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LONG LIVE HM Queen Sirikit

In 1965, Her Majesty Queen Sirikit accompanied His Majesty the King on a tour to boost cordial relations with the United States and several countries in Europe.

In connection with these state visits, Her Majesty commanded that research be conducted and designs made for various styles of Thai costumes.

Her Majesty's initiative resulted in the development of many Thai-style gowns and dresses designed with fundamental lines going back to traditional dress.

Her idea culminated in a total of eight magnificent styles of Thai dress named after royal palaces or mansions. In particular, the Thai Ruean Ton style is well suited to casual occasions, while the Chitralada style is for more formal functions and the Thai Boromphiman style is ideal for occasions requiring full dress and opulence.

During the state visits of 1965, Her Majesty's exquisite clothing was acclaimed wherever the Royal Couple went.

The styles of dresses thus initiated by Her Majesty became known as the *Thai Phra Ratcha Niyom* (Royally Favored Costumes). All were uniquely elegant, and highly artistic, and integral to all of them was the heritage of the country.

Her Majesty was inspired to comment in a speech, "Since I have accompanied His Majesty on his trips to visit the people all over Thailand, I have discovered with pride that Thai people are talented.

"If they are given the op-



portunity, they can always create excellent work."

To this day, Their Majesties the King and the Queen always give Thai silk as tokens of appreciation to distinguished guests.

After starting supplementary occupation projects in rural areas all over Thailand for many years, in 1976 HM Queen Sirikit set up the Support Foundation. Her Majesty became the president and patron of the Foundation and donated a million baht

as capital for its establishment.

The objectives of the Support Foundation are to produce, preserve and promote traditional handicrafts as a way for farmers and other low income people to earn supplementary income after the end of the harvest season. It also aims to preserve the folk arts and crafts of each region.

To accomplish its aims, the Foundation provides training in various appropriate cottage industries and promotes and seeks new markets for local products.

HM the Queen continues to help people in every region of the country. In many parts of the northeast, silk- and cotton-weaving projects were launched as part of the Support Foundation, while in the north, Her Majesty has supported the weaving of *Chok* - loom-embroidered silk.

In southern Thailand, HM Queen Sirikit supports the making of Koh Yor material in Songkhla Province, brocade-making at Phumriang in Chaiya District, Surat Thani Province, Na Muen Si material in Trang Province, and Muang Nakhon brocade in Nakhon Sri Thammarat.

Her Majesty has had the vision to see that Thailand's handwoven materials have qualities that cannot be matched by factory-made cloth and preserve the folk wisdom of former generations.

Her Majesty understands the value of the work: that it is not the yarn that counts in the weaving of such materials, but the heart and soul and artistic gifts that the weavers pour into each piece of cloth they make.

Through her vision and her initiative, Her Majesty has helped countless people in Thailand, and has also helped to preserve and elevate the art and traditions of the country. In the process she has earned the love of the people of Thailand.

On the occasion of Her Majesty's 72nd birthday on August 12, the whole country joins in saying, "Long Live Her Majesty Queen Sirikit."

— *Pranee Sakulpipatana*
Assistant Professor
Phuket Rajabhat University

High-speed bedmakers spring into action

PHUKET CITY: This year's Hotelex Exhibition Food and Beverage Show, which will be held at the Royal Phuket City Hotel from August 12 to 15, will open with a thrilling "speedy bed-making" contest.

The novel competition, with 6,000 baht in prize money up for grabs, will get underway at 1 pm on August 12, marking the start of the four-day show that has been gaining in popularity over the past few years, especially for its bartender contests.

This year there will be three bartender contests: solo amateur, solo professional and professional duo.

The winners of the amateur contests will each receive a champion's cup and 5,000 baht, while the top professional bartending pair will each receive a cup and 7,000 baht.

All winners in the bartender contests will also receive the opportunity to compete in the National Bartenders Contest to be held later this year.

The event will also see the return of the annual Miss Cocktail competition, with this year's prize being 6,000 baht.

Thirawit Yingdamnoon, president of the event's organizers, the Food and Beverage Managers' Club of Phuket, said, "The aim of the event is to display to the world the high standard of the food and beverage business in Phuket."

Entry to the show is free.

Sipa targets B470m budget for 2005

By Gategaeo Phetsawang

PHUKET CITY: Dr Manoo Ordeedolchest, President of the Software Industry Promotion Agency (Sipa), has announced that the agency will apply for 470 million baht to carry out projects in 2005 to develop the use of information and communications technology (ICT) in Thailand.

Key projects slated for implementation next year include the development of software for small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) in Thailand, and the development of Thailand into the "e-learning" hub of Asia.

Dr Manoo said that Sipa aims to have about 100 private software companies involved in the development of business software for Thai SMEs, using the free, open-source OFBiz suite of programs as a base.

The OFBiz suite includes programs for accounting, production, inventory and order management as well as online marketing and e-commerce tools.

The development of software tailored for tourism businesses is also on Sipa's agenda, Dr Manoo said, and the agency is seeking participation by private companies.

"However," he added, "there is a lack of manpower in this field. So Sipa is supporting projects to produce 200 IT workers within a year, and 500 over the next three years.

"Next year, we will spend about 2 million baht each on 200 SMEs," Dr Manoo said. "We will

test the [business] software in parts of a company – for example, in the front office of a medium-size hotel – and help people to use it in a way that makes their business more effective."

He added that the Office of SME Promotion will choose the companies or hotels that are suitable for the software and support. "We may divide the budget so that 30% is spent in the three ICT cities [Phuket, Chiang Mai and Khon Kaen] and the remaining 70% is spent in the rest of Thailand."

In developing Thailand as an hub for "e-learning", Dr Manoo said that Sipa expected to develop e-learning software

within three years and distribute it throughout Asia.

"We will use animation to motivate children to learn," he said, adding that this software, too, will be based on open source programs, and will be developed by programmers currently enrolled in Sipa's free six-month computer animation course.

"We will produce teaching media, such as video clips for teachers and lecturers to download from our website and use. Students will be able to download educational computer games as well," he said.

The website and the software available from it will cost 40 million baht to create, Dr Manoo said.



NO-GO AREA: Phuket City Council recently completed construction of a pair of gates aimed at limiting late-night access to the Saphan Hin area, long a hotbed of youth crime activity. The gates, on Kra Rd near the swimming pool, are closed daily from 10 pm to 5 am.

IN BRIEF

Plans to tap PM's B100bn promise

PHUKET: The Phuket provincial government plans to ask Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra for funding for projects to aid Phuket's development during the PM's visit to Phuket on August 26 and 27 as part of his tour of southern Thailand.

At the beginning of last year, PM Thaksin promised more than 100 billion baht to develop Phuket into the country's biggest economic and tourism hub in the coming five to six years.

Vice-Governor Winai Bua-pradit said that projects to be presented to the PM include improvements to all roads, the ports and the airport; four-lane roads linking Patong and Rawai with the bypass road; a distribution system for water from the new Bang Neaw Dum reservoir; and security cameras in tourist areas (see story, this page).

More neighbor laborers needed – employers

PHUKET: A total of 31,473 Burmese, Laotian and Cambodian laborers were registered with the government before the August 1 deadline, but local employers say that many more are needed.

Kitti Nuisri, the Deputy Chief of the Phuket Provincial Employment Service Office (ESO), noted on August 3 that the 3,304 employers who registered neighbor laborers said that they needed a total of 18,162 more.

Gambling tops stats

PHUKET: Gambling has once again topped the crime statistics in Phuket, with 163 arrests between July 1 and 25.

Other common crimes included possession or use of illegal narcotics, with 72 arrests, and illegal immigration, with 43 people arrested.

Violent crimes during the period included two murders (with no arrests to date), five cases of attempted murder (with three arrests made), two rapes, and 12 cases of bodily harm.

14 die on roads

PHUKET: According to the latest government statistics, 14 people died in motorbike accidents on Phuket roads between May 20 and June 20. A further 906 people were injured in motorbike accidents, while 47 were injured in car accidents.

100 high-tech cameras to boost security

PHUKET: Provided that the money is forthcoming, 100 security cameras using the latest-generation Internet communications protocol will be installed at 70 points across the island, including the tourist areas of Patong, Karon and Kata, to deter crime and monitor traffic flow.

Dr Manoo Ordeedolchest, President of the Software Industry Promotion Agency (Sipa),

told the *Gazette*, "The idea originally came from the former Governor [Pongpayome Vasaputi] to use closed-circuit cameras to prevent crime and to keep an eye on tourist areas for added security."

Sipa's Acting Manager in Phuket, Rattana Wetprasit, added that the system could also be used to monitor traffic.

The idea was floated in 2000, when such a project would

have cost 200 million baht. But today, thanks to plunging prices of cameras and software, it is budgeted to cost 45 million baht.

The Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Ministry is expected to pay about 20 million baht for the cameras and the network, with the Provincial Administration Organization (*OrBorJor*) providing 25 million baht for a monitoring center.

The cameras to be used will support IPv6 (Internet protocol version 6), a communications protocol, which is currently being deployed in the latest electronic devices, including mobile phones and online media players, and which allows greatly improved quality of streaming media.

Dr Manoo said that the cameras will probably be networked initially using cable because government regulations currently do not allow use of the high frequencies needed to network them wirelessly.

– Dhirarat Boonkongsan

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Assassinated politician had 13 'conflicts'

By Kamol Pirat

PHANG NGA: Police investigating the July 30 assassination of Nithat Siribenjukul, chairman of the Phang Nga Provincial Administration Organization (*Or-BorJor*), say that K. Nithat was involved in no fewer than 13 conflicts, any of which might have triggered his murder.

K. Nithat was gunned down by at least three men riding in the back of a black Isuzu pickup as he drove into the Takuapa bus terminus at about 8 pm.

Speaking to the *Gazette* on condition of anonymity the day after the murder, an officer from Takuapa Police Station said, "K. Nithat drove his Jeep Cherokee into the parking lot at the Takuapa bus terminus.

He was followed by a black Isuzu pickup bearing red license plates, with about four men riding in the back.

"The men in the pickup opened fire on K. Nithat with shotguns and handguns while he

was still driving. He died at the scene."

Pol Col Aroon Keawthane, Superintendent of Takuapa Police Station, said, "He was in conflict with many people in Takuapa District, including a dispute over bidding for a road construction contract, and disputes with other local politicians about the Phang Nga *Or-BorJor* budget.

"We cannot rule out any of the 13 possible motives because any one of them could have led to his death," Col Aroon said.

He explained that officers had questioned about 10 witnesses, including fellow Phang Nga *Or-BorJor* member Nipon Pechkul, whom Nithat visited just before he was gunned down.

Col Aroon said that 11mm and 6.55mm casings were found at the scene of the murder, along with shotgun cartridges.

"I can't confirm whether the gunmen are still in Phang Nga," he said. "If I knew that, I would have caught them already."

Peddlers, ladyboys targeted

PATONG: Police arrested about 30 people on July 28 in a nighttime crackdown aimed at reducing the number of street peddlers pestering tourists to buy trinkets, plastic flowers, garlands or, in some cases, sex.

Pol Lt Col Boonlert Onklang, of Kathu Police Station, told the *Gazette* that Kathu police officers arrested about 30 vendors who annoyed tourists walking along the beach road by importuning them to buy their goods.

"Some vendors have been going into bars and disturbing tourists who are trying to relax, by begging them to buy goods. More and more tourists have been complaining to the police about this, and we want to solve this problem," Col Boonlert said.

He added that some parents were also arrested for sending their young children out to sell flowers until the early hours of the morning.

"Children should not be out at that time of night," he said. "They should be home in bed."

The vendors were fined 500 baht apiece for causing a public nuisance.

He added that, in the period leading up to the nighttime blitz, Kathu Police had also arrested a number of ladyboys for disturbing tourists.

"We arrest ladyboys in Patong every day, but we can't solve that problem completely because the ladyboys have nowhere to go – most of them have been expelled from the bars in Patong," he said.



IT'S A TOUGH JOB BUT SOMEONE'S GOT TO DO IT: Vice-Governor Niran Kalayanamit welcomed contestants in the Miss Thailand World 2004 contest when they arrived in Phuket on July 3. The 50 beauty queens were on the island as part of their preparations for the final rounds, which will take place in Bangkok on August 21. They stayed in Phuket for a week before returning to the capital on August 6.

B100m earmarked for schools

PHUKET CITY: Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (*Or-BorJor*) President Anchalee Vanich-Thepabutr plans to spend 100 million baht on education next year in a drive she is calling "Better Phuket, Better Life".

Speaking at a press conference on July 28, K. Anchalee said, "The *Or-BorJor*'s revenue for 2004 is about 300 million baht, and this will reach as much as 400 million baht in 2005. We will spend 100 million baht of that on education."

K. Anchalee singled out education as one of the most pressing issues in her policy outline on May 12, saying that the national government's decision to allow teachers to take early retirement had left more than 500 teaching positions vacant in Phuket.

"Although we have a limited budget and 245 projects waiting for budget approval this year, education will be one of the main issues we will focus on," she said at the press conference.

She added that the Department of Local Administration in Bangkok plans to establish an "Education Fund" so that *Or-Bor-*

Jor around the country can direct funds into developing schools.

"This fund will be open to applications from all schools," K. Anchalee said. "The *Or-BorJor* will be able to allocate funds to schools that apply."

Another project for which funding has been approved is the improvement of Ao Por Pier. "The 130-million-baht budget has been approved, with 26 million baht from the 2005 budget and 104 million baht from 2006," K. Anchalee said. "We need to make the area more attractive first, then we will consider a construction plan. It will be similar to Ao Chalong Pier."

K. Anchalee also reported that the first stage of her project to expand the Community Police – ordinary citizens empowered to assist in police operations – is complete, with 95 people having completed the basic training course.

"They will help the police to provide security in communities," K. Anchalee said. "We believe that the Community Police can help prevent robberies, theft and other crimes. The project will be evaluated monthly. If we receive good overall feedback after six months, we will start the second stage."

– Anongnat Sartpisut

Turk insists he is an FBI agent

PATONG: Police say that Turkish citizen Tuncay Orser, who was arrested on July 30 for possession of a fake ID card identifying him as an agent of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), continues to insist that he is a real G-man on a mission to hunt down terrorists.

Orser, 31, was arrested after he showed what he said was

an FBI ID card at the front desk of the Amari Coral Beach Hotel when checking in.

An interview was eventually arranged with genuine FBI agents, who denied that Orser was affiliated with their organization.

Orser is now in prison awaiting trial on a charge of possessing a counterfeit document.

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First refusal

SAMUT PRAKAN: The latest case involving two wives and a severed penis has a couple of notable twists. First, the victim was Burmese, not Thai. Second, the mutilation came at his own hands – not that of a jealously enraged partner.

On July 30, Samut Prakan Police were called to a laborers' complex in Samut Prakan Municipality to investigate a report that a Burmese laborer had "hurt himself". He had indeed.

Arriving at the scene, investigators found a Burmese man, identified only as "Phodong", lying on the ground dressed only in black underwear. He was writhing in pain and bleeding from wounds to his abdomen and genitals – or at least what was left of them.

According to the report, 37-year-old Phodong had been keeping two wives in the laborers' complex (read: slum). His first wife was on the second floor, his second wife on the third floor.

During the evening, Phodong had been drinking a lot in his room. This put him in the mood for sex, so he began to get frisky with his first wife. But the woman got all pouty and refused his advances, citing his relationship with the second wife as the reason for her reluctance.

Rather than simply walk up a floor to the pleasures of his second wife, however, Phodong instead tried to light a fire and burn down the entire building. The blaze was quickly extinguished by a neighbor.

Phodong then picked up a knife and stabbed himself in the stomach. Not long after that, he cut off his penis using a pair of scissors. For his finale, he ran to the balcony and jumped off, landing with a thud on the ground below.

Despite all the self-inflicted trauma, Phodong survived the incident and was last reported receiving treatment in the intensive care unit of Samut Prakan Hospital.

Thailand is largely regarded as a worldwide leader in the surgical reattachment of severed penises, but this proved to be of little help to Phodong.

Doctors ruled out the procedure for him, saying that the severed penis had been too badly crushed at the base during the fall.

Source: Khom Chad Luek

In the 2002-2003 dry season, which was longer and drier than most, former Governor Pongpayome Vasaputi called in the Royal rainmaking team in a desperate attempt to alleviate the resulting crisis.

Yet this drought occurred in a year when roughly 184 trillion cubic meters of water had fallen on Phuket's main land mass. In theory, if all this rain could have been collected it would have filled the island's 8-million-cubic-meter reservoir at Bang Wad about 23 million times.

The problem, of course, is that the vast majority of this water flows unchecked into the sea during periods of heavy rainfall and little is saved for the dry season when it is needed.

With Phuket's single reservoir at Bang Wad incapable of fulfilling future demand, plans to meet Phuket's water needs are focused on two new reservoir projects, at Bang Neaw Dum in Thalang, and at Klong Krata in Chalong.

Yet even if final budget approval for both these projects is granted – by no means a sure thing – it will be three years at least before these will be able to supply water to the population.

Given the precarious state of the island's water supply during the interim, the *Gazette* asked a number of local government officials and residents what steps people can take to make better use of Phuket's abundant rainfall.

Poonsak Narksena, Chief Administrative Officer of Patong Municipality, said that water supply problems on the island are rooted in a lack of water management expertise, coupled with the fact that no single government agency is responsible for coordinating water supply for the entire island.

He said that new residential projects should be required to install underground tanks to store rainwater from roofs. This additional supply could be used for

The greatest irony of Phuket's water supply problems is that the island lies in the tropical monsoon belt and enjoys copious amounts of rain during its annual rainy season, which lasts about six months in most years.

Government statistics show that an average of about 2,400 millimeters of rain falls on Phuket every year. Yet despite the island being among the rainiest places on earth, its water supply situation continues to worsen.

Sangkhae Leelanapaporn and Kamol Pirat examine why this should be so.

watering gardens or washing cars during the dry season.

All of Phuket's municipalities have a policy of encouraging collection of rainwater, he noted, but these fall short of making compliance mandatory.

"We cannot enact regulations forcing people to [store water], because this would be unconstitutional and people could sue local governments," he said.

K. Poonsak admitted that most new homes do not have rain storage tanks, so most rainfall is channeled directly into combined drainage and sewage ditches, where it becomes too polluted for any practical use.

Most homeowners who do store water do so in tanks beneath the soil [to limit evaporation], he said, decrying the fact that very few Phuket people now channel rainwater from rooftops into large earthenware jars, as they did in the past.

He added that a campaign to encourage water conservation and teach water-saving techniques is needed to help meet supply needs during dry season droughts.

Aroon Soros, Chairman of the Rawai Tambon Administration Organization (*OrBorTor*), called on Governor Udomsak Usawarangkura to boost public awareness of the need to collect rainwater.

He noted, however, that most Rawai residents rely on groundwater supplies, and few had ever experienced a dry well – even during the dry season. For this reason, few Rawai residents bother to store rainwater, he said.

He predicted that Rawai will face water shortages in the future and called on homeowners to install gutters so that they can collect and store water for their own use.

"Phuket residents have failed to tackle water supply problems by taking any steps to conserve water. That's why [parts of the island] have faced serious shortages in the past two or three years. The Governor must take action immediately to solve this problem by running a big public awareness campaign," K. Aroon said.

Chuchee Sung, acting director of the Provincial Waterworks Department (PPWD), said that the key to solving shortages is reducing waste. For this reason, the PPWD advises homeowners to check pipes and plumbing fixtures frequently and repair any leaks as soon as possible.

He pointed out that dry season droughts are the result of an unfortunate timing of events: the dry season corresponds to the high season for tourism, when demand is greatest.

He noted that residents of

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WATER: WILL WE EVER LEARN?



Jusoon Wattana remembers when water shortages were unthinkable yet people channeled rainwater into wells in their homes.

ages were unimaginable.

"My house still has a well, but we switched to the municipal supply about six years ago when we realized that the quality of the well water had begun to deteriorate.

"In the past, the location of the well would always be somewhere that allowed rainwater to be channeled from the roof directly into it," he said.

Such wells can still be seen inside many older Sino-Portuguese dwellings, where they are sometimes retained solely for decorative purposes. Yet their practicality could lead to a revival in their use if the water supply situation continues to worsen, perhaps even being incorporated into the design of new homes.

Phuket has 118 waterways that flow year-round, but most of these are too polluted to serve as practical supply sources.

One source of additional supply recently has been from some of the island's 113 tin mining ponds. Found all over the island, these have a combined storage capacity of about 50 million cubic meters of water. However, many of them are controlled by the private sector, making them inaccessible.

Chalan Sarnrak, Chairman of *OrBorTor* Kamala, told the *Gazette* that his administration was considering making a deal with tin mine owners to augment supplies in Kamala, where homeowners continue to rely on groundwater.

In K. Chalan's experience, however, residents tend to plan

for additional water supplies only after problems reach crisis point. As in Rawai, that hasn't happened yet in Kamala.

"I used to campaign for water conservation and rainwater collection, but it was not successful. But I think it would be a good idea if local administrations [were authorized to] force new property developments to install their own rainwater collection systems," said K. Chalan.

One man who would stand to benefit a great deal from such regulations would be Prasert Pinitvorakarn, who designs and installs roof gutters from his shop on Chao Fa East Road.

He told the *Gazette* that most of his customers contacted him not to help save water, but to protect wooden fixtures such as doors and windows from water damage.

"Most people in Phuket have never stored rainwater, as residents in some other provinces do. They think that rain water is contaminated with airborne chemicals that it will make them sick," he said.

In fact, rainwater is almost always cleaner than untreated ground or surface water. As it does not come into contact with the ground, it has fewer dissolved minerals and is far less likely to be contaminated by such pollutants as fertilizers and pesticides.

But health concerns, real or imagined, aren't the only thing keeping new homeowners from taking some responsibility in helping to meet the island's future water needs.

Phuket native Surapong Sawangtip, 39, recently bought a home in one of the island's upscale housing projects, and plans to rely solely on the water supply provided to him by the project developers.

"I don't want to install gutters because they don't look good and are unnecessary. We already have a 1,000-liter storage tank in case the project's supply is disrupted.

"I don't believe that collecting rainwater is the answer because there is still a lot of construction going on in the area and that makes the roof too dusty," he said.

municipal districts with water supply systems were the biggest wasters of water. On average, they use 200 liters of water a day each, four times as much as rural residents.

Specifically, he said taking baths uses more water than a simple shower or a traditional Thai "splish-splash" shower that involves pouring water over oneself with a plastic bowl. The average Jacuzzi uses 110 liters, compared with just 20 liters for an average shower.

When brushing their teeth, he said, people should fill a glass or bowl with tap water rather than allowing water to flow from the faucet continuously, which al-

lows 45 liters of water to flow uselessly down the drain over a five-minute period.

Car washing is another source of water waste, he said. Rather than spray a vehicle with a hose, which uses 200-300 liters of water per car washed, he recommended that car owners fill buckets with water and then use rags for washing and rinsing.

The PPWD, he noted, is cooperating with municipalities to encourage developers of residential projects to include 1,000- or 2,000-liter storage tanks in each home in order to ease pressure on the public supply during the dry season.

Some homeowners have

devised their own methods for conserving water. Ouan Saelee, a 61-year-old Phuket native, told the *Gazette*, "I save water in many ways. Apart from collecting it from the rooftop during the rainy season, I also put buckets around me in the bathroom when I shower.

"That way, when I shower, much of the water falls into the buckets. It's not that clean, because it has soap and shampoo in it, but it's still fine for cleaning the bathroom or for watering plants," he said.

Jusoon Wattana, 73, can remember a time when the population of Phuket was in the tens of thousands only, and water short-

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By Anongnat Sartpisut

Treating the tablets

As tough as stone may be, it still requires plenty of TLC to keep it in tip-top condition, according to Calum Ferguson, the eponymous Stone Doctor of the rock rescue company. "Stone is like a person," he mused. "Every kind of stone is unique, anything can go wrong with it and each problem requires a different treatment."

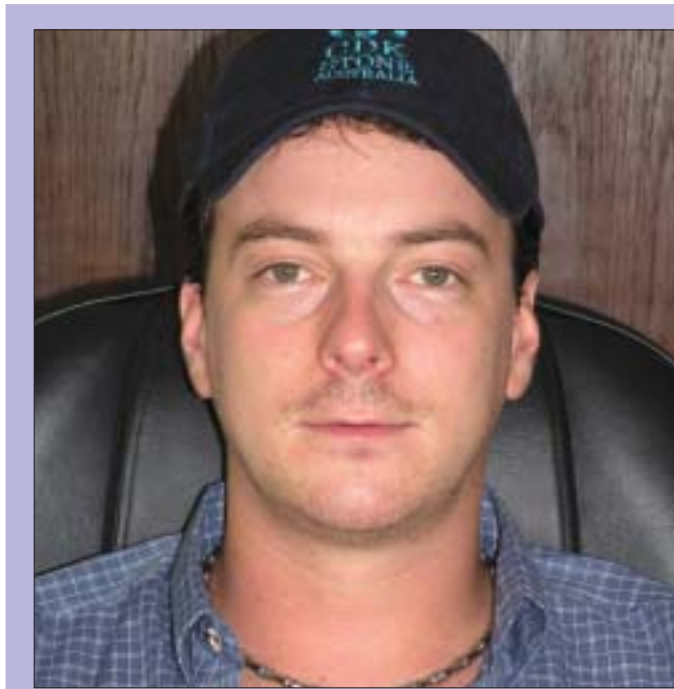
Not spending money to look after your stone floor can be expensive in the long run, he suggests, and regular maintenance is the key to ensuring that it lasts a lifetime. "Stone is beautiful," he reflects, "and it takes work to keep it that way."

The Stone Doctor has his "surgery" at the entrance to Rydges Beach resort in Cherng Talay but, naturally, he doesn't expect his patients to come to him. House calls are the order of the day.

Mr Ferguson was a stone specialist in his native United Kingdom for four years, where he learned his craft, and began the process of setting up his company here in late 2003.

Stone Doctor has been operating for around three months, protecting, maintaining and repairing stone – natural and man-made – as well as passing on advice to clients.

"More and more houses in Phuket are being built with stone as an intrinsic feature of the property, not just as a construction material," he explained. "Some of these houses cost 40 million baht and you don't want the floor to look shoddy in a house that expensive. Looking after the stone will also help maintain the value of the property."



HEART OF STONE: Stone Doctor Calum Ferguson says, "Stone is beautiful, and it takes work to keep it that way."

SHINING EXAMPLE: A little TLC can transform a battered stone floor (below) from a dull surface to a polished finish (below, right).



"The market for stone-care services is continuing to grow," he added.

Mr Ferguson explained that natural stone surfaces should always be maintained by experts although man-made stone can usually be cared for by the manufacturers or wholesalers.

"The easiest mistake to make is to think that one product or technique can be applied to all types of stone," he warned. "Terra cotta, marble, sandstone and others can be ruined by trying to treat them all in the same way."

He gave the example of one

client who had used a regular household detergent to clean a marble floor, which damaged the surface. The customer had then tried to make the floor look better by waxing it. "It looked terrible," Mr Ferguson said bluntly. "We had to strip away the wax and 're-crystallize' the surface before it looked better."

He suggested that regular periodic maintenance, as one should do with a car, is the best way to keep stone looking fresh. He added that protecting a newly-laid floor with the stone equivalent of Scotchguard is a little-known trade secret in the battle

against stains. "The damage from wine, coffee, oil, ink and a myriad other liquids can almost be eliminated by sealing the stone," he advised.

Mr Ferguson has a battery of more than 40 different chemicals at his disposal with which to protect and clean stone floors. "We import our products from a company in Germany that has been specializing in stone treatment for more than 50 years. Customers can rest assured that we will use the right treatment for whatever surface or problem we come across," he said.

It is difficult to put an aver-

age price on his services, he said, because each job is done on a case-by-case basis.

"It depends, of course, on a number of variables: the type of stone; how large an area needs to be treated; and what the problem is."

Although naturally keen to make a financial successful of his business, Mr Ferguson said, "I love my job. I love being able to repair a floor that a homeowner feels is beyond salvation."

"I don't go in and just 'do the job'; I make sure that the work is carried out above and beyond the expectations of the homeowner."

The Stone Doctor gets most of his patients from personal recommendations. "If someone is happy with the service, he will tell his friends or business associates – particularly in the real estate business."

He also said that many clients use the service for repair and six-monthly maintenance contracts but he also gets called on to seal and protect floors in a new building before occupation.

"I am sure that this business can be a great success," he grinned. "Phuket first, then Bangkok and I even have my eyes on the markets in Hong Kong and Singapore."

A man with both feet firmly on bedrock.

The Stone Doctor can be contacted at Tel: 076-271217 or 07-2824930 or by Email to: info@stonedoctor.co.th

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Southern Islamic schools face closure

Authorities have threatened to shut down 21 Islamic schools in the Deep South and throw the schools' directors and principals in jail, after asserting that the schools are breeding grounds for militants.

Intelligence information indicated that students and teachers from the religious schools, known locally as *pondoks*, have been involved in creating violence in the region, Deputy Education Minister Sutham Saengprathoom said.

The Education Ministry will summon the schools' directors and principals to ask for their cooperation in the detection of militant movements in their respective schools, he said.

If the schools' leaders refuse to cooperate, they will be imprisoned for six months, fined 50,000 baht, or both, he said, adding that the schools will also be shut down.

Of the 21 schools, five are in Yala while there are eight each in Pattani and Narathiwat provinces.

K. Sutham said staff at two schools were indirectly involved in violence in the region, though he declined to name the schools in question.

Bad boys and girls: Alcohol, truancy, pornography, gambling and brawling are becoming more prevalent among the country's youth, according to results from a large-scale survey by Assumption University.

The survey questioned 14,783 young people in 29 provinces between June 1 and July 24. Respondents were between 11 and 26 years old, and 42.7% were students.

The survey found that 42.2% of respondents drank alcohol, up from 37.1% last year, and that the number of truants had risen from 26.7% last year to 28.4%.

More youths had viewed pornographic materials, 38.1%, compared with 25.5% last year, while the number of young gamblers rose from 22.1% to 32.6%, and 26.9% of respondents said they had engaged in brawling, up from 17.4% last year.

A total of 5.4% of respondents said they had taken illegal drugs at least once, with *ya bah* (methamphetamine) and marijuana the drugs of choice. In the 2003 survey, 2.76% admitted they had tried illegal drugs at least once.



CLEAN SWEEP: Sanitation workers ensure that at least the area outside Bangkok City Hall is smear-free ahead of candidates' registration for the post of City Governor.

Golf widows: Nikul Iamjan, a patron of the Field Marshal Plaek Golf Course on the 13th Army base, said that during the past few weeks several stray bullets from the nearby shooting range had hit trees on the golf course while people were playing.

He said that golfers were understandably scared and had to make a dash for safer holes when they heard gunfire.

Base Commander Col Paisarn Thaweesap explained that some members ignored the rules, using larger caliber firearms than allowed and standing too close to the targets. "We have sent a request to the provincial commander to check the shooting range. Members will have to obey the rules," Col Paisarn said.

Extreme ways: Slimmers who force themselves to vomit or take laxatives could risk their health by falling victim to the eating disorder bulimia, a doctor warned on July 26.

Dr Charnwit Pornnoppadol, a psychiatry lecturer at Chulalongkorn University, said that warning signs include binge eating followed by attempts to purge oneself of the food consumed through induced vomiting or abnormally long periods of exercise.

Bulimia can cause a mineral imbalance in the body, such as low levels of potassium. Induced vomiting can harm the esophagus, as well as causing stomach bleeding, tooth decay, irregular menstruation, dehydration and kidney failure.

If a patient does not receive medical attention in time, he or she could die, he said.

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

Online treasure: A one-page letter thought to have been written by HM King Rama V was put up for auction on the popular eBay website earlier this month.

The letter, with a reserve price of US\$550 (22,569 baht), shows the letterhead seal bearing King Chulalongkorn's initials under the royal crown, as well as his purported handwriting and signature.

The seller, identified only as "nino00", listed the item with its photo and description as "19 Sept 1908 letter from King Rama V to his brother. Folded. Good condition."

But the auction offer expired without any bids.

Sureerat Wongsangiam, Deputy Director of the National Archives, said after examining the image on the website that she thought the letter was probably genuine.

Stupa storm: The heated debate over women being barred from entering temple stupas in north-

ern Thailand points to a need for society to resolve conflicts peacefully, a symposium at Thammasat University was told recently.

Chalidaporn Songsamphan, a lecturer in women's studies at the university, said she was surprised that people who regarded themselves as devout Buddhists were willing to become almost violent in defending the custom of barring women from entering stupas, the inner zone of the temples.

The debate flared earlier this month when Khon Kaen Senator Rabiabrat Pongpanitch

began a campaign to remove signs barring women from entering stupas. She ran into fierce resistance and condemnation from many local groups.

"We may have to rethink how we can co-exist," K. Chalidaporn said. "Those 'devout' Buddhists were apparently willing to curse us and wring our necks."

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In The Stars

by Isla Star

LEO (July 24-August 22): Leos who are refreshed by a recent break should feel ready to take on the island, if not the world. Next week you will have to smooth ruffled feathers at work; someone's nose is out of joint and although the problem wasn't of your making, others will look to you for a solution. Wear sunflower yellow to maintain a positive outlook.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): Chewing over the past can only leave a lingering bitter taste. Virgoans who are still unable to let go of emotions that should have been buried long ago will benefit from a heart-to-heart talk with a trusted friend. The immediate future holds sweet promise, if you are really prepared to move on. Business is about to become more rewarding for those who have laid strong foundations.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): You will be ready for action this week. If you've finally decided to stop waiting for things to happen, the stars are in an auspicious position to support any romantic moves you make.

Acting on impulse will bring far better results than you could have hoped for. Resist crying over spilt coconut milk when a minor mishap related to work occurs mid-week.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): This is a week when one plus one just refuse to add up to two. Fractious moods are likely to affect close relationships; you may want to consider taking some time out; absence really could make the heart grow fonder. A minor storm on the career front causes you to reassess your talents, and not before time. Wear lime green to put a spring in your step.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): Appearances can be deceptive and those born under the sign of Sagittarius should be prepared to reconsider first impressions concerning a new acquaintance. Someone you had dismissed as being a lightweight could provide invaluable support in any new business ventures you're hoping to get off the ground. Single Sagittarians should make a point of getting out and about this weekend as love is sure to be in the air.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): Your usual aversion to change is conspicuous by its absence this week, which is just as well because an unusual suggestion stands a good chance of taking root. Capricorns who are not entirely happy with their present lot in life will probably welcome an opportunity to leap into the unknown. You have more power to succeed in business than you realize. Wear sky blue to help dissolve inhibitions.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): If your mood matches the gray clouds swirling overhead, the answer is quite simple: stop looking out the window and moping. Aquarians who are lacking in sunny spirits this week must seek out new horizons. This could be the ideal time to take that trip you've been contemplating for a while. Paying a surprise visit to an old friend will be more than worth the effort.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): If your reasons for wanting to take a casual relationship to new heights are

honorable, then expect a positive result. But Pisceans who have devious motives should retreat into the jungle before emotional damage is done. On a more practical note, discrepancies in your financial situation need urgent attention. Get to work with the calculator this weekend and start working on a viable budget to put into immediate operation.

ARIES (March 21-April 20): Exotic pleasures are forecast for those born under the sign of Aries who are ready to spoil themselves a little. If you've been keeping a tight grip on the purse strings recently, it's time to realize that everyone deserves a treat now and then. Your partner may be in a chilly mood this weekend; leave them alone to thaw out while you search out a good time with friends.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): Taureans who are tempted to indulge in a spot of rock-climbing this weekend are advised to avoid overhanging ledges. Flirting with danger will bring no benefits, and could easily result in a serious loss of face. On a more positive

note, the way to resolve a longstanding dilemma suddenly becomes crystal clear. Tuesday is your most auspicious day for consolidating business agreements. The number 9 holds promise.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): The wheels of your buffalo cart will be turning more slowly than usual. If you try to speed up a certain process, there's every chance that you'll get stuck in a deep rut. Those born under the sign of Gemini are advised to cultivate patience and redirect energy toward personal matters. Scorpio has some free advice to offer this weekend; it won't do any harm to listen to the voice of experience.

CANCER (June 22-July 23): Cancerians are usually able to deal with surprises and don't shy away from intrigue. This is just as well because you are certain to be dealing with the unexpected this week. August will bring various opportunities for you to prove that you can stand on your own two feet. Get ready to wow a captive audience and move a few rungs further up the career ladder.



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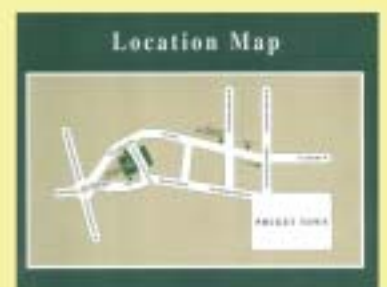
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This week



FLYING HIGH AND THAI: Viset Sontichai, Thai International's District Sales Manager for Upper Southern Thailand (2nd from right) and Smathi Piamsa-nga, District Cargo Sales Manager for Upper Southern Thailand (right), join colleagues celebrating the launch of THAI's new 'Thai Cargo, Thai Care' freight service at the Phuket Architect and Engineering Exhibition at the Royal Phuket City Hotel.



VILLAGE PEOPLE: Phuket TAT chief Suwalai Pinradab (left), Vichit Na Ranong, President of the Tourism Council of Thailand (center), and Montri Reatong, Head of the Phuket Provincial Strategic Development Division, celebrate the opening of the new function room at the Pearl Village Hotel at Nai Yang Beach.



SCREEN TEST: SF Cinema City Advertising Manager Termphan Mathawabhan (left), Marketing Director Supat Ngamwongpaiboon (center) and PR Supervisor Naline Chaliewkriengkrai are pictured at the official announcement of plans to open a movie theater, the SFX Coliseum, at Central Festival Phuket.



SHAKE IT: Pictured at the launch party for the Hotelex Exhibition Food and Beverage Show, which will run from August 12-15 at the Royal Phuket City Hotel, were (from left) Pattanapong Aikwanich, President of the Phuket Tourist Association; Napasorn Kakai, Deputy Director of the local TAT office; Amanpuri F&B Director Thirawit Yingdamnoon; and Miss Cocktail 2004 contestants.



LEFT: The new President of the Rotary Club of Patong, Friedrich "Sam" Fauma (4th from right) and the new Board of Directors (from left) President-Elect Arnaud Verstraete, Secretary David Arell, Sergeant at Arms Paul Spring, Vice-President Hari Bedi and Treasurer Jirapa Eawsakul celebrate at the 3rd Annual Installation Night at the Holiday Inn Resort Patong.

THE CAPE CRUSADER: Attorney-General Rawat Chamchalem (right) and his crime-busting team are welcomed to the Cape Panwa Hotel by the General Manager, Poomiphat Navanukroh (4th from left) during a recent seminar on fighting international terrorism.





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GARDENERS'

Thousands flocked to the Flower & Plant Show organized by the Phuket Agriculture and Cooperatives Office (PACO) at Saphan Hin from July 26 to August 4.

Somchai Wongsriwat, an official with the PACO, explained that Phuket had been selected by the Prime Minister's Office and the Department of Agricultural Extension to mount the fair, called "Flowers and Plants to Celebrate the 72nd Birthday of HM Queen Sirikit".

In addition to flower and plant displays and competitions, the show featured food, agricultural materials, OTOP products, and music and recreation on stage every night.



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Lots of chemicals for sale at market

Despite a shower of encouraging food safety reports, concern is still being expressed by the Koh Samui authorities that farmers are using pesticides and other chemicals too liberally, and reaping their harvests too hastily.

Tests conducted on the island between October last year and January this year showed several chemicals to be present in fruit and vegetables on sale at local markets.

One contaminant, hydro-sulfide, enhances the color and appearance of food and is also – somewhat bizarrely – used to treat wounds in animals. If humans ingest too much of it, they may experience vomiting or have difficulty breathing.

Another chemical found was formalin, a preservative that helps to keep food fresh, but is also used for embalming dead people. Excessive levels of this substance can also cause vomiting and, in extreme cases, death.

Borax, the most common contaminant found in island food, is officially banned in Thailand, and with good reason. This preservative and texture enhancer damages the heart and liver, and can also cause death, especially in children.

If traces of such unpleasant chemicals continue to be found in the island's fresh produce markets, fast food chains may soon take over the entire island.

High low season: Positive reports from the tourism sector indicate that the low season on Koh Samui this year was much better than in previous years, with tour-

ism figures much higher than expected.

In addition, there is increasing interest in the island from large Thai and international companies wishing to invest here. One example of this is the recent 60-million-baht buyout of the Pongpetch Resotel in Chaweng Noi by the Pavilion Group.

Several companies are also looking at spending more than 100 million baht in Bophut. Others are also poised to invest in the island, and local residents hope that, along with their money, they will also bring a sense of responsibility with them, so that Samui can grow in a sustainable and environmentally-sensitive way.

Starry-eyed: A new benchmark for hotel standards is being introduced on Samui as

part of a scheme that started a year ago across Thailand, based on international star ratings.

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) plans to survey all hotels in the three- to five-star bracket, and will award certificates in a similar way to those issued to restaurants under the "Clean Food, Good Taste" program.

TAT officials will also offer help and advice to those hotels hoping to improve their star rating, or achieve a certain standard of service and comfort.

The aim is to make sure places such as Koh Samui are considered world-class tourist destinations, by boosting travelers' confidence in the services provided, and also by helping hotel owners who want to improve the standards of their fa-

FROM THE GULF OF THAILAND



By Commander
Sammy Swan



Paul Hawkins (left), a retired police captain and veteran of the Charleston County Sheriff's Office in the US, who also served as Station Commander for the UN in both Bosnia and Croatia, has been officially installed as the new President of the Rotary Club of Koh Samui. He is pictured with Bhichai Rattakul, an ex-Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand and former President of Rotary International (right) and Rico Stapel of *community magazine*.

cilities. Tax breaks will be offered for those renovating or upgrading their properties.

So far, the authority has surveyed 110 hotels and resorts, and 84 of these have been awarded ratings. The officials involved are looking very relaxed indeed.

Watery-eyed: Although the water supply system on Samui is now quite stable, thanks mainly to hefty government investment in new water basins, the authorities warn that, where high demand coincides with low rainfall, shortages could still be a problem.

Some rather ambitious proposals have been considered already, including a mountain dam, and a pipeline from the mainland, but both were considered too complicated and expensive to be workable.

On July 12, the provincial water department began considering bids from several private firms for the construction of desalination plant to extract fresh water from sea water. This is also

a costly option, but is claimed to be more appropriate to the island's needs and terrain.

The company that wins the contract will sell water to the authorities at an agreed price per unit in times of need.

As always, citizens and visitors to Koh Samui are being urged to save as much water as they can, though the company that wins the bid will most likely hope for quite the opposite.

High risk: There has been a sharp increase in theft from houses and businesses on Koh Samui, and the thieves also appear to be more inventive than their predecessors.

One gang of burglars is known to enter through the roofs of buildings by removing the tiles. Police believe the gang is responsible for several incidents around the island.

One such break-in took place recently in Nathon at the DTAC mobile phone shop. The thieves stole all the phones apart from a couple of older-model

Nokias, which suggests they know their target market well.

People building new homes or considering upgrades are now being advised to pay careful attention to their roofs, in addition to the doors and windows, when considering security.

Mister Mayor: Government watchdogs from Bangkok have been assessing the recent local government elections on Samui, and have finally declared the results valid after confusion and error threw doubt on the outcome of the voting.

Wanagorn Ratanapak, also known as "Mr Sot", is now the official head of the Municipal Authority.

We wish him all the best in his new role, as he struggles to steer Samui through the mine-field of development.

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

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BUCOLIC DELIGHT DOWN ON THE FARM

It's fair to say that there's no other resort in the whole of Asia quite like the blissfully peaceful, utterly genuine, beautifully proportioned Farm in the Philippines. There again, the word resort doesn't give quite the right impression. Nor does spa; nor does retreat. "Natural gourmet pampering ashram with X factor" perhaps comes a bit closer.

A couple of hours' drive out of Manila, near the volcanic Lake Taal, The Farm is spread over almost 50 hectares at the foot of Mt Malayarat. Most of the land runs wild, but the core of the property contains 25 villas and suites, two infinity-edge pools, the Salus Per Aqua spa and the 85/15 restaurant, which are equally devoted to health and pleasure.

Manicured lawns that would not disgrace an English stately home stretch toward the boundaries, winding paths lead to hidden bowers and meditative salas, and the quiet is only punctuated by the occasional distant eldritch cries of The Farm's pet peacocks and the murmured greetings of the score of gardeners who shimmer in and out of the shrubberies like bucolic butlers.

The Farm came into being thanks to the Herculean efforts of Eckard Rempe and his wife Perla. Ironically, after a career in tobacco and manufacturing, he decided to turn the land he had bought for his retirement into something more visionary.

Contemptuous of modern eating habits, the pharmaceutical industry and much of the medical profession, he craved pure natural "living" foods and their benefits. Quoting Hippocrates ("Let food be your



medicine, and medicine be your food"), and adrift in a land where duck's embryo and dog rank as delicacies, he can seem like John the Baptist crying in the wilderness. However, there is no doubting either his sincerity or The Farm's burgeoning popularity.

The restaurant 85/15 is so called as only 15% of the food is heated, using specially designed dehydrators that give it the appearance of being cooked. The rest of what's served is as fresh and raw as Adam and Eve's apple, but without the punitive consequences.

And this is the delight of The Farm: you can take the place as seriously as you want. You can determinedly detox and spring-



Above: Now, where's my navel? – contemplative scenery at The Farm. Left: the vegetarian 'living' food is as fresh as can be. Below: comfortable informality in the dining room.

clean your internal organs from dawn yoga sessions to colonics at dusk, drinking nothing but juice in between.

Or you can simply revel in the landscape, lolling in the pools, ambling about the grounds, dipping in and out of the spa treatment menu, retreating from time to time to the solitude of your villa or suite, only emerging to take your place promptly at meal times.

There's no meat or fish of course, and the only alcohol is organic wine which makes a low-key appearance at dinner. But under the rampantly enthusiastic eye of consultant chef Karen Parker, common-or-garden ingredients are transmogrified into stunning mini-feasts.

While living food is the core of The Farm's placid regimen, its medical services are also available for those who want to take things a step further.

Spas and retreats abound around the world nowadays, and especially in Asia. Comparisons between The Farm and better-known, more pricy, much more public versions are inevitable.

The major difference is that the latter are essentially commercial operations, while The Farm is more concerned with, well, both dollars and sense.



TALES OF A TRAVELER

By Ed Peters

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FLAIR IN THE AIR

Fashion with Rungtip

From August 1, cabin crew flying with Singapore-based SilkAir have taken on a new look, thanks to a soft yet practical new uniform.

The new look is part of an ongoing update of the airline's brand. Chief Executive Mike Barclay explained at the roll-out of the new uniform that it is part of an ongoing branding exercise defined by the phrase, "Where the world unwinds".

Certainly, the new uniform is relaxing on the eye. Who designed it? Mr Barclay told the *Gazette* that it was a team effort.

"The people who know best about what is most appropriate are the crew. So the company set up a competition for crew to come up with the design.

The uniform, made from polyester silk, comes in two basic colors – lime green for the stewardesses and rustic red for the crew-in-charge and the female ground staff.

Lam Hoi Seah, Manager of Cabin Crew & Inflight Services, told the *Gazette* that the original concept came from Cynthia Teoh, a former SilkAir flight attendant, but stressed that the design has changed several times in



Left: Four cabin crew show off the new, softer-looking uniforms.

Below: Now you see it ... the concealed pen pocket.



light of suggestions from stewardesses.

For example, he said, one flight attendant had pointed out that crew need to carry pens at all times. So, in the final cut, a small pocket for a pen was made near the right hip, neatly concealed behind a piece of fabric.

And what about the people wearing the new uniform? One flight attendant told the *Gazette*

she was delighted with the new design. "It's so convenient because it's a one-piece dress, and the colors are nice; they create an atmosphere of enjoyment."

She said she also liked the new camel-color shoes and handbag – "very modern-looking".

The new uniform went into

service on August 1 on all of SilkAir's 25 routes.

– Rungtip Hongjakpet

EAR CANDY by ANDY

For a band formed in 1999, Zona Sul have been a little tardy in putting out their debut album but the result, *Um Amor Tão Pura* (Pure Love) is worth the wait.

Zona Sul, incidentally, is in the south of Rio de Janeiro – close to Ipanema and Copacabana – and is the birthplace of bossa nova.

Franco-German Sophie Wegener has one of the clearest voices in music today. Whether singing in English, French, Portuguese or Italian, she uses it to great effect in her interpretations of some less well-known jazz and bossa nova songs – most written by the prolific Antonio Carlos Jobim.

Pure Love worth the wait

These are love songs, but in a wider sense than "boy meets girl"; these are songs of love, and the love of life and culture.

The opening track, *The Waters of March* – which is also featured as a bonus track in the original Portuguese *Águas de março* – is a paean to the pleasure of being alive. Ms Wegener's enjoyment of song is infectious; On *Eu vim da Bahia* – a Gilberto Gil composition – one can hear her smiling as she sings and even



a wet, gray day in Phuket is suddenly brighter.

The stand-out track has to be *Dorme Profundo* by Marcos Valle. Here, the striking Ms Wegener purrs "Sleep well, I will watch over you and I won't sleep until you are dreaming... But know, I love you. Sleep my love." What better lullaby could one wish for?

This album is packed with talent and style and is a pleasure to immerse oneself in. *Um Amor Tão Pura* is proof – were any needed – that bossa nova is alive and well.

■ *Pure Love*, Zona Sul, Nagel Heyer 2039. Playing time: 55 minutes and 57 seconds.

Perhaps the musical compilation genre to which the hackneyed phrase "The Usual Suspects" is best applied is classical compilations. Pick your top 15 or so pieces – whether you know the

name or simply the tune – and there they all are on a compilation album.

The main problem with compilations such as *Forever Classic II* is the random way in which works are included, and also how removed from their original context they are.

Mussorgsky's *Promenade* from *Pictures at an Exhibition*, for example, is a fine recording of the Sofia National Orchestra under the baton of Ivan Marinov, but it is just one fragment of a full symphony. Classical music is not a fusion-food buffet.

Marketers' justification for hodge-podge classical compilations is that the listener will be "inspired" to buy the entire composition from which the sample is taken. In reality, most do not do so.

But, skipping over the ubiquitous *Habanera* from *Carmen* and *Bacarolle* from *The Tales of*

Hoffman, *Forever Classic II* does feature a couple of interesting choices not often found on such compilations. Perhaps that's why they are on the sequel.

Bruch's *Adagio* from *Kol Nidrei Variations for Violoncello and Orchestra Op. 47* is a rare delight and Mendelssohn's *Song without words, Op. 19/1* played by Leonard Hokanson – one of Artur Schnabel's final pupils – shines.

Saint-Saens' *Finale* from *The Carnival of the Animals* also takes the listener away from the mundane and lifts this compilation above many others currently available.

■ *ForeverClassic II*, Nova CW210098. Playing time: 71 minutes 26 seconds.

– Andy Johnstone

Albums courtesy of CD Warehouse Bangkok. Order inquiries should be made to Siriporn Nurukkhe, Marketing Manager. Tel: 02-6551140-3 ext:120-122; Email: mm@cdwarehouse-asia.com

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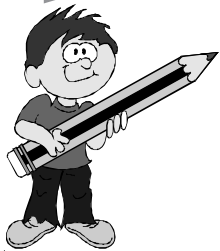
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Brain Buster!!

In the Republic of Transportia is a bridge four kilometres long and strong enough to hold 20,000 kilograms, but no more. A diesel train weighing exactly 20,000 kilograms rolls onto the bridge. As it reaches the halfway point of the bridge, a sparrow weighing 30 grams lands on the train, yet the bridge does not collapse. Why not?

By the halfway point, the train has used up more than 30 grams of fuel.

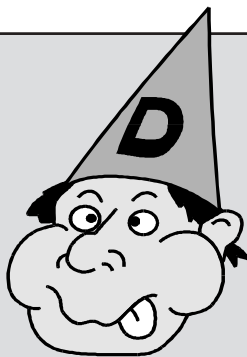
Solution to last week's Crossword

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

Answers to last week's Monster Quiz

1. Mark Chapman; 2. American War of Independence; 3. A helicopter; 4. Samuel Johnson; 5. Malcolm Bradbury; 6. Mick Jagger and Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones; 7. Ian Curtis; 8. Joy Division; 9. Juneau, Alaska; 10. Djibouti; 11. Charles Darwin; 12. Green Eggs and Ham; 13. A cannon; 14. Fish; 15. Crossbow; 16. Albert Einstein; 17. Panama Canal; 18. Jean Harlow; 19. Man; 20. Namibia.

Get your brain in gear with the Monster Quiz



1. Whose motto is "Ich Dien"?
2. Who invented the words "chortle" and "galumph"?
3. The words first appeared in a poem. Name the poem.
4. In 1908 a meteorite hit a remote part of Siberia, near which river?
5. What does a poynter make?
6. If you were a master of magirics, what would you be good at?
7. Henry Bessemer invented a process for making what?
8. Which top comedian was born Jerome Silberman?
9. Which US state is also known as the Tar Heel State?
10. Which US state has a name meaning "Green Mountain"?
11. Which Thai province is between Udon Thani and Roi Et?
12. What did Boris Karloff sell for a living before becoming an actor?
13. Whose nose was insured for US\$140,000?
14. Who used the pen name "Boz"?
15. How many hemidemi-semiquavers are there in a full note?
16. Name the flying island in Gulliver's third journey.
17. From which island did Napoleon Bonaparte escape in 1815?
18. Which soccer player claimed to have been helped by "La mano de Dios"?
19. Bono, The Edge and Larry. Who is the fourth member?
20. Which superhero first appeared on Japanese TV in 1966?

Answers next week.

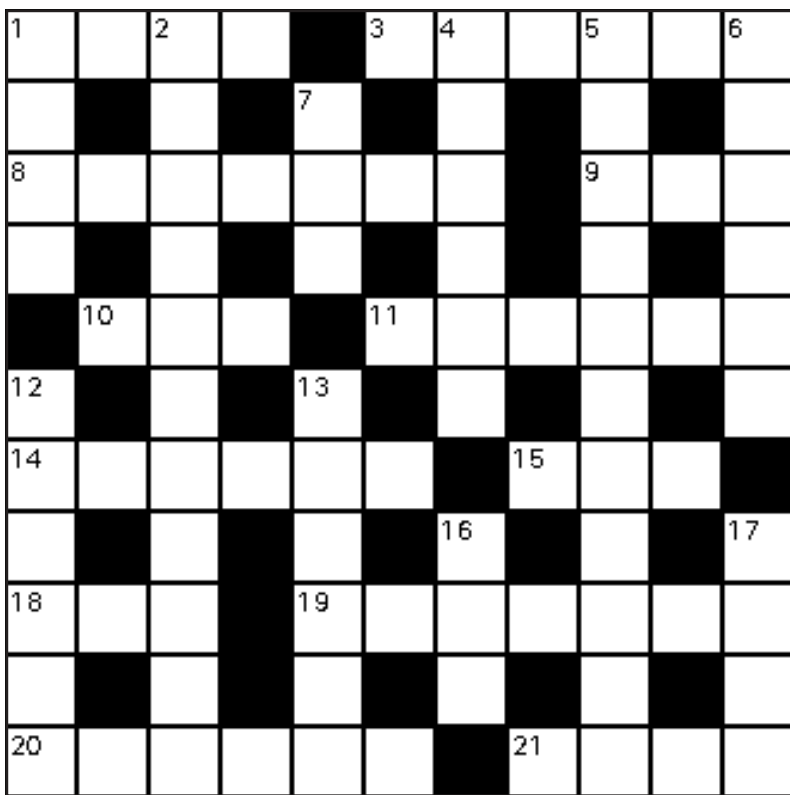
Never a Cross Word!

ACROSS

1. Not well.
3. In slumberland.
8. Perplex.
9. Not him.
10. Irritate.
11. Anise-flavored liquor.
14. Nautical measure of depth.
15. Troops.
18. US company.
19. Lunacy.
20. Tempt.
21. Go no further.

DOWN

1. Foot covering.
2. State south of Massachusetts.
4. Its capital is Stockholm.
5. Improvement.



6. March-past.
7. Underwater boat, in short.
12. Workplace.
13. Type of acid ants make.
16. Not even.
17. Please reply.

Solution next week.

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Sarah's slightly scary first day

Once again the holidays are over and most of us are heading back to school with our heads down, knowing we will have to get back into school routines after two months of soaking up the sun and hanging out (in other words, doing nothing day after day).

On the upside, meeting up with schoolfriends after a long stretch is an invigorating experience filled with small talk and pleasantries. The beginning of the term is also the time when we old hands meet the academic year's new starters.

One of these was "Sarah", an Anglo-American student who had moved to Phuket to complete her final two years of secondary education.

Sarah didn't enjoy her first day at school. The teachers were nice enough and the reputation of the school was good but for her, it just didn't feel right.

For a start, the school was huge compared with the small private school in England that she came from. She wasn't used to seeing so many people in one place. The diversity of cultures at the school was also something of a shock.

Sarah entered the class and noticed that there weren't too many girls around, and those who were, seemed too shy to talk with her.

Loneliness washed over her. She couldn't wait to get home and curl up in front of the TV.

Things started to get worse right at the beginning of the physics class.

The physics teacher bellowed, "If you are not prepared to sit at home on a Friday night and study your physics, then do not do advanced!"

It appeared that several students had asked to change to a different level of physics, creating hassle for the teacher and thoroughly irritating him.

The students were pushed into a ragged line and told to pick a door: lower physics – where they were greeted with a more traditional "Good morning" – or higher physics with the red-faced teacher.

Sarah was slightly intimidated by this teacher, but headed for the "higher" door. As she stood on the threshold, he stopped her and asked, "Are you prepared?" Sarah did not answer. He asked again. "I don't know," she replied. The red-faced teacher's face got redder still.

As she braced for the impending explosion, someone already in the "lower"



Youth 'n
ASIA

By Lauren Moorhouse

class took Sarah's hand and pulled her into the room, leaving the red-faced teacher fuming outside.

Inside – in contrast to the room she had just left – was peace. As she dropped her bag on the table, Sarah saw her savior in conversation with the "lower physics" teacher and several other students.

The teacher beckoned her to join them and someone again held out a hand for Sarah to grab onto. She had made a friend. Perhaps this

new place wasn't as bad as she'd initially thought. It might even be better than her last school.

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Why has my landlord cut down all the trees?

Dear Momma Duck,

I recently moved into rented accommodation. The house is in a nice location and is very comfortable.

The only slightly disturbing thing is the lack of trees around it. It seems that during construction my landlord ordered just about all the trees to be chopped down, which is rather a shame, not to mention the fact that, when the dry season comes, the lack of shade is likely to make things rather hot.

I can understand that there may have been practical considerations – getting construction equipment in and out, for example – but I have been told that there are also cultural considerations, specifically that Thais believe that certain trees are appropriate round one's dwelling, while others are to be avoided at all costs.



**Momma
DUCK**

By Wanida Hongyok
momma@phuketgazette.net

Can you tell me a bit more about this?

Tree Hugger
Chalong

Dear Tree Hugger,

In practical terms, when one considers planting a tree next to the house, one needs to consider the length of root the tree will produce, the type of wood, the likely eventual size and whether the tree will be able to withstand strong winds – and not fall on the house.

But in addition, Thai people tend to be very particular about trees.

There are certain types of trees, with suitable names, that should be planted in the front yard of the house and others that are suitable for the back yard.

Others are considered unlucky in a domestic garden.

So there are trees that can be kept from the original property and others which have to be replaced when a house is built.

People from the older generation also may not like to have trees or bushes close to the house because of the insects and reptiles they may harbor.

Trees considered harmful in gardens include the Bohdi tree, the Banyan tree, Sugar palms and rattan vines. The Bhodi and Banyan are suitable to be grown in temple grounds only.

Trees that normally grow in a rice field or in a fruit orchard are appropriate for planting around the home.

In the book *Phromachard*, there are sections about what type of trees should be grown at certain points of the compass. Other information includes the suitable seasons and days for planting various plants in the garden.

Traditions include the growing of a jack-fruit tree at the back of the house because we believe it will make the homeowner prosperous.

Besides, land here is fertile and plants grow so fast that we have no hesitation about replacing them.

Unfortunately, I think the new generation tend to be ignorant about this, or are influenced by "modern thinking" in regard to the old beliefs, and therefore miss out on the benefits of placing trees in the "right" place.

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George vs George

Downsider

By George Bentick

It's getting really scary and I mean *really* scary. I have been watching the US Democratic National Convention on the box lately and the only thought I have come away with is that it's getting *really* scary.

"What I am against is quotas. I am against hard quotas, quotas they basically delineate based upon whatever. However they delineate, quotas, I think vulcanize society."

"So I don't know how that fits into what everybody else is saying, their relative positions, but that's my position." – US President George W. Bush quoted in the San Francisco Chronicle, January 21, 2000.

The scary part is that the world is not sure if George W. Bush can be defeated in the upcoming general election. That to me is a horrifying thought.

Every living soul I know, including all the American expats living here in Phuket, believe that Bush is right up there with the second coming of Idi Amin.

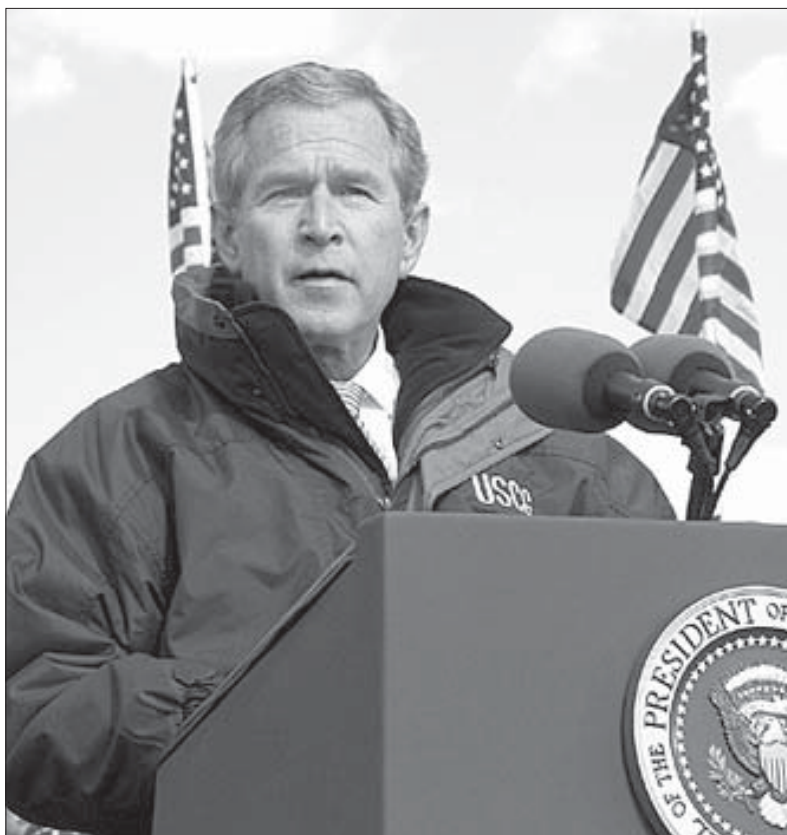
Yet no one – and here's the really *really* scary part – believes that he can be beaten in the upcoming election. Only in America.

"We spent a lot of time talking about Africa, as we should. Africa is a nation that suffers from incredible disease." – After meeting with the leaders of the European Union, Gothenburg, Sweden, June 14, 2001.

It's not easy being the leader of the free world. It puts a lot of unfair demands on you. One of the demands is that you should, at best, be semi-intelligent. This, in the current administration, can be a tall order.

The needs of the office require one to educate the rest of us ignoramuses in the free world to come to terms with certain realities that we may be unaware of.

"I understand small business



growth. I was one." – New York Daily News, Feb. 19, 2000

Or,

"More Muslims have died at the hands of killers than – I say more Muslims – a lot of Muslims have died – I don't know the exact count – at Istanbul. Look at these different places around the world where there's been tremendous death and destruction because killers kill." – Washington DC, January 29, 2004.

American expats here in Phuket are a somewhat scattered bunch. They are sprinkled around like pepper. They tend to live all over the place in odd locations and congregate around any area that has a golf course.

They truly believe that they are the cultural bedrock of the island. They even have a special deal with the Thai government known as the Treaty of Amity.

The amazing thing about the treaty is that no one really knows what the hell it is, American expats included. It extends a myriad privileges that no Ameri-

can I know seems to be able to take advantage of.

"The ambassador and the general were briefing me on the – the vast majority of Iraqis want to live in a peaceful, free world. And we will find these people and we will bring them to justice." – Washington DC, October 27, 2003.

Several of the Yankee expats who

After watching the Democratic convention I have to confess [that] John "The nose that could" Kerry and his oily lawyer sidekick have all the pizzazz and political punch of down-filled pillows. That's scary.

I come in contact with truly believe that when they go to Patong the girls should be paying them and, you know what, they may have a point.

"Rarely is the question asked: Is our children learning?" – Florence, South Carolina, January 11, 2000.

"[T]he illiteracy level of our children are appalling." – Washington DC, January 23, 2004.

The story goes like this. When the Vietnam War was in full swing, bombers that were returning to their bases in Thailand would fly a route (or perhaps I should say "rowt") over Phuket.

The bomber crews were struck by two things: the beauty of the island from the air and the lack of bomb craters.

When time came for some R&R many of them headed this way. Before long the word spread and the destination became very popular with the servicemen.

As I am sure you know, most servicemen need to be serviced (probably where the word "serviceman" came from) and thus grew the fundamentals of places like Patong.

So in truth, if one believes the above scenario, those Vietnam-era aircrews were in some way the founding fathers of Phuket as we know it today.

So, in a way, the girls do owe them a certain debt of gratitude.

"I think it's important for those of us in a position of responsibility to be firm in sharing our experiences, to understand that the babies out of wedlock is a very difficult chore for mom

and baby alike ... I believe we ought to say there is a different alternative than the culture that is proposed by people like her in society ... And, you know,

hopefully, condoms will work, but it hasn't worked." – Meet the Press, November 21, 1999.

Now, I wouldn't compare any of the flyboys to, say, Benjamin Franklin or George Washington when it comes to being founding fathers, but I reckon you get my drift.

The glue that does seem to keep them together is that they all think that George W. is a moron and should be removed from office.

They are also pretty much unanimous in believing that the American electorate is not going to do the world a favor and remove Dubya from the pinnacle of global influence.

After watching the Democratic convention I have to confess they may be right. John "The nose that could" Kerry and his oily lawyer sidekick have all the pizzazz and political punch of down-filled pillows. That's scary.

"More and more of our imports are coming from overseas" – Des Moines Register, January 15, 2003.

So, few though they are, our American cousins in Phuket have played a pivotal role in the story of Phuket and we the people of Phuket want to let them know that it is time for them to rescue us again.

So we say, "We are fully behind you and your vote, come the next presidential election.

"Save us. Please save us from what we feel is certain doom."

"Natural gas is hemispheric. I like to call it hemispheric in nature because it is a product that we can find in our neighborhoods." – Austin, Texas, December 20, 2000.

Riding a motorcycle?

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

PHUKET PROVINCIAL
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT



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International

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- Since 1994 -

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Water: the dry facts

As is pointed out in this week's *Inside Story* (pages 4 and 5) Phuket suffers from a sad contradiction: tropical downpours at this time of year yet, in the tourist season, when water is most needed, there is a shortage.

In other countries, the dry season would bring a host of restrictions such as a ban on the use of hoses for the garden and a bar on washing cars. Here, it seems, such regulations don't exist. If they did, most people would regard the rules as petty and enforcement would be as problematic as the effective enforcement of helmet laws, for example, has been.

Similarly, attempting to force property developers to build rain-water tanks into every home they construct would probably be futile. Indeed, one official interviewed by the *Gazette* said that, in his opinion, an attempt to bring in such a regulation and enforce it might even be unconstitutional.

The Phuket Provincial Waterworks Authority estimates that town-dwellers in Phuket each use as much as 200 liters of water a day. That's about 73 tonnes of water a year, per person. Assuming a population of 500,000 for the island, that's 36.5 million tonnes a year, or five times the maximum capacity of the Bang Wad reservoir, Phuket's only sizable reservoir.

The rural population, we are told, use a quarter of the amount that city folk do, but suggesting that urbanites emulate their rural cousins (no Jacuzzis, no car washing, no washing machines or dishwashers) is a non-starter.

There are plenty of ways to save water without great sacrifices in quality of life (our article lays out a good selection of ideas) but there also seems to be, in Phuket at least, widespread ignorance of the problem and the solutions, combined with an attitude of "So what? We're rich. We can buy our way out of the water shortage."

It's this ignorance that must be tackled. Teaching children in school how to save water is important but its effects will take hold only in the long term.

What's needed is an education campaign that reaches householders and homemakers now, that makes them understand that money is not the solution to water problems; that only personal responsibility can ensure continuing water supplies.

It's time for the government, national and provincial, to cooperate with the media, particularly with radio and TV stations, to launch a concerted, long-term, every-hour-on-the-hour advertising campaign to ram the message home.

If the ignorance persists, the water will not.

— The Editor

The Phuket Gazette

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Letters

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

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

Oil pipeline plan is pure insanity

Thank you Vichit Na Ranong for expressing very clearly the insanity of building an oil pipeline in Phang Nga (*Gazette*, issue of July 31).

The absurd notion that oil traders will be attracted to the region must be the joke of the year and the lack of environmental enforcement would lead to a serious oil spill sooner or later, killing the tourism industry in southern Thailand.

Everyone involved in tourism, from Trang to Ranong, should protest against this plan.

K. Vichit, you have our fullest support.

Wolfgang Meusburger
General Manager
Holiday Inn Resort Phuket

The real victims in the land probe

Recently, my Thai and foreign friends working and living in Phuket or visiting the island as deep-pocketed tourists have all been asking me the same question, "Why the serious disputes over land on the island?" I have answered them all, "Because the land on the Pearl of the Andaman is like gold."

Still in doubt, some friends asked whether it was true that the disputes are simply the result of government agencies going up against the big families and the local politicians.

I explained that my friends working as lawyers and legal advisers to Thai and foreign clients in Phuket share the same aim as the government led by Prime

Minister Thaksin Shinawatra: to look seriously for any illegal land occupation or acquisition.

The big families and the local politicians, who are the major landlords on the island, are "sitting ducks" for the present government.

Unlike Thai landlords, foreigners who have acquired disputed land on the island may have to enter into a three-cornered battle – fighting the government agencies investigating the land and fighting the person claiming possession or ownership of the land, in the same court, at the same time.

There have been many disputes over land entered into the Court of First Instance in Phuket, and we can expect all parties in the disputes to fight to the bitter end because they don't want to lose their "gold".

I would like to advise foreigners who want to own just a little piece of land on the island to check for themselves about the land and the title deed with every relevant government agency. Otherwise, they risk ending up as owners of a piece of golden tissue paper.

Sura Pattanapratichaya
Phuket

Round of applause for Immigration

I married my wife – a Thai – in 1999 and have lived in Thailand for two years. After two earlier applications and after the staff of the Immigration Office in Krabi were replaced, I am finally sure that I will get my one-year extension of stay.

I appreciate the kindness and professionalism of the new

officers and suggest that we show them an open-minded attitude. A double "thumbs-up" to the Krabi Immigration officers.

Serge Yves Barros
Koh Lanta

Duty-free scheme is full of holes

Every day I pass the monstrosity that will be the Wang Talang duty-free complex on Chao Fa West Rd, and I can't help thinking how poorly conceived Phuket's duty-free plans are.

Phuket Governor Udomsak Usawarakura's suggestion that Thais visiting Phuket for at least 48 hours could also buy duty-free goods (Governor's letter, *Gazette* issue of June 5) was a kindly notion. But it would effectively allow the whole world *except* Phuket people to shop duty-free.

And how do the authorities plan to identify which foreigners qualify to buy duty-free? Having foreigners show that they entered Thailand on a tourist visa would go a long way, but excludes the much-sought-after "long-stay tourists". Why penalize them when the government has spent so much money in trying to attract them?

Then there are the foreigners who live and/or work here who have to leave Thailand every 90 days. If long-stay tourists were allowed to buy duty-free, then it would plainly be hypocritical not to allow 90-days "visitors" to buy duty-free goods.

Whatever solutions the government comes up with, I hope it is prepared for all the confusion that will follow.

R D Jennings
Chalong

Letters conveying views and suggestions are published here. Those seeking comment from government officials and/or business owners are published in *Issues & Answers* on the facing page.

Dog problem a matter of responsibility

There is a long history of stray dogs staying at wats. The wat has no duty to keep the dogs, but strays come and we cannot avoid taking care of them. This is the only place left where these dogs are allowed to live. If monks lacked this compassion, I don't know where the dogs would stay.

We help the animals in any way we can. If we have enough food for them, we share it among all the animals; but if we do not, they will starve.

The food for the animals comes mainly from people's offerings to monks. Any surplus is given to the animals, though we sometimes buy dog food to feed the dogs.

I do it voluntarily. Taking care of the dogs at the wat is not only about giving food. I give them love and compassion, and sometimes I hug them.

I allow the dogs to stay out of pity. I do not wish to form an agreement with any animal welfare organization or promote the wat as a tourist attraction or ask for donations.

Foreigners working for the animal foundations in Phuket come to help take care of the dogs. They help the wat because they know the wat shows pity and allows the animals to stay.

The foreigners love and care for the dogs. They know the name of every dog, and when they come here the dogs crowd around them, and some dogs jump on them and play with them.

They feed, vaccinate and sterilize the 100 or so cats and dogs at the wat, and



FIRST PERSON

The establishment of the dog pound in Thalang, and the rounding up of strays in late June and early last month sparked debate throughout the community about whether this was an appropriate way to solve Phuket's stray dog problem.

Phuket's wats have long been the last place of refuge (or dumping ground, depending on one's view) for a vast number of the island's strays. Here, Pra Kru Sunthon Prariyathada, the Abbot of Wat Tha Rua in Thalang and the most senior monk in Thalang district, gives his opinion of the dog pound and the role of the wat in caring for strays.

spend about 10,000 baht a month on helping the animals. For example, it costs about 600 baht to sterilize each dog, and they pay for it.

I think the wat should care for the dogs with compassion as the prime motivator. If we do not, the authorities will eventually come and take the dogs away. I cannot oppose officials who come to the wat to catch the dogs and take them to the pound. It would be very easy to catch the dogs because they are not aggressive.

If all the dogs here were taken to the

pound, this would affect these foreigners' feelings. I do not want to hurt their feelings. They have helped the wat without wanting anything in return.

I will not oppose the authorities wanting to take the stray dogs to the pound. But [if this happens] I pity the foreigners who care for the dogs. I think they may feel negatively about me.

I stress that my caring for stray dogs comes from my compassion for them and I do not want to damage the goodwill of the foreigners. The dogs at the wat are in

good condition because they are well cared for.

I think that taking dogs to the pound is the same as taking elderly people to an old folks' home. If dogs could speak, they would object to being sent there. In my opinion, this was the sin in taking the dogs to the pound.

From my observation, people in homes for the elderly are unhappy, even if they are well cared for. They do not enjoy the same warmth as they do when living with their families. Dogs experience the same emotions.

Dogs stay at the wat already. If we cannot act responsibly and, instead, abandon dogs, like a father abandoning his son, that is inappropriate behavior.

The people who abandon the dogs come at night to dump them, and 80% of the animals dumped at our gate are killed by traffic because they are in a strange environment and are confused about where to go. The people who abandon them never come to the wat to learn about morals, so we cannot teach them – we have no way to meet them.

The problem of stray dogs comes from the lack of responsibility on the part of the dogs' owners. The task of taking care of a dog is not a big burden; all the owner needs to do is give love and some food.

If the owners are irresponsible, they pass their burden to others. They are selfish.

If people were more responsible, we would not have this problem.

Why is import duty being levied on my educational materials?

I have received a fax from the Customs Department in Bangkok informing me that a FedEx parcel has arrived for me from Canada and that I must pay 850 baht import duty on it before they will forward it to Phuket.

I am doing a correspondence course for my schooling in Canada and the contents of the package are the books that I need to study. I have already paid 5,000 baht to have the package sent here by FedEx.

I will be taking the books back to Canada when I move back home. Should I pay tax on this? Will I have to pay tax again when I take the books home?

I currently work here and have a non-immigrant B visa. Will this help with any tax breaks? Is everything that enters Thailand taxable?

Jeffrey Deveau
Phuket

Customs hotline officer Paka-walee Wanto (Tel: 1164) responds:

According to Thai Customs tariff 4901, no import duty is levied on educational textbooks that have more than 30% of the text in a foreign language.

However, any maps, charts

or diagrams sent separately are not exempt from import duty, regardless of which language they are printed in.

Customs at Bangkok International Airport check all packages being imported to Thailand and determine whether the articles being imported fall under tariff 4901. If the officers deem that the articles do not, import duty must be paid on them.

As for other items being imported to Thailand, used personal belongings can be imported to Thailand without incurring import duty.

However, the belongings must be imported to Thailand no more than one month before or six months after the foreigner arrives in the country.

There is no tax on exporting used personal belongings to your home country.

Teera Paesathitthavorn, the Deputy Chief of Customs in Phuket, adds:

To appeal against import duty you must file the appropriate protest form at the time when you pay the import duty.

If this procedure is not followed, the duty is not refundable, even if it was levied in error.

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

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

Issues & ANSWERS

Transferring car ownership alone

I have been told that it is possible to transfer ownership of a car without the person selling the car being present. Is this true? If so, what documents are required from the previous owner?

Daniel
Phuket

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

You may transfer a vehicle to be registered in your name without the previous owner being with you when you come to our offices to register the change of details.

To do so, you must bring to the PPTO a signed letter from the previous owner granting you permission to take over ownership of the vehicle.

Alternatively, the previous owner may choose to have a rep-

resentative act on his or her behalf. However, this person must also have written permission to do so, signed by the previous owner.

In addition, the previous owner must sign the transfer-of-ownership form, but that may be done without coming to our offices, and you may complete the form when you are here.

If the previous owner is Thai, you must also bring a copy of that person's ID card and of his or her *tabien baan* [house registration paper], both signed by the previous owner.

If the previous owner is a foreigner, you must bring a signed copy of his or her passport, in particular the pages showing the person's face and current visa.

For more information call the PPTO at Tel: 076-214929 or 076-211019.

Getting off the Immigration blacklist

I am married to a Thai woman and two years ago I was deported because I was found guilty of stealing 1,440 baht.

I now want to return to see my Thai family, but Immigration will not let me return. What I can do? Before, I was in Thailand for nearly two years without a passport. Sometimes the system goes against the people.

MYM
Unseen in Thailand

Pol Capt Krissarat Nuesen, of Phuket Immigration Office, replies:

You should hire a lawyer to appeal the decision to have you barred from Thailand. However, there is no guarantee that you will be allowed to return.

Sharp Whit from the Protean Scotsman

Iain Banks contains multitudes. In a novel I reviewed six months ago, *Dead Air*, his narrative voice was that of a militantly atheist Scottish disc jockey in London. In *Whit* (Abacus, London, 1996, 455pp) he is the pious 19-year-old granddaughter of the leader of an arcane religious cult in the Scottish countryside. Both books abound with zany characters, fast-paced action and rollicking humor.

The beautiful and intelligent Isis Whit is dispatched by her grandfather – “His Holiness The Blessed Salvador-Uranos Odin Dyaus Brahma Moses-Mohammed Mirza Whit of the Luskentyrian Sect of the Select of God” – to find her cousin Morag, slated to be guest of honor at her cult’s quadrennial Festival of Love. Morag has renounced her religion and disappeared.

The cult is named the Luskentyrian Order, otherwise known as the Saved. Isis must leave her back-to-the-land commune and travel to London amid “the Unsaved (also known as the Wretched, the Insane, the Norms, the

Obtuse, the Reject, the Clinker, the Chaff, the Cluttered, the Rank, the Passives, the Benighted and the Asleep)”.

Morag had left the commune to become an “internationally renowned soloist” on a musical instrument called the baryton.

She was last seen in London and Isis makes her way there, putting up with a layabout cousin, Zebediah Whit, in an squatter apartment strewn with wine bottles and spliffs that he shares with Roadkill, his girlfriend. Talk about an innocent abroad.

While waiting for Zebediah to buy a train ticket, Isis is approached by a man who puts a hand on her elbow and asks if she is lost: “‘Far from it,’ I told him, looking down at his hand. ‘I am one of the Found. I suspect that it is you who are one of the Lost, sir.’”

The man is chased off by Zebediah and Isis turns on him: “‘Zeb, I am not totally naïve concerning the ways of the world and the vices of the city,’ I told him. ‘Quite possibly that gentleman did have some nefarious and even sexually preda-

tory motive in talking to me, but I ask you: what other sort of soul is more in need of being saved? I have a duty as an Officer of the True Church and especially as the Elect to spread the good word wherever and whenever possible.’”

Isis and Zebediah go off in search of Morag’s theatrical agent. The address turns out to be a porno theater and, later that night, through the accidental viewing of a video tape, Isis discovers that Morag is Fusillada De-Bauch, a porn queen.

This is just the start of a wild picaresque journey that careens all over England and circles back to Scotland. Framed for theft by her ambitious brother Allen, Isis is banished from the commune but manages to track Morag down in Edinburgh where she is on vacation with her muscular boyfriend Ricky, touring the giant waterslides of Scotland.

Queried by Isis about her line of work, she replies: “I love it. I like lots of sex, I like being admired and I like the money.”

Isis also tracks down her great aunt



Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt

Zhobelia, living in an old folks home, and from her learns the true origins of her grandfather’s cult. The stage is set for a final confrontation at the commune.

The moral is delivered halfway through the novel by Isis’s grandmother Yolanda, an apostate Texan who turned against religion after the David Koresh massacre at Waco.

“I’ve seen just about every damn cult and faith and sect and religion and pseudo-religion the world has to offer in my time, and it seems to me maybe in some sense your Grandfather is right about one thing: they are all searching for the truth, but they never find it, not all of it, not any of them, and that includes you people; you’re no more right than anybody else ... And you know what I think? I think it’s all a load of crap. I don’t doubt that there’s a God, although maybe even that’s more habit than true faith, God knows, but I don’t think anybody in any religion has ever said one damn useful thing about Him or Her or It.”

How free Wi-Fi Internet is possible

Q You recently mentioned in your column that free wireless Internet service was widely available in the US. I’ve been to the US several times this past year and – although there are plenty of wireless “hotspots” – they were invariably expensive and usually not very fast. How can fast Internet connections be provided free?

BT
Nai Harn

A Many small cities in the US currently have free, fast Internet wireless hotspots. Large cities have them, too, but they’re harder to find. There are dozens of catalogs of free wireless hotspots available on the Web (eg, www.wififreespot.com).

COMPUTER Q&A

By Woody Leonhard

com), but none of them covers even a tiny percentage of all the sites available. Very few list Thailand.

Ultimately, the best way to find a free hotspot is to start your computer, make sure your firewall’s working, try to access any wireless network that’s broadcasting its system ID, and see what happens.

Many of the chain restaurants and coffee shops in the US that offer connections for a fee were equipped by Internet Service Providers (ISPs) who invested heavily in wireless tech-

nology way back when it was expensive – and now they have to recoup their costs.

Such restaurants typically have exclusive licenses with ISPs that prevent them from offering Internet access from any other ISP. Increasingly, squatters are simply setting up wireless hotspots in the building next door or across the street from the restaurant. The ISPs with the exclusive licenses are furious, while the restaurant owners often look the other way.

I dropped by a Kinko’s copy shop in Seattle and asked how much it would cost to plug my laptop into their ultra-fast network. The man looked at me as if I had asked how much it costs to breathe air. “It’s free,” he said.

Hotels, however, are in a

class of their own. Hoteliers face two problems in rolling out wireless Internet access to their customers. First, they have a technical hurdle: 802.11 wireless technology doesn’t permeate through multiple walls very well, so blanketing a hotel with wireless service can be, uh, challenging.

Second, and the real sticking point for many hotel chains, is that they have already sunk huge amounts of money into wiring their rooms for fast Internet.

Many of them have been charging an arm and two legs for broadband, and they’re reluctant to give up the revenue stream.

I stayed at a major chain hotel during my most recent trip. The staff at the front desk told me (while the boss wasn’t listening, of course) that I could plug my laptop into the room’s network cable, and pay US\$29 a day for the privilege; or I could schlep my laptop down to the reception area, hop onto the hotel’s wireless connection and use the Internet all I wanted for free.

Oh, and the wireless connection in the lobby was faster than the one in the rooms.

What’s currently happening in North America will happen in Phuket – although it may take a year or two ... or three. What makes it all possible is that the cost of setting up a Wi-Fi hotspot is about 4,000 baht, or the equivalent, plus the monthly fee for the Internet connection.

So, in the US at least, many folks feel compelled to set up a free hotspot, simply as a random act of kindness, or as a cheap value-add service for their customers. Amazing.

Q You recently said that you’d been having trouble with your TT&T/CAT broadband connection. Mine’s been fine. Is it possible that you have a bad telephone line?

A Predictably, the day after I filed that column, my TT&T/CAT connection started working wonderfully.

There’s a reason why. The TT&T/CAT connection is sold as a 2-Mbps service – which means that downloads run at a maximum rate of 2 million bits per second. TT&T advises that its “standard” 1,000-baht-a-month service bundles a maximum of 50 users together on a single port: if all 50 start downloading big files at the same time, the connection will run like a slug. Fair enough.

Here’s what TT&T didn’t tell you. From TT&T’s main switch the connection goes to CAT’s ADSL switch. All the ADSL service in Phuket goes through that one connection: the Mother of All Bottlenecks.

Up until a few weeks ago, that key connection was running at a maximum rate of 8 Mbps. Yes, you read that correctly: the maximum rate for all of Phuket was just four times as fast as the advertised rate for every single connection. That’s a bit like supplying water for all of Phuket through a single two-inch pipe.

On the day my ADSL service got better, I’m told, CAT upgraded the Mother of All Bottlenecks to 155 Mbps. It’s a huge jump, and it shows.

Computer questions? Send them to woody@khunwoody.com

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Plant industry shaken to its roots

By Kamol Pirat

PHUKET: The island's property boom has spawned a boom of a different kind – in plant shops. All those million-dollar homes require beautiful gardens.

As a result, there has been a rush of people from around Thailand setting up plant shops in Phuket. Those in the industry say some 100 new plant shops have opened in the past couple of years, and some in the business now gloomily predict a shakeout.

Lert Arsana-Suwan, from Ratchaburi, opened the Larn Larn plant shop on the bypass road about a year ago. It cost him 200,000 baht to set up and stock the premises, and another 200,000 baht for a year's rent in advance.

Unlike the major operators, he cannot afford to go into the lucrative business of creating gardens for customers – he has neither the labor nor the space to store trees until they can be planted in a garden. "Land in Phuket is very expensive; I can't afford to buy a plot for a permanent shop," he says.

K. Lert says competition is tough, with many shops cutting prices to the bone. Low prices, he believes, mean low quality. "Shops will not take care of customers, and some will cheat.

"Low prices are good for customers in the short term but the [backlash against poor quality] will hurt the whole industry because customers will stop buying."

He says his prices are higher than most. "That's because of the quality."

The business is seasonal, he notes. Many of the owners of expensive homes come to Phuket in the high season only, and come to him to replace plants that have died while they have been away.

But some owners prefer to arrive to find their gardens looking perfect, which is where operations like that of Rewadee Charoenthip come in.

K. Rewadee is the owner of Thip Garden, one of the largest plant shops in Phuket. She has been in the business since quitting her job at the Pearl Village Hotel at Nai Yang Beach to open a small plant shop in Phuket City 15 years ago.

Her big break came when she got a contract to provide plants for the Blue Canyon Golf Club. That contract was worth about 50 million baht. The profit

enabled her to buy some 12 rai of land near Wichit Songkram Rd and massively expand her business.

These days, about 75% of her customers are foreigners, she says. They pay her to supply all the plants for their dream gardens, and many also use her firm to look after the garden while they are away.

She too sees greatly increased competition in the industry. "It is important to look after existing customers," she notes.

In contrast to the oversupply of plant shops, some plants are in short supply. For example, K. Rewadee says, "Customers favor frangipani trees, presumably because of the sweet scent. Now we have to order them from Isarn, or even from neighboring countries.

"The price of a frangipani has been rising. A tree with a two- or three-inch trunk, about three meters high, now sells for 3,000 to 5,000 baht."

The most expensive tree on her premises at the moment is the frangipani that stands in front of her office, waiting to be moved to its new home. Because of its height and its "beautiful shape" it was sold recently for a stunning 75,000 baht.

Another favorite is bougainvillea. "We've been growing them for a long time and have a lot of experience. Our business grew from bougainvillea."

Bougainvillea, too, can command astonishing prices. One large, shapely plant, about 50 years old, is in Thip Garden's price list at 50,000 baht.

Success in the plant business has to be based on common sense, K. Rewadee adds. "In Bangkok and other places you can grow every kind of plant, but Phuket is different. We concentrate on plants that can withstand the dry season and the saltiness of the sea air."

In addition to Phuket, Thip Garden also has markets in the US and Europe, thanks to online sales through its website, www.gardenphuket.com.

Despite the increasing competition in Phuket, K. Rewadee says that she makes a decent profit, and the business is still expanding. The main problem is a shortage of labor. "If the government would relax the rules for hiring labor from neighboring countries, that would go a long way to solving the problem," she says.

On the Move

Canadian **Darren Michelin** has been appointed Business Development and Training Manager at Baan Klung Jinda Restaurant in Phuket City. He has a degree in mass communications management, is a certified advertising agency practitioner and has a TESOL qualification.

During his 11 years in Thailand, Mr Michelin has worked as International Sales Manager at Reed Exhibitions, and as Training Manager at the Dusit Laguna Resort Hotel. He has also taught at international schools and universities, and has worked as a freelance writer and as an MC.

Supornpan Te-Pin from Bangkok, is the new Manager at Phuket Holidays travel agency in Patong. She graduated from Phuket Vocational College with a diploma in marketing, and her work experience in the travel and tour industry includes more than 20 years working at the Queen Air Booking Center, also in Patong.

Yindee Vichaidit, 33, from Nakhon Sri Thammarat, has been appointed Reservations Manager at The Aspasia Phuket at Kata Beach. K. Yindee graduated from the Rajabhat College, Nakhon Sri Thammarat campus, with a degree in business English. Her experience includes working as Reception Supervisor at the Kata Beach Resort. Before moving to The Aspasia Phuket, K. Yindee worked at the Allamanda Laguna Phuket.

Rocketing your gains by going into Orbis

As I have explained in previous columns, the Orbis fund management group has demonstrated superb investment performance and has been able to achieve excellent investment returns during the bear market of 2000-2003.

It is my belief that the rise in global stockmarkets from April 2003 until the end of 2003 was a bear market rally. We are not out of the woods yet.

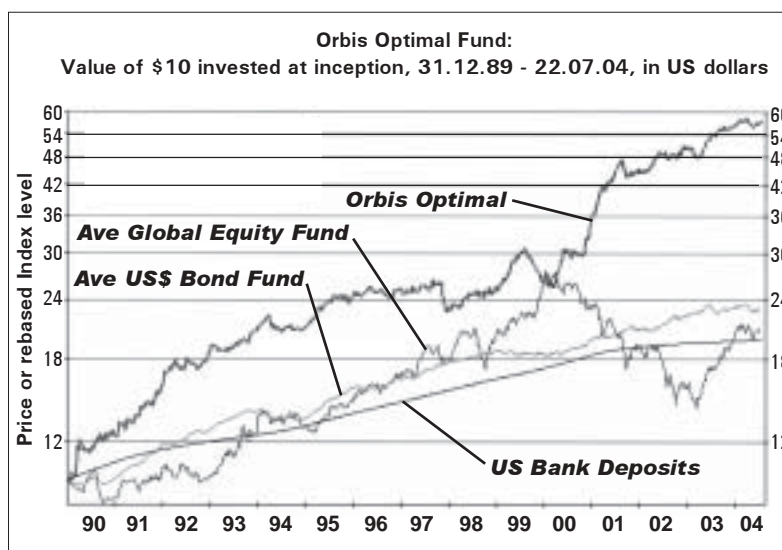
Markets being what they are, there will always be different opinions, but many technical analysts believe the bear trend in markets is starting again, with falls likely in September and October, and beyond.

The attraction of the Orbis Funds is that they have performed well in both rising and falling markets. The graph of the Orbis Optimal US Dollar Fund from its inception on December 31, 1989, shows the returns on US\$10 invested at that date. Investors in the fund would now have a holding worth US\$57.06 compared with a value for the average US\$ bond fund, of US\$22.92. The average global equity fund stands at US\$20.77 and US\$10 cash, as measured by US dollar bank deposits, would have grown to US\$19.78.

The interesting part of the graph is the performance through difficult periods over the past five years. On an annualized basis, the fund has returned 12.8% per annum compared with the return of the average global equity, which recorded a loss on average of 1.1% a year.

Naturally – as the standard cautionary warning states – past performance is no guide to future performance. However, it may be a good indication of the skills of the fund's managers.

The Orbis Optimal is hedged against stockmarket down-



MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson

turns. This is not simply to defend against falls but to make a profit out of falling markets.

While Standard & Poors list the Orbis Optimal as an equity fund, its managers describe it as an "absolute return fund", and stress their belief that it has, in their opinion, the lowest risk profile of all their funds.

It is a large fund with US\$3.2 billion (about 130 billion baht) under management.

The Orbis Africa Equity (Rand) Fund may appeal to homesick South African expats and others who have an interest in portfolio investment in South Africa. It is rated as AAA by Standard & Poors and AA by Forsyth Partners.

The benchmark for this fund is the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) All Share Index. It has outperformed this index to a significant degree. The fund was launched on June 30, 1998.

Fifty rand invested in the JSE at that date would be worth 89.21 rand today, while the same amount invested in the Orbis Africa fund would be worth 300.53 – quite a difference.

Considering that the fund is only six years old, it is large; the current amount invested in it is 1.189 billion rand (just under 8 billion baht).

The fund is registered offshore, so interested investors do not have to go through the complications of the South African banking system.

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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และ การแสดงชุด บรอดเวย์โชว์
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งานเลี้ยงด็อกเทล เจ้าของธุรกิจโรงแรม
- 14 ส.ค. ฝ่ายบริหารและฝ่ายจัดซื้อ
แข่งขันการผสมเครื่องดื่ม Malibu ชิงชนะเลิศ
- 15 ส.ค. ประเภทลีลา เดียวมือสมัครเล่น และประเภทคู่มืออาชีพ
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- 13 Aug Fashion Show from Angel Model & Promotion
Management and Broadway Show from Fantasia
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Cocktail reception party for hotel
owners, management and purchasing managers
- 14 Aug Malibu Flair Bartending Contest
Single Amateur and Duo Professional Contest
- 15 Aug Malibu Flair Bartending Contest
Single Professional Contest
and Miss Cocktail Contest
Fashion Show and Broadway Show
from Fantasia Entertainment Group



Lessons in top-flight takraw

By Anongnat Sartpisut

MAI KHAO: Phuket International Airport was an appropriate setting for the informal 2nd Airport Sepak Takraw Championships over the weekend of July 31 and August 1; some of the aerial antics of the participants had the crowd wondering whether clearance for takeoff had been given.

Five of the 13 three-man teams taking part featured members of the Thai national squad, and it was no coincidence that these teams took the top five places in the tournament.

In the end, it was the Patcharaporn team that flew highest, though only just, in a close-fought, best-of-three tussle with Sor Jor Rat.

Current national squad players Sarawut Inrek and Udomsak Kietchupipat graced Sor Jor Rat while Singha Somsakul played for Patcharaporn.

Every volley fired by Singha in the first set seemed to end up with a point for his side and they quickly reached the 21-point target, leaving Sor Jor Rat with 17 points.



STRATOSPHERIC: National squad players Singha Somsakul for Patcharaporn (left) and Udomsak Kietchupipat for Sor Jor Rat defy gravity at the 2nd Airport Sepak Takraw Championships. Patcharaporn went on to win the final.

Patcharaporn suffered a reversal of fortune in the second set when Sor Jor Rat – having learned from their earlier mis-

takes – made it to 21 first, leaving their opponents on 18 points.

The final set was a rush to 15 points

and saw the boys from Sor Jor Rat lose their touch. Patcharaporn's resident alchemist Singha – later awarded the Player of the Tournament award and 1,000 baht – turned every play into a point, helping his side to hit the magic 15, taking the 25,000-baht first prize and leaving Sor Jor Rat frustrated with 11 points and the 12,000-baht runners' up prize.

Third place went to the Chester's Grill team when the opposing Nong Mint team – current Asian sepak takraw youth champions – retired from the contest due to injuries.

After the contest, Kamol Tankimhong, coach to the Thai national sepak takraw teams told the *Gazette* that his players are encouraged to take part in as many provincial matches as possible to keep their skills and reflexes in tip-top condition ahead of the King's Cup Sepak Takraw Championships to be held in Bangkok later this year.

"It is also a great way to demonstrate the level of skill necessary to play at international level, and it gives provincial players the opportunity to learn from the top-flight players," said Kamol.

Tigers maul Ao Nam Bor

PHUKET CITY: The first two days of the Democrat Party-sponsored seven-a-side soccer tourney at Saphan Hin saw some fiercely competitive play, particularly in the under-11s division.

One of the big matches for the under-11s – 17 teams are competing in this division – was between Phang Nga Tiger Juniors and local lads Ao Nam Bor.

The Tigers were as good as their name and played in defensively, waiting to pounce on Ao Nam Bor when they strayed too far from their end of the pitch.

The Tigers lured their opponents into thinking that they had the upper hand but struck successfully at goal in the 7th minute, with first blood going to Jirayut Sawangkit.

The 9th minute saw Tiger Durongkorn Tuwapirun shoot from half-way, but missed.

In the second half, Ao Nam Bor left their goal wide open in the 11th minute and Jirayut seized the opportunity to push the lead to 2-1. The home team saw their troubles multiply when Jirayut –



The Ao Nam Bor goalkeeper saves a shot by Phang Nga Tiger Juniors, but four more went past him.

fouled three minutes later and awarded a free kick from the 10-yard line – took another shot at goal.

The Ao Nam Bor keeper got a finger to it only to see the ball deflect into the net.

Sensing defeat, Ao Nam Bor rallied and Assada Pratan managed to score in the 17th minute.

The Tigers knew that they were almost unstoppable but Durongkorn showed no mercy to Ao Nam Bor and made up for his

first-half miss by putting the ball firmly into the home side's net.

Final score: Tigers 4, Ao Nam Bor 1.

See next week's *Gazette* for more results of the four-day, 115-team tourney.

– Anongnat Sartpisut

Moo 5 Nakok in narrow win

CHALONG: Moo 5 Nakok beat Island Safari 1-0 to win the open category of the 7th Chalong Samphan (Friendship) seven-a-side soccer tournament on August 1.

Moo 9 came third and Moo 4 came fourth in the competition, played on the makeshift soccer pitch next to the Chalong Water Supply Office.

Placings in the other categories were as follows:

Under-11s: 1. Baan Laem Panwa School; 2. Baan Naborn School; 3. Baan Ao Nam Bor School; 4. Surakul Stars. **Under-13s:** 1. Police B; 2. OrBorTor Moo 5; 3. Baan Laem Panwa School; 4. Police A. **Under-19s:** 1. Moo 7; 2. Moo 1; 3. Moo 4; 4. ING Insurance Co.

Kata Group bowls them over

PHUKET CITY: Kongngern Thaitong, Pairoj Janchana and Eam Thavornvongwongse of the Kata Group team outscored 19 other teams to win the recent Bowling San Samphan Rapee Day 2004 at CS Bowl at the Big C supercenter.

After two hours of competition, the trio had amassed 1,425 points, pushing Somchai Peungsuriya, Boonsong Reuanphet and

Nikorn Khaoraksa, of Pakdee Village, who managed to score 1,410 points, into second place.

The Village Leaders Association, comprising Pisut Tanmanee, Pongtorn Rungsirrat and Somnuk Pracha, scored 1,390 points to take third place.

The tourney was organized to honor the memory of HRH Prince Rapeepattanasak, regarded as the father of Thai law.

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For a rather basic, no-frills two-seater, the Mazda MX-5 has sold remarkably well. It is now in its 15th year of production, with a tally of well over 700,000 having been built. It even made the *Guinness Book of World Records* for the world's best-selling sports car, when its production figures reached 600,000 in October 2001.

The name Mazda originated from Ahura Mazda, the highest Zoroastrian god of reason, who apparently granted wisdom and united man with other gods and nature itself. The word Mazda also closely resembled the name of founder Jujiro Matsuda, so the firm, which began as the Toyo Cork Kogyo Co. in 1920, subsequently became Mazda.

This year, at the Los Angeles International Auto Show, the latest version of the MX-5, the Mazdaspeed MX-5 Miata made its debut, featuring a turbo-charged 1.8-liter engine producing a very creditable 178bhp (130kW) and 225Nm of torque. An intercooler ensures a dense charge of fuel/air to the engine, while the cooling system has a larger radiator to cope with the excess heat produced.

A six-speed short-throw gearbox is standard, while the Mazdaspeed lowered suspension gives the MX-5 remarkable agility, a legacy going back to the original MX-5, which was legendary for its handling, making it simple and easy to control, due



The new Mazdaspeed MX-5 continues a winning legacy going back 15 years, but with more power and comfort.

in part to its low center of gravity and the tiny, low-slung sports configuration.

Exterior colors for the Mazdaspeed MX-5 are limited to Velocity Red Mica or Titanium Gray Metallic, with a black vinyl soft top. A 225-Watt, six-speaker Bose audio system is standard, along with a six-disc CD auto changer. Leather or cloth upholstery may be specified, while a special sports suspension featuring Bilstein shock absorbers and larger anti-roll bars gives the car better road-holding than ever before.

Safety has also been enhanced with side-impact bars and reinforced windshield pillars. The only factory option is the GT package, with a cloth top and black leather bucket seats with red stitching.

When the MX-5 was launched in 1989 (it was called the Miata in the States and the Eunos in its native Japan) it was powered by a humble, 1.6-liter, 16-valve lump producing just 115bhp. It was fairly rudimentary and the brakes were barely able to cope with the modest speeds it could reach.

In 1993 came a power hike,

with the introduction of a 1.8-liter motor delivering 140bhp. Disc brakes all round had also been added in the intervening years giving the car more stopping power.

But it was still the simple, open two-seater design that had endeared it to thousands of enthusiasts who had mourned the passing of the MG Midget, the British entry-level sports car of the '60s and '70s.

Mazda has been threatening to replace the MX-5, yet despite the showcasing of a variety of concept machines – all looking remarkably similar to the current production model – the original is still selling in viable numbers.

At last October's Tokyo Motor Show, Mazda displayed

the two-seat Ibuki concept, an open-top, lightweight sports car that hinted at the possible design direction of a future Mazda roadster.

The Ibuki featured environmental technologies being developed by Mazda, such as the unique Renesis hydrogen rotary engine.

This could be the way forward, both in environmentally-friendly terms and as a worthy successor to the MX-5.

The Mazdaspeed MX-5 Miata is now on sale in North America but it is unclear when this particular model will be available in other markets.

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

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Although it may seem that we are spoiled for choice when it comes to restaurants in Phuket, many people would agree that there are still not enough places offering Indian cuisine.

One small, reasonably-priced restaurant that serves home-cooked Indian food is in Rawai. The 'Indian Take Away' is owned and operated by Somjai 'Jim' Jaikhaew, who originally comes from Nakhorn Sri Thammarat.

She went to university in Bangkok with the intention of becoming a teacher and, as part of her training, also studied in Leicester, England where she spent four years.

"When I went to Leicester, I was amazed to find so many Indian people living there," K. Jim says. "This was when I realized the popularity of Indian food, not only with Indian people, but also with Westerners."

Having decided ultimately that a career in teaching was not for her, K. Jim went to Pattaya and turned her talents in another direction, opening an Indian restaurant.

She ran the restaurant, Fatima in Soi 14, for three years, but eventually grew tired of the lifestyle there. "At that time, about eight years ago, Phuket was much quieter than Pattaya and it was nearer to my family, so I came here to make a fresh start," K. Jim explains.

In the intervening years, her restaurant has become a popular place for people to eat or to pick up a meal on the way home from work.

As the restaurant is small and K. Jim does most of the work herself, she has kept the menu simple. If you want take-away, she advises calling to order you meal a couple of hours beforehand.

Fish Biryani For two people

Ingredients:

200 gms white snapper fillet (or any other firm fish) cut into bite-sized pieces;
5 tomatoes, chopped small;
2 onions, chopped small;
½ large carrot, chopped small;
2 tablespoons tinned green pea seeds;
2 cloves of garlic, crushed;

No-worry CURRY



K. Jim (right) realized the wide popularity of Indian food while she was studying in Leicester, England. Above left, Fish Biryani. Above, Chicken Masala. Left, Prawn curry.

Guest chef By Jenna Wise

Chicken Masala For two people

Ingredients:

200 gms chicken breast, cut into bite-sized pieces;
1 large peeled potato, cut into chunks;
1 onion, chopped small;
2 tomatoes, chopped small;
2 cloves of garlic, crushed;
2 tablespoons butter;
½ cup milk;
1 tablespoon garam masala;
1 teaspoon turmeric powder;
1 teaspoon cumin powder;
1 teaspoon crushed ginger root;
Fresh coriander and tomato to decorate.

Method:

Boil the chicken pieces until they are just tender. Fry the garlic, onions and tomatoes in butter for a few minutes, before adding the masala powder, turmeric, cumin powder and ginger root. Stir well and add everything else, including the pre-cooked chicken pieces. Simmer the masala until the potato is cooked. Serve with steamed rice, topping with coriander and tomato for decoration.

Prawn Curry For two people

Ingredients:

10 medium-sized prawns;
2 tablespoons butter;
5 tomatoes, chopped small;
2 onions, chopped small;
1 stalk lemon grass, cut into 2-inch lengths;
2 cloves of garlic, crushed;
1 tablespoon garam masala;
2 cinnamon sticks;

2 pieces star anise;
Salt to taste.

Method:

Fry the garlic, onions and tomatoes for a few minutes in butter. Add the garam masala, stirring in well. Remove from heat and blend until smooth.

Heat again, adding the lemon grass, cinnamon sticks, star anise pieces and some salt. Simmer for half an hour, then add the prawns. Cook for about 10 more minutes before serving with steamed rice.

Basmati rice is the traditional Indian accompaniment with curry dishes. K. Jim says she buys her Indian ingredients from the Indian food shop near Sainamyen School in Patong.

Indian Take Away, 39/31 Soi Saiyuan, Rawai. Tel: 01-6910081. Open from 9am to 10pm every day.

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Construction Update

by Anongnat Sartpisut

Executive Director of Baan Rae Rawai, Kris Tengamnuay, likens the current boom in housing to a flower: "The market for million-dollar homes has blossomed but a small gap exists for affordable homes in the 3- to 5-million-baht bracket."

"We considered what people wanted from a family home – peace, privacy and value for money – and decided to offer exactly that," he added.

Baan Rae Rawai, which fronts onto Wiset Rd, between the entrance to the Evason Phuket and the Rawai Health Center, is split into two distinct phases.

Construction of Phase 1, a terrace of five shophouses with accommodation, began in April this year and is set for completion in October. The three-story properties each have a 70-square-meter deck to the rear and some 250sqm of internal space. Prices begin at 3.95 million baht and go up to 4.55 million baht.

Phase two is situated behind the commercial units and is in what K. Kris describes as a "...modern tropical style". Construction begins this month with the last property being ready for occupation by June 2005.

Each of the detached homes



Artist's impression of one of the homes to built in Phase 2 of Baan Rae Rawai.

Aiming at a niche

has three bedrooms, three bathrooms, a kitchen, and separate living and dining rooms. The properties also have individual outdoor Jacuzzis. Prices, accord-

ing to K. Kris, will not be more than 8 million baht per home.

He added, "Rawai is a residential zone. The homes will be convenient for the beach and for

transport links. The development will use durable, low-maintenance materials to making living there easy."

Properties in both phases will have their own pressurized well-water supply, as well as a reserve tank. Electricity and other cables will be buried to preserve the panoramic views to the east.

K. Kris expects the development to be popular with long-term foreign residents who want security and privacy. The development will cost about 50 million baht to complete.

For more information contact Kris Tengamnuay at 131/89 Wichit Songkhram Rd, Phuket; Tel: 076-323424 or 01-628166; E-mail: bigkris66@yahoo.com

Home of the Week

Peaceful hideaway in a quiet Rawai soi

This stylish Sino-Portuguese-style villa, completed a year ago, is hidden away on a hillside in a quiet soi in Rawai and is one of three villas of differing styles next to each other.

The home, which covers 268sqm, is surrounded by dense jungle on three sides, ensuring a peaceful lifestyle. On the ground floor is a large, airy, open-plan living area which includes a separate lounge area leading out to a large covered terrace and the 8m x 4m pool.

There is a well-equipped Western kitchen and breakfast bar, a dining area and, currently, an office area – and there is still room for a pool table.

Also on the ground floor are a toilet, a laundry area, storage space and, outside, a parking area with room for two cars.

The living area has teak ceilings and a wide teak staircase with wooden handrail leading to the upper floor, which contains the master bedroom and two other bedrooms.

There is a large balcony on the second floor with wooden railings and a floor with terra-

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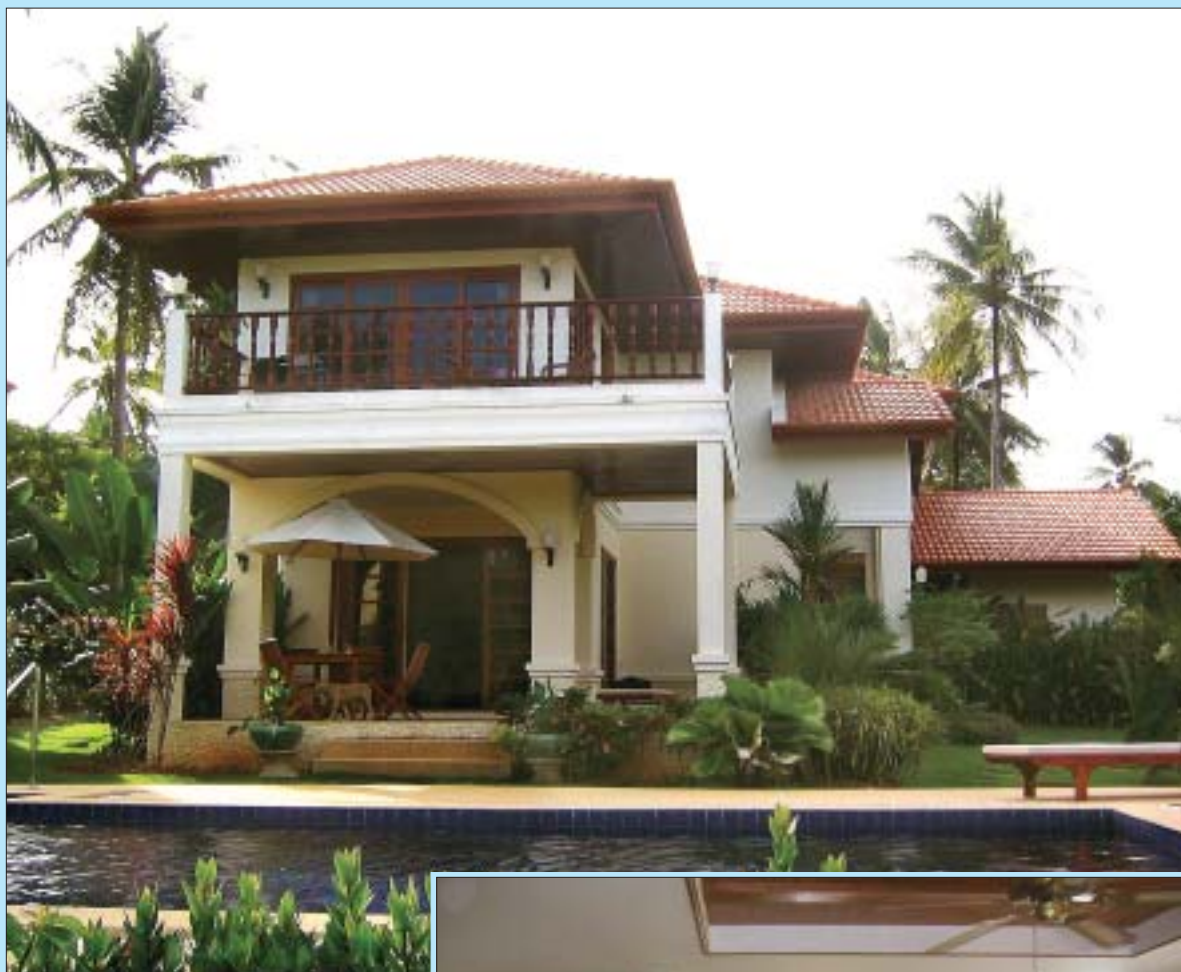
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Rawai



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Two of the bedrooms share a bathroom with shower, while the master bedroom has an en-suite bathroom with a bathtub, a separate shower and two wash-basins. The master bedroom also has a high-quality wooden floor, while the rest of the upper floor is tiled.

The well-designed garden features many tropical flowers and trees, and a high-quality lawn.

The villa is fully air-conditioned and is also equipped with fans. There is hot and cold water throughout. Phuket City is 15km away, while Rawai and Nai Harn Beaches are just 3km away. The land area is 900sqm and the title is Chanote. The property is priced at 24 million baht.

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The 2004 Phuket & Samui Property Expo in Hong Kong in November is overbooked and we are looking to take more space. The reasons for this explosion of interest in the show, which is co-sponsored by the *Gazette*, are worth considering.

The obvious reasons are that there are more developments under construction on Phuket and Samui and that the property market is healthy, especially with current exchange rates of about 75 baht to the pound sterling and about 49 baht to the euro.

The opportunity to buy a luxury three-bedroom home on a tropical island at roughly the same price as a miserable flat so small that you couldn't swing a cat in it, in a miserable, gray alley in the miserably gray city of London, is proving attractive to many.

Thailand's current economic performance and relatively stable political scene also continue to inspire confidence in investment here.

But what is more interesting is that this year's increase in the number of property exhibitions is more due to what *hasn't* happened than what has.

The first Phuket & Samui Expo in Hong Kong was in November 2002. That whole year was one of sombre mood in the

A mood of real optimism

wake of the terrorist attacks in the US, followed by the bomb blast on Bali on October 12.

Last year, the outbreak of Sars crippled the travel and tourism business throughout South-east Asia, and then another bomb went off at the JW Marriott hotel in Jakarta.

This year, however, has been relatively trouble-free, and a change of attitude is noticeable; people perhaps accept more readily that the world is never going to be free of trouble. We are always going to have the extremists and diseases. Britons lived with IRA bombs for more than 20 years, but that did not stop them going to the pub for a beer.

In spite of the predictions of the doomsayers that terrible events will inevitably come, life has to go on, albeit with some changes.

With all this in mind, we can look forward to a bigger and more profitable year for Phuket and Samui's property market.

The growth is not only limited to Phuket and Samui, of course. Another property exhibition, known as the Premier Properties Thailand show, will be held in Singapore in October and in Bangkok at the end of November, featuring properties throughout Thailand.

The Premier exhibitions are intended to showcase the high-quality end of the international property market, including luxury Bangkok condominium projects and high-end homes in Chiang Mai, Phuket, the eastern seaboard, Koh Samui and Hua Hin.

Discussions are underway with some of the big international property companies who want to become more involved in the show, adding their respected public image and professional expertise to the exhibition, and so far the signs are good.

In the meantime, Phuket and the rest of the Thai property market are in for a period of good growth and so long as there are no man-made or natural disasters, that growth should continue for the rest of the year.

PROPERTY & HOMEZONE

By Graham Doven

Gardening

with Bloomin' Bart

Getting religion

I've never been much of a one for religion. I suppose I get bored too easily. In fact I get a little impatient with religious nuts of any variety, and try to distance myself from them as much as possible. I'm quite content to wallow in a sea of disbelief.

Before I came to Thailand, about the only link I could make between gardening and religion was those over-enthusiastic old ladies who insist on raiding the vicar's garden, hacking off every flower in sight so that they can "tastefully" arrange them in various corners of the church. The flowers were dead within a few days.

I always wondered why they couldn't just leave them where they were in the first place. Most of them would probably then have outlived the old ladies.

Generally speaking, there are few religious intrusions into the world of gardening. Apart from Moses. You know, that bloke with the huge beard and the long stick. One of the more common varieties of ground-cover plants I know of in Thailand is *Moses-in-a-boat*, or *waan hoi khraeng* in Thai.

Also known as spiderwort, it's an odd little plant really. It consists of a spiky rosette-shaped cluster of leaves with a purple-green hue that looks quite normal if you look at them from the top. The strange thing is that the underside of the leaf is a deep maroon color for no particular reason.

It has quite a short stem, and doesn't usually get much taller than about 30 to 40 cm. It gets its name from the fact that tiny white flowers appear from the base of the leaves, near the stem.

I suppose that if you have a few Heinekens and squint with your eyes half-closed, in a certain light, the shape does resemble slightly a boat containing a white blob. Quite how this

looks like a bearded baby in a papyrus basket, I'm not quite sure.

This is certainly not the most user-friendly of plants, as all parts of the spiderwort are poisonous. Any contact with the sap may cause some stinging and make your skin itch.

Attempt to eat this unassuming little shrub, and a severe burning pain in the mouth and throat will be the result. This is certainly not the ideal plant to chew on.

If you have a patch of ground in your garden that you're just tired of looking at, and want to cover it in the easiest way possible with the minimum of effort, this is the one.

Once established, it will require little further input or effort from you. It will be less enthusiastic if it's too shaded, but with plenty of sun, it will continue to cover ground quite contentedly.

You can encourage more growth and help it on its way by simply splitting plants and replanting them elsewhere, but I wouldn't bother - it's quite happy to do that for itself.

Although it prefers compost-rich soil, the spiderwort will grow in sand or even coral rock. It doesn't really care.

In Phuket, the spread of *Moses-in-a-boat* is something that we would encourage, but in other parts of the world they don't share our enthusiasm.

In Florida for example, conditions are so well suited to the spiderwort that it's actually become an "invasive exotic species". The seeds are wind-dispersed and, as a consequence, it turns up growing in all sorts of places over there. You can even find it as an epiphyte growing on city buildings.

Moses-in-a-boat isn't your average plant; the leaves are different colors on each side, the plant's poisonous, it has tyrannical tendencies, and a rather daft name. Perfect for any garden.



Moses-in-a-boat. - Photo by George M. Carlson.

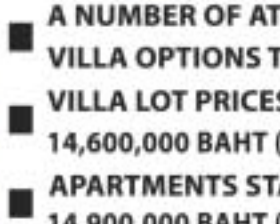


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Property Gazette

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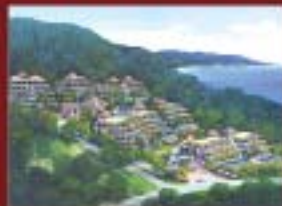
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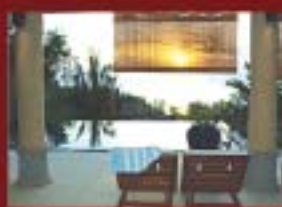
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Property Gazette

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Tel: 076-211230

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Aroonsom Plaza Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd, Patong

Tel: 076- 344521-2

A la Carte
Kamala main road, Cherng Talay

Tel: 076-278019

PHANG NGA

Maew Internet Shop, Khao Lak

Tel: 076-420627

Avalon Creative Group Co Ltd, Khao Lak

Tel: 076-420539

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- Good computer skills (Word, Excel)
- Self-motivated and energetic

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Requirements:

- Diploma, bachelor's degree in accounting or related field
- Female, age 25-35
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41/12 M.3 Khuk Khak Takuapa, Phang-Nga 82190 Thailand.
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E-mail: hr@sofitelmagiclagoon.com



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wanted urgently. Must be Thai. Contact for details and to apply. Tel: 09-8736467. Email: june@fsi.psu.ac.th

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International Law Office, Patong Beach

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If you are interested, please contact us at Tel: 076 222191-5
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Mom Tri's Boathouse, Phuket

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Please contact: HR department,
182 Koktanod Road, Kata beach, Phuket 83100
Tel: 076 330 015 Fax: 076 330 561
e-mail: hr@boathousephuket.com

AIRLINE STAFF

Korean Air is seeking staff with the following skills: good spoken & written English; and experience in reservations/ticketing/passenger traffic. Please send your resumé with photo to apply. Email: jwpak@koreanair.co.kr

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Bulletins

Alcoholics Anonymous

is holding meetings in English at the following places:

Phuket City
Mission Hospital
on Wed and Sun at 7 pm

Phuket International Hospital
on Fri at 7 pm

Patong
Patong Hospital
on Mon, Tue, Wed, Sat, Sun at 7 pm and on Fri at 8 pm

For more info, please call
01 895 4763 and 01 891 2895.

Business Opportunities

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Need an extra income? An MLM company is looking for reps. Email for details. Email: phuketcash@hotmail.com

BUNGALOW RESORT

for sale. Resort in Chalong with 7 bungalows and 8 years on lease for sale. Includes restaurant, bar, pool and house. Leaving Thailand; must sell for 1.5 million baht. Please call for details. Tel: 09-0385184.

GUESTHOUSE 4 SALE

Guesthouse near the Sheraton and Central Sofitel resorts, Krabi, for sale. 60m from the beach. Please call for details. Tel: 01-3703109, 06-6823119.

DUTCH BAR 4 SALE

Well-known Dutch bar/restaurant - with apartment and rooms for rent - in the center of Patong for sale. Has many regular customers. Good contract. Call or email for details. Tel: 01-0801370. Email: amsterdampatong@yahoo.com

OFFICE FOR RENT

next to Imperial Hotel. Would suit office, restaurant. 13,000/month. Tel: 06-6820677.

GUESTHOUSE

w/sauna. Men-only, 9-room guesthouse with sauna and gym in the Paradise Complex. Please call or email me for details. Tel: 01-7881466. Email: richard_melen@hotmail.com

MALE MANIKINS/DOLLS

Many different kinds for sale. Tel: 01-7881466. Email: richard_melen@hotmail.com

SHOP IN KAMALA

Detached single-story shop, 8m wide, with road frontage on the road to the beach. 7 years remain on the lease at only 3,000 baht per month, that is not a typo! Building has bathroom, cooking, and sleeping quarters. Owner will not allow bar type of business but any other is OK. Sell for 300,000 or nearest offer. Call after 10 am to arrange to see it. Tel: 076-279645, 01-8917933. Email: bazzoli@hotmail.com

SMALL INVESTORS

wanted! Excellent money/holiday return. Shares in hotel project. Max. investment 15,000. Email for details. Email: paradiseproperty2004@hotmail.com

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rent. 6 beds, 1 VIP room, 2 bathrooms, reception, free pool and sauna in small resort next to Wat Chalong. Rent: 25,000 baht per month. Minimum six-month rental. Tel: 09-5943209. Email: olebay_th@yahoo.co.uk

KAMALA GUESTHOUSE

Fully equipped Kamala guesthouse with long lease, pool room, bar, kitchen and Thai and European restaurant, 5 guest rooms and store available. Email: sheilaspies@thailand.com

SHOP FOR RENT

Prime location corner shop for rent. 20m from main beach road in Patong, opposite Wealthy Gems. Call for details. Tel: 076-344715, 01-7977199.

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PRINTER WANTED

Color printer for computer wanted. Must be up-to-date model. Email: bobedward1@hotmail.com

3D GAMES

I would like to exchange PC Windows-based 3D action, simulation or sport games with others. Also, all the latest software programs, etc. Please send me a list of what you have or what you need and I'll reciprocate. Email: transmile@hotmail.com

2NDHAND GPRS

Motorola C350 GPRS mobile phone with cable. 5,000 baht ono. Tel: 01-8933462. Email: tempthai@yahoo.com

Lost & Found

LOST DOG

Our family dog, Tommy, has disappeared from our home in Baan Suwan Naramit (Baan Pa Khlok). He is a Thai dog, with short legs and is quite long. Brown, black and white fur, and he was wearing an orange-and-pink collar when we last saw him. This is a very special dog who is very badly missed by my children and myself. Reward for any information leading to his return, no questions asked. Tel: 06-2934264, 01-9780496.

Misc For Sale

MINELAB EXCALIBUR

1000. New metal detector, used only twice. Mint condition. Great for beach combing or diving to 200ft. Paid over US\$1,200. Will sell for 40,000 baht. Please email: bentley22222@yahoo.com

Personal Services

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TRANSLATIONS

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Personal Services Wanted

TRAVEL ASSISTANT

needed by 47-year-old American, partially paralyzed on left side. I can walk a bit and I can drive, but my left arm is paralyzed. I need help with errands, food buying, registering in hotels, etc. I want to do some travelling from Chiang Mai, and go to BKK, Phuket, Samui... maybe other places. I can pay 500 baht a day, plus all travel and hotel (3-4 star) expenses. Not looking for a girlfriend. I'm looking for someone who can help me, who is *jai yen*, and who can follow directions. English-speaking not necessary. I have lived in Thailand for 20 years. Please contact if interested. Tel: 09-8614676. Email: ajarn@loxinfo.co.th

Personals

LOOKING FOR

girlfriend. I am a single man working in Phuket. I am looking for an Asian lady age not over 35 years of age for a close relationship. If you think you are the one I am looking for, please email me. Email: saedan@hotmail.com

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FITNESS FRIENDS

39-year-old male visiting Phuket September-October seeks friends to keep fit: running, tennis, weight training, badminton. Email: shank199@hotmail.com

HAPPY FAMILY

I am a 44-year-old, nice and kind male living in Europe. I would like to meet a nice (non-smoking, non-drinking) Thai woman who is interested in having children and a happy family. Email: sidharta455@yahoo.com

TRAVEL COMPANION

33-year-old Dutchman seeks a nice, attractive, fun, slim and open-minded Thai female to be my holiday travel companion in September. Please email with your picture and I will reply to you. Email: erik1online@hotmail.com

GENUINE THAI LADY

wanted. Genuine, educated Thai lady wanted for love/relationship with English man who has lived in Phuket for over a year now. I am 40, good looking, fit with own house and car, and looking for a serious lady. Please email me with your photo. Email: rawaiman@aol.com

WESTERN SINGLE

seeks a pleasant Thai cutie, aged 18-35 years, for friendship or more serious relationship. You will find me polite, quite smart and good looking. Please reply with photos if you would like to enjoy your days off or free time with a good guy. Email: karhu4@yahoo.com

WOMAN SEEKS NICE

farang man. My very cute Thai friend is looking for a nice farang man for a romantic relationship. Must be good looking, clean and have a nice body. Email details. Email: gl505@hotmail.com

LOOKING FOR LOVE

only. The greatest thing you ever learn is just to love and be loved in return. French gentleman living in Canada, 39 years old, 1.85m, 80kg, is looking for a romantic, well-educated and nice Asian dreamgirl who wishes that a man will discover her soul and personality hidden behind her great beauty. Email: neptune1964@hotmail.com

Pets

NO 1 FOR ANIMAL

lovers. Protection, vegetarians: "Animals Lament-The Prophet Denounces" ("The Prophet", No 15). Many may, perhaps, be asking themselves: What do a prophet and the animals have to do with each other? To answer this question, here is another question: Should God remain silent when His creatures are maltreated in the cruellest ways? He will raise His voice for them and He does it today through Gabriele, His prophetess, who gives the animals a voice: "We animals want to meet you as friends, like brothers and sisters, so to speak. And you? We have done nothing to you. Why do you do this to us...? I am frightened by people with cold hearts." Order a free booklet (160 pages) from: The Word, POB 5643, D-97006 Wuerzburg, Germany. Email: hansgerodetti@yahoo.de For further details, please see our website at: www.universal-spirit.cc

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