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Lucky Complex to get new life?

By Kamol Pirat

PHUKET CITY: The Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (OrBorJor) has agreed to issue a concession for private company Phamonkij Witsavakram (PW) to refurbish the abandoned Lucky Complex at Saphan Hin and run it as a duty-free plaza for 25 years.

However, the agreement is contingent on several key factors, including Customs Department approval for duty-free goods to be sold at the site, which will be renamed Sawasdee Phuket Duty Free.

The OrBorJor application to Customs also asked that stores in the complex be allowed to sell duty-free goods to Thai tourists who present some form of proof, such as an air ticket or hotel bill, proving that they have stayed in Phuket for more than two days. Thais would be limited to spending 100,000 baht on duty-free goods per trip.

In addition, before PW may take over the premises in January next year, it must prove to the OrBorJor that it has at least 200 million baht to spend on the project, half of which must be spent on refurbishing the run-down complex.

PW will also have to pay more than 1.67 million baht in outstanding rent – the legacy of the previous leaseholder, Lucky Seafood Co, which was evicted by the OrBorJor in March 2002.

The concession will also require PW, a construction firm based in Nonthaburi province, to pay 500,000 baht a month rent for the first three years, with a 9% increase at the end and every three years thereafter.



The Lucky Complex at Saphan Hin has stood empty and decaying for seven years, but may now get a new lease on life.

OrBorJor President Anchalee Vanich-Thepabutr, making the announcement on September 13, said, "Over the 25 years, the OrBorJor will receive more than 350 million baht, which is a high return compared with the 17 million baht in rent we would have received under the old deal."

Another part of the agreement, she said, was that parts of the complex must be earmarked for the OrBorJor to hold public activities and for local products to be displayed and sold.

K. Anchalee explained that she had presented the company's proposal to the OrBorJor council on September 10, and that the council had agreed unanimously.

"We gave the concession to this private company without bidding [by other companies]," K. Anchalee said, "because no other companies have made a proposal for the site, and we be-

lieved that no other firm could match PW's offer.

"This project will encourage tourists to spend more money on buying brand-name goods, which will boost income for Phuket and the country," she added.

The move to rejuvenate the Lucky Complex may signal a new era in the building's sad history. Construction began in 1992, and Lucky Seafood Co opened the complex as a department store in 1996.

It closed down less than a year later, after disenchanted tenants moved out, having found that essential utilities, including electricity, were not provided.

The OrBorJor resumed possession of the building after Lucky Seafood failed to pay rent for two years. Since then, the building has stood abandoned, serving only as a shelter for homeless people and drug users.

Phuket in bid to host F1 power boat races

By Sangkhae Leelanaporn

PHUKET: The island is hoping to host a round of next year's international UIM F1 Powerboat Grand Prix circuit, the world's premier inshore power boat racing championship.

Governor Udomsak Usawarangkura told the Gazette that he had already met with F1's Vice-President for Marketing, Giancarlo Tschuor from Switzerland, and that a tentative agreement had been reached to stage the Phuket race in February next year.

"They would like to use the Deep Sea Port [at Cape Panwa]," he said. "If it is successful, then Phuket could become an annual venue for racing."

The 2004 championship, which started in the waters off Mumbai, India, in March, has so far included races off Saudi Arabia, Portugal, Italy and China, and is scheduled to visit Singapore next Sunday (September 19) and Putrajaya, Malaysia, on September 26.

"They have already checked many of the facilities here, such as the hospitals and hotels, as well as water depths, winds and tides," the Governor said. "There will probably be about 12 teams taking part."

He added a warning to Phuket's bureaucrats: "We have to help them with immigration and customs procedures, included the importing of spare parts in advance of the event."

"We have to make things convenient for them. If we don't do this, then I don't think they will come back."

"Officials involved in the arrangements should not be stu-

Continued on page 2

Gov moves to reduce drowning toll

PHUKET: Phuket Governor Udomsak Usawarangkura is planning to erect signs at island beaches warning swimmers how to react if they get caught in a dangerous current.

"I just met with a foreign expert in sea safety, and he told me that swimmers who get into trouble should not try to fight the current and swim back to shore. This only causes exhaustion and often leads to drowning. They should just float and wait for help, possibly waving to nearby boats for assistance," he said.

The Governor added that he plans to call a meeting of sea safety experts and other officials to discuss other ways of reducing the death toll from drowning.

This might involve extending the system of red warning flags to include flags flown from offshore buoys, where they will be more visible.

The dangers of Phuket's waters in the low season were highlighted by the drowning deaths of five people in a five-day period at the end of August.

Police urged to take special care of Ozzies

By Kamol Pirat

PHUKET: Police in Phuket have been urged to take special care of Australian tourists in the wake of the recent car bomb in Jakarta, Indonesia, which killed at least 10 people and did massive damage to the Australian embassy.

The Deputy Commissioner of the National Central Investigation Bureau, Pol Maj Gen Chachavan Suksumjit, also called on the tourist police in Phuket to be alert to any signs of potential terrorist activity, and to encourage hotels and guesthouses to report suspicious people to the police.

However, Gen Chachavan said, because terrorists pursue psychological warfare, their targets are more likely to be state buildings than people. This is why, he said, the police were especially active around embassy buildings in Bangkok.

And he stressed that police have never found any evidence suggesting that anyone is planning to harm tourists in Phuket.



Gen Chachavan: Police have never found any evidence that anyone is planning to harm tourists in Phuket.

Gen Chachavan was in Phuket on September 11 to present scholarships to the children of local police officers.

He talked about police activity to protect tourists from thieves in southern Thailand, as well as police action against the illegal occupation of state land, and a crackdown on smuggled goods – from cow internal organs imported illegally via Malaysia to pangolins smuggled from Malaysia to Thailand – and counterfeiting.

He said, "We have two areas locally where we have problems with places selling goods that violate copyright laws; one is Patong and the other is Chaweng on Koh Samui. The police in these areas are working to solve these problems."

Gen Chachavan also talked about how the local police are enforcing the national government's policy to suppress southern Thailand's "Mr Bigs". At one time, three people were under surveillance, he said, but that number has now risen to 20.

Activities in which the 20 are allegedly involved range from illegal occupation of state land to running underground lotteries.

Jeab murder accused free on bail

PATTAYA: Belgian Sam Van Treeck, 24, who is accused of the murder his ex-girlfriend has been released on bail by the Pattaya Provincial Court.

Chompoonut "Jeab" Kobram was found stabbed to death at Van Treeck's apartment on June 25. The accused denies the charge, claiming he came home after being out drinking and found the body. K. Jeab had been stabbed 48 times.

Pol Maj Chalermkiat Sirimak of Pattaya police told the *Gazette* that Van Treeck had been charged with committing premeditated murder and had initially been remanded in custody.

He explained, "It is up to the court whether to grant bail or not, taking account of such matters as the accused's assets and the likelihood of him appearing to stand trial. We don't know his current whereabouts, but he is required to report every 12 days. A trial date has not yet been fixed."

K. Jeab and her Canadian boyfriend Noah Meyer, 33, were planning to marry next year. She is survived by her three-year-old daughter Cherie.

Call for cut-price software

PHUKET: The Software Industry Promotion Agency (Sipa) has called for all Thai software development companies to join its Small-to-Medium Enterprise Software Exchange (SMese) project, which will provide cut-price Thai-language computer programs to the Thai private sector.

To encourage developers and vendors to provide software for the project, Sipa has set up a website at www.smese.net as a marketing portal for the pro-

grams, and will provide after-sales service on behalf of the software companies that join the project.

Some 150 software vendors, including Phuket-based On Business, Ceron Software, B.Lue D.Zine and Phuket Programmers, have joined the project since it began in June.

Developers and vendors interested in joining the SMese should contact Sipa at Tel: 076-379111-2, Fax: 076 379 000 or by email at: phuket@sipa.or.th

Roadshow pulls in 2,000 tourists

PHUKET: Almost 2,000 Malaysians have decided to celebrate the end of Hari Raya and Ramadan by visiting Phuket, after seeing a roadshow organized by the local office of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT).

Around 30 TAT staff, members of the Phuket Tourism Association and industry representatives from Phang Nga and Krabi took the "Thailand – Southern Paradise Roadshow" on a swift tour of Kuala Lumpur,

Malacca, Johor Bahru and Singapore between September 6 and 11.

Suwalai Pinpradab, Director of the Phuket TAT office, told the *Gazette*, "We presented attractions such as shopping – our target group likes to shop – golf and next month's Vegetarian Festival, along with fishing competitions, December's film festival and the countdown to the Chinese New Year celebration," she said.

Poaching threatens to spark spa wars

PHUKET CITY: The Chairman of the Phuket Spa Business Club (PSBC) has called for spas to work together to train staff rather than poaching employees from one another.

Pakin Raktae-Ngam said that poaching was not a problem within the club. But club members, and other smaller spas that are not members, were having problems with spas belonging to large chains, which were luring away their trained staff.

Phuket is the first place in Thailand to issue certificates to spa therapists, according to K. Pakin. The number of spas on the island has increased greatly in recent years, and so has the competition for trained, qualified staff.

Therapists could not be blamed for accepting job offers with higher pay and better benefits, said K. Pakin.

However, he said, "It's not justifiable to take staff like this. It's as if we plant the coffee trees,



Pakin Raktae-Ngam: 'It's not justifiable to take staff like this.'

harvest the beans, blend them and roast them, then someone else takes all the benefit when we bring the coffee to market.

"If [the big spas] need to build teams, we should do it together." –Anongnat Sartpisut

F1 powerboats

From page 1
pid; we should all help them."

The Director of the Phuket branch of the Tourism Authority of Thailand, Suwalai Pinpradab, welcomed the news.

"This is a world-class event," she said. "It will be good for tourism in Phuket because it will be broadcast on satellite TV. It will be a big help in promoting Phuket as a marine tourism center."

Thailand already has a stake in the championship, with Boonrawd Brewery sponsoring the Italy-based Singha Racing Team, which took first place in Mumbai and currently lies second in the team standings, behind Emirates F1 of the UAE.

The organizers of the F1 powerboat championship not be reached for comment.

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SorPorKor papers on 3,000 rai revoked

PHUKET : The Phuket Provincial Land Reform Office (PLRO) has revoked 283 *SorPorKor* 4-01 land documents covering more than 3,000 rai in Phuket, following a ruling by the *SorPorKor* Land Commission in Bangkok that the land was not being used by poor farmers as intended.

Teerawut Tawornpatanavong, Chief of the PLRO, told the *Gazette* he will now begin notifying the illegal occupiers, who

will be required to vacate the land immediately.

Those wanting to challenge the order will have 90 days from the date of official notification to file a case with the Administrative Court, he added.

K. Teerawut said the revocations are the result of the investigation carried out by the Crime Suppression Division last year. Many of those to be evicted used the

land to construct restaurants and other types of building. Other cases involved *SorPorKor* documents held by people who were neither poor nor farmers – the two qualifications for being granted *SorPorKor* land.

Some even tried to sell the land, even though *SorPorKor* 4-01 documents do not confer ownership on the title holder, he said.

Most of the invalidated *SorPorKor* papers were issued on land in Muang and Kathu Districts and included hilly areas along the bypass road held by members of the Srisansuchart family.

The PLRO will now consider each plot on a case-by-case basis and decide if it should be re-issued to poor farmers, preserved as forest land or designated for some other purpose, he said.

Malls shorten opening hours

PHUKET CITY: Shopping centers and malls in Phuket have been told they must restrict their opening hours to save energy.

Panjit Pissawong, Chief of Phuket Provincial Commercial Office (PPCO) told the *Gazette* that the island's shopping malls had to fall into line with the resolution made by the Cabinet on September 9. She added that the PPCO will monitor how trade is affected by the reduced hours.

The new opening hours being observed by Phuket's malls are as follows:

Central Festival, Robinson, Big C and Tesco-Lotus: Monday-Thursday: 11 am-9.30 pm; Friday: 11 am-10 pm; Saturday and Sunday: 10 am-10 pm.

Makro and Super Cheap: Monday-Thursday: 6 am-9.30 pm; Friday, Saturday and Sunday: 6 am-10 pm.

– **Dhirarat Boonkongsae**

Wisut to run for election as TRT MP

PHUKET: Wisut Santikul, former Vice-President of the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (*OrBorJor*), will stand in next February's general election as a Thai Rak Thai (TRT) candidate, he and the party confirmed on September 13.

K. Wisut, who stood as an independent in the *OrBorJor* elections in March, but lost, will contest District 2 – all of the is-

land except Phuket City and its immediate surrounding areas – for the TRT, while long-time party member Dr Sriyada Palimapan will contest District 1.

K. Wisut said his experience as *OrBorJor* Vice-President would stand him in good stead for the forthcoming contest.

"I believe that in the general election in 2005, people will trust me and elect me," he said.

Police welcome B34m for guns

PHUKET CITY: The Superintendent of Phuket City Police Station, Pol Col Paween Pongsirin, has welcomed the allocation of 34 million baht from central government for weapons and training by a US expert for police from Phuket and surrounding areas.

The money was promised by Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra during his recent whistle-stop tour of the South.

Col Paween said, "This money is for security measures

and will be spent on special weapons, including handguns, and also on training."

He declined to say what weapons will be bought, explaining, "We don't want [criminals] to know our capabilities."

Col Paween said he believed the 34 million baht would significantly improve policing capabilities. "You can compare it with how a boxer fights," he said. "Having good gloves is not enough; you need good tactics and technique."

Reluctant hotels pay B44m in rooms tax

By Kamol Pirat

PHUKET: With less than two weeks to go until the end of the tax year, Phuket's hotels have paid more than 44 million baht in tax on room revenue to the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (*OrBorJor*), President Anchalee Vanich-Thepabutr said on September 8.

K. Anchalee said 217 of the island's hotels – considerably less than half – had paid.

The *OrBorJor* would be writing to thank those hotels that have paid, said K. Anchalee. But she warned those companies that have yet to pay that the *OrBorJor* will not let the matter slide.

"First I will send notices to the hotels who [do not pay]," she said. "If these notices are ignored, I will use the law to force them to pay."

Owners or managers of hotels that fail to pay the tax – 1% of room revenue – face fines of up to 5,000 baht or three months in prison, or both.

However, K. Anchalee told the *Gazette* that, after talks, local members of the Thai Hotels Association (THA) had agreed to pay, but first wanted to see the *OrBorJor*'s spending plans.

"I will send the budget to the THA. I believe they will have no problem with it," she said.



Anchalee Vanich-Thepabutr: No exceptions.

K. Anchalee said the revenue would be used to promote Phuket as a "World Class" tourism destination, and to improve facilities for tourists.

Some will be spent on hiring lifeguards to watch every beach on Phuket. Other proposals include improvements to the scenery around Khao Pra Taew wildlife sanctuary and at Kok Chana Pama in Thalang district,

site of the 1785 victory over Burmese forces by defenders led by the Two Heroines.

In addition, said K. Anchalee, the *OrBorJor* intends to take a roadshow to countries such as Russia and India to promote tourism to Phuket.

"I guarantee that the income from the hotel tax will be put to good use, will be spent efficiently and will reap dividends for Phuket in the near future," she said.


When first introduced in 2000, at a rate of 0.5%, the *OrBorJor* tax was bitterly opposed by Phuket's hotels.

One major bone of contention was that the *OrBorJor* at that time was planning to collect the tax first and then decide what to do with the money, rather than draw up a budget first, and base the tax rate on its budgetary requirements.

Hotels were also furious that they would not be able to pass the first year's tax on to guests, because most hotels had already signed one-year room-rate contracts with major tour operators.

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Phuket Gazette

Queer News

A very rich diet

PHAYAO: Doctors performing emergency abdominal surgery were dumbfounded when they found more than two kilograms of coins and other objects inside the gut of patient Sanguan Pongsuwan, 37.

Sanguan was taken to Phayao Hospital by relatives after complaining of severe stomach pain on August 31. Doctors knew something was amiss when they looked at X-ray images of Sanguan's stomach – it looked like the inside of a slot machine.

Dr Nathapon Arayavuthikul said that after two hours in the operating theater, he and his surgical team had successfully removed 468 coins from K. Sanguan's stomach. Also recovered were two marbles, some shiny stones and bits of stainless steel.

"We found his stomach had become infected from trying to digest so many coins. However, we were able to remove them and the patient is now off the danger list," said the surgeon.

K. Sanguan's mother, 67-year-old Petch, said her son began exhibiting strange behavior about three years ago.

"He would ask for coins to go buy something, but then he would pop them in his mouth and swallow them instead," she said.

Concerned, K. Petch took her son to the Phayao Hospital, where he was diagnosed as schizophrenic. He was treated for about a month at the Suan Prung Hospital in Chiang Mai and released – under strict orders to refrain from eating coins and other shiny objects.

At the beginning of August K. Sanguan started to complain of abdominal pains that eventually became so crippling he could not stand. The emergency surgery saved his life and his prospects for recovery are good – provided he can break the habit of swallowing coins.

"I'll really have to watch him closely when we get home," said his mother.

It was not reported whether the coins, with a total value of 665.50 baht, were enough to cover K. Sanguan's medical bill.

Source: Thai Rath

Pendant power

NAKHON PATHOM : Rachanee Jarunpong, 32, was bringing her young son back from school by motorbike on the afternoon of September 6 when two men rode up beside her.

The man riding pillion pulled out a large-caliber pistol and fired three shots at her head before the pair raced off.

K. Rachanee was rushed to Thepakorn Hospital where, miraculously, she was treated for minor injuries – a wound on her thumb from when she raised her hand to protect herself from the bullets, and a slight graze on her head. The helmet had two bullet holes in it.

K. Rachanee is sure her miraculous survival was the result of the *Luang Phor Tae* pendant she wears around her neck. She may be right: a high-caliber bullet fired at such close range would normally pass through a plastic helmet like a hot knife through butter.

Source: Daily News

As with so many of its ambitious initiatives, the Government has chosen Phuket to serve as its pilot province by making it the first place where hoteliers can report information on guests via the Internet.

At the core of the effort is enforcement of the long-ignored Section 38 of the Immigration Act of 1979, which reads:

"The house-master, the owner or the possessor of the residence, or the hotel manager where the alien, receiving permission to stay temporary in the Kingdom has stayed, must notify the competent official of the Immigration Office located in the same area with that house, dwelling place or hotel, within 24 hours from the time of arrival of the alien concerned. If there is no Immigration Office located in that area, the local police official for that area must be notified."

Though on the books for 25 years, Section 38 has seldom been enforced – until al-Jemaah Islamiyah operations chief Hambali, who had close links with Osama Bin Laden's Al Qaeda organization, was captured hiding out in Ayudhaya in August last year.

Following his arrest, in January, Immigration Police in Bangkok searched 13 guesthouses in the backpacker's Khao Sarn Road, arresting five foreigners for failure to show their passports. All of the guesthouses searched had broken the law and their owners were fined under Section 38.

Now that the reporting has been made easier, Phuket Immigration is hoping for better compliance – and says it now fines those who "intentionally" fail to supply TM-30 reports.

With the cooperation of the Phuket Tourism Association, which supports the effort, the Immigration Bureau held a seminar at the Pearl Hotel on August 4 to teach more than 170 hotel reception staff how to send the information, all of which is taken from the foreigners' arrival/departure cards when they check-in.

But while there has been

Continuing acts of terror have governments worldwide scrambling to boost coordination of intelligence-sharing efforts and improve ways of tracking the movement of foreigners within their borders.

In Thailand, with some 10 million foreigners entering the country each year – and plans to double that figure – this challenge falls to the Immigration Bureau of the Royal Thai Police.

Immigration headquarters in Bangkok are starting on an ambitious program to enforce a number of long-ignored reporting requirements which, in theory at least, would allow police to know the address of every foreigner during his or her entire stay in the Kingdom. **Dhirarat Boonkongsan** looks at how Immigration plans to achieve this.



Although Pol Col Chalermpong Vadhanasukha (above), Deputy Superintendent of Immigration Division 3 in Bangkok, stresses that foreigners may not report their own address to Immigration, the pragmatic officers at the Phuket Immigration Office have found a way to allow them to do so.

some success with getting large hotels to report via the Internet, sources at Phuket Immigration admit that the response from smaller guesthouses has been less than impressive: many aren't even aware of the reporting requirement, and those that are probably consider it unlikely that they will ever be singled out for a surprise inspection.

Even more problematic is the fact that any Thai who offers accommodation to a foreigner – even a Thai who puts up a foreign friend overnight and free of charge – is also required by law to make the notification.

Nevertheless, under the law all are required to report and – technically at least – ignorance of the law is no excuse. Penal-

ties range from 2,000 to 10,000 baht, Pol Col Chalermpong Vadhanasukha, Deputy Superintendent of Immigration Division 3 in Bangkok, told the *Gazette*.

As the only provincial office currently charged by Bangkok with enforcing the Section 38 notification (Chiang Mai will be next) Phuket Immigration has taken what appears to be a rather interesting and pragmatic approach: allowing the foreigners to report themselves.

Their website carries the following:

For notification of residence of the foreigner [staying in a] hotel, guesthouse, mansion, apartment or any rented premises, the owner or the hotel manager must use TM-30 form for notification. [The] Immigration Bureau has defined the format and procedure of the foreigner's notification of residence within 24 hour as follows:

- 1. The foreigner may notify by himself [or] herself.*
 - 2. The foreigner may assign [a] person to notify for himself [or] herself.*
 - 3. The foreigner may notify by registered mail.*
 - 4. The foreigner may notify through Internet network system.*
- To fill out the TM-30 form, the foreigner must fill out all details required. And since the details filled out [are] usually incorrect, the details should mainly come from the details on his/her passport...*

However, when the *Gazette* asked Col Chalermpong whether it was actually possible for a foreigner to fill in the TM-30 form himself, he denied that it was.

Col Chalermpong pointed out that foreigners do have to report their address in Thailand, but this is done by filling in the "address in Thailand" box on the TM-6 arrival/departure card upon entering the Kingdom.

He called attention to note number 4 on the TM-6 arrival card, which reads:

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DATE MONTH YEAR

เรียน พนักงานเจ้าหน้าที่ตรวจคนเข้าเมืองหรือเจ้าพนักงานตำรวจท้องที่.....
TO: THE IMMIGRATION OFFICER OR LOCAL POLICE OFFICER

ข้าพเจ้า.....อายุ.....ปี
I (FULL NAME) AGE YEARS

สัญชาติ.....อยู่บ้านเลขที่.....ต.รอก/ซอย.....
NATIONALITY PRESENT ADDRESS LINE

ถนน.....ตำบล/แขวง.....อำเภอ/เขต.....
ROAD SUB-DISTRICT (TUMBOL) DISTRICT

จังหวัด.....ขอแจ้งการพักอาศัยของบุคคลต่างด้าวที่เดินทางเข้ามาในราชอาณาจักรไทย
PROVINCE WISH TO NOTIFY THE ADDRESS WHERE ALIEN RECEIVED PERMISSION

เป็นการชั่วคราว ซึ่งเจ้าพนักงาน.....
TO STAY TEMPORARILY IN THE KINGDOM HAS STAYED AS LINE

ถนน.....ตำบล/แขวง.....อำเภอ/เขต.....
ROAD SUB-DISTRICT (TUMBOL) DISTRICT

จังหวัด.....เมื่อวันที่.....เดือน.....พ.ศ.....
PROVINCE ON DATE MONTH YEAR

รวม.....คน ตามบัญชีรายชื่อที่แนบมาด้วยแล้ว
TOTAL PERSONS (NAME LIST ATTACHED)

ลงชื่อ.....ผู้แจ้งในฐานะเจ้าบ้าน
SIGNATURE HOUSE-MASTER, OWNER OR POSSESSOR OF RESIDENCE

หมายเหตุ 1. แจ้งภายใน ๒๔ ชั่วโมง นับแต่คนต่างด้าวเข้าพักอาศัย
MUST NOTIFY WITHIN 24 HOURS FROM THE TIME OF ARRIVING AT THE RESIDENCE
2. ในเขตกรุงเทพมหานคร ให้แจ้งต่อนายทะเบียนคนเข้าเมือง
MUST NOTIFY THE IMMIGRATION DIVISION IF LOCATED WITHIN BANGKOK AREA
3. ในต่างจังหวัด ให้แจ้งต่อนายทะเบียนคนเข้าเมืองที่ดูแลพื้นที่ หากไม่มีให้แจ้งต่อนายทะเบียนคนเข้าเมืองที่
MUST NOTIFY THE LOCAL IMMIGRATION OFFICE IF THERE IS NO IMMIGRATION OFFICE

The TM-30 form is clearly designed for the 'house-master' to fill in – but few do.

In case of change of address from what is stated in this form [the foreigner] must notify the Immigration Office within twenty-four hours.

“Upon entry, foreigners must fill in the TM-6 form to inform us of the place where they are going

to stay. That way, in case they do something wrong, we will be able to find them. And if they aren't staying at the address listed on their TM-6 card, they are subject to punishment for having provided the wrong information,” he said.

Unfortunately, the TM-6

card has long been a source of complaint and mystery among foreigners, who notice that it is all but impossible to fill in an entire address in the tiny space provided – even if they do happen to know it.

To see how the TM-30 reporting effort was working out in Phuket, and to clarify whether it really was the foreigners' responsibility to make the TM-30 report themselves, the *Gazette* first spoke with Pol Lt Col Rungkhiat Sonjance, Deputy Superintendent of Phuket Provincial Immigration Office.

After checking a regulations manual, he denied that foreigners were required – or even allowed to – make the TM-30 notification on their own.

“Even if the foreigners want to make the notification themselves, such as when their landlord ignores the requirement, they cannot do it. It's not legally possible.”

Despite the information on the website, this would appear to be the case, because the form itself is clearly intended to be completed by a Thai, not a foreigner. As this story was being edited, Col Rungkhiat said the webmaster was going to correct it.

However, the colonel did encourage foreign tenants to make their landlords aware of the reporting requirement and not to confuse it with the normal 90-day reporting requirement for foreigners who remain in the country on one-year extensions of stay – which are the sole responsibility of the foreigner.

This requirement, also

long ignored by Phuket Immigration [although enforced by some other offices] in past years, is now also being enforced, with those failing to comply facing a 2,000 baht fine and possible difficulty in getting extensions in the future.

Earlier, the *Gazette* was able to get in touch with Pol Capt Krissarat Nuesen of the Phuket Immigration Office and the usual public spokesman for the agency. He confirmed that Phuket Immigration had been allowing foreigners who live on their own in rented accommodations to make the TM-30 report by themselves – provided that they submitted copies of all the required documents, signed by the landlord.

But why would a foreigner go to all this effort when, according to some officials they cannot legally do so and when they are not legally required to do so?

One good reason is that the TM-30 form comes with a “receipt of notification” slip which is detached and given to the person making the notification. Phuket Immigration has informed other local government agencies – most notably the Phuket Transport Office – that this slip is now to be used by foreigners who need to apply for government services, such as the issue of a driver's license.

Capt Krissarat explained that by presenting the rental agreement, the foreigner effectively became “the owner” of the house in the eyes of Phuket Immigration. This enabled individuals to report themselves – even though this required them to fill in their own name twice on the document – once as “owner” and again as the person being reported.

At the time, Capt Krissarat explained that this was the way Phuket Immigration has implemented the law, although he admitted that he was not aware of how many other Immigration offices in the country were doing it that way, if any.

Returning to the larger issue of getting landlords, hotel owners and other “housemasters” to make the the TM-30 report

themselves, Col Rungkhiat told the *Gazette* that he had personally encountered difficulty in getting the message out.

“Even though we now have the Internet system for notification, less than 50% of hotels and other tourist accommodations are complying,” he admitted.

“I have been trying to get them [landlords, etc] to understand about this for a long time. I went to a [hotel] once to tell them about it and give them advice, but they just thought Immigration wanted money ... Some [hotel managers] tell me, ‘It's not my job, it's my staff's job. Go get them, not me,’” he added.

“I understand that nobody wants to be inconvenienced, but it's our job to ensure security. I don't think good people will see Immigration requirements and checks as unreasonable ... I don't want to see Phuket become like Pattaya, which has so many [foreign] mafia,” he said.

Col Rungkhiat told the *Gazette* that people who get permission to enter into a business of offering accommodation to foreigners are required to know all the accounting, tax reporting and other laws that apply – including making a TM-30 report every time a foreigner stays with them.


As with other laws that go largely ignored, penalizing offenders would seem to be the most obvious path to better enforcement. But Col Rungkhiat admits that thus far Phuket Immigration has seldom fined anyone who was unaware of the requirement.

“We mostly advise them first. Only in cases when people intentionally ignore the law do we fine them,” he said, adding that he hoped compliance would improve.

“Right now we are at peace here – both Thai and foreigners – so [people] tend to see all the regulations as an annoyance. But if something bad happens [a terrorist attack] everybody will blame us for not having been more strict.”

It's a concept that Immigration officials in the US came to understand all too well after September 11, 2001.

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By Anongnat Sartpisut

Long before the days of email and faxes, commerce and individuals relied on the postal service for clear and efficient lines of communication.

Thailand entered the postal age in 1880 during the reign of King Chulalongkorn, often referred to as “The Modernizing Monarch”. The first post office was opened that year, though it was another three years before the first stamps were issued.

Apart from their practical purpose, Thai stamps became an object of interest for collectors both here and abroad. Stamps do, after all, represent the *zeitgeist* and cultural history of a country through the emblems and pictures depicted on them.

Phuket philatelists may now enjoy the renovated Phuket Post & Telegraph Office – next to the main post office on Montri Rd in Phuket City – which is home to the first stamp museum in southern Thailand.

Visal Pongtiwattanakul, Chief of Phuket Post Office said, “This post office was the first in Phuket and was built in 1930, although it went out of service some years ago. The Fine Arts Department of the Ministry of Culture has listed the building for conservation and decided that it should become a museum.

“Built in a Sino-Portuguese style, it has been renovated and turned into a philatelic museum at a cost of more than 2 million baht. It will officially open in December.”

K. Visal said that the museum will also be a center of education, a place where people can learn not only about the stamps themselves, but also about the



The old post office was built in the 1930s (above) but has now been restored and converted into a stamp museum (left).

PHILATELIC FANTASY

history and culture of Thailand – and the world – through stamps.

The museum will boast examples of rare, early Thai stamps, and visitors can chart the evolution of Thai philately through the many displays on show. There are even examples of stamps inlaid with gold leaf, used by, among others, the nobility and the government.

Old weighing scales and other related paraphernalia will also be on display, and a library and bookshop will cater to those seeking souvenirs or reading matter.

Seeking to shed light on the almost global fascination with stamps, K. Visal said, “It’s quite a leisurely hobby to participate in. It requires little in the way of

equipment and interesting stamps are actually easy to come by.

“There are currently around 300 members of the Phuket Stamp Collectors’ Club – my son is one of them and a more enthusiastic collector than I am – and really, it’s a beneficial pastime. You can learn from it; it sometimes requires concentration and it’s also a calming hobby.”

Enthusiasts often try to collect examples of the entire series of a particular set of stamps. According to K. Visal, Thais are particularly interested in stamps of the *Benjapakee* style.

“These stamps illustrate the development of the images of the Buddha from the Sukhothai, Ayudhaya and Rattanakosin periods,” explained K. Visal. “People feel there is something very special about stamps of the Buddha.”

“They believe that good fortune will come from amassing the whole series, or even one particular stamp.”

Although some sections of the museum are not quite ready, one can still visit and admire the detail and colorful history portrayed through stamps.

Although most are in Thai, some documents, brochures and legends are in English. Entry to the museum, which is open from 9 am to 4 pm daily, is free.

Phuket Stamp and Post Office Museum, Montri Rd, Phuket City, Phuket, 076-211020.

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Schools to get 'manners monitors'

The Education Ministry will issue new regulations to stamp out "inappropriate behavior" by students under 18 years old.

Education Minister Adisai Bodharamik said he was in favor of the regulations, which would tighten control on student behavior, punish offenders and authorize the appointment of professional "manners monitors".

The regulations will cover nine types of inappropriate behavior: truancy, gambling, possession of weapons, consumption of alcohol, cigarettes or illicit drugs, extortion, quarrelling, amorous acts in public, prostitution and night-time revelling.

K. Adisai said offenders would face four levels of punishment, but would not be suspended or dismissed from school. Punishments would consist of verbal admonishment, probation, having "behavior scores" reduced and mandatory participation in activities aimed at reforming behavior.

Lost in time: Dinosaur footprints that were preserved in sandstone for more than 100 million years are now being destroyed by quarry explosions in Nakhon Phanom's Tha Uthen district.

The Geological Survey Bureau called on the Cabinet to call an immediate halt to the blasting, which is on private land.

Chief researcher Dr Warawuth Sutheerathorn said that most of the 1,000 footprints were those of ornithomimosaur dinosaurs, similar in size and appearance to ostriches.

The tracks, which are scattered across a 3-rai site, were discovered accidentally in July, 2001. By February this year only 200 footprints remained, he said.

Two reasons were cited for the destruction of the site: the quarry operators sped up their activities because they did not want their business to be suspended; and some businessmen are buying rocks with the dinosaur footprints to sell to fossil traders.

War on thugs: The government is considering broadening the measures used in its battle against



A policeman orders students of Bangkok Technology School to perform push-ups after they were rounded up during a street brawl with a rival school. One student was grazed by a bullet during the fracas.

organized crime, including the use of wiretaps.

"The Special Investigation Department now has a limited mandate to carry out special law-enforcement measures, and it is time for a review in order to expand that mandate in ways that will not affect privacy," Deputy Prime Minister Wissanu Krea-ngam told a seminar. He said existing laws to deal with transnational crime and racketeering were inadequate.

K. Wissanu urged relevant agencies to consider drafting legislation authorizing wiretaps and the interception of mail and computer transactions. Any such bill must have measures to prevent abuse, he added.

Justice Minister Pongthep Thepkanjana said the bill could be modeled on US laws.

Fossil fools: Citing rising petrol prices, The Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand has asked the Cabinet to review a resolution that turned a 43-rai plot of land in Lampang's Mae

Mo district into a conservation area after ancient freshwater shell fossils were found there.

But Mineral Resources Department head Somsak Potisat said it would be regrettable not to conserve the site, where shell fossils found 12 meters underground could be traced back 13 million years.

"We have never found shell fossils in such a great amount and depth. If we don't conserve the site, we will have a lot to explain to the world," he said.

E-plus gets an "F": The Thailand Institute of Scientific and Technological Research has given up on the production of its highly-touted "E-plus" device, which was claimed to save fuel, after testing by state oil firm PTT found it had no effect on gas or diesel consumption rates.

Shin Corp will continue to make and market the gadget in Thailand and abroad, however. About 1,000 motorists have already fixed the device to their engines.

The 20,000 or so people who placed orders and were waiting for the 3,500 baht part could still buy it from a private company – if they still believed in it, said Pimuk Simaraj, secretary to Science and Technology Minister Korn Dabbaransi.

Somroj Panitamnuy, who has patented the invention in the United States, said the fact that Shin Corp was interested showed that E-plus could save fuel. Somroj holds 15% of Power Super Save Ltd, a Shin Corp unit, and gets 200 baht from each sale.

Justice prevails: A 78-year-old grandmother who mistakenly tore up her ballot during the Bangkok governor election escaped charges.

Police declined to pursue her case after a hospital verified in writing that Puengpian Thongpanchang suffered seriously impaired hearing, said Lt Col Winit Pongying of Tung Song Hong Police Station, who was in charge of the case.

K. Puengpian had gone to

her polling station in Lak Si district on August 29 to cast her vote. While there, she was arrested for ripping up her ballot sheet.

She told police that, because she was hard of hearing, she read an election official's lips as asking "Have you ripped the ballot yet?" instead of "Have you ticked the ballot yet?"

After learning that police had dropped the case, K. Puengpian told neighbors the legal hitch would not prevent her from voting in future.

"Next time, I won't tear my ballot. I don't want to have any problems with the police," a neighbor quoted her as saying.

War on poverty: Deputy Prime Minister General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh said the National Anti-Poverty Center has managed to cover 100% of loan cases categorized as being "outside the legal system" during its first year of operations.

General Chavalit said the center's 6,036 debt negotiating teams across the country had handled 1.76 million cases involving total debts of 132.8 billion baht and had negotiated agreements in 1.7 million of the cases.

The center will also seek to settle 7.67 million registered debt cases under legal system loans, worth 496.8 billion baht.

This would be achieved by getting five government banks to draft guidelines for dealing with these debts, taking charge of negotiations and assisting debtors, said Gen Chavalit, who chairs the body.

Around the Nation news round-up is sourced from the pages of The Nation and Kom Chad Leuk newspapers.

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Shortage of skilled labor a worry

The Buriraya Resort and Spa, one of Samui's newest and at times most controversial top-end hotels, recently announced the appointment of a new General Manager.

David Martens, who is already a member of the management team, will take the reins at Samui's largest Thai/Malaysian joint venture later this month.

His extensive experience will no doubt prove invaluable in Samui's increasingly competitive luxury accommodation market, which is about to expand considerably, with five exclusive resorts currently under construction around the island.

Although most people in the hospitality industry here welcome this move towards a higher standard of tourist, some of the more experienced general managers on Samui are concerned about staffing.

Each of the developments will have around 100 rooms, and this will place considerable strain on an limited pool of skilled labour for the island's tourism sector.

Anyone interested in being paid the best rates to work in a hotel on Samui is therefore advised to hold out until the Christmas peak season before applying for a job.

Juicy business: Samui's growing reputation as a health and fitness destination was enhanced earlier this year with the arrival in Lamai of Red Bicycle, a Californian-run operation offering guided tours on state-of-the-art Santa Cruz and Cannondale mountain bikes.

Those in search of a sweaty challenge can choose a full-day or half-day mountain tour, or even spend a whole day cycling around the tiny, unspoilt island of Koh Tan.

FROM THE GULF OF THAILAND



By Commander Sammy Swan



PLANNING AHEAD: Peter Schnyder (rear, left), General Manager of the Paradise Beach Resort, presents Baan Bang Rak School with two computers for students to further their education.

Real thrill seekers can opt for the Kamikaze Suicide Run, down some of the island's steepest inland dirt tracks.

Owners Debra and Mike recently added a bar called Juice Dude to the premises, bringing American juice bar culture to Samui.

With health and adventure drawing increasing numbers of active people to the island, it may soon actually be possible for two foreigners to pass one other in the supermarket aisle.

Blue Samui: Coco Blues Bar, one of Chaweng's newest and busiest watering holes, recently hosted a concert by none other than Zakiya Lee Hooker, daughter of legendary blues man John Lee Hooker.

Zakiya was, literally, born to sing the blues, and that's certainly how it seemed as she performed live with her band to a packed house of appreciative bobbing heads.

Live music is enjoying somewhat of a resurgence on

Koh Samui, which for a time looked set to become the 'Ibiza-esque' dance capital of the Thai Gulf. Early closing laws, combined with an older crowd, seem to have put paid to Techno Samui.

Even the famous full moon party on Koh Phangan now offers a variety of musical offerings. Maybe the old Thai adage 'Rock Never Die' is true after all.

Government check-up: As a follow up to Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's rather generous budget allocations to Surat Thani Province earlier in the year, a team from his office has now been despatched to make sure all that money is well spent, and used in ways that benefit the tax payers providing it.

Projects to be monitored include several land reclamation initiatives, as well as a river expansion programme and projects focusing on waste and fresh water management.

Local commentators have expressed hope that the help offered by central government officials will ensure that the funds are used in the most effective and appropriate way possible.

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



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Pruerk-lawan	112.6	11,850,000	100,000	3,455,000	8,295,000
Pruerk-umpai	157.80	14,480,000	100,000	4,244,000	10,136,000



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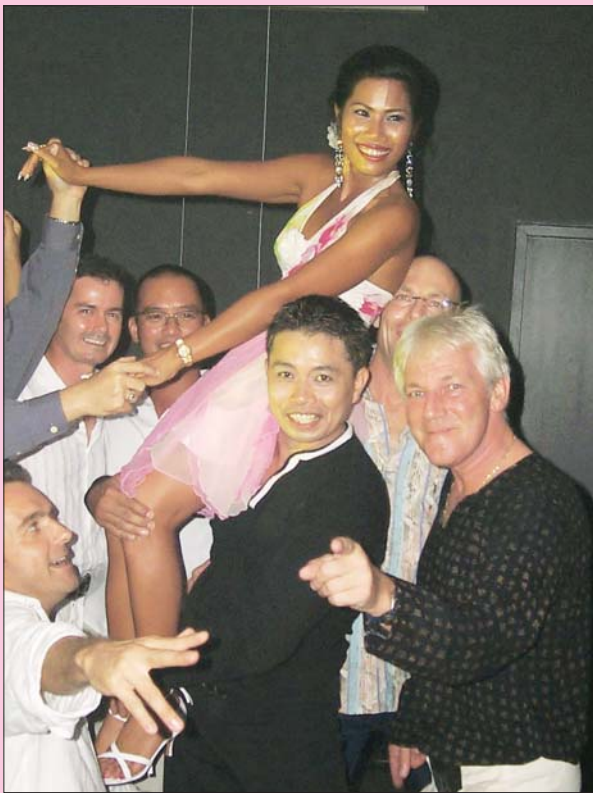
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Location Map



This week



LAY LADY LAY: (right) the President of the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization, Anchalee Vanich-Thepabutr, lays the foundation stone of the Luang Por Wat Chalong Building at Satee Phuket School in the city center.

WISHFUL THINKING: Director of SenSes Spa in Cherg Talay, Parichat Namchoo, appears to be enjoying her birthday at the nearby Red Room restaurant earlier this month.



BIRTHDAY BOY: Justin Kenny (right) celebrated his 5th birthday with family and friends at the Mangosteen Resort and Spa recently.



TOP STUFF INDEED! (above) Robert Bruce Mebruer, CEO of U-Marketing International, and Chiranun Poopat, VP of Buying, Merchandising and Marketing for Tops supermarket launch the shopper card scheme at Central Festival Phuket.

KOREA OPPORTUNITIES: (from left) Korean masterchefs Yong-Cheal Kim and Hyun-Joo Choi, along with waitress Hwa Youn Paek, all from the Sheraton Walker Hill hotel in Seoul, arrived recently at the Thavorn Beach Village & Spa to give the resort's Korean menu a boost. They were welcomed by GM Matthias Wiesmann (right).



TWINPALMS TAKES ROOT: (from left) Vice-Governor Pongpow Ketthong relaxes with TwinPalms Phuket owner Carl Langenskiöld and his wife, Sukanya Wannasiri, at the resort's recent grand opening party.





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Jirayu Niranvirot discovered early in life that he wanted to be a veterinarian. When he was growing up in Phuket his family's pet dogs were killed with poison. "I didn't know how to save them, and this was one of the main reasons I became a vet," he said.

After graduating from the Veterinary Technical College in Bangkok in 1987, K. Jirayu returned home to work at the Phuket Provincial Livestock Office (PPLO). "At that time there were only about six elephants in Phuket. All of them were at Baan Thai Village, near where Phuket Rajabhat University is today.

"The first elephant I treated was called Plai Sombat. He had inflamed eyes," K. Jirayu said. With that first visit he realized how much he liked these enormous animals. It marked a new turn in his career.

"Seeing elephants healthy and happy makes me feel proud that I am helping them. Elephants are an endangered species, and they need our help. I feel that I am doing something good for them and good for Thailand," he said.

Smiling as he spoke of Plai Sombat, K. Jirayu said, "He's 70 years old now, and he lives in Surin."

Of the fond memories K. Jirayu has accumulated over the past 15 years, the first birth of an elephant in Phuket is his favorite. "The most impressive event I have experienced since I began working with elephants was when I helped deliver Plai

Heart as big as a jumbo

Veterinarian Jirayu Niranvirot shares a love for all creatures, great and small. But he has a special place in his heart for elephants. He is the only vet at the Phuket Provincial Livestock Office (PPLO) specializing in the care of elephants, and is on call 24 hours a day to respond to any pachydermal emergency.

Here he explains how he came to love the giant animals, and recalls some of his most memorable experiences with elephants in Phuket.

Phuket. He was born in Rawai in 2002, and now he works in Chalong, where every day he shows visitors how talented and how lovely he is. I still take care of him there as well," he said.

Since then K. Jirayu has helped deliver three more baby elephants on the island.

Unlike other provinces in Thailand, Phuket has elephants for only one type of work – tourism, K. Jirayu explained. Working in the eco-tourism industry, he said, gives both the elephants and their mahouts a better quality of living.

It also adds to the value of the elephant, he said. "People value an elephant by its skills. If an elephant is very clever, it can be sold for as much as 500,000 baht."

While elephants on Phuket do not do the same heavy work as their northern brethren, the work is demanding in other ways. Elephants born into businesses that offer trekking and performance shows are separated from their mothers before they reach three years of age.

"Baby elephants need milk from their mothers, but they don't get it because their mothers are trekking while they are on show. So I ensure they receive dietary supplements to keep their bones strong," he said.

Although K. Jirayu has great admiration for elephants, he never forgets that they can be dangerous to work with. "Although elephants are clever and cute, they can also be dangerous because of their size. Just



JUMBO JUNIOR: K. Jirayu with 'Plai Phuket', the first elephant born on Phuket, which K. Jirayu helped to deliver.

a swing of their tail can knock a person unconscious. I have to have a mahout watch over me while I work," he said.

"Elephants sometimes attack people," he added. "They have good memories, especially when it comes to people who treat them badly. They can even remember people who tease them."

"One time, in Rawai, an elephant attacked his mahout. The elephant remembered that this mahout always hurt him, and when he had the chance, he attacked the mahout."

Unfortunately for K. Jirayu,

though he loves elephants, they don't love him. "I am not someone elephants remember in a positive way, because I give them injections. They only need to see me approaching with my bag and they try to run away," he said, smiling.

But the most dangerous time to treat elephants, he said, is when they are in musth, when they experience heightened sexual excitement. "Elephants become violent when in musth," he explained. "Both males and females become easily irritated, though the males are more easily angered than females."

Another life

By Dhirarat Boonkongsan

In The Stars

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): Contrary to what someone else has been saying, you haven't missed the Love Boat. Virgoans who have been harboring secret desires need only to make their feelings known. The object of your interest is waiting for you to make the first move. Schedule business appointments for Wednesday or Thursday, when you will be your most articulate. The color tomato red is lucky.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): Ground-breaking changes are occurring in your life right now, and many Librans would like to bury their heads in the sand. You are justified in taking a short break from it all, but are advised not to leave crucial mat-

ters on the back burner for too long. You may have been making mountains out of molehills.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): Your sunny mood rubs off on those around you this weekend, and a good time is forecast for all. However, when it comes to work, others are perhaps too demanding. Scorpions should dig their heels in, unless they actually enjoy burning the candle at both ends. Your extra-perceptive powers will come in handy on Thursday, but don't be too quick to make comments.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): Sagittarians who scratch the surface of a mystery should learn enough to put them

off further investigation. Meddling with matters that are none of your business can only lead to bad feelings. If there isn't enough going on in your life, find a new hobby. Fresh surroundings will help activate a stale imagination, and the color midnight blue can stimulate clarity of thought.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): Capricious Capricorns grazing in pastures new will make compatible friends this weekend. Your ever-widening social circle can help get you out of a work-related rut, but don't make any sudden moves – at least one job offer you are about to receive is sugar-coated. Career changes are forecast before the end of this year, but for now sim-

ply keep your options open. Number 9 is lucky on Tuesday.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): Aquarians finding it hard to please their partners may be investing too much effort in this direction. If you find that the more you do, the less progress you make, a reality check could be in order. On Wednesday, an old friend turns up out of the blue, and this could lead to some serious partying. Your luck in money matters is especially strong early next week.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): Those Pisceans who don't want to be the same as all the other guppies in the pond should take advantage of benevolent astro-

logical factors this week to strike out for independence. Throw your usual caution to the wind and dare to be different – you'll be surprised at how good it feels. The color aquamarine will encourage new ideas to flow.

ARIES (March 21-April 20): Arians who are on slippery ground are advised to seek a firmer foothold. If your current emotional path is a precarious one, there's every chance it'll lead you into hot water this weekend. After Monday, there are signs that finances will receive a surprise boost. Should this come about, treat yourself to something you've wanted for a while. Your lucky number is 3.

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"Elsewhere, an elephant in musth is usually put to hard work so that the animal expends the energy that might otherwise build up and result in an outburst of frustration.

"But in Phuket, elephants in musth are tied up, alone, to a big tree with no people around who could make them angry."

Mahouts, he notes, need to pick a big, strong tree for this purpose. "I once had to sedate a bull elephant in musth in Karon. He had pulled a fair-size tree right out of the ground," he said.

K. Jariyu is often called out to sedate elephants in musth – the last thing a tour company needs is to have a cranky giant working with tourists.

He recalls one time in Karon when a mahout misjudged the condition of his elephant, thinking that it was all right to show and trek. "The animal broke free from its chains. It attacked everything around it, and terrified the tourists," he said.

Why not let an animal in musth relieve the sexual tension in a natural way, through sex? Life, unfortunately is not so simple, K. Jariyu explained. "A mahout cannot let an elephant in musth simply have sex; elephants take months to choose their partners before having sex.

"They also need to choose their own partners by themselves.

A female elephant may refuse a male simply because of his scent," he said.

K. Jariyu is available 24 hours a day to deal with any emergency, which he admits takes its toll on family life. "I have two children, but I don't get to spend much time with them because I am on call 24 hours a day," he said.

"It's hard work, but I can't take a break. Every day people call me to help a sick elephant."

Helping K. Jariyu with his work are the mahouts who tend to elephants, nearly always on a one-to-one basis.

"Having mahouts is very important. Mahouts have been trained how to treat elephants properly and how to administer first aid to them.

But, he said, it is the business owners who provide food and medicine for elephants who are most important when it comes to making elephants happy.

"Sadly, there have been many occasions on which I've discovered that mahouts have told owners about problems, but the elephants' needs have still been neglected.

"All I can do is to ask for owners to cooperate. I explain to them that it is in their best interest to treat elephants well. But there are no laws that I can enforce to make sure that this is done."

"Seeing elephants healthy and happy makes me feel proud that I am helping them ... I feel that I am doing something good for them and good for Thailand."

by Isla Star

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): Taureans could be enjoying an unplanned break this week. A spur-of-the-moment idea put forward is too good to resist and even a couple of days' break will blow away the cobwebs. If you have been stressed lately, resist accepting extra work; you will benefit from taking it easy until the end of this month.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): The two sides of your character are likely to be in conflict this week-end. When a tricky situation presents itself, your fiery reaction will take others aback. Try to stay your usual easy-going self. This cloud really does have a silver lining, though you'll have to wait to see it.

CANCER (June 22-July 23): Early this week you will need the same patience needed to wait for an orchid to bloom. Most Cancerians will take the waiting in their stride, but some may get frustrated. Crossed wires will prevent messages being received clearly and there's little you can do to stop this. Scorpio would like to know what makes you tick.

LEO (July 24-August 22): Communication is highlighted this week, making it an ideal time to catch up on overdue correspondence. Leos should complete tasks before the end of the month, as October will bring new challenges. A social get-together on Saturday will turn out to be more fun than you expected.

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Niche quiche market

There had always been yachtsmen – sometimes considered eccentrics – who demanded something extra from their vessels and scoured shipyards worldwide in search of their goal.

What they searched for was simple: a large vessel capable of withstanding anything the oceans could throw at it, from high seas to pack ice. Finding a suitable ship – a task in itself – was simply the first step in a long process of stripping back to the bare hull and rebuilding the vessel as an ocean-going expedition yacht.

Commercial ships and even warships of one type or another have always been highly-prized as suitable conversion projects.

In 1954, Aristotle Onassis paid US\$34,000 for the frigate *HMCS Stormont*, built in 1943. A few years and the then astronomical figure of US\$4 million later, she emerged transformed into one of the most glamorous yachts ever, the *Christina O*.

It was not until the '80s that a slew of vessels emerged that appeared not to pander to the sophisticated world of superyachts, although that was precisely what they were.

Converted from huge ocean-going tug-boats, coastguard ships or research vessels, they were purposefully left looking rugged on the exterior. The superstructure was left largely unaltered, belying the sumptuous interior of a superyacht.

With slow-turning, powerful engines fed by enormous fuel



AWE-INSPIRING: Construction of Gulu Lalvani's Royal Phuket Marina continues day and night

tanks, leviathans such as the ex-Russian icebreaker – and rumored spy ship – *Giant* can roam halfway round the world without refueling.

Custom-built exploration yachts have become one of the fastest growing trends in superyacht design. Both *Tatoosh* and *Le Grand Bleu*, at well over 300 feet in length, are recent examples of exploration-style mega-yachts.

Delta Marine of Seattle is among the foremost of a number of shipyards that have begun to exploit this niche market over the past decade or two with smaller

custom-built vessels. Taking styling cues from the hull shapes of North Pacific trawlers, Delta Marine's line has proven so successful the average length has grown from 75ft to 125ft.

One of its most recent builds is the 126ft *Sinbad*, one of four expedition-style yachts to visit Phuket this year. In the 18 months following her launch, *Sinbad* stretched her sea legs half way around the world from the tropics to polar climes.

Carrying a host of back-up systems, such as generators and refrigeration, she is capable of being self-sufficient for two months, and her 20,000 gallons of fuel can take her 6,000 nautical miles.

Rugged, high-bowed and

purposeful on the exterior, her interior would delight any guest. Described as tropical minimalism, the main living space was decorated from a single teak log to create a perfect veneer to complement the chenille sofas and Eames recliners sitting atop hand-tufted Tibetan rugs.

The other expedition style yachts that have visited Phuket this year were *Lamu*, a 150-ft German conversion, the exquisite 120-ft Vitters-built *Dardenella* and *Newcastle Explorer*. Newcastle Marine's *Explorer* provides a prime example of a new company specializing in this sector. This Florida shipbuilder has built nothing other than expedition-style yachts since its foundation in the '90s.

Even builders of the most luxurious yachts are now claiming their slice of the lucrative exploration pie. The venerable Feadship launched the award-winning *Andiamo* in late 2003, bespoke-built for a woman who loves to both explore and cook.

The 140-ft vessel features one of the most comprehensive galleys ever installed on a superyacht.

The owner welcomed 35 guests on board for a New Year's brunch before the yacht was even finished. Her brief for the yacht was food, family and friends, and she can personally prepare gourmet fare for her lucky guests in the middle of nowhere!

This might give one the impression that *Andiamo* is a cosmetic expedition yacht, but she most definitely is not.

With a hull strengthened by a four-foot ice belt, and a couple of 22-ft tenders carried on her foredeck, she can cruise to the remotest of destinations. Her owner – fully trained and qualified to do so – often takes the watch.

RECENTLY, I had the pleasure of being shown around the site of the Royal Phuket Marina by Marina Manager Andy Stephens.

All but invisible from the main road, it is awe-inspiring when viewed from on-site. The 800-man workforce is already "topping off" some of the first-phase buildings.

A visit to the site leaves you with the feeling that this development alone will do more to promote the idea of a "total Phuket lifestyle" than any other, a tribute to both the vision and ambition of Gulu Lalvani.

Have you spotted a superyacht in Phuket waters? Want to share the poop on a super sloop? Send an email to Dominic Stroud at: superyachts@phuketgazette.net

Superyacht WATCH

By Dominic Stroud

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Men's Fashion with Andy Johnstone

DARK THOUGHTS

The invitation stated "Black Tie" but my dinner suit was still in Blighty. With no time to have it sent over, the choice was to have one made or let the side down by wearing a lounge suit.

A quick scan through the *Gazette Guide* and a Shopper Card-friendly tailor was found – Peter Tailor in Canal Village. A dash up Thepkrasattri Rd and within 30 minutes a woman was bearing down on me with a tape measure.

I had little to fear, according to Pasini "Jenny" Klinchan; after three years in Phuket I was a "31 plus". "Plus what?" I asked. "Plus lunch," she said. Clearly a woman who knows about tact as well as tacking...

K. Jenny, originally from Bangkok, presented a number of catalogs for my perusal. A double-breasted suit? Single-breasted? I plumped for single-breasted with a shawl collar and no turn-ups. She then enquired whether I wanted all black, white jacket and black trousers, or all

white. Black, I decided, never goes out of style and remains the sartorially savvy choice.

K. Jenny's next question – "What kind of black do you want?" – baffled me somewhat. I mumbled a hesitant "Black black?" but this was not descriptive enough for her.

I was presented with a number of different swatches of black wools and cashmeres and after an indecisive few moments, chose an Italian cashmere as black as my soul. Yes, very black indeed.

We zipped through the other details, such as the type of shirt I wanted, belt loops, side-adjusters or braces-buttons, and within an hour of having made my appointment, I was on my way home with a date four days hence for the first fitting.

I arrived at the appointed time and changed into my half-finished suit. The cry of "You look like James Bond" rose from the assembled staff. But which Bond: Brosnan? Niven? Lazenby?

Expert eyes were cast over my rather lanky frame and a few swift chalk marks were made on

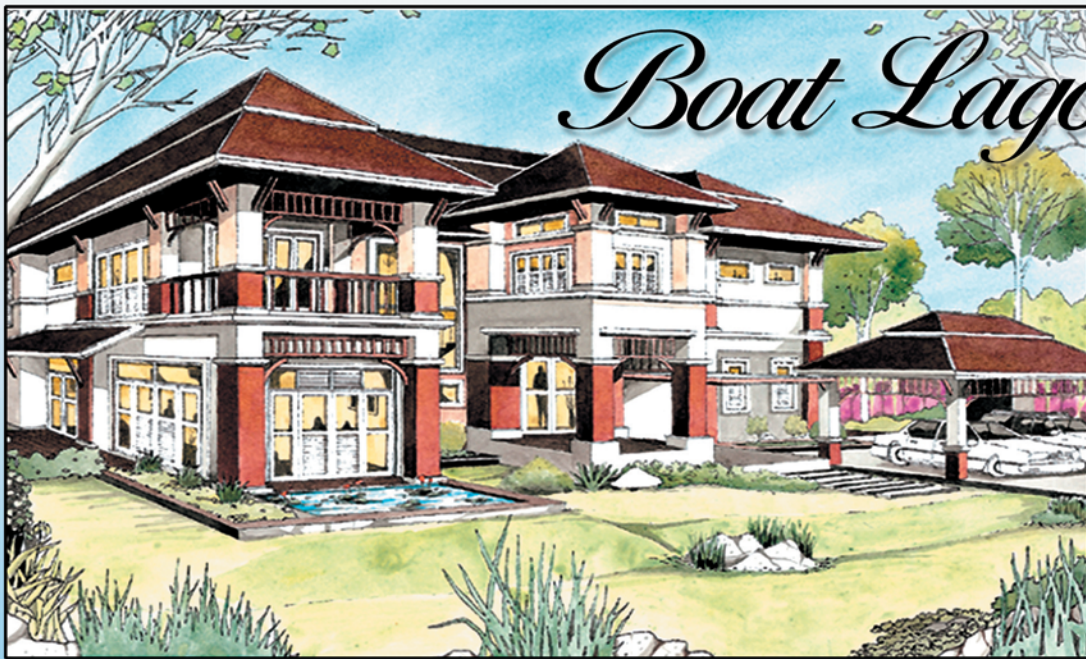
the jacket. The trousers – ready save for the satin piping down the leg – were a perfect fit, as was the double-cuff, regular-collar shirt, the cummerbund and bow tie.

I returned a few days later for the final fitting and tried on the entire ensemble. It fitted like a dream and I left feeling like a million dollars, although the price – I had also ordered a light-weight, machine-washable cotton suit – came in at around 12,000 baht for everything.

And the event for which I had ordered the DJ? I was the only person who turned up wearing a dinner suit. However, my efforts were appreciated and I certainly cut a dash during my late-night tour around a bar or two in Phuket City afterwards. Heads – and a few stomachs – turned, but so what?

Dressing up is not just for girls.

Contact Pasini "Jenny" Klinchan at Peter Tailor, Unit 22-23 Canal Village, Laguna Phuket, Cherng Talay. Tel: 076-270949 or 076-324453-7 extension 222.



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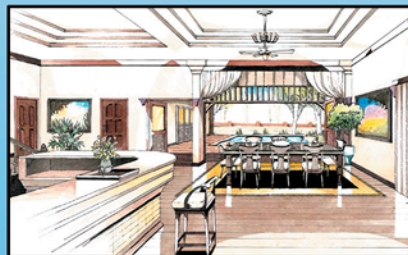
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Mega-rich *Lonely Planet* publisher Tony Wheeler apparently once checked into a cheap hotel in Singapore only to find graffiti on his bedroom wall which read, "Who the f**k is Tony Wheeler and what does he know anyway?" It's a good question but one that need not concern us now.

Rather more useful is something Mr Wheeler himself wrote, to the effect that whenever he flies into Singapore he always spends the last half hour of the flight working out precisely where he's going to eat out for the next few days.

It's a good plan, because however bland the Lion City can be in some ways, it is certainly not so when it comes to feeding your face. As an culinary melting pot, Singapore is to food what Bangkok is to nightlife. There's also the added attraction that, rather than being one urban mass, parts of the city have retained a distinct cultural heritage.

Chinatown would be self-evident even under a different name, and Little India not only looks and sounds Indian, but is also fragrant with mouth-watering curries and spices – all of which makes for ambience with a capital A, which is the icing on the cake as far as eating out is concerned.

Singapore's hawker centers are deservedly the stuff of legend, catering to Malay, Indian and Chinese tastes, with a mixture of everything in between. Cheap, quickly prepared and available on just about every street corner, this is fast food as it should be and is the antithesis of international hamburger chains. And, of course, the city's stringent hygiene laws ensure that eating here is as safe as in any restaurant.

Best of all, the food is simple yet authentic. You can



Singapore may be bland in other ways, but the rich variety of food on offer at places like Clarke Quay, above, is spectacular.

choose between tucking into vegetables fried in batter with a sweet potato-based chilli sauce at Sajis on Waterloo Street, or enjoy a satay steamboat – skewered seafood, meat and vegetables cooked in a hot pot and dunked in peanut sauce – at Hua Yu Wee's on Upper East Coast Rd. And all for a modest fistful of dollars.

Further up the gourmet scale, prices are higher, the surroundings more fancy, and in general there are a lot more frills. But even as little as S\$20 (480

baht) can buy a substantial lunch or supper.

The Blue Ginger on Orchard Rd is a classic example of fusion cuisine, serving Peranakan dishes – Chinese ingredients with Malay spices – in a two-story converted shophouse amid old-fashioned hanging lanterns, carved wooden panels and paintings by local artists.

Siamese Fins in Tanjong Pagar gives fusion a new twist, mixing traditional Teochew cuisine with the spicier elements of Thai cooking. Or there's Bukhara, on Clarke Quay, named after an oasis in Central Asia and churning out carnivore crowd-pleasers like peshawari kebab – chunky cubes of lamb marinated in a mixture of yoghurt, ginger-garlic paste and malt vinegar, and charcoal-grilled to perfection in the tandoori oven.



A great deal of imagination has gone into the menu here – you can even follow up your car-damom-flavored rice pudding

with a vaguely-spicy masala tea, which comes with a cinnamon-stick stirrer for added flavour, to say nothing of finesse.

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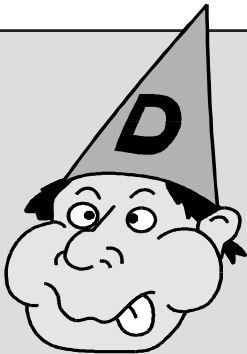
THE FAMILY

Hidden Words

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

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

Get your brain
in gear with
The Monster Quiz



1. Of the 50 states in the US which is the most southerly?

2. Philately is the study of what?

3. What is the main ingredient in glass?

4. Who wrote the book *The Swiss Family Robinson*?

5. Who plays the President in the TV series *The West Wing*?

6. A mule is a cross between which two animals?

7. What colours comprise the flag of Venezuela?
8. What vegetable is the main ingredient in the Greek dish moussaka?

9. Who painted *The Laughing Cavalier*?

10. What does a chronometer measure?

11. A murmuration is the collective noun for which creature?

12. The Glorioso Islands are northwest of which larger island?

13. "Accord not in it" is an apt anagram of which word?

14. Felix Dzerzhinsky set up which organization?
15. What international organization came into existence on October 24, 1945?

16. What is done to a vegetable to "julienne" it?

17. Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh trained in London as what?

18. What was director Steven Spielberg's first theatrical movie release?

19. When and where was singer Nelly Furtado born?

20. What is *gjetost*?

Answers next week

Never
a Cross
Word!

Across

1. Sinbad's giant bird.

5. Measure of rotary speed.

7. Flying Wilbur's brother.

8. Neither birdie nor bogie.

9. It doesn't work.

10. Unhappy.

12. Every fancy home in Phuket should have a view of this.

13. Guarantee paid by arrested person.

15. Badger's home.

17. Kitchen at sea.

19. Mr Lincoln.

21. North or Caspian, for example.

24. New York City, in short.

25. Take steps to stop something happening.

26. Anger.

27. Music, painting or sculpture, for example.

Down

1. The losing boxer may end up on these.

2. Little crown.

3. Ms Gardner, movie star.

4. Itchy little pest.

5. "Stop" color.

6. Olympic award.

10. "All the world's a *****"

11. Database, in short.

14. Capital of Georgia, USA.

15. Japanese snack.

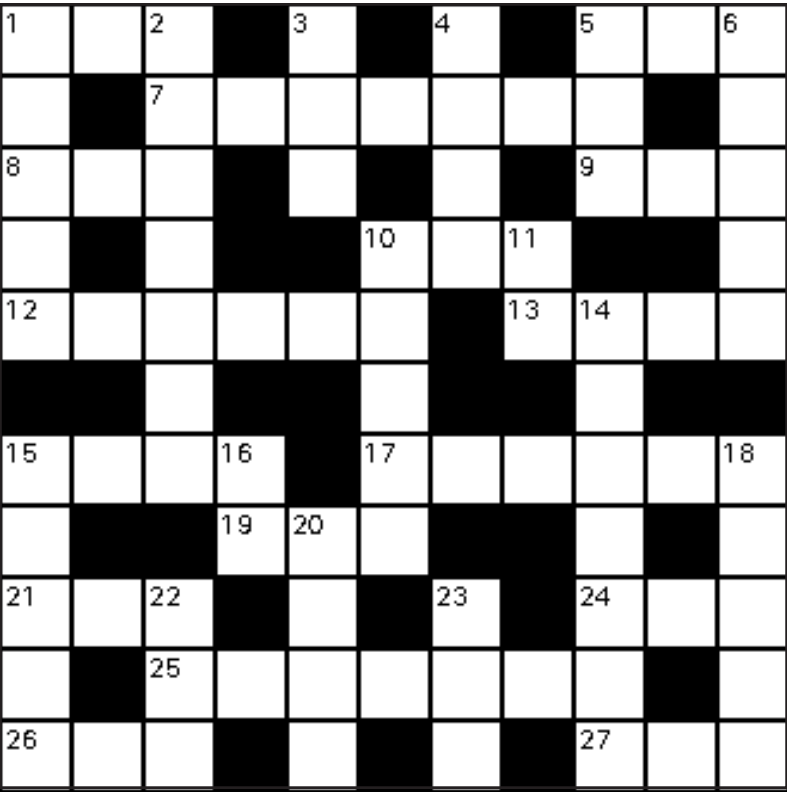
16. A quick thanks.

18. You'll find a 17ac in this.

20. Ale.

22. Orangutan or chimpanzee, for example.

23. Rent out a property.



Brain Buster!!

When the day after tomorrow is yesterday, today will be as far from Wednesday as today was from Wednesday when the day before yesterday was tomorrow. What is the day after this day?

A. Thursday

Answers to last week's Monster Quiz

1. Dylan Thomas; 2. Exploration of caves; 3. Barcelona; 4. US Senator Hiram Johnson; 5. Target of the first deliberate aerial bombing of civilians; 6. Pablo Picasso; 7. Strontium; 8. Winds/Maserati cars; 9. Georgia; 10. June 9, 1963, Owensboro, Kentucky; 11. 1881; 12. Integrated Services Digital Network; 13. Coca Cola; 14. Cooking pot; 15. Britain; 16. Washington DC; 17. A milliner; 18. 1995; 19. Anthony Hopkins; 20. 150 million years.

Solution to last week's Crossword

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



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A date with delusional Deborah

Pattaya may attract some of the strangest people on the planet, but there are a few who manage to slip through the butterfly net and wind up elsewhere.

Therefore, the essential visa run is sometimes a timely reminder that wherever you may go, someone, somewhere will be able to remind you of what you've left behind.

On a recent visa trip to Georgetown, Penang, I was just finishing my dinner, behind a street stall flogging cut-price Mexican cuisine on Chulia St, the backpacking center of Georgetown, when an Asian woman of average height and plain features, dressed casually in grey shorts and a khaki T-shirt, walked past, stopped, and then strolled over.

"Do you speak English?" she asked. "Yes," I replied. That was my first mistake.

"It's terrible what's happening in Iraq now," she said. "But I don't understand why the world is so concerned about them and no one is worrying about me."

I knew if I let the conversation develop I would regret it, but Georgetown at 8 pm is hardly party central, so I rose to the bait. "What do you mean?" I asked.

"The South Korean government," she exclaimed. "They

have tried to kill me so many times. They stole my palm prints and DNA and then tried to have me killed."

There were two possibilities: A. She was off in cloud cuckoo land with the rest of the world's paranoid nutters, or B. The South Korean government is pathetic at assassinations.

"Why would the Korean government want to kill you?"

"Because I became famous too fast. They're jealous. Most people take 20 to 30 years to become famous, unless they're movie stars or rock singers. But I became popular globally. I'm more famous than the South Korean president." Option A was definitely the short-priced favorite.

She said her name was Deborah, from Pusan in South Korea. "Deborah, I hate to admit this," I interjected. "But I've never heard of you."

"Where are you from?"

"Australia."

"Well, you are the only Australian who doesn't know me," she said. "I'm a religious leader. I am The True Prophet. But I have no money and no power." Definitely a few kangaroos loose in the top paddock.

"So what do you do every day?" I asked.

"I have breakfast. I ask for donations. I read the Bible."

Delusional Deborah was nothing more than a panhandler. Instead of lurking on street corners in disheveled clothing with a tin cup and a downtrodden demeanor, she was pro-active, approaching people and spinning the old "I am the Light of the World" yarn: Grease my palm with a few coins and you can avoid the threat of eternal damnation.

She said she had left Korea, spent some time in Bangkok and then washed up on Penang.

"I spent many hours speaking against churches, even on national TV. Actually, global TV. This was before the computer chips were put in me."

Run that by me again? They've stolen her DNA and palm prints; they have placed computer chips inside her (presumably in the large vacuum space between her ears); and *still* haven't managed to kill her?

"They think I'm cuckoo," she said. Gosh. Really?

"My true life is here, but my

fantasy life is out there," she stated matter-of-factly. I don't think she realized just how far "out there" she'd gone. It would require a Space Shuttle to bring her back.

"I'm moving to Canada."

"When?" I asked, hoping the answer would be something like, "in the next five seconds".

"One day. My husband is there."

"Oh, you're married?"

"No, not yet. I know he loves me, even though I've never seen his face."

Remind me never to drink the water if I ever happen to visit Pusan.

When I asked her if she was getting enough sex, she replied, "I'm a virgin. Nick's not like that. He doesn't believe in it."

"Who's Nick?"

"My boyfriend."

"Hang on," I said. "This is a guy whose face you've never seen."

Ignoring my statement, she raised her voice. "Just because I'm pretty, just because I'm sexually attractive, men always want

to sleep with me! I always sleep alone."

I didn't have the heart to tell her she wasn't pretty or sexually attractive but men are men, and many will plant almost anything with, and sometimes without, a pulse.

When I questioned her tenuous grip on reality, suggesting a visit to a psychoanalyst she stared wide-eyed. "Oh my God! They got to you. Just like they got to the people on Khao San Rd. You'll go to Hell."

"Why?"

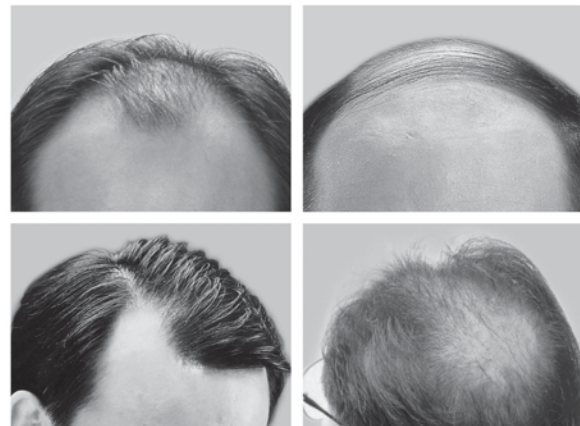
"Because you didn't prevent me from being hypnotized. The people on Khao San Rd didn't stop me from being hypnotized. You know," she ranted, "I don't think I'd find your name in the Book of Life." Not if there's a fee to join and she's a paid-up member.

Three local lads had arrived during our – I mean her – conversation, sitting at a table behind Deborah. When she started to raise her voice in anger, they looked over with silly grins on their faces.

I paid my bill and walked away, leaving Deborah negotiating with three very bemused Malays. The next night I had dinner in Pizza Hut. I figured it was safer.



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The birds and the bees

Our fall and winter visitors are either back or on their way; not only the tourists, but also the many species of birds who grace us with their presence between now and late April.

Among the most interesting birds are those in the genus *Merops*, the bee eaters. Sitting on our balcony, I can watch the bee-eaters sitting high on the outstretched limbs of the big *Acacia* across the pond. Every couple of minutes one flies off and circles in a flat, almost level trajectory. It returns to its perch with a bee or wasp in its beak.

It kills the insect by banging the creature's head against the limb of the tree, then disarms it by hitting its tail against the limb to destroy its stinger. The prey is then ready to be eaten.

Bee-eaters ignore crawling insects. Once airborne, almost any insect instantly becomes attractive to the watchful bee-eater, whose prey includes not just bees, wasps and hornets but virtually all flying insects.

These birds will eat fruit flies, flying termites, bad-tasting butterflies with warning colors, even blister beetles, although they do prefer wasps, hornets, sweat bees, bumblebees and, most of all, honey bees.



EARTH WATCH

By Robert Cogen

Bee-eaters nest in holes dug out of earthen banks, using their long, sharp beaks to pick the soil away. The hole, when complete, is usually between two and three meters long and the eggs are laid on bare soil in an oval chamber at the end of the tunnel.

Bee-eaters usually lay clutches of four white eggs, which are laid a day at a time. The babies hatch at one-day intervals, in the same order as they were laid. They are pink, featherless and blind.

As with most nestlings, there is serious competition for food, which the bigger, older babies win. When food is scarce, the smaller, younger babies do not survive.

When an adult enters the tunnel with food, the babies race to get the first insect. It is usually the biggest, oldest one that gets into the tunnel first and gets fed first.

The young nestlings are mobile as soon as they hatch, moving back and forth in their nest chamber on their well-developed feet. At about one week of age, gray feather spines sprout from the skin; the babies look like little gray hedgehogs. Then the feathers begin to unfurl; they grow fast and by the fifth week, the babies are fully fledged and ready to leave the nest.

The parents stay nearby, but do not feed the youngsters. After a day or two of fasting, the young birds fly off on their first forays. The adults accompany them and call encouragement, and also bring them food for a short time.

Phuket's bee-eaters come from northern India and China, where they breed in the summer months. I have seen two species on Phuket: the Blue-tailed Bee-eater and the Rufous-crowned or Bay-headed Bee-eater.

Some species of bee-eater are monogamous. Many are gregarious. The two species we see most often in Phuket are colonial or gregarious, which is characteristic of those who forage in open countryside.

Colonial breeding and nesting promotes helping-at-the-nest behavior by offspring from previous broods.

Helpers are indistinguishable from breeding pairs and are often sexually mature.

Bee-eaters often alternate between breeding and helping in successive years. In years of limited food, twice as many young survive from assisted nests as from solitary ones.

Bee-eater colonies are very

active, with birds constantly coming and going. There is constant arguing, chasing, courtship and mating.

Both males and helpers bring food to incubating females and guard their holes from other females, as a female will lay an egg in another's nest if given the chance.

The males also guard their females from other males who attempt to mate with them, though they themselves are always looking for an opportunity to mate with other females.

These birds are among the most interesting and unique species found on Phuket. I have enjoyed many hours watching their antics. I hope you enjoy them too.

Robert Cogen is a well-known California lawyer and a broadly experienced naturalist with a degree in zoology. Email: indepth@asis.com.

Why so many animal charities?

Q Why are there so many dog and cat organisations on the island and are they all proper charities?

A In reality there are not that many and they tend to focus on different areas, although there are overlaps. They are:

The Atigaro Project: Founded by Australian vet Alison Montgomery, with the sole intention of bringing in volunteer vets from overseas to operate mobile sterilization clinics. It is now part of the Soi Dog Foundation (see below).

Dogs in Distress in Thailand (Didit): Founded by retired British publican Eric Wells and his wife Linda, Didit was responsible for the sterilization of more than 1,000 animals in 2003 alone.

Eric and Linda have retired to Chiang Mai but volunteers continue to feed and look after more than 150 dogs in Patong, Kathu and Phuket City.

Didit is a member society



By Top Dog

of the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA).

Phuket Animal Welfare Society (Paws): Paws is a network of independent volunteers who, entirely at their own expense, feed animals at various locations throughout the island. The parent organization pays for up to one animal per week to have veterinary treatment.

Like Didit, Paws is a member society of WSPA. It raises funds via donations, events and collection boxes.

Soi Dog Foundation: Started by Margot Homburg Park, SDF's main aim is the control of the dog and cat population through mass sterilization of street animals. The SDF also

feeds animals at temples in the north of the island.

Registered as a charity in the Netherlands, the foundation is applying to be registered in Thailand. Sources of funding include events and donation boxes.

All funds go directly to assisting animals. All administration, food and other costs are paid by the volunteers. The accounts are open to inspection and will be published on the web site, www.soidogfoundation.org.

Top Dog may be contacted by email to topdog9@myway.com

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Reality fails to mirror the movies

In the 1973 film *The Day of the Jackal*, a police inspector is able to foil a terrorist plot on the life of French President Charles de Gaulle using methodical police work – and information provided about the would-be assassin through Immigration arrival cards.

Although the account is fictional, those who saw the movie came away impressed at the ability of good Immigration procedures to help stop terrorists – before they can strike.

In reality, things rarely work so well.

Although Thailand scored a well-publicized victory with the capture of Hambali in Ayudhaya last year, a number of events, from the September 11 attacks in 2001 up to the recent bombing of the Australian embassy in Jakarta, have highlighted the need for governments to improve their ability to track the movement of foreigners – from the time they enter the country until the time they leave.

Thai Immigration's establishment of Phuket as the first province where those providing lodging to foreigners can report them via the Internet, as required under Section 38 of the Immigration Act 1979, is commendable in theory.

In practice, however, there is a long way to go before this long-ignored law is effectively enforced.

Phuket Immigration's attempts to comply with directives from Bangkok by allowing foreigners to report themselves is unlikely to do much to help track down terrorists, human traffickers and others who threaten national security.

After all, why would anyone planning a terrorist attack ever report his movements to Immigration – especially if he wasn't even legally required to do so?

At the same time, well-intentioned and law-abiding foreigners will find themselves wasting even more time dealing with immigration procedures – as if 90-day-reporting, having to prove financial status, and expensive and time-consuming visa trips abroad weren't exasperating enough already.

Achieving complete compliance with Section 38 is going to be an enormous challenge, but there are other, more practical ways in which existing reporting procedures could be improved.

For example, Immigration could start by enlarging the tiny space on arrival cards so that foreigners have enough room to write in the full address of the place where they are staying.

In a perfect world there would be no need for visas, passports or work permits. But until that day arrives, we need sensible immigration laws and procedures that thwart criminals while at the same time minimizing the cost and annoyance to law-abiding foreigners.

– The Editor



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.

Gasoline thuggery

I would like to warn your readers to avoid some thuggish behavior that I experienced recently on the road between Patong and Karon.

Some people have built a house on the hillside there overlooking the Meridien Hotel. Apart from spoiling what was once a splendid view, they have also set up a roadside "filling station", consisting of a gasoline drum and a crude pump.

I filled my motorbike with gasoline there and was asked for 120 baht. It usually takes only 50 baht to fill the tank, so I refused to pay this much. I offered to pay 60 baht.

Refusing to negotiate the matter, the woman who ran the place went inside and returned with a large man. He tilted my bike over on its side and started to pour the gasoline onto the ground, until I got him to stop.

These thugs apparently have as much regard for the environment as they do for tourists. Not a pleasant place to fill your tank, believe me.

Charles DeMaurier
Phuket

am paying, I will be charged the higher price.

This seems to be widely accepted, but for me it is *not*. I would not recommend such a shop or restaurant.

Peter Hallonen
Patong

Cyberian winter in tropical Phuket

How right your reader was with his comment, "Phuket a Cyber Paradise? What a joke" (*Gazette*, Issues and Answers, August 21).

I have just about had it with useless phone lines, inept service, non-existent anti-spam tools, worthless service and so on.

The only good thing is the poor boy in Loxinfo's city office who sits with his thumb stuck in the dyke of endless complaints. This is especially true since Loxinfo "mated" with CSI.

What I would like to know is: is *anybody* out there getting good service from *any* local Internet service provider? I would change my account to the one recommended in a heartbeat.

Ken Sowton
Phuket City

The high price and the Thai price

I have noticed several times that when I, a farang, buy food, beer, soda or other articles in local food shops or mini-marts, I have to pay more than Thai customers.

A can of soda can cost me 15 baht or more, but Thais pay 13 baht. Pad Thai is 40 baht for me and 30 baht for Thais. If a Thai joins me for a meal and I

Bentick's moggy tale plumbs the depths

Maybe George Bentick should do us all a favor and have his own nuts cut off (*Gazette*, September 4).

Phuket is overrun with feral cats but he wants his own cats to prove themselves studs by impregnating any and every female cat in his neighborhood. I'll bet his neighbors really love him.

On a serious note, what little Phuket wildlife hasn't al-

ready been wiped out by the developers will certainly be wiped out by the island's cats – as happened in Australia.

Any sane cat owner should have his animal fixed.

Paul Hammond
Chalong

Uncritical acclaim

We would like to thank your newspaper. It gave us a lot of information about the top seven stars in Phuket, the top hits of pets, the tourist places, how to make food, the fun and games, the new restaurants and the many events in Phuket.

We could travel around Phuket without any problem because it tells us about traveling there.

Finally, we would like to thank you very much.

Pornpailin Ingkachotiwani &
Thanakorn Wongwiset
Mattayom 1
Nan Christian School
Nan

Phuket's water: why not dig more holes?

I read from your website that Phuket City will now have to pay Phummisak Hongsyok 2 baht a cubic meter to pump water from tin-mining ponds on his land.

We live in the monsoon belt, so why do we need to pay anyone for water?

These tin-mining ponds are nothing more than holes in the ground that happen to collect water.

Why not simply dig more holes?

Concerned
Phuket City

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.

When two problems can make a solution

Here are two seasonal environmental problems: tar balls on Phuket beaches and wet trash delivered to the Phuket incinerator. Two very different problems, but could they be combined into one solution?

The first problem concerns the tar balls that wash up on the beaches here. Tar balls, more properly referred to as Pelagic Tar, are lumps of oil weathered to a semi-solid or solid consistency and difficult to remove from contaminated surfaces.

Formed through the combining of hydrocarbons – mostly grease and oil – with other floating debris, they range in size from a pinhead to around 30 centimeters in diameter.

Where do tar balls come from? In 1979, the USA National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) focused on this issue in a document called "A Review of the Tar Ball Problem". The findings showed that tar balls originate from three main sources:

The largest portion – 49% – comes from shore-side facilities, including automotive oils deposited in storm sewers or washed into the sea by rainstorms. Another 40% originates from vessels at sea pumping bilges or cleaning tanks and the remaining 11% comes from natural seepage of oil from ocean floors.

The study further concluded that oil in oceans undergoes a weathering process during which lighter fractions evaporate. The remaining product is a heavy asphalt-like substance which washes up on beaches.

Normally, this substance does not pose a serious threat to public health and welfare, but it may create environmental,

FIRST PERSON

Brad Kenny (right), Director of Environmental Solutions and Protection on the bypass road, wondered whether two seasonal problems – tar balls on the beach and wet garbage delivered to the incinerator in Phuket City, might be used to cancel each other out.

His research revealed that tar balls are by no means limited to Phuket. Hawaii, too, has the same annual problem, and takes advantage of it to solve the problem of wet garbage. Here he explains how the solution works and suggests how local authorities might put it into action.



cosmetic, and, at times, economic problems.

Why do we see tar balls more often on the west coast of Phuket? Pelagic tar is a phenomenon that plagues coastlines throughout the world, not just Phuket's. Wind and water currents create conditions during Phuket's southwest monsoon season that result in the tar ball problem at this time of year. At other times of the year, wind and currents carry the tar balls away from Phuket to other coasts.

Tar balls are a nuisance and raise many questions. If you walk barefoot on the beach in affected areas, you may find tar on your feet. The tar should be removed

from your skin as soon as is practicable; with some heavy oils, prolonged contact may cause an allergic reaction.

How do you remove tar from your skin? Scrape off the excess with paper, apply a grease removing agent (such as a paste sold in auto stores) or mineral oil, then rinse with fresh water.

In cases where fresh water or a removing agent are not available, the bulk of the tar may be removed by rubbing the area with beach sand. Do *not* use gasoline, solvents or other materials, which may be worse for your skin than the tar, and *do* dispose of the removed tar properly.

Although there is no centralized or organized removal effort on Phuket, most resorts, hotels and west coast businesspeople clear tar balls from the beaches in front of their businesses.

For example, the Holiday Inn in Patong cleans the beach in front of the resort every day. All the trash is deposited in normal receptacles to be collected by the municipality; most of the contents go into landfill.

This brings me to the second seasonal problem: waste sent to the incinerator in the rainy season is, of course, wet from the rain.

It takes large quantities of natural gas to dry the trash out to the point where it will burn, and this causes real budgetary strain at this time of year.

Tar balls, however, represent a free source of fuel. An organized effort to collect them could make a significant difference to the performance of the incinerator.

I suggest that an effort be made to provide special containers for resorts and other beach-side businesses, so that they can collect the tar balls separately and have them transported direct to the incinerator for disposal.

Tar balls loaded on top of each batch to be burned at the incinerator would considerably reduce the amount of gas required to burn the trash.

The authorities might also consider paying people to collect the tar balls, as an incentive to keep the beaches clean.

In theory, these two seasonal problems could eliminate one another and even provide additional benefits by way of boosting the power generated by the incinerator.

Getting a house number

What is the correct procedure for obtaining a house/street number for a newly-built house in Chalong?

We went to the relevant authority in Phuket City and were

told we needed the Poo Yai Baan (village headman) for Chalong to sign a form.

We took this form to his house and have now been waiting for six weeks. I understand

he is a very busy man but is there another way to do this?

Simon Cree
Chalong

Karnjana Hongboonyanurak, Registration Officer at Muang District Office, replies:

After Chalong Tambon Administration Organization (*OrBorTor*) has given you planning permission and the property is more than 80% finished, you should take the planning permission document and a house number form – from the Muang District Office – to your Poo Yai Baan to sign.

It is up to the Poo Yai Baan to check that all the documents are genuine.

If it is taking a long time, you should ask the Poo Yai Baan if there's anything wrong or whether you need to present additional documentation.

You should check with the Poo Yai Baan regularly, asking him why there is a delay.

When the Poo Yai Baan signs the form, you should take it, plus the planning permission document, the land deed, your passport (or in the case of a Thai citizen, your ID card and house registration) to the Muang District Office, which will issue you with a house number.

Ripped off on insurance

I bought a motorbike which I had to register in the name of a Thai woman I had known a long time, who worked in a hotel.

Although the bike was entered in the registration book as belonging to her, I paid for everything, including tax and insurance.

Unfortunately, I had an accident, as a result of which I was in hospital for two days. I paid the hospital bill, and submitted it to the insurance company.

However, when I went to collect the insurance money I was told that the "owner" of the bike had already collected the cheque.

Do I have any legal recourse against the woman or the insurance company?

Dave Co
Phuket

Adisorn Chanta, a lawyer with the International Law Office, responds:

First, I would like to point out that a foreigner can be the legal owner of a vehicle so long as he has registered his address with the Immigration Office, no matter what kind of visa he holds.

However, if the insurance is registered in a certain person's name, any payments against claims must be paid to that person. Therefore, no case can be made against the insurance firm.

You would have to file a civil case against the registered owner of the vehicle for reimbursement of the expenses under Thai Civil and Commercial Code Section 406.

Depending on the evidence, and provided that no personal relationship (for example, a common-law marriage) exists between you and the "owner" of the bike, criminal charges of misappropriation under Thai Penal Code Sections 352, 353 might also be possible.

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

Overcharged for phone card

In two minimarts in Kamala I have been charged more than 100 baht for a 1-2-Call phone card. One shop charged me 110 baht and the other 105 baht. Why?

Victor
Rawai.

Sutthisak Kunteekan, Director of Southern Advanced Info Service Public Co Ltd, replies:

It is not our policy to have dealers or shops selling 1-2-Call cards at more than the face value of the card.

In this case, AIS (Advance Information Service) has already warned vendors to sell cards at the standard price.

If they continue to charge

extra for phone cards, we will penalise them; the penalties will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Governor's email

Our previous governor had a public e-mail address. Does Gov Udomsak Usawarangkura have one I can write to?

Pim Hoogeveen
Phuket

The Governor's secretary replies:

You may email the Governor at udomsak_pk@hotmail.com

A close look at the beloved leader

Pasuk Phongpaichit and Chris Baker are co-authors of the magisterial *Thailand: Economy and Politics*, a sweeping overview of Thai history from the early 19th century to the 1980s – the one book I would give to any newcomer to Thailand.

Despite their academic credentials, they write in a simple, terse, pellucid style. They followed this book with *Thailand's Boom and Bust* and *Thailand's Crisis*, which covered the 20 years up to Thaksin Shinawatra's election as Prime Minister.

Now they focus on the man himself. In *Thaksin: The Business of Politics in Thailand* (Silkworm Books, Chiang Mai, 2004, 302 pp), the authors are certainly fair to the Prime Minister. "This book is an attempt to explain where he comes from, and what he is trying to do," they declare in the prologue. "We make no claim to neutrality, but suspect we will disappoint his fierce critics just as much as his fervent fans."

The first third of the book focuses on Thaksin's family background – much more affluent than he has led supporters to believe – his business success, and his rise to power.

"Thaksin's rise to power was framed by the 1997 economic crisis and by the new 1997 constitution," the authors write. "In different ways, these two factors rang down the curtain on the political system that had developed over the prior two decades. The crisis wrecked the Democrat Party, the most successful political party of the 1990s, and thus created a vacuum that Thaksin was able to fill."



His landslide electoral victory "combined to put Thaksin in a more powerful position than any previous elected Thai leader. From this vantage point, he set out to change Thailand's economy and politics."

The authors then turn to a succinct and incisive analysis of "Thaksinomics". In general, they give Thaksin and his macro-economic team high marks.

But they are also keenly aware of the economic risks ahead: the huge accumulation of household and quasi-governmental debt, along with rampant opportunities for cronyism. "The country is being managed as a business by people who also have their own businesses," they observe. "The scope for confusion is large."

The authors reserve their most corrosive criticism of Thaksin for their chap-

ter "Managing Society":

"Under Thaksin, the media were subject to tighter control and more aggressive manipulation than anything experienced since the famously reactionary government that was installed after the Thammasat massacre in 1976. Protesters were beaten by the police and castigated as 'anarchists'. NGOs were condemned as almost treasonous. Public intellectuals who ventured dissident opinions were publicly rebuked. The anti-drug campaign in early 2003 seemed a retreat to the brutal methods and contempt for human rights, which had been the hallmark of the old security state."

Thaksin also went on to attack his two rival centers of power: big money politics and a torpid bureaucracy. But he also got into bed with old-style corrupt politicians, lost many of the best bureaucrats, and employed blatant nepotism to assert control over the military and police.

This nepotism extended to the economy: "Thaksin resigned from all positions in the Shinawatra companies, and transferred his shareholdings to his wife and children. Legally he was now separate from his concession-based business empire. But the gap was no more than the width of the dining table."



Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt

The authors then offer a meticulous analysis of the many ways in which the family business, Shin Corporation, has profited mightily over the past four years, with special concessions ladled out for such Shin properties as iTV and Air Asia. Crony companies haven't done badly either.

"The political costs of Thaksin are a larger problem than the economic risks," the authors conclude.

"When a country becomes a company, and the government becomes management, then people are not so much citizens with rights, liberties, and aspirations, but rather consumers, shareholders, and factors of production. Thaksin has rolled back a quarter-century of democratic development. He hopes to transform Thailand from a beacon of democracy in Southeast Asia into another illiberal one-party state."

On a more hopeful note for the nation's future, the authors portray Thaksin as intellectually curious, with a solid academic background in international economics. He has read such important books as Hernando De Soto's *The Mystery of Capital* and Liah Greenfeld's *Spirit of Capitalism*.

He would do well to read this one.

SP2: The time has come to do it

Last month I wrote about Microsoft's huge revision to Windows XP, which goes by the name of Service Pack 2, SP2 for short. In fact, SP2 isn't a garden-variety service pack: it's a major upgrade, certainly on a par with the jump from Windows 98 to Windows ME, an upgrade that Microsoft sold to the tune of billions of baht.

Last month, I recommended that you wait until the pioneers pulled the arrows from their backs, before you installed this huge upgrade on your computer. Now, with a month of experience

under our collective belts, I feel much more confident in recommending Service Pack 2... with a few exceptions, and several caveats.

First, realize that a small percentage of all the people who upgrade to Service Pack 2 get zapped in the process.

SANS Institute, a large computer security organization (www.sans.org), has been maintaining a Web page that asks upgraders to report the problems they've encountered.

The SANS results show that roughly 10% of all SP2 upgraders report problems that are so severe the only solution is to re-format the hard drive. Another 10% say they hit insurmountable problems, and could not get SP2 to work.

I think those self-reported

numbers are way overblown, but the fact remains that a proportion – possibly 2% to 3% – of the people who install SP2 end up with PCs that don't work.

They have to uninstall SP2 (which is remarkably easy) or, if their systems have truly gone to the dogs, re-format their hard drives – which is about as much fun as watching an American political convention.

Second, there are groups of PCs that seem to be having a hard time handling the SP2 changes. A small number of Pentium 4 and Celeron D-based systems hang in the middle of the upgrade (see support.microsoft.com/?kbid=885626).

If you have an AMD Athlon 64 computer, or an AMD Opteron server, you may fall victim to Microsoft's vaunted (and buggy) Data Execution Protection scheme (see support.microsoft.com/?kbid=878474). Total Velocity's TV Media card gives SP2 fits (see support.microsoft.com/?kbid=885523).

Third, after you've installed SP2, some programs may not work. Microsoft lists more than 50 programs that may need to be tweaked after you install SP2 (see support.microsoft.com/?kbid=842242), including Symantec Antivirus Corporate Edition 8.0, AutoCAD, and even Microsoft's own programming package, Visual Studio.NET.

I've seen dozens of additional warnings about odd SP2-induced behavior in virtually all of the Office programs. I personally have encountered a weird bug that prevents one of my PCs from talking to others on my peer-to-peer network. I have no idea why it isn't working, and I still don't have the problem fixed.

Fourth, if you install SP2 and your computer won't start, don't panic. Use a separate computer to look at the Knowledge Base article at support.microsoft.com/?kbid=875355, and follow the recommendations there religiously.

Finally, a telling note: as I write this column, the number one download on Microsoft's site is Windows XP Service Pack 1a. That means an enormous number of people are installing SP2, deciding that they don't want it for whatever reason, then reverting back to SP1a. There's even a Knowledge Base article on protecting your PC when you remove SP2 (see support.microsoft.com/?kbid=878454).

But when all is said and done, I do recommend that you install SP2. The security gains are too great to ignore, and a few new features (such as much-improved wireless support) make SP2 a must-have. Microsoft still hasn't announced when SP2 will be available in Thai.

You can find detailed in-

structions on installing SP2, and recovering if it goes belly-up, at support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=fh;ln;xpsp2getinstall. For a change, Microsoft seems to be up-front about the problems customers have encountered, and their Web site lists many ways to recover from those problems.

You don't need to install Service Pack 1a before installing SP2. And, yes, SP2 will install on most bootlegged versions of Windows XP. (The only exceptions are the pirate copies with one of the four most-frequently-filched activation codes – the same bootlegs that refused to install SP1a.)

If you have only one PC to update, you can use Windows Automatic Update to grab your copy of SP2. But if you have more than one PC, or if you know anybody who has to use a dial-up line to download the beast, do everyone a favor and download the whole 270 MB enchilada from microsoft.com/technet/winxpsp2. Burn a copy on a CD and pass it around.

Downloading WinXP Service Pack 2 over an ADSL line takes a little under an hour. Over a dial-up line, you're looking at a full day – probably two or three, realistically, while you struggle with broken connections.

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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Index looks forward to success in Phuket

By Siripansa Somboon

PHUKET: Built at a cost of more than 300 million baht, the Index Living Mall south of the Tesco-Lotus supercenter on Chalmprakit Ror IX Rd (the bypass road), is on track to open in the middle of next month.

The two-story, 16,000-square-meter mall will be split into two distinct sections.

The lower floor will have a "plaza" holding of a range of "lifestyle" companies including the Japanese restaurant chain Oishi, sports equipment supplier Sport Dome, Mega Universe electronics retailers and Coffee Lovers.

True Value builders' merchants, Se-Ed Book Center, clothing retailer Inter and a branch of the Bank of Ayudhya are among the other companies that will open stores in the mall.

The upper floor will be taken up entirely by the Index Living Mall, selling a wide range of products manufactured under the company umbrella such as Winner home furniture, Logica office furniture and Decor Metall shop fittings.

The new store will be the sixth large Index store to open in Thailand. A smaller store has been open on the bypass road north of the Baan Samkong Intersection for the past two years or so.

Explaining the thinking behind the decision to build the massive store, Pisith Patamasatayasonthi, President and CEO of parent company Bangkok Interfurn Group, told the *Gazette*, "[We] consider that the expatriate and local residential property market, and hotel developments here have a great deal of potential."

"In fact, the potential for growth and good business here is better than in Pattaya or Chiang Mai."

Index will be about three times the size of HomePro Phuket, in the nearby Tesco-Lotus complex.

K. Pisith denied that the two would compete. Rather, he believes that Home-

Pro will act as a "feeder" store for Index.

"People will buy the raw materials to build and decorate their houses from HomePro, and then come to Index for the furniture and furnishings."

"We [Index and HomePro] serve the property market in quite different ways."

According to K. Pisith, Interfurn's turnover last year was around 2 billion baht, of which some 65% came from exports. Although he did not give a figure for turnover in the Index stores, he did note that in 2003 it had risen about 30% from 2002.

He hopes that the Phuket store will see around 1,000 customers each day, at-

tracted not only by the range of items offered but also by what he describes as the company's good customer service.

When asked about Index's plans for further expansion in Phuket, a confident K. Pisith replied, "There are currently no plans for further expansion in Index operations in Phuket because we think that this new showroom [will be] the best in the south of Thailand."

UK residential property riding for a fall

The outlook for British residential property prices is beginning to look cloudy. The UK media are carrying a wide range of stories with differing opinions on where prices will go from here. These vary from "this is a temporary slowdown" to predictions of a 20% fall in prices.

Investors in UK residential property have enjoyed huge increases in value over the past seven years. The UK market is open to buyers worldwide, and it's not even necessary to be a resident to purchase property. The sole requirement, as it should be, is money.

A buoyant economy was one factor that helped the residential property market in Britain, which saw the end of its last recession in late 1992. While many countries, including almost all of continental Europe, the US and most of Asia, have experienced varying degrees of economic difficulty over this period, Britain has enjoyed uninterrupted economic growth.

The UK was not exempt from the steep drop in stockmarket prices that started in 2000. This also had a major effect on the value of pension funds. But this too, fed the property market; when in doubt about the value of other investments the British traditionally put their money into residential property.

Many investors buy multiple properties to rent out for income, most of which are financed by banks and building societies. The investor buys a property, installs a tenant to pay the mortgage and then buys another property, installs another tenant and keeps repeating the process.

This is an easy way to make a lot of money in a rising market. However, all good things come to an end and rental yields have been falling for some time.

Falling interest rates since 2000 also reduced the cost of borrowing but in November 2003 the Bank of England reversed the interest rate cycle beginning with a 0.25-point rise in interest rates.

Since then interest rates



MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson

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.

have risen five times, moving the base lending rate from 3.5% (a low not seen since the 1950s) to 4.75%.

The Bank of England had two aims in mind. First, it wanted to stop the huge increases in the value of residential property, due to concerns about this market getting completely out of control, thus resulting in a massive fall in prices.

Second, it hoped to slow the huge rise in consumer debt financed through credit cards, mortgages and loans.

To understand the attitude of the British consumer and the increased debt, it is necessary to realise that the average homeowner was earning at least as much through rising house prices as he was earning in salary.

People simply felt more affluent and bought new cars, durable goods and holidays, based on this perceived increase in wealth. The banking sector was

more than happy to finance their purchases.

An increase in interest rate does not have an immediate impact on an economy. It is estimated that its effect is felt only six to nine months later. Thus it is widely believed that the last

two increases have yet to be felt, although the impact of rising interest rates does appear to be slowing retail sales. By last month British consumer debt had reached a record high of more than £1 trillion (over 70 trillion baht).

The price boom passed by one major area of British property: commercial property. This is because consumers lack the expertise and money to go out and buy an office block or a shopping center. This sector has seen very modest but sustainable gains.

My favorite fund in this sector is the Glanmore Property Fund, which holds a wide portfolio of office, retail, industrial, warehouse and leisure properties spread throughout Britain.

Returns to investors since the fund's launch in April 1997 have been constant. Total returns for one year were 8.99%; three years 27.86%; five years 61.04% and since inception 84.99%.

Later this month, the fund

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will offer, for the first time, investments in US dollars or Euros. Previously it had only been possible to invest in pounds sterling.

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(bold listings are Thai flagged boats)

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38 Ft 2000	Flybridge Watertaxi Yamaha, 2 x 200 Hp	THB	2,700,000
37 Ft 1996	Searay 370 Mercruiser, 2 x 350 Hp	USD	175,000
30 Ft 1990	Bayliner Sunbridge 2855 New King Cobra 7.5 L	THB	1,900,000
29 Ft 2003	Prowler 9000 Honda 4-stroke, 2 x 50 Hp		Price on Application
28 Ft 86/02	Italian Open Sportfisher Yamaha 200 Hp	THB	1,500,000
18 Ft 2000	Skip Jack 18 Yamaha, 2 x 85 Hp	THB	750,000
Sail			
60 Ft 50/03	Indian Dhow Isuzu 84 Hp	THB	4,500,000
57 Ft 1985	B. Roberts motor sailor Ford, 120 Hp	US\$	ONLY 100,000
56 Ft 1973	Classic Corten Steel Ketch Perkins, 64 Hp	US\$	70,000
48 Ft 83/03	Frers 48 Perkins, 87 Hp	US\$	88,000
46 Ft 1981	Herschhoff Ketch Ford, 80 Hp	US\$	127,500
42 Ft 1987	Westail 42 Perkins, 50 Hp	Euro	80,000
41 Ft 1978	Bluewater 41 Ford Lees Marine, 72 Hp	US\$	128,000
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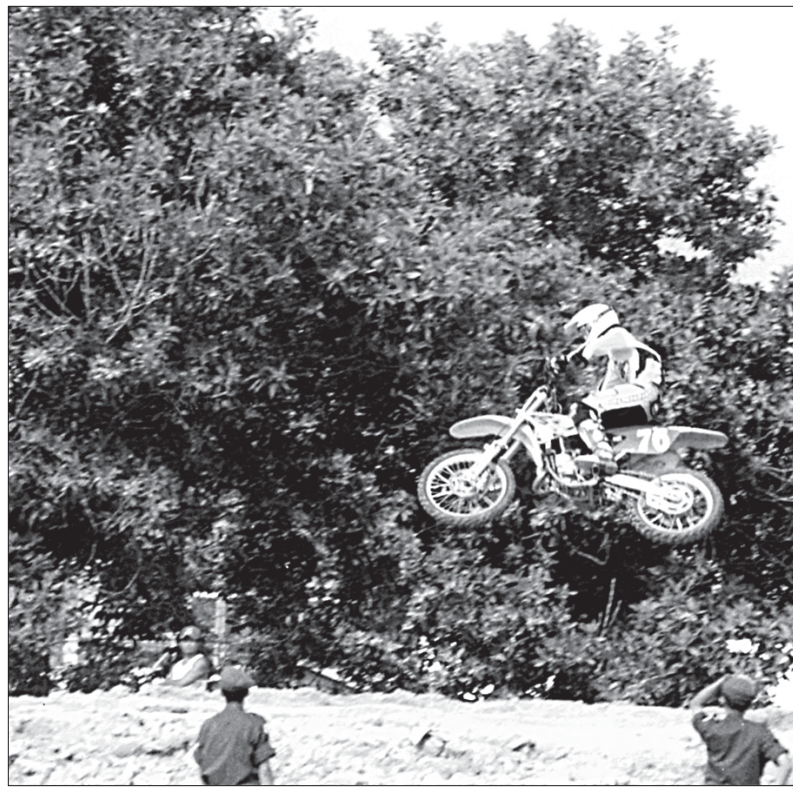
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FLYING HIGH: Adchariya on bike 76 flies to the finish to win the Motocross 2004 on September 12.

Adchariya wins bypass motocross

Anongnat Sartpisut

KOH KAEW: Thailand's current top amateur motocross rider, Adchariya Peungkaew, dominated the final race in the 125-150cc class of the Motocross 2004, held on September 12, leading all the way from start to finish.

Some 80 riders turned out for the meet, held at the track opposite the Toyota showroom on the bypass road, even though it contributed no points to the national motocross championships.

Adchariya blitzed his six competitors from the start, leaving them to eat his dust for the

next 20 laps, totaling eight kilometers.

Crossing the finish line two bike lengths behind was Songkla's Sittichai Saetan, who is currently fourth in the national 125cc championship, with Phatthalung's Chaowalit Tongduang close behind in third place.

Four-time national motocross champion Chakrit Rungsuan, who failed to race at the bypass meet because of unfortunate personal circumstances, is expected to add additional spice to Phuket motocross on October 23 and 24, when the Supercross and Cross Country Master of Thailand race meet will be held off Soi Suksan in Rawai.

New

It's been a long wait, but the Phuket Mission Hills Golf Resort and Spa has finally opened for play. Phuket's golfers have looked forward to the island's first new 'club' for more than 10 years.

The 18-hole ocean view course is hosting a 'pre-soft opening' until September 30, when the full 'soft opening' starts.

A few privileged locals have already been invited to sample the course. I have to thank aptly-named project manager Khun Golf for graciously guiding me round the enormous construction site that will eventually be the clubhouse/spa, driving range and hotel, and letting me loose on the course with my dusty old set of clubs.

Nicklaus Design associate John Cope has created a thoroughly enjoyable and generally very 'playable' 6,806-yard course which cleverly makes the most of the site's magnificent views of Phang Nga Bay and its islands. Koh Ngam (Beautiful Island) is a magnetic sight on several of the seaward holes.

Rather than create one stunning beachside hole, as another designer might have been tempted to do, Mr Cope opted for a routing that visits the bay during both nines, allowing golfers to play towards the beautiful sea views on many holes.

Seaside holes feature extensive "beach bunker waste areas" which enhance the coastline on the side of the island where beaches did not exist before.

The developers have also taken care not to disturb the mangrove ecosystem around the seaside holes, even though that means players have to deal with a tidal mangrove creek coming very much into play on several holes.

Expecting nothing more than a dull canvas of rubber trees and mudflats, I was very pleasantly surprised by the site. There are areas where lines of rubber trees make for an uninspiring frame for some holes, but the views of Phang Nga Bay on the "beach" holes are truly stunning.

On the "return", holes that were potentially anti-climactic instead feature a beautiful back-

Surakul upgrade 'nearly complete'

PHUKET CITY: Work to upgrade Surakul Stadium will be complete by October 15 – one month ahead of the Thai leg of the Fifa Under-19s Women's World Soccer Championship, said Kiatdee Attavatyanon, Head of the Phuket Office of Sports and Recreation Development.

He told the *Gazette* that the buildings are 80% complete, and that the pitch requires only 2,000 square meters of turf to be laid.

Four other soccer fields – at Phuket Rajabhat University, Saphan Hin, Chai Stadium and Karon Municipal Stadium – will be out of action from October 11 to ensure that they are in a playable condition for Fifa matches.

However, the Karon stadium requires between 400,000 and 500,000 baht more than the original 100,000 baht earmarked for refurbishment to bring it up to scratch. "We are looking for sponsors," said K. Kiatdee.

A delegation from Fifa will visit Phuket on September 25 to inspect progress.



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course will be a 'must play'



The new course makes the most of the site's magnificent views of Phang Nga Bay and its islands (top right of the map).

drop of rainforest hills which highlight the flight of good and bad shots without prejudice.

It is a very different "Nicklaus" design we see these days; perhaps it is owner K. Suraphan's influence?

Most tees at Mission Hills are at virtually grade level, creating a more classic look. This style is easy on the legs, but tough on the eye. Several holes could have enjoyed improved visibility if the back tees had been raised just a foot or so.

Nicklaus Design has prescribed just three sets of tees, as they have on many newer designs – a little strange given that there are four sets of markers to choose from.

This aside, the course offers a very balanced challenge. Unusually wide fairways allow weaker players to get around with a respectable score, while better players still face a formidable challenge.

Several holes feature strategically-placed bunkers that call for players to select a line on the wider or narrower side. Often the narrow side is close to water and offers an easier angle or a shorter approach option.

My feeling is that, on some holes, the designer has outwitted himself, as the narrower side is just too narrow to be a genuine option!

Nevertheless, the course passes the "Morrow Memory

Test". If I can, despite my failing powers of recall, remember every hole shortly after play, I consider it an interesting course.

The course is very good, but it is not *great*. There are weak holes. Two of the par 3s, the 7th and 11th, are both of the 'Redan' character made famous at this year's US Open. A good Redan – characterized by a front-to-back slope to the green and thus accepting a running approach option – is a treasure.

The 7th, as a very long one-shotter, gets close. The 11th, at just 160 yards, doesn't work. Fabricating a short iron to run into the green on dense tropical grasses is beyond most of us, even if it does play downwind during the dry season.

The par-4 8th and 17th holes, with optional tee-off lines implying risk-reward choices, also ask a little too much of the tee shots. The semi-blind par-4

17th is more characteristic of Dye than Nicklaus, with a large mound obscuring a view of the green from anything but the perfect tee shot, with the omnipresent mangrove bordering the target areas. In both cases, I think bunker complexes would have created more appealing holes.

One feels the architect has perhaps tried a little too hard to make a name for himself here, but all the same, this course has many more good holes than bad ones.

On the outward half, the 1st, 3rd, 5th and 6th holes are excellent par 4s. (The 6th will be a really strong hole if visibility on the corner of the dog-leg is improved.) Coming home, the 12th is one of the best long two-shot holes on the island.

The par 5s also stand out and are, collectively, the best set of three-shot holes of any course on Phuket. The 9th is a fun climax to the front nine, while the 15th is a wonderfully tempting shorter par 5 at a great stage in the round.

Though I have questioned the par-3 7th and 11th holes, the other half of the 'par three set'

are, respectively, outstandingly beautiful and severely demanding: the 4th hole plays towards the Bay, and though it is not too difficult, its drop-dead-gorgeous looks can be very distracting.

The 16th reminds me a lot of Portmarnock's famous "gut wrenching" par-3 15th. This hole will take no prisoners; only a superbly accurate medium iron shot will find the target, but a bail-out area on the left makes the hole quite playable. In my view this is a superb par 3.

When completed, the development will include 27 holes (nine holes and the already-completed driving range will be floodlit for night play), a spacious clubhouse with full spa facilities, a 102-room hotel and a housing project.

Khun Surapan tells me his goal has been to help elevate Phuket to a higher level as an international golfing destination. There is no doubt he has succeeded.

Phuket Mission Hills is a very beautiful and enjoyable golf course, destined to become a must-play for golfers visiting Phuket's island paradise.

TEE TO GREEN
Jon Morrow

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**BEHIND
THE
WHEEL**
By Jeff Heselwood

Peugeot was the first auto manufacturer to introduce the folding metal roof concept at the more affordable end of the market, with its 206 CC model.

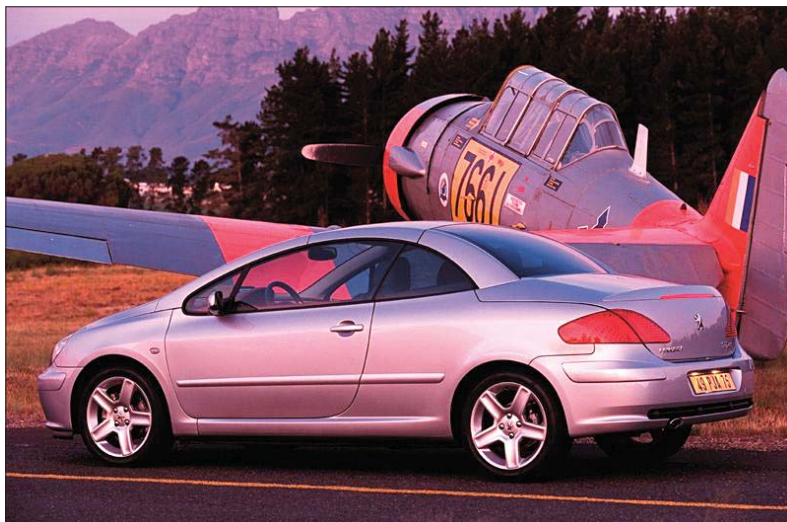
Previously, only the comparatively expensive Mercedes-Benz SLK had this feature, but now everyone is jumping on this highly-successful bandwagon, with new convertible models available from GM, Nissan and Ford.

The 206 CC is an attractive enough automobile but in appearance it lacks a certain balance. It was successful, however, and that success prompted French independent PSA (Peugeot-Citroën) to apply a similar design to its larger model, the 307.

The result is the more balanced and stylish 307 CC cabriolet-coupé, with excellent performance and plenty of interior space.

The 307 CC features the same folding metal roof as the 206 CC, produced by the French industrial group Heuliez, a company founded by Adolphe Heuliez in 1920.

Originally a manufacturer of carriages and buses, Heuliez now works primarily on roof systems such as the ones used by Peugeot. It is also responsible for



production of the roof of the new Opel Tigra Twin Top.

The 307 CC comes with a choice of two 16-valve gasoline engines, both of which are two-liter units: the less-powerful one develops around 138bhp (100 kW), while its big brother pushes out a more robust 180bhp (130 kW).

At present there is no diesel version but automatic transmission comes as standard.

In Thailand, the 307 CC is

priced at around 2.5 million baht.

The 307 CC forms the basis for Peugeot's rally car, the 307 WRC, which had its maiden victory in the hands of Marcus Grönholm last month, driving in his homeland in the Neste Rally in Finland.

Grönholm, who was world champion in 2000 and 2002, has had a tough couple of seasons, with victory eluding him, but the tortuous roads of central Finland were seemingly made for the 307

WRC. It was the fourth time that Grönholm had won his home rally.

"We've waited a long time for this," he said after the rally, a reference to the past season and a half where even finishing an event was doubtful.

But the 307 WRC proved reliable throughout this rally, apart from a gearbox problem that resulted in Grönholm losing fourth gear.

Rally Finland, one of the longest-standing rallies on the calendar, was previously known as The Rally of 1,000 Lakes.

Based at Jyväskylä in the center of Finland, the rally features fast gravel stages, with high-speed, tree-lined tracks.

Loved and feared equally by the majority of rally drivers,

it is one of the fastest of the World Rally Championship events.

Grönholm's teammate Harri Rovanperä was also in spectacular form on home territory, leading from the start until forced to retire following an accident. Third Peugeot driver Sebastian Lindholm also crashed out when in second place behind Grönholm.

Team boss Corrado Provera commented, "This win will go down in history: a first for the 307 WRC and our first win this year."

"Marcus has done an exceptional job, resulting in possibly the most comprehensive victory I have ever seen."

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

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Guest chef

By Jenna Wise

SERIOUS CLASS AT SENSIBLE PRICES

Residents in the north of Phuket will be pleased to know that they can now enjoy five-star cuisine at two-star prices.

The 'Farang' restaurant was opened by Chit 'Tik' Rukngam and his wife, Sangtian, nine months ago, and the menu reflects K. Tik's wide experience in preparing both Thai and Western dishes.

Having opened and organized the kitchen at the Red Room restaurant in Cherng Talay, K. Tik felt it was time to branch out on his own.

"My specialty is really Italian cuisine," he explains. "I have been cooking Italian food for a long time, and last year I spent six months in Australia and had a wonderful time exchanging my Thai cooking skills for new ideas in Italian-style cooking at the Kuppa restaurant in Perth."

Most customers express amazement at how K. Tik can manage to serve such top-quality food for such low prices. Apart from certain dishes such as T-bone steak, the average meal at Farang costs around 60 baht.

"The portions are modest," explains K. Tik. "For example, our pizzas are about the size of a side plate. But this means that guests can order two main dishes and still pay only about 100 baht."

As everything is home-made, and K. Tik always does his own shopping to ensure all ingredients are fresh, his restaurant offers really good value for money.

The choice is varied, from Thai dishes to pasta, pizza, sandwiches and salads. K. Tik also bakes mouth-watering cakes; brownies and cheesecake are always available and he often has such delights as plum or apple pie as daily specials.



K. Tik with, from top, Farang spiced prawn salad; Grilled salmon steak; and Pasta with crabmeat.

Method:

Thoroughly blend the ingredients for the salsa sauce. Heat some oil in a pan and fry the salmon steak for two or three minutes on each side. As you cook the steak, dust it with salt and pepper to taste.

Arrange the three-colored vegetables and mashed potato on a plate and place the salmon steak on top of these.

Drizzle some salsa sauce over the salmon and serve.

Pasta and crabmeat with tomato cream sauce Per person

Ingredients:

100 gms (when cooked) fettucine pasta;
50 gms fresh crabmeat, left in chunks;
1 teaspoon chopped garlic;
1 teaspoon chopped onion;
½ cup whipping cream;
1 tablespoon tomato sauce;
1 teaspoon grated Parmesan cheese;
2 fresh sweet basil leaves, chopped;
Salt and pepper to taste;

Method:

Heat some oil in a pan and fry the garlic and onion for a couple of minutes until lightly browned. Add the crabmeat and mix in well.

On a low heat, stir in the rest of the ingredients, making sure that the sauce is smooth. Put the cooked pasta in last, just before serving the meal.

Farang restaurant, 120/6 Moo 1, Cherng Talay, Thalang, Phuket 83110. Tel: 01-6207429 and 01-5367254. Open Tuesday to Sunday from 10am to 11pm and Monday from 5pm to 11pm.

If you have a recipe you would like to share with our readers, please email chef@phuketgazette.net.

Farang spiced prawn salad Thai-style Per person

Ingredients:

3 large fresh prawns, steamed;
1 small bowl of washed, mixed salad greens;
3 cherry tomatoes;
½ medium onion, sliced thinly.

For the Aioli sauce:

3 cloves garlic, minced;
1 dessertspoon prepared mustard;
2 eggs;
1 cup olive oil;

For the spicy sauce:

½ cup finely chopped mixed green and red small chilies;
5 cloves garlic, chopped small;
3 coriander roots, chopped small;
½ cup lemon juice;
1 cup fish sauce.

Method:

Blend the ingredients for the two sauces well. You will have enough to keep in sealed jars in the fridge to use on other occasions. Arrange the salad greens, tomatoes and sliced onions on a plate. Place the three prawns on

top and either drizzle the two sauces over the salad or serve them separately.

Grilled salmon steak with verdi salsa sauce Per person

Ingredients:

1 salmon steak, about 100 grams;
2 tablespoons mashed potatoes;
2 sticks carrot, steamed;

2 sticks turnip, steamed;
2 small pieces of any green vegetable, steamed.

For the salsa sauce:

2 gherkins, finely chopped;
2 cloves garlic, minced;
½ shallot, finely chopped;
½ cup olive oil;
2 sprigs fresh parsley, finely chopped;
Salt and pepper to taste.

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Scale models work much better than posters or brochures. This model is of the Lakewood development in Cherng Talay.

When small details make a big difference

Saroch Tantipattananaseri designs and builds houses – big houses and little houses. And I mean very little houses.

K. Saroch is actually an architect, with P&C Project Management Consultants in Kathu, so there is nothing unusual about an architect building houses. But not many also build models of the houses.

Many developers and property marketing people consider models to be their most important marketing tool.

Certainly, at the Phuket property exhibitions in Hong Kong and in Singapore, the display stands with model houses have always attracted plenty of attention. One model of a villa design for a Phuket project was so detailed that it was constantly surrounded by little girls who saw it as the ultimate dolls' house.

Little girls aside, an accu-

rate scale model is a good way for potential customers to get a feel for the project.

Mark Phillips, a two-time home buyer who has retired in Phuket from the corporate world of private banking, says that models are what attracts his attention at home shows. "A nicely detailed model gives a 'touchy-feely' impression.

If you have a model of the overall project or masterplan and models of the individual houses, you get a better impression than from looking at pictures or artists' impressions," he says.

"I will always stop at an exhibition booth where there is a model on display."

Traveling with models is not always that easy; I'd be interested to see the overweight bill when those lugging models around checked in at the airport.

A few pictures and posters are an easier way to travel. But they're not as effective.

PROPERTY & HOMEZONE

By Graham Doven

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Home of the Week

Patong-Kamala



A modern Thai-style three-bedroom villa with swimming pool, on the hillside near the coast road between Patong and Kamala, has recently been completed and placed on the market.

The house sits well back from the road on a 1,000-square-meter plot within extensive landscaped grounds of more than 6.6 rai. The site is surrounded by rubber trees at the rear. Access is via a wide concrete driveway, which leads past the emerald-tiled swimming pool with integral Jacuzzi to a twin car garage, off which there are maid's quarters and a service area.

On the floor above the garage is a large living and dining area – with a durable tiled floor – which adjoins a sizeable sala with a Thai roof. There is also one bedroom.

The master suite has an impressively spacious bathroom and leads onto a private covered sala at the rear. It is on the top floor, along with the second bedroom.

The house is impressively finished, with rendered walls and major columns flagged in sandstone. This finish is echoed in the sandwash and sandstone-



effect tiles used for the many airy terraces that surround the property.

The window and door frames are made from good quality wood and the windows let in plenty of light. Inside, there are redwood parquet floors, wood-lined ceilings and marble-effect bathrooms.

The location of the property suggests it may be noisy, but while traffic can be heard in the gardens, the house itself is well insulated.

The property is almost equidistant from Patong and Ka-

mala, within a five-minute drive of either, and it is only a short walk from Nakalay Beach.

The home was originally envisaged as the showhome for an estate of several similar homes. The buyer has the option of buying the house alone for around 15 million baht, or buying the house and the surrounding 6.6 rai of land.

For further details of this property please contact Tab at Phuket LandSearch at Tel: 076 340 348, email: tab@phuketland.com

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Delay and you could pay a higher price

Archie Hamble, currently in South Korea, wrote to me to say that he is considering buying a house near a beach in Phuket.

He also wrote that he is interested in knowing more about current price trends and whether bargains, perhaps in the form of "fire sales" are available.

If you choose the property carefully, then now is the time to buy in Phuket. Increasing demand and limited supply are fueling rising land and built property prices. Building materials are also rising in price.

The upward trend in Phuket's housing market shows no sign of ending soon. Transaction numbers and values in the year to date have far exceeded those of 2003, and the figures for 2003 were significantly better than those of the year before.

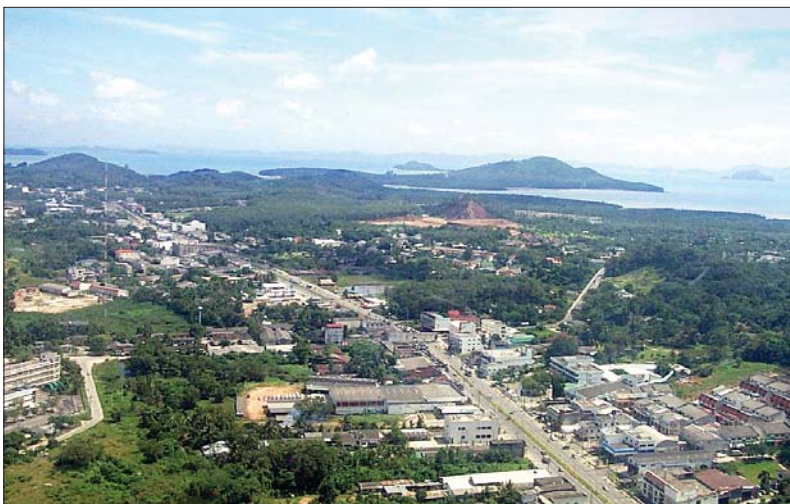
There are some signs that Phuket is in the early, rather than the late, stages of growth, in terms of both demand and prices. More and more buyers are seeking their dream homes in a good location and with good views.

When access to mortgages is made easier, expect the prices to increase at an even faster rate. Buy now before the better locations become rarer and therefore more expensive.

In such a market fire sales – whereby property is sold off at short notice and usually at a discounted price – are rare, and one needs to move quickly to take advantage of any that do occur. Prepare your finances carefully and in advance, ready for swift action.

It seems that for most sellers in Phuket, an unsold property does not present too much of a financial burden; seldom do they offer a heavy discount to induce a sale, and many prefer to rent out the property while holding out for a buyer.

Increasing amounts of



Land prices are still rising steeply in Phuket, and so are the costs of building materials.

property in new locations around the island may eventually affect this dynamic and opportunities for bargain hunters may arise.

These bargains may be offered by foreign owners who have over-extended themselves financially.

Choose your location with care, especially if you expect to rely on rental income to service an overseas debt. Paying more for a premium location where rental yields are likely to be more constant is sensible. That said, a buyer who intends to rely on



Ask WILLIAM

By William Pinsent

rental income to pay for his property is taking a risk.

Some of the properties marketed are no-brainers when it comes to predicting their above-average yields. A savvy realtor should also guide the buyer away from properties where the yield quoted is a developer's flight of fancy rather than a plausibly achievable figure.

Beware of guaranteed returns, and question whether the sales price has been manipulated to accommodate these in some way. Also, ask what happens when the "guarantee" expires.

Recent increases in the price of raw materials have, in turn, raised the price of properties. One developer began the

first of his three near-identical houses in early 2003. It cost 10 million baht. The second property – begun seven months ago – is set to cost 13 million baht. Estimates for his third and final house are around 15 million baht. The lesson is clear: delay buying into the market and you will have to pay higher materials and land costs.

Buying off plan can offer repayments spread out over a number of years with some developers able to tailor these repayment plans to suit your circumstances. You can also fix the price, which – all things being equal – will probably otherwise rise during the construction period.

Another strategy – particularly for someone not living in Phuket – is to buy a plot of land. It is likely that capital gains on land alone will be greater than on a small finished home, and the land can be sold off or built on as required.

You should factor in the escalating construction costs, but offset this against depreciation and maintenance charges. This strategy allows you to extend yourself to only a certain degree but still benefit from the upward trend in land prices.

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

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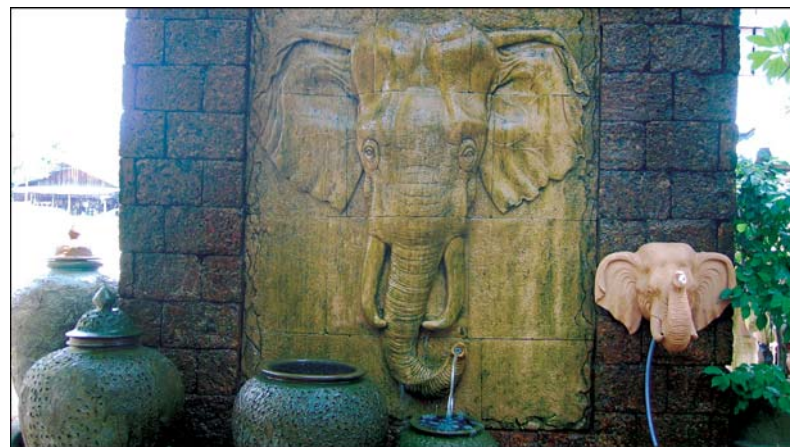
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Gardening

with Bloomin' Bert

REACH FOR THE SKY

Did I mention the fact last week that I do rather like trees? Perhaps I just hinted at it a bit. I can't say that back in England I could get particularly enthusiastic about this aspect of the plant world. I just couldn't be bothered – growing trees in your garden over there holds about as much interest as watching a cricket match in slow motion.

I mean, not a great deal happens. And when it does, you don't even notice, as any movement is imperceptible.

I have to say that I do get a bit smug with the Percy Thrower-types over there, who think

they're God's gift to the gardening world because they can plant something that doesn't actually die as soon as it hits the ground.

Grow? Perish the thought – just keep it alive for a year or two, then it will start considering an increase in size.

The main difference here is speed. There's a tree that's known over here as a *paya satabaan*, which grows like no other tree I've ever seen. It's almost demonic in its impatience to climb skywards.

I first came across this possessed plant a few years ago, when I spent a weekend on one of the islands south of Phuket.



BLOOMIN' QUICK: The *paya satabaan* is probably the fastest growing tree in your garden.

Like many of the resorts on the Trang and Krabi coasts, there wasn't a great deal to do other than relax on the beach, swim in the ocean and drink beer. Predictably, I mostly chose the latter.

It was during a beer-fuelled conversation that I got onto the subject of gardening with the

owner of the resort. As soon as he discovered that I actually like growing stuff, he immediately thrust a large "nut", with a three-inch fresh green shoot peeping out of it, in my hand and asked me what it was.

Much as I would have loved to have replied with some kind of witty retort, and recite its Latin name and preferences for light, water and garden position, I didn't. Being a little less than totally sober, I told him that I hadn't the faintest idea what it was.

Undaunted, I took it home anyway, eager to discover what on earth he'd given me, and stuck it in a pot of compost. It grew. A lot. Within a couple of months it was too big for the first pot, so I put it into a bigger one. It didn't take too long for it to outgrow that, too.

I didn't have a garden with soil as such in those days, just a huge balcony jammed with pots of various shapes, sizes and contents. As it was apparent that this manic grower wasn't going to be content with any pot I could try putting it in, I gave up.

I went over to the opposite side of the street where there was a patch of ground that hadn't been built on, dug a hole, and popped it in. This was precisely what it had been waiting for, and the growth spurts I'd seen previously were apparently only

warm-ups. It was now a hormonal teenager on some kind of alien-sponsored speed-growth project.

Two years after my visit to the island, the three-inch shoot was four meters tall. Now that doesn't happen every day in other parts of the world. These things certainly do seem to like island life, as they are all over Phuket, though presumably they weren't all planted with the same naïvete that I had when I took mine home.

Rules don't seem to apply to this particular plant. Stick it in some soil, and it will grow without any encouragement at all. Just give it plenty of space. If it's anywhere near a window, it will need regular attacks with some very large shears if you don't want perpetual darkness in that particular room.

As I think I mentioned earlier, I do like trees. I just wish I knew what a *paya satabaan* was in English.

If Percy Thrower knew about it, his green fingers would be tinged more with envy than anything else.

Want to know more about a plant in your garden?

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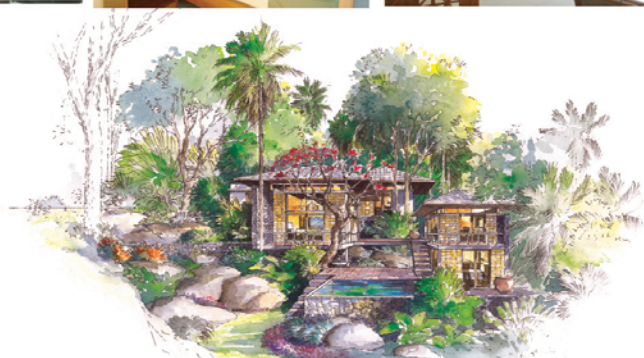


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Property Gazette

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for sale. 560 sqm, in Kathu, with Nor Sor 3 Gor title. Two stories, 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, with Jacuzzi. Price: 6.9 million baht. Tel: 07-2799500.

PRIME LAND - LUSH, PRIVATE

Three rai on Phuket's lush northwest coast. Set high on a quiet mountain, this land offers spectacular sea and valley views. Ten minutes to two world-class golf courses, the island's marinas, and the airport. Chanote title. 5.2 million baht per rai. Call Janpen on 09-8736166 or email: property@phuketgazette.net

"Sri Patak Villa On-Site Sales Office Now Open"



A detached one-storey house.

63 sq. wah and upwards. 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 1 living room and 1 kitchen.
Price: 2 million baht+



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Price: 3 million baht+



One-storey townhouses.

2 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, 1 living room and 1 kitchen plus washing area.
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One-storey semi-detached houses.

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For more information, please contact: Sri Patak Villa Tel: 076-280333, 076-281583

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KATA APARTMENT

1-bed, 70-sqm apartment in Kata with pool, aircon, parking, and sea view. Secure and private, and with new lease. Offers over 3 million baht. Pls contact for more info. Tel: 076-333244, 076-330087 ext 304. Email: porterat@phuket.ksc.co.th

RAWAI CONDO

Apartment comprising 1 room and toilet. Prime location 400m from beach. Freehold title, 290,000 baht upwards. Please contact for more information. Tel: 09-4740227. Email: chotip_5@hotmail.com

PATONG APARTMENT

for sale. 57-year lease. 1 bedroom, 126sqm. Fully furnished, 3 years old. Expat community. Please email for more details. Email: beijingkirk@yahoo.com

15 RAI, CHALONG

seaview with road, power, Nor Sor Sam title. 1.7 million baht per rai. Email for info. Email: adamphuket2001@yahoo.com

LUXURY BEACH

condos. Large - 56sqm - seaview apartment comprising 1 bedroom, living room, bathroom and kitchen for sale for 1.5 million baht. Freehold title for 760,000 baht. Please call or email for full details. Tel: 09-4740227. Email: chotip_5@hotmail.com

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Deadline for all other pages: Saturday 12 noon.

Property Gazette

NICE PLACE 4 RENT

Nice place – with garden views – for rent. 100 meters from the main road in Soi Palai. Good business opportunity. Please call for details. Tel: 07-8260993.

3-BEDRM HOUSE

3-bedroom house for long-term rent. Located near Mission Hills golf course, in Thalung. 145sqm, kitchen, bathroom and WC. Please call. Tel: 076-274575.

BEACHFRONT

condo. Kalim, Patong. Fully-furnished to a high standard. 2 bedrooms, fitted kitchen, pool. Many facilities. Please contact to view or for further information. Tel: 01-892-0038.

KATHU HOUSE

Part-furnished 2-bed house in Kathu for rent. Has 2 bathrooms, 2 aircons, living room, UBC, TV. 10 mins from Patong, 10,000 baht/month. Pls call for details. Tel: 09-6459527, 09-7319960.

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Furnished apartment in Kathu with 2 rooms, bathroom with hot shower, cooking area, aircon, balcony, swimming pool, parking and security for long-term rent. 9,000 baht or deal for 5,500 baht. Pls call for details. Tel: 01-7288768.

LUXURY HOUSE

near Laguna. Luxury house near Laguna for rent. Has 3 bedrooms, pool and sala. Pls call for details. Tel: 01-6067410.

PATONG

apartments. Apartments in Patong available for long-term rent. 1 bedroom, 1 TV room, cable TV, aircon. Some apartments with good sea view 5,000 - 20,000 per month. Tel: 09-2909567. www.brommathaihouse.com

CONDO @ PATONG

Tower. Condo on the 17th floor of Patong Tower for rent on a monthly basis for 35,000 baht. New and clean, and a 2-minute walk to the beach. 1 bedroom and 1 living room with big balcony and panoramic view of Patong Bay. Pls contact for details. Tel: 01-8063946. Fax 053-354334. Email: noinoiarporn@yahoo.com

FISHERMAN WAY

Beachfront house for rent. Please call Tel: 076-381181 or 076-381189 for full details. Please see our website at: www.fishermanway.com

Property Wanted

LOOKING FOR HOUSE

Looking for house or apartment, with 1 or 2 bedrooms. Must be a good-quality property in a quiet location in the Kata-Karon area. Long-term rental up to one year from October/Nov. Please email with details. Email: mat268@yahoo.com

PATONG LAND

Looking for 1 rai to 2 rai of land in Patong. Sea view or close to beach preferred. Please send photos and price by email. Tel: 02-7269918, 06-3418781. Fax: 02-7269917. Email: solitude001@aol.com

Accommodation Available

HOTEL PROMOTION

Special low-season, long-stay promotion at a beachfront hotel. Includes ABF and use of facilities. 18,000 baht/month. Please call for details. Tel: 076-345518 or 01-8920038.

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ANDAMAN SEA

view resort. Rooms for rent on daily, weekly or monthly basis at very reasonable rates. Rooms are fully furnished and have aircon, hot and cold water, cable TV and access to a coffee shop. Call for details. Tel: 01-6285361.

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Issues & Answers

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IBAP BUSINESS FAIR

Relocatable offices, homes or extra accommodation for the mother-in-law. Check out our economical and unique system at the IBAP business fair on September 25-26 at Central Festival Phuket or call for more details. Tel: 01-8924804.

PHUKET WATER

gardens. Phuket Water Gardens offer water feature construction including koi ponds, waterfalls and more. Call for details. Tel: 07-8814984.

Would you like to keep up on what's happening in Phuket - the good, the bad and the bizarre?
Let us share it with you - every week!

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The Phuket Gazette

Wherever you stop for shopping, don't forget to pick up your weekly **Gazette** every Saturday at:

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• Kiosk opposite Watson's

Home Pro

• Se-Ed Book Center

Robinson Department Store

• Bookstore (1st floor)

Big C

• Se-Ed Book Center (Ground floor)
• Kiosk in front of MK Suki (1st floor)

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• The Books (3rd floor)

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Problems with an extra-marital affair?
Questions about Thai culture?
Need somebody to Love?

Read her advice in the Phuket Gazette



Fax 076-213971 or email momma@phuketgazette.net

Island Job Mart

Silk Entertainment

A contemporary Thai-style restaurant located in the Surin area, Phuket, is seeking dynamic & independent candidates for the following positions.

Restaurant Manager

- * Aged 25 years to 40 years.
- * Excellent command & understanding of the English language.
- * Able to control & run a restaurant.
- * Able to work within financial controls & meet budget fore-cast requirements.
- * Ability to lead staff by example.
- * Self motivated, great organizer & trainer.
- * 3 years' experience in a similar position in a 5-star establishment.
- * Good communicator, pleasant personality, energetic & passionate about work.
- * Knowledge of food & wine.
- * Knowledge of POS system, computer literate.

Restaurant Hostess

- * Aged 22 years to 30 years.
- * Excellent command & understanding of the English language.
- * Able to speak other languages besides English & Thai.
- * 2 years' experience in a similar position.
- * Some knowledge of food & wine preferred.
- * Good communicator, pleasant personality, energetic & passionate about work.
- * Knowledge of POS system, computer literate.

Cooks/Stewards/Cleaners

- * Experience essential, team players & willing to learn.
- * Reasonable understanding of the English language (not essential)
- * Pleasant personality, energetic & passionate about work.
- * Min. 2 years' experience in similar position or in the hospitality industry is preferred.

Bar Manager

- * Aged 25 years to 30 years.
- * Good command & understanding of the English language.
- * Ability to lead staff by example, great organizer & trainer.
- * 2 years' experience in a similar position in a 5-star establishment.
- * Good communicator, pleasant personality, energetic & passionate about your work.
- * Knowledge of POS system, computer literate.
- * Excellent understanding of kitchen organization & hygiene standards.
- * High degree of knowledge of making & serving first-class cocktails & beverages & able to control bar stocks & costs.

Service Staff/Bar Staff

- * Experience essential, team players & willing to learn.
- * Good command & understanding of the English language.
- * Pleasant personality, energetic & passionate about work.
- * Min. 2 years' experience in a similar position or in the hospitality Industry is preferred.

All positions for Thai nationals only. Interested applicants can apply for interview by calling the General Manager at Tel: 01-271 2471 Mon-Fri 9 am. - 5 pm.

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

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

SALES LADY

required for property developer in Phuket. Fluent in Thai, English, computers. Please send CV with photo by email to: sales@thaistylehouse.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.

SALES STAFF

required for Siam Diving Enterprises. Fluent in spoken & written English and have a driving license. Experience in diving & sales an advantage. Tel: 076-281401. Email: sdephuk@loxinfo.co.th

ESC

INTERNATIONAL

Expatriate Service Center is a diversified service center for expatriates in Phuket. We're looking for a suitable candidate to fill the following position:

Experienced Legal and Law Professional

- * Master's degree in Legal and Law
- * 2-4 years experience in:
 - Company Registration
 - Visa and Immigration
 - Property Law
 - Family Law
 - Contract Law
- * Sense of responsibility, reliability and possess pro-active problem solving skills.
- * Be fluent in spoken and written English.

Interested persons please reply by
Email: investthailand@yahoo.com or
Tel: 07-2779242

PROPERTY

secretary. Are you self-motivated, experienced, sociable, and fluent in English, as we require a secretary who can get the work done. Salary commensurate with experience. Send CV. Tel: 076-236616, 01-8952206. Fax: 076-236617. Email: siamuk@loxinfo.co.th

SECURITY MANAGER

International security provider requires internal Security Manager. Based in Bangkok, applicants should be aged 30 years up and have a minimum of 5 years' experience in the private security industry. Thai-speaking expats with military or police backgrounds are welcome to apply. Tel: 076-354762, 01-8924992. Fax: 076-354726. Email: sth_phkt@phuket.ksc.co.th

PHI PHI ISLAND

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

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-liveaboards.com

THAI ENGLISH

Teacher is required to teach kindergarten and primary level. Please send resumé via email or fax. Tel: 076-248-975. Fax: 076-248976. Email: info@kajonkiet.com

DIVING CENTER

manager. Well-established diving company based in Phuket seeks General Manager for new Khao Lak branch. Please email CV to apply. Email: workinkhaolak@hotmail.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

Employment Wanted

SCANDINAVIAN

seeks job. My name is Thomas Christensen. I am a 27-year-old male from Denmark. I am currently working as manager for a bungalow resort in Thailand, but I am now looking for sales, marketing or IT position, open to and willing to learn other options. Able to communicate in Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, English and Thai. Tel: 09-6403432. Email: tc@papillonlanta.com

TIMESHARE SALES

manager. Seeking long term position in Thailand with growing company. I have 20 years' experience in Vacation Membership sales - USA, Caribbean, Central America, Southeast Asia. Will send references and resumé upon request. Tel: 63-91823356. Email: riggillo@yahoo.com

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hotelier. Hotel graduate from Cambridge International College, 33, male, Indonesian and currently Rooms Division Manager in the south of Thailand. Looking for RDM/RM position. Tel: 06-5964268. Email: executives@ehotelier.com

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Tout, Trader & Trumpet

Articles for Sale

WISER 2ND HAND
Closing sale! Everything must go by the end of the month. Storage space available. Pls call for more details. Tel: 076-288591, 01-5971140.

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.

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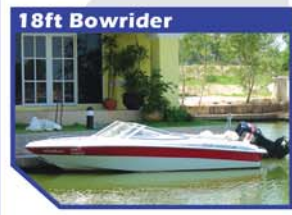
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BOAT FOR SALE

29-foot fibreglass motor yacht with Thai registration. 2 x 280hp Mercruiser engines. Price: 3.5 million baht ono. Please contact for more information. Tel: 076-239-864. Email: hktnkt@ksc.th.com

27-FOOT BOAT FOR SALE



British built, 27ft aluminum commercial or recreational boat, with Perkins 80hp marine engine. 1.5 million baht. Contact for details. Tel: 07-2659977. Email: jimmys@loxinfo.co.th

Bulletins

Alcoholics Anonymous

is holding meetings in English at the following places:

Phuket City
Mission Hospital
on Wed and Sun at 7 pm
Phuket International Hospital
on Fri at 7 pm

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

For more info, please call
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BEAUTIFUL

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BUSINESS PACKAGE

Soi Nanai restaurant with small bar, 3 apartments and 2 separate houses with apartment for rent. Email: phuketopportunity@hotmail.com

AO NANG RESORT

Small boutique resort for sale. Ideal place for living and working. Expandable. Tel: 075-637752. Email: info@na-thai.com

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ASIAN TAPAS BAR

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SEEKING MLM

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

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

Business Products & Services

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MALE MANIKINS/ DOLLS

Different models available for a nice display. Pls contact for more info. Tel: 09-7291113. Email: richard_melen@hotmail.com

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service. Fiance, settlement and Schengen visas: 6 years' experience. Looking for a Thai girlfriend? Tel: 076-248626, 07-2679780. Fax: 076-248626. Email: admin@phuketdeafeagle.com

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Largest size - 1.2m x 0.5m x 0.6m - UPS for sale from original owner. Bought November '02, high tech, one-off sale. 10KVA/8KW, 4.5 AMP. 360kg. Serious callers only. Please call me for more details. Tel: 07-2666423.

Computers

COMPUTER PARTS

Computer parts and accessories delivered free. New + used PCs + notebooks. I also conduct mobile repairs. Please call me for help with your computer or for more information. Tel: 09-4735080.

COMPUTERS FOR SALE

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15" MONITORS

wanted. I am looking for 4 used 15" monitors. If you have any, please call me, between 9am and 5pm, or email with full details. Tel: 076-282403. Email: areeyah@yahoo.com

LAPTOP & DESKTOP

Dell Laptop and Dell desktop computers. Computers are 100% complete working systems. Asking 19,500 for both together. Tel: 076-282486, 09-0093524. Email: cessnausa@yahoo.com

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- Genius speakers
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- Canon printer, S100SP
- Genius scanner
Two years old. 10,000 baht. Tel: 04-0534118. Email: carlophuket@yahoo.com

The Phuket Gazette

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Tel: 076-324017-20

La Boutique at Le Royal Meridien Phuket Yacht Club
Tel: 076-381156-63

Gift Shop at Merlin Beach Resort
Tel: 076-294300

Siam Gallery at JW Marriott
Tel: 076-338133

Gift Shop at Patong Merlin Hotel
Tel: 076-340037-41

Gift Shop at Novotel Phuket Resort
Tel: 076-342777

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Personal Services

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body's way. Nia classes at The Movement Center, Chalong, every Monday and Wednesday at 6:30 pm, and at the Alba Wellness Center at TwinPalms Phuket, Surin, every Tuesday and Thursday at 6:30 pm. Visiting practitioners coming from Sept to March. Tel: 01-7975065. Email: phuketmoves@yahoo.com

LEARN THAI

Conversation and lessons in your home with charming lady Thai teacher. Tel: 01-7971497. Email: churee77@hotmail.com

RUSSIAN

translations. Native Russian can help with translation to/from English/Russian. Tel: 09-6524232. Email: tom_skrpnik@hotmail.com

MAID OR CARE GIVER

My wonderful housekeeper is available for home or personal care. Pls call for details. Tel: 07-2844425.

OSTEOPATHY

by licensed osteopath. Specialist for back problems. Sport massage, acupuncture, manipulation. Tel: 01-077-8940. Email: lejardin@phuket.ksc.co.th

FREELANCE WEB

design. Web design service available - from simple and inexpensive web to complicated graphic/web programming. Websites created with HTML, Java Script, PHP, MySQL database, Flash Professional, Photoshop, Illustrator, Dreamweaver, Adobe Audition, Swishmax, After Effects, etc. Magazine and brochures design also available. Email: hktreal@yahoo.com

BABY SITTING

& housework. Do you need your children looked after or any housework done? Washing, ironing? I can do it for you. My name is Nok and I'm a 24-year-old, non-smoking non-drinking lady with experience looking after young children. If you are in Katu-Patong-Karon-Kamala-Surin and need my help, contact me. Tel: 09-2087205. Email: sodanok46@hotmail.com

WANT TO SPEAK

good Thai? Thai lessons for all levels by qualified Thai teacher (university graduate). Available at your place and at the very best price. We will enable you to speak Thai as well as we do. Please call for more details. Tel: 01-970-0859. Email: wildflowers25@hotmail.com

Personal Services Wanted

TRANSLATIONS

Need a translator capable of translating English to Chinese and Malay. Pls contact me to discuss. Tel: 076-346142, 09-7291113. Email: richard_melen@hotmail.com

FOOD IMPORT LICENSE

I need to import three food items from the United States but I don't want the hassle or expense of getting a license for such a small quantity. Does anyone have a food import license that I can use to bring this stuff in? I can pay a fee, but not too much. Tel: 076-280737, 09-8121084. Fax: 076-281102. Email: elliott@seadawgs.biz

AIR TICKET

proposal wanted. Looking for Travel Agent to propose cheap round-trip airfare BKK-PARIS-BKK for the period Dec 12, 2004 to Jan 2, 2005. Contact me by email. Email: tydbo@yahoo.com

ARTIST WANTED

urgently to produce and paint a fiberglass head (around a manikin head). Must look life-like. Photos and the main manikin will be provided. Tel: 01-2624133. Email: onlyterry@hotmail.com

MS EXCEL

instruction. Help! I need basic instruction in MS Excel or someone to help me set up basic accounting books in Excel. Will pay a reasonable fee. Tel: 07-0779816. Email: williet98248@hotmail.com

WEB DESIGNER

I am looking for a person with skill to design websites. Please contact on my mobile phone number for more information. Prefer someone from Phuket and Thai nationality. Tel: 01-9270792.

Personals

FARANG SEEKING

Thai lady. Farang male 42 - resident in Norway - looking for an attractive Thai lady (preferred age: 22-30) for a long-term relationship and marriage. Divorced, widowed and with kids considered. Send a recent photo and brief details by email. More than one photo would be welcome. I will return to you with details about myself and photos. Email: oys2505@hotmail.com

SAILING COMPANION

Australian guy looking for nice, educated lady to come on sailing trips from Phuket to the Thai islands and beyond. The right lady, with passport, must be able to live onboard a yacht, and cook and travel. Send information to my email address with contact details. Email: asiansailing2004@hotmail.com

FARANG SEEKS THAI

If you are a single Thai lady looking to make a big change in your life, then I would like to meet you. I am looking for someone who would like to come to my country and share my life, my work and my dreams. If you are the right person I will come to Phuket to meet you. Email: explore@pixie.co.za

THAI BEAUTY

companion. I am a beautiful, thin, smiling 23-year-old Thai woman available to show you around. I can give you an enjoyable time. I study English and am caring and soft. Would you like me to email you a picture? I can meet you in Bangkok or Phuket. Email: areemagic@hotmail.com

SAMUI HOLIDAY

Farang aged 50 looking for young Phuket lady to join for holiday in Samui late Sept/early October. Five days of beach fun - no strings attached. Please send your details and photo by email to: martinsavaloy@hotmail.com

WANT TO BE FRIENDS?

I am a local girl, working as business services. I would like to meet a friend no matter who you are and where you are from - very welcome for helping anything about Phuket, including Thailand! Email: martiny_25@yahoo.com

SEEKING LADYBOY

friend. Genuine, educated ladyboy wanted for love relationship with European man who is often visiting Thailand for work. I am 41, good looking, fit with own house and car. Looking for a serious, very feminine, pretty ladyboy, age 18 to 30. She should be single, free and available to travel with me. Please email with your photo. Email: paulatino6@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. Please email: paul2@mail2world.com

FARANG MALE SEEKS

Thai male. Hi, Guys! I'm a white male looking for a Thai man to share my time with. I'm 25, blonde-haired, blue-eyed and physically fit. I enjoy movies, bicycle rides in the park, dancing and relaxing nights at home with my special someone. Please email if you would like to know more about me. Email: guppaz@hotmail.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. Email: dhartman@ozemail.com.au

WOMAN SEEKS

foreign man. I am 35 years old and people say that I am a nice lady. Living in Chiang Rai and seeking foreigner who cares for me. He can be sure I will take care of him and be a good wife. Age not important and I'm not after your money. Email: nantiya_6@yahoo.com

ANY THAI PEOPLE

in England? I would really enjoy being in contact with any Thai people living in England - not only for fun, but also to practice speaking Thai. It would be wonderful to have a friend to meet with and maybe go for a walk together. I love to learn about other cultures. Hoping to hear from any Thai person in England, and thank you for reading this message! Email: andypatong1@hotmail.com

Pets

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Q Mart, Grand Hotel, Sukhumvit Rd, Soi 11, Klongtoey

Tel. 02-6511200 ext. 3452

C Mart, Centre Point, Petchaburi Rd, Soi 15, Rajathewee

Tel. 02-6536690-8 ext. 4030

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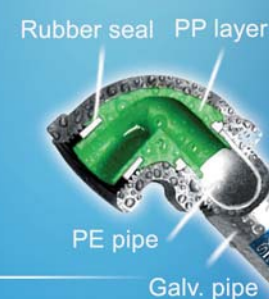
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