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Politician hurt in beach attack

By Gategaeo Phetsawang

PATONG: Suwat Somnam, a member of the Patong Progress Party, which is being investigated by the Phuket Election Commission for vote-buying after it won the February 8 Patong municipal election, was beaten with a metal bar on April 6 while jogging along Patong Beach.

"I woke up early as usual and went jogging along Patong Beach," he told the *Gazette*.

K. Suwat, 47, explained that he was jogging along the footpath near the Baan Lai Mai Beach Resort when a man aged 30-plus and wearing light-pink jeans leaped out from behind a bush and attacked him with a metal bar.

"He hit me many times, [and he kept hitting me] until the metal bar was bent," K. Suwat said.

"I raised my hands to protect my head and my face, and then I pushed him backward," he said. "He backed off, then he ran to a motorbike driver who was waiting for him about 20 meters away."

K. Suwat said that, before collapsing on the ground, he saw both men drive off, his attacker using one of his feet to cover the license plate.

"I was taken to Patong Hospital by someone on a motorbike and then moved to Bangkok Phuket Hospital later in the day," he said. "My left arm and my back are bruised. One finger is broken."

K. Suwat also told the *Gazette*, "I later called other members in the party to warn them to be careful. I think this attack involves local politics because I am a new politician in a new



Suwat Somnam recovers in hospital: 'I think this attack involves local politics.'

party, and especially because I am a person who usually speaks frankly.

"Six or seven people have been attacked because of Patong politics since [Patong] was promoted to a [tessabaan] municipality," he added.

Patong Progress Party leader Songserm Kepsap told the *Gazette* that he believes that the

attack was politically motivated. "K. Suwat is a good person. He has lived in Patong for at least 40 years and has no [personal] conflicts with anyone," he said.

Pol Col Chalit Thintanee, Superintendent of Kathu Police Station, said that police will investigate, with business conflicts and local politics as possible motives for the attack.

Developers slam report of 'double pricing'

By Gategaeo Phetsawang

PHUKET: Real estate developers have reacted with bafflement and irritation to an accusation that the property industry in Thailand indulges in double pricing, with foreigners paying up to 75% more than Thais for homes.

The accusation came in a report on April 7 published by the *South China Morning Post* in Hong Kong – the biggest market by far for the high-end residential property available in Phuket.

The paper quoted Bangkok-based Francis Lai Pang Fee, former Chairman of the Thailand chapter of the prestigious London-based Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), as saying that the tourism industry's much reviled two-tier pricing system was mirrored in the residential property market.

"Assuming it is a prime location, the increase in price for foreigners can be as much as 75%," the newspaper quoted Mr Lai as saying.

"Normally, such projects, which are sold off the drawing board, are offered to foreigners first at the higher price. Later, the leftovers are sold locally at a discount."

Bill Barnett, CEO of consultancy C9 Hotelworks and developer of the successful East Coast Ocean Villas project, told the *Gazette*, "Probably 90% of the clients are non-Thais so it's not a very practical thing. I've never seen any two-tier pricing, or been aware of it."

"Normally, when you buy off-plan, you get better value, and when sales reach critical mass,

Continued on page 2



Don't miss it...

Hong Kong - November 2004

See Page 36 for details

Phuket & Samui PROPERTY EXPO

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Air Andaman to launch new Singapore-to-Phuket route

By Stephen Fein

PHUKET: Air Andaman will begin a regular service between Bangkok and Singapore from May 13, stopping at Phuket on the way.

Public Relations Manager Amnad Thienhiranchaikul told the *Gazette* that the airline is awaiting delivery of two new Fokker-100 jet airplanes to fly the new route. With capacity for 108 passengers, the new planes will replace the smaller F-50 turboprop aircraft formerly used by the carrier.

K. Amnad said the fares, yet to be announced, will be "competitive". The service is scheduled to fly every Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday. The company has also applied to fly from Phuket to Vietnam via U-Tapao airbase, near Pattaya.

In addition, the feasibility of a direct service to the Andaman & Nicobar Islands from Phuket, the dream of airline founder Atichart Athakravisunthorn, is being studied.

Rival carrier PB Air recently announced plans to provide a twice-weekly service to Port Blair in the Andamans from Bangkok, starting in December.

Air Andaman Sales Director Apirat Purithawornston said the company is also planning services to other regional destinations, including Kolkata (formerly Calcutta) in India and Shenzhen in southern China.

Air Andaman's new management team is changing the airline's focus away from the domestic market to the regional one. Bucking the low-cost, no-frills trend, Air Andaman will offer free-flowing Champagne on all regional flights as part of its "Chaba" in-flight service.

In a recent press statement,

Air Andaman President Dean Mills said, "Air Andaman has successfully restructured [its] shareholdings and debts, and has emerged with what we believe is a very sound and promising business plan.

"We have decided to exit the domestic market due to very high competition and falling yields. From now on, we will concentrate on regional services."

Mills added that while the airline will become a regional carrier, some domestic routes may still be part of the network. Services from Bangkok to Surat Thani and Haad Yai are being considered, he said.

Plans are also being drawn up to offer long-haul flights from Bangkok to destinations in Europe, although no details are available yet. The company is awaiting delivery of a Boeing 737-400 for longer routes.

Dreaming of flying

PHUKET: The government is offering 60 scholarships for good-looking, tall, well educated Thai women living in poverty to realize their dreams of becoming air hostesses.

Under the "Eur Ah-torn Air Hostess Project", women granted scholarships will attend the three-month cabin attendant course at the Civil Aviation Training Center (CATC) in Bangkok.

The project, says an announcement from the Phuket Provincial Public Relations Office (PPRO), aims to give underprivileged women a chance to "serve air passengers with the warmth of traditional Thai culture".

In addition to being improv-



Her Royal Highness visits Koh Maphrao

HRH Princess Galyani Vadhana received a welcome garland from Maneephan Usawarangkura, wife of the Governor of Phuket, when she visited Koh Maphrao on April 5 to preside over a health drive on the island by some 200 volunteer health workers. Her Royal Highness also attended similar health drives in Phang Nga and Ranong provinces.

Warning over export of antiques

PHUKET CITY: Officers from the Customs Office at Phuket International Airport and from the Thalang National Museum have issued a reminder that people wanting to take antiques or Buddha images out of Thailand must first obtain a permit.

Nittaya Pinchaisiri, an of-

ficer at Thalang National Museum, said, "Foreigners who want to take antiques or Buddha images bought in Thailand back to their home countries need to have permission from the government first. But most people don't know that it takes time to issue a permit to take such items out of the country."

She explained that a committee of officials from the Phuket Fine Arts Office and the Thalang National Museum, which examines applications to export items of cultural value, must approve each application before passing it on to the Governor of Phuket for approval.

"Currently, it should not take longer than four days to issue a permit, but we will soon

accelerate the process so that it takes only two days," she said.

Mana Pisibut, Chief of the Customs office at Phuket International Airport, said, "We will urge antique shops to inform their customers about this regulation."

He also explained that people found taking cultural artifacts out of the country without a permit could have the items seized and may even be detained by Customs officials

For more information about permits to export cultural items contact the Thalang National Museum, at Moo 3, Tambon Srisoonthorn, Thalang. Tel: 076-311426. Open 8:30 am to 4 pm, government work days only.

Developers angry at allegation of double pricing in property

From page 1
prices go up." But, he said, this was a normal pricing strategy, and had nothing to do with nationalities.

There were no "leftovers" as described by Mr Lai, he said, adding, "If anything, the last few properties sell at a premium."

Tanan Tanpaibul, developer of The Heritage, where homes are selling for 7 million baht to 10 million baht, said, "No, no. Not in the property business."

"The land price and the building costs are the same for anyone. We have both Thai and foreign buyers and we sell to them at the same price."

David Edwards, Director of Green Heritage Developments, which built Katamanda, said, "It defies logic and it's certainly not the case in anything I've been involved with."

Long-time property agent and developer, William Pinsent

of Phuket Land, could think of only one circumstance where there might be a price differential – in the selling of mixed condominiums, where the 49% earmarked for foreign freehold ownership might carry a premium of 20%. This was because those units could be sold to anyone in the world, while the remaining 51% could only be sold to Thais.

"But that's a supply-and-demand issue," he said, "and the buyers know this."

He described Mr Lai's allegation of a 75% difference as "absolute crap".

Even in the Thailand chapter of the RICS, Mr Lai appears to have little support for his views. The current chairman, Haydn Thomas, told the *Gazette*, "I would personally distance myself from the article. I am not aware of any two-tier pricing system [in the Thai property market]."

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Bad debt property to be auctioned off

PHUKET CITY: The Phuket Legal Execution Department (PLED) will hold its first "distressed property" auction of the year on May 15 at the Phuket Merlin Hotel.

The PLED, which is responsible for auctioning off bad-debt properties, currently has on its books 220 properties worth an estimated 750 million baht.

Those that are unsold on May 15 will be offered at discounted prices in subse-

quent auctions. "We hope to bring in 50 million baht from the first auction," said PLED Chief Saeksan Suksang.

"The other auctions will be held June 5, June 26 and July 3. All will take place at the Phuket Merlin Hotel, starting at 9 am."

All 220 properties will be put on the block on May 15 unless debtors can work out loan restructuring agreements with their creditors.

K. Saeksan noted, "[Usually] about 30% of the properties [on our list] are saved from going to auction when both sides agree to compromise on repayment terms," K. Saeksan told the *Gazette*.

He said that about 20 of the properties up for auction on May 15 are valued at more than 10 million baht.

One property in Phuket City, covering more than 1.5 rai, is valued at 26.5 million baht.

On May 15, bidding on each lot will open at 80% of its estimated value. If a property fails to attract bids, it will be put on the block again at a subsequent auction, with bidding opening at 50% of the estimated value.

Prospective bidders must register in advance and pay a 50,000-baht deposit.

For more information contact the PLED at Tel: 076-217090-1 or 215589.

Gategao Phetsawang

Deputy mayor victim of bizarre 'poison' incident

THALANG: Police are investigating whether a bottle of water in the Thepkasatri Municipal Offices contained poison – and whether it was part of a murder attempt by municipal officers bent on revenge after being accused of embezzlement of municipal funds.

Accusations of skulduggery and fraud – and possible links to a double murder – were flying today at the troubled municipal offices.

The man who sipped the supposedly contaminated water from the glass, the 49-year-old Deputy Mayor for Public Health and Environment, Manoch Chotivarananon, is sure the water was laced with poison.

On April 9, he explained, an officer poured him a glass from a bottle in the office refrigerator.

"When the glass reached my mouth, I realized it wasn't just water," he told the *Gazette*. "A little bit went down my throat," he said.

"I spat out the rest and when it hit the floor it fizzed. I rinsed out my mouth quickly and officers helped me to get to Thalang Hospital." He remained in hospital overnight.

"I'm still confused as to why I was poisoned because I don't have any conflicts with other people," he said.

The reason K. Manoch immediately suspected he had been poisoned was the bitter atmosphere at the municipal offices on Thepkasatri Rd, close to the Thalang Municipal Offices and the local police station.

Suspicion and distrust have permeated the offices since Mayor Prasong Trairat's parents,

Prasert and Thavorn Trairat, were murdered at their home by gunmen on May 5 last year.

The shootings came soon after the mayor's father, a community leader, made accusations of corruption at the Thepkasatri municipal offices.

No one has been brought to justice for hiring the killers, but one official was later transferred to Cherng Talay as a result of the corruption allegations.

Mayor Prasong told the *Gazette* that he believed someone deliberately put the poisoned water in a bottle in the refrigerator in the finance division at the offices.

"I'm not sure, though, whether that person wanted to murder some of the new financial officers who have just been appointed to work here," he said.

"I have found many suspect projects and have established that the old financial team of the municipality created some problems," K. Prasong said. "For example, there was a football project that the Municipality organized. The amount in the bank should be 160,000 baht, but when I checked, there was only 268 baht left in the account."

"The police are investigating," he said. "I think it must be someone in the Municipality because other people normally don't have access to this refrigerator. I don't think K. Manoch was the intended victim."

Pol Lt Col Jumroon Playdoug of Thalang Police Station said that while police theorize that acid may have been added to the water, they are now awaiting the results of lab tests being performed in Bangkok.

Phuket 'will overtake Singapore in 2 years'

By Gategao Phetsawang

PHUKET CITY: Information and communications technology (ICT) in Phuket will outstrip that of Singapore within two years, the head of Phuket's newly-established Software Industry Promotion Agency (Sipa) has ambitiously predicted.

Dr Pongsak Kerdvongbudit, President of Sipa in Phuket, also announced that the office in Saphan Hin, which was officially opened on March 1 but initially remained unmanned, is now partially staffed and is ready to register information technology (IT) companies.

Dr Pongsak invited IT investors to a meeting on April 25 to discuss problems they have encountered setting up businesses on the island and to look for ways to help them. The meeting will be held at the Thavorn Grand Plaza Hotel in Phuket City, starting at 9 am.

He told the *Gazette* that Sipa is encouraging all IT businesses on the island to register with its office, which now has one full-time staff member and more on the way.

"We expect to be fully staffed by April 20. The office here has been set up very quickly," he said, admitting however, "The Sipa headquarters in Bangkok still doesn't have an office, so this has held us up. [It was announced on April 9 that the Bangkok office had at last been established.]

"After the meeting, we will

use the information gathered to develop a plan to meet the needs of investors and IT specialists working in Phuket. Within two years, ICT systems in Phuket will be better than in Singapore," he predicted.

There are now thought to be more than 200 IT firms located in Phuket, and a number of international companies have set up businesses here to produce short-range wireless network devices and medical equipment.

Rattana Wetprasit, Acting Manager of the Phuket Sipa office and currently its sole occupant, told the *Gazette* she is ready to help to interested investors.

"We'd like qualified IT firms to join in helping us establish Sipa's pilot projects, such as our One-Stop Service," she said.

K. Rattana revealed that foreign labor issues were among the most common queries. She said her office was now discussing the issue with the Board of Investment to find ways to make it more convenient for foreign IT experts to get work permits.

Among Sipa's other ambi-



Dr Pongsak Kerdvongbudit: 'Within two years, ICT systems in Phuket will be better than in Singapore.'

tious plans for Phuket are:

- To help turn Phuket into an IT city by supporting software industry development to reach a target market value of 160 billion baht over the next five years;

- After 2007, to train up to 600 IT-literate workers a year in four areas: software enterprise development, animation and multi-

media, mobile and game applications, and embedded systems;

- To expand the IT industry into the neighboring provinces of Phang Nga and Krabi.

IT investors may now register with the Sipa Phuket office at Prince of Songkla University's Saphan Hin building. A form for registration for the seminar can be downloaded at www.phuket.psu.ac.th/sipa/ext7-47.doc.

Sipa's Phuket office is open weekdays from 9 am to noon and 1 pm to 3 pm. The office on the ground floor of the Research Center, Prince of Songkla University Phuket building, Saphan Hin, Tel: 076-356039; Fax: 076-356040; Email: sipa_phuket@lycos.com. **Editorial: Page 18**

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Queer News

The iceman cometh

NAKHON PATHOM: One of the primary targets in the Government's war on drugs are dealers of *ya bah* (methamphetamine), one form of which is the highly addictive recrystallised form, known as "ice".

But if the tale told by a man in Nakhon Pathom's Muang District is to be believed, dealers in ice made from water are now being targeted by unknown hitmen, too – perhaps indicating that the War on Drugs has taken an unexpected turn for the worse.

On March 31, 25-year-old Samran Singthong of tambon Thanong was going about his daily work routine, delivering ice in his *saleng* (a three-wheel pig transporter, a motorcycle with a crude sidecar).

At 10:30 am he made a delivery to 99 Hotel in tambon Charrok (*Editor's note: Hotels with names like 69, 89, and 99 are invariably "short time" hotels.*)

After making the delivery, he stopped off at the nearby home of his elder brother.

As he was getting back onto his conveyance, two men dressed in black, wearing gloves and helmets, pulled up about five meters away on an unlicensed red Honda Wave motorcycle.

From there, the man riding pillion fired two rounds at K. Samran's chest before speeding off.

When police arrived, they found a hole in K. Samran's clothing and a bruise on his skin, but no penetrating wound. A crowd of excited villagers had gathered around the man.

"I felt pain on my chest and vomited blood after the criminals escaped," the human target told the officers

"I thought I had already

died and was witnessing my actions from the spirit world. But when I checked myself there was no bullet in my chest, just this bruise and a hole in my shirt," he told the police.

"I believe I was saved by the magical properties of the *ko* amulet that always hangs from a chain around my neck. I wear it to protect myself from harm," he added proudly.

But one officer found more holes in K. Samran's story than he did in the man's shirt.

A thorough search of the scene failed to turn up any bullet casings and nobody in the area heard gunshots. The only evidence found to corroborate his story was a spread of bloody vomit.

Chief Investigator Pol Capt Chayut Phiphattaweekul, of Nakhon Pathom Police Station, said he was not convinced that K. Samran had been shot – and if he had, it must have been by an argun.

Bullets, after all, aren't generally known to bounce off human flesh.

Buddha amulet expert Yutthachai Phathomwathanasiri said the Luang Por Ngurn amulets were issued in 1963.

They have become popular among hoodlums, thugs and goons who think they have the power to stop bullets. They are commonly referred to as *liang go* (gangster coins).

Although the Buddha tried to enlighten his followers and free them from the suffering and ignorance, the sale in these trinkets is a multi-billion baht business in Thailand.

The monks who issue them are the greatest beneficiaries.

Source: Kom Chat Luek

Fighting sports have long been an aspect of traditional Thai culture. Cock-fighting, although the recent outbreak of avian 'flu dented its popularity, is practised up and down the country, and many trainers prize their birds for the pureness of breed as well as their fighting ability.

Buffalo fighting, where two beasts are pitted against each other, rather than a toreador, also enjoys a following. Both these pastimes are legal unless pursued for gambling purposes.

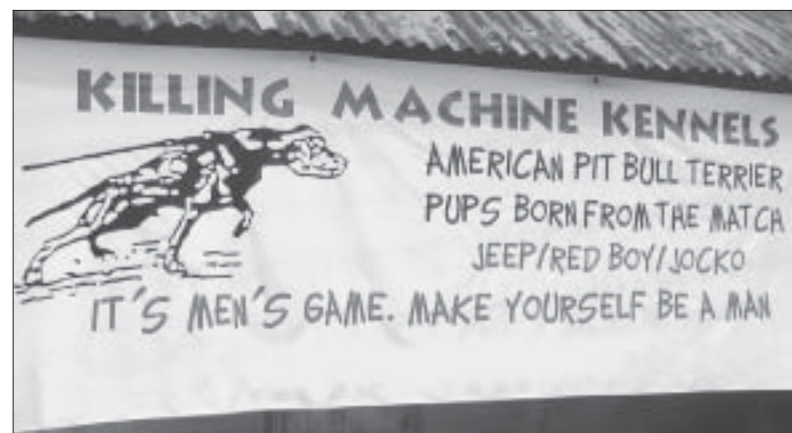
But one spectacle, bloodier and more recently introduced – and technically illegal in Thailand – is dog fighting. American Pit Bull Terriers are the preferred breed, and the numbers of these dogs on Phuket is increasing.

The *Gazette's* Dhirarat Boonkongsaeen takes a look into the island's pit bull culture.

American Pit Bull Terriers, usually referred to simply as pit bulls, have a checkered history and a bad reputation.

Their fanciers say that the dogs are nothing more than misunderstood creatures, brave, affectionate and without parallel in the canine world.

Is this really man's



VIAGRA FOR THE EGO: The sign is just to let potential owners know what to expect, says the breeder.

Their detractors suggest that generations of excessive inbreeding, done to make the dogs excel in combat, whether bull-baiting or pitted against one another, has left the breed scarred and without function, except, at best, as a machismo-enhancing lifestyle accessory. At worst, they say, pit bulls are little more than killing machines.

A recent incident that emphasizes the detractors' standpoint was the February 21 savaging of a six-year-old girl in Pathum Thani by both a pit bull

and a rottweiler.

There have been other cases of pit bull attacks in Thailand though none, as far as the *Gazette* could ascertain, in Phuket.

The situation is, in some ways, similar to that in Britain in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Although "devil dog" stories were whipped up by crusading tabloid journalists, the popularity of a number of breeds – pit bulls, Japanese Tosa, Dogo Argentino, and Fila Brasileiro – gradually increased until a correlated rise in attacks on humans led to them being banned in Britain under the 1991 Dangerous Dogs Act.

But on Phuket in 2004, the casual observer passing along Wiset Rd in Rawai can see a banner advertising pit bull pups for sale from "Killing Machine Kennels". Although importing pit bulls is against the law in Thailand, breeding and selling them is not.

The banner is provocative, suggesting that the pups are scions of dog fight champions, and trades on the macho image of owning an ultra-tough dog.

The owner of Killing Machine Kennels, who declined to give his name to the *Gazette*, admitted that he had received considerable criticism about the banner, and had stopped selling pups in Phuket, sending them instead to buyers in Bangkok.

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CUDDLY OR DEADLY?

Whether bred to fight or bred as pets, pit bulls provoke strong reactions from fans – and from those who fear them.

best friend?

who know how to look after them, not for fighting,” the breeder said.

The name of the business – like the rest of the wording on the sign – was taken from American magazines, he said. He had chosen the name as a way to deter normal dog-lovers who might otherwise be tempted to buy one of his dogs.

“People who love this kind of dog will understand what it means,” he said.

He denied all knowledge of dog-fighting in Phuket and said that anyone who accused him of raising dogs for the arena was only trying to destroy both his business and reputation.

He added that someone had called him recently to ask about buying tickets to a dog fight, but he had told the caller that he had no idea about this.

But dog fights do take place in Phuket. Indicating the fear that surrounds those involved in the business, another source who asked not to be named told the *Gazette* that dog fights are staged in the Chalong area, though only a dozen or so people attend any match, and only by invitation.

“These people don’t care about the dogs,” the source said. “They are interested only in seeing their dog fight with – and beat

– other pit bulls.

“Some people involved in the business will tempt pit bull owners into becoming involved in fighting by offering them 100,000 baht for their dog – if it can first win a fight,” he said.

One expert on pit bulls, who also spoke with the *Gazette* on condition of anonymity, said “Pit bulls used for fighting are trained differently from the pet ones. They are trained to pull weights and are kept running on treadmills to build up their strength and stamina.” The training would be considered by most people to be nothing more than downright cruel.

The expert described how fighting dogs are routinely kept in extremely confined spaces – such as an oil drum or a small concrete trough – and exposed deliberately to sunlight or rain to make them aggressive.

He went on, “Some pit bulls are injected with steroids to build



DO THEY MEAN ME? Bad to the bone, or just bad press, pit bulls are here to stay.

up their muscles while others are fed *ya bah* (methamphetamine) to make them barking mad.”

Inbreeding is employed as a means of distilling the aggres-

sion found in particular strains of the breed into successive generations.

Wichai Chidchio, director of Phuket International Dog School acknowledged that some countries have laws restricting or ownership of pit bulls or banning them outright.

“Their powerful character makes them 100% fighter. They don’t stop fighting until they or their opponent dies,” he said.

“Some people are scared of pit bulls, poor dogs,” he concluded.

He said he knew of pit bull owners who had not been able to keep the animals and had dumped them in a local wat.

The pit bulls had quickly become, through fights, the top dogs in the wat. As a result, pups born to females in the wat, having pit bull blood, became successively more aggressive.

Bangkok-based pit bull owner and veterinarian, Kosin Thongsri, stressed, however, that any dog can be trained to be aggressive.

“Poodles can be aggressive, if you train them to be. Similarly,

pit bulls are only dangerous to people if they are trained to be.

“Some people don’t know how to treat pit bull terriers and some criticize me for making my dog exercise – but pit bulls need exercise,” said Dr Kosin.

K. Wichai agreed. A pit bull needs to run between three or four kilometers a day, he said.

He revealed that he was recently targeted by an investigative crew from TV channel iTV. An undercover team approached him and asked to buy a fighting dog from him.

“I told them that I have never kept dogs for fighting. They looked around and realized that I have only friendly dogs, not aggressive or fighting dogs,” said K. Wichai.

“They eventually told me who they were and asked where they should go to see a dog fight. I told them that they could see one in Surat Thani.”

K. Wichai admitted that he had once inadvertently sold two pit bulls to people who wanted them for fighting.

However, he managed to recover the dogs, later selling one to work at Phuket Provincial Prison and finding the other a good home in Phang Nga.

“Pit bull fighting is a very bad thing and I don’t know why it still happens.

The fighting itself is cruel and the training programs – the dogs are kept half-starved and in terrible conditions – are dreadful,” said K. Wichai.

“The police have all the authority they need to stop pit bull fighting but the [dogfight] organizers are arrogant because they know that no one really cares about the dogs. Perhaps people have forgotten that dogs have blood and souls, and all the emotions that we do.”

There is no law that specifically prohibits dog-fighting. The only charge that might be brought against owners of fighting dogs would be one of cruelty to an animal, a petty offense that carries a maximum 1,000-baht fine.

With dogs being sold for as much as 100,000 baht, not to mention the money to be made through gambling, a 1,000-baht fine is not much of a deterrent.

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Phuket's Gold Coast

By Stephen Fein

KARON: While most foreign tourists come to Phuket's beaches to unwind, Peter Cott, from Berlin, comes with metal detector in hand to sweep our beaches – not for landmines, but for the coins that are dropped by careless tourists and disappear into the sand every day.

The enterprising German was sweeping along a row of beach chairs in front of Arcadia Beach Resort just before dusk recently. Curious as to how he was doing, the *Gazette* asked how much he had found so far on that evening's sweep.

"Ninety four baht already," he said, scooping up a coin from beneath the lounge I had just left. Finders keepers, losers weepers.

Mr Cott said that searching for coins along the beach was just a way of getting exercise and only a hobby – but a lucrative one. He bought the metal detector in Florida about eight years ago for some US\$350 after a great deal of deliberation as to whether it would really be worth the expense.

It has been. Mr Cott, who keeps a daily log of exactly how much he collects, told the *Gazette* he has already scooped up the equivalent of more than 7,000 Euros from beaches all over the world.

He covers a lot of sand, too. He said the best spot in Phuket is along Kamala, where he rou-

tinely scoops up hundreds of baht a day. Some people have referred to the strip along Kamala beach as "millionaire's mile".

Are the people there really so rich that they can't be bothered to deal with coins, instead just casually tossing them into the sand?

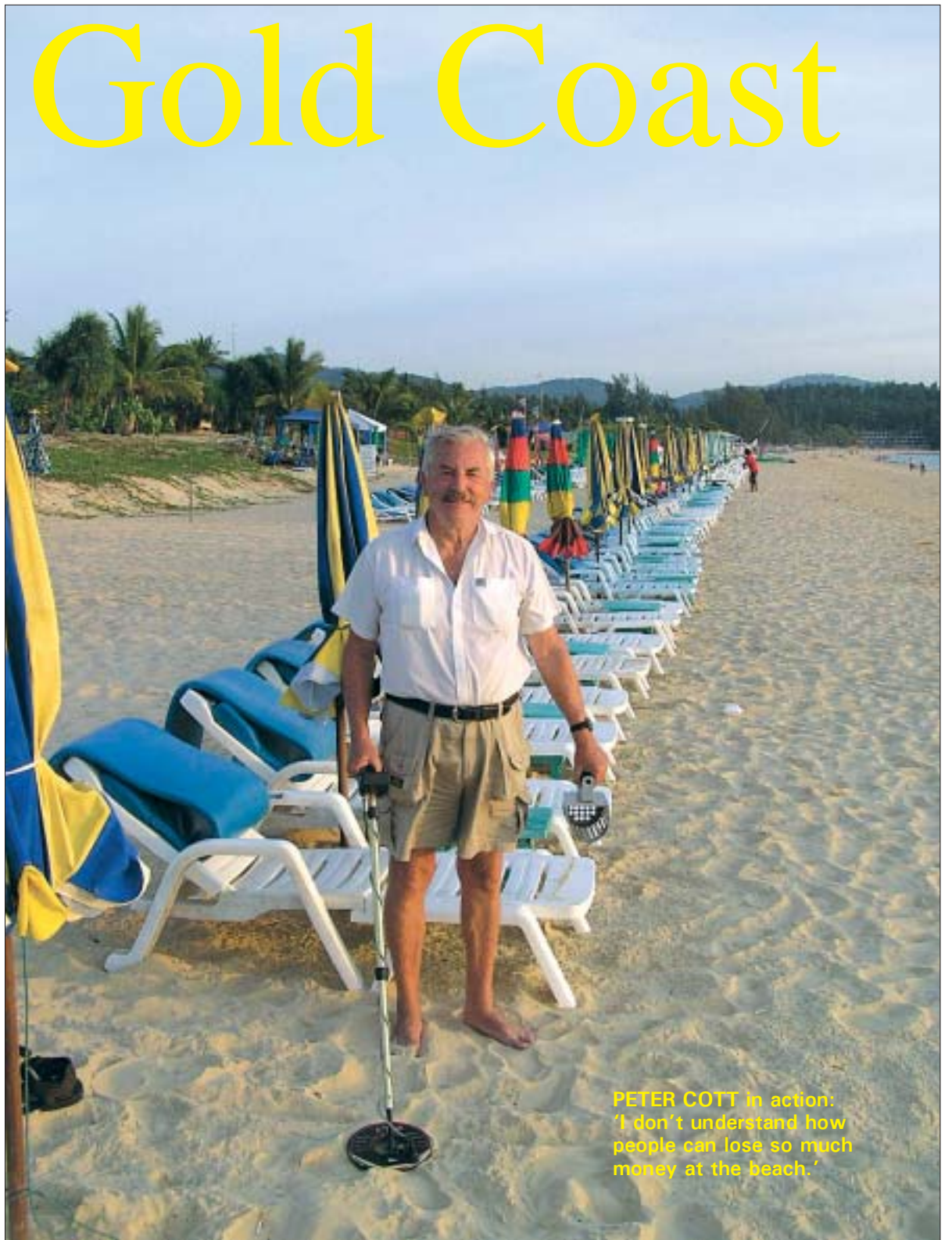
Not so, said Mr Cott, who thinks it is more just a matter of basic carelessness. When the *Gazette* noted that he occasionally found banknotes under water while swimming in the holding pens set up to protect swimmers from jet skis, Mr Cott said, "Yes, it's unbelievable. I don't understand how people can lose so much money at the beach."

He isn't complaining though, as the negligence plays right into his own sifter-wielding hands.

But even Kamala can't compare with the best spot of all, said the globe-trotting German.

"The best spot is Tenerife, one of the the Canary Islands. I can rake in [literally] about 200 Euros a week while I am on vacation there," he divulged, adding that much of the booty was in the form of British pounds because the UK has yet to adopt the Euro as its sole currency.

One has to wonder if Mr Cott's hobby might not be a reasonable job alternative to the annoying touts who wander Phuket beaches with their improbable wares, annoying tourists whose sole aim is to relax.



PETER COTT in action: 'I don't understand how people can lose so much money at the beach.'

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SINGHA NEW LOOK

Top academic slams Thailand Inc

Prime minister Thaksin's CEO style of government has eroded many of the political reforms of the past 25 years, threatening democracy and civil society while reducing citizens to mere consumers, Professor Pasuk Phongpaichit, of Chulalongkorn University's Faculty of Economics, told an international seminar at the university.

"When a country becomes a company and its government becomes management, then people are not so much citizens with rights, liberties and aspirations as consumers and factors of production," the professor said.

Prof Pasuk said PM Thaksin, whose family controls the Shin Corp conglomerate, seized power to protect big business interests.

"They want to manage society to suppress alternative agendas which prioritize rights, democracy or equity above growth," she said, adding that the Government was undermining society by delivering social development schemes to quell protests.

She also charged the government with taming the media through a mixture of law, regulation, intimidation and money.

The professor from Chulalongkorn, Thailand's oldest and most prestigious school, quoted Thaksin's famous dictum of last year: "Democracy is a good and beautiful thing, but it's not the ultimate goal as far as administering economic growth is concerned ... Democracy is just a tool, not our goal."

In November, the professor pointed out, PM Thaksin was also quoted as saying: "A company is a country. A country is a company. They're the same. The management is the same."

More pressing business: House Speaker Uthai Pimchai-chon said that raising allowances paid to MPs for attending sessions will not prevent absenteeism – because attendance depends more on each MP's sense of responsibility.

The increase, still being considered by the House Decree Committee, calls for the atten-



Performers from Kenya's Masai tribe display their acrobatic skills during a show at Chon Buri's Khao Kheow Open Zoo.

The park has set up a safari exhibit featuring African animals such as giraffe and rhinoceros.

The Masai were brought in to help promote the exhibit, which is intended to give Thais a glimpse of life on the African plains.

dance allowance to rise from 500 baht to 1,000 baht a session to lure MPs into the House.

Since 2002, five House sessions have had to be abandoned due to the lack of a quorum after a formal check. That figure does not include sessions closed after the House Speaker decided independently that the number of members in attendance was below the required 250 MPs.

Cranking up production: After years of controlling birth rates, the government will try to increase the population by playing matchmaker in a new *Ua Athorn*

husband-and-wife program.

Deputy Public Health Minister Sirikorn Maneerin described the program as a package of services that would provide a database of single people and widows or widowers for people seeking partners.

In addition, the program will offer training courses for new couples, including blood-checking, preparing for pregnancy, what to do after delivery of a child and how to raise children, said K. Sirikorn.

The program arose from the Prime Minister's concern that young people today marry very

late and have fewer children. In the long run, this could reduce the population of the country while increasing the proportion who are elderly, she said.

Bangkok underground: The official opening of the Bangkok subway system will be moved from August 12 to June because of increasing traffic congestion on Bangkok streets, the Metropolitan Rapid Transit Authority of Thailand (MRTA) said.

MRTA governor Praphat Jongsanguan said the government had decided to move the official launch to June, but the exact date had yet to be fixed.

Bangkok City Clerk Natthanon Thaweessin said 18 new taxi motorcycle stands at 18 subway stations in six districts have also been approved on a trial basis. He said the motorcycle taxis at the stands would be able to travel across district lines, unlike normal stands where services are limited to the same district.

K. Natthanon said shuttle mini-buses would also be allowed to park at subway stations to pick up passengers.

Irrigation irritation: Senator Pramote Maiklad strongly attacked the pipe-irrigation system proposed by newly-installed Natural Resource and Environment Minister Suwit Khunkitti, saying he was not scratching where it itched.

Sen Pramote, a former Irrigation Department head and one of the country's top irrigation experts, criticized Suwit and Agriculture Minister Somsak Thepsuthin for proposing a pipe irrigation system, saying the country was facing a lack of water resources, not a problem with water distribution.

"I do not understand how they come up with these ideas. I suspect something fishy behind them. Do they want to build a water-pipe factory? It is not necessary to waste 500 million baht to conduct a feasibility study. I can tell them right away that it is not feasible," he said.

He should know: As part of the government's policy to decentralize power, any department head who fails to transfer power to CEO provincial governors will be moved to an inactive post, warned Deputy Prime Minister Wan Muhamad Noor Matha.

Only about half of the relevant departments have transferred power to governors, the Deputy PM told a seminar at Kasetsart University in Bangkok.

Deputy PM Wan Muhamad Noor was himself recently transferred to a less active post. Formerly Interior Minister, the second-most-powerful man in government, he was transferred to his Deputy PM position after failing to resolve the conflict in the South.

Kindergarten fees covered: The Cabinet approved a plan to subsidise tuition fees from kindergarten to Grade 12. Previously, only Grade 1 to Grade 12 students were eligible for government subsidies.

Education Minister Adisai Bodharamik said his ministry would receive an additional 2 billion baht to fund the plan. He added that state schools would receive an annual subsidy of 600 baht per kindergarten pupil.

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

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Thai TV: Samui to get the full monty

Concerns are finally being addressed over the number of people on Samui who are unable to receive the Thai government television station, Channel 11.

The channel is the only one that people cannot watch on the island, which means they miss some fascinating insights into Thai life, from the price of rice to the latest market stall hold-ups.

More important still, for those without cable or satellite connections, Channel 11 is sometimes their only alternative to live football from Europe.

The Public Relations Department, perhaps sensing an uprising, has agreed to install new transmitters in seven locations around the country, including one on Koh Samui.

This should ensure that everyone gets to find out exactly what's happening back in their home village without having to

jump on the ferry to the mainland. Hopefully, this will also help reduce staff absenteeism for many large resorts on the island.

Government defends airport: Despite rumors that plans for a second airport on Samui have been put on hold, Dr Likhit

Theerawakin, adviser to the Ministry of Communications, recently announced that the project was making good progress.

He claimed that even if no land is found to build a second airport on the island, the government would reclaim land from the sea in order to create one, thus developing Samui to its full potential.

He criticised Bangkok Airways for maintaining high prices, especially on its flights to Bangkok, which he said were excessive at more than 7,000 baht return, costing more than a flight to Singapore.

The Vice-President of Bangkok Airways responded by

saying that the government had agreed to all the airline's fares as part of the licensing agreement. He also stated that two daily low-cost flights had since been introduced on the Bangkok route.

Meanwhile, one member of Parliament from Surat Thani has openly criticised the airport plan, claiming that it would only serve foreign tourists and business people.

He favors a proposed tunnel from the mainland to Samui, which he claims could be built for a mere 10 billion baht. A tunnel would provide greater access to a wider segment of the population, as well as helping the infrastructure of the island. The discussions continue, and to many people on Koh Samui, the dispute is beginning to resemble more of a personal power struggle than a serious attempt at solving regional transport issues.

TB on Samui: With all the fuss and worry surrounding Sars and bird 'flu, the more traditional diseases associated with life in developing countries seem to be all but forgotten.

In an attempt to remind people, however, the Samui Public Hospital recently announced that there were 40 to 50 cases of tuberculosis reported on the is-



Paitoon Sriraud, Director of the Public Relations Department Region 5, hosted a party in Surat Thani town to celebrate the 50th birthday of the regional branch. *Community Magazine* was among the many colorful guests at the party extending their best wishes and hopes for continued success.

land last year. Unlike bird 'flu, the TB virus is easily transmitted from one person to another through the air.

Fortunately, TB is curable, and there is a trained medical team on the island to keep the disease under control.

Those who find themselves coughing up blood for several weeks are therefore asked to avoid contact with their friends

and neighbors and contact the nearest hospital at their earliest convenience.

They will then be assigned a personal attendant, who will administer drugs and monitor the disease on a 24-hour basis until it fades. What a relief.

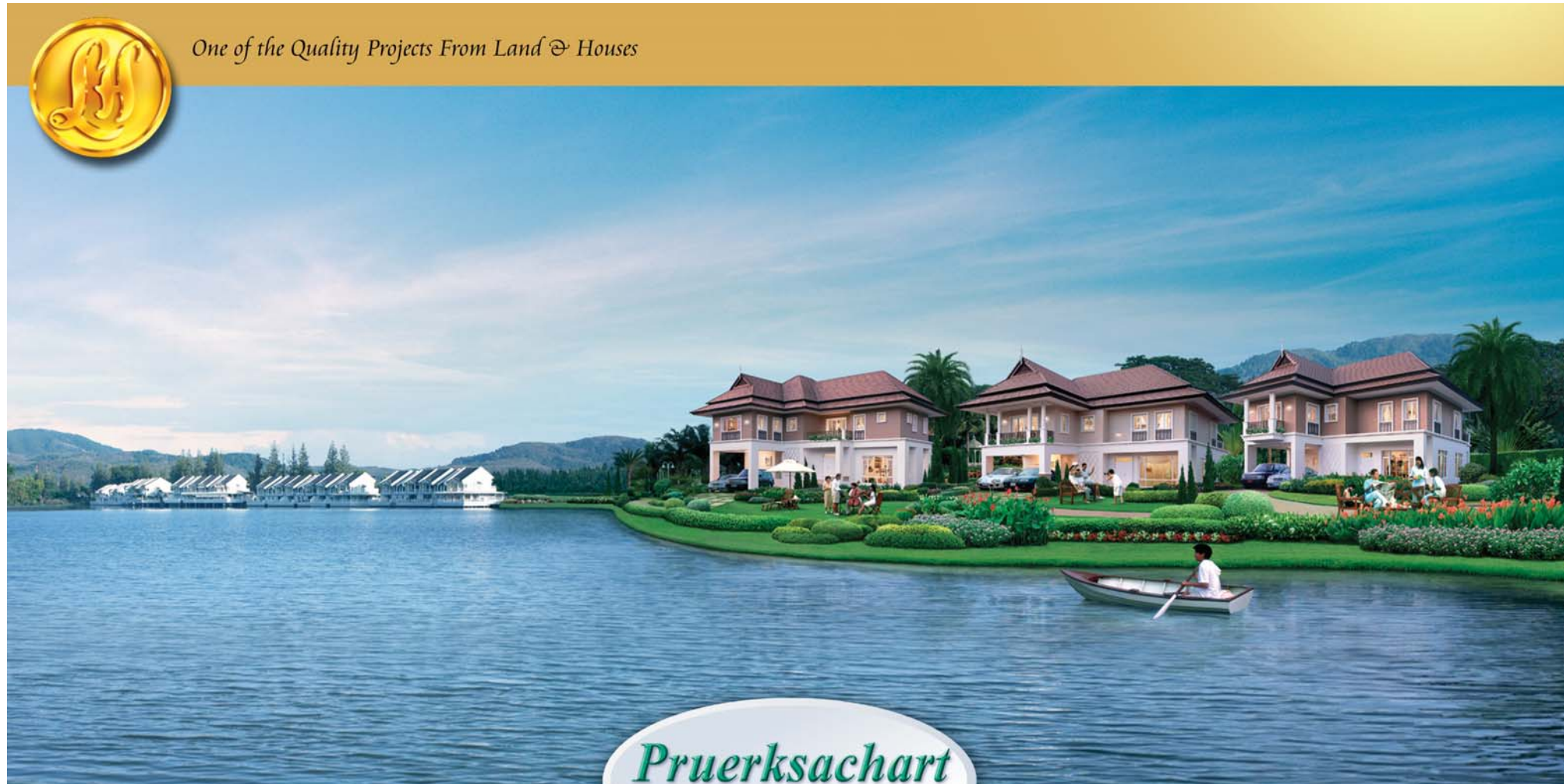
Cdr Swan is a writer with Koh Samui's community magazine.

FROM THE GULF OF THAILAND



By Commander
Sammy Swan

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This week



BIG BUSINESS FOR IBAP: Governor Udomsak Usawarangkura (center) was one of the speakers at the International Business Association of Phuket's April 2 seminar on "Mega Business in Phuket", organized by the association's Secretary OB Wetzell (2nd from right). Also pictured, from left, are Pongsak Kerdvongbundit, MD of Von Bundit Co Ltd; local Lions Club Charter President Rohn-Napa Kanjanayothee; and Chan Chee Chong, Manager of SilkAir Thailand.



BLESSINGS ACROSS THE YEARS: Students of OSI International School celebrated Songkran a little early. They are pictured pouring lustral water over the hands of their teachers.



A GLOWING TRIBUTE: Panjit Howe (center), Human Resources Director of the JW Marriott Phuket Resort & Spa, accepts her "Internal Customer Excellence Award" at Marriott's Asia, Pacific & Australia regional meeting in Beijing. Lillian Poon (left), Vice-President Human Resources, and Jim Pilarski, Senior VP International Human Resources, made the presentation.



RIDING TO SUCCESS: Praphan Phornthanavarsit (2nd from right) Chief Operating Officer of Thai Yamaha Motor Co Ltd and Jintana Udomsub (2nd from left), the company's Chief of Commerce, are pictured with guest of honor Pol Maj Gen Kongpol Suwannaraks (center), Deputy Commander of Police Region 8, at a party held at the Royal Phuket City Hotel to celebrate Thai Yamaha's achievement of increased market share.



ALL-STAR LINEUP: Dr Jirichai Amornpairoj (2nd from right), General Manager of the Royal Paradise Hotel, Patong, with celebrities Suradesh "Joey" Tubtimsai (left) from Thai Band Bazoo, and Pussacha Tonawanich (2nd from left) and Chamanan Wanawinawet (right), presenters of the TV show *Wan Sudtai*. K. Joey's mum, Anchalee Tubtimsai, takes center stage.



HAPPY AS LARRY: Larry Cunningham, (standing, center) of Phuket One Real Estate, celebrates his birthday at Laem Thong Restaurant.



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HAVEN

A life in progress

A pioneering force behind Khao Lak's growth has been Pintong "Noi" Promta, of Gerd and Noi Bungalows. K. Noi left school 30 years ago, at the age of 13. Her life since then has been a mix of triumph and tragedy.

She talks to *Gazette* correspondent Frankie Gunn.

Gazette: When did you come to Khao Lak and why did you chose this place?

K. Noi: I had to support my family so I left school in Chiang Mai to look for well-paid work in Phuket. It seemed to be easier than finding work with good wages in Chiang Mai at that time. I learned to take care of myself early. That made me strong. I met my husband, Gerd, in Phuket in 1981 and we began looking for a quiet, dreamy place to live. We found Khao Lak, fell in love with the place, and moved here in 1983.

and his brother Christian was born seven years later. At that time, the business had developed from a basic bungalow resort, with simple coconut leaf roofs, which we rented out for 80 baht a day, to a small but decent holiday resort with some of the first stone bungalows in Khao Lak. We were the first and only resort back then. As property was cheap, we were able to find a nice

piece of land on the beach. In those days you could buy a rai of prime beachfront land for between 80,000 and 250,000 baht. We were very lucky and were happy, even though life in Khao Lak was basic, with no entertainment.

The accident was a horrifying nightmare for me and the children.

Gazette: So you and Gerd found your paradise here. But I guess it was very different back in 1983.

K. Noi: Oh, yes. It was very quiet. There was nothing here, only beach and jungle. The highway was more like a dirt road. We did not even have a supermarket. Everything we needed had to be bought in Takuapa.

Gazette: Sounds fantastic. What happened then? How did everything start with Gerd and Noi Bungalows?

K. Noi: Family came first. Our son, Nong Mai, was born in 1985,

Gazette: You say you were happy, but you seem happy to me now, too.

K. Noi: Yes, of course I am happy today – yet again, I should say. My husband Gerd died in a car accident in Bangkok on February 23, 1998. He was on his way to Germany, to talk to people with whom we had made business plans.

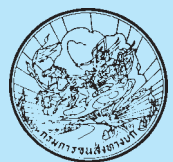
We had land plots for sale and many of our guests were interested in buying land. The future seemed very promising.

The accident was a horrifying nightmare for me and the children.

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FROM HASSLES

Gazette: I am very sorry to hear that. What happened then?

K. Noi: I had to hold everything together and run the business alone while trying to give my children as much love and time as I possibly could, to make up for the loss of their father.

It was a very hard time for all of us. However, I knew life had to go on and my children needed me, so there was not much time for the years of lonely grieving that you see in Hollywood movies.

I kept Gerd in my heart as I remembered him – as a kind and loving father and husband – and worked as hard as I could. This helped me to get over it and finally, that mood sparked over to my boys and soon we were stronger than ever before.

Gazette: But you had no intention of leaving Khao Lak. Why?

K. Noi: At that time, Khao Lak had become my dream home. I could not imagine being anywhere else in the world, not even Europe, which was the dream destination for a lot of young Thai women in those days. All the good memories I had about my past with Gerd gave this place a spirit that kept me and my boys here. And we were, and are, happy again.

Gazette: So what were your business ideas then, and how did everything develop?

K. Noi: I had to run the resort, because it made good money and we had a lot of returning guests. The tour and canoeing business that Gerd had started shortly before he departed was one of the businesses I had to relinquish, because it is not a business to be run by women. I expanded the resort and later I found a partner who helped me to open and run a flourishing diving business. Similan Scuba Adventures is now one of the leading dive shops in Khao Lak.

Gazette: What do you think was



Pintong 'Noi' Promta: left school in Chiang Mai at the age of 13 to become a pioneer in Khao Lak.

the biggest and best year for Khao Lak?

K. Noi: 2000 through 2001 was the best, with the most development in all areas, new hotels and resorts, and dive shops.

Gazette: Do you prefer Khao Lak as it is now or before, when everything was quiet?

with all the changes that go on. Everything changes in life, so I have to cope with these changes. Both times had something special, before and now.

Gazette: You run a successful dive shop and several resorts right now. Which is the better business in your opinion, and why?

Perhaps Khao Lak will become more popular than Phuket because of the long, pristine beaches, the nature, and the abundance of waterfalls and jungle that Phuket does not have.

K. Noi: For business, Khao Lak is perfect right now. I guess I will like Khao Lak always, regardless of the level of development. It is my home and I simply love it,

K. Noi: Both businesses are very rewarding, personally and from a business point of view. The dive shop developed very fast and grew very strong, also as a result

of [partner] Roman's background in the scuba diving industry, while the resort business is built on long-term relationships with satisfied and returning guests. I like both businesses equally.

Gazette: Do you have any comments on the liveaboard price war that is going on these days, like four days and four nights off the Similans, including equipment and national park fee, for 9,000 baht?

K. Noi: We are not involved. I believe it is a fight that no one can win, because no one makes any money. I believe in good quality for reasonable prices, emphasizing the word reasonable. Cheap can't be any good, and our diving guests know that. They demand quality and quality is what they get, and what they are willing to pay for.

Gazette: So, what do you like most about Khao Lak as it is today?

K. Noi: The feeling of being home and welcome. Everybody knows me here, and I have many friends I would not want to miss. Khao Lak has a very special atmosphere and, due to my past with Gerd, it is a place I love and cherish.

Gazette: Anything you dislike about Khao Lak?

K. Noi: No.

Gazette: What do you think the future will bring? Do you have any ideas for improvement?

K. Noi: I believe Khao Lak will grow strong and become a prime example of a tourist attraction that develops well ecologically.

Perhaps Khao Lak will become more popular than Phuket because of the long, pristine beaches, the nature, and the abundance of waterfalls and jungle that Phuket does not have. It is important that we get a good sewage system and that we have a failsafe water reservoir for Khao Lak.

Everybody has seen what happened in Phuket – and let's not forget Pattaya – because of missing sewage systems, drains, and fresh water supplies. Roadside pavements would be a good idea.

Gazette: Who, besides Gerd and you, has been important in the development of the district?

K. Noi: K. "Lek" from Khao Lak Laguna Resort has fought hard to make Khao Lak an attractive tourist destination while keeping the area pristine with restrictions on high-rise buildings.

The Nangthong family set up the first supermarket here, providing infrastructure, and by now they have established the biggest supermarket between Thai Muang and Takuapa.

Gazette: If you could start all over at your dream destination, where would you be today?

K. Noi: In Khao Lak, where else?

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One of HeliCam's two helicopters takes off on another mission.

Art of rotorgraphy

By Andy Johnstone

Taking off where other marketing tools fail to soar is HeliCam, short for *helicopter camera* platform. The innovative service, just introduced in Phuket, uses 1.8-meter radio-controlled helicopters to lift cameras into the sky.

The Managing Director of HeliCam, Briton Phil Clark, and his partners have invested money, time and most importantly, a great deal of thought into a niche market with plenty of potential for success on Phuket.

Owners of homes and other developments, real estate agents, yacht owners and government organizations are already booking flights.

More than 10 years of development and refining has gone into making the helicopters stable and vibration-free rather than fast, and the best images – stills or video – are achieved when hovering, or at speeds between 30-50kmh. That said, the two choppers are capable of around 80 knots (140kmh) at full throttle.

Digital and video images

are transmitted to a mobile ground station-cum-editing suite, the HeliVan. The “crew” of two, pilot and photographer, are effectively under the direction of the client as to what images are to be taken.

Many of the operations, from take off to the customer walking away with his or her high-resolution photos on a CD, are completed in an hour.

Compared with conventional aerial photography, HeliCam is cheap. While the charge to hire a full-size helicopter for an hour is about 85,000 baht, HeliCam charges 48,000 baht for half a day and 95,000 baht for the whole day.

Alternatively, customers may pay by the photograph, at 10,000 baht for the first picture and 4,000 baht for subsequent ones.

The sky, it seems, is the limit for the future marketing of Phuket.

Inquiries should be made to Phil Clark, Tel: 07-2810451 or Fax: 076-292889. HeliCam will have its official public launch at Tesco-Lotus Phuket on April 17 and 18.

In The Stars

by Isla Star

ARIES (March 21-April 20): Those Arians who are still feeling slightly soggy from all the recent water festivities should be looking at ways of freshening up this week. To revive jaded spirits, you need to find a new creative outlet. An easy way to do this is to think of what your friends' interests are. At least one person has a hobby that could become a worthwhile pursuit for you.



TAURUS (April 21-May 21): As your birthday approaches, there are signs that many Taureans are seriously considering life-altering moves. Don't allow your fear of the unknown to hamper progress. You are definitely following the right guiding star and will be taken care of. This week offers an early glimpse of success that is just over the horizon, which should spur you on.



GEMINI (May 22-June 21): You are not likely to be impressed by a friend's tale of woe this weekend and will be tempted to suggest that what goes around, surely comes around. This reaction is certain to spark bad feeling, so try to keep any comments neutral. Relationships generally will be susceptible to ups and downs during the coming days. Riding out the storm as calmly as possible is your only option.



CANCER (June 22-July 23): You should be feeling very happy that all you have to do is lie on the bed of roses that you've made. Cancerians who are now reaping the rewards of their efforts can afford to take it easy now. Even if someone isn't actually tending on you hand and foot, you should be basking in the



sunshine of their adoration. Scorpio demands your attention mid-week over a business matter, which could be beneficial.

LEO (July 24-August 22): Those born under the sign of Leo will be pleased that last week's unsettled atmosphere has settled down. This will generally be a good week. The only cloud that could hover above will be on Monday when cutting through red tape pushes your patience to the limit. The following days will see you sailing effortlessly through your responsibilities and even considering taking on more.



VIRGO (August 23-September 23): If someone has let you down recently, there is definitely no reason to give them a second chance. Being cruel to be kind may sound like harsh advice, but Virgoans are well equipped to employ a tactful approach. On the sunny side, your domestic situation should be glowing this week as a personal relationship benefits from benevolent astrological conditions.



LIBRA (September 24-October 23): Too many ideas racing through your head mean that you are at risk from getting into a muddle this weekend. Librans are usually good at keeping their thoughts balanced, but this may prove to be a challenge as a burst of inspirational energy strikes. Try writing down some of your best notions for future reference and concentrate on what can be achieved right now.



SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): Your natural charm can be put to good use this weekend, particularly on Saturday when you will want to impress someone. A new romantic connection is about to be made. If you're already involved in a relationship, beware of a butterfly who would like to prise you away. When involved in business



discussions this week, take care to have serious structure to your suggestions. Your lucky number is three.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): You are now in a position to give more in a relationship that has been suffering from a drought lately. If you don't do this now, there is every chance that a parting of the ways is imminent. Perhaps this is what you really want. Should this be the case, Sagittarians are advised to handle the situation with kid gloves. This week you will finally receive acknowledgment of your skills at work.



CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): Deep down, you know you should be working on long-term plans, but the temptation to hang loose will be strong this week. Somehow those born under the sign of Capricorn must find the right balance between work and play. Jealousy is likely to affect a close relationship on Saturday, but there's no reason to allow this negative emotion to take hold.



AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): An action-packed week will unfold. Luckily, your energy levels are running high so you should be able to live up to your reputation as a party animal. A social get-together on Sunday holds promise for new friendships, and if you are ready for romance, Cupid is poised to shoot an arrow in your direction.



PISCES (February 20-March 20): Your tendency this week to smooth over problems rather than face up to difficulties will be a stumbling block. If a particular situation has a distinctly fishy odor, get to the bottom of it. Once you know exactly what you have to deal with, it should be easier to sort out. A budding romance is well-starred, but take things slowly.



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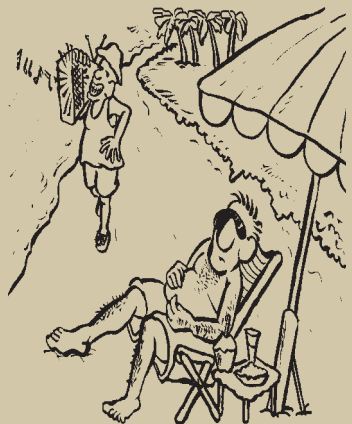
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Kuala l'Impure no longer



Base-jumpers fly off KL Tower at weekends.

TALES OF A TRAVELER

By Ed Peters

Is Kuala Lumpur a verdant city or more of a jungle with buildings growing out of it? And if it is a city, does it belong to this century or the last?

The definitive answer to either question would have to be maybe. Look one way and Petronas Towers thrust up to the heavens, rather piqued perhaps at being overtaken by something slightly larger in Taipei last year.

A short hike away, base jumpers fling themselves off KL Tower on weekends, floating to earth beneath canopies as lackadaisically as if they'd wandered in from some out of town kampong.

Then look over your shoulder, and the streets are lined with antique shophouses selling everything from pots and pans to stray bits of computers (rather than computer parts). It's several years now since the city centre race course was turned into a public park with a sparkling shopping mall on its fringe.

But within a few minutes' drive, traffic jams permitting, you can be hanging over a fence in the Lake Gardens, feeding deer. Around the Golden Triangle, service and menus in restaurants and bars have a snappy, crisp, nouvelle cuisine aura.

But shuttle off to the muddy brown interior of the Coliseum Cafe on Jalan Tar and you're inside a short story by Somerset Maugham (who branded KL as *Kuala l'Impure*) with grizzled types hogging the bar knocking back their whiskies mid-afternoon, ancient waiters bearing meaty dinners back and forth and wafting intricate conversations that could be sound bytes from the 1950s.

This is not really the place to eat, of course, a role that falls to KL's hundreds of hawker stalls and coffee shops. Whether indoor halls or perched on a street corner, Indian, Chinese or Malay, they are uniformly cheap, ubiquitous and chummy and worth visiting simply for phrases like: "Would boss like roti with the banana leaf curry?"

There's a little colonial overhang too, from the old and extremely eccentric Arabian Nights railway station to the snooty Royal Selangor Club (its pretty facade now blistered with

split-level air conditioners) off Merdeka Square. Women are still not allowed to go up to the bar and notices around the club's perimeter warn non-members against trespassing.

But of all its pleasant sights, both ancient and modern, KL comes up trumps in Bangsar Baru, 20 minutes or so by taxi from the centre of town and the latest smart address.

Think Patong with space and without the sleazy side shows, think Phuket City with better food and prices that are not too dissimilar, and that's Bangsar to a T.

With its broad avenues, a broader clientele and similarly cosmopolitan cuisine, this is where the city's brightest come to party at night,

mix and match and then do the same thing all over again the following evening.

Not that it's exclusively an after-hours haunt. Lunch times are well patronised too, and the galleries, bookshops and souvenir stalls are all more than worth an hour or two's browsing.

All in all, as Asian capitals go, KL is one of the most amenable, with the feel of a small town yet the scope of a big city, and with both aspects of its character eminently likeable.



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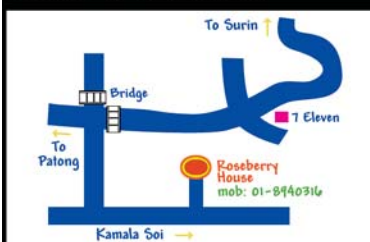
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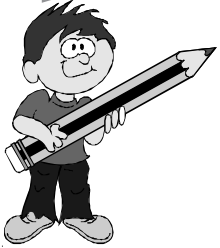
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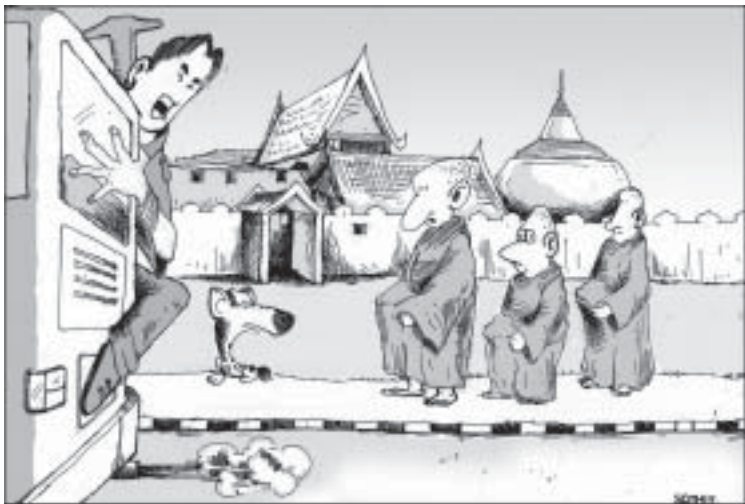
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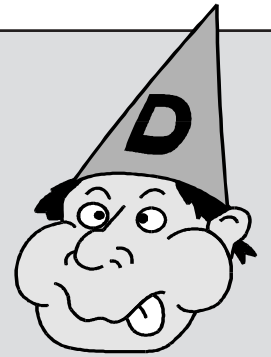
Q. There are six ears of corn in a hollow tree stump. If a perfectly healthy squirrel carries only three ears out each day, how many days will it take for him to empty the stump?

A. Six days. Two of the three ears are the ones on the squirrel's head.

Solution to last week's Crossword

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

Get your brain in gear with the Monster Quiz



- The city of Kyaikkami in Myanmar was formerly known as what?
- What did Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster invent?
- What was 15th-century Scotsman Sawney Beane notorious for?
- Whose embalmed body did Samuel Pepys admit to kissing on his 36th birthday?
- Which author overcame writer's block by having his servant take away all his clothes?
- Dancer Fred Astaire's legs were insured for what sum?
- In what year did women in Switzerland get the right to vote?
- From which language does the word "yogurt" originate?
- In 1675 Col Thomas Blood became famous for his attempt to steal what?
- At what temperature Centigrade does mercury freeze?
- By what name was actor Issur Danielovich better known?
- What was Agamemnon doing when Clytemnestra murdered him with an ax?
- What gift is said to be appropriate for a 12th wedding anniversary?
- Whose head was finally buried in Sydney Sussex College in 1960?
- Which of Henry VIII's wives had three breasts?
- Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote poetry under the influence of what drug?
- What is Boren's First Law?
- Who played Genghis Khan in the 1956 movie *The Conqueror*?
- Who made the first non-stop flight across the Atlantic?
- Anticosti Island is a possession of which country?

Answers next week.

Never a Cross Word!

Across

- Flattering (9, 2).
- Teenage skin complaint.
- Claymore and epée, for example.
- Ready, ***, Go!
- Jolly Jack Tars.
- Eye make-up.
- And so on.
- Ankle injury.
- Stylish.
- Non-stop.

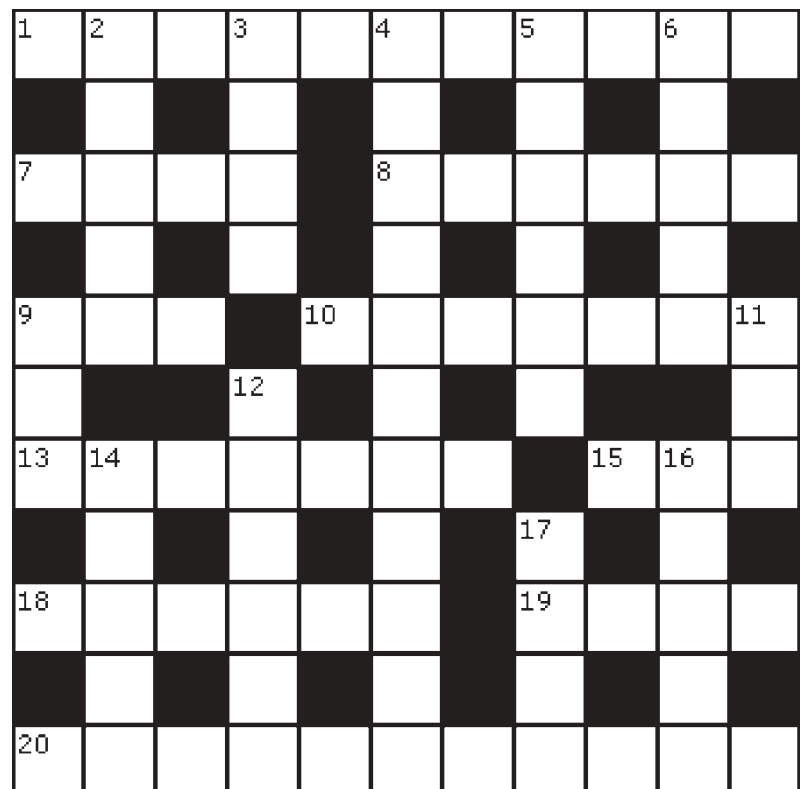
Down

- Grandad's son.
- Long journey.
- Eating places.
- Asian pasta?
- Not over.
- Total.
- Dry wine.
- Eight notes.
- Colorado ski resort.
- Action in court.
- Computer mini-picture.

Solution next week.

Answers to last week's Monster Quiz

- Birth; 2. Formula translation; 3. 300; 4. Manicuring; 5. Geelvink Bay; 6. *Dracula*; 7. Violin-shaped; 8. Hills in Rome; 9. Tyrrhenian Sea; 10. 100; 11. Lemon yellow; 12. Ginger Rogers; 13. Scarf; 14. Mint; 15. French Foreign Legion; 16. Fresco; 17. Every four years; 18. Ragnarok; 19. Mike Nichols; 20. *The Graduate*.



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The truth about all those cheatin' hearts

Dear Momma Duck,

I wonder why foreigners stay in Thailand when they often complain about being cheated. I have witnessed resident foreigners and tourists being subjected to poor treatment by ordinary Thais and even from Thai officers.

But foreigners also seem annoyed by inconsequential situations. I know it seems serious for foreigners who are away from their countries and exposed to the different colors of Thailand's culture.

I feel sorry for them because they must experience these things in my country again and again. I am afraid that if I were in another country as a tourist or resident, it would be difficult for me to tolerate these feelings of annoyance. How can we overcome this culture conflict?

Dhirarat,
Phuket City

Dear Dhirarat,

It is a genuine question and concern. Unfortunately, many countries in this part of the world are known for cheating, corruption and taking advantage of foreigners, so we're not alone.

I believe that some behavior towards foreigners is just cultural differences, while other behavior is, indeed, taking advantage of them.

First, let's put it in perspective. Look around you and you will see many cases of Thai people cheating each other. There are also lots of cases of foreigners cheating foreigners, both here and in their home countries. In other words, there are cheaters



**Momma
DUCK**

By Wanida Hongyok
momma@phuketgazette.net

everywhere, some of whom use the law to cheat and others who operate outside of the law.

In Thailand, most tourists are victims of simple over-pricing because they don't know the real local value of goods and services. Many visitors also come from a culture where bargaining is not common. Even some Thais are not good bargainers and end up paying higher prices.

In Phuket, the only cheating I've heard tourists regularly complain about is the tuk-tuks. This is real "cheating", often over-charging by hundreds of baht.

This problem seems unique to Phuket because all other provinces have good transport services with more or less standard prices (metered taxis, *rot song taews*, etc.). Many tuk-tuk drivers in Phuket also seem to be young bullies with no sense of proper Thai politeness. Most of them are not Phuket natives.

When I was recently in Surathani for several days, I used the local tuk-tuks, paying only 10 baht around town and only 50 baht to a village 15 kilometers out of town. The drivers were all well mannered. I met several foreigners there and they all paid the same prices as me.

I feel that the Phuket provincial government and police have failed to manage this problem properly. All that is required is standard prices, like all other provinces, posted in both Thai and English languages.

The authorities fail to see that upset tourists, who have been cheated by impolite Thais, will not return again to Phuket.

Unfortunately, our national government and civil service often reinforces this greedy approach to foreigners, charging them more than Thais for many services, such as the 10-fold na-

tional park fees. Most tourists aren't worried, given that fees are included in overall prices, but it is a sore-point for many resident foreigners because they pay taxes to Thailand and inject billions of baht into the Thai economy every month.

They also see it as unfair because in their home countries, there are no price differences between locals and foreigners.

In spite of these drawbacks, Phuket is still attracting new settlers, with property sales booming. Please don't be upset by those foreigners who love to complain about our driving habits, management practices and easy-going approach to life.

I have little sympathy for such people and I wish they'd go back to their own countries and leave us in blissful ignorance of "how things would be better if we only did things their way".

I am glad that you care for other people and do not like unfairness. You are thoughtful and are able to see both sides of the coin.

Dear Khun Wanida,

My girlfriend does not get on well with her mother. Recently, they had a huge row and my girlfriend walked out. She disappeared for three days before she called me. As you can imagine, I was terrified. Is there anything I can do to prevent this from happening again?

Bing

Dear Bing,

All young Thais often feel frustrated by their parents' attitudes but, in our culture, we traditionally tend to avoid conflict and usually find a way of establishing some independence without insulting our parents.

Modern Thai TV is doing it's best to destroy this part of our culture by constantly showing screaming family arguments. That doesn't explain why she didn't contact you. Of course you were terrified and would like to help prevent this from happening again.

The best way is to find out about their relationship and the cause of the conflict, perhaps reminding her that she only has one set of parents.

However, I am also concerned about your own relationship if her standard response to conflict is to disappear for several days. On the other hand, she might not understand the love of her mother until she has her own children.

Ascending Everest without a road map

There comes a time in every student's life when he, she or – in some cases "it" – must choose what to do next. Many such choices come in the course of a lifetime, and very few are as crucial as that of higher education.

It is a big choice, no one can dispute that. One must choose the subject area that, if not definitive for a career path, will at least determine general skills. This choice will affect future jobs options and limit the choices further on in life. All this, however, presupposes that an individual will even decide to learn a subject.

At this stage in our lives, we have reached more than a simple fork in the road. We are at a bewildering crossroads and need to make a number of choices regarding further study. Perhaps this is part of the reason the choice of "higher education" is so difficult to make.

The first of these choices is whether we want to pursue higher

education at all. Arguably, even before this choice is made, one must decide at least roughly what to do with life. For example, an individual who studies economics at university is obviously aiming for a job in that field, whereas another who wishes to ascend the corporate ladder from the bottom may simply not bother with higher education. These examples may not be brilliant, but they put across the message I'm trying to make.

Assuming one continues to study, the choices are where and what. So many factors are involved.

(Hey, looks like I won't be running out of ideas for my next article. Perhaps this column should just become the "Youth 'n Asia: higher education advice from one clueless teen

to another" – no offense intended if you're not a teen and wish to pursue higher education.)

The how, where, when, why and what of pursuing "higher education" have been discussed so frequently about me that it has become a generic topic. Let's paraphrase a conversation I had with people who I shall dub Luke and James (generic pseudonyms as this is a generic conversation) but will probably resemble a conversation I have had with anyone and everyone over the last few months:

Me: "Hey ... I don't know what I'm going to do for university... do you?"

Luke: "Nope."

James: "Oh yeah? Well, I'm going to ... [censored because I never pay attention when people who have organized themselves talk about how organized they are. It is at this moment in time that I kick myself repeatedly for not being like them.]

How do my contemplations link into the above conversation? Simply that I, among many people, do not know what I want to do. It is torturous to have so many people, as in the majority of all the people I know and/or have conversed with, not knowing where our lives are leading us.

Sure, there will be some like James who seem to have everything planned out between today and their funeral, but such cases are there to make up for the incapability of everyone else in the world to make their choices about education.

By the time these words are printed, the majority of students will have decided their course. A relatively small minority have everything clear-cut. For the rest of us, the future is scary because we don't know what we want.

We don't know how all of you elders made it where you have in life and we don't know how to get anywhere in our lives. We're afraid that we're going to make the wrong choice. We're afraid of the future and what the consequences of our decisions will be.

To all of those out there making the final decision of your high school lives, I wish you good luck. God knows I'm going to need it, and I assume you'll need it too.



**Youth 'n
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By Eric Lacey

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HIS V HER STORY STORY

I stagger around, holding my drink firmly so as not to spill a drop. I am drunk, but I don't think the rest of the joint knows it yet.

When walking, I pick a point ahead of me so that my wandering looks purposeful and direct. Women are staring at me from all corners of the room. I can see their leering eyes, piercing from dark corners.

They are waiting for me to drop so they can swoop in. Like vultures, they wait patiently, for they realize that I could soon be theirs.

The drink makes every woman around me seem stunning and desirable. Fat becomes slim, unfortunate becomes fortunate, big becomes small, serious becomes hilarious. They all want me, not for my money or a night's shelter. No, they want me because they think I am desirable, sexy, handsome. A little older, maybe, but who the hell wants an immature young butterfly? Besides, in Thai culture, age does not matter.

Older means more respect. With a sexy lift to an eyebrow, I acknowledge one of the lovely creatures ogling me. They can't resist that little knack I have.

Just look at him. He probably stinks of booze and he can't even walk straight. Must he keep staring at me with that stupid grin? Oh God, please keep going, don't stop, please. Farangs! You watch, the idiot will want to buy me a drink, thinking that is my price of admittance. Why is it that I only attract these drunken fossils? I hate this business, but what else can I do? Oh no, I think he saw me staring. Shit! He's coming this way. My God, look at his stomach. What the hell is that weird thing he does with his eyebrow? Don't tell me - he also has a tic.

This one wants me, for sure. Bet-

ter be careful here, don't want to put all my eggs in one basket. Something nicer could come along. It's sweet the way she seems so shy. Whoops! What the hell was that? Just another drunken Aussie, I guess. Hey watch it, buddy. Damn! My drink is spilt. God, I hate drunks. At least I can hold my liquor. Look, she's giggling. She must think that I handled the whole thing well. I'll give her another eyebrow to show her I am in control. Good lord! Look at her tits. Release the hounds, baby!

Just my luck. Here comes Mr Cool. Maybe if I look away, he'll keep going. Perfect - he just bumped into some guy. What a drunken idiot. Look how he's trying to claim it's the other guy's fault. Hilarious! Now he's Mr Tough, giving the other guy the stare. Men! He's still looking at me out of the corner of his eye. Yes, I see you, moron. This is too funny. There's that weird eyebrow thing again. Hell! Here he comes. He looks like an aging lounge singer, and why is he staring at my chest? Never seen breasts before, pal?

HE SAYS:

I'll bet she's dying for a drink. In fact, she would probably like to take me home for a beer.

Wow! She's nice. She doesn't seem like all the rest. She's really looking at me. Wanting me. Be cool, don't act drunk like all the others in here. Play a little hard to get. You can tell she likes older men. She feels safer with them - and besides, I don't look my age anyway. Hey look, she's giggling again. Cute. OK. I don't want to be too obvious. I'll go stand behind her. Make her turn to me. Puts me in control. Boy, it's crowded in here.

Be cool. You can unload this clown. You've done it a hundred times before. This guy really thinks he's something. He's just so pissed. Yuck! He looks

Downsider

By George Bentick

well over 50. I'll bet he can't even get it up anymore, but that could be a good thing. It all just makes me laugh. Try not to giggle. Why are his eyes so red. Here he comes. Should I accept his drink offer? Hey, why is he standing behind me? Don't look - maybe he will just go away. It feels weird, with him standing so close there. I hate people hovering behind me. This guy's a freak.

Alright now, just stand here and be a man. Pretend that you don't really notice her. Mmmm! She smells terrific. Those breasts! She's perfect, but I really hate those platform shoes. Why the hell do they wear them? They look so bulky and horrible. Ah well, she's still hot. I'll just kind of brush up to her and bump her accidentally to get her attention. I'll bet she's dying for a drink. In fact, she would probably like to take me home for a beer. I don't think she noticed my little nudge. There, let's try it again.

This is really weird. What's with the standing behind me routine and what's with that outfit he's wearing? Nothing worse than an old fart trying to look hip. Here it comes, the old bump-into-me-for-the-attention routine. God, this is depressing. He keeps bumping into me. Look, I got the message the first time, pal. I can feel and smell his breath on my back. Gross! Cigarettes. Has my life really come down to this? He's looking to see if I have a drink. I wish he would stop that move-with-the-music routine, it looks so stupid. Old Mr Groovy doing his little dance steps behind me. You are just soooo funky. Go ahead,

bump into me all you want, I am not going to turn around. If you have something to say, then say it, for God's sake. Wish my phone would ring. Where have all my girlfriends gone? Hey there's Pranee. Where did she find him? He's cute. She's always lucky that way.

Time to ask her if she wants a

SHE SAYS:

Maybe if I look away, he'll keep going. Perfect - he just bumped into some guy. What a drunken idiot.

eyes off those tits. Wow! She doesn't want a drink. That's a first. That's so sweet, she doesn't want to seem too greedy.

I knew he was going to use the drink routine. Hell, it's almost two o'clock. I'm going to have to make up my mind. I'm going to turn around and get a good look at this clown. Maybe he's not that bad.

There you go. I knew she would

turn around sooner or later. Ok. Be cool again. Don't act drunk. Starting to feel a bit weird. I'll just lean against this pillar. Wish the bloody room would stop spinning. She wouldn't notice anyway. I don't think I look as though I am drunk.

Oh God! He's worse than I thought. He looks completely pissed. I've got no choice - it's two o'clock and I've got rent to pay. I want to get another pair of these shoes and I guess this slob is going to have to be my ticket. Got to get a hold of myself. Remember it's just business and I've gone with worse than this. Boy! He's really starting to turn white and both his eyes are looking in different directions. Lucky that pillar is there. Time to turn on that closing charm. I'll start with a half smile - the old shy routine.

There you go. Did you see that little smile? I told you she wanted me. Well Bud, you may be over the hill but, they still come crawling. Killer! Boy, I'm starting to really feel weird again. Not feeling good at all. I think I'll just st...

Oh hell! I knew it. The idiot just passed out. What a mess. There's beer everywhere. Just my luck. Idiot farang. Bloody drunk. God! He's bleeding all over the place. Look at him lying there. Pathetic. Ah well, just another lousy day at the office. Where the hell is Pranee?

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Sipa's wobbly start

There is something almost magical about the inspiring pronouncement by the head of the Software Industry Promotion Agency (Sipa) in Phuket that the island's IT and communications will leapfrog past Singapore's within two years.

Sadly, the history of Sipa so far has been less than magical and hardly inspiring. In July last year, the *Gazette* ran a story about a variety of startling plans for the island, announced by visiting ministers. Among these was the pronouncement that in order to attract foreign investment in information technology, Sipa would be set up within three months.

Eight months later, on March 1 this year, the Sipa office in Saphan Hin was declared open by the Minister of Information & Communications Technology, Dr Surapong Suebwonglee. Eager IT investors rushed to the office, expecting to find staff and sophisticated systems waiting to help them cut through all the red tape in record time.

No such luck. The office was locked and empty. Sipa explained that it had yet to appoint any staff. But at least Phuket had a Sipa office, which was more than Bangkok, headquarters of the agency, could claim.

One month later (nine months after the "three months till we start" announcement) the office was open for business, thanks to the presence of one staff member – with more "on the way".

The sophisticated, computerized systems for the one-stop shop do not, as yet, exist. In a somewhat circular plan, Sipa says it will hire and train a private-sector company to develop these systems for it.

The agency's presence on the Internet is equally uninspiring. Google registers just 213 references to it on the entire Internet.

It has no web site; only a page on the Prince of Songkla University Phuket campus website. The page is all in Thai. From it, there are links to various Word and PDF documents that can be downloaded. Or not – some of the "links" are not linked.

A PDF document for registering a company with Sipa is corrupted. Visitors may, however, download a Word document to register for a seminar the agency plans to host later this month.

The document requires a signature. So anyone wanting to go to the seminar must download the document, print it, fill it in, sign it, scan it, then attach it to an email to Sipa. Or they can skip the scanning stage and fax it. IT par excellence.

Two years to overtake Singapore, which took 30 years to reach its current level of sophistication in IT and communications? The signs are not good.

– 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.

Wakey wakey, the world still turns

The latest statement by the Governor that 2 am [*Gazette*, February 28-March 5] is an appropriate time to close bars, therefore allowing people four hours' rest before they wake up, is brilliant.

I was unaware that 6 am was "wake up time" but appreciate how this would make an early bedtime desirable, especially if siestas on the beach were banned.

To help awakening awareness, may I suggest the use of loud air-raid sirens (renamed Social-Order Sounders, or Snooze Over Serenaders (SOS), outside every hotel and guest-house room.

Each occupant should be required to place an "I am awake" sign outside their door no later than 6:10 am. Late sleepers with "Do Not Disturb" signs showing after 6:10 am could be legally shot, in self defense, by dawn law enforcement troopers.

"Quality tourists" with the odd million to spare could buy a VIP sleep-in card, and of course, anyone from the Governor's planet would be exempt.

B Packer
Downunder

Light and shade is best of both worlds

Two letters in the *Gazette* of April 3-9 show that you can't please all of the people all of the time.

Jeff, from Rawai, complained that the *Gazette* is no longer light-hearted and has become too serious. Stanley, from Chalong, berated the *Toon Town*

column for being too light-hearted.

Personally, I think the *Gazette* has just about the right mix. Any newspaper needs to address issues that concern its readers.

Like it or not, the *Gazette* is an English-language paper with expats and visitors as readers, so of course it will concentrate on issues that concern them.

Newspapers are also there to entertain and *Toon Town* certainly always makes me chuckle. Anyone who reads Konrad Stalin expecting culture is surely missing the point. Lighten up!

John Dalley
Cherng Talay

Phew! At last someone who likes us. Thank you.

– Editor

Pitfalls of land lease agreements

I would like to comment on a statement made by Alex Malcolm regarding 30-year land leases [*Issues & Answers*, January 10].

[William Pinsent of Phuket Land] did not reply to Mr Malcolm's claim that a lease must be re-registered by the heir should the original lessor die. Mr Malcolm referred to a "clause in 'private' lease agreements" to cover that scenario.

I have never seen such a clause in any lease agreements registered at the Land Office. Nor am I aware of any Thai law that prescribes the re-registering of a lease upon death of the lessor.

Given that the lease is registered, there is no need for any agreement to have such a clause;

the lease is on the Public Record and therefore all heirs to the land are presumed to have knowledge of this encumbrance.

The law in Thailand, as elsewhere, seems to be clear. A lease is an encumbrance on the property, just as a mortgage or a right-of-way are, and an heir inherits the property subject to any such obligations.

Gunter Bellach
Thalang

Bob Andrews, Managing Director of Phuket LandSearch Co Ltd, replies:

Under Thai law, inheritors of property are not automatically obliged to renew leases on land they have inherited. Equally, the right to occupy a property by inheriting a lease is not automatic.

However, these rights can be enforced by having an appropriate clause inserted into the lease.

Phuket's future, by Nostrildamus

I've have been to Thailand several times and I am going to start looking elsewhere for future beach holidays.

As you walk or drive around Phuket, the reek of sewage, stagnant water, burning plastic, animal waste or dead dogs, not to mention rubbish everywhere, assails the nostrils.

Perhaps the Thai government should adopt a "tidy town" approach, as in Australia, and offer incentives to local officials.

Now if you will excuse me, I've heard there are some great beaches in Vietnam.

Alex B
Australia

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.

Mobs are necessary for justice

FIRST PERSON

When there's a mob, people in other communities usually think that we are violent people. But there must be reasons why people feel they have to protest. If the police do their work well, why would people need to gather as mobs? Mobs usually spring from problems between government officers and villagers.

We have to listen to all people in the community, not just a few of the adults. We villagers in Cherng Talay believe that we can treat teenagers responsibly. I understand teenagers. They are just the same, whether in Chiang Mai, Bangkok or Phuket. We have measures and laws allowing officers to control each situation. Why don't they do this?

The past two mobs at Cherng Talay Police Station occurred because of events in Baan Bang Tao. The first time, I was one of the negotiators who sought a compromise. The second time, I was in Bangkok and couldn't return in time.

Mostly, the problems are caused by teenagers. Some of them are from other provinces and move to live in Phuket with their parents, who come seeking work.

The recent problems are not caused by teenage gangs from Bang Tao and Baan Don, as some people think. Actually, one of the gang leaders is not a local person. He's from another province.

It's normal for teenagers to behave in a quarrelsome way sometimes. This happens in other provinces as well.

I agree with the idea that some youth problems can be solved if parents are punished when their children misbehave. Parents must take care of their children.

But it's also important for police officers to deal with these matters appropriately. Why do people gather at Cherng Talay Police Station? It's because the officers are not performing as they should.

For example, there was the case of a teenager with a scimitar who chased another teenager in Bang Tao, intending to kill him. The police didn't pursue or arrest the attacker. Instead, the case gradually evaporated, like so many other cases in the Cherng Talay area.

Many villagers think that the offic-

Cherng Talay villagers have a reputation for mass protest, or a "mob" as it is known locally. There have been at least six mobs in the area in the past two years:

• **May 22, 2002:** Some 60 villagers stage a protest on Soi Masjid Langkao, complaining about the rapid deterioration of a new concrete road in the village.

• **March 18, 2002:** About 300 villagers block the entrance to Laguna Phuket to protest over a variety of grievances against the operators of the five-star resort complex.

• **June 15, 2003:** About 200 villagers carry the casket of a murdered village council member to

ers don't pursue some cases because the people who cause the problems have some influence over the police.

I know that accusation is not true, and I understand that police can't always arrest troublemakers on the same day.

But when arrests do not come, the feelings of villagers grow more intense when it appears that officers cannot prosecute those who create the problems.

The latest mob incident sprang from a relatively small misjudgement: officers just misunderstood and arrested the wrong people over a fight in which a person was shot.

Unfortunately, verbal commitments made by the police have proved to be unreliable because often they can't manage to make an arrest.

The police need to improve their image, too. Most usually overreact and are unfriendly.

Talking and cooperating with villagers and leaders in the community is the best way forward for police. They should



the Cherng Talay Police Station to demand justice over the councillor's death.

• **January 21, 2004:** A crowd of about 100 people masses out-

side Cherng Talay Police Station after an incident in which a young gang member shot a teenager from a rival gang in the leg.

• **March 3, 2004:** An argument between locals and security guards at the Banyan Tree Phuket resort escalates and about 100 villagers stage a protest outside the Cherng Talay Police Station.

• **April 2, 2004:** In a gang war flare-up between youths from Bang Tao and neighboring Baan Don, some 100 teenagers blocked the main intersection in Cherng Talay for seven hours.

Ma-ann Samran (pictured), a village headman for Moo 2 in Tambon Cherng Talay, has been an elected member of OrBorTor Cherng Talay for about 10 years.

As a community leader, he has a central role in most local protests. Here, he explains his attitude.

inform people about what they have done and what they are doing. They should say how their investigation is progressing and provide regular updates in longer investigations.

We disagree with those who say that mobs harm tourism. We don't want that to happen. But if, say, a resort does something that alienates local villagers, we can't stop the villagers from expressing their view in a protest.

There are many potential issues dividing the resorts and villagers, but most of the disputes center on public land encroachment.

Public relations has been poorly handled, especially release of the facts about public land. At the same time, the resorts have participated in community activities, but this is not well known among people in general.

Local people, such as the taxi drivers in front of the hotels, sometimes need help. Hotels and taxi operators should cooperate to solve problems and learn to

respect each other. Hotel managements need to understand that this is a living for the taxi drivers and managements should not obstruct people from working.

What they should do is to talk to each other. If a wall remains between the hotel and taxi drivers, there will be more problems later.

Most people think we are fortunate to have a resort in Cherng Talay but I think the resort company is also lucky and should be thankful for this area, and that they are able to use its natural resources.

I admit that a mob or a protest is not the ideal way to solve problems.

But whenever a mob gathers, it becomes more likely that high-level government officers will come to talk to villagers and listen to what they have to say directly.

To prevent mobs in future, the police must win the villagers' trust and make them confident of their efficiency.

— *Compiled by Gategeo Phetsawang*

Transferring stamps to a new passport

I entered Thailand on May 18, 2002 on a non-immigrant O-A (long stay) visa, and I am currently on a one-year extension-to-stay that will expire on May 18. I also have a multiple re-entry permit that will expire on the same date.

My British passport will expire in two years' time. What must I do to remain in Thailand on future extensions-to-stay after my current passport expires?

Roger Neill
Rawai

Pol Capt Krissarat Nuesen, of the Phuket Provincial Immigration Office (PPIO), replies:

It would be best if you renewed your passport before the extension-to-stay expires.

Thai Immigration will not issue any permits to people with

passports that will expire within six months. If your passport is valid for more than six months but less than a year, Immigration will issue permits valid only to the date that the passport expires.

For example, say your passport will expire on December 31 this year. If you apply for another one-year extension-to-stay to continue from May 19 this year, and your application is approved, you will be issued an extension-to-stay valid only until December 31.

After you have been issued with a new passport, bring to the PPIO both your old passport, with the current extension to stay and the multiple re-entry permit, and your new passport, and we will transfer both permits into your new passport — free of charge.

Want to know how to get something done? Can't understand some of the dafter things that seem to go on in Phuket? Want to pitch an idea to Phuket's authorities or institutions?

Then this is the forum for you. Submit your queries or suggestions to us and we'll ask the appropriate people to respond to them.

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

Issues & ANSWERS

Can I register a quad bike for road use?

I have agreed to buy a quad bike for personal use. The only document that I currently have is the receipt for payment of import duty. Is it possible to be issued a license plate for the bike and ride it on the road?

Fabio Krabi

Teerayuth Prasertphol, Deputy Chief of the Phuket Provincial Transportation Office, replies:

The Transportation Department will not register quad bikes,

known in Thailand as ATVs (all terrain vehicles), and will not allow them to be driven on public roads.

We cannot register them because they do not fit into any of the recognized categories of vehicle listed in government legislation and regulations.

However, ATVs can be driven on private property. To do so, you will first need to obtain permission from the local environmental health office for your area.

Pol Lt Col Narong Laksanawimol, of Kathu Police Station, notes:

The Kathu Police Station has an ATV which is used for patrols on the beach and on roads in Patong. We have special permission for this.

Apart from this machine, ATVs may not be driven on roads because they are too slow and are therefore likely to impede traffic. With special permission, however, ATVs may be driven on hills or in the jungle.

The writer who took on the buffoons

A rough survey of editors at *The Nation* revealed that less than half know who H.L. Mencken was. This is a shame because Mencken deserves to be the patron saint – despite being an atheist – of newspapermen.

A new biography, by Terry Teachout, is aptly titled *The Skeptic* (Harper-Collins, New York, 2003, 410pp).

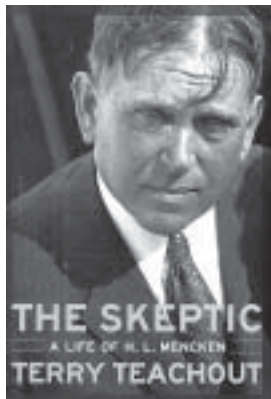
Mencken didn't believe in God, democracy, socialism, patriotism or any politician of his day, which ran from his turn-of-the-century stint as a cub reporter at the *Baltimore Sun* to his peak as a critical scourge in *The Smart Set* and *American Mercury* in the 1920s and 1930s to his death in 1956.

Mencken, an autodidact known as "The Sage of Baltimore", despised high school and refused to go to college. Instead he headed straight into the newspaper world, which he loved dearly.

This was his reaction to covering the great Baltimore fire of 1904: "[The week was] brain-fagging and back-breaking, but it was grand beyond com-

pare – an adventure of the first chop, a razzle-dazzle superb and elegant, a circus in forty rings."

That same year, the 24-year-old city editor rose in defence of American newspapermen under attack by the literary eminence of the day, Henry James, who accused them of being "crude, untidy and careless". Mencken had no use for the genteel tradition of fiction and held *Huckleberry Finn* to be the great American novel.



His response to James was typically acerbic: "The American newspaper reporter writes better English than Henry [James], if good English means clear, comprehensible English. Take any considerable sentence from any of his novels and examine its architecture. Isn't it wobbly with qualifying clauses and subassistent phrases?"

Doesn't it wriggle and stumble and stagger and flounder? Isn't it 'crude, untidy and careless', loose, frowsy, disorderly, unkempt, uncurried, unbrushed, unscrubbed? Doesn't it begin in the middle and work away from both sides? Doesn't it often bounce along for a while

and then, of a sudden, roll up its eyes and go out of business entirely?"

As Teachout comments: "In articles like this you can hear the click of a style snapping into place."

With his inimitable style – magisterial, down-to-earth, erudite, rowdy, savagely funny, he castigated the fools of his day: Republicans, Democrats, evangelists, puritans, Christian Scientists, Rotarians, holy rollers, chiropractors, Ku Klux Klanners, and many more.

He ridiculed without mercy the hack writers he reviewed and turned America's attention to a new wave of talent including Joseph Conrad, Sinclair Lewis and F. Scott Fitzgerald.

His nemesis was Franklin D Roosevelt, who made a fool of him in public at the 1934 Gridiron Club Dinner. As the Great Depression deepened and Mencken still held up the New Deal president to scorn, he lost his audience.

He retired to scholarly work, most notably *The American Language*, then in the 1940s recaptured his mass appeal with the best-selling memoirs of his Baltimore childhood, *Happy Days* and

early career, *Newspaper Days*.

Let us leave Mencken with this passage from his essay, *On Being an American*:

"And here, more than anywhere else that I know of or have heard of, the daily panorama of human existence, of private and communal folly – the unending procession of gov-

ernmental extortions and chicaneries, of commercial brigandages and throat-slittings, of theological buffooneries, of aesthetic ribaldries, of legal swindles and harlotries, of miscellaneous rogueries, villainies, imbecilities, grotesqueries, and extravagances – is so inordinately gross and preposterous, so perfectly brought up to the highest conceivable amperage, so steadily enriched with an almost fabulous daring and originality, that only a man who was born with a petrified diaphragm can fail to laugh himself to sleep every night, and to awake every morning with all the eager, unflagging expectation of a Sunday-school superintendent touring the Paris peep-shows."

That's prose.

Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt

MASTER of your domain

Q I see that you get email at khunwoody.com. How did you get a name like that all for yourself? How much would it cost to get my own name? How hard is it?

A The dot com part of an email address or Web page address is called a "domain name". I've registered several domain names in the US, including khunwoody.com and woodyswatch.com, and use them all the time. Domain names registered in Thailand have .th on the end, so you see frequently see domain names like loxinfo.co.th and boi.go.th. There used to be a distinction among names ending in .com, .net, .org and the like,

COMPUTER Q&A

Ask the experts. Email chris@phuketgazette.net

but those differences have largely disappeared as the number of registered domain names has grown to more than 10,000,000 – six million are dot coms.

You can stake out your own domain name, too. It's amazingly cheap and easy, if you know the ropes. The easiest way to start looking for an unclaimed .com, .net, .org, .us, .info, .biz, .uk, .tv, .cc, .jp, .be, .de, .at or .nz domain name is at www.godaddy.com. Look at the GoDaddy FAQ and follow the instructions to find and register a domain for 400 baht a year or less. (I just registered askwoody.com for five years, and paid 1,400 baht.)

If you want to register a .co.th, .net.th, .or.th, .in.th, .ac.th, .go.th, or .mi.th name, start at www.thnic.net, but expect to pay considerably more.

Registering a domain name is only half of the process. Once you have the name staked out, you need to hire a company to "host" the domain – provide a computer that's connected to the Internet full-time, where you can put your Web pages and work with email. (You can host it yourself, but believe me that's a more-than-full-time occupation.)

Competition for Web site hosting is intense, and prices reflect an abundant supply. GoDaddy has a good reputation for

hosting. In the same league is www.thaihost.com, but you should ask around and run a Google search before settling on a vendor.

Q Recently the *Gazette* ran an article saying that TT&T and the Communication Authority of Thailand were going to offer a shared 2 Mbps ADSL service (nominally eight times as fast as the fastest current commonly available Internet connection), called T-Speed, for 1,070 baht a month. I'm having trouble finding anyone who can give me details. Is it true?

A As far as I can tell, CAT and TT&T are ready to provide the service. If true, this is a watershed event in Phuket "Cyber Paradise" because it will finally put fast, unlimited, affordable Internet access into most homes and offices. There are two different plans, both of which use (nominal) 2 Mbps ADSL connections for uploading and downloading. I say "nominal" because it remains to be seen how fast the lines really are – and whether CAT/TT&T can keep the speed up as the system gets more heavily used. In either case, you get full, always-on, 24-hour Internet access, with no blocked sites and no data limitations – in other words, a typical ADSL connection.

The services differ when it comes to how many different phone lines will be attached to the same port in the main office. If your phone line is trying to get



A start to finding a place for yourself: www.godaddy.com

through at the same time that many others are slinging bits, your line slows down.

You may get great throughput during the day, but slow down to a crawl on evenings and weekends. On the other hand, if there are only a few phone lines connected to a single port, speeds should be much better – and more consistent.

The first service, called "Standard", lets CAT/TT&T connect your ADSL line together with up to 50 others. It costs 1,000 baht a month, plus 7% VAT. You don't pay any extra for the phone line, although you do need to buy or rent an ADSL modem (200 baht a month).

The second service, called "Premium", greatly restricts the number of lines that get ganged up in the main office. (I've heard that it's a maximum of five, but couldn't verify the number before we went to press.) Premium T-Speed runs at 2,860 baht a month, plus VAT, and the modem rental.

I signed up the day I heard about T-Speed, and should have the Premium package installed

shortly. I'll run the McAfee speed test and report on my findings as soon as it's up and running. If you're getting the T-Speed package, too, please send me email so we can compare notes.

Q Six weeks ago, the *Gazette* ran a front-page article saying, "After years of promises, Phuket moved one step towards the goal of becoming a center for information technology with the opening of a branch of the Software Industry Promotion Agency (SIPA) at Saphan Hin on March 1." I'm trying to get in touch with SIPA. Where are they?

A It seems SIPA are still looking for staff, and there should be a firm opening date shortly. All of us in the computer biz in Phuket are keenly interested in a "one-stop service center" for computer businesses and investors. I'll keep you posted – and if you hear anything definitive, please drop me a line.

– Woody Leonhard
woody@khunwoody.com

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Insights into 'mega-business' in Phuket

By Gategaeo Phetsawang

PHUKET CITY: The International Business Association of Phuket (IBAP) held its first conference of 2004 at the Royal Phuket City Hotel on April 2, with 40 people joining in a discussion on "Mega-Business in Phuket".

IBAP Secretary O B Wetzell discussed the need for better infrastructural support for the many large-scale projects in Phuket, citing as a case in point the need for highway overpasses along the bypass road.

In terms of employment, he said mega-projects are essentially a trade-off. While they provide many new employment opportunities, they also drive some small operators out of business.

Sachaporn Thongsom, President of the Kamala Tambon Administration Organization, pointed out that one positive result for Phuket landowners was an increase in land prices in areas near mega-projects.

He noted that land prices around the Samkong Intersection near Tesco Lotus had risen tenfold, to as much as 10 million

baht a rai, since the site was chosen for construction of the store.

K. Sachaporn added that the increasing number of mega-projects in the retail sector had increased competition, thereby improving choice and lowering the cost to consumers.

He expressed concern, however, about their effect on the environment and local culture. He said the presence of large retailers was a threat to local communities, in which social bonds have traditionally been maintained through small-scale neighborhood commerce.

Referring to Phuket's worsening traffic congestion, Phuket Governor Udomsak U-sawarangkura said that he had held a meeting with the Highways Department to discuss the need for an overpass at the Darasamut Phuket School intersection, where the Central Festival shopping complex is now under construction.

He added that the Highways Department is also studying ways of ensuring smooth traffic flow to the site of the controversial International Convention and Exhibition Center, which is

to be built on reclaimed land at Saphan Hin.

Craig Murphy of the Royal Phuket Marina, which, when completed, is expected to be the largest marina in Asia, told attendees that the project would include a 400-room luxury hotel. The 6-billion-baht project in Koh Kaew will cover 190 rai and provide berthing for 350 yachts.

Representatives from Central Festival and Jungceylon, another mega-project under construction in Patong, were invited to the seminar but were unable to attend.

On the Move

Koonsak Ratjaneeorn of Samut Songkhram has been appointed Chief of the Phuket Town Planning and Public Works Office. He holds an architecture degree from Mapúa Institute of Technology in the Philippines. Before moving to Phuket, he served as the head of the Town Planning and Public Works office in Ratchaburi, followed by a similar post in Surat Thani last year.



Trang native **Supattra Sorsrisumpun**, 49, has been appointed Chief of the Phuket Provincial Excise Office. She holds a master's degree in economics from Ramkhamhaeng University in Bangkok, as well as two bachelor's degrees. Her past experience includes serving as head of the Provincial Excise Office in Yala province, a post she held for one year.



Duangporn Satitpanuwat, 34, from Kanchanaburi, has been appointed Assistant Director of Marketing of Queen Air Booking Center Co Ltd. She is a graduate from the Faculty of Social Sciences, Srinakharinwirot University. She worked for eight years as Marketing and Sales Supervisor for the Thai arm of international travel booking system Abacus.



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

US jobs report a global booster

Often, what seems a boring topic will actually be much more important than it seems. The US jobs report (non-farm payroll) for March 2004 was released on April 2, seemingly just another economic statistic.

But this one, when released, caused gold to fall \$7 an ounce, the Dow to jump almost 100 points, Nasdaq to rise more than 2% and the benchmark 10-year US Treasury Bond yield to back up 30 points.

This information is so important that many European bond market traders didn't even bother going to work until the afternoon. Its release also caused the US dollar to rise almost 2% against the euro and the pound sterling.

The US jobs report showed that instead of an anticipated 120,000 jobs being created, the US economy actually added 308,000 jobs. It also showed, on revision, that previously released statistics for January and February 2004 had underestimated US job creation.

This has been widely described as the finding of the missing piece of the jigsaw. Economic statistics had been reflecting growing economic activity in the US but it was being increasingly described as a "jobless recovery".

However, anyone with even a vague interest in economics knows that job creation during economic expansion is a lagging indicator.

Why is this the case? Simply, when an economy has suffered a recession followed by slow economic growth, it still has a lot of spare capacity. In the case of the US capacity utilization, it is still only at 75.6%.

Companies operating in this environment first have to fully employ existing staff and have at least a degree of confidence that the expansion is going to be a continuing trend before they will consider hiring new employees.

The jobs report released on April 2 was a watershed event for financial markets, and not just

US markets. The financial world was eagerly awaiting its release – poor figures would have cast the US economic recovery in doubt and would have further postponed the time when the US Federal Reserve made the decision to raise interest rates.

Poor job-creation figures would have placed increased pressure on the value of the US dollar in international terms, while gold would have been a beneficiary.

Low interest rates in US dollars makes holding dollars less attractive. It also leads to less outside investment in the US economy.

European stockmarkets also jumped at the news as the main British and Swiss indices rose over 1% and the French and German markets lifted by 2%. This is some good news for Europe as an expanding US economy has "spillover" benefits for virtually everyone.

Japan, the world's second largest economy, appears now to be emerging from the economic doldrums that have existed since 1990. Their big banks have managed to substantially improve their balance sheets.

There has been considerable corporate restructuring and the new Bank of Japan Governor is showing a more constructive approach.

There is still too much dependency on exports as the driver of economic activity but the economy does appear to be moving forward.

China, as an increasingly important export and investment market, is also helping the Japanese recovery. A resurgent Japan is very good news for the rest of Asia, Thailand included.

However, the picture is not all encouraging. The Euro zone, with some small country exceptions, is finding recovery an elusive goal.

The larger economies, especially Germany and France, need far more restructuring. Siemens, for example, has found the cost of production in Germa-



MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson

ny is simply too high, and has given the unions some unpleasant alternatives.

Five thousand workers will be made redundant unless they agree to work a 40-hour week or accepting a pay cut. These jobs will not be destroyed but transferred to another country, where the cost base is more competitive.

Pressure is building on these countries to trim their welfare and pension benefits, restructure their labor markets and deal with spiraling health costs, among other areas.

The politicians there have taken tentative steps, to howls of disapproval from the electorates. Regional elections in France, held in late March, saw the ruling party trounced, purely on these issues.

The electorate might not like it but they are simply trying to avoid reality. Without change, significant economic growth will be almost impossible to achieve.

Growth is essential to make the "cake" larger and, with ageing populations and an eroding tax base, the Euro zone's principal members must "bite the bul-

let". It is a competitive world and those who act like dinosaurs will surely become increasingly irrelevant and poorer in a rapidly-changing world.

Unemployment is a serious problem for these countries and it can only be solved

by accepting these realities. Whether the electorates will allow their politicians the freedom to make the necessary changes is another matter.

Readers may wonder why I refer to the Euro Zone, not Europe as a whole. Basically, Britain is in Europe but not part of the "zone". Britain has problems, but they are of a different nature.

For example, unemployment there is less than half that of France or Germany. GDP growth in Britain over the past year is 2.8% compared with 0.6% in France and 0.2% in Germany.

The demographic situation is much better in Britain than either of the other two countries. Labor market rigidities are also much less.

Tax for a production worker is about 18% in Britain on average, compared to 33% in Germany and 40% in France. In the US, by comparison, it is 16%.

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



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TAEKWONDO

Punchin' and kickin' to a Thai world title

PHUKET CITY: Taekwondo may be a long way from supplanting Muay Thai as Phuket's martial art of choice, but it is definitely gaining popularity on the island. Those hoping to punch and kick their way to taekwondo success have a chance to study with a real master, seven-time international gold medal winner Park Hee Kang, of Korea, who is now under contract to teach at Dragon Gym.

Mr Park, 28, first became involved in taekwondo as a young boy when he saw the sport as a way to strengthen his mind and body. Even then, Mr Park was proud to study his country's signature sport and found success in the discipline as a way of winning the approval of his friends.

"I was really scrawny, but

with this sport I realized could become stronger," he recalled.

His hard work paid off. He won a spot on Korea's national team in 1996 and competed in more than 50 international tournaments. One highlight came when he represented Korea at the Asian Games in Bangkok in 1998.

After his first visit to the Thailand, he flew back to Korea with the gold medal in the Men's Fin (50kg) weight division. Other career highlights included gold medals at international competitions in Iran in 1997 and Germany in 1998. He also reached No. 2 in the world rankings in 1998.

Plagued by injuries, he decided to quit competitive taekwondo in 1999 and went to work

teaching the sport in Korean secondary schools. Later, he was contacted by Thailand's National Taekwondo Coach, Choi Young Seok, who is also a Korean.

"I talked to Mr Choi and he convinced me that working here would be a lot more fun than working in Korea," he said.

"I welcomed the challenge of working in a new country and culture. I still had really fond memories of Thailand after winning the Asian Games here, so I packed my bags and flew off," he said.

At first he came to Thailand for just a month, working as Mr Choi's assistant and training Thailand's top taekwondo talent. As luck would have it, he was later offered a one-year teaching contract by Dragon Gym in Phuket City and he began work on March 1.

Asked about Muay Thai, Mr Park said the disciplines are similar because they both rely on kicking and punching techniques.

"In taekwondo, fighters normally focus on the fast body movements. An experienced fighter can deliver 20 kicks in just a few seconds," he said.

"Thai boxing requires more power, but it is somewhat slower," he remarked.

Mr Park pointed out that people who have previously studied Muay Thai readily absorb taekwondo techniques.

"When I teach Thai people,



Park Hee Kang: He teaches by example.

they can usually pick up new techniques faster than people from other countries," he said. "But whether they reach an advanced level depends on their individual commitment," added the level-five black-belt.

Out of necessity, Mr Park teaches by example. "I have problem communicating with my Thai students," he admitted. "It would be easier for me if I could speak English. So I let my body movements do the talking."

Mr Park is optimistic about taekwondo in Thailand and predicts there will be a Thai world champion within five years.

— **Rittiwat Suwannaratphum**

Park Hee Kang is now based in Phuket with Dragon Gym on Chanajarern Rd, Phuket City, near X-Zone Pub. Tel: 07-2771199 or 01-6916230.

RUGBY

Overseas teams line up for 10-a-side title bid

By Chris Husted

KARON: Twenty teams from Thailand and abroad have registered to compete for the Clive Williamson Memorial Trophy in the sixth Phuket International Rugby 10s, which will be held at the Karon Municipal Stadium on May 29-30.

Home teams Phuket Vagabonds and Phuket Barbarians will aim to defend island pride, while back to defend their titles will be last year's champions, The British Club (Bangkok), and runners-up Wanderers (Singapore).

Plate winners last year, the Christina Noble Foundation (from Abu Dhabi), will also return, as will the Pattaya Panthers, winners of the Bowl tourney last year.

The other teams confirmed to take part are the Pot Bellied Pigs (Hong Kong), The Bucks RFC (Singapore), The Old Bill (Hong Kong), Bangkok Japanese (Thailand), Seoul Survivors (Korea), Melbourne Cruiser Rams (Australia), Brunei Yacht Club (Brunei), The Jailers (UK), Aberdeen RFC (Hong Kong), Middlesborough RFC (UK), Emirates airlines' "Flying Muppets" (UAE), Hong Kong Football Club, British Army (Germany) and the Southerners (Thailand).

Proceeds raised from the tourney will go to the Child Watch Phuket charity and the Christina Noble Children's Foundation.

The number of teams in the tournament is limited to 24. For more information or to enter contact Patrick at Tel: 076-341799 or by email at: phuketvagabondsrfc@yahoo.co.uk.

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37 Ft 1996	Searay 370	Mercuriiser, 2 x 350 Hp	USD 160,000
29 Ft 2003	ProVier 9000	Honda 4-stroke, 2 x 50 Hp	Price on Application
28 Ft 86/02	Italian Open Sportfisher	Yamaha 200 Hp	THB 1,500,000
21 Ft 1997	Searay Laguna 21	Mariner 200 Hp (50 hrs)	THB 1,200,000
18 Ft 2000	Skip Jack 18	Yamaha, 2 x 85 Hp	THB 750,000

Sail			
64 Ft 1993	Traditional Wooden Ketch	Yanmar 45 Hp	USD 100,000
63 Ft 1993	Wooden Penisi Ketch	Iwazu 511 Hp	Reduced to Euro 100,000
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The most important part of learning to fly, Don Pinkney explains, is learning self-control



Blown SKY high

Don Pinkney is trying to get a club off the ground – literally. But he's finding it difficult to convince people to join him in soaring over Phuket with just a parachute-style glider and a small motor.

Safety is the obvious issue, but as far as Don is concerned paragliding is as safe as most other sports involving the elements. Of course, proper instruction and a healthy respect for heights and the power of the wind are fundamental, but most importantly, says Don, is to start simply.

"There are three levels of gliders: beginner, intermediate and advanced," he explains. "The advanced gliders are for pros and the type used for aerial acrobatics, such as doing inverted spins, full tilt, tumbles, 360s. The beginner models are so basic that when the wing starts to collapse as you hit a thermal sheer, the best thing to do is nothing as the wing will correct itself."

It's so simple to learn, says Don, that he has even taught a 76-year-old man to paraglide. Don picked up the sport in the Colorado Rockies, where the thermals needed to fly are much stronger and more volatile. A friend introduced him to the sport and just a few years later Don was racing 40 miles cross-country, using his wits and experience to navigate the course.

"In Phuket, the winds are more suitable for learning," he said. "They are lighter and not being drawn from 30 miles around. The best times for flying are early morning and late afternoon, when the thermals are not so strong." His preferred take-off sites are at Friendship Beach and Laem Phromthep, providing an added attraction for tourists seeking that perfect Andaman sunset.

The most dangerous part of learning to fly, Don explains, is learning self-control. "Some people start getting the buzz of flying and become reckless," he says. "But first and foremost is understanding where the wind is coming from and how it can change. Knowing what's happening in the sky is the key to your longevity. If you push the limit;

By Chris Husted

you get whacked. That's the power of the sky. It deserves the utmost respect."

As for getting off the ground, that's easy. Don goes through his pre-flight drill: ignore the onlookers who inevitably gather; strap in, take the weight of the engine and frame by rocking forward, and stand up. He then waits for a steady, slight breeze to fill and lift the wing. When the breeze is consistent enough, he turns and runs windward.

"Five to 10 seconds of steady breeze is all that's needed," he says, adding that flying with a motor usually requires a sprint, but flying motorless often needs no running at all. "The best condition is flying in no wind; you just ride the thermals."

Minutes after take-off, Don is flying high over the island. "Top-end altitude is about 30,000 feet, which is crazy," he says. Don has flown up to about 20,000 feet (5,400 meters), but not over Phuket, where the ceiling for unrestricted flight is at

500 feet. "That is enough to see the island's beauty from another, very different, angle," he says.

With a single tank of eight liters of gas, Don usually flies for about 2½ hours, from Nai Harn to Patong, then to Panwa, and back to Nai Harn.

In addition to spectacular views, says Don, Thailand offers the added bonus of being one of the cheapest places to get into the sport. "A wing for a beginner costs about 120,000 baht, while an average motor costs an extra 250,000 baht. Thailand is lucky. Equipment here is nearly at cost price."

And all this enthusiasm for flying comes from a man who, as a boy, couldn't ride the chair-o-plane at the local fair. "I didn't like it. It made me sick."

Anyone interested in learning to paraglide should contact Don Pinkney by email at: cunim68@yahoo.com. People are also welcome to call him on his mobile at 09-5880619, though he adds it may be better to send him an SMS – just in case he's in the air at the time.



Don Pinkney tests the air over Phuket, above and above left. Flying motorless often needs no running at all. "The best condition is flying in no wind; you just ride the thermals," he says.

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THE VOLVO V70XC IN ACTION: Whether the vehicle ever sees a dirt road is not important. It's an ecologically-sound vehicle but the cleanliness comes at a price.

My next-door neighbor has a Volvo V70 XC which he says is ideal for going "up-country" or for use during the extremes of the rainy season. But how many of us ever actually leave the island, let alone during bad weather?

True, this Volvo has significant safety benefits, but I doubt this or any other XC in Thailand will actually venture off road.

The V70XC D5 is the first to use Volvo's own common rail diesel engine, a unit produced in-house, offering class-leading performance and excellent fuel economy.

Unique among diesels, the Volvo motor is a five-cylinder, using an all aluminum block and cylinder head. Designed from the outset to accommodate diesel power, the lightweight motor produces a teeth-pulling 340Nm of torque at just 1,750 rpm.

Power output is reasonable too, with 163bhp (120kW) on tap. Top speed is a shade under 200 kmh. Acceleration, although a little sluggish, will still take the V70 XC to 100 kmh in less than 12 seconds.

And, because the in-line,

transverse engine is relatively narrow, it leaves adequate room in front of the block for the all-important crumple zone to dissipate crash energy.

The biggest feature of the XC is its electronically controlled all-wheel drive, developed in conjunction with one of the leaders in this field, Haldex of Sweden. It is an intelligent system that adjusts to surface conditions and driver input.

By comparison with earlier Volvo four-wheel drive systems, based on a viscous coupling dif-

Taking the ROUGH with the SMOOTH



By Jeff Heselwood

ferential, the new AWD is much swifter in its response. It only needs one of the front wheels to start to slip by a fraction of a wheel rotation for more power to be fed to the rear wheels.

The effect is to minimize the risk of the front wheels digging in if, say, soft sand is encountered. The heavier the driving surface, the greater the difference and advantages over the earlier system.

On the road, up to 65% of the available power is directed to the rear wheels to give the XC a

rear-wheel drive feel but any changes in where the power is delivered happen instantly, without the driver even noticing.

Off-road, the electronics take over and distribute torque according to available traction.

The AWD is connected to the car's Multiplex system, so it can communicate with the other systems, such as traction control and dynamic stability control.

A further sophistication is that when the driver brakes, the AWD system is deactivated so that the brakes and the ABS can function effectively, giving maximum stability and shorter braking distances.

Similarly, the AWD is deactivated by the dynamic stability and traction control systems if either performs any braking intervention to counteract a skid.

Volvo intends to capture a significant share of the large diesel market in Europe, and the five-cylinder engine is now avail-

able in the larger XC90 and the normal, two-wheel drive V70 as well as the XC70.

Diesel has taken off big time in Europe, with Germany Volvo's largest diesel market. Italy is next, followed by Britain, Belgium and Volvo's home country, Sweden. Amazingly, 92 % of all large Volvos sold in France are diesels, according to the company's own figures.

One important factor is that the five-cylinder Volvo diesel complies with Euro 3 emission standards (Thailand now only demands Euro 1), halving exhaust gas emissions compared with Volvo's previous passenger car diesels. There is also an oxidizing catalytic converter to remove unburned hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide. In short, this a very clean engine.

The engine is made at Volvo's plant at Skövde and the XC70 is built at its Torslanda plant, also in Sweden. Other Volvo models for the Thai market, such as the S60, V70 and S80 are assembled at Volvo's joint-venture facility at Samutprakarn, south of Bangkok, along with various trucks and buses, but not the XC70 which is 100% Swedish-built.

My neighbor may never venture off road with his XC but by the look of it he has one of the better options available in Thailand. Consider it next time you are thinking of changing cars, although it will probably set you back well over two million baht.

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

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Sunrise shines

Even though the cakes and pastries on offer at Sunrise Coffee House, Chalong, are of professional quality, the lady responsible for making them has had no formal training.

Navaporn "Poom" Prueksapanachart learned her baking skills purely by experimenting with various recipes over the years. "I first started baking when we were living in Tunisia," she explains.

"My husband soon got tired of the food available there and as I wasn't working, I had plenty of time to cook.

"He has quite a sweet tooth, so was very happy when I started baking different cookies and cakes."

After leaving Tunisia, K. Poom and her husband, John, relocated to Singapore. There, K. Poom returned to studying and obtained a diploma in computer studies, followed by a degree in business and finance. Having lived in Singapore for six years, K. Poom was pleased when she found out they would be moving to Phuket.

She and John fell in love with the island when they spent their honeymoon here in 1989.

"I opened the Sunrise Coffee House in June 2003, so I could combine my love of baking with the business qualifications I'd received in Singapore," K. Poom said. "I make a range of about 20 kinds of cake, both to sell in the coffee house and also for private orders."

Apart from the various cakes, you can also enjoy an all-day breakfast and lunchtime specials at the Sunrise.

Chicken and Asparagus Quiche For 10-12 people

Ingredients for the pastry:

250 gms plain flour;
100 gms cold butter, cut into small pieces;
1 egg yolk;
3 tablespoons iced water.



Gingerbread with lemon icing: K. Poom's husband, John, has a sweet tooth.

Guest chef By Jenna Wise



Chicken and Asparagus Quiche.

For the filling:

170 gms asparagus, cut diagonally into 1-inch pieces and steamed;
25 gms butter;
1 onion, chopped small;
50 gms wholegrain mustard;
200 gms soft cream cheese;
150 ml fresh cream;
3 eggs, lightly beaten;
200 gms cooked chicken fillet, chopped small;
Salt and pepper to taste. Method:
To make the pastry, mix the flour



Sunrise crew (from left): Phrae, A, K. Poom, Ribbin and Jum.

and butter in a food processor until the mixture is crumbly. Add the egg yolk and water and continue processing until the pastry is well blended. Wrap in cling film and chill for 30 minutes.

To prepare the filling, heat the butter in a pan and cook the onion until it is translucent. Remove from the heat and add the mustard and cream cheese, stirring until the cheese has melted. Cool slightly before adding the cream, eggs, chicken, asparagus

and salt and pepper to taste. Mix well together and set aside. Now roll out the pastry and line a 10-inch baking tin with it. Chill for 10 minutes before covering the pastry with baking paper. Spread baking beads evenly over the paper and bake for 15 minutes in an oven preheated to 200 degrees. Remove the paper and beads and bake for a further 10 minutes until the pastry is lightly browned and dry. Cool completely and reduce the oven heat to 180°. Spoon

the filling into the pastry shell and sprinkle with pepper. Bake for about 1 hour, or until set.

Gingerbread with lemon icing For 10-12 people

Ingredients:

150 gms unsalted butter;
100 gms brown sugar;
50 gms molasses;
50 gms golden syrup;
1 teaspoon cinnamon;
2 teaspoons fresh ginger root, finely chopped;
300 gms milk;
2 large eggs, beaten;
1 teaspoon baking soda;
2 tablespoons warm water;
2 cups all purpose flour, sifted.

For the icing:

300 grams icing sugar, sifted;
3 tablespoons lemon juice;
1-2 teaspoons warm water.

Method:

Preheat the oven to 350°. Butter and line an eight-inch square baking tin with baking paper. Melt the butter in a pan and stir in the sugar, molasses, syrup, cinnamon and ginger. Remove from the heat and mix in the sifted flour until you have a smooth consistency. Pour into the prepared tin and bake for 1 hour. When ready, turn the gingerbread onto a wire rack to cool. Mix the icing sugar and lemon juice together, adding warm water to get the desired consistency for the icing. Spread this over the gingerbread.

Sunrise Coffee House, 43/44-45 Moo 5, Wiset Road, Rawai. Tel: 076 280962. Owner: Navaporn "Poo" Prueksapanachart. Open daily 7 am to 7pm.

CLARIFICATION

In the Guest Chef column of March 20 it was stated that Kirsten Kindermann taught yoga to members of the Thai Royal Family. In fact, she taught members of the ruling family of Abu Dhabi.

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Home of the Week

Kata

A villa on four levels

Katamanda is an exclusive, secure residential estate and one of the last available headland properties in Phuket, overlooking Kata and Kata Noi, two beautiful beaches.

The estate offers a tropical lifestyle in 44 villa plots on 28 rai (11 acres), combined with the conveniences of modern living.

Planned to be a secure and discreet private estate, it has been comprehensively designed with resort-style recreational and management facilities.

The infrastructure includes paved private roads, extensive landscaped gardens, and perimeter walls, plus 24-hour security.

The clubhouse features a reception and business service center, lounge and meeting rooms, a private terrace restaurant for owners and their guests, together with a free-form swimming pool, fitness center and floodlit tennis court.

This is indeed a rare opportunity to own one of Katamanda's exclusive villas.

Villa E5 is set on a hill on four levels. Visitors approach



All three bedrooms overlook the pool and have sea views.

along a short driveway which leads to a covered carport for two cars, and a storage area.

Steps lead up to the second level and the swimming pool, which is surrounded by flowers and tropical plants. There are three bedrooms that overlook the pool. All the bedrooms have sea views. The first bedroom is on the second level, with low-maintenance sliding aluminum doors opening to the swimming pool. A maid's room and separate laundry-storeroom are on the same level.

Up on the third level is the main terrace, which surrounds the villa. There's a sala to one side, where you can relax and admire the views across Kata Bay.

The main teak door takes you into the dining-living room with a doorway to the Western kitchen and another to a second living room, then through to a study.

The top floor has two master bedrooms, both with full en suite bathrooms finished in marble and luxury bathroom fittings.

The finish of the property and fixtures are of the highest quality and give an air of luxury, with no expense spared.

Makar timber flooring is used extensively – few developments on the island can match the finish.

The villa can be let by the management of Katamanda, ensuring a handsome income stream.

This property will not be on the market long and may suit someone who prefers not to wait for a villa to be built.

Land title: Chanote. **Price:** 35 million baht.

Contact: Richard Lusted, Siam Real Estate, Tel: 076-280805 www.siamrealestate.com, Email info@siamrealestate.com



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Construction Update

by Rungtip Hongjakpet

Two new property companies took advantage of the recent Phuket & Samui Property Exhibition in Singapore to launch both themselves and their developments to the public.

Teerasak "Kim" Phon-ngarn, Managing Director of the Kamala Nathonghouse project on Hua Kaun Rd in Kamala, said he was pleased with the interest shown in the development at the show.

"We are very happy with the results from the Singapore show. A little surprised, in fact," he admitted.

The location of Kamala Nathonghouse – Hua Haun Rd is next to Phuket FantaSea – is, K. Kim suggests, a key factor in the project's popularity.

Price also comes into the equation. "Our starting price is US\$100,000 (around 4.2 million baht) for a three-bedroom bungalow of 139.5 sqm with two bathrooms," he explained.

"This represents a very good deal for people looking for a holiday home."

K. Kim told the *Gazette* that one person put down a deposit having viewed only the plans, while a number of others planned to travel to Phuket to inspect the site.

"We have also found that although we didn't plan to sell to the domestic market, the price is affordable by Thai standards, and we have had interest from this sector, too," K. Kim said.

Some 200 million baht has been invested in the project, which broke ground in January this year. The entire project of 22 bungalows and 21 two-story houses is due to be completed within three years.

More information on Kamala Nathonghouse may be found on its website at www.kamalanathonghouse.com. Inquiries may be made by email to kim@kamalanathonghouse.com or by telephone to Tel: 01-8162156.

ANOTHER new company making its exhibition debut at the Singapore show was Phuket Pavilions Private Villas.

Nick Anthony, Managing Director of Indigo Real Estate, who is marketing the project, told



Artist's impression of a home at Phuket Pavilions Private Villas.

New projects get good start at Singapore show



One of the larger homes in the Kamala Nathonghouse project, near FantaSea.

the *Gazette* that the scheme was well-received with much positive feedback ensuing.

Phuket Pavilions will be a managed residential resort comprising 21 one-bedroom and nine three-bedroom villas, all designed by Phuket-based architects Bishop International. Construction began in February this year and a completion date of mid-2005 is expected.

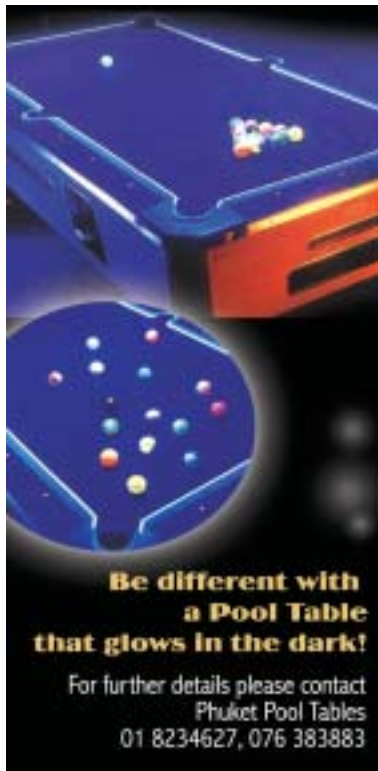
The project is directly above the Lakewood Hills development near Bang Tao Beach and is close to the maximum 80-meter ceiling for buildings, giving it widespread views west to Bang Tao, south to the Banyan Tree golf course, and southeast to Cape Yamoo and Boat Lagoon.

Mr Anthony remarked that although the villas are sold as private dwellings, the option exists to include them in the resort's rental pool scheme. "Owners can remove their property from the rental pool with 90 days' notice and use their villas as they wish,"

he said. Rental income yield is expected to be around 7.2% a year.

He added, "At 16.5 million baht for a three-bedroom villa with views, a management scheme and facilities, plus a furniture package costing 800,000 baht, it's a good investment."

Readers may contact Mr Anthony by calling Tel: 076-270770 or by email to nick@indigore.com. The project's website is at <http://www.phuketpavilions.com>.



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Gardening

with Bloomin' Bert

SHEAR ECSTASY

Talk to a gardener from the West about pruning, and she will take a sharp intake of breath immediately, and shake her head with doubtful severity. She'll make that same noise that your car mechanic makes as he tells you that you need a new engine when all you wanted was an oil change.

"Now you've got to be careful," she'll say. "You really need to pick a suitable bud, and cut exactly an inch above that. But of course you can't prune that particular plant at this time of the year." And so the pruning saga continues.

As we all know, we're not in that hemisphere – we're in Phuket. No need for mechanic noises here. Just feel free to hack away. Literally.

A friend of mine once kept an assortment of plants on his balcony. Most of them were generally pretty abused. His idea of watering was simply to pour the remnants of last night's beer into the nearest pot.

He also felt that the ash from Marlboro Light cigarettes made an effective fertilizer. In his mind, his duty of care was done. After all, these plants weren't candidates for the Chelsea

Flower Show by any means.

One night, as I was helping him to produce some more beer remnants, I decided that his charges needed a makeover. Something had to be done.

They'd gone pretty wild and straggly, and needed a serious attack with the secateurs (secateurs are those scissor-like tools with the short, curved blades that everyone has at the bottom of a drawer somewhere.)

Luckily he was no exception, and magically produced a pair of secateurs from the bottom of a drawer somewhere. As he lurched off to the corner shop to replenish the dwindling beer supplies, I got to work. And I was ruthless.

Nothing escaped my evil clutches, with the result that, on his return, the plants on his balcony were a shadow of their former selves.

One was immediately christened "the twig" because that was all that was left sticking out of the pot. The owner was horrified at the time, but within weeks, everything bounced back, as tropical plants inevitably do.

His look of horror had been replaced with a gleeful grin when next I saw his balcony. Even "the twig" was now a healthy mass of fresh green growth.

There are several classifications of pruner. Like my beer-drinking friend with the balcony, there are the cowardly pruners, who are afraid to lop even a leaf from a plant, because they might hurt it. Their gardens tend to be a testament to this – everything looks a bit overgrown.

Then there's the annual

pruner who, armed with saw, shears and ax, attacks the garden with a vengeance once a year, cutting all hedges and shrubs back to the ground. After disposing of the debris, he hangs the tools up until the following year.

A rather strange breed of pruners are the "topiarists". This lot feel the need to turn their hedge into something it's not, like a deer, or an elephant, or an unnatural geometric shape.

They're left with a garden full of bits of hedge wrapped around wire frames that I suppose are designed to make people swoon with envy at their double-helix tetrahedron hedge.

These three have rather missed the point. The main purpose of pruning is to remove unwanted growth to benefit the plant parts that remain, and simply to make them look better.

Here in Phuket, with a tropical climate that will encourage almost anything to grow anywhere, this can be done anytime.

While it's certainly true that some plants will benefit more from being cut back in the dry season, and some in the wet, generally they will thrive on regular hacking sessions.

Just about the only thing that you have to be careful of is cutting back a young tree too early, so that it never has a chance to develop into its natural size.

Over-exuberance here will result in a bonsai tree. That's how they do it in Japan.

If in doubt, a good rule for flowering trees and shrubs is to prune soon after the flowers have fallen.

Otherwise, just hack away.

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BASIC INSTINCT: The Rangoon creeper will stalk you maniacally until you get out the shears and show it exactly who is boss, as *Gazette* reporter Siripansa Somboon demonstrates here.

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Property Gazette

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Property Gazette

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Email resumé, photo, expected salary & tel no to: efsi@loxinfo.co.th



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is currently looking to recruit
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All applicants should be made by
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KATATHANI
PHUKET BEACH RESORTS

Katathani Phuket Beach Resorts is currently seeking a
highly qualified professional with relevant experience
for the following position:

Local Sales Manager

Qualification:

- Male or female, minimum age of 25
- 2-3 years experience in hotel sales and marketing
- Bachelor's Degree or higher
- Fluent in written and spoken English, other languages will be an advantage
- Applicant with personal vehicle is preferred
- Good personality and being proactive

Please contact Personnel Department
14 Katanoi Road, Karon, Muang, Phuket 83100
Tel: 076-330124-6, E-Mail: personnel@katathani.com

The Phuket Gazette

the island's English-language newspaper

The *Phuket Gazette* seeks to fill the following positions:

Desk Editor. The successful candidate will be a computer-savvy, native-English speaker with high-quality writing skills and a passion for clear, accurate English. The job entails editing, laying out and proofreading editorial, classifieds and display advertisements.

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

If an event isn't listed in the Gazette's
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List **YOUR** event now - **It's free of charge.**

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STAFF WANTED

Sales person need for busy diving retail shop. Must have good English skills. Diving experience is preferred. Please contact for an interview. Tel: 076-281401-2 or 01-0794137. Fax: 076-281400. Email: sdephuk@loxinfo.co.th

HR MANAGER

The Mangosteen Resort & Spa is seeking a Human Resources Manager with at least 5 years' experience and excellent command of English language (Thai nationals only). Knowledge of Thai labor law is required. Please contact for more details and application. Tel: 076-289399. Fax: 076-289389. Email: hajo@mangosteen-phuket.com

EXPERIENCED STAFF ONLY

Spa Aseyri in the Maldives is seeking to employ 2 experienced spa therapists for a new spa. Based in Male with all relocation costs taken care of by the company. Only dedicated persons, send your CV with photo by fax or email to apply. Please contact for further information. Tel: 960-776024. Mobile: 96-77-6024. Fax: 960-310714. Email: duniyespasmanager@meeru.com

HOLIDAY RESORT

Staff wanted for the following positions: Assistant to the General Manager and Sales staff to work for local chain resorts on Koh Yao Noi in Phang Nga; Chiang Mai; Cha-am; and Ayudhaya. Please contact to apply or for further information. Tel: 02-7115997-8 (ext 21, 34).

SPA MANAGER

wanted. A new luxury spa is now looking for a qualified spa manager, min 5 years' experience. Good salary and benefits. Tel: 01-3708632.

ADMIN ASSISTANT

English-speaking Thai required for accounting, payroll and marketing duties. Please contact to apply. Tel: 076-333197, 07-8810750. Fax: 076-331021. Email: tigercom@phuket.loxinfo.co.th

STAFF WANTED

Sales person needed for busy diving retail shop. Must have good English skills. Diving experience is preferred. Please contact for an interview. Tel: 076-281401-2 or 01-0794137. Fax: 076-281400. Email: sdephuk@loxinfo.co.th

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 resumé by fax or email. Fax: 076-282240. Email: info@footprints-asia.com

URGENTLY REQUIRED

Marketing officer. Must be able to use MS Office and communicate well in English. For more information and to apply, please call Tel: 076-289122.

SPA THERAPIST

Chandara by Lucky Paradise Co Ltd, a new exclusive residence situated at Laem Singh Beach, is now looking for energetic person to fill the position of Spa Therapist. Requirements: 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. Please send your CV and recent photo. Tel: 076-279550-1. Fax: 076-279092. Email: nsapple@loxinfo.co.th

SALES EXECUTIVE

for Phuket and Samui. CPK Plantation, the producer and distributor of Chateau de Loie wine, offers excellent employment opportunities for ambitious candidates who are interested in a secure and rewarding career with this dynamic company, to be based in Phuket and Samui. Requirements: university graduate, male or female; excellent command of written and spoken English; sales experience in alcoholic beverage market an advantage; enthusiastic, confident and desire to succeed. Send your application with photo to: Sales & Marketing Director, 7/4 Soi Soonvijai, Petchaburi Rd, Bangkok, Huaykwang, Bangkok 10320. Tel: 02-7180433. Fax: 02-718-2403. Email: marketing@chateaudeloei.com

OFFICE REP.

We are looking for a young female with a good personality and fair English to work as an Office Representative. Salary: 8,000 baht a month. Please contact us for further information and to apply. Tel: 076-263737. Fax: 076-224113. Email: recruitment@bowentraining.com

ENGLISH TEACHER

wanted. Candidates must be native English-speakers and have a degree. Teaching experience is preferred. Call or email to apply. Tel: 076-325000, 09-6486713. Fax: 076-325476. Email: kanok@surinbeachresort.com

COOK WANTED

The Yorkshire Inn Hotel is looking for a good cook in both Thai and European food. Please contact for more information and to apply. Tel: 076-340904, 076-345258.

HEAD HOUSEKEEPER

wanted. Must have experience, able to give introduction to staff, able to speak some English. Good salary and conditions. Please contact Khun Fon at the Yorkshire Inn Hotel, in Patong. Tel: 076-340904 or 076-345258.

JUNIOR ACCOUNTANT

wanted. We are an expanding company seeking a junior accounts assistant. Requirements: Thai national, diploma/degree in accounting, own motorbike/car, preferably some work experience. Please send your CV to apply. Email: info@asiadebit.com

5-STAR RESORT

New 5-star boutique resort in Phuket is seeking people to employ in the following positions: Chef de Partie, Baker and Pastry Chef, Commis, Cooks, stewards. Tel: 076-333031. Email: alistair@aspasiaphuket.com

DIVING INSTRUCTOR

PADI diving instructor couple required for our dive center on Phi Phi island. Please contact for more info. Email: tgspg@hotmail.com

MANGOSTEEN RESTAURANT

We are seeking people to fill the positions of waiter/waitress. Must have at least 3 years' experience and good command of English. Tel: 076-289399. Fax: 076-289389. Email: hajo@mangosteen-phuket.com

Employment Wanted

LOOKING FOR WORK

I am 27 years old, Swedish and seeking employment in the hotel business. Anything with management and/or sales. I have experience in this kind of work in Sweden and Norway. Please contact me by email. I can start work immediately. I speak Swedish, Finnish, Norwegian, English and a little bit of Thai. Tel: 47-40401609. Email: mvali@start.no

EXPERIENCED DJ

English-speaking Thai DJ available for gigs in Phuket and Phang Nga. Please send email with details of work hours and weekly salary offered. Email: panyim@loxinfo.co.th

MAID

Maid looking for part-time work, washing, cleaning, ironing. Many years of experience as a maid for foreigners. Working hours between 8 am and 2 pm, but not more than 4 hours a day. Prefer work in Chalong, Rawai, Nai Harn or Phuket City areas. Tel: 06-8494634.

HOTELIER

Hotel graduate from United Kingdom with hotel management experience in Thailand. Looking for a new position in Asia. Please call 06-596-4268. Email: jimmyboy32@hotmail.com

HARD WORKING

Scot is seeking work in Phuket. I am computer-literate and have many years' experience with MS Office and a lot of other programs. If interested, please contact me and I will email my CV to you. Tel: 07-9674007. Email: ocs9@lycos.co.uk

ENGLISH TEACHER

I am looking for a job teaching English in Phuket from July 2004. I am from New Zealand and I have a bachelor of arts with honors degree. I have 5 years of teaching experience in Japan and South Korea. I have taught all ages, including one year of teaching children. I am currently working in Korea but am available for work from July. Tel: 031-391-9367. Email: melsarg@yahoo.co.nz

LOOKING FOR JOB

Multiskilled windsurf instructor and drummer seeks employment. Previously teaching in Taiwan, I have many certificates and experience. I am now in Phuket. Please contact me for more information. Email: jesse001100@yahoo.com

MANAGEMENT

Mature and analytically-minded Canadian male, university educated with a career in hospitality management ranging from upscale hotels to new business start-up, as well as hospitality design and contracting, is looking for work within these given fields. If you are seeking an energetic and trustworthy individual who is capable of getting the job done, then please call or email to discuss. Tel: 09-8333673. Email: gee5440@yahoo.com

Tout, Trader & Trumpet

Articles for Sale

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: 09-504-3307.

LEAVING COUNTRY

Expat selling everything including oven, fridge, tools and kayak. Come and get an awesome deal before someone else does. Call for directions. Tel: 01-2715049. Email: mista_p_williams@yahoo.com

PADI ENCYCLOPEDIA

A must for all divemaster trainees and IDC candidates. Price: 800 baht or best offer. Please email me or call me, but please don't leave a message. Tel: 06-2768676. Email: sylvie_yaffe@yahoo.com

DIVING INSTRUCTOR

Diving instructor manual (German) and CD for sale at only 1,600 baht. Contact Max at Tel: 01-0858914. Email: tomDEXTER2001@yahoo.de

WATER BLASTER

Urgent sale of high-pressure water hose Extream 160T. Good condition, only 10 months old and used a few times. Good for private or commercial use, car washing, cleaning of all kinds of outdoor areas, etc. New price: 22,000 baht, now asking for 15,000 baht or best offer. Please call or email for more details. Tel: 076-264372 or 01-8924676. Fax: 076-264373. Email: paul@thaibondall.com

RED PALMS

We have 20 red palms for sale, 1-2 meters high. Price: 250 baht each. Tel: 076-289373. Email: goldenbear@talofobay.com

PLASTIC DRAWER

2 household 4-drawer storage units from Tesco, as new. Price: 500 baht. Tel: 06-2953965.

CD PLAYERS

2 Denon professional twin CD players available for sale. Approximately 4-5 years old, in good condition and recently serviced by Denon in Bangkok. Model DN 2000: 20,000 baht. Model DN 2500: 25,000 baht. Please call in the afternoon, or visit the DJ Box in Soi Eric and ask for John. Tel: 09-650-3940.

FURNITURE FOR SALE

Moving from Patong and have the following items for sale: Sharp 29-inch TV with VCD and TV cabinet; UBC satellite dish with receiver and card paid till 25 April '04; king-size bed with sheets, pillows and duvet covers; bedroom wardrobe and matching dressing table; Electrolux fridge/freezer; Samsung washing machine and spinner; electric kettle/toaster/rice cooker and oven-grill; pots, pans, dishes, cutlery, cooking utensils; desktop computer with speakers and Epson printer. All are in good condition. Good price for sale of single items. Please contact us. Tel: 09-8735725. Email: danjock51@hotmail.com

CAMERA FOR SALE

Underwater camera for sale. Sea & Sea MX10 underwater camera with YS-40 strobe and hardbox for sale. All in very good condition. Price 10,000 baht ono. Contact us for more information. Tel: 07-2666432.

LEONA VCD PLAYER

VCD, CD, MP3 player with microphone for Karaoke. 2 speakers and sub-woofer unit, as new from Tesco. Price: 1,500 baht. Tel: 06-2953965. Email: robinsbum@hotmail.com

SEAQUEST XL BCD

for sale. I have an XL BCD for sale in good working condition. If you are interested, please give me a call or send me an email. Price: 3,000 baht. Tel: 01-3670025. Email: fredrikjohansson71@hotmail.com

DIGITAL CAMERA

Sony Cyber-shot DSC-P12 for sale. Brand new, 1 photo taken. Tel: 09-7312938. Email: chris44@loxinfo.co.th

ACOUSTIC GUITAR

Future semi-cutaway acoustic guitar with carry bag. Price: 3,000 baht. Tel: 06-2953965. Email: robinsbum@hotmail.com

ITEMS FOR SALE

Deep freezer 5,000 baht, bamboo shelves 200 baht each, fridge 3,000 baht, motorbike Honda Wave 110, used only 1 year 25,000 baht and more, all these are in Trang. Tel: 09-7251661. Email: lumbalumba15@hotmail.com

Articles Wanted

DIVE GEAR

I would like to buy two sets of dive gear. Must be in good working condition. 2 x complete regulators, 2 BCDs 1xXL, 1xS; fins x 2 (sizes 42-43 & 41-42). Please email me with your contact number. Email: ianlenton@hotmail.com

MP3 PLAYER & MUSIC

I am looking for a MP3 player under 2,000 baht and some CDs of Britney Spears. Email: philip_kicker@yahoo.co.uk

Boats & Marine



FOR A FREE OF CHARGE INSURANCE QUOTE FOR YOUR BOAT COMMERCIAL OR PLEASURE

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

BOAT FOR SALE

29-foot fiberglass motor yacht with Thai registration. 2 x 280hp Mercruiser engines. Price: 3.5 million baht ono. Please contact for more details. Tel: 076-239864. Email: hkmtkt@ksc.th.com

60FT BOAT FOR SALE

Thai-registered 60ft wooden fishing and dive boat with 40-person capacity. 12ft rubber dinghy with 15hp outboard, and aluminum boat with 40hp Yamaha outboard. Sale includes diving compressor tank and other items of dive gear. Tel: 074-731198.



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PHANG NGA SAILING

56ft-yacht needs 4-6 pax for overnight stay in Koh Hong. Avoid the crowds and enjoy fresh seafood and a BBQ on the beach. Call for details in English. Tel: 01-6771641.

INFLATABLE/ RIB

Nova Marine 450 Rib with a 50hp Mercury outboard, capable of 30 knots in good working order. Imported to Thailand in June 2002. Call for more information. Tel: 01-18930272. Email: info@derani-yachts.com

SPEEDBOAT 4 SALE

Fully refurbished, well-equipped speedboat, for business or private use, for sale. 2 X 115hp Yamaha engines, 2 X 150 LSS tanks. Mooring buoy in Chalong Bay. Photo on request. Price negotiable. Licence available through lawyer. Contact by mail only, make appointment to visit and test the boat. Email: dechaux@loxinfo.co.th

58FT MOTOR YACHT

Beautiful, perfect-condition, 4 cabins with aircon, salon with aircon, a large fully-equipped galley, 3 decks with top deck fitted out with luxury seating, dining and bar area, and large sun deck. Twin Cummins engines. Also includes a 5.8m tender with twin 85hp engines. This is a truly magnificent boat in perfect, spotless condition. All inquiries to Bill. Photos on request. Tel: 01-9390176. Email: bill@phuketisland.com

BOAT TRAILER

for sale. Wooden trailer, less than 1 year old, suits 37-foot speedboat of up to 4 tons. Wheels need attention. Best offer can take it away. Tel: 076-254826, 01-8937027. Fax: 076-254827. Or Email: ianpotter@hotmail.com

SEARAY SD220

New Searay Sundek 220, complete with trailer and accessories. Powered by 260hp, MPI Alpha 1 Mercruiser sterndrive. Smartcraft instrumentation and great looking boat features and amenities. Full warranty agreements for hull and engine. Fantastic boat for day use and watersports. Must see it to appreciate it. Tel: 076-239755, 01-9700583. Fax: 076-239756. Email: craigm@royalphuketmarina.com

12M FISHING BOAT

Thai registered. 185hp Hino diesel engine, sonar and GPS. Tel: 07-8868938. Email: adamhalushka@hotmail.com

SAILBOAT

Fast, 25ft fiberglass boat with Thai registration. Sleeps 4, toilet, pantry, full set of 5 like-new sails, 8hp outboard (like new), and hard-bottom inflatable dinghy with 3hp motor. Ready to go anywhere. Can be used as charter boat. US\$20,000. Tel: 06-9401860. Email: bigasail@samart.co.th

FLYBRIDGE CRUISER

Sleekly-styled family fly-bridge cruiser offering great layout and good lines. Powered by twin 150hp turbo diesels, she cruises at 25 knots with top speed of 30 knots. Thai registration. Asking price: US\$44,000 or the equivalent in Thai baht. Tel: 01-8924077. Email: franks@diveSupply.com

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 information, please see our website at: www.simpsonmarine.com or call Tel: 012-2971364, or email: simon.theseira@simpsonmarine.com

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 further information. Tel: 01-8626954. Email: karom@libero.it

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30HP YAMAHA

9 months old, 25 hours running time. Perfect condition. Cost 95,000 baht new; will sell for 75,000 baht. Includes standard prop and Yamaha tank. Stainless-steel Solas prop also available, same age as engine. Cost 13,000 baht new; will sell for 9,500. Email: montykong@yahoo.com.hk

FIBERGLASS BOAT

Brand new 36-foot center console fiberglass speed boat for sale (without engines). Max 25 passengers, ideal for commercial sight-seeing or scuba diving. Email: tgspg@hotmail.com

RESORT FOR SALE

A 12-bungalow resort, including swimming pool, restaurant and bar, satellite TV, on Koh Lanta with a 10-year lease offered at 4.5 million baht, price negotiable. Annual rent only 65,000 baht and very good high season business. Serious inquiries only please. See our website at www.papillonlanta.com for further information. Tel: 09-6403432. Email: mail@papillonlanta.com

PARTNER WANTED

Partner wanted for bar and restaurant by Kata Beach. Please call for more information. Tel: 09-2892297.

MLM LEADERS

US\$4 billion healthcare company seeks quality leaders. Unlimited income potential. Email for details. Tel: 02-7269918 or 06-3418781. Fax: 02-7269917. Email: makelifegood@aol.com

PHANG NGA

3-story, 14-room guest-house, convenient for James Bond Island, banks, market, restaurant and bus station, and popular with both guests and guidebooks, is for sale. Clean, aircon, fully furnished. A steal at 6 million baht. Please call for more information. Tel: 07-6411963.

OWN BUSINESS

Own a business with work permits in Thailand. Please contact for further information. Tel: 07-2719664. Email: lester_lougan@yahoo.ca

SPORTS BAR

and restaurant. Great location in central Bangla area. Max 1 pool table, darts area, stereo/DVD/satellite radio, 3 (UBC) TV sets, 3 aircons, modern kitchen, living area upstairs. Upmarket bar with long lease. Please contact for more information. Tel: 09-8677969. Email: bangla_04@yahoo.com

17-ROOM HOTEL

In a top location 80m from the beach, this 17-room hotel and restaurant is offered for sale at 11.7 million baht. Please contact for more details. Tel: 076-344305, 06-6848758. Email: hfs@phuket1.de

SOI EASY BARS

to rent. Monthly or daily from 1,500 baht/day, no key money. Includes electricity and water. Tel: 01-477-2512.

KATA BAR

Bar in Kata Center entertainment area for sale. Very good location. 800,000 baht. Rent is 6,000 baht a month. Call 07-8814415 for more information.

PULLING UP STAKES

Selling Thai business license, plus real estate, at fraction of value. Please contact for more details. Email: ken@adventure1.com

FOR SALE

Nice bar and restaurant in Rawai, good location. For more information, please call. Tel: 06-2810205.

BAR IN PATONG

Bar & restaurant located in a very good location in Patong for lease at a good price. Please contact for more info. Tel: 076-345241, 06-5954362. Email: sumalee1955@yahoo.com

FARANG

restaurant to take over. Includes equipment and many items. Tel: 06-2705064.

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

LUXURY VISA RUN

to Ranong every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, starting at 8 am from The Yorkshire Inn Hotel, in Soi Sansabai, Patong. Air-conditioned minibus with surround music, TV, snacks and drinks. Price: 1,200 baht, including Burmese visa fee and boat crossing. Please book early. Tel: 076-340904 or 076-345258.

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services. Office Xpress has gathered together a team of international-quality web designers, programmers, graphic artists, and IT specialists. Let us help you with your e-commerce and on-line business. Contact us today to learn how you can get more sales via the Internet and new IT products. Tel: 076-282403. Email: mike@officexpress.org

CONSTRUCTION

Phuket Construction. Top notch local builder, 10 years' experience. Tel: 07-2698492.

Computers

COMPUTER REPAIRS

Computer repairs, call-out services, upgrades, sales and tuition by UK technician. Please contact for more information. Tel: 09-4735080.

ADSL MODEM

ADSL USB modem (BIPAC-701 C2) and ADSL splitter for sale. 4,000 baht. Never been used, still in the box. Please contact Khun Goy. Tel: 076-342636, 09-6451050. Email: hoiclang@hotmail.com

IBM FOR SALE

If you looking for a perfect computer then you are on the right track. For sale: imported IBM 205 8430 IBM Server 2.0 MHz. 1 Gigabyte RAM, DVD RDW, DVD, extra Rage XL PCI video card 120MB RAM, NEC LCD 1850E. Logitech cordless keyboard. Tel: 076-383813, 07-8822597. Email: euro-art-gallery@planet.nl

Personal Services

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 for a chat. Tel: 01-7971497. Email: churee77@hotmail.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.

PERMANENT TATTOO

Permanent tattoos for ladies. Professional tattoos for lips, eyes and eyebrows. Contact for more information. Tel: 076-385385, 06-2761506. Email: nattakarn_aasa@yahoo.com

Personal Services Wanted

PIANO INSTRUCTOR

I am seeking an experienced piano teacher to instruct my 11-year-old son who is in his second year of instruction. Email: moonsun_hi@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.

SEEKING MISS RIGHT

Single English guy living in Dubai seeks a female partner for life. Must be young, vibrant and like travelling. Please send your photo by email. Email: twonks@emirates.net.ae

LONELY BI GUY

Good looking Englishman, 27, seeks male or female for friendship and fun, and likes to roleplay. Sponge or stone. Tel: 09-7268471.

THAI WIFE

I am a jai dee gentleman wanting to meet a Thai woman for marriage. I am of medium build with brown hair and blue eyes. I'm 5' 7" tall and have a good job in the medical field. Anyone interested in meeting a faithful man please email me. Email: khunjdr@thaimail.org

SEEKING COMPANION

Young, 46-year-old male spending 3 weeks in Karon early next month is seeking a female companion. Email: davidjg@dodo.com.au

Pets

KITTENS

looking for a home. We are 4 really cute kittens, 3 black and white and one black, white and ginger. Please come to visit us. Email: linaab28@hotmail.com

CACATUA PARTNER

We are looking to find a partner for our middle-sized yellow cheek Cacatua. The bird has to be younger than 2 years. Tel: 076-279088, 01-9439834. Fax: 076-385509. Email: ruthe@tcm-asia.com

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3. Se-Ed's, Siam Center, Rama 1 Rd, Pathumwan. Tel. 02-6581153.
4. Se-Ed's, Panthip Plaza, M-floor, Petchaburi Rd, Rajathewee. Tel. 02-6566070.
5. Se-Ed's, Fortune Town Building, Ratchadapisek Rd, Huaykwang. Tel. 02-2485668.
6. Se-Ed's, Central Rama 3, Satupradit Rd, Yannawa. Tel. 02-6736342.
7. Q Mart, Grand Hotel, Sukhumvit Rd, Soi 11, Klongtoey. Tel. 02-6511200 ext. 3452.
8. C Mart, Centre Point, Petchaburi Rd, Soi 15 Rajathewee. Tel. 02-6536690-8 ext. 4030.
9. Duangkamol, Sukhumvit Rd, Klongtoey, Phrakanong. Tel. 02-2526261.

Bulletins

MUSIC JAM AT FREEDOM BAR

in Rawai. Acoustic jam and free buffet every Monday, 8pm till 1am, all styles welcomes. Drinks at half price for musicians and singers. Location: round the bend at Rawai beach. Contact Eric. Tel: 01-7972040.

Business Opportunities

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

PATONG BUSINESS

Bars, shops, rooms or combination of all three for sale or lease. 300 meters to beach. 7,000 baht/month. Please contact for further information. Tel: 07-2738944. Email: thesonapt_2536@hotmail.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

BAR & RESTAURANT

for sale. Located near Robinson department store in Phuket City. 2 floors, 2 aircons, 17 tables. Rent: 12,000 baht/month for one-year contract. Foreigners are welcome. Asking price: 380,000 baht. Tel: 01-6931391.

NEW AMERICAN FOOD SHOWCASE

**Mark Your Calendar for
26-28 April, 2004
Bangkok & Phuket**

The Office of Agricultural Affairs, U.S. Embassy, Bangkok, invites you to participate in the Discover Thailand Trade Mission 2004. We are bringing many new-to-market U.S. food and beverage exporters to present their products to you.



Plenty of opportunities for Thai importers, retailers, food service professionals and interested food processors to interact and meet with these special U.S. suppliers at a luncheon reception and table top exhibit.



26 APRIL, 2004
11:30am-06:00pm
**LUNCHEON RECEPTION/
TABLE - TOP EXHIBITION**
The Sukhothai Hotel
The Celadon Restaurant
BANGKOK

28 APRIL, 2004
01:00pm-06:00pm
TABLE - TOP EXHIBITION
Dusit Laguna Resort
Suriyan Room
PHUKET

Don't miss this opportunity to meet and discuss business with these **NEW-TO-MARKET** U.S. companies. Table-top showcase will feature gourmet foods and beverages, almonds, walnuts, macadamias, energy drink, snack foods, etc.



For reservations or any additional information, please contact Khun Sukanya at 02-205-5106 or agbangkok@usda.gov



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Life Home Project's Fundraising Ball

Following the success of last year's Fundraising Ball, Life Home Project is delighted to present another elegant evening of Champagne, cocktails, wine and a sumptuous 4-course dinner at the JW Marriott Resort & Spa on Saturday, May 29. A host of entertainment performances have also been arranged to ensure an evening of fun!

Last year, the generous support of the major businesses and hotels on Phuket made this event such a great success. The proceeds were used to maintain the project and expand the services offered to the broader community.

All funds raised this year will subsidize the greatly needed construction of a safe and permanent home for the HIV-infected children and mothers at the Life Home Project.

Thank you to our major sponsors, JW Marriott Resort & Spa, Ambrose Wines for their donation of wine for the evening, beer from Peppers bar and restaurant, and the support of the *Phuket Gazette* and *The Nation*.

Your continued generosity is asked for, to make this home a reality and Life Home Project would be most grateful for any donations that could be used for the Live Auction, Silent Auction or Raffle.

For tickets and donations please contact Helene Fallon-Wood at lifhome@loxinfo.co.th or Khun Nut on Tel: 076 242 632



Don't miss it...

Phuket & Samui PROPERTY EXPO

Hong Kong - November 2004



Enquiries: www.ap-expo.com
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Phuket Gazette

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.