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Gov asks for more police

By Gategaeo Phetsawang

NAI YANG: The Phuket provincial government has requested more police to beef up security in the province following the recent violence in Pattani, Narathiwat and Yala.

Speaking to members of the Thai Federation of Provincial Tourist Associations (TFPTA) from 42 provinces attending a seminar on May 8 at the Pearl Village Hotel, Governor Udomsak Usawarangkura said he had asked Bangkok for more officers to boost security "like we had when the [Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation] meetings were held in Phuket.

"Each hotel and resort should also have their own security," he added, "We believe that nothing bad will happen here if we watch tourist areas carefully."

He also addressed the problems raised by a reappearance of the Sars (severe acute respiratory syndrome) virus in China recently.

"Sars affected tourism last year. Some hotels had to close and people lost their jobs. So we have begun to prepare measures to handle this situation, should it recur."

He said that the Phuket Public Health Office was monitoring the situation so that authorities could be fully prepared.

"Direct flights from China will be checked strictly," he said, adding that the possibility of buying a mass scanner to identify people with high temperatures was being considered as a way to speed up the processing of arriving passengers.



General roundup

Pol Lt Gen Dr Chanvut Vajrabukka, Commissioner of the Immigration Bureau, speaks with a Nigerian citizen rounded up recently in the ongoing crackdown on illegal migrants. See page 3, 'Immigration cracks down on illegals'.

"The Phuket Tourist Association has suggested that the airport should have a scanner checking the temperature of each person coming into Phuket. The government and the

private sector would each pay half of the cost of such a machine."

Four cases of Sars were detected in China in April. One of the four has since died.

Muslim diplomats 'surprised' by calm

By Gategaeo Phetsawang

PHUKET AIRPORT: Muslim diplomats who took a tour of the troubled deep South and then Phuket last weekend, expressed surprise at how calm the South was, and noted that Phuket still has many tourists.

Suten J. Manurung, Deputy Chief of Mission of the Indonesian Embassy, said the tour, with Minister of Interior Dr Bhokin Bhalakula acting as guide for the 12 diplomats, was a good idea.

"It's been a good trip. At least we and other countries, especially Muslim countries, can see for ourselves what is happening. It's nothing like you would expect after reading reports in the media in Bangkok." He also noted, "There are still many tourists in Phuket."

He added that he hopes the South will calm down as soon as possible, especially once the Thai government opens a dialogue with southern insurgents.

On May 7, Dr Bhokin led the diplomats to Pattani to meet Muslim leaders from Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat provinces.

Dato Haji Md Yunus bin Haji Md Hussein, Brunei's Ambassador, told the *Gazette*, "In Pattani it is peaceful and we were surprised to see people there going about their daily lives. They don't seem to be worried."

The group, which also included Bangkok-based representatives of Oman, the UAE, Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Morocco, Kazakhstan and Qatar, flew to Phuket in the evening of May 8. They toured Patong the same night and took a trip to Koh Hei (Coral Island) the following day, before flying back to Bangkok.



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Hong Kong - November 2004
See Page 11 for details

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Star Cruises denies fear sparked suspension

PHUKET: Star Cruises denied on May 10 that its suspension of all cruises from Singapore to Phuket was the result of fears of terrorist attacks, following the violence in southern Thailand on April 28.

Ariya Noongan, Executive Sales Officer at Star Cruises in Bangkok, told the *Gazette* that the Star Cruises head office in Singapore decided "last month" to suspend the Singapore-Phuket service because feedback from ticket agents and customers indicated that a Singapore-Penang-Langkawi service was preferred.

"The decision had nothing to do with the threat of terrorism," she said.

Oddly, given the "feedback", K. Ariya said that the Phuket service, discontinued on May 2, will resume from June 1.

The Star Cruises denial came after Leenawat Roonguthai, Operations Manager of the Phuket branch of SEA Tours Co Ltd, a major agent for the cruise line, told the *Gazette*, "The cruise industry has been severely affected by the threat of terrorism."

"We usually have 10,000 tourists a month in the low season," he said, "but at the moment we have zero bookings."

In contrast, other tourism businesses operating outside of the deep south report that there

has been little effect so far on their businesses.

Chusak Wongwai, Operations Manager of Phuket-based tour company Asian Trails, said, "The [violence] has not affected us more than 0.5%."

However, he added that many tourists were worried about traveling to Phuket because it is a southern province.

"The negative image of the violence has spread to cover all of southern Thailand. It did not involve Phuket, and publicizing this is important in getting tourists to understand," he said.

Pattanapong Aikwanich, President of the Phuket Tourist Association, agreed. He explained to the *Gazette* that he recently returned from Xiamen, China, where he saw the newspaper headline "Terrorism in southern Thailand" and a map showing Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, Krabi, Phang Nga and Phuket as the danger zone.

"Most tourists misunderstand [the situation] because of what is presented by the media [in those countries]. They [the media] should publish the facts, and Thailand, especially, should communicate directly through the international media," K. Pattanapong said.

— Anongnat Sartpisut

Trash handling very inefficient – study

PHUKET CITY: About 20 local leaders attended a seminar at the Royal Phuket City Hotel on May 5 to hear the findings of a study on waste management issues.

The study's final report called for more efficient waste disposal practices by local government bodies in order to support efforts to sort trash before collection.

The seminar was presented by Pireeyutma Vanaprak, President of the Development of Environment and Energy Foundation, a non-governmental organization that conducted the study, in cooperation with researchers from the Prince of Songkla University Phuket Campus.

The work was funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

The research paper, titled *A Study of Improvement of Waste Management for Phuket Province*, called for local municipalities and tambon administration organizations (*OrBorTor*) to improve waste collection practices to support trash separation and allow the island's incinerator to operate more efficiently.

What the study found was



Pireeyutma Vanaprak: Government-private sector cooperation needs boosting.

not encouraging. It concluded, for example, that a pilot trash separation project in Thalang was essentially futile because the trash was recombined when collected by municipal workers.

The report noted that Phuket generates about 350 tons of garbage daily, about 100 tons more than the rated maximum capacity of the incinerator in the Saphan Hin area of Phuket City.

Operated by the city, the incinerator is designed to handle

dry waste. The disparity between its capacity and the amount of waste generated needs to be addressed now in order to avoid a future crisis, the report said.

A trash separation facility was opened next to the incinerator last December, with the goal of reducing the 340 tons a day burned at the facility by about 15%, or 40-50 tons a day.

But the sheer volume of garbage still results in wet and dry wastes being burned together, reducing the incinerator's efficiency.

He told the *Gazette* that the study began last month, and was prompted by widespread suspicion and complaints about the 200-baht-a-ton charge that Phuket City levies on other districts for burning waste at the facility.

K. Pireeyutma concluded that change must be made in order to minimize the amount of waste that must be collected and incinerated.

In addition, he said, cooperation on trash separation between local government and the private sector must be increased.

— Naiyana Pattanapiboonpong & Rittiwat Suwannarattaphum

Challenge to wallets and bladders

PATONG: Residents with kind hearts and strong bladders will want to participate in the Patong Cannonball Challenge, a monthly charity pub crawl starting early next month.

The event involves teams of four to 10 members drinking beer in participating venues along a designated route. Starting at their home venue, participants will receive points for drinks consumed – but will have points deducted each time they answer the call of nature.

In addition to losing points, they will also have to go back to

the last bar visited and consume more beer.

The team that accumulates most points on each leg of the crawl, which is expected to take in dozens of bars, will host a Golden Potty Award party at its "home" bar.

Expect to see a lot of red faces, grimacing and clenched knees in Patong on the night of June 4, when the first pub crawl kicks off at around 5 pm. It is expected to end at about 10 pm.

The entry fee is 500 baht per team, plus 100 baht for each team member, with the money

collected going to charity. An official briefing will be held at the Two Black Sheep Bar on May 28 at 8 pm. At the meeting, teams will also decide which charity will receive the proceeds of the first crawl.

Organizer Bill Scott said that initial response to the idea has been positive, with as many as 40 bars expected to take part.

For more details contact Bill Scott at Two Black Sheep (076-344799; 09-5944081) or Brian at Danny Bar in the Tiger Entertainment Complex (01-0880353).

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Issues & Answers
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Immigration cracks down on illegals

PHUKET CITY: Phuket Immigration Office has arrested 766 illegal workers, mostly from neighboring countries, in the first four months of the year as part of a concerted drive to round up illegals.

Of those arrested, the overwhelming majority – 738 – were Burmese, with the remaining 28 coming from Laos, Cambodia and other countries.

Pol Lt Gen Dr Chanvut Vajrabukka, Commissioner of the Immigration Bureau, explained at a press conference on May 9 that the Labor Ministry will begin a new round of registration of foreign laborers on June 15.

When the registration begins, he said, “There will be a policy to ease off on arrests of illegal laborers. So until then we have to make arresting them a priority.”

He added, “There are many aliens waiting along the borders with Thailand for the chance to come and register to work in Thailand.”

Satra Bunyantrapiwat, President of the Phuket Business Operators’ Club, arrived before the press conference and presented Gen Chanvut with flowers. He told reporters that there is a lack of low-skilled laborers in Phuket.

“We have to hire foreign labor because Thai people don’t do these kinds of jobs – working in fisheries, in agriculture or as coolies. I’d like to propose to the Commissioner of Immigration that he ease the suppression of illegal foreign labor,” he added.

But Gen Chanvut responded, “Business people say there is a lack of foreign low-skill labor. But [given the choice] between the benefits to a group of [business] people and the benefits to the country as a whole, I think Thai people will choose the latter.” He did not explain what the benefits to the country might be.

Rawai Beach vendors stay put

RAWAI: The saga of the moving of the beachfront stalls at Rawai seems no closer to an end following an announcement on May 6 by Rawai Tambon Administration Organization (*OrBorTor*) President Arun Sorot that the amount of land required for the project is still being calculated.

Rawai *OrBorTor* says it plans to move 14 of the vendors’ stalls – those belonging to Rawai people – to a site behind the *OrBorTor* offices, 400 meters from their current location.

K. Arun said he expects a report from the Phuket Provincial Land Office within a month, detailing how much land is needed and how much is available.

He added that if not

Anchalee finally takes OrBorJor seat

PHUKET: Eight weeks after the elections for seats in the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (*OrBorJor*) took place, and 14 days after all the other members’ seats had been confirmed, the Phuket Election Committee (PEC) on May 11 finally handed signed confirmation to Anchalee Vanich-Thepabutr that she is the new *OrBorJor* President.

PEC Director Kittipong Thiengkunagrit, speaking to the *Gazette* on May 10, said “We received the formal declaration [this morning] from the CEC [Central Election

Committee] in Bangkok, confirming that K. Anchalee is the rightful President of the Phuket *OrBorJor*.”

K. Kittipong explained that CEC Chairman Wassana Permlab signed the declaration on May 2.

However, he said, although the declaration was sent by Express Mail Service (EMS), the document took a week to arrive because of government holidays in the following week.

There was a further day’s delay because when the document reached Phuket it had to

be signed by the PEC Chairman, Dr Prapa Kayee, but she was not in the office on May 10.

Finally, however, on May 11, Dr Prapa signed the document and it was collected the same day by K. Anchalee.

The 24-member Democrat-dominated *OrBorJor* was scheduled to meet on Friday May 14 and K. Anchalee told the *Gazette* that she expected to assume her presidency of the *OrBorJor* at that meeting.

“We will then announce our major policies,” she said. – *Anongnat Sartpisut*

Tuk-tuk rip-off hotline to be launched soon

Gategao Phetsawang

PHUKET CITY: Customers who believe they have been overcharged or otherwise maltreated by tuk-tuk, taxi, minibus or airport limousine drivers will soon be able to make complaints direct to the Phuket Provincial Transportation Office (PPTO) through a new 24-hour telephone hotline number, 1584.

Due to go into service at the end of May, the 1584 hotline will allow disgruntled passengers to speak direct to PPTO officers, who will launch an investigation.

Problems associated with motorcycle taxi drivers will not, for now, come under this new push to improve the quality of Phuket’s transport services.

This is because motorcycle taxi operators are currently exempt from rules imposed under the Land Transportation Act. An amendment to the act is expected to be made soon, bringing them in line with other forms of transport.

These rules state that the complaints hotline number must be displayed within each vehicle along with – for tuk-tuks – a list

of maximum fares on 49 routes around the island, and the tuk-tuk operator’s license.

Any tuk-tuk operator found not to be displaying the fares list or charging more than the maximum fare for a trip is liable to a fine of up to 2,000 baht.

The Chief of the PPTO, Prasit Amarapan, told the *Gazette* that officers should be able to conclude an investigation within seven days of the complaint being submitted, provided that the complainant gives them specific information to identify the offender, such as the operator’s license number or the vehicle’s PPTO number (painted on the side of the vehicle).

“Passengers must include at least the license plate number or another official mark for us to be able to investigate the claim,” said K. Prasit.

Until the hotline number is introduced, passengers wishing to complain may call the PPTO on Tel: 076-220791 or 076-211019, ext 6, during weekday office hours, or 076-211019, ext 9, at other times. Complaints may also be lodged at any police station.

Love-and-money tryst ends in blood

PHUKET CITY: Furniture contractor Sophol Marapong, 32, was found murdered in Suan Luang Park on the night of May 7 after a clandestine meeting over love and money went sour. He had been stabbed 22 times.

Pol Maj Watcharin Jiratikarnwiwat, an Inspector at Phuket City Police Station, told the *Gazette* that police arrived at the scene about 10:30 pm, after receiving a call from a passer-by who discovered the body.

“He had been robbed of 150,000 baht and his mobile phone. The following day we questioned and arrested Sureerat Soonamporn, at her house in Phuket City, in connection with the murder,” he said.

Maj Watcharin explained that Sureerat, 36, is the older sister of 30-year-old Saokaew Fongnam, K. Sophol’s live-in partner for more than 10 years. K. Sophol and Sureerat had been secret lovers for some time.

“K. Saokaew was shocked to hear of the murder. She is due to give birth to K. Sophol’s baby in about three months,” he said.

Maj Watcharin said Sureerat explained that she had decided to teach K. Sophol a lesson because of his “butterfly” ways, and at the same time to get as much money from him as possible.

She called him and told him she wanted to borrow 100,000 baht, and set up a meeting with him in the park.

But when K. Sophol arrived at the rendezvous, he was attacked by two men whom Sureerat had hired to beat him up and to rob him.

“She was angry with K. Sophol because of his philandering and she knew he would be bringing 150,000 baht with him,” Maj Watcharin said.

Sureerat told police that although she was angry with K. Sophol, she didn’t want him dead. “When she saw one of the men draw a knife and stab K. Sophol, she got scared and ran away,” the Inspector said.

“She told police that she did not know the two men well. Maybe they killed K. Sophol because they were afraid he could identify them – K. Sophol knew many police officers and was an important person,” he added.

Sureerat named only one of the killers, who goes by the nickname “Iad”. The money is presumed to have been taken by the duo.

K. Sophol’s body has been taken to his home province of Trang for cremation. Sureerat has been charged with conspiracy to murder.

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Queer News

Dark times for black dogs

SRISAKET: Black dogs in Nong-simai Village 2 were slaughtered recently after a local shaman convinced villagers that soaking string in the blood of a black dog and wrapping it around their homes would offer protection from the dreaded *phi porp* – a female ghost that kills married men and eats their innards.

After two village men died in mysterious circumstances, village women were convinced seven more men would die before the *phi porp* was satisfied.

Duang Sosrisook, better known as *Por Jump*, told the villagers that a length of sacred string (*sai sin*) soaked in the blood of a black dog and then wrapped around the home would ward off the intestine-gobbling apparition.

Before long, local supplies of *sai sin* were sold out and villagers were driving to markets as far as 10 kilometers away to stock up, probably looking for black dogs along the way.

Village women also hung carved images of penises from their front doors in the hope that this would also help keep the hungry demon at bay.

Source: *Daily News*

Cock killer!

BANGKOK: A man from Bangkok's Prawet District was convicted of stealing and raping a fighting cock on April 14.

A Bangkok court gave Pira Angprom, 31, a suspended two-year jail term and fined him 1,000 baht for stealing Direk Ruchakong's fighting cock. He was also fined 500 baht for cruelty to an animal.

K. Direk said Pira stole one of the cocks and raped it. The cock died during the assault. Phra Khanong District Police arrested Pira the following day. Police said he confessed to the crime.

Source: *The Nation*

Phuket residents served by the island's two main waterworks departments like to complain about occasional low pressure and supply disruptions, and some spoiled foreign residents even wonder aloud why they can't drink the tap water here.

But compared with the large number of island residents who have to find their own water, these people just don't know how good they have it.

The island's two main supply agencies are the Phuket Provincial Waterworks (PPW), which is currently responsible for supplying a growing number of users in Muang and Kathu Districts, and Phuket Municipality Waterworks (PMW), which supplies Phuket City. Both rely on the island's sole reservoir, the Bang Wad Dam, and augment supplies by pumping water from tin mines.

PPW chief Sayun Vareearoonrod told the *Gazette* the PPW currently supplies about 21,000 to 30,000 cubic meters a day to its 17,000 users. It pumps 400m³ an hour from Bang Wad and another 500m³ an hour from privately-controlled tin mines.

"Now that it's raining there will be enough water. I don't think we'll have to ask for artificial rain again this year. We also have plans to expand our capacity. Now we can produce a maximum 1,500m³ an hour but that will increase to 2,500m³ an hour next year," he said.

The PMW supplies about 25,000m³ a day to about 14,000 homes in the 12 square kilometers of Phuket City, along with some parts of neighboring Tambon Wichit and Tambon Rassada. Officials estimate that about 80% of city residents rely on their supply.

The PMW pumps from nine tin mines, two of which are owned by the municipality. The other seven are owned by the private sector – most notably the company of ex-Phuket Town Mayor Phummsak Hongsyok – which has allowed the city to pump from them free for the past 10 years.

The PPW also relies heavily on private tin mines, but must pay for the privilege.

WORRIED

Even if Phuket has enough water – and this year it seems it does – there is still the problem of getting it to people's homes. As **Gategao Phetsawang** and **Dhirarat Boonkongsan** report, many people are simply not linked to reliable supplies.

About 70% of the supply to Patong, Karon and Kata areas serviced by the PPW, or about 10,000m³ a day, are bought from REQ Water Services. The water is pumped up and stored in 3,600-m³ storage basin atop Patong Hill.

Chucheeb Sung, head of the PPW's pressure-piping division, told the *Gazette* that the installation of a new pipeline from the hilltop basin direct to Kata-Karon, passing through Patong without losing pressure head, would provide sufficient pressure to pipe water to hillside areas of Kata-Karon where it is currently unavailable. He expects the new pipeline to be completed within a few months.

Another key player in the Phuket water supply puzzle is the Phuket office of the Royal Irrigation Department (PRID), which is responsible for sourcing the water that is treated and then transmitted to users by both the PPW and PMW.

Apart from operating the Bang Wad Dam in Kathu, the PRID is planning to build two more dams on the island, one in Thalang and the other in Chalong.

Suwini Anukul, Chief of Water Management and the Irrigation System Improvement Branch, told the *Gazette* that the two reservoirs will help meet Phuket's future water supply needs.

Work on the Bang Niew Dum dam, in Thalang, began last October and is scheduled for completion by the end of September 2006. Construction of the Klong Krata reservoir in Chalong

will begin this October and should be completed at about the same time, he said.

The Bang Niew Dum Reservoir will hold up to 72 million cubic meters, about the same size as Bang Wad, while the Klong Krata reservoir will be slightly smaller at 57 million cubic meters.

'Now that it is raining there will be enough water. I don't think we'll have to ask for artificial rain-making this year.'

– Phuket Provincial Waterworks Chief Sayun Vareearoonrod



Phuket Governor Udomsak Usawarangura updated the *Gazette* on the projects recently. "The Bang Niew Dum Project is budgeted at about 396 million baht over three years. The project is still in the design and land-acquisition phase.

"When complete, the reservoir will supply important areas, such as consumers near the airport and along Mai Khao Beach," he said.

"I have asked the PRID to supply its completed project design plan in advance, because past projects have had design and construction work running concurrently, which is wasteful and inefficient," he said.

The governor confirmed that another 280 million baht has been earmarked for fiscal-2005 to build the Klong Krata reservoir at Chalong Village 5.

The PWD will definitely need the extra water, as cries for public water supply are coming in from just about every part of the island where it is not available.

People living in densely settled areas or along main roads will likely be the first to get service. The PWD is currently completing a large mains project that covers parts of Rawai and Chalong under its 2004 budget, and its projects for next year include 6.94 million baht for installation of 6,400 meters of mains to provide service in the following areas: Honsaitong Village, Tambon Rassada; Thaisarco, Tambon Wichit; Soi Dara, Tambon Kathu; Soi Suy-Larn-Uthit, Tambon Kathu; Soi Rae Rim Chang Restaurant, Muang District; Soi Thida, Tambon Kathu; Soi Baan Klaang, Tambon Chalong.

But people in lightly-settled and hillside areas may have to wait a long time. Pamuke Achariyachai, owner of the Kata Group of Hotels and Chairman of the Phuket Chamber of Commerce, told the *Gazette* that his company spends about 100,000 baht a month having water trucked to his resorts.

"We buy water from a private company and we also have a truck that delivers the water from our own tin mine. We aren't really worried about the expense; the real problem is the dangerous situation created by the water trucks having to go up and down hills. It's not safe, either for them or for other vehicles," he noted.

But not everyone owns his own tin mine or can afford to

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ABOUT WATER



Most owners of the 30 homes in this apparently attractive Samkong development (left) are trapped; they want to sell their homes because of the pitiful water supply (above) but buyers take one look at the blue tanks and go elsewhere.

shell out 100,000 baht a month on water. One such person is Tanee Jansuksang, a 47-year-old resident of a hillside housing project in the Samkong area, but just outside the municipality.

When he bought his home in the low-income, 30-unit housing estate, he was told by the project developer that the company would provide water from a communal well.

"When we first decided to buy this house, we didn't know that there would be a water supply problem. The project was built two years ago. They told us that they would provide us with well water, but after a year the well dried up," he said.

"Now we have to buy water from a truck, but it still isn't enough. The water truck comes twice a day, providing water at 7 am and 5 pm, but supplies usually run out within an hour. That means most homes are without water for most of the day," he said.

"Once the truck didn't come and we didn't have any water to use all day long.

"There are four people in

my family, and we all use water as efficiently as we can. I am thinking of building a water collection system to save rain water as well," he added.

Although K. Tanee would like to move, it's not an option. He bought the house from the bank on a 690,000-baht mortgage as a repossessed property, then invested 100,000 baht more to rebuild the roof and make other repairs.

Now he is broke and his equity is tied up in a property with no water supply, making it difficult to sell. Naturally, he is angry with the project developer.

"A few [residents] have moved to new places already [because there is no water]," he said. "If there's any way they can go, they do," he said.

A letter signed by all of the community's residents and sent to the PPW has yet to be answered, said K. Tanee.

The Vice President of Rassada Tambon Administration Organization (*OrBorTor*), Sompong Phaopom, told the *Gazette* many parts of the district are clamoring for a PPW hook-up.

On the day reporters spoke with him at the PPW offices, a group of about 50 residents of Srisoonthorn Rd were applying for a hook-up to a new PPW main that is being installed to their community under 1.6-million-baht funding from Rassada *OrBorTor*. The project is slated for completion in about six months.

"Now these people each pay at least 600 baht a month to have water trucked in – more in the dry season. If they can get PPW water, they will pay only 70-100 baht a month," said K. Sompong.

But this won't help an isolated community like K. Tanee's, which is far from any PPW mains yet lies tantalizingly close to the PMW's mains that run along Yaowarat Rd.

Despite this proximity, the city is not responsible for the village; in only a few exceptional cases has the municipality installed mains outside its boundaries.

Many residents of Thalang, all of which lies outside the current PWA distribution network, will sympathize with K. Tanee.

With the exception of Thepkasatri Municipality, which pipes water for about 7,000 users from the Ton Sai and Bang Pae waterfalls, the rest of the district relies on groundwater reserves that tend to run out as the dry season progresses.

There are 45 such systems scattered across the island, many operated by *OrBorTor*, villages or private developments.

One of these is Tambon Thepkasatri (as opposed to Thepkasatri Municipality), which pipes groundwater to its estimated 15,000 residents though its own supply system. But *OrBorTor* Chief Administrative Officer Kraisri Keawwan said dwindling groundwater resources and drought were an annual crisis in his tambon – and this year was the worst ever.

"We are too far away to get help from the PPW, which has no way of piping the water to us. The province gave us about 5,000 or 6,000m³ in April to help relieve the drought," he said. The water was trucked in, and pumped into tanks in individual homes.

K. Phummisak said real es-

tate project developers have to do a better job of planning and should submit comprehensive Initial Environmental Effects (IEE) reports to the IEE Committee of the Natural Resource and Environment Ministry, as required by law.

"The project developers have to list the water source, how it will be pumped and transmitted, who is responsible for supply, how much it will cost, what quality it will be, and so on," he said.

In the case of hotels under 80 rooms or property developments of less than 80 dwellings, application must be made to the provincial IEE Committee. For larger projects, application must be made to Bangkok. That, at least, is the legal theory.

When the *Gazette* contacted the Phuket office of the Ministry of the Natural Resource and Environment, a source there confirmed that developers are legally obliged to submit their IEE reports to an IEE Committee, whose members, at the provincial level, include such high-level individuals as the governor.

The reality is very different, the source said.

Although the committee is authorized to order work stoppages, most developers are allowed to do whatever they want and pay scant attention to the committee's orders or advice – much to the dismay of people like K. Tanee, who suffer the most from the developers' greed and incompetence.

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With so many lady bikes and pick-up trucks on Phuket roads, police need something a bit different to stand out from the throng and, if necessary, to chase down criminals.

Without their uniforms, guns and vehicles, police are otherwise indistinguishable from the general population. But residents of Patong and Phuket City will have no difficulty recognizing the authority figures in their districts.

Police in Patong are now riding high with their own All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) to patrol the sand and seaweed along Patong Beach.

Pol Sgt Sayan Kleawkla of Kathu Police told the *Gazette* that the ATV, which is on patrol daily from 8am to 10 pm, was donated to the force by the Banthai Hotel and Resort last October. And this is no ordinary beach buggy. It's decked out with all the law enforcement bells and whistles, including a siren and police lights.

"The ATV helps a lot because it can ride on the sand and help police look after tourists. Most of the problems we have at the beach involve gangsters annoying tourists," Sgt Sayan said.

He added that the ATV was very popular with tourists, who often ask to be photographed next to it. But the ATV is far more than just a novelty – it has actually reduced crime in the area, said Sgt Sayan.

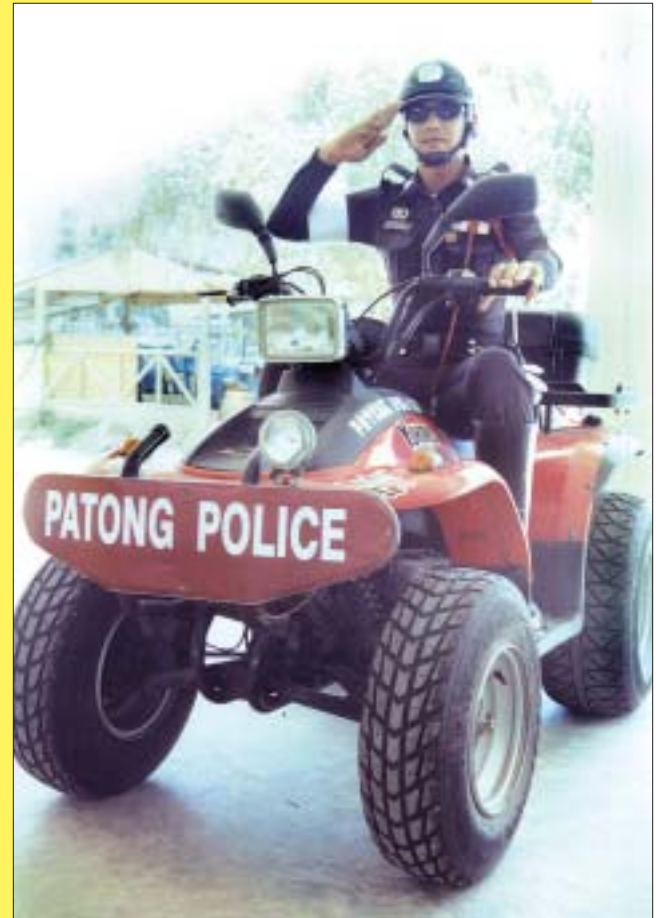
Phuket City Police got some nice new toys last year too, in the form of three black-and-white BMW motorcycles.

Pol Lt Col Jeerasak Siem-sak of Phuket City Police Station told the *Gazette* that the distinctive vehicles were sometimes used as part of a motorcade for



A CUT ABOVE YOUR SUZUKI SMASH: From left, Pol Snr Sgt Maj Tavesak Junlmas, Pol Sgt Maj Jakkrit Chatwittaya and Pol Sgt Maj Supot Kettang of Phuket City Police should have little trouble chasing down bag snatchers, speed demons and other miscreants thanks to their big BMWs.

A FAVORITE WITH THE TOURISTS: Pol Sgt Maj Suchat Suntornmalcha gives a crisp salute as he prepares to take the ATV out along Patong Beach to sort out any criminal activity.



Hot wheels help boys in brown to enforce the law

visiting VIPs, but were also routinely used on regular patrols.

"The motorcycles have proven very useful because they can go where a car cannot," he said, adding that speeders found

the vehicles intimidating. He added that the bikes' distinctive appearance makes them stand out at crime scenes and the siren and flashing lights make them far more appropriate for

police work than the officers' personal vehicles that were used in the past.

Lt Col Jeerasak told the *Gazette* that the trio of BMWs are normally used to police the

heavy traffic along Chao Fa West Rd and the bypass road. So if you are planning to bomb down to Chalong or run a high speed mission to Tesco-Lotus, watch out.

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SINGHA NEW LOOK

Govt approves 'peace through prosperity' plan for the South

The Cabinet approved an initiative designed to establish peace in the deep south within three years. Carrying out Prime Ministerial Order 68/2547 will be the responsibility of the National Security Council, the National Economic Social and Development Board, and the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC).

The ISOC will immediately establish the initiative, entitled "Reinforcing Peace in the Deep South Command", while the Budget Bureau and the Finance Ministry will allocate funds for the project.

The main points of the plan include:

- avoiding any operations that could lead to a continuation of violence;
- convincing extremists to adopt "the middle path";
- cracking down on "influential" groups;
- eradicating the root cause of conflicts, such as discrimination and inequality that stems from race, religion, differences and social status;
- making Muslim culture part of Thai society; and
- treating as fellow-Thais those offenders who have been misled, and resorting to legal and judicial systems to solve problems.

The plan also calls for economic development to increase living standards, and continuous use of intelligence work and "psychological operations".

Family reunion: A villager in Saraburi province found a 12-year-old girl who was lost in Khao Yai National Park for three days after leaving her family for a pee in the woods.

The parents of Sombat Phuthong, from Saraburi's Wihan Daeng district, reported the girl's disappearance, but gave up hope of seeing their daughter again after a two-day search by police, sniffer dogs and volunteers failed to track her down.

She was eventually found by villager Somboon Boribun, who realized she was lost and immediately took her to the authorities.

Sombat said she lost her sense of direction and kept walking along a creek, drinking water as she went. She said she was terrified as she walked during the day and slept on rocks by the creek at night.

Dental plan: Free dental treatment will be given to students who won the government's "One District One Scholarship" awards, before most of them leave for college abroad.



SUMMER'S WRATH: A house lies flattened after a freak summer storm hit Hang Klong village in Sukothai's Muang district, damaging over 50 dwellings in the area. Local officials promised to help the villagers.

"Getting a toothache could cause our students to lose concentration in their studies, and dental care in a foreign country can be very expensive," Deputy Public Health Minister Sirikorn Maneerit said.

The ministry will ensure that the 926 graduates from low-income families across the country are in good health.

A survey in 2000 found that only 13% of five-year-olds nationwide were cavity-free.

Realm of fear: Kietchai Pongpanit, managing editor of mass-circulation Thai-language newspaper *Khao Sod*, told a seminar held on World Press Freedom Day that the Thai government is guilty of manipulating the media and curtailing freedom of the press.

K. Kietchai added that the government would force the people to revolt unless it provides them with a forum to air their grievances.

"The two Cs that are commonly used by the government are 'condemn' and 'confront'. The media as well as other organizations, such as NGOs, who stand for something against the government's action, are always condemned and confronted," he said.

Supinya Klangnarong, secretary general of the Committee for Media Reform, said the government had created a "realm of

fear" among those supporting freedom of expression. As a result, she said, media outlets were reluctant to speak out for fear of government reprisals.

Day the music died: Police arrested four karaoke girls in Pattaya for allegedly murdering a man in order to help one of the girls break off a relationship with him.

The four suspects were taken into custody after the mutilated remains of 53-year-old Sitthiporn Takiangthong were found in garbage bags.

Three suspects admitted to helping their 15-year-old colleague break off her relationship with the man in exchange for the valuables he was carrying.

The four admitted drugging the man in the karaoke bar. When he did not fall unconscious, one of them whacked him over the head with a stick before stabbing him to death and mutilating his body.

"It was horrific. One 17-year-old suspect laughed while stabbing the man and watching his internal organs spill out," a police investigator said.

Mauled keeper dies: A young worker at Chon Buri's Sriracha Tiger Zoo died a few days after being mauled by six Bengal tigers in front of more than 100 foreign tourists.

Uraiwan Sansern, 18, was

admitted to Phyathai Sriracha Hospital with a cracked spine and gashes requiring more than 100 stitches. The management of the private zoo gave the girl's family 300,000 baht in compensation.

One of the tigers turned on K. Uraiwan, who was untrained in handling the animals, after she hit it with a stick during feeding time. Five other Bengals then joined in the attack.

Pottery find: Fifty ancient pottery items have been retrieved after hundreds of years on the seabed in the Gulf of Thailand.

Erbprem Vatcharakul, managing director of the Fine Arts Department's Underwater Archaeology Division, revealed that among the retrieved items were Sawankhalok dishes, jars and bowls from Sukothai's Sri Satchanalai district, jars from Sing Buri and other wares from southern China.

"There are more pottery

items that have yet to be retrieved," he said.

The items were found about 40 nautical miles off the Trat coast, where a trading junk was believed to have sunk nearly four centuries ago, when Ayudhya was Siam's capital.

Erbprem believes the vessel might have been carrying barter between China and Southeast Asia when it sank.

The discovery, which he called "good for our country's underwater heritage", stems from a joint survey by the Fine Arts Department and the Royal Thai Navy.

A second survey is expected to follow in August or September.

Homegrown: More than 560 schools are now part of a nationwide project that involves students growing their own vegetables for lunch.

The project was initiated by HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn in 1980.

Thongchart Raksakul, Agriculture Promotion Department director general, said the project taught students about the whole agricultural and production process and developed teamwork.

The project also includes a housewives group to encourage mothers of the children to cook lunch for the students.

The project was created after Princess Sirindhorn realised that students in rural poverty areas often go to school without lunch, resulting in malnutrition and other health problems.

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

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The current Miss Belgium, Ellen Petri, visited Koh Samui in late April for a fashion shoot alongside Julie Taton, last year's holder of the country's most prestigious beauty crown. Ellen was modeling bikinis for top Belgian fashion rag *P Magazine*, and stayed on Samui for a week, posing daily in states of tropical undress all over the island.

Ellen told everyone she met how much she loved Samui, and spoke very highly of the warm, friendly people and beautiful beaches. Local fishermen lucky enough to catch a glimpse of her wondrous form reciprocated the compliment by staring for long periods, mouths agape.

This was the second time *P Magazine* had chosen Samui as a photography location. They were assisted in finding suitable spots to shoot their Belgian beauties by fellow countrywoman and Samui resident Ilse Dumont, who runs the stylish and popular Mangrove Restaurant, near the Big Buddha.

FROM THE GULF OF THAILAND



By Commander Sammy Swan

More snatches on Samui: According to many foreign residents on the island, bag snatching is becoming a serious problem on Samui, especially in the main tourist areas.

Well-organized snatchers, often working in teams, prey mainly on single female motorcyclists, and either grab the bag from the front basket while the rider is waiting at traffic lights or, in some cases, they push the rider off the bike and snatch her belongings as she lies injured on the road.

One victim in Lamai said that the police were very supportive and concerned when she reported being robbed, but also provided little hope of either catching the assailants or retrieving her bag.

Monthly reported crime statistics released by the local authorities on Samui generally give the impression that there is hardly any theft at all. Personal accounts, however, suggest that



Marine matters: As part of international Dive into Earth Day on April 22, Big Blue Diving took 13 staff and customers from various dive schools to remove discarded fishing nets that trap rare tropical fish, and to clean up underwater debris from the Samran Pinnacles dive site, off Koh Tao. There was so much refuse that the boat had to make two trips to haul it all away.

the actual number of robberies may be much higher.

Visa crackdown: Last year, an immigration sweep on Samui, Koh Pha-ngan and Koh Tao resulted in the deportation of several angry foreigners who apparently were found to have illegal visa stamps in their passports.

A "no-travel visa" company was providing the fake stamps,

while claiming to take their customers' passports out of the country, which itself is illegal.

All those who had used the service were either fined or asked to leave Thailand.

Now, the Samui Immigration Office is causing consternation by targeting visa overstays. A newly introduced, one-day minibus service to the border has reportedly been stopped every

morning at the island's ferry port, and all the passengers' passports examined.

People with overstays as short as a single day have been arrested, and some have also been ordered to appear in front of the Samui Court, where they may incur large fines.

The Non-Italian Job: The Malaysian Mini Owners Club came to Samui this year, driving vehicles in convoy to the island from their headquarters in Kolim, near Penang.

The rally is more of an excursion than a race, with drivers enjoying a week of fun and sun as they drive around the island's towns and beaches.

A total of 25 vintage cars made the trip, and the bizarre sight of these diminutive classics convoying around Samui's main roads has sparked fears in some quarters that there is an increased likelihood of a bank robbery on the island, as portrayed in the movie *The Italian Job*.


Fortunately, Samui's roads are in such a poor state of repair that even the most accomplished getaway driver would have problems escaping.

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




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This week



ABOVE: ML Tri Devakul (2nd from right) makes Austrian gourmet chef Johanna Maier welcome during her recent stay at Mom Tri's Villa Royale in Kata.

LEFT: Phuket Governor Udomsak Usawarangkura (center) marks the pre-opening of Baan Klung Jinda restaurant in Phuket City by switching on a fountain in the garden. He is joined by (from left): Tomrong Tongtun, Chief of the Phuket Treasury Office; Visawa Sasimit, Phuket Chief Administration Officer; Kittti Phatanachinda, MD of Baan Klung Jinda; and Phuket Vice-Governor Niran Kalayanamit.



ABOVE: Percussionists Wicked Aura Batucada, from Singapore, are welcomed to the Banthai Beach Resort by GM Gerard Tan (center).

RIGHT: Kingfisher Marine recently unveiled its latest acquisition, the 40-meter motor yacht *Payoon 3*. Pictured from left are MD San Kingston; Annie Lim, Marketing Manager; and Giat Chotithamaporn, Director.



ABOVE: Henry Batt (center), son of Joint MD of Laguna Resorts and Hotels, James Batt, celebrates his 5th birthday with mom Angela and friends at the Gecko Beach Restaurant on May 1.

LEFT: Dr Susana Sakulpipatana (4th from left) and Dr Wajana Prechawai celebrated their marriage at the Royal Phuket City Hotel on April 29. Pictured with them are the groom's parents, Pranee and Supachai Sakulpipatana (2nd and 3rd from left) and the bride's mother, Prechaya Prechawai (2nd from right).



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A classic

After spending five years at the Dusit Laguna and a year with a local building company, **Kitti Phatanachinda** has opened his remarkable new restaurant, **Baan Klung Jinda**, across from the Phuket Merlin Hotel in Phuket City. The restaurant is at a busy intersection, where we have all been able to watch as a run down Sino-Portuguese mansion was transformed into one of the most important new city eating places.

"This building used to be the residence of the provincial treasurer. When Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra decided to lease unused public buildings, I decided it was time for me to realize my vision of a restaurant with a theme from the late 19th century, during the reign of King Rama V," explains K. Kitti.

True to his vision, he has restored this once deserted home, built in 1907, into a modern version of the most popular period in Thai history, when Western art nouveau designs were combined with local Sino-Portuguese architecture.

"Twenty years ago, I worked across the street as an adviser to the family that owns the Phuket Merlin Hotel," K. Kitti remembers, "and I always had my eye on this building and its potential. This is my opportunity to realize my dreams and



DREAM WEAVER: Kitti Phatanachinda's vision has come to life at Baan Klang Jinda (left).

to celebrate the history of Phuket."

K. Kitti has developed what he calls Siamese Spice Cuisine, which, he explains, are the original recipes that too often have been adjusted to meet modern tastes. He spent 200,000 baht just refining the menu, cooking and tasting all the dishes over and over again to get the perfect taste. He wants us all to "experience the true Thai taste" – the motto for Baan Klung Jinda.

K. Kitti is no stranger to pleasing the public. As a young man, his family sent him to Aberdeen, Scotland, to study. He

supported himself by working in a traditional British pub and learning the hospitality business. When he returned to Thailand, he was recruited first by Thai Airways to boost their sales and then by Amari Resorts.

He was part of the opening team at the Santiburi Dusit Resort & Spa on Koh Samui, representing **Santi Bhirombhakdi**, President of the Boon Rawd Group, makers of Singha beer, and then went to work for **Khunying Chanut Piyaoui** of the Dusit Hotel Group.

K. Kitti has real enthusiasm to share what he believes is the

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true value of Thai culture with his guests. Baan Klung Jinda does this, and is a valuable, high-class new attraction for Phuket City.

Charity begins at Home: The Life Home Project's Grand Gala Ball is just a couple weeks away, and hoteliers around the island are donating prizes for auctioning or raffling. One resort doing something rather different is The Chedi.

Recently **Lee Sok Cheng** and **Samuel Featherson III** exchanged wedding vows on the beach between The Chedi and Amanpuri. Guests were invited to donate to the Life Home Project by placing their paint-soaked hands onto a canvas for the innovative Hands Project, a fund-raiser created by LHP Director **Jose Luis Gay**.

"Of course, most people are very shy about showing their face when it comes to issues surrounding HIV and Aids, but we have asked people who wish to contribute to our project to just place their painted hands on a canvas



to show that there is still caring in this world," says Jose.

The canvas from the wedding will be put on display at the World Aids Conference in Bangkok in July, and Jose's idea has already spread to HIV projects as far away as Australia and Africa.

I watched guests, who all made a donation to the LHP,

choose from a variety of luminescent colors before putting their hands into the paint.

It was especially fun to see Chedi GM **Daniel Meury** work beside his staff stringing flowers through the trees, undaunted by the threatening rain and wind.

By the time the nuptials began, his beach restaurant was

transformed into an elegant floral paradise.

The wedding was organized by Shanghai event company Hullabaloo. Daniel has targeted the high-end Shanghai market as a cure for Phuket's traditional lower occupancies during the monsoon or "green" season.

Mountain of trouble: What ever



Off the WALL

With Bruce Stanley

happened to the plan to dig a tunnel through the mountain between Patong and Kathu?

Now that the rains have come, there is almost daily chaos for anyone trying to get over the mountain. Motorbikes slide sideways, trucks' brakes fail, and stalled cars create jams on both sides of the mountain.

And all this happens while the traffic police serenely watch TV at their Kathu checkpoint.

I say we forget the tunnel and just blow up the mountain. Invite the American Army Corps of Engineers to blast a six-lane road right through the middle of this obnoxious obstruction as they have so capably done in places like Panama and Alaska.

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Out and about with a stupid tout

According to a local Thai-language press report, the depressing tout scene along Soi Sea Dragon took a turn for the absurd recently when Vice-Governor Pongpow Ketthong and other top local leaders were walking along Soi Bangla on an inspection tour.

The party was checking to make sure everything in the area was in compliance with the Government's Social Order Policy.

As they passed Soi Sea Dragon, one of the inspection team, Kathu District Chief Suthin Utaitamrong, had a tout approach him with an album listing the many cunning stunts the girls in the tout's bar perform. He urged K. Suthin to follow him to enjoy the show.

But tout teamwork in the area is well-known, and before long another tout tipped off the idiot to the impending danger with an animated series of winks, gestures and nods.

The idiot managed to disappear into the crowd, according to the report, and is probably back on the job now.

Patong Police were ordered to investigate, but thus far there have been no reports of arrests

relating to lewd spectacles occurring anywhere in Patong. The mind boggles.

Direct marketing: Sex show touts aren't the only ones using aggressive advertising techniques at the mouth of Soi Sea Dragon.

One girl in a beer bar there was spotted taking a marketing approach so direct that it made the people at Amway look like models of inefficiency.

Standing behind the counter of a beer bar she held up a sign which read, "Best Blow at Good Price." A telephone number and room number were listed on the hand-drawn placard. I wonder what that was all about? Was she selling drugs? Trying to humiliate an enemy?

A tale of two bathhouses: I would really like to know who designed the public showers at Loma Park.

The floors are constantly covered with sand because there is no pool for people to rinse their feet in before entering the showers. Somehow, the owners of every other beach-side shower on the island seem to have figured out this is a necessary design element of a public shower area.



You don't need to go trekking in the wilds of Chiang Mai to pick up colorful hilltribe trinkets. Prospective buyers beware, however, because some of the vendors working Soi Bangla (though not the one pictured here) are actually girls from Isarn dressed up to play the part. Of these, a few have even been accused of picking the pockets of unsuspecting (ie, drunk) tourists.

This, along with all the discarded shampoo packets that are never picked up by the indolent staff who collect the 10-baht fee, causes the drains to block. The result? People whose only goal is to get clean are forced to wade ankle-deep in their own filth – and that of others.

The nationwide restriction on installing hooks in public changing areas has, however, been rigorously enforced. Des-

perate to ensure their bags don't fall into the mire below, bathers hang them from the only thing available – the doorknobs.

As a result, these have all become loose, so the doors can

neither be locked or even shut all the way – just perfect for those who like to be naked in public.

But worst of all is the height of the shower heads, which send forth a pathetic trickle from a height of not much more than one meter.

Showering thus become a circus act, with anyone who wasn't born a gnome or a dwarf forced to squat or otherwise contort themselves into position just above the filthy, flooded floor.

These shower heads are so low that they are really only good for cleaning off the genitals, though given the proximity to Soi Sea Pearl and Soi Bangla perhaps that's what they are intended for.

To see how a public shower should be designed and maintained, perhaps the Patong municipality staff should visit the public showers next to the stadium at the south end of Karon Beach.

These have flexible hoses and are kept immaculately clean. They even have a YK Battery calendar, featuring a picture of a beautiful naked women, hanging above the urinals.

Now that's more like it.

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



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In The Stars

by Isla Star

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): You may have been spending too much time with your head in the clouds. This should stop before you miss a good career opportunity. People won't take you seriously unless you come up with a concrete plan soon. Wear earthy shades to help you move forward.



GEMINI (May 22-June 21): A little kind attention will go a long way towards helping someone close to you get over a stormy period in their life. But in the end that person has to figure the puzzle out alone, so it would be better to concentrate on what's important in your working life. Tuesday is the best day for revealing new ideas.



CANCER (June 22-July 23): You seem to be moving at the speed of a snail. Push the pace up a notch or two; you don't have to be the fastest car on the track, but tighten up your agenda to avoid being left on the starting line. Wear sapphire blue to encourage clarity of vision.



LEO (July 24-August 22): A tempting situation will present itself this weekend but Leos may find themselves wishing they'd looked a bit longer before leaping in. Career concerns are best left on hold until next month. A simple social outing on Saturday turns into more than you'd bargained for.



VIRGO (August 23-September 23): Take time to reflect this weekend to prepare for making an important decision. If you have serious news to impart to those close to you, Wednesday is the most auspicious day. Put yourself first – you've done your bit for everyone else.



LIBRA (September 24-October 23): A stumbling block on Monday needn't be cause for you to give up. Maybe taking a few steps back to reassess the big picture will help you find a way around this tricky rock. Energy levels are low, but some simple diet changes will boost them. Wear bright citrus colors to add further zest.



SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): This weekend, a burning issue threatens to provoke your wrath and you must try to stay calm – people who don't know you could be easily alienated by a fiery reaction. From Monday onwards, the more loving side of your nature is prevalent and a romantic relationship benefits greatly. The number 3 has special meaning this week.



SAGITTARIUS (November 23-

Where are the stars leading you this week?

DECEMBER 21: Your tendency to be a stick-in-the-mud grates on a close friend's nerves. Make an effort to lighten up and appreciate the good things in life. Perhaps being too self-centered is the root of your discontent; if so, there are plenty of deserving causes that would benefit from some help. The color rose-pink will brighten your outlook.



CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): Capricorns who make a wish will be pleasantly surprised when it comes true this week. If you think superstition is a waste of time, events are certain to make you re-examine your beliefs. There's magic in the air and if you've been thinking about changes to a particular area in your life, now's the time. Taurus wants to make contact.



AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): Your imagination knows no bounds this week, but remember that there's a fine line between fantasy and reality. You may be in danger of seeing a situation as being something it's not, and can never be. You need to take the buffalo by the horns and ask the person in question where his or her heart truly lies.



PISCES (February 20-March 20): As summer heat peaks, Pisceans who are gasping for cool air should consider taking a break. A friend far away would welcome a visit. You will return refreshed and flipping your fins with renewed vigor. Should escape be impossible, make an effort to limit obligations.



ARIES (March 21-April 20): Your week should be as smooth as silk after a slightly rough start this weekend. Turbulence will be due to a misunderstanding with a friend that can be eased by a good talk. If you value a relationship, pull out all the stops to prevent things going from slightly bad to much worse. Your lucky number is 10.



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Steps of wonder

TALES OF A TRAVELER

By Ed Peters

Banaue, we are told, is the Eighth Wonder of the World. It's not, though it is a wonder that such a hackneyed phrase has been attached to somewhere that has outlived Babylon's hanging gardens, the Colossus of Rhodes, and Zeus's statue, and looks in much better shape than the Great Pyramid of Giza.

Banaue boasts a series of rice-farm terraces hacked out of mountains 1,200 to 1,500 meters above sea level by the indigenous Igarot people over 2,000 years.

Set deep in the northern Philippines island of Luzon, Banaue requires quite a trek to reach, but a trek that's more than worthwhile.

It takes a 10-hour drive to get to Banaue from Manila, and most visitors arrive after dusk



The astonishing terraces of Banaue go back 2,000 years.

when the town is asleep. Dawn brings a sight for sore eyes and jangled limbs – layer upon layer of rice fields stepping up toward the sky. Here and there a small stream dashes down, all bathed by dawn's early light.

Exploration is a must, of course. Go by road to Sunrise Viewpoint, where Igarots strut about in tribal clothing, hawking carvings and always ready for a photo op. Or venture on foot

along the twisting narrow pathways that criss-cross the rice fields, picking your way through the silence atop high earthen banks dotted with crimson chongla plants.

Anyone who has journeyed here under their own steam should employ a local guide for 100 pesos (70 baht) or so to show them the way around the terraces. The maze of pathways is otherwise confusing.



Need a basket? How about a hat? Basket weaving is a local industry.

A walk to the village of Batad – little more than a clutch of dwellings clinging to the mountainside – is a good choice for an all-day trek.

Start with two hours of steep descent past shacks, farmhouses and terrace upon terrace of rice fields. The paths are all in good condition but the gradient can still be punishing.

Continue for another 90 minutes beyond Batad until you reach a waterfall that fills a glorious natural pool. Float up to your chin and wash off the aches and pains of the last 3½ hours. Naturally, there's an entrepreneur waiting at the side with bottles of beer and soft drinks. Then it's back up the hill to Banaue.

The area's other great claim to fame is found at Sagada, three hours' drive from Banaue.

Igarots believe the spirits of the dead enjoy their own Halloween every night of the year, rising from their coffins during the hours of darkness to indulge in revelry and mischief-making.

The dearly-departed are not so much buried as put in cold storage, with their coffins wedged in the network of limestone caves that honeycomb the hills around the town.

Guides – and again, without one, it is all too easy to lose your way in some of the larger caves such as Sumaging – always make a point of opening coffins to give the bones a friendly stir, rather as if they were shaking hands with an old friend.

Smalls

Today's Special: The following passage from the Web "editor" of a California-based spam protection service:

"If the sender wishes to add themselves to your white list they can type in the authorization code that is provided to them. This code will verify they are a real person."

That editor should be ashamed of itself, no?

VIP Paradise: Over the past year or so, *Smalls* has noted a marked increase in the volume of quality visitors to our island. The TAT must be overjoyed. Packed with dignitaries visiting the zoo, snake farms and gem shops, most tour buses now enjoy the services of a government escort. Feeling left out? No need – contact your local police station for rates.

Identity Crisis?: What do George Bentick and Sean Power have in common? We don't know – never asked him.

rip

Karaoke, generally: With Phuket recording yet another murder in a karaoke last week – this time at the entrance to Laguna Phuket – one has to wonder about the usefulness of such establishments in the context of Thailand's bold new "social order".

The government says Phuket has about 150 karaoke, but even the most myopic of observers can count well over 200 of them in Thalang district alone.

As brokers for the commercial sex industry, wholesalers of noise to residential neighborhoods and employers of practically no one, do the venues really fit Purachai's plot for a better Phuket?

Baan Klung Jinda: One thing almost sure to receive widespread applause as a serious contributor to a better Phuket is the new restaurant at the corner of Yaowarat Rd and Thungka Rd.

Though not yet fully open, its sophisticated Euro-Thai atmosphere, comfortable seating and cosmopolitan clientele should vault it quickly into landmark status, particularly among residents who've never fully adjusted to the idea of dining out in a shophouse.

Have something useful or irrelevant to tell our readers? If it's truly small, try Smalls@PhuketGazette.Net

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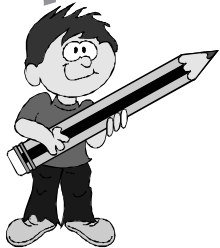
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KIDS

THE FUN PAGE FOR ALL THE FAMILY

Spot the Difference



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



Brain Buster!!

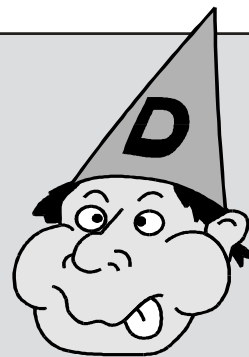
Jim pulls into a gas station. "Fill 'er up, please," he says. "This may sound strange," says the owner, "but I'd rather fill two cars from out of town than one car from this town." Jim looks across the small town and replies, "I know just what you mean." What did the owner mean?

A. He would make twice the money, of course.

Solution to last week's Crossword

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

Get your brain in gear with the Monster Quiz



- Which UK soccer club has a spectator stand named after a hill in South Africa?
- The city of Timbuktu was originally a center for trade in which commodity?
- The word "bus" comes from the Latin "omni-bus", meaning what?
- Which layer of the atmosphere is between the stratosphere and the exosphere?
- What new island rose from the sea off Iceland in 1963?
- Who is credited with founding the Taoist belief?
- Which country is the world's leading producer of cocoa beans?
- The Madeira is a tributary of which river?
- Which Thai province is north of Chon Buri and south of Prachin Buri?
- Who said, "Patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel"?
- Who made a fortune from a pub with no beer?
- Who painted *Twittering Machine*?
- As Poet Laureate, what commodity did Geoffrey Chaucer receive as his salary?
- Who was American football's Most Valuable Player in 1990?
- By what name is Betty Joan Perske better known?
- It's variously known as a solidus, a separatrix or a virgule. What would a computer user call it?
- From what language does the word "taboo" derive?
- Where was composer Irving Berlin born?
- Before he became a painter full-time, what did Paul Gauguin do for a living?
- What did Frank Samuelson and George Harvo do in 1897?

Answers next week.

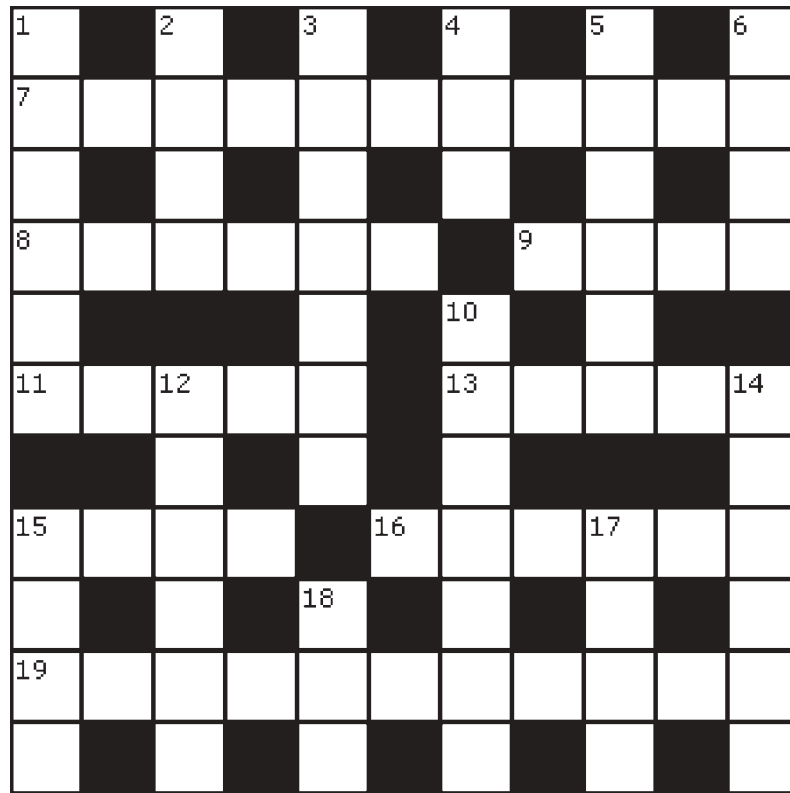
Never a Cross Word!

Across

- Blue-bloods.
- Occupant of rented accommodation.
- Fairy-tale bad guy.
- Jewish spiritual leader.
- Successfully vote for.
- Before gamma.
- Japanese garment.
- Top sailing event.

Down

- One who dies for his religion.
- King of the beasts.
- Tool.
- Top fighter pilot.



- Bargain.
- Dr Jekyll's alter ego.
- Someone from Acapulco, perhaps.
- Jeeves, for example.
- Groups of cavalymen.
- Grizzly, for example.
- That hurts!
- Porker.

Solution next week

Answers to last week's Monster Quiz

- Harp; 2. Malayalam; 3. Alexander Fleming; 4. *In The Heat Of The Night*; 5. Rod Steiger; 6. Sting; 7. Tenerife; 8. Carthage; 9. 202 BC; 10. Richard Nixon; 11. Kentucky; 12. Skopje; 13. Major earthquake; 14. Charles Lindbergh; 15. Liechtenstein; 16. Flags; 17. Belgium; 18. Australia; 19. Bobby Fischer; 20. *Dr Strangelove*.

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

ASK KHUN WANIDA "MOMMA DUCK"



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

Why is there so much domestic violence on Thai TV?

Dear Momma Duck,

Are Thai women more prone to jealousy than women of other countries? Why is there so much domestic violence on Thai TV? There seems to be virtually no drama show when the women are not slapping men or other women?

David



Momma DUCK

By Wanida Hongyok
momma@phuketgazette.net

Dear David,

I, too, worry about the amount of domestic violence shown on TV and how it affects our children's attitudes. In real life, however, I think there is probably no more violence here than in other nations.

In our past, it was acceptable for Thai men to have more than one wife. I'm sure that led to situations rife with intrigue and sometimes violence.

The wives were usually living under the same roof or in the family compound and lives must have been complex, with jealousy and broken families.

In that period, loyalty to the lord or husband was a main theme in Thai literature – fertile ground for modern melodramas. Also, it may be a reaction to our formal Buddhist up-bringing, in which women are taught to be modest and to control our feelings and desires.

When I am in England, I see newspapers stories full of violence and the worst side of human nature. The US has its soap operas and some incredibly violent movies. Therefore, I tend to think that each culture probably has its own ways of dramatically presenting the worst side of life.

Additionally, Western families are generally smaller and not such a fertile ground for dramatic melodrama. Our families are larger, so there is often less personal privacy than in the West.

We are very close and when there is a conflict, it usually involves many family members and is dealt with more in the open.

Lastly, most of the melodramas showing domestic violence on Thai TV are based on older dramas that date back 20 or 30 years. These include *Pritsana*, *Baansaithong* and *Dao Prasak*, which are still loved by the same old audience, especially for the shrewish, bitchy roles presented.

Who knows, maybe the enduring popularity of such shows is a way for Thai women to quietly rebel against a male-dominated society.

Dear Momma Duck,

My neighbor's long-term girlfriend recently turned 35. In the week preceding her birthday, she returned home to Isarn for a blessing by her family's preferred monk. When she returned to Phuket, she held a ceremony to ward off bad luck.

Dressed in black, she lit black candles, set aside black grapes and a black-colored liquid in a glass, then began to pray. She then asked my neighbor to join her in prayer.

My friend is happy to observe Thai customs and behavior, such as greeting people with a *wai*, not touching monks or other people's heads, and so on.

But to him the "black" ceremony seemed more like a practice of the dark arts. He refused her request to join in the ceremony, which caused some consternation. Could you please explain what is so auspicious about turning 35? Also, why the "dark" ceremony?

Chris,

Dear Chris,

I'm not aware of anything special about turning 35 but I can explain about the "dark" ceremony.

emony. It is not sinister but, rather, relates to a Thai traditional astrological practice.

Like the early Greeks and Romans, we have astronomical symbols for each day of the week.

To make calculations for fortune telling, we have eight symbols, which are as follows:

Monday	=	Moon
Tuesday	=	Mars
Wednesday	=	Mercury
(6 am to 6 pm)		
Wednesday	=	Lunar eclipse
(6 pm to 6 am)		
Thursday	=	Jupiter
Friday	=	Polaris
Saturday	=	Saturn
Sunday	=	Sun

Each person's astrological chart, as you are probably aware, is based on the astronomical configuration at the time of birth, exactly as in the Western practice of astrology.

When making predictions about a person's "future", astrologers look at the present astronomical configuration and compare it with that person's configuration. The future is then interpreted as lucky, unlucky, neutral or whatever.

Thai astrological tradition regards the eight symbols listed above as prime determinants of events. Your friend was obviously coming into a period when the lunar eclipse (*rahu*) period was considered as influencing her future.

Rahu is represented by the color black, which makes sense if you visualize a lunar eclipse.

The *rahu* influence is regarded as potentially negative, therefore the ceremony you describe is meant to make sure that the period of *rahu* influence on her future is more positive.

For example, throughout a period of *rahu* influence, the person may encounter restlessness, headaches or events such as a lawsuit or a brawl.

All of the offerings have to be black in color and traditionally include: nine black joss sticks; two black candles; local moonshine (black in color); a small quantity of black sesame seeds; a black chicken; black grapes; black Chinese jelly; and black coffee. During the ceremony the person wears black as well.

Two years ago the current Prime Minister attended his sister's *rahu* ceremony at the Rahu Temple in Nakhon Pathom.

This is not the type of black magic or witchcraft that you are thinking of. The ceremony is simply intended to ward off evil.

Notes from a dark closet – at exam time

It's that time of the year. Streets throughout the world are silent, schools are filled with a pall of dread. Students are nowhere to be found, except behind desks in dark rooms, their only ray of hope coming from the candles burning at both ends of the desk.

"The exams are here!" scream students as they scurry into underground shelters, seeking in vain to protect themselves with massive textbooks, torn folders and disheveled scraps of paper.

"The math exam is next week!" shrieks one, as he arms himself with writing instruments and proceeds to furiously scribble numbers on page after page, stopping only occasionally to refer back to his notes and textbooks.

"I can't do this!" another student cries, her hands throbbing from hour upon hour of page-turning, line-drawing and attempting to write coherent sentences, although her writing eventually degenerates into indecipherable scribble.

A student next to him, the youngest in the group, had been staring blankly at his textbooks for the past 45 seconds.

Realizing that all the other students are 45 seconds ahead of him in their studying and that he will never be able to catch up before the math exam, he can take no more stress and hurls himself repeatedly against the wall.

After realizing that this, too, is unlikely to help him pass his math exam, and that he is now an additional minute behind the other students, he crumples into a weeping heap on the floor and begs invisible miniature flying pigs to save him.

This is the environment I find myself in, and to write this I am using an old typewriter and hiding in a closet with only a candle as company.

I fear I do not have long before the psychotic, exam-crazed students outside find me and force me to study, causing this manic obsession to take over my mind and body as it has theirs.

It's true, the exams are near. Things were not so bad at first. Sure, all the students were a little pressured to begin with, but none anticipated the coming madness.

As the weeks flew by and the exams hurtled toward us, students began to panic. Before long, the only strand to sanity they had left was that they were still in school and could ask the teachers for help.

But then along came "study leave", and most of us could take it no more, sinking into insanity, babbling physics formulae, vomiting forth names of chemicals in a spray of rabid spittle.

The pressure at this stage is immense, and students like myself found it hard to maintain sanity.

As I write this, the first exams are only a few days away and few sane students remain. We hide in closets, under beds and under desks trying not to only study, but also to relax occasionally to prevent ourselves from falling into EII (Exam-Induced Insanity).

My closet has not yet been discovered by the EII-afflicted students, and from behind a buffer of old sweaters I have heard the screams of other still-sane students as they are prevented from relaxing by the EII-afflicted majority. Within moments they, too, become afflicted and join in the effort to find any remaining uninfected students.

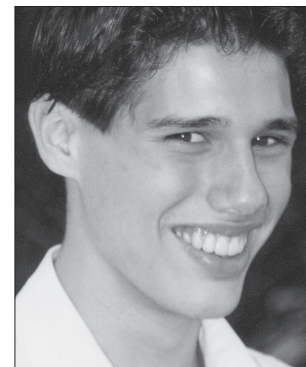
Before they find me, I must write down the final testimony of a sane student caught in a growing throng of EII-afflicted individuals. Perhaps I can leave behind some useful tips to any other students who might remain.

First, do not be afraid to feel stress. Exams are important. Stress makes us think faster in the exams, perhaps raising scores.

Second, do not be afraid to relax during your study time. By occasionally giving that fleshy undulating lump of brain matter a rest, it will be far more likely to retain information.

Third, preserve a balance between work and rest. It is no good studying for two hours only to take a five-hour break. Alter the study-to-relaxation ratio as necessary.

But what do I know? I'm in a closet surrounded by crazed students. Like a scene from *Night of the Living Dead*, the zombies are hurling themselves on the closet door, all the while scribbling notes into their revision books. The door will not hold much longer, and even if it does, my candle will die soon and I will be forced to leave. I relax for the last time and hope that this testimony will somehow fall into more fortunate hands than mine.



Youth 'n ASIA

By Eric Lacey



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Don't miss....

Issues & Answers

phuketgazette.net/
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So you think Phuket has changed for the worse?

In the words of that classic Joni Mitchell song, *Big Yellow Taxi*, "They paved paradise and put up a parking lot."

Phuket has expanded so fast in the past five years that it has, to some, become unrecognizable. People who return after being away for a while always have a mixture of awe and disgust in their voices when they talk about how the island has grown and developed.

"I just can't believe all the building you see around here," or "I remember when Phuket was soooo beautiful, but now it's all built-up."

It's a common habit to wish that your favorite place will never change. We want our memory to be served year after year by that same snapshot that we took the first day we arrived – in Phuket's case, its beautiful, unspoiled beaches, rustic little beach abodes, friendly, smiling population, beautiful women and all of the above at prices that were unrealistically low.

Tourism creates a strange demand: that the place we choose to visit year after year must not change.

Tourists seem blind to the fact that people actually live here year-round. They view all the inhabitants as a sort of "natural" island staff hired, courtesy of *National Geographic*, to make their holiday an exact postcard duplicate of the year before.

If indeed they are aware that people have lives beyond tourism, they still seem to expect that the local population stay in some sort of self-imposed time warp so as not to disturb that warm and fuzzy feeling that comes from unchanged quaintness.

With a few exceptions, the majority of Thais and expats living here arrived on the island within the past 20 years, and most of these within the past 10.

We look upon them with the same reverence as the settlers of the Old West. They were here in a time that had no mobile phones, 7-Elevens, Fanta-Sea or by-passes, or any of the other symbols of Paradise Lost.

In those days, Baan Rim Pa had just opened, a paved road was a luxury, and the construc-

tion of Amanpuri so far north was considered insane.

Well, hang to your historical hats, for a new pioneer is on the scene and his name is George Bentick. The first time I visited Phuket was in 1963. That's right! Forty-one years ago. Those of you who think that Phuket has lost its charm over the past few years are only half-right. The rest of you – listen up.

I was 10 years old and lived in Malaya. My father was in the tin industry and was con-

sulted by several companies in the Southeast Asian tin industry – companies with names such as Austral Amalgamated, Rio Tinto, Gopeng Mines, Guthrie (better known for rubber production) and the myriad companies owned by rich Chinese mining tycoons who later converted much of their holdings into well-known local golf courses.

My father would bring me along for the journey which he made annually for about 10 years in a row. Getting here consisted of boarding a DC3 at Penang Airport in Malaya and flying – believe it or not – direct to Phuket Airport.

The airport had been here since World War II and in those days consisted of a runway and a collection of wooden huts with thatched or corrugated tin roofs, all surrounded with a high barbed-wire fence. From what I recall, the airport is in exactly the same place as it is today.

On the way, the plane flew at about 3,000 to 5,000 feet (DC3s were not pressurized) over nothing but empty coastline and jungle – pure old growth and thick untouched jungle all the way.

I remember when...

Patong did not even exist. The only indication that something was there was the incredibly strong reek emanating from the fish-drying racks that dotted the entire western coast line. (There are those who say the area still smells of fish.)

In fact, the main fishing village you came to on that coast was in Karon. It was built around a lagoon, of which you can still see the remnants today as you drive down the hill to Karon from the north.

I remember when...

The entire northern part of the island was nothing but an ugly



George Bentick as a young lad, fishing the waters round the south end of Phuket. (In fact, he doesn't look very different now – Editor.)

orange mudfield created by the tin mines.

These mines were of two types. There were the *palongs* – huge man-made structures of bamboo onto which the tin-rich sluice was pumped.

The tin was extracted from this mud by women who spent the entire day with large wooden sluicing pans that looked remarkably like giant salad bowls. In fact, my mother used one for exactly that purpose.

The other type, of course, was the dredge. There were hundreds of these monsters. They started inland and continued out into the ocean. Inland, the dredges floated on man-made ponds called tailing ponds and were positioned and controlled by a series of cables attached to the shore line.

They had a continuous belt of scoop buckets that tore away the landscape. One of these ponds today makes the 14th a challenging hole at Blue Canyon. Examples can be seen all over the island.

You may find it interesting to know that Phuket possesses not one single naturally-occurring lake.

Where Laguna stands today was a giant eyesore more reminiscent of trench warfare than anything else. The waters off the

northern coastline around the island were a bright orange stretching at least a mile out to sea, caused by the mud leaching from the inland dredges.

I remember when...

The waters around the southern part of Phuket were teeming with fish and fishing boats. As a kid, I would walk down to the beach with my fishing rod and throw my line in and catch fish after fish of every kind at any time of the day.

I remember when...

Phuket Town was one of the richest communities per capita in all of Southeast Asia due to the wealth that came with the tin, and was not much smaller than it is today.

There was only one road from the east to the west, pretty much where the existing Phuket City-Patong road is today.

But in those days if you wanted to go over the top to the west coast you had a choice – Land Rover or, believe it or not, a small cart pulled by either buffalo or zebu cows (the ones with humps on their backs).

At the crest of the hill where the Chinese shrine is today was a tiny village which marked the halfway point of the journey – and it was indeed a journey in those days.

Every day the village chief would bring out a huge rattan chair. Attached to the chair was a large golf umbrella on which were printed the words "BOAC Comet to the Future" He would sit in the shade of this umbrella and charge a fee for any vehicle that wanted to pass – probably Phuket's first and only toll gate.

I remember when...

The skies around Phuket were teeming with air force and military aircraft of all kinds as the Vietnam War escalated all through the '60s. These 'planes were mainly stationed in Bangkok but later used new bases in Pattaya and Trang.

During Christmas of 1972 my parents were offered the use of a large, very lovely colonial-style bungalow owned by one of the mining companies somewhere (I am not sure exactly where) near the very northern tip of the island.

It was the Christmas when US President Richard Nixon ordered the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong. Hundreds, and I mean hundreds, of B52s would take off daily from Pattaya, Trang and other bases in the region.

When they returned in the evenings, they all entered into holding patterns which consisted of flying huge circles while they waited for their turn to land.

The evening sky would be filled with the roar of the jet-black monsters returning at very low altitude with every conceivable type of damage. I remember being mesmerized by the sight, and would watch them for hours. My God! What a time.

So you think Phuket's changed. You don't even know the half of it.

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Groundwater resources need protection

Among the many negative consequences of Phuket's rapid and largely unregulated development have been the loss and degradation of the island's groundwater supplies.

There are two major factors that cause wells in many parts of the island to run dry after just a few months of hot, dry weather.

First, with the continuing property boom, more wells are being sunk and more people are drawing from dwindling reserves.

Second, with development, vegetation that stabilizes the soil and holds rainwater – allowing it to percolate slowly down into the water table – is stripped away. While construction is in progress, rain simply runs off the bare surface, taking valuable topsoil with it. When construction is complete, the rain lands on impervious materials such as roofs, concrete and asphalt, running uselessly into storm drains and, eventually, into the sea. In both cases, the water table suffers.

While the government agencies responsible for water supply are doing a good job planning for Phuket's future water needs by installing water mains and building two new dams to create reservoirs, these plans alone will never allow the province to meet the governor's oft-stated goal of providing a potable water supply.

Pumping water to Bang Wad reservoir from Klong Bang Yai during the rainy season has helped ensure that the reservoir remains full, but the extra reserves come at a price.

There can be little doubt that water from Klong Bang Yai is not as clean as the water from the Bang Wad catchment area, and that contaminants will be introduced into the reservoir by pumping water into it from the klong. In effect, quality is being sacrificed for quantity.

The island's increasing reliance on water from tin mines, which are associated with contamination by various metals, is also taking us further away from the goal of a potable public water supply.

In addition, evaporation is a major problem with all surface water, especially in a climate like Phuket's. Groundwater, in contrast, is not only protected from the sun, but also enjoys natural purification by soil bacteria and other natural processes.

Much has been made of zoning in Phuket in recent months, but there has been little, if any, discussion about zoning aquifer recharge areas. This is a shame, because Phuket's best approach to ensuring a sufficient supply of high-quality water in the future lies in protecting its groundwater resources – or at least what is left of them.

– 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.

Social Order is just no fun at all

I had a pretty good time during my recent holiday in Patong, but not as much as I did in previous years.

Patong is changing, and many businesses are having a hard time, if not starting to die. The beach is also becoming dirtier.

Day and night, more aggressive Thais, streetwalkers and sex-show touts make the long flight seem less attractive. Soi Bangla is becoming an area of large discos where the hookers hang out, or boring, quiet bars.

The early-closing time has had an impact and Patong is losing its identity as a fun beach resort.

I'm not sure if I'll be back again; there are too many other really fun places to see.

James Price
UK

Internet at any price

When is the so called "IT city of Asia" going to kick in?

I have the same problems as other users: it can take me up to 30 minutes to connect to Loxinfo, and when I am finally connected, the connection drops out as little as a minute later.

What about broadband and ADSL high-speed Internet connections?

I live in Tambon Rassada, just outside Phuket City, and I have been told that there is a waiting list for these.

Please, please, let me know if this is not true. I would jump

at the chance of a broadband or ADSL line right now, whatever the cost.

Neil D Williams
Tambon Rassada

Rawai doublespeak is getting plain silly

I have never heard such a bunch of convoluted rubbish in my whole life as in the article "Still no Action on Rawai Beach vendors." [See *Gazette* Online and news pages in this issue.]

Can't the *OrBorTor* simply admit that the food stands on Rawai Beach are illegal, blocking public access to the beach, and that they should be moved?

Then everyone can take their own sweet time – as usual – as to where they should go. But get them off now!

Restless
Rawai

Beach bar bursts Phuket's bubble

Is the Kata blockade of commercial boat operations another mafia-type tuk-tuk situation?

What a disgrace. And they still want decent tourists to come to Phuket. Is it not enough that tourists are already harassed by jet-ski operators, tuk-tuk drivers and the like?

Wake up to yourselves, beach boys, or you will find that it is not just the trouble in the South that is keeping tourists away.

Phuket was a wonderful place to visit, a real island paradise. But not any more.

Nikko
Stockholm

There's no excuse for animal abuse

As a former operating-room nurse, I have seen the results of child rapes. There is no excuse for that kind of abuse, nor for abusing animals in the same manner.

If the report of a man abusing a dog sexually is correct, I would suggest that his picture – a very large picture – his name, address and phone number be published on the front page of your paper. People like that do not deserve to hide behind the law.

Barbara Collum
Karon

Amazing view of quality of service

Alexandre Romain's reply (*Letters* May 1) concerning service at Big C amazed me. Does the writer not see that small problems must be corrected to prevent them becoming bigger ones?

I hope that Mr Romain does not advocate such low standards of service.

Big C addressed the complaint, which was the principle rather than the amount, very well.

How can Mr Romain compare donating to charity with being short-changed? One is giving and the other is taking.

I hope that Mr Romain's local restaurant (and I will match any charitable donations made) encourages staff to treat all customers equally.

From his letter, Mr Romain seems to think otherwise.

Jeffrey Deveau
Chalong

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.

Hypocrisy over Buddha images

FIRST PERSON

A few weeks ago, there was a story in the newspapers about a bikini that had pictures of Lord Buddha on it. People in Thailand who saw photos of it were upset. Deputy Prime Minister Wissanu Krea-Ngam, who is in charge of Buddhist affairs, said that he was offended and that he would tell the manufacturers how upset Thai Buddhists were.

I didn't like seeing the Lord Buddha on a bikini. I wouldn't like to see the Thai flag on a bikini either, but I think that, as a country, we are being hypocritical.

I could walk into almost any fashion shop in Phuket, especially in Patong, and buy clothes with religious symbols from other faiths on them. Is that offensive?

Or I could buy a crucifix, a Star of David or a sacred Hindu symbol as a piece of jewelry. Would that be offensive?

What about the way Thai people treat the flags of other countries? Bikinis, pants and shoes all feature them. We in Thailand are offended by how other people treat things important to us, but then we treat others' symbols and icons just as badly.

I think that the Deputy Prime Minister was right to complain, although I don't know how seriously he was taken. Perhaps he should be more interested in what is happening to Buddhism in this country – perhaps the monks should be too – and about the inappropriate use of Buddha images in Thailand.

I'm not complaining about the hundreds of shops that sell statues of Buddha or Ganesh, the Hindu elephant-headed

Bikinis featuring images of the Buddha, produced recently by American lingerie company Victoria's Secret, caused an uproar and sparked condemnation from the Thai government. But, argues Sirikorn Johnstone, Nurse Manager at the Bangkok Samui Hospital and a concerned Buddhist, the government and Thai Buddhists in general should perhaps concern themselves first with inappropriate use of Buddha images in Thailand.

god; these shops sell to tourists mostly, and the sculptures at least look nice. They may not be "holy" but they might mean a lot to someone, and not just as a holiday souvenir.

Tourists could buy these statues or other artifacts from temples but perhaps they don't think about it, or maybe they are worried about feeling like they, as non-Buddhists, don't belong in a wat.

Anyway, if people want a statue to have significance and meaning, it will; where they buy it makes little difference. The shops that sell these items make a profit from them. I wonder if they make merit for every statue they sell? I doubt it.

What does offend me is how much



the very important cultural icons of Thailand – Buddhist images, images of the Royal Family, and sometimes the Thai flag – are now seen as nothing more than good luck symbols.

Yes, as a country, we pay respect to Lord Buddha and to His Majesty the King but some of the places where these images are displayed are not appropriate locations.

I have only gone past a few bars in Patong and Samui, and most of those were quite "good" places, compared with some I have read or been told about. But I could see Buddha statues and photographs of the Royal Family as I went past.

Buddhism is a tolerant faith, and

Thai people are generally tolerant themselves, but it is not right to have statues and pictures of people we revere in bars where prostitutes work.

Buddha taught us many things, including "the Eightfold Path". The eight paths are: right view; right aim; right speech; right action; right livelihood; right effort; right mindfulness; and right contemplation.

How much of what happens in a bar follows the Eightfold Path? I can understand that bar girls need to support themselves, and maybe their families, like everyone does, and I am not saying that what they do is wrong, but that way of living and Buddhism do not go well together.

Of the eight paths, two are particularly relevant to my argument. The first of these is right action, which deals with refraining from killing, stealing and "bad ways of living".

The second is right livelihood, which is concerned with the five trades that should be avoided by lay Buddhists. They are: trade in deadly weapons; trade in animals for slaughter; trade in slavery – including prostitution; trade in intoxicants; and trade in poisons.

So-called "good" Buddhists, who make a big show of making merit, often seem to be the ones who break the Eightfold Path most frequently.

Keep the bars open – I don't care – but for Thailand to keep its Buddhism and its dignity, monks and ministers should be more concerned with how sacred images are treated in this country, and less with whether they end up on bikinis in America.

Can I pick up friends from Kata Beach?

With reference to the *Gazette* story about local long-tail boatmen refusing to allow an Aman-cruises boat to collect guests from Kata Beach [see *Gazette*, April 24], does this mean that a yacht cannot anchor at Kata Beach and take friends ashore for lunch, for example, without permission from the long-tail boatmen?

What about the next Kings Cup? The same Kata boatmen make good extra money during the week.

Concerned Sailor

Sayan Boonyawong, President of the Speedboat Club of Kata, Kata Noi and Karon, responds:

If it's not related to business, people can always bring their boats or yachts to Kata and land or pick up their friends from the beaches.

But if they are running a business and landing or picking up clients from Kata Beach, they should apply for permission from the Karon Municipality first.

Met Chulak, President of the Long-tail Boat Club of Kata, Kata Noi and Karon replies:

To be honest, I can't say. This matter will have to be discussed in our next meeting [with

Karon Municipality, local operators and other local committees].

If the boat owner is not doing it for business, I reckon he can bring his boat to the beach. We can tell if it's really a boat for business or a private boat. For example, if a boat operator came to pick up eight people or more and told us that they were all his friends, we would find this difficult to believe.

If a commercial operator wants to pick up passengers, he can ask for permission and we will discuss it to decide how it will affect things on the beach.

Why no songtaew bus from Karon and Phuket?

Why is there no *songtaew* bus running between Karon and Patong?

Alex Thow

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

In 1994, we started a public transport route linking Patong and Karon. After just three days, however, the driver was pulled

Importing essential drugs

I'm interested in visiting Phuket for a holiday, but am greatly concerned by the War on Drugs, widely reported in newspapers.

I need to take certain medications, including blood pressure and cholesterol drugs, including Lisinopril, Metoprolol, Atorvastatin and Gemfibrozil.

What's the likely result when Thai customs agents find a 30-day supply of each in my luggage, along with multi-vitamins and dietary supplements? Should I expect demands for documentation? Arrest? Imprisonment? Jail? Execution?

What documentation would satisfy Thai customs of my legitimate need for these drugs?

Wuthichai Ekisarasap, Appraiser in the Customs Office at Phuket International Airport, replies:

You should bring a paper from your doctor explaining your illness and your need for medication. It should state the amount of each drug you will need to use during the time you are here.

As for the multi-vitamins and dietary supplements, the amount you bring should not be more than the amount the labels on the packaging state is a reasonable amount for the time you will be here.

Issues & ANSWERS

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

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

Government policy on guns

What is the Thai government's position on the issue of disarmament?

Matthew Hindmarch
Phuket

Anurut Thaitrong, Director of Order Maintenance Division, Investigation and Legal Affairs Bureau, Local Administration Department, replies:

The government's policy is one of controlling the number of guns in Thailand, rather than disarmament.

Currently, until June 30, no gun licenses are being issued. The government will decide whether to continue the suspension after that date.

People who believe they really need to own or to carry guns may ask the governor for permission.

Travel writer slithers onto the coffee table

In his classic *Slithering South* – the best travel book about Thailand – Steven Van Beek paddled for 58 days from the headwaters of the Ping River down the Chao Phraya to the Gulf of Thailand. He has also written *The Chao Phya: River in Transition* and canoed down its other major tributaries: the Wang, Yom and Nan.

Now he has written his magnum opus. *Thailand Reflected in a River* (Wind & Water, Hong Kong, 2004, 264pp) is a huge coffee-table book, replete with ancient maps, prints, engravings, temple murals, photos old and new, mostly by Van Beek. The text is lyrical and magisterial, enlivened by frequent boxes displaying ancient texts and current commentary.

His central premise is that the essence of Thailand – its religious beliefs, culture, art, folklore, festivals and economic lifeblood – is wrapped in the notion of life as a river.

Into these sumptuously illustrated pages Van Beek has poured his copious knowledge of Thai history and geology, flora and fauna, river boats and royal barges, rice farmers and teak wallahs,

dams and fish traps, river spirits and water rites, waterborne communities and modern-day river pilots.

How did he get started on this colossus of a book? "It has grown out of a love affair with the river that began when I lived above it in a stilt house, one of those chance encounters that change one's life," he writes in the foreword.

"I nearly rejected the offer of a wooden house on the Thonburi bank because it seemed too far from the city centre. A single night in the house convinced me of the irrelevance of convenience.

"For 11 years it was my home and my introduction to a riverine way of life I'd not known existed. The experience taught me more about Thailand and its culture than I'd ever been able to glean from books."

Van Beek traces the early history of habitation from settlements along the riverbanks that grew into the 7th century city-states, and the development of *muang fai* irrigation systems that led to the huge canal projects of the first Thai kings.

This mastery over water culminated in the glories of moat-girt Ayudhaya. Of course, as the river gives, it takes away,

as attested to by Ayudhaya's fall to the Burmese in 1767.

But further downriver, in Thonburi and Bangkok, Siam sprang to life again. Such a riverine cycle of rise and fall is central to a Thai perception of life:

"To a Thai, rivers and water are perfect Buddhist metaphors. On the one hand, they represent tranquillity and happiness; on the other hand, they represent the mutability, unpredictability, and ephemeral nature of life, always changing character, always altering course. Rivers nurture plants, humans, and animals; floods bring destruction and disease. Individual entities are not important in the totality of a river, but are absorbed into a larger whole. Like life, a river has its own momentum; it pulls one towards a distant goal, and it is useless to struggle against it."

Van Beek devotes chapters to religious rites, river spirits, *naks*, boat races, royal barge processions, the *Bang Fai* rocket ceremony, the *Songkran* and *Loy Krathong* water festivals.

For centuries, Thailand's rivers were also its economic lifeblood. Rice was

grown along river banks; ingenious contraptions were invented to catch fish; teak logs were floated down the currents; elephantine barges and double-decker riverboats moved goods. An entire chapter is devoted to boat design from sampans to modern long-tails.

The high point of the book is a long prose poem entitled *Living on Water* that recounts a typical day on the river and opens: "Water drips from a paddle blade as a boatman pauses between strokes to listen to a bulbul perched high in a jackfruit tree. Plink, plink, plank . . . the droplets falling onto the canal's tympani surface in the dawn light count cadence to the bird's song."

Van Beek concludes on a note of hope. While lamenting that modern Thais have turned their backs on the rivers, new parks, walkways, floating restaurants, riverside cafés, luxury hotels and restored mansions "reflect a growing awareness of the value of preserving relics of a former age and a sense of gratitude for a heritage that nature has bestowed on Thailand."



Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt

Big potholes on the GPRS road

Q I recently bought a cable for my mobile phone, wanting to try out the much-publicized wireless Internet via GPRS. Technically it works fine, pretty much as fast as my landline.

However, as I hadn't been able to find any information on what it actually costs to run, I started out by making a small experiment. I checked the balance on my 1-2-Call card, 255 baht at the time, and set about browsing the web for 15 minutes.

Towards the end of the 15 minutes I got cut off, which I first attributed to technical problems. But when I checked the balance on my account, it had been completely depleted!

This works out to a charge of about 1,000 baht/hour, enough to get you approximately two weeks of broadband access in many areas in Europe and the US.

COMPUTER Q&A

Ask the experts. Email chris@phuketgazette.net

Is this for real? If it is, how can anyone advertise this as a viable option for Internet?

Former Mobile Web-Surfer
Chalong

A There are many potholes on the road to Internet connection in Phuket, and you just stepped into two big ones.

First, whenever you use a pre-paid card for any telephone service (and most definitely including GPRS Internet connection time), you're at the mercy of the company's prevailing rate system, which may or may not be reasonable, well-documented – or even comprehensible.

In this particular case, I looked high and low and couldn't find any information on the rates that 1-2-call charges for GPRS Internet connections, either on the one-2-call.com website, or in the company's brochures.

In the end, I had to call Bangkok and ask. The representative told me that 1-2-Call charges for the amount of data you download, at a mere 15 satang per thousand bytes.

(Worth noting: I have no idea how much you were charged, and have no way of independently verifying the current rate. It could change tomorrow, and we would be none the wiser.)



IRONY: Downloading software on the Internet can get mightily expensive if you pay by the byte. Downloading this free version of OpenOffice, for example, over a 1-2-Call GPRS mobile link would consume 10,000 baht in Internet connection time – if you could find a top-up card of that denomination. Caveat emptor.

Second, any pay-per-byte scheme can get extremely expensive, very quickly. In this case, 15 satang per KB might sound like a pittance, but it adds up.

For example, many of the recent Mars Lander photos from nasa.gov run to 10 MB or more (1 MB = 1,000 KB). Simply looking at a picture of the surface of Mars could cost you 1,500 baht (= 15 satang X 10,000 KB). For one picture.

At 63.5 MB, OpenOffice 1.1 would cost more than 10,000 baht to download. For one program. Ka-ching.

Paying for Internet by the byte is like paying for water by the drop. I suppose some people can ration themselves, but in the vast majority of cases pay-per-

byte leaves you wide open to nasty surprises.

All of the major GPRS vendors in Phuket – DTAC, AIS and TA Orange – have pre-paid cards that charge an arm and two legs for Internet access.

But they also have "normal" subscription accounts that aren't as usurious. As I've described in columns here in the *Gazette*, you need to look for flat-fee unlimited Internet access.

The problem doesn't lie with the technology. The problem stems from the plethora of services available, the multiple (sometimes outrageous) billing practices, and an almost complete lack of readily accessible, reliable information.

In the end, it's rather like

ordering a Phuket lobster for dinner – you'd better ask the price before you commit.

So how do you get onto the Internet with a mobile phone here in Phuket? A friend of mine bought a Sony T68i phone with built-in Bluetooth (to let the phone talk to his computer) and GPRS modem (to let the phone talk to the Internet).

He also bought a Bluetooth box made by D-Link that plugs into his computer with a USB cable. (It's a model DBT 120, which is available for 1,800 baht from Mr. Com).

He uses an AIS Internet SIM card with a standard GPRS-enabled mobile phone account. It costs 1,200 baht a month. For the next six months, he gets unlimited connections and usage time as part of a promotion available to that particular mobile phone account.

After the six months are over, AIS will put a 250 MB limit on data transfer, charging extra for each additional MB.

At that point, I'm sure my friend will be looking for a much better deal. In the interim, however, he's paying a pittance for decent Internet access – a little bit faster than dial-up, but highly reliable – and he gets to use the same phone for voice conversations, too.

– Woody Leonhard
woody@khunwoody.com

■ Woody Leonhard's latest book, *Office 2003 Timesaving Techniques For Dummies*, has just hit store shelves in the US and Europe.

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"If not NOW, when?"

'Still lots of upside' in property market

By Sangkhae Leelanapaporn

PHUKET: The Phuket property market still has good potential for business, as indicated by the current booms on the east coast and north of Phuket Town, and investors should expect franchises to perform well in the near future, says Yongyuth Kasetsuntorn, the new chief of the Phuket Provincial Business Development Office (BDO).

K. Yongyuth took up his new post on April 8, after moving from the equivalent post in Songkhla.

Comparing the two top investment centers in southern Thailand, he said, "Last year the Phuket BDO collected about 15 million baht in registration fees,

which was 3 million baht more than Songkhla collected."

He explained that most registered capital in Phuket is invested in tourism or property, whereas in Songkhla most businesses are involved in agriculture.

"There are many rubber plantations in Songkhla, so businesses there are involved with [processing] rubber. Songkhla also has many more fishery businesses and frozen food factories [than Phuket]."

"Most businesses in Songkhla are limited partnerships, which is different from in Phuket, where most are limited companies," he noted.

Another main difference, K. Yongyuth said, is that most

businesses in Phuket involve Westerners, whereas Songkhla has more businesses that are 100% Thai-owned. "If foreigners are involved [in business in Songkhla], they are usually Malaysian or Singaporean, not Westerners," he said.

Behind the investment figures, he added, was a major difference in the foreigners' intentions when setting up a business.

"Foreign investors in Songkhla are serious about their businesses. That's different from in Phuket, where some foreign investors just want a work permit to facilitate their lifestyle and to allow them to stay here longer."

"These investors do not

take their businesses seriously. They do it for an easier lifestyle, not for serious profit-making," he said.

K. Yongyuth believes that the property business in Phuket is still strong, and will continue to perform well. "Most business-people on Phuket have invested in property, such as shophouses, houses, apartments and luxury homes," he said.

"Phuket is a small island, and demand will continue to outstrip supply because many people come to work in Phuket and need a place to live," he added.

Two areas where the property market is booming are Pa Khlok and Koh Kaew. "The prices of land in Pa Khlok are not too high yet, and Koh Kaew is starting to see villas built for families with children who attend Dulwich International College," he explained.

"Other areas near the beaches in Phuket are already full."

Focusing on Phuket's well-developed tourism industry, K. Yongyuth said he had noticed that it is becoming more common for tourism firms, especially tour and dive companies, to be registered in Phuket, but to operate in Khao Lak, Phang Nga or Krabi.

Looking to the future, K. Yongyuth believes that there will be more franchise businesses on the island, and that they will perform well. "Franchises are reliable businesses, and it seems many are starting up now, including restaurants, beauty salons and garages."

"I think franchises are good and the BDO will promote and support them because they provide good quality [products or services] and a range of jobs."

"However, franchises sometimes have many conditions attached, and require large investment, and some Thais do not fully understand how the franchise business operates," K. Yongyuth said.

US interest rate worry

Many investments are linked to extremely low short-term interest rates in the US. These include most asset classes such as equities, bonds, emerging markets as well as commodities.

A number of observers believe that the riskiest areas are Hong Kong and Chinese equities, US financials excluding insurance, US homebuilders, Latin-American equities, and bonds and currencies. All of these markets and areas have been the subject of rampant speculation, encouraged by the US Federal Reserve's negative - after inflation - Federal Funds rate.

This has caused an asset price bubble in the areas mentioned, and, as investors liquidate their positions, these areas and markets may fall. This may happen because it is a "leveraged situation", that is, many of the sellers who previously borrowed "cheap" money will be forced to sell when they receive margin calls.

A margin call is a demand by a broker that a customer deposit enough capital to bring his margin up to the minimum requirement. If the customer does not, he often becomes a forced seller, or the lender simply sells the investments held as security to protect his own financial position.

Disappointment: The latest figures reflecting US gross domestic product (GDP) released in late April were disappointing for two reasons:

The GDP figures covered the first quarter of 2004 and came in at 4.2% annualized growth, lower than market expectations of 5%. In addition, the inflation problem (if that is what it is going to be) is of some concern as



MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson

it may cause the Fed to increase interest rates - lower than at any time since the 1950s - and to do it sooner rather than later.

There is a school of thought within the US financial market that the economy is peaking, along with corporate profit and commodity prices.

Chinese puzzle: The Chinese premier, Wen Jiabao, recently announced that measures would be introduced to try to cool the rapid growth China is experiencing.

The Chinese government believes that it is starting to see inflationary pressures building in the economy.

China, unfortunately, does not have the sophisticated controls available to true market economies. Nobody is really sure where the Chinese economy will head between now and the end of 2005.

School's in: Britain's university accommodation market has been mentioned frequently in this column over the years, and a mutual trust fund has been the recommended approach to this investment opportunity.

An investment in this sector makes sense because universities in the UK can provide accommodation - and most of that is of a Victorian standard - for only 22% of the 2 million or so students educated by more than 100 universities.

Student numbers are continuing to rise and cash-strapped

UK universities are more likely to spend extra funds received on their two main priorities - teaching and research.

Realizing that a gap in the market existed, UK-based Brandeaux Group launched a fund in December 1999 called the Student Success Fund.

This fund buys and renovates buildings suitable for student accommodation, most of them being old student halls of residence built in the 1960s. Each room is brought up to a suitable standard, complete with en-suite facilities and Internet connections.

The student housing also doubles as accommodation for conference delegates during university vacations.

Student occupancy rates run at more than 96% while bad debts are low.

The fund has been very successful, returning a gain of 48% between launch and April 2004.

It closed to new investment in May 2003 as it was simply attracting far more cash than it could invest. Too much cash sitting on deposit would have diluted the fund's return on investment.

The fund has re-opened until the end of July, when it will again close to new investment. Friends Provident International, the British insurance group, has a mirror fund called the Student Accommodation Fund which invests solely in the Student Success Fund.

The Student Success Fund has never fallen in value and continues to rise. Unfortunately, it is available only in sterling.

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.

Thai Marine Leisure

(bold listings are Thai flagged boats)

Power		BROKERAGE DIVISION	
39 Ft. 1998	Riviera 39 Platinum	Cummins, 2 x 250 Hp Turbo	US\$ 275,000
38 Ft. 2000	Flybridge Waterlily	Yamaha, 2 x 300 Hp	Reduced to THB 2,000,000
37 Ft. 1996	Searay 370	Mercuriuser, 2 x 350 Hp	USD 160,000
29 Ft. 2003	Provier 5000	Honda 4-stroke, 2 x 50 Hp	Price on Application
28 Ft. 86/92	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	US\$ 100,000
63 Ft. 1993	Wooden Penisi Ketch	Iseki 511 Hp	Reduced to Euro 100,000
60 Ft. 1982	Penisi Ketch	Hino 175 Hp	Euro 51,500
60 Ft. 1998	Penisi Sloop	Yanmar 50 Hp	USD 45,000
56 Ft. 1973	Classic Corten Steel Ketch	Perkins, 64 Hp	US\$ 70,000
45 FT. 1981	Bluewater Ketch	Ford Lehman, 65 Hp	US\$ 118,000
33 Ft. 1986	Nauticat 33	Ford 90 Hp	THB 3,500,000
31 Ft. 1983	Mini 95 (Peterson)	Volvo Penta, 22 Hp	US\$ 40,000

BOAT OF THE MONTH:

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That wonderful sinking feeling

Kersplosh! One of the finest sights in golf; the other person's ball making an arcing Greg Louganis-like entry into the water. If you happen to be standing within earshot, the sound is even more pleasurable.

Ideally, your opponent can see the ball but it is just too far away to retrieve without the ignominy of removing his shoes and socks. The next few holes are yours for the taking because your opponent is seething mad and unable to think straight.

Water hazards were rare on the courses I played as a youth. I think I had such a heightened affection for them because, as a pathetically short yet unerringly accurate hitter, I was rarely the one suffering at the hands of the *kersplosh*.

Every April we would be glued to our TV sets watching the US Masters. Magic TV it was, too. The sight of Nicklaus, Palmer or Player hitting long irons and even woods onto those par fives over the water was an inspiration. And the color of the water on the 16th was astounding. I didn't know until years later that they dyed it.

In the late '80s and early '90s, Nicklaus and Faldo were the best-known beneficiaries of the Augusta *kersplosh* at the expense of Ballesteros at hole 15 and Ray Floyd in a play-off at hole 11.

Curtis Strange had several *kersploshes* at hole 13, losing a large lead. I can't remember who was the happy winner on that occasion.

In recent years, probably



Jon Morrow

because of the "Augusta effect" and the increased need for irrigation storage lakes, impressive water hazards have become the norm rather than the exception.

Phuket's golf courses have many impressive water hazards, more due to the island's tin-mining history than by design.

In particular, I like the Phuket Country Club's use of water. The only hole on the front nine with water really in play is the par-3 hole 6, where lilies complete the beautiful landscape.

Love or hate hole 10, you can't help but be impressed by the effect the lake has on all levels of player. The well-placed water hazards on holes 16 and 17 would have been a nice finale, but I can't say I like the blind creek on hole 18.

The same designer, Dr Sukitti Klangvisai, later built five of the first nine holes at Loch Palm with water all the way down the right. In addition, there are 11 water carries on the first seven holes. That's a little excessive; with water often near the tees catching topped shots, it affects the weaker rather than the stronger players.

The Blue Canyon Country Club's Canyon course makes terrific use of water hazards.

Although the water is balanced a little too heavily on the right side of the Canyon course, the routing is strong enough for it not to be very noticeable.

But on the Lakes course, it's as if the course has to justify its name with water in play on all but the par-3 hole 17. Although the hazards are better balanced between left and right, beginners suffer the most.

I was surprised to discover that the Thai Muang course has water in play on 17 holes, as it doesn't seem so during play.

Perhaps it's because water is behind greens and mostly on the left, which is fairer, as so many "weekenders" tend to slice.

The Banyan Tree course has also been designed with water to the left on the front nine. But being a right-to-left player, I have always struggled with holes that turn right with the ground sloping towards the water on the left.

However, the back nine more than compensates with all the water on the right. While all these hazards add an extra challenge for Phuket's golfers, water hazards have other advantages, too. One of my favorite sights in Asian golf is the crowd of scallywags lined up on the right of the golf hole waiting for unsuspecting punters to *kersplosh* their way to the hole.

A short sprint and swim follows, and back comes the ball – with just a small price to pay.

Marvellous.

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

Vino a corker in her debut race

AO CHALONG: In perfect conditions for his new Burgundy-colored Phuket 8, *Vino*, Josh Lee from Lee Marine managed third place in his boat's competitive debut in Race 5 of the Ao Chalong Yacht Club (ACYC) Keelboat and Multihull race series, on May 9.

Although Scott Duncanson's more experienced Phuket 8 crew on *Somtam Express* led the way, securing first place, closely followed by Mark Horwood's *Attitude 8*, *Vino* proved quick and was hot on their heels around the course.

Summersalt, with Mark Pescott at the helm, proved the better of the two multihulls on the day, beating Tim Milner's *Charro*.

In the Cruising class, Al Boone on *Blue Moon* led the way, followed by John Fenn on *Four Winds* and Brian Ritchie on *Beyond Rotto*.

Although *Blue Moon* and



Vino on her way to third place in her maiden race in Chalong Bay.

Four Winds both managed to round Koh Bon, the light conditions and strong adverse current resulted in all boats in the class failing to complete the course.

The next ACYC race day will be on June 23. For more information contact Scott Duncanson at Tel: 01-8924992.

In-Between takes darts lead

PATONG: Week seven of the Patong Darts League saw Champs being unseated from the top of the league, their place taken by In-Between, who took three points against Football Crazy.

One point separates first and second places but the five-point-chasm between second and third places remains.

Patong Darts League table: 1. In-Between (17 pts); Champs (16 pts); 3. Off Shore (11 pts); 4. Piccadilly (10 pts); 5=. Amigos (9 pts); 5=. Didi's (9 pts); 7=. Football Crazy (8 pts); 7=.

Happy Days (8 pts); 9=. Shaker's (7 pts); 9=. Valhalla (7 pts). (Note: Happy Days and Didi's each have a game in hand)

Results for May 4: Amigos* 4, Didi's 5; Champs* 3, Offshore 6; Football Crazy 4, In-Between* 5; Piccadilly* 6, Shakers 3; Valhalla 3, Happy Days* 6. (* Beer leg winners.)

May 18 fixtures: Amigos v Champs; Football Crazy v Didi's; Happy Days v Piccadilly; In-Between v Shakers; Off Shore v Valhalla. (Home team listed first.)

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Seur Moun Chol take To Be No 1 Cup

By Rittiwat Suwannarattaphum

PHUKET CITY: More than 1,000 people gathered at Surakul Stadium on May 5 for the *Maha Kam Keera Maha Mongkol* sports day.

The first event of day was the final of the open category of the "To Be Number One" five-a-side football tourney, which had seen some plucky play in earlier rounds from the more than 100 teams who entered.

Fittingly, the Open final, between Seur Moun Chol B and Peuan Paeng, was a cliffhanger.

The first attempt on goal was made just 15 seconds into the game when Seur Moun Chol bounced the ball off their opponents' crossbar.

The ball went straight back to Seur Moun Chol, and Anuvat Patan, weaving past defenders, shot again, but failed to get past the Peuan Paeng goalkeeper.

Peuan Paeng gave as good as they got but neither team could edge ahead. A free kick in the second minute by Peuan Paeng also failed to find its target.

Peuan Paeng saw Panchat Petrit, substituted for an injured teammate, make an immediate attack on goal only to be thwarted by a tight defense.

Peuan Paeng's determination finally paid off in the ninth minute when teammate and brother, Panpet Petrit, volleyed into the back of the net.

With everything to play for in the second 10-minute half, Seur Moun Chol wasted no time in attacking.

Their onslaught paid off with an equalizer in the 11th minute. Two minutes later, how-

ever, Peuan Paeng again took the lead when Chuttimar Paojin slammed the ball home.



IT'S MINE: Chuttimar Paojin (pink jersey) from Peuan Paeng, defends his possession against Pisan Kayankit from Seur Moun Chol. The game was a constant tussle of catch-up. After 20 minutes of hard play, Seur Moun Chol scooped the honors with a 3-2 victory.

ALL TOGETHER NOW: Mass aerobics were the order of the day after the soccer final. Hundreds of people, including Phuket Governor Udomsak Usawarangkura, took part in the exercise.



Attack and counterattack by both sides followed, until the 17th minute when Seur Moun Chol once again leveled the score, at 2-2.

Finally, in the 18th minute, Bandit Vichiensaeng made himself the hero of Seur Moun Chol and the team's fans, scoring the winning goal.

In the Under-15 final, Surakul Football Club beat Sarin House 2-0.

HRH Princess Ubol Ratana Rajakanya will present trophies to the two winning teams during her "To Be Number One" event on May 18.

After the soccer finals,

other sports activities included a free soccer training session, a mountain bike race and a five-kilometer fun run.

The winner of the under-35 age category in the fun run was Pichet Pengrang. Prasert Chimat came second, followed by Vora-chet Rakchat.

In the over-35 age group, Somyos Pongjit came first, followed by Pisan Jantorn-Prasoot and Prajak Chitmat.

At 5 pm, Phuket Governor Udomsak Usawarangkura arrived to preside over the prize-giving ceremony at the stadium, before leading a 20-minute mass aerobics session.

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The Maserati brothers began making their own motor cars in 1926, but by then they had already been involved for a long time in racing at Grand Prix level. There were seven brothers, but only four became inextricably linked with cars and motor sport: Carlo, Bindo, Alfieri and Ettore.

Carlo, the eldest, was still at school when he built his first steam engine. He went on to design a single-cylinder engine for a bicycle while still a teenager. When he was 20, he became a test driver for Fiat, then raced Bianchi cars to great effect.

Alfieri and Bindo worked for Isotta Fraschini in Milan. Ettore joined the same factory later. Ernesto, the youngest, began his racing career as riding mechanic to Alfieri, before designing a range of engines, with four, six, eight and even 16 cylinders.

Alfieri, however, had greater ambitions and founded a company devoted to fine-tuning racing engines. He had a long and distinguished racing career before dying of kidney problems following an operation in 1932.

Ernesto took over the reins of the company, but by the late 1930s the company was in financial trouble and control passed to Adolfo Orsi, an industrialist from Modena.

In 1946, the Maserati brothers left the firm. It continued successfully racing in Grands Prix, winning the world championship in 1954 with the legendary Juan Manuel Fangio and again in 1957. At the end of that year, however, Maserati announced its withdrawal from racing.

In 1958, Maserati went into receivership. It was revived in 1962 when the Maserati Sebring was introduced, followed a year later by the first Quattroporte.

Financial problems continued to dog the company, however. In 1975 the company went into liquidation. It was rescued by Argentine Alessandro de



Left: The new Maserati Quattroporte is the perfect way to get to your little Italian country cottage.

Above: The command center – note the gear-change paddles on the steering wheel.

Maserati maestros

Tomaso before coming under the management of Ferrari in 1993.

Ferrari revamped the factory and installed strict quality control measures before, last year, launching the new Quattroporte sedan, with which Maserati hopes to take on the best German-engineered machines from Mercedes-Benz and BMW.

The latest Quattroporte, designed by Pininfarina, is powered by a 4.2-liter, light alloy V8 producing a healthy 400bhp (294kW), with peak torque reaching a mammoth 451Nm.

Maximum speed for this beautiful Italian offering is an

outstanding 275kmh – no restrictors here – with the benchmark 0-100kmh sprint achieved in just 5.2 seconds.

Weight distribution, front to rear, is aided by the six-speed, electro-hydraulic “transaxle” transmission being mounted at the rear, which is operated by paddles on the steering wheel.

The driver can, if he wishes, start in automatic and switch to a more sporting experience by using these paddles, or the car can be left in fully automatic mode.

There is also a drive-by-wire throttle and sophisticated adaptive electronic damping. Acceleration sensors monitor the movements of the wheels and the car’s body, instantly changing the calibration of the dampers to compensate, giving a perfectly controlled ride.

Safety is of paramount im-

portance in a car capable of the Quattroporte’s high speeds. To this end, the electronic stability program interfaces with the ABS, EBD and traction control. Brakes are by Brembo and consist of four massive, ventilated discs with four-pot calipers on the front, two-pot on the rear.

Passive safety is taken care of by an airbag system activated by sensors at the front and on the sides which measure the severity of the impact and inflate bags accordingly.

Side airbags are incorporated in the front seats and there are full-length air curtains to protect occupants in the event of a side impact.

Further safety features include light and rain sensors, while all seat belts have pretensioners and load limiters.

The interior, as you would expect, is luxurious: the finest

hand-stitched Poltrona Frau leather, in a choice of 10 shades, complements acres of wood paneling in either rosewood, mahogany or briarwood, while a titanium-style finish can be specified if desired.

Front and rear seats are electrically operated and there is a top-of-the-range Bose hi-fi system incorporating a single-CD player. A multi-disc autochanger, mounted under the dash, is optional. All this for a mere 10 million baht, plus taxes.

Development of the new Quattroporte was personally overseen by Ferrari President Luca di Montezemolo in his quest for improved quality.

With three cars in its lineup and the considerable financial muscle of Ferrari behind the company, the future of Maserati is now assured – a far cry from the desperate times experienced by Alfieri and his brothers, that’s for sure.

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



By Jeff Heselwood

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Pepper's bar and restaurant in Cherng Talay was opened in 2002 by four golfers in need of a place to socialize after playing a round. Two of the original four left last year but Pepper's enjoys continued success under Mark Cain and "Biff" Bailey.

"We listen to our customers," says Mark. "The menu is constantly evolving. People have requested more vegetarian dishes so we have added 12 to the menu." A quarter of the menu offered at Pepper's consists of Thai dishes.

Enthusiastic staff are a key factor in Pepper's success. Chef Malee "Nit" Poopuang, said, "I like the challenge of learning to prepare new dishes. The management and customers are very friendly. It's a great place to work."

Chili con Carne For 2 people

Ingredients:

200 grams ground beef;
½ onion, diced;
½ teaspoon dried oregano;
2 cups tinned tomatoes;
2 cups tinned kidney beans;
1-2 teaspoons chili powder (according to taste);
Salt and pepper to taste;
Oil;
1 cup grated cheddar cheese;
1 cup finely chopped onion;
Fresh coriander leaves.

Method:

Fry the diced onion until translucent. Add the ground beef, salt, pepper, oregano and chili powder. Cook until the beef is browned, and then add the tomatoes and beans.

Simmer gently for about 2 hours. Remove from heat and serve with a garnish of fresh coriander leaves, a small bowl of grated cheddar cheese and a small bowl of chopped onion.

Cottage Pie For 2 people

Ingredients:

200g ground beef;
½ onion, chopped;
2 cloves of garlic, crushed;
½ medium-sized carrot, grated;
¼ small, fresh red chili, finely chopped;
1 teaspoon Bisto, or other gravy powder blended into ¼ cup water;
Oil;

Pepper's & chili



Guest chef By Jenna Wise

1 large potato, cut into 1-inch chunks;
1 tablespoon butter;
2 tablespoons milk;
Salt and pepper to taste;
Grated cheese (optional)
4 slices of fresh tomato;
2 sprigs fresh parsley.

Method:

Boil the potato until cooked, then drain and mash with the butter, milk, salt and pepper. Fry the onion and garlic until translucent. Add the beef, grated carrot and chili. Mix well, add the gravy, and simmer until the beef is browned.

Spoon the mixture into bowls and top with mashed potato. For extra flavor, cover with a layer of grated cheese. Brown under a hot grill and decorate

with fresh tomato slices and a sprig of fresh parsley before serving.

Goong Sarong For 2 people

Ingredients:

10 medium to large-sized prawns, shelled and cleaned;
3 x 40-gram packets rice noodles;
Oil;
Salt and white pepper;
½ cup mushroom soy sauce;
A small bowl of plum sauce, for dipping.

Method:

Soak the rice noodles in cold water for about 2 minutes until soft, then drain well. Wrap about eight noodles around each prawn until it is covered. Mix the salt and pepper into the mushroom soy sauce and dip each prawn into it before frying it until golden. Drain well and serve with plum sauce.



Above left, Goong Sarong. Above, Cottage pie with baked beans and fries. Left, Chef Malee 'Nit' Poopuang – "I like the challenge of learning to prepare new dishes."

Pepper's Restaurant and Bar, 382/10-11 Moo 1, Srisoonthorn Rd, Cherng Talay, Thalang, Phuket 83110 (Laguna entrance). Tel: 076-325112. Open 7 days a week, from 5 pm until midnight.

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PUNCHLINE COMEDY CLUB RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MAKE CHANGES TO ITS PROGRAMME AND PERFORMERS AT ITS SOLE DISCRETION AT ANY TIME WITHOUT LIABILITY.

My friend, Duangjit "A" Kraissakul died last week, apparently from heart failure. She was 35 years old. People who knew her were stunned.

She was beautiful, both physically and in her nature. We saw her in her office and at the international property exhibitions where she promoted Phuket and the project she was working for. I had a few chats with her, quite often in the bar next to the office. The last time was only a few days before she died.

K. A liked to discuss her work, how she could help her employers, what she needed to do to help them promote their project.

She was always positive and happy, although she occasionally worried about her ability to do her job – an understandable concern in a way, as she was a Thai lady in an international situation, but a concern that one could not agree with: she spoke English fluently, her

nature was warm and generous, and her enthusiasm for her work was inspiring.

Before she entered the property industry, K. A was a nurse. Her background was in helping people, and that carried through into her new career.

Before the Phuket and Sa-

mui Property Show in Hong Kong last year, K. A was both excited and concerned that everything should go well. Mostly it did, except that her luggage didn't arrive in Hong Kong at the same time as she did. Nevertheless, she set up the stand in the exhibition room wearing the

clothes she had worn on the aircraft from Phuket.

The next day, with her bag still on the way, K. A wore the same clothes. None of us complained – she still looked great. And when her Thai dress arrived, she looked stunning.

God knows why she died. A few friends were aware that she had fallen ill and that her father had taken her to Bangkok, but according to some of her friends, the medical facility she was taken to could not find a problem.

Back in Phuket, medical personnel apparently did not recognize urgent problems though, according to close friends, a heart problem was suspected.

During an outing in the preceding days, she told friends that she could not join in some activities as she was unable to run.

Some days earlier, while at an exhibition in Singapore, a colleague commented that K. A was unable to walk more than a short distance without having to stop to recover her breath. There was clearly something seriously wrong for this to be happening to a 35-year-old woman with a physique to make both athletes and models envious.

There's nothing to be gained now from hindsight, conjecture or trying to lay blame. K. A has gone. She left before most of us – friends and colleagues – knew that she had a problem. But perhaps it's time for us all to pay a little more attention to those close to us.

K. A was a warm, delightful person and I am sure that I am not alone in wishing there were more people like her in the world.

– **Graham Doven**



Duangjit 'A' Kraissakul (in red top) with friends at last year's Phuket & Samui Property show in Singapore in March.

An untimely loss

Home of the Week

Haven

Despite being just three minutes away from the amenities of Patong, this 10-year-old house, built on three floors, is far enough away to be a place of tranquility.

Once past the security gatehouse and up the steep concrete road, one sees the entire complex of five similar villas. The residences, and their shared swimming pool, sit on a five-rai hillside plot overlooking Patong Bay.

Well-built, and with teak and stucco finishes, this Thai-style home has an internal area of 300 square meters.

The house features one bedroom on the second floor and two, including the master bedroom, on the third floor.

Each bedroom has built-in wardrobes and an ensuite bathroom; the master bedroom with a Jacuzzi and sunken bath.

The second floor has another bathroom while a WC can be found on the first floor.

The fully-equipped Western-style kitchen, finished with brick and tiled walls, is a cook's delight. Modern appliances and a breakfast bar-cum-work surface complete the room.

The living room leads out onto a terrace and offers spectacular views, and there is also a dining room and a study room. Wide teak windows give an airy feel to the living space while allowing the breeze off the sea to refresh the property. A sala to the side of the house provides exterior seating.

There is an abundance of teak in the property, including the floors, which are a mixture of



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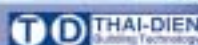
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DIY or off-plan: the pros and cons

With the significant number of new projects launched over the past six months many of our clients have asked us to explain the advantages and disadvantages of buying into an off-plan (not yet built) project as opposed to a property on the secondary market.

Buying a house that is already complete is certainly a much simpler exercise than buying land and building a home for yourself.

When you buy a house, you can see exactly what you will get and know exactly what you will have to pay for it.

If you can find a sound, attractive house that fits your needs and lifestyle choices at a price that appeals to you, then you should probably just go for it. But therein lies the rub: if you find a prime house in a prime location, it will almost certainly be marketed at a significant premium over its development – land purchase plus construction – cost.

The advantages of building for yourself are primarily that you can design, build and fit out a house exactly as you want it and (subject to availability) do so on a land size and in a location that best suits you, with the expectation that, done with care, the project can be completed at a price well below the market value of the finished product.

It all sounds very appealing, but it is not always as straightforward as it sounds. If the property you plan is modest, the design, construction supervision and infrastructure development costs of the site may well out-

weigh the potential savings.

Savings will generally increase the larger the property that you are building. Also it must be noted that even with the assistance of a qualified local architect and construction manager, making sensible design and costing decisions can be difficult for those without experience in construction. Building your own home does not always guarantee that you will get what you want at the price that you budgeted for.

There is, however, a middle ground between buying a finished home and doing it all yourself. Several housing developments and land subdivision projects around the island offer the opportunity of buying a serviced plot of land with a fully (or at least partially) customized home design and construction service.

These projects also typically establish codes, covenants and restrictions which on the one hand might slightly inhibit your design aspirations, but on the other hand offer a lot of protection from excessive development by your neighbors – something that can be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve if you buy a single plot of land in an uncontrolled area.

Clearly these subdivision/custom-build projects are out to make a commercial return, and will cost you more than if you were to do every aspect of the development totally alone (but usually only less if you omit to value your own contribution in terms

of time when building all on your own).

Such projects are typically managed by experienced developers, who can offer considerable assistance in the design development process as well as providing economies of scale in the various professional fees, the site infrastructure and the actual construction process.

Cost is usually computed on a price per square meter (for a defined specification) and then adjusted for variations in size or specification. Alternatively, in some cases construction price is set by directly-negotiated competitive tender, with the developer charging a percentage overhead to cover professional fees.

Because the developer faces little risk and uses only limited amounts of his own capital in the development with this format, developers of these buy-build projects can typically work on much lower margins than a builder who constructs homes on spec, tying up large sums of capital, or requiring expensive financing.

Shop around and consider the options carefully. With care and consideration of your personal needs, design-development abilities and the time you have available to oversee the process, one of the three general approaches suggested above will likely lend itself to your personal situation.

Ask WILLIAM

By William Pinsent



Gardening

with Bloomin' Bart

The plant that wouldn't die

Most plants grow, make flowers, stop growing, and then go to plant heaven. It's a bit harsh, like a child watching *Old Yeller* for the first time, but that's just the way it is.

However, some plants are less co-operative with the natural order of life. On the road into the *Gazette* offices, there's a classic example of one such rebel, the *dracaena fragrans*, or corn plant.

Thais know this monster of a plant as *wasa naa*. Others know it as a "false palm", as it does look a little like a palm, with its long, sometimes naked stems, and crowns of sword-like, "palmy" leaves.

But it definitely isn't a palm. It is part of a huge family called *dracaena*. Another member of the same family is a common houseplant in England, the yucca. In the dim and distant days of my youth, in not-so-sunny England, I used to be fascinated by my mother's yucca.

I wasn't fascinated by its huge size, or the fact that it just kept on getting bigger, but by its "headless" stalk. It rose about a foot out of the pot, looking as if it had been decapitated. Just under the stump was the rest of the

plant, growing out of the side of the stalk.

For most gardeners, decapitation is the primary way of propagating any member of the *dracaena* family. Once you decide that it's just too healthy and getting too big for its boots, trim it. This is the easy part – just cut off the stem at a point where you would like to see new growth emerge. You can even lop it a few

centimeters above the soil, if you really want to shrink it down. Then wait a few days, and you'll see a new shoot bursting out below the cut, which will become a duplicate of what was there before.

The bonus is that you now have two for the price of

one. Put the section you cut off into another pot of soil and water it. Rather than wither and die, the cutting will grow.

The *dracaena* can come in several leaf colors, but all with the same bushy-topped look. Some are variegated, with yellow and green stripes, though most in Phuket are plain green.

It's debatable whether this monster is a plant or a tree, as it can become huge. The satisfying thing about it is that such growth can be achieved with absolutely no effort on your part. Once established, the plant requires little to no maintenance, as it pretty much looks after itself, as long as the soil is well-drained. Large *dracaenae* don't grow overnight though; they take years to grow to heights of several meters.

It's almost impossible to kill the corn plant, no matter how hard you try. You can put it in partly shaded area of the garden, and it will flourish. Put it in direct sunlight, and it loves that too.

If you count yourself as a gardener who prefers to enjoy looking at the garden rather than tending it, then the corn plant is perfect. It's very much a non-gardening gardener's plant.





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Property Gazette

Properties For Sale

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Property Gazette

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

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Island Job Mart



The Allamanda Vacation Club based in Phuket and an integrated part of Laguna Resorts & Hotels, is currently looking for enthusiastic individuals to fill several available positions of:

Asst. Sales Manager (2 positions), Sales Representative (5 positions) Outside Personal Contact (6 positions) & Tele-Marketer (3 positions)

Applicants should meet the following criteria:

- Self motivated and enthusiastic individual
- Able to communicate effectively in English (other languages would be an advantage)
- Interested in earning a lot of money
- Experience preferred but not essential (full training given)
- Truly passionate about representing the best product in our industry
- Outside Personal Contact & Tele-Marketing positions reserved for Thai only.

Applicants are invited to apply in person at Allamanda Vacation Club Office is located in Canal Village (shopping area) at Laguna Phuket or send a full resumé, detailed qualifications and experience with recent photo to:

The Group Director of Human Resources
Laguna Resorts & Hotels Public Co Ltd
390/1 Moo 1, Srisoonthorn Road, Cherngtalay, Thalang, Phuket 83110
Tel: 076-324416-7 Fax: 076-325002
Email: sunisas@lagunaphuket.com or avcmkt@lagunaphuket.com

WEBMASTER

needed for yacht charter agency. Thai national with experience in this field. Please email resumé for an interview. Email: charter@thaimarine.com

URGENTLY REQUIRED

Artasia Press is currently seeking qualified, energetic, and service-minded people for the following positions: 1. Junior sales representative; Outgoing young male/female, confident, able to communicate in English, have computer skills and driving license, pleasant personality. 2. Administrative officer; Good communication and telephone skills, computer literate in Microsoft Word, Excel and Powerpoint, accounting background. Acceptable qualifications: certificate, diploma, bachelor's degree. Interested persons, should send application letters in English with resumés and recent photograph or call in advance to apply in person at: Artasia Press Co Ltd. Baan Prangthong, 3211 Moo 3, Kwang Rd, Muang, Phuket 83000. For further details, please see our website at: www.phuketmagazine.com. Tel: 076-264433, 09-8667892. Fax: 076-264-255. Email: saksia@aapress.net

ASSISTANT GM

Assistant General Manager position available in a boutique resort. Will be responsible for daily operations and human resources. Thai nationals only need apply and by email only. For more information or to apply, email: jobs@opensthe.net

OFFICE SECRETARY

Thai national, fluent in written and spoken English, wanted for position as Office Secretary. Only experienced persons. Please email or fax resumé for interview. Fax: 076-238974. Email: charter@thaimarine.com

OFFICE STAFF

Three permanent office positions, 1 senior and 2 junior, are available in our new Phuket City office. Applicants should have good spoken and written English skills and computer skills. Preference will be given to those who can drive a car. Tel: 076-348117, 01-8919653. Fax: 076-348119. Email: rob@sailing-thailand.com

DIVING INSTRUCTOR

couple. We are looking for a PADI diving instructor couple to work at our busy dive center on Phi Phi. Email: jkg24@hotmail.com

TOP MALE MODEL

Looking for top male model for new magazine in Europe (in Phuket in August). 18 to 25 years old; minimum 170 cm; minimum 60 kg; very attractive body and smile. Must be available in August. Very good pay for the right candidate. Please email with background about yourself and attractive photo. Email: florianhofmeister@yahoo.fr

URGENT

Housekeeper needed urgently. Must be able to speak English and live in. Good wages and working conditions. Tel: 076-273427.

PROGRAMMER

and Marketing Officer wanted. Programmer qualifications: PHP, MYSQL, Java script, control panel, shopping carts, other HTML, PSD, PageMaker. Marketing position (females only) qualifications: English-speaking, enthusiastic, com & Internet skills, driver's license. Pls call 076-342270 or email: info@phuketdir.com

OFFICE SECRETARY

Secretary required for a quantity surveyor's office. Must be a Thai national, fluent in spoken and written English, and with good computer skills. Forward CV to PO Box 65, Patong Post Office, Kathu, Phuket, Thailand, 83150.

PHUKET LAW FIRM

seeks secretary for part- or full-time. Call 06-0439141.

HEAD GARDENER

We are looking for a man, suitably-experienced in gardening and able to understand some English, to work as Head Gardener. Good salary for the successful applicant. Tel: 076-281084, 01-8953185. Fax: 076-281084. Email: man@islandhomephuket.com

RESTAURANT STAFF

Head chef and all staff required for Rock Fish (previously known as The Balcony) in Kamala. Must have experience, a good attitude and a desire to learn. Rock Fish will serve modern healthy cuisine amidst oceanfront surroundings, and with a fun attitude. Tel: 09-2873161. Email: kamalarestaurant@hotmail.com

PROPERTY SECRETARY

Bright English-speaker required to continue the setting up of a villa project in Koh Kaew. Requirements: Independence; computer literacy; and own transport. Salary dependent on experience. Pls contact for more details and to apply. Tel: 076-236616, 01-895-2206. Fax: 076-236617. Email: siamuk@loxinfo.co.th

DIVE SUPPLY

is looking to recruit for the following positions:
3 Sales Representatives for Scuba Diving Equipment

- Thai National Male/Female, age over 25
- Spoken English essential
- Proven experience in a sales background
- 2 years' experience in a similar position
- Salary 12,000 baht, with Scuba Diving Experience 15,000 baht and up

If you think this is you, please contact; Khun Pen 076/342511 or send email to info@divesupply.com

Timeshare Sales

German, Scandinavian & Belgian
Sales Reps required at View Talay
Holiday Resort, Jomtien

Up to 14% commission
Excellent Up Flow

Call 09 5423041
Weekends or after 8 pm

SUPERVISORY CHEF

Wanted: English-speaking supervisory chef for a new restaurant in the Laguna area. Must have experience supervising other kitchen staff. Must be able to prepare high-quality Thai food and be skilled in barbecuing meat over open coals. Excellent salary and benefits for the right candidate. Tel: 076-270725, 01-6061522. Fax: 076-270725. Email: dboston@loxinfo.co.th

HEAD HOUSEKEEPER

Head housekeeper position available. Must have experience, ability to lead staff and be able to speak some English. Good salary and conditions. Please contact Khun Fon at The Yorkshire Inn Hotel, in Patong. Tel: 076-340904, 076-345258

FEMALE SALES

Female sales assistant required. Should speak English and have experience in sales. Please contact for more details. Tel: 01-9795624. Email: tom@bootlegonline.com

ASSISTANT MANAGER

A newly set up company operating mainly in the real estate market is looking for an enthusiastic Thai national, male or female, 30-35 years old, fluent in English, with good experience in marketing, a good all-round personality and preferably with own car. Very good salary and profit sharing scheme. send your CV by fax or email to apply. Fax: 076-352066. Email: info@consaltho.it

TRAINEE HOUSEKEEPER

Looking for a trainee housekeeper. Must speak some English, be willing to learn, able to ride a motorbike and work in Kathu. Good wages and working conditions. Please call for more information or to apply. Tel: 076-323214, 01-8540061.

ADMIN & SALES

Assistant. English-speaking Thai female required for part-time and possible full-time employment. Must be active and willing to learn new things. Send CV by fax or email. Tel: 076-355040. Fax: 076-355039. Email: cj@searaspports.com

OFFICE MANAGER

Full-time office manager required for exclusive villa project, based near Kamala. Applicant must be fluent in both spoken and written English, and have at least 5 years' experience in a similar role. A sound understanding of accounting is essential together with knowledge of QuickBooks, Microft Word and Excel. A car and driver's license is preferred. Good presentation and bright personality are very important. Excellent rewards for successful candidate. Tel: 09-8934217. Email: admin@capcsol.com

HOTEL STAFF

Staff wanted for a small, 5-room hotel in Patong. We have vacancy for a female all-rounder aged 22-32. Should be an English speaker, duties to include reception, accounting, bar, breakfast, room-cleaning, laundry and other usual hotel jobs. Salary dependent on qualifications, and we offer free accommodation, food, laundry, motorbike, mobile phone and health insurance for the right applicant. Please apply by telephone. Tel: 06-1062566.

SECURITY GUARDS

Wanted: 2 security guards for guesthouse and bar. Hours: 6pm-10 am. Contact for more details and to apply. Tel: 09-5943209. Email: olebay_th@yahoo.co.uk

COOK WANTED

The Yorkshire Inn Hotel looking for good Thai- and European-food cook. Pls call for more info and to apply. Tel: 076-340904, 076-345258.

ACCOUNTANT

Accountant, with good written and spoken English and experience of SME business, is needed. Knowledge of QuickBooks is a must. Tel: 01-8926930. Email: philippe@thaimarine.com

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Don't miss....

Issues & Answers

www.phuketgazette.net/issuesanswers/index.asp

Tout, Trader & Trumpet

Articles for Sale

GOING HOME

"Going back to Europe" sale. Two professional 1,000-watt JBL SF-15 speakers, 21,000 baht for the pair (Price new: 50,000 baht). UBC system: 2,200 baht. Mobile aircon: 2,900 baht. 4 rattan chairs with pillows, price for the set: 5,000 baht (Price new: 16,000 baht). 2 big Goldstar (LG) loudspeakers, for home use, price for the pair: 2,900 baht. New, gray, Diamond VCD/music system, with two satellite speakers and one central: 4,400 baht. 2 vacuum cleaners: wet-and-dry professional cleaner 3,900 baht, small one only 1,600 baht. New aluminium picture frames with glass - 10 pieces 60cm x 80cm, 10 pieces 30cm x 40cm, 50 pieces 20cm x 30cm - Price for the lot: 12,000 baht (Price new: 36,000 baht). Two Integral high-quality motorcycle helmets, one helmet: 1,900 baht; the other helmet: 1,200 baht. Panasonic Tel/Fax/Copy machine: 4,500 baht. New Hi8 Samsung Camcorder, 32x optical zoom: 5,900 baht. Tel: 07-8823878. Email: thailand@topsportswear.nl

PADI CUE CARDS

Cue cards for all the required skills for the confined water course. For instructor use and a must for IDC candidates. In good condition with some rust. 1,200 baht. Tel: 06-2768676. Email: sylvie_yaffe@yahoo.com

DINING TABLE

plus chairs. Priced for quick sale at 4,000 baht. Price new: 9,900 baht. Call now. Tel: 01-0853429.

SUNNTO MOSQUITO

Sunnato Mosquito (as new) plus instructor manual, Aqualung regulator, and teaching slates. 15,000 baht ono. Tel: 01-0853429.

NOKIA 6600 4 SALE

Just 3 days old: tri-band Nokia 6600 with video camera. Comes complete with 1-year warranty and the receipt. Email: micks_2003@hotmail.com

SPORTS EQUIPMENT

4'6" punch bag with 2 sets of gloves: 1,200 baht. 2 unused Slazenger Panther squash rackets, 1 Yonex Graphlex and 1 Snauwaert tennis rackets. Price: 500 baht each. Tel: 07-8954355.

UW CAMERA

Nikon F90X. Nikon SLR camera with 28-80mm Nikon lens and Ikelite underwater housing. 40,000 baht or best offer. Tel: 06-5953210.

ACOUSTIC GUITARS

for sale. Future semi-cutaway. Nice tone. Low action fretboard. 2,500 baht, with carry bag. Also Sun Star Acoustic. Semi-cutaway. Fast action. Sweet tone. Ideal for beginners. 1,500 baht. Tel: 06-2953965. Email: robinsbum@hotmail.com

WOODEN BEDFRAME

King-size wooden bedframe for sale. Paid over 5,000 baht; asking 1,500 baht. Tel: 076-289244. Or email to: rawaitim@yahoo.com

PANASONIC STEREO

with surround sound. Plays video CDs and music CDs. Two front speakers, two rear speakers and one middle speaker. Karaoke functions and microphones. 8,000 baht. Tel: 06-2830812. Email: sales@a-o.biz

MP3 PLAYER

MP3 player with 128MB Memory Stick. Plugs directly into computer USB port. Has forward/reverse controls, 5-mode equalizer, integrated voice recorder, lock/hold key and digital volume control. Comes with stereo headphones (not used yet). Hardly used. Price: 2,500 baht. Please call 09-7233722.

SONY VHS

recorder/player. Sony 6-head stereo multisystem PAL/NTSC player recorder. Video amplifier (PAL). Please email: ecoquest66@hotmail.com

HIGH-END CD PLAYER

AMC CD 60 with remote control. Made in US, 1 year old, rarely used. 8,000 baht. Burr-Brown 24-bit/96KHz DAC; dynamic range > 100dB; THD < 0.01%; 1 pair analog connection; 1 digital coaxial connection. Tel: 01-4203873. Email: t_pranot@hotmail.com

SONY CAMERA

Cybershot 2.1-megapixel digital camera, capable of 15-second MPEG movie clips and stills. Includes software, 3 memory sticks (4MB, 8MB, 16MB), 2 batteries and charger. All in good condition. 15,000 baht. Tel: 076-330897.

SONY ERICSSON 610

Bluetooth mobile phone for sale, including camera, extra battery, desk charger and travel charger. Price: 9,000 baht. Email: sawadee07@hotmail.com

DIGITAL CAMERA

Ezonics 2-megapixel digital camera. Used less than a year. Uses compact flash memory, 8MB built into the camera, and 2 AA batteries. 1.5-inch display. Can record video with sound. Price: 2,500 baht. Please call 076-280590.

Articles Wanted

POOL TABLE

Secondhand pool table required for new bar. Email: olebay_th@yahoo.co.uk

MOBILE PHONE

wanted. I need a mobile phone. Must be in good shape. Price up to 3,500 baht. Email: philip_kicker@yahoo.co.uk

MOBILE PHONE

Newish model. Must be in good working order. Email: butterfly33@yahoo.com

SOFA WANTED

Looking for inexpensive rattan sofa and chairs for our guesthouse. Please email: newdad41yr@yahoo.com

BABY STUFF

Looking for all items necessary for a newborn. Car seat, crib, change table, etc. Prefer quality items. Email: newdad41yr@yahoo.com

Boats & Marine



Riviera 39
Top condition
Cummins engines

contact
broker@thaimarine.com
076-239111



Sea Ray Laguna 21
NEW Mariner 200 Hp
great for P'nga

contact
broker@thaimarine.com
076-239111

TAMAPRAO YACHT

for sale at Tamaprao. Swedish design, 36-foot fiberglass motor yacht, 2x200 hp engines. Tel: 09-200-2497.

30-FT FLYBRIDGE

cruiser. This sleekly-styled family flybridge cruiser with Thai registration offers a great layout and good lines. Powered by twin 150hp turbo diesels, the fuel consumption is very economical. She cruises at 20-23 knots with top speed of 25-27 knots. The asking price is US\$39,900, or 1.59 million baht. Tel: 076-342511, 01-8924077. Email: franks@divesupply.com

EXPEDITION KAYAK

Feathercraft K2 Expedition double, collapsible kayak. Meets airline requirements, includes 2 spraydecks, 2 seasocks, 2 collapsible paddles and wheelcart. Over US\$5,000 new. Please contact with best offer. Email: maurinquina23@hotmail.com



FOR SALE

37-foot custom-made wooden speedboat, an unusual and beautiful design. Built extra strong. It can take 3 outboards. Asking price: 850,000 baht. Please call to arrange a viewing. Tel: 01-6931425 or 01-5365900.



TIKI 30FT CATAMARAN

Wharram design, built by Seascope Phuket, launched Dec 2003. Thai registered, draught 2ft. Ready to sail away. Price 42,000 euros. Email: seascope@phuket.ksc.co.th

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: hktmkt@ksc.th.com

THAI SPORT FISHING

boat. 12-meter Thai sport fishing boat with working flybridge. 500,000 baht. Tel: 06-2674400.

<p>Vitech 72</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1994 / Twin 1080HP GM • 4 cabins / offers encouraged • Lying Indonesia 	<p>Hi Star 75</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1992 / Twin 1000HP MAN • 4 cabins / Newly refurbished & painted 2003 • Lying Malaysia
<p>Grand Banks 49</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1990 / Caterpillar 375HP • 3 cabins / in good condition • Lying Malaysia 	<p>Silverton 36.2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1996 / Twin-shaft diesels • 2 cabins / presentable condition • Lying Malaysia

Check out our website at: www.simpsonmarine.com

Paul Scholten at: +06012-6011705 / Email: paul.scholten@simpsonmarine.com
Simon Theseira at: +06012-2971364 / Email: simon.theseira@simpsonmarine.com

Business Opportunities

HOTEL PROPERTY FOR SALE

Would you like to own a hotel, restaurant and rental shop on Karon Beach? Easy foreign ownership and rapid company transfer. Please contact us for further information or see our website at www.geocities.com/hotelinparadise or call us. Tel: 01-6931136. Email: hotelinparadise@yahoo.com

RESTAURANT 4 SALE

35-seat, fully-equipped restaurant in Patong for sale, ready to work. 4 motorcycles for rent and 6 computers with Internet access. Tel: 07-048-6254, 01-9496092. Email: pillar@loxinfo.co.th

GUESTHOUSE LEASE

for sale. 7-year guesthouse lease for sale. Ground level property comprises 10 ensuite bathrooms, office, kitchen, bar, pool table and satellite TV. Registered Thai company. Email for pics and info. Tel: 076-342280, 01-9781956. Email: palm@phuket.ksc.co.th

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. Tel: 09-8677969. Email: bangla_04@yahoo.com

PATONG BUSINESS

Bars, shops, rooms or combination of all three for sale or lease. Only 300 meters to beach. 7,000 baht/month. Tel: 07-2738944. Email: thesonapt_2536@hotmail.com

PRIME LOCATION

Shop in prime location for sale. Build your future with your own shop. For further information, please visit our website at: www.rangrong.com or call Tel: 01-6893194. Email: 2810@mail.austria.com

FOR SALE

Nice bar and restaurant in Rawai, good location. Tel: 06-2810205.

LADIES' FASHION

Shop with aircon for rent in good location in Phuket City. All stock and furnishings can be bought. 120,000 baht for quick completion. Tel: 07-2801089, 07-8919614. Email: ornuntanut1@yahoo.com

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

ASK KHUN WANIDA "MOMMA DUCK"

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



Tout, Trader & Trumpet



GUESTHOUSE FOR SALE

12-room guesthouse, overlooking large lake and private swimming pool, located near Loch Palm Golf Course, for sale or rent. 10-15 years contract. Also, 9 rai for sale with water and pool. Tel: 06-9757268.

OFFICE FOR RENT

Fisherman Way Business Center office for rent. 6m x 10m, with aircon and 3 telephone numbers. Tel: 076-381181, 076-381189.

SHARE FOR SALE

Share in bar/restaurant for sale. Please call for more information. Tel: 06-2814897.

BAR IN KAMALA

Good, fully equipped bar in Kamala available. Complete with long lease, accommodation, pool table and lovely staff. Email: ehoi_2u@hotmail.com

SURIN BEACH

Shop for rent at a prime location at Surin Beach. Contact Khun Tud. Tel: 01-7978952 or 01-7977624. Email: susieyoga@hotmail.com

INVESTMENT

required. Exciting project in Rawai: 4 rai on the beach needs 3.5-million-baht investment. Serious individuals only please. Contact for more info. Tel: 06-1010477. Email: mhorak72@yahoo.com

PRODUCTIONS

Phuket Production, the best and biggest digital video studio in Phuket City. Tel: 09-4745761.

RESORT FOR SALE

Koh Samui beachfront resort for sale. Comprises 25 bungalows and pool. For more information, please see our website at: www.phuketbooking.net/real_estate

GERMAN RESTAURANT

A well-established German restaurant with firm clientele at the best location now offered for sale. Please see our website at: www.phuketcon.com/lomarest/sale/english Tel: 076-280455, 01-2738160. Email: ppe@loxinfo.co.th

PHANG NGA

3-story, 14-room guesthouse is for sale. Convenient for James Bond Island, banks, market, restaurants and bus station, and popular with both guests and guidebooks. Clean, aircon, fully furnished. Tel: 07-6411963.

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.phuketdir.com/expressvisaextension

INTERNET

unplugged. GPRS is the most cost-effective way to access the Internet almost anywhere in Thailand. Please contact us for more info and a demo. Tel: 01-8957727. Email: info@axiominvestments.com

SEA CANOE ORIGINAL

Special promotion for Thais and residents from now to July 2004. Day trip: 1,500 baht/adult; 750 baht/child. Transfer excluded. Please contact for more information and for reservations. Tel: 076-212172.

Computers

COMPUTER FOR SALE

Desktop computer with Windows XP Pro, printer, Web cam. Only 10,000 baht. Please contact for more details. Tel: 09-4729740.

COMPUTER

and monitor for sale. Intel Pentium III (666 MHz), 256 MB RAM, 3GB HDD, NVIDIA TNT2 Pro graphics card, Traxdata CDRW 2260 CD burner, 24x, 2x, 4x, CD ROM (40x), Windows XP (German or English), 19" monitor. All for 9,999 baht. Email: peter@phuketinternet.co.th

COMPUTER 4 SALE

PC for sale. 800MHz CPU, 520MB RAM, 20GB hard disk, 14" monitor. 10,000 baht. Tel: 06-2830812.

Lost & Found

CONTACT DETAILS

I am looking to contact Saranchana Hannon, also known as Saranchana Antil. Please write to Karl O'Connor 4/620 Mt Eden Rd, Mt Eden, Auckland, New Zealand. Tel: 09-3567370, 02-11821886. Email: christinat2@hotmail.com

Personal Services

ATSUMI HEALING

Fasting & detoxing, yoga & meditation, to clean up your health, get back into shape and lose a kilo a day. Discover your true nature. Call to: 01-2720571. For further details, please see our website at: www.atsumihealing.com

LEARN THAI AT HOME

From easy conversation to far more advanced learning. Coursework, cassettes and home-study materials provided by Joy, a charming Thai lady and ready to help. Or teach English to your girlfriend. Please contact for a chat. Tel: 01-7971497. Email: churee77@hotmail.com

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

In the global workplace, English-language skills are required for success. This book, *The Tools of HER Trade*, serves the student as a reader and studies image management, time management and basic business communications at the same time – in easy English. Email: carbeengruncle@yahoo.co.uk. For further details, please see our website at: www.carbeengruncle.com

COMPUTER REPAIRS

New and used sales. Tuition. Call-out service by English technician. Tel: 09-4735080.

COMPUTER LESSONS

by an English teacher at your home for just 500 baht/hour. Tel: 09-4735080.

Personal Services Wanted

TRANSLATION

wanted. We need to have our website translated into Chinese, Japanese, Malaysian, Thai, French and Italian. You must be a native speaker of the language. Tel: 076-346142, 01-7881466. Email: richard_melen@hotmail.com

ASSISTANCE NEEDED

Deaf man needs a lady to take care of phone calls, as I can't hear the phone. Must speak and write English. Email: kris@csloxinfo.com

Personals

BACKGAMMON

players wanted for some exciting games. Please call or fax for more details. Tel: 076-386113 or 01-577-8443. Fax: 076-386114.

WISH TO MEET

kind man. I am a Thai woman, 43, who is sincere and honest. I wish to meet a Caucasian man, 50 up. Maybe we can wipe away our tears together and someday erase the pain. Tel: 09-7242186. Email: p965@hotmail.com

LONELY DOC

52-year-old Swedish medical doctor, divorced, romantic, honest, decent and financially stable is looking for an honest, attractive Thai lady. Email: ysabba@hotmail.com

EMAIL HANDSOME

farang. Thai ladies, you can receive and send hundreds of emails to and from handsome farang all over the world, after joining for free. Email: thailovehearts@hotmail.com

LOVE, LOVE, LOVE

The greatest thing you ever learn is just to love and be loved in return. French gentleman living in Canada, 39 years old, 1.85m, 80kg, is looking for a romantic, well-educated and nice Asian dreamgirl who wishes that a man will discover her soul and personality hidden behind her great beauty. Email: neptune1964@hotmail.com

SEEKING GUIDE

I am traveling to Phuket in June and I have never been there. I am looking for what to do and where to go. Are there any fun and sweet girls out there who can lead me in the right direction? Email: jakegillis@hotmail.com

THAI GIRL PENPAL

wanted. Hi, my name is John. I live in Australia and am just looking for a penpal for a possible future relationship. Email: jlendis65@hotmail.com

NICE GENTLEMAN

Seeks a pretty, warm and smart lady with whom he can feel happy and enjoy the good things in life. You will find me a sincere, friendly and educated man who has nice looks and can take good care of the right lady. Email: gary8lw@yahoo.com

NEED LADY FRIEND

I retired early and divide my time between Sydney and Phuket, and am looking for a female companion to be with while I am in Phuket. I will arrive at the end of May for a 3-month stay. If you are single, speak some English, able to take care of me, and are a good housekeeper, please email: dr_alfred33@yahoo.com.au

A FEMALE TO GUIDE

me. I am a photographer, single, and looking for a nice woman to guide me as my companion on my visit to Thailand in June. I am looking for an intelligent woman who likes to talk and is interested in art and architecture. Email: fv62@hotmail.com

WANT 2 MEET LOCALS

Would like to meet girls for friendship, fun and going out. Email to: phuket_blonde@yahoo.co.uk

LOOKING 4 SOMEONE

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PROFESSIONAL LADY

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