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TSUNAMI ADVICE

A GUIDE TO COPING: Keep perspective; Understand your emotions.

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Patong 'clear of tsunami debris'



Clean as a whistle: Armed with plastic bags, volunteers ensure there is no litter along the seafloor.

By Sangkhae Leelanapaporn

PATONG: Debris left in the wake of the tsunami has now been cleared from the streets of Patong and dumped in a disused tin mine, Phunsak Naksena, Chief Administration Officer of Patong Municipality, told the Gazette on January 10.

"We have dumped all construction debris into a privately-owned tin mine," said K. Phunsak. "Most car owners have already contacted their insurance companies to handle the disposal of their cars, and some vehicles have been cut up and sold for scrap. We decided not to burn any of the debris because no one had any idea what was in it."

Patong Municipality was due to meet with representatives of the Phuket branch of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) on January 12 to discuss how the resort will progress in the medium and long term.

"This is our opportunity to clear the illegal buildings along the beach, and now we are waiting for the TAT's plan for what Patong should be like," said K. Phunsak.

K. Phunsak added that he believes Patong's water supply should be safe, as most homes are supplied from Bangwad Dam, far from the tsunami damage. He conceded, however, that many people are now drinking only bottled water.

One sign that Patong is getting back to normal would be the re-appearance of beach chairs and loungers on the beach, but the beach chairs will not return, said K. Phunsak, until the municipality has received instructions from the Ministry of Interior on how the beach area should be zoned.

"In my opinion, the only beach chairs the ministry should allow on the beach are those made of plastic. I believe that a number of people died during the tsunami because they were hit by wooden beach chairs.

"Best of all, though, would be if there weren't any sunbeds at all, if people used just cushions and beach umbrellas."

Foreign states relaxing warnings

By Gazette Staff

PHUKET: Foreign governments have been relaxing their warnings against traveling to Phuket, although the change is by no means universal, and all government websites visited by the Gazette are still recommending that their nationals avoid Phi Phi and Khao Lak.

The French government was one of the first to take Phuket off the pariah list.

Last week, the website was already advising readers that while much of Thailand's west coast was hit by the tsunami, the damage varied from place to place.

It said: "The island of Phi Phi and the area of Khao Lak were ravaged but, in contrast, on the island of Phuket, damage was very localized and limited to certain beaches.

"Daily life continues in a normal manner across most of the island. Many hotels, restaurants, dive centers, etc are working as usual. The situation is the same in Krabi.

"There is no greater risk of infectious diseases than normal. Travel to the area is therefore perfectly possible."

At the time of going to press, however, the US continued to warn against travel to Phuket, in a travel advisory issued on December 26 that has not been updated since.

It said: "A series of tsunami waves ... caused great loss of life and destruction to buildings and infrastructure in the popular resort areas of Phuket, Phi Phi Island, Krabi, and other smaller islands in that vicinity.

Continued on page 2

IN BRIEF

Call for donations to rebuild schools

PHUKET: Those interested in making donations for rebuilding Baan Kamala and Baan Kalim Schools, both of which were badly damaged in the tsunami, can do so using the bank account information below.

The first account, the Phuket Educational Area Relief Fund, will be administered by officials from the local branch of the Education Ministry, which will allocate the funds:

Bank: Krung Thai Bank; Branch: Phuket; Account name: Phuket Educational Area Relief Fund; Account No: 805-002293-5; Swift code: KTDTHB

Donors to this account are asked to contact K. Premjit via email to pwangmuang@yahoo.com or Fax to 076-214066 or 076-214553, or by calling Tel: 076-211591 (ext 30), after transferring funds into the account.

The second account will be administered directly by the teachers at Baan Kamala School. The account details are:

Bank: Krung Thai Bank; Branch: Patong; Account name: Kamala School Donations; Account number: 837-0-00808-9; Swift code: KTDTHB.

AirAsia cancels flights

PHUKET: AirAsia canceled its direct Phuket-Singapore flights from January 5, due to lack of demand following the tsunami disaster of December 26.

The Singapore route was launched with promotional fares of 1,200 baht exactly two months earlier.

Call for F1 race support

PHUKET: Phuket Chamber of Commerce Chairman Pamuke Archariyachai has called for the government to commit 50 million baht in sponsorship for the F1 powerboat race in Phuket, as a way to attract tourists back to the island.

At a meeting on January 6, held to discuss ways to revive the tourism industry in the six provinces affected by the tsunami, he said, "The government should [provide a] 50-million-baht budget for this event."

Seafood safe to eat, says health chief

By Sangkhae Leelanapaporn

PHUKET: The island's health chief has confirmed that seafood supplies are safe to eat, though he has also reminded people not to eat raw seafood.

Dr Wanchai Sattayawutthipong, Chief of the Phuket Provincial Health Office, told the *Gazette* on January 11 that every kind of meat should be well cooked before being served. Such precautions apply at all times, not just now, he said.

"I think it will take a while [before people start eating fish again]. It's similar to the situation with chicken flu; we stressed that people could eat chicken safely if it was cooked, but they didn't [eat it]," Dr. Wanchai added.

Benjawan Tampanuwat, owner of a fleet of deep-sea fishing vessels operating out of Phuket and Ranong, admitted that there is currently a slump in seafood sales because people worry that fish may have eaten corpses washed out to sea by the tsunami.

"It's a mis perception," she said. "Most of the fish are caught in the open ocean, far from the shore, while most of the bodies that were in the sea have already floated back to shore."

She added that she did not believe the cost of seafood would rise.

Sinthi Daengsakul, Chief of the Phuket Provincial Fishery Office, told the *Gazette* that some 1,200 boats based in Phuket were

damaged, of which 1,000 were fishing boats.

"We are collecting damage reports from them now and will present the results to the provincial authorities for them to approve aid grants," K. Sinthi added.

"There may be some upward pressure on the price of seafood while the boats are being repaired, but I don't think that will last long," he added.

He noted that many people are not eating fish at present but agreed with K. Benjawan that the risks inherent in eating fish are no greater now than at any time in the past.

"Most [carnivorous] fish would not eat corpses," he said. "They would rather eat each other."

No sign of disease outbreaks

PHUKET: The chief of the Phuket Provincial Health Office (PPHO) has confirmed that there have been no reports of epidemic diseases on the island.

However, he did warn people to take precautions with drinking water.

In particular, Dr Wanchai Sattayawutthipong warned people in coastal areas affected by the December 26 tsunami to refrain from drinking well water, in order to prevent the spread of diseases.

Dr Wanchai said that contaminated drinking water is his single greatest concern.

"I want to warn people in those areas to drink boiled water only," he said.

The PPHO earlier distributed a notice issued by the Department of Disease Control on December 29, warning that diarrhea, cholera, influenza, conjunctivitis, malaria and other diseases could spread in affected areas if precautions were not taken.

Kamala was the area in Phuket worst affected by the tsunami in terms of water supply. See report on facing page.

— Siripansa Somboon



Workers were kept busy fumigating parts of Khao Lak with insecticide in a drive to prevent outbreaks of diseases such as malaria.

— Photo by Kanittha Thanthanasap

Gay Festival postponed until April

PATONG: The Phuket Gay Festival, originally scheduled to take place in February, has been postponed until April.

An announcement on the organizer's website said, "The general feeling of the Gay Festival

organizers ... was that respect for the consequences of the tsunami was by far the most important issue, [along with] allowing Patong area residents ... time to recover both emotionally and physically from the disaster."

Governments begin to relax travel warnings

From page 1

"There have been severe disruptions to normal services in these areas, including hotels and telephone services. As a result, the Department of State urges that American citizens avoid all non-emergency travel to those areas."

Australia, too, continued to warn its nationals against travel to Phuket. An advisory, dated December 30 and unchanged by January 11, read: "Australians should avoid travel to the west coast and islands off the west coast of Thailand including Phuket, and to the southern region in general (Ranong Province and all provinces south)."

"In addition to health concerns, infrastructure, tourist and public services are severely disrupted. Phuket Airport is operating and Australians concerned for their welfare are encouraged to leave by commercial flights."

The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) indulged in an odd bureaucratic shuffle, warning travelers initially against "all but essential" travel to Phuket, then saying the island was safe, then warning again against travel to the island before finally relenting on January 9, stating, "We no longer advise against travel to Phuket and Krabi."

"We advise against all but essential travel to [the] most badly affected areas, which include ... Khao Lak and ... Phi Phi. In other places, including Phuket island, some hotels and other facilities remain in good order."

On January 11, Sweden — which lost thousands of citizens to the tsunami — relaxed its advice to its nationals about traveling to affected areas.

A spokesman for the Swedish Embassy in Bangkok said the embassy was not advising Swedes to avoid Phuket, but instead was telling travelers to be aware of the risks of visiting Phi Phi and Khao Lak.

Many travel firms and their insurers base decisions on government travel advisories, resulting in a direct economic impact on places labeled as no-go areas.



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Fixing Kamala water 'will take 2 months'

KAMALA: Local authority staff have begun distributing water to residents of Kamala whose supplies have been rendered undrinkable after being contaminated by the tsunami.

Kamala Tambon Administration Organization (*OrBorTor*) Chairman Jaran Sararak told the *Gazette* that the *OrBorTor* had arranged for water to be delivered to villagers in Moo 3, where the existing water supply had been disrupted.

He said he hoped that water pipes

would be repaired and the supply fully restored within two months.

Around 20% of Kamala's water supply has been polluted, said K. Jaran.

He added, "We haven't found any cases of disease yet, though I recommend that people drink soft drinks or boil their water before use."

Kathu District Chief Kanthee Silapa told the *Gazette* that the water problem had affected around 200 families in Kamala Moo 3, but that he hoped some homes

would have a clean water supply within five days.

He added that anyone who needs more fresh water should contact the Kathu District Office.

In Patong, which is served by Phuket Provincial Water Works, the municipality is distributing free water to householders.

The Chief Administrative Officer of Patong Municipality, Phunsak Naksena, said the water was potable, but householders were reluctant to drink it because it

was brackish. He added that, as far he was aware, no cases of water-borne disease have been reported.

Sayan Wareearoonrod, the manager of the Phuket Provincial Water Works (PWW), told the *Gazette* that the tsunami caused damage to PWW water pipes totaling around 1.2 million baht.

He said the company was working hard to fix these pipes, and he expected repairs to be completed within a week.

— Siripansa Somboon

B75m budget for homeless victims

PHUKET: The central government has budgeted 75 million baht to construct new homes for some 4,000 families left homeless in the tsunami-hit provinces.

Speaking at a press conference at the Governor's Office on January 5, Interior Minister Bhokin Bhalakula said the aid will come from the Prime Minister's Office, the Finance Ministry and private donations.

K. Bhokin said there had been a video conference with government ministers in Bangkok at noon that day to discuss the issue of long-term housing for the victims, who will be given temporary shelter in camps until new homes can be built for them by the government.

He said the maximum the government would spend on any of these new homes would be 100,000 baht. (75 million baht spread across 4,000 homes averages out at a much more modest 18,750 baht per home.)

The government is already working on setting up temporary shelters, he said.

He noted that most of the homes destroyed in Phuket had been on private land, but added that homes built on state land could be rebuilt.

However, ruined structures on state land that had not been used as residences could not be rebuilt, he added.

He said a survey put the total number of destroyed homes in Phuket at 449 – 205 in Muang District, 115 in Kathu and 129 in Thalang.

He also estimated the number of damaged fishing vessels at about 500.

K. Bhokin said wide-scale searches for the missing were winding down, but added that the government would continue searches in specific areas when requested to do so by local people.

— Sangkhae Leelanaporn

FantaSea closes 'temporarily'

KAMALA: The Phuket FantaSea tourist attraction closed on January 8 for 10 days, because of the tsunami.

Managing Director Pin Keewkacha said the Kamala-based attraction had sustained damage totaling 60 to 70 million baht, and had lost between 150 million and 200 million baht in revenue because the number of visitors had slumped to almost zero.

As a result, the manage-

ment decided to close FantaSea for 10 days.

"We've had something like 15 visitors a day since the tsunami; in the past we would have 3,000 to 6,000," said K. Phin.

"After the tsunami, the tour agencies canceled their reservations until February. This is the high season, but still we can't get people here."

He called on the government to do more to persuade tourists to return to Phuket.

Some of dead 'may never be identified'

By Kamol Pirat
& Dhirarat Boonkongsan

PHUKET: British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw on January 7 said that identification of tsunami victims may take months and, in some cases, identification may never be possible.

Mr Straw was speaking during a visit to Phuket, where he met tsunami survivors and relatives of some of the thousands killed by the tsunami.

He said the tsunami had claimed the lives of at least 49 Britons in Thailand, with a further 391 still missing.

He added that had spoken with British forensic experts who had helped identify victims of the bombing of PanAm flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988, and of the 2002 Bali bombing, and that they had stressed the difficulty of identifying the thousands of tsunami victims in Thailand.

He said, "There are many hundreds of dead in the mortuary areas. It is impossible to tell the country of origin of most of those poor people..."

"Some victims may never, ever be identified and my heart goes out to all those who face this terrible and, I fear, continuing ordeal... [of not having the death of a loved one confirmed]."

"The agony of long uncertainty for many families, and the scale of the effort still required, is totally daunting."

British forensic experts



British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw described the task of identifying thousands of dead as "totally daunting".

have joined colleagues from 29 other countries in the attempt to identify as many of the dead as possible. At the same time, the Thai government is to send DNA samples from 2,500 corpses to China for analysis.

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who escorted Mr Straw on his visit to Phuket, said DNA samples would be taken

from unidentified bodies, which would have microchips implanted to aid identification later.

The Prime Minister told the press conference at Phuket Provincial Hall that "good preparations" were being made to improve Patong and Kamala.

"The recovery is going well, better than I expected," he said.

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Visitors can look forward to strolling along a wider sidewalk while enjoying a more open view of the beach in the "new" Patong, says Santichai Euachongprasit, the Deputy Governor for Tourism Products at the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT).

"The TAT draft plan," said K. Santichai, "is to ensure that shops and other structures which stood between the beach and the road, especially the ones built illegally, do not return, and to improve the frontages of the remaining shops."

"The sidewalk on the shop side of the beach road will be widened to three meters, and the electricity cables will be relaid underground, while the lifeguard center and police service center will be placed on the beach."

Some of the least attractive features of the pre-tsunami beach, according to some, were beach umbrellas and beds – around 6,000 or so, offered for rent by 55 different operators.

The Director of Public Works for Patong Municipality, Suwat Boonchanawiwat, said the municipality intends to start collecting fees from the operators, who are, after all, making money from a public amenity.

In the past, the only official fee paid by the operators was 3,000 baht a year for garbage collection, and even then not all the operators paid it.

Phuket may be down,

The recent tsunami tragedy is an event uniquely shocking in the history of Thailand, leaving some people speculating whether tourism in the region will ever recover.

Currently, many beaches in the six southern provinces along the Andaman Sea coast are empty.

At Patong, dubbed "the cash register of Phuket", the beach now has much fewer beach chairs, colorful umbrellas, hawkers and jet-skis that were such a feature before December 26, 2004.

The stalls and shops on the beachfront road are gone or deserted, and where once motorists vied with rental cars for a space on the beachfront, parking is no longer a problem.

But the blue sea and white sand are the same as before, and it is hoped that their charm will persuade tourists to return.

From devastation has come opportunity: government officers are currently drawing up plans to give Patong, and Phuket's worst-hit beach, Kamala, whole new looks.

And even the survivors of Phi Phi and Khao Lak, where the tsunami claimed thousands of lives, are looking toward the good that can be wrought from the tragedy, as the *Gazette's* Gategaio Phetsawang and Dhirarat Boonkongsan report.

However, Patong Municipality does not have the authority to carry out these changes, said K. Suwat – there will first have to be a public hearing organized by the provincial government.

Cars were another major problem in Patong, but Kathu Police Station superintendent Pol Col Teeraphol Thipjaroen told the *Gazette* that, at a meeting on January 3 between Patong Mu-

nicipality and Kathu Police, it was decided to develop and enforce the municipality's one-way system, as well as create more parking spaces.

Col Teeraphol added that Patong should be served by an efficient public transport system, as this would encourage people to leave their cars at home.

Of all the beaches on Phuket, Kamala was worst affected. "About 621 million baht of in-



At Kamala, the worst-hit part of Phuket, volunteers and local villagers work together to restore the beachfront community.

frastructure and housing was lost to the tsunami," said Bamrung Pimolratanan, Head of the Engineers' Division of Kamala Tambon Administration Organization.

The reconstruction plans drawn up by the Office of Tourist Development, commissioned by the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, include tidying up the beach and building a walkway, said K. Bamrung.

There are no plans to replace the beachfront restaurants which, according to K. Bamrung, directly contravened Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment regulations.

Said K. Bamrung, "The idea is to allow a panoramic view of the beach and have more space for tourists."

"I think this area should be covered by new laws which define this as a risk area, and wor-



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but it is by no means out

thy of special consideration when it comes to planning laws. If we don't have better regulation, nothing will change."

Even on devastated Phi Phi Don people are looking to the future.

"The first priority is to improve Phi Phi; it was messy because of the rapid growth of tourism," said Anake Jewwuthipong, the Chief of Krabi City Planning Office.

"Not all of Phi Phi was wrecked. About 70% of the accommodation survived. Beachfront resorts and hotels have gone because they were small structures located too close to the beach, such as at Ton Sai Bay, but that's not happened in Cape Tong and Loh Dalam Bay.

"Phi Phi will be declared a 'significant tourism zone', which means that tourism will feature heavily in the plans for restoration and improvement."

He continued, "Infrastructure will be important. We'll put in a better power system, maybe with underground cables; we want to put in a water supply, and the Marine Department of the Ministry of Transport is working on a draft plan for a new pier."

The cost of restoring and improving other parts of Krabi, including the most popular tourist destinations of Ao Nang, Koh Lanta, Baan Nong Talay and Sri Boaya Island, has been put at 20 billion baht.

There will be a public hearing about the plans "in a few months" according to K. Anake, after which work can begin in earnest. "We will have to ensure that there are controls on the stability and security of buildings," he added.

The Phang Nga coastline was worst hit by the tsunami. Almost all tourist facilities have been swept away by the water, and Khao Lak, which was just emerging as a high-end destination, was severely hit.

Around 90% of the 7,000



If the Tourism Authority of Thailand gets its way, Patong Beach (pictured here before the tsunami) will not only be restored to its former glory, but improved with fewer beach chairs. The town will also have underground power cables and a three-meter-wide sidewalk along the beach road.

hotel rooms in Phang Nga sustained serious damage, according to Suwalai Pinpradab, Phuket TAT office Director. She said it could be the end of this year at the earliest – and possibly as far into the future as 2007 – before things are anything like back to normal. Rebuilding will cost an estimated 10 billion baht.

"It is too early to talk in detail about the future of Phang Nga and Khao Lak, because there are many things to take care of first, such as peoples' lives, and arranging loans for rebuilding and renovating the destroyed hotels, and finding employment for the staff," K. Suwalai added.

"However, we do intend to make the most of the opportunity to stop unregulated construction, which has impinged on the beaches. There are many resorts and hotels built on land they should not be occupying.

"Khao Lak will be much improved in a few years, and this will be something we can be proud of."

In the immediate aftermath of the tsunami, groups of engineers surveyed the damaged areas, mainly in Phang Nga.

Their suggestions – unveiled by Chadap Padmasuta, the President of the Bangkok-based Council of Engineers – include reviews of city planning laws in the six Andaman provinces hit by the tsunami, and calls for local planning officers to enforce laws banning the construction of any permanent building within 100 meters of beaches.

While long-term planning is important, a more immediate concern for those who work in the tourism industry in areas less badly affected by the tsunami, is that tourists will cancel their vacations, thereby depriving them

of the income that would make a valuable contribution to the rebuilding effort.

Several governments have issued travel advisories recommending that their nationals avoid tsunami-hit areas, Phuket included.

Suparerk Soorangura, the president of the Association of Thai Travel Agents, said the priority was to spread the message that, while Phi Phi and Khao Lak have suffered serious damage, 80% of Phuket has been unaffected by the tsunami, and it is still safe to come here.

For the future, though, K. Suparerk has a vision of what this region could be like, if the government makes the most of the opportunity presented by the tsunami.

"The beaches of Phuket, Phang Nga and Krabi are very beautiful, world-class destina-

tions, but the management in the past was not good enough," he said.

"People have been allowed to do as they wished, and this has had a detrimental effect on the beaches. Regulating the beaches doesn't necessarily mean that existing businesspeople will lose out. In fact, they may end up better off, and the benefits may be shared with the rest of the country as well."

He continued, "We should create world-class scenery for tourists who come here, and not look solely at things like beer bars, discotheques and pubs.

"Tourists also want calm, clean beaches, where they can soak up the Thai lifestyle.

"In Patong, for example, I think that if we can make the beachfront road into a pedestrian mall, Patong Beach will be more beautiful. The renovation should not be aimed at restoring what was there before; it should be better organized.

"We should publicize it around the world that we aren't just recovering but that we're improving."

But while it is all right for bureaucrats, planners, engineers and the like to say what they believe the future should hold, what are the thoughts of the people who were most directly affected by the tsunami, people like hotelier Amarit Siripornjuthakun?

"The tsunami swept away practically everything I had," said K. Amarit, his voice thick with emotion. "But I will keep fighting, I am not giving up. I intend to have my resort ready to receive tourists in February."

He continued, "This disaster was not as bad as, say, the terrorist bombing in Bali. People understand that it was a natural disaster, and that we can avert [future] loss of life by having a proper early-warning system.

"And they will return, very soon, depending on how quickly we can recover what was lost."

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Finding the time

By Andy Johnstone

It isn't all news gathering, deadlines and green editors' visors working for a newspaper. Just occasionally, we are freed from bondage and get to enjoy ourselves.

The *Gazette* staff needed a jolly before Christmas, and our fun and games came in the shapely package of *Chom Tawan*, a gleaming-white, 40-foot Riviera cruiser.

And how timely. Little did we know that a week later the island's population – us included – would be stretched to breaking point, either through work or worry, or both.

After the deluge, it was with some trepidation that I phoned Gus Overman, General Manager of Tawan Cruises. Were he and his staff okay? The boats? Yacht Haven Marina, where the boats are moored? The answers were all in the affirmative.

Of all the myriad ways to indulge oneself in and around

Phuket, boats are among the most enjoyable. For those of us without our own floating gin palaces, the choices are simple: stand on the wharf and sigh as the beauties go past, or charter a vessel.

Chartering conjures up images of adventure and there was more than a frisson of excitement as we approached *Chom Tawan* and boarded her. Before we were underway, Gus gave a safety briefing as we enjoyed refreshments in *Chom Tawan's* roomy, air-conditioned cabin. We concluded that all was shipshape and Bristol fashion.

Chom Tawan's twin engines push out a "modest" 550hp apiece, rapidly accelerating the boat to its cruising speed of more than 30 knots.

But it isn't just about speed. Touring the islands aboard *Chom Tawan* is to be in the lap of luxury. Being on deck, with the wind and sun on our faces, caused inane grinning all round. The first of a few bottles of wine was opened. This was the life.



For those who don't have their own floating gin palaces, a day aboard *Chom Tawan* could be the best way to relax on the bay.

One can simply indulge in sybaritic idleness aboard *Chom Tawan* and get a great suntan. The Hemingways out there can strap themselves into the fishing chair and take advantage of the frankly priapic trolling poles to try their hand at game fishing. That, however, seemed too much like hard work, so we worked on our tans.

A few of us boarded the boat's dinghy and ventured off to Koh Hong to explore a *hong*, one of the many limestone caves for which Phang Nga Bay is famous. Those who remained on board relaxed and sipped our wine, wav-

ing regally at the crammed cattle-boats that occasionally ploughed past, their skippers on tight deadlines. Not us; we had all the time in the world.

Chom Tawan can accommodate 12 passengers for day trips or five to seven for overnight excursions; she has two double cabins as well as the main cabin. Her skipper knows all the best (read: "unknown") spots, and the hostess can provide anything from a light sandwich lunch – including smoked salmon bagels and foccacia caprese – to antipasti mezze or a barbecue.

We eventually headed back to Yacht Haven, basking in the late afternoon sun, making idle chit-chat and well, just being there and enjoying the moment.

Phuket is rapidly picking up the pieces and rebuilding. Paradise was not lost on December 26, 2004; indeed, we may have just found it again.

Tawan Cruises operates two luxury vessels: Chom Tawan and Tarn Tawan. For more information contact Gus Overman at Tel: 076-239710 or 01-8943234; Email: sales@tawancruises.com



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Krabi, Phang Nga given protected status

The Natural Resources and Environment Ministry will declare the tsunami-hit provinces of Krabi and Phang Nga "environmentally-protected areas", giving the Ministry more power to regulate rebuilding.

"Our ministry is planning to issue the declaration soon," said Natural Resources and Environment Minister Suwit Khunkitti, adding that Khao Lak and the Phi Phi Islands would take around 18 months to rehabilitate.

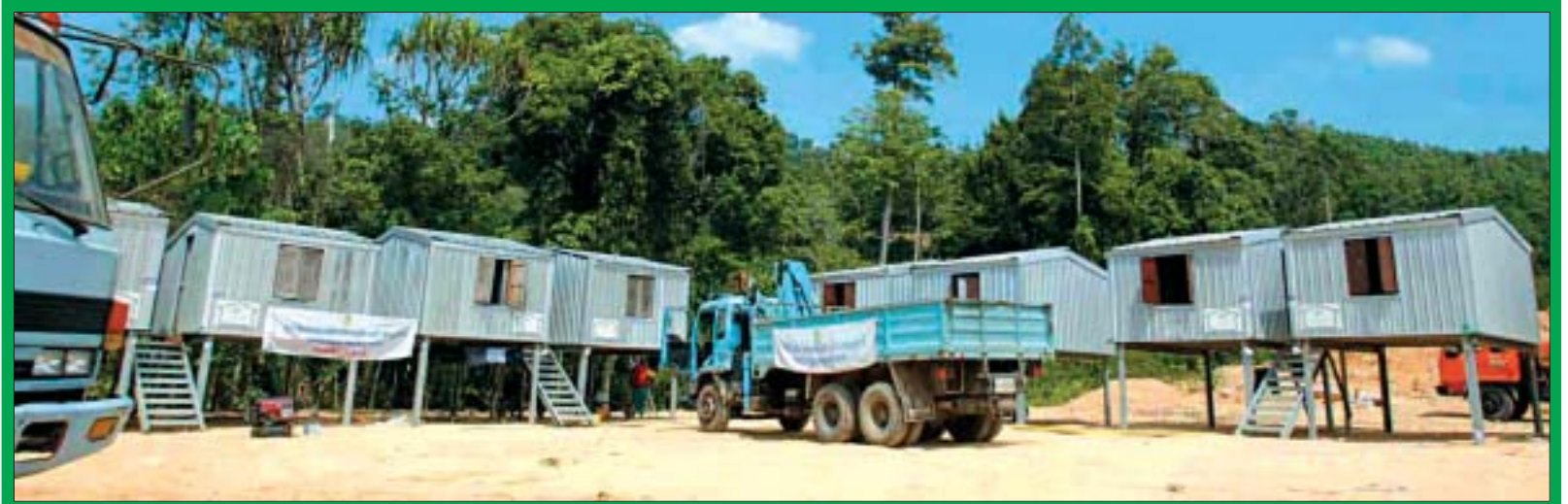
The status of "environmentally-protected area" will entitle the ministry to lay down key regulations, including how far away from beaches and up to what height construction should be allowed.

Deputy Prime Minister Chaturon Chaisang, who chaired a meeting of all relevant agencies on how to rehabilitate the tsunami-ravaged areas, said a committee had already been set up to supervise rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts.

K. Chaturon said he would chair the committee while K. Suwit would be its deputy chairman. "We will oversee the rehabilitation of natural resources, tourism, agriculture, fisheries and communities," he said.

He added that the most urgent tasks were to clean up beaches, provide drinking water sources and set up sewage and garbage-collection systems.

The Natural Resources and Environment Ministry, the Interior Ministry and the Royal Thai Navy had been assigned the task of accomplishing these objectives, K. Chaturon added.



ROYAL RESCUE: Prefabricated houses were erected in Phang Nga's devastated Takua Pa District just one week after the area was hit by the December 26 tsunami. The aluminum structures were donated by HRH Princess Bajrakitiyabah's Friends in Need Volunteers Foundation.

Orphan debtors: Some of those orphaned by the tsunami are having to shoulder the debt for items their parents bought on instalments, said Deputy Permanent Secretary for Justice Thongthong Jantharangsu, who heads the committee providing legal assistance for people affected by the tsunami.

K. Thongthong said a survey by his panel found that many orphans had inherited the debts of their deceased parents, mostly for motorcycles that were destroyed in the disaster.

He said the Justice Ministry would represent them in negotiations with finance companies and try to help them get out of debt.

Law Society of Thailand Vice-President Danai Anantiyo said debtors who bought houses, cars or motorcycles on finance need not worry, however.

Debtors had been legally freed from their debt, he said, because the unavoidable disaster had caused them to be unable to repay. He said the law centered on the leased items, and now those items had been destroyed by the disaster.

Painting damage feared: The Culture Ministry fears ancient cave paintings in Phang Nga and Krabi may have been damaged after the tsunami devastated the area, said Khemachat Thepchai, head archaeologist of the Fine Arts Department.

The so-called Viking Cave on Phi Phi Lei Island contains what some believe are ancient paintings of Viking long boats, while another cave has paintings estimated to be more than 2,000 years old.

"Officials will be sent to examine the caves soon to see if

the paintings have been affected. If any damage is found, we will discuss restoration efforts with the department's Director General," K. Khemachat said.

He said most of the 20 or so archaeological sites in the six southern provinces remained intact, as they are located on high ground or inland.

Outsourcing: In a sudden policy reversal, the Public Health Ministry said it would let China conduct DNA testing to identify some 2,500 tsunami victims.

The decision could humiliate Thailand's 14 forensic medicine institutes, which the ministry formerly said would handle the job on their own.

"One disadvantage of this decision is that we could be viewed as not ready to do the job, even though we are capable," said Professor Thanin

Phuphat, head of Chiang Mai University's Forensic Science Department, which is one of the 14 institutes.

Public Health Minister Sudarat Keyuraphan said the decision was in no way a reflection of the quality of the Thai experts, but a gesture to acknowledge China's offer of help.

She added that Thailand, through its Interior and Public Health ministries, would work closely with China on the genetic testing.

Interior Minister Bhokin Bhalakula said that of the approximately 5,300 people confirmed dead but not yet identified, 1,792 were believed to be Thais.

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

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Rebuilding Khao Lak through a love of life

A little more than two weeks after the tsunami struck, the first rays of hope can be detected in Khao Lak.

It sounds unbelievable, but especially here in Khao Lak – the worst-affected area, which suffered such great loss of life and which saw the beautiful Cape Pakarang wiped out, its very topography changed – the spirit of the people remains unbroken and stronger than ever.

The shock of realizing just how much we have all lost – relatives, friends, neighbors, possession even – begins to fade, and the survivors appear to be calming down, using their heads to find ways to overcome the losses.

Rebuilding lives and businesses will take time, but it is achievable; those whom we have lost will stay in our hearts forever.

Initially, most of my friends and neighbors told me that they would leave Khao Lak and never

return, or perhaps come back after – at the earliest – a few years. This is what shock can do, but it does wear off.

Many of my acquaintances are now trying to tie up the loose ends, scanning the rubble for bits and pieces that might be salvageable. They are also being supported – emotionally and financially – by friends both overseas and in Thailand.

I lost my parents, my two great doggies, my cat, my home and my business. I almost drowned under the roof of a bungalow. I stated that I would visit the beach one final time, never to return.

I said to a friend of mine – who lost his fiancée, unborn child and parents – that I would spit into the sea, curse it and beat it with a stick before heading to somewhere such as the mountains of Canada, where I would never again have to set eyes upon the sea.

I was an enthusiastic diver, underwater photographer and all-



ANDAMAN COASTING

By Franky Gun



RESURRECTION FROM THE RUBBLE: Two weeks after the tsunami devastated Khao Lak and its neighboring beaches, trucks continued hauling away debris and rubble, and local residents began rebuilding their lives.

round sea-lover before, so I hope that this gives the reader some idea of how it can feel to go through such a physical and emotional nightmare.

Some two weeks on, I realize that it was neither the ocean's – nor anybody's – fault. Disaster can strike anywhere, and no one is 100% safe from its reach. Along with other survivors, I will stay here and try to find faith in life itself and in living by the sea.

More reports of positive news are coming from divers who visited the nearby Similan Islands a few days after the tsunami hit.

Many feared the worst, but it appears that this beautiful dive destination suffered only minor damage. The marine life in about 80% of the dive sites has been

reported as fully intact. The remaining 20% suffered only minor damage.

Most of the Phuket-based live-aboards continue to operate according to schedule, with divers relieved to see the marine habitat in such a good condition.

I love Khao Lak and would give everything to see this area flourish again. I trust that I speak for each and every person in this area when I say that Khao Lak deserves love, care and all of our energy and willpower to rebuild it so that the terrible losses we all suffered were not in vain.

At this point I would like to thank everyone – the medical and rescue teams, friends and family – who helped us during the first two weeks after the tsunami changed our lives forever, for their continued support and

selfless efforts to ease the pain.

A big thank you, hugs and kisses also to the forensic teams who are still trying to help us find and identify the remains of our loved ones. Your continuing great deeds and courage will never be forgotten.

Many tourists who know and love Khao Lak and Thailand in general ask how they can help. Here is the answer: Come back again!

This is the easiest and most effective way to help us all to get through this difficult time. Knowing that tourists will return here, knowing that laughter, fun and happiness will fill the temporary vacuum in Khao Lak, making it again what it was until just a few days ago: the latest-and-greatest tourist destination in southern Thailand.

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Rebuilding



Above: Fishermen in battered Baan Nam Khem rebuild a boat. Getting back to work and providing for their families is a priority. Right: Reconstructing the local school is high on the to-do list for people in Kamala, as is restoring power (below, right). Below: Soi Praisanee in Patong is almost back to normal, as a backhoe removes the last of the rubble.



Right: Monks pick up the pieces at Wat Kamala while, below, the first temporary homes in Baan Bang Muang are almost ready for the thousands of Nam Khem survivors currently living in cramped tented accommodation.





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Maj Pornchai Eua-aree: "One thing I was very impressed with was how everyone pulled together and helped each other out – many tourists even managed to remain happy and smiling."

A shocking

Royal Thai Air Force Major Pornchai Eua-aree, of Saraburi, arrived to take over management of Phuket International Airport less than two weeks before the December 26 tsunami hit. Here he discusses with **Sangkhae Leelanapaporn** how he had to draw on all of his experience to handle the chaos at the airport after the waves hit Phuket – temporarily blocking runways at the airport and disrupting flight traffic – just as there was a rush of people trying to get off the island.

Maj Pornchai Eua-aree started out his career in aviation management after graduating from the Royal Thai Air Force Academy in Bangkok, after which time he went straight to work at Don Muang Airport in Bangkok as an air traffic controller, a job considered by many to be among the most stressful of all occupations.

After proving himself in the control tower, his English-language skills and growing technical expertise gave him a chance to do some flying himself.

"I was given the chance to travel abroad, studying air traffic control procedures at airports in the US states of Texas and Mississippi. After returning, I worked as an air traffic controller in Thailand for six years, before going back to school and getting my MBA from the National Institute of Development Administration," he said.

MBA in hand, he was assigned by Airports of Thailand (AOT) to a wide variety of challenging positions: Revenue Division of AOT's Finance Department in Bangkok; Deputy Direc-



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induction for airport chief

tor of Chiang Mai Airport; Vice-President of Electrical and Mechanical Operations in Bangkok, to name just a few.

"I was also Vice President in charge of Information Technology as the year 2000 approached, which was lucky for me because it gave me a chance to liaise with so many different airlines, protecting against software glitches and ensuring security," he said in reference to the Y2K scare of the time.

With experience in so many aspects of aviation, perhaps it was only natural Maj Pornchai was eventually appointed as Director of Haad Yai International Airport, a position he served in for one year.

"Phuket and Haad Yai Airports are different in many ways, especially the passengers who transit there. In Haad Yai, most of the passengers are business-people who dress as such and usually look quite serious.

"But in Phuket, most passengers are dressed up for holidays and have smiles on their faces," he said.

There weren't many smiling faces on December 26, after the tsunami hit. While the seawater never made it onto the runways, the force of the tsunami sent sand and other debris high into the air. This was blown across the runways, closing them until about 2 pm, and also causing damage to electrical equipment, though this was swiftly repaired.

But because of the ensuing chaos and need to reschedule flights, it wasn't until about 7 pm that flight traffic resumed. Maj Pornchai, who was in Bangkok on the morning the tsunami hit,

was among the first arrivals.

Like just about everyone, the reality of the tsunami damage took Maj Pornchai completely by surprise.

"I was in Bangkok when my staff called to brief me about the earthquake. At first I didn't realize it would cause a tsunami. I never realized just how bad the situation would eventually become," he said.

"Everyone trying to flee the island converged at the airport, and there were many hundreds of people waiting there for flights," he said.

Many of these were traumatized or injured – some lying on corridors. But when the runways were reopened, it wasn't just for departing flights; there were still incoming flights full of tourists, many of whom still had no idea that the island had been hit by a tsunami.

Smiling faces quickly turned to shock and despair when tourists were informed that, in some cases, the hotels they were planning to stay in no longer existed. Chaos reigned, but Maj Pornchai somehow managed to cope.

"Some tourists who just arrived on December 26 still wanted to stay in Phuket, but we had problems trying to find places for them to stay. So we let them stay at the airport and even gave them free meals.

"One thing I was very impressed with was how everyone

pulled together and helped each other out – many tourists even managed to remain happy and smiling.

"I'm very happy with the effort, not only of my staff, but also with all the people who volunteered by driving people out from Phuket City free of charge.

"I have never seen or felt such a great community effort before. There was no arguing, even though everybody was tired and under a lot of stress," he said.

Sadly, the airport is now much quieter than it would normally be in mid-January, traditionally the height of the high season for tourism.

"We had many plans to further develop the airport, such as by lengthening the runways and aprons. Last year we had 4.2 million people come to Phuket through the airport, and this year we had expected that to increase to about 5 million. The government's plan was to develop Phuket into an aviation hub," he said.

The ambitious plan seemed to be working, until the tsunami



One of the crucial tasks of airport personnel was to ensure that international aid, in this case in the form of a search-and-rescue squad from Taiwan, was on the ground as fast as possible.

hit, yet Maj Pornchai remains hopeful.

"We were handling close to 40 flights a day when the tsunami hit. But now we expect arrivals to decrease a bit because it will take some time to bring everything back to normal. I think it should take about three months," he said.

Hopefully he will be proven right. The airport is central to Phuket's battered tourism industry and when operating at full capacity it can generate up to a billion baht a year in revenue, mostly from landing fees, Maj Pornchai told the *Gazette*.

He said the airport staff are working hard, like everyone else on the island, to restore confidence abroad.

This involves getting the truth out about the real extent of

the damage in Phuket, which fared far better than Khao Lak and the Phi Phi Islands – not to mention Aceh or Sri Lanka.

"I just got off the phone with the management of Austrian Airlines, and they will send representatives and members of the press at the end of the month to tour the island and help us promote the fact that most of the island is undamaged. I don't think it will take longer than three months for Phuket to recover," he said.

Despite some trying times recently – Maj Pornchai was getting only about three hours' sleep a night during the week after the tsunami hit – he remains optimistic and still loves his work.

"Aviation has been my dream ever since I was a little boy. I have done a wide number of jobs, held many different job titles, and have enjoyed them all," he said.

"I would like to let passengers know that if their flights get delayed, they should try to remain patient. We have to do everything to international standards, and we always have to think of safety first," he said.

And he not only loves his current job, but enjoys living in Phuket.

"Before, I often came to Phuket on business, such as when working on the Y2K problem or bringing clients when I worked in AOT investor relations.

But I also came here for my vacations. I love the sea and traveling around the island, so I am very happy to have the chance to live and work here," he said.

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CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): If your intentions are misunderstood this weekend, take heart from the knowledge that the truth will come to light before the end of the month. Those who are determined to put matters right may only make them worse by attempting clarification. As the week progresses there are signs of a financial surprise to cheer you up. Be careful who you share this news with. The number 3 is lucky on Saturday.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): Aquarians should make an extra effort to keep things in perspective this week. Your outlook is sunny as long as you don't expect an unrealistic amount of cooperation; delegation of tasks must be handled carefully in both personal and work areas. Aries has a probing question that will catch you unaware on Wednesday. Surprise your partner with a romantic gesture this weekend to get an amazing response.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): Finances are well highlighted this week for those Pisceans who are willing to take a legal gamble. Dare to invest in the future and there are golden gains to be had. A difference of opinion on Monday causes a minor rift in your closest personal

relationship. Rebuild ties immediately to stop matters escalating. If you need advice, Sagittarius has the experience necessary. The number 9 is auspicious midweek.

ARIES (March 21-April 20): A situation that you believed to be cut and dried will need further investigation. Arians who are too lazy to investigate further will pay the price further down the road. A trip down memory lane leads to the rediscovering of a special relationship; the journey will begin midweek. At work, forces beyond your control are working to your advantage. The number 4 holds the key to good fortune on Sunday.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): Disappointment is caused by a broken promise on Monday, but a financial break brings compensation on Wednesday. Taureans can expect to receive a bolt from the blue this week when someone suddenly declares romantic feelings. Once you have recovered from the shock, the idea of starting a relationship with this person starts to become attractive. The color burgundy brings artistic inspiration.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): A work task becomes easier when you listen to advice early next

week. You will need to put to one side your negative feelings about the person who is offering to help. The focus remains on work until next weekend; Gemini should remember that the early bird catches the juiciest worms. The best hours for doing business in January are certainly before lunchtime. Romance with Pisces looks promising.

CANCER (June 22-July 23): A tricky situation stirs you up on Monday. Normally placid Cancerians will really have to watch their words carefully, or an influential person could get upset. You may feel that you're walking on eggshells until Wednesday, but the atmosphere mellows after then. Love is in the air this weekend; a hot, steamy spell is forecast for those who dare to take a chance. Wear lime green to sharpen your senses.

LEO (July 24-August 22): You need to make the effort to get out and about this week. Leos who have recently been content to lay low in their lairs are in danger of forgetting what the outside world looks like. A chance comment on Tuesday knocks the wind out of your sails; you will get the opportunity to retaliate subtly before too long. Libra has a useful tip on Wednesday.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): Many Virgoans may be feeling somewhat the worse for wear this week. Without going to any extremes, your body would definitely benefit from a cleansing regime. Try spending some evenings at home in choice company; Sagittarius is angling to get to know you better. Those already in a committed relationship will see their partner in a new light. The color rose pink will encourage a calmer mood.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): You will start dancing to a different tune this week. A romantic obsession will evaporate leaving you wondering what all the fuss was about. Many single Librans will realize that there are more important things in life at this time. Concentrating on work can bring unprecedented benefits, but there is danger of forgetting an important appointment midweek. If you haven't got a diary for 2005 yet, get one now.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): The atmosphere is electric this weekend when Scorpios find themselves attracted to a new acquaintance in a way that may not be entirely appropriate. Refrain from making advances until you understand the situation better. On Tuesday you will get the chance to head off in a new business direction. Whether you are ready or not, this is an opportunity not to be missed. Cancer has some words of wisdom on Thursday.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): Sagittarians who are doubtful about the future need not be overly concerned. Astral forces are working on your behalf although it will be a while before the outcome is clear. In the meantime, try to take life one step at a time and reflect on all that is good and positive. Rather than being a hermit in a cave, spend time with true friends who really understand you.



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A MUTED CELEBRATION

By Gategaeo Phetsawang

In many parts of Phuket, Children's Day was celebrated, albeit in muted fashion, on January 7. Financial assistance has been pouring in from Thailand and all over the world to help rebuild Phuket schools damaged by the December 26 tsunami.

The Education Ministry has already issued 800,000 baht in emergency funding to rebuild four schools damaged by the December 26 tsunami, said Damrong Boonchoti, Director of the Phuket Educational Area Office.

Most of the funding will go toward setting up temporary classrooms and other facilities at the two schools worst hit – Baan Kamala School and Baan Kalim

School. Two other schools suffered only minor damage.

"I expect the Ministry to come through with more funding to help build permanent structures at a later date," said K. Damrong.

"The plight of the primary schools has also drawn concern from the Bureau of the Royal Household, with HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn asking officials to visit damaged schools in both Phuket and Phang Nga," he added.

Since putting out a plea for assistance, the Phuket Educational Area Fund alone has already received some 300,000 baht in private donations to aid in reconstruction.

"Baan Kamala School students are now studying at Kamala

Bay Garden Resort, and will continue to do so until they can return to their own school," he said.

"At Baan Kalim School, temporary buildings have already been set up to serve as classrooms, and the Chinese Taipei Association has notified us of its intention to donate five million baht," he said, adding that some of the funding would go toward buying textbooks and providing accommodation and grants for victims of the tsunami.

On Children's Day, Phuket FantaSea held a special activities day for students of Baan Kamala School and Baan Bangtao School.

The *Gazette* asked the students what they most wanted following the disaster.

Prawit "Bird" Proksakul, an 11-year-old student at Baan Bangtao School, told the *Gazette* that after the waves hit, he found his efforts to place calls on public telephones fruitless.

"I want to have my own mobile phone so I can call all my friends more easily," he said.

Supawadee Uttiya, 12, from Baan Kamala School, said that the only thing she wants is a new doll. She said she and her friends were already enjoying the coloring books and pencils that had been donated to the school.

Sutthima "Sofia" Kuanon, 11, also of Baan Kamala School, told the *Gazette* that she wants her school, and everything else in the area, to go back to the way it was before the wave hit.

"My school was beautiful. There was a green football field, and sometimes my friends and I used to play chairball on the field," she said.

Her schoolmate, Nattakarn "Marita" Somsa 11, said that she wants her teacher back.

"One of my teachers, who taught science, died in the tsunami. She was a kind person," she said sadly.



Left, top and center: Phuket FantaSea laid on special entertainment for children from Kamala and Kalim; Below, from left: little petals at Kajonkietsuksa School; boys get on the water pistol range at FantaSea; Marisa (left) and Sofia wish they could turn the clock back.

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Do Not Drink Tap Water!

Flower show as candidates step up to register for election

By Kamol Pirat

PHUKET: Tsunami or no, the four parliamentary candidates from the two big political parties turned up on January 10 to register their candidacies for the upcoming general election.

With the Democrat Party candidates in blue, their Thai Rak Thai (TRT) opponents in red, all wearing yellow garlands and cheered on by enthusiastic supporters, the atmosphere was reminiscent of the final minutes before a big boxing match – apart from the fact that there was nobody there to tell them, “Keep it a good, clean fight.”

The TRT candidate for District 2 (outside Phuket City), Wisut Santikul, was the first to arrive, followed not long after by incumbents Suwit Sa-Ngiamkul and Chalermkluk Kebsub, Democrat Party members representing District 1 (Phuket City) and District 2, respectively.

They were accompanied by Democrat Party deputy leader Jurin Laksanavisit, indicating the importance the party attaches to holding Phuket, one of its traditional southern strongholds.

Last to arrive was TRT District 1 candidate Dr Sriyada Palimapan, who arrived with new husband Saravuth Shinawatra, nephew of the Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

Below, from left, incumbent Democrat MPs Suwit Sa-Ngiamkul and Chalermkluk Kebsub, and TRT candidate Dr Sriyada Palimapan. Right, the TRT's Wisut Santikul.

Dr Sriyada, a dentist by trade, was trounced by former Democrat Party list member Anchalee Vanich-Thepabutr in the hotly contested battle for the presidency of the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (*OrBorJor*) last March.

She has since changed her name from Yada to Sriyada, to bring good luck, and also married into Thailand's most powerful political family.

This could prove to be a factor in the race, as public approval of PM Thaksin nationwide has soared following his handling of the tsunami disaster.

The head of the Phuket Election Commission (PEC), Dr Prapa Kayee, said five intended polling stations were destroyed by the tsunami, two next to Patong Beach and three at Kamala.

The PEC is incorporating the voter registration lists for those places into those for nearby polling stations, and will inform the electorate as to where they should cast their ballots, she said, adding, “That will not be a problem.”

She did, however, address one potential problem – the use by unscrupulous people of the ID cards of registered voters who have been missing since the tsunami hit.

She urged relatives of the missing to inform her office so that their names can be removed from the rolls.





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KIDS

THE FUN PAGE

FOR ALL

THE FAMILY

Hidden Words

Hidden in the grid below are the names of 30 chemical elements. 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; 25 or more, excellent.

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

Brain Buster!!

Q: Two babies are born on the same day of the same year and have the same mother and father. Yet they are not twins. How do you explain this?

A. They are two of a set of triplets.

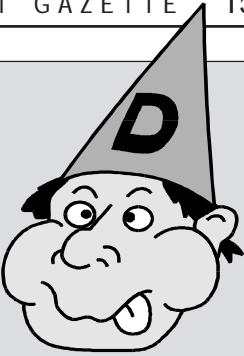
ANSWERS TO MONSTER QUIZ OF JANUARY 1

1. Epsicles; 2. Frank Epperson, who invented popsicles; 3. He was President of Cuba and he fled the country during a coup; 4. Fidel Castro; 5. He was a lawyer; 6. J Edgar Hoover; 7. Her mental arithmetic capability; 8. J D Salinger; 9. 19; 10. None. It is landlocked; 11. A volcanic crater; 12. The Prophet; 13. Khalil Gibran; 14. Just below the neck, it is a V-shaped indentation at the top of the sternum; 15. In Gilf Kebir, Libya; 16. San José; 17. On answering the telephone (it means "Hello"); 18. Roy Lichtenstein; 19. Vaduz; 20. The Little Prince.

Solution to crossword of January 1

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

Get your brain in gear with The Monster Quiz



1. "You milk genie" is an anagram of which pop star's name?

2. Which actor provides the voice for SpongeBob SquarePants in the movie of the same name?

3. Who, in *The Simpsons*, is Mr Burns's right-hand man?

4. US President Nixon ordered what on January 15, 1973?

5. The Tyrannosaurus Rex lived in which geological period?

6. In which computer game would you find Professor Oak?
7. When was the Nintendo Gameboy introduced?

8. What, to some, is known as a SwAK?

9. What is the capital of Namibia?

10. What is a crith?

11. Who wrote the *Jeeves and Wooster* books?

12. What is the term for a person with a keen interest in underground rail and mass-transit systems?

13. Jessica Abel is well known in which field?

14. In which series of
- films does Bib Fortuna appear?

15. Which is the largest bird in the world?

16. How tall can it grow?

17. Who, in 1919, made the first non-stop transatlantic flight?

18. How long did the flight take?

19. What is unusual about C ndor station on the Rio Mulatos-Potos  line in Bolivia?

20. How has Pole Zbigniew Rozanek achieved fame?
- Answers next week

Never a Cross Word!

Across

1. Most distant.
6. Sigmund of psychology.
7. To-do list.
11. Unrestrained merry-making.
12. Too many may spoil the broth.
13. Close with a key.
14. Back of the eye.
18. Passport stamps.
19. Very respectful.

1		2		3			4		5	
						6				
7	8		9		10					
							11			
						14	15		16	17
19										

Down

1. Greek cheese.
2. Asian cereal.
3. A bunch of cows.
4. Tiny monkey.
5. Source of caviar.
8. It may make your car go.
9. One kind of jewelry.
10. Parisian love.
15. Absolutely not odd.
16. Zulu army unit.

17. Gone off without permission.
- Solution next week



Recently I read an article about a champion British stud bull named Picston Shottle, whose semen sells for £35 – 2,600 baht – a shot. Cattle breeders regard this five-year-old purebred Holstein so highly that his services are fully booked till April.

This year he is expected to produce a hefty 200,000 “doses” of semen, which will retail for £7 million (520 million baht). His owners are a bovine-genetics company. They sell bull semen.

What a way to make a living. Picture yourself at a cocktail party. You’re introduced to a beautiful and cultured woman who inquires, “And what do you do?”

“I sell bull semen,” you reply urbane.

From there the evening has nowhere to go but down.

The bull’s owners call him Shottle, which sounds disrespectful to me. I mean, a bull like that deserves to be called, at the very least, Mr Shottle. Possibly even Sir Picston. Better still, Lord Picston.

I’m not familiar with the protocol relating to British nobility, but it seems to me that a bull like that ought to receive a knighthood. If we can have a Sir Mick Jagger and a Sir Elton John, why not a Sir Picston Shottle?

Sadly, the article failed to

One very spunky bull

answer several vital questions. Consider the production capacity of this animal. If his quota is 200,000 “doses” annually, that means he would have to produce 547.9 “doses” a day.

Then there is the question of precisely what amount of semen constitutes a “dose”. Here we intrude on delicate ground, and encounter a veritable minefield of problems of taste and decorum through which I, for fear of the censor’s pen, must tiptoe very carefully.

Assuming that a “dose” consists of the full amount of semen produced in one ejaculation, the bull would be ejaculating 547.9 times a day.

That sets a record for virile behavior that most teenage boys would find hard to beat – although I’m sure many of them would like to try. The thoughtful observer is compelled to inquire: Does Sir Picston have time to do anything else? And where does he get the energy required for such a treadmill of productive activity? Concerned scholars will be relieved to learn that his energy levels are kept up by regular



feedings of sugar beet. He sleeps on a bed of wood shavings surrounded by heat lamps to keep him warm, and his handlers play Mozart to soothe his manly spirit. Stud bulls lead a cushy life.

Now we come to the weighty question of how the semen is extracted.

Alas, the article does not specify. I doubt that the cows are transported to Sir Picston’s residence to be physically inseminated; for then the queues of waiting cows, mooing in amorous anticipation, would be inter-

minable. It is more likely that the semen is extracted, suitably packaged, conveyed to the cows, and implanted by machine in the relevant reproductive organs.

This is not a very romantic scenario, and is likely to cool the ardor of even the most promiscuous cow.

How, though, is the semen extracted? Here again I must be cautious; the censor is ever alert, and I sense the quivering of his stern pen. Always it is poised to strike, fiercely and without remorse, shattering the most hal-

lowed canons of rhetoric and inflicting devastation on once-perfect prose.

I suspect that the company employs highly-trained personnel whom we, for the sake of convenience, may call sperm extractors. No doubt these skilled professionals remove the semen by using methods far too complex and sophisticated to be explained in language comprehensible to ordinary laymen.

In the interests of transparency, though, I must reveal a terrible secret. Rumor has it that an interviewer from the BBC once asked one of these experts how he extracted the semen. The man replied, “I use me ’and.” But this rumor is unsubstantiated, and quite likely spurious.

How is Sir Picston stimulated to a state of arousal? One naturally assumes that sperm extractors have access to methods undreamed of by common folk. Videos of sexy cows in erotic poses and various stages of undress are an obvious possibility.

Unfortunately, none of this has any relevance to Thailand. The government is sure to ban the import of Sir Picston’s love-juice in its zeal to protect the racial purity of Thai cows.

S Tsow can be flamed at stsow@yahoo.com, except when he’s stuffing himself with sugar beets and listening to Mozart.



Double take on the big mango

When you pick up *Bangkok Inside Out* (Equinox, Jakarta and Singapore, 2004, 175pp), you think, “Oh no, not another guidebook to Bangkok.” But authors Daniel Ziv and Guy Sharett disabuse you of that notion with the very first words of their introduction:

“This book isn’t really a ‘guide’ to Bangkok. There’s no map or sections on where to stay and how to get around. Instead, it’s a street-level snapshot of a 21st century Southeast Asian city bursting at the seams but inching courageously forward; a snapshot of ordinary people in their urban landscape; of culture and pop culture. Our approach is raw and cheeky and irreverent at times, but we think of it as honest and real.”



Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt

What they present are 30 topics arranged alphabetically – including amulets, beauty contests, Chinatown, durian, gambling, Khaosan Rd, Khlong Toey, Lumpini Park, MBK, *Muay Thai*, *Phra Arthit*, Sky Train, soi dogs, street food, traffic, urban elephants, *ya bah* (methamphetamine) – and illustrated by striking color photos, a few by the authors but most by Croatian photographer Sasa Kralj.

It’s a strikingly original approach to this bewildering behemoth of a city and the two young writers pull it off brilliantly.

Their short takes are an irresistible mixture of humor, insight and pathos.

In *Chao Isaan*, the authors profile two sisters from the Northeast, construction workers who earn just 160 baht a day:

“One of the sisters, Lung, says it’s common to see people in their migrant community crying at night, missing their kids and homes. Indeed, a favourite phrase in Isaan folk songs is *kit teung baan* (‘to miss home’) – like a giant pall of yearning rising out from taxis, food stalls, hotels and brothels, looming over this alien city before drifting slowly toward the Northeast.”

They comically describe the Thai addiction to comic books, many of which are translated versions from the Japanese originals, though others are locally produced.

“One original Thai creation is *Taleung* (‘cheeky’), a series peppered with sexual innuendos and puns in succinct Bangkokian lingo ... We won’t comment on the size of women’s breasts (OK

– they are *huge*), but they speak volumes about men and wishful thinking. That’s alright, though: In frenetic Bangkok, comics serve as magic capsules that whisk people from a hot bus ride in a huge traffic jam to a world where anything is possible.”

The authors also delve into corners of the Thai psyche to discuss such concepts as *sanuk*, *tam boon*, chic, retro, hi-so/low-so, farang, *look-krueng*, gay and *katoey*.

Their section on the sounds of Bangkok is practically a prose poem, moving from the sounds of the Chao Phya express boats to Thai boxing bouts to *look thung* music wafting out of taxis.

“In central Bangkok, blind musicians chant slow, haunting sounds that crackle from a tenuously rigged amplifier ... At street level, food stall commotion provides its own distinctive soundtrack: deep-fried locusts crackling in a wok; a hawker frantically pounding chili paste in a mortar; the noisy chatter of diners; and the mad clatter of

dirty dishes being washed. This could only be Bangkok.”

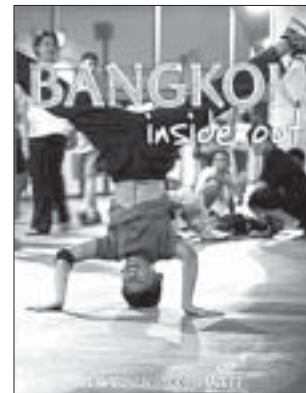
The two writers are obviously in love with the city. While they appreciate “the danger of over-romanticizing the subject, or worse, being condescending”, they succeed in striking a happy

balance in their honest enthusiasm for the myriad people and places that make up the City of Angels.

“Bangkok is a chaotic place, and this book probably reflects a bit of that madness,” they conclude. “But lately it’s also a city that’s constantly

bettering itself. It’s bouncing back from recession, basic services have improved, and it’s becoming an increasingly cosmopolitan place – full of enthusiasm and creative energy. So for all the quips, satires and dirt we dish out on these pages, we hope our love for this amazing city still shines through.”

It certainly does. This is the perfect book to give to first-time visitors to Bangkok, but also to long-time residents. There’s plenty in here that I never knew.



In the aftermath of the tsunami, a number of volunteers have reported receiving criticism for helping animals at a time when there is so much human suffering about.

I'd like to point out that many of the animal volunteers here were among the first to assist the human casualties of the tsunami.

One lost her life going to the aid of victims, others spent days and nights helping at the hospitals and other relief centers. Some went to Khao Lak to assist in the recovery and wrapping of bodies, others became counselors.

Only now that the relief effort has been stepped up and there is no shortage of volunteers have they turned their attention back to the area's animals.

It is worth remembering that animals feel pain and suffer, just as we do, and it is almost always humans who make animals suffer, and not the other way round.

This was brought home to me today when I had to dart a dog that, having survived the carnage on Patong Beach and being still in shock, had had its tail cut off, presumably just for the hell of it. The dog is now recovering at the Phuket Animal Hospital.

Yet in spite of how cruelly people behave towards animals – not to mention toward other humans – we are supposed to believe that humans are superior to other animals.

If people want to fancy themselves as being of greater moral worth than the other creatures of this planet, we should behave better than they do, not worse.

So what is the situation regarding Phuket's animals, in the weeks after the tsunami?

Many dogs and cats, stray or owned, did perish on the beaches, but many others are running around aimlessly and when they do return "home", they find they have lost their food source and often cannot find fresh drinking water either.

We are seeing many dogs that formerly lived on the beaches and were taken care of by local restaurants wandering along the roads around where they used to live.

In addition, many volunteers who previously fed dogs and cats in the island's temples and the alleys of Patong with leftovers from hotel and restaurant kitchens, have lost this source of food because many of these establishments are not operating.

The controversial dog pound has little food left, and I understand it is unlikely to get any more food from the government, which – and I fully understand this – has other things on its mind right now.

Being cynical, this may be an easy way for the authorities to get out of a problem they created, without losing face. So, as



Battered and emaciated, this survivor is now being looked after.

ANIMALS ALSO SUFFER

predicted, it will fall on the charities to fill the void.

In addition, more and more dogs are being dumped, as owners who lost everything move away and leave their animals behind. Concerned local villagers brought 13 surviving owned dogs from the island of Koh Phra Tong, off Khao Lak, where only 87 people out of a population of nearly 400 survived.

These animals are currently in cages at the pound,

but I have been advised that no more dogs will be accepted there.

The Soi Dog Foundation is leading the relief effort, working closely with international agencies. Humane Society International, Wildlife Friends for Thailand (WFT), and Animals Asia have all sent representatives and

are giving practical assistance to the charity.

Other organizations are offering help from afar, while pet food companies are trucking down supplies of pet food. Veterinary supplies are being flown over from South Africa, which is also offering veterinary help.

Edwin Wiek and his assistants from WFT have been assessing the impact on the area's wildlife, and were actively involved in the rescue of two dolphins stranded in a lagoon at Khao Lak.

Long-term, there is a desperate need for volunteers who are prepared to offer whatever help they can, whether it be a regular contribution of dog food or some of their time to help feed and treat sick animals.

Anybody who can offer any help at all should contact the Soi Dog Foundation on 09-8959965 or 07-0508688.

Leone Cosens: Sad loss for the community

This page would not be complete without highlighting the greatest loss to the animal welfare community of Phuket caused by the untimely death of Leone Cosens (pictured right), who died helping others.

When I first arrived on Phuket, Dr Suchon of the Phuket Animal Hospital told me Leone was a "living legend".

A resident of 11 years, she was known to probably every person and every animal in the south of the island, and I never met anybody who had a bad word to say about her.

A founder member of Phuket Animal Welfare Society (PAWS), she was in recent times

an inspiration to and a dedicated member of the Soi Dog Foundation.

Most people will be unaware of the hundreds of animals she regularly cared for; she bought the food herself and employed three full-time helpers to distribute it, yet she was also a people person, much loved by many.

My wife, along with countless others, considered Leone her best friend. When my wife was in hospital, never a day went by when she didn't call, even when her own husband, Tim, had a severe stroke.

The Soi Dog Foundation is determined that Leone's work will continue as a living memorial to her.



(bold listings are Thai-flagged boats)

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51 Ft 2002	Sealine T31 Volvo Penta, 2 x 675 Hp	US\$	695,000
45 Ft 1990	Carver 45 Caterpillar, 2 x 205 Hp	THB	6,500,000
38 Ft 2000	Flybridge Watertaxi Yamaha, 2 x 200 Hp Reduced to	THB	2,000,000
36 Ft 1994	Island Gypsy Europa Perkins, 2 x 225 Hp	US\$	169,000
29 Ft NEW	Prowler Motor Cat Honda 4 stroke, 2 x 50 Hp	THB	POA
21 Ft 1997	Searay Laguna 21 Mariner 200 Hp (50 hrs)	THB	1,200,000

Sail

63 Ft 1993	Wooden Penisi Ketch Izuu, 115 Hp	Reduced to Euro	100,000
60 Ft 1982	Penisi Ketch Hino 175 Hp	US\$	51,500
60 Ft 1998	Penisi Sloop Yanmar 50 Hp	US\$	45,000
48 Ft 1998	X yacht 482, race-fitted Yanmar 75 Hp	US\$	375,000
42 Ft 1981	Vagabond 42 Ford Lehman, 65 Hp	US\$	105,000
33 Ft 1984	Reinke, Alu cutter Volvo, 24 Hp	THB	1,350,000
33 Ft 1986	Nauticat 33 Ford 90 Hp	THB	3,500,000
30 Ft 1988	Jeanneau Sunlight 30 Yanmar 18 Hp	US\$	40,000

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Care not just today

The response from Thailand and the world in general to the suffering caused by the tsunami nearly three weeks ago has been magnificent.

Governments have made promises and international aid agencies have sprung into action, but it has been ordinary people who have reacted fastest and who have probably made the greatest difference in helping survivors to adjust to the violent upheaval in their lives.

There are countless stories of generous and selfless actions by Thais and foreigners alike, by people who, in many cases, were suffering loss themselves.

People pitched in to help recover and wrap the bodies of the dead, to comfort the grieving, to raise funds and deliver aid wherever it was needed. Offers of help poured in from overseas – offers of funds, clothing, medicine; offers to get on the first available plane to Thailand and help on the ground.

Millions of dollars poured into charity accounts. Locally, groups of friends pooled resources to send truckloads of sarongs, cooking stoves or milk for babies, or simply went to supermarkets and loaded up their cars with toys, flip-flops and toiletries – anything they could think of that might bring comfort and make survivors feel more human – and headed for the worst-hit places.

The response has been outstanding, and is undoubtedly thoroughly appreciated by those currently contemplating their shattered lives.

But here a note of caution must be sounded. When the TV networks fly out after the next big story, when those whose lives were not touched directly by the tsunami go back to business as usual, there is a risk that the most unfortunate victims will gradually be forgotten.

A disaster such as this requires not only an immediate response, but also a long-term one. People who lost everything will need consistent help in rebuilding their lives and regaining their dignity.

For example, in Baan Nam Khem, just south of Takua Pa Town, where the loss of life and destruction of property was truly horrific, survivors are already telling well-meaning helpers that, yes, they do need immediate help with food and shelter. But what they really need are boats so that they can once again set out to sea and feed themselves.

As the headlines fade, the *Gazette* urges those with good hearts not to forget those who suffered, and to make a point of helping them, not just over the next few months but in the coming year, or two, or however long it takes.

– The Editor

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I think I can see ripples of a normal life on the horizon.



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.

Support and views continue to come in

I linked to your paper days ago and have been emailing all of the major stores and imploring them to not only raise cash and link to the Red Cross but also to box up these needed items immediately and send them where needed. Maybe it will work.

I want to do anything to help and think that they could do more to save lives (baby formula etc) and shoe stores are next on my list.

Thanks for keeping me posted daily in English.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Thailand and the other countries affected.

Julie Dowen
New England

I have read about the plight of 15-year-old Bua Changtongkom who has lost her home and father in the tsunami disaster and is now staying at the women's refuge in Phuket.

I understand that she has expressed an interest in moving to the West in order to continue her education and hopes to become an engineer.

I live in Oxford, UK. Is there any way at all I can help her? Please help me find out who to contact.

Annie Relph

I am a US citizen in Texas and I just wanted to extend my best wishes for hope and answered prayers during your moment of hardship.

Be brave; the world is coming to your aid. We send our love and strength.

Patrick

I live in France and want to do something to help so I am organizing charity lunches and an auction of promises.

I also have shoebox full of paracetamol, aspirin and other such medicines but nobody in France seems to be shipping relief supplies out, just money. Can I post direct to you?

Sam Bottomley

I have flown for Northwest Airlines for 27 years. I am bringing a few friends to the Phuket area the first 10 days of March to help in anyway possible

Do you have specific idea as to what we should bring and where we should help out?

I have been on vacation to to Thailand many times and love the country dearly. Please tell me what I can do.

My husband wrote the famous song *Wind Beneath My Wings* and he would be happy to perform it if and when you wish.

Laurie Norton

I am an emergency services professional working for the fire service in Australia, with experience in emergency management.

As an individual I am available to volunteer to assist with any activities associated with the tsunami.

Please contact me if there is anything I can do to help, either from Australia or in Thailand. I am available at short notice and possess a current passport.

Ron Shamir
Victoria Country Fire
Authority,
Australia

I am writing to ask for some advice or direction. I am a member of Southampton University Air Squadron and also currently a student at Southampton University in England

Each year in our summer vacation, we have a summer expedition, which usually consists of about two weeks when we will travel to another country to carry out adventure training of different kinds.

Recently, a few members, with the backing of our squadron leader, have suggested that we give up our expedition, and instead give our help to the tsunami crisis.

We were wondering if you could do with some help during the summer in helping to rebuild the infrastructure of some of the places in and around Patong.

If so, we would really like to help out in whatever way we can.

We have a representative in charge of our expeditions while I am in charge of charities. We were thinking of sending about 40 people out for a couple of weeks during the summer months.

We have money set aside for our expeds, and the rest we hope to raise to pay for our flights and accommodation and such like.

Just a few ideas, but I was hoping that you could let me know if this kind of thing is feasible and if it would actually be of any help to you.

Thank you for your time and I hope you can give us some advice.

Genevieve Wade

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.

Yesterday I visited and swam at Surin Beach, smack in the middle of the west coast of Phuket.

It is one of my favourite beaches – always very clean and with clear water like a swimming pool – and I found it crowded with visitors and swimmers.

I was thinking I would have at least a couple of weeks without the long line of beach chairs all set out for the tourists, but they were all back.

The bars and restaurants at the back of the beach were also back in action. It looks as if nothing happened here, but would anyone believe this from your reporting?

What I ask is to give us here a break from disaster and do a story on survival and recovery.

John Lloyd
Phuket

In the midst of terrible tragedy I see the *Gazette* is now advocating violence as a solution to looting (Editorial, *Gazette*, January 8).

Haven't enough people died? Haven't the survivors seen enough horror to last them a lifetime? Do we really need to see more bodies piled up?

I suppose your election editorial will be an endorsement of the Thaksin administration and their efficiency in dealing with 2,500 drug suspects.

I will look for a full report in a future edition that explains and justifies this barbaric position.

Rick Muir
New York

I would like to commend the *Phuket Gazette* for your coverage of this disaster, your email alerts service, the vital information in helping to locate missing people and also for the other unfortunate people affected by the tsunami.

I for one – and I am sure there are many, many more people that will agree with me – feel that the *Gazette* has, and is providing a valuable service in this hour of need

For the tourists who are afraid to return to Thailand it is not the country or the Thai people who are at fault. It was a freak of nature that might never happen again.

Any new technology in the shape of early-warning systems that will be developed from this event will give plenty of warning for such an eventuality, should it happen again.

Please, tourists, help the Thai people rebuild their economy by returning to and holidaying in a new Phuket

I would like to add my condolences with those of the countless others for the survivors and victims.

Brian Adamson

Your headline article in last week's *Gazette* "Life goes On" is exactly the kind of positive reporting that Phuket needs.

Many investors have categorized the tsunami as a one-off event. I believe that we will make a swift and full recovery.

Stephen O'Brien

I have been impressed by your calm approach to reporting the recent dreadful events – and offer plaudits for it – except until I read "Devastated Khao Lak resembles war zone" on the online *Gazette*, which follows the sad tradition of sensationalistic, tabloid journalism.

Are lurid descriptions of bodies necessary? Everybody knows what happens to bodies in hot climates. Also, your description of the destruction as resembling a "war zone" is, as anyone who has been in one knows (I have: 2 tours Vietnam, 1969 and '70), way off.

Granted, there are military vehicles everywhere, but the difference is that warfare is deliberate and you are under the threat of death yourself.

But the absolute worst, most crass piece of writing must be this, which is taken directly from your site:

"More dead bodies awaiting removal are lined up in rows under a makeshift awning, many with their limbs frozen through rigor mortis in grotesque positions. On several, arms and fingers point skyward as if frozen in a final, terrified plea to God – a plea that went unanswered."

Thailand was, last time I checked, a Buddhist country with minority Muslims and Christians, some of whom, I acknowledge would have been among the dead. However, such maudlin statements are insensitive at the very least.

This nauseating style of writing takes away from the generally excellent content of your online newspaper.

Although some, if not all, responsibility rests with the editor for passing this kind of schmaltz, you should also tell your journalists to stop getting their cues from the likes of Fox News and CNN.

Eric Logen
Chiang Mai

Here in Holland everybody is helping Asia. My family and friends also want to help.

We have stayed at The Beach House in Phuket and we hope the owners and staff survived. Can you give us some information about this hotel?

My parents have an organization to help Romanian children. Teddy bears are sold in Holland, and the money raised is sent Romania. I would like to do similar for Thai children or send the bears to Thailand to be sold.

Is this a good idea, and if so, where should I send the money or the bears?

I know it's a busy time for you there and we wish you all success. We won't forget you.

Jeffrey Blanken

The front page of your latest edition mentions that Thai Airways has staff at Phuket International Airport trained to handle traumatized passengers. I beg to differ.

Shortly after the tsunami, I took three German passengers to the airport to assist in their checkin for their return Thai Air-

ways flights to Munich. All three were victims of the second wave at Kamala Beach. They stayed on in Phuket because of a missing mother and emergency surgical treatment.

They arrived at the Thai check-in counter with injuries blood oozing from a badly-dressed injury. They lined up at the Thai economy-class desk and a THAI Airways staff member on the Thai Royal Orchid Class counter then asked them to come over to her counter for check-in. Just as they started the check-in procedure, a couple with business-class tickets appeared.

Our passengers were then asked to pick-up their heavy bags and again line up back at the economy class queue. We protested. She then agreed to proceed, asking to have all three bags on the scale. We did as requested but she then asked us to remove all the bags again and lift them back on individually. I asked why she was doing this to passengers who were injured and in distress. Her reply? "Here is my name, report me."

I then asked her to call the Duty Manager. She refused and said: "I don't have to. You can talk to me" and "I will call the police". I said "OK, please do, but make sure that you better also call the Duty Manager," to which she replied, "I don't have to".

Thankfully, the Duty Manager arrived and the check-in proceeded as it should have.

I have never encountered such rudeness before on THAI anywhere in the world!

It so happens that these three passengers were frequent visitors to Phuket and when the wave struck, they were swept well over 500 meters inland; one lost her mother right in front of her and her husband was wedged submerged under a tree until he was found six hours later.

They went through the hell of looking at 143 unidentified bodies at Patong Hospital to find the mother, who was cremated at Wat Kathu. The survivors also went through emergency surgery and follow-up surgical procedures at two hospitals.

They just wanted to get home but their last impression and goodbye (if any) was of and from the Thai Airways check-in staff.

Thank you, THAI Airways for further traumatizing already traumatized passengers.

Of course they will tell their stories – including their experience with THAI in Phuket – for years to come.

Shame on you, the THAI check-in assistant, for your lack of respect, courtesy and professional composure; you looked old and experienced enough to handle situations like this, but I guess I was wrong; you simply lacked the good manners and maturity to handle your customers who have come a long way to enjoy Thailand, and who left your country traumatized physically and emotionally only to receive a final send-off by you.

Dr Michael Pohl MBBS
Singapore

I am very sad about the deaths and financial loss, not only to your island but also to everywhere hit.

I have been coming to Patong for a few years now, and am due to visit again early February, but have been considering canceling my holiday. I have been following your paper to see when my chosen resort will open.

Please report any news.

Mark

We, the employees of the Rhein-Mosel Fachklinik hospital in Andernach, Germany, one of the six hospitals of the Landeskrankenhaus Group, wish to help on a hospital-to-hospital basis.

It is very important for us that our donation will reach a hospital and all involved in this catastrophe so that injured Thais will be able to get professional help.

We would like to emphasize that it is important to us to help Thai patients first and foremost.

As it is the area around Khao Lak that has been hit hardest by the tsunami, it is our wish that our help is sent directly from our hospital to one of the hospitals in this area.

At present, we are still collecting donations.

We would like to send our donation as soon as possible and ask you to suggest a suitably-worthy hospital in the Khao Lak area.

One of our employees was helped in Takua Pa Hospital, therefore could you please provide the name of a contact person, an email address or another means of contacting this or a nearby hospital?

Employees of Rhein-Mosel-Fachklinik Andernach

I am 59, a nurse, and free to travel. I would like to volunteer myself and my skills to the disaster area but am coming up against stumbling blocks – my age being one – with all volunteer agencies.

I am, however, fit and healthy, and have years of valuable experience to offer. I am prepared to do anything, even non-medical work if that's what is required.

I watched someone from your paper on Sky News and was impressed with what your paper is doing. Please let me do my bit, too.

Val Goll

We have heard that the school at Kamala was completely destroyed and a group of us in Ireland and New Zealand who have had many happy holidays at Kamala would like to do something specific to help restore this institution.

Would it be possible for the *Gazette* – or anyone else – to help me contact someone in authority in Phuket to coordinate this project?

We would be extremely grateful if you could help us

Peter Little

I am a 39-year-old woman from Australia and am able to come over to help immediately if some organization or hospital would like my help.

I could help any group that does not have anyone to help them directly in recovering

Please let me know where I could be of use and I will be there.

Victoria Larielle

My heart goes out to your beautiful region and its people. I have been to Phuket five times and feel sick to the stomach when I see the news that is coming back to us in Australia.

Could you let me know how I can donate some money directly to your region? It may not be a fortune, but it might help people attempt to recover.

I am organizing a collection of clothing in my home town, and would like to send it to the people that need it in your region. Could you advise me of the best way that I could do this so that it makes it to your local people? It would be much appreciated by us here.

I would also like to know the status of the Patong Merlin – where I have stayed and been made to feel very much at home – and its staff, who are so nice. Once again my heart goes out to the people of Patong and surrounding areas.

Deon Coombes
Australia

We are two people from Denmark who love your country and the Thai people, and we hope you can help us to get in contact with the local people on Phuket Island that have lost relatives – especially children – shops, businesses and so on.

We were on Phuket that day when the big wave hit the beach, and we consider ourselves lucky to have survived.

The Thais helped us with all information, food and water as we spent a whole day and night on the hill behind Kata Beach.

We have started a website – www.helpphuket.dk – which is also in English.

We will try to make the site well known, our hope being that we can raise a lot of money to be donated to the people of Phuket.

We will be back in Phuket at the end of February, when we will donate money to the people.

Kenn Esbensen and
Helle Mikkelsen

Please accept my deepest sympathies to you all in this horrible catastrophe.

People involved and media in Sweden have all expressed their gratitude to the Thai people that have helped so much.

Maybe I can give something in return. I have in my possession two pallets of baby meals (3,888 jars) that I can offer you for free.

Are you able to use them? I can have them shipped to Phuket as soon as you need them.

Paul de Susini
Catering Manager Novair

Online resources for coping with disaster

I was surprised to discover how few people – computer-savvy people (okay, geeks, if you must) – knew about the National Earthquake Information Center (NEIC) I referred to in my last column.

The NEIC is only one of hundreds of locations on the Internet that can help you deal with any real or potential (or imagined!) problem. This week, I figured I'd take you through some of the sites that could come in useful, some day.

According to Charles McCreery, director of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's center in Honolulu, major tsunamis occur in Asia only once every 700 years. I figure there's a greater chance of seeing green aliens dancing the boogaloo on Soi Bangla than seeing another big tsunami in Phuket. But we still need to be prepared for disasters, both natural and not-so-natural.

Most people, most of the time, rely on the international news sources – primarily CNN, BBC, and other major television networks.

In the wired population of Phuket, we also rely on the *Gazette* website. International news services cover the top layer of news, only occasionally diving down into the details. Frequently, you need information that's either more timely, more detailed, or (ahem) more accurate.

That's where the Web comes in. While you can't believe everything you read on the Internet, many Web sites offer information that can save your tail.

Take earthquakes, for example. The Pacific Rim is particularly prone to earthquakes, but we get them in Asia, too. Many of the post-tsunami panics in Phuket had their roots in rumors about earthquakes.

As I noted last week, there is never any reason to wonder about earthquakes. The NEIC (neic.usgs.gov/neis/bulletin/), in spite of its name, continuously updates information about earthquakes all over the world.

The information is posted automatically. NEIC sensors pick up a quake on the Tibetan pla-



Innovative interface: The Joint Typhoon Warning Center website.

teau, say, and within seconds details appear on the Web site; no human intervention required. If you want to know about quakes – and we've been averaging about 10 a day here in Asia since December 26 – full information lies a couple of clicks away.

Tsunamis are another kettle of fish altogether: a large earthquake near or under the water will always trigger a tsunami, but it's very difficult to figure out where the tsunami will hit, and how much destruction it will bring.

Pacific rim countries spend enormous amounts of money on tsunami warning systems. The US maintains two major Tsunami Warning Centers, and both have excellent, up-to-the-minute websites, at www.prh.noaa.gov/ptwc and at wcawtc.arh.noaa.gov/message.shtml.

The latter even offers news updates via email. Unfortunately, neither claims to cover areas outside the Pacific rim – a shortcoming that is currently being addressed at many levels.

What about hurricanes and typhoons? The Joint Typhoon Warning Center, www.npmoc.navy.mil/jtwc.html, lists tropical depressions and other bad weather

patterns all over the world, using an innovative interface (shown above).

If you see a weather system that concerns you, click on it and details appear at the bottom of the page. The US Department of Defense at Pearl Harbor runs JTWC as a public service to provide accurate, timely information about potentially dangerous weather all over the world.

Communicable diseases aren't nearly as easy to track, and the information I've found on the Web rarely appears before general news reports. The Centers for Disease Control, which does yeoman's work in so many areas, falls flat with its dated, disorganized Web site.

For disease information, go to the World Health Organization's news page, www.who.int/en – but don't expect much more than you see in the news.

When a disaster strikes, there's a crying need for a single source of reliable information – lists of victims; survivors; accurate and timely information about the extent of the problem; public announcements; requests for supplies; coordinating centers to match volunteers with worthwhile tasks; and much more.

In Phuket, without a reliable focal point, we all scrambled to do the best we could, and the result, I think, speaks for itself. I would call it "organized chaos", though "organized" maybe overstates the case.

How can we be prepared for the next emergency unless we have a single source of reliable information – and the means to get at the information?

– Woody Leonhard
woody@khunwoody.com

Khao Lak businesses face long uphill battle

KHAO LAK: Uli and Duryia Aeschelmann are lucky – very lucky. Their Khao Lak Restaurant was not touched by the tsunami. Their house is intact and they lost no one.

The Aeschelmanns have always made a point of remaining open during Khao Lak's low season and they have reopened now, serving pizzas and pasta, after a two-week cleaning-up exercise.

But luck, in Khao Lak, is a relative matter. Stand by the road through Khao Lak Center in the evening and count the cars going through.

There is perhaps one every two minutes, and passing through is what most of them do. Few stop at any of the restaurants, bars and tailor shops that have reopened since December 26.

Mr Aeschelmann says that most of the money he made in past years was reinvested in the business.

He has some money put by, perhaps enough to see the family through 12 months "though we won't be buying a new car or anything."

Across the road, Henry's Laguna Tailoring has also survived unscathed. But Henry's new shop in Bang Niang, opened just a couple of months ago, was trashed by the wave and the apartment above was also

wrecked by looters who appear to have taken pleasure in smashing anything they could not carry away with them.

Concerned customers overseas contacted Henry after seeing the disaster on their TVs, and asked him what they could send him.

"I told them, 'I don't need anything like that. I need customers. Tell your friends to come to Khao Lak – and come and see me.' What we need here is customers."

It could be some time, however, before his regulars come back or, indeed, anyone else. The beaches at Khao Lak are as gorgeous as ever, but the resorts fronting on the water, which is most of them, are trashed.

Rebuilding will take months, and that's after the thousands of tons of debris have been removed. In the case of many of the small bungalow-style resorts, of course, there is no one left to contemplate rebuilding. On the main road, many shops, though untouched, remain shuttered.

Mr Aeschelmann notes somberly that many of his regular customers may have fallen victim to the wave. He just doesn't know yet.

How long will it take before business begins to return to normal in Khao Lak? He shrugs. "Who knows?"

Pension crunch is

We start a whole New Year and wonder what 2005 will bring. Personal financial planning is an area that requires, as usual, some forethought.

In many countries it was, in years gone by, common to spend one's working life with very few employers – even perhaps just one – and on retirement to enjoy a company pension, usually supplemented by a government pension.

Personal financial planning to the average person was almost irrelevant, or it meant perhaps owning a house and accumulating savings for a rainy day.

Times have changed and continue to do so, and employers are increasingly reluctant to provide for the retirement needs of their employees.

This is not because they have lost interest in them but because of reality. Companies have become increasingly aware of the huge liabilities they face in trying

to meet pension fund obligations.

Financial directors and CEOs of even very large companies who tried to ignore these facts have had to face the truth since the stock market plunge that started in early 2000.

A number of large companies that are outwardly profitable face pension fund obligations that exceed their market capitalization. The wag who said "General Motors is a pension fund that happens to make motor cars" was not far from the truth.

Companies are increasingly reluctant to carry on with pension funds that give guaranteed benefits to retired employees. They simply cannot afford

to do so. In many cases it would eventually lead to bankruptcy.

Governments of first-world nations face the same dilemma. Birth rates are falling, people are living longer and, for a large number of countries, economic growth at healthy levels seems to be unattainable or unsustainable. Health-care costs borne by gov-

China is another example of a country where people will have to be responsible for their own financial futures. The one-child policy introduced some decades ago is going to have enormous implications in the decades ahead.

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Banks prepare for massive hike in loans applications

PHUKET: Banks and lending institutions are expecting a huge swell in applications for loans, while insurance companies have already paid out millions of baht in compensation as people seek to rebuild their businesses, homes and lives after the tsunami.

"I believe almost everyone hit by the tsunami will ask their bank for a loan," said Somchai Pikulthong, President of the Banks of Phuket Association.

K. Somchai said the Bank of Thailand had already agreed to put up 30 billion baht to provide soft loans to tsunami victims in the six provinces hit by the wave, at 2% interest rather than the standard 5.75%.

And, he added, banks are also preparing to restructure existing loans, to give borrowers more time to repay them.

K. Somchai said the banks had not received many requests for loans as yet, but, he added, "I think investors whose businesses were damaged are still in the process of assessing their businesses

and establishing what they need. They will be contacting the financial institutions soon."

Insurance companies have been doing their best to help customers caught up in the tsunami, said Pojanee Thanawaranij, Director-General of the Department of Insurance.

She said, "The Thai Insurance Association and Damage Appraisers Insurance Association have been visiting customers to advise them on payments, and they have set up a 24-hour call center as well."

K. Pajanee said she knew that Muang Thai Life Assurance alone has already paid out about a million baht to the families of four people who had been killed, and she said big businesses with earthquake cover would be recompensed, although it may take 12 to 24 months for the payments to come through.

Phuket is home to offices of some three dozen property insurance companies and 18 life insurance companies.



While banks prepare for a huge increase in loans applications, at Phuket Pawnshop, on Komarapaj Rd in Phuket City, about 70% of the shop's 200 customers a day have been reclaiming possessions.

Watchara Kasamanont, Chief of the Phuket Provincial Insurance Office, has calculated that local insurance companies will pay out about 900 million baht.

He said, "10 million baht has already been paid out for 16 people killed by the tsunami and 14 million baht for businesses."

"Already, 22 insurance companies have received, between them, 330 claims from businesspeople, worth a total of around 364 million baht, but I expect the total to rise, maybe to

900 million baht. Some businesses haven't yet put in claims, so the figure is rising all the time."

The tsunami seems to have prompted people to reclaim their goods from at least one island pawnshop. Uthit Phatchimpetch, manager of Phuket Pawnshop, said around 70% of his shop's 200 customers per day were reclaiming their possessions.

"I'm not sure whether they are taking back their belongings – especially gold – to sell them, or to keep them close to them. But people are still coming here

to deposit stuff and borrow money."

At present, said K. Uthit, around one borrower in five is a tsunami survivor.

He said, "I think it's possible that people are getting money from the government and are taking back their belongings, but within seven months, a lot of stuff will be returned here, because people will be wanting money again."

In Patong, though, the pawnshop has so far experienced a downturn in trade.

Manager Chalerm Koompanied told the *Gazette*, "Usually, we would have about 50 people coming to the pawnshop, mostly to reclaim their belongings, but right now we're getting only about 35 customers a day, and most of them are bar girls."

"I think people took back their stuff, such as gold, because they wanted to take it back home over the long weekend, to show to their families, and they've delayed returning to Phuket because of the tsunami."

"But I think more people will be using the service again within a couple of weeks."

coming as firms and states take stock

ernments are also spiraling upward due to both a longer average life expectancy and the expense of new technology.

The Scandinavian and continental European first-world countries are in the worst position. There is very little private provision for pension funds and social welfare departments are paying pensions out of current tax and other receipts.

Their politicians are acutely aware of the problem but see no possible means of solving it without losing power. They are simply hoping the problem will disappear or, more commonly, postponing dealing with the problem until the buck is passed to a future politician.

Families in the past were larger than today and taking care of the aged was a normal responsibility of children. This is still the case in many societies; poverty keeping families together is the age-old social security system.

It may be possible to be young, poor and happy but I very much doubt that it is possible to be old, poor and happy. The only solution is to be responsible on an individual basis for one's own future financial welfare. Surveys



MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson

have shown that only a tiny percentage of people have any idea of the amount of capital required for a retirement that is free of financial hardship.

US President George W. Bush has stated that his administration is investigating ways to change the whole social security system. He is seeking ways to alter the emphasis from the present system whereby the government provides every retiree with monthly payments, to one where the individual is responsible for providing his own safety net.

President Bush is acutely aware that he cannot entirely remove the guaranteed payments, but he is trying to remove the government's huge contingent liability.

Regardless of which political party is running the US, it still has to live with the same mathematics and demographics. The US, compared with most of the first world, is still in an enviable

position. Vast amounts of capital are already invested by individuals in retirement accounts. It is common to hear that American savings are low – but they are not as low as is commonly thought.

For some strange reason, the US Department of Commerce completely ignores savings held in the stock market. I would imagine this is because of the potential for loss in this type of investment. Literally trillions of dollars in individual savings are completely ignored.

This type of accounting would have little effect if applied to countries such as Germany, Austria, France or Italy, where the average person invests in bank deposits and bonds, and where shareholders are a small minority. Applied to the US, however,

it alters the statistics substantially and gives a distorted impression of the true savings level.

China is another example of a country where people will have to be responsible for their own financial futures. The one-child policy introduced some decades ago is going to have enormous implications in the decades ahead.

It will be absolutely impossible for the central government to offer reasonable pensions. Fortunately for China, crunch time is still some way off.

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

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Volunteers must keep things in perspective

There are many volunteers helping others deal with the current crisis, the volunteers themselves may be vulnerable to unexpected stress.

Here is advice on keeping everything in perspective and not becoming depressed or overstressed.

- There is enormous need here, but try to ensure that you take on a manageable amount of work – no individual can solve all the problems created by this crisis.

- Ensure that you have access to personal

support, either from a colleague, a supportive friend or family member. It is important to “debrief” after you have listened to a number of traumatic stories.

- Try to maintain your daily routines for mealtimes and sleeping – this is important for reducing your levels of stress.

- Take regular breaks from your volunteer work – even five minutes away from those in need can have a powerful restorative effect.

Take a day off after four or five days of intensive work.

- Recognize the symptoms of stress – irritability, tearfulness, fatigue, loss of concentration – and take a break.

Bear in mind that the effects of this crisis will continue for some time – you can help most if you pace yourself and maintain your reserves of energy.

- Also bear in mind that “every little helps” – don’t allow the vastness of the crisis to undermine your sense of achievement for the work you have carried out.

Finally, a couple of notes on dealing with victims:

- If you are not involved in the practical side of recovery efforts, explain this at the outset to the person you are helping, in order to avoid disappointment. It is not helpful to raise expectations that may not be fulfilled.

- Don’t attempt to go too deeply into the feelings of those affected as this can increase the risk of the development of traumatic symptoms.

Focus on listening, empathizing and containing. A feeling of being understood and heard is the greatest gift to someone who is grieving and shocked.

Understanding your emotions

You are in the process of recovering from a natural disaster. An experience like this is sudden and overwhelming.

There may be no visible sign of injury, but there is nonetheless a serious emotional toll. Understanding normal reactions to abnormal events can aid you in coping effectively with your feelings, thoughts and behavior and help you along the path to recovery.

What happens to people after a traumatic event? Shock and denial are typical responses to disasters and other kinds of trauma, especially shortly after the event. Both shock and denial are normal protective reactions.

Shock is a sudden and often intense disturbance of your emotional state that may leave you feeling stunned or dazed. Denial involves you not acknowledging that something very stressful has happened, or not experiencing fully the intensity of the event. You may temporarily feel numb or disconnected from life.

As the initial shock subsides, reactions vary from one person to another. The following, however, are normal responses to a traumatic event:

Feelings become intense and sometimes are unpredictable. You may become more irritable than usual, and your mood may change

back and forth dramatically. You might be especially anxious or nervous, or even become depressed.

Thoughts and behavior patterns are affected by the trauma. You might have repeated and vivid memories of the event. These flashbacks may occur for no apparent reason and may lead to physical reactions such as rapid heart beat or sweating. You may find it difficult to concentrate or make decisions, or become more easily confused. Sleep and eating patterns also may be disrupted.

Recurring emotional reactions are common. Anniversaries of the event, such as at one month or one year, as well as reminders the sounds of sirens, can trigger upsetting memories of the traumatic experience. These “triggers” may be accompanied by fears that the stressful event will be repeated.

Interpersonal relationships often become strained. Greater conflict, such as more frequent arguments with family members and colleagues is common. On the other hand, you might become withdrawn and isolated and avoid your usual activities.

Physical symptoms may accompany the extreme stress. For example, headaches, nausea and chest pain may result and may require medical attention. Pre-existing medical conditions may worsen due to the stress.

Feelings of guilt may arise. There are always others worse off than ourselves. But we are still entitled to express our own sadness, fears and anxieties.

How do people respond differently over time? It is important for you to realize that there is not one “standard” pattern of reaction to the extreme stress of traumatic experiences. Some people respond immediately, while others have delayed reactions – sometimes

The Gazette thanks volunteer Carol Marco, a member of the British Embassy team at the emergency center at Phuket Provincial Hall, for the material on this page.

months or even years later. Some have adverse effects for a long period of time, while others recover rather quickly.

Reactions can change over time. Some who have suffered from trauma are energized initially by the event to help them with the challenge of coping, only to become discouraged or depressed later.

A number of factors tend to affect the length of time required for recovery, including:

- The degree of intensity and loss. Events that last longer and pose a greater threat, and where loss of life or substantial loss of property is involved, often take longer to resolve.

- A person’s general ability to cope with emotionally challenging situations. Individuals who have handled other difficult, stressful circumstances well may find it easier to cope with the trauma.

- Other stressful events preceding the traumatic experience. Individuals faced with other emotionally challenging situations, such as serious health problems or family-related difficulties, may have more intense reactions to the new stressful event and need more time to recover.

How can I help myself and my family? There are a number of steps you can take to help restore emotional well being and a sense of control following a disaster or other traumatic experience, including the following:

- Give yourself time to heal.

Anticipate that this will be a difficult time in your life. Allow yourself to mourn the losses you have experienced. Try to be patient with changes in your emotional state.

- Ask for support from people who care about you and who will listen and empathize with your situation. But keep in mind that your typical support system may be weakened if those who are close to you also have experienced or witnessed the trauma.

- Communicate your experience in whatever ways feel comfortable to you, by talking with close family, friends or colleagues; keeping a journal or writing about your experience in detail, just for yourself, or to share.

- Healthy behavior will enhance your ability to cope with stress. Eat balanced meals and get plenty of rest. If you experience ongoing difficulties with sleep, you may be able to find some relief through relaxation techniques. Avoid alcohol and drugs.

- Establish or re-establish routines such as eating meals at regular times and following an exercise program. Take some time off from the demands of daily life by pursuing hobbies or other enjoyable activities.

- Avoid major life decisions such as switching careers or jobs if possible because these activities tend to be highly stressful.

How do I take care of children’s special needs? The intense anxiety and fear that often follow a disaster or other traumatic event can be especially troubling for children. Some may regress and demonstrate younger behaviors, such as thumb sucking or bed wetting. Children may be more prone to nightmares and fear of sleeping alone. Performance in school may suffer.

Other changes in behavior patterns may include throwing tantrums more often, or withdrawing and becoming more solitary.

There are several things parents and others who care for children can do to help alleviate the emotional consequences of trauma, including the following:

- Spend more time with children and let them be more dependent on you during the months following the trauma – for example, allowing your child to cling to you more often than usual. Physical

affection is very comforting to traumatized children.

- Let them play to help relieve tension. Younger children in particular may find it easier to share their ideas and feelings about the event through non-verbal activities such as drawing. Devising a play or acting out events with dolls can also be helpful.

- Encourage older children to speak with you, and with one another, about their thoughts and feelings. This helps reduce their confusion and anxiety related to the trauma. Respond to questions in terms they can comprehend. Reassure them repeatedly that you care about them and that you understand their fears and concerns.

- Keep regular schedules for activities such as eating, playing and going to bed, to help restore a sense of security and normality.

What if I need professional help? Some people are able to cope effectively with the emotional and physical demands brought about by a natural disaster or other traumatic experience by using their own support systems. It is not unusual, however, to find that serious problems persist and continue to interfere with daily living. For example, some may feel overwhelming nervousness or lingering sadness that adversely affects job performance and interpersonal relationships.

Individuals with prolonged reactions that disrupt their daily functioning should consult a trained and experienced mental health professional. Counselors, psychologists and other appropriate mental health providers help educate people about normal responses to extreme stress. These professionals work with individuals affected by trauma to help them find constructive ways of dealing with the emotional impact.

With children, continual and aggressive emotional outbursts, serious problems at school, preoccupation with the traumatic event, continued and extreme withdrawal, and other signs of intense anxiety or emotional difficulties all point to the need for professional assistance.

A qualified mental health professional can help children and their parents understand and deal with thoughts, feelings and behavior that result from trauma.

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The Phuket dive industry has already survived many global challenges – 9/11, Sars, the Bali bomb and bird 'flu. No one, however, can deny that the industry is now facing a huge challenge.

Besides the direct effects of the tsunami, there have also been the indirect detrimental effects of misleading media reports and foreign government travel warnings.

While the island is grieving, it is also necessary to begin the recovery process. Solidarity and unity, and compassion among the dive industry, are more pertinent now than ever before.

Amid all the destruction, there is still some good news to report. Many people are volunteering their time and their services. Many concerned dive operators and divers are doing what they can to contribute.

Contrary to previous reports, the vast majority of dive sites are still flourishing, some having suffered only minor coral damage. Tourists are continuing to do dive courses and dive trips.

The Dive Operators Club of Thailand (DOCT), the Phuket Marine Biological Center (PMBC) and scientists from Chulalongkorn University are also working to protect the industry here.

Just one day after the tsunami, staff from Oceanic dive center, including managing director Mona Fristedt, were cleaning up Kata Beach and many tourists chipped in to help.

Since then, Oceanic has also been sending divers to clean the house reef in Kata and the bay in Karon. They were happy to report that the Kata reef still has healthy corals, marine life and schools of fish, despite sustaining some damage. Kata-based dive companies will continue to remove debris from the ocean.

The damage from misleading media reports and erroneous government advisories may actually be worse than that from the tsunami.

It appears, for example, that some sections of the media continue to confuse Khao Lak with Phuket. Unnecessary obstacles such as this make the tasks at

The greatest challenge



Kata: There have been some unusual additions to the seabed, but the coral is still in fine condition.

hand even harder and stand in the way of the preserving the dive industry here. Such reports will deter tourists from coming to dive in and around Phuket.

The vast majority of both day-trip boats and live-aboards were spared damage. Whether to continue as normal is a delicate decision, but while respecting all those who lost their lives, operators in Phuket and Koh Lanta have decided to continue to support the local community, economy and the dive industry by going back to work.

Operators in Phuket and Koh Lanta continue to operate both day trips and live-aboard trips. The DOCT and dive operators in Koh Lanta have issued press statements about the conditions and why they decided to continue their operations.

Phuket is still a world-class dive destination. Local dive sites, as well as the Similan Islands, Surin Islands and Richelieu

Rock, are still in excellent condition overall. There is undeniably some damage, but only a few dive sites have experienced a large amount of damage.

Rich Neely, tourleader on Oceanic's *Rhapsody*, enthusiastically comments on Thailand's most famous dive site: "Richelieu Rock is in perfect condition, completely untouched."

After speaking to many dive masters in the area, my assessment is as follows:

Local dive spots such as Anemone Reef, Shark Point, Koh Dok Mai and King Cruiser wreck are still in excellent condition and only minimal coral damage was noticed. Racha Noi was also reported as suffering only minimal damage.

Racha Yai suffered damage on the south side but less on the north side, and even Bungalow Bay and Siam Bay are fine.

Ruethaiwan "Noon" Chak-

rutpong, an instructor who was in the Similans when the tsunami hit and continued to dive there for the days afterwards, reported the reactions of her customers.

She said, "The customers were happy. Even though they noticed some damage to some of the dive sites, it didn't affect the dive. She added, "The Similans is still a great place to dive, but we must be more careful and continue to protect it."

At many dive sites the damage was only noticeable to the dive masters familiar with the area. Other dive masters commented that their divers had made no complaints and had enjoyed their post-tsunami dives in the Similan and Surin Islands.

Further south, Hin Daeng and Hin Hunag are virtually unscathed, and the popular Koh Ha, off Koh Lanta, is also in excellent condition.

The marine science department at Chulalongkorn University, in cooperation with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, the PMBC and the Tourism Authority of Thailand,

has been assigned to study the effects of the tsunami on the reef and to develop a suitable recovery plan. They left on January 4 to conduct an official survey of the area.

It is the responsibility and obligation of everyone in the dive industry to get the word out that we are going on with our lives, which includes diving. It is important to spread the truth and try to reverse the damage done by the negative rumors. We must encourage people to come to Phuket. Not only is the dive industry at stake, but the livelihoods of Thai people and foreigners alike.

At times like this everyone needs to support everyone else, for the benefit of all. The diving industry is a major contributor to the economy here in Phuket.

Although nothing can be done to replace the lives lost, the dive community in Phuket and neighboring areas can support the local communities and each other by doing what we can for those who were fortunate enough to survive. We must not give up.

Beneath the SURFACE

By Sylvie Yaffe

CBS denies report was misleading

PHUKET: US TV network CBS has denied that a report aired on its news on the evening of January 3 was misleading in its portrayal of damage to reefs along the Andaman coast.

The denial came in response to a complaint from local dive company boss Jeroen Deknatel, who said that CBS should be "ashamed" of the report, which "paints the wrong picture about the true level of coral damage in the Similans".

However, Barry Petersen, the correspondent who made the report, wrote to the *Gazette*: "We told it as it was shared with us by

the very people who experienced and saw the damage, both before and after, one of whom is a professional dive instructor.

"It is totally untrue that we distorted, in any way, the before and after pictures of the coral reef. We screened this on the boat with the man who shot it. Both he and the dive instructor confirmed that this was exactly the same location.

"We made it very clear to the dive operators when setting up the story that we wanted to show that the wave damaged not just what was on land, but also what was at sea."

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Wine gives pizza that extra pizzazz

I encountered my first great pizza in Rome around 20 years ago. The weather was bitterly cold, I was lost and there was not a taxi in sight. I noticed a pizzeria with a barely perceptible, unlighted sign and nothing else to point to its presence. Hungry and cold, I took a chance.

Inside was a large oven with open flames to warm the room and cook the pizzas. The smell was intoxicating. A local red wine arrived without my having to ask; it was assumed I would want it and, of course, I did. It was delicious, as nameless local wines usually are in Italy.

My pizza was constructed with a razor-thin crust, no sauce but rather a layer of virgin olive oil and a small quantity of chopped tomato, fresh mozzarella and garlic, and topped with a few slices of salami and three pungent basil leaves.

Its freshness and simplicity brought me face to face with all that can be deemed exquisite in Italian gastronomy.

I became a pizza addict from that first great pizza. I bought quarry tile to make my own at home. I talked the local dairy into buying a buffalo to make real mozzarella; I even grew my own tomatoes. I wasn't sure if I consumed pizzas or if they had consumed me.

When I was 17, I was sure beer was just the thing for pizza. If it hadn't been for my relentless metabolism all those carbohydrates might have led me to reconsider wine with pizza as the perfect marriage, and not the extravagance I assumed it must be.



By Steven Roberto

Wine with bread. Wine with cheese. Wine with meats. What could be more obvious than wine with pizza, which is made from all three? Encouraged by this revelation and my slowing metabolism, I began to explore wine with pizza more earnestly.

I concluded there are two basic approaches to wine and pizza. For pizzas with strong cheeses and tomato sauce a fruity, modestly tannic red wine will always delight. And for pizzas highlighting pesto, shellfish or vegetables the acidity of a white wine is required – slightly bitter whites that are not too fruity.

Some personal recommendations

include Syrah and Merlot from Chile, Barbera from Piedmont and just about anything from Chianti, California Zinfandel, and the modern-style reds of Spain.

For whites, I look first to crisp New Zealand sauvignon blanc, tangy Loire Valley Sancerre, and the minerally whites of Friuli or Umbria.

It isn't cold in Phuket but the comforting satisfaction of a perfect pizza accompanied by the ideal wine still makes, to my mind, a most rewarding indulgence to be enjoyed at any time.

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

A CULINARY TOUR OF ASIA

Love it or hate it, Central Festival Phuket does appear to offer something for more or less everyone.

Armchair epicurean travelers with neither the resources nor the inclination to leave the island – let alone Thailand – for a multi-country food-lover's tour can set course instead for Phujs Nirvana, the er... "Asian Concept Restaurant and Bar" at Central Festival and emerge thoroughly refreshed.

I say refreshed even though battling rush hour traffic, made all the worse by the mega-mall, leaves one feeling decidedly well-traveled.

This is an Asian tour, specifically offering Chinese, Indian, Vietnamese, Thai, Japanese and Indonesian-Malay food.

Phuja Nirvana – on two floors – is big, very big. It covers approximately 4,000 square meters and has dining space for around 400 people.

As I walk down the impressive staircase into the bar, I am struck by a sense of déjà vu. It's vast in here, almost like walking into the airship sheds at Cardington in England.

Dinner – rather than alarm – bells are now ringing, and it's time to eat. I will be called to the bar later.

The restaurant is divided into areas that reflect – stylistically – the different cuisines on offer. But no matter; one can happily sit in the Indian section and order Japanese, or the Chinese section and order Thai ... you get the picture.

I'm beginning to warm to the place. The staff are smartly turned out and are more than vaguely aware of not only what is on the menu but also what is in each dish. They can navigate our awkward squad of diners in the appropriate direction.

We choose stacks of food, everything from Vietnamese

Waitress Kanchalika arrives with the clams.



charbroiled clams to Indian *mutter paneer*, and Japanese salmon salad to Indo-Malay *hati ayam* (chicken livers in a creamy coconut and peanut sauce).

Also gracing the table is vegetable *jhinga malai* and one of the most-favored adopted British dishes, tandoori chicken. The

empire strikes back, albeit at the dinner table.

Drinks, too, are inventive, and my Forest Hermit cocktail – strawberry and chocolate liqueurs with a healthy slug of vodka – causes my senses to tingle.

Phuja hits the target with the Indian food, in terms of it be-

ing tempered to the Western palate, that is. It is not 100% authentic Indian fodder, and Jasmine – rather than Basmati – rice is served, but who cares?

A good-sized chunk of fresh *nan* bread to scoop it up with and delightfully oil-free vegetable samosas transport us, if not to Bangalore, then certainly to Birmingham.

We amble downstairs and into the bar, taking seats in the Opium Den. There is precious little opium on offer, but the mix of strong cocktails, Buddha Beats and other ambient sounds, trippy lights plus a generally chilled atmosphere weave their magic.

I like the style here, the combination of minimalism (decoration, music) with opulence (furniture, drinks).

Who needs strutting rock-gods with guitars when you can be laid back and in an altogether sexier state of enlightenment, with music at first too loud and then sublimely transcendent permeating your mind, body and spirit?

I stand – no I don't – I lie on my opium bed corrected for my initial cynicism about the place. Nirvana it may be, but it's certainly as hip as Hell and an easy path to a state of grace.

Phuja Nirvana at Central Festival Phuket. Restaurant opening hours: 11 am to 11 pm. Bar: Sunday-Thursday and 5 pm to 1 am; Friday-Saturday 5 pm to 2 am. Tel: 076-291010. Email: phujanirvana@central.co.th

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Home of the Week

Nai Harn

A cosy retreat in Nai Harn

This 200-square-meter, three-bedroom home is fully furnished with high-quality furniture and fittings.

Set in a mature tropical garden, it has sweeping views across open grasslands to the mountains in the west, and is located in a desirable, tranquil location set within a well-established, small group of very presentable homes – altogether making this property top value for money.

The ground-floor terraces and upper-floor balconies both share the view from the property's quiet and secluded location. The upper floor features spacious bedrooms, with French doors opening to a balcony, and a bathroom. A second guest bathroom is located on the lower floor.

The kitchen is a chef's delight. It is spacious, light and airy with good ventilation, and features timber cupboards both

overhead and under-counter, a double sink, four-burner gas/electric cooker built into the counter top, and a built-in oven.

The open-plan living and dining areas have air-conditioning and are furnished with lounge and dining suites. The alfresco dining area on the covered terrace is also furnished with a tropical rattan cane suite. The French doors and windows have insect screens, and are fitted with either blinds or curtains.

The color scheme used throughout the house uses soft creams, white and beige, with gloss ceramic floor tiles – presenting altogether a most livable home designed for, and furnished in, true tropical style.

There are ceiling fans in all rooms, as well as a laundry, store-room and undercover car parking.

Utilities include UBC TV, telephone, mains and well water, hot-water and a water filtration

The property is simply, but tastefully decorated throughout, enticing owners to enjoy a laid-back lifestyle.



Above: The pool is the main feature set among the landscaped gardens.

Right: Only minutes from Nai Harn Beach, the property enjoys seclusion from the outside world.



system, septic tank and single-phase electricity supply, and an alarm system.

The Thai-style, two-year-old home is built on approximately 650sqm of land, and there is a pool set in the center of the well-maintained communal gardens.

The land title is Chanote, and the property is for sale at 7 million baht.

For more information contact Richard Lusted at Siam Real Estate at Tel: 076 280805, Email: info@siamrealestate.com or visit the website at: www.siamrealestate.com.



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Prima Villa on schedule in Karon

KARON: The Alisaburi Company is developing the Prima Villa project on a 7.5-rai site next to the Thavorn Palm Beach Resort off Patak Rd. The project, with a total investment of about 200 million baht, is being marketed by real estate agency CB Richard Ellis (CBRE).

Khanitha Jarukirati, Sales Manager of CBRE's Phuket office, told the *Gazette* that work on the 22-unit Phase 1 began in November 2004 and is scheduled for completion near the end of this year.

The first show villa will be ready for public viewing in March.

A second phase, compris-

ing nine condominiums, is still at the design stage, she said.

The developers confirmed that the project is proceeding according to schedule and was completely unaffected by the tsunami — despite being just five minutes' walk from the beach.

Three villa designs are available in the first phase. The first, the "Prima Shell", is for 215-square-meter, single-story units with two bedrooms and three bathrooms. Five units will be built, ranging in price from 7.5 million to 8.9 million baht. Signature features include a central swimming pool and barbecue area with direct pool access from the master bedroom.



An artist's impression of the "Coral" design home at Prima Villa, in Karon. The development's show home is on target for completion in March.

The second design, the "Prima Reef", is slightly larger at 228sqm. These units are also two-bathroom, three-bedroom units. Six units will be available, ranging in price from 7.9 million to 8.8 million baht. The design con-

cept, featuring a garden and pool, is intended to ensure privacy.

The largest units, the "Prima Coral", will be two-story villas of 276sqm, with three bedrooms and three bathrooms. Eight units will be available, ranging in price from 9.26 million to 13.5 million baht.

Three of these units will have views overlooking Karon Beach. The design, suitable for family living, includes full air conditioning and an integrated hot-water system.


Other amenities of the project include underground power cabling and reserve water tanks with capacities of 1,500

cubic meters. The project's common facilities, to be developed by CBRE, will include 24-hour security, garbage collection and landscaped gardens.


Projects already developed by the Alisaburi include Kamala Bali Villas.

K. Khanitha said the project is intended to attract buyers looking for second homes at affordable prices.

For more details contact CBRE at 12/9 Moo 4, Thepkasattri Rd, T. Koh Kaew, A. Muang, Phuket 83000; Tel: 239967/9; email: info@cbre.com; website: www.cbre.co.th




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Working toward a Bang Tao revival

Fernand Lacksweed and Detlef Loemker are friends. Fernand is from Belgium and Detlef is from Germany. I introduced them to each other some time ago at our local pub in Cherng Talay.

Fernand lost his house at Bang Tao Beach to the tsunami, and almost lost his life. Now he is working with his neighbors to rebuild his home. Although Fernand still lives in Belgium, he recently sold his company there and plans to spend more time in Phuket, so getting the house back together is his top priority.

Would he think of getting another house in Phuket, maybe somewhere else, not on Bang Tao Beach? "No," says Fernand. "This is my area, I am comfortable here. I know this part of the island and, after seven years, I have many friends here."

Detlef has made Phuket his home, and after many years with the Hyatt hotel group – he managed hotels all over the world – he, too, has decided to make Phuket his main base. He and his wife have a house in France, but they are now building a new home in a development on Bang Tao Beach.

His transportation is his Honda Dream motorbike, which has a rather unique sidecar. It sports a very distinctive Rolls-Royce grill, the only remnants of his old Rolls Royce that he had the misfortune of crashing in France several years ago.

"It fitted the side car exactly" he says. "Everybody knows it around here, even the police have a laugh."

Last week Detlef bought 35 refrigerators, 70 gas cookers and 70 gas bottles. This week he's going to buy some television sets.

Detlef didn't suffer any damage to his house, also in Bang Tao, but many in the local Thai community around him lost their homes and business and, in some cases, their lives. With nowhere else to go, many of the village residents were sleeping in makeshift shacks on the land next to Detlef's home after the disaster.



Friends Detlef Loemker (left), who lost his house and almost his life in the tsunami, and Fernand Lacksweed together are working toward a Bang Tao revival.

LARGER THAN LIFE

By Graham Doven

"They had nothing," says Detlef. "Now at least they can cook food."

Perhaps this type of practical, on-the-spot help is what's best for Phuket people in need at the moment. The Thai government has stated that Thailand doesn't need international financial assistance, but where and when Phuket's tsunami victims get access to government disaster relief money – if ever – remains anyone's guess.

Compared with the devastation in other parts of the region, Phuket is relatively untouched. But there has been a mass exodus of visitors just at the beginning of the high season for tourism, thanks to foreign governments issuing blanket travel warnings for the whole area and the disastrously unbalanced television coverage from international media on the situation in Phuket itself.

As a result, the jobs and income people need to rebuild their

lives will likely be in short supply for some time to come.

Perhaps in our community, there are some kind-hearted developers and builders who might consider providing practical assistance to help those less fortunate than themselves by rebuilding their homes.

On the question of media coverage, much has already been said. It was unfortunate, 10 days after the tsunami, to see reporters standing in front of a vacant piece of land covered with rubble in Patong and talking about the destruction and devastation in Phuket.

That particular piece of land [north of the football field on the beach road] was vacant before the tsunami, and was being used as a storage area for rubble from a nearby construction project.

The question now is how to get tourists back here and put local people back to work. If not, we may find ourselves threatened with another danger: the prospect of a Phuket full of desperate and distraught people, with no immediate relief in sight.

This could pose an even greater danger than the one we have just faced.

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Gardening

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A strange tale from Nai Harn

Well, we're now into the new year. There have been many changes in the last year; some for the better, and, especially given recent events, some not.

But some things never change – there are still many things I simply don't understand. Why do people in the back of pick ups sit on top of the sides, rather than in the back? Why do people put those little blue lights into their windscreen washer jets?

Why do Americans choose to change the spellings of perfectly good words? Why do countries in the hottest parts of the world eat the hottest food? And speaking of food, why is it that the more you spend on a meal, the less you get?

Another "why": Why do

gardening writers drone on about complete nonsense when they really should be talking about some aspect of gardening?

There are some things about living here that I'll never get. Some are cultural, some are political, and, for a *farang* such as myself, these involve concepts I'll never be able to grasp in a month of Sundays.

It would appear that during a recent council meeting somewhere, some bright spark stood up and announced it would be a wonderful idea to remodel the Nai Harn lake area.

They'd obviously had enough of all those pesky trees spoiling people's views of the far side of the lake, and now, the trees that used to surround the lake have simply been uprooted en masse and unceremoniously removed.

I mean, what are they going to do? Replace what were perfectly good trees with ... more perfectly good trees?



Not a pretty sight: the entire area around the Nai Harn lake has been ripped up for 'renewal'.

It is surely no coincidence that this "remodeling" started only after the recent Loi Kratong festival, when the locals flocked down to the lake to enjoy the loing of their kratongs in what were formerly fairly untouched, idyllic surroundings.

These people are less than overjoyed at the sight that greets them all the way around the lake, now that there's nothing left. I talked to a friend about the level of feeling, and it seems local residents are up in arms.

They're not exactly wielding axes and swords against any authority figure they can lay their hands on, but nonetheless they are pretty miffed.

They're scratching their heads in disbelief, wondering what the people who decided this would be a jolly good idea have actually got planned for the area. I mean, what are they going to do? Replace what were perfectly good trees with ... more perfectly good trees?

Some of the plant life that used to be there was truly spectacular. Just a couple of weeks

ago, I mentioned the scrambled eggs tree. It was driving past the dozens of these trees that used to hem the Nai Harn lake shore that gave me the idea to write about them.

My favorite former resident of Nai Harn lake has to be the coral tree, or *thong-lang* in Thai.

Up close, the flowers look like giant red tigers' claws which, by no coincidence at all, accounts for another of its names; its flowers are absolutely incredible.

Every dry season, the coral tree sheds all its leaves, leaving it looking strangely bald. What saves the tree from looking like a victim of floral *hara-kiri* are the incredible blossoms that follow, just as the new growth starts.

Their scarlet hue is dramatic. And, at Nai Harn at least, no more. I wonder if the JCB operator would have been quite so ruthless had these things been in flower at the time?

Even though we can all complain that a former hotbed of plantlife has now been wrecked, there's an even more important

aspect: the loss of the quiet, unassuming work that all trees and plants do below the surface.

Without them, soil isn't the strongest of substances, and will disappear completely with a couple of storms and nothing to hold it together.

That's already happening. There are a couple of spots where the banks have been eroded to such an extent that the lake is now washing the edges of the road that surrounds the lake.

The recent tsunami has certainly worsened the problem, but I doubt very much if the damage would have been anywhere close to the current situation had none of the trees been removed.

I'm sure that whoever made the decision to move in with the JCBs had their reasons. Perhaps they thought the trees were just getting a bit long in the tooth. Maybe they thought, heaven forbid, that they were growing a little too successfully.

After all, we don't want all those rather annoying trees to get in the way of a good view, now do we?

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Property Gazette

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- Receptionist
- Housekeepers
- Bar tenders
- Qualified ship engineer
- Electrical engineers

- เชฟคนไทย – เชฟชาวไทย มีประสบการณ์ในการทำอาหารไทยและยุโรป
- ผู้ช่วยเชฟ – ต้องการผู้ช่วยในร้านอาหารไทยด้วย
- พนักงานครัว – เชฟชาวไทยมีประสบการณ์การทำงานในร้านอาหารและรีสอร์ทมาก่อน
- แม่บ้าน – เชฟชาวไทย มีประสบการณ์ในการทำความสะอาด ทำงานในรีสอร์ท

admin@azureholdings.biz

HOTEL IN PATONG

The Hilltop Hotel, at No 24 on 50 Pi Rd in Patong, is looking for staff to work in all positions in the kitchen, restaurant and bar. For more information or to apply, call 076-296787 between 8 am and midnight.

INTERIOR DESIGNER WANTED

Qualified Thai interior architect with minimum 4 years' experience. 3-D Autocad and construction management ability required. Email: kathyadam@eggspace.com

INTERNATIONAL ACCOUNTANT

Asia Debit international internet merchant account and online secured credit cards payment solutions are seeking:

1 International Accountant Qualifications:

- Male or female, age not over 40
- Bachelor's Degree in any related field
- A very high level of written and spoken English
- Familiar with Thai and international accounting standards
- Good working knowledge of internet banking is a plus

Please submit resum^e stating qualifications and experience, expected salary and a recent photo via email. Tel: 076-264445. Fax 076-264447. Email: oil@asiadebit.com

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Tel: 076-236555 Fax: 076-213971**

Island Job Mart



DirectRooms is an Internet hotel reservation company. We are expanding and need staff to join our friendly, highly motivated team in our Phuket City office.

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Address: 8/51 Moo 3 Rasadanusorn Road, Rassada, Phuket

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- Female, age 26+, bachelor's degree and at least 2 years' admin experience.
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PHUKET: PEST CONTROL / HYGIENE SERVICE COORDINATOR
- Male, age 25+, bachelor's degree, no experience necessary as full training provided. English speaking.
Good salary and allowances. To apply call 076 224659 or email your resumé to stephen@pcs.co.th, www.pcs.co.th

VILLA SANTI
PHUKET

Villa Santi, a luxury resort with project with 57 units, is expanding its operation and currently invites applicants for the following positions:

For the Sales Office

1. Junior Accountant 1 Position
Qualifications:
- Female, Thai national, age 22+
- Bachelor's degree in accounting or related field
- Good knowledge of MS Office (Excel WordPower Point)
- 1-2 years' work experience
- Knowledge of English language is an advantage

2. Driver/Passenger 1 Position
Qualifications:
- Male, Thai national, age 25+
- Driving license is needed
- Automobile driving record needed
- Good knowledge of Phuket area
- Work experience and knowledge of English language is an advantage

Interested candidates, please submit resumé stating qualifications, experience, expected salary, contact number together with a recent photograph to:

Villa Santi Project
118 Prabaramee Road, T. Patong
A. Kathu, Phuket 83150
Tel: + 66 76 290324, Fax: + 66 76 344847
Mobile: + 66 9 4744898
E-mail: admin@phuket-villa-santi.com
www.phuket-villa-santi.com

For Project Management

1. Site Architect 1 Position
Qualifications:
- Male or female, Thai national, age 30+
- Degree in civil engineering or architectural design
- Knowledge of AutoCad, Microsoft Office
- Good command of spoken and written English
Duties: Required to assist Project Manager to develop both architectural and structural drawings, assist with the design co-ordination

2. Secretary to Project Manager 1 Position
Qualifications:
- Female, Thai national, age 22+
- Bachelor's degree in administration
- Fluent spoken and written English
- Computer literate (Microsoft Office)
Duties: Filing, database entries, all in-house correspondence, to assist PM with processing and preparing all documents

3. Quality Surveyor 1 Position
Qualifications:
- Male or female, Thai national, age 30+
- BS in engineering, diploma in construction
- Computer literate (Excel WordPower Point)
- Good command of spoken and written English
Duties: Progress check, contract administration, procurement of subcontractor and supplier, purchase clarification and variation orders

4. Site Engineer/Inspection/M&E 1 Position
Qualifications:
- Male or female, Thai national, age 30+
- Degree in civil engineering or construction
- Good command of spoken and written English
- Experience in construction

Tai Pan

We require the following staff for our new fitness spa and restaurant opening soon in central Patong.

Restaurant

1. FIRST COOK
2. COOKS
3. KITCHEN ASSISTANTS
4. CASHIERS
5. BARTENDERS
6. WAITERS

General

7. MAINTENANCE MAN
8. OVERNIGHT CLEANERS

All positions require a minimum of 3yrs' experience.

Tel: K. Vichit 06 7855378

Employment Wanted

LOOKING FOR A NEW challenge. Looking for a management or sales position. I am fluent in English & German and speak some basic Thai. I have lived and worked in Thailand for many years, mainly in the dive business. I have my own Ltd Co and a valid work permit. Due to unforeseen circumstances I now have to relocate from Khao Lak to Phuket, where I am available right now for the right position. Tel: 01-979-0525. Email: michael_bosch@hotmail.com

RESORT GM SEEKING position. 14 years in Thailand, mid-40s, European nationality. Hotel management graduate. Have worked for several local chains as well as stand-alone properties. Pre-opening experience. Now seeking new job. No "troublesome" properties, please. Email: resortgm@gmail.com

JOB WANTED
Thai man with Swedish, English- and Thai-language skills, and international experience, can help your business grow. Please call or email with details. Tel: 01-3081026. Email: jayphuket@hotmail.com

Nanny required to help father

To take care of a 6-year-old Eurasian boy, full of mischief but adorable.

- Single female, age between 20-25 yrs.
- Must be very patient and calm, yet fun.
- Live in a 4* hotel and eat in 4* restaurants, enjoying all hotel facilities.
- Must speak English.
- Must be able to act independently and with responsibility as father occasionally travels on business.

Interested? Please email your status and contact details with photo and expected salary to Woody040260@yahoo.com

CORAL RESORT

Koh Chang urgently requires hotel & restaurant manager, receptionist, cashier, bartender, chef, cook and waiters. Experience a must. Tel: 09-9112284. Email: marc@coral-resort.com

DATA ENTRY STAFF

PT staff. Have computer? Work from home. Skills: Excel, Word, English language. 4,000 baht a week and FT work for fast workers. Email: kevinsan2001@yahoo.com

SECRETARY

Marine electronics company needs a Thai national with good command of English & computer skills. Duties: Customs paperwork, quotations, handling travel arrangements, visa applications, work permits. Tel: 076-239112, 01-892-0534. Fax: 076-239058. Email: damian@electrical-marine.com Website: www.electrical-marine.com

REAL JOB IN EUROPE

British manager of Black Sea Coast property & publishing company wants to employ a Thai person for many different jobs. Visa will be arranged for 3 months – if happy, extended. Pay is 200 euros plus all expenses paid. Accommodation arranged. Meeting in Thailand. Ed Vaan. Email: champagne@worldmail.com

Find more classifieds at www.phuketgazette.net/

Tout, Trader & Trumpet

Articles for Sale

MINI EXCAVATOR

KOMATSU - PC 30. Good working order, new seals. Tel: 01-8924804.

UBC SUBSCRIPTION FOR SALE

Dish, receiver plus subscription until 31/10/2005. Tel: 076-391815.

USED CAR AUDIO

1 Techwood 4-channel 400 w/amplifier; 1 Sedona pre-amplifier; 1 Seo Sub 400 with 10" (27cm) x 5" (14cm). All in excellent condition. 10,000 baht only. Email: sveinsko@asiatrading-online.com

FOOT-MASSAGE

chairs. Rattan chairs with footrest for sale at 1,900 baht each. (New price is 4,500.) Have 8 available. Pls contact for more info. Tel: 06-2688061. Email: schendl@loxinfo.co.th

USED CLIMBING GEAR

I am selling my slightly-used shoes, ropes, harness, slings with karabiners, etc. All in good condition and well-maintained. Contact for more information. Email: sveinsko@asiatrading-online.com

BARGAIN TV

As new TV with 14-inch screen. Little used. Cost more than 3,000 baht; will sell for only 2,600. Only a few months old. Genuine sale, with remote, etc. Email: th246810@hotmail.com

Boats & Marine

27-FOOT BOAT FOR SALE



British-built, 27ft aluminum commercial or recreational boat, with Perkins 80hp marine engine. 1.5 million baht. Contact for more information. Tel: 07-265-9977. Email: jimmys@loxinfo.co.th

BOAT FOR SALE

29-foot fiberglass motor yacht with Thai registration. 2 x 280hp Mercruiser engines. Price: 3.5 million baht ono. Pls contact for more info. Tel: 076-239864. Email: hktmkt@ksc.th.com



18ft speedboat
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THB 750,000

contact
broker@thaimarine.com
076-273464



Penisi Ketch
refit 2003, Thai flag

US\$ 51,000

contact
broker@thaimarine.com
076-273464



27FT BAYLINER

for sale. Sunbridge Bayliner 2755, full-deck cabin cruiser. New Mercruiser V8 (250 HP). Very well-maintained. Can take up to 12 people, sleeps 5. Perfect to discover the region. Can be seen at Yacht Haven. Price: 1.5 million baht. Tel: 01-9799307. Email: michelburon@hotmail.com

DIVING COMPRESSOR

Bauer Junior 2, single-phase diving compressor. Nearly new condition, 100L/min fill rate, p21 filter system, whip and pressure gauge. Trade price: 178,000 baht. I am willing to sell it for 120,000 baht. Tel: 07-2697105. Email: pauladventure@hotmail.com

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Patak Rd, Chalong

NAVA Language School

Phang Nga Rd, Phuket City

Sin & Lee

Thalang Rd, Phuket City

Taurus Travel

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

Tel: 076-280400/3

Tel: 076-232398/9

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I am going to build a new school for orphans and other children of Nam Khem. I am looking for an architect and lawyer to work for this good cause pro bono. If you are willing to offer your services, please contact me ASAP. Thank you. Tel: 076-205058, 06-2796364. Email: mysammy11@yahoo.com

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services. We supply new & used PCs & accessories. Repairs & service. ADSL, LAN & WLAN, GPRS. Need Internet access? No problem. call English Computerman at Tel: 09-4735080.

Missing Persons

DAVID COOPER

Lost friend and resident of Chalong, David Cooper, aka Igloo. 58 years old, 6 feet tall, bald. Please try Irish Bar, friends or Champs Bar. Any info would be great. Tel: 170-4233803, 77-74504806. Email: philip.jolley@tesco.net

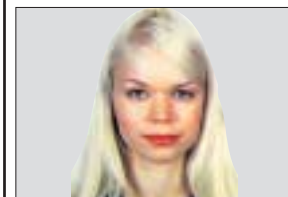
MISSING ON PHI PHI

Saipen Niemsuwan, nickname "Thai". 21 yrs, small, 155cm, 40kg. Worked at Adventure Club on Phi Phi, her father lives in Krabi. Her ID no is: 2810600020842 and she has a small child who lives in Phuket. I am also looking for her best friend, "Toom", who worked at Fatty's. I know Toom is OK and want to contact her. I think Toom is from Krabi or Trang + speaks good English. Tel: 06-9516230. Email: iam@yahoo.com

HELP REQUEST



Sven Vetevoog, born: 22.10.1973, 183cm tall, blond hair, gray eyes, athletic build, tattoo of a dragon on his right foot covering a big scar.



Merle Vooder: born 21.11.1977, 157cm tall, long white hair (part of it black in the neck area), blue eyes.

As known they were somewhere in Phuket; where they rented a beach bungalow. Also possible that they went diving on the morning of Dec 26. If any person saw them before or after the tsunami contact: Katrin Kracht. Tel: +37250 46 98. Fax: +372 60 66 006. Email: katrin@kermion.ee
Thank you for all your help!

Mobile Phones

SONY-ERICSSON

P900. Sony-Ericsson P900 in mint condition for sale. All accessories and original box included. More information about the phone on the link below. Asking price: 20,000 baht ono. Tel: 01-8926251. Email: michael@asiadebit.com For further details, please see: www.sonyericsson.com

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www.atsumihealing.com

Bulletins

Alcoholics Anonymous

is holding meetings in English at the following places:

Phuket City
Mission Hospital
on Wed and Sun at 7 pm

Bangkok Phuket Hospital
on Fri at 7 pm

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

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

Archery

We are exploring the possibility of setting up a small Archery Club on Phuket.

Interested latent Robin Hoods, with or without experience, should contact . . .

archery@lagunaphuket.com
or telephone Little John at 076 271 006

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FORCED SALE - RESTAURANT/BAR

Located on Kamala main road. Aircon, seats 40, well-established. Walk in to take over remaining 7-year lease at 6,000 baht per month. Please call Tel: 076-385-940 after 4 pm.

NICE RESTAURANT

& bar for sale on Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd in Patong. Very good location, 70 seats, fully equipped, many customers. Ready to walk into. Tel: 07-8984338.

NEW BAR FOR SALE

Double shopfront, top of Bangla Rd. Undamaged, 4-year lease. 2.8 million baht, monthly rent 50,000 baht. Tel: 09-8674878.

BAR/RESTAURANT

Near Nai Harn Beach, includes accommodation. Long-term lease, price is 600,000 baht, rent is 25,000 baht. Pls call for more info. Tel: 09-289-2297.

DEVELOPMENT

projects. 10-25% shares available with excellent return. Tel: 07-8893838. Email: asiaproperty@yahoo.co.uk

BAR 4 SALE: PATONG

Excellent location & fit-out. Full entertainment licences 3-4 + registered Thai company. 2 work permits possible. Low overheads. 8 million baht. Tel: 07-0170135. Email: cocodior@hotmail.com

RESTAURANT 4 SALE

Beach restaurant with bar in good location, tables and chairs, seating for 60 people, fully-equipped kitchen, satellite TV, etc. We currently serve Thai & Western food and also have pizza delivery. The restaurant is ready to be taken over immediately. No key money. Monthly rent 62,000 baht, price 1.11 million baht. Email: peterrantala@hotmail.com

LOOKING FOR

partner for existing hotel, good location, good business. Tel: 09-5902184.

Business Opportunities

BAR MEE

A trendy noodle shop in Tesco-Lotus is for sale at 1.3 million baht. For more information, call Jay at Tel: 09-874-5286.

FOR SALE

Fully operational restaurant off Nanai Rd, Patong, with swimming pool & Jacuzzi. European and Thai food, 34 covers. New lease available. Sensible offers to Steve. Tel: 01-5369079. Email: houseofelliott@lineone.net

FRIENDSHIP BEACH

Bungalow Resort has RE-OPENED. Beautiful, seaside, pool, restaurant. Yearly, monthly, short-term rentals. Located 2.6km south of Chalong Circle. Please call Tel: 09-7272296.

BUSINESS

opportunity: 11-bedroom guesthouse. Bar, restaurant and guesthouse for sale. Low rent, near the beach, excellent location. 4.95 million baht. Tel: 076-345940.

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at home. Conversation and coursework with charming Thai lady. Course books provided free. Also basic English lessons for a Thai girlfriend. Please contact for more info. Tel: 076-398157, 01-797-1497. Email: churee77@hotmail.com

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only. If you wish to meet an honest, handsome and kind man who is interested in marriage please respond to me in the USA at my email. I will answer all letters. No games, please. I won't waste your time either. Email: crisxcross@hotmail.com

BACKGAMMON

Retired businessman looking for backgammon players on Phuket Island. Please call if interested. Tel: 076-386113, 01-5778443.

UK MAN SEEKS

Phuket pal. I would like to chat with locals from Phuket, either Thai or from the UK, with regards to me visiting Thailand soon. All emails will be answered. I look forward to hearing from you. Email: dr005a9452@blueyonder.co.uk

AUSTRALIAN MAN

Australian man, 42, is looking for pen friends and email friends among any ladies interested in Australian culture. Any single lady with or without children will be replied to. Interests include travel, postcard collecting, sports and different cultures. Email: chris_13nsw@hotmail.com

GUIDE WANTED

I am in Phuket for a month from Jan 14 onwards, and I would like to meet a local Thai girl as a guide. Please email to: alan@sierracycling.com

COMING AGAIN TO

Thailand. I will be returning to Koh Samui at the end of January. If you know the island and want to show me around, please send me your details. I am from Holland and am male. Email: george@tommelen.net

MY DREAM GIRL

I'm looking for my sexy, slim, young dream girl. I am a 33-year-old, slim Swiss guy. I am staying in Phuket for a while and hope to find someone to have fun with. Just call me; I would like to meet you. See you soon. Tel: 09-5593161. Email: hugli@gmx.net

ONE NIGHT OF

passion. My name is Khao and I'm a handsome, fun-loving guy looking for love. Nothing too serious, just a little fun with the right kind of gal - educated, good-looking, maybe rich. Thai or farang. No strings attached. Your place or mine. Please send me a sexy photo. Oh, one other thing: I'm a white toy poodle: five kilos of muscle and doggie smarts. Gimme a call if you'd like to meet. Tel: 01-6661211. Email: martinsavaloy@hotmail.com

LOVELY THAI LADY

Attractive gentleman, slim, family-oriented, is looking for the right lady who is very pretty, kind and nice to be with. Please reply with photos to make an appointment. Email: mack2547@yahoo.com

MAN WANTS TO MEET

lady. Hello, I want to meet a nice and sexy lady. I am 32 and from Sweden - not fat. Pls send me mail with photo. Email: sunnyislandguy@hotmail.com

Pets

13 DOGS SAVED FROM TSUNAMI



A week after the disaster, rescue workers found 13 dogs who are now ownerless, on the tiny island of Koh Piatthong, off the coast of Khao Lak, where only 87 people out of 400 made it through the tsunami. The survivors live in the forest with the deer there and don't want the dogs, which are now "behind bars" in the Phuket pound. They are all mixed-breed, very friendly, people-oriented dogs and need loving, caring homes immediately. They appear in good health, will all be vaccinated, sterilized and treated for whatever necessary at no cost to the new owner. Please, please, don't let these dogs stay there a minute longer - they have been through so much already, emotionally and physically. For more photos and info check our website. Margot, Tel: 09-895-9965. Email: margot@loxinfo.co.th For further details, please see our website at: www.soidogfoundation.org

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Citroen AX 1.4i, 4-door, 1994, 149,000km, 98,000 baht. Tel: 01-2718635.

HONDA CIVIC

3-door. Automatic, blue, 150,000km, built end of 1994. Nice car with extras - all okay. 230,000 baht cash. Tel: 09-9707444. Email: micha@aquadivers.com

CHEVROLET

for sale. 2 years old, one owner, used by housewife to run around the island, very good condition. Price: negotiable. Tel: 076-248502, 06-9539209. Fax: 076-248509. Email: varuana@yahoo.com

HONDA CIVIC

Honda Civic, 2002, top model, very good condition, 51,000 km. Bronze color, leather interior, 6-CD player. 125,000 baht down payment, then take over 36 installments @ 13,720/month. Contact Jenny at Tel: 076-344847, 09-4744898. Fax: 076-344-847. Email: jiranthanin_13@hotmail.com

HONDA JAZZ

June 2004, 13,000km, manual transmission. Great car! Tel: 09-5863284. Email: mjazz_2005@yahoo.com

TOYOTA ALTIS

Toyota Altis 1800G. Automatic, top model. 160,000 baht downpayment + 24 payments of 20,000 baht. Tel: 06-1542255. Email: thailarry@myway.com

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4-door Toyota Hilux, about 12,000km. In very good condition. Price: 240,000 baht. Tel: 01-9797571. Email: harryjunggren@hotmail.com

PICKUP FOR SALE

Mitsubishi Strada, 4x4, Extra cab. Year 2001, English owner from new, good condition. 350,000 baht ono. Contact Andy, as above. Tel: 01-891-3466. Fax: 076-296160. Email: antc@phuket.ksc.co.th

'99 NISSAN BIG M

pickup. 2.4-liter petrol, 4-speed automatic with electric overdrive, ABS braking and lock-up fiberglass carryboy with roof rack. Metallic gold, still in original condition. 104,000 km. 12-month license and first-class insurance. Asking 295,000 baht. Tel: 076-289182, 09-5931188. Email: neilrickards@yahoo.co.uk

4 x 4s

AMC JEEP MODEL C77 88

Top condition, farang owner, all vital parts new last year (list available), low mileage. Must sell, as going home. Only 150,000 baht. Tel: 07-2725421.

GRAND CHEROKEE

1998 model, good condition, 176,000km, full options, dark green, first-class insurance. 540,000 baht. Pls call for more details. Tel: 07-2836716.

JEEP GRAND SAFARI

1988. Top condition, 170,000 km, custom painted & farang owner. Never used off-road, new vital parts including steering system, starter, all brakes, tires and fuel pump. 5-speed, bucket seats, runs great & economical. Only 140,000 baht. Pls call for more info. Tel: 07-2725421.

1961 JEEP WILLY

wagon 4x4 for sale. Mint condition - just start & go. Privately owned and currently garaged in Bangkok. 375,000 baht. Tel: 02-6739658. Email: seiry106@hotmail.com

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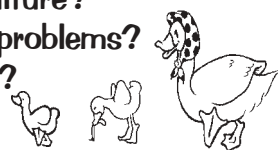
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