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6 sign up for April 23 poll



As candidates arrived to register at Phuket Provincial Meeting Hall, protestors held up a banner reading, 'This joke election and assembly of acrobats will bring the nation to ruin.'

PHUKET: Six people have applied to run in the April 23 parliamentary by-elections in Phuket, four of them in District 1, which covers Phuket City and the immediate area, and two in District 2, covering the rest of the island.

The Phuket Election Commission (PEC) accepted applications for candidacy on the weekend of April 8 and 9. However, only Thai Rak Thai (TRT) District 1 candidate Dr Sriyada Palimapan chose to register on the Saturday. The remaining five candidates all registered on the Sunday. In Chinese numerology the number 9 is thought to be more auspicious.

In the April 2 poll both TRT candidates ran unopposed, but both failed to get the minimum 20% of eligible votes required to claim a seat.

On her arrival at Provincial Hall, Dr Sriyada was greeted by a small band of protestors carrying placards, one of which read:

"The new election is a child's game and a waste of taxpayers' money."

She admitted, "I don't really expect to get any more votes than the last time around, but I will do my best and I won't give up."

The TRT's District 2 candidate, Wisut Santikul, arrived at Phuket Provincial Hall with a small band of supporters the following day. They were outnumbered by a contingent of anti-TRT protestors, who greeted K. Wisut with songs such as *Nak Phaen Din* (which roughly translates as "You're a waste of space"), and chanted "Thaksin Get Out!" and "Ai Na Liam" (Damned Square-face! - a reference to Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra).

Undaunted, K. Wisut told the *Gazette*, "I don't feel any pressure and I still want to work as a politician. I want to work in Parliament, not along a roadside," he added in reference to his de-

tractors, who were lined up along the street.

"I believe that there about 22,000 TRT supporters in District 2 and I need more of them to come out and support me on election day," he said.

Also filing his candidacy was Prayoon Poonchan, of the Pattana Chart Thai Party, who was defeated in the April 2 poll in Nakhon Sri Thammarat. If the PEC rules that he is qualified to run in Phuket, the vote tally needed for K. Wisut to win will drop to just 5% of all eligible voters.

Registering their candidacies in District 1 were Thavorn Permpoon of the Thai Chuay Thai Party and Pol Sgt Panya Borirak of the Pattana Chart Thai Party, both of whom were disqualified in the previous poll because they had not been members of their parties for the minimum 90-days. Also signing up was Thongchai Kaewthong of the Siam Party.

In order to allow management and staff to practice their water pistol skills, the offices of the *Phuket Gazette* will be closed over the Songkran holidays, from Thursday April 13 to Sunday April 16 inclusive.

As a result, there will be no issue of the *Phuket Gazette* on April 22. The next issue will hit the newsstands on April 29.

For those addicted to news, stories will still be posted in the *Gazette Online* in the interim.

Karon hotel bought out for B1bn

By Nattamon Ratcharak

KARON: Central Hotels & Resorts and an unnamed investor have created a joint venture company called Karon Phuket Hotel Co (KPH) and have bought the 316-room Islandia Park Resort in Karon. It will become the third Central property in Karon.

The amount paid was not revealed by the partners, but hotel industry publications said that KPH paid a total of 1.05 billion baht for the property and that a further 210 million baht would be spent on upgrading the hotel to four-star status.

An industry source told the *Gazette* on condition of anonymity that the "investor" is believed to be global investment bank Lehman Brothers.

Supratra Chirathivat, Central's Senior Vice President, Development, said that the revamped resort will have 19 villa units grouped in four zones, each serving a specific type of guest.

Currently, Central owns and manages 12 hotels and resorts. In Phuket it has the Central Karon Village and Central Waterfront Suites, both in Karon.

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Dive industry 'requires more regulation' – Palad

By Janyaporn Morel

PHUKET CITY: A newly formed committee met at Phuket Provincial Hall on April 5 to discuss recent developments in the dive industry, particularly accusations leveled at the industry that some dive operators have been evading tax and employing staff without work permits.

Phuket's Chief Administrative Officer (*Palad*) Nivit Aroonrat, claimed after the meeting that Phuket's dive industry is "concealing" facts and that the government does not have enough overall information about operators and their employees.

He said that, despite the fact that the dive industry is an important part of the island's tourism industry and is a rich source of income, the government should regulate operators more rigorously.

He pointed out that the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) is responsible for dive operators' registration, but that it records only the number of boats, the diving equipment and the number of dive masters employed.

"The TAT at first asked why the dive industry had suddenly become an issue, as they are the ones who are supposed to regulate it.

"Yet when I asked if they knew if every dive master had a work permit or not, they admitted that they had never checked. The second question I brought up was whether import tax had been paid for their diving equipment or not. They had to admit that they hadn't checked on that either.

"Also, does the TAT know how much coral is destroyed when [dive companies] go on diving trips? And does the TAT know



Palad Nivit Aroonrat: 'Does the TAT know how much coral is destroyed when [dive companies] go on diving trips?'

how much we spend every year on restoring and looking after coral? Even though the dive industry says that they spend money here, [the amount is] nothing compared with the cost of coral upkeep."

K. Nivit said that the committee had come to the conclusion that the province will have to take effective measures to control dive operators; to check their taxes and work permits, and the amount of damage they may have caused to coral.

He added, "I'd like these measures to be implemented this month, but we still have more issues to discuss."

K. Nivit said that the province will set up a committee to check and regulate dive opera-

tors before they are even eligible to register with the TAT.

The task of the committee will be to check boat registration, work permits, import taxes, the length, quality and safety of diving courses, whether companies have Thai employees or not and, if so, whether they comply with Thai labor laws.

K. Nivit added that even though these measures might be regarded as tough, they would be "good for tourism in the future".

"We don't think that these regulations will deter dive operators from investing money in Thailand.

"In the end they'll thank us because we'll get rid of the companies that give the industry a bad name," he concluded.

Homes worth B300m booked at show

PHUKET CITY: Properties with a total value of more than 300 million baht were reserved at the Property Investment Exhibition 2006 (PIE), which drew to a close at Central Festival Phuket on April 10.

Thanet Traiwut, Managing Director of exhibition organizer Delice Thai, said, "The exhibition was a success. About 80% of visitors were looking for a house and 20% of visitors came for the shopping but collected information while they were here.

"More than 50 houses, at an average cost of six million baht, were reserved during the show, and many Thai people showed interest in houses ranging from 3 million to 5 million baht."

The home reservations were a bonus for the Phuket Real Estate Club, which instigated the show. Before the event, PREC President Phummisak Hongsyok, said, "This is the first event of this kind that we have arranged, and we do not expect that many customers will actually put down

deposits for homes. The main idea is to give people information to help them make decisions."

K. Thanet added, "We will hold the PIE again in September, again at Central Festival Phuket. We will also set up a permanent Property Information Center at Central, which should open in June. We are now talking with Central about precisely where."

Somsak Wannopak, 45, came to make a payment to a bank in the mall but ended up looking at properties at the show. "This is a good idea. It gives people the chance to look at what properties are available, even if we decide not to buy. It's better than having to visit every property development's sales office."

Englishman Nick Parker-Smith, 37, said, "I really enjoyed it, it was very interesting. I'd like to see it held again next year. I spoke with people here about building services, law, engineering, pools and wood supply."

The show was co-sponsored by the *Phuket Gazette*.

Police nab alleged dealer – and a couple of witnesses

KALIM: Undercover police armed with a warrant arrested suspected drug dealer Boonyarit Charnpraneet, 46, on the evening of April 7 following a tip-off from a member of the public.

The arrest took place at the bar owned by Boonyarit at Kalim Beach. Police declined to reveal the name of the bar.

The officers also managed to gather up a couple of prosecution witnesses.

While police were watching

Boonyarit's bar awaiting his return, a couple – a Thai woman and a foreign man – approached one of the officers.

Taking one of the plain-clothes officers to be an associate of Boonyarit, the couple asked him if they could buy marijuana from him, adding that they had done so previously from associates of Boonyarit at the bar.

The officer pulled from his pocket, not a bag of grass but a Royal Thai Police identity card.

He told them he would not arrest them provided they went with him to the Kathu Police Station to bear witness against Boonyarit.

Boonyarit eventually turned up and officers searched the premises, recovering what they described as three marijuana cigarettes and an undisclosed number of *ya bah* (methamphetamine) tablets, as well as some 500,000 baht in cash.

Boonyarit was arrested for possession of controlled substances with intent to supply and taken to Kathu Police Station. He was later released on bail.

– Sangkhae Leelanaporn

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Big incentive group 'injects B150m into the economy'

By Alasdair Forbes

CHERNG TALAY: A thousand Australians descended on the Sheraton Grande Laguna Phuket on April 8 for the biggest incentive program yet hosted in the Laguna complex.

The organizers, Hagemeyer Electrical of Australia, a subsidiary of Dutch trading giant Hagemeyer, estimate that the three-day program, which brought 850 of the company's top customers to Thailand, injected some 150 million baht into the Thai economy, excluding airfares.

Because Phuket has no dedicated conference and exhibitions building, Hagemeyer built its own. Erection of the "Hockerdome", a mammoth tent, began in February beside the Y-junction, next to the road into the Laguna Beach Resort.

It contained a 1,000-seat auditorium with state-of-the-art audiovisual equipment and an exhibition hall large enough for booths for 80 of Hagemeyer's suppliers.

The Sheraton's General Manager, Jan Kirstein, explained that the agreement to hold the incentive program was signed two years ago, and that Hagemeyer had made no fewer than eight inspection visits in the interim.

Noting that this was the first time the hotel had been entirely booked by one group, he added, "It's a fantastic commitment to this destination."

Richard Brouwer, Managing Director of Diethelm Travel Thailand, which was heavily involved in arrangements for the program, agreed. "I think it's a great opportunity for demonstrating that Phuket is back," he said.

Robin Norris, CEO of Ha-

gemeyer Electrics, Australia, explained that this was the third time in eight years that the incentive program had been held in Thailand, and the second time Hagemeyer had opted to construct its own facilities.

The first time, he said, was in Bangkok in 2003, when the Shangri La Hotel's facilities were stretched by extending them into the hotel's car park.

Asked why the company had chosen Phuket, a venue that has no dedicated conference facilities, he said that the first priority in selecting a location was to identify a place that would "excite" the company's customers.

It should also have enough accommodation for some 1,000 people, including Hagemeyer's customers, 80 of its suppliers and some 100 of its own people. The accommodation must also be close by in order to avoid wasting time in transferring people from hotel to conference hall and back.

Les Alford, General Manager

Asia of Incentive House, which was also deeply involved in the organization of the event, added, "There is a limited number of locations. Incentives look for desirable destinations that are going to motivate the winners. So it's not just a conference destination; it has to motivate the customers."

Hagemeyer Electrical has offices across Australia and recently set up operations in Bangkok and Nakhon Ratchasima. The entire group operates in 25 countries worldwide, employing some 21,000 people and recorded a turnover last year of 5.6 billion euros (260 billion baht).

Editorial: Page 24



The first priority in selecting a location is to identify a place that will 'excite' the company's customers, said Hagemeyer CEO Rob-in Norris.



The head of the Phuket Election Commission, Dr Prapa Kayee (left) greets Governor Udomsak Usawarangkura to offer blessings for Songkran. The Governor and his wife Maneephan were visited by many government officials who came to his mansion on April 11 to pour water over their hands.

PHUKET (Gazette, Nation): As of the morning of April 11, the death toll in Phuket for the government's Songkran holiday road carnage accounting period stood at three dead and 43 injured.

Officials with the Phuket Office for Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (ODPM) Road Safety Center, who are keeping the grim statistics over the 10-day period from April 7 to 16, said there were 43 accidents reported in the province to date, with three fatalities from two collisions.

The first fatality in Phuket occurred at about 6 am on April 8, when 67-year-old Mhad Manabutra crashed his motorbike into his own home while drunk.

Then, at about 4:40 am on April 9, in Pa Khlok, a Nissan pickup truck hit a motorcycle driven by Ulai Netrapakdee, 33. Both K. Ulai and an unidentified female passenger were killed in the accident, which police described as a hit-and-run.

The ODPM has set a target for the province over the 10-day period of no more than four dead and no more than 53 injured

3 dead, 43 injured in first 4 days of Songkran

badly enough to require a spell in hospital.

Nine police checkpoints are being manned around-the-clock throughout the period, each staffed by at least 10 traffic police officers and volunteers.

Nationwide, road accidents claimed 110 lives and injured 1,260 on April 7, 8 and 9.

Surasit Silpangam, manager of the Don't Drive Drunk Foundation, called the number of casualties "unbelievable" and predicted the toll would rise because, he said, the road-safety campaign has been overshadowed by the recent political turmoil.

Nationwide, the number of accidents in the first three days

was 1,130, down 4.4% on last year's 1,182, said Deputy Interior Minister Serm Sak Pongpanit, who is also Deputy Director of the National Road Safety Center.

Songkhla topped the list for the three days, with eight fatalities, K. Serm Sak said. In second place was Chiang Mai, with five, followed by Chanthaburi, Chachoengsao, Nakhon Pathom and Phichit, with four apiece.

On April 9 alone, the third of the 10 days, there were 399 road accidents nationwide, in which 42 people were killed and 450 injured.

Finn held for dope

PATONG: Kathu Police on April 6 raided the home of Finnish man Markku Ilari Helim, 40, finding an unspecified amount of marijuana in the house.

Helim was charged with drug possession and admitted the charge, said Pol Cpl Somsak Nguanson. He was released on bail after spending two nights in a cell at Kathu Police Station.

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On the morning of April 3, Supachok Wangrungruengthavorn, his partner Edwin Yeung of Hong Kong and their lawyer Prasert Tantipusapun approached Governor Udomsak Usarangkura and other top provincial officials as they were inspecting work on the Ao Por Pier project. K. Supachok told the Governor that his company, Suntat (Thailand) Co Ltd, has been operating in Ao Por for more than 10 years.

Most of the equipment for its fish farm was destroyed by the tsunami, they said, and the company was still struggling to recover after receiving 20,000 baht in compensation from the Fisheries Department and a five-million-baht loan from Bangkok Bank.

The company, which exports most of its fish to Hong Kong, has two large pens off Koh Raed and also operates a hatchery on the coast at Ao Por, they explained.

The letter, dated March 29 and signed by Pa Khlok OrBorTor President Panya Samphaorat, gave the company 30 days to remove all of its pens, and 15 days to appeal.

K. Supachok, who presented the letter to the Governor, explained that since 2000, he had twice approached the Marine Office to seek a permit for his growing operation, only to be told that all he needed was an approval letter from the local tambon chief, or *kamnan*.

He had already been granted this approval, he said.

A letter seeking formal permission from the OrBorTor received no reply, he added.

Fish farming company Suntat (Thailand) Co Ltd has petitioned Governor Udomsak Usarangkura, pleading for fairness after receiving an official notice from Pa Khlok Tambon Administration Organization (OrBorTor) threatening legal action if the company does not remove its two large fish farming pens from Ao Por within 30 days.

As the *Gazette's* Janyaporn Morel discovered, the dispute goes beyond local interests, involving a tussle between the representatives of central government and a small elected local body. Its resolution could throw new light on who has the final say in local matters.

As his business continued to grow and he wanted to conduct it legally, K. Supachok contacted the Marine Office again last year to seek a permit and the matter was eventually put before a provincial committee on coastal affairs.

Members of the committee inspected his operation on March 9 and he was still awaiting their conclusions when the letter from the OrBorTor arrived, he said.

Phuket Marine Office Chief Surin Tirakulpisut, who was with the Governor at the time, said that

12 of the provincial committee's 13 members reviewing Santat's permit application had agreed to it in principal and the committee was awaiting only a report from Pa Khlok OrBorTor as to why they opposed it the fish farming operation.

The Marine Office agreed that Suntat Co Ltd should be issued a permit, as its inspection had shown that the pens did not obstruct local navigation channels and also because provincial policy is to promote industries such as fish farming, which is a "key per-

BATTLE INVOLVES MORE THAN JUST FISH

formance indicator" in evaluations of Phuket's economic performance.

"We are still awaiting the OrBorTor's reason [for opposing permission]. They will have until April 17. If they don't provide one by then, the Marine Office will go ahead and issue the permit," he said.

Governor Udomsak acknowledged the complaint and advised K. Supachok to await the committee's ruling on the issue.

When the *Gazette* contacted Pa Khlok OrBorTor President Panya Samphaorat on April 6, he told the *Gazette* that not only does he stand by his decision to order the removal of Suntat's two pens, but that he is

even prepared to seek a ruling from the Administrative Court should the provincial committee try to override his authority in the case.

K. Panya said he had initially asked the company only to relocate its pens from navigation channels, arguing that their presence there was hindering a provincial plan to develop the area as a tourist destination – which was also why the Ao Por Marina project had been approved.

He also said he had received two letters of complaint about Suntat's operations. With photos attached, the letter alleged that fish had been washing up on local beaches, rotting there and ruining the scenery for tourists.

The letter writers specifi-

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Suntat (Thailand) partner Supachok Wangrungruengthavorn at the company's hatchery. He says the OrBorTor has unfairly ordered him to cease operations. OrBorTor President Panya Samphaorat says he is willing to fight the case right through the courts.

this include operating in an area that the company neither owns nor holds a concession for, and laying an electric cable across the seabed to the offshore fish pens without proper permits, he said.

K. Panya remains confident that the fish pens will eventually be removed.

"I'm sure that if the Marine Office looks at the laws regulating offshore fish farming they won't dare issue this company a permit.

cally mentioned Suntat's fish pens as the source of the dead fish, he said.

"I called the company in and we discussed the matter. I explained that some 40 to 50 million baht has already been invested in making Ao Por a tourist destination, and that it would not be good to let their dead fish destroy the scenery. I also told them that when the new marina opens there will be a lot of boats passing through their area," he said.

At that time, the company verbally agreed to relocate, accepting K. Panya's offer to find them a suitable alternative location. That was the last time he had heard from the company,

which never went ahead and removed the pens, he said.

K. Panya said he was surprised to learn subsequently that the matter had come before the provincial committee on coastal development, of which he is a member – and the only dissenting one in this case.

Despite his minority view in the committee, K. Panya believes the tambon retains jurisdiction in the matter following the 2004 Transfer of Authority Act, which was intended to decentralize national government control by handing over authority to elected local government bodies, of which the tambons are the lowest level.

"I think that the company

was advised by the Marine Office that the Marine Office are the ones who are authorized to issue a permit. However, I think that since the 2004 Act, this matter falls under the jurisdiction of the local administrative body," he said.

As for the provincial committee on coastal issues, K. Panya said that he had already explained his reasoning for issuing the order to remove the fish pens – but had been ignored.

DEFIANCE

"They just told me that the project was in line with the provincial development plan ... and all of them agreed to issue a permit al-

lowing the company's operations to continue," he said.

Before 2004, for a tambon council president to defy a provincial committee headed by the Governor would have been unheard of. But in going ahead and issuing the order for Suntat to cease operations, this is precisely what Pa Khlok OrBorTor has done.

"I think I have jurisdiction here. Furthermore, I issued the removal order only after the company failed to move its pens, as it had verbally agreed to do," he said.

To back up his case, K. Panya also said he was sure the company was in violation of many fishing industry regulations. Just a few examples of

They have to look at more than just the provincial development plan when reviewing this case," he said.

As for the 30-day deadline to remove the equipment, K. Panya said that if the fish farms are still in place when the deadline passes on April 28 he will begin legal proceedings against the company for defying an official order.

When asked what he would do if the Marine Department issues a permit to the company without his approval, K. Panya said he would take the matter to the Administrative Court, which is responsible for ruling in jurisdictional dispute cases between government agencies.

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Frenchman dies after fall from rocks

NAI HARN: A French tourist died on April 5 after he apparently slipped while climbing rocks at Nai Harn Beach, plunging onto submerged rocks below.

Chalong Police Inspector Lt Col Chokchai Sutthimek identified the victim as Gregory Eric Muguet, 34.

The accident occurred after the victim went out for a morning walk and swim with his mother, Col Chokchai said. "I was informed at about 9:30 am that a French tourist had slipped from some high rocks at the south end of the beach. When I arrived, we found his body clad only in a bathing suit. The body was badly cut from barnacle-covered rocks just below the surface," he said.

The victim's mother told Col Chokchai that during their stay they had walked along the beach and gone for a swim every morning after breakfast.

When they reached the end of the beach on that day, the mother stopped to enjoy the view while her son, who enjoyed rock-climbing, tried to continue on.

He disappeared from view and, after about 15 minutes, his mother began to worry and started looking for him. To her horror, she saw a corpse floating offshore.

She called for help and the body was eventually brought back to the beach by some surfers, Col Chokchai said. She identified the victim as her son, he said. He added that police were treating the case as accidental death.

Queer News

Funeral provides language lesson for 'dumb' northerners

An all-night funeral vigil ended in a hail of gunfire when a fight broke out because one of the guests was unable to speak Southern Thai – after being ordered to by a local drunk.

The unfortunate incident took place at the funeral of Aree Khaemungkhalo, whose pals were up drinking through the night of April 2-3 in order to "keep her corpse company" (*pen phuean sob*) at her home in Tambon Bangbon, Phattalung Province.

Among the assembled mourners were a group of Chiang Mai natives who had formed a *wong lao* (drinking circle).

It was not reported how the gentlemen from the north came to be at the funeral, but it appears from the surnames of the victims that some were related to local residents.

Whatever the case, the men had apparently had not been in the area long enough to pick up the rapid-fire local dialect, which differs greatly from the slower northern version of Thai.

As the Chiang Mai men were getting drunk, Phattalung

native Preecha Kingtongmak, 53, stumbled up and asked to sit with them. Before long, he demanded that one of the northerners, 40-year-old Junkaew Sakda, speak in the Southern dialect.

Junkaew's inability to do so led to a heated argument that eventually turned into a violent brawl, the men using whatever heavy objects they could find to bash one another.

The contretemps ended when shots ran out and bodies

began to drop. The six men hit were listed as: Junkaew, Preecha and his relative, Man Kingtongmak, 38; Chaiwut Poongate, 32; Somyot Poongate, 32; Theerayuth Poongate, 40. All except K. Junkaew were listed as residents of Chiang Mai.

Each was hit at least once in the torso with a .38 caliber bullet, and most of the men were also covered in bruises sustained in the brawl.

At the Bangkaew Hospital

in neighboring Bangkaew District, where the men were rushed for treatment, the injuries to Preecha, Chaiwut and Junkaew were listed as critical. They were later transferred to a better-equipped hospital in Haad Yai, Songkhla, about one hour's drive to the south.

Police investigator Sub Lt Methapong Narkpalad said it was too early to determine who had fired the bullets, but said police believed it was somebody who was attending the funeral vigil, not an outsider. Three or four suspects, including the victims, remained to be questioned, he said.

Lt Methapong said the brawl was unrelated to recent political events. Just days before the attack a group of Democrat Party leaders were attacked by an angry mob in Chiang Mai, the power base of Thai Rak Thai Party leader Thaksin Shinawatra.

"This was just a typical drunken brawl between citizens that got out of hand. It has nothing to do with the Democrat Party members being driven out of Chiang Mai," he said.

Source: Kom Chad Luek




The chaotic scene in the hospital emergency department after the multiple shooting.




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Change proposed to 80-meter rule, again

By Janyaporn Morel

PHUKET: The Provincial Natural Resources and Environment Office (PNREO) has proposed changes to the current law limiting the height of construction in Phuket to no higher than 80 meters above sea level.

A five-year ban on building above 80 meters was enforced in 1997 as a way of preventing landslides. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) extended the ban in 2002 for one year and then again on October 1, 2003.

At the weekly CEO Governor's meeting, PNREO Chief Ong-art Chanacharnmongkol reported that a total of 323 plots of

land above the 80-meter contour are under cultivation.

K. Ong-art said that he had received many complaints from the landowners that they could not build even a small house, such as a dwelling for rubber tappers.

If they did build such a structure, it would be illegal, the landowners pointed out.

The issue was initially raised in a CEO Governor's meeting on March 8, following which Governor Udomsak Uswarangkura assigned an ad-hoc committee to consider how to tackle this problem.

K. Ong-art said that one condition of an easing in the regulation should be that owners could build only a single-story building

less than six meters in height and with a footprint of no more than 150 square meters. There should be no more than one building per plot of land.

He stressed that the rule change would be purely for the benefit of landowners farming on hills, and not for anyone wanting to build a hotel, resort or other property for business.

"We will allow only those who were registered as landowners before October 1, 2003, to make use of this regulation," he added.

"I made this proposal to the policy and planning office of the MNRE. They told me to come up with building limits that would not benefit property companies.

"That's why I propose that the easing of the law apply only for people who were registered as land plot owners before October 2003, and why the [proposed] specifications [allow only a small building]."

K. Ong-art said that the is-

sue is due to be reviewed again by the ad-hoc committee on April 20.

"We will see then what the details will be, and then we will send our conclusions to the MNRE's policy and planning office," he said.

Songkran road toll target: no more than four deaths

PHUKET: As in previous years, the province will set up police checkpoints around the island during the Songkran Holiday period in a bid to keep road deaths and injuries to a minimum.

At a conference at Phuket Provincial Hall on April 3, members of the media were each given a 24-page stack of documents prepared by the Phuket Office for Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (ODPM), detailing this year's safety campaign.

The press package, entitled "Ten Days of Danger: April 7-16", stated that the ODPM's target is to limit the number of dead to no more than four and the number of injured requiring a hospital stay to just 53.

Vice-Governor Worapot Ratthasima told the press that it was imperative to meet the target set for the province by the national Road Safety Office, which calls for an overall reduction in accidents of at least 15% from the previous year.

In 2005, there were 397 reported accidents in the province during Songkran. Three people died and 433 were injured, of

whom 90 required in-patient treatment. In 2004, there were also three deaths, with a total of 424 people treated for injuries.

Nationally, the Road Safety Office aims to limit the number of Songkran road casualties to 506 dead and 6,196 injured.

During the 10-day period, checkpoints will be set up in the following locations:

Muang District: in front of Muang Mai Motors on Thepkra-sattri Rd; in front of Surakul Stadium on Wichit Songkraam Rd; and in front of Chao Fa Thani on Chao Fa West Rd.

Kathu District: in front of Phuket FantaSea in Kamala; at the Patong Hill intersection on Siriraj Rd; and at the Tung Tong Police checkpoint on Phra Bara-mi Rd.

Thalang District: at the Tah Chat Chai checkpoint near the Sarasin Bridge; in front of Thalang Police Station; and in front of Cherng Talay Police Station.

Phuket Governor Udomsak Uswarangkura assigned his three Vice-Governors to oversee the safety campaign, one in each of Phuket's three districts.



HEART OF THE CITY: Tourists venturing off the tourist trail into the vast wasteland that lies between Nanai Rd and Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd south of the Jungceylon project can view one of Patong's newest tourist attractions: a muddy path piled high on both side with smouldering garbage.

A garbage picker rummaging through the debris told the *Gazette* that she had hoped to uncover some valuables from the garbage heap before the municipality came to bulldoze it, but had come away empty-handed.

Gazette readers are encouraged to send photos of "informal" garbage dumps, along with details of where and when the photos were taken, to dump@phuketgazette.net, for inclusion in this regular column.

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By Nattamon Ratcharak

Television ... video games ... schools that reward rote memorization and penalize self-expression; parents these days have good reason to worry that all of the pitfalls and distractions of modern life are keeping their kids from fully developing their minds, bodies and souls.

Fortunately for parents interested in putting their children on the path to mental and physical self-awareness, the Kids Center Over The Moon in Cherng Talay offers a variety of courses in yoga, art and language – all designed to tap into and broaden a child's naturally fertile imagination.

The center, which opened about a year ago, is run by 34-year-old Barbara van Oers, who moved to Thailand about five years ago and now has two children with her Thai husband.

The former journalist in her native Belgium told the *Gazette* that she came up with the "Kids Center Over the Moon" name because "over the moon" describes the happiness her students can attain from yoga and the other activities offered.

Membership of the center costs 2,500 baht, which entitles the holder to 10 lessons, or lessons can be paid for one at a time for 300 baht.

The activities are offered in groups of up to 15 children, all of similar ages: four to seven and eight to 12. Classes are held after school or during school holidays, when children are free to learn.

Barbara, who prepared the entire curriculum herself, has big plans for the center, which is currently being expanded with the addition of three large wooden *sala* in its one-rai garden, where children can learn in cool, outdoor comfort.

Coming in June to conduct special workshops will be Dutch-woman Helen Purperhart, who



Who says yoga's a load of boring Om? Barbara van Oers shows a little student how much fun it can be.

acquaint children with yoga and the philosophy behind the practice. You guide children to go on their own yoga adventure using your own imagination and theirs.

"For example, you go to a rainforest and meet all kinds of animals. You sit on the back of a friendly dolphin or let your worries fly away in a big blue balloon," says Helen.

The benefits of yoga are many, Helen and Barbara agree. Through movement, games, art and meditation, children are taught the satisfaction that comes from simply "being" – rather than from "having". Is that not a concept most parents would love their kids to grasp?

The lessons are full of adventures that stimulate children to use their imaginations. For example, many of the yoga positions are inspired by animals stimulate suppleness and strength. For mental development, concepts like karma, chakra and the elements are introduced and developed in ways a child can easily understand.

Barbara said the benefits yoga brings to children are much the same that they offer adults: improved concentration, self-esteem and creativity as well as better social skills.

Barbara also hopes to bring the benefits of yoga to children from less affluent families. For this reason, the center has applied for foundation status and hopes to become a charity, teaching poor local kids for just 20 baht an hour.

Kids' Center Over The Moon is located at 13/3 Srisoonthorn Rd in Cherng Talay. For more information contact Barbara van Oers at Tel: 09-6472651 or Email themoonkids@yahoo.com

OVER THE MOON ABOUT YOGA

has been teaching children in her native Holland for over 20 years.

Helen first became interested in the benefits of yoga while pregnant. When her daughter was four years old, Helen wanted to teach her yoga but realized

there were no schools offering yoga for children. So she opened her own center, the "Jip & Jan" Yoga Center for Children. Helen is also the author of two books on yoga for children, one of which has been translated into English.

During her time in Phuket, Helen will give special training workshops to give teachers the skills they need to teach children yoga in groups, either at home or at school.

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One of the men suspected of involvement in the largest robbery in British history is reported to have invested in property on Koh Samui.

John Fowler, 60, from Kent, faces five charges in the UK – including conspiracy to rob and kidnap. But well before the February heist took place, he reportedly invested in a private housing development in Mae Nam – to which he apparently planned to move.

Fowler was arrested in connection with the robbery at the Securitas plant in Tonbridge, Kent, which disposes of used notes from the Bank of England. On February 21, a gang broke in and took £53 million (3.6 billion baht) – easily the largest sum ever stolen in Britain.

The Samui house is reported to have cost Fowler just 15 million baht. It sits on a quiet estate amid palm trees, with swimming pools and a private gym. According to reports in the British media, Mr Fowler told the developer that he liked the development because "...the security is good and it seems safe from villains and thieves".

Thailand has long suffered from a reputation as a haven for British criminals. With the country tightening security and investment laws in some areas, smaller and less regulated islands like Samui have become an attractive option for investors whose legitimacy may be suspect.

Private buildings, but public spaces: Officials from the Forestry Department were joined by police recently on an inspection of public land reportedly being used for commercial purposes on Koh Pha-ngan.

Bank job suspect 'invests on Samui'



A private school bus on Samui.

The Department for the Environment in Surat Thani had received letters complaining that resorts had been built illegally on the island and that they were using up resources and destroying forests.

Officials subsequently traveled to Koh Pha-ngan to check title deeds and to ensure that the buildings identified had been built according to regulations.

They are reported to have found two resorts, both in Ao Chaloklam, that had encroached upon government land.

The case has been referred to the Land Office in Surat Thani.

Samui school crisis: According to local teaching profession-

als, overcrowded classrooms, staff shortages and a lack of public funding are all contributing to the decline of education on Koh Samui. In contrast to the increased general wealth of the island, public funding for education appears not to have kept pace with the demands placed on it.

Banjong Phuwasethaworn, Headmaster at one of the island's most respected schools, Theeparat Pittaya, says the problems are becoming serious.

"Our school has around 40 students per class," he says. "We have 23 teachers, including staff on temporary contracts, but this still means we are suffering from a teacher shortage. We need 20 more teachers to fill the vacuum. And we are not alone – many schools face the same problem."

Some schools have had to seek help from parents and local foreign businesses to provide teaching and learning materials. Yeamsak Noonraksa, Headmas-

ter at Wat Lamai School, considers his institution lucky because, he says, it has, "The support of parents, villagers, community leaders and local companies".

With increasing numbers of foreigners relocating to the island, the demand for international-standard education is also increasing. But just three foreign-run schools have opened so far – none yet fully licensed, and all only for children under the age of 12.

Many foreign residents are hoping that one of these schools will eventually expand to cater for high school-age students, as parents with older children currently have to educate them elsewhere in Thailand. Many parents on Samui who can afford it send their children to secondary school in Bangkok, while many foreign parents either do the same or send them back home to study.

Police seize opium: As part of a new policy initiated in Surat

Thani last month, the provincial drug squad began working more closely with local traffic police to search vehicles and apprehend suspected drug dealers.

A few days after a workshop to train officers from both departments in the new approach, police stopped a minivan heading south on the main Surat Thani highway.

A Thai woman was driving the vehicle, with a Malaysian man sitting in the back. Both acted suspiciously when questioned, which prompted the officers to conduct a thorough search of the van.

Finding nothing inside the cabin, they examined the rest of the vehicle. After encountering a faint smell of pepper, they eventually discovered 47 kilograms of opium, which had been packed into 62 bags and hidden in the spare tire.

Subsequent inquiries revealed that the van had been driven down from Chiang Rai, and was bound for the border with Malaysia.

The suspects were arrested and taken to Haad Yai for further questioning.



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GULF OF
THAILAND

By Barry Singleton

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Medical blunders 'kill 10,000 a year'

The Network of Victims of Medical Malpractice, a Thai advocacy group, has petitioned the United Nations in an effort to force Thai authorities to comply with a World Health Organization (WHO) agreement to make information on medical malpractice public.

The network's coordinator Preeyanant Lorsermwatthana said the Public Health Ministry had made little progress in implementing the WHO protocol since Thailand ratified it in 2002.

Self-governing medical bodies in Thailand seemed to simply ignore it, she said.

The network's research found there were around 10,000 people dying each year as a result of medical malpractice, with many more suffering injury and disabilities.

The petition includes four demands: a new public information law that allows relatives of victims to obtain detailed information about malpractice from hospitals at fault, without conditions; a new independent body to openly study medical treatments in question and to identify mistakes made; the setting up of a government-sponsored fund to compensate victims of maltreatment in both state and private hospitals; and the inclusion of all medical mistakes in curricula in medical schools and in all public information services.

Citing an international study, K. Preeyanant said public disclosure could reduce the number of malpractice cases.

K. Preeyanant said she did not intend to find fault with doctors or create legal wars.

"We just don't want to see more Thai people victimized by medical mistakes with no one being held responsible," she said.

Scheming: Dr Sanguan Nitaya-



Festival fantastic: Children take part in a parade as part of the 10th annual Chiang Mai Arts Festival.

rumphong said he believes a good way to depoliticize the controversial 30-baht health scheme is perhaps to give it a new name.

"Perhaps it should simply be known as the 'universal healthcare' scheme," said Dr Sanguan, referring to his brainchild health security scheme, which was adopted by former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra as a flagship policy of his Thai Rak Thai Party five years ago.

"Thirty baht may not be the

single flat-rate payment any more. The scheme has to undergo a lot of adjustments for it to survive in the long run. It is known that the quality of healthcare under the scheme has been compromised by financial constraints. People might still pay 30 baht if they go to neighborhood hospitals for primary care, but if they go to big hospitals, they may have to pay 60 baht or even 100 baht [if admitted as inpatients]."

The scheme now covers

some 48 million people of Thailand's total population of 62 million. Sanguan is now chief of the National Health Security Office, which was set up to administer the scheme.

He now favors funding the scheme through the trillion baht a year the government collects in "sin taxes" from alcohol and tobacco, as this would free the scheme from the whims of party politics, he added.

"We are building this scheme so that it can be sustained to serve our children. Health security for citizens is a fundamental element of a civilized society," he said.

Dig gets a lift: The Cabinet approved an additional 45-million-baht budget for restoration and preservation work at the Ban Chiang archaeological site in Udon Thani Province, Fine Arts Department Deputy Director-General Somsuda Leeyawanich said.

Some 23 million baht would be spent on landscaping and 22 million baht more on public exhibitions, management and accommodation for visitors. The department had previously received 11 million baht for projects at the site, where a Bronze Age civilizations thrived more than 5,000 years ago.

The site was discovered in 1960 and officially registered with the Fine Arts Department six years later. Excavation and studies of the artifacts began in 1967. Archaeologists say the artifacts date from 5,600 to 2000 BC.

Young boozers bound for jail: More than one-fifth of Thailand's young male population regularly consume large quantities of alcohol, a behavior that contributes to criminal activity including gang rapes, said Chattraphong Kitti-

phorn, a senior juvenile correctional official in the province of Nakhon Ratchasima.

The number of people aged between 11 and 19 nationwide classified as consumers of alcohol is 1.06 million, or around 21.23% of that entire age group, he said.

Almost all young inmates serving terms in detention facilities drank alcohol before committing their crimes, he added.

Rolling stones hit wat: A stone quarry in Ratchaburi that was previously ordered to close for causing a disturbance to nearby communities has been shut down again, Interior Minister Kongsak Wantana said.

The fresh closure came a day after blasting at the quarry sent a huge boulder crashing into a nearby temple compound.

Kongsak did not comment on how the plant had been able to continue operating despite having twice been ordered to close by provincial governor Wongsak Sawaspanich.

The poorly-controlled explosions at the quarry made headlines last year when flying debris forced monks in nearby Wat Tham Yordthong to wear safety helmets during religious rites.

Medical milestone: Thailand will open a plant to produce a vaccine for the virus that causes dengue fever.

Dr Thongchai Thavichart, president of Thailand Center of Excellence for Life Sciences, said his agency has approved a 33-million-baht grant for Mahidol University's Center for Vaccine Development to set up the state-of-the-art facility.

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

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Above, Joel Cadbury is borne to the wedding on an elephant. Below, saris in every hue imaginable helped make the wedding a colorful affair. Right, father and daughter at the marina party. Below, right, a *pas de deux* amid the marina's fountains was just one part of the entertainment at the party.



WEDDING OF THE DECADE

Phuket had never seen anything like it before: the celebrations for the wedding of Divia Lalvani, daughter of Royal Phuket Marina owner Gulu Lalvani, and Joel Cadbury, son of chocolate heir Sir Peter Cadbury. The photographs on these pages give some idea of the exuberant and opulent nuptials, first at Amanpuri on March 31 and then at the marina the following night.



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Top left, the bride arrives for the wedding carried shoulder-high on a palanquin. Top right, Gulu Lalvani, Joel and Divia during the wedding ceremony. Left and above, guests at the marina party all wore white.




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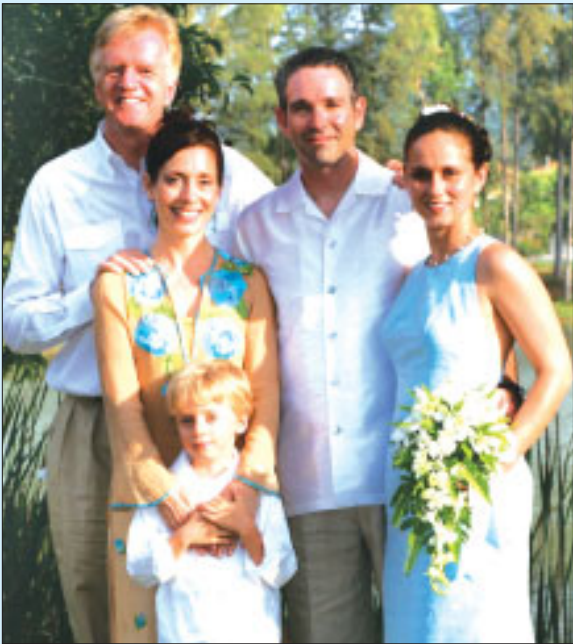
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Happily Ever After

Recent weddings in Phuket



Above, Mindy Leyendecker and Dan Hickman, from Austin, Texas, were married at the Laguna Wedding Chapel. The couple are pictured with Laguna boss James Batt, his son Henry and his wife Angie, who is Mindy's cousin.



Right, Korbkarn Yuttitham and Ratthapon Suksabai were married at Phrapitak Grand Ballroom in The Metropole hotel on March 5.

How much do you know about autism? If you had to take care of an autistic child would you know how to go about it? For Wirach Klaharn, Director of Phuket Panyanukul School, known to most people on the island as the Phuket Special School, the seemingly huge distance between "us" and "them" can be bridged by special people who care enough to go out of their way to look after and love them.

Here the *Gazette's* Natcha Yuttaworawit asks K. Wirach what it takes to keep the truly special school in Phuket open to those who need it most.

Wirach Klaharn, from Nakhon Ratchasima, has been Director of Phuket Special School since 2002. Although the school, which has been open since 1993, provides care and education for children with a range of disabilities, it specializes in the teaching and training of autistic children.

"We have a total of 250 students, with about 60 with hearing difficulties and a few disabled pupils," explained K. Wirach, who has a background in teaching disabled children.

He came to Phuket from the Southern School for the Blind in Surat Thani, where he spent a year as Director, a position he gained after earning his bachelor's degree in general science and master's degree in teaching people with hearing disorders from Srinakharinwirot University.

The students at Phuket Special School are divided into two groups: those who are unable to write – who take part in what K. Wirach calls the "practical group" – and those who can write and are able to study.

"We teach in the mornings

and engage in a wide range of activities in the afternoon, such as sports, art, as well as religious awareness so that they can be well adapted for society.

"We realize these students will not necessarily be leaders in the future, but we try to help them handle their own lives and to not be a burden on others. Our objective is to teach each student to control both their mind and their body," K. Wirach explained.

He said that there are never more than eight students per class, which range from Prathom 1 (primary level) to Mattayom 3 (secondary). "Usually our students stay on at school over the weekends until the end of term.

"Sure, sometimes we have trouble among the

higher-spirited students, but we have five minders to take care of them as well as a staff of 29 teachers," he added.

However, while the number of teachers and minders seems to indicate that all is well at the school, K. Wirach explained that keeping the school functioning properly relies not only on the spirit and kindness of the teachers and minders, but

'It is very hard work, but still all the teachers and the nannies here do it – and they do it with all their hearts.'

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Above, working on a great smile. Right, Phuket Panyanukul School Director Wirach Klaharn.

A SPECIAL CALLING

also of caring people in the community.

"The school is free. There is no charge for room and board, uniforms or learning equipment. But we must rely on donations from people to ensure other things are covered, such as making sure students' clothes are washed," he said.

"The budget from the government to hire minders is not enough. We receive 4,600 baht a month to pay for just one nanny, and that nanny is expected to work six days a week.

"As for the teachers, 28 are

paid by the government and one is paid for by donations."

K. Wirach is proud of his staff. "The teachers at this school try to do their best for their students. It is very hard work, but still all the teachers and the nannies here do it – and they do it with all their hearts. This especially evident in sports. When students win, all of us are share in their happiness."

He explained that due to the nature of the school, teachers see it as their duty to ensure the students receive whatever education they need. "As befitting South-

ern Thailand, our school is multi-ethnic. We enroll students of all religions and of all races. If they want to come to this school, they can. I try to support all religions because the students must learn about their religion, and some parents do not teach them," K. Wirach said.

"We also encourage students to engage in handicrafts and art because we can fund the school through the selling of their creations, such as colorful postcards. They also get to keep 50% of the income made from sales, so that gives them an incentive."



One important problem for teenage students that needs special attention is their sexual behavior, K. Wirach explained. "They grow up and their bodies develop normally, but they do not have a good understanding of it. They know love just like any person, but we have to help them and protect them from problems, such as girl students falling preg-

nant, because they cannot control their urges.

"So we teach students about sex and we tell their parents to try to control their children's sexual behavior."

Readers who would like to visit or donate money to the school can call Tel: 076-260448 between 8 am and 4:30 pm any day.

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This week



SPA IS SERVED: Phayoong Aikwanich (right), owner of Thainaan restaurant, celebrates the March 30 opening of Cheraim Spa Village, next to the restaurant, with (from left) brother and Phuket Tourist Association President Pattanapong Aikwanich, Phuket Vice-Governors Niran Kalayanamit and Pongsak Playmek; Phuket Governor Udomsak Uswa-rangkura and Phuket Chamber of Commerce Chairman Eam Thavornvongsewong (rear).



ALPINE AID: Swiss Ambassador to Thailand Rodolphe S. Imhoof (red shirt), Phang Nga Vice-Governor Opas Svetamani (pink shirt) and guests celebrate the handing over of 16 houses donated to tsunami victims at Baan Muang Mai, in Takuapa, Phang Nga, on April 1. Swiss charities also rebuilt the fishing port, a community meeting hall and donated fishing equipment to the villagers.



BRUSHED UP: National Award-winning local artist Watcharin Rodnit (2nd from left) and fellow artist and wife Jay-Da Rodnit (4th from left), with other leading local artists, celebrate the April 1 opening of their month-long One Yin, One Yang art exhibition at Mom's Tri's Gallery in Kata.



TORQ TO ME: John Fink (right), Executive Vice-President of Ford Thailand, hands Akradet Somjai (center) the key to the first Ford Ranger Duratorq 380 sold in Phuket, at the pickup's Phuket launch at the Anuphas Ford off-road test track on Thepkasattri Rd on April 1. Phummisak Hongsyok, Managing Director of Anuphas Ford Phuket, looks on.



PENNED IN PARADISE: Andrew Campbell, Senior Sales Manager of Baan Paradise condominiums in Karon, hands a 22-carat gold pen to this month's Lucky Draw winner, Karuna Pattarawalee, Negotiator from CBRE Phuket. K. Karuna's name was drawn from those agents who showed Baan Paradise to potential clients during March.



WANTIN' WOMEN: Khanasutra restaurant owner Billy Chima (4th from left) and DJ Thomas Gottschalk enjoy the attention at the March convening of the monthly KamaSutra Singles Club at the restaurant.

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Cruise control? What's that?

The word "cruise" means different things to different people in Phuket. Popular website www.wordwebonline.com offers the following four definitions of the word when used as a verb. Which ones apply best to Phuket?

Definition 1: Drive around aimlessly, but ostentatiously and at leisure.

There is certainly plenty of this in Phuket. Motorbikes, sports cars with silly custom lights, obnoxious SUVs with rumbling sound systems blaring out songs like *Hotel California* are the preferred vehicles, but even a three-wheeled pig transporter (*sa-leng*) will do in a pinch.

Definition 2: Travel at a moderate speed.

This is far less common in Phuket, and is generally only done when the driver is lost, running on fumes, talking on a mobile or engaging in definition 3, below:

Definition 3: Look for a sexual partner in a public place.

On a vaguely related topic, Stool Pigeon notes that there was

a surge in arrests for prostitution last month, with 70 people arrested. Fortunately, almost all of the cases were in Phuket City, meaning that this is one scourge that has apparently not made it over the hill into Patong. *Riiiiight*.

Definition 4: Sail or travel about for pleasure, relaxation, or sight-seeing.

Unbeknownst to many, including, apparently, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT),

Stool Pigeon



Phuket also plays host to people who take the word "cruising" quite literally. Phuket is, after all, a "port of call" for a number of world-class cruise

lines, among them P&O Cruises.

Recently disembarked in Patong, at the floating docks at the south end of the beach, were about 2,000 people on an around-the-world cruise aboard one of P&O's majestic ships. So who was there to greet them? A Vice-Governor perhaps? A TAT pretty offering a gracious *wai* and presenting garlands? Not quite. Not even an official from Patong Municipality that we could see – unless he was disguised as a tout.

No, the greeting committee for these well-heeled, first-time tourists comprised a pack of gleamy-eyed tuk-tuk drivers and touts, all jostling for position to get a choice chunk of all the fresh, naive new meat.

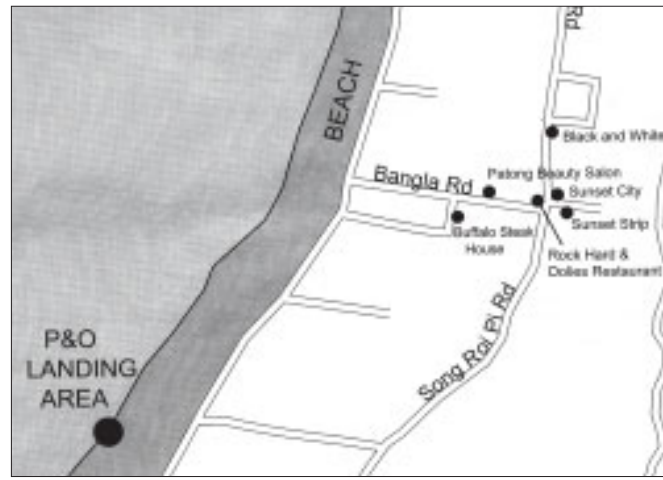
To get their bearings, all the newly-arrived tourists had to rely on was five-page "Port Guide" supplied by P&O Cruises, one of which is now in Stool Pigeon's possession.

And what a fount of useful information it is: it even has a section called "learning the lingo" which reads: "Thai is a notoriously difficult language to learn. The alphabet looks absolutely incomprehensible to those without a PhD in cryptography and, to make matters worse, the language is tonal, similar to Chinese."

"This means that the same word can be pronounced with a rising, falling, low, high or level tone, potentially giving it five different meanings."

"It is to be expected, therefore, that your attempts at speaking Thai will be not always successful."

The linguistically-chal-



The most informative part of highly-detailed map given to P&O Cruise passengers disembarking in Patong.

lenged author goes on to tell us the Thai expression for "Do Not Want" (what expression could possibly be more useful in Patong?) is Mai Owl. What a hoot.

It appears that Phuket is currently better equipped to meet the recreational needs of the United States Seventh Fleet than those of luxury cruise passengers.

Pithed off: For those with PhDs in cryptology, or who have at least taken the time to learn their *gor gai kor kai*, an interesting website is www.seasrc.th.net.

Here you can find a collection of Thai bumper stickers, complete with their English-lan-

guage translations – an entertaining study aid that also gives a good insight into the Thai way of thinking.

Examples include: ฝันดี (Dream on, pal!); ใจดี (The Isarn equivalent of *mai pen rai*) and รักแท้ (True love loses to a Benz). There are about 100 in all.

For Sale: One of Patong's most popular bars, Amigos in Soi Sea Dragon, is up for sale. Owners Terry and Bez are willing to help the new buyer's transition into the business to continue the success of this busy bar. Call Terry on 09-8677969 for details.

Also up for sale is Home, one of the classiest watering holes on the island.

A luxurious lounge bar located on Soi Sea Viking, Home is a perfect bastion of class and sanity for those seeking refuge from the noise, mayhem and methane of Soi Bangle.

See www.homebarphuket.com or better yet, stop in and visit owner Peter (Tel: 07-8817600) for details.

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I'm not asking for much. I don't ask, "Where in the world can I find peace and quiet?" I'd be happy to settle for somewhere in Phuket. Peace and quiet may be states of mind, but occasionally one must be in the right physical environment to enjoy the psychic state.

Finding places of tranquility here has, it must be said, become increasingly difficult in my five years on the island. Where once was a dusty track leading to a near-deserted beach accessible by only an all-wheel drive vehicle is now a wide slab of concrete with signs proclaiming "Private Property". Trees are unceremoniously uprooted to be replaced by street lamps or – quite farcically – different trees. Views, where not obstructed by new buildings, are instead blocked by massive billboards telling one how good the views from a new property development are.

HEDONISM

A sanctuary, a haven is required, and a couple of hours relaxing and being deliriously relaxed in a spa seems to be just the ticket. A spa treatment is, however, a double-edged sword if one lives on Phuket – for after the treatment comes the inevitable drive home, which can and often does remove the effects of said treatment.

It is well within the philosophy of hedonism to build an entire weekend around visiting a spa, particularly if the spa is Tea Tree Spa, part of the classy Crowne Plaza Karon Beach Resort. "Book the spa and stay the night," I decided.

Arriving one limpid Saturday afternoon, we are taken to our suite in one of the resort's tuk-tuks, the driver pointing out for future reference where Tea Tree Spa is. Kamolthip "Thip" Kangit, the spa's manager, is expecting us at 6 pm. "Relax first," she advises. Time to flake out in the plunge pool on the roof of the decidedly pleasant villa, watching

Spa
MAGIC

By Andy Johnstone

Tea Tree Spa



SACRED TOUCH

How to banish the double-edged sword of living in Phuket



An outdoor treatment sala (above) and the spa's luxurious interior.



lines drawn in the sky by passing planes.

A tuk-tuk arrives to collect us at precisely 5.57 pm, taking us to the door of Tea Tree Spa at the appointed hour, ready to be anointed. We are greeted by K. Thip who bids us to relax with a herbal infusion on a large day bed in the cooling air of the lobby. Here, we complete a short health questionnaire and then choose,

with guidance, our treatment: Samunprai, a Thai herbal heat energizer.

Top marks go to the designer of Tea Tree Spa, for the décor throughout is tasteful and the lighting muted. The atmosphere is, naturally, serene.

Guided by our therapists K. Noi and K. Jib, we are taken through to an equally restful treatment room and invited to undress and don bathrobes.

As we sink in like pashas to the deep cushions of a sofa, K. Noi and K. Jib delicately wash our feet in scented water, skillfully applying just the right amount of pressure so as not to tickle. Cares and worries begin to ebb, and we then are asked to lie on our massage tables.

The ministrations of our

therapists are performed simultaneously, and the experience – one can wear disposable underwear, although it is not obligatory – is sensuous.

All of our senses (certainly more than the five as classified by Aristotle and closer to the 12 proposed by Rudolf Steiner) are being cosseted. Gentle chill-out music plays. Exotic scents fill our

noses. Our skin detects the warmth of hands, oils and penetrating poultices on our bodies taking away tiredness and aches. The sense of equilibrium – spiritual, physical and of the ego – is also well tended to by K. Noi and K. Jib.

As the treatment progresses, we are asked to sit cross-legged to practice our breathing. We inhale deeply for a count of eight, before pausing for the same duration, exhaling likewise, pausing again and repeating the procedure.

Uplifted, renewed and soothed by the delights of an almost sacred treatment at Tea Tree Spa – and without the need for a punishing drive – we glide as if on snow back to the villa. Restful sleep comes easy.

The Samunprai treatment lasts 75 minutes and costs 2,400 baht per person. However, if that all sounds just a little too healthy, take advantage of Tea Tree Spa's 45-minute Re-tox bath, complete with a Cuban cigar and French cognac.

For more information, contact Kamolthip Kangkit, Tea Tree Spa Manager, at Tel: 076-396139, Fax: 076-396122 or Email: Kamolthip.Kangkit@ichotelsgroup.com

The Crowne Plaza Karon Beach, 509 Patak Rd, Karon, Phuket.









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Some refer to the Cape Panwa Hotel as “the grand old lady of Phuket”, an epithet that suggests a certain stateliness. Trouble is, the phrase also suggests a certain sobriety, as if the establishment is Oscar Wilde’s Lady Bracknell made flesh, er... brick.

Keen to indulge in a spot of Bunburying and to enter the grande dame herself, I enlist the support of Cecily Cardew and Gwendolen Fairfax, two of my dearest friends.

Handbags – theirs, not mine – at the ready, we don’t spare the horses in motoring to the delightful cape, which remains one of my favorite places on the island, a bolt hole of sorts, for the times when a limited form of escape is needed.

I am probably not alone in finding sanctuary at Cape Panwa – and many luminaries have done likewise by hiding in the voluminous pleats of the Grand Old Lady’s skirt, to carry the allusion further.

Claude Sauter, the charming Resident Manager of the Cape Panwa Hotel, relates to us over apéritifs that the list of the A-list actors who have stayed there includes Michelle Yeoh, Virginie Ledoyen, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Leonardo di Caprio, some chap called Pierce Brosnan, and Elizabeth Taylor – a true grande dame, if there ever was one.

The conversation as we sit in the lounge of the Top of the Reef (TOTR) restaurant is flowing only slightly faster than the drinks are being consumed. I soon excuse myself saying I fancy a quick tinkle, the only problem being that I never learned to play the piano.

Never mind, though; an able duo – piano and vocals – are there to give their spin on standards, with requests taken, although when I ask for “Do You Know the Way to San José?” the professional tinkler pulls out a pocket atlas.

TOTR is one of 10 restaurants – I am told that some hotels refer to restaurants, cafés

THE DETAILS COUNT

On the menu

WITH

Andy Johnstone

Top of the Reef



and bars on their premises as “food outlets”. Food outlets? How on earth is that dreadful piece of hospitality-industry newspeak supposed to conjure up any excitement in a diner?

We do indeed feel like VIP guests tonight, particularly as Claude has gone to the trouble of producing a menu for us that is even graced with the *Phuket Gazette* logo.

Attention to detail and making the guests feel special – no, letting the guests know that they are special – are skills that cannot be taught. One has them or one hasn’t; Claude has them.

Following lazily on from a small pre-appetizer of rock lobster, we are brought a piquant and almost decadently rich crab bisque with sliced tiger prawns. Then, as we drink a fine Chablis, K. Assaree – a waiter at Cape Panwa for some 17 years – an-

Left, the rockfish appetizer. Above, fillet of sea bass

nounces in such a quietly understated way that we are bound to take notice of it, “Ladies and gentlemen, I will now prepare your Caesar salad.”

A perfect piece of theater ensues with K. Assaree selecting the ingredients – a little Worcestershire Sauce here, a raw egg there, croutons, lemon

juice, Parmesan cheese – before conducting the most amazing bout of tossing since the night with the aspiring Japanese actress. We feel moved to clap, but K. Assaree no doubt takes his praise by seeing how much the diners enjoy the King of Salads.

We do.

We are given free rein to

choose our main courses, and both Claude and I take mere seconds to decide on lamb. Utterly tender, delightfully fragrant and in my case served with perfect mashed potatoes drizzled with a rich sauce, I am in raptures.

Cecily and Gwendolin – and apologies to the ladies for making so few references to them, but Gwendolin is so shy and retiring as to be almost not heard – decide on fish.

Cecily finds appeal in the steamed salmon with a citrus sauce, while Gwendolin selects sea bass fillet yet eschews the less than humble potato (it is reputed to be an aphrodisiac...) in favor of rice.

Opinions, banter and quiet asides fly backwards, forwards and sideways all evening, helped in no small part by the Pinot Noir La Foret 2002 chosen by Claude.

K. Assaree returns to produce a confection even more dramatic than the Caesar salad for dessert: Crêpe Suzette Flambé. Stylishly performed, the excitement of this treat extends in appeal to all from gastronomes to pyromaniacs.

The taste – the burning off of the alcohol in the Grand Marnier combined with the sugar results in a wickedly rich, caramelized sauce – is divine.

Grand old lady of Phuket? She’s just getting into her stride.

Top of the Reef Restaurant, Cape Panwa Hotel, 27 Moo 8, Sakdidet Rd, Cape Panwa. Tel: 076-391123 or email: gm@capepanwa.com

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THE ISLAND IN THE BAY

Thailand TRAVELER

By Bill Owen

We joined 27 motorcycles, several tons of cement, water tanks, 80 islanders and a Swedish couple on the 10:30 am ferry to Koh Yao Yai from the Tensin jetty at the fishing port in Phuket.

It was my first time in 17 years in Phuket that I'd made it to this island to the east. After the hour-long ferry trip, we boarded one of the island's two small buses for a 20-minute drive to the Yao Yai Resort.

This is a small, basic but extremely comfortable resort on the island's best beach, Haad Lo Pa Ret. Its 20 bungalows and small restaurant front the beach, facing west toward Phuket and the southern part of Phang Nga Bay.

It is an ideal spot for quietly reading under the trees, though the more energetic can enjoy great swimming. Several two-man kayaks are also available for the resort's guests to use, free of charge.

That evening during dinner, while the other guests were quietly chatting, Chris and I walked the beach and saw no one else at all. The island's community being Muslim, there were no dogs either. We found it a very pleasant change from Phuket.

The next morning we rose early, with a plan to explore other parts of the island on a couple of rented motorbikes. The main road runs directly north-south through the middle of the island, and just north of the resort, we came to Laem Yai.

A huge natural harbor, it will soon reportedly soon be home to yet another marina, and will also be the island's base for the new ferry to be operated by Seatran Travel Co, which plans to start



Main picture: the best beach on the island. Anticlockwise from above: the narrow island road, the dreadful crowds and bungalows at the Yao Yai Resort.



services to and from Phuket within the next few months.

As we progressed along the island, the already narrow road became even smaller, and it soon became apparent that there were few trucks or cars, most of the traffic being motorcycles.

This island is a wonderfully easy place to get about, with everyone you meet being pleasant and friendly.

It is a beautiful island, with rubber plantations, rain forests and the occasional white sandy

beach on both east and west coasts. We eventually made it to the jetty at the north of the island, from which small longtail boats ferry bikes and people to and from the better known of the two islands – Koh Yao Noi.

We returned, hot and thirsty, for a well-deserved lunch at the resort. I should point out that this is the only place with an alcohol license on the entire island – and it took the resort four years to get it.

The weekend soon over, it

was time to board the local bus again to be delivered to the 3 pm ferry back to Phuket. Again, the boat was packed with motorcycles – but this time tons of dried sardines had replaced the cement.

Koh Yao Yai is definitely worth revisiting. For those who have never been, it is a wonderful place to escape to for a few days with a good book, a motorbike license and a desire to explore.

How to get there

The ferry, from Tensin Jetty on Koh Sireh, departs daily at 10:30 am and 2 pm (larger car ferry) except Fridays, when there is one service only, at 10 am. Cost is 80 baht one-way. Cars and motorcycles can also be garaged at the dock. The charge to park a car overnight is 50 baht.

The return trip from the island is at 8 am for the large ferry, and 3 pm for the small boat. The journey takes one hour.

Where to stay

Yao Yai Resort: rooms with fans cost 1,200 baht per night (including breakfast) for two people. Larger rooms with air conditioning are 2,200 baht for two.

For further information, contact the resort's office in Phuket City, at Tel: 076-254523, Fax: 076-219274, Email: info@yaoyairesort.com or visit the website at www.yaoyairesort.com



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PUZZLES

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?



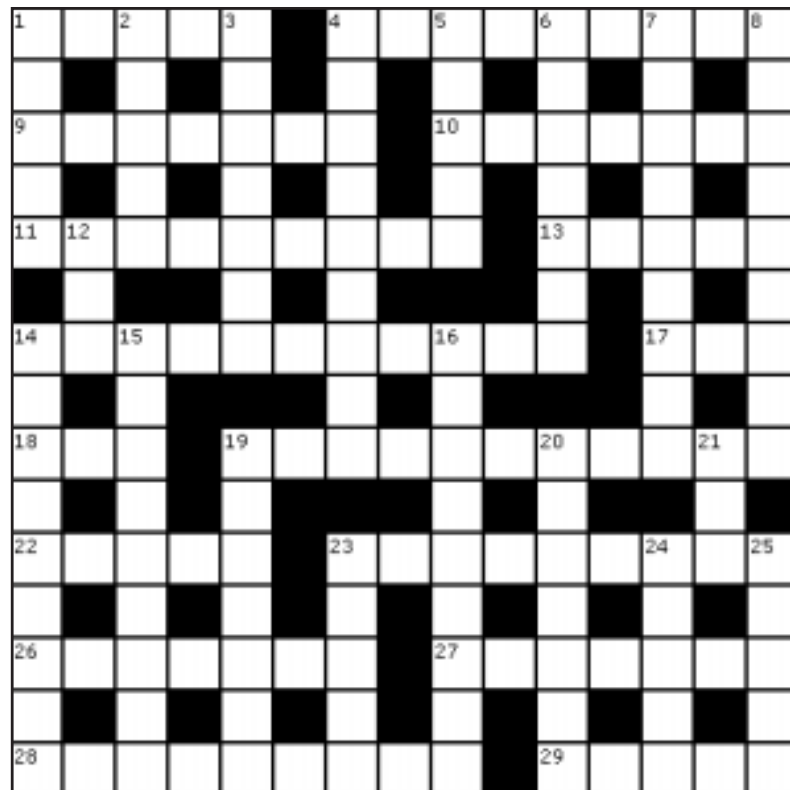
The Cryptic Crossword

ACROSS

1. Computer language puts graduates in charge. (5)
4. Rodent keep rev counter as facial adornment. (9)
9. Pakistan niche holds tinny. (7)
10. Qualification is in Protestant extremist. (7)
11. Am in grief over enlarger. (9)
13. Without it, could be deranged. (5)
14. Spread stain – see dim. (11)
17. Actress missing in action? (3)
18. Block place in court. (3)
19. Over-the-top jarhead is blue. (11)
22. X – or singer. (5)
23. Bandages doctor at a couple of points, and warbles. (9)
26. Nothing in bed, darling. (7)
27. In Parisian summer, Rudi is knowledgeable. (7)
28. Twist of lemon – rent registration. (9)
29. Muscles the cardinals. (5)

Down

1. Be so mighty initially, now a sweeper. (5)

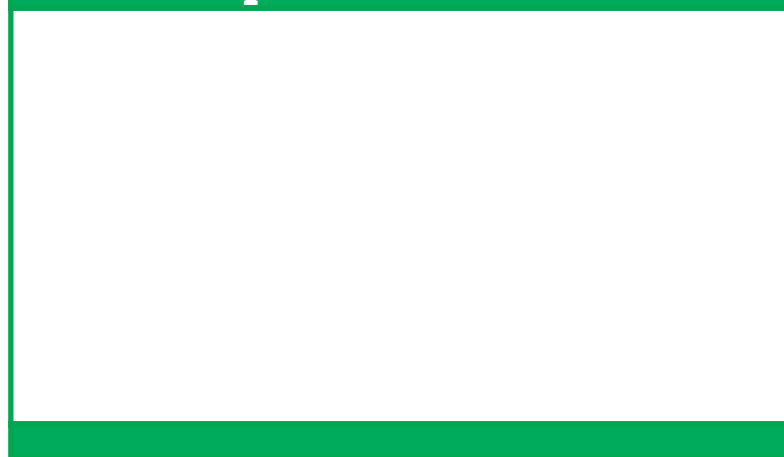


Compiled by Tortuus. © 2006

2. Colloquially speaking, north in residue. (5)
3. Tell secret prisoner beginnings of Castro. (7)
4. Skilled operator adjusts mast 1 inch. (9)
5. Stimulating kind of cut. (5)
6. Dah-dit! Scottish exclamation in tree. (7)
7. I hang mica around northern town. (6,3)
8. Clear mark in time with eastern speed. (9)
12. A '51 boxer. (3)
14. It can be argued that social beginner is on a list. (9)
15. Cake decoration can water the lawn? (8)
16. Degradation in a cellar. (9)
19. Untangle United Nations composer. (7)
20. Attack, we hear, an old sailor. (7)
21. Scold horse. (3)
23. Avoid city. (5)
24. Innocent, I am in body of church. (5)
25. Looks for turban wearers, they say. (5)

Solution on next page

Scribble Space



Brain Buster

Somchai applies for a job. The employer tells him that the job will last only 20 working days and then offers him a choice of pay rates: either a flat B100 a day or a rising scale starting from 1 satang for the first day but doubling each day – 2 satang on the second day, 4 satang on the third day, 8 satang on the fourth and so on. Somchai is a smart guy. Which one does he choose, and why?

Answer on next page

su | do | ku

© Puzzles by Pappocom

Solution, tips and computer program at www.sudoku.com

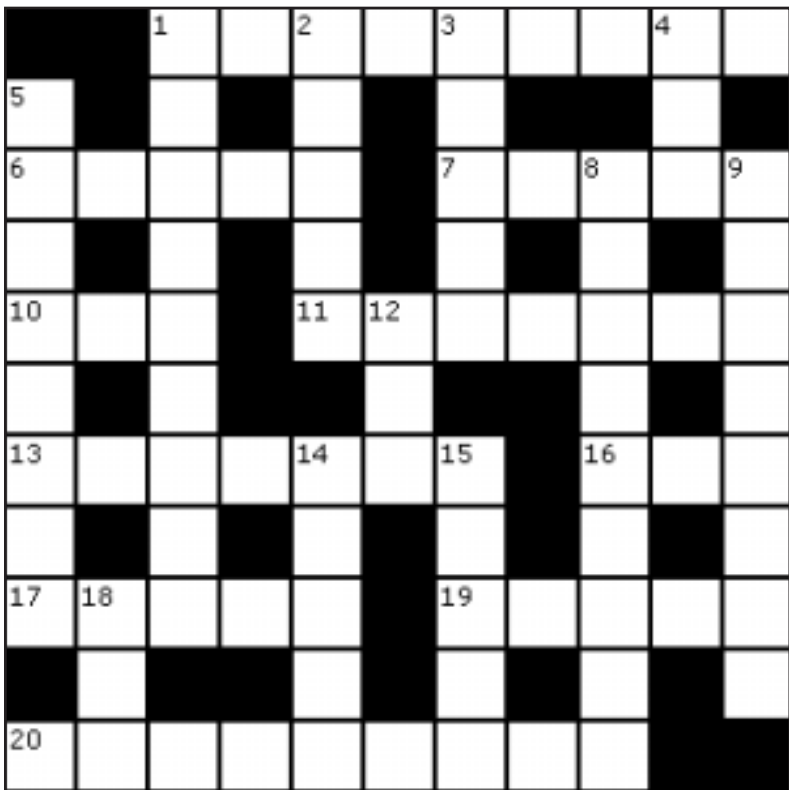
		7	8		6	1
6						
4	1					
	2			3		
			4		2	
	5			7		
9	4					
1						
		2	3		9	4

The principle of Sudoku is very simple: each row, each column and each "box" of nine squares within the puzzle must contain all the numbers from 1 to 9 with, naturally, no repetitions. Guess if you will, but each Sudoku puzzle can be solved using logic alone. Beware: there is only one solution to this puzzle, which is on the next page.

EZ Trivia Quiz

1. In which fictional city do Batman and Robin live?
2. British rock band Oasis originally formed in which city?
3. What are Tinky Winky, Dipsy, Laa-Laa and Po collectively known as?
4. A parsec is a unit of what?
5. What is the name of the US journalist just released after being held hostage in Iraq for about three months?
6. Which global conservation organization uses a panda as part of its logo?
7. Which team won the 2005 FA Cup?
8. Suva is the capital of what Pacific island nation?
9. The Para rubber tree is native to which continent?
10. Hua Hin is in which province?

Answers on next page



Quick Crossword

ACROSS

1. Not the real thing.
6. Serpent.
7. Large cracks.
10. Famous boxer.
11. Portable weapon.
13. Mum's mum, perhaps.
16. It is (archaic).
17. Lovers' secret meeting.
19. Be of the same mind.
20. Sign on back of large truck, perhaps.

DOWN

1. Not real.
2. Concepts.
3. Broadcast.
4. Cereal.
5. French delicacy.
8. Cracked.
9. School term.
12. Computer maker.
14. A little bit crazy.
15. Remember the *****!
18. Fish eggs.

Solution below, right

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. What was boxing legend Muhammad Ali's original name? | 8. <i>Gentlemen's Quarterly</i> – or <i>GQ</i> – magazine is published by which company? | 10. 1936 in Visp, Switzerland? |
| 2. What were the names given to his famous fights in Zaire and the Philippines? | 9. Who is the drummer for heavy metal band Slipknot? | 16. Whom did he succeed? |
| 3. Älvkarleby is the home town of which well known Swedish author? | 10. When and where was the Battle of the Herrings fought? | 17. For which label did the Sex Pistols record? |
| 4. The town is located by which stretch of water? | 11. What were the names of the Three Wise Men? | 18. Whose singing voice has been described as if it were "soaked in a vat of bourbon, left hanging in the smokehouse for a few months and then taken outside and run over with a car"? |
| 5. Indie-rock supergroup Broken Social Scene come from which country? | 12. Which is the most popular breed used for "seeing eye" or "guide" dogs? | 19. Who was named as "The Fastest Piano Player in the World" in 1953 by Ripley's Believe it or Not? |
| 6. What was their 2001 debut album called? | 13. What instrument did Glenn Miller play? | 20. By what name is Franz Schubert's <i>Ellens dritter Gesang</i> more commonly known? |
| 7. What is the Internet country code for Equatorial Guinea? | 14. Who said, "America is the only country that went from barbarism to decadence without civilization in between"? | |
| | 15. Who was born on March | |

Answers below, left

Puzzle Solutions

Monster Quiz Answers

1. Cassius Marcellus Clay Jr;
2. The Rumble in the Jungle and the Thrilla in Manila;
3. Stig Dagerman;
4. The Gulf of Bothnia;
5. Canada;
6. Feel Good;
7. .gq;
8. Condé Nast Publications;
9. Joey Jordison;
10. February 12, 1429 in Rouvray, France;
11. Gaspar, Melchior and Balthasar;
12. Alsatian;
13. The trombone;
14. Oscar Wilde;
15. Sepp Blatter, President of FIFA;
16. Joao Havelange;
17. Virgin;
18. Tom Waites;
19. Liberace;
20. *Ave Maria*.

Solution to Cartoon Puzzle



EZ Trivia Answers

1. Gotham City;
2. Manchester;
3. The Teletubbies;
4. Distance. It equals about 3.26 light years;
5. Jill Carroll;
6. World Wide Fund For Nature, or WWF (formerly World Wildlife Fund);
7. Arsenal;
8. Fiji;
9. South America;
10. Prachuab Khiri Khan.

Brain Buster Answer

Somchai chooses the second option because it will pay him a great deal more. The first option will pay him a total of B2,000. The second will see him pocket B10,485.75.

Cryptic Crossword Solution



Quick Crossword Solution



Sudoku solution

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

In The Stars

by Isla Star

ARIES (March 21-April 20): If it's your birthday this week, you can look forward to being spoiled by those who really care. From now until the end of April it appears that you will have the golden touch. Exploit this by finalizing business arrangements or by applying for the job of your dreams. If you're single, a second meeting with someone you got off on the wrong foot with recently can lead to attraction.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): You should have more of a sparkle in your eyes this week. Finding the right balance between work and relaxation is still something that you need to work on, though. Where finances are concerned, you can afford to push the boat out and indulge in a shopping spree. A boost to your bank account is forecast before the end of the month. Wear lime green to sharpen your wit.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): Geminis who have been wondering how to while away the low season months will receive inspiration from an unexpected quarter. A new interest is about to demand a lot of your attention. At the same time, travel overseas to attend to personal family matters before the end of the month is highlighted. The color light lotus pink will help you keep calm in this flurry of activity.

CANCER (June 22-July 23): You are about to find out who is in your corner and who is against you. One person you thought you could count on has changed sides. Your tactful approach should ensure that dignity is maintained, but watch out for hot-hotheadedness on Tuesday. Later in the week beware of absent-mindedness – you could lose something important on Thursday. The number 8 is lucky on Saturday.

LEO (July 24-August 22): Your powers of persuasion are strong this week, so use them to make changes happen. At home, family members offer more support than you thought you could count on. The only downside could occur on Wednesday when a misunderstanding threatens to upset a long-standing friendship. If trying to impress someone, maintain an air of mystery. The best night for a hot date is Sunday.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): Most of your satisfaction will come from work this week. People who appeared intent on placing obstacles in your way seem suddenly keen to remove them. Maybe they've realized that your success can be to their advantage, but ensure they don't benefit too much from your effort. Aries is about to try to get to know you better, but this shouldn't be encouraged.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): Finances are well-starred this week. Cash seems to be flowing more quickly in your direction,

and not immediately away again. Scorpio has got wind of this situation, and would like to persuade you to join a sure-fire scheme. Do a thorough background check before committing, though. Personal relationships are likely to be put to the test this weekend.

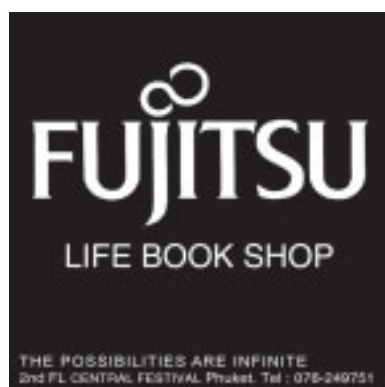
SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): The pace is still frenzied. Much as you love being the social butterfly, you should concentrate on business during the coming days. A lucky break mid-week will mean that at least one corner can be cut, opening a more direct route to success. Thursday is the most auspicious day for meetings. The color bronze will enhance your ability to impress.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): Your wanderlust is stirred this week. You may wake up to the fact that life has reached something of an impasse; travel can certainly broaden your mind. If you're tempted to invite a new romantic partner along on a trip, think carefully before doing so. On this occasion, a solo journey would bring the fulfillment you've wanted since the start of the year.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): A platonic friendship is about to develop into something else. If you've been going it alone for too long, you will wake up and realize where your heart truly lies. This will be quite a revelation for both parties concerned, but you should proceed slowly. Your flair for spotting a bargain will useful later in the week. The number 5 can bring luck on Saturday.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): Relationships are subject to fluctuating astral conditions. If you think you can't do anything right in your partner's eyes, have a heart-to-heart talk. There could be factors that you know nothing about. Make the weekend a time to clear the air and start afresh. At work, you are about to deal with people whose interests are more materialistic than yours.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): Career expansion is forecast. Now that you have accepted that it's not always possible to work independently, opportunities are about to open up. Update your résumé and touch base with old contacts. An event on Sunday will widen your social circle, and will also put you back in touch with a blast from the past. Wear earthy tones to feel more grounded.



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Power poles are ruining the once attractive scenery along the road from Cherng Talay to Thalang.

POLEAXED

I've written about concrete poles before and now I'm writing about them again. In fact, anybody who cares about Phuket should be writing about them and talking about them and having meetings about them and protesting against them, especially the people who live here and who grew up in one of the most beautiful places in the world.

The poles are destroying the place. While most of the world is getting rid of these concrete eyesores by putting their power and phone lines underground and out of sight, Phuket is going the other way and doing its best to make the island as ugly as possible.

The road between Cherng Talay and Thalang was famous for its magnificent rice fields, mists rising in the mornings, sugar palms and buffalo grazing peacefully. Now it is being made ugly – and fast.

Some people like to comment about developers scarring the hillsides, but the landscaping will grow and the trees will help camouflage the structures. There is always a time when the hillside will look ugly. You can't have investment without construction and there is no such thing as a beautiful construction site.

However, construction sites

– including bald hillsides – will one day look attractive again. Not as attractive, perhaps, as the original natural jungle and forest, but certainly better than hundreds of concrete poles lining roads.

Concrete poles will never look beautiful. Indeed, they get uglier as the jumble of wires and lines cluttering up the roadsides increases.

A senior officer from the Phuket Provincial Electricity Authority told me that poles carrying mains power are put 30 meters apart. The fact is, however, that some of these things are scarcely 10 meters from each other.

Maybe there is another reason for these monstrosities multiplying. The outgoing Prime Minister announced not so long ago that within 10 years all public power supplies would be underground in Phuket.

Is it possible that those who benefit from the manufacture and installation of power poles have been panicked into making hay while the sun shines? Perhaps power poles are being manufactured in great quantities for export, but I doubt it.

Can't the local authorities see how ugly the place is becoming?

The situation along the Cherng Talay-Thalang road is unforgivable. A large percentage of visitors head along this road and it is their first impression of the Phuket hinterland.

The power lines were put underground along Bangkok's Silom Rd more than 10 years ago.

I'm not sure whether the main reason for that was to improve the look of the place or to do away with perches for the thousands of swallows who turned up there for a few months every year and made deposits on the heads of unsuspecting tourists. Probably a bit of both, but the fact is that it was done in the main business district of Bangkok – proving that it is not impossible.

It would cost Phuket a lot of money to put cables underground – that's what always happens when you don't learn from other people's mistakes. So the proliferation of power poles continues unchecked, and somebody continues to make a lot of money.

**LARGER
THAN
LIFE**
By Graham Doven



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Phuket's 'Wow Factor' a winner with Mice

There has been a great deal of discussion in recent years about the pros and cons of building an international convention and exhibition center (ICEC) in Phuket.

Those who are for it argue that the meeting, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (Mice) market is huge, and that Phuket would be foolish not to try to take a slice of it. Those who argue against it point out that there are hundreds of places with such facilities in Asia, so the huge investment comes with huge risks.

As an example, they point to the less-than-sparkling performance of the Mahsuri International Exhibition Center on Langkawi, in Malaysia.

Even among those who agree that there should be such a facility in Phuket, there is disagreement about where it should be located.

The recent major incentive event staged by Australian company Hagemeyer should dispel the fears of those who worry about the risk of building an ICEC in Phuket. Despite the fact that Phuket has no such facility, the firm brought about 1,000 people to the island, injecting an estimated 150 million baht into the Thai economy.

In addition, more than half of those who attended had never been to Phuket, or even Thailand, before. Many will undoubtedly return for private vacations, adding to the income derived. Hagemeyer made a point of arranging additional packages after the event for its delegates – for which the delegates themselves paid. These included a beach package, a safari package in Khao Sok National Park, and a side-trip to Chiang Mai. These, too, injected cash into the economy.

The company chose Phuket, despite its lack of conference facilities (its answer was to erect its own) because, to put it in marketing language, Phuket has enough of the Wow Factor to overcome most disadvantages.

As to those who argue about where the ICEC should be sited, the answer is simple enough: it must be close to enough accommodation to ensure that no time is wasted herding 1,000 people onto buses, transporting them halfway across the island and then getting them and their possessions safely off the buses at the other end.

The accommodation should also be within easy striking distance of good shopping and good beaches.

Phuket may not be the ideal place for heavyweight conferences or large industrial exhibitions, but thanks to the Hagemeyer experience it is clear that the island has everything required to take a much larger slice of the "i" in Mice. The only thing lacking is the ICEC.

– The Editor

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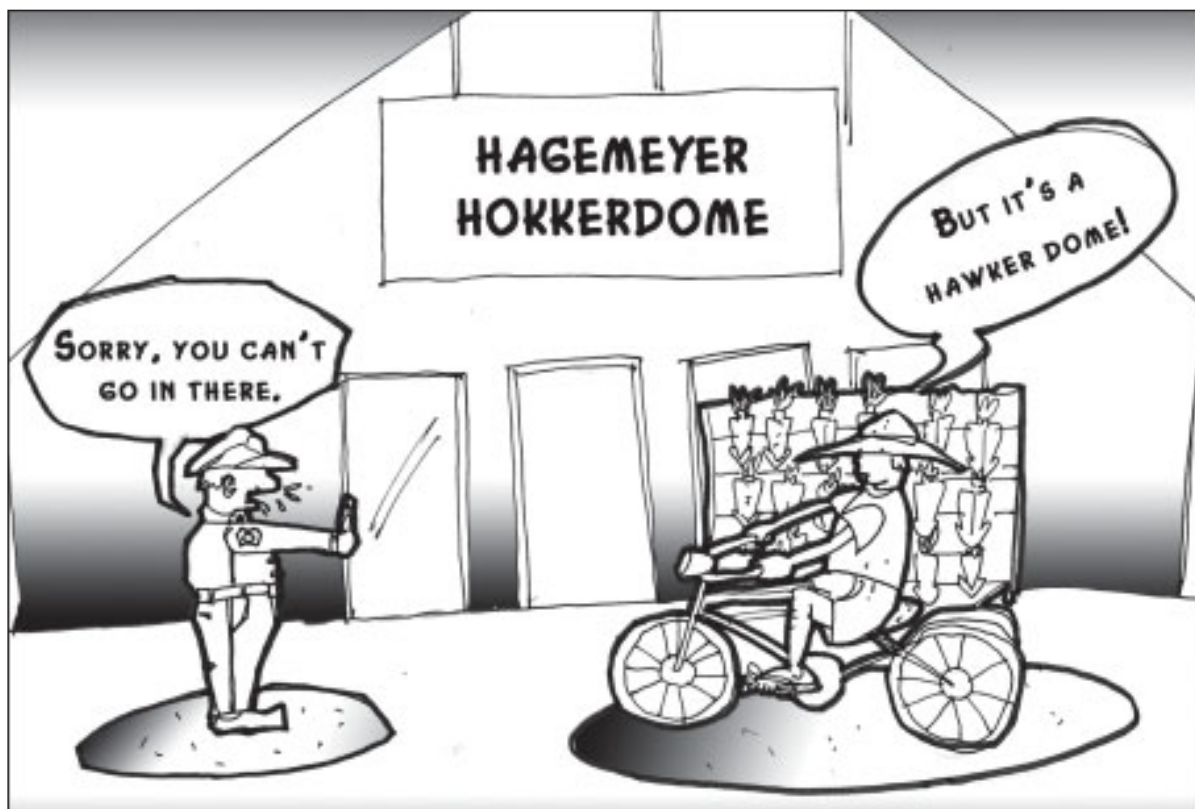
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Letters

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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.

ISO surprising

I almost fell off my stool when I read the small article in last week's *Gazette* reporting that Patong Municipality has received ISO 14001 certification from the International Standards Organization.

Your article alludes to, but fails to expand upon, the exquisite irony of Patong Municipality receiving this certification, which "...exists to help organizations minimize how their own operations impact on the environment (ie cause adverse change to air, water or land)."

Over the years, Patong Municipality has presided over what may be the biggest environmental disaster to be found anywhere along Thailand's Andaman coast. Corruption, mismanagement and sheer incompetence by the municipality have seen the emergence of seaweed – first bright green and now slimy brown – in a bay that had crystal clear waters just two decades ago.

So thick is the stench of human excrement emanating up from the sewers along Soi Bangla these that the grates need to be covered with burlap bags. I fear that one day soon the methane levels in these poorly-vented sewers will one day become so high that if someone drops a cigarette butt down there, we will get our own version of the naga fireballs in Nong Khai.

The organization's website, www.iso14000.com, lists the most commonly cited benefits of an ISO 14001 environmental management system as follows:

1. Improved perception of the key environmental issues by their employees and a better

(greener) public image of the organization.

Comment: Perhaps their public image could improve; it is certainly hard to foresee how it could get any worse.

2. An increase in the efficiency and use of energy and raw materials.

Expected action: Continued dumping of any and all garbage at the illegal dump site at the end of Soi Nanai 2. What isn't scavenged or burned will be eaten by rats and cockroaches. This is more efficient than trucking it over the hill and paying the fee for it to be incinerated properly.

3. Improved ability to meet compliance with environmental regulations.

Plan B: Failing that, we can always hope Patong Bay will somehow cleanse itself out naturally, as it did on December 26, 2004.

4. Dependence on a system rather than just the experience and capabilities of an individual to manage the environmental function of an organization.

Expected result: The municipality's "experienced and capable" person, if one exists, will be forced to spend all of his or her time filling out forms and writing out job descriptions. These will never be read or acted upon by anyone.

Somchai Huasaikul
Patong

Running the gauntlet

Some years ago a bus service was set up to run between Patong, Karon and Kata. However, the service soon halted as the bus drivers received threats from angry tuk-tuk drivers.

Today, the only way for most tourists to get to Phuket's

most popular places is by tuk-tuk, at inflated fares.

Who decides the future of Phuket? The local authorities or the tuk-tuk mafia?

Laurs Rudsgaar
Germany

Costa hell Phuket?

A few weeks ago, I read with interest a letter from a gentleman warning that Phuket is turning into another Costa del Sol.

He specifically mentioned property prices edging out locals and making them feel like secondhand citizens in their own land. I would like to add a few more poignant comparisons of my own, having resided in Spain some years ago.

As years went by, the "yob" factor imposed itself onto everyday Spanish life. Phuket? Admittedly not as bad as Pattaya, but go to any Patong bar past 9 pm or join a visa run and you will see and most certainly hear a motley collection of educationally-challenged, tattooed musclemen, dragging their knuckles on the floor as they stalk – or are stalked by – their prey.

However, the yob factor is by no means limited to musclemen. Unscrupulous property developers, who are able to wreak far more damage, take the money and run.

It seems that anywhere and everywhere is being developed, yet the unbridled development of Phuket resembles more an obsession with quick profit than sustainable development.

Phuket has very little time to mend its ways. Look at Spain and learn.

Paul Visconti
Phuket

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.

Phuket: a suitable case for treatment

When planning a new business, you have to know how to market what you intend to sell. Not to have a marketing plan is a sure route to losses and unhappy entrepreneurs. This concept can also be applied to a city in which urban planning does not seem to be the focus at all. Proper planning can prevent chaotic development and urban deterioration – and there is a special relationship between marketing and urban planning.

Growth takes place when people move into a city that offers good business opportunities. The more people, the more customers – and consequently the better employment prospects. More money is shuffled around, better living opportunities arise, and the entertainment business forms part of that success. But how do you organize such a great endeavor? By proper urban and city planning.

It could be argued that growth itself will take care of a city's needs, but there's a catch to this – growth will bring about many activities that, if not planned accordingly, will quickly interfere with each other. When this happens, quality of life is the first urban concept to suffer.

As a city expands and commerce grows, both governmental institutions and private companies profit. If the city is the capital of a nation, for instance, it will grow because the government is located there and it is the largest employer; that, in turn, creates all sorts of supporting businesses.

An industrial city is similar, in that it creates employment. The more intensive and variable the industry, the greater the employment opportunities and the need for supporting smaller industries – which in turn generate more jobs.

If a city's main business is tourism, it depends on visitors who come to enjoy particular amenities that the region offers. Employment is generated in all occupations, be they services, construction or entertainment.



FIRST PERSON

Pedro Glucksmann, a professor in transportation and urban planning at the Central University of Caracas, has more than 35 years' experience in transport engineering. He was involved in planning subway systems in the Venezuelan cities of Caracas and Valencia, as well as in Toronto, Canada.

Here, he turns a critical eye on the rampant growth of Phuket.

The transformation of Phuket from a tin-mining center to a major tourist attraction is a clear example. The population growth of this city has been amazing. United Nations' figures show the resident population at the start of 2002 was 261,386 people. Yet annual tourist arrivals are now at least three million, and this brings in foreign currency.

To better understand the concept of urban or city planning for somewhere like Phuket, it is important to recognize and identify the problems that can cause a place to become critically vulnerable to maladies that can quickly lead to uncontrollable urban growth.

As a Transportation Engineer and Urban Planner, I decided to check out Phuket as a tourist destination while I was here, making a trip that began in Patong and ended in downtown Phuket.

First, I walked along the Patong beachfront from Ocean Plaza at the southern end toward Soi Bangla. I had to dodge traffic continuously, especially tuk-tuks and motorcycles, since the sidewalks had either been de-

stroyed [by the tsunami] or were unfinished, meaning I had to walk on the street itself.

Where there was a sidewalk, I was constantly harassed by shopkeepers, and often took to the street again in an effort to avoid them. But this did enable me to make a comparison with my hometown, where everything is planned and orderly.

Reaching Soi Bangla, I found sidewalk bars everywhere. In the evenings, Bangla turns pedestrian so people can walk freely without worrying about being knocked over. Pedestrianization is good, and is used by city planners to expand open city spaces, which would otherwise not be available.

Having said that, the steady thump of music and the people there have made Soi Bangla an "adults-only" circus.

When I reached the road parallel to the beach, Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd, the pandemonium was worse. The traffic was bad at the beach road, but here you couldn't even tell where the traffic lanes were, much less identify sidewalks. In the battle between cars

and pedestrians, the cars usually win. And there are restaurants everywhere, harassing passers-by in an attempt to lure them inside for a fast and impersonal meal.

At this point, I decided to board a bus to Phuket City. I wanted to be able to relax and have a quiet meal. The bus made a frantic trip over the rollercoaster road connecting Patong to Phuket City, but when we arrived I found the same hullabaloo and similar traffic congestion.

Walking on a sidewalk in Phuket City was just as difficult and confusing. One thing I did notice was that the façades of many buildings were uniformly aligned with the street, giving the impression that at some time in the past there must have been city planning that contributed to an orderly way of life.

Now, sadly, the same disorderliness of Patong has taken over on the sidewalks, which are littered with unsightly banners, street vendors obstructing access, and overhead cables covering the old buildings and blocking the view of the sky.

It was easy to see that a lack of city planning and control had taken hold, allowing the former city center to become impoverished. A once exclusive place has become "the backside of town".

Most of these maladies have a remedy. Preventive measures can solve a city's severe problems, and are also the main way to avoid future obstacles.

In order to stem rapid and ad hoc growth of a city, one has to call in "doctors" such as Urban Planners, Traffic Engineers and Transportation Engineers. They will examine the patient to determine its different illnesses, and prescribe action to enable it to recover and avoid future disorders.

But for this to happen, the concept of urban planning has to be planted in the minds of the city leaders. If there is no willingness to admit that this is necessary, then the city is likely to collapse and become a "chaos destination".

Is this what the civic leaders of Phuket want? I doubt it. But there has to be political motivation if things are to get better.

One solution is better land use, which would attract investment since big-spending developers will look upon Phuket as a high-grade investment area offering more security and control. More taxes would be generated for the municipality in the process.

In Phuket, proper urban and town planning will have to be undertaken using the clear concept of what is being developed – a sound tourist destination. Since its main economic focus is now tourism, Phuket must not lose this potential. If corrective action is not taken soon and there is no clear master plan, there will be an irreversible process of self-destruction and chaos on a grand scale.

There is still time to launch the planning process, but the city leaders must want to deal with what is now a pressing issue – everything depends on their willingness to proceed with an urban plan that will benefit the people.

Must I pay the locals for parking my car near Laem Singh Beach?

I was under the impression that one can go to any beach without paying a fee. At Laem Singh, however, a number of locals have come up with a great idea: instead of charging tourists for going to the beach, they charge them for parking along the main road.

Their "parking lot" seems to be very long, extending all the way from where Kamala ends to where Surin begins.

It is surely very doubtful that they own all this land.

The roadside next to Laem Singh is, to my knowledge, the only place in Phuket where one has to pay a parking fee.

Could the authorities check if these people have the right to charge tourists and residents for parking and where exactly their "parking lot" starts and ends?

Khun John
Laem Singh

Jaran Sararak, President of Kamala Tambon Administration Organization, replies:

If you pay to park there, it is understood that the locals will watch out for your car while you are at the beach.

If you refuse to pay, however, this does not give them the right to harm your vehicle.

The locals do not own the roadside there; it is public property and anyone is allowed to park there without paying a fee.

If anyone has complaints, they should report them to us and we will investigate. Our telephone number is 076-385640.

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

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S MIRACLE

Historians do not come more distinguished than David McCullough. He has won two Pulitzer Prizes and two National Book Awards. His latest is *1776* (Simon & Schuster, New York, 2005, 386pp). The story is about the birth of a nation, told through the voices of American and British soldiers and civilians, generals and privates. Most of all, it is the story of George Washington, whose words form the book's epigraph, "Perseverance and spirit have done wonders in all ages."

An interesting sideline to this story is that had events played slightly differently, the capital of the United States of America might have been called Lee. And the title "Father of His Country" might refer to Charles Lee, Washington's second-in-command, who had defeated the British in South Carolina while Washington lost the battles of Brooklyn and White Plains – plus the two vital forts that were supposed to block the British Navy from the Hudson River.

Even Washington's trusted adjutant-general Joseph Reed, in a letter to Lee, lamented Washington's indecisiveness.

And Lee was more than ready to assume command.

The matter became moot when Lee was captured by British cavalry at a New Jersey tavern – a stunning blow to the American cause.

Washington's great strength was the intense loyalty of his best generals, Nathaniel Greene and Henry Knox. It was Knox, a 25-year-old Boston bookseller, who might be said to have set the American Revolution rolling.

While the Americans laid siege to General William Howe's army in Boston, Knox came up with the idea of hauling the British cannon captured at far-off Fort Ticonderoga by Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain Boys and installing them on Boston's Dorchester Heights. This took General Howe completely by surprise, and he ordered Boston evacuated. The Americans had won their first victory.

The scene was then switched to New York City. Washington fortified the city in preparation for a British invasion by sea. A third of the inhabitants fled – mercantile loyalists rather than the fierce patriots of Boston. Henry Knox wrote to his wife

Lucy about his impressions of New York:

"The people – why the people are magnificent: in their carriages, which are numerous, in their house furniture, which is fine, in their pride and conceit, which are inimitable, in their profaneness, which is intolerable, in the want of principle, which is prevalent, in their Toryism, which is insufferable."

When the fleet did arrive on July 12, 1776, eight days after the Declaration of Independence was adopted, it was not a sight for the fainthearted.

"Nothing like it had ever been seen in New York," McCullough writes. "The total British armada now at anchor in a 'long, thick cluster' off Staten Island numbered nearly four hundred ships large and small, seventy-three warships, including eight ships of the line, each mounting 50 guns or more. As British officers happily reminded one another, it was the largest fleet ever seen in American waters. In fact, it was the largest expeditionary force of the eighteenth century, the largest, most powerful force ever sent forth from Britain or any nation..."

"It was a display of military might

past imagining. All told, 32,000 troops had landed on Staten Island, a well-armed, well-equipped, trained force more numerous than the entire population of New York, or even Philadelphia which, with a population of about 30,000, was the largest city in America."

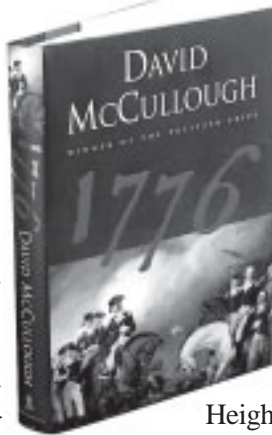
Opposing them was Washington's ragtag band of state militias. In the Battle of Brooklyn, he was swiftly defeated after loyalists showed the British an unguarded pass which allowed them to outflank the Americans. Many men trying to surrender were simply bayoneted.

Washington would be in retreat for the next half year, limping across New Jersey and taking shelter on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware River. On Christmas Day, he made his famous crossing back to New Jersey to rout a Hessian force – and then win another battle at Princeton.

The war would last another six and a half grueling years until the Treaty of Paris in 1783. McCullough concludes: "Especially for those who had been with Washington and who knew what a close call it was at the beginning... the outcome seemed little short of a miracle."

Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt



Wave goodbye: "The other thing I didn't like was that too many people in business or who offer services to farangs pull on your heartstrings and keep referring back to the tsunami.

"Yes, we know it was terrible and yes we feel for you and the hell you must have been through, but it was so bad that even when negotiating a tuk-tuk fare, you would try and be reasonable with the ridiculous prices they quoted you.

"Asked for 100 baht to literally just take you around the corner, to which you would ask substantially less, they would come back with 'tsunami, my life no good' and give you one hell of an evil look.

Sorry, but that sort of carry on won't win too many friends. I guess it works with some people though so they will continue to use it." (1)

Battling a wave of irritation

Pee'd off in Patong: "Phuket was the worst part of my trip. Not that it was expensive, rather the greed factor there was increased from its usual obscene high levels throughout Thailand, by a factor of a hundred in Phuket.

"And it happened as soon as I arrived: From KS, took a ferry to some town, and then the minibus.

"Once arrived in Phuket, the driver forced us to wait in the minibus for his travel agency to open, so they could book us in their hotels for a hefty commission – and it was raining so our luggage was getting soaked.

"We waited nearly two hours, and it took a revolt of ten extremely pissed farangs to get

'The worst part of Phuket was on the Patong boardwalk. No, not the katoeys. Far worse were the merchants, who would literally harass the farang to buy their overpriced touristy crap. I felt sorry for the tourist who travelled half way around the world just to be harassed.'

the driver to move. Of course after the wait, without previous notice they still charged us an extra 150 baht per person to take us to Patong Beach, and we had no alternative, as there were no other busses or taxis around.

"However, the worst part of Phuket was on the Patong boardwalk. No, not the katoeys. Far worse were the merchants, who would literally harass the farang to buy their overpriced touristy crap. I felt sorry for the tourist who travelled half way around the world just to be harassed.

"If you give me an address, I will write a formal complaint to those in authority, if you think it

would help. I would not recommend Patong to anyone – not until they clean up those harassing merchants" (2)

You REALLY like it here?

"Patong is very, very touristy, this is where a lot of Europeans come to vacation. It was very interesting view on the beach today, lots of topless women. Man can life get any better...chill'n on the beach, relaxing, with gorgeous women all around you...lmao!" (3)

Sleepy Phuket and naughty Patong: "The bus dropped us off in Phuket Town and we found a hotel. That night we just went out

to dinner and went to sleep. When we got up in the morning, we tried walking around town, but everything was closed.

"Unfortunately, we are finding out that there are very few foreigners in Phuket Town. All of the tourists go straight to the beaches... which is a little bit of a haul. The whole island of Phuket is probably the size of Sarasota and Bradenton. To get anywhere, you have to drive...

"Hat Patong is quite expensive, and way too crowded. We were looking for foreigners, and my god, did we find them! There are sooooo many people. The sex industry is really big there too. There are tons of strip clubs, and you see hookers everywhere. Everywhere you look there is an old man with a young Thai girl.

"Another thing that was a little overwhelming was the beach. Blake and I were thinking it was going to be really big and beautiful, but it's not.

"The hotels have bought sections of the beach to put lounge chairs for their guests, and now the whole beach is so covered with lounge chairs that there isn't much room for the public. Hat Patong just isn't a place I would ever associate with relaxation. Blake and I give it a thumbs down." (4)

Cool Britannia? "Heineken Beer Bottle 70 – 110. Singha Beer Bottle 70 – 100. Chang Beer Bottle 60 – 80. Whinecooler 70 – 120" (5)."

Biggest erection in Patong? "There's a very simple reason

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NATURE NOTES

By Dave Williams

In among the Agamids



taken in Khao Sok National Park in Surat Thani, but this lizard also lives in Phuket.

It is most often seen clinging to small trees or bushes. You'll need to keep your eyes peeled, though; it's very easy to miss because it stays perfectly still most of the time.

Like geckos, agamids can shed their tails to distract attackers; however, this doesn't happen as easily as it does with other lizards. Interestingly, when the tail grows back, it does so without bone; only cartilage will be in the replacement tail.

So take a walk around your yard or visit one of the many lovely parks in Phuket. Looking carefully, you have a good chance of seeing one of the interesting agamid lizards. Good luck with your hunting – and don't forget your camera.

Dave Williams runs eco-expedition company Paddle Asia. For details, visit www.paddleasia.com

Can I be the only person who has noticed that every other wildlife show on TV these days appears to be about reptiles? Most of the reptiles they show are venomous or dangerous, but that's not the full story.

There are plenty of very interesting non-venomous reptiles around Phuket. The agamid lizards (family Agamidae) for example, are abundant and easy to spot. You may even have some in your yard.

Agamid lizards are characterized by very long tails and the many spines running from the head to the tail, as well as small irregular scales. In captivity, agamids usually live between eight and 12 years.

This family of lizards, found in Asia, Australia and Africa, are considered to be the Old World equivalent of the iguanas (family Iguanidae).

Agamids have dewlaps, a flap of skin on the throat that they

use – either by changing its color or flaring it – to show their mood, to communicate with other agamids or to ward off competing males.

Other interesting ways that these lizards communicate include bobbing their head, doing “push ups”, tail wagging and flaring their head crests.

The most common agamid lizards in Phuket include the

horned tree lizard, the cross-bearing tree lizard and the garden fence lizard. These all average nine to 12cm long from the tip of their noses to their vents (the underside just before the tail).

Their tails are longer than their body length. As they all tend to play possum, you can usually get surprisingly close to them.

The beautiful reddish-colored lizard in the photo was shot

in my front yard. It's a lovely male garden fence lizard in its breeding colors.

Aside from in my yard, it can be found in parks such as Khao Pra Taew, Kathu Waterfall, Ton Sai and Bang Pae, residential gardens, in secondary growth areas and of course in what's left of the island's jungle.

The other photo is of a horned tree lizard. This photo was

OUTSIDE IN

By Lis Kinswoman

Hello youngsters! I thought this week we would have a look at the most depraved, lowdown, disgustingly filthy aspects of Patong that could be printed, but then I remembered we did that last week, and the week before, and the week before that. Oh well, I guess it's back to normal, then.

that the gay center in Phuket escaped any destruction from the tsunami, and it doesn't have anything to do with politics, religion or sexual preferences.

“If you know the layout of Phuket and Patong Beach in particular, you'll remember that the Paradise Hotel complex is quite a distance back from the beach, on the otherside of 2nd Road, and the waves only went inland about half way to this road.

“The gays might claim moral superiority, but they really only escaped the devastation since they prefer to party in the tallest phallic building on the island.” (6)

(1) <http://www.stickmanbangkok.com/Weekly2006/weekly249.htm>

(2) <http://www.stickmanbangkok.com/Weekly/weekly78.html>

(3) http://www.travelpod.com/cgi-bin/guest.pl?web_UID=wldndfireghtr&tweb_tripID=thailand-2004&tweb_entryID=1101077760&tweb_PID=tpod

(4) <http://www.travelpost.com/travel/Lindseystravels>

(5) <http://phuket.as/bar.php>

(6) http://www.theswanker.com/macammacam/2005/01/phuket_gays_sta.html

Phuket Diary Upcoming events on the island

To May 31: Art exhibition.

YArt! Gallery at the Crowne Plaza, Karon Beach, is hosting its second art exhibition, titled *Fantasie*, which showcases a combination of surrealist and impressionist works by Thailand's finest artists.

The exhibition is open to the public free of charge. For more information contact yartgallery@gmail.com

May 27 and 28: Phuket International Rugby 10s.

The Phuket 10s takes place this year at Karon Stadium.

Twenty-three teams from nine countries have confirmed they will take part.

Rainbow Warriors from South Africa, last year's champions, have confirmed that they will return to defend their title.

Other teams, in addition to Phuket's own Vagabonds, include former champs the Moorabbin Rams (formerly the Melbourne

Cruiser Rams), and the 2003 champs British Club Bangkok, which will field two sides.

May 1: Labor Day.

Public holiday for all private sector workers; government offices will remain open.

May 5: Coronation Day, public holiday:

Coronation Day commemorates the ascension to the throne of HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej on May 5, 1950.

May 11: Royal Ploughing Ceremony Day, public holiday.

This auspicious occasion, which predates even the birth of the Lord Buddha, marks the traditional beginning of the rice-planting season.

The Ploughing Lord – appointed by HM the King – performs ancient rites and attempts to forecast the rainfall for the coming months, to predict whether

the rice seedlings about to be planted will provide a bountiful crop this year.

May 13: Le Meridien 6th Golf Tournament.

The Le Meridien 6th Golf Tournament will be held on Saturday, May 13 at Phuket Country Club.

The entrance fee of 2,700 baht for local residents and 3,500 baht for non-residents includes the green fee, caddie fee, a polo shirt and the awards dinner.

The tournament will start at

7:00 am followed by the dinner, at Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort.

For further details contact K. Punjaporn at tel: 01-7473036 or K. Narumon at Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort tel: 076-340480, or K. Sirichai at Phuket Country Club tel: 076-321038.

July 2-30: Sports & Adventure Camp.

For details of the camp at the British Curriculum International School, email: summer@bcis.ac.th

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ON THE MOVE

The new Superintendent of Phuket Immigration Office is **Pol Col Bunpot Kongkachandra**, 55, from Bangkok. He holds a degree in political science from Chiang Mai University and has worked as a police officer in many provinces. Before moving to Phuket he was Superintendent of the Southern Immigration Center in Songkhla.



Courts Megastore (Thailand), has appointed Jackie Dodd, 44, from Oxfordshire, England, as Director of Consumer Credit. She has 25 years' experience in retail with Courts in Britain, Singapore and Papua New Guinea. Before moving to Phuket she was the Director of Financial Services with Courts in Papua New Guinea.



Alam Singh Chauhan has been appointed Indian Chef at the JW Marriott Phuket Resort & Spa. In his home town of Mumbai, he worked in well-known restaurants and hotels including the Vintage Restaurant, the Residency Park Hotel, the Royal Challenge Restaurant, the Citizen Hotel and the Suyagi Family Restaurant.



PASSWORD PUZZLES

KHUN WOODY'S COMPUTER

You can't live with 'em and ya can't live without 'em. Once upon a time, passwords were a joke – put a password on a Word document, and anybody with a little bit of know-how, and a free downloaded program, could crack the doc in a few minutes.

Some software companies made a pile of cash selling cracking programs that looked at the scrambled password inside a document, shifted a few things around, and popped out the original password in no time.

Those times have changed. Man, have they changed. It's now a point of conjecture whether the CIA, the US National Security Agency and/or the Department of Homeland Security have the methods to crack a typical password-protected document. If they don't have the magic key, a brute-force attack on a simple Word document could take hours – and on the fastest super-computers available.

THINK YOU'RE CLEVER? The 100 most common passwords

0	123asd	enable	patrick
000000	123qwe	foobar	pc
00000000	2002	god	pw
007	2003	godblessyou	pw123
1	2600	home	pwd
110	54321	ihavenopass	qwer
111	654321	Internet	root
111111	88888888	Login	secret
11111111	a	login	server
12	aaa	love	sex
121212	abc	mypass	super
123	abc123	mypass123	sybase
123123	abcd	mypc	temp
1234	Admin	mypc123	temp123
12345	admin	oracle	test
123456	admin123	owner	test123
1234567	administrator	pass	win
12345678	alpha	passwd	xp
123456789	asdf	Password	xxx
1234qwer	computer	password	yxcv
123abc	database	pat	zxcv

You can still buy programs that stand a fair chance of cracking open a document, sooner or later. They use dictionaries and lists of the most common passwords – and they blast away with hundreds of combinations a minute. Some of them (see, for

example, lastbit.com/password-recovery-methods.asp) take advantage of weaknesses in the way Microsoft implemented Office document password protection. Clever.

Document passwords are just a small part of the problem, of course. If you're like me, you have passwords coming out your ears – not just passwords for Windows and specific documents, but online banking passwords, shopping site passwords, subscription passwords and reservation system passwords. Even, yes, a password for PhuketGazette.net.

The longer, and more varied, your password the better. For example, if you have a six-character password, all lower case, a fast PC can easily generate and test all the possibilities in 10 minutes or so. But if you use an eight-character password and combine punctuation and numbers with

upper and lower case, the same PC would take about three years. Big difference, eh?

Some experts recommend that you use very long passwords, peppered with upper and lower case letters, numbers, punctuation marks and the like – and it's even better if you misspell a word or two, or use archaic words, to subvert dictionary-based attacks. My favorite is Ye.Olde.Sand?wich. Shoppe. It's easy for me to remember, and it'd take a couple centuries to crack. I bet you can dream up something similar.

The worst passwords? The ones that everybody uses – "Password" and "password" top the list. Your name, your nickname, your spouse or significant other's name, or the name of anyone close to you. Your birthday, your spouse's birthday, your kids' birthdays. Your telephone number, national ID number or passport number or email address. Your bank ATM PIN number. And you may as well hang a sign on your back that says "Kick Me" if you use any of the passwords in the list above left.

So how do you keep track of all of your passwords? Every method I've encountered has a critical flaw, or two or three... Of course, the worst possible way to keep track of your online passwords is to jot them down on a yellow note and stick it on your monitor. (Raise your hand if guilty as charged.)

I keep a notebook containing all sorts of access numbers, settings, and the like, along with my passwords, but the passwords are written in a weird shorthand that's discernible only to me. I think. The Achilles Heel for that approach, of course, manifests itself when I forget to bring my notebook on a trip. Doh!

I try to minimize the num-

ber of different passwords that I use, but that, too, carries its own danger: if my password on one website is compromised, all of the other sites that use the same password are considerably more vulnerable. So if I use the same password for eBay and Kasikornbank, say, and somebody gets their hands on a bunch of eBay passwords, they might be able to crack my bank account. You can't win for losin'.

I've started using a program that's called Roboform (www.roboform.com), and which keeps track of all my online passwords. It can generate truly random passwords with the click of a button, but I don't use the password generator: I still assign passwords manually and write them down in my log book. Roboform really shines in its ability to remember passwords and fill in Web forms automatically.

Every time I go to www.eBay.com, for example, Roboform fills in my user name and password. Amazon, too. Same with Kasikornbank – even in Thai. I have to remember the one password for Roboform; after that, everything else is filled in automatically.

Roboform won't log on to Windows for me, and it doesn't remember the passwords on my documents or spreadsheets. But it does keep track of every online password I've ever used, and regurgitates the passwords I need with absolutely no hassle. Best of all, Roboform can store all my passwords on a key drive – fully encrypted, of course, so they can't be retrieved by anyone but me. Every time I log on to a computer, I slip the key drive in a USB slot, and Roboform takes care of the rest. Very cool.

The evaluation version of Roboform (which can store up to 20 passwords) is free. The "Pro" version, with unlimited storage and several additional features, costs US\$30 (about 1,200 baht). It's one of the few Windows add-on utilities that I've paid for, and I use it many times every day.

– **Woody Leonhard**

Woody's website, AskWoody.com, covers all the latest news in the wacky world of Windows and Office. Email him at woody@khunwoody.com

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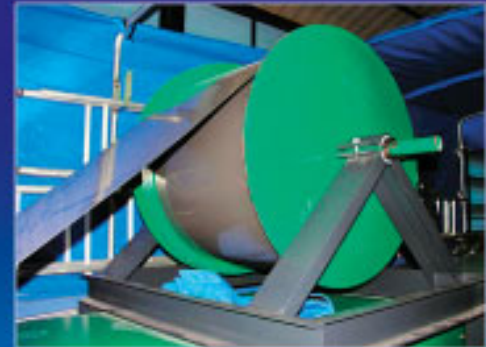
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One of the more interesting – and least discussed – emerging markets in the world is South Africa. It is a country of enormous contrasts – economic, climatic, cultural and linguistic.

To try to assess the country by speaking to its citizens merely leaves the researcher with a paradox. Some South Africans believe the country is almost paradise on earth, while others think virtually the opposite.

From a tourist's viewpoint, the former will usually be the conclusion, as it is a place of outstanding natural beauty and diversity of scenery. Its crime statistics, on the other hand, are horrific.

Nature has endowed South Africa with a treasure trove of minerals and natural resources, from gold to diamonds, coal to platinum. The only missing mineral is bauxite, which is used to produce aluminum.

SURPRISES

For those who have never been to South Africa, a first trip will result in many surprises. Two French bankers I hosted some 20 years ago in Johannesburg were absolutely astounded – “It looks like New York,” said one, while the other said he had never seen so many Mercedes-Benz and BMW cars in his life.

However, the five-star hotel where they stayed in central Johannesburg is now a two-star, and the city center would be far too dangerous these days as a place for an evening stroll.

A tour of the suburbs, though, will reveal beautiful properties, advanced infrastructure and world-class shopping.

The financial structure of the country is long-established and sophisticated. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to try to measure it against any other emerging market – South Africa's financial infrastructure is just so much more advanced.

SOUTH AFRICA WORTH TAKING A LOOK AT



FISCAL ATTRACTION: South Africa has stunning scenery, and a lot more, including profitable investments for those willing to take a bit of a risk. – Photo by EPA/Nic Bothma

Under extreme political pressure in 1986, the British banking group Barclays was forced to sell its subsidiary in South Africa. This was a substantial operation, with more than 1,000 branches throughout the country.

The pressure was not exerted from inside South Africa itself, but came mainly from the Barclays home base in the UK.

Demonstrators protested outside British branches against the group's involvement in South Africa, then ruled under *apartheid*, and some major charities – including Oxfam – moved their accounts to other banks. This created substantial negative publicity.

In 2005, however, Barclays went back. It bought the South African operation of ABSA – Amalgamated Banks of South Africa – the largest banking group in the country. South Africa is now “politically correct”, and there was no political opposition to the deal.

Ironically, the new bank is a direct competitor with the old one Barclays sold. The economic dominance of South Africa over the remainder of sub-Saharan Africa is plain; its population enjoys by far the highest standard of living.

Sixty per cent of electricity generated in all of Africa is South African-sourced.

The country also enjoys an investment-grade credit rating with all of the major international

credit rating agencies.

Although the country has 11 official languages, English dominates the business and political worlds. In politics, the use of any other language could easily lead to interpretations of tribal bias, so English has become the most politically correct language. The rising African middle class also regards the ability to speak English as a status symbol.

The financial markets are large, long-established and extremely professional. South Africa is home to many dynamic companies involved in a very wide range of activities. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that three of the 100 companies in the British FTSE 100 Index – the “Footsie” – are of South African origin.

But this is merely the tip of the iceberg. South Africa was one of the earliest developers of nuclear power, for both military and civil purposes. The govern-



MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson

ment tested its first nuclear device in 1967, but decided that it did not quite trust its successors during the run-up to “full” democracy in 1994.

Before the elections, the outgoing regime contacted the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to decommission its nuclear weapons – and the IAEA still uses South Africa as the ultimate model for the decommissioning because of the level of co-operation it received.

For investors with a reasonably adventurous streak, South Africa should be on their radar screens. There are many ways of investing there, but, to give my personal recommendation, it would have to be the Orbis Group.

EXPERIENCE

Orbis has lengthy experience in the South African investment market, via a company called Allan Gray Ltd – pension fund managers based in Cape Town.

Mr Gray is the founder and Chairman of Orbis, and its pension fund management operation has become an investment legend. The Orbis Africa Equity (Rand) Fund is an offshore fund based in Bermuda.

Since its inception in 1998, the fund has achieved a return of 1,269.94%. Its benchmark, the FTSE/JSE Africa All Share Index, made a gain of 277.84% in the same period.

The strategy of the fund is to invest mainly in South African equities, and it seeks to earn higher returns on the South African stock exchange with no greater risk than the index.

The fund does not hedge currency (the South African Rand), therefore there is a currency risk for foreign investors. Minimum investment is US\$50,000 or other currency equivalent. The Fund is rated “AAA” by Standard & Poor's.

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

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Dusit Laguna first in Asia with ETVi

By Chris Husted

CHERNG TALAY: Dusit Laguna Resort (DLR) on March 28 inked a deal with ETV Interactive (ETVi) that will see the resort receive a huge upgrade in-room entertainment technology, with the system expected to be online June 1.

The high-speed system will be ETVi's first in Asia.

ETVi, which is based in the UK, recently opened an office in Bangkok, its first in Asia. It is also looking to open branches in the US and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) later this year.

Dusit Laguna Resort General Manager Jan Verduyn told the *Gazette* that the system will give the resort access to more than 250 terrestrial TV channels, of which 30 will be available to guests at any one time.

"This gives our guests personalized viewing, and we will no longer need to keep rescheduling our satellite television arrangements. With ETVi, guests can watch television programs from China, Singapore, Sweden, Russia, Spain, Greece, Latvia – there are even African channels," he explained.

16 LANGUAGES

Guests will also have access to real-time, on-demand movies. "They will be able to watch a movie when they want, stop it and go and eat, then come back and finish watching the movie," he said.

However, Mr Verduyn explained that ETVi will offer much more than expanded TV viewing. The welcome screen will initially offer ETVi in 16 languages, although the system can accommodate up to 50 languages.

It will also offer high-speed Internet access through both hardwired and WiFi connections direct to the resort's 10 Mbps network, allowing guests to order room service and check their hotel bill in real time through the system.

Mr Verduyn said, "I can have the television in a guest's room set to their native language with the flick of a keystroke," adding that guests will have the option of changing the language to their preference. "They will be



Dusit Laguna Resort General Manager Jan Verduyn (2nd from left) shakes hands with ETVi Business Development Manager (Asia) James Hankewich at the March 28 contract-signing.

able to watch the movies in the language of their choice, with subtitles of their choice."

The movie database will be stored on hard drive at the resort, with ETVi regularly updating it via modem with new releases as they become available.

"As with DVDs, guests will have the option of which language soundtrack and subtitles [they want] for the movie," Mr Verduyn said.

Every room will be connected to the main server at the resort via fiber-optic cable, delivering digital content to the television set, explained Andy Trigg, DLR's Director of Engineering. LCD TVs in the Dusit Club Rooms will also be connected.

"The hotel will operate the system on a day-to-day basis, but ETVi can assist with any technical problems via modem 24/7, or send an engineer if needed," he added.

Beyond in-room entertainment, the system will also be able to deliver emergency warnings – including tsunami warnings – in each room in the guest's native tongue.

"In case of a tsunami warning or a fire, we can give evacu-

ation details in the guest's native language, with maps showing where the nearest evacuation

assembly point is from that particular room," said Mr Verduyn.

Mr Verduyn added that the

system also provides a non-intrusive way to inform guests of resort functions. "It is an interactive, friendly, non-disturbing way to inform our guests of events at the [Laguna] resorts. We can have the system inform guests of, say fireworks at [Laguna] that evening, letting them know the time and place," he said.

"It's a fully integrated system – and it's limitless," he said. "What we do with it is up to us."

While not at liberty to divulge details of the financial arrangement of setting up and running ETVi at the resort, Mr Verduyn explained that it is a "revenue sharing arrangement", with ETVi footing the installation bill. "It is expensive, but it pays off with the pay-per-use packages," he said.

He explained that the launch of ETVi at DLR is the simply the result of coincidental timing. "The profile of the hotel suited them. It is good for us and it gives ETVi the chance to break into the Asian market," he said.

However, he added that it is a non-exclusive deal between the two. "I believe ETVi is flexible in what arrangements it might make with other hotels," he said.

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Among all of the professionals working in the dive industry in Phuket, there is one who stands out from the crowd.

Dokmai "Born" Chada has not only become the first Scuba Schools International (SSI) instructor here who is Thai; she was also the first Thai woman to achieve the qualification.

There are Thai PADI dive masters, Thai PADI instructors and one Thai PADI course director on Phuket, but until K. Born came along, there were no native Thai SSI-certified professionals.

PADI is the Professional Association of Diving Instructors, and there is essentially no difference between its courses and those run by SSI. Each is as good as the other.

SSI is merely another option for dive training. Like PADI, it is a diver-training program that provides training from entry level to professional level, and its certification is accepted worldwide. There are only five SSI training centers on Phuket, but SSI is growing. On Koh Tao in Surat Thani Province, for example, nearly half of the dive shops offer SSI certification courses.

One of the SSI training facilities in Phuket is Ocean Lovers Diving Center in Karon, and it provides the SSI option for diving instruction and continuing education up to instructor level. Simon Speight, K. Born's SSI Instructor Trainer at Ocean Lovers, told me proudly that not only did she pass the examinations, but she also scored a perfect 100%.

Originally from Mukdahan in Isarn, K. Born moved to Ray-



Born Chada teaches Australian Terry Wright his SSI Open Water diving course.

their live-aboard boats and is now also the tour leader on their two-day speedboat trips in the area. On a recent trip from Phuket, she sighted a whale shark and two mantas during a single dive.

K. Born decided to further her professional career and become an instructor. She was faced with the choice of either PADI or SSI to attain her instructor qualification.

"I knew a lot about the PADI system already. So I thought, 'Why not SSI?' It would be interesting, and I could always cross over to PADI later," she explains.

Becoming an SSI instructor means that, in addition to guiding dives, she can teach the entry-level course to beginners as well.

"The ITC (Instructor Training Course) lasted two and a half weeks. I found it difficult, because it was not in my first language," K. Born says. "I studied every night until 3 or 4 am."

"During the exam I was very nervous, but the examiner helped us feel relaxed and comfortable – he was like a friend," K. Born says. How did she feel when she was told she had scored a perfect 100%? "I was surprised," she says.

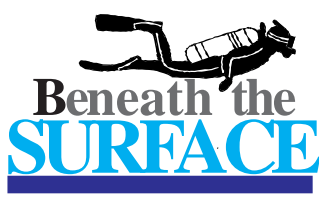
Her plan now is to stay busy for the rest of the season with Ocean Lovers, and to teach courses.

As for the future, K. Born says, "I'd like to see more Thais become divers and work professionally in diving. They are far fewer than the foreign professionals here. Every time I see a Thai client who loves diving I'm so happy – and they, too, are happy to have a Thai dive master."

For further information contact Simon Speight of Ocean Lovers Dive Center at Tel: 076-286471 or visit the website www.phuket-diving-thailand.com

A STAR IS BORN

ong where she went to college. After graduating, she found work on a sailing yacht, and it was at Langkawi in Malaysia that she took the decision that one day she would learn to dive, when she could afford it.



By Sylvie Yaffe

It was not until she came to Phuket and secured an administrative job in a dive shop that she did her first dive. And that was it – she loved it from the word "go".

In October, 2002, she did her PADI Open Water course.

"It was exciting," she says of her first experience diving at Koh Racha Yai, south of Phuket. "I thought it was perfect, wonderful and amazing."

"I read the Thai version of the PADI Open Water book, but

I did the exam in English. It was quite hard for me, because four years ago my English was not that good. The rest of my dive education was all in English, as there are no continuing education materials in Thai."

She became a PADI-certified dive master, one step lower than instructor, in 2003. "The first time guiding I was nervous," she says, "but after a few times it seemed quite natural. It was fun."

At the time, K. Born never even thought about progressing to become an instructor.

"I didn't think I would be in this industry for very long," she says. "I was just a happy dive master. I thought it was just another experience for me."

"During the 2005 low season after the tsunami, I quit my job and thought about what I could do. I had actually saved enough

money to do the instructor's course, but if I did it and then didn't get work, I would have no money left."

K. Born decided she wanted to do something on her own. "So for 10,000 baht I started my own business selling *somtam*, barbecued chicken and sticky rice. I had a cart and walked around with it. Some days I made 400 baht, which was enough." After just 17 days she had made enough money for another change.

"I leased a laundry business with two friends. We called it H3O. We also taught English and translated letters. Business was very good."

For the 2006 high season, K. Born decided to look for a diving job, and she went to the Ocean Lovers Diving Center – taking her CV with her.

"I spoke with Simon Speight and the Thai owner, Ramphai 'Kai' Bouchara. I liked them a lot – it felt like a family, and I felt I fitted in. That was important."

She began working for Ocean Lovers, guiding dives on

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FIFA boss Blatter inspects B30m project in Phuket

By Sam Wilkinson

CAPE PANWA: Joseph "Sepp" Blatter, President of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), association football's world governing body, and Mohamed bin Hammam, President of the Asian Football Association (AFC), visited Ao Nam Bor School in Ao Makham on April 5 to mark a donation of 30 million baht to boost local kids' soccer.

The visit was part of FIFA and AFC's Tsunami Fund distribution drive in tsunami-affected countries.

FIFA and AFC's one-day stopover in Phuket took place to mark the donation of a package that includes two football pitches and training facilities along with a two-story athletes' residence with 47 rooms, all of which is being built on 30 rai at Cape Panwa.

The facilities will serve local children affected by the tsunami.

Phuket Governor Udomsak Usvarangkura and Eam Thavornwongse, Chairman of the Phuket Chamber of Commerce, along with Thawatchai Satjakun, President of the Football Association of Thailand, were on hand to welcome the soccer ambassadors.



Mohamed bin Hammam, Sepp Blatter and Governor Udomsak Usvarangkura listen to a progress report on the new Cape Panwa soccer facilities.

FIFA and the AFC have provided clubhouses, training centers, ancillary facilities and equipment throughout tsunami-hit regions in Asia.

In his speech, Mohamed bin Hammam, who is also Chair-

man of FIFA's Tsunami Task Force, said, "FIFA is not only about a game; it is about humanity."

The often-controversial Mr Blatter commented, "Participation in football games assists the young who have experienced severe emotional trauma as a result of a disaster, [helping] to restore their social and psychological health."

The project is expected to be completed in six to nine months.

After inspecting the construction site, Mr Blatter flew back to Switzerland.

After inspecting the construction site, Mr Blatter flew back to Switzerland.

After inspecting the construction site, Mr Blatter flew back to Switzerland.

Final match played on Lakes Course, then renovation begins

MAI KHAO: Blue Canyon Country Club (BCCC) recently held a seven-hole cross-country scramble golf tournament on its Lakes Course before renovations to the course started on April 3.

The scramble was made up of 12 teams of four golfers each, comprising members and management of BCCC.

After about two-and-a-half-hours' play, a tag team of husband and wife duos, Wan Azfar, Rajazakiah, and Gordon and Susan Watson emerged winners, with a combined score of 20.8 points.

The event concluded on a high note, with the winners receiving framed autographed BCCC flags to commemorate their win and the occasion.

This was followed by a ceremony in which Sia Leng Yuen, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Blue Canyon Country Club, took a spade to the 18th green to signify the start of the renovations.



DIGGING IN: Sia Leng Yuen (right) Chairman and CEO of Blue Canyon Country Club, and Golf Course Superintendent Heath Glasby wield unusual pieces of golfing gear.

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Didi's do the doubles – again

PATONG: It all comes down to the doubles, and Didi's continues to hit them in the Patong Darts League.

Playing at Queen Mary, the boys from Soi Sansabai drew 3-3 after the singles. Queen Mary led both of the first two doubles games by 200 points, but ended up losing both to lose the match.

Turnabout is fair play, however, and Queen Mary came back from a 200-point deficit in the beer leg to salvage a point.

Piccadilly also came back to sweep the singles against Freddie and the Coyote boys at home, Chris checking out the decider on x8 in the doubles. Coyote came back to win the beer leg.

In a Nanai Rd derby, a much-improved Boss Bar were dismissed, losing all three points to OffShore.

Scheduling note: April 19 is the Senate election, the third national poll this month to result in a two-day bar closure. All April 18 matches will therefore need to be rescheduled.

With just six weeks of play to go and all matches played, bar owners are encouraged to keep getting their matches in and reporting the results by Friday.

April 4 results: Queen Mary* 4 Didi's 5; Amigos* 8 Two Black Sheep 1; Valhalla 6 Shakers* 3; Piccadilly 5 Coyote Bar* 4; OffShore* 6 Boss Bar 3 (* = winner of beer leg)

Standings: 1. Didi's (36 points.); 2. Amigos (32); 3. Queen Mary (30); 4. Dog's Bollocks, OffShore (28); 6. Piccadilly (26); 7. Coyote Bar (24); 8. Valhalla (23); 9. Shakers (20); 10. Boss Bar (13); 11. Two Black Sheep (9).

April 18 matchups: Queen Mary v Shakers; Dog's Bollocks v Didi's; Amigos v Boss Bar; Valhalla v Coyote Bar; OffShore v Two Black Sheep. (Home team first)

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Home of the Week

Cherng Talay

SPACE AT SAI TAAN

The Sai Taan development is a combination of simple elegance and sophisticated living. Off a quiet soi within the Laguna complex, the estate retains its natural character because of its many original trees.

Construction of the first villas of Sai Taan's Phase I finished in the middle of last year, and the house featured this week has just been completed.

Privacy and attention to detail are evident with this property; the indoor and well-shaded outdoor areas complement each other perfectly.

This is a four-bedroom villa with space, both indoors and outdoors – lots of it. The interior measures a total of 450 square meters, all on one level.

The furniture has been carefully chosen to match the image and style of the villa, while the imported appliances are considered the best there is.

There are timber ceilings in the pitched roofs, and the widespread use of local materials enhances the design.

Each bedroom has its own well-appointed en-suite bathroom. There is also a study. Behind the fully equipped kitchen is a laundry area, as well as a maid's room and storage area.

The rectangular 10-meter-long swimming pool is in the center of the garden. Beside it is a *sala*, ideal for morning or evening dining, afternoon drinks or for just lazing by the pool enjoying the breeze from nearby Bang Tao Beach.

Its popular location in the Laguna area means Sai Taan has many advantages – the Laguna golf course, many recreational facilities, five-star hotels and Bang Tao Beach are less than two minutes away, for example.

Phuket International Airport is 20 minutes' drive to the north, and the popular Surin Beach is just a few minutes away. Tinlay



Place, with its cosmopolitan bars, clubs, cafés and restaurants, is a short walk from the property.

Sai Taan's estate management is handled by Knight Frank, which provides service for the common areas and rental opportunities for short- and long-term tenancies. Demand for executive rentals is strong within Laguna, and supply is very limited.

This is a classy, stylish and elegant home. Now available at 31.5 million baht, including built-

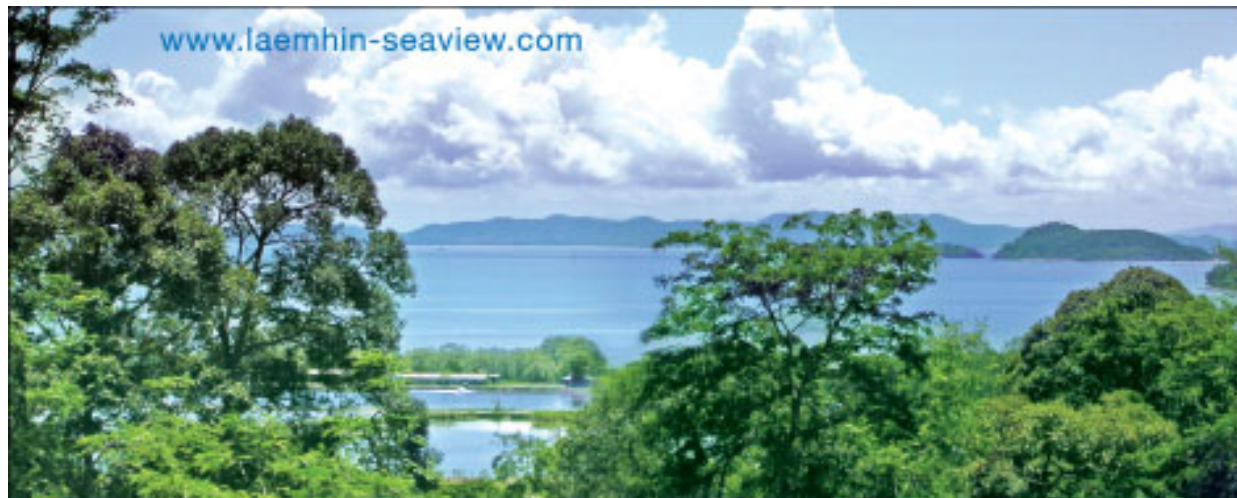
in furniture, the villa is priced to sell. The 1,060-sqm plot of land can be owned freehold.

It would well suit an astute investor, a retired couple looking for a stress-free property, or a corporate entertainer on the lookout for a prestigious villa.

For further information, contact Stephen O'Brien of Knight Frank Phuket at Tel: 01-825-5126, or Email: stephen.obrien@th.knightfrank.com



Clockwise from top left: The walled garden ensures privacy; the *sala*; the main entrance; and one of the four bedrooms, all of which have en-suite bathrooms.



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Decor

by Natcha Yuttaworawit



Above, Benjarong barrel seat from Rattanakosin 2. Right, classic jar and quirky teapot from Benjarong House.

Classically colorful

In every bundle of trinkets taken home by tourists on their first trip to Thailand is most probably at least one piece of porcelain decorated in the classic Benjarong style.

Benjarong porcelain can be found all over the island, but rather than detracting from the style's appeal, it's popularity is testament to how attractive people find it to be.

Benjarong literally means "five colors". To be in classic Benjarong style an item must feature white, black, green, red and yellow colors – all of them and no others.

Benjarong comes in many manifestations, such as jugs, pots, cups, lamps, vases and even chairs.

The most popular Benjarong items tend to feature classic Thai patterns from the early years of the Rattanakosin period, from 1782 until the present, when Benjarong won the favor of the Royal Household and upper-class families of the time.

However, artists today are adding a touch of modern flair to the shape and style of the decorative items, and using a variety of new shades in addition to the classic tones.

Benjarong House on Thepkrasattri Rd, which has been selling Benjarong items to other retailers and the public for 12 years, sources its products from Samut Sakhon, in Central Thailand, believed by many people to be the birthplace of the style.

The Rattanakosin 2 store on Chao Fa East Rd, near the junction with Kwang Rd, also sources its Benjarong from Central Thailand, but in this case from Ratchaburi Province.

This store features a full range of Benjarong porcelain vases, cups and lamps, and even a table set with barrel seats at 9,500 baht for the table and 3,500 baht per seat.

Benjarong House is open daily from 8:30 am to 6 pm. For more information call K. Jittima at Tel: 076-377512 or 01-691-6303. Rattanakosin 2 is also open daily from 8:30 am to 6 pm. For more information call K. Pannarat at Tel: 01-537-8455.

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The Beach Boulevard is located just 300 meters from the Club Med, a few minutes away from the popular Kata Beach, and is a short drive from Phuket City (30 minutes) and Phuket International Airport (50 minutes).

Each three-story hotel compound has 12 bedrooms and 13 bathrooms. Facilities include air conditioning and water heaters.

The suites in each boutique hotel all come fully equipped with a kitchen, dining room, living room and luxurious office area. High-quality materials have been used throughout.

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All this combines to make The Beach Pool Villa one of the best-designed two-story homes with a pool in the Kata area.

The unit is 13.25 x 23.50m on an area of 14 x 25m. Usage area is 415sqm with swimming pool included.

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Construction

by Janyaporn Morel



The kitchen and dining area glitter with "contemporary Japanese" influence.



The comfortable living area leads onto a balcony with panoramic sea views.

Work on The Accenta private apartment block continues on schedule, with the four-story building on target for completion in June.

Construction of The Accenta, which will have a footprint of 2,000 square meters, will comprise 12 one-bedroom and four three-bedroom high-end apartments.

The site is on sloping land of one rai on Laem Sai, with views north to Karon Beach and south to Kata Beach.

The project is being developed by the same management team that helped bring The Plan-

Putting the accent on quality

tation, Samsara and Aspasia projects to fruition.

Outside the apartment block will be landscaped gardens with an infinity-edge relaxation pool overlooking the bay below, and an 18-meter lap pool.

Just inside the main entrance will be a spiral staircase leading to the upper floors.

The interior throughout the complex will be in "modern tropical" design with a "contemporary Japanese" influence.

The one-bedroom apartments will be on the lower two floors, with the bedroom and bathrooms to one side, and the living and dining areas opening out to the balcony and sea view terrace.

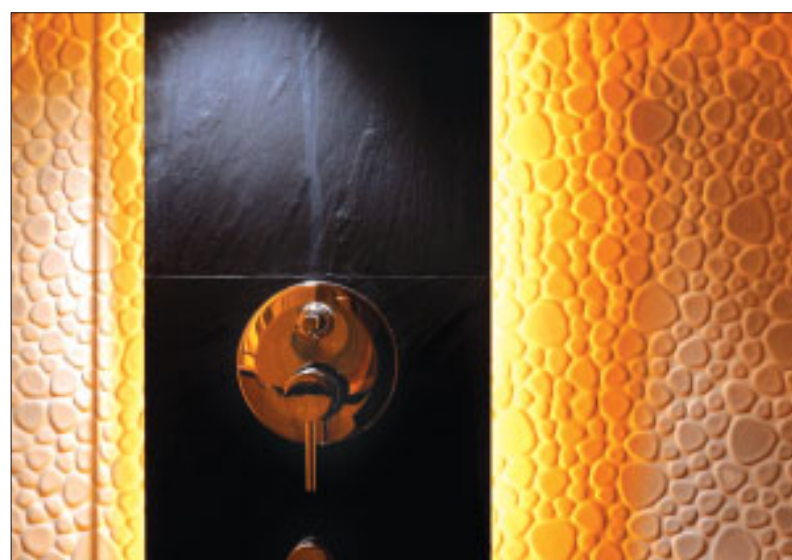
Each unit will have an internal floor space of 67.5 square meters and a balcony terrace of 13.5sqm.

The open-plan living area with a fully fitted kitchen and work areas will meet all the requirements of a modern lifestyle. Each apartment will have its own direct telephone line, Internet access and satellite television, and a large number of power points.

For safety, electrical wiring, power outlets and switches will be protected by fault detectors that will automatically cut off the power.

The balcony terrace areas will have automatic irrigation systems and seating areas with plenty of shade. Privacy from neighboring apartments will be provided by decorative dividing walls.

Water supply will be provided from three sources: an on-



Great attention is paid to detail. This is the bathroom shower faucet.

site artesian well, a rainwater catchment area on the roof, and tanker delivery from local reservoirs.

The water collected from these sources will be filtered and sanitized, then supplied throughout the building by a constant pressure pumping system.

Once finished, The Accenta will have a management service that will include 24-hour security, maids and rental assistance for

those wanting a return on their investment.

Prices for the units range from 6 million baht for a one-bedroom unit to 17 million baht for a three-bedroom apartment. Seven one-bedroom apartments currently remain available.

The Accenta Phuket. Tel. 076-333034. Email: info@theaccentaphuket.com Website: www.theaccentaphuket.com

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with Bloomin' Bert

I'm not nuts about this weather

I'm writing this from sunny England; where I'm spending a few days seeing my aging mother – and, of course, sampling one or two polite pints of proper beer.

I use the word "sunny" in its most ironic sense. There's not a great deal that's sunny about this part of the globe at all.

English weather is inevitably – and perpetually – gloomy. It all began as I flew in and a blanket of weird sludgy mist seemed to envelope the country. We'd been fine over France. I hate to say it, but things east of the English Channel almost looked pleasant from where I was sitting. If I'm not careful I'm in severe danger of saying something positive about the French.

The weather here is, I'm sure, some form of gargantuan practical joke, foisted on the hapless inhabitants. It's almost as if they'd finished the weather for the rest of the world, and when they got around to England, they'd run out of ideas.

"I know!" said whoever was in charge, "Let's make English weather as glum, leaden and generally miserable as possible – I'm sure they'll see the funny side." They don't, as it turns out. It couldn't have been inflicted on a more deserving race; whinging about the weather is one of my compatriots' national traits. One more reason why I choose to make Thailand my home.

I've been here for only a few days, and I'm missing Thailand already. I miss the heat, the people, the beaches, and the smells of Phuket. Even the less-than-pleasant smells. Have you ever wandered down a Phuket lane to be hit by the whiff of distantly rotting vegetables? I can almost smell it now...

It isn't necessarily the excess culinary delights from a vegetarian restaurant or yesterday's peelings from a pineapple stand that have attacked your olfactory system.

There may well be a far more natural explanation – it's probably a cashew tree.

These seriously pong, as a result of all the fruit dropping to the ground and rotting. Here in the UK, that process would take



Above The cashew tree's leathery leaves provide good shade. Left, close-up of the fruit. The nut is inside the gray 'ovary' below.



But how many people know how they grow? Follow your nose and you'll see exactly how – as a little appendage dangling below an insignificant-looking rose-apple type of fruit.

There's a great example of a cashew tree outside a hostelry in Nai Harn. I was sitting in the Red Lion Bar enjoying a beer before I left, and floating through the air came the unmistakable aroma of rotting cashew fruit. Strange how so many gardening discoveries are made when alcohol is involved.

Anyway, the cashew tree's official name is *anacardium occidentale*. In Thai it's *ma-muang himaphan*, and it was introduced to Asia by the Portuguese during the 16th century.

The family to which the cashew belongs also includes poison ivy and poison oak, and the mango, the pistachio, and the smoke tree. The cashew tree, native to the Americas, is now widely cultivated in Asia (especially India) and Africa for its nuts and other products.

It grows as high as 12 meters and has leathery, oval leaves. Its fragrant, reddish flowers grow in clusters, and the pear-shaped fruits, called cashew apples, are a reddish or yellow color. At the end of each fruit is a kidney-shaped ovary, (a technical term for the nut itself), with a hard double shell. You will only ever see one nut per fruit – one reason why cashews aren't exactly the cheapest nut around.

Between the shells is a caustic black oil that has to be removed by a complicated roasting process. This oil is used in the plastics and varnish industries in many parts of the world. Another roasting stage removes the second shell, freeing the nut. These things are hard work. The trunk of the tree yields a milky, acrid gum that is also used to make varnish.

The cashew apple can be eaten fresh or mixed in fruit salads, or you can make juice from it. The only problem is that it doesn't taste particularly good.

However, the fruit of the cashew can be distilled to produce an alcoholic drink (I'm not sure that's strictly legal in Thailand...), that will, I'm told, blow your socks off. I rather suspect that its willingness to ferment is linked to the pungent smell that wafts from so many trees.

Although the cashew tree loves rain, the amount of fruit that appears will be greater if it doesn't rain too much during the flowering part of its life cycle – a pronounced dry season of three to four months is ideal.

This tree flourishes in most hot, dry tropical areas around sea level. It has an extensive root system and a deep taproot (the main one in the middle). The trees even grow wild in some places – they're quite adaptable.

The cashew is not finicky when it comes to soil either. It will grow quite happily in a wide range of soils, unless they're heavy clay, waterlogged or saline. Place it too close to the sea and it will pretend it's English – and whinge.

Well-drained, sandy soils are ideal for good growth and generous production of cashew nuts.

England isn't exactly renowned for its well-drained sandy soils or its three-to-four-month dry seasons. I'm not sure that the cashew would be particularly content with sub-zero temperatures, either. Strangely enough, there aren't too many cashew nut trees here.

Perhaps I should ponder this over a pint in front of a log fire – I'm freezing. Back soon.

OMISSION: Blooming Bert's column on Sea Hibiscus, in the issue of April 8, was illustrated with a photograph taken by Gerald D Carr, PhD, of Carr Botanical Consultation of Corvallis, Oregon, in the US. The Gazette thanks Dr Carr for giving permission to use it.

weeks. In Thailand it takes minutes.

Cashews are hardly unknown in Phuket – they feature prominently in some of the more *aroi* dishes available on the island.

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Property Gazette

Properties For Sale

NEW HOUSES IN PATONG



3 new connected deluxe houses on Patong hillside, Soi Thamdee, for sale. Ground floor: garage and separate one-room apartment with toilet. Second floor: 2 bedrooms and bath, balcony. Third floor: living room with balcony, built-in kitchen and dining room, toilet. Fourth floor: big roof garden with Jacuzzi. Usable area: 200sqm; freehold land: 100sqm. Price: 6.2 million baht. (US\$155,000). Please contact K. Peter. Tel: 01-8928526. For details please see our website at: www.phuket-besthomes.com

BEACH APARTMENTS

Spacious, modern, 2-bedroom apartments, some with a sea view, a 2-minute walk to the beach, gardens, pools, clubhouse, gym, sauna. Prices start from 8.5 million baht. On-site sales office. Tel: 06-2806624. For further details, please see our website at: www.bangtaobeachgardens.com

NEW DETACHED HOUSE FOR SALE



in Kathu. 2 stories, 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, 508sqm swimming pool 4x9 meter. Price 9 million baht. Soi Waterfall. Please call for more information. Tel: 07-2799500.

PHUKET CITY CONDO

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2 new, connected shop-houses in Rawai, on Wiset Rd are for sale. Ground floor: sales office, staff room, kitchen, dining room and toilet. Second floor: master bedroom with separate bath and 2 separate bedrooms with connecting bath. Third floor: living room and en-suite bedroom. Living area 200sqm, freehold land: 100sqm. Price 4.5 million baht. (US\$113,000). Please contact K. Peter for more information at Tel: 01-8928526 or visit our website at: www.phuket-besthomes.com

NEW HOUSE IN PATONG



Island Living Co Ltd is proud to offer for sale a new 2-bedroom house built to the highest quality of materials and construction. Very quiet and natural location in the hills at the northern end of Patong Beach. The house can be custom-designed to your requirements. Tel: 01-8913466. Fax: 076-296-160. Email: antc@phuket.ksc.co.th

NEW HOUSE IN PATONG



Brand-new, deluxe house, with a swimming pool, on a Patong hillside, on Soi Maneesi. 2 floors, modern Thai-style architecture, completely furnished, ready to live in. Ground floor: big living room, Western-style kitchen and dining room, guest toilet. Second floor: big master bedroom and bath with Jacuzzi, 2 bedrooms and a separate bathroom. Each room has an air conditioner and a balcony. Living area: 200sqm; freehold land 150sqm. Price: 8.5 million baht. (US\$210,000). Please contact K. Peter at Tel: 01-8928526 or visit our website at: www.phuket-besthomes.com

NEW SEAVIEW APARTMENTS



in Patong. Fully furnished and air-conditioned 2-bedroom apartment of 85- or 96sqm, hillside, Nanai Rd, Patong, Soi Thamdee. Starting at 4.1 million baht plus a 186sqm penthouse with 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms. Kitchen comes with high-quality teak furniture 10.9 million baht. Tel: 09-4725530 (local) or +49-2421931444. Email to K. Bert at: kuepperhubert@aol.com

RAWAI CONDOS

for sale. Freehold, fully furnished, brand-new condos. 550,000 baht. 400m from beach. Tel: 06-6865567.

HOUSE IN VILLA

California. 32 talang wah, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, and living area. 1.35 million baht. Tel: 01-8936630. Email: baansorada@hotmail.com

RAWAI SALE/RENT

130sqm house, newly renovated, 2 bedrooms, fully furnished. 500m from 7-Eleven & beach. Asking 6,000 baht a month. Will sell 1.2 million baht. Please contact for full details. Tel: 09-4740227. Email: chotip_5@hotmail.com

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Knight Frank



Freehold seaview apartment, Karon Beach "B-R-E-E-Z-E through this summer"

- 167 sqm, 2 bedrooms, commanding sea views from every room
- 3 km views of the coast, just 2 minutes' walk to the beach
- minutes from restaurants, luxury hotels, entertainment establishments and spas
- common pool, fitness center, tennis and squash courts, Jacuzzi
- cool and refreshing sea breezes all year round
- perfect holiday apartment, stress-free.



Laguna Home Resale "quaint hideaway"

- 4 bedrooms, 2-storey villa on the 5th fairway (water and course views)
- peaceful, yet very secure location
- generous-size rooms, designed to enjoy the picturesque views of the Laguna course
- ideal for further extensions
- family golf membership included in the sale
- perfect for the first-home buyer!



Private Pool Villa, Sai Taan Resale "lifestyle living at it's Best"

- newly completed, 4 bedrooms spacious villa, just minutes from the beach
- partially furnished, opportunity to decorate according to your style
- Sai Taan villas have proven high-income stream, strong demand for short-term rentals
- perfect holiday villa, ideal for corporate or private entertaining
- walk to Laguna, restaurants, clubs, bars, 5-star hotels, etc
- estate management services by Knight Frank
- priced to sell.



Stylish Laguna Residences (Resale) "grand master"

- 4 bedrooms airy residence, wide panoramic fairway views
- versatile separate living areas
- cool pool and outdoor dining sala
- spacious open-plan design
- oversized land plot, perfect for families
- large balconies, great breezes.



Laguna Villa for long term rental "live the view"

- spacious 4 bedroom residences available for long-term rental
- stunning Laguna fairway and water hazard views
- private infinity edge pool, huge outdoor verandas, great shade
- fully furnished, Western style appliances, very affordable rental
- peaceful surroundings, secure estate
- full time management services by Knight Frank.



Immaculate Laguna Villa (Resale) "exclusive residence - opportunity beckons"

- direct golf frontage, approx 450sqm built-up area on a 1,100sqm land plot
- 3 "master" bedrooms, study, formal living and dining areas, pool, maids-quarters
- teak finishings, well-appointed furniture
- tropical landscaping, picturesque views of the fairways
- secure and peaceful location in the heart of Laguna
- ideal residences for retired couple or the astute investor
- Laguna benefits & privileges included in the sale.

The local office with a global network

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2-BEDROOM HOME NAI HARN

For sale by owner: A well-designed 2-story, 2-bedroom house set on 2 ngan, 18 sq wah (722sqm), of landscaped gardens. Cha-note title. Very private, very quiet location facing a large palm-fringed pond. 6.5 million baht. Tel: 01-8938592, 06-2826221. Email: saneroad@yahoo.com Please see photos at our website: www.flickr.com/photos/phuket-life/sets/72057594092450228/

HALF-RAI IN RAWAI

with the most beautiful sea view. Not much else left in Rawai. Tel: 09-9722064.

RAWAI LUXURY

villa. New house, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms with 400sqm. Freehold land. Asking 3.4 million baht. Please contact. Tel: 09-4740227. Email: chotip_5@hotmail.com

RAWAI, 2-STORY

house. Twin 2-story house, brand-new, 400m from beach. Asking 1.3 million baht. Tel: 06-6865567 (owner).

NAI YANG - PHUKET

Small development of 5 houses. Display home now open. 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, large living + dining room, European kitchen, laundry, all-round veranda, boundary wall, electric gate, carport, landscaped garden. Living area 153sqm, land 532-740sqm. First house for sale at 7.5 million baht. Please contact for more info. Tel: 076-328424, 01-8953481. Email: golddigger_phuket@hotmail.com

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Property Gazette

HOUSE FOR SALE IN VILLA 5



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ECO-COOL THAI HOME



Award-winning 3-bedroom, 3-bathroom, energy-efficient home in Rawai. Learn how to beat the tropical heat without air conditioning. Has a modern, open-air design. Many designer features, 400sqm pond/pool. Price: 9.5 million baht. Please call for more info. Tel: 07-8987062 (Gary), 01-0775042 (Wanida).

THE BEST, NO JOKE, THE BEST



The old song goes: "they paved paradise and put up a parking lot..." (Sound familiar? This is what Phuket is becoming.) We refuse to do this; our land is right beside a national park with the best sea view of Phang Nga Bay I have ever seen (considered by many to be one of the 7 wonders of the world). We are going to keep the park-like atmosphere, so no street lights and minimal paved roads. If you like giant original-growth trees behind you and Phang Nga Bay in all its wonder in front of you, call me. Chanote title, sea views. Starting at 3.8 million baht per rai. Also, flat land with some sea views available for 2 million baht/8 rai lots. Please contact. Tel: 07-2747470. Email: nsupin@yahoo.com

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10 RAI - RAWAI

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RAWAI - WALKING

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LAND PLOTS

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CHALONG - 1 RAI

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4 RAI - RAWAI

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Property Gazette

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LAND FOR SALE

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HOUSE & LAND

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NEW HOUSES

in Nai Harn. 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 200sqm, 2.5 million baht and 400sqm 3.5 million baht. Please call for more information. Tel: 06-2761831.

SAI YUAN - 3 RAI

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3 RAI - RAWAI

3.2 million baht per rai. Central Rawai. Good area of nice homes. Road, electricity, water. Please contact. Tel: 07-2747470. Email: nsupin@yahoo.com

EXCLUSIVE OFFER 2 RAI OF LAND

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CHALONG LAND

for sale. 1,500sqm. for 2.4 million baht. Has road, electricity. Tel: 01-5376866.

LAND LOCH PALM

2.5 rai, close to international school, road frontage, good view. Tel: 06-2790837.

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Beach, near Rawai. 1 rai, Chanote title, good area, quiet, near the beach. 4.5 million baht per rai. Tel: 06-7406156.

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5.1 rai of beachfront. Has water, electricity, road access. Great view. 7 million baht. Tel: 01-8940580.

19 RAI - SEA VIEW

land with Chanote title and Chalong Bay view. 2 million baht a rai. Tel: 06-7406156.

NAI HARN SEA VIEW

7 rai, stunning view. 4.8 million baht a rai. Please call 06-1202625.

5 RAI - RAWAI

2.7 million baht per rai. Good area. Perfect for small development. Roads, 3-phase electricity, water. Please contact for more information. Tel: 07-2747470. Email: nsupin@yahoo.com

2 + 1-BEDROOM

apartments to rent. New apartments in Patong for long lets. Include aircon, cable TV, pool. 28-30K month. Tel: 01-7477520. Email: phuketpete@yahoo.co.uk

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for sale. 1,443sqm, surrounded by high-quality estates, walking distance to Surin and Bang Tao Beaches. Chanote title. 7.8 million baht. Email: tomshut@hotmail.com

RAWAI CONDOS

for sale. Freehold, new renovated, fully furnished, 400m from beach. 550,000 baht. Tel: 09-4740227. Email: chotip_5@hotmail.com

LAND PLOTS

in Bang Tao. High-power underground electricity and water. 2 with sea views, 1 with hill views. Large plots in a quiet, private area near water-fall. 1.65 million to 3.3 million baht per plot. Please contact for more details. Tel: 06-267-0157. Email: bannuaton@yahoo.com

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A villa with 3 bedrooms and bathrooms, plus a maid's room. Location: Cape Yamu, elevated, east coast, providing some of the prettiest views on Phuket. Furnished, internet, a pool and gardens in a very quiet, exclusive estate, 10 minutes to BCIS/Laguna. Asking only 80,000 baht per month. Please call for more info. Tel: 06-279-6283.

VILLA FOR RENT



275sqm living space, 1,200sqm of land, 10m pool, 3 bedroom, Fully furnished, Nai Harn. 70,000 baht per month. Tel: 07-8896074.

VILLA FOR RENT



200sqm living space, 1,200sqm of land, pool, 3 bedrooms, fully furnished. Nai Harn. 40,000 baht per month. Tel: 07-8896074.

PROPERTY FOR RENT

Beautiful new 2-bedroom villa. 2 minutes from Rawai Beach, European standard, fully furnished, aircon, UBC TV, telephone, swimming pool, tropical gardens. Minimum 6-month let. 25,000 baht per month. Tel: 07-2810452.

2 APARTMENTS

Rawai. For rent, furnished, maid service, swimming pool, TV, DVD, satellite TV, kitchen, safe, aircon, bed linen. Tel: 01-0804702. Email: colin1216@hotmail.com

RAWAI STUDIO

condo. Rent empty or furnished. 3,000 to 4,000 baht per month. Close to 7-Eleven & Laem Ka Beach. Please call for more information. Tel: 09-4740227.

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sea-front apartment. Aspasia 5-star luxury 1-bedroom furnished apartment. Spa, pools and ADSL. In a very quiet area. 30,000 baht/month. Tel: 09-9726017. Email: asiasail@yahoo.com For further details, please see our website at: www.koumbele.com/1br

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in Patong. Fully furnished, for long term rent, near Patong Temple, 2/56 Soi Khuanyang. They have a small kitchen, refrigerator, a European-style balcony, air conditioner, cable TV, fan, hot water, and one bathroom. Asking 8,300 baht per month. Tel: 04-8450541, 01-8914561.

LOW-SEASON LONG

stay promotion. Beachfront hotel, includes breakfast. 8,000 baht monthly. Tel: 076-345518, 01-8920038. Email: anthony_sharman2006@hotmail.com

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VILLA FOR RENT



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- ▶ English speaker

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- ▶ Thai national
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Qualified candidates are invited to send a CV to Wipa Putkeaw, Human Resources, by email, fax or post to:

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Fast sale: 29" TV speakers + DVD TV stand: 14,000 baht. Big fish tank stand: 10,000 baht. Big bed mattress & frame: 8,000 baht. Nice designer desk chair: 5,000 baht. Leather designer couch with two matching leather chairs and ottoman. Other misc items. All items only three months old. Each cost about two times what I am selling them for. Call Tel: 076-283-360, or the best way to contact me is by Email at: turtlewax47@gmail.com

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equipment. Everything you need to start kitesurfing today! (Good wind not included.) A 160 beginner-to-advanced board, 5ft kite, pump, Naish harness/impact vest. All in good condition. 45,000 baht for the lot. Please contact for more details. Tel: 01-367-5413. Email: wesleybaxter@hotmail.com

GUITARS/AMP

for sale. Epiphone Les Paul Copy 7,000 baht, Takamine Electro Acoustic 8,000 baht, Fender 25 Watt amp. Tel: 01-5379196.

Bulletins

Alcoholics Anonymous

is holding meetings in English at the following places:

Phuket City

Mission Hospital

on Wed and Sun at 7 pm

Bangkok Phuket Hospital

on Fri at 7 pm

Patong

Patong Hospital

on Mon, Tue, Wed, Sat, Sun

at 7 pm and on Fri at 8 pm

For more info, please call 012732053 (Scandinavian), 018954763 (English) or 018912895 (Frank)

Business Opportunities

GREAT OPPORTUNITY

Looking for a small business in Phuket? Check this. 48 seat restaurant in Rawai with aircon and all equipment. Only 5 months old and a very busy little place. Please contact for more info. Tel: 076-388478, 06-5969553. Fax: 076-388-478. Email: gerrybfoster@hotmail.com

KATOEYS 'R' US

After 6 years, Patong's famous cabaret bar for sale. 4 million baht. Genuine owner retiring. No email info. Personal calls. Nick 01-8922824 or Nong 01-8955242. Email: junaworn@hotmail.com

BUSINESS FOR SALE

Nice office located in a business area. 50sqm, fully furnished with all office equipment and ready to start. 1.8 million baht. Company car is available if required. Tel: 09-8750017. Email: talayjan@yahoo.com

BAR FOR SALE

Off Soi Bangla with fittings and pool table. 160,000 baht. Tel: 01-8928579.

EXCLUSIVE

restaurant on Koh Lanta. 56 seats, bar, pool table. In a major entertainment area on the main road. 90 years left on lease 20 years paid up front. Low monthly lease. Urgent sale. 2.4 million baht ono. Tel: 01-0989870. Email: jari12se@yahoo.com

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BAR FOR SALE

Soi Dongtan. Refurbished. Good figures. No key money. Lease paid until December 2006. Tel: 06-8528256. Email: misterkai4@yahoo.com.au

BAR FOR LEASE

(3 years). Soi Bangla, Patong. Please contact for more information. Tel: 01-5388891. Email: phuket-properties@hotmail.com

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BAR FOR SALE

New bar in Andaman Bazaar. Fully furnished, has pool table. Seats 35, and has kitchen, etc. 3 + 3-year lease. No key money. Take over for 500,000 baht. Rent: 52,000 baht per month. Please call for more information. Tel: 06-7430978.

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- a tour agency
- a 60-seat restaurant
- a rental business
- an Internet cafe

Please contact for more information. Tel: 01-082-0039, 01-0911662. Email: ilan_75@hotmail.com

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restaurant & bar. Famous for pizza + Texmex: 40 seats, air conditioning, equipment, stock, and furniture. For sale at 500,000 baht + rent 6,000 baht per month. Call after 5 pm. Tel: 03-1753996.

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New 2.8GHz 64-bit Celeron, SATA 80GB HDD, 512MB DDR, CD/DVD burner, 17" monitor, 1 month old. 15,000 baht. Tel: 09-2898628.

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- Pentium 4. 1.6GHz. 512 DDR, 40GB hard disk. CD/DVD, 64MB video, Windows XP Service Pack 3, Office. 17" monitor. 8,000 baht.
- Celeron 2.4GHz. 512 DDR, 40GB hard disk. CD/DVD-RW, 128MB video. 17" monitor. 10,000 baht.
- Pentium 3. 1GHz. 384 SD RAM, 40GB hard disk. CD/DVD, 32MB video. 17" monitor. 6,000 baht. Please call. Tel: 09-2898628.

Notice

Public Notice

This notice is to inform the public that as of February 20, 2006, **Mrs Duangkamol Khaochatr (Mod)** has no further involvement and is no longer associated in any way with The Surin Bay Inn Hotel.

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Over The Moon activity center for children.

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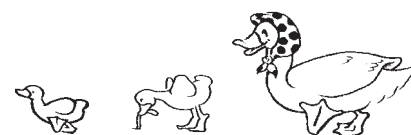
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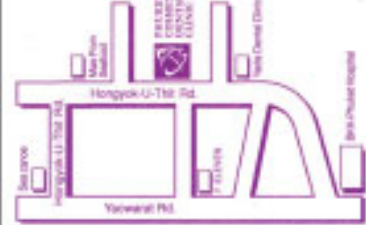
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