



The Phuket Gazette

END OF THE LINE: Oxygen bottles marked for destruction show evidence of the rough treatment they must be built to withstand. Volume 11 Issue 37 News Desk - Tel: 076-238353 September 11-17, 2004 Daily news at www.phuketgazette.net 20 Baht

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Tycoon ordered off disputed land

By Kamol Pirat

PHUKET: The Phuket Appeal Court on September 7 overturned the judgment of the Provincial Court and ordered businessman Boonkeng "Ko-Keng" Srisansuchart to vacate two plots of land, of 21 rai and 68 rai respectively, in the Panturat Hills next to the bypass road.

K. Boonkeng is a major property developer and the owner of Srisuchart Transportation.

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

The court heard that K. Boonkeng is neither a farmer nor poor. He owns four companies and more than 20 pieces of *Chanote*-titled land, and his estimated annual income, the court was told, is more than 10 million baht.

K. Boonkeng countered that the land had been in his family for generations before the *SorPorKor* land reform program started.

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

K. Boonkeng may apply within 30 days to the Supreme Court in an effort to get the Appeal Court decision reversed.

The Phuket Appeal Court is to consider eight further appeals by the PLRO against Pro-



UNDER SIEGE: Boonkeng Srisansuchart has become a focus of the central government's ongoing land probe.

vincial Court judgments on land ownership.

The Chief of the PLRO, Teerawut Tawornpattanavong, said that if the cases go to the Supreme Court and are upheld, it will rescind the *SorPorKor* status of the land and designate it for public recreational use.

The Appeal Court's expulsion order is the latest setback for K. Boonkeng, who has been a prime target of the central government's land probe in Phuket.

In July last year he was summoned for questioning by land investigators and his home was searched as part of the probe into corruption in the Provincial

Land Office. Investigators also inspected land in the Panturat Hills registered as belonging to him.

In June this year Justice Minister Pongthep Thepkanjana led a team that seized 76 rai in the same area from K. Boonkeng.

It was alleged that he had originally leased the land from the state and had later somehow acquired title to it.

In July this year his name cropped up again in connection with another investigation into allegedly false titles to state land, also in the Panturat Hills. The investigations continue.

ICEC may be built anywhere, says Gov

By Gategao Phetsawang

PHUKET CITY: Phuket Governor Udomsak Usawarangkura has said he does not care where the controversial 2.5-billion-baht International Convention and Exhibition Center (ICEC) is built, so long as it benefits Phuket.

"We have wasted a lot of time on this already. The ICEC can be built anywhere that will create growth in Phuket. We won't argue over it anymore," he said.

Previously, Gov Udomsak had backed Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's emphatic preference for the center to be built at Saphan Hin, as part of the proposed Ao Phuket Development Plan.

However, there has been considerable local opposition, with residents arguing that Phuket City does not have the infrastructure to cope with a deluge of delegates and the traffic they would generate.

Opponents have suggested the north of the island as a more appropriate location.

Speaking on September 6, Gov Udomsak said, "Building the ICEC at Ao Phuket may cause traffic jams but we could solve them. If we can reclaim land from the sea to create Ao Phuket, we can also can reclaim it to build a road to the ICEC."

He added that the budget for the scheme had already been presented to Deputy Prime Minister Suwat Lipatapanlop, for later discussion. However, the governor conceded that it may take some time to get the money needed for the project, and he implied that the private sector could contribute.

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Queer News

Women 2,
Burglar 0

CHALONG: On the night of September 4, an 18-year-old Austrian girl named Anna was asleep in her rented bungalow on Soi Sermsook. She had come to Phuket, like many young Europeans, to learn how to dive.

But when she awoke just before dawn during a heavy rain-fall, she saw a strange man in her room – and began to scream.

The intruder, described as a short, dark-skinned Thai man in his early 20s, stuck a *pha khao maa* (Thai checked loincloth) into her mouth and began punching her in the face.

Anna fought back and poked him in the eyes twice, then gouged at them until blood began to run from one eye socket. He gave up and fled.

The following night Pra-teep Montaldi, 47, was woken by noises from the kitchen of her home, near Anna's accommodation, at about 4 am. At first she thought it was her husband – until she realized he was sound asleep next to her.

Quietly she looked into the kitchen and saw a man searching for valuables. She tiptoed back into the bedroom and came back with her husband's .38 pistol.

She fired at the intruder, but missed. The thief beat a hasty retreat through the kitchen window, escaping with only a mobile phone for his efforts.

The description of the burglar and his modus operandi being similar in both cases, police believe the same man may have been involved in both abortive burglary attempts. No arrest has yet been made.

Source: *Siang Tai*

Anchalee proposes radical changes to local government

By Anongnat Sartpisut

PHUKET CITY: How should Phuket be governed? That was the question asked at a National Institute of Development Administration (Nida) seminar at the Phuket Merlin Hotel on September 2.

The seminar covered three main areas: the disadvantages of the current system of government in the province; what could replace it, and how residents would be likely to react to changes.

The President of Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (*OrBorJor*), Anchalee Vanich-Thepabutr, told those present that the idea of a special system of government had been proposed as long ago as 1992.

"Phuket is now in a position to take greater control of its own affairs," she said. "Nine tenths of the population has completed secondary education, and our economy is good.

"The problem now is that the national government doesn't support [the idea of] Phuket having a special system such as exists in Bangkok and Pattaya.

"I believe the *OrBorJor*, tambon administration organizations (*OrBorTor*) and municipalities should be replaced by a structure in which Phuket would be divided into five districts rather than the current three.

"There would be a 35-member council and a Governor. They would be separate, but both would be elected.

"I would also like to see the revenue system changed, so that either half stays in the province and half goes to the government, or 60% stays in the province and 40% goes to central government."

But Kamala *OrBorTor* Chief Administrative Officer Sajjapol Thongsom disagreed, arguing that lower levels of the administrative system had to be restructured before any changes were made at the top.

He said, "There is too much administration already. It should be reduced and simplified. We have the *OrBorTor* duplicating the work of the municipalities.

Dr Juree Vichit-Vadakan, Director of Research Projects at Nida's School of Public Administration, said Phuket *OrBorJor* had commissioned her organization to research the merits of a special system of local government for Phuket.

The school would use the results of the seminar to prepare a consultation document to be shown to interested parties in November.

The finished proposal is expected to be ready by December, when the *OrBorJor* will decide whether to submit it to central government or not.

Editorial: page 18



Huge crowds jamming the new Central Festival Phuket (CFP) shopping center were treated to fashion shows among other entertainment. Around 10,000 people are estimated to have passed through the doors within the first few hours of them opening on September 1. For more pictures see also pages 12 and 13.

Woman's body found in garbage dump

KAMALA: Police have not yet been able to identify a woman's body found at the Kamala garbage dump on September 2.

The Deputy Superintendent of Kathu Police Station, Pol Lt Col Chawalit Niemwadee, on September 6 said that the police went to the scene after receiving a call from local garbage collector Newin Sukprasert, who made

the gruesome discovery amid the garbage.

Col Chawalit said the woman, about 155 centimeters in height, is believed to have been dead for at least five days before her body was found.

"We don't yet know her identity or the cause of death," Col Chawalit told the *Gazette*.

However, he said the body

IN BRIEF

Clean-up drive

PHUKET: The Dive Operators' Club of Thailand (DOCT) has appealed for divers to join the annual Clean Up The World day on September 18. The DOCT drive will, as in years past, focus on collecting garbage from the seabed around Koh Racha Yai.

Those wishing to join in should contact one of the following dive operators: Dive Asia (Tel: 076-330598), Kon-Tiki (076-280366), Marine Project (076-294023), Santana (076-330360), Scandinavian Divers (076-294225) or Sea Bees (076-381765).

On land, the clean-up will focus on Kamala, Surin, Nai Harn, Nai Yang and Mai Khao Beaches and will be organized by Claire Lester, Community Action Service Coordinator at Dulwich International College (Tel: 076-238711 or email: clester@dulwich.ac.th).

Saudi tourist drowns

KAMALA: Phuket's rainy season surf has claimed another life, this time 27-year-old Saudi dentist Abdullah Alamri.

Pol Col Chawalit Niemwadee, Deputy Superintendent of Kathu Police Station, told the *Gazette* that Mr Alamri drowned off Laem Singh Beach on August 31, the same day that a French visitor died at Surin Beach.

His death brings to five the number of people who drowned in Phuket's waters in a five-day period.

Gambling tops crime

PHUKET: Gambling has once again topped the crime statistics in Phuket, with 139 arrests recorded between August 1 and 15.

The latest police figures show that other crimes included possession or use of illegal narcotics – with 62 arrests – and illegal immigration, with 21 arrested.

Thirty people were arrested on prostitution-related charges while six were held for illegal possession of weapons. There were 11 cases of embezzlement and six of fraud, six murders, three cases of attempted murder and 20 cases of bodily harm.

Police received 43 complaints of theft, five of vandalism, four of snatchings and handled one case of receiving stolen goods. In addition, 14 motorbikes were reported stolen.

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GO FOR IT: Around 208 young people competed in the first southern regional tournament for players of the board game Go, which took place at the Big C Supercenter on September 4 and 5.

Hike likely in City water rates in 2005

By Anongnat Sartpisut

PHUKET CITY: Phuket City residents can expect a rise in water rates in the next few years, following former mayor Phummisak Hongsyok's decision to begin charging for water the municipality pumps from his tin mines.

For years, K. Phummisak provided the water free of charge, but he told the *Gazette* last month that, from around May next year, he intends to charge about 2 baht a cubic meter.

Wiwat Puangkaew, Chief of Production at the Phuket City Water Supply Department, said that he expects a rise in user fees as a result. Even with such an increase, rates would remain lower than in other parts of the country, he added.

He said that demand for city water has risen sharply in recent years. The department now supplies almost 10 million cu m of water to users every year, up from just 4 million during the 1994-

1997 period. The steep rise in demand began in 1998, when it jumped to 7 million cu m.

"We used about 3 million cu m from K. Phummisak's tin mines last year. We expect that he will charge us 2 baht per cu m, so we will have to pay him about 6 million baht a year, probably starting in 2006."

"K. Phummisak's tin mines are not the city's only water sources," he explained. "We also pump water free from the municipal reservoir on Soi Paniang and from tin mines owned by Khunying Kanjana Na Ranong and the Hoey Seong Company.

"If necessary, we can also pump from the Bang Wad Reservoir, which mostly supplies the Provincial Water Supply Department (PWSD)," he said.

K. Wiwat said that the city currently charges users 4 baht per cu m. The amount of the increase resulting from K. Phummisak's decision will, he said, rest with the municipal government, which sets the rate.

Cool response to Pian's policy speech

By Gategao Phetsawang

PATONG: Policies outlined in a speech on September 7 by Patong Mayor Pian Keesin at his first municipality meeting received a cool reception from the dominant opposition party in the Patong Municipal Council.

K. Pian listed a number of items he categorized as "priority projects" for Patong.

These include: finishing the first stage of the waste water treatment plant and beginning its second phase; improving the municipality's garbage management; encouraging Patong residents to separate their garbage before collection; protecting and developing Patong's beaches and scenic beauty; burying power cables along Thaweewong Rd; installing tourist information kiosks and inaugurating a tourist call center; and promoting community activities.

Banyong Kepsup, municipality member and sister of MP Chalermprak Kepsup, read from a prepared statement after listening to K. Pian's speech, pointing out that the mayor had failed to mention his election promise to build a football field in Patong.

She said, "The land where the pitch was to have been built has now been rented to a private company, a company that K. Pian knows very well.

"I would like the pitch to be built, and will support the mayor in this if he will do so," she continued.

Another council member, Suthikarn Karnjana, suggested that K. Pian's first priority should be to address the waste water system in Patong, including the completion of the treatment plant.

He noted, "The first phase of the water treatment plant has been under construction for five years, and hold-ups in its completion are delaying the building of the nearby roads and watercourses.

"The mayor shouldn't consider phase two of the project until phase one is complete. Patong people have been waiting a long time [for the plant to be finished]," he concluded.

Fellow council member Prasop Prateppattana suggested that the municipality should collect fees from the three major tourism-related businesses - rented vehicles, beach chairs and

boats - that ply their respective trades along the beach.

He said "There are rented vehicles parked along Thaweewong Rd for around three kilometers. These operators are using land that belongs to Patong people. They should pay for the privilege."

After listening to the comments, K. Pian said that he was willing to consider all ideas and would discuss the issues raised with his administrative team.

Andaman 'cluster' income set to top B100bn

PHUKET CITY: Officials from the three "Andaman Cluster" provinces of Phuket, Phang Nga and Krabi met at the Thavorn Grand Hotel on September 6 to discuss progress on the cluster's strategic development plan, which has now been in effect for nine months.

Phuket Governor Udomsak Usawarangkura said, "The cluster's private sector is now generating 95 billion baht in tourism revenue annually and we believe there is room for further expansion. We don't even have a low season now. Hotel and resort

owners are very happy about this."

The Governor, who predicted private-sector tourism revenue will top 100 million baht next year, downplayed fears among industry leaders that the controversial "landbridge" oil pipeline project will harm tourism.

"I brought this matter up with PM Thaksin on his last visit, and he assured me that he will take care of it and ensure that the project and tourism are developed harmoniously.

"The landbridge project is

important too, because, with rising oil prices, energy is a serious concern."

The Governor was given 10 minutes to meet with the Prime Minister during the premier's one-hour stop at Phuket Airport on August 25.

Gov Udomsak said that new projects would continue to attract tourists to the cluster. These include a large new aquarium in Phuket; a marina in Chalong; the Asian Film Festival in December, and a planned international powerboat race next year. - Gategao Phetsawang

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The explosion involving an oxygen cylinder at a major resort in Patong last month, resulting in the death of a hotel engineer, has brought to the fore the dangers of the pressurized gas cylinders found across the island, in homes, restaurants, resorts, mechanics' garages, dive businesses, and even in the sidecars of mobile food vendors.

While the police investigation in the Patong explosion has yet to be completed, the blast has raised questions about the safety of pressurized gas and how it is used, transported and stored on the island.

Sompon Srichock, Chief of Factory Control of the Phuket Provincial Industry Office, is one of two officers responsible for ensuring that oxygen tanks in Phuket are safely refilled and regularly tested for safety.

He explained that while workplace inspections of hotels and any place registered as a "factory" are carried out annually by committees of district-level police and officials, the main place at which checks are performed to ensure that gas tanks are safe is at the refill depots.

"We have the authority to check only factories where oxygen tanks are refilled, but not any shops that buy or use oxygen tanks. We can inspect a factory at any time, without warning."

By law oxygen is not available through retailers; it must be bought direct from a supplier. In Phuket, only two companies sell and refill oxygen tanks: Hokhuad Co and Poonthavee Oxygen Partnership.

K. Sompon said, "We check each factory every two months, and we also ensure that oxygen tanks are checked every three years."

He explained that his office's records indicate that explosions happen because tanks or valves are substandard, or because nitrogen is put in an oxygen tank, or vice-versa – all fac-

Bottles of inflammable LPG and other gases are everywhere in Phuket. Yet the rules governing how they are handled are far from comprehensive, and the number of officials responsible for inspecting gas supply facilities is pitifully small. The *Gazette's* Sangkhae Leelanapaporn and Gategaeo Phetsawang examine the current state of affairs.



'I can't say that [testing] ensures gas cylinders are 100% safe because accidents can happen anytime.'

Tongrat Vannach, sole officer at the Phuket Energy Business Office, responsible for ensuring LPG bottles on Phuket are safe.

tors that greatly increase the risk of explosion.

K. Sompon said that one of the primary causes of explosions was people's lack of knowledge of how to use the tanks. He added that the government was looking into drafting new laws to improve safety, specifically concerning people who work with pressurized gas.

Other major factors in oxygen tank explosions, he said, were tanks not being marked clearly, and tanks and valves not being tested.

"Oxygen tanks must be checked every three years, and usually last about 20 years. But a tank's useable life greatly depends on its use. For example, tanks used in diving, on boats or stored or used near the beach, due to their exposure to saltwater and sea air, must be checked every year," he said.

Sutha Janyong, 43, manager of Hokhuad Co, says his company is serious about ensuring tanks and valves are tested, whether the customer wants the tanks tested or not. "We argue with customers almost every day because they don't want to pay to have their oxygen tanks tested. But we will not refill the tank without testing because it is not safe for our staff, for the factory and for the customers," he said.

"We test a tank by filling it to 3,500 pounds per square inch of pressure, instead of the normal 2,000 pounds, then submerge the tank in water and check for bubbles. It costs only 120 baht a test but it takes about a week. We have spare tanks for customers to borrow while we test their own tanks.

"But some customers try to avoid having their tanks tested and still want to use their old tanks because a new one costs

about 4,000 baht," K. Sutha added.

The possible consequences of using an untested tank are grave, he said. "For anyone within the blast radius of about five meters, the result of an explosion of a pressurized oxygen tank will be similar to being shot. Steel two-inches thick will rip right through [the victim's] body. On the bright side, there will be no fire and usually only one tank will explode," he said.

The biggest danger, K. Sutha explained, is people who have oil or petrol on their hands opening or closing valves. "Sometimes a technician has just a touch of oil on his hand and opens the valve, and that will be enough to cause an explosion," he said.

However, while tanks of oxygen and other pressurized industrial gases present danger to workers, the numbers of such bottles pale in comparison with those of the ubiquitous bottles of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) on the island.

Tongrat Vannach, the sole officer at the Phuket Energy Business Office, is responsible for ensuring that LPG bottles on Phuket are safe, and that LPG vendors adhere to safety regulations.

He makes regular spot checks on the two gas bottle refill depots on Phuket and on places that store a large number of gas bottles to ensure that the bottles are safely used, refilled and stored. All such places are required to register with his office.

He explained that LPG cylinders are tested before being sold, with the test date stamped on each cylinder. When cylinders reach five years old, they are returned to the manufacturers for

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The dance of life

By Dhirarat Boonkongaen

Pornpissane Girdcuven loves to dance. In addition to being a sociology lecturer at the Southern Business Administration College (SBAC) in Samkong, Phuket City, she is the dance instructor for the college's compulsory ballroom dancing course.

To mix a bit of business with pleasure, she now invites all dancers, experienced or not, to join her classes at the college, to learn seriously or just for the fun of treading the tiles.

"We started the compulsory classes for students in November - which the students enjoy a great deal. We finally started night and weekend classes for people from outside the college on July 15," she explains.

The dance sessions are held Monday to Friday, from 5:30 pm to 9 pm, and at weekends from 10 am until midday.

One-on-one lessons cost 150 baht an hour, while groups of six to 10 people can receive 10 hours of tuition at 300 baht

per person. Those who want to learn but who don't have partners can, for 400 baht, receive 10 hours of training with a partner provided.

Experienced dancers can come and enjoy the fun for just 50 baht an hour.

K. Pornpissane says that she hopes to increase the number of Phuket people involved in ballroom dancing. "It is popular among small groups of people in Phuket, but the Phuket Ballroom Dancing Club has fewer than 100 members," she says.

The classes at SBAC are not restricted to classic ballroom. She says, "We also teach jive, waltz, tango, salsa and other dances. No step is more difficult to learn than others; each dance is unique."

The big benefit of learning to dance, K. Pornpissane says, is that it sharpens the mind. "The eyes have to watch where we are dancing, the ears have to listen to the rhythm of the music, and the body has to move to the music," she says.

In addition to improving a person's coordination, K.

Pornpissane maintains there are many other benefits of learning ballroom dancing, including heightened awareness, a more developed sense of responsibility, increased confidence and a deeper understanding of social etiquette.

"Ballroom dancing teaches good principles in how to live together in a society, and [demonstrates] that people must play by the rules and be polite to each other," she says.

"Students also learn societal values, for example that a man should be polite and take care of ladies, especially his dancing partner. He should give her a lift to the class and drive or walk her home," she adds.

Other values to be learned are that people should be considerate of others. "For example," she says, "as the male leads his partner, he should be

'Well-trained ballroom dancers should be open-minded, relaxed people and can deal calmly with any situation.'



aware of where he and his partner are stepping. They should step carefully because they should appreciate that there are other couples on the dance floor."

K. Pornpissane adds that dancers learn not to be selfish, especially with their dance partners. "They need to learn how to be together properly; selfish people don't make good dancers."

K. Pornpissane says that ballroom dancing also improves self-confidence.

"I was once invited to a glamorous dinner where I met the then-Governor of Phuket. I was confident when I met him and I danced with him. My confidence gave me the chance to do something that not too many people would have done."

But most importantly, says K. Pornpissane, "Well-trained ballroom dancers should be open-minded, relaxed people and can deal calmly with any situation. They learn from the different situations.

"Dancers must be good listeners and have open minds, otherwise they will learn nothing."

For more information about the SBAC dance classes, call K. Pornpissane (Tel: 01-0814348), K. Tuk (Tel: 06-9053011) or the SBAC (Tel: 076-212496). The SBAC is located in Soi SBAC, opposite the Bangkok Phuket Hospital.



Ballroom dancing teaches good principles in how to live together in a society, and [demonstrates] that people must play by the rules and be polite to each other.'

Pornpissane Girdcuven

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*When the taste is perfect,
it can be the start of a friendship.*



Rich face SorPorKor squeeze

The Agriculture Ministry will require 224 large holders of land to prove their ownership and that their land is not meant for the poor under the SorPorKor land-reform program, otherwise the land will be seized by the state.

Deputy Agriculture Minister Newin Chidchob said he would summon the landholders, each of whom hold at least 500 rai of land, to a meeting on September 20. They will then be given three weeks to provide documents proving they owned the land in question before it was earmarked for SorPorKor use.

A survey by the Agricultural Land Reform Office (ALRO) found that the 224 holders claim ownership of 994 plots of land totaling 268,208 rai nationwide, including 16 holders with 125 plots in the south.

K. Newin added that ALRO had not yet submitted the list of holders to him, so he does not know whether local politicians or influential people are included.

Those failing to prove ownership will have their land seized by the state for redistribution to the poor. Those able to prove ownership will be granted official rights to their land, the minister said.

This is the first time the Thaksin government has indicated it would recognize the land rights of wealthy individuals who hold SorPorKor land, if they can prove prior ownership. Earlier, it insisted that the rich must unconditionally surrender any land in areas designated SorPorKor.

Uniformity: Education Minister Adisai Bodharamik will consider making all vocational and technical school students wear identical uniforms in order to tackle the problem of inter-school violence. The idea was to make all students look the same and thereby reduce student bawls, he said.

He also said vocational and technical schools should have personal lockers for students, so that they could change their clothes before going home.

Weerasak Wongsombat, Secretary General of the Office of Vocational Education Commission, said both plans would be put before the national conference of vocational school directors.

Clear and present danger: Thailand is seeking World Bank assistance to fund the clearing of land mines, said Foreign Minister Surakiart Sathirathai at the opening of a three-day land mine conference in Bangkok.

"So far, we have had encouraging and positive indications from the bank," he said.

Thailand has land mines in 27 provinces, mainly along its borders with Cambodia, Laos and Burma. Four military units are working to clear land mines,



Memberships in collegiate and provincial weightlifting clubs in Chiang Mai have more than doubled since the triumph of female Thai weightlifters at the Athens games.

Former national weightlifter Kamala Chaiyaporn said the Games had caused young people to become interested in the sport.

She is now a trainer with the Chiang Mai Education College's weightlifting club, which includes gold medal winner Pawina Thongsuk among its alumni.

but their work is hampered by a lack of funds.

This year, the government has allocated 32 million baht to clearing land mines, despite the fact that more than half a million Thais live in communities next to areas with mines. Last year 25 people were injured and four killed.

Most of the victims come from poor farming families.

Bog standard: Sanitation and Health Impact Assessment Division researcher Pariyada Chokwinyu reported that sanitation in public toilets nationwide in 2004 was rated as "average", and that many of the country's public toilets are unhygienic.

"Men's restrooms tend to be cleaner than the women's, but

they smell worse," she said.

Another problem, which K. Pariyada said could encourage the spread of diseases, was the poor maintenance of toilet waste pipes and tanks.

Meanwhile, Health Department Director General Dr Wichai Thienthavorn said problems with public toilets needed immediate attention in order to protect the health of the public – and prevent damage to the tourism industry.

Blending in: Police in the deep South were told not to wear their uniforms on duty after two innocent people were injured during an attack on officers in Yala on September 1.

Leaflets were distributed in the predominantly Muslim region warning local residents they

might get caught in the crossfire if they mingle with police and soldiers, who are increasingly being targeted by militants.

Pol Lt Col Sakorn Thongmuni, spokesman for Police Region 9, which covers the five southernmost provinces, said the leaflets were meant to get locals to stay away from police and thereby avoid danger.

Divide and conquer: Pollution Control Department Deputy Director Adisak Thongkhaimuk said failure to separate garbage and recycle was tantamount to squandering natural resources, adding that his department was now considering making garbage separation mandatory.

"Without proper separation, packaging waste such as

glass, paper, plastic, aluminum and metal is buried along with other rubbish. It should be recycled," he said.

"It costs the country about 3.4 billion baht to dispose of 3.4 million tons of packaging waste each year," he added.

K. Adisak said that his department had completed a draft proposal on recyclable and disposable packaging that could make it mandatory for homeowners nationwide to separate their refuse.

Cruellest cut: A schoolteacher in Chumphon province allegedly cut off part of a student's ear while cropping her hair in punishment for wearing it longer than permitted by school regulations.

The father of the 15-year-old school girl in Chumphon's Lang Suan district filed a complaint with police, accusing teacher Laweng Yangphakdi of reckless endangerment and causing serious injury for cutting off part of his daughter's ear.

Several witnesses said the teacher assembled some 70 students in the morning to inspect their hair.

He then concluded that the girl's hair was too long and, ignoring her protests, cropped it with a large pair of scissors.

The girl was then heard screaming in pain when part of her right ear was cut off. Doctors failed to reattach the severed part of the ear.

The local mayor said he would appoint a committee to investigate the incident.

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

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CANAL VILLAGE LAGUNA SHOPPING

PM 'approves' major projects

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra made a two-day stopover in Krabi on August 25 and 26 as part of his well-publicized tour of the South. At each stop, the Prime Minister took time to hear about local problems.

Provincial authorities were required to submit proposals for development and other projects for the PM's approval.

In Krabi, Governor Amnuay Sang-uannam submitted numerous proposals to the PM for his evaluation. Krabi encompasses such a large area, and Koh Lanta, the Phi Phi Islands and surrounding islands as well as Ao Nang, Klong Muang and, naturally, Krabi Town itself, featured in the projects submitted.

The entire area has seen tremendous growth in recent years, and there is a constant need to upgrade the infrastructure to keep pace with the rapid development of tourism.

Among the top priorities for the Governor is the construction of a four-lane highway from Phang Nga to Krabi. Also high on the list of proposals is the creation of a freshwater reservoir at Puan Saou Doad.

Another project presented was the laying of an underwater power cable from Krabi to Koh Jum and nearby islands, then on to the Phi Phi Islands.

A petition was made for a badly-needed upgrade for a ring road around Koh Lanta. Residents have to put up with some of the worst mud tracks, which can't really be classed as roads.

Then there is the problem of garbage on Koh Phi Phi Don, which, like most developed islands, is unable to dispose of its waste without degrading its environment.

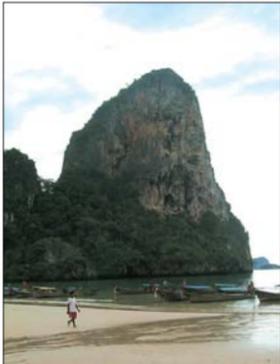
The islands come officially within the jurisdiction of the Ao Nang Tambon Administration Organization (*OrBorTor*). Consumer waste is supposed to be shipped from Phi Phi to a landfill in Krabi, although whether it ever reaches the landfill is another story. Even if it does, Phi Phi is still faced with the problem of disposing of its waste water.

The island's overdevelopment is well documented and the need for a wastewater treatment facility is obvious so the Governor has petitioned for the construction of treatment facilities both on Phi Phi Don and in Ao Nang.

According to sources, the four-lane highway from Phang Nga to Krabi and the reservoir projects were approved by the PM. The others were referred to the Cabinet for further study.

Additionally, the PM also okayed funds for construction of additional classrooms at the Muang School, after hearing complaints about overcrowding from teachers and students.

Handouts are always welcome but the local authorities hope the infrastructure proposals will be examined in the light of their importance to the region's overall development and to its growing importance as a major tourist destination in Thailand.



ACROSS THE BAY

By Gus Reynolds



ON SONG: Harvard University's Radcliffe Pitches perform at a benefit concert for The Krabi Province Council for the Disabled at the Sheraton Krabi Beach Resort. See 'Charity chant', below

School for rumors: I have been bombarded with rumors over the past few weeks about a new international school opening in Krabi. This issue is one of great importance to the ex-pat community; apart from the small Montessori school in Ao Nang – only for children aged three to six – there are few places where Western children can be educated.

One option is the bilingual program at the Anubaan Krabi School in town, but this is limited to Bor 1 to Bor 6.

Therefore any talk of an international school creates great excitement and, unfortunately, a lot of disinformation.

The McDonald College of Sydney, Australia, is looking to establish a school based around the performing arts and athletics in the Krabi area. The college has a solid reputation in Sydney and hopes to attract students not only from Thailand, but also from neighboring countries as well.

But this project is currently very much in the developmental stages and is years away from coming to fruition. So the rumors that the school is under construction or that it will open next year are, unfortunately, not true. As we hear more, we will keep you informed.

Marina mumbles: The latest rumor to hit the coconut telegraph in Ao Nang concerns the so-called Ao Nang Marina. People have reportedly seen it advertised in Bangkok, while

others have the location varying from Haad Nopparat Tara to Laem Phong to Talen.

We can't confirm or deny any of these stories, but common sense can eliminate some locations right away. There is currently no suitable deep water in Haad Nopparat Tara, while the extensive dredging and the need for a man-made harbor in the Laem Phong area north of the current gypsum factory make this location unlikely.

The area further north in Talen is a national park, under the protection of the Forestry Department, so the odds are that a commercial marina would not be allowed there.

In fact, the only project of which we are aware is the dredging being carried out in the vicinity of the new pier in Krabi Town by the Harbour Department.

The original plan – although things are still moving at snail's pace – was to dredge to six meters in depth and move south 21 km into deep water. Whether this is the source of the rumors, we don't know, but if there is another project underway, we'd like to hear about it.

Charity chant: On August 30, the Krabi Sheraton Beach Resort hosted a charity benefit for the Krabi Province Council for Dis-

abled People. Famous female *a cappella* group The Radcliffe Pitches provided the entertainment.

The singers, all students at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, were on an Asian tour that included Thailand, Malaysia, Taiwan and Japan.

The choir has existed for 25 years, producing five albums and entertaining presidents, dignitaries and benefit events worldwide.

The evening was in aid of the 2,100 disabled people in Krabi Province. Some 90% of these disabilities arise from road accidents, and there is a great need for funding for rehabilitation facilities.

Suwan Sittiwat, President of the Council for Disabled People and himself an accident victim, presided over the event. As usual for the Sheraton, the food and service were excellent.

The entire staff deserve a big hand for another job well done, and we also extend a warm welcome to new food and beverage manager Bernhard Langer.

...any talk of an international school creates great excitement and, unfortunately, a lot of disinformation.

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This week



QUEEN FOR A DAY: Miss Siam 2004 Sasiwan Phootrakornchai (wearing tiara) and attendants welcome residents of Phuket's home for the elderly to the 6th annual day trip to Laguna Phuket. The residents later enjoyed a slap-up meal at the Sheraton Grande Laguna Phuket.



Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra presents Bangkok Phuket Hospital Managing Director Dr Suraphong Lookhanumanjao with the Prime Minister's Export Award 2004 on August 23.



ABOVE: Helicam Aerial Photography team members, including Manager Anthony Clark (left) and Office Manager Katja Stockle Clark (front row, 3rd) and friends celebrate the opening of the company's new office in Patong.

BELOW: Executive Vice-President of Toyota Motor Co Thailand Paiboon Waiquamdee (wearing tie) and members of the press launch the new Toyota Hilux Vigo pickup truck in Bangkok recently.



ABOVE: (from left) Makro Operations Director Somchai Chaidech, Phuket Governor Udomsak Usawarangkura and his wife, K. Maneephun and Siam Makro President Suchada Ithijarakulrat celebrate the opening of the Phuket discount superstore.

BELOW: Prince of Songkhla University Phuket students and MCs for a day Chitpol Watcharapan (left) and Kosita Boonyakiat (right) with cheerleaders from Tessabaan Baan Samkong School at the recent Fun Festival and temple fair.





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THE NEW BOY IN

Gazette: *Joining an international school at director level is quite an achievement and an indication of your wealth of experience. Can you describe your path to Phuket?*

Raymond Berttula: Sure. In 1978, I left the US and started working for the Peace Corps in Honduras. Not only was it my first appointment overseas, but it was also the place where I met Cindy, now my wife. We stayed in Tegucigalpa for a couple of years – Cindy was teaching in an American school – before going back to the States.

I then picked up my teaching certificate before we returned to Honduras, to work in a school run by the Standard Fruit Company for its employees, in La Ceiba on the coast. Another couple of years on and we moved to Quito, Ecuador, to teach in the American school there.

A friend was running a school in Baranquilla on the north-eastern coast of Colombia and Cindy and I moved up there for three years.

Gazette: *Bit of a hot spot back then surely?*

RB: We were there at the height of the drug wars. A presidential candidate was machine-gunned to death at a rally; the drug cartels blew an airliner out of the sky between Bogota to Medellin; car bombs were going off all over the place.

There were bombings and shootings near our apartment all

the time. We arrived home one day – just after a car bombing – and found that all the windows in our fourth-story apartment had been blown out. Our dog was in the apartment and she was walking around amid all the broken glass with a look of “It wasn’t my fault” on her face!

I ended up back in the States in 1994 or so. There was a residential facility that took in at-risk and troubled teenage girls and the management decided to start up a school on site.

I got that up and running but after eight years, Cindy and I began to think about going overseas again. Another guy I had met during the process of setting up that school was the director of Baraka School in Kenya.

At-risk boys from Baltimore City in Maryland were taken to Kenya for two years of their education – in the US it was their seventh and eighth grades. The idea behind it was to prepare them academically and behaviorally for [US] high school, which for us starts at ninth grade.

Baraka had undergone quite a few management changes and I was brought in because I had both education and residential experience. The first year we were there – 2001 – our students were due to fly out of Baltimore on September 11.

Gazette: *An unfortunate coincidence.*

RB: That’s right. The students were quite literally on the way to the airport when the first plane hit the World Trade Center. And there we were, sitting in Kenya thinking, “Are we even going to have a school?” I would



The challenges of starting a new school face not only the fresh-faced pupil transferring from another institute, but also the teacher, who may be coming from overseas. That’s the situation for Raymond Berttula, the new director of Quality Schools International Phuket (QSI), on his first appointment in Southeast Asia. The *Gazette’s* Andy Johnstone spoke with Mr Berttula – recently arrived from Kenya – and asked him for his insights into the life of the peripatetic principal.

have understood if the parents had said “No, we aren’t sending our boys now”.

The board [in Baltimore] met with the parents and the parents’ attitude was that the situation would improve and that their kids needed to get over to Baraka.

We started the term a couple of weeks later than scheduled and with 21 kids. We were due to take in 23 boys but a couple of the parents became nervous at the prospect of sending their kids overseas.

Gazette: *Can you explain a little more about Baraka School and its programs?*

RB: Baraka School was about 25 kilometers from the nearest town. We had our own power, water and sewage systems. It was more like a village than anything else.

The school operated on a two-year cycle. We began with the 21 boys who came over for their seventh grade and then returned home for the summer vacation.

When September came round again, they returned for their eighth grade and we also took in another group of seventh-graders. So by September, we had around 45 kids going through the program.

The boys’ academic levels were going up phenomenally and we were getting their behavior together. Things were going along smoothly.

But then terrorists blew up a Mombassa hotel in November 2002, and then governments banned flights into Nairobi in May of last year, after threats to down an airliner were made.

That lasted for about two

months and then the US Embassy closed for a few days...

Gazette: *Hardly inspires confidence, does it?*

RB: (laughs) Exactly! Our primary funder, The Abel Foundation back in Baltimore, was no longer comfortable sending some 40-something at-risk kids to Kenya with these security issues.

At the end of the academic year in June 2003, the foundation decided to withdraw funding for the school. And that was the end of that. I went back to Kenya to lay off staff and close the books. In reality, I have spent the last year undoing the work of the previous two years.

Gazette: *Not a pleasant way to say goodbye to a country.*

RB: No. It was pretty difficult but there are two positive elements that have come out of it.

The first is that all of the kids who went through the two-year program and left the eighth-grade were accepted at schools for high academic achievers – called “magnet schools” – back in Baltimore.

Almost all of the students who completed only their seventh grade at Baraka had pretty well caught up and have successfully completed their eighth grade back home. The school may have gone but at least the kids have continued to be successful.

Gazette: *And that’s how you ended up here?*

RB: Pretty much so. My wife and I had wanted to work in south-east Asia in general and Thailand specifically for a long time. A friend we worked with in Ecuador is now the headmaster of a school in Kuala Lumpur and another is working in an international school in Singapore.

Gazette: *Which part of the States do you both hail from?*

RB: I’m originally from Minnesota and my wife is from Pittsburgh, although we have been out of the country for years now. We went back to the US after I did my Peace Corps stint, for my

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SCHOOL

teaching certificate to add to my degree in forestry.

Anyway, we went back for another few years and left Minneapolis in about 1984.

It's cold there, I mean *bitterly* cold! We said, "That's it. From now on we are going to live south of the Mason-Dixon Line. We're done with cold weather!"

Gazette: *Little chance of that in Phuket before the next ice age.*

RB: Our experience in Honduras has been good preparation for the heat and humidity here and for the the tropical rainfall. Over there, you could almost set your watch by it. Bang! Down it comes like turning on a tap. An hour later and bang, it's off again.

The only drawback here – and I speak with the experience of having been here for all of a few weeks – is the weather. The part of Kenya we were in also had a rainy season, two in fact: the long rains and – you've guessed it – the short rains.

But outside of those periods, June to November, it was cloudless. We'd wake up and say, "Oh, another perfect day!"

Gazette: *Phuket is a very multicultural place, a school a microcosm of that. How do you deal with these differences?*

RB: Good point. QSI Phuket has students of around 16 different nationalities enrolled and many of them have a Thai parent. We have Norwegian kids, Koreans, Swiss, British, Americans, French and more besides. It's a pretty good mix here.

We have to be sensitive to their different needs, keep an open mind and be flexible. Making accommodations wherever possible is vital. You have to play on the strengths of recognizing the diversity.

We try to have "international days" where everyone brings in food traditional to their culture or home country. It's like a mini-United Nations – for all its strengths and weaknesses – and a lot of the kids come out of an international school with an appreciation of other cultures.

I have only rarely found it to be a problem in terms of causing conflict, although it is hard sometimes.

Gazette: *Can children in such a multicultural environment "lose" their cultural identity?*

RB: It's a possibility but they wouldn't lose it entirely. For example, a Thai child coming to this school is not going to forget that he is Thai, but he is going to learn other ways of thinking and viewing the world that may or may not be completely compatible with what he thought before.

Whether that's a good or a bad thing depends on your point of view. Very rarely have I seen it as negative thing.

Generally, I have seen children develop an ability to deal with a lot of different people. Taking Phuket as an example, someone who can "swim" through all the cultures here will probably have an advantage.

We all enter an international community with a certain amount of cultural baggage. Over the years, some of that baggage – for good or ill – is no longer there.

Gazette: *How did being educated in '60s America affect you?*

RB: It was a time of real change and the questioning of authority and what we – as a nation – were doing.

An interesting thing is that ideas and attitudes that back then were considered liberal are now thought to be conservative.

Even conservatives in the States now see nothing strange in – for example – a woman getting a college education or achieving high office. In the '60s, that wasn't so. I guess it set me up and sent me out into the world.

I recall Kennedy and the Peace Corps, although I was pretty young when that started. I remember vividly the return of the first volunteers in 1963 or so. I thought, "Hey, that looks interesting," and a few years later, I was out there doing it.

And I've been overseas ever since!

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Thailand TRAVELER

By Bill Owen

After a few relaxing days in Khao Sok, we decide to explore some of the more isolated areas of Phang Nga province. We pore over some guide books and set off to experience the waters of the Chieowlan reservoir, an easy 45-minute drive to the north east.

The first part of the drive through the Sok valley is spectacular, with the road winding through the high limestone outcrops on either side. After passing some small villages and settlements, the terrain flattens out and we arrive at the small market town of Takhun, where a signpost directs us left to the Rachaprapa dam, the departure point for exploring the expansive waters of Chieowlan.

The entrance to this beautifully scenic area is about 15 kilometers north of the town. High in the hills, the lake stretches far into the distance, disappearing from view – it is nearly the size of Phuket.

The dam itself was constructed in the early 1990s by the Electricity Generating Board of Thailand and the lake behind it is now a wonderful place to explore.

Our escort for the next few days is Somsak, who runs a restaurant at the viewpoint overlooking the lake. He is kind enough to allow us to join his longtail boat for a few hours, so we set off with our four kids and some newfound fisherman friends.

Although this is the monsoon season, the weather is perfect, with glorious blue skies as we drift across the still waters of the dam.

Suddenly there is a cry to stop the engines – the surface of the water about 50 meters away is boiling. A large shoal of



Above, canoes are a great way to get around on the mirror-smooth waters. Below: accommodation is basic, the scenery spectacular.



A dam fine way to get far away

fish has broken surface and the rods are out, lines are cast and suddenly there is silence apart from the sound of reels being wound.

“Geng maak,” comes a shout, and we see a fish break the surface – the first catch of

many that day – a smallish but very strong *Chadoll*, a magnificent-looking freshwater fish.

We head north across the lake for another hour or so, continuing to fish until we eventually arrive at a “resort” of floating raft houses just before dark.

Accommodation on the lake is very basic indeed – and certainly not for the faint-hearted. These are basic mosquito-netted bamboo rooms, no running water, and very basic toilet facilities

which are accessible only via rickety walkways.

But the location is truly stunning, with the lake surrounded by huge limestone outcrops rising vertically out of the water.

Nature, peace and tranquility are the main features here, especially in the late afternoon and early evening as the sun sets. This is the ideal time to take a canoe and slowly paddle off to explore this magical location.

Later, when we return to the raft house, Somsak is preparing the fish we had caught earlier and there is a delicious aroma of deep-fried fish and garlic in the air.

Dinner is served on the bamboo deck in front of the raft houses as we watch the moon rise. This is truly a place to hide away.

Getting there: By car, drive directly north to Takuapa and take the main highway 401 through Khao Sok in the direction of Surat Thani until you reach Takhun. There you will see a sign for the Rachaprapa dam on the left. The main departure point is easily found about 15km along this well signed and paved road.

Buses depart hourly from Phuket City to Takuapa, and from there local buses are available to take you on to Takhun, from where you need to negotiate a rate with local tuk-tuk drivers to take you to the dam.

Getting around: You can hire a longtail boat to cross the reservoir, with a one-way trip costing from 1,500 baht. Alternatively, rates can also be negotiated for the boat trip and an overnight stay for about 2,500 baht. There is also a fee of 200 baht per person (20 baht for Thais or foreign residents) to enter the national park.

Accommodation: There are a number of basic raft-house resorts on the lake, but also worth considering are the more comfortable rooms at the Toen Teay ranger station in the center of the lake. The raft houses cost about 350 baht a night, depending on room type.

Bill Owen, who has lived in Phuket and worked in the island's travel industry for more than 15 years, is General Manager of Oriental Leisure Co Ltd, a leading event management company in Phuket. He can be contacted by email at: owen_b@hotmail.com. Website www.oriental-events.com

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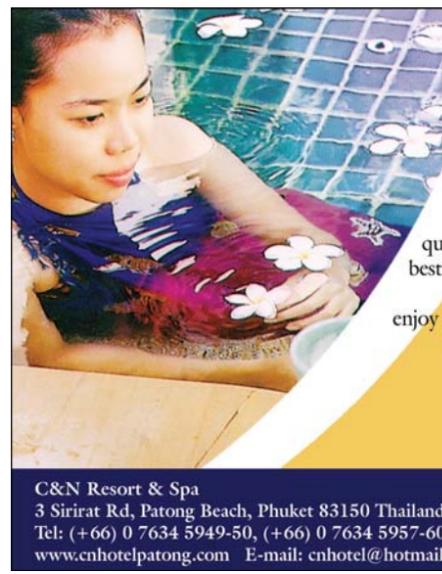
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Festival of bright color



The opening of the Central Festival Phuket mall on the bypass road was a feast for the senses for the 10,000 or so people who went along on the opening day. The Gazette's shooters were out in force to snap some pictures of the huge variety of goods and services on offer.

Left: Thiwaphan Somwong (right), Manager of the Svenson of London hair clinic.



Pritsanu Thongsri, Area Manager of Oishi Ramen, congratulates Thanaseth Kulweraaree, President of the Andaman Group, Oishi franchise-holder in Phuket.



Above: Arth Prakhunhungsit (right), Franchise Marketing Manager of The Pizza Company, presents a congratulatory bouquet to Kongsak Chunharatchapan (left), General Manager (Marketing) of Pizza Co's new outlet at Central Festival, and his father, John Lloyd.



Left, Chuchok Suandee, General Manager (Operation) of the Andaman Group (right) serves a customer at the In & Out, The Bakery CafE.



Above: Staff from The Books, which will stock the Gazette Guide and carry the newspaper every week.



Nuanphan Jayanama, Marketing Manager of Watson's, picks up some essential reading matter.



Above: Duangsamorn Charoenbunditchai, Operation Manager, shows off the Mr P range of figurines available at Propaganda Co.



Left: Staff from Fant-Asia check the temperature in one of the company's spa baths.

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WHAT? ME WORRY?

Having just returned from perhaps too long a vacation in Western civilization, I find myself getting very irritated with some local rituals that I previously just accepted.

For example, ever wonder why, when you drive into Tesco-Lotus, you have to take an orange plastic card from the security guard, which you are supposed to carry on your person, then return when you leave?

Well, I decided to take my orange card and ask the management what the hell it is for. "Security," I was told. "What do you mean 'security'?" I asked? "How is this little orange plastic card supposed to protect me or my car?"

Apparently, no one had ever asked this question before, as a number of managers gathered and asked each other the same thing. Eventually I was told the cards are counted and used to determine the number of customers who frequent the store each day. Now we know.

And then I got irritated later in the day when stuck at the Two Heroines Monument during the afternoon rush hour. All hell was breaking loose, with buses, *songthaew*, motorbikes and other commuters all trying to get around Phuket's most sacred circle at once. No wonder the two ladies have their swords drawn.

When I finally did get to the main road, I stopped at the clown police box, built courtesy of Phuket Fantasea, stuck my head round the door and disturbed the traffic policemen hypnotized by the television.

"There's a *problem* outside," I said. They gave me that look that means "crazy *farang*" and I realized I was acting like a crazy *farang* and I had better settle down or get the next plane back to the other side of the world.

So now I sit amid the traffic chaos at the Thai Naan intersection and tell myself I'm lucky to live in Thailand and I should re-adopt a *mai pen rai* attitude and appreciate patience as one of the Thais' greatest charms.

Kaboom-ching: Never mind all that; I'm glad to be back on Phuket as there are so many wonderful people and events, making this the most fun place I know.

Next Wednesday (September 15) at the Boat Lagoon's highly fashionable Watermark, Punchline Comedy's Managing Director John Moorhead presents three of London's top comedians,

who have been keeping audiences laughing from Hong Kong to Tokyo, from Bangkok to Beijing.

John took the first Western comedian to China and for that alone he deserves at least a knighthood. Helping the mainland Chinese laugh is good for all mankind.

John opened the Punchline Comedy Club in London and he has a talent for attracting hip, funny new talent. Now he has brought three more comedians to Phuket, following the sellout suc-

Right: Salvatore Cossu shows off the fruit of his labor (and his grandmother's special beer-reinforced recipe).



Below: A cheery wave from Julie Hirunchai, but the Good Earth Bookshop is gone.



The dinner, which costs 850 baht, will be served only between 6 pm and 8 pm, while the comedic main event will start promptly at 9 pm.

"We'd like to have four Punchline Comedy nights a year with a distinctive dinner," says Stuart.

Tickets are still available and can be booked by calling the Watermark at Tel: 076-239730.

Slice of life: Salvatore Cossu has opened seven restaurants in his 16 years on Phuket, including Casanova in Patong and his now-famous Salvatore's in Phuket City. Some months ago, he told me he was going to transform the old Bata shoe store next door into a pizzeria.

"Salvatore," I said, "you already work too hard. Why open another restaurant?"

"There's no good pizza in Phuket Town," he replied.

Well, that will all change from next Thursday evening, September 16, when Salvatore opens his pizzeria. To mark the opening, Salvatore has issued an open invitation to anyone who enjoys authentic pizza to join him for free samples of his 28 pizzas. You are in for a great treat.

It was Salvatore's grandmother who taught him, back in his native Sardinia, to make pizza dough, and to add beer to "excite" the yeast. After finishing

hotel management school in Switzerland, the young Salvatore took his grandmother's recipes and opened three popular pizzerias in Amsterdam and The Hague.

But while on holiday in Thailand, he was so captivated by the beauty of Phuket he decided to bring his own style of Italian cuisine to the island, eventually becoming one of the most successful local restaurateurs.

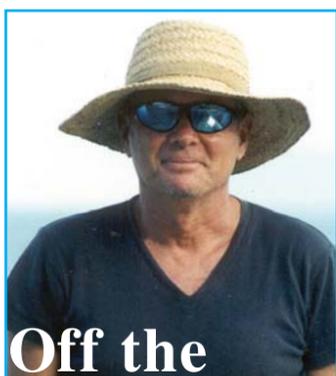
Book her now: It's the end of an era for those devoted to books and intelligent conversation. Julie Hirunchai, whose Good Earth Bookstore has been a feature at the heart of Kata Beach for 12 years, has been forced to close the shop after the landlord doubled her rent.

Apparently, the girlie bars nearby pay more per square meter than Julie did, so she has boxed up her thousands of books and her collection of art from around the region, and put it all in storage while awaiting an offer from a landlord who appreciates literature and an educated clientele.

The Good Earth Bookstore has hosted literary readings and book launches and has been the de facto home of those interested in good conversation and those with a taste for Julie's home spun wisdom and fresh-baked pastries.

Her informal Friday night Open House was the highlight of many local residents' social calendars.

Any landlord wanting a popular business and a great lady in their development should call Julie at 09-8682639.



Off the WALL

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KIDS

THE FUN PAGE FOR ALL THE FAMILY



Get your brain in gear with The Monster Quiz

Spot the Difference



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



Brain Buster!!

Q. You have an ostrich egg and you have been told that in order to cook it just right, you should boil it for 15 minutes. You have two traditional hourglass-type egg timers. In timer A, the sand takes 7 minutes to run through. In timer B it takes 11 minutes. How can you time the egg exactly?

A. Start both timers together. When Timer A is finished, turn it over immediately. It will then run for 4 minutes before timer B finishes. Turn it over again at that point and it will measure a further 4 minutes. 7+4+4 equals 15 minutes.

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S MONSTER QUIZ

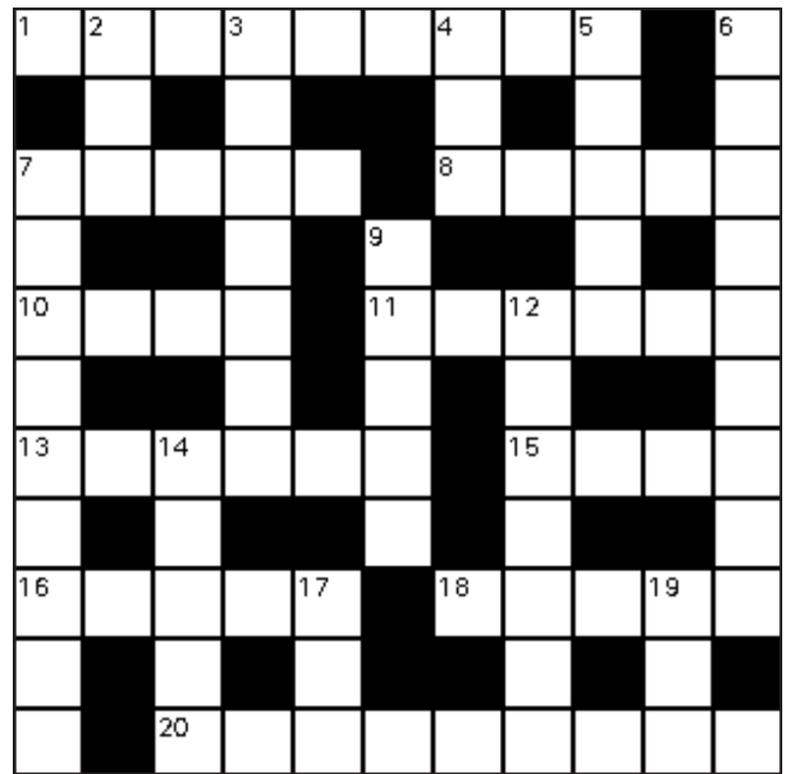
1. Crocus; 2. Scotland (different heights of hills); 3. An Athenian lawmaker; 4. Kentwood, Louisiana, December 2, 1981; 5. In the ear; 6. Michelangelo Buonarroti; 7. Zloty; 8. Q and Z; 9. Ants; 10. Belarus; 11. Television; 12. Orlando Bloom; 13. The face; 14. Lyndon B Johnson; 15. Ag; 16. France; 17. Frequency Modulation; 18. Mel Blanc; 19. Five; 20. 100.

1. *And Death Shall Have No Dominion* was written by which poet?
 2. What is spelunking?
 3. In which city is Las Ramblas?
 4. Who said, "The first casualty when war comes is the truth"?
 5. During the Spanish Civil War, Guernica achieved notoriety for what?
 6. Who painted the most famous picture of the devastation?
 7. Which element has the symbol Sr and the atomic number 38?
 8. Bora, Khamsin and Ghibli are all types of what?
 9. The lari is the currency of which country?
 10. When and where was actor Johnny Depp born?
 11. In what year did the gunfight at the OK Corral take place?
 12. In telecommunications terminology what do the letters ISDN stand for?
 13. What did Dr John Pemberton invent in his backyard in 1886?
 14. As is illustrated on its logo, what French word is the food product Marmite named after?
 15. Which country sends the most letters abroad?
 16. In which city is the headquarters of the International Monetary Fund?
 17. What do you call a person who makes women's hats?
 18. In what year did Robbie Williams leave the band Take That?
 19. Who played Captain Bligh in the 1984 movie *The Bounty*?
 20. Roughly how long was the reign of the dinosaurs?
- Answers next week*

Never a Cross Word!

Across

1. Roundheads' opponents.
7. Collection of water vapor in the air.
8. Mexican friend.
10. Borrowed money.
11. Islands between Lisbon and New York.
13. Japanese miniature tree.
15. Mongolian desert.
16. Eskimo home.
18. Boxer's weapons.
20. He may be from Oslo.



Down

2. Become ill.
 3. Ex-student.
 4. Significant period of time.
 5. Traveler over snow or water.
 6. Science of sound.
 7. Famous person.
 9. Capital of France.
 12. Continuing.
 14. Stocking material.
 17. Rower's implement
 19. Beverage from leaves.
- Solution next week.*

Solution to last week's Crossword



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Ah – the delights of a real writer

After reviewing the rather juvenile *The Da Vinci Code* and *The Rule of Four*, it was so nice to return to the hands of a grown-up novelist. Anne Tyler is 62 and has written 15 novels.

"Tyler is not merely good, she is wickedly good," John Updike famously wrote of her. A back cover blurb for her latest novel, *Back When We Were Grownups* (Chatto & Windus, London, 2001, 274pp) proclaims that both Roddy Doyle (*Paddy Clark Ha Ha Ha*) and Nick Hornby (*About a Boy*) consider her "the greatest living novelist writing in English".

This isn't that far off the mark and I can see why these two novelists would idolize Anne Tyler: they write the same kind of novels as she does: quirky, character-driven, with a strong moral center.

At the very least, Anne Tyler is an American national treasure, akin in her relentless regional focus to William Faulk-

ner, for whom the moral universe was pared down to a single fictional county in Mississippi. Anne Tyler's own Yoknapatawpha county is Baltimore, Maryland, the scene of almost all her novels.

Back When We Were Grownups opens this way, introducing Rebecca Davitch:

"Once upon a time, there was a woman who discovered she had turned into the wrong person.

"She was fifty-three years old by then – a grandmother. Wide and soft and dimpled, with two short wings of dry, fair hair flaring almost horizontally from a center part. Laugh lines at the corners of her eyes. A loose and colorful style of dress edging dangerously close to Bag Lady."

Rebecca's epiphany comes during a family picnic on the North Fork River in Baltimore County, when she looks around her and asks herself: who are these people? There's her daughter Min Foo (Minerva but nicknamed for her Chinese looks) with

two children from two different husbands and pregnant now by her third, and three stepdaughters: Patch, Bidy and NoNo – a physical education teacher, a chef and a florist.

The two eldest are married with children, while NoNo (no explanation for the name) is newly engaged to Barry, a lawyer who has a brilliant but very odd 12-year-old son, Peter. There is also her bachelor brother-in-law Zeb, and Poppy, the family matriarch who is pushing 100.

Rebecca is at the center of the Davitch family and has been since her husband died in a car crash after six years of marriage, leaving her to raise his three stepdaughters from a previous marriage to a ditzy actress.

He also left Rebecca his business: a beautiful old Baltimore row-house called "Open Arms", which is hired out as a venue for

parties. Rebecca acts as hostess, Bidy provides the food and NoNo the flowers. Rebecca also organizes all family holidays and celebrations, always reciting a poem at each.

And suddenly she thinks: why am I here? All because of a chance meeting at an Open Arms wedding party with a 33-year-old divorcee named Joe Davitch. She dropped out of college to marry him, abandoning her "engaged to be engaged" childhood sweetheart, Will Allenby.

Rebecca's sense of alienation intensifies when she dreams that she is on a train with her son, "Never mind that she had no son. Never mind that if she had, he would have been a grown man by now.

"In her dream, she took it for granted that this tall, quiet, gawky young boy belonged to her

without question. . . And most familiar of all was some quality in his expression, something hopeful and wistful, some sense he felt a little bit outside of things. Didn't she know that feeling!"

Grasping for an alternative life, she looks up Will Allenby, who turns out to be a physics professor at the college they'd both attended more than three decades ago. He's living alone in an apartment, divorced from his former student, the despised and ignored father of a punk teenage daughter.

Tyler makes a rich comedy out of the abortive romance of Rebecca and Will.

Rebecca pulls away from the family and then comes back, in the end realizing that the son of her dreams was really Peter, her daughter's stepson, who she had cannily coaxed out of his shell.

The final chapter – Poppy's 100th birthday party – is a thunderous celebration of family life.



Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt

Cities of Brotherly Broadband

Back in the 1920s, actor W.C. Fields remarked, "I once spent a year in Philadelphia. I think it was on a Sunday." The folks in Philadelphia, the City of Brotherly Love, have spent more than three quarters of a century living with that image of slowness but now finally, maybe, they've found a way of rebutting that infamous assault on their dignity.

The City of Philadelphia ap-

pears poised to be the first large city in the world with 100% wireless broadband Internet coverage. If the City Mayor has his way, Philadelphia will spend about US\$10 million (roughly 400 million baht) and, a year from now, every person in Philadelphia will have free, unlimited, very fast Internet access.

Kids in their classrooms, merchants in their shops, sports fans in their seats, realtors in their

cars, doctors in their offices, medics in ambulances, consumers in pajamas – no matter who you are, no matter what you do, if you're in Philadelphia and you have a wireless Internet card, you're connected 24/7. Incredible.

If Philadelphia can do it, why can't Phuket? Philadelphia spans half the area of the island of Phuket, but contains roughly three times as many people. The terrain is quite different, of course. Philadelphia's elevation varies with hills in the 100-to-150-meter range, while Phuket's tallest "mountain" stands at 530 meters. But Phuket encompasses vast unoccupied areas that don't really need wireless broadband, and costs here are tiny in comparison with those in the US. In addition, Philadelphia's inner city is a concrete jungle, compared with which Phuket City is like open parkland, where installation is a walk in the, er, park.

Using Tropos (www.tropos.com) or a competing technology to set up a large "hot zone" – as opposed to a small hotspot – is as easy as hanging boxes from phone poles. Imagine what would happen if Phuket had a wireless base station on every telephone

pole, with 8Mbps Internet access (four times faster than the fastest ADSL line currently available) free for residents, tourists or anyone on a yacht within a kilometer of shore.

Phuket still wouldn't hold an IT candle to Hong Kong, where essentially every home can get an 8Mbps line. But if fast wireless Internet services were ubiquitous, nearly free and reliable, it's entirely conceivable that we could pull even with our competitors – er, neighbors – by leap-frogging to wireless 802.11g technology while the folks in Hong Kong, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur are still sweating in the sewers, laying cables.

Sound far-fetched? Consider Cleveland. In the middle of the American Rust Belt, Case Western Reserve University got together with a bunch of educational institutions, hospitals, government groups and high-tech companies to form OneCleveland.

If you work for one of those companies, chances are good you can get unlimited wireless access at 1 Gbps (gigabits per second) – that's 1,000Mbps.

In a related development, the City of Cleveland has deployed 4,000 wireless base stations in key areas around the city, where anybody with a wireless card can go online.

The list of cities in the US offering free wireless Internet access grows every week. Sometimes a city or local govern-

ment offers the service – typically in a small area, such as a downtown traffic corridor, or a park, or a bunch of public buildings – but occasionally renegade residents have set up co-op free networks of their own.

You can find large, free wireless areas in New York; Kansas City; Austin, Texas; Long Beach, California; Milwaukee; Richmond, Virginia; and the daddy of them all, Seattle Wireless (www.seattlewireless.net), among many others.

I'm gathering information about various wireless hotspots in Phuket. As best I can tell, Starbucks in Patong was the first commercial installation on the island (using KSC), and Don's Mall appears to be the first free-for-customers hotspot (using iPSTAR).

I have a list of all the TOT-sponsored hotspots (Dusit Laguna, Novotel, Kata Beach Hotel, Tiny's Coffee Shop, Coffee Plus/Star Mart, Phuket Airport, and Bangkok Phuket Hospital). And I know about the new free hotspot at Laguna Phuket Canal Village.

I'll be writing a comprehensive guide to hotspots in Phuket soon. If you know of any other publicly available hotspots on the island – or any hotels that provide wireless access to their guests – please drop me a line.

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

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The Monkey gets the bullet

Sign of the times: yet another go-go bar has called it a day. The legend that was TJ's Monkey Ba is no more, leaving Toon Town with fewer than 10 bona fide go-gos.



By Konrad Stalin

TJ's owner, Terry, is a savvy operator who has known nothing but success in his long time in Thailand. He started off here longer ago than anyone can remember, as the DJ at the Marine disco, Pattaya.

TJ's was one of the few bars in Toon Town that had a genuine go-go license, but Terry has sound reasons for getting out of the go-go business.

He explained, "I see the government's actions over the past few years as an indication that they really are serious about ridding the kingdom of this type of entertainment.

"The laws they have passed to govern the operation of go-gos have now rendered them almost impossible to operate profitably and not a lot of fun, frankly. Quitting while I'm ahead seems to be the sensible option. It's either that or move to Cambodia, which is rocking as a result of the Thai crackdown."

Terry will re-launch the venue as a pub, which should be open by the time this article is published. The pub will be

called The Winchester and as it's Terry who is behind it, it should be a top spot.

Heroic departure: Heroes sports bar on what remains of Soi Sea Pearl has changed hands and

Daz has set sail for Blighty; he had a leaving do that lasted at least a week.

The island will miss his presence, but he reassures me the new owners are top lads, too.

Up t'hill: Had a friend over for the whole of last month and, on my recommendation, he stayed at the Baan Yin Dee in Kata-Karon, up the hill past the Arcadia. He was as delighted with the place as my other friends who have stayed there.

It's not in the bargain basement league, but it has facilities that exceed what you would expect for the price and the rooms are simply stunning.

Hurry, curry: Rumour has it that a proper British curry house is under construction in Cherng Talay, complete with a chef from one the best curry houses in Thailand. More next month...

Konrad Stalin may be reached at konradstalin@hotmail.com.

Sometimes going to court may be your only option

Mr L owned a quality home in Thailand which he rented out for a substantial sum, taking several months' rent as a deposit. However, short after, the tenant disputed some contractual matters – which Mr L regarded as minor – and used the dispute as an excuse to stop paying rent.

Endless emails flew back and forth, along with threats from the tenant to take legal action, to tell tales to the Revenue Department and do other little things to make life hard for Mr L.

Mr L decided to sell the home. A prospective buyer, initially attracted, was wary about the purchase due to the problems with the sitting tenant.

Mr L was therefore eager to resolve the situation with the tenant, but found it impossible as their respective positions had become too entrenched.

He therefore decided to hire a lawyer to take legal action.

Official notices were sent to the tenant instituting proceedings to have the lease cancelled, and to force the tenant to leave the house and pay the overdue rent. When there was no response from the tenant, the case was filed in court.

The weekend before the court hearing both parties met once again in an attempt to settle the matter out of court. They



LAYING DOWN THE LAW
With Friedrich 'Sam' Fauma

were able to agree on most issues, but there was one sticking point: the tenant would offer nothing more than a "promise" to pay the outstanding rent.

Since the tenant had already signed a contract stipulating the rent payable, but had not honored it, Mr L felt that this "promise" – whether verbal or on paper – was not sufficient assurance. He decided to go ahead with the court action.

The court ruled that the tenant must sign an enforceable court agreement stating that he would pay the rent owed and move out of the house before a specified deadline. Both parties declared themselves satisfied, and their dispute ended.

Sometimes, when difficulties arise in property rentals, the only way to resolve them is to go to court.

There was one sticking point: the tenant would offer nothing more than a "promise" to pay the outstanding rent.

This column is compiled from the collective experience of the partners in the International Law Office, Phuket City. Tel: 076-222191-5. Fax: 076-222196. Email: interlaw@loxinfo.co.th

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An elected Governor for Phuket?

Thailand is a young democracy. It is, after all, only 13 years since the last military coup – and the ensuing bloodshed.

All democracies struggle along the path to establish true democracy – “rule by the people”. After eight years of rule by the Democrat Party, which worked to decentralize government as mandated by the new constitution, the pendulum has now swung firmly in the opposite direction.

Under the 1997 constitution, the central government is required to direct no less than 35% of its annual expenditure to *tambon* and provincial administrative organizations (*OrBorJor*). Currently, the figure is closer to 20% – and it isn't rising.

The failure to turn power over to local bodies is not just a fiscal matter. Talk of elected governors outside of Bangkok is rarely heard; indeed, appointed governors – who are now all “CEO governors” – have more power than before, not less.

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra was widely quoted when, in his speech on Constitution Day last year, he said, “Democracy is a good and beautiful thing but it is not the ultimate goal ... Democracy is just a tool ... the goal is to give people a good lifestyle, happiness and national progress.”

Clearly, giving people more power to vote for what they believe to be in their own interest does not come high on the Prime Minister's agenda.

So it seems that when Phuket *OrBorJor* President Anchalee Vanich-Thepabutr convened a seminar recently during which she called for Phuket to have an elected governor, she was wasting her breath.

This is a shame. Phuket has a greater impact on the country's economy than some provinces 10 times its size, yet it is still subject to the whims of the central government and of the bureaucrats Bangkok imposes upon it.

This is not to say that appointed governors don't try to do their best for Phuket. But they must first spend time learning about the province, its problems and its needs. They then need to formulate policies and stay long enough to see them through. With the departures of three governors in the past five years, this is not happening.

An elected governor would have the huge advantage of being a local person with far greater accountability to Phuket residents than any career bureaucrat.

Will it happen under a Thai Rak Thai (TRT) government? Given the Prime Minister's views on democracy, along with the TRT's disastrous showing in the *OrBorJor* election in March and more recently in the Bangkok gubernatorial poll, not a chance.

– The Editor

The dream of true democracy is fulfilled in Phuket, thanks to Cyber Paradise.

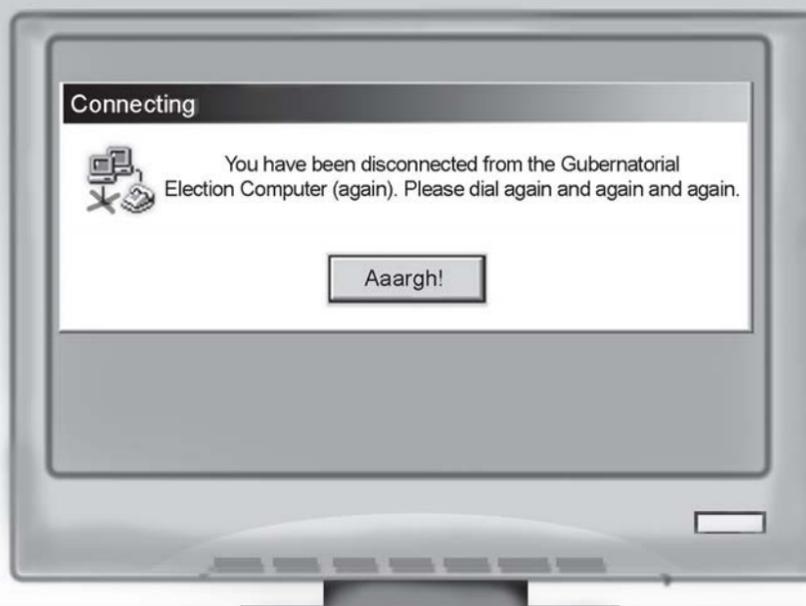


CHART.

Letters

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

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

Politicians are on the wrong track

At least two of Phuket's political leaders appear to be on the wrong page in the book again (*Gazette* August 28).

First, Anchalee Vanich-Thepabutr of Phuket [Provincial Administration Organization] is against the extension of the airport runway because, she says, most of the new tourists coming to Phuket are Asian and there are already too many flights disrupting Muslim prayers. If the runway must be extended, she says, then do it into the ocean.

I think it is fair to say that the highest-spending visitors to Phuket are not Asian but Western, and that Muslims are not the only religious group on Phuket.

In addition, Prime Minister Thaksin has envisaged eight million tourist arrivals from the year 2009 onwards; are they all going to arrive by road or boat? Or are the sea turtles, which lay their eggs on the beach closest to the airport, to be destroyed when their home is ripped open?

Second, there is Chairat Sukbal, one of the new deputy mayors of Patong, with his ridiculous ideas about 24-hour entertainment for Patong. How is it possible to talk about discotheques and rock climbing in the same breath? Is this just using smoke and mirrors to get around other issues?

Three years [after the government's Better Social Order policy was introduced] all the song and dance over opening hours is a dead issue; get over it.

As I see it, the main issue on the island as a whole isn't opening hours but corruption. The powers-that-be need to wake up

to the fact that Phuket is an international destination and see that everyone shares in the benefits, not just a select few, as happens time and time again.

Small island life has gone: take a walk around the new Central Festival store and you will see that.

Juan Kerr
Patong

Criminal treatment

I was on holiday in Phuket last week and was amazed when a policeman stopped me on my motorbike and asked me for my passport and driving license. For security reasons, due to stories of “stolen identity”, I carry neither with me.

I was taken to the police station like a criminal and told I had to pay a fine of 300 baht for not carrying the said documents.

Would it not have been better for me to report to a police station within a required time period as you would in the UK?

Gary Enderby
United Kingdom

Seeing red over Phuket drownings

It's sad to see so many tourists losing their lives on Phuket's beaches during the months when the seas are rough. On Karon and Kata Beaches a tourist drowns almost every week, and even though there are red flags in place, many tourists still go swimming.

Why do they go into the water if they are aware of the danger? Perhaps they come from countries without beaches, or perhaps they don't understand that a red flag means danger?

Better safety measures are needed because the use of red flags alone is not working.

There should be clear warning signs along all the beaches and beachguards should be on duty both to protect and advise tourists.

Thomas
Phuket

Sorry George, I don't buy your theory

Mr Bentick's response to my letter (*Letters, Gazette* August 28) still sounds like the sort of stuff you believe for your first fortnight in the Kingdom.

The holding pattern taking in Phuket to which Mr Bentick refers would have used up a lot of very expensive jet fuel.

Bomber crews would have seen little more than giant tin mines, if anything at all, from their altitude.

If Mr Bentick can cite reliable sources for his information, I'll gladly write him an apology.

Steve Rosse
USA

The biter gets bit

“Perplexed Patong” (*Letters, Gazette* August 21) clearly has no idea of what is now happening in the West, where incarcerating dogs has been eschewed in favor of “capture, neuter and release” programs, which is exactly what the charities here do.

Any truly dangerous dogs should be removed from the streets, but in fact, the incidence of dog attacks reported here is actually very low, much lower than in the West. Street dogs here tend to be afraid of people, generally running away from them.

Top Dog

The Phuket Gazette

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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.

Government policy a disaster for schools

The big problem in education in Phuket right now is that we don't have enough teachers. You could say the situation is at "crisis level".

The government says it is giving senior teachers a chance to try new things, a different life outside the classroom.

But some teachers don't want to retire, they are happy in their jobs. They are being forced to leave because of the government policy.

At some schools, all the teachers have retired, leaving just the management and the cleaner behind.

Many other schools have been left drastically understaffed, and those teachers who haven't taken early retirement are overworked, trying to do the work that used to be done by their retired colleagues, in addition to their own.

The government's concern was to save money. It never considered the effect this would have on students who, after all, are the future of the nation.

If the students don't have access to a good education, and aren't given the chance to complete it, what will happen in the



Last May, the central government embarked on a policy aimed at cutting public spending, half of which was for salaries for government officers.

Called the "Good Leave Project", the drive was intended to encourage senior staff to take early retirement, offering them a golden handshake of seven months' salary – in addition to their pensions – as an incentive to quit.

Government officers over 50 years old became eligible for early retirement; at the same time, new tests were introduced for government officers.

At the time, more than two million people in Thailand worked for the government, and teachers – of whom there were 600,000 – made up the largest group.

The government's aim is to cut staff by at least 5%, meaning tens of thousands of government officers should leave their jobs. The starting salary for teachers, as for the majority of government officers, is 6,600 baht a month.

A number of Phuket teachers who have had to retire early because of the government policy agreed to open their hearts to the *Gazette*, though on condition of anonymity. Here is a distillation of their views, compiled by Sangkhae Leelanaporn.

future? The government really has to think again before the next round of retirements, about the teachers who would leave and how this will affect students.

Younger teachers who have not taken early retirement worry about the standard of their teaching, especially as they no longer have their more experienced colleagues to help them and pass on what they had learned during their own careers.

Often, teachers' hearts aren't 100% in their work because their salaries are very low – barely enough to live on, especially in Phuket province.

Some of them just get through each day, while looking for a new job that is more rewarding. When they get one, they leave, placing the school in a still more difficult position.

We would like to see new teachers take the government

officers' recruitment examination, to demonstrate that they are serious about teaching and committed to their careers, which, of course, would be good for Thailand.

Older teachers who have not retired yet should be encouraged to stay in their jobs and should be told that they are appreciated.

We are grateful to the Phuket Administration Organiza-

tion for setting up the "Phuket Brains Trust". This will go some way toward solving the problem of the lack of teachers, by allowing teachers forced to leave through the early retirement scheme to return to the classroom.

We hope the government will move quickly to improve the situation and recruit more teachers. We worry about the future of the nation.

Condominium ownership

I understand that the rules for alien ownership of condominiums in Patong have been changed recently from allowing 100% alien ownership to some new percentages. What are the new rules?

Potential Buyer
Patong

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

To attract foreign investment after the Asian crisis of 1997, certain condominium buildings were permitted to increase the amount of foreign ownership to 100%.

The rules stated that 100% alien ownership was allowed in municipal jurisdictions for projects that were built on no more than five rai of land and had 40 or more units.

However, this was a five-year dispensation only. The five-year period lapsed in April this year, so the rules have reverted to the old situation, being a limit on foreign freehold ownership of 49% of the "strata value interest" for all new condo developments.

The strata value interest often gets interpreted by the lay person as meaning 49% of the units within a block.

This is broadly correct in buildings where units are of equal size and were valued at the same

price per square meter when they were registered with condominium status.

However, in a block where the units vary in size and there were differences in the original price per sqm (usually, the higher the floor, the higher the price per sqm), the foreign-owned share of the strata value interest could work out at more – or less – than 49% of the total number of units. Units with existing foreign freehold may be transferred with this right to other foreigners, but if a non-Thai now buys a unit in such a condominium from a Thai or a Thai company, and 49% of the strata interest is already taken, he or she will not have the right to freehold ownership.

Can tourists own cars?

As a tourist in Phuket, can I buy and register a car in my own name?

Gilbert Converset

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

Yes you may. To do this you need to bring to us your passport with a valid visa in it and an "address confirmation paper", as well as all the normal papers for the transfer of ownership.

The address confirmation paper is a document confirming your address in Thailand. It can be obtained from the Phuket Provincial Immigration Office.

What's the point of police checks?

I have been told that 20 to 50% of motorbike owners haven't paid their taxes and I also notice that many motorbikes don't have functioning lights.

I have been stopped many times at checkpoints to make sure I have a driver's license and a helmet. Very commendable, but I want to know why the police never check for current papers and properly functioning equipment, such as registration documents and working lights, brakes and so on.

William Smith
Phuket

Pol Lt Col Teeraphol Thip-jaroen, Deputy Superintendent

of Phuket Police Station, replies:

Traffic police do check the condition of the bike and that the documentation is in order.

The officers make a particular point of checking the lights at night because they can see clearly if drivers have their lights on and they are working properly.

Setting up the checkpoints can cause traffic jams, so we tend not to check every vehicle in detail, apart from suspect vehicles.

It also depends on the area where the checkpoint is. If there is enough space for vehicles to park off the road, we can check more thoroughly.

Issues & ANSWERS

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

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

Bartending courses for beginners

Are any professional bartending courses taught in Phuket?

Hilde Marie Johansen
Norway

Thirawit Yingdamnoon, President of Phuket Food and Beverage Club (FBC), replies:

People who are interested in learning bartending can contact the Phuket Vocational College at Tel: 076-226196 or Phuket Technical College at Tel: 076-

211343. Teachers at these colleges are professionals with experience in their specialist subjects, including bartending.

The FBC plans to establish a bartending course in the future, but for now, the best we can recommend is the above.

Such a course would probably cost about 6,500 baht and last about two weeks. You should contact the colleges directly if interested.

Is a wife's criminal past a problem?

Can a foreigner married to a Thai woman with a criminal record still get a one-year extension of stay on the basis of marriage?

Pol Col Chalermpong Vadhanasukha, the Deputy Superintendent of Immigration Division 3, replies:

This office considers only the status of the foreigner and the nature of the couple's relationship when deciding whether a foreigner should be granted permission to stay.

We would not take into account any criminal record the Thai partner might have.

Call it my London Club, this café on top of the old Simpson's building on Piccadilly. When I'm in town for the day I come here for a quiet cup of tea or an early evening drink.

Large plate-glass windows look out to the rooftops of the city. Three or four delicate church spires, one of which is Westminster Abbey, are tokens of old London amongst the steel, glass and concrete of the more modern buildings. I can see the top of the giant London Eye ferris wheel peeking up over a neighboring roof like a rising sun on the horizon.

Cool jazz gives a mellow mood to the afternoon and I think back to the coffee shops in Tokyo where I spent many an hour reading, listening to music and dozing. Some of the Japanese girls sitting here writing postcards maybe feel the same way. Or perhaps they drop in because it's near the Japan Centre, a focus of London's Japanese community, where they can buy Japanese newspapers and sushi.

But the best thing of all about this café, The Studio Lounge, is that it sits on top of the best bookshop I know in the world: Waterstone's of Piccadilly – five spacious floors and endless aisles of solid books. Once you've done your browsing and buying you can come here to relax and sample your purchases.

This afternoon I've bought the first three books in *The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* series, a remarkable, beautifully-written and improbable set of books by a professor at the University of Edinburgh, Alexander McCall Smith. They're about a modest woman from

London calling

EDGEWISE

By John Gilpin

Botswana who sets herself up – without any experience – as the country's first female private detective: an upcountry African version of Hercule Poirot. I read the first few pages of the first book as a sampler and I'm hooked.

Later I take the elevator to the ground floor and walk out into the warm London night. Where next? Like all great cities, London offers a bewildering variety of choices.

On my most recent visit I went with my wife and friends to a promenade concert at the Royal Albert Hall. "The Proms", launched in 1895, are an eight-week musical season presenting classics alongside rare and new works. We heard *Stanze* by Luciano Berio and Gustav Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* (Song of the Earth). As both works are a form of mediation on death, the concert was a sombre though moving experience.

Mahler's piece is based on a series of Chinese poems that were translated into



The London skyline as seen from the rooftop of The Studio Lounge, Piccadilly.

German (sample, from *The Drinking Song of Earth's Sorrow*: "A full goblet of wine at the right time is worth more than all the kingdoms of this earth!"). Interestingly, a Chinese version of the work has recently been performed using the original Chinese words set to Mahler's music.

We stayed with friends that night and the next day wandered through the streets the Portobello Road to catch a glimpse of the Notting Hill Carnival, which was taking place that weekend. London's biggest and liveliest street party – with its reggae bands, African drumming and dancing – couldn't have been much further in spirit

and sound from the previous evening's concert. "Old men like us," said my friend Peter, "prefer to sit around drinking in a pub than rushing around at a street party."

With that, we retired to the Churchill on Kensington Church Street, a fine old pub, for a few pints of London Pride. Later, we found ourselves at The Windsor Castle, an equally dark and timeworn establishment, where we continued drinking and talking our particular brand of nonsense.

*The song of sorrow
Shall in gusts of laughter
Through your souls resound.*

In the Stars

by Isla Star

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): Your normal down-to-earth outlook is put to the test when a mystery crops up. Virgoans who reject any supernatural beliefs will find it hard to come up with answers and may even have to accept that the impossible is true. Concerning work, someone's power trip needs careful navigating around. If your birthday is this week, take time to celebrate.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): Don't let your partner's mood dampen your spirits this weekend. Librans who have done all they can to bring sunshine into a relationship can be forgiven for getting on with their own lives. Your guardian angel is on standby to ensure that fun is at hand; you just have to find where it's happening.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): Your creativity is compromised by another's negative attitude. Some Scorpios will see this as a sign that it's time to move on, and a midweek encounter gives you serious food for thought. From now until the end of the year, radical changes in your work situation are forecast and you are likely to take the first steps in a new direction this month. Keep long-term goals in focus and you can't go wrong.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): A rejuvenating week is about to unfold for Sagittarians. Worries dissolve as if by magic, and peace is restored to the home front. Set some time aside for contemplation; many of the problems that have been oc-

cupying your mind could have been avoided. Expect good financial news on Monday or Tuesday.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): Any plans to take the island by storm may have to be reconsidered. Capricorns who haven't done their homework could receive a wake-up call this week and will have to think seriously before they pass the point of no return. Support could be offered from an unlikely quarter. Whatever upheavals you are going through will be forgotten by the end of this month.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): Your imagination knows no bounds this weekend, but there's a good chance that you're misjudging someone's actions.

There could be serious repercussions from airing unfounded suspicions in the wrong places. Aquarians should focus on reality unless they're prepared for a relationship to spin out of control. The spotlight next week is fixed firmly on business; remember that the earliest mynah bird gets the juiciest worm.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): Pisceans are likely to be feeling slothful this week, but partners and close friends will not be content to sit at home watching the rain drops trickle down the windows. If you can prise yourself out of that armchair and venture outside, there are good times to be had. To encourage energy, treat yourself to new clothes in shades of purple.

ARIES (March 21-April 20): Most Arians will be feeling rather frisky as the weekend starts. If you've been harboring secret desires, the object of your interest would say "yes" in a heartbeat. With romantic success guaranteed, there's not much that can get you down. However, the path toward financial gain has a few potholes and you will need to choose your approach carefully when dealing with an unknown quantity. The color moss green is auspicious.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): The recent snappy crocodile mood should have dissolved, leaving Taureans feeling more like their usual positive selves. A daisy chain of events is about to unfold and this can provide motivation and outlets for your creative talents. An admirer is find-

ing it hard to make his or her intentions clear, but you should soon get onto the same wavelength. Taureans already in a relationship will have important decisions to make.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): Geminis are advised to avoid confrontations during the coming days. You could find yourself the target of a surprising amount of venom, but it shouldn't be taken personally. On a more pleasant note, an intimate involvement soars to new heights and there are indications that this coupling could become permanent. Wednesday brings a golden opportunity to take part in a money-making venture.

CANCER (June 22-July 23): Cancerians will profit from employing logic when faced with a series of irritating, but minor, problems this week. This is not the right time to gamble or try your luck. If you weigh up all the pros and cons, you should have no trouble identifying the correct moves to make. A Piscean's heart is starting to beat a little faster when you are near.

LEO (July 24-August 22): Encouraging astrological aspects are set to support those born under the sign of Leo who are ready to try a new career direction. If you're worried about biting off more than you can chew, perhaps now is the time to get professional financial advice. A mellow atmosphere prevails at home, with the accent strongly on nest-building. Family gatherings are highlighted this Sunday; someone is planning a surprise visit.

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Hospital in merger negotiations

By Anongnat Sartpisut

PHUKET CITY: Phuket International Hospital (PIH) is set to merge with a leading Bangkok hospital.

The news comes just two months after the *Gazette* reported that another private hospital, Bangkok Phuket, was being taken over by hospital operator Bangkok Dusit Medical Services Ltd (BGH) (*Gazette*, July 10).

Anurak Tansiriroj, managing director of PIH, said he could not say which hospital PIH was about to merge with. However, it is widely believed to be Bangkok's Bumrungrad Hospital, which posted a net profit of 487 million baht in 2003.

Founded in 1980, Bumrungrad is Southeast Asia's largest private hospital. It has 554 beds and treats more than 850,000 patients

per year, around a third of whom are foreigners.

"I can see only benefits," K. Anurak told the *Gazette*. "We can expand our market. At the moment, although PIH does treat some foreign patients, we focus on locals."

"The plan is for the famous Bangkok hospital to take a 30% stake in PIH," he added. "I cannot identify the hospital at the moment because revealing the name might affect our negotiations. But I believe there is a 90% possibility of the merger going through."

"The other hospital already has an established foreign market, with facilities for promoting and co-ordinating it. After the merger, PIH will be able to take advantage of [these facilities]."

Another advantage of the merger, ac-

ording to K. Anurak, would be "co-resourcing" – or sharing of facilities – by the two hospitals.

He said, "We can exchange specialists and equipment. For example, we will be able to contact the other hospital and get a specialist sent down to Phuket to treat a patient. Our technology would be upgraded too."

The 105-bed PIH has frequently been running at 100% of its capacity, said K. Anurak. Two new buildings are in the pipeline, at a cost of 200 million baht. The first should be completed next year, adding an extra 60-70 beds, and the second will follow later.

The extensions had been planned for some time, said K. Anurak, but added that the merger should make completing and running them easier.

On the Move

CB Richard Ellis (CBRE) has announced the appointment of

Briton **James Saunders** as General Manager Property Management of its Phuket office. Mr Saunders was previously



manager of President Park, Sukhumvit 24 for CBRE in Bangkok. Before joining the company, Mr Saunders worked in London, for Hackney Borough and Islington Councils. He holds a BSc in estate management from Kingston University in England.

CBRE has also appointed Bangkok-born **Khanitha Jarukirati**



as Sales Manager in Phuket. K. Khanitha has a master's degree in International Management from Thunderbird University in

Arizona, USA, and a business administration degree from Assumption University, Bangkok. K. Khanitha worked for CBRE in 1994 and 1995. Before rejoining the company she worked for the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) for four years.

Manassanun Tanwongwan, 27, from Bangkok, has been promoted from Sales Manager to Business Development Manager for Mom Tri's Boathouse and Mom Tri's Villa Royale in Phuket, and the Prem Tinsulanonda International School in Chiang Mai, responsible for sales and marketing development activities. She holds an arts degree from Assumption University in Bangkok.



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

Cockeyed European theories

When European political leaders made plans for the creation of the European Central Bank (ECB) and the establishment of a common currency, the Euro, they also laid the groundwork for future problems. Unfortunately, no attention was given to solving any of these problems.

The theory was reasonably sound. The ECB was given a very simple mandate: inflation in the Euro Zone was not to exceed 2% and the ECB's primary mission was to watch out for price stability. Economic growth was not even mentioned.

The primary architects of these plans were France and Germany and their chief concern was to control the future behavior of member states, especially new members who, it was assumed, might have a somewhat cavalier approach to matters such as inflation and good economic governance. In addition, member states were to limit their budget deficits to no more than 3% of Gross Domestic Product.

Unfortunately for all concerned, the leaders of France and Germany – who concocted these plans – were themselves woefully ill-informed on economics. They had painted themselves into a corner which they hadn't even realized existed.

In Germany the cost of incorporating the old East Germany was staggering. The notion that a "greater" Germany would quickly become a larger and dynamic economy foundered on the rocks of reality.

There were many reasons for this, including the fact that the inhabitants of the former East Germany had been brought up in a communist regime. Communism does not encourage initiative.

The old joke, "They pretend to pay us and we pretend to work" holds more than an element of truth. Attitudes formed by the concept of being cared for



MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson

by the state from cradle to grave do not disappear overnight.

Workers who could slowly put together a Trabant car did not take kindly to the high-pressure atmosphere in the BMW and Mercedes-Benz plants.

During the early 1990s the governments of France and Germany noted that unemployment levels were unacceptably high. They came up with what they considered to be the perfect solution and one that also met with the full approval of the trade unions.

Well, it was the perfect solution if you were economically illiterate or completely insane.

It was so simple. If workers who had previously been required to work 40 hours a week had their work week cut to a maximum of 35 hours, then companies would have to hire more workers to keep output constant. The governments of the day would also be more popular with the work force and trade unions.

All this was combined with a brilliant idea that had been previously introduced in German medium and large companies: supervisory boards that included members of management and shop-floor representatives.

The idea was to give employees true power in the direction of the company. Boards of directors and management had to listen to supervisory boards.

This was presumably "enlightened capitalism". Workers could give their opinion on all

major company decisions and, theoretically at least, guide companies in the right direction. This was combined with legislation to ensure that employee dismissals were almost impossible to enact without great expense and difficulty.

Employers, as well as paying employees' wages, would also have to shell out almost half that amount again to cover employee social security, health costs and other "essentials".

Obviously, shareholders in companies could not expect any rights or privileges. After all, they sought to profit from the sweat of the worker's brow.

This mixture of regulations, constraints, costs and lack of incentives has led the economies of France, Germany and some other members of the Euro Zone into dangerous territory. They are finding it difficult to achieve even a modicum of economic growth.

Having long since breached the 3% budget-deficit limits, France and Germany are trying to introduce some reforms and cut some expenditure. This is to

be applauded, but there are a few problems.

When governments try to reform, it is best that they try to do so against a background of a "rising tide". However, with budget deficits already exceeding stability-pact limits and the European Central Bank not able, because of its "mission statement", to inject funds, a "rising tide" is very difficult to achieve.

It is not only Germany that is suffering these problems. Holland, for example, finds economic growth difficult when Germany is in its present state.

There is a solution to the problems of some countries in the Euro Zone. The solution is restructuring, deregulation and the introduction of real free enterprise. This has to be accompanied by the injection of massive economic stimulation by the ECB.

It is the only way that a real "stability pact" will ever work.

Richard Watson runs *Global Portfolios Co Ltd*, a Phuket-based personal financial planning service. He can be reached at Tel and Fax: 076-381997, Mobile: 01-081-4611. Email: imm@loxinfo.co.th.

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First into the Andamans

The word "virgin" means different things to different people. For divers, it usually means unspoiled reefs, pristine coral, sites free of other divers and boats, no damage from fishing – and lots of pelagic marine life.

One area that inevitably comes up in any discussion of virgin dive sites is the water around the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. When Phuket dive operators started seeking out more remote and unexplored areas in recent years, many of them went north to Burma. This was because it was difficult – if not impossible – to take a commercial dive boat into the Andamans.

However, one fortunate operator has now been given the rare opportunity to take his boats into the Andamans which, although part of India, are closer to Phuket than to the Indian mainland.

Companies have taken the occasional dive trip there in the past, but this high season will be different because Kingfisher Marine will offer a variety of regular tours: liveaboards, super-yachts and "fast cats" – catamarans.

Jean Kingston of Kingfisher Diving explained that Kingfisher Diving has been operating in Phuket for about seven years, and has proven to be one of the more innovative and enterprising dive outfits. Last season they had three boats in the Similan Islands: the liveboard *M/V Kingfisher* and two catamarans; *Kingfisher Express I* and *Kingfisher Express II*.

Just recently, Kingfisher brought into service its 40-meter "megayacht" *Payoon 3*. During the coming high season, the company plans to have three vessels spending time in Andaman Island waters.

The Andaman Islands have always been considered a special territory by the Indian government, which restricted access to them. Indeed, as much of 90%



Kingfisher will be taking one of its roomy catamarans to the Andamans.

of the territory has been declared a special reserve.

But now the government has given special permission to the Barefoot Group, an Indian tour company, to begin limited tourism development in the territory. The Barefoot Group, which will also offer charter flights between the capital of Port Blair and Bangkok, took three years to obtain this permission.

When asked about the prospects for diving in the Andamans, Mr Kingston replied, "Where is there to go now in the world where you can still do exploratory diving in relative comfort?"

So what did Kingfisher do to find itself in a situation that is probably turning other Phuket dive operators green with envy?

Not much. Basically, fate came knocking at Mr Kingston's door one day when he was approached by the Barefoot Group (who, it should be noted, do wear shoes). Both firms, along with the Indian government, are now determined to keep the Andamans in pristine condition, and the strength of the island's NGOs and environmental lobbies – something sadly missing in Phuket – will help ensure that they do.

Mr Kingston said that one of the biggest challenges in establishing the tours was separating rumor from fact. One thing that is clear, however, is the commitment of the Indian govern-

ment has to preserving the Andaman's unique marine ecosystems. There are very strict controls to ensure that the principles of ecotourism are really adhered to. Commercial fishing, for example, is not allowed within 9.5 kilometers of the islands. There are similar restrictions on where speedboats can operate.

Manta Rays, sharks (including the occasional hammerhead) and other open-water species are among the main attractions for divers. The waters around Narcondam, a long-dormant volcano that erupted just a few years ago, have up to 50 meters of visibility and interesting lava formations beneath the surface.

On land there are numerous attractions as well, and even a naturalist professor who takes people on hiking tours. Mr. Kingston described the natives as friendly, adding that he did not see a single beggar the whole time he was there.

Kingfisher Diving plans to organize tours that will include diving in both the Similans and the Andamans. *Payoon 3* will do three charter trips from Phuket, and the 20-meter liveboard *MV Kingfisher* will be in the Andamans throughout February, offering seven-day tours for guests flying in from Bangkok. The flight service is scheduled to begin in December.

Pending final approval,

Beneath the SURFACE

By Sylvie Yaffe



Kingfisher Diving will also be bringing one of its catamarans to the Andamans and setting up a dive shop on Have-lock Island, the second one there. Although he newly refitted catamaran, which was designed by an Australian, is a roomy 11 x 4 meters, tours will be limited to just 12 customers.

As if dealing with both the Thai and Indian bureaucracies isn't enough to keep this dive operator busy, Mr Kingston is also involved with Kingfisher Marine – an offshoot of Kingfisher Diving.

Kingfisher Marine is the sole broker in Thailand for Horizon Yachts, the 10th largest recreational boatbuilder in the world. In addition, Kingfisher Marine also provide its clients with management services, boat chartering and maintenance.

During the low season, the Kingfisher vessels are available for chartering. In fact, a few lucky people may already have received invitations to the wedding of Mary Ellaz, Kingfishers' Diving Division Manager, and Adam Duggan. The nuptials will take place at sea aboard *Payoon 3*. Most of us, however, will just have to wait for the photos.

Kingfisher Diving, the Barefoot Group and the Indian government all have conservation as a top priority. It is refreshing to know that New Delhi is not willing to exploit natural resources in the name of mass tourism and profits, and that the word "ecotourism" is apparently more than just a buzzword.

Properly managed, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands could develop into a top tourist destination, allowing "quality" tourists to enjoy the islands' natural beauty for decades to come. At the same time, India would earn the kind of international respect and admiration that Phuket, after 20 years of unregulated development, can never expect to receive.

Sylvie Yaffe is a semi-retired dive instructor. She can be reached by email to: prodocs_pkt@yahoo.com

Kingfisher Diving can be contacted by calling Tel: 076-340625-6 or by email to info@kingfisherdiving.com.

15 through to Volvo Klassic finals

KATHU: One hundred and eighteen golfers took part in the Phuket qualifying round of the annual "Volvo Klassik Thailand 2004", at the Phuket Country Club on September 4.

The top five finishers in each flight will move on to compete in the national finals on October 5 at Lakewood Country Club in Samut Prakan – provided that they own a Volvo.

The winner of each flight in the national finals will then get the chance to play amateur golfers from 20 countries in the Volvo Masters Amateurs, which will be held at the Almenara Golf Hotel & Spa, in Sotogrande, Spain, from October 27-31.

The top three finishers in each flight will receive a "Lotus Crystal Cup," regardless of what kind of car they drive, if any.

Results in the Phuket round were:

Flight A (handicaps 0-12):

1. Blair Speers* (38 points);
2. Wittaya Tantipiriyakul (37);
3. Suppachai Pongtanankorn* (37);
4. Karun Panichpichetwong* (37);
5. Evan Butford (36).

Flight B (handicaps 13-17):

1. Bancha Koipokaisawan (35 points);
2. Witee Supitak* (34);
3. Pinyo Wongbaisad* (34);
4. Teerawat Chaosuan (34);
5. Chainarong Chaisara (33).

Flight C (handicaps 18-24):

1. Philip Evans (32 points);
2. Somporn Makchit (32);
3. Saeree Ruamsamak (32);
4. Ekasil Preeyawanich* (32);
5. Sittichai Tantawalak* (31). (* = Volvo owner)

Patong Darts League

PATONG: After five weeks of play, Dog's Bollocks and Didi's have emerged as the front runners.

August 31 results: Off Shore 7 Happy Days* 2; Amigos 5 Piccadilly* 4; Champs 3 In-Between* 6; Dog's Bollocks* 8 Fat Boy Saloon 1; Didi's* 6 Two Black Sheep 3. (* = Winners of beer leg). Shakers vs Valhalla postponed.

Standings after August 31: 1= Dog's Bollock's and Didi's (12 pts); 3= Amigos and Off Shore (9); 5 Champs (8); 6. Happy Days (7); 7= Piccadilly and In-Between (6); 9 Two Black Sheep (5); 10 Shakers (3); 11 Valhalla (1); 12 Fat Boy Saloon (0)

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Phuket supplies 11 players for Thai national soft tennis squad

By Anongnat Sartpisut

PHUKET CITY: Of the 32 players picked to take part in trials for the Thai national soft tennis squads, no fewer than 11 have been chosen from Phuket.

Six men and five women from the province have a chance of places in the final 24-player squad after a weekend of selections in Bangkok.

Nipon Jangiam, Chairman of Phuket Soft Tennis Association [PSTA], said, "It's a great honour for Phuket soft tennis."

"The [PSTA] was launched only two years ago yet we have

more athletes in the national trials than anyone else."

He added that Thailand and Indonesia are the best soft tennis teams in Southeast Asia, alternating between first and second places, and the Thai team is ranked fourth or fifth in the whole of Asia.

The Phuket athletes are all 18 or 19 years old, said K. Nipon, adding, "They have the potential to become some of the world's top-ranking players. One, Withita Jangiam, is already ranked ninth in the world."

The Phuket players selected for the national squad are: Eitthi



Nipon Jangiam (right) with seven of the 11 Phuket players picked for the national trials.

Tansiroj, Sakan Tansiroj, Tanapong Anantantikul, Peerapan Promrak, Pakorn Niyomadul, Paemyod Tansakul, Tanpaschara Kongkaew, Withita Jangiam, Sirowan Jittikan, Anchanok Kumpitak and Kietravee Adchu.

Said K. Nipon, "At the end of September, the Phuket athletes and the others picked for the national trials will train with the na-

tional coach – who is Japanese – in Bangkok, and maybe also in Chiang Mai and Surin.

"In December, Thailand is to host the Asian Soft Tennis Championships. As the host nation, we can enter two teams, each of six men and six women. The members of these teams will be picked during the training sessions.

"A total of 17 nations will send teams to Chiang Mai for the championships and we hope Thailand will finish in the top three."

Somtam Express dominates Ao Chalong racing

AO CHALONG: *Somtam Express*, with Scott Duncanson and Muzza Norstrand on board, dominated Race 10 of the Ao Chalong Yacht Club (ACYC) 2004 Keelboat and Multihull Race Series on September 5, winning top honors in the Racing class. In the Cruising class, Al Boone on *Blue Moon* came first.

Somtam Express also dominated the inaugural Phuket Sports 8 Mini Series on September 4 and 5. After four races *Somtam Express* is at the top of the table with five points.

Motocross fun

PHUKET CITY: Keen motocross riders will have the chance to let loose at the Motocross 2004 meet just off the bypass road on September 12.

The competition will be held from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm, at the motocross track opposite the new Toyota showroom next to the Bang Khu intersection.

Entry for spectators costs 50 baht per person. Tickets will be available at the track.

Thepkrasattri crush Cherng Talay 5-1

THALANG: Tessabaan Thepkrasattri breezed to a 5-1 victory over *OrBorTor* Cherng Talay – despite conceding the first goal – in their September 1 clash in the Thalang District final of the Thai Cup at Muang Thalang School.

The shock to Thepkrasattri's system came in the second minute when their goalkeeper wandered too far from his station, allowing Cherng Talay's Eakachai Jampada to sail a shot in from 20 yards.

In the fifth minute Cherng Talay tried again with a spirited strike from 15 yards out but the goalie – in position this time – got a hand to it.

Thepkrasattri began their comeback in the 10th minute when Sutad Poonkaothong – one of four Thepkrasattri players cramming Cherng Talay's penalty box – brought the score to 1-1 by sliding a shot past goalkeeper Sukchai Manabutr.

Cherng Talay kept up their offense but failed to score with any of their five vigorous attacks on goal. Thepkrasattri, however, managed to edge ahead in the 18th minute thanks to their striker, Wissanu Singhasuwan.

Wissanu made a further four attacks on Cherng Talay's goal before creating Thepkrasattri's third goal with a pass to Sutad in the 26th minute which Sutad slotted home.

A scant five minutes later, Thepkrasattri's Santi Art-eam gracefully arced the ball over the Cherng Talay keeper's head, taking the score to 4-1.

Cherng Talay worked doggedly in the second half but to no

avail; time and again, the Thepkrasattri defense proved too strong for them. The nearest they came was when Suriya Samran's volley bounced off the crossbar.

The game was marred by the issuing of a yellow card in the 50th minute to Thepkrasattri's Amnad Insenee after his fierce sliding tackle brought Suriya crashing to the ground.

Thepkrasattri cemented their dominance of the match with another goal in the 63rd minute, taking the score to 5-1, after which they seemed to take a breather.

Cherng Talay kept trying, but fruitlessly. Score at 90 minutes: 5-1 to Thepkrasattri.

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BEHIND THE WHEEL

By Jeff Heselwood

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in the US recently produced some alarming figures indicating that people driving or riding in a sports utility vehicle (SUV) in 2003 were almost 11% more likely to die in a traffic accident than people in other types of cars.

That said, overall crash fatalities in the US declined to their lowest levels in six years. The decline has been attributed to a successful seat belt campaign initiated by the government, and more stringent laws against drunk driving.

Although the figures indicate that accidents involving SUVs in general claim more lives than other kinds of motor vehicles, some of the latest SUV models are equipped with up-to-date technology and are actually safer than their sedan counterparts. One such vehicle is Volkswagen's monster SUV, the Touareg.

The Touareg was initially equipped with a choice of a 3.2-liter V6 gasoline engine, or a massive 5-liter V10 diesel. Although the diesel is more popular in Europe, where distances traveled are usually greater, it is almost twice as expensive as the smaller V6.

This is the same V6 that is now available in the more luxurious Porsche Cayenne (see *Gazette*, issue of April 24), which was developed in parallel to the Volkswagen.

Top speeds are 195kmh for the V6 version, and 225kmh for the V10 diesel.

More recently, a more affordable five-cylinder 2.5-liter TDI engine offering 174bhp (128kW) has been slotted into the Touareg, and it is this version that is likely to be popular in South-



Although the 5-liter V10 diesel (right) is popular in Europe, it is expected that a more affordable 5-cylinder, 2.5-liter TDI engine will be the preferred option in Touaregs in Southeast Asia.

east Asia. It is reliable, economical and with strong torque of 400Nm at just 2,000rpm.

Porsche carried out most of the development for the two distinctly different models, and they both carry the same transmission, doors and a number of chassis components. Whereas the Cayenne is distinctly upmarket and is seemingly aimed at Porsche owners, the Touareg is a more basic machine, yet offers plenty of space, reasonable comfort and more balanced styling – without the characteristic Porsche drop-axle nose.

All Touareg SUVs are equipped with six-speed transmissions, whether manual or automatic, and permanent four-wheel drive. There is a central differential lock and an optional rear-

axle lock to ensure strong off-road capabilities.

To cope with steep downhill stretches, the Touareg is fitted with a hill descent control that alternately brakes the wheels and reduces engine power to maintain a constant speed.

Returning to the subject of safety, the Volkswagen SUV passengers are protected by the latest electronic systems, including crash sensors that trigger two-level airbags that deploy according to the severity of the accident. There are also side airbags and full-length curtain bags.

An electronic stability program is standard, as is an electronic differential control which adjusts power distribution to the wheel or wheels that have the most traction.

Pedestrian safety has also been addressed – the front fenders are made of flexible plastic and the hood is made of aluminum.



Despite the NHTSA's pronouncement on SUVs in general, it appears that Volkswagen's Touareg is a significant advance in terms of safety and comfort. It certainly stands as a major competitor to the BMW X5 and Volvo's XC90.

Incidentally, the name Touareg is derived from a nomadic tribe, the Tuaregs, who inhabit parts of northern Africa. The Tuaregs' homeland is the mountains and deserts of Niger, Mali, Algeria, Libya and Burkina Faso,

where even in winter temperatures can hover around 40°C.

The total Tuareg population is about a million people, most of whom are nomads or semi-nomads. Volkswagen has "adopted" the Tuareg people and, in a rare exhibition of altruism from a major motor manufacturer, is providing a new irrigation scheme and a couple of new schools.

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

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2004 harvest looks set to be memorable

Vineyards in Australia and New Zealand are harvesting huge crops of the highest-quality grapes seen in years. In fact, New Zealand's harvest is the largest on record, and friends there tell me the quality exceeds that of any vintage in recent memory.

Argentina also saw perfect weather throughout the 2004 growing season and has enjoyed bountiful crops.

The good news for consumers is that large crops of healthy and delicious grapes eventually show up as an oversupply of great wine, at lower prices.

Some wine-producing regions already suffering from a glut of quality wine, such as Australia, will be forced to dump their stocks at bargain prices.

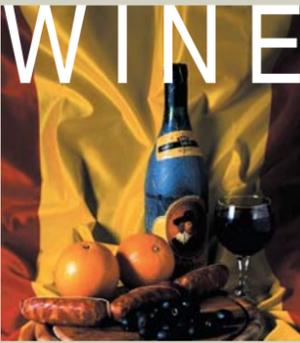
Except, of course, in Thailand, where the government is taxing to death wine importers in a fervent effort to col-

lect all the revenue that its draconian tax code allows. If consumers in Thailand are lucky, they won't see any rise in prices this year.

But a sliver of hope remains for Phuket restaurateurs: consumers in North America have resumed shelling out top dollar for famous wines, and are ignoring more pedestrian wine labels when dining out.

Now, if these folks would just venture here on holiday with their credit cards, local businesses would really have something to toast.

Continuing in a weather-related vein: global warming may not be entirely bad. The heat wave in Europe last year produced at least one benefit: rich and flavorful wines.



By Steven Roberto

A few regions received too much heat, but overall, from Bordeaux to Alsace to Germany's Rhine Valley, the warm weather produced bountiful crops of delicious fruit destined to delight wine lovers in the years to come.

Cork screwed? Wineries continue to abandon the traditional cork in favor of screw top closures to protect the integrity of their premium

wines.

The trend is gaining momentum and consumers are increasingly accepting of the screw top and appreciate its convenience.

According to historians, it was 76 years before people came to prefer the newly-invented zipper over the button fly,

so cork devotees can take comfort in the knowledge that the cork won't disappear overnight.

Whites in: Consumers' love affair with Italian white wine is spreading from Pinot Grigio to other traditional regions and wines as the quality of Italian wine continues to improve.

Soave Classico, Greco di Tufo and Roero Arneis increasingly appear on wine lists and are being snapped up by consumers who appreciate the distinctive and delicious flavors of these newly-re-discovered wine regions.

Steven Roberto is a winemaker and restaurant consultant from California. He is the Wine and Beverage Director for the award-winning Baan Rim Pa restaurant in Patong. Email: stevenroberto@lycos.com

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

Traveling to Cape Panwa along some deceptively treacherous roads and through heavy rain, I consider that breakfast might have been my last meal on Earth. The sight of a truck looming over the brow of a hill at 60kmh on a road a scant three meters wide is not good for the appetite.

Nonetheless, some skillful driving on my part, some prayers from my dining companion and another swig by the truck driver from his bottle of *Krating Daeng* saw us through the danger.

Cape Panwa is, for now, unspoiled by the urban blight affecting so much of Phuket. Pleasant walkways and salas have been built along the coastal route, offering the weary driver the chance to stop and admire jaw-dropping scenery. So far they have not been discovered by food vendors or louts on motorcycles.

Our destination, the Panwa Beach Resort, is not big by Phuket standards, but nor does it adopt the "boutique" affectation so beloved by many smaller hotels. "Bijou" is perhaps the adjective for the hotel, which features one restaurant, Aroma.

Our luncheon host is F&B Manager and Bangkok native Chanchai Deenan. Amiable and sympathetic to our near-death

experience, he bids us sit down and rest a moment – with a glass of Monty's Hill Chardonnay, Aroma's house white – before a mini-tour of the resort.

But "Aroma"? I wonder... The first scent to hit my nose is that of jasmine, followed by a rich panoply of spices – cinnamon, pepper, star anise and cardamom – and then the fragrance of the sea.

I enjoy putting people on the spot and my gambit to K. Chanchai is that my dining companion is a vegetarian. K. Chanchai deflates me somewhat when he presents a menu that is – according to my veggie colleague – very good by Thai standards. At least five dishes are vegetarian and not a hint of anything resembling soya duck, prawn or chicken gets a look in.

I, however, am not a vegetarian and I want flesh. Before the same – in the form of beautifully-presented grilled white snapper, scallops and rock lobster with a curry butter sauce and saffron rice – is brought to the Rennie Mackintosh-style table, a selection of appetizers arrives.

Little tasters of *laab gai* in lettuce leaves; vegetarian mini-spring rolls and *wonton*, and curried chicken – rich with *garam masala* – in tiny pastry cases are scoffed by us, K. Chanchai and,



A feast for eyes and taste buds: Aroma's tempting appetizers.

graces the table, but not for long: easy on the eye it may be, but it's even better in the mouth. Next!

Within moments, *tom yum het* – sour and spicy soup with mushrooms – arrives for my dining companion. She loves it, and comments that real thought has gone into the vegetarian choices at Aroma.

Time for dessert, tiramisu in my case. It's one of the best I've enjoyed outside Italy, hardly surprising as Chef Rachata spent a year in Genoa getting to grips with the finer points of Italian cuisine.

Bitter, cool, sweet and creamy at the same time, I love it. It's mine. Leave it alone, okay?

My dining companion and now ex-friend doesn't, so I retaliate by tucking into her *two* Thai desserts: sago and black beans in coconut sauce, and taro in, er, coconut sauce.

Aroma is pleasantly discreet and quiet, has good food, great views and friendly staff. Enjoy.

Aroma restaurant, Panwa Beach Resort, 5/3 Moo 8, Ao Yon Bay, Cape Panwa, Phuket. For reservations, Tel: 076-393300 or Email: panwa@cscms.com

On the menu with Andy Johnstone Aroma

now, Chef Rachata, another of Phuket's nomadic chefs.

My dining companion contents herself with a dish often referred to in Chinese restaurants in the UK as "monk's vegetables" – fried, creamy tofu and steamed mixed vegetables in a rich gravy.

"Wolfing it down" may seem an odd phrase to describe a vegetarian's eating habits but she does, before I get a chance to sample some myself.

Steamed white snapper with lashings of lemon, garlic and chili – according to K. Chanchai, his and his staff's favorite dish –

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NEW'S ORDER ONLINE

Construction Update

by Anongnat Sartpisut

Kalim megadevelopment gets underway

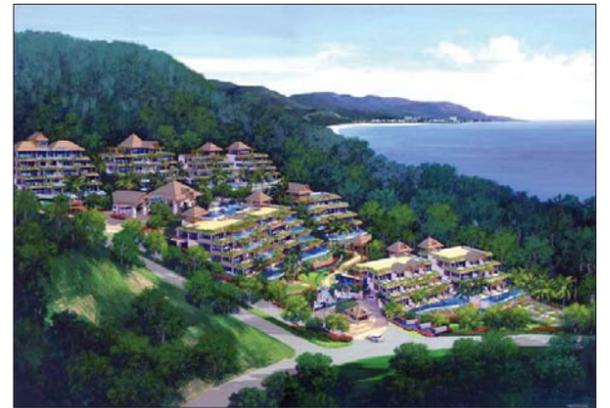
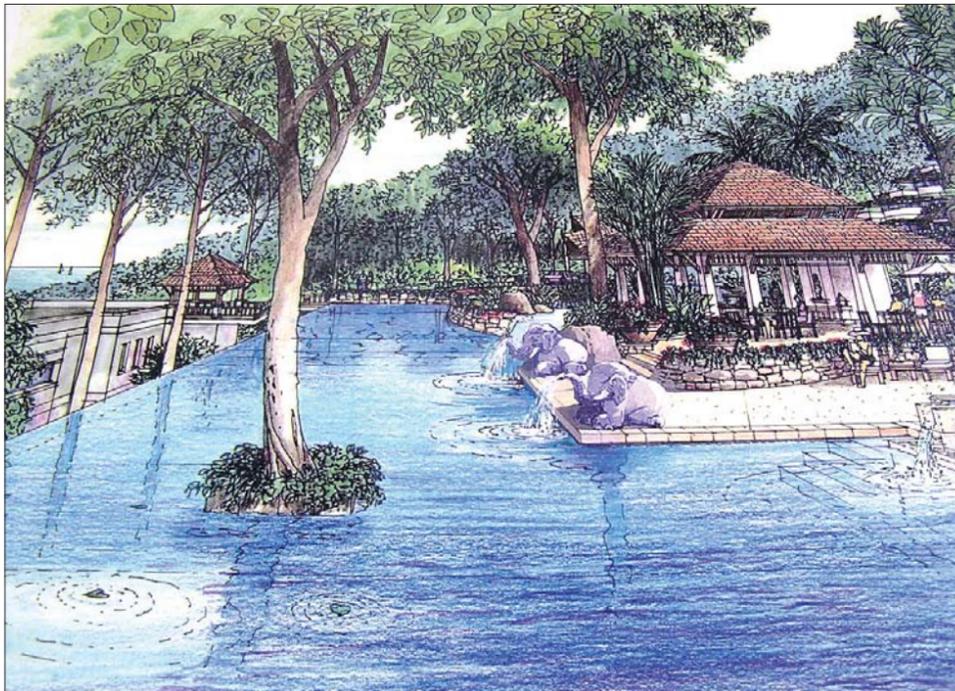
Work on phase one of the Monte Carlo luxury apartment complex in Kalim is now underway and is scheduled for completion in September 2006.

Managing Director Supanee Nukulpanichwipat told the *Gazette* that over 1 billion baht has already been invested in the project, which upon completion will cover 287 rai of hillside property and boast the world's largest hilltop bird park and other tourist attractions.

The 13-rai first phase consists of 63 luxury apartments. These will range in size from 80 square meters for a one-bedroom unit to 467sqm for the three-bedroom penthouse.

All apartments will feature dramatic sea views. Prices will range from 12.9 million to 28 million baht. Phase one is aimed primarily at Westerners, who can lease or buy units.

Each apartment will have its own spa pool, and each terraced apartment block will have a larger communal swimming pool. Shar-



Left and above: Artist's impressions of the main pool in Phase 1 of Monte Carlo, and a bird's eye view of the apartments.

ed facilities will include a large clubhouse with its own swimming pool, spa, beauty salon, restaurant, fitness center and other facilities.

The second and third phases, which are still in the planning stages, could consist of a villa

project and a small hotel, the developers say.

K. Supanee explained that the name Monte Carlo was chosen because the location and design is reminiscent of the famous town on the French Riviera.

When choosing their interior

design, buyers will be able to select from a range of styles – including Balinese, Japanese, European and American – or can come up with their own design.

There will be round-the-clock security service and each home will have an alarm system linked to a central monitoring station. Utilities will include underground power cables and a large reserve water tank.

The total land area acquired by the developers, an expanse of 287 rai, will feature landscaped gardens, three waterfalls and what the developers say will be the world's largest hilltop bird park, which will sit above the 80-meter building limit on construction.

Although they have not yet finalized plans, the developers are also considering, in later phases, construction of luxury hotels and a shopping arcade.

Already under construction along the Kalim-Kamala road are replicas of Thai homes from various periods of Thai history, such as Ayudhya, Sukhothai and Rattanakosin. These are intended to serve as tourist attractions and sales points for antiques and handicrafts.

Larry Cunningham, director of Phuket One Real Estate (Thailand) Co, the exclusive sales agent for the project, said his firm has been working together closely

with K. Supanee in all phases of project design and development.

He described the initial response for the project, which only recently opened its sales office, as "amazing", adding that he found the architecture and location so impressive that he had bought a unit himself. Three units have already been reserved, he said.

The typical profile of a buyer, he added, would be someone who would spend about a month in his apartment annually, gaining rental income on his investment during the rest of the year.

Mr Cunningham said the developers see a continued strong demand for luxury apartments with sea views near Patong, and have noticed a trend among buyers in Europe to sell condominiums in places like Spain and relocate to Phuket, which offers better value for money.

"Many Europeans visiting Phuket want to enjoy their stay in more privacy than they may get in a hotel," he noted, adding that new projects in Patong, including the 150-rai Jungceylon project, will transform the city and attract more 'quality' tourists.

"Kalim offers the best of both worlds: luxury and privacy in a natural setting, yet with the beach and the shopping and nightlife of Patong within walking distance," he said.

For inquiries, contact Phuket One Real Estate at Villa 6, Nakathani Village, Kamala, Tel: 076-345707, email info@phuketonerealestate.com or bank@phuketmontecarlo.com, Tel: 01-8066613

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I'm lost. Please bring back the Manik pig

It took me a while to realize that the pig had disappeared. On several occasions I was quite disoriented, and wondered how I had managed to drive through places without seeing them.

Other landmarks are disappearing as well. Phuket is changing at a rapid rate, and after being here for many years, I wonder if all the changes are for the better.

The opening of the island's mega stores over the last couple of years is generally considered to be an important part of Phuket's growth.

Certainly, the advent of stores such as Tesco-Lotus and Makro give visitors and expats a comfortable feeling of familiarity. Modern centers such as the new Central Festival complex are giving Phuket increased facilities.

Modern resorts, swish restaurants and plans for new expo centers, marinas and villa projects are totally changing the character of the island from a once-peaceful holiday destination.

As has been the case in so many places of great natural beauty, man congregates to enjoy or take financial advantage of such places. Often the very nature of the place is lost in the rapid growth of infrastructure and facilities.

Nobody needs to be told that the advent of the superstores – without proper planning – is having an unpleasant effect on our ability to travel easily around the island.

Planning is needed for a trip from the north to the south of Phuket. The bypass road itself sometimes need

to be bypassed. It's becoming increasingly possible, especially with cheap airfares, that Bangkok may become a getaway place from the stresses of Phuket.

But with all the growth, many of the small things that were enjoyable – and made Phuket a place where we wanted to stay – are disappearing or are forgotten.



Thalang Rd in the heart of the old city still lives on – but many of Phuket's other landmarks are disappearing.

Sin & Lee, a quaint shop in the old heart of Phuket City, was once the only place where you could get supplies for a yachting holiday, such as flagons of Australian wine, Vegemite and many other international food items.

I keep intending to go there to see how they're coping, but the advent of the superstores has caused me to forget businesses like this. I shall make an effort to visit this favorite landmark in the near future.

Sin & Lee survives but the pig has gone. Those who travel the road between the Heroines' Monument and the west coast of the island will know a small village called, correctly, Baan Manik, but often referred to as 'pig village'.

This was because of a large concrete pig that stood for a long time in front of a row of shops. For as long as I can remember,

the pig had its nose in a collection of rubbish bins. Fairly pig-like, I suppose.

But suddenly, without warning, the pig disappeared. I used to assess my progress on a trip to other areas by whether I had passed the pig or not.

It took quite some time, and a few misjudged "times of arrival" for me to realize that the pig had gone, without fanfare or farewell. Maybe we should take a up a petition for its return.

The pig is one of many fine landmarks that have gone. Pan's Lighthouse, a grass shack on the shore of Chalong Bay, is another, long ago replaced by larger, more modern buildings.

I suppose this is the price of progress, but it seems a pity. The floating seafood restaurants off Laem Hin are still there. I hope they stay and I hope the pig comes back. But most likely it won't.

The pig, it seems, is dead. May it rest in peace.

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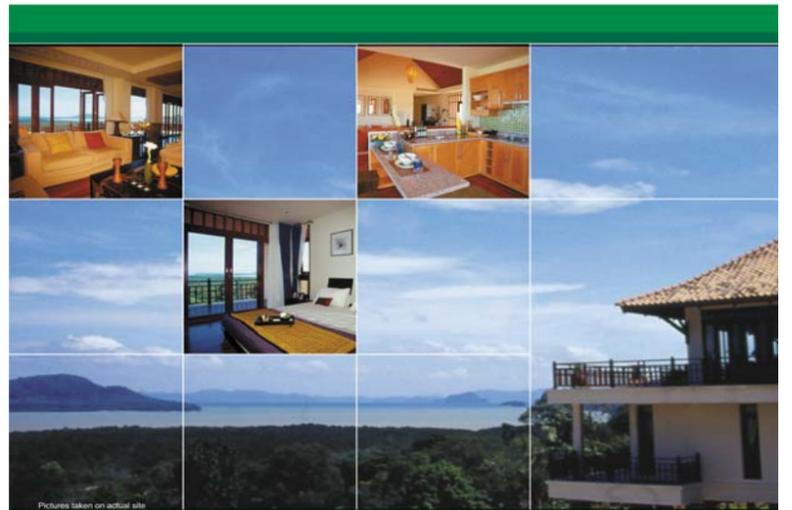


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Gardening

with Bloomin' Bert

How not to be stumped for trees

Where would we be without trees? I mean, really? We kind of take them for granted. Not just here in Phuket, but everywhere. They're just, well, sort of there all the time. We shelter under them, then we chop them down. We climb them as kids, and a couple of years later we carve our beloved's initials into a convenient tree trunk.

The material on which this publication was printed originated from a tree of some kind, and the house you live in is probably crammed with wooden furniture. Ultimately, the health of the planet revolves around trees, so they are probably worth a little more than a casual thought.

So why are we generally so unwilling to plant the things? Most gardeners are content to throw a few bedding plants around, peppered with the occasional shrub and bush. But trees? Maybe not.

I know what it is – we just can't be bothered with all the years of waiting that growing trees entails.

But at least in this corner of the globe we have a head start on many other regions. Plant a tree in Europe, and it will take several years just to decide if it's going to survive or not. Once it's graced you with its decision to actually stay alive, then it will consider getting down to the business of growing; that, too,



TREES IN TRUSSES: If you want a stump to grow into a tree, make sure it can't sway about.

takes time. They're not too keen to rush into anything there. It's too damn cold.

Here, winter frosts are the least of a gardener's concerns. Anything that one decides to put in the ground will in all probability do its best to please, and will grow with a degree of enthusiasm. Trees are no exception, but that enthusiasm isn't much good if the result you're after is 20 feet tall.

There is an answer to that problem here. Go out and buy a pre-grown tree. It's a bit like buying a secondhand car, except that

it's not totally destroyed by the time you take ownership of it. Quite the opposite in fact – a tree that's already been around for a decade or two is well worth having.

This is exactly what they've done in an area of land near the *Gazette* offices – they've covered it in trees. It was a somewhat bizarre sight when they first arrived. What appeared was a fleet of trucks, filled with what can only be described as enormous gnarled logs.

These weren't what you would logically describe as

“trees” at all – everyone in my office wondered what was going on.

They were duly unloaded, and what was revealed at the base of each log, which turned out to be a tree trunk, was what had once been a well-established set of roots. All that was left was a round stubby area between two and three feet across.

There seemed to be nothing delicate about the way they had been extracted from their former homes. Roots that had once presumably extended far and wide had been simply and mercilessly hacked off, leaving very little behind.

But that little stubby set of root stumps that was left was obviously enough. The next day, after a truckload of topsoil was pushed, literally, off the back of

a truck, a team of workers arrived.

As suspected, these giant logs were about to be planted. Holes were dug and lined with topsoil, then the trees were hoisted into the air, slotted into place, and the gaps around the edges filled with more soil.

Then came the clever bit. In order for something of this size to take root again, two very important things are needed.

First, trees need nutrients and water. The topsoil deals with that, and at this time of the year you hardly need to be manic with the hose.

Second, they need stability. If the stump moves, even a bit, then any further roots that are produced will move, and probably decide not to bother growing. Once too many of the roots give up in disgust because things just won't stay still, the tree is no more.

That's the key. The gardening team attached enough supports around each tree to support the Sarasin Bridge in a hurricane. It wasn't going anywhere; it had no excuse to move a single twig. I'm convinced those trees will still be there long after I've moved on.

If you want a tree in your garden but simply can't be bothered to wait 20 years, go see these gentlemen. Don't worry – the log look won't last long.

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Property Gazette

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TOWNHOUSE

in Anuphas. On the main road in the heart of the city and near Central, Tesco-Lotus and Big C, 2 stories, 27 sqwa., 3-bed, 2-bathroom house with kitchen, aircon, furniture and water heater is for sale for 2.2 million baht. Contact for details. Tel: 09-4691813. Email: annanoi@hotmail.com

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Property Gazette

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THE SAROJIN

THAILAND

The Sarojin is a new five-star, luxury boutique resort with first-class amenities set amongst the beautiful surroundings of Khao Lak, Phang Nga. Scheduled to open in December 2004, applications from Thai nationals are now invited for the following positions. Luxury operating and pre-opening experiences are an advantage. A passion to deliver the extraordinary and the ability to fulfil the dreams of our guests by delivering the unexpected are essential.

Executive Sous Chef
Executive Housekeeper
Chief Engineer
Chief Accountant
Sales Manager
Spa Manager

Sous Chef
Pastry Chef
Chef de Partie
Restaurant Manager
Room Service Manager
Chief Steward

Positions will be based at the pre-opening office in Phuket, relocating to The Sarojin prior to opening. Please forward resumé, recent photograph and salary expectation to: The Human Resources Manager, The Sarojin, 29/91, Moo2, Koh Kaew, Muang Phuket 83000.

e-mail: hr@sarojin.com fax: + 66 (0)76 239 819

Applications for all positions should be received by 16 September 2004.



Le Petite Orient

Le Petite Orient is the newest boutique hotel in Phuket town, to be opened in November 2004. We require experienced individuals to join our team as follows:

- 1 FRONT OFFICE MANAGER
- 1 SALES EXECUTIVE
- 1 RESERVATION
- 6 GUEST SERVICE AGENTS
- 3 CONCIERGES
- 1 CONTROLLER
- 1 ACCOUNT RECEIVABLE
- 6 HOUSEKEEPING

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
Contact person: Khun Chatchalerm Daengchai

MARKETING

executive wanted to promote brand awareness for leading international company.

- Excellent opportunity for self-motivated individual with own initiative.

- Salary + bonus.

- Based in Boat Lagoon, smart appearance essential.

Please email resumé to apply. Email: info@barclaycarrigan.com

LIVE-IN MAID

wanted. Nice family (Thai-farang) is looking for a live-in maid in Cherng Talay as soon as possible. Age 18 to 35, reliable, honest, independent, smiling and not lazy. English not necessary. The big house with pool means a lot of work and the big heart of the owners means a lot of fun - you will be happy to work here. If you have a job already but your sister in Isarn wants to work in Phuket call her in. Tel: 076-325588, 01-0827703. Email: dellapietra@mysunrise.ch

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. Please call for more details. Tel: 01-9011741. Email: rffuller@hotmail.com

PHI PHI ISLAND

travel agent. Largest travel agency on Phi Phi Island requires 4 motivated English-speaking staff. Accommodation included. Salary on application. Please contact to apply. Tel: 075-612260. Email: siamuk@loxinfo.co.th

BOI SUPPORTED

company. Well-known company - with 8 branches around the world and investment in Phuket with BOI support - seeks Thai nationals for the following positions: Accountant; Electronics Engineer; and Drivers. Please apply urgently by email to: taylor@loxinfo.co.th For further details, please see our website at: www.radi.se

PERSONAL DRIVER

I'm looking for a personal driver. Thai male with car license and experienced at driving in Phuket. Good personality and fluent in English, age between 30-40 yrs. Salary starts at 15,000 baht with 3 months probation. Must be available to start immediately. Please contact us now. Tel: 076-290068, 01-9584229. Fax: 076-290068. Email: kchai007@hotmail.com

RECEPTIONIST

needed urgently for a Patong guesthouse. Must speak English. Please contact for details and to apply. Tel: 06-2695763. Email: ciscocat@hotmail.com

ZURICH
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Thai Zurich Insurance Co Ltd. is well known for its professional insurance service and solid balance sheet internationally and domestically. We are seeking high-caliber applicants to help us expand our business in a dynamic and rapidly developing market for Foreign Resident and Small and Medium Enterprise (SMEs). Contact us if you:

- Are well established in the foreign resident, local and foreign business community
- Have a pleasant personality, good interpersonal skills and service-minded
- Knowledge of insurance would be an advantage but not required, training is provided.

Please send your resume or CV to

Mr. Daniel Wyss,
Manager of Foreign Resident & SME Dept
Thai Zurich Insurance Co Ltd
126/2 Krung Thonburi Rd,
Klongsan, Bangkok 10600
Tel: 0-2860-8033
or email: daniel.wyss@zurich.com

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

Island Job Mart



Cultural Spa & Wellness

A brand new spa in Phuket, located on Chao Fa West Road, scheduled to open in January, 2005. We are now seeking highly-qualified, team-minded professionals with modern thinking. A great opportunity for people who desire a career in a luxurious world-class spa and want challenging experiences.

Come and tell us if you are the right person for the following opportunities:

Guest Service Department

1. Guest Service Manager
2. Guest Service Supervisor
3. Guest Service Agent
4. Receptionist

Sales & Marketing Department

1. Marketing Executive
2. Sales Executive
3. Reservation Officer

Spa Service Department

1. Spa Supervisor
2. Spa Therapist
3. Assistant Spa Manager
4. Spa Cook
5. Salon & Beauty Supervisor
6. Salon & Beauty Attendant
7. Housekeeping Attendant
8. Housekeeping Supervisor
9. Housekeeping Clerk

Clubhouse Service Department

1. Club House Receptionist
2. Sport & Activities Attendant
3. Sport & Activities Supervisor

Engineering Department

1. Engineering Supervisor
2. Maintenance Engineer

Kitchen Operation Department

1. Chef De Partie
2. Executive Sous Chef
3. Cook
4. Cook Helper
5. Chief Steward
6. Steward
7. Secretary to EAM

Food & Beverage Department

1. Restaurant/Bar Supervisor
2. Restaurant/Bar Captain
3. Waiter/Waitress
4. Bartender

Finance & Account Department

1. Chief Accountant
2. Accounts Receivable
3. Accounts Payable
4. Income Auditor
5. General Cashier
6. Cost Controller
7. Storekeeper
8. Commissioning Service
9. Purchasing Supervisor
10. Purchasing Officer
11. Receiving Officer

Human Resources Department

1. Human Resources Clerk
2. Security Supervisor
3. Security Officer

Spa Gallery Service Department

1. Guest Service Agent

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Please send your resumé with a recent photo or apply in person to:

Human Resources Department
Sukko Spa Executive Co, Ltd.
 65/24 Moo 5 Wichit, Muang Phuket, 83000
 Tel: 076-235240
 E-mail: vee@sukkospa.com
www.sukkospa.com

RESERVATION STAFF

required. Phuket's largest travel agency requires 2 motivated English-speaking Thai nationals aged 25 upwards and possessing knowledge of computers, tours and hotels in the south of Thailand. Please call for more information and to apply. Thank you. Tel: 01-8939925.

ADMIN ASSISTANT

5-star diving cruise office is looking for an administrative assistant. Candidates must be fluent in written and spoken English, and have a driving license. Knowledge of accounting would be an advantage. Please call or email for more information. Tel: 076-294227, 01-8948508. Fax: 076-294038. Email: mike@viking-liveboards.com

DRAFTSMAN

urgently required. Draftsman with skill in AutoCAD 2000 wanted. Skills in any related field would be an advantage. Please call for more information or to apply. Tel: 076-215710.

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 would be an advantage. Must be fluent in English. For more information please contact Richard at Tel: 01-9011741 or by email at: rffuller@hotmail.com

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



Café Pourquoi Downunder

141 Hadnopparatara Road, Ao Nang
 Tel. 075 637 588

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Café Pourquoi Downunder is a recently established small boutique hotel with a modern euro-style bar & restaurant, located opposite the beach in Ao Nang.

- Experienced Bar Person, who can also provide reception & booking assistance. The opportunity to progress to Assistant Manager exists for the right candidate;
- Chef, trained & experienced in Thai & Western cuisine, with a flair that will appeal to, and satisfy, discerning palates.

Successful candidates will possess the following attributes:

- Thai Nationals;
- Fluent in both written and spoken English;
- Excellent & Vibrant Personalities; and
- Dedication, Honesty & Reliability.

Interested?

Check us out at www.cafe-pourquoi.com and then email your application & resumé to:

john.cary@cafe-pourquoi.com.

If you have any queries you can call John Cary on Tel: 072 767312

PHUKET MARBELLA

Villa Management requires the following staff for a luxurious villa in the Laguna area. Butler/Chauffeur: Experience of this type of work is essential and duties will involve the smooth running of the home and staff and personal attention to owners and guests. Chef: Knowledge in the preparation of international as well as Thai cuisine to a professional standard. Maid: Seeking a person able to ensure that the villa is kept to an extremely high standard. Further assistance will be expected as necessary. All the above posts will require references and full details of all previous employment. Pls contact by phone or email to apply. Tel: 076-271544, 07-2701387. Email: phuketmarbella@yahoo.com

Employment Wanted

HOTELIERS/RESORT

owners. Do you need help with your project, to lower costs or make unprofitable areas profitable? Hotelier with over 30 years in the hospitality industry is only a call away. Let the expert give you his unbiased opinion on a consultancy basis. Tel: 04-7457024. Email: kingrw80@hotmail.com

DYNAMIC CHEF

I am a young, dynamic and creative chef with working experience in Thailand. Looking for a new challenge. Culinary regards, Chef. Email: bangkokchef@flashmail.com

LOOKING FOR JOB

I am 22 years old, Thai, and looking for a job as informationist or shop assistant. Can speak English. Tel: 04-0566912.

Wine Connection Phuket

is looking for

- Senior Accountant (1 position)**
- Shop Manager (1 position)**
- Sales Staff (1 position)**

Minimum 28 years old with 4 years' experience and a Good command of English - Competitive salary.

Email: michael@wineconnection.co.th
 Fax: 076-282-414 / Tel: 076-282-411/2

SALES STAFF

Sales assistant required for Siam Diving Enterprises. Applicant must be fluent in spoken & written English and have a driving license. Experience in diving & sales an advantage. Tel: 076-281401-2, 01-079 4137. Fax: 076-281400. Email: sdephuk@loxinfo.co.th

SEEKING MLM

leaders. US\$4 billion health care company seeks quality leaders for network launch in Thailand. Please contact us for more information. Tel: 02-7269918 or 06-341-8781. Fax: 02-7269918. Email: makelifegood@aol.com

Find more Recruitment Classifieds at www.phuketgazette.net/

Tout, Trader & Trumpet

Articles for Sale

POOL/SNOOKER TABLE
6 foot x 3ft pool/snooker table in good condition for sale. Can be seen in bar. Buyer collects. Please call for more info. Tel: 01-6064649.

EURO PALLETS
for storage or shipping. Buy them, use them and then sell them for the same price. Save handling costs in Europe. 500 baht each. Please call for details. Tel: 01-2712684.

USED RESTAURANT EQUIPMENT

Used restaurant kitchen equipment for sale: bakery reversing dough sheeter; bakery bread slicing machine; gas grill with stainless steel stand and enclosure; bain-marie; long beer refrigerator; fume collection hood and fan; and chest freezers. Good low prices. Items can be seen by contacting Don at Tel: 01-8946401 or by visiting Don's Mall on Sai Yuan Rd, Rawai.

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Sanyo. Nearly-new (purchased in July) Sanyo Wine Storage unit. Warranty card and receipt available unsent. Will hold about 48 bottles easily, and about 80-85 if some shelves are removed and bottles stacked. Good controls, well insulated. I like this unit, and am selling it because I am buying a much larger one that will hold 180 bottles. This is perfect for storage of this capacity; I just want the bigger unit. I love wine. I paid 15,900 baht for this unit in Phuket City. Will sell for 11,500 ono. Can see, it is full of wine right now. Will transfer to the larger unit when it gets here. I'll even throw in a bottle of red... Tel: 076-296204, 07-0291882. Email: jcorti@loxinfo.co.th

CHRISTMAS
crackers. It ain't a proper Christmas dinner unless you have read a motto/bad joke and put on a paper hat. Mums and dads, do not deprive your kids of this Yuletide tradition just because you live in paradise. 650 baht for a box of 10. Hoteliers, make sure your Christmas banquet is all it should be. Call now for bulk discounts! Tel: 01-535 1754, 01-5351754. Email: crackers@funkyguide.com

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Christmas Eve. I'm looking for a beautiful white boat to charter for a private and sophisticated Christmas Eve party. The capacity required is about 35-40 people. Only needed for just one night. Please contact me with full details. Tel: 01-7970714. Email: loogpatt@hotmail.com

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

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for sale. Thai-registered fiberglass 25-footer - with lots of extras - for sale. Can be used for charter. US\$ 20,000. Call for details. Tel: 06-9401860.

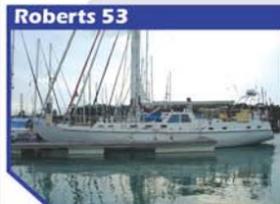
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BAR FOR SALE
Patong. Bar in Patong's fun zone for sale. Includes all stock, furnishings, licenses and sound & light system. Bar has dance area/stage with mirrors and 3 aircon units. The property is double-width, on 2 levels and has a patio. Price: ฿29,900 (UK£20,000/US\$36,500) purchase + ฿700 rent. 5-year lease. call or email for details. Tel: 06-9486850. Email: patongbar@yahoo.com

BAR FOR SALE
Small bar on beautiful Phi Phi Island for sale. Please call for more details. Tel: 072-703-780, 09-5908411.

KAMALA
guesthouse. Phuket, 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 storeroom. Please email for details. Email sheilaspies@thailand.com

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ADSL INTERNET CAFE
Nice coffee, Internet and games shop, including interior + technical equipment, for sale at 980,000 baht. Buyer takes over the lease. Price without the interior, technical equipment, etc, is 360,000 baht, with the buyer taking over the lease. Please contact for more information. Tel: 076-333280, 01-8924282. Fax: 076-333280. Email: taxiregio@freenet.de

RESTAURANT & BAR
A 48-seat restaurant and bar available for rent on the main road to Nai Ham Beach. Facilities include office, pool table, 2 bamboo salas, garden and car park. Good contract. Please call for more details. Tel: 01-0910964.

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 information please email us at: phuket_development@hotmail.com

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leaders. US\$4 billion health care company seeks quality leaders for network launch in Thailand. Email for info. Tel: 02-7269918, 06-3418781. Fax 02-7269918. Email: makelifegood@aol.com

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Personals

WANT TO BE FRIENDS
I am a local girl, working in business services. I would like to meet a friend, no matter who you are and where you are from. Very willing to help with anything about Phuket, and Thailand! Please contact me. Tel: 076-325274, 01-6936224. Fax: 076-325277. Email: martiny_25@yahoo.com

LADY FRIEND
wanted. I like to travel anywhere in Thailand. If you would like to meet and have a nice time, maybe for dinner, and if you are looking for a good friend, I am an easy-going guy who likes to enjoy life. I am healthy, very clean and like to exercise and swim. Email: paul2@mail2world.com

WOMAN SEEKS
foreign man. I am 35 years old and people say I am a nice lady. Living in Chiang Rai and seeking foreigner who cares for me. He can be sure I take care of him and am good wife. Age not important and I don't do for money. Please email me, I am waiting for your answer. Email: nantiya_6@yahoo.com

LOOKING FOR
educated girl. I am a handsome and young 44-year-old, a kind and gentle Australian man looking for an educated, kind and gentle lady for friendship and possible relationship. I have an excellent job and am keen to meet you if you are not from the bar scene. 21 to 35 years old would be great. Tel: 06-7729795. Email: dhartman@ozemail.com.au

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Green 1997 Mazda Astina 1800cc for sale at 330,000 baht. Tel: 076-216420, 01-5376766, 01-7979200.

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Pickups

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TOYOTA TIGER
in excellent condition, for sale. 2 doors, 2-wheel drive, gray, 109,000km, expat owner, serviced by Toyota only. 390,000 baht. Tel: 04-0534118. Email: carlophuket@yahoo.com

ISUZU 4 CAB
2 years, 8 months old. Metallic silver, 2-wheel drive, manual, electric windows and mirrors, central locking, Max wheels, Carryboy hard top. Serviced by Isuzu, one expat owner. 515,000 baht. Tel: 076-296563, 09-8715642. Email: termalou@loxinfo.co.th



Wanted

SMALL CAR/P-UP
wanted cheap. Small car or pickup needed just as local run-about in Phuket. Must be in decent working order and cheap. Please contact by email with full details. Email: bnsms@sanook.com

HONDA STEED
Honda Steed wanted in good condition. Please contact with full details. Tel: 076-344851, 01-5395329. Email: grahamtre@hotmail.com

Others

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cover for pickup truck. Carry Boy-type cover for pickup truck, currently used on Mazda standard-bed vehicle. Locks fine, windows slide and rear window opens perfectly. Excellent for rainy season. We are buying a 4-door pickup - cannot use this one. Cost about 15,000 baht (or something like that) new; will sell for 5,500 ono. In fair condition, excellent buy. Can be seen at Number 21, 50 Pi Rd in Patong. Tel: 076-296294, 07-0291882. Email: jcorti@loxinfo.co.th

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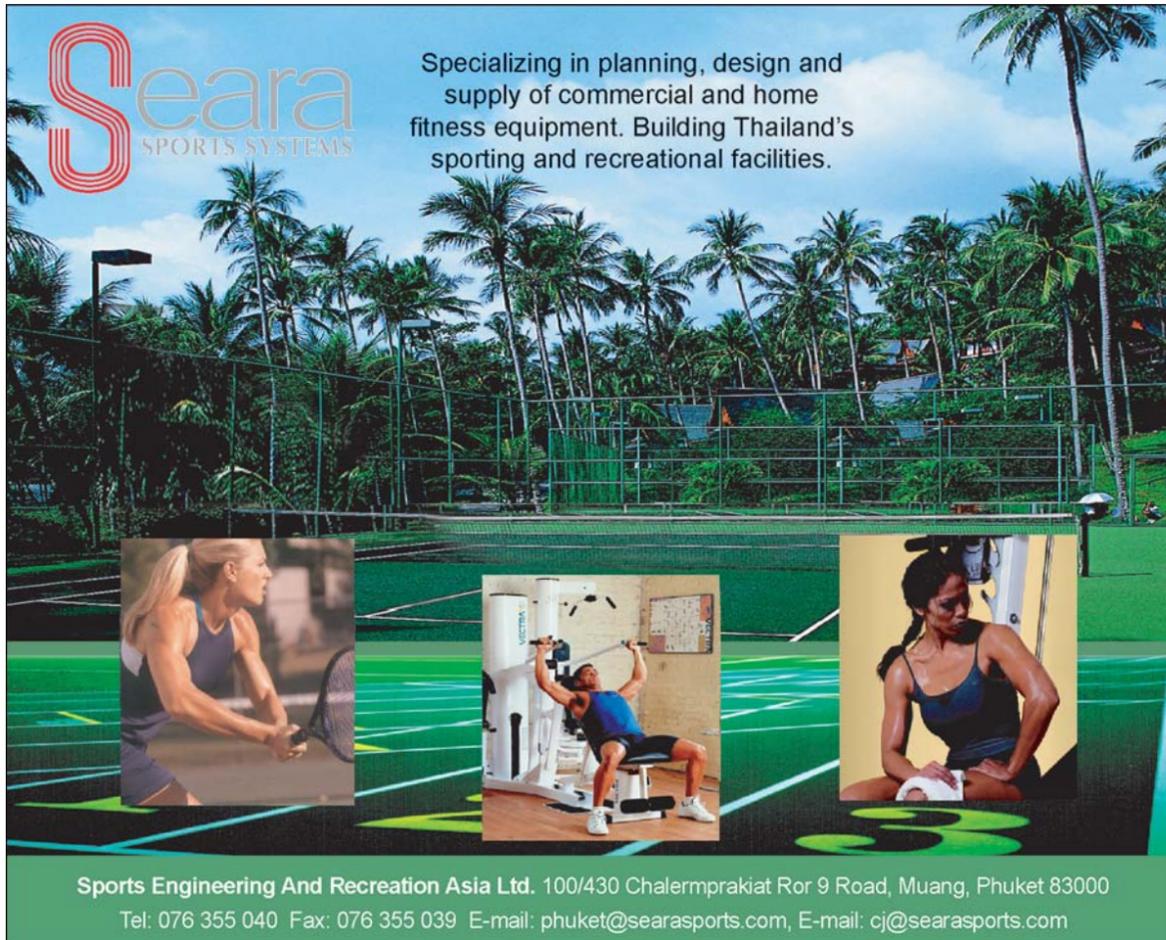
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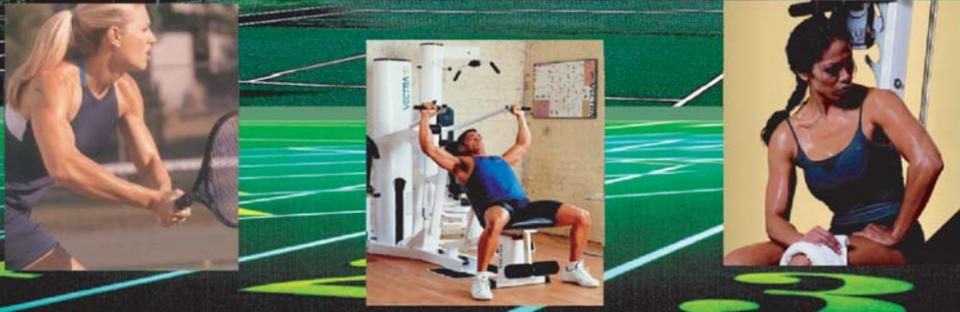
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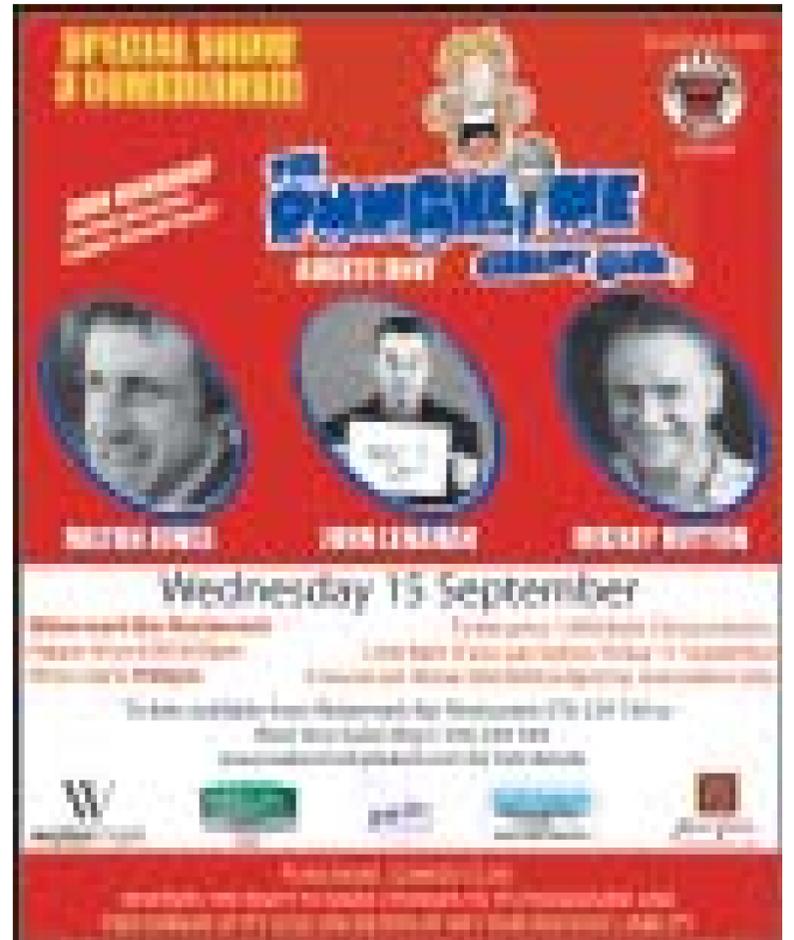


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THAILAND PREMIER PROPERTY EXHIBITION

Wednesday 15 September

W

Singapore

15-17 Oct 2004

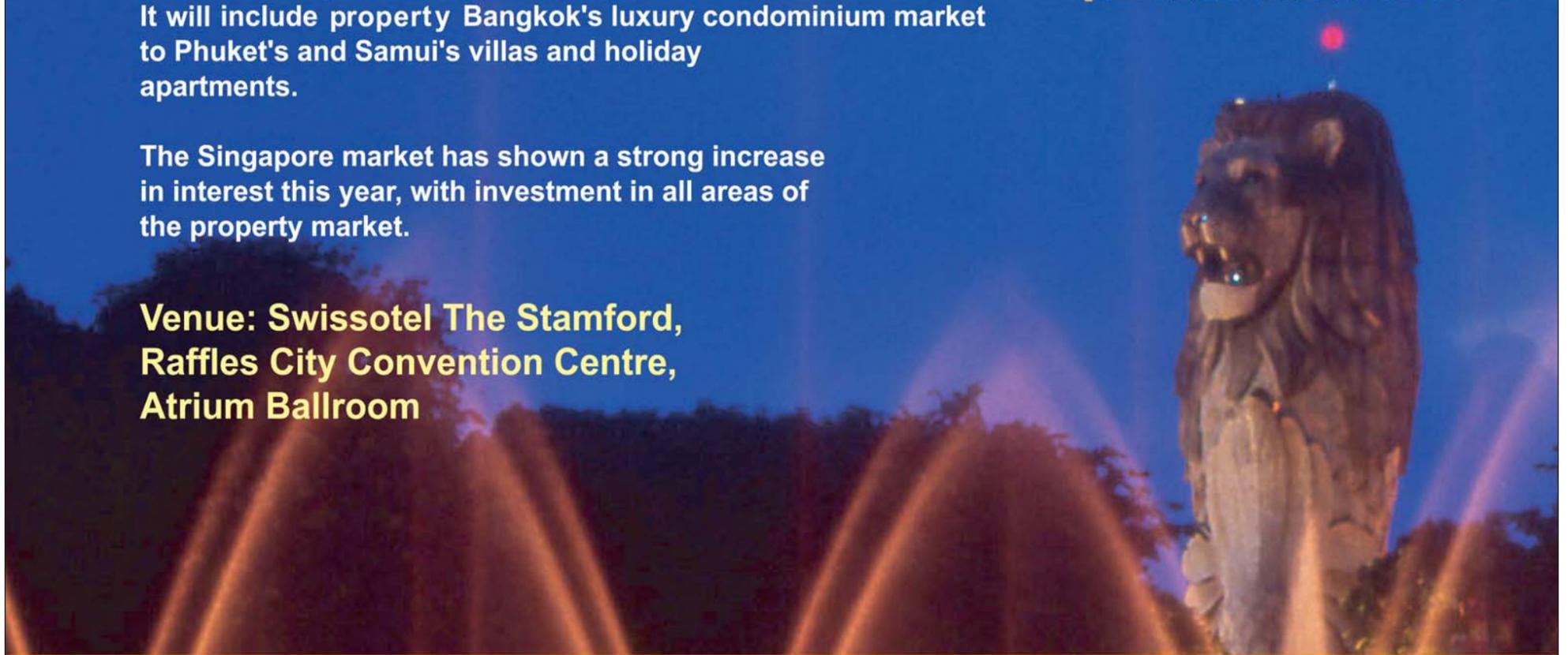
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