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IN THIS ISSUE

NEWS: Limos give ground to keep concession; Land Office chief moves to allay property bust fears. **Pages 2 & 3**

INSIDE STORY: On board the love boat MV *Doulos*. **Pages 4 & 5**

AROUND THE REGION: Biorock on a roll off Koh Taen. **Page 7**

AROUND THE ISLAND: Driving licenses for computer geeks. **Page 10**

PEOPLE: The Moffats. The who? No, The Moffats. **Pages 12 & 13**

LIFESTYLE: Footie fashion; cocktails. **Pages 14 & 15.**

SPA MAGIC: SpaNakarn. **Page 18**

ON THE MENU: An astounding restaurant. **Page 19**

BETWEEN THE LINES: The case for corruption. **Page 25**

NATURE NOTES: The 'truly unique' mudskipper. **Page 27**

BUSINESS & MONEY: Property tax boom; Money Talks. **Pages 30 & 31**

SPORT: ACYC Race Series; Kayak racing. **Pages 32 & 33**

PROPERTY: Home of the Week: Cape Panwa; Decor: Orchids; Construction: Dara-samuth School; Gardening: What a state. **Pages 34-37**

PLUS

QUEER NEWS 6; AROUND THE NATION 8; TRAVEL 11; HAPPENINGS 16; PHUKET DIARY, TIME MACHINE 17; MOTORING 20; TAKE A BREAK 21 & 22; HOROSCOPES, DOVEN 23; EDITORIAL, LETTERS, ISSUES & ANSWERS 24 & 25; BOOKS, OUTSIDE IN 26; COMPUTERS 28; CLASSIFIEDS 38 - 47.

LONG LIVE THE KING!

Entire nation celebrates HM's Diamond Jubilee

Sixty years ago, on June 9, 1946, the 19-year-old Prince Bhumibol ascended the throne after the tragic death of his brother, King Ananda.

This brought significant changes to the young King. The first change was his education. HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej switched his field of study from science to political science and law when he returned to Lausanne, Switzerland. The other changes were in his personal life.

His life was no longer for himself, but for his people. In his Oath of Succession to the throne at his Coronation on May 5, 1950, the young King said, "We will reign with righteousness for the benefit and happiness of the Thai people." His activities since then have proved the truth of these words.

HM The King is the first Thai king to have visited all the provinces of the kingdom, especially those in Isarn, which have the fewest natural resources. He has traveled by helicopter, jeep, train, boat or even on foot, if necessary. He continued in this way until recently. Now, however, his health no longer permits him to make such visits as he undertook in his younger days.



His virtue, coupled with direct communication with his people through his innumerable visits, gives him valuable insight into his people's lives and problems.

During his "fact-finding" trips, he not only listens to local officials, but also solicits first-hand information from farmers, agricultural workers, monks and village elders. He takes their

problems, needs and hopes into serious consideration, and acts upon them as much as he can.

He believes in effective communication between administrators and the public. He once said, in a speech delivered to the United States press during his state visit to that country, that the press and the King share the common responsibility, that of understanding the public.

Throughout his 60 years on the throne, the King has not lived a fairytale existence. Rather, he has shown his people the benefits of a simple, self-sustained life.

He turned the grounds of the Chitralada Palace into an experimental farm, breeding dairy cattle, growing fish and planting rice.

These farming activities demonstrated integrated farming techniques and showed how they might be used by his people to better their living standards using available resources.

The products from his royal farm are distributed to his people either through agencies such as the Department of Fisheries or the Ministry of Agriculture, or through various marketing outlets.

As an educator and intellectual, the King often gives
Continued on Page 2

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Entire nation celebrates 60-year reign of HM King Rama IX The Great

From Page 1

people around him food for thought. These insights are sometimes made public, becoming "food for thought" for Thai society at large.

Taking the Thai practice of placing a gold leaf in front of a Buddha image – with the expectation that other people will see what has been done – HM The King once suggested that his people instead place the gold leaf behind the image, out of public view. This communicated the idea that good deeds should be done for their own sake and that we should not expect anyone to see or know what we did. The reward is simple self-satisfaction.

HM The King's philosophy of life is often combined with an appropriate action. Once, an abbot of a

monastery in a poor village asked him for a new *ubosot*, the chapel of a Thai monastery. People expected that HM The King would provide a lot of money for a splendid building. But he must have observed the poverty around the monastery, so he gave only simple materials such as wood and corrugated iron sheets.

The lesson learned from this was that a monastery must be in harmony with the people who live around it. Clerics should live in the same way as their followers.

Words are not enough to express the warmth and happiness Thai people have enjoyed under the 60-year reign of HM King Bhumibol. On the 60th anniversary of his accession to the throne, the entire nation along with Thais living overseas share the same feelings of love and respect for our King as the nation did 60 years ago.

HM The King indeed gains love and respect from his people due to his humanistic ideals, his beautiful spirit and his true love for his people.

Only one thing would he ask of us in return, on this very special occasion, and that is that we be dedicated to our duty and see our country as the very essence of ourselves.

The wonders HM The King has contributed to our country over the past 60 years were recognized when, on May 26, the United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan presented His Majesty with the UN Development Program's first Human Development Lifetime Achievement Award.

LONG LIVE OUR BELOVED KING!

– Pimpaporn Suwatthigul



Phumtham Vejyachai cuts a ribbon to officially open the new terminal.

New Krabi Airport terminal opens

KRABI: Phumtham Vejyachai, Deputy Transport Minister, officially opened a new four-floor domestic-passenger terminal at Krabi International Airport on May 18.

Pisarn Jinacharn, Director of Krabi International Airport, said, "At the moment Thai Airways International and low-cost carrier Thai Air Asia operate daily flights between Bangkok and Krabi. I have also heard that One-Two-Go, operated by Orient Thai Airlines, will start flying to Krabi, although this has yet to be confirmed.

"We have also expanded the parking apron so that it is large enough to hold three Boeing 747s. We and our contractor are now planning to build a new international terminal as well as a new runway and taxiway. The taxiway should be complete by the end of this year," K. Pisarn said.

Limos give ground to keep concession

By Janyaporn Morel

PHUKET CITY: The Phuket Limousine and Business Services Cooperative Ltd (PBC) is to have its concession to operate limousines at the airport renewed but members will have to agree to a number of conditions.

The news came after both the PBC and the Airports Authority of Thailand (AAT) asked the Provincial authorities to intercede in negotiations. The current concession agreement is due to expire at the end of this month and the PBC had been concerned that the AAT would not extend it.

The announcement was made by Phuket Provincial Chief Administrative Assistant (*Palad*) Nivit Aroonrat at a meeting held on June 5. K. Nivit announced that the concession will be extended, but only if the PBC accepts a number of conditions.

"The PBC's concession will

be renewed under the following conditions: First, the PBC must accept price controls imposed by the province; second, it must accept a meter-taxi desk at the airport; third, it must agree to the low-cost bus service for the airport; and finally, it must improve standards of service.

"There can be no more incidents of passengers being taken on detours to shops or dropped off only halfway to their destinations," K. Nivit said.

ASSURANCES

"The PBC will have to sign the agreement within the next couple of days. They have said, however, that before they sign they want assurances about where the bus and meter-taxi stands will be located, and guarantees that the number of taxis will not rise.

"I have assigned the AAT to sort out these issues," he added.

"If the limousine service is to be expected to lower its prices then the AAT must also agree to lower the concession fee. However, at the moment, the AAT is waiting for instructions from its head office in Bangkok," K. Nivit explained.

"Today I assigned the AAT and the Phuket Provincial Transportation Office to draft a list of the conditions PBC must agree to. We will then meet again to sign the agreement," he concluded.

Niphon Piromrit, Secretary of the PBC, told the *Gazette*, "We asked for provincial help because we heard that the AAT might not renew our concession because they wanted to hold an auction for transport services at the airport. They also complained about our service.

"We were very concerned because, if the AAT didn't renew the concession, it would cause many problems for the limousine service. We have about 200 people working for us whose jobs would be under threat.

"Today, in the meeting, we promised to make the improvements. The limousine prices, for the moment, will remain unchanged, however. We haven't increased our charges in line with fuel price rises, so we cannot afford to lower them.

"We will have to negotiate the concession price with the AAT. As for the other transport at the airport, such as the buses and meter-taxis, the provincial authorities and the AAT will assign a place for them that every party agrees to," he concluded.

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Land Office Chief moves to allay property bust fears

By Gazette Staff

PHUKET: The Chief of the Phuket Provincial Land Office (PPLO), Supot Suwannachote, has moved to reassure business people that closer inspection of companies wanting to register land titles, as ordered by the Ministry of Interior, does not mean that transfers of ownership will be refused.

He stressed that he did not want to see a slowdown in Phuket's booming property industry. "If your company is genuinely 51% Thai-owned, there is no problem."

K. Supot denied that all applications by companies with foreign shareholders are being put on hold, or that applications are automatically being sent to Bangkok for examination.

"The first thing we do is check with the Provincial Business Development Office (BDO) whether the company has been properly set up, with foreigners owning no more than 49%."

"Where the company has a Thai MD [Managing Director] or has both Thai and foreign MDs, there is no problem. But when a Thai-registered company has a foreigner as its Managing Director, we check more carefully. For example, we check with the BDO whether the shareholding has changed so that the foreign share exceeds 49%."

"So far, we have not sent a single case up to Bangkok," he said on June 6.

Details of some applicant companies with foreign shareholders might be sent to the BDO for further checks, he said, but



Provincial Land Office Chief Supot Suwannachote: 'If your company is genuinely 51% Thai-owned, there is no problem.'

these checks should not take more than a month to complete. Since the order was issued on May 15, however, no cases have been sent to the BDO.

QUIETER

The PPLO receives between 100 and 120 applications for change of ownership of land every day, he said, though most of these are transfers from one Thai to another or by people wanting to register loan or lease agreements.

Since the original uproar over the tightening of checks on land transfers, matters have gone rather quiet in the property community, with concern over the brakes being put on business having, apparently, abated.

Stuart Reading, Assistant Vice-President of Finance at Laguna Resorts & Hotels, said that

LRH was not particularly concerned as most of its sales are on a leasehold basis, and therefore do not require a change in land ownership.

But, he added, "I'm not aware of any transfers we've done in the past week that have [run into problems]. From what I understood this was mainly aimed at foreign developers. We're a Thai company, so we are legally able to acquire and develop land, because we are a public company."

BDO Chief Veerachai Tantiwathanavallop denied that checks on companies would take a month, as suggested by K. Supot. "It will take only a minute or so," he said. "Just give me the name of the company and its registration number and I can tell you." He confirmed that he had, to date, received no queries from the PPLO.

He noted that when people apply to set up companies, he explains to them that in order to register a Thai company the foreign shareholding must be no more than 49%.

He said that, theoretically, a company could increase its foreign shareholding to more than 49% but that it would then have to be re-registered as a foreign company, which would limit it to just 49 areas of business, all effectively in exports. "I have never had a single application of this nature," he added.

Registration of new companies in Phuket continues apace. A total of 157 new limited-liability companies were registered in May.

Of these, 50% were registered to do property business. Of those, 70% had foreign investors.



Elizabeth Zana, founder of the Nat Association – which is named after her daughter, Natacha, an environmental worker who died in the tsunami – is pictured with some of the 20 local children she took to visit the French warship *La Marne* at Phuket Deep Sea Port on June 1. It was a rare opportunity for the children to go on an educational outing. Many said they had never been on such a trip and rarely got to go anywhere apart from home and school.

Police Chief warns of rising petty crime

PHUKET CITY: Phuket Provincial Police Commander Pol Maj Gen Decha Budnampeth has ordered police in the province to step up their vigilance against petty crime.

He has also urged the public to help officers by informing them of any crimes they witness, especially in the run-up to the month-long soccer World Cup.

Gen Decha said, "All police officers should be more attentive while on patrol in all areas of the island, especially in local neighborhoods."

"But we do not have sufficient officers to protect everyone effectively from crime [so] we need everyone to help by being the eyes of the police."

"Police are working hard to prevent snatch-and-run crimes because we know that the economy is not good right now. Phuket is a 'tourism city', so there is a traffic around the clock."

Gen Decha explained that Phuket City Police arrested a gang of four petty criminals on

May 29. Three were teenagers, aged 17, 18 and 19, while the fourth was a 41-year-old.

He said that the gang members admitted to 10 snatch-and-run crimes in Phuket City and to others outside the city limits.

Gen Decha called for parents to be more responsible in educating their children not to commit crimes, as it is the police who end up with the problem of catching them later.

He also called for people to inform police of venues that stay open illegally after closing time to allow soccer to watch live broadcasts of World Cup matches.

"There are 500 to 600 places where people can legally watch live broadcasts of the matches after the usual closing time, but there are other venues that will stay open [without the proper permit] just so they can make more money," he said.

To report a crime, he said, people should call Tel: 191, which is manned round the clock.

– **Jenjira Ruengjarus**

Rawai area scheduled blackout

RAWAI: The Phuket Provincial Electricity Authority (PPEA) has announced a scheduled blackout for June 22 that will affect Rawai and Yanui Beaches.

The outage is needed for the PPEA to continue its inspection, maintenance and repair work on high-voltage power lines.

The blackout, from 9 am to 4 pm, will affect Saiyuan Rd,

from Wiset Rd to Laem Phromthep and down to and including Yanui Beach, as well as along Rawai beachfront, Happy Home Village and Soi Yanui, and Soi Saliga off Wiset Rd.

Note: This information is subject to change without notice. For more information or to check the latest status, call Tel: 076-211663, extension 45311.

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It was said of the RMS *Titanic* – or so legend and Hollywood have us believe – that ‘God himself could not sink this ship.’

Captain Alex Feddes, from the Netherlands, of the MV *Doulos*, describes that as ‘not a safe statement to make’, while Hungarian Réka Borsickzy, Media Relations Officer for the *Doulos*, goes further. ‘It’s only God,’ she says, ‘that keeps this ship from sinking.’

The *Doulos*, the world’s oldest active ocean-going passenger ship, is halfway through a three-week call on Phuket. The *Gazette*’s Andy Johnstone went aboard to understand more about her mission and her crew.



The MV *Doulos* has had a varied life under a number of different names and in a number of incarnations.

Constructed in 1914 – just two years after the RMS *Titanic* began her maiden and only voyage – she has survived active service in both world wars and has brought “Knowledge, help and hope” to millions.

Even her name gives an indication of her mission and that of her crew of some 350 volunteers: to serve. *Doulos* is Greek for “servant”. (There is, however, some controversy over this translation; some would say it means “slave”.)

MV *Doulos* began her illustrious life as the SS *Medina* – named after a river in Texas rather than the second holiest city of Islam.

This vessel of peace was built at the Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company shipyard in Virginia, US.

This, ironically, is the same shipyard that produced many Wickes-class destroyers, Los Angeles-class nuclear attack subs, Nimitz-class aircraft carriers and the ballistic-missile submarine USS *Robert E Lee*.

As the *Medina* her role was to carry freight. According to the 1914 edition of the *International Marine Engineering* magazine, she was “...one of the most modern and largest freight steamships operating on the Atlantic coast”.

Her first task was to carry a cargo of onions from New York to Galveston, Texas. Soon after, World War I broke out and she was requisitioned as a US supply ship.

The 130.5-meter *Medina* – top speed 14 knots – was converted to from coal to fuel oil in 1922 and continued as a freighter until she was commissioned into service along the US west coast by the United States Coast Guard during World War II.

In 1948 she was sold to the Genatavier group, renamed the *Roma* and converted into a 287-berth passenger ship with dormitory accommodation for another 694 souls.

1950 was a Roman Catholic Holy Year (they come around every 25 years), and the *Roma* was used to carry pilgrims to Italy. She was also used to transport emigrants seeking a new life in Australia.

Just two years later, she was sold again, this time to Linea

MARINERS



Costa and renamed *Franca C*, which, in common with all vessels of the Costa fleet, was the name of a member of the Costa family.

Her original steam engine, which had served her for 38 years, was replaced by diesel engines, and she began a regular route from Italy to Argentina with a capacity of more than 900 passengers.

Seven years later, the *Franca C* was refitted as a first-class luxury liner, with a swimming pool, casino and a cinema. Her cruises were mainly around the Mediterranean, with occasional trips into the Black Sea, before going on to pioneer the cruise ship trade out of Miami.

In 1970, a further modification was made with the fitting of an 8,100bhp Fiat diesel V18 engine, giving her current top speed

of 17 knots, although she cruises at around 10 knots.

The *Franca C* was under threat of being scrapped in 1977, but, during her final cruise around the Greek Islands, representatives of Gute Bücher für Alle e.V. (Good Books for All or GBA) – a private, non-profit, charitable organization registered in Germany – were on board.

GBA decided to buy the *Franca C* for their ministry and renamed her the *Doulos*, operating with the Operation Mobilisation organization and the mercy ships *Logos* – which ran aground off Chile in 1988 – her replacement, the *Logos II* and the *Logos Hope*.

Her new role as a floating bookshop and Christian ministry ship necessitated some structural changes, such as the removal of the swimming pool and casino,

and the construction of a covered book exhibition on the aft deck.

These modifications were undertaken in Bremen, and on June 3, 1978, she left the dock to begin her new role.

She now has capacity for some 414 crew members, and, in her role as a bookshop, 1,037 cubic meters of cargo space devoted to books. The *Doulos* carries some 500,000 tomes covering 6,000 titles, which puts her in the *Guinness Book of World Records* as the largest floating book fair in the world. She is also listed there as the world’s oldest active ocean-going passenger ship.

The range of books for sale on board the *Doulos* almost puts to shame the titles offered in the island’s book shops.

Statistics time: in her 18 years as the *Doulos*, the ship has sailed more than 315,000 nautical miles (583,000 kilometers – roughly equivalent to 14½ times around the world), made more than 515 port calls in more than 100 countries and – staggeringly – received more than 17.5 million visitors to her 92-year-old decks – some 2.9 million of whom have taken part in on-board workshops.

The denizens of the ship come from 45 different countries. The youngest is just one year old, one of 30 children, while the oldest is 65-year-old electrician Gary Barto from San Diego, who is now halfway through his third two-year tour.

Volunteers join the *Doulos*

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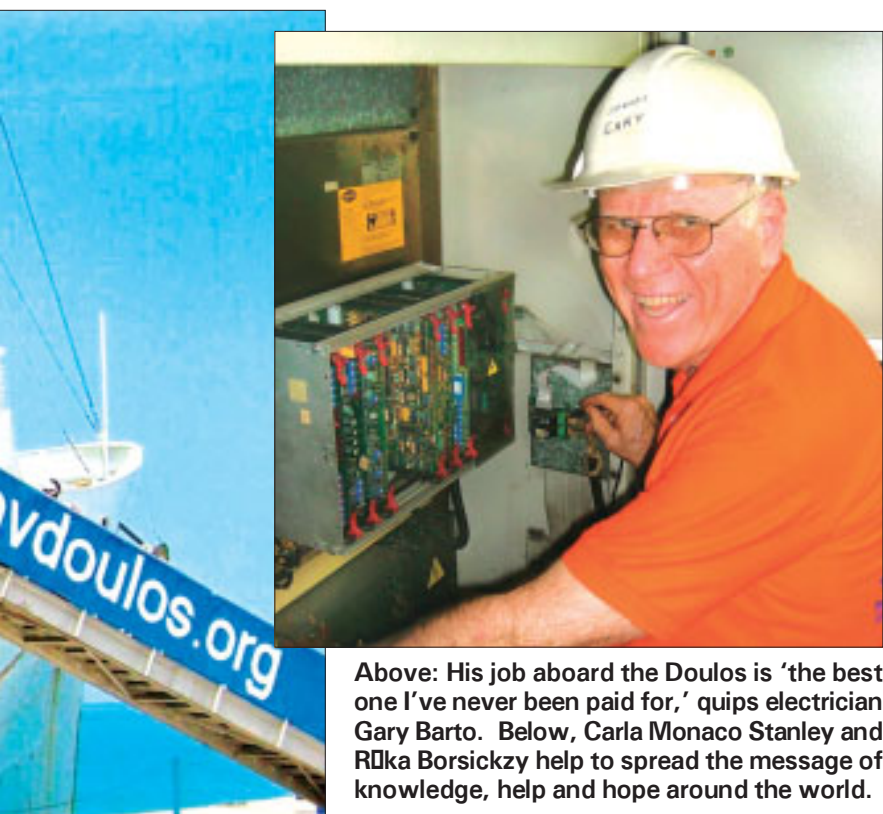
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WITH A MISSION



Above: His job aboard the Doulos is 'the best one I've never been paid for,' quips electrician Gary Barto. Below, Carla Monaco Stanley and Réka Borsickzy help to spread the message of knowledge, help and hope around the world.



for a two-year training program to raise their practical skills and their spiritual and social awareness. No crew members are salaried, not even the captain; all are

supported by their families or by their own savings.

Gary, a five-year veteran of the *Doulos* who also served in the US Navy, suggests that she

might be the most-photographed vessel ever.

"Even in the poorest countries we've sailed into, it seems that most of the visitors we've taken on board have been taking photographs," he says.

Gary's first involvement with the *Doulos* goes back to her earliest days under that name.

"I was a telephone and telecommunications engineer with my own company back then, but I was also working with a volunteer organization, taking my telephone talents all over the world to any Christian mission that needed them.

"My organization was asked to help put a new telephone system on the *Doulos*. Before that she had only an eight-telephone system, and she needed telephones in every room, a job that took us about three weeks. That was 1978."

Gary sold his business in 2001 and he says that, after the sale, he thought, "Well, what would I like to do now?"

He continues, "Although I hadn't been thinking about her constantly, I had never forgotten the *Doulos* and simply thought, 'I'd really like to go back on board and continue volunteer work.'

"My job on her now is the best one I've never been paid for," he quips. "I had worked on other, similar ministry ships – the *Caribbean Mercy* and the *Anastasis* being two of them – and am a sailor by blood.

"I wanted to go back to sea some day, and here I am, where I'm able to combine my talents and experience to help others. It's still a lot of fun, even after five years," he says.

Gary says that his hearing

and balance are beginning to deteriorate, and that he is not sure how many more physicals – required to serve on board – he will pass. "Only God knows," he smiles.

His travels on the *Doulos* have taken him from the Faroe Islands to Arabia, Africa and Asia, and he has also seen great strides in the technology aboard her.

"The phone system we installed [in 1978] weighed two tons. The latest one we put in I can pick up with two hands. Piggybacking off this is a new satellite communications system, so this ship has seen many changes. I hope I'm as up to date when I'm 92!"

Carla Monaco Stanley, 31, from Brazil, but also with Lebanese, Italian and English ancestry, is a five-month veteran of life aboard the *Doulos*. Speaking of life at sea, she says that it is a very close community on board.

"We all work together for us, for the ports and the people we visit, and for the Lord," she says. "My mixed background, and my life experience working, for example, in Denmark are very helpful."

Her path to the *Doulos* began in 1994. "I visited the *Logos II* when she came to Santos, in São Paulo, Brazil, and it has been a dream ever since. I had been working in the hotel industry in Denmark, but wanted to become involved in humanitarian work when a colleague in Hong Kong sent me details about the *Doulos*.

"That got me thinking more strongly about it and, thank God, after 12 years, here I am," she says.

"I'm not here just because

it was a long-standing dream for me, but also because I can serve God and I can meet people from so many countries and provide them with knowledge, help and hope."

Réka Borsickzy reports that, a year after the tsunami, 100 volunteers from the *Doulos* built homes for people who had been homeless since December 26, 2004, while others built two schools in the Sudan – emphasizing that practical, as well as pastoral care, is a key part of the crew's mission.

Both Réka and South Korean Daniel Chae, the Director of the *Doulos*, and in fact the entire crew of ordinary people who do not speak about religion so much as put it into practice, believe strongly that the ship acts as a mini-United Nations.

Mr Chae says, "[Being on board] the *Doulos* lets people of all ages and generations live together, helping them to understand each other's point of view without judging them for country, color or culture."

The final word goes to John Hume, the Northern Irish politician who was co-recipient of the 1998 Nobel Peace Prize. Speaking about the *Doulos*, he said, "The very fact that you can have under one roof people from virtually every country in the world is a magnificent symbol to the modern world."

The MV Doulos is berthed at Phuket Deep Sea Port, Ao Makham, until June 26. The book fair is open from 10 am to 10 pm, except Sunday and Monday, when opening times are 2 pm to 10 pm. Entrance is 10 baht. For more information, visit www.doulos.org




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Queer News

Palpating penalty gives Persian palpitations

A tourist found out the hard way that not every woman in Pattaya likes to be groped, and that getting mixed up between grope-me-do and touch-me-not can be an expensive experience.

At 3 am on May 28, Pattaya Tourist Police Sub-Inspector Pol Cap Jirawat Sukonthasup received a call from Sukanya Pakdeerattanamitr, 22, of Tambon Nong Preu, Banglamung District. Complaining that a foreign tourist had sexually molested her, the woman demanded police come and arrest the man.

When officers arrived at her place of work, a vendor's stall in front of the Henry Tailor Shop on the Walking Street, K. Sukanya explained that she had been selling souvenirs as usual when a foreign man approached to look at her wares.

But it must have been mammarys and not mementos that really interested the young man, for without warning he suddenly leaned over and simultaneously squeezed both of the young woman's breasts while exclaiming "Bin! Bin!" Then he walked away.

He did not go very far, how-

ever. When police arrived at the scene, K. Sukanya was easily able to point out the man, who was sitting on the opposite side of the road drinking a beer.

Taking the offender into custody, police learned that his name was Amil Detkaharn, a 23-year-old from the Islamic Republic of Iran, a place where boobs are seldom, if ever, seen in public, let alone palpated by complete strangers.

BUSTED

Amil was taken to the Pattaya District Police Station, where Pol Lt Col Omsin Sukankha charged him with sexually molesting a female over the age of 15. He also informed him that the victim was demanding 400,000 baht in damages.

Upon hearing this, the young Iranian fainted, collapsing into a heap on the white-tiled floor.

Police called Pattaya Memorial Hospital, asking that an ambulance be sent to pick up Amil, take him to the hospital for revivification, and then return him to the station to face the charges.

Source: Daily News



This rising mountain of mess was spotted in Village 9, Ao Yon, near Ao Makham. Behind the row of trees is a beautiful sea view, and, when the pile rises too high, the garbage just falls off the cliff into the sea below, causing yet more unsightly pollution. The dump is just down the road from some of the most expensive luxury property on the island. If you have seen any scenes like this, email a digital photo and details of the location to: dump@phuketgazette.net

TRASHING
Phuket



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

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



Massive shifts in weather conditions played havoc with sailors in the fifth Koh Samui Regatta. Now known to many as "The Tropical Island Regatta", the event this year served up a variety of incidents, including a catamaran splitting in two.

Winds varied between dead flat calm and 40 knots, and the conditions switched from scorching sunshine to tropical downpours, challenging even the most experienced crews.

The scene was set for drama in the first race, when local favorite *Siamese Cat*, owned by Samui businessman David Hill, literally split in two thanks to a powerful squall that caused the multihull's mast housing to give way. Fortunately, apart from their pride, no one was injured in the misadventure.

The overall winners in Racing Class 1 were Frank Pong and his Hong Kong compatriots aboard the beautiful 77-ft yacht *Jelik*. In the Premier Cruising class, Geoff Hill's *Strewth* took top honors, while David Lindahl's *La Samudra* won Class 2.

The Multihull Class brought yet more excitement with Roger Kingdon's *Moto Inzi* and Armind Kundke's *Coco Blues* tied on 9 points coming into the final race. Sadly, with no wind at all on the final day the race was abandoned and the winner had to be determined by a countback. As *Moto*



Hocux Pocux 2 leads the pack on Day 2.

— Photo by Martyn Goodacre, Koh Samui Regatta

FROM THE GULF OF THAILAND

By Barry Singleton

STORMY WEATHER

Inzi had two wins to their credit, they won the class, taking the title from the defending champion.

Major international sponsors added considerably to this popular Thai sailing event. Land-Rover organized off-road excursions across Samui's mountainous interior. Jack Daniels, Singha beer and Sabai wine cooler sponsored the after-race parties, and the competitors and participants en-

joyed a week of unrivaled hospitality at the Central Samui Beach Resort.

Flights of fancy. Thai national carrier, Thai Airways International (THAI), recently entered into talks with Bangkok Airways, the only airline currently serving Samui, regarding the possibility of running two daily return flights from Bangkok to Koh Samui.

On May 22, representatives from the two companies sat down to discuss a deal that would allow THAI to fly two Boeing 737-400 aircraft to Samui as part of the island's daily timetable.

Although the runway at Samui Airport is long enough to land larger aircraft, the legal limit for daily flights to a single destination in Thailand is 34.

Bangkok Airways has al-

ready reached the legal capacity with its own planes, which means THAI would be required to compensate the company in order to take over two of the daily flights.

THAI must first look at the feasibility of the plan. A spokesperson from the airline said it would take at least three months to reach a decision, which means that Thai flights will definitely not be included until the next winter timetable.

Rockin' on. The recent deployment of a new Biorock project on Koh Taen marks the third fishery habitat restoration site for Koh Samui.

Underwater pictures of the project's flagship site off Ban Makham revealed excellent progress, despite it being in an area of exceptionally heavy sedimentation.

The structures are already populated with schools of fish, deposits of developing mollusks and – to the surprise of the Biorock crew – large clusters of new coral.

The second site, at the mouth of Silver Beach behind The Cliff Restaurant, is also showing very positive results. A recent study dive revealed, amongst other marine life, a sea anemone, which has naturally attached itself to the structure. According to the project coordinator, this is the first time an anemone has been observed on a Biorock structure anywhere in the world.



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Illegal bets still dwarf legal lottery

Underground betting continues to flourish despite the government's introduction of legalized lottery two years ago, a survey by the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce has found.

"The amount spent on legal lotteries remains as low as 10% of the value of all underground betting," said Saowanee Thai-rungroj, Dean of the university's Faculty of Economics, which conducted the study.

The amount spent on underground betting totaled 400 billion baht last year, while the government's lotteries drew only a tenth of that amount, the survey found. The average government lottery player spends about 500 baht a month, while the average underground lottery player spends more than 1,300 baht.

The survey found that about 33% of all households in Thailand regularly placed bets on government and underground lotteries.

Residents of Isarn, the country's poorest region, bought the most government lottery tickets, followed by Bangkok residents.

Those who regularly place bets on underground lotteries are typically more than 50 years old, with a monthly income of 5,000 baht to 10,000 baht. Generally, they have only primary-school education, if that.

"Those with a degree or higher are not fans of underground betting," K. Saowanee noted.

A survey in 2001 found that turnover in underground betting was as high as 500 billion baht a year.

Dry days ahead. A new bill to ban all alcohol advertising and other forms of promotion of alcohol products will go to a nation-



TOP HEAVY: A man miraculously walks away from his car after a freak accident in Bangkok. He was driving along an expressway when a semi-trailer tipped over, flattening the roof of his car.

wide public hearing next month.

A final draft of the Alcohol Consumption Control Bill has been drawn up, covering all aspects of national control of alcohol consumption, said Dr Narong Sahamethapat, Deputy Director-General of the Disease Control Department.

Dr Narong said the next step was to conduct a series of public hearings next month. These would take place in eight provinces, chosen to represent all regions of the country.

Public comment, including the stance of alcohol producers and advertising agencies, will be presented to the national committee on alcohol consumption control before the bill is forwarded to Cabinet, he said.

Public Health Minister Pini

Jarusombat, who chairs the committee, said passing the law could take a long time given that the country has no functioning government.

The draft bill also covers zoning areas where alcohol may be sold and setting days when sales would be banned altogether.

How time flies: Researchers at Mahidol University are conducting a five-year, US\$7million study to find a way to shorten the life span of the Aedes aegypti mosquito, carrier of the dengue fever virus.

Researchers hope to introduce into local populations a strain of the naturally-occurring Wolbachia bacterium, known to kill adult mosquitos at just seven days – before the 14 days required for the dengue virus to incubate and be passed to humans.

The idea is that the bacterium will be implanted into the egg cytoplasm of a female, which will later be released and allowed to mate. If successful, future generations should carry Wolbachia in their own egg cytoplasm.

The micro-injection study is part of a US\$400 million international project funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Grand Challenges in Global Health (GCGH) initiative.

The project is one of 43 health research projects worldwide, selected out of 1,600, which won GCGH funding last year. The Mahidol team is the only Thai team in the GCGH project.

Mortal coil: A high-profile Surat Thani businessman and former MP killed his wife and then himself in front of their three-year-old daughter, police said.

The bodies of Bundit Wongchareon, 54, and his wife Kanta, 39, a fortune-teller, were found in the bedroom of their residence in Muang District about 8.45 am.

Their three-year-old daughter slept in the same room.

Both had been shot in the head and had been dead for at least six hours when police arrived.

Investigators said the apparent murder-suicide had probably been preceded by a quarrel, possibly over financial problems or suspicions of infidelity.

Bundit, a former Surat Thani MP, was in the construction and shrimp-farming businesses.

Blue flag special: To help consumers hit by rising living costs, the government is opening "Blue Flag Markets" selling discounted commodities in all 76 provinces across the country.

Caretaker Commerce Minister Somkid Jatusripitak kicked off the campaign at Suphachalasai National Stadium in Bangkok, saying the markets would be held on the first weekend of every month.

People flocked in to buy household goods, food and hand tools that were discounted by 20% to 40%. Particularly popular were rice, sugar, eggs and prepared dishes priced at 10 baht each.

Fishing for a solution: The number of fishing cats has dwindled to the point where the species is listed as protected in Thailand. So it was an ecological milestone recently when the Zoological Park Organization of Thailand successfully completed its first embryo transfer.

To start the breeding program through artificial insemination and embryo transfer, fishing cats were gathered at Khao Kheow Open Zoo in Chon Buri for observation and reproduction research. The eggs were taken out of two female cats and inseminated with the semen of a

male from Dusit Zoo in Bangkok.

The artificial insemination comes as part of a bid to ensure a higher survival rate for weak embryos. Staff believe they will manage successful transfers of about half of the embryos so far conceived.

The agency moved to help protect the rare cat after noticing its numbers dwindling dangerously.

For the past three years, the organization has worked with the Smithsonian, the Cincinnati Zoo and specialists to pioneer the fishing-cat breeding project.

In Thailand, the cat is found around water in heavily wooded areas and is a protected species under the Wildlife Preservation and Conservation Act of 1992.

School security: In a bid to prevent the recurrence of recent hostage dramas in schools, the Cabinet approved a 64-million-baht budget for the Education Ministry to build extra safety features into schools in the restive Deep South.

The budget has been allocated to build facilities such as fences, and fortifying school gates as well as the government residences of the teachers to ensure their safety, according to Sansanee Nakphong, a spokesperson for the caretaker government.

The budget will cover the expenses of 21 schools in Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat, she said.

Besides the budget to boost security, Deputy Prime Minister Chidchai Vanasathidya said authorities would send two security volunteers to help guard each school seen to be at particular risk.

Villagers took two teachers hostage at Ban Kuching Reupah school in Narathiwat last month, demanding authorities release two suspects arrested earlier in connection with the murder of two marines last year. The teachers were brutally beaten and one of the two is now in a coma.

Pandaring: The Zoological Park Organization is considering artificial insemination for Chiang Mai Zoo pandas Chuang Chuang and Lin Hui if a natural pregnancy does not happen next year, a senior official said.

Thai people have longed for the pair to mate naturally, but so far this hasn't happened as Chuang Chuang was not ready for mating or due to other reasons, zoo Deputy Director Thanong Natheepithak told a press conference.

"Next year, if Chuang Chuang still doesn't perform during Lin Hui's in-heat period, which lasts only three days a year, the zoo may use artificial insemination with Chuang Chuang's semen," he said.

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

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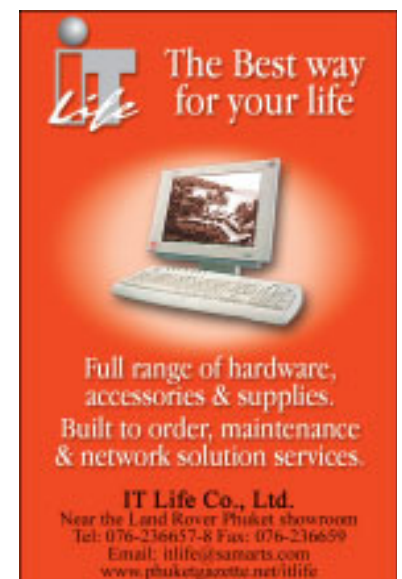
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By Janyaporn Morel

Nowadays computer skills are important to people in almost all walks of life, whether they are studying, running a business or looking for a job. You might say that you already know how to use a computer, but do you really know how to get the best out of it?

A good choice for people wanting to expand their computer knowledge is the International Computer Driving License (ICDL). The ICDL was initiated in 1995 by the Council of European Professional Informatics Societies, a non-profit organization that seeks to raise the level of information and communications technology (ICT) skills in industry.

Designed to help people in their everyday computing tasks, the ICDL is now the world's leading fundamental computer-skills certification program.

The British Curriculum International School (BCIS) is the first and only open accredited ICDL Test Center in Thailand. As it is an open course, candidates from outside the school can sit the ICDL exams.

There are two other accredited centers in Thailand, both in Bangkok. However, these are closed centers, which means that they allow only candidates from their own institutions to take the exams.

David Brettell, Head of the ICT department at the BCIS told the *Gazette*, "We started the course [at BCIS] because we wanted to train the teachers in computer skills. We then decided to make the course available for parents and students, too."

He explained that the ICDL courses at the school are divided into two groups, one for students in Years 10 to 13, and the other is for parents and anyone else interested in the course.

The ICDL course comprises seven modules, and a student



Vroom vroom: Students in BCIS's International Computer Driving License course concentrate on the task at hand.

Do computers drive you nuts? Take driving lessons

must pass a test for each module before he or she is awarded an ICDL certificate. The seven modules are:

Basic Concepts of ICT. The students are taught the components of a PC and concepts such as data storage, memory and viruses.

Using the Computer and Managing files. This module

comprises information about the fundamental functions of a personal computer and its operating system.

Word Processing. This module teaches the student how to create, format and finish a word processing document, and also how to use more advanced word processing features.

Spreadsheets. For developing, formatting and using basic formulas and functions to perform standard mathematical and logical functions.

Databases. How to design and plan simple databases using a standard database package and retrieve information from an existing database.

Presentation. This module teaches how to create, format and prepare presentations, and how to use graphics and charts and various slide show effects.

Information and Communication (Internet & Email). Students are taught to use a web browser and a search engine to

accomplish Web search tasks, and to use email software to send, receive and organize messages.

Mr Brettell continued, "We have already finished teaching our first 20-hour module, which was the Word Processing program, and the exam system is now set up and ready to go."

If there are not enough students to open a class, Mr Brettell explained, it is also possible for students to study the course by themselves.

"If there are only a few people and we cannot open a class, the students can buy the course book and CD and study by themselves, and just come in for the exam," he said.

Although the exams are conducted online on an ICDL server, students must sit the exams in person at an ICDL Test Center. The exams cost 500 baht per module and are held around every six weeks to two months.

"If it's a small class, around 10 or 12 students, the students

can pick a module and then the teacher can help them individually. The book covers all the modules and we also have multimedia CDs which students can work on independently.

"In bigger classes, however, the students have to follow a more structured course where everybody does the same lessons. In the small classes they can work quickly, but it really depends on the students. Some students are real beginners and need a lot of help. Though, as they learn more they get quicker and can study by themselves, and ask for help only when they get stuck," he said.

"The last course was held on Tuesday mornings for parents. But anyone is welcome to join. If there is enough interest we can run evening and weekend classes as well as intensive courses during school holidays," he added.

The parents' class held recently was enthusiastically received. "They said they loved it. They learned a lot and want to carry on, though we still need another six or so students before we can run the next module," Mr Brettell said.

Experiences at the school have shown that although many people may think that they can use computers, there is always room for improvement.

"If you look at the statistics, many people think they have computer skills. But to be honest, most people only know a little of what computers can do. Also, if people want to prove that they have skills then they need a certificate.

"What we find now is that our Year 12 and year 13 students think they know computing, but when they do their International Baccalaureate courses and they haven't studied computers before, they can't even create reports.

"They are unable to do simple things like center text or make tables, they can't create a decent Powerpoint presentation or write up their science report with a graph. Therefore we are making computing compulsory for Years 12 and 13.

"They must have one lesson a week to improve their skills. They will also have to take the exams for the certificate, so they can prove they have skills when they leave school," Mr Brettell said.

For more information about the ICDL courses contact Mr Brettell at Tel: 076-239268, Email: dbrettell@bcis.ac.th or visit www.icdlap.com The fee for each 20-hour course is 7,000 baht. First-time students also have to pay a fee of 1,000 baht to register and obtain the course CD.

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KOH LONE RANGERS



Romance comes in the form of a four-poster with mosquito net while breakfast on the verandah could hardly be closer to the beach (above right).

The rain hit as we were halfway across Chalong Bay. What a day to travel, and what a time to be going off to check another resort; it surely would have been much more fun staying home with a good book.

Chalong had already disappeared; as had our destination, Koh Lone, both now totally hidden by the squall. The longtail boat driver laughed, water pouring down his face, as my intrepid traveling companion and I huddled in our plastic capes trying to hide from the storm under a battered umbrella.

On arrival at the beach in front of Baan Mai Cottages, we were met by Resort Manager Moye, who was sheltering under a tree with dry towels. Moye then led us to reception, where we were presented with a spirit-lifting welcome drink. Things were beginning to look up.

We were then taken to our accommodation – a delightful bungalow right next to the beach. The resort is small, having just eight cottages and a wonderful three-bedroom Thai-style villa.

The villa, an ideal venue for a family or party weekend, is easily able to accommodate six or more, with a huge lounge and a terrace overlooking the gardens and beach below.

The wooden bungalows are simply but tastefully decorated and very well kept. Each has a mosquito-netted four-poster, as well as a gorgeous open-air Balinese-style bathroom. There is also a small covered balcony offering both garden and beach views.

The gardens at the resort are a pleasure – rather wet on that particular morning – but a wonderful sight.

It kept on raining, so we decided to settle down for lunch. The resort's small restaurant offers a great French-style menu. We chose the chef's salad and some excellent seafood quiche. It was both delicious and well presented. This, combined with a few chilled glasses of the excellent house wine, helped us forget the continuing downpour outside.

Later the rain stopped and the clouds opened up. Suddenly we were able to see Chalong and the Phuket highlands across the bay.

Koh Lone is a small island, with a tiny Muslim village close to the resort. Apart from visiting the nearby waterfalls there is really not much to do apart from relaxing and recharging one's batteries.

As a result, the resort's pool was our main afternoon attraction. The pool itself and the surrounding area is covered by a canopy of trees – an idyllic spot to end the day.

Sunset was spectacular, exploding over the highlands above Chalong and in reflected purple, white and pink hues over the bay. It was the perfect place to sip a well-deserved sundowner, especially after the soaking we'd had earlier in the day.

Koh Lone is so very close to Chalong and the bustle of Phuket, yet so far away in many ways; Baan Mai Cottages offers the ultimate in retreats for a hide-away weekend.

Koh Lone is so very close to Chalong and the bustle of Phuket, yet so far away in many ways; Baan Mai Cottages offers the ultimate in retreats for a hide-away weekend.

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Recent weddings in Phuket

Intira Janekit and Yutthachai Choochuay were married at The Royal Phuket City Hotel on May 4.



Zahid Ali, from Fiji, married Wijittra Iamwiwattanakool in the Chamjuree Ballroom at the Phuket Merlin Hotel on May 5.

Same Same BUT DIFFERENT

What kind of music do you play nowadays?

Clint: We consider our album to be more pop but it has a rock influence. We try to diversify our style whenever we make an album, but this is still more of a pop album.

How long did you spend on this album?

Bob: This project's really made for Clint and I. The Moffatts broke up in 2001, so we've had five years of not doing much work. I came to Thailand about nine months ago and we've spent about six months on the project so far.

So you started it here in Thailand?

Clint: Yeah. Bob came down to visit Dad, who had been living here about a year, and he got involved with life in Thailand then invited me down to visit, and we ended up just staying here and making our album.

You collaborate with Thai singer Aparporn Nakorn-sawan on the album. How did you find her?

Clint: The idea came from the MD at Sony Music, he listened to the original song, *Strange Love*, and he thought we could present it in a different way, and so he played us her record and we thought it was great. It worked out very well. We also have another song called *Without You* featuring Nui from the Peach Band. She has a beautiful voice and she really carries the song well.

Where did the name "SAME SAME" come from?

Clint: Well, Thai people came up with the term. It's funny because when we chose the name we were worried that people in the rest of Asia wouldn't get it, but somehow they all use it in a different way.

It's a very catchy name and it reflects well on Bob and myself.

How many times have you been to Phuket before?

Bob: Actually this is our first visit here. We'd been to the airport before but this is the first time we've had chance to see the island. We're blown away – it's absolutely beautiful here.

How long have you been staying here?

Bob: We arrived here this morning, and we have to leave tomorrow to go to Nakhon Sri Thammarat, then we go to Haad Yai.

What are you guys doing? Is it a tour?

Clint: Actually, we're doing little showcases here and there but we're basically just trying to go out there and meet the people and the radio stations that are supporting our songs. We were never able to do that with The Moffatts because we just flew in and out of Bangkok. Now with us spending so much time here, it's given us the opportunity to get out and meet people we never met before.

If Phuket were a girl, would you say she was a "girl of your dreams" or a "supermodel" [SAME SAME songs]?

Clint: I don't know if we know Phuket well enough to be able to say. I'd say right now she would be a supermodel.

Bob: Yeah. Because we flew in and all we know is how great looking she is. But if we stay here she might become a "girl of our dreams". I know that most people who do live here consider Phuket to be the girl of their dreams because they never leave.

What about your life in Thailand? Do you have any favorite Thai dishes yet?

Clint: Khao man gai, khao neow moo tort.

Can you eat spicy food?

Both: Yeah, no problem.

Somtam?

Bob: Yes, but my favorite is guay teow nam.

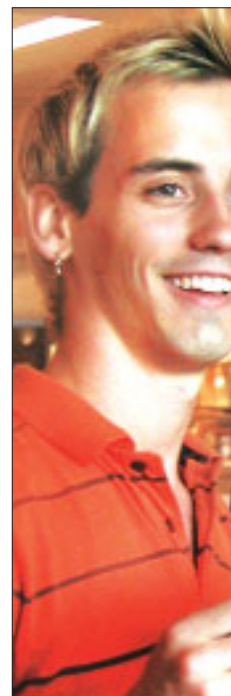
What are your plans with SAME SAME? Do you have any plans to branch out into movies?

Clint: Actually, before I came here I decided to go to acting school.

It's something I've always been interested in. But I'm young and I still have a lot of time.

I think we really want to concentrate on SAME SAME for the next three or four years, and longer. We have to focus and commit to that first. In future we can start trying other things.

So you are pretty committed to SAME SAME. If you were not doing this, where would you be – and what would you be doing?



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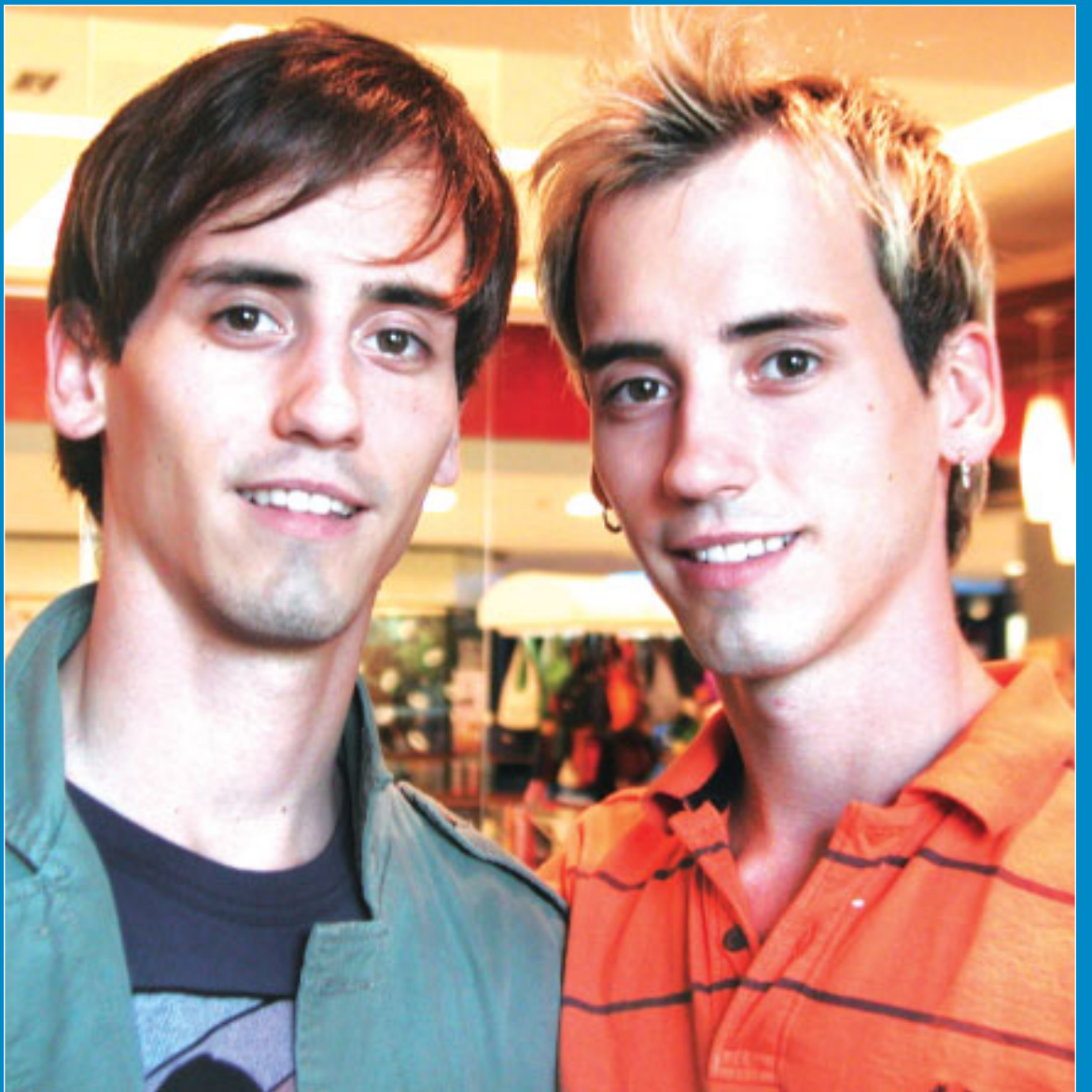
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Remember The Moffats? No, not the Muppets; The Moffats, the Canadian teenybop band made up of triplets Bob, Clint and Dave along with elder sibling Scott. Unlike most kiddy bands, however, The Moffats were precociously talented and actually put their minds to learning instruments after their earlier vocal success.

They went on to perform more than 200 times on TV – with Scott on lead guitar, Clint on bass, Dave on keyboards and Bob on drums – and were the youngest band ever signed to a major record label. Their 1998 album *Chapter One: A New Beginning* sold more than two million copies worldwide and the single *Miss You Like Crazy* was number one throughout Asia for 13 consecutive weeks.

The band broke up in 2001 and identical twins Bob (right) and Clint (Dave is a fraternal triplet) have since formed a duo called SAME SAME and have released an album entitled *The Meaning of Happy*. The *Gazette's* Jenjira Ruengjarus caught up with them for an exclusive interview when they performed a mini-concert at Central Festival Phuket.



Bob: I really have no idea. Clint would probably be back in LA, learning how to act. I've got no idea what I'd be doing, it's hard to say.

Everything we do is supposed to happen; it's meant to be. We're just happy to be doing a project together.

Your fan base here is mostly teenagers and young people. How do they compare to Canadian teenagers?

Clint: Before, whenever we came to Southeast Asia, I always thought the fans were very receptive and very loud.

I mean all over the world they're loud, but coming here was different, they were a bit more aggressive and it was more entertaining for us to be a part of. Also, they're very loyal; if they like a band they stick with them for a long time.

Your Dad's actually living here. What does he do?

Bob: He lives in Bangkok and he works for Sony BMG.

So he's not retired?

Bob: No, he got back into it. One of his goals was to come back to Southeast Asia and teach English, and he did that for a year and a half. Now I think he wants to give the music industry another go.

What about you guys? What's your daily life like?

Clint: When we have a day off we usually go to the gym, do a little running, go to the pool.

We're laid back; we don't do much on our days off because we usually don't have much time for relaxing because of all the traveling around.

We're very big into PlayStation. We turn that on at the first opportunity.

If you two had the same haircut how could people tell the difference between you?

Bob: If you got to know us you'd easily be able to tell us apart. Clint is a little more tense most of the time, I mean he can be laid back and chilled out, but as a person he's probably more intense than I am; I'm more laid back.

In terms of personality you [Clint] are the more intense one?

Clint: I think so. It's like that with any set of twins. One's a little more casual, more laid back, the other one's a little bit more aggressive.

I think that's why we work so well together; we work with the difference between the two of us.





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GREAT SHAKES

By Jenjira Ruengjarus

Bartender Bamroongsak "Top" Kongkaew has won awards for his skill with the cocktail shaker.

He was fourth in the cocktail contest at the Southern Hotel Business Festival in 2004 and, after working to improve his techniques, he took first prize in the Great Andaman Bartender competition last year.

He now works at Chic Resto, which is tucked away in a corner on the second floor of Ocean Shopping Mall, Phuket City. The pub and restaurant serves both Thai and Western food and has a variety of DJs. It is, however, the cocktails that K. Top is most interested in.

His greeting is warm and he is enthusiastic as he conducts a verbal tour through the cocktail list before deciding on which ones will best suit this column.

Some he created himself, such as the White Sea and Chic Sling, while others are his interpretations of old favorites. Finally he suggests that I take a Blue Martini and a Love Bite.

The Blue Martini is a quintessentially Asian cocktail.

Eastern ingredients such as lemon grass and lychee juice give it an exotic aroma.

The dryness of the vodka is masked by the sourness of the lime juice and the sweetness of the syrup and Lychee juice.

The cocktail should ideally be served in a martini glass with a slice of lime and a glacé cherry for decoration.

Blue Martini

Ingredients

Vodka 1 ½ oz.
Lychee juice 2 oz.
Lemon grass juice 1 oz.
Lime juice ½ oz. (freshly pressed)
Blue Curacao ½ oz.
Syrup ½ oz. (boiled ½ kg of sugar with ½ liter of water)
Ice cubes 2-3

Method: Put all the ingredients together in a shaker and shake vigorously before pouring the mixture into a martini glass.

The Love Bite is, appropriately, a vividly colored cocktail.

It is an unusual drink, mingling fresh milk with lime and orange juice, but it tastes delicious.

Love Bite

Ingredients

White Rum 1 oz.
Cointreau ½ oz.
Fresh orange juice 2 oz.
Fresh milk ½ oz.
Fresh lime juice ½ oz.
Syrup ½ oz.
Grenadine ½ oz.

K. Top uses a special technique to achieve a layered effect, starting with the Grenadine, poured into a tall glass.

Next comes the orange juice mixed with the syrup – very slowly.

Then comes the milk – very slowly – and finally (yes, slowly) the lime juice mixed with the Cointreau and white rum.

Finally, decorate your drink with a sprig of green vegetable such as lettuce or parsley.

Chic Resto is on 2nd floor of Ocean Shopping Mall, Tilok U-thit 1 Rd, Phuket City. It is open daily from midday to 10pm, except on religious holidays. For more information call Tel:076-256143



Looks like young Nong Ken is backing Beckham's boys.



Bra-zil, aptly enough. Supporters of a different kind.

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- Moo Baan Irawadee, Samkong

FAN-TASTIC

Okay, so you may not actually be going to Germany for the World Cup, but that's no reason not to get into the spirit of things.

On Phuket, support your team quietly by wearing a wristband (below) or key chain in the colors of your country.

Try sporting good stores or 7-Eleven, where such items cost about 60 baht apiece.

To let the world know where you stand, pick out a soccer shirt (left) from the Patong OTOP Shopping Paradise on Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd, in front of the Holiday Inn – 700 baht for shirt and shorts for kids and 900 baht for adults.

For enthusiastic soccer girls with a passion for fashion – or a soccer “fan” they want to impress – the Sea Coast Shop, opposite Impiana Phuket Cabana resort on Thawee-wong Rd, stocks bikinis (below, left) in your national colors at 950 baht a set.

– *Jenjira Ruengjarus*

Just face up to it: for the next month the whole world is going to be football crazy.



Left: Finding Netherland? The World Cup may go Dutch, but at this stage you just can't put your finger on it. Slap on a wrist-band and show which team you are backing.

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This week



GOING DUTCH: Child-Watch Phuket Director Friedrich 'Sam' Fauma (left) and Child-Watch Phuket President Dr Suppalak Kanjanamethakul (in white) join Paul Voogd (front, right), Executive Vice-President of the Netherlands-based Children Aid Foundation (CAF), fellow CAF member Viktor Mirovic (back, right) and guests at the grand opening of the Childcare Holland House, a joint project of Child-Watch and CAF on Wichit Songkram Rd in Kathu.



IN SAFE HANDS: Pol Maj Gen Kongpol Suwannaraks (left), former Phuket Provincial Police Commander, hands a souvenir to James Ang, Assistant to the Vice-President, Asia Pacific, of international conglomerate Robert Bosch, at the May 30 grand opening of the new premises of the Bosch subsidiary, Securitech Solutions, opposite Moom Muang market on Chao Fa East Rd, Wichit.



BIRTHDAY BASH: Wattana Meetaem, owner of the recently revamped Night Station nightclub in Soi Sukhumvit, Patong, blows out the candles on his birthday cake as guest and friend Col Charoon Ampa (right), Adviser to the Prime Minister's Office, looks on.



WELL DEALT: (From left) Phuket Gold Card (PGC) Partner Patrick Jehle and PGC Directors Alexandra Menzel, and Thomus and Thanida Moog celebrate the company's May 27 grand opening at its offices in Kamala.



KOSHER CALL: Bundarika Phuket resort General Manager Kasem Vorasurayakanrt (middle row, left), welcomes Israeli plastic surgeons and health magazine journalists led by Sharon Toval (rear, left), Manager of Thailand Health Paradise tourism agency, and Dolf Max Kalmann (back, 2nd from left) of the Tourism Authority of Thailand's Israeli office during the group's recent trip to Phuket.



UPBEAT DIVING: Beat Duss (left), Manager of the Thailand branch of dive equipment supplier Seemann Enterprise Co Ltd, and worldwide Seemann distributor Robert Stoss (right) celebrated the first anniversary of the Thailand branch on May 18 with guests and friends at Fisherman Way Business Centre in Chalong.



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Souls Damaged In Beer Bar Brawl

From the Phuket Gazette, issue of June, 1996

KATHU: Early last month Kathu Police were informed during a routine patrol that a fight was taking place at one of the beer bars on Patong Beach.

On arrival at the scene, police found a large crowd of foreigners and local people watching some bar girls engaged in a brawl which was not in any way a part of their regular act.

The custodians of law and order then intervened and stopped the fight by hauling the "parties" off to Kathu Police Station.

They were identified as Busawan Boonwah, 25, Lotus Boonwah, 23, and Pranee Nard-sawat, 25, all working in the same bar.

The fight had apparently

started when they argued over the attentions of a foreign tourist.

Pranee, according to the report of this event in local Thai newspaper *Siang Tai*, happened to be better looking than some of her colleagues, so she got more attention.

The two Boonwah sisters therefore became somewhat envious and bashed Pranee over the head with a wooden box. Pranee then hit one of them back with the same item, inflicting a wound which later required four stitches.

The three girls were charged with disorderly conduct and causing "damage to body and soul." They pleaded guilty to the charges.

THE TIME machine

News from the past

Community cops held for shaking down illegal worker's boss

From the Phuket Gazette, issue of June 1-14, 2001

WICHIT: Anucha Kaewkuen, 33, and Udomchai Faipetch, 37, from the Tambon Wichit Community Police office, were arrested on May 13 after demanding a 4,000-baht bribe from an employer who had hired an illegal Burmese worker.

The men went to an unnamed employer's construction site and arrested a Burmese laborer.

They then demanded the employer pay them 4,000 baht. They claimed that the money wasn't for themselves but was for government officers – including Provincial Governor Pongpayome Vasaputi – who they said were to receive 1,000 baht each.

The employer was told to pay the money at 6:30 pm on May

13 at the Tambon Wichit Community Police office.

Gov Pongpayome told the *Gazette* that he had received a number of complaints from employers that he was allegedly receiving bribes to turn a blind eye to illegal Burmese laborers.

So when he received an anonymous tip-off about the shake-down on May 13, he swiftly set up a special task force, led by Nikorn Torhiranpluek of the Phuket Provincial Defense Force and Pol Col Abhirak Hongtong, Superintendent of the Phuket Immigration Police, to act on the tip-off.

The two men were charged with extortion and the Burmese worker involved was charged with being an illegal immigrant.

American dies in police custody

From the Phuket Gazette, issue of June 1-14, 2001

PHUKET TOWN: An American man died after falling off a chair in the early hours of May 15 while in custody at the Phuket Town Police Station. Police named the 56-year-old man as William Bryan Brooks.

Pol Maj Adul Nirapai, of Phuket Town Police Station, told the *Gazette* that he had received a call from staff of the Bai Fern restaurant on Chao Fa East Rd. They said that they were unable to close the restaurant because a man, who had been drinking all evening, had slipped off a chair and was asleep on the floor.

The man was subsequently

picked up and taken to the station. While there, he fell off a chair and remained unconscious on the floor.

After he had been lying there for some time, police checked on him and found he was no longer breathing.

"I don't know exactly what caused his death, but he may have had some sort of illness," Maj Adul said.

Will Hebler, Phuket warden for the American embassy, told the *Gazette*, "He was a very well educated man from California. I was told that he had been a teacher in Vietnam."

PHUKET DIARY of coming events

June 18: First Phuket International Marathon.

Laguna Phuket will host the first Phuket International Marathon Festival. More than 10,000 people are expected to attend the event with around 2,500 runners taking part in the marathon and supporting races on June 18.

Promoted under the "Run Paradise!" slogan, the 43-kilometer marathon, half-marathon, 10-km fun run, 3-km community run and 1-km kids' run, all scheduled for to take place on the same day, are expected to attract many local runners along with some 500 foreign competitors from more than 30 countries.

The schedule is as follows:

June 16: 10 am to 8 pm.

Registration at Laguna Beach Resort (Cherng Talay room) and bib number pick-up.

June 17: 10 am to 6 pm.

Registration at Laguna Beach Resort. Opening ceremony at 5:45 pm.

June 17: Pasta party. 6 pm.

June 18. Race day. Start times are: Marathon 5 am. Half-marathon 6:30 am. 10-km fun run 7 am. 1-km kids' run 9 am.

For more information, visit the International Marathon website, www.phuketmarathon.com or call Roman Floesser or Chuanthong Ittipatachai at Tel: 02-2362931.

July 10: Asarnha Bucha Day (public holiday).

Asarnha Bucha marks the anniversary (determined using the lunar calendar) of the Lord Buddha delivering his first sermon to five disciples at the Deer Park in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India, more than 2,500 years ago.

July 10: Khao Phansa Day (public holiday).

This is the beginning of the "Rains Retreat" – known in Thai

as *Phansa*, hence the Thai name for the holiday, Khao Phansa Day – during which many Thais join the Buddhist monkhood for the three-month period.

July 28 to August 28: Free judo course.

Phuket City Municipality is offering a free judo course taught by a Prawat Chanasen, who represented Thailand at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens.

The course, to be held at Saphan Hin, is open to everyone over 10 years old, whether Thai or foreigner.

For details contact the Phuket City Municipality Youth Center at Saphan Hin (Tel: 076-216866 or 076-250163).

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It's so *QUIET* in here

there are both single and double rooms. Three of the rooms have bathtubs for herbal soaks.

I was impressed that a place in Patong could be so calm and serene. Lack of noise is paramount, K. Mon says, adding that therapists are under instructions not to talk with customers too much because customers are paying for complete relaxation.

She suggested that I try the 90-minute Herbal Detox Massage at 2,200 baht. It uses a combination of Thai herbal compresses to stimulate blood circulation and soothe away soreness and tension in the muscles.

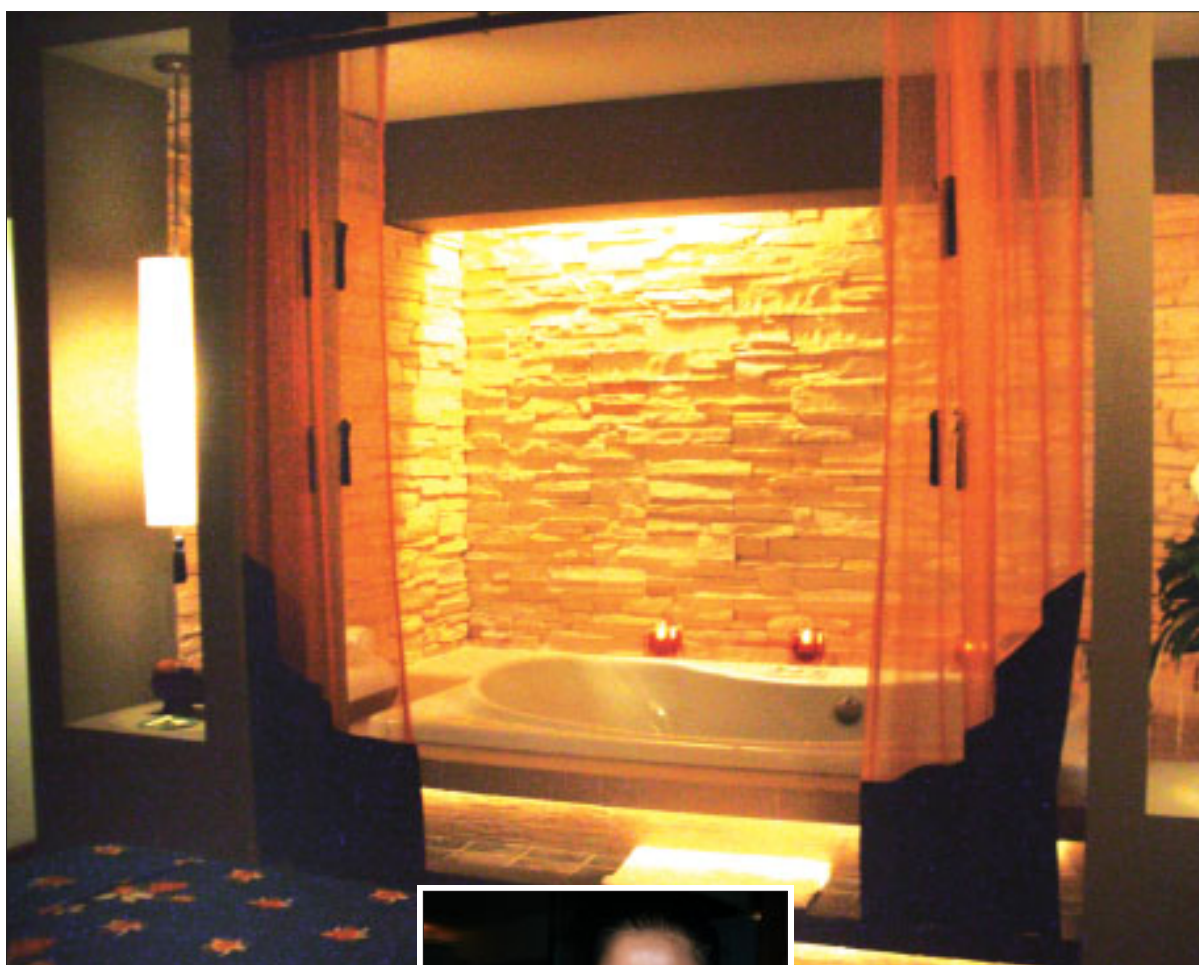
She also said I should try the 30-minute herbal soak for 700 baht which, she says, invigorates and stimulates both body and mind.

My room was on the third floor. Inside was a massage bed and a big bath behind a translucent curtain. The room was lit by six candles giving it a dark, romantic atmosphere to go with the old Thai songs playing in the background.

My therapist, Jak Kaenkaew from Trang, had more than six years' experience in spas. When I first saw her, I wondered if such a thin little thing could have the strength to apply enough pressure, but K. Mon told me that many guests request K. Jak because the pressure she applies during massage is always very consistent.

K. Jak sat me down on the sofa and began to scrub my feet with salt. After that it was time for the herbal soak. K. Mon explained that she had the idea of using edible herb leaves instead of flowers because she was worried about the chemicals used in commercial flower growing.

The bathwater was full of kaffir lime leaves (*bai makrood*),



The *luk prakhop*, a fabric ball filled with many kinds of Thai herbs, is used to soothe away soreness and tension in the muscles

which completely covered the surface so that I couldn't see my body at all. Two herbal balls were floating in the bathtub alongside me. I had never tried a herbal bath before and was a little surprised by the experience. The warm water combined with the smell of the kaffir lime leaves made me feel like a shrimp stewing in a big pot of *tom yang kung*.

K. Jak plied me with drinks and Thai fruits. I cannot believe that there is a single person in the world who would not enjoy this experience – laying back in a steaming aromatic bath, being fed and pampered.

I was a little apprehensive about the next stage of the program. The *luk prakhop* to be used in the massage the herbal detox massage were steaming away in a pot and looked far too hot to be used on my skin.

K. Jak started to massage

my back with aromatic oil. She then began to acclimatize me to the heat of the *luk prakhop* by warming up her hand and then softly rubbing it over my skin. She gently increased the temperature until finally she was massaging me with the balls themselves. Despite the heat, there was no sense of shock or discomfort, just a warming feeling spreading throughout my body.

K. Jak nimbly handled the *luk prakhop*, almost bouncing them off my back before pressing more slowly and consistently. It set my nerves tingling every time they touched my skin.

When she had finished with the *luk prakhop*, she began to use her hands again, firmly massaging my arms and legs.

I asked her if foreigners could endure the heat of the *luk prakhop* against their skin as, even for me, it was hot at the

beginning. K. Jak assured me that most foreigners like it because it is soothing and good for the circulation.

At the end of the 90 minutes I felt refreshed and energized. The package would be a perfect warm-up for a night of partying down the road in Patong. The experience also taught me not to judge from outside appearances; despite K. Jak's frail build, her touch was strong and assured – the perfect massage.

When I awoke the next day, I felt none of the pain that has followed massages in some other places. My skin felt soft.

K. Mon explained to me that because the Thai herbs are beneficial for the muscles and circulation, there is no aching afterward; the oil that seeps out of the kaffir lime leaves during the herbal soak revitalizes the skin.

The SpaNakarn menu provides 10 different kinds of massage, a menu of 14 treatments for body scrubs and body wraps, six facial treatments, eight special packages, five herbal-bath treatments, five beauty treatments and – invaluable for those caught out by the tropical sun – two treatments for sunburn.

The treatments start at 900 baht for a 60-minute Oriental foot massage, rising to 5,200 baht for a special top-to-toe treatment package that lasts three and a half hours. The spa also offers special packages, a different one each month, which are about 30% to 40% cheaper than the standard rate.

SpaNakarn at Baan Thai Beach Resort & Spa is open everyday from 10 am to 10 pm and advance bookings can be made by calling Tel: 076-340850-4 or email: info@spanakarn.com

It is not easy to find a calm place to relax in Patong, away from the vendors, tourists and traffic jams. But it's not impossible. Here's a really good suggestion: SpaNakarn at the Baan Thai Resort & Spa.

The spa has been open since the end of last year, but its Director, Mon Suwannakarn, is an old hand with many years' spa experience.

She told me that the spa uses only organic fresh and dried Thai herbs, some of them grown in the grounds of the hotel.

"Our outstanding product is called *luk prakhop*, a fabric ball filled with many kinds of Thai herbs and used for massage. We use two balls for each session and never reuse them. The *luk prakhop* are made here by our therapists, and are excellent for re-energizing tired and weary bodies," She added.

K. Mon took me for a look around the spa, which occupies three floors and has an elevator for those unable or unwilling to walk up. The 16 massage rooms are all named after Thai flowers. Each has a candle outside that is lit when the room is in use.

K. Mon showed me round some of the rooms. Each is decorated in a different style, and

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On the menu



WITH

Andy Johnstone

Anna's Phuket

Take an elegant shop-house on Rassada Rd in Phuket City – an area, as recent stories in the *Gazette* have shown, that is undergoing a renaissance – add a little Bangkok culinary flair with a dash of history and the result is Anna's Phuket.

Although the restaurant opened a few months ago, it has already become quite a favorite among those looking for an elegant yet wholly unpretentious dining experience.

Now, "experience" may be a dreadfully overused word when used in reference to food, and only the humblest hack – or one with a keen sense of irony – would dare to use it.

However, an experience Anna's is, not only for the food but the ambience, graceful décor and polite – no, polite is not enough – genteel service.

The gazes of the waiting staff here are not downcast, avoiding – as is done in some restaurants – making eye contact with the patrons. Rather, the staff are scanning the room and appear to take orders, deliver food, replenish glasses and a host of other things, almost without bidding.

BRANCHES

But I'm ahead of myself.

Anna's Phuket is – I suppose the "Phuket" gives it away – part of a family of restaurants that began in Bangkok a few years ago.

There are now five Bangkok branches, popular mostly among young urbanites rather than not-so-young expats. This is not surprising, as these capital restaurants are in the business districts.

Each has its own identity, and the same is the case with Anna's Phuket, which tends to attract those looking for a romantic tête-à-tête or, as was the case for this column, a family Sunday lunch.

Anna's is on two floors, and although the upstairs dining area is not in use today, we do take a peek as monsoon rain pours down outside. Even with darkening skies overhead, upstairs and downstairs at Anna's are bright and cheerful, aided by a large skylight, with an antique lantern hung above the courtyard below.

Speaking of floors, while upstairs has a wooden one, the ground floor is a delightfully reno-



The restaurant has already become quite a favorite among those looking for an elegant yet wholly unpretentious dining 'experience'.



Anna's chicken, above, and chocolate cake, below.



ANNALYSIS

The crabs are good enough to cause me to embrace all seafood – apart from octopus tentacles, which could embrace *me*...

vated tile affair, which fits in perfectly with the old-world charm of the place.

We adults decide to take a back seat and let the children do the ordering. I say "adults" and "children", although this is one of those situations where the youngsters are displaying more maturity than their elders.

Glasses of wine in hand – we are of age – we relax as the girls scan through the menu. We look, too, but our interest is taken first by the brief story of the "Anna" behind the restaurants' name. Bravely, we feel, the Anna in question is Anna Leonowens, the woman employed by the court of HM King Rama IV to teach his children.

Hushed tones ensue as the tale is related to the children.

They soon press on to or-

dering, well, almost half the menu, everything from a perfectly-pukka *naam prik goong seab* to roast chicken to fried rice and more.

We companionable grown-ups decide to ask for soft-shelled crabs fried in garlic, which is rather brave in my case because I have an innate fear of seafood. No, really, apart from fish, most of the other edible inhabitants of the sea give me the willies.

The idea, *my* idea of eating a crab – shell and all – almost causes me to swoon like a heroine in a Barbara Cartland novel. These crabs, however, are good enough to cause me to embrace all seafood – apart from octopus tentacles, which could embrace *me*...

The *naam prik goong seab* is a little less spicy than I am used

to, but my companions lap it up and I tuck in with gusto. *Larb moo* was also picked by the girls; this too is spot-on. The balance of spice and mint is as good as one would find in a five-star hotel or – perhaps the better benchmark – in a cheap 'n' cheerful no-star Isarn eatery.

Roast chicken is one of a few non-Thai dishes on the menu, yet a certain Eastern approach

has been added through the subtle use of spices. Star anise, ginger and cloves are but a few I can pick out in the melange of tastes.

"Sacrilege," I hear you say. "Poppycock," say I, by way of swift riposte. My mum once made, for my sister's then-boy-friend – a half-Indian and bloody good bloke called Harvey – a curry gravy to go with roast chicken, Yorkshire puddings and the trimmings. Anna's take on a Sunday roast – with sublime mashed potatoes – is every bit as good.

I am gifted with superb peripheral vision and eyes in the back of my head, but not, sadly, on the side, which is just as well, because it would make me look like someone in an Egyptian wall painting. Because of this deficiency, I have to keep turning to gaze at the desserts not eight feet from me.

I suspect that the staff at Anna's are rather proud of the desserts, because they tell us what to order: carrot cake and a warm melting chocolate cake with vanilla ice cream.

Yes, yes, carrot cake is found all over Phuket, but Anna's is in the vanguard of refinement for this slightly-spicy treat in that they use cream cheese frosting for the topping.

For once, I get to tuck in first as the girls are taking the pics – all of them – today. Top marks to Tash and Galong for those.

The melting chocolate cake is a sight to behold, even before the first cut into it is made and the glossy, rich, warm chocolate gently oozes out. Delectable, delicious, decadent and delovely.

And the cost? Around 1,300 baht for four, including two glasses of wine and soft drinks. Make a date with Anna's soon.

Anna's Phuket, 13 Rassada Rd, Phuket City. Tel: 076-210535-6. Open at weekends from 11 am to 10 pm, and Monday to Friday from 11 am to 2:30 pm and from 5:30 pm to 10 pm.

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BEHIND THE WHEEL

By Jeff Heselwood

0-100
in 22.5
million
baht

We'd had a week of inclement weather – squally thunder storms and persistent rain, really treacherous stuff to drive in.

Were they really appropriate meteorological conditions in which to test one of the fastest supercars in the world?

Or, more to the point, was it appropriate to place someone else's half-million-dollar motor car in a potentially hazardous situation?

It was earlier this year, and my only chance to get behind the wheel of the delicious Ferrari F430 – a car that BBC television's *Top Gear* presenter Jeremy Clarkson described as the best he'd ever driven.

But could it really be *that* good? And would its superlative qualities shine through in such wet conditions?

I was doubtful, to say the least.

The F430 is the successor to the impressive 360 Modena.



This is the right stuff, whatever the weather

But where the 360 was merely competent, the F430 is an out-and-out star and is hard to fault.

On the steering wheel is a selector switch, which the Ferrari people describe as “road, sports, race” and “you’re on your own now”! This changes the differential and suspension settings to suit the conditions.

The final and most extreme setting turns everything off, including the all-important traction control.

Without this function, almost 500bhp through the back wheels can become a problem – even for someone like seven-times Formula One world champion Michael Schumacher.

It was this traction control that proved to be so much fun during the test. With seriously damp roads – “soaked” would be a more accurate description – booting the Ferrari in first or second gear produced the inevitable wheelspin, yet the F430 remained straight and true as the tachometer whizzed towards the red line at 8,500rpm.

Thailand traffic being what it is, it is difficult to find the space to extend the F430. But believe me, you can enjoy yourself in the lower gears almost as much – especially if it's raining and you have a staggering 490bhp (360kW) available under your right foot.

The gears are controlled by paddles behind the steering wheel – right for up, left for down. It's simple and effective. More importantly, however, it is an electro-hydraulic system that controls the gearbox. This means none of the power losses as you would find in the more popular Tiptronic system.

While the F430 is a development of the Modena, in reality it is a better machine in virtually every way.

The cockpit may be familiar Ferrari, but under the skin the technological advances are immense. The electronic differential is probably the biggest development, allowing the driver to “tune” the handling according to the conditions.

The styling was a joint effort between Turin design house Pininfarina, a long-time Ferrari collaborator, and Frank Stephenson, who designed BMW's new Mini Cooper.

The rear treatment of the F430 is “borrowed” from the Ferrari Enzo, with protruding lights and a similar air intake. Stainless-steel tailpipes finish off the dramatic rear, emphasising the outstanding performance this car is capable of.

But the figures – top speed of more than 315kmh and a 0-100 kmh sprint time of exactly four seconds – do not tell the full

story. It is the way the car performs that sets it aside from others in this category.

The F430 is head-and-shoulders above the opposition, without a shadow of a doubt. And with peak torque of 465Nm mid-way through the permitted rev-range at 5,250rpm, it is never difficult to manoeuvre through heavy traffic. But, slot it down one, or even two, ratios and gently press the accelerator and it will rocket past almost anything else on the road.

All this comes at a price, of course, and the F430 is significantly costlier than the outgoing 360.

With its six-speed F1-style transmission, electronic differential and selectable stability and traction control, full leather upholstery and a choice of carbon-fibre or aluminium dashboard inserts, a superior Becker sound system and Xenon headlamps, the Ferrari is on the road at a staggering 22.5 million baht.

There are optional extras such as ceramic brakes and different hide interiors, but the standard machine, if you can refer to a Ferrari in that way, is quite sufficient.

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

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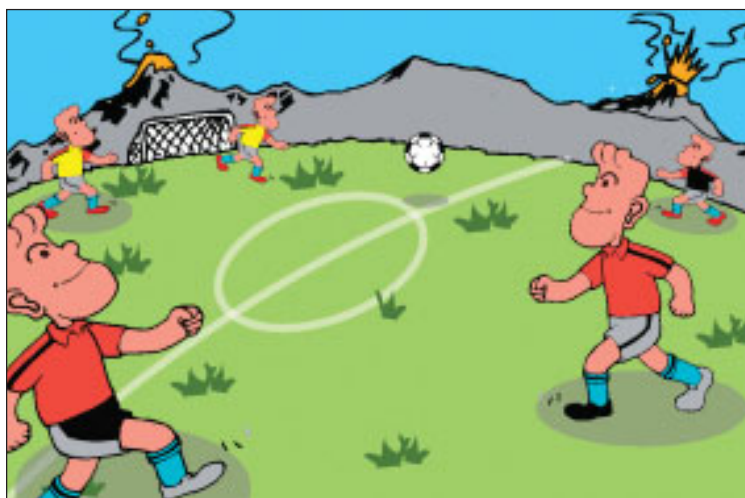
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PUZZLES

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?



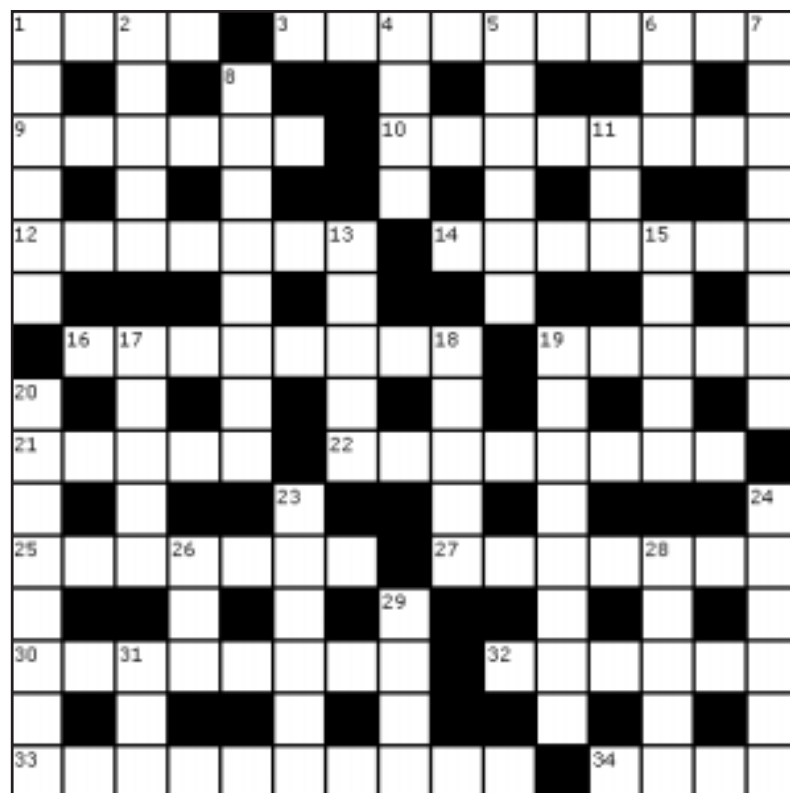
The Cryptic Crossword

ACROSS

1. What fish may do a little to the East. (4)
3. Green lacking taste. (10)
9. Confuse one aim for alienation. (6)
10. Little chap after letter ending - it's you! (8)
12. "A limit", I ordered citizens' army. (7)
14. Island shorts. (7)
16. Reacting to shock beginning. (8)
19. Worker in charge of caper. (5)
21. Follow the path. (5)
22. Final notice. (8)
25. Amputated drunk. (7)
27. Pair of cardinals attempts ways in. (7)
30. Despot's car is about rodents. (8)
32. Fur, er, belongs to me. (6)
33. Spare bed transported around the French letter. (7,3)
34. Face part of launching pad. (4)

Down

1. With Liszt, 35 ac. (6)
2. Mischievous dwarf fish. (5)
4. States of South Africa - yes, south! (4)
5. So let it be about cubic insightfulness. (6)
6. Nitrogen twice. Note direction. (1,1,1)
7. Resistance of the French groom-to-be. (8)
11. Add up the total. (3)



Compiled by Tortuus. © 2006

13. Am I no acid? (5)
15. Final say. (5)
17. There's a sharpness about the right city. (5)
18. Complain about tight hold on cardinal. (5)
19. A sin for grown-ups only?
20. Resolute start about confusing law. (8)
23. Starry street in Aral? (6)
24. Backwards, like sea bird. (6)
26. Beer sign. (3)
28. Nationality air Ishmael holds. (5)
29. Attempt to pierce. (4)
31. Day hut is destroyed. (3)

Solution on next page

Scribble Space



su | do | ku
© Puzzles by Pappocom

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

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

MEDIUM

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: this puzzle has only one solution, which is on the next page.

EZ Trivia Quiz

1. Who was known as "The Wizard of Menlo Park"?
2. What bird was sometimes used by miners to detect the presence of methane gas?
3. Graphite is an allotrope of what chemical element?
4. What is the official language of Brazil?
5. How many Members of Parliament represent Phuket when the House is in session?
6. Sri Lanka lies off the coast of which country?
7. In the modern English alphabet which is the penultimate letter?
8. Which native American chieftain was the title of a poem by Longfellow?
9. In *Kill Bill*, which actress played O-Ren Ishii?
10. Fictional French police detective Jacques Clouseau featured in which movie series?

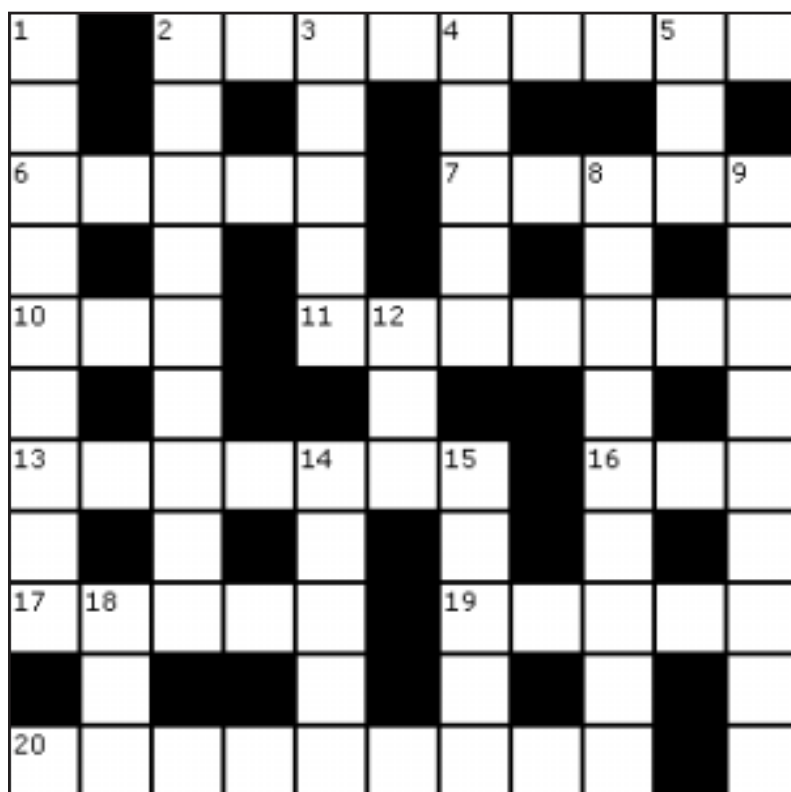
Answers on next page

Brain Buster

The numbers in the middle column are related in some way to the numbers in the left and right columns. How are they related?

3	42	8
5	51	3
8	61	2
7	53	5

Answer on next page



Quick Crossword

ACROSS

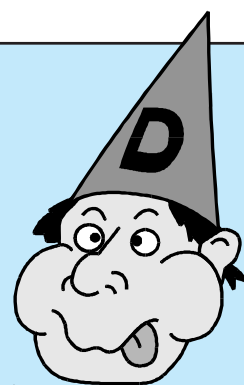
1. Put off.
6. Royal headgear.
7. Dull pains.
10. Neither partner.
11. Helicopter.
13. State between Illinois and Ohio.
16. Consume.
17. Dizzy.
19. Cake topping.
20. Loathing.

DOWN

1. Climbing.
2. Stuck out.
3. A kind of boom.
4. Greek philosopher.
5. Organ of vision.
8. Event.
9. Ploy.
12. Female chicken.
14. Deep pit.
15. Excuse.
18. Anger.

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. Which female name can be applied to a dish of potatoes, a Finnish magazine and an Indian coin?
2. What sort of poem is an epyllion?
3. "Who ever lov'd, that lov'd not at first sight?" is the final line of which epyllion by Christopher Marlowe?
4. In the 2004 film *Dodgeball*, what are the names of the two rival teams?
5. Who was the creator of the 1980s fad, the Cabbage Patch Doll?
6. Where on each doll was the creator's signature stamped?
7. Which film by which director won the Palme d'Or at this year's Cannes Film Festival?
8. In which South American capital city would one find Manzana de la Rivera?
9. Which vehicle links Sir Alec Guinness, Marc Chagall, Brian Johnson and Brigitte Bardot?
10. Jascha Heifetz was a virtuoso of which instrument?
11. Who was David Niven's batman (manservant) during World War II?
12. What is the highest military decoration a foreigner can receive from the American government?
13. Where was movie legend Samuel Goldwyn born?
14. Which drummer was an extra in *A Hard Day's Night* and *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*?
15. What is the highest point on Phuket called and how high is it?
16. What were the nicknames of Phuket's "Two Heroines"?
17. Which scat singer was known as the "Hi De Ho Man"?
18. Which mythical seahorse pulled Poseiden's chariot?
19. What fictional character rode a horse called "Fru-Fru"?
20. What do TE Lawrence, Duane Allman and Berry Oakley have in common?

Answers below, left

Puzzle Solutions

Monster Quiz Answers

1. Anna; 2. A narrative poem with a mythological or romantic theme; 3. *Hero and Leander*; 4. The Average Joes and the Purple Cobras; 5. Xavier Roberts; 6. The left buttock; 7. *The Wind That Shakes the Barley* by Ken Loach; 8. Asunción, Paraguay; 9. The Citroën DS. They each owned one; 10. The violin. 11. Peter Ustinov; 12. The Legion of Merit; 13. Warsaw, Poland; 14. Phil Collins; 15. *Mai Thao Sip-Song* (Twelve Canes) 529 meters above sea level; 16. Gam and Mook; 17. Cab Calloway; 18. Hippocampus; 19. Anna Karenina; 20. They all died in motorcycle accidents.

Solution to Cartoon Puzzle



EZ Trivia Answers:

1. Thomas Edison; 2. Canary; 3. Carbon; 4. Portuguese; 5. Two; 6. India; 7. Y; 8. Hiawatha; 9. Lucy Liu; 10. The Pink Panther.

Brain Buster Answer:

In each row, the middle number is the number on its left multiplied by the number on its right, but written backwards. (eg, $3 \times 8 = 24$. So number in middle column is 42.)

Cryptic Crossword Solution



Quick Crossword Solution



Sudoku solution

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

In The Stars

by Isla Star

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): You can look forward to more cooperation from others in the year ahead. Those tired of carrying too many responsibilities will soon be able to rest. Libra offers an interesting theory on Tuesday that should explain why a scheme has not been going to plan. Make a thoughtful gesture to soothe your partner this Sunday.

CANCER (June 22-July 23): Life could appear to be somewhat dull for you and it's high time to set new ambitions for yourself. There's no good reason to continue wallowing in your present rut. Dare to kick up your heels this weekend by accepting an unlikely invitation from a friend. A bittersweet relationship from your past could be rekindled soon; it would be wise to consider carefully before setting these wheels in motion.

LEO (July 24-August 22): A week of unpredictable events lies ahead for you. A Sagittarian friend may ask for help out of the blue. Even though this will probably involve some inconvenience, sympathetic Leos will find it hard to refuse. Communication breakdown is

highlighted on Wednesday or Thursday. Wait for this storm to pass before trying to come to any agreements. Money will flow away rather than towards you until the end of June

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): Unfinished business becomes urgent this week. If you had convinced yourselves that you had time to kill you will receive a rude awakening. If you're planning a trip during June, make sure not to leave before all loose ends have been tied. Your spirits soar when you learn that someone's feelings are as intense as yours. Romantic commitments are strongly highlighted during the coming weeks. The number 5 looks lucky on Tuesday.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): A busy week lies ahead for you. By the end of it you'll probably wish to be marooned on a desert island. An attractive Arian would appreciate an invitation to join you. A financial windfall is forecast to take place very soon; this should be the chance you've been waiting for to repay a debt. Double-check important documents before committing to a deal

that will be impossible to wriggle out of.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): A dazzling opportunity appears this week. Monday and Tuesday are particularly auspicious days to aim for the moon. If you are getting cold feet about a recently begun romance you have nothing to fear – this liaison is sure to succeed if you open your heart. On Wednesday travel will be subject to hitches, so allow extra time. The color amber encourages warm feelings.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): You need to guard against spending as if there's no tomorrow. Rainy days lie ahead and you are advised to keep some cash on one side. It appears that a serious discussion regarding finances is long overdue with your partner. Remember that money can't buy love. At work you will benefit from remaining aware of colleagues' activities; a snake in the undergrowth could be trying to slither into your business.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): Taking charge of a

situation can avoid a catastrophe later this month. If you have been avoiding facing up to reality you should take the plunge. It will be a fairly simple matter to set the record straight. This weekend it looks like you'll be painting the town red when a friend's celebration turns out to be wilder than planned. The number eight can bring luck on Monday.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): Trying to make others see sense will push your patience to the limit this weekend, but the astral atmosphere eases after Monday. You will find it helpful to realize that it's not imperative that everyone shares your point of view. If you're single, a tentative approach made by Sagittarius this Saturday gives exciting food for thought. A lucky break ensures that you can start some serious holiday planning.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): Accepting a new work commitment will turn out to be a mixed blessing for you. Although you will certainly appreciate having a healthier bank balance at the end of the month, an impending visit from friends or family will

demand time and energy. On Tuesday your imagination is fired up by someone's success; the stars will support any effort you make to change career aims. Pay attention to dreams this weekend.

ARIES (March 21-April 20): Approaches you made last month regarding business breaks bear fruit this week. Leo can be trusted to come up with the goods, but Scorpio will want too much control. A blast from your past suddenly makes contact; handle this situation with kid gloves to avoid upsetting the current love of your life. Saturday is the best day to combine work with pleasure. Wear the color beige to encourage a tranquil mood.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): The outlook is reasonably rosy for you. Others may not behave exactly as you had been hoping for, but there's still time for them to prove their worth. You could receive news that family from overseas are planning a visit. If this interferes with arrangements already made, there is a solution to please everyone. Wear the color lotus pink to help focus on the here and now.

A time for all sorts of football

The 2006 World Cup has just started. The usual bleary-eyed employees stumbling in late for work, productivity down, rent and car payments gambled away and seriously late nights are to be expected.

That's what it's all about, at least here in Thailand.

The last tournament was in Japan and Korea so kick-off was always in the afternoon or early evening.

One bank in Silom Rd in Bangkok installed TVs throughout its offices, reasoning that staff might be distracted from their normal work, but at least they were at work. Enlightened.

Digressing from the topic of soccer for a moment, however, I want to put in my two pence worth about of this fuss over another long-time football: foreign ownership of land in Thailand.

The issue of setting up companies to buy or control ownership of property has come up time and time again over the years. Now there is a new flap about it (see page 1 of the *Gazette* issue of June 3).

But in fact there is nothing new in this and I don't see what all the fuss is about.

People should be happy if companies are set up properly and their investments are safe. The weeping and wailing about buyers dropping out by the hundreds doesn't make any sense.

It should be the other way round, I don't believe that any smart people are dropping out.

LARGER THAN LIFE

By Graham Doven

We need smart people here anyway, I'd hate to see too many not-so-smart people moving in. The next thing you know they start breeding, and then you start to hear the first notes of bluegrass played on the old five-string banjo at warp speed.

Although the directive from the Ministry of Interior will require further clarification in the coming days, for now at least, with no Thai parliament in session and therefore no possibility of new laws being passed, the law regarding foreign investment in real estate has not changed one bit.

So there's no point in whining and whining and carrying on. In fact, it could be counter-

productive. When nobody shows any interest it usually goes away.

Now, more importantly, back to the Jules Rimet Cup. That's what the footballing nations of the world are competing for this week.

A group of visionary French football administrators from the 1920s, led by the innovative Jules Rimet, are credited with the original idea of bringing the world's strongest national football teams together to compete for the title of World Champions.

The original gold trophy bore Jules Rimet's name and was contested three times in the 1930s, before World War II put a

12-year stop to the competition.

From the website www.soccerhall.org, some little anecdotes: The trophy had a hazardous existence. The Italian Vice-President of FIFA, Dr Ottorino Barassi, hid it in a shoe-box under his bed throughout World War II and thus saved it from falling into the hands of occupying troops.

Then in 1966, the cup disappeared while on display as part of the build-up to the World Cup in England. It was found, buried under a tree, by a little dog called Pickles.

Finally, in 1983, it was stolen again, this time in Rio de

Janeiro, and apparently melted down by the thieves.

The Brazilian Football Association, who had earned the right to keep the trophy after having won it three times, ordered a replica made.

The World Cup is a huge event that brings many nations of the world together. Although I'm mainly a rugby fan, I'll be watching because Australia is in the tournament for the first time in 32 years.

The downside is that we are facing Brazil, Croatia and Japan in our group.

Never mind, enjoy it, and happy hangovers, people.

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Bizarre crackdown

It is all rather bizarre: an order comes down from the Ministry of Interior in Bangkok, instructing land officials in every province to put "under a microscope" any company with foreign shareholders that wants to buy land.

The order stated that some people had attempted to "bypass" the law by buying a piece of land with a house for residential or office purposes, and then changing their "aim", subdividing and selling the land. Just how checks by land officials are supposed to curb this is not clear.

There seems to be some suggestion that some companies may have subtly altered their shareholdings so that foreign-owned shares exceed 49%. This is hard to believe. Any investor wanting to buy shares in a company is going to want to have that purchase registered. If the purchase breaches the 49% limit, then the company is no longer able to own land. So what is the point?

There is the possibility that foreigners are hiding behind Thai nominees, but this is an inherently dangerous ploy. If the officially registered owner of the shares is Thai, there is really nothing to stop him or her from selling those shares – even if they were actually paid for by the foreigner. Where is the sense in that?

In Phuket, the Land Office has been following orders, but had, up to the time of going to press, found no company that might appear to be trying to "bypass" the law.

News of the order did, however, cause some consternation – not to mention confusion. That is never a good thing in any economy. Why anyone would want to cause such damage has become a matter for dark speculation and conspiracy theorizing.

The Land Office will be well aware that this is a delicate matter that could affect a large number of people – most of them Thai.

Perhaps there are still cases of Thai companies being set up illegally with near-penniless nominee shareholders, which is what the order appears to be aimed at extirpating.

But staff at the Business Development Office are not stupid, and such cases, if they exist in Phuket, must be few in number. This is especially true among the property community, which has learned from bitter experience that everything must be done according to the law if one does not want a "shortcut" to come back and bite one on the backside.

The order from the Ministry is misguided and will achieve little or nothing in terms of righting wrongs. It should be rescinded before damage is done.

– The Editor



Letters

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

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

Chetwynd-Talbot sentence not enough

I have just read the article regarding the ludicrous sentence handed down to Chetwynd-Talbot, the murderer of Debra O'Hanlon. I am sure that all in Patong who knew and loved Debbie will be utterly dismayed at this short sentence.

Debbie had the biggest heart and was everyone's friend. She captained the ladies pool team for the OffShore Bar and was always in full support of the team members. She brought great fun to everyone who knew her. It was a chilling shock that ran through the expat community when we heard the terrible news of Debbie's death.

Looking at Talbot's picture, he seems fit and well. This leads me to believe he is receiving outside help. When he was arrested he was penniless and had a string of personal debts to people throughout Patong, myself included. So how is he surviving?

The account mentions that forensic evidence indicates hard hits to parts of Debbie's body. Therefore, he struck her more than once. In his own words, he said, "I threw one punch that I shouldn't have thrown and this resulted in the girl's death."

Can he not remember her name? This evidence shows he struck her more than once.

The crime, under section 288 of the Thai Penal Code, carries a penalty of 15 to 20 years. His sentence was reduced by a third because Talbot surrendered himself to the police and admitted that he had killed Ms O'Hanlon. It took Talbot two days from when he killed her to surrender himself – no doubt realizing that

he could not depart from Thailand, as I am sure he would have done, given the opportunity.

My heart goes out to Debbie's family and friends, as this is an unjust sentence. Not only do they have to bear their tragic loss, but must also cope with this latest insult.

On behalf of the expat community, may I say how truly sorry we feel for her. Debbie is sorely missed.

Bar Stool Boris
Las Vegas

For the love of dogs

With reference to the letter "Let straying dogs die" [*Gazette* edition of May 27], the writer should be aware of the following.

1. The process of sterilization and re-release is not a pseudo-scientific argument. It is based on more than 100 years of stray-dog-control records kept in many countries, which have proved scientifically that it is the only method that works.

Killing and removing dogs has never worked. Returning visitors and residents comment that the number of stray dogs in Phuket is decreasing and the condition of the remaining strays is improving.

2. We are living in a Buddhist country. Euthanasia of dogs is not officially practiced, and when attempted some years ago in Bangkok was stopped at the request of His Majesty the King. The Soi Dog Foundation (SDF) does have vets who will euthanize, but only if the animal is suffering or clearly dangerous.

3. The majority of the island's population, including SDF and the PPLO, would like to see an end to the stray dog population. However over 95% of

SDF's funding is from overseas, donated in the main by people who have never even visited Phuket. If Phuket's population would like to see a speedier end to the problem, then they should be prepared to pay for it.

4. Phuket may be an island, but it is joined to the mainland. Every week scores of puppies are brought down here to markets and pet shops. Offspring from these dogs continue to add to the stray population.

5. Mandatory registration and enforced leash laws are an excellent idea. I would add mandatory sterilization, but the writer is being naive if he thinks it would or could be effectively policed. Just look at how many laws are not enforced already.

Banning the sale of puppies on the island could be more easily policed and would have a marked impact.

John Dalley
Soi Dog Foundation

Day tripper

Surely the letter about the state of Chao Fa West Rd [*Gazette* edition of May 27] was a spoof. However valid the sentiments expressed, the writer – under the title of Sir Hugh Creighton-Ward, Blackburn, Lancashire – is an obvious Beatles fan, and using their lyrics to spice his joke.

From *A Day in the Life*:

I read the news today, oh boy/4,000 holes in Blackburn, Lancashire...

And then there's the vocabulary used: "Bally swiftly" and "take the blame squarely on the chin like a man instead of fudging a response, smiling, shrugging and blaming an underpaid coolie".

Another Antiquated Beatles Fan, Chalong

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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.

In absolute praise of corruption

It goes almost without saying that skepticism today passes nearly for religion. *Caveat emptor* are our watchwords, and only fools trust the pious assertions of public figures who affect a disinterested or altruistic concern for the well-being of others.

Corruption is assumed to be rampant, an assumption that has grown so common that an ulterior motive is adduced for every project or policy advanced.

Lawsuits, investigations and accusations belie the fact that hardly anyone anymore believes in a "common weal" – there is only self-interest, more sophisticated, perhaps, but just as unenlightened as the selfishness of beasts.

Thailand's schoolchildren don't even see anything wrong with the prevailing skepticism, according to Privy Counsellor Dr Kasem Wattanachai, who cited a recent opinion poll in which 3,000 Bangkok-area high-school students were asked if they find corruption in politics acceptable.

A 51% majority answered "yes" – so long as politicians deliver on their campaign promises.

According to the *Nation* newspaper, Dr Kasem attributed the country's moral malaise to "a destructive form of capitalism" and lamented that prospects for the future cannot thus be bright.

It must be observed that national figures tend to grab headlines in a national way; a better gage of our actual moral depravity, if that's what it is, is probably found not at the national but at the local level.

Everyone can probably name his favorite local bar that opens till dawn without a hint of official interference. Just don't do it in print or you'll likely face a lawsuit.

It is presumed, of course, that corruption is involved when certain establishments are allowed to operate in violation of the laws while others are not. But maybe that is not the case.

Perhaps our local government officials and the constabulary are being entirely frank. Perhaps they just don't see what's

going on; decent people, after all, are asleep at 3 am.

It may well be that the situation is not so bad as it seems at first blush, however, and that local officials are not completely to blame – corruption or no.

Economists justly point out that suppressing a popular trade inevitably results in development of a black market.

A long with the island's scofflaw bars, the proliferation of unregulated fuel stations on Phuket roads is another fine case in point.

The central government, alleging waste of fuel and electricity, has forced the nation's licensed filling stations to close at 9 pm.

The result is, in most areas, renegade gasoline vendors, each with dozens of open bottles of fuel set up on tables at the roadside.

No one is yet alleging official corruption in allowing the vendors to skirt minimum fire and safety regulations – but that is-

sue is clearly beside the point. Many vendors are spaced so closely together that, were one to explode, others might erupt in a chain reaction.

Were a speeding vehicle to lose control, as so often happens late at night, and smash into one, it could precipitate a real catastrophe.

So who's to blame? The vendors? They're mere victims of economic imperative. Officialdom? Which office? The Commerce Office? The Provincial Office? Local *OrBorTor* offices? The Highways Office?

Any of these agencies might assume responsibility if it wished, but none of them want to crack down on the *chao ban* until orders come from upstairs; because in this case, as with the bars, what appears as out-and-out "corruption" may in part reflect popular discontent over central government policy.

Recall that there was long an official closing time in Thailand before the Thaksin administration began enforcing it. Someday, then, an order to close down the table-top filling stations may come through.

Thus, in a roundabout way, it appears sense is all on the side of those who think corruption is fine if held within limits.

A few years ago, before Thaksin's crackdown, too many bars were open far too late. It was ugly. Now, because of a little corruption perhaps, just the right number remain open.

Before the government ordered filling stations to close at 9 pm, there were only a few renegade gasoline vendors serving the needs of those in areas where fuel was otherwise unavailable. Now the situation is not only ugly, but dangerous.

But soon, it seems likely, the crackdown will come; and then, after a little corruption sets in, there will be just the right number once again.

Corruption will be always be with us, and maybe we're better off that way.

A little corruption, a little hypocrisy, a little piracy, here and there, grease the wheels of commerce and add life to society. When everyone is straight – and no one gets bent even a little bit, ever – it takes the fun out of living.

Letters

It isn't Christmas in Thailand anymore

As a visitor to Thailand for over 20 years, I have enjoyed spreading the good word about Amazing Thailand. One of my favorite descriptions is, "It's always Christmas in Thailand."

When you rolled into any village anywhere after sunset in Thailand you used to be greeted by the sparkle of countless tiny lights adorning every roadside restaurant and beer garden.

Alas, not any more. Having spent a good part of the past year driving through both rural and urban areas, I have found the onset of nightfall is now bleak, dark and dreary. In a no-doubt well-intentioned attempt to save energy, the lights are out everywhere.

Street lamps are out, there are hardly any welcoming fairy lights and, for the first time I can recall, the traveler is constantly warned to beware of gangs roving the darkened roads. This cannot be good for business.

Arriving at night on an "off season" trip to "over-developed" Phuket, the road was virtually pitch black except for the well-lit entrances to fancy housing developments, and it was only a little past 9 pm.

Certainly street lights could be turned back on, and there must be low-voltage Christmas lights businesses could use.

Perhaps the solution is as simple as a complete conversion to solar power for all highway lighting.

About 80% of all the campgrounds in US national parks are now solar-powered.

It is important to bring back the sparkle to the night in the magic Kingdom, however it is done.

Jim Newport
Los Angeles

Please stop the midnight wailing

I am writing this at 4 am, having had my sleep interrupted yet again. Just about every night we are disturbed, often more than once, by the blaring sirens of ambulances and "rescue service" pickups as they drive past on the road outside.

The drivers of these vehicles use the sirens even when they are completely unnecessary, such as in light or non-existent traffic and after dark, when their brightly flashing lights more than adequately warn others of their presence.

Cannot the thoughtless drivers see that by their inconsiderate behavior they are rapidly eroding the goodwill that people feel towards those who work in such occupations, and, by association, their employers?

They should also be made aware that the disturbance is made much worse by their sirens causing the many wandering, uncontrolled local dogs to howl loudly in concert, often long after the cause of the trouble has gone by.

W Brown
Patong

How do we register a Thai baby of unmarried parents with a foreign surname?

My Thai girlfriend and I have a 15-month-old baby. She wants the baby to have my surname. How can we do this?

Suwanee Choochote, Registration Department at Muang District Office, replies:

The registration department issues birth certificates by taking information about the baby's birth from hospital documents which bear the surnames of both the father and the mother. If you stated that you are the father at the time of birth we will issue a birth certificate with your name on it.

However, if the baby already bears the mother's surname and you want to change its surname to your family name, you must obtain a marriage license.

I suggest that you contact the registration department at the district office where your girlfriend and your baby are residents with the birth certificate, the marriage license and a copy of your passport.

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

Is agreement needed for a property transfer to a Thai citizen?

My wife's father, who is Thai, bought a property in Bangkok a few years before he was married. Now he wants to transfer ownership of the property to my Thai wife. Does his wife need to sign to agree for the transfer to take place? We have called the Land Office in Bangkok but have been given conflicting responses.

My wife's father and his wife are still married, but the property was obtained two years before the marriage was registered.

Jarong Ninrat, Chief of Regulation Department at the Phuket Provincial Land Office, replies:

He does not need his present wife to sign her consent if he wants to transfer this property to his daughter because he obtained it before his marriage.

If he obtained the property while he was married the property would belong to both of them. But as this property belongs only to him, he does not need consent from anybody.

Wheeling and dealing: "Phuket has two types of taxi - millions (or so it seems) of small songthaew-style minivans (usually bright red, occasionally bright yellow), and a much smaller number of conventional sedan-style taxis (yellow and red, with a "TAXI-METER" sign on top). The minivans are universally referred to as tuk-tuks (even though they have four wheels, not three). They have no meter, and their drivers are notoriously mercenary, so always agree a price beforehand and do bargain hard. Short hops around town shouldn't cost more than 40 baht, but good luck getting from Patong to Phuket Town for under 200 baht. For longer distances the metered taxis are a better bet, so do your bit to break the iron grip of the minitaxi mafia and patronize them if you can." (1)

Clutching tuk-tuk drivers: "As far as the average tuk-tuk driver is concerned there is no smaller unit of currency than the 100 Baht note. Now compared to western prices this is hardly highway robbery, but if you compare a trip from one end of Patong to the centre (Bangla Road) a distance of a couple of miles, to how far you can go in a metered Bangkok taxi you'll soon get the point. In fact air conditioned taxis, of which there are a small number when compared to omnipresent Tuk-tuks in Phuket, charge the same as their less comfortable alternatives. The solidarity of the drivers when it comes to pricing is ad-

OUTSIDE IN

By Lis Kinswoman

This week we'll stick with getting around in Phuket. When Lis visited Blighty a few years back, her friends asked what was the most stressful aspect of living on a tropical island. She said, "the traffic" and everyone fell about laughing. They obviously hadn't had **The Phuket Driving Experience**. As usual, Lis quotes and does not edit.

mirable and for us tourists it is a case of 'grin and bear it'." (2)

Some differentials: "This is a quite cheap way to travel, but ask for the price before the ride!"... "Tuk tuks... are surprisingly expensive. A short ride from say the centre of Patong beach to the other end was standard at THB100. Not much when you convert it to EUR, USD or GBP but really when you compare it relative to everything else it's actually not cheap."... "No helmets are necessary and no license required to hire them (motorbikes) either. Yet, amazingly the streets are not littered with any cranial contents."... "There are motor-

ZOOM ZOOM!

cycles for rent too. Did not try any, found it too dangerous."... (3)

Driving the point home: "If there is one piece of advice to keep in mind when driving in Thailand it is this. Don't assume anything. Just because someone is indicating right, doesn't mean they won't suddenly turn left. There is no highway code and driving tests are practically a formality. Therefore, you should always expect other drivers to do things you don't expect. This includes running lights, not indicating, overtaking on blind corners and anything else you can think of." (4)

Australian rules: Apparently when it comes to road rules for Thai bikers, as long as you appear to have looked before pulling out in front of buses, trucks, whatever, just inches away...that's highly acceptable!

These are the rules we managed to pick up after a couple of hours riding time...

1. If there's a gap that looks too small for you to fit in...try to fit anyway!

2. If there's so much traffic coming, it looks like you'll be sitting at the intersection for hours before its going to be safe to pull out...pull out anyway!!

3. If there's too much traffic in your

lane, veer to the wrong side of the road...they'll go round!

4. If the traffic in front is too slow, overtake on the right...or left...or mount the curb!

5. Indicators are provided on the bike, but are completely unnecessary!

6. Traffic lights are only there for a guide, you don't have to obey them.

7. Helmets are for losers...tough it out, you don't want your hair messed up!

8. Bikes are small but are good for carrying 4 or 5 passengers...no worries!

9. Children as young as 2 yrs old can easily steer while dad talks on the mobile!

10. If all else fails, smile, wave and toot the horn, while yelling... aussie, aussie, aussie!!" (5)

1. <http://wikitravel.org/en/Phuket>
2. http://www.virtualtourist.com/travel/Asia/Thailand/Southern_Thailand/Phuket-1444813/Transportation-Phuket-Tuc_Tuc-BR-1.html
3. http://www.virtualtourist.com/travel/Asia/Thailand/Southern_Thailand/Phuket-1444813/Transportation-Phuket-Tuc_Tuc-R-1.html
4. <http://www.phuket.net/visit-phuket/tips/road-safety.htm>
5. <http://www.travelblog.org/Asia/Thailand/Phuket/Patong-Beach/blog-59547.html>



Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt

Author Roger Osborne has bitten off a huge chunk of narrative: the story of Western civilization from 40,000 years ago till today, from the caves of Lascaux to the fall of the twin towers. But the polymath – fluent in history, philosophy, religion, literature and art – is just the writer to do it.

As he relates in his prologue to *Civilization: a New History of the Western World* (Jonathan Cape, London, 2006, 532pp), he was inspired to take up the task

when confronted by the threat to Western civilization represented by the September 11 attacks.

"Civilization is the word that stands for what we most value in society," he asserts. "We cannot simply dismiss it as being so full of contradictions as to be meaningless, so we must make some attempt to understand it. This, I suggest, can only be done by seeing how values and events are connected, investigating the context in which ideas that we take for granted arose, bringing cultural, philosophical, social and political history ... and viewing received wisdom and venerable authority with healthy scepticism."

Osborne is fully current with new trends in historiography. The lives of the earliest Europe-

ans were not as envisioned by Thomas Hobbes – "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short" – but actually quite prosperous. Agriculture spread rapidly from 7,000 BC and trade routes sprouted along rivers and seacoasts.

Then came the Greeks. The chapter devoted to them is aptly titled *A Torrent of Words*. With the adoption of an alphabet, the West saw its first written outpouring of history, philosophy, drama, poetry and political thought.

The Greek apogee came with the Golden Age of Pericles. In a famous eulogy in 431 BC – actually a pep rally for a war against Sparta – Pericles told the Athenians that their forefathers had, "by their courage and their virtues, handed on to us a free country. Athens is open to the

world and its institutions make its people free."

Osborne notes that Pericles was "the first notable example of a politician holding one method of government to be superior to another in principle."

Moving on to the Romans, Osborne is unflinching about their conquering hubris. Julius Caesar performed a systematic genocide against tribes of peaceful farmers to "civilize" Gaul. And yet: "The Romans were endlessly fascinated by themselves and profoundly occupied by questions of right and wrong."

The Dark Ages after the fall of Rome were, according to Osborne, not all that dark. Farming and commerce went on apace. Trading centers grew into cities while purely military garrison towns fell into ruin. From St Augustine to St Thomas Aquinas, this was the grand era of religious philosophy. Osborne is remarkably astute in his approach to Christianity – with none of the hack academic's hostility toward religion. The issues addressed by the Fathers of the Church were universal.

Osborne then shifts gear in his chapter *Art as Civilization: Wealth, Power and Innovation*

in the Italian Renaissance. This was a period when history suddenly revolved around Italian painting, sculpture and architecture.

"The absence of art from any story of the fifteenth century is like a wedding without a bride, while the presence of art dominates and diminishes everything around it," Osborne writes, though he also delves deeply into the calamitous history and ram-bunctious literature of the era.

Osborne takes us through the Enlightenment and Industrialization, and then skips across the pond to look into the contributions of the United States, which was formed by both.

How the glorious march of human progress ended in the horrific barbarity of the first half of the 20th century is a question that Osborne raises, but fails to answer. Nationalism, racism, totalitarianism are all trotted out, but the overwhelming mystery of human evil endures.

Osborne's final chapter on the post-war world is a rather banal overview of conventionally-liberal platitudes. This is weakest section of the book, but there are so many strengths that you forgive him.

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A FISH OUT OF WATER

**NATURE
NOTES**
By Dave Williams

These fish
are truly
unique

If you've ever paddled a canoe or walked down a pier at low tide you are likely to have seen one of the strangest creatures that the mudflats offer – the mudskipper. Around Phuket, they're all over the place.

Globally, 17 species of mudskipper are currently recorded and at least 10 of these are found in southern Thailand. Mudskippers are actually related to gobies, a beautiful group of coral-reef fish.

They live mostly in the area between the high-tide and low-tide marks. At times they can be seen swimming with their heads partially out of the water, but they are most often observed when the tide recedes. You can see dozens of them at a time, "walking" around on the mud. Some of the easiest places to see them are Bangrong Pier and Ao Por pier.

These fish are truly unique. They have the ability to breathe through their moistened skin and through the mucus lining of the mouth and throat. None of this happens, however, unless the mudskipper is wet. This limits mudskippers to wet habitats.

When not visible on the mudflats, mudskippers are often underground. They have burrows in the mud. Because the mud in mangrove mudflats is extremely low in oxygen, the fish maintain an air pocket inside of their abode for breathing purposes. Another reason for the burrows is to provide boltholes, for when the tide is in and predators threaten.

The burrows are also equipped with escape routes in case

predators do manage to wriggle their way in. The main predators are snakes, such as the dog-faced water snake, which is fairly common in Phang Nga Bay, the mangrove snake and the crab-eating water snake. Predatory fish are also known to feed on mudskippers.

What do mudskippers themselves eat? Some species eat diatoms – microscopic phytoplankton categorized as unicellular algae. These tasty morsels are found in abundance on the sediment in the tidal zone. Other species seem to prefer crustaceans, insects and other small invertebrates.

Several species of mudskippers often share the same turf, perhaps because of an abundance of food. You most likely will never see fighting between species, but within any one species you may see aggressive behavior.

The "fighting" is actually quite comical. What normally happens is the two mudskippers square-off facing each other. They display their dorsal fins and open their mouths as wide as possible.

They then close in to each other and that's usually as far as it goes. I have never seen mudskippers going past this stage.

If you go kayaking around mangroves, take a look on the prop roots of the Rhizophora mangroves. You'll likely see some mudskippers there.

Take the time to watch one of these guys for a while. You can see them almost everywhere in Phuket, that is, everywhere with mud.

The mock
fighting is
quite
comic...

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ON THE MOVE



Janyaporn Morel from Surin province has joined the *Phuket Gazette* as a reporter. She has a degree in biotechnology from Mahasarakham University and a certificate in English for tourism from Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University.

She has spent the past nine years using her biotechnology training in Cox Laboratories Co in Bangkok; at Bayer Laboratories (Thailand) Co in Samut Prakarn; at Better Pharma Co and then the Department of Livestock Development poultry vaccine development project, both in Nakhon Ratchasima.

Before joining the *Gazette* she was Quality Control and Quality Assurance Supervisor with B Foods Product International Co in Lop Buri.



John Webb has been appointed General Manager of JW Marriott Phuket Resort & Spa. Mr Webb was General Manager at the JW Marriott Mumbai, in India, for three years.

He began his career with Thistle Hotels in the UK and spent nine years in food and beverage positions before moving to Australia in 1990, joining Renaissance Hotels in Sydney. In 1995 he became General Manager at the then-Ramada Hotel Parramatta in Sydney, now the Courtyard Parramatta.

In 1999, he was assigned to the New World Renaissance Hotel, Makati City, Manila, as Resident Manager. The following year he was promoted to GM of the Renaissance Riverside Hotel Saigon. Three years later he moved to Mumbai.



Sirinya Sukkho, 25, from Yala, has been promoted to Guest Relations Manager of the Twinpalms Phuket hotel.

K. Sirinya graduated from the Prince of Songkla University, Phuket campus, with a degree in hotel management before working as Junior Secretary and Convention & Incentive and Public Relations Officer at Le Royal Meridien Phuket Yacht Club.

She moved to Twinpalms in 2004 to work as Sales and Public Relations Officer.

Blue Canyon exits debt restructuring procedure

BANGKOK: The Central Bankruptcy Court (CBC) in Bangkok announced on May 31 its decision to allow Murex Co Ltd, the holding company for Blue Canyon Country Club (BCCC), to officially exit the debt restructuring process it has undergone under the court's administration.

BCCC, in an official release, stated, "The Plan Administrator of Murex, BC Golf Resort Management Co Ltd, has been instrumental in the implementation of the Debt Restructuring Plan, which has been under execution since 2002.

"The [CBC] noted that Murex has complied fully with its obligations under the Debt Restructuring Plan and has satisfied all payments to its creditors from proceeds of a new capital injection of 2 billion baht into Murex

by its owners, which was announced late last year.

"The decision follows closely on the announced release of title deeds by Blue Canyon in March 2006 to buyers of condominium units and villa land plots, enabling them to be registered as owners of their property at Blue Canyon.

"The entire title deeds release process is expected to be completed over the next few months."

The release quoted Sia Leng Yuen, the Chairman of BCCC and one of the owners, as saying, "This is great news for us. Blue Canyon can now look forward to the future and focus on ensuring that it remains not only Asia's premier golfing destination, but also one of the best property investments in the region."

The release continued, "The immediate future for Blue Canyon will see major development and refurbishment of the entire property, providing new levels of exemplary service, contemporary decor and luxurious amenities.

"The capital injection and the Central Bankruptcy Court's decision ensure a promising future, not only for Blue Canyon, but also for all its employees and the people of Phuket, and are clear endorsements of the management and owners."

HURDLE

One final hurdle BCCC still has to clear is a slew of lawsuits filed since 2004 by former shareholders who allege falsification of documents and concealment of information, with intent to take control of Murex.

One of those shareholders, Rawat Chindapol, a founder of BCCC and Murex, told the *Gazette*, "I have no objection to the court allowing Murex to exit the debt restructuring process.

"But I will not give up easily. I want [ownership of] Blue Canyon to return to Phuket. At the moment, we have eight criminal and civil suits outstanding over Blue Canyon.

"Our lawyers continue to collect data to support these cases."

Property boom makes tax officials smile

PHUKET CITY: If taxes paid are any indication of economic health, then Phuket's economy has been going through a very healthy patch, particularly the property industry.

Between October 1 last year and April 30 this year, the Phuket Area Revenue Office (PARO) collected 455.75 million baht in taxes from property businesses alone – an increase of 64.58% on the same six-month period a year earlier.

On May 30, PARO Chief Pensri Passakul explained at Governor Udomsak Usarangkura's monthly meeting with Provincial Office Chiefs that the rise in property taxes collected has been a boon for government coffers.

"Our figures show that [in the first half] this [fiscal] year we have collected 2.73 billion baht, which is 27.16% more than we collected in the same period a year ago.

In the tax year from October 1, 2004, to September 30 last year, she added, taxes collected amounted to about 4 billion baht. "We believe that this year we will collect more than that," she said.

She was speaking before revelation of the Ministry of Interior's order to land officials to put land-owning companies with foreign shareholders "under the microscope". (See *Gazette*, issue of June 3, Page 1)



Revenue Office Chief Pensri Passakul: Taxes collected in the first half were up 27pc on last year.

"Tax collected in April this year totaled 476.3 million baht, a rise of 36.72% compared with April last year, when 348.39 million baht was collected," K. Pensri said.

She explained that the rise in taxes collected from property businesses had resulted from an improved economy this year, with more transfers of land ownership, and the expansion of the property industry.

Gov Udomsak also attributed the boost in taxes collected to good work by the central government and the private sector in promoting Phuket as a tourist destination.

However, he criticized Thai Airways International (THAI) for not reintroducing direct international flights canceled after the tsunami.

"I have heard from travel agencies that forward bookings for next year are good ... but there are no direct flights [for visitors]," the Governor said.

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Last week this column featured the negative side of the hedge fund industry; this week it's time to tell the story from the opposite view.

Hedge funds is a generic term for investment funds that try to profit not only on rising asset prices, but also on falling prices. They have a huge array of investment styles; probably the only point on which they all agree is that they do not like static prices. Fortunately for hedge funds, markets seldom move sideways for any length of time.

These funds came into being simply because of demand.

No asset price keeps on rising in a straight line, and recent weeks have seen a significant rise in volatility in currency, commodity, bond and stock markets – volatility being a term used only to describe markets that are falling.

It is logical for serious investors to have investments that profit in declining markets in addition to those that make money in rising markets. Today, there are about 13,000 different hedge funds that manage well over US\$1 trillion (38 trillion baht) in assets, and which aim to fill this demand.

Originally, many hedge funds, especially in the US, choked off investment by the general public simply by requiring a very high minimum investment to enter, usually US\$1 million (around 38 million baht). Others wanted to deal only with other institutions and were reluctant, at best, to allow any private investment, no matter how large.

PENSION FUNDS

This, naturally, piqued the interest of the private investment community. Here was an investment type that was available – if available at all to individuals – only to the rich, and the word spread that the returns being enjoyed by participants were exceptional.

This may all seem very remote to many readers, but in reality many will already be investing in hedge funds, though they will be completely unaware of their investment.

Pension funds, for example, are increasingly investing in hedge funds. Previously, pension fund managers had all their assets in cash, bonds, shares and perhaps commercial property. In all these asset classes they have one common aim: to make money.

However, each of these asset classes also has its own problems: cash on deposit may be safe but often the returns are very low and insufficient to fund the pensions that have to be paid.

Bonds may guarantee an income but until they mature the capital values may fluctuate wildly. This can lead to unpleasant results on the annual balance sheet. Stock markets can be profitable but can also suffer from serious falls which can, as history reveals, last for years.

Commercial property is also cyclical and is a very unpleasant place to be at the wrong time in the economic calendar.

Many happy returns



MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson

Naturally, pension fund managers want to be able to hedge their risk. What better place to be than in a hedge fund, whose managers specialize in this area?

When investors want to include hedge funds in their portfolios they immediately encounter problems. One is simply the size of the industry.

Having a choice of more than 13,000 funds is simply mind-numbing. To select on performance alone, without knowing much about the strategy that was employed to make these returns, is dangerous.

Also, are the same successful people still managing the fund? They may have been replaced by completely new managers who are not as competent.

Add this to the fact that many hedge funds still have huge entry sums and others are still not available to the public.

There are many solutions to these dilemmas.

Three hedge fund managers got together to create their own hedge fund group that was known simply by the initials of the founding partners.

Eventually, one of the three decided he wanted to go out on his own.

He went on to found his own company, which has a fund that simply invests in the cream of the other funds in the hedge fund industry – a fund of hedge funds.

He was approached by an extremely wealthy Arabian Gulf



On conventional stock markets, such as the New York Stock Exchange (above), investors have a hard time when stock prices fall. Hedge funds aim to make money, whichever way prices go.

– Photo: EPA/Justin Lane

family to manage their billions. Dubai. There was one condition He agreed and relocated to that he insisted upon; he would

continue to manage his own hedge fund. The family agreed.

This hedge fund manager, simply because of his reputation and the enormous amount of money he manages, is on the calling list of the world's best hedge funds, whose managers beat a path to his door. He is privy to all their investment strategies and manages a very successful fund.

The fund is perhaps a little conservative for those in a hurry but the objective is to make money, not to lose it. It is also open to the public and does not have high minimum-entry requirements.

The hedge fund industry has attracted some of the most talented managers in the world and has given their clients access to simultaneous multiple strategies that simply do not exist in any other type of fund.

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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Alcoholics Anonymous

is holding meetings in English at the following places:

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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),
019564031 or 018912895

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On Phuket Rd. Good location next to a dentist. 5m x 30m. 240,000 baht per year. Please call for more information. Tel: 01-892-4311.

KAMALA

guesthouse. Detached, restaurant-bar, 5 rooms, separate entrance. Email: swisstreff@gmx.net

PATONG INTERNET

coffee shop. Close to the beach. 60sqm, 1 bedroom, toilet, pantry, 7 computers & all equipment. For sale at 650,000 baht. Rent is 6,000 baht per month. Please call for more information. Tel: 04-1831199, 01-8895563.

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Nakha Island. 200m beach front, 80 villas, total 120 rooms. Tel: 07-8896074.

PHI PHI ISLAND

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BAR FOR SALE

in Patong. Going cheap. Please call for more information. Tel: 07-8930847.

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CHALONG

restaurant. Large restaurant Chalong circle + internet cafe for rent or sale, 2 shop houses. Fully equipped. Rent only 36,000 baht. Tel: 09-593-4193. Email: tonydudley@eznet.co.nz

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