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Work set to start on west-coast marina

By Anongnat Sartpisut

CHERNG TALAY: Construction of the first marina on the island's west coast, the 51-rai, 1.7-billion-baht Layan Marina and condominium development, at the northern end of Bang Tao Beach, is due to start in October.

Nathaphut Na Patthalung, Managing Director of developer Layan Marina, explained that, after consulting with local yacht-building company Latitude 8°, he had determined that the site, between the sea and the Sun Tua development, is one of the best locations on Phuket's west coast for a marina.

Exposure to the wind and waves of the southwest monsoon makes much of the west coast unsuitable for marinas for half the year, but the entrance to Layan Marina is sheltered by nearby Koh Tha.

A natural canal, Klong Layan, is already used by local fishermen to get in and out with their boats. The klong is 25 meters wide at its mouth, but only three meters deep. K. Nathaphut said that he is currently in talks with the local authorities to gain permission to deepen it to six meters – the same depth as the berths planned for the marina.

"We have a natural canal – it is [already] wide and deep



Klong Layan, pictured here with Koh Tha in the background, will lead into the new Layan Marina.

– Photo courtesy of Ocean Breeze Resort and Suites, Layan, Phuket

enough for powerboats and for yachts up to 30 feet [nine meters] long," he said. Traveling along the klong, the project site is about 300 meters from the sea.

The marina will be built in three phases. Phase I includes berths for 75 boats and five con-

dominium blocks, each seven stories tall, for a total of 70 units, each selling for 12.5 million baht upward.

K. Nathaphut said that Phase I, which will also include a clubhouse with a swimming pool, fitness center and spa, is

scheduled for completion by the end of 2007.

Phase II, which will consist of 10 seven-story buildings each with 10 units, will start a couple of months after Phase I. Prices for these one- or two-bedroom units will start at 6.5 million baht, though the main target for this phase will be the timeshare market.

This phase will also see the marina enlarged by another 100 berths – giving it roughly the same number of berths as the Boat Lagoon – and space for shops and restaurants. It is expected to take two and a half years to complete.

The final phase, Phase III, which is expected to take three years to complete, will comprise 10 seven-story condo blocks, providing 350-400 units. Units will be priced from 7 million baht.

Plans for Phase III also include a tennis court, golf driving range and a large swimming pool, though K. Nathaphut said that the decision on whether to go ahead with this phase will depend on the success of the first two.

If Phase III goes ahead, a hard stand will be built to accommodate another 100 boats. The Layan Marina will be built by contractors Phuket BB Construction Co and Choke Papan Construction Co.

Police in plea for donations of new wheels

PHUKET CITY: Phuket City Police Superintendent Col Paween Pongsirin is appealing for public donations to help buy badly-needed police vehicles for his cash-strapped department.

Col Paween told the Gazette last week that although cars and motorcycles are essential for police work, seven of the

department's 14 squad cars are no longer roadworthy or are currently being repaired.

He added that 20 of the station's 60 bikes are inoperable.

"Our vehicles are too old – we have had them an average of five to seven years. Police vehicles are used 24 hours a day. We policemen get to take a rest, but our vehicles

never do. They are used all day, every day, because we have so few of them," he said.

The shortage is affecting the department's work and is often the reason for delays in responding to calls, he said.

"At any given time we need to have some cars on traffic detail and others out on

Continued on page 3

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STILL LOVING PHUKET



The word is spreading around the world. Flying the flag for Thailand (above) – and making the point that he loves Phuket – is Irishman John O'Dea, a regular visitor to the island, pictured promoting Phuket in his home town of Kilfenora, County Clare.



Meanwhile, (above) Vitoon Kemtong receives his prize of a dinner for two at the Pacific International Phuket Resort & Spa from *Gazette* Desk Editor Shiona Mackenzie as part of the continuing "We Love Phuket" campaign.

December quake moved Phuket 27cm

LONDON: Scientists say that Phuket moved 27 centimeters to the southwest when the massive tsunami-generating quake erupted near Sumatra on December 26 last year, and moved a further 7cm in the following 50 days.

Writing in the latest issue of the respected *Nature* magazine, the scientists say that the quake ripped a gash in the Earth's crust more than 1,000 kilometers long, stretching from Sumatra to the Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

The team also worked out that the rupture initially traveled at more than 13,000kmh.

The team of Dutch, French, Indonesian, Malaysian, Thai and US researchers used data gathered from some 60 global positioning system (GPS) sites in Southeast Asia. They learned that the positions of observation stations as far away as 3,000km from the quake's epicenter had shifted as a result of the temblor.

Property tax break plan ill-timed – Phummisak

By Sangkhae Leelanaporn

PHUKET: Phummisak Hongyok, President of the Phuket Real Estate Club, has criticized as ill-timed and inappropriate a government proposal to reduce the tax on transfer of property ownership.

His criticism, on July 14, came despite the fact that many might assume that real estate companies and property developers would welcome the proposed tax break as a stimulant, however small, to house sales.

The proposal was floated the previous day by Deputy Finance Minister Chaiyot Sasomsub.

Currently, homebuyers must pay transfer taxes based on the purchase price of each and every property they buy.

The proposed tax break, K. Chaiyot explained, would mean that transfer taxes would be based on the difference between the

price of the new home and the price of the old one.

For example, under the current system, a homebuyer upgrading from a 1-million-baht home to a 1.5-million-baht home pays tax on both amounts in full.

Under the new proposal, the buyer would pay tax on the original 1 million baht, and then on the difference between the house prices – 500,000 baht.

K. Phummisak, however, told the *Gazette* that he believes the timing of the tax break proposal is wrong.

"I don't think this idea is appropriate right now. I don't know what the central government is trying to do, but it is the wrong time.

"When the economy is like this, with the cost of fuel rising every day, we should encourage people to save more.

"If they have a house already, why encourage them to spend more buying a bigger house?" he asked.

In addition, he queried, "Who would buy a new house just because transfer fees have been reduced like this?"

K. Phummisak explained that in Phuket the market for low- to medium-cost houses – which he described as being priced between 1 million and 4 million baht – was suffering be-

cause most of the buyers are hotel staff, tour guides or other people who work in the battered tourism industry.

"But the high-end of the [Phuket property] market has no problems because most of the money is transferred from overseas and the buyers are still certain they want to buy.

"They are thinking long-term about having a holiday home in Phuket," he added.

HM Queen Sirikit Park expanded

PHUKET CITY: Work on HM Queen Sirikit Park, the city's fourth public garden, is almost complete.

The park, on the south side of Dibuk Rd, has been enlarged by three rai following a request made to the government by Governor Udomsak Uswarangkura not to site the Provincial Treasury Office on land in the area originally earmarked for that purpose.

The public would benefit more from a green area downtown than from another building, he argued. The government agreed.

The park will now occupy nine rai, with a new Tourism Au-

Halal food festival aimed at boosting Kamala

KAMALA: Phuket Provincial Administration Organization with the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) will stage a "Halal Food Hilal Town" at Kamala Beach from July 28 to August 1.

The highlight will be a sound-and-light presentation of the story of Princess Mahsuri, a semi-legendary princess from Kamala.

Other activities include a wide range of inexpensive, tasty Halal food (food prepared according to the Muslim way); readings of the Holy Quran by young people; zebra dove and bulbul singing contests; demonstrations of leatherwork; and many other attractions featuring traditional local lifestyle.

There will also be an exhibition on sustainable tourism, and stalls featuring products from the 14 provinces of Southern Thailand.

Privy Councilor Gen Surayud Chulanont will preside over the opening ceremony on July 28 at 5:30 pm on Kamala Beach, in front of the Coco Hut Resort, near the entrance to Phuket FantaSea.

For more information visit www.phuketcity.org or www.tourismthailand.org, or call Tel: 076-211877, 076-212213.

– Sangkhae Leelanaporn

thority of Thailand office to be built on the other one rai of the total 10-rai site. The park will be officially opened in September, after the arrival of a large "Hai Leng" dragon sculpture that has been commissioned as the park's centerpiece.

Mayor Somjai Suwannasuppana asked the public to donate shade-giving Golden Shower trees (*ton rachapreuk* or Cassia Fistula) for the final three rai, which were to be planted during a ceremony at the park at 4 pm on July 21.

Response to the call for trees has been positive; 35 have already been donated. In about three months' time plaques bearing the names of the donors will be placed under each tree, Mayor Somjai told the *Gazette*.

There is still room in the park for more trees. They cost as follows: eight-inch-diameter trunk, 5,000 baht; 10-inch, 6,000 baht; 12-inch, 8,000 baht

Contact Phuket City Municipality at Tel: 076-212196 for more information.

– Athiga Jundee



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Tsunami alarms to be hooked up next month

By Ananya Hongsa-ngiam

PHUKET: The island's tsunami warning system will be linked in August via satellite to the Nonthaburi-based National Disaster Warning Center (NDWC).

Patong, which has been chosen for the pilot project of the NDWC's tsunami warning system for the entire Andaman coast, is home to three NDWC warning towers and there are plans to increase the number of towers to cover 24 locations around Phuket in the future.

The NDWC system will make Thailand the first of the countries hit by the December 26, 2004, tsunami to devise a national warning system.

Boonchai Somjai, head of the Phuket Provincial Office of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, explained that the next four locations for siren tower construction will be in Kata, Karon, Kamala, and Sakoo.

After that, towers will be built at Mai Khao, Ao Poh, Laem Tukkae, Saphan Hin, Ao Chalong, Rawai and Laem Promthep.

Apart from delivering warnings through the towers, the system will be capable of interrupting regular radio and TV programming to alert the public to the approach of a tsunami or any other disaster. It will also deliver



Dr Smith Thammasaroj (left), head of the National Disaster Warning System, thanks Governor Udomsak Uswarangkura for his support.

warning SMS messages to mobile phones.

A Cabinet meeting will be held next month to approve a budget for the construction of 62 alarm system towers in the six Andaman coast provinces and Bangkok.

Dr Smith Thammasaroj, who was appointed to establish the NDWC, said, "Installing the tsunami alarm system should help

tourists regain confidence in the safety of the region."

The alarm system in Patong will be tested once the satellite link to Nonthaburi is complete.

Chairat Sukbal, Deputy Mayor of Patong Municipality, told the *Gazette*, "We will inform the public at least one week in advance of the test."

The NDWC Hotline is Tel: 1860

Scottish girl, 15, dies in crash

PATONG: A 15-year-old Scottish schoolgirl, Alexandra Stark, died in the early hours of July 13 when the motorcycle on which she was riding pillion was hit by another bike.

Pol Maj Sophol Borirak, of Kathu Police Station, said that the accident happened at about 2 am at Tanut Corner on Nanai Rd. Miss Stark was riding behind the family babysitter, Tientong Kanson, when they were hit by another motorcycle driven by Peerapong Sasitornvetchakul, 20.

A family friend told the *Gazette* that the two girls had gone out to buy noodle soup and were returning to Miss Stark's

home when the accident took place.

Neither Peerapong nor K. Tientong were badly hurt but Miss Stark died after falling onto the road. Peerapong was charged with reckless driving causing death.

Maj Sophol said that tests showed Peerapong was drunk, with a blood-alcohol concentration of 263mg/100ml.

"Peerapong has admitted that he was drunk while driving," Maj Sophol added. "He has been released on bail of 200,000 baht. We expect to complete our investigation within a month, at which time the case will go to court."

Store owner's death 'suicide'

KATHU: A grocery store owner living in the Moo Baan Irawadee housing development in Ketho apparently committed suicide July 13 by shooting himself in the head.

Pol Lt Col Ampolwat Saengraung of Tung Tong Police Station identified the man as 35-year-old Songkhla native Prawee "Ead" Kaewbutr.

He lived with his daughter

and common-law wife, who discovered his body in a bedroom at about 1 am. He had apparently shot himself in the right temple with a .38-caliber pistol, which was found next to his head.

The bullet and traces of gunpowder taken from K. Prawee's hand have been sent to the Office of Forensic Science in Bangkok to confirm that the death was suicide.

Police appeal for new wheels

From page 1

patrol. That doesn't leave many for our duty officers to use when responding to calls," he said.

Duty officer Pol Lt Thivakorn Kongpeth told the *Gazette* that the situation had deteriorated to the point where many officers had taken to calling the Kusoldharm Rescue Foundation and asking them for a lift to accident scenes.

"When I answer a call, I use my own personal vehicle – and have to pay for the gas myself," he said.

Col Paween explained that getting funding for new vehicles from the Royal Thai Police head-

quarters was not an easy task.

"They have 1,460 stations under their control, so it takes a long time to get approval for a budget," he said.

"People look to the police when they are in need, but when our vehicles break down we end up having to pay for repairs out of our own pockets.

"People always use our service, but how many of them think of the suffering of police?" Col Paween asked.

Those seeking to ease the suffering of the police can arrange to make a donation by calling Tel: 076-216046 or 076-212115. **Editorial: Page 20**

Hitmen kill businesswoman

PATONG: A 27-year-old woman from Udon Thani, Nilasnuch Tongnun, was shot dead by hitmen on the evening of July 8 while chatting with her uncle and neighbors at Ericsson Guest House on Nanai Rd.

Pol Lt Col Boonlert Onklang, of Kathu Police Station, said, "She was shot four times: once in the chest, once in the left shoulder and twice in the back."

Col Boonlert said police who went to the scene of the shooting found three bullets on the ground and a trail of blood from a marble table in front of the guesthouse to K. Nilasnuch's home 40 meters away.

"She was sitting outside the guesthouse at about 10:30 pm with her uncle, and the sister and daughter of the owner of the guesthouse, when two men on a Blue Honda Wave motorcycle, both wearing helmets, pulled up alongside," Col Boonlert said.

"The man on the back of the motorbike shot K. Nilasnuch twice before getting off the bike. He then walked up to her and fired twice more. When he was sure that she was dead, he got back on the motorbike and [the men] rode off."

The trail of blood was caused, police learned, when K.

Nilasnuch's uncle carried her to her home.

Col Boonlert said that a man, known to police only as "K. Pong", had rented a room in the guesthouse about five days before the shooting. He had not been seen since K. Nilasnuch was shot.

Police have taken fingerprints from the room and have K. Pong's mobile telephone number.

He added that witnesses had seen two men riding around the area on the same motorbike in the days leading up to the shooting. However, he said, witnesses could not give a full description of the men, who always wore full-face helmets.

Col Boonlert said that K. Nilasnuch was planning to open a spa and silk shop in the Jung-

ceylon shopping complex with a business partner.

"She had signed the contract and had already paid the developers for rent and decorating. Last year, more than 1 million baht was paid into, and then withdrawn from, one of her six bank accounts. We believe this was used to pay for her shop," he said.

"She was planning to go to Sweden on July 12 because she has a Swedish boyfriend, whom she met about two months ago," Col Boonlert added. He said the boyfriend was currently in Laos on business and could not be contacted.

K. Nilasnuch's body was cremated at Wat Patong. Police are continuing their investigation into her murder.

– Athiga Jundee

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Nit-picker: Jao Jor is feeling plucky with her pet chicken.

NAN: As humans continue to invade, bomb and terrorize one another, perhaps we could all learn a lesson from a diverse group of animals that get along wonderfully together at Wat Nadai.

There, a macaque, a dog, a cat and a chicken all co-exist peacefully in a temple sala.

The star of the show is six-year-old Jao Jor, a female crab-eating macaque, abandoned at the temple by a traveling salesman when she was about a year old, after the salesman realized it was not practical to roam the country with an adult monkey in tow.

"I'm afraid she may die or be shot and eaten by my neighbors if I abandon her," he told the abbot of the temple back in 2000.

The cat and dog get along wonderfully with Jao Jor, who especially likes to groom the dog, looking for ticks and fleas.

Even a chicken has fallen under the spell of the gentle Jao Jor, who is often found hugging the bird to her chest and grooming it. The tick-picking has left the chicken half plucked – but the bird doesn't seem to mind and is always coming back for more.

Source: Kom Chad Luek

As the island's real estate boom continues, many questions are being raised as to the long-term effect that so many new projects will have on the island's water supply. The *Gazette's* Anongnat Sartpisut and Stephen Fein asked people involved in the real estate industry what steps developers should take to protect the island's water supply – and what role the government should play.

Local property developer and erstwhile provincial politician Somchai Duangkhae believes that too many developers fail to take the natural contours of the land into effect during project design.

As a result, they often block natural watercourses, backfill low-lying areas that are important for recharging the groundwater table, and cause erosion and landslides.

This "backfill and build" approach not only affects water supply but also spoils an area's natural beauty, he believes.

One major problem is that the current system of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) is of little value in protecting water supplies, he says, because the government committee responsible normally performs

on-site inspections only before work begins.

After granting a building permit, the committee seldom, if ever, returns to check on construction in progress – unless it receives a complaint about the work from the public. For this reason, most developers see the process as a bureaucratic hurdle and simply hire a consultant to help them get over it.

K. Somchai says the only real solution is increased environmental awareness from all sides – project designers, developers, builders, investors, government officials and buyers – so that the intent of the law will become better understood and adhered to. This is largely a matter of education, he thinks.

"Properly done, real estate development doesn't have to entail environmental degradation," he maintains. "With some respect for the environment and some creativity it can even enhance the natural landscape."

Bill Barnett, Managing Director of asset management firm C9 Hotelworks and current developer of the 50-unit Ocean Breeze Resort project at Layan

Beach, sees water supply as a vital issue, but he does not believe that all the blame can be laid at the feet of developers.

"We have experienced water shortages in the past two years, so water remains a critical issue. You cannot single out real estate, but rather have to look at the development of the entire island, which has seen its unofficial population rise to over half a million people.

"Issues on development of infrastructure to meet this rate of

from clearing trees, but water shortages are more fundamental in terms of population growth, and infrastructure not keeping pace – or lagging well behind it.

"In the Caribbean and the Maldives, rainwater is collected off all buildings and they have seawater treatment plants and water conservation programs in place. But these are not widely used in Phuket. The water table on the island is shrinking and one has to wonder how the demand can be met."

growth certainly pose a challenge to government planning bodies and there seems to be a lack of resources dedicated to improving basic services, such as water.

"Many high-density areas on the island, such as Rawai and Patong, experienced significant shortages this year – despite a lower demand for water than expected because of the downturn in tourism after the tsunami. Water issues are a time-bomb on the island and need to be addressed.

"Certainly, there is an environmental impact



'The more we pump water out of the aquifer, the greater the chance of saltwater intrusion, which is very dangerous. There is only so much water under the ground.'
– OB Wetzell of Development Management Group.

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WATER ANSWERS

Property developers may be accused of damaging Phuket's water supplies, but the problems run far deeper, the developers say.

Like everyone the *Gazette* spoke to, OB Wetzell, Managing Director of Development Management Group (DMG), says Phuket's plentiful rainfall between April and November should be more than enough to meet demand – but that politics have come in the way of a long-term solution.

"A water study of Phuket was done about six years ago. At that time it was my opinion that there was enough water on Phuket in tin mine ponds. The problem with water on Phuket is that it is not distributed properly. The existing distribution system does not go out to areas where there are a lot of new developments.

"I spoke with the Governor at that time, Chadej Insawang. He was in strong support, along with Senator Paiboon [Upatising] and many others, of installing an island-wide water system.

"We had a contractor named Earth Tech willing to put up US\$60 million to put in a system that they would later hand over to the government after they had had sufficient time to recoup their investment.

"The system required that we improve the Bang Wad Dam, because it has a leak in it now. We had to fix the leak, and then we could add more water to it. So we were going to add water from an area in Kathu and another in Boonchoo by pumping up the hill and into the dam.

"But we had to reach an agreement between the Irrigation Department, which controls the Bang Wad Dam, the water supply authorities and other government agencies involved – and the owners of the tin mines who supply water.

"It became very compli-



'You cannot single out real estate, but rather have to look at the development of the entire island, which has seen its unofficial population rise to over half a million people.'

– Bill Barnett
of C9 Hotelworks.

cated, political, and bureaucratic trying to make all this work – but we came very close.

"The engineering is easy and there are investors abroad willing to pay for it. One of the major stumbling blocks is the politics of water," he says.

Mr Wetzell sees at least three advantages of an island-wide supply system over the current patchwork of individual supply systems.

"It would be good because the water quality could be controlled. We could be one of the first islands in Southeast Asia to have potable tap water.

"The second reason would be that we could control the price, so that nobody would pay much more than anybody else.

"The third reason is that, with all these microsystems, all the big hotels and many private citizens are putting down wells. The more we pump water out of the aquifer, the greater the chance of saltwater intrusion, which is very dangerous. There is only so much water under the ground.

"Phuket gets plenty of water from rainfall. If we catch enough rain and store it properly, we would have enough water on the island for everybody to be happy. But when you pump out of the ground you run the risk of saltwater intrusion and you can never fix it – so wells are dangerous," he said.

Mr Wetzell also thinks desalinization has a role to play in protecting the groundwater supply.

"There are some private properties that want to set up desalinization plants, using re-

verse-osmosis technology to remove the salt from seawater – or even using reverse osmosis to retreat and recycle wastewater.

"This would be very beneficial, much better than using wells. The problem, again, is that the government doesn't know how to deal with it. They don't know how to provide permits for it," he explains.

verse-osmosis technology to remove the salt from seawater – or even using reverse osmosis to retreat and recycle wastewater.

"Desal is a great way to provide water to residential communities in the dry season and maybe even to tourist communities – but right now it's more a dream than a reality," he says.

Mr Wetzell has also observed that the kind of high-end

The stumbling block here, he says, is the rules drawn up to regulate the prawn farming industry, long a source of coastal water pollution. The law forbids the removal of water from the sea for use on land, followed by its return to the sea, he says.

"The regulatory authorities don't know how to give out permits to put in a desalinization plant. Many of the projects I'm working on would like to use desalinization, but right now we

developments that his company is involved with are more likely to set up expensive collect-and-store systems than many other residential projects.

"The other developments that put down wells are attacking the existing, fragile water system. I don't know how you control this. How do you regulate it? Ultimately, we need a government that is very concerned about water and has some power to regulate the quality and distribution of water.

"Right now, the way the EIAs are written, they don't concern themselves enough with the management of water. When you file for a building permit you have to tell them what you're going to do with your sewage – but you don't have to tell them how you are going to get your water in the first place – and it's the freshwater that's in low supply.

"Again, the government has to pay attention to these things and, of course, the developers need to cooperate too," he stresses.

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Longtails break into the mold

By Sangkhae Leelanaporn

The traditional favorite of Thai fishermen, the wooden longtail boat may soon be usurped by a modern counterpart made of glass fiber.

Steve Day, Managing Director of Asia Marine Technik Co (AMT), told the *Gazette* that in the near future fiberglass longtails would likely become the fisherman's top choice.

"The advantages of a boat made from fiberglass are that it is safe, it is lighter than one made of wood, and it is easy to clean and maintain," Mr Day explained. "Also, we offer a three-year guarantee to our customers."

"The cost of our fiberglass longtail, without engine, is about 125,000 baht, not much more than a wooden longtail, which costs about 100,000 baht. Of course, our boats can also be fitted with conventional outboard engines."

Based in Phuket, AMT is a powerboat and fishing boat manufacturer that grew out of OSS Marine, a company that specialized in the restoring and repairing yachts and powerboats.

"We have a factory in Thalang District where our team produce our range of boats. Using a mold, we can build one fiberglass longtail boat a week now, though we plan to produce more. It takes longer than that to build a wooden longtail," Mr Day added.

"We will market our longtails in other places such as Phang Nga, Ranong, Samui and Pattaya, and overseas, including Sri Lanka, Indonesia and other countries that were affected by the tsunami," he said.

Vicharn Prachoomphan, AMT's Managing Director of Sales, told the *Gazette*, "Fiberglass is so sturdy that it can last from three to 10 years without maintenance, and if the fiberglass breaks we can spot-fix damaged sections."

"A lot of fisherman have examined our fiberglass longtail boat and agree that it is a great product. It's a new commodity in Thailand, so customers ask many questions before buying," K. Vicharn said.

He explained that many fisherman would like to buy a fiberglass longtail, but need to sell their old wooden one first. "We hope to cooperate with finance



One of the new fiberglass longtail boats, with a mounted pilot's pedestal, takes shape at the Asia Marine Technik boatyard. A fiberglass longtail boat can now be built in about one week.

companies to allow struggling fishermen an opportunity to own one of our boats."

AMT already has competition. Omni Marine Co's first hull was released from the mold on July 4, after three months of effort. In the future, the company expects to build about three longtails a week.

Bjorn Moller, Director of Omni, said that he has worked with the local sea gypsies along Thailand's Andaman coast for

some time now. "After the tsunami I started to provide them with new boats, mainly longtails, but I saw the need for new thinking and technology."

"Our fiberglass longtail is the fruit of two years of research in the region. We developed it with the help of local [Sea Gypsies] and some of my boat-designing friends," Mr Moller added.

He noted that the problems of deforestation and the rising

price of wood are at least partly addressed by the creation of the fiberglass longtail. "We have the technology to build any model of boat in a short time, using laser-cut molds in our shipyards in Thailand and Malaysia."

"Our longtails could be useful in Sri Lanka, India, Indonesia, and elsewhere," he said. "I am now trying to contact organizations that have funds for donating new fishing boats to the local population," he said.

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National ban on cockfighting

In an effort to halt the spread of bird 'flu, the Livestock Department imposed a temporary ban on cockfighting nationwide and restricted free-range duck and chicken breeding in 25 provinces. The move follows reports of mass poultry deaths on farms in 12 provinces.

Livestock Department Director-General Yukhol Limlaemthong said the Interior, Natural Resources and Environment, and Public Health ministries were made jointly responsible for enforcing the ban.

K. Yukhol believes that duck breeders in the 25 provinces, which include the 12 provinces where mass poultry deaths have been reported, will comply with the ban.

If testing now underway indicates bird 'flu, chicken exports will have to be halted until at least the end of this year, he added.

Thawat Suntrajarn, Director General of the Disease Control Department, said earlier that the H5N1 virus had become endemic in Suphan Buri Province, but urged locals not to panic because "the authorities have everything under control" and there have been no human cases of the disease in the province in recent months.

Nirandorn Uangtrakoolsuk, who heads the Livestock Department's Disease Control Veterinary Service Bureau, confirmed that bird 'flu outbreaks had been detected at five places in Suphan Buri's Sam Chuk district.

He said that before this latest round of bird 'flu infections, Agriculture Minister Sudarat Keyuraphan had planned to declare the country "bird 'flu-free" as it had been 90 days since the last recorded case in Lop Buri.



BACK TO THE BASICS: Trishaw drivers wait for customers in Bangkok's Prachachuen District. The three-wheelers have become popular again as their fares are lower than those charged by motorcycle taxi drivers, who are being pinched by high fuel prices.

"But now, we have to start from day one again," he said.

Charming fellow: The Criminal Court denied bail to occultist Harn "Nain Ae" Raksajit, 45, after his July 10 arrest for allegedly deceiving the public. The court acted on the suggestion of police, who feared that the suspect might threaten witnesses if released.

Harn, who claims to have supernatural powers and specializes in rituals supposed to enhance women's sexual allure, was arrested at his home in Saraburi's Nong Don District.

Police seized videotapes of Harn having sex with some of his customers, allegedly used for blackmail; two boxes of condoms; Viagra tablets; lingerie found in a "ritual room"; bank books showing accounts totaling almost 10 million baht; land title deeds; and three vehicles – including a new Mercedes-Benz.

Police said that Harn had advertised his services in many

publications, offering to help restore relationships between estranged couples with his rituals. Customers paid up to 10,000 baht each for his services, but did not get the results they were promised.

Harn denied the charges, saying that the videotapes were likely made by his estranged wife, from whom he has been separated for more than two years.

Rattled: The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) dismissed reports that gift handouts it made to newborn babies were substandard and posed a danger to the infants.

Speaking in response to complaints from parents who received toys from the Ministry's Brain-Based Learning Center, MoPH Permanent Secretary Vichai Tienthavon said some parents might have been annoyed because the free gifts, distributed on a trial basis, did not compare

well with learning-stimulation toys sold in the market.

Each gift package contains seven items designed to enhance infants' intelligence and emotional quotients. The handout scheme is scheduled to start on July 28, and the center is expected to give 300,000 bags to parents across the country by the end of the year.

K. Vichai explained that the designs of the items were based on knowledge used in Western countries, but were manufactured in part by Thai handicraft makers as part of the government's OTOP scheme.

Bang on: Residents of Uttara-dit's Tha Pla District unearthed four antique drums while cleaning up the grounds of a deserted temple in preparation for an annual Longon Festival.

Elderly residents said they hadn't seen such drums since they were very young, when they were used as part of a local drum-

ming competition. One estimated the drums to be about 300 years old.

Tambon Ruamjit headman Kham Jaiyapiangkaewkamnan said that it became apparent the pieces of wood were drums only after earth was removed from them.

"Villages used to have drum competitions with drummers from each village on boats cruising along the Nan River. The village whose drums could be heard from furthest away won," explained 75-year-old resident Pan Kanthathit.

The local mayor said he wanted to revive the tradition and build a museum to house the drums, which range in length from one meter to 3.7 meters.

Iron rice bowls: The government will need to come up with 8.5 billion baht to increase the salaries of state workers by 5% as promised, said Deputy Prime Minister Wissanu Krea-ngam.

K. Wissanu said the increase would be across the board and implemented when the new budget year starts in October. The National Salary Committee initially proposed that the increase be made in May next year, but Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra wanted it implemented sooner to help officials cope with the economic downturn.

For those working in the private sector, a Ministry of Labor sub-committee proposed raising the daily minimum wage by six baht in Bangkok, with authorities in other provinces free to set increases as necessary, depending on local conditions.

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

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Rising cost of fuel taking its toll

Operators of Samui's main transport services are demanding to be allowed to increase their prices by 15% to 20% to offset higher fuel costs.

Wichean Promcharern, chairman of the Samui Transport Cooperative, which operates public *songtaew* services around the island, said that more than 200 passenger vehicles have been affected by rising oil prices on Samui, and that he had put in a proposal to the provincial authorities asking for permission to increase fares.

The government has officially frozen fares on public transport nationwide, and currently imposes a 1,000-baht fine on drivers caught overcharging, with a further penalty of license cancellation for repeat offenders.

In the private sector, however, prices have already risen, with the islands airline, Bangkok Airways, recently putting up the price of its promotional flights from Bangkok to Samui.

Meanwhile, Althiya Sutthara, general manager of Grand Sea Tours, which runs speedboats to Koh Tao and the National Marine Park said that many boat



The new 20-million-baht viewpoint is controversial, but the Mayor argues that Samui needs more than just new roads.

companies are suffering badly due to rising fuel costs.

A trip from Samui to Koh Tao uses 400 litres of gasoline, she said. The cost of this has nearly doubled in recent months and we will soon be forced to increase ticket prices.

Tourism officials are worried that higher transport costs will deter tourists, particularly the domestic visitors who help prop up the economy during low season periods.

Samui is already considerably more expensive than the

mainland due to transport costs, and the worry is that further hikes could soon make the difference unacceptable to many potential customers.

Southern discomfort: Chao Ngiampaisal, the owner of the Muang Samui Spa and resort, says there were no tourist cancellations as a result of the recent terrorist attacks on London.

Bookings at his resort, which is one of Chaweng's newest and largest, remain high. In fact, the hotel is full right through until the end of August with most of the guests coming from Britain and other European countries.

Tourist numbers are still very good for the time of year, he confirmed. But the London bombings make it even more urgent for the Thai government to find a solution to the problems in the South.

We have avoided a serious negative impact on Samui so far, but if the situation worsens it could be very damaging to the tourism business in the region.

Figures released by the TAT this week confirm the healthy state of Samui tourism, with numbers actually up on the same time last year.

The head of the Samui TAT office, Panuk Woramit said that although June and July are normally considered low season in Thailand, popular tourist locations such as Chaweng, Lamai and Bophut are currently enjoying good occupancy levels.

Working with Bangkok Airways, his office plans to promote the island further later this month with an all-star Thai Beach Vol-

leyball contest from July 13 to 16.

Thai film and music stars will compete in the contest which, it is hoped, will attract visitors from Bangkok and other parts of Thailand.

Old ferries sold off: On a recent visit to Koh Samui, the Minister of Justice, Suwat Liptapanlop spotted two disused ferries blocking access to the main passenger pier in Nathon.

The broken-down vessels have occupied space at the pier for five years since the company that ran them went bankrupt. In the meantime, authorization has been given for a new passenger pier, which is now well on the way to completion.

Following the Ministers comments, the old ferries were sold to a consortium consisting of local ferry operator Raja and a Bangkok-based company. The larger one sold for 7 million baht and the smaller one for 3 million baht.

Both vessels were removed within a week, leading some commentators to question the need for the new ferry terminal, which is costing taxpayers several hundred million baht.

Different point of view: Waragorn Ratanarak, the Mayor of Koh Samui, recently announced the controversial construction of a 20-million-baht viewpoint above the tourist beach of Chaweng, complete with car park and public facilities.

The project is part of a beautification program that will take place on the island between 2006 and 2008 to coincide with other improvements such as better roads and garbage disposal.

The Mayor acknowledges that Samui's roads are the No 1 priority for 80% of local folk, but he believes that

money should also be spent in other areas to create a more balanced approach to development.

More public facilities will make the island more attractive to visitors and residents, he said, adding that we should also be looking at ways to separate and recycle waste because if current levels continue, the islands incinerator will reach maximum capacity in around two years.

Such problems need to be addressed now, otherwise we could find ourselves facing serious pollution problems in the future, and it is unlikely that we will have the funds to buy another incinerator.

Cdr Sammy Swan is a writer for Samui's community magazine.

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FROM THE GULF OF THAILAND



By Commander Sammy Swan

This week



KHAO LAK KINDNESS: Teera Chakajnarodom, Chairman of Samaritans of Thailand, officially opens the Samaritans Befriending Center in Khao Lak on July 9. Beside him are Virat Paopluk (left), Chief of the Takuapa Public Health Office, and Nikom Alapach (right), owner of the Khao Lak Green Beach Hotel. The center offers befriending services in Thai, Wednesday-Sunday, 5 pm-9 pm, at Tel: 076-423273/4.



ROTARY RELIEF: Former Rotary International President Bhijai Rattakul congratulates a Kamala fisherman on receiving a boat donated by the Rotary network. The six Rotary Clubs in Phuket together raised a total of 2.28 million baht to repair 10 boats, buy another 18 new boats and provide cash for fishermen in Kamala affected by the tsunami.



STORM THE PARTY: French DVI (Disaster Victim Identification) Team Commander Maj Jerome Servettaz (left) takes a break from his arduous work to celebrate Bastille Day with other French nationals at a cocktail party at The Metropole hotel on July 14. He is joined by Jean-Pierre Ledonne (center), Phuket Consultant to the French DVI Team, and Adjutant Patrice Lallemand.



PENAL PRODUCTS: Dr Somchai Pookayaporn (in blue shirt), Assistant to the Minister of Justice, and Phuket Governor Udomsak Uswarangkura (right, in white shirt) inspect one of the items, made by prison inmates, on display at the recent Southern Prison Products Exhibition at Saphan Hin.



BEEMER IS BACK: Pingpan Ratana (center), Phuket Branch Manager of BMW dealer Performance Motors (Thailand) Ltd; Phoonsin Sinthanaphat (right), Vice-President of Thanachart Bank Plc, Phuket branch; and former Phuket Chamber of Commerce Chairman Pamuke Archariyachai mark the Phuket launch of the new BMW 3 series on July 8 at the Performance Motors showroom.



STAR START: Direct2U Managing Director Nittaya Pisolyabutr (red polo-neck) celebrates the recent grand opening of the Direct2U, an outlet of TV marketing company Retail Direct Co, on Wichit Songkram Rd, in Phuket City. Guests at the event were (from left) actress Pimpan Chalayanakop; Samkan Sangfai; Phuket Provincial Administration Organization Vice-President Sutin Uthaitamrong and actress Sirapabha Sukdamrong.

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Tourist police want you – today!

Volunteers who spend their spare time helping Thailand's police are nothing new. What is new, in Phuket at least, is foreign volunteers helping the Tourist Police patrol areas frequented by tourists.

The *Gazette's* Anongnat Sartpisut met one such volunteer to find out why he put up his hand when the call came, and what the job entails.

Volunteer Tourist Police Officer No 2049, James Thomas Madigan, always wanted to be a cop. The burly Californian spent 10 years as a full-time patrolman with the San Francisco Police, then another 15 years working with them voluntarily.

Now in Phuket, he's doing the same with the local Tourist Police.

"We wear volunteers' uniforms and carry walkie-talkies and mobile phones, in case fellow volunteers or police have a problem. The Tourist Police need people who are willing to work from the heart, not for the sake of wearing an elegant uniform," Mr Madigan explains.

He is the only policeman in his family. "A good family friend inspired me to join the police," he says, "starting out as a volunteer when I was young. As a schoolboy, I always wanted to be a policeman when I grew up."

He gained a degree in psychology from California State University, then went into the San Francisco Police Academy. After graduation he worked as a full-time patrolman for 10 years, then as a volunteer for 15 years.

In his last job, he handled police dogs and patrolled residential areas, just as the Royal Thai Police do.

"I've worked since I was 21-years-old and spent all my life helping people. It's in my blood," Mr Madigan said. "I am happy to work, to help people from

Thailand and other countries. I just want to do something I enjoy."

"I had good experience working with the police in the US. I've lived in Phuket for almost nine years now, though I go back to the US with my family for a couple weeks each year.

"When the local police department told me about the volunteer police training that was conducted at the beginning of the year, I was very eager to do it. I think it's a good job for foreigners here, to assist the full-time police.

"I joined the first group of Volunteer Tourist Police in Phuket before the tsunami. I was in the US on vacation when [the wave] struck; I returned to Phuket on January 2nd and worked with local businessmen and police taking

food to refugee camps in Khao Lak.

"There are two categories of Volunteer Tourist Police: bicycle patrol and foot patrol. Right now, I'm patrolling beach areas on foot.

"Sometimes we almost seem to serve as tour guides, because we must answer travelers' questions about Thailand, where to stay, and tourist spots. We need to know Patong beach and the surrounding area well."

The Volunteer Tourist police work in pairs: one Thai and one foreigner. "Team leaders decide what to do, where and when," Mr Madigan explained. "Usually, I work in the evening; it's of more use to the police for



IN THE SYSTEM: After 10 years as a full-time patrolman and 15 years as a volunteer, James Madigan still could not give up the urge to help people. "I've worked since I was 21 years old and spent all my life helping people. It's in my blood," he says.

volunteers to help them enforce the law at night.

"We have the cooperation of the local Thai police and we have no communication problems with them. The Tourist Police are well-educated and speak English very well. The foreign volunteers are very impressed with this." Even so, he says, he is going to school to learn Thai.

Phuket currently has 20 foreign Volunteer Tourist Police

Officers, from a variety of nationalities. "It is very helpful for tourists if we can use their native tongue," he added, "whether it is English, French, German, or something else.

"Most of the volunteers need to pay for their own equipment [like walkie-talkies]. I use a lot of my own money. If we could get local firms to support us, it would make things easier.

"I think the Volunteer Tour-

ist Police concept is a good one and I'd like to encourage more foreigners to get involved. The opportunity to meet people from different cultures, learn about Thai culture and make new friends is exciting."

For more information or to join the Phuket Tourist Police volunteer program, call Inspector Pol Maj Bundit Khaosutham at Tel: 1155.

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In the Stars

by Isla Star

Your stars this week

CANCER (June 22-July 23): You should aim higher because your tendency to accept what is first offered is blocking progress at the moment. The stars are on your side if you dare to ask for more than you expect to receive. Business matters look promising until the middle of August, so make the most of these conditions. Personal relationships will require more effort, however. Open your heart or there will not be a happy ending.

LEO (July 24-August 22): If you are celebrating coming of age this week, you can look forward to a wonderful surprise. Someone is determined to show just how much you mean to them. The air is hot with romance and there are indications of a relationship being taken to a higher level. This is the time to take a chance with love, but don't neglect your friends in the midst of all the excitement.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): Someone with the power of persuasion appears determined to convince you that buffaloes can fly. Even the most down-to-earth Virgoans will be susceptible to a story this weekend. Keep your feet on the ground and your wallet tucked away. A romantic situation is subject to fits and starts until the end of July. If you don't

enjoy cliffhangers, find other things to occupy your mind. A dream you had recently will come true.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): Take a deep breath before the final week of July starts. You will be inclined to fly off the handle when someone seems determined to rattle you. You are usually the voice of reason, but astral conditions until the end of this month could cloud your judgment. The best day for doing business will be Wednesday, but you should avoid making any kind of commitments on Thursday. The color lotus pink softens your outlook.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): You should be clearer about which direction your life is now taking. Your ability to think on your feet comes in useful when an opportunity is presented to you. However, you must be sure to mean what you say and vice versa. Making promises that are impossible to keep could lead the way to hot water. Aries is carrying a torch for you.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): Those pessimistic people who doubted whether your plans would work are about to receive a shock. You are about to see a dream come true and radical changes to your situation are forecast. Expect a financial boost as a result of hard work and being prepared to take chances. While all this is good news, the downside is that a personal relationship could suffer from lack of attention.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): Your energy levels are high at the moment. Make the most of cooler temperatures to achieve as much as you can. In business, things begin to slot into place, but you will have to contend with an irritable colleague on Tuesday. Know when to let a sleeping dog lie, rather than stirring up further negativity. Romance is about to enter a more exciting phase – Taurus can't sleep for thinking about you.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): You can be a natural leader with a special talent for

thinking on your feet and making ideas clear. However, there is strong likelihood of your words being misunderstood mid-week. If you have business meetings scheduled for that time, it would be prudent to prepare well beforehand or postpone appointments until the beginning of August. An encounter this weekend encourages you to see someone in a new romantic light.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): You should make your point of view crystal clear as intentions are likely to be misinterpreted this weekend. Daydreaming will prevent you from accomplishing an important task on Monday or Tuesday. Get to grips with reality, even if there are issues you really don't relish facing. Financial matters must be handled before the end of July or there could be costly consequences. Number 3 is lucky next Thursday.

ARIES (March 21-April 20): You should consider taking up a new hobby that gets you outdoors. A cloud of boredom is looming above you and the only answer

is to activate an interest that involves expending energy. If you're not adventurous enough to attempt kite-surfing, start jogging along the beach so you can watch those who are. Romance is simmering on the back burner, with Pisces a strong contender for your affections.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): Your best day for accomplishing tiresome tasks is Saturday, and if you are content to, then stay at home and do just that. Don't yield to pressure from friends who are loath to party alone. August promises to bring some action-packed days and you will benefit from storing up energy to keep up with the pace. Wear a color that is different from your normal choice to attract fresh attention.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): You should recognize the right moment to desert a sinking ship this week. If you don't react to a clear sign, then you are likely to encounter financial setbacks soon. Socially, life is starting to look up. A whale of a time is predicted for those who are inclined to venture further afield than their usual watering holes. Next Tuesday is your most auspicious day for making romantic overtures. The number 7 is lucky on Wednesday.



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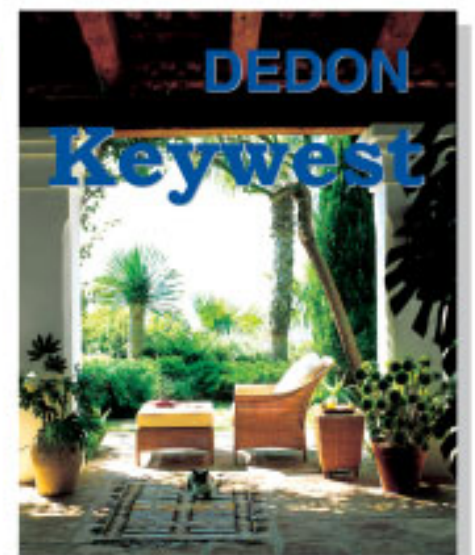
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with a flourish

By Shiona Mackenzie

A fountain pen adds elegance and a flourish to anyone's signature. Since its development from the simple quill in the early 19th century, the fountain pen remains a prized writing instrument, a reminder of a gentler age before the advent of the ubiquitous, cheap, disposable ballpoint.

Today, form and function combine in a myriad sophisticated styles to satisfy modern or traditional tastes. There is a fountain pen for every celebration, whether it be graduation, a birthday or a wedding anniversary.

A comprehensive selection of fountain pens – from the cultured design of the luxurious 23k gold-plated Swiss-manufactured Leman by Caran d'Ache, retailing at 24,000 baht, to the high-tech, sturdy plastic of Lamy's Safari, priced at only 825 baht – are available from Central Festival, Phuket.

"Businessmen appreciate the weight and width of the Leman barrel, which fits comfortably in the male hand," says Kesorn Choorat, Sales Manager in the Accessories Department, "while architects and students

seem to enjoy the colorful Safari with its big clip.

"However, the pen of the moment among businesspeople, government officials and tourists alike has got to be the Star Wars [pen] by ST Dupont," she added. "We have sold so many of these."

Solid, yet long and narrow enough for a slender hand to hold, it looks as though its black barrel has been sprinkled with gold dust and costs a mere 49,780 baht – less than a light saber.

Although high-end pens are popular in Phuket, equally attractive and comfortable fountain pens are available at reasonable prices, such as Shaeffer's 14k gold-plated Prelude, which costs 4,200 baht, or the streamlined Verve Selenium by Cross for 7,000 baht.

K. Kesorn shares her preference for Cross pens with many of her clients. "While price is often the leading factor in a customer's choice, Cross's lifetime guarantee cannot be ignored."

Once you begin to use a fountain pen on a regular basis, you may find your writing habits change, and for the better. Pens are an indulgence that, in a world of email, can lend a renewed grace of expression to the young and the young-at-heart.



Above, the Star Wars from Dupont is currently top choice for those in the know – a bargain at just under 50,000 baht. Below, The streamlined Verve Selenium, from Cross, priced at 7,000 baht.



Kae Chonlada (left) and Joy Rinlanee.

Fun Fashion at just a fraction of the price

It's time to get decked out in high fashion and enjoy 10 to 50% off. The "Thailand Grand Sale 2005 Fashion Show" held in the Grand Hall at Central Festival on June 30 was a reminder to refresh yourself by shopping for beautiful clothes at bargain prices till July 31st. Just one week to go!

First onstage at the Central, Phuket, fashion show were the ever-popular top model Joy Rinlanee and 15 supporting models in summer attire from shops such as Chaps and Lolita.

The second part of the show was led by Kae Chonlada wearing Bossini, Grace, and Esprit apparel, while famous model Chanokwanan "Took" Wacharakoon strutted the catwalk in various hot numbers, including Playboy brand outfits.

The finale brought the three Thai supermodels together, brightening the stage with the sunny colors of their hot season apparel. Clearly, the coming season will be one for fun and now is the perfect time to overhaul those wardrobes without spending a fortune.



Popular supermodel Chanokwanan 'Took' Wacharakoon.

**Spa
MAGIC**

By Sangkhae
Leelanapaporn

**Thai Privilege
Spa**

Perfect restorative for power shoppers

A few hours of "power shopping" and you just want to relax. Luckily, Thai Privilege Spa is there to welcome you, right in the heart of the Central Festival Phuket shopping mall.

Thai Privilege Spa uses all-natural Thai ingredients in its treatments and everything is done with a human touch. You will not find any harsh chemicals or mechanical manipulation there, Ratchata "Pop" Jayant Na Ayudhaya, the spa's Public Relations Director explained as I dropped my cumbersome shopping bags.

The spa, which now has two branches in Thailand, enjoys a continuous relationship with loyal customers from its Bangkok branch who come to Phuket. "The difference," K. Pop said, "is that people in Phuket arrive on time." I certainly did – I was too exhausted even to look at the sale-priced shoes.

As the staff served me warm water, fruit juice and a soft, warm towel, I felt myself begin to unwind. I enjoyed simply gazing around at the pleasing blend of Sino-Portuguese-style decor.

After giving me time to catch my breath, K. Pop showed me around the 1,000-square-meter spa, which is delicately scented by aromatic oil burners in every corridor; I entered a shopaholic's escape from frantic quality and cost comparisons.

K. Pop said that some of her customers had never experienced a spa before; people do not always want to go out of their way. Luckily, Thai Privilege Spa is placed so you don't have to look far.

Even groups of shopping pals can easily be accommodated in the spa's 16 foot-massage chairs, 12 regular rooms, four executive suites and two foot-bathing pavilions. And the cost of a massage at Thai Privilege Spa ranges from 350 to 6,000 baht, with different packages to suit different customers' needs. There is something for everyone.



Left: The facilities at Thai Privilege are spacious enough to handle packs of power shoppers.

Below left: Ah yes! The perfect remedy for Shopper's Foot.

Below: The decor is pretty – and pretty comfortable, even if you're just waiting around.



My treatment began in the *Sala Lang Thao*, a foot-bathing pavilion with room for two, where

my feet were scrubbed with tamarind, salt and herbs. Then I was guided to an executive suite with a Jacuzzi, separate shower and toilet, twin beds and soft, relaxing lighting.

I felt sorry to find myself there all alone, but I made up for this bit of bad luck by treating myself to the 90-minute Skin Vo-

cation Treatment for 3,200 baht. Happily, I was attended by two therapists who knew just how to pamper the lone shopper.

I passed 20 blissful minutes in the hydrotherapy Jacuzzi, pulsating water massaging me all over. I felt as content as a child with a new toy.

After that, a therapist scrubbed my back with a mixture of tamarind, sea salt, milk and lavender oil. It was so good that these 10 minutes felt much shorter.

In the following 15 minutes, my circulation was boosted with a leg and foot massage using ti tree oil and petroleum jelly rebalancing.

My two petite therapists were joined by one more and, combined, they were surprisingly powerful and invigorating as they applied my Siam Aroma massage. The massage oil was blended with aloe vera for skin rejuvenation and moisturizing – wonderful for sunburn.

With their perfectly synchronized motions, the therapists seemed as one and I was impressed by their skill.

At last, my body and mind sufficiently slowed, I was ready for something refreshing. The 25-minute facial cleansing massage using aloe vera gel began with a warm towel to open my pores and brought my spa indulgence to a cooling close.

Relaxed and revitalized, I found myself perusing the spa's herbal products for use at home. Yes, I was ready for power shopping, round two.

Thai Privilege Spa is located on the 3rd floor of Central Festival Phuket. Tel: 076-209009-12. Open daily from 11 am to 9 pm. Visit the website at: www.thaiprivilegespa.com

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After DARK

by Sam Wilkinson

Groove over matter

Phuket City's Music Matter is a whole different basket of eggs. Music matters enough there for many local professional musicians to go along every Wednesday and jam away the evening.

Situated on Chana Jaroen Rd, diagonally across from Boots the Chemist, the open-sided bar/café has grown to be immensely popular among those who like a treble clef with their tippie.

But why the singular Music Matter? What happened to the 'S'?

Simple: "I don't like plurals," shrugs Filipino owner, Jeffrey Sevilla. Jeffery has a bona fide jazzman's philosophy: "I don't think of it as business – I think music and that's why music matters." Or, in this case, matter.

Over the past nine years, Jeffrey has done stints on piano/keyboards at the Dusit Laguna and Mom Tri's Boathouse, and has been through the dreaded school of hotel lobbies, much like many of his musical chums who start arriving and setting up at 9 pm on Wednesdays.

By 10:30 pm, the joint is bursting with jumping rhythms, bubbling bass lines, snappy rim shots and snazzy sax.

This former ice-cream parlor is now home to the coolest Latino-jazz with shades of Trad and even a hint of free-form when the "stage" gets crowded.

"Know what I like about this place?" confides Mark, an English teacher, "It's never the same people in here. Totally new folks all the time."

Some nights at Music Matter, the musos can outnumber the public, making this place the musicians' hangout.

It makes for a strange sight when there are more people on stage than in the audience. Still, it makes a pleasant difference.

Maybe they come to take revenge for having to play endless repetitions of *The Girl From Ipanema* or *Fly Me to the Moon* in some soulless hotel lobby, ad infinitum.

But it is also a sad fact that the island's musicians have had a lot more free time on their hands since the tsunami.

Music Matter is a small place. When it is full and the weather allows, drinkers spill out onto the sidewalk where extra



Musos from around the island come to Music Matter to get relief from playing hotel lobby music night after night.



For owner Jeffrey Sevilla (left), music really matters. Plurals, however, are a bore.

chairs and tables are set out. Rather Parisian.

Formal and crusty it's not; warm and friendly, certainly. It's the ideal post-night-shopping bar for a sherbet and a chat and, on Wednesday evenings, Music Matter is the place to be for some of the hippest sounds on the island.

Music Matter, 119 Chana Jaroen Rd, Phuket City. Open every afternoon until late. Tel: 09-588-2347.

Rak Mak! Awards

This week's winning numbers:

ปม 1825

สงขลา

Gold Isuzu

กค 9498

ภูเก็ต

Blue Chevrolet

จ 1212

กรุงเทพฯ

Blue Ford Pickup

บจ 7752

ภูเก็ต

Gray Isuzu

ศค 2457

กรุงเทพฯ

Black Ford

กค 5443

ภูเก็ต

Gray Suzuki Caribbean

The first three of these vehicle's owners to contact us can choose from the following three prizes: five disposable cameras from Central Festival Phuket; a buffet lunch for four at The Metropole Hotel Phuket; or a spa treatment at the Pacific International Phuket – Resort & Spa.



Please contact the Gazette quickly to ensure you get the prize you want.

First come, first served!

Email LovePhuket@PhuketGazette.Net, or call K. Nok at 076-236555.

offers expire August 2, 2005

Love Phuket? Put this sticker on your vehicle:



If we spot it, you could win a free one-month membership at Club Asia Fitness, or dinner for two in any restaurant at the Dusit Laguna Resort Hotel, or a two-hour spa treatment at The Mangosteen Resort & Spa.



Be prepared: it's the wacko Phuket Parade

Let's start with this: at timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2100. "If you decide to book a holiday to Phuket, what can you expect? For a start, you will not see homeless people, aid camps [though you may see a few camp aids] or makeshift morgues."

"On the drive from the airport, we passed a row of canvas tents. I turned to my translator, Jum: 'Tsunami victims?' I asked. 'No,' she smiled, 'boy scouts on holiday.'"

Tsunami, tornado, too much:

Last week, a 73-year-old Yorkshire farmer was working on his farm when a tornado sucked him and his trailer up and dumped them 10 meters away.

Albert Parker, a Patong tsunami survivor, said on the *Daily Mirror* news site, "I thought 'Oh no, not again ... you can imagine that happening in Phuket, but you think you're all right in Yorkshire.'"

Mass executions in Patong:

The worldwideguidebook.com/cities describes a well-known Patong bar in macabre detail. "It's packed to the rafters every night and even expansion into the building next door has not put paid to the heaving crowds."

Mai pen what? Perhaps the contributor at www.yacht.co.za/news needs to get off her linguistic hobby horse, or at least until she learns some basic Thai.

"Where you go?" never requires an answer because that's as far as their [the local islanders'] English goes, but it is said with so much interest that one can't help going into the long spiel of 'We have come to talk to your Headman. Do you think you could take us to him, old Pal?' To which we naturally get a big smile and a 'Mai pen rai' which

How do people around the world perceive Phuket? Does the island have a positive or negative image in these post-tsunami days? One way of finding out is to trawl the Net for opinions, but who has the time and the nerve for that?

The *Gazette's* very own Lis Kinswoman does, and once again grabs the reins of world opinion and hangs on for dear life. Enjoy the ride.

OUTSIDE IN

By Lis Kinswoman

we know to mean 'No understand.'"

Ouch.

Deuce! "We were in Patong, which is full of ping pong shows and the like. Jim and I were up for watching a local table tennis tournament but we got more than we bargained for." netpacker.farrell.me.uk/shownews

Authoritarian Guardian:

"There are two types of holiday you can have in Phuket: you can lie on the beach, eat exquisite Thai food, have several suits made by skillful tailors for bargain prices and go on day-trips that lead you to a magical wonderland of peace and beauty – a soul-searching experience."

"Alternatively, you can lie on the beach, eat fish and chips, watch bar-girls perform anatomically-defying tricks and get out of your head on cocktails at £1 a throw." travelguardian.co.uk/countries/story/0,7451

Gee thanks, now that we know exactly what to do with our hols we all feel much better for it.

Inside out: Astute comments at the gay site rainbownetwork.com/Travel/detail.asp:

"The ever-smiling Thai people are always friendly and willing to help. This might initially seem a bit cumbersome if you are visiting from a country where you never talk to strangers without a purpose."

"The real culture shock comes when you are back home, however, and start to realise the difference."

Dead right: "Chiming in with their contribution to the 'What the hell does this mean?' competition, the Patong Hospital in Phuket has a sign right out the front saying 'Reach the international standard with the morality of service.'"

"What could this possibly mean? I guess it's just as well that morality was not spelt as mortality..." stickmanbangkok.com/weekly

Tuk tuks ... again: A dog-tired Japanese traveler, arriving from Malaysia via Haad Yai, wearily gives in to the unwanted attentions of yes, yet another avaricious tuk-tuk driver at ayadaafe.com/weekly.

"...Of course, I couldn't get anything less than 200 Baht ... It figures ... 270 Baht to drive 4 hours and 200 Baht to drive 10 minutes."

Write on, bro: Writing about expats in general at expatworld.net/downloads/ew16-02, the contributor could easily be describing many of the island's finest and their spouses: "Often it works well. The woman gets what she wants: a decent life, and a husband that doesn't knock her around."

"He gets what he wants: a pretty and a pleasant young wife, food on the table, and a good mother if they have kids. He probably actually loves her because, praise God, she's not congenitally angry or in a law firm. They're happy. It's their business." Amen.

Aussie giant takes on Saddam

Australian writer Thomas Keneally has produced one of the longest shelves in modern literature: 22 novels and five works of non-fiction. This is a good record for a hack commercial writer but Keneally is the foremost Australian novelist of his generation. His *Schindler's List* won the Booker prize and four of his other novels were shortlisted for the prize.

I've read half a dozen of Keneally's novels about Australia and three – *A Family Madness*, *The Playmaker* and *Woman of the Inner Sea* – rank as world-class literature, with high moral concerns and fully realized characters.

In *The Tyrant's Novel* (Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, New York, 2004, 235pp), Keneally takes on the Iraq of Saddam Hussein. The story is told by a refugee in an Australian detainee camp.

He calls himself Alan Sheriff, a English translation from his Arabic name, and all the Iraqi characters of his tale are similarly given English names – making their story more immediate to Western readers. Sunnis are called "Mediationists", Shiites "Intercessionists", the Revolutionary Guard the "Overguard". Saddam is known as "Great Uncle" and his beastly son as "Sonny".

Alan Sheriff is a veteran of the Iraq-Iran war who has written a highly acclaimed collection of interrelated short stories about the war, published in the US, guaranteeing him a modest living as he writes his first novel about Iraq in the post-sanctions era following the Gulf War.

His beautiful wife Sarah is a famous actress who has retired from TV after too much political interference. Sheriff has nearly finished his novel when Sarah dies of a stroke. Deciding to commit suicide, he buries his manuscript with Sarah.

It's just then that he is summoned into Great Uncle's presence and ordered to write a novel in his name. The time period?

One month. He is to be helped by his old friend Matt McBrian, a cultural affairs bureaucrat. If he fails, the assumption is that McBrian and his pregnant wife will be handed over to the tender mercies of Sonny.

This is the mainspring of the plot which also wanders into a horrific account of a poison gas attack in the trenches of Summer Island, Iraq's oil-rich island in the Persian Gulf, and the cruelties of life in sanctions-ridden Baghdad

where, "on the broad river ordinary people saw the parvenus to whom Great Uncle and the Overguard had entrusted both the smuggling of oil above the one-billion-barrel limit and a share as well of the UN's largesse given in exchange for the modest legal quantity of our national output. This new class could be seen luxuriating at sunset on glittering cruise vessels. Rowboats on the river, manned by fathers and sons trying to catch a little protein for their shanty kitchens, were swamped by the cokehead skippers of cruisers. Busloads of the dispossessed lower middle class and workers, moving about the city, were likely to be overtaken by fast cars, with scant disregard for pedestrians, driven by Sonny's ugly circle of friends ... In Market Street, child prostitutes ran after McBrien's vehicle yelling, A dollar! A dollar! These offers were made within the potential hearing of parents. When I had been writing my book, someone told me, You can tell the child prostitutes. They're not as skinny as the others."

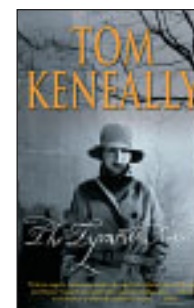
Meanwhile, he interviews doctors and nurses in drug-starved hospitals who "gave me a potent sense of the pyramid of infant corpses our nation has become." There are several anecdotes about Great Uncle's idiocies and atrocities that rang true to me. Only at the end of the novel does Keneally acknowledge that the concept of his novel came from reading *Tales of the Tyrant*, published three years ago by Mark Bowden in *Atlantic Monthly*. This particular story was included in Bowden's book, *Roadwork*, which I'd read a couple of months ago. That's where Keneally got his inspiration.

This lack of real life experience, unlike his Australian novels, accounts for a certain stiffness in narration and shallowness of characterization.

Keneally is incapable of writing a bad novel. This is just not one of his best.

Off the SHELF


By James Eckardt



Wordly wise

"The violence problem in the deep South is like a beehive. If we invade a beehive, the bees will fight back until their death. But if we make the correct approach, we will get all the honey."

– Senior social critic Prawase Wasi during a speech in which he called on "all sides of society" in the three southern border provinces to meet on a monthly basis.



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Spot the Difference



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



Brain Buster!!

Look carefully at each line of numbers in the number pyramid. What number should replace the question mark in the middle of the bottom line? Explain why.

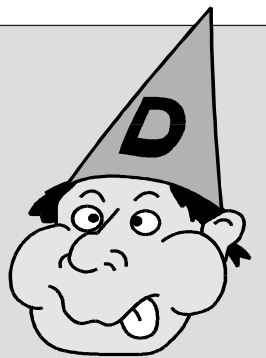
8
2 5 2
1 2 4 2 1
1 2 1 3 1 2 1
1 2 1 1 ? 1 1 2 1

A: 2 is the missing number. Each row adds up to one less than the row below it.

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S MONSTER QUIZ

1. Helena Paparizou; 2. My Number One; 3. The Ministry of Truth; 4. Subscriber identity module; 5. Mali; 6. Uruguay; 7. Mickey Mouse; 8. A Dutch beer; 9. Neptune; 10. Richard Nixon; 11. Chicago; 12. Nimes, France (de Nimes); 13. Monopoly; 14. Yoga; 15. Russia; 16. The Rhine; 17. Victor; 18. 10; 19. Red and yellow cards; 20. The tongue

Get your brain in gear with The Monster Quiz



Kids! Get 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. How many books make up the Bible's New Testament?

2. The barrels in which Cognac is aged are made from what?

3. Who was "Kaiser Bill's Batman" in 1967?

4. How many teaspoons make a tablespoon?

5. Which is the only one of Richard Branson's products not to have the Virgin name attached to it?

6. What form of defense in a criminal prosecution is a Latin word meaning "elsewhere"?

7. Shirley, Moneymaker and Harbinger are all
- varieties of what plant?

8. Which type of US spy plane was shot down over Russia in 1960?

9. Salem is the capital city of which US state?

10. What is the fifth of the Ten Commandments?

11. Who are the three grandchildren named in the Beatles' *When I'm 64*?

12. Which sport was the first to be filmed?

13. Who was the film maker?

14. By what name was Don Diego de la Vega better known?
15. Which movie featured the song *Rock around the Clock*?

16. To the nearest million, what is the population of Switzerland?

17. The name of which car company means "I roll" in Latin?

18. What was the name of Adolf Hitler's dog?

19. What was the name of Goldfinger's Asian henchman in *Goldfinger*?

20. One of the fads of 50 years ago was a large plastic ring people twirled around their waists. What was it called?

Answers next week

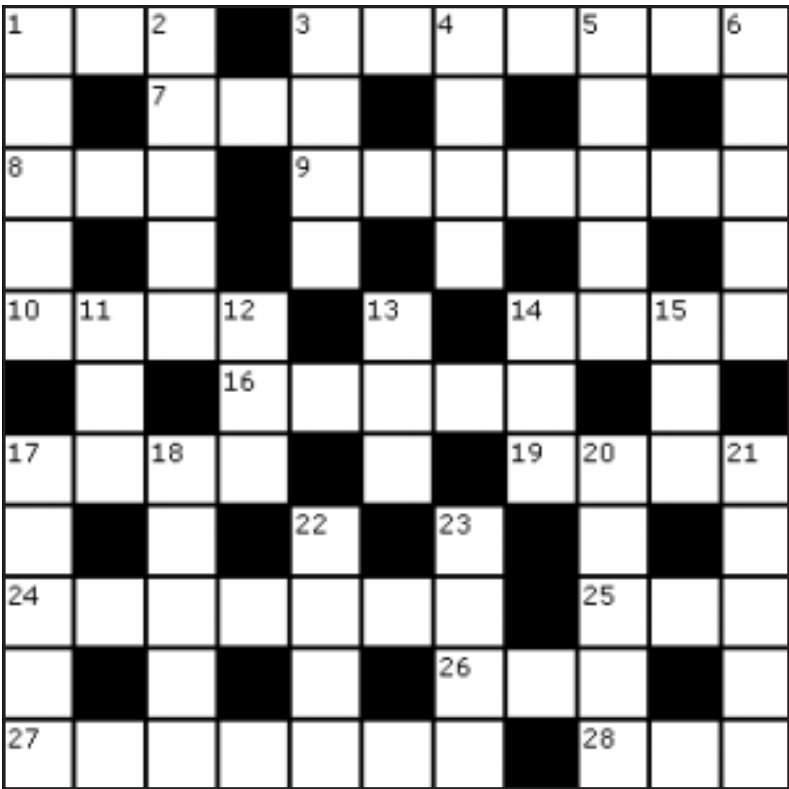
Never a Cross Word!

ACROSS

1. Fire residue.
3. Clown.
7. Cold and slippery.
8. Be the possessor of.
9. Checking the flavor of.
10. One of the Great Lakes.
14. Clove hitch or sheet bend, for example.
16. Rent long-term.
17. Dutch cheese.
19. Shine.
24. Less quiet.
25. Initially explosive.
26. Mr Geller, spoon bender.
27. Self-centeredness.
28. Neither's partner.

DOWN

1. Make amends.
2. Indian language.
3. Eight bits.
4. Go angling.
5. Aromatic vegetable.
6. Between dusk and dawn.
11. Primary color.
12. Large tree.
13. Rodent.
14. Small barrel.
15. Yoko, Lennon's wife.
17. Mr Els, golfer.
18. Mexican buddy.
20. Roman language.
21. Fluid essential to life.
22. South Pacific island.
23. Percussion instrument.



SOLUTION TO LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD



A sad tale of senseless violence

Everyone who knows him is hoping for the recovery of assault victim Chatchai "Ghee" Ritchohor, who is in Wachira Phuket Hospital recovering from surgery to his head after a senseless assault by a man from Scotland, who, for legal reasons, cannot be named (though we know who you are).

K. Ghee's long-term partner, Supin Rueang-alam, said that her husband underwent some three hours of surgery at Wachira Phuket Hospital after being transferred there from Patong Hospital.

His head was badly swollen – to about the size of a soccer ball according to friends who visited him in hospital – and his doctors said, a few days after an operation to relieve the swelling, that he had only a 50-50 chance of recovery.

He is being treated under the government's 30-baht health care scheme.

Fortunately, the swelling has been going down, some color has returned to his face and he has begun to respond by staring when his name is called – all good signs – K. Supin said.

K. Ghee was also given a tracheostomy on July 14 to remove mucus from his windpipe and to improve his breathing. He was unable to speak, however, and had only very limited movement in his limbs, she said.

K. Ghee's condition is the result of a sucker punch by a Scotsman on the evening of July 5.

Based on what K. Supin said and accounts of others who were there, this is what happened:

K. Ghee, a bartender at the C&N Hotel on Rat U-Thit 200 Pi Rd, had gone out with K. Supin to enjoy a drink and see friends at the Piccadilly bar on Soi

Kebsup, which was hosting a Patong Darts League match against another team that night.

The two teams in the match have always got on well and had enjoyed a good match that evening. But as people started to leave, the Scotsman – who had just started playing for the opposing team – met K. Ghee on the street outside. K. Ghee simply asked him: "Do you remember me?"

With that, the Scot ran up and delivered a punch straight to K. Ghee's mouth, causing him to lose consciousness and collapse to the pavement.

The real damage came when his head hit the concrete.

Seeing what he had done, the Glaswegian apologized profusely, and

those holding him back let go of him. As K. Supin and others tried to help K. Ghee back into the pub, the Scotsman and a Thai girl with

him jumped onto a motorcycle taxi and fled.

A tuk-tuk was called to take K. Ghee to the hospital, but when it arrived K. Ghee appeared to have regained consciousness and just seemed a bit groggy – the tuk-tuk was waved off. It was a bad decision because, in fact, his brain was hemorrhaging.

He was later sent to hospital when it became clear that his condition was getting worse.

The Scotsman, who likes to wear a green-and-white striped Glasgow Celtic FC soccer shirt, had earlier told people at the bar that he had a lot of money, thanks to a guy that looked after his several businesses in Scotland, and that he could afford to stay in Thailand for six months a year.

He also bragged that he could play darts really well – closing out a game on 11 darts – but "...only if I really hate my opponent".

K. Supin said she thought the whole thing was a terrible misunderstanding. The Scot, she thought, was afraid that K. Ghee was going to hit him, which was why he struck first.

She explained the history between the two men. About two years ago, the Scot had burned the motorcycle of a woman who used to work at a bar K. Ghee was running at the time, she said.

He wanted to marry the woman but she dumped him, so he torched her bike out of spite.

"When Ghee said, 'Do you remember me?' there was nothing more to it than that. It wasn't a threat. He wasn't holding a grudge," said K. Supin. "Everyone likes Ghee and he has never had a problem with anybody."

Other people have describ-

ed K. Ghee as "very helpful" and "one of the nicest people I have met in Thailand".

The girl who left with the assailant was later spotted in Patong, where she told someone where the Scot had been staying, but added that he had checked out soon after his assault on K. Ghee. Police were able to get his name from the register.

As for his current whereabouts, Pol Lt Pratuang Fonmanat, who is in charge of the investigation, said he thought the Scot was still somewhere in Phuket, but that a warrant for his arrest had yet to be issued because the police were waiting for a letter from the hospital "...to confirm that K. Ghee was hurt".

He added, "These things take time because we need to

follow police procedure."

Once the warrant is issued, Immigration Police will be contacted and they will be able to arrest K. Ghee's assailant if he tries to exit or enter the country, he said.

To speed up the procedure, K. Supin, who visits her husband in hospital every day, said she would get the letter herself and hand-deliver it to the police.

Based on what the Scot told other people that night, however, he was scheduled to fly out of Thailand around July 12 or 13.

He also said he planned to return to Phuket in December with his children.

Send questions, comments and queries to: stoolpigeon@phuketgazette.net

Stool Pigeon



MR HAPPEENESS

It has been announced by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) that its 2005 domestic advertising campaign has "Happiness" as its theme. To this end, a new mascot has been devised and, with huge creativity, has been named "Happy Man".

Photos of this creature can be seen by logging onto the TAT website, but for those who can't be bothered, suffice it to say that Happy Man puts one in mind of the kind of nocturnal pleasure device (batteries not included) bought by ladies dressed in long overcoats from stores generally located down a short flight of stairs in the seedier parts of metropolises around the world.

The TAT has enlisted the services of a well-known Thai singer Thongchai "Bird" McIntyre to help promote Happy Man and the Happiness theme. The script (also on the website) runs along the following lines: "This is 'Happy Man'. He's my happiness mascot ... Happy Man follows in my footsteps wherever I go."

I have a question for the boffins who came up with this whole Happy Man and the Happiness Trail scenario: What were you guys smoking?

In fairness, it's probably fortunate that the people charged with creating Happy Man didn't succumb to calling the creature "Mr Happy". Maybe a couple of them were educated in the United States and were aware of the connotation ascribed to the use of "Mr Happy" when applied to the possibility of sexual congress between people whose native language is English.

Despite my misgivings about the Happy Man promotion, it led me to thinking about what kind of promotion – in a similarly blue vein – Fun Town could conjure up if, say, the Pattaya Bar

Owners' Association became involved.

I would like to offer my suggestions. I must admit I played around with the idea of a Mr Floppy and even a Mr Droopy, but decided Master Bates, a six-inch long, thin, carrot-like figure with a bell helmet, would be appropriate as the lead mascot. He would be ably assisted by his nautical friends Seaman Staines and Roger the Cabin Boy.

Of course, those of you who come from the British Isles will be familiar with the three aforementioned names, as urban legend has it they were characters in a 1960s children's cartoon series entitled *Captain Pugwash*.

The myth has become so well known that many people believe they were the real names of characters in the series.

The reality is that the names were far more sedate: Master Mate and Tom the Cabin Boy. There was no Seaman Staines; well, at least not in the characterization department.

Yet, for a place such as Pattaya, nestling by the briny sun-kissed waters of the Gulf of Thailand, names of a maritime nature couched in innuendo and double entendre, even though they did not really exist, appear more than suitable, especially to my addled mind.

Think of the slogans: "Don't just Roger the Cabin Boy...go the whole nine yards and roger the lot!! Pattaya's economy will thank you for it." (The fine print on the slogan would have to indicate that the word "boy" refers to males over the age of 18.)

A more serious slogan, for

an establishment correcting erectile dysfunction, could read: "If Master Bates lets you down, and Seaman Staines have not been a worry for longer than you'd like, perhaps it's time you visited us."

Going back to the Happy Man and Happiness theme for a minute, in his book entitled *Authentic Happiness*, psychologist Prof Martin Seligman warned against pursuing "short cuts to pleasure".

Among these short cuts he singled out drugs, shopping, TV, spectator sports, chocolate, loveless sex and masturbation. He didn't say these things are not

good per se; just that they provide only a brief period of feeling good. Seligman, spoilsport that he is, said the problem is they are just too easy.

The reality of happiness and satisfaction is found, he argued, in those things that require more effort. He included reading a book, dancing, rock climbing, good conversation, and volleyball (not necessarily all at the same time of course) as being among the more satisfying.

This being the case, the whole Happy Man concept just won't work in Fun Town.

The denizens of this great fun-loving metropolis are, by any measure, totally devoted to shortcuts to pleasure: drugs, shopping, television, and loveless sex.

The problem is that we have no one who is well enough known, yet stupid enough, to be the face of Pattaya and have Master Bates tagging along.

No wonder Pattaya seems to have been bypassed in the Happy Man campaign. Nurse... more bromide please.



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The first Shelby Mustang to be produced in 35 years looks like a sure-fire winner among those who love raw power. Below, the slick interior of the new muscle car.

Shelby's muscle hustle

Carroll Shelby is best known for shoe-horning a big American V8 into a tiny, aluminum sports car produced by an even tinier company, AC Cars in Britain. The car metamorphosed into the Shelby Cobra, a brute of a machine that acquired legendary status.

Now the performance king has turned his attention to Ford's latest Mustang and, with the help of the Ford Special Vehicle Team (SVT) has come up with the Shelby Cobra GT500.

Said Shelby, "I have worked with the SVT guys for several years now, and I know they have the guts, the talent and the passion to deliver the best Mustangs ever."

The GT500 will be the first of a string of Mustangs that SVT will produce, from a V6 model that will sell for less than US\$20,000 (about 900,000 baht) in the States, to the 450bhp (331kW) Shelby version, which cost about double that.

To obtain this staggering amount of power, Ford has supercharged its 5.4-liter "big block" V8: the result is more than 450 bhp, but more importantly a strong 610-Nm peak torque figure. Although it is an iron block, the cylinder heads are aluminum, while a number of internal components are sourced from the dramatic Ford GT sports car.

The Mustang's powerful V8 is mated to a six-speed manual

gearbox, the product of Ford's Mustang FR500C racing program. The FR500C was purpose-built to compete in the US Grand Am Cup, winning on its first time out at Daytona in February.

Race engineer Hau Thaitang of Ford's SVT said, "Ford's racing arm and SVT will be working closely [together] as we go forward on future projects."

"The Mustang FR500C program is an exact demonstration of the capability we engineered into the mainstream Mustang and now we have the Daytona victory, we are showing off the performance possibilities with the Shelby Cobra GT500."

To complement the immense power reserves, the SVT road version is fitted with some of the largest brakes in the business: 14-inch cross-drilled Brembo rotors at the front and conventional discs at the rear. Massive 19-inch wheels with performance tires are fitted to improve road-holding.

The interior has also received the SVT treatment, with black leather upholstery, and leather-clad shift lever and parking-brake handle. Red leather inserts in the seats and door panels add a further touch of class to the car.

Carroll Shelby first put his name on a Mustang back in 1964 when he was asked to raise the performance of the then all-new Pony model. The result was the GT350R, a lightweight race car.

Subsequently, road versions of the race car were produced, as well as a special limited edition in conjunction with Hertz Rent-a-Car which was known, inevitably, as the "Rent-a-Racer".

The ultimate Shelby Mustang of that era was the GT500 KR (King of the Road). Powered by a big-block 428-cubic-inch V8, the GT500KR was one of the most powerful muscle cars of the '60s. Production of Shelby Mustangs stopped in 1970, after more than 14,500 had been built.

Shelby adopted the racing stripes from his legendary Cobras and these feature on all his

performance vehicles, no less prominently on the Mustang GT500.

A new, deep, front air dam, larger grilles, air extractors sunk in the hood and a neat trunk spoiler add to the overall theme. The name Shelby is written large across the tail, while a snake and SVT insignia are discreetly incorporated into the body styling to complete the package.



The Shelby Cobra GT500 is the first Mustang in 35 years to feature the Shelby name. It's good to see him back.



By Jeff Heselwood

The Phuket Gazette

Wherever you stop for shopping, don't forget to pick up your weekly **Gazette** every Saturday at:

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367/2 Yaowarat Rd, Amphur
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Tel: 076-236555
Fax: 076-213971
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Policing Phuket

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra recently vowed to reform the Royal Thai Police to make it less centralized, giving each station chief more decision-making authority and budgetary control.

The reforms – at least in theory – will improve operational efficiency at each of the country's 1,460 police stations and restore public confidence in the country's quarter-million officers.

Unfortunately, the reforms will be no guarantee that the image of the police will improve overnight. That can come only through a long-term, sustained effort to break down the entrenched us-versus-them divide between the police and the public.

Reports, accusations and the widely-held belief that the police are involved in extortion, corruption, abduction, brutality, extra-judicial killings and other crimes have taken their inevitable toll.

Even PM Thaksin, a police lieutenant colonel himself, is willing to concede that the public perception of the police is in dire need of change.

Nowhere is the need for police reform and the dangers of a breakdown in the rule of law more clearly demonstrated than in the four southernmost provinces.

For years, sporadic violence in the south was confined mainly to skirmishes between police and local elements unwilling to accept their authority – until a dash of terrorism was thrown into the equation. Now the situation has deteriorated to a point where it is verging on civil war. It didn't have to be this way.

Here in Phuket, police under-funding has forced Pol Col Paween Pongsirin, Superintendent of the Phuket City Police, to appeal for donations so that his department can buy vehicles they desperately need in order to carry out their duties (see News).

While Col Paween has developed a reputation as a clean cop, it is unlikely that his plea for pity will elicit much sympathy among a populace that has a long-held view of the police as self-serving, uncaring and unethical.

The request itself, though not illegal, poses an ethical dilemma: would a party donating money for police to buy a new squad car get preferential treatment from police should it run into legal problems?

With the emergency 191 number only recently restored after being out of service for two weeks, and officers having to ask for rides to crime or accident scenes from charities, there can be little doubt that local police officers' crime-fighting abilities are not all that they should be.

Let's hope that the reforms, if and when they occur, will allow police the equipment they need to do their jobs – so that they do not have to appeal to the public for handouts.

– The Editor



Letters

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

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

No 1 destination?

I disagree with your correspondent who said that the price of holidays in Phuket had increased (*Gazette*, July 9).

We are finding that prices on the island are slightly less than last year, while the costs of holiday packages from New Zealand are approximately 10% less.

Internal transportation on Phuket Island is not significantly dearer than last year, although gasoline has risen by 25% to 30% at the pumps.

I admire the strength and determination that the Thai people and government have shown in their efforts to restore Koh Phuket as a premier world tourist destination.

Although the tsunami was covered extensively by the world media, I feel that the progress Thailand has made in its restoration efforts has received sparse media coverage.

All overseas tourists should spread the word upon returning to their respective countries that Phuket is still the No 1 destination.

The Lumb Family
New Zealand

Back to normal?

It's good to read that Airports of Thailand want to cut landing fees to make it cheaper for planes to land (*Gazette*, July 9), but who is really getting the benefit? I was on Phuket a week before the tsunami and have returned twice as a journalist to tell the world how things really are there.

I would come back again in August just to visit and stay for a fortnight, but there is no way of booking a flight at an affordable price [from Germany].

Thai Airways' special offer ended on June 23, their next "restricted-fare" offer ended on July 12 and most other airlines have ceased flying. Please tell me how things can get back to normal if people like myself who want to come can't, as the very few flights available are much too expensive?

I have been a regular long- and short-stay visitor for the past 10 years. I come to Phuket about four times a year and try to finance my stay and trips by buying paintings and selling them in Europe. I'm not only helping the hotels and restaurants but also many Thai painters who haven't seen a tourist since December 26.

On my last trip in March, I spent over 10,000 euros on goods alone and I would return in August, but it would cost me about 2,000 euros (100,000 baht) to fly return from Berlin. If flying to Phuket is that expensive, I will have to cancel my plans.

Ian McConnachie
Berlin

Shonky practices on the streets of Patong

My wife and I recently stayed a week in the Patong area – we have been to Phuket many times – and have enjoyed ourselves in spite of people trying to get us to buy things.

We accept this and have no problem with it.

But this time we must say that the tailors, especially along Patong's beach road, drove us crazy and we stopped going there.

I have been told that local authorities are supposed to monitor such activities, but, if this is true, they're not doing very well.

Another annoyance is people on motorbikes, quite often with an English accent and probably working illegally, trying to flog timeshare units. Some people end up going to these seminars only to find they have wasted precious time or money.

This shonky practice should be stamped out. You have a wonderful island and we always look forward to coming back, but I'm sure a lot of people are put off returning because of these practices. They spoil the holidays of a lot of people, and can only hurt the reputation of Thailand, a country my wife and I love.

Keith Ryan
Australia

An ICE idea

God forbid that there will be another tsunami in Phuket or a man-made disaster situation such as a terrorist bombing or a plane crash but, following the outrages in London on July 7, a sensible idea has begun to catch on.

An English paramedic, Bob Brochie, came up with a plan that any mobile phone owner can adopt.

Users in the UK, the US and Australia are now storing their own personal information, relatives, etc in their phones' memory under the heading ICE – In Case of Emergency.

If the user is severely injured or worse, details from the phone – if found – and/or SIM card can be accessed and relatives can be contacted.

It would also be useful for those who overindulge in ale and fine wines, should they forget pertinent details about themselves.

Louis Renault
England

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Editor: Rungtip Hongjakpet

Managing Editor: Alasdair Forbes

Deputy Editor: Chris Husted

Chief Reporter: Sangkhae Leelanaporn

Editorial Team: Stephen Fein, Andy Johnstone, Anongnat Sartpisut, Athiga Jundee, Sam Wilkinson, Ananya Hongsa-ngiam, Shiona Mackenzie

Managing Director: Rungtip Hongjakpet

Marketing Manager: Oranee Pienprasertkul

Website Services Manager: Natthira Susangrat

Distribution Manager: Passara Kaewbumroong

Publisher: The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd

Contact us

Advertising Sales: adsales@phuketgazette.net

Classified Advertising: classads@phuketgazette.net

Website Services: anna@phuketgazette.net

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Telephone: 076-236555 (10 lines) **Fax:** 076-213971

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

Letters

Kamala is in a dreadful state

Having survived the tsunami through luck – not thanks to the Thai Meteorological Department, which had information but did not issue it – I have recently returned to Kamala.

I see that what tourists can expect here is banks shut at the weekends, no currency exchanges and most gas stations closed.

The roads remain un-repaired, and the sidewalks are like mud baths after every downpour.

Kamala now is how it was 17 years ago, when I first went there. But, instead of it being a community under development, as it was then, it and the road-sides remain littered with the debris from the tsunami.

How does this show the beauty of Kamala to tourists?

Is the plan to remedy everything once the thousands of tourists return [to Phuket] and provide revenue and tax?

Is there no overall coordinator for Kamala who will ensure that tourists are made welcome? And, finally, what should I tell my friends when they ask if it is okay to visit Kamala?

Thomas T
By email

Refusing to be put down or out

In response to the letter "Ethical treatment or hypocrisy?" (*Gazette*, July 9) is the writer suggesting that the Soi Dog Foundation (SDF) has become hypocritical?

SDF, along with the vast majority of other animal-welfare groups, believe in mass sterilization as the way to control stray animals, and have already sterilized more than 4,000 dogs and cats since they started work here less than two years ago.

Most long-term expatriates have begun to notice a significant reduction in the number of stray animals here.

If he is advocating euthanasia per se, he clearly does not understand Thai culture.

We are only just getting some vets to agree to euthanize animals who are clearly suffering and have no hope of survival. Other vets will still not put a dog to sleep under any circumstances, as it goes against their beliefs.

There are, sadly, many dogs who are doomed to spend the rest of their lives locked up in the Mid Road Dog Pound.

I feel that it would be better for them if they were to be euthanized.

We, [the SDF] however, have no authority to intervene and would never find a vet prepared to put a healthy animal to sleep.

John Dalley
Soi Dog Foundation
Phuket

Government should re-examine its energy policy

FIRST PERSON

UK-born **Andrew J Wood** has been in the hotel business in Thailand for 15 years. He is currently General Manager of the Chaophya Park Hotel in Bangkok.

Here, looking at Thailand's woes amid continuing rises in fuel costs, he questions whether the energy-saving policies of the government of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra are effective, and suggests some alternatives that might have a far greater impact, and yet do less damage to the tourism industry.



P rime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra recently endorsed a series of measures to help reduce the country's growing energy bill, including a plan to shut down TV stations at midnight.

This, on top of an existing social reform program that enforces early closing of entertainment places, puts further strain on the already stressed tourism sector.

This is certainly not the right message to be sending around the world to potential holidaymakers.

Recent reports, from hoteliers based in Phuket, of police raids and enforced urine tests on tourists visiting clubs and bars on the island, also add to the misery of the post-tsunami fall out.

Should one, however, blame the PM for these enforcements? After all, he has only the best interests of the country at heart.

Most engineers agree that a TV shutdown will have little impact on energy saving, as other forms of entertainment will be sought and TV energy consumption is minimal when compared with heating and cooling costs. However, it will help a little.

It just seems to me that the tourism industry, under so much pressure to produce foreign currency, has very few powerful lobbyists to make the case for governmental restraint and to explore alternatives.

What of the Tourism Authority of Thailand, the Thai Hotel Association and other industry bodies that exist to lobby for our interests? Certainly it would appear that they are quiet, but then public confrontation is not a marked characteristic of the Thai tourism industry's profile. We are, after all, in the Land of Smiles.

My fear is that further austerity measures, due to be reviewed in September following the failure of the current measures, will be even stricter, and will continue to hurt tourism.

Is it right for the PM to enforce these measures or are we ourselves to blame?

The short answer is yes ... and no. Yes, as oil prices make daily headlines, with limited supply and demand so strong, one can only guess at where it will end ... US\$100 a barrel?

For years, environmentalists have warned us of the dangers of our continuing heavy dependence on fossil fuels. Global warming and damaging pollutants add to worldwide economic woes.

Add to that the rising demand from countries with large populations, such as China and India, and it really does not take a genius to work out that a gigantic problem lies ahead.

So the situation is serious and most businesses, including hoteliers, are becoming acutely aware of how rises in energy costs are having a worrying impact on the bottom line.

The pressure by tour companies to freeze room rates year in and year out adds to the worry.

Take a medium-sized hotel in Asia of, say, 350-500 rooms. Electricity will be the single largest portion of the energy bill, of which air conditioning will account for up to 80%. Here in Thailand expect that to be in the region of 1.6 million to 2.5 million baht a month, or 10% to 15% of the cost of running a hotel. Then add in other fuel costs, such as oil for heating water and gas for cooking, not forgetting the cost of water.

So what if we were able to get free hot water and free air

conditioning? Yes please, but isn't that just a dream?

No. Many large buildings are now investing in heat pumps that give free hot water and, as a byproduct, a small amount of chilled air. They work very much like an air-conditioning unit, only in reverse.

The bad news is that while they are cheap to run, the purchase cost is about 10 times that of an similar-size air conditioning unit. It is the warm tropical air that makes heat pumps efficient and they are particularly effective in Asia. If governments were serious about reducing their reliance on imported oil, then this must be one measure to consider. They are being installed as a standard feature in most new buildings

If governments could help to reduce the pumps' purchase cost, for example by reducing import taxes, or by offering special tax incentives to have them built locally and offering grants for installation in older buildings, then we could then replace inefficient oil-burning boilers. The savings could be significant.

So yes, the blame is partly shared. Both the private sector and governments have to take a responsible lead.

And what of other energy saving ideas? Solar panels are

well tried and tested, but so far are little used throughout Asia.

By contrast, Scandinavian countries, which have far less sunshine, have been using them successfully for decades for both power and hot water.

Ozone is another option that avoids the need for high-temperature water in hotel laundries and hospitals.

Wind power and wave power are other alternatives. The problem, however, lies in their cost. But what if oil reaches US\$100 a barrel? What if the oil-producing countries stop producing? What if, as many people fear, oil will eventually be too expensive to burn?

Yes, hotels and the tourism industry do have a social responsibility but of the many different types of industries, the hospitality sector is probably at the forefront of energy conservation.

Where more help is needed is through education, access to cheaper equipment and provisions of loans to upgrade the energy-saving capabilities of older buildings. Most studies show that, in the case of heat pumps, the investment is recouped in less than two years. The potential saving for one of my hotels would be 20,000 liters of fuel oil a month.

It is clear what our social responsibility is, but is there the political will and conviction to make it happen? After all, isn't it easier just to switch off the TV?

ON THE MOVE



Phuket-born Thiti Mesri, 33, has been appointed manager of the Direct2U shop in Phuket, an outlet of TV marketing company Retail Direct Co. A management graduate from Rajabhat Phuket University, he formerly worked as Warehouse Manager of Courts Mega Store, Phuket, for a year. Before that he was Warehouse Chief at Phuket International Hospital for nine years.



Phuket-born Phatsara "Yui" Raktamakit, 27, has been promoted to Classifieds Manager of The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd. She has a degree in education from Thaksin University in Songkhla and worked as a sales executive at The Layan Phuket before joining the *Gazette* two years ago.



Thanyawadee Pongtanapach, 28, from Phuket, has been appointed Spa Manager of Thai Privilege Spa at Central Festival Phuket. A business administration graduate of Bangkok University, she worked as Spa Manager at the Cottara Spa in the Diamond Cottage Resort & Spa and the Phuket Grand Tropicana Hotel. She was also formerly Acting Assistant Spa Manager of Mandara Spa (Thailand) Co Ltd.

Smart ideas for the home

My past few columns focused primarily on the ins and outs of our local broadband system. These turned out to be very popular.

This is obviously an important topic to many readers. Thank you for your many comments and questions. I promise to explore the topic in greater depth in future columns.

This week, however, I want to look at smart home technology, what it really means to the average homeowner, which functionalities are actually useful and which are simply gadgets for the technophiles.

Today, a smart home can do just about anything you need – and plenty you don't. Many facilities in your home can be controlled from key-pads dotted around your house, or from the comfort of your couch using a remote control. You can even control your home when you are not there.

The following four examples are just a few of the many smart home functionalities out there. Check out www.clipsal.com or www.automation.siemens.co.uk for a more comprehensive overview.

Smart lights: Imagine pulling the car into your driveway and, before you turn off the radio, the lights in the car port, front foyer, living room and even the pool all come on to preset levels, creat-

ing a welcome-home atmosphere.

No, it's not *Star Trek*, but an intelligent lighting system, and it's all the rage in smart homes today.

The concept is simple. You can control any light anywhere in your home, turning lights on or off, setting the brightness and even the color, all from an easy-to-use control device.

Actually, some of the control devices are not so easy to use, and the wiring setup and setting of such systems can be complicated, so be careful.

Install a good system and you can enjoy simple and effective control over your home's lighting. A bad system however, will have you lighting candles and feeling around in the dark for the user's manual.

Each light to be controlled requires a dedicated power cable and a CAT5 control cable wired back to a central unit somewhere in your home.

This is not so difficult if you are building a new home, but think again if you are considering retrofitting a system into your existing villa or hotel.

Wireless versions may minimize the need for drastic work to your home, but this technology is still new and not totally reliable.

Once installed, the variables of your system will be programmed to your liking. Be sure to become involved at this stage



The Clipsal website can give you a good idea of what's available in home automation.

because smart lighting configuration is as personal as interior decorating.

Also, keep in mind the impact that installing such a system may have on the resale value of your house.

In addition, remember KISS. No, not the rock band, but "Keep It Simple, Stupid." An uncomplicated and effective system can greatly increase the value of your home. The converse can also be true.

Smart refrigerators: Now this is a fun concept. What was once a basic icebox has morphed into a sophisticated thinking machine.

Many of today's refrigerators are equipped with a bar code scanner that keeps track of what you put inside, and an Internet link for ordering replacements.

Here's how it works: you start by signing up with a grocer that supports this technology and agree to a specific shopping list that you wish to maintain.

When you put groceries into the fridge, it scans each item.

When you're running low, simply press the order button on the front of your icebox and – voila! – your refrigerator orders

the new supplies, the grocer delivers them and your account is automatically billed.

All we need now is a grocer or supermarket in Phuket that can provide the other end of this service.

Smart music: A central audio system allows you to select music from an electronic jukebox – such as an iPod – and to set the volume for specific zones within your home.

This can be useful if you have a large home where you serve cocktails by the pool, dinner in the dining room and have kids in the game room.

The concept and control of this system is essentially similar to smart lighting. You control things from wall-mounted key-pads located throughout the home.

Optional wireless touch pads come complete with a graphic interface and a map of your home's floor plan.

There are two basic designs; one simply allows you to play music and control the volume in different areas of your home while more advanced systems enable you specify what music is played, and how loudly, in each zone of your home.

Our customer base is split about 50/50 between the two systems. Some like to keep it straightforward and simply plug in their iPod anywhere in the home. Others go for the Full Monty, which includes wireless touch pads that control lighting, sound and even home-theater curtains and movie selections.

Again, depending on your interests, you should find a provider who can match this technology to your specific needs.

Wireless broadband: These systems not only deliver broadband anywhere in your home but also enable the sharing of peripherals, such as printers and video conferencing – something the grandparents will enjoy.

The skinny on this technology is basic; it connects every computer in your home via a home local area network (often abbreviated to HLAN) without the need for cables or plugs.

Again, this can be pretty simple if you are building a new home but if it is going into an existing home, office or hotel, then you will want to minimize cabling while maximizing wireless coverage area.

This is done using WiFi access points that create wireless signal hot spots throughout your home. It is important that your systems provider designs an efficient network and has a good understanding of signal interference and security.

You, naturally, want to be able to access your hot spots easily, but without your neighbors having similarly easy access to your emails or bank accounts.

Next week's column will focus on design and construction issues, and I will highlight some simple ways to make your home or villa smart-capable, thus increasing its resale value.

John Seebach has more than 25 years' consulting experience in information systems and business process re-engineering. His company, Island Technology, offers IT solutions and broadband services throughout Southeast Asia. For more information, contact him by email to john@islandtechnology.com



Siam International
38/54 Nanai Road,
Patong, Kathu, Phuket 83150

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Increased flights a little tonic for Phuket

By Anongnat Sartpisut
& Ananya Hongsa-ngiam

PHUKET: The plans announced in early July that Austrian Airlines would begin operating direct flights from Vienna to Phuket must have been welcome news to the island's flagging tourism economy, even though the flights will not begin until November 4.

But while this is a small shot in the arm for Phuket, the trend among other airlines, mostly from Asian countries, is to cut existing services still further.

South Korea-based Asiana Airlines recently ended its direct Seoul-Phuket schedule and has not announced plans for

its reintroduction, while Korean Air dropped both its Pusan-Phuket and its Seoul-Phuket routes at the end of June.

Malaysia Airlines now flies the Kuala Lumpur-Phuket route seven times a week instead of the pre-tsunami twice a day.

Hong Kong's Dragonair not only stopped flying to and from Phuket direct, but even closed its Phuket office.

It is not, however, all gloom and doom. Orient Thai Airlines, which operates a route from Incheon in South Korea direct to Phuket, will increase its roster from two flights a week to four from July 26 onward.

China Airlines, flying out of Taipei, joins Austrian Air in bucking the trend, and

has introduced a schedule of flights between Taiwan and Phuket every four days from July 13 to August 30.

That three airlines have promised new services or increased the frequency of existing ones comes as good news to the Director of of Phuket International Airport (PIA), Sq/Ldr Pornchai Eua-aree.

He told the *Gazette* that traffic to and from PIA dropped by around 72% between January and June this year, compared to the same period in 2005.

He bullishly predicted that traffic would, by the end of 2005, reach 70% of its volume in the same period last year.

The Director of the Phuket office of the Tourism Authority of Thailand, Suwalai

Pinradab, added, "The main reason for the declining number of tourists is that many carriers have stopped flying here."

Dr Josef Burger, the Chief Commercial Officer of Austrian Air, told the *Gazette* that, assuming each Boeing 767-300 ER flies with its full capacity of 239 passengers, some 14,000 travelers could generate income of 500 million baht a year for the airline.

"There will be a lot of room to expand and we will not miss any market opportunity," said Dr Burger. "We believe that the tourism market will change [in Phuket] and that the number of tourists – and we will bring people who have never been to Phuket before – is set to increase."

New politicians make India worth a look

India is a country that investors often ignore, and in the past there were good reasons for this, including bureaucracy, an unwelcoming attitude to foreign investors, and poverty.

For more than 40 years after India gained independence from Britain in 1947, successive governments seemed determined to lead the country into a downward spiral with a quasi-socialist economic system.

India enjoyed an attachment to the USSR, although this was a purely strategic relationship because, during much of the Cold War, the US favored Pakistan, a country with which India had fought several wars.

It then became a case of "my enemy's enemy is my friend", and it was fashionable, too, to proclaim anti-imperialist slogans.

This state of affairs and the economic malaise that accompanied it continued until the late 1980s. The only boom was in population growth.

However, a new generation of politicians was coming to the fore and they could see that many other Asian countries were shooting ahead of India in the economic race. These new politicians naturally felt that India could achieve similar leaps forward.

The first moves to improve the economy were tentative steps to remove or ameliorate the difficulties caused by inefficient bureaucracy, internal subsidies and other structural problems that littered the country's economy. In time, Indian companies began to make progress.



MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson

The economy started to grow in the early 1990s, and as the decade progressed so did the pace of economic growth.

Much of the growth was internal but, as the number of university graduates increased, so did the level of sophistication of the services and products offered by an increasing number of companies.

Successive Indian governments realized that the key to prosperity would be a free-enterprise system. It was clear, too, that foreign investment could no longer be viewed as a form of neo-colonialism.

The rise of the Chinese economy in the 1980s sparked the desire to see India achieve the same levels of development.

The development of the Internet also broke down international barriers. India was more fortunate than China and many other Asian countries in that a large number of people were already fluent in English.

This allowed the development of such areas as call centers which, by Indian standards, gave impressive numbers of well-

paid new jobs with little or no investment.

Many Indians are natural entrepreneurs and the development of high-technology companies has gone hand in hand with the development of a wide range of services and industries, and Indian businesses changed their combined focus from the domestic to the international market.

India has another advantage over China; it has long-established financial markets and a banking system. India initially viewed the Chinese as competitors, but increasingly the two countries are expanding trading links.

India has, over the past two to three years, established itself as a base for foreign manufacturers and more companies are setting up production plants there all the time.

Economic growth has been excellent – in the 6% to 7% range. While this is two to three percentage points lower than China's growth, it is still impressive.

Growth in the last quarter of 2004 was 6.9% and for the first quarter of 2005 was 7%.

A spokesman for the London-based Economist Intelligence Unit (EUI) stated that the EUI expects India's GDP (gross domestic product) to increase by 7.1% in 2005.

The stock market, in stark contrast to China's dismal performance, is at record levels. Yet the economy is not overheating, and stock market results are supported by strong corporate profits.

A recent survey of company CEOs showed that 62% believe that the Indian stock market will continue to move upward in the medium term.

The Indian government is increasingly pro-business, and recently reduced company tax from 35.8% to 33%. Representatives of the government are frequently guest speakers at Indian business conferences and are vocal in their support of the business community.

India is a democracy and the main political parties, Congress and the Bhartiya Janata Party are acutely aware that if

they want to have any chance of winning an election, then the Indian economic surge must continue.

With a population of more than a billion and about a quarter of that number being "middle class", the Indian domestic market is becoming substantial.

How can an investor take advantage of this investment opportunity? There are several ways, the easiest being to invest in a mutual or offshore fund.

There are a number of choices managed by large well-known international groups.

The advantage of taking this route to investment is that all the research and asset selection is undertaken by the fund manager for a modest fee. Investors are able to use economies of scale in this regard.

Investors are also able to compare the performance of various managers against one other and against the main Indian stock markets indices, the Bombay Sensex 30 and the Standard & Poors Nifty 50.

The indices cover, respectively, the leading 30 and 50 largest companies in India. For the more adventurous there are alternatives such as Indian small companies funds.

Required investment mini-

mums for these funds are generally low and investors can choose to hold more than one fund.

As a general recommendation, I see India as a place to hold 5% to 10% of a growth portfolio. The stock market is trading at record highs.

Hugh Young, Managing Director of Singapore-based Aberdeen Asset Management, who oversees US\$10 billion in Asian portfolio assets, recently sought to make a comparison between China and India.

India, he stated, was "streets ahead" in terms of corporate governance, management skills and treatment of shareholders, with many "fabulous companies".

India's emergence as a manufacturing base has yet to be the subject of heated debate in Europe and North America.

The currency is officially free floating, although in reality, it is closely linked to the US dollar. Again, it has an advantage over China where tensions over trade imbalances are provoking increased political ire.

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.

VITAL STATISTICS VEHICLE REGISTRATIONS SOAR

Type of vehicle	May, 2004	May, 2005	% change
Cars with capacity for no more than 7 people	485	1,411	190
Cars with capacity for more than 7 people	9	109	1,111
Pick-up trucks	307	1,313	328
Meter taxis	1	2	100
Motorcycles	2,434	6,878	183

Source: Phuket Provincial Transportation Office



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Dr. Ilian Assenov
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Prince of Songkla University, Kathu, Phuket
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Fax: 076 276203
Email: ilian@fsi.psu.ac.th www.fsi.psu.ac.th/Prog/TMBA/part-time

Strategic thinking sadly lacking at many courses

Man's earliest attempts at golf course design were, for the most part, a crude collection of geometrically-arranged hazards along and across golf holes. These hazards bore no real resemblance to nature's work on the seaside courses where the game began and evolved, and little thought was given as to how different levels of players should proceed.

Over the years, certain trends began to emerge as golfers expressed their opinions by favoring certain courses, and thus certain styles, over others. Ever since the golden age of design, starting in the early 1900s, the style of choice has been the strategic school.

In this, the first of three articles discussing the merits of each of golf's schools of design, I will focus on the qualities that make strategically-designed holes so much fun to play, and name what I feel are Phuket's best and worst examples of the strategic school.

The essence of this style is for the player to play to a particular side or area of the fairway from the tee in order that a distinct advantage is gained on the following shot.

Fairway hazards are then placed to make the optimum line of play fraught with risk.

Those with less ability have a sporting chance of finding the short grass, while the very short hitter may gain an advantage on his "longer" opponent who tries to play a little too cleverly and gets caught out.

The paradox of strategic design is that the simplest designs very often produce the most interesting play. Often, all that is needed is one or two well-placed hazards to create virtually unlimited interest for players.

Unfortunately, many modern course designers' strategic holes are so complicated that they leave players with no choice at all.

The best examples of this are holes offering optional lines of play, with one line being risky and the other much safer. The major problem with this is that, much of the time, only very long hitters choose the risky route, because it requires a very long carry from the tee. The average player is left eternally playing the safer route.

A really good hole of this type should also allow the "short" golfer to benefit just as much as the long golfer.

Great strategic holes don't necessarily create obvious "black or white" options. However, they may present a single obvious haz-

ard (black) and dozens of shades of gray near the hazard or complete safety (white) away from the hazard, with the result that the approach shot is infinitely more difficult.

The best, and quite honestly the only, simple strategic hole I can think of at this time is the 14th hole on Blue Canyon's Lake Course. The hole started life as a solid but wide open, uphill par-four with a single bunker guarding the front and left side of the elevated green. What made it more interesting was that the hog's back fairway exaggerated the error of hooked or sliced drives.

When a large tree was planted on the right edge of the fairway, the hole was transformed into something very interesting. Now the player had to think about driving as close as possible, (but not too close) to that tree.

Laying back far enough with the drive to ensure getting easily over the tree on the second shot, would mean a very long shot and make holding the plateau green very difficult. In my opinion, had the green been built on a more diagonal axis to the left, where the hole is located, this would have been a really special strategic golf hole.

I would find myself playing away from the tree only to have to confront the greenside bunker. As the weeks went by I would try to drive more and more to the right side of the fairway until ... bam! Blocked behind the tree with no second shot! Then of course the cycle would start all over again.

A hole like this captures the essence of the strategic school and never ceases to captivate, whatever level the golfer. I give it a strong eight out of 10 and the prize for Phuket's best strategically-designed golf hole.

Just a few hundred yards away, situated – ironically enough – on a far better piece of golfing real estate, is perhaps the worst strategic hole on the island, the fourth. (At least I think the fourth hole on Blue Canyon's Lakes Course was intended as a strategic hole.)

If the hole has been improved since I last visited, could someone please let me know so I can sleep at night.

In fairness, it's quite a strong hole when played from the black tee 50 yards further back. But from the forward tees, players either have to hit some kind of "skyrocket" high shot or a

ground-hugging slice around a group of trees to get as close as possible to one of the wonderful canyons on the course. But the green location and arrangement then add no incentive whatsoever to the player who manages to pull off this half-shank or perfectly-played trick shot.

Meanwhile, a solid, straight drive leaves one playing from next to the base of a tree or from a severe left-to-right slope trying to carry the aforementioned canyon with a bunker welcoming overhit shots. Any instructor will tell you that the likelihood of a novice pulling off either shot is close to zero.

If there is any strategy to playing the hole, I can't for the life of me find it.

The saddest thing here is that, had the green been arranged more along the line of the canyon, and just a few trees removed near the tee, this could have been an excellent hole from all tees. I guess you can't win 'em all.

Although Mission Hill's short 17th hole comes close, the Blue Canyon Lakes Course's fourth hole gets two out of 10 and takes the prize for Phuket's worst strategic hole.

Another apparent paradox of the best strategic holes is that the key hazard is extremely penal in nature.

This point is often lost on golf committees who, obsessed with fairness, fail to realize that the value of the strategy played is enforced by the severe nature of the hazard.

St Andrew's 17th, the "road hole" is one of the world's finest strategic golf holes.

The hole's supreme character is formed largely by the presence of two extreme hazards at the green site. There is an asphalt road

guarding the back and right of the green, separated from the green by a very steep grass slope. The nature of this slope refuses to allow run-up shots to be played with any degree of confidence. On the other side of the green lies the infamous Road Bunker.

By the time the British Open finishes, all viewers will be familiar with the satanic little pot bunker, which has cost many a contender the title. Drives played closest to the out-of-bounds on the right offer the best line to attack the hole on the second shot.

The 17th hole is in many players' minds well before they step onto the tee. Had either of the hazards been "standard" in difficulty or character, St. Andrew's 17th would not be half the hole it is today. What a shame they no longer build them like that.



World first as makes tracks

PHUKET: Dr Marut Muangkeo, President of the Thai Rugby Union (TRU), has announced that the world's first international 80-80 rugby tournament, in which players must weigh no more than 85 kilograms, will be held in Phuket from August 6 to 14.

Apart from the weight restriction, 80-80 rugby is full 15-a-side contact rugby played under the existing International Rugby Board (IRB) laws for official under-19 matches.

The name 80-80 was adopted because no player can weigh more than 80kg at the start of a season.

Auckland Rugby Union, New South Wales Union and Japan Rugby Football Union have all confirmed that they will compete against Thailand in August. "These Unions represent the 'powerhouses' of Southern hemisphere rugby and of course, Japan is the leading rugby nation in Asia, being the only one to have made it into a World Cup," Dr Marut said in a press release.

"[The event] should prove to be one of the most competitive and closely-fought rugby competitions between Asian Unions and Southern hemisphere unions ever."

Don McBain of the TRU told the *Gazette* that although the tourney was originally scheduled to be played in Bangkok, the Ministry of Sports and Tourism decided to have Phuket host the tourney as part of its post-tsunami recovery policy.

Dr Marut explained, "When told of the venue change, representatives of Auckland Rugby Union and New South Wales Rugby Union were very enthusiastic. They will be spending some time in Bangkok as they pass through, but were more than happy to be playing their rugby in Phuket."

Squads of roughly 30 players, coaches and managers will be staying in Phuket for a full 10 day and nights. "And because the matches are 15-a-side, requiring mandatory rest periods between

Dragons romp home

CHUN CHEON, SOUTH KOREA: Local Taekwondo team Dragon Gym has brought home a slew of medals back from the Korean Open International Taekwondo Championships, held in Chun Cheon, South Korea, from June 24 – July 1.

About 1,500 entrants from 60 countries participated in the championships. The Dragon Gym team traveled to South Korea with the Thai national team, led by coach Chei Yong Sock and Olympic bronze medalist Yao-wapa "View" Burapolchai.

The Dragon Gym team, aged from six to 24 years old and trained by Korean national Park Hee Kang, won four gold medals, three silver medals and two bronzes. The medal winners were:

Gold: Suchakri Boonyang, Duangsamorn Chuaikheng, Branson Ekwanch Robinson, Tiemsak Sungsa.

Silver: Kannika Boonlert, Tanaporn Thavornvongwongse, Chayut Wichitsil.

Bronze: Tanatip Kummit and Donlaporn Suyanon.

Serbin wins challenging sailing

AO YON: A 12- to 15-knot wind with mild swells and choppy seas made for exciting and challenging racing at the Ao Yon dinghy sailing regatta on July 17. Four Bytes and one Laser (all single-handed dinghies) started the event.

By Race 4 – the final race of the day – a capsized dinghy was only too familiar a sight and just two boats crossed the finishing line. One boat (no names mentioned) had spent more time upside down than up and sailing.

Vadim Serbin was one of only two sailors to start and finish each race. At every start, he was on the line, at speed, at the gun. In Race 2, John McDermott edged him out by inches right at the finish line but McDermott was disqualified due to contact between the boats, giving Serbin second place. Serbin won Races

1, 3 and 4 to win the day convincingly.

The other sailor who completed all races was Kittisak "Bpaam" Songnopparat, who began the day in a scrappy manner but then came back strongly.

In the first race, he capsized many times on the downwind legs and duly took last place. He then pulled himself together and, after a perfect start, won Race 2. A couple of great starts gave him second place overall.

Russell Huebschle led the group around the course early in the races but capsizes on the downwind legs resulted in two second-place finishes for him. Surprisingly, he retired after Race 3 due to minor gear failure. Despite a Did-Not-Start score in the last race, Huebschle managed to take third place overall.

– Philip Lawson

80-80 rugby for Phuket

matches, there will be plenty of time for the teams to take in all the tourist activities," said Dr Marut.

Also expected to attend, despite their demanding schedules, are the Chairman of the Australian Rugby Union, Dilip Kumar, and the Chairman of Auckland Rugby Union, Ken Baguley.

The IRB is expected to send both technical development managers and media representatives to study and record the tournament; filming of the event will be broadcast worldwide on the IRB's weekly *Total Rugby* program.

However, Mr McBain explained that it has yet to be determined whether the tourney will be televised locally in Thailand.

He added that he expects the popularity of 80-80 rugby to skyrocket. "The potential for this is huge. If it's anywhere near as successful as it has been in New Zealand, we're sure it will take off," Mr McBain said.

Although 80-80 rugby is a relatively new form of the classic sport, in the Auckland region alone some 200 clubs already play 80-80.

Dr Marut was enthusiastic about Thailand's potential to perform well internationally in the sport because "...it will be a competition based on individual skills, teamwork and technique only, without the domination of physical power that can be generated by some of the physically bigger peoples such as Fiji and South Africa.

"The concept is particularly appealing to Asian and African countries because these unions can now compete. Thailand recognized this, and has taken a valuable and enviable initiative, now grabbing the lead over every other union in the world," he said.

"Imagine the interest if Thailand were to end up in the top 4 nations in the world, and with weight grade, there is no reason why that could not be," Dr Marut added.



BATON CHARGING

The Tessabaan Muang Phuket School 2 (in gray) narrowly beat Tessabaan Baan Bang Niew School in the 12-year-old girls relay during Phuket City Municipality's annual sports competition, held July 9-16.

Competitions in futsal, volleyball, *platanque*, *sepak takraw*, swimming, athletics and table tennis were held at Saphan Hin Gymnasium and at Surakul Stadium, where this photo was taken.

Winners now go on to compete with youngsters from other parts of the island for the right to represent Phuket in the national student games.

All five primary schools run by Phuket City Municipality took part: Phuket Municipal School; Baan Samkong School, Plookpanya School, Bang Niew School and Wat Kajorn Rangsan School.

with Korean medals



Dragon Gym take gold – again – in Chun Cheon, South Korea.

To Be Number One prizes up for grabs

PHUKET CITY: The Phuket Provincial Health Office (PPHO) has invited the public to watch 70 five-person soccer teams compete for the second To Be Number One Cup, scheduled to take place July 21 to 24 at Saphan Hin Football Field.

The nationwide To Be Number One project, initiated by HRH Princess Ubol Ratana Rajakanya to promote excellence and healthy alternatives to drug use, gathers 70 teams from throughout the South. These will be split into two age categories for the tourney, under-16s and open division.

The under-16s can win trophies and cash prizes of: 1st 8,000 baht, 2nd 4,000 baht, 3rd 2,000 baht and 4th 1,000 baht. Open category winners will receive trophies and cash prizes of: 1st 15,000 baht, 2nd 8,000 baht, 3rd 4,000 baht and 4th 2,000 baht.

The winner in each category will receive a trophy from Princess Ubol Ratana, or her representative, while other winners will receive their trophies from various other officials.

For more information, contact the PPHO at Tel: 076-211330 ext. 306.

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Rahu In Control

– *Phuket Gazette*,
July 1995.

On June 30, one of the most famous fortune tellers in Bangkok, Atthavirot Sritula, predicted dangerous times ahead. We are now in the period of "Rahu", the seer said.

This phase, which will last until the end of November 1995, is controlled by Pra Rahu – a demon who influences human affairs and causes eclipses of the sun and moon.

The objects of his evil are people born on a Wednesday night

or on the 3rd, 8th, 12th or 28th of any month. You are also likely to experience trouble if your license plate ends with the number 8, but there is more.

If your first name begins with Y, R, L or W/V, you are cautioned to keep your head down until December.

Pra Rahu's manifestations of malice are manifold. He was

responsible, according to Atthavirot, for the earthquake in Russia, the Ebola outbreak in Africa and the recent sinking of the ferry dock in Bangkok.

If you are on Rahu's list, beware of all manner of misfortune, especially traffic accidents. But don't despair.

If your first name is, say, Walter and you were born on Wednesday night, the 12th, and your Honda Dream's license plate number ends in 8, you are advised to make an offering to Pra Rahu, and you can do this in the comfort

of your home.

The minimum you will need is eight incense sticks and a cup of liquor. If you are feeling particularly unlucky, add one black chicken, black coffee, black whiskey, sticky rice, beans, eggs and sweets (all black).

If you don't do this, please lock yourself in a closet. We'll call you in December.

THE TIME machine

News from the past

Police catch grinning bag-snatcher, alive

– *Phuket Gazette*,
June 15-30, 2000

PHUKET TOWN: The smiling bag snatcher who grabbed at least 11 purses in Phuket in a matter of days last month, including five in one 24-hour period, was nabbed by police after committing another crime at Tesco-Lotus Supercenter.

Pol Col Chalit Thintanee, Superintendent of Phuket Town Police, earlier ordered his officers to catch the bag-snatcher "dead or alive".

The culprit, identified as 25-year-old Moohesam Heena from Narathiwat, was arrested after he stole a carton of cigarettes and a pair of sports shoes from Lotus.

Police were called to the store and caught Moohesam as

he was riding his motorcycle out of the parking lot.

Police said the suspect appeared to be high on Ecstasy and had trouble answering questions.

Moohesam at first denied the crime and identified himself using various names, which police later discovered belonged to his father and brother.

During a search of his residence on Thepkasattri Rd, officers discovered items reported by bag-snatch victims as having been stolen.

A few hours later, after Moohesam's head had cleared, he admitted that he had committed all of the crimes on his own.

Moohesam's bag-snatching *modus operandi* was to drive up alongside women on motorbikes, give them a big grin and then snatch their bags or purses.

Cognac cognizance

Wine production in the Cognac region of France dates back to Roman times. Back then, Cognac wines were intended for export but did not enjoy much success, as they were simple, light bodied, and did not travel well by ship.

The only place they caught on – later – was Norway.

The Dutch stepped in to evaluate Cognac's prospects as a distillate and they were impressed enough to encourage dedication of the region's output to distillation.

Because alcohol has a high pH and because distillation amplifies the aroma of the wine from which it is made, the Dutch recognized the acidic and plain-tasting Cognac wines to be ideal for distillation. Thus Cognac, the region, was reinvented.

Cognac is interesting in that much of the product is still produced by small, family distilleries, each of whom sells their production to larger Cognac houses, as in olden times.

The region is littered with small farmhouses harboring basement stills, and the production of Cognac is still very much a community endeavor.

The Cognac appellation is divided into six sub-appellations, listed here in descending order of quality from best downward: Grande Champagne (not to be

WINE



By Steven
Roberto

confused with Champagne, the sparkling wine), Petite Champagne, Borderies, Fins Bois, Bons Bois, and Bois Ordinaires.

Theoretically, better sub-appellations produce better Cognac as they are produced from higher-quality grapes.

Young wine, still on its "lees" (grape solids and spent yeast), is added to copper kettles and heated by a wood or gas fire. The vapors are concentrated as they pass through a cooling coil and condense into a distillate called Brouillis, which is, in turn, re-distilled into young Cognac.

Alcohol percentage at this stage typically approaches 70%. Yet, despite distillation's seeming simplicity, the process involves complex physical chemistry and biochemistry and demands a

strong engineering mindset, as well as an artistic touch in blending and aging. These processes shape the final product.

Cognac is aged in oak barrels constructed of wood from France's Limousin forest. It is the barrel that imparts the color and much of Cognac's subtle flavor. The barrel also mellows Cognac through evaporation.

In fact, so much alcohol evaporates that roofs often turn black from the mold that seems to enjoy the alcoholic vapor. Inside the cellar it smells like sweet heaven, but can quickly turn to hell if care is not taken to avoid the build-up static electricity that can trigger an explosion.

Most Cognac is aged in barrels for seven to 50 years. Over the course of its life, it progresses from a fiery clear liquid that tastes something like asparagus to a glorious fruity, nutty-tasting nectar with hints of vanilla and orange spice.

Once bottled, Cognac's flavor never changes. One pays dearly for the premium aged offerings. Timelessness is never cheap.

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

Phuket Diary

July 24-25, 2005, 10 am to 5 pm: One-design Regatta.

The 2nd Phuket Sport 8 one-design regatta, the Quantum Naga Cup, will be held in Chalong Bay on July 24 and 25.

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A limited number of tickets are available at 600 baht a day or 1,000 baht for both days, including lunch and soft drinks.

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miss it. Tickets available from the Ao Chalong Yacht Club or Lee Marine (Boat Lagoon), or from Scott Duncanson. Call Tel: 01-892-4992 or send email to: sduncanson@quantumsails.com

August 1-31, 2005, 10 am to 10 pm daily: Photography at Watermark.

From the simple to the sublime ... "Here and There" is a stimulating collection of color-intensive, high-impact graphic images by accomplished photographer John Marmon.

Images shot in China, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Italy, Jordan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and the US Virgin Islands form this amusing,

whimsical, imaginative and original portfolio of contemporary photographic art.

John's images are his personal vision of what he has seen while traveling and living around the world.

Preferring to eschew typical travel photography, he draws attention to seemingly insignificant and ephemeral subjects that might otherwise have gone unnoticed.

Arguably unconventional, the subjects create images of stunning impact.

For more information call John Marmon at Tel: 09-0571976 or Stuart Bird at Tel: 01-7376184 or send email to info@watermarkphuket.com

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Guest chef

By Jenna Wise

Philippe Cablat is proud of his restaurant. "We have been running the Black Cat in Cherg Talay longer than any other part-foreign-owned restaurant in the area," he says. He and his wife, Meow, have enjoyed 11 successful years in the restaurant business on Phuket.

In these quiet times, the couple continue to invest positive energy in the Black Cat with a free taxi service to and from the restaurant and, out front, a hard-to-miss 2.5-meter-tall illuminated yellow sign featuring a large black cat.

All the restaurant's dishes are freshly prepared, with an emphasis on home cooking.

"Our menu features an eclectic mix of French, other international cuisines and Thai fare, which seems to suit our customers very well," says Mr Cablat.

The homemade fish stock in the white snapper recipe is also used in the Thai-style seafood dish. It's a good all-purpose recipe. You can, for example, use this stock as the base for a delicious fish soup.

Fish Fillet with Saffron Sauce For 2 people

Ingredients:

2 white snapper fillets, each weighing about 150 gms;
A pinch of saffron powder;
About 20 pieces of whole saffron;
10 cl white wine;
14 cl whipped cream with a pinch of cornflour stirred in;
10 cl homemade fish stock.

To make about one liter of fish stock:

500 gms sole (use the whole fish, but clean it well first);
2 liters water;
300 gms roughly chopped carrot;
200 gms roughly chopped celery stalks;
200 gms roughly chopped onion;
5 bay leaves;
1 bunch fresh parsley, roughly chopped;
Salt and pepper to taste;
3 cloves;
10 cl white wine.

Method:

First prepare the fish stock, simply placing all the ingredients into a large pot and bringing to a boil. Simmer on a low heat for about three hours. Allow to cool, then strain.

Pan-fry the white snapper fillets lightly in butter. Heat the white wine, fish stock, saffron powder and half of the pieces of whole saffron for 2-3 minutes.



Right, Philippe and Meow Cablat with daughter Pem-Pem.
Left, Foie Gras and Bacon Salad.
Below left, Thai-style Seafood



Add the cream and simmer for a further 5 minutes letting the sauce reduce.

Place the fish fillets onto two plates and cover with sauce, then sprinkle the remaining whole saffron pieces on top of the sauce. Philippe recommends serving this mouth-watering fish dish with either fettuccine or rice.

Thai-style Seafood (served on a hotplate) For 2 people

Ingredients:

400 gms mixed prawns, fresh tuna steak, squid rings and shelled mussels;
400 gms mixed carrot, *phak kana* (Thai dark green leafy vegetable), baby corn and mushrooms.

For the sauce:

2 tablespoons palm oil;
2 tablespoons Maggi seasoning sauce;
2 tablespoons sesame oil;
2 tablespoons Chinese rice spirit;
2 tablespoons oyster sauce;
2 tablespoons light soy sauce;
2 tablespoons homemade fish stock (see previous recipe);
2 teaspoons sugar.

Method:

Heat the palm oil in a wok, then add the other sauce ingredients and stir well. On medium heat, stir-fry all the vegetables in this sauce. Remove the vegetables and stir-fry the seafood in the same wok.

Arrange everything on 2

hotplates, so that the seafood and vegetables remain separate.

Foie Gras and Bacon Salad For 2 people

Ingredients:

2 slices of foie gras, each weighing about 50 gms;
4 thin slices of bacon;
2 cups mixed green salad;
2 finely chopped shallots;
2 tablespoons chopped parsley;
4 spring onions;
2 sprigs of parsley to decorate;
10-12 cherry tomatoes.

For the dressing:

3 tablespoons olive oil;
3 tablespoons sunflower oil;
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar;
1 tablespoon raspberry vinegar;
1 tablespoon walnut vinegar;
Salt and pepper to taste;
3 tablespoons Dijon mustard.



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Catalog of success

Method:

Chop the bacon slices finely and fry lightly in butter. Blend the salad dressing ingredients together well.

Arrange the mixed green salad, chopped shallots, chopped parsley and bacon on each plate with a slice of foie gras placed on top.

Place 5 or 6 whole cherry tomatoes on each salad and a

whole spring onion and sprig of parsley for decoration. Drizzle some salad dressing over the salad before serving.

The Black Cat restaurant, 296/1 Moo 1, Cherg Talay, Thalang, Phuket 83110. Tel: 076-271180 or 01-7879701. Open seven days a week from 11.30 am to 3 pm and 5.30 pm to 1 am. Closed at lunch-time on Sundays.

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Apathy towards roads damps development

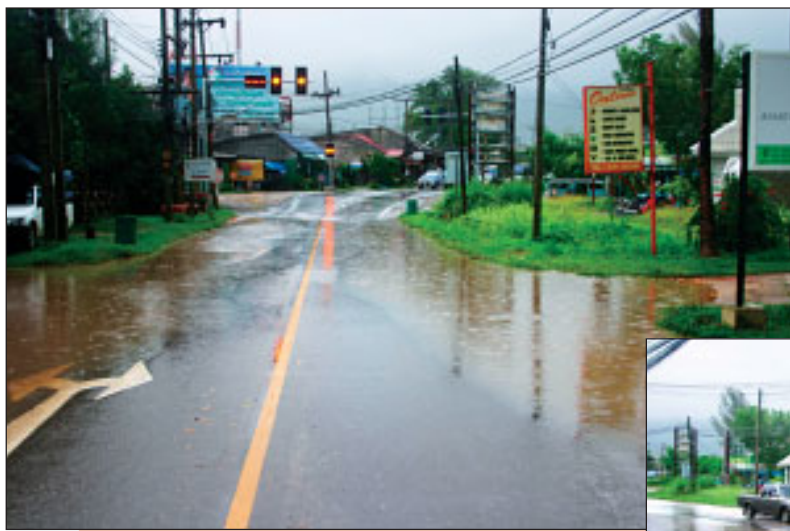
The road outside my office in Cherng Talay is flooded. All the immaculately-dressed secretaries and hotel staff going to work on their motorcycles suddenly get blasted with a wall of spray as a not-so-considerate bus driver roars past in the opposite direction.

This particular road is not only the main access to Phuket's biggest resort complex, Laguna, but is also the way to the fast-developing Layan area and the northwest coast.

At 5 pm every day, traffic is backed up some 200-300 meters, and part of the queue is stuck in the puddle. It's been like this for years; everybody complains – especially me, since it is in front of my office – but nobody does anything about it.

The question is: who is responsible for the road? It's a bit like the traffic lights at Thalang when the right-turn arrow showed green in both directions.

Unbelievably dangerous, and if I remember correctly, when



UNDER THE WEATHER: The main access road to the Laguna complex (left) becomes flooded with each substantial rainfall, causing not just an eyesore, but also a danger to motorists (below).



the *Gazette* staff inquired about it, the policemen who monitor that particular intersection answered that it was not their responsibility as the traffic lights did not belong to them.

The local authorities also washed their hands of responsibility, saying that the traffic lights didn't belong to them either. In

fact, nobody seemed to be sure who owned the lights.

But the road is different from the traffic lights in that we know who owns it. You see, some people went to see the local authority, but were told that it wasn't their responsibility because the road is privately owned.

A representative of the road's owner reported that the owner felt that the people who benefit from the road should pay for its repair.

Of course, the owner of the road seems not to consider the fact that collecting rent from all the businesses along the road is a benefit, too.

He has a point though; the people who operate businesses along the road benefit the most, or they would if there were customers passing by, which at the moment there are not.

Of course, then comes the next question: who benefits most from the road?

"Mr Chai has a bigger shop than Mr Smith," says Mr Smith. "Therefore he should pay more." If that were the case one would think that my friend Bepy should

pay the largest part of the repair bill. There goes my next vodka on the house from him.

Mr Chai does not agree with this theory because he says that everybody shares the same number of potential customers going along the road.

Wong Li says that he does not have to pay anything because the road does not flood in front of his shop. The tailor further west does not mind the water

trap; he hopes that people will come to him to replace their ruined clothes.

The problem is this: apart from all the people who get their clothes ruined,

and the danger to motorcyclists, there are only three or four of us who are directly affected.

The cost of fixing this problem is about 200,000 baht, which, among three or four of us is a lot of money, although split among 60 or 70 businesses, it is nothing. Most of them do not care though, the owner does not care, and I cannot afford to fix it myself, so I guess it stays just as it is.

Anyway, the weather today is fine, so it doesn't really need fixing – for now.

Home of the Week



Sheer

This three-bedroom home, which fronts directly onto the sea in the beautiful Cape Panwa area has direct access to the beach, a large swimming pool and tropical gardens. It even boasts a waterfall, and the owner can anchor his or her boat just out to sea.

The entire development is named, appropriately enough, The Moorings. It was completed about six years ago and comprises 10 beachfront villas sharing large communal areas.

This particular home has undergone major redevelopment to make the most of every part of its more than 300 square meters of living space, on two floors, looking west across Ao Chalong.

The sea views and sunsets from this handsome home can be stunning and can be seen from many parts of the house, including the shower in the master bedroom.

The house was designed for comfortable living, and while the exterior reflects the style of Northern Thailand the interior is pure Western convenience.

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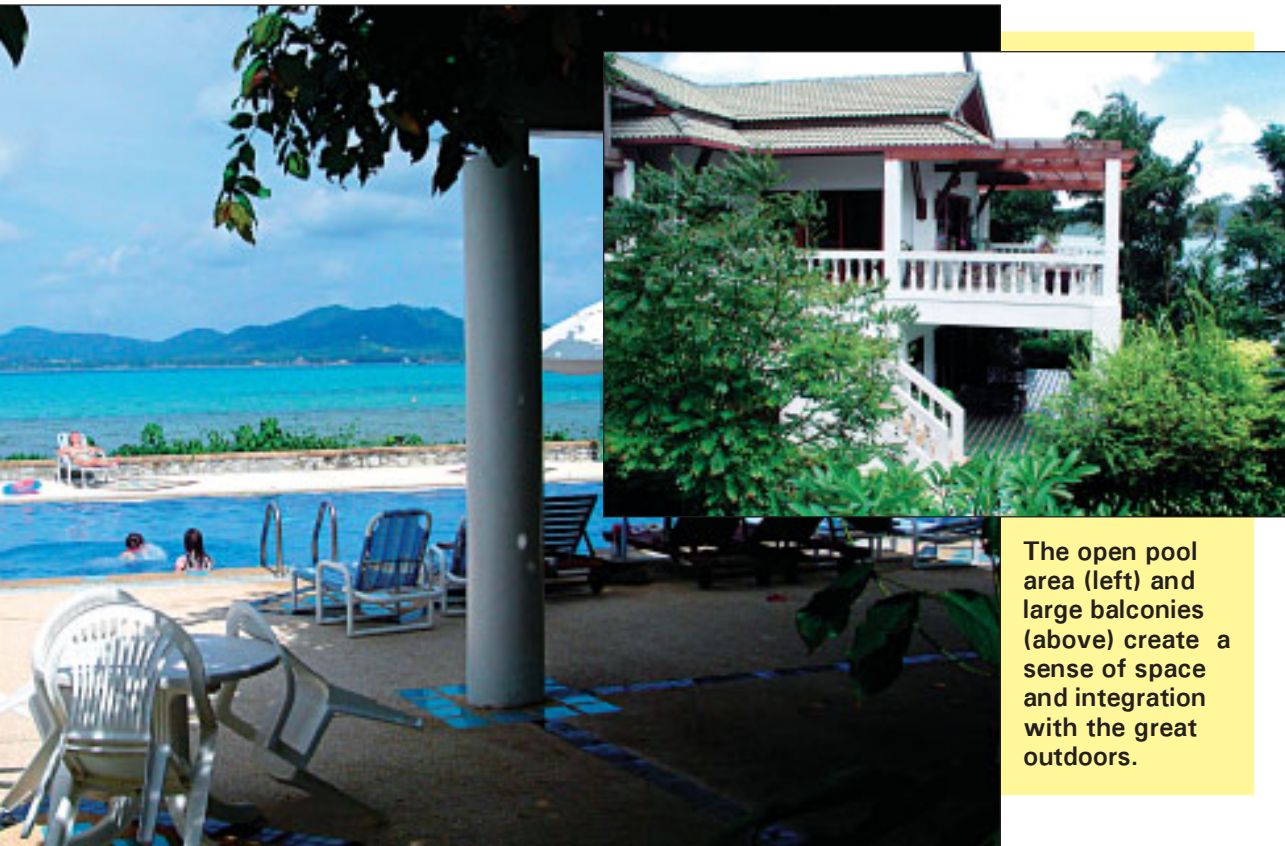
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Cape Panwa



The open pool area (left) and large balconies (above) create a sense of space and integration with the great outdoors.

space at Panwa

The covered outdoor barbecue-and-lounging area next to the dining room provides an excellent venue for parties, protected from the sun and tropical rain yet without detracting from the spectacular views across the bay.

The kitchen is equipped with a gas-and-electric stove, oven, dishwasher, a family-sized refrigerator and a breakfast bar.

The master bedroom has a spacious walk-in closet, a large Jacuzzi and a bathroom and shower. The latter has one-way glass to enjoy the view while washing in the morning – a great way to start the day.

The house has a fully adjustable lighting system with dimmer switches, and a washing machine and clothes dryer. Both of these machines are heavy-duty items, each with a 10-kilogram capacity, ample for almost any family.

The total interior space of the house is almost 319sqm, split 163.22sqm downstairs and 156.46sqm upstairs.



The property, which also has parking for two cars, is for sale at 22 million baht (approximately US\$550,000).

Contact Ken Abday of Lifestyle Properties Co Ltd at Tel: 01-6493557 or Email: info@phuketlifestyle.com for more information. Alternatively, visit Web: www.phuketlifestyle.com/moorings.htm

The living room (above) provides protection from the sun and tropical rains while the floor-to-ceiling windows offer spectacular views across the bay.

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BRIGHT LIGHTS

A lamp can add so much more than simply light to a house or an office. Choose the correct one, and it can bring a spark of bright individuality into the dullest of rooms.

Intercraft Furniture specializes in lamp stands crafted from wood and ceramic. Additionally, they can modify a customer's favorite vase and turn it into an attractive lampstand. Most of the shades for the lamps at Intercraft Furniture are made from cotton. The lamps shown Above, right, and below are priced at 2,000 and 3,500 baht.

Lamp Mode carries a range of retro, contemporary and fancy styles of lamp, many of which would probably suit a larger home. One of Lamp Mode's showcase items is the crystal-ship lamp (left), which is sure to be a topic of conversation in any home. Ships in full sail are never cheap, though: this lamp costs 21,300 baht. A more down-to-earth 8,650 baht is the price for the antique-style lamp (right).

Although the cheerily-named **Happy Lights** specializes in ceiling- and wall-mounted lights, it does stock a small range of desk and table lamps. The shop's current range includes a "candle-stick" lamp (below, right) with a white shade for 1,200 baht.

For more information:

- **Intercraft Furniture**, 91/8 Chaofa West Rd, is open Monday to Saturday from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm. Tel: 076-264348.

- **Lamp Mode**, 108/104 Chalemprakiat Ror IX Rd (the bypass road), is open from 9 am until 7 pm, Monday to Saturday. Tel: 076-261808.

- **Happy Lights**, 371/1 Yao-warat Rd, is open from 9 am to 7 pm, Monday to Friday, and closes one hour earlier on Saturdays. Tel: 076-223824.

Right, from top, Intercraft Furniture, Lampmode and Happy Lights.



Lamps from Lampmode, above, and Phuket Intercraft, right.

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Gardening

with Bloomin' Bert

Hanging baskets of babble on

When I was a youngster, like so many of my peers, I looked at older people with a degree of disdain. They did not understand the music I listened to and often had no idea what I was saying. At times it seemed that we were speaking completely different languages.

I remember persons of more mature years actually laughing at my one and only pair of Birmingham bags; those trousers with the four button-high waistbands that looked like twin miniature tents. They were of course the height of fashion at the time, but the oldies did not get it. These were people who were still parting their hair with Brylcreem. They had no idea that it just was not right to wear socks with sandals.

I grew up vowing that I would never turn into my father. I swore that I would stay current with the music of today – I would always enjoy it. I would also keep track of the language of today's youth, and I would always be aware; never disapproving.

That was of course complete nonsense. Nowadays I haven't a clue. I am now officially my father through and through.

So now I have to ask: What does "hanging tough" actually mean? How about "hang loose" or, more obscurely, "hang ten", come to that.

For now, I will have to assume that "hanging tough" is something to do with grabbing hold of something above, and dangling from it. Toughly. Is that an adverb? It is now.

The tenuous link today, not surprisingly, is pots that dangle in your garden, more commonly known as hanging baskets. They do not seem to be as commonly used here as they might be.

Pots sitting idly on the floor are not the only thing in which plants can be grown. Why not hang something from that striped tin roof over your patio?



Episcia works well in hanging baskets. Thais call it *Prom Yipoon*, or Japanese Carpet.

Hanging baskets can be hung anywhere. Baskets containing water-loving plants can be suspended under the eaves of a sloping roof, to make the most of the plentiful rainfall in Phuket. You can hang plants with more troglodyte-type tendencies – those that prefer the shade – in more secluded spots.

Just about the only rule with hanging baskets is not to put them anywhere near an area where you are likely to walk. An eager friend decided that his large balcony would be greatly enhanced by half a dozen suspended pots. The flaw in the plan was that he artistically dotted them all over the area at head height. They looked amazing, and it wasn't

until the sixth bruise on his head that he concluded that the look was not particularly practical.

Coincidentally, I think six was the exact number of beers he had drunk.

When hanging these pots, especially the heavy ones, a firm fixing is also fairly important. Phuket, with its tropical storms and winds, sometimes does its best to undo the work you have done, so it is a good idea to use a good strong screw hook to fix the supports. Bend it a bit or wire it up to close it, too.

When choosing plants, there is a huge number of possibilities. All it takes is the ability to put one plant next to another. Even I can do that. You can even

insert trailing plants around the edge and through the basket side with "uprights" in the middle and climbers next to the chain.

My favorite is the episcia, or flame violet (*Prom Yipoon* in Thai). It has crinkly, thick, fuzzy, oval leaves that are dark green with silver veins. The small, tubular flowers are a vivid scarlet with a tiny yellow throat, and the plant grows up to four inches high.

It is not much of a sun-worshiper, although it is happy with indirect sunlight with some shade. The soil needs to be continuously moist, but not waterlogged.

A healthy episcia has a number of small plantlets at the

ends of runners. These runners make it both an ideal candidate for a hanging basket, as they droop over the edge of the pot and dangle down in mid-air. The runners make it very easy to reproduce. Pinch off one of the plantlets, and put it in some moist potting compost. One new episcia.

Another hanging basket option is lantana, or *phakaa-krong* in Thai. Many Thai people regard this as a weed though, so they may give you a few funny looks. It trails well, so is ideal, and requires little in the way of maintenance. If you do not mind giving a little TLC, then orchids are at the other end of the maintenance stakes, and look spectacular.

You can make a hanging basket yourself, if DIY appeals to you. Take a large wire basket, line it with black polythene, puncture for drainage holes and then place a layer of coconut fiber on top of the plastic.

The soil and compost mix that contains the plants needs to be able to hold water, without becoming soggy. This allows free drainage, while still retaining nutrients. It is actually reassuring to finally find a use for some of those thousands of coconut husks we see lying all over the island.

So hang them high or hang them low. Hang them on the wall, from the ceiling or from a tree. Hang them tough, loose or even ten. The young people will know what I'm talking about.

Want to know more about a plant in your garden?

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Property Gazette

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For sale by owner: 2-story townhouse with views over Kata Beach to the sea. Located in a safe area close to a market and shops; has 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms and a very big Western-style kitchen, all with air conditioning; nice terrace. Chanote title, asking 5 million baht. Tel: 01-7888280. Email: mauram7@hotmail.com

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Property Gazette

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APARTMENT

wanted. I am looking for a 2-bedroom furnished apartment for long-term rent. Will consider all areas north of Phuket City. Please contact for more information. Tel: 69-5975777. Fax: 69-5971777. Email: hhrackwitz@hotmail.com

HOUSE FOR RENT

in Nai Harn. Looking to rent a small house or apartment in the Nai Harn area from December 10, 2005 until January 8, 2006. It should have a bedroom, living room, air conditioning, TV and UBC. Please email: martin.stelzer@mmm.com

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with swimming pool. We are looking for a nice house, with a private swimming pool, to rent between December 24 and January 23. The house should have at least 3 bedrooms and furniture. We are looking to stay in Patong, Karon or Kata, and close to the beach. Please contact us with full details. Tel: 07-8822597. Email: euro-art-gallery@planet.nl

HOUSE/CONDO

or other accommodation in Patong. We are a young and easy-going couple looking for accommodation in Patong for sale or for long-term rent. We are interested in cheaper houses, condos or other apartments in Patong. The price for long-term rental of a smaller apartment should be a maximum of 15,000 baht a month. Houses, apartments or condos for sale or long-term lease should be at a maximum of 1.5 million baht. We need a kitchen, a telephone line or ADSL, and air conditioning. We will need the accommodation from November onward. If you have anything that may suit our needs, please send full details, prices and photos to us by email at: lunkan1x@hotmail.com

ACCOMMODATION

wanted. I am looking for a 2-bedroom property in the Kata-Karon area, for six months from October 1. Please email with full details to: anthony@szuch.force9.co.uk

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46 Ft 87/98 Dutch Pilot, Daf 2x140 Hp turbo US\$150,000	57 Ft 1995 Lagoon 57, Yanmar 2x45 Hp US\$950,000
39 Ft 90/00 Searay 390 Custom, Cat 2x385 Hp THB7,300,000	44 Ft 1976 Peterson 44, Yanmar 1x45 Hp US\$85,000
36 Ft 1994 Island Gypsy, Perkins 2x225 Hp US\$169,000	38 Ft 2003 Athena Cats (2 sister boats), 2xYanmar 19 Hp US\$245,000

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Applicants must have experience in a similar position. Good command of written and spoken English. Good interpersonal and leadership skills.

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F&B Department (Service) : Bar Supervisor, Captain, Hostess, Waiter, Waitress, Bartender
F&B Department (Kitchen) : Pantry, Thai Cook, Cook's Helper (European), Bakery Supervisor, Bakers, Steward Supervisor and Steward

F/O Department : F/O Supervisor, Chief Receptionist, Receptionist, Operator, Bell man and Driver

Housekeeping Department : Office Clerk, Room Maid, Room Boy, Cleaner, Gardener

Engineering Department : Engineer (specialist in mechanics & air-conditioning)

Accounting Department : Purchase Supervisor, A/C Receivable, Front Cashier, Night Audit, Restaurant Cashier and Checker

Spa Department : Spa Receptionist, Therapists

Applicants must have minimum 2 years' experience in a related field, good command of written and spoken English, strong customer service skills and a good personality.

BASED IN KOH SAMUI (at Impiana Resort Samui): Executive Sous-Chef and Lady Chef
 Experience in fusion cuisine; good command of English and able to create and design menus and recipes. Pleasant personality and good management skills with strong leadership approach.

BASED IN BANGKOK (at Regional Sales Office, Sukhumvit Road): Sales Manager
 Bachelor's degree minimum 3 years' experience, good command of written and spoken English, excellent communication and interpersonal skills, self-motivated, result-oriented and able to work independently.

Interested candidates are invited to send their resumé a recent photo to the address below:
 Personnel Manager Impiana Phuket Cabana
 41 Taweewong Road, Patong Beach, Phuket
 Tel: 076 341494 Fax: 076 344310 or Email: pncabana@samart.co.th

Phukana

Wine and Music, a leading 5-star place located in Phuket town, is now looking for applicants to join our team in the following positions:

Manager

- Male
- Experience in a restaurant and good knowledge of wine
- Fluent English is required

Receptionist

- Female, age not over 30
- Experience in a related field
- Good command of English

Cashier

- Female
- Must have a guarantor

Waitress

- Female, 18-25 years of age
- Experience in a related field
- Good command of English

Chef & Assistant Chef

- Experience in Thai & Western cooking

Kitchen Staff

Housekeeper

- Female

Interested candidates are invited to contact
 K. Kwan. Tel: (01) 892-4337.
 Phukana Co., Ltd. 6 Maeluan Road,
 Tambon Talad Yai, Muang Phuket 83000.

HOUSEKEEPER - UK

Opportunity for a housekeeper to a bachelor (58 yrs) in the UK on an initial 6-month contract. Duties include: domestic cleaning, cooking, washing and ironing, and driving. Hours are variable and must be flexible, but, in general, not over 35 hours per week. The ideal person will keep the home running smoothly and act as a host. Benefits: all travel between the UK and Thailand paid for. As the position is in a rural location, a car will be provided. An International Drivers' Licence is a must. This is an ideal opportunity for a person aged 30 to 40 to explore the UK and live in a country setting. Email me with your details and photograph. Interviews will be held in Bangkok in September. Salary, paid in UK Sterling, is open to discussion. Email: sandy2501@aol.com

ACCOUNTANT

required. Diving and adventures company in Karon area seeks Accountant. Thai or foreign nationals may apply. Candidates will be computer-literate Accounting graduates with 3 years of relevant working experience and a fair command of written and spoken English. Attractive salary for the right person. Please send your resumé to 393 Patak Rd, Karon, Muang, Phuket, 83100, Thailand, or contact Tel: 01-8927847, 076-398-364. Fax: 076-398365. Email: holiday@liveaboard-thailand.com

Employment Wanted

SALES AND MARKETING DIRECTOR

(40) is looking for a new challenge. Great experience in building up and leading efficient teams with 'Must Win' attitudes and: - Working in developing countries - Building up new branches/subsidiaries - Implementing channel strategies - Introduction/establishment of new products - Working in start-up situations, and - Developing new markets I am a team player with strong ability to motivate and develop people. I speak English and German, and have working experience in Asia and Europe. Email: muenchen1@gmx.net

JOB WANTED

24-year-old service-minded Filipina with pleasant personality seeks a job. Capable of adapting to a changing environment, good command of written and spoken English and German, with experience in waitressing, housekeeping and babyscare. Tel: 04-744-1520.

W watermark

bar restaurant

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 For interview, send resumé to info@watermarkphuket.com
 tel: 076.239078



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If you have Autocad/Designcad or similar training and experience, an artistic flair, good English and above all a willingness to learn our trade and grow with us, we want to meet you.

Please contact us at:
 info@shades.co.th or Tel: 076-204120, 076-323600.

SHORE BOAT

captain. Part/full-time shore boat captain needed for small fleet of excursion vessels (daytrip and/or live-aboard); to be responsible for scheduled maintenance and quick turn-arounds. Mechanical or electrical background required. Thai and foreign applicants welcome. Tel: 01-8927847. Email: holiday@liveaboard-thailand.com

MISSION HEIGHTS

property requires sales staff. Skills required: driving license, computer knowledge, excellent English language, ability to work under pressure and a "Go-Getter" personality. Good salary and commissions for the right candidate. Please contact for more information. Tel: 01-3444473. Email: brian@missionheights.com www.missionheights.com



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for long-term employment wanted!

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Send application to: holger@sea-bees.com

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Tout, Trader & Trumpet

Articles For Sale

FREEZER CONTAINER

20-foot refrigerated container in good condition. Quick sale: 175,000 baht. Please call for more information. Tel: 076-281283.

A-Z OF EVERYTHING

What women want, in black pages by Qishi Marijossa. Now on sale for 300 baht. Please email for more information. Email: qismi@yahoo.com

ORNAMENTAL FERNS

Large choice of ferns, birds' nests and garden items, in Thalang. Please call for more information. Tel: 04-837-1063.

ASTRA SATELLITE

dish and decoder. As new, and for sale much cheaper than UBC. New: 22,000 baht. Now 10,000. Also five home theater DVDs. Tel: 076-385865. Fax: 076-385665. Email: kamala_bakery@yahoo.com

USB VIDEO CAPTURE

Dazzle USB video capture card VC80. Capture from video camera or cassette player to mpeg. Composite or s-video input. All cables and installation disks. 1,500 baht only. Please call for more information. Tel: 01-9783089.

DVD COLLECTION

Over 100 DVDs. Must sell. Please call for more information. Tel: 04-8106205.

RESTAURANT

furniture and equipment. Brand-new restaurant furniture and equipment for sale. Great prices – everything must go. Tel: 07-9795048.

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A good set for the beginner to intermediate player. Only 15,000 baht. Tel: 04-844-9360. Email: johanh@loxinfo.co.th

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2 1/2" Hitachi disk drive. 40 GB. Suitable for use in laptop computer or disk enclosure. 1,500 baht only. Please call for more information. Tel: 01-9783089.

Bulletins

Alcoholics Anonymous

is holding meetings in English at the following places:

Phuket City

Mission Hospital
on Wed and Sun at 7 pm

Bangkok Phuket Hospital
on Fri at 7 pm

Patong

Patong Hospital
on Mon, Tue, Wed, Sat, Sun
at 7 pm and on Fri at 8 pm

For more info, please call
012732053 (Scandinavian),
018954763 (English) or
018912895 (Frank)

Business Opportunities

WORKING PARTNERS

Established real estate company requires two partners for expansion in Chalong and Patong. Contact for details. Email: gibbo_960@hotmail.com

RAWAI MINI SPA

for sale. A nine-year contract for business in a 2-story townhouse with four bedrooms near Rawai Beach. Tastefully furnished and ready to use. Selling for only 550,000 baht. Tel: 01-891-3039. Fax: 076-383081. Email: siamuk@loxinfo.co.th

CHARTER BOAT

operation. Newly-built Chinese Junk with Thai owning company for sale. Respond by email. Tel: 076-345710, 01-0806165. Email: litzaco@hotmail.com

RESTUARANT

for sale at Kata. Great location, also has 4 rooms, large kitchen, has the lot. Please contact K. Ranne. Tel: 06-6833964.

CAFE FOR SALE

Trendy cafe at Surin Beach with all assets for sale. Selling due to family commitments. Tel: 01-8636294.

NEW RESTAURANT

for lease. 60-seat, air-conditioned restaurant for lease in new 3-story building, fully equipped, in Phuket City. Tel: 01-7872869.

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. Tel: 01-0808557.

BAR FOR SALE

Soi Dongtan, Patong. Fully furnished, nice location. Contact K. Ot at Tel: 06-6863337 or K. Greg at Tel: 076-345010.

DOMAIN NAME

for sale. "Thailand-scuba-diving.com" on auction, starting at 100,000 baht. Tel: 04-0511944. Fax: 076-243089. Email: sharkymike@yahoo.com

SHOP FOR RENT

On the main road at Patong Beach, front facing; 15 meters deep. Tel: 076-344-715, 01-7977199.

BAR FOR SALE

in Patong. Very cheap! Own the best. Tel: 07-8817600. Please see our website at: www.homebarphuket.com

PATONG

Guesthouse for sale with Chanote: six rooms, living quarters and minimart. Asking 4.5 million baht. Please contact for more information. Tel: 07-8887676. Email: homeawaypatong@hotmail.com

SHOPHOUSES

for sale. 3 floors, 160sqm, located opposite Simon Cabaret on busy road between Patong and Karon. Asking 4.2 million baht, for quick sale. Tel: 01-9684-575.

RESTAURANT

and guesthouse available for 6.5-year lease in Karon. European-style kitchen, 36-seat air-conditioned restaurant, 2 TVs, UBC & sound system. 5 air-conditioned guest rooms with hot water, TV and full UBC satellite system. Small staff room and office. Thai-registered company included, ready to start your business now. Tel: 09-591-4044, 01-8936-072. Email: beefeater_karon@hotmail.com

FOR URGENT LEASE

One-floor, three-room shop-house now for lease in Kata business center. Please call Khun Sinny at Tel: 01-979-8540.

BARS FOR LEASE

15 beer bars for lease near Simon Entertainment on Soi Bangla. 3+3-year contract. All new, opening November 15. Call Mr. Kees. Tel: 01-826-7129.

INVESTOR

Active investor or silent partner sought for beer garden and for beach bar. Email: phuketopportunity@hotmail.com

OFFICE FOR RENT

2-story office with 15 computers for rent opposite Robinson. Tel: 076-250-538, 09-8751166. Email: ppcabana@dreamwiz.com

SMALL SPA

for sale, in Patong. Includes healthy yearly profit and 900,000 baht in investment. Tel: 076-233348, 01-8958-837. Fax: 076-212901. Email: siripornp@asianwind.biz

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: www.patong.biz/venus

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Notice



AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY BANGKOK

CHANGE OF TELEPHONE NUMBERS

With effect from 8 PM on Friday 15 July 2005 the existing Embassy telephone numbers were changed to the new numbers listed below:

Embassy Main Switchboard	02 344 6300
DIMIA (Visas and Immigration)	02 344 6400
Austrade	02 344 6333
Australian Education Centre	02 344 6488

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. Please contact for more information. Tel: 076-345-277, 04-021-9800. Email: admin@siam-legal.com For further details, please see our website at: www.siam-legal.com

LEARN THAI

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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for gentlemen. British hairdresser now working at the new West One Salon. Walk-in service is available or you can call to make an appointment. Tel: 076-248311.

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& accounting. Netgroup offers services for your company, including work permit & visa processing, accounting (including tax and social insurance submissions). Please email for more details. Email: netgroup_services@yahoo.com

Personals

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Retired businessman looking for backgammon players on Phuket Island. Please call if interested. Tel: 076-386-113, 01-5778443.

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