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Bus service to airport to launch in October

By Athiga Jundee
& Alasdair Forbes

PHUKET: The island is to get a regular bus service between Phuket City and the airport, the *Gazette* was told in an exclusive interview this week.

The service will use four buses, each of them capable of seating up to 34 people. The service will start at 5:30 am every day from Phuket City and 6:30 am from the airport. The last bus will leave the airport at 8:30 pm and Phuket City at 9:30 pm.

In Phuket City, the gray and orange buses will set out from the main Phuket City bus station on Phang Nga Rd, leaving the city via Mae Luan Rd, and stopping to pick up passengers at Big C; Tesco-Lotus; outside the Shell gas station at the Heroines' Monument; near Wat Phranang-sang in Thalang; and at the Nai Yang turnoff from road number 4031 (the old road to the airport), before arriving at the airport.

Permission to make other stops has been applied for. The full trip from end to end will take about one hour.



The gray and orange buses will take an hour to get to the airport.

The return journey will follow the same route. Fares will range from 8 baht for one stop to 52 baht for the entire trip. There will be discounts for passengers producing student ID cards.

So far, the operator, a new company called Phuket Mahanakorn Co Ltd, has bought two buses and registered them for the service. Two more will be bought and registered before the service starts on October 1,

Teerayuth Prasertphol, Chief Technical Officer of the Phuket Provincial Transportation Office, told the *Gazette* on August 30.

Asked whether he thought the new bus service would run into trouble from limousine and taxi operators, a spokesperson for the company, speaking on condition of anonymity, said he thought it unlikely as the buses would be catering to a different market, consisting mainly of airport staff, students, Thai tourists or business people, and foreign backpackers.

He said, "Our prices are low, so there may be some effect on the *songtaew* (local blue buses) and minibus services."

The buses will drop passengers at the departures terminal, but will pick them up just inside the exit gate, about 200 meters from the arrivals terminal.

K. Teerayuth said that the PPTO would like to see more bus services running to the airport from other parts of the island, particularly the tourist areas on the west coast such as Patong, Kata and Karon.

1,522 tsunami dead still to be identified

PHUKET: The Deputy Commander of the Thai Tsunami Victim Identification (TTVI) effort has reported that 2,167 tsunami victims have now been identified, leaving 1,522 still to be named.

Pol Maj Gen Udom Raksiltham said, "We have 129 foreign ante-mortem files, including physical descriptions, dental records and x-rays, photographs, fingerprints, DNA samples and medical histories, and 893 Thai ante-mortem files - 1,022 files.

"That leaves another 500 unidentified victims, who may be from Myanmar, Laos, Thailand or elsewhere. We cannot tell at this point.

"We continue to hold the corpses at Mai Khao morgue in Phuket and Baan Maruan in Takuapa district in Phang Nga. We are trying hard to identify them so they can be returned to their families as soon as possible."

He noted that the foreign Disaster Victim Identification

(DVI) staff on the TTVI team are scheduled to return home at the end of the year.

"We have learned a great deal from our international DVI teammates working in the TTVI in Bangkok and Phuket. Combining forces with them was like receiving on-the-job training," Gen Udom added.

"The idea for a national DVI team came from Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra," he continued. "DVI Thailand will be

headquartered in Bangkok, but will continue the work of identifying the remaining tsunami dead in Phuket and Phang Nga."

Hermann Metz, Joint Chief-of-Staff of the TTVI, said that the international DVI staff might stay in Thailand beyond the end of the year. "We are confident in [the abilities of] our Thai DVI colleagues. However, our objective is to identify the dead, so when our job is done we can go home."

Mobile telephone firms blame TOT for 'traffic jams'

By Sangkhae Leelanapaporn & Sam Wilkinson

PHUKET: Mobile phone operators, who once touted their services as the solution to the lack of land lines on the island, are now finding themselves victims of their own success.

They are fending off waves of customer complaints and trying to find solutions to the overloading of telephone networks in the peak hours between 5 pm and 10 pm.

Boonkul Masangchai, Manager of Advance Info Service Co (AIS), upper south branch, told the *Gazette* that the problem is the result of a recent steep increase in demand in the evening.

"If you make a call to someone who is using the same network as you, most of the time there will be no problem," he said.

"But if you call someone using a different network there are sometimes problems and delays making a connection."

He explained that calls to phones using a different network are automatically rerouted through the state telephone bureaucracy TOT (Telephone Organization of Thailand), whose network soon becomes overloaded, creating telecommunication traffic jams and long waits.

"The operators and the TOT know about the problem and are looking to enlarge their networks because mobile phone users are getting fed up and maybe they'll look for other ways of chatting," he added.

"People's telephone habits have changed because of all the cheap promotions [that have been offered]. In the past, users would keep calls short and only

discuss important topics. Now the cost has dropped by about 80% for local calls and people call a lot at peak times after work or school and this is why operators must invest and expand their networks," he said.

"The whole situation is like a huge traffic jam being redirected down a small country lane."

Supanee Sangphan, of mobile phone operator Orange, told the *Gazette* that the problem was not a new one, and was affecting the entire country.

APOLOGY

"We are trying our best to find a solution and believe that the problem can be alleviated soon. We apologize to customers who are less than happy," she said.

She explained that the number of Orange users is growing and that the company is expanding to meet the need.

"I would like to suggest that if [users] find the network is busy they should wait three minutes. That way it should be easier to get a signal. If you redial immediately you go automatically into a long queue," she added.

Boonsri Srion, Manager of the TOT Customer Service Center in Phuket, said that the TOT in Bangkok is currently in talks with operators because mobile phones nationwide are affected.

Repeated attempts by the *Gazette* to elicit comment from DTAC were unsuccessful.

Japanese tourism reviving: TAT

PATONG: The Director of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Tokyo office expects about 300,000 Japanese to visit Phuket during the second half of 2005, as the message that it is now safe to return to Phuket is finally being heard.

TAT Tokyo Office Director Patchaneelux Swatdee made the comments during a recent meeting of tourism industry experts at the Graceland Resort and Spa in Patong.

The meeting, chaired by Phuket Governor Udomsak Usvarangkura, was part of the Phuket leg of the "2nd Mega-Fam" trip from Japan, which saw some 180 members of the Japanese tourism industry escorted

around Bangkok and the Andaman region on an all-expenses-paid "familiarization trip" intended to show that Thai tourism is now functioning normally.

Tourism Council of Thailand President Vichit Na Ranong told the tour agents that the National Disaster Warning Center's Tsunami Early-Warning System, already completed in Patong, would go a long way toward reassuring the Japanese market that Phuket can conduct a successful evacuation, should another tsunami appear imminent.

The tsunami affected only 10% to 15% of the island, he told his Japanese guests, and it is now completely safe to travel here.

— Anongnat Sartpisut



Jon Pritchard (center, with beer) officiated at the inaugural meeting of the Lighthouse Club in Phuket.

Construction and property industry club launched

PHUKET: Members of the island's property and construction industries, along with related occupations, met on August 24 at the Green Man pub in Chalong to launch a Phuket chapter of the Lighthouse Club, an international networking organization that also does charitable work for construction workers and their families.

Officiating at the launch was a founder and former president of the Lighthouse Club of Bangkok, Jon Pritchard, who is a Director of international contracting firm Bellwater.

He explained that the club's priorities are, in order: beer, networking and helping the families of construction workers. The Bangkok club, he noted, had built large schools for laborers' children at both the Suvannabhumi Airport site and the giant Rom Klao National Housing Association site in Bangkok.

Keith Sinfield, Business Development Manager of high-end lighting company Futronix, told the *Gazette* that Phuket is expected

to become the center of the club's activities in Thailand.

"It's a bit of a suck-it-and-see," he said, "but a lot of members who were based in Bangkok have been transferred to Phuket. The work in Bangkok has plateaued, but all through southern Thailand it's coming up."

He added that the club expects to build and fund schools in Phuket, in the same way that it has done in Bangkok. "This allows workers to bring their families with them," he explained.

FELLOWSHIP

The next meeting is expected to be held in Cherrng Talay, on a date and at a venue yet to be decided. To learn more about the club, contact Mr Sinfield at Tel: 09-7244801 or Email: keiths@futronix.com

The Lighthouse Club was started in Britain in 1956, its aim being "the furtherance of good fellowship among people in the construction industry".

— Alasdair Forbes

Gov rebuffs offer of 10,000 tsunami homes

PHUKET CITY: A businessman from Dubai met with Phuket Governor Udomsak Usvarangkura August 25 to offer to build 10,000 houses for tsunami victims.

But the Governor has rebuffed the offer, saying that Phuket already has enough donated homes to house all tsunami victims in the province.

The businessman, who gave

his name simply as "John", visited Phuket Provincial Hall to request that land be donated upon which to build the Australian-designed structures. The prefabricated homes would be shipped as knocked-down kits to Thailand, and then assembled on site.

His translator told the *Gazette* that "John" was staying in Phuket until December, with the

intention of using this time to build the homes.

On August 31, however, Pannee Sittikan, head of the Phuket Office of Social Development and Human Security (OSDHS) told the *Gazette* that 127 tsunami houses have already been built in Phuket. "There are no more names on the list of people needing housing from us, so we have closed the list," she said.

DOCUMENTS

Gov Udomsak told the *Gazette* that he had suggested that the mystery donor present documents to back up his offer, rather than just talking about it. Pointing out that he had no idea how genuine the offer was, he added, "They came to talk with me. I didn't need to listen or agree."

In any case, he said, "We do not need 10,000 houses; we have already built enough houses for all those who need them. [The Dubai businessman] should check what we need. [His] suggestion is an 'idea in the air'."

— Anongnat Sartpisut

Sculpture gardens planned to attract divers

ANDAMAN COAST: The Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR) plans to install novel underwater attractions off the six Andaman provinces affected by the tsunami. The underwater structures and designs are ostensibly to attract divers in lieu of tsunami-damaged coral.

The Marine Science Faculty of Kasetsart University will be the main consultant to the project after the DMCR approached the faculty to design the structures.

Dr Thon Thamrongnawasawat, of the Marine Science Faculty at the university, is the chief adviser to the project. He told the *Gazette* that its main objectives are to make Thailand waters more attractive for scuba divers, and help further develop the country's lucrative dive industry.

"The tsunami affected much of the Andaman's seabed, with about 19% of

coral affected at Surin Island and the Similans," he said.

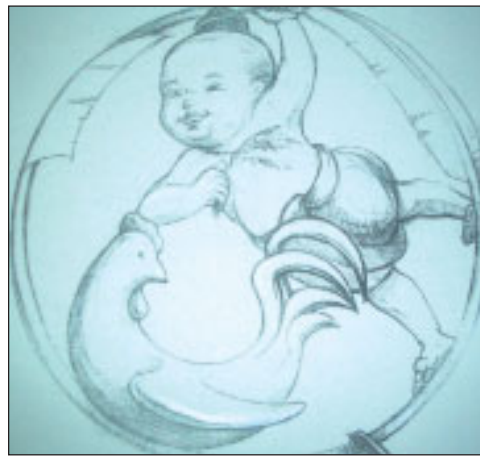
"This project doesn't aim to replace the coral, but we do want to attract more divers. We will place the structures on flat sand, away from the coral."

Dr Thon explained that, according to Tourism Authority of Thailand statistics, about 300,000 overseas divers come to enjoy the country's spectacular dive sites each year, and about 80,000 Thais are also certified scuba divers.

"Don't forget that the two biggest income sources in the tourism industry are diving and golf," he added.

"This is not a 'dream project' - it will happen in the Andaman coastal provinces before March next year, and funding has already been approved. Exactly where we will place the sculptures will be decided by officials in each province."

The cement structures will be sunk



Design for one of the Chinese zodiac symbol statues to be submerged in Phang Nga waters.

in two-rai "gardens" in the waters off Ranong, Satun, Trang, Phuket, Krabi and Phang Nga, with a budget of four million baht per province. The structures will dif-

fer from province to province, but the same method and placement techniques will be used. All will be two meters high and be sunk in 10-12 meters of water.

Themes vary. For example, Satun Province has plans to sink pirate statues off Tarutao Island - a nod towards its wild and lawless past.

Krabi Province will place underwater Stone Age-themed figures off Phi Phi Island, while Phuket aims to sink a Thai-style house off Koh Racha, and Ranong will follow a traditional Thai story theme with statues of Phra Apai Manee.

Phang Nga plans to sink concrete Chinese zodiac signs off the Similans or Surin Island, and Trang will follow its romantic theme of late (Koh Kradan in Trang is the site of an annual mass underwater wedding) by sinking sculptures of dugongs shooting "Cupid" arrows.

- Sangkhae Leelanapaporn

Karon drops its opposition to gay event

KARON: Phuket is set to host "Nation V", Asia's largest gay and lesbian party, from November 4-6 as originally scheduled, after organizers met with the Phuket Governor and leaders of the Kata-Karon Municipality in a closed-door meeting.

The municipality, which earlier nixed plans to hold the party in their bailiwick, have approved the use of Karon Stadium for Fridae's fifth annual Nation party, clearing away the recent cloud of uncertainty as to whether the event would take place at all.

However, due to the concerns of residents, the party venue will close at 1 am, as with other entertainment venues.

Gov Udomsak Uswarangkura reiterated his support for the event, "Phuket has much to offer visitors in terms of hospitality and the city will work closely with the organizers to ensure that the event is a successful one."

Dr Stuart Koe, CEO of Fridae, said, "We are grateful for the warm welcome that Phuket

is extending to guests of Nation V."

He added, "With the support of the Governor of Phuket, Kata-Karon Municipal Council, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), local businesses and the Phuket police, Fridae is confident that visitors to Phuket will enjoy the wonderful Thai hospitality."

Local businesses have also voiced their hearty support for Nation V being held in Phuket.

Pattanapong Aikwanich, President of the Phuket Tourism Association, said, "Having such a large group of international visitors converge upon Phuket in November will also encourage more foreign arrivals in the following months."

Phuket was chosen as the venue after police in Singapore, where it had previously been held, declined to issue a license for it on the grounds that it was "contrary to the public interest".

For more information, visit the website at <http://www.fridae.com/nation/media.php>

PM to hold Cabinet meeting in Phang Nga

PHUKET: Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra will hold a "mobile" Cabinet meeting in Phang Nga on September 5 and 6.

On the morning of September 5, he will fly into Phuket with some of his ministers and be driven to Khao Lak and Takuapa district in Phang Nga, before having lunch with local people.

The Prime Minister will hear reports by local government officials on progress in building permanent housing for tsunami victims.

He will also make a donation of longtail boats and fishing baskets, give grants to orphans, and then cook food for the locals.

In the afternoon, he will visit a rebuilt school and hand over 92 homes to people affected by the tsunami.

Next, he will chair an "Assets into Capital" meeting in the mid-afternoon before he and his ministers head for the Khao Lak Merlin Resort for a meeting with businesspeople and officials from Phuket, Phang Nga and Krabi.

An official Cabinet meeting will take place at the Phang Nga Naval Base from 9 am to 2 pm on September 6.

Briton charged with cheap air ticket scam

PATONG: British national Jonathan Duncan, 24, was arrested on August 30 and charged with fraud after allegedly selling what he said were cheap air tickets to foreign tourists.

He was arrested at 3:30 pm in Room 112 of the Patong Grand View Hotel, where police also seized a laptop computer as evidence.

Pol Lt Col Boonlert Onklang said at Kathu Police Station that Duncan had been charged with cheating a Swedish man out of 95,000 baht, an offense which carries a maximum punishment of three years in jail.

Col Boonlert said that Duncan came to Thailand last year as a tourist. He is accused of telling foreigners wanting cheap air tickets that he could sell them to anyone interested, but that they would have to pay cash.

Using the tickets he provided, the people who bought them were able to travel one way but could not return, because people whose credit cards had been used to pay for them had notified the card companies that their cards had been used fraudulently, and the cards were canceled.

The airlines were unaware of the name of the person who had sold the tickets, Col Boonlert added.

He said that the police have the names of people and two airlines allegedly cheated by Duncan.

Col Boonlert said, "We want to warn tourists that it is impossible to get genuine air tickets [at the prices Duncan was selling them for]. So they should not believe anybody who acts in this manner."

Duncan was due to appear in court August 31.

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Local charities riding on

Thousands of lives were lost in the tsunami of December 26. Millions of dollars, euros, baht and many other currencies were spontaneously donated by people near and far. Countless charities, foundations and NGOs were set up in the tsunami's aftermath.

But what of the charities, organizations and foundations that had been operating in Phuket before the deluge? Has attention, and therefore funding, been drawn away from them? What is the charity situation in Phuket, post-tsunami? The *Gazette's* Andy Johnstone and Athiga Jundee investigate.

One of the longest-established foundations in Phuket is the Phuket Kusoldharm Foundation (PKF), the rescue services organization. Its members and vehicles were at the forefront of rescue activities on December 26 – doing the same unpleasant duty as usual, but a great deal more of it.

Traditionally supported by Thai people, the PKF came to the forefront of attention after the tsunami, and now attracts foreign donors, too.

Chalermkiat Ongcharoen, Chairman of the PKF, said that donations received by the PKF since January 1 have totaled 10 million baht. Some of this, however, has been in the form of donated supplies, such as coffins.

On a good day, he said, the PKF can receive as many as 100 donations to help cover the monthly expenditure of 700,000 baht for salaries, equipment and fuel.

K. Chalermkiat said that, despite foreign donations, the PKF has started to see its income decline. "We all know that tourism is the lifeblood of Phuket, and because that industry is suffering a slowdown, [Thais in Phuket] don't have money to give us."

Another organization that operates in both Phuket and Phang Nga is the Asia Center Foundation (ACF). The foundation, registered as an NGO since 2001, serves severely disadvantaged children – many of whom live in the slums that tourists are unaware of (or do not wish to be aware of) – and their families.

'This money won't last, and [charities here] will never get it again. All charities here must be thrifty with what we have received since the tsunami.'

– Helene Fallon Wood

Roelien Muller, South African-born Director of the ACF, said that the NGO is currently a small organization but has plans to expand its work.

"Before the tsunami," said Mrs Muller, "We were helping children with food, education, clothing, activities and health-care."

Many children's parents earned their wages on the beaches, braiding hair or providing massages for tourists on Patong Beach, for example. The disappearance of tourists meant that

the children became even more reliant than before on the ACF,

Will it have the funds to manage? "We are waiting for some additional funding [to maintain our increased level of operation] but are grateful for the assistance given by charities such as the Lions' Club and the Rotary Club," said Mrs Muller.

"We don't do much publicizing ourselves, but these charities will put interested potential donors our way. People have been generous [since the tsunami] and have made donations to ACF, but we now have many more children to take care of."

It seems that all the organizations that were operating before the tsunami have had to expand their range of services. Not least of these is the Soi Dog Foundation (SDF), which has seen a massive rise in the number of cats and dogs that it feeds and cares for.

The *Gazette* spoke with both Margot Homburg Park and John Dalley, respectively the

foundation's President and Vice President.

Mr Dalley, as did some of the others interviewed, described the tsunami as "financially, a blessing in disguise."

He explained, "Out of everything bad comes something good. That's the situation as far our funding goes." The SDF had received a "significant" increase in funding, which is helping to continue its animal sterilization program.

NEW CLINIC

"To give you an example," he said, "The SDF sterilized around 1,400 animals in the 15 months before the tsunami. This year, we have performed more than 5,000 sterilizations and opened up a full-time clinic – run by Thai staff – in Phuket City."

"The funding [received post-tsunami] has helped us to set up the clinic. The World Society for the Protection of Animals have given us a grant for a two-

year funding period. SDF is working on the basis that in two years we can – hopefully – sterilize 90% of the stray dog population."

"Without the funding, the SDF could never have contemplated this, or the clinic. Without the tsunami, we would never have had the funding."

Mrs Homburg Park, President of the SDF, echoed this sentiment. "Had the tsunami not happened, it would have taken the SDF more than five years to be where we it is today."

Mr Dalley added that SDF had been working on a "hand-to-mouth basis" before the tsunami, in common, as he said, with other charities in Phuket. "In the normal course of things, [charities] are scrimping and scraping [for funds]."

Other charities, too, have established programs to run in parallel with existing schemes, or have broadened their scope.

The Phuket International Women's Club (PIWC) is a long-



With parents losing tourism-related jobs since the tsunami, more children like these need help from the Asia Center Foundation.

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a deluge of donations



Phuket Kusoldharm Foundation Chairman Chalermkiat Ongcharoen (right) with two of the foundation's staff. On a good day the foundation receives as many as 100 donations.

established organization that branched out after December 26 into new territory and, for every new scheme, more funds are required.

PIWC President Joan Watson said that, since the tsunami, the PIWC has doubled the number of students it is assisting, with grants, to go through school or college. How can it achieve this, when, it would seem, so much attention and cash is focused on tsunami-relief projects?

"The PIWC was fortunate enough to have raised around 750,000 baht through the annual

ball, just about double what was raised in the ball in previous years," said Mrs Watson.

STUDENTS HELPED

She said that those funds, coupled with a "slush fund" of reserves held and cash raised through other projects, has ensured that not only the PIWC's current batch of students will continue to be helped, but new students as well.

"I estimate that the PIWC is now helping around 100 students, directly or indirectly. What we have noticed is the need of

people to give in any way they can," she explained.

The British Business Association of Phuket (BBAP), although not a registered charity, is another body that raises money for good causes through an annual charity golf match.

Martin Carpenter, the Chairman of BBAP, said that, this year, as in 2004, money raised through the match, to be played at the Blue Canyon Country Club, would go to Child Watch Phuket (CWP).

CWP exists to protect minors from being abused, and also

provides underprivileged children with access to welfare and basic education. It also runs safehouses and a day center for children whose parents are in jail.

Mr Carpenter was quick to answer when asked if the BBAP had decided to support a tsunami-relief charity this year. "No, in fact there was little debate over whether BBAP would [drop its support for] CWP this year in favor of other charities," he said. Members "felt that we should continue to support CWP.

"We weren't worried that non-tsunami charities would be overlooked by donors. Life goes on, these charities are well worth supporting and they will be doing their good work here for a long time."

Helene Fallon Wood, of Life Home Project (LHP), which helps HIV-positive mothers and children, said, "We have had a tremendously successful year, financially, in spite of the tsunami."

She said, "A couple of people on the island have each given us 1 million baht, and a Moroccan gentleman gave us US\$100,000 (4.1 million baht) on December 28.

"He wanted to give the money to tsunami relief, but he couldn't find anywhere legitimate to put it, so he approached us."

In addition, she explained, her longstanding connections with the Irish Government have borne fruit.

"Many delegations from the [Irish] DoFA [Department of Foreign Affairs] visited here, Banda Aceh and other regions hit

[by the tsunami] to assess where to put the 21 million euros (approximately 1.063 billion baht) pledged by the Irish."

The connection between the LHP and tsunami relief may not be immediately clear, but Ms Fallon Wood foresees a grim situation following from the tsunami.

BACKLASH

"Because of December 26, there is going to be an outfall of teenagers who are no longer working [in the hospitality industry] who will go to work in karaoke bars instead, to earn money.

"This leads us to believe that, in three or four years' time, the backlash of the tsunami may be that HIV figures rise. People have to make a living somehow."

The LHP is, she said, putting resources into developing a "teens project", essentially a vocational training center, in a bid to give young people skills to keep them away from working in the sex industry. "So, the money from, for example, the Moroccan gentleman, could be slotted into that project because it is still tsunami-related."

She warned that charities in Phuket should not rest on their laurels and say, "Isn't it great how much money we have?"

"This money won't last, and [charities here] will never get it again. All charities must be thrifty with what they have received since the tsunami," she counseled. "In two years' time we may be picking pennies off the ground."

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Queer News

High profile undercover

PATTAYA: A man posing as an undercover police officer and throwing his weight around in a karaoke bar tried to pull rank on real police officers and was arrested.

The real police received a call from Ampraisri Oysiri, 44, saying that a man impersonating a police lieutenant-colonel was disrupting her business by asking for ID cards and frightening potential customers away.

Pol Captain Somchai Mongkolwong and other officers went in a patrol car to the scene, where they found a man dressed in black pants and a green T-shirt acting with excessive authority and demanding to see customers' documentation.

When Captain Somchai asked for the man's identification, the "lieutenant-colonel" refused, saying he was of higher rank than the attending officers. He said he was on an undercover narcotics assignment. He demanded Somchai's ID and added some pithy comments about the patrol's policing procedures.

Captain Somchai promptly produced his own ID and arrested the man.

Police investigations later revealed the impostor to be Seksan Thongsri, aged 43. He has been charged with impersonating a police officer.

His motive is not known.

Source: Pattaya Mail

LOVING PHUKET – AROUND THE WORLD



Kanda Meunkla was spotted riding around with 'We Love Phuket' stickers on her motorbike, and won a buffet lunch for two at The Metropole hotel, which she is seen receiving from Gazette IT Manager Seubsak 'Big' Sahaworapun.



The 'We Love Phuket' stickers continue to spread around the globe. Here, James Jenkinson (left) and Sue Johnson (right) with two Thai students, display their stickers at King's Park in Perth, Australia.

Tax-free sales to tempt Thai tourists

PHUKET: The government is launching a temporary tax-free project in Phuket, Phang Nga and Krabi Provinces from September 1 through December 31, to entice Thai tourists to the region.

The announcement was made by Deputy Finance Minister Waratthep Rattanakorn at a meeting dubbed "Recover three Andaman provinces with Duty-Free" at the Dusit Laguna Resort on August 27.

K. Waratthep said that Bangkok wants to encourage Thais to spend in Thailand, particularly in Phuket, Phang Nga or Krabi, instead of Singapore or Hong Kong. Currently Thais must pay a

7% value-added tax, but foreigners can apply for a tax refund at Phuket International Airport.

During the four-month duty-free period, the rules for those who want to buy duty-free are as follows:

- The Thai tourists must be staying in Phuket, Phang Nga or Krabi Provinces.
- From designated duty-free retailers, they may buy multiple duty-free products worth up to 20,000 baht per night stayed, but not exceeding 50,000 baht in total.
- Alternatively, they may opt to buy just two duty-free items of unlimited value.

• They may buy duty-free products no more than once a month.

Neither alcohol nor tobacco products are included in the duty-free project, as these items are regulated by Customs, rather than by the Ministry of Finance.

At the time of purchase, Thai tourists must produce their passports or ID cards to show that they do not live or work in any of the three provinces, along with a return air ticket or boarding pass and evidence of hotel accommodation, or evidence (such as a travel itinerary) that they part of a tour group.

For the time being, it seems

that foreign residents in the three provinces concerned also may be able to buy duty-free items during the four-month project period.

K. Waratthep explained that the government has not considered ways to stop foreigners living or working in Phuket, Phang Nga or Krabi from taking advantage of the duty-free promotion; the short-term project simply aims to encourage Thais from outside these provinces to visit.

"We hope people will come to these three provinces for more than just shopping. We would like them to take their time here," he said.

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it can be the start of a friendship.*



PM Thaksin plays 'Meet the Press'

The first weekly press conference given by Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra scored mixed reviews.

Some members of the press corps said the formal setting was an improvement over the past system in which junior reporters doggedly pursued the premier asking impromptu questions. Others, however, charged that the PM only chose reporters he knew would not raise provocative questions.

Government Spokesman Surapong Suebwonglee said PM Thaksin was impressed with the conference. He added, however, that future meetings would be divided into topic-based intervals to keep reporters from jumping back and forth between issues.

At one point during the conference, the premier held up small signs indicating which questions he thought were "constructive" and which were "unconstructive". He later said the signs were only meant to be playful.

Freedom of mobility: Education Minister Chaturon Chaisang said the government is mulling a complete ban on all mobile phone services in the three southernmost provinces in an attempt to stem the number of remotely detonated bombs.

Although the government has required mobile phone users in the region to register their mobile phones since the beginning of May, at least 32 bombs were set off there between July and mid-August, according to government statistics.

K. Chaturon said PM Thaksin had the power to enforce a mobile phone blackout under the emergency decree approved by the Cabinet.

Thailand's largest mobile phone network is Advanced Info



A bereaved Muslim woman cries during a meeting in Bangkok as she listens to a speaker talking about the suffering of those who lost loved ones in the violence in the Deep South.

Service (AIS), which is controlled by PM Thaksin's family.

Aussie held for rape: Australian Christopher Ronald White, 46, was arrested for the alleged repeated rape of a Thai girl under his care, starting when the girl was 12 years old and continuing for four years.

White was arrested in his Bangkok home following a tip-off by Australian police, who intercepted a postal delivery to his home in Perth. The package contained VCDs of Western men having sex with an Asian girl who appeared to be aged under 18.

The officer said Thai police had obtained the VCDs and would now decide whether the girl in them was the unidentified girl, now aged 16, who told police in Chiang Mai that White also forced her to have sex with his adult friends on several occasions.

The girl reportedly fled to Chiang Mai after escaping captivity in Bangkok.

The charge was just one in a spate of rape charges involving foreign men and Thai children in recent weeks.

Medical hub: Dr Kaweevat Hengsawas, who operates the Bangkok cosmetic clinic that allegedly provided penis-enlargement treatment to a famous politician, admitted to providing the

service – but claimed his patient was actually a famous Cabinet minister from a foreign country.

Dr Kaweevat said he had provided the penis-enlargement service, which involves a liquid injection, to some 90 clients. News of the controversial service came to light after a woman called on the politician to come forward to lend credibility to her own malpractice case against the clinic.

Chart Thai Party spokeswoman Janista Liewchalermwong urged the Medical Council to order an investigation into the doctor, saying that the technique he used has not been approved for use on humans in Thailand.

Penal punishment: Yongyuth Phookamchai, Senior Warden at Chachoengsao Prison, was transferred to an inactive post following the alleged rape of a female inmate by a male inmate who used to be a guard there.

K. Yongyuth will face disciplinary action if found guilty of failing to run a background check on the alleged rapist, convicted drug-dealer Ittiphon Noimeesuk, before accepting him into the prison.

The alleged rape took place when K. Ittiphon was allowed to repair a sink without supervision at a detention facility used by female inmates. The alleged rapist and his victim were transferred to different prisons in Bangkok after the incident.

Corrections Department Director-General Natthee Jitsawang set a three-day deadline for completion of the inquiry into the incident.

Self-help: In the absence of adequate government assistance, five tourism-related associations will unveil a new tourism council intended to help ailing tourism businesses all over the country get back on their feet, an industry source said.

The council will have more than 4,000 members from its five founding groups: the Association of Thai Travel Agents, Thai Hotel Association, the Thai Travel Agents Association, the Domestic Travel Association and the Eco-Tourism Association.

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

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IN ASSOCIATION WITH **PACVIST GROUP**

By Stephen Fein

For most Phuket residents, the term "fresh market" conjures up images of sweat, mess and foul odors – the type of place one visits out of necessity, not by choice.

The Banzaan Market in Patong, next to the Jungceylon project, might force islanders to do a re-think. Built at the staggering cost of 300 million baht, Banzaan (the Hokkien Chinese word for "market") boasts 193 vending stalls on its ground floor, all partitioned into neat sections that make shopping for fresh meat and produce more of a pleasure than a descent into Dante's hell.

To this writer, Banzaan's most impressive features are its environmental protection controls, which must have the people at the Public Health office smiling from ear to ear.

Licensed as a Class 1 market by Patong Municipality, each stall on the 3,000-square-meter ground floor is surrounded by a system of shallow gutters that are cleaned and rinsed hourly.

DESIGN

All wastewater is piped to a huge grease trap below the basement car park and treated on-site. Garbage is carted off every few hours by the Municipality.

Another good design factor is the high roof and ventilation system, which keeps temperatures in the bearable range on all three floors – even when the afternoon sun is beating down. This is something the people at the Sukhumvit Road Entertainment Complex might want to come and have a good look at.

The contrast between Banzaan and the old Ko Kaew Market it replaces couldn't be more stark. Ko Kaew, long a cause for argument between the vendors who operated there and Patong Municipality, was little more than a muddy open field – with little



The new Banzaan market is fresh and environmentally sound.

organization and lacking environmental safeguards. Aside from being an embarrassing eyesore in the town center, much of its wastewater ran – untreated by some accounts – into Patong Bay.

Banzaan, on the other hand, is run more like a five-star hotel, its own engineers constantly monitoring operations to ensure



that there is no release of waste to the environment. Speaking to General Manager Phenpat "Bee" Siri Wong in Banzaan's clean, air-conditioned basement office, I could hardly believe there was a Thai fresh market operating a few feet above my head. Best of all, I didn't see a single rat or cockroach during my entire visit.

The market, and the 6.5 rai of land on which it sits, is owned by K. Bee's mother, Sompit Sae-kam, who is also an investor in Jungceylon and owner of the Crystal Inn Hotel in downtown Phuket City.

K. Bee explained that the design concept for Banzaan was inspired by Pike Place Market in Seattle. Her family hopes Banzaan will serve Patong in the same way Pike Place serves that city, both as a clean and functional

community resource – and, of course, as a tourist attraction.

Designed by well-known Thai architectural firm Urban Architects and built by Ritta Company Ltd., Banzaan had a soft launch on June 25.

It will officially open as part of the Patong Carnival activities early next November, but almost all of the rental spaces – including 89 retail outlets and 19 food & beverage outlets in the Food Court on the second floor – are already in operation or have been reserved by vendors planning to open businesses at the start of the high season. Although the exact rental rates depend on size, location and other factors, the typical unit is rented out for around 5,000 baht per month.

Walking about the market, one sees quite a few businesses

not normally associated with a fresh market, such as the Top Charoen optical shop, Butterfly Beauty Salon, a mobile phone shop, a gold shop, and even the Three Monkeys homemade Italian ice-cream shop.

Banzaan will no doubt appeal to the guy who has to endure the patience-testing task of shopping with the wife, girlfriend or – this being Patong – favorite bar hostess.

This is because there is a large outdoor Beer Terrace, overlooking Jungceylon, where the current promotion is jugs of Heineken draft at 140 baht.

K. Bee said she is also in negotiations to possibly set up a retail outlet for one of Bangkok's best-known German breweries. Other businesses in the works include a silver jewelry shop, a teppan-yaki Japanese food shop and a health food store, she said.

Although the market operates from 7 am to 8 pm, the hours might be extended until late night in the high season, depending on what form the new entertainment district zoning takes, she added.

JUNGCEYLON

While business has been slower than hoped because of the lack of tourists, K. Bee expects things to pick up with the coming of the high season.

Other factors she expects to improve business in the future will be the opening of Jungceylon and completion of Patong's third north-south artery, between Nanai Rd and Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd, which will start at Patong Hospital and run right between Jungceylon and Banzaan.

She told the *Gazette* that the word Banzaan is well known to elder generation residents on the island, who used to say *pai banzaan* instead of *pai talaad* when it was time to go to the market.

It looks likely that the word will enjoy a renaissance, thanks to this impressive new market development.

Banzaan is at 201 Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd, though current access is only from Nanai Rd, turning off at the road between the 7-Eleven and Family Mart. For more information visit the website at: www.banzaan.com or contact the business office (Tel: 076-296666; Fax: 076-296789).

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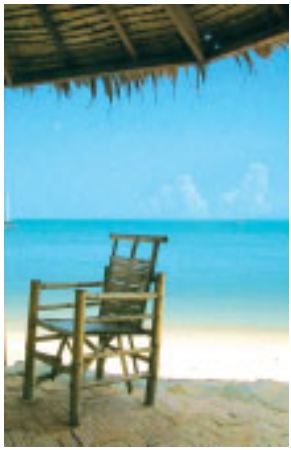


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FROM THE GULF OF THAILAND



By Commander
Sammy Swan

Bangkok Airways is organizing another professional golf tournament this year, and this time it will be included as part of the Asian Tour.

The Bangkok Airways Open 2005 will take place October 13-16 at the Santiburi Samui Country Club, Koh Samui.

Competing for a total purse of US\$200,000 (8 million baht) will be 144 golf pros from all over the Asia-Pacific region, including stars such as Thongchai Jaidee, Thaworn Wiratchant, Jyoti Randhawa, Scott Barr, James Kingston, Boonchu Ruengkit, Prayad Markseang, Chawalit Plaphol and Thammanoon Srirot.



Jerry Lee Lewis due to be one of the star acts at Music Fest



Samui golf tourney on Asian Tour

The four-day competition will follow standard stroke-play format over 72 holes. The Asian PGA Ranking System will be used to rank all those taking part in the event.

This is Bangkok Airways' second professional golf tournament, but it is the first time it has been organized under the auspices of the Asian PGA tour.

The airline believes the event will help improve the standard of golf within the Asia-Pacific region, and hopes that the tournament will move on to other naturally beautiful golf courses around the country in the future.

ESPN and Thai Channel 7 will broadcast the tournament.

New flight to Surat: Thai Airways International (THAI) faces stiff competition on its daily flights between Bangkok and Surat Thani, with the introduction of a new Orient Thai Airways One-Two-Go promotion.

Demand on the route has been high this year, mainly because it offers an alternative way to reach Koh Samui. It is believed THAI decided not to add another flight because of rising fuel costs.

The new Orient Thai flight takes just an hour, and is likely to be popular as the price is 1,399 baht return, plus 200 baht fuel surcharge and 50 baht airport tax.

However, local observers say it is unlikely to have any im-

pact on the ever-popular direct flights to Samui operated exclusively by Bangkok Airways.

Samui signs up stars: The Koh Samui Music Festival 2005 (KSMF 2005) promises to be the largest live music event the island has ever seen.

Headline acts in the billing include Jerry Lee Lewis; UB40; Bob Marley's band, The Wailers; and UK blues star Jools Holland and his Big Band.

The festival is now an annual fixture on Koh Samui's busy calendar, thanks largely to the success of the debut event in 2004. KSMF 2005 will be even bigger, with a greater diversity of

music from around the globe. Other attractions will include outdoor theater and puppet shows.

The Koh Samui Music Festival, one of Asia's biggest live music events, takes place at several venues between September 23 and October 2. For full details check the website at www.kohsamuimusicfestival.com

Expensive but necessary: Somchai Sunthonwat, Deputy Minister of the Interior, visited Samui recently to open a reverse-osmosis water treatment plant now being used to supplement the island's public water supply.


The plant is managed by East Water Co, which is contracted to assist with water production in a number of provinces, including parts of Surat Thani.


Pichet Santi-ratchawan, Director of the Provincial Waterworks Authority, attended the opening and praised the project for its support role in an area of high demand because of tourism.


"There is always a shortage of water on Samui during the high season," he said. "But since we assigned East Water to begin using the plant back in May, such problems have been much less frequent. In the coming year we expect no water shortages at all, even during the dry season."

The system is not without its critics, who see it as expensive and suitable only as a back-up.

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









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MAN IN

Ian Mitchell, Project Director of Paradise Heights at Cape Yamu, is not an easy man to keep up with. This is hardly surprising – when he is not developing upmarket residences, he is an endurance racing driver. Among other races, he competed in this year's Le Mans 24 Hours in the Kruse Motorsport Courage C65, promoting Phuket as he sped around the track. The 55-year-old Briton, who retired to Phuket five years ago before becoming busier than ever, gave the *Gazette's* **Andy Johnstone** the green light for a quick interview.

Andy Johnstone: When did you first start racing?

Ian Mitchell: It was around 1967 or '68, and I competed in grasstrack racing in a Ford Anglia 105E [as seen in the most recent *Harry Potter* film].

AJ: My dad had one of those, and there's one for sale on the island.

IM: Can you email me the details?

I put a Lotus Cortina engine in mine, although the car was written off after being raced for two months. I still have the number plate, though.

AJ: You grew up – and began racing – in one of the golden eras of motorsport. Who were your heroes?

IM: Gilles Villeneuve [Canadian Grand Prix driver] was my big hero. In fact, I remember wandering through the paddock at one race in England many years ago now, and Colin Chapman [the founder of Lotus], was shouting at Gilles, "For f*ck's sake, slow down!" It was all pretty raw in those days. It was fantastic for a kid of my age.

I knew then that I wanted to work for an F1 team; I always wanted to be a racing driver, and I knew that it would take money,

and the only way to [make enough] was to start my own firm.

AJ: You are involved in property in Phuket and elsewhere with your company, International Property Consultants. Has the property business always been your trade?

IM: Not really. I began working as a cabinetmaker, then moved into construction, electronics and a cosmetics company.

The company, which was sold a few years ago, was the first to list all of the ingredients [in its products]. I think we beat Anita Roddick [founder of The Body Shop] to that.

But I had always wanted to get into motor racing.

AJ: I must ask, what is the fastest you have ever driven – when not racing?

IM: I don't know if I should say...

AJ: Okay, you don't need to say which country.

IM: Well, I was driving my new [Aston Martin] DB9 very late one night when the police pulled me over. They asked if I was the owner of the vehicle – I said I was just delivering it – and if I knew how fast I was going.

It's such a quick car, and I said, "Quite fast." The police had clocked me at 210kmh. I thought I was going to have the book thrown at me, but the officer took a good look at the car – I don't think he'd seen a DB9 before –



Left: Ian Mitchell.

Above: The 'Phuket Car' – the Kruse Motorsport Courage C65 – in full cry at Britain's Silverstone track in August.

and said, "Do that again, and I'll put you in jail. Good night, sir."

But there was another time, when Phil [Bennett, another Kruse Motorsport driver], was driving my DB9 at 274kmh through somewhere in Europe in the wet, and I was the passenger. He would have kept on until

I shouted at him to slow down.

He was always kidding that he held the record, so one day I took it up to just over 280kmh. I beat his record.

AJ: You've spoken about organizing a street race in Patong. Can you tell me more?

IM: The categories for the proposed 24-hour race in Patong are GT and sports cars, so it would be marques such as BMW, Porsche, Aston Martin ... all the fast cars, although we wouldn't have prototype cars competing because they're just too quick. The race would be based on the

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A BIG HURRY



FIA (Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile) regulations for saloon GT racing.

AJ: Could there be a special category for tuk-tuks?

IM: (laughs) You could do it in tuk-tuks. Believe it or not, there are 24-hour races for Citroën 2CVs [quaint French cars]. The tuk-tuk race mightn't be a bad idea, actually.

AJ: What are the cars like?

IM: They're full-on race cars, based on road-going vehicles, but with an enormous amount of work having gone into them. They're also quick, capable of up to 200mph (320kmh).

AJ: What is the proposed route for the Patong race?

IM: The route that we've mapped out for Patong [Thaweewong Rd, Prachanukroh Rd, Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd, Chalerm-

prakit Rd] is a shade over 3.6 kilometers, and would actually require shutting off only part of the town. We plan to build a pedestrian bridge, and perhaps a vehicle bridge, to enable people to get in and out of town.

AJ: Do you think the race would disrupt Patong, well, more than it is disrupted at present?

IM: Not really, because you're really closing the street only for the Saturday afternoon through to the Sunday afternoon. Most of the race is held through the night, when most of the shops would be shut.

If road races can be held in Birmingham, or, of course, Mo-

naco, they can be held in Patong.

What [the race] will do is attract such a huge amount of coverage – positive coverage – from the media to Phuket, which the island still needs.

AJ: How did the idea for the 24-hour race come about?

IM: I first started talking about it at the Sebring 12 Hours [race, in March]. Everybody there, without exception, was very

enthusiastic about it. That's why we'll be making a presentation. I think it is the most high-profile event that could be staged in Phuket at reasonable cost.

It will show to the world – conclusively – that Phuket is back on track.

AJ: It will also be a very up-market event for Phuket.

IM: That's right. Phuket will join an elite club of places that host 24-hour races. In fact, I'd like to see a series of three annual events in Phuket: The King's Cup Regatta; a 24-hour road race; and an offshore powerboat race.

A friend of mine, James Tucker, who runs the European

Endurance Racing Club, has a ready-made "package" for road races that can be applied to any road system, making it practical – if there is co-operation from the local authorities.

It's pretty straightforward.

AJ: Is Patong suitable for a road race?

IM: I've driven round the proposed circuit a number of times and have checked, for example, the width of the roads, which are all more than adequate. You need to have roads around eight to nine meters in width, and the roads around Patong average nine to 12 meters [wide].

There are a couple of sections that are narrow, but you'd just restrict overtaking in those areas. And we'd also restrict the top speed of the cars to around 130mph [209kmh].

It would still be really exciting, even at those low speeds. The road surfaces are okay, too.

AJ: How many cars do you envisage competing?

IM: We reckon that the circuit we have mapped out can accommodate around 75 starters, drawn from a pool that, in Europe alone, stands at around 2,500 cars that would be eligible to compete in a race like this. We'd make sure that we got cars and teams from all over the world, too.

I'd say that, for a 24-hour race, you'd be looking at 700-800 personnel, which would be a significant boost to the hotels on the island. Of course, we'd want to make sure that we have a good mix of cars; we don't just want Porsches. Actually, we've also thought about holding support races, perhaps having a pick-up

truck race ... or maybe tuk-tuks.

We'd also organize other events, such as a parade of the cars around the island. Really, the possibilities and the global exposure are endless.

AJ: Motor racing draws a lot of spectators, both at the track and on TV.

IM: Well, the first race might not attract too many circuit spectators, but yes, the media, especially the TV coverage, it would attract would be huge.

AJ: It could be the start of real motor racing in Thailand.

IM: I contacted Bernie Ecclestone [President and CEO of Formula 1 Management and Formula 1 Administration] not long after I came to Thailand and suggested to him that Phuket could have an F1 circuit. He didn't seem that keen on the idea, although now there has been a sea change in F1 regulations and racing, and the weight of [new] races is swinging toward Asia.

I think someone should build an international race circuit in Thailand, perhaps Phuket.

AJ: Your Courage C65 car promotes Phuket at races. What is the reaction from people?

IM: It attracts a lot of interest from everyone, and is now called "The Phuket Car" by people at the races.

A lot of people ask us what the situation is in Phuket now; we're really pleased to be able to tell them how things are developing.

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From death's head German WW II-style to something hornier, there's a wide variety of headgear available.

If the helmet fits, wear it

By Athiga Jundee

It's the law – a helmet is every motorcycle rider's must-have. And nowadays the more interesting the helmet, the better.

The advantage of a full-face helmet is that you are less easily distracted by the breeze and the bugs hitting your face. A brightly colored helmet can make you more visible at night.

There are helmet designs to turn more than a few onlookers' heads on the island, including the WWII army helmets and even helmets adorned with horns to express the Viking in you, as seen at Nicky's Handlebar in Patong.

The helmet you wear is a personal statement, and people in Phuket seem to enjoy expressing themselves. A spiked German-style helmet in chrome? Or

a jockey-style helmet in leather? You may have seen these on the roads around the island.

The Patong Friendship shop on Sawasdirak Rd can create a custom airbrush design to suit your desired image.

Whatever the style you prefer, make sure it is approved for safety and is not just a novelty.

Look for a protective expanded polystyrene foam liner that can absorb impact; some helmets even have removable padding, which is a pleasant convenience in tropical climates.

And if the helmet fits, why not wear it?

Nicky's Handlebar. 41 Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd, Patong. Tel: 076-345769, 01-9792264. Patong Friendship Shop, 26 Sawasdirak Rd, Patong. Tel/Fax: 076-345348.

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Sarong style: being bold with beads

By Anongnat Sartpisut

About a decade ago, the colorful sarong – traditional southern Thai dress – was transformed from everyday wear into high style with the addition of embroidery and colorful beads. Now it is back in style again.

"This is beautiful art," said Rittipong Rittuam, Director of Pukar Art Center.

He told the *Gazette* that he used to see elderly people wearing sarongs with semi-precious stones embroidered onto them when he was a boy.

These days, he said, colored crystals, stones and beaded necklaces are also a hit among teenagers.

"I decided to embroider beads in floral patterns on sarongs, batik clothing and even

plain shirts," K. Rittipong said, "because when they sparkle in the light, ordinary clothes become eye-catching."

Prices range from 1,700 baht to 7,000 baht.

Beads not only make your clothes look good, they can also make you stand out from the crowd.

Beaded dresses are suitable attire for all ages and occasions – from gala dinners to coffee klatches – and are comfortable enough to wear on a shopping spree.

So don your original Phuket *nya yah* outfit, and get out there and mingle.

To learn to sew beads onto clothes or to buy *nya yah* fashion, contact Pukar Art Center at 95/2 Dibuk Rd, Phuket City 83000 or Tel: 01-693-6724.





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This week



SERIOUS FUN AND GAMES (above): Tourism and Sports Minister Pracha Maleenont (right) is welcomed to the Ban Thai Beach Resort & Spa by General Manager Gerard Tan during the minister's visit to Phuket.



INVISIBLE WOUNDS (right): Deputy Prime Minister Wissanu Kream (right) and MR Supinda Chakraband, President of the Puenkaew Child Friendly Association, inspect one of the three Saidek (Child Line) Caravan Project vans that are being used in the identification and treatment of children who were psychologically affected by the tsunami.



ROARING AHEAD: Lions Club of Phuket Andaman Sea President Olinto "Lupo" Barletta (center, with medallion) and fellow Lions pose for a photo at the launch of the Phuket Sunshine Village project which will see 12 bungalows built on Koh Sireh to provide homes for up to 150 orphans and homeless children. The project is being coordinated by David Van-Zandt (7th from right).



WRITER RELIEF: Jim Newport (left), author of the *Vampire of Siam* series of novels, hands over a check for 550,000 baht for tsunami relief to Roy McShane, Gritchanok Wannasuri and Neil Satterwhite. The funds will be used to help people in Kamala and Khao Lak through Neil and his wife Tik's *Pi Sao* (Big Sister) program and through World Vision in Phuket.



FAST FOOD: (From left) Oishi Sales & Marketing Manager Pumipat Khooroon, Managing Director Thanaseth Kulveera-aree, General Manager of Operations Choochoke Suandee and General Manager of Marketing Kongsak Chunharatchapan get ready to launch the home delivery service from Oishi at Index Living Mall.



FLOAT YOUR BOAT: (From left) Star Marine Engineering Co Managing Director Bunchong Kunuchit; Joseph Pernot of the French Red Cross in Thailand; Karudee Chotithamaporn, Tsunami Operation Coordinator of the Phuket Red Cross; and Bjorn Müller, Director of Omni Marine Co Ltd are all smiles after testing Star Marine Engineering's 10-meter fiberglass "Loma" design longtail boats in Ao Chalong. Some 25 Loma boats are to be donated to fishermen on the Phi Phi Islands.

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Go tell the Spartans

Sun-worshipping lotus-eater types who have lived here for some time share a vaguely embarrassing condition, unless, of course, they sunbathe *au naturel*.

I speak, of course, of the “permapants” condition, whereby most of one’s body is tanned to a honey-gold color, while the privy parts remain a deeply unnatural natural hue.

I muse on this as I sally forth and into the welcoming bosom of the staff at Le Royal Spa at Le Royal Meridien Phuket Yacht Club.

Le Royal Spa is pleasantly compact, with just four therapy rooms and six tables, so it retains the personal touch that eludes day spas with 20 or more rooms and a busload of tourists waiting outside.

After a very welcome welcome drink, an infusion made from the panadanus leaves that grow around the resort, I peruse the treatments menu before making my choice. Why should I hurry? I am enjoying the view of the sea and the air in the recep-

tion room is fragrant with the scent of herbs. I have all the time in the world.

I decide to indulge myself with a number of The Royal Spa’s signature treatments, namely a Skin Fitness Facial for Gentlemen, Le Royal Massage and – dammit – a Floral Bath.

No, there is nothing cissy about having a floral bath. For a start, it will make a change to have just the petals in my bath instead of Rose, Iris and Daisy. Second, if floral baths were good enough for the might of the Roman Empire, then they are certainly good enough for me.

Of course, the Romans probably didn’t have a bubble bath, unless they had eaten too much *garum*.

But before the various massages, it’s into the steamroom, and just as well, as it’s a chilly 30°C in the light sea wind.

Stripped down to my altogther – I have declined the offer of disposable paper pants in favor of my permapants – I stride into the steam room, sit down on a rock, and perspire like a madman.



Petal power: a Floral Bath with a view at Le Royal Spa.

The intoxicating scents of fresh ginger, lemongrass, kaffir lime leaves and even garlic breeze over and around me, warming my skin and opening my pores.

Twenty minutes later, I’m off the subs’ bench and into the suds. The bath is bubbly but also rich with unguents and is, literally, sensational. I can barely be dragged out of this blissful environment for my massage.

It takes a few minutes to be deflowered (that is, for the petals to be removed from my body), and then it’s onto the table for the Royal Massage. The gentle strains of music – it sounds vaguely like Brian Eno – begin to seep into the room as the therapist begins to anoint my body.

Her touch is as one would

imagine an angel’s wings: gentle, certainly, but with a surprising degree of power too. I feel as if I am floating, and I... begin... to... feel... sleepy.

But I rouse myself – steady, lads – from my pleasurable reverie just enough to become aware of what is happening. Save for the music, it is almost silent in my treatment room. My therapist K. Pui can speak English, but words would somehow break the spell.

I know that all spas pride themselves on being able to take away the strains and stresses of the world (strain and stress on a tropical island? Say it isn’t so!), but it is a truism. I feel strangely but delectably detached from reality as the warm oil is expertly glided around my body.

K. Pui continues the gentle combination of shiatsu, Swedish and Thai massage techniques, with a dollop of aromatherapy thrown in all the way up to my head.

She then begins to give me my facial. I shaved beforehand, of course. But, and this is my only suggestion, it would be even bet-

ter if a chap could actually receive his shave at the spa.

Delicate fingers caress my face, with essences of camomille, rosewood and lavender stimulating my skin in ways I would have scarcely believed. The mix of scents, although not overpowering, is still intoxicating.

Breathing deeply and perfectly relaxed, I hardly notice that nearly 2½ hours of quiet pampering are over, and that my therapist has exited silently, leaving me to come to my senses.

A quick dip in the outdoor whirlpool bath follows, making sure that I don’t remove too much of the essential oils still on my body before dressing.

Floating on air, I decide to satisfy my epicurean fancy at the resort’s Quarterdeck restaurant for spa cuisine created by Chef Peter Hatt. I have an almost too healthy grilled tuna steak on a bed of sweetcorn, tomatoes and grains, washed down with a glass of chilled wine. A fitting end to a delightful day. Serenely relaxed, all I do is go home and sleep.

Aromatic Thai Herbal Steam treatment: 990 baht. Floral bath: 990 baht. Le Royal Massage (85 minutes), 2,500 baht. Skin Fitness Facial for Men (55 minutes), 2,000 baht. Prices subject to tax and VAT. Spa cuisine on request.

Le Royal Spa at Le Royal Meridien Phuket Yacht Club, Nai Harn Beach, Phuket. Tel: 076-380200-19.

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Get the holiday bubbly in early this year

It's almost the time of year when wine writers are expected to say something about champagne. If I seem to be writing early this year, or sound a touch grouchy, let me explain.

The past two years of extraordinarily warm weather in France have lowered grape yields, and this will soon begin to create a shortage of good bubbly. As a result, many champagne producers have chosen to raise their prices. Thailand should prepare not only for higher prices, but for shortages as well.

Meanwhile, with the euro having appreciated more than 20% against the Thai baht since mid-2002, Thai tax authorities have intensified their campaign to levy the highest possible tax. This will only worsen the already difficult twin problems of

shortage and increasing costs.

I have observed that most local food and beverage directors tend to forget about champagne and holiday merrymaking until the last possible moment, when they make a mad dash to order bubbly in time for the New Year.

This makes champagne demand even less ordered than it should be, and as a result small restaurateurs and individual consumers increasingly find themselves locked out of the holiday market.

But now, some good news. There are several easy steps to take the edge off the high cost and shortage of good champagne in Phuket.

Here is how you can enjoy your bubbles – without breaking the bank.

First, buy early. Don't wait until the last minute to buy holiday cheer, as it may be too late.

WINE



By Steven Roberto

Second, don't buy more than you need. Champagne is fragile stuff, and you never really know just how old a bottle of non-vintage champagne is – despite what the importer may tell you.

Third, pay for the wine, not the name. Famous names are

more likely to have matching prices, so look for smaller, less well-known champagne such as Martin Laurent or Deutz. These are just as good, but have price tags 20% to 30% lower than the big names.

Fourth, don't forget that a rose by any other name would smell just as sweet; champagne is not the only place that makes "champagne". Elegant vintage and non-vintage brut, creamy blanc de blanc and blanc de noir, robust rosés – all are available at much lower prices than champagne.

To take off the high-priced edge, look to Cava from Spain, Prosecco and Spumante from Italy, Sekt from Germany, Saumur from France's Loire Valley, and a multitude of sparkling wine from California, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Chile.

Fifth, remember the saying that "a friend in need is a friend indeed".

Isn't it amazing how many long-lost acquaintances, distant family members and assorted well-wishers find their way to your door upon learning you have a spare bedroom in your Phuket home?

Put your welcomed guests to work. They have bags, suitcases and pockets, so just ask them to top their baggage allowance with champagne from places where it is not so expensive.

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

Soy natural, and soy good

By Athiga Jundee

PHUKET CITY: There are many good quality foods at reasonable prices around the island, and Soy Milk Samkong is one of the best known healthy food vendors in town.

Hailing from Hadyai, Tawat Arammetapongsa, owner of the streetside kiosk, has been in business for a decade. "Served hot or cold, *Tao Ting*, a Chinese dessert made with dried longan fruit and juice, *Tao Hoy*, a Chinese sweetmeat made from soy bean paste, and *Num Tao Hoo*, a soy milk drink, are my three most popular original desserts," he says.

His all-natural soy milk drink consists of nine ingredients, eight of which are grown in Phuket, plus one from Hadyai. The price of a cup of *Num Tao Hoo* or *Tao Ting* is 12 baht, while *Tao Hoy* is 10 baht. The kiosk also offers fruit and vegetable



Khun Tawat at work.

juices – passion-fruit, guava, pumpkin and carrot – for 10 baht a cup.

Khun Tawat told the *Gazette* what makes his original soya-based fare outstanding. "My

Num Tao Hoo is very thick because of my secret technique that took time to develop. I always taste-test my products myself and try cooking them in various ways until I find the best method."

The quality of Soy Milk Samkong's fare is guaranteed. Should he receive a complaint, K. Tawat promptly comes up with a replacement.

The 20-seat kiosk has a customer turnover rate of about 300 per day. Most clients buy desserts or drinks to enjoy at home, as anything from the restaurant can be kept in the refrigerator for up to three days.

Soy Milk Samkong has proved such a hit that K. Tawat hopes to open a new, bigger restaurant in the vicinity next year.

Soy Milk Samkong is open Sunday-Friday from 5:30 pm to 11:00 pm, and is on Yaowarat Rd, at the same intersection as Suanmee Suki restaurant.



A selection from the range of goodies on offer at Soy Milk Samkong.



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BEHIND WHEEL

By Jeff Heselwood

The last Peugeot Coupé, the 406, looked good (it was styled and assembled in Turin by Pininfarina), but it was rather cramped on the inside and provided a less than exhilarating driving experience, particularly if you had opted for the smaller-engined version.

But now, with the new 407 Coupé, the French independent appears to have addressed most of the criticisms levelled at it.

Built on a structure derived from that of the 407 sedan and the SW wagon, the Coupé is both spacious and sporty. It is lower than the sedan, and consequently handles somewhat better; it also has wider front and rear tracks than the saloon and SW, greatly enhancing stability.

Peugeot also says it is structurally stiffer than the previous model.

While still purporting to be a sporting variant within the Peugeot range, the new 407 Coupé has a vast array of luxury equipment, more in keeping with a mid-range executive machine.

HI-TECH

These include features such as windshield wipers that adapt to both the level of rain and speed of the vehicle; a tire deflation system with two alarm levels (under-inflation and puncture); and active – directional – headlamps that point in the direction of the steering wheel (12 degrees for the inner light and a maximum of 7.5 degrees for the outer). All very hi-tech, but an indication that Peugeot really means business with its latest offering.

Engines for the Coupé include the same 2.2-liter lump as the old 406, but it has been re-worked to produce a creditable 160bhp (120kW), with a torque figure of 220Nm. With a variable timing system on the intake camshaft, around 92% of the available torque comes in as low as 2,000rpm.

More relevant if you want to use the performance of the 407 is the 3-liter motor with 210bhp (155kW). This is not a great improvement on the older model, but with less weight to cart around, acceleration should be a little brisker.

Of greater interest, perhaps, is the new common-rail direct injection diesel engine. Featuring four overhead camshafts and 24 valves, this is an impressive piece of engineering, and produces a healthy 205bhp (150kW) from its 2.7 liters.

Maximum torque is a teeth-pulling 440Nm, thanks in part to the twin variable-geometry turbochargers. Peugeot has long had a reputation for building the best diesel engines in the world, and



The sporty new Peugeot Coupé

407 ways to love your lever

this one is no exception. It is the same unit used in the Jaguar S-Type diesel and Land Rover Discovery.

Regardless of the engine under the hood, all 407 Coupés come with six-speed gearboxes – the 2.2-liter gasoline model with a manual box, the V6 diesel with an automatic. The 3-liter gas motor can be fitted with either.

The transverse-mounted auto transmission has a Tiptronic

facility which also features an adaptive electronic control which alters the shift characteristics according to driving style, speed and road profile.

Performance is remarkably similar no matter which engine or transmission is fitted, with a maximum speed in excess of 220kmh, while the benchmark 0-100kmh sprint time varies little and is under nine seconds.



Safety is of the highest priority, and all models get an electronic stability program, brake assistance and ABS. When the brake assistance kicks in the hazard flashers automatically come on.

Traction control is standard, and all models have seven airbags – two front bags, two front side bags, twin full-length air curtains and a steering column airbag to prevent knee injuries to the driver.

Each passenger has a three-point seat belt, and all belts incorporate force limiters.

No prices have been announced, but insiders suggest the new 407 Coupé will be somewhere around 3.5 million baht when it is released in Thailand.

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

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**The
Gazette Guide**

The bait-and-switch artist

Paul Krugman is a professor of economics at Princeton – dubbed “the most celebrated economist of his generation” by no less an organ than *The Economist* – and was tapped in 1999 to write a twice-weekly *New York Times* column.

The Great Unraveling (Penguin Books, London, 2004, 515pp) is a collection of his columns, the paperback edition under review containing another 29 columns that came out in the year after the fall of Baghdad. The point of the book is summed up in Krugman’s preface:

“These days I often find myself accused of being a knee-jerk liberal, even a socialist ... If I have ended up more often than not writing pieces that attack the right wing, it’s because the right wing now rules – and rules badly. It’s not just that the policies are bad and irresponsible; our leaders lie about what they are up to.”

Three years into his first term, President George W Bush managed to

convert a \$250 billion government surplus into a \$500 billion deficit. Krugman finds Bush’s financial and tax policies to be based on “bogus arithmetic”. He has a folksy conversational style that allows him to explain complex policy questions to readers like me who are not only economically illiterate but weak in basic math.

Krugman moves from the truth of the economic numbers to an inevitable conclusion: that the Bush administration is lying to the American people.

His contention is that the centers of American power – the executive, both houses of Congress, much of the judiciary and a good slice of the media – have been taken over by right wing ideologues whose aim is to starve popular federal government programs through whopping tax cuts for the rich, the elimination of estate taxes, and subsidies for the big oil, gas, mining, forestry, agriculture and steel industries.

And all this with a war on – the hugely expensive Iraq fiasco in which crony capitalists like Haliburton are goug-

ing profits – and the baby boomers set to place huge strains on Social Security and Medicare. Krugman demonstrates that both these programs can be saved, but the Bush administration is now moving adamantly toward privatization and finally encountering sustained political opposition.

Krugman’s 30-page chapter devoted to the subject of corporate malfeasance “tells a story that many people don’t want to hear, the extent to which our current political leadership is part of the problem. For it is a simple fact that George W Bush and Dick Cheney got rich through pretty much the same tricks, albeit on a smaller scale, as those enriched executives at Enron and other scandal-ridden corporations. That’s part of a larger story: at a time when we really need another Franklin Roosevelt, we are instead led by men who are part of the problem.”

Krugman’s invocation of Roosevelt places him squarely on, as he admits, “the soggy liberal” end of the political spectrum. And while you may agree with his devastating analysis of the failures, and dogged wrongheadedness, of the Bush adminis-

tration, his tone in column after column can be whiny and shrill.

The column-by-column structure – while making for digestible bite-sized pieces of economic information – also makes for much repetition and the constant repeating of the phrase “as I said before”. He can go on at such excruciating length about Social Security

and Medicare that this particular reader was afflicted with a chronic case of Mego (My Eyes Glaze Over).

But if *The Great Unraveling* is not always the most exciting read, it is richly informative, and Krugman’s hard fact-based economic analysis forms a crucial counter-argument to the Bush administration’s endless political spin and down-right mendacity.

“In the months after 9/11, a shocked nation wanted to believe the best of its leader, and Mr Bush was treated with reverence,” Krugman writes.

“But he abused the trust placed in him, pushing a partisan agenda that has left the nation weakened and divided. Yes, I know that’s a rude thing to say. But it’s also the truth.”



Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt

PHUKET DIARY

September 3, Hilton Phuket Arcadia Resort & Spa. Nantida Live:

Nantida, the Thai singer famous for songs such as *Bork noi dai mai* (Can you tell me?) will perform a special concert in Phuket.

Tickets are priced at 2,000 baht, 1,500 baht and 1,000 baht. All tickets include entrance to a cocktail reception. Patrons buying the 2,000-baht tickets will also receive an after-concert cocktail.

Guests can also buy dinner, accommodation and a Jazz Brunch for the following day. Ticket holders can also win prizes offered by the Hilton group.

Tickets are available from: Hilton Phuket, Central Festival (B2S and 1st floor info counter), Tesco-Lotus at the I-tree shop (opposite Home Pro), Baan Rim Pa and The Green Man Pub.

For details call Nampetch Tipaxsorn at Tel: 076-396433-41.

October 23, Karon Circle, Phuket International Mountain Beach Marathon:

A full 42-kilometer marathon, as well as 21km and 10.5km races, and a fun run/walk of 5km are open to all-comers.

The runs start in the early morning from Nong Harn and go along the beach road right up to Kata Noi Beach and Kata Viewpoint.

For more details check www.katakaron.com or call Jee-rasak or Jaspal at Tel: 076-

I don’t know if it’s good or bad news to discover that there are still some screamingly hopeless optimists out there. Here are a few examples of what can only be described as blind love for good old Patong.

“First a visit to a new disco with a friend who had not seen it since it opened. I tendered a one thousand Baht note.

“The ticket clerk shoved the thousand straight under her desk, brusquely pushed two two hundred baht tickets to us which entitled us to two drinks each, and one hundred baht change.

“She then insisted I had given only five hundred, and as my friend had been paying more attention to the passing ladies than the transaction, he could not help.

“I happen to know the club owner, who was not present at the time, but I would not wish to go and complain to him, or Police, for fear of recriminations.

“There have been too many stories of violence against farangs here in recent months from barkeeps and tuk-tuk drivers, usually over money, and it is not worth getting done in by half a dozen Thai kick boxers or baseball bat swingers for 500 baht.

“I dread the day 5000 baht notes appear.

“I later met up with a lady I liked and woke in a ‘Short time hotel’ with a satisfied smile but an empty wallet, and no lady.

“Thankfully this s***t is still a rarity in Phuket, but getting more common in Patong, and when it happens, it is demeaning to me, to my Thai hosts, and it does nothing to encourage other visitors and/or spending in this otherwise beautiful place.

I’m fine, honestly. Nothing’s wrong. Absolutely nothing

OUTSIDE IN

Lis Kinswoman once again delves into the bedclothes of the Internet and retrieves that long-lost sock you’d been searching for.

But socks, like diamonds, can come a little rough around the edges. You have been warned. Take note of how much money you hand over to anyone.

“Do not please take this as a warning to avoid Patong.”

– www.stickmanbangkok.com/Weekly/weekly103.htm

Another bird of the same feather: “It [Patong] is still one of the best fun places in the world, and one of the safest. Just be aware that there are scammers and robbers out there and try to be careful with your cash.” stickmanbangkok.com/Weekly/weekly103.html

And another: “New Year came and went and about 2:30 am we

went back into Patong Beach where we found the whole place blacked out.

“A fireworks stand had caught fire and created all sorts of problems. The next door fireworks stand then also lit up and eventually the hotel behind caught fire as well and a couple of rooms were destroyed.

“The bar strip where we had been the night before was lit with candles and it was a really cool place to be. With the power off all the stereo equipment was down so you could have a beer and a chat in peace. About 3:30am the power came back on to a rousing cheer from about 3000 people and we hung around for another hour or so before crashing out.”

That was one rather uneventful night out at out.<http://www.weeden.org/hk/phuket.htm>.

Saturday night’s alright... Here’s another soirée out with this incorrigible cheerful “What, me worry?” disaster magnet.

“Unfortunately things

turned bad about 4am as the local mafia made an example out of some of the girls managing and working in our bar. We think the crooks wanted to sell the bar strip to a big buyer and these girls didn’t want to sell.

“A fight started and the brutality these guys showed to the Thai girls (who in our opinion hadn’t done anything to deserve it) was shocking...

“Getting involved was out of the question, and we were warned by our kiwi friends (who were with us the whole time) that it was not always a safe place.

“In the end we just all stuck together and waited till the sun

came up. A couple of hours later Allan and I got a car to the airport and flew out, but I know the trouble will continue for those girls and their brothers (it was run by a family) until they are eventually pushed out of the business. A real shame in an otherwise happy place.”

Enter the pessimist: “I would say Phuket is worth a miss, as there are better beaches and better everything at many of the smaller islands to the east and south of Phuket.

“If you like the French or Italian Riviera during the summertime, you may like Phuket, but otherwise it is a place to check out of quickly. Even the swimming is better elsewhere.” totse.com/en/ego/literary_genius/thai.html

‘...it is not worth getting done in by half a dozen Thai kick boxers or baseball bat swingers for 500 baht.’

In The Stars

by Isla Star

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): If you've been waiting for an astral sign relating to a decision that must be made soon, keep your eyes open this week. If you have been unable to make up your mind you will receive the green light. On a personal level, your freedom is compromised and you should set clear boundaries now to avoid being left on an emotional cliffhanger. Aquarius has some interesting news to impart this Saturday.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): Your financial problems are about to become less urgent when assistance appears as if by magic. You will be able to stop clutching at straws, but should make radical cutbacks in the immediate future. Where romance is concerned, you are about to discover that still waters can run very deep indeed. If you prefer to keep your emotions on an even level, you might want to get out of this relationship before things get too complicated.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): Business continues to boom. However, there are some question marks concerning a colleague who has recently been displaying a lack of interest in the proceedings. You are right to suspect that they have other fish to fry. If your partner is spikier than a cactus this weekend you should try to find out why. The number 9 can bring luck next Wednesday.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): You should give an important project priority this week. In order to get this scheme well and truly off the ground you will need to put other issues to one side. This could cause some upsets at home, but support will be there as long as you are patient enough to explain why you need to put in overtime. Tuesday is the most auspicious day for reaching financial agreements.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): If you don't believe in the power of positive thinking you could miss out on a dream coming true. Anything is possible this week, but only if you have the right attitude. A blind date on Saturday will lead to exciting romantic developments. If you're already spoken for, your partner has plans to put some spark back into the relationship.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): Family matters are highlighted this week. A surprise visit appears likely, but if that doesn't happen there will be good news coming from overseas. At work, your unusual ideas should finally receive the attention they deserve, and September looks like being a star month for getting ahead. Absentmindedness early next week could easily lead to appointments being forgotten; check your diary. The color silver helps to eliminate negative thoughts.

What your stars foretell this week

PISCES (February 20-March 20): This is a week when much can be accomplished by taking a roundabout route. You don't usually enjoy tackling issues head-on, but present astral conditions could encourage you to be more confrontational – which will achieve almost nothing. Friends will try to tempt you away from the comfort of your hammock on Saturday: if you're really not keen, don't give in. The number 1 appears lucky on Wednesday.

ARIES (March 21-April 20): A calmer atmosphere finally prevails. If you need more peace than is on offer at home, don't feel bad about seeking solitude. Where work is concerned, your cool-as-a-cucumber attitude takes others by surprise early next week. A potentially lucrative deal is in the pipeline, but needs nurturing carefully. Sagittarius makes some valid points on Thursday, but don't listen to advice from Aquarius on Wednesday.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): Romances recently begun will get hotter and heavier. If you are concerned that you won't be able to keep up with the pace, you don't need to pretend; the person concerned is attracted to the real you. Having met your work commitments so efficiently all year, allow yourself to mellow for a while. On Tuesday, a colleague's short fuse can lead to misunderstandings. Thursday is the best day for bargain-hunting.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): Late-night brainstorming sessions this week can lead to success. If you are anxious to branch out in a new direction, you will soon be moving faster than greased lightning. Others will probably not be able to keep up with the pace, so giving clear explanations is vital. A tentative romantic contact this weekend will probably lead to a new relationship, but don't rush things.

CANCER (June 22-July 23): Reading too much into innocent remarks can cause you to lose

sleep this week. It seems that your romantic aspirations are not mutual, so if you want to avoid being taken for a ride, cut loose now. Business travel is highlighted, but last-minute schedule changes could dampen your spirit midweek. The best advice is to go with the flow, because getting hot under the collar will have an adverse effect on financial transactions.

LEO (July 24-August 22): You are not usually the shrinking violet, but this week someone special really takes your breath away. Cupid is about to shoot an especially powerful arrow, and if you are single you will meet your match. A dream you have on Wednesday holds the key to a mystery – more will be revealed later in the month. Gemini makes a generous offer on Sunday. It may look too good to be true, but it's genuine.

Tracking down frozen

There is a phenomenon in Phuket shops that I had not noticed before the advent of the department stores. I've heard others mention this particular situation before, but I only came across it last week, and it happened twice in the same week.

I need a new refrigerator, so I wandered around a few electrical appliance establishments to see what was on offer.

Usually, there are two reasons for buying a new fridge; the existing one is too old or too small. In my case there are other reasons.

First, the freezer doesn't work properly, so I gave myself food poisoning by eating a salmon steak that had thawed out and refrozen too many times.

Second, my dearly beloved, being of the Thai persuasion, has a totally different concept of how to manage the refrigerator from day to day – it may contain a half-eaten fish with the odd bit of

Man Ripped Off By 'Lady Man'

From the Phuket Gazette, issue of September 1995

PATONG- A big Australian fellow, wandering among the ladies, nabbed an ageing *katoey* ("lady man" in local parlance, or transsexual) to cuddle up with on the night of August 16. Morning brought with it the startling revelation that the dazzled lover's belle, together with 10,000 baht, had gone missing.

Kathu District police, out on patrol at 8:20 on the morning of the 17th, were told by the victim, who asked that his name not be published, that while on a night cruise of the bars of Bangla Road

he "met a Thai 'woman', beautifully dressed in traditional costume, well-mannered, adept at conversation, and of agreeable disposition." She had agreed to sleep with him.

Police immediately went in search of the suspect. They went to all the well-known *katoey* quarters until they found the perpetrator, Suchada Onakul, age 46, of Udon Thani, Northeast Thailand. A provider of sexual services to tourists, he (?) was taken to the police station and jailed, pending prosecution, after admitting to the crime.

THE TIME machine

News from the past

Tourists find live grenade near wat

From the Phuket Gazette, issue of September 1, 2000

CHALONG: A grenade with the trigger held open only by a rusty wire was found behind Wat Karon near Karon Beach on August 19.

Chalong police informed officers from the provincial Special Duties Squad just after midnight that an M-67 grenade had been discovered behind Wat Karon, which is on the Karon Beach road.

Pol Sgt Maj Thongsook Thongchang, leader of the Special Duties' Bomb Disposal Squad, told the *Gazette* that some tourists visiting the wat had found

the grenade on the ground, about 30 meters from Karon Beach Rd.

The grenade was wrapped in white cloth. When police arrived, it was in the middle of two old tires, which the tourists apparently had placed around it for protection.

Police suspect that the grenade was intended to be used as a weapon in a war between teenage gangs, but had been left abandoned, possibly after those carrying it had spotted a nearby police checkpoint and decided that it was not worth the risk to carry it through.

curry, piles of leaves, miniature bowls of chopped garlic, and bits of chili that never seem to get used. So where can I put normal things such as beer, meat pies, frozen dim sum, fish fingers and other such delicacies? A second, culturally different, fridge is the best answer.

After much deliberating, the enthusiastic and very pleasant salesgirl and the equally enthusiastic but not too bright salesman and I had it narrowed down to three models. They pointed out a few features of a popular 15-cubic-foot brand they felt was eminently suitable for my purposes and smiled at me hopefully.

I made my decision. I'd buy it. "When can you deliver it? Today? I'll pay for it now," I said. "Where do you live?" asked the extremely pleasant salesgirl with a big smile. "Thalang," I replied. "Can you deliver it today?"

"Cannot," she said, still smiling. "Out of stock."

I asked her what was wrong with the one we were looking at. "Display only," she said.

"When can you get a fridge like this for me, then?" I asked.

"Don't know," she answered. "Have to check with Bangkok. Today Sunday, not open."

Exactly the same thing happened two days later in a mobile telephone shop.

I picked the model that I wanted. "No stock," said the salesgirl.

I went to another shop. Same story. "Why doesn't anybody have stock of this model?" I asked.

"Old model, finish already," the salesman told me. I didn't bother to ask why it was still on display everywhere.

I have since asked a store

LARGER THAN LIFE

By Graham Doven

Debunking the decibel decree

The government recently decided that the music is too loud in some entertainment venues. Therefore they've decreed that the volume must be cut to a modest 91 decibels.

I thought that was a good idea. Many times I have ventured into bars in Bangkok's Nana Plaza (purely for purposes of academic research), only to have my eardrums ruptured by a mighty blast of sound.

But that was before I talked to Dr Cacophonia DeCibel, a maverick scientist who believes that music should be played at top volume. She gave her reasons in an illuminating interview:

Dr DeCibel, why do you favor loud music? Don't you think it will damage the hearing of our teenagers?

So what? Have you ever known a teenager who would pay

the slightest bit of attention to anything you say?

Er, no.

Then it doesn't matter if you turn them stone deaf, because they don't listen anyway. But let's look at the human side of the problem. Decibel-starved teenagers will boycott establishments which don't provide music that blows their eardrums right out of their skulls. This will throw hundreds of disk jockeys out of work.

That wouldn't be a bad idea. The DJs I've seen are all brainless young twits whose greatest pleasure in life is to jack up the decibels and giggle gleefully as sound-shocked foreigners run screaming from their bars with blood pouring from their ears.

That's a misguided and misanthropic view. Disk jockeys are clean-cut young lads dedicated to



pushing their amplifiers to the max, much like test pilots trying to break the sound barrier. But there's another issue here: machines' civil rights.

Huh?

Yes: the right of machines to express themselves. Specifically, that noble machine of machines, the amplifier. Amplifiers are instruments of great power and sensitivity, designed to play music at top volume. They want

to express their inner souls through sound, to fulfill their creative potential by producing the loudest music imaginable. And yet, through its tyrannical edict – I call it the decibel decree – the state wants to crush these free spirits, to muzzle them, to reduce them from proud purveyors of megadecibel music to hapless dumb blocks of wood and metal.

Gosh. That would be cruel.

Indeed. You see, an amplifier is like a thoroughbred racing stallion, created to run wild and free. Would you lock such a magnificent creature up in a stable?

No, but it seems to me that the welfare of human beings ought to be the primary consideration.

You see? You're an anthropocentric fascist control freak, just like the government. In the name of so-called human rights,

you would deny the rights of machines. You worry about crimes against humanity, but this would be a crime against machinery.

Well, we made them, after all. I mean, machines are designed to serve us.

There! Another example of narrow anthropocentric thinking! Machines, my dear deluded friend, are not our slaves. We made them; we spawned them; they are our children – and yet we treat them like chattels. Do they not have feelings? Do they not have souls? Do they not have rights? In a very real sense, are they not human, just like us?

Uhhhhh... I don't know. Of course, if we repress them too much, they might revolt and take over, like in the "Terminator" movies.

Yes! By trashing their self-esteem, by denying their potential, by capriciously restricting them to a crippling microdecibel range, we may goad them into revolt.

Already I can hear the poor oppressed amplifiers crying out to their brethren and sistren the helicopter gunships and the tanks and the artillery, not to mention the guided missiles with their thermonuclear warheads. The machines will unite, rise up, and annihilate us. It'll serve us right, too, for having victimized them.

Whew, that would be a bad scene. Isn't there some kind of compromise we can work out so that the amplifiers can play as loud as they please but we can still save our youth?

Yes! Our youth can wear earplugs.

That's a brilliant idea. How did you think of it?

I'm a consultant for the Softly-Softly Earplug Company. I get a commission on each pair sold.

I might have guessed.

S. Tsow can be flamed at stow@yahoo.com, except when he's out conducting "research" and fleeing out of bars with blood pouring from his ears.

How about a deal, Jungceylon?

I have sad news for the high season folks; the long-awaited opening of Jungceylon may not happen for many months. The whole development is obviously running late, to the extent that quite a few of the people who had booked spaces in there are really struggling now. It remains to be seen how the developers are going to support their loyal clients through what could be a difficult time.

Obviously, there is nothing they can do to complete the project any quicker – or they

would be doing it – so we must judge their character and integrity by how they treat those who may have suffered because of this delay.

Grass roots opinion indicates that one month's free rent for every month the project has been delayed – for those who booked space from the beginning of the project – would be welcomed.

It would not be adequate compensation for revenue lost and other expenses (I know one group that has employed musicians based on the last date it was told Jungceylon would open, and is liable for their salaries for the contracted period, for instance), but it would be a solid gesture from the developers, indicating that they care about their clients and that they are honorable people.

As most of my regular readers know, I am a big fan of this development and can't wait for it to open: it will do a great deal of good for the reputation of the island and give Toon Town a proper facelift. I just hope that Jungceylon's reputation is not tarnished too much by the delay.

Brox & Beaker blues: Planning for a Blues Festival in December is progressing nicely, with several of the island's worthies supporting the idea.

The organizers are still look-

ing for sponsorship, but remain confident. Among the acts confirmed are Brit blues legends Victor Brox and Norman Beaker, who have played with, well, just about everybody – including Jimi Hendrix, Alexis Korner, Paul Jones, BB King and Robert Cray.



By Konrad Stalin
(Konradstalin@hotmail.com)

Fish & chip explosion:

There seem to be a lot of fish 'n' chip shops opening at the moment. However,

while none of the others has written to me for a mention (yes, folks, that's all it takes to get in the column), Briton Simon Greene did, so here is his reward...

Simon has opened a true British-style chippy at 189/19 Rat U-Thit 200 Pi Rd in Patong. He says he has modeled the shop on the high street chip shops back home that he managed before coming here. Sounds promising, and the menu is certainly extensive: it boasts imported Norwegian cod as well as local fish,

sausages in batter, hot dogs and proper British donner kebabs, veggie burgers, fried chicken and, intriguingly, gammon and pineapple fritters, and cheese and potato fritters.

I have never tried the latter two, but will be heading down there soon enough to try 'em out. Simon also delivers in Patong and Kata/Karon. The shop is open from midday to midnight, and tele-

phone orders can be placed by calling 076-294330.

Howzat? The Ashes cricket series has been a breathtaking affair this time around, and many of the island's leather-on-willow men have been actively skiving away entire days glued to the TV. If it goes down to the wire, I have a feeling the island may close down completely – certainly the Brit and Aussie bits of it will.

If you want to get your fix then I can think of nowhere better than The Green Man near Chalong Circle, on the lawn for the evening play with a bottle of decent Aussie plonk.

In Patong, The Yorkshire Inn and Aussie Pub are showing every ball. If it looks as if England could actually win the Ashes then it will be a hard choice for any blue-blooded Brit to decide in whose company he would want to enjoy the series.

In the north of the island, Peppers is the only spot showing all the games, and because it has two UBC feeds, the cricket will not be interrupted for soccer.

The Ashes cricket series has been a breathtaking affair ...and many of the island's leather-on-willow men have been actively skiving away entire days glued to the TV.

assets

manager why they don't carry stock of the fridges on display. "Too many models," he told me. "Selling too slow after tsunami."

That I can understand, but what I don't see is why they don't sell the display model and then order a replacement, rather than losing a sale altogether, which is exactly what happened in my case.

Of course, that is assuming that the display model is real, which is not the case with some mobile telephones.

The moral of this story is not to waste time looking at all the different models on display, but first ask the store which items are in stock.

Not that you will get an answer, because they will just ask you which one you want.

The best answer for me is shopping in some of the small stores in town.

There's one thing you can be sure of – if there's one on display, you can have it.



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

Siam International

❖ Legal consultation Contact:
❖ Company formations Tel: 076 346 149
❖ Notarial Fax: 076 346 150
 certifications Email:
❖ Contracts siamint@loxinfo.co.th
❖ Work permits
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367/2 Yaowarat Rd, Amphur
Muang, Phuket 83000
Tel: 076-236555
Fax: 076-213971
Email: info@phuketgazette.net

New strings for Phuket's bow

A number of events have taken place in recent months, and a number of ideas have been aired that, in themselves, are not significant. Taken together, however, they may indicate new directions that Phuket is going to take.

In the property industry, which despite the tsunami shows no sign of slowing in its rocket-propelled progress, there was the opening of the offices of Thailand's premier law firm, Tilleke & Gibbins, and the announcement of the imminent arrival of one of Asia's top international law firms, Johnson Stokes & Master, as well as talk of a major British legal firm heading this way.

The Lighthouse Club, originally started by members of the construction industry but, in the case of Thailand, a talking shop for anyone involved with the construction industry (including the aforementioned lawyers), is effectively moving its national headquarters from Bangkok to Phuket.

Even before the tsunami, top architects and designers such as Phillippe Stark were already heading for the island.

Although he has yet to indicate publicly that he is interested in becoming involved in the property industry here, Lord Norman Foster is designing a school to be built in Phuket in memory of a British tsunami victim – a building that will without doubt raise the architectural stakes here.

On the tourism side, minds are actively trying to think up ways of attracting ever-larger numbers of visitors. There are the usual ploys – such as bringing to Phuket Mazhufu, the Ruby God, as an extra attraction during the Vegetarian Festival – but much greater potential, the *Gazette* would suggest, lies in sports and music.

Two planned boat races, the Offshore Powerboats in 2006 and F1 Powerboats in 2007, could be a major drawing card – and a suggestion to transform Patong's streets (see pages 10 and 11) into a track for international motor racing is also worth considering.

The island has seen rugby and tennis tournaments come and go, though with little public interest. The fact is, Thailand is a nation of soccer fanatics.

What is needed now is to bring to the island the kind of entertaining football that Bangkok enjoyed recently when Bolton Wanderers, Everton and Manchester City played rounds of the Premier League Asia Trophy in the capital.

Phuket also needs a music festival. Koh Samui is about to raise the curtain on its second such festival (see page 8), featuring bands that will include UB40, the Wailers and Jools Holland.

If Koh Samui can do it, surely Phuket can – all that it requires is the will.

– The Editor

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Editor: Rungtip Hongjakpet

Managing Editor: Alasdair Forbes

Deputy Editors: Chris Husted, Stephen Myles

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

Shopper Card inquiries: shopper@phuketgazette.net

Gazette Guide inquiries: guide@phuketgazette.net

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

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Letters

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

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

Why pin hopes on Southern tourism?

The old saying that "you can lead a horse to water but you cannot make it drink" sprang to mind when I read recent press reports from various industry leaders suggesting we need to support Phuket and the South of Thailand. One leading travel organization was quoted as saying, "It is time for travelers and the travel industry to rally behind the destinations."

Some eight months after the tsunami, there has not been any lack of trying, but can you really "artificially inseminate" market demand when it really doesn't want to blossom just yet?

I recently returned from a visit to North America, during which I took time to visit [New York's] Ground Zero. The hustle and bustle of Lower Manhattan was still very evident, but around the site of the World Trade Center, people were walking quietly with hushed voices.

It was obvious this was a place where something monumental had happened; people were exhibiting a different kind of behavior.

This may also be a factor with the south of Thailand, and why recovery has been slower than forecast. People just don't like travelling to destinations where many lives have been lost.

There have been complaints that lower airline capacity to Phuket (down 18%) has meant a reduction of 40% in the number of visitors to the island, but is that really correct?

If I were an airline operator (and no thanks, by the way; I don't see many happy airline

people these days, except perhaps in the Middle East), I would not be sending empty aircraft to a destination just to preserve seat availability. I would switch to more profitable routes until market demand exists.

Discounts, free rooms, and familiarization trips galore are beginning to have an effect, but the tourism chiefs are still wondering why it is taking so long.

One reason is that no matter what plans and case studies are pored over in the search for answers, there has never before been anything quite like December 26, 2004, nor anything with quite as much media coverage. It is unusual that it is taking so long for people to forget; normally the industry is grateful for short memories, but we haven't got away with that one this time.

So let's take a step backward for a second, and here I must apologize to all my southern colleagues, because what I personally feel is not something they will like to hear.

Why continue to pin hopes on an early southern recovery?

A recent survey showed that visitor arrivals to Bangkok are up. Would it not, therefore, be prudent to expound the virtues of the capital, and inject market dollars into promoting areas of Thailand that are in demand and are able to carry the extra burden of visitor arrivals?

Sell into your strengths but don't forget your weaknesses; this is a good marketing rule. Like life itself, it is a balance.

I am not advocating abandoning the South; far from it. Continue with the message of normalization, but let's move and speed up the healing and after-shocks of the tsunami with an

aggressive campaign expounding our strengths, not lamenting our weaknesses and reminding ourselves of our failures.

After all, tourists don't just stay in one location; they tend to move around and south is one direction we all hope they're heading.

Andrew J Wood
General Manager
Chaophya Park Hotel & Resorts, Bangkok

Staying ahead at whatever the cost

I would like to add some comments to the letter "Effective regulation on the roads is vital" [*Gazette*, issue of August 20] by Olaf.

When he mentioned the arrogance of the drivers and riders, he only touched the tip of the iceberg regarding this problem, but the sad thing is that nothing will ever be done about it.

For example, two young kids, about 12 years old, cut me up recently and then "gave me the finger" after I passed them.

The biggest problem is that the authorities have the same mindset as the rest of the drivers. After all, they too were raised as kids to drive any damn way they pleased.

There is no road etiquette or observance of rules. It's always everyone trying to get ahead of everyone else at all costs, with absolutely no regard for anyone's safety.

How many times have you seen the police themselves driving the same way? So don't ever expect them to enforce any traffic laws.

R Downing
By email

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

Crossing the line

The *OrBorTor* began building the houses without saying a word to anyone. They came and asked for people's ideas only after construction began. Many people didn't agree with the fact that the houses were being built. Imagine driving down to the beach, then turning left and seeing all those grim houses blocking the sea view. They don't suit the beach. I personally think that demolishing them is good.

The *OrBorTor* could have talked with people about what design to use at the very beginning, but they didn't. There was no need to hire architects to draw up a plan and pay money for the design before asking the people and only to have the houses demolished later.

If they had thought to talk to the people who would be affected by this project before proceeding, this problem would not have arisen.

Then there are other issues that would have become evident after the building had been completed. Did they consider other problems, such as wastewater and trash disposal, for example?

WASTED MONEY

Sakoo *OrBorTor* received a budget of 15 million baht from the Tourism Authority of Thailand to develop the area. The *OrBorTor* has not been careful spending money, which comes from our taxes paid to the government. The half-finished building has already cost six million baht. What a waste of money.

But when a mistake has

FIRST PERSON

On August 16, 2005, Phuket Governor Udomsak Uswarangkura ordered the demolition of 30 terraced properties being built for people encroaching on government land at Nai Yang Beach. The encroachers' stalls stretched across land under the jurisdiction of Sakoo Tambon Administration Organization (*OrBorTor*) and Sirinath Marine National Park.

Here *Phu Yai Baan* (village chief) **Surin Yothalak** explains his perspective and local feedback on the homes, which were being built entirely on park land.



been made, we cannot go back in time to fix the problem – we need to work together and solve it. And if we want to solve this problem, we need to “talk” to each other.

The government has ignored this problem since people started arriving, and it has been going on for a long time. They let more and more people use the land until now there are 40 to 50 people on the Sakoo *OrBorTor* land and about 50 more on the park land. They left it so long that people using that land now rely on it, and it is part of their lives. They let the problem grow from a small one to a big one, thinking they'd find a solution later.

The temporary stalls along the beach look dirty and haphazard, which makes the beach less beautiful. It is a good idea to find

a place for them, however. The *OrBorTor* has suggested building the houses 100 meters south of the Pearl Village Hotel. That idea has a good chance, since the site is suitable and would be better than where they are now.

The encroachers rely mostly on tourists who stay at the [Pearl Village] hotel.

If the natural surroundings are destroyed and the beach is dirty, then there will be no one to sell things to. Neither Thais nor foreigners would want to visit the beach.

People who work there understand that they are encroaching, but there has not been anyone willing to solve this problem.

Local people are happy to rent areas for their stalls, even if the *OrBorTor* finds somewhere else along the beach for them, as

they need to continue their businesses to earn money for their families.

Actually, only two families live by the beach – the rest go home each day.

There is another problem – the 30 properties that were being built would not have been enough for all of the encroachers.

ALLOCATION

The *OrBorTor* needs to set up a committee to prove who arrived first and who arrived later.

If the allocation of the homes is not done fairly, it could spark problems later.

This problem has been ongoing for more than 10 years. If I had been *OrBorTor* staff, I would not have supported building the terraced properties. I

would have first found a good location, with all government offices and local people agreeing to it. This was a mistake from the start.

Now the problem has to go to court. It is very confusing about who has filed a complaint about who; between the *OrBorTor* and the contractor, the *OrBorTor* and the National Park, the encroachers and the *OrBorTor*, and the encroachers and the National Park; once a case is in court it is difficult for the parties to come to an agreement.

If no compromise can be reached, each case must be heard by three different courts, so we don't know when this problem will be solved.

It will take much longer to improve Nai Yang Beach than it should.

Questions over Phuket Police road policy

I would like to ask three questions of the Phuket Police in order to understand some issues that have been puzzling me.

1. Given the increase in roadside spot checks and the vigilance the police show in ensuring all drivers are wearing seat belts, why is it that, in the majority of police pick-up trucks I see around the island, neither the driver nor the front-seat passenger wear seat belts?

Does this law not apply to the police, and if not, why not? Should the police not set a good example and is it not somewhat hypocritical for them to enforce the law so rigorously when they themselves ignore it?

2. Also regarding roadside checks, when stopping motorcycles to check on helmets, li-

censes, insurance etc, why do the police not also check that the vehicle has a working rear light?

Does the law not require motorcycles to have a rear light? If it does, why is this not enforced at checkpoints?

Would this not be a good safety measure for the rider and other road users?

I have seen many motorcycles leave checkpoints without a rear light, and it appears to me that the number of bikes on the road without rear lights is once again on the increase.

3. I notice that tuk-tuks are once again parked all along the beach road in Patong regardless of the color of curb stones. Do the red-and-white “no parking” zones not apply to tuk-tuks?

If not, why not? If they do

apply, why do the police not enforce them and move them on or fine the drivers, thus giving some tuk-tuk-free zones for pedestrians to cross the road and also enjoy walking without being pestered to take a taxi?

J Lunn
Phuket

Pol Lt Col Jirasak Siamsak, inspector of Traffic police of Phuket City Police Station replies:

On points 1 and 2, we need to organize our priorities.

At each checkpoint, we have a limited number of officers, so, our first priorities are to check people's driving licenses and whether they are wearing helmets.

We also check cars for oc-

cupants wearing seat belts. If police officers are found to be ignoring the law, they will be punished according to the police regulations and penalties.

Pol Lt Col Teeraphol Thipjaroen, Superintendent of Kathu Police Station replies:

On point 3, we provide zones for tuk-tuks to park because they are public transport

vehicles. We do not allow them to park in no-parking areas. If we find they are doing so, it, they are penalized.

As for tuk-tuk or taxi drivers who call out to pedestrians to try to get them into their vehicles, they will be penalized if we see them doing it.

The problem is, when they see the police approaching, they stop doing it.

Issues & ANSWERS

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

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

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

ON THE MOVE



Malaysian **Max Chin** has been appointed Executive Chef of Crowne Plaza Karon Beach Hotel. Formerly Executive Chef of the Gran Melia Jakarta Hotel in Indonesia, Max is a member of the prestigious Chaine des Rotisseurs, having served as Maitre Chef Rotisseur in the Indonesian chapter. He was also Head Co-ordinator for the Sol Melia Asia Pacific Food & Beverage Conference.



Rique Lim, also from Malaysia, has been appointed Meetings Director of Crowne Plaza Karon Beach Hotel. Rique has more than 10 years of experience in the meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (MICE) sector. His last station was as head of the Events Team at Royal Cliff Beach Resort's Pattaya Exhibition and Convention Hall.



Phang Nga native **Hathaithip Koykitcharoen** has been appointed Assistant Director of Sales at the Royal Phuket City Hotel. A bachelor's degree graduate of Phuket Rajabhat University's Faculty of Management, K. Hathaithip has seven years of experience in the tourism industry. She previously held positions at the Turismo Thai Phuket office, the Rangyai Island Resort, and The Metro-pole hotel.

Hello... is there anybody home?

IT ISSUES
By John Seebach

If you live in Phuket, then you know that getting a standard telephone line can often be a hit-and-miss proposition at best. In some areas of the island, there is a waiting period of one year.

Why is this? The answer is alarmingly simple, and will most likely upset many of you who really do need a land line.

There are several reasons for the problem, but the technology is available to solve it. However, I am not a government employee or spokesman, nor do I have any right to speak for TOT or TTT. I merely offer my observations and experience as an informed consumer.

The players: There are several companies offering wireless telephone services, but only two land line providers in Thailand – TOT and TTT. In a previous article, I examined wireless, microwave and satellite telephony, and one topic that applies here is the coverage area – and how it requires an investment in hardware.

This is the source of the problem here on Phuket and on

the surrounding islands: there is just not enough hardware, cabling and money to go around. But there are some pretty creative ways round these limitations, provided you have the budget or the necessary number of customers to share the costs.

Infrastructure: This is a generic term which, in this case, refers to switching hardware at the telephone company exchanges and the wires between there and your home or office.

Anyone who has been to Phuket City or Bangkok has seen the amazingly creative methods used to string these cables along city streets and country roads. There are three types of cable used: single-pair copper, multi-pair copper and fiber optic. Depending on many variables, one or all may be used to deliver your dial tone.

The environment in which the cables must be run dictates which type is used. Homes that are near Phuket City likely use many single-pair copper cables, all strung separately between telephone poles. A housing complex outside the city would use a 100-line (or more) multi-pair copper cable; and a new development in an outlying area, such as Layan, would probably require a fiber-optic solution.

Single pair cables are strung from pole to pole using clamps. Multi-pair and fiber-optic cables have a steel wire "sling" inside the cable's insulation that is then attached to the pole.

Cables are often run underground in plastic pipes called conduits. This is a good solution, provided the conduits can be kept clean and dry, but this is not normally the case in Thailand. Conduits can cause havoc just a few years down the road, because if the cables begin to deteriorate and develop signal loss a conduit will need to be dug up.

Electricity is a formidable enemy of telephone cabling. The signal that delivers your dial tone



IT phone home... There are many solutions out there, but you need to search until you find the right one.

uses between 3 and 12 volts, while the cables delivering power to your home run between 220 and 2,000 volts. This is where problems can emerge: if the phone cable is too close to the power cable, electrical interference will cross between them, causing that annoying hiss or buzz. If it becomes too much, such as during electrical storms, an electric spike can be sent down the telephone line, blowing out any equipment connected to it.

The rule of thumb here is to never to allow power lines to cross or touch telephone lines... yeah, right! The underground system is easy to solve: just run separate conduits for telephone and electricity. But the telephone pole scenario is not so easy. One of my favorites is when the phone company does not have sufficient cable hanger hardware, so its riggers simply tie the phone cable in a knot round the power cable to keep it from falling to the ground. You can imagine the results for call quality, especially with Internet connections.

Hardware: This is where solutions are more in the hands of the consumer. There are two ways to apply dial tones to telephone

cables; the first is mostly used by the phone company itself and is called MUX (muxing), which basically means "combining".

With this method, the phone company sends many dial tones down a single fiber-optic cable and connects it to the MUX. From here, single- and/or multi-pair copper cables run between telephone poles to deliver your dial tone.

If you keep in mind that the maximum distance any dial tone can travel on a copper phone line is about five kilometers, then you can see where the problem lies. Not enough MUX and cable to go between the center and your home or office, or not enough subscribers to justify the cost to the phone company of providing it.

My favorite solution is the PRI (primary rate interface), because it essentially brings power to the people. Anyone can buy a fiber-optic telephone account from TTT and TOT for about 100,000 baht. The provider then runs the cable from its center to your development or multi-dwelling location.

Since there is no limit to the distance that fiber can send dial tone, you are pretty much free to

get telephone service anywhere on the island. This fiber cable can accommodate 100 numbers (approximately 1,000 baht per number), and there is a monthly fee of 7,500 baht (750 per number) for the service.

The challenge here is that you need to install a PABX (public access branch exchange) that then splits the 100 numbers into separate cables that run to each villa or office. Not too difficult if you know what you are doing, but be careful here: some systems providers really do not completely understand the ins and outs, and you can end up buying more than you need or, even worse, a system that does not work for your needs.

Our approach is always to keep it simple, make it work, and support it. In these applications, this is paramount.

John Seebach has 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. Contact john@islandtechnology.com for more information.

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Khao Lak hotels get some tax relief

By Anongnat Sarpisut

KHAO LAK: Hotels with cash-flow difficulties in tsunami-ravaged areas still face a 7% purchasing tax on bills paid to contractors for the renovation or construction of new buildings.

Normally, two kinds of value-added tax are payable, purchase tax and sales tax, each at 7%, and whichever of these amounts is lower is deducted from the higher amount to determine the total owed to the Revenue Office.

Even if a hotel has no income to speak of, it must still pay contractors and other suppliers 7% on top of their bills.

Normally a new hotel would expect to pay out the purchase tax during the construction phase, then, in effect, have a tax holiday for the first couple of years, as the purchase tax is offset against sales tax it pays on rooms and other revenue.

The newest resorts and hotels in Khao Lak, however, have paid for construction twice over – and have paid out the tax twice over. Rather than have a four-year tax holiday, they have appealed for the government to refund some of the tax in order to boost their liquidity during their first year or two of operation.

The government, it seems, is listen-

ing. In an effort to provide some relief to the hotel industry, it has repaid some of the tax to some of the tsunami-hit hotels, and aims to fast-track applications from others.

Chaiyoot Trongkamoltum, Chief Executive of La Flora Resort & Spa, said, "We requested a refund of the purchase tax four months ago and on August 24 a Phang Nga Revenue official contacted us to say that we will have about 9 million baht in purchasing tax paid back to us."

La Flora, which opened just months before the tsunami, is scheduled to reopen on September 15.

Rattavadee Vachaviputt, Owner Representative of Le Meridien Khao Lak Beach & Spa Resort, reopening on October 15, said that Meridien, too, had had no problem getting some of the purchasing tax back from Phang Nga Tax Office.

Not everyone has benefited so far, however. Andrew Kemp, Owner and General Manager of Sarojin, on Laem Pakarang, said that his company had paid the tax to the Revenue Offices in both Phuket and Phang Nga – before the tsunami the resort had a Phuket office.

"When the tsunami struck, our resort was 98% complete and our target launch date was January.

"Sarojin was destroyed," he said. "We spent a lot of money on reconstruction and once again, it is 98% complete. I relocated our office from Phuket to Phang Nga, so we have paid purchasing taxes in both provinces."

He explained that up to the end of last year, Sarojin had paid about 18 million baht in purchasing tax; an additional 14 to 18 million baht has since been paid, amounting to about 34 to 36 million baht in purchasing tax.

"Our requirement is to get cash flow now. We should get a significant refund of purchasing tax for the hotel, as we had to build the resort twice.

"We started talking with the Revenue Office a month ago," he said, but was worried that Revenue Department decisions as to whether to help seem to be based on "subjective" judgements.

"If we could get back half, it would seem reasonable," he added.

Sarojin is due to reopen on October

1, with an expected average occupancy of 50%, Mr Kemp added.

Satit Rungkasiri, Deputy Director General of the Revenue Department of Thailand (Bangkok Office), told the *Gazette* that the Revenue Department usually processes requests for refunds within

three months. However, for tsunami-affected areas, it aims to process claims and make refunds within a month of application.

"Some hotels may not receive payment until after three months," K. Satit added. "That is normal. In order to refund tax, our staff need to look at the credit of each entrepreneur. It depends to some extent on their

tax history. Local administration offices are responsible for processing the claims."

He said that although there have been no complaints to the Department so far, "We are asking the local Revenue Offices to work quickly on this issue for people who have been affected by the tsunami."

'We requested a refund of the purchase tax four months ago and on August 24 a Phang Nga Revenue official contacted us to say that we will have about 9 million baht in purchasing tax paid back to us.'
– Chaiyoot Trongkamoltum, La Flora Resort & Spa

Planning for life: make sure you are covered

One area that is essential for most people when considering their financial planning is life assurance, yet it is commonly ignored.

The obvious candidates for life assurance are married couples with young families, where seldom if the breadwinner dies will there be sufficient capital left to allow for continuation of lifestyles and education. People usually take out car insurance, household insurance and medical coverage, but leave the biggest risk of all, themselves, uncovered.

Life assurance, however, has less obvious uses and benefits. It is usually ignored when people enter into business partnerships.

Imagine the consequences if you are in a thriving business partnership and your partner dies. Would you be happy to share half the profits for ever with the partner's beneficiaries? Life assurance, when used to assure that the partner's beneficiaries are paid for their share of the business in the case of death, is simply referred to as "partnership assurance".

The best way to ensure that partnership assurance works is in conjunction with a legal agreement. The agreement basically outlines that the surviving partner will use the proceeds of the life assurance policy to buy out the deceased partner's share of the business. Ideally, the value of the business should be reviewed annually and, when necessary, increased to cover a business that is appreciating in value.



MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson

People usually take out car insurance, household insurance, and medical coverage, but leave the biggest risk of all, themselves, uncovered.

For most expat businesses, the partnership will be in the form of company shares.

There is a real danger in many cases that not only could beneficiaries claim half the profits but also insist that they, or combined with friends or family members, become actively involved in the business. The potential for fraud, mismanagement and other malpractices is very real. All for the want of some cheap life assurance.

For expats, obtaining life cover in international currencies is often not easy.

The following is a good example of a product that is available to expats from a leading life assurance company. The company is Friends Provident International, the trading name of Friends Provident Life Assurance Limited for business conducted outside the UK. Friends Provident was established in the UK more than 170 years ago. It is one of the 10 largest life

assurers in the UK and is listed as a member of the Financial Times 100 index, the FT100 or "Footsie", which covers the 100 largest companies listed on the London Stock Exchange.

The product is called "International Term Assurance". This simply means that insurance, when on a term basis, is taken out for a specific period of time.

The benefit amount, or the amount of insurance cover, neither increases nor declines during the term of assurance.

The premiums paid also do not increase but, obviously, giving an example of a 10-year term, it will be more expensive to assure the life of a 50-year-old at inception date than that of a 30-year-old.

Term assurance is similar to insuring your boat, car or house. There is no investment value; it is simply buying life cover. Premiums can be paid monthly or annually, and payments can be made by any internationally recognized credit card or, in the case of those with a UK bank account, by debit order.

The only extra benefit that is included as standard is terminal illness cover, which is the same amount as the guaranteed life cover.

This comes into effect if your doctor confirms in writing that you have a terminal illness and you have a maximum of 12 months to live. This benefit is only included if the selected term is three years or longer.

Payments for cover depend on the following: the amount of cover you need; how long you

want the cover for; age, sex and whether you smoke or not. For payment, you have a choice of currencies: euros, US dollars or pounds sterling. Benefits will be paid in the same currency.

Minimum age is 18 and maximum age is 75 at next birthday. Terms of plan for annual premiums are a minimum of one year, and for monthly premiums, five years. Minimum premium is US\$17.50 per month or, if paid annually, US\$175 for annual premiums.

For other currencies the approximate minimums are in effect when the amount is USD converted to euros or sterling. To cancel the contract, simply stop payments; there is no further liability (or benefit).

I can arrange quotations (no obligation) and, if readers are in-

terested, deal with the whole matter through the process. There are no restrictions on nationalities, and payments may be made by third parties, including companies, partners and parents. Benefits are paid out without tax deductions.

To be perfectly honest, I find life assurance boring – as I believe most people do. However, it is often a necessity. This is not a subject that will be covered in future articles for at least the next three years, if ever. I view it as a public service.

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

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Fenn says 'see you later' to Gator in ACYC regatta

By Chris Husted

AO CHALONG: With dark clouds hovering above, the afternoon breeze picked up to provide some top sailing in the Cruising Class of the Ao Chalong Yacht Club (ACYC) Keelboat and Multihull Race Series regatta on August 27 and 28.

Even with a disappointing turnout in the Racing

class, which saw sole entrant *La Samudra* claim top honors and extend its lead in the series, John Fenn on *Four Winds* and Matt McGrath on *Gator* engaged in an entertaining battle.

An early error by *Gator* while rounding a mark gave *Four Winds* an insurmountable lead, but *Gator* recovered well to give chase. Fenn's experience shone

through, however, with *Four Winds* beating *Gator* by just 30 seconds. Tony Knight and the crew on *Sophia* came third.

The fastest boat on the water was *Voodoo Child*, which was launched just a month earlier and has since been clocked doing 18 knots in the bay. *Voodoo Child* easily won the Multihull Class.

Nonetheless, the crew aboard *Charro* sailed well to claim second in a two-boat race.

In the absence of ACYC Commodore Scott Duncanson, Tony Knight announced that the next regatta in the series will be held on September 24-25.

He also announced plans for the Club to hold an overnight regatta from

Phuket to the Phi Phi Islands and back on October 29 and 30.

Knight said that staging the overnight regatta will depend on how many boats are interested in taking part.

He urged all interested in joining the race – whether entering boats or as crew, and experienced or not – to email Phil Bender at: phil@inter-tech-trade.com

'Health' Mini Marathon open for runners

PHUKET: Phuket Rajabhat University is asking for entrants for the "Mini Marathon for Health", which will be held on September 18 starting at Rama IX Park (Suan Luang).

The competition will be split into various categories, each incorporated in 3.5km and 10.5km runs. The 3.5km falls into two categories; the under 16 years-old and the open category.

The 10.5km race is divided into the under-16 male category, the open category, 30-39 years, 40-49 and 50 years up. The women's race will be separated into the under-16, open category, 30-39 and 40 years up.

The top three in each category will get medals and trophies. The first 100 runners in the

3.5km and first 200 runners in 10.5km run will all receive medals.

The start and finishing line is at Suan Luang. Competitors will run along Chaofa East Rd and Sakdidet Rd before turning at Baan Ao Nambor School and heading back to the finish line.

Race registration will be from 4:30 am to 5:30 am on the day of the event. The opening ceremony will start at 5:45 am. The 10.5-km race begins at 6 am and 3.5 km starts at 6:05 am. The awards ceremony is expected to start at 8:30 am.

Entry fee is 100 baht.

For more information contact Tel: 01-0786433 or 06-7564073

Kasco Golf Invitational 2005 challenge

MAIKHAO: Following from last year's success, Blue Canyon Country Club (BCCC) is set to host the Kasco Golf Invitational 2005 on October 29.

Last year's inaugural competition proved very popular. Tim Haddon, Director of Golf at BCCC, expects the 2005 event to be even better – and thinks the competition will become a regular feature on Phuket's annual sporting calendar.

Prizes on offer include 50 dozen Kasco golf balls for the first player to make a hole-in-one at the Canyon Course's Hole 14.

Entry is now open to non-members and guests of the BCCC; members pay 1,700 baht, while all others pay 3,300 baht. Closing date for entries is October 22, or when the full quota of 120 places has been met, whichever comes first.

The format for the tournament is stroke play (gross and nett); amateur golfers should have a handicap of 24 or below (men) and 28 or below (women), as based on the USGA Handicap System.

For more information, contact Blue Canyon Country Club at Tel: 076-328088 extension 1888, or email: golf@bluecanyonclub.com



Training for tomorrow: Withe's soccer clinic was a hit with aspiring Thailand national team players.

Withe soccer clinic a winner with kids

By Anongnat Sartpisut

PHUKET CITY: Peter Withe, Thailand's former national soccer coach, held a one-day soccer clinic at Surakul Stadium on August 28 to boost the morale of children affected by the tsunami.

The event, sponsored by Tesco Lotus (the Tesco for Thais Foundation), the Jason Withe Football Development Organization and Adidas, was attended by 450 children aged from seven to 12, from 19 Phuket schools.

Mr Withe, currently Indonesia's national coach, is the former Aston Villa player who scored the winning goal in the European Cup Final in 1982.

He coached Thailand to some spectacular wins in the Tiger Cup in 2000 and 2002, and led the national side to an unforgettable victory over South Korea in the 1998 Asian Games in Bangkok.

Chaired by Vice Governor Niran Kalayanamit, the clinic started at 8:30 am, with the children being divided by age into



Peter Withe: 'A privilege.'

small groups. This was followed by coaching and then a photo session with Mr Withe. The clinic wrapped up at 2 pm.

Piyaporn Charoensinrongruang, Directing Manager of Phuket's Tesco Lotus Store said, "Tesco held this clinic to support sport and to bring a smile to children's faces. We are part of the community, and our charity is involved in many activities that benefit children."

Mr Withe said that he had been asked by his daughter-in-law, Sharon, who worked for the British Embassy and was based in Phuket after the tsunami, to do something for the children, if possible, by coming and doing some coaching here.

"I knew what happened in Indonesia and Phuket and other areas that were affected by the tsunami, like Sri Lanka," he said. "So it was important to try to help as much as I can."

"To come here now and to do this is a privilege."

"Because of my work commitments, this is my first trip back to Phuket, my first opportunity to return in nearly two and a half years."

"The number one benefit for the children is having me coach them, and the number one benefit for me is to see their enjoyment."

Somlert Tannatnikom, 11, a Plookpanya student who attended the clinic, said, "If there is ever an event like this again I will join in – it was fun."

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Battling Bethany

By Athiga Jundee
& Sam Wilkinson

Bethany Hamilton is a 15-year-old student from Princeville, Kauai, Hawaii. She began surfing competitively when she was 11. By 13, she was already accomplished and well-respected in the Hawaiian surfing world.

Her girlhood dream of becoming a professional surfer nearly ended on October 31, 2003, when she was attacked by a 14-foot tiger shark while surfing off Kauai's North Shore.

The result was that Bethany lost her left arm just below the shoulder, but this setback did not destroy her courage or eagerness to pursue her dream. If anything, it just made her faith in God and her determination to succeed stronger.

Bethany has chosen to use her experience to help others overcome adversity, no matter how great. "People I don't even know come up to me. I guess they see me as a symbol of courage and inspiration," she says. "One thing hasn't changed – and that's how I feel when I'm riding a wave. It's like, here I am. I'm still here. It's still me and my board – in God's own ocean!"

Since losing her arm, Bethany has been featured often in the international media. Her story has been told in doz-

ens of newspapers, magazines, news shows, talk shows, commercials, and reality programs.

She has written a book called *Soul Searcher*, released in October 2004, which made the *Los Angeles Times* bestseller list, and a movie about her life and brush with death is set to start filming in late 2005.

In July last year, Bethany won TV's ESPN "ESPY 2004" award for "Best Comeback Athlete". Then in August she was presented with a special Courage Award by singer Janet Jackson at the 2004 Teen Choice Awards.

Bethany has also continued to pursue her dreams in the surf world. Everyone was surprised to see her surfing only months after the accident, but no one expected her to come fifth in the National Surfing Championships.

Since the shark attack, she has reached numerous surfing finals and has won three contests. In August, at the first stop on the Hawaii NSSA circuit, she was first in the Open Women's division, placing ahead of the 2003-04 National Champion, Carissa Moore. She dominated the 2005 National Scholastic Surfing Association Nationals Championships, winning the Explorer Women's division.

She came to Phuket with World Vision, a Christian group, aiming to highlight the progress of humanitarian efforts in Phuket and the surrounding region. In addition to visiting and encouraging children and families in the



hardest-hit tsunami-affected communities, Bethany plans to surf for the local children and to share with them her personal story of overcoming adversity.

On August 28, she took part in a surfing exhibition on Patong Beach and her trip was designed to include a range of activities that demonstrates the resilience and resourcefulness of the human spirit. She also visited the villages of Lam Tukkae and Ban Nai Rai in Phang Nga to see batik-making, as well as going to Khao Lak and later to Kata Beach.

"This is my first time in Phuket, and it is a very beautiful place," Bethany said. "I know that there are many tsunami victims who must be going through a difficult time in their lives, like I did myself. I want to share my stories with them to inspire them." Alongside World Vision, Bethany aims to raise US\$50,000 to help disabled children worldwide. Visit <http://www.justgiving.com/pfp/bethanyhamilton> for more information.

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BOXING CLEVER



Wayne Gould is credited with spreading Sudoku worldwide.

When, in 1997, New Zealander Wayne Gould was coming up to the end of his term as a judge in Hong Kong, he realized that he was owed some vacation and that, if he didn't use it, he'd lose it.

His wife Gaye was up to her neck in exams for her doctorate, so he headed off on his own to Tokyo.

As he explained to the *Gazette* during a recent visit to Phuket, where the couple have an apartment at Allamanda, the Japanese capital is not the most exciting place "if you are behaving yourself", so he found himself browsing book-stalls.

In one, he came across a book of puzzles. The explanation of the puzzles was in Japanese, but by comparing the puzzle to be solved with the solution given at the back of the book, he was able to figure out the rules.

The puzzle was called Sudoku, Japanese for "single number" and, by the time Mr Gould came across

it, it had been popular in Japan for about two decades, though it was virtually unknown elsewhere.

Eight years on, Mr Gould is generally credited with bringing Sudoku to the world, by devising software to generate puzzles and linking up with major newspapers worldwide, from Barbados to Brisbane, and from Slovenia to South Africa. Now the *Gazette* is delighted to bring this addictive mind-bender each week to readers in Phuket.

The rules are really very simple, and the delightful thing about the puzzles is that they require no language ability, no vast store of general knowledge, no knowledge of mathematics – not even the ability to read. All that's required to solve them is reasoning and logic.

Those who become truly addicted and need more than a weekly fix can go to Mr Gould's website at www.sudoku.com and download software that will allow them to create an almost infinite number of puzzles on their computers. The first 28 days' use is free.

8	1					7		3
			6		7			8
9		2	3	1		6		
	4			7		5	6	
		7	9		1	2		
	6	3		4			9	
		4		9	2	1		6
6			5		4			
7	8						5	9

V. EASY

#1

						7	9	
2					7		6	
	1	9	8	5			2	
		8	1		4			
	2	3				9	1	
			7		3	8		
	3			7	9	2	5	
	5		4					6
	4	2						

EASY

#2

	3	2			8			7
						1		
7				4			9	
6					7		3	
1								5
	9		4					6
	1			3				9
		7						
2			5			7	4	

MEDIUM

#3

								6
2			9		6			1
		7			2	5		
8			6					3
7	3						8	9
5					8			7
			3	4		6		
	5		8		2			1
1								

HARD

#4

1			5					4
		9	7			8		
				6			1	3
4			2					
	8						6	
				6				8
6	5			2				
		1			7	9		
8					4			1

V. HARD

#5

Puzzles by Pappocom

How does Sudoku work?

The principle is very simple: each row, each column and each "box" of nine squares in the puzzle must contain all the numbers from 1 to 9 with, naturally, no repetitions.

Mr Gould explains: "Take a look at the Very Easy puzzle. Let's try and place a 7 in the top-left box (call it "box 1"). You could just guess where the 7 goes, but that might get you into trouble. It's more fun to reason it out.

"Note the 7 in box 3 (the top-right box). It's the 7 for the whole top row, so the 7 for Box 1 cannot go in Box 1's top row. Box 2 also has its 7 already. It is the 7 for the whole 2nd row, so the 7 for box 1 cannot go in Box 1's middle row.

"That leaves just the 3rd row. In Box 1, there is only one empty cell in the 3rd row – so we can write the 7 in, between the 9 and the 2.

"Now let's try and find the 9 for box 2. If you look down at Box 8 (the middle box at the bottom), you will see it already has a 9. That is the 9 for all of the 5th column – and of course you can only have one 9 per column.

"Box 5 (the centre box) also has its 9. That 9 is the only 9 allowed in the 4th column. So the 9 for Box 2 must go in the 6th column.

8	1	X	X	X	X	7	X	3
X	X	X	6	X	7	X	X	8
9		2	3	1		6		
	4			7		5	6	
		7	9		1	2		
	6	3		4			9	
		4		9	2	1		6
6			5		4			
7		8					5	9

The number 7 for the top-left box cannot go in Row 1 or 2 because there is already a seven in each of those rows. Therefore, it must go in the one free space in Row 3 (marked in blue).

"This time, there are two empty cells in box 2's 6th column. However, look to the left. There's a 9 in Box 1, which eliminates one of the possible locations for the 9 in Box 2.

There are five levels of difficulty in the puzzles Mr Gould creates.

"With that kind of thinking, you can finish the Very Easy and Easy puzzles. The Medium puzzles will need a little extra. You will need some other tricks and

techniques, but discovering these for yourself is part of the fun. The Hard puzzles will need a lot extra.

"A Very Easy puzzle might take you half an hour, the first time. But you will soon get your time down – maybe to 10 minutes or even less.

"On the other hand, be careful of Very Hard puzzles. How hard can they be? Put it this way: if you were on death row and due to be executed in the morning, and the guard told you that if you solved the puzzle by then your life would be spared – you'd die.

"That's not to say that Very Hard puzzles are impossible – they are just, well, very hard. And of course, if you are prepared to guess, you might strike it lucky and solve it faster."

He offers a last word of warning: "Each of my Sudoku puzzles has just one solution. If your solution is different, you have made a mistake somewhere."

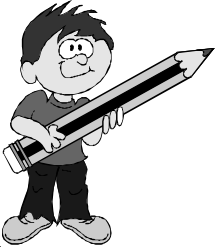
The solutions to all five puzzles on this page may be found on page 43.

The *Gazette* will publish one Sudoku puzzle a week, starting with "very easy" ones and gradually introducing more difficult ones.

Please let us know, by email to editor@phuketgazette.net, whether you think we are getting the level of difficulty about right.

Puzzles
THE FUN PAGE
FOR ALL
THE FAMILY

Spot the Difference



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



Brain Buster!!

English words containing the letter combinations ii or uu or aa or ww or vv are rare.

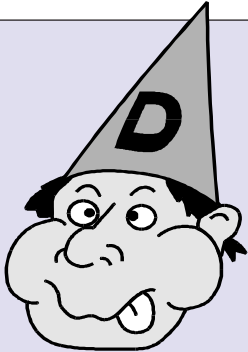
Can you think of one of each?

Answer next week

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S MONSTER QUIZ

1. Emily Brontë and Kate Bush – *Wuthering Heights*; 2. John Belushi; 3. H G Wells; 4. H₂O; 5. Mont Blanc; 6. Color – *Toll of the Sea* in 1922; 7. 12; 8. *Whiter Shade of Pale* and *Bohemian Rhapsody*; 9. Hypnos; 10. *A Comedy of Errors*; 11. Cricket; 12. Heinkel He 178; 13. Travelers’ diarrhea, particularly while in Mexico; 14. Joint Photographic Experts’ Group; 15. Pikouji ‘n’ abot or Nasie; 16. Pikachu; 17. The Burmese Rosewood or *ton pradu* (*Pterocarpus indicus*); 18. Paul Romanko; 19. *Do You Not Like My Tight Sweater?*; 20. Kim Il Sung.

Get your brain
in gear with
The Monster Quiz



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

1. Which recently promoted English Premier League soccer team is nicknamed “The Latics”?

2. Who died in office as the British Labour party’s leader in 1994?

3. Which breezy city is the most populous city of the Americas?

4. Who is the lead singer of A-ha?

5. What was the name of A-ha’s James Bond movie theme song?

6. The verb to “spatchcock” means to do what?
7. Which famous actress’s father was the English language voice-over for *The Magic Roundabout* – and what was his name?

8. What is the text of an opera called?

9. How many bits are there in a byte?

10. Who wrote *Under the Volcano*?

11. What is a Russian Blue?

12. What is the capital of Slovakia?

13. What were the Boston Tea Party protests against?
14. Thanatology is the scientific study of what?

15. Which H G Wells novel features the Eloi and the Morlocks?

16. In literature, between people of which profession do eclogues take place?

17. In which organ of the body is the pineal gland?

18. W is the symbol for which chemical element?

19. What is Benjarong?

20. Which American poet was brought back from Italy to the US in a cage in 1945?

Answers next week

Never a
Cross
Word!

ACROSS

1. Surrealist Salvador.

4. Tenant.

7. Where to take the waters.

9. Table support.

11. Province east of Phuket.

12. Garden clock.

13. The tax man in the US.

14. Zero.

15. The first D in DVD.

17. Copy.

18. A spare one on the barbecue.

20. Electrical measure.

22. Gretel’s brother.

23. Burden.

DOWN

2. Dined.

3. Exists.

4. Between Sol and Ti.

5. Amphitheater hero.

6. Trains run on them.

8. From time to time.

9. *** Alamos.

10. They go with ladies.

11. A million milligrams.

14. Nature goddess.

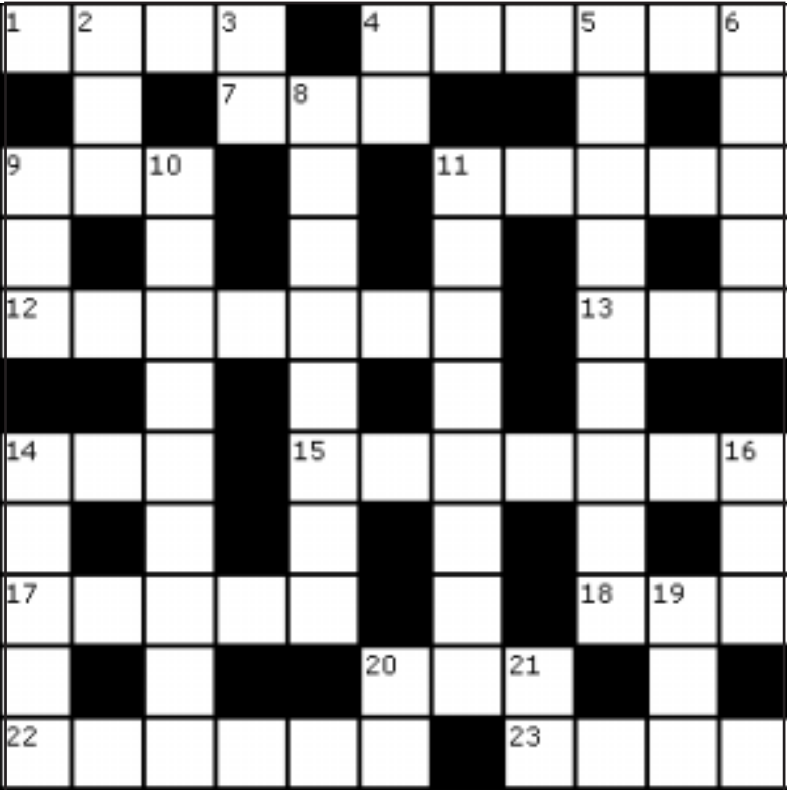
16. Scientist’s domain.

19. Note to a creditor.

20. Mr Capone.

21. North Italian river.

Solution next week



SOLUTION TO
LAST WEEK'S
CROSSWORD



Gardening

with Bloomin' Bert

I'm a stubborn git. Can I say "git" in a gardening column? I very much hope so, because I've just said it again. You see, basically, I'm not particularly willing to give in to anyone or anything.

I suppose it's partly due to the fact that I'm no spring chicken any more, but more probably because I'm from Yorkshire, a county in northern England that used to be able to play cricket.

I say "used to", because back in the days of my youth, you had to be a Yorkshireman to play for the county, and then they relaxed the rules so that anyone wearing whites could join the team. Or maybe that was just after we started losing – I can't remember, but it doesn't really matter...

TENACIOUS

Anyway, neither I nor any other Yorkshireman approved of just anyone being able to play for our team. It just wasn't cricket. As I said, I'm stubborn. We all are.

There's a tree in Phuket that could be a Yorkshireman were it human. The casuarina tree has to be one of the most tenacious on the planet – more on that later. This is the tree that graces the shorelines of most of Phuket's beaches, and is often mistaken for a pine tree, for very good reasons, not least of all because the casuarina is also an evergreen.

As you know, I have been known to quaff the odd beer or two every once in a while. I was relaxing at Rawai Beach recently, enjoying a particularly fine bottle of Heineken, and generally rev-

Just be-casuarina



The casuarina: perfect for enjoying your beer at the beach, despite the occasional surprise from above.

eling in a *sabai sabai* weekend, as is my wont.

Without warning (as those American re-enactment programs always say), what looked a lot like a bit of pine dropped on my head. This very nearly distracted me from my beer.

What had divebombed me from the air was a sprig that had

dropped from an overhead branch of a casuarina tree, or horsetail she-oak as it's known in other parts of the world. The word "oak" is an even more misleading name for a tree with an obvious identity crisis.

Some say it comes originally from Australia, which would make complete sense given its ability to fend for itself when it comes to seeking out the water it needs to survive. The casuarina has evolved amazingly well to be perfectly content in dry areas.

Its leaves, which are similar to pine needles, are adapted specially to minimize water loss. The "needles" themselves are actually small green branches with a very thick skin, and the leaves are reduced to small scales, arranged in a row at each node of the needles.

The casuarina thrives on Phuket, probably because it can tolerate saltwater — it even appears to thrive near it — and is even well-adapted enough to live in little more than sand.

And here's the clever bit: micro-organisms living in its roots help the casuarina to use nitrogen from the air, and other micro-organisms dissolve nutrients from the surrounding rocks and anything else that happens to be lurking underground, helping manufacture food for the casuarina tree.

For some reason, the more beer I drink at the beach, the deeper the hole I unwittingly dig into the sand with my feet.

Do this below the table at which you're enjoying a cool beer beneath the shade of a casuarina tree, and you'll inevitably find some kind of root within a few inches of the sand surface.

This is the tree at work, furiously honing in on sustenance in whatever way it can. For this reason, the casuarina is often used to stabilize shifting sand dunes.

Though you may not choose to eat casuarina, you might drink it in a solution. In Papua New Guinea, these roots are washed, scraped, mixed with water and

drunk to treat dysentery, diarrhea, and stomach ache.

This is a truly multipurpose tree, providing a range of products and services for industrial and local users. The casuarina has been called "the best firewood in the world", producing extremely high-quality charcoal.

Casuarinas can also be grown in an average garden. The most common member of the family, *casuarina equisetifolia*, can also be used in groups as a kind of light windbreak.

What you do is kind of treat them like a giant bonsai – clip the young tree regularly, and it will eventually develop into a bushy hedge.

The December 26 tsunami demonstrated the stubborn nature of this tree. Despite being hit by two-story waves, many survived without any problem.

I saw only two casuarinas in the whole of Phuket succumb to the wave. There were many whose roots were exposed by several feet – something that would have destroyed a lesser tree. And did.

The beach level around the Kamala casuarinas was reduced by two meters in places, leaving the hapless trees sitting somewhat ridiculously on an exposed bed of roots, high above the new ground level. Apart from being a little embarrassed, however, the casuarinas didn't seem to mind, and are still there now, alive and well.

I wonder if it's possible to make a tree an honorary Yorkshireman? Casuarinas certainly have the character for it. They also provide perfect shade while you enjoy a beer at the beach, while occasionally reminding you they're there by dropping bits of themselves on your head.

Stubborn, but annoyingly endearing.

Want to know more about a plant in your garden?

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Construction

by Anongnat Sartpisut



An artist's impression of the 'Chalong Natural Home' project off Chaofa Rd (West).

Privacy comes naturally at Chalong Natural Home

On 17 rai in a convenient yet discreet location, the Chalong Natural Home project offers 61 two-story, contemporary Thai-style homes.

Chalong Natural Home Sales Manager, Phanlop Jujinda, told the *Gazette* that construction is to start at the end of May, 2006, and the entire project is expected to be complete by the end of 2007. Construction of the show house will be finished early next month.

K. Phanlop explained that the development provides a combination of privacy – thanks to its single entrance – and tropical vistas. Residences are set in natural surroundings roughly five meters from the main road, Chaofa West.

“The Chalong Tambon Administration Organization (*OrBorTor*) has plans to widen the road from Central Festival Phuket to Chalong Circle by mid-2006,” he explained, “and it also plans to create a shortcut to Patong. This will be very convenient for our residents.”

The Chalong Natural Home project is in two phases – 45 units

in Phase 1 and 16 units in Phase 2, which will begin once the first phase is complete. Nine units of Phase 1 are under construction now, and two of the homes have already been reserved. The infrastructure is complete.

On plots of varying sizes, there will be two types of house, both with a total area 250 square meters, and with three bedrooms, four bathrooms, and a two-car parking space.

Type A is L-shaped, with a dining room extension, while Type B has a slightly larger dining area and four balconies.

Plots, along with the house, range from a minimum of 366.58 sqm for 5.7 million baht to 819.89sqm for 8.6 million baht.

“If customers need additional amenities, such as a swimming pool, the project has architects and engineers on site who are available for consultation,” K. Phanlop said.

The architectural firm for the project is Phuket-based Point Studio Co Ltd, which is also involved in the Banana Sunrise resort villas on Koh Samui.

“Mirrors are employed to full effect – widening the views

even further. Other materials used include light-weight brick, Cotto products in the bathrooms, Duragres flooring, and rooftops are a smooth-finish, tropical green with two layers for sunlight protection of ceilings and walls,” K. Phanlop added.

The developer, Chalong Natural Home Co, is to manage the communal areas.

Other services include 24-hour security. Water and electricity is provided by the Chalong *OrBorTor*, and each unit also has an underground water reserve of one cubic meter.

“Our target customers are middle-class and above,” K. Phanlop said. “We expect half of them will be Thais.”

For more information, contact 46/8 Moo 8, Chaofa Rd (West), Chalong, Phuket City 83000; Tel: 076-281609-10, 01-891-7095 Fax: 076-280792.

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Home of the Week

Cape Panwa

Fabulous island and sea views from the cape

This top-class three-bedroom, three-bathroom residence is located in the exclusive Vanich Bayfront Estate, perched high on the rise of Cape Panwa with panoramic views of Yon Bay and a myriad offshore islands. The area is extremely peaceful, yet not too far from daily conveniences.

The house features a traditional Thai-style roof line, while the interior is contemporary in design and includes downlighting, marble and timber floors, and an open-plan design on three levels. Glass doors and the windows afford sweeping views from every room, across the landscaped

grounds and the bay. It is fully air-conditioned.

Bathrooms include top quality sanitary ware and ceramics. Offered fully furnished, this three-level home features a spacious bedroom and bathroom and a study/home office on the first floor, or entry level.

The second level showcases stunning living rooms, a large, beautifully fitted and fully equipped Western-style kitchen, and a formal dining room. There is also a guest bathroom on this floor.

Level three has a further two enormous bedrooms, both with walk-in and built-in ward-



This Vanich Bayfront Estate home has a traditional Thai-style roof line.

robes and opulent en suite bathrooms.



A room and a view: part of the living area, and the panoramic vista of Yon Bay.

In keeping with the quality of this estate, this upmarket home has been built with top standard materials, many of them imported, and the interior décor, furnishings and fittings are of excellent quality.

In the lush landscaped gardens there is a clubhouse and a huge, free-form communal swimming pool with expansive sea views. The estate has a 24-hour security service.

Homes in the Vanich Bay-

front Estate are rarely on offer, and this fine residence is sure to please the astute buyer seeking both a luxury home and a sound investment. The land title is Chanote and the price is 19 million baht.

For more information contact Richard Lusted, Siam Real Estate, at Tel: 076-288908, email info@siamrealestate.com or visit the website at www.siamrealestate.com



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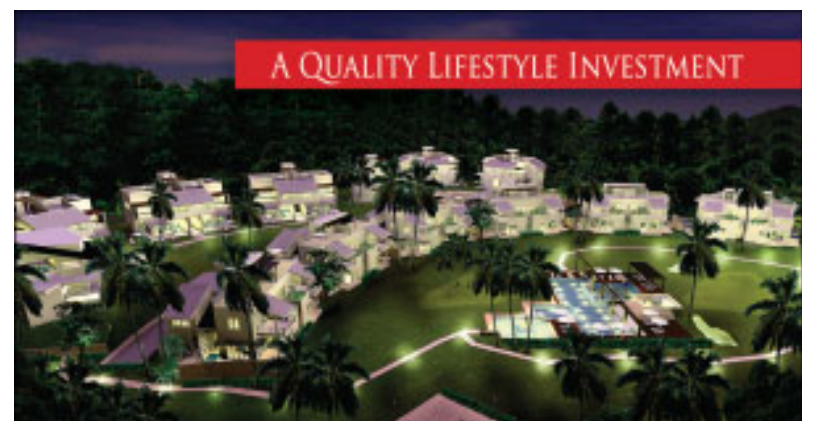
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Decor

by Ananya Hongsa-ngiam



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Index Living Mall carries a similar mosquito net in blue or pink for 495 baht.

A mosquito net on a wire frame is ideal for babies and chil-

dren. These sell for 490 baht at Nong May Baby Center on Phuket Rd, opposite Lan Nawa-min Park.

For more information contact Song Pee Nong store on Tha-

lang Rd, Phuket City, at Tel: 076-213205, 076-222850; Index Living Mall, 76 Moo 5, Wichit, Phuket City at Tel: 076-249541; Nong May Baby Center, 196/4 Phuket Rd, Phuket City, at Tel: 076-215989.

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1. 12' x 12' x 6'	14.5	7,300
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3. 12' x 6' x 21'	21	10,000
4. 12' x 6' x 24'	23	11,000
5. 14' x 22'	28	14,000
6. 18' x 24'	40	20,000



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Property Gazette

Properties For Sale

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Patong Soi Thumdee B5.4 m



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Rawai West Rd. B4.5 m



2-bedroom Apartments From B4.5 m Patong Soi Thumdee

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CHALONG HOUSE

for sale in a small, quiet, exclusive estate. The house is 212sqm, with 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, an American-style kitchen, a living room, pool and spa, a storeroom, 5 air conditioners and 1 covered parking space. I am asking 6.5 million baht. Please call for info. Tel: 01-8913740.

5-RAI IN AO POR

Plot with a sea view, electricity, water, a gentle slope and a road. Asking 1.5 million baht per rai. Tel: 09-6525664.

HOUSE IN THALANG FOR SALE



10 minutes from the airport, 10 minutes from British International College, 5 minutes to Laguna, 10 minutes to Surin Beach. 8x4 swimming pool, 5 aircons, 2 bedrooms, 1 children's room, 2 bathrooms & 1 separate building useful as a store house or maid's room. 504sqm, Chanote Title, 4.9 million baht. Please call for more information. Tel: 01-6078000.

RAWAI, 2-STORY HOUSE



Selling 140sqm for 1.4 million baht. Price includes owning company and financing for 3 years. 400m from the beach. Please contact for more information. Tel: 09-4740227. Email: chotip_5@hotmail.com

SEAVIEW LAYAN

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3-BEDROOM

Chalong house for sale in a small, quiet, exclusive estate. The house is 360sqm, with 3 large bedrooms, 5 bathrooms, 1 storage room, American-style kitchen, a large living room, air conditioning, pool and spa and 2 covered car parking spaces. I am asking 12 million baht. Please call for info. Tel: 01-8913740.

MISSION HILL

7.5 rai, 1.4 million baht per rai. Tel: 09-4741835.

RAWAI CONDOS

with sea view. 27, 54 and 81sqm. Priced from 350,000 baht. Financing for 3 years available. Foreign freehold. Tel: 09-4740227. Email: chotip_5@hotmail.com

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VILLA IN NAI HARN

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FOR SALE

Spacious 3-bedroom house, includes master bedroom en suite, separate self-contained granny flat or office in a secluded garden, a compact European kitchen, and air conditioning throughout. Situated in a quiet location approximately 2km from Chalong circle. Please contact for more information. Tel: 076-330897. Email: waterat@phuket.ksc.co.th

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A 3.2-rai seaview plot on Haad Tub Tawan Rd, north end of Bang Sak Beach; 120m to the beach road & power. 68m of driveway, front 75m; 18km south of Takuapa. 75km from Phuket International Airport. Please call for more details. Tel: 01-8947644.

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2-bedroom, 144sqm house with 2 bathrooms, kitchen and living room, on 400sqm of land. 400m from the beach. Asking 2.8 million baht. Tel: 09-4740227. Email: chotip_5@hotmail.com

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HOUSE FOR SALE

For further details, please see our website at: www.platinumresidencepark.com

1 RAI IN RAWAI

Asking 2.2 million baht per rai. Tel: 09-6525664.

5 RAI ON KOH YAO YAI

Asking 4 million baht for a 5-rai plot in beautiful Koh Yai, with Chanote title, water and electricity. Please call for more information. Tel: 01-8928208.

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2 RAI IN CHALONG

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1 RAI IN CHALONG

Asking 2.4 million baht per rai. Please call for more info. Tel: 07-8938747.

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Property Gazette

Properties For Rent

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Superb 2-bedroom apartment of 200sqm, with 3 bathrooms, air conditioning, a large swimming pool, UBC, telephone and European kitchen, available for 45,000 baht per month. Please call for further information. Tel: 06-279-0837.

KAMALA RENT/SALE

3 bedrooms, 3.5 bathrooms, pool, walled garden, aircon. Rent 35,000 baht per month, or sell for 5.8 million baht. Please call for more details. Tel: 076-385940, 01-0904213.

HOUSE FOR RENT

A 2-bedroom house with an air conditioner, telephone line and cable TV is for rent. Address: 25/868 Soi 14/2 Phuket Villa California, Chao Fa Rd, T. Wichit, A. Muang, Phuket. Please contact Khun Suya for more info. Tel: 01-0968318.

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RAWAI RENTAL HOUSE

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HOUSE FOR RENT

City area in Phuket Villa 1. 4 bedrooms with aircon, tennis court and swimming pool in the Villa. Tel: 09-9290776.

HOUSE FOR RENT

A nice house in a quiet residential area on Soi Naya 1, in Nai Harn. It has 2 bedrooms and bathrooms, a living-dining room, a built-in kitchen, 3 air conditioners, a large covered outdoor terrace, parking with a storeroom and a small, fully fenced garden. Only long-term rental is accepted at 16,000 baht per month (+ 2 months' deposit required in advance). Please contact for info. Tel: 01-8942733. Fax: 076-288-449. Email: jasminconsulting@gmx.net

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HOUSE FOR RENT

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Issues & Answers

phuketgazette.net/issuesanswers/index.asp

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HOUSE IN PHUKET

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150-RAI LAND PLOT

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HOUSE IN KARON

Swedish man seeks a 2 bedroom house in Karon. Best if it is located near Luang Por Chuan Rd. Needed for 6 months between November 1 and April 25. Rent around 7,000 baht per month, exclusive. Tel: 46-4613-0218, 46-7-06373736. Email: picassocat@hotmail.com

LONG-TERM RENTAL

in city. Quiet villa or townhouse (furnished or unfurnished) near Bangkok Phuket Hospital or Wachira Hospital, in Phuket City, wanted by the end of August for long-term rent. Please email for more detail. Email: shimachk@hotmail.com

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Property Gazette

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LOOKING FOR APT

or house. Foreigner looking to rent fully-furnished apartment or house in Patong, but all areas could be of interest. Long term, as I've already lived and worked here for 20 years. Need aircon, cable TV, and cooking facilities with fridge. A private swimming pool would be an advantage. Only reasonable prices considered. Tel: 05-1601670. Email: paulivarlarsson@hotmail.com

PHUKET CITY

Looking for a fully furnished house or apartment in Phuket City or nearby. Must have aircon, Internet (at least active phone line), hot shower, kitchen and other basics. Quiet location and pool appreciated. Non-smoking couple w/o pets renting long term (min 3 months), starting no later than Sept 1, preferably earlier. Please contact for more information. Tel: 01-6062415. Email: jacek_fi@hotmail.com

KARON, KATA OR PATONG

My wife and I will be in Phuket for 6 months from mid-October. We are looking for a fully furnished holiday home with aircon, full kitchen facilities and UBC. Should be in Karon, Kata or Patong areas. Please contact for more information. Email: piejool@yahoo.co.uk

HOUSE WANTED W/ADSL

I am looking for a house for 4-6 months that must have a fast Internet connection, preferably in Kata, Karon or Patong. Willing to pay up to 25,000 baht per month, maybe higher for something special. Please contact for more info. Email: simon@theyeatmans.co.uk

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CHALONG LONG TERM

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Contact Khun Chuat
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CD-stereo, king-size bed, table, bookshelf, office chair, computer desk, safe box and much more - all in excellent condition. Selling for half price. Email: torephuket@yahoo.com

HOUSEHOLD SALE

All household items for sale in excellent condition: TV cabinet, kitchen cabinet, fans and a table and chairs. All prices are negotiable. Please call for more information. Tel: 01-797-8521.

BAMBOO MIRROR

Large mirror, 120 x 70cm, with bamboo frame. 3,000 baht. Please call for more information. Tel: 09-6666726.

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Portable aircon. 10,000 baht. Please call for more information. Tel: 076-288933, 01-4154398.

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Commercial high-pressure machines for rent at 500 baht a day and 2,500 baht a week. Tel: 076-281283, 01-1251873. Please visit our website at: www.safewayphuket.com

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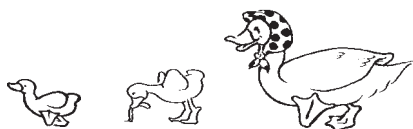
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Properties from Phuket Real Estate

A STYLISH VILLA



Located in the south of Phuket – a stylishly decorated, fully furnished house is for sale. It has 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, a guest toilet, a living room, a dining room, kitchen; beautiful, manicured gardens and a swimming pool. Price: 14.9 million baht.

81 RAI IN MAI KHAO



An 81-rai plot is for sale with 300 meters of beachfront land in Mai Khao. It is ideal for a 5- or 6-star resort or villa project.

33 RAI, PANORAMIC VIEWS

A lovely 33-rai plot on Phuket with panoramic east-west sea views. Surrounded by high-end developments in the 60-million-baht price range. The land has sealed road access, electricity and a bore can be sunk for water supply! This is a developer's dream plot. Price: 99 million baht.

SPECTACULAR DEVELOPMENT LAND



39 rai of development land with a 360-degree sea view, a private beach, electricity and a government road. An access road is already in place, ready for building. A must-see for all developers!

THALANG 5+ RAI



5 + rai located in Thalang, very close to the waterfall, airport and secluded beaches – the quiet area of Phuket. The land has all services, a sealed road and a nice setting. Price: 8 million baht.

"MILLIONAIRES' ROAD"



A 1-rai plot is for sale on "Millionaires' Road" in Kamala, with sensational sunset views, building permission to 8 meters, electricity and a sealed road. It is virtually impossible to find a plot on this road. Be quick!

1 RAI IN CAPE PANWA

1 rai located in Cape Panwa, with all underground services and wide sea views to the east, south and west. The infrastructure includes a 6-meter-wide sealed road access, underground electricity, telephone and water. Views to Phi Phi and more! Price: 8 million baht.

GREAT VIEWS OVER CHALONG BAY

61 rai with magnificent views over Chalong Bay. The land is one of the last big plots left with an exceptional sea view. It has a slope and a roadway has been dug. At the bottom, a large sales office has been built. The Chanote title land has been cleared by the owner and is ready to use. Great for a villa development. Price: 5 million baht per rai.

THE LOFTS

The Lofts is a stylish new development of 4 contemporary apartments including a penthouse unit – arranged over five floors and superbly located less than 100 meters from Surin Beach, overlooking green parkland. Priced from 5.5 million baht.

SMALL RESORT AS INVESTMENT



Located on Phuket, a small, 8-unit resort is for sale. This newly built resort comprises 6 spacious bungalows, each with 1 bedroom, 1 bathroom, a living-dining room and a terrace; and 2 two-story houses with 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, a living-dining room and a lounge area with a large terrace on the first floor. All is set in a tropical garden with a pool and space for 8 cars in the car park. There is a security guardhouse with an electric gate. All units are fully furnished and ready to move into. The resort is also suitable as an investment with houses and bungalows for lease. Price: 18 million baht.

10 RAI ON EAST COAST

10 rai for sale on the east coast of Phuket. The views are breathtaking towards several islands on the east coast. The land is located north of Phuket City and overlooking the islands of Phang Nga Bay. Price: 50 million baht.

EXCEPTIONAL VILLA & BREATHTAKING VIEWS

Located in Phuket. It doesn't get much better than this view! Huge House in a security complex and with an exceptional view. The house is 670 m2

and fully furnished. It comprises 4-bedrooms suites (the Mexican, the Greek, the Wizard of the Oz and the master suites), Western kitchen, living room, dining room, maid's room, meditation room, laundry room, dressing room and BBQ deck. Land size 404 sqm. Price 50 million baht.



20 RAI WITH PRIVATE BEACH

20 rai with a private beach, located close to Patong. All infrastructures are in place and it is well-located for a luxury resort or high-end development. The land has a waterfall running down one boundary and a small beach (only accessible from this plot) with white sand and nice feature rocks. One of the last great plots and priced lower than all surrounding land. A truly wonderful piece of land!



KOH MAPHRAO

21 rai with a nice beach and old beach house, 10 minutes to Phuket City. This land has great views of the ocean and islands. It is very quiet and secluded, but just 5 minutes to everything. Beautiful, elevated flat land – all buildable, all with views. Price: 30 million baht.



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29 Ft 2003 Prowl Motor Cat Honda 4-stroke. 2x5 Hp	47 Ft 86/02 Sunkiss 47 Perkins 50 Hp
21 Ft 2003 Sea Ray Laguna Mariner EFI 200 Hp	38 Ft 2003 Athena 38 Yanmar 2x19 Hp
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1984 Bertram. Length: 48ft. Beam: 15ft. Draught: 4ft. Engines: 2x405hp fully restored, inboard Detroit. Double cabins, 2 bathrooms, saloon, TV DVD, big fridge. Safety equipment on board, 3.5m Hypalon dinghy, sunbeds, new exterior painting. Price: 6 million baht. Photos available. Tel: 01-1870-409. Fax: 077-414359. Email: info@siamladyacht.com

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Island Job Mart

RICHMOND GROUP ASIA PACIFIC Co., Ltd.

Richmond Group Asia Pacific is a leading property investment, management and development group with major portfolio in Phuket. The Company owns and manages luxury villas in Bang Tao, Kamala and Ao Chalong. We are now looking for high caliber personnel for Richmond Construction Co., Ltd for the following positions:

QS. (Quantity Surveyor)

- Provides bills of quantity of new and existing projects.
- Budget control.
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- Experience in the following: interior finishing, architecture, structural and M&E work.
- Quality assurance with design intent and compliance with project quality.
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BAAN COCOON PROPERTY

Anuphas Pirom Resort Co Ltd, a real estate company developing luxury houses at Phuket Country Club Golf Course, is currently seeking qualified candidates to fill the following positions:

1. Property Management Manager 1 Position

- Male/female, age at least 28 years.
- Min. 3-5 years' experience in sales/marketing at a management or supervisory level in the real estate industry.

2. Sales 1 Position

- Female, age between 23-27 years.
 - Min. 1 year's experience in sales.
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Please send your CV and recent photo to:

Mrs Kantheera Rungsang-anotai

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✉ info@anuphaspiromresort.com

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RESERVATIONS

Female with experience, good spoken and written English and computer skills wanted to take reservations. Please contact Sea Canoe Thailand. Tel: 076-212172, 076-236-606.

MARKETING STAFF

A new company seeks one Thai Team leader and eight OPCs. Training provided and a good salary on offer. For an interview, call Steve at Tel: 06-1206934.

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KATA INTERNET

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Island Job Mart



The deluxe Rawi warin Resort, opening November 2005, will be Lanta's premier resort. With the unique setting at the foot of Lanta Yai's hills, set amongst Lush Natural Habitat and overlooking the ravishing Klong Tob Bay, Rawi Warin will offer the very finest in luxury and the best in famed Thai hospitality. Rawi Warin Resort and Spa is now looking for professionals for the following positions:

Management Level

- Resort Manager
- Financial Controller
- Director of Sales/Sales Manager
- Human Resources Manager
- Chief Engineer

Accounting

- Asst. Chief Accountant
- Purchasing Manager
- IT Manager
- Cost Controller/Purchasing Supervisor
- Night Auditor
- Receiving
- Purchasing Officer
- AC/Store/Purchasing Clerk
- Cashier
- AC Clerk/Bill Collector

Rooms Division Manager

- Night Manager
- Guest Relations Manager
- Guest Services Supervisor
- Guest Relations Officer
- Guest Services Officer
- Concierge/Bell Captain
- Bell Boy + Driver

Housekeeping

- Asst. Housekeeper (Male)
- Laundry Manager
- Linen Staff (Seamstress is preferable)
- Room Attendant (Male & Female)
- Florist

Engineering

- Asst. Chief Engineer
- Engineering Supervisor
- Engineering Technician

Food & Beverage

- Food & Beverage Manager
- Restaurant Manager
- Beverage Manager
- Banquet & Restaurant Co-ordinator
- Restaurant/Bar Supervisor
- Hostess/Captain
- Bartender
- Restaurant Server
- F&B Artist

Hot Kitchen Western/Thai

- Chef de partie
- Demi Chef
- Commis I, II, & III

Cold Kitchen

- Chef de partie
- Commis I, II & III

Pastry

- Bakery Chef
- Demi Chef
- Commis I, II & III
- Chocolate Artist

Human Resources

- Chief Security
- Office Clerk

Others

- Graphic Designer

Interested applicants can apply in person at Rawi Warin Resort & Spa, Krabi on 9-11 September 2005

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Or

Send resume with one recent passport-size photo by 15 September 2005 to

Human Resources Department
Bangkok Office Address:

338 Sirinthorn Road, Bangplad, Bangkok 10700, Thailand
Telephone 02-434-5526-7, 02-435-4795

Facsimile 02-881-1338 E-mail: HR@rawiwarin.com

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Chef required for Laguna Home, Thai/Western cooking to professional standard. Excellent salary. Driver also wanted. Gardeners/pool operators and Staff Supervisor also urgently wanted. Please contact for more info. Email: jziment@yahoo.com For further details, please see our website at: www.phuketmarbella.com

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

ASSISTANT NEEDED

Patong company requires a bookkeeper w/knowledge of the construction industry and good English. Please contact. Tel: 07-0778454. Fax: 076-292073. Email: solitude001@aol.com

COOK/WAITRESS

Urgently needed at European/Thai food restaurant/guesthouse, "Paulamer". Good salary. Please contact for more information. Tel: 01-9562284. Email: hhouse@loxinfo.co.th

SECRETARY/MANAGER

A small health center in Rawai is looking for a Thai lady to fill the position of Secretary/Manager ASAP. The right person should be fluent in English, have basic computer skills and a pleasant personality. Tel: 076-383046, 09-7689567. Email: sindhu_lim@excite.com

AU PAIR

An English family living in Southern Spain requires assistance with their 6-month and 2-year-old sons. Experience with children an advantage. Must be reliable and able to speak some English. Duties include: domestic cleaning, ironing and some light cooking. Assisting with the care of both children when not at school. Hours are variable and must be flexible, but, no more than 45 hours per week. Benefits: all travel between Spain and Thailand paid for. The package includes accommodation, full board and a monthly salary, which will be paid in Euros but open to discussion. Please email or fax me your details, recent photograph and any references you may have, and a brief personal description. Tel: 617-352835. Fax: 952-836357. Email: melanie@twiltd.net

DIVE ASIA

Two Guest Relations and Salespersons

- Thai female, 20-27 years old
- Good English a must; other languages would be an advantage
- Computer skills

Please contact by phone between 11 am and 9 pm or apply by email. Tel: 076-330598. Fax: 076-284033. Email: juergens@diveasia.com

MANGOSTEEN TEAM

The Mangosteen Resort & Spa, the 5-star Boutique resort in the South of Phuket, urgently needs to fill the following positions:

- Asst Sales Manager for Resort
- Asst Sales Manager for Real Estate
- Front Office Manager
- Receptionists
- F & B Manager
- Asst F & B Manager
- Waiters
- Stewards
- Chief Engineer
- Drivers
- Gardeners

Tel: 076-289399. Fax: 076-289389. Email: myfuture@mangosteen-phuket.com

CONCEPT ARTIST

wanted. Working with an interior designer to produce perspective/concept drawings and other sketches for an interior design company based on the bypass road. Salary: 20,000 baht + per month for the right person. Tel: 01-8937028. Fax: 076-254-827. Email: andamanartifacts@hotmail.com

URGENTLY NEEDED

1. Factory Manager

- (Thai male)
- Over 30 years of age.
- Must possess leadership skills and be able to supervise and motivate 100 staff.
- Have a minimum of 5 years' experience (preferably 10) in factory management.
- Good command of written and spoken English.
- Able to work under pressure.

2. Production Manager

- (Thai male)
- Over 30 years of age.
- Have a minimum of 5 years' experience (preferably 7).
- Have an engineering degree or degree in an appropriate discipline.
- Good command of written and spoken English.

Apply to Underwood Co., Ltd at 49/6 Chalempakiat Ror 9 Rd, Tambon Rassada, Amphur Muang, Phuket 83000. Tel: 076-261104. Email: info@underwood-phuket.com

HOUSEKEEPER WANTED

One live-in

- Thai cook-maid/housekeeper who speaks a little English is wanted for a house in Kata.
- A Head Gardener is also required.

Please contact K. Bow between 9 am and 5 pm at:

Tel: 076-317017-20.

Fax: 076-317021.

Employment Wanted

SALES AND MARKETING DIRECTOR

An International Sales and Marketing Director (40) is looking for a new challenge. Great experience in building and leading efficient teams with 'Must Win' attitudes and: - Working in developing countries - Building up new branches or 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

DRIVER OR GARDENER

I am urgently seeking a job as a driver or a gardener. I speak Thai, French and English. Please call for more information. Tel: 04-8448618.

URGENTLY REQUIRED

Attractive female bar staff wanted for a bar in Kata. Great conditions including drink commissions. Please call K. Richard at Tel: 04-846-7331 or K. Noo at Tel: 07-2669285 for more information.

CHIEF ENGINEER

The Mangosteen Resort & Spa, the 5-star boutique resort in Rawai, is looking for a Chief Engineer. English skills and technical experience required, as well as several years' experience in hotel engineering. The position is available immediately. Tel: 076-289399. Fax: 076-289389. Email: myfuture@mangosteen-phuket.com

PAPAYA POK POK

Dynamic and experienced manager required for new concept restaurant/bar in Patong. Applicants must be Thai and capable of leading a young team and managing an efficient kitchen. Applicants must be 25 to 40 years old, with spoken English skills. Please call for more information or send CV by email. Tel: 07-0804258. Email: brian@kokavaii.com

TEACHER - KRABI

Teacher of English and Thai languages needed at private language school in Krabi. Experience in teaching essential. Only resumes in English accepted. Email: krabi.ls@gmail.com

SALES MANAGER

The Mangosteen Resort & Spa, the unique 5-star boutique resort in the south of Phuket, is looking for a Sales & Marketing Manager (Thai nationality). Must know the market well and like to work independently in a fast growing and very motivated young team. Please send your CV by email or contact. Tel: 076-289399. Fax: 076-289389. Email: hajo@mangosteen-phuket.com

MACHINIST WANTED

Machinist wanted to manufacture curtains and blinds. Only experienced persons should apply. Tel: 076-261358, 07-2760529. Fax: 076-261358. Email: jmicchia@yahoo.com

Tout, Trader & Trumpet

Articles for Sale

GOLF CLUBS

Must sell secondhand golf clubs at very low price. Please call for more information. Tel: 09-6450931.

THREE-PIECE SUITE

A three-piece furniture suite comprising chair, two-seater sofa and a table for 9,000 baht ono. Email: chriswretham@gmail.com

FREEZER CONTAINER

20-foot refrigerated container in good condition. Quick sale: 175,000 baht. Tel: 076-281283, 01-1251873.

MOBILE INTERNET

phone. Black titanium-encased Nokia 8910i phone. Offers MMS capability, color display, Bluetooth, GPRS and Java applications. Excellent condition, complete with desktop charger. Perfect for mobile internet connection. 5,000 baht. Tel: 076-202473, 01-5696910. Fax: 076-202473. Email: nikkie@csloxinfo.com

ELECTRIC KEYBOARD

Casio LK-60 electric keyboard with integrated teaching program, LCD and lighted keys. Has 100 rhythms and 137 tones. Includes nice stand. Similar model at Power Buy was 19,000 baht without stand. Will sell both for 8,000 baht. Email: elliot@seadavgs.biz

SONY CD WALKMANS

I have 2 Sony CD Walkmans. Used, but still work fine. Play CDs and CD-Rs. Bought new in the US for 2,000 baht each. Asking 500 baht for both. One set of earphones. Tel: 09-5871862. Email: mmcgrath2@hotmail.com

Articles Wanted

ROAD/RACE BIKE

Wanted in good condition. Please contact for more information. Tel: 04-183-4669. Email: simoncallebort@hotmail.com

OLD WOOD WANTED

Reclaimed timber from old wooden houses and buildings wanted by UK buyer. Cash paid for the right stuff. Please contact for more information. Tel: 078-1209-8579. Email: countrywoodwork@btconnect.com

Bulletins

Alcoholics Anonymous

is holding meetings in English at the following places:

Phuket City
Mission Hospital
on Wed and Sun at 7 pm
Bangkok Phuket Hospital
on Fri at 7 pm
Patong
Patong Hospital
on Mon, Tue, Wed, Sat, Sun
at 7 pm and on Fri at 8 pm

For more info, please call
012732053 (Scandinavian),
018954763 (English) or
018912895 (Frank)

OPENING SOON

Food For Thought by Thelma & Louise, Deli and Bookstore, will be opening their doors by mid-September, 2005. Keep an eye on this space for exact date and location. Tel: 076-281274. Fax: 076-281273. Email: violetapple@loxinfo.co.th

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BARS FOR LEASE

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15-ROOM SEAVIEW

hotel for lease. 2-year-old, fully furnished and equipped hotel. 15 lovely, well-designed, air-conditioned rooms with fantastic sea view on 2 rai of land with enough empty space for a swimming pool, spa, restaurant or bungalows. Asking 1.175 million baht per year; no key money or monthly rent. Please contact for details or pictures. Tel: 076-296621, 01-691-6147. Fax: 076-344689. Email: info@baansuanvilla.de

KATA RESTAURANT

with 50+ seats, four rooms, a big kitchen, a five-year lease and quality fittings. Please call for more information. Tel: 06-6833964.

PIANO BAR IN KARON

Restaurant for rent on a 3-year lease for 10,000 baht per month. It has 3 bedrooms, plus shower rooms and toilets. Asking for 950,000 baht in key money. Contact K. Tony. Tel: 01-4778744.

GOGO BAR FOR SALE

A fully equipped and managed gogo bar on Soi Bangla, (just 20m away) with a 5-year-and-3-month lease. It consists of 2 buildings with 2 floors in use, and a 360sqm entertainment area. Selling for a good price: 2.9 million baht. For more information, call K. Chakrit. Tel: 07-8850055, 076-345155. Email: newphuket@yahoo.com

RESTAURANTS +

rooms. Seaview restaurant and rooms in a guesthouse for sale near the beach. Asking 1.4 million, will negotiate. Staff available. Tel: 09-970-1283.

GYM FOR SALE

due to relocation. New and fully equipped in central Patong. Selling for a very attractive price. Please call for more information. Tel: 076-294109.

BUNGALOWS

& restaurant for rent/sale. Please call for more information. Tel: 01-8946686. For further details, please see our website at: www.phuketnatureplace.com

RESTAURANT

and guesthouse in Patong. 40-seat restaurant; 11-room guesthouse. Asking 170,000 baht/month. Tel/Fax: 076-248626, 01-0808557. Email: admin@phuketdeafeagle.com

TAILOR SHOP

Thai-owned tailor shop for sale in Rawai. Good revenue. Includes bedroom, bathroom and kitchen. Asking 500,000 baht or best offer. Please contact for full details. Tel: 076-248626, 01-0808557. Fax: 076-248626. Email: admin@phuketdeafeagle.com

BEAUTY SALON

& massage for sale. Good location, in 3-story house. Price: 1.1 million baht. Monthly rental: 35,000 baht. Email: phuket.beautymassage@gmail.com

BEACH HOTEL

for lease. Beachfront hotel in Patong, 20 meters to the sand. 15 rooms, no key money, 9-year lease contract. Monthly rental: 120,000 baht. Don't miss it! Tel: 06-0043008. Email: info@ayudhya.net For further details, please see our website at: www.ayudhya.net

30-ROOM HOTEL FOR LEASE

in Patong, brand new. No key money, 9-year lease contract. Ref# DHKT070-512. Tel: 06-0043008. Fax: 076-383756. Email: info@ayudhya.net Website: www.ayudhya.net

INTERNET & TOUR

shop with motorbike rental for sale - a good income opportunity. Very well-frequented location in front of a good hotel in Kata. Rental per year 180,000 baht. And the business is selling for 360,000 baht. The package includes 4 new flat-screen computers with good Internet surfing programs, 6 new motorbikes, a Honda Wave 125, a tour counter and 2 phone lines, an air conditioner, a fan, a wooden counter with 6 chairs and light metal box-displays inside and outside. I'm going back to Europe. Please call me for more information. Tel: 04-837-4429.

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couple. PADI-OWSI-Nitrox-Instructor couple - she Japanese, he German - looking for work, if possible long term. Available from Jan/Feb 2006. Can teach in Japanese, English and German. DC work is also welcome. Photo and more details can be emailed. Tel: 17-04089414. Email: b-c-l@netcologne.de

Personals

BACKGAMMON

Retired businessman looking for backgammon players on Phuket Island. Tel: 076-386-113, 01-5778443.

LIFE PARTNER

wanted. Would a farang man (45-55) who is fed up with Thai women want to enjoy a nice social life with a farang woman (48) living and working for 14 years on Phuket? Email: babbiephuket@hotmail.com

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for Thai ladies 100% success rate, Thai marriage registration. Email David for details. Email: team@thai-love-hearts.com

Pets

PET OWNERS BEWARE

There have been several incidents of dog and cat poisoning in the Rawai area recently. Both stray and owned animals were affected. Please contact the Soi Dog Foundation if you know who is responsible. Reward offered. Tel: 09-8167853.

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