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# Pian back in the saddle

By Sangkhae Leelanaporn

PATONG: More than two months since his victory in the June 21 mayoral elections, and after three years in the political wilderness, Pian Keesin has finally taken office again, his win at the polls having been confirmed on August 30 by the Central Election Commission.

Mayor Pian, a former mayor of the town who lost the office amid allegations of corruption in October 2001, will now face the daunting challenge of straightening out the municipality, which has been leaderless for nine months and faces mounting environmental and social problems.

But Mayor Pian's win over rival Songserm Kepsap of the Patong Progress Party (PPP) was far from an overwhelming mandate. He won by just 147 votes, or just 2% of the votes cast.

Even more problematic is that fact that his Rak Patong Party is greatly outnumbered in the town council. Fifteen of the 18 council members are aligned with the rival PPP, which may make it impossible for Mayor Pian to pass a budget without making serious concessions to his opponents.

Back in the saddle on August 31, K. Pian told the *Gazette* that his first priority is to improve environmental management of the town, "especially the wastewater system, which we must have working within three months."

He added, "Patong is growing very fast and we need more roads.



Pian Keesin is Mayor of Patong again after a chaotic three-year hiatus. But a question mark hangs over his ability to control members of the council, most of whom belong to the opposition Patong Progress Party.

"In fact, it seems as though Patong has had no leader in the nearly three years since I stepped down. Look at the telephone and power cables in Patong; they're all tangled, like squid tentacles," he said.

Addressing the problem of having to work with a council dominated by members of the PPP, he said, "I don't think it will

be a problem - everyone has the same goal, to improve and develop Patong.

"Everyone should work for the good of Patong and remember the promises they made during election campaigning. I believe [the council members] will support the good projects I want to carry out."

Continued on page 2

## PM vetoes proposals for 'pearly' underpasses

By Gazette Staff

PHUKET: Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, in Phuket for just one hour on August 25, turned down a proposal to build two underpasses on the bypass road at a cost of 800 million baht.

Instead, he said, the provincial authorities should look at the example of Dindaeng in Bangkok, where a single tunnel, long enough to reach from Phuket's Samkong intersection to the Darasamut School intersection, was built for 600 million baht.

"The price is too high," he said, referring to the plan for two underpasses. "Are they going to be decorated with pearls?"

During a 10-minute meeting with provincial authorities at the airport, he declined to make a decision on the proposed expansion to four lanes of Chao Fa West Rd and Wiset Rd from the Darasamut intersection to Rawai, a project estimated at 260 million baht.

"I will ask the Department of Highways and the Office of Transport and Traffic Policy and Planning [in Bangkok] to examine the traffic in Phuket carefully to resolve any problems on this road," he said. He set no date for a decision.

The Governor of Phuket, Udomsak Usawarangkura, did not present other road project proposals, most notably the planned Chalong-Patong road, to the Prime Minister.

He did, however, receive the go-ahead to buy the abandoned Payathai Hospital, on Si Sena Rd in Phuket City, and refurbish it as an annex to the Wachira Phuket Hospital.

The PM assigned Deputy Finance Minister Varathep Rata-Continued on page 2





PM Thaksin receives roses from an admirer at Phuket International Airport. He is accompanied by local Thai Rak Thai parliamentary candidate Sriyada Palimapan (2<sup>nd</sup> from right) and TRT maybe Wisut Santikul (4<sup>th</sup> from right).

## Thaksin vetoes underpasses

From page 1

nakorn to coordinate this plan, because the hospital is currently the property of the Asset Management Corp, the body set up by the government to take over non-performing loans from Thai banks.

PM Thaksin also agreed to allocate a budget of 34 million baht to buy weapons for police in Phuket.

Gov Udomsak pointed out that security in Phuket depends entirely upon the local police force because there are no army bases on the island.

"We need 34 million baht to buy weapons such as handguns, along with ammunition and body armor to support the police in Phuket," he told the PM. The Prime Minister assented.

Earlier, PM Thaksin was greeted on his arrival by car from Phang Nga by local Thai Rak Thai supporters wearing party jackets and led by the Dr Sriyada Palimapan, the TRT candidate for the coming general election.

Also there to greet the PM was local politician Wisut Santikul – though not wearing a TRT jacket, because he has yet to make a decision whether he too will stand as a TRT candidate.

After spending half an hour greeting his supporters, the Prime Minister went into his 10-minute meeting with the Governor and his team.

It was a day of ministers, with new Deputy PM Suwat Liptapanlop and Public Health

Minister Sudarat Keyuraphan also in town.

In his first press conference as Deputy PM, also at the airport but earlier in the day, K. Suwat defended the government's plan to build an oil pipeline across Phang Nga, saying that it will not affect tourism in the region.

The former Chart Pattana leader, who joined Thai Rak Thai as Deputy PM two and a half weeks earlier, said, "It will not affect the environment or cause problems for tourism in the region [of Phuket, Phang Nga and Krabi]."

The pipeline is vehemently opposed by the tourism industry.

After uttering his anodyne assurance, Deputy PM Suwat moved on to more important matters. He said that Bangkok will target people who cheat tourists, and address Phuket-specific problems, such as inadequate infrastructure and traffic jams.

In Phuket City, meanwhile, Health Minister Sudarat announced that her ministry is to spend 50 million baht promoting Phuket as a health hub.

In Phuket for a three-day health conference at the Royal Phuket City Hotel organized by her ministry, K. Sudarat said the money had already been allocated and would be spent before the end of the year on developing health tourism schemes for the province. She also pledged to raise state health workers' pay.

# Udomsak to stay on as Phuket Governor

By Sangkhae Leelanaporn

PHUKET: Udomsak Usawarangkura is to be Governor of Phuket for at least one more year.

Gov Udomsak's name did not feature in a list of governors who are being promoted or moved this year. As a result, he told a meeting of government officers at Phuket Provincial Hall on August 30, "We will be working together for at least one more year."

There were widespread rumors that Gov Udomsak was to be moved in October to replace former Phuket Governor Pongpayome Vasaputi as Director-General of the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation at the Ministry of Interior in Bangkok.

K. Pongpayome was tipped

to become Governor of Nakhon Ratchasima. In the event, neither official will move in this year's reshuffle.

Normally governors are appointed for four-year terms but in the past five years Phuket has seen no fewer than four faces in the post.

Going straight on with business, the Governor told representatives of the Phuket Post Office that mail services must be improved. He said he had received many telephone calls about late deliveries.

"Some people have had their electricity and water supplies cut off because their bills arrived so late they got into trouble," he said.

The Governor also said he would like this year's Vegetarian Festival to be bigger than in pre-

vious years, as a way to celebrate HM Queen Sirikit's 72<sup>nd</sup> birthday.

He said he would like to see the whole of Phuket decorated in white for the festival, due to run from October 14 to 22.

"I want this year's Vegetarian Festival to be different from in the past and I would like the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) to help in promoting it, and to ask tourists to bring white clothes," said Gov Udomsak.

Napasorn Kakai, Deputy Director of the TAT's Phuket Office, said that the TAT has already completed about 90% of its preparations for the festival.

"Every Chinese shrine will be represented in the parade around Phuket City on October 14, and we will give 7,200 white T-shirts and free vegetarian food to the public," she said.

## Hotline for yachtsmen 'should ease red tape'

CHALONG: The Phuket Port Control Center (PPCC) at Chalong Pier has launched Thailand's first 24-hour bilingual automated port information service as part of its Phuket ePort project.

By calling the Bangkok number Tel: 02-3659696, people can access information in Thai and English on port control procedures, contact details of government offices, and general information about the island.

Dr Rattana Wetprasit, Acting Manager of the Phuket branch of the Software Industry Promotion Agency (Sipa), said that Sipa is looking to have online port services available by the end of September.

She explained that captains, crews and passengers will be able to go online to complete forms for Immigration, Customs, the Marine Department and the Chalong Tambon Administration Organization (*Or-BorTor*), which levies the mysterious and much-reviled "Phu-

ket Waters Fee", before they arrive in Phuket.

Dechakanee Leelanon, the Chief Administration Officer of Chalong *Or-BorTor*, said, "The one-stop service should ensure that the [bureaucratic] process of arrival is shortened, and should also improve security."

Vice-Governor Winai Bua-pradit later explained to the *Gazette*, "Every boat that comes to Phuket must be reported at the Chalong [one-stop center]. Boats may be moored elsewhere [around Phuket] but their crews and passengers must report in person at Chalong."

"We are currently liaising with marinas in Phuket to publicize [the reporting requirement] to the boating community. It is the provincial government's policy to provide the one-stop service to make it more convenient for the boating community."

— Anongnat Sartpisut

## Pian makes his comeback

From page 1

One problem he highlighted was a lack of funding. "I will try to raise more income to develop Patong because the number of people moving here grows every day. We can't wait for the annual budget to give us the funding for development."

"I will talk with the central government about zoning Patong. We have to find places where we can move the tuk-tuk and motorbike rental people."

"We also have to cooperate with the police, who have the authority to arrest people who use public land to do business."

Asked whether he was worried that this proposed crackdown would lose him votes in the next election, Mayor Pian said that he was not.

"We shouldn't be scared of them. We should not be soft with vendors who break the law," he said.

## Navy training 60 lifeguards

PHUKET CITY: Sixty lifeguards are currently being trained by experts from the Third Naval Area Command in water safety, including swimming, use of flotation equipment, rescue tech-

niques and administering first aid.

After finishing their training the lifeguards will work at Patong, Kata, Karon, Rawai and Kamala Beaches.

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Staff make final adjustments to a display of fruit before the store's opening on August 27

## Makro sells B15m on first day

PHUKET: Makro, the newest addition to Phuket's roster of superstores, recorded turnover of 15 million baht on August 27, its first day of trading.

The manager of the new Wichit Songkram Rd superstore, Aue-angkul Tunvisut, told the *Gazette* that since the 15-million-baht take on opening day, the store had been averaging a turnover of five million baht a day.

"It's very successful and most customers like the assortment in our store," she said.

"Around 3,000 members visit each day and an average of 700 new members apply every day."

The store is the wholesaling giant's 27th branch in Thailand.

K. Aue-angkul added, "The fresh food department has received very good feedback from customers. All products have sold more than we targeted."

"The top products are frozen pork and white shrimps, while fruit and vegetables have sold out everyday."

## Wisut still undecided

PHUKET: Wisut Santikul has yet to decide whether he will stand as the Thai Rak Thai (TRT) Party's District 2 candidate for MP in the upcoming general election, which must be held by next February.

K. Wisut, former Vice President of Phuket Administration Organization (*OrBorJor*), told the *Gazette* today that he is also undecided which party to run for – or whether to run at all.

"Not only has TRT contacted me. I was also approached by the [newly-formed] Mahachon Party. They would like me to run for them in District 1, with Rewut Chindapol as the candidate for District 2."

"But I need more time to think about it. Right now I am quite happy to spend my time

diving and relaxing," he said, adding that he was concerned that the Democrats may be too strong in Phuket and he doesn't want to risk losing another campaign.

Running as an independent, K. Wisut was beaten by former Democrat party list MP Anchalee Vanich-Thepabutr in the election for the *OrBorJor* president last March.

"I don't really want to run for parliament, though I am still considering it. I am also thinking about running for the upper house in the next Senate elections in 2007, or in any local elections that are free of party politics. I need to discuss it with my family, but they are in America now," he said.

– Sangkhae Leelanaporn

# Appeal court orders Anchalee's husband to quit SorPorKor land

By Kamol Pirat

PHUKET: The Phuket Appeal Court on August 25 overturned a judgement of the Provincial Court and ordered Tossaporn Thepabutr to quit 98 rai of land in the Nakkerd Hills in Karon.

K. Tossaporn is the husband of Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (*OrBorJor*) President Anchalee Vanich-Thepabutr.

The successful appeal was made by the Provincial Land Reform Office (PLRO), which argued that K. Tossaporn had no right to the land because it had been included in the *SorPorKor* land reform program, which is aimed at providing poor people with farmland.

The court heard that K. Tossaporn is not a farmer but has shares in many companies and has personal wealth estimated to total more than 55 million baht.

K. Tossaporn countered that the land had been in his family for generations, certainly since long before the *SorPorKor* land reform program was launched.

The Appeal Court disagreed, and ordered K. Tossaporn and his associates to vacate the land.

The chief of the PLRO, Teerawut Tawornpatanawong, said K. Tossaporn had the right to take his case to the Supreme Court to try to get the Appeal Court decision reversed.

He has 30 days in which to lodge such an appeal.

K. Teerawut added that this was the second case in which the Appeal Court had overturned the judgment of the Provincial Court and ruled in favour of the PLRO.

The first judgement was against Narong Nopdara. On July 23 the Appeal Court ordered him off 21 rai of land, also in the Nakkerd Hills.

The Appeal Court is to consider nine further appeals by the PLRO against Provincial Court judgements on land ownership.

Said K. Teerawut, "The next will take place on September 7 when the Appeal Court will judge on land currently in the hands of prominent developer Boonkeng Srisansuchart."

## Cop killer caught

TRANG: Police on August 26 arrested Sompong "Jorm" Prayongyam, one of the two men alleged to have been involved in a vicious attack on Kathu police officer Pol Sgt Pramual Thongaugorn, who later died from his injuries.

Undercover police, posing as friends, convinced Jorm to meet them at the Trang Bus Terminal, where he was arrested.

– Kamol Pirat

## Bad week at beaches

KARON: Three tourists drowned and a fourth went missing in just five days off Phuket's beaches.

The first to drown, on August 27 at Laem Singh Beach, was Italian Paolo Demedio, 53. On August 30 Muhayiddin Iyon, 25, from Singapore, drowned off Karon Beach. His friend Chris Ng disappeared. On August 31, as the *Gazette* went to press, a man named by police as Patrick Michel Peters, 56, from France, was rushed to hospital from Surin Beach. He later died.

## Police shelve Pongtorn murder investigation

PHUKET: The investigation into the assassination of land official Pongtorn Hiranyaburana, who was shot dead on the way to his home in Surat Thani in April last year, has officially been shelved, pending further evidence being presented to the police.

K. Pongtorn was the Deputy Chief of the Phuket Provincial Land Office (PPLRO), and he was investigating the issuing of illegal land titles in Phuket.

Pol Col Ronapong Saikaew, Superintendent of Investigation at Surat Thani-based Police Region 8, told the *Gazette*, "We paused the investigation last month because we know only who the driver for the gunman was, but we lack the evidence to arrest him."

He explained that the investigation will be resumed only if fresh evidence from new cases matches evidence already collected in the Pongtorn murder investigation.

"It's normal procedure. If we do not make an arrest [in a case] within a year [of the investigation being launched], we put the investigation on hold," Col Ronapong said.

He also said that investigators have failed to make a connection between the murder of K. Pongtorn and Thawatchai Anukul, a former chief registrar of the PPLRO, wanted by police on charges of issuing illegal land titles.

Thawatchai resigned from the PPLRO and disappeared shortly before the death of K. Pongtorn.

"To be able to confirm whether there is a connection between Thawatchai and K. Pongtorn's murder, we need to question the hired gunman. We can't come to any conclusions now because we have not been able to get the gunman," Col Ronapong said.

– Gategeo Phetsawang

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## Queer News

## The love that lasts

SUPHAN BURI: Love is sweeter the second time round for newlyweds Sunthon Thanabutr, 74, and Sumrith Aom-aerm, 75.

The love-struck septuagenarians, both of whom have been married and widowed, knew each other more than half a century before their chance meeting at an "Elders' Day" held at a local temple.

K. Sumrith said that, 54 years ago, she and K. Sunthon were in love, but her family arranged for her to marry another man. K. Sunthon also married, and both raised their families but continued to think of their lost love.

"Sunthon and I met again, talked and visited one another constantly. Now free, we decided to get married," she said.

The elderly groom said, "We were not lucky in love earlier in our lives, but fate has brought us together and we will stay with each other for the rest of our lives."

Source: *Kom Chad Leuk*

## A bone of contention

PATTAYA: Swede Mikael Persson was fined 1,000 baht for slapping service girl Lamyai Soonklarnng after she refused to perform oral sex on him.

Persson told police that he spent over 1,000 baht in drinks and a bar fine to take Lamyai to his room for sex, but that the agreement turned sour when she refused him oral satisfaction and he demanded his money back.

Lamyai, 25, refused to return the bar fine, saying that oral sex was never part of their agreement, which was also oral.

Pattaya's finest, acting as mediators, ordered the unsatisfied Swede to pay 1,000 baht in compensation and fined him an extra 500 baht for disturbing the peace.

Source: *Pattaya Mail*

Build it and they will come" seems to be the mantra of Phuket yachting industry figures and government officials alike.

With the 200-berth Royal Phuket Marina (RPM) now well underway and Governor Udomsak Usawarangkura proposing another large marina complex in Ao Chalong, the prospects for the industry have never seemed brighter.

Montri Raetong, the head of the province's Strategic Development Committee, believes that the yachting industry – and the big spenders it caters to – represent an ideal "niche" tourism market in line with government policies to bring in more "high-quality" tourists – the kind that dump a lot of money into the local economy without threatening the local environment or culture.

"Developing the yachting industry by building more marinas is an idea that has been discussed at many recent committee meetings," he explains.

Thana Thanadolpap, Harbor-master of the 300-berth Boat Lagoon in Koh Kaew and a pioneer in the local yachting industry, sees great potential for further expansion.

K. Thana, who describes a marina as a "hotel for boats", says, "The demand for berths has increased since the reduction in

## PHUKET

Since the days of English trader Captain Francis Light in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the charms of Phuket and its surrounding waters have attracted foreign seafarers.

But more recently, swingeing taxes, a shortage of international-standard marinas and support facilities, and restrictive immigration laws have hindered the development of the marine leisure industry – while rival destination Langkawi Island has prospered under support from the Malaysian government.

With the scrapping of import and excise taxes on foreign vessels last February, however, it seems that the government is finally recognizing the potential benefits of the industry as a foreign-exchange earner.

The *Gazette's* Dhirarat Boonkongsan and Anongnat Sartpisut report on the outlook for the island's marine tourism industry.

import and excise tax because Phuket has become a more attractive destination. We need more marinas to accommodate the extra demand."

Governor Udomsak is keen to do just this. During a trip to California last month, he visited marinas in the Santa Barbara area. He is now courting private-sector investment for a new marina in Chalong.

"We need a master plan first. We are looking for design experts, and we have contacted the Australian Embassy to provide us with a list of suitable firms," he explains.

"I think we are likely to divide up the project, allowing different investors to invest in each part – dry-docks, onshore facilities, etc.

"We need technical knowledge from Australia, because it's too complicated and difficult for the Thai private sector. Australia is not so far from Phuket," he says.

K. Montri says that many companies from the US and Japan are interested in the project.

With the exception of Martello Thailand, which is building the Malina Phuket project along Klong Pak Bang in Patong, most developers agree that the island's east coast is more suitable for new marinas than the west side.

Conventional wisdom says

the water off the west coast is too rough during the rainy season for recreational yachting and for entering or leaving the confines of a marina.

Another concern is the shifting sands of the littoral zone during the monsoon, which would make maintaining a channel on the west coast a difficult prospect.

Tanan Tanphaibul, Deputy President of the Phuket Tourist Association and Managing Director of Seatran Travel, thinks Chalong is an ideal spot for a new marina.

"Chalong Bay already has a one-stop service for Immigration, Customs and the local Chalong Tambon Administration Organization Office [to which a fee must also be paid] at the pier. It's already a

well-established destination. Phuket would benefit by offering a greater choice of marinas for visiting yachtsmen," he says.

When asked whether Phuket could catch up with Langkawi, K. Tanan replies, "Langkawi has the advantage of being a duty-free port and has enjoyed government support for a long time. Thailand is only just opening its eyes to this industry.

"Fortunately, Phuket has a wide variety of attractions and could serve as a center for yachts-

"Boats are not like cars. When you have a car you can park it in your garage at home and forget about it. But boat people need to have their boats cleaned, repaired and maintained. This money comes back into the economy."

– Andy Stephens, Royal Phuket Marina

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# CHANGES COURSE



Yacht Haven Marina in the northeast of the island is almost full. More marinas are needed, say all those involved in planning for the marine leisure industry.

men and -women to explore the coastline all the way up to Ranong."

In yachting, bigger tends to be better. The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), which is working with the private-sector lobby group, the Marine Alliance of Thailand (MAT), to promote the industry abroad, definitely sees it this way.

Dr Pipadh Eksaengsri, a member of the TAT's Long Stay Tourism Committee, says, "We'd prefer high-spending vessels to come here, like the superyachts [whose owners and crews] can spend up to 100,000 baht a day."

Assoc Prof Manat Chaisawat, a lecturer in tourism studies at the Prince of Songkla University, Phuket Campus, says that research he has conducted shows that the marina industry still has great potential for further expansion and that there are still a number of good sites left for marinas on the east coast.

"We also found that the yachting industry is not only a great revenue generator, but it is among the most efficient at circulating money back into the local economy," he says.

Andy Stephens, Marina Manager of the 6-billion-baht

RPM, now under construction, is equally optimistic.

"Phuket definitely still needs more marinas. Right now Boat Lagoon is full, and has a waiting list. Yacht Haven [in the northeast of the island] is 90% full and we already have 50% of our marina spoken for. It will also be full very quickly. In Phuket, we need about three more marinas within the next five years," he says.

Elaborating on why the business is such a positive force on the economy, he explains, "Marinas are a huge benefit to the local economy. We're creating jobs and creating income."

"If you spend 10 dollars in a marina, 100 dollars goes into the local economy," Mr Stephens says, repeating the MAT mantra that sailors of yachts not only spend money in marinas but also buy a lot of the other goods and services on offer in Phuket.

He adds, "Boats are not like cars. When you have a car you can park it in your garage at home and forget about it. But boat people need to have their boats cleaned, repaired and maintained. This money comes back into the economy."

Government support is im-

portant for industry development, he notes.

"In Langkawi, the [Malaysian] government helped owners to build marinas, and the benefits come back into the economy. In Phuket all the [existing] marinas are 100% funded by the private sector, which is difficult for the developers because marinas are a very risky business."

"But our government is now starting to realize the potential benefits and is starting to become proactive. Reducing boat [import and excise] taxes to zero was a huge step forward," he says.

"What we need now is for the government to simplify its regulations for visiting yachtsmen and boats."

"This is a very difficult pro-

cess for them to do [but] we're lucky because we have a very pro-active Governor who sees the benefits of our industry. I think we are on the right track, but it may take some time."

"I think the one-stop service is a good start. Right now we are calling it a one-stop service, but it's not really a one-stop service yet. But Gov Udomsak has said they are working on the software to simplify and integrate all the services."

"Phuket doesn't need huge marinas. They can be small 'boutique' marinas, maybe 150 berths. For larger ones, the question is where we can fit them. To put large marinas in Phuket will require government support. The private sector cannot do it alone," he adds.

Mr Stephens agrees that the industry can provide a lot of jobs, but feels that a good deal of training will be needed.

"There is 10 times more skilled labor here [in general] than in Langkawi, but we are still short of what we need. However, because the marina industry is specialized, the skill set will grow by default."

Gareth Twist, Managing Director of Yacht Solutions Marine Consultancy, agrees.

"A lot of people in Phuket have knowledge and experience and more and more are learning. Our company has taken on a lot of local people here, and if they don't have the skills we can train them."

"For example, now we are hiring a lot of people from car repair firms and training them in marine mechanics."

"It would be a great improvement if they had a marine college here and trained more people in engineering and boat skills. We need more captains and boat crew ... both for power and sail boats."

He, too, believes that Phuket needs more marinas.

"Now, Boat Lagoon and

Yacht Haven are full. We need two, three, four or more [new] marinas. When more boats come here, [the new marinas] will be full as soon as they open," he says.

Where will all these yachts come from?

"Now we have a lot of cruising boats coming through the area, people who have been living on their boats and traveling throughout the world."

"There are two main reasons they come to Phuket. First, because it's the last place to go before crossing the Indian Ocean on the way to the Mediterranean. The other reason is that Phuket has developed a good reputation for repairs at good prices."

"Other people who are starting to come are foreign and local people buying boats and bringing them to Phuket ... Those boats are then looked after by local management companies and [the owners] fly in or live locally."

"We are seeing a trend now of a lot more high-quality boats. I think the third type of boats that will be coming here quite a lot, now that the Thai import duty has been relaxed, is smaller boats."

"Before, they had to go down to Langkawi every six months to [avoid import taxes]. Now they can stay here for a long time."

With all the unbridled optimism, is there anything to stop development of Phuket's yachting industry?

Mr Twist thinks the only real risk is the environment, especially the island's dwindling mangrove forests.

"Local governments need to ensure that the environment is protected. They need to make sure that the mangroves and surrounding areas are not damaged during construction."

"If marinas are correctly designed and built, however, they should bring great advantages to Phuket."

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By Gategaeo Phetsawang

**T**iger Woods played his first golf at the age of just 18 months and he is now arguably the most famous golfer in the world. Could a child from Phuket one day be equally famous as a motorbike racer?

A good place to look for the motorbiking star of the future could well be the minibike racing circuit in the Tesco-Lotus carpark.

Mini Racing has been in operation for just over a month, has 15 electric minibikes and is a bit hit with the kids.

Khem is six years old and proudly wears his Spiderman outfit. He told the *Gazette* that his mother brings him to Mini Racing at least three times a week and he has never yet fallen. "I enjoy riding around it and I want to be a racer when I grow up," he said.

Another boy, five-year-old Fil, comes to ride almost every day. This is in spite of the fact that he has three bicycles at home. He said he prefers to ride minibikes here, in a large space.

Duangkamon "Pam" Angthanadilok, the owner of the Mini Racing circuit, told the *Gazette*, "We have 15 GP1 minibikes now and plan to order more.

"Each bike can support a maximum weight of 80 kilograms. We don't limit the ages of drivers. If they can ride two-wheeled pushbikes, they can drive our minibikes easily.

"If the children can't ride a bike, we have staff to drive for them. Most of the children who come here are between six and 13 years old. Parents often ask to ride as well, so they can enjoy the fun with their children."

The bikes have a maximum speed of 30kmh. K. Pam said ac-



Above, the circuit's owner, Duangkamon 'Pam' Angthanadilok.

Right, A couple of youngsters corner like veterans at the Mini Racing track.



## EASY RIDERS

cidents were few and far between, and when they did happen, the injuries were not serious. "It's common for children to fall down - it happens when they ride bicycles too," she said.

"However, their parents know that we have helmets, elbow and knee pads, and sports

shoes for the children. We also have first aid equipment for an emergency and staff to take care of the children.

"We also show the children how to ride safely before they start and warn them that they must follow the rules and ride politely. They shouldn't, for ex-

ample, pop wheelies or kick each other, and each must wear a helmet with the chinstrap fastened."

On Mother's Day, August 12, Mini Racing staged a series of races which drew 72 child racers. There was also a special VIP race for parents.

It costs 20 baht for five min-

utes' riding at Mini Racing, which works out to about 10 laps of the circuit. The racetrack is usually busier after 5pm, after the young riders have finished school.

K. Pam can be contacted at Tel: 06-5950263.

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# Thailand 'hub for jumbo smuggling'

The Asian Conservation Alliance Task Force, a coalition of about 30 elephant conservation groups across Asia, branded Thailand a center for unlawful trade in endangered Asian elephants.

The group blamed corrupt officials and lax regulations for helping smugglers remove wild elephants from Thailand and its neighbors to be sent to zoos and circuses around the world.

The group is launching an international campaign to stamp out the trade as Bangkok prepares to host the Wild Fauna and Flora conference of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, which outlaws commercial trade in wild elephants and other animals.

Chawal Tanhikorn, director of the government's Wildlife Conservation Office, challenged the group to produce evidence to support its allegations.

**Double trouble:** The Army invoked martial law in banning men from riding pillion on motorcycles in the three southern border provinces of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat.

The ban, which took immediate effect, followed an increase in separatist attacks since the beginning of the year. Many officials and civilians have been killed in surprise attacks carried out by pillion riders on motorcycles.

Deputy Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh said the violence in the region was worse than ever and had reached a "critical" stage.

**Bug busters:** The Influenza Foundation of Thailand has been established as an early warning center to keep both the public and health workers informed of any new viruses that pose a health risk.

A survey by virologist Prasert Thongcharoen found that health workers and the public are ignorant about deadly 'flu strains. To remedy that, K. Prasert and a team of experts on 'flu viruses and epidemiology helped start the new center, which will be independently run.

K. Prasert said a new 'flu strain was due to emerge, an outbreak would come "sooner or later", and Thailand needs to be on higher alert. Historically, new 'flu pandemics have emerged about every 10 to 30 years. It has



The 19<sup>th</sup> Asian Dove Singing Competition was hosted by Yala, one of the provinces in the South affected by almost daily separatist violence.

More than 1,200 doves from Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia were brought to compete in the event.

been more than 40 years since the last outbreak of the deadly Asian 'flu, he said.

**GMOs and CEOs:** Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra bestowed the government's tacit blessing on planting and trading in genetically modified organisms (GMOs) by revoking an earlier ban on their commercial use.

In contrast to the current policy, which permits GM crops to be grown only in laboratories for experimental purposes, the revision will allow for open planting and commercialization of GM crops – provided they receive approval from the Bio Safety Committee, the premier said.

The decision has inflamed local farmers, environmentalists and consumer networks.

"The policy is putting Thai people at risk. How can the gov-

ernment place its trust in the Bio Safety Committee when it has long been known as a paper tiger? It has no legal power to enforce the rules and therefore cannot make private companies adopt its guidelines," said Wittoon Lianchamroon, director of the BioThai Network.

**Iodine deficiency:** The declining average in the intelligence quotient of Thai children and the rising prevalence of iodine deficiency – which affects brain development – are raising concerns about the future of the nation.

The reason is that the country mistook progress in reducing cases of goiter as an overall indicator of success in eliminating all iodine deficiency disorders, said Dr Saengsom Srinawatana, director of the Health Department's Nutrition Division.

Research carried out by the

Network for the Sustained Elimination of Iodine Deficiency indicates that iodine deficiency remains a problem in Thailand because only 51% of households consume adequate amounts of iodized salt, compared with the global target of 90% set by international health organizations.

**A kick in the shin:** The Campaign for Popular Media Reform (CPMR) and other NGOs slammed Shin Corp's 400-million-baht libel suit against CPMR leader Supinya Klangnarong and launched a campaign to raise funds for her legal defense.

"If society allows powerful political and business groups to take legal action against social watchdogs over acts in the interest of the public, no one else will dare to express opinions, speak the truth or criticize anything," the CPMR said.

Roby Alampay, director of the Southeast Asian Press Alliance, called the amount "staggering" and said it was "a clear message to the Thai press that questioning corporations and the government on conflict-of-interest matters would have dire consequences for the press as a whole."

The suit stems from a *Thai Post* story in which K. Supinya was quoted as saying that, from figures she had gathered, it appeared that Shin Corp was a major beneficiary of the premier's policies since Thaksin Shinawatra became prime minister in February 2001.

Shin Corp is controlled by the Prime Minister's family.

**Shark attack:** Police arrested a member of a gang allegedly hired by a loan shark to chop off the hand of a pregnant fish vendor who defaulted on a 30,000 baht loan.

Narongsak Aimmano, 28, said he was hired by loan shark Thananan Klinchuenban, 51, to locate seven-month pregnant Somporn Charoennum, 27, a fish vendor at a market in Nakhon Sawan's Krok Phra district.

K. Somporn is recovering at Sawan Pracharak Hospital, where doctors have reattached her left hand.

Police are now looking for five suspects. One chopped off Somporn's hand while the four others prevented onlookers from interfering.

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra sent an official to help the woman sort out her 250,000-baht-burden in debts, both legal and illegal.

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



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## FROM THE GULF OF THAILAND



By Commander  
Sammy Swan



At a public hearing on July 6, Samui residents voiced their support for the Marine Department's proposed 210-million-baht marina at Baan Phang Ka. If the budget is approved, construction should begin in 2006 and be completed the following year. The computer-generated illustration, left, gives an idea of how the completed marina may look.

Samui's once-thriving speedboat business is feeling the pinch, with international oil prices driving the cost of fuel on the island ever higher.

The manager of Grand Sea Tours, one of Samui's largest firms, which provides transport to Koh Phangan, Koh Tao and the Anghong Marine Park, said he expects the price of gasoline will soon be 25 baht a litre.

This will almost certainly mean ticket prices will have to be raised to offset the increase in running costs, he said.

Most speedboat operators are at present keeping their prices down, as they wait to see what

# Fuel price crisis looms for speedboats

happens, but all the signs point to continued gas price hikes, which will eventually be passed on to the passengers.

**Environment club:** A new society has been formed for the protection of the environment on Koh Tao, and on August 4 members released 1,000 tiger claw mussels into the sea to help replenish and rejuvenate marine life in the area.

The mussels are known to be natural filters of water, help-

ing to keep the sea clean and healthy for other types of marine life.

Koh Tao is earmarked for extensive development, with funds already allocated for several major infrastructure projects.

It is hoped that the club will have a strong voice on the island, and will also be able to undertake further valuable action in the very near future to protect one of the country's natural treasures from further damage.

**Pagoda restored:** The Lam Sor Pagoda or Chedi is a famous Samui landmark, and the site is visited by thousands of tourists every year.

In a special arrangement with a temple in India, an ancient piece of bone believed to belong to the Lord Buddha himself are reportedly being transported to Koh Samui to be placed inside the pagoda.

Not only will this make Lam Sor a highly revered chedi, but also an interesting location

for pilgrims and tourists alike to visit.

There is another, older pagoda, on a small hill not far from the Lam Sor site. This is now being restored in an attempt to attract even more tourists to this part of the island.

The restoration and enshrining of the bone from the Lord Buddha will also, it is hoped, help to preserve traditional culture on an island that many believe is in danger of losing its original beliefs.



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# This week



**DRY FORECAST:** Wisut Santikul (right), former Vice-President of the Phuket *OrBarJor* congratulates Naruechai Phonsin, Managing Director of Siam Southern Foodline Ltd, at the launch of a new range of dried seafood products at the Korn Thong gift shop on Thepkasattri Rd.



**ADEN AND ABETTING:** Celebrating the opening of the Aden health food shop and restaurant on Yaowarat Rd are (from right): Aden MD Thanthika Subsoontornkul; Phuket City Mayor Somjai Suwannasuppana; and Chantra Kulweera-a-ree, K. Thanthika's mother, with her grandson.



**WHAT'S GOING ON?** (above) Among those about to cut the ribbon at the recent opening of the Watsons store at Tesco-Lotus Phuket are: Andrew Miles (2<sup>nd</sup> from right); Store Manager Pluemchit Kaewbuathong (in purple shirt); and Alan Nementzik (3<sup>rd</sup> from left).

**TURKEY, NO BULL:** (right) Attending the August 19 Food Safety & HACCP seminars and US turkey promotion at the Holiday Inn Resort, Patong, are (from left): Swiss Master Chef Urs Fr  dric Stauffacher; Don's Foods Co MD Donald Battles; Holiday Inn Executive Chef Nara Suttichanond; and former Assistant Commissioner of Public Health, now Food Hygiene and HACCP consultant, Koh Geok Beng.



**BITE OF THE CHERRY:** (left) Thai actress and MC of TV show *See San Wan Sabai*, Cherry Pungprasert (center) takes five during filming with Kata Thani Resort Reception Manager Natcha Warawong (right) and Customer Service Manager Siriphan Panchatree.

**AYAS WIDE OPEN:** (right) Japanese actress and superstar Aya Sugimoto (left) meets her JW Marriott Phuket Resort & Spa namesake, Duty Manager Aya Hosokawa, during the celebrity's recent filming trip to Phuket.





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## Accessorizing

By Dhirarat Boonkongsan

# Pearls before swain

Phuket is often referred to by the charming name of "The Pearl of the Andaman". Whether by coincidence or design, this moniker is an appropriate one when one considers the abundance of the delicate orbs farmed in Phuket.

"Most people are aware that natural pearls are formed when foreign matter – a piece of grit is most common – finds its way into a bivalve – a mollusc with two shells," said Piyapong Kaewteen,

manager of the Phuket Pearl Factory.

"Secretions of aragonite or calcite, bound by conchiolin – together called nacre – form around the piece of grit," he explained.

"Over time, anywhere between eight and 24 months depending on the species of mollusc, these layers of nacre form what we recognize as a pearl."

"The difference between natural and

farmed pearls is that in the case of farmed pearls the foreign body is implanted into the bivalve – and any bivalve can produce pearls – rather than accidentally finding its way there," said K. Piyapong.

Three types of mollusc are cultivated at the Phuket

Pearl Factory: The Pteria Penguin, or Golden Wing, oyster creates dome-shaped Mabe (pronounced mah-bay) pearls up to 15 millimeters in around 10 months; the Pinctada Fucata or Vulgaris oyster forms the Akoya pearl, which can grow to between two and 10mm in eight-24 months; and the Pinctada Maxima, or silver-lipped oyster, in which the South Sea Pearl grows to around 11mm in about two years, though only when the oyster has reached maturity at two years.

The value of pearls depends upon five factors: luster; smoothness; shape; color; and size. "Rose-white and silver-pink pearls tend to be the most prized items and although size is important, the thickness of the nacre is also crucial

to the beauty and value," added K. Piyapong.

Pearls have traditionally been associated with more mature ladies, but K. Piyapong said that increasing numbers of younger women are falling under the spell of these precious globes.

"Some people consider the financial value of – for example – diamonds and gold, but not that of pearls. People form an emotional bond with pearls and hand them down from generation to generation," K. Piyapong explained.

Pearls are quite delicate, he

warns. They should be polished regularly to maintain their lustre and one should never put them on and then apply perfume, as it can damage them. "Scent first and then pearls," advised K. Piyapong.

"Almost everyone appreciates a pearl necklace

on a woman."

The Phuket Pearl Factory is located at 58/2 Thepkasattri Rd, Koh Kaew, Phuket 83000. Tel: 076-238002. Fax: 076-238337. Email: pearls@samart.co.th Website: www.phuketpearlfactory.com

**PEARLY WISDOM:** Mabe pearls, such as this one, grow up to 15 millimeters in around 10 months. Although traditionally worn by more mature ladies, many young women are now finding pearls taking their fancy.



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## EAR CANDY

The new ECM Records retrospective of selected recordings by the drummer Jack DeJohnette is a sublime introduction to his style for the uninitiated, or an essential companion for old friends.

Like so many in the ECM label stable, DeJohnette's work exudes a simple grace. Opening with the infectious *Third World Anthem* from 1984's *Album Album*, his subtle, powerful playing and "melodic" approach to drums and cymbals is explored.

Add to this his counter-

hythms, shifting accents, dynamic changes and a rich Afro-pop beat – and 20 years on it still sounds cutting-edge.

DeJohnette's melodic spirit is likely due to his impressive talents both on the piano and in composition, and this is demonstrated on the final three, slower, tracks.

*Silver Hollow*, by the New Directions band, features a splendid combination of DeJohnette's contemplative piano and very Miles-esque muted trumpet from Lester Bowie. This is perhaps not

surprising, as DeJohnette joined Davis in time for the 1969 classic *Bitches Brew*. *Picture 5* and *Picture 6* are from a mid-'70s set of duos and solos.

The standout track here is *How's Never* from 1994 by the Gateway trio, featuring Dave Holland on double-bass and John Abercrombie on

guitar.

The hard-rocking riff, played by three of the most gifted jazz musicians around, consumes everything in its path – thanks to DeJohnette's slamming backbeat

and an inventively blistering solo by Abercrombie.

Fetishists out there will be pleased to know that the packaging is, as with all ECM recordings, the most aesthetically pleasing since the days of Peter Saville and Factory Records.

*Jack DeJohnette Selected Recordings* ECM Records rarum ECM 8012. Playing time: 67 minutes and 32 seconds.

Since Bologna-based label Irma Café's first album, *Chill Out Café*, came out back in 1998, the series has grown into one of the essential reference points for

new music within the genre.

The double-CD *Chill Out Café Volume Otto*, the latest selection of inspired mellowness, generally eclipses the high standards of its seven predecessors, with styles ranging from deep, laid-back funk to hip-hop, acoustic to Brazilian, and down-tempo Mediterranean to atmospheric house.

Track 2 on CD 1 – *Dolphins* by Ohm Guru – is trippy serial music as light as air and just as welcome. Continuing the cetacean theme is track 12, Lockhart's *My friends the whales*. Trance music with backing pro-

## In The Stars

**VIRGO** (August 23-September 23): Virgoans coming of age this week could be overwhelmed by a surprise party although it could coincide with plans already made. Commitment-juggling might be necessary. September will be action-packed regarding your career but don't accept any offer that smells fishy. The number 3 is lucky.

**LIBRA** (September 24-October 23): Honesty is the best policy this week. Librans who are tempted to tell fibs will be discovered. If you've done something recently that could affect a relationship, then come clean this week but there's no need to hang dirty washing out in public. Some private matters should remain exactly that.

**SCORPIO** (October 24-November 22): Your talent for seeking out viable schemes comes in handy this weekend. A chance encounter inspires a potentially profit-making idea that warrants following through. Strike while the iron's hot, or someone else will. Financial backing is available, but it could come at a price that is more ne-

gotiable than it first seems. You will have good luck with the number 9.

**SAGITTARIUS** (November 23-December 21): Stressed-out Sagittarians should escape from the concrete jungle and find a quiet, green place to indulge in some contemplation – there are underlying worries that are causing a disturbed home atmosphere. Later in the week, a meeting with Aquarius leads to new work possibilities. Spark off some fresh energy by incorporating brighter colors in your life.

**CAPRICORN** (December 22-January 20): Business progress grinds to a halt this week. Capricorns who are counting on finalizing agreements before the end of the month will need to pull all the stops out in order to get important signatures on the dotted lines. Dress to impress for a meeting on Monday or Tuesday; the color crimson will emit the right signals. Cupid shoots an arrow your way on Saturday.

**AQUARIUS** (January 21-February 19): A romantic encounter leaves you starry-eyed this weekend. Aquarians will want to meet this person again soon. Tuesday is your best day for an intimate dinner for two, but make it clear that the date isn't for three or four. Your wits are sharp when a workplace spat arises; don't let contentious opinions be overheard. If home renovations are required, be sure to obtain more than one estimate.

**PISCES** (February 20-March 20): Fair-weather friends need to be identified for once and all. Pisceans who have more on their plates than they can handle will be disappointed by others' lack of enthusiasm when called upon for help. Luckily, there is at least one person who will come to your aid; track them down on Monday. A sticky patch will end by mid-month.

**ARIES** (March 21-April 20): Arians should be able to congratulate themselves on reaching a record level of productivity. Your determination to complete a task, despite limited cooperation from others, will have helped you achieve a long-term goal. You may now be in a position to be able to support someone else in his or her quest for success. Set aside some quality time for your partner.

**TAURUS** (April 21-May 21): Correspondence is delayed as usual this week, but Taureans can rest assured that overseas affairs are going well. Improved finances don't mean that you can be overly generous. Someone who has noticed that you are better off is about to ask for a loan. A refusal won't result in a lost friendship. Choose Wednesday for a hot date.

**GEMINI** (May 22-June 21): Gregarious Geminis will make new friends this week, and some of them may be in high places. This is to your advantage, so cultivate these



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by ANDY

vided by humped-back whales for a dreamy five minutes.

On CD 2, the mood shifts occasionally to a darker place. A decidedly spooky ambient version of *The Windmills Of Your Mind*, performed not by Noel Harrison but by New Yorkers Robert Larow and Jeremy Skaller - collectively Orange Factory - was set to repeat ad infinitum in my car. I didn't want it to end, despite it having an almost David Lynch eeriness to it.

Back into the light with

track 8, *Da onda* by Riovolt, which begins with a husky Latin male breathing "Attenzione" before the sexy tinkle of a Mediterranean babe's laugh carries the tune into boppy electro-bossa nova.

Track 12, *Coming Home* by Spy From Cairo is, appropriately enough, infused with an Egyptian leitmotif and wailing *zummaras*, echoing *doumbeks* and Italian-Egyptian composer Zeb's own nimble finger-work on the *oud*, a guitar-like Middle Eastern instrument.

This global compilation is fun, sassy and thoroughly accessible. Why wait until you need to chill out before listening to it?

*Chill Out Café Otto Various Artists* Irma Café Records 515187-2. Total playing time: (2 CDs) 148 minutes and 53 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



by Isla Star

relationships carefully. Don't be a slave to pleasure, or business matters will be left on the shelf. Prepare for deadlines now.

CANCER (June 22-July 23): Your usual sideways approach to dealing with things you're not sure about won't inspire positive progress. Cancerians should set their sights firmly and



be prepared to act on trusted advice. A business matter is less complicated than it looks; do the groundwork and sit back and wait for a rich harvest. The color amber will encourage a harmonious home atmosphere.



LEO (July 24-August 22): It is said that charity begins at home, but Leos will be slightly

reluctant to put this into practice this week. A family member is getting ready to come a-knocking on your door with a request for help. By being smart and putting your thinking cap on, you will come up with an offer of assistance that doesn't require opening your wallet. Creative and lateral thinking is the solution to any dilemma this week. The solution is in your paws.



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# THE DREAM COMES TRUE

The most beautiful ladyboy in Thailand is 19-year-old Phuket native Treechada "Poi" Petcharat, born Saknarin Malayaporn, a second-year student in the Faculty of Political Science at Suan Dusit Rajabhat University in Bangkok.

K. Poi was the winner of this year's Miss Tiffany Universe contest in Pattaya, held annually – according to the organizers – to promote Thai tourism and to promote a positive image of transvestites and transgendered people.

With that achievement, K. Poi is now preparing to compete for the US\$7,000 first prize in the Miss International Queen contest in October, to be held for the first time in Thailand.

K. Poi was back in Phuket to visit her family during the Mother's Day weekend and spoke with the *Gazette's* Sangkhae Leelanapaporn and Gategaeo Phetsawang about the competition and her hopes for the future.



The moment the dream came true: 19-year-old Treechada "Poi" Petcharat is congratulated by the runners-up in the Miss Tiffany 2004 contest. (Nation picture).

**Gazette:** Tell us about your background.

Poi: I studied in Phuket when I was young and moved to an international school in Surat Thani for the first part of my secondary school education. I did my high school studies at Phuket Wittayalai, studying science. Now I'm studying in Bangkok.

Although my family could never accept it in the past, I have been like this [a transvestite] ever since I was in kindergarten. I had

to lie to myself that I was a boy. I wanted to be a boy for my parents, but I couldn't do it – because I wasn't a boy.

Even in primary school, I used to take my mom's powder to school. I had to be a boy when I was at home, but I acted like a girl at school.

I'm glad that now my parents can accept me as I am. They finally accepted it about three years ago. I'm still a good person, even though I am like this. I

have never done anything to upset them.

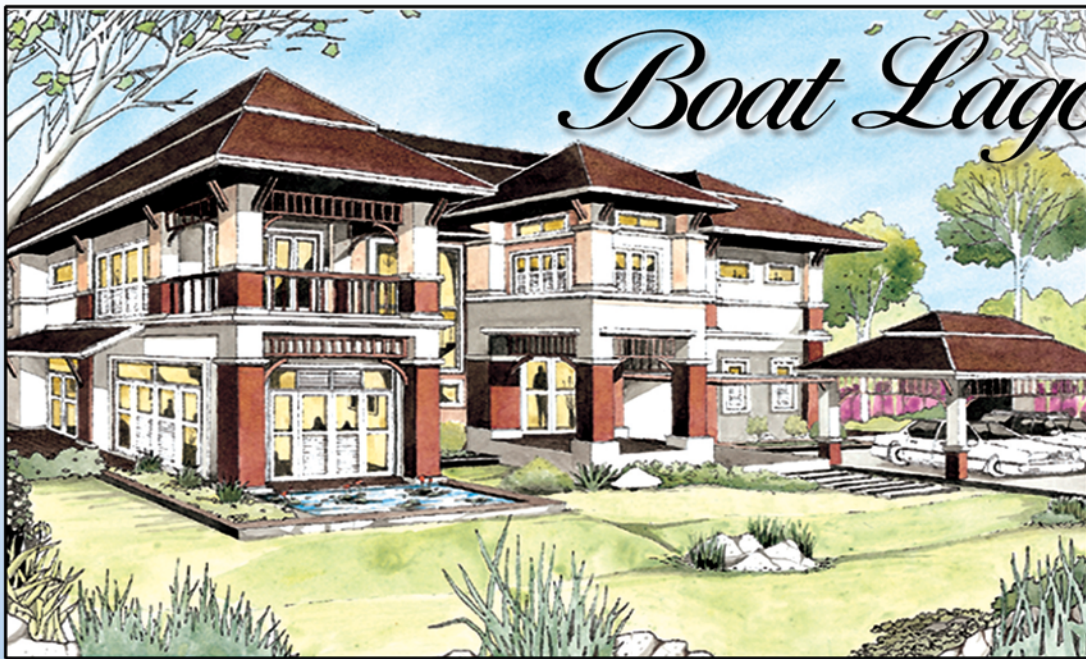
Over the past three years my mom has started to say things like, "Do you want to borrow my make-up?" And my dad has stopped complaining if I dress up

like a girl at home. I felt especially glad that they didn't complain when I started to say "kha" instead of "khrap".

I had a heart-to-heart talk with my parents and they came to accept my decision. They said

I could be whatever I wanted to be, as long as I remained a good person.

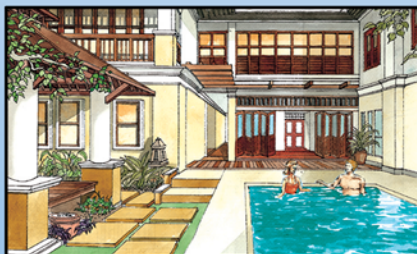
**Gazette:** What made you decide to compete for the Miss Tiffany title?



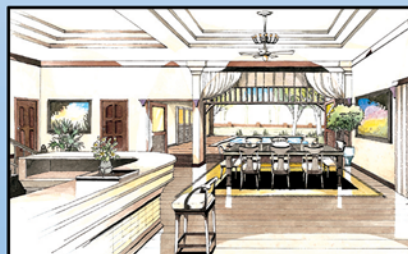
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Left: Crowning glory – Poi with the tiara that confirms she's Miss Tiffany 2004. Right: Going places – a bright red Honda Jazz was one of the prizes Poi received for winning.

Poi: I think the competition is unique and also very famous. I thought if could win, then I could gain greater social acceptance. Also, winning the Miss Tiffany contest is the dream of just about every ladyboy. I am lucky that I was the one whose dream came true.

**Gazette: What prizes did you win?**

Poi: A Honda Jazz car and about 250,000 baht in cash.

**Gazette: What do you plan to do next?**

Poi: I have to promote the Tiffany Show Pattaya (which organizes the pageant) and help in their social awareness campaign.

I also have to prepare myself for the Miss International Queen competition, which will take place on October 30 in Pattaya. I have to study English for the competition, but that's OK, because I like to learn English.

I have been to the US, Tai-

wan, Korea and Japan and I will go to Kuala Lumpur soon. I have traveled with the Tourism Authority of Thailand and helped to promote the tourism in Pattaya and Thailand.

**Gazette: Have you had gender reassignment surgery yet?**

Poi: Yes. I had the surgery to become a woman about two months ago, after I won the Miss Tiffany competition and got my prize money.

I was already a lady in my mind, but I wanted to be a complete woman. That's why I decided to get the surgery.

**Gazette: What questions were you asked in the competition?**

Poi: The MC asked me what I thought of this government's Social Order Policy. I answered that the main goal of the policy is to close nightspots at midnight and impose a 10 pm curfew on people under 18.

I told him that I strongly disagreed with this idea, because it limits the experience of young people to the classroom and doesn't allow them to learn about the outside world, which is important.

I think the government is attacking the symptoms, not the

cause. In fact, children need to learn right from wrong from a very early age. Only the family can achieve this.

My mom, grandma and other relatives came to cheer me at the contest, [because they knew] I always dreamed of becoming Miss Tiffany.

**Gazette : What are your ambitions for the future?**

Poi: I dream of setting up a support group for aging katoey. At present there are many homes for old people, but not for older

katoey – who are often looked down upon by society. I would like to help out, but at the moment this is just an idea.

Right now, I am waiting to finish my bachelor's degree because that will be important for me financially in the future. I haven't decided on a career to pursue yet.

**Gazette: What do you think your life will be like when you are 50 years old?**

Poi: I think by that time I will already have children, because the doctor told me that it may be possible in the future for katoey to have children. At least that's my hope.

**Gazette: How do you take care of your figure and your skin?**

Poi: The same way as most actresses, always making sure I get enough sleep and visiting the beauty salon regularly.

**Gazette: Does that mean you want to be come an actress?**

Poi: That depends on whether or not I get the right opportunity. I have already been contacted by some people, but I am very busy right now with the promotional events that go along with being Miss Tiffany.

**Gazette: Do you think it's true that it is difficult for most katoey to find true love?**

Poi: I think all people are different. I believe there are still sincere people, at least a few. It depends on how strong the love is on both sides, and it depends on the behavior of the katoey too. I don't have a boyfriend, but there is someone special. He's British.

The Miss Tiffany competition is organized annually by Tiffany Show Pattaya Co Ltd. For more information visit the website: [www.misstiffanyuniverse.com](http://www.misstiffanyuniverse.com)

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# Sophisticated cruising

Swannies are a rare breed in travel circles. Reasonably well-off, more than a little cultured and terminally infected with wanderlust, they cruise the world aboard Swan Hellenic's *Minerva II*.

Named after the the Roman god of wisdom, *Minerva* gets to the Far East only every so often.

The 600-foot, 11-deck, 30,000-metric ton ship, which was launched just last year, will be back in local waters next January. Four months hence may sound like a long way off for booking a cruise, but Swannies are noted for planning

in advance and the *Minerva*'s 363 cabins tend to fill up fast.

What puts the *Minerva* head and shoulders above other passenger liners is the quality of its onboard entertainment. Rather than casinos, floor shows, discos and the like, she goes in for en-

tering top quality speakers on board.

The upcoming "Passage to India" voyage will start in the Seychelles and then go by

way of the Maldives, Sri Lanka, the Andamans and Malaysia before finally docking at Singapore.

A notable bunch of experts will be on board to discourse on

their specialist subjects in a way relevant to the *Minerva*'s route.

They include Dr Robert Bradnock, of King's College London's School of Oriental and African Studies, an acknowledged expert on cultural and historical development; historian Richard Wallace, who will speak on the cultures of the Indian Ocean, their history and inter-relationships, and the Bishop of Oxford, Richard Harries, who will offer an expert view on the area's religions, politics and contemporary history.

They will be joined by Alastair Harborne, a natural scientist who has worked on reef conservation for the past 10 years, and Kim Saunders, who will speak about textiles and the importance of trade in South East Asia.

Much of the pleasure of the high-brow life on the high seas comes from the other Swannies, who as a type are chatty, well-informed and curious, and as

keen to get ashore and delve for themselves as they are to pose questions at the end of a seminar.

Interesting port excursions are a regular feature of the *Minerva*'s voyages, and are often conducted by local experts.

Away from the lecture circuit, the *Minerva* – which is reminiscent of an English country mansion, with its carpeted stair-

cases, traditional prints and spacious public rooms – provides plenty in the way of diversions.

The library contains some 4,000 well-thumbed volumes, and there is a highly popular card room too. Even the smallest cabins are reasonably comfortable, with mod cons such as direct dial telephone, television and a pair of binoculars.

The gym gets less punish-

ment than it might were the average age of the passengers rather lower, but at least it's never crowded. The pool is for dips rather than Olympic lengths, but the promenade deck is still the favored way to combat the near continual assault of food that begins with breakfast and ends with late-night snacks.

Passengers can take their meals in one of four restaurants, opting for a breezy buffet or more formal dining room where gentlemen are requested to wear a jacket and tie, and there are also two bars. The band plays nightly, and comedy and drama evenings are staged as well. Many passengers keep in touch with each other long after the voyage has ended via the "Swan Club".

For more information, visit the website: [swanhellenic.com](http://swanhellenic.com)

## TALES OF A TRAVELER

By Ed Peters



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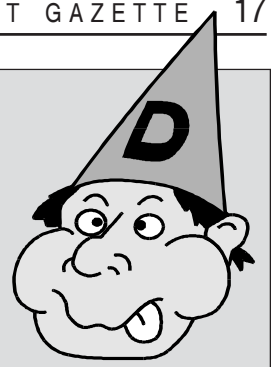


# Hidden Words

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

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

# Get your brain in gear with The Monster Quiz



- The spice saffron comes from which flower?
- What are Munros, Corbetts, Donalds and Grahams?
- The word "draconian" comes from the name Draco. Who was Draco?
- When and where was pop singer Britney Spears born?
- Where in the body is the labyrinth?
- Who designed the dome of St. Peter's, Rome?
- What is the unit of currency in Poland?
- In the board game Scrabble, which two letters are worth 10 points each?
- What creatures live in a formicary?
- Which country is bordered by Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Ukraine?
- With what invention is John Logie Baird primarily associated?
- Who plays the part of Legolas the elf in the *Lord of the Rings* movies?
- A yashmak covers what part of the body?
- Who became president of the USA after John F Kennedy was assassinated in 1963?
- What is the chemical symbol for silver?
- Who won the soccer world cup in 1998?
- In radio terminology what do the letters FM stand for?
- Who did the voices of Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck and Porky Pig up until 1988?
- How many sides does a pentagon have?
- A googol is a one followed by how many zeros?

Answers next week

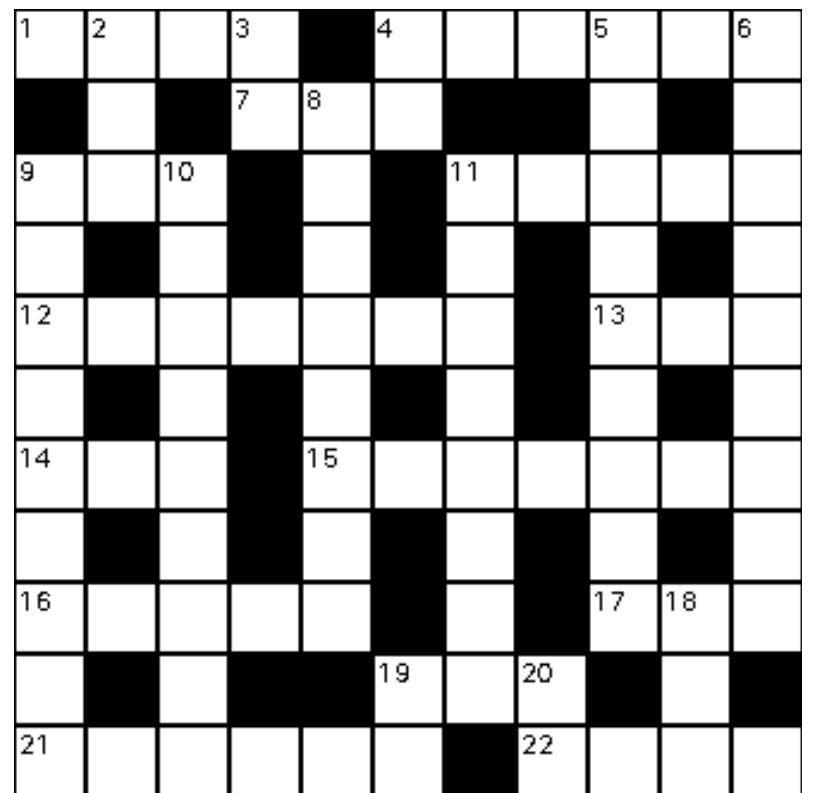
# Never a Cross Word!

## Across

- Former communist empire.
- Turned from solid to liquid.
- Ostrich's cousin.
- Forty winks.
- Lightest wood.
- Etna or Vesuvius, for example.
- Tailor's tool.
- Wildebeest.
- Mythological one-eyed giant.
- Little bits of tree.
- Double curve.
- Help.
- Mr McDonald.
- Killer whale.

## Down

- Where to take the waters.
- In regard to.
- Greek M.
- Long-distance conversation piece?



- Doctor's conclusion.
- Kings and queens.
- On a ship, he knows his charts.
- Filth.
- Green vegetable.
- Dry sherry.
- A commercial, in short.
- Perform.

Solution next week

# Brain Buster!!

The Danish government issues staff in one department with free biscuits every morning. The biscuits are not for the staff to eat, but are for their protection. Explain how this works.

The staff are postmen and the biscuits are dog biscuits.

## ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S MONSTER QUIZ

- Loquaciousness; 2. Kiss the stone; 3. Women's shot put; 4. One; 5. Eight; 6. Richard Nixon; 7. Yo-yo; 8. 1949; 9. Antarctica; 10. Rabat; 11. Hen; 12. Brain; 13. 300; 14. Helen Mirren; 15. Fats Waller; 16. 1974; 17. Rhinoceros; 18. 17; 19. Death; 20. 1866.

## SOLUTION TO LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

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

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When people discuss a place like Phuket, they tend to get an instant image of crystal blue waves lapping beautiful white, sandy beaches. They imagine themselves lying on a deckchair beneath one of those large, colorful umbrellas, being served refreshing cool drinks with fantastically tropical names like Paradise Delight or Sunset Smoothie.

I guess you could easily come to Phuket for a vacation and find all this imagery is reality. And on top of that there are so many wonderful activities – you can go cable-skiing, bungee jumping or even take off to one of the nearby islands and learn how to dive.

Often, places like Phuket stick in the vacationer's mind as the nearest thing to Paradise on Earth, and they frequently wish they could relocate here.

What few realize is that they come during the "high" season, when most people are on vacation, the seas are calm, the skies are beautiful and there is no rain.

Tourists, many of them Europeans, never really question what Phuket is like when all the tourists go back to work or school. They do not get to see what happens during the rainy season that comes around the middle of the year and stays with us until near the year's end.

Sarah learned this pretty soon after she arrived on the island. Sitting in her classroom one Friday, she completely lost the thread of the lesson because of the trees outside the window. They seemed to be bent almost horizontal by the force of the wind.

Her attention was pulled abruptly away from the window by a sarcastic voice. "Joining us anytime today, Ms Charles?" asked her English teacher.

She turned quickly and apologized. But try as she might to stay focused after

# Whiling away the rainy days

that, she found her concentration simply kept slipping away.

A piece of paper fell into her lap as someone brushed past her on the way from the teacher's desk. She opened it and read the scrawled message: "What are we gonna do this weekend? It doesn't look like we can go to the beach! Ha ha!" Sarah instantly recognized the handwriting as that of Charlie.

Sarah and Charlie had become instant friends after he saved her on her first day from the bad-tempered physics teacher.

As she started to write a reply she felt the cold, hard stare of the English teacher fall upon her. She quickly pushed the note aside and waited for warmth to return. When it finally did, instead of returning the note, she turned in her chair to see Charlie grinning at her.

She had no idea what they should do at the weekend. She shrugged. Charlie raised a hand shaped into a cylinder to his eye, miming winding a handle at the side of his head with his other hand. Sarah couldn't contain a burst of laughter.

"I don't find anything amusing, Sarah!" the teacher said instantly. Sarah kept her head down, refusing to look up and give him the satisfaction of embarrassing her in front of the class again.

Finally, 20 minutes later, the bell

rang and the class headed out to lunch. Over the meal, Sarah and Charlie decided to go to the movies the next day. But whenever they rang up to try to find out what was screening and at what time, the line was always busy. They decided to chance it anyway.

The next day, it was raining so heavily that it had even affected her mother's mood – for the worse. "I don't see why you absolutely *have* to go see the film tonight. I *hate* driving in the rain here!" she grumbled.

But Sarah was fascinated by the weather. She just kept staring out the car window until they arrived at the cinema.

When they got there, she and Charlie both jumped out of the car and ran in.

They were hit by a rush of cold. After the soaking outside, the normally refreshing feeling of air conditioning wasn't so fantastic.

They headed over to the ticket stand to find that the one and only film in English had started 45 minutes earlier. Slightly irritated, they decided to head across the road for pizza. Their bad luck persisted. All the tables were packed with people. There was nowhere to sit.

Rather than wait, they moved to the ice cream shop next door. Ten minutes

later, they were stuffing their faces with rocky road- and chocolate-filled dishes, with cherries on top of mountains of whipped cream.

As their stomachs started to fill, they cheered up and decided to head for the bowling alley. Halfway there the rain became even heavier. Worse yet, Charlie seemed to be taking them in circles.

"I know its around here somewhere!" Charlie yelled over the rain as Sarah stopped to check the time. They'd left the house pretty late, and would need to ring her mum to collect them.

But when she tried her phone, Sarah found she had no signal – nor did Charlie. It was time to look for a tuk-tuk.

An hour later, they pulled up to the house and jumped out of the tuk-tuk, still soaking wet. They handed over a wad of sodden cash to the displeased driver before walking over to the front door. Sarah's mom was not pleased when they trooped in dripping, but grudgingly accepted their apologies as they headed upstairs to change.

Dry again, Sarah thought to herself that the evening hadn't been a complete washout. Yes, it had poured constantly. Yes, they had gotten soaked and had failed to see a movie or find the bowling alley.

But on the positive side, they'd had fun out in the rain and fun stuffing themselves with ice cream.

In the end, she realized as the two of them nodded off in front of the TV, the best-laid plans can always go wrong, so it doesn't really matter what you do – what really matters is who you do it with.



**Youth 'n ASIA**  
By Lauren Moorhouse

# When the pinpricks of love start hurting

Dear Momma Duck,

I've been married now for two years. At the beginning of our relationship my wife told me that she had been married before, for 10 years, and had two children.

She said I was only the second man she had been with and the only man to have given her an orgasm – in her previous marriage she had never reached climax. I thought it was good to hear that I was giving her fulfilment

for the first time in her life.

But then one day she started talking about her previous marriage. She said her ex-husband came round to her parents' home and offered them a 200,000-baht dowry to marry their daughter.

They called her and told her to come home, but without saying why. When she arrived they dressed her up and then the groom arrived. She had met him only twice, as the friend of a friend.

She was in shock when her family told her she was to be married; they had agreed to the marriage without even asking her.

Then a helicopter flew over and roses were thrown from it over the "happy couple" and the family; her ex-husband worked at a military radar installation and had a friend who flew helicopters.

There were three wedding

parties: one in the village for her family, one where her husband worked and the third was a big party with his family and friends.

She told me that when he came home from work he would have sex with her eight times, and then she asked me, "How many times have you had sex in one day?" I said, "What is this? A competition?" Then she said, "He is really big."

Ever since then I have been wondering why she said this. When I ask her, she says she meant nothing by it, and then we get into a fight.

Now I feel unhappy and I keep wondering how big he really was. Was he hung like a horse? Does she prefer it big and is mine not good enough?

The stupid things she said that one time are now printed on my brain and I can't get rid of them. She doesn't want to take responsibility for what she said.



**Momma DUCK**  
By Wanida Hongyok  
momma@phuketgazette.net

I really love my wife and I know she loves me too but the stupid things she said have left a sour taste in my mouth.

Please, Momma Duck, can you tell me how much of what she said might be the truth? Or has she just been watching too much TV? Why did she say those things to me?

I feel embarrassed already, writing this letter. Please help me by making me understand so that I can feel *sabai jai*.

Jeap Jai

Dear Jeap Jai,

Wow, you could use this experience as the basis for a television melodrama script. It's got

the three main ingredients: sex, money and ego. It's a story worthy of some characters at a certain running club with which I am familiar.

I asked one Thai friend what she thought and her response was, "What a silly wife if she said that to her husband."

I asked a foreign friend for her thoughts and her response was, "He's got a real self-confidence problem if he's worrying about the length of his willy – apparently he's satisfying her and we all know that size is irrelevant."

Another friend, knowing how Thais often like to communicate indirectly, wondered if your wife's story about her first marriage was a clumsy request for more attention from you in the form of more frequent sex and/or a wedding ceremony in her village and/or, perhaps, money.

Another person felt that she might be angry with you about something else and this was her way of striking back to hurt you (because her story does sound a bit screwy).

In any case, no matter which analysis you accept, I suggest you let the whole thing go from your mind; enjoy sex and your relationship with her; and, if she (not you) raises the issue once again, you can begin to worry anew. Good luck.

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There is an old and obvious theological assumption that states that when Moses handed down the laws and methods of circumcision to the gathered scribes and rabbis around him surely one of them must have said, "Are you out of your f\*\*\*\*\*g mind?"

About a year ago I was presented with a tiny black kitten that had been found wandering around outside the *wat* in Bang Tao. It had not eaten for days and looked like it was on its last tiny legs.

I did not immediately feel warm and fuzzy about the idea of adopting this creature. Adoption means responsibility, and for this very reason I have thus far escaped any situations that require ongoing nurturing of any living being.

Needless to say, six months later, I was sitting on my couch with a now almost fully-grown pure black cat. For fear of any future legal action from him I will call him "Max", although that's not his real name.

Anyway, Max and I settled down to a life in the Thai suburbs. He grew into a handsome and happy cat, having none of the usual stresses that cats are constantly confronted with on the streets of Phuket.

There was one feature, however, that Max retained that really made him stand out in the feline crowd, and that was his possession of the largest pair of fur-covered testicles that has ever been connected to a vertebrate.

It actually started months earlier when I began to notice that Max and his balls were not growing at the same rate. At one point, Max looked as if he were a set of silken orbs that happened to have a cat attached.

Max, of course, knew no different and put down to extreme jealousy whatever comments I made. Whenever Max and I went for a walk, Max would have to compensate for the extra weight on the back and therefore would break into this strange gait, which became the talk of the neighborhood.

About a month later, my new *farang* neighbor – whom I will call Judy, again to prevent any future legal action – happened to rescue a kitten, which she called Muffy. Muffy is her real name; you could not possibly invent a name so hideously unoriginal.

Now, when I say "rescued", I mean just that: Muffy had obviously collided with a car or some object that must have been moving at incredible speed. Muffy was reconstructed road-kill.

One ear, one eye, a mangled tail, some clumps of fur and two basically useless back legs. It was quite a pathetic sight. While Max elicited awe wherever he went, Muffy extracted pathos.

As Max started to mature, he began to want to go out at night and party. I would sit at home and worry, as all parents do, about what he was up to and whether he was all right.

# THE UNKINDEST CUT OF ALL

## Downsider

By George Bentick

Max constantly ignored my curfews, choosing to gamble with my wrath upon his early-morning returns home. It was now obvious that Max was discovering what his two hanging monsters were for.

He was now getting into trouble in the neighborhood as his oversized testes drove him to sate his desires. His reputation and his equipment were now approaching cult status.

I must say that a flush of pride did come over me with each and every conquest. Max was fulfilling his destiny; Max was becoming a *stud*.

A few weeks later, I was awakened very early in the morning by horrifying sounds, human and feline, from next door. I jumped out of bed and ran outside to be confronted with a blood-curdling scream from Judy, aimed directly at me, "MAX IS RAPING MUFFY! MAX IS RAPING MUFFY!" At that moment, Max dashed by me with a smirk and into the house.

I managed to calm Judy and persuade her not to call the authorities by promising on Max's behalf that he would not do it again. I stormed back into the house and confronted Max.

"What the hell are you doing, Max? Are you insane?" Max just lay there and gave them one more long lick. "Relax," he said, "It's no big deal." "No big deal? Max, Muffy can't even walk, for God's sake, and not only that, she's downright ugly."

"Precisely the point, Pops," he said. "I've never had a cripple before. Look, I go over there and I roll her over and we're done. She just gotta lay there and take it. Consider it a mercy f\*\*k," he said, trying to conceal a look of machismo.

He went on, "What's the point of going out at night and going through a whole bunch of hassle and sweet talk, when all this time I could have just gone next door for a quick and easy?"

Max was taking no prisoners and his unabated desire was now equal to his testicle size. We

had two very round and very large problems.

The next day I went next door to apologize, and was greeted by two traumatized females: Judy, with a look of disgust, and Muffy, who looked as though the Russian Army had just passed through. Muffy was

playing the victim to the hilt and I knew both Max and I were in trouble.

"You should do something about your cat," Judy blurted out. "Look what he's done to Muffy." I could have sworn that, much though Muffy was stunned by the experience, she was also hard-pressed to conceal just a hint of satisfaction.

"Look, I don't know what to do, Judy, but Max does have a youthful exuberance and everyone is quite familiar with his balls, and besides this is what cats do."

At that point I could hear Max snickering behind me.

"George, I think the only humane option you have is to get Max fixed," she replied. Fixed? No sooner had the word left her lips than Muffy began to smile and I heard Max, who had been listening from the bushes, bolting over the fence in horror.

Fixed? That means castration in a male doesn't it? It conjures up visions of Chinese emperors, opera singers and Germaine Greer. It did, however, present a solution to Max's over-indulgence.

"I don't know Judy, that's a pretty radical thing to do. You may have a point, Judy, but I really don't have the time, nor would I know where to go," I replied. I heard Max whispering loudly the rabbi's question "Pssst! Pssst! Are you out of your f\*\*\*\*\*g mind?"

"Judy, I think it's a good idea, but let me get back to you."

When I went back into the house Max started on me. "What the hell are you thinking? You

realize we're talking about cutting my nuts off? Oh my God! It's obvious that she hates men. I mean, just look at her.

"She only wishes that she'd gotten a little of what I gave Muffy. She and Muffy should be so lucky. What are you? A momma's boy? I thought you loved me."

Max had a point. How would I feel if all the cats in the area decided that my lads should be cut off? "George, you've been going to Patong too much, so we have decided to castrate you."

It just did not add up. I settled back, assured Max that I would not agree to it, and that he could relax. I did, however, make him promise to leave Muffy alone and not be so aggressive when it came to women. He agreed enthusiastically and licked the rest of the night away.

The next day I returned from work early and was surprised that Max was not there to greet me as usual. I asked the gardener if he had seen him.

"Sure," he said, "K. Judy came to get him this morning and took him to the vet."

I went cold with horror. I started to sweat. Surely not, I thought to myself. I raced inside grabbed my phone and called.

"Judy! Where is Max?" I screamed. "Relax George, he's right here. He's just waking up."

"WAKING UP? WAKING UP FROM WHAT?" Horror of all horrors.

"He's been fixed."

"Fixed? *FIXED*? F\*\*K!!!" "Relax, will you. Everything went well and we'll be home soon."

"RELAX?? RELAX?? You bring my goddam cat home NOW!! HOW DARE YOU?"

"George, I'm sorry, but I thought we agreed to do this last night."

"I did not agree to anything, Judy. I said I'd get back to you. How dare you come and just grab my cat?"

At that moment, I looked across the yard and saw that feeble furless gimp Muffy giggling with revengeful delight. I was out of my mind with rage and horror.

About fifteen minutes later, a truck from the local animal rescue organization pulled up and out stepped Judy and a co-conspirator, holding a dazed Max.

I immediately grabbed him and turned him over. Two empty fur sacks hung pitifully between his legs. Max looked at me like Jesus probably did at Judas.

I screamed my fury at both of them and took Max inside. He looked like McMurphy after the lobotomy in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

He was half the man he had been, having been caught unwillingly in some suffragette nightmare from which he would never wake. Max was now ball-less.

Since then, my neighbor has moved away. I fear that the incident has left all three of us scarred.

Max? Well, Max, as you can imagine, is not the cat he used to be. Reduced to television and tuna, he sits on the couch gazing forlornly at his empty sac.

Females still call his name over the fence, as his legendary equipment is still the stuff of urban myth.

Muffy? Last I heard, she was working some bar in Patong, wishing another Max would come along...

Then there's me. I bear the guilt for all this and sometimes I swear I can see the ghosts of gonads lurking behind me in the dark.

But I now have a new kitten that Max can teach his old moves to. His name is Moses.

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## Steering car ownership the wrong way

The changes to the tax rates on new cars, pickup trucks and sports utility vehicles (SUVs) (see page 23) will certainly be welcomed by most car owners, particularly those buying their first cars.

But one does have to wonder about the wisdom of the new structure, on a number of levels.

First, the new tax rates are supposedly aimed at encouraging people to buy cars that use less fuel. This is accomplished, to some extent, when it comes to the gas-guzzling all-wheel-drive SUVs, on which excise tax will rise by as much as 21 percentage points.

Yet anyone wanting to buy a 7-series BMW or a top-of-the-line Mercedes-Benz will find that the tax has gone up by just two percentage points, while those in the market for a mid-range sedan with an engine between 2.5 and 3.0 liters will be delighted to find that the tax has dropped a couple of points.

Also heavily penalized are buyers of pickup trucks – the workhorses of the Thai economy – on which the tax will rise by the same amount as for SUVs.

Meanwhile, the five-point reduction of tax on small sedans, from 35% to 30%, means that the pool of first-time buyers is enlarged – the cheaper the car, the greater the number of people able to afford it.

This is likely to be a major setback in Phuket, where roads are already becoming clogged with cars, leading to the provincial government laying plans to spend billions of baht on widening and upgrading main routes.

Meanwhile, the hefty increases in excise tax on pickup trucks will undoubtedly lead to a fall in new truck sales. Owners will hang onto their pickups longer, resulting in more poorly-maintained, polluting and dangerous vehicles on the roads.

Certainly, the old tax structure was a badly thought-out mish-mash. But the new structure that replaces it seems equally ill-conceived. It will only reinforce the idea that car ownership is essential.

The government's priority should be to get people out of private vehicles and into public transport.

In Phuket's case, instead of planning underpasses costing hundreds of millions of baht, it would be much more sensible to extend the current Phuket City bus system to cover the whole island, and to increase taxes on all forms of personal transport, not lower them.

Instead, the government, at both national and provincial levels, seems hell-bent on paving over huge swathes of countryside – and then clogging them with cheap saloon cars.

– The Editor

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**Chief Reporter:** Sangkhae Leelanapaporn

**Investigation Team:** Dhirarat Boonkongsaen, Gategaeo Phetsawang,

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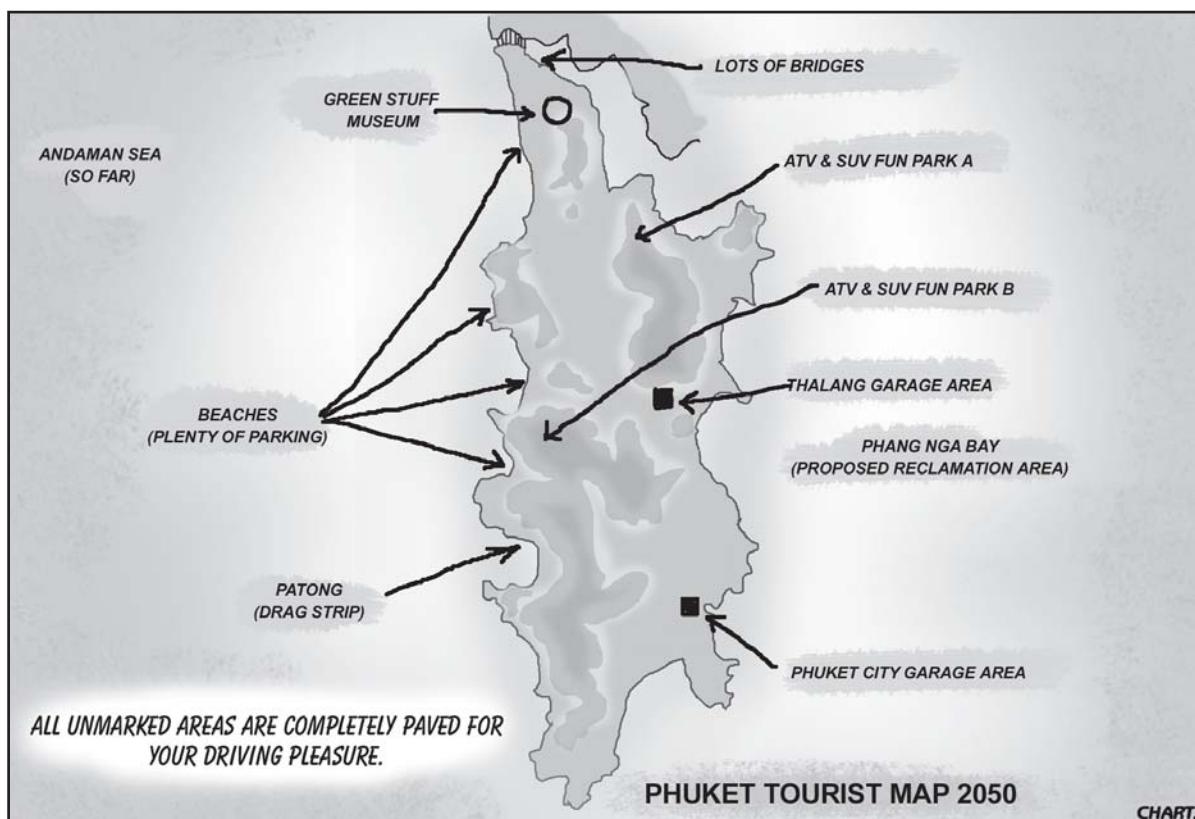
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## Letters

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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.

### Sidewalk shambles

With regard to the beach vendors taking over the new sidewalk that was supposed to beautify Patong Beach for tourists (*Gazette* Letters, issue of July 31), Patong Chief Administrative Assistant Poonsak Naksensa stated, "The operation [to restore order] began along the beach road on July 21."

Good joke, K. Poonsak. I was there recently and there are even *more* vendors than before. Walking along the path is impossible, so tourists just avoid that area.

Don't the vendors realize that if they got off the walkway and moved onto the grass, tourists could walk by and perhaps buy a drink or rent a chair from them? As it is, tourists can't pass by so they go elsewhere. *Som nam naa!*

Perhaps K. Poonsak never visits Patong Beach to verify whether or not his orders are being carried out.

I would hate to believe that there might be some kind of baht exchange going on that allows these vendors to act as they do.

Tourist Patrol  
Patong

### Airport antagonism flies in face of logic

I would like to comment on the two reasons given by Anchalee Vanich-Thepabutr for opposing the extension to the runway at Phuket International Airport (*Gazette*, issue of August 28).

Her first reason was that Phuket's expanding markets are in Asia, not Europe. But perhaps a major reason for this is that Europeans cannot fly directly to

Phuket, whereas Asians can.

A European family wishing to vacation in Phuket can fly scheduled via Bangkok, which means a change of aircraft and often airline, and usually hours of layover time in Bangkok airport.

Or they can fly in a chartered plane small enough to land at Phuket, which means at least one refuelling stop on the way, adding hours to the flight time.

Were it possible to fly direct from Europe to Phuket, K. Anchalee might see significant growth in this market, a market I thought Phuket wanted to encourage because of the higher per-capita spending of European over Asian visitors.

K. Anchalee also said aircraft noise was "disruptive for the local communities", but qualifies this by adding "mostly Muslim". Why is that relevant?

Does this imply that had they been Buddhist, Christian or Jewish it would not be seen as a problem? I hope that Phuket is not catching the Western diseases of political correctness and positive discrimination.

John Lunn  
Phuket

### Advocating anarchy

Regarding your article on water safety (*Gazette* Inside Story, issue of August 14), I do not understand why TAT Region 4 director Suwalai Pinpradab and leaders of Phuket tourism associations do not react against the double standards used by the central government that work against our interests here in Region 4 – Phuket, Phang Nga and Krabi.

Tourists choose Samui over Phuket, Phang Nga and Krabi because there is no harass-

ment by police over helmets, seat belts and driving licenses. Investors – Thai and foreign – feel comfortable on Samui because they enjoy fewer tax controls and no new regulations are on the table.

Foreigners on Samui, Koh Pha-ngan and Koh Tao are able to work either full-time or on a freelance basis without a work-permit. Nobody cares.

The *Gazette* should publish a report comparing the pros and cons of investing, living and working in the two regions.

Guy (Charlie) Lidureau

### Purple and gray can smooth the way?

Ahead of me in the queue at a government office in Phuket was a man who had come to check on buying some land for a foreign client.

The man's turn came and he handed over the documents to the officer.

The official looked at them before whispering to the guy, "Where is your proxy for authorization?" I could see the man's documents did not include a proxy.

The guy whispered to the officer, "Wait a minute, I have to go to the toilet. I'll be right back," and disappeared. The official waited and so did I.

The guy returned with an envelope in his hand. "Here's the proxy," he whispered to the official. The official peeped inside the envelope and said, "Okay".

I wonder. I'm sure the proxy I saw was not white. It might have been purple and gray, but it was hard to tell.

Sura Pattanapratthaya  
Phuket

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



# A plea for more beach guards

Phuket's beautiful beaches and marine activities are a huge tourist attraction but no one – or no administrative body – takes responsibility for tourists' safety.

The main responsibility of the Phuket Marine Police is to prevent and detect crime at sea, but it seems that we are now also expected to ensure the safety of tourists on the beach because Phuket Province has no office dealing with this issue.

This lack of organization has led to many deaths, and as a result, the reputation of Phuket at home and abroad is tarnished.

Phuket should have lifeguards on all its beaches. These guards would help save lives and we would no longer have to hear the news of people drowning as the result of preventable accidents.

The best way to improve this situation is to allocate a budget for the employment of life-

guards and then organize and manage them properly. From May to October, the seas around Phuket can be very rough and even good swimmers can find themselves fighting strong currents. According to the Tourist Authority of Thailand (TAT) website, statistics suggest that drowning is the leading cause of death among tourists visiting Phuket. Lt Col Pratuang Silamontri, Inspector of Phuket Marine Police, believes it is time Phuket took a more organized approach to safety in the sea for tourists.

Phuket does, of course, have lifeguards, although they

## FIRST PERSON



are more an ad hoc group than a structured service, and they work for only part of the year. There should be lifeguards employed

year-round because tourists – vital to the local economy – visit Phuket year-round.

The current situation is that people who get into difficulties are usually rescued by – or an attempt to rescue them is made by – a member of the public who just happens to be there when the need arises. Professional, trained lifeguards should be doing this, as well as being proactive and providing warnings about currents and other dangers to people about to enter the water.

I accept that the lifeguards may end up being less well-trained than their counterparts in other countries, but that doesn't mean that they cannot be trained to an adequately high standard – and equipped with the necessary equipment – to fulfill their role.

The Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (*OrBorJor*) and the Tambon Administration Organizations (*OrBorTor*) should be responsible for the budget because they get benefits

– in terms of revenue – from tourism. These organizations should be responsible for the safety of tourists and others in the waters around Phuket.

The Phuket Marine Police have, at meetings with the *OrBorJor*, hinted for some time of the need for lifeguards although the idea has not yet been put officially. A positive step forward is that Anchalee Vanich-Thepabutr, the *OrBorJor* president, has agreed that organizing a dedicated lifeguard service is a good idea.

Although these lifeguards' primary role would be to prevent and, if necessary, respond to incidents, their secondary function could be to advise beach users of any infringements they are making against the law. They could then report these lawbreakers to the police or perhaps even be given power of arrest.

I urge the *OrBorJor* and *OrBorTor* to support the implementation of a full-time, year-round lifeguard service.

## Why can't the number of a stolen phone be blocked?

On my past two trips to Phuket I have had mobile phones stolen, each time with a considerable amount of credit still left on my prepaid One-2-Call account.

Twice I have been back to the Nokia agent where I bought the phones to see if the numbers of the stolen phones could be blocked and if the remaining credit could be transferred over to my new number. However, I was told that this was not possible. Why?

It would certainly curb the black market for stolen mobile phones and give peace of mind to the previous owner who would be assured that at least the thieves would not benefit from their wrongdoing by being able to make calls at the victim's expense.

Gregory Westcott  
Phoneless in Phuket

**Wilai Kiengpradoo, Assistant Vice-President, Public Relations Department of Advanced Info Service Public Co Ltd (AIS), replies:**

You can keep the same mobile phone number and have the credit transferred to a new phone.

To do so, you first should report the phone number of your stolen phone at an Advanced Info Service (AIS) service center or by calling the AIS call center at Tel: 1175.

You will need to prove that you were the owner of the mobile phone by providing details such as the number of the phone that was stolen, phone numbers that you frequently dialed, the amount of credit your account was most recently "topped up"

with, and the time and date when you last topped up your account.

If we are satisfied with the accuracy of the details you provide, we will block the number of your old mobile phone.

You then need to report to the police that your mobile phone was stolen, and take the police report and your passport (Thais may bring an ID card) to an AIS service center, where you can apply for a new SIM card with the same number as your old one.

We will also transfer any credit left to the new account.

## Bringing money into Thailand

I lived in Patong for about two years, then last year I moved back to Italy. I still have a deposit account that I opened with the Thai Farmers Bank, which has less than 500 baht in it. As I'll move back to Patong in October, I would like to transfer money into my account before I arrive. Are there any bank fees or regulations involved?

Massi Scialla  
Italy

**Pornjit Saksrithawe, Exchange Officer at the Phuket City branch of KasikornBank (formerly Thai Farmers Bank), replies:**

First, note that any accounts with a balance of 500 baht or less that are inactive for longer than six months are automatically closed by the bank.

Transferring money into your KasikornBank account from abroad is free of charges at our end, and you can organize the

transfer through a bank in Italy.

With any transfers of US\$20,000 or more (or the equivalent) into or out of Thailand, you must declare the intended purpose to the Bank of Thailand. This can be done at your bank in your home country or in Thailand.

If you transfer 2 million

baht or more, you must inform the Anti-Money Laundering Office. This can be done at the branch where the account is held.

You have to show your copies of these papers in order to take the money out of Thailand later.

To transfer money from KasikornBank to a bank abroad costs 550 baht per transaction.

## Common law marriages and visas

I am looking to retire in Phuket on a non-immigrant visa. I am over 50 and meet all the financial criteria.

I note that a foreign retiree married to a foreigner may apply to include his or her spouse on the non-immigrant visa.

I am British and my partner is Filipina. We have been together for a number of years.

In our current country of residence, Singapore, our common-law status was recognized

following a statutory declaration witnessed by a notary public and an endorsement letter to that effect from the British Consulate.

Our question: would the same procedure be acceptable proof of marriage in Thailand for the purpose of applying for a dependent visa?

Brian Evans, Singapore

**Friedrich Fauma, Senior Partner of Phuket International**

## What should I do about power surges?

I have been experiencing many fluctuations in my power supply lately. I have heard that power surges can damage electrical equipment.

If the power seems to be surging, what should I do? Turn everything off? Do I need to unplug everything too?

How can I know when it will be safe to turn everything back on?

Stephen Fein  
Phuket

**Worawut Thirabenjakul, Customer Service Assistant, Phuket Provincial Electricity Authority (PPEA), replies:**

Yes, power surges can damage electrical equipment. You should switch off and unplug all electrical equipment.

You should report any problems with your power supply in person to the PPEA at our offices at the substation on Thepkasattri Rd, north of Phuket City.

**Law Office, replies:**

The common-law wife status declaration as described in your query will not be recognized by Immigration for the purpose of obtaining a one-year dependent visa.

Only a legally married spouse may be granted a dependent visa under a spouse's retirement visa.

In Thailand, only a marriage certificate may be used for this purpose.



# Bangkok expo an IT product fest

Last month I had a chance to catch Bangkok's ICT Expo, held in the Impact Arena. Billed as "Thailand's First International Information and Communications Technology Exhibition and Conference" by the ICT Ministry, it drew an enormous array of exhibitors, from Microsoft to Dell, from Oracle to DTAC, from Sony to Shin.

I caught a cab in downtown Bangkok early on the last day of the conference. You'd think that arriving an hour before the scheduled opening time would avoid most of the crowds – and you'd be wrong. It took an hour of stop and go to navigate the final kilometer or so from the freeway exit to Impact Arena.

Inside Impact, I found a surprisingly well organized and well laid-out show. The people running the booths ran the usual gamut from vacuous to savvy; most of the products on offer worked correctly, and printed, detailed product information was almost always immediately available. The throngs of people there were surely the envy of any exhibition organizer in the world.

Microsoft had details about "Windows XP Lite" (as I call it), the Thai-language-only version of Windows that's available at a decent price. I'll run a column on this version of Windows soon.

TOT, TT&T and CAT showed off their ADSL services. IBM was, well, IBM. DTAC, AIS and True (better known as TA Orange) sported big booths, as did Huawei – the Shenzhen-based technology company behind GPRS mobile phone Internet access from AIS.

The booths I found most informative were those of the consumer electronics companies – Toshiba, Hitachi, JVC, Sharp, Sanyo, NEC, Samsung, among



Big crowds at the ICT Expo in Bangkok were treated to the latest consumer electronics technology from all over the world.

## KHUN WOODY'S COMPUTER

many others – and the Thai companies that offer their products.

While a few computers appeared in some booths, the exhibitors offered nothing particularly innovative or cheap. Most of the interesting stuff fell into consumer electronics categories: peripherals; phones; TVs; projectors; cameras; video recorders and the like.

ICT Expo ventured way beyond the typical hardware goodie fest. A giant area, packed with kids, offered games and other diversions. The Ragnarok booth was as big as IBM's – and much more heavily attended. (Sorry, but I remain of the firm opinion that computer games are a good thing.)

An entire section of the main pavilion held representatives from other countries – Japan, Laos, Myanmar and a dozen more – fishing for business. The Khon Kaen Software Park had its own corner, as did the influential Board of Investment. Even the Software Industry Promotion Agency (Sipa) staked a claim.

Regarding prices, suffice it to say that the products I saw on offer were quite competitive: almost on a par with Hong Kong, slightly higher than discount store prices in the US, but considerably lower than prices here in Phuket.

What amazed me was the depth of stock: most of the products offered by most of the big manufacturers are available in Bangkok. I know. I saw them.

Unfortunately, the Expo organizer has made it deucedly difficult to contact exhibitors and ask about products and prices. You can start at the website at [www.reedtradex.co.th/bangkokictexpo/visit\\_exhibitor\\_list.htm](http://www.reedtradex.co.th/bangkokictexpo/visit_exhibitor_list.htm), but then you'll have to Google each company and search for contact information.

On a completely different note, I'll be writing a column soon about wireless Internet access "hotspots" in Phuket. They're popping up all over the island. Some of them are free; most are expensive.

If you know of a publicly available hotspot, or one that's available to patrons of a particular shop, I'd sure like to hear from you. Shoot me an email and let me know any details, be sure to fill me in. Thanks in advance.

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

# American literacy like, uh, abounds

John McWhorter has produced a thought-provoking book on the dumbing-down of modern American English. *Doing Our Own Thing* (Gotham Books, New York, 2003, 279pp) comes with this lengthy subtitle: "The Degradation of Language and Music and Why We Should, Like, Care".

His thesis is that since the counter-cultural revolution of the 1960s the formal spoken diction of Lincoln, Roosevelt

and Kennedy – in which a speech was honed to perfection in an elevated mode of rhetoric – has been replaced by the flat conversational tone typified by George W Bush. This is an interesting point and McWhorter, being a professor of linguistics at the University of California at Berkeley, is especially qualified to address it.

On the other hand, being an academic at the hotspot of radical 1960s politics may have skewed his vision. But perhaps the campus politics that spawned the counter culture just don't matter anymore. Does anyone remember Mario Savio?

But it is a joy to read McWhorter argue his case – he is no academic drudge – even if I don't buy a lot of what he says. He writes in the lively, colorful, funny, informally conversational language that he deplores in theory, adding in his defense that he was born in 1965 and just can't help himself: "My writing indeed hearkens to casual language much more than it would if I were writing forty or more years ago."

Theodore Roosevelt, Susan B Anthony, Marian Anderson, WEB Du Bois, William Jennings Bryan, British sitcoms, classic black-and-white movies, musical comedies, Martin Luther King, Walt Whitman, HL Mencken, Edna Millay – he cites these in praise of careful, formal English.

At the opposite pole are representatives of flat, conversational English: the Beat poets, rap and hip-hop, US poet laureate Billy Collins, American sitcoms like *Friends* and President Dubya.

While languages such as Italian, French, German, Arabic and Russian retain high standards for literary expression, American English has become consistently simplified like plain ordinary talk.

"Mannerism of the language means pushing it beyond its natural state, and to our forebears, nothing seemed more pleasing or appropriate. Reading that old style of prose, a modern American can barely help wishing from time to time that those people had gotten real. But that would have made no more sense to James Gordon Bennet [the 19th century newspaper publisher] than heating up frozen pizza for a dinner party would to us. To us, frozen pizzas would be egregious because preparing them took no effort... But public decorum in the old days put language in the same space. Writing like you talked, or more generally without decoration, would take no effort, while dressing up the language on the page was a way of giving delight, of paying respect, of showing that you were alive."

Early in the book, he cites the example of Edward Everett, the orator who spoke for two hours before Lincoln gave his Gettysburg Address. In those days, people would take in a speech like we would a movie. Those days are no more.

The degradation extends to music. "I have claimed that the United States has undergone a shift in its relationship to self-expression that has had an effect beyond anything traceable to education or large currents of intellectual history," McWhorter writes.

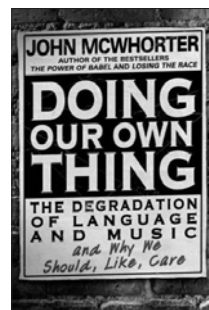
"If I am correct, then I should predict that this shift would include not only spoken and written language, but also music. Thusly predict I do, and the prediction is borne out. The musical sensibilities of most Americans of Boomer age and younger parallels their sense of language, preferring the visceral, spontaneous, and elementary over the objective, planned, and elaborated."

Thus he laments the one-note music of rap, hip-hop and black protest poetry. (McWhorter, by the way, is black.) And does he see any hope for the future?

No, with email and mobile phones, things are only getting worse. The political implications are grim: "Both Bushes show that having trouble rubbing a noun and a verb together is not considered a mark against one in applying for the leadership of the land."

## Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt



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# Car sales tax change slow to take effect

By Dhirarat Boonkongsan

PHUKET CITY: Nearly all Phuket car dealers say they have yet to notice any significant difference in their business as a result of the changes in excise taxes on car sales announced in July.

In a bid to encourage people to buy smaller-engined vehicles, the Ministry of Finance declared that excise tax on cars with engines under two liters would, with immediate effect, be reduced from 35% to 30%.

Conversely, taxes on most cars with engines over 2,000cc increased slightly, while those on pickup trucks rose, in some cases massively. Taxes on a third category, sports utility vehicles (SUVs), are to be put up later, by the same amount as those on pickup trucks. (See table for details).

Phummisak Hongsyok, chairman of Honda, Ford and Mazda dealer Anuphas, told the *Gazette* that orders had increased

by around 10% after the tax reduction was announced.

"The Honda Jazz is very popular in Phuket," he said. "After the prices were reduced following the tax changes, people were attracted to buying small cars such as these."

Phuket Chevrolet sales manager Siriporn Nunkliang said the tax change had reduced the price of smaller Chevrolet cars by between 45,000 baht and 93,000, resulting in an increase in sales.

She said, "For example, 13 Chevrolet Optra 1.6s were reserved in the 20 days after the tax changed, compared with nine a month in the quarter before the tax change."

She said that there had been no effect on sales of the popular Chevrolet Colorado pickup. "It is still as popular as it was before the tax increases. We get deposits for 50 to 60 vehicles a month."

Smaller Toyota cars have come down in price by 38,000 to 80,000 baht since the duty was

Saloon cars			
Engine size (cc)	Old tax (%)	New tax (%)	Change (% points)
Up to 2,000	35	30	-5
2,001-2,500	35/41	35	0/-6
2,501-3,000	41	40	-1
Over 3,000	48	50	2
Pickups/SUVs			
Up to 2,000	29	30	1
2,001-2,500	29	35	6
2,501-3,000	29	40	11
Over 3,000	29	50	21

**Note: New tax rates are already in effect for saloon cars and pickups. They will apply to imported SUVs from September 26 and to Thai-made SUVs from January 1, 2005.**

changed, said Vitoon Leethanasak, head of the sales division of Toyota Pearl.

He predicted, "The effect of the tax reduction for small cars will not be short-term; it will continue so long as the tax rate does not change again."

"We are not really looking at short-term increases in sales

immediately after the tax reduction, but at sales rising steadily in the longer term because the cars are cheaper."

The dealership is absorbing any extra tax on vehicles over 2,000cc, he said, so prices buyers are paying had not increased and there had therefore been no appreciable effect on sales of

larger vehicles and pickups.

Piriya Tantipiriyakij, Managing Director of Volvo dealer Muang Mai Motor and Land Rover dealer Lifestyle Auto, said the impending tax change for SUVs had increased sales by 30-40%, as people bought now, before the tax increase comes into force on September 26.

"We expect sales to slow down, though the cars imported before that date will not be affected by the rise in tax."

He said that after the tax rises come into effect, the dealership plans to promote vehicles such as the Land Rover Freelander SUV by stressing their fuel economy.

He added, "I believe we will be able to sell so many cars with engines smaller than two liters... that it will make up for any reduction in sales of cars with engines over that size. And the Volvo SC90 [SUV], which is built in Thailand, will not be affected until January 1 next year."

## Rising oil prices float US trade deficit

To investors, currency movements at the moment appear to hold at least an element of contradiction. The US trade deficit for June 2004 reached a record of US\$55.8 billion (more than 2 trillion baht). The US dollar moved slightly lower on the news but then rapidly regained lost ground.

This may appear illogical, but a number of factors combined to contribute to this phenomenon.

Rising oil prices are a negative factor for US trade figures, but since oil is a US dollar-based commodity, it must be bought in that currency. Therefore, oil buyers in Japan and Europe, for example, have to convert domestic currencies to US dollars. Higher oil prices lead to greater demand for dollars.

In addition, many oil exporters "think" in dollars and hold their proceeds in that currency. Recently, Qatar, an oil-producing Gulf state, even went so far as to sell all the euros in its foreign reserves and buy dollars instead. A rising oil price is, in many ways, US dollar-positive.

Some foreign countries are still major buyers of US bonds. In June, Japan bought US\$22 billion worth of US Treasury Bonds. It is likely that China was also a major buyer.

Rising US short-term interest rates have also contributed to a willingness among some foreign investors to hold the currency. The "Fed Funds" rate may currently be at only 1.5%, but the trend over the coming months is for this to rise.

Additionally, during the Northern Hemisphere holiday months, currency traders are dealing with reduced flows of business and are more reluctant

to commit themselves to taking any major positions.

The rising oil price is acting as an additional tax on all major economies and is likely to cause some slowdown in economic growth.

However, the advanced economies of the world are less dependent on oil now than they were during the major oil crisis of 1973-74, partly because much of the manufacturing process has become more energy-efficient.

This does not mean that the First World will escape the effect of the rise. One has only to look at the impact that rising oil prices have had on sales of sports utility vehicles - SUVs - in the US.

SEVERAL READERS have asked me what is happening with insurance group Scottish Provident International.

I telephoned its headquarters in the Isle of Man and was advised that, although there were plans to sell the company, it is no longer on the market.

The company closed for new international business in December 2003, but has remained open for new business for residents of the UK, Isle of Man and Channel Islands.

In the 1990s, there was a trend in the UK for building societies, in an era of deregulation, to become one-stop financial centers, and Scottish Provident is a subsidiary of a large UK building society, Abbey National.



### MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson

Abbey National was not the only building society to acquire an insurance company. Halifax, the largest of the UK building societies, took over long-established UK insurance group Clerical Medical and its subsidiary, Clerical Medical International, before going on to merge with the Bank of Scotland.

This was after the Bank of Scotland had failed in its bid to take over National Westminster Bank in competition with its main Scottish rival, Royal Bank of Scotland.

Returning to Abbey National and its subsidiary, Scottish Provident, both companies are now effectively for sale.

Although a decision was reached not to sell Scottish Provident, it seems that Abbey National got into difficulty after attempting to enter the UK corporate finance market in order to diversify its lending operations.

This market has long-established players with very deep pockets, and Abbey National gave up its attempt after experiencing heavy losses, mainly because of the cost of trying to establish itself as a competitor.

The mortgage market in the UK is competitive to the point of

being cut-throat. With the introduction of the Internet, the situation has become worse, as borrowers shop online for the best deals.

Abbey National has found itself in extreme difficulty and this has brought in potential buyers for the group.

The leading contender for the Abbey National Group is the largest of the Spanish banks, Banco Santander, which has offered 8.3 billion sterling (about 620 billion baht) for Abbey.

Banco Santander has a great advantage over UK rivals: it is unlikely to face problems with the UK regulator. Halifax/Bank of Scotland (HBOS) is rumored to be interested but, as the largest mortgage-lender in the country, it is certain to face problems with the Takeover Panel, which is there - in part - to stop the creation of monopolies.

Holders of Scottish Provident International policies need have no fear about the security of their investments.

It should be noted that my company, Global Portfolios, has no connections with Scottish Provident International, past or present. Scottish Provident has tried to offer its services but I did not like its product range, which I always felt was too heavily directed toward placing money in its subsidiary, Aberdeen Asset Management.

I am Scots, but when it comes to business, any thoughts of patriotism are irrelevant.

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

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**LOCAL HEROES:** (front row, from left) Plookpanya's Korakod Phetchalak, and teammates Wachirawut Kingkaew and Jarun Panyachim after their August 24 victory.

## Plookpanya on top

PHUKET CITY: Saphan Hin sports complex's Gymnasium 3 was the venue for two days of fierce competition to decide who should represent Phuket in the Education Service's 2004 *takraw* competition, the eventual prize being the HRH Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn trophy and 30,000 baht in cash.

A total of 32 teams competed in the Phuket heat in three age groups: under-13s, under-16s and under-19s.

The final of the under-16s competition – on August 24 – was between Tessabaan Plookpanya School and Tessabaan Muang Phuket. Most of the points "scored" in the first set by each side were the result of errors by their opponents, such as serving faults, volleying into the net, or "overplaying" (playing the ball more than three times in the home court).

In the end, Plookpanya made fewer errors than Muang Phuket and won the first set 21-15.

Muang Phuket fared better in the second set, pulling ahead 8-7, thanks to the "storm heading" of Sunchai Phetpalanulak on the left wing and Amared Naopai on the right.

As in the first set, Muang Phuket faulted often, presenting Plookpanya with points.

Plookpanya also took advantage of the rules of *takraw*, which allow players to switch positions, and put in a dazzling performance as Korakod Phetchalak swapped with server Jarun Panyachim, and Wachirawut Kingkaew exploited every opportunity presented by his rejuvenated teammates.

Most of the points came from Korakod and his impressive reverse-kick volleys. Plookpanya took the set 21-15 to win the match 2-0.

Tessabaan Baan Bang Niew School won the under-13 boys' competition, and Hongyok Bumroong School the girls' tourney.

Wichit Songkram School won the under-16s girls' round while Phuket Wittayalai and Kathu Wittaya schools respectively won the under-19s men's and women's competitions.

The winners will compete in the southern regional round of the tournament, due to take place in Nakhon Sri Thammarat on November 26 and 27. The winners of that heat will compete in the national final in Bangkok.

— Anongnat Sartpisut

## Phuket wins 'Special Olympics'

PHUKET CITY: Students from Phuket Special School for mentally handicapped children gathered 20 gold medals, 17 silver and 14 bronze to win the Southern Thailand Special mini-Olympics held at Saphan Hin on August 20-22.

Nakorn Sri Thammarat Special School came second in the medal tally of 18 gold, seven silver and seven bronze medals, while Chumphon Special School placed third with six gold, eight silver and seven bronze medals.

The event attracted 139 special students from throughout southern Thailand who competed in the 50m, 100m, 400m and 800m track events, as well as soccer, shot put with a soft but heavy "shot", and a modified form of pétanque.

Jazon Edouard of The Family, which organized the event in conjunction with the Special Olympics Committee of Thai-



**READY, SET, GO!** Girls in the 10-14-years-old category get ready to sprint down a muddy track in the 50m dash.

land, told the *Gazette*, "Although all children attending government schools for mentally handicapped children in Southern Thailand were invited, only special students from Phuket, Chumphon and Nakhon Sri Thammarat could attend. The others simply could not afford to come."

He added, "We're looking for more sponsors so more children can take part in the next Special Olympics."

The Phuket event was funded by 36 sponsors, including the Chris Koppers Foundation, sailmaker Rolly Tasker and the Phi Phi Bay View Resort.

## Bowling them over

It is almost impossible to count the number of cartoons that feature the clichéd image of a bowler unable to release his or her fingers from a bowling ball sliding down the lane to the inevitable collision with the pins.

Bowling is a hugely popular sport, but just what is the attraction? Is it the natty shoes? Perhaps the sociability of the fun-for-all-the-family game? Maybe it is the test of hand-to-eye coordination.

Bowling is an easy sport to play badly – even the professionals have an off day and see their ball flip into the gutter – but practicing is fun. Phuket offers plenty of opportunities to develop the balance and control necessary to see all 10 pins go down with one ball.

You don't even need to have your own ball or shoes, as most bowling centers will lend or



**KNEE-ACTION:** Play in loose and comfortable clothes.

rent them to you. Professionals, of course, choose their balls very carefully. It has to be the right weight; not too heavy and not too light.

One avid bowling fan said, "You can bowl all day long if you want, time really seems to fly when you are concentrating on getting a strike."

It is a popular misconception that bowling exercises just the active arm but nothing could be further from the truth. Watch any good bowler in action; every muscle is involved in the process. It takes rock-solid legs to get down onto one knee smoothly and good upper-body strength to

hold a ball that weighs as much as seven kilograms and release it with pinpoint accuracy and just the right amount of spin.

"Players bowl 12 times in a game, and even with air-conditioning it is easy to build up a sweat with so much activity," said Nantita Surakul, Deputy Managing Director of CS Bowl Center Entertainment. "Just think how much exercise you get if you play three games," she added.

Back to the sartorial side of bowling, bowler Ajarn Prasit Seekaew says that the dapper clothes do have a function. "The trousers worn must be loose enough to allow complete free-

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# Running out of steam

PHUKET CITY: Savitree "Tuk" Srichore has 10 years' experience in Thailand's national athletics team, and such dedication to her sport that every other weekend she travels from Korat to Phuket to pass on her skills to the stars of the future.

But on August 28 she found herself alone in Surakul Stadium. Not one of her students had turned up.

From 100 would-be athletes at the start of the training sessions 18 months ago, numbers dwindled to seven or eight regulars. And then to none.

"I feel sad and discouraged," said K. Savitree, who flew from Korat to Bangkok to Phuket on August 27 and was due to follow the same route home on August 29, before returning to work the following day.

It's a journey K. Savitree, a 100-meter and 200-meter sprinter



**DISCOURAGED:** Dedicated athlete Savitree Srichore.

and member of the Thai national 4 x 100m relay team, has made twice a month since the "Athletics to Become a National Sport" project was launched in April 2003.

She said, "I teach the basics of athletics, such as how to run

correctly, then more advanced things such as techniques to increase speed, for anything from 100-meter sprints to long-distance running.

"If athletes have skill, I will send them to compete in national and international tournaments. They could make the national team easily, but they have to practice continually.

"I have experience to give to students, but only seven or eight [in Phuket] are interested. The schools haven't been supportive, the parents seem reluctant to make the effort to bring their children to the training sessions, and we were given no budget to organize competitions. As a result, the students lost interest."

Eam Thavornvongwongse, Deputy Chairman of the Phuket Sports Association, said that he too was disappointed. "I am so committed to this project that I have given my own time and money to it.

"In the past, Phuket-born athletes Nithit and Sumek were in the national team for the 4 x 100 meter relay, but now there is no one from Phuket in the national team.

"This project was set up to improve and develop athletics here and help those with skill to join the national team.

"But the local community doesn't seem to be interested in athletics, nor is Thailand as a whole.

"In some countries - Singapore, for example - the national government supports sports and people are interested in taking part, but not in Thailand."

K. Savitree's next coaching session will be on September 11 between 9 am and 11 am and 3:30 pm and 5:30 pm. She hopes that this time someone will turn up.

## in style

dom of movement, especially the quick descent onto one knee. Shirts, too, should be loose enough to swing comfortably.

As for the shoes - which the 1980s band The Jam "adopted" as their footwear of choice - these must allow the wearer to slide just enough on the varnished surface of the lane, without skating. They need to be flexible, too.

"The most important thing," advises Ajarn Prasit, "is to concentrate. 'Focus, and 'be' the ball as it goes down the lane to strike the pins."

Phuket boasts an impressive number of bowling alleys:

CS Bowl Center Entertainment is on the top floor of the Big C Super center on the bypass road. It has 30 lanes, a pro shop, sports center and restaurant, as well as instructors able to coach novice players.

CS Bowl is open from 10

am until midnight daily and lane fees vary according to when one wishes to play. Tel: 076-249260.

**Rock and Bowl**, on Soi Kebsub 2, off Sai Nam Yen Rd in Patong - has 16 bowling lanes as well as a coffee shop and restaurant, and a sports shop. It is open 1 pm - 2 am daily. Tel: 076-345165.

**Pearl Bowl**, at the intersection of Montri and Phang Nga roads in Phuket City has 12 bowling lanes, a restaurant and coffee shop, and a sports shop. It is open from 10 am to 1:30 am daily. Students 18 years old or younger can play for just 20 baht a string from Monday to Friday. Shoes are provided free.

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# Camry the conquerer

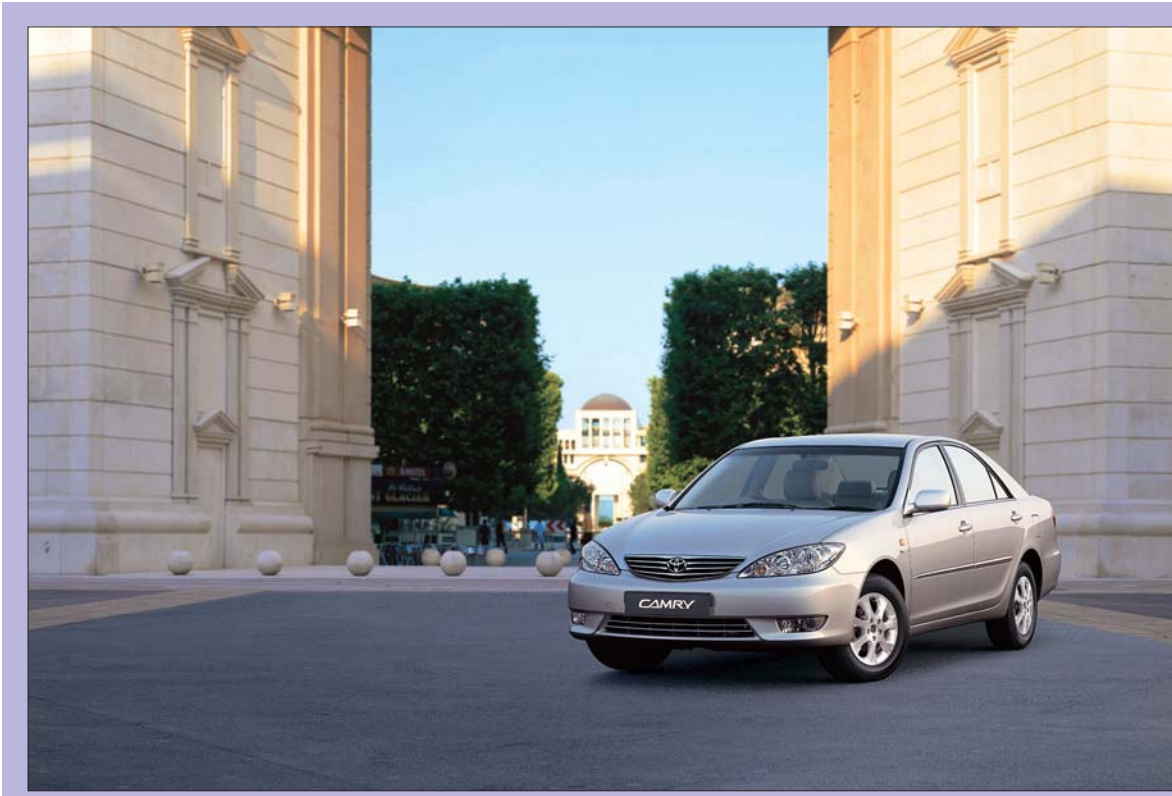
At first glance the new Toyota Camry doesn't look much different from the old one, but its makers claim a host of improvements, some merely cosmetic and others more practical.

Visually, the front and rear lamps are larger and brighter, while there are shiny new wheels, carefully sculpted to reveal the large brake discs. According to Toyota, the newly-designed front grille says "strength and luxury", while a wider front bumper adds to the equation to create a balanced, solid appeal.

Inside, the cabin is equipped with a number of technological advances, including an anti-glare electro-chromatic rearview mirror and an ambient light sensor that automatically switches the headlights on at dusk and while going through tunnels (though not while driving under the shade of trees).

There are also new Optitron instruments, designed to improve clarity and reduce eye fatigue. A new steering wheel has repositioned control switches and there is extra lumbar support within the seats.

A rather neat folding cover



Thanks partly to the Camry, Toyota's profit in the US for the first quarter of this year was greater than those of American automakers Ford and General Motors combined.

to a center console shelf is large enough to hide a camera from prying eyes and in the trunk there is a luggage net to prevent items from sliding around. All are certainly improvements, but are they

sufficient to keep the Camry at the top of the sales charts?

Toyota, it appears, has all the answers, increasing its market share wherever it ventures. Its share price is at an all-time high and in the US it is breaking all records, with first-half 2004 sales exceeding a million units for the first time. Toyota's profit in the US for the first quarter of this year was greater than those of Ford and General Motors combined.

In Southeast Asia, Toyota and its subsidiaries, Daihatsu and truckmaker Hino, control more than 36% of all sales in Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia and Taiwan. In Thailand, Toyota's share of the auto market from January to May this year increased to 38%, with a total of

94,235 units sold, including trucks.

In September, Toyota will unveil its replacement for the Hilux range, which will be built in Thailand. The Japanese automaker intends to use Thailand as the main global production center for all its one-ton pickups, with a production capacity of around 300,000 vehicles a year.

The Hilux range will feature two power plants: a Thai-built diesel and a gasoline engine from Indonesia.

The Camry, meanwhile,

features three different engines, of which the 2.4-liter gasoline model is expected to become the most popular. Priced at 1.615 million baht, including VAT, it is a lot of car for the money. Toyota Pearl in Phuket City has the top model on display and is already taking orders.

Producing about 150bhp (112kW) at 5,600rpm, the Camry is a reasonable performer, if not outstanding in its class, but a peak torque figure of 218Nm, produced between 3,800rpm and 4,200rpm, ensures relaxed, comfortable motoring.

Although Toyota no longer publishes performance figures, expect the Camry to be reasonably lively off the line, with a top speed around 200kmh.

Safety is a major improvement in the new version, with full-length curtain airbags on the deluxe models, as well as dual front and side airbags on all versions, while the front seat belts are equipped with pre-tensioners and load limiters. In the rear, the outer seats are fitted with the Isofix child restraint system, while all three rear seats have three-point seat belts.

To accommodate bulky items in the trunk, the rear seats fold in a 60:40 split and there is a handy rear sunshade for late afternoon driving when the sun is setting.

In many markets, Thailand included, the Camry's major opposition will come from the Honda Accord. The 2005 Camry, though, is surely ahead on equipment levels and style, even if it is still hard to distinguish from the outgoing model.

Jeff Heselwood may be contacted by email at [jhc@netvigator.com](mailto:jhc@netvigator.com).



The new Camry's interior has a number of improvements, including Optitron instrumentation and a spacious center console. Just don't try putting your cigarettes on the dashboard.



By Jeff Heselwood

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# Guest chef

By Jenna Wise

# BLIGHTY BITES

**R**ecently opened in Rawai, the TC British Bar is certain to appeal to those who want nothing more than basic English food, tea and beer.

The brain behind the creation of this new establishment is Terry Cregan, a man with more than 30 years' experience of managing pubs in the Manchester area of England.

Terry decided that there was still room in Rawai for one more bar and his plans include making the TC British Bar an official branch of the Manchester United football supporters club.

He has already requested that membership application forms be sent over and expects that not only British expats, but also many Thai football fans will be eager to join up.

The food and drink available at TC's is strictly English, but head cook Niparuk "Ni" Sanrash will have a relatively easy time in the kitchen, as many ingredients are obtained from The Lancastrian in Patong.

Run by Ratree Wongsaporn, The Lancastrian offers a wide selection of typical English foods that are hard to find in Phuket. These range from different types of savory pies and quiches to home-made chutneys, pickles and sauces.

Other products available include Scotch eggs, various sausages, back bacon and that staple Northern delicacy, black pudding.

Back at the TC British Bar, K. Ni admits that she also enjoys some typical English dishes, especially the full English breakfast. This is available at a reasonable price of 120 baht, including a large mug of Tetley's tea.

## TC Bar English Breakfast Per person

### Ingredients:

- 2 eggs;
- 1 rasher back bacon;
- 1 pork sausage;
- 1 slice white bread;
- 1 slice black pudding;
- 4 tablespoons baked beans;
- 2 tomatoes (tinned);



### Method:

Heat some oil in a frying pan and fry the sausage for 5-6 minutes. Fry the bacon in the same pan, but only for 3 minutes. Fry the black pudding slice for just 1 minute. Lightly toast the bread slice before frying for about 30 seconds on each side.

K. Ni recommends microwaving the baked beans and tomatoes for 10 seconds each. Fry the eggs in fresh oil according to your taste, ie. sunny-side up or easy over. Serve the breakfast with your choice of sauce and a big mug of strong tea.

## Burger, banger and chips Per person

### Ingredients:

- 1 beefburger patty;
- 1 pork sausage;

1 handful frozen chips, or make your own if desired;

### Method:

Heat some oil in a frying pan and fry the sausage for 5-6 minutes. The burger patty should be fried for 3-4 minutes. Turn both a few times as they are cooking. Deep-fry the frozen chips until they are golden brown. Serve with condiments of your choice for an easy home-cooked "fast-food" meal.

## Steak and onion pie with mash and peas Per person

### Ingredients:

- 1 steak and onion pie, or other type;

Niparuk "Ni" Sanrash takes a no-nonsense approach to producing 'proper' nosh that any Mancunian will relish.

- 1 large potato;
- 1 tablespoon of butter;
- Salt and pepper;
- ½ tin of peas (garden peas are best, but use green pea seeds otherwise);

### Method:

Peel and cut the potato into pieces. Boil for about ten minutes, then drain well and mash with the butter, salt and pepper. Use a traditional English potato masher to get the best results, though a food processor will also do the job.

Warm the peas in a pan. To heat the pie, K. Ni recommends first microwaving it for 2 minutes on full power, and then wrapping it in silver foil and baking in an oven pre-heated to 180°C for 10 minutes. This method ensures that the pastry is well crisped.

TC British Bar, open daily from 9 am to midnight, is at 48/7 Wiset Rd in Rawai. For more information call Niparuk at Tel: 06-6892956).

For more information about The Lancastrian, contact Ratree (Tel: 076-340856; Fax: 076-340295) or visit the shop at 69/11 Rat-U-Thit 200 Pee Rd in Patong.

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Home of the Week

Nai Harn

# Seclusion in the South

An artesian well giving at least 7,000 liters of water a day ensures that this delightful bungalow near Nai Harn will never be left high and dry.

The 18-month-old bungalow is just two minutes' drive from Nai Harn Beach, but it is in an unspoiled part of the district. The property is set back from Soi Naya, with access provided by a tarmac road, with the hills to the west.

The bungalow covers an area of 131 square meters on 420sqm total land area. It has a small garden of mature tropical trees and plants and is surrounded by a four-foot high granite wall which blends nicely with the style of the property, which is finished in a mustard color.

Stone pathways lead from

the driveway and carport to doors at the front and side of the house.

The main entrance leads into the large open-plan living and dining area, which has a Western kitchen area and a breakfast bar, while the side entrance leads onto a small covered terrace.

Adjoining the living area are three good-size bedrooms. Two have en-suite bathrooms finished in granite while the other could double as an office or a study; all have built-in wardrobes.

There is an abundance of electrical and TV sockets in all rooms, and the house features a total of four air-conditioning units and ceiling fans. The ceilings have recessed halogen lights, the interior floors have travertine tiles, while the terrace is tiled in terra cotta.



Located off Soi Naya, the home offers seclusion within two minutes' drive of Nai Harn Beach.

At the rear of the property is a separate storage area and laundry room.

The exterior doors are solid timber and the windows, all slid-

ing, are low-maintenance aluminum. The eaves are finished in hardwood treated with Cuprinol, and extend to 1.5 meters, giving good shelter from the elements.

The utilities on the property include UBC television, telephone, septic tank and a copper-lined hot water tank.

The land title is Chanote and the property is for sale at 6.3 million baht.



For more information, contact Richard Lusted at Siam Real Estate. Tel: 076-280805. Email: [info@siamrealestate.com](mailto:info@siamrealestate.com) Website: [www.siamrealestate.com](http://www.siamrealestate.com)



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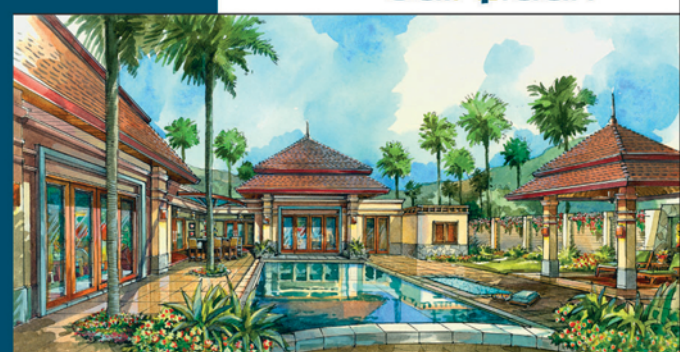


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Kevin Slattery (left) and John Brun both expect a boom in interest in Phuket property from Honkies wanting that slice of island life.



# Honkies hankering for Phuket lifestyle

One of Hong Kong's leading financial management firms believes that Phuket is about to see a big increase in property investment by Hong Kong-based buyers.

Speaking in Phuket recently, Kevin Slattery, the Managing Director of Hong Kong-based The Henley Group, said that inquiries from their clients, in Hong Kong and in the UK, showed that Phuket is quickly becoming more attractive with its increasing infrastructure, and the value of the baht against a strong British pound.

"Phuket tops the list for Hong Kong people at the moment," said Mr Slattery. "Expatriates are now in Hong Kong for longer periods, as the old 'two-year expat package' has virtually disappeared, with more people being employed on local conditions.

"As they are likely to be in Hong Kong for several years, and they will never have a beautiful house in Hong Kong, they are likely to consider the option of having a beautiful house in a beautiful place only a couple of hours away".

The Henley Group has been

**PROPERTY  
&  
HOMEZONE**  
By Graham Doven

operating in Hong Kong for 14 years. The company changed its name two years ago when it was bought by Mr Slattery, who changed its name to The Henley Group, after his home town, Henley-on-Thames, in Oxfordshire, England.

The Henley Group has just formed a subsidiary, Henley International Properties, run by John Brun, an Australian with a long history in the Southeast Asian property industry and in his own words, "a 20-year passion for Phuket."

"Even though some people complain about traffic and other infrastructure problems, it is not unique to Phuket," he said. "It's the same in many places that grow very fast. The infrastructure is always going to be trailing behind the development, especially on a tropical island where it takes longer to get things done. Most people understand, and it isn't going to deter them."

The Henley Group will officially launch Henley International Properties on October 13 in Hong Kong, where they plan to introduce some new Phuket projects to their clients.

Mr Slattery also believes that Phuket will start to see more Hong Kong Chinese showing interest in Phuket. "The older generation were interested in Australia, Canada and the UK, where they could establish their families. The younger generation has different interests and more money, and are looking for lifestyle. Phuket will offer them lifestyle as well as investment," he said.

John Douma, Managing Director of financial investment advisory company Chatyon, is a regular visitor to Phuket. He also believes that the Hong Kong market has a lot to offer Phuket in the near future.

Like Mr Slattery, Mr Douma said the Hong Kong-based market will keep on providing potential business as expatriates continue to work in Hong Kong for longer periods. "I believe that it will continue to grow for whatever period there is a supply of quality products available in Phuket," he said.

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## Gardening

with Bloomin' Bert

# Jekyll and hide

I get bored with plants sometimes. I know that I'm supposed to be a gardening writer, and that such things shouldn't really be said, but there you go. So sack me. But I do. They're all just so, well, green. And therefore predictable. They have green leaves, they sit there just growing and doing nothing particularly exciting.

I'm not saying that I'd like the average Begonia to get together with its floral friends and form a conga line. All I want to see is something that breaks the mold a little. I don't think I'm asking too much – just give me something that's a bit different. I'm not even looking for flowers.

Well I think I've found it. The Quezonias has a head start on most of its rivals due to the simple fact that it has a rather cool name. I could get all technical and point out that its official Latin name is *clerodendrum quadriloculare*, but I'd never do that. Here in Thailand it's known as *sao-san-sai*.

What makes the Quezonias stand out from the crowd is that its leaves look as if they couldn't quite decide what color they should be, so they compromised.

Imagine your Aunt Doris and Uncle Eric arguing over what color to paint the living room, which is long overdue for an overhaul. They can't come to a decision between the two of them, so the only option they can come up with is to paint the top half of the room with Uncle Eric's choice, British-racing green, and the area below the dado rail in bright crimson.

This is the combination we end up with in the Quezonias, except this isn't the result of a ram-



Plant it and ignore it: The Quezonias seems to thrive on neglect.

bling garden writer's fertile imagination – this is real. Pass it by, and from a distance it looks like the most innocuous plant on the planet.

However, once the breeze starts wafting it around, the deep red undersides of the 7½-centimeter-long leaves become apparent.

It's difficult to know whether this plant is a shrub or a bush, or if anyone really cares, for that matter. It supposedly can grow to a height of five meters. I don't think I've ever seen one that big, though Quezonias can get a bit straggly and unkempt if left to their own devices.

I have one of these odd plants in a quiet corner of my garden. In fact that particular corner is so quiet that I rarely get around to watering the plants in it or paying any attention to their welfare whatsoever.

While many other garden occupants scream out in protest if I miss them with the hose, this

one really couldn't care less. It's gone through several dry seasons now, and is still going strong. About the only thing it requires is a hack-back with the secateurs every now and then. Not exactly the sort of growth you'd expect from a plant that is usually completely ignored.

This two-faced little shrub is actually a member of a fairly large family, or genus as those "official" gardeners refer to these things. There are literally hundreds of different types of clerodendrum, some of which have magnificent sprays of flowers. One of them, the Pagoda flower, is spectacular, and does bear a striking resemblance to, erm, a pagoda.

One of the clerodendrums, the bronze-leaved variety, is such a prolific, self-sufficient grower, that there are some regions in the world where it simply isn't wanted. According to *The Global Compendium of Weeds*, it's officially classed as a "Quarantine Weed" – a plant that is banned from certain parts of the world.

That's not exactly something for this otherwise innocuous little plant to be proud of.

Maybe it's just the simplest in me, but my favorite has got to be the one we started with – the Quezonias. Nothing too flash or brazen. One of the more two-faced plants around. But it is distinctive; even a little odd. Now it's starting to make sense...

Want to know more about a plant in your garden?

Email Bloomin' Bert at: [bloominbert@hotmail.com](mailto:bloominbert@hotmail.com)

## Construction Update



The showhome of the Buan Suan Suay project in Patong is on target for completion by December.

## Patong project on schedule

Construction of the 30-million-baht Baan Suan Suay Villa project, which began in June this year, is moving on apace, with the show home due to be ready in December.

Each of the eight three-story villas in the development covers 250 square meters and comes complete with its own swimming pool. Living space comprises three bedrooms, three bathrooms, a living room and dining room, and each villa will have two parking spaces. Surachart Khorana, the developer of Baan Suan Suay Villa, told the *Gazette* that the prices for the properties have been set at 5.5 million baht apiece.

K. Surachart said, "Developments in Patong tend to be expensive, so I wanted to offer a value-added choice, close to both the beach and downtown Patong."

Interior and exterior design

is in what K. Surachart calls "modern style", with extensive use of teak and durable granite for doors and floors, respectively. Kitchen appliances will be of European quality, and the bathroom fittings will be American Standard. Each house will have three air-conditioning units.

Pointing out some other features of the houses, K. Surachart said, "Each property will have its own subterranean 2,000-liter reserve water tank and automatic pump, a three-year termite protection guarantee and the estate will be guarded by 24-hour security."

"Our target customers are foreigners, and I expect this project to be a great success," he said. — **Anongnat Sartpisut**

For more information about Baan Suan Suay, contact K. Ann at Tel: 01-5976195. Fax: 076-345251 or 076-354670. Email: [rachneeuomo@hotmail.com](mailto:rachneeuomo@hotmail.com)

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# Property Gazette

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# Property Gazette

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Please send resumé, photo and expected salary to: (Temporary Sales Office)  
74/204 Poonphol Rd., Taladyai, Muang, Phuket 83000  
Tel: 076 - 246 500 Fax: 076 - 246 501 Email: [avanihotel@asia.com](mailto:avanihotel@asia.com)  
Contact person: Khun Chatchalerm Daengchai

### CLUB ASIA FITNESS

is looking for sales staff with positive attitudes and the desire to achieve results. Attractive commission and bonus available to those who work hard. Call Khun Amp for more details and to apply. Tel: 076-354027.

### SALES GIRL WANTED

We are looking for a friendly sales girl with some sales experience and English skills. Tel: 01-9795624. Email: [tom@bootlegonline.com](mailto:tom@bootlegonline.com)

### NANNY REQUIRED

to look after a 20-year-old child and to perform some domestic duties. Must be able to speak some English and be able to start immediately. Tel: 01-0827323. Email: [pjmcevoy@yahoo.com](mailto:pjmcevoy@yahoo.com)

### JOB VACANCIES

Urgent:

- Phuket Operations Manager
  - Chief Steward
  - Spa Supervisor
  - IT Officer
  - Staff restaurant cooks
  - Waiters/Waitresses
- Tel: 076-236761-2, 01-895-8575. Fax: 076-236763. Email: [sasithorn@zeavola.com](mailto:sasithorn@zeavola.com)

### 5 MASSEUSES

wanted. 1-year contract. Malaysian government certified. Very high salary. For full info, call now! Tel: 01-3974291.

### EXTRA INCOME

Need extra cash? Work at home at your own pace. Large company looking for reps. Please send email for more information. Email: [phuketcash@hotmail.com](mailto:phuketcash@hotmail.com)

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With more than 10,000 visitors a day, the Island Trader Online is Thailand's most active classified marketplace.

\*Ads may be submitted in person or online ([phuketgazette.net/classifieds](http://phuketgazette.net/classifieds)), but must be paid for at the Gazette offices. The discount is not available when payment is made at our agents.

### The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd

367/2 Yaowarat Rd, Phuket City Tel: 076-236555 Fax: 076-213971



# Island Job Mart



**Fagor European kitchen appliances distributor is looking for the right candidates to join our team in the following positions.**

## Showroom Manager 1 position

- Male/Female, aged over 30 years
- Bachelor's degree in a related field
- Management and sales skills
- Own car and license

## Sales Manager 1 position

- Male, aged over 28 years
- Bachelor's degree in a related field
- Working experience of kitchen appliances
- Own car and license

## Sales Executive 1 position

- Male or female, aged over 25 years
- High vocational certificate or higher
- Working experience of kitchen appliances
- Computer skills

## Chief Technician 1 position

- Male, aged over 30 years
- Bachelor's degree in related field
- Working experience of kitchen appliances

All positions require a good command of English. Experience in position applied for will be an advantage. All positions are based in Phuket.

Interested persons please reply by

Email: [fagorpkt@phuket.ksc.co.th](mailto:fagorpkt@phuket.ksc.co.th)

or Tel: 076-234695, 0-1809-1386 and Fax: 076-234240

## Silk Entertainment Limited

Silk Restaurant & Bar, a contemporary Thai Style restaurant on the top floor of The Plaza Surin, Phuket, is looking for dynamic and independent candidate for the following position.

### Marketing Coordinator

- Thai Female, Bachelor's Degree or higher in Marketing, Communication Arts or related field.
- At least 5 years' experience in Marketing, Advertising, Public Relations or related field. Knowledge of F&B industry, food and wine will be an advantage.
- Pleasant personality, good communication skills, having initiative, creativity, smart thinking & positive attitude. Good interpersonal, presentation & organization skills.
- Excellent command of English language, MS Office skills, Internet & others.
- Own transportation.

If interested, please send your resumé & recent photo to:  
General Manager 5/50 Moo 3, Cherngthalay, Thalang, Phuket 83110  
Tel: 66 (76) 271241 Mob: 66 (1) 2712471 Fax: 66 (76) 271242  
E-Mail: [quoka@phuket.ksc.co.th](mailto:quoka@phuket.ksc.co.th)



## PARADISE GROUP

Paradise Group - the Development, Management, Design & Restaurant company in the Surin Beach Area, Phuket - Seek a qualified and energetic person to fill the following position:

### OPERATOR / PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Female, aged between 22 years to 30 years. Bachelor's degree in a related field.
- Pleasant personality, service-minded with excellent communication skills.
- Excellent command and understanding of the English language.

If interested, please send your resumé and recent photo to:

CEO, 5/50 Moo 3, Cherng Talay, Thalang, Phuket 83110  
Tel: (076) 271241 Fax: (076) 271242.  
Email: [nsapple@loxinfo.co.th](mailto:nsapple@loxinfo.co.th)



One of Thailand's most exclusive Country Clubs, the award-winning Blue Canyon Country Club, is seeking suitably trained, business-proven Thai professionals to join its team. We are taking applications for the following positions:

### Assistant Front Office Manager Events Coordinator Accountant Executive Sales Executive

The positions are based in Phuket and require candidates who possess the following:

- Minimum experience in a related field
- Experience in the hospitality industry is a plus
- BA degree or higher
- Proficiency in written and spoken English
- Service-minded and results-driven attitude
- Computer skills

For the Accountant, experience in one of the Big 4 accounting firms will be a plus

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted. Please send resumé and at least three references and a recent photo by 30 September 2004 to:

### Human Resources Manager

P.O. Box 18, Thalang Post Office, Phuket 83110  
Or e-mail: [hr@bluecanyonclub.com](mailto:hr@bluecanyonclub.com)  
Tel: 076-328088 Fax: 076-328087

### EMPLOYMENT

opportunities. Underwood Co Ltd specializes in designing, manufacturing and exporting unique decorative products to five-star resorts around the world. A company well known to the local and international markets, it is now looking for:

#### Factory Manager

(1 position)

- To oversee the upgrading and maintenance of the factory's efficiency, staff safety and discipline, purchasing, store and waste reduction.

#### Production Manager

(1 position)

- Able to increase efficiency by programming and coordinating production steps so jobs can be completed on time.

#### Project Coordinators

(2 positions)

- To search continuously for better suppliers, better quality products & services;  
- To obtain quotes and organize subcontracting/out-sourcing.

All applicants must: be fluent in spoken and written Thai/English; hold a university degree and have at least 3 years' experience in the field; be familiar with office tools. Computer and Internet experience will be an advantage. Please send your resumé by email or by fax to apply, or contact us for more information. Tel: 076-261104. Fax: 076-261103. Email: [info@underwood-phuket.com](mailto:info@underwood-phuket.com)

### SECRETARY

required for new events and technical productions company in Phuket.

Qualifications:

- Age 23 years plus, male or female;
- Excellent command of written & spoken English;
- Computer literate in MS Excel & Word;
- Willing to take responsibility and work under pressure;
- Pleasant with service-minded personality.

If interested, please send your resumé with recent photo to: 38/2 Moo 2 Srisoontorn Rd Cherng Talay, Thalang, Phuket 83110. Email: [workstation71@hotmail.com](mailto:workstation71@hotmail.com)

### WAITRESSES & BAR

supervisor. Luxury small boutique resort at Kata Beach requires attractive waitresses and a female bar supervisor. English speakers please. Tel: 076-284430. Email: [hr@aspasiaphuket.com](mailto:hr@aspasiaphuket.com)

### Employment Wanted

### COUPLE AVAILABLE

for management. Couple from Canada available to manage hotel, resort or bar. Over 30 years' experience in the hospitality industry. Fluent in English, Polish, Greek and Russian. References available on request. Please call or email with details. Tel: 001-12042570. Email: [edward@goralski.net](mailto:edward@goralski.net)

## The Phuket Gazette

The Phuket Gazette seeks to fill the following positions:

### I. ACCOUNTANT

- ▶ Thai, age at least 23
- ▶ Bachelor's degree or higher in Accounting
- ▶ Reasonable command of written and spoken English
- ▶ Car driver's license
- ▶ Accounting experience would be an advantage, but the Gazette is willing to provide training for a novice with good interpersonal skills and unquestioned honesty.

### II. IT Technical Support officer

Responsibilities:- The Technical Support officer will focus, at least initially, on hardware, system maintenance and networking issues (TCP/IP, LAN)

- ▶ Male or Female, Thai Nationality
- ▶ Diploma or degree in computer or related fields
- ▶ At least 2 years' experience in networking and hardware maintenance
- ▶ Good interpersonal skills
- ▶ Good command of spoken English would be an advantage.

Applications may be sent by letter or email to the Managing Director and should be accompanied by a resumé with full details of work experience.

The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd  
367/2 Yaowarat Rd, T. Taladyai, A. Muang, Phuket 83000  
Email: [info@phuketgazette.net](mailto:info@phuketgazette.net)

### URGENTLY REQUIRED

#### 1 GM (1 Position)

- Male aged between 35-45 years
- Fluent English
- 5 years' experience in F&B

#### 2 Sales Manager (1 Position)

- Male or female
- Fluent English
- 3 years' experience

#### 3 Sales Coordinator (1 Position)

- Male or female
- Fluent English
- 2 years' experience

If interested, please call:  
Human Resources Department  
Tel: 02 5834540-2

### SOFTWARE

developer wanted. Expat working in Phuket for a London-based software company requires a software developer. Must have experience of Borland Delphi and MS SQL Server. Knowledge of accounting systems an advantage. Must be fluent in English. For more information please contact Richard at Tel: 01-9011741. Email: [rffuller@hotmail.com](mailto:rffuller@hotmail.com)

### GUARD WANTED

in Kamala. Guard wanted for duties in Kamala. 300-350 baht a day. Please call for details and to apply. Tel: 076-279978.

Find more Recruitment Classified ads  
at  
[www.phuketgazette.net/](http://www.phuketgazette.net/)



# Tout, Trader & Trumpet

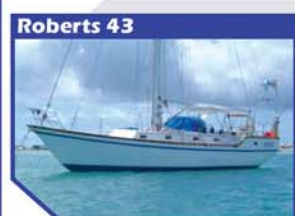
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## Bulletins

### 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.

Don't miss....

**Issues &  
Answers**

[phuketgazette.net/  
issuesanswers/index.asp](http://phuketgazette.net/issuesanswers/index.asp)

## Business Opportunities

### PARTNERSHIP

A German, working in a specialized banking business for over 30 years, internationally successful, etc, offers partnership for the right person. Terms: must have English-language ability and be computer-literate; 50% partnership for 25,000 euros. Start now without wasting time. Possible to operate in all parts of the world. Pls fax or email for more info. Tel: 001-1-320-2139083 (USA). Email: [passport@diplomats.com](mailto:passport@diplomats.com)

### KAMALA

Guesthouse in Kamala available on a long lease. Large, fully equipped bar with pool room, restaurant with Thai/European food kitchen. Also has 5 guest bedrooms and a store room. For more information or to view please email: [sheilaspies@thailand.com](mailto:sheilaspies@thailand.com)

### PRIME GUESTHOUSE

Small easy-to-manage "boutique" guesthouse with 5 apartments/rooms and a large bar. All rented. Very good profits. 50-year lease, First-class "farang" fit-out. A genuine business, all books correct, and for only 2 million baht. Please phone for more information. Tel: 01-924-1447.

### RESTAURANT & BAR

A 48-seat restaurant and bar available for rent on the main road to Nai Harn Beach. Facilities include office, pool table, 2 bamboo salas, garden and car park. Good contract. Please call for more details. Tel: 01-0910964.

### BEAUTY SALON

Fully equipped beauty salon and massage center in a 3-story shophouse in an excellent location. For rent at 35,000 baht a month plus water and electricity bills. For sale at 1.5 million baht. Contact for more information. Tel: 076-346413, 09-4707786. Email: [max@phuket-beautymassage.com](mailto:max@phuket-beautymassage.com)

**BUSINESS INVESTOR** required. Well-established Phuket-based business is looking for an investor/partner to help fund expansion of this rapidly growing business. No time wasters - genuine inquiries only please. Tel: 01-4125652.

### RESTAURANT

A profitable Thai restaurant - which includes laundry - in a good location in Cherno Talay is for sale. Please contact for more information. Tel: 07-8977249. Email: [tipriya@hotmail.com](mailto:tipriya@hotmail.com)

### CHALONG

Bungalow resort in Chalong available for sale on an 8-year lease for 1.5 million baht. Tel: 09-0385184.

### INVESTOR(S)

wanted. Small residential development in Phuket seeks investor(s) for up to 50% share or outright purchase. Project concept and master plan complete for a 2.5-rai development. Up to 10-rai available. For more details please email us at: [phuket\\_development@hotmail.com](mailto:phuket_development@hotmail.com)

### "BUY OR SELL A BUSINESS"

[www.sunbelt-phuket.com](http://www.sunbelt-phuket.com)

### VERY NICE BAR

& restaurant in Nai Harn for sale. Includes pool table. Tel: 01-0887971.

## Business Services

### VISA RUN TO RANONG

1,299 baht. Includes visa stamp fee, insurance, trip by boat and minibus (both in good condition), and lunch with soft drinks. Daily trip starts at 7 am at KFC at Tesco-Lotus supercenter. Please contact us for reservation. Tel: 076-289201 or 01-5352637. For further information, please visit our website: [www.phuketdir.com/expressvisaextension](http://www.phuketdir.com/expressvisaextension)

## Business Products & Services

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### DJ FOR PRIVATE PARTIES



DJ for hire for private parties. Europe's best Techno/Trance DJ on Phuket is ready for private bookings. For further details, please see our website at <http://www.dj-sounddiver.com>

## Computers

### COMPUTER PARTS

and accessories delivered free. New and used PCs and notebooks. Mobile repairs. Please call for help and full details. English Computer Man. Tel: 09-4735080.

### TOSHIBA LAPTOP

for sale. 6-month-old Toshiba P4 laptop for sale. 56GB, 768MB RAM, XP Office, CDRW/DVD, 2 USB ports, Wireless LAN 1 link, PC, SD, Media card slots and 30" floppy drive. 42,000 baht. Tel: 09-9943874.

## Personals

### WOMAN WITH NO PAST

36 years old, MBA-US, virgin, alone. Not necessary to talk or meet. You just send your profile with picture(s), an essay about yourself, plus two recommendation letters. Applicants are required to be very rich and must live permanently in a developed country. And for your profile to be considered, there is an application fee of US\$100. Email: [wimon\\_in\\_hollywood@yahoo.com](mailto:wimon_in_hollywood@yahoo.com)

### YOUNG LADY

wanted. Gentleman from Germany, 50, good looking, living in Phuket, wants to meet young lady for massage and Thai lessons one or two times a week. Picture appreciated. Please email: [bleimblemeister@web.de](mailto:bleimblemeister@web.de)

### THAI TEACHER

wanted. I am an Englishman living at Laguna, Cherno Talay, and am looking for someone who can teach me to speak Thai. I would like 2 or 3 lessons each week (1 hour) at my house. Email: [ianreadman@hotmail.com](mailto:ianreadman@hotmail.com)

### ALASKAN MAN

seeking woman. I am a 39-year-old man. I would like to find a nature-loving, petite (small but curvy) Thai girl for life partnership. Should be age 18 to 32, with no children. Email: [im\\_amorous@hotmail.com](mailto:im_amorous@hotmail.com)

*Riding a motorcycle? Please...*



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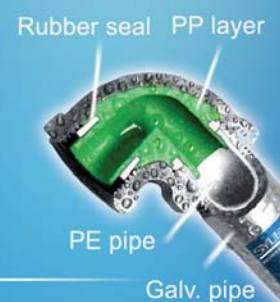
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