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IN THIS ISSUE

NEWS: Finance Ministry urged to review spa tax; Gov to push for expo center in Ao Phuket. **Pages 2 & 3**

INSIDE STORY: Patong B1.8bn plan analyzed. **Pages 4 & 5**

AROUND THE ISLAND: No illusions about magician King Robert. **Page 6**

AROUND THE REGION: Tourist numbers on the rise. **Page 8**

PEOPLE: PIWC ball photos; Film director Jira Maligool in Phuket. **Pages 10 & 11**

LIFESTYLE: Essential Christmas gifts roundup. **Page 12**

STREETS OF PATTAYA: A legally-binding column to laugh at. **Page 14**

SUPERYACHTS: The vicarious joys of big boys' toys. **Page 16**

FIRST PERSON: Market forces at work in Patong. **Page 23**

BUSINESS: Singapore-Phuket air traffic increasing; Currency queries. **Page 25**

TALES OF A TRAVELER: No Suzie Wong, but heaven in Hong Kong. **Page 28**

PROPERTY: So near, yet so far in Chalong; Layan lowdown; Construction. **Pages 33, 34 & 35**

GARDENING: Tongue-tied by the mother-in-law. **Page 36**

PLUS

QUEER NEWS 4; AROUND THE NATION 7; HAPPENINGS 9; KIDS 19; MOTORING 20; HOROSCOPES 21; EDITORIAL & LETTERS 22; ISSUES & ANSWERS 23; BOOKS, COMPUTERS 24; SPORT 26 & 27; GUEST CHEF 30; CLASSIFIEDS 37-43.

Showdown at market

By Siripansa Samboon

PATONG: Mayor Pian Keesin on December 3 led a large squad of Kathu police and more than 30 municipal officers to the grubby Ko Kaew Market, where he ordered the police to detain Ruantong "Da" Wareesri, who is leading the vendors' fight to keep the market open, while he spoke with other vendors.

K. Da, a committee member of the 240-strong Ko Kaew Market Association, organized a meeting with the Senate Committee on Tourism in Bangkok last month, during which she pleaded for fairness in the matter.

At the meeting, which was attended by both K. Pian and Phuket Province Chief Administrative Officer (*Palad*) Vichan Busapavanich, it was agreed that the market vendors would begin selling their wares at the new Mae Ubon Market on Nanai Rd on alternate days, once Mae Ubon Market provided them with sufficient canvas roofing and parking spaces.

The Municipality has pressed the vendors to relocate since the opening of the new Mae Ubon Market last year. The vendors say it is at least the third time they have been forced to move, and that business has never been as good as it was back in 1992, when they were allowed to sell their goods along the beachfront in Patong.

The Phuket Provincial



'I'm tough, but I'm not a bully': Patong Mayor Pian Keesin wants the grubby market closed.

Health Office last year cited the market for violating 16 different health codes, saying its unhygienic conditions posed a risk of cholera and other infectious diseases.

The market owner also decided not to renew the market's license when it expired last year, so it is now operating illegally.

The vendors taped Mayor Pian on video during his December 3 visit, saying, "We want all the vendors to move out [now] and we don't care where they [go to] make a living. We already have [set up] canvas roofs and car parking for them [at the new Mae Ubon Market], even if it isn't enough for everyone," he said.

The market has been the site of several sinister incidents recently. In the evening of No-

vember 26 there was a fire at the market in which, the vendors say, eight stalls were burned. The Vendors' Association estimated the damage at more than 50,000 baht.

The following day, according to the vendors, persons unknown blocked a nearby canal, diverting its course so that much of the market ended up knee-deep in muddy water. Graffiti have also appeared, delivering warning of a bomb if vendors continue to operate there, they claim.

Mayor Pian denied being involved with either incident. "I'm tough, but I'm not a bully. I wasn't the one

who burned down the shops or tried to flood you out," he told the vendors.

While being detained in a police pick-up truck, K. Da told the *Gazette* by mobile phone that she was being held by police "at K. Pian's request". With her out of the way, Mayor Pian then went to talk to the other market vendors, she said.

"If K. Pian tells the police to arrest me they will; if he says let me go, they will," she said while in detention.

K. Da was later released, after K. Pian finished talking to the other vendors.

Pol Col Teeraphol Thipjaroen, Superintendent of Kathu Police Station, told the *Gazette* later that K. Da was held temporarily in order to defuse a poten-

Continued on page 2

Researchers recommend special status for island

By Kamol Pirat

PHUKET: A group of researchers from the National Institute of Development Administration (Nida) have argued in favor of Phuket being turned into a special administrative zone with an elected Governor.

At a seminar at the Phuket Merlin Hotel on December 1, the Nida research team, led by Juree Vichit-Vadakan, said that results of a survey they had conducted showed that 83% of 298 Phuket residents surveyed favored the province being designated a special administrative zone similar to Pattaya and Bangkok. In those cities, leaders are elected instead of being appointed by the Interior Ministry.

Attending the seminar were Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (*OrBor-Jor*) President Anchalee Vanich-Thepabutr, Phuket City Mayor Somjai Suwannasuppana and many other local politicians and officials.

The research team said they had studied several possible administrative models that would be appropriate, and which would be more helpful in meeting Phuket's future development needs.

Such needs, including improved wastewater treatment, garbage collection and expansion of the road network, must all be met in order to accommodate projected increases in tourism arrivals, the researchers said.

"The current administrative system will be unable to deal [adequately] with Phuket's problems in the future. It is too slow. Establishing a special administrative zone is the answer to controlling Phuket's development," K. Juree said, adding that it would help establish Phuket as

Continued on page 2



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Finance Ministry to be urged to review spa tax

By Kamol Pirat

PHUKET: Phuket Governor Udomsak Usawarangkura has agreed to ask the Finance Ministry to review the controversial 10% excise tax on spas, following a meeting on the issue held at his office on December 2.

Gov Udomsak chaired the meeting, which was attended by Phuket Spa Business Club Chairman Pakin Raktae-Ngam, who is leading the opposition to the tax, and Supatra Horsrisumpun, Chief of the Phuket Area Excise Office, which is responsible for collecting it.

Also in attendance was Dr Wanchai Sattayawuthipong, the Chief of the Phuket Provincial

Health Office and a handful of other officials.

After listening to views from all sides, the Governor said he would ask Finance Minister Somkid Jatusripitak to review the controversial tax next week.

"I will point out the difference between massage parlors and spas. The raison d'être of spas is to improve the customer's health, and this is why spas are being promoted under the Government's 'Health Capital of Asia' tourism promotion scheme.

"The tax should be kept low to allow us to compete with the spa industries in neighboring countries," the Governor said.

K. Pakin pointed out that spas are already subject to 8% tax

on income, 7% Value Added Tax (VAT) and a 1% "local administration charge".

"If the spas have to pay the 10% excise tax, this will raise the total to 18%. Such a high tax will have a negative impact on the spa business," he argued.

K. Supatra said she was only following Finance Ministry regulations in collecting the tax, adding that, if spas succeed in being exempted, she would no longer have to collect it.

But, she said, "My duty is based on the law," a point she emphasized by noting that the tax had gone into effect on January 28, 2003 and stating that she would be obliged to pursue the many spas that have refused to pay for back taxes – whatever the Finance Ministry decides.

Researchers recommend special status for Phuket

From page 1

an "international city", and improve the economy and the lives of residents.

Fellow researcher Sombat Thamrongthanyawong explained that all of the administrative models they had studied had one common factor: allowing for an elected Governor whose powers would be held in check by a provincial council, which would replace the *OrBorJor*.

"This special administration of Phuket would report directly to the central government and would have the power to launch any activities it authorizes, apart from matters relating to defense, international relations or finance," he said.

Though unrelated, the meeting came less than a week after Deputy Prime Minister Pinij Jarusombat proposed turning Phuket into a special economic zone, to come under the direct supervision of the Prime Minister's Office.

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opp. Islandia Hotel
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The Ko Kaew market is not the most salubrious place in Patong. In the background is the Jungceylon construction site.

Showdown at the market

From page 1

tially explosive situation. "The officers put K. Da in the police pickup truck because [police and municipal officials] wanted to talk with the other vendors, who were easier to deal with than her," he said.

"We had about 50 police and municipal security personnel there to control the situation. It wasn't our purpose to arrest anyone," Col Teeraphol added.

Another Vendors' Committee member, Thongchai Sae-ong, told the *Gazette* that several vendors had tried to make a go of it at the Mae Ubon Market, only to find their sales volume fell.

They later returned to Ko

Kaew market out of economic necessity, he said.

Mae Ubon Market is too far away to attract many customers, he explained.

He added that his older brother, Natcha, an electrician at the market, had been shot last month in another act of intimidation.

K. Thongchai said attempts to get assistance from Phuket Governor Udomsak Usawarangkura had failed, as the Governor appears to support Mayor Pian on the issue.

The Vendors' Association plans to make an appeal to Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra as soon as possible, he said.

First Person – page 23

Sipa offers free course in computer animation

BANGKOK: Creative arts graduates are being invited to apply for a free place on a "pre-professional" 3D animation course run by the Software Industry Promotion Agency (Sipa).

One hundred places are available free on the course, open to people with diplomas or degrees in the creative arts or related subjects.

The course will be based at the national ICT Learning Center in Central World Plaza, Bangkok. The first half will run from January 15 and February 27 and the second from March 14 and June 14.

The course includes 480

hours of internship at private companies.

The aim is to produce more professional animators in Thailand and give them the skills to produce animation to international standards.

Applicants must pay a 15,000-baht deposit at the start of the course, but this will be refunded upon completion.

The deadline for applications is January 1. Further information (in Thai) can be seen at /www.sipa.or.th/content.asp?ContentId=487. Application forms may be downloaded from the same web page.

– Gategeo Phetsawang



Made of stainless steel, the new mobile minimarts will, it is hoped, promote good hygiene.

Mobile minimarts launched

PHUKET: The Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (*OrBorJor*) on December 2 unveiled some of the "mobile minimarts" that will be used to sell "clean" food around the island.

The minimarts are part of a 1.5-million-baht initiative to pro-

mote food hygiene among vendors and buyers.

Phuket Technical College worked with the *OrBorJor* to design a stainless steel rust-free minimart attachment for motorbikes, at a cost of 23,000 baht each.

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IN BRIEF

Duffers' delight

PHUKET CITY: In an effort to raise international awareness of the island's growing golf tourism industry, Phuket Province is teaming up with several other agencies to host the "Phuket – The Golf Paradise of Asia" golf tournament on March 5.

It is hoped the event will be the world's largest golf tournament, with over 500 golfers flying in to take part. Also invited to the tourney is an official representative of Guinness World Records, who will monitor whether it is a world record.

The tournament is being organized jointly by the Tourism Authority of Thailand Region 4, the Phuket Golf Association, the Thai Hotels Association Southern Chapter, the Phuket Tourist Association, the Phuket Chamber of Commerce and participating courses.

For more information contact Surin Bamrunghphol at Tel: 01-8912333 or email the Phuket Golf Association at: info@phuketgolf.com

Sriyada engaged

PHUKET: Dr Sriyada Palimapan, due to stand as the Thai Rak Thai (TRT) candidate for Phuket District 1 in next year's general election, was quietly engaged to Saravuth Shinawatra on December 3 in Chiang Mai, the *Gazette* has learned.

Her fiancé – a businessman – is cousin to Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

Close friends and immediate family only were invited to the ceremony. The Prime Minister was not present.

The engagement ceremony, Dr Sriyada told the *Gazette*, was deliberately kept low-key to ensure that it did not breach Election Commission rules that prohibit "entertaining" members of the electorate in the run-up to an election.

Sharks released

CAPE PANWA: The Phuket Marine Biological Center (PMBC) and Phuket Provincial Administration Organization pooled their resources and released 99 Indonesian Bamboo sharks on December 2 to mark the birthday of HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

The sharks – between six and 12 months old and measuring up to 50 centimeters long – were bred at the PMBC.

Gov to push for expo center in Ao Phuket

By Kamol Pirat

PHUKET: Governor Udomsak Usawangkura says he will ask the Cabinet later this month to approve plans for Phuket's International Conference and Exhibition Center (ICEC) to be built in the proposed Ao Phuket development.

"The estimated cost of reclaiming land in Ao Phuket is 1 million baht a rai, which is cheap compared with the price at which land in Phuket is currently being traded," said Gov Udomsak, adding that he would put this proposal before the Cabinet when it meets in Trang on December 14.

The Governor's revelation came as he rejected proposals from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and a firm of consultants for the ICEC to be

built at Saphan Hin, arguing that this would cause too much disruption for local people.

At the December 1 meeting in his office, the Governor was shown the results of a study by Sindhu Pulsirivong Consultants (SPC), which indicated that the best venue would be a 178-rai site in Saphan Hin.

But the Governor, who in September said that the ICEC could be built "anywhere that will create growth in Phuket" said he could not support the SPC proposal.

"The details of this plan call for the relocation of many of the buildings around the site," he said, "which would not be in line with provincial policy."

Gov Udomsak added that Saphan Hin is the city's public park and leisure amenity. People

from Phuket like to relax there, which is why the city municipality looks after it.

A far more suitable site, said the Governor, would be in the proposed 3,200-rai, 63-billion-baht Ao Phuket project.

The Governor chaired the meeting, which was attended by TAT Region 4 Director Suwalai Pinpradab and other TAT representatives; Somchai Srivibul of the Department of Public Works and Town and Country Planning; and representatives of Phuket City Municipality.

During his visit to Phuket on November 19, Deputy Prime Minister Suwat Liptapanlop ordered that a meeting be held to assess progress on government policy, in particular the long-running debate over the siting of the ICEC.

Tax office issues warning over unregistered charities

By Sangkhae Leelanaporn

PHUKET: Organizations that raise money for good causes have been warned that they are now liable to pay tax on the money they raise, unless the organization is a registered association or foundation.

The rate of tax is 7% + 2% of the amount raised by an unregistered charity. In other words, 7% tax is levied on the amount raised, with 2% tax levied on the subsequent total.

Likewise, companies that sponsor charitable organizations – whether registered or not – must pay tax on the full value of service or goods provided as sponsorship.

For sponsorship of unregistered charities, the tax payable is 7% + 2%, while for sponsorship of registered charities it is 7%.

In contrast to this, said Paisit Sudjarustham, Deputy Chief of the Phuket Provincial Revenue Office, cash donations by companies to registered charities are not taxable, and are deductible.

K. Paisit has said that his office will do what it can to help

bona fide charities to make arrangements to minimize their tax liability.

Phuket has many clubs and organizations that arrange many events for many different reasons, said K. Paisit.

But a "club" has no legal standing in dealings with government officials, so any income it receives, even if the income is for charitable purposes, is taxable.

Bodies registered with and recognized by the Ministry of Interior as legitimate foundations or associations providing a service to society are generally exempt from tax, K. Paisit said.

They must still pay tax on some forms of income: 2% on

income from business, agriculture, and industrial or transportation ventures, and 10% of income from sources such as rent, bank interest, consultancy fees or share dividends.

Foreigners who want to raise money for charity have a choice of either setting up a registered charity or paying income tax to the Revenue Office.

But, said K. Paisit, government officials would do their best to make registration quick and easy for those wishing to run a bona fide charity.

He added, "If someone is organizing a charitable event, they are welcome to come and ask this office for suggestions on how to reduce their tax liability."

Mahachon 'will not contest election in Phuket'

PHUKET: Phuket is one of only two southern provinces in which the newly-formed Mahachon Party will not field a parliamentary candidate in the coming general election, due to be held by February 13.

Chadej Insawang, Secretary of Mahachon and a former governor of Phuket, told the *Gazette* on December 6 that the party had looked into running a candidate in the province, but had failed to find a suitable person.

K. Chadej, who was in Phuket on private business, confirmed that the party was ready for the election and would be well-represented in the South. Phang Nga is the only other southern province without a Mahachon candidate, he said.

"I am confident that our candidates will win in at least five southern districts, and will do especially well in the three troubled provinces of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat," he said.

– Kamol Pirat

Drive to decrease holiday road toll

PHUKET CITY: The Phuket Office of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (ODPM) has launched a campaign to reduce the number of road accidents, injuries and fatalities in the period to the end of the New Year holiday.

The ODPM is urging road users not to drink and drive, and for motorcyclists to wear helmets. It has also urged all drivers to carry licenses at all times.

Police are to be strict about enforcing the traffic laws, and will be setting up checkpoints on many roads.

Around 15 people are killed on Phuket's roads each month – almost all of them while riding motorcycles – and the ODPM wants to reduce this by almost 50%, to nine or fewer.



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Queer News

Coming unglued

PHITSANULOK: A former soldier was arrested for allegedly murdering his wife while high on glue, partially dismembering her body and distributing sawed-off parts around a village in Phitsanulok's Wang Thong District, police said last month.

The headless and handless body of Wang Pikul villager Bang-orn Liansuwan, 54, who died at least three days earlier, was found in a pool near her home, said Lt Col Thanu Khamode of Wang Thong Police Station.

There were signs of a struggle inside her house, with damaged furniture and bloodstains, he said. Police also found a long knife and a huge ax, suspected to be the murder weapons, as well as pieces of cat and dog skin and flesh.

Bang-orn's husband, Sub Lt Boon-ngam Liansuwan, 57, was arrested and police found the head of a cat and a gold earring beneath his motorbike seat.

Boon-ngam, who appeared mentally disturbed, told police he did not kill his wife, but that he had found an unidentified body rotting in his house.

He had cut the head off, he said, in order to retrieve the gold earrings and then cut off the hands because they got in the way. He then disposed of the body in a nearby pool and dumped the other body parts at various locations around the village.

Based on information provided by Boon-ngam, police managed to locate Bang-orn's head some 500 meters from her body, and her left hand in a rice field. At last report he right hand had still to be located.

Boon-ngam, who has been sniffing 3K glue for two years, resigned from the military to live on his monthly 18,000-baht pension because of a mental illness he suffered after the 1987 Rom Klao war with Laos, in which he fought and narrowly escaped death, the police said.

Police investigators believe Boon-ngam was high on glue when he axed his wife to death and dismembered her body.

He also butchered 10 cats and dogs she'd raised, before cooking them for food.

Source: *The Nation*

Representatives of Consultants of Technology Co (CT) at a November 30 meeting at the Club Andaman Beach Resort unveiled a six-point plan to dramatically improve Patong and its attractions (see panel, right).

CT was hired to put together the plan at the recommendation of the Ministry of the Interior's Department of Public Works and Town & Country Planning (DPT), which has ordered a countrywide planning effort, with all provinces subdivided into planning zones.

Patong Municipality is one of eight such zones in Phuket. The consultants were required to take public opinion into account when drawing up the plan. They carried out a public survey in which Patong residents were asked what should be the focus of Patong's future development. Of those surveyed, 40% voted for sustainable tourism as the top priority; 31% for mixed tourism (conservation and [unspecified] activities); 12% for maximized tourism through commercial activity; and 10% for improvement of tourist facilities. The remaining 7% professed to have no opinion.

After the meeting, recently-elected Patong Mayor Pian Keen admitted that Patong was now paying the price for the lack of planning in the past.

Mayor Pian, who has been mayor twice before, said, "Any

PATONG

A 1.8-billion-baht proposal for improving Patong has been received with a mixture of cynicism and outright condemnation from local community leaders who believe that much of it is unnecessary, poorly conceived or impossible to implement.

There have also been questions as to how honestly the massive plan would be implemented, given the recent political history of the town, with two mayors thrown out of office for corrupt practices, and a bureaucracy that seems to have developed a reputation for putting personal interests ahead of community needs.

The *Gazette's* Anongnat Sarpisut and Gategao Phetsawang report.

large community needs to operate by a fixed set of rules. Flooding has damaged us because we failed to regulate development and introduce standards.

"Patong has grown faster than elsewhere in Phuket, so we urgently need town planning. When we get the [normal] municipal funding from the central government, we will use part of it to fund the planning initiative," he said.

Patong Municipal area is divided into seven sub-districts, each led by an elected village leader who serves a one-year term. These officers, with no vot-

ing power in the municipality, are supposed to recommend projects that local villagers want and to convey public opinion to the municipality.

Two of these leaders who spoke with the *Gazette* are not optimistic about the plan.

Yuthapong Rangsun, of Kalim, said, "When we get town planning, we must have enforcement. But the authorities don't do this. Look at Patong, with all the illegal building on the sidewalks.

"The people in charge of enforcement - Patong Municipality - are not strong. They know what the laws are, but they

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PLAN UNDER FIRE

Project	Agency supposedly responsible	Approx. budget (million baht)
1. Government services buildings and infrastructure, (includes 14 residences for government workers; clubhouse; playground; sports stadium)	Phuket Provincial Administration Organization	466
2. Lagoon project (includes 55 detached homes)	Private sector	692
3. Combined water storage basin and recreational facility, (includes amphitheater, 12 salas, 4 kiosks, etc)	Patong Municipality	180
4. Patong Beach improvement	Ministry of Tourism & Sports	273
5. Soi Bangla improvement	Ministry of Tourism & Sports	144
6. Sawatdirak Rd improvement	Patong Municipality	192

Above: The six-point plan to spend 1.8 billion baht on improving Patong. Below: The tourists still come to Patong – but will the town collapse under the strain on its inadequate infrastructure?

don't enforce them. Without better enforcement, more regulations are useless.

"Maybe the permanent staff have been there too long. Patong would be better if the authorities worked honestly for the city. Needed projects get ignored unless certain 'benefits' accrue to the municipality, while other projects nobody wants are approved over local opposition."

Referring to one of the points in the plan, he added, "We protested against last year's beach landscaping project because we didn't see any reason for it. It's a waste of money."

Krisada Tansakul, Chief of Patong Beach Community, expressed similar sentiments, but added that "political instability" was also partly to blame.

He thinks it is unlikely, for example, that the lagoon project – another of the six points in the plan – will get the private-sector cooperation that would be needed, because the developers would be more interested in maximizing profits than in following the plan.

"Patong Municipality lacks political stability, so it is difficult to know who will be in charge of coordinating all the work. This plan calls for a huge budget, but I think it's more of a pipe dream that will never really come off."

That instability could deter other organizations from becoming



ing involved, he added. "I don't think the *OrBorJor* [Provincial Administration Organization] will invest this much in Patong."

Associate Professor Chuvit Sucha-Xaya of Silpakorn University, one of the consultants who helped draw up the plan, said that only 11% of the flat land in Patong suitable for building was actually being used. Meanwhile, developers try to offer sea views and build on hillsides, increasing the risk of landslides.

He said that the plan to develop of Sawatdirak Rd depends on the authorities being able to stop construction on private property closer than 15 meters from the road's centerline. Whether or not this part of the

plan succeeds, he said, would depend on how effective local authorities are in enforcing regulations when they go into effect.

He added that the plan would, in any case, have to be approved by parliament, and that this would take time – at least four or five years.

Noting that there are currently no town planning laws in place anywhere in the country, he said, "We can't just wait for regulations to solve problems. Otherwise it will be too late. We are

afraid that, at the current rate of development, the west coast of Phuket is going to continue to grow and deteriorate, especially Patong."

Local authorities, he said, should take immediate action when and where they can, rather than wait for funding and new laws to come from Bangkok.

He added that local governments would be authorized to enforce certain recommendations made by the planners once they are included in the DPT's final draft.

Prof Chuvit explained that the rationale behind both the water Storage Basin and Lagoon Projects is to stem Patong's repeated flooding problems, and is based on a flood-management theory advanced by HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

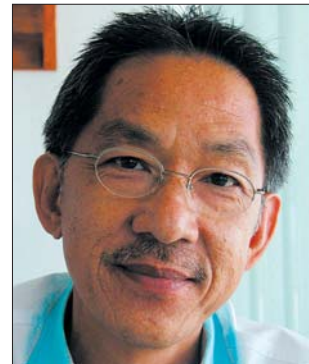
Tunnels would channel floodwater away from the town into the holding basins, the surroundings of which would be developed as a public recreation area, he said.

As for the lagoon project, Prof Chuvit said this would take cooperation from the company that was developing the site. "The land belongs to a private company," he said. "They may build resorts or hotels, but we would like them to develop their project to go along with the town plan and build a large lagoon and a system of canals to help regulate drainage to the sea."

Management of Martello Holdings' Malina Phuket project, contacted by the *Gazette*, declined to comment at this time.

Turning to transport prob-

lems, he noted that, at 7%, the town has an even lower road-to-land ratio than Bangkok's 10% and far below the 25% that is standard for urban areas. He noted that although one new major road was included in the plan,



"It's nice to imagine Patong as a tourist paradise, but we have to consider just how much of this is really possible."

– Suwat Boonchanawiwat, Director of Patong Public Works Division.

They could solve the traffic problem by using *songtaew* buses, which could be specially designed to fit Patong's image as a tourist destination," he said. How this remark would be received by the tuk-tuk lobby is easy to imagine.

Opas Netraumpai, owner of Club Andaman Beach Resort, and one of Patong's most weighty businessmen, said he felt it was unlikely that enough funding would ever be found for all the projects and recommended that they therefore be prioritized.

He also noted that, of the agencies included in the proposal, only Patong Municipality had bothered to send representatives to the meeting. "It might look good on paper, but when you look at it in detail, there is a lot missing," he said.

The last word belongs to Suwat Boonchanawiwat, Director of Patong Public Works Division. He told the *Gazette*, "It's nice to imagine Patong as a tourist paradise, but we have to consider just how much of this is really possible."

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More than sleighty amusing

By Andy Johnstone

One would almost expect the exchange of business cards with a magician to include him saying, "Pick one, any one – but don't show it to me..."

Meeting Robert Paulett – 50-something prestidigitator originally from Kent in England – sadly did not begin that way. I was not ushered into a box to be sawn in half, nor was a rabbit pulled out of a hat just for me.

However, within minutes, Robert – or King Robert, to address him by his stage name – is involving me in one of his tricks involving balls.

Sponge balls to be precise, or more accurately still, one sponge ball. "Squeeze it tight," he says before waving his magic wand – ok, a cocktail stirrer for this illusion – over it. "Say the magic words to make it disappear," he orders.

"Shazam?" I stumble. "No! Too old fashioned," he retorts. "Abracadabra?" I whisper. "No! Try saying something that sounds more ... Asian."

I look bemused and Robert relents, waving the wand without the magic word. And when I open my hand, lo and behold, where once there had been a single sphere there are now two.

"What went wrong?" he asks as I giggle inanely.

Reality has been suspended. The laws of physics have been broken. Robert has performed the now rarely-seen conjurer's shtick of *pretending* to



Robert performs the now rarely-seen conjurer's shtick of *pretending* to get it wrong, not unlike the late British comic Tommy Cooper, who was accomplished at deliberately screwing up tricks.

get it wrong.

Britons of a certain age reading this may well remember Tommy Cooper, a fez-wearing magician famed for his magic – it always went (deliberately) wrong – and for his jokes:

"Two cannibals eating a

clown. One says to the other 'Does this taste funny to you?'"

Robert follows this long tradition of clowning – literally, as he is also a trained clown – rather than glitz-and-glamor Las Vegas-style showmanship.

In fact, one could almost

say that with his musical skills – he is also an accomplished guitarist and songwriter – that his antecedents are perhaps jesters or fools.

But a foolish performance and the many tricks up his sleeve belie the serious side to this sorcerer, who once built and sailed a yacht from Australia to Bali.

He holds a degree in philosophy and has many years' experience teaching English as a foreign language.

His skills as an educator and a performer have taken him through Europe, receiving plaudits from such institutions as the British Council in Paris for his imaginative ideas about learning. Robert has also developed his own "English through Magic" course, with much success.

His rapport with the audience – he prefers the close-up style of magic-making, termed table magic – is palpable, even though I was the only one present during the interview. He is by turns witty, endearing and above all else, a master of misdirection.

Give him a room full of

people and 15 or so minutes at each table and the atmosphere is easy to imagine.

Robert's badinage takes one's attention away from the mechanics of magic-making and, as he says, "Magic can let you suspend your belief in reality. In fact, if you believe what you see," he continues, "then that is real – or real enough."

King Robert follows this long tradition of clowning – literally, as he is also a trained clown – rather than glitz-and-glamor Las Vegas-style showmanship.

Enough of the serious stuff and Robert proceeds first to pull an egg from behind my ear, then make a silk handkerchief disappear within 60 centimeters of my eyes.

I can't see – mechanically – how this pleasantly eccentric conjurer does it, but I can understand the reasons why.

I can't help but grin like a different kind of fool once again, and then wander off chuckling.

King Robert has a few vacancies for the Christmas season and beyond – and can also be contacted to discuss his highly-entertaining teaching courses. For more information contact him directly (Tel: 076-345324; Email: kingrobert@phuketsun.com).

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it can be the start of a friendship.*



Crackdown on teen drinking

Laws forbidding teenagers under 18 to buy alcohol and cigarettes are now being "officially" enforced, following a directive from the Public Health Ministry to police.

The owners of stores that sell alcohol or cigarettes to minors will face three months in prison or a 30,000-baht fine. Offending youths will be put on probation and their parents notified, as called for under the Children Protection Act of 2003.

The government has also dusted off a 1972 Revolutionary Council declaration allowing stores to sell liquor only during two periods of time each day: 11am to 2pm; and 5pm to midnight. Violators will be sentenced to a maximum of two years' imprisonment or fined up to 4,000 baht.

Dr Supreda Adulyanon of the Thai Health Promotion Commission said the government's aggressive campaign follows research that found that 90% of stores the agency monitored sold liquor to youngsters under 18, despite the Children Protection Act. He said teenagers could still avoid law enforcement in many ways, however, such as by asking somebody over 18 to buy alcohol for them.

Pol Maj Gen Surasak Sutharom, Deputy Commissioner of the Bangkok Metropolitan Po-

lice, said police would not have to change their approach to the laws because they already strictly enforce them.

Settling a score: Filled with rage dating back two decades to the rape and murder of his mother, 39-year-old Udom Khamtan killed a neighbor who was a suspect in the case.

Police found the body of In Wongkaew, 56, of Tambon Pong Noi, Chiang Rai, with a shotgun wound to the stomach.

Udom later surrendered to police with the shotgun and was charged with murder. He said he suspected K. In to be the person who raped and killed his mother 20 years ago. He said that K. In had taunted him about the murder at a neighbor's wedding.

Udom, who had been drinking, then went to get his gun. He followed K. In home and shot him dead, he told police.

Having a blast: One man was killed and two others were injured in an explosion involving banned giant firecrackers during Loy Kratong celebrations in Chiang Mai.

The incident took place when a drunken man, identified as Thaweesak Sadab, 19, ignited a large homemade firecracker, which abruptly exploded and blew off his right hand.

Standing nearby was his

19-year-old friend, Pativej Kumkudling, who was killed when the blast blew his head open. Another young man, 15-year-old Adisorn Kammoon, suffered a serious wound to his forehead.

Police said legal action would be taken against Thaweesak after he recovers.

Dredging up the past: Fine Arts Department Director Sod Daengiad asked for more funds to support a survey of underwater ar-

chaeology and cultural resources, citing insufficient funding over the past three decades.

The current budget for the project is 1 million baht, but there have been times when no budget at all was allocated - forcing the department to rely on private donations.

About 50 sites of sunken ships dating back from 300 to 700 years ago have still not been investigated. Most are in the eastern Gulf of Thailand, he said.

Customary pledge: The Finance Ministry signed a memorandum of understanding with 100 traders and shippers that in effect promised them that no more "tea money" would be demanded to do business with the Customs Department.

K. Somkid invited exporters wishing to file complaints to call him or the head of the Customs Department direct, or to call the Customs hotline number, 1332.

The department has long been infamous for taking extra payments from companies to expedite or perform overtime services, especially timely clearance of cargo.

K. Somkid admitted that the initiative would not immediately eliminate corruption, and said he would give it about six months to show if it can be successful in reducing corruption.

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



Agony and Ecstasy: Suspects arrested in five separate drug busts are presented at a press conference at the Police Patrol and Special Operations Command headquarters in Bangkok. Police said they seized more than 250 *ya E* (Ecstasy) pills from the suspects. The sign reads: *The approximate value of the evidence and suspects' assets totals 1,000,000 baht.*

Under Thai law, assets of drug suspects can be seized and held by the state until the courts reach a verdict in their cases. If the suspect is found guilty, the seized assets become state property, with officials involved in the seizure receiving a commission.

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TAT stats show tourism numbers soaring

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has released figures for the first half of the year, which show an average increase of 10% in the number of visitors to Koh Samui, Koh Phangan, and Koh Tao compared with the same period last year.

Samui alone welcomed 20% more guests than during the same period in 2003, with a total of 420,000 foreigners – mainly from Britain and Germany – along with 105,000 Thai tourists, choosing to stay on the island.

These figures appear to justify the current hotel construction boom on Samui, which will result in 15 new hotels and resorts being built on the island, bringing the total to 400.

The average length of stay was 4.2 days, and each person spent around 2,300 baht a day, signifying a change in the profile of the average Samui tourist from budget traveler to wealthier but shorter-term guest.

Diving and snorkeling still rate highly as preferred activities for tourists visiting the islands, as do visits to Samui's spas. One of the newer pleasures on the island, golf, is now also bringing people to Samui on holiday.

Koh Phangan attracts a rather different type of tourist, with Australians, Japanese and Israelis featuring heavily, and visitor numbers peaking around the monthly full moon parties.

The 282 hotels and bungalow resorts on Koh Phangan reported an average 60% occupancy during the first half of this year, with most of the 134,000-plus guests staying on and around Haad Rin and Baan Tai beaches.

Koh Tao saw around 55,000 visitors during the same period, and still receives a large number of day-trippers from neighboring islands.

Meanwhile, the TAT is boosting its efforts in Surat Thani Province. The latest slogan is,

FROM THE GULF OF THAILAND



By Commander
Sammy Swan



Bangkok Hospital Group President Dr Phongsak Wittayakorn (center) opens the new state-of-the-art dental clinic, diving medicine center and a reflexology and foot spa at Bangkok Samui Hospital. He is joined by Valailuk Kiattanakorn (left), of the hospital's dental department, and Dr Soonthorn Sritha.

"100 islands, 100 rivers, 100 temples – magic in a single day", and it is hoped that expanding the range of attractions on Samui and nearby islands will continue to attract ever-increasing numbers of visitors.

Bird 'flu update: Although there has never been a case of bird flu reported on the islands of Surat Thani Province, the local authorities continue to treat the threat

seriously and are monitoring the situation closely in order to prevent an outbreak.

This month the task becomes more difficult than normal because of the large influx of birds migrating to the region. Birds generally arrive in Southeast Asia at this time of year, escaping colder weather in countries farther north, and settle into the wetlands and waterways to wait for the passing of winter.

In Surat Thani province, approximately 38,000 rai of land are populated by wildfowl from December to February, making comprehensive checks for bird 'flu very difficult to carry out.

Officials are therefore asking all local citizens to be vigilant, and to report immediately to local government offices any sightings of dead or sick birds.

Angry spas: Wanwalee Thantikan, the head of the Samui Spa Association, has expressed deep concern and anger at the government's decision to place health spas and massage parlors in the same tax category.

Many of the island's 30-plus health and wellness spas feel they should be officially recognized as distinct from the once-popular Thai "shower houses", and this should be reflected in the amount of tax they pay.

K. Wanwalee's sentiments were echoed by the national Thai Spa Association, which will be joining forces with her to write a letter of complaint to the central government.

They will also request a change in the government's approach to the country's growing health spa industry.

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

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This week



GIFT OF GIVING: The 400th anniversary of the establishment of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the holy book of Sikhism, is celebrated by Gurbachan Singh Sethi, chief of the Siri Guru Singh Sabha, handing over food for 101 poor families to representatives of Phuket communities.



EMIRATES' AMITY: Sheikh ali bin Maktoum Al Saeed (center), of the United Arab Emirates' ruling royal family, enjoys a recent break in Phuket with his close family at the Royal Phuket City Hotel.



TURNING JAPANESE: At the grand opening of the Oishi restaurant at Index Living Mall are (from 2nd left): Thanaset Kulveeraaree, MD of The Andaman Group; Tan Passakornnatee, President and CEO of Oishi Group; and Hester Chew, Chairman of the Executive Committee of Oishi Group.



GOLDEN OPERA-TUNE-ITY: The Sheraton Grande Laguna recently hosted *Rigoletto*, another very successful adaptation by the European Chamber Opera – led by Stefan Paul Sanchez – of a Verdi opera.



SHINING ACROSS THE BAY: Among others at the recent re-opening party at Jimmy's Lighthouse in Chalong are (fom left, back row): Jerry Bruce and Jimmy Pearson; and Don and Linda Billingsley, the new managers.



SIGNED AND SEALED: Dr Suraphong Lookhanumanjio (2nd from left), MD of Bangkok Phuket Hospital, and Wanida Chansue, MD of TRSC International LASIK Center, at the signing ceremony for a new clinic.



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IN DE NILE

Phuket's glitterati were out in force – and in costume – for the Phuket International Women's Club Ball on December 4 at the Hilton Arcadia. No prizes for guessing the theme.



The *Gazette's* interview with film director Jira Maligool took place, fittingly, in Phuket City's On On Hotel. Already well known among the backpacker fraternity, it has become a place of pilgrimage since the film *The Beach* was released, even if the hotel was "relocated" to Bangkok for plot purposes. **Anongnat Sartpisut** chatted with K. Jira, one of the leading lights in the Thai film industry, while he was shooting a historical film on location in Phuket and Phang Nga.

Each movie, says director, cinematographer and screenwriter Jira Maligool, "is like starting from scratch. Having one successful film under your belt doesn't mean that your next one will be a success."

That's a comment one would have to take with a pinch of salt – K. Jira, currently filming in Phang Nga, has five successful films to his credit, as well as a number of accolades for his work.

He was both cinematographer and producer for *Satee Lek (Iron Ladies) 2*, a prequel to the 2000 Youngyouth Thongkonthun film about a championship-winning gay volleyball team.

In 2002, K. Jira wrote the screenplay for and directed *Sib Ha Kham Doan Sib Ed*, released internationally as *Mekhong Full Moon Party*.

This whimsical tale, which has obvious parallels with *Whisky Galore!* and *Local Hero*, is filled with canny characters and tells the story of the mystifying natural phenomenon that takes place annually on a stretch of the Mekhong River in Nong Khai Province.

According to legend – and witnesses – fireballs shoot from the river on the night of the full moon that signifies the end of the Buddhist Lenten period. These *Bangfai Phaya Naag* or Naga rockets (a naga is a mythical crea-

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Winner in the movie lottery



Jira Maligool discusses a scene in *Mahalai Muang Rae* with one of the actors.

ture somewhere between a snake and a dragon) are said to be discharged by Phya Naga – the great naga.

K. Jira cut his film-making teeth on music videos. However, despite reading communication arts at the prestigious Chulalongkorn University, he still found the practical application of the art he had learned was a steep learning curve.

"I was asked to shoot a video for the singer Paiboonkiat Kieowgaew. My brief was to use the singer in a short film that would have the song *Floating Dream* dubbed later," he says.

"I didn't shoot the video with K. Paiboonkiat lip-synching. The producers asked me why I hadn't done as I was expected

to. I replied that I didn't know that I was supposed to do it that way."

Despite this, K. Jira set up Hub Ho Hin Bangkok, which has become one of Thailand's top TV commercial production houses.

Working in the advertising industry has been a stepping stone for many feature film directors, with Ridley Scott, of *Alien*, *Blade Runner* and *Gladiator*, being one of the most well-known former admen to have made the transition.

K. Jira worked for more than 10 years in advertising before he was asked to contribute to the screenwriting and cinematography of *Satree Lek*. "I began to realize my dreams with this," recalls K. Jira. "And I knew that

I should move toward directing films."

The Thai film industry is, he suggests, like playing a lottery. "Only five out of the 50 or so [Thai] films made in 2003 made a profit. But people are still attracted to [the business] because when profits are made, they are substantial.

As a director, he struck it rich first time round. "My directorial debut was *Mekhong Full Moon Party*, which made a profit of 52 million baht in Bangkok alone. I'm not sure how much it made elsewhere," he grins.

The film was both a commercial and a critical success, but was still branded a fluke by some. "Nobody expected it to make more than 10 million baht, but it

was up there as one of the five highest-grossing domestic films in Thailand in 2002.

"It also paved the way for me to make my next film, *Fan Chan (My Girl)*. This was also a success, and many of the actors in the film received awards for their performances – and I received the Best Director award – at the Supannahong Film Awards in 2003.

"But every film is a new film, and past successes offer no guarantees," he says.

Of the film-making process, K. Jira says that "[a director] can do one of two things; he can simply direct the film, knowing – technically – the correct angle or lighting for a shot and nothing more than that.

Or he can participate fully in the creative process, the concept, the writing, everything and really communicate a feeling with the audience.

"To me, a film is 'my' property, 'my' child even. I put so much into it, my experience – I don't just mean professional experience but my life experience, too – that it becomes the heart of the film," he muses.

And the process takes time. He likens making a film to running a marathon and suggests that one of the major pitfalls is to expend one's energy too soon rather than to maintain a steady pace and endure.

"The process starts with finding inspiration for the plot, then writing the screenplay, correcting it again and again, securing financing, casting, rehearsing, scouting for locations, and then shooting the film in around 50 days.

"It may be a business but the director must lead the cast and crew into making sure the film moves the audience, touches their emotions in some way."

K. Jira's new film *Mahalai*

Muang Rae, which translates roughly as "mining university" has the English title *A Beautiful Mine*. Filmgoers may detect a nominal similarity – entirely intentional, according to K. Jira – to *A Beautiful Mind*, the 2001 Russell Crowe pic.



'Honor, decency, perseverance, these qualities are timeless and should be prized.'
– Jira Maligool

"That film won an Oscar," jokes K. Jira. "The names are similar, so perhaps *Mine* will win one, too."

Mine, which is set to be released in August or September next year, recounts the self-penned story of Achin Panjapan, a 22-year-old engineering dropout from Chulalongkorn University who took up employment in the lucrative tin-mining industry in the south of Thailand in the late '40s and early '50s.

A disgrace to his family, he was divorced by his wife in Bangkok after he had been "absent" in the south for three years. Achin ran out of money and needed – literally – to dig himself out of a hole.

"The tin mine really meant something to him," says K. Jira. "He discovered that he could prove himself and earn respect by working hard at what he believed in. He needed to prove himself to people, especially to his family.

"I read this book when I was young and it touched a nerve with me. I suppose that I identified with him," says the director.

He notes, "*Mine* is a good story for teenagers to read – or, soon, to watch. We all need to learn to respect ourselves first before we can hope for others to respect us.

"Qualifications, money... they don't prove much; they don't mean that a person is automatically worthy of respect.

"But honor, decency, perseverance, these qualities are timeless and should be prized," he concludes.



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This is a terrible mistake and my lawyer, a partner in the firm of Seeit, Grabbitt and Runn, has recommended I remedy this situation before I do any more damage.

Therefore, the column space this issue will be devoted to a legal disclaimer. Those of you who agree to the following terms and conditions may continue to read future editions; those who do not will probably experience an immediate and long-term rise in their social standing.

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When I started writing the *Superyacht Watch* column earlier this year, it was due in no small part to the massive – literally – shift in the world of megayachts.

Just 15 years ago, a 45-meter yacht was regarded as a monster. Not so today. Quite what sparked the change is hard to say, though some credit Leslie Wexner – CEO of US retail giant The Limited and the man who gave the world Victoria's Secret lingerie – for laying out the current ground rules by stating, "If it's not over 300 feet, it's not worth building."

That said, he launched his 315-foot *Limitless*.

Before *Limitless*, nearly all the largest yachts were in the hands of royal families and were counted as state property, not as private vessels.

Moreover, those large yachts were not particularly inspirational. Among the largest built in the 1980s were those intended for use by oil sheikhs. Designed for massive family entourages, these mini-cruise ships belonged to the floating-bathtub school of design – with interiors so gaudy as to make Liberace's bedroom look austere by comparison.

During the '90s, however, private individuals seemed to lose their restraint. They began using steel, aluminum and Viagra in the building process. Tossing aside all convention, they built vessels up to, hey ho, 400 feet.

At the start of this year Paul Allen's 414-foot *Octopus* spread its tentacles into the No 1 spot – promptly to be deposed by Larry Ellison's 454-ft *Rising Sun*, which is about to be handed over, sailed to Gibraltar and thence to the Caribbean for New Year.

The same trend is taking place in the sailing world. Jim Clarke, formerly a principal at Silicon Graphics and Netscape, launched his 292-foot schooner *Athena*, the world's largest-ever private sailing yacht. This will be almost matched in length by Perini Navi's 289-ft *Maltese Falcon* in 2006.

Have we peaked yet? No. Rumors are now flying that negotiations have been concluded on at least two new megayachts. One of them could be for a stunningly futuristic yacht that German yard Blohm + Voss (B+V)

SIZE really does matter, Part II



Any takers? In addition to the 147m (482ft) concept on its design books, Blohm + Voss also has another, at the rather more modest 103m (338ft) vessel pictured above in this artist's impression.

has had on its design books for a couple of years, known as Project 147, with the 147 being the length in meters – around 482ft.

The other, gulp, is supposedly for a 160-meter vessel, putting it firmly over the 500 foot mark at 524ft, to be built at either B+V or the mighty Lurssen shipyard. My money is on Chelsea Football Club owner Roman Abramovich as the buyer for this monster.

Roman, Roman, send us your yachts: I am praying that Roman has started a Phuket tradition that he will follow in the New Year by bringing another yacht to the island. Two years ago it was *Le Grand Bleu* and a year ago *Pelorus*.

This season would be a humdinger if he sent the newly launched *Ecstasea* down Kamala way. Okay, so it's only the baby of his fleet (a speedy little 282ft commuter) but he obviously has a thing for Asia. Reports are that the yacht even features an Asia-inspired interior.

The Return of Asean Lady: Almost a year after *Asean Lady's* launch in China, Phuketians were treated to their first sight of Singaporean shipyard owner

Brian Chang's new and improved yacht.

Morphing from a classic-looking superyacht into an intriguing 88-

meter outrigger *proa*-design megayacht (now No 15 in the world yacht size rankings), *Asean Lady* was definitely a sight to see.

Even from the shore, one could see she is better looking in real life than in photographs.

On the negative side, from some angles the design appears somewhat clumsy, and there is a blandness to the exterior details. There are no side decks on the main deck level and the windows looked decidedly commercial.

One gets the feeling that all the design focus went to the radical design of the vessel and little into the details.

Nonetheless, after circling her a few times I came away feeling exhilarated. Here was an

owner prepared to break all the superyacht rules, and there was a certain elegance in the outrigger design not found in large catamarans such as *Moecca*.

Stated as being of paramount importance in the owner's brief is the enormous amount of space this design generates. With three decks rising from the main hull, it gives one the feeling of an apartment block on the sea.

For owners wanting to spend extended periods aboard their yachts, or complete a circumnavigation, this is surely a design worth considering.

Personally, I would love to see a yacht of this design with exterior styling by someone such as Martin Francis, who would bring design flair to the smallest details, matching the grandness of the overall concept.

Tiger, Tiger burning bright: In writing *Superyacht Watch*, I follow an unwritten rule when it comes to an owner's privacy. If an owner publicly announces himself as the owner of a yacht, I will use his name. Otherwise, I won't.

One recent example of why

I follow this rule was the recent rude invasion of golfer Tiger Woods' privacy.

First, his "private" wedding in Barbados was blurted to the global media by the resort manager before the golfer's plane had left the tarmac for the island. One might have hoped that Tiger would have been given more privacy for his wedding than he is when he is on the links, but of course that wasn't the case.

After the wedding, Tiger and his party left aboard a large Christensen yacht, which was subsequently dogged by both helicopters and boats. The very reason he regularly charters yachts is that he knows they can afford him a level of privacy and relaxation he can find nowhere else.

A few months later, with Tiger back to work on the golf course, Christensen decided to shoot themselves in the foot at the Fort Lauderdale Boat Show – the largest boat show in the world.

In an apparent breach of the confidentiality clauses they had signed, the company flagrantly told all and sundry that the honeymoon yacht was in actual fact Tiger's own, brand new 155-ft custom-built yacht.

As a publicity tool, this got an immediate response. Tiger promptly sued them for US\$40 million, citing the unauthorized use of his name and invasion of his privacy.

Quite right – for now his megayacht might as well have bull's-eye targets painted on both sides.

Mind you, let's hope he chooses a more fortuitous name for his next vessel. The first one was called, ironically, *Privacy*.

Up the Hudson: Considering that Manhattan is an island, and expecting New Yorkers to have seen just about anything and everything, I was surprised to find out that one particular yacht caused quite a buzz recently in The Big Apple.

Roman Abramovich sailed the mighty *Le Grand Bleu* up the Hudson and parked all 354ft of it at the wharf adjacent to – where else – Wall St. A friend who lives around the corner tells me that there are normally 100- to 150-footers in the vicinity, but *Le Grand Bleu*, at nearly three times that size, had everyone in nearby buildings hanging out of windows to catch a glimpse.

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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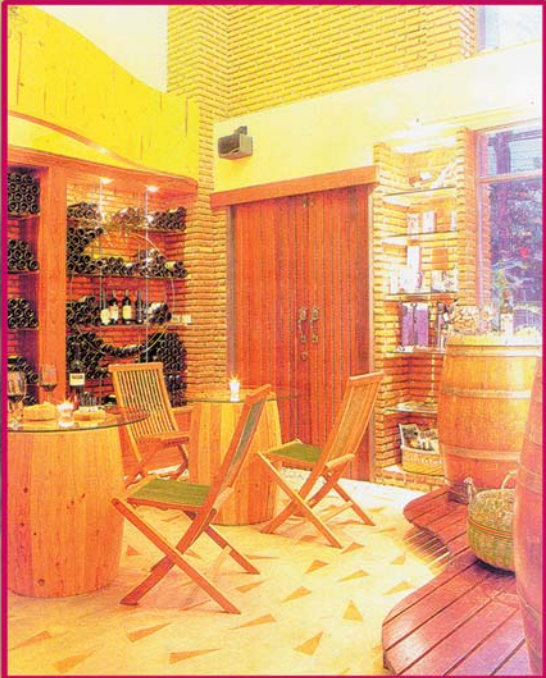
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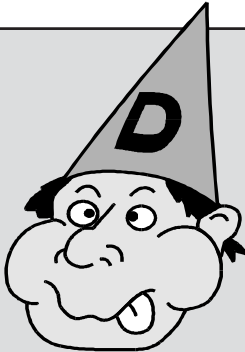
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Hidden Words

Hidden in the grid below are the names of at least 20 diseases. 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.

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

Get your brain
in gear with
The Monster Quiz



1. What is 111,111,111 squared?

2. What do bullet-proof vests, fire escapes, windshield wipers, and laser printers all have in common?

3. By what name was Lee Yuen Kam better known?

4. Which two countries declared war on the United States of America on December 11, 1941?

5. Who was US President at that time?

6. When is the dish *tzimmes* traditionally served?

7. What is *hanji*?
8. What, according to the United Nations, is the average life expectancy in Botswana?

9. Who, in 1450, invented the mechanical anemometer?

10. What is "Parkinson's Law"?

11. Name the sea monster in Greek mythology that lived under a rock at one side of the Strait of Messina.

12. *Houses of the Holy* was a 1973 album by which rock band?

13. American Thomas Midgeley Jr is credited with which two disastrous inventions?

14. When and where was
- actress and singer Hilary Duff born?

15. What is the name of the bartender in *The Simpsons*?

16. Irishman Eoin Colfer writes which series of books?

17. Ghost Recon, Splinter Cell and Rainbow Six are computer games based on the novels of which author?

18. Which country celebrates Republic Day on December 11?

19. And by what name was this country formerly known?

20. What is a barramundi?
- Answers next week.

Never a Cross Word!

Across

1. Revolve.

3. Blows up like a volcano.

8. Pungent gas.

9. The same again.

10. Joe Louis Theater character, for example.

14. Assault.

16. Province southeast of Krabi.

18. Grown without chemical fertilizer.

20. Sign a treaty.

21. Monster loch.

Down

1. In music, not flat.

2. "I think, therefore * *" (1, 2).

4. Use a newspaper.

5. City in Chonburi.

6. Use a gun.

7. Back-of-the book list.

11. Bridge wall.

12. A place for play.

13. Say the words.

15. Blows with the feet.

17. Tiger's game.

19. Opposite of SSW

1		2			3	4		5		6
				7						
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20									21	

Brain Buster!!

Joe goes into a bar and asks the barman for a glass of water. The barman pulls out a gun and points it at him. Joe smiles, says 'Thank you very much,' and walks out. How do you explain what happened?

A. Joe had hiccups. By pulling out the gun, the barman scared him, thereby stopping the hiccups.

Answers to last
week's Monster Quiz

1. Jester; 2. To be played moderately loudly; 3. The national dress of Korea; 4. German; 5. 1980; 6. Sir George Cayley's glider, *Coachman Carrier*, in 1853; 7. Ludwig van Beethoven; 8. Gary Oldman; 9. All Saints; 10. 299,792.458 kilometers per second; 11. 225,407.863 kms/sec; 12. Vassily Kandinsky; 13. Argentina; 14. Leonardo di Caprio; 15. A compiler or solver of crossword puzzles; 16. Developing the periodic table of elements; 17. Molybdenum; 18. False; 19. Gâteau Saint-Honoré; 20. The Body Shop.

Solution to last
week's Crossword

O	X	E	N		F	A	T	H	E	R	
F		G		G		N		A		A	
F	L	O	R	I	S	T		N	A	Y	
	E			N				O		O	
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	I			E		U		R			
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E		L		O		E		N		E	
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Teana turns out in style



The new Teana's stylish design marks Nissan's new focus on increasing its share of the Thai automobile market.

Central Festival Phuket appears to be attracting the well-heeled and the well-wheeled to Phuket, judging by the vehicles in the parking lot. Spotted there recently was a shiny new Nissan Teana 230JM, a stylish, yet somewhat subdued luxury sedan from the Japanese marque.

Elsewhere, the Teana is available in two two-wheel drive versions – one with a 2.3-liter engine and the other with a 3.5-liter lump – and a 2.5-liter 4WD version.



The quality of the interior finish is excellent in both of the Teana models made in Thailand.

In Thailand, however, we are likely to see only the 2.3-liter model, as this is the one chosen for manufacture in the Kingdom.

Two versions are available – the 230JM and the 230JK – and although the JM is a little more lavishly equipped than the JK, both have comprehensive safety and comfort features throughout.

Safety is particularly well catered for, with a number of systems fitted as standard, including brake-assist and electronic brake-force distribution (EBD). The latter senses the load – of both passengers and luggage – in order to optimize braking and to distribute it among the four wheels to best effect.

On the 230JM, powerful Xenon lights replace the standard halogen headlamps, useful on some of Phuket's unlit roads. The lights on this model are also height-adjustable, useful when transporting heavy loads in the trunk.

Leather upholstery is standard, and while both cars have an electrically-powered driver's seat, the 230JM boasts a powered passenger seat too. Other minor differences can be found between the two models, but the quality of the interior finish on both is excellent.

Both are equipped with dual front airbags, front seat belts with pre-tensioners and load limiters, three 3-point belts in the back, active front headrests and a high quality sound system. A CD player is fitted in each car, and the JM has a six-disc autochanger in the glove compartment.

The car is powered by a 2.3-liter V6 engine featuring continuously variable valve-timing control (CVTC). Maximum output is a healthy 170bhp (127kW), with maximum torque of 225Nm oc-

curing at 4,400rpm. The front wheels are driven through a four-speed automatic transmission.

No performance figures are given, but underfoot the car feels lively and responsive. The 2.3 engine comes from the VQ family of motors made by Nissan, which was named one of the "Ten Best Engines" by authoritative US-based auto analyst Ward's Communications Inc.

The independent, multi-link rear suspension provides an excellent ride combined with good roadholding. At the front, MacPherson struts with coil springs

are used. One additional advantage of the multi-link rear set-up is that the suspension does not impinge on the generous trunk space.

The Teana is the first new model to be introduced since Nissan took

a tighter grip on distribution by buying a significant stake in Siam Motors in Bangkok. The car maker's aim is to increase its penetration of the Thai market, using an extensive dealer network throughout the kingdom.

Founded in 1952 by Dr Thavorn Phornprapha on Rama I Rd, in Bangkok, Siam Motors originally dealt in new and used machinery. Dr Thavorn, however, recognized an opportunity and established contact with the car maker, and became Nissan's sole distributor for Thailand and its first overseas distributor.

In 1960, with the approval of the Thai government, the company built the first factory in Thailand to manufacture Nissan sedans.

Initially, a staff of 120 produced a meager four cars a day. Today, production capacity is more than 100,000 cars a year – sold both locally and overseas – from a total of around 2,000 employees.

The Teana 230JK sells for 1.385 million baht, and the 230JM for 1.465 million.

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



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In The Stars

by Isla Star

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): A deadline looms closer, which could cause many Sagittarians to slip into panic mode. Rather than cut corners to meet it, try asking for a few days grace so that you don't damage your reputation. An invitation to celebrate the New Year in an unusual setting is worth a second glance, particularly if you've been feeling somewhat stuck in a rut lately. The number 7 could bring luck midweek.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): Your senses are finely tuned this week; you can definitely trust your instincts on Monday regarding a business matter, though convincing others may require some effort. On the domestic front, try to be less demanding and more understanding of your partner's mood swings. Caring Capricorns will go shopping for a special Christmas gift to show how much they care. Wear light amethyst purple to tune in to your spiritual side.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): It will be a challenge to persuade others to focus on work this week. Aquarians will probably feel that they are the only ones not intent on starting the party early. After working hard all year, you are advised to slip into a comfortable sarong and join

in the fun. On Sunday a game of cat-and-mouse could take on sensual meaning, but take care not to play with fire.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): If you're starting to think about New Year resolutions, keep them simple. Pisceans who put too much pressure on themselves this year should have learned an important lesson that could make 2005 a more productive period. There will be a tendency to get hot under the collar when dealing with an awkward colleague on Tuesday. A dream you have this week reveals the answer to a romantic puzzle.

ARIES (March 21-April 20): You need to stop believing that nothing but sunlight shines from a certain someone. Arians who have refused to see what is staring them in the face could have an unpleasant shock in the pipeline. Try putting your faith in those who deserve it. If you're planning a romantic date on Wednesday,

dress to impress. Take care of possessions this weekend as there is a slight risk of losing something important.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): The time is ripe for true love – those Taureans who have just about given up expecting to meet their soul mate are likely to be swept away on a romantic current this week. Someone has been admiring you from afar and is preparing to reveal his or her identity. You are entitled to put work issues to one side and concentrate on the fun side of life. Wear jade green to combat negativity.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): Your ears will be flapping like an elephant's when you catch a juicy rumor this weekend. However, make sure that there is concrete evidence before you decide to act upon what you hear. The coast is clear if you are on the lookout for a business opportunity; Pisces has some relevant information to help you along the

way. The number 1 is lucky on Thursday.

CANCER (June 22-July 23): If the *Loy Kratong* wish you made hasn't come true yet, don't despair; you are due to receive something you've been longing for. Midweek you have the necessary tact to avert a potentially embarrassing situation; others will be grateful for your cool intervention. Accept an unexpected invitation this Saturday – it could turn out to be a lot more enjoyable than you suspect. The color orange will activate passion.

LEO (July 24-August 22): Your partner needs support with a work-related issue this week and you may feel as though your own needs are being ignored. But what goes around will quickly come around, so don't hesitate to lavish attention on the one you love. Problems should fade away by Thursday and the second half of December looks like being an exciting time.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): Virgoans who are paddling against the tide may have a rude awakening this weekend. You have invested too much energy into a sinking project; it's time to swallow that pride and focus your interests elsewhere. An overseas contact holds the key to a new direction. On Sunday you have a golden opportunity to say the words that have been on the tip of your tongue for some time now.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): Romance is in the air, with Monday especially highlighted for a meeting of minds. If you are already in a relationship, pay attention to hints your partner drops this weekend – it shouldn't be too difficult to read between the lines. Business plans are liable to last-minute change and your ability to think on your feet comes in useful on Tuesday.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): An easy way to get a difficult job done presents itself this week; it's not too late to start again. If you don't like your friends' ideas for holiday celebrations, let your imagination run riot and surprise everyone. The way toward romantic success is to play the waiting game; laying all your cards on the table in the first round will extinguish any flicker of interest.

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Patong 'plan' is seriously flawed

The 1.8-billion-baht "town planning" scheme unveiled for Patong last week [see Inside Story, pages 4-5] appears to have all the hallmarks of a local government pork-barrel scheme, rather than a serious attempt to guide private-sector development.

The *Gazette* has long argued for comprehensive zoning laws across Phuket, and in some parts of the island – those that are still relatively undeveloped – the implementation of zoning regulations, if enforced, would certainly have a positive effect. In Patong, however, the time for planning has largely passed.

The municipality is sadly unique in Thailand in that it has a lower road-to-land ratio (7%) than even Bangkok (10%), where overpasses are now built. But unlike the capital, Patong still has no sensible public transport system – nor is there much talk by the municipality of establishing one.

All five projects included in the scheme face serious obstacles, the most daunting of which will be the acquisition of land held by the private sector. The costs of this were not even estimated in the proposed budget. How many private-sector projects are "planned" in this way?

Though a new road is called for, the plan's failure to specify even a single public parking lot is another glaring oversight. The plan to spend 273 million baht landscaping the waterfront, which has just recently undergone a facelift – one in an apparently unending series – is patently absurd.

Enforcement of building regulations is the key. But one look at Patong in its current state is proof positive, even among first-time visitors, that the municipality has failed miserably in this regard.

Unless Patong Municipality gets serious about enforcement of regulations, the town's current slide toward a social and environmental black hole will continue – and throwing 1.8 billion baht at the problem won't make any difference.

This week did see the municipality, now with a functioning government for the first time in years, take action – by trying to force vendors at Koh Kaew Market out of their current location (see news pages). Yet even this effort was marked by the dark hand of intimidation, indicating that the real powers-that-be in the town remain firmly in control.

Additional funding from central government to Patong should not be released until the town manages at least to solve its public transport and wastewater treatment problems. If the town cannot achieve these two very basic goals, is it really wise to hand over so much more taxpayers' money?

– 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.

Ao Por needs seawall, not a jetty

As a boat owner and resident of Ao Por, I was interested to read about the proposed marina and construction of a new pier, both of which have been rumored locally for some time.

I would like to offer some observations and a suggestion. Ao Por is a natural harbor and gateway to scenic locations, but the bay itself offers nothing to attract tourists. Its one attractive feature is its rustic jetty which, admittedly is of no practical use at low tide, when the shoreline is an unattractive stretch of mud.

Instead of building an unattractive concrete jetty over the mud, it would make more sense to build a seawall from a point sufficiently far along the northern end of the bay (which I believe is called Laem Lhong) to allow boats to dock in 2 or 3 meters of water, even at low tide. This seawall would extend south in similar depths of water and turn in to a point somewhere near where the existing jetty meets the road.

The area within the wall could then be backfilled, reclaiming the land. Since the seabed is already government property, it would cost nothing to acquire. It could also be sold to developers for the creation of an attractive waterfront with shops, restaurants, etc.

Floating docks could run out from the harbor wall, the base of which would be below the waterline at all times – regardless of tidal conditions. Since berths would form the shape of a "comb", they would accommodate more boats than the pro-

posed jetty – most of which would be unusable at low tide anyway.

With this approach, the authorities could solve the problems of access, land acquisition and tides in one fell swoop, and create an attractive waterfront development. Properly managed, the project might even turn a profit.

Ao Por Resident

Road toll needs addressing seriously

The government seems to be hung up on the wrong issues [in insisting on earlier closing for nighttime venues]. The road statistics here are absolutely mad. Nowhere else have I seen such a massacre on the roads.

If the government is serious about protecting people, then it should do something about the road toll: 153 deaths and 9,389 people injured so far this year.

Surely this is not only costing the government money in healthcare, but is also affecting the tourism industry by giving Phuket a bad image.

Safer roads
Phuket

Junk all the high praise, Konrad

Konrad Stalin is already gushing praise upon Jungceylon, even though it is months from opening. If, by some long shot, he or one of his mates doesn't have a vested interest in the project, then please ask him to find something else to write about.

Marcia Mallows
Patong

Recognizing that Paradise is illusory

Some months ago I read an article in the *Gazette* about a survey of visitors to Patong. It was conducted at some of the major hotels and resorts, and the main complaints concerned unruly tuk-tuk drivers, the lack of service in some areas, the unseemliness of the beaches and sex workers.

What struck me as incongruous was that the people surveyed were staying at the best hotels and resorts, the sorts of places which aim to protect customers from the outside, and project an aura of "paradise".

We should all know that "paradise" is an illusion, and that these customers must eventually leave their hotels and re-enter the real world. "Paradise" would be boring if not alternated with what one is trying to escape from.

Of course, the opinions of the people surveyed are important; they bring in money.

But to cater to the desires of these "tourists" too much will damage the very atmosphere that brings many others to this land. The "differences" are what attract me, not air-conditioned, walled-off luxury resorts.

That's not to say that these places are bad, but just that too much of one thing destroys choice.

The Buddha said, "Follow the middle way", and I think most Thai people innately do.

I hope the Thai people will see this and not get carried away.

Otherwise, Patong could end up having all the forced charm of an air hostess' trained smile.

Mark

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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.

Forced market move is not a fair call

This market earns more than a million baht a day in business, so we can't just close it down overnight. Even if we closed it for only one day, many vendors would be negatively affected. We would lose our credit with suppliers and the whole economy would be affected because many people rely on this market.

The market has operated here since 1992, but last year the Public Health Department said the market was a risk for spreading cholera and was not properly licensed. We collected 200 baht a day from all the vendors to try to keep it clean. Then we applied for a class-1 market license [allowing for daily operation], but we were only given a class-2 license, because the market did not have a permanent roof.

At the same time, the Mae Ubon Market was given a class-1 license. Now we have stopped collecting the 200 baht a day because so many vendors are facing hardship.

Three days after taking his post as Governor last year, Udomsak Usawarakura came to inspect the market. After that, we received his order to close down, citing a risk of cholera. We demonstrated to ask for fairness, but the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office said we were in violation of 16 different health codes.

We agreed that this market is unclean, so we collected 200,000 baht to build a wastewater



FIRST PERSON

Phang Nga native Ruangtong "Da" Wareesri is a member of the committee that represents the 240 vendors at the Patong Fresh Market, where she has run a plasticware shop for over 10 years.

The market has operated in the area between Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd and Nanai Rd since 1992, when it was moved there from the Patong beachfront. Since the new Mae Ubon Market opened last year, at the southern Nanai Rd, Patong municipality has tried to get the vendors to relocate there. But they don't want to go, even though they have been operating at the fresh market illegally since the market owner let its license lapse last year.

The Gazette interviewed K. Da before the events of December 3 (see News pages) to ask her why the vendors should be able to remain in their current location. The following is excerpted from that interview.

ter treatment facility [to prevent the dirty water from channeling into Patong Bay]. Now the market is clean.

But now our market has a problem with the Mae Ubon Market, and people have been sent to intimidate us. Our committee deputy chairman was shot, but the local media passed it off as a "business conflict". Why?

I also wonder why market owner Worawit Teerapittayanon allowed the market's license to lapse, as he had always renewed it in the past. I suspect he may have faced intimidation. K. Worawit accepted the closure, but the vendors appealed to the municipality, citing hardship,

because we have so many expenses: bank loans, children's school fees, car payments and so on.

We took our case to the Senate Committee on Tourism, which organized a meeting in Bangkok between five parties: The Senate Committee; The Phuket Chief Administrative Assistant [*palad*], Mayor Pian Keesin, a PPHO official and vendors' representatives.

At the meeting, we all agreed that once Mae Ubon Market provided sufficient canvas roofing and parking facilities, we would close the market for three days a week, during which time it would get a thorough cleaning

from the municipality. We would be able to sell at this market on alternate days and at Mae Ubon on the other days.

But the municipality renegeed on its word to the Senate and failed to provide the canvas roofs and parking as promised. If everything were ready, we would move to there [as promised]. But now they say they want us [the committee] to pay to clean the market every other day and pay 15,000 baht a month to the city to haul away the garbage.

We agreed to the fee before, but that was when we could open every day. How can we earn that much if we aren't allowed to open every day? How can we

clean the market when we don't have the right vehicles? And we want to know why the Mayor went back on his word.

People are people. They have a right to make an honest living. We support the law, so the law should support us. We are only asking for fairness. Don't oppress us!

We respect the Senate, but are fed up with the local government agencies here because they haven't done what they promised. We wanted to follow the agreement made at the Senate meeting – but that didn't include a garbage collection fee. It's up to the municipality now.

We will appeal to the Senate again because we have no support [from local government agencies] in Phuket. Every government official here disrespects us because we are just common folks, without power. But the Senate might support us, because we are really in trouble.

Somphit Sae Kum, who is involved in the Jungceylon complex, is building a new three-story market for us and it should be finished within six months. The rental fees will be cheaper than at the Mae Ubon Market and she is offering us 10-year contracts. K. Somphit is a religious person and she took pity on us, asking us why we didn't want to move to Mae Ubon. We told her the answer is simple: we can do good enough business here [to get by on]. So she is building the Baan Sun Market to help us out.

Are foreigners charged more for land ownership registration?

I have bought land in Phuket with my wife, who is Thai. We would now like to build a house on the land using both our names. Is this possible? If it is, does the land office charge more for registering a building permit in two names?

Also I've heard that the officials at the land office charge more for registering a building permit for a foreigner. Is this correct?

Steve Gurnham
Switzerland

Jarong Nilrat, Land Officer of Phuket Provincial Land Office, replies:

You may register yourself and your wife as co-owners of the house. The fee is the same whether the house is registered in one name or two, and the cost of registering a building permit is the same whether it is for a Thai or a foreigner.

Clarifying the 80m rule

I understand that a person cannot build permanent buildings above 80 meters due to environmental/conservation restrictions brought in in 1997. But if the base of a building is at or under 80 meters, can the walls, roof, and so on be above 80 meters? Also, is a non-permanent structure, such as a Thai-style sala or small wooden house, allowed to be built above 80 meters?

Mr Enviromentalist
Koh Kaew

Prapit Noopetch, Head of the Public Works Division, Koh Kaew Tambon Administration Organization, replies:

A building structure, permanent or otherwise, is not permitted to stand higher than 80 meters above sea level, regardless of how far above sea level the land it stands on is.

No structure, permanent or otherwise, may be built on land 80 meters above sea level, even a wall, because this is also considered to be a building.

'Road guard' responsibility

Do the "road guards" who stop traffic to allow vehicles to enter and leave shopping complexes have the same authority as the police? If they cause an accident, who would be responsible?

Saengrawee Saenmanee
Patong

Pol Lt Col Jirasak Siamsak, Inspector of Traffic Police at Phuket City Police Station, replies:

Road guards do not have the authority the police have, and if a guard, by his actions, causes a crash, then he is in the wrong. In fact, road guards are committing an offence when they stop vehicles on the public highway, and drivers are under no obligation to do as they order.

However, if they are on private property – a shopping center car park, for example – they may control traffic as they wish.

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

Malaysian border passes

I live near Kangar, Perlis, in Malaysia. I have applied for a border pass and I would like to know how far can I go with it when it arrives.

Can I travel as far as Phuket, or even Bangkok, on my border pass, or will I need my Malaysian passport?

Steven
Perlis, Malaysia

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

There has been an agreement since 1940 (when Malaysia was a British colony) allow-

ing Thais and Malaysians to cross the border with border passes rather than passports.

To apply for a border pass, a person must be of Thai or Malaysian nationality and have lived in the border area for not less than three years. Border passes are available from border immigration and can be used anytime within six months of issue.

A Malaysian with a border pass may stay in Thailand for no more than seven days and may not travel further than 25 kilometers from the border. This means, of course, that he or she cannot travel to Phuket or Bangkok without a passport.

Stopping your PC from kicking the bit bucket

Almost every day somebody drops by my bakery with a question about Windows going belly-up. Depending on your version of Windows, when Windows kicks the bit bucket, you'll get a message that says something like, "This program has encountered a problem and needs to close." Often, Windows asks if it's OK to phone home and leave a record of your, uh, experience, in Microsoft's vast database.

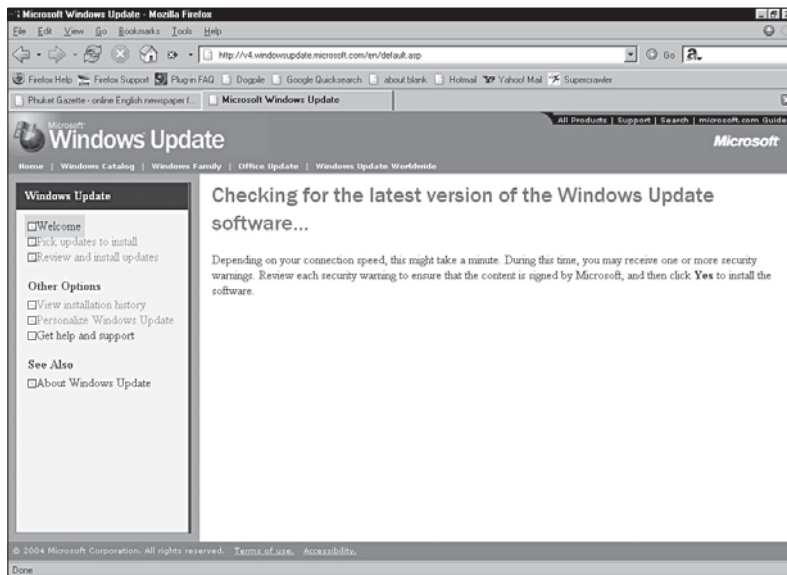
In the not-so-good old days, we called an act of Windows self-immolation a General Protection Fault, or GPF. The causes of GPFs run the gamut from programs that don't know what to do next to programs that have had their bits scrambled, to drivers that overstep their bounds.

To understand where GPFs come from, you must first realize that your computer runs many different programs all at once. Even if you haven't started any programs by double-clicking on them, Windows is constantly running all sorts of programs, most of which just sit around waiting for you to do something.

To see which programs are currently running on your Windows XP or 2000 system, hold down the Ctrl, Alt, and Del keys all at once, then click on the tab marked Processes.

When one of those Processes tries to do something it shouldn't – most commonly, when a Process tries to get at a chunk of your computer's memory that belongs to a different Process – Windows unceremoniously throws the Process out on its electronic tail. The GPF merely signifies that some Process did something stupid, and Windows can't figure out how to handle the problem except by killing off the Process.

Until recently, more than half of all the GPFs on Windows



Installing a critical patch from the Windows Update website can help stop your PC from crashing.

KHUN WOODY'S COMPUTER

computers occurred because of lousy device drivers; one of the programs that handles communication between a peripheral (say, a printer, sound card or modem).

The "phone home" feature, which is built into XP, has gone a long way toward reducing the number of GPFs. Why? Because Microsoft collects statistics on how many times a specific program triggers a GPF.

If NVIDIA video driver version 4.08.101 triggers thousands of GPFs on the first day of its release, Microsoft bangs on NVIDIA's head until it fixes the stupid thing. Hardware manufacturers tend to listen when the Softies tell them their drivers don't work.

If you're getting GPFs from a new program, try to uninstall it and re-install the older version. If you're getting GPFs and you haven't changed anything lately, I suggest you run a CheckDisk to see if your hard drive is getting flakey. To do so, in Windows

XP, click Start | My Computer, then right-click on the drive and click Properties, then choose the Tools tab. Click Check Now. If you get a dialog box that asks whether you want CheckDisk to automatically fix errors, and to scan for bad sectors, check both of the boxes and click OK.

Chances are good that you will get a message saying you must re-start your machine before the check can be run. Restart your computer and CheckDisk will give your hard drive a thorough vetting.

If CheckDisk doesn't find anything wrong with your hard drive, go to the Windows Update site (windowsupdate.microsoft.com) and install all the latest critical Windows patches, which Microsoft calls "High Priority Updates". (Note: Microsoft has set Windows Update to respond only to Internet Explorer.)

Critical patches rarely fix the problems that cause GPFs, but in many cases installing a critical patch will update an old Windows program that could be contributing to the problem.

Finally, if neither of those approaches work, go back into Windows Update, let it scan your computer to see what updates are available, then click the box on the left that says Select Optional Hardware Updates.

Seriously consider installing any hardware driver updates that have been available for more than a month or so (the release date is usually shown on the update description).

While updating drivers every time a new version becomes available will surely drive you crazy, sometimes you can chase away the GPF blues by installing the latest version of a driver.

— Woody Leonhard
woody@khunwoody.com

An epic worthy of Dickens

I have just finished the most amazing novel, one with the exuberant narrative thrust, the epic sweep and the deep characterization of a Charles Dickens work.

The time is 1875, the place is London and the main character is a 19-year-old prostitute called Sugar. Michael Faber's *The Crimson Petal and the White* (Harcourt, New York, 2002, 895pp) is the best damn novel I've read in years. Critics agree. The big trade paperback that I bought (692 baht) comes with no fewer than four pages of ecstatic praise from all the American and British big guns.

"Watch your step. Keep your wits about you, you will need them. The city I am bringing you to is vast and intricate, and you have not been here before," the novel opens with a magisterial author's voice.

The "you" addressed is the reader and from time to time the god-like author will tell you to stop following one character and to take up with another. Thus the first person introduced is Caroline, in a dim brothel in Church Lane, St. Giles.

"Let me pull you through the back door of this house, let me lead you through a claustrophobic corridor that smells of percolating carpet and soiled linen."

Through a series of masterfully described street scenes, Caroline later comes across her old friend Sugar, who is buying a gross of expensive writing paper at a stationer's.

Sugar has risen to a better class of brothel on Silver Street in the West End. She is well-dressed, well-spoken, well-read and has been a prostitute for six years, since she was turned out by her brothel-keeper mother at age 13.

Tall, slender, small-breasted, with fiery red hair and green eyes, Sugar is popular for her educated conversation and her willingness to "do anything" for cash.

She is also writing a novel about her life: "It's the story of a naked, weeping child rolled into a ball under a blood-stained blanket, cursing the universe. It's a tale of embraces charged with hatred and kisses laced with disgust, of practised submission and the secret longing for vengeance. It's an inventory of brutish men, a jostling queue of human refuse, filthy, gin-stinking, whisky-stinking, ale-stinking, scabrous, oily-nailed, slime-toothed, squint-eyed, senile, cadaverous, obese, stump-legged, hairy-arsed, monster-cocked – all waiting their turn to root out the last surviving morsel of innocence and devour it."



Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt

Her savior comes in the form of the foppish William Rackham, heir to a soap and perfume fortune, who meets her during a magical night at the wonderfully described pub called "The Fireplace" and is entranced by her beauty and intelligence.

He is 28, an Oxford graduate with literary ambitions, husband of a woman who is slowly losing her mind, and father to a neglected six-year-old daughter.

William Rackham sets Sugar up in a house of her own and pays her a generous allowance. To fund all this, he dutifully takes up the reins of his father's empire, helped in no small way by astute advice from Sugar, who makes her own intense study of soap and perfume business.

William Rackham is suddenly a captain of industry. In short, he hardens into a man, while Sugar softens into a woman. A turning point comes when they are confiding in each other and William says: "Your childhood years must have been Hell on earth."

"She nods and, without having to will it, real tears fall from her eyes. But what if William is one of those men who cannot abide a woman weeping? What does she think she's up to? Something has gone awry inside her breast, where such decisions are made; a valve of self-control has failed, and she feels herself borne on a spillage of unfiltered feeling."

Sugar's next move is into William's house as the new governess of his daughter Sophie, who has been ignored by her mother since birth. She is a timid soul, whose love Sugar quickly reciprocates. The house is haunted, however, by the growing madness of William's wife Agnes.

By this point, two-thirds though the novel, the reader cares mightily about what will happen to these people. The last 300 pages pass in a blur of increasing suspense. The ending is abrupt and absolutely perfect. Grab this book. At 692 baht, it'll be the cheapest thrill of your life.

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Singapore-Phuket tourism is on the rise

By Anongnat Sartpisut

PHUKET: One person out of every 100 in Singapore visited Phuket during the first six months of this year, figures from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) suggest.

Passengers from Singapore accounted for 36,000 of the international arrivals at Phuket International Airport.

This was a small proportion when compared with the total 800,000 passengers who arrived at the airport between January and October, but was still a 33% increase over the same period last year, and equivalent to around one percent of the city-state's population.

The rising figure is a sign of the increasing air traffic between Phuket International Airport and Singapore's Changi airport, fuelled by the cheap flights offered by low-cost carriers.

The Phuket-based Director of the Region 4 office of the TAT, Suwalai Pinpradab, said, "In the past, only Silk Air flew daily between Phuket and Singapore.

Thai Airways also flew the route, but not every day.

"Now, though, we have AirAsia and Tiger Airlines offering daily flights, which makes it easier and more convenient for people to fly between Phuket and Singapore, especially for weekend trips."

The bulk of visitors from Singapore are "free independent travelers", said K. Suwalai. "They come to use the spas, play golf and shop. We're also working on promoting dining here, and by the end of the year, in conjunction with Central Festival, we aim to offer a food and entertainment combination," she said.

The traffic is, of course, by no means one-way. Leong See Kay of the Singapore Tourist Board (STB) said that around 240,000 Thais visited Singapore last year, and around 250,000 between January and September this year, although she could not say how many of these visitors were from Phuket.

Tourism accounts for 3% of Singapore's gross domestic product and puts around S\$9 billion (216 billion baht) a

year into the Singapore economy. Ms Leong said the STB was the main factor in boosting tourism to Singapore.

The "Uniquely Singapore" promotion, which markets different features of Singapore in different countries, was "very exciting", said Ms Leong.

But, she said, the STB also promotes tourist attractions, food-and-beverage facilities and shopping, as well as MICE (Meeting, Incentive, Convention and Exhibition) events. STB also stresses the level of customer service offered in Singapore.

She continued, "We definitely see the budget airlines as a good opportunity to bring more visitors to Singapore."

"For example, we have launched the "Uniquely Singapore fun break package", which combines airfare and accommodation for people who can come over for the weekend, at a special price."

Will the traffic continue to flow? Silk Air has increased its flights since last year, and now offers 22 a week, four on Sundays and three a day on other days.

Silk Air's Phuket office manager, John Sim, said, "Last year we were operating two flights a day. Now, in the peak season of November to January, we are offering many packages to customers. Our capacity is 140 seats and we are running at about 80% of capacity."

"So far, the low-cost airlines haven't had much of an impact on us because our main market is beyond Singapore, but we do plan to increase the number of flights, and we are considering the Phuket route for next year."

Singaporeans aren't the only neighbors to visit Phuket, and K. Suwalai said the TAT was working to attract more visitors from Malaysia.

And, she said, "We are also trying to promote long-haul packages in the European and North American markets."

"It's a long journey to here from countries in those regions, so we try to offer a combination of destinations - Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Hong Kong and so on - to make the journey worthwhile. It's an effective package."

Currency can be an important component of an investment portfolio, but it is an option that is frequently ignored.

For example, the US dollar has been weak against most other major currencies for more than a year. This has allowed dollar-based investors to reap rewards in most of the world's markets, often significantly higher returns than those enjoyed by investors with other currency bases.

The German stock market, for instance, was tipped in this column some months ago as an attractive investment destination.

For investors with a Euro currency base, it has returned over 15% in the past four months, but for US dollar investors it has yielded over 20% - thanks to the weakening of the US dollar.

So, on average, investors whose base is US dollars or a related currency have had a profitable year. But the experience for investors with, say, Euros, Sterling or Yen as their "home" currency has not been so pleasant.

In fact, unless they have used currency hedging techniques, or have been particularly astute or lucky, they will probably be nursing losses.

For US dollar investors, the weakness in the currency has resulted directly in increased corporate profits.

The first and most obvious is US companies exporting to other countries. The second, which is often overlooked, is US companies that derive a substantial portion of their profit from operations overseas. When profits are remitted and converted to dollars, they are likely to increase thanks to currency factors alone.

Investors with "hard currency" bases will likely find 2005 a different year. The pressure on the dollar seems likely to continue, although it has already weakened substantially and currencies are notoriously difficult to predict.

One area of investment that

The conundrum of currency

MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson



has repeatedly illustrated the difficulties of dealing in currency is the "Managed Currency Fund". This appears superficially attractive: the investor places capital in the fund and the fund managers are supposed to select the currencies which they feel will be strongest and make currency gains. The fund also earns interest on the currencies held.

What actually happens, though, is that most fund managers make a profit when the base currency of the fund is weak but start losing money when the base currency strengthens.

Many well-known financial institutions have offered Managed Currency Funds and many more investors wish they had never heard of them.

Lopsided growth: The biggest problem the international economy faces is what might be described as lopsided growth.

The US has just released revised gross domestic product (GDP) figures for the third quarter of 2004. It was initially estimated that the economy grew at an annualized rate of 3.7%, but the interim GDP figures revealed growth was 3.9%.

US exports in October rose by 6.6% over September, which itself was a new record. However, imports are also up, by 6%.

In Japan, which has the world's second-largest economy, the news is less encouraging.

In October, industrial production fell 1.6% compared with September, against an expected rise of 0.1%. This was the sec-

ond fall in two months; in September industrial production was down 0.4% on August's figures.

The latest Japanese PMI (Purchasing Manager's Index) makes for grim reading, with substantial falls. Deflation is still present, and the earliest estimate for this scourge to disappear is 2006.

There is a solution to Japan's problems. It is not a magical elixir but it will help: Print money. It may seem crazy, but here is how it will help: the Japanese government already prints money, lots of it - too much by any rational standard.

In fact, Japanese Government domestic debt is something in the order of 160% of GDP, and when one considers that the International Monetary Fund cautions countries against exceeding 60% of GDP, one can see how far Japan has exceeded reasonable limits.

Surely printing more mo-

ney will make the problem worse? Not really. The Japanese government always makes the same basis mistake: it prints money and then issues bonds to cover the amount. This is called "sanitizing" money supply. The result is increased debt.

What I am suggesting is not to issue bonds, but just print money. This "unsanitized" money has an inflationary effect, and would normally be a bad policy.

But when an economy is suffering from deflation, the remedy is a little bit of inflation. Any economist or central banker will confirm that a little bit of inflation is always preferable to any amount of deflation.

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

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Why the public should get to play a round

Flashback to June 1994, Blue Canyon Country Club: following the hugely successful Johnny Walker Classic, the golfing masses were lining up to play the Canyon Course. Day after day, busloads of visiting Golfers made their way up the famous Thepkra-sattri raceway to test themselves against the mighty "Blue Nasty".

"If Norman could shoot 64, I wonder, if I'm on my game..." many thought. "...Norman shot 64, here?"

However, the vast majority of the 100-plus golfers a day failed to score less than three figures.

Then, Blue Canyon Chief Executive Yasuo Miura made one of the golf business's most bizarre decisions. From next month on, he proclaimed, Blue Canyon will be open for members and guests of the golfers' lodge only.

While "booms" normally run out of steam without assistance, Mr Miura, never one to do things in a small way, alone decided when that boom would end.

Given the advance arrangements required by Asia's biggest travel operators, incentive groups, local hotels and, indeed, anyone who was involved in the golf travel business at that time, this was an almost inexplicable turnaround. Needless to say, it backfired, turning the club into a virtual ghost town overnight.

Over the next few years, Blue Canyon's continued existence was likely more symbolic of the Thai banking system's charity than the business acumen of Miurasan.

Elsewhere in the Kingdom, golf's Thai binge was giving way to the inevitable "morning-after hangover", and it was a cracker.

Under reasonable accounting standards, most golf courses would have been considered insolvent. Life memberships in



clubs boasting "designer labels" were available for little more than the price of a high-end set of clubs.

The silver lining was that many golfers, including children, were attracted to a game previously thought to be way beyond their means. While Tiger Woods may have been an inspiration for soaring recruitment in Thailand, the cornerstone of golf's launchpad had already been laid.

Back to the future. We've come full circle. The Phuket golf scene in December 2008 might look something like this:

Phuket Country Club Old Course: 4,000 baht. (9-hole course closed in 2006 to make way for housing). Loch Palm GC: Old Course, 4,000 baht; New Course, 5,500 baht. Laguna GC (Banyan Tree): 5,000 baht (more if successfully redesigned). Mission Hills: 18 holes, 6,000 baht; 9 holes, 3,500 baht. Blue Canyon: Canyon Course, 7,500 baht; Lakes Course, 3,000 baht.

Thai Muang Beach and the Navy Course at Tab Lamu have been redesigned by Nicklaus Design and bought by Thai Elite Card Company. Playing privileges are restricted to the 27 paid-up cardholders, with at least a group a day on the course.

Of course, there are still local and seasonal rates, and special prices are available to those who voted for the current government.

All joking aside, we are not too far off seeing US\$100 green fees across the board on the island's courses. This is, of

course, great news for those in the golf business.

However, I fear for the development of junior golf in the province. Where will the next generation of golfers come from? The majority of today's sport stars were not fed with silver spoons, but developed their hunger by striving to catch up with their "better off" counterparts.

Thailand's potential champion golfers may never make it to the first tee, unless the price of golf is made affordable to them – or charitable concerns help pluck them out of obscurity.

I dream of the day Phuket has a public golf course. There will probably be just nine holes, with a par of 33.

The greens may be hard and bumpy, with holes not changed for days at a time. The fairways may be home to weeds, and tees may be rubber mats where grass refuses to grow.

We will play the ball as it lies, frequently from a patch of long grass, sometimes from a divot mark. The bunkers will have little sand.

There will be members, but anyone can line up to play. Tuk-tuks line up in the dark pre-dawn, drivers and passengers alike eager to play.

The course will be full from dawn to dusk. Young boys and girls caddy before playing a nominal green fee. Some play for free, in exchange for helping the three permanent staff take care of the course.

This course is not unlike the one I grew up on, and hundreds of others around the UK.

On this ground, champions of the future would learn to play every shot in the book, and more. Grandparents, parents and children would learn the game together. Most of all, the game could be played by anyone, no matter their economic status.

Every journey begins with a small step. In the meantime, I will be scanning the horizons for the nastiest, dustiest, most infertile piece of land on the island that may one day become Phuket's first public golf course.

Big guns line up for Phuket-Singapore race

PHUKET: Some of the fastest yachts in the region will set off from Nai Harn Bay on January 8, vying for a share of the S\$10,000 (about 240,000 baht) prize money in the inaugural Phuket-to-Singapore Yacht Race (PSYR) 2005.

Among the entrants in the non-stop race are some of the Phuket King's Cup Regatta big guns, including Robert Knight's *Drumstick*, Neil Pryde's *Hi Fidelity*, Fred Kinmonth's *Mandrake*, Peter Ahern's *Yo!* and Mike Downard's *Switchblade*.

Likely to be suited to the larger yachts, the event will be run as a single RORC-IRC-class race, with the prize money to be shared among the first-, second- and third-place finishers, and line honors.

The PSYR is intended to be a taster for the inaugural Singapore International Yacht Challenge (SIYC) regatta, to be held in January 2006, which the organizer, the Republic of Singapore Yacht Club, hopes will become a premier event on the Asian yachting circuit.

Although the proposed S\$100,000 (about 2.4 million baht) prize kitty for the SIYC is expected to attract professional crews from around the world, many in Phuket's yachting community have voiced concern about the timing of the regatta, as it will fall in the middle of the peak charter season.

For more information or to enter the PSYR, visit the RSYC website at <http://siyc.rsyc.org.sg/> – **Chris Husted**

Nakhon Sri Thammarat clean up

PHUKET CITY: Nakhon Sri Thammarat Province triumphed over the 13 other southern provinces in the Thai Phuket Youth Games, held between November 20-30.

Sports as diverse as pétanque, tennis and Thai boxing were included in the regional qualifying for the National Youth Games. Although Phuket did not triumph, Songsak Jithakankul, Chief of the Phuket

Office of the Sports Authority of Thailand, said that its total of 72 qualifiers was an improvement on last year.

Phuket did win a number of medals, including gold for Papan Wongtaweeppittayakul in the Pinweight (under 43 kilograms) tae kwon do competition. All qualifiers will compete in the Thai National Youth Games in Chaiphum Province next March. – **Anongnat Sartpisut**

PATONG DARTS LEAGUE

November 30 results: Amigos* 7 Valhalla 2; Champs 6 Didi's* 3; Happy Days* 6 Two Black Sheep 3; Queen Mary* 4 Fat Boy Saloon 5; OffShore 5 Nag's Head* 4; Shakers* 3 Piccadilly 6. (*Winners of beer leg)

Standing after November 30: 1. OffShore (38 points); 2. Happy Days (37); 3. Piccadilly (34); 4. Nag's Head (33); 5. Champs, Queen Mary (31); 7. Didi's (28);

8. Amigos (22); 9. Two Black Sheep (19); 10. Shakers (12); 11. Fat Boy Saloon (11); 12. Valhalla (1). (Nine make-up matches to be played).

December 14 fixtures: Amigos v OffShore; Fat Boy Saloon v Piccadilly; Nag's Head v Champs; Happy Days v Queen Mary; Shakers v Two Black Sheep; Valhalla v Didi's. (Home teams first).

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200 children make first Kids Tri race a big success

By Sangkhae Leelanaporn

KOH KAEW: A light breeze went some way toward cooling down the 200 or so children taking part in the inaugural Kids Tri Phuket triathlon, held in and around Dulwich International College on December 4.

But it was still hot work, particularly for the older age groups, whose races started later in the day and ended with the sun standing high overhead.

No fewer than 13 schools and 17 nationalities were represented, with the enthusiasm of the parents matching that of the competitors.

Les Bird, Chairman of Kids Tri Phuket, said, "We've been overwhelmed, not only by the messages of thanks from the competitors, but also by their interest in taking part [in further such events]."

The organizers are hoping to launch a series of triathlons throughout the year at different venues in Phuket, and possibly in neighboring provinces, during

the coming year. Mr Bird hopes that another race will take place in the first quarter of 2005, possibly at one of the island's resorts.

Winners in each age category, with times in parentheses, were as follows:

Girls 5 and 6: Robyn Edwards (20:09); **Boys 5 and 6:** Jonas Johansson (15:56); **Girls 7 and 8:** Linnea Tenrz (15:51); **Boys 7 and 8:** Philip Johanssen (13:15); **Girls 9 and 10:** Amy Henthorn (18:28); **Boys 9 and 10:** Josh Henthorn (19:54); **Girls 11 and 12:** Timana Hossack (30:27); **Boys 11 and 12:** Timothy O'Leary (30:06); **Girls 13 and 14:** Alicia Payne (46:31); **Boys 13 and 14:** Gavin Lewis (34:52); **Girls 15 and 16:** Ashton Woods (29:37); **Boys 15 and 16:** Braden Payne (44:50); **Boys 17 and 18:** Federico Vassallo (33:58).

The event was sponsored by a large number of local companies, with major sponsorship coming from Chubb, Laguna Phuket, Dulwich College and the *Phuket Gazette*.



Hong wins PEGS President's Cup

KATHU: Hong Shen beat a field of 92 golfers to win the inaugural Merv Baines President's Cup tournament of the Phuket Expat Golf Society (PEGS) at Phuket Country Club on November 25.

Hong humbled the opposition to win the 18-hole medal competition with a magnificent gross 74 for a net 62. Freddy Munger shot a net 65 to come in second, with John "TJ" Conant four more shots back.

In fourth place was Heinz Bauer, who just edged out Tom Wilson on a count-back.

The low gross trophy was won by Blair Speers with an ever-steady 75. John Marinko came in second with a gross 78.

The Christmas tournament will be played on December 27 at Thai Muang, with the awards ceremony and party taking place at Phuket Country Club phase 2 on December 29.

Results: Low net: 1. Hong Shen, gross 74 (handicap 12), net 62; 2. Freddy Munger, gross 87 (22), net 65; 3. John Conant, gross 83 (14), net 69; 4. Heinz Bauer, gross 87 (16), net 71.

Long drive: Men: Simon Cree; Women: Hong Shen.

Nearest the Pin: hole 2: Jeff Schendel; hole 5: Willy Vather; hole 14: Ian Herbertson; hole 17: Brian Sloper.

Plookpanya victorious in Pepsi volleyball

PHUKET CITY: Cooperation and coordination gave Plookpanya School boys' team a definite edge over Chumphon's Sa-ad Pademwittaya in the best-of-five-sets opening match of the 15th Pepsi Volleyball tournament southern selection round, at Saphan Hin Sports Complex on December 1.


The first set rose to a nail-biting climax, with both teams equalising on 24, 25 and 26 points, before Plookpanya finally broke through to take the set 28-26.

However, in the second set, Sa-ad took full advantage of basic errors by Plookpanya, hitting back to take the set 26-24.

Plookpanya, though, regained control in the third set and took it by 25 points to 20, then sealed the match by taking set 4 by a resounding 25 points to 17, and the match by three sets to one.



The winning teams – male and female – of the southern selection round will go through to the national finals in Bangkok.

– Anongnat Sartpisut



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Beyond the concrete canyons

It is all too easy to get bogged down in the concrete jungle of Hong Kong, and overlook the fact that there's a lot more to one of the world's more famous former colonies than high-rises and high prices.

Almost half of the Special Administrative Region's 1,100 square kilometers is made up of country parks and islands, all no more than an hour or so's journey apart, and little more than the price of a bus ride or a ferry fare away.

There's no better introduction to the biggest island, Lantau, than boarding one of its slightly clapped-out, five-seater taxis at Chek Lap Kok International Airport.

Head roughly south and within 10 minutes the humdrum milieu of Tung Chung new town has been left behind for the long grind up to the saddle at Pak Kung Au.

It may have been all glittering Lord Foster-designed modernity to start with, but here you're on a single-lane road with passing places, flanked by fields and woods, moving at around 30kmh.

The largest of Hong Kong's 200-plus islands, Lantau – meaning "broken head" in Cantonese – has always been a superlative escape from the rigors of the city.

Two designated country parks covering 7,840 hectares (49,000 rai) are criss-crossed with walking trails. Deserted sunny beaches suggest there's little need for swimwear. A brace of monasteries – one Trappist, one Buddhist, the latter crowned with a stupendous statue of Lord Gautama – polarize the island's religious offerings.

TALES OF A TRAVELER

By Ed Peters



A 30-minute boat ride from Mui Wo (right) takes you to Cheung Chau, a one-time pirate lair now famous for its annual bun festival and costume parade (above).

International restaurants have sprung up in former fishing villages, while local couples rent tiny but blissfully private rooms near the ferry piers to snatch a little solitude away from Hong Kong's 7 million other citizens.

Board one of the *kaido* boats at the main port of Mui Wo and 30 minutes on the water takes you to Cheung Chau, a one-time pirate lair now famous for its annual bun festival and costume parade.

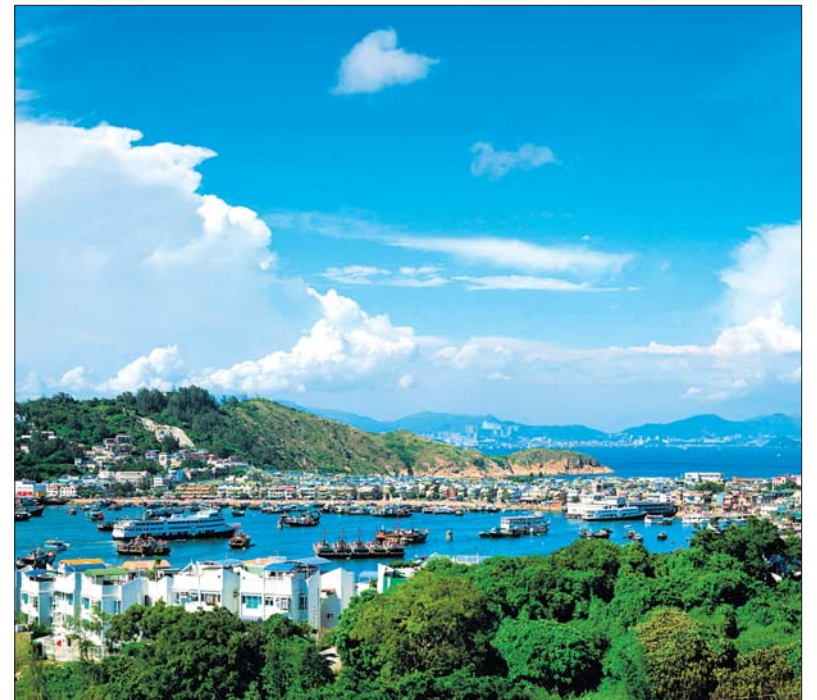
It is still a thriving fishing

community and a popular dormitory for city workers who don't fancy spending their nights as the filling for a 60-square-meter concrete sandwich downtown.

No vehicles – with the exception of toytown-sized ambulances and fire engines – are allowed here, and life progresses at walking pace.

At night, the promenade turns into one unbroken stretch of seafood restaurants. By day, it's a delight to fossick around the narrow alleys with their quaint shops or to stride off along the trails that wind past beaches and deserted woodland right the way around the island.

Another twist to alternative Hong Kong lies on the boundary with China proper, in the Mai Po Nature Reserve, at the center of 1,500 hectares (9,375 rai) of wetland. More than 300 species of



birds – such as the Black-faced Spoonbill and Saunderson's Gull – and 50 species of butterflies have been recorded in wetlands in northern Hong Kong.

The reserve, which is managed by the World Wide Fund for Nature, is a protected habitat for these species, and a home to shrimp ponds and dwarf mangroves.

Visitors can trek through the reserve with knowledgeable and enthusiastic guides and there are camouflaged hides from which to observe the birds.

However – and rather ironically – just beyond the reserve it's all too easy to discern the massed ranks of skyscrapers in the nearby Chinese city of Shenzhen.

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GOOD GREEN GRUB

Guest chef

By Jenna Wise

The Green Dome restaurant in Rawai, on the way to Nai Harn Beach, has built up a regular clientele who appreciate the home-cooked taste and generous portions of the meals.

Owners Dieter and Sinon Hanrak returned to live in Thailand after operating Thai restaurants in Dieter's native Germany for 13 years.

"It became too expensive to have a business in Germany," Dieter explains. "Our daughters are studying in Thailand, so that was also a reason to settle in Phuket."

The menu at the Green Dome incorporates both European cuisine and Thai dishes, all at very reasonable prices.

Dieter says the couple's main aim is to provide good, affordable food for local people and passing tourists, and they plan to open a mini-market where customers can buy home-made local produce.

The recipes below are firm favorites at the restaurant. Although the goulash is time-consuming to make, it can easily be frozen, and the longer it is kept, the better the taste, apparently.

On the other hand, the duck curry can be prepared in less than 20 minutes and is a very tasty meal. On the dessert menu, pancakes are a popular choice.

Hungarian Beef Goulash For 4 people

Ingredients

1kg beef tenderloin fillet, cut into 2.5-cm chunks;
1kg finely chopped onions;
4-5 heaped tablespoons paprika powder;
1 tablespoon finely crushed caraway seeds;
4-5 garlic cloves, chopped;
2-3 red bell peppers, cut into thin strips;
400g thick tomato paste;
Minimum 2 glasses red wine;
250g crème fraîche or whipping cream;

1 tablespoon dried thyme;
1 handful fresh chopped parsley;
2 tablespoons Knorr demi-glace brown sauce powder;
Salt and pepper to taste;
Olive oil, for frying;
Water.

Method

Heat some olive oil in a large, deep pan and fry the onions and garlic until they are translucent. Add the paprika powder and stir-fry for about one minute, then add about two tablespoons of water.

Stir-fry for another minute before adding the chopped beef. Continue frying for another minute before adding all the other ingredients except the bell pepper strips and the crème fraîche. Simmer on a very low heat for 20 minutes.

Blend the brown sauce

powder with a little water to get a smooth, thick paste and add this and the red wine. Now simmer on a very low heat for two hours.

About 10 minutes before serving stir in the bell pepper strips. Remove from the heat and add the crème fraîche, salt and pepper, plus more wine if desired.

Goulash is very popular in Austria, according to Dieter. He recommends serving it with tagliatelle pasta, potatoes or rice. A side salad is a good complement to this hearty meal.

Duck Curry For 4 people

Ingredients

600g duck breast;
10 tiny Thai aubergines (*makeua puang*);
10 small white Thai aubergines (*makeua*);

Sinon Hanrak (left): She and her husband aim to provide good, affordable food for local people and passing tourists. Right: Duck Curry. Below: Hungarian Beef Goulash



20 fresh, sweet basil leaves;
10 fresh kaffir lime leaves;
400g coconut milk;
2 tablespoon red curry paste;
2 medium size red chilies, sliced;
Oil for frying.

Method

Cut the duck breast into ½-inch-wide slices and fry these in hot oil for a few minutes. Add six tablespoons of the coconut milk and all the curry paste and cook for a further two or three minutes.

Cut the *makeua* into eighths and add these to the curry, along with the *makeua puang* and kaffir lime leaves. Stir in the rest of the coconut milk and cook for another four to five minutes.

Remove from the heat and decorate with the sweet basil leaves and chili slices before serving with steamed rice.

Pancakes For 2 large pancakes

Ingredients

2 cups sifted plain flour;
1 egg;

Enough milk to make a thin batter;
Pinch of salt;
1 teaspoon sugar.

Method

Beat all the ingredients together well. Heat some butter in a large frying pan and pour half of the batter in. Turn the pan to ensure that the batter is evenly spread. Cook for 1 minute before flipping over and cooking for another minute.

At the Green Dome, these pancakes are filled with fresh tropical fruit salad inside and served with chocolate sauce and ice-cream.

The Green Dome restaurant, Soi Saiyuan 59/37, Rawai, Phuket. Tel: 04-7460072. Open 7 days a week from 10 am until 11 pm.

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

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Home of the Week

Chalong

Close to the action – but far from the crowds

A four-bedroom house in well-established grounds that feature a pool and two bungalows has come onto the market.

The two-story house is on a quiet hillside cul-de-sac, yet is just minutes away from Chalong Circle and all the amenities around there.

On the ground floor are living and dining areas, with views of the garden and surrounding area, and doors opening onto large terraces, as well as a Western-style kitchen. There is also a guest bathroom, a maid's room and a laundry.

On the upper level are two airy bedrooms with a shared bathroom, a large master bedroom with en-suite bathroom and

walk-in closet and an atrium living area.

In the garden are two bungalows, each with a bedroom and bathroom, which could be used as guest rooms or rented out as holiday apartments, and a 9m x 4.5m swimming pool.

Utilities include air conditioners and ceiling fans, UBC TV, two telephone lines, well water and 3-phase electricity. Access is via a paved road.

The 1.5-rai plot has Nor Sor 3 Gor title, and the price is 20 million baht.

Contact: Richard Lusted, Siam Real Estate, Tel: 076-280805, website: www.siamrealestate.com, email: info@siamrealestate.com



Mature gardens and a large swimming pool make tropical living as pleasant as can be.



The house has stacks of space, whether in the roomy kitchen (left) or the shady balcony (above).



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One night I asked around 10 different people who have lived in the Bang Tao area for some time whether they knew much about Sirinath National Park.

Nobody had heard of it, which shows how little interest people have in the area where they live.

In fact, Sirinath National Park adjoins Bang Tao Bay, starting at Layan Beach and extending north to the top of Phuket at Sarasin Bridge.

Six months ago, though, the national parks authorities moved long-term squatters from the headland at the top of Bang Tao and posted signs announcing that this area had now been reclaimed as part of Sirinath National Park.

The area around northern Bang Tao and Layan is actually very pleasant, with numerous inlets from the sea, and old tin mine lagoons.

According to Bill Barnett of C9 Hotelworks, "The Layan area is becoming the new west coast hot spot for property development."

"There's so much going on there and it really is a pretty part of the island. Laguna is continuing to expand north with its residential properties, including the new Grand Residences and the Banyan Tree; Chom Tawan, the

Layan firmly on the map

LARGER THAN LIFE

By Graham Doven



The top end of Bang Tao Bay and, beyond it, Layan Beach.

new phase of the up-market Maan Tawan project; Layan Gardens; Phuket Pavilions; Layan Estate; Suan Tua and more."

Ocean Breeze Resort and

Suites, one of C9's projects, is located on the Layan road in an area which, according to Mr Barnett, doesn't really have a name as "it's somewhere between north Bang Tao, Sirinath National Park and Layan Cove."

Just imagine saying "My house has no fixed address."

One of the newest projects, Ocean Breeze is a development of 50 apartments and suites built around a central lake and swimming pool.

It will enjoy the features of a modern resort, including a spa and fitness center, restaurant and bar, convenience store and children's pool and playground.

The Layan area is well located, being close to the Laguna complex and Cherm Talay village and its numerous restaurants, and within easy reach of the airport.

Values are up in this area, with properties selling for around 75,000 baht a square meter. The already has enough quality developments for it to be too late for somebody to come in with cheap rubbish.

With Ocean Breeze, C9 is trying to integrate open living



Large balconies at Ocean Breeze, as seen in this artist's impression, will encourage outdoor living.

with modern designs, using, for example, big balconies like the famous Australian "Queenslander" design, whereby much of the time is spent on big balconies or verandas.

Ocean Breeze principals have come up with "Island Fresh" as the concept for this project. It sounds a bit like a deodorant, but the idea of eating

outside on the balcony makes much more sense in the tropics; it beats air conditioning any day.

Actually, the design, with the shutter-style doors, spacious balconies and tropical landscaping, gives a feeling of the old rubber plantation days, elegant living in the tropics, Sir Stamford Raffles, high tea and daiquiris. "Jolly good stuff, what?"

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FOR PROPERTY CLASSIFIEDS AND THE CLASSIFIED AD FORM, SEE PAGES 37-40.

Construction Update

by Anongnat Sartpisut

Phuket Peninsula Spa and Resort will comprise 56 luxury apartments and seven villas in a natural setting within walking distance of Nai Yang Beach.

The development, on which ground was broken recently, will cover 10 rai at the southern end of the beach, close to Naithon and within easy reach of Phuket International Airport.

Resort owner Suthasinee Setabandhu said the project represented an investment of 650 million baht.

"We will provide a six-star product, in a good location close to the beach, and run by an experienced team. We hope this will be a successful combination," said K. Suthasinee.

The exclusive agent for the project, Larry Cunningham, said construction started in September and should be completed by October 2005.

"It is the intention to provide a quiet resort, something that is difficult to find in Phuket now. This is a very quiet development in a nice part of the world, on a very nice beach."

The entrance and lobby will be built on the hillside; glass elevators will carry guests to the accommodation floors.

All the apartments and villas will be for sale. Two-bedroom apartments of 150 square meters, with two bathrooms, dining room, living room and jacuzzi, will cost from 11 million baht.



Artist's impression of the completed project at Nai Yang Beach

LIFE'S A BEACH

Three-bedroom apartments of 220sqm, with three bathrooms, will cost from 17 million baht.

The seven 154-sqm villas, each with its own 3m x 7m swimming pool, will be on the market for 15 million baht. Each will have two bedrooms, 2½ bathrooms, kitchen and an L-shaped living-dining room.

A three-bedroom, 300-sqm penthouse with four bathrooms and a swimming pool, will go on the market for 29 million baht.

The interior design of the project is being handled by Design 507, which has worked on the Samui Peninsula Spa & Resort, the Prajin Resort near Khao

Yai National Park, and Baan Khuntan in Chiang Mai.

The resort will have a coffee bar, spa lounge, lobby, reception desk, foot massage salon, swimming pool and 24-hour security.

The developer is Phuket Peninsula Co Ltd, and the management company is Quality Enterprise International Co Ltd.

For details, contact *Phuket One Realestate*, 6/34 Nakatani Village, Kamala, Tel: 076-345707, Fax: 076-345709, email: info@phuketonerealestate.com, website: phuketonerealestate.com



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Gardening

with Bloomin' Bert

As you may or may not know, I'm single, and I'm gloriously happy this way. There are many reasons for my current status, primarily the fact that I suppose I'm probably not the easiest of people in the world to live with. Let's be honest; there are very few women who would put up with me and my various "quirks".

I have been known on occasion to quaff the odd glass of beer, and very occasionally, to the point of excess.

Difficult to believe, I know.

I also rather like having the house to myself, without having to discuss which CD to put on next, or where to have dinner.

Perhaps one of the scariest aspects of marriage is the inevitable extended family, and all that

Verdant abuse

comes with it, such as the objectionable brother-in-law who wants to be your best mate but unfortunately is a complete prat. Or the new – and rather disturbing – 73-year-old aunt, who thinks you're cute and keeps pinching your cheeks.

But the *pièce de résistance* of your new-found family has to be the mother-in-law. She may be the most harmless lady in the world (hopefully), but on the other hand she may well have a tongue that could flay you at 50 paces, and that's probably what I'm more than a little afraid of.

It's not difficult then to see where one of the ugliest plants in the region, the *sansevieria trifasciata*, got its more common name – the mother-in-law's tongue. In Thai, it's known as *lin mangkorn*, or dragon's tongue, which is, if mother-in-law clichés are to be believed, almost synonymous with the English.

It's rather a strange plant. It consists of nothing more than prickly, sword-like leaves that spiral upward from the ground, up to a meter and a half tall on the biggest varieties.

Nobody seems to know ex-

actly how many varieties of the mother-in-law's tongue, also known as the snake plant, exist. The experts in these matters do know that it's native to Africa, and that it gets its alternative name, not surprisingly, from the snake-like dark green bands with gray-green patterns on the leaves of many varieties.

One thing that is common to all members of this particular family is that it is singularly unattractive. It's primarily grown simply to fill an otherwise vacant space in the garden, or in an area that has little hope of receiving continuous care, if any at all.

The mother-in-law's tongue is one of those plants that can be "divided". It grows from roots known as rhizomes that sit just below the surface of the soil.

It's ridiculously easy to make more of them – just break the rhizomes (or even the leaves) apart and plant them. You should wear gloves while doing this as the sap irritates skin.

The new clones of the originals won't take long to establish themselves. Give them an occasional splash of water to start with. After that, you can pretty much leave them to their own devices.

When I first moved into my house here in Phuket, along with half a truckful of assorted potted plants, my new landlord rushed across with a gleeful look on his

face, and a couple of armfuls of mother-in-law's tongue plants.

He handed them to me with a grin, and indicated that there was an empty patch in front of my garden wall that was looking a little bare. Having just moved in, I hardly had time to devote hours to nurturing a patch of ground that wasn't even mine, but nevertheless, I quickly made

a few slits in the soil, and pushed them in.

After throwing a little water at them the same day, I lost interest in them, with the thought that if they lived, then good luck to them. Two years later, they haven't just lived; they've thrived, with absolutely no help from me whatsoever.

The mother-in-law's tongue is the ultimate survivor but if it's over-watered, the roots will rot and it will quickly give


up the ghost.

People in cooler parts of the world grow this as a houseplant. Presumably they are less picky and a lot more patient in those parts of the world – a plant that takes a year to grow 30 centimeters here will take five years to do the same over there. And it's still ugly – a fact overlooked because it's seen as "tropical" or "exotic", I suppose.

If I could find a mother-in-law who didn't have a tongue like this, then that might be the first step in getting me married off to her daughter.

She'd better tell her daughter that I do like the occasional beer, though...

Want to know more about a plant in your garden? Email Bloomin' Bert at: bloominbert@hotmail.com

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Phone +66 7632 5667-71 Fax +66 7632 4313 Mob +66 1894 2386 +66 9873 2837
sales@alilaphuketvillas.com www.alilaphuketvillas.com



Property Gazette

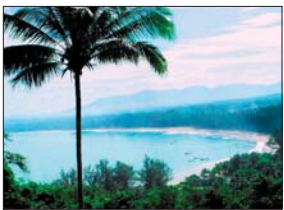
Properties For Sale

BEAUTIFUL LUXURY APARTMENT



for sale in Surin Beach. The apartment (only 2 apartments per villa) is located in Suriyana, a small but very exclusive development in Surin Beach. 215sqm with a huge living room, 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, fully-equipped kitchen with Teka appliances, and an office. Beautiful lake views and use of a 32m swimming pool in a tropical garden. Priced at 12.5 million baht. Pls contact for more details. Tel: 09-8753289. Email: regents@phuket.ksc.co.th

SURIN BEACH LAND FOR SALE



On the same mountain as The Amanpuri Resort and The Chedi hotel. 7 rai (11,000sqm) for sale with beautiful sea views over Bang Tao Beach. 5 minutes walk to Surin Beach and Bang Tao Beach. Highest point is 74m. Ideal for a quality estate or boutique hotel. Last piece of land with a seaview in Surin Beach. Pls contact during the day for more information. Tel: 09-8753289. Email: regents@phuket.ksc.co.th

SEAVIEW CHANOTE

land, with water well and road, located in Ao Makham, 1,220 sqm, 60m to the sea and a small harbor. Property is surrounded by a solid wall and is ready to build on. Must see to appreciate. Price: 5.7 million baht. Pls call for more info. Tel: 07-2728216.

LARGE DETACHED BUNGALOW

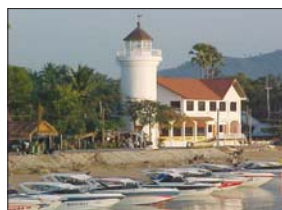
Located in Chalong. Thai-style roof, 300sqm floor space, 42sqm covered terrace, 1 rai of land, wall-fenced and large, secluded garden in peaceful area. Please contact for information. Tel: 01-8912166. Email: gerhard-berger@gmx.at

BALINESE VILLA



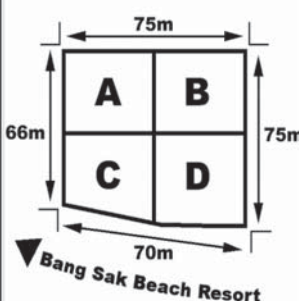
Two-story villa in Chalong, far away from road traffic and noise. Living room, European kitchen, open-air dining room, 2 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, private pool & spa on about 920sqm of land. 2 car parking. Price: 4.9 million baht. Pls call for more info or visit www.ayudhya.net for pictures. Tel: 06-0043008.

LIGHTHOUSE FOR SALE



The famous Lighthouse Restaurant – with five waterfront luxury rooms and three offices – in Ao Chalong is seriously for sale. Potential to develop residential units on unused property. Please email: maipenrai@hushmail.com

KHAO LAK LAND FOR SALE



call 01-8947644

HOUSE IN VILLA 5

2-story house for sale with 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, built-in kitchen, living room and nice garden. Please contact for more details. Tel: 04-0575756. Email: pmareeyana@hotmail.com

KATHU TOWNHOUSE

For sale: last 4-story townhouse in the new village "Goldenville". Very good location for small business. Please contact K. Orasa. Tel: 05-1130389. Email: orasahomkhajorn@hotmail.com

BUNGALOW

in Anupas Golf Ville. 4 bedrooms, 5 aircons, kitchen with dining room & built-in furniture in every room. Price: 5.7 million baht. Pls call for more info. Tel: 07-2836716.

NEW HOUSE FOR SALE



Single house near Patong - 95 sq wah - with 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms and a garden, is for sale by owner. Pls call Khun Lalida for more details. Tel: 076-244141, 01-6916090.

BEST PRICE

House for sale at Kata Beach, near the sea. Please contact for more details. Tel: 076-284065, 06-5958512, 01-9704638. Email: nalumana@phuket.ksc.co.th



Best sea view in Phuket, in The Doa Tiam Project, above Mission Hills Golf Course. Better than land selling for 6-12 million baht/rai. The only land I know of with a complete view of Phang Nga Bay. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and up rai lots available. Chanote title. 3.2 million baht/rai. Tel: 06-5950188 E-mail: nsupin@yahoo.com



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Freehold condominium apartments and penthouses with breathtaking views over Kalim Bay. **PRICE:** 13.3 million baht (Two bedroom, sea view unit of 202 sq. metres)



ONE RAI PLOTS SEA VIEW
Almost impossible to find. Superb elevated plots with sensational views to Phi Phi. **PRICE:** 8 million baht per one-rai plot.



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Email: info@phuketonerealestate.com www.phuketonerealestate.com

CHEAP SHOP FOR SALE / RENT

In Kamala, VERY reasonable rent (3,000 baht/month for the first 2 years!) with 7 years remaining on the land lease. 350,00 baht (or best offer) buys this 8-meter-wide shop. Suitable for most businesses, on busy street. Includes Thai living quarters. Call soon to see - it won't last. No bar businesses allowed. Tel: 01-8917933.

LAND FOR SALE

Directly on the Banyan Tree Golf Course at Laguna Phuket. 1,050sqm/262.45 sq wah. Price: 7.872 million baht. Pls call or email for further information. Tel: 076-239864. Email: hktmkt@ksc.th.com

BEST SEA VIEW

in Krabi. Beachfront land for sale with Nor Sor 3 title. 3 rai located in a quiet area. Pls call Tel: 01-8953301.

NEW SINGLE HOUSE

for sale by owner. 2 stories, 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, fully furnished with a mountain view. 560sqm, 69m. Pls call for info. Tel: 07-2799500.

2 RAI GOLF VIEW

Great location, great views & great access. Land overlooks Loch Palm Golf Course. Ready to build, within 9 kms of Central, Tesco, Dulwich and most amenities. 6.5 million baht, owner will subdivide. Tel: 01-6493557. Email: info@phuketlifestyle.com

DIRECTLY ON MAIN RD

1 rai, 1 ngan in Cherng Talay with an old house. Good for restaurant, bungalow resort, shophouses, office etc. 4.9 million baht., Chanote title. Pls call for more info. Tel: 06-2746511.

RAWAI VARIOUS

Plots in a housing project available with very good infrastructure. Plot sizes from 400sqm-1,750sqm, and start at 1.45 million baht. Contact for more info. Tel: 01-6067410 Email: info@siam-business.com

LAND IN PHUKET

Land available in all areas of Phuket. Ideal for investments. Contact for details. Email: landinphuket@yahoo.com

NEW VILLA FOR SALE

Beautiful 4-bedroom villa including pool. Exceptional building quality, 350sqm of living space, ready to move in. Only 13.35 million baht. Pls call for more info. Tel: 01-8916143.

CONDO 4 SALE

1-room apartment at Patong Beach for sale at 550,000 baht cash. Freehold title. Tel: 09-4740227. Email: chotip_5@hotmail.com

1 RAI IN RAWAI

(1,600sqm). 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, (150sqm) modern Thai-style house. Stays cool without aircon. Only 6.9 million baht. Contact Gary for more info. Tel: 07-898-7062. Email: ebsseng@yahoo.com

Do Not Drink Tap Water!

Property Gazette

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Best Value on the Island



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Situated between Thalang and NaiYang, it is only 5 mins to the beach and 20 mins to Tesco.



10 million baht for quick sale.
Tel: 0-7631-3137 - email
mick@phuketprogrammers.com

LAND FOR SALE

4 rai with seaview for sale at Kho Yao Yai; just 100 meters from the beach. Price: 4 million baht. Pls call for details. Tel: 01-6078567.

KAMALA HOUSE

90 sq wah with full title, two bedrooms, aircon, sat TV, large kitchen and living room, and big garden. Located in a sought after area of Kamala. 3.7 million baht. Pls contact for details. Tel: 01-6064649.

HOUSE IN NAI HARN

New house with three bedrooms, two bathrooms, lounge/dining room, separate kitchen & large garden. 4.5 million baht. Pls call for details. Tel: 01-7520275.

LAND FOR SALE

in Phuket Country Club. Please call for more details. Tel: 09-8718333, 01-691-3351.

BEST HOUSE IN PA KHLOK



270 square meters with 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, big swimming pool & garden. Modern Bali style, fully furnished and located in a Thai neighborhood. For sale or rent. Pls contact for more details. Pa Khlok. Tel: 06-6866101.

4+2 BEDROOM HOUSE IN KAMALA

Top-quality 4+2 bedroom house for sale in Kamala, near Phuket Fantasea and only 10 mins walk to the beach. 4 master bedrooms on 1st floor with en-suite bathroom. 2 bedrooms on ground floor - one can also be used as an office (2 phone lines), the other as a maid's room with attached bathroom. Large living/dining room with open European kitchen, as well as a Thai kitchen. Fully furnished - all rooms with aircon and ceiling fan. Priced at 18 million baht. For more details please contact Franz Brun in Kamala. Tel: 076-279075, 01-4761415. Email: fbrun@loxinfo.co.th

RAWAI CONDO

for sale. 250,000 baht total price, payable in instalments. 150,000 baht initial payment, the remaining 100,000 baht transferred at the Land Office after 1 year. Freehold title. Pls contact for more details. Tel: 09-4740227. Email: chotip_5@hotmail.com

65 RAI BEACHFRONT

land in Chalong, perfect location for a villa or marina project. 180 million baht. Pls call for more details. Tel: 01-8916143.

GOLF COURSE LOTS

1-rai, serviced building lots facing the 8th tee of a Jack Nicklaus course with ocean views. Contact for details. Tel: 09-9725226. Email: bgbphuket@yahoo.com

BEACHFRONT LAND

for sale. 10 rai at Khao Yao Yai, near the pier. 80 meters of beachfront, priced at 36 million baht. Please call for more information. Tel: 01-6078567.

KRABI HOUSE

for sale. Located in Nong Talay. 1.66 ngan with Chanote title. Needs some work done on it. 450,000 baht. Please contact for more information. Tel: 076-423315, 06-28111945. Email: mike@ethailand.com

TOP OF KAMALA



Land plot with direct access to the main road. Under-ground power & water supply, and excellent location with views overlooking the bay. Contact Phuket Land Search. Please contact for details. Tel: 076-290509. Email: sales@phuketland.com

Properties For Rent

SUPERB PRIME-VIEW HOUSE



Thai-Balinese teak-roofed house for rent. 1 master bedroom w/large balcony and open sea view + 2 additional bedrooms. Also has a small guest house with master bedroom and a dynamic view. High-season and long-term rental now available. 200,000 baht per month. Longer terms negotiable. Please contact for more info. Tel: 076-344044. Email: pocconnor@hotmail.com

RESTAURANT/

guesthouse/bar for lease in a popular location in Karon. Furnished restaurant with fully-equipped European kitchen ready to be moved into today. 5 letting rooms, all fully furnished, including full satellite system in each room and a separate staff room. 7-year lease including Thai-registered limited company. Pls contact for more info. Tel: 01-8936072, 09-288-1732. Email: beefeater_karon@hotmail.com

APARTMENT

near Loch Palm Golf Club. 58 sqm, aircon, fan, phone, cable TV, swimming pool & quiet area. For long-term rent at 12,000 baht/month. Please contact for more info. Tel: 076-202725, 01-8916632. Fax: 076-202725. Email: golfandview@gmx.de

HOUSE

near Chalong. Detached house with 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, 3 aircons, UBC, phone line & fully furnished. Long-term rental wanted. Tel: 01-9680309. Email: waeowta@myrealbox.com For further details, please see our website at: www.deliver-it.nl



Shophouse for Rent ..in prime location in Patong

Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Road (opposite Christin Massage)
Free from January 1

3 floors, each floor is 110sqm. Total area is 330sqm.

Please contact: 01-8924077
or send email to: info@divesupply.com

Rent direct from private owner: No estate agents please.

APARTMENTS

in Patong for long-term rental. 1 bedroom, 1 TV room with cable TV, & aircon. Some apartments with good sea views. 18,000-20,000 baht a month. Call Tel: 09-2909567 or visit our website at: www.brommathaihouse.com

PATONG HOUSE

Simple, quiet 1-bedroom house with sensational sea and mountain views. Partly furnished, aircon and large private garden. 9,000 baht/month, long-term only. Pls call Patrick at Tel: 09-2915726.

PATONG APARTMENTS

for rent. Clean, comfortable condos with all-new interior decor, big fridge, aircon, cable TV, big double beds, swimming pool and parking. Please call Tel: 01-0825707. Email: phuket-accommodation.info

PATONG RESIDENCE

1- or 2-bedroom apartments with kitchen and pool, and only 350m from the beach, for rent at 9,000 baht/month. Pls contact for more details. Tel: 09-4740227. Email: chotip_5@hotmail.com

HOUSE AT NAI HARN

Quiet house only 5 mins to Nai Harn and Rawai Beaches. 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, fully furnished & swimming pool. Only 40,000 baht/month, price includes electricity, cable TV, water & cleaning. Please contact for more details. Tel: 01-9680309. Email: waeowta@myrealbox.com

FOR RENT

Brand-new, 3-story, lakeview apartment/shop near Lotus. 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 17,000 baht a month + security deposit. Call for more info. Tel: 01-8928208.

PENTHOUSE

for rent at Andaman Beach Suites, Patong Beach. 3 double bedrooms, 1 small bedroom + maid's room. Swimming pool + use of hotel services. Considered to be the best penthouse on Phuket Island. Tel: 076-342737, 09-9723861. Email: ba@kiwibrian.com For further details, please see our website at: www.kiwibrian.com

RAWAI RESIDENCE

Apartment/studio with aircon and fan, fully furnished and 300m from the beach, for rent at 7,000 baht/month or 350 baht/day. Contact for info. Tel: 09-4743418, 07-2738944. Email: chotip_5@hotmail.com

BEACHFRONT

condo. Fully furnished, high standard condo for rent at Kalim Bay, Patong. 2 bedrooms, fitted kitchen, pool and many other facilities. Pls call for more details. Tel: 01-8920038.

RAWAI TOWNHOUSE

3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, furnished, aircon & TV. Yearly rental, 15,000 baht per month. Also for sale, 2.7 million baht. Please contact for more details. Tel: 01-3709661. Email: one5thave@yahoo.com

OFFICE BUILDING

on the main road of Karon Beach for long- or short-term rent. For more details, please email amorn9999@yahoo.com or visit: www.phuket-excursion.com

APARTMENT

for rent. 50 sqm. Good position and location on Nanai Rd. Only available for a year-long rental. Please call for info. Tel: 07-8904518.

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BEACH LAND PLOTS

35 mins from Tesco or 30 mins from the airport. Located on the west side of Naka Island, only 3 mins from Ao Por pier and the new marina. Only 6 plots: 600-700sqm with 12 meters of sandy beach frontage. Ideal place for weekend relaxation or holiday. Secure Nor Sor 3 Gor title. Priced at only 1.9 million baht, first come, first choice. Pls call for more info. Tel: 09-4697133.

PATONG BEACH

condo for sale with freehold title. Property has a fantastic view, measures 92sqm and is priced at 2.2 million baht, payable in instalments. 1.2 million baht initial payment, the remaining 1 million baht transferred at the Land Office. Financing available. Pls contact for info. Tel: 09-4740227. Email: chotip_5@hotmail.com

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Property Gazette

Accommodation Available

PATONG LUXURY

apartment. Central Patong, 1- & 2-bedroom apartments. Pls email for info & photos. Email: suites247@yahoo.com

CONDO ROOM

for rent. 5 min walk to Patong Beach, cheap price, fully furnished, seaview, aircon, hotwater, cable TV etc. Pls contact for more info. Tel: 09-6455134. Email: JS_0704@hotmail.com

ATSUMI VILLAS

Total tranquility in a tropical garden setting in Rawai. King-size bedroom, lounge/kitchen, aircon, hot water, UBC, DVD, stereo, POS ADSL & phone, yoga & massage. 2,500 baht/night to 16,000 baht/month for long stay. Please call for more details. Tel: 01-2720571.

KATA PENTHOUSE

near beach. Aircon, fan, furnished, UBC TV & DVD. Also available are 4 double rooms with cable TV, fridge, fan & balcony. Clean, cool & with views. Please call for more info. Tel: 06-2766597.

A GREEN OASIS

at Blue Point. You love the beach and also going out? But you want a relaxed, green, safe and clean neighborhood, and also a quiet place to sleep! Come to Blue Point in the residential area of Patong. Great seaviews with sounds of birds instead of the noise of tuk-tuks & motorbikes. Due to a cancellation, one apartment is now available, for holiday use only. Take the beach road (direction Amari), over the bridge, go left and before viewpoint BLUE POINT enter Ban Suan Kamnan. Pls call or email for info. Tel: 06-7866350. Email: buurmanb@hotmail.com

PATONG

apartment for rent. The apartment is conveniently located at Patong Beach, 500 meters from exciting water-sports and close to restaurants. 2 bedrooms with aircon, living room and kitchen with dining area. 80sqm. Weekly or monthly. Please email for more info. Email: martin.jelf@msa.hinet.net

ACCOMMODATION

available. Kamala rooms with aircon, cable TV, shower, balcony & Jacuzzi/sauna. 5 mins to the beach. 600-800 baht/night, inclusive. Please call Tom for more info. Tel: 07-1904584.

ROOM IN PATONG

Room with aircon, good location. 950 baht/day. Please check for availability. Tel: 06-6822969. Email: smith@taurus-travel.com

Accommodation Wanted

LONG-TERM RENTAL

I will be moving to live in Phuket with my partner at the end of January. We would like to rent a house for less than 20,000 baht a month. We need two bedrooms, and the house should be furnished. If it has a pool, that would be great. If I like the house, I might wish to buy it 2 or 3 years into the rental. Pls email info and pics. Email: taeb62@hotmail.com

LOOKING FOR HOUSE

to rent. I will be moving to Phuket with my partner at the end of December 2004 to teach in Phuket City. We would like to rent a house for less than 10,000 baht per month. We don't need more than one bedroom, but the house should be furnished. We would be grateful for any information. Email a.c.vaughan@gmail.com

CONDO OR APT

Condo or apartment wanted for long-term rent by serious and clean man. Email: phuketweb@hotmail.com

SMALL HOUSE

wanted. I want to rent a small 1- or 2-bedroom house for a single Thai person in either Kathu, Kata, Karon or possibly Phuket City. Should be quiet secure area, furnished, aircon in 1 bedroom. 2,500 to 4,000 baht per month for a long-term rental. Please call me. Tel: 09-1950616.

PATONG APPT/

room wanted for responsible Canadian coming from Bangkok. Requirements: quiet (from 4 am to noon); cable TV or UBC; aircon; no more than a 14-minute walk to beach. Small place ok, or room ok. Dates: minimum 3 months stay, starting on or about January 5, and if possible 10-18 days starting early December to check it out and pay in advance for the longer stay. Email: andrewryan@yahoo.com; silomsoi2@yahoo.com

GOOD PATONG APT

Looking to rent a good, clean apt or house for 1-2 persons with a kitchenette in Patong or nearby. Rental period would be 1-2 months in March-April. Please let me know your number to call you soonest. Email: johan9a@yahoo.com

APARTMENT

Looking for long-term rental apartment in Chalong, Rawai area. Not over 7,000 baht/mth. Email: beachcomberwa@yahoo.com.au

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GREEN APPLE

Interior design, renovation, home extension, maintenance, (home, pool & landscape) and painting of kitchen, bathroom & wood furniture. Call for more info. Tel: 05-0691633.

Household Services Needed

MAID/NANNY

Family with 2 kids seeks a live-in helper for child and household care and Thai cooking. An opportunity for long-term employment for a trustworthy person who is gentle with kids. Tel: 04-8398141. Email: benoit.beaufils@censydiam.com

HOUSEKEEPER

We need a housekeeper with a difference. Should be able to live in, in her own lovely apartment in our luxury villa. Ability to speak English essential, and requires ability to cook Thai and possibly farang food. A very high standard of cleaning is required and the applicant should have a happy and sunny outlook on life. Salary is subject to experience, abilities and references. Please call or email for interview. Tel: 09-1950616. Email: admin@phuketbuilders.com

LIVE-IN MAID

Live-in maid and driver urgently required. English-speaking preferred. Clean and trustworthy. Tel: 076-200617, 01-9170377. Fax: 076-200618. Email: nuntiya@psa.co.th

CLEANER NEEDED

Part-time hours by arrangement, 3-4 hours daily. Patong area. Pls call for more info. Tel: 76-342737, 09-9723861. Email: ba@kiwibrian.com

Property Services

PROPERTY

management. Siam Home Care for rentals, finding tenants, property management and home services. Tel: 076-281483, 06-9402386. Fax 076-281483. Email: ria@siamhomecare.com For further details, please see our website at http://www.siamhomecare.com

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Wahoo Big Game Fishing is currently recruiting for the following positions:

Chief accountant:
3 years' experience in accounting
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Must speak and write English well
1 position available

Sales officer:
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Cook:
1 position available

Contact address: Wahoo Big Game Fishing Company Ltd,
Tel: 076-281510-3 attention Khun Orawan, secretary to
Khun Bubpha (every day from 0830-1800 hrs)



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Qualifications:

- Male/Female, not over 30 years old; must be able to work permanent nightshifts
- Strong self-initiative and creativity
- Independent worker, fast learner
- Able to work with Internet and standard computer programs
- Excellent command of written and spoken English is a MUST.
- Able to communicate clearly and professionally in English, spoken and written
- Own transport.

Tel: 076-264445. Fax: 076-264447. Email: oil@asiadebit.com

HAIRDRESSER WANTED



Angel Hair, a new, high-class beauty salon in the center of Phuket City, is looking for a professional English-speaking hairdresser. Should be good looking, 22-32 years old with more than 2 years' experience. Call Toi for more info. Angel Hair, 32 Rassada Rd, Phuket City. Tel: 01-3267431.

CHEFS, COOKS &

Admin reqd. Molly Malone's Irish Pub requires skilled chefs, cooks & administrative persons with experience in Western/Euro-style cooking and restaurant administration respectively. Please apply in person or send your CV by email or post to: Molly Malone's Irish Pub. 94/1 Thaweewong Rd, Patong Beach, Kathu, Phuket 83150. Tel: 076-292771, 076-296706. Fax: 076-292-774. Email: mollymalones@loxinfo.co.th

DELIVERY PERSON

wanted. Khun Woody's Bakery seeks a slow, careful driver to deliver our sandwiches, cakes and cookies. Full-time, starting daily at 7 am. Great job with excellent benefits, good people and a friendly company that's growing quickly. Driver's license required. Some English helpful. Pleasant personality a must. Tel: 076-340066, 09-7298665. Email: woody@khunwoody.com

A New Coffee Shop in Patong

Urgently Requires

1. Experienced cooks; 2 positions
2. Shift managers; 2 positions
- Fluent English (speaks & read)
3. Kitchen workers; 10 positions
- Basic English
4. Customer service; 6 positions
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For more information, please contact K.Kung
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Computer literate, sales orientated & English-speaking for 3 new apartment/villa projects in Kamala. Good future prospects and management opportunities for the right applicants. Pls phone for an interview. Tel: 01-6777185.

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Important Phuket company is looking for: Web designer or Graphic designer or IT professional. Important: must be able to speak English well! Please contact for more information or to apply. Tel: 07-6281510. Fax: 07-628-0775. Email: daniel@informaticplus.com

KITCHEN STAFF

in pizza restaurant. Located in Patong. No experience, but some English is necessary. Ability to learn how to do things our way is a must. Tel: 076-341827, 06-2767608.

MARKETING PERSON

Thai with good English and some marketing experience wanted to promote real estate company. Own transport essential. Good salary and commission. Please contact for full details. Tel: 076-280805. Email: richard@siamrealestate.com

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Requirements:

- Good spoken English.
- Computer skills in Outlook, Word, Excel.
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Tel: 09-7725077

Email: phuketofficecv@hotmai.com

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If you want to sell online in a smart, fun and friendly office in Phuket City, contact us now. If you have no experience, but you wish to try, this is a great job to improve your university English. Need 3 people. Tel: 076-236616, 01-8952206. Fax: 076-236-617. Email: siamuk@loxinfo.co.th

CASHIERS

Securicor urgently requires two female cashiers. Applicants should be aged between 18 and 30 and be high-school/university graduates with basic English. On-the-job training provided. Tel: 076-354762, 01-8924992. Fax: 076-354726. Email: sth_phkt@phuket.ksc.co.th

RESTAURANT STAFF

Rockfish Restaurant and Bar, in Kamala, requires chefs, bar-men, a waitress and an assistant manager. Must speak good English and have experience in F&B. Good working conditions and excellent money. Pls call or email Richard for more details. Tel: 09-2873161. Email: eat@rockfishrestaurant.com

URGENTLY NEEDED!

Math, Physics, Chemistry, Chinese and Spanish teachers who can speak and write French needed to help a 16-year-old prepare for her exam in May 2005. Please call for more information. Tel: 076-282232, 01-979-4140.

SELLING TO

Westerners. If you can sell on the Phi Phi Islands, in a busy office, contact us now. If you have no experience but have a need to succeed, this is a great job to improve your university English. Need 3 people. Tel: 076-236616. Fax: 076-236617. Email: siwaporn@hotel-travel-asia.com

COMPANION

wanted, e.g. physiotherapist, who can stay with Swiss gentleman (1.84m tall) and take care of him after knee surgery for approx 2 weeks during his stay in his own apartment at Patong Beach, Phuket, in January 2005. Good knowledge of English required. Please contact: PO Box 336, CH-3000 Berne, Switzerland.

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Island Job Mart

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The Phuket Gazette seeks to fill the following positions:

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- Thai, age 23 up
- Bachelor's degree or higher (in any field)
- Reasonable command of written and spoken English
- Must have a 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

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- Diploma or degree in computers or a related field
- At least 2 years' experience in networking and hardware maintenance
- Good interpersonal skills
- Good command of spoken English would be an advantage

III. ASSISTANT DISTRIBUTION MANAGER

- Male or female, Thai nationality
- Bachelor's degree in any field
- Strong command of English would be an advantage
- Able to work as part of a team
- Creative and hard working

Qualified candidates are invited to send a CV to Passara Kaewbumroong, Human Resources, by email, fax or post to:

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367/2 Yaowarat Rd, T. Taladyai, A. Muang, Phuket 83000
Fax: 076 213971 Email: mem@phuketgazette.net

TEACHERS

required. English, Spanish, Chinese, Math, Physics and Chemistry. Till end of May '05. Please call for more info. Tel: 076-282232, 01-9794140.

BEAUTY SALON

Manager/ess with experience wanted for a new salon. Must have reasonable English and good appearance. Top salary plus extras, negotiable. Pls call Jimmy for more info. Tel: 09-5861098.

MASSAGE

therapist needed. Well-established (10 years) health spa seeks male & female therapists specializing in Thai massage and traditional treatments. Please email us for more information. Email: cantikbeautyline@hotmail.com

ADMIN STAFF

required. Applicants must have experience in accounting, be able to work a computer, and be able to speak English. Tel: 076-281401/2, 01-0794137. Fax: 076-281400. Email: sdephuk@loxinfo.co.th

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Part-time, also some cleaning. Childcare experience & references are necessary. Must speak English & have transportation. Tel: 07-2760141. Email: kat@helicam-asia.com

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PEOPLE-RELATED WORK SOUGHT

Articulate, flexible Englishman with extensive experience in hotel and tourism industry looking for related opportunities in Phuket. Guest relations and sales and marketing a forte. I have a BA in Thai language and Southeast Asian Studies, and have lived in Thailand for 6 years. Resum  available on request. Tel: 053-810352. Email: saxbyalex@hotmail.com

HOTEL OR DIVE

manager. Highly experienced manager in hotel and diving businesses is searching for a long-term job. I am fluent in German and English (spoken and written); have good computer skills; am service-minded; and have lived in Thailand for 8 years. Tel: 076-280-221, 09-8684358. Email: royalnavigator@csloxinfo.com

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wanted. Canadian female seeks employment in the Rawai area. Skills include sales & marketing, real estate & advertising. Please email for more info. Email: armstrongmarketing2002@yahoo.co.uk

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Looking to work in a school or can give lessons to your children. Can even come to your house to teach. Email: rubina682003@hotmail.com

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KRABI SALE

Washing machine: 2,000 baht. Samsung Crystal fridge: 2,500 baht. Single bed w/ steel frame + new mattress: 1,600 baht. Canon camera 100Fn zoom Tamron 100-300: 5,000 baht. Contact for details. Tel: 06-8202663. Email: colombattofabio@hotmail.com

ATTN: ARTISTS

Must sell: create your own silkscreens for T-shirts, canvases, etc. Silkscreen light table and materials for sale. 3,500 baht for everything, or best offer. Please contact for more information. Tel: 076-288487. Email: sookjeong@hotmail.com

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28-90mm lens, 75-300mm 420 EXI flash macro lenses with red filter & polarized lens. 24,000 baht obo. Please call for more information. Tel: 06-2798183.

Articles Wanted

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Urgently need of a telephone line in Nanai, not too expensive. Also need a wireless GPRS for my PC. Email with details, please to: pam_2004@asia.bcom

BOUNCY CASTLE

I'd like to rent a jumping/ bouncing castle for a birthday party. Pls contact with details. Tel: 01-8918689. Email: villathani@hotmail.com

DIVE COMPRESSOR

Dive compressor in good condition wanted. Minimum output of 280 liters per minute. Or Bauer K15 compressor for spares. Tel: 075-620698, 07-2661850. Fax: 075-620698. Email: goff_diving@hotmail.com

TREADMILL FOR DOG

Lokking to buy a treadmill, new or secondhand, for my dog. Email: sianglert@hotmail.com

Boats & Marine

TAYANA 55



This 1993 Tayana is in Phuket, and in turnkey condition with many new upgrades. Asking price: US\$380,000. Never listed before. No brokers. Tel: 076-345236, 01-3670520. Fax: 076-345236. Email: svbengaltiger@yahoo.com

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20x5m. Up to 35 pax capacity. Thai registration. Lies at Deelock shipyard in Phuket City. Contact for details and pictures. Best offer. Tel: 01-8927847. Email: colonapt@loxinfo.co.th

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Trailerable vessel with a dry weight of 5,200 lbs. LOA: 28' 9", centerline length: 27', beam: 8' 6". Approx weight: 5,200 lbs. Engine: 5.7L Mercruiser (new, 0 hours, under warranty). Fuel capacity: 260. Fresh water: 78 gallons. Registered in Singapore, licensed for 12 people. Price: 1.4 million baht. Tel: 65-9617-5004. Email: michelburon@hotmail.com

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YACHT REQUIRED

Looking for a 35- to 45-foot yacht with crew to rent for 1 day, Jan 4, 2005, for 9 people for a diving trip to Koh Racha Yai. Email: karppinenesa@yahoo.com

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**Patong
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