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Rawai Beach vendors evicted



ALL GONE: The Rawai shore has been cleared of shops. Below, an excavator assists the eviction.

By Siripansa Somboon

RAWAI: Provincial officials led by Phuket Governor Udomsak Usawarangkura evicted some 20 stall owners from the Rawai beachfront on July 2 in a swift conclusion to a long-drawn-out battle to clean up the view.

Using an excavator, the eviction crew took a matter of hours to clear the illegal shops, in stark contrast with almost two years of promises by the Rawai Tambon Administration Organization (*OrBorTor*) to clear away the ramshackle structures.

After workers cleaned away the debris, it was as if the restaurants and other small businesses had never been there.

One business – the popular Nikita Bar – was allowed to stay. Arun Soros, Chairman of the Rawai *OrBorTor*, told the *Gazette* that it, too, would have



to be demolished soon, though he could not give a date. The owners of Nikita declined to comment.

Nikita's did not escape entirely unscathed. Part of its roof was demolished because it was overhanging the road.

Fourteen Rawai families were allowed to re-establish their

businesses in a special area next to the Rawai *OrBorTor* offices, at the southwestern end of the beach.

K. Arun said that all the people evicted had expected it to happen for a long time, and there had been no protests, not even from the operations that were closed for good.

Police kill '50-hit' gunman in shoot-out

By Gategeo Phetsawang

TRANG: The fugitive ex-police-man wanted in connection with the murders of Prasert and Thavorn Trairat, the parents of Thepkasattri Mayor Prasong Trairat, was killed by police in Trang early on July 1 after a high-speed chase during which a grenade was thrown, followed by a 12-hour manhunt in a forest and a final gun battle.

Police, who have been searching for more than a year for former Pol Sgt Maj Chalaw Ramduang, had a lucky break when he was identified as the hitman in another murder in his home province of Phatthalung on June 29.

Knowing that he had formerly served at the Sikow District Police Station in Trang, and reasoning that he might feel at home there, police kept a look-out for him and spotted him early evening on June 30 in a car with four other people, one of them a woman.

Two police pickup trucks carrying 10 officers chased the car for 30 kilometers, during which Chalaw dropped a grenade in front of the road, peppering the second pickup with shrapnel but failing to stop it.

Chalaw and his companions also fired at the police with handguns and an M-16 automatic rifle, but also without effect.

Eventually Chalaw and his confederates stopped the car and ran into a nearby forest, each in a different direction.

Some 100 police descended on the forest to find the fugitives. At 5:30 the following morning, Chalaw was finally
Continued on page 2



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Hired assassin killed during battle with guns and grenades

From Page 1

found and a gun battle ensued during which he was shot dead.

The others escaped. Among them, said Pol Col Kosol Pring-kongphon, a Deputy Commander of Trang Provincial Police, was Anant Noojim, another gunman who is wanted in connection with four murders in Trang. The woman in the car was identified as his wife. They and the other two are still at large.

Chalaw was wanted for eight murders in Trang and "other cases" in Phuket and Phatthalung, Col Kosol said.

Another senior police officer, speaking on condition of anonymity, told the *Gazette* that Chalaw was thought to have committed as many as 50 "hits".

Prasert and Thavorn Trairat were gunned down in their Thepkrasattri shophouse home on May 5 last year. Suchart Manee-suwan, arrested soon afterwards, confessed to playing a role in the murder, saying that he had pointed out the victims to the gunman, whom he identified as Chalaw.

Bureaucrats Sompong and Wipa Jantong were arrested five months later on charges of ordering the hit, but police have since said that they believe the couple are innocent. Despite this, the Jantongs are still on trial.

All the members of the police team investigating the murder were transferred from Phuket in April for "conducting a dishonest investigation".

Pol Col Ronapong Saikaew, Superintendent of Investigation for Provincial Police Region 8, said that police know who hired Chalaw to murder the elderly couple, but do not have enough evidence to make an arrest.



The Dusit Laguna Resort Hotel has been named as Phuket first 'official' five-star hostelry.

Seven hotels receive official star ratings

By Anongnat Sartpisut

PHUKET: Seven Phuket hotels have been assigned star ratings under a new classification system set up jointly by the Thai Hotels Association (THA), the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and Association of Thai Travel Agents (ATTA).

The announcement was made by the new certifying body, the zippily-named Foundation of Standards and Human Resource Development in the Service and Tourism Industry, which named the seven as:

5-star: Dusit Laguna Resort Hotel;

4-star: Amari Coral Beach Resort, Cape Panwa Hotel, Club Andaman Beach Resort and Holiday Inn Resort Phuket;

3-star: Best Western Ocean Phuket Resort and South Sea Resort.

Four other Phuket hotels applied for certification but fell short of the criteria. They were not named.

Currently, there are 549 TAT-registered hotels and guesthouses in Phuket, comprising 31,302 rooms. Under the system, hotels choose the star ranking they wish to apply for after considering the criteria that need to be met. They are then inspected to see if they meet all the requirements.

Hotels failing to meet all the criteria, many of which are subjective, have up to 180 days to make the necessary upgrades and apply for re-inspection.

Sithi Tandavanitj, President of the THA and owner of The Metropole hotel in Phuket City, said, "In this first certification round, only 84 of 110 hotels [countrywide] were certified."

The inspection committee reporting to the Foundation comprises 10 people from tourism-related government agencies and and private-sector groups.

Mana Chobtam, Director of TAT's Product Promotion Department, said, "In the past, the hotels and tour operators identi-

fied the star-ratings of hotels by room rates alone [for lack of a better option]. There was no organization to rate Thai hotels.

"There are 3,600 hotels in Thailand, comprising 300,000 rooms. Our Thai hotels and facilities and standards are as good as those in Europe and the US, but we lacked a good system to organize them," K. Mana said.

"In the future, it is possible that [Thai] state agencies, which spend an estimated 2 million baht a year on hotel functions, will use only hotels that have been assigned ratings," he said.

Dr Baramee Ruengkanjana-set, who helped draft the standards, explained that they were broken down into three sections: construction and facilities; maintenance; and service standards.

He said that applicant hotels that were rejected failed to meet the standards only in terms of maintenance.

"The nationwide hotel rating system is part of the government's policy to have Thailand become a 'world-class destination' by 2008," he said.

Once issued, star ratings remain valid for three years, though subject to unannounced spot checks, he explained.

Frenchman drowns at Karon Beach

KARON: A 45-year-old Frenchman drowned while swimming in heavy seas off Karon Beach on the morning of July 5.

Police named the victim as Michael Marcorn.

Boona Sritong, Mr Marcorn's girlfriend, told police that she had warned him that the waves looked too heavy to swim in but that he ignored her warning.

Pol Maj Anek Mongkol of Chalong Police Station told the *Gazette* that K. Boona reported that she saw Mr Marcorn getting into difficulties around 11 am.

She raised the alarm but Mr Marcorn drowned. His body came ashore and was found by a beach guard 30 minutes later.

Duo arrested for multiple snatching

PHUKET CITY: Two young men were arrested on July 6 on charges of snatching and receiving stolen property.

Police said that Sampan "Ab" Pantunit, 18, and Prakij "Tum" Nariwandee, 20, confessed to snatching a variety of items from their victims but denied receiving stolen goods.

Also arrested was the unnamed owner of the SR mobile phone shop on Damrong Rd, who was charged with receiving stolen goods.

Pol Capt Akanit Danpitak-sat, Sub-Inspector of Investigation at Phuket City Police Station, told the *Gazette* that the two youngsters explained that they would hang around Khao Rang or Soi Tonpho in the Saphan Hin area, waiting for victims.

After robbing them, they would sell the stolen items at the SR shop.

Between them, they admitted a total of 12 robberies in June and this month. Their haul included 14 mobile phones, a gold necklace, 1,600 baht in cash and a Honda Sonic motorbike.

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Massive operation to quash teen violence

By Gategaeo Phetsawang

PHUKET CITY: Police arrested 100 youngsters from July 2 to 4 in a citywide crackdown on teenage gang violence and law-breaking.

More than 200 officers from the Phuket City police and Bangkok-based Patrol and Special Operations Division set up some 20 checkpoints around the city, Pol Col Paween Pongsirin, Superintendent of Phuket City Police Station, told the *Gazette*.

"We have received complaints about these problems," Col Paween said, explaining that teenage gangs tend to gather in Phuket City and create problems for other people by fighting and

by racing motorbikes, sometimes resulting in innocent people being injured or killed.

Favorite gathering places for the gangs, he said, include Saphan Hin, Suan Luang Park, Nawamindra Memorial Square, Khao Rang, Thepkasattri Rd and near Phuket Rajabhat University.

The gangs, each consisting of 20 to 30 members, come from a variety of places across the island, including Soi Tonpho in the Saphan Hin area, Baan Lipon, Bang Khontee, Saiyuan and other parts of Rawai, as well as Chalong and Kathu.

"When they meet another gang, they fight using guns, knives, brass knuckles and other weapons," Col Paween said.

"They also like to race on public roads, breaking the traffic laws."

Fifty three youngsters were arrested for unlawful assembly and 22 for conspiracy to commit assault.

In addition, nine were arrested for road racing, three for drunk driving, four for careless driving, eight for glue sniffing and one for possession of *ya bah* (methamphetamine).

The parents of all the teenagers were informed about the arrests and warned that repeat offenses would result in the parents, too, being prosecuted for failure to control their children.

Col Paween said that the drive to suppress teenage gangs will continue.

Suan Luang closed to cut crime

PHUKET CITY: In an effort to reduce crime, Rama IX Park (Suan Luang) is now closed to traffic daily from 4 pm to 7 pm and from 10 pm to 7 am the following day. The new hours, which went into effect July 1, are intended to reduce youth crime in the area.

Pol Col Kokiat Wongvorachart, a Deputy Commander of the Phuket Provincial Police, said on July 1 that Suan Luang is one of four "high risk" areas in the city that will be the focus of increased law enforcement efforts.

The other three are Saphan Hin, Nawamindra Memorial Square and the Rang Hill area. There have been nine cases of violent crimes and robberies in these areas in the first half of 2004, he told the *Gazette*.

For years the park has been open overnight so that residents who live in houses to the west of it can drive through the park to their homes from Chao Fa Rd.

Access to Saphan Hin, long the epicenter of the island's youth

gang activity, will also be restricted once a gate near the swimming pool is completed.

The gate will be closed from about 10 pm until the following morning, forcing all traffic to enter through a single manned checkpoint near the roundabout.

Special units, including a task force from the Bangkok-based Patrol and Special Operations Division, will be assigned to police Saphan Hin.

"The Phuket Provincial Administration Organization is funding the construction of the Saphan Hin checkpoint in order to reduce crime there.

"We already have special police task forces patrolling the area, and we feel the checkpoint will provide a long-term solution," Col Kokiat said.

The new gate will be left open late on evenings when the area hosts civic activities, and extra police will be assigned to the area on those evenings.

The police presence will

also be increased in the Rang Hill area.

"The Nawamindra Memorial Square, in the heart of Phuket City, is already manned by police," Col Kokiat added, "but the officers there need to work more effectively."

— Anongnat Sartpisut

Phuket City gets a mayor at last

By Sangkhae Leelanapaporn

PHUKET CITY: Nearly three months after the Phuket City Municipal elections, Somjai Suwannasuppana of the *Khon Noom* (Young Turks) Party on July 2 received official confirmation that she is Phuket City's first directly-elected mayor.

In the April 4 election, K. Somjai – who was deputy to the previous mayor, Phummisak Hongsyok – polled 11,986 votes, defeating Prawat Suwannadithakul, of the *Chao Baan Sarng San* (Creative) Party, by a scant 1,406 votes.

Phuket City voters also elected six councilors to each of four constituencies, with *Khon Noom* taking 14 of the 24 seats. The other 10 positions went to *Chao Baan Sarng San*.

Dr Prapa Kayee, Chairperson of the Phuket Election Commission (PEC), told the *Gazette* on July 2, "The Central Election Commission [CEC – in Bangkok] approved the election re-



After a wait of almost three months, Somjai Suwannasuppana can at last be called 'Mayor Somjai'.

sults last Saturday [June 26] but we received the official notice just yesterday [July 1]."

Mayor Somjai and her councilors celebrated the confirmation of their election by riding around Phuket City on the back of a six-wheel truck, thanking people on the street for voting them into power.

On July 6, her first official day at work, she told the *Gazette* that she was delighted with the CEC's ruling that she had won the election fairly, even if it had taken some time.

She added, "Talking to people while I was campaigning, I learned about many problems, which I intend to solve.

"I am determined to do my best and I thank all those [voters] who placed their trust in me and my team," she added.

Investigators check 400 rai of land

PHUKET CITY: Police from Bangkok and Phuket, and officials from the Land Development Department (LDD) on July 6 examined 14 plots of land on Punturat Hill, along the bypass road that are suspected of having illegal land documents.

The 14 plots, totalling about 400 rai, purportedly belong to members of the Srisansuchart family and their associates. The papers name the owners as Sombat, Boonkeng and Saovapa Srisansuchart, along with Li Rakchart, Sawai Keawtatip, Pradit Vinyapradit, Saovane

Sae-tan and Sathit Jiraseree-amornkun.

Police and LDD officials first checked the land papers, over which doubts have been raised because some of the land appears to be forestry land, some is earmarked for *SorPorKor* 4-01 tenancy and some on slopes of more than 35° from horizontal, which by law is state land.

Later, the investigators surveyed the land using GPS equipment and confirmed that three points at which readings were taken were in national forest.

Viboon Suksomsonk, the

LDD's Chief Surveyor, said, "From the initial checks we know that a lot of this land is forestry land." The survey was due to continue the following day.

Pol Col Koranwat Parnprapawatt, of the Crime Suppression Division, said that once a full survey is completed, the evidence will be handed over to the LDD for any fake deeds to be canceled.

Charges will then be brought against the supposed landowners and any Land Officials found to have been involved in issuing illegal land papers.

— Kamol Pirat

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Queer News

Mia Noi Madness

SURAT THANI: A mentally disturbed pig farmer threatened to hang himself and his baby daughter from a flagpole if the police did not comply with his demands to be locked up in prison. It was later learned that the crazed man was desperate to find a retreat from his wife and mistress.

The incident occurred just before 8 am on June 16 in front of the Baan Nasarn Police Station, where police were preparing to hoist the flag as part of their daily morning ritual.

The deranged man, identified as 43-year-old Preecha Golaga, put his one-year-old baby daughter "Nok" in a headlock, placed a nylon rope around her neck and threatened to hang her – and then himself – if police did not lock him up for 18 months. He specified Nakhon Sri Thammarat Prison as his penal facility of choice.

After a 30-minute standoff, police negotiators were able to calm him down, with his daughter suffering no more than slight abrasions to her neck.

K. Preecha had come to the police station earlier, claiming that "someone was out to get him". Suspecting that the man may have been driven to his bizarre behavior by illicit drugs, police contacted his first wife, or *mia*, Wantana Golaga. She told them that the man had no history of drug abuse.

"In fact, he is a pig farmer – and a rich one, too," she told them.

Hearing this, the police decided not to arrest Preecha and instead opted to send him for an examination at Suan Saranrom, the local mental hospital. He later told the officers that all he really wanted was an extended vacation from his two *mia*, who had apparently driven him crazy.

Once at Suan Saranrom, Preecha caused yet another commotion when he again took his daughter hostage and demanded to be incarcerated. It was not reported why a man in his condition was allowed access to a toddler whom he had already injured.

The medical staff there eventually calmed him down, and at last report were still monitoring his condition. It was not reported whether Preecha ever got his wish of being sent to Nakhon Sri Thammarat Prison, which is home to some of the South's most dangerous criminals – but mercifully free of Preecha's two wives.

Source: Daily News

Dying for some peace and quiet

CHACHOENGSAO: Efforts to curb noise pollution received a major setback on June 6 when a man was shot to death for turning down the car stereo of some teenagers at a 7-Eleven store in Khao Din district.

Twenty-one year old Wisaruj Yoohan-ngoh and friends were traveling from Bangkok to Ranong when their tour bus pulled up for a rest at the roadside convenience store.

K. Wisaruj took exception to the loud noise coming from a pickup truck filled with teenagers in the store's car park. He went over to the vehicle, reached in, and turned down the volume. Little did he know that the blaring music was among the last sounds he would ever hear.

The teenagers in the car took exception to K. Wisaruj's brazen act. A quarrel ensued and quickly turned violent. After an exchange of punches and a warning shot with a 9mm gun that was unsuccessful in getting K. Wisarut to stop fighting, one of the youths took aim and fired, hitting K. Wisaruj five times. He died en route to hospital.

Three girls who were traveling with the victim were hit by stray bullets before the teenagers sped off in the direction of Pattaya, police said.

Source: Thai Rath

PIPE DREAM

The idea of constructing an oil pipeline connecting Thailand's Andaman coast and The Gulf of Thailand has been around since the late 1980s, when it was first proposed by the late Prime Minister, Chatichai Choonhavan.

The plan, which now goes by the name "Strategic Energy Landbridge", appears set to move forward. The government says it will help in the development of Thailand as a regional energy hub and reduce capital losses to Singapore, which has used its strategic location on the Straits of Malacca to develop itself as the regional center of the petrochemical trade.

The 240-kilometer pipeline and refinery project will lessen Thailand's reliance on Singapore and offer oil-hungry countries in East Asia a faster route for sourcing Middle East crude oil, the government says.

On the Gulf side, the proposed site for the pipeline's eastern terminus and a large oil refinery complex has been welcomed by most residents in Nakhon Sri Thammarat's Srichon District.

But the question of where to site the Andaman Sea end of the project has been far more controversial.

It now appears that the Ministry of Energy (MoE) has decided upon the Tab Lamu area of Phang Nga for construction of the tank farm to store crude oil. A mooring platform, where the tankers will discharge crude oil, will be constructed about five kilometers offshore (see diagram).

In a July 2 meeting at Phang Nga Provincial Hall, about 40 government officials and private sector representatives from the Phuket-Krabi-Phang Nga economic cluster met with MoE Deputy Permanent Secretary Dr Pornchai Rujiprapa.

They came to learn more about the project and voice their concerns over the project's potential impact on the environment and the tourism industry. The information collected by Dr Pornchai is to be presented to the Cabinet at the upcoming "mobile Cabinet meeting" in Surat Thani.

Dr Pornchai told attendees

A plan to build an oil pipeline from Tab Lamu in Phang Nga to a refinery close to Surat Thani makes good economic sense. But it has also sent a frisson of horror up the backs of environmentalists and tourism industry figures in nearby Khao Lak.

The *Gazette's* Dhirarat Boonkongsan and Gategaeo Phetsawang attended a recent hearing on the project. Here they examine the pros and cons of the proposal.



The tourism industry and environmentalists worry that sites as far away as the Similans (above) could be ruined by an oil spill.

that the project is needed because most of the country's oil is sourced through Singapore, where market prices are set.

"We are now losing about 12 billion baht a year to Singapore and global prices for oil have [almost] doubled over the past five years [making the problem worse]," he said.


"The money we are losing could be used to do many things for Thailand, so we must become more self-reliant in meeting our energy needs," he said.


Nobody argues the need for Thailand to improve its position in the global oil market, but many fear the impact the project may have on the environment – and on the crucial tourism industry.

Thawat Niranatwarodom of the Phang Nga Tourism Association said the project threatened far more than just those involved in the tourism business.

"Actually we are looking into this project in the name of Thai people on the whole.

"There is still no clear information about what the environmental effects of the project will be. Khao Lak is only 20 kilometers to the north, and the offshore platform [where tankers will pump out crude oil] could affect the Similan islands. Tankers could run aground, their props destroying coral. What about the sea turtles? They will probably disappear from the area [if the project is built].






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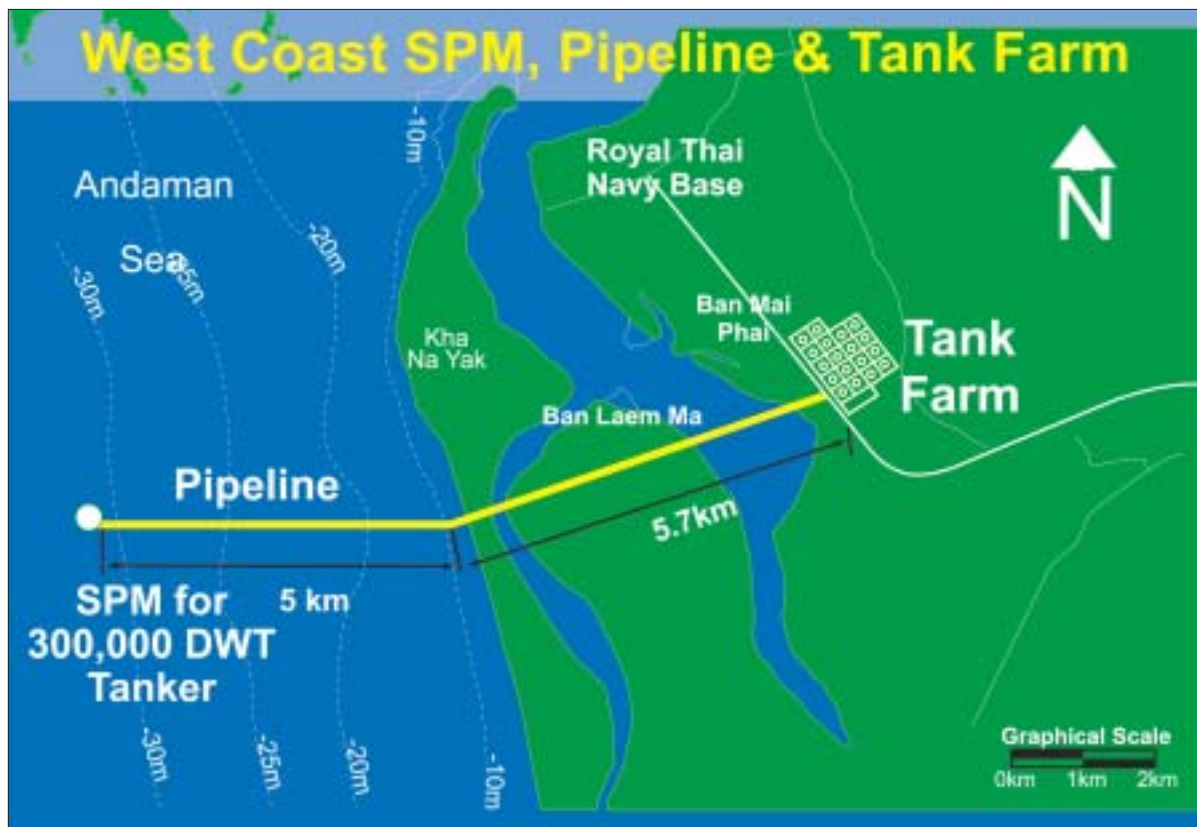
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OR ECO-NIGHTMARE?



Map of the Andaman Sea end of the planned pipeline at Tab Lamu and the offshore facility where tankers would discharge their load (SPM, or 'single point mooring').

"The benefits from this project will not accrue to the people of Phang Nga either. Those people who will come to invest and trade in the oil business may stay in our hotels or resorts, but that's not what we want. Our visitors should be people who want to appreciate our natural resources. If those resources are damaged, what will we have left?"

Suwalai Pinpradab, Director of the Tourism Authority of Thailand's Region 4 office, also expressed concern about the impact on the region's beaches.

"If tourists know that there will be such a project, they may choose another destination. Eight million tourists visit these three provinces each year, generating 7 billion baht in foreign income annually. We would like to maintain this," she said.

Amarit Siripornjutakun, Vice-President of the Krabi Tourism Association, said the 30 billion baht earmarked for the project would be better spent on solving long-standing environmental and infrastructure problems, such as waste disposal.

"Oil slicks and ships will damage our marine resources.

The government has other options when it comes to solving energy needs. The Phuket-Krabi-Phang Nga cluster development plan is based on eco-tourism. I'd like to see alternative energies such as solar energy instead," he said.

"Krabi has palm oil and bio-diesel. Supporting these alternatives through research funding is another way to solve our energy problems," he said.

Sutham Sutharatpong, head of Phang Nga's Natural Resources and Environment Office, said it was difficult to inform the public about the project when the pipeline route has not yet been finalized. He called for public hearings on the issue.

Comments by Jamrong Sukawat, Director of the Khao Lam Pee-Haad Tai Muang National Park, indicate that it is not just the public who feel left out of the loop.

He said that he had received very little information about the project and that the July 2 meeting was the first he had been invited to – even though the pipeline would pass right through the park that he administers.

"I am worried about the ef-

fect the pipeline will have on the National Park and tourism. We should be getting clear information about the effects this project will have and how [environmental] problems will be dealt with," he said.

The MoE's Dr Pornchai tried to calm fears related to the project's environmental impact on the park, saying that the pipeline would be buried at least a meter below the ground and that the Parks Department would retain the authority to do whatever is necessary to protect the park.

Dr Pornchai referred to a section of a project summary re-

port issued by the Petroleum Authority of Thailand as to why the western terminus should be at Tab Lamu.

Two other locations that had been considered were unsuitable, the report stated. Although Krabi's Baan Klong Sai was deemed appropriate from an engineering standpoint, it is an important area for tourism and is too close to the Royal Palace there.

The other option, Khao Lak, was determined to have too many "natural resources" and was home to Phang Nga's most beautiful scenery.

But the Tab Lamu area, the report stated simply, has no "marine resources" and its only drawback was listed as "variations in weather during some seasons".

Kanjana Adulyanukosol, head of the Endangered Species Conservation Division at the Phuket Marine Biological Center, refutes the argument that Tab Lamu is devoid of marine resources.

She should know, as she was one of the researchers who provided the information that was supposedly used in the MoE report.



'We are now losing about 12 billion baht a year to Singapore.'

– Energy Ministry Deputy Permanent Secretary Dr Pornchai Rujiprapa.

She told the *Gazette*, "There are plenty of marine natural resources in the area, such as sea turtles, dugong, dolphins and nice coral at [nearby] Koh Ka and Koh Pa.

"The Ministry of Energy asked us to do a survey and we submitted our results to them about six months ago," she said.

While she thinks the project will have an impact on the environment, K. Kanjana doesn't see oil spills as the greatest peril.

"Actually, oil spills are not the biggest threat. The real damage will come from all the sediment that is stirred up by dredging and from the construction of the pier," she said.

She noted, however, that those involved in Khao Lak's poorly regulated tourism industry were hardly in a position to take on the mantle of environmental advocates.

"Damage continues in Khao Lak and nobody seems to care. There don't seem to be any NGOs or other groups raising a voice over the construction of ugly buildings there," she noted.

Dr Pornchai told the attendees that the pipeline would actually improve tourism in the region. He said it is just the type of infrastructure development project that is required to make tourism sustainable and could even help to make tourism less seasonal by attracting businessmen year round.

He added that the government had taken the environmental effects into account, which was why it had decided not to build a refinery on the west coast.

He cited petrochemical projects in Alexandria, Egypt – home of the pyramids – and the North Sea as evidence that they can be developed with limited impact on tourism.

He added that technology employed by the petrochemical industry and the value of the oil itself would virtually ensure there would be no accidental releases into the environment.

If there were an oil spill, the platform's offshore location would minimize any impact, he said. The oil that washes up on local beaches comes from fishing vessels pumping their bilges – not tankers, he said.

"It is necessary for Thailand to have both energy and good tourism management. If we have a lot of tourists, but no electricity or gasoline for our cars, what will happen to tourism then?" he asked.

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Image of a family walking on a beach.

By Dhirarat Boonkongsan

A one-stop pet shop

Phuket's now has its first pet supply emporium. Located on Chao Fa West Rd in Tambon Wichit, the ShamuShamu shop stocks just about everything one could possibly need, or imagine needing, for the care and feeding of dogs, cats, gerbils, birds or tropical fish.

The store is the brainchild of Kajornwan Chueng, who opened the original ShamuShamu shop in the Satorn area of her native Bangkok about two years ago after returning to Thailand from the US, where she had studied computer science.

K. Kajornwan has put those computer skills to good use, setting up her website, shamushamu.com, as well as publishing an attractive quarterly magazine and catalog entitled *Sh@mu*. Customers shopping online or through the catalog can choose from an extensive (some would say dumbfounding) array of pet care items and accessories.

For reasons not clearly elaborated, the shop name was inspired by Shamu the killer whale, the first captive orca to fire the public imagination back in the 1960s during its live performances at SeaWorld in San Diego.

Although you won't find whale-sized toothbrushes at ShamuShamu, the selection is impressive nonetheless. Some

might argue that it's downright extravagant, given the plight of the island's stray dogs, feral cats and homeless humans.

There are dog collars and leads of every possible size and description, brushes, combs, clippers, flea and tick control products, books and videos on just about every breed of dog and cat, shampoos, conditioners, toys, ear cleaners, powders, vitamins and other food supplements, internationally-approved cages, clothing, litter boxes, ergonomically designed pooper-scoopers and cat scratching posts.

And that's just the start. The

items fill the 110-page *Sh@mu* magazine and anything not in stock can be ordered from the US suppliers that provide most of the shop's products.

K. Kajornwan told the *Gazette* she was inspired to launch a website and catalog when she saw how popular such services were in the US, although she now admits that most Thais are less willing to shop for pet products online than their American counterparts. Most of her products are sold for cash right at the shop, she said.

She also admits that she caters to a niche market, describ-



PURELY FOR PETS: Inspired to launch a website and catalog dedicated to pet supplies after seeing how popular such services were in the US, Kajornwan Chueng (left) recently opened her ShamuShamu pet emporium in Phuket (above) on Chao Fa West Rd, in Tambon Wichit.

ing her customers as people who raise their pets inside the home and treat them like their children. And all parents want the best for their children, even if the "children" do happen to have four legs.

Citing the trade in animals at Bangkok's infamous Chatuchak Weekend Market as one example, K. Kajornwan has harsh words for people who abuse dogs for profit.

"Those shops don't know how to keep bitches healthy. They keep them pregnant all the time without rest, and they don't use any proper selection criteria

in breeding," she said.

For those who want to learn how to do it right, the quarterly *Sh@mu* is more than just a catalog. Priced at 189 baht/year, the glossy publication has page after page of dog care tips and information about kennels that support humane breeding practices. In Phuket, the magazine is also available at popular book stores including Se-Ed, Dokya and Nai Inn for 35 baht an issue.

K. Kajornwan said 100 people had already taken out subscriptions in Phuket, which indicates that there is a healthy population of pet lovers here.

She said that buying in bulk keeps her prices low and that nobody can match her selection, which includes food bowls specifically designed to meet the feeding requirements of each breed, be it a flat-faced Persian cat or a long-eared basset hound that doesn't like to have its ears tied up above its head before dinner.

ShamuShamu is at 18/140 Moo 3, Chao Fa West Rd, Tambon Wichit, Muang District. Tel: 076-217-329; Website: www.shamushamu.com. The shop is open daily from 10 am to 9 pm, except Mondays.

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Builders opt out of dream project

Contractors are shying away from working with the government's *Ua Athorn* (We Pity You) housing program, which aims to build 600,000 homes for low-income people during its first five-year plan, from 2003-2007.

Ua Athorn homes, priced at between 250,000 and 390,000 baht, come in five styles and are aimed at first-home buyers. Repayment installments start at a low 1,000 baht a month.

Titanon Pibulnakarin, Deputy-Governor of the National Housing Authority, said that many contractors are no longer interested in bidding on *Ua Athorn* projects because rising steel and cement costs could cause them to lose money.

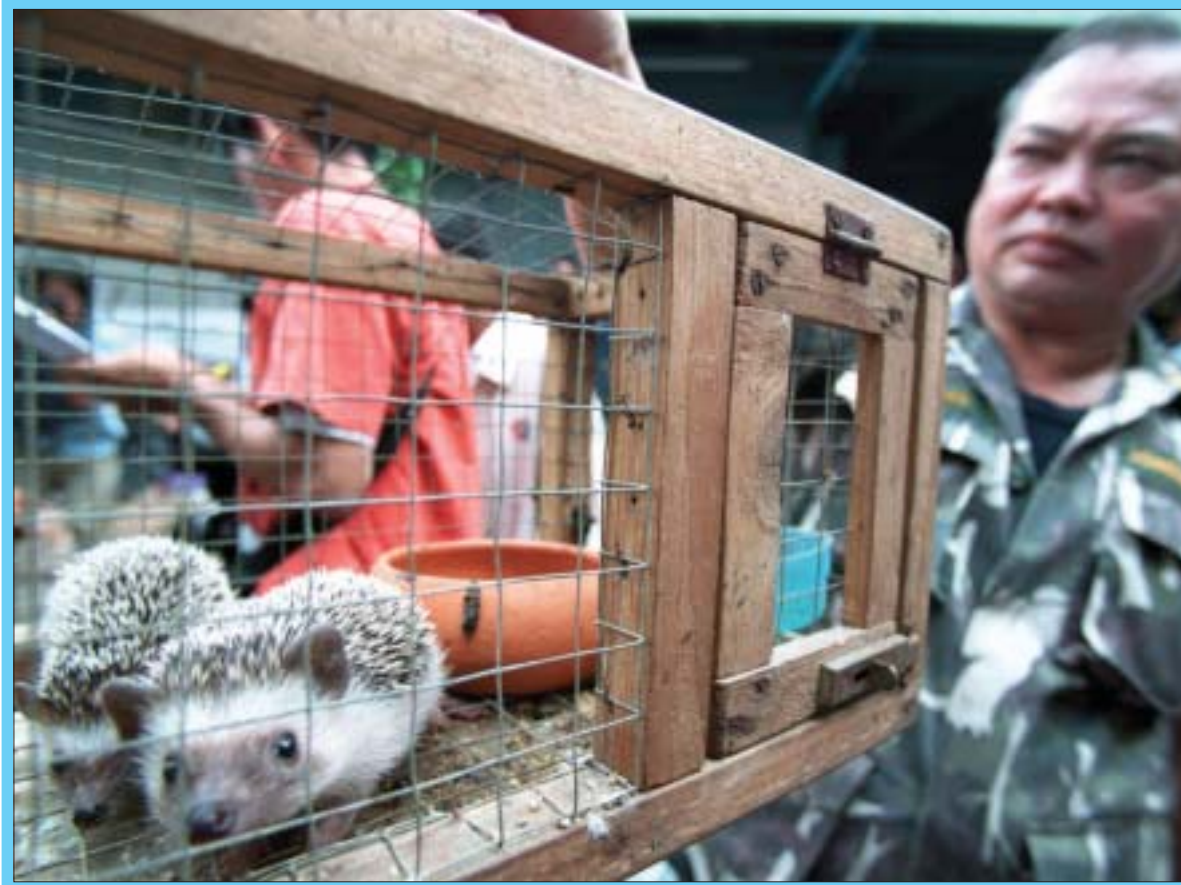
Of the 150,000 homes planned to be built under the *Ua Athorn* program, only the 477-unit Rangsit Khlong Sam project, in Bangkok, is complete and occupied.

A real downer: Rising sales of Alprazolam, a sedative more commonly known by its brand name Xanax, have prompted concerns that substance abusers may be using it as an alternative to more expensive illicit drugs.

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Secretary-General Dr Supachai Kunarattanapruk said that about 300 million tablets of Alprazolam were sold in Thailand last year at a cost of one to two baht each. Alprazolam purchase requires a prescription and selling it without a license is punishable by up to five years in jail, he said.

"Using it for a long period of time can induce strong addiction. It's also dangerous if users don't know about its effects or proper usage," Dr Supachai said.

Luckless lottery: The record 100-million-baht jackpot offered in the July 1 government lottery draw remains unclaimed. The prize was the largest ever offered



These two baby hedgehogs were among a number of protected wildlife species seized from pet shops at the infamous Chatuchak Market in Bangkok recently. The raid also netted 23 rare birds.

by the Government Lottery Office to punters in the two- and three-digit lottery, which comes with a "bonus" number giving them a chance to win the grand prize in the bi-monthly national lottery draw.

Only one ticket was sold with the serial and batch numbers matching the winning number. However, it was a 20-baht ticket, so the winner had to settle for 25 million baht. The 100-million-baht jackpot is reserved for a 100-baht ticket.

Drink your milk: A teacher and 32 kindergarten students in Samut Prakan required hospitalization after drinking a chocolate powdered drink laced with the insecticide Lannate. Twenty-two of the students required overnight hospital stays and two were placed in the intensive care unit.

After an inspection of the

brown-sugar factory from which the school ordered the powdered product turned up nothing suspicious, Samut Prakan Police Commander, Maj General Suriya Songmetta announced that the toxin must have been placed in the drink during or after the mixing stage.

Toxicity city: Despite campaigns for improved food safety over the past couple of years, only 553 out of 1,505 (37%) of fresh markets surveyed nationwide met food-safety standards set by the Public Health Ministry. The numbers are even worse in the capital, where only 12% passed the standards.

Implemented in 2002, the inspection program is part of the government policy to improve food safety in fresh markets. Randomly selected samples were tested for common contaminants

including borax, formalin, salicylic acid (an anti-fungal substance), and sodium formaldehyde (a bleaching agent).

Career opportunities: Burmese, Laotian and Cambodian workers who entered the country illegally are now allowed to register to work legally in six labor sectors: fishing and fishing-related industries, agriculture and livestock industries, rice mills, water transportation, construction, quarries and domestic work.

Employers can seek to hire them at district employment offices, where the workers must register and pay 1,900 baht for a medical checkup and health insurance. Employers who do not

register their foreign employees will face heavy fines, said Employment Department Director Juthathawat Intornsuksri.

Recycled wrappers: The FDA plans to investigate fast-food restaurants that wrap food in recycled paper for fear that the materials may not comply with Public Health Ministry standards.

The move follows a widely circulated email stating that a paper-recycling factory had been audited and found to be supplying many fast-food restaurants with food wrappers and boxes.

FDA regulations stipulate that recycled paper must comply with standards on chemical content and ability to resist melting when in contact with hot foods.

"The agency has received no complaints on the matter, but we decided to look into it anyway," said FDA Deputy Secretary-General Sathaporn Wongchareun.

Still bugged: The Thai Journalists Association (TJA) demanded that two microphones in the press room of the Information and Communications Technology Ministry (ICT) be removed.

Although the two microphones are allegedly intended to monitor acoustics in the connecting press-conference room, they could also be used to secretly listen to conversations in the press room. This violates the constitutionally guaranteed privacy of reporters, the TJA said.

Reporters on the ICT Ministry beat found the two microphones in the ceiling of the press room last month, prompting them to petition the TJA.

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

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On June 12, the Koh Samui Marine Department received a distress call from a fishing boat near Hin Bai Rock, off the coast of Koh Tao.

The crew of the boat reported seeing a dead diver floating on the sea, in full scuba gear, near the rock. By the time the Marine Police arrived, however, strong currents had apparently swept the corpse from sight.

A number of dive boats joined the search, but they were also unable to find the body, which has still not been retrieved.

The victim is thought to be American citizen Martin Huffman, an experienced diver who went missing while taking part in a highly technical rebreather training course.

With no body found, the exact cause of the death remains unclear.

However, with large numbers of divers and trainees plopping into the seas daily around Koh Tao, the number of accidents is on the increase.

Snorkelers in the increasingly less-than-crystal waters should therefore be aware that they may occasionally see more than just dead coral.

SAMUI may (or may not) be on its way to getting a second airport, but it looks as though there may soon be more aircraft circling in the skies above the island. The only difference? The biggest passenger many of them will be able to carry is about the size of a Barbie doll.

The aircraft are available at a unique new shop on the island, directly opposite the exit from the Tesco car park, selling radio-controlled models.

Weerayuth Herun, head of the Tourist Police in Samui (white shirt), started the shop with partner Pratak Wongprasert a few months ago.

Apart from models of fixed-wing airplanes and helicopters, they also sell model cars and boats.

These are powered by electric motors or miniature internal combustion engines running on nitro – the choice for top-fuel dragsters.

K. Weerayuth said that he hopes the shop will encourage young people to take up a nice hobby, rather than turning to drugs in efforts to "get high".

K. Pratak concurred, noting that there is a lack of hobbies available to Samui residents and that learning to fly a model plane correctly is an absorbing challenge.



Snuffed out: A man employed to drive one of those annoying sound trucks around Koh Samui was found shot dead in his vehicle after locals complained that the parked truck had been blaring out its message from a single spot, rather than spreading the misery around the island as one would expect it to do.

The truck, being used to tout the Chevrolet Road Show, was, somewhat confusingly, a red Nissan.

When police arrived to check it, they found the driver, Apisit Wangchimoa, slumped dead at the wheel. He had been shot six times with a 9mm handgun. Investigators estimated the murder had been committed between 2:30 pm and 3:30 pm on June 10.

Police later revealed that a jealous lover was behind the

shooting, thereby silencing rumors that a foreign resident had ordered the hit simply to get some peace and quiet.

FROM THE GULF OF THAILAND



By Commander Sammy Swan

Green Mango shooting: In another recent episode of violence on Samui, two brothers were involved in a shooting at Chaweng's popular Green Mango Nightclub.

Sompong Pregden and his older brother Samart, both from Surat Thani, were shot at the club. Sompong died instantly, but Samart survived the attack

and was rushed to the intensive care unit at Nathon Hospital.

The rumor mill quickly linked the shooting to troubles in

the Deep South, but these were quelled when police apprehended the killer and found out that the wife of one of the victims had been involved.

The motive, they said, may have been to claim life insurance – after the wife found out that her husband was having an affair. The story is expected to be made into a soap opera for national Thai television.

Surat Thani to Guangdong: Charter flights will soon be operating between Surat Thani and the southern Chinese province of Guangdong.

Local government officials and businesspeople have for some time been talking about increased tourism and trade links between the two regions, which they say would boost the economies of both.

On a visit to Surat Thani in early June, the Governor of Kwangtung first took a tour of fruit farms, and then made a trip

to Koh Samui to assess the tourist potential here.

Seafood has long been a major export from Surat Thani province, and the Chinese metropolis of Guangzhou (formerly Canton and capital of Guangdong) would also appear to be a good export market for Thai fish. Although Guangzhou started life as a fishing port, the waters nearby are now too polluted to sustain a fishing industry.

Increased Sino-Thai cooperation now appears to be a priority for many Southern Thai provinces, and Koh Samui is an important part of the marketing of Thai tourism to that country.

This has prompted fears amongst some Westerners – and hopes in others – that the sight of overweight, purple-faced Western alcoholics may soon be a thing of the past.

Tapee River expansion: The government recently started a project to expand the Tapee

River, which flows through Surat Thani, making it navigable by larger vessels.

Funded by a 10 million-baht budget, dredging and widening has started along a 30 kilometer stretch that links the sea with a number of inland ports and other locations.

The project will enlarge the main waterway to 60 meters wide and four meters deep, giving vessels access to five separate freight ports inland, thus facilitating faster distribution of products between the Gulf of Thailand and provinces on the Andaman Sea coast.

The main export that currently passes along the river is palm oil. The river carries more than 10 billion baht in trade annually, a large share of the region's total revenue.

Cdr Swan is a writer with Koh Samui's community magazine, which recently celebrated its second anniversary.

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This week



WELL DONE: Former Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tan Sri Musa Mitran (center) congratulates Dulwich International College roll of honor student Christopher Hourigan on a splendid year's work.



COFFEE TO GO: Senior executives from Le Meridien Khao Lak Resort & Spa, including General Manager Jean Louis Ripoché (right), and Nasser Javadizadeh from Boncafé (Thailand) Ltd (left), gather at the resort to celebrate Boncafé being awarded the contract to supply coffee and brewing machines to the resort.



'ROUND MIDNIGHT: (above) Renowned jazz bassist and vocalist Eldee Young (4th from right), and fellow musicians local and touring look anything but kind of blue following his concert and jazz jam at Sheraton Grande Laguna Phuket last month.



FOR SAIL: (above) Rob Williams (3rd from right), Managing Director of yacht chartering and sail training company Yachtpro, marks the opening of the company's new office in Phuket City with partner Alan Searle (back row, left), staff and friends.

FOR ME? Neil Cumming (right), Managing Director of Phuket Dot Com Ltd receives a bouquetS during his surprise 60th birthday party at Watermark on June 26.



EYES RIGHT: Phra Rajadhammasarn watches Pol Col Paween Pongsirin, the Superintendent of Phuket City Police Station, at a ceremony to bless a new *san praphum* (spirit house) at the station.



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LADY AND THE RATS



Few people, and especially few women, are likely to be found going head-to-head with rats, cockroaches or termites, but Supaporn "Porn" Sainui, a Krabi native, is one of those people.

K. Porn, 31, is Phuket Branch Manager of pest control experts Advance Service (Thailand) Co Ltd, with more than eight years' experience in the business.

"I hated rats when I was young but after working in pest control for a while I could tolerate them – though I still don't like them because they carry diseases."

She started in the pest control business as manager's secretary for three years before spending another three in sales, signing up customers. Two years ago she was promoted to branch manager.

"The company has a policy of promoting from within. We need professionals who have experience in this kind of business," K. Porn explains.

"Often, when I make appointments with customers to present our pest control services, they are surprised that the manager of this kind of business is a woman. They ask me how come I am doing this kind of work. I tell them that it's a challenge," she smiles.

"I have to go with the workers when they go to control pests. I have to make sure that what they do is the same as I have presented to the customer. I can also educate the owner of the premises by telling them things they didn't know before."

"Our major customers include Land & Houses Park, the Royal Phuket Marina and a number of big hotels in Phuket. Some people are interested in ter-

mite protection while others want us to control all kinds of pests. We also have follow-up services such as collecting dead rats after poisoning."

Prevention is always better than cure, she stresses. For example, she recommends that anyone planning to build a new house should install a system such as Advance Service's Retri-culation System, whereby pipes are laid inside the foundations, through which termite poison can be periodically injected.

"If you come to see me when you have a termite problem, you will already have lost a lot of money through damage already caused."

"Termites are the most difficult problem to tackle because they live underground where we can't see them, and they spread very easily. That's why the number of termites increases every day," K. Porn adds.

New houses, she says, should not have much in the way of pest problems but, she says, "You should clean your house thoroughly, especially in the kitchen. Don't leave food lying around. Throw out the garbage every day; don't leave it overnight because pests, especially rats and cockroaches, which sleep during the day, will come out at night and find it."

After eight years in pest control, is there anything that disgusts K. Porn? Yes. Geckos. "Whenever I see a gecko I'll clobber it until it's dead, because I really don't like geckos," she says.

Advance Service (Thailand) is at 1/2 Moo 2, Chao Fa East Rd, Tambon Wichit, Amphur Muang. Tel: 076-222565 or visit the company's website at www.ads.co.th.

Another life

By Sangkhae Leelanapaporn

BEAUTY Vs THE BEASTS: Supaporn "Porn" Sainui, with mouse traps. Termites are the most difficult problem to tackle, she says.



Do you know them?

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PORN'S GUIDE TO THE MOST COMMON HOUSEHOLD PESTS

RATS: Everything about the rat – its hair, its urine and feces, and any food that it touches is liable to be contaminated with diseases the rat carries. These can range from leptospirosis and typhus to rabies, foot-and-mouth disease and, infamously, bubonic plague.

The average female rat will have about eight babies at a time, so you can reckon that for every rat you see in your house there are at least eight more you can't see.

Rats are ready to breed about two months after they are born, so you get an idea how fast they can multiply.

They usually get into homes through pipes, and generally make their home in the roof.

People wonder why rats gnaw on power cables. It's not because they regard cables as food. Their teeth grow continually and when they get too long it is difficult for the rat to eat, so they nibble on something hard to wear the teeth down.

It is not easy to get rid of rats because they are intelligent animals. For example, if you use glue traps, any rat that is caught

will cry out, which warns other rats of the danger. Cage traps have similar problems.

Poison is not always the best solution because rats, when they feel ill, will go somewhere quiet and hidden to die, so if you can't find the body there will be a nasty smell.

If a rat dies in the air conditioning, for example, it will smell bad for about a month.

We have a new chemical that kills rats within four or five days of them eating it, by solidifying their blood.

This method is good for catching many rats at the same time because they don't make the connection between the poisoned food and feeling ill. When they die they don't smell because the corpse is dry.

If you are too scared to kill a rat caught in a cage trap, put it out in the sunlight. Rats cannot tolerate sunlight and die in about an hour when exposed to it.

TERMITES: If you see one termite around your house, that means there are about 100,000 others in the vicinity.

Some people think that

if a house is made of teak they will have no termite problems, but in fact teak trees should be at least 10 years old before they can resist termites.

But many people cut teak when it is as young as five years old, and the termites can eat it.

Don't think that because you have bought Grade A wooden furniture that it will be immune from termites.

You don't know how old the teak in the furniture is, so it is better to treat the wood first. That's cheaper than getting it fixed later.

After rain at night, if you see alates – flying

termites – around the lights of your house, turn off all the lights you can so that the termites will fly to other lights away from your house.

Once the alates land and lose their wings, they will dig into the soil. So pick them all up, tie them in a plastic bag and throw it away.

Some termites will not

dig into the ground; if they fly into your roof they may start a nest up there and start eating your roof.

Don't forget that termites eat 24/7; they never stop.

Often, they will eat the back of furniture, out of sight, so that you do not know they are doing it. We had one customer

who asked us to treat a closet. It had no back on it – the termites had eaten it all, and she

hadn't seen anything because the closet was full of clothes.

ANTS: Ants generally live in the ground and always use the same route to and from food sources. We use a gel to get rid of ants be-

cause chemical sprays may harm people if they contaminate food or are accidentally sprayed on pots or dishes.

COCKROACHES: Cockroaches get into your home by climbing up bathroom or kitchen waste pipes. They tend to live apart from one another and come out to find food at night.

If you find a cockroach, it may be female and even though it is dead, it may contain as many as 50 eggs, which will hatch later.

Cockroach eggs are very difficult to destroy. In fact, spraying them with insecticide may even speed up the hatching, thanks to a chemical coating on the outside of the eggs.

Sometimes adult cockroaches can be wiped out but the eggs survive and hatch, reinfesting your home.

There are many kinds of cockroaches. Some keep the eggs inside their body while others produce an egg case containing the eggs and leave it somewhere dark and quiet.

The best thing to do if you find cockroach eggs is to squash them.



If an event isn't listed in the Gazette's *Events Calendar* it probably isn't one.

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In The Stars

by Isla Star

CANCER (June 22-July 23): This week you should place more importance on your opinions of yourself and less on how others see you. You will not reach your full potential this month if you don't believe in your own capabilities. Once those lingering doubts have dissolved, all obstacles will disappear. Wear the color lemon yellow to stimulate positivity.

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LEO (July 24-August 22): This is not the right week to make important decisions about work or other matters. If taking a low-season break, make every effort to leave cares and worries behind, and concentrate on rejuvenation. Friends from the past are about to pop into your life again; one of them has some surprising news.

♌

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): It's time to deal with your paperwork. If you ignore important issues for much longer, the repercussions could become quite serious. Clearing the cobwebs away will freshen your emotional outlook and be of benefit to a relationship that is

♍

Where are the stars leading you this week?

heading for the rocks. On Wednesday, take someone's words with a handful of salt – there's not a grain of truth in the gossip.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): Your stamina is at a low ebb this week so do not to force yourself to do anything for which you don't have the energy. Use this quiet time to think carefully about your ambitions and be prepared to shift the goalposts. Focusing on attaining peace of mind will bring more benefits than chasing that elusive pot of gold. Scorpio offers useful advice.

♎

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): The rainy season blues will not affect you this week. You will be able to leap over the puddles that others end up

♏

wading through. One reason for your bright outlook could be a new relationship. Someone you thought had desires in other directions reveals the truth. The number 3 has special meaning on Tuesday.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): Sagittarians who are not absolutely sure of their facts should refrain from passing on information. Rumors are set to fly around your social circle and although there is no smoke without fire, some stories are pure fiction. Where business is concerned, you can deal with the future if you function efficiently now. Someone who is considering making an investment is observing your style.

♐

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): Don't waste time

worrying about a minor hiccup at work early next week. While someone else's behavior may not meet your criteria, there will be no backlash on you. Concentrate on your own career path and be on the lookout for new opportunities. Your partner is subject to mood swings and needs understanding.

♑

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): As you have sensed, this is not an auspicious time to launch a wild scheme, but there is room on the back burner for one. Aquarians should curb their imaginations and concentrate on practical matters. There may be a change of residence in the coming weeks; this may be a forced move due to problem neighbors, but exploring pastures new could be just what you need.

♒

PISCES (February 20-March 20): Your thought processes are a little clouded this week, but your partner is full of ideas. If you can't relate to all this mental energy, take a break from the material world and devote some time to spiritual matters. There doesn't appear to be anything urgent demanding your attention and Pisceans are en-

♓

titled to a period of retreat from the world. The color deep purple will encourage clarity.

ARIES (March 21-April 20): Arians will be blessed with a silver tongue this week. You will know exactly what to say, and when to say it. Use this gift to good effect on Monday or Tuesday if you wish to further your career prospects. A friend is likely to try your patience this weekend with one hard-luck story too many. The color dusky rose will enhance romance.

♈

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): Even the strongest bull will balk at shouldering an unfair burden this week. The weight will become too much if you continually let others add to your responsibilities. Taureans should practice the art of saying 'no', and take a realistic look at how much they can achieve without burning out. Your finances are looking up, but you should wish upon a star on Sunday to get faster results.

♉

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): Close the door firmly on groundless fears and worries that are sapping your energy. You will be liable to bouts of soul-searching and uncharacteristic doubt this weekend, so forewarned is forearmed. The planets encourage a more harmonious atmosphere from Tuesday onwards. Romance will be especially well-starred, and those single Geminis who are tired of going it alone may be about to meet their match.

♊



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Dubai (pronounced "wealth") is a near-perfect embodiment of the fortuitous. Captapulted from obscure desert sheikhdom to a state of abundant riches by the discovery of oil, it has since surfed a wave of prosperity aptly assisted by unfolding political events, good management and its own opportune location.

The end of the Cold War opened up vast swathes of the former Soviet Union to commerce. The end of apartheid meant South Africa was available to trade with the Arab world.

Economic reform in India brought down import duties and at the same time allowed greater freedom on foreign exchange for overseas investment. Countries in East Africa started to get their act together and pursue more liberal trade policies.

In each case Dubai was not only in the right place to take advantage of the changes, but also had the nous and the financial clout to capitalize on the opportunities.

Employing the best expatriate know-how money could buy – hand-in-hand with shrewd business decisions – ensured that Dubai transformed itself from a regional trading center in the late 1970s and early 1980s into an international player

A wealth of wadis to bash



Wadi bashing is a must for visitors to Dubai, and desert sunsets would make the average Phuketian green with envy.



Strapped in and succored by aircon, tourists are whisked away across the sand, hurtling down suicidal gradients and roaring to the top again in seconds flat. First stop is a camel farm, where beasts and their minders pose obligingly for photographs.

"Where's the toilet?" bleats one knee-clenched punter, to be answered with an expansive wave of the guide's hand toward the horizon.

From there the cruisers, always in convoy in case of accident, rev their way to the top of an escarpment to catch the sunset before plunging back down to the mock Bedouin village for supper.

Salads, kebabs, steaks, baked potatoes, humus and pita bread are washed down with beer and wine, and then, as the punters snuggle down, la belle belly dancer slips out of the shadows and her tracksuit to brave the night's chill. It's showtime, folks.

While by no means authentic, wadi bashing and its accompanying entertainments are certainly fun, a refreshing break from the cellophane-wrapped, slightly soulless city and a hint of what life must have been like in pre-gusher days.

during the following decade.

Now, with the oil expected to run out in a couple of decades, Dubai is playing the tourism card, with a wealth of fantastical projects including the billowing Burj Al Arab hotel, man-made islands shaped like a palm tree and the world, and an indoor ski resort with snow.

Plus there are going to be

even more shopping malls to complement the glittering downtown gold souk (open-air market), remarkable not so much for its mega-carat display but for its almost total lack of security.

Glance at a photo of Dubai taken 30 years ago, and all you see is a cluster of houses and a lot of sand. Today, beyond the ranks of skyscrapers and supermalls, the desert stands unchanged, and an trip there is one of the more enlightening of Dubai's many touted excursions.

TALES OF A TRAVELER

By Ed Peters



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Eating the crusts of bread, so they say, will make your hair curly. But for anyone not prepared to spend years eating crusts and living in hope, yet who still wants to be well-coiffed for this season, a trip to one of Phuket's many hairdressers is the only way to go.

Jeraporn "Tik" Thonggate, the owner of Tik & Toh Salon, says that most of her customers these days are looking for a one-night stand – as far as their hair goes anyway.

They may have dead straight hair for the office or university but want to take a walk on the mild side of wild after dark – and have straight hair again the next day.

Out go the chemicals and permanent waves and in come the big rollers and curling tongs for a more natural look.

One very popular – and sexy – style at the moment is to keep the hair straight at the crown but to add curls, almost in spirals, toward the end of the locks.

With all of the other last-minute preparations that form part of the pre-party grooming so essential for us modern women, spending hours on having your crowning glory done is hard to fit into the schedule, particularly if you are preparing for an after-work or midweek event.

The curly crowning glory story

Hair with Sangkhae

On average it takes around 15 minutes for a light set of curls and 30 minutes for a more obvious look.

K. Tik advises that heat treatment and curling tongs shouldn't be used more than once a week otherwise your hair end up getting too dry.

She also recommends using Kerastase shampoos and other products – sold for home use at her salon – for the quality and protection they offer.

Typical charges for up-to-the-minute curling are between 250 and 650 baht, depending on

which grooming aids are used and, naturally, the amount of work that goes into the creation.

Another advantage of a hairstyle that will last only 10 hours or so is that if you decide that curls are not for you, all it takes is a good night's sleep to have you back on the straight and narrow.

– Sangkhae Leelanapaporn

Tik & Toh Salon, 151 Patipat Rd, Phuket City, is open every day except Tuesday from 9 am to 9 pm. Tel: 076-234959 to make an appointment.



Curls night out – yet tomorrow she'll be straight again.

EAR CANDY by ANDY

The song *Garota de Ipanema* (The Girl from Ipanema) has become, through too many cover versions of such varying quality, a parody of itself. So it is testament to the virtuosity of vocalist Rosa Passos and bassist Ron Carter on their collaboration *Entre Amigos* that they can inject some new life into it.

Entre Amigos (Among Friends) features "interpretations" (read: "cover versions") of this and 10 other Brazilian classics but this is not to its detriment,

A fresh girl from Ipanema

particularly when the combination of Passos's silky voice – more like a lover's than a singer's – and Carter's matchless bass-work combine.

Carter was part of Miles Davis's mid-'60s rhythm section with Herbie Hancock, and he also played with Thelonious Monk. He brings, therefore, a wealth of innovative experience to this album.

Passos and Carter are almost competing, albeit gently and in perfect harmony, throughout this album. Voice and bass reflect – and are just as moving as – each other, especially on the second track, *Insensatez*. But Passos does not limit herself to simply mirroring the bass and on *Desafinado*, the lyrics are delivered in short, almost terse phrases, following Billy Drewes' tenor sax.

This album stands repeated listenings and makes a great introduction to the Brazilian scene for any jazz neophyte.

Entre Amigos, Chesky Records JD247. Playing time: 51 minutes 51 seconds.

The re-release of the 1996 album from I Ching, *Of The*



Marsh And the Moon (the title comes from an ancient Chinese text), comes at a time when the melding of traditional, World or New Age music with a contemporary backing shows no sign of diminishing.

Eno, Enigma, Ennio Morricone even, paved the way for I Ching's album of lush sounds, inspired sampling and bass that's deep enough to have the neighbors draw up a petition.

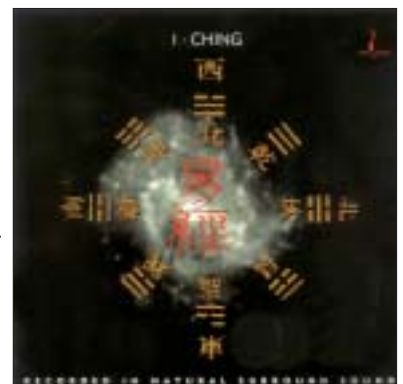
This album is a fusion of the ideas and playing skills of Joel Goodman, Sisi Chen, Tao Chen and Bao Li Zhang. The latter three are accomplished players of – respectively – the Chinese dulci-

mer, flute and two-string fiddle.

Some pieces are interpretations of traditional works. *Gadamaylin*, a Mongolian folk song, is one of the stand-out tracks and begins with sampling from a street market before gliding into percussive effects that are intentionally ever-so-slightly discordant.

Beauty is Everywhere is undoubtedly the most interesting and rewarding piece on the album. The vocals are almost too ethereal, and repeated listenings are needed to be sure it is a human voice and not a synthesizer.

The one downside is that, for many listeners, *Of the*



Marsh... will be dismissed as just another piece of muzak or, worse, a soundtrack for New Agers to do their thing to. This is not

doing the album justice.

It takes time, and plenty of volume, to appreciate this recording.

Of The Marsh and The Moon, Chesky Records SACD-265. Playing time 52 minutes 17 seconds.

– Andy Johnstone

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Brain Buster!!

Tommy Twitter has a collection of rare records featuring bird calls, which he wants to sell. He manages to sell half the records plus a half record more to Jimmy Whistler. then he sells half of what is left and a half record more to Robin Crow. This leaves Tommy with one record. How many records did he have originally?

Seven. He sold three and a half plus a half record more to Jimmy. (which is four) then he sold one and a half plus a half record more to Robin. (which is two). Tommy was now left with just one record.

Solution to last week's Crossword

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

Answers to last week's Monster Quiz

- Hermann Gessler; 2. Turkey; 3. Kamphaeng Phet; 4. Harry Truman; 5. James Joyce; 6. Nahuatl; 7. Boxing; 8. Modest Mussorgsky; 9. Emerson Lake & Palmer; 10. Kansas; 11. Edward G. Robinson; 12. Cape Verde; 13. San Francisco Giants; 14. Caber toss; 15. Manchester, England; 16. Usher; 17. A cow; 18. Active Server Page; 19. Oz; 20. Ethernet.

Get your brain in gear with the Monster Quiz



- What fruit provides juice, material for pot plants and material for mattresses?
- In which town was Ryan's bridge too far?
- Which town stands where the Alaska and Klondike highways meet?
- Towering Inferno played which famous racehorse in a 1992 movie?
- Rheingold, Walküre, Siegfried*. What is the fourth in this series?
- Who did de Morville, de Tracy, Fitzurse and Brito murder?
- In which year were Colorado, Nevada and Dakota admitted into the United States?
- Which popular ballad singer was born Henry John Deutschendorf Jr?
- Henry Fonda and Katherine Hepburn won Oscars in 1981 for their roles in which movie?
- Where are the headquarters of the Organization of African Unity?
- Apia is the capital of which island?
- Who won the Wimbledon women's singles title in 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978 and 1980?
- Who beat her in 1979 to take the title?
- Which country's flag looks like that of the US, but with only one star?
- Before becoming a TV personality, how did Johnny Carson earn his living?
- From which language does the word "yoghurt" derive?
- If Greenland is the largest island in the world, which is the second-largest?
- In which country did 20 million people die of famine or influenza between 1914 and 1924?
- Which Thai province is between Lamphun and Phrae?
- In Ireland, what would one kiss in order to receive the gift of loquaciousness?

Answers next week

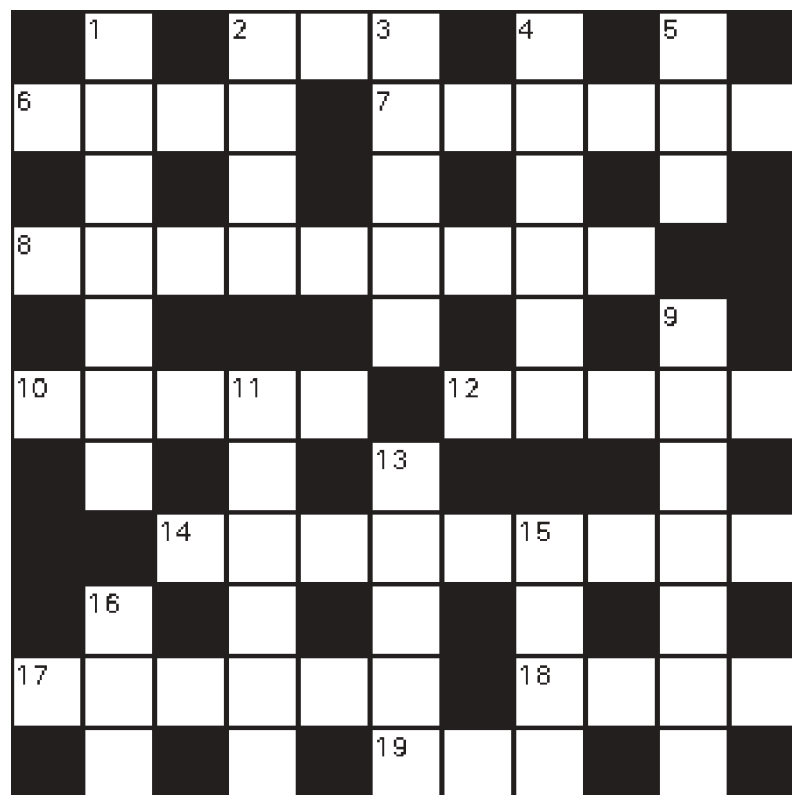
Never a Cross Word!

Across

- Overweight.
- Certain.
- Mistakes.
- What a referee should always be.
- Movie star's reward.
- Pursue.
- Small blood vessel.
- Sherlock Holmes's constant companion.
- Ms Chanel.
- Metal-bearing rock.

Down

- From Yangon, maybe.
- Greek goat cheese.
- When you get old, they may be false.
- Deliver a sermon.
- Internet address.



- Large flightless bird.
- André of tennis.
- In music, quietly.
- Parasites in one's hair.
- Tree's vital fluid.

Solution next week

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See you later, definitely, I think

There comes a point in everyone's life when they realize that in spite of all the great friends, people and memories they have enjoyed, it is simply time to move on.

There are also those times when you don't want to move, but the situation demands it, like when you're in the supermarket studying cereal boxes and there's a queue forming behind you, pressing you to get out of the way.

My goodbye to you – for those of you who haven't already figured this out, this is goodbye – is, to quote an over-quoted Shakespearean adage, sweet sorrow.

And to be perfectly honest with you, I don't know which of the above situations this is: a goodbye whereby I simply know my time has come to move on, or whether this cursed "higher education" has

inserted its grotesquely academic backside rather rudely into my life to force me to move on.

Whatever the cause, one fact remains: I am moving on. Perhaps a little slower than previously anticipated, but I am moving on nevertheless.

I would, like Madonna's character in *Evita*, break out into an Andrew-Lloyd Webber song dedicated to saying goodbye – if it weren't for the fact that people would trample me to death to make me stop.

I could build a huge monument dedicated to the readers of the *Phuket Gazette* and erect it in Phuket City, if only there were any room for it. I could even make an awe-inspiring speech, if people knew who the hell I was in the first place.

Alas, I am left with naught but a laptop, rusty fan and the ringing silence of an empty room with which to say my farewells.

Avoiding further digres-



Youth 'n ASIA

By Eric Lacey

sion, whether I am moving on through force or whim, the sad fact remains that a goodbye must be said. Or an *au revoir*. Or *sayonara*.

Or does it? A friend once told me, upon his departure from my life, that there was no need

to say goodbye. Thoroughly surprised, I inquired as to what should be said.

The reply? "See you later".

This was an example of euphemism at its best; using words that don't have quite the same powerful connotations and thus, in this case, create a little foam to pad the business edge of the sledgehammer of farewells.

"Goodbye" has associations with heartache, with loss, with the loneliness of moving on, and with the very real possibility of never, ever meeting again.

"See you later," on the other hand, has absolutely no implication of finality. You say "see you later" to co-workers at the end of a day, knowing that tomorrow you'll likely see them again. With no sense of finality, there is none of the pain associated with the word "goodbye".

So, to all of you readers out there, I would hate to say anything as harsh or painful as the

word "goodbye". To all of you who have read this column, I would like to say, as chirpily as possible: See you later.

N.B. The sad fact is that probably none of you will ever hear from me again. In fact, most of you probably have never met me in the first place, so that won't make much of a difference now, will it?

However, to the few who have had the misfortune of meeting me, or seeing my repulsive visage as I walk down the street, perhaps some day in the distant future (or not so far) we will meet again.

I must add, however, that there is slight irony in my use of "see you later" as a euphemism for saying goodbye: all the people I've ever said "see you later" to, in place of a full-on farewell, I have not, to this day, ever seen again.

So, for the last time ever, see you later.

Why do Thais have such very long names?

Dear Momma Duck,

I am interested in the origins of Thai family names. How long have Thais had last names? Do they have any meaning? Why do Thai people change their names so often? Why are they so long when spelled in English?

Somchai H

Dear Somchai,

The use of surnames is rather recent in Thai history. Even aristocrats had titles rather than surnames in the past, and were known only by their title, such as "Mom" or "Mom Jaow" plus their given name.

During that time, when a man married he would live with the wife's family and respect their ancestors, so lineage was maintained largely through the mother's side.

Following Chinese patriarchal influences, and also Western-inspired reforms of the late 19th century, some surnames started to be handed out by the King at that time.

The Family Name Act of 1915 was enacted in the reign of HM King Rama VI and specified two types of surnames: one that was "Given by the King" and the other that was given by either

civil authorities or temple abbots.

The aristocrats were divided into two groups. The first were members of the Royal Family itself, who often adapted their old titles as a form of surname. For example, "Phra Ong Chao" (a title for a son of the King) or "Chao Fa" (a title for a son of the King born of a mother who was also of royal blood) might form the basis of a new surname.

The second group consisted of civil servants or those who worked closely with officers. The family names of this group were given either by the King himself or by one of the subordinate members of the Royal Family.

During that period, many of these new family names formed the basis of elite groups and sometimes functioned almost like a brand name. In many cases,

the status still carries on to the present day.

For example, any person with a "na" in front of his or her "provincial" surname originally came from the aristocratic family that governed the province. Common examples are "na Songkhla" and "na Ayudhaya".

Needless to say, we Thais always manage to transform new ideas into our own amazing Thai style, resulting in the current form of surnames. Some Thai surnames can indicate the origin and class of people from which the names originally evolved.

Typically, the second generation of Chinese immigrant families would adopt Thai given names but still use Chinese surnames, such as Tan or Lim.

Those who continued this practice now have surnames such as "Sae-tan" or "Sae-lim". Others would use their Chinese

family name as a given name and change their given names into surnames. For example, Hok Siew Saw used his Chinese family name "Saw" as his Thai name and his given name "Siew", which means "long life", as his new surname. He would then translate the new surname into Thai and be called Saw Siviya (which has a similar meaning as the Chinese).

Also, many people used their ancestors' names or their own occupations as a base for

their family name, in much the same way as Western surnames came into being.

Many foreigners wonder why some Thai surnames are so long. Most of these long names belong to former Chinese immigrant families. By trying to insert as much positive meaning as possible, they combined several Pali and Sanskrit words.

The government created and continues to guard the system of creating surnames. A new surname cannot be the same as

one that already exists and the meaning cannot be vulgar. So new surnames got longer and longer.

On top of this, when we write the name in English we tend to include all the implied (but unwritten) Thai vowels, as well as the written but unvoiced characters.

To avoid bad luck and enjoy good health and success in life, a child must have a name that is consistent with his or her day, month and year of birth.

There are many books that explain how to calculate and choose the most suitable name for a child. The name must also have a good meaning.

Some Thais change their names when they are experiencing a lot of bad luck, in the belief that a new name will bring them better prospects. Many of them also do it because it sounds more modern than their present name.



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Crikey! He's a frisky little moron, ain't he?

Downsider

By George Bentick

I was sitting at home the other night desperately thumbing my way through some of the worst B-grade entertainment in world, collectively known as UBC.

For some reason, when I'm hung over I find myself staring blankly at Discovery Channel. It has a very soothing effect on the soul because it requires you not to think. Rather, it lectures you just when you feel that you want to end your life after being debriefed about your behavior the night before.

It's a channel that makes me address my issues: "Why kill yourself, George, when all this beautiful nature and scientific wonder is around you? So what if your friends didn't tell you that 'she' had a penis?"

Sitting there in a sorry state the other night (I was at Mrs Street's 40th birthday bash the night before), I was glued to Discovery when on came the most annoying pabulum ever.

That's right ladies and gentlemen, I am referring to none other than *Crocodile Hunter*, or as it should be known, *Extreme Critter Wrestling*, or perhaps, *Let's Go Beat the Sh*t out Of Something That's Minding Its Own Business*.

Here's the scenario. Australian man with mullet haircut by the name of Steeve Irwin and his American wife Teeeri, roam Australia and the rest of the world dressed in khakis looking for anything with a pulse that they can capture, dominate or generally disturb. Then, in the heat of some egocentric euphoria, they beat the living daylight out of it.

This lunatic, egged on by his missus, will fling himself at whatever hapless creature is deemed interesting enough to film. He'll wrestle with it until it's unconscious, blind with terror or subdued enough for a close-up. All the while he is extolling its many virtues, and advising us, "Crikey!! Nevah troy this yerself." Duh!

Once in a while he will do something noteworthy, like freeing a croc from a net, but for the most part he just terrorizes the poor bastards for a good camera shot. Then he makes inane statements like "What a privilege to share territory with such a beee-ootiful creacha. Crikey! It brings tears to your eyes." My hangover suddenly got worse.

On one show he wrestled – God knows for what reason – a

razorback hog. Upon shaking itself free, the swine turned and charged him with a vengeance. I struggled to contain myself, I was so overjoyed.

I also loved the visit to Sumatra where the mulleted moron was greeted by a huge, pissed-off Komodo dragon. Steeve was eventually chased up a tree in his ball-dangling khakis, whereupon he shows us the hole that this beyooooodiful creature has put in his boot. He sums it up by saying "He's gawt a feeewd response."

Feud response? How about simple self-defense? Upon witnessing this, my hangover immediately evaporated and I was now standing and yelling, "Yeah baby! Go! Bite his nuts off, Scaly! Then go after the wife!"

Just when you thought things could get no more bizarre, along came that Michael Jacksonesque moment when, grasping his one-month-old son Bob like pet food under one arm and a chicken under the other, Steeve bounds into a croc pen at feeding time.

Way to go Steeve!! Crikey! You're a reeeeee smart bugger. While observing this horrifying event, a conversation was overheard between two on-screen witnesses:

Husband: "They're known for having huge bodies and a tiny, tiny brain."

Wife: "I know that, dear, but what about the crocodile?"

Irwin's comments after the incident were as bizarre as Whacko Jacko's dancing and waving on a car rooftop after his arraignment on child molestation charges.

"The kid has to learn to become croc savvy," he said to reporters. Please bear in mind: his son Bob was *one month old* and did not even have the ability to focus on the end of his thumb, let alone become "croc savvy".

You might as well drag a joey from his mother's pouch and drop-kick him into the neighbor's yard in order to teach him the fundamentals of Aussie rules.

Not to be insulting, but when you actually see the footage of the incident it's difficult to tell the difference between the baby and the chicken.

When one newspaper phon-

ed him for a comment on the story, it reported that his answering machine gave the following message. "Hi! This is Steeve I can't come to the phone right now 'cause I've got me arm up a buffalo's bum. Leevee a message

and harass or capture a crocodile; do not dangle arms or legs from a boat in an area known for crocs.

But on searching the book further, I could find not a single word of advice on how to *attack* or intentionally irritate a crocodile, or a Komodo dragon, come to that.

Why does Australia allow people like Paul "Crocodile Dundee" Hogan and Steeve Irwin to emerge as focal points of its cultural marketing?

Australia is an amazing country with an extraordinarily resilient and diversified population who have taken what is probably one of the most inhospitable land masses in the world and made the whole thing work. They produce amazing results in everything from sports to industry.

Apart from the genocide inflicted on the English language, they have taken what to most would have been a bad situation and turned it into a

winner.

Australia, however, will never shake off its "Shrimp on the barbie" reputation as long as clowns like this are the face it presents to the rest of the world.

They even want to rename part of the infamous Ghan rail link after Irwin, who seems to have become their spokesperson.



and Teeeri will get right back to ya as soon as we clean up."

For the most part, reptiles don't harm humans if left alone. In fact, they go out of their way to avoid human contact.

According to *The Worst Case Scenario Survival Handbook*, if you find yourself in the rare position of being attacked by a crocodile, you should do the following:

- Get on the crocodile's back and force its head and jaws down;
- Cover the crocodile's eyes to create a sense of sedation;
- Go for the eyes or nose with an object or your fist;
- If its jaws are closed on something (your limbs included) and you want to remove the something, hit the croc hard on the snout;
- If you cannot free yourself from a clamped mouth, prevent it from shaking and rolling over by spreading your legs and distributing your weight as widely as possible, like a wrestler.

It goes on to state the obvious: don't disturb croc eggs; don't try

That's like OJ Simpson representing a glove manufacturer.

The recovery from Australia's Crocodile Dundee period was long and painful. It was finally put to bed by the amazingly successful 2000 Olympics, which proceeded grandly without a single reptile being flagellated or even featured. Then along comes Irwin. Ah gawd.

So what can be done about all this? Well not much – animal rights activists seemed more concerned for the baby than the croc.

So let me lend my support to the crocs by giving the "Worst Case Survival Scenario" on how to wrestle free from an attack by someone like Steeve.

- Flip the moron over and drive your rear left claw hard into the space between his legs known as the crotch. Don't waste effort attacking the empty space between his ears;
- Clamp down hard on his ankle, shake violently from left to right, and do not – repeat, do not – allow him to cover your eyes and induce a state of sedation;
- If the attacker hits you on the snout, extend your right front claws and tear through his scrotum. This is known as a forcible vasectomy, and will ensure that the attacker produces no more offspring;
- Tie him up to the nearest tree. Grab his wife, flip her over, and take her from behind – all the while repeating these words. "Crikey!! She's a frisky little bugga ain't she mate?"
- Lay back, light a cigarette and savor the moment.

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Oil and tourism don't mix

History is full of examples of human hubris, of people so convinced of their own superior abilities that they believed they had built the perfect machine or devised the perfect solution to an intractable problem. Remember the "unsinkable" *Titanic*?

More to the point, remember the *Exxon Valdez*? They said it couldn't happen, that modern tankers were so well built that even in the event of an accident, a major spill was out of the question.

The *Exxon Valdez* oil spill in 1989 smeared 39,000 tonnes of crude oil along 2,000 kilometers of Alaskan coastline, killing countless birds and fish, and, along with them, the local tourism industry, with resultant losses to the economy of an estimated US\$2.8 billion (120 billion baht).

The cleanup, which cost Exxon US\$2.1 billion, involved about 10,000 workers, some 1,000 boats and roughly 100 aircraft. Even now, 15 years later, oil from the spill can be found in parts of Prince William Sound, the area most severely affected.

The *Exxon Valdez* is, to be sure, an extreme example. But the plan by the Ministry of Energy (see pages 4 and 5) to site the western end of the proposed Strategic Energy Landbridge in waters off Tab Lamu, just south of Khao Lak, is fraught with potential danger to the environment and the tourism industry.

Assurances by the Ministry of Energy that spills can be dealt with efficiently, with minimal damage to the environment, ring hollow when one recalls the Alaskan experience.

In addition to the oil, an environmental specialist at the recent meeting in Khao Lak to discuss the plan pointed out that dredging and foundation work for the pipeline and its terminal out at sea would damage the area's fragile marine ecosystems.

Like many aspects of this project, just why it has been decided to site the terminal off Tab Phut and run the pipeline more than 200 kilometers across the peninsula to a point in Nakhon Sri Thammarat, is not clear. There would surely be cost advantages to siting the terminal and pipeline closer to Ranong, where the peninsula is half as wide, yet the only other sites considered for the terminal were in Krabi and Phang Nga.

There are suggestions that the water off Ranong is too shallow, but that would presumably be the case with the Phang Nga Bay site as well – yet that one was at least considered.

Nowhere is a perfect site for something as potentially damaging as an offshore oil transshipment terminal, but few places could be less perfect than Tab Lamu, where prevailing winds and currents during the southwest monsoon would likely guarantee that any spilled oil will end up on the beaches of Khao Lak.

– The Editor

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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.

Bamboozled by mia farang report

I must take issue with the report by Decha Vanichvarod, Director of the National Social and Economic Development Board [*Gazette*, June 26-July 2]; his is an obviously personal and biased report on Thai wives of foreign men.

He states, "They are ... not the type to attract typical Thai men" and, "They are not 'beautiful' according to Thai men." What is a typical Thai man?

Yet according to K. Vanichvarod's report, 80% of these women have been married to Thai men and many already had children. With that in mind it does not sound as though these women are incapable of attracting Thai males.

Unless, of course, the typical Thai male, in K. Vanichvarod's eyes, makes 2 million baht a year and watches too much television in a 5-million-baht home with a family that believes Thai beauty is synonymous with white skin.

According to the Thai woman I have met, a typical Thai man is an untrustworthy "butterfly" and not a good provider for a family. Most of these women do not want Thai men because they have had bad experiences with them.

K. Vanichvarod also presented the startling revelation that women from Isarn are not the attractive women who head for jobs in the sex industry in Bangkok, Phuket or Pattaya.

Where does K. Vanichvarod think these women met their foreign husbands? At the local coffee shop in Khon Kaen?

The vast majority of the women working in bars in places like Patong, Bangkok and Pattaya are from exactly the area he mentions.

He is right, however, when he states that many of these women could not survive economically after being abandoned by the "typical" Thai male and saw jobs in the sex industry as a way out of just such a situation.

But did K. Decha's survey define a typical Thai male and what Thai men consider beautiful? I think not. He backs up these opinions with a few unrelated statistics.

Regardless, K. Vanichvarod's report does at least offer reassurance to Thai men that foreigners are not snapping up all the most beautiful women in Thailand.

Mark Patong

Posting a complaint about missing mail

In your front page story concerning problems with the postal service in Phuket (*Gazette* June 26), the statements from regional Post Office spokesperson Somjit Treesinnurak and Phuket Post Master Visal Pongtiwattanakul seem to imply that they have no control over the situation.

As a consequence, it appears that they will do nothing that differs from current policy. The policy itself seems to be to offer alibis and to shift responsibility and blame to others. What soft jobs they have!

I have twice been a victim of lost or stolen mail. Recently I waited for more than a month for a package of important docu-

ments posted to my home address.

I visited my local post office in Thalung to enquire as to its whereabouts. Staff checked a book to see if there was a record of it having been received and delivered, and then went into a room full to overflowing with packages.

Nothing was stacked in any order. They finally found my package by checking every item inside and outside the room. It took 20 minutes to find it.

The staff were pleasant and helpful – and I felt lucky. However, is it not possible to at least deliver a card to a customer's home address advising them that there is a delivery awaiting collection?

I have also experienced lost registered mail and when something does go into orbit, or into someone's pocket, Post Office staff can tell you when and where it was last seen but not what happened to it.

It seems to me that registering mail only marks it as something valuable.

Charles O. Smith
Phuket

Rawai evictions are a loss for tourism

It is a shame for both Thais and tourists that the food vendors along Rawai Beach have been evicted from their places along the seafront.

Take away the bamboo cafés and restaurants and Phuket starts to look less like Thailand and more like the Costa del Sol every day.

Jan Jaspers
Phuket

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.

Hoping for court's common sense

I am 60 years old, and I have lived here a long time, since 1972. If the government wanted to evict me, officers should have come and had a good talk with me.

I am waiting for the court to decide whether to issue an order forcing me to be evicted, but I have not heard anything for quite some time. I just hope that if the court does order me to move that it at least has some pity and orders some compensation be paid.

Nobody was interested in the land when it was of little value, but now that land prices have risen, they want it.

When I moved here the land was vacant. I thought that it was a beautiful place to open a shop, and then five other shopkeepers set up here, too.

I collect only 2,500 baht a month from each of the other five shopkeepers, and I need that to support my family. I have had to pay for my seven children's education, and now that I am old I cannot afford to become ill, so I need to go for regular checkups at the hospital at the Prince of Songkhla University, Haad Yai Campus, in Songkhla province, and that costs a lot of money.

I have applied many times to the Phuket Provincial Land Office (PPLO) to issue me the title for this land, but I was told that a land title could not be issued on land in the city.



FIRST PERSON

Mayuree Keesun is one of six shopkeepers facing eviction from the bus terminal in Phuket City to make room for more parking space for *songtaew* buses.

Here she speaks out against the move by the Phuket Provincial Transportation Office (PPTO) to evict her without compensation on the grounds that she is trespassing on government land.

Although she admits that she will eventually have to move, K. Mayuree believes that her future depends on a court ruling on whether she will be compensated for the relocation.

K. Mayuree lives on the site, so she faces losing not only her business but also her home.

But I think that if I had a lot of money I would have been issued a land title. Perhaps it has already been drawn up and that is why they cannot evict me.

The PPLO also claim that they have staked out the plot incorrectly with the boundary markers. If PPLO officials can make a mistake like that, how can people

believe the PPLO has done anything correctly?

I want to know why nobody was interested in this land – or in evicting me – during my first 10 years here. If the land had already been titled, why didn't anyone evict me or order the police arrest me? Back then the land was not titled, and that

is why no one filed a complaint – they did not have any evidence.

I have been told that my shop is old and that the galvanized steel does not look beautiful, and I agree. But when I decided to renovate my shop, the chief of the Phuket Bus Terminal, Thavicha Kubsongkhun, told me that it was not necessary because I would have to move soon. So then I concentrated on doing good business because I had agreed with the government to improve my shop but they had told me, "Don't!"

I have been told me that the PPTO said that this area is not suitable for restaurants or shops. But they want to build extra parking for *songtaew* buses downstairs with shops above.

How can an old trader like me survive? The government should at least compensate us so we set up somewhere else.

If the government wants to develop the area, they should not take advantage of traders like me by taking over our sites.

They see traders like me as the Devil, and every day I am told to get out. They say that everything that I say is wrong. But they are government officers and I'm only an ordinary person.

The government can evict me, but they must also take care to find a place where I and the five other shopkeepers can make a living.

– *Compiled by Siripansa Somboon*

Why must I pay an extra B100 for a taxi at the airport?

I have arrived at the Phuket Airport a number of times during the past month and walked across the parking area to the metered taxi stand.

On several occasions the taxi has been stopped before the exit gates and I have been asked to pay B100 to some people, who I can only assume are mafia.

On other occasions these people are absent and the B100 is added to the fare on the meter.

I hire metered taxis expecting to pay what the meter totals – not extra. To a newcomer or a tourist this must seem as blatant as corruption can get. Why can't the authori-

ties control this service, and come up with a more acceptable method of payment?

PGF
Phuket

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

The 100 baht is a legal charge. It is the fee levied on meter taxis for using the airport area, and is in addition to the amount shown on the meter.

So passengers using meter taxis from the airport must pay 100 baht in addition to the fare on the meter.

Is a disabled person limited to driving only one vehicle?

Seven years ago I lost the use of my right arm in an accident. I now drive an automatic car modified with the indicator switch on the left side of the steering wheel and other small adjustments.

On my Thai driving licence it states that I am permitted to drive only my car and has on it my car's registration. To drive a different vehicle, I must have my driving licence amended to show the new car's registration.

Can I be issued a license that permits me to drive any vehicle that has been adapted for my special needs, and not just for one specific vehicle? Surely a driver's license is issued to a person and not to a particular vehicle.

One-Armed Bandit

Teerayuth Prasertphol, Chief of the Provincial Transportation Office (PPTO), replies:

Must I keep money in a bank account?

My wife and I are both foreigners, living on Phuket, with type 'O' retirement visas.

This apparently means that we are required to hold between 1.6 and 2 million baht in our Thai bank account in order to qualify to stay here long-term.

I want to invest some of

this money in Thailand, so it can earn more than the 0.75% annual bank interest that it currently earns.

If I invest some of this money in shares of Thai public companies, such as Thai Airways International, can I include the value of the shares to support our visa renewal application next year?

Also, if I have money in a bank savings account in Dublin, Ireland, does that count toward our visa requirements?

Concerned in Kamala.

Pol Capt Krissarat Nuesen, Deputy Inspector of the Phuket Provincial Immigration Office, responds:

When applying for extensions to stay on a retirement visa, only the amount you have deposited in a Thai bank account will be considered. The value of shares that you have bought of any Thai companies will not be considered, nor will any savings in foreign bank accounts.

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

What kind of health certificate do I need?

I went to the Immigration office in Phuket City to renew my permit to stay. I took the same documents that I took to Immigration in Bangkok last year, but this time I was told that I must provide a medical certificate. However, I was not told what I should be tested for or what the certificate should state. Can you find out?

Roger Neill
Chalong

Pol Capt Krissarat Nuesen, Deputy Inspector of the Phuket Provincial Immigration Office, replies:

Only foreigners staying in Thailand on a "retirement" visa are required to show a medical certificate verifying that the applicant is healthy and does not suffer from elephantiasis, tuberculosis or leprosy, and is not addicted to alcoholic or a user of illegal drugs.

People suffering from any of these conditions are not permitted to enter Thailand.

Exposing all the Dubya dealing

With the American public turn-ing against the Iraq fiasco, authors exposing the sins of Bush are out in droves. And they are not lambasting Dubya alone, but his father and grandfather as well.

First out of the gate is Kevin Phillips with *American Dynasty* (Viking, New York, 2004, 397pp), subtitled: *Aristocracy, Fortune and the Politics of Deceit in the House of Bush*. This was followed by *Ambushed: Secrets of the Bush Family* by Toby Rogers and *House of Bush, House of Saud: The Secret Relationships Between the World's Two Most Powerful Dynasties* by Craig Unger.

They are certainly on to something.

"Four generations of building toward dynasty have infused the Bush family's hunger for power and practices of crony capitalism with a moral arrogance and backstage disregard of the democratic and republican traditions of US government," Phillips writes in his preface to *American Dynasty*.

This is not a Michael Moore-type liberal speaking. The author of 10 books on politics and economics, Kevin Phillips was a staunch Republican in his youth

and middle age. During the Nixon years, he wrote the seminal *The Emerging Republican Majority*. Only his disdain for the elder Bush turned him into a political independent.

Phillips goes back to the modern founder of the dynasty, James Bush, an Episcopalian minister, the first of the five generations to attend Yale. His son, Samuel Bush, manufactured railroad equipment in Ohio and moved into the close-knit investor circle of the Rockefeller, Harriman and Morgan clans.

His son, Prescott, a handsome, gifted athlete at Yale, came under the tutelage of a wheeler-dealer named George Herbert Walker and entered into the nexus of international oil investment and post-World War I weapons dealing (including to Nazi Germany) before becoming a two-term senator from Connecticut.

George Herbert Walker Bush followed in his footsteps into Yale and the Skull and Bones secret society (incubator of CIA agents) but then moved to Texas to plunge deeper into the oil business.

Here is Phillips' take on Bush Snr's 12 years as vice-president and president: "Whatever other geopolitical hand George Bush might have preferred, his

cards for 1981 to 1992 had essentially been dealt: crisis management, covert operations, and a reindulged CIA; multibillion-dollar guerrilla warfare in Afghanistan; the byzantine Iran-Israel relationship and the bitter Iran-Iraq war; the clandestine but flagrant US arming of Saddam Hussein; the transformation of parts of the Middle East into insect colonies of arms dealers, corrupt banks, and drug dealers; and a gathering blowback against US policies and activities from Palestine to Peshawar."

George W Bush followed exactly in his footsteps: Yale, Skull and Bones, oil business in Texas. Yet he was strikingly different from his father.

"What was different was [George W] Bush's nonélite demeanour: the cow country accent, the rumpled clothing, the chewing tobacco, the style of religiosity, the moral fundamentalism, the outsider language, the disdain for the Harvards and Yales, the six-gun geopolitics, and not least the garb of a sinner rescued from drink and brought to God by none other than evangelist Billy Graham."

It is Dubya's playing of the redneck religious card – in contrast to his father's genteel Episcopalian mien – that Phillips



Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt

identifies as his strongest political suit. The fundamentalist rhetoric won him two terms as Texas governor and may win him another term in the White House – always in the service of big oil interests and the investor class in general.

American Dynasty is generally well-written, though there are some boring patches and some padding – excursions into Restoration England or Bourbon France, for example. But his conclusion, circling back to Iraq, is iron-clad:

"Through four vice presidential and presidential terms, two emblematic wars with Iraq, and an unknown number of covert operations, the fortunes of the United States in the world's principal cockpit of diplomacy and religious fervour would be significantly swayed by a single family's entanglements, mistakes, financial alliances, and commitments."

American Dynasty is among the best in the recent tsunami of anti-Bush books. Expect that wave to crest even higher as the election heats up, but to break suddenly and vanish altogether if American voters send Dubya back to his ranch.

Dangers of Office Service Pack

Q I use Outlook. While going through my mail the other day, after I had finished reading an email from a friend I accidentally clicked on the Junk key instead of Delete.

Now all email from that friend no longer lands in my Inbox. How can I stop this from happening?

I have missed several important emails from that friend, but I have known about this only since my friend called me out of concern that I had not replied to his emails.

JT
Phuket City

COMPUTER Q&A

By Woody Leonhard

A You can change the Junk mail filters you have made for Outlook 2003 by going to Actions | Junk Mail | Junk Mail Options | Blocked Senders. Scroll down the list, click on any senders who should not be there and hit Remove.

Sadly there's no Find option nor sorting available to ease access to what can be a very long

list. But there is an option to Export to File which you can use.

Export the existing list to a text file. Then open that file in Notepad or Wordpad, as both of those programs have a Find feature to look for particular domains or strings of characters, and then edit it. Save the edited text file then import it back into Outlook.

Importing the file will add only new entries from the text file to the Blocked Senders list. Deleting an email address from the text file and importing the file will *not* remove the address if it's already stored by Outlook.

You can use the exported text file to help find addresses, and then delete them from within Outlook.

If you make major changes to the text file, such as adding and removing entries, it might be easier to export the existing list, edit it, then delete all entries in Blocked Senders stored in Outlook. Then import your edited list into Outlook so all your changes are in place.

Q I have read that Office XP Service Pack 3 is available from Microsoft, but I am reluctant to download and install it – I have done this before with other Service Packs (SPs) and have regretted it.

On one occasion, after I installed an SP, Outlook became unstable, crashing unpredictably, as did other programs until I uninstalled the SP. What do you suggest? Office XP SP3 has been available for nearly two months but I have heard few reports advising whether users should or should not install it.

RJ
Chalong

A Yup, there's a service pack available for Office XP users, but before you go rushing off to get it, make sure you get any necessary updates to other software.

The SP contains mostly security updates and includes anything in previous SPs or updates. All of that is a good thing.

However, Office XP SP3 was not widely circulated in the developer community before its release. This means that some Office add-ins, notably anti-spam features for Outlook 2002, won't work anymore.

That has left the makers of those add-ins scrambling to identify problems and release updates. This is something that the Softies could have avoided if they had wished to, but presum-

ably either they didn't know or they don't care about the consequences for customers.

I know that I Hate Spam and Junk-Out have both been updated to cope with SP3, so if you have an anti-spam package with Outlook 2002 you might want to ensure that it is compatible before installing SP3.

It's not just spam programs that are affected. I've heard that the online meeting software WebEx also has trouble running after SP3 has been installed.

Because of these problems I cannot recommend that anyone install Office XP SP3 at this stage.

Microsoft is being typically silent on the matter, and none of the common compatibility problems are even hinted at among the "Known Issues" that come with the update.

The poor service of the Office update team contrasts with the Windows team. Windows XP has a service pack coming and a release candidate for that will be available for all who need it to test and adapt.

It's worth an early warning that the Windows XP SP will have serious consequences for more than a few programs, so caution will be needed before updating.

Once I know more I will give you a clearer picture of how and when to update to Office XP SP3.

Computer questions? Send them to woody@khunwoody.com

The Phuket Gazette

While you are at the airports, get a copy of a latest Phuket Gazette at:

Bangkok International Airport

King Power Shop, 1st and 2nd floor domestic flight building
King Power Shop, 2nd floor international flight building

Phuket International Airport

Book Corner, 2nd floor, next to Jim Thomson
Book Corner, domestic flight departure lounge
Book Corner, international flight lounge

Krabi Airport

Book Corner, next to the Thai Airways check-in counter



BGH to take over Phuket hospital

By Anongnat Sartpisut

PHUKET: Bangkok Dusit Medical Services PCL, better known by its stock market moniker BGH, will buy 51% of shares in the privately-owned Bangkok Phuket Hospital (BPK), giving it 100% ownership of the medical facility.

The move is part of a grand strategy – BGH is also buying out the remaining 67% of shares in affiliate Samitivej Plc and the 32% of shares in the Bangkok Hat Yai Hospital that it doesn't already own. Once completed, these deals will make BGH Thailand's largest operator of private hospitals. BGH has also bought 20% of Ramkamhaeng Hospital for 360 million baht.

No money will change hands; the

takeovers will be achieved through share swaps. Dr Surapong Lookhanumanchao, Hospital Director of BPK, explained that, BGH has offered to swap 1.48 BPK shares for one BGH share. To cover the swap, it will issue an extra 180 million shares.

Although the BPK takeover has yet to be approved at a shareholder's meeting to be held early in August, Dr Surapong said, "All the private shareholders have agreed to the takeover because they will benefit from the share swap."

Piyanoot Hongsyok, a member of BPK's board of directors and of Anuphas & Sons, which owns 15% of BPK, told the *Gazette* she was in favor of the deal.

"It is good news for shareholders. It will [also] greatly benefit customers as it will improve BPK's standards," she said.

Existing shareholders have also injected 100 million baht into the hospital in a capital call that closed today. Dr Surapong explained that the cash injection will be used to build a new 350-bed wing at the hospital with facilities to treat up to 1,000 outpatients a day.

Dr Surapong said that he expected the buyout to be complete by November. The hospital will continue to be known as the Bangkok Phuket Hospital. "Our management teams will still be the same, but after the takeover BGH management and consultants will coordinate with us closely in matters of treatment, research and development, and technology," he said.

Dr Surapong added that the BPK's growth was on par with BGH's hospitals. "Last year BPK had revenue of 500 mil-

lion baht. During the first half of this year, our revenue has grown by 30%. We expect about 670 million baht revenue for this year," he said.

He added that the move will strengthen BGH's dominant position in the Thai healthcare market.

"BGH holds 12%-15% of the national market and will buy out the remaining shares of the Samitivej Hospital Group, which owns two hospitals in Bangkok and a third in Sri Racha in Chon Buri [province].

"In the first quarter of this year, revenue from each BGH hospital has grown by 30%. After merging with [Samitivej], we expect 7-8 billion baht revenue a year. In five years, we expect about 20 billion baht revenue [a year]."

Fundamentally, a good investment idea

A very popular method of investing is to use a fund. However, while many people have heard of some of the terms used in association with funds, the meanings often remain something of a mystery to them.

The term "fund" includes unit trusts, mutual funds and investment trusts, along with offshore funds and other similar in-

On the Move

Bangkok-born **Peerapong Supourut** has been appointed General Manager of The Metropole hotel in Phuket City. He has worked in hotel sales and marketing since 1980, with previous positions at the Windsor Hotel in Bangkok, the Grand Palace Pattaya and the River Kwai Village in Kanchanaburi. Before being named GM, he was The Metropole's Director of Sales.



The new Reservations Manager at Le Royal Meridien Phuket Yacht Club is **Orawan Suphanphong**. The 30-year-old Surat Thani native holds a degree in liberal arts from Phuket Rajabhat University. Before moving to the Yacht Club, she worked as revenue analyst at Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort in Karon for nine years.



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

vestment vehicles. The first two are identical: the phrase unit trust originated in the UK while the term mutual fund is used in the US. The world's first collective investment scheme was launched in the UK in 1868 by asset management group Foreign & Colonial, which still exists today.

Collective investments, such as unit trusts and mutual funds, take in money from the public and other investors, such as pension funds. The total investment is broken into units of a certain price, say US\$10.

The value of the unit rises and falls with the value of the assets represented by a unit. Extra units are created when money is added to the fund, and units are cancelled when the units bought back by the fund exceed new money received.

This form of investment has become popular throughout the world with many trillions of dollars and other currencies invested in this manner.

Some investors avoid any involvement with funds, mainly because of a lack of investment knowledge or a desire to avoid the fees levied by funds managers.

But investing in the stock-market directly can be dangerous, as investors try to become "stock pickers". The most com-



MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson

mon danger is the lack of appropriate information available on which to base an investment decision.

An individual, in 99% of cases, does not have access to the wealth of knowledge available to a professional analyst. What is certain is that the individual investor will not be invited to attend analysts' conferences hosted by individual companies.

Despite governments' attempts to make the information distributed at these conferences available to individual investors, companies never release all the information.

Very often, the study of an individual company requires that investors have an in-depth knowledge not only of the company but also of the sector that the company trades in.

Such a wealth of knowledge is required that even an individual with good knowledge of how to use the vast resources of the Internet is at a disadvantage compared with professional investors.

An individual's investment

decisions may not be based purely on when to buy or when to sell, especially in the stockmarket. Investors become sentimentally attached to shares, and those holding shares long term usually lose touch with the company's share performance in overall terms, sector terms and market terms.

The most extreme example I have ever seen was in February 1997. The investor was retired and had well over US\$1 million (40 million baht) invested in a portfolio of shares in Hong Kong.

This represented more than three quarters of his capital. He had no knowledge of the individual shares; everything was thrown into a large drawer.

I recommended that he diversify and use professional management, but to no avail. About five months later came the Asian financial crisis.

Today, using the Hang Seng index in Hong Kong to measure his portfolio's performance, it has still to recover to its value of seven years ago.

Funds offer investors a tremendous range of choices, from money market funds, which invest only in cash and short-dated bonds, to bond funds to cautiously-to-aggressively managed and balanced-managed funds.

There are many choices of funds, including regional funds

such as Asia, Europe, North America or even global. These are by no means the only choices; some funds cover small companies, others cover large companies and some are even tied to an index, such as the Standard & Poors 500, the FT All Share Index, the Nikkei 25 or whatever.

Many people equate funds with stock markets, but in reality the assets held by funds worldwide in cash and bonds are far greater than those held in stock markets.

Funds also invest in real estate, both commercial and residential, and ground rents as well as secondhand endowment policies. I have yet to see a Persian carpet fund, but there are funds of one form or another that invest in most other areas.

Funds give investors the ability to access a wide variety of assets and at the same time have the advantage of professional management.

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: 01-081-4611. Email: imm@loxinfo.co.th.



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● Lock systems and equipment	● Measuring tools and meters
● Air-conditioning and heating systems	● Pool and spa systems
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● Kitchen systems for hotels and restaurants	● All kinds of flooring materials
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● Auditorium equipment	● Computer-operated Controls and Intelligent home systems
● Safes, fire extinguishers and security systems	● Cable TV and Satellite TV systems
● General services	● Publications relevant to the industry, Internet services
● Web designers	

You absolutely should not miss this unique opportunity to look at an enormous variety of exhibits, ranging from construction materials, tools, architectural design to every type of home decoration need. Highlights of the show will include a special exhibition of ready-to-assemble Thai-style houses, the unique ceramic tiles, as fitted in the world's largest swimming pool—situated at the Novotel in Khao Lak and now featured in the Guinness Book of Records—and special construction techniques for building energy-saving homes, high-tech homes and low-cost homes.

Such an exciting display has not been seen in Phuket before, and it will be of great interest to individual home-owners, architects, engineers, contractors, foremen, hotel and spa owners and development companies alike.

After recovering from negative impact caused by the SARS crisis, Phuket and other provinces in the Andaman region remain the fastest growing area in Thailand. Apart from growth in the hotel and tourism sector, more than a hundred building projects are in construction at the moment, including luxury housing projects and large shopping centres such as Central Festival, Jungceylon (with 100,000 square metres of Life Style Centre), and the Macro megastore. The building boom is happening now and this exhibition provides the opportunity of seeing a wide choice of materials and techniques available.

As July is the low tourist season, it is the ideal time of the year to introduce new construction materials and interior design items to the building industry. Many home-owners, housing developments, resorts, spas and hotels will want to utilize this quiet period to build or renovate their properties, so that work is finished before the next high season starts in November.

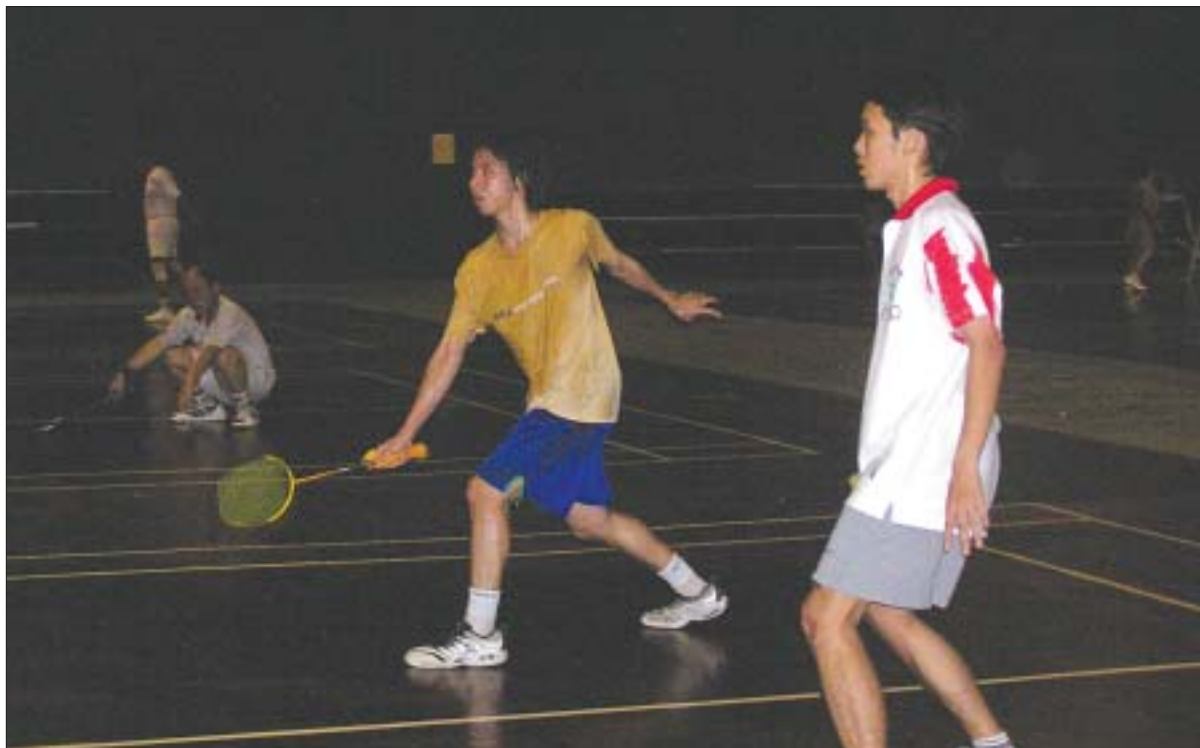
Visitors to the exhibition are also cordially invited to attend three free seminars. The first, 'Asian Style in Modern Architecture', will be of special interest to developers and architects; the second, 'Professional in Construction Management', will be of special interest to engineers and contractors; and the third, '108 Problems with Air-Conditioning Systems' will be of special interest to engineers and contractors.

For information, please contact: Delice Thai Co. Ltd. 22 Soi Indramara 51 Suttisan Road Bangkok 10320 www.aashow.com

Phuket Office: 109-111 Satun Rd, Talad Nua, Muang, Phuket 83000 Tel: 076 214804, 076 258417-9 Fax: 076 210320



Courting with speed skills



A good eye, lightning-fast reflexes and partners whom you don't mind swapping are essential ingredients for a good game of badminton.

By Anongnat Sartpisut

Badminton seems such an easy game to play: simply hit the shuttle back over the net but land it within the boundaries of the court. It also requires little in the way of equipment, just a racket apiece and a shuttlecock and it can be played just as easily indoors or outdoors. Which is just as well, really, as Phuket has few indoor courts.

Early evening, as the day starts to cool, the sight of people playing badminton by the road or in their gardens is a common one. However, being a good badminton player takes good tactics, concentration and a supple body to win. And it is not easy to go from being a skilled outdoor player to a skilled indoor player – or vice versa.

Outdoor players hone their skills to counter the effects of wind and an often uneven playing surface. Indoor players, on the other hand, develop their skills in an environment that is

not subject to these factors. That said, indoor players can be impeded by low ceilings. High shots can sometimes exceed 30 feet in height, and incidentally, some of the top players can make the shuttlecock whip through the air at 150mph (240kmh) or more.

Most outdoor, casual players have a rudimentary court set-up, but a proper court must, according to International Badminton Federation rules of play, measure 44ft (13.4 meters) in length by 17ft (5.18m) for singles play and 44ft by 20ft (6.1m) for doubles. The net should be 5ft (1.52m) high at the center and an inch higher at the ends.

Doubles matches are preferred by many players for a number of reasons, not least of which are sociability – you need a partner and can make new friends – and the fact that the effort is shared between two players, neither of whom has to work as hard as in singles play.

Doubles play also helps novice players to develop their skills; find an experienced player

and they become a resource for learning skills and the many rules and regulations of the sport.

At club level, badminton throws up new players and new challenges. Players must learn quickly the strengths, weaknesses and tactics of their opponent. Time can fly by, and some players carry on for hours at a time, swapping partners and playing new opponents in best-of-three contests.

In all, badminton can be summed up as a game in which, “Think fast, move fast,” are the fundamental skills that focus the mind and make for great aerobic exercise.

It's also a lot of fun.

Phuket Badminton Club, at Saphan Hin, is open from 4pm to 10pm daily and offers memberships for an initial registration of 300 baht and 200 baht a year thereafter. Courts can be booked for 10 baht. Contact Peeraphan Pinyowattanaporn, Vice-Chairman of Phuket Badminton Club at Tel: 076-216921 for more details.

Jao Surakul joy

SAPHAN HIN: The San Pitak team were perhaps lucky to concede only five goals against opponents Jao Surakul in the Phuket City Municipality Futsal Tournament on June 30 at Saphan Hin.

Jao Surakul were fielding five players from the Thai national futsal squad, which came third behind Iran and Japan in the Asian Futsal Cup played in Macao in April.

San Pitak surprised their opponents just five minutes into the first half when Preerapol Kreasombat placed the ball in the back of Jao Surakul's goal.

The spectators had to wait until the 12th minute for the favorites to equalize with a goal by national squad player Prasert Innui. Jao Surakul took the lead in the 15th minute when Narongsak Khong-kaew – another national squad player – hammered one home just before the end of the first 20-minute half.

Jao Surakul looked confident as the second half began but were rocked by plucky San Pitak who produced a near-action replay of their first-half goal. Panlop Puthisri landed a neat kick in the 25th minute to level the score at 2-2.

However, talent won out and the Jao Surakul players employed their signature tactics of

quick passing and tight defensive play to see Prasert score in the 28th and again in the 30th minute to scoop his hat trick.

Jao Surakul's Narongsak took the score to 5-2 in the penultimate minute of play.

Although Jao Surakul received 30,000 baht in prize money, the national squad players received a wake-up call to not rest on their laurels.

Jao Surakul coach Aniwat said, “After this match, the national side players will begin training in earnest for the World Futsal Championships in Taiwan in December.”

He added that the Thai national futsal squad will be training under the watchful eye of new coach, Brazilian Glaucio Castro. Asian division leaders Japan and Iran also have Brazilian coaches.

There were three categories – under-13s; under-19s and men's open – at the tournament, which attracted 32 teams.

Overall results (in order):

Men's Open: Jao Surakul; San Pitak; Bunker Pub; Trakul Poo.

Under-19s: Trakul Poo; Phang Nga Pimscreen; Dek Thajin; R-zooji A

Under-13s: Nakha Sport; Plookpanya A; Wat Latthiwanaram; Plookpanya B.

– Anongnat Sartpisut

Patong Darts League update

Results of June 29 matches: Amigos 4 Shakers* 5; Happy Days* 6 Football Crazy 3; Champs 4 Didi's* 5; In-Between* 6 Valhalla 3; Piccadilly* 4 Offshore 5.

(* = Winner of beer leg.)

Overall standings after June 29: In-Between (32pts); Happy Days (31); Champs (29); Offshore (27); Football Crazy (21); Shakers (19); Valhalla (18); Amigos (16); Didi's (16); Piccadilly (16)

July 13 matches: Amigos at In-Between; Football Crazy at Offshore; Happy Days at Shakers; Piccadilly at Champs; Valhalla at Didi's.

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Everything starts with an E

Beleaguered Daimler-Chrysler (DC) may have to divest itself of its Mitsubishi stake, following a decision by the advisory board not to spend further funds supporting the ailing Japanese manufacturer.

In addition, Korean giant Hyundai has fallen out with DC executives. Holding only a 10% share, the American-German combine was outvoted and has been forced to sell.

But the good news is that the Mercedes-Benz marque continues to gather speed. Profits are up and a raft of new models are either on the way or have been recently introduced, the latest being the trendy SLK Roadster.

The expansion into nascent markets is beginning to pay off, with C- and E-Class models now being built in China.

The E-Class was launched in 1995, and to date an amazing 1.4 million units have been sold, making it the most successful sedan in its segment worldwide; it has an average of 24% of total sales in its segment, though in some countries the percentage has been as high as 40%. In many years sales have topped 200,000 worldwide.

Built principally at Mercedes-Benz's largest plant at Sindelfingen, just outside Stuttgart, the third generation E-Class looks set to emulate the unprec-

edented success of its forebears. At the Geneva Motor Show in March this year, journalists had the chance to test the mettle of the new E-Class when tem-



The new E-Class Mercedes-Benz is lighter and more fuel-efficient, yet stronger than its predecessor.



peratures plummeted and snow began to fall.

A welcome advance they noticed was the excellent Electronic Stability Program (ESP), which cuts power and applies brakes individually in the event of traction being lost. A miniature warning triangle appears on the instrument panel to alert the driver that the ESP has kicked in.

A further addition is the new Airmatic air suspension. This improves ride comfort, but also uses electronic sensors to control both springing and damping.

The sensors constantly monitor road conditions, driving style and load, selecting the op-



timum shock absorber and spring settings.

There is a choice of five different engines – three gasoline and two diesel – available for the new E-Class. The popular middle-of-the-range E240 features a three-valve-per-cylinder 2.6-liter V6 gasoline engine producing a

more-than-adequate 177bhp (130kW), delivered at 5,700rpm. Torque output is a strong 240Nm at 4,500rpm.

A five-speed automatic gearbox is standard, but a six-speed manual can be specified as an option.

Performance of the E240 with either transmission is similar: a 0-100kmh sprint time a shade over nine seconds and a top speed of around 230kmh.

Certain improvements to the body have reduced fuel consumption and contributed greatly to passenger safety. The front and rear crumple zones are larger than in the outgoing model, while the hood, front fender, trunk lid and parts of the front and rear

modules are all made of aluminum. Other parts throughout the E-Class are also made of high-strength alloys, providing improved safety with minimum weight.

Side airbags for front-seat occupants, large window bags, belt pre-tensioners and a roll-over sensor are all included as standard safety features.

In Thailand – the principal market for Mercedes-Benz in Southeast Asia – the E-Class, as well its C- and S-Class sisters, are the segment leaders. It seems that Mercedes-Benz can't put a foot – or a tire – wrong.

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

BEHIND THE WHEEL

By Jeff Heselwood

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Karon Beach, opposite Islandia Hotel www.otools-phuket.com

Otowa, on the coast road to the north of Patong Beach, was renowned for its Japanese cuisine long before chef Junji Katakura arrived in December last year.

But things have changed under Junji, who has spent most of his culinary career preparing French food. He is now responsible for the exciting medley of Japanese and French dishes available at Otowa.

"I grew up in Hokkaido, the northernmost island of Japan," explains Junji. "My dream was always to leave and this was realized when I went to work at the Hotel de Paris in Monaco. Before that, I had worked for about 17 years in Japan, where I learned the art of French cooking."

Junji has moved on again – to Phuket – and is enjoying creating fusion dishes. "Japanese and French food blend together very well," he says. "But there's no reason why you can't mix Japanese with other types of food. For example, a sushi pizza is a great meal."

Tropical Seafood Salad For 4 people

Ingredients:

8 medium-size prawns;
8 tuna fillets and 8 red snapper fillets, each weighing about 80g;
4 sliced Phuket abalone;
4 salmon fillets, each weighing about 50g;
1 small iceberg lettuce, chopped;
½ a leek, julienned;
1 small cup of diced, mixed tropical fruit.

To make the vinaigrette dressing:

100ml olive oil;
30ml white wine vinegar;
1 tablespoon chopped shallots;
Salt and pepper to taste.

To make the sauce:

2 egg yolks;
30ml balsamic vinegar;
20ml red wine vinegar;
1 tablespoon mustard;
Salt and pepper to taste;
300ml olive oil;
1 tablespoon water.

Method:

Blend the ingredients for the vinaigrette together and set aside. Do the same for the sauce. Cut the fish fillets into strips about 2.5cm wide.

Put some chopped lettuce in



Far left, Chef Junji Katakura. Left, Tropical Seafood Salad and, below left, Terrine of Vegetables with Smoked Salmon.

Guest chef

By Jenna Wise

For the garnish:

8 sun-dried tomatoes;
Sprigs of fresh dill.

Method:

Remove the stalk and cut each cabbage leaf in half. Blanch these by placing them in a pan of boiled water for about 30 seconds, then in a large bowl of iced water. Lightly boil all the other vegetables before putting them into the iced water too.

Immerse the gelatin leaves in cold water and ice for 10 minutes.

Heat the chicken bouillon and add the gelatin with some salt and pepper. Remove from the heat and stir until the gelatin dissolves.

To make the terrine, line the cake tin with cling wrap. Dip the cabbage leaves in the cooled chicken bouillon and line the tin with them. Dip the other vegetables in the bouillon and form into layers in the tin – put the smoked salmon in about halfway through. Peel off the leek leaves and layer these and the other vegetables.

When the tin is full, put cabbage leaves on top and press a weight onto the terrine. Refrigerate for an hour. Turn out the terrine and cut into 2-cm-thick slices.

To make the tomato sauce, put the ingredients into a blender and blend until smooth. Serve a slice of the terrine with sauce on the side. Garnish with two sun-dried tomatoes and a sprig of dill for each plate.

Otowa restaurant, 223/3 Phra Baramee Road, Patong, Phuket 83150. Tel: 076 344254. Open daily for lunch from noon to 3 pm and for dinner from 6 to 11 pm.

Fusion food with Japanese dash



the center of a plate and cover with a portion of each type of the raw fish and seafood. Cover this with more lettuce and drizzle with sauce.

Spread a small handful of leek julienne on top. Serve mixed tropical fruit on the side with a little vinaigrette over it.

Terrine of Vegetables with Smoked Salmon For 4 people

Ingredients:

½ a cabbage;
200g broccoli florets, cut small;

150g cauliflower florets, cut small;
100g thin asparagus heads;
100g carrots, cut into matchstick size;
80g leek, uncut;
50g mange tout, topped and tailed;
50g smoked salmon fillets;
300ml chicken bouillon;
15g gelatin leaves;

Salt and pepper;
An oblong cake tin, about 15cm long, 8cm wide and 8cm deep.

For the tomato sauce:

2 tablespoons tinned tomatoes;
2 tablespoons finely chopped onion;
Salt and pepper to taste;
1 tablespoon vinaigrette dressing (from the seafood salad recipe).



Construction Update

by Anongnat Sartpisut

KOH KAEW: The first 200-berth phase of the Royal Phuket Marina (RPM) complex is on track for completion in May next year.

Warwick Barnes, Sales and Marketing Manager of the mammoth project, said that even though official marketing has not yet begun, 25% of the first phase of five condominium blocks comprising 80 units of two- to four-bedroom apartments has already been sold.

"Construction of the first phase, including excavation of the marina basin and the opening of a breach in the coastline began in February," Mr Barnes said. "The facilities here will be ready to accept the first boats by the end of this year."

Explaining the siting of the marina, he said that the east coast of the island is affected far less by the annual monsoons and winds, and there is a thriving community along the east coast between the existing Yacht Haven in the north of the island and the Boat Lagoon, next to which RPM is being built.

"This area, Phang Nga Bay, is the best part of Thailand for sailing. You can sail all year round, whether it is the monsoon season or not."

"Sailing is a boom industry for Phuket, and marinas are an obvious necessity. Boat Lagoon is now full – RPM will take some of its excess capacity before it has been completed – and the Yacht Haven is too far away [for many boat owners]," Mr Barnes said.

But the new marina will not be exclusively for those who like messing about in boats. "Obvi-



Above: The basin in Phase 1 is now complete and has been filled with water. Below: artist's impression of one of the Luxury villas, which are priced at 56 million baht upward.

Marina first phase on target

ously, the key market for the residential units is yachties and other boating enthusiasts," he explained. "But of the 16 condo units sold so far, only four of the buyers have boats. People are buying into [RPM] for the lifestyle, not just the sailing."

An ayurvedic spa, fitness center, children's club and an all-suite hotel, as well as the all important yacht club and even a jazz club will be built on the site to supplement the lifestyle options.

When complete, the entire project – being built at a cost of 6 billion baht – will cover some 190 rai. Phase 1 will feature up-market shops and a range of cafés and restaurants along a 250-meter boardwalk, as well as apartments and nine villas enclosing the marina on three sides.

Construction of the 150-berth Phase 2, which will include a further 12 condo blocks, 30 "Luxury" villas, eight "Deluxe" villa blocks each with four individual homes, and nine "Grand"



villas, is scheduled to begin a year or so after the initial phase has been completed.

The condo blocks are in a "U" shape around a shared swimming pool, and most of the residents will have a good view of the marina. The apartments have two or three bedrooms and living space of 157 square meters to 253sqm respectively.

Countering comments that a 157sqm apartment priced at 9.95 million baht might be regarded as expensive, Mr Barnes said, "Yes, there are cheaper developments on the island but none of them has the same standards of construction, materials or luxury as RPM is offering."

The 253-sqm two-bedroom apartments are for sale at 10.5 million baht. Luxury and Grand

villas in Phase 1 vary in living space from 802sqm to 1,250sqm, and are priced from 56 million baht to 68 million baht, depending on location and internal specifications. Four of the nine villas have already been sold or reserved.

Mr Barnes expects 75% of the buyers to be foreign. A good deal of interest is being expressed, he said, by people from Hong Kong, Singapore, Britain and other parts of Europe.

Warwick Barnes can be contacted at the Royal Phuket Marina, 68 Moo 2 Thepkasattri Rd, Koh Kaew, Muang, Phuket 83000. Tel: 076-239762; Fax: 076-239756; Email: paradise@royalphuketmarina.com; Website: royalphuketmarina.com.

Home of the Week

Many developments advertise themselves as "ocean view", but with many of them you find that you can see the sea only through the trees, or round the side of the balcony, or at least partially blocked by something. With this home at Kamala, it is refreshing to find that it offers sea views and that is precisely what you get.

Indeed, spectacular sunset views can be enjoyed from most of the apartments and villas at The Plantation, where this week's home – the estate's show apartment – is now for sale.

The unit comprises 225 square-meters of interior space with amazing views overlooking the ocean from the south end of Kamala Bay. A side entrance opens to the large open-plan kitchen, dining and lounge areas combined, which have great views. The interior design, created by the innovative firm Naga Concepts, features a lot of glass, meaning that there is a large amount of natural light, giving the unit a spacious, airy feel.

The kitchen is equipped with a cooker and oven, double sinks, cupboards and storage units. Dividing the kitchen and dining area is an breakfast bar/counter unit with storage drawers on one side. The eating area and the bar, topped with a black marble working surface, is large enough for three people to eat in comfort.

All along the sea-view side of the dining and lounge areas are sliding glass doors, which recess into the walls when opened, allowing the cool sea breeze to add to the open-air feel.

The terrace is partly covered by wooden slats that are designed to support vines and other hanging plants to provide a shaded area on the balcony.

The guest bedroom, with its en-suite bathroom, is set behind the living area. It has a wooden sliding door, which recesses into the wall, providing direct views of the ocean.

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Kamala



Above: Sea view? Oh yes.
Left and above left: the
dining room and living
rooms are bright and airy.



Currently the bedroom floor is covered with rustic white tiles, but these will be changed to teak parquet.

Next to the living room is a 15-square-meter study, with great sea views and doors opening onto a balcony.

Accessed through the study is the master bedroom, with its large four-post bed and ample wardrobe space.

The spacious master bathroom has "his and her" sink units and a large shower cubicle with double shower heads. Both the guest and master bathrooms are finished with white mosaic tiled floors and walls.

A door from the master bathroom opens onto a private

walled area with an open-air terrazzo bathtub, where you can look out at the ocean with champagne in hand.

Included in the price is a comprehensive furniture package that includes all the buyer needs to move straight into the unit, right down to the plates and cutlery.

But what is most striking about this unit is the great sea views and the bright, airy, spacious atmosphere. Definitely part of the Phuket dream.

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The world is getting more and more politically correct by the day. Luckily, here in Thailand we're less affected by the wave of people telling us that we can't call short people dwarves, or must rename the population of the world "humankind". They'll probably be calling the fairer sex "wo-humans" next.

The word "dumb" falls into the category of words we're not allowed to use anymore. Many years ago it was used to describe people who couldn't speak for some reason, and more recently to identify people somewhat lacking in intellectual ability.

Fortunately, the gardening world hasn't been affected by the insanity of political correctness, and we can still call a spade a spade. The dumb cane, or mother-in-law plant, is a case in point.

Some would argue that it received its politically rather incorrect name from what many people would like their mother-in-law to become, but most would agree that it actually was named after the effect of chewing its poisonous leaves.

Apparently dumb canes contain several noxious, irritating substances such as needle-like calcium oxalate crystals that affect the throat and larynx if swallowed, making it difficult to speak. Turn this charmer of a plant into a meal and it may even be fatal.

But there is an upside. The dumb cane, or *dieffenbachia*,

Getting really dumb



Not so dumb: the Dieffenbachia.

looks impressive and is an ideal way to fill a corner in a shady area. It has a stem about 5cm across, and big leaves that are usually about 30cm long and have light-to-dark green and white, cream or yellow markings. Most dumb canes have leaves growing out of a single stem. There are several varieties, but they all revolve around the "pale creams and greens" theme.

It's not a difficult plant to look after and will demand very little from you. Like most other

plants it needs watering regularly, without allowing things to get too soggy. But the main demand it will make of you is its location. The dumb cane has a lot in common with a high-season tourist – it will suffer seriously in the Phuket sun. Sunlight burns the leaves, making them dry and curl up. Put it in the shade.

Propagating dumb canes isn't exactly rocket science; simply cut a length as little as 15cm long from the stem, and stick it in some moist soil. It'll grow.

Another factor to bear in mind is that as this is not a particularly child-friendly plant, it shouldn't be near kids, just in case they try to chew on it. Even cutting and repotting the dumb cane needs a bit of caution – the juices aren't gentle to the skin, either.

These plants grow like lunatics. A few years ago I had a carport with a rather boring wall on one side, with large expanses of glass bricks in the upper reaches of the wall. I bought a couple of dumb canes and sat them at the foot of the wall. They grew. And they grew toward the light, and all the leaves turned to face the open front of the carport.

Then they stopped growing, and started to lean over as if they were drunk. I wired them to the wall to try and keep them upright, and almost overnight all the leaves turned and faced the nearest source of light – the glass bricks above them.

If you ever see dumb canes in a shaded area, such as in a shopping mall or a hotel lobby, all the leaves will always be facing the direction providing the maximum amount of light, like obedient soldiers. Dumb canes have figured this out for themselves, so perhaps they aren't so dumb after all.

Down to brass tax

Property sales always incur closing costs and although these are generally fair and reasonable in Thailand, one should still understand how the final figure is calculated.

Apart for the costs of drafting sale contracts – which are not significant in simple transactions but can rise if the deal is complex – there are four areas where fees and taxes will be levied. These are paid to the Land Office or Revenue Department at the point of sale of a property.

All property transactions incur stamp duty of 0.5%. Depending upon whether the transaction is a lease or a sale, either a 1% registration fee or a 2% transfer fee will also be applied. These fees are collected by the Land Office.

The transaction may be subject to business tax of 3.3%. This is applied to all sales by companies and, since an amendment to existing laws intended to reduce speculation in property, to any private vendor sale that takes place within five years of the date of the original purchase.

Where due, business tax by individuals is paid to the Revenue Department desk in the Land Office at the point of sale. Companies, however, pay it later as part of their monthly tax payments.

Next comes the income tax assessment, again paid to the Revenue Department desk at the Land Office. This is where things start to become more complicated.

Unlike in many Western countries, there is no capital gains tax on private sales in Thailand. In private sales, a 5% withholding tax is taken and features as an adjustment in your year-end tax returns. Most people, however, find it more efficient to request that the tax be calculated at the point of sale. The calculation is made according to a taxation table that says, in essence, that the longer you own the property, the greater the proportion of its value is taxable.

The "annual income" is calculated by dividing the taxable income into the number of years of ownership and then multiply-

ing this amount by the applicable personal income tax rates for those years.

This, in practice, works out at less than 2% of the price for properties of low-to-medium value. Higher marginal tax rates for large incomes can push the figure significantly higher for very valuable properties.

Corporate sales incur a 1% withholding, which is taken at the point of sale. Funds raised through the sale then appear on the corporate balance sheet.

In light of all of the separate tax components listed, you may find the earlier "fair and reasonable" comment a little odd.

However, take comfort in the fact that transfer fees and income withholding taxes are not based upon actual market rates but on government book values for property. These are known as minimum assessed values.

Occasionally these are higher than the true price but more commonly, they are a fraction of the market value. This is because

market rates are rising faster than the assessed minimum values can be updated.

Assessed values vary from 30% to 80% of the market value with book prices for condos being closest to the true market value. Prices for raw land are the furthest from the market price.

Business tax, if applied, along with stamp duty, are levied on the declared price of the property. In practice therefore, the total cost of the sale will be much lower than the base fees would initially suggest.

There is no fixed rule as to whether the buyer or the seller should pay the various fees and taxes. In general, the matter is negotiated between the parties and costs are usually split. It is important that any such agreement is stated in the sale contract.

William Pinsent has lived in Phuket since 1981 and is a director of Phuket Land Ltd. More articles by the author can be found at www.phuketland.com/gaz/gazmain.htm



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APARTMENT

in Patong. Careful tenant wants apartment in Patong for long term. Max rent: 10,000 baht/month. Email: info@swiss-webs.com

HOUSE WITH POOL

required. Patong/Kalim area or very close. Prefer 3 beds and a study/office area. Very long-term rental, references available. Prefer negotiable prices. Tel: 07-8914882. Email: mail@seftonhanley.com

LONG-TERM RENT

Seeking 2-3 bedroom house with good parking in Patong or Kalim for long-term rent (minimum of 1 year). Tel: 09-809-3566. Email: lennartviberg@hotmail.com

NEED QUALITY

place to stay. Looking for a quality bungalow to rent long term. Requirements: 3 bedrooms, aircon, pool (shared is fine), phone line and preferably broadband Internet, quiet area, security and parking. Prefer close to either Rawai or Marina. Send offers, preferably with photos. Email: bsc2703@yahoo.com.sg

GOOD PATONG APT

I would like to rent a neat, small house, condo or apartment for October. Later I will be able to rent your apt for longer periods. I prefer Patong or areas within 15 minutes' drive. Email: onset2005@yahoo.com

LOOKING FOR HOUSE

Need to find a house by end of August. Areas of preference: 1. Chalong, 2. Chao Fa Rd (Chalong-Phuket City), 3. Rawai/Nai Harn. Requirements: 2 bedrooms, telephone line, minimal mosquitos, Partially furnished. Budget: 7-10,000 baht (will consider higher if house is in good condition, has nice furniture, etc). Email: pantomine_horse@yahoo.com

GOOD PATONG VIEW

Looking for a nice, comfortable apartment in Patong or the Patong area. Must have a good view and be in a safe and quiet location. Swimming pool access and own phone line would be great. If you know of such a dream location in Patong, please email me with details, including price. Email: neighbor007@yahoo.com

LOOKING 4 HOUSE

I am looking for a house with 3 bedrooms and a fenced garden in Karon, Kata, Chalong or Rawai. Contract for 6 months or 1 year, starting from mid-July. Please contact with details. Tel: 01-2787117. Email: uniccoli@hotmail.com

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Island Job Mart



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- Male, over 35 years old
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- Computer, Internet and emailing proficiency.
- Able to work under pressure and handle multiple projects simultaneously.
- Hard working, dynamic, hands on and highly responsible.
- Experienced in resort opening will also be an advantage.

Front Office Manager

- Male or female, ideal age 30-35 yrs.
- Sound knowledge of all front-office and reservation standards, operating procedures with good financial understanding.
- Computer literate in Fidelio, MS Excel & Word.
- Fluent in Thai and spoken English, written English also preferred.
- Must have worked in international-standard hotel, preferably a resort.
- Minimum 2 years as an Asst Manager/Duty Manager, including reservations training.
- Must lead by example, be hands on and create a pro-active team environment.
- Ability to train and develop staff at both supervisory and entry-level staff.

Other position available: Guest Service Officers, Cooks-Thai/Western cuisine, Engineers/Technicians, Boat mechanic, Boat captains, Reservation officers (Koh Lanta & Bangkok office), H/K supervisor, Purchasing officer (Bangkok office).

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Interested candidates, please submit resumé, recent picture and expected salary to:
Fax: 075 607 999 or Email: hr@pimalai.com. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted.

Pimalai Resort & Spa, 99 Moo 5, Ba Kan Tiang Bay, Koh Lanta, Krabi 81150, Thailand

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4. Finishing & Architectural Foreman (Male/2)
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6. Office Clerk (Female/1)
7. Warehouse Officer (Male/1)
8. Construction Heavy Machine Operator (Male/2)

Real Estate Services & Management

1. Villa & Customer Services Manager (Male or Female/1)
2. Secretary of Directors (Male or Female/2)
3. Purchasing Officer (Male or Female/1)
4. Housekeeper Chief (Male or Female/1)
5. Driver (Male/2)

Design & Architectural Department

1. Site Architect (Male/3)
2. Draftsman Structure/Architectural (Male/3)

Applicants are welcome to apply in person or sending your resumé at:

Baan Thai Surin Hill

92/5 Baan Had Surin, Srisoonthorn Rd., Chergtalay, Thalang, Phuket 83110.

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Urgent: I am looking for a single Thai female who is in the Patong Beach area and interested in working as a shop assistant. The candidate should have a high school or vocational diploma, be willing to learn, and able to speak some English. If you are interested in this position, please contact me for an interview. Tel: 09-8746170. Email: jona_0624@hotmail.com

SECRETARY

Representative secretary wanted for land and house project. Candidates must have diploma, CV, and experience in administration, accounting, tax and sales. Good salary. Tel: 07-8938747. Email: platinumresidence1@hotmail.com

CHIEF ACCOUNTANT

needed. Qualifications: BA in accounting; minimum of 5 years' experience in hotels; fluency in English. Please contact to apply. Tel: 075-637015. Fax: 075-695497. Email: savika@krabilaplaya.com

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We are looking for well-qualified and experienced teachers. Full-time and part-time positions available for immediate start. Please contact for more details. Tel: 076-282-232. Fax: 076-381447.

SHOP MANAGER

Thai national wanted to manage a new digital camera shop in Central Festival Phuket. Must be computer literate and have good English-language skills. Knowledge of digital cameras essential. Contact us for details or send resumé to apply. Email: 24322admitry@mail.ru

LIVE-IN MAID WANTED

Must speak English, cook Thai and Western food, and know Thai massage. Excellent salary, food, room in nice condo. Email: jaiyai2547@hotmail.com

PROJECT

coordinator. Must have experience in building. Responsibilities: building coordinator, messenger, cost controller and coordinate building of 21 houses. Must have CV and speak Thai and English. Good salary. Tel: 07-8938747. Email: platinumresidence1@hotmail.com

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Kokawaii, an international young, trendy fashion boutique, is looking for a Thai English-speaking female between 25 to 35 to manage our new shop in Central Festival. Candidate must have retail experience, strong leadership qualities and a passion for fashion. Please forward your CV and recent photo to: tiff@kokawaii.com. For more info call Tel: 07-9380848.

PROPERTY SALES

Due to expansion plans we require 3 experienced Thai sales staff with excellent English and preferably with car. Basic salary and good commission. Tel: 076-280805. Fax: 076-280805. Email: rlusted@siamrealestate.com For further details, please see our website at <http://www.siamrealestate.com>

INTERNET CAFE

Staff wanted for Patong Internet cafe. Please apply. Email: simon47phuket@hotmail.com

SECRETARY

wanted for security firm 6km from Phuket City. Candidate should speak good English and be experienced with Windows and other Microsoft programs. Starting salary: 8,000 baht/month, more depending on experience. Call Tel: 076-239950 or 07-0530470 for more details.

Employment Wanted

GERMAN NATIVE

teacher is looking for a full-time contract with a language school starting from October 2004. Teaching experience and experience in Asia of more than 15 years. CV available upon request. Email: ralf.wirz@web.de

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employment. Swedish man, 38, holding 'B' visa, resident in Phuket for over a year, seeks job in tourism/hotels, IT, security or marketing. Previous experience: Global network manager - Europe (Internet, computer/server, support of WIFI, etc); computer software teacher, and military airforce officer for several years. Have also worked with online hotel bookings as reservations manager in Phuket. Email: patongswede@hotmail.com

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Phuket LandSearch Ltd, the leading property agency in Phuket, is expanding. We are therefore urgently looking for Sales Representatives with the following qualifications:

- Male or female
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FRONT OFFICE

The Mangosteen Resort & Spa, a new high-end boutique resort near Nai Harn Beach, is seeking a Front Office Manager (Thai nationals only) with a minimum of 5 years' experience and an excellent command of the English language. Knowledge of Fidelio Front Office software required. We also need receptionists with experience and a good command of English. Please contact us for details or to apply. Tel: 076-289399. Fax: 076-289389. Email: myfuture@mangosteen-phuket.com

Recruitment



KATATHANI
THAI BEACH RESORTS

Katathani Phuket Beach Resorts is currently seeking highly-qualified professionals with relevant experience for the following positions:

1 Local Sales Manager

Qualifications:

- ☐ Male or female, minimum age of 25
- ☐ 2-3 years' experience in hotel sales and marketing
- ☐ Bachelor's degree or higher
- ☐ Fluent in written and spoken English, other languages will be an advantage
- ☐ Applicant with personal vehicle is preferable
- ☐ Outgoing personality and pro-active

1 Assistant Food & Beverage Manager

for our extensive Food & Beverage operation with 7 outlets and several bars

Qualifications:

- ☐ Thai national, male or female, minimum age of 28
- ☐ Fluent in written and spoken English, other languages will be an advantage
- ☐ Minimum 5 years' experience in a senior Food and Beverage position in a 4-5 star hotel with several outlets
- ☐ A natural, highly-motivated leader with great communication skills and good personal relationship skills
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Please contact Personnel Department
14 Katanol Road, Karon, Muang, Phuket 83100
Tel: 076-330124-6, E-Mail: personnel@katathani.com

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- ▶ Graphic-design skills and knowledge of Adobe Illustrator, PageMaker, Photoshop and Dreamweaver programs are required
- ▶ Freehand drawing and web-design skills are a plus
- ▶ Responsible, hard-working, attention to detail
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ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT

The successful candidate will be a Thai national with an outgoing personality. Also essential are experience in sales and/or administration, a good command of written and spoken English, good management and organizational skills, skills in PageMaker and Office software programs.

Please send your CV to the Personnel Manager.
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Bulletins

A Benefit for Cherie

On June 25, Chompoonut "Jeab" Kobram, was brutally murdered in Pattaya, leaving her beautiful daughter, Cherie, parentless.

As friends and family are coming to terms with the loss of Jeab, their efforts are now turning towards ensuring that Cherie is cared for.

A spirited 3-year-old who never had the chance to know her father, Cherie has not only lost her mother but also her only financial provider. It was Jeab's dream for Cherie to be educated and to have opportunities that Jeab herself never had.

Jeab was a beautiful, charismatic woman who loved life, so her friends and family have decided to throw a party to celebrate her life.

On Saturday, July 17, at Yoonique Stone Music Café, in Nai Harn, there will be live music, a free buffet and fireworks.

The event also aims to raise funds for Cherie's education and future.

Everyone will be given the opportunity to send off Chinese lanterns throughout the evening in honor of Jeab.

All are welcome and remember: this is a wonderful opportunity to make a difference in a little girl's life and to honor an extraordinary woman.

STARTING AT 7 PM LIVE MUSIC TILL LATE

For more information, or if you are unable to attend but would still like to make a donation, please call Shannon (06-6838166), Apple (01-9355049) or Adrienne (01-0797729).

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THE BEST BAR

in Patong. The Dolphin Bar, located near the beach, is for sale with almost 2 years left on the lease. Our kitchen serves Thai and European food, and we also serve other bars and shops in the area. Open from 9 am to 2 am. Price: 2.4 million baht ono. Tel: 09-8093566. Email: lennartviberg@hotmail.com

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1. Restaurant: 2 units. Living accommodation. Includes pool table.

Price: 2.8 million baht.

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Ready-to-use office near the Seng Ho bookstore in the center of Phuket City. Please call for more details. Tel: 01-8927604 or 09-4740363.

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Popular pub and restaurant in Khao Lak for sale. Best location, turnkey with everything: company, popular website, 2 stories, 3 rooms, 1 aircon, 2 toilets, kitchen, fully loaded bar, stereo, pool table, darts, TV and excellent landlord. Price 1.5 million baht obo. Tel: 01-326-7683.

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A German, working in a specialized banking business for over 30 years, internationally successful, etc, offers partnership for the right person. Terms: must have English-language ability and be computer literate; 50% partnership for 25,000 euros. Start now, without wasting time. Possible to operate in all parts of the world. Fax or email for more information. Fax: 001-1-320-2139083 (USA). Email: passport@diplomats.com

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