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IN THIS ISSUE

NEWS: Minister calls for centers to handle aid complaints; Korean airlines stop direct Phuket flights. **Pages 2 & 3**

INSIDE STORY: The tsunami's psychological toll. **Pages 4 & 5**

AROUND THE ISLAND: When only a massage at home will do. **Page 6**

AROUND THE REGION: The slow progress in Khao Lak. **Page 8**

PHUKET PEOPLE: The island's biggest radio star. **Pages 10 & 11**

LIFESTYLE: Inspired designs from Art and Gift Gallery. **Page 12**

FIRST PERSON: Phuket's volunteer cops. **Page 21**

BUSINESS: The green shoots of golf revival; Money Talks: Chinese whispers; On The Move. **Pages 22 & 23**

SPORT: Phuket to enter KL gay games; Laguna PhuketTexas Scramble results. **Page 25**

GOOD LIVING: Pleasure principles at Peppino. **Page 27**

PROPERTY: Home of the Week: Rawai; Construction update: Aroonpat; Doven digs in while others dig up. **Pages 28-31**

PLUS

QUEER NEWS 4; AROUND THE NATION 7; HAPPENINGS 9; SUPER-YACHTS 14; TRAVEL 15; OUTSIDE IN 16; KIDS 17; HOROSCOPES, MAKING TRACKS, EARTH WATCH, BOOKS 18 & 19; EDITORIAL, LETTERS 20; ISSUES & ANSWERS 21; COMPUTERS 22; WINE, WORDLY WISE, TIME MACHINE 26; GARDENING 30; CLASSIFIEDS 32-39.

Dog pound in dire straits

By Anongnat Sartpisut
& Stephen Fein

THALANG: Food supplies are dwindling at the Mid Road Dog Shelter in Thalang, leaving some 300 dogs to subsist on rations of cat food donated after the tsunami.

Even this supply is expected to run out by the end of July and there appears to be no long-term solution to the problem.

The controversial facility, opened last July, was intended as a permanent shelter for some of the island's estimated 10,000 to 13,000 stray dogs, but has thus far done little to reduce the number of strays on the island.

Sunart Wongchawalit, chief of the Phuket Provincial Livestock Office (PPLO), explained that adequately feeding all 300 dogs requires 100 kilograms of dry dog food a day.

Island hotels had begun donating scraps to the shelter just before the tsunami hit, he said, but have made no donations since.

After the dog food ran out, there was still a supply of about 6,000kg of cat food donated after the tsunami. At the current rate of consumption, however, this too will run out – by the end of July, K. Sunart said.

K. Sunart said there has thus far been little support for the shelter from Tambon Administration Organizations (*OrBor-Tor*) and municipalities.

"We asked each local body to provide funding for the shelter. We do have a 90,000-baht commitment from Phuket City, but we still haven't received the funds. When we do, that should buy 3,000kg of food – enough to



Dogs at the pound are now being fed cat food – and even that will run out at the end of this month.

last about three months. But we will still need a lot more than that," he said.

Of Phuket's 19 local administrative bodies, only three others have agreed to chip in for dog food and staff wages: Cherng Talay *OrBorTor*, Cherng Talay Municipality and Wichit *OrBorTor*. Private-sector donations have been even less impressive.

"We don't know the solution right now. If we run out of dog food, we will probably have to start asking for donations from shops," he said.

K. Sunart explained that, initially, a committee was established comprising representatives

from several government agencies, each with specific responsibilities. This approach failed due to lack of cooperation and the entire responsibility has since fallen to PPLO, he said.

He put the minimum current financial needs of the shelter at about 110,000 baht a month; 20,000 baht for staff salaries and 90,000 baht for food.

"Even though we feel abandoned right now, the dog pound is open and it's up to us to run it. If we could get more cooperation from the local bodies, then we could register all the dogs on the island, implant them with mi-

Continued on page 2

B20 tuk-tuk service planned for Patong

By Athiga Jundee

PATONG: By the time the next high season arrives, a fleet of 24 tuk-tuks will ply a circular route through the streets of Patong charging no more than 20 baht a passenger, Teerayuth Prasertphol, Chief Technical Officer at Phuket Provincial Transportation Office, announced on June 24.

K. Teerayuth explained that the tuk-tuks will pass along the route every five to 10 minutes.

However, he added that many details of the plan have yet to be decided – including the route and how the tuk-tuks will be decorated so they can be distinguished from those currently operating in the resort town.

He added that the fares have yet to be set, but the maximum would be 20 baht.

"I intend to have the routes finalized before the end of this month, and the project should be ready for tourists to use in the coming high season," he said.

K. Teerayuth explained that the service was being introduced in response to complaints from tourists about extortionate sums being charged by tuk-tuk drivers.

"Since I started working in Phuket in 1999, I have heard that one big problem in the tourism industry in Phuket is the high tuk-tuk fares," he said.

"The current Governor, Udomsak Uswarangkura, and past Governors instructed me to find a solution to this problem."

The drivers – and the tuk-tuks – will be recruited from the ranks of the freelance tuk-tuks currently working in the resort town, he said.



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Somsak Ruamsakul (left) collects his prize of dinner at The Red Room Restaurant & Lounge from *Gazette* Distribution Manager Passara 'Mem' Kaewbumroong.



Natthira 'Anna' Susangrat (left), the *Gazette's* Website Services Manager, presents Nattawut Ingkanant with his prize – a free one-month membership in Club Asia Fitness.

Minister calls for centers to handle aid complaints

BANGKOK (*The Nation, Gazette*): Deputy Prime Minister Wissanu Krea-ngam, back in Bangkok after reviewing the tsunami aid situation on the ground, will ask the Cabinet to set up complaint centers in the six disaster-hit provinces to field queries about the distribution of state funds and private donations to tsunami victims.

Government spokesman Chalermdej Jombunud said K. Wissanu would inform the Cabinet today about problems he uncovered during his inspection tours of Phang Nga and Phuket on June 18.

He said the Deputy PM had discovered problems in five sub-committees responsible for the distribution of state funds and

private donations to tsunami victims.

Some of the state aid money and private donations, he found, were not used to help tsunami victims, K. Chalermdej said. Some government agencies had used the budget to replace official cars that were damaged in the disaster, he added.

Tsunami victims in some provinces do not know how to get help, so the Deputy PM suggested that the government distribute handbooks to them. It is not yet clear if the Cabinet will agree to follow K. Wissanu's suggestions.

Meanwhile, Phang Nga Governor Anuwat Metheeviboonwut told the *Gazette* that in Phang Nga there have been prob-

lems with people trying to get more than they are entitled to, such as fishermen who are entitled to get money to repair or replace their boats, but want more in order to pay employees; or people who want houses larger than those allocated to them.

He noted, "We have sent a list of small vendors [who have lost the equipment they need to continue in business] to the central government. Payment will depend on approval from the Prime Minister's Office.

"In some cases we have found that people have applied for aid again after already receiving it, while in other cases people claimed to have lost a business when they did not in fact have one before the tsunami.

"As a result we have to insist that claimants produce some kind of paperwork, such as tax records, to prove that they did formerly have a business."

Immigration open Saturdays

PHUKET CITY: The Phuket Immigration Office is now opening on Saturdays from 8:30 am until midday. Previously it was open only five days a week.

The office, in Phuket City, will also remain open during the lunch hour on weekdays.

Pol Capt Krissarat Nusen of the Phuket Immigration Office told the *Gazette*, "From Mondays to Fridays we will now stay open from 8:30 am until 4:30 pm."

Phuket to be 'C-Commerce' guinea pig

PHUKET CITY: Phuket and Chiang Mai are to pilot a new e-commerce scheme that will allow tour operators and travel agents anywhere in the world to give tourists up-to-date information on destinations, and to make hotel and tour bookings.

The "Tourism C-Commerce Outlet" initiative was unveiled on June 24 at the Royal Phuket City Hotel at a meeting of about 350 people organized by the Software Industry Promotion Agency (Sipa).

The pilot scheme will start in Phuket and Chiang Mai in August and will run until January. If successful, it may then be rolled out across the country.

Parinya Krachangmol, the Business Development Manager of Sipa in Bangkok, told the meeting that 27 entrepreneurs had already joined the scheme in Chiang Mai.

Kanawat Wasinsungworn, the Deputy Minister of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), said he was confident that Phuket is ready to be an ICT city. However, he added, the province needs to encourage entrepreneurs to work together and to coordinate information among themselves.

Sipa Phuket may be contacted at Tel: 076-379111.

— Anongnat Sartpisut

Dog pound in crisis

From page 1
crochips, and also have enough money to run the shelter properly," he said.

As if the current situation were not dire enough, more dogs may be on the way.

Rawai OrBorTor Deputy Chairman Kraiwut Kumbaan told the *Gazette* on June 22 that he had discussed the stray dog issue in the Rawai area with the aim of rounding up strays and

sending them to the pound.

He said that if the Mid Road Shelter agreed to accept the animals, he would raise the issue of providing financial support at a council meeting next week.

"Some dog clubs are opposed to our idea, but we do have to find a place to put all these animals, preferably in the shelter. We understand that there isn't enough food there at the moment, which is why I will raise this issue with the committee," he said.

Margot Homburg-Park of the Soi Dog Foundation (SDF) told the *Gazette* she opposed sending strays to the shelter, as they would only suffer from the overcrowding and the shortage of food.

She pointed out that no budget had been allocated for feeding dogs when the facility started accepting them, and noted that her foundation was rebuffed when it offered to get more involved in work at the facility.

She added that the SDF has received two large grants, one from the World Society for the Protection of Animals, that will allow it to expand its sterilization campaign (see also page 18).

She said that reducing the stray dog population through sterilization and increasing public awareness was a realistic goal, and one that her group would continue to work hard to achieve.

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The new crest devised for the British Curriculum International School, Phuket.

Top school begins life after Dulwich

KOH KAEW: As of midnight June 24, Dulwich International College (DIC) ceased to exist, as the island's premier private school became the British Curriculum International School, Phuket.

On the afternoon of the school's final day as DIC, the annual secondary school prize-giving assembly was held.

During his speech to the assembly, Academic Director Dr George Hickman said, "Yes, we are undergoing a change but I can tell you, from my perspective, that it is good."

He told students, "I am looking forward to welcoming you back in the fall and moving on to some great plans to continue the strong reputation of the school from here on and for many years to come."

He later described the coming academic year as "a honeymoon year". Casting an eye around, he added, "Looking at all these smiling [student] faces makes it all worthwhile."

Navy finishes home-building on Koh Lanta

KOH LANTA: The Royal Thai Navy (RTN) on June 25 handed over the last 16 of a total of 60 homes to tsunami victims on Koh Lanta. The Navy builders will now move to Koh Khor Khao, near Baan Nam Khem in Phang Nga, to build more houses.

Adm Phirasak Watcharamul, Deputy Commander of the RTN, handed over the 16 houses to Prasit Phuchutvanichakul, Chief of Koh Lanta District. Construction, undertaken by some 400 sailors, started in April.

K. Prasit told the *Gazette*, "Tourism at the moment is very slow," he said. "We have 3,200 rooms available in a total of 117 hotels and guest houses, and even if everything were undamaged I believe it would still be quiet."

"I think the main reason that tourists are not coming here is because of the unrest in the Deep South. Everyone realizes that the tsunami was a natural disaster and was not man-made."

—Sangkhae Leelanaporn

Trip of lifetime for IMPAC winner

DUBLIN, IRELAND: A Phuket student and her mother were among the 250 international guests at the City Hall here on June 15, when the 2005 International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award was presented to American Edward P Jones for his novel, *The Known World*.

The annual IMPAC Award is, at 100,000 euros (about 5 million baht), the richest prize in the world for a single work of fiction published in English.

The Phuket student, Thipratri "Kae" Saenkam, a 17-year-old secretarial student at Phuket Vocational College, was one of two winners of an earlier, related competition, the Junior IMPAC Dublin Literary Award for Thailand.

As part of her prize, she and her mother, Somchuan Saenkam, a caddy at Phuket Country Club, traveled to Dublin to attend the presentation dinner.

For Kae and her mother it was the trip of a lifetime – their first time on an airplane and their first time staying in a five-star hotel.

The two enjoyed a tour of Dublin and a visit to the Guinness brewery. "The trip was very interesting," Kae said. "Dublin City is beautiful and everyone has been very friendly." —Anita Whooley



Thipratri Saenkam (right) with IMPAC Chairman Dr James Irwin (left) and the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Michael Conaghan.

Korean airlines stop direct Phuket flights

By Athiga Jundee & Ananya Hongsa-ngiam

PHUKET: South Korea's two leading air carriers, Korean Air and Asiana Airlines, have announced that they are to suspend their direct flights to Phuket from this week.

South Korea's Construction and Transportation Ministry said on June 21 that it had accepted the airlines' applications for suspension of operations to Phuket, blamed on an abrupt decline in the number of passengers.

Asiana was due to stop flights between Seoul and Phuket on June 28. Korean Air said it would be dropping its Seoul-Phuket route on June 29, and its Pusan-Phuket route the day after.

Pattapong Aikwanich, President of the Phuket Tourist Association, told the *Gazette* that if Phuket International Airport had agreed to airlines' request for a reduction in landing fees, Korean Air and Asiana might not have decided to suspend direct services to Phuket.

"A number of local businesses, including my own – the Diamond Cliff Hotel – have been dealt a sharp blow by the [two] airlines' decisions, since Korean tourists will have to waste time traveling via Bangkok," K. Pattapong said.

Also hit are businesses such as that of Kim Hong Feok, who opened his Kang Chon Korean restaurant in Phuket City just six months ago.

"I was aware that Korean Air might end direct flights to Phuket but, although it's a serious situation for my restaurant, I haven't laid off any of my staff, in the hope that there will be an upswing around December," he said.

Udom Metatamrongsiri, Executive Director of the Tourism Investment Department of the Tourism Authority of Thailand, told the *Gazette* that both Korean airlines had said they would resume flights to Phuket in October, when tourism is expected to improve.

But Kittti Phatanachinda, Vice-President of the Phuket Tourist Association, pointed out that, in the low season, Asian markets are the most important and Korea is a top tourist market, in terms of both the number of visitors and the amount of money they spend here.

"It is regrettable that Asiana and Korean Air will suspend

their operations to Phuket. Some companies catering to Korean tourists, along with some Korean businesses here, have already been forced to close down."

K. Kittti also pointed out that if tour operators in Korea now switch to other destinations, it would become even more difficult to attract Koreans back to Phuket, because it takes tour operators a great deal of money, time and trouble to develop new packages, which they would therefore be reluctant to drop.

One small piece of good news is that Australian Airlines has launched direct charter services from Sydney to Phuket. The first was on June 27, and there will be five more before the end of July.

"This is good news for Andaman tourism. The number of Australian visitors to our island has increased 8% over the figure for January," K. Udom said.

PSU dumps casino course

PHUKET: The Phuket campus of the Prince of Songkhla University (PSU) has decided to drop its controversial course in casino and gaming management, after the Senate Committee on Education, Religion, Arts and Culture declared that the course was "opposed to Buddhism".

Even though casinos are illegal in Thailand, the university offered its first – and only – 45-hour casino and gaming management elective between March 31 and April 30 this year.

Program director Associate Professor Manat Chaisawat told the *Gazette* that he and fellow lecturers had agreed to drop the course as they now believed that it was inappropriate.

"I understand that people don't want casinos to be legal in Thailand. When the university started the course, many people thought that Phuket would have an entertainment complex in the near future," Prof Manat said.

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Queer News

Fine behavior

BANGKOK: The daughter of a retired police general ran amok at Dusit Police Station after suffering the indignity of seeing her boyfriend fined for driving without a license.

The incident occurred at about 11 pm on June 26. Kwanreuthai Taensawat, 31, and her 25-year-old brother Supakorn were in a pickup being driven by her boyfriend, Thongchai Khombamee, when it was stopped at a police checkpoint in front of Dusit Zoo.

When 33-year-old Thongchai failed to produce a license he was asked come down to the station to pay a fine. This infuriated his privileged passengers, and when they arrived at the station, Supakorn shoved an officer and was sent to an interrogation room to "cool down".

But his sister was just warming up. She screamed abuse at the officers and shocked a crowd of onlookers by punching the station's Inspector hard in the face. Then she bit down hard on the thumb of a housekeeper who tried to grab her, started smashing glass and brandished a broken bottle.

Brother and sister were both charged with abusing an on-duty officer and resisting arrest; Kwanreuthai was also charged with assault.

After reporters arrived, Kwanreuthai calmed down, confessed to the charges, and said she had plenty of money to pay for the damage. Then she called her relatives and told them to come to the station bail her out.

Thongchai paid his 100-baht fine without protest.

Source: Daily News

The emotional

Taking time to light a cigarette, "Gennady", 52, begins speaking, "I was born in Stalingrad (now Volgograd) and come from an army family. I was raised to be tough, and I later joined the Soviet Red Army, fighting in Afghanistan from 1981 until the [final] withdrawal in 1989.

"I fought, and I killed. I saw my friends die; I thought I was a 'hard man'".

Gennady, co-owner of a business in Phuket, was in Bangkok when the tsunami struck. Knowing his workers were safe, he felt that he could best assist in Phang Nga, making his way there on December 28.

"I thought, 'A body is a body, and I have seen worse.' People die in war, in airplane crashes, in natural disasters ... I can help."

He joined up with a body recovery team in Khao Lak for a week. "After I had finished [there], when I went to bed, I closed my eyes and saw body after body after body. I imagined I was one of those bodies. I went for a massage one evening to relax, but even there it was the same. I felt that I was one of the corpses that I had picked up."

Gennady said that he didn't sleep for more than a couple of hours a night for two or three months after the tsunami. "I drank until I fell over, but sobered up when I went to bed. I would sit and cry. Anything could cause it, I can't even remember what now.

"Now, it is better," he said. "I sleep at night, although sometimes something little can still make me remember and it is as real now as it was then."

His story is one of the more

It is perhaps too easy to reduce the December 26, 2004 tsunami disaster to numbers: a 9.15-magnitude earthquake; around 300,000 dead or missing, some 8,000 in Thailand alone; billions of dollars in damage.

Much more difficult to quantify is the emotional trauma suffered, not only by survivors but also by those in the frontline of disaster relief operations.

Six months on, the *Gazette's* Ananya Hongsa-ngiam and Andy Johnstone look at the psychic toll of the tsunami disaster.

extreme cases of what some label "post-traumatic stress disorder" (PTSD).

Sufferers can experience nightmares and unpleasant daydreams, giving them little respite or rest. It is not uncommon for them to "self-medicate" with alcohol and other drugs.

For retired British Army soldier "Tommy," a Sunday morning walk with his dog turned into a desperate attempt to rescue people.

While rescuing a number of people at Yanui Beach, he noticed one survivor wearing a wedding ring.

"The man said his wife and daughter were missing," said Tommy. "Water was everywhere still, it was perhaps the second wave by that time. I could hear screaming – it sounded like two women – a short distance away."

Tommy said that he tried to reach them, but couldn't locate the source of the screams.

"Some of the roads nearby had been blocked by the authorities by that time, and I just couldn't get close enough.

"I don't know whether his

wife and daughter died or whether they are safe and sound. Frankly I don't want to know.

"I felt extremely guilty for three or four days, maybe a week, that I hadn't gone [to where the screams were coming from]."



"When they have a mental health problem, Thais prefer not to visit a physician or psychiatrist, but instead visit a fortune teller or monk."

– Dr Benjaporn Panyayong

He paused before saying, "The feeling of guilt faded on its own. But I still think, 'I could have got closer.'"

The father of a three-year-old boy on Phuket told the *Gazette* that the child's mother had to carry the infant above the water when the tsunami inundated a low-lying area in Chalong.

The child was upset – naturally – although not by the water; that situation seemed to be too far beyond his comprehension or experience.

"What seemed to upset him most was not the volume of water, but the volume of people – 60 or so – nearby, who were running, panicking to get away."

The father said that he believes that his child reacted to a "collective" fear. Later, while watching an amateur DVD of the tsunami, the boy again appeared not to be upset by the images of the waves, but rather by the reaction of the people.

"We were crying as we watched it, and our reactions affected him," the father said.

"A 'trigger' must have been left with him, because it took him around four months to be even vaguely comfortable on the beach and going in the sea. Before, he would have played in it happily for hours."

"Colin", a dive master based in Khao Lak, was on board a vessel to the Similan Islands when the tsunami passed. The boat rushed back to Phang Nga, where he set to work recovering corpses.

"I remember – even now – bodies. It was the children that affected me most and I couldn't stop crying," he said.

Having worked through December 26, Colin was preparing himself for more of the gruesome work when, the next day, he was injured in a motorcycle crash.

"I was hurt and couldn't help as much I was wanted ... needed to. But what soon began were the dreams," he said.

The recurring dreams mirrored reality – walking through streets littered with bodies.

"It was a terrible, terrible thing to experience, but I don't think I was deeply traumatized. In the beginning, I suppose, I tried to deny that it had happened. Then I seemed to become resigned to it. But no matter how much I – anyone – did to help, it didn't seem to be enough," Colin said.

"Working, no matter what you are doing, keeps your mind occupied. Time on your hands to think about things is not good," he said.

The first official aid for those suffering psychological trauma in the six affected provinces was provided by the Ministry of Public Health's Mental Health Recovery Center, based in Khao Lak.

Under the direction of veteran pediatrician Dr Benjaporn Panyayong, the center opened December 28 and has thus far treated some 10,000 people, almost all Thais. Her clients presented typical reactions to the disaster that are not, strictly speaking, symptoms of a mental health disorder.

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toll of the tsunami

"People were angry, shocked and in denial. This is normal, despite – or perhaps because of – how abnormal the situation was. My research indicates that as many as 30% of people in refugee camps, around 2,000 people, are suffering from depression.

"Elsewhere in Phang Nga, I estimate it to be around 20%, Krabi 10% with Phuket less still. There appears to be a correlation between the scale of the disaster in an area and the incidence of depression."

"The number of people who are exhibiting symptoms of what could be termed PTSD appears to be increasing. Some clients report recurring images of what they experienced.

"Anything can trigger feelings of panic or anxiety, even the sound of waves crashing on the beach."

She said that she set up screening programs in anticipation of suicidal behavior.

"Around 200 people were initially deemed to have suicidal tendencies. The number fell to fewer than 100 needing surveillance after counseling. There are still about 10 people we are monitoring closely.

Dr Benjaporn explained that Thailand has a relatively low "recorded" suicide rate, about 6.9 deaths per 100,000 people annually, about half that of the UK, for example.

She said that there was only one suspected tsunami-related suicide in Phang Nga and one other attempted suicide in Phang Nga.

She and her team have been involved with around 10,000 people, and she estimates that as many as 30,000 more may need some kind of help, whether it be



The walls of the MHRC in Khao Lak are decorated with murals painted – as a form of therapy – by survivor children.

Above, one child included a tsunami-warning system in a mural while right, the message is simple to understand, in any language.

professional counselling or support from the family or community.

A Phang Nga native, Dr Benjaporn is mindful of the risks of applying Western approaches when treating Thais. "When they have a mental health problem, Thais prefer not to visit a physician or psychiatrist, but instead visit a fortune teller or monk.

"The temple remains the

focal point for counseling and support. Belief, a faith in something, is a good thing," she said.

One foreign health professional working a private hospital in Phuket after the disaster had to set himself a strict regimen in order to cope.

"Patrick", a trained paramedic with more than 12 years' experience in the field said, "I have seen a lot of trauma cases –

both here and abroad. I suppose I am a little ... desensitized to it."

He said that he was well aware of the need for adequate rest, food and "time out" to ensure that he could cope. The hospital's management also set an example to the staff.

"Many staff were keen to do extra shifts, and, generally, as much as possible. But we [the management of the hospital] re-

alized that we couldn't operate for 24 to 48 hours without rest.

Patrick, who reported that his hospital had not seen a significant increase in the number of people seeking counseling, is also wary of imposing Western-style "stress debriefings".

He agreed with Dr Benjaporn that intervention, when necessary, must be geared to the culture of the individual.

"It's debatable whether Thais need or want [debriefings and stress counseling] ... It's also debatable whether it works for Westerners."

These sentiments were echoed by "Tim", a long-term expatriate and a qualified psychiatric nurse.

"Everybody has to find his own path ... Some people are reluctant to go back to the life they had before because it seems so meaningless ... some people don't want to take that first step into the trivial."

Tim, like many others, has found it difficult to accept the concept of "closure".

"Closure? What is that? It doesn't exist. People and their emotions can't be neatly categorized into stages of grieving and reaction [to an event].

"There's a guy I know who lost a lot of his family, including his toddler son, although there were reports that the child had been taken in by someone else.

"Even now, I find myself giving every child a second glance, just in case it's him."

Tim said that nobody really gets "healed", except in the sense that episodes of mental pain tend to become shorter and less frequent.

Time may not always heal, but it will tell.

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Rubbing you just the right way

By Alison Winward

It is a great massage. Your body is somehow simultaneously relaxed and re-energized, your mind is at the very threshold of Nirvana, and the last thing you feel like doing is peeling yourself off the massage couch and hauling yourself home from the spa. But you have to.

Or rather, you did, until George della Pietra and his wife, Suntory "Noy" Songrak, launched Phuket Home Massage on June 1.

Based in Cherng Talay, Phuket Home Massage will send a top-quality masseuse to any home on the island.

"If someone goes to a spa, they have to go home. They don't want to – they want to curl up and go to sleep. But if they have their massage at home, then they can stay and go to sleep," says George, who has considerable experience in spa management.

On December 26 last year, George, from Switzerland, was Spa Director at the upmarket Trisara resort. He has seen at first hand the effects of the tsunami, and the subsequent slump in tourism, have had on the spa industry – and the number of therapists who have lost their jobs because of it.

And this is why, he says, he



and K. Noy set up Phuket Home Massage. Said George, "Nobody would open a business in the middle of the low season, but our company was established to give therapists who lost their jobs due to the tsunami a new source of income... We simply could not wait until the high season because these therapists need jobs now."

Despite paying what George describes as a "very good wage" he and K. Noy struggled to find staff when they started recruiting back in February.

"The therapists needed jobs, but they didn't want to go to customers' homes... I had to persuade them that I would make sure they would be safe," he said.

One way to do this is to

have the therapist escorted by a driver when visiting a new customer, although therapists do visit repeat customers unaccompanied.

Said George, "The feedback from the therapists has been excellent, though we have had only nice customers so far."

"Our customers see that we are in the higher price range, so they know they will get professional treatment and that's it. Now the therapists actually enjoy visiting customers' homes."

At 1,500 baht an hour, plus travel expenses of 500-1,000 baht, the massages are not cheap, but George says that because the company does not have to pay the overheads of running a spa, cus-



HOMEWARD BOUND: (Above, from left) Suntory "Noy" Songrak, her husband George della Pietra and assistant "Mick"; (left) K. Noy with the team of masseuses.

tomers pay half what they would for the same standard of treatment in an upmarket spa.

George, however, is aware that the cost may deter some Phuket residents – which is why the company is based in Cherng Talay, where it is surrounded by higher-end properties.

The company offers just five types of massage – Thai, oil, sports, Lomi and Yin and Yang (which involves two therapists at once) – but George prides himself on providing these massages well, especially as he has hand-picked the half-dozen masseuses currently on the company's books.

Good masseuses, says George, are born, not made. "It's a gift", he says, and although the company only chooses "gifted" masseuses with considerable ex-

perience, they are still given additional training before being sent out to customers.

The response from customers has so far been "excellent", according to George, so much so that he and K. Noy are considering expanding the concept beyond Phuket, perhaps to Samui. George is sure he will find a market there, too.

He said, "There are people who would like to have a spa experience, but they don't want to have to go out of their way for it."

"Now we bring the spa right into their homes."

Phuket Home Massage, Moo 1, 310/3 Soi Pattana 2, Cherng Talay, Talang. Tel: 01-9561901 or 076-270027. Email: reservations@phukethomemassage.com

NOTICE

Sumanta Bhattacharya, principal of KSI International, wishes to point out that the Phuketnia shop in Kathu (see *Gazette* issue of June 18), is a joint venture between his company and Lotus Crystal Co, in association with NV Aranyik Co, SKI Ceramic Co and other design companies in Thailand.

WARNING: SELLING ALCOHOL TO PERSONS UNDER 18 YEARS OLD IS ILLEGAL

*When the taste is perfect,
it can be the start of a friendship.*



Research sheds light on dengue spread

A recent study by a research team at Chulalongkorn University has shown that dengue-carrying mosquitoes – once thought to bite only at night – have evolved to feed in the daytime.

One theory for the mosquitoes' new behavior is that because people work during the day, the mosquitoes had been forced to change their habits. The study also found that infected male mosquitoes, once thought to have no role in the spread of dengue, pass it on to all the females they mate with.

The researchers also observed that one mosquito can harbor more than one strain of the virus, possibly explaining the severe symptoms observed in the current outbreak.

In denial: Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra distanced himself from the closure of two websites critical of him and his government.

PM Thaksin said he knew nothing about the shutdowns, ordered by the Information and Communications Technology Ministry.

The Thai premier said he was aware that the sites had both been campaigning against him, but said he was unable to say who had ordered them shut down, telling reporters to direct their queries to the ministry involved.

PM Thaksin also said he had never seen the websites. "I visit only websites with useful content that can provide me with knowledge I need, such as Google," he said.

Prying professor: Pongsak Wiwatthanadech, science lecturer at Bangkok's prestigious Chulalongkorn University, was arrested and accused of prying open public phones to steal coins.



WRONG TURN: Thailand's biggest drug haul in decades is shown at a Highway Police press conference. The three men pictured confessed to transporting 230 kilograms of heroin and 148kg of "ice" (crystallized methamphetamine) from Udon Thani to Bangkok.

The trio were stopped at a highway checkpoint in Saraburi, where police refused a bribe of 2,000 baht, choosing instead to search their two vehicles. The street value of the drugs uncovered could be as much as US\$1 billion in Europe and the US, their intended markets, police said.

Acting on complaints that telephones near Bangkok's Victory Monument had been frequently vandalized, police caught the suspect during a surveillance operation as he allegedly wrenched open a public phone with a sharp metal object.

K. Pongsak, 49, told police he had just wanted to retrieve his coin after the phone had swallowed it before he could place a call. The two metal bars he carried were for his research in mechanics, he claimed.

Police said that a year ago K. Pongsak had been a suspect in a similar case, but escaped being charged due to lack of evidence. An informed source said K. Pongsak successfully sued police for millions of baht in compensation after his acquittal.

Religious rights: About 100 monks and 500 lay followers gathered outside Parliament to demand constitutional amendments that would pronounce Buddhism to be Thailand's official religion.

Members of the Center for the Protection of Buddhism of

Thailand submitted a list of demands to Senate Speaker Suchon Chaleekrua, who promised to present the demands before the upper house.

The organization's Secretary General, Phra Thepwisut Kavee, said his group had gathered 330,000 signatures calling

for 11 amendments to the Constitution. The primary demand was to amend Article 73, which forbids granting privileged status to any religion.

The agony and the ecstasy:

An undercover policeman disguised as a male prostitute spearheaded a sting operation in which out-of-work actor Malit Cheuy-sopol, 35, was arrested for possessing three and a half Ecstasy pills.

The once-popular K. Malit reportedly told police he turned to drugs last year because he no longer had acting work and suffered from the stress of meeting his expenses. He bought the pills from a friend for 800 baht a tablet, he said.

"When I'm high for three to four hours, I forget all my worries," he said. "I'm sorry I have let my fans down. If I can get through this, I'll never touch drugs again."

The actor faces a charge of possession of narcotics and possibly a charge of selling drugs, which is punishable by a five-year jail sentence, due to his act of sharing the pill with the officer.

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

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The owners of these vehicles can choose from dinner for two at Leelawadee Restaurant at the Pacific International Phuket - Resort & Spa, or a two-night stay for two in a deluxe double room (accommodation only) at the Absolute Sea Pearl Beach Resort in Patong, or three computer books from Woody Leonhard: Microsoft Office 2003, Office 2003 for Dummies & Windows XP for Dummies.

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Slowly but surely does it in Khao Lak

Almost half a year – at the time of writing – after the tsunami, the timing seemed right for several official and unofficial organizations in Phang Nga Province to hold meetings enabling organization members and donors alike to review recovery progress and to streamline future projects in the Khao Lak area.

A meeting of the Thai Tsunami Recovery Group, better known as “Thai Together”, at the Khao Lak Merlin Hotel on June 2 dealt with mapping, needs assessment, camp management problems and mental health counseling.

On June 11 the Phang Nga Tourist Association held a meeting, which was attended by most of Khao Lak’s resort owners and other businesspeople.

The meeting aimed to discover more effective ways of local cooperation. It was determined that potentially as many as

1,200 beach-front resort rooms alone could be operating by November this year.

One might think that this number, plus the many guest house and resort rooms located distant from the beach, would be more than enough to reassure the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) that it would be acceptable to start promoting

Khao Lak again.

In fact, quite the opposite is happening.

The TAT official website no longer features Khao Lak as a destination anymore.

Many Khao Lak businesspeople are outraged by this omission.

While Nang Thong Beach was lagging behind in the reconstruction and cleanup process in early June, these days the area is catching up fast.

With a lot of green also generated by the monsoon rain, Khao Lak will most likely be a colorful and tropical paradise again by the end of the year.

Almost all of the car wrecks have been removed and repair work is underway all along the southern half of the beach.

Reconstruction efforts at Bang Niang Beach are also progressing, with the first beach bungalow completed and the first private villa is nearly finished. The new concrete roads are 50% complete. As yet, though, there is no electricity available in north-western Bang Niang.

The southwest monsoon has brought back tons of lost sand to the beaches of Khao Lak. With a lot of green also generated by the monsoon rain, Khao Lak will most likely be a colorful and tropical paradise again by the end of the year.

In a move that must reassure tourists, the construction of a tsunami warning station near Bang Niang Beach is underway. A 14-meter-tall tsunami watchtower has been erected east

of Petchkasem Rd, near the temple on the way to Chongfah waterfall.



ANDAMAN COASTING
By Franky Gun



The reassuring tsunami watchtower at Bang Niang Beach.

Equipped with loudspeakers and binoculars, the tower is believed to be an efficient tool to warn against possible future disasters.

Another loss: The recent loss of a dive boat in heavy seas, result-

ing in the death of one passenger, should serve as a wake-up call to those in the marine industries.

But given that many other boat accidents have happened in the past, it seems likely that any lessons learned will be ignored.

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This week



BALKAN BENEFACTORS: Zvonko Volaj (in gray suit), the Slovenian Honorary Consul General to Thailand, poses with children at Baan Kalim School on June 20 after presenting school equipment from the people of Slovenia.



HAPPY TO BE HOME: Sia Leng Yuen (front, left), CEO and Chairman of the Blue Canyon Country Club (BCCC), congratulates Yoo Sobse Sermjit (right), 71, for being the first of 13 villagers from Nai Rai, in Phang Nga, to have their houses replaced by the BCCC's Crisis Relief Effort aid project. Alexander von Sengbush (rear, left), and Lothar Mezger look on.



HOMELY HANDOVER: Liz (front, in blue top) and Peter Kirkwood (front, in white polo shirt), from The Shawnee Institute, hand over to Namthip Thonghom (front, 4th from right) the first completed house of 14 to be built for Kamala villagers who lost their homes in the tsunami. Pattarin Thamrongkiatikul (front, 5th from left), of The Shawnee Institute (Thailand), joins them.



FILM AFFAIR: (from right) Andreas List, Charg   d'Affaires of the European Commission delegation to Thailand; SFX Cinema City Department Managing Director Suvannee Chinchiewchan, Phuket Vice-Governor Winai Buapradit and *Phuket Gazette* Managing Editor Alasdair Forbes toast the recent opening of the European Film Festival at the SFX Coliseum Cinema at Central Festival Phuket.



SOMETHING BORROWED, SOMETHING TRUE BLUE: Australian newlyweds Peter Walker and Julie White exchange vows at their recent wedding at Le Royal Meridien Phuket Yacht Club.



WAI, THANK YOU: Some 200 students from Baan Kalim School wai in thanks for the day of activities put on for them on World Children's Day at Club Med in Kata on June 22.


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Tanarat Kitayakarn checked into this world 35 years ago, weighing a hefty five kilos, after staying in his mother's womb, he says, for 11 months and 25 days. Both his parents are large and many people believed that his mum was carrying twins.

He had a lucky start in life as his parents sent him to an English-speaking kindergarten. At school, his teachers would affectionately call him "Nong Man" or "Chubby" because of his size.

When he was younger, he resented the stares and curious glances of people in the street but

HEY MR DJ!

now, with maturity, he says he feels more comfortable with himself.

He studied at Somapanusorn School until he was 11 before going on to study at the all-boys Sethabutrumpen School, located in Minburi. He says he's still in touch with his teachers from those days.

When he was 15, he discovered the artistic side of his character and went to study metalwork, silk screen coloring and batik at Minburi Technical College.

"I wanted to use my brain rather than my hands and my friends were just the opposite so I would do the brainwork and my friends would help me out in the practical side of projects." At the college he was leader of the cheerleaders' club and assistant in the Buddhist Society.

After graduating he considered studying at Ramkhamhaeng University but decided to stay on at Minburi to gain a higher vocational certificate.

He said, "At first I was not very competitive but in my college there was a speech contest and I decided to have a go. My friends told me I wouldn't make the grade but I ended up winning it. After that I competed in many contests and my friends, in a complete turnaround, even encouraged me to enter a singing competition."

Going from strength to strength, K. Tanarat won the National QC Presentation Contest, Semathong Targets 2 and 5, the Arsapattana Camp Presentation and, before graduation, he and his colleagues appeared on TV's *Tam bai doo* (Go and look), demonstrating an electronic cane for the blind that they had invented.

One day, a teacher took K. Tanarat and his friends to TV's Channel 9 studios to watch a recording of the *TV Watee* debate program.

K. Tanarat noticed a young lady wearing headphones. He was told that she was the creative director of the program, freshly graduated in mass communications. His curiosity was piqued.

He explained, "After I finished college, during post-training, Ajarn Sri Sombatsiriroj took me along to meet *TV Watee*'s Ajarn Jatupon Chompoonit who is well known as a good presenter. 'He wants to be a speaker like you,' Ajarn Sri told him. Ajarn Jatupon replied, 'Concentrate, and one day you will be.'"

K. Tanarat continued, "I earned a free scholarship with JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) to study Industrial Science at the Patumwan Institute of Technology. There, I was Vice-President of the Students' Society and President of the Public Speaking Club.

You've probably seen local radio jock Tanarat Kitayakarn about town. The DJ's a big lad, weighing in at an impressive 188 kilos, so he's hard to miss. But if you haven't seen him, don't worry, you can catch his warm and witty patter everyday from 10:30 am to 1 pm on FM 89 "Power Zone".

The *Gazette*'s Ananya Hongsa-ngiam went along to chat with K. Tanarat and to hear the story of his life so far.



When he was young, DJ Tanarat Kitayakarn resented the stares he drew because of his size. Now, he says, with maturity has come a feeling of comfort with who he is.

"One day, a letter arrived from TV's Pasorn Production Co, signed by Kannika Thammakesorn, inviting me to compete in their Public Speaking contest. First prize was an invitation to be a television presenter at Pasorn.

"So I went through many heats and got to the final and eventually won it. I decided to take a job in Pasorn's information and activities department, occasionally speaking on the TV

Watee Udom Suksa program.

"I worked there for two years and was creative director for the *Toh Karom Mathayom Suksa* program. The program won the Mekala Award and the "Best Program" prize from the National Youth Bureau.

"Then I entered the music scene. I had had previous experience in drama, so I played a role in the music video of Anan Anwa's *Ding Dong Song*. I was also in Ko Khai's *Kong Kin Roy*

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LARGER THAN LIFE



'I feel I can overcome challenges as I have done so in the past. They make you stronger in the long run.'

Roy video as well as presenting *Sam Niang Siang Thai* (Thai Voices) on Channel 7, which is presently enjoying a rerun.

"Other jobs included *Ka Rom Kom Kid* on Channel 5, *Talk*

Zone Cinerama on Channel 5, and *Sod Sai Wai Khaeng Raeng* on Channel 11, for which I composed the theme song.

"I was a volunteer for a while at the Froebel Children's

Friends Center, an institute for Thai-German children. There, we formed The Kindergarten Band and recorded with Tempo Records. We sold many cassettes, almost as many as Thongchai

"Bird" McIntyre. I still get royalties from those songs.

"Up until then I had been living at home but then I moved to KM Marketing in Chiang Mai as General Manager. I was living in the San Sai district, a very beautiful place.

The people there called me "Ai Tui" which is northern vernacular for "Chubby Elder Brother". I learned many things from the villagers who were very friendly and we used to eat golden apple snails or *hoi cherry*. Delicious, even though the villagers regarded them as a pest as they damaged the rice crop.

"After that I went back to Bangkok and worked in public relations at the International Education Quality of Thailand Institute for 4 years."

One day he was invited to Phuket to act as MC in a speech contest on Channel 11. While he was here he learned that Action Radio was looking for a General Manager.

"I decided to take the job but that meant dropping all my Bangkok projects. My old boss in Bangkok is still waiting for me to go back! In Phuket I worked as Marketing Manager at Mae Ju

Local Products and composed a song for them. After that, Narong Pronjitta and I formed BMS Events Company. We've been going for 4 years."

"I am very thankful to the Pro Add Company, the mother company of 89 Power Zone and to Nantina Kaewchaiyo and Teerawut Kaewchaiyo who gave me this job.

"Because of my weight I suffer from fatigue more than other people and this is a challenge but I feel I can overcome challenges as I have done so in the past. They make you stronger in the long run.

"Dr Niran Taweekool, a close friend, recently asked me when I would like to lose weight, but I am who I am. People recognize me like this but the health aspect is one part of my life that I'll have to face up to. I can find clothes my size in Bangkok and Pattaya and my friends bring me T-shirts from abroad but I have to have my pants tailored."

And the future? K. Tanarat smiled, and said, "I would like to settle down in Phuket and I'm still waiting for that special someone who understands and accepts me as I am."

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Art and Gift Gallery, in the Laguna complex's Canal Village Shopping Center, features a large selection of eye-catching hand-painted items, ranging from umbrellas, vases and wall hangings, through to candles, tissue boxes and golf bags, and much more.

Gallery owner Umavadee Suramanont, says that she loves handicrafts so much she decided to create some herself.

"The gift and souvenir items I offer are perfect for people bored with the usual things sold in department stores. Customers can even

order their own designs; personalized gifts are always very popular.

"I order the unpainted materials from a supplier in Bangkok and then decorate them here. The ones I most enjoy painting also sell well – flowers, marine life, and symbols of Phuket," she added.

Items with corporate logos on them can also be custom-ordered.

The cost of decorated tissue boxes ranges from 350 to 1,500 baht, key racks cost from 450 to 990 baht, and painted doorknobs are 200 to 300 baht, depending on the design.

The Art and Gift Gallery is open daily from 10 am to 8 pm. For further information, call K. Umavadee at Tel: 076-270616.

Anticlockwise from left: This towel ring makes an attractive addition to the bathroom; strictly for the birds, who will appreciate the natural motif, no doubt; Firm but polite way to deal with pesky door-steppers without even meeting them; No more fishing around for missing keys.



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Loving life at the helm

One of the most beautiful superyachts seen in Phuket waters over the past few years is *Yanneke Too*. Her dark blue hull and white superstructure can often be seen anchored off Patong Beach or one of the other bays along Phuket's west coast. Here, Adam Frost talks to Charlie Dwyer from Newport, Rhode Island, in the US, who is the captain of *Yanneke Too*.

Adam Frost: What is the background of *Yanneke Too*?

Charlie Dwyer: She was built by Camper & Nicholson in Britain. Construction started in 1993 and she was launched in 1995. Her length is 117 feet (35.2 meters). *Yanneke Too* is a Bill Dixon design and won the Superyacht of the Year award in 1995 from *ShowBoats International* magazine. She is worth more than US\$10 million (400 million baht).

AF: How long have you been captain and where did you join?

CD: I have been a captain of maxis and superyachts since 1987. Before that I was doing the America's Cup. I have been the captain of *Yanneke Too* for 12 years and joined the boat in the UK during her construction.

AF: So what is the difference between your America's Cup time and now being a superyacht captain, is there any comparison?

CD: The America's Cup gave me a great insight to the technical side of racing and performance. It enhanced my knowledge and enabled me to understand the intricacies of yachting.

The difference between the two jobs is like night and day, but my America's Cup days defi-

nately acted as a springboard for me to get into superyachting.

AF: What is the most challenging part of your job?

CD: Every aspect of running a superyacht boils down to organization. Selecting the proper crew to achieve the goals of the owner is the biggest issue for me.

It is imperative that I understand what the owner wants. I have to know him personally to see how he ticks. He is on board *Yanneke Too* eight weeks a year, so there are no excuses for not providing him with anything but the best.

AF: What are some of the highlights of your time as captain of *Yanneke Too*?

CD: Sailing up the Irrawaddy River in Myanmar stands out as being pretty special. Seeing the pagodas along the riverbanks at sunrise was magical. It was so different from anywhere else we had been and gave a general feeling of exotic enchantment.

Sailing in Alaska was also breathtaking. Seeing wildlife such as black bears, killer whales and



Yanneke Too (above), looking magnificent under sail, won Superyacht of the Year award in 1995. Charlie Dwyer (left) has spent the past 12 years as her captain.

tacked by pirates during your circumnavigations?

CD: Yes, We had an attempted boarding on my birthday while traveling in the Red Sea. It happened just off the coast of Djibouti, which is a pirate hotspot.

We were traveling in a convoy of seven other superyachts and had a naval escort for security, but still the pirates had the nerve to attack us. There were two boatloads of them, with six armed men in each.

We were fully armed, but I managed to outrun them by pushing to full throttle, so they were not able to get close enough to board. Luckily, they didn't open fire on us.

AF: How about your time on board *Yanneke Too* in the Mediterranean: was that a good experience?

CD: We raced in the classic Nioulargue Regatta a couple of times, which was great fun. We have also cruised the Amalfi Coast in Italy. Berthing at the Porto Cervo Yacht Club [in Sardinia] was special.

This is the most prestigious and exclusive yacht club in the world. A berth in the marina there costs about US\$1,000 [40,000

baht] a night. We have also called at Capri, Antibes and Monaco, but Porto Cervo is my favorite.

AF: And for your next adventure?

CD: Borneo – The boss will be flying in to Brunei, and from there we will cruise to Kudat in Sabah. We will be cruising in that area for a month.

I have arranged for the boss to fly by helicopter to see orangutans and proboscis monkeys in the jungle.

I have also arranged for him to visit the 'Lost World'. This is a place that takes five to seven days to reach overland, but he will be flying in by helicopter. In fact we have two helicopters, one for the boss and his guests, and the other for the guide and catering team.

They will be having a gourmet lunch on white linen tablecloths, right next to a large waterfall in the middle of the jungle. After that he will fly to a five-star resort for a night at a place called Sandakan.

Adam Frost is the Managing Director of Seal Superyachts Co. Ltd. Website: www.seal-superyachts-asia.com

Superyacht WATCH

By Adam Frost

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Kicking back with the Kiwis

New Zealand is famed for its wide open landscapes and relatively small population. So the premier city of North Island, with just over one million residents spread around the shores of its two harbors, is quite a contrast to the rest of the country.

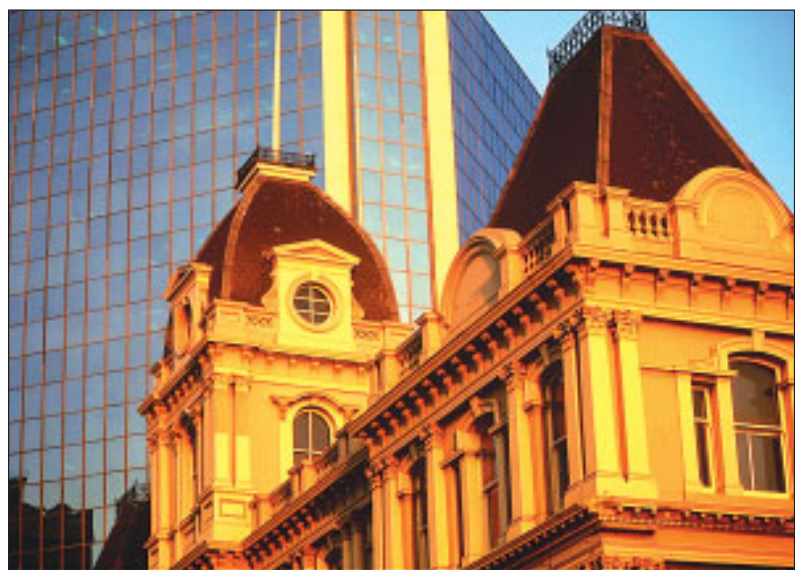
But "city" hardly seems the right description for Auckland – known to the indigenous Maori as *Tamaki Makaurau* – with its open spaces and broad, uncrowded streets. There is none of the mean hustle and bustle that characterizes other metropolises.

Kiwis, as New Zealanders call themselves (after the indigenous bird which is their national symbol), are chatty and helpful, proud of their country and eager to show off its best assets. It is worth making the most of this generous hospitality.

The place to start a tour of the city is the Auckland Domain, an 75-hectare public park east of downtown and home to the War Memorial Museum. The museum has a large display of Maori artifacts and the guided tour of the exhibits, including a short musical performance, is a unique experience.

A harbor cruise is the second "must do" in Auckland, also known as the "City of Sails". Outlying islands such as Waiheke and Rangitoto are well worth an excursion, but a simple day-long jaunt on the tug *William C Daldy* is just as enchanting. Several harbor cruises set sail after dusk, and

Colonial buildings of yesteryear stand alongside modern towers of glass and steel throughout the city.



Auckland (left), with its million or so residents, is hardly a bustling metropolis, yet cosmopolitan touches such as street art (above) set it apart from the rest of New Zealand.



the *MV Kestrel's* nightly voyage has a place in city folklore.

On weekends, much of Auckland takes to the water and the armada of small boats across the water is a thrilling sight.

Daredevils will be pleased to learn there are plenty of opportunity to expend some adrenaline here, whether by base jumping off Sky Tower, bungy jumping from Harbour Bridge or trying some straightforward skydiving at Mercer Airfield – about an hour's drive away.



Kiwis excel at many sports, but also manage to maintain the ability to kick back and relax when they feel like it.

Auckland's nightlife dispenses with pretension in the quest for sheer fun. Most of the bars and discos are within walking distance of the city center, and there is the added bonus of live music in many of the venues.

The Shakespeare Brewery on Albert Street holds poetry readings while the Gables Tav-

ern on Jervois Rd is the spot for jazz.

Auckland is not a shopper's paradise of designer label malls

by any stretch of the imagination, but there are plenty of good Kiwi souvenirs, such as All Blacks rugby shirts, available in the boutiques on Queen Street. With so many sheep (100 million and counting) in NZ, wool products are an excellent buy. The weekend flea markets at Otara and Waitemata are fun for browsing and picking up curios.

When it comes to cuisine, there's a lot of choice so people on a budget won't be forced to head for international fast food chains. Tempt your taste buds in the food court at the bottom of BNZ Tower on Queen Street. There, counters serve up Turkish, Chinese or Italian fare, simple and fish 'n' chips or New Zealand roast specialities at very reasonable prices.

In the Viaduct Basin, the restaurants are more expensive, but like anywhere else in the world, you pay a bit more for a spectacular view.

TALES OF A TRAVELER

By Ed Peters

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Patong's allure persists on the Web

Phuket "is an island with various features," a world-weary globetrotter at virtualtourist.com/travel/asia/thailand wisely notes.

The website is a fount of information about Phuket. Contributor Shane points out, "Phuket island is also a land of hills. There are many hills in Phuket. Every route to Patong Beach has to pass hilly roads. These roads can be dangerous for those who are not used to driving hilly roads."

Nellie9 advises on Patong nightlife. "When u 1 2 go 4 a short shopping in Patong, do not bring too much cash ... perhaps jus sufficient 4 drinks n food, cos u never noe who will come up n force u 2 take pic with them (n u will nvr think dat its 4 free), n hv 2 pay them, they wont let u leave until they sees u EMPTIED ur pockets..."

Here is our pal Shane again, getting his chronological knickers in a twist. "If you are driving from Nai Harn to Kata Noi, you will most probably pass this viewpoint. The best time to visit this place is in the morning about 5 pm and in the evening [at] 5.30 pm. These timings are the best for those who likes to watch sunrise and sunset."

Driving force: This would not be

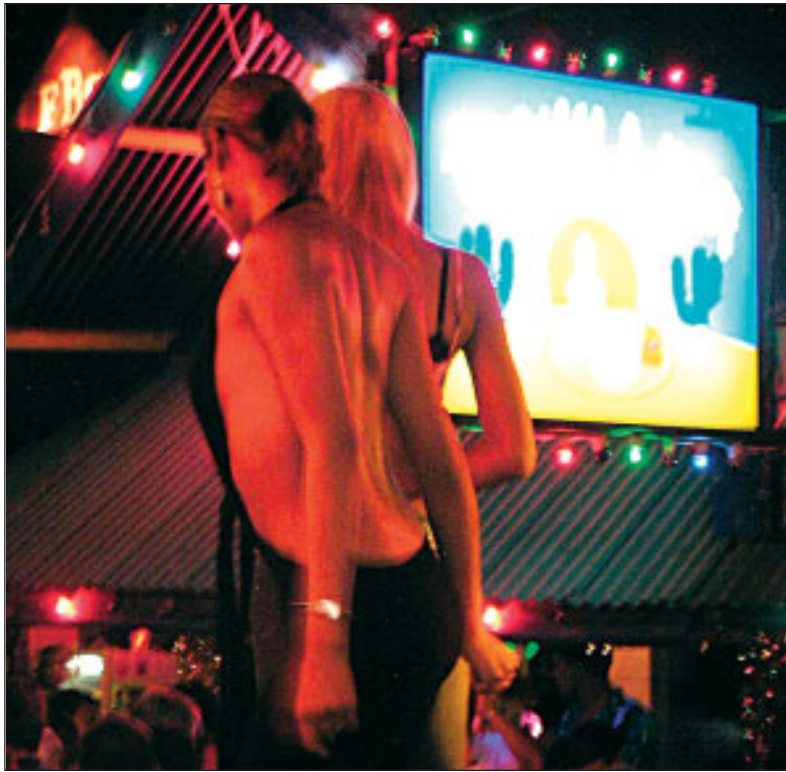
OUTSIDE IN

By Lis Kinswoman

an Outside In if we didn't mention Phuket's exotic driving habits, and who better than the witty Bob at bobharris.com/content/view/275/5 to put things into perspective?

"In Singapore, jaywalking is unthinkable: pedestrians have wide sidewalks and clear rights of way, while in Kuala Lumpur, jaywalking is a useful urban skill: pedestrians regard a BMW in the shins as a minor nuisance, nothing more. But [in Phuket], jaywalking is a sign that somebody didn't love you enough, and it's time to end it all: pedestrians are hunted and killed as large game. Right this very minute, I half-expect a car to come careening through the window of this Internet café, killing me in mid-sentence. The driver, however would be really friendly about it to my family."

Cutting remarks: The website stickmanbangkok.com is informative and frank, with some gems that shine in the cyberdark. "I went into a Patong tailor shop



"See the pretty dancers twinkling on their toes..."

and asked the guy to spend an hour measuring me up, then make a suit for someone 6 inches taller with one arm shorter than the other, with a thick trunk and tiny spindly arms. He said 'I can't do that!' I said 'Why not? You did last time.'"

Lost in translation: Does this sound familiar? Taken from a vis-

iting student's travel log at eng.uwaterloo.ca/: "Where is ***?" "Closed. Today no open." "Yes, we know it's closed, but can you still tell us where it is?" "No, closed. All closed."

"Yes, we know it's closed, but where is it?" "Closed." (Makes hand motion that everything is closed). "Yes, we know, we don't want to go in there, just

meet some friends there. Where is it? We just want to take a picture of the outside." (Makes hand motion for taking photos). "Closed, no one there."

Patong again: Travelogs on the net are revealing, and the main litmus test of a travelogue is when the writer "discovers" Patong. The general rule is that the writer either collapses laughing or waxes moralistic at the sight of Soi Bangla.

At traveljournals.net/stories/6283 a young Singaporean turns over a stone and what does he see? "Nothing prepared me for the circus that is Patong. It's the main beach strip in Phuket and everything is geared to the tourist. Streets are all lit up with neon lights at night. Any shop that isn't selling t-shirts/fake watches/elephant carvings is a restaurant or [girlie] bar."

That's one of the politer reactions to Toon Town. Some of the others are unprintable.

The writer at idlanzakaria.com/khalilur is assailed by his muse once he claps his eyes on Soi Bangla's finest:

"See the pretty dancers twinkling on their toes
Are they men or women?
the answer, nobody knows."

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KIDS

THE FUN PAGE

FOR ALL

THE FAMILY

Hidden Words

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

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

Brain Buster!!

Decipher the following to get a description of a “superior” person

k k
c c
u u
t t
s s

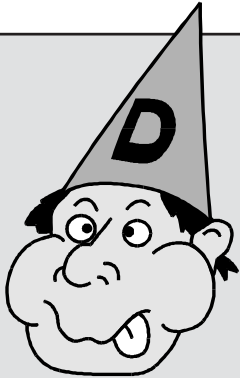
word word word word

A: Too stuck up for words.

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S MONSTER QUIZ

1. Turkey; 2. Bacardi; 3. Lily; 4. Blue; 5. Robert Maxwell; 6. On an Elephant; 7. 1971; 8. Two; 9. 7-UP; 10. Starbucks; 11. Draco; 12. Sir Wilhelm Friedrich Herschel on February 15, 1786; 13. Jan Eliasson; 14. Eric Carle; 15. Matsuura Aya; 16. National Cat-fish Day; 17. Burr Point, County Down; 18. Dr Carol Rosin, in 2001; 19. Arthur C Clarke; 20. Northern Africa.

Get your brain in gear with The Monster Quiz



Kids! Ask Mum and Dad to help you find the answers to these questions. They’re not easy but, if you do some research, you should be able to find the answers to all of them.

1. Who, on July 2, 1982, attached 45 helium-filled balloons to a lawnchair and soared 4,876 meters skyward?

2. Who was the first woman to feature on a US Treasury coin, and when?

3. Who recently set a new record of 9.77 seconds for the 100m sprint?

4. In the Mayan language, what is *pop*?

5. Giggles, Lifty & Shifty, and Cro-Marmot are characters from which animated series?

6. In the entertainment business, what are F4, G4, 112 and 5566?
7. Which date is the middle day of a non-leap year?

8. In the US, the John Newbery Medal is awarded for what?

9. Who was the 2005 recipient of the Newbery Medal?

10. What is an arquebus?

11. In which palace would you find the Hall of Mirrors?

12. What is the correct term for a fleshy fruit with a stone?

13. Where does the perfume ingredient ambergris come from?

14. Which country has an Inca name meaning “cold winter”?
15. In the fashion label DKNY, what do the letters stand for?

16. Nicholas Breakspear was the first and only British what?

17. In old days, what did a nob thatcher do for a living?

18. Which book opens with the following words: “It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen.”?

19. Which city has the largest population in the world?

20. What do Botswana, Chad, Ethiopia, Switzerland and the Vatican City have in common?
- Answers next week

Never a Cross Word!

ACROSS

1. Frosted.

7. Copied.

8. Clenched hand.

9. Photography machine.

11. Hindu god of preservation.

12. Emergency room, in brief.

13. Arts degree.

15. Haitian black magic.

17. Easternmost region of France.

18. Recorded onstage, not in a studio.

19. Egg dish.

20. Time before nightfall.

DOWN

2. Law-breaking.

3. Get rid of.

4. Goes around.

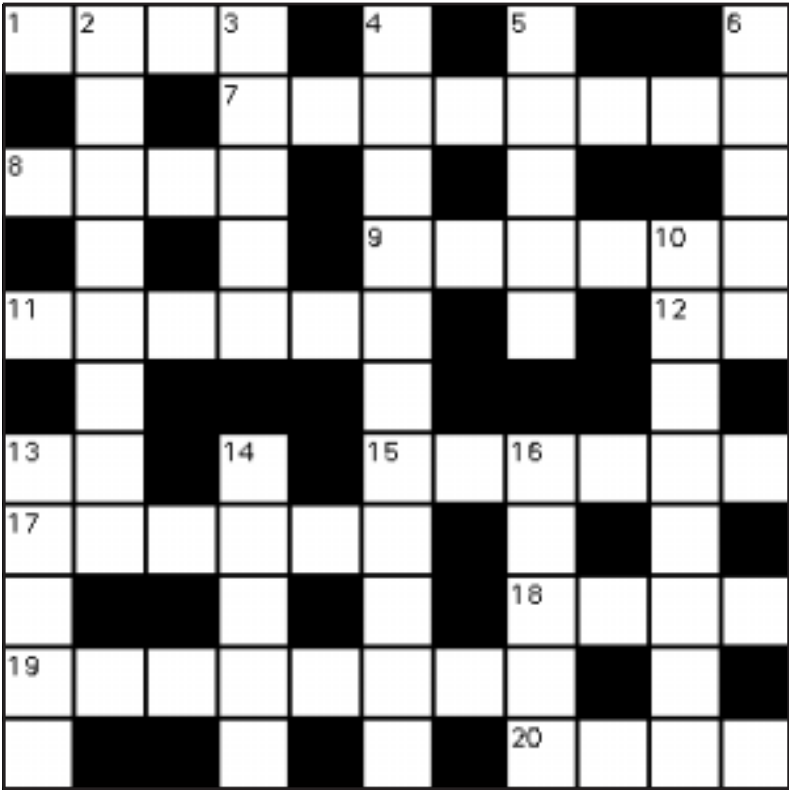
5. Damages or hurts.

6. ***** Allan Poe.
10. Goes round.

13. Pig meat.

14. Drops.

16. Leered at.



Solution to last week's crossword



Solution next week



In The Stars

by Isla Star

CANCER (June 22-July 23): Luck will come your way if your birthday is this week. A money-making scheme that was hard to get off the ground last month flourishes under auspicious astral conditions. You may find it hard to keep up with everything that's going on in your life right now, so eat plenty of fruit and get some early nights to boost energy levels. The number 8 is lucky this weekend.

LEO (July 24-August 22): Spice up your life by going to new places and meeting different people. If you have been stuck in a rut recently, you must make an effort to climb out of it. With a little help from your friends, this can easily be achieved. Your performance at work impresses those in high places and promotion lies ahead. Don't be afraid to ask for an appropriate raise when this happens.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): You are probably on tenterhooks at the moment about a business proposal. If you're not comfortable with these plans, suggest adjustments to suit your ideas. Changes are in the air this month in other areas of your life, too. A domestic situation that has been causing unrest will demand attention. Aries has the perfect answer to this problem.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): This week things fall into place for you, as if by magic. You will find something that was lost; possibly a good-luck charm. Tentative job offers should be kept on hold until more concrete proposals are forthcoming, but you should be in the enviable position of having choices. If you're not keen to change your present employment, there's really no reason to do so. The number 4 is lucky on Tuesday.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): If the carousel of life is turning too slowly for your liking, there's the chance to speed things up early next week – if you are prepared to take control.

WHAT THE WEEK HAS IN STORE

Choose your words carefully on Monday when a sensitive colleague could be upset by something you say. On the home front, junior family members give cause for concern this weekend; pay serious attention to these problems now.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): You are quick off the mark next week, while others are still hesitating at the starting post. If sensible, you will take this advantage to get ahead in business this month. July promises to be fairly hectic, and you will need to keep up with the pace. New romance threatens to interfere with your working life; keep things in perspective. Aquarius is about to come up with an interesting proposal.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): If you're tired of navigating rocky ledges, it's time to accept that taking the most challenging path up the mountain may be more trouble than it's worth. Admit that you've bitten off more than you can chew and an easier option will emerge this week. Your heart of gold is appreciated on Sunday; Pisces is particularly grateful. The color royal blue gives confidence.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): A dark mood may cause you to be pricklier than a durian this weekend. Rather than upsetting others, you should go into temporary hibernation and seek the cause of these negative feelings. It appears that a personal problem is not as bad as you might think; communication is

the key to finding a solution. Next Wednesday, your heart beats faster when sensual sparks fly at an impromptu meeting.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): You are advised to resist the temptation to bury your head in the sand this week. Motivation is at low ebb, but much can be achieved by making some effort. Business matters are best attended to on Tuesday when colleagues are open to your ideas for improvement. Regarding romance, approaches made before the middle of the month will fall on deaf ears.

ARIES (March 21-April 20): The outlook is mostly fine this week. However, your thoughts regarding a personal relationship are likely to be clouded by others' opinions. While it's worth listening, you shouldn't make a final decision without considering what you really want from this situation. At work, a problem is unearthed on Wednesday that could require doing overtime without compensation. If you want to get ahead, go with the flow.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): If you have been feeling neglected lately, then you will be delighted by attention received this weekend. Somebody will shower you with compliments, with no ulterior motives lurking in the undergrowth. July promises to be a time when a dream comes true. If you've been feeling snowed under by work, find a way to offload some of the responsibility.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): If you endured a hard time last month, then you can look forward to the focus being on fun in July. This week, the stars are smiling on any attempts you make to improve your lot in life. An acquaintance can open doors to taking up a hobby that will lead you to a whole new circle of friends. Thursday is a particularly promising day to remind someone of an unpaid debt.

Huge boost for

The World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA), has announced a long-term aid program in the tsunami-affected regions of Asia.

Phuket itself will benefit from a massive aid injection over the next two years; WSPA sees Phuket as a potential model of how a stray animal population can be effectively controlled.

Maj Gen Peter Davies, the organization's Director General, said, "We have a real opportunity to raise the standard of animal welfare above what it was before the tsunami struck."

"WSPA is putting projects into place that will provide sterilization and vaccination programs for stray animals and take mobile animal clinics into areas where veterinary care is a rarity."

WSPA is undertaking a long-term approach aimed at supporting the work of its member societies and local organizations in the region.

The organization's work will be a combination of sustained practical aid and educational programmes, aimed at bringing new skills and knowledge to future generations of vets.

In addition, an emergency response team, established by the Thai Animal Guardians Association with WSPA backing, will attend to future emergency animal welfare problems as they arise throughout the region.

In Phuket, the work will be carried out by WSPA's two member societies here.

The Phuket Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) will run a mobile clinic, (currently under construction), that will travel predominantly throughout the western areas of the island.



MAKING TRACKS

By Top Dog

This will provide veterinary care to animals that would otherwise not receive it, and carry out spaying and neutering operations in the field.

Until the clinic is completed operations are being performed at the PAWS base on Kwang Rd.

The Soi Dog Foundation (SDF) has already opened a large spaying and neutering clinic in Phuket City on Amphur Rd, just south of the turning to Koh Sirei. The clinic is being fitted out to the highest standards, using the latest available equipment, such as gas anesthesia.

SDF will concentrate initially on the large population of stray animals in the Phuket City area, but will also continue to run its mobile clinics, predominantly in the eastern area of the island, as well as on islands off Phuket and in Phang Nga Province.

SDF has already sterilized more than 3,000 animals in the region since the beginning of the year.

Both PAWS' and SDF's projects are staffed entirely by Thai veterinarians and many local people have been employed and trained as assistants and dog catchers.

Margot Park, president of the Soi Dog Foundation, said, "WSPA's support will make a huge difference in helping us in five ways:

Nightjar: silent

My first encounter with a nightjar occurred in Southern Mexico. We were driving down a long dusty dirt road, near midnight, close to the border with Belize, on the Eastern edge of the continent.

Our headlights shone on a chubby, long-tailed bird sitting in a dusty indentation in the middle of the road. We pulled up alongside. I got out with my flashlight to have a look.

The nightjar allowed me to scoop it up in my hand. It had very soft plumage. I was worried that it might be injured, but two seconds later it flew away.

Its flight was totally silent, like an owl's. Since then I have seen nightjars a few times in Thailand, twice on Phuket, in the warm dry season, usually late February or March. None seemed very wary; they all let me get quite close, although none let me

touch them like that first bird did.

Nightjars belong to the family *Caprimulgidae*. They have soft mottled plumage, mainly brown, long tails and pointed wings. They are all nocturnal insect-eaters and, for this reason, have big eyes to help them spot insects on the wing and catch them with their small bills. There are 78 species found worldwide, six of them in Thailand.

Two species are found on Phuket—the Great-Eared Nightjar and the Large-Tailed. They are found from sea level up to 2,000 meters. The eared nightjars are sometimes classified in a separate family, the *Eurostopodidae*. The Great-Eared is one of these; its scientific name is *Eurostopodus macrootis*.

Nightjars are usually solitary – indeed, this is the only way I have ever seen them. However it is reported that groups have

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animal welfare



Soi Dog Foundation's dog-catching team, now aided by WSPA.

- Reducing drastically the huge numbers of unwanted dogs and cats in Phuket by mass sterilization.

- Relieving these animals' pain, suffering and neglect by large-scale vaccination as well as treatment of disease and injuries in local clinics.

- Easing their hunger with our feeding program, monitored by local Thais and expatriates.

- Educating the public in proper treatment of animals, the importance of de-sexing them, and the benefits of companion animals to people, communities and society at large.

- Encouraging and assisting local authorities to initiate humane animal control programs."

WSPA's origins go back more than 45 years. It is the

world's largest network of animal protection specialists, having a membership of over 550 animal protection societies in more than 120 countries with over 400,000 individual supporters.

The society is the only animal welfare organization to have consultative status at the United Nations and the Council of Europe.

It has 13 offices worldwide, and in a further show of confidence in Thailand, will shortly be opening its Asia headquarters in Bangkok.

For more information visit the following websites: www.wspa.org.uk; www.phuket.com/paws; and www.soidogfoundation.org, or call PAWS at Tel: 076-391944 or Soi Dogs at Tel: 09-8167853.

Another Thailand — the real one

With all the crummy novels abounding about Bangkok bargirls, Kristiaan

Inwood is a refreshing exception, celebrating through drawings and prose his simple rural life with his Thai wife and infant son.

He is that rare bird, a painter and a writer. Back in 1979, he published *Siamese Bestiary*, a meditation on his life in a traditional wooden house on the rustic outskirts of Bangkok. It has now been republished in Thailand with additional material (Orchid Press, Bangkok, 2005, 136pp).

With meticulous attention to detail, Inwood draws exquisite sketches of his house, his wife Anong, his infant son Hilary, and the bestiary that surrounded them: cats, dogs, rats, birds, snakes, ducks, fighting cocks, gibbons, gekkoes, tukkaes, turtles, frogs, snails, crabs, fish, spiders, butterflies, dragonflies, ants, millipedes, scorpions and cockroaches.

He sketches the tumble-down homes along a canal, a market woman paddling her *sampan* in a rainstorm, a tattooed neighbor and his fighting cock, a fortune teller with his paraphernalia, a wizened laborer cracking an egg into his breakfast *lao kao*...

His writing is just as luminous: prose poems, low comedy, personality profiles of his neighbors, whimsical reflections. He

tells us nothing about his past or his wife's, except that she is a farmer's daughter and speaks no English.

Inwood gets the idea for the book while waiting for his wife to come home from the hospital with their newborn son. At the hospital he found his wife looking radiant and his son "bright pink, screwing up his eyes against a bright outside world merely three mornings old. Take him into my arms and talk with Anong. As Anong

and self gabble happy nonsense about everything and nothing, Hilary urinates into my breast pocket. The book is baptized, blessed, fertilized, christened and launched.

"This is it."

Next comes a wonderful chapter of pratfall comedy. Anong has gone to register the birth at the local district office, leaving the author alone at home to cope with a screaming baby: "Coax, soothe, cradle, croon, desperately try to insert a milk bottle teat between his gaping jaws. No luck. Incredible screams. Fantastic lungs. Anyone passing outside would think I am trying to strangle him."

A sudden downpour drenches the house, rain sweeping in through all the open shutters, and Inwood rushes around madly slamming windows and doors. Everything is instantly soaked so Inwood dumps the kid in the driest part of the house: the kitchen sink. Which is where Anong finds him, initiating two pages of hilarious dialog.

Inwood suffers from a path-

ological fear of snakes. When Anong informs him that she has just killed two snakes in the kitchen, Inwood falls into panicked thoughts of countermeasures:

"Move into a tenth floor apartment. Buy a mongoose. Better, buy a dozen. Emigrate to Ireland. Or New Zealand. Advertise for a suit of armor. Walk on stilts ..."

On the subject of his neighborhood dogs, he writes:

"If the dogs share one characteristic, it must be that a disproportionate number are neurotic. Their standard diet — leftover rice, leftover vegetables, leftover meat scraps — and the incessant heat combines to weaken them and addle their brains ... Their neuroticism takes many

forms. For example, one particular dog, a black mongrel bitch, lovable and friendly, was indubitably the fittest, ablest, swiftest and cleverest cat I've ever seen."

Among the dog's feline talents are catching birds, rats and ... snakes:

"Too often would she approach strangers with the snake in her mouth, and mistaking their frenzied alarm for the start of a new game, pursue them pell-mell through the trees."

Beyond the ever-present comedy, Inwood captures quotidian events in prose poems of simple but stunning lyricism: returning home at night in the rain, a morning walk with his son through the countryside, the daily rhythms of *klong* life.

The book ends with Anong pregnant again and the little family happy in their wooden house. If you're an expat who has lived happily in Thailand for a long time, give this book to a newcomer. It will explain why.



Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt



hunter of the dark

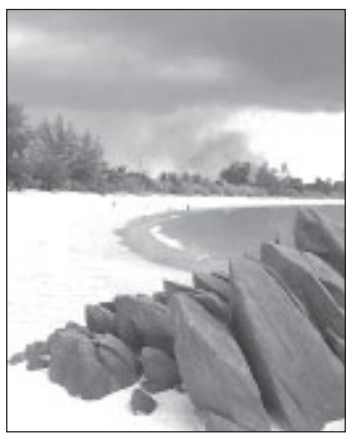
been observed feeding on insects around lights at night.

These birds lay their eggs directly on the ground; they do not build nests. They frequently roost on the ground during the day, favoring patches of dry leaves on the forest floor or bare ground. They may also roost stretched out along horizontal branches.

I have seen only the Large-Tailed, *Caprimulgus macrurus*, which is found throughout Thailand. It is a common resident, although many people have never seen one. Its feathers are a rich brown, streaked with black, and it has a rust-hued collar.

The male has distinctive white wing patches and large white corners on the tail. The female's wing and tail patches are buff-brown and not as distinct as the male's.

Their call is a loud "chonk", repeated at roughly one-second



EARTH WATCH

By Robert Cogen

intervals, often to be heard at dusk. Some of the hill tribes call them the Blacksmith Bird because of this call, and believe you can acquire smithing skills by dreaming about these nightjars.

It is possible that the Grey Nightjar, *Caprimulgus indicus*, visits Phuket in the winter. It prefers hilltops above 600 meters and is considerably darker and grayer than other nightjars, and lacks the rust-colored collar.

The males have white wing patches and white spots near the end of the outer pairs of tail feathers. The female has buff brown wing patches and dusky tail spots that are hard to see in the field.

Nightjars are not easy to see. They do not leave their perches until dusk. If you are lucky, you may see one flying in the last light before total darkness. Their flight is erratic as they chase bugs, and their skill in the air is breathtaking.

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

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Six months on: having a smashing time

In the couple of weeks leading up to June 26, the *Gazette* was the target of numerous calls from news services, TV channels and newspapers, all asking what was happening to mark the first six months from the tsunami (some referred to it as "the six-month anniversary").

The answer was, basically, "Nothing's happening. Six months has no cultural significance. Come back in another six months for the real anniversary."

Sadly, this did not deter media around the world from revisiting Phuket for the "six-month anniversary". It was a pretty shabby show, led by CNN, which lost no time and wasted no tears on presenting, yet again, footage of the waves smashing into the shore.

One shot showed breakers hitting the beach six months after the disaster, with a red flag fluttering in the foreground. "And still people are afraid of going into the water..." intoned the voice-over.

Please understand, CNN, apart from surfers, anyone with an ounce of brains stays out of the water at this time of year because it's dangerous. That's why we have the red flags: red for danger. And this is the case at this time of year, every year.

CNN Online has a special "Six months on" section on its website, which includes "Images of devastation". Thank you very much. It also has an "Eyewitness" section which features such regurgitated stories as, "Phuket paradise washed away" and "Survivors recount tsunami terror". Thank you again.

The website describes itself as "...among the world's leaders in news." Ladies and gentlemen of CNN, this is not news. It's history. And it's damaging us. Nowhere in the site could the *Gazette* find any article pointing out that the island is 25 kilometers wide, and the wave, at its worst, came in only some 300 meters.

Meanwhile, the BBC, that enduring bastion of accurate, fair reporting, presents on its website "Tsunami: Anatomy of a disaster. An account of the Asian tsunami disaster based on scientific research and survivors' stories." Good grief. Give it a rest, will you? Instead, how about a story headlined, "Six-month anniversary: Foreign media continue to blight chances of recovery."

Or, if that's too hard a pill to swallow, follow your grandma's advice: "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all."

We are dreaming, of course. What Phuket now has to do is prepare for the inevitable "tsunami" of images and stories of devastation and depression that will fill media on the first anniversary - right in the middle of the high season.

- The Editor

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Letters

The *Gazette* is pleased to receive mail from readers. Please write to us at 367/2 Yaowarat Rd, Amphur Muang, Phuket 83000, fax to 076-213971 or send an email to editor@phuketgazette.net

with your views for publication in our next issue. We reserve the right to edit all letters. Pseudonyms are acceptable only if your full name and address are supplied.

CNN damages Phuket again

Today [June 23], CNN once again did incalculable damage to Phuket tourism. In a new feature about the tsunami, CNN returned to Phuket, concentrating entirely on the Kamala Beach Hotel.

The very cooperative hotel manager showed viewers the rebuilt hotel, then evoked the terrible events of December 26. This gave CNN the opportunity to show, once again, dramatic pictures of the moment the waves struck.

The manager showed us a room where the pathetic belongings of guests swept away are stored. He then sadly raised the possibility that tourists might not wish to return to Phuket.

There was no mention of the 95% of hotels that were not damaged or only superficially so.

CNN has probably, by its stupidity, been yet another destructive force to Phuket's tourism. My hope is that all friends of Phuket, as well as government authorities, will protest with vigor.

John Phillips
Allamanda, Laguna

Immigration shines

I have lived in Thailand on and off since 1989, and finally settled here in 2002.

I'd like to say that I have received the best of service when applying for and renewing my retirement visa from the Phuket City Immigration Office.

[The officers are] polite, businesslike, with no hint of corruption, and the gentleman who issued the letter confirming my residency photocopied extras for me without being asked.

The redesigned office even looks the part.

Now I hear that an office will open part-time in Chalong, where I live. That's service and will make life easier for the rich boat owners. Good thinking!

Keep up the good work. This sort of service will encourage more long-term visitors, which is just what post-tsunami Phuket needs.

It's a shame that immigration cannot sort out the tuk-tuks and rubbish on the island.

Robin Richardson
Chalong

Democracy loses hands down

In the *Phuket Gazette* of [June 11] I read an Issue & Answer from a reader who was forbidden by the police to play cards on the beach. He asked whether playing cards was illegal in Thailand.

The response from Pol Col Teeraphol Thipjaroen scared the living daylights out of me: "Playing cards is legal, but gambling is not, so when the police see people playing cards for fun and they're not sure that money is involved, they forbid further playing."

Under fair, civilized, democratic law, including Thai law, the doubt benefits the accused, or the suspect, not the other way round.

Try to imagine a society where Col Teeraphol's principles would apply: the police could apprehend anyone on the street and say, "We are not sure whether you are not a criminal, so we are pressing charges against you."

A court of justice would say, "We are not sure whether you are a murderer, so we will sentence you to death."

Is this the "New Order

Thailand", or is it that Col Teeraphol does not understand the spirit of the law or the practice of fair, democratic police work in a civilized country?

I sincerely hope it is the latter.

Patrick Legrain
Phuket

Langkawi flights for visa runners?

With the amount of expats living on Phuket, I would think there would be a brisk business for return flights between Phuket and Langkawi for visa runs.

The Haad Yai flights have now been canceled and not everyone wants to sit in a bus for nine hours to go to the Burmese border and back.

Langkawi is only 130 miles away and has a modern international airport. There is also a lot of travel between Phuket and Langkawi by members of the marine industry who would also use a direct flight service.

I suggest that an airline put on a once-weekly flight and check the results, which could be surprising.

Mick Kealy
Phuket

Toilet paper

To save water, I suggest that all new buildings that require a European toilet should install a twin-flush model. One button gives a half-flush, the other a full-flush.

Another suggestion, again for European toilets, is to put a house brick into the cistern. Each flush will save a volume of water equivalent to the volume of the brick.

Michael G Finn
Ex-Dubliner

Letters conveying views and suggestions are published here. Those seeking comment from government officials and/or business owners are published as *Issues & Answers* on the facing page.

The pros and cons of volunteer police

Before the *OrBorJor* started training people to be community police we were already working with volunteers.

Chalong Police Station currently has 13 community policemen who receive a monthly salary of 2,500 baht paid by the *OrBorJor*. In addition, there are another 22 unpaid but uniformed community police who work with us.

These individuals are sacrificing their time to help us so we give them uniforms. Therefore it's not surprising that people sometimes confuse community police with "real" policemen.

Also, in certain situations, we allow them to carry firearms but this certainly doesn't mean that we allow them to use guns without permission.

The *OrBorJor* plans to introduce a blue [community police] uniform so people can tell the difference between regular and community police but this is still in the planning stages.

It should be obvious that the community police aren't as knowledgeable with the law as



FIRST PERSON

Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (*OrBorJor*) recently launched a "community police" project in each of Phuket's police stations with the intention of helping out the regular police force with volunteers. **Pol Col Chalit Kaewyarat**, Superintendent of Chalong Police Station, explained the ins and outs of the community police force to the *Gazette's* Anongnat Sartpisut.

regular police. As a result they sometimes overstep their authority.

For example, at checkpoints, the regular police know the limits of their power and know when to get tough or not.

But the community police have sometimes acted too enthusiastically, in some cases trying forcibly to stop motorcycles, risking the possibility of both parties being injured.

There are other problems.

We had 15 trainees in the first batch but we had to ask two to leave as they simply didn't have the time to be dedicated enough and this caused us scheduling problems [community police work from 7:30 pm to 3 am].

Not only that, but a teenage *malaeng wan* ("fly" or daredevil motorcycle racer) claimed that people dressed as police threatened him and shot at his group of friends, causing injury.

In the end we couldn't make

out whether he was telling the truth of not because he could not identify his [alleged] assailant from among the community police we have at the [Chalong police] station.

A Thai contractor using Burmese labor complained that people who acted like police came to extort money from his workers. He didn't lodge an official complaint but he still felt it was worth mentioning.

In the past it was our policy

to have the community police work separately from us but we've changed tactics and now regular police oversee and train the volunteers.

In this way there should not be any abuse of power. The fact is, we need support from the community police as we have a manpower shortage.

In addition, community police are locals, so they have a greater knowledge of what's happening in their area and are invaluable in backing up investigations. We need accurate information in order to crack local crime successfully. I don't think anyone can do better than locals.

Most community police have day jobs, so to work at night as well you have to love the work and be able to sacrifice your time.

If the *OrBorJor* wants to introduce more community police, it would be a very good idea; we could select the best people to work with us.

It would also be good if we had women volunteers for the more delicate situations but for now we're working with what we have.

'No swimming' rule in force?

I saw a big sign at Patong Beach with a picture of a swimmer with a red cross through it. This, I assume, means "no swimming".

Is it true I can no longer swim in Patong? Is this just for the lowseason? Are there other signs like this around the island? How many? Does it make good sense to ban swimming on a resort island? Can I be arrested if I decide to go swimming anyway?

Charles McBride
Phuket City

Phuket Administration Organ-

ization (*OrBorJor*) Vice-President Sutin Utaitamrong replies:

The sign is to warn people that this is a dangerous area and we advise them against swimming. But this is just one of the signs now being used at the beach. Others include a red flag that means we advise against swimming, and a green flag that means it should be safe to swim.

The *OrBorJor* has put these signs at points around the island since January. There is one sign each at Nai Harn Beach, Surin

Beach, Laem Sing Beach and Nai Yang Beach; there are two in Kamala, three in Kata-Karon and three in Patong.

People who do swim in areas where there is a "No Swimming" sign or a red flag will not be arrested – it is up to them if they choose to swim and put themselves at risk of being injured or killed.

The signs are part of the *OrBorJor's* attempts to make the beaches safer – we have also recruited a number of beachguards to watch over the beaches.

In the dark over car registration

I recently bought a new Toyota Vigo in Trang. I went to have it registered in Krabi, where I live. I took along all the documents needed to have it registered and to get a number plate, but the officer told me my vehicle could not be registered because of the film on the windows.

The silver film is 60% transparent.

The Toyota dealer in Trang had told me I would have no problems registering my car, but the officer from the Transportation Office in Krabi would not listen when I told him this.

I have now been told that almost all the cars that leaves the dealerships in Trang and Krabi are fitted with the same film, and they are still registered (with the film in place).

Anyway, I decided to register my car in Trang, but I have now come up against a new prob-

lem. The Transportation Office asked me for a certificate of domicile (*Nangseu Raprong*) from the Immigration Office in Krabi. But then the Immigration people said that it was not up to them to issue these certificates.

I have a Non-Immigrant O visa and a census registration signed by the owner of my house, immigration paperwork and proof that I have already bought three vehicles in Krabi.

I am starting to think that either every province has its own rules, or that someone is expecting "something" more than my documents. Is there a way to get my vehicle registered, or must I drive with a red plate forever?

Concerned
Krabi

Pinyo Aphinyalawan, Head of the Krabi Provincial Transportation Office (KPTO), replies:

Window film is no longer an issue when registering a vehicle. A law was introduced in 2003 banning the use of window film less than 60% transparent, but that law has now been repealed.

I suspect the car owner's difficulty was down to a misunderstanding between him and members of staff here.

Sanchai Pornkaew, Chief of the Registration Department at the KPTO, replies:

All the KPTO needs to register a vehicle is the owner's real passport and a copy of it, and a paper confirming his or her address, which is available from Krabi Immigration Office, along with the car registration book.

Anyone who needs more information may contact the KPTO Registration Department at 075-612604.

Issues & ANSWERS

Want to know how to get something done? Can't understand some of the dafter things that seem to go on in Phuket? Want to pitch an idea to Phuket's authorities or institutions? Then this is the forum for you.

Submit your queries or suggestions to us and we'll ask the appropriate people to respond to them.

Write to: The Phuket Gazette, 367/2 Yaowarat Rd, Muang, Phuket 83000. Fax 076-213971, or submit your issue at www.phuketgazette.net

Buying sex toys in Thailand

I cannot find any shops in Phuket – or further afield in Thailand – that sell marital aids or sex toys.

Are there any here? Or are such devices/shops illegal here? Can I buy them on the Internet and have them sent to me here?

Tanya Cheex
Phuket

Pol Col Paween Pongsirin, Superintendent of Phuket City Police Station, replies:

It is illegal to open a sex shop in Phuket or anywhere else

in Thailand. Such shops are not congruent with Thai morals or Thai law.

Sittisak Jai-Uae, Chief Inspector of Phuket Customs Office, replies:

It is illegal to buy or sell sex toys, or open a sex shop, in Thailand. It is also illegal to import them into Thailand. If you order sex toys on the Internet or have friends send them to you, and we discover them, we are required to confiscate them.

Is online poker in Thailand illegal?

I am a professional poker player and mostly I play poker online. I would like to live in Thailand

This would not be possible if there was no way to play poker online from servers placed elsewhere in the world. Is it illegal to play online in Thailand?

Jack
Sweden

Pol Maj Wacharin Jirattitakarlwiat of Phuket City Police Station replies:

If you play online poker for entertainment only, that would be legal but even if you play for small amounts of money it is illegal under Thai law.

Every online game played for money is illegal in Thailand.

Getting connected

Getting work done in a timely and cost-effective manner is something every company needs to do. Whether it's a large multinational, a basic SME or just two of you in a home office, the need for clear and accurate information and communication is paramount.

Herein lies the focus of this week's column; I hope to shed some light on available technologies and solutions, and their applications in everyday business.

Let's start with the most basic aspect: setting up a single computer. Today USB (Universal Serial Bus) ports are used to connect pretty much everything to computers, from printers, cameras and music players to networks, gaming devices and even "Smart Homes".

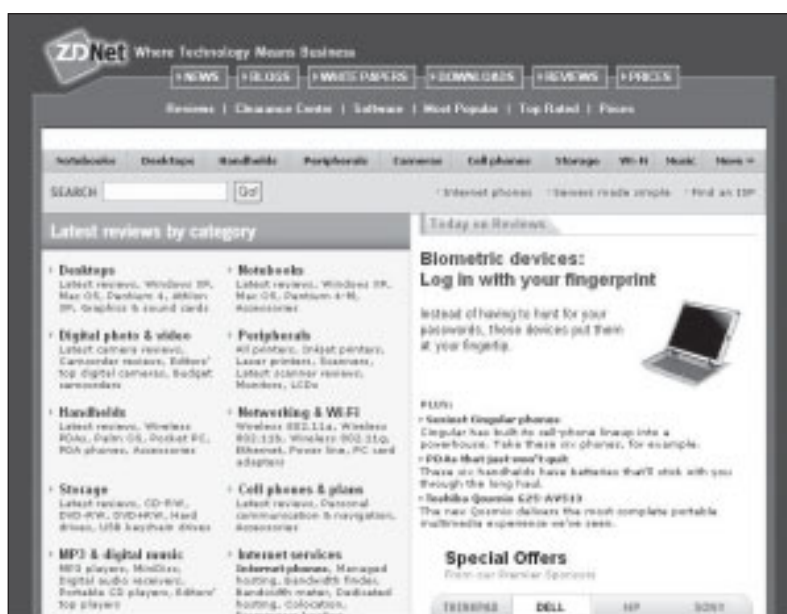
Using USB ports to connect nearly all types of devices to your computer has opened a wide range of choices of what to connect to your computer, and choosing a new gadget has become a daunting task.

If you're looking for a new gizmo, I suggest you check out the product reviews posted on www.zdnet.com, www.cnet.com and www.pcmagazine.com. You will be impressed at how easily you can understand and compare just about any technical product on the market.

A quick tip: most devices need a small program called a "driver" so that they can "talk" with the computer. Installing the correct driver before connecting the device can save you hours of frustration.

Now, onto connecting computers to each other. A connection between two computers is usually as simple as plugging in a USB cable. A good site that has all kinds of connectivity information is www.networkworld.com.

If you want to connect more than two computers, then



HELPFUL PORTAL: ZDNet's website is one of many that posts tech gadget reviews that help non-geeks to choose a new techno toy.

you are talking about a local area network (LAN). This allows you to share printers, scanners, files and even access to the Internet – all common needs for businesses, large and small.

A basic LAN uses both hardware (devices) and software (programs) to connect everything, with the computers and devices communicating by using Ethernet – a common language (or "protocol" in computing parlance). Ethernet is responsible for making the whole thing easy to use.

The hardware includes LAN cards (or ports), connection jacks called RJ-45s (which look like big telephone jacks), CAT5 cables and a central Hub (or switch).

LANs operate much like the water system in your home. Just as faucets, hoses and shower heads are connected to a single water supply, all your CAT5 cables connect from the LAN cards to the Hub.

It is important to note, however, that unlike the water in your house, each computer requires its own CAT5 cable going to the hub, whereas in your home the show-

er head and bathroom sink can share a common pipe.

Another form of computer networking is the WAN (wide area network), commonly used by companies with offices in different locations, even in countries on opposite sides of the globe.

WANs offer some neat features and the technology gets a bit more complicated, but the basic result is the connection of multiple LANs to one another. These larger networks are used mainly for centralized email systems, file-sharing between offices, video conferencing and remote access to any computer within the WAN.

In Phuket, more and more people are using this technology. An executive whose main office is in Hong Kong can come to his vacation home in Phuket, play a few rounds of golf and then connect directly to the main office.

It's just as if he's sitting at his desk in Hong Kong. He can access files, print at the secretary's desk, access his email and even make inter-office phone calls.

If he has a Web Cam he can see and be seen by his secretary – which is why he should take off his golf cap before calling; someone may get jealous.

John Seebach has over 25 years of consulting experience in Management Information Systems and Business Process Re-engineering. His company, Island Technology offers IT solutions and Broadband services throughout S.E. Asia. Contact john@islandtechnology.com for more information.

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Golf courses

By Gazette staff

PHUKET: Golf tourism has – in a similar way to much-lauded health tourism – become one of the niche marketing ploys to lure visitors to Phuket.

The island's five courses host a number of national and international tournaments each year, and regularly win regional accolades for the quality of their golfing facilities. There were even plans scheduled for March 5, 2005, to set a world record for the largest golf tournament held.

Priorities changed, however, after the tsunami. The record attempt was canceled, although Blue Canyon Country Club (BCCC) secured a number of high-profile events – the 2005 Thai Airways (THAI) Open and Tiger Skins tournaments were relocated to BCCC – in an attempt to tell the world that Phuket was "back in business".

And with good reason. The industry is labor-intensive; between them, the golf courses employ close to 1,800 people. Countless millions of baht have been invested in the courses and their ancillary facilities, such as housing developments.

But, while the greens remain verdant, the number of visitors is sliding into the red. Immediately after the tsunami, Phuket's golf courses reported that they had just 20% usage.

Steve Scott, the Corporate Director of Golf at Laguna Phuket Golf Club (LPGC) told the *Gazette* that business has dropped by around 40% since December.

"This is probably the worst year ever for LPGC, even though our course wasn't actually 'affected' by the tsunami," he said.

Songsak Hongyok, Clubhouse Manager of Phuket Country Club (PCC), described a situation worse than that at LPGC.

"On an average day [in a good year], more than 100 people come to play golf, split 60:40 between foreigners and Thais in the high season, with the ratio reversed in the low season," explained K. Songsak.

"The number of tourists visiting PCC has dropped by around 50%."

Lin Tan, PR Manager at BCCC, said that it is "...business as usual – in terms of course and facilities upgrades and maintenance – at Blue Canyon."

As with the representatives of other courses, Ms Tan was circumspect about disclosing precise figures concerning revenue and player numbers but said that BCCC was suffering "...loss of income and revenue in line with other tourism-related businesses in Phuket".

The courses' strategies for coping with what has become a cycle of crises and the resulting

Chinese stock

Investors often ask how they can profit from the economic boom underway in China. Their obvious intention is to buy either a mutual fund or shares in Chinese companies.

Most people would think that the Chinese economic boom would lead to the stock market surging ahead. Sadly, the reality is quite the opposite.

Chinese stock markets, as measured by the Shanghai Composite Index, have not been pleasant places in which to invest. This index to mid-June 2005 has fallen 13.4% this year and more than 25% over the past year. In fact, the index is at an eight-year low.

In 2004, Chinese stockbrokers suffered losses of at least US\$ 1.8 billion (around 80 billion baht). There are far too many of them – over 1,000 stockbroking firms – and they have not exactly been models of competence or honesty.

In many cases clients left their share certificates in the "safe" custody of their stockbro-

kers who then used these shares as collateral to borrow money and "play the market" themselves, often with disastrous results.

The central government is actually giving money to some of them to resolve their difficulties; others will simply collapse.

The causes of the problems include a lack of proper government regulation of companies and stockbroking firms, bad management, fraud and irregular accounting.

China is still new to the free market system and checks and balances have yet to be properly established. Good management is still in short supply.

Some improvement may be on the way. Bank of America recently announced that it will buy a 9% share in the Chinese Bank of Construction for a total cost of US\$3 billion (120 billion baht), with an option to increase the share to more than 19%.

This is America's second-largest bank taking a share in

This index to mid-June 2005 has fallen 13.4% this year and more than 25% over the past year. In fact, the index is at an eight-year low.

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take a swing at revival

low numbers of tourists to Phuket should now be well-honed.

So what are they doing to attract tourists? According to Mr Scott, the courses are not presenting a unified marketing image, but are going it alone.

"There is no assistance from, nor liaison among, any other golf clubs or associations," he said.

He continued, "I am not sure, but I think that there is a central [marketing] program with the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), but – as with the other clubs [in Phuket] – we are trying to work it out on our own.

"We try to target the hotel guests [of the five resorts within the Laguna Phuket complex], as well as corporate groups. We [LPGC and Laguna Phuket] are targeting tourists from all over the world."

He added that special deals are being offered to players from outside Phuket, as well as people who live here.

Ms Tan said that the focus, targets and marketing strategy of BCCC are the same now as they were before the tsunami.

"The only difference," she admitted, "is that we have to work twice as hard and be more innovative. Also, we must maintain the high standards we set for ourselves because [regional] competition is now stiffer.

"We [all businesses in the

region] must contribute our full-effort to attracting more tourists."

But K. Songsak of PCC suggested a different reason for the current slump in the numbers of golfers.

"I think that it was not the tsunami that affected tourism, but the problems in the restive Deep South.

"I went to ITB (International Tourism Bourse) Berlin a few months ago. It seemed [then] that the plan to attract tourists back to Phuket would have worked by the end of this year."

K. Songsak told the *Gazette*

that he is planning to arrange marketing roadshows in Europe and Asia. "We must show that everything is still okay in Phuket, including the beaches, which are even better than before."

He added that he believes – but offers no strategy as to how this should be achieved – that Phuket's golf courses and tourism-related businesses should be included in a joint post-tsunami recovery scheme.

K. Songsak offered more concrete suggestions as to what the government should do, al-

though he feels the problems stem not only from the tsunami.

"The government should renovate the basic infrastructure [of the island], such as water supplies and electricity supply to prevent blackouts," K. Songsak said.

"The problems on Phuket's roads need to be addressed urgently. Any country that offers a

safe destination to tourists – golfers or not – will have an advantage over others."

Away from Phuket, work has continued to promote the island's courses.

The inaugural London Golf Show (LGS), held in April, held a competition in which golfers had the chance to win an all-inclusive trip – with flights provided by Taiwan's Eva Air and THAI – to Thailand that included two nights' accommodation and two rounds of golf at BCCC, the same arrangement at Mission Hills Golf Course and a round of golf at PCC.

However, none of the representatives of Phuket's clubs who spoke with the *Gazette* mentioned this promotion; an event that attracted thousands of visitors.

What is worrying, perhaps,

is the apparent ignorance or unwillingness to discuss exposure at international events such as the LGS or golf tours offered by a number of specialist tour groups.

Callum Mackie, the Managing Director of London-based Solar Golf, along with the TAT, the competition's co-organizer, said on the LGS website (www.londongolfshow.com), "Golf is an integral part of Thailand's tourist industry".

Solar Golf – and other specialist tour agents – has been offering competitively-priced packages from Bangkok to Phuket with prices from £375 (approximately 28,000 baht).

Additionally, after he led a group to play three courses in Phuket, *Asian Golf Monthly* magazine quoted Mr Mackie as stating, "Phuket is open for business and is the perfect location for the golf holiday of a lifetime."

Ms Tan concurs. "The future will always be bright," she said, "because of the strategic location of Phuket and the way the government has positioned Phuket on the world map of tourism. We hope that business will be as usual during the next high season."

Mr Scott concluded, "I tend to be an optimistic person and I think that around November and December, we'll see people returning and see Phuket getting back to normal."

This is probably the worst year ever for LPGC, even though our course wasn't actually 'affected' by the tsunami.

– Steve Scott, Corporate Director of Golf at Laguna Phuket Golf Club.

markets still risky business



MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson

China's third-largest bank. A spokesman for Bank of America stated that its reason for this move is "to be where our customers are".

The Chinese bank's interest in accepting a major new shareholder is to gain foreign know-how. Bank of America will send 50 personnel to assist the Chinese bank in this regard.

It has been reported that Swiss banking giant UBS is in talks with the Bank of China about similar possibilities.

It is likely to be some time before these deals have an effect on the financial system in general, but for those who still want to invest in China, or at least in its financial markets, there are various options.

One can buy a mutual/offshore fund that targets this market. Various fund management groups, including HSBC and JP Morgan Fleming, offer this route.

Alternatively, an investor can use the same mutual/offshore

fund approach but widen the investment alternatives available to the fund manager by choosing an Asian fund that includes China on its list of investment destinations.

With the first approach, many fund managers take the view that, should the investor choose to invest in China, it is up to the them, the fund managers, to manage a China portfolio through good and bad times.

They may decide to move part of the portfolio – seldom more than 30% if they are negative about the market – into cash, but many fund managers will stay fully invested; they reason that the investor is paying them to manage a China fund, not cash.

It is important that investors realize that many fund management groups take this view, regardless of the country selected.

There is a third, rather unusual, approach to investment in China that has been offered by Anglo-American investment group Invesco for about a decade.

This fund is called Invesco Greater China opportunities. It will invest in any company that measures up to its standards and

that is predominantly managed by Chinese – anywhere in the world.

The usual examples include China itself, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore but if, for example, a company in San Francisco has Chinese management it also qualifies; an interesting approach.

German conundrum: What has been the best place to be as a stock market investor over the past year?

The answer may surprise many readers: Germany. The stock market, as measured by the DAX 30 index, is up almost 30% this year.

This looks like a conundrum: a stock market booming in an economy that has virtually stalled. Probably the best explanation for Germany's stock market leap came from Anaïs Faraj, the global strategist with Nomura.

Faraj reasons that German companies lost patience with their government's endless promises to restructure the economy and, instead, restructured their own companies.

He believes that, in the next five years, most German companies will closely resemble their British and American counterparts. This is why it was recommended in this column, about a year ago, that investors look at

Germany as a home for part of their portfolio.

Recent domestic opinion polls in Germany show that 75% of those asked believe that the opposition will win the election later this year. If so, there will be few tears shed among the business community at the departure of the present government.

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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ON THE MOVE

Smaijit Vephula, 56, from Bangkok, has been appointed General Manager of

Loch Palm Golf Club. K. Smaijit graduated from Chulalongkorn University with a degree in political science and a master's degree in political and administrative science.

Before moving to Phuket, he worked for eight years as Managing Director of Thaimex Leasing Co in Bangkok and spent a further eight years as Credit Director of the Union Bank of Bangkok.

Briton **Russel Paine** has been named Executive Assistant Manager of Le

Royal Meridian Phuket Yacht Club. Mr Paine has extensive experience in Asia, especially in food and beverage (F&B) management. He was previously F&B Director at the Bangkok Marriott Resort & Spa.

Phuket-born **Boonchai Somjai**, 42, has been appointed Chief of

Phuket Provincial Office of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation. He graduated with a law degree from Sukhothai Thammathirat University and earned a master's degree in political and administrative science at Burapa University, Chonburi.

K. Boonchai previously worked as secretary to former Phuket Governors Chamnong Chalermchat, Chadej Insawang and Pongpayome Vasaputi.

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The victorious Phuket team (in blue) with the Surat team in red.

Weerachai hat-trick clinches win

PHUKET CITY: A hat-trick from Weerachai Kongtap's "magic feet" led Phuket's Plookpanya A team to a 4-3 victory over Surat Thani's Theppamit A in the final of the under-12s "Phuket Municipality-People-Youth Sports" football [indoor football] tournament at Saphan Hin on June 25 and 26.

Phuket's Komkrit Suttakit fired the ball into the net just three minutes into the 15-minute first half, and a goal from Weerachai five minutes later took the score to 2-0 to Phuket.

But three minutes before the end of the half, one of the Theppamit players found the net and took the score to 2-1.

Just four minutes into the second half, Theppamit leveled the score at 2-2. Three minutes

later, Weerachai scored again, but Phuket's 3-2 lead lasted only seconds, as Theppamit was quick to equalize.

Two minutes before the end of the exciting match, Weerachai's magic feet scored their third goal of the match, and the match finished 4-3 to Plookpanya.

Phuket City Mayor Somjai Suwannasuppana presented trophies to the top four teams in the tournament.

Plookpanya A received 10,000 baht and Theppamit A 5,000 baht.

Theppamit B, who defeated Wat Kajornrangsun in the playoff for third and fourth places, received 3,000 baht and Wat Kajornrangsun went home with 1,000 baht.

Phuket to field top volleyball players in KL gay games

By Anongnat Sartpisut

PHUKET CITY: Some of Phuket's top gay volleyball players will come up against their counterparts from Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, Taiwan and Hong Kong when they compete in The Straits Games in Kuala Lumpur later this year.

The Phuket squad has won the volleyball tournament twice in the past, but team coordinator Ulf Mikaelsson said the players are not necessarily expecting to repeat their successes this year.

Mr Mikaelsson plans to take an eight-strong squad to the games, to be held from September 30 to October 2 in the Malaysian capital.

He said, "Our volleyball team won the championship the last two years, but we aren't going there only to win – but also to enjoy the games and have fun together."

The Straits Games, open to lesbian, bisexual, gay and transgender people, will feature events in badminton, bowling, squash and volleyball. The tournament

was initiated to foster relations between countries, promote healthy lifestyles and raise awareness of HIV and Aids issues. The first competition took place in 2002.

Mr Mikaelsson, of the Connect guesthouse in Patong, is currently trying to persuade Phuket City Municipality to support his attempt to bring next year's games to Phuket, as it could help boost tourism.

Mr Mikaelsson is also appealing for donations to help cover the cost of competing in Kuala Lumpur.

Anyone interested in donating, or in finding out more, should contact Mr Mikaelsson (Tel: 09-6521544; Email ulf@beachpatong.com) or K. Boy (Tel: 01-9790854).



AO YON: Competitors did a lot of swimming on June 26 during the regular Sunday regatta. Five dinghies started the racing but gusty winds of 15 knots or more resulted in only three completing the day's sailing, and everyone joined in the festival of capsizing.

Hosking & Co victorious in Laguna Texas Scramble

LAGUNA: Michael Hosking led his team to win the The Laguna Golf Club Texas Scramble played at the Laguna golf course on June 25. Nine four-member teams competed in the fun tournament and then enjoyed a dinner and awards ceremony afterwards.

Laguna Phuket Golf Club also concluded its two-month 2005 match play championship, with Peter Tkac emerging as the men's champion and Pim Hamilton winning the ladies' competition.

Results: Team: 1. Michael Hosking, Rona Hosking, Parichart Namchoo, and Daniel Oroiden; 2. Anita Hourigan, Christopher Hourigan, Nicholas Hourigan and Lindsay Renolds; 3. Nigel Peters, Annie Peters, Daniel Peters and Sukhathai Chumbala

Individual: Ladies' Long Drive: Pim Hamilton; Men's Long Drive: Nigel Peters; Closest to the pin, hole 3: Mike Renolds; hole 7: Rona Hosking; hole 11 and hole 13: Michael Hosking; hole 16: Nor Moorhouse.

Right on cue at Crocodile

PATONG: The Crocodile Pub & Bar is to hold a knockout snooker tournament on July 5. The competition, open to both men and women, has a 600-baht entrance fee.

The winner will take home a 10,000 baht cash prize and a "gold" snooker cue. The runner

up will be awarded 3,000 baht and a bottle of Johnnie Walker Black Label. Third prize is a five-hour shrimp fishing package at Nanai Shrimp Farm. Closing date for applications is July 3.

For more information contact Tel: 01-9684860, 04-642-5401 or 076-294224.

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Where do all those colors come from?

Q Recently you wrote that Pink grapes are used to make white wine and red grapes are used for red, pink or white wine. How is this possible?

Most pink and red grapes have white juice; it's only the skin that is red. Immediately removing skins from juice gives a white wine; leaving them briefly in the juice results in a pink wine.

During fermentation, yeast respire sulfite as part of cellular respiration and the winemaker introduces additional sulfite. This sulfite removes some color pigments from the wine. This is also why a white wine results.

Q What is the difference between variety and varietal?

Variety refers to the name of a grape when one speaks about the plant. Varietal refers to the name of a wine made from that specific grape variety. For example,

Chardonnay (the grape-vine) is a variety while chardonnay (the wine) is a varietal.

Q My husband's friend is coming from Oregon and is going to try to bring a frozen wild Chinook salmon with him. I am expected to barbecue it. What wines can I find in Phuket to go with salmon and what kind of wood should I use?

In the Pacific Northwest, slow-burning alder or manzanita wood is traditionally used for salmon. To my knowledge you cannot find either here but your friend could bring a kilogram of alder chips to sprinkle on your fire.

In Phuket, your best alternative

WINE



By Steven Roberto

would probably either be rubber or mango wood; but be sure the trees were not recently treated with pesticides.

A buttery chardonnay in the old-school California style is wonderful with barbecued salmon. Jordan, Ridge, and Mer Soleil are available here. Barrel-fermented Oregon pinot gris also works well. Maybe your husband's friend can bring a few bottles. St Helena Reserve Pinot Gris from New Zealand is also a good choice and available here.

For red wine, I would buy the best possible New World pinot noir. The pinot noir of Oregon is perfect, so maybe your friend can stuff a few bottles of those into his jacket pockets, too.

Ponzi, Broadley, and Adelsheim are three of my favorites. Archery Summit from Oregon is available here, as is St Clair from New Zealand.

Good luck with your barbecue. I hope your friend has a big baggage allowance and makes it through Customs.

Q Who made the famous joke, "Who stole the cork from my lunch?" Rodney Dangerfield or Dean Martin?

Neither, that was W.C. Fields. Rodney Dangerfield's wine quip was, "My father worked in a wine shop. He was so dumb they caught him stealing corks." I doubt that Dean Martin ever gave wine much consideration.

Steven Roberto is a winemaker and restaurant consultant from California. He is the Managing Director of enVision Phuket, a Phuket-based wine importer and consultant. Email: stevenroberto@lycos.com.

Wordly Wise

"Discussing politics has become obscene and [the state] feels it must be silenced."

— Ubonrat Siriyuwak, Associate Professor of Chulalongkorn University's Faculty of Communication Arts, following last week's government shutdown of two websites critical of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's administration.

Blue Whale Dies on Beach

Phuket Gazette, July 1995

Early last month, the Director of the Phuket Marine Biological Centre, Mr Tavorn Thammasawat, received a call from local fishermen at Baan Para, Pa Khlok, Talang, reporting that a large whale was dying on the beach.

The Director, along with Phuket's Governor, Sudjit Nimitkul and the Sheriff of Amphur Talang, Worakon Yokying, proceeded to the scene. Upon arrival, they found a blue whale lying in shallow water about 200 metres from the beach. The whale died shortly thereafter.

A four-wheel drive vehicle was fetched, but it took nearly an hour to haul the huge mammal onto the beach. Ten metres long, the whale was estimated to be about 1 year old and to weigh about 2,000 kg.

Mr Sammai Liebond, 48, who discovered it, said he had felt shock at realising what it was, having at first assumed that it was a large piece of driftwood.

Local people are almost never exposed to such a phenomenon. Although blue whales do migrate to southern waters to breed, their natural habitat is in the northern oceans.

Phuket makes serious bid to become major center for IT

Phuket Gazette, July 1-15, 2000

PHUKET: Through the use of IT, astonishing things have become possible and large fortunes made. Small wonder, then, that Phuket wants to play a key part in the IT revolution, by becoming a "cyberport". The big question is whether the island is ready.

What is a cyberport? According to the definition given at the Phuket Cyberport & International City Seminar, a cyberport is a "comprehensive facility to foster the development of the information services sector, and to enhance the area's position as a premier information and telecommunications hub in the region".

Why Phuket? At the opening of the seminar on June 14 at the Pearl Hotel in Phuket Town, Deputy Prime Minister Dr Trairong Suwankiri explained, "Phuket has many advantages over other places. Phuket is known worldwide. There are many well-educated people in the province.

It has a strong economy; residents have the seventh-highest per-capita income in Thailand. It is in a good location and [thanks to tourism] it has a good foundation to provide high-standard services."

Charn Wongsatayanont, Chairman of the Phuket Chamber of Commerce, explained that Phuket needs something other than tourism for a sustainable economy.

"The tourism industry has its limits. We need to find other things that can generate more income but, at the same time, do not interfere with tourism," K. Charn explained.

But can Phuket make the transition? Despite regular grumbles about the telephone service in the province, the seminar heard that Phuket is already equipped with optical fiber along most of the main roads.

"Next year, we will get budget to install more optical fiber around the province.

"If we really are going to

become a cyberport, we will definitely get more budget and that, of course, means more optical fiber lines," said Voravit Vorapiboonpong, the Phuket chief of the Communications Authority of Thailand (CAT).

Sompol Chanprasert, CAT's Vice President of Data Communication Services, added, "We currently have 48 cores of optical fiber in Phuket. Only two are in use; we use one to carry data out of Phuket and the other to carry data in. Two more are used as backups.

"This means that we have another 44 lines left, each of which can carry about 600 megabytes of data per second."

All seemed to agree that turning Phuket into a cyberport will fit well with the island's need to protect the ecology and avoid harming the tourism industry.

M.R. Nongkran Chompoot, assistant director of NEC-TEC, actually sees spin-off benefits for tourism. "If we have better IT, visitors will be able to stay longer in Phuket because they will be able to work while they are on the beach.

"This means more income for the tourism industry."

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News from the past

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On the menu

with
Andy Johnstone

Peppino

A full moon and scudding silver clouds causes my dining companions to impress me with their knowledge of werewolves – from the movies – and me to toss in the classic Marty Feldman line: “Werewolf? There wolf!”

My hope that they won’t get the joke is in vain; they do – and they think it’s pretty feeble.

From the outside, Kata Beach Resort seems deceptively small. Inside, however, it is magnificently spacious – the lobby boasts one of the most spectacular vaulted ceilings I have seen in Thailand. Yet although it is cathedral-like in its grandeur and scale, it retains an air of intimacy.

A wash of warm colors – saffron, red and terracotta – grace the walls. Religious icons and other statuary complement our sense of peace as we walk in to be greeted by our affable triumvirate of hosts: GM Frank Dreist; F&B Director Jorge De La Torre and Pan-Usa Poomchan, Group PR Manager.

A brief tour of the ground floor begins to reveal the scale – and space – of this 273-bedroom resort, the base for the annual Phuket King’s Cup Regatta.

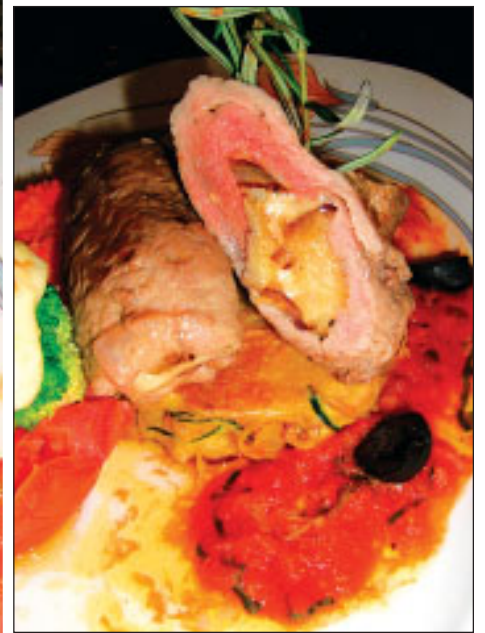
Cool sea breezes refresh us before we enter the resort’s Italian restaurant, Peppino.

One of my companions comments that she likes the contrast between the quasi-Italianate décor of the restaurant and the undeniably tropical view visible through the windows.

I regret that we did not leave work early enough to catch a glimpse of what we are told was a memorable sunset.

No matter, for no sooner are we seated than we are gently seduced by the restaurant’s inescapable charm. As with the rest of the resort, it is both intimate and uncramped, which is no mean feat.

Each table appears to be in its own little zone. The music is both discreet and appropriate for the setting, and the animated buzz of other diners’ chatter does not interfere with our conversation.



The pan-fried sea bass (left) and the veal rolls (above), served on a vegetable “cake” with a root-vegetable mash, made for delicious devouring.

Carnal cravings

There must be something of the animal about me tonight – perhaps it’s the full moon – because I am drawn to some decidedly red-blooded dishes, and I’m not only referring to my dining companions.

Carpaccio is my choice of starter, although before this arrives we are presented with a plate of mini-appetizers, including delectable smoked salmon wrapped around herby breadsticks, *crostini* and stacked slices of tomatoes and mozzarella, a novel twist on *insalata caprese*.

Almost impossibly-thin slices of raw tenderloin beef dressed with capers and shavings of ripe parmesan seemingly evanesce in my mouth, satisfying some of my baser instincts.

My companions, too, wolf down their starters, which are

Minestrone alla Milanese (fresh vegetable soup in a clear broth) – which Companion 1 describes as “perfect”. Companion 2 chooses *Salmone Affumicato*.

Having dined with Companion 2 a number of times, I know smoked salmon to be one of her favorites. Her assessment: “This is the best I’ve had in a long time”.

Although we are impressed with the starters, the main courses elicit little gasps of pleasure from Companion 1 and 2, in themselves rather pleasant.

Presentation of the food at Peppino is superb. My dish of veal rolls, containing aubergine and tomato and served on a vegetable “cake” with a root-vegetable mash, looks too good to eat.

But eat it I do, feasting like

there’s no tomorrow, savoring the fresh tomato and olive sauce.

Companion 2 is presented with pan-fried sea bass – a pleasant alternative to the near-ubiquitous red snapper – in a sensational lemon-and-sage butter sauce.

Jorge and I had earlier discussed the sea change that has occurred in Phuket, since around 2001, in the range and quality of locally-produced foreign foodstuffs, such as herbs and vegetables.

“Four years ago,” he begins, “Basil and coriander were more or less the only herbs you could find easily.”

“Now, restaurateurs and those who cook at home can find just about anything they need.”

“All the big supermarkets [in Phuket] are selling very good

products grown in Northern Thailand,” he adds.

“However, we do still import our meats from New Zealand, although we couldn’t be in a better location for seafood.”

Companion 1 likes her *Linguine alla Salmone* in a sweet basil and tomato sauce, and a glass of the peppery De Bortoli Willowglen Shiraz Cabernet – although she had said that she wouldn’t have a drink.

Companion 2 and I quite merrily finish the rest of the bottle.

Cries of “I’m full” from both companions are not really to be believed, especially when the dessert menu comes round. We choose not the *tiramisu* – though it’s one of my favorites – but a dark-chocolate *tartufo* filled with a white chocolate truffle center and a vanilla sauce.

The food is delectable, the *objets d’art* in alcoves around the restaurant heighten the pleasant ambiance and the service is top-class. The prices, too, are reasonable. A mere 470 baht for my veal, for example.

All in, Peppino is heaven, though whether or not this wolf of carnal appetites should be allowed in again is another matter.

Peppino Italian Restaurant, Kata Beach Resort, 1 Pakbang Rd, Karon. Tel: 076-330530-4 or Email: katagrp@loxinfo.co.th Open Monday to Saturday from 5 pm until 10:30 pm.

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Home of the Week

Rawai

Gallic flair by the ocean

Completed two years ago by its French designer, this custom-designed and beautifully constructed home enjoys an sea view across Chalong Bay from both the upper floor and a rooftop pavilion above its spacious two-car parking garage.

The entire 640-square-meter property is fully walled, with access via a long walkway leading to its porch entrance, or through the garage.

Entering from the two-car garage, you will find a bathroom, a storage area and the pool pump room.

Above, accessible by a stairway, is the roof-top pavilion. This forms part of the home's poolside entertainment area with beautiful views over the bay.

Separating the parking area from the home is a 14sqm swimming pool with a counter-current main basin that eliminates the need to do laps.

There is also a 4.5sqm children's pool at one end. The surrounding patio area lends perfect privacy for outdoor entertainment.

On the first floor are two bedrooms, each with double beds and en-suite storage and dressing areas.

One of the bedrooms boasts a large terrace, adding to the already spacious feel of the entire property.

There is also a room with a sea view beneath the home's large dormer-style roof that could serve as either a fourth bedroom or a study.

The ground floor has an open-plan living area that incorporates the lounge, dining and kitchen areas. There is also a toi-



Spaciousness, sublime sea views and more than a hint of French style combine to make this a highly-desirable family home.

Although other properties are being built nearby, the views will remain.

let, and the spacious master bedroom is off this area.

The rear of the home has a well-designed "day-kitchen" area, which is especially useful when catering for poolside activities.

The front of the stylish residence features a lovely low-maintenance garden with native flora, complete with an S-shaped fishpond.

As this unique home was built under the watchful eye of its owner, emphasis was placed on quality control in construction and in choosing only the most weather-proof of materials for exteriors.

Quality homes about the property and two more are under construction nearby.

These are single-level buildings, and so will not affect the views from the house, but will add considerable value to the existing homes.

The house and contents is offered at 12.7 million baht.



BELOW: The 14sqm swimming pool is just one of the highlights this property will offer the new owner.



For further information or to arrange a viewing, contact Garden Island Company (Tel: 076-296072; Email: info@gardenislandphuket.com; www.gardenislandphuket.com).

Aroonpat is a 10-rai, 130-million-baht housing project located off Nanai Rd in Patong. Piyaporn Kittiwatano-kun, the project's Marketing and Sales Manager, expects it to be completed in the third quarter of 2007.

The 40 homes are split into two types, Aroonpatra and Aroonnara.

There are 23 two-story Aroonpatra units, each with 160 square meters of living space including three bedrooms, three bathrooms, a dining room, living room, kitchen and two parking spaces. Prices start at 6.69 million baht.

There are 17 of the two-story Aroonnara units, which are similar in terms of the rooms, but with a smaller living area of 145 sqm. Prices for these start at 6.39 million baht.

All the houses come equipped with air-conditioning and kitchen equipment. A 4x8-meter swimming pool is optional at 800,000 baht.

K. Piyaporn added, "Our prices reflect the design and the quality of materials used."

"These materials are suitable for Phuket's tropical conditions, for example the floors on the second level are non-slip, laminated ceramic tiles, and the roofing material is similar to the smooth, heat-resistant tiles used in resorts."

Both water and electricity come from Patong Municipality. There is a reserve water tank and a 1,600-liter septic tank.

Other facilities and services include a garden with a large fountain at the entrance of the project, and 24-hour security.

A management company will be brought in to handle maintenance of shared amenities.

K. Piyaporn added, "Instead of paying the rate for a hotel villa, customers can invest in their own home here or buy as an investment."

She explained that, while most construction in the Patong area consists of commercial buildings such as shophouses that help developers reap a high return on investment, Aroonpat's aim is to build property for people who need relaxation and privacy.

The project is being carried out by Bangkok-based developer Thanapat Property Development Co. This is its first Phuket pro-

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Artist's impression of the Aroonpat project, from outside the gates.

Bangkok-based developer makes debut in Patong



Construction of the project is well underway.

ject. Ten of the 40 units are already reserved.

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Gardening

with Bloomin' Bert

Hanging on to your hosepipe

Why do we love to whinge? I think Brits especially excel in this area. The Australians call us "whinging poms". Being British, I should obviously try to defend my fellow countrymen, but in this regard on this one, though I hate to admit it, I think the Australians have actually got it right for once.

We're a nation of whingers. Back home, we complain if our winters are cold and we have to turn the heating up a bit. Then, in summer, we complain if we're too hot – exactly the scenario we've spent the winter yearning for and we're still not happy.

The weather is one of the most frequent topics of conversation in the UK, and the topic seems to have been imported by Brits living in Phuket. I've actually heard some of my compatriots voicing their dissatisfaction with the searing heat we experience in the hot season through March and April. *Of course it's hot – it's Thailand! You're in the tropics!*

Now that the hot season is over and the rains are here, these same people have started to whinge about how they get a bit

WET AND WILD: Too much or too little water will make your sweet little bloomers wither and die.



damp on their motorcycles on their way home from the pub.

They seem to ignore the fact that it's this same rain that keeps the temperature down, like a giant air conditioner unit in the sky. There really is no pleasing some people.

For me, one of the benefits of the rainy season is that I can be a little more sparing with the hosepipe in the garden. That said, this is a difficult time for gardeners, as we share the job of keeping the garden adequately watered with the heavens.

One of the most important factors in successful gardening is knowing when and how to water. Many gardening factors, such as fertilizing and pruning, have easy-to-learn rules to follow. But watering has no "rules" as such; when to water and how much to

water depends on the kind of plants, type of soil, time of year and the weather conditions.

So, if you notice that your particular watering problems seem to be different from your neighbors', you're probably right.

You should water only when plants need watering. That may sound a bit daft, but it's true. The leaves of many plants will begin to curl in the early stages of a water shortage. Later, the leaves will become very limp and will wilt pathetically. Plants should always be watered before they wilt.

Frequently allowing plants to reach this stage inevitably results in the plant dropping its leaves. If plants are allowed to remain in a poor condition for several days, they may never revive.

Some plants may not show

symptoms of a water shortage until it is too late. These plants should be watered when the soil around them feels dry and crumbly.

Recent plantings need special care. Remember, when your new plant was in the nursery, it was watered every day. Also, during the first few months after being planted in a new environment, new plants still have small root systems and can absorb water from only a limited soil area. They may still "think" they're in a pot.

Ideally, watering should be done in the early morning, when winds and temperatures are low. Late morning, midday, and afternoon irrigation usually results in loss of water through evaporation. Also, strong winds are more likely to blow at these times, resulting in poor distribution of water over the garden.

When watering, give the

soil a thorough soaking. Frequent, light sprinklings waste water and don't do a great deal to satisfy the needs of a plant growing in the hot, dry soil of Phuket. Watering in this way encourages shallow root systems which increase susceptibility to damage if you fail to water the plant for a few days.

Water should be applied only as fast as the soil will absorb it. Watering with a hose nozzle turned on full force can actually do more damage than good. Fast-flowing water runs off quickly, carrying soil with it, and may expose plant roots to the sun, which isn't ideal here. It's more efficient to use soaker hoses and sprinklers. Soaker hoses do a good job, but they don't cover as large an area as sprinklers.

What you really need to avoid is soggy soil, as this really is the kiss of death to most plants. They simply can't get the oxygen through to their roots, because the water fills every little space in the soil that would have oxygen in it. The roots rot, and the plant dies a slow death.

Over-watering is perhaps the cause of more plant deaths than just about anything else. The problem is made more difficult because the signs of too-wet soil are similar to those of too-dry soil, so the tendency is to panic and keep watering, thinking it needs more, and making the problem worse.

To check, stick your finger in the soil and water only when the soil is dry one whole knuckle down.

Plants do complain, but only when they have good reason. They certainly don't whinge like Brits – they actually understand that it gets a little warm here.

Want to know more about a plant in your garden?

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Living in the dead center of town

This is where I have stayed for more than 10 years. Not in the cemetery itself, but in the building from where I've taken the photograph, the Tower Inn. Although I don't live here permanently, I still stay here when I'm in Bangkok, so I happen to be interested in events along Silom Rd.

The Tower Inn is next door to two old cemeteries; one Christian and the other Chinese. I'm not a cemetery enthusiast, nor am I a ghoul, or a vampire, a grave robber, a professor of bones, or the sort of fellow who spends his time hanging around graveyards and tombs.

Yet, like most people who live or work in the center of Bangkok, I have been particularly fond of these cemeteries, not because of the graves, but because of the trees – great old trees that pumped out life-giving oxygen in the middle of the heat and pollution of Silom Rd.

Having this "park" right in the middle of Bangkok's business district was somehow a comfort.

Everybody said that it would

LARGER THAN LIFE

By Graham Doven

always be there, as cemeteries could not be desecrated. Everybody was wrong.

Apparently "grave robbers" have been at work, and bones from the Christian cemetery have been quietly removed over the past two years. I could not find anybody who knew how long it is since anyone was buried there, and seeing as all the gravestones have been removed, it's too late to check the dates out. According to one old lady who has worked next door to it in Silom, it has not

been used in the past 70 years.

These "grave robbers" are not the evil villains of spooky movies, but the church that owns the cemetery. You would think that a church would have considered the value of this piece of Bangkok, not in terms of money, but in terms of the value of the trees.

If they decided to relocate

These "grave robbers" are not the evil villains of spooky movies, but the church that owns the cemetery.



URBAN REALTY: The vacant lot in Silom, Bangkok, that was once a cemetery will likely be developed into another tower with thousands of airconditioners pumping pollution into the air.

the cemetery, fine, the trees could have stayed and the church could have opened it up as a public park.

But no, the church is going to sell it off to developers.

No doubt yet another skyscraper is going to cast its shadow across Silom, blocking out the

pleasant view from the roof garden of the Tower Inn and pumping more pollution into the atmosphere from thousands of air conditioners.

It is interesting to note that while the Christians are selling out, the Chinese cemetery will

remain. Even though the trees and bushes are a bit scraggy, at least they're going to stay, for the time being, at least.

Also, at the front of the Chinese cemetery there is a pleasant seafood restaurant. We'd hate to lose that, too.



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Property Gazette

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Property Gazette

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Two male travelers will be in Phuket from July 14 through August 9, doing volunteer work. We need housing. All accommodations will be considered. Email with specifics. Email: benjamin.hewitt@colorado.edu

LONG-TERM

accommodation. I am looking for 2- or 3-bedroom accommodation for my wife and myself when we arrive in Phuket in October. We require aircon, a Western kitchen, telephone line and UBC. As our dog will be accompanying us, we require a large, enclosed garden. We are looking for a suitable property in the Nai Harn-Rawai area. The rental period will be for a minimum of 12 months. Our rental budget is 15,000-20,000 baht per month. Email: jonahship1@btopenworld.com

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in Thalang/Kathu. I am looking for a new/near-new, modern house between Kathu and Thalang (preferred). Must be secure and quiet, with a useable inside kitchen. NOTE: Will pay up to 9,000 baht per month, maximum. Email details first (with photos if available). I will then call you if it sounds suitable. Please contact for details. Tel: 076-261-358, 07-2760529. Email: jmicchia@yahoo.com

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We are looking for a furnished one-bedroom apartment, house or bungalow in the Kata-Karon Beach area from February 8, 2006 to March 14, 2006. If possible, please send price, pictures and info about your property. Thank you. Email: mats.kennedy@dof.se

LONG-TERM HOUSE

rental. I am looking for a house to rent for a year or longer. Anything considered in any area. I am a tour guide and my max budget is around 10,000 baht per month. A walled garden would be nice as I have dogs for security. Please phone or email details. Tel: 09-7059734. Email: rey_52@hotmail.com

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seeks Prime Phuket Businesses for the top of the Gazette Online's Classifieds and Business Listings pages.

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A banner at either of these two addresses is repeated on every other page in the whole section. Thus a banner at the top of the Classifieds main page appears in each of the section's roughly 3,600 individual ad pages. And a banner at the top of the Gazette Guide main page appears in every one of that section's roughly 3,000 individual business listings.

The Gazette Online is always at the top of Google when using key words such as "phuket", "phuket news", "phuket events", "phuket classifieds", "phuket yellow pages", etc, etc. That's why we receive an average of 30,000 to 35,000 visitors a day.

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Need experienced crew and sailors for Phuket Race Week 27/7 - 1/8/05 to sail on Swan 55 (new rig and sails). Offer package deals (transfer/bungalow/racing). Contact Horst. Tel: 076-383080, 06-9401860. Fax: 076-381934. Email: bigasail@samart.co.th

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K14 Bauer diving compressor, in very good condition. Please contact for more information. Email: saildivefree@yahoo.com

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for sale. 5 meters long, 2.6 meters wide, made from large timber tree. 6-cylinder engine, about 8 years old. Price: 150,000 baht. Please call Khun Kob for more information. Tel: 09-8731019.

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boat. Superbly-built 4-year-old boat with excellent stainless railings. Licensed for 150 pax - ideal for day trips or convert to liveaboard. 2 engines, 2 gen sets. First to see will buy. A bargain at 6 million baht. Please contact for more information. Tel: 076-281526, 09-9720423. Fax: 076-281527. Email: dougie@divejohnsandy.com

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Central Krabi Bay Resort

The majestic Central Krabi Bay Resort, the newest addition of Central Hotels & Resorts, will be gracing the shores of Krabi from this October. This 190 deluxe room and Villa resort, which occupies its own private bay, sits on a 500 metre long white sand beach, has stunning views and grand natural limestone outcrops encircling it. Truly a memorable setting.

The Central Krabi Bay Resort will be offering the very finest accommodation, dining and leisure experiences and aims to match this by delivering outstanding levels of customer service. We are therefore now inviting applications from interested, motivated and qualified people to join us on this exciting journey and also to create a career for yourself within the expanding group of Central Hotels & Resorts.




- HR Manager
- Chief Security
- Assistant Chief Engineer
- Chief Accountant
- Cost Controller
- Purchasing Manager
- Assistant Housekeeper
- Reservations Manager
- Assistant F&B Manager
- Outlet Managers
- Executive Secretary
- Guest Services Manager
- Assistant Managers
- Japanese Teppanyaki Chef
- Sous Chef
- Receiving Clerks & Storekeepers
- Cleaners

Qualifications required

- Service minded personnel with good communication skills
- Computer competent
- Friendly and enthusiastic
- Enjoy working as part of a team
- English speaking
- Self motivated and creative
- Possess leadership skills

Previous experience in a similar work environment is desirable for all management positions. All positions are open to Thai nationals only. All applicants must be willing to reside in Krabi.

APPLICATIONS FOR ALL OTHER POSITIONS ALSO WELCOME

We offer attractive remuneration package to the successful candidates. Interested persons should send detailed resume stating current and expected salary, contact telephone number together with a recent photograph to:

Human Resources Division
Central Hotels & Resorts
1695 Phaholyothin Road, Chatuchak, Bangkok 10900
E-mail: recruit@chr.co.th

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BARTENDER
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The above positions are based in Phuket. The team is small and friendly, the restaurant busy, fun and very successful. An attractive remuneration package will be offered to the right candidate.

Please e-mail your CV to
eat@rockfishrestaurant.com



SECRETARY/PA

Looking for office assistant for hotel & real estate sales. Must speak good English and have computer and accounting skills. Please contact for more info. Tel: 07-0778454.

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needed. Pa Khlok area. Can live in. Please call for more information. Tel: 076-273-427, 01-8295388.

SPA MANAGER

We are looking for a Spa Manager and female receptionist. Nationality not important. Please call for more information. Tel: 04-8478352.

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Look for secretary & paralegal. Send resume for appointment. Please Email: scphuket@yahoo.com for more information.

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Australian Government Austrade

The Australian Trade Commission (Austrade) is the Australian Government's export facilitation agency. We are expanding our business activities in Thailand and we are seeking an energetic and highly skilled person to join our team as a Business Development Manager, based in Phuket, covering Southern Thailand.

The successful applicant will be required to establish and manage an Austrade representative office in Phuket.

Our business development team assists Australian companies to win export sales to the Thai market. The successful applicants will work closely with Thai importers to identify opportunities and help Australian companies to win business. In addition they will be required to respond to commercial enquiries from Australia concerning market conditions and opportunities in Thailand. The Phuket position will be required to liaise and work closely with our Bangkok office.

The successful applicant will have:

- Experience in sales & marketing
- Excellent knowledge of Thai commercial practices
- Appropriate tertiary qualifications
- Excellent written and spoken English
- Native proficiency in Thai

Experience or knowledge in a number of sectors is highly desirable:

- Agribusiness, food & beverage
- Environment
- Services to business/Government
- Fast moving consumer goods
- Building & construction/infrastructure

Some knowledge of, or experience in Australia would be an advantage (including Australian qualifications), but not essential.

The successful applicants will be comfortable working in a business development/sales environment and having specific personal targets. A commencing salary of between Baht 735,000 to Baht 1,035,000 PA will be offered, depending on the experience of the applicant. There is the opportunity to receive a salary bonus based on performance. Health cover is also included. The successful applicant will benefit from a commitment to training & equal opportunity employment.

Austrade offers a comfortable and fun working environment with the opportunity for flexible work practices.

Applicants should be able to travel regularly.

The selection documentation is available on our website www.austrade.or.th along with a number of frequently asked questions (FAQ's). If you have an enquiry not covered by the FAQ, please email to recruitment.bangkok@austrade.gov.au

Applications addressing the specific selection criteria should be emailed to recruitment.bangkok@austrade.gov.au by 5 July. Applications failing to address the selection criteria will not be considered.

URGENTLY REQUIRED Administration Executive

We urgently require for our Patong office an Administration Executive. Suitable candidates need to have the following qualifications:

- Good command of English language (both spoken and written)
- Well Versed in Microsoft Excel and Word
- Proficient in typing
- Secretarial skills required
- Be able to join immediately.

One position available. Remuneration will be based on experience and qualifications.

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- Female, age 25 +, Bachelor's Degree, some pest control experience would be useful but training will be provided

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Property Care Service(Thailand) Co.,Ltd, 371/21 Yaowarat Road, Tanbon Taladyai, Amphur Muang, Phuket 83000

Please send your resumé along with covering letter in English and the address above or to stephen@pcs.co.th or call 076-224658-9



Construction Quality Manager

J.D. Pools is the premier swimming pool company in Thailand. We are currently seeking a Construction Quality Manager to set the highest standards on the construction site.

Requirements:

Minimum 3 years working experience in construction, preferably in pool building field, degree in the construction field, good leadership and motivational skills, ability to manage construction projects and focus on customer expectations. Good command of spoken English.

Please send your CV and recent photograph to norbert@jdpools.com or call direct 01-8916143.

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in Portugal. Looking for gay young Thai male to work in a gay guesthouse in Portugal. Gardening, swimming pool handling, cooking, receiving guests. Please send background information and photo. Tel: 351-284434-105. Email: quintadafe@clix.pt

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Preferably with experience, English speaking. 2 positions, Nai Harn. Serious offer for serious people. Please call for more information. Tel: 01-9560204.

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Looking for a Thai female or male secretary, who speaks good English and has a driver's license and computer skills. Must know Excel and be able to move to Pattaya. Salary 4,000-5,000 baht/week. Non-smoker only. Tel: 076-248827, 04-7444807. Fax: 076-248826. Email: toddteal@mail.com

BOOKKEEPER

wanted. Min 3 years' experience, knowledge of Quickbooks Pro. Office near Wat Chalong. Email: bic1@phuket.ksc.co.th

URGENTLY NEEDED

now. Housekeeper/cook; gardener/driver/maintenance man; English-speaking language teachers for Spanish, French and Thai lessons; music teachers for guitar, piano and singing lessons; personal fitness instructor. Excellent conditions and pay. English-speaker required. Pls contact for more information. Tel: 01-7871752, 01-9784773. Email: mjoneilluk@yahoo.co.uk

PROJECT

coordinator needed. Fluent in Thai and English; computer literate, with excellent secretarial skills. Tel: 076-325-667, 01-9145119. Fax: 076-324313. Email: info@acquaphuket.com

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Johnson Stokes & Master (JSM) was established in 1863 and has offices in Hong Kong, Mainland China, Thailand and Vietnam. JSM provides an extensive range of legal services to prestigious, blue chip clients in Hong Kong, Mainland China and across Asia. Our office in Bangkok already provides a full Thai legal service to international and Thai-based companies doing business in Thailand and the surrounding regions.

Due to the expansion of our business in Thailand, we are now opening an office in Phuket. We are seeking enthusiastic and experienced lawyers, an office manager and a secretary, all willing and able to take on new challenges. The successful candidates should be able to meet the following criteria:

LAWYERS

- Thai nationals
- 2-3 years' experience in general commercial and/or property law
- A high standard of written and spoken English
- Training will be provided in Phuket and Bangkok

OFFICE MANAGER

The position requires liaison with all lawyers and staff to ensure that all procedures are properly fulfilled and the office is run smoothly.

The role of Office Manager also encompasses the tasks of Executive Secretary to the Managing Director, providing assistance on day-to-day business operations.

Overview of key requirements and responsibilities:

- Oversee and ensure the general day-to-day office administration is efficient
- Support lawyer facilities
- Maintain and communicate clear company policies
- Manage all employment issues, including staff records, payroll, taxation etc.
- Manage the office secretarial function
- Provide additional support as necessary
- Produce monthly management and financial reports
- Carry out basic accounting and be responsible for areas such as bank accounts reconciliation, petty cash, VAT, monthly accounts, etc.
- Ensure the company complies with all relevant government regulations
- Manage invoicing and follow-up payments
- Manage all procurement issues

SECRETARY

- Male or female
- 2 years' experience in secretarial work with a law firm would be an advantage, but not essential
- Friendly and enjoy working as part of an international team
- Computer literate and familiar with both Thai and English operating systems

Benefits include:

We offer a stimulating work environment and a remuneration package commensurate with experience. Our intention is to create an office environment in Phuket which provides legal services at a level consistent with those we deliver in our offices in Hong Kong, Beijing, Shanghai, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh and Bangkok.

Applications should be sent to:

Nattaya Knavong

12th Floor, TISCO Tower, 48/20 North Sathorn Road, Bangrak, Bangkok, 10500, Thailand

Tel: (66 2) 638-0880 Fax: (66 2) 638-0870

Email: nattaya.knavong@jms.com www.jms.com

Please contact us or visit our web site for further information.

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Normeca Asia Pacific Co Ltd belongs to the Normeca Group in Norway, one of the leading suppliers of mobile hospitals and clinics in the world. You can find more information about Normeca Group at www.normeca.no

We now need the following staff in Phuket:

Accounting Manager

You must have at least 3-5 years' experience in accounting, fluent spoken and written English and know how to use a computer. You also need to know Thai law and rules for accounting, taxes, VAT and so on. Good salary for the right the person, starting A.S.A.P.

Maid/Housekeeper

We need someone to take care of our house in Phuket, including cleaning, laundering and preparing food some days a week. You must speak English.

Gardener/Driver

We need someone to take care of our garden. You must speak English and have a driver's licence, since we also need a driver from time to time.

Please call Ronny Karlsen at 05-1213179 for more information or send an e-mail including CV and picture to ronny.karlsen@normeca.no



The Banana Fan Sea Resort, a leading 4-star resort on Koh Samui's famous Chaweng Beach, is looking for new associates to join our existing team, who will work hard together to achieve new standards of excellence in our resort.

We are currently seeking:

1. Executive Secretary
2. Executive Housekeeper
3. Restaurant Manager
4. Assistant Front Office Manager
5. Bartender

For Position 1

- Fluent English is required
- Applicants interested in this position should submit a resumé directly to the General Manager: gm@bananafansea.com

For positions 2, 3, 4

- English Knowledge is required

For positions 5

- Basic English is required

Qualifications

- Experience in similar position
- Good personality and presentation skills
- Strong leadership and communication skills

For all positions a complete resumé should be sent either by mail or Email to:

Banana Fan Sea Resort
201 Moo 2 Chaweng Beach Road, Tambon Bophut, Koh Samui, Surat Thani, 84320.
Tel: 077 413483-6 Fax: 077 413487
Email: info@bananafansea.com

Employment Wanted

GERMAN LAWYER, age 43, is looking for a job in Thailand, especially Phuket. Not necessarily in law business. Have also experience in commerce/trade, diving and semi-professional German cooking. Always willing and able to try something new. Please contact me. Email: jobinlos@gmx.de

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If any company needs a property scout, please let me know. I'm available now. Thank you. Tel: 076-286071, 09-1968429. Fax: 076-286-071. Email: amorn9999@yahoo.com

SWEDISH LESSONS

Do you or your kids want to learn Swedish or English? I can help you with that from November 1, 2005 - April 1, 2006. Please call or send me an email if you are interested. Tel: +46-467063737. Email: picassocat@hotmail.com

NANNY/COOK

I can make Thai food - every menu - and a little Euro food. I was cooking on a diving boat before the tsunami. I have also worked in Holland. Please let me know if you might have any work for me. Tel: 076-202816, 01-6067417. Email: watchreec@yahoo.com

Tout, Trader & Trumpet

Articles for Sale

UNIQUE FURNITURE



Beautiful pieces from Suzhou, China. Dark timber china cabinet, opium chair, coffee table, carved mirror & vase. Tel: 076-385768, 06-2707031. Email: dgfcms@hotmail.com

VIDEO CAMERA FOR SALE

Video camera, Panasonic NVG 540 EG: 14,000 baht, GPS Garmin: 8,000 baht. Please call for more information. Tel: 04-1899868.

HP ALL-IN-ONE

2401 photosmart, fax, copy, printer, new ink: 8,900 baht. Please call for more information. Tel: 06-9549558.

Bulletins

Everyone is invited every Friday night at 18:15 for services followed by a lavish Shabbos meal at Chabad House.

52/32 Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd (opp Patong Post Office) T. Patong, A. Kathu, Phuket, 83150. For more information Tel: 04-1303770. Email: clthailand2@yahoo.com

"Have a good Shabbos"

Business Opportunities

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

Well located Shop section for rent in one of Patong's busiest shopping areas (close to Bangla Road). The section is approx 135 sqm, all on one floor, including toilet and small storeroom. Call 01-8920299 for more information.

PATONG

guesthouse for rent. Seven apartments - 2 with seaviews - balcony, parking space, fully furnished and equipped, satellite TV and Inet-Wlan, quiet and trendy Patong hillside, ready to run, take over August 1. Rent 550,000 baht per year, no key money, 50% covered by existing long-term contracts on 2 apartments. Contact for details. Tel: 076-296621, 01-6916147. Fax: 076-344689. Email: info@baansuanvilla.de

NIGHTCLUB

for sale. Exclusive nightclub in central Patong; fully equipped with stage, professional DJ equipment and VIP lounge. Contract until 31-12-2009. Before 2.5 million baht now 1.7 million baht. Tel: 076-292523, 06-6911516. Email: venus@patong.biz Website at: www.patong.biz/venus

HOTEL IN AO NANG,

Krabi, for sale. 17 rooms and restaurant on the main road; incredible mountain view. Please contact for more information. Tel: 01-8935105. Email: we_are95@hotmail.com

PROFITABLE BIZ

One of a kind; monthly net profit 120,00 baht. Price: 2.5 million baht. Please call for more information. Tel: 01-0808557.

BAR FOR SALE

Patong. 5-star luxury nightclub. 3-4 entertainment licenses, work permits, Thai company. Cost to build: 12 million baht, selling for 6 million baht. Please contact for more information. Tel: 07-8817600. For further details, please see our website at: www.homebarphuket.com

SMALL SPA

for sale, Patong. Includes healthy yearly profit and 900,000 baht in investment. Please contact for more information. Tel: 076-233348, 01-8958837. Fax: 076-212901. Email: siripornp@asianwind.biz

CAFE EUROPA KRABI

Scandinavian restaurant with 40 seats + guesthouse with 6 rooms. Sale includes building and company with 2 work permits. Well-established business, 15 years with the same owner. Price: 7 million baht. Tel: 09-5910584. Email: henrik_krabi@hotmail.com

NEW RESTAURANT FOR LEASE

60-seat, air-conditioned restaurant for lease in 3-story, new building, fully equipped. In Phuket City. Tel: 01-7872869.

Business Products & Services

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.

LEGAL SERVICES

Register your Thai Limited Company in just two hours through Thailand's largest legal service network, Siam International Legal Group. Business Licenses, contracts and property transactions by legal professionals at reasonable fees. Call 24 hours. Tel: 076-345277, 04-0219800. Email: admin@siam-legal.com For further details, please see our web-site at www.siam-legal.com

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Charity



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Office of Swiss Solidarity and Swiss Labor Assistance in Phuket: Funds available for credible reconstruction projects with Swiss counterparts. Only projects for victims of tsunami. Criteria of Swiss Solidarity applied. Please contact Tel. 01 274 96 86



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Miscellaneous for Sale

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Notice

NOTICE

I have a Queensland Court Judgment of A\$20,678.05 (for unpaid legal fees to do with her divorce) against Rungratchanee (Julie) Weston (Suriya) formerly of Toowoomba, Queensland, but now of Phuket. I will pay 5,000 baht to anyone who can give me the correct address of Rungratchanee Weston. Please contact Richard O'Bryen (Lawyer), 7 James Street, Toowoomba Qld 4350, Australia. Tel/fax: 61746131932, 0407726-225. Email: obryen1971@hotmail.com

Personal Services

VISA FOR THAILAND

Tired of visa runs? Get a one-year Thai visa. Free initial consultation at Thailand's largest legal service network, Siam International Legal Group. Call 24 hours. Tel: 076-345277, 04-0219800. Email: admin@siam-legal.com For further details, please see our website at www.siam-legal.com

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at home. Conversation and coursework with a charming Thai lady. Course books provided free. Also basic English lessons for Thai spouses. Please contact for more information. Tel: 076-398157, 01-7971497. Email: churee77@hotmail.com



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Personals

BACKGAMMON

Retired businessman looking for backgammon players on Phuket Island. Please call if interested. Tel: 076-386113, 01-5778443.

FEMALE PARTNER

wanted. European businessman living in Phuket is looking for a serious partner – independent, young, educated and working. Please contact for more information. Tel: 06-9410776. Email: bsc2703@yahoo.com.sg

Pets

KITTENS FOR FREE

2 female kittens need new home, both 2 months old, one black and one gray. Don't want to put them in a temple, so please help adopt them. Please email: phuketinasia@yahoo.com for more information.

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Very nice Chevrolet Optra for sale. Gray paint, beige leather, CD-radio, aircon, dark windows, 4 new wheels, never been damaged, year 2004, 26,000km, 670,000 baht, negotiable. Tel: 01-8512280. Email: dm@janydan.com

CHEROKEE FOR SALE

In very good condition, 4.0L, automatic, dark red, with black leather seats and CD player. Asking only 333,000 baht. Call for full details. Tel: 01-2712825.

SUZUKI JEEP

Red Caribbean for sale, good condition. Price: 110,000 baht. Tel: 01-8915474.

TOYOTA SPORT

rider 2.5L 4WD, manual gear, alarm, roof rack + ladder, leather interior, Pioneer radio/CD/MP3 player. I am the first owner. New in April 2004, only 37,000km. Price: 800,000 baht. Tel: 01-5353043. Email: rainier_vig@yahoo.fr


HONDA CRV

Automatic; black; leather. Maintenance book; no accidents. May 2002, Price: 770,000 baht. Tel: 07-2651390.

HONDA ACCORD

1990. Aircon, 4-door, gold color. 85,000 baht. Tel: 04-1872405. Email: peterflood@postmaster.co.uk

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