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Land ownership debate launched

By Sangkhae Leelanapaporn

PHUKET: A debate is developing in Phuket between those who believe land should remain the sacred birthright of Thais, with no foreigners allowed to buy any, and those who believe it is time the rules were relaxed – though not to the point where there is a totally free market.

Two senior Thai figures on the island are among those who believe the time has come for change, and have called for Phuket to be a testbed for foreign ownership.

The Chairman of the Phuket Real Estate Club (PREC), Phummisak Hongsyok, was the first to broach the subject, suggesting this week that Phuket should be the site for a pilot project to study the effects of land ownership by foreigners. He sought to allay the fears of opponents.

"If we are worried that foreigners will buy a lot of land in Phuket, we should set out specific areas for them," he said.

Phuket Senator Paiboon Upatising agreed. He told the *Gazette*, "Foreigners should be given the right to own land, under certain conditions. After all, with globalization, Thai people can legally own property in countries such as the US or Australia, though with some restrictions.

Sen Paiboon added, "We need to study how other countries control [the sale of] land so that the buyers do not develop it in an illegal way.

"The way I see it is this: not a single square centimeter of land can be taken out of Thailand, and we can collect tax on the land."



THE DREAM: A sunset view from a fabulous home. But what are the chances of owning the land on which it stands?

He stressed, however, that care should be taken to ensure that foreigners do not develop exclusive enclaves where only those of the same nationality are granted entry. "This would badly restrict the rights of Thais," he said.

K. Phummisak said that Thais should not be frightened about a takeover by foreigners. "The foreigners are the ones who should be worried because of [frequent] changes in government rules. There is not need for Thais to worry that our land will be filled up with foreigners – they cannot take the land away with them," he added.

Sen Paiboon echoed the call for Phuket to be the laboratory for testing foreign ownership. "With its well-organized long-term plans, I am sure Phuket can be a very successful trial site. It depends on the vi-

sion of the government; if they want to try, we are ready," he said.

However, Bangkok's local representative, Governor Udomsak Usawarakura, told the *Gazette* that he was against foreign ownership of land. He pointed out that foreigners may already own condominiums and can take out 30-year leases on land, with the option of extending those leases.

"If we allow foreigners to own land," he said, "we would have to watch the intentions of every single foreigner who wants to do so. [We need to watch] what they want to do in Thailand. If we are not careful about this, these foreigners will snatch Thai people's jobs.

"Suppose we let the Japanese, say, or another country, take possession of a piece of

Continued on page 2

Gov given international view on bar hours

By Gategeo Phetsawang

PHUKET: Governor Udomsak Usawarakura has indicated a possible softening of the government stance on closing times for Phuket's entertainment venues, mentioning, almost in passing, a closing time of 3 am.

The Governor was in Berlin from March 12 to 16 at the giant ITB 2004 exhibition, widely regarded as the world's premier tourism industry event, with about 10,000 exhibitors from 180 countries and regions taking part.

There, he heard the opinions of foreign travel industry insiders on the closing time issue. He told the *Gazette*, "I had a chance to ask Thomas Cook representatives what feedback they got from travelers to Phuket.

"They said tourists are worried about the closing time issue. The tourists would like the closing times to be put back, not brought forward, so that their trips will be more worthwhile.

"I visited some pubs in Germany that close at 12 pm, but in tourist areas like Berlin they stay open until 4 am," he said.

The Governor said would not like to see Phuket pubs stay open that late but added, "We think the Thai policy will be to extend closing times within entertainment zones to 2 am or 3 am, but no later than that.

"I think 2 am is an appropriate time because it gives people four hours of rest [before they wake up].

"Other complaints we received concerned overpricing by tuk-tuk drivers, environmental problems and noisy construction projects," said Gov Udomsak.

Accompanying the Governor
Continued on page 2

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Roadshow to Nagoya, Osaka, targets 'quality tourists'

PHUKET CITY: Sixty-four government officials and tourism industry representatives are currently visiting the Japanese cities of Nagoya and Osaka to promote tourism to Phuket, Krabi and Phang Nga provinces. The road show is due to end on March 29.

Speaking at a conference preceding the roadshow, Vice-Governor Winai Buapradit described Japan as a source of "quality tourists". Currently,

about 150,000 Japanese tourists visit Phuket each year and spend about 4,200 baht a day, 17% more than the 3,600 baht daily average of all foreign tourists.

The director of the local TAT office, Suwalai Pinpradab, said that Thailand is already a top travel destination among the Japanese, who make up about 10% of all foreign visitors to Thailand.

"Because Thailand is not too distant, the Japanese can jus-

tify shorter-duration stays here and visit more often. There are also daily flights from Tokyo to Phuket and service from Osaka three times weekly, so it is more convenient than ever for Japanese to visit."

The roadshow targeting working women who will come to Phuket for spa treatments, along with the elderly, divers, and young people, she said.

K. Suwalai admitted there were still some factors hindering

the Japanese market from reaching its full potential.

"The cost of travel [from Japan] to Thailand is still higher compared with destinations such as Guam and Hawaii. Taxi drivers who prey on Japanese tourists and the presence of illegal tour guides are still a problem because Thailand doesn't have enough Japanese-speaking guides to meet demand," she admitted.

Kitti Phatanachinda, a com-

mittee member of the Phuket Tourism Association, said one of the keys to the promotional effort in Japan would be a "Table Top Sale" that would expose Phuket's attractions to 150 Japanese tour agencies.

"We offer them quality health tourism, including the spa business, and other recreational options such as shopping, diving, golf, and ecotourism, including trekking and kayaking," he said.

— **Dhirarat Boonkongsan**

Police seek witnesses to double fatality

RAWAI: Police are keen to interview anyone who may have witnessed a collision between a car and a motorbike that killed a British tourist and his Thai girlfriend on Wiset Rd, Rawai, on March 14.

Killed were Briton Scott Tristan Watkins, 33, and Sasithorn Kaewyai, also 33, from Buri Ram.

The following day, the driver of the Mitsubishi Pajero involved in the crash was charged with driving carelessly and later released after relatives paid 100,000 baht bail.

Pol Maj Jessada Sangsue, of Chalong Police Station, told the *Gazette* that the collision took place about 11 pm, about 200 meters north of the Phuket Sea Shell Museum.

Mr Watkins and K. Sasithorn were declared dead on arrival at Wachira Phuket Hospital in Phuket City.

"We will continue to gather evidence," Maj Jessada said. "If anyone has information about the collision, they should contact police."

K. Sasithorn's younger sister, Nithira "Lek" Kaewyai, told the *Gazette* that her sister and Mr Watkins headed out for a ride about 6 pm on the rented motorbike.

"I'd like to see justice done because my sister has two daughters, aged 10 and two, who have to be cared for," she added.

— **Gategeo Phetsawang**

Grand Prix heroes opt for different wheels



Juan Pablo Montoya, widely regarded as the Formula 1 driver most likely to topple World Champion Michael Schumacher, arrives in Phuket after the Malaysian Grand Prix and waits at Phuket International Airport for transport with his wife Connie (left) and his

mother, Libia. His father, Pablo, was also in the party.

With the next fixture on the F1 calendar being the Bahrain Grand Prix on April 4, it is understood that Montoya has opted to stay in Phuket in the interim, in order not to have to reacclimatize to the warm

weather of the Arabian Gulf.

He was not the only one. Spotted on Koh Samui was fellow F1 driver Jenson Button, taking a rather slower mode of transport, while the *Gazette* understands that other Grand Prix visitors to Phuket and Samui included



Nick Heidfeld, Giancarlo Fisichella, David Coulthard, Kimi Raikkonen and Takumo Sato. Michael Schumacher, however, stayed in Malaysia, relaxing on Langkawi.

— Montoya photo by Jim Corti; Button photo courtesy of Red Bicycle, Samui.

Debate over land ownership

From page 1

land; they may, in the future, turn this into some kind of enclave and ban Thais, or not allow Thais to do anything in that territory.

"If we don't consider the possible bad results [of foreigners owning land] or if we don't

create safeguards ahead of time, we won't be able to control any problems that happen in the future," the Governor explained.

"In any case, although foreigners do not have the right to own land, there are already many businessmen who do so [through back door methods] because they are married to Thai women. They want to do business in Thailand and Thai policy allows foreign investors to do business here," he added.

The debate has been welcomed by foreigners in the real estate business. Paul Moorhouse, Director of Tropic Asia Company, developer of Lakeshore Villas, Lakewood Hills, and Orchard Springs, told the *Gazette* he believed that if foreigners were able to own land — whether for private housing or for other purposes — then the amount of foreign investment coming into the country would increase dramatically.

"It would also give people a lot more confidence. In England and America, anybody can buy land. A lot of Thais seem to forget that. They can go to England and buy land freehold whereas here there is a lot of red tape."

Anthony James, Chairman of the Pacvest Group, currently developing The Plantation in Kamala, also agreed that foreigners should be allowed to own land, though not unconditionally.

"Foreign investment is extremely important to Thailand but it [should also be recognized] that this is Thailand and the land does belong to the Thais. But I think [it is possible to achieve] a balance, a middle way."

"I believe foreign ownership is quite important in terms of the development of any property market. As far as Phuket is concerned, I think it would make an enormous difference to the sale of property if there was some limited form of land ownership."

Gov hints at 3 am closing

From page 1

nor to Berlin was Phuket Tourist Association (PTA) Chairman Pattanapong Akevanich, who is also a member of the informal committee set up by entertainment industry operators in Phuket to fight earlier closing times.

"The Governor and I agreed about [the need for] zoning entertainment businesses," said K. Pattanapong. "We also agree that there should be flexibility over closing times but that they should not be later than 3 am."

"We [the PTA] proposed this to the House Committee on Tourism two weeks ago and are still awaiting its decision," he added.

He added, "If the government is concerned about illegal drugs, firearms and other such problems among Thai youth, then it should focus on those issues directly because these problems are not created by tourists," he said.

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June Bahria



The new Customs House at Ao Makham.

New Customs pier opened

AO MAKHAM: The new Customs House and pier at Ao Makham, opened on March 18, is expected to play a major role in the protection of the area around Phuket Deep Sea Port from various maritime threats, including smuggling and environmental accidents.

The Customs Department will base five vessels there to intercept fuel-oil smugglers and drug runners. Anti-smuggling operations may also target yachts entering Phuket that are suspected of carrying drugs.

Other ships under the aegis of the Customs Department will

be on standby to deal with major maritime problems such as oil spills and ships in distress.

Customs Department Director General Chavalit Sethameteekul, opening the new facility, said he felt that the area was ripe for investment and development.

"There is already a Thai investor interested in building a marina and shipyard close to the Customs pier," he said.

"I'm certain that the new Phuket Customs pier area will attract many investors," he predicted.

— Athairat Muangkong

Seminar to explore effects of zoning

PHUKET: The *Phuket Gazette* and *The Nation* newspapers will host a free seminar at Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort on March 27, to explore opinions on zoning and its potential effects on the island.

Issues to be examined will include the effects of traffic congestion, noise, trash and other environmental problems on tourism, property development, investment and the quality of life on Phuket.

Discussion will center on whether or not planning and zoning will be implemented in time to save the island from falling off the world's tourist and investment maps.

Speakers will include Dr Sommai Prijasilpa, Head of the Foreign Relations Office of Thailand; Wanee Samphantharak, Secretary General of the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning; Phummasak Hongsyok, Chairman of the Phuket Real Estate Agents' Club; Bill Barnett, MD of hotel and property development consulting company C9 Hotelworks; Warwick Reynolds, Director of Crystal Lake Properties; Tranai Tan-ngamtrong, urban design architect and city planning consultant.

The seminar, which will be in English, will run from 2:30 pm to 5:30 pm.

Another conference, in Thai, entitled The Future of Phuket, will be held at the same venue in the morning. The seminar, organized by the Phuket Chamber of Commerce (PCC) and *Krungthep Turakij* newspaper will discuss development problems facing Phuket.

Speakers will include Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak; Phuket Governor Udomsak Usawarangura and Manoo Ordeedolchest, President of the Software Industry Promotion Agency

First steps taken to curb long-tail rip-offs

By Siripansa Somboon

RAWAI: Island-wide measures are to be introduced to register all of Phuket's long-tail boats, set standard fees for tourist trips, and punish rip-off boat operators.

Most of the island's long-tail operators are honest, but some have been known to charge excessive rates and cheat tourists.

Another cause for concern — and action — is the tour group operators who overcharge tourists but underpay long-tail boatmen for their services.

Seang Chanalerd, president of the Rawai Long-tail Boat Club and *Phu Yai Baan* (village chief) of Rawai, told the *Gazette* about a case in which a tour operator charged a group of tourists 2,000 baht each for a trip but paid the boatman just 800 baht.

On March 15, a group of about 60 local boat owners gathered at Rawai to signal their support for the first stage of the project, which has the backing of the Marine Department and the Rawai Tambon Administration Organization.

It is hoped that eventually long-tails will also be required to carry life jackets, and will be prevented from taking visitors out to sea in unsafe weather — especially during the sudden storms that spring up in the monsoon season. Establishment of an insurance scheme is also being looked at.

K. Seang said he hoped that it will not be long before regular scales of fees are available and tourists can tell from looking at a boat that its driver has the approval of authorities and abides by the regulations.

Songkran Festival events announced

SAPHAN HIN: To mark the Songkran festival, the Phuket Municipality and the Phuket Merchants' Association (PMA) will organize a Phuket Songkran Merchants Event, to raise funds for a new building for the association.

The event will run from April 6 to 15 at Saphan Hin.

Highlights of the festival will include:

April 6: Grand opening ceremony by the Governor of Phuket at 6 pm;

April 9: Concert featuring the Ve Tee Thai *look thung* band, along with singers and dancers, starting at 7 pm;

April 10: *Sepak takraw*

(net takraw) competition at 9 am;

April 11: Flower show and competition, starting at 9 am; *look thung* contest for men and women, starting at 6.30 pm;

April 12: Drawing contest for children at 8:30 am, *takraw lord huang* (hoop takraw) competition at 9 am; procession of Buddha images on floats, starting from Narisorn Rd at 5 pm; concert featuring the Mai Lha band at 7 pm;

April 13: Songkran Day begins at 6 am with an alms-giving ceremony at the Phuket Seafood Restaurant, Saphan Hin, and various Buddhist ceremonies, followed by the traditional sprinkling of water;

April 14: Musical shows by students from Thalang and Anuban Phuket Schools, at 6 pm.

For more information, contact the PMA Tel: at 076-211313 or 01-8953942.

Appeal over headless body

KAMALA: Police have appealed for information to help them identify a badly decomposed, headless corpse that was found washed up on seaside rocks at Laem Son on March 14.

Pol Capt Serm Kwannimit, of Kathu Police Station, told the *Gazette* that the body was discovered by local villagers at about 4:30 pm.

He said that police believe the victim was probably male because the corpse was wearing green men's underwear.

However, due to the extent of the decomposition, officers are not sure.

"I believe this person died not more than 20 days ago because the corpse still has some flesh on the hipbone," Capt Serm said.

He added that the remains were sent to Patong Hospital to

await transportation to Bangkok for examination by forensics experts.

"We expect to know the cause of death in about five days," he added.

He urged anyone with information they believe may help in identifying the body to contact Patong Hospital at Tel: 076-340444.

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Bike Week organizers set up full program

PATONG: This year's annual Phuket Bike Week — the 10th — will run from April 10 to April 13.

The four-day bike extravaganza is organized by Phuket Riders and *Ride Thailand* magazine. Bikers from as far away as Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia and even further afield, are expected to take part.

The event starts with the registration of participants on April 10. That evening, the Grand Welcome Dinner Party takes place at the Thainaan restaurant in Phuket City.

The party will feature a custom car and bike show, a tattoo display, and the Miss Ride Thailand contest. Entry to the Grand Welcome Dinner is 300 baht a head, including food and soft drinks.

The following day, bikers will assemble at Patong football field and begin a rumble around the island. The first stop will be at Nai Yang Beach at 1 pm, followed by the Phuket Special School in Pa Khlok for some charity work at 3 pm. The final stop will be at Laem Phromthep at 4 pm.

On April 12, a Rodeo & Beach Games Party takes place at the Patong football field, organized by the Phuket Big Bike Association.

Finally, on April 13, the riders will bikes will again form a caravan and take an undoubtedly wet tour of the island as part of the Songkran festivities.

In addition to the events already listed, there will be various bike club parties throughout the week.

For more information call Tel: 076-352069 or 01-6919346, go to www.phuketbikeweek.com or email: sumon@e-mail.in.th.

— Rittiwat Suwannarattaphum

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Queer News

Food fight turns into deadly shotgun duel

PHITSANULOK: They say the way to a man's heart is through his stomach, but a housewife in Nernmaprang District wound up dead with a shotgun blast through her stomach – after serving her drunk husband a dinner that he deemed *mai aroy* (not delicious).

The wife, 33-year-old Sontong Kamyuang of Tambon Chompoo Village 3, had prepared dinner for her husband Boonsong, 39, who came home drunk as usual on the evening of March 17.

But after finishing the meal, he had some rather unflattering comments about the quality of the food she had prepared.

This precipitated an argument that eventually became so violent that Boonsong walked to the house of a neighbor, borrowed a shotgun, and stood in front of his own home firing a

volley of shots into the sky to vent his anger.

But rather than intimidate his spouse, his shots only made her angrier. Totally enraged, she grabbed her own shotgun from a bedroom and confronted her husband in what turned out to be a duel with no winner.

Her shot found its target, but her husband didn't die immediately. He managed to return fire, blowing a hole in his wife's stomach and leaving her dead in a pool of her own blood. He himself later died in hospital.

When the police arrived they found 16-year-old Srirutra Kamyuang, one of the couple's daughters, weeping over her mother's corpse.

The deceased couple are survived by three children – now all orphans.

Source: *Daily News*

Live by the serpent, die by the serpent

SRISAKET: A man who was once listed in the *Guinness Book of Records* for spending the most time in an enclosure with snakes, died on March 19 after being bitten by one of his 30 pet snakes the day before.

Boonreung Bauchan, 34, was known as "The Snake Man" after spending seven days living with snakes in 1998 to claim the record.

He was bitten by a mamba on March 18 while tending to his serpents.

His mother Phao Bauchan, 53, said her son collapsed after he was bitten.

He was rushed to nearby Prai Beung Hospital then trans-

ferred to Srisaket Hospital when his condition deteriorated. He died the following day.

"We are in grief because now there is no one to take care of the family. It was always Boonreung who supported us by doing snake shows," K. Phao said.

K. Boonreung's father, Pon, said that the pet snakes were still at his house – and they aren't in a very good mood.

"They look fierce now, so no one dares get close to them," he said.

K. Pon said he planned to donate the reptiles to a zoo after his son's cremation ceremony.

Source: *The Nation*

FUTURE PATONG

On a sunny Sunday afternoon, there are still touches of village life to be found in Patong.

Families spread their mats and picnic in Loma Park. Local children play on the sand.

But the village itself is gone, replaced long ago by a tourist town, with the bars of Soi Bangla at its heart. Each evening, as darkness falls, Patong undergoes a transformation.

As the light fades, the family groups disappear. In their place come bar girls, *katoey* and sex tourists. Patong parties hard and long into the night, every night.

Love it or hate it, that's Patong these days. Some people find the two Patongs acceptable. Others hate Patong by night and wish the bars could be bulldozed so the sex tourists would stay away.

Meanwhile, both Patongs coexist. Whether the Jekyll and Hyde character of the town can survive remains a matter of conjecture, with supporters on both sides.

However, the coincidental timing of several events is likely to mean that the coming year will prove to be a watershed for the village that grew and grew.

The word that best sums up the critical period is "development".

The first development comes in a more intense national government approach to entertainment venues.

Even if closing hours are not brought forward, the changes wrought to regulations are likely to bring tighter controls over the industry, a potential drop in the value of venues (paradoxically combined with a rise in the value of the land) and with it a reduction in the numbers of sex tourists as they switch to other destinations.

The second development is the election on February 7 of Songserm Kepsap as mayor. Although an investigation is underway into whether the poll was tainted by vote-buying – post-poll inquiries are almost mandatory these days – Kepsap's Patong People's Party has a reputation for honesty and may represent a much-needed break with Patong's troubled political past.

Will the sinners be the winners?

Shopping paradise or sex playground? Which way will Patong go in the near future?

Gategao Phetsawang and Siripansa Somboon chart the beginnings of a new era for the raunchy town.

The coming year should tell whether a permanent break can be made with systemic municipal corruption.

The third development takes another form. While the old Shipwreck bar in Soi Bangla has just had a facelift and large windows are being knocked into the walls of the huge Star Club disco (formerly the Shark Club, Star Wars, and Star World), the third development is mostly beyond the borders of Patong.

Along other island beachfronts, more five-star resorts are going to multiply over the next year and beyond to widen Phuket's appeal to the "quality" tourists, beloved by Thailand's international marketeers.

Just a stone's throw from Star Wars-World-Club, across Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd, is the most visible sign of the physical change that is likely to transform Patong with increasing speed.

Piledrivers and cranes are working on the Jungceylon mall site. The scale of the project is difficult to gauge from the road – the gigantic project actually stretches back for about a kilometer.

Under construction and swarming with hard-hats, the "lifestyle" center, being built at a cost that has now swollen to

three billion baht, will dwarf other island retail outlets when it opens in January, offering hundreds of jobs – and alternative forms of entertainment.

With so many other sites available, why was Patong chosen as the site for such a center?

Rena Udomkunnatum, Vice President of Marketing and Sales of Jungceylon Phuket, told the *Gazette* that Patong has great potential – along with the whole province.

If the government continues to pursue its plans for Phuket, the island will be comparable to Hawaii, she said. "Phuket is well known," she said. "But 10 years ago, it was not as prosperous as it is at present."

When the company came to the decision about where to build Jungceylon, Patong's bad-boy reputation was not seen as a problem.

K. Rena explained that the final choice was between Phuket Town and Patong. Patong won because it had no large department stores, yet almost every tourist visits the town.

"If the government aims to make Phuket a high-class tourist destination, there should be some additional facilities for them," she said. "And that's why we chose Patong."

There are problems, for sure – transportation, cleanliness and the need to uphold a good image as a tourist destination, she explained.

"It's the right time for us to invest in this area because we foresee the stability of Phuket," she said. "What we and many people should be concerned about is its natural environment."

"I don't think Phuket will be the same as Pattaya. But I'd like people to be aware of the need to protect the environment in Patong."

It is safe to assume she is talking about the beach and its marine life, not the bars that are sandwiched between the sea-shore and Jungceylon.

"Once there is a big project invested here, it will make the big change and bring a new standpoint for Patong," she said.

"Right now there are many vendors along the beach, but after we [Jungceylon] open, there will be more brand-name products, and land in Patong will become more valuable. These

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READY OR NOT: If the bright lights of the sex industry are dimmed, will the tourists stay away from Patong? That's the big question.

things will attract various kinds of businesses to this area.

"The bars of Soi Bangla are also tourist places, but there should be some other choices for tourists who don't want to spend all their time in bars," she said. "Otherwise Patong won't be able to attract other kinds of tourists."

Good political leaders were essential for Patong's progress, she said. "Patong can expand and attract new businesses if the town presents an interesting standpoint to people."

Thomas McNamara, who 14 years ago started a small restaurant that has grown into the up-market clifftop Baan Rim Pa Group, agrees that Patong's future is bright.

"Patong is almost like a gold rush community. It has happened in such a short period. Recently we've started to see more families come here," he said. "I find that to be better for the island."

Diversity is the key, he said. "I don't think people who come to Phuket should enter the bar and restaurant businesses."

"The service industry – in terms of mechanical engineering, construction and electrical ... all of those things seem to be ignored in great part. It's really hard to make money opening more restaurants."

"There should be some more shops, and more activities

rather than just too many bars and not enough activities for families. I think of making better, not making more."

"[Nightlife] is not necessary for Patong," he said, adding, "Obviously, Patong needs to be cleaned up. One of the government proposals is to put all the wiring underground, which is a great idea."

"They are also providing more green areas, and the quality of hotels will go up."

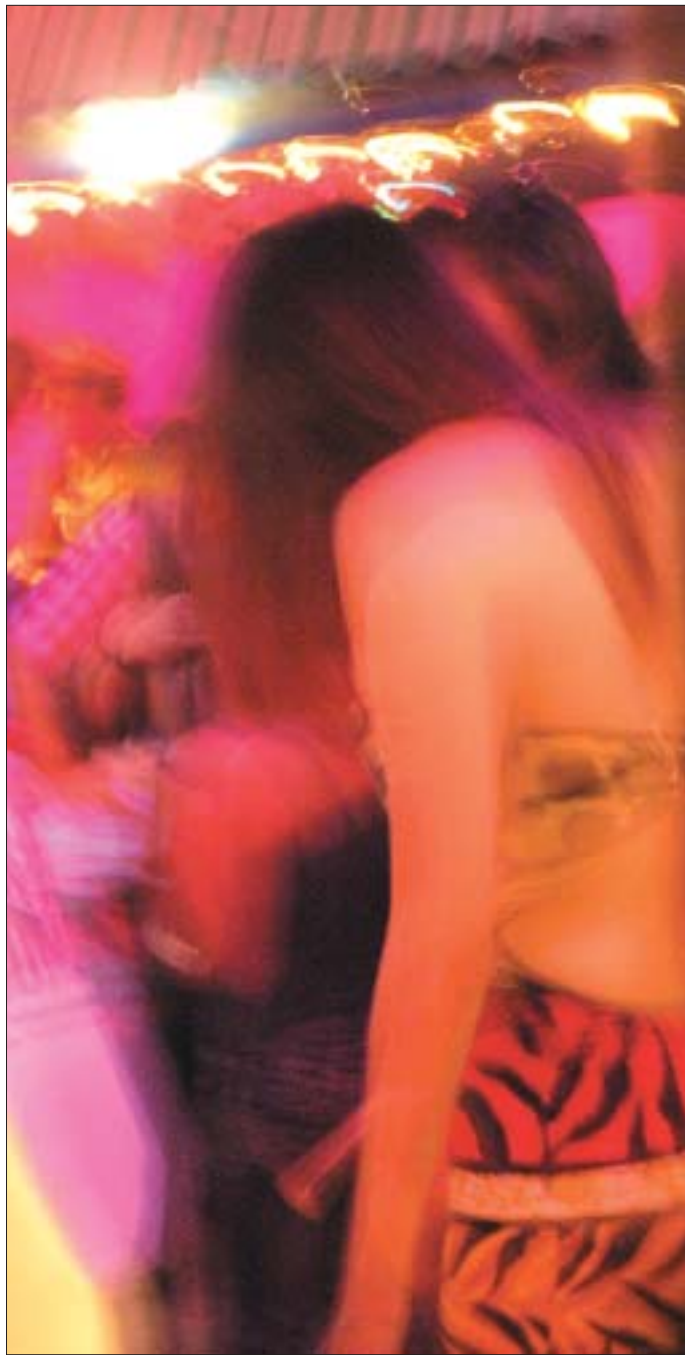
Chairat Sukbal, owner of the Safari Pub, believes Patong is going to boom over the next five years.

"Development depends on management," he stressed, "especially local government. Organizations must have more knowledge and ability."

He added that nightlife remained critical to attracting tourists. "If Phuket doesn't have nightlife, that means we will have no tourists. How would business in Phuket continue?"

Wolfgang Meusburger, General Manager of the Holiday Inn Resort Phuket, which has been open for 17 years, told the *Gazette* that more coordination between the stakeholders was essential.

The Holiday Inn is one of a group of hotels in Patong that conducts an annual survey of tourist opinions of the town. The latest survey has just been completed.



Patong by numbers

Official permanent population: 14,797 people in 2002. Garbage collection figures indicated there was a vast, unregistered population and that the real figure could be as high as 46,000 people.

In high season – again from estimates based on garbage collection – the population rises to about 66,000. In 2002, tourists to Phuket numbered 3,854,054. Of these, 2,766,350 were foreigners.

1626: The name "Phuket" appears for the first time. Dutch merchants, buying tin, are given land to build stores.

1827: Baan Kathu and Baan Patong are small villages without convenient transportation.

1898: The island is organized into five grades of local government.

1947: The government approves 60,000 baht for a basic road across the hill to Patong although it is difficult to use in the wet season.

1969: Patong is upgraded to a "sanitation district" and taxes of 20,000 baht a year are collected.

1976: A sealed road is built to Patong for the first time.

1979: Electricity arrives – Patong is wired, and not for the last time. There is no record of the first complaint about a short-circuit or black-out. Nor is there documented evidence of when the first fairy lights were strung around a karaoke bar.

1994: Patong Sanitation District is upgraded to a municipality, with Thanong Kwanyuen becoming the first mayor.

2005: More big-brand hotels are set for completion. Jungceylon "lifestyle" retail complex scheduled to open.

"Guests keep complaining about the same things," said Mr Meusburger.

"Aggressive street vendors, no fixed prices for transportation, poor water quality, and garbage."

"All of these things can be fixed. The sad thing is that not much has happened for the past three years."

"The government should understand that people come here for the shopping and the nightlife. Proper zoning is very important in Patong."

"Bars should be allowed to open until 4 am. Closing is not the issue – it's really about zoning."

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By Rittiwat Suwannarattaphum

When most people hear the word glass, they think of something fragile and easily shattered, like a foolish dream.

But for Phang Nga native Pichai Sakulson, a career in selling handcrafted glassware has been a dream come true, turning a cash-strapped young man with little education into a successful businessman.

Better known by his nickname "Pui", 46-year-old K. Pichai got his start in the business when the tourism boom was beginning around 1987. K. Pichai told the *Gazette* that, at that time, he left school with just one year of secondary education. He found himself doing poorly paid work with few prospects.

"I was quite poor and rather uneducated. I wandered about looking for a well-paying job until I finally found that the decorative glassware industry matched my interests," he says.

He started off selling the finest glassware he could find at night markets and bazaars.

"As soon as I heard of any special sale or exhibition, I would book a booth. My products quickly became very popular and spread throughout the southern region," he recalls.

Now he has his own factory, Baan Bao Kaew, the only glassblowing factory in Phuket and one of just six in Thailand. Located in the Kuku area on the northeast edge of Phuket City, the factory employs 12 glassblowers and can produce a profit as high as 20,000 baht a day when production is at full capacity.

K. Pichai says that attention to detail and using the most ap-

Viewing the world through glass



Workers fashion glass ornaments at the factory in Kuku set up and owned by Pichai Sakulson (right). Products are exported worldwide.

propriate raw materials are the keys to his business success.

Raw glass comes in a number of different grades, he explains, but the finest grades are prohibitively expensive and very difficult to mold or blow because they need to be heated to 600°C before they can be worked. Instead, his factory uses intermediate grades which can be worked at 400°C.

K. Pichai stresses that there is no textbook approach to working glass. The art still depends entirely on the skill, creativity and experience of the individual craftsman. "The more pieces they produce, the better they become," he says.

In addition to domestic sales, exports now play a major role in K. Pichai's business.

His product line ranges

from animal figurines to the signs of the Zodiac, with prices from just 20 baht all the way up to 5,000 baht. China and Hong Kong are among his major foreign markets, but K. Pichai continues to put his greatest effort into the German market for sentimental reasons.

"I pay special attention on Germany because the Germans were the first to buy my products on a large scale. They allowed me to develop my business and move ahead of my rivals," he explains.

All of his effort paid off three years ago, when creations from his factory were featured at the Thai Chamber of Commerce Exhibition in Bangkok.

He was also commissioned in 1999 to produce a dragon-shaped figure used to mark the state visit to Thailand of China's then-premier, Jiang Zemin.

K. Pichai says that one of his dreams is to establish a state-of-the-art glasswork training school on the island. Working in glass, he says, is a good career for those with patience and a love of crafts, but the best glass workers are those who start when they are young.

"Youngsters are more flexible and pick up new knowledge faster.

"I don't want to see them roaming around, addicted to drugs. This could harm our national development," says a stern K. Pichai, who would rather see Thai kids making glass pipes than smoking from them.



Baan Bao Kaew, 74/101 Mooban City Home, Moo 3, Ruampattana Rd, Tambon Ras-sada, near the Phuket Provin-

cial Offices. For more information, contact K. Pichai (Tel: 076-241189 or 01-8924507; Email: pichaignessware@thaimail.com).

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SINGHA NEW LOOK

Testing scandals rock MoE

Education Minister Adisai Bodharamik has admitted that some schools in remote areas leaked the national secondary school entrance exam to students.

K. Adisai said that he had instructed Basic Education Commission Secretary-General Khunying Kasama Worawan na Ayuthaya to take strict measures to prevent a repeat.

More than 5,000 students in grade 6 at 200 schools in 65 provinces had to take the national test twice after some students received unusually high scores in the first exam.

Meanwhile, the Senate youth committee called for Higher Education Commission Chief Woradet Chantrasorn to step down, having been responsible for eroding faith in the university exam system.

Committee chairman Wallop Tangkananurak said faith in the system had been compromised after K. Woradet broke the seal on university entrance exam booklets two days before the test day, defying a long-standing tradition in the Ministry of Education that only those involved in producing the exams should be allowed to see them.

K. Woradet said he was just checking the exams for errors.

Receipts required: The Government Lottery Office (GLO) has rejected plans by private operators to accept wagers for two- and three-digit government lottery tickets via mobile phone short message services.

GLO Director General Surasith Sangkhaphong said the move went against the agency's rules, which stipulate that customers must receive paper tickets as evidence of purchase.

Current affairs: Power consumption in Thailand reached a record high on the afternoon of May 16, fueled by sweltering heat and increased economic growth, the Electricity Generat-



Sawaeng Panyawong, 56, mourns over a picture of his dead son, Phra Tanom Pasuko. Police said the monk, acting abbot of Sathong Temple in Khon Kaen, was found dead after a road accident. The monk was wearing civilian clothes and had a high blood-alcohol level.

ing Authority of Thailand (Egat) announced.

The agency recorded 18,247.3 megawatts of electricity consumption at 2 pm, breaking the record of 18,121.4 MW set last May 7.

Egat, whose workers are fighting off a government plan to privatize the state enterprise, has insisted there is no danger of blackouts.

Epic cartoon: In an effort to make classic Thai literature more appealing to students, publisher Sky Books has released a comic-book version of the Ramakian epic, the Thai variation of the Ramayana. Company manager Rungroj Archathewan believes that young Thais will find the Ramakian and other classic

works much more accessible through the modern medium.

The drawings look anything but Thai, using stereotypes from Japanese comics popular in Thailand, as well as the hard edges used in Western cartoons.

As a result, in the book Lord Rama has big eyes and an oval face, while his monkey soldier Hanuman seems to have sprung directly from the pages of a Japanese comic.

Chipped cocks: Agriculture Minister Somsak Thepsuthin shot down a move to prevent further spread of avian 'flu by having microchips inserted in healthy fighting cocks, saying that other preventive measures would be easier and cheaper to implement.

His deputy, Newin Chidchob, floated the idea during the height of the bird 'flu outbreak. The roosters were blamed by many for spreading the deadly disease.

At 120 baht a bird, implanting the chips is costly and breeders opposed it, K. Somsak said, adding that the chips would tickle fighting cocks and could slow them down when charging at the opponent during a fight.

He said the plan was uneconomical as the birds have short lives, and instead proposed a system of photographing each bird's legs. Rooster legs have skin patterns as unique as human fingerprints.

Pop art exhibition: A new art gallery at the Promenade Decor

shopping mall, near Raffles Hotel on Wireless Rd in Bangkok, features paintings by the father of pop art.

The exhibition – “Andy Warhol – From Soup Cans to Celebrities: An Iconic Cultural Survey 1964-1987” – features 23 prints and one painting, worth a total of about 10 million baht.

Highlights of the exhibition are the “Toy Apple” (1986) and the 1-million-baht silkscreen depicting Mick Jagger (1975), which was signed by both Warhol and Jagger.

Apart from the famous soup cans, the show features portraits of celebrities including Marilyn Monroe, John F Kennedy, Mao Zedong, Ronald Reagan and Queen Margrethe II of Denmark. The works cost 240,000 to 2.4 million baht.

History in the making: The legacy of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra is to be exhibited in a renovated library at a temple in the Chiang Mai neighborhood where he grew up.

The Culture Ministry's Department of Religious Affairs will partly finance the project, which will turn the basement of the eight-story pagoda at Wat Rong Tham Samakki San Kamphaeng district into a public religious library.

The library will feature an archive devoted to PM Thaksin, in the same manner former US presidents' collections are commemorated in purpose-built libraries, but on a smaller scale. PM Thaksin's religious lifestyle and his bonds to his childhood community will be highlighted.

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

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Business owners hit by fee hikes

Last month I reported that many businesses in the Krabi area had received less-than-friendly visits from the local tax authorities demanding payment of taxes from income that allegedly hadn't been reported, or that the tax collector was convinced had been hidden.

Some local business owners believe that this aggressive approach may be the result of pressure from higher-ranking tax officials to increase tax revenues despite the tourist season having been, again, rather lackluster.

The visits come on top of recent increases in a range of expenses for business owners in the area, especially for foreigners, who have seen their visa and work permit fees jump dramatically.

Property and building taxes in Ao Nang have also increased in spectacular fashion, with the new system for assessing tax liability creating quite a stir among local property owners.

The new system – which replaced a calculation so complex and confusing that even Einstein would have had trouble following it – assesses taxes at 140 baht per square meter. This formula may be simpler, but it has resulted in the tripling of taxes for many people, with one owner's

property tax jumping from 5,000 baht a year to 29,000 baht.

General business taxes are on the rise as well, with the social security tax going up from 3% to 5%, along with a general increase in sign tax.

On top of all this, the owners of local bars, restaurants and hotels were invited to the Krabi Town District Office to have new fees and licenses explained to them.

A long list of licenses that businesses must apply for was provided, including a live music license, a license for televisions, another for playing music on CDs, one for dancing, and more.

The biggest surprise for the business owners was the price: 50,000 baht for *each* license in the first year, plus 10,000 baht a year thereafter.

Previously, the licenses were 10,000 baht a year for the first year and 1,000 baht a year thereafter.

Under the old fee system, the average beer bar owner could make a marginal living, but the hundreds of thousands of baht in license fees will probably see many of them go out of business.

While this may be the ultimate aim of the policy (and it may not be altogether a bad thing) business owners are beginning to feel swamped as one cost



ACROSS THE BAY

By Gus Reynolds



Koh Lanta: Nice beaches. A pity about the land prices.

after another is hiked. In light of the soft tourist season this year, many business owners are re-evaluating their investment strategies.

As a solution to these problems I propose the introduction of a license for bars to stay open after 2 am. This would generate additional tax revenue and get the tax man off the backs of the legitimate businesses, weed out the marginal bars, and still provide a variety of entertainment venues to attract tourists to Thailand.

Unreal estate: In this environment of rising costs and sluggish income, why are land prices and rents still escalating? Scarcity of property? Possibly, though only to some degree. Income potential? Hardly – unless, as a property owner, you bank on a new sucker coming down the block

every year to pay exorbitant prices for land and rent.

Locals are shaking their heads at some of the prices being asked for properties, sold or leased.

To be sure, a lot of this is sour grapes, for if we had known how high prices were going to go, we would have bought as much land as we could have years ago.

One cannot even estimate the price of land on the Ao Nang beachfront because there are no sizable lots available. Single buildings are selling for 20 million baht or more, and you have to travel three kilometers or more to find land with a good title in the range of 2 million baht a rai.

Amazing Lanta: A recent trip to Koh Lanta revealed prices even higher than those in Ao Nang, with land selling in the 5-million-to-10-million-baht-a-rai range.

While the beachfront is beautiful and the water pristine, the high season there is quite short. During my visit in the first week of March, tourists were in short supply.

The logic behind the high prices is that once the infrastructure is in place (how about a paved road, please), Koh Lanta will be "the next Phuket".

Even if that were true, would you be willing to pay 10 million baht a rai and still have to wait up to five years for the infrastructure to develop and for business to expand? Evidently, many people are.

Overtime ban: Krabi, like elsewhere in Thailand, has been hurt by the confusion over changes to closing times for entertainment venues.

Up to now the system for the bars that stay open after 2 am has been to pay the local officers overtime for policing the bars after 2 am.

Fair enough: if you close at 2 am you don't pay; if you stay open late, you pay.

In theory, the new rules closing all entertainment venues at 2 am or earlier will do away with this system, so yet another group will suffer financially from the earlier closing time – the local constabulary.

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This week



TRASH TRENDSETTERS: Students from seven schools in Thalang donned garbage garb to increase awareness of local environmental needs, including recycling, as part of a promotion by the Development of Environment and Energy Foundation.



NO TURTLE RECALL: Vice-Admiral Pairoj Theerachai, Commander of the Third Naval Area Command, and wife Saowanee join in with the March 13 turtle release at the Sea Turtle Conservation Center at Koh Huyong in the Similans.



STAIRWAY TO SUCCESS: Year 9 students from Dulwich International College are greeted at the *Phuket Gazette* offices by Website Services Manager Natthira Susangrat (right) during a recent visit to the newspaper.



SETTING SAIL ON THE SEA OF LOVE: Newlywed singing star Nicole Paanpum, *nue* Teriault, and husband Jirasak perform at the Phuket Arcadia Beach Resort as part of Bangkok's Green Wave 106.5FM annual *Sea of Love* event.



WRIST ACTION: TT&T Public Co Ltd President Prachuab Tantinon (left) and Senior Vice-President Suroj Lamsam, launch the telecommunication company's "Meet & Greet T-Speed" high-speed Internet service in Chiang Mai on March 12. (See page 21.)



NO COUCH POTATO: Club Asia member Maneerat Jantarattanawong (left), with fitness counselor Onuma Sae-Poo, after being chosen as the lucky winner during a recent grand prize draw at the fitness club.



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‘The job requires someone who is capable of logical and critical thinking. It’s a lot more

Pol Maj Gen Chatchawal Suksomjit does not beat about the bush: “Everyone is aware of the fact that some local policemen work closely with criminals,” he says.

“Sometimes, to protect their own safety, they fail to pursue local criminals. Both of these scenarios result in many crimes being ignored or going unpunished.”

While few would be candid enough to make such an assertion, Gen Chatchawal is in a position of unique authority.

He is the CIB commissioner for Police Region 8, which means he supervises some 700 police officers, including officers in the marine, forestry, train, highway, and tourist police divisions, as well as crime suppression units.

His sphere of authority extends over seven provinces – Phuket, Ranong, Phang Nga, Krabi, Surat Thani, Chumpon, and Nakhon Sri Thammarat.

Seemingly unafraid of dealing with apparently insurmountable problems, Gen Chatchawal arrived in Phuket recently to take charge of investigating any suspected cheating by candidates in the March 14 *OrBorJor* election.

Other areas of law enforcement that are typically avoided by local police because of difficulty or danger – such as investigating terrorist cells or tax fraud, or combating mafia organizations, are welcomed by the CIB.

In the past, the CIB was

GOOD COPS, BAD

A life in progress

By Dhirarat Boonkongsan

For many years, the provincial police forces have been tarnished by a reputation for corruption and poor handling of cases. According to the region’s highest-ranking detective, both allegations are true.

In an interview with the *Gazette*, Pol Maj Gen Chatchawal Suksomjit of the Central Investigation Bureau (CIB), explains how these problems arise and how they are going to be fixed.

also criticized, because all of its detectives were stationed in Bangkok and were sent out to the provinces to investigate cases only when local authorities requested help.

That has changed. “Last November, the CIB was reorganized to allocate detectives to the

various provinces,” Gen Chatchawal explains. “Moreover, detectives are being trained in the provinces to become experts in various fields.

“We need to have CIB officers and detectives to guide the police in local areas when working on a case. For example, in a smuggling case, we need a CIB officer who is an expert on economic law to lead the investigative team.”

Explaining the need for CIB detectives in every provincial office, he says, “The local police normally do not want to involve any other law enforcement branch in their cases.

“They try to get everything done without consulting us, even though many situations



require the leadership of an expert. But we have reorganized ourselves so that we have detectives in rural areas who operate in an undercover role to listen to people and hear what is really going on.”

Few people would find the idea of entering a domestic ver-

sion of the spy world appealing, and Gen Chatchawal is quick to explain that being a detective is not something for which many people are qualified.

“To be a CIB detective, one must possess intelligence and a love of knowledge,” he says. “A detective has to collect the facts

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complicated than just using your gun or fists.’ – Pol Maj Gen Chatchawal Suksomjit

COPS AND A TOP COP



using your gun or fists.

“I am happy working in the CIB. I enjoy being able to assimilate new and interesting information and work with it on a daily basis.

“Having been a detective for a while, I feel comfortable and it’s convenient for me to work here. I get cooperation everywhere I go in the seven provinces. I also know I can call on officers in Bangkok if I need help.”

Gen Chatchawal says he worked hard to become part of the CIB and to rise through its ranks.

Born in Ayudhya province, he left home early to study as a monk in Bangkok, at Wat Benjamabopit. It was there that he became inspired to become a police officer.

“I was studying to finish grade 12. I saw some police cadets walking in the temple after having taken part in a parade in front of the King Rama V monument. The way they looked inspired me to become a police officer,” he recalls.

A few years later, after graduating from Sampran Police Academy at Nakhon Pathom, he started work as an investigative officer at Phayathai Police station in Bangkok.

“I worked there for three years and then moved back to be the principal of the Royal Thai Police Academy,” he relates. “It’s a tradition that the best student



‘Above all, justice must be in [a policeman’s mind] at all times. It’s central to every situation.’

“When it was time for training on the job, I was already ahead of most other people.”

Gen Chatchawal is realistic, however, and does not expect every police officer to follow his example. He stresses that he understands the challenges police officers face.

“It’s very difficult for policemen to be 100% clean – but they must strive to be so. The temptation to accept money or ignore certain problems is very great. They must remember who they are, what they are doing, and who they are working for.

“They need to be able to turn to the people for support and cooperation. Some policemen seem to forget that some of the time – and some police forget it all of the

time. After another three years, I returned to work in the police station again. I have now been an officer of the law for 27 years.

“I was first attracted to detective work in the third year of my police studies. I had asked to spend time working as a police trainee at a police station, which was unusual because you don’t become a trainee until your senior year.

“But I was a very eager student and wanted to apply what I had learned in class.

“I wanted to know how to work a case, so I spent the vacations between semesters working as a volunteer police assistant.

time.

“Good cops will be open to the public and won’t limit themselves to interacting only with certain types of people. If they commit that error, it becomes impossible for them to treat all people fairly, which is an important part of being an officer of the law.

“They also must be aware of what kind of people and situations they are dealing with. It is their duty to improve society and make people feel secure. That sense of responsibility is essential.

“Above all, justice must be in their minds at all times. It’s central to every situation.”

and evidence and know how they relate.

“There is always a large amount of information to deal with and one must be aware of how it relates to applicable regulations and laws. It’s easy to make a mistake and create lots of trouble for yourself.

“I don’t think you can be a successful detective without believing that everything that happens has its roots in an original cause.

“Beyond that, the job requires someone who is capable of logical and critical thinking. It is a lot more complicated than just

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Phuket is not the right base for an avid train traveler. No rails within miles – such a shame. So, having completed a visa run via Kota Bharu in Malaysia, we decided to ride the rails north from Sungai Golok to Hua Hin.

First, we stocked up on provisions at a local market and managed, with a little help from our minibus driver, to find some sustenance of the alcoholic variety – not easy in the Muslim south.

At the local station at 2:10 pm, the whistle blew, the green flag waved, and off we chuffed. We visited the dining car in search of ice, and discovered friendly staff dispensing whiskey and beer: no need for our pre-trip provisioning.

Leaving behind me a table of laughing women preparing *som tam* and other delights for the evening meal, I walked back through the third-class and second-class cars crowded with families, back-packers and travelers of all kinds, settling in for the hours ahead.

The railway is a great way to travel in Thailand. You pass wonderful sights along the way – small villages, paddy fields, rivers, and the occasional road crossing. With an average speed of about 50 kmh, it is certainly a convenient way to get around.

The sun was beginning to set. We passed *takraw* players, workers walking home from the

Railroaded, and loving it

Thailand TRAVELER

By Bill Owen

fields, and slowly rattled through small, picturesque stations, all with carefully-tended gardens, orchid pots and plants – typical of country stations everywhere.

Just before dark, we revisited the dining car. With its open windows, the warm evening breeze blowing, the wonderful smells of nature as we passed and – yes – the ladies, still at their table, laughing and joking as they prepared the evening meals.

We devoured several large bottles of Heineken, many plates of prawns and curries, and were ably assisted in disposing of the food and drink by the waiters who sold them. K. Sai, a six-year veteran on this run, was clearly here for the beer as well as his salary. A few perks don't go amiss in any job.

A little later, drinkers converted the dining car into more of a bar. In one corner, four

Swedish dive instructors read books while clutching their beers. An English teacher, who was also a drummer in a Bangkok band, chatted with friends. Others conducted business on the move on their mobile phones. Groups of Thais played cards.

The railway security police arrived, as if to join the party, and the laughing ladies were still there, preparing even more food. After dinner and many beers, we wended our way back through second- and third-class carriages, which seemed to have multiplied.

Ah, the luxuries of first class. With the bunks now set up, it was time to sleep. And sleep came fast, with the gentle rocking of the train. Through sleep-laden eyelids at busy Surat Thani station, I glimpsed the dive instructors making their way across the platform – still clutching bottles of Chang.

At 4 am, there was a knock on the door. The sleepy guard announced, "Twenty minutes to Hua Hin. Please pack and get ready as the train doesn't stop for long."

Stepping down to the platform, we realized we'd been deposited in front of the Royal Reception Room. The best people, it appears, still travel by train.

Bill Owen has lived in Phuket and worked in Phuket's travel industry for more than 15 years. He can be contacted by email at: owen_b@hotmail.com.



SEA OF LOVE: Next month 18 couples will be paddling on Phang Nga Bay on a tour dedicated to testaments of love.

Love boats in Phang Nga Bay

PHANG NGA: The karsts and *hongs* of Phang Nga Bay will be the setting for a free love experience of a different kind on April 14, when 18 lucky couples, newlyweds or recently engaged, venture out in canoes to explore the area.

The day-long Romantic Canoe Wedding Project, which will be free to the couples, is being organized by the Phang Nga Provincial Administration Organization, the Phang Nga Chamber of Commerce and the local office of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT).

Although the trip, organized as part of the government's "sustainable tourism" strategy, will take in some of the bay's more common tourist sights, couples will also be made aware of the less obvious significance of some of the sights.

For example, a stop will be made at Koh Tapu (Nail Island),

most famously remembered as a location in the James Bond movie *The Man With The Golden Gun*.

The organizers explain that another kind of bond is represented by the island – a nail's stability when hammered into wood, signifying the stability of a loving and devoted couple.

Another stop will be made at Khao Ping Gan (Leaning Together Mountain), where two huge slabs of rock rest against each other, symbolizing the mutual support couples give one another.

To establish even closer bonds, couples may join in a marriage ceremony on Panyee Island before paddling off on their symbolic journey.

For more information contact the Phang Nga Chamber of Commerce at 076-411656 or the TAT at 076-212213.

How to book:

Call, or ask your travel agent to call, Pantip Co Ltd in Surat Thani, the State Railway of Thailand's main ticketing agent in the south, Tel: 077-272230.

They give excellent advice on all routes. Funds are accepted via bank transfer, or through the post office for a service charge of about 100 baht a ticket, with all tickets delivered to Pantip's small office at Phuket City's main bus station.

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CALL NUI

Welcome to the world of Stool Pigeon. This column is in response to reader demand for more coverage of trends, developments and upcoming events in Phuket's diverse and sometimes dizzying nightlife scene.

In order for Stool Pigeon to fly, however, we need input – lots of it – from you, our readers.

So if you are involved in Phuket's nightlife in any way, whether as a barkeep, pub owner, elbow-bender, karaoke singer, dancer, tout or just someone who likes to enjoy a good night out, this is your forum.

Hypocrisy:

One in-the-know bar owner told Stool Pigeon that the Patong bar business is in a sorry state of decline, and that the only venues making good money are those staging lewd spectacles and using touts to bring in business.

Remarkably, while some establishments seem able to get away with full nudity and horrifying passing tourists with English-impaired lists of the depravity they offer, dancers in "pure" go-go bars are now forced to cover up – hiding their G-strings under nurse uniforms or student skirts.

Adding to the obvious hypocrisy of allowing foreign tourists to walk along the beach top-

Patong's playing field

less (i.e. in public), one has to wonder if the real go-go bars – and their clientèle – aren't getting the short end of the stick.

Upper hand: Speaking of "getting the short end of the stick", an Internet search for the origins of that well-worn phrase turned up some interesting insights. Ed Stansell posted this one on the [www.phrases.shu.ac.uk](http://www.phrases.shu.ac.uk/discussion-board/) discussion board:

"The precise analogy in this term, first recorded in the 1930s, has been lost. Some believe it comes from worse end of the staff, used since the early

1500s, which in the mid-1800s became, in some instances, short or shitty end of the stick, allegedly from a stick poked up one's rectum by another in command of the situation.

Others believe it alludes to fighting with sticks, where having a shorter stick is a disadvantage."

Is turnabout fair play? In Patong about 10 years ago, a friend of Stool Pigeon once suspected that a certain bar was "padding his bill", the local euphemism referring to how unscrupulous bar staff sometimes throw extra bills into an unwary (drunk)

Stool Pigeon



The legendary wizard of rock: DJ Big Bill of Rock Hard A Go-Go probably has the biggest collection of music on the island.

customer's collection of bills.

Rather than argue, this acquaintance decided to fight back by secretly removing bills from his cup whenever he saw a chance.

Reasoning that all bars would "pad bills" if they could get away with it, he eventually saw it all as a big game and he would extract and dispose of bills from any bar he visited.

"It will all even out in the end," he maintained.

One night as we were drink-

ing in a particularly dark and sleazy establishment, a waitress came to our table and laid two bills, dripping wet with urine, on the drink table in front of my friend.

"I believe these belong to you," she said matter-of-factly.

My friend had apparently pulled two bills from his cup and tried to flush them down the toilet.

Apparently unfamiliar with toilets in this country, he expected them to go down – but they

didn't. I guess the moral here is that publicans not only need to watch their staff like hawks, but some of their customers as well.

Gyro-scope: Usually Stool Pigeon avoids farang food like the plague, but one exception is the gyro, a Greek sandwich of sliced roast chicken (yes, I said chicken) with onion and tomato stuffed into pita bread.

They do a good one for just 60 baht at the **Oasis Bar** (31 Bangla Rd), run by Apple and Tom, though they call it a chicken kebab for some reason.

The bar spills right out onto Soi Bangla, affording imbibers an impressive cross-sectional view of Patong's endless parade of international tourists, along with the brigades of locals who make a living catering to their needs. Enjoy their free popcorn and life's rich pageant.

Send all correspondence to stoolpigeon@phuketgazette.net. Contributions are subject to editing for clarity and space. No mudslinging, malicious gossip or blatant self-promotion please, though we will be happy to publish special events such as new venue openings, birthday parties, and the like. Amusing anecdotes, reports of the latest scams, jokes, astute observations and interesting photos are all welcome.

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HEARD & scene

With bird 'flu still on many minds, the *Gazette's* Peter Meltzer and Siripansa Somboon went out and about and asked, "What disease would you prefer to die from and why?"



Name: Adam Coruana
Age: 28
From: Canada
Occupation: Teacher

Something that requires regular visits to Patong, lots of Chang beer, an absurd number of female nurses, and a constant supply of barbecued duck.



Name: Stephen Brierly
Age: 38
From: England
Occupation: Company Director

Any disease that would be quick, painless and require plenty of care and bedbaths. Some hallucinations would be nice, too.



Name: Piyada Yikusung
Age: 34
From: Phuket
Occupation: Bank Employee

I think the best disease to die from would be to faint and then die while you're unconscious. That way it wouldn't involve any pain.



Name: Wisut Eahlertkul
Age: 27
From: Phuket
Occupation: Accounting Officer

Bird 'flu because it's the most up-to-date. It only takes one week to die and my mother will get millions of baht from the Prime Minister.



Name: Janpim Kulwatanasopon
Age: 27
From: Phuket
Occupation: Bank Employee

I would prefer it to be from heart failure because it's a disease that doesn't hurt. I am not afraid of death, but I don't like pain.

In the Stars

by Isla Star

ARIES (March 21-April 20): Frustrations early this week cause you to feel as prickly as a cactus but friends and partners help to smooth the way. However, you shouldn't fall into the trap of expecting too much sympathy. You're not the only one with a lot on your plate. As the month of March draws to a close, Arians should take stock of positive things.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): Your zest for life is rekindled this weekend, and the reason could come from a meeting that sets off romance. Single Taureans who didn't think they were in the market will be surprised by their reactions. Time to follow your heart and not your head – practical matters will take care of themselves. If the heat is getting you down, stay in the shade.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): New endeavors demand extra input this week. You can't expect to reap a juicy harvest from a neglected mango tree, so put some effort into taking care of business. A potential ally has been watching you from afar and likes your style. Beware of pranksters next Thursday. Someone is planning to make a fool out of you.

CANCER (June 22-July 23): Misunderstandings in your love life need to be cleared up this week. Much as you would rather let sleeping dogs lie, there are signs that unspoken issues are likely to build up to exploding point. Where work matters are concerned, you should insist on having concrete evidence when promotion is promised. Another offer coming your way in April could lead to a sunnier future.

LEO (July 24-August 22): You are about to regain your rightful place as king or queen of the jungle. Those who feel that their talents have been unappreciated lately should receive a confidence boost. Offers of work are set to flood in, but determine carefully which to accept. Listen to grapevine gossip for pointers in the right direction.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): A somber mood descends. Your temporary failure to view life through rose-tinted shades could annoy family and friends, so make arrangements to spend some time contemplating your navel in solitude. The grey cloud should lift quickly and you'll be ready for fun. A misplaced personal item turns up.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): Try not to get irritated about your partner's lack of attention. Plan an intimate dinner for two and be prepared to offer a sympathetic ear. This week brings communication delays, but no

news is good news. The planets are looking out for you. A casual meeting holds great significance for your financial future.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): Your appetite this week will not be satisfied by a dish of plain chicken fried rice. If you're tempted to take a previously unexplored jungle path, keep a watch for snakes in the undergrowth. You are likely to come into contact with someone who is not what they seem to be.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): Changes are in the air for those born under the sign of Sagittarius, but they will mostly be welcome. As long as you have the courage of your convictions, this is an auspicious time for risks where your career is concerned. In your personal life, it appears that someone is carrying a torch for you. You should handle this situation with sensitivity.

CAPRICORN (December 22-

January 20): This weekend, Capricorns are advised to see someone else's point of view. Work and travel are highlighted on Monday and Tuesday. April Fool's Day could be an acceptable time to pay someone back – let your imagination flow.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): Expect life to return to order this week. You don't normally jump for joy at hearing the word "routine", but most Aquarians will be glad to know that work-related issues will finally simmer down. The number 9 holds the key to good luck.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): A suggestion is made this weekend that you would have leapt at last year. Now too much water has flowed under the bridge. Keep the doors of communication open, though, to find a way to stay in someone's good books. If your social life isn't as lively as you would like, try lighting some proverbial firecrackers under boring friends.

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KIDS

THE FUN PAGE

FOR ALL

THE FAMILY

Hidden Words

Hidden in the grid below are at least 20 names of cities in the USA. The words may read vertically, horizontally or diagonally. They may also read right-to-left or down-to-up. See if you can find more than your family or friends. Score: More than 10, good; more than 15, very good; 20 or more, excellent.

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

Brain Buster!!

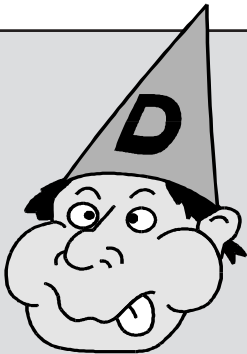
Q. How much dirt is in a round hole that is 9 feet deep with a diameter of 3 feet?

A. None. You make a hole by digging out the dirt, so the hole is empty.

Solution to last week's crossword

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

Get your brain in gear with The Monster Quiz



1. Who devised a system of raised point writing at the Institution des Jeunes Aveugles?

2. What culinary delicacy's name misleadingly suggests a partly concealed amphibian?

3. Cuneiform script is thought to be the earliest form of writing. What does 'cuneiform' mean?

4. If Massachusetts is "the Old Colony", what is Michigan?

5. Which state is ruled by the Al Khalifa family?

6. Which is the most populous city in South America?
7. In 1910, tennis player William Larned won the US Open men's singles. Whom did he defeat in the final?

8. In which year did Lennox Lewis win Olympic gold for boxing?

9. In centimeters, how long was a Roman cubit?

10. What is often described by the acronym "roygbiv"?

11. Who wrote the lyrics for *Little Shop of Horrors*?

12. How far below the surface of the ocean is the bottom of the Mariana Trench?

13. Which volcano erupted in 1902 killing some 30,000 people?
14. By what name is Caryn Johnson better known?

15. Cymric, Ragdoll and Chartreux are all types of what?

16. In 1968 North Korea seized an American war-ship. Name the ship.

17. In what year was the Erie Canal opened?

18. Which island did Peter Minuit buy for the Dutch?

19. What did he pay for it?

20. What does a polliwog grow up to be?
- Answers next week

Never a Cross Word!

Across

1. Secret.

6. Near.

7. He owes money.

9. Or's companion.

11. Where doves may live.

13. Long-tailed amphibian.

15. Calm down.

17. Andy the artist.

18. Peruvian empire.

19. Self-centered.

Down

1. It's a worry.

2. Slang.

3. This duck's down is used for bedding.

4. Contents of cigar or cigarette.

5. You use it for listening.

8. Not in.

1		2			3		4		5
6					7			8	
9			10				11		12
13	14				15			16	
17							18		
19									

10. Peace talks may bury this.

12. It's in a socket in your face.

14. Aircraft's supposed arrival time (abbr).

15. Pouts, maybe.

16. Pick-me-up.

17. Great trouble.

Solution next week

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S MONSTER QUIZ

1. Esthesiometer; 2. Red, green and blue; 3. Ben Gunn; 4. Dorothy Parker; 5. Héloïse; 6. South India or Sri Lanka; 7. A nuncio; 8. St Lawrence; 9. François Leclerc du Tremblay. 10. Santee River; 11. Sirenia; 12. Hawk; 13. Cereal grasses; 14. Hebrew; 15. Algebra; 16. Decimation; 17. Dag Hammarskjöld; 18. Luciferin; 19. Quebec; 20. Sudan.

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Cut it short and sweet

I don't memorize keyboard shortcuts very often. Maybe I'm too lazy, or my memory is too short but I make it a rule not to clutter my mind with simple information that I can find in a book in five minutes.

In my defense, although using keyboard shortcuts can be faster than diving for the mouse, my brain hiccups when I have to remember a key combination. This causes a distinct pause in my effort to get the job done.

But there are two categories of key combinations that every Office user should know: the shortcuts you should have tattooed on the inside of your eyelids; and the ones that can make life much simpler.

The Essentials. The shortcuts every Office user should know are:

- Ctrl+C copies whatever is selected and puts it on the clipboard
- Ctrl+X cuts whatever is selected and puts it on the clipboard
- Ctrl+V puts whatever is on the clipboard into the document

If you're using the Office Clipboard (which holds 24 items in Word 2002 and 2003, or 12 items in Word 2000), Ctrl+V puts the last clipboard item in the document.

- Ctrl+A selects everything
- Ctrl+Z undoes the last thing you, or Office, did
- Alt+Tab (the "coolswitch") cycles through all running programs in Windows. If you're

fastest way to talk about the '90s or what 'ave you.

KHUN WOODY'S COMPUTER

lucky, you can also use it to switch from a frozen program to another that is working – and avoid rebooting the computer.

- Ctrl+Alt+Del (the "three-finger salute") brings up the Windows Task Manager. From there you can select a program that is "not responding" and kill it by clicking End Task. Be warned: use this to kill only the programs that are clearly identifiable and not responding. Many programs seen in the Task Manager are core Windows components.

- Alt+F, then X, then Enter several times, will exit out of any Office program, saving your work in the process – an important combination to remember for the frightful times when for some reason you can't see your screen.

There are other key combinations that will produce the same results, but these are the easiest ones to memorize and use.

Important Keystrokes. Most users soon learn that you can hold down the Alt key and press any underlined letter in an Office menu, and Office will act as if you clicked on that menu item.

There are a few things that are easy to do with keyboard shortcuts, but a pain in the neck with the mouse. For example:

- Hold down Ctrl and press ' (apostrophe) twice to get a curly single "close quote" – surely the

fastest way to talk about the '90s or what 'ave you.

- Shift+F5 "goes back" to the last place you edited in a Word document

- F9 updates all selected fields

- To select non-contiguous parts of a document, select the first item, hold down Ctrl, select the next item, then the next, and so on.

- To select large portions of a document, don't click at the beginning and drag your mouse down – Word (in particular) will flip-flop all over the place. Click at the beginning, hold down the Shift key and click at the end, then let go of the Shift key.

- To nudge a graphic, click on it, hold down the Alt key and drag

- To put a tab in a table cell, use Ctrl+Tab

To remove manually-applied character formatting, select the characters and hit Ctrl+Spacebar. I remember that key shortcut because the terminology for mouse users keeps changing.

In Word 2000, Ctrl+Spacebar is equivalent to applying the "Default Paragraph Font" style in the Style box.

In Word 2002/Office XP it's called the "No Formatting" style. In Word 2003 the same thing is called "Clear Formatting" in the style pane.

There are many more shortcuts in all the Office programs, and in addition you can create your own by clicking Tools | Customize | Keyboard.

Woody Leonhard has written a number of books in the "...for Dummies" series on computing. Readers can contact him at: woody@khunwoody.com

Taut thriller as police track pedophiles

The first competitor to arrive during my 17-year reign as class clown of the *Bangkok Post* (before S.Tsow waddled onto the scene) was Colin Cotterill. Suddenly, from his position as an English teacher in Northeast Thailand, he was writing the same type of first-person full-page loony humor tales that I was cranking out in Songkhla.

I finally met him in Songkhla – where he slept on my floor – and again one night on Silom's Soi 4. His writing tapered off but he continued to draw the *Maan Farang* cartoon in *Metro Magazine*.

What I didn't know about Colin was that he set up an NGO to fight child abuse in Phuket and later moved on to ECPAT, the international organisation that combats child prostitution and pornography.

This grim subject that is the focus of *Evil in the Land Without* (Asia Books, Bangkok, 2003, 268pp). The novel opens up in 1978 with a massacre of Karen villagers by Burmese troops. The traditional Karen homeland in Burma is called "Kawthoolei" or "The Land Without Evil", thus explaining the rather awkward title.

Nothing else is awkward in this fast-paced thriller that races from London to Nairobi to Chiang Mai to a Karen insurgent camp in Burma and back to London for the finale.

In London, in the year 2000, we are introduced to a meeting of a secret group of pedophiles, the Boy Lovers of the United Kingdom Society (BLOUKS), who are taking turns giving talks and slide shows about their predilections. The last to set up his slide show is John Jessel, a ruddy, big-bellied, nervous, sweaty, middle-aged boozier: "Gentlemen," he says, taking a large swig from his glass. "You are all under arrest."

Jessel is a police inspector, a member of the Surrey Child Protection Unit. Protecting children from abuse is his life. His childhood was a grim one: an absent father, who died in Southeast Asia, and an unloving mother. He is a solitary

drinker and the only lights in his life are his sister, Susan, her academic husband Brian and their irrepressible six-year-old son, Eddo. These characters are drawn with great warmth and humor, and snappy dialogue.

After the BLOUKS bust, Jessel's life is suddenly sent into a tailspin when he receives a threatening letter from someone called "The Paw" which ends ominously: "P.S. My regards to Eddo."

He puts his family into hiding, then tracks one BLOUKS suspect

to a beach house in Mombassa, Kenya, where he discovers that the back yard is a secret graveyard containing the corpses of seven beach boys: "It took only another six minutes to find the second body, no more than five meters from where they'd found the first. It has long since given up its pretence of being a human being. It was gnarled and lumpy like a charred ginseng root. The earth had already blotted away its smell. It had once been an eight-year-old boy."

The corpse of the adult suspect is also found in the graveyard. Attention shifts to a mysterious "Chinese man" who had "interviewed" all the dead boys.

Back in London, Jessel receives more threatening letters and stumbles up-

on the truth about his father's death in Southeast Asia. First his former police mentor, then his mother, turn up with their throats cut. On the trail of the killer and his father's past, Jessel sets out for Chiang Mai where he is met by Norbert, a lively old Thai with a quick sense of humor and a broad American accent.

The two set off for a Karen insurgent camp in Burma where Jessel meets up with Sherri, a survivor of the village massacre in 1979 who is now a doctor. She faints at the sight of him.

This is as much as I'm going to give away. *Evil in the Land Without* more than lives up to its hackneyed blurb: "A spine-tingling tale of murder and conspiracy." I read it in one sitting and so will you.

Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt



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Time to make tourism compulsory

Ah, tourism promotion – the endless frontier. And guiding us on our path into the future is the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), which recently announced yet another campaign to get us through the coming low – er, green – season as painlessly as possible.

Just six days after unveiling a visionary plan to solve the unrest in the deep south by promoting tourism there, the TAT is at it again.

Nowadays, it seems to be coming up with more advertising gimmicks than Tesco-Lotus and Big C combined. Where will it all end?

The slogan for the newest campaign is a real cracker: *Unseen Paradise*. A natural progression from the previous *Unseen Thailand* campaign, this promo is aimed at attracting big-spending foreign tourists to infiltrate whatever unspoiled regions of the nation might be left.

I like the name, though I am still a bit miffed that in following the *Unseen...* pattern, TAT chose not to go with my proposed *Uneaten Thailand* as the title of their project to promote Thai food abroad, instead opting for the rather staid *Kitchen of the World* slogan.

Whatever the case, *Unseen Paradise* is a fine slogan, and I particularly like the continuity of thought involved. It's the natural descendant of *Amazing Thailand*. It also has a real "if-a-tree-falls-in-a-forest..." quality to it that is sure to appeal to the brainy types who come here for intellectual stimulation.

After all, what could be more tantalizing? If the prospect of paradise isn't enough in itself, then an *unseen* paradise must be even more sublime and enticing, making visions of sugar plums dance in the heads of travel brochure readers around the globe – or at least in the target markets. Paradise might be defined as the perfect place, but our *Unseen Paradise*

SATIRE

by Somchai Huasaikul



will be even more perfect, if such a thing is possible.

The TAT received a budget of 953 million baht for domestic tourism activities this year, with 250 million of this earmarked for its "domestic tourism stimulus" plans. It hopes that domestic tourists will make 67 million trips within the year, generating 360 billion baht in revenue. That's a lot of tripping, and will require every single Thai to make at least one domestic tourism journey each year.

This would help keep Phuket's 500-plus tourist accommodation establishments filled during the low season, but one has to

wonder if it's too ambitious a target given the unwillingness of many Thais to stray far from their native villages.

I have my own cunning plan to overcome this difficulty, one which would have been impossible to implement under previous governments, but which could easily come to pass, given the foresight and fortitude of the current one.

The basic idea is to increase domestic tourism by making it compulsory. The slogan would be *Mandatory Thailand*. The idea is inspired by the industry that has grown up to meet the demands forced on foreign residents to make "visa runs"

every 90 days, injecting much-appreciated doses of income to hotels, minibus companies, airlines and karaoke bar hostesses throughout the land in the process.

The key to making this system meet the domestic tourism market is to institute a system of mandatory "domestic" passports. These will be issued regionally and require residents to travel outside their own region at least once in an arbitrary period of time, say every three months.

The whole concept fits in very nicely with the Government's "cluster" development plan that requires provincial governors to submit development plans that are integrated with the regional cluster.

Phuket's cluster includes Krabi and Phang Nga provinces, which are also slated for a variety of aggressive tourism development plans.

Under the plan, all Phuket residents would need to hit the road every three months to spread some cash outside the cluster, perhaps venturing to jackfruit plantations in Pattalung, going further south to catch a glimpse of Narathiwat under martial law, or even venturing north to catch the next chicken cull in Suphan Buri.

Just like their international counterparts, domestic visas would be issued on a discretionary basis.

During the tourism high-season, double-entry visas could be issued, eliminating the need to stay overnight outside the cluster before being allowed the passport bearer to re-enter their home cluster.

At other times, such as when a real or media-concocted security issue arises that empties hotel rooms, no double-entry visas would be granted.

This would ensure that hotel rooms remain occupied at all times, thereby neatly addressing all of our economic concerns and possibly even raising our tourism figures to the point where they receive a mention in *The Guinness Book of Records*.

Look sharp: try some acupuncture

My education and experience with Western medicine have made me skeptical of traditional treatments, such as acupuncture.

However, I have seen some excellent results and heard first-hand accounts from patients who have reported that acupuncture played a role in the treatment of conditions that may not have responded terribly well to Western medicine.

Acupuncture, developed centuries ago by the Chinese, is the process of inserting fine needles into the skin at strategic points – there are more than 2,000 of them – to relieve pain and treat disease.

The theory is that energy flows through the 12 main and eight secondary channels or "meridians" between the surface of the body and internal organs.

If the meridians become blocked, then pain and disease may result. Inserting needles at

the end of the meridian is thought to release the blockage, thus allowing the energy to flow again.

The view of Western medical practitioners is that acupuncture releases endorphins and opioids, the body's natural painkillers, and perhaps immune system cells, even neurotransmitters and neurohormones in the brain. Glucose levels, as well as other bloodstream chemical levels, may rise after acupuncture.

According to the US National Institutes of Health's National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, there is also evidence that stimulating acupuncture points enables electromagnetic signals to be relayed faster. This may increase the flow of natural healing or pain-killing chemicals to injured areas.

Post-treatment, patients report a greater sense of wellbeing, physically and emotionally. As a result, they may heal faster.

Acupuncture needles are

solid metal, sterilized and used once before being discarded. The needles are slightly wider than a human hair and patients may feel the needle pierce the skin – the puncture site is usually swabbed with a disinfectant beforehand – but there is no pain.

When the needle locates the locus of the problem, or "trigger point", there may be a "grabbing" sensation, followed by a relaxed, warm feeling.

Some patients even fall asleep.

Side effects of acupuncture are rare, but there may be some soreness or dizziness.

There are several acupuncture methods beyond simply inserting needles. Low-voltage electricity can be sent through the needles or they may be warmed gently with a heat lamp or a moxa stick – a herbal heat source that looks and burns like a cigar.

The needles may be manipulated by hand, and at other times, needles aren't used – the trigger points are massaged instead.

Acupuncture has been used to treat conditions such as fibromyalgia, abdominal pain, headaches, neck and back pain, arthri-

tis, asthma, allergies, and even some addictions.

There are many patients who endorse this type of treat-

ment and believe that acupuncture has a place when modern medicine fails to produce a satisfactory result.

Questions and comments may be submitted to Peter Davison, Manager for International Services, by fax to 076-210936 or email to peter@phuket-inter-hospital.co.th.

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Ending land xenophobia is a question of confidence

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, when Japanese investors acquired property in the USA totaling some US\$15 billion, including such national "icons" as the Rockefeller Center in Manhattan and Pebble Beach golf course in California, there was a distinct sense of discomfort and, in some quarters, downright xenophobia.

When Sony bought Columbia Pictures, *Newsweek* described the purchase as the buying of "a part of the American soul". Part of the reason for this backlash, according to commentators, was that at the time, the US was going through a crisis of confidence. Japan was seen as the world's dominant economic power, and to be feared.

There was also an element of racism. The Dutch and British were also investing in the US at the time, and their purchases are estimated to have been five times those of the Japanese, yet no one seemed to object to this.

Could a similar lack of confidence, tinged with racism, be behind the objections to foreigners buying land in Thailand? Isn't it time for Thailand to have confidence in its own growing economic power?

In Phuket, there are those who see no harm in foreigners buying land – indeed, they see considerable economic advantages. There are also those who see allowing foreign ownership as somehow selling a part of the Thai soul.

Like it or not, there are already ways for foreigners to effectively own land. While it may not be possible for individuals to do so outright, it is possible to set up a Thai company, minority-owned but controlled by foreigners. The company can then buy and hold land.

In Phuket, the influence of foreign property developers on the high end of the market is considerable. Demand for homes, albeit heavy, is seen by many as being only at the take-off point. Allowing foreigners to own land would see a flood of foreign currency pour in.

There is no suggestion by the supporters of foreign ownership that the foreigners should get anything more than a title deed.

They won't get (and most likely don't want) Thai citizenship, a political voice or any other kind of influence over the way Thailand is run. All they want is security for their investment.

Thai supporters of foreign ownership suggest that it be limited to certain zones or have certain strings attached.

These might be ways for Thailand to dip its toe in the waters. The chances are that the country would find the water warm and comfortable.

– The Editor

The Phuket Gazette

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Letters

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

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

Police must arrest topless tourists

An increasing number of women tourists parade topless along Phuket's beaches. Most of these women must surely be aware – but apparently don't care – that local people find this offensive.

Many tourists, especially those in family units, also find toplessness embarrassing. My wife and I, like many others, now swim and sunbathe only at the hotel pool.

If the Tourist Police charged these inconsiderate women with "offensive behavior," detained them for a few hours and fined them 5,000 baht, then maybe the message would get through.

Alan Smith
Rochdale, England

Driving 'tickets' may drive tourists away

Ray Lukassen writes (*Gazette*, March 6) about the silly tickets issued by police to tourists for not having motorbike licenses but this corruption is no secret to those of us who frequently visit Phuket.

I've visited nine times over 10 years and spent three million baht. Surely that helped the economy a bit?

I will reconsider next season if this corruption doesn't stop. There are other equally beautiful places.

The last straw came after taking my turn to pay at the police station in Patong. I volunteered some suggestions and tourist insight to the money col-

lector – who seemed rather uneducated and ignorant for a man who is supposed to act as a role model for his country.

He responded by saying, "If you don't like it then don't come here." I'd sure like to know where my money went.

Alberto Alfonso
US

Phuket drivers need to chill to survive

One thing that Nick, Phuket, forgot to mention in his letter (*Gazette*, February 28) about the death toll on the island's roads was speed.

A visit to Cambodia made me realize what a crazy place Phuket is, particularly its drivers.

Phnom Penh also has motorcycles vying for space and almost no law enforcement.

But the occupants of the city still manage to get around in organized chaos with few life-threatening accidents.

They drive slowly and respect other drivers' space. Chill out, Phuket. If every driver stopped being selfish, things would improve.

Let's get back that tropical island feeling.

Seonai Gordon
Chalong

Sky is the limit for the circus foxes

An enterprising fox who managed a circus posted a sign saying "Free entrance" then, in small print, added: "Exit fee: \$1".

I bought a Phuket-Bangkok ticket on Air Asia for 1,500 baht

then couldn't travel because of illness and gave the ticket to my father.

I asked Air Asia to change the ticket to my father's name – and Air Asia charged me an extra 500 baht.

If Air Asia's aim is to help more Thai people fly, it shouldn't behave like a circus fox.

Nong Ying
Phuket

Dear Sir, it takes two to Tesco

To the Purchasing Clerk of Tesco-Lotus, who said Tesco Tea will no longer be imported because it failed to meet sales targets (*Issues & Answers*, February 19):

Sir, your reason for the absence of Tesco Tea Bags is incredible. This Tesco product elsewhere outsells many brands because thousands of people drink it and find it excellent.

Tesco Tea carries production and sell-by dates, ensuring the tea is fresh, carries its unique bouquet and makes for a good brew – unlike other teas I have checked and noticed on your shelves. Those brands sit there for a couple of years judging from the yellowing of the packets.

Do you have an arrangement with these other tea brands that requires you to sell as much of their tea as possible? Perhaps a letter from me to the Tesco production team in Britain would resolve your problem. I can assure them that it would sell if only you, their support group, would put it back on the shelves.

Derek S Priest
Kathu

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.

Making the roads of Phuket safer

Figures from 2003 show around 275,000 registered residents on Phuket and close to 190,000 motorcycles. That's rather a high ratio of motorbikes to people.

Phuket lacks a good public transport system, so people choose motorcycles, which are a relatively cheap and a convenient way to get around.

But many people are not aware of how to ride them properly, especially on Phuket's roads which, due to the island's topography, are dangerous.

Motorbike accidents account for 92% of all vehicle accidents in Thailand. The largest proportion of accidents involves people aged between 15 and 25.

Most people simply don't know how to ride safely and therefore don't make good role models for others, particularly their children or younger siblings. Indeed, young people often witness very poor driving, often done to avoid the police.

These young people, often subject to little parental control, are allowed to use the family motorcycle to get to and from school, or elsewhere, and are ignorant of traffic regulations and are too young to hold a driver's license. (*Editor's note: the minimum age to hold a motorcycle license in Thailand is 15.*)

Motorcycle gangs are increasing in number these days, and their members display more anti-social behavior than before,

FIRST PERSON

Statistics show that around six people in every 10,000 die in traffic accidents in Thailand every year. This amounts to some 40,000 people annually.

Pol Lt Col Teeraphol Thipjaroen, Deputy Superintendent of Phuket City Police Station, suggests that all people should act as role models, especially parents to their children, in the quest for safer roads. Here he sets out his views and policies for making Phuket roads safer.



with many of them committing criminal acts. We, the police, are of course responsible for keeping the roads safe and we do enforce the law. But these gangs fight with the police in order to avoid capture, and also because they enjoy fighting. They fight more than we expect and are then held up as heroes by their peers for this.

They probably don't behave violently at home, and in fact, the parents of many of them don't believe us when we tell them what their children have done.

But the children are often stopped late at night, and I wonder why the parents don't know that their kids are out.

I believe that problems should be fixed at the source, and that's the family. Although most of the problem-causing kids are in school, road skills education must originate at home. Parents should play their part. There also will be new laws to punish the parents as well as the children.

The media also have a role to play in projecting the correct picture of how society expects youngsters to behave, and how parents should raise their children. The message must be put across that we are all – not just the police – responsible for these problems.

Rules relating to the issuing of vehicle licenses are not

strong enough, and riders are not aware of how to ride their motorcycles properly. Changes must be made to make the regulations stronger.

There are now different rules relating to the issuing of driving licenses and vehicle operation that have confused everyone, from the license holder to officers in provincial transportation offices who issue the licenses. Everyone must be made aware of the changes.

To issue a driving license without considering carefully the road skills of the rider or driver is like issuing a death warrant. The provincial transportation officers should become more rigorous in

testing applicants, in both the initial driving test and in the license holder's renewal application.

I believe that strong action and law enforcement are necessary to stop this problem.

Nationwide, the police are working with organizations such as provincial public health offices, labour offices and the government's Public Relations Department to reduce the incidence of motorcycle accidents.

One of our joint initiatives is to tie road safety campaigns to specific events, such as the Songkran festival. Festivals and other holidays present particular problems and always require greater coordination between agencies.

The process of understanding and learning how to ride properly should begin at home and be developed as the individual comes into contact with more people. Many of the victims are still in school or have recently started work. School and workplaces should cooperate in making the roads safer.

Parents and other older people should ensure that they are good role models for kids, and people should learn not to accept unsafe road behavior on the part of others.

These are the best ways to teach others how to drive and ride properly and I strongly believe that this can reduce the numbers of people being killed on the roads.

Paperwork for driving into Malaysia

I plan to drive to Malaysia in my Thai-registered car. What formalities are involved?

Also, I have a new road tax sticker for the year 2548. What should I do with the old one? I've asked around and most people have advised me to leave the old one on my windshield. The problem is that there are too many stickers now and they're creating a blind spot. What should I do with the old tax stickers?

Head Scratching
Phuket

Supakorn Vilairat, Chief Registrar of the Phuket Provincial Transportation Office, replies:

To drive your car out of Thailand into Malaysia you must come to the Phuket Provincial Transportation Office (PPTO) bringing your ID card, plus one copy; your house registration, plus one copy; and the car registration book. You must have them translated into English.

Foreigners should bring, instead of the ID card and house papers, their passport, plus one copy.

To drive in Malaysia, drivers must have either a valid international driving license, or a Thai driving license, which must also be translated by us into English. The international license

Issues & ANSWERS

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

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allows you to drive in Malaysia until it expires. The Thai license allows you to drive in Malaysia for one month only.

It takes about two days for the PPTO to process the paperwork.

The PPTO will provide a certificate stipulating your car registration plate's equivalent in Roman letters. Before entering Malaysia you will need to have stickers made up – one set for the front and one for the rear of your car – clearly showing the Roman-letter version of your car's registration number.

When you arrive at the bor-

der, both Thai and Malaysian Customs officers will ask you to produce all the papers.

On returning to Thailand, you must first prove to Malaysian Customs that you are legally in possession of the car. They will then give you a permit that will allow you to take the car out of Malaysia. This permit must be shown to Thai Customs officers when you enter Thailand.

As for the old tax stickers, there is no need to keep them on your windscreen or anywhere else. As long as you have the current tax sticker on your windscreen, you can throw the

old ones away, or even keep them as souvenirs.

The Phuket Gazette notes:

Section 58 of the Malaysian Road Transport Act 1987 (see <http://kedah.jkr.gov.my/gendirec/rta/act333.htm>) requires any person in charge of a motor vehicle, when asked by a police officer, to produce a certificate of insurance for the vehicle.

Section 89 of the same act requires that the insurer be lawfully registered to conduct motor vehicle insurance business in Malaysia and be a member of the Malaysian Motor Insurers' Bureau – which requires having signed an agreement with the Malaysian Minister of Transport.

If you cannot find insurance from an appropriate agent before entering Malaysia, just across the border at the Sadao border checkpoint is an insurance agency that qualifies. Ask the Malaysian border guards; they will be happy to direct you.

Can Australians now own land?

Now that there is a free-trade agreement between Australia and Thailand, can Australians own freehold land in Thailand?

Vince Lazzaro
Sydney

Obtaining an export license

Where do I go in Phuket to obtain an export licence? I want to export clothing to Europe.

Romeo Chalong

Arjin Ongsakul, an officer at the Phuket Commercial Office, replies:

For an export licence for clothing, you should contact the Department of Foreign Trade (Textile Division) at the Ministry of Commerce in Bangkok.

The Department is at 44/100 Sanam Bin Nam-Nonthaburi, Nonthaburi 11000, Tel: 02-547-4809 or 02-5474843.

You should be aware that many countries set quotas limiting the amount of clothing imports they will accept from Thailand.

Supot Suwannachote, Chief of the Phuket Provincial Land Office, replies:

Australian nationals still cannot own freehold land in Thailand.

Barmageddon?

The much-feared early closing has turned into a classic middle-way solution. Every venue is still open – and so far there has yet to be a furore over it, which is exactly how some shrewd characters reckoned it would be.

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra seems to be effective at pretty much everything he does. I applaud the good that he has achieved and if he were to desert Thailand for the comfort of, say, Anfield, he would leave the place in better shape than it was when he found it.

Any politician's first priority is to win re-election. Most single terms are too short to create a lasting impact – most governments need two. Thatcher, Blair, Reagan and Clinton all had the time they needed to implement fundamental reforms and policies, and Clinton managed to give a welcome boost to the cigar industry, too.

So PM Thaksin needs time. The reforms he wishes to implement seem to be the ones we would welcome: an end to the drugs problem; an end to corruption; and the introduction of a meritocratic civil service; and an education system in which progress is made through effective results – and not patronage from some half-dead *Phu Yai* or bent MP. So PM Thaksin needs to appeal to his electorate, agreed?

Frankly, his electorate do not come to Thailand on holiday. Most of them are agricultural workers, who are quite conservative. Anyone who has been upcountry would have seen teenagers bowing their heads as they pass elders, even crawling on their knees as they pass their grandparents.

This, my friends, is Thailand. In many ways it's the traditional Thailand that we always admired before we came here. Not the Thailand where teenagers drink, smoke and shout "hellowheretheycomefromwelcome".

PM Thaksin knows his electorate well and naturally he does some things that appeal to them. Headlines about closing down these shocking places and making youngsters go to bed early are aimed directly at this electorate.

Whether such directives are acted on as policy is another issue. Hey, the goal has been scored, the headlines written, and that's the point.

The police are not enforcing the change in policy. Is it an act of defiance? Nope, it's just pragmatic politics.

In Britain, the conservative

Best keep an open mind



By Konrad Stalin

Manchester Evening News newspaper would throw itself into a fit of apoplexy every time the local police – yes, the police – asked for an extension of bar closing times.

The police would cite reasons – spreading out the time when people leave the city pissed would lead to less fighting, be easier to police and require fewer bobbies.

It also would allow kebab vendors extra time to cook a 'bab (or is it a kee?) thoroughly, thus reducing the incidence of Genghis's revenge on a Saturday morning, leading to more efficient water usage in the city.

The *Evening News* would proclaim "The End Of Civilization" and "Manchester Home to Yob City". Yet now, one can drink anywhere in the city until 4 am. How so?

Euro 2000 footy came to town and the police said they had to grant several late licenses because all these foreign chappies were coming over with their odd habits, and us being warm northern folk should treat 'em proper like and let 'em drink at all hours – thus calming the rabid letter writers of Wilmslow and other points posh.

The police, without saying anything, never rescinded the licenses granted to the venues that had them issued. Hmmm.

Mind the gap: Phuket's North-South divide now has a name. Apparently you are now NOLO or SOLO, that's North Of Lotus or South Of Lotus. If you are NOLO, or even an aspiring one, I must tell you about a funky little restaurant that is causing quite a stir.

The place is called Italian Farang and is a tiny shop jobby and about a mile from the Cherng

Talay Police Station, heading towards the Heroines' Monument. It's on the north side of the road, just after the pawn shop and opposite the big school.

What's so special? Well, virtually every dish is 50 baht. What's the catch? There is none, it's super. The portions are deliberately small and I love it because this means we can order Leeks in White Sauce and Steak with Red Wine sauce and Broccoli Cheese and Salmon and a pizza and Fettuccini Carbonara, and so on.

Those of you who know the Blond Bombshell Indoors know that she is not too experimental with farang food. If it does not require asbestos gloves and make steam come out of her head, she normally dismisses it with a "mai phet, mai arroy".

Well, here is a place where I can tempt her with excellent Western food, sure in the knowledge that I will not be dragged off to a noodle stand later because she is still hungry, when all I want to do is have another brandy/go to bed, possibly at the same time.

So, if you have a Thai wife who is reluctant to get to grips with our bland delicacies, I suggest you take her there and order, well, everything. There is bound to be something she likes – and they do Thai food, too.

They also do daily specials. The people are very friendly and they are so loved in the local community that several customers are chipping in to help them extend the place and make it groovy. Do your bit and get up, or down, there.

Fuss 'n' Ships: Opposite the Tourism Authority of Thailand office on Phuket Rd in Phuket City, there's a most excellent F and C shop that I have only just discovered.

Owned by a Kiwi who lived in Australia for years, the place is full of model ships so it is easy to find. The chips were sublime. I had a homemade pie which was gorgeous, and I was served two slices of buttered bread that were soft and fresh.

But wait a minute – do you remember proper milkshakes? Not the McDonald's ones. I swear if everyone in McD's sucked in on one of those things at the same time, the windows would implode.

No, I am talking about the milkshake that used to get you in trouble with your ma in Wimpey's when you blew bubbles into it.

Made with ice-cold milk, strawberry flavoring and a noisy machine, it had a froth bigger than, er, well, a very big frothy thing indeed.

They serve 'em and, now I am an adult, I can blow all the bubbles I like. Liberation!



In the lap of the Golden Buddha

I didn't get up early enough this morning to join the turtle squad on their patrol of the beach. I was awake, feeling a cool breeze blowing through the mosquito net and listening to the rolling waves and the trilling and cheeping of birds. I sleep a lot here on Koh Phra Tong – Golden Buddha Island.

I had forgotten about the turtle patrol. Anyway, the egg-laying season is almost over and the local people, most of whom are Mokken, or sea gypsies, don't poach turtle eggs anymore; they've now got the idea that turtles are endangered. And I doubt that I could have coped with walking five kilometers one way and five kilometers back on the sand.

This year the turtle volunteers, who come from all over the world, found only three nests, whereas in the past they have seen as many as 30 in one season. This is not because the turtles have decided to lay their eggs elsewhere but because poaching in previous seasons means that fewer turtles are born on Golden Buddha Beach.

In a state of semi-sleep, I thought about the legend of the Golden Buddha. Down at the bar last night I was told that a golden Buddha was said to have been buried here on the island.

Now if I were running away with a golden Buddha in my hands and wanted to bury it, I would make very sure I could find it again.

I would line up two sets of two points and bury it where they crossed. What's more, I would be coming to the island by boat so these sets of points would have to be visible from the sea.

I was trying to identify such points as I looked out over the bay at breakfast from the dining sala. One might be that steep, rocky little island with pine trees on it, like a scene depicted on a piece of Chinese blue and white pottery. There's a similar island next to it, which could be the second marker point.

A third marker point could be the promontory right at the end of the beach, on the other side of the spit of land on which the Golden Buddha Beach Resort is located. (It's a perfect spot for a resort, with the sea on both sides.)

Three years ago they built a meditation pavilion on the promontory. That's where I was meditating yesterday afternoon. My wife said that in the light of the setting sun, I looked like the Golden Buddha himself.

Lory Follador from Switzerland, who manages the resort and has been here for eight years, says people don't pay much attention to the legend. Nobody comes here with metal detectors looking for the Golden Buddha.

Instead, people who make the long and difficult journey to this remote spot – it's a 40-minute long-tail ride from Kuraburi, south of Ranong – come here for the peace and quiet, and the solitude.

Some come for yoga retreats – run by some of the world's top yoga teachers – and some simply to walk the long, long beach and commune with nature.

There are hornbills here. Lory had a pet one, Tony, which they had rescued. Tony used to hang out in her office. There are other rare birds, too, such as the endangered lesser adjutant, which is as big as a stork.

There are dolphins, sharks, a few snakes in the wet season, and macaque monkeys, which are becoming quite a nuisance – the resort even has a monkey cop who patrols the estate with a catapult.

"Estate" and "resort" are the wrong words to describe the Golden Buddha Beach community. It's a collection of privately-owned wooden houses, some of them beautifully designed and constructed, together with a common club house, a yoga sala, turtle tank, massage sala and the meditation pavilion. Most of the houses are available to rent, from 1,300 baht a night.

For more information, check out www.goldenbuddhabeach.com.

EDGEWISE

By John Gilpin

TT&T and CAT combine to offer hi-speed Internet

By Our Staff

PHUKET: Telephone company Thai Telephone & Telecommunication (TT&T) will be offering high-speed Internet connection with unlimited hours from April 22 or 23, at a price of just 1,070 baht a month.

The new service is part of a national project, known as T-speed, which involves investment of some 400 million baht nationwide.

T-speed – which is starting with pilot projects in Chiang Mai, Khon Kaen and Phuket – is targeted at home users, with broad-

band Internet access delivered over normal telephone lines.

The big draw for home users is that the Communications Authority of Thailand (CAT), which, effectively, controls Internet access in Thailand, has joined T-speed to offer an ADSL (Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line) connection with a shared bandwidth of 2 Megabytes per second (Mbps), unlimited-hours usage and unlimited file transfer, at a monthly cost of 1,070 baht.

However, Suwit Suthin Nalok, CAT's Chief of Marketing and Customer Services, explained that people signing up for

the CAT broadband service would share the 2 Mbps bandwidth with up to 49 other clients.

Taratorn Kitipipak, Manager of TT&T in Phuket, stressed that while T-speed carried all the hallmarks of a short-term promotion, this was absolutely not the case. "This is not a promotion; this is the new standard," he said.

He explained that TT&T's decision to offer high-speed Internet access followed moves by the government to slash Internet costs. "The government has reduced the cost of offering Internet access and the cost of [importing] the equipment needed,"

he said. "The lower prices have caused higher demand."

With cheaper ADSL equipment available, he added, it became possible to introduce broadband technology that works over existing telephone lines.

Meanwhile, the Telephone Organization of Thailand (TOT) will continue to offer its existing range of services, the cheapest of which costs 1,000 baht a month for a shared connection with a download speed of 128 Kilobits per second (Kbps) and an upload speed of 64 Kbps, plus 280 baht a month for the ADSL router.

Up until now, TOT has of-

fered economically-priced ADSL only in certain parts of the island where subscribers were close to special ADSL exchanges linked to higher-quality cable.

Somchai Jitpiphatkul, Sales Engineer at TOT Phuket, explained that TOT will continue to charge 1,000 baht for installing an ADSL router. He could not confirm how many users share each line. "That is up to each ISP to decide," he said.

Asked if the CAT will join the TOT to offer a more competitive deal, he said, "We have not discussed that yet, but they probably will."

Dazzlers that can make investors dizzy

This week we conclude the series on different types of investment with a look at the fancier, more glittery end of the spectrum.

Gold: There is a variety of ways to invest in gold. A common method is to buy an ingot of gold or gold coins. After that, however, the new owners of the gold are often faced with a security problem.

The common solution is to use a bank deposit facility, but this adds to the overall cost. So does transportation and insurance when buying and moving the gold.

One alternative is to join a gold fund whereby the investor is given a certificate – but one must choose such a fund carefully.

The most common route is to invest in gold shares. This generally gives the investor a leveraged return on the price of gold. For example, if the gold price rises by US\$10, shares in gold-mining companies usually rise by a much greater proportion – a pure profit on paper for the company issuing the shares.

Conversely, an investor in gold shares should be aware of a gold miner's cost of extracting an ounce of gold, just in case the gold price triggers a fall in values towards the point where mining becomes unprofitable.

What is the mine's approach to "forward selling"? This technique has become popular and works as follows: a gold mine has proven reserves of gold but requires working capital to

extract it. There are usually three parties involved in a typical "forward-selling" contract – the gold mine, a merchant investment bank, and a central bank.

The central bank already holds gold in its vaults. Provided that the bank is not taking any undue risk, it is often prepared to "mortgage" future gold production from the mine in exchange for interest on a loan of some of its gold to the mine.

The merchant investment bank brings the gold mine and the central bank together. It sells the central bank's gold on the market and the proceeds go to the gold mine.

The gold mine receives the proceeds from the sale of the gold, which it uses to finance its working capital. Future gold, when extracted, is then delivered to the central bank. Effectively, this means that the gold mine is selling gold that is still in the ground.

The disadvantage for investors in gold mines that have heavy "forward-selling" contracts is that the shares may benefit little from any rise in the gold price.

Investors must also consider other factors. What is the life expectancy of the gold mine in question? All gold mines have a finite life.

The problem with a mine approaching the end of its working life is that it is often paying exceptionally high dividends, which can be very misleading for investors.



MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson

This is not pure profit. It is generally a mix of profit with a high percentage of what is actually a return of capital. After all, when the mine closes, there will be little left of value – even extraction equipment will generally be old.

Mostly, gold shares outperform the upward price movement of the physical metal but the reverse is true in a falling market. In a nutshell, gold share prices are more volatile than the metal.

Another factor is currency. The investor must always consider that gold is a US dollar-denominated asset. For example, in 2003 the Euro appreciated 20% against the US dollar while gold appreciated 19%. For the Euro investor who bought physical gold at the beginning of 2003, there was actually a loss of 1%.

Gold shares also require research into which gold mines are suitable as investments. South African mines, for example, are very sophisticated but are almost always mining at great depths, which adds greatly to extraction costs.

South Africa's currency, the rand, also tends to appreciate in value when the price of gold rises. Unfortunately, so do extraction costs that are rand-based. Another factor of investment in gold shares in countries such as South Africa is the possibility of labor unrest, or strikes.

Conflict among the different tribes employed at the mine can be a bloody affair. An outbreak in violence does little to help the share price. Strikes – or even the threat of a strike – are also a negative factor.

The easiest way for an investor to take advantage of gold shares is to buy a mutual fund. This certainly reduces the number of potential headaches.

I watched an interesting interview with a professor from the

Wharton School of Business on a recent *Kudlow & Kramer* show on CNBC. Apparently, the amount of money invested in mutual funds (unit trusts) in America has now reached a record US\$ 7.53 trillion. One of the reasons for this is the losses suffered over the past few years by private investors buying individual stocks.

Diamonds: They may be a girl's best friend but they tend to be a very difficult investment type for an individual. First, the investor must have good technical knowledge of diamonds and their market price.

Second, there is often a high profit margin involved, except between professional diamond dealers. Last, depending on the country, there is often an extra tax in the form of VAT or sales tax.

At one time, investors could invest in De Beers shares. De Beers owns the Central Selling Organization (CSO) that controls more than half the world's supply of diamonds and the level of supply to keep prices from becoming too volatile.

However, Anglo American, a long-time associate of De Beers, acquired De Beers' entire share capital some years ago. There are no other major groups quoted on world markets.

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.

On the Move

The new Chief of the Phuket Provincial Land Office is **Supot Suwannachote**, 52, from Songkhla. He has a law degree from Ramkhamhaeng University in Bangkok and worked as Chief of Trang Provincial Land Office for a year before moving to Phuket.



Simon Littlewood, 37, from Britain, has been appointed Director of Spa Development – Asia with Hilton International Asia, based at the Phuket Arcadia Beach Resort. He has a master's degree in business from Huddersfield University and comes to Phuket with over 14 years' experience, having worked at the Dubai Pyramids hotel as General Manager and with Chiva Som International Health Resources in Thailand as Project Manager.

Piyada Pissananont, 22, from Nakhon Pathom, has been appointed Manager of Modern Cultured Stone (MCS). She has a degree from the Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management at Prince of Songkhla University, Phuket Campus.



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

VITAL STATISTICS: NEW VEHICLE REGISTRATIONS CLIMB SHARPLY			
Type of vehicle	Jan 04	Jan 03	% change
Cars with capacity for not more than 7 people	571	371	53.91
Cars with capacity for more than 7 people	10	5	100.00
Pickup trucks	273	211	29.38
Motorcycles	1,651	1,502	9.92
Taxis	0	0	0

Source: Phuket Provincial Transportation Office

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Beer, sun and wicket – that's cricket

By Andy Johnstone

Cricket, for a large part of the world's population, is a game of incomprehensible rules, baffling terminology, and plenty of standing around in the sun.

It is also too involved a game to explain in less than 10,000 words – but with the Phuket Invitational Cricket Sixes about to start, it's time to try to flesh out some of the details anyway.

The world's main cricketing countries – Australia, Bangladesh, England, India, Kenya, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka, the West Indies, and Zimbabwe – do have British Commonwealth connections and, for the record, total some 1.5 billion inhabitants. But the game's reach goes far beyond an extinct empire.

Cricket is also played in another 88 countries, from Afghanistan to Cuba, and from Israel to Uzbekistan. It may not have quite the depth of appreciation that soccer does, but its reach makes it one of the most widely-played team games in the world.

On seeing his first cricket match, Groucho Marx uttered the aside, "Say, when does it begin?" Cricket may appear to be a slow game if compared with, say, polo, but to enthusiasts the game's slower pace is one of its attractions.

William Temple, once the Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1925 described cricket as "organized loafing". Phuket's generally clear April skies should at least give players the chance to catch up on their tans.

A cricket match can last a couple of hours or go on as long as five days or more, and the longest matches between countries are called Tests. The shortest-ever Test was between Sri Lanka and India in Colombo in 1996. All but 50 minutes of the match were rained out.

Cricket is played on an oval, although the actual playing area may be any shape. Two batsmen stand 22 yards apart between wickets – small wooden arches a bit like the McDonald's golden arches minus the curves – and take it in turns to try to hit a hard leather ball.

The ball, it's worth noting, is coming at them at considerable speed, bowled overarm in windmill

fashion – and sometimes aimed at their head.

The bowler, one of 11 opposition players on the oval, tries to bowl the ball in such a way as to hit the wicket behind the batsman or to have him caught out.

The batsman tries, of course, to hit the ball as far as possible but not, preferably, into the hands of a fielder. If the ball is caught without bouncing, then you're out.

If the ball hits the wicket, you're out, too. If the ball hits your shin but would otherwise have hit the wicket, it's called Leg Before Wicket – and time for the batsman to take a lonely walk back to the pavilion for a cup of tea and a slice of cake.

The batsmen can score runs by hitting the ball and running between the wickets for as long as it takes the fielders to retrieve the ball, by hitting the ball to the boundary for an automatic four runs, or by hitting the ball over the boundary for a six.

Teams can top 600 or more runs in a single innings. While individual batsmen have been known to score more than 300 runs, personal totals above 100 are always considered noteworthy.

Cricket Sixes is a much faster-paced game with play taking hours (or even minutes) rather than days. Each batsman may score an absolute maximum of 35 runs, after which he must retire. The opponents score points if they manage to get a batsman out before he hits the maximum runs.

An amount of good-natured barracking is permitted, although one famous slight to the batsman – "Bowl him a piano; see if he can play that" – is not expected to be heard on Phuket.

Cricket remains a good-natured game – helped along by doses of sunshine and beer – and there is genuine respect for an opposing team.

Phuket has many of the elements required for the development and enjoyment of cricket: good weather, plenty of expats and tourists from cricketing nations, and a population keen to take on the challenge of a new game.

There's much more lore and many arcane rules and nomenclature: A hooker, for example, can actually be a stylish batsman. But we won't go into that here.

Fun run for turtle charity

MAI KHAO: The JW Marriott Phuket Resort and Spa will hold its second annual Fun Run on April 13 to raise awareness of the plight of Phuket's endangered giant leatherback turtles and cash for the resort's turtle charity.

Last year's fun run raised 25,000 baht for the Mai Khao Marine Turtle Foundation, which was established by the resort at its grand opening in March 2002.

The foundation is dedicated to the protection of the leatherback turtles that lay their eggs along Mai Khao Beach.

The day's activities will start at 7 am with a Buddhist ceremony followed by a group stretch-and-aerobics session, and then the five-kilometer fun run.

The course will start on the resort's south lawn, circle a nearby lake, and finish back at the hotel.

Participants may run, walk, skate, skateboard or use wheelchairs, but bicycles are prohibited.

Registration fees are 100 baht for adults and 50 baht for children 16 and under.

The first three finishers will win trophies as well as domestic airline tickets. Refreshments will be served and there will be prize draws throughout the day.

For further information, contact Sean Panton or K. Samart at Tel: 076-338000 or by email to: sean.panton@marriott-hotels.com.

Rotary Club plans strikes for charity

PHUKET CITY: The Rotary Club of Phuket will hold its third annual bowling tournament at CS Bowl at Big C on April 25, from 10 am to 4 pm.

Some of the funds raised at the tournament will be used for the construction of a nursery for seaturtles, while the remainder will go toward the Rotary Club's various charitable causes.

The event will be opened by Vice-Admiral Pairoj Theerachai, Commander of the Third Naval Area Command, Royal Thai Navy.

Each team will consist of three people. Team trophies will be awarded to the winning team and four runners-up.

There will also be individual trophies for the top scorer in any one game and the top scorer over three games. The cost of entering the tournament is 3,000 baht a team, which includes lunch and hire of bowling shoes.

For more information, contact Phuket Pin Bowl Club at Tel: 076-354961-2, Phuket Shooting Range at Tel: 076-381667-8, or the Thai Military Bank at Tel: 076-212123/076-253100.

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The homegrown Phuket 8s are regulars in the ACYC race series.

Dates set for ACYC races

CHALONG: The Ao Chalong Yacht Club (ACYC) has announced dates for the remaining 13 races in its 14-race 2004 Keelboat and Multihull Race Series. The first race was held on March 14.

The dates are as follows: Race 2, March 28; Race 3, April 11; Race 4, April 25; Race 5, May 9; Race 6, June 13; Race 7, July 25; Race 8, August 8; Race 9, August 22; Race 10, September 5; Race 11, September 19; Race 12, October 3; Race 13, October 17; Race 14, November 7.

All races are scheduled to

start at 11 am, with briefings at 9:30 am on the same day.

Entry costs 100 baht for ACYC members and 150 baht for non-members. All are welcome to join in, regardless of experience.

Other coming events on this year's Asian Regatta Calendar include: President's Cup, April 13-17, Subic Bay, Philippines; Samui Regatta, May 23-29, Koh Samui; Phuket Race Week, July 10-17.

For more information contact Scott Duncanson at Tel: 01-8924992.

Phuket Gazette

Do you know her?

If you pick up your weekly Gazette at Used Books on Chao Fa East Rd, chances are you've met Khun Nilima "Oy" Jaisang. She is an important part of the Gazette Distribution Team – always eager to serve you, and always on time. In fact, she can usually hand you Saturday's Gazette on Friday afternoon.

The Gazette Distribution Team – always eager to serve you!



Their cup runneth over: Football Crazy darters show off the silverware after winning the championship.

Football Crazy celebrate darts championship win

PATONG: They may be mad about soccer but, by winning the 10-team Patong Darts League, the team from the Football Crazy bar showed they're pretty handy around the dart board as well.

Team members Peter Hopkins, Matthew Hopkins, Mark Cuthbert, John Curtis, Billy Smith, Tony Jeffries, Andy Brown and Danny Wilson celebrated their win with a trophy presentation party at Football Crazy on Soi Sansabai on March 16.

Members of other teams joined in for a lucky draw competition, buffet and, naturally, lots of beer.

League organizer Paul "Bez" Berridge explained the league format to the *Gazette*: "Players on each six-man side square off in a straight-in game of 301, with each win counting for one point. After that there are three 501 doubles matches, also

By Stephen Fein

worth one point each. The first team to amass nine points wins."

Each match ends with the highly-competitive "beer leg", a team game of 1001. Although the points don't count in the overall standings, the stakes are high because the owner of the losing venue has to buy a round of drinks for the winners.

Peter Hopkins, owner of Football Crazy, said the standard of darts in Patong has improved steadily over the three years the league has been running.

The new league was sched-

uled to begin March 23, and the *Gazette* will publish the results of each week's play – provided that team captains get their score sheets to Bez at Amigo's Bar (email: bezpaulberridge@hotmail.com) on time.

Matches scheduled for Mar 30 are Didi's v Off Shore; Happy Days v In Between; Piccadilly v Amigos; Shakers v Champs; and Valhalla v Football Crazy.

For more information about the league or about joining a team, go to any of the competing venues at 8:30 on Tuesday nights, when the matches are played.

Final standings, Patong Darts League 2003-2004

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Football Crazy (45 points) | 6. Shakers (27 points) |
| 2. In-Between (38 points) | 7. Happy Days (21 points) |
| 3. Didi's (32 points) | 8. Piccadilly (20 points) |
| 4. Champs (32 points) | 9. Amigos (17 points) |
| 5. All Stars (27 points) | 10. Valhalla (11 points) |

Phuket schools stamp their authority on international soccer

KOH KEAW: Boys from Phuket schools proved too hot for visiting teams to handle in the inaugural Dulwich International Football Tournament on March 19 and 20, winning three of the four boys' competitions.

The seven-a-side tournament, the first of its kind organized by Dulwich International College, attracted 40 teams from as far afield as Nepal and the Philippines, and as close as Phuket City.

Taking top honors in their categories were Plookpanya Thai School A (Boys Under 11), Surakul Thai School (Boys Under 15) and Dragon Junior Thai School (Boys 15 and Over).

Five other teams from Phuket schools also ranked in the top three in their respective categories.

The Girls Open category saw some competitive and deft play, with more than a few of the male players looking decidedly relieved that they were only

spectating and not taking part.

Despite some rain during the final rounds on March 20, the event was hailed as a resounding success.

Jeff Lamantia, Head of Physical Education at Dulwich and the school's team coach, said that he hoped the event would become a fixture of the international – and local – sporting circuit.

First three placings in each category were: **Girls Open:** Bangkok Patana A, British School Manila, Bangkok Patana B; **Boys Under 11:** Plookpanya School A, Bangkok Patana, Plookpanya School B; **Boys Under 13:** Bangkok Patana, Dulwich International College, British International School Jakarta; **Boys Under 15:** Surakul School, Bangkok Patana, Dulwich International College A; **Boys 15 and Over:** Dragon Junior School, Phuket Wittayalai School, Chalmprakiat School.

– Andy Johnstone

Below, British International School Jakarta (in red) take possession close to an open goal as the British School Manila defense closes in, during their clash in the Girls Open division. Photo by P Barnham.



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Ugly as sin, but a great little mover



THE ALPHARD: Did the vehicle-naming people combine alpha with dullard? Whatever the case, ugly wins the popularity stakes.

If there were an ugly motor car contest, the Toyota Alphard would win hands-down. Over-bodied, undoubtedly aerodynamically inefficient, chromed beyond belief and definitely in the unattractive corner, the Alphard would triumph over all comers.

But in terms of luxurious interiors, the seven-seater people carrier has no peers. It is a serious contender in the automotive industry. No wonder it is so popular in major cities around Asia.

You will find them in abundance on the streets of Bangkok, Hong Kong and Manila, not to mention domestic Japan, where it has a huge following.

The Alphard – there is no explanation for the name other than it is derived from the Greek letter ‘a’ – is powered by a three liter V6 or 2.4 in-line four and is available with four- or front-wheel drive. Power outputs are modest at 220bhp (162kW) and 159 bhp (117kW) respectively, but the torque figures are far more impressive with 304Nm and 220Nm, which may account for the Alphard’s popularity.

Both engines are aided in

their quest for high torque outputs by variable valve technology. The 2.4-liter models also qualify as ultra-low emission vehicles.

Both engine options are mated to an electronic, four-speed automatic transmission with a high-efficiency torque converter, incorporating a lock-up to improve fuel consumption. Meanwhile, the shift lever is mounted on the instrument panel so as not to intrude on floor space.



By Jeff Heselwood

Traction control is standard. So are vehicle stability control, electronic brake-force distribution and brake assist. Brake assist is a useful addition that detects emergency braking from the driver and increases line pressure to shorten stopping distances. Most drivers never brake hard enough when faced with an impending accident.

Toyota has announced that the Alphard was conceived as “a flagship minivan” for a wide range of customers and “developed around the concepts of dynamism and hospitality”.

Chief engineer Hideyuki Iwata maintains, “It is dynamic in both style and performance for active-lifestyle owners, while it is equipped to provide just about any passenger a hospitable experience.”

There is no doubt the vehicle offers excellent comfort for seven or eight passengers, with a versatile seating arrangement, ranging from completely flat to form a full-size bed, to swivel second row seats to form a mobile conference facility.

Upholstery is a choice of high-quality leather, synthetic leather, suede-effect fabric or simple cloth. There are separate front and rear controls for the air conditioning and the windshield and front side windows feature tinted glass to maintain a cool atmosphere.

These side windows are also treated with a water-repellant that atomizes water droplets for good visibility in wet weather.

Twin side-sliding doors make it convenient to enter from either side, and both are fitted

with an easy-close system that automatically closes any door that hasn’t been shut properly.

The left-side door can be operated with a remote or by simply touching the handle. In addition, the rear door can be opened from the driver’s seat or by a switch on the lower edge of the tailgate.

Toyota says this is the first power-operated rear door on a vehicle produced in Japan. Front windows and those in the sliding doors are also electric-powered.

Standard on all models are driver and front-seat passenger airbags along with front-seat side airbags and full-length air curtains, although the latter two may be optional in some markets.

Interior furnishings, such as the pillars and roof side rails, contain built-in ribs to absorb impact, and the seat structures incorporate an anti-whiplash concept to lessen the possibility of neck stress in the event of a low-speed rear impact.

Other safety features include an impact-absorbing hood to reduce head and chest injuries to pedestrians, as well as radar cruise control, which uses laser technology and steering sensors to maintain correct lane discipline and to ensure the vehicle stays a safe distance from the car in front.

For countries that produce digital maps (on CD-ROM) there is a large screen for the navigation system. A blind-corner monitor that indicates the approach of other vehicles or pedestrians from the left or right is also available as an option.

The Alphard may be lacking in esthetic terms – indeed, it is disagreeable to look at – but in terms of comfort, drivability and safety, it is no wonder it has found such favor with Asia’s discerning motoring community.

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

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Home of the Week

Cherng Talay

A smart blend of classic and contemporary



The Residence consists of 21 villas set among lush, tropical gardens in an estate that is fast becoming one of the smartest addresses in Phuket.

The stylish design, a mix of contemporary and Sino-Portuguese, complements the raw beauty of Bang Tao Beach, just 1.2 kilometers away.

A design feature of The Residence is the rooftop sala complete with kitchenette and bar-becue area for private, outdoor entertainment.

Other amenities for each villa include a swimming pool, built-in furniture, kitchen appliances and landscaping.

Monthly maintenance fees cover all common areas and services such as gardening, security, water supply, engineering, fire protection, pest control, upkeep of communications equipment and swimming pool cleaning.

In addition to bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms, each villa has an open Western kitchen, living and dining area, separate living room/office, water filtration system, laundry room with washing machine, and a double garage.

The interior finish is superb, as are the quality fixtures and fittings. Most of the large aluminium doors slide back into wall recesses, giving plenty of room for the breeze to enter.

Optional extras include a media room with plasma screen and surround sound; music in every room; a touch-pad central control for all home automation systems; and Wi-Fi, meaning you can be connected to the Internet anywhere in the house. Homes can also be equipped with the latest developments in lighting and security systems.

Villa owners can take advantage of the professional management to realise a return on their investment without compromising their enjoyment of the property.

There is a choice of a two-, three- or four-bedroom villas, with prices ranging from 10.5 million to 22 million baht for floor areas from 311 square meters to 866 sqm. The land title is Nor Sor 3 Gor.

Monthly maintenance charges range from 17,000 to 23,000 baht. There is also a sinking fund of around 150,000 baht for periodic major works, such as external redecoration and roof renewals.



For further details contact Richard Lusted at Siam Real Estate, Tel: 076-280805, website: www.siamrealestate.com, email info@siamrealestate.com


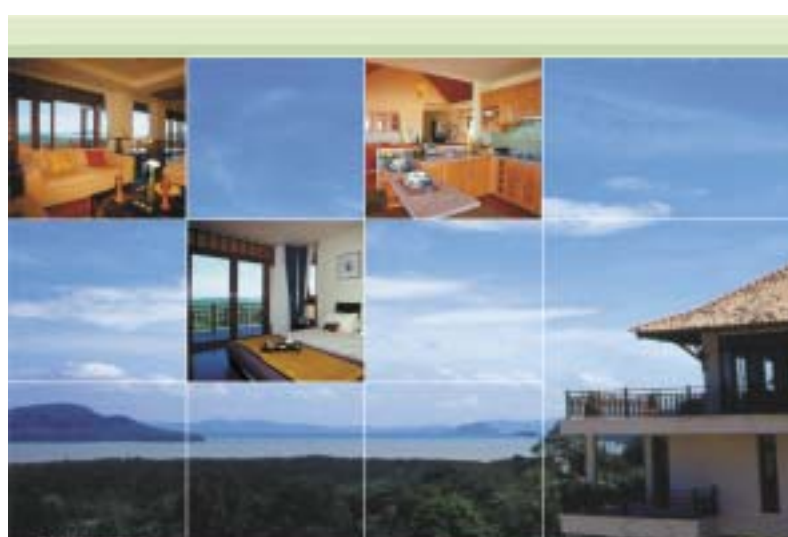
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Location and quality are always bestsellers

A friend of mine has stayed in villas at the Amanpuri for several high seasons. Not your cheapest holiday accommodation, but he's fussy.

He wandered into the local pub a couple of months ago and told me that he was going to buy a house. "So, what's new?" I asked him. "You've been telling me that for several years."

In fact, I had driven around the island with him on a number of occasions over the years, scrambling up mountainsides, looking for a spot for him to build a secluded monastic-style retreat, or something similar.

"This time I'm serious. I'm planning to buy a villa in the Maan Tawan project on Bang Tao Beach," he told me. "What do you think?"

I told him that it was a good project in a great location and had many other things going for it, although the prices might be prohibitive for many people seeking properties on the island.

Quite to my surprise, he went ahead and bought one. I don't mean surprised because he bought at Maan Tawan, but that he actually bought anything at all.

This anecdote is an indication of the standard of the project. My friend lives in villas and palaces all round the world, hobnobbing with the types of people

most of us never get to meet, unless we happen to have made the national football team and shake hands with one of them before the big match starts.

Maan Tawan, set among trees only a few meters from the beach near the luxury Banyan Tree Resort, is a development excellent in concept, design and location. Such locations are now as scarce as hens' teeth on Phuket.

The project was conceived 18 months ago and is now 85% sold. The developers are planning a new project, Chom Tawan,

on adjoining land with the same style and mix of 3- or 5-bedroom villas, along with penthouses and apartments.

The design concept is by Hong

Kong-based architect Andrew Morrison of Projex Asia. The architecture itself was done by Bangkok's Tandem Architects, well-known internationally for their luxury hotel, resort and private residence commissions.

The designs balance contemporary Thai with modern tropical architecture, and the residences are built to exacting international standards with *maka* timber floors, and teak window and door frames.

Somehow, Maan Tawan gives one the feeling of being in a seaside park, and environmen-

tal considerations have not been ignored. They have kept the trees, they catch the rainwater, they recycle the wastewater – all that stuff.

It is a superb development and a lesson in how to build luxury residences on Phuket.

Neither experienced developers with knowledge of house building on Phuket nor internationally-recognized consultants come cheap, but in this case the extra expense has paid off, as the successful sales attest.

Considering the location and the high standards, Maan Tawan is good value. Prices start at just under 13 million baht for a 330-square-meter apartment, while the larger 700-sqm ocean-facing villas come in at 42 million baht.

This column is not supposed to waffle on like an advertising brochure, but once in a while we like to give credit where credit is due. Maan Tawan deserves its success, and if I win the lottery...

PROPERTY & HOMEZONE

By Graham Doven

Note: In the *Gazette* issue of March 13, in Construction Update, the photograph caption erroneously identified the picture as The Woodlands project. In fact, it showed buildings under construction at the Sirin Thara development.

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Beware of big, flapping wings

Imagine the biggest bird you've ever seen. Then imagine one that is even bigger. Then picture its nest. The bird's nest fern is probably similar to that. It's one of the most aptly-named plants around, although it's larger than life.

Whoever first came up with this name must have been thinking of a bird out of *Sesame Street*. The bird's nest fern is a fern that looks like, well, a bird's nest.

It consists only of a number of long, shiny, leathery leaves, and nothing else. The large leaves grow in a rosette around a central, densely hairy crown, and like most ferns, slowly unwrap themselves from the middle, with the lower leaves dying off at a similar rate.

This unusual plant sometimes grows on the ground, but more often it forms as an epiphyte, on the trunk of a tree. Last week I rambled on about epiphytes – this is one of them.

Just to remind you, an epiphyte is a plant that grows on

another, without being a parasite, obtaining nutrients from decaying leaves and other debris, and taking in moisture from the air without rooting into the soil.

The bird's nest fern, or *asplenium nidus*, traps falling leaves and other debris among its fronds. Roots grow out from its stems into the decaying plant matter to absorb nutrients.

Look below one of these plants, and you'll see a forest of fine roots, reaching out for whatever they can find to feed on.

Its ancestral home was Madagascar. Why is it that so many of the plants we find in this part of the world today originally come from this island off the coast of Africa?

Bird's nest ferns look impressive in any tropical garden, and will add a sort of jungle feel. It's also perfectly suited to life in Phuket. It needs watering fairly often, but it's fairly laid back about the idea. Neglect it, and it doesn't seem to mind.



The bird's nest fern is good for just about everything except birds.

Photo by Alasdair Forbes

It is quite particular about where it lives, though. It's used to the shade, and usually colonizes trees, rock faces and boulders in rainforests, so it isn't much of a sun-worshipper.

Put it in direct sunlight and it will quickly scream at you by turning a depressing shade of brown.

Eventually reaching about a meter and a half in height and width, the bird's nest fern is a

striking plant to use at entrances, or in containers where it will always attract attention.

Although in the wild it prefers to attach itself to other trees, it will happily survive in a pot. You can even grow it in the ground, but the soil should be very well-drained.

The plants should generally be kept moist, but if it's in a pot and the soil becomes heavy or waterlogged, you should repot it.

Put a few woodchips in the soil and plenty of broken pot pieces around the drainage holes in the base, and that should help.

The plant doesn't like heavy soil very much and will commit *hari-kari* if it's left unchecked.

The large, stemless apple green leaves have a black, prominent midrib which becomes prominent as the fronds age.


Spores appear often on the underside of leaves, which is how it reproduces.


You want to grow more? Collect the ripe spores by placing a piece of paper under spore-bearing leaves, then sow the spores on damp peat moss.


Do this somewhere that's not too warm, although the idea is certainly easier than the reality in Phuket. The growing medium should be kept constantly moist and covered with glass or plastic.

Once new plants are large enough to handle, they can be transplanted into individual containers.

The bird's nest fern is certainly weird. With one of these in your back garden, just live in hope that an unknown giant Madagascan bird doesn't try to reclaim the fern as its home.







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Property Gazette

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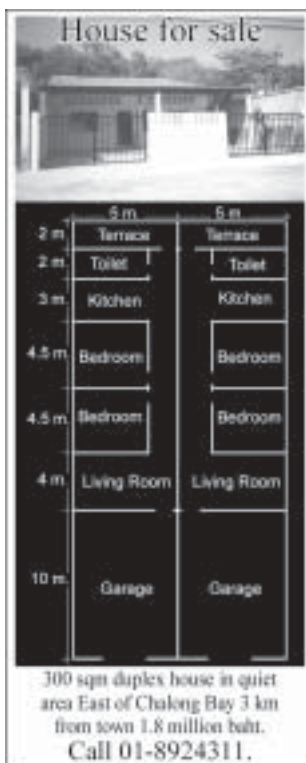
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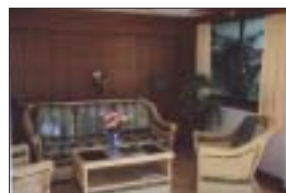
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for sale. 4-bed house with sea view, with 3 bathrooms, indoor and outdoor Jacuzzis, and parking space for sale. 18 million baht. Tel: 04-056-8122.

All classifieds
in these pages are

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Property Gazette



TROPICAL
Life
Company Ltd.

Baan Chai Nam - Bang Tao Beach



For sale: Luxury 1 bedroom apartment, sharing large swimming pool and private beach.
Price : 5,200,000 baht

Loch Palm Golf Club - Kathu Valley



For sale or rent: Townhouses – 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, direct frontage to golf course, super views.
Prices from 6,700,000 baht

Loch Palm Golf Club - Kathu Valley



For sale: Courtyard Homes – Exclusive Luxury Villas, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, private swimming pool.
Prices from 8,800,000 baht

Loch Palm Golf Club - Kathu Valley



For sale: Garden Villas – Exclusive Luxury Villas, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, designed with views overlooking private swimming pool, sala and spa, direct access to the golf course.

Tel: 076 323595, 01 6949850
Tropical Life Company Ltd.
E-mail: info@tropical-life.com
www.tropical-life.com

Completely renovated house in Baan Benjamas, in Soi Sansabai, Patong, for rent. 1st floor: living room, kitchen, gueststool, store and terrace. 2nd floor: 2 bedrooms, bath, balcony. All rooms with aircon and fans. 50m from swimming pool, with security. 3 minutes to beach. Tel: 01-8914561 (Thai); 06-283-1674 (German/English).

Tel: 076-420539

Deadline for all other pages: Saturday 12 noon.

Property Gazette

LUXURY APARTMENT

A fully furnished apartment in quiet, central Soi Sansabai is available to rent. Includes 2 aircons, cable TV, telephone, kitchen, balcony, access to pool, and maid service. Rent from 30,000 baht + + /month. Tel: 076-340937, 07-2650652. Fax: 076-345034. Email: gisbert1@gmx.net

Properties Wanted

WANTED: 6 RAI LAND

to lease for long term in Karon, Kata or Patong areas. Email: stephen.rutter@btinternet.com

PATTAYA PUB

Looking to swap for bungalow or sell. This is a huge property to live in and has large bar with all the trimmings on ground floor. Good customer base. Live and eat rent free. Located outside town. Email: benny62@loxinfo.co.th

EXCHANGE

World cruising yacht for land or house in Phuket, value around 3.3 million baht. Tel: 01-0891137.

Accommodation Available



PHUKET BEVERLY HILL

We offer Exclusive Residences at Beverly Hills in Patong. Beautiful Town House with Superb Ocean Views.

For more details call
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09-7762591

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Website: www.phuketislandrealestate.com

CONDO IN PATONG

One junior suite is available for rent. Located in nice 7th floor condo. Only 100m from beach and with all hotel facilities. 1,000 baht a night, discounted rent for longer periods. Tel: 076-383621, 01-5351777. Fax: 076-383-622. Email: laurencekaeser@hotmail.com

ATSUMI VILLAS

Atsumi Villas offers peace and quiet in a tropical garden in Rawai. 1 bedroom, lounge, kitchen, aircon and UBC. Tel: 01-2720571.

APARTMENT 4 RENT

Luxury, 2-bedroom apartment with full options. Tel: 076-344350. For more details, please see our website at www.residencephuket.com or email: g.van.hal@12move.nl

BEST DAILY/MONTHLY

packages. Nanai Coconut Resort on Nanai Rd has spacious rooms with aircon, hot and cold shower, cable TV, and a swimming pool and restaurant. Free motorbike, massage, or island tour. Daily rate: 750 baht. Monthly: 16,000 baht. Tel: 076-292907, 01-0776221. Email: coconut2004@phukets.info. Please see our web promo at: www.phukets.info/coconut-2004-promo.html

ROOMS TO LET

Fully-furnished rooms for rent in a new complex. Aircon, satellite TV, fridge, hot water and car parking for 166 baht/day. Yes, 166 baht/day. Lake View Apartments. Tel: 076-202585, 09-1968449. Email: ketmaneeclayton61@hotmail.com

PATONG LUXURY APT

1- & 2-bedroom apartments in central Patong. Email for info and photos. Email: suites247@yahoo.com

KARON BEACH

Fully-furnished bungalows at Karon Beach and apartments in Kata-Karon now available for short- or long-term rent. Please contact for further details. Tel: 076-333242, 09-6517818. Fax: 076-333243. Email: horstkaron@yahoo.com or see our website at: www.capt-horst.com

Accommodation Wanted

UNIQUE HOUSE WANTED

Young couple seeks unique house in a beautiful, nice, natural setting in Phuket. Long-term rental or possibly rent-to-buy. 2-4 bedrooms, aircon, furnished or unfurnished, a view, garden, pool or beach nearby is a plus but not looking for anything fancy or luxurious, just a little peace of paradise for 10,000 to 20,000 baht per month. Tel: 09-598-7703. Email: coneybee70@aol.com

3- OR 4-BED HOUSE

Looking to lease long-term a 3- or 4-bedroom house with one ensuite bathroom plus one other. House must be in the southern part of the island. Email: peter_k9@hotmail.com

KATHU OR IN TOWN

Seeking a quality small house or apartment for 3-6 months in a good and quiet area in Kathu, Phuket City or nearby. I visit Phuket twice a year. Please contact with phone number to arrange viewing. Email: fjellstue@yahoo.com

LOOKING FOR PLACE

to live. I'd like to rent a bungalow, an apartment or a house near a less-touristy beach area. Very clean, quiet and private, preferably with a garden. I can move either middle or end of April. Email: cooltranejazzgame@yahoo.com

HOUSE FOR RENT

I need to rent a 2-bedroom house, preferably on the east coast, and near Kajonkiet Suksa School and Tesco. Rent: less than 15,000 baht/month. House must have aircon in at least one bedroom and the living room. I will need some furniture: beds, sofa, etc. Tel: 05-150-0013. Email: iggemobil@yahoo.se

WANTED 4 VACATION

Swedish family needs a house with 3-4 bedrooms, swimming pool, aircon, kitchen, satellite TV, and hot/cold water in the bathroom. Must be fully furnished. We will need it for a holiday of 10 days around Christmas and New Year 2004. Should be near ocean - prefer walking distance - and car parking would be nice. Pls email with photo. Email: reformbyran@yahoo.se

APARTMENT

Looking for an apartment in Patong Beach area, such as Nanai Rd or Kalim Bay, with 1 bedroom, living area and kitchen. Long-term stay, with monthly payment of 7,000-10,000 baht. Tel: 076-294-104, 07-2886289. Fax: 076-294108. Email: a.noordin@baanyindee.com

NEEDED IN KRABI

I need to rent a house at Ao Nang from Dec 21, 2004 to Jan 10, 2005. Require 2 bedrooms and 6 beds. Email: info@sandelin.biz

NICE HOME

I am looking to rent a nice, clean, 1- or 2-bedroom home for 4-6 months starting October. Prefer Patong, Kalim and Kathu, but will consider quality homes elsewhere. Email: tanewius@yahoo.com

FURNISHED 2 BEDRM W/KITCHEN

Furnished 2-bedrm with kitchen, near Bangkok Phuket Hospital, required by April 1 or sooner. Will pay up to 16,000 baht. Contact with details. Tel: 07-8852996.

Building Products

DELUXE SUN AWNINGS

Sun awnings for your home, shopfront or boat. Built to last by Canvas Creations at Boat Lagoon. Contact us now for a free quote and measuring. Tel: 076-238946, 01-3701600. Fax: 076-238946. Email: canvas@loxinfo.co.th

Building Services

phuket home services

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

Tel: 076 324 400
Mobile: 07 282 0200

DREAM HOMES

Custom-built homes and villas. Please email to: rockhard@loxinfo.co.th

Household Services

AAA STORAGE

AAA Storage offers a safe, secure and fully-insured building for your motorbike, electronic equipment, furniture, boxes etc. We also sell padlocks and cardboard boxes. Tel: 06-7428743.

Household Services Needed

MAID WANTED

Maid wanted for part-time work in Chalong. Mornings 9-12, Monday to Friday. Tel: 076-381525, 07-8958629. Email: ritalouisedobson@hotmail.com

STORAGE SPACE

I need storage space of approximately 3 sqm for furniture and packed boxes, for about 6 months. Anything dry and safe will be considered, depending on price. Tel: 06-2813502. Email: kds@loxinfo.co.th

Household Products Needed

FILL UP MY HOUSE

I will move to a new, empty home soon, and I need to get rid of the echo off my new walls. If you have good-quality furniture that I could use, please email or call me. I need the everything: indoor/outdoor furniture, TV/stereo/DVD, fridge/freezer, stove, fans, etc. Tel: 07-2679780. Email: lovinda1@hotmail.com

Property Services

HOUSE PAINTING

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

SPAS R US

Steam room/sauna and accessories, and portable hot tubs from USA. Quality equipment, designed and installed for your needs. Tel: 09-7939268.

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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Require Experienced OPC's and "Cold Line" sales reps for a Gold Crown Resort.

Top commissions paid to the right candidates with a proven track record.

Daily cash spiffs, Flight reimbursed, 1 month accommodation provided

CALL NOW !!

For OPC's call Paul on 069470925
For Sales Reps call Pandora on 062672667
Or email: sales@samuipeninsulareort.com

CHANDARA

by
LUCKY PARADISE COMPANY LIMITED

A new Exclusive Residence situated in Laem Singh Beach, Phuket Province, is now looking for energetic people to fill in the following position:

SPA THERAPIST

- Minimum 5 years experience with certified spa therapist
- Pleasant personality and service minded
- Good communication and interpersonal skills
- Good command of English language is essential

If interested, please send your resume and recent photo to:

- General Manager - 60/6 Moo 3, Chong Thalay Sub-District, Thalang District, Phuket 83110 Tel: (66-76) 279550-1 Mobile: (66-9) 8717062

Fax: (66-76) 279092 E-Mail: nsapple@foxinfo.co.th

Leading Holiday Ownership Company in Asia is seeking Expat Sales Professionals

We currently have vacancies at our Bangkok Venue. We offer:

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The quality of life in Bangkok cannot be beaten by any other destination in Thailand. Come and make serious money.

Call Sam in our Bangkok office on 02-2312618 Mon-Fri between 1 pm and 8 pm or email your application to ltners0303@yahoo.com

Sales Manager (Phuket, Samui)

- Sales Supervisory Experience
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- Active with pleasant personality
- PR or Sales background
- Good English

What's on South Thai 076-213916, 076-213918
Asean Journals Co., Ltd 02-3324600-5
Email: ajapply@yahoo.com

The Phuket Gazette

the island's English-language newspaper

The Phuket Gazette seeks to fill the following position:

Reporter

The successful candidate will be a Thai national with initiative, an outgoing personality and plenty of curiosity about the world and how it works. Also essential are the ability to communicate in English, both spoken and written, and a car driver's license.

Applications should be submitted by email to alasdair@phuketgazette.net

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Urgently need an executive secretary for a villa development project. Candidate must be Thai, well-presented, fluent in both spoken and written English, computer literate, and possess some previous sales/accounting/coordination experience. Offer good salary and advancement in the near future. Please contact for more information and application. Send your CV by email with telephone number. Tel: 01-8917499. Fax: 076-342906. Email: info@kamala-orchid-estate.com

GENERAL MANAGER & HEAD CHEF BKK

required for soon-to-open upmarket English pub and restaurant on Sukhumvit Rd, Bangkok. Requires experienced, energetic expatriate GM (Brit or Aus preferred) and head chef (any nationality). UK comparable salary packages. Start date May 17. Postal applications only with full CV, photo and references to: Post Classified No. 4276, c/o Bangkok Post, Bangkok, 10110.

NEW 5-STAR BOUTIQUE RESORT

Kitchen staff required for the following positions: Chef de Partie, Baker & Pastry Chef, Commis, Cooks, stewards. Please email, fax or call for application. Tel: 076-333031, 01-9790513. Fax: 076-333035. Email: alistair@aspasiaphuket.com

THAI FOREMAN

English-speaking Thai wanted as a trainee foreman for a modular building company in Phuket. Must speak, read and write English. Call for more details and to apply. Tel: 01-1251873.

PROGRAMMERS

We are looking for staff with accounting knowledge, some English and computer skills, to work in our Thalang head office. Willing to train up, good prospects and salary offered. Working hours: 9-5/ Monday-Friday. Please call or email to apply. Tel: 076-313137. Fax: 076-313269. Email: admin@phuketprogrammers.com

CLASSY THAI

masseuse wanted. Minimum 6-month contract in Pretoria, South Africa. Employer provides flights, apartment and food. Basic salary plus commission. Authentic Thai massage and reflexology practitioners only. To apply or for more information, send full details via email or write to: Thai Therapy, PO Box 37087, Faerie Glen 0043, South Africa. Please include photo and qualifications/experience. Email: hjsteyn@iafrica.com

SECRETARY/

Duty Manager required for a small Rawai resort. Basic computer and English skills a must, French is a plus. Salary by negotiation. Please send CV including contact details by email. Tel: 09-8676157. Fax: 076-384055. Email: av58@phuket.ksc.co.th

TEACHERS REQUIRED

Nursery and preschool assistants required. Mothers with children aged 2-5 will be considered. Must have good English-language skills. Please call to apply. Tel: 076-282232, 01-9794140.

SPA MANAGER

A new luxury spa is now looking for a qualified Spa Manager with a minimum of 5 years' experience. Good salary plus benefits offered. Please call for more information or to apply. Tel: 01-3708632.

MARKETING

Manager required for Patong-based property company. Successful candidate must have a marketing degree, a minimum of 3 years' experience, good English and strong presentation skills. Salary 20-25,000 baht. Please contact to apply. Tel: 076-263737. Fax: 076-224113. Email: recruitment@bowentraining.com

MANAGER/

Marketing required for a small resort in Rawai. Must be expat with work permit, spa/hotel experience. Tel: 06-2742044. Email: brian@coco-palace.com

EXPERIENCED STAFF ONLY

Spa Aseyri in the Maldives is seeking to employ 2 experienced spa therapists for a new spa, will be opening at the end of April. Based in Male with all relocation costs taken care of by the company. Only dedicated persons, please send your CV by fax or by email to apply. For more information, contact Tel: 960-776024. Mobile: 96-776024. Fax: 960-310714. Email: duniyespasmanager@meeru.com

DIVING INSTRUCTOR

We are looking for a PADI diving instructor couple for our dive center on Phi Phi. Good salary plus commission and other benefits. Email: tgspg@hotmail.com

THAILAND-HOLIDAYS

Our Phuket office has 2 positions available for licensed tour guides, 1 German-speaking guide and 1 English-speaking guide, both with experience throughout southern Thailand. To apply, please send a written application together with your resume and a recent photo by email to: info@thailandholidays.de and for more details see our website at www.thailandholidays.de

Employment Wanted

MULTILINGUAL

professional. London professional, moving to Phuket in April, speaks and writes English, Spanish and Portuguese and can converse in Italian and French. Please feel free to contact me for an updated CV and a recent photo. Email: connect_ms@yahoo.co.uk

EUROPEAN CHEF

available. Chef from Switzerland is looking for a job. Currently working in Bangkok. Please email details about the job to: peter_beimueller@hotmail.com

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The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd

367/2 Yaowarat Road, Phuket Town Tel: 076-236555 Fax: 076-213971

ADVERTISING SALES

Expanding young media company seeks Thai nationals aged 22 and over with a good command of written and spoken English for advertising sales positions. Experience in sales is an advantage, and must have own transport. Good commission offered. To apply please send resume by fax or email. Fax: 076-282240. Email: info@footprints-asia.com

ONLINE RESERVATION

Officer. The Resort Hotel Network is seeking an Online Reservation Officer. The successful candidate will have a bachelor's degree in tourism or a related subject, as well as a good command of the English language. Please submit your resume or call Khun Duangphen for further information. Tel: 076-261382, 06-682-3672. Fax: 076-261383. Email: info@resorthotel.net

Tout, Trader & Trumpet

Articles for Sale

BARGIRL EQUIPMENT

Due to recent windfall and subsequent semi-retirement from the trade, the following items are for sale:

- 12-inch-high silver moon boots
- Vinyl jumpsuit with accessory pocket
- Mobile phone w/flashing lights and extra-loud ringing tone
- Lifetime membership at Daeng's Beauty Shop
- Phone list of 384 longstay punters for guaranteed cash on slow nights
- Fully furnished 3.6m x 4m room wit saquat toilet an wat-bum hode; new seening fan; an 2 mun prepaid ren (by boyfren fum Sawiterlan)
- Woeful "Request for Funds" letters in 63 tragic scenarios and 4 languages
- Honda Wave motorbye (now dive the Benz)

Note: all items for lease with option to buy pending outcome of recent venture (maybe Saviterlan too cole an boyfren not take care me good). Email: buffalosick.senmemoney@hotmail.com

HANDMADE SILVER JEWELRY

Beautiful and unique, our charming handmade solid silver necklaces, bracelets and anklets are made by a locally-based designer. These highly desirable items are very reasonably priced between 1,000 and 3,000 baht. I can visit you in your home or office for personal viewing and selection. Please call for further details. Tel: 09-5043307.

EQUIPMENT FOR CLOTHING SHOP

for sale. Everything for a men's clothing shop: hangers, display racks, mannequins (many different models), cash register. All items are only 1 year old. Please contact for further information. Tel: 076-346142, 01-7881466. Please email: richard_melen@hotmail.com

GRASS CUTTER

for sale. Professional-style Honda grass cutter with heavy duty blades for thick brush and long grass. Also has nylon cable head for trimming. This is a very powerful 4-stroke machine, about one year old, works perfectly. Price: 9,500 baht. Tel: 06-2725078. Email: sk2max@hotmail.com

CAMERA FOR SALE

Underwater camera for sale. Sea and Sea MX10 underwater camera with YS-40 strobe and hardbox for sale. All in very good condition. Price 10,000 baht ono. Tel: 07-2666432.

GENERATOR

from Germany, secondhand, 125KVA, 225KVA, top condition (90%). Please contact for further information at Rothermann 1998 (Thailand). Tel: 02-6185925, 01-6176313. Email: rotherman@cscoms.com, wattana@rothermannthai.com

CHILDREN'S SWING

Children's swing, seesaw and climbing frame with rope, assembled on one very neat unit. Finished in plasticized toxic-free paint. Manufactured by Playguard. Price new: 6,900 baht, will sell for only 4,000 baht. Please contact for details. Tel: 06-2778537. Email: montykong@yahoo.com.hk

Articles Wanted

USED STAMPS

I would like to exchange or buy postally used commemorative or large stamps. Email: silviobeato@tiscalinet.it

TRAILER WANTED

Any kind of trailer to be pulled by a car, not only a boat trailer. Could be flat or a box or a car trailer. Tel: 01-2734000. Email: bbonello@web.de

Boats & Marine

VITECH 72

1994 build. 4-cabin layout and spacious aft deck; large Detroit diesels (1,080hp each) and twin generators; large spacious engine room; nice cherry wood interior; presented in good condition. For further details, please see our website at www.simpsonmarine.com Tel: 012-297-1364. Email: simon.theseira@simpsonmarine.com

FISHING/DIVE BOAT

Thai-registered 60-ft wooden fishing and dive boat with 40-person capacity. 12-ft rubber dinghy with 15hp outboard, and aluminum boat with 40hp Yamaha outboard. Sale includes diving compressor tank and other items of dive gear. Contact Mr David Soh. Tel: 074-731198.

25FT FIBERGLASS BOAT


Fiberglass, inboard diesel, fishing boat. 105hp, fast, cheap to run, quiet and reliable. With trailer and Thai registration. Price: 270,000 baht. Please contact for more details. Tel: 01-8626954. Email: karom@libero.it



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FLYBRIDGE CRUISER

This sleekly-styled family flybridge cruiser offers a great layout and good lines. Powered by twin 150hp turbo diesels, she cruises at 25 knots with top speed of 30 knots. She has a Thai registration. Price: US\$44,000 or the equivalent in Thai baht. Tel: 01-8924077. Email: franks@divesupply.com

TAMAPRAO YACHT

for sale. Swedish-designed Tamaprao 36-foot fiberglass motor yacht with 2 x 200hp engines. Tel: 09-2002497.

BOAT FOR SALE

29-foot fiberglass motor yacht with Thai registration. 2 x 280hp Mercruiser engines. 3.5 million baht ono. Tel: 076-239864. Email: hktmkt@ksc.th.com

Bulletins

FREE BOOKLET

The Murder of the Animals is the Death of Humans. The voice of the heart. Please order free booklet from The Word, POB5643, D-97006, Wuerzburg, Germany. Please see our website at www.universal-spirit.cc for further info. Email: hansgerodetti@yahoo.de

PLAYGROUP PALS

wanted. I am setting up a home-based playgroup for children approximately 18 months to 3-years old. Looking to meet mums and kids to join the group two mornings a week: Tuesdays and Saturdays, 9:30-11:30. Please call for info. Tel: 07-8958629. Email: ritalouisedobson@hotmail.com

Business Opportunities

BEAUTY SALON FOR SALE

Refurbished and ready-to-operate beauty salon for sale in Cherng Talay Village, due to owner relocating. Viewing highly recommended. Price: 250,000 baht. Please call or email for more details. Tel: 07-277 3917. Email: stewcliff@myway.com

KARON SPORTS BAR FOR SALE

A 50% share in a Karon sports bar is for sale. Good location close to large hotels. 16-month lease priced at 400,000 baht. Please call for more information. Tel: 09-5897288.

KAMALA BAR 4 SALE

Fully equipped Kamala bar for sale for 250,000 baht. Rent: 6,500 baht/month. Tel: 01-7374295, 01-8929524. Contact for more info. Email: stevebragg28@hotmail.com

BAR IN KATA

Bar in Kata Center entertainment area for sale. Very good place. Price 800,000 baht and 6,000 baht rent/month. Tel: 07-8814415.

HOTEL PROPERTY FOR SALE

Would you like to own a hotel, restaurant and rental shop on Karon Beach? Easy foreign ownership, rapid company transfer. Please contact us for further information or see our website at www.geocities.com/hotelinparadise Tel: 01-6931136. Email: hotelinparadise@yahoo.com

PRIME LOCATION

shop for sale. Build your future with your own shop. For further details, please see our website at www.rangrong.com or Tel: 01-6893194. Email: 2810@mail.austria.com

MESSAGE BUSINESS

available. All new on 2-floors on main road. Has kitchen, outdoor bar, 3 aircons, beds, chairs, stereo and supplies. Price: US\$17,500. Please contact us for more details. Tel: 06-6828010. Email: pritchah@hotmail.com

GUESTHOUSE 4 SALE

Newly built with 12 deluxe rooms, 2 penthouse suites, elevator and Chanote title. 5-minute walk to beach and 5-minute walk to Soi Bangla. Price: 20 million baht. Will finance up to 50%. Email: patong207@hotmail.com

PATONG PUB

restaurant. Very well-located in the middle of a high-class hotel area. Good turnover, 110 seats, pool, darts, big screen, and fully equipped. Price: 3.2 million baht. Please call for further information. Tel: 01-8914381. Email: sawadeeoliver@hotmail.com

SHARES FOR SALE

50% of well-located and profitable restaurant in Patong beach. 950,000 baht. Tel: 06-0043008.

BAR IN PATONG

for sale. Busy bar in Patong, including all stock, pool table, UBC. A very big bar, was 3 small bars but knocked down and made into 1 bar. The best looking bar in the soi. Price: 700,000 baht ono. Must sell this month, owner moving back to UK. Contact Barry. Tel: 06-6862104. Email: info@pigandwhistle.org

SUPER, NO-COST OPPORTUNITY

Beautiful and unique hand-made solid silver necklaces, bracelets and anklets made by locally-based designer. We are looking for selected outlets where these very reasonably priced and highly desirable items may be sold in return for 25% commission. No cash outlay at all and no stock purchases necessary. Tel: 09-504 3307.

RESTAURANT 4 SALE

35-seater, fully equipped restaurant in Patong for sale, ready to work. 4 motorcycles for rent and 6 computers with Internet access. Tel: 07-0486254.

PROPERTY OR LAND

swap. I am looking for an expat or local Thai interested in doing a property, land or even business/investment swap and looking to swap my London property for land or villas near a golf course, any sort of commercial property or even some sort of business or land. Tel: 852-91629824. Email: jamesage@yahoo.com

SPA FOR SALE

Located in the busy Patong Beach Hotel. Spa/massage/beauty. Price: 250,000 baht. Great opportunity. Tel: 01-7191522.

BOOMING WELLNESS

Choose your own time at your convenience to work your own company. Little investment, high earnings. Tel: 07-8054344.

HIGH PROFIT

High-profit candle business for sale. Price: 650,000 baht. Tel: 01-7475874.

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&
Answers

www.phuketgazette.net/
issuesanswers/index.asp

NOTICE

Please be advised that the deadlines for classified ads in the Phuket Gazette April 17 issue will be early due to the April 13-15 Songkran holidays.

Deadlines:

All classified pages: 4 pm Wednesday, April 7.

For other issues, deadlines for classified ads remain as before.

Tout, Trader & Trumpet

Business Services

VISA RUN TO RANONG

1,299 baht. Includes visa stamp fee, insurance, trip by boat and minibus (both in good condition), and lunch with soft drinks. Daily trip starts at 7 am at KFC at Tesco-Lotus supercenter. Please contact us for reservation. Tel: 076-289201 or 01-5352637. For further information, please visit our website: www.phuket.dir.com/expressvisaextension

AAA STORAGE

Safe and secure building, fully insured. We store motorbikes, electronics, furniture, boxes, etc. We sell padlocks and cardboard boxes. Contact Jesse. Tel: 06-7428743.

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The most cost-effective way to access the internet is GPRS. No phone line but faster speeds and fixed costs. We have an excellent range of GPRS devices for all PC solutions and proven support services. Call or email for your free and no-obligation demonstration and quotation. Tel: 01-8957727. Email: info@axiominvestments.com

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Our goal is to provide a five-star villa management service at the most competitive prices. Choose Phuket/Marbella, a company backed by 25 years' experience on Spain's Costa Del Sol. We can also offer a superb choice of rentals in either Phuket or Marbella, from studios through to the most luxurious villas. Email: phuketmarbella@yahoo.com

Computers

COMPUTER REPAIRS

Computer repairs, call-out services, upgrades, sales and tuition by UK technician. Please contact for more information. Tel: 09-4735080.

APPLE WANTED

Portable or desktop wanted. Also video, cameras and desktop for children to learn. Tel: 01-2720571. Email: john@atsumihealing.com

NOKIA PCMCIA

cardphone. Nokia PCMCIA cardphone for connecting your laptop via the mobile phone network. This is a fully self-contained mobile phone that plugs into your laptop. Simply insert SIM card and drivers, plug in the card and surf away. Looking for offers around 5,000 baht. Email: Dr@doctorlaptop.com.au

Personal Services

WEB DEVELOPERS

Freelance programmers in Phuket provide the following services: Web design, Internet/Intranet applications, e-commerce solutions and client-server applications. Please email us for further details. Email: webteam56@hotmail.com

THAI LANGUAGE

course. Learn to speak, read and write Thai language with a professional teacher (fluent English, 6 years' experience). Both private and joint classes are available in a nice classroom at a neighborhood price, including materials, talking dictionary and CDs. Tel: 06-2820797. Fax: 076-248446. Email: thaiclasspro@hotmail.com

LEARN THAI AT HOME

From easy conversation to far more advanced learning. Coursework, cassettes and home-study materials provided by Joy, a charming Thai lady and ready to help. Please contact me for a chat. Tel: 01-7971497. Email: churee77@hotmail.com

PERSONAL TRAINER

Shape your body in the privacy of your own home or office and at the convenience of your own schedule. First session free to set up personalized program according to your needs. Please call to discuss. Tel: 09-4731598.

AMERICAN ENGLISH

Let me teach you English, American-style. Your place or mine. Groups are welcome. Tel: 417-3274042. Email: rogerxnine@yahoo.com

GRAPHIC DESIGN

freelance. If you are looking for someone to do graphic design work for you, especially for brochures, posters, food menus, printing work or building your own homepage at reasonable prices, please feel free to contact me. Tel: 09-7289671. Email: hktreal@yahoo.com

MAKEUP STYLIST

Makeup stylist available to show you the right way to use cosmetics for weddings, parties and other special occasions. Tel: 076-280363, 01-9334121.

Personal Services Wanted

DREAMWEAVER

Need help building a website with Dreamweaver program. Tel: 04-0511944. Email: moodiving@yahoo.com

WEBSITE TRAINING

I need a professional website builder to teach me how to build websites. Please contact me with your proposals. I am available most times to suit you. Tel: 09-8722752. Email: ukthai@procom.in.th

HELP WANTED

Business owner in Thalang is looking for a housekeeper and a Thai teacher to instruct a foreign student in Thai language. Must have own transportation. Tel: 06-0760141.

ITALIAN TEACHER

I am looking for an Italian woman to teach me conversational Italian. I already have a textbook and speak a little Italian. Email: ms_que70@hotmail.com

Personals

BACKGAMMON

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

LADY TO 45

sought by mature, fit man of French background living in Australia. Here (in Phuket) now looking for an educated lady who speaks English or French, works in an office or as a nurse. Good looks a bonus. Tel: 07-8972648. Email: bedshed@ic-net.com.au

GAY LOVER

wanted. A very pretty 27-year-old English male with good sense of humor is looking for older men for fun and games. I stay at Phi Phi Island. Please call to arrange meeting. Tel: 09-7268471.

THAI WIFE WANTED

A retired 51-year-old Australian businessman staying in Patong hopes to meet an honest, kind, attractive, English-speaking lady, aged 20-30. She should be of good character, interested in marriage and a very good future. Must be a lady who loves to laugh and smile. Please email with photo and more details. Email: bigmudcrab@hotmail.com

DEAF THAI LADY

wanted. I am a deaf man from Europe. I am looking for deaf Thai ladies for friendship and maybe for love. Please email me with more details. Email: kris@csloxinfo.com

FEMALE PENPAL

An engineer in Phoenix, Arizona, is looking for a penpal friendship with a Thai lady, 20-40 years old. Please contact by email at: markjive@cox.net

SPECIAL LADY

Are you seeking a nice, charming Western male to share a secure life with? I'm looking for a nice, kind, sensual lady to be with for life. Email: fjellstue@yahoo.com

GENERAL MANAGER

A single foreigner in Phuket is looking for an Asian woman. Please email if interested. Email: duhart37@hotmail.com

IRISH MALE

seeks Thai lady for marriage in Pattaya. If interested, please contact Email: paulwww2003@yahoo.co.uk

AUSTRALIAN LIFE

I am 55 years old, slim, fit and healthy. I am divorced and I have my own business in Australia. I would like to meet a Thai lady, 24-40 years old, who can cook Thai food, look after me, and enjoy a quality home life here in Australia. In return, I will fly her to Australia to be with me. Email: squire5445@yahoo.com.au

Pets

GIVE BAMBI A CHANCE

Bambi is a gentle and affectionate 3-month-old male puppy with rather large ears. He was found in a rubbish dump, with a large infected hole in his back and also suffering from pneumonia. He has made a full recovery and is looking for a home with someone who will give him the care and affection he deserves. If you can help, please contact me. Tel: 09-9701392. Email: leonecosens@yahoo.com

AFRICAN GRAY

It would be nice to get in touch with other owners of African Gray parrots in Phuket and maybe set up some form of owner's association. Please contact us for further information. Email: travelmate212@yahoo.co.uk

YORKSHIRE TERRIER

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Property agents and their potential clients alike found the Phuket & Samui Property Expo in Singapore in March both fun and informative. Don't miss the next one in Hong Kong in November.