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Patong plan draws fire

By Gazette Staff

PATONG: The government plan for rebuilding Patong has drawn fire from those who previously made a living from renting out beach chairs and umbrellas, and who claim that the proposed changes would only add to the losses they have already suffered.

At a meeting at Patong Municipality Office on January 14, Aumpian Thernthin, the leader of the 55 rental operatives in attendance, asked Patong Mayor Pian Keesin and Phuket Vice-Governor Winai Buapradit for the plan to be changed, so it "better reflects the real situation in Patong".

The plan, put together quickly by a firm of architects commissioned by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) advocates a ban on sun loungers on the beach, replacing them with plastic mats for sunbathers to lay on. The number of beach umbrellas would be limited to 1,500, as against the 7,000 or so that were on the beach before the tsunami.

Between Pakbang Bridge and Prachanukro Rd would be earmarked for sunbathing; between Prachanukro Rd and Soi Bangla, there would be a playground and an area for sports activities and between BanThai Resort and Sawasdirak Rd there would be a zone for restaurants and nightlife entertainment venues that would extend back past Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd.

The beach chair and umbrella operators are pushing for three changes to the plan: to in-



Patong Beach, and not a beach chair in sight. The government would like to keep it that way, but locals disagree.

crease in the number of beach umbrellas to 2,000; to scrap the zones and to scrap the ban on beds and chairs on the beach.

"The tourists will get sand in their faces if they have to lie on the mats stipulated in the plan, so I doubt they would want to rent them," said K. Aumpian. "Plus, it's unfair to Patong people, because the beds and chairs would still be allowed at the other beaches, such as Kata, Karon and Surin."

V/Gov Winai argued that a beautiful beach would be the best way to help Patong recover, because it would attract more tourists, but he said he would present the traders' requests to the government.

SPA Architects presented a

plan to rebuild Patong Beach, at a cost of 550 million baht, to Governor Udomsak Usawarakura, Patong Mayor Pian Keesin and tourism industry leaders on January 12.

Mayor Pian agreed with the idea of limiting the number of beach umbrellas. "This plan will return Patong Beach to its previous beautiful condition, and show the world that this is a beach to visit," he said.

In Kamala, meanwhile, people who lost homes and businesses along the seafront were in debate with the Governor as the Gazette went to press, angry after being told that they may not rebuild.

The pain of Kamala: page 4
Readers' views: page 18

Airline set to resume routes from Scandinavia

By Gazette Staff

PHUKET: MyTravel Airways, based in Copenhagen in Denmark, is to resume direct flights from Scandinavia to Phuket International Airport on February 3, bringing about 1,000 people a week to Phuket and Krabi.

Torben Andersen, the airline's Head of Information and PR, told the Gazette that the first resumed flight will leave Oslo, Norway, on February 3, with another departing from Stockholm on February 6, and a third from Göteborg – also known as Gothenburg – in Sweden, on February 8.

All flights will use Airbus 330s, each bringing between 360 and 405 passengers.

"This schedule will continue throughout the rest of the northern hemisphere winter, bringing around 1,000 tourists to Phuket and Krabi each week," Mr Andersen said.

He explained, "Before Christmas, we had six aircraft flying direct from Scandinavia to Phuket every week, and last season we carried around 70,000 Scandinavians to Phuket."

"We are providing flights for our own tour operators – Ving, Always, Saga, Tjaereborg and Spies. The tourists will stay in Krabi, Kata, Karon, Surin Beach and Kamala. We have our own resorts, such as the Jiva Resort and Spa in Kata, and the Surin Beach Resort in Surin."

Mr Andersen added that Danish tourists will be arriving from February 1, when Britannia Airways resumes its services to Phuket, using a Boeing 767.

"We look forward to meeting our many friends on the beautiful island of Phuket," he said.

A chance to follow in the footsteps of giants of literature

IRELAND: Dublin is a city famed for its connections with such literary giants as WB Yeats and James Joyce, and now young writers from Phuket have a chance to sample its delights – free.

The national winners of the 2nd annual Junior IMPAC Dublin Literary Awards for Thailand will each win a trip to Dublin, to attend the Senior Dublin Literary Awards, currently the world's richest literary prizes.

The aim of the Junior IMPAC Dublin Literary Awards is to promote creative English-language writing among Thailand's high school students.

Students – Thai and non-Thai – aged between 14 and 18 on April 1, 2005, have until February 15 to submit an essay of between 800 and 1,200 words on "My Thailand, My Dream".

The regional winners, Thai and non-Thai, will receive 10,000 baht, and will be entered into the national competition. There will also be two "merit awards" per region, of 5,000 baht each.

The overall national winners – Thai and non-Thai – will also win a trip to Dublin, each accompanied by one parent.

The Junior IMPAC awards for Southern Thailand are sponsored by international productivity consultants IMPAC and Enterprise Ireland, and are organised by *The Nation*, *Nation Junior* and the *Phuket Gazette*.

More information about the contest is available from K. Pam at pam@phuketgazette.net.

Ricky Martin comes to help

PHUKET CITY: Latin American pop singer Ricky Martin arrived in Phuket on January 13 and met with Interior Minister Bhokin Bhalakula at the Phuket Provincial Hall.

The Puerto Rican idol, on his first trip to the island, is here to provide assistance to orphaned survivors of the tsunami.

K. Bhokin, who conferred with the singer in private, said that the singer said he had found the kindness of Thai people similar to that of people in his native

Puerto Rico. "He wants to help with rebuilding schools or providing homes for orphaned children. He has also expressed a desire to donate educational equipment to students," he said, adding that the Foreign Affairs Ministry would coordinate the aid effort with the Ricky Martin Foundation.

The Foundation was established to prevent sexual exploitation of children.

Following the meeting the singer went off to tour parts of the island affected by the tsunami.



A large crowd turned out to rub shoulders with Ricky Martin at Phuket Provincial Hall.

B2bn support pledged for tsunami-hit SMEs

PATONG: Industry Minister Pongsak Raktapongpaian announced on January 13 that the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion (OSMEP) has earmarked 2 billion baht from its Venture Capital Fund to buy between 10% and 49% interest in tsunami-affected SMEs in order to provide much-needed cash flow.

There will be no interest levied on the capital injection nor will the OSMEP claim any share of profits from the companies that join the project.

However, the companies that opt to sell shares to the OSMEP must buy back the stake in the company no more than seven years from the date the stock was transferred.

K. Pongsak added that the OSMEP has deployed four mobile units on a six-month mission to provide assistance to SMEs in Phuket, Phang Nga, Ranong and Krabi.

At the Baan Sukhothai Hotel, where the headquarters for the mobile units has been set up, K. Pongsak said, "I will do my

best to take care of business people, and if they are not satisfied with our efforts they can contact me at the Industry Minister's office in Bangkok." K. Pongsak's Bangkok office number is Tel: 02-2023100-3.

Krivuthichai Treekrutapan, Chief Financial Officer and partner of the Best Western Palm Galleria Resort at Khao Lak, which was scheduled to open on December 31 but suffered some 50% damage in the tsunami, said, "I think the government is going about this the right way. It's good

to see the Minister is willing to deal with problems himself."

SME owners may contact the mobile unit headquarters at the Baan Sukhothai Hotel at Tel: 076-340195-6 ext. 521, 06-2764742, 07-2807913, 04-843-5527, 04-8415389 or 04-839-7250.

The main office of the OSMEP is at 17th floor, 21 Wipawadee-Rangsit Rd, Chatuchak, Bangkok 10900. Tel: 02-2788800 Fax: 02-2738850. E-mail: info@sme.go.th; Website: www.sme.go.th

OrBorJor tax break for hotels

PHUKET CITY: In order to help soften the blow to Phuket's tourism industry caused by the tsunami, the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (*OrBorJor*) is exempting all hotels from the controversial 1% rooms tax for the first nine months of 2005.

Explaining why the exemption was being applied to all hotels, and not just those with structural damage, *OrBorJor* President Anchalee Vanich-Thepabutr

said, "All Phuket hotels have been affected because there are so few tourists now. The hotels have to take care of their staff, so the *OrBorJor* is granting this exemption to help them recover."

She said, however, that hotels would be required to resume payment in October this year.

K. Anchalee added that the *OrBorJor* has set up an emergency fund of 48 million baht to help tsunami victims.

Microsoft will replace lost or damaged software, free

PHUKET: Microsoft Thailand has agreed to replace software and user licenses damaged or lost in the tsunami.

Andrew McBean, Managing Director of Microsoft Thailand, has announced, "Anyone who has lost or has had genuine Microsoft software and/or licenses damaged in the affected areas can call our call center and we will replace the licenses and media free of charge."

"We have already called all companies in the area who have registered their software with us to offer them assistance in this regard. However if customers have any doubt, or any questions, please do not hesitate to call our call center."

Contact numbers for the call center are Tel: 02-6320860-3, 02-6320380-1 or (toll free): 001-800-441-0560 (in Thailand). Press 4 for Thai language.

The center may also be reached by email at: seahelp@microsoft.com

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Swedish PM calls for probe into lack of tsunami warning

By Kamol Pirat

PHUKET: Swedish Prime Minister Goran Persson has called for an investigation into why no warning was issued in the hours before Thailand was hit by a tsunami that killed more than 5,000 people including, possibly, as many as 1,000 Swedes.

Speaking during a visit to Phuket on January 17 with his counterparts from Norway and Finland, Kjell Magne Bondevik and Matti Vanhanen, Mr Persson said he had requested that the Thai authorities examine the circumstances surrounding the tsunami, and added that Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra had "gone along with" the request.

Mr Persson said, "The investigation should ask, when it happened, what did the Thai authorities know? How was [the information] handled? Why wasn't it distributed?"

"There may be a good explanation, but there is a need for an explanation; so many people have died that it is a necessity."

He continued, "It is important to say that many Europeans, including Swedes, want to come back to this wonderful country, but [their return] goes hand-in-hand with security and safety, and an investigation is part of that."



Goran Persson: so many people have died that an explanation is a necessity.

Mr Persson added that lessons should be learned from the tragedy, giving building safety as an example. Someone, he said, should examine the reasons why some buildings were "completely eradicated" while others were left standing.

There have been reports that the search for bodies was winding down, but Mr Persson said he had been told this was not the case.

He said, "The Prime Minister has assured us that the search will continue ... and he also said that if we ask the authorities to search in specific areas, they will support us in this."

He stressed the importance of identifying bodies. "It's in line with having as many [victims] as possible back home again, and having the possibility for those who lost their families, or part of their families, to make their farewells through a funeral," he explained.

Mr Persson added that a joint Swedish-Norwegian consulate is to be established in Phuket, mainly to support the relatives of victims. He said, "Many people in Sweden and Norway will want to come back here to have a time of reflection and mourning at the place where their loved ones died."

Before arriving in Phuket, the three prime ministers stopped in Phang Nga, where they met PM Thaksin, Interior Minister Bhokin Bhalakula and the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Suwit Khunkitti, as well visiting Khao Lak and Wat Yan Yao, where thousands of bodies are being stored.

All three expressed their admiration for the forensic teams working to identify the deceased.

Norwegian Prime Minister Mr Bondevik told journalists that visiting the place where the corpses are being examined, "was like being on the doorstep of the realm of death".



Mascot Gokgig stood up to be counted at the launch of the Helping Tsunami Victims Through Dogs project by the Rotary Club of Phuket, the Raksatt Small Animal Hospital & Pet Shop and the Chaipak Dog Training Center.

The coordinator of the Helping Tsunami Victims Through Dogs project, Anupan Boonchuen, noted that dogs can help relieve the suffering of tsunami victims by providing companionship, thereby making them feel less stressed.

He said the group also plans to promote adoption of dogs and will put up a list of available animals on its Thai-language website soon. For details, contact the Rotary Club of Phuket at Tel: 076-211097 or Raksatt Small Animal Hospital and Pet Shop at Tel: 076-211549.

TAT planning 'Tsunami Trail'

ANDAMAN: The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) is hoping to launch a "Tsunami Trail" tour in March, in collaboration with private tour companies.

Sethapon Chindanon, the TAT's Regional Director for the Americas, told the *Gazette* that the tours would be aimed initially at the Thai market.

"We're discussing the idea with tour firms, airlines and hotels, and are trying to decide which sites tourists should visit - damaged and undamaged,"

He added that the Tsunami Trail will include a visit to a rescue center, temporary housing and - if they have been built by then - a memorial area and a center for orphans, with the aim of allowing visitors to make donations to victims.

"We would like them to see that only some places were damaged."

"I expect that this tour will at least help people feel more confident about traveling to the Andaman provinces," he added.

Help from Canada and Saudis

PHUKET CITY: Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin on January 16 visited Phuket and offered his country's help in restoring the coastal environment and establishing a tsunami early warning system.

Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Sorajak Kasemsuvan said Mr Martin expressed great sympathy for tsunami victims, and added that his country would support the recovery of the tsunami-affected areas.

"The Canadian International Development Agency will

help with the environmental recovery of coastal areas and with technical information for an early warning system," said K. Sorajak.

Meanwhile, on January 16, an aircraft laden with medical supplies, tents, sleeping mats, blankets and 75 tons of food donated by the government of Saudi Arabia arrived in Phuket.

The aid items, flown to Phuket on a special relief flight, were handed over to Interior Minister Bhokin Bhalakula at Phuket Provincial Hall.

OrBorJor alert system in the works

PHUKET: The Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (*OrBorJor*) is planning to establish and operate its own 8.8-million-baht emergency radio network and warning system in order to help prevent a repeat of the December 26 disaster.

The idea is the brainchild of *OrBorJor* President Anchalee Vanich-Thepabutr, who said her own efforts to coordinate an emergency response to the tsunami failed when mobile phone

networks became jammed and could not be used.

K. Anchalee's plan involves the installation of 11 repeater antennae, at a cost of 800,000 baht each, providing coverage at all island beaches.

OrBorJor personnel in watchtowers would keep a sharp eye on the sea for any irregularities that might constitute a danger. If a tsunami approached, people on the beaches could be warned to evacuate via loud-

speakers set up at the beaches and by members of the *OrBorJor* beach guard, who would receive the warning by walkie-talkie. K. Anchalee said she prefers not to wait for the government's early-warning system. "That will take a long time to set up and will involve a great deal of international cooperation," she said.

"I believe this network will save lives, and the *OrBorJor* has sufficient budget to set up and operate the system on its own."

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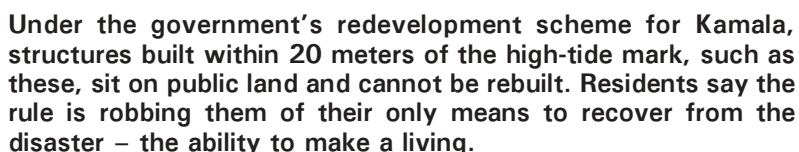
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Residents of Kamala are incensed at the government's plan to redevelop the area after the tsunami and claim that government aid has been poorly coordinated and slow to reach them. Even worse, they say, is the government's refusal to allow them to rebuild homes and tourism businesses, for many their sole source of income.

Before the tsunami the sands of Kamala Beach were lined with everything from massage parlors to Internet shops. Many of these were swept away or damaged, and now the government wants to use the disaster as a chance to wipe the slate clean and redevelop the area in a more orderly fashion, as recommended by the Office of Tourism Development.

The responsibility for carrying out the plan falls to Phuket Governor Udomsak Usawarangkura, who thinks it will be a good chance to deal finally with the long-standing problem of encroachment on public land that many feel has blighted Kamala's attractiveness for foreign tourists.

Everybody agrees that the area was poorly regulated before the tsunami, but when the government erected signs along the beach threatening to take legal action against anybody rebuilding in the area, tempers flared and some 200 villagers converged on Kamala Police Station, demanding to meet the Governor.

ADDING

The government's stated aims in the post-tsunami clean-up of Kamala has villagers up in arms. They fear that, having been victims of the wave, they will now also be victims of hastily-made, inflexible government decisions. **Gategao Phetsawang** reports.

Many of them were residents of Moo 3 who have lost their homes and businesses, and now feel the government is taking away their only avenue to recovery – the right to work.

Working to help them has been Kamnan (village headman) Sanoh Ploykhao, who has been busy signing papers and dealing with all the paperwork needed for them to obtain financial assistance from the government.

"So far the Kamala Tambon Administration Organization (*OrBorTor*) has paid out 15,000 baht in compensation to the relatives of those who died in the tsunami and 2,000 are now unemployed," he said.

He added that the *OrBorTor* has also received some 378,000 baht in private donations, but that none of this has yet been distributed because a committee still

needs to be set up to manage the funds.

“Kamala villagers can apply to the *OrBorTor* for compensation, which will be limited to a maximum of 30,000 baht a person,” he said.

But for the people most badly affected, it will likely be a case of too little, too late.

Speaking at the spot where her restaurant, bungalow operation and home once stood, Sunee Sannam, 46, said that the people who have lost the most have received very little from the government, and getting money from non-government agencies tended to be a matter of being in the right place at the right time.

"There was an association that came to donate, but it's difficult to get assistance unless you happen to be at home when they arrive," she said.



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 46. Patong Tower with 32 storey Tower Property and development for sale. High floor level. 1,000,000,

INSULT TO INJURY?



'If we can't live here, where can we go?' Sunee Sannam amid the wreckage of her home and the nine bungalows she used to rent out, all threatened by government policy.

"We have been here for a long time. I had a small restaurant on the beachfront, but now there is nothing left. My home and nine bungalows were all destroyed, so now I have to go stay with my sister in Bang Tao," she said.

"Before, I made at least 1,000 baht a day selling food and drinks. I hope the government will repair our houses and shops so we can start our business again. Even though I am afraid that there will be another tsunami, I still want to stay here. We have been here for a long time, for generations. If we can't live here, where can we go?" she asked.

"Recently we were told that the *OrBorTor* was distributing money to victims. I went there and waited. There were 200 people standing in line in front of me just to get 100 baht each.

"The people who are suffering the most aren't getting much help from the government. If they want to help the right people, they should actually walk through each damaged house and pay according to the amount of damage," she said.

Kamnan Sanoh explained that there were 15 volunteers from a government school in Prachin Buri who were doing just that, but admitted that much of

the relief money released so far had been distributed in a haphazard fashion.

"Before, there were other organizations that came to donate money to villagers as well. But they didn't check if people who

received money were really tsunami victims.

"Many of the real tsunami victims were too afraid to come back to the area, while other people who weren't really victims pretended to be, and took the donated money instead," he said.

He added that many owners of homes and shops who were not being allowed to rebuild would be relocated to an area near Kamala Police Station, where the government would build new homes for them at a maximum cost of 100,000 baht each.

Kamnan Sanoh told the *Gazette* that Governor Udomsak had decreed that all buildings along the shoreline must be demolished, after which time some could be rebuilt by the government at a cost of 100,000 baht each if they met zoning regulations, such as being more than being 20 meters from the high-tide mark.

"That means people will become displaced. And in other cases, is it really worth demolishing everything and then rebuilding? There are three Thai-style homes that cost over three million baht to build and were only slightly damaged by the tsunami. Is it worth it to demolish them and replace them with homes that are built for 100,000 baht?"

"The governor just makes resolute decisions without listening to the people. He says that they are encroaching on public

land, but the villagers know that their families have been living there for hundreds of years," he said.

"I checked on a map at the Land Department and found that the Kamala Beach Hotel & Resort and Baan Kamala School occupy areas zoned in the same way as the land the villagers live on, so if they want to demolish the village they should demolish those buildings as well," he said.

Anek Sarakom, who used to double as both a beach chair operator and taxi driver, said that a 100,000-baht house with two bedrooms wouldn't be enough for his large family to live in and said that what he wanted was not free accommodation, but an opportunity to earn a living.

"All the beach chairs were swept away by the tsunami. Some operators bought them on credit, so how can they pay back their loans? If we have work, we will be able to support ourselves and we won't have to wait around for handouts from the government," he said.

"The governor's policy seems to be that he doesn't want us to work. We aren't afraid of natural disasters now because we understand them. What we do fear is disasters inflicted upon us by the government," he said.

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Putting Krabi back on its fleet

By Robert Reynolds

One of the first sights to greet visitors to the beaches of Krabi Province and surrounding areas in the past was the longtail boats.

These boats, which can maneuver in the shallow waters that characterize this region, serve a wide variety of purposes: as water taxis to the many island beaches, as tour boats, as pleasure fishing boats and as commercial fishing boats.

The long-tails provide employment for many of the local population and sustain many families. So when the tsunami hit, and almost all the longtails were destroyed, many local people were immediately and directly affected.

According to Keratesuk Phukaoluan, the Mayor of Krabi, all but six of the 400 longtails registered in Krabi were lost or damaged on Dec 26. Some 100 boats were reported lost at Koh Lanta, with the majority of the fatalities on that island being fishermen who died trying to save their boats.

Immediately, salvage and repair work got underway in many locations. Since Ao Nang is the transportation hub for the

local area, and is accessible by road from the beach, much of the activity was located there.

Two days after the disaster, a crane was brought to Haad Napporat Thara Beach. The flat beach there – Ao Nang has a sea wall – provided easier access for the machines used to retrieve damaged boats from the sea.

The bay looked placid, with two or three damaged boats protruding from the water, but beneath the surface lay dozens of longtails in various states of destruction.

A local body, "The Foundation for the Repair of Long Tail Boats in Krabi after the Tsunami" was established, overseen by local officials.

Students from the local technical college provided the manpower to lift the boats onto the makeshift dry docks. On the first morning, an impressive 15 boats were pulled from the sea.

Then the work began. Wood, nails and other materials were supplied by the foundation and owners were also given money to buy replacement engine parts, shafts and propellers. Mechanics from Surat Thani helped with the repairs, free of charge.

Amazingly, within a few days, the first boat repaired un-



der the auspices of the foundation was relaunched. With much fanfare, Mayor Keratesuk ceremonially pulled this first boat into the water.

Similar efforts have taken place throughout Krabi Province. The Koh Lanta Fishermans' Fund was established to repair and replace boats there, with Charuwan Sathityanakool, the manager of Bangkok Bank in Trang, appointed fund trustee.

More information on this fund, and other relief efforts in Koh Lanta, can be found at www.kolanta.net

Local representatives have been on hand to determine what needs to be done to each boat, with a similar procedure taking place in Koh Lanta, where the fund is providing materials and parts, but no cash.

The work hasn't stopped here. In Ao Nang, some 30 boats



Left: The first of the longtail boats ready to be relaunched. Above: The remains of the longtail fleet smashed at Haad Napporat Thara.

had, at the time of writing, been relaunched, while another 62 were still under repair. With the average repair bill per boat coming to around 20,000 baht, larger foundations, such as the Sri-phong Phukaoluan Foundation – www.krabirelief.com – have stepped in to help. Repairs for engines and shafts will increase the bill to the 35,000-to-50,000 baht range.

While various agencies are hard at work helping owners to rebuild their boats, getting the tourists – the mainstay of the longtail boat owners' livelihoods – to come back to southwest Thailand may take longer and be a great deal more costly.

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The cost: 53,000 affected, B9bn lost

The December 26 tsunami has affected an estimated 53,203 people and damaged over 9 billion baht worth of assets in the six affected southern provinces, said Chanchai Soontaramut, Deputy Permanent Secretary at the Interior Ministry.

K. Chanchai, also deputy director of the government's main Tsunami Relief Center, reported that of the 53,203 affected, 5,303 were killed – 1,790 Thais, 1,354 foreigners and the rest of undetermined origin – while 6,065 Thais and 2,392 foreigners were injured. Another 3,396 are missing, he said.

Of 7,053 houses damaged, 3,674 were completely destroyed and 3,379 partially damaged, he added.

K. Chanchai said assets worth 9.17 billion baht were damaged, including about 2,389 rai of ruined farmland; 1,224 fish and shrimp farms; 651 water buffaloes and cattle, 744 goats and 4,044 poultry killed; and 1,214 large fishing boats and 4,337 smaller fishing vessels destroyed or damaged.

About 6,200 rai of beaches and 555 rai of mangrove forests were severely damaged; 500 rai of forest was destroyed; and 222 fresh-water wells and 50 artesian wells were ruined in the disaster.

Calamity and culture: The Culture Ministry will propose that the government build a 250-million-baht museum in the South to educate citizens about tsunamis and commemorate those who lost their lives in the disaster.

Permanent Secretary Khunying Dhipavadee Meksawan said the project, to be organized by the Office of Contemporary Art and Culture, would include construction of tsunami memorials at six sites, including Patong and Ka-



Catastrophe: Just a few of the hundreds of stray cats and dogs that were rounded up for removal from the Phi Phi Islands, where health officials fear their presence could spread disease.

mala in Phuket, Khao Lak and Ban Nam Khem in Phang Nga, and on the Phi Phi Islands in Krabi.

There would also be a large tsunami museum on a five-rai site yet to be selected, possibly in Phuket. An initial design for the museum has already been pre-

sented and its construction could be completed within one year, she said.

Islands in the stream: Hotel operators on Koh Chang and Koh Samui have experienced extended high seasons as a result of the tsunami's destruction of

beach destinations on the Andaman coast.

While the high season on the islands usually slows in the first or second week of January, there has yet to be a fall in the number of tourists arriving, resort operators have said.

Khanittha Manoon, of the four-star Panviman Koh Chang Resort, said there have been no room cancellations and occupancy has topped out because tourists are extending their stays and new guests keep arriving.

Ruengnam Jaikwang of the Samui Tourist Association reported a larger than usual number of room reservations on Koh Samui as tourists look away from the Andaman coast. There are also more tourists from Scandinavia, he said.

There are currently some 30,000 tourists occupying the 13,000 rooms on the island, he said.

Sinking feeling: The seismic hazard level of the South might have to be increased from "zero-low risk" to "moderate-fairly high risk" because the recent Sumatra earthquake has had a profound effect on the region's geological structure, said Assoc Prof Panya Charusiri, of Chulalongkorn University's Department of Geology.

The most visible indicators

are the ongoing soil collapses, which have created a series of sinkholes all over the region. The largest of the 18 holes found by the Department of Mineral Resources is in Nakhon Sri Thammarat; it is 20 meters in diameter and 10 meters deep. Fourteen of the 18 sinkholes were found in Satun province.

"This is part of the after-shock effect, which could last several months. We are lucky that the sinkholes have so far mostly occurred in forests or on farmland. Imagine what would happen if they took place in the middle of a town," he added.

Staying sane: More than 5,000 people in tsunami-hit areas have sought psychiatric counseling, but only 11 of them are thought to be in need of hospital treatment, said Dr Vachira Pengchan of the Department of Mental Health.

Of the 11 patients admitted to Suan Saranrom Psychiatric Hospital in Surat Thani, eight had a history of mental problems and only three others needed to be hospitalized because of extreme anguish brought on by the disaster, he said.

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

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PACVEST GROUP

Franky Gun is a regular contributor to the *Gazette* as writer of the *Andaman Coasting* column, which focuses on Khao Lak.

Here he reflects on his own experiences during the tsunami, and tries to make some sense of it all.

I have known hardship before. I found myself totally broke twice; I've been backstabbed by business partners and so-called "good friends" countless times and I once spent seven long hours drifting at sea at night with 13 other people when the small ferry we had taken sank between Koh Rok and Koh Ngai, well off the coast of Krabi. Fortunately, we were eventually rescued by a fishing boat.

But compared with the events of December 26, all of that was a walk in the park. I am an Aquarius, born January 25, 1965, and had always been an enthusiastic swimmer, diver and all-around lover of the sea.

Little did I know that on that day I was about to experience the rage and power of the Andaman Sea in a closer and more painful way than any I could have ever imagined in my worst nightmares.

I don't love the sea anymore – I can tell you that much. The wave came without warning, a swift and stealthy killer that took both of my beloved parents, great friends and

neighbors and wonderful pets. It swept away everything I worked so hard to create throughout my life before that day – and it was all over in just seconds.

The most tragic part of the story is that Thailand's foremost meteorological experts apparently received a tsunami warning around 8 am on the Sunday, more than two hours before the wave struck Thailand. Following a crisis meeting, they decided not to issue a tsunami warning out of fear that it might harm the tourism industry.



You can't sleep properly, and 90% of your dreams are nightmares where the waves come again and again. All you do in your dreams is struggle against drowning – over and over again.

– Franky Gun
(photograph taken before December 26, 2005)

All I hope for now is that heads will roll in the Meteorological Department, and I am not just talking about people losing their jobs. If I were sitting in judgment, I would like to see their lives ruined to the same extent as mine and the thousands of other people who have lost loved ones, countless possessions and who have been left with no future in sight.

I want to stand before them, look into their eyes, show them the picture of my parents, my neighbors, my friends and all the neighborhood children who perished because of

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HELL ON EARTH



Franky Gun's house after the tsunami. It was 150 meters from Bang Niang Beach

their misjudgment, and ask them: "How can you still be alive with all this guilt resting on your shoulders?"

I would like to show them each and every picture displayed in morgues across southern Thailand: the victims disfigured beyond recognition, the hundreds of dead children, and let them experience the pain they have inflicted upon me and thousands of other survivors of this tragedy.

I would like them to experience the feeling of searching through thousands of swollen, blackened and disfigured corpses in the hope of finding Mom, Dad or any of the many friends and neighbors still among the missing.

I would like them to suffer

for the rest of their miserable lives, even though I know it would never bring back even a single person; but it could at least give some sense of "justice being served" to the ones left behind, mourning their loved ones.

I know that I would feel better after seeing that board of meteorological experts disgraced in public, and I hope that at least this small miracle might happen.

I write this to help readers not directly affected by the tsunami get an idea of how one feels as a victim after such an experience.

You can't sleep properly, and 90% of your dreams are nightmares where the waves come again and again. All you do in your dreams is struggle against

drowning – over and over again.

You are afraid of loud noises; even the wind in the trees can freak you out. You hate looking at the sea and never feel safe anywhere. I just hope that the emotional scars will fade away in the future, but today, 19 days after the tsunami, I still feel like a total emotional wreck and want to lash out, hence my rage in the paragraphs above.

But periods of lashing out are followed by reflection.

Luckily it was a Sunday when the tsunami hit, because my fiancée, Lad, who is carrying our unborn child, studies in the weekend program at Phuket Rajabhat University. Had she been home, I am certain that she would have drowned as well.

That she and our unborn child are well is one of the few miracles that continue to bring me hope for the future. Our house was just 150 meters from the beach in Bang Niang, one of the worst-hit areas. I stress the word *was*, because our home is no more.

I woke up that morning at around 8:15 am when I twice felt my bed shaking a little. I went to check in on my parents in the guest room. They were visiting us to celebrate my Dad's 75th birthday, along with Christmas, the new year and my birthday in January. They planned to fly back to Germany in February.

I asked whether they had felt anything. They replied, "Yes, we felt it. It must have been a small earthquake." I replied, "Wow, that's amazing!" not knowing what was to come.

We hugged and kissed and said "good morning" to each other just as we did every day and proceeded to start into the new day. My parents just took it easy, lying on the bed and listening to their favorite music on a small portable stereo system, a Christmas gift for both of them from Lad and me, because they missed their favorite music so much.

I called Lad to ask whether she had felt the earthquake over there in Phuket, but she said no, which made me feel comfortable. So I just did what I do every Sunday, eating breakfast in bed and watching a movie, a custom I decided to practice after long years of working 12 or more hours a day, seven days a week.

About two hours later, the power went down three times and I could hear loud noises outside. I went to the kitchen window to see what had happened. People were screaming and running, while there was a strange sound coming from the sea.

Still I did not realize what was going on. My Mom and Dad came into the kitchen and Mom said, "Franky, the water is coming!" but I still did not get it until I saw dark gray water flooding the garden outside.

Thinking that it might have been a water tank that had fallen over and flooded the neighborhood knee-deep or so, I remember tossing my laptop computer under the mattress of my bed so it would not be stolen in case we had to leave the house for short while.

Obviously, I did not realize the true scope of what was coming. Yet thinking about it, I believe the delay saved my life; most of the people running outside were killed almost instantly when the second wave hit, because they were crushed by floating cars and debris.

My Mom asked, "What shall we do?" and all I could say was, "I don't know!"

The sound outside grew louder and we heard electric poles falling, houses collapsing and trees snapping in two, while the people outside were screaming. The different noises combined into the most eerie sound, one that I will never forget for as long as I live.

Seeing the water steadily raising outside, I panicked and screamed, "We have to get out of here!" I tried to open the kitchen door, but the water pressure was too strong. I simply could not open it. Our cat Casper screamed, trying to swim in water that was by now knee-deep in the house. I picked her up and put her on the kitchen table.

I planned on smashing the kitchen window with a chair to give us a way out, but just then the panes of the big glass front doors finally cracked. Tons of

Continued on page 10



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From page 9

water washed me through the kitchen window and today my guess is that my parents were pushed through the kitchen door when it suddenly burst open.

When I looked at the house from the outside, I screamed, "Mom, Dad you have to get out of there!"

The water was almost up to the ceiling when the second wave hit with a power unimaginable unless experienced personally. I swallowed water and was swept away under the torrent, finally surfacing some 200 meters away, where I found myself being pushed under the Thai-style roof of a nearby bungalow resort. It was like being caught in a washing machine.

After about 30 seconds underwater, being pounded by debris, and hearing cracks and other loud noises under water, I was in utter panic. I believed that I was going to die. It was dark and frightening. I did not see my life flashing before me, nor any bright lights – just total darkness.

I remember thinking that I believed I had many more years to live, and that my impending death was coming too early. Yet I was convinced that it was the end.

Being pushed by the water against the roof of the bungalow and hovering there in a fetal position, I waited for the moment when I would finally have to inhale water and die. I had never

experienced such sheer terror in my entire life.

But suddenly I had an intense intuitive feeling that I had a choice to make: it was up to me to call the cards – black or white, death or life. The last thing I remember thinking at that moment was, "I don't want to die!"

Suddenly, the roof broke apart and was washed away. I surfaced for a split second, enabling me to take one more breath. Then I was pushed under again for a few seconds, before resurfacing right next to a floating mattress.

It was almost as if the Buddha himself had pushed it there to help me – I had no strength left to swim anymore. I grabbed that mattress and held onto it, shaking frantically in pure panic.

I recall repeatedly muttering: "I don't want to die. Please, please, I don't want to die..." in English, which is not my native language. To this day I still don't know why I said that in English.

I found myself floating back towards Highway 4, which was completely submerged. Only the upper levels of some shophouses were still visible. I pulled my underpants up again after almost losing them underwater. That was all I had left – just my underpants.

I eventually saw Maew, a neighbor. She held on to the life-saving mattress.

She, too, was in a panic and asked me whether I had seen her



The last photograph Franky Gun took of his parents, on Loy Krathong night, with neighbor and friend Torbjørn "Tobbe" Siegfriedsson, who is also still missing.

Swiss husband Ernst or any of her children. I could give her no comfort, as I had seen neither him nor her children during my underwater journey.

I asked about my parents, and also got a negative reply. The current of the water was now slowing down and we finally ended up in a tree near the highway, some 900 meters away from the house. The mattress went under and we held onto that tree.

Near the tree was a broken house with a flat roof. A French guy stood on top of it and was shouting the name of his daughter, Arianne. He asked me whether I had seen his child, and

of course I had to reply with a no, as I knew neither him nor his daughter.

I climbed onto a tree branch and sat there for a while until I realized that my parents' chances of survival were next to nothing.

I looked around and saw destruction and bodies everywhere. In the tree, just a meter away, was a dead Thai man who had become fatally entangled in debris. I had never seen a dead person so close.

I started to weep as the proportions of this tragedy slowly but steadily became clearer. I cried for my parents and for all the dead people and children

around me. I cried for Khao Lak, my home.

I believe that no destination in Thailand ever had so much positive spirit concentrated in one place. Each and every one of us had had such high hopes and bright dreams for the future. Everybody believed that this would be the best tourist season ever and that we all had made it. We were a part of the greatest and most promising tourism destination in southern Thailand.

But now there was nothing left – just death and ruin.

I saw a naked guy sitting in the tree. He was just looking around with eyes wide open. He did not speak at all. Suddenly a voice in the tree to my right asked, "Is that you Franky?"

It was Johan, a neighbor from Sweden. He was also naked and in such a state of shock that he could not speak for the first 15 minutes or so. He eventually said that he had seen me before, but had found himself unable to make any sound at all.

He told me that his parents were missing as well, and that he believed both his pregnant fiancée and his five-year-old son were dead.

I started to cry again when I told him that my Mom and Dad were gone too. It hurt so much that I could hardly breathe. I was not lucky to be alive, I thought, wondering why the water hadn't claimed me as well.

Continued on page 22



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



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Location Map



Relief



A relief convoy musters before setting off to Phang Nga. "We barely scratched the surface," said the organizers. Far from being deterred, they did it again on January 14.



A protective hand shields a young girl from harsh sunlight as villagers of Ban Sai Khao, north of Takua Pa on the way to Ranong, wait for aid including - for the children - plenty of sweets and toys.



Food and other supplies are delivered to Koh Chum, in an island dependent on fishing. Longer-term help will be on its way.

British golfers carried on playing a round at Blue Canyon Country Club, raising more than 155,000 baht for hard-hit Ban Nai Rai.



An evening of entertainment and a celebration of life at The Mangosteen Resort & Spa added more than 233,000 baht to the coffers of relief organization Farang Jai Dee.



The Chedi, represented by GM Daniel Meury (left) played host to American violinist Aaron Meyer (center) for a charity performance that raised more than 400,000 baht for villagers from Bang Tao and Kamala Beaches.



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ACCESSORIZING

with Dhirarat

Golden start to the Chinese New Year



There are many traditions surrounding Chinese New Year, which falls next month.

Chinese people believe that the start of a new year is a time to leave behind the things of the past and to make a new start. As a result, it is common to clean the house from top to bottom – maybe even painting doors and windowframes – pay off debts, buy new clothes, and even get a haircut.

Houses are decorated with flowers and paper decorations bearing wishes of prosperity, good luck and happiness for the coming year. Red and gold are popular colors for these decorations: red because it represents power, happiness and vitality; and gold because it represents wealth and good fortune.

It is traditional for older people to give children “Ang Pao”, little red envelopes containing gifts of cash or gold.

As this is the time for giving gold, the *Gazette* talked to Santi Suwannakarn, whose family has run Phuket’s Tawee Suwan gold shop for three generations, about the timeless allure of gold.

“Gold is renowned for its ductility and malleability,” said K. Santi, who is Tawee Suwan’s Managing Director. “It can be stretched or molded into almost any shape without breaking.

“One ounce of gold can be extended into a single thread more than 50 kilometers long, and gold can be beaten to a thickness (or thinness!) of just 1/300,000 of an inch.”

But, of course, the main reason people choose gold is because of its beauty.

Said K. Santi, “Real gold has four qualities that make it outstandingly valuable: it has a glossy polish and a naturally beautiful color; it is rare – it takes many tons of raw ore to make just

A golden gift could make all the difference to that someone special who is looking for a bright start to the Chinese New Year.



one ounce of pure metal; it is very durable – it doesn’t rust, it doesn’t look dull, it doesn’t corrode. Look at the gold accessories found in the tomb of the Egyptian Pharaoh Tutankhamun. They were buried for 3,000 years or so, but they were still shiny when they were found.

“Finally, gold is incredibly versatile: it can be shaped into practically any kind of accessory, because it is soft yet strong.”

Gold jewellery is available in a number of different purities, from 24 karat, which is pure gold,

to nine karat, which is 37.5% gold. It can be alloyed with a number of other metals to alter the color and hardness – silver or nickel, for example, create a pale yellow, or even “white gold”, while copper gives a more pink colour – “rose gold”.

Although gold is durable, it is rather soft, so it is quite malleable. For this reason, it is sometimes advisable to go for a lower karat for a piece that will receive a lot of wear, such as a wedding band, especially if it is patterned or engraved.

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KIDS

THE FUN PAGE FOR ALL THE FAMILY

Spot the Difference



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



Brain Buster!!

Among the five dogs in the alley, Jam is heavier than Daeng. Dam weighs more than Kao but less than Seua. Kao weighs more than Daeng. Seua weighs less than Jam. List the dogs in the order, starting with the heaviest.

Answer: Jam, Seua, Dam, Kao, Daeng

SOLUTION TO LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

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

Get your brain in gear with The Monster Quiz



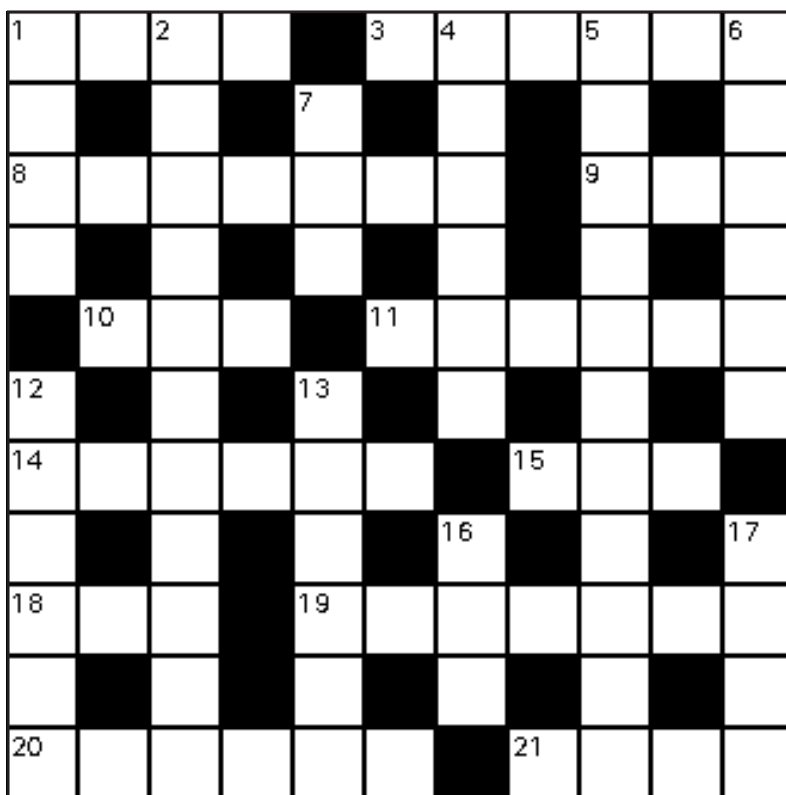
- The cravat – a stylish form of male neckwear – gets its name from which country?
- Which actor provides the voice for The Sorting Hat in the Harry Potter movies?
- “Twang how pertly” is an anagram of which actress’s name?
- Which famous poet – a lord – was born January 22, 1788?
- How much, approximately, does a fully-laden Boeing 747-400R weigh?
- Who, what or where is Aibo?
- Tarragon is a plant native to where?
- What is the correct name for a consommé flavored with tomato, usually served cold?
- What, to someone with a sweet tooth, is a divinity?
- The American Volunteer Group was better known by what name?
- Under whose command did Capt Claire L Chennault form this group?
- Who, in 1884, patented the world’s first electromechanical television system?
- What was it called?
- What is the capital city of Benin?
- By what name was Benin formerly known?
- Laos was once called “Lan Xiang”. What does this mean?
- Who invented the Barbie Doll?
- Where is the driest place on Earth?
- What, from 1964 to 2001, was its average annual rainfall?
- What is the world record for the most tennis balls held in a dog’s mouth?

Answers next week

Never a Cross Word!

Across

- Finger adornment.
- Run fast.
- Portable timepieces.
- Measure of a golf hole.
- Skirt edge.
- Russian capital.
- Phuket, for example.
- Finish.
- Ms Landers, agony aunt.
- Human-shaped robot.
- Business possessions.
- Thailand’s continent.



Down

- Line-ups.
- Home of the Dutch.
- Six-shooter, maybe.
- Totally lacking in funds.
- Chucks.
- Not outgoing.
- Noisy insect.
- Babe.
- Strange.
- Concept.

Solution next week

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S MONSTER QUIZ

- Kylie Minogue; 2. Tom Kenny; 3. Walter Smithers; 4. A halt to the American bombing of North Vietnam; 5. The later Cretaceous period; 6. Pokemon; 7. April 21, 1989; 8. The Swiss Army Knife; 9. Windhoek; 10. The weight of a liter of hydrogen at 0°C and 760 millimeters pressure; 11. PG Wodehouse; 12. Metrophile; 13. As a comic-book writer and artist; 14. Star Wars; 15. The North African ostrich; 16. As much as 2.75 meters; 17. Britons Captain John Alcock and Lieutenant Arthur Brown; 18. 15 hours, 57 minutes; 19. It is the world’s highest, at an altitude of 4,786m; 20. By making and riding the world’s smallest bicycle.



In the wake of the wave

We were glad to hear that nearly all our friends, both Thai and foreign, survived the tsunami unscathed. We mourn those who perished and offer our condolences to their families and friends. For those who were injured and whose homes were damaged or swept away we offer prayers for quick recovery.

What is a tsunami? Is it always the product of an earthquake? Tsunamis, sometimes erroneously called tidal waves, are the result of submarine earthquakes, underwater landslides and oceanic volcanic explosions. They have nothing to do with tides. Any of these events can produce swells, ripples, that sweep across the surface of the ocean in all directions until they encounter land.

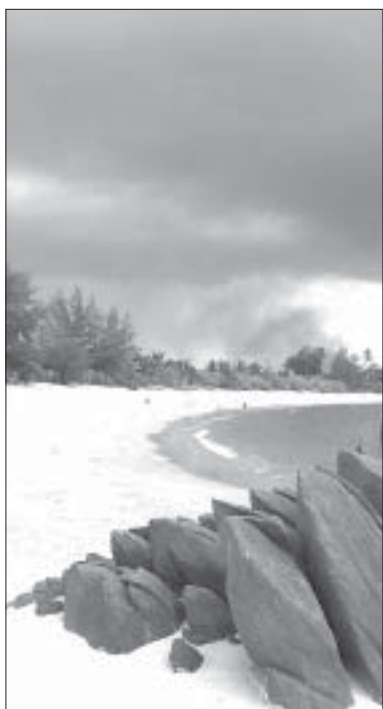
Tsunamis can reach speeds of 800kmh. As they enter shallower depths, their speed decreases and their height increases; the water recedes from the shore sometimes as far as a kilometer, and then the swells sweep in and breakers fall on the shore. Great waves sweep inland, carrying debris and people alike.

The tsunami that just struck Phuket, among 11 countries that ring the Indian Ocean, was the result of an earthquake under the seabed near Sumatra. A greater tsunami occurred in 1883, when Krakatoa's volcano erupted at sea level.

The ocean rushed into the crater, producing a steam explosion under water. The resulting tsunami swept Indonesia and northern Australia.

In the 1960s an underwater landslide, the result of a big earthquake among the Aleutian Islands produced a deadly tsunami that struck the northwest coast of the US, specifically Washington, Oregon and Northern California.

Although tsunamis are fairly common, they are usually a meter or less in height and cause no damage. The Sumatran tsunami was the most devastating



EARTH WATCH

By Robert Cogen

since the one in 1883 generated by Krakatoa's eruption.

While earthquakes cannot as yet be predicted, we can warn about a resulting tsunami and notify people likely to be affected. Recording instruments have been placed on the Pacific ocean floor to register changes in ocean depth and sea floor movement.

Buoys have been tethered above them to register wave heights and direction. These buoys transmit this data to various weather posts where the data are correlated.

The resulting picture foretells the seriousness of the tsunami and its direction. While areas near the epicenter of the cause may be hit within a few minutes, other areas may be several hours away and can easily be warned in time.

The Thai Chief Meteorologist has just lost his job for failing to alert the Andaman coast provinces of the tsunami. He knew of the earthquake and the prob-

ability of a tsunami, but did not know how severe it might be and was afraid to sound a warning over a minor wave that would adversely affect tourism.

Unfortunately, no warning system exists in the Indian Ocean. If there had been a series of instruments and buoys in place, Thailand, India and Sri Lanka, as well as several low-lying island nations, could have had adequate warning, though people on Sumatra could not have been told in time.

While more than 120,000 people are known to have perished so far, we will not have a final estimate for weeks yet. In addition, millions have been left without food, water or shelter; they also face potential epidemics that could be more lethal than the tsunami itself.

Countries around the world are sending aid in the form of money, food, medicine, water and temporary shelter to Thailand and the 10 other affected countries.

We hope this effort will be generous and timely enough to prevent further great loss of life. It is encouraging to see that Phuket is already well on with repairs and rebuilding.

Countries ringing oceans where tsunamis can occur should have a cooperative warning system and an aid arrangement so that the displaced and injured can be readily and easily helped.

To our friends and those we have not met who survived this catastrophe, we offer hope for a quick return to normal life, and a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

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

The *Gazette's* diving specialist, **Sylvie Yaffe**, was recently a member of a massive effort, involving 70 divers, to chart and assess damage to reefs off Phuket and the Similans, following the tsunami. Here she reports on what the survey members found beneath the surface.

Nine days after the tsunami hit, a group of volunteers took a trip to survey the effects of the tsunami on the dive sites in the Andaman Sea.

Inspired by a topic on an internet discussion board for Thai divers, the trip evolved into an official study, jointly organized by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), the Dive Operators' Club of Thailand (DOCT) and the Bangkok Dive Operator Club (BDOC), and is now known as the Coral Reef Recovery Project.

Joining the trip were National Park officials, marine biologists from six universities, three PADI course directors, two of them Thais, and more than 80 dive masters and scuba instructors.

The majority of the volunteers were experienced divers from Bangkok and the Phuket area, veterans of more than 500 dives in the Similans. Also aboard were crews from Thai TV stations.

"The Mission", as it was commonly referred to, had several objectives. Chutinun "Mean" Mora, one of the organizers, summed it up best. "We want to

Survey

give out the right message to the world."

One of the initial organisers, Polpich "Ae" Komson, said he felt he had to do something. "I should organize something, so I thought carefully how I could be useful, and I ended up with this project that would at least help someone."

He added, "We must recover the livelihoods of the people here, starting with the diving business. If the diving business comes back, then so does the hotel and the restaurant business. Everything, as a consequence, will get better."

Environmental concerns were also a major consideration. K. Ae believes that international news organizations should also carry the message that the reefs are still thriving.

Pathamawan "Linda" Satchaporn, who has been diving in the Similans for more than 10 years and is the group's public relations officer, commented, "Of course, as divers, we are all wondering what is happening underwater."

"But we are looking for ways of helping the environment. We are doing this for educational reasons, for now and also for the long term. Whoever can help should do it. It's not fair to say the government should take care of everything. We, as Thai citizens, can help."

Soonthorn "Sunny" Mongaram, PADI course director and manager of Marina Diver, said, "The people in Thailand now know the Similans are fine, but this is not enough; we want everyone around the world to know." He added that he was disappointed not to see more foreign press on the trip.

The survey expedition was fortunate to be able use the Thai

In The Stars

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): Deadlines are a challenge to meet early next week for Aquarians. However, there is a chance of meeting someone halfway; you just need to recognize the opportunity and grab it with both hands. Energy could desert you, so stock up on fresh fruit and resist the temptation to party too much. Wear jungle green for camouflage.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): Pisceans who are feeling jaded will benefit from a change of scene. You will be amazed at how much difference even a short break can make. On Tuesday you will be faced with a tricky choice concerning a romantic affair. You should not agree to more compromise than feels comfortable because the path you choose now will dictate the level of happiness you can expect to reach this year.

ARIES (March 21-April 20): Set

your sights lower during the remaining days of January. Expecting too much from others can only cause disappointment; everything will come in its own good time.

Meanwhile, focus your energy on finding ways of sorting out a personal relationship. If you thought stalemate had been reached, think again. On Wednesday, don't be fooled by promises of financial gain.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): Your tendency to daydream needs to be overcome this weekend. Taureans who are prepared to deal only with reality will succeed, but those with their heads in the clouds will have a rude awakening. If you're in the mood for love, get ready for a romantic chase; Aries is starting to become interested. For those already involved it's time to demand straight talking from a partner who seems to be hiding something.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): You will be pleased that the lighter side of life is once more revealed this week. Low-key enjoyment is on the agenda and an impromptu get-together with friends turns into a feel-good occasion. Progress at work midweek is impaired by a colleague's stubborn mood. If discussion doesn't bring results, try putting pen to paper. The color salmon pink will soothe your soul.

CANCER (June 22-July 23): If you are happy to be romantically uninvolved at the moment you may have to fight to preserve your single status this weekend. A certain someone has their sights set on you and won't give up easily. A friend's chance comment on Tuesday gives you food for thought; work-related schemes are well starred for the next couple of months, so don't delay getting projects off the ground. The number 4 is lucky on Sunday.

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finds coral damage is minimal



Volunteers in the administration center aboard the *Andaman Princess* help to collate information collected by the project's 70 divers.

cruise ship *Andaman Princess*. Navith "O" Yasasindhu, the Deputy Managing Director of the *Andaman Princess*, is also a dive instructor and he wanted to do what he could for the marine environment.

The ship provided enough space for everyone and every task, and having everyone on the same boat made the organization and sharing of information much easier. The trip was well organized, despite being completely unprecedented.

One area of the boat was completely dedicated to administration. Here, volunteers organized the surveys from each of

the groups and downloaded photos from the many memory cards.

All the diving was impressively efficient. Taishiro Miyayuchi, PADI course director and owner of Marine Project in Phuket, was unanimously elected dive leader and put in charge of all the diving.

"I've never been in charge of 70 divers," he admitted. "I didn't know if I could do it, I'm used to only 16 divers." However, his experience in Phuket and fluency in Thai were useful assets.

Divers were separated into three large groups, blue, pink, and purple, then into smaller sub-

groups. Each group was given a different area to cover. This way it was possible to cover many dive sites during the four days of diving. Each group had a videographer, a photographer, a researcher and a local divemaster.

The trip started with the local dive spot off Racha Noi and Racha Yai. Although the objective was to survey the condition of the reef, one lucky group was visited by a friendly manta that passed by repeatedly. The remaining three days were spent surveying the Similans.

The *Gazette* had a chance to speak with K. Chaturathap, National Park Superintendent

from Lamnam Kraburi who, in the wake of the tsunami, has been working with the officers in the Similans National Park.

He said, "The dive sites have about 10% damage; the Similans will officially open again this month." However, he said, guests will no longer be permitted to stay overnight on Islands Four and Eight.

In future, K. Chaturathap said, "We will control the boats coming into the Similans national park. There will be more regulations, many things will change."

Even after a quick look around, it was easy to see that the damage on Island Eight was surprisingly light. The national park office and restaurant were spared major damage and the national park staff continue to stay on the island.

Many divers agree that now is the time to start over, to develop and enforce regulations in the Similans. Mr Miyayuchi agreed that the number of divers needed to be limited, as did the type of diver.

K. Linda added, "The Similans is such a beautiful place and we could have done so much more. It didn't have to take so long to close Fantasea Reef."

Fantasea Reef has been closed for four seasons now, and during the survey trip it was decided to recommend that it stay closed. However, the pink group was quite lucky, because it got to survey the once-popular dive site.

The *Gazette* asked Sakanan Plathong, a marine biologist from Prince of Songkhla University, if

he felt sad after seeing some of the reefs. His reply? "No, the corals can recover by themselves."

"If they are broken or have fallen over, there are still living parts that can grow. Even if we don't turn them [right side up], they can change their direction of growth."

K. Sakanan recently surveyed the reefs around Phi Phi Island and he said that, in stark contrast with the damage on land, the corals there were also in good condition.

Each evening the team leaders from each dive group reported their findings. Damage to individual reefs rarely exceeded 10%. No one is denying that there are broken corals, but there are many more still in perfect condition.

It was also pointed out that many of the broken corals are still living; as Mr Miyayuchi pointed out, this is one way the corals spread themselves to new places.

Each dive featured abundant marine life, and the general consensus was that the diving in the Andaman Sea was still amazing.

It became apparent that there was a new objective, to flip corals and to save fallen sea fans by propping them up. Sadly, one dive site on Island Nine is damaged, but this is only one of more than 20 dive sites in the Similans.

The data collected during the trip is invaluable, and is available to anyone who requests it. It will be reviewed by government officials, who will then be able to determine which dive sites should close and which remain open.

It has been determined that there is an urgent need to make another trip to flip over corals and find a way to secure the sea fans. Marine Project Dive Center has returned to the Similans to continue the mission.

The organizers are now looking to raise money to pay for fuel – their main expense – to send more volunteers out there. For anyone who would like to contribute, the account details are as follows:

Account Name: For Coral Reef Recovery from Tsunami; Bank: Thai Military Bank, Surawong Branch, Bangkok; Account Number: 078-2-11327-8

Anyone interested in volunteering should email reefrecover@yahoo.com or call K. Ae at Tel: 01-8263223.

by Isla Star

LEO (July 24-August 22): If you have your hands full, then ask for help. Taurus is ready to assist and has some useful tips to make your life easier.

Even if you don't feel like socializing, make the effort to meet friends on Saturday; an interesting new acquaintance is likely to be made. You will be taken by surprise by a probing question midweek; you should stall for time to answer.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): Sharpened insight gives you a strong advantage in business discussions on Monday and Tuesday. Commitments made before the end of this month are destined to work out well. Generally speaking, your luck remains good until the middle of February. If you're feeling doubtful about where an intimate relationship is going, a strong breeze is about to set it in the right direction. The color sunflower yellow brings positive thoughts.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): Your need for some space will not be easily accommodated this week. Librans generally find it difficult to be forthright and should overcome this trait to find peace of mind. It's time to put your thoughts in order and decide what the most important goals for 2005 should be. At least one of your ideas can never reach fruition, but some others have a good chance of flourishing in the right climate.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): The fiery side of your nature threatens to stand in the way of progress this week. Scorpions are particularly susceptible to a bout of hot temper on Monday and someone on the receiving end will respond accordingly. You could try putting all that energy to better use. Your partner has a surprise up his or her sleeve – get ready to hear an announcement that will leave you speechless.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): Sagittarians who feel that too many obstacles are standing in the way of progress will get help this week. The signs are generally positive for those who are trying to get a new business off the ground. Aries has an especially useful tip on Wednesday, but don't react too quickly. You are advised to cultivate a more balanced relationship with your partner by finding out what they really want.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): A shower of astral luck is forecast midweek when a long-standing dream finally comes true. Those Capricorns who have been waiting a long time for the wind to change direction will shed some stress immediately. If you're looking for new employment, however, job offers will be thin on the ground; perhaps this is the time to set your sights further afield. The number 5 holds the key on Thursday.

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Local spam begins to stink

It all started about 6 years ago with the porno peddlers. Then came the erection pharmacists, the loan sharks, the software touts, the penis enhancers, and the pimps for "millions of horny housewives".

What they all had in common were marginal products; a hyper-aggressive, reader-be-damned business style; and a murky domicile. With reputations placing them at the nadir of the Internet's food chain, they became known, euphemistically, as "spammers".

As the offensive gathered momentum in terms of volume, frequency, and breadth of products, some victims abandoned the term "spammer" and employed more descriptive words. But let us ignore crudities for now and focus not on Phuket's victimization by spam, but rather on our island's burgeoning contribution to it.

About a year ago, some local businesses – not front liners – began to dip their fingers into the treacherous world of spam as a marketing tool. They got them burned. Worse, many are unaware of the backlash they've suffered, for spam is like body odor – not even your best friend will tell you about it. How would you know when someone enters you into his or her twit filter?

About a month ago, anonymous@something.com (not his real name or domain) began unleashing a frenzy of gratuitous announcements and "newsletters" to.... well, basically everyone in town. These rapidly multiplied on some days into almost hourly events, with victims receiving the same message over and over again from a hopelessly crude and tangled mailing list.

One message boasted (yes) that he had a "target" list of almost 3,000 local Phuket businesses, and promised to inflict upon *all* of them, any "announcement" from any one of them.

Subsequent messages became even more aggressive, focusing on claims of a "huge" audience within the affluent international community. Hype-hype, hooray!

Under a flood of complaints from local residents, particularly foreigners, the *Gazette* asked Anonymous to try to trim his libido, but the request apparently failed. The biggest loser, of course, was not the spammer; it was his client.

Mass promotional email is gratuitous, intrusive, and.... er, a bit boorish. It's opt-out, not opt-in, and it assumes assent where little is present. Thai people do not use it. Organizations which value their relationship with a community positively eschew it.

Have you ever had a mass promotional email from Central Festival? Laguna Phuket? Lotus? *The Nation*? Dulwich? IBAP, or any Rotary or Lions club?

That's because they respect you, understand the value of goodwill, and do not wish to wind up on your twit list. – **The Editor**

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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.

Plans to limit the number and location of beach chairs on Phuket's shores (see News pages), as well as umbrellas and massage ladies, appear to fall foul of tourist opinion.

Of all the letters received by the *Gazette* on the subject, not one expressed favor for the plans. Correspondents were unanimous that the beaches – Patong in particular – should have the old facilities restored. The letters below are typical of readers' opinions.

I read with dismay that Patong Municipality intends to control or ban the use of deckchairs and umbrellas on the beaches.

What a ridiculous idea. Surely, 99.9% of tourists come from cold countries and that means that their skin is white and will burn easily under the Thai sun. The deckchairs – and the umbrellas – allow us to go to the beach and enjoy the open air, without getting totally burned on Day 1 of our holiday.

Control the number if you must, but do not ban them. Please do not turn Thailand into a mirror of Singapore. Singapore is sterile and unfriendly and I would not go there even if I won a free trip.

I have been to Patong seven times and I want to keep coming back, but I will look elsewhere if this ridiculous rule is introduced.

John Dedman
Perth

To those in authority in Patong, please realize that Scandinavian and other fair-skinned people cannot lie on a beach in the sun in Phuket without umbrellas.

We are simply not used to such strong sunshine.

Matti Naumanen
Finland

As a regular visitor to beautiful Phuket, I would like to say that the 7,000 beach chairs, the vendors and the other people on the beach are all parts of the reason I have come to Phuket – and will do so again in February.

Please don't allow the terrible tragedy of the tsunami to usher in rushed changes to a very special part of the world.

Colin
Australia

There have been many reports that, since the tsunami struck, beach vendors will not be allowed to rebuild in Patong, Kamala and Karon Beaches.

Is it the policy of the politicians in Phuket to further disenfranchise those who have already been devastated by this tragic situation?

Bethany Duffy

At lunch the other day, my friends and I were remarking on how Phuket's beaches reminded us of 20 years ago.

One fellow suggested a row of palm trees, coconut trees, planted every three meters, making an attractive line following the curve of the bay ... every bay.

The chairs and parasols would be behind that line. The restaurants and hotels would be behind the line of trees. The authorities would have a visual line to patrol, the rule of placement would be clear, and should the unheard of happen again, the trees would help break the wave.

Sunbathers could rent straw mats and lie in front of the palm trees. That way there would be room to walk along the beach, for children to play and for everyone to swim and enjoy themselves.

Could we do that?

Pat Michel

I have just read the article regarding plans to keep beach chairs and umbrellas from beaches in Phuket (see *News* current issue) and must say that one sign that Patong is getting back to normal would be the re-appearance of beach chairs and loungers on the beach.

The beach should be returned to the way it was before the tsunami struck, and that of course means with chairs and umbrellas.

The island's tourist recovery plan is insane and I foresee Phuket losing a lot of tourists if the proposal is actually implemented.

Tourists really do want to have these facilities, but why does no one consult the tourists? I am certain that every one of them would say the same thing: bring back the beach chairs and umbrellas, as well as massage ladies and other beach workers.

The authorities must instigate this now, not later.

Tourists will start arriving here from the beginning of February – my family and I will be arriving in Phuket on January 31 – and they will be disappointed to see the beaches so devoid of facilities.

If you want quiet beaches, you will find them at other places.

Please believe what I say; this issue is already a popular one on Internet discussion forums.

Ken Soerensen
Denmark

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.

Time to accept the painful truth

In the aftermath of the tsunami it is my sincere hope that someone out there in authority will take note of four points I should like to make:

- It is pointless and maybe even counterproductive to blow our own trumpet about how quickly the six southern provinces will recover.

In the face of the ongoing human tragedy, this may seem, to many here and abroad, to be insensitive and crass. The first duty, for the present, is to alleviate human tragedy, and observe a decent period of mourning.

Many hotels and resorts were unharmed – I mean, not a single beach chair, not a leaf on a tree was damaged – yet bookings have fallen drastically, and these hotels are almost empty.

It would be best for us to accept the truth, to be considerate to the feelings of those who have lost loved ones and not to promote the destinations at least for the time being.

If we do things correctly we shall not only win visitors' confidence but also their hearts.

- The proposed tsunami warning system must first be installed or at least appear to be well in train. Then our efforts to convince our target audience will be successful.

- It should be understood by all involved in future planning, that two categories of buildings did not suffer casualties or damage whatsoever. The first are those located sufficiently inland, and how far back inland depends on each specific location, and secondly virtually all properties located on the East coast.

So, for example at Patong, beyond a certain distance from the beach, there was no damage. There have been erroneous reports that Phi Phi was entirely washed away. As with Phuket, those on the east side of Phi Phi were unharmed. These observations are well known facts to the locals, and must be taken in earnest consideration when constructing for the future.

- It is true that this is an opportunity to introduce proper control and zoning. At the same time, many encroachers are also people who have lost homes and livelihoods. They must not be excluded from the economic recovery being planned; they must be given alternatives, must be given priority. We must do what we should have done, but compassionately and in a Thai way.

I am in total agreement with trying to achieve a swift recovery, but let us do it the right way, the noble way.

Tira
Cape Panwa, Phuket

Prayers and concern from Down Under

I just want the people of Phuket to know that they are in the prayers of all Australians.

Having holidayed in Patong, we are worried about



Villagers in Ban Sai Khao await the arrival of relief supplies, courtesy of expatriates living in Phuket.

many of the locals we made friends with. We stayed at the Horizon Beach Resort Hotel, and we wonder about the staff and the traders nearby.

As the days pass we are becoming more and more concerned about these people. Is there a way we can find out if they are safe or in need of assistance? We feel so helpless here.

Thank you for your excellent paper, the information is valued.

Kathy Crook
Australia

More offers of help

My wife and I had been planning to spend six months in Phuket from the end of January, and now we would like to spend the time helping in any way possible to rebuild the lives of Thai people who have lost their livelihoods as a result of the tsunami.

We are looking at raising funds from friends in Australia and the US, and putting together a program to help the areas of greatest need. We would appreciate ideas and information that would help us in our efforts.

I lived in Thailand for five years up till December 1999, and have a great affection for the vast majority of Thai people.

Hayden Wills
Brisbane

Thoughts for my friends

I know that many people are concerned as to the fate of loved ones and friends but I am worried about three people in Karon: Wan the beach chair lady; Yin the refreshment stall girl; and Chang the Thai massage lady.

I hope and pray that they are safe and that I will meet up with them when I return in February.

Malc

The best way to help

We were so very sorry to hear of the dreadful things that have happened to Phuket and other regions in Thailand, and other countries in the area.

We are due to come back to

Patong for a holiday next month. What are things like there at the moment? We would not like to come back and be in the way of relief and rebuilding projects on your beautiful island.

Cindy Etherington
and Family

Flying in to aid

My friend James Kormos has vacation time coming up in mid-to-late January and would like to volunteer to help with the tsunami disaster relief efforts in Phuket for a week.

He is a flight attendant and can get to Phuket and back without assistance. However, once in Phuket, he needs to know who he should contact in order to be of the most assistance.

He also needs to know what he should bring, so that he is not a burden to the relief efforts.

James is strong and in good health and is a seasoned traveler. He speaks fluent English and German, and has a limited knowledge of Hungarian.

Any information you could provide would be greatly appreciated.

Our thoughts are with you at this difficult time.

Heather Champagne
California

Positive spin leaves negative image

The recent *Gazette* headline "Life goes on" encompassed everything that needed to be said about the relief effort and clearly underscored for me the ineptitude and incompetence of the Thai government.

As a tourist to Phuket who was on Patong Beach and saw the events unfold on December 26, I was touched by the generosity and spirit of the Thai people and voluntary organizations during this terrible catastrophe.

The way that ordinary Thais rallied to assist in donating blood, food, money and helping in the search for missing people and assisting in the cleanup was tremendous.

Which says it all. The first

few paragraphs of the article talked about the efforts of the ordinary citizens and nothing about the various government departments.

Watching the rescue then the relief efforts hours and days after the tragedy, I cannot help but wonder and feel sorry for the ordinary Thai people, because of the lack of support, leadership and organization by their government.

One could readily be forgiven for forming the impression that the Thai government was more concerned with image and playing down the incident in an attempt not to hurt their tourism industry, rather than getting support to their own local communities who badly needed direction and support the most.

By doing so, however, they may have inadvertently damaged the very image and industry that they tried so much to protect.

On the day the waves hit the beaches in Phuket, I waited and waited for some sort of organized rescue and relief effort to kick into action.

What I saw was a valiant but frankly under-resourced effort from localized services who did their best to cope with a catastrophe of unprecedented scale.

In the days following the tragedy, no well-organized teams were put together to conduct a coordinated response and it was seemingly left to exhausted, already overburdened civilians to get on with the relief effort.

It was only after days of an increasing death toll and exposure to the real extent of the devastation that took place, that it must have occurred to someone that it might be a good idea to bring the armed forces in to assist.

Whilst they might not be the best equipped to deal with natural disasters, they still have the equipment and the organization to co-ordinate a relief effort.

I fully appreciate that this is one of the largest natural disasters that has befallen the area and that no one could possibly have been prepared for the extent of destruction that occurred.

However, it is incompetence, ineptitude and lack of leadership that has stymied relief efforts.

I love Thailand and I love the Thai people, but I feel that they have been let down.

I, for one, will be coming back to Thailand.

However, many people I have spoken to may decide differently – not because they fear another tsunami, but because they might not feel comfortable bringing themselves and their families to a place where the government seems to be more concerned with image and less with assisting local communities in relief efforts following a natural disaster.

Joe Gruba
Kuwait

FCO finally sounds the right note

Many people in the UK, myself included, sent emails to Britain's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), urging them to lift their travel advisory on Phuket.

The advice was unnecessary, given that many areas are relatively undamaged, and the local people have done such an extraordinary job of clearing things up and getting hotels open again.

The French Government amended its advice some time earlier.

It was also clear that economic recovery would take far longer if people's insurance was declared invalid by an ill-informed advisory notice.

So I was delighted when the FCO updated its advice, recommending only that people stay away from Khao Lak and Phi Phi.

We shall be seeing our new house in Nai Harn for the first time in March.

As a teacher, I would like to help in a school for a couple of days, and also help with books and equipment.

Do you have any suggestions?

Mike Reeves
UK

The scum of scam spam strike again

While the good people of the world are all pitching in and offering what help they can to those who have suffered from the tsunami, email scammers and fraudsters have fine-tuned their efforts to con money from people who believe that it will go to those in need.

Indeed, these lowest of the low started circulating scam emails as early as December 27, just one day after the catastrophic waves hit. The rest of the online fraud community soon caught on, and the number and variety of tsunami scam emails landing in people's inboxes grew so fast in the following days that the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) issued a "fraud alert" on January 5.

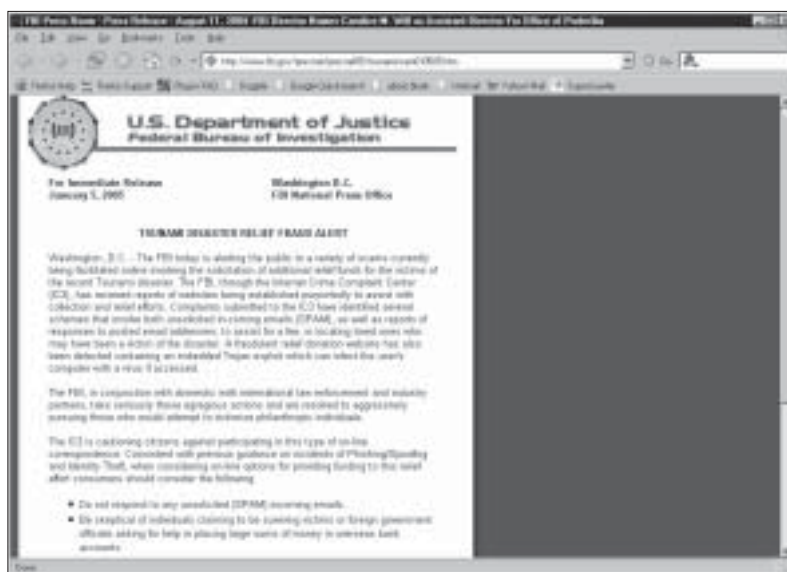
Most of the scam emails follow the usual pattern, similar to the long-running Nigerian fraud scam, appealing for people to provide personal or financial information in an effort to retrieve large amounts of inheritance funds purportedly tied up because of the tsunami.

One of the first tsunami scam emails to do the rounds claims to be from a victim from Banda Aceh Province, in Indonesia. The email, from "Marco Nula", asks for "assistance at clearing my late father's money".

It states: "If you are business oriented with experience in Holiday, Hotel and Resort business or have some idea on how to run a groceries shop, I am willing to recommit the money for the full benefit of all (My Sister you and I).

"...Apart from that I shall be willing to give a negotiable percentage of the money to you otherwise or alternatively, please contact me on my email address as the telephone system is not functioning at the moment."

Another popular fraud email simply asks for money to be deposited into an overseas bank account to support the tsunami relief effort.



The number of tsunami-related scam emails grew so fast after the event that the FBI issued this fraud alert on January 5.

KHUN WOODY'S COMPUTER

Some of the other scam emails are more insidious, with links to either "false websites" or to websites that pretend to be legitimate relief organizations asking for donations. The FBI noted that at least one such website harbored a virus that could infect your computer, adding injury to insult.

The most despicable of the scam emails offer, for a fee, to locate loved ones who may have been victims of the tsunami.

The easiest way to spot one of these scam emails is that it arrives unsolicited from a person you have no connection with. If you have doubts, though, a quick search on Google will produce links to reports of the most popular scam emails doing the rounds. In particular, Sophos (www.sophos.com) and Scambusters (www.scambusters.com) are good websites to check the latest scams.

More importantly, to protect yourself and to save others from receiving scam spam, do not respond to any unsolicited incoming emails, and be skeptical of individuals claiming to be surviving victims or foreign government officials asking for help in placing large sums of money in overseas bank accounts.

Be very suspicious of emails that claim to show pictures of the disaster areas in attached files, as the files may contain viruses. Open attachments only if they come from people you know.

As I've said before, install and maintain a good anti-virus software product – any of the major packages are OK. The important thing is to keep the virus information up to date by installing any updates or patches. Symantec has LiveUpdate to do this for Norton-brand products

and other manufacturers have similar features.

Be careful of any email attachment you receive, regardless of who it appears to come from, as the sender's address in spam is usually faked, so you can't rely on it.

Although recent versions of Outlook block most attachments, virus writers are getting around Outlook's defenses, so don't rely on this system. Use an up-to-date anti-virus package. Even if you believe the attachment is genuine, don't double-click on the file. Instead, save it to your hard drive then use your anti-virus software to check it before opening.

If a particular spam email really gets your goat, feel free to report it to the Internet Crime Complaint Center, found at www.ic3.gov – they'll keep track of it and pass it on to law-enforcement authorities.

If you want to contribute to the relief effort, there are two important factors in choosing who to donate money, food or other necessities to: How trustworthy are the people or the organization? And how transparent are they in terms of demonstrating that people in need receive your donations?

Many local residents and organizations are co-ordinating relief projects, including the Rotary Club of Patong Beach (www.rotarypatong.org). For details of the latest efforts, keep an eye out for news or bulletins posted on the *Phuket Gazette* website, or simply talk to your neighbors to find out who and what they know.

To make a donation to people in need outside of Thailand, it is probably best to contact an internationally recognized aid agency, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (www.icrc.org) or UNICEF (www.supportunicef.org). Just don't get fooled by the crooks.

– Woody Leonhard
woody@khunwoody.com

Origins of the Cambodian sinkhole

Bookshelves groan under the weight of books written about Cambodia's short-lived (1975-1979) Khmer Rouge regime. But what of the Vietnamese-backed interim government, the People's Republic of Kampuchea, that lasted for 13 years till UNTAC (the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia) arrived in 1992 to, among other duties, arrange democratic elections?

Evan Gottesman fills a critical gap in *Cambodia After the Khmer Rouge*, subtitled *Inside the Politics of Nation Building* (Silkworm Books, Chiang Mai, 2004, 428pp).

Having spent three years in Phnom Penh as deputy director of the American Bar Association Cambodia Law and Democracy Project, Gottesman investigates the workings of a secretive regime, heavily under the influence of Stalinist "advisers" from Vietnam, and describes how the Cambodian leaders struggled to find their own identity.

Delving into the minutes of government policy meetings and interviewing the principal characters, Gottesman reveals how the main features of the Cambodian government today – free-wheeling capitalism, ingrained patronage, rampant corruption and legal impunity – were formed in the crucible of the 13 years before the UN-monitored election.

This is a scholarly work, with no fewer than 50 pages of footnotes, but is never boring for anyone with an interest in modern Cambodian history. The sections on civil war, politics and economics are brilliantly organized and clearly laid out.

Despite their many flaws, Hun Sen and Chea Sim emerge as the pragmatic heroes of a subtle struggle against Vietnamese colonialism and Communist orthodoxy. In January 1979, the young Cambodian leaders were faced with the daunting prospect of rebuilding a nation from scratch.

The last thing the Cambodian people wanted was another dose of communism and all attempts by the Vietnamese occupation authorities to collectivize the economy were doomed to failure. Even many of the Vietnamese, southerners mainly, saw the lucrative advantages in setting up a free-trade system for the country's rice, timber, rubber and fishery resources.

Into this economic vacuum arose pragmatic client-patronage networks, mastered by Chea Sim and Hun Sen. They were members of the "Eastern cadres" who had fled into Vietnam after the early Khmer Rouge purges.

The other faction were ideologically rigid Cambodian cadres who had lived for many years in North Vietnam. Their importance lessened with the years as the Vietnamese, preparing to withdraw their troops from Cambodia, put their trust in Hun Sen, the new prime minister who was both flexible and efficient.

The downside of this political and economic liberty is that, in the scramble for international trade and investment, Hun Sen and his colleagues neglected to establish the rule of law, an independent judiciary or an effective police force.

"Hun Sen and the rest of the current Cambodian leadership are the beneficiaries of the political and economic system that evolved in the 1980s," writes Gottesman. "Civil servants whose salaries are too low to support themselves and their families are allowed to pocket a percentage of any fines, taxes, fees, or bribes that they impose on the citizenry ... Powerful patrons have little incentive to punish their own loyalists. As long as the money flows, officials act with impunity – engaging in theft, extortion, or worse."

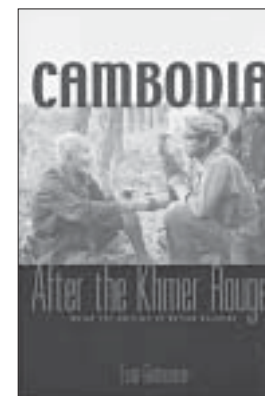
This is the current situation in Cambodia, whose economy depends on massive doses of foreign aid, which is systemically siphoned off by corruption. Despite a free press, a political opposition and a plethora of human rights organizations, Cambodia remains a feudal state that is rapidly devouring its own environment.

As long as the money keeps rolling in, few care. Everything else is cosmetic.

"No Berlin Wall fell in Cambodia," the author writes. "No Vaclav Havel or Lech Walesa came to power. The regime did not collapse; it negotiated the terms of its own survival. Impoverished and isolated, the SOC [State of Cambodia] understood that it needed legitimacy and assistance from the United Nations and from the West. This meant complying with the representations of the international community when necessary, and protecting power in undemocratic and frequently violent ways, when possible."

Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt





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Hoteliers call for greater govt support

By Anongnat Sartpisut

PHUKET: Although the government has been praised for its handling of the tsunami relief effort, hoteliers are calling for faster, more comprehensive and more effective support, with some saying that the government is not doing enough.

To aid affected businesses, the Bank of Thailand (BoT) decided on January 16 to establish a system allowing tsunami-affected businesses to get loans at interest rates of no more than 2% a year.

These loans would be channeled through the country's commercial banks, which would repay the BoT at a rate of just 0.01% a year, Prasuksup Puangso-korn, Division Executive in the BoT's credit and refinancing division, told the *Gazette*.

But this loan plan has yet to become reality. Banks are not obliged to join the scheme; those that do so must collate information on borrowers seeking post-tsunami loans and submit this information to the BoT before February 28.

K. Prasuksup said that the BoT would give loan requests from commercial banks top priority, disbursing the funds within a day of receipt of a request.

In the meantime, however, most commercial banks continue to offer loans at the same rates as before the tsunami – 5% to 8% a year.

ML Vitaya Chakrabandhu, owner of Le Meridien Khao Lak, which suffered

damage from the wave estimated at 500 million baht, criticized the government for not being supportive enough.

"We urgently need a loan to rebuild the hotel. We know that the government is going to offer soft loans, but we've found that it is very difficult to get such a loan quickly, and the rate [of 2%] is too high," he said.

"We asked for a reconstruction loan [from our bank] in the week after the tsunami, but it has still not been approved. What we need is for the government to offer interest-free loans until the tourists return in large numbers. If we can attract guests, then we will be able to pay off loans and interest as we would normally."

ML Vitaya also criticized a supposed price freeze on building supplies as ineffective. "The Internal Trade Office (ITO) has asked for prices of construction materials to be kept the same [as before the tsunami], but in reality the prices are still moving according to market principles, and are being influenced by high demand."

"We are finding it difficult to source materials in Khao Lak, as most suppliers here were affected by the tsunami," he added. "When we order materials, some shop owners say they don't have enough stock, and if we order from Phuket or Surat Thani, it takes time and the transportation costs too much."

"In short, we like the government policy, but we also need action," ML Vitaya said.

Siriruk Lirawan, Technical Officer at the ITO in Phuket, explained that on January 7 the ITO had asked construction material suppliers in the six tsunami-affected provinces to freeze prices of all construction materials until June 30. But, she explained, there is no legal requirement for shops to cooperate, and no legal sanctions for non-compliance.

"We are in an open market, and this situation will see high demand. As part of one of many solutions, we have also asked suppliers to display prices on their products."

"But in the end it is the customers who must decide whether the price of a product is justified," she said.

K. Siriruk noted, however, that the ITO in Phuket is monitoring the prices charged by 28 construction materials suppliers on the island, and had found that prices at those stores have either fallen since January 7 or had stayed the same as before the tsunami.

"We monitor the prices of construction materials every day, and [the prices of] wood, steel and other [building] materials have stayed the same."

"We have awarded blue pennants to the shops that are cooperating with the price freeze," she added.

Wisut Kasayapanand, Manager of the Kamala Beach Resort, which sustained about 80 million baht in damage from the tsunami, not only called for more effective price regulation of building supplies,

but also for the government to support small traders running businesses aimed at tourists.

He said, "The government should help by lowering taxes and interest rates for shops near hotels. We are trying to re-open as quickly as possible to encourage nearby shop owners to start trading again. If we opened alone and ignored the surrounding area, we would not survive."

Wolfgang Meusburger, General Manager of the Holiday Inn Resort in Patong, which sustained more than 100 million baht in damage and is now closed for repairs, also called for the government to take a broad perspective in its support of affected people and businesses.

"The government should ensure that the infrastructure in Phuket is [fully] restored as soon as possible, and should focus on reconstruction of Patong as a beach destination."

"They should make sure that the Patong beachfront is built up properly, and learn from the past."

"They should make the beach road more beautiful, and easy to walk along, with car parking and better public transport. It would be wonderful if they could do that," he said.

Mr Meusburger said that financial assistance for people who have lost jobs should also be a priority. "The government should help people who have lost their jobs to ensure that those people can have income," he stressed.

A time when money really did talk

The Expat Tsunami Fund Committee (ETFC) was responsible for raising over a million baht at a function at The Green Man Pub and Restaurant on January 2.

The aim of the fund is to assist – directly – the Thai victims of the tsunami without using intermediate organizations.

In the days after the fundraiser, I heard that the fund was still looking for worthwhile beneficiaries and that a fishing village north of Khao Lak appeared to be just that.

The village in question is Baan Nam Kem or, in English, Saltwater Village. The villagers were desperately in need of new fishing nets and food, including baby formula.

Everyone has seen the footage of the damage at Khao Lak, and even of the waves approaching the area. The camera may not lie but I have noted before that one simply does not get a true impression of the daunting size of waves from mere images.

What follows here is a brief account of a visit to the area and also an account of the expenditure of the 60,000 baht allocated by the ETFC to aid Baan Nam Kem.

I am a firm believer in the old adage that if you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day but if you teach him to fish, he can feed himself for a lifetime.

That was exactly the situa-

tion at Baan Nam Kem. Although they needed food, they needed to start fishing again to make the community – to an extent – more self-sufficient.

A number of the Thai trawlers at the village were undamaged by the tsunami but all had lost their fishing gear. A Thai colleague, K. Lek, took responsibility for buying the raw materials and equipment required for making nets. He approached the matter intelligently and practically, co-opting a retired fisherman to assist him with the technical details.

For just over 54,000 baht, K. Lek was able to buy enough material to make 48 nets. However, for the style of fishing practiced here, it takes eight of these nets joined together to make one large net. The fishermen therefore manufactured six full nets. A good start.

The balance of around 5,500 baht allowed us to buy baby formula, bottles and some food. It didn't seem sufficient, so we found some more funds to bulk the donation somewhat.

By the early afternoon of January 10, we were ready for the off in Mike Hardy's fully-laden truck.

Baan Nam Kem had been a thriving village of 30 sois with brick houses. It is now a series of sois but with little still standing. Most of the debris has been



MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson

removed, leaving empty lots where buildings once stood.

I estimate that 10% - 15% of the buildings survived, albeit severely damaged. A handful remained – outwardly, at least – unscathed.

There was, before the tsunami, a three-kilometer-long island west of Baan Nam Kem. But no more. The sea has claimed it.

Despite all this, Baan Nam Kem is no ghost town. It is a place of intense activity. We were

received with grave courtesy and given detailed receipts for everything we donated.

The women and children of the village had dispersed to surrounding areas but were due to return on January 12. Everybody from the village was going to be accommodated in the local school.

In Phuket, Kamala appears to have suffered a similar type – though not scale – of damage; the magnitude of destruction in Khao Lak and at Baan Nam Kem must be seen to be believed. No words or images will ever portray it accurately.

We will be making another trip to deliver more nets of a different configuration – these ones are 200 meters long – so that

more boats can get back in the water, more people can back to work and the Baan Nam Kem community can take more steps back toward normality.

This column is titled "Money Talks" and, for once, it did.

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



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From page 10

Thoughts of guilt began to emerge; I felt that I did not deserve to be alive at all. When I calmed down, the water level began to fall and the water around me started to bubble like a Jacuzzi. I was afraid that it could be gas, and I was terrified of another wave, so I told everybody around me it would be best if we climbed up onto the roof where the French guy was standing, still calling out for his daughter.

We moved over to the broken house, and half way up I heard the sound of running water again behind me. I panicked as I was sure that another wave was coming to take the rest of us.

I begged the Frenchman to pull me up fast. He helped me up, and one by one we pulled up the few survivors stranded near that house, along with Johan and Maew.

We found some wet clothes and gave them to the naked Swedes so they could cover themselves up a little. All of us had cuts and bruises – but we were alive.

Yet looking around at all the havoc and destruction, it did not feel good to be alive at all. There was nothing left. All buildings, resorts and houses were gone. All that was left was black and dark gray debris, car wrecks, broken trees and a few palm trees that somehow remained standing.

We decided to stay on the roof for a while as a precaution, because it seemed possible that another wave could come. We did not speak much. A Filipina girl who had swallowed a lot of water threw up. Everybody just sat there and tried to cope with what had happened.

The French guy left to look for his daughter; I tried to convince him that it would be safer to wait, but he just ran away towards the ruins.

From time to time we could hear people screaming for help, but it was hard to determine where the voices came from; the sound of the ocean was too loud.

After more than two hours, we climbed down and walked toward the highway, which was covered with debris, broken cars, broken motorbikes, destroyed furniture and dead bodies. It looked like a war zone.

Thai people, along with a few police officers, tried to create

some kind of order. Every surviving person in the area was ordered to move on towards the Chong Fah waterfall, where it would be safe. Another wave was expected, they said, and everybody who could move ran towards the mountains.

On the way, we picked up some clothes on the street to cover ourselves up. I bandaged the leg of a foreign woman, who had deep cuts in her right leg. Shortly after, she was taken to safety in a minivan. We drank what we could find on the way up. All the shops were destroyed; bottles of Coke, Sprite, Fanta and water were scattered all around us.

Johan and I decided to stay together because, as he said, we shared the same fate. That was when it hit me like a hammer:

What about Lad? Would she be safe in Phuket? I guessed that the whole coastline must have been hit just as hard as Bang Niang. Remembering the intense force of the water, breaking everything in its path, taking my parents away and almost drowning me, I was sure that at least a million people must be dead.

I tried to get comfort from Johan, asking him whether he thought Phuket had survived. He said yes, and I felt a little better, but the uncertainty over the fate of my fiancée and our unborn child started to drill a hole into my brain.

If she were gone too, I thought, there would be no reason to go on living in Thailand. Perhaps I would move to Canada and live in the mountains, as far from the sea as possible.

A deep and heavy hatred towards the sea welled up in my thoughts. I told Johan that I would never live near the water again, and would return to the shore just one last time to spit into the sea, curse it and lash it with a stick. I hated the water, the sea, the beach and felt helpless like a little child. We both cried silently as we walked toward the waterfall.

A pickup truck stopped and

carried us the rest of the way. The park ranger station was crowded with injured survivors, and blood covered the floor everywhere. I forgot self-pity for a while and tried to give comfort to a few people.

An Italian man was sitting in a crooked position, breathing heavily and loudly. I calmed him down and told him to move into a more comfortable position and to take deep, slow breaths. He felt better after a few minutes and I moved on to see if any more friends and neighbors had survived.

I found Peter, a Swedish friend who had been living in a house next to mine. Peter had a head wound and several cuts and bruises. But at least he, his wife Monica and their 12-year-old daughter had made it. Yet there was no sign of their 11-year-old son Richard.

No sign, either, of neighbors Marie and Thomas or their son Phillip. Peter was crying and we hugged, trying to comfort each other. We still could not believe what had just

happened. It had all been paradise until just a few hours ago. Peter's daughter Sandra was in bad shape. She was feverish and was trembling in her sleep.

Slowly but steadily I could feel my body again, bruised and battered. I felt like a heavyweight boxer after going 12 hard rounds. Adrenaline depleted, I had to sit down. I could no longer move around.

Yet I did have enough energy left to shout frantically at a Thai guy with Rastafarian hairstyle who arrived at the scene joking and laughing loudly with friends. I told him, in Thai, to shut up, because there were people here who had lost children and family members and that this was not the time for his stupid jokes. Had he not stopped, I believe I would have killed him.

All my hatred towards the sea, all my anger about this terrible

A deep and heavy hatred towards the sea welled up in my thoughts. I told Johan that I would never live near the water again, and would return to the shore just one last time to spit into the sea, curse it and lash it with a stick.

tragedy would have been released in deadly blows wasted on a person who had no sense of humanity in general.

I still can't believe today that a person who had passed dead children lying on the streets, seeing the whole area destroyed, and people crying and hurt all around him could laugh loudly. Perhaps it was his own kind of defense mechanism, I don't know. I just know that I was deeply shocked and disappointed by this one single person.

We met a few more friends who made it, but nobody was in the mood for conversation. We just sat there and stared into space.

Many hours later, Johan and I decided to go back to Bang Niang Beach and perhaps search for our relatives. We made it just a few hundred meters towards the beach before realizing that there was no way we could make it to our houses, as the way was completely blocked by debris, wrecked cars, bits of roof, trees, corpses and the ponds of a nearby shrimp farm with bodies floating in them.

On our way we found our cars, now just mangled wrecks. We tried to spot our houses from the distance, but it was impossible; there was nothing left, just a few walls here and there. The whole beach was unrecognizable.

On the way we met a Thai construction worker, Panya, a good friend. He instantly offered to help us, gave us money to survive and took us to his home, where we could take showers and get some fresh clothes.

Shortly after, I got great news. My fiancée's car had been seen at the viewpoint and it was certain that she was alive. I was massively relieved to hear that and totally happy, though I also felt sorry for Johan, who's fiancée was by now feared dead.

I did not see Lad again until 36 hours later. We had been searching for each other by visiting all the nearby hospitals, yet kept missing each other.

Johan and I tried to talk about what the future would bring and how to cope with our losses. That night, we did not find much sleep on the floor in Panya's house, but at least a comfortable feeling of being safe started to settle in.

I cried a lot that night over the many hours I just lay there awake, with just a few short period of restive sleep in between. I just hoped that my parents had gone to a better place, because Earth seemed like Hell right now.

I hoped to find them in a dream, but when I finally fell asleep there was just darkness.

If I could make a wish, and if something like reincarnation is a reality, I would wish to be reborn as the son of those exact same parents so that I could tell them just one more time just how much I loved them.

Rugby 10s to raise funds for tsunami orphans

PHUKET: The 7th AirAsia International Phuket Rugby 10s will be held at the Karon Municipal Stadium on May 28 and 29, with the profits going to an scholarship fund for orphans.

Patrick Cotter, Chairman of the Phuket Vagabonds RFC, said, "We plan to set up a scholarship fund for children orphaned [by the tsunami] to ensure that they can at least get a good education to help them through this ordeal."

"To this end the AirAsia Phuket International Rugby 10s will be raising donations for the fund, not just this year, but for the foreseeable future."

He added, "The annual Phuket AirAsia International Rugby 10s is seen as a possible conduit for [helping these children], especially as the timing of the [event] in May will come as international interest in the victims of the tsunami subsides."

Mr Cotter added that sports travel agents Gullivers, for example, have offered to arrange for former England international and after-dinner speaker Gareth Chilcott to host a dinner on the Monday evening following the 10s. Mr Chilcott will be en-route to New Zealand for the British Lions tour and has offered his services free.

Gullivers has also offered a "Lions package" as a raffle or auction prize. The package includes tickets for the first Lions test against the All Blacks at Christchurch on June 25 and the match against Manawatu, along with accommodation aboard the P&O cruise liner *Pacific Sky*.

Although the deadline for entering the tournament is April 30, Mr Cotter has urged teams to register early. Entry is US\$400 per team, of which US\$100 will go to the scholarship fund.

Anyone interested in the proposed Gareth Chilcott dinner should also contact Mr Cotter as soon as possible, so that arrangements can be made.

For more information about the Rugby 10s tournament or other fund-raising efforts in Phuket's rugby community, contact Patrick Cotter by email at: phuketvagabondsrfc@yahoo.co.uk



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Regatta to go ahead

PHANG NGA BAY: The 8th QBE Insurance Phang Nga Bay Regatta will take place as scheduled from February 9 to 13.

"The way to restore people's lives [after the tsunami] is to bring tourism back as quickly as possible. It is now time for the yachting community to give back..." the organizers announced in a press release.

The Phi Phi islands, which have suffered major damage, will not be a scheduled stop in this year's regatta. "As a sign of respect, an alternate destination is currently being decided upon. However, all proceeds collected by the regatta this year will be donated to the rebuilding of this magnificent island, which has in previous years played host to our event," the release said.



La Samudra won Cruising Class A in last year's Phang Nga Bay Regatta.

For sailors unable to take part in the regatta, donations may still be made. For more information or to make a donation, contact Andrew Craig (Tel: 01-7372812, Email: andrew@leadingedge-media.com) or Scott Duncanson (Tel: 01-8924992, Email: securicor@csloxinfo.com).

Sailing day aims to raise funds for tsunami victims

YACHT HAVEN: Sail training school and charterer Yachtpro will hold a charity sailing day on January 30 to raise funds for local victims of the December 26 tsunami, and to raise awareness that Phuket is operational.

Rob Williams, of Yachtpro, said, "The faster Phuket derives income from tourism, the faster the recovery will be for the Thai people in our area."

"My fear is that once the tourists affected by this disaster are gone, people will lose interest in the locals left behind, and they will suffer. This will help keep everything going."

The account details are: Account Name: Tsunami Recovery; Account Number: 021-2-57154-1; Bank: Bank of Asia; Branch: Phuket City; Address: 206 Phuket Rd, Muang, Phuket, 83000

Mr Williams added, "All proceeds will go to a Royal Charity. In this way we can ensure there will be no deductions of administration or other costs."

For more information contact Rob Williams at Yachtpro (Thailand) at Tel: 076-232960, Fax: 076-232961; Email: info@sailing-thailand.com, or through the website at www.sailing-thailand.com

OffShore wins Patong Darts League

PATONG: By winning 6-3 on the road in a make-up game against Didi's, OffShore Bar held off a strong late-season challenge by last season's winners Happy Days to win the Patong Darts League by just two points. In the only other game played on January 11, also a make-up match, Happy Days took all three points against Fat Boy Saloon.

Seven matches remained unplayed, but as these would not impact on the standings at the top of the table, they don't need to be played, league organizer Bez of Amigos Bar said.

By winning the league, OffShore won the right to host the winner's party at their bar at the mouth of Soi Nanai 2 on January 18. The league restarts

on January 25, with the same venues expected to take part.

Final standings: 1. Offshore (49pts); 2. Happy Days (47); 3. Nag's Head (45); 4. Piccadilly (42); 5. Queen Mary (38); 6. Champs (36); 7. Didi's (30); 8. Amigos (26); 9. Shakers (23); 10. Two Black Sheep (22); 11. Fat Boy Saloon (11); 12. Valhalla (6).




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The first "Behind the Wheel" column I wrote for the *Gazette*, back in May 2003, featured the then-new Volvo XC90, declaring the luxury sports utility vehicle (SUV) a "world beater".

And sure enough, the XC90 has dominated sales of SUVs in a number of markets, particularly its main target market, North America, where demand currently outstrips supply.

But the XC90 had one flaw: it was not equipped with a lazy V8 engine which, in the face of competition from SUV rivals BMW and Mercedes-Benz, has cost Volvo a number of sales.

All that changed in September last year when, at the Paris show, Volvo unveiled a new XC90, complete with a 311bhp (229kW) V8 motor, the first V8 in Volvo's history.

The 4.4-liter, Jaguar-derived V8 is a tight fit and, mounted transversely, is shoe-horned into the XC90's engine bay, which was originally designed to accommodate either a straight six, or the less conventional straight five, both also mounted transversely to save space.

Volvo has tried to stress the advantages of the location of the engine, saying: "A transverse engine is helpful in maintaining the frontal crumple zones in the XC90, thus not compromising protective safety."

In addition, the engine meets the stringent American ULEV (ultra-low emission vehicle) standards, something no other gasoline V8 so far has managed to achieve.

The ULEV requirements have been met by using four catalytic converters and adopting a higher idling speed of 1,250 rpm to ensure speedy warm-up.

The V8 is mated to a new six-speed automatic transmission and the latest permanent all-wheel drive (AWD).

Sixth gear is a pure over-



V8 puts Volvo back in front of the SUV game

drive, to reduce noise and fuel consumption. Using new software that cleverly integrates engine performance with the new transmission, the unit will not shift gear in a corner, but waits until the road straightens out.

It can also be used as a manual gearbox if preferred and there is a "lock-up" facility.

The new AWD system, developed in Sweden by Haldex, now incorporates "instant traction", which improves quick getaways on slippery surfaces.

By maintaining some re-

sidual torque in the system, Volvo claims a reduction in wheelspin of about one-seventh of a turn of the wheel. The AWD system has also been upgraded to accept the increase in torque produced by the big V8.

Safety has long been a by-word at Volvo, giving the firm a name for producing cars that protect occupants, and the XC90 is no exception.

A strong boron steel-reinforced passenger compartment is complemented by a sophisticated side-impact protection system.

There has been some controversy, in the US particularly, about the tendency of SUVs to

roll. The Volvo addresses this with an advanced anti-roll-over protection system incorporates gyro-sensors that will detect if the vehicle has leaned too far in one direction or the other, and will reduce torque and apply braking effect to the necessary wheels to counter the roll.

The new V8 XC90 is distinguished from its more mundane cousins by discreet V8 badges on the front grille and tailgate, newly-designed 18-inch wheels, twin tail pipes and body-color side moldings and door handles.

"Masculine without being macho; powerful without being

aggressive." That was how the original designer of the XC90 Peter Horbury described the SUV at its launch in 2002.

Horbury would no doubt attach similar images to the power of the V8 version. He is now head of design for Ford North America – Volvo is still searching for a replacement.

With a new Mercedes-Benz M-Class about to make its debut at the 2005 North American International Auto show in Detroit this month, and upgrades promised for the BMW X5 during the year, this particular segment of the luxury SUV market is set for a fierce battle. The new V8 XC90, though, is already ahead in the war.

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



By Jeff Heselwood

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Home of the Week

Rawai

Travertine marble and parquet flooring, skirtings and wooden blinds are just some of the details that add character and appeal to a four-bedroomed home on sale near Rawai and Nai Harn Beaches.

The property sits on a large plot on a cul-de-sac, in a location that is quiet, yet still close to beaches, shops and other amenities.

The ground floor features travertine marble flooring laid in an eye-catching diamond pattern, timber doors, skirtings, natural cedar wood blinds and, in the living area, a bar.

The lounge opens onto a terrace and the adjoining dining room is spacious, light and airy. Next to it is a U-shaped, well-equipped Western-style kitchen, with smart black granite bench

The appeal is in the detail



tops, timber cupboards and stainless steel appliances. There is also a guest bathroom on this floor.

On the upper level, which features parquet floors, are three roomy bedrooms, complete with

balconies overlooking the garden, and two bathrooms, one with a full-sized bath.

In the garden, which has an infinity-edge swimming pool, there is a freestanding guest suite, consisting of a bedroom and ensuite bathroom.

The house has car parking space for two vehicles under the main roof and a large tropical garden.

Water is supplied from a large water tower. The house also has several air conditioners and ceiling fans, single phase electricity and a hot water system.

The land title is Chanote and the asking price is 12.5 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.

Set in front of the house is an infinity-edge swimming pool.



The property sits on a large plot on a no-through road, offering privacy within minutes of Nai Harn and Rawai Beaches.

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Construction Update

by Anongnat Sartpisut

Chalong villas by the bay

CHALONG: Work is continuing on the 326-million-baht Chalong Beach Villa development, sited on 10 rai of beachfront land about 1.3 kilometers south of Chalong Circle, with the first show home expected to be ready for viewing next month.

Developers Chalong Beach Villa Company Ltd broke ground on the 16-unit seaside residential project in August 2004, and are on target to complete the project by the end of 2006.

Project Manager Suttipunt Kao-Umpaipunt said that the development offers an alternative to other villa projects on the island, many of which are clustered around golf courses or in hilly locations.

The project comprises villas of three different design schemes, all of which offer prospective buyers customized interiors to meet their own specific needs.

All are built on lots with minimum area of 800 square meters.

The single-story Chaiyapluk design offers three bedrooms, four bathrooms, living room, dining room, maid's quarters and a kitchen. All are located with direct sea views and cover 448sqm. Four units will be available at prices starting at 24 million baht.

K. Suttipunt said that the



The Rachapluk design – the largest in the Chalong Beach Villa portfolio – has four bedrooms and a 32sqm swimming pool. Scandinavians and Singaporeans will be part of the target market.

Chaiyapluk design will include ventilation blocks and lighting that will create a warm and spacious atmosphere, especially in the evening.

The two-story Rachavadee units will cover 398sqm and be built in a style that combines Thai and Sino-Portuguese design elements.

Each will comprise three bedrooms, four bathrooms and a WC, living room, dining room, maid's quarters and kitchen. Prices start at 19 million baht and eight units will be built in this style, all with sea views from the second story.

The largest design, the Rachapluk, is a two-story Thai-style design covering 580sqm, also with second-story sea views. Four units are planned, each with three bedrooms, four bathrooms, living room, dining room, maid's room and kitchen. Prices start at 20 million baht.

All of the homes will come with a 32-sqm swimming pool and sun deck with non-slip ceramic tiles.

The entire project will feature underground power supply and telephone lines, as well as parking and 24-hour security.

The developers are target-

ing Scandinavians, Malaysians, Singaporeans and people from Hong Kong seeking a vacation home and investment opportunity in Phuket.

"We have been getting very positive feedback so far... Four units have already been sold."

K. Suttipunt said most buyers viewed the tsunami as a "one-off" event and added that the projects' construction had not been badly affected by the disaster.

"We have been getting very positive feedback so far, with prospective buyers contacting us every day. Even though we have yet to officially begin marketing the project, four units have already been sold," he said.

While everyone on Phuket has an opinion of how the island will fare over the coming months, I decided to get a forecast from one of the most experienced people in the Thai travel industry – Bob James.

Bob is a long-time senior executive in the travel industry in Thailand and now runs his own company in Bangkok. He came to Thailand more than 10 years ago with the Southern Pacific Hotel group and, until a year ago, was Senior Vice-President and Director of Marketing for the Central Group of Hotels.

He is now Managing Director of Sheer Bravado, a graphic design and marketing company with blue-chip clients including Star Alliance, Pacific Islands Club, Sheraton Grande and East West Siam, and, in Phuket, the Hilton Phuket Arcadia Resort and Spa, Royal Phuket Marina and Thai Marine Leisure. He is also on the Executive Committee of the Tourism Council of Thailand.

"I was in the UK at the time [of the tsunami] and, naturally, glued to the TV, switching from channel to channel.

"What has made it difficult for the immediate future is that, around the world, we were seeing only the problem areas, and not being shown that most of Phuket was unaffected.

"Now, however, most people – including those in Bangkok – are becoming aware that most of Phuket is operating normally, so business will start to come back, though slowly at first," he said.

"The fact is, people in Bangkok are almost certainly thinking twice at the moment

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Bouncing back better than ever



"Investing in property is a question of confidence," says Bob James, travel industry guru.

LARGER THAN LIFE

By Graham Doven

about coming to Phuket. There would be a combination of feelings; many will feel that it would be premature or perhaps a little insensitive to come now.

"The message that Phuket needs to get across is that if you are a responsible and sympathetic person, you should come and support the industry."

Looking to the long term, Mr James said, "Phuket will come back stronger than before. The tourism industry has been se-

verely whacked almost every year since the financial crisis of 1997, but the increasing maturity and resilience of the Thai tourism industry in this very beautiful part of Thailand will eventually see major improvements.

"Every time there has been a setback, the industry has reorganized itself and come back stronger than ever."

There is always a benefit from disaster, Mr James pointed out, and many things are improved. Money starts coming into the community for rebuild-

"...most people – including those in Bangkok – are becoming aware that most of Phuket is operating normally..."

"I think we will see a little slowdown, but this will more likely be due to the fact that potential buyers are just delaying their trip until they feel comfortable with the situation, and this takes time."

"People took a little time to return to New York after the September 11 crisis, even though most of the city was fine," said Bob.

Indeed, he believes, Phuket will finish up better off and, in a few months, the island, its people and its economy will be stronger than ever.

ing and Phuket will finish up better off, he explained.

"The human spirit of the community will strengthen as people overcome the experience."

Bob pointed out that massive advertising campaigns are currently being planned, presenting the island to the world as more beautiful than ever, which will go a long way toward overcoming the negative effect of the early images.

What about Phuket's property industry?

"The property industry is quite different. Investing in property is a question of confidence, and if I had the opportunity to buy or if I were contemplating buying in Phuket, I wouldn't change my mind."

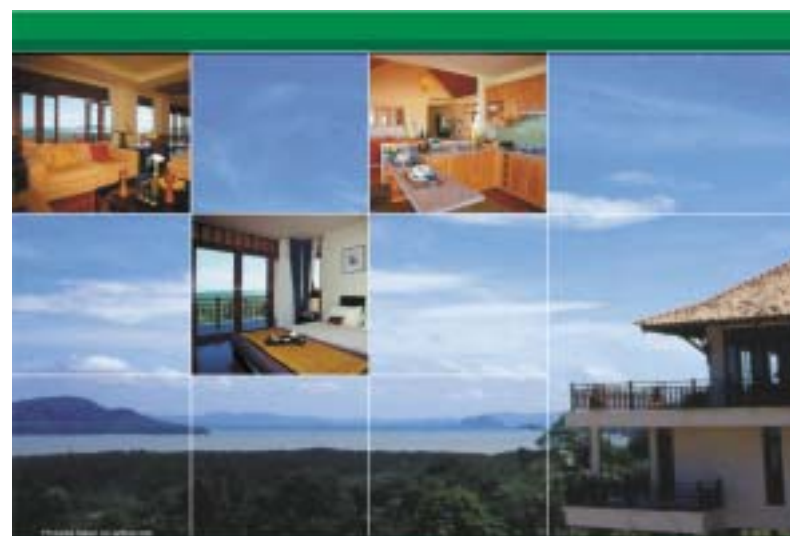
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Gardening

with Bloomin' Bert

My mum's a bit of a gardener, too. She lives in a completely different part of the world, Britain, which has an equally different climate. The idea of gardening over there is to wait years – rather than days – for results, always assuming that the frost doesn't kill everything off in the meantime.

Things that we take very much for granted here are grown by Britons as pot plants. British pot-plant cultivators feel a sense of achievement if their charges do little more than survive; the fact that anything actually grows and increases in size is a bonus. Something that grows several inches in a month in this neck of the woods will do well to achieve that rate of growth in a year over there.

Without any doubt, my mum's favorite flower is the orchid. This is one of those flowers that doesn't exactly thrive next to daffodils and tulips.

The first time she came to Thailand, I remember her reaction to how widespread orchids are here, and how freely they grow. At over £1 (around 70 baht) per bloom in the UK, you don't find a spray of them on your

Orchid you not ...



The ancient Greeks believed that the roots of orchids had aphrodisiac properties.

hotel bed there, nor expect to find one or two in your cocktail glass.

Nobody knows exactly how many different varieties of orchids exist, but the best estimates put the number between 25,000 and 35,000, making *orchidaceae* by far the biggest family of flowering plants.

Why "orchid"? You can thank Theophrastus, an ancient Greek Peripatetic philosopher – who was also something of a botanist – for that.

He gave the name to a group of bizarre plants that he came across because he thought the paired tubers of these plants closely resembled the delicate pair of parts of the masculine anatomy; *orkhis* in Greek.

Back then they also thought that orchids had aphrodisiac properties – that eating the tubers might "provoke Venus" and they would sire male children.

All orchids share a common theme – they're stunning. They seem to ooze "tropicalness", and are used in a thousand different ways to maximize this. They're often one of the first things given to visitors to Thailand – often in the form of a garland – and Thai weddings wouldn't be complete

without the guests having an orchid pinned to their clothing.

Most orchids that grow in this region are epiphytes. In other words, they don't need any soil to grow, just something to cling on to.

They are equally happy spreading their roots into an old coconut husk as they are in the cracks of a wall or rocky outcrop, or the cracked trunk of an old tree. They don't harm the tree in any way, they're just harmless squatters.

They seem to appear at every turn in Phuket. Most gardens have at least a few lurking somewhere, and the hotels and restaurants would look incomplete without orchids sitting in the background. The most unlikely of spots can have the most abundant orchid collections.

If you ever fancy a beer at Rawai Beach, call in at the Sunshine Bar, run by a lovely lady called Jim. Yes, Jim. This lady is obviously an orchid nut and she has dozens of varieties there, all

just quietly minding their own business. She's certainly doing something right, as they're magnificent.

That's the wonderful thing about this plant. It looks after itself. You'll read testimonies from experts in the field who will insist on certain fertilizers, and specific watering techniques and schedules to maximize the flowering of the plants.

Why then do the orchids of my next door neighbor look so incredible? He waters them every day. That's it – nothing else. The flowers just keep on coming regardless.

Orchids in nature grow protected from the tropical sun by the shade of trees. Although there are many "rules" about orchid-growing that can be flouted, this is one that has no room for maneuver.

If you don't have a shaded area in your garden, then you'll need to invest in some plastic shade cloth to filter out the worst of the direct sunlight.

We're pretty lucky here. Orchids just grow. Don't tell my mum though, as she may just be tempted to move out here permanently.

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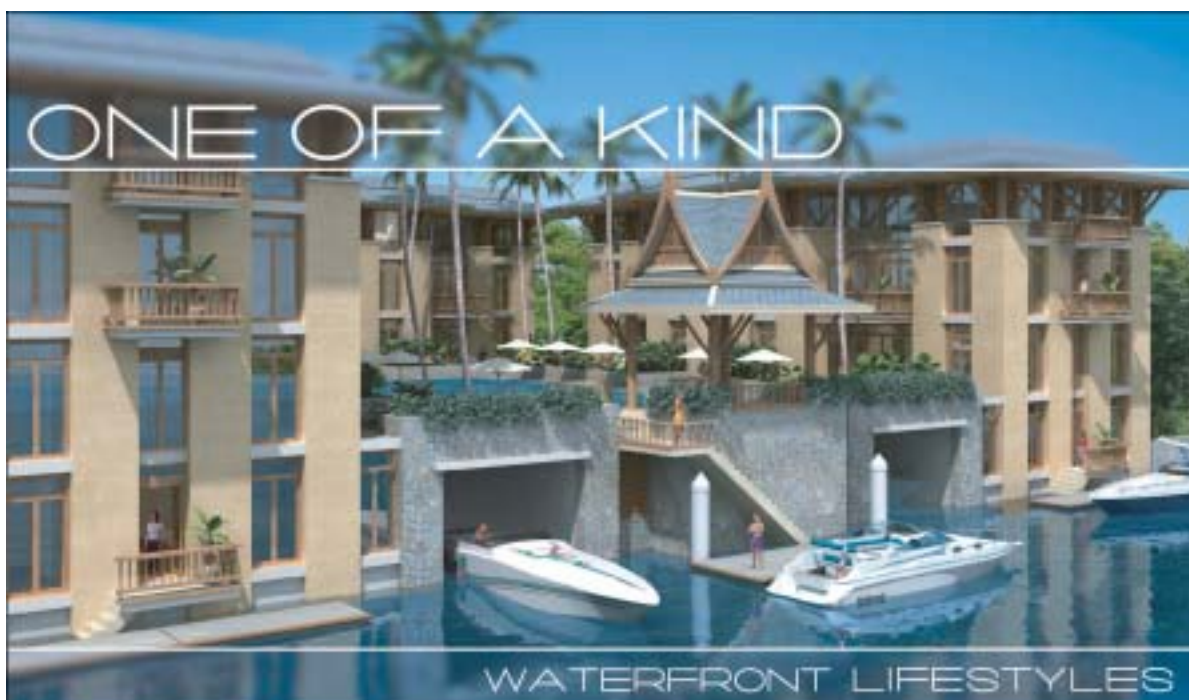
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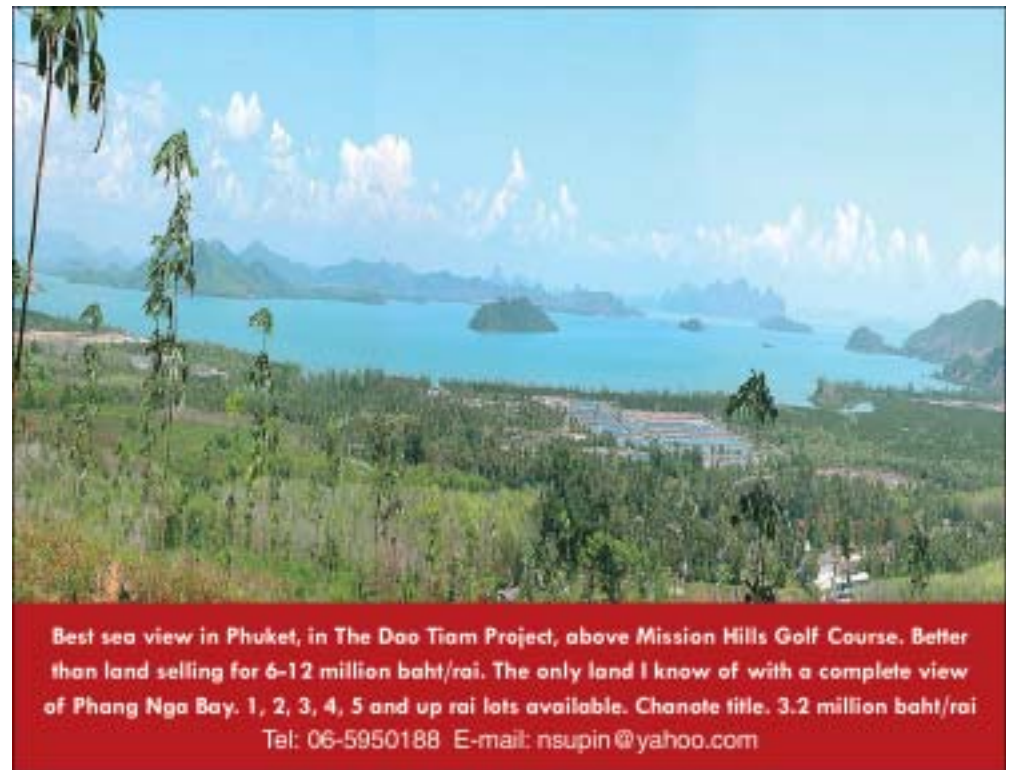
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MARCH 2005

Looking for an apartment, condo or house for March 2005, may become long-term rental. Need 2 bedrooms, furnished. Prefer west coast with view. Email: fire.dick@verizon.net or ffiredick@yahoo.com

2-BEDROOM APT

2-bedroom apartment wanted at Patong Beach from January 22 to February 16. Email: ajstonick@bellsouth.net

LOOKING TO RENT

I am looking to rent a small house with 1 bedroom in Patong, Kamala or Karon, in February. Furnished, and in safe, quiet area. Around 7,000 baht a month. Please email details to: th246810@hotmail.com

NEED APARTMENT

Thai/Norwegian couple (3 years +) moving to Phuket City, to work there, so from February we need a 2- or 3-bedroom apartment or house, preferably located in city. Email: thomas@taon.no For further details, please see our website at: www.taon.no

KAMALA HOUSE

wanted. I want to rent a 2-bedroom furnished house, aircon, satellite TV and full cooking facilities in Kamala area for 2 months, Feb-March 2005. Please get in touch with me. Tel: 902-163615444. Email: akiciman@tnn.net

NICE HOUSE/CONDO

Non-smoking Western male seeks 1-2-bedroom house/condo/apartment of good quality for February-April. Patong and Kathu are preferred, but Karon or Kata might do as well. Please send details to have my Thai mobile phone number. Email: ackroydee@yahoo.com

RENTAL WANTED

Looking for a private place to live with a private little garden, furnished. Short-term rental. Email: kamalala@wildmail.com

HOUSE OR VILLA

with garden. Wish to rent a house/villa in Patong area with garden, 2/3 bedrooms, bathrooms, living room, western kitchen, phone line, TV and car park. Approx 2/3 months from now. Tel: 01-7971207. Email: mdefeo@gmx.net

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MAID W/ HIGH

responsibility. Foreign couple is looking for a long-term maid with high responsibilities. Basic spoken and written English, plus nice, sincere personality required. The person should also be able to help with miscellaneous local issues. Working location for the first 9 months will be at Patong Beach; after that, in Kathu in nice environment. Good salary based on abilities and working experience. Pls call or email for interview. Tel: 06-7428968. Email: fima168@yahoo.com

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Transun Thailand, part of the global Transun Group, a specialist multinational travel company established for over 20 years in the UK and Europe, requires hardworking, service-minded individuals to fill a variety of roles in its Thailand companies. Junior and senior (management) positions are available with salaries appropriate to experience and abilities. Most roles require qualification to degree level with proven leadership qualities and the ability to work under pressure, multi-tasking skills and the drive to succeed in a diverse and varied role. Fluency in written and verbal English is essential for senior roles.

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Based in our offices in Bangkok and Samui, we have vacancies in the following areas: Sales, Marketing, Product, Operations, Finance & Accounts, Admin & Reservations, Ticketing & GDS (Amadeus/Galileo), Tour guides & Hotel reps, Drivers, IT Support (Bkk only).

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Many opportunities are available at our operational properties on Koh Samui and Koh Tao. We have vacancies at all levels in the following areas: Operations, Maintenance, Front Office, Finance & Accounts, Admin & Personnel, Food & Beverage, Kitchen, Housekeeping, Gardening, Engineering and General Management.

Applications in writing, with a recent photograph to: surapon.satimanont@transun.co.th and bernd.schillig@transun.co.th

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A New and Exceptional Resort Hotel opening in Krabi in August 2005 is now seeking an experienced and qualified:

'Marine Transportation Manager'

to operate its fleet of marine vessels, which will include a number of amphibious vessels available in Thailand for the first time.

The successful candidate should possess the following credentials:

- Class 4 or 5 USL professional mariner
- Have some experience working in Thailand
- Have a good understanding of the weather and sea conditions in the South of Thailand
- Have been involved in an operational and safety training position in the past
- Have a good understanding of safety and mechanical aspects of boating operations

In exchange you will be employed by one of Thailand's foremost hotel companies in a beautiful setting in Krabi. We will offer you an attractive one-year employment package, tax free, with accommodation, meals, medical insurance coverage and work permit.

All nationalities are free to apply.

Please send your resumé with recent photo and indication of salary requirement to our VP Human Resources or Human Resources Manager at

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Waitress (2 positions)
Basic English skills required. Previous experience an advantage. Positions carry good salary and healthcare insurance, and are based on a 6-day working week. Tel: 01-5353220. Email: mrd68@yahoo.com For further details, please see our website at: www.mellow-phuket.com

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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 expenses all paid. Accommodation arranged. Meeting in Thailand. Ed Vaan. Email: champagne@worldemail.com

COOK NEEDED

small restaurant urgently needs cook for breakfast, Thai food and European food. Please contact for details. Tel: 076-286061, 01-891-4019. Email: tkoschig2000@hotmail.com

THAI COOK FOR UK

Thai cook wanted for very busy cafe in Guernsey, Channel Islands. Seasonal from March until October. Tel: 04-7168701. Email: tengmo@hotmail.com

STAFF WANTED

English woman, under 60 years old, wanted for residential project near airport. Sales, computer experience, can drive. Pls call for more info. Tel: 01-8298101.

Personal Assistant

Not just another secretarial job. You are hardworking and have a 'make it happen' personality. Must have exceptional multi-tasking and prioritization skills and enjoy working with people at all levels and from all walks of life.

Qualifications:

- Female, outgoing and pleasant personality
- Fluency in English is a must (other languages a plus)
- Bachelor degree or relevant qualifications with experience
- Excellent computer and presentation skills
- Excellent interpersonal, communication and negotiation skills, with ability to build business relations
- Ability to work independently, self-confident, with good judgment and discretion

We offer exceptional compensation package for the right candidate, including highly competitive salary, company car and accommodation (for out-of-Phuket residents).

Interested candidates may apply by submitting full resumé and recent photo by mail/fax/e-mail to:



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PARADISE KOH YAO - EAM

The Paradise Koh Yao is a contemporary 70-room Boutique Resort on Koh Yao Noi island near Phuket. Uncompromised luxury, away from the crowded tourist spots of Phuket and Krabi. Seeking outstanding, motivated personality as key member of management team.

EAM (Room Division)

In charge of front office; supervise housekeeping, engineering, recreation/transfers, and PA, with additional duties re: personnel and local relations/affairs.

- 3-5 years' experience in 4- or 5-star hotel/resort operation in similar assignment
- Exposure and personal strength in front office-, lodging-, personnel-related work
- Thai national, 30-40 years of age

Attractive remuneration package will be offered to the right candidate. Please contact for more information. Tel: 01-8924878, 01-9683221. Fax: 01-8942736. Send your resumé with recent photo to: jhrassoc@ksc.th.com

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SECRETARY

urgently required. Real estate company in Patong is urgently looking for an experienced secretary. Must speak and write fluent English and be able to work with PC. Experience in sales & marketing is an advantage. Good salary for motivated person. Call or mail. Tel: 076-340792, 07-8822856. Email: info@phuket-tropical-realestate.com

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sales rep. Need experienced reps for the high season at a gold crown resort in Samui. We have financing available and pay all commissions within two weeks on full down financed deals. Limited amount of slots open. Pls contact for more information. Tel: 66-7741 3844. Email: fred@samuiopeninsulareort.com

ADMINISTRATION

assistant. Property management and construction company. Fluent in both Thai and English. MS Office skills a must. Pls contact for more information. Tel: 06-2934264. Email: acmpkt@phuket.ksc.co.th

MAID NEEDED

Foreign couple is looking for a live-in or full time maid. Basic English required; location is Rawai, close to Chalong circle. Call 09-4744083 or 01-9872821 (in English) Tel: 09-4744083, 01-9872821.

BANGKOK FEMALE

assistant. Thai, not shy, to help give out financial aid. Pay is 5,500 baht per week. If interested, please contact for more information. Tel: 02-2671415, 06-0682026. Fax: 02-6339336. Email: diminpost@yahoo.com

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Island Job Mart

The Phuket Gazette

The Phuket Gazette seeks to fill the following positions:

I. ACCOUNTING MANAGER

This is a new position in a rapidly expanding company. Qualified candidates will be Thai, aged at least 28, and have:

- ▶ A bachelor's degree or higher in accounting
- ▶ Minimum 2 years' experience in accounting management
- ▶ Knowledge of tax and other statutory filings
- ▶ Ability to communicate effectively in English

II. IT TECHNICAL SUPPORT OFFICER

Responsibilities: The Technical Support officer will focus, at least initially, on hardware and system maintenance, and networking issues (TCP/IP, LAN).

- ▶ Male or female, Thai nationality
- ▶ Diploma or degree in computers or a related field
- ▶ At least 2 years' experience in networking and hardware maintenance
- ▶ Good interpersonal skills
- ▶ Good command of spoken English would be an advantage

III. REPORTER

The successful candidate will be a Thai national with initiative, an outgoing personality and plenty of curiosity about the world and how it works, and a keen interest in sports. Also essential are the ability to communicate in English, both spoken and written, and a car drivers license.

IV. ASSISTANT DISTRIBUTION MANAGER

- ▶ Male or female, Thai nationality
- ▶ Bachelor's degree in any field
- ▶ Strong command of English would be an advantage
- ▶ Able to work as part of a team
- ▶ Creative and hard working

Qualified candidates are invited to send a CV to Passara Kaewbumroong, Human Resources, by email, fax or post to:

The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd
367/2 Yaowarat Rd, T. Taladyai, A. Muang, Phuket 83000
Fax: 076 213971 Email: mem@phuketgazette.net

SALES EXECUTIVE

Invited to apply for a challenging position in Phuket. Franke (Thailand) will soon open in Phuket and we need a colleague to handle and expand our business. Requirements include: at least 1 year of sales experience, preferably in kitchen equipment or sanitary ware, Thai nationals only, bachelor's degree, aged up to 40 years, and have a good command of written and spoken English. Please email resum  and cover letter to:

FTH-info@franke.com
www.franke.co.th

WESTERN CHEFS NEEDED

The Macau Tower is in need of highly-trained Western chefs with 5-star hotel and restaurant experience. Macau is exploding and so are we, with many new concepts coming ahead. English proficiency preferred, Chinese language a plus. Please send your background and CV as an attached file by email to: Email: johnrees@macautower.com.mo Our hearts go out to all!

FC/CHIEF

Accountant. Our client, a boutique hotel, is looking for staff with at least 5 years' experience, for the following positions:

1. Financial controller: 40 K
2. Chief Accountant: 30 K
3. Assistant Chief Accountant: 15-25 K

Tel: 076-263737, 01-5354108. Fax: 076-224113. Email: recruitment@bowentraining.com

NEEDED URGENTLY

Maid & cook. For more info please call Tel: 076-273427 or 01-8295388.

MAID WANTED

American couple seek English-speaking live-in maid for villa in Surin. Brand new, beautiful accommodation with separate maid's lounge and kitchen. Excellent salary for the right candidate. Contact Lorna at Tel: 01-845-1492, 076-271711; Fax: 02-9603159; Email: shdrbkk@ksc15.th.com

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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

WAITRESS NEEDED

small restaurant needs a waitress urgently to work in daytime. Please contact for more information. Tel: 076-286068, 01-8914019. Email: tkoschig2000@hotmail.com



This well-established resort on Koh Lanta, Krabi, a member of Small Luxury Hotels of the World, is searching for candidates for the following positions:

(A) Chief Engineer

- Male, 33 to 45 years old
- Bachelor's or master's degree or higher in engineering field
- At least 5 years' experience in a similar position and preferably in a resort environment
- Strong ability in leading a team of 25-40 engineering & gardening staff
- Good command of written and spoken English
- Computer, Internet, and emailing proficiency
- Able to work under pressure and handle multiple projects simultaneously
- Hard working, dynamic, hands-on and highly responsible
- Experience in resort opening will also be an advantage

(B) Reservation Manager

- Female preferred, 30-35 yrs old
- Sound knowledge of all reservation standards & procedures
- Computer literate in Fidelity, MS Excel & Word
- Very strong command of English language a must
- Previous employment in international hotel chain, preferably a resort, would be an advantage
- Minimum 3 years as an Asst Reservation Manager/one year as Reservation Manager
- Must be able to lead by example, be hands-on and create a pro-active team environment
- Ability to train and develop staff at both supervisory and entry level staff

(C) Human Resources/ Personal Manager (250 employees)

- Male/female over 35 years old and of Thai nationality
- Bachelor's or master's degree in personnel or human resources management
- Minimum 2 years' experience in management level
- Minimum 6 years' experience in personnel/ human resources field in Hotel business; experience in resort environment will be an advantage
- Must have strong interpersonal and communication skills, be a hands-on person, motivator, enthusiastic, aiming at promoting harmonious employee relations
- Strong knowledge of labor laws, work permits/ visa, HRM systems
- Computer literacy (Word, Excel), Good command of written and spoken English

Other positions available: (D) Purchasing officer (Bangkok based) & Night Audit supervisor, Cost controller, Chief accountant, Accounting clerk, (E) Airport representative

For all applicants: Outgoing personality, self confident and with an eye for detail. Must also be able to adapt and live on an island location. All positions are open for Thai nationals only and offer excellent benefits and a salary appropriate to the applicant's experience and abilities.

Interested candidates, please submit, resum , recent picture and expected salary to: Position (A & C) at generalmanager@pimalai.com; Position (B) at sdm@pimalai.com; Position (D) at nibondh@pimalai.com - Or fax at 075 627 868/867. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

Pimalai Resort & Spa, 99 Moo 5, Ba Kan Tang Bay, Koh Lanta, Krabi 81198, Thailand
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VILLA SANTI PHUKET

For the Sales Office

1. Junior Architect 1 Position

Qualifications:

- Female, Thai national, age 23+
- 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/Manager 1 Position

Qualifications:

- Male, Thai national, age 25+
- Driving license is needed
- Ausdrone-free driving record needed
- Good knowledge of Phuket area
- Work experience and knowledge of English language is an advantage

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

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
- Degree Required to state Project Manager to develop both architectural and civil structural design drawings, assist with the design in construction

2. Secretary to Project Manager 1 Position

Qualifications:

- Female, Thai national, age 23+
- Bachelor's degree in administration
- Fluent spoken and written English
- Computer literate (Microsoft Office)
- Degree: Filing database entries, all in-house correspondence, to assist PM with processing and printing all documents.

3. Quality Surveyor 1 Position

Qualifications:

- Male or female, Thai national, age 30+
- BA in engineering, diploma in construction
- Computer literate (Excel WordPowerPoint)
- Good command of spoken and written English
- Degree: Progress check, contract administration, procurement of subcontractor and supplier, payment certification and variation orders.

4. Site Engineering 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

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

Villa Santi Project
318 Phaburana Road, T. Patong
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Tel: + 66 76 290324, Fax: + 66 76 344847
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I'm currently starting up a company here in Thailand. The company provides design and development of machinery, appliances and consumer products into manufacture. I'm searching for a multi-skilled assistant/secretary to handle accounting, public authorities, supplier contacts, purchasing and so on.

- Thai female or male, aged 23 years or above.
- Good spoken and written English.
- Experience as purchaser.
- Technical knowledge, degree.
- Computer knowledge, MS Office and Internet.
- Good office organization skills.
- Accounting knowledge, degree is an advantage.
- Driving license.
- Able to relocate.

Please email your CV/ resum  and salary request to us. Email: peter@protehead.com For further details, please see our website at:
www.protehead.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: kevinan2001@yahoo.com

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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

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Bulletins

Alcoholics Anonymous
 is holding meetings in English at the following places:

Phuket City
 Mission Hospital
 on Wed and Sun at 7 pm
 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

NEW SCHOOL
 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

PUBLIC NOTICE
 As of December 15, 2004, **Ms Chatchalai "Nuch" Butrkob**, and as of December 31, 2004, **Ms Orn-anong "Aam" Sudjai**, are no longer employees of Krabi Consultants Co., Ltd. 314/4 Moo 2, Tambon Ao Nang, Krabi 81000.

Ms Chatchalai "Nuch" Butrkob and Ms Orn-anong "Aam" Sudjai may not represent themselves as employees of Krabi Consultants Co., Ltd and the company will no longer be liable for their actions.

Robert Clarke Reynolds
 Director
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 e-mail: hsiegner@royal-beerhouse.com

INVESTORS WANTED

Danish grillhouse chain seeks investors on a franchise basis. We currently have 3 shops running, two in Patong, one in Karon. Franchise concept amount is 350,000 baht. We are looking for franchise people in Kata, Kamala, Phuket City and Krabi. Pls contact Mr. Kim Kristiansen. Tel: 076-344900, 06-2989500. Email: la@grillhousedk.com or visit www.grillhousedk.com for more info.

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in business. Professional skills are not enough for that top job; we must acquire the soft skills to get to the top, like image management, with: "The Tools of Her Trade, the success book for Women that Men read too" by Dr Harold Dresner. Tel: 972-498843699, 05-22489711. Fax: 972-4988 4369. Email: carbeengruncle@yahoo.co.uk For further details, please see our website at: www.carbeengruncle.com

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Misc For Sale

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Show DVD. I have a few copies of this recently-aired show. DVD is all regions and costs 350 baht. 200 baht from every copy sold will go to my TEAR fund (Tsunami Effective Aid Relief), helping the needy Phuket children. For details of the fund and how you can help, plus a list of other unique UK TV shows available, please contact me. I want to raise as much money as possible while I have free time now. Tel: 07-2773917. Email: stewcliff@myway.com For further details of the TEAR Fund, please view my site at: www.helpthailand.blogspot.com

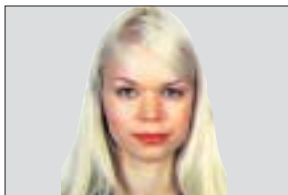
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Missing Persons

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@kermonee. Thank you for all your help!

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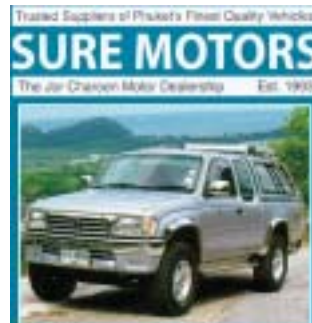
13 DOGS SAVED FROM TSUNAMI



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 contact Margot at Tel: 09-895-9965 or by email at: margot@loxinfo.co.th For further details, please see our website at: www.soidogfoundation.org

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motorcycle. 1500cc, 6 cylinders, red and cream colors, good condition. New rear tire. Asking 350,000 baht. Tel: 01-8423961. Email: gerrit.bijlsma@planet.nl

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