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# The Phuket Gazette

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## NGOs 'building too many homes'

By Sangkhae Leelanapaporn

PHANG NGA: This province, the hardest hit in Thailand when the tsunami struck on December 26, may end up with twice as many houses as it needs to accommodate people rendered homeless by the disaster, Provincial Governor Anuwat Metheeviboonwut said on May 7.

Speaking at his residence, Gov Anuwat said that so many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and individuals, from within Thailand and without, had offered to build homes that the state house-building project had been ended.

He said, "The province needed only about 2,000 houses, but NGOs and others have offered to build more than 4,000.

"I don't know who will live in these houses – or, for that matter, where we will put them.

"The best we can do for the moment is find a place where these people can build, but they have to organize everything themselves, to sort out problems and make sure the construction process is free of cheating, corruption or commission scams."

The governor attacked NGOs which, he said, were encouraging people to break the law and occupy land that belongs to the state or other people.

Speaking less than a week after residents of Baan Nam Khem complained to journalists once again about being hounded off their land by property speculators wielding false papers, Gov Anuwat said, "In fact, the land belongs to a private concern, which has all the paperwork, but it had been illegally occupied by local people. The case is going through the courts now."



Governor Anuwat Metheeviboonwut: Headaches all around.

He continued, "After the tsunami, the company thought it was a good opportunity to claim the land back, but the local people – supported by NGOs – are being difficult about this."

The illegal occupation of state land is another headache, said Gov Anuwat. "Some people who were living illegally on state land before the tsunami are saying they should be allowed to live there now, and there are NGOs encouraging them in this wrong-doing," he complained.

"This is a major concern for me. I'm trying to uphold the law, but these NGOs are encouraging people to break it.

"Another headache is people asking for more land than they need: we have had small families asking for three- or five-

rai sites to live on; about 10 families have asked for sites with lots of land – that's a problem I have to solve soon," he added.

Another priority, he said, is jobs for those who worked in the tourism industry, especially unskilled workers from the resorts and hotels around Khao Lak; while owners appear to be paying staff at management level and above, they have laid off many of their lower-grade staff.

Despite this cost-cutting, there are still concerns about the hotels' ability to weather the slump, said Gov Anuwat.

"Most of the investors right now are hoping for help from central government. But many people have still not received help from the banks and other financial institutions," he said.

## Phuket Air barred from UK, Netherlands

LONDON: Troubled Phuket Air has been banned from flying to the United Kingdom and the Netherlands because of safety concerns.

Both bans were imposed on the airline over just a handful of days. And to add to Phuket Air's woes, one of its planes was impounded at Britain's Gatwick Airport for non-payment of landing fees.

The website of the UK Department for Transport (DfT) says that "the Secretary of State has suspended the permit of Phuket Airlines (Thailand) because of operational safety concerns." The statement was last modified on April 28.

The airline joins others on the UK blacklist, including airlines from Equatorial Guinea, Liberia, Tajikistan, Sierra Leone, Congo, Mauritania and Swaziland.

The Guardian News Service quoted the DfT as saying the ban, which is unusual for a mainstream carrier, was a result of "the number and severity of safety breaches revealed in Civil Aviation Authority inspections".

Days later, the Netherlands Department of Civil Aviation (NDCA) barred the airline from landing at Amsterdam, after discovering that an emergency floor light on an aircraft that landed at the city's Schiphol Airport was inoperative and also that the medical certificate of one of the pilots had expired.

Phuket Air Executive Vice-President Capt Chawanit Chiamcharoenwut said the emergency light had become inoperative during the flight. "It could easily have been fixed in Amsterdam before the aircraft departed for Bangkok," he said.

Continued on page 2

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## Off to the movies? Click before you go!

**PHUKET:** Movie-goers in Thailand are familiar with the vagaries of screening schedules; the phenomenon of sudden, unannounced cancellations; and the difficulties in getting through to box office telephone recordings. For foreigners, these problems are often compounded by communication difficulties.

It was against this background that the SFX Coliseum cinema at Central Festival and the *Phuket Gazette* teamed up two months ago to build a set of movie schedules into the *Gazette's* website. The pages, launched last week, can be found at [www.phuketgazette.net/movies](http://www.phuketgazette.net/movies).

Each listing contains a classification (Action, Comedy, etc); a summary of the plot; a rating (General Audience, Restricted, etc); a list of lead performers; and the sound track language. Screening times are posted into the listings daily, at noon. These remain in effect for 24 hours only, so movie-goers should check the schedule at, or after, noon on the day they wish to go.

Commenting on the effort to bring the movie details to a wider audience, Theatre Manager Nitima Nithattamathan said, "It's good for Phuket residents to know the movie schedules with certainty now – and to be able to dovetail their schedules with ours."

"And by the way," she said, "we at SFX love Phuket, too. So we'll be handing out the *Gazette's* new [We love Phuket] bumper stickers to all of our customers who want one, as they exit our theatres."

Visitors to the *Gazette Online's* movie schedules are asked to note that the listings are for the SFX Coliseum cinema at Central Festival Phuket, and not for the Coliseum Paradise Multiplex next to Robinson.

# Kamala makes plea for alarm system

By Anongnat Sartpisut

**PHUKET CITY:** The Chief of Kamala Tambon Administration Organisation (*OrBorTor*) has called on the government to pay for and install the disaster warning system he says the tambon urgently needs.

Jaran Sararak said on May 4 that at a meeting earlier in the day, Governor Udomsak Usawarakura and other provincial officials had decided that Kamala should pay for its own warning system.

But, said K. Jaran, the cost – 40 million baht – was too much for the tambon to find on its own.

He added that the tambon had been unable to make much progress in recovering from the tsunami because it had not yet received any of the 100 million baht it had been allocated to

implement the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT)-commissioned recovery plan.

K. Jaran said, "I request the government to give urgent consideration to installing an alarm system here. It is important for us to have an alarm here, because we can't predict when there will be another disaster."

As for recovering from the tsunami, K. Jaran said, "We can't really get on with the real work until we get that 100 million baht."

K. Jaran was speaking as work started on installing a community radio system for the tambon, geared towards entertaining residents rather than warning them of impending catastrophe.

The bulk of the 217,000-baht cost of the installation is being met by the South African

government, through its embassy in Bangkok.

Music and news will be relayed through the tambon by loudspeakers. Said K. Jaran, "This community radio could be a source of entertainment for people in the area, and a way of distributing news to villages."

K. Jaran said that, so far, Kamala has received 4.5 million baht from the government of the Czech Republic, for a Child Development Center, and 1.5 million baht from Austria, to pay for the clearing of the land on which the center is to be built.

A private individual has spent eight million baht building 20 houses for families rendered homeless by the tsunami, and the tambon has also received cash and other forms of aid from other individuals.

*Stalled recovery: page 4*

## Phuket Air problems

From page 1

As for the pilot's medical certificate, Capt Chawanit stated that although international regulations specify a 12-month medical certificate for pilots – which the unnamed Filipino pilot had from the Philippines Civil Aviation Authority – NDCA rules insist on six-month certificates.

One of the airline's aging Boeing 747 jets is still at Gatwick, impounded by the British Airports Authority (BAA), for non-payment of landing fees.

The Guardian News Service quoted "industry sources" as saying the amount owed was more than £100,000 (7 million baht).

Sribenja Semmeesook, Communication Consultant of Aziam Burson-Marsteller, the public relations agency for Phuket Air, pointed out that the airline had already stopped its

London service before the UK ban. She told the *Gazette* on May 7, "Phuket Air are now talking with the Dutch authorities, and we expect a positive result soon."

Asked about the seizure of the 747, she said, "[Landing fees are] a financial matter so I am unable to comment on that."

"However, I know that the jet was parked at Gatwick at the end of April because of mechanical problems. As soon as repairs have been made the plane will be brought back to Thailand."

Meanwhile, the Thai New Agency (TNA) reported on May 8 that the Transport Ministry has threatened to ground Phuket Air temporarily unless the airline resolves safety problems.

The agency quoted Deputy Transport Minister Phumtham Vej Jayachai as saying that the incident had damaged the image of all Thai airlines.

## Ghost-busting monks return

**PHUKET:** Monks from Taiwan and Japan performed two ceremonies for tsunami victims, one in Patong and another in Khao Lak, on the orders of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra – 40 days after Phuket Governor Udomsak Usawarakura ordered an end to rituals to appease ghosts.

Napasorn Kakai, Assistant Director of the Tourism Authority of Thailand Region 4, said PM Thaksin had declared that the ceremony would be good public relations and should make tourists more confident about traveling to and around the Andaman provinces.

Altogether, 26 people from Japan and 20 from Taiwan took part in the ceremonies, accompanied by officers of the TAT offices in Japan and Taiwan.

The Phuket ceremony was



Two senior monks from Taiwan lead the ceremony on May 9.

– Photo courtesy TAT

held at Loma Park, from 10 am until midday, while the Khao Lak ceremony was held the day before, from 1pm-3 pm.

Rain fell on both ceremonies, with particularly heavy showers falling on participants and onlookers in Khao Lak.

On March 30, Governor Udomsak called a halt to ceremonies to appease ghosts.

He said, "There have been

enough religious ceremonies [for tsunami victims]. If anyone needs to hold a religious ceremony, they can, but only within 100 days [of the tsunami]."

"We will not allow ceremonies to be held at the beach or in a public area after 100 days. There have been enough religious ceremonies. Now it is time to get back to the real world."

– Sangkhae Leelanaporn

## APOLOGY

Mr Thongchai Wongavatchanakarn has prosecuted me (Mr Georg Dietlmeier) at Phuket Provincial Court on a charge of trespass and mischief. I hereby admit that I am guilty. I wish to apologize to Mr Thongchai Wongavatchanakarn and to express my gratitude to Mr Thongchai Wongavatchanakarn for forgiving me and withdrawing the case against me.

Mr. Georg Dietlmeier  
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## Norwegians honor loved ones who died

**KATA:** Two hundred and fifty Norwegians arrived in Phuket recently on a trip of remembrance of loved ones who died in the December 26 tsunami.

At a sunset memorial at the Kata Thani Hotel & Beach Resort on May 6, they joined in

a religious service and then floated flowers in the sea to remember the dead.

Some of the Norwegians also visited Khao Lak and Phi Phi Don, where tourists died in large numbers. Seventy-six Norwegians perished in the disaster and eight are still missing.

## Storms usher in wet season

**PHUKET:** Thunderstorms and heavy rain swept across the island over the weekend of May 7 and 8, and weathermen said there was a likelihood of more to come, as Phuket's annual monsoon rains finally arrived to bring relief to the parched landscape and replenish dry wells.

Staff at the Southern Meteorological Center (West Coast), Phuket, told the *Gazette* that southwesterly winds of up to 40 kilometers an hour – about Force 4 to 5 on the Beaufort scale – would probably continue to produce waves of around two to three meters in height.

The center warned that small vessels should not put to sea while all other shipping in the Andaman Sea should proceed with caution.

The blustery conditions appeared to be caused by an active low-pressure cell in the Indian Ocean, forecast to move slowly northeastward toward western coastal areas of Thailand.

Rainfall recorded at Phuket International Airport on May 8 topped 90 millimeters. May is statistically the wettest month of the year in Phuket.

– *Athiga Jundee*

## PSU casino course at odds with local views

**PHUKET CITY:** A Phuket university has reignited the debate over casinos in Phuket by offering a course in casino and gaming management.

The Phuket campus of the Prince of Songkhla University (PSU) has started to offer the 45-hour courses to master's degree and doctorate students, even though casinos are illegal in Thailand. The course has received approval from the Ministry of Education.

But Phuket Provincial Administration Organization President Anchalee Vanich-Thepabutr said, "Our society is decaying enough as it is, without illegal things that will destroy the morals of our youth being made legal."

The university offered its first Casino and Gaming Management elective between March 31 and April 30.

Students had lectures from professors from countries where gambling is legal, and went on field trips to the Andaman Club casino in Burma and to casinos in Malaysia's Genting Highlands.

Pattanapong Aikwanich, the President of Phuket Tourist Association, said it made sense

for PSU to run the course, as, he believes, gambling and casinos will be allowed in Thailand in the future.

However, he added, "I do not think we should have casinos in Phuket, because this is a place of natural attractions."

Prominent businessman Phummisak Hongsyok said he believes there will be little support for the course.

"The government may have given the green light for this institute to teach this course, but I don't think it has much support locally," he said.

"The only people who would profit from [having a casino in Phuket] are the people who would build it. Would it be good for the government to make casinos legal? I don't know."

# Phuket 'badly needs' plan for long term

By Anongnat Sartpisut

**PHUKET CITY:** Phuket desperately needs a long-term development strategy following the tsunami, a Phuket Chamber of Commerce (PCC) seminar entitled "Phuket Alert" heard on May 4.

The PCC is considering development issues facing the province and will make recommendations within two months so that they can be included in a development plan for Phuket now being drafted by the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB). The seminar, intended as a brainstorming session, was attended by tourism industry representatives, academics and government officials.

PCC President Eam Thavornwongwongse, who led the discussion at The Metropole hotel, noted that the lack of an integrated development strategy long pre-dated the tsunami disaster.

He likened land in Phuket to slices of a pie for which there has been no distribution control – with investors interested only in maximizing profits from the slices they happened to control, without looking at the bigger picture.

"The end result is that

Phuket has developed in a haphazard fashion, with illegal development clearly visible all around the island and especially along beaches," he said, adding that the culprits were both Thai and foreign.

"Second, there hasn't been enough assistance from public utilities in [restoring] telephone service, and power and water supply after the tsunami. Third, we have to ask ourselves if our elected officials ... are really working to the full extent of their abilities and are using their budgets in a way that best benefits the province," he added.

"Finally, we are still going to have to wait three or four years before the NESDB development plan takes effect. Can we really accept all of these things?" he asked rhetorically.

K. Eam said that restoring Phuket's tourism economy to normal levels by the next high season was essential, otherwise a variety of social ills – including crime – could result from having 35,000 hotel rooms unfilled and 40,000 hotel workers unemployed or underemployed.

He suggested organizing "roadshows" abroad as one way to address the downturn in tourism arrivals.

## Animation course open to all

**PHUKET CITY:** The Phuket office of the Software Industry Promotion Agency (Sipa) is accepting applications to join its "Pre-professional Animation 2005" course for those who want to learn how to create 2-D and 3-D computer-animated graphics.

The six-month course, which starts on June 11, is free and is open to all nationalities.

Classes will be at weekends at the Prince of Songkla University building at Saphan Hin.

Applicants may register for the course from 10 am until 7 pm at the Sipa booth at Central Festival on May 14. Alternatively, contact the Sipa Phuket office at Tel: 076-379111 or at Email: [phuket@sipa.or.th](mailto:phuket@sipa.or.th), or visit [www.sipaphuket.org](http://www.sipaphuket.org) (in Thai only).

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## Queer News

## Going coconuts

RAWAI: A young welder from Nakorn Sri Thammarat died of a broken neck on April 27 after he fell from a coconut tree in Rawai.

Sompoj Petcharat, 23, was part of a team working at a bungalow colony off Yanui Rd. Being thirsty, he decided to scale one of the many coconut trees in the area to quench his thirst.

But after successfully climbing up the 15-meter tree, he apparently ran out of energy and began sliding back down. He then lost his grip completely and fell the rest of the way, his neck snapping when his head bounced hard on the ground.

Police noted that the fracture was so complete it was possible to turn the head of the corpse 360 degrees.

It was not reported whether K. Sompoj managed to dislodge any coconuts before he plunged to his death.

Source: Siang Tai

## Bad moon writhing

SURATTHANI: Tourists arriving on the island of Pha-ngan in Surat Thani Province are to be issued with stickers reminding them that "free sex" is illegal, following government concern over visitors having sexual intercourse in public places.

The decision follows pleas by Khon Kaen Senator Rabiabrat Pongpanit to stop tourists on the island from humping in public during the island's notorious "Full Moon" parties.

Pramoth Supyen, Director of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT)'s Southern Office Region 5, warned that although it would be difficult to ban the parties, which are an important source of revenue for the island, the police would put a halt to them if they were alerted to tourists making a public spectacle of themselves.

Noting that tourists should be aware that Thailand is not a country that allows public bonking, he warned that those having sex alfresco could be arrested.

The TAT will also issue stickers and leaflets to the island's hotels and guesthouses outlining the legal position.

It was not reported whether the stickers would contain an image of stick figures fornicating, with a red X superimposed. Nor was it reported whether those indulging in paid – as opposed to "free" – sex would be targeted.

Source: Thai News Agency

## Relatively dangerous

PHUKET CITY: A family sitting around a table in their home at 33 Surin Rd dived for cover when somebody lobbed a fragmentation grenade into their living room at 2 am on April 30.

Homeowner Krongkwan Niemsa-ard told police that she believed she was the intended victim, because the grenade hit her on the arm and then rolled under her chair. A relative with whom she had already had several violent disputes had threatened to bomb her house and kill everyone inside, she said.

Police noted that the pin had been pulled on the *noy naa* bomb, so named because hand grenades bear a resemblance to the popular Thai fruit, known in English as the custard apple.

Fortunately for the Niemsa-ard family, this *noy naa* bomb was past its sell-by date: police said it was too rusty to detonate.

Source: Siang Tai

## FUTURE OF

Trade is "dangerously slow" at Janraem Kreutzer's Villa Siam mini-mart and apartment business in Kamala.

"I hardly see any tourists these days," she said, "Most of the *farang* I see in Kamala right now are expats who live here."

Things are unlikely to change, believes K. Janraem, while the beach and the area around it remain in their current state – too ugly to attract tourists. "Already I'm worried about next high season," she said.

K. Janraem, 35, said Kamala has received no help from the government since the tsunami, and that what little reconstruction work is underway is being done by local residents themselves.

One local resident who has contributed to the clean-up is Teerasak Phonngarm, the developer of the Kamala Nathong House project.

Although the development suffered no physical damage on December 26, it has suffered the consequences of the tsunami, with little interest from potential buyers.

Slowly but surely, K. Teerasak is finding tenants for the rental homes, but the tenants thus far are unimpressed by their surroundings.

K. Teerasak explained, "A couple of weeks ago, several residents came to see me to complain about the state of Kamala Beach; they said it was dirty and that they were having to go to Surin Beach instead."

"I discussed their complaint with Kamala Tambon Administration Organization (*OrBorTor*) but the people there said they didn't have the budget, or the staff, to clean up the beach."

"I ended up giving the *OrBorTor* 40,000 baht from the business to pay for the beach to be cleaned."

"Around the end of April, I went to check on the state of the

Kamala Beach was once famed as one of the most beautiful beaches in Thailand. On December 26, it was one of the places in Phuket worst affected by the tsunami: 64 people died there, and the water washed away or wrecked countless homes and businesses.

While the rebuilding effort continues elsewhere, progress in Kamala seems to be very slow; there have been complaints that the beach is dirty, and the area around it is heavily scarred by the remains of buildings damaged in the tsunami.

Five months after the catastrophe, many residents of Kamala are unable to make much progress towards rebuilding their lives. Rungtip Hongjakpet finds out why.

beach and it was clean, but I think the *OrBorTor* should be doing more to keep it that way – like hiring a temporary beach cleaner, for example."

According to *OrBorTor* Chief Administrative Officer (*Palad*) Satjapon Tongsom, the *OrBorTor* is doing its best to keep the beach attractive, and is paying people 175 baht a day to clean it.

But, he conceded, "With a small number of staff and a limited budget, the cleaning can't be perfect."

Jane, a tourist on her first visit to Kamala, said she and her boyfriend were happy with the quality of the beach – but she wished there was something to block the view of the devastation just inland from it.

She said, "It's not easy for us to lie down and relax and enjoy our holiday while just over our shoulders, there are things that constantly remind us of the unhappy things that happened here."

And it is the debris left behind from that devastation which is prompting the most concern among those who are frustrated at the speed of the reconstruction effort in Kamala.

K. Satjapon believes it is unfair to compare Kamala with places like Karon and Kata, which suffered much less damage in the tsunami.

It is also unfair to compare Kamala with Patong, even though Patong was another place badly hit by the tsunami.

Said K. Satjapon, "Most of the areas of Patong that suffered damage belonged to individuals, and the owners could start to clean them up immediately."

"But in Kamala, the most damaged parts lie on public land,

which belongs to the government."

As a result, said K. Satjapon, residents are wary of repairing or rebuilding their homes and businesses. Although many of the local residents claim their



"We are still waiting for the money. We have been chasing the Director-General of the Office of Tourism Development ... but so far, we have got precisely nowhere."

– Satjapon Tongsom, Chief Administration Officer of the Kamala Tambon Administration Organization.



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# KAMALA IN LIMBO



Irish tourist Marcus White, pictured here holding debris from the tsunami still left lying on Kamala Beach, has returned to Kamala every year for seven years.

But if the beach isn't cleaned up, he says, he will not be back – and he doesn't expect other tourists to return, either.

"I think the people of Kamala should act now. They should form a local lobby group; they should lobby the government in Bangkok, because Bangkok rules everything.

"I don't mean that they should not work in conjunction with the local authority; it's important that they are united. They should work through the local government.

"The timing is very important. If they don't act now, they will lose out. I think it will take three or four years to build up Kamala again, but only Kamala people can help themselves, at the end of the day.

"If things [the dirty beach and the debris] don't change, don't expect tourists to come. Why should they? I myself will not come back."

K. Satjapon agrees that the fate of the locals lies in their own hands and that they should take action themselves, rather than leave others to take it for them.

He said, "Part of the problem here all along has been that some people refuse to help themselves in anyway.

"I don't want to see or hear people say that the people of Kamala just sit around waiting for help from outside."

The *Gazette* tried several times to contact Dr Sasithara Pichaichannarong of the Office of Tourism Development for a comment on the delay in drawing up the recovery plan and allocating the money, but was unable to reach her.

families had lived and worked on the land for the best part of 50 years, they have no land titles or any paperwork to "prove" they have a right to be there.

The residents say they lived on and used the land openly before the tsunami and that the authorities never questioned their right to be there.

Now, though, the government wants to clarify the land ownership situation. Many residents fear they may be turned off the land. While the uncertainty continues, they are naturally reluctant to rebuild their homes – or even demolish what is left of them and clear up their plots – in case the government takes the land back.

The situation has now reached an impasse, according to K. Satjapon, who is trapped in the middle of it. He acknowledges that the issue is adding to the difficulties of residents hit hard by the tsunami, but he can also understand why the government would take the opportunity presented by the tsunami to resolve the land question.

But the result seems to be a stalemate – one that could harm the local economy.

He said, "The people don't know what they should do. They don't know whether they should rebuild their homes or shops or whatever, so they're just leaving everything as it is, and it is ugly – and that's not good for tourism."

But even without the complication of the land issue, the renaissance of Kamala would probably not be progressing as well as it should.

In the wake of the tsunami, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra called for tsunami-affected areas to be reconstructed in a way that would make them "beautiful and safe".

As a result, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) commissioned a recovery plan for Kamala and, shortly afterward, Phuket Governor Udomsak Usawarangkura asked the government for more than 300 million baht to implement the plan.

Under the plan, residents would be prohibited from returning to homes near the beach and would be relocated to a site near Kamala Police Station.

But in the first week of March, the government decided to allocate just 100 million baht for Kamala's revival – less than one-third of the sum requested.

Two months on, and even this promised 100 million baht has yet to arrive in Kamala – and the revised recovery plan has yet to materialize.

The money is supposed to be with the national Office of Tourism Development in Bangkok, which is charged with drawing up a plan on how the money will be spent.

In theory, once the plan is drawn up, it will be put before a public hearing. Once the plan is agreed upon by all parties concerned in the recovery, contractors will be appointed (this process alone would likely take around 30 days) and the reconstruction proper will begin.

In practice, though, according to K. Satjapon, "We are still waiting for the money. We have been chasing the Director-General of the Office of Tourism Development, Dr Sasithara Pichaichannarong, but so far, we have got precisely nowhere.

"Dr Sasithara hasn't even come up with a plan for us to see; I don't understand what central government is doing about this."

While the central government drags its feet, the local authorities have been forced to look elsewhere for funding.

Said K. Satjapon, "We went to the Department of Local Administration (DOLA) and asked for help. We got the money in April, and we expedited the processing so we could start work in May."

DOLA has given Kamala *OrBorTor* around 110 million baht. Projects the *OrBorTor* plans to spend the money on include repairing the village cemetery near the beach (21.6 million baht), rebuilding the road along the beach and creating an anti-tsunami embankment (20.09 million baht), raising the wall along the Getnee canal (1.5 million baht), and clearing up the damaged area (1.376 million baht).

"We aim to have everything

finished by September 30, which should give Kamala time to get ready for the coming high season," said K. Satjapon.

He believes the progress of the recovery is "not slow at all," but Irish tourist Marcus White would disagree.

He has visited Kamala every year for the past seven years, and he was "shocked" by how slowly things have been moving in Kamala.

He said, "I know there was a tsunami but it has been five months since then. It's May now.

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By Anongnat Sartpisut

Automatic car washers may be a common feature by the roadsides of Europe and North America, but there has not been a single one in Phuket – until now.

The 5-minute System Car Wash Co Ltd has just been opened at Rawai by Richard Wagner.

He said, “I got the idea three years ago, when I came to the island on holiday with my girlfriend.

“I said to my girlfriend, ‘What is going on here? Why are people still washing their cars by hand? I don’t believe it.’

“And I asked myself why we didn’t open an automatic car wash here, of the kind used overseas and in Europe.”

It took Mr Wagner a while to find a location for his car wash, but then he found what he thinks is the perfect spot – two kilometers south of Chalong Circle, near the PTT gas station and on the road that scores of people travel along every day to watch the sun set at Laem Promthep.

Having worked for a car maker in Germany, Mr Wagner was confident of his ability to install and run his automatic car wash.

Before a vehicle joins the 1.7-meter-long conveyor, the parts of the underside that will not be washed by the machine, are sprayed (by hand) using high-pressure water jets.

A chemical pre-soak loosens dried-on dirt, then the vehicle undergoes a high-pressure rinse, which prepares it for washing by a series of brushes, after which it can be given an optional wax.

The vehicle is then blow-dried. Humans re-enter the pro-



Above, Richard Wagner. Left, the new car wash in Rawai is the first on the island, despite the technology being 30 years old and widely used in the West.

## AUTO AUTO WASH

cess at the end, when they remove any remaining spots and give the vehicle a quick once-over to make sure it is clean and gleaming.

The machine is fast – it takes only five minutes to wash, dry and wax a car – allowing the machine to handle up to 100 vehicles a day.

A major draw for motorists, according to Mr Wagner, is that it is cheap – prices range from

145 baht for foam, wash and dry to 240 baht for foam, wash, wax and under-chassis cleaning, although Mr Wagner is offering a special opening promotional price of 99 baht for the full deluxe service.

He estimates, though, that a similar clean and wax by hand would cost between 1,000 baht and 1,500 baht.

There are other advantages, too, he said. “If you wash by

hand, it is easy to scratch the paintwork, if you use the wrong cloth.”

In water-starved Phuket, is an automatic car wash not just another drain on the island’s water resources?

Not according to Mr Wagner. He explained, “With our cleaning system, we don’t need much water, and the water we do use can be recycled. We clean it and we use again.

“Our process uses 90 liters of water per car, but if you wash a car by hand, you use 200 liters, and it takes longer.”

Customers so far seem to have been driven to the car wash more by curiosity than a desire for a clean car. Said Mr Wagner, “We have had people who have come to see and try out ‘new’ technology.

He continued, “I hope we can persuade customers that this machine will not damage their cars. People shouldn’t be scared; this technology has been used in Germany for more than 30 years.

“If this car wash is a success, I plan to open another one in Phuket City.”

*The carwash is open from 8 am to 8 pm at 77/1 Moo 5, Viset Rd, Rawai, Phuket. Email: carwash\_phuket@hotmail.com or Tel: 09-6503160.*

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# B30m for Haad Yai Airport security

**H**aad Yai International Airport will spend 30 million baht on beefing up surveillance systems to boost security after last month's bomb attacks at the facility, the airport director said.

Pratheep Wichittho said that airport officials will add 39 closed-circuit cameras to the existing 23 cameras, two X-ray machines to the existing four and two mobile phone jamming devices by October. These measures were aimed at rebuilding confidence after the April 3 attacks, he said.

The authorities will also block exits and entrances to ensure that there is only one way either in or out of the airport. About 20 security officers will guard the entrances and patrol the airport 24 hours a day, he said.

**Nanotremor:** Residents in two separate parts of Nan Province reported feeling tremors and seeing road surfaces buckle.

A local official in Phu Phiang subdistrict reported a 30-centimeter-wide, five-foot-long crack in a road outside his house, and villagers in Wiang Sa District reported similar damage following a tremor.

Over the past few months, similar incidents have been reported in Udon Thani and Uttaradit. However, the provincial meteorological office in Nan said that no earthquake activity had been detected on that day.

Adichat Surinkum, Director of the Mineral Resources Department's Geotechnics Division, said a team would be sent to Nan to investigate.

K. Adichat advised people not to panic about such incidents, saying similar things had been happening for a long time but no one had paid them any attention



**TAXI, SIR?**  
Tuk-tuk models made from used aluminum cans were a popular item at a recent export promotion market held in Bangkok.

before the December 26, 2004, tsunami disaster.

**Head start:** Childcare centers are to be installed in 800 government hospitals across the country in the near future, Public Health Ministry permanent secretary Dr Wichai Thienthaworn said.

HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn initiated the project, which began on April 2, her 50<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The government's Lottery Office has contributed 60 million baht to start the project, which was inspired by research indicating a drop in IQ among Thai children over the past 10 years. The study concluded that fewer than 1% of Thai children had an IQ level above the normal 110.

**Buddhism bonanza:** An estimated 300,000 Thai people and a total of 600 monks and laypersons representing Buddhist organizations in 40 countries will take part in a series of grand ceremonies to mark Visakha Bucha

Day week in Thailand between May 16 and 22.

The foreign delegates will attend a seminar at the United Nations building in Bangkok, which Deputy Prime Minister Chaturon Chaisaeng said will be one of three major events to be held during the seven-day period.

The two other events will be services at Sanam Luang in Bangkok and at the Buddha Monthol complex in Nakhon Pathom on May 22, on which Visakha Bucha Day falls this year.

**Treasure chests:** Wacoal brand undergarments has linked up with crystal-maker Swarovski to introduce its latest brassiere collection, Diamond Intimacy.

The firm expects to generate 300 million baht in domestic sales this year from the new collection, which features Swarovski crystals. Prices for the new collection, which is intended to lift Wacoal's image, start at 680 baht.

The domestic lingerie mar-

ket is valued at 11 billion baht, of which Wacoal has a 65% share. The company is spending 20 million baht on television advertising to promote the new collection.

**June bugs:** The first batch of 12 million smart ID cards will be delivered to Thai citizens by June, after a six-month delay.

The Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the Interior Ministry will speed up their preparations of the database that will store citizens' data and allow it to be accessed by authorities with the swipe of an ID card, ICT Minister Suwit Khunkitti said.

The smart ID cards have raised concerns among civil rights groups and other critics regarding privacy. Their foremost concern is that information stored in the database and on the cards could be accessed by unauthorized individuals or agencies.

The cards will first be is-

sued to the residents of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat, where an ongoing Muslim insurgency represents the government's single greatest security problem.

**Kiwi extinguisher:** Tourist Corin Ian James of New Zealand, 27, was found dead in his guest-house room on Bangkok's Khao Sarn Rd after playing with a fire extinguisher while drunk.

Two fellow New Zealanders told police James took a fire extinguisher from the hallway of the Marco Polo Guesthouse and proceeded to empty its contents for fun before falling asleep at around 9 pm. When they returned at 3 am, they found their friend dead, they told police.

Police suspect James may have died after inhaling the toxic fumes unleashed by the fire extinguisher, but are awaiting the results of an autopsy.

**Lack of faith:** Most Bangkok residents are unhappy with the government's performance in tackling corruption, a survey by Assumption University (Abac) has found.

Srisak Jamornman, Director of the university's Poll Office, told a press conference that 63.9% of the respondents wanted Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra to speed up efforts in tackling corruption, while 27.9% said the government was already doing enough. The remaining respondents had no comment.

When asked whether state officials, such as police, had demanded bribes from them over the past three months, 68.4% of the respondents said they had.

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

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**R**uengnam Chaikwang, the director of the Tourism Association of Koh Samui, says that rising fuel costs are now causing problems in many sectors of the island's economy.

Price increases resulting from recent fuel hikes include taxi fares, which are likely to go up by 10% to 12% across the board, construction costs – due mainly to the cost of transporting materials – and the delivery of goods to businesses around the island.

Prices of ferry tickets from Donsak to Koh Samui or Koh Pha-ngan are also likely to rise, according to Seesak Sreesawat, manager of the Seatran ferry service.

Large passenger and cargo ships that come to the island rely on diesel fuel, and recent increases in the price of oil around the world mean that the company will be forced to put up its prices.

According to management sources, the company's operating costs have already risen by more than

40%, and fares must be changed to reflect the increase.

K. Ruengnam says that Samui is already expensive for tourists compared with the mainland, but predicts further price rises during the rest of the year.

Fishermen also face higher fuel costs, and this factor will be reflected in prices for their catch.

Gasoline and diesel normally cost around one baht more per liter on Koh Samui than they do on the mainland, which is added to cover the cost of transporting the fuel there. The problem is compounded by the fact that there are only two contain-

# Rising fuel prices hit Samui

ers daily to the island, which means that gasoline is in limited supply.

Those industries that rely heavily on fuel will have to take measures and plan for higher investment in their business in order to weather the increase.

**Water worries:** Chaowalit Saran, the assistant director of the Provincial Waterworks Authority in Bangkok, came to Samui recently to inspect facilities and meet those in charge of the operation.

The amount of potable water available from the public supply dropped to critical levels in April, and K. Chaowalit said that if no rain had fallen by mid-May, then the much-promised reverse-osmosis system would be initiated to cope with the shortfall. He added that introducing the process, whereby saltwater can be turned into potable

water, would not mean a change in water prices. A mobile plant already in place on Chaweng Lake could also provide an emergency supply, and a new reservoir at Lippa Yai, with a capacity of 9,000 cubic meters, should be built before the next dry season.

Small islands around Samui, such as Koh Tan, Koh Matsum and the islands in the Angthong Marine Park, have already run out of water, despite claims last month that the situation was manageable.

The Royal Thai Navy is now delivering water to these is-

## FROM THE GULF OF THAILAND



By Commander  
Sammy Swan



**BEETLE MANIA:** Dr Carlos Lopez-Vaamonde, from the Institute of Zoology in London, spearheaded the seminar held recently on Samui to discuss ways to control the beetles that are ravishing the island's coconut plantations.

lands, for local use and to cope with the demand from tourists visiting the islands on day trips.

A navy boat stationed in Nathon will make regular trips until the rains replenish the natural supply. It can carry 60,000 liters, but there is some concern that this water, which is being taken from Koh Samui, is reducing already depleted supplies.

**Coconut conference:** A high-level seminar was held recently on Koh Samui to discuss ways to control the spread of three types of coconut beetles that continue to destroy large numbers of palm trees on the island.

Dr Carlos Lopez-Vaamonde, from the Institute of Zoology in London, joined forces with Prof Surachate Jamorn-

marn, Head of the Entomology Department at Kasetsart University, and Dr Vidyasager, Vice-President of Research at Vikkis Agrotech, India.

The three experts identified the different species present on Samui, and also described the insects' life cycles and feeding patterns. The team also offered various ways to control and destroy the insects, using both natural and chemical means.

Prof Surachate hopes to follow up the seminar with more in-depth research, and eventually to establish Koh Samui as a testbed for measures to protect palms against these destructive creatures.

**Samui public health shortage:** Koh Samui Hospital is short of

qualified staff, and high demand for care means that many doctors have to work outside their specialized field.

Such overstretching of staff increases the chance of mishaps and misdiagnoses, as well as putting a lot of pressure on the doctors both personally and professionally. In some cases, doctors are drafted in from private hospitals, but this can take time.

The major concern for most island residents is that if patients are sent to Surat Thani for treatment, the journey can be hazardous and may also take up to five hours, reducing the chances of a satisfactory recovery.

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


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## This week



**RIGHT:** During his recent visit to Thailand, Britain's Prince Andrew presented a plaque to Alan Cooke (right) marking Mr Cooke's elevation from British Honorary Consular Correspondent for Phuket to British Honorary Consul for the island.

**LEFT:** More than 20 children – some of the poorest in Phuket – and volunteers joined in the opening day of the Friends Center at Baan Chang, Patong, which will offer educational and social activities for the community's children and their parents.



**'ELLO, 'ELLO, 'ELLO:** Detective Chief Inspector Peter Newton (lilac shirt) of the UK Police Disaster Victim Identification team presents 20 communications radios to Pol Capt Pongnarin Sutin, Chief of Kamala Sub-Division Police Station during a recent party at the Whispering Cock public house in Cherno Talay. Most of the radios belonging to Kamala Police were lost, together with a lot of other equipment, in the tsunami.




**HELPING HANDS:** Japanese parliamentarians presented fishing nets and floats to 14 families in Baan Nam Khem, Phang Nga Province, contributing to one of World Vision's livelihood-sustainability projects.



**ONE FOR THE BUOYS:** Bianca Hein (rear, center, blue top) receives a warm welcome to her new position as Editor of *Siam Marine* magazine from ArtAsia Press MD John Everingham (in front of Ms Hein, in white shirt, glass of red wine in hand) and guests at Ao Chalong Yacht Club.



**PHOTOGRAPHY, OH YES!** Celebrated Japanese photographer Takeo Ono (center) and other guests, including Somjai Suwannasuppana (2<sup>nd</sup> from left), the Mayor of Phuket City, attend the opening of the "Shutter by Two" photographic exhibition at Phuket Public Library.



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# That's what friends

**F**or Ramphan "Lek" Phuanpin, there is no greater cause than to help children from poor families achieve their dreams – children trapped by poverty; children with very limited opportunities to realize their dreams.

Recently K. Lek, with the help of many friends, set up the Friends club, a "library", as K. Lek calls it, at Baan Chang, a grim slum at the southern end of Patong, so that children might have a bright, clean place to play and learn close to home.

Here, K. Lek explains to the *Gazette's* Athiga Jundee how the library was formed, and what drives her in her tireless efforts in helping Patong's poor.

**E**very morning, 12-year-old Woravit "M" Sukumpa and his friends are the first to arrive at the Friends club at Baan Chang, a slum at the southern end of Patong not far from Simon Cabaret.

"Is it open yet?" they call out. M is one of about 25 children who live at the village, and who have found the recently opened library has become a ray of light in their lives.

Although some of the children's parents have jobs, such as working in stores or bars, as motorcycle taxi drivers or selling food from carts around Patong, they earn little. Some of the families make ends meet by collecting trash, selling paper, glass, plastic and other items that can be recycled.

The need to make money more often than not means the children are left to their own devices, which was the first thing that childcare volunteer

Ramphan "Lek" Phuanpin noticed about the village.

"While I was looking for the right place to set up the place, I saw many children playing games here," she said. "But I noticed that they were dirty, and many parents were not home to look after them, to make sure they were safe and clean."

K. Lek runs the Friends club with fellow volunteer Chantana "Pom" Bunpum in a rented shack in the village. The club, which opened on May 1, is the first project of the recently-formed Dek Dek Phuket Club (Phuket Children's Club) charity.

K. Lek explained that the main objective of Dek Dek Phuket is to help poor families look after the welfare of their children. In particular, the Friends club aims to provide youngsters with a place for learning and doing activities together, and a way to steer young teenagers away from the vices of the resort town.



Originally from Phitsanulok Province, K. Lek moved to Phuket in 1999, when she joined Sainamyen School in Patong as a teacher for seven months, while waiting for her retirement as a school teacher to be ratified.

After her retirement came through, K. Lek launched into her career as a volunteer worker. She started full-time volunteer work at Patong Hospital, working for Phuket Child Care Center, where she spent two years. She then went on to become Project Manager of Child Care for the Asia Centre Foundation and as a volunteer for World Vision, all the time focusing her efforts in Patong.

"When I volunteering with

the Asia Centre Foundation, I had the fortune to meet a generous man, Mr Jerry Dixon. He was from Switzerland, and had retired in Phuket," K. Lek explained. "Before he died, he gave 130,000 baht, which included money donated by his friends, toward helping children in need, with me as the person responsible [for making sure the money was spent appropriately]," K. Lek said.

With the money, K. Lek and other friends of Mr Dixon set up the Dek Dek Phuket Club to provide immediate assistance to children who urgently need help.

They chose the name "Friends" for the project in Baan Chang because it was born out of the benevolence of Mr Dixon and his many friends.

Friends are indeed a blessing. One of Mr Dixon's happened to know the PR Manager of German mining technology company Deutsche Bergbau-Technik. Last month the company gave Dek Dek Phuket 250,000 baht.

Little M, who loves reading, finds Friends club a delight. "I don't mind if the books are old or a little bit broken. If I can read them and see some of the photos, that's fine." But what he wants to be when grows up is a soldier, so he studies hard and spends his spare time reading so he can become one, he said.

K. Lek sees a little of herself in each of the children at the club; when she was young she dreamed of being a teacher and hearing the children's dreams,

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she says, inspires her to be a part of their lives and to help them make their dreams come true.

A big part of K. Lek's tireless smiling devotion derives from her own childhood. She understands what the children are going through, she says, because she came from a poor family of rice farmers. "I was lucky. I got a government scholarship that gave me the opportunity to study for

my diploma [in teaching]," she said.

But throughout her life, it has been support from friends and loved ones that has proved critical in making it through hard times. After she graduated, K. Lek became a teacher at a school in Phitsanulok. She then married a policeman and had two children. However, K. Lek and her husband separated. She came to

Phuket at the invitation of friends who thought a change of scene might help get the separation off her mind.

Getting back on her feet, but still waiting for her retirement to be approved, K. Lek met Briton Gordon Hollinshead, who had already retired and was living on Phuket.

"He always stands beside me, giving me support to help

others in society," she said

K. Lek says that she has plans to set up similar projects in other needy areas.

"I am very happy working for young people and for society," she says, with that same big smile.



To make a donation to the project, deposit funds in this account: Mrs Ramphan Phuanpin (Dek Dek Phuket), Siam Commercial Bank, Patong Phuket Branch, Account No. 601-258082-2. For more information contact K. Lek (Tel: :09-6494838; 076-323482).



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# FULLSTEAM Ahead

**Hair with Rungtip Hongjakpet**

There's the old saying, "If you want to get ahead, get a hat," but, as these pictures suggest, if you want to really turn heads, have a word with hairdressers Rukdeaw, Deddong and Rukkun Nalamdoon. The funky, punky hairstyles created by the Bangkok-based brothers and their Kawa-I stylists team were one of the highlights of the recent hair trade show at the Royal Phuket City Hotel.

Around 350 hairdressers from Phuket visited the show – organized by the distributors of Dipso hair products and Phuket's BeautyLand salon – to pick up tips on new products, styles and techniques.

Away from the catwalk, the hair care professionals were only too happy to give advice for those who prefer less eye-catching styles than these. Some of their tips:

**STEAMING** is a deep-conditioning treatment that involves coating the hair in intensive conditioner and applying steam, either by wrapping hot, damp towels around the head, or by using an electric steaming machine.

If your hair is very healthy, you can steam it once a month, but if it is dry, weak or damaged by too many chemical processes – perming, coloring and so on – steam it no more often than once every two months.

**UNHAPPY** with your new perm? Don't try to change it by having another perm – that's the worst thing you can do. If you do want to try to "undo" the perm, the sensible approach is to wait about a month, to allow the hair to recover slightly from the original perm before trying to perm over it.

**WHEN** choosing hair products, go for those formulated for your type of hair. Some women, for example, will opt for an intensive conditioner when a light one would be better; the intensive one may be too rich for their hair, and leaves it looking lank rather than healthy. Choosing the wrong product is a bad idea that does your hair no good.



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It's amazing the absolute rubbish that floats into your brain when you're coated in ground mangosteen and encased from neck to toe in heavy-duty plastic, an electric blanket and several towels. In my case, it was: "I wonder what I would do if there were an earthquake right now?"

An earthquake was an unlikely prospect, but the fact that the thought even drifted into my head at all is perhaps a testament to the intoxicating effect of an evening at the Solitude Spa at the Mangosteen Resort in Rawai. It was as relaxing as being drunk – only without the alcohol.

So relaxing, in fact, that my colleague – nicknamed "Hyper" at the *Gazette* office – fell asleep.

I couldn't see Hyper on account of the cloth placed over my eyes by therapist K. Nik when she left me to "bake" in my wrap, but I could hear her snoring gently on the adjacent couch.

K. Nik, on the other hand, moved about the treatment room so quietly that the only time I was aware she was nearby was when I smelled the fragrance of the soothing towel she was about to wrap round my head.

I was having one of Solitude's signature treatments: a mangosteen body detoxification wrap, which uses acids from mangosteens to remove dead skin cells and draw out toxins.

After showering in our treatment room's private shower, using mangosteen shower gel made exclusively for the Mangosteen resort, I had been informed that the treatment required me to be *au naturel*.

As a Brit who generally prefers to keep her bits under wraps, this came as something of a shock. "It's not a problem," K. Nik assured me. And she was right: carefully placed and folded towels protected my modesty throughout the application of the wrap and the delightful Swedish massage that followed it.

Hyper – who had a Swedish massage from therapist K. Ben, followed by a European facial – and I agreed that the sur-



# Memorably Mangosteen

roundings contributed just as much to our spa experience as the treatments we received.

There were, for example, flowers floating in bowls under the couch headrests, giving

us something attractive to look at while we were lying on our fronts, and unlimited clean towels – the spa is spotlessly clean.

New-Age-but-not-irritat-

ingly-so Western and Eastern music played softly in the background, and the tastefully-decorated air-conditioned treatment rooms had stunning views of Chalong Bay – the best of all from the Jacuzzi in the premier treatment suite.

Mangosteen Managing Director Kewalee "Ant" von Keller drew up the spa menu of European and Asian treatments with help from manager K. Nancy (formerly of the Banyan Tree) and assistant manager K. Rin.

"We change it every year," said K. Ant, "and I'm planning to introduce a detoxing weight-loss package shortly."

As there is only the resort's swimming pool between the spa and the wonderful restaurant, I'm not sure that's entirely fair!

*Solitude Spa at Mangosteen Resort, 99/4 Moo 7, Soi Mangosteen, Rawai, Tel: 076 289399, website: www.mangosteen-phuket.com*

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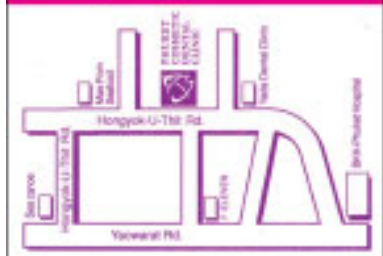
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The leading canoe is sinking, please send the escort boat to assist, came the command over the walkie-talkie as we were crossing the Mae Kung reservoir.

We were 30 kilometers inside the rolling foothills to the north of Chiang Mai, and this was the start of a corporate team-building challenge program we were running for 100 adventurous executives.

The theme – Back to Basics – provided a hectic 36 hours, as we escorted 14 teams through the basics of canoeing, jungle cooking and survival techniques, navigation, orienteering, mountain biking and trekking.

The area to the north of the city is one of rolling hills, gentle valleys, small rivers, rich fruit plantations and small-stepped paddy fields, certainly a place to wander slowly and capture the peaceful rural scenes.

Small villages abound, with sleepy residents, especially when, at this time of the year, the temperature hits 40°C. It may be hot, but it is also very, very dry, and the low humidity keeps the heat at least bearable.

Once past our canoeing challenge, the teams boarded their *songtaew* and were soon off again, driving through some of Thailand's largest teak forests, the most expensive timber around. The government replanted this area several years ago and the young teak trees are a stunning sight.

The countryside slowly changed as we drove down into the next valley, which was full of fruit plantations and some of the most fertile land I've seen in Thailand, especially so around the Sri Lanna National Park region, east of Mae Malai.

This is definitely worth a drive, or even better, a trip by mountain bike, and this was the next team challenge. After basic safety instruction, the teams carefully navigated their way along the quiet side roads through the sleepy villages.

From there we moved on into the adjacent valley of Maeteng where, after a few kilometers we started to follow the fast-flowing river. The terrain began to change dramatically, as the hills grew higher and the valleys grew steeper.

Soon we were at Mae-taman, the location for one of the north's largest elephant camps, home to around 60 elephants.



Above and below, the canoe challenge at the beginning of the program. Above right, a traditional greeting from the locals.

## PRETTY BASIC STUFF



We drove higher up the valley. The paved road ended suddenly, and 4WD was really the only way to go.

The sun was slowly falling in the sky as we made it over the mountain and to the last of the challenges: a short trek to our camp for the night.

The late afternoon was much cooler there, and the temperature was in the upper 20s, perfect for the short trek along the banks of the Maeteng River, and past a small elephant sanctuary, where half a dozen el-

ephants bathed quietly in the river.

The camp, owned by my old friend Alex, is right on a bank of the river in the Muang Kut area.

It has a small restaurant, showers, toilets and plenty of riverside camping, and – highly appropriate for the end of a perfect day – a bar serving the coldest Heineken I've tasted in years. That's how it seemed, at any rate...

After a rather riotous party, we finally bedded down in our

tents beneath the stars. We had indeed been "back to basics" and it had been the perfect contrast

to the corporate life. It was surely better than being behind a desk.

### HOW TO GET THERE

Fly to Chiang Mai: several options are available, including Thai Airways, Nok Air and AirAsia – check for current offers, which change weekly.

From Chiang Mai: rent a car or jeep. Alternatively, check out Contact Travel, which organizes tailor-made adventure programs, featuring trekking, escorted mountain biking, kayaking and rafting tours, all over the north. The website is at [www.activethailand.com](http://www.activethailand.com)

### WHERE TO STAY

Camping at Muang Kut camp site, from 400 baht per night per person. Call Contact Travel at Tel: 053-818844.

Lisu Lodge, website: [www.lisulodge.com](http://www.lisulodge.com) or telephone East West Siam at Tel: 076-340912.

Oriental Leisure's "Back to Basics" corporate team-building programs can be run in northern or southern Thailand for groups of between 20 and 100 people. Website: [www.oriental-events.com](http://www.oriental-events.com)

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# Do you “P” hard or soft?

For better or worse, Phuket has figured prominently in the world news this week so it's an opportune time to welcome you to the first edition of the *Phuket Gazette's* new weekly update of how the world sees us.

**P**hooket? Well, I may as well take a few liberties with the Pearl of the Andaman's moniker because everyone else seems to be doing so.

## OUTSIDE IN

By Lis Kinswoman

**Unity at Last:** The website [www.thevoiceofreason.com](http://www.thevoiceofreason.com) states: “Journalists across the globe have finally reached a consensus on the pronunciation of the Thai resort of Phuket.”

In non-media circles, the popular resort is widely referred to as “F\*ckit” but this led to difficulties when the pronunciation slipped into television broadcasts by accident.”

A media specialist told this paper, “Obviously you can't say ‘F\*ckit’ on television or radio even though that is the correct pronunciation, so the only option was to go for a made up pronunciation such as ‘Foo-keet.’”

Other options in the article included “Fooquet”, “Fokket”, and “Foget”. There were others but I forgo them.

One can only pray that Chalong doesn't grab worldwide headlines.

**The air beneath my wings:** Predictably, Phuket Air got a

drubbing, particularly from [www.news.independent.co.uk](http://www.news.independent.co.uk) under the rubric “The World's Least Favourite Airline”, which went on, “...leaking fuel tanks, faulty safety equipment, passenger revolts. Phuket Air has suffered a catalogue of hair-raising problems this week.”

A related airline pilots' net forum came up with Phuketian chestnuts: “Phuket Air; is that their name *and* their motto?” “Sounds even worse than ‘Lucky Airlines.’” “Hey, you forgot to put the petrol cap back on. Ahh, Phuket.”

But enough: the last word in the punning stakes came from a wag at [www.gruse.typepad.com](http://www.gruse.typepad.com) who dispensed the following advice for those confused in pronouncing this island's name.

“When you're in a Thai cab next Friday morning don't forget to petch the poreign luggage from the trunk and don't drive too far into the porrest past the hotel.”

## Wordly wise

“Deliberate lies, deceptions, evasions, omissions, confusion and ... bamboozlement are characteristic of this government. [But] it was a great pleasure to see the transport minister flapping [around] like an air traffic controller without radio communication.”

— Anonymous letter to *The Nation* about the massive airport procurement scandal.

# Solid advice for new couples

**T**his is a dandy idea. Why didn't anyone think of it before? *Good Medicine for Thailand Fever*, also released under the truncated title *Thailand Fever*, (Paiboon Poomsan Publishing, Bangkok, 2004, 258pp), and subtitled *A Road Map for Thai-Western Relationships* is a bilingual marital guide for people who really need it: *farang* men and Thai women embarking on a romance with all the hellacious cultural misunderstandings that will arise.

The authors are Chris Pirazzi and Vitida Vasant. K. Vitida is certainly highly qualified to give advice. She holds a BA from Chulalongkorn and an MSc in Cultural Anthropology from the University of Pennsylvania. She moved to California in 1981 and frequently returns to Thailand.

She married and divorced a *farang*, is raising a daughter, and is engaged to marry another American. Chris Pirazzi's qualifications are more dubious: he has been travelling in Thailand since 1999. Still, he holds up his end of the conversation reasonably well.

The even-numbered pages are written in English, the odd in Thai. If the male symbol is written before a section, that means Pirazzi is talking; if the female, Vitida; if both, both. Their advice, in the main, is eminently practical.

Which means I agree with them. If I can put my own oar in, I'm married to a Thai. My wife and I used to joke that we were married longer than World War II, but now it's pushing the Thirty Years War.

What do young married couples first fight about?

Money. The Thai wife's attitude toward domestic finance



## Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt

can be summed up in one sentence: “What's your money is my money and what's my money is my money.” The corollary to this is: “Just shut up and give her the money.”

From time immemorial Thai women have been handling the family finances. When the military ruled in Thailand, their wives ran the economy. A recent survey indicated that Thai women, in terms of education and employment, are the most liberated in the Asia Pacific region.

Thus it bodes well for a *farang* to tread carefully around the issue of money. The authors address this in an astute discussion of *nam jai* (“water heart”, or generosity) as opposed to its all-too-familiar complement *kee nieow* (“sticky shit”, or stingy).

“The value of generosity is so strong that it outweighs the values of privacy, independence and fairness,” writes Pirazzi.

The prospective husband is expected to be generous to his spouse and her family. “You love your husband more than your

family” is a Thai curse. On the other hand, the family will stick with you through thick and thin. And your children, unlike hard-hearted *farang* kids, will never toss you into a nursing home but rather appoint you guardian of the grandchildren. Marrying into a highly interdependent Thai family and raising kids is way different from how *farang* do it.

“It all comes down to understanding your partner's culture,” the authors write. “Never forget that you and your partner grew up in cultures that developed separately over thousands of years. To have a happy relationship, you must understand that your partner does not share some of the basic beliefs and values you have taken for granted your whole life.

You must be open-minded in ways you've probably never considered. In this book, we will make you aware of these surprising differences.”

In her advice to Thai women, K. Vitida addressed such Western values as independence, privacy, fairness, equality, openness and

ways of handling conflict.

“Believe it or not, to the Westerner an argument can be a source of *sanuk* (fun),” she writes. “Friends and co-workers can be yelling at each other one minute and laughing about it over lunch a minute later, celebrating what a great argument they had! You will need to get used to this if you live in your boyfriend's country. You might even come to enjoy it yourself ... Getting to the truth is very important to Westerners – more important than saving face.”

My own southern Thai wife has never been a slouch in the argument department, but I suppose K. Vitida is talking about the ideal Bangkok woman.

In sum, if you know a Thai-*farang* couple about to get married, give them this book. If you're already married, read it yourself.





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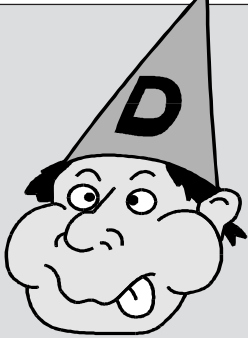
What time is it now?

A. 9

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S MONSTER QUIZ

1. Innsbruck and Bolzano; 2. John Milton; 3. Scrivener; 4. Malo Luafutu; 5. Stop The Music; 6. Phrygia; 7. Mark Twain; 8. The torpedoing of the passenger liner RMS Lusitania; 9. Caspar David Friedrich; 10. Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood; 11. Thomas M Disch; 12. Windsor, Ontario, August 28, 1965; 13. I'm on my way; 14. Noonday, Texas; 15. Moder (or Mother) Svea; 16. FC Barcelona; 17. Cerro El Pital; 18. Valdas Adamkus; 19. Japanese bamboo flute; 20. Dr Dennis Gabor.

Get your brain in gear with The Monster Quiz



1. Who, in 1922, painted *Twittering Machine*?

2. What brand of shoe is named after Greek goddess of victory?

3. What word beginning with "T" describes a small drum or a footstool?

4. What is remarkable about Princess Victoria of Sweden?

5. What name is given to the ardent fans of the Ferrari Formula 1 team?

6. What, in 1950, was the first Ferrari F1 car?

7. *Duel* was a 1985 hit for which German synth-pop band?

8. Edward Jenner administered the first what on May 14, 1796?

9. The character Major Major Major appears in which novel?

10. The character Major Tom appears in the song *Space Oddity* and which other David Bowie song?

11. What is the opposite of a perigee?

12. Which actor will play the role of Willy Wonka in the movie remake of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*?

13. Child rapper Kid Gangsta "matured" into which adult rapper?

14. Rapper Calvin Codorzar Broadus is better known by what name?

15. Which character did he play in the 2004 film *Starsky & Hutch*?

16. What was the first nuclear-powered surface vessel?

17. Boris Diaw plays for which US basketball team?

18. At 24.5 kilometers, which is the world's longest road tunnel?

19. Who is the President of Turkey?

20. Which London area has the postcode SE21?

Answers next week

Never a Cross Word!

ACROSS

1. They're good for looking at very small things.

7. Scottish monster's nickname.

8. Small sips.

10. Put the knife in.

11. Legally permissible.

12. Soccer team's hero.

14. Sinister plan.

15. He's on your side.

17. Gases.

18. Spit.

DOWN

2. Exactly the same.

3. Rude-sounding fruit?

4. Seafood leftover.

5. Trident-like letter in Greek alphabet.

6. Help!

8. The *Gazette's* a good example.

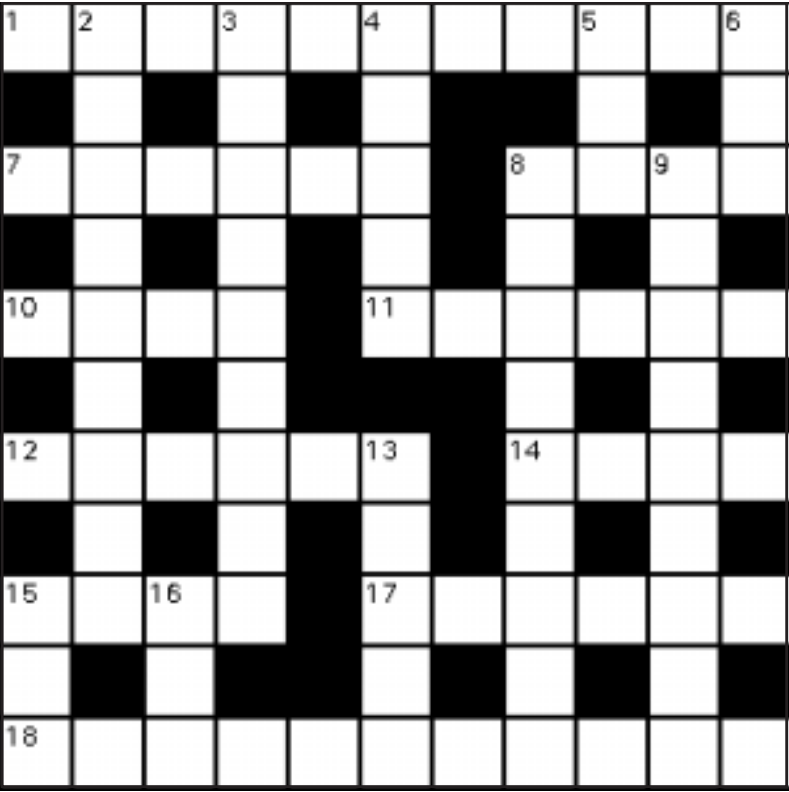
9. He believes the rich should rule.

13. Metal fastener.

15. Highest or lowest in the pack.

16. Once round the track.

Solution next week



SOLUTION TO  
LAST WEEK'S  
CROSSWORD

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



By now the “five Tigers” appointed by Governor Udomsak Usawarang-kura to oversee Patong’s recovery from the tsunami should be well settled into their new job.

In my previous column, I said I was confident that the “tigers” – one of whom is Patong Mayor Pian Keesin – would lead the municipality to recovery.

But what are the issues that K. Pian and his colleagues need to tackle?

Well, the answers are glaringly obvious, but as not a single reader took up my challenge to email me a list of what Patong needs, here, for the record, is my own personal wishlist:

- The direct regulation of tuk-tuk prices seems to be a mission impossible, yet these guys do more damage to the town than anyone else, both environmentally and in terms of the fair distribution of the tourist dollar or euro.

They are often aggressive, and God help the poor tourist who argues with them too heatedly for, verily, I say unto you that he shall receive a swift box to the ear.

Their cut is disproportionately high compared with their overheads and the service rendered. They have made government, both local and national, look ridiculously impotent.

The drivers’ reaction – when anyone has tried to regulate them – has typically been to blockade major transport routes on the island, including the road to the airport.

There has never been a better time to confront – and deal – with them. There are clearly too many of them for a start. Anyone who has been solicited by driver after driver after driver can attest to this.

To be merely critical serves no purpose, so here is my strategy for putting the brakes on their excesses:

#### Introduce competition,

# Go get 'em, tigers



By Konrad Stalin

specifically baht buses similar to those in Pattaya. As long as the tuk-tuk guys have a monopoly, there is little chance of getting them to charge reasonable fares.

**Inform tourists** of costs to and from various destinations by placing signs in tourist hotspots advising them of prices. The Phuket Provincial Transportation Office (PPTO) launched a complaints hotline number – 1584 (which seems to be constantly engaged) – in May last year.

Officers are supposed to be on hand 24 hours a day to receive complaints about rip-offs and other bad treatment, from not only tuk-tuk drivers but also limousine and minibus operators.

Disgruntled passengers are advised to note the vehicle’s PPTO registration number, which should be on the side of the vehicle, or the driver’s license details.

According to a *Gazette* story from May 5 last year, “...the complaints hotline number must be displayed within each vehicle along with – for tuk-tuks – a list of maximum fares on 49 routes around the island, and the tuk-tuk operator’s license. Any tuk-tuk operator found not to be displaying the fares list or charging more than the maximum fare for a trip is liable to a fine of up to 2,000 baht.”

Does anyone want to hazard a guess how many tuk-tuks



Whether tuk-tuks will be allowed to dominate Patong’s beach road, as they did before the tsunami, (pictured above) is up to Governor Udomsak’s “five tigers”, who include Patong Mayor Pian Keesin.

do display as ordered, or how many have been fined?

- The roadside vendors’ temporary structures, which obscure legitimate beachfront building frontages, should be demolished. Most of these people sell illegal goods and have invested in nothing other than their own stock.

They clutter the entrances of decent traders and pay no taxes (at least not to the government). Why should they occupy such a prominent position? Location is not an important factor in their business because people will find them wherever they are.

The unlicensed sidewalk alcohol sellers on Soi Bangla should be removed. These people really are taking the p\*ss by selling alcohol from coolboxes on the street; it is an insult to all the legitimate businesses in this area, where a bar costs a fortune to secure and operate.

- The seemingly random allocation of the five existing Patong nightclub licenses has been responsible for more skulduggery than anything else in this industry. Releasing more licenses immediately takes away the opportunity for the “blind eyes” to make illicit cash.

- Jet-skis are dangerous and noisy pests and should be removed now, not in five years’ time. Give the owners jobs with the beach patrol and pay them the same as they would earn from jet-skis.

- Give us back our beachfront and don’t let the car hire mob infest it again. Tourists may be returning to Phuket, but they are not returning to Patong. They are staying just about anywhere else on the island.

That the tsunami dealt an almost fatal blow to the place cannot be changed, but Phuket’s politicians do have the power to

influence how it recovers and what it presents to the public for next high season.

They also need our support and encouragement, so let us be prepared to applaud them when they do get it right.

**Beyond bad taste:** To boast that I have seen something truly tasteless in Phuket is not going to come as an earth-shattering surprise. Our lovely little island could occasionally be considered the Queen of Crass.

But last week I saw a T-shirt with the words “I survived the tsunami at the \*\*\* Bar” printed on it.

This was clearly the work of someone whose brain is not engaged. If you recognize yourself from my description, and you wish to give me a righteous slagging off or – unwisely – try to defend these appalling rags by dint of either your right to free speech or your right to celebrate your survival, then feel free to do so.

However, I must caution you that when I saw these shirts, I was in the company of a Scandinavian couple whose two-year-old son did not survive the tsunami at the \*\*\* Bar, or anywhere else.

Their initial disbelief quickly turned to heartbreak, as they realized that the most dreadful moment of their lives had so quickly been trivialized for someone’s financial gain.

The observation of this – and my complete failure to find words to comfort them – will stay with me forever. In the coming year there will be a lot more visitors of this type, who lost someone and wish to visit the area

where they died, and your sick boast will crush them all.

You know what to do, Sunshine. Do it now.

**Food fight:** On, now, to a lighter subject, and a plea from Mr P Orker for information on the source of a decent sausage in Phuket. Not easy to find, although there may be suppliers here of whom I am unaware.

I get mine smuggled in with me tea bags, steak and kidney puddings, choccie biccies and bacon.

Two of the best places I know of are Yorkies in Pattaya and Bourbon St – a Cajun restaurant – in Bangkok.

Yorkies produce a very good Cumberland and a few other varieties, as well as a cracking black pudding. They used to have an outlet in Phuket at Food Glorious Food and are now seeking another local partner. Excellent Andouille sausages are available by mail order from Bourbon St.

There is obviously a huge gap in the market locally, but everyone who has tried to fill it has failed. I am clueless as to why. Maybe Mr P Orker should investigate?

Far be it from me shamelessly to plug any company, but, for the benefit of those who are partial to a tasty bit of sausage, here are their contact details:

Bourbon Street, Bangkok. Visit [www.bourbonstbkk.com](http://www.bourbonstbkk.com), Email: [bourbon@mozart.inet.co.th](mailto:bourbon@mozart.inet.co.th) or call Tel: 02-2590328-9.

Yorkies Pork Platter Co, Jomtien Beach Rd, Jomtien. Tel. 038-231918 or email: [porkplatter@yahoo.com](mailto:porkplatter@yahoo.com)

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# Hats off to a Royal wedding

**L**ike many others, I watched the wedding of Prince Charles and Camilla Parker Bowles on TV. Not the actual wedding, of course, which wasn't televised, but the church service that followed.

As an American – and hence a scruffy ex-colonial – I was impressed by the grandeur of the occasion. The British do these things much better than we do; we need a little grandeur in our tatty lives to relieve the tedium of wars, natural disasters, and Michael Jackson.

Another thing that struck me is that British upper-class ladies, and the ladies of the Royal family in particular, have what is perhaps a genetic predisposition to the wearing of ugly hats.

Camilla was wearing one, Queen Elizabeth was wearing one, and there must have been at least 50 ladies in the congregation wearing them: great broad-brimmed hats of various designs and colors, some of them multi-layered, some adorned with sprigs of alfalfa, and every one of them atrociously ugly.

Now, I myself am a hat man. I am an enthusiastic devotee of hats, and possess entire trunks of hats which I have collected from various Asian boot-docks.

I have Kulu and Lahauli caps from the Himalayas, Nepali caps, Gandhi caps,



Mao caps, baseball caps, a Turkmen sheepskin hat reeking of mutton, a Vietnamese pith helmet, and a flat-topped, roll-brimmed wool hat like the ones the Afghans wear. I have Arab headcloths, turbans, even a fez.

Finally, I possess the King of Hats: a magnificent Australian bush hat that a friend brought me from Sydney and which cost me US\$70.

The fact that I would spend 70 big ones on a single hat should suffice to nail down my credentials as a serious hat freak.

But whereas all of my hats are splendid, the hats worn by the ladies of the British upper classes are merely ugly. And I have a theory that accounts for this aberration.

I believe that British upper-class ladies are trying to overcome their repu-

tation for frumpiness. So they wear these big, gaudy, absurd-looking hats, which proclaim to onlookers, "Look at me! I am wearing an ugly hat! I am not frumpy!"

The effort is, alas, in vain. The average onlooker, beholding such an apparition, will merely mutter into his Guinness, "Mmmm, there's a frumpy woman wearing an ugly hat."

Indeed, the difference between me and British upper-class ladies, aside from petty considerations of gender, wealth, status, and breeding, is this: I know my hats make me look stupid, so I never wear them. British upper-class ladies don't know that, so they do.

To cap it all, when Camilla took her hat off, things got worse. She was wearing what appeared to be the remains of an osprey's nest beneath it. It looked as if a small haystack was sprouting from her head.

Aside from the headgear, there was another notable aspect to the wedding.

I was struck by the emphasis which the Archbishop of Canterbury placed on the moral failings of the happy couple. He led them in a prayer that declared to the entire watching world that they had repented their sins and wickedness.

I wonder if, when Charles' reign is over, history will remember him as King

Charles the Sinful and Wicked (but Repentant!).

It seemed to me that the archbishop was being a little hard on poor Charlie who, after all, has just been trying to wring a little joy out of the rough hand life has dealt him.

It is said that the Church of England had wanted the Heir Apparent to apologize to Camilla's ex-husband, Andrew Parker Bowles, for cuckolding him.

I don't know if this actually happened, but I imagine that such an encounter might have gone something like this:

**Charles:** I say, Andrew, old chap! Terribly sorry to tell you this, but I've been bonking your wife.

**Andrew:** Ew, think nothing of it, yer Royal Highness. It's all just a part of being sinful and wicked. I do hope you had a good time of it.

**Charles:** Well, I just want you to know I'm frightfully repentant.

**Andrew:** No problem, old chap! Not very good, is she, now?

**Charles:** Er, yes, I was meaning to ask you about that...

And we discreetly draw a veil over the remainder of their conversation.

*S. Tsow can be flamed at stsow@yahoo.com, except when he's counting the hundreds of hats he never wears.*

## In The Stars

by Isla Star

**TAURUS** (April 21-May 21): Long distance affairs of the heart are a viable proposition as long as you keep things in perspective. Ensure that you have your priorities right and you won't have any trouble maintaining passion from afar. But if you make too many sacrifices early on in this relationship it is set to land on the rocks. Dedicate this weekend to having fun and going places you've never been before.

**GEMINI** (May 22-June 21): If you want to get ahead of the rest, you must put in the hours. Progress is possible this week, as long as you cover every angle. Where personal matters are concerned, there's no point in stirring up a hornets' nest unless you are sure that you can tolerate being stung. Keep ideas about relocating on hold – the stars will shine brightly on possibilities next month.

**CANCER** (June 22-July 23): The astrological climate could turn stormy this week. If you've recently given in to the temptation to play the field, someone is about to find out. To achieve romantic bliss, be prepared to prove that trust won't be destroyed; this may take a while. On Monday, Capricorn sends an ambiguous message. You should obtain clarification before wires are crossed and communications break down.

**LEO** (July 24-August 22): If you want to get on in life, you really must analyze the details in the big picture. No matter how easy it is to drift along in the general direction of where you want to go,

you will somehow be forced into taking more specific steps this week. Your methods of seduction are enhanced this Saturday – dare to confront an admirer with an irresistible offer.

**VIRGO** (August 23-September 23): An interesting weekend lies in store for you. If you're quick to take a hint, there's a golden opportunity waiting around the corner. Accepting your fair share of domestic duties will smooth the path with your partner, who has been feeling somewhat taken for granted lately. A dream on Sunday gives you food for thought, but should not be taken too seriously.

**LIBRA** (September 24-October 23): You will find it hard to resist spending money this week. Items that have been on your wish-list since the beginning of the year will magically appear when you go shopping. The last two weeks of May are the perfect time to feather your nest in time for the rainy season. Incorporate shades of orange to tune in to your spiritual side. The number 7 is moderately lucky on Monday.

**SCORPIO** (October 24-November 22): If you are floating above the clouds due to a fresh romance, you may come down with a slight bump this weekend. A new side of the person you're involved with is revealed and this could cause you to re-evaluate the potential future of this relationship. However, you are strongly advised not to jump to conclusions – there are more pleasant surprises to come. A business decision can't be delayed much longer.

**SAGITTARIUS** (November 23-December 21): You are liable to be oversensitive this week, particularly on Monday and Tuesday. Harmless remarks may cause you to doubt yourself unnecessarily. But even if you can't see much concrete change, the career side of your life is slowly and surely improving. Making an effort to get out and about this weekend will do much to cheer you up; Leo is waiting for you to show him or her a good time.

**CAPRICORN** (December 22-January 20): Be careful what you wish for this weekend, because

there's a very good chance that you will get it. If you are determined to make changes, you could find these happening ahead of schedule. Others involved are going to take a lot of convincing, but don't bombard them with information too quickly. Taurus wants to apologize for past misunderstandings and you should be prepared to listen in the right spirit of forgiveness.

**AQUARIUS** (January 21-February 19): Organization is the keyword for you this week. Frustrations about not being able to find the appropriate document when it's needed can be avoided by spending some time sorting papers out. By doing this, you are likely to discover an overdue bill – take care of this matter immediately. Another Aquarius catches your eye on Saturday; your flirtatious manner sends out the right message.

**PISCES** (February 20-March 20): If you get hot under the collar this weekend you will be yearning for some cool fresh air. Your usually placid nature is susceptible to sudden flare-ups which won't achieve anything.

Try visiting the sauna alone to let off some steam instead of inflicting bouts of bad temper on others. By Tuesday you should have cooled down sufficiently to enjoy a dinner date with that special someone. The number 4 is lucky this weekend.

**ARIES** (March 21-April 20): Keeping your nose to the grindstone will ensure that overdue assignments are taken care of this week. Even if you haven't felt the pressure to deliver the goods, someone is not impressed by your tardiness. As long as you have a valid reason to offer, all should be well; this is one contact you certainly don't want to offend. Wear shades of strawberry and cream to attract someone special.

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## Put plans in the pipeline now

At last it's pouring with rain! *Chaiyo!* Now we have lots of water. What a relief! Now we can stop worrying about water shortages and rationing, and concentrate on more important things.

Sadly, this refrain is heard every year in Phuket. Sadly, because the water problem will get worse. The population is still growing and the water catchment areas, thanks to booming development, are still shrinking.

This year, because of the tsunami, we had very few tourists and yet Phuket City Municipality was still warning that the water reserves in the Bang Wad Reservoir were approaching critically low levels.

Each year, the problem gets worse. Yet each year, the onset of the rainy season brings a collective amnesia.

When the dry months come around, there is a knee-jerk reaction. Vague pleas for people to save water are dusted off and served up to the public; negotiations begin with tin-mine owners (who are negotiating from a position of supreme strength); frantic calls are made to the rain-making pilots (whose service costs as much as 480,000 baht a day), and tanker trucks carrying water of sometimes dubious quality constantly rumble around the island.

When one realizes that this is a tropical island with a heavy tropical rainy season, this is pathetic.

Serious thought must go into long-term solutions. Here are some suggestions (apart from the usual, "Save water; shower with a friend"):

- Bring in planning laws that require any new hotel or property development be to built with rainwater tanks two meters deep and covering the same area as the total footprint of the buildings.

- Offer incentives, tax breaks or even subsidies to the owners of existing buildings to persuade them to build rainwater tanks. Funds for this could come out of budgets currently earmarked for costly and inefficient government reservoirs.

- Initiate a ban on the use of hoses during the dry months. This might not be easy to enforce, which is why it should go hand-in-hand with the enlistment of *Phu Yai Baan* (village heads) and other grassroots officials to convince people to be more civic-minded.

- Insist that water departments, municipalities and other bodies responsible for water distribution maintain pipes and equipment properly. Cracked pipes not only waste huge amounts of water but also allow contaminants into the water supply.

Only when the authorities start some serious planning and serious enforcement can the annual ironic spectacle of the waterless tropical island be banished.

— The Editor

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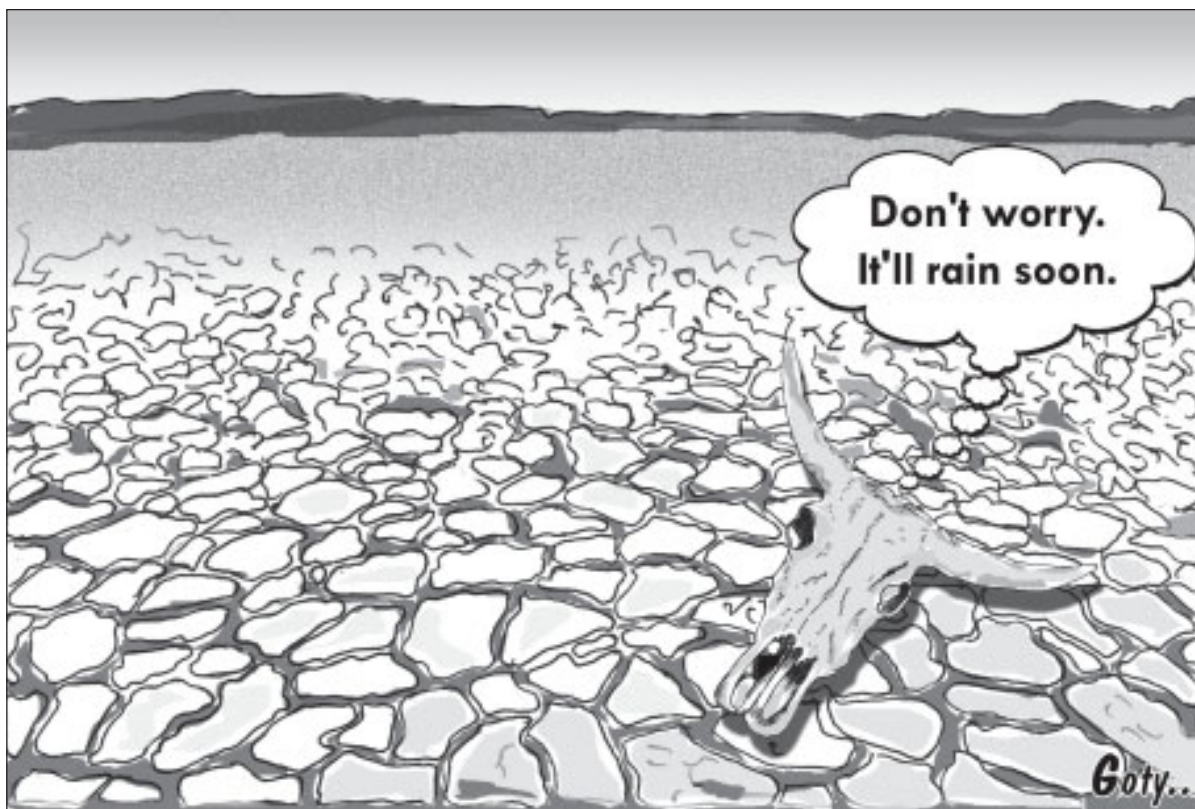
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## Letters

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.

### Water warnings go down the drain

Given the continuing warnings by the Phuket Provincial Water Supply (PPWS) office about the parlous state of Phuket's water supply, why is it that the leaking water main opposite the C&N Resort on Sirirat Rd, Patong, continues to gush water, despite frequent calls to the PPWS over the past 18 months by local businesses?

The leak continues to bubble away, and our precious water continues to flow into Patong Bay.

The Highways Department should take note, too. This leak is now causing subsidence under the road, so they can expect an expensive repair job in the near future.

Perplexed  
Patong

### The dirty shame of Phuket

I have been living in Phuket for about a year, and I am still amazed to see an island that depends so heavily on tourism taking no action whatsoever to stop people throwing garbage just about everywhere.

I used to live in Chalong but I could not bear to see the beaches so dirty. Now I have moved to Rawai but it is exactly the same here.

It is a shame that nobody is teaching people to take care of the environment. Everywhere you go, you are surrounded by bottles, plastic and all sorts of discarded items.

Something that amazed me last year was the World Clean Up Day events organized and held on

Koh Pha-Ngan, which does not have the same population as Phuket.

Nobody is organizing drives to clean this place up. Koh Pha-Ngan has done an amazing job, and I think it is possible here.

Janine  
Rawai

### Views of the cashed, not trashed, count

If the government really wants to help Phuket's economy, why not ask for the opinions of the people who spend the most money in Phuket – the expatriates and the wealthy professionals, not the barflies?

Tourists come and go, some spend a few days, others a few weeks, but the expatriates live in Phuket year round.

Shortsightedness and greed will kill Phuket more effectively than any tsunami.

Mac T  
Philippines  
(formerly of Phuket)

### Aid far too long in coming through

Where has the foreign and Thai aid money for tsunami relief gone?

The only people I know who have received money from the government are Thai landowners who were born in the areas hit.

In Kata, money was suddenly available to construct a new canal and walkway, and before the recent general election, money was given to people on the understanding that they would vote for the party that bribed them.

But most people – *farang*

and other foreigners – received absolutely nothing, although I had not expected any help.

My wife – Thai, born north of Bangkok – had her three businesses washed away.

She is not a landowner – she had only a long-term lease [on the properties] – and because she was not born here she has not received any help through government or local [aid] channels.

We have spent weeks in government offices, the Mayor's office and police stations making reports both for her and for my business, but for nothing.

I know that we are not the only ones to have suffered because of the tsunami, and I know that many others lost a great deal more than we have, but still we wonder where the aid money has gone.

No one seems to know.

Lars Bo Sondergaard  
Koh Kaew

### TOT-al failure

I was connected to TOT (Telephone Organization of Thailand)'s ADSL service in Kamala in December [last year] having waited five months.

Initially, the service was good, running at 512kb/sec – which is the speed I pay for – but since January it has deteriorated to 19kb/sec.

My telephone calls to the TOT's Phuket office elicit no response.

TOT is not providing the service that its customers are paying for, it is not improving what service there is and it must be deliberately misleading new customers as to what it can deliver.

B Walls  
By email

Letters conveying views and suggestions are published here. Those seeking comment from government officials or business owners are published online at [www.phuketgazette.net/issuesanswers/](http://www.phuketgazette.net/issuesanswers/)



# Turtle heritage lost

**L**ike most middle-aged and older residents of Phuket, I remember my father taking me to the beach as a child to watch in fascination as the sea turtles came ashore to lay their eggs under the full moon. Phuket parents these days can no longer share this experience with their children.

I can say that the decrease in the sea turtle population here is from man-made rather than natural causes, and the main culprits are the fisherman who trawl at night with seine nets.

I have asked officials of the Sirinart National Park and the Royal Thai Navy (RTN) so many times to prevent those kinds of boats [from fishing illegally there], but I haven't been successful because the fishermen are backed by big investors.

I have also gone to Bangkok to make presentations aimed at keeping the sea turtles' habitat healthy enough to sustain the population.

It seems like I am constantly fighting with these investors and government officials [who collude to allow it].

I have fought for the turtles for so long. Some people disagree with me or even hate me, but others who support me understand that all I really want is to protect the turtles.

When I was young there were so many turtles here – and several different species. People who wanted to watch turtles lay

## FIRST PERSON

**F**isherman Sombat Saeiew, 63, founded the Mai Khao Sea Turtle Preservation Club more than 30 years ago. Despite his efforts, the population of sea turtles nesting on Mai Khao Beach dwindled to zero until two females managed to lay clutches totaling 180 eggs on the beach just after the tsunami. They were the first clutches in two years. Sadly, none of the eggs hatched.

K. Sombat lays the blame for the demise of this important part of Phuket's natural heritage squarely on illegal fishing and the government officials who allow fishermen to operate within the three-kilometer restricted zone – inside national park waters. Here, he speaks with the *Gazette's* Sangkhae Leelanapaporn about another part of Phuket's heritage that is being lost to greed.



their eggs were never disappointed.

But about seven years ago, the number of turtles plummeted when [people] began to poach the turtles and their eggs for sale [in the illegal trade in endangered species].

Sometimes the fishermen don't intentionally go after turtles, but when the animals get caught in their nets they just cut the turtles' legs off to [get them out of the nets], and they die or are handicapped.

Many years ago a group of foreigners campaigned for a switch to turtle-safe nets, but the fishermen haven't gone along with that. They continue to oper-

ate in whatever way is easiest for them.

We know this is going on from the high number of turtles we observe that are injured or have been handicapped and swim poorly as a result.

Many times when we found turtle corpses onshore, we invited monks to do a Buddhist ceremony as a way of making the hunters feel guilty.

I always tell people it's one thing to steal eggs, but please, please don't kill the turtles too [because they can live up to 100 years and never stop producing eggs].

Sometimes fishermen catch sea turtles and, if their boats are

too small to bring the turtle back to shore, they use a knife to cut open the turtle's stomach and pull out the eggs. Then they leave the mortally-wounded turtle to die alone at sea, where it sometimes has to suffer for days before it finally perishes.

Turtle eggs now sell at about 100 baht each, and sea turtles lay clutches of about 150 eggs each.

That's why people poach them – because it's profitable. So the eggs need to be protected throughout the full 65-day incubation period. The meat of the leatherback also sells for about 100 baht per kilogram [in illegal markets].

I used to remove some turtle eggs from the nest [lest they be stolen] and incubated them myself. After they hatched, I fed the hatchlings for about a month so that their chances of survival against predators would improve. It always made me feel good to release them into the wild.

I don't understand why these people have to kill turtles, and I believe that in doing so they are only allowing wickedness into their lives [through bad karma].

I will continue to work to conserve the sea turtles for as long as I can. The only thing I ask for are RTN boats to patrol the national park waters, day and night, to prevent poaching.

If we could get this we could probably preserve the species for future generations.

At the Similan Islands National Park, there is still a healthy population of sea turtles because Navy patrol boats there enforce the laws. I want to see the same thing happen in Phuket.

I'm pleased with the efforts of the Baan Mai Khao villagers. They always take part in activities to help save sea turtles. We have many volunteers that help watch the beach during egg-laying season – and they do this with no expectation of financial reward.

My hope now is that during the next nesting season some turtles will return to Mai Khao Beach to lay their eggs.

Last month I was in Phuket, then in Khao Lak to scatter the ashes of my best friend, David Sammann, who was killed in the tsunami. Is there any way I could get about six or so "We Love Phuket" stickers?

Roger Sim  
Princeville  
Hawaii

Hi, I just read the story about your new stickers in the online version of the *Phuket Gazette* and was wondering if I could get a few from you.

I live in the US and just returned from Phuket last month after falling in love with it, and am trying to spread the word to get more people to visit.

I am willing to pay for the stickers since I realize it will cost more for you to ship them to America.

John Csiszar

I would like to receive a "We Love Phuket" sticker, if possible.

Bassetti Luca  
Faenza  
Italy

I visit Phuket from Sweden twice a year. Can you please send some stickers to me?

Dragan Cikota  
Malmö, Sweden

# Telling the world

**I**n case anyone doubted it, Phuket has many friends overseas, a point hammered home by the deluge of requests from around the world for the *Gazette's* "We Love Phuket" car stickers. Here are some of the emails the *Gazette* has received.

In response to the demand, the *Gazette* has decided to courier stickers to those who want them, at 40 baht per sticker plus postage costs. All proceeds will be donated to the Rotary Patong Tsunami Fund. Requests should be directed to [LovePhuket@PhuketGazette.net](mailto:LovePhuket@PhuketGazette.net)

I sure would LOVE one of these stickers!

Mike Thomas  
Florida

I would like very much to have a sticker from Phuket in my home in Norway.

Tor Midtun

I'm Ramon from Manila in the Philippines. I'm a total Phuketophile – I've been to Phuket at least 15 times these past 10 years – and would very much want to spread the word about the beauty of Phuket and its people in my country.

Can I have some of the "We Love Phuket" stickers to give out to my friends to create more awareness of the island and its resilient people? I would be willing to pay for mailing charges.

I sincerely want to help Phuket, even with my very limited reach and means.

Ramon Bello  
Mandaluyong, Philippines

I have read that you are giving out "We Love Phuket" stickers.

I love Phuket, so is there any chance that you can send me some so that I and my friends here in Sweden can put them on our cars?

That could be good publicity for Thailand.

Thanks for everything; we love you and your country.

Marianne Nielsen  
Brålanda

I have visited Phuket 10 times since 1998 and I love the island. My last visit was in April.

Can you send me a "We

Love Phuket" sticker for me to put on my car in Norway?

Erling Justnes  
Kristiansand

We are great fans of Phuket. Please send us a sticker.

Rolf and Esthi Weber  
Switzerland

Please send me some "We Love Phuket" stickers.

Alf Clark  
Australia

Because I love Phuket, I want to have some of your stickers.

Many thanks, and I hope we meet each other one day in Phuket.

Franky Cauwels  
Belgium

We would love some "We Love

Phuket" stickers for our vehicles. Do you mail them to the US?

Sid

Even as far away as the island of Oahu, here in Honolulu, Hawaii, we love Phuket.

I am willing to show the world that I love the "other" island paradise that is so near and dear to our hearts.

William  
Hawaii

Is it possible to have two stickers sent to us so that we can promote Phuket in The Netherlands?

Maybe we can help the island by putting a sticker on our car.

We will also be helping Phuket in another way by visiting the island again.

Mr A Wolters and  
Miss C van Gaans  
Harreveld

I would like to get a few stickers to put on my car and send to my friends.

I lost my brother and niece in the tsunami in Khao Lak but I still want to do anything possible to help Phuket to recover quickly from this disaster.

Marlies Alvarez-Hollenstein  
Switzerland



# High rubber price keeps planters from selling land

By Anongnat Sartpisut

PHUKET: Rubber producers in Phuket are still receiving almost record prices for their rubber – and more than double what they were five years ago – and have apparently yet to feel the pinch in the downturn in the Chinese car market. (See also *Money Talks* on facing page.)

Natural rubber is currently selling for around 47 baht a kilogram, compared with 20 baht a kilo five years ago.

The price was pushed up partly by demand for tires for the burgeoning Chinese car market, and partly because of the increase on oil prices, which has had a knock-on effect on the price of synthetic substitutes for rubber, which are made from oil.

In Phuket, the rise in the

value of rubber is encouraging owners of rubber plantations to hold onto their land and use it for growing rubber trees, rather than succumbing to the temptation to sell it to property developers.

According to figures from Phuket Provincial Agricultural Extension Office (PPAEO), 115,421 rai of Phuket's 336,29 rai (538sqkm) is currently given over to growing rubber, generating income for the province of 1.21 billion baht a year.

Rubber is Phuket's leading agricultural crop, and one of Thailand's top exports. Most of Phuket's rubber plantations – around 66% of them – are in Thalang District.

The head of the Phuket provincial office of the Rubber Replanting Aid Fund (RRAF), Chaiwat Ruangtaweep, said

that the growth of industry in China has created a demand for rubber.

K. Chaiwat continued, "If people could get more money from selling their land for development than they could from using it to grow rubber, then they would sell it. But at the moment, very few plantation owners are selling their land for development."

"In addition, if rubber prices do fall, then the government, through a joint agreement with Indonesia and Malaysia, will prop up the price of unsmoked sheet rubber, so producers will not get less than 30 baht a kilo."

"Rubber growers are happy with the price of rubber, so they are not likely to sell their plantations."

PPAEO agriculturalist Na-

latporn Nilbud agreed that few plantation owners are selling their land at the moment.

"Only 5% of total planting area has been sold," K. Nalatporn told the *Gazette*. "That's been sold because the price of rubber has been low over the past few years, and growers have looked at what they would have to put into their land over 20 years to get the latex – such as labor, the cost of fertilizer and so on – and it was not easy for some to turn down the large sums they were offered for their land."

"But if growers can get a high price for their rubber, then the return on their outlay over 20 years looks good, and they feel it is worth hanging onto the land."

Kiat Wongkasikit, the head of the Pa Khlok Agricultural Group, said, "We are satisfied

with the price we are currently getting, which, on May 5, was 47 baht a kilo."

K. Kiat said that demand for natural rubber had been rising, but that growers might still be tempted to sell their land for development, if the price were right.

He said, "The total number of units [of rubber] produced is falling. If buyers offer good prices for the land, then people will sell."

"A lot of land was sold when the price of rubber was low; people thought their land could be put to better use."

"Five years ago, when the price was about 16 baht a kilo, growers were netting between 100 and 200 baht a day, and it wasn't worth their while, in terms of labor or expenditure."

## TOT vs TT&T ADSL – Round 2

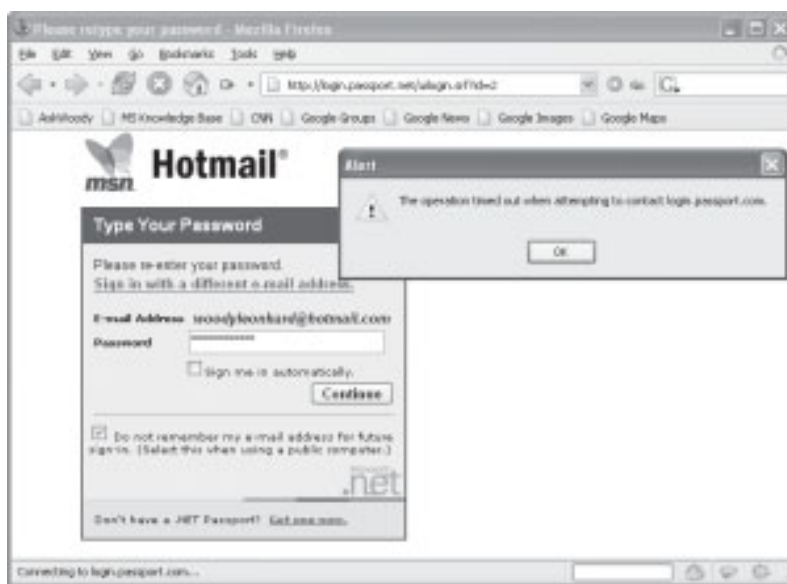
Last week I talked about my brand-spanking-new TOT ADSL lines. All three of them are in Patong: one in my home office, another in the bakery shop and the third at our "factory", where we bake goodies.

I now have two ADSL lines in my home office – one from TOT, the other from TT&T, and I can hot swap between them, running comparisons on precisely the same computers with the same configurations. Let's you think me extravagant, keep in mind that each of the lines costs 1,000 baht per month.

Last week I described how TT&T's Hi-Net service won't connect to at least one (and probably many) websites. Their Domain Name Server appears to have been intermittently malfunctioning, and as of now TT&T still hasn't fixed it.

This week I have another bizarre situation to report – and TOT's in the hot seat this time.

Once TOT made an appearance at the shop, the ADSL line worked great. I connected the wireless base station and ran into an address conflict with the TOT-supplied modem, so I had to per-



My new TOT ADSL lines time out every time they try to get to a secure Web site.

form some minor brain surgery, but that's pretty much par for the course.

I re-started all the machines in the correct sequence, and Firefox took off at a blistering pace. I tested Internet Explorer, too, ran a speed test, and everything checked out with flying colors. Time for me to head back to the office and get cranking on that new *Dummies* book.

Thirty minutes later, I got a

telephone call: somebody at the shop tried to log on to Hotmail and couldn't get through. Oy. I figured, hey, they must've forgotten their password or something equally mundane. So I hopped on the motorbike and drove down to check it out.

Guess what? I couldn't log on to Hotmail, either. I could bring up the Hotmail main page, no problem. But when I typed my email address and password and clicked to sign on, Firefox just hung there, ultimately telling me that it had timed out trying to contact the Microsoft Passport log on website.

Internet Explorer pulled the same routine, timing out with its inimitable Error 404. I don't use Hotmail much – only when I'm on the road – so it didn't even occur to me to test it at the shop. Dumb, eh?

Mystified, I headed back home to work. I figured that Hotmail had to be down, and that the problem would fix itself in a few hours. Wrong. Soon afterward, I got a call from a different person at the shop. He couldn't log on to Google's Gmail.

Back to the shop. I was stumped. I tried everything but couldn't imagine *anything* that would cause both Hotmail and Gmail to time out. I stuck a note on the PC saying Hotmail and Gmail appeared to be out of order, scratched my head (and a couple of other parts of my anatomy) and headed back home.

Two days later, the mystery still unsolved, I was having a latte at the shop when another fellow tried to log on to Hotmail, with predictable results – he failed. We started talking and – as luck would have it – he told me that he worked in the Bangkok office of a large international communications device manufacturer. We talked about the broken TT&T Domain Name System (DNS) and TOT's hyperactive blocking of Anonymizer sites.

But what about Hotmail and Gmail dying on the vine? He asked me if I had 128 bit encryption turned on. Yes. If Firefox and Internet Explorer were up-to-date. Yes again. If I had scanned recently for viruses and spyware. Yes. If I was having problems with any other secure sites. And that's when the big bright light seared my brain – secure sites.

We took turns at the computer trying to get on various secure sites – local banks, international banks, PayPal, Amazon, even Thai Airways. (Book a flight online, and Thai Airways.com switches over to a secure site as soon as you type in your credit card information.) Lo and behold, we couldn't get into *any* secure site.

I rushed back home as fast as my Honda Wave would take me, and tried all of the secure sites using my other TOT ADSL line. Sure enough, they were all

blocked too. I hot-swapped over to the TT&T ADSL line. No problems: Hotmail and Kasi-kornbank and PayPal and Thai Airways all worked fine.

Why on earth would my TT&T ADSL line get through, where both of my TOT lines – installed on completely different computer systems, in two completely different parts of Patong – time out every time they hit a secure site? I called TOT and posed the question.

I still don't have an answer. I've talked to the folks at TOT five times now. (They won't communicate by email. Imagine.) They seem to understand the problem. But they haven't fixed it.

I have a guess as to the source of the problem – my guess is that the two new TOT lines are

sharing the same port on the phone company's switch, and somebody has screwed up an SSL-related setting for that port – but I can't prove it.

TOT says that nobody else has called with the same problem that I describe. I have no doubt that most TOT ADSL subscribers can get through to secure sites.

But I'd be willing to bet that there are many TOT subscribers who can't log on to Hotmail, and don't have the slightest idea why. If you recently installed a TOT ADSL line in Patong, and you time out when you try to use a secure Web site, please drop me a line.

Next week, I'll compare the speed and availability of TOT and TT&T ADSL service, and let you know if either or both have fixed their problems. Frankly, I'm not holding my breath.

– Woody Leonhard  
woody@khunwoody.com



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# Meridien chain close to new ownership

PHUKET: Plans are on the table for recapitalization of debt-ridden Le Meridien Hotels & Resorts, which operates four hotels in Southern Thailand.

Two of the hotels, Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort and Le Meridien Khao Lak, are to reopen later this year after being severely damaged by the catastrophic events of December 26.

Le Royal Meridien Phuket Yacht Club at Nai Harn Beach suffered minimal damage and remained open while Le Meridien Baan Taling Ngam on Koh Samui was, consequently, busier than expected.

In a recent press release, Meridien headquarters in London announced that affiliates of investment bank Lehman Brothers, which holds much of Le Meri-

dien's debts, and Starwood Capital Group Global LLC intend to form a joint venture to acquire Meridien's portfolio of 135 leased and owned hotels.

In addition, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc (Starwood Hotels), which operates more than 750 properties worldwide – both owned and managed – including the Sheraton Grande Laguna Phuket, has entered into a non-binding agreement to acquire and subsequently manage the Le Meridien chain from Lehman Brothers/Starwood Capital.

Realization of these these proposals still awaits a decision by the Meridien board, and through parallel discussions with – among others – stakeholders and employee representatives of the chain. If the deal goes through, the transactions and

recapitalization are set to be completed in the third quarter of 2005.

Speaking to the *Gazette* on May 4, Philippe Seigle, Regional General Manager of Le Meridien Thailand Resorts, said, "For the statement on the proposed recapitalization and acquisition to have been released, I would say that it is very likely that it will go ahead."

Asked what changes this could mean for the four local resorts and whether the proposals – if accepted – could mean the end of the Meridien brand, he said, "On the contrary, Le Meridien will stay under the Le Meridien flag; it is, after all, a high-profile, well-respected and unique brand."

"Jobs will not be affected and the management teams will stay in place."

When asked if any of Le Meridien hotels worldwide might be incorporated into the current range of Starwood Hotels brands, Mr Seigle said that it is anticipated that although the Meridien brand will remain, the management company will review its portfolio at a later date.

"In many ways the proposal is more like an MOU [memorandum of understanding], the 'will' to go for an agreement, and [the parties involved] are still finalizing the details."

"The agreement is 'non-binding' because no-one knows exactly what will happen in the future."

He also said that Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort and Le Meridien Khao Lak were on track to reopen in August and mid-October respectively.

## ON THE MOVE



**Boonchock Maneechot**, 53, from Surat Thani has been appointed Chief of the Phuket Provincial Employment Services Office (PESO).

Before moving to Phuket, K. Boonchock was Chief of the Ranong PESO for 18 months. Before that, he worked in the PESO at Chumphon.



Nakhon Ratchasima native **Promchote Traivate** is the new Head of the Phuket Office of Sports and Recreation Development.

K. Promchote was a member of the Policy Analysis and Planning staff in the Regional Public Co-ordination Office in the Office of the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Tourism and Sports before he moved to Phuket.



An advertising co-ordinator for Phuket-based ArtAsia Press, 27-year-old **Weereeya "Paan" Tepsarn**, has been appointed Assistant to the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand.

K. Weereeya, from Bangkok, has a degree in mass communications from Chiang Mai University.

# US spending a worry

**T**he second half of April this year saw considerable volatility in world equity (stock) markets. This was caused mainly by concerns about economic growth in the US.

The release of some less-than-stellar economic data temporarily reduced confidence, and this was cited as a reason for the pullback. However, a slight correction in markets is usually a healthy sign; it is when markets romp ahead without pause that investors should be aware that "irrational exuberance" is taking over.

Human nature being what it is, people seldom consider what is happening when they are making money. It is often stated that investors only have two emotions: greed and fear. Markets go to extremes when either is absent.

In addition, the US market was overdue for a pause. There is no doubt that economic growth is slowing in the US; the 4.1% rise in GDP that was experienced in 2004 is unlikely to be repeated in 2005, though economic growth is still likely to exceed 3% and may well reach 3.5%.

When one considers that economic growth has averaged 3.1% in the US over the past 60 years, this is still a good investment environment.

It is worth noting that the worst losses occurred when oil prices were falling and the best gains were recorded when oil prices were rising. That the market was not interested in oil price movements must have surprised many analysts.

Alan Greenspan, the Chairman of the US Federal Reserve, made some interesting points

when addressing the Senate Budget Committee. Mr Greenspan is always an interesting speaker, and, for those not familiar with his style, he often seems to understate his case.

He is certainly very diplomatic in his approach, but in this particular presentation, he was, by his standards, blunt and direct.

He recognized that neither the Republicans nor the Democrats have much appetite for curbing government spending. He has sought to shake them out of that mindset, pointing out that – if left unchecked – the current size of the budget deficit would lead to economic stagnation – or worse.

This is not likely to become a reality immediately, but it is an issue that cannot be ignored indefinitely.

He even went as far as to say that politicians might have to tell the public that they could not deliver what they had promised.

In response to a question from a member of the Senate Budget Committee on raising taxes, Mr Greenspan correctly pointed out that raising taxes by a certain percentage never leads to the expected revenue gain.

This may appear to be illogical but tax increases always result in a lower revenue. This is because of a number of factors but, in layman's terms, tax increases are unpopular, they reduce incentive and increase evasion. These, incidentally, are my words, not Mr Greenspan's.

One of the biggest problems faced in the current US budget situation is that government



## MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson

spending on Medicare is simply too high and ways must be found for it to be reduced to sustainable levels.

Another issue that should have been addressed by politicians of both political parties is the issue of social security.

President Bush has made some suggestions on the matter, but there is one area that should be attended to immediately.

Social security payments are increased in line with average earnings, which has meant that the cost of social security has risen much faster than the consumer price index (CPI). This situation should not have been allowed to occur in the first place.

Mr Greenspan also raised the issue of US domestic savings, which are at worryingly low levels.

This, too, is a problem that needs addressing. The average American is simply not saving enough. This, when combined with a government that is living beyond its means, is a dangerous combination.

The corporate sector is living within its means and, in fact, corporate balance sheets have not been so healthy in years.

This, however, is not enough to offset the behavior of the public and the government, and has led to dependence on foreign capital to balance the books.

The US has its faults, but if compared with the second-largest and third-largest economies, Japan and Germany, it is an oasis of economic prosperity and sanity.

The Japanese recovery is looking increasingly hesitant and the promises that deflation was

about to disappear have now been postponed to late 2006.

In Germany, the latest in a long line of falling economic expectations has now dropped to a growth rate of only 0.7% for 2005.

Many people point to the huge economic growth rate of China although the communist giant's economy is still too small to have much influence on the global economy.

Sales in certain sectors of the Chinese market – the auto industry is a prime example – have been disappointing. It is estimated that China will have a stockpile of around 450,000 unsold cars by year end.

As the average annual disposable income for China is only US\$1,000 (about 40,000 baht), the vast majority of the population are still far from "middle class".

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

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## GOLF

## PCC plays host to Phuket vs Pattaya showdown

PHUKET: Phuket Country Club was voted the best golf course in the Andaman region by the Phuket Golf Association (PGA) and was set to receive a trophy from Sports and Tourism Minister Somsak Thepsutin on the first day of play in the 7<sup>th</sup> Phuket-Pattaya Rider Cup tournament, May 12 to 14.

The tournament, held every two years, pits 12 top PGA players against their counterparts from the Sattaya Golf Association in Pattaya.

PGA Chairman Surin Bumrunghol said the tournament began in 1996. Pride is on the line, as Phuket holds a slim 3-2 advantage in the series, though Pattaya won the last encounter in 2003. The two evenly-matched sides played to a draw in 2001. Phuket hasn't won the cup since 1998.

For more information see the website [www.phuketgolf.org](http://www.phuketgolf.org) or call Tel: 076-244820-3.

# Dulwich hosts regional sports tourney for kids

KOH KAEW: Dulwich International College (DIC) soccer player Robert Smith throws in during a Year 4 football match, one of the many events in the Federation of British Schools in South and East Asia (FOBISSEA) Games.

DIC hosted the Group A games, for larger FOBISSEA schools, from April 27 to May 1.

Also competing were: the Patana School, Bangkok; Harrow International School, Bangkok; the Alice Smith School, Kuala Lumpur; the Garden International School, Kuala Lumpur; Tanglin Trust School, Singapore; the British International School, Jakarta; and the British School, Manila.



## Phuket vs Nakhon Nayok in 'Challenge Day'

PHUKET: The Phuket Office of Sports and Recreation Development is calling for sportsmen and women of all ages, nationalities and levels of ability to take part in a "Challenge Day" sports event between Phuket and Nakhon Nayok on May 25.

Promchote Traivate, Head of the Phuket Office of Sports and Recreation Development, explained that each province in the country will compete against another province, with the aim of encouraging people to play sport.

Participants may compete in any chosen sport, anytime from 5 am to 7 pm, anywhere in the province.

The province declared as having most people taking part will be declared the winner.

Nakhon Nayok and Phuket were paired up, K. Promchote explained, because the two provinces each have an official population of about 250,000 people, based on a tally of house registration forms.

"People must register with

the *OrBorJor* [Phuket Provincial Administration Organization] or their local *OrBorTor* [Tambon Administration Organization] or *tessaban* [municipality] to take part in this competition," K. Promchote said.

Registration begins on May 10 and ends on May 25.

"Participants may get the opportunity to make new friends in other provinces," K. Promchote said, "as we expect that some entrants will be chosen to visit Nakhon Nayok to

compete against teams there in selected sports, and vice-versa."

"There's no need to worry about cheating with the number of participants because people must register their name at the *OrBorJor* or the *OrBorTor* in their area, and those authorities know their people well," he added.

For more information contact K. Promchote at Tel: 01-8697431, 076-217054 or 076-221766, or by email at: [phuket@mots.com](mailto:phuket@mots.com)



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# Aussie wins first ATP Futures event

PHUKET CITY (*The Nation*): Canberra-based Alun Jones, currently placed 963<sup>rd</sup> in the International Tennis Federation (ITF) rankings ended a three-year drought of titles when he cruised past Austrian Patrick Schmolzer in the final of the US\$10,000 (approximately 400,000 baht) TAT Phuket Open Men's Futures 1 tournament at the Phuket City Tennis Courts on Damrong Rd.

In a surprise final between the Australian qualifier and the Austrian "lucky loser", Jones took advantage of his better physical condition to trounce an exhausted Schmolzer 6-1 6-1 in less than one hour.

The victory was the second ITF championship for Jones, who first won in Berri, Australia, in 2002. He also won US\$1,300 for his win in the first of four week-long ITF events being held in Phuket from May 3-21. The events were moved to Phuket from Bangkok to woo back tourists after the tsunami.

The singles event had 85 entrants, while 38 players signed up for doubles competition.

Schmolzer rode his luck until the final. Despite losing in the final qualifying round, he still managed to battle his way to his first final before running out of gas against Jones.



Australian Alun Jones (above) may be ranked number 963 in the world, but he was Number 1 in Phuket last week, winning the final in straight sets to take the TAT Phuket Open Men's Futures 1 tennis tourney.

The 20-year-old had two tough matches against Thai Weerapat Doakmaiklee and German Frank Moser in the previous rounds. As a runner up, he earned US\$900.

In the rain-interrupted doubles final, Germans Patrick Knobloch and Dominik Meffert survived a tough challenge from top seeds Josh Goffi of Brazil and American Trevor Spracklin to

win 3-6 7-6 (7-4) 6-4. The winning pair split the US\$630 prize, while the runners-up shared US\$330.

Competition in the main draw of the second Futures 1 tournament got underway on May 9, with the final scheduled for May 14.

Complete tournament draws and results can be viewed online at [www.itftennis.com](http://www.itftennis.com).

## SOCCER FOR PEACE

# Tak Bai soldiers too tough for VIP Phuket

PHUKET CITY: The Takbai Santisuk (Peace for Tak Bai) team of soldiers made the most of their respite from serving in the three troubled southern provinces of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat by drubbing VIP Phuket 5-2 in a friendly soccer match at Surakul Stadium on May 7.

Tak Bai captain Maj Gen Surapol Udomchairat explained that the aim of the match was to help promote peace in the troubled South.

After completing the seven-hour drive from Narathiwat's Tak Bai District, Santisuk, who also included Malaysian League ringer and Thai national Marumee Ming, had only 10 minutes to warm up before the kickoff at 6:40 pm.

VIP Phuket, comprising Phuket local government and police officers, seemed to have the fresher legs in the opening minutes and launched into attacking play. Phuket's Permphon Rattanasoontorn opened the scoring in the 22<sup>nd</sup> minute, first connecting solidly in front of the goal with a well-placed cross from a teammate.

Takbai's Col Atthaporn Phaopajak returned the compli-

ment minutes later by beating VIP Phuket goalie Pret Teeranittayapab.

Hovering around in VIP Phuket's penalty area paid off for Takbai's Atthaporn in the 43<sup>rd</sup> minute, when he blasted his second goal off a pass from teammate Sgt Boonra Numjuan. Half-time score: Tak Bai 2, VIP Phuket 1.

VIP Phuket picked up the pace in the second half, with Permphon slotting the ball into the bottom-right corner of the goal in the 51<sup>st</sup> minute.

Takbai replied with fast counter-attack runs, which resulted in three more goals for them before full-time. Abdul Rosa scored in the 66<sup>th</sup> and the 76<sup>th</sup> minutes, and Abdul E-tae sealed VIP Phuket's fate with a goal in the 77<sup>th</sup> minute. Final score: Takbai Santisuk 5, VIP Phuket 2.

Immediately preceding the Tak Bai-VIP Phuket match was another friendly match, this one between scratch team

Phuket All Stars and U-Bun, comprised of residents of the Rawai sea gypsy village. U-Bun easily won, beating Phuket All Stars 4-0.

## PATONG DARTS LEAGUE

**May 3 results:** Amigos 6 Shakers\* 3; Didi's\* 3 Dog's Bollocks 6; Nag's Head\* 1 Queen Mary 8; OffShore Bar\* 8 Two Black Sheep 1; Valhalla 3 Piccadilly\* 6. (\* = winner of beer leg)

**Standings:** 1. OffShore (39pts); 2. Queen Mary (31); 3.= Shakers; Amigos, Piccadilly; Pickles (24); 7=. Valhalla, Didi's (20); 9. Nag's Head (18); 10. Dog's Bollocks (11); 11. Two Black Sheep (7).

**May 17 fixtures:** Amigos vs Queen Mary; Didi's vs Piccadilly; Nag's Head vs Two Black Sheep; OffShore vs Pickles; Valhalla vs Dog's Bollocks. (Home teams first).

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## PCU cricket postponed

Any cricket fans brought up in the UK will be familiar with the phrase "rain stopped play", and this is precisely what happened to the match scheduled for May 8 by the Phuket Cricket Union (PCU).

Undeterred, the PCU plans to hold the match on Sunday May 15 at Dulwich International College, which has put an 11-man team together for the 40-over game.

Play is scheduled to start at 11 am. Anyone interested in playing – weather permitting – should contact Mark "Scarfy" Whetton at Tel: 06-1208346 or 076-263086 or Email: [scarfy@loxinfo.co.th](mailto:scarfy@loxinfo.co.th)

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# THE GREAT GRAPES

All wines are made from one or more grape varieties, or *selections* as winemakers refer to them. Several thousand varieties have been identified to date, but only 20 or so are familiar to most consumers.

The common way to classify grape varieties is by color. Pink grapes do exist and are used to make white wine. Red grapes can be used to make red, pink or white wine, and white grapes can be used to make pink wine by adding a little red wine for color.

To simplify things, winemakers tend to classify grape varieties as either red or white.

There are many obscure red grapes that make exceptional wine either alone or in blends but the most popular red wine grape varieties include cabernet sauvignon, merlot, syrah and my favorite, pinot noir.

Cabernet sauvignon is the undeni-

able king of red wines, known for its uncommon depth, richness, concentration and longevity. At its best, cabernet possesses the classic flavors of blackcurrants, plums, black cherries and cedar spice.

It can also be marked by herbs, olive, mint, tobacco, anise, and ripe, jammy notes. Bordeaux, and California's Napa Valley, are home to the world's most celebrated cabernet producers.

Merlot was the red wine success story of the 1990s, and its popularity has soared along with its acreage. It seems wine lovers can't get enough of it, although much of what one finds in the supermarkets is quite unremarkable.

At its best, merlot has classic flavors

## WINE



By Steven  
Roberto

of cherries, plums, herbs, green tea and chocolate, but without the astringency of cabernet sauvignon.

Saint-Emilion and Pomerol, in Bordeaux, Northern Italy and Washington State, in the US, are home to the world's most celebrated merlot producers.

Syrah (called shiraz in Australia) is capable of making rich, distinctive jammy wines with pepper, spice, black cherry, tar, leather and roasted-nut flavors.

The Rhône Valley, Tuscany, Australia, and California's Santa Barbara County are home to the world's most celebrated syrah producers.

Pinot noir is perhaps the most distinctive and seductive of all red wines. At its best, it displays flavors of black cher-

ries, cinnamon, leather, raspberries and an aroma of wilted roses, along with earth, tar, mushroom and cola notes. Pinot noir wines are noted for their velvety texture.

Burgundy, California's Russian River Valley, Oregon, and New Zealand are home to the world's best known pinot noir producers.

The grape also plays an important role in the production of sparkling wines, such as Champagne.

Other important but less well-known red grape varieties include cabernet franc, grenache, nebiolo, sangiovese, and tempranillo. Future articles will describe these in detail.

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

## Phuket Diary

May 21

**Canadian Expat Night.** Canadians & guests are invited to join in an evening of good old Canadian rock 'n' roll. Put on your favorite jeans and T-shirt and rock the night away! Come out and catch up with old and new friends, enjoy cheap drinks and free appetizers. There will be prizes, too.

Location: Karma Lounge Music Café, on the corner of Patak & Bangla Rds, Karon Plaza, Karon. Event time: 8 pm. Contact: Marshall or Reinhard on Tel: 04-8429640 or 01-8920960. Email: mow449@yahoo.com

May 23

**Visakha Bucha Day.** May 23 is a substitution holiday for Viskha Bucha Day, which falls on May 22. It is a public holiday, therefore banks and most government offices will be closed.

May 28-29

**The 7<sup>th</sup> AirAsia Phuket International Rugby 10s.** Teams from around the world will be competing for the Clive Williamson Memorial Trophy in the 7<sup>th</sup> AirAsia Phuket International Rugby 10s. Entry for spectators will be free, but funds will be raised for an orphans' scholarship fund in Khao Lak.

Location: Karon Municipal Stadium Event time: 8 am to 6 pm both days. Contact Patrick Cotter on Tel: 09-8731190 or Email: phuketvagabondsrfc@yahoo.co.uk

## Crackdown on foreign bar owners

— *Gazette, May, 1995*

CHALONG: Early on the morning of April 14, Chalong police raided several bars at Kata Beach and arrested their foreign owners, who were perceived to be "working" on the premises.

Two Swedes, two Englishmen and a Japanese man were arrested.

A number of other foreign-owned bars were also raided, but their owners were not present.

Those arrested face a spell in jail of 24 to 48 hours, a fine of 10,000 baht and deportation.

They are eligible to re-enter the country by obtaining tourist visas abroad.

As a general rule, it is not possible for foreign owners of small bars and restaurants to obtain a permit to work in their businesses, as was confirmed recently when two of them were arrested in Pattaya and Bangkok for talking to their customers.

## THE TIME machine

News from the past

## Finance Ministry plans to cut boat luxury tax to 10pc

— *Gazette, Mid-May, 2000,*

PHUKET: The Ministry of Finance is planning to lower the luxury tax imposed on yachts and luxury boats from 50% to 10%. The move is calculated to raise revenue and reduce the number of cases of boat owners trying to evade the tax.

Deputy Minister of Finance Dr Pisit Leeatham told the press recently that high imposts have discouraged boat buyers.

As a result, revenue from taxes on boats has fallen drastically from 19 million baht in 1997, when the luxury tax was first imposed, to 3 million baht nationwide annually in 1998 and last year.

No date has yet been announced for the cut in the tax, and Borvorn Chayakul, chief of the Phuket Excise Tax Office, said he had yet to be informed of the exact amount of the cut in the tax.

"I only know that we have had a policy to lower the tax," he said. "Personally, I think that lowering it is a good idea, especially for Phuket; I can tell you that we were not able to collect anything last year."

The high tax rate has not

only resulted in revenues collapsing. It has also encouraged more cheating on taxes and has driven many yacht owners out of Phuket, particularly to the neighboring Malaysian island of Langkawi, where there are no taxes at all on pleasure vessels.

There is considerable confusion as to just how much tax boat owners are liable for. In March, Yuttana Yimgarund, chief inspector in the Customs Department in Bangkok, told the *Gazette* that the total tax amounted to 210%. More recent *Gazette* inquiries suggest a slightly less outrageous 128%.

Most of the confusion seems to arise from the fact that taxes on boats are collected by three government departments. The Customs Department collects import duty, the Excise Office collects excise and luxury tax, and the provincial tax office collects value-added tax (VAT).

The best "guess" seems to be that a yacht or luxury boat in Thailand is subject to import duty of 35%, an excise tax of 5%, a luxury tax of 50%, and 7% VAT. These imposts, applied cumulatively, result in taxes totaling about 128% of the value of the vessel.

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## BEHIND WHEEL

By Jeff Heselwood

The beautiful, Pininfarina-designed Ferrari F430 Spider – effectively a redesigned F430 Berlinetta minus the roof – was unveiled at the Geneva Motor Show on March 3, to the expected wide acclaim.

New for the F430 is a “trick” electronic differential, first developed for the all-conquering Ferrari Formula 1 cars. This innovation improves traction and roadholding under all conditions, the makers say.

A quick flick of a switch housed on the steering wheel sets the system into operation, and even Michael Schumacher should be able to find a set-up that suits his driving style, from “snow” and “rain” modes to what Ferrari cryptically term “fast road” and “race”.

It's not easy to make a fully-retractable electric roof and still make the car look good, but Pininfarina seems to have done just that, with the soft-top nestling nicely behind the cockpit, while you can still view that magnificent V8 engine – a true in-car entertainment system – through a Perspex cover.

The styling of the Spider was fine-tuned using the latest computer aerodynamics simulation program usually only employed by the F1 team. Unusually, with the roof up, the rear window is almost vertical, reminiscent of many 1950s convertibles – a strange departure for the Turin designer but one that appears to work.

The Spider's shape has evolved from lengthy wind tunnel testing and incorporates new, larger rear air intakes, an extended rear engine cover and a rear underbody diffuser.

The elliptical front air intakes that feed the twin radiators are styled in a fashion of the 1961 championship-winning Scuderia Ferrari Tipo 156 “shark nose” F1 car, designed by Carlo Chiti and driven by American Phil Hill.

There is also a spoiler connecting the lower edge of these air intakes that directs fast-moving air toward the rear diffuser.

The F430 Spider is powered by the same 4.3-liter, 490-bhp (360kW) all-aluminum V8 engine as employed in the Berlinetta version of the car, capable of pushing the roadster to more than 310kmh. From rest it can reach 100kmh in just 4.1 seconds. These are remarkable figures for an open-top sports car.

The engine is the result of collaboration with Ferrari's sister company Maserati and is essentially the same motor that powers the latter's 4200 GT and Quattroporte models, although the Ferrari version has been enlarged from 4.2 to 4.3 liters and



Banana drama: There should be no shortage of takers for the beautiful new Spider, whatever the price is – and it won't be cheap.

# New Spider weaves a wonderful dream

revs considerably higher – 8,500 rpm – than the Maseratis.

The gearbox is a sequential manual, controlled by paddles behind the steering wheel. Ferrari claims a shift time of just 150 milliseconds; it even “blips” the throttle on downshifts without any driver intervention.

Carbon-ceramic brakes are an option for the F430 Spider. Lighter and more effective than steel discs, these advanced composite rotors were pioneered by Porsche and are an option on a number of its models, but the Ferrari Enzo supercar was the first in this range to use them.

One of the most famous – and desirable – convertibles ever produced by Ferrari was the 1971 365 GTS/4 Spider. Again, styled by Pininfarina, the Spider was originally launched at the Paris Motor Show in 1969 but was not sold until 1971.

Based on the Ferrari Daytona, only 121 examples were produced, making it a rare collectors' item. Although Pininfarina has styled almost all of Ferrari's cars since the late '50s, in the '60s the celebrated Modena coachbuilder and stylist Sergio Scaglietti produced a Spider version of the GTB/4 for the

American market as there was no official convertible at the time.

Ferrari continues to emphasize its exclusivity by producing a total of around 4,000 cars a year and, although no prices have of-

ficially been announced for the Spider, there should be no shortage of takers.

Jeff Heselwood may be contacted by email at: [jhc@netvigator.com](mailto:jhc@netvigator.com)



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## Construction Update

By Anongnat Sartpisut

## Home of the Week

Helping to cement Phuket's reputation as a golfer's paradise is CD&P – The Golf Phuket, a new apartment development in Pa Khlok, on the east side of Phuket.

In addition to its location – Alain Tabruyn, the GM of the project, pointed out that it is just 400 meters from the Mission Hills Golf Course – the development comes complete with a putting green as well as its own nine-hole golf course.

Construction of the seven-story, 22-unit project, is scheduled to start in September or October this year with completion expected by end of next year. The total cost of the development is some 1.5 billion baht, according to Mr Tabruyn.

He described the design of the apartments as "minimalist". Floors 1 to 4 will each comprise four two- or three-bedroom apartments of between 120 to 180 square meters, as well as individual terraces and parking. Prices for these are 5.8 to 9.8 million baht each.

Floors 5 to 7 will have two apartments apiece, four-bedroomed and of at least 300sqm, plus terraces and parking space. These will sell for between 12.8 and 14.6 million baht.

The first floor of the property will have a 50sqm communal infinity pool facing the fairway, which itself will feature tropical gardens and a creek.

Two elevators will be at the rear of the property and their will be no shared corridors.

# Apartments aimed at avid golf players



Eagle-eyed readers will spot that the building in this artist's impression has six floors. The design has since been amended to add another floor. In addition, CD&P have scrapped plans for a number of individual homes at the site, in favor of all-apartment accommodation.

"The residents of this project will want to have privacy," said Mr Tabruyn. "That's why each apartment will have an individual entrance.

However, there will be other shared areas, he continued. The roof of the property will have two or three Jacuzzis, a barbecue area, an extensive sundeck and even a roof garden. "Residents can enjoy activities together," said Mr Tabruyn.

He was keen to point out that most of the materials for the cavity-wall construction will be imported. The roof will be lined with a special heat insulator, the terraces will feature a special non-slip material, front doors will be of timber or aluminum while

the window frames will be of vinyl or aluminum.

The large, one-piece windows will, when open, said Mr Tabruyn, "...allow residents to feel nature and the breeze while enjoying the view of the fairway."

The owners will be able to select the interior design for themselves, and each kitchen will have a built-in oven and a four-ring stove of gas, electric or a combination of the two. There will also be a stainless-steel cooker hood.

In keeping with the minimalist theme, the apartments' air-conditioning units – interior and exterior – will be concealed. For similar aesthetic reasons, said Mr Tabruyn, power lines will be buried.

The properties will have

telephone lines and satellite or cable TV, and the entire development will have 24-hour security.

Despite most marketing so far being by word of mouth, about 25% of the units have already been sold, he said. "Our target market is 30- to 50-year-old golfers. Interestingly, of the buyers so far, half are based in Hong Kong," he said.

"CD&P – The Golf Phuket has been conceived to satisfy the residents' quality of life, and also to be a good investment," he said.

Future projects, he concluded, will include a larger development on Koh Sireh.

For more information contact Alain Tabruyn at Tel: 04-051-9677 or visit the Website: [www.cdpthegolf.com](http://www.cdpthegolf.com)



The one-rai grounds of this three-year-old Nai Harn property – which are laid to lawn and tropical trees – are protected by a high wall and an automatic gate.

The focal point of the garden is the 78-square-meter swimming pool, which is complemented by a sala with shower and changing-room facilities.

The single-story, L-shaped house, which is suitable for a family and is wheelchair-friendly, comprises four bedrooms, all of which have en-suite bathrooms and built-in wardrobes.

The bedrooms lead off the central, open-plan living area, which also features a well-proportioned Western-style kitchen equipped with modern appliances and a breakfast bar.

The living area, which has a guest toilet, is toward the poolside of the house and has a large terrace, while the dining room leads toward the rear garden. There is also a room – currently used as a music room – that could be used as a fifth bedroom, or an office or games room. Adjacent to this is the maid's room, a Thai-style kitchen and laundry room.

The house has ceramic tile floors throughout and is well decorated. There are ceiling fans and air-conditioning units in all main areas, including the bedrooms.

Utilities include UBC satellite TV, telephone, well water and water heaters, a septic tank

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Nai Ham



# The pool's the cue

Right: The comfortable living room. Above, left and right, the large swimming pool is a focal point for the home.

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## LARGER THAN LIFE

By Graham Doven

I drove to Bangkok last Sunday. This in itself is not a matter of any significance, but whenever I mention to somebody that I am going to drive to the City of Angels, it usually prompts a discussion about the merits of the different routes, and the time it may take.

Some consider the route via Ranong to be the best way, but in reality it is more than 12 years since Ranong has been a viable option if time is a consideration. But it's definitely the most scenic route if you're not in a hurry and don't mind rough and winding roads.

Mind you, I haven't traveled between Ranong and Chumphon for a few years, so it may have improved, although I would doubt it, unless an expressway and tunnel have been cut through the mountains.

The Ranong-Chumphon route will take you at least two hours more than if you go via Surat Thani Province.

The quickest and easiest way to drive to Bangkok - and I have now measured the distances and taken into account factors such as road quality - is the following route.

By the way, I'm referring only to the route south of Chumphon, which is about halfway between Phuket and Bangkok.



Is that a motorbike in the distance? On the new and very empty Krabi-Surat Thani expressway.

# THE ROAD less traveled

Traveling this route the other way, I have left my accommodation in Bangkok's Silom Rd at 9 am and managed to arrive at Surin Beach at 5:30 pm.

Admittedly, there were no traffic problems in and leaving Bangkok, but it shows that it is possible to complete the Bangkok-Phuket run in 8½ hours and without exceeding 130kmh.

Traveling from Phuket, take the road to Krabi but turn right just before Phang Nga Town.

Turn right again at Tab Phut, which is 22 kilometers from Phang Nga Town, before turning left 5km further at the traffic lights at Baan Na Nua. This is the "usual" road to Surat Thani, and after 16km you come to Baan Khao Toh.

At the traffic lights here, the sign says straight on to Surat Thani, but instead turn right to Plai Phraya, which is 16km away.

Once you reach Plai Phraya, turn left and follow that road for about 15km where the next town is Bang Sawan.

This is beautiful countryside, very fertile and a major producing area for palm oil and tropical fruit. The markets in this area have some excellent produce at the moment, such as longan and rambutan.

Just the other side of Bang Sawan you come upon a magnifi-

cent expressway, which seems to be in the middle of nowhere.

This is actually the new Krabi-Surat Thani expressway, but it seems that nobody knows about it as it is unlikely that you will encounter any other vehicles apart from the occasional motorcycle, which will probably be coming toward you on the wrong side of the road.

Turn left onto the expressway and the first sign you will see proclaims "Surat Thani 63km". Follow it for about 50km. I don't think you will find a better stretch of road in the country.

When you reach the main north-south highway, turn left and you're on the road to Bangkok with Chumphon 198km away. It is 400km to the roadhouse where I stop for lunch, which is within 20km of being halfway between Phuket and Bangkok. It took me 4 hours and 15 minutes exactly, which proves that I'm no "boy racer".

I hope this proves to be useful information for you. At the very least, it is something to talk about in the pub, especially when there's no sport on the TV.

I'll be available to explain it in more detail to anyone who doesn't understand in return for a small "tipple", as I believe they call it in the UK.



## Gardening

with Bloomin' Bert

People are strange. For example, we never seem to be happy with our skin color. *Farang* fly half-way around the world to destinations such as Phuket so that they can get a tan. Unfortunately for most people with fairer skin, such as mine, it doesn't usually work like that.

Golden brown, although the aim of most visiting sun-worshippers, isn't usually the result. More often than not, they achieve a shocking pink result on the first day, avoid the sun completely for a few days while their wounds heal, after which all the damaged skin flakes off so that they're back to Square 1.

At this stage they're free to start the process all over again.

I hear that Thais describe Patong and Karon beaches as "barbecues" – rows of initially pale *goong* (prawns) that turn bright red after a short time in the searing heat. That's not a bad metaphor.

It seems that we all want to be something that we're not – foreign visitors yearn for much darker skin, but women all over Asia do the complete opposite. For them, fairer skin is much more desirable than their gorgeous natural brown. I am amazed at all of the skin-lightening products that you can buy over the counter here.

Plants are far more sure of themselves. As nearly all plants contain chlorophyll to help the process of sustaining themselves, the vast majority of them tend to be a variation of green. But, as ever, there are exceptions.

There are several plants around with either red or purple leaves, and they appear to be quite content with that.

Many plants don't flower for more than a few weeks at a time, so when we consider a colorful garden, why do we so often think of flowers, rather than foliage?

In tropical areas, many alternatively-colored leaves actually intensify in the heat, so these plants tend to be more permanently colored, bringing some deep hues to gardens here.

A prime example is the dentata ruby, also known as the parrot leaf, or calico plant, with its rich burgundy foliage. The Thai name is a little more involved: *ban-mairu-roy-farang*, which translates as Farang Everlasting Beauty (there is a Thai version with green leaves known simply as *ban-mairu-roy*).

It's one of those plants that doesn't make a song and dance about the business of growing; it just sits there quietly in the background and gets on with it.

Evergreen (now there's a misnomer if ever I heard one) foliage plants such as the dentata ruby are superb in the garden, because they give you that stunning color all year round.

# Tough kid in the corner

Everlasting beauty  
– Dentata Ruby  
is easy to like  
and easy to grow.



The plant is grown mainly for its distinctively colored leaves and is often trimmed back to remove the flowers. The flowers themselves look a bit like afterthoughts on the plant's part. They are small, white clusters that really don't achieve much.

This is a plant that's perfect for a garden corner that you're not quite sure what to do with, as the color contrast with other things that may be around it is effective, with very little work involved.

Once it's been planted, there's no stopping its expansion, apart from uprooting it altogether – it spreads like a weed. I have a solid bed of the stuff outside the front gate of my house.

A few months ago, a new concrete road arrived outside, and the gentlemen involved in its construction were less than meticulous in dealing with the excess concrete that didn't quite make it to where it should have gone.

There was cement everywhere, which smothered everything growing there. The only plant that emerged unscathed was the dentata ruby, which came up grinning like a mischievous urchin within a few weeks.

Try as you may to defeat this one, you'll struggle to win.

"Proper" gardeners will tell you that it should be planted in partial shade to full sun, in moist, well-drained soil, and watered regularly.

The examples outside my gate make total nonsense of this theory, as it gets no attention from me or my hosepipe whatsoever, and just kept on growing, right through the recent drought.

The only thing I need to do is attack it with the secateurs oc-

asionally, to slow down its quest to achieve its full height of around a meter.

It's equally easy to propa-

gate. Just cut off a thickish woody stem, and thrust it into some moist, composty soil. No dramas, no intricate, involved instruc-

tions to follow – this is gardening for numpties. Gardening for numpties is fine by me. Now where's my sun tan lotion?

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# Property Gazette

## Properties For Sale

### VERY CHEAP



Cape Panwa land for sale. 656sqm, 300 meters from aquarium: 3.5 million baht. Tel: 09-1531325, 01-0820144.

### LAND AND HOUSE

Park. Chalong house, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, built-in kitchen, nice private garden, 344sqm, quiet area, safe, aircon every room. For sale at 3.9 million baht. Call Lec. Tel: 01-8950711.

### PATONG SEAVIEW

3 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms. 500sqm of land, option for extra land. Price: 8.5 million baht. Please contact for more information. Tel: 01-477-5306. Email: patriklambert@hotmail.com

### HOUSE AND LAND

2-story house in Patong. 4 beds, 2 baths, nice garden, large balcony, store, carport; with road access. Price: 5.9 million baht. Tel: 01-895-7908. Email: rungtiwap@asianwind.biz

### NAI HARN HOUSE

for sale. Thai-style, 3 bedrooms, 2 rai, 6.9 million baht. Please contact for more information. Tel: 076-288-047, 01-8941660. Email: cottrell@loxinfo.co.th Please see our website at: www.homesinphuket.com

### NAI HARN HOUSE

for sale. 2 stories, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, large garden, furnished. Price: 4.5 million baht. Tel: 01-7520275.

### MISSION HEIGHTS

225 talang wah, 900sqm. Building plots for sale at 2.25 million baht. 100% deposit, 18 months to pay. Call Brian at Tel: 01-344-4473 or for further information see our website at: www.missionheights.com

### HOUSE FOR SALE IN PHUKET

A lovely detached bungalow is available for sale by owner in the "Irvadee" private estate in Kathu, Phuket, near the Phuket Country Club golf course. Price: 2.75 million baht ono. Please contact. Tel: 09-8729149. Email: klaus\_harbauer@hotmail.com For further details, please see our website at: www.phuket-house-for-sale.com

### NEW HOUSE

and land for sale. 2 stories, 3 bedrooms, 3 baths, 3 balconies, hill view, quiet area, Soi Ruam Nana Chat. Must see. Tel: 01-6776117. Email: jackiebeyers@hotmail.com

### NEW HOUSE, KATHU

Bargain house, just completed, convenient for golf courses, shopping, and 9 minutes to Patong. 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, large living room, kitchen/dining, enclosed verandah living area. Approx 140sqm covered space, 340sqm enclosed land area. Selling price: 3.5 million baht. Tel: 076-321954, 04-8439579. Fax: 076-323421. Email: somsrijenner@lycos.com

### RAWAI-NAI HARN

land. Land plots & house for sale. Located on hillside, with sea view 3,500 baht per square meter. Please contact for more information. Tel: 09-4740227. Email: freehold\_prop@yahoo.com

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### RAWAI CONDO

Beachfront, sea view, 28sqm. For sale: 350,000 baht; foreign freehold. Tel: 09-474-0227. Email: chotip\_5@hotmail.com

### KATA LAND PLOTS

900 meters to beach. From 1 million baht. Tel: 01-0918908. Email: katabeachestate@hotmail.com

### LAND AT RAWAI

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### LAND IN RAWAI

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### RAWAI TOWNHOUSE

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### LAND & HOUSE

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### 1 RAI FOR SALE

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### URGENT

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### PATONG CONDO

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### KOH LANTA LAND

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# Property Gazette

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16-meter wooden dive boat for sale:

- Cabin for 4 people
- Tiled bathroom
- Stainless-steel cooking area
- Bottom sounder
- Communications radio
- Tank racks (for 20 tanks)
- Hino engine
- 600-liter fuel tank
- 600-liter water tank
- Thai registered
- Meets TAT requirements

A perfect boat for daily dive/snorkeling trips, in a very good condition. Please email or call us for more information and photos. Tel: 077-456216, 07-9700913. Email: charlott\_ragnarsson@hotmail.com

**DINGHY FOR SALE**  
One year old, 4 meters long, glass-fiber bottom. New price is more than 200,000 baht. Urgent sale at only 100,000. Please contact for more information. Tel: 076-243089, 04-0580815. Fax: 076-243089. Email: boat\_phuket@yahoo.com

**BARRET SSB250**  
radio phone. This single side-band marine radio comes with the tuner as well. Works fine. I don't use it anymore. Cost new: AUS\$2,700. Asking 8,000 baht. Tel: 09-5871-862. Email: mmcgrath2@hotmail.com

**10HP YAMAHA**  
outboard engine in excellent condition. Tel: 06-9401860. Email: bigasail@samart.co.th

**NORTH SAILS**  
spinnaker. Red, white and blue radial design. 26ft luff and leech and 16.5ft foot (about 400 sq ft). 6,000 baht. Tel: 09-587-1862. Email: mmcgrath2@hotmail.com

**SEADOO JETBOAT**  
2 x 115hp, 1996, 15 feet, 5 pax. New canvas; needs a little attention (carb and trailer need fixing). Very fast, fun boat. Have spares worth approx 20,000 baht. Will sell altogether for 649,000 baht, or without spares and trailer for 599,000 baht. Located at Boat Lagoon Marina, house 23/76. Pls contact for more information. Tel: 01-2734000. Email: bbonello@web.de

**MARINE SALVAGE**  
Anchor recovery/setting, location surveys/consultation, hull inspections. Please call dive specialists Angus (01-536-5840) or Paul (01-7433200) for more information.

Find more classified ads

**"Boats & Marine"**

at [www.phuketgazette.net](http://www.phuketgazette.net)



# Island Job Mart

## Cape Yamu seeking...

### Project Secretary

- Female (Thai)
- Degree in accounting, from secretarial college or in any related field
- Minimum 2 years' experience in related field or as property administrator
- Excellent command of English
- Computer literate
- Good personality, hard working and can work as a team leader

### Assistant to Project Secretary

- Female (Thai)
- Degree in Accounting or from secretarial college
- Minimum 2 years' experience
- Good command of English
- Computer literate

### Site Manager (2 positions)

- Male (Thai)
- Degree in Civil or Electrical Engineering, or in Architectural
- Minimum 5 years' experience in the construction industry
- Excellent command of English
- Computer literate
- Good personality, hard working and can coordinate a team

### Site Inspector

- Male (Thai)
- Degree in Civil Engineering or Architecture
- Minimum 3 years' experience in related field
- Good command of English
- Computer literate

### CAD Draftsman

- Thai citizen (Female or male)
- Vocational education as draftsman
- Minimum 3 years' experience in related field
- Good command of English
- Computer literate, CAD-related programs

Interested candidates, please send resumé + recent photo to the Project Secretary.

Cape Yamu office: 23/102 Thepkasattri Road,  
T. Koh Kaew, A. Muang, Phuket, 83200.  
Tel: 076 353 926 Fax: 076 353 927  
e-mail: hom@capeyamu.com



One of Thailand's most exclusive Country Clubs, the award-winning Blue Canyon Country Club, is seeking suitably trained, business-proven Thai professionals to join its team. We are taking applications for the following positions:

**Front Office Manager**  
**Assistant Front Office Manager**  
**F & B Manager**  
**F & B Outlet Manager**  
**Corporate and Events Sales Manager**  
**Assistant Financial Controller**  
**Night Auditor**  
**Cost Clerk**  
**Pro-shop Receptionist**  
**Sales Executive**  
**Sales Administrator**  
**Public Relations Executive**  
**Public Relations E-Projects**  
**(Design & Website)**

The positions are based in Phuket and require candidates who possess the following:

- Minimum experience in a related field
- Experience in the hospitality industry is a plus
- BA degree or higher
- Proficiency in written and spoken English
- Service-minded and results-driven attitude
- Computer skills

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted. Please send resumé and at least three references and a recent photo by 30 June 2005 to:

### Human Resources Manager

P.O. Box 18, Thalung Post Office, Phuket 83110  
Email: hr@bluecanyonclub.com  
Tel: 076-328088 Fax: 076-328087

### PIMALAI RESORT

& Spa, a member of Small Luxury Hotels of the world, is currently looking for guest service officers. English required, computer literate. Fidelio front office a plus. Other positions available: Graphic Designer, Bell Boy, Admin Secretary. Tel: 075-607999. Fax: 075-607987. Email: rdm@pimalai.com For further details, please see our website at: www.pimalai.com

### PROJECT MANAGER

required for a small three-villa project in Kathu. Full-time or part-time. Please contact for more information. Tel: 01-8933462. Email: allard@bougainvillas.info

### ICECREAM SHOP

is looking to employ a good-looking young Thai woman who speaks English. Tel: 06-9928026.

### PROJECT MANAGER

Looking for project manager. Male; 2 years' experience or more; good command of English; certificate in construction or related field. Please contact for info. Tel: 076-281084. Email: non@islandhomephuket.com

### JOB VACANCIES

Krabi La Playa Resort is now recruiting for the following positions:

- Reservations Manager
- Restaurant Manager
- Personnel Manager
- Sales Executives

A minimum of 3 years' experience in the hotel field is required. Tel: 075-637500, 01-8812317. Fax: 075-695497. Email: worasuda@krabilaplaya.com For further details, pls see our website at: www.krabilaplaya.com



Paradise Group Limited, a Developer and a Property Management, Architecture, Interior Design & Entertainment company located at The Plaza Surin, Phuket, is seeking qualified and energetic persons to fill the position below:

### ACCOUNTING ASSISTANT

- ▶ Thai national, male or female, Bachelor's degree.
- ▶ At least 5 years' experience in general accounting, knowledge of taxes and other statutory filing.
- ▶ Good command of written & spoken English.
- ▶ Good computer literacy.
- ▶ Good personality, friendly & service-minded.

Interested candidates, please send full resumé together with a recent photograph and expected salary by e-mail to:

CEO e-mail: apple@paradisepuket.com  
The Plaza Surin, 5/50 Moo 3, Cherngthalay,  
Thalang, Phuket, 83110.

### ACCOUNTANT

Fluent English, 5 years' experience in AR/AP/VAT, filing social security. Please contact Tim. Tel: 01-9279328 for more information.

### ARCHITECTS/

draftsmen. Junior/senior architects/draftsmen needed for rapidly expanding architecture practice. Please contact for more info. Tel: 076-279643 or send CV by email at: shadows\_and\_light@yahoo.com

### NIGHTCLUB MANAGER

Female only, 30 years or over. 5-star venue in Patong seeks self-motivated, English-speaking, stylish woman with Phuket knowledge. Please contact Peter for more information. Tel: 07-0170135.

### SALES & MARKETING

Assistant. We are looking for a female w/at least 3 years' experience, good English and strong presentation skills. Salary 20-25,000 baht per month. Contact for more information. Tel: 076-263737, 01-5354108. Fax: 076-224-113. Email: recruitment@bowentraining.com

### TEACHERS WANTED

Phuket Wittayalai school requires native English-speaking teachers with a TOEFL certificate and a degree. Please contact K. Boonthong. Fax: 076-213922. Email: boonthong\_a@pkw.ac.th

### LAW FIRM

Looking for paralegal & Thai lawyer. Please email resumé to: scphuket@yahoo.com

## INTERNATIONAL LAW OFFICE

### Secretary

- Female
- Bachelor's degree
- Good command of spoken and written English
- Computer skills
- Able to start immediately
- Experience in Agreements, Visa, Work permits will be advantage

Please do not hesitate to contact us at  
Tel: 076 222191-5

Email: ohn@phuket-realestate-law.com

### ENGLISH TEACHERS

Native Speakers of English needed for teaching kindergarten to adult, part-time and full-time. Please contact for more information. Tel: 076-219062. Email: eccpkt@ecc.ac.th

### BURASARI

Restaurant Manager. Burasari Resort in Patong requires a dynamic Restaurant Manager. Ideal candidate will have an outgoing personality, proven experience in top-class hotels, knowledge of wine and strong leadership abilities. Excellent English-language skills and the ability to use a computer are also required. Please contact Ext #669 for further details and to apply. Tel: 076-292929. Fax: 076-294451. Email: hr\_bj@burasari.com

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Place your ad in these pages;  
Present your Shopper Card; and  
Pay for the ad at our offices,

you'll enjoy a 25% discount\* AND have your ad appear free of charge in the Phuket Gazette Online.

*With more than 10,000 visitors a day, the Island Trader Online is Thailand's most active classified marketplace.*

\*Ads may be submitted in person or online (phuketgazette.net/classifieds), but must be paid for at the Gazette offices. The discount is not available when payment is made at our agents.

**The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd**  
367/2 Yaowarat Road, Phuket City  
Tel: 076-236555 Fax: 076-213971

**Gazette Online Classifieds**  
**10,000 readers every day!**



# Island Job Mart

## The Phuket Gazette

The Phuket Gazette seeks to fill the following positions:

### I. ARTIST

- ▶ Graphic-design skills and knowledge of Adobe Illustrator, PageMaker, Photoshop and Dreamweaver required
- ▶ Freehand drawing and web-design skills a plus
- ▶ Responsible, hard-working, attentive to details
- ▶ Able to work in a fast-paced environment and meet deadlines
- ▶ Good communication skills, team player
- ▶ English speaker

### II. ADVERTISING SALES

- ▶ Thai
- ▶ Good command of written and spoken English
- ▶ Good management and organizational skills
- ▶ Car driving license a must
- ▶ Outgoing personality

### III. ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT

The successful candidate will be a Thai national with an outgoing personality. Also essential are experience in sales and/or administration, a good command of written and spoken English, good management and organizational skills, and knowledge of PageMaker and Office software.

### IV. PROGRAMMER

- ▶ Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science or Computer Engineering
- ▶ Solid experience of at least 2 years in developing web applications with Asp-MS Sql or PHP-MySQL. (Working samples of previous work required.)
- ▶ Professional working knowledge of ASP, PHP, JavaScript, MS-SQL 2000 server, Microsoft Access, MySQL, IIS
- ▶ Ability to hand code clean & efficient HTML, CSS with notepad/editplus
- ▶ Ability to program web-based database connectivity
- ▶ Ability to program 'com component' would be a plus
- ▶ Ability to work independently with little supervision
- ▶ Dedicated, team-player attitude

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

**Gallery International Limited** invites Candidates to apply for the following positions for a Restaurant and a Club located in Jungceylon, Patong, Phuket. Opening late September 2005.

#### 1. Executive Chef (Thai Nationality)

We are looking for a highly motivated Sous Chef who has worked with international hotels and has ambitions to become the leader of an international restaurant with a staff of approximately 8-10 persons. Must be able to control staff, food costs and be able to create "Fusion-menus", East and West, local and Western cuisine. Menu planning, dish developing and menu costing. Computer-literate is an advantage. Start early July, 2005. Job training and English classes will be provided.

#### 2. Marketing Executive (Thai Nationality)

Female, 25-40 years of age with a minimum of 3 years' experience in Hotel and Restaurant Marketing. Computer-literate. Enthusiastic, driven, customer-focused, creative-thinking and result-oriented. Researching customer needs, developing and implementing strategies and procedures to boost sales and repeat business. Candidate should be on board early July 2005. Working place will be in the Corporate Office, Patong.

#### 3. Restaurant/Saloon Manageress (Thai Nationality)

Female, 25-40 years of age with a minimum of 3 years' experience in similar position in a hotel or restaurant. Must be able to control restaurant and bar staff and liaise with the kitchen staff.

#### 4. Restaurant Hostesses

#### 5. Restaurant and Club Supervisors

#### 6. Waitresses

#### 7. Head Bartender

#### 8. Bartenders/Cashiers

#### 9. Cooks

#### 10. Commis Cooks/Kitchen Helpers

#### 11. General Cleaners

#### 12. Office Boy

Positions 4-8 should be females, **MUST** be able to speak English and have a minimum of 2 years' working experience. Work place for position 12 will be in the Corporate Office, Patong. Job training and English classes will also be provided. Candidates should be on board early August, 2005.

**The company provides further long-term opportunities to its staff to join various hotel and restaurant operations in Thailand, Singapore and Indonesia.**

Interested candidates please apply with resumé, recent photo, present and expected salary to the Corporate Head Office 241/16 Rat-U-Thit Road, Tambon Patong, Kathu, Phuket. Att. Horst J. Soeller, or email details and application to horst@gallery-int.com Or contact Khun Aye at Tel: 09-6525931.

**Closing date: June 15, 2005**

#### HOTEL MANAGER

Small hotel with bar and restaurant looking for experienced Thai lady fluent in English. Excellent opportunity for the right person. With experience only, please. Please call for more information at Tel: 076-340464, 07-8871-733. Email: whharris042004@hotmail.com

#### ICE CREAM SHOP

is looking to employ a good-looking young Thai woman with spoken English. Please call for more information. Tel: 06-9928026.

#### MEDIA SALES REPS

wanted. Good basic salary + commissions. Thai nationals only. Excellent spoken English essential. Please contact for more information. Tel: 02-6556070, 01-5357944. Fax: 02-6556070. To apply please email resumé and recent photo to: terry@csloxinfo.com

#### EXPERIENCED STAFF

wanted for property development company in Phuket. For more information check: www.immobilienplus.com/jobs

#### CRUISE DIRECTOR

Cruise Director wanted for Phinisi Charter operation. Good customer relations and English language skills. Apply by above email. Email: neil\_dibb@litigold.com

#### HOUSEKEEPER

for Patong area. Live-in preferred. Good English, good cook of Thai/farang food, pleasant nature, good standards of cleaning. Good salary + conditions. Please contact for more info. Tel: 01-7473000. Email: admin@thaiservers.com

## PHUKET MISSION HEIGHTS

Company Limited

## Wanted

for real estate company

Person with sales, computer and driving experience - must also speak very good English - for company located in the north of Phuket Island.

Salary 15,000 baht per month + commission

Please contact Khun Brian.

**Tel: 01-3444473**

#### OFFICE

administrator. The Asia Center Foundation requires an Office Administrator with good organizing and administrative skills. English and Thai-language ability a must. Position available immediately. Please contact Roelien for more information. Tel: 076-321235, 01-8957016. Fax: 076-321235. Email: roelien@asiacenter.ac

#### SAILING SKIPPER

required. Kia Ora Catamaran Charters, located in Koh Samui, requires an experienced skipper to operate our 52-foot day-charter sailing catamaran. Please contact for more information. Tel: 077-425264. Email: mark@kiaorathailand.com Please see our website at: www.kiaorathailand.com

## ASK KHUN WANIDA! MOMMA DUCK

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



Read her advice in the *Phuket Gazette*.



# Island Job Mart

## SALES CONSULTANTS

## & TELEMARKETERS

## LOCATION: PHUKET

PURAVARNA IS A FAST GROWING LUXURY RESORT AND PROPERTY DEVELOPER IN PHUKET. TO KEEP UP WITH OUR RAPID EXPANSION, WE ARE LOOKING FOR CANDIDATES WITH ENGLISH AND ASIAN LANGUAGE SKILLS WHO WOULD LIKE A REWARDING AND CHALLENGING CAREER IN THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS:

### Sales Consultants

We are seeking experienced sales professionals, fluent in English and with Asian language skills (Cantonese, Japanese, Thai etc). You will be determined, driven and passionate about sales, and must be able to demonstrate a high level of closing skills, with an ability to communicate with high network individuals. Used to exceeding your sales targets, you are ethical and rely on sound factual arguments to achieve your success. If this sounds like you and you want play a key role in our continued growth, bring your energy and enthusiasm to us today.

### Telemarketers

We need experienced telemarketers to cover all Asian languages as well as English, who are confident, well spoken and have an ability to engage clients over the telephone and secure appointments for our sales team. You will have boundless energy and be a self-motivated achiever and able to work as part of a small team. You will receive on-going training and have state of the art software at your disposal, with a first class exclusive product.

Excellent packages available. Send your CV by email to: [ph@puravarna.com](mailto:ph@puravarna.com)

PURAVARNA RESORT Suite 2B, 2nd Floor, M.Thai Tower, All Seasons Place, 87 Wireless Road, Lumpini, Pathumwan, Bangkok 10330, Thailand Tel : +662-654-1100-2 Fax : +662-654-1103

## Employment Wanted

### INTERNET EXPERT

I am looking for suitable work in Phuket. I have my own Web server with unlimited space, etc. I also have an easy-to-use e-commerce shopping cart package. I would be interested in working for a company that would benefit from my expertise and resources. Please contact by email at: [mkewer@coastlineweb.net](mailto:mkewer@coastlineweb.net) for more information.

### DRIVER

I am 28 years old, male, from Trang Town. I can speak a little English. Now working with diving company in Phuket. I am available to start immediately. Please contact for more information. Tel: 05-0680190.

### ITALIAN CHEF

Looking for an Italian chef? I'm an Italian chef, 22 years old, with good experience. In the past 3 years I have worked in a good 4-star hotel in Italy and a very fine Italian restaurant in Australia. For further details, please contact me at Tel: +39-054570331 or by email at: [lucadirani@hotmail.it](mailto:lucadirani@hotmail.it)

### PART-TIME MAID

Qualified maid, Patong/Kathu area, available few hours per week. Please call for more information. Tel: 09-8725717.

### MUSICIAN AVAILABLE

Accomplished solo guitarist and vocalist available beginning of June. Great for happy hour or opening for full band. All music from 70s, 80s, 90s to today. Lots of original material. Very popular throughout Europe and the US. Also would be interested in joining a band. Please contact me by email. Thanks! Email: [steveastray@hotmail.com](mailto:steveastray@hotmail.com)

### LOOKING FOR JOB

38-year-old man from Sweden is looking for a job in Patong, Kata or Karon. I work as a dispatcher in Sweden, answering the Swedish emergency number 112. I connect people in need with the police, ambulance or the fire brigade. I will go to Karon in November and stay for 6 months this time. But if I find a job I am willing to stay longer. I am not afraid to work hard. Former employment includes Security, police, and computers. Please contact for more information. Tel: +46-467063737. Email: [picassocat@hotmail.com](mailto:picassocat@hotmail.com)

# Tout, Trader & Trumpet

## 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 01 788 6027, 06 745 8910 and 01 2732053.

## Business Opportunities

### RESTAURANT/BAR

for sale. Kamala, main road. Aircon, 40 seats, well-established walk in. Take over: 6,000 baht/month; 900,000 baht for sale. Please call after 4 pm. Tel: 076-385940.

### FURNITURE FOR SALE

Closing down restaurant & bar. Everything for sale, including 2mx3m cold room. Please contact for full details. Tel: 01-1924706 (Richard); 07-8933715 (Garry); Tel/Fax: 076-296295; Email: [premiumbsp@yahoo.com](mailto:premiumbsp@yahoo.com)

### QUICK SALE

A great business opportunity on Saiyuan Rd in Rawai is up for quick sale (with or without company).

- 1,000sqm freehold land (Chanote title)
  - 44-seat restaurant
  - one of the most popular Internet cafés in Rawai
  - big parking area
- Price: 6 million baht or best offer. Tel: 01-8919914. Email: [bluecomthai@yahoo.com](mailto:bluecomthai@yahoo.com)

### NO CAPITAL?

No problem! Company registration, work permit and visa within 1 month (also for bars). Don't have 2 million baht? No problem; just call! Tel: 075-378805, 09-472-7205. Fax: 075-378873. Email: [nakhon@mail.com](mailto:nakhon@mail.com)

### SHELL COMPANY

Phuket Villa Services. No trading history, zero liability: 220,000 baht.

Tel: 01-6060200

[www.PhuketVillaServices.com](http://www.PhuketVillaServices.com)

### LOOKING FOR

sea lovers. Looking for partners for our three-year-old company speedboat service around the beautiful islands. Please contact us to realize your dream. Tel: 01-737-0164, 06-2699484. Email: [simbaseatrips@yahoo.com](mailto:simbaseatrips@yahoo.com)

### BAR FOR SALE

Large, successful, established bar in soi off Soi Bangla for sale. Pool table, sound system plus all fittings. Please call Tel: 06-2832285 for more information.

### KATA SHOP

bargain. Central, next to Little Star restaurant. Shop and upper floors ready to move into without delay; all perfect state. Rent 20,000 baht a month, no key money. 2 months' deposit. Tel: 06-6902532, 01-3708074.

### BUSINESS FOR SALE

in Kata Plaza. Options No. 1 Internet café, with flat screens and ADSL + USB; motorbike & chopper rental tour counter with high turnover. Price: 750,000 baht. Pls call for more information. Tel: 04-8374429.

### BAR FOR SALE

Patong. Entertainment, Thai company, work permit. Please see our website at: [www.homebarphuket.com](http://www.homebarphuket.com)

### LEASE SMALL HOTEL

Consistent monthly returns, easily managed. Tel: 01-8922824. Email: [junaworn@hotmail.com](mailto:junaworn@hotmail.com) Please see our website at: [www.kohjoy.com/building](http://www.kohjoy.com/building)

### TSUNAMI RESORT

Active investor/partner sought for redevelopment of eco-resort on Phra Thong Island in Phang Nga. Site is a world-class setting, with two beautiful beaches, abundant wildlife, years of successful operation based on a love of nature. Email: [simi@losthorizonsasia.com](mailto:simi@losthorizonsasia.com)

### RESTAURANT/BAR

for rent. At tsunami-safe Surin Beach: 15,000 baht/month. Tel: 01-4151647. Email: [tomshut@hotmail.com](mailto:tomshut@hotmail.com)

### SMALL GUESTHOUSE

Restaurant/bar with 25 seats, 130 meters to the beach. Please contact by email at: [phuketopportunity@hotmail.com](mailto:phuketopportunity@hotmail.com)

### HOTEL FOR LEASE

Consistent income all year. Easy to manage. Tel: 01-8922824. Email: [junaworn@hotmail.com](mailto:junaworn@hotmail.com) For further details, please see our website at: [www.kohjoy.com/building](http://www.kohjoy.com/building)

### TOUR COMPANY

for sale. Established city tour company. Good prospect for overseas market. Ideal for foreigners wanting to work and stay in Phuket. Email: [paradisetour@csloxinfo.com](mailto:paradisetour@csloxinfo.com)

### KATA CENTER

Siam Silk & Work of Art. For sale; urgent. 3 rooms and stock: 740,000 baht. Please call Tel: 01-9798540.

## Business Products & Services

### PRIVATE BOAT

service. Would you like to have a private boat service at your total disposal during your entire stay? The Italian crew will take care of you with experience, courtesy and professionalism as they plan with you any daily trips around Phuket. Long-term agreement. Tel: 06-269-9484, 01-7370164. Email: [simcapo@hotmail.com](mailto:simcapo@hotmail.com)

### BILLBOARD

6mx10m billboard on a building at Kao Kaew, opposite Boat Lagoon, for rent. Please contact for details. Tel: 01-7872201. Email: [phuket8@hotmail.com](mailto:phuket8@hotmail.com)

### WORLD'S

newspapers. Same day editions available in Phuket! Delivery to your place. Pls contact for info. Tel: 076-346-218-9. Fax: 076-346232. Email: [info@newspaperdirect-phuket.com](mailto:info@newspaperdirect-phuket.com)



# Wheels & Motors

## Computers

**MAC PBG4 1.33 17"**  
DVD RW, 2x512 RAM, 80 GB HD, Bluetooth keyboard plus mouse. Bought on 23/04/04, have all bills, brand new, with software: 90,000 baht. Call Gregg at Tel: 01-956-0204.

## COMPUTERS

New or used. Repairs. WLAN, GPRS ADSL 1 Internet. No phone, no problem. English computerman. Please call Tel: 09-4735080.

## Miscellaneous for Sale

### DAY TRIP TO RANONG

New double-decker tour bus (not minibus), non-smoking and smoking areas, toilet, films/music, snacks and drinks, on-board buffet lunch. No extra to pay, fully inclusive. Only 1,300 baht. Every Mon, Wed, Fri, Sat, Sunday. Tel: 04-7457024.

### INT'L DRIVERS LICENSE

5,000 baht, valid up to 10 years, 6,000 baht valid up to 20 years. Sole agent in Thailand. Free pick up & delivery, open 365 days a year. Please contact Khun Christine for more information. Tel: 04-006-8736.

## Personals

### WANT SOME ENCOURAGEMENT?

Would you like a free weekly or daily email that will give you encouragement or inspiration? Send a blank email to us to subscribe, or visit our website for more information. Email: subscribe@thoughtforweek.net For more info, see my website at: ThoughtForWeek.net

## BACKGAMMON

Retired businessman looking for backgammon players on Phuket Island. Please call if interested. Tel: 076-386113, 01-5778443.

## FEMALE FOR FUN

on Phi Phi. Looking for a female companion, romance, for a few days of fun on Phi Phi Island, around June 6. Please send photo, and more about you. Email: timesreporter@tscnet.com

Find more classifieds at  
[www.phuketgazette.net/](http://www.phuketgazette.net/)

## Saloon Cars

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For more info pls call us at  
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[www.suremotor.com](http://www.suremotor.com)

### CAR FOR SALE

Honda CRV, 1997, automatic, 2,000cc. 95,000 km. Price: 550,000 baht. Tel: 09-2909567.

### MAZDA 323

1993 model, 180,000km, blue, 4 doors, automatic, CD/radio. Price: 130,000 baht. Tel: 09-4075281.

### KIA SPORTAGE FOR SALE

Very clean and runs well. Only 2 foreign owners, well maintained and serviced by agent. New wheels/tires, speakers and battery. Radio/cassette/MP3 connection. 360,000 baht. Tel: 09-8731517. Email: kevin@boland.name

### 1998 MIRA

Good, cheap run-around. Runs well and has new aircon. Recent registration. 95,000 baht. Please contact for more info. Tel: 076-386040, 01-2731740. Fax: 076-386043. Email: harry@eimeos.com

### SPORTS LANCER

(rare model). Mitsubishi Lancer, 1976, needs minor body repairs. Rust proofed engine compartment, boot and undercarriage. Excellent mechanical condition. 1.6-liter fuel-injected Toyota engine. Sports gearbox, mag wheels. First to drive will drive away. 70,000 baht ono. Tel: 06-2699141. Email: seumasfh@yahoo.com

### FORD LASER GLXI

1,600cc. Automatic, silver-gray, year 2000. First owner, superb condition. As new! Only 63,000km, with maintenance book. Price new: 850,000 baht, now only 395,000 baht. Contact Khun Jum or Mr Eddy. Tel: 076-249093, 06-9412625. Email: edbur59@surfmail.be

### VOLVO 440 AUTO

1997, metallic silver, mags, 170,000km. Price: 280,000 baht, or 85,000 down payment and 4,500 baht/month. Perfect condition. Tel: 076-248626, 01-0808557. Fax: 076-248626. Email: admin@phuketdeafeagle.com

### NISSAN SUNNY

Good engine, body has rust. 25,000 baht. Tel: 01-477-5306. Contact for more information. Email: patriklambert@hotmail.com

### 1993 OPEL KADETTE

GLS. Light-blue exterior, gray interior. 4 doors, 5-speed, aircon, power windows, CD player. 145,000 baht or offers. Please contact for more info. Tel: 04-8429640. Email: mow449@yahoo.com

### 1996 ISUZU

Wanderer. Excellent family car. Well-maintained on a regular basis by Isuzu dealership. 67,000 original kilometers. Tires have a few thousand kilometers on them. 2nd farang owner. Light green with a black "roo bar". Icy cold air conditioning! Halogen headlamps. 325,000 baht or best offer. Now being used as a second car and no longer needed. Late afternoons are best. Tel: 07-8946697.

## Pickups

### CHEVY TRUCK 4-DOOR



20,000km, new tires and wheels. Many extras: 700,000 baht or best offer. Please contact Khun Ben. Tel: 07-8821963. Email: benlee53@hotmail.com

### MITSUBISHI STRADA

Cab. 5 years old. Mint condition. Foreign owned and driven. 2,800cc. Carryboy. 114,000km. 320,000 baht. Quick sale. Tel: 01-8926766. Email: manuphuket@hotmail.com

## 4 x 4s

### SUZUKI CARIBIAN

SJ413, soft top, blue, 54,000 km: 190,000 baht. Also have Honda Wave 125cc, electric starter, disc brakes, 5,000km: 29,000 baht. Please call for more info. Tel: 07-2790572.

### SUZUKI JEEP

50,000 baht. 1988 Sporty model. The bodywork is bad, but it runs good. Aircon, stereo. Email: sanoek5@hotmail.com

### TOYOTA SPORTRIDER

2002. 117,000km, 4WD, looks and drives like new. 850,000 baht. Please contact for more details. Tel: 07-2719414. Email: pritchah@hotmail.com

### CHEROKEE FOR SALE

Jeep Cherokee '97, auto, 4.0L, leather seats, excellent condition, well maintained by Mercedes service center. For quick sale, with warranty, only 340,000 baht. Tel: 01-5371050.

### JEEP CHEROKEE 1997

Excellent condition, 4WD, manual gears, 350,000 baht for fast sale. Tel: 076-288-287, 04-0529034.

## Motorbikes

### HONDA SONIC

Blue, 2 years old, no scratches. Lady owner. Never been in a shop for repairs. Still in good running condition. Please call me to view. Tel: 01-539-0696. Email: leareyes@hotmail.com

### KAWASAKI

11,000 baht. Kawasaki Cheer, 112cc, but with different paintwork and stickers so looks a lot better. Electric starter, good condition. Couple of years old but drives exactly the same as when I brought it. Tel: 09-7305591. Email: wilki77@hotmail.com

### HONDA CB400

Honda CB 400 Super Four. Perfect running condition, well-maintained by the owner. Metallic blue, new tires, new brakes, new chain and liquid gel battery. Only 78,000 baht. Tel: 09-1398083. Fax: 02-6541119. Email: stianche@yahoo.com

### JRD TORNADO

JRD Tornado chopper, 150cc, built 2004, original 1,600km, like new. Side boxes and additional front lights included. Price new: 60,000 baht. Now available at 47,500 baht. Tel: 01-892-4282. Email: taxiregio@freenet.de

### NEW WAVE 125R

New Honda Wave 125R, 600km, electric starter, disc brakes. Black and yellow. Full warranty. 34,000 baht. Tel: 01-8950612. Email: travisns@yahoo.com

### HONDA DREAM

Very nice Honda Dream, 100cc, very good condition, first owner, red, electric starter, well serviced and maintained. 8 years old but looks like new. Price: only 10,000 baht. Tel: 09-646-6871. Email: handsomedan@popstar.com

### HONDA SMILE

110cc 10,000 baht. For more info. Tel: 01-4775306. Email: patriklambert@hotmail.com

### HONDA WAVE 125S

Honda Wave for sale by private owner. 2004 deluxe model, disc brakes, electric starter, 1,500km, blue/black, only 32,000 baht. Email: nongnut@yahoo.com

### YAMAHA V-MAX

1997 model, blue, not a rental bike. Just spent about 100,000 baht on new parts. Forced to sell for 160,000 baht. Tel: 01-8936020. Email: mattisan1@hotmail.com

### HONDA NSR 250

in very good condition. Very fast 2-cylinder, 2-stroke racer. 25,000 baht! Email: jefdejong@hotmail.com

### SUZUKI LOVE

Two-stroke motorbike in fair condition. White, recently serviced at Suzuki main dealer, with book. Asking price: 9,800 baht. Tel: 01-6063143. Email: markus.kummer@cinerent.com

### HONDA NSR 150CC

First owner, not used much, built 1997. Price: 25,000 baht. Tel: 09-7241988.

### YAMAHA XJ

Special, 400cc. A classic motorbike in excellent condition. Easily modified. Recently changed tires, battery, sprocket and chain, starter and more. Registered in Thailand! Will travel for viewing. New price: 39,000 baht. Email: greig.oldford@gmail.com

### HONDA CB1300

motorbike. Red, bought new in Nov 04, only run 1,400km. Fitted with carbon blueflame exhaust and mushroom engine protectors. Complete with full Honda workshop manual, spare original exhaust and brake pads. Full documentation. 385,000 baht. Tel: 01-9264210. Email: nigelcrofts@yours.com

### HONDA MONKEY BIKE

Red, runs well, new tires. No papers or number, hence 7,500 baht ono. Tel: 09-253-358. Email: safesurfer@lycos.co.uk

## Vans

### MINIBUS FOR SALE

Minibus for sale, year 1994. Nissan Urvan, gray with CD player, price 270,000 baht. Call for more details. Tel: 01-6078567.

### VOLKSWAGEN VAN

7 seats, 1992, good condition, 1st-class insurance to September. 350,000 baht. Please contact for more details. Tel: 076-288184, 01-5372128. Email: reimund@korat.loxinfo.co.th

## Rentals

### A1 CAR RENT

Cars, trucks, jeep, 7-seat minibus for rent; fully-insured. 12,000-30,000 baht/month; special long-term rates. Tel: 09-8314703.

### LOW PRICE

Low rates for long-term rentals. Many types of new car, with CD player, insurance and good maintenance. Tel: 05-8833470.

### CAR FOR RENT

9,000 baht/month. Suzuki, Honda, Nissan; from 9,000 baht to 12,000 baht. Email: lovephuket2000@yahoo.com

### CAR FOR RENT

Daihatsu Mira, good condition, easy to drive and economical, insurance. Only 9,900 baht/month. Please call for more information. Tel: 01-5371050.

### JEEP CHEROKEE

4.0L, auto, CD, 1st-class insurance. For rent: 25,000 baht/month or 9,000 baht/week. Call for more details. Tel: 01-3430777.

## Wanted

### JRD TORNADO

wanted. I am looking to buy a JRD Tornado or Kawasaki Boss, or other similar. Must be in good condition, and have low mileage and a history of regular service. Tel: 07-9752326. Email: info@smarthomes-thailand.com

### SUV AUTOMATIC

wanted. Looking for a used SUV with automatic transmission, no serious accidents. Mitsubishi, Nissan, Toyota, Honda, Cherokee, Kia, Ford – any make. Car should not be older than 8 years and must be in good condition. Email: bauer\_ctu\_la@hotmail.com Please send detailed description with pictures.

### HONDA DREAM

wanted. Good condition, not more than 4 years old. Please contact with full details. Tel: 01-8934661. Email: valiant@loxinfo.co.th

## Others

### REWARD

Last week I saw a 30-year-old, black BMW 2000 for sale along the road from Kamala to Patong. I will give 1,000 baht to the first person who can correctly tell me where that car now is. Email: jefdejong@hotmail.com

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## Rak Mak! Awards

Last week's winners:

กจ 5859  
ภูเก็ต

Silver Mercedes

ก 550  
ประจวบ

Red Suzuki Jeep

กจ 1981  
ภูเก็ต

Silver Toyota Vios

The owners of these vehicles have each won dinner for two at Mom Tri's Boathouse\* or at Rock Fish\*, or one year's free home delivery of the *Phuket Gazette*.\*



Please contact the Gazette quickly to ensure you get the prize you want, First come, first served!



Email LovePhuket@PhuketGazette.Net, or call Khun Pam at 076-236555.

\*offer expires May 24, 2005

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