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Task force to inspect Chalong bombings

By Sangkhae Leelanapaporn

PHUKET CITY: Phuket Governor Niran Kanlayanamit has appointed a special committee to investigate the November 28 bombing of three new homes on disputed land in Chalong.

During a meeting of the Phuket Provincial Security Council, Gov Niran said he would like to see the police track down and arrest the people responsible for the blasts as soon as possible.

The three improvised explosive devices, described as "fertilizer bombs", detonated about 2:30 am on Soi Songkun in Chalong, about one kilometer off Chao Fa East Rd.

Two Burmese workmen were injured in the blasts, which police believe were motivated by a land dispute.

"I went to the three houses the day after the explosion and talked with villagers there. There were already numerous problems there before the explosions, including arson and attempted murder. There are already 21 court cases related to land disputes in the area," Gov Niran told the committee.

Fearing that the explosions could be the start of a new trend if the perpetrators were not brought to justice quickly, Gov Niran named to the panel such provincial heavyweights as the Phuket Provincial Chief Administrative Officer (*Palad*), the Provincial Police Commander, the Muang District Chief, the head of the Chalong Tambon Administration Organization, along with representatives from the Provincial Land Office and Natural Resources and Environment Office.

"If explosions like this can

Clinton commends sea gypsies

MAI KHAO: Former US President Bill Clinton visited the small sea gypsy village Hin Look Diow on December 2 as one of his last acts as the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery.

Clinton planted a mangrove tree and commended the villagers on their environmentally-friendly practices. The mangrove tree was planted as a part of a 'Mangroves for the Future' initiative that will be expanded throughout 12 tsunami-affected countries in Southeast Asia.

Speaking of the villager's efforts to maintain mangrove forests, Clinton said, "It's hard to say they aren't smarter than a lot of people who claim to be more technologically advanced," since they maintained the forests, which provided some protection from the 2004 tsunami's waves.

Clinton thanked the villagers for setting a good example for the rest of the region and said he felt comfortable ending his tenure as Special Envoy at the end of the year because the tsunami recovery is at a position where it can be handled by international and local groups without his assistance.

— Zach Fridell



Former US President Bill Clinton meets Thai Foreign Affairs Minister Nitya Pibulsonggram before Clinton addressed villagers and reporters in Mai Khao. — Photo by Dan Miles

happen once, they could be followed by a second or third round of bombings. This is bad for Phuket, especially during the high season," he said.

Phuket Provincial Police Commander Pol Maj Gen Decha Budnampeth told Gov Niran that he expects the people behind the blasts to be arrested "soon", but added that investigators are still collecting forensic evidence.

However, Gen Decha

lashed out at local authorities, blaming them for many land disputes resulting in violence.

Such violent disputes often stem from negligence on the part of local authorities, who often fail to adequately check the backgrounds and land titles of people who contact them seeking a temporary house number, electrical supply and other utilities, he told Gov Niran.

"Why do the police have

to patrol public land to prevent trespassing and encroachment when this is the responsibility of local administrative bodies?" Gen Decha asked.

"It's very difficult to evict people once homes have been built or [public] land has been sold and resold many times over. So many protracted court cases involving land disputes could be avoided if the local authorities did their jobs properly," he said.

Blues festival to give to charities

KARON: The organizers of the Phuket International Blues Festival have announced that the 2007 festival will be a charity event.

Profits from the festival will be donated to the Phuket International Women's Club and the Phuket Has Been Good To Us Foundation, two organizations committed to children's education.

The festival will take place at the Hilton Arcadia Phuket Resort & Spa on February 16 and 17, 2007.

Performers from the event will wind down with a jam session to be held in Patong on February 18.

Returning to headline the show will be The Rich Harper Blues Band from the US, and Victor Brox and daughter Kyla Brox from the UK.

Thai-based bands Cannonball, Soi Dog Blues Band, Blue on Blue, The Blues Machine and The Groove Doctors will also be performing at next year's festival.

Patong toilets a flushing success

PATONG: Toilets at Patong Hospital and Banzan Market on Nanai Rd were awarded top honors in the southern region section of a national competition as part of the "World Toilet Expo & Forum 2006" held in Bangkok last month.

Representatives from each were awarded a 5,000-baht cash prize – 3,000 baht for the winning venue and 2,000 baht for the cleaning staff responsible for lavatory cleaning and maintenance.

Patong Hospital won in the hospital category, while the tourist-oriented Banzan Market took top honors in the division for markets, which are seldom associated with clean and hygienic toilets.

Kathu woman stabbed to death at home

KATHU: A 40-year-old woman died of stab wounds to the body, head and throat, inflicted by an intruder who broke into her home near Tung Tong Market early on November 27.

Pol Lt Col Passakorn Sonthikul of Tung Tong Police Station said that the murder was reported about 8 am on the day of the attack by Thavorn "Pae Lian" Kajkla, who identified the victim as his "second wife", Nongying "Sao" Sengton.

Pae Lian, 72, is a property owner in Kathu, where his business interests include home rentals.

The front door to K. Sao's home was forced open, and police suspect that the intruder then gained access to the victim's bedroom, where the murder took place, by re-

moving ceiling tiles in the bathroom and climbing over an interior wall.

K. Sao's body was found lying face down on the bed, dressed in purple pajamas. There were signs of a struggle, with bloodstains covering the bed and floor. Skin and hair, presumably from the attacker, were found under her fingernails.

Fingerprints and other forensic evidence were collected by police officers, and K. Sao's body was sent to Patong Hospital for examination.

K. Sao was home alone when the attack occurred, Col Passakorn said. He estimated the time of death to be about 3 am.

Noting that her body had 15 deep stab wounds, he added, police suspect that a "per-

sonal conflict" was the likely motive for the killing.

However, police are not ruling out that K. Sao may have been murdered for her possessions, as a gold necklace, gold bracelet and a single gold earring were noted as missing from the scene.

Col Passakorn said that evidence from the crime scene suggests that more than one person was involved in the attack, but that only one person entered the home, while one or more accomplices waited outside.

Tung Tong Police are now collecting evidence in the case and checking local gold shops to determine whether K. Sao's jewelry has been sold, hoping it will allow them to trace the killer.

Vice-Governors arrive on Phuket

By Sompratch Saowakhon & Supanun Supawong

PHUKET CITY: Two new Vice-Governors took up their posts on the island December 4. On the same day, Phuket Vice-Governor Pongsak Plaivaj was transferred to Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, where he will serve as a Vice-Governor.

The two new Vice-Governors are Tri Augkaradacha, promoted from Roi-Et Provincial Chief Administrative Officer, and Smith Palawatvichai, who served as Provincial Office Chief in Chaiyaphum.

The appointments will restore Phuket's top bureaucratic line-up to its standard makeup of one Governor – currently Niran Kalayanamit – with three Vice-Governors.

One post as Vice-Governor became vacant on October 31, when V/Gov Niran was promoted to Governor. The third post is already filled by V/Gov Vorapoj Rattasima, who will continue his work in the province.

K. Tri, 54, is a native of Nakhon Pathom Province, and is married with three children. He holds a master's degree in public



NEW ARRIVALS: Vice-Governor Tri Augkaradacha (left) and V/Gov Smith Palawatvichai.

administration from a university in Kentucky. His previous posts include positions in Mukdahan, Roi-Et and in his home province.

K. Tri is familiar with Phuket, having traveled here on holiday while working as District Chief of Surat Thani's Naderm District some 13 years ago.

Despite the obvious differences between Phuket and a rural province such as Roi-Et, he said his administrative experience



gives him confidence in his ability to do a good job here.

K. Smith is a native of Bangkok, where his wife and son reside. He is also familiar with the South, having served as Chief Planning Officer in Krabi in the early 1980s.

He has also visited Phuket many times as a tourist. K. Smith said he is looking forward to working in Phuket because the public sector here is considered more unified and harmonious than in Chaiyaphum.

Average annual income in the agriculture-dependent Northeastern province is only around 30,000 baht, compared with 100,000 baht in Phuket, he said.

Although Phuket is a small province with only three districts, promotions into the province are generally seen as a big step up in the Thai government hierarchy.

Bloody day on Phuket's roads

PHUKET: Four people, including three 11-year-old boys, were killed in two separate road accidents on November 27.

The first accident occurred about 7:30 pm, when three boys on a motorcycle and a sedan collided head-on on Thepprathan Rd, Koh Sireh.

The driver of the motorcycle, Channarong Sadimin, and one of his passengers, Suriyapong Premjaroen, died at the scene.

The third boy, Piyaong Sukwilai, was rushed to Vachira Phuket Hospital, where he died the following morning.

Pol Lt Theeradet Jiraksa, Duty Officer at Phuket Police Station, said that the driver of the sedan gave a statement reporting that the three boys, none of whom were wearing helmets, were weaving between cars at high speed before suddenly cutting into his lane, leaving him no time to react.

No charges will be pressed against the driver of the car, who has offered to help the parents with the costs of the boys' funerals.

In another fatal accident the same day, 39-year-old taxi driver Chartchai Chuachit crashed his car into an electricity pylon near Super Cheap on Thepkrasattri Rd around 8 pm.

"We think the taxi driver dozed off as he was driving and then crashed into the pylon. His neck was broken by the impact and he died at the scene. We found no alcohol in his blood, so we presume that the accident was caused by the driver being tired rather than drunk.

"We estimate that he was driving about 120 kilometers an hour at the time of the accident," Lt Theeradet explained.

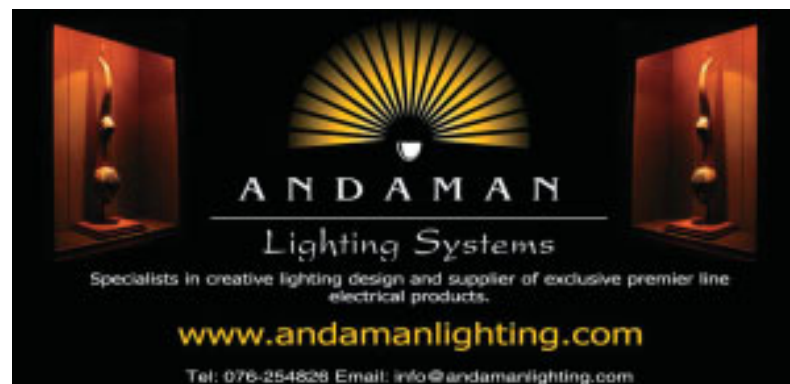
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TOUGH TALK: The banner on the right reads: 'The government wants quality tourists but the TAT wants rubbish tourists'.

TAT blamed for inaction on illegal Korean guides

PHUKET: An angry crowd of some 25 Thai tour guides and travel agents marched on Phuket Provincial Hall on November 30, demanding government action regarding Korean tour guides working illegally in the province.

Some members of the group carried signs demanding that Suwalai Pinpradab, Director of TAT's South Region 4 Office, take responsibility for the issue and step down.

The group delivered a letter of complaint addressed to Phuket Governor Niran Kanlaya-namit accusing the government of tacitly accepting the presence of Korean tour guides, who they claim are threatening the livelihoods of registered tour guides.

The letter accused tour operators who employ illegal Korean guides of selfishness, bribery of government officials

and other infractions of labor law. "Some government officers involved in tourism get money from guides so they can work in Phuket without a work permit," the letter alleges.

The crowd dispersed after Gov Niran appointed Vice-Governor Vorapoj Rattasima to chair an immediate meeting to discuss the allegations with the parties involved.

Governor Niran explained that many Koreans had requested that he grant them work permits so that they can work legally in Phuket.

"The Labor Department refuses to issue them work permits, so they have file complaints at the Administrative Court.

"I cannot blacklist them because they have the legal right to apply for a work permit," he said.

Man dies at Laguna Triathlon

CHERNG TALAY: Briton William Scott Stewart, 43, died after suffering a heart attack during the swim leg of the Laguna Phuket Triathlon held on December 3.

Debbie Dionysius, Laguna Phuket's Director of Destination Marketing, said that Mr Stewart was unconscious when he was pulled from the water.

He was taken to Bangkok Hospital Phuket, where he died at 11:08 am the same day.

She said that safety staff were watching Mr Stewart while he was swimming as he had veered off course. "He was rescued from the water when he was about 20 meters from shore," she said.

"He was a good swimmer, and he had prepared for the event," she added.

On his registration form, Mr Stewart had not noted any pre-existing medical conditions.

Tsunami warning buoy now deployed

By Sompratch Saowakhon

CAPE PANWA: The first US-built Deep-ocean Assessment and Reporting of Tsunamis II ("DART-2") tsunami-detection buoy has been deployed 1,100 nautical miles from Phuket by the Royal Thai Navy's MV *Seafdec*, which departed from Cape Panwa December 1.

The buoy will be anchored to the seabed at a depth of about 3,500 meters. Connected to the buoy and sitting on the seabed will be water-pressure sensors that can detect tsunami waves and, through the buoy, relay warnings to a satellite connected to research centers across the region which will then be able to raise the alarm.

The DART-2 buoy is the first in an array of 24 deep-ocean buoys planned by UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanic Commission, which oversees the development of the Indian Ocean regional tsunami warning system.

The first DART-2 buoy was deployed through a partnership between the US and Thai governments, represented at a ceremony to mark the *Seafdec*'s departure by US Ambassador to Thailand Ralph Boyce and Thai Foreign Affairs Minister Nitya Pibulsonggram.

Also in attendance were officials from USAID, which manages the US contribution to the Indian Ocean Early Warning



BUOY BUDDIES: Thai Foreign Affairs Minister Nitya Pibulsonggram (left) and US Ambassador to Thailand Ralph Boyce (left) shake hands in front of the DART-2 buoy.

System (IOTWS), and numerous Thai government officials, including Dr Smith Thammasaroj, who heads the Nonthaburi-based National Disaster Warning Center, which was established after the 2004 tsunami.

The US is funding two more DART-2 buoys to be deployed off the Indonesian Islands of Sumatra and Java in 2007, he said.

Dr Smith described the tsunami-warning system currently in place in Thailand's six Andaman Coast provinces as "good", but said he would only be satisfied after the two buoys are deployed

off the coasts of Sumatra and Java, sites much closer to Phuket than the remote location chosen for the first buoy.

In the event of a future tsunami, an array of buoys should provide Thailand's Andaman Coast with a critical 75-minute lead time during which national governments can relay warnings to local officials, who will warn coastal residents and coordinate emergency evacuations, he said.

Direct real-time detection will also eliminate the need for "false alarm" tsunami warnings issued solely by based on seismic data, he added.

Phuket City biker dies after blast from shotgun

PHUKET: A 20-year-old man died after being shot at close range with a shotgun in the early hours of November 28 as he rode his motorbike around Phuket City, with his girlfriend riding pillion.

The incident happened on Thepkasattri Rd about 12:30 am.

Pol Maj Wicharn Suwan-sith, Duty Inspector at Phuket City Police Station, said that Kheng Phatthong was confronting other young men on motorbikes who had shouted insults at him, when he was blasted in the left side of his abdomen with a

shotgun. He was rushed to Vachira Phuket Hospital, where he died from his injuries.

"I think this happened because Kheng's enemies wanted revenge; he was known for being involved in violent crimes," Maj Wicharn said.

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IN DEFENSE OF DOING

As a provincial probe investigating fraud allegations against the Thai-Swedish Children's Foundation in Mai Khao moves slowly forward, orphanage founder Narin Daengtakote tells the *Gazette* in an exclusive interview that no fraud has taken place at the shelter.

K. Narin maintains that he and his foundation are the victims of a smear campaign instigated by two disgruntled home buyers whose complaints have been unfairly played up in the Swedish media. With his Swedish wife Maria Florence by his side, Narin Daengtakote tells his side of the story.



Maria Florence, her husband Narin Daengtakote and volunteer workers Sussi Janson and Hans Forssell.

No European country lost more of its nationals to the 2004 tsunami than Sweden, which suffered more than 428 confirmed deaths and at least another 100 missing – many of them people vacationing in Thailand when the waves hit.

In the days that followed the tragedy, few figures were more visible in the Swedish press than Narin Daengtakote, who had just completed his Phuket Village holiday home estate project, which comprises some 40 detached homes for sale or rent to Swedes in Tambon Mai Khao, near Wat Muang Mai.

K. Narin, fluent in Swedish, was seen as a hero when he opened the doors of his newly completed homes to tsunami survivors.

When Narin and Maria opened the Thai-Swedish Children's Foundation in March 2004, funds from kind-hearted Swedes came pouring in: about 20 million baht by official counts – but much more if allegations by Swedish newspaper *Expressen* are true.

The orphanage is now the subject of a provincial probe, which began in May. Under dip-

lomatic pressure, the Ministry of the Interior (MoI) has since ordered the province to report weekly on the matter.

But K. Narin remains confident they will find nothing – because no fraud has taken place. He said that he has hired PricewaterhouseCoopers to audit the foundation's finances and that most of the controversy stems from the fact that he has spent most of his adult life in Sweden and was simply unaware of the laws governing Thai charities.

K. Narin said that he has also filed formal complaints against Swedish newspaper *Expressen* with the Swedish Press Council, a move he sees as the first step toward winning a cash settlement for defamation through the Swedish court system. If he does win such a settlement, he will donate all the money to the foundation, he said.

The controversy started at the housing project and had nothing to do with the nearby orphanage, he claims. "There were two families who were staying in our villas who refused to pay their electric bills for an entire year. We asked them for the money but they refused to pay, so I had to

cut off their power. They got very upset after that," he said.

It was these two families who launched the smear campaign against him, he said.

"When the tsunami hit the island I went in and offered help to Swedish people who were injured or had no place to stay. In some cases, I used my extra set of keys to open up vacant units that had already been bought or rented without asking the owners for permission first.

"Some of the survivors had only the swimming trunks they were wearing, so we gave them a place to stay, clothes to wear and food to help them get through the situation.

"I later talked to the villa owners, explaining what I did and the reasons for it. They all agreed that it was okay under the circumstances. The complaints didn't come from those owners, however, but from two other families," he said.

Part of the reason for the resentment was that those two buyers didn't fully understand the original terms of the purchase contract, which forbade them as

foreigners from owning the land outright but instead was based on a 90-year land lease, he said.

"I believe that these people trying to harm us comprise only a small group. The rest can see what we have done at the project and for the community. They trust us," he said.

"They started sending letters of complaint to the press and many different organizations in Sweden, the latest being a letter to the Swedish Embassy in Thailand asking to investigate us. They accuse the foundation of corruption, alleging that we accepted donations through more than one bank account. Now they want the government to check our finances.

"But none of it is true. It's just an attempt to destroy the foundation and my reputation. I have been cooperating with the [investigating] officers all along. I attend meetings whenever they want me to. I have nothing to hide.

"They even claim that I colluded with the temple Abbot over the land donated for the foundation. I have done many good things for the temple for

many years. There is no reason for me to want anything from them, because I am already happy with what I have," he said.

"After this case started, and to prevent the problem in the future, we decided to hire a private company called PricewaterhouseCoopers [an internationally-known audit firm] to work on the project, so that when the government wants to investigate the foundation it can be easier for them," he added.

K. Narin denied allegations that a sala constructed at the orphanage at a cost of two million baht was overpriced, as stated more than a year ago by Nikorn Torhirunyapreuk of the Phuket Provincial Defense Office, which is conducting the investigation.

"We spent two million baht on the project. Some wonder why we spent such a large budget, but they must understand that we wanted to build something that would last not only a couple of years, but for hundreds of years.

"As a result, the costs are quite high. For example, the cost of one wooden elephant can be as high as 100,000 baht. This sala

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THE RIGHT THING

serves as our own memorial of the Swedish people who died in the tsunami," he said.

K. Narin said that the foundation was not built solely for tsunami orphans, but for all needy children – because Thailand lacks the kind of social welfare system found in Sweden, where he still spends most of his time. He also denied reports that he had renounced his Swedish citizenship.

"I have a home in Sweden and have to travel a lot between Thailand and Sweden. Before I set up the foundation, I helped many schools and temples here with funding for new projects while on my holidays here."

K. Narin said that after tsunami victims moved out of the village into homes set up for them by the government, he wanted the foundation's work to continue. He did this by helping needy villagers from the nearby villages of Baan Para and Baan Phru Somparn, both in Thalang. Other children at the orphanage come from Thailand's Northeast.

"We are now supporting 50 kids, about 25 of whom came from Khon Kaen Province about a month ago. We send them to school, give them a place to stay and buy them clothes and other necessities," he said.

As for the foundation's fi-



The foundation's sala, built at a cost of 2 million baht.

nances, K. Narin said that the original land was paid for out of his own pocket and that the Abbot of Wat Muang Mai donated land for any expansion projects. Thus far the foundation has col-

lected some 25 million baht in donations, all of which has been spent – though donations continue to come in, K. Narin said.

"I lived in Sweden for 30 years, so I don't know much

about Thai law and the regulations on setting up a foundation. If I had known that it was going to be so complicated, I would not have set up the foundation. Instead I would have just donated the money myself," he said.

As for his attempts to clear his name in Sweden, he said the last hearing in his case with the Swedish Press Council, regarding what he says were ethics violations by *Expressen*, took place late last month.

Both sides are still arguing their cases, he added.

"I tried to call the newspaper to talk about my case, but no one wanted to talk to me. The paper presented only one side; they never called us, interviewed me or listened to our side of the story. They are probably afraid that if they did it would change the story in a way that wouldn't be very interesting," he said.

K. Narin said that although the investigation in Thailand has thus far turned up nothing, he doesn't expect the controversy to slowly fade away. "Those two people will come up with something else and continue to try to harass me. I will probably never see the end of it," he said.

Whether or not the end is in sight is unlikely to be decided by the Swedish Press Council,

whose verdicts have no judicial or financial implications.

The council's review body only attempts to determine whether or not "good press ethics" were violated, and, if they were, recommends that the publication issue an apology and publish its verdict.

The same is not true of the Phuket Provincial Defense Office, which has been investigating the orphanage for over a year and can recommend criminal charges to the Thai justice system based on its findings.

Committee member K. Nikorn told the *Gazette* in June this year that after two rounds of questioning K. Narin, they "suspected dishonesty" and intended to revoke the orphanage's foundation status.

But a year later, with the Ministry of Interior demanding weekly reports in an effort to get results, such revocation has yet to occur.

Samran Yukhunthorn, another member of the investigation committee whose job it is to file the weekly reports, said that there has been little progress and that evidence is still being collected, including questioning of the residents of Phuket Village and the Abbot of Wat Muang Mai.

"We are still proceeding with the investigation and cannot comment on the case until we summarize our findings," he said, without giving any date for when that might happen.

Le SUNDAY BRUNCHEON



Relive those long lazy afternoons of self-indulgent delight on the Quarterdeck overlooking Nai Harn beach and enjoy a celebration of gourmet delights. The brunch's culinary highlights include rich appetizers and the sweetest treats, a carving trolley and a special selection of main dishes from our a la carte menu.

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Queer News

Monkey's best pal

PETCHABOON: When the abbot of a temple in Tambon Taboh preaches about the need for love and social harmony, he has a good example to point to right on the temple grounds: an orphaned monkey and a crippled dog who grew up together and have become loyal, inseparable friends.

Phrakhru Arun Pacharakij, Abbot of Pa Reirai Buddhist Temple in Petchaboon's Muang District, said the female monkey, named

Somsri, is a one-year-old Crab-eating Macaque. She was brought to the temple as a newborn by villagers who discovered her alone in the jungle after her mother had been shot.

"When Somsri was brought here she was completely helpless. We bottle-fed her a mix of sweetened condensed milk with warm water," the Abbot said.

About the same time, the Abbot's mother brought to the temple another animal worthy of considerable pity: a newborn pup that could not use his back legs. Named Book, the light-colored pup was raised together with the monkey.

Now, about a year later, the pair do everything together. When they go for a "walk" – no easy feat for a dog with front-wheel drive only – Somsri jumps on board, riding Book like a jockey. The two wrestle and jump up and down, much to the amusement of visitors to the temple, who ensure the pair always have lots of food.

When they are not playing, Somsri indulges her simian instincts by grooming Book, carefully removing any mites or ticks she finds. Book returns the favor



Boom (center) protects his monkey pal from the attentions of another temple dog.

by guarding her primate playmate, growling menacingly and barking if any stranger tries to approach her.

"The way these two always look after one another provides a valuable dharma lesson," said the Abbot.

"Even though they are both lowly beasts they are still capable of having a deep, mutually beneficial relationship with each other. So why are some humans, all of whom belong to the same highly-developed species, barely capable of understanding one another and always fighting?" asked the Buddhist preacher.

"We should feel ashamed of ourselves in front of these creatures," he said.

Bamroong Wannathon, President of the Toboh Tambon Administration Organization, said the relationship between the two animals was as magnificent as it was strange, especially given that under normal circumstances monkeys and dogs tend to be natural enemies.

"I think the special circumstances of how they were brought up together is the only way to account for it," he said.

Source: KomChadLuek



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By Noolek Karaket

From Winnie-the-Pooh,
Chapter 1:

Isn't it funny
How a bear likes honey?
Buzz! Buzz! Buzz!
I wonder why he does?

HONEY

The bear facts

Well, Winnie was, by his own admission, a "bear of little brain", so it's unlikely that he would be terribly familiar with the history of honey.

Honey is an ancient food and is an integral part of many religions and cultures, both metaphorically and literally. Honey pie, honeypot and honeytrap are all phrases in common usage, and who, of a romantic bent, has not called their lover "Honey"?

Of course, in the film *Pulp Fiction*, who could forget the gun-wielding character "Honey Bunny" issuing such a swear-word-laden threat as to be unprintable in a family newspaper?

Honey was used by the Egyptians and other Middle-East peoples as a food and as a part of the embalming process from at least 40BC.

The Old Testament contains references to honey as a symbol for all that is pleasant and desirable. For example, the Book of Exodus describes the Promised Land as a "land flowing with milk and honey".

The sweet, viscous fluid also has symbolic value in Indian and Bangladeshi Buddhism, especially the festival of Modhu Purnima.

The day commemorates Buddha making peace among his followers by retreating into the wilderness. A monkey, so legend goes, brought him honey to eat.

Honey is also important in Islam, too. The *Qur'an* mentions "rivers of honey" in Paradise as well as noting that the Prophet Muhammad liked honey. Because of this connection, honey



HONEY – AND MONEY: Virat Boonmalert, Secretary and beekeeper at the Rim Poo Pa bee farm.

holds great symbolic value to Muslims.

Aside from being food, honey has also been used in medicines, cosmetics and soaps for millennia, and is now finding new applications in spa treatments.

It contains antioxidants, a wide array of vitamins, minerals and amino acids, and also boasts antiseptic properties and is used to treat wounds and burns, with some advocating its use to treat conjunctivitis.

Few of us have not enjoyed the soothing effect of a hot toddy – lemon juice and honey – on a sore throat, particularly if there is a healthy dose of the hard stuff in it.

The only place in Phuket where this ambrosia is produced commercially is The Bee Farm of Rim Poo Pa community. The Bee Farm was formed as a co-operative in 2001 by Virat Boonmalert and Yoosop Somboon, now the farm's Secretary and

President respectively, along with 40 other low-income residents of the small village off Wiset Rd, Rawai.

K. Virat told the *Gazette* that training for the novice apiarists came from a number of different organizations, and was and remains supported by both the Prince of Songkla University Phuket Campus and the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT).

"The business was beginning to pick up by 2004," began

K. Virat. "We had around 100 hives, each containing thousands of honeybees of the species *Apis indica* in Langstroth frames, the frame most common these days for man-made hives.

"When the tsunami struck, however, although it did not hit the farm directly, around 80% of the members of the cooperative were lost or lost family. After that, the survivors had other priorities."

The dark days are now behind them, added K. Virat, a Muslim who is well aware of the importance of honey from his knowledge of the *Qur'an*.

"The farm is getting back on its feet, and is now populated by a different species of bee, the *Apis mellifera*, more commonly known as the European honey-bee.

"These bees are less aggressive than *Apis indica*. We still use Langstroth frames and farm the bees in hives of around 10,000 to one queen" said K. Virat.

He explained that five people work full time at the farm, which, in addition to producing its brand-name Rawai Honey, also manufactures candles from the beeswax.

Rawai Honey is available in jars of up to one liter, which sell at 300 baht. The smallest jar retails at 80 baht and all products can be found in shops around Rawai. K. Virat said that the farm will expand both its distribution network and the number of hives within the next 12 months. He is also hoping to introduce new products, such as soaps and shampoos.

Visitors are welcome to the farm. If you speak no Thai, K. Virat suggests you bring along a translator.

For more information, contact Virat Boonmalert, Tel: 085-7903195. The farm is on Soi Baan Bang Tanatee (approximately one kilometer south of Chalong Circle), Wiset Rd, Rawai.





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Gas stations to reopen 24 hours

Petrol stations around the country will be permitted to open around the clock from December 1, following Cabinet's November 28 decision to lift the order for their closure between 10 pm and 5 am, Government Spokesperson Yongyuth Mayalarp told Thai News Agency.

K. Yongyuth told reporters that the order, enforced since July 12 as part of the government's drive to reduce domestic gas consumption, has inconvenienced drivers and disrupted long-distance road travel, especially over-night transport.

The Energy Ministry, which proposed that the measure be lifted, said it will continue to encourage the public to conserve energy through other means.

So far, the campaign has been successful and the public has been aware of the need to reduce its energy consumption, K. Yongyuth added.

In a related story, a ban on illuminating large billboards after 10 pm will remain in effect.

"The measure hasn't been canceled. Our billboards are monstrosities. If the lights are turned off,



School stinks: A teacher and students at the Wat Aranyawasi School in Saraburi's Muang District wear masks to protect themselves from a private company's garbage dump nearby.

Thailand will be more beautiful," said Energy Minister Piyasawad Amranun.

Booze ad ban postponed: The ban on alcohol advertising initiated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has been postponed for 30 days, pending a review by the Council of State into its ruling that the ban is invalid.

The ban was initially scheduled to come into effect December 3. Ministry of Public Health Permanent Secretary Dr Kittisak Klabdee said the ban would not take effect on that date because his ministry wished to hear the review results first.

"Whatever the review results are, we will accept them," he said.

The Council of State ruled that the FDA had no mandate to comprehensively ban alcohol advertising. The Lawyers Council of Thailand a few days later said the ruling was legitimate.

The comprehensive ban, just one part of the Public Health Ministry's proposed Alcohol Control Bill, was approved in principle by Cabinet on November 28.

Spiritual state: Deputy Interior Minister Banyat Chansena has proposed that all Buddhist children formally pledge their allegiance to Buddhism when they are eight years old, reviving a tradition adopted during the reign of King Rama VI.

The idea was part of a long-term government plan to promote morality among Thai youth. The practice would encourage Thai people to observe Buddhist teachings more closely and appreciate dharma earlier, he said.

K. Banyat said the practice should not be considered coercive, as other major world religions required believers to undergo affirmation rituals.

The government plan also proposed a "Prototype Temples" project that would encourage abbots and monks to improve their spiritual public services and act as centers of their communities.

The three-year project would begin in January and involve 5,500 temples and around 550,000 Buddhists.

Scary statistics: Bangkok youths aged between 15 and 24 accounted for the highest number of Aids patients in Thailand last year, Department of Disease Control Director-General Thawat Suntharajarn announced.

The national number of Aids cases was 70 in 2002. There was a decrease between 1992 and 1996, before numbers increased again from 1997 to 1999.

The number of Aids patients in Bangkok is currently 92. The first Aids case in Bangkok was detected in 1987: a 23-year-old male student.

Dr Thawat said young peoples' decision to not use condoms as they "felt unnatural" was one reason for the increase. Another reason he gave was that young men were too shy to buy condoms from shops.

The number of people between 15 and 24 becoming sexually active rose between 1997 and 1999 in both sexes, while the use of condoms fell.

Blind injustice: MoPH Permanent Secretary Dr Prat Boonyawongvirot told a conference of medical experts from around Asia that more action was needed to prevent people from needlessly losing their sight.

Citing World Health Organization figures, he told delegates at the gathering in Nakhon Ratchasima that there were 37 million blind people worldwide. Almost 1.5 million of those were children and 90% were in developing countries, he said.

Whereas blindness in children was caused mainly by congenital defects or chronic diseases, degenerative diseases were the major causes of blindness in those of advancing years, with as many as 75% of such cases being preventable, he said.

Thailand had about 200,000 people considered completely blind, about 0.3% of the population. This was one of the lowest rates in the region, he said.

Govt urged to amend rape law: Assistant Professor Nartrudee Denduang of Mahidol University's Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities urged the government to amend Section 276 of the Criminal Code to ensure better justice for rape victims.

Currently, Section 276 prescribes punishment against a rapist only if the woman raped is not his wife.

"The law should be amended. What about rape victims who are wives? Or homosexuals?" Asst Prof Nartrudee Denduang said at a seminar on legal amendments that would boost equal treatment towards women.

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

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New airport terminal to open in 2007

Despite canceling planned fare increases on its Bangkok-Samui route because of local resistance, the island's only airline, Bangkok Airways, recently announced that it plans to open a new terminal at Samui Airport next year.

A larger passenger terminal, designed along the similar typically-tropical lines that made the original building one of the island's tourist attractions, is almost complete. The company plans a Suvarnabhumi-like switch to this new facility as soon as logistics – and completion – allow.

Nantiya Danviriyakl, Bangkok Airways' corporate communications manager on Samui, said that a larger terminal is necessary to cater for the increasing numbers of passengers to the island.

The "boutique airline" Bangkok Airways already operates an average of some 60 flights a day to and from Samui, but expects to add more flights to its schedule in the near future.

A new road is being built to service the facility, which will include spacious arrival and departure lounges as well as a choice of shopping and dining areas.

No date has yet been set for the move, but with bookings already close to capacity, there is already a significant amount of strain on the existing terminal. Most local commentators agree

that more space would certainly ease passenger woes.

Samui police force primed for high season: Pol Col Thesa Siriawtho, Deputy Commander of Surat Thani Provincial Police, has ordered Samui's law enforcement officers and security volunteers to be extra vigilant and work especially hard to prevent crime during the Christmas and New Year celebrations.

New Year's Day marks the first anniversary of the murder on Samui of British student Katherine Horton, whose killers had their sentence reduced from execution to life imprisonment last month. Col Thesa visited the island recently to give the 200-strong police force stationed there a pre-season pep talk.

The provincial police are keen to avoid a repeat of such violence and will focus on preventing crimes against foreigners. Col Thesa said he was particularly concerned by reports of the widespread possession of illegal weapons in the district.

He ordered his officers to conduct regular searches, confiscate weapons and instigate undercover operations to track down gangsters and drug dealers.

Tourists are likely to notice greater police presence in popular areas around the island this year. The police hope this will result in a safer, more relaxed atmosphere.



An artist's computer-generated impression of what part of the new, larger terminal at Samui Airport will look like. No completion date has yet been announced.

Study to look at Samui dam: Thailand's Groundwater Resources Department (GRD) recently initiated a feasibility study into groundwater dam construction on Samui to guard against a lack of fresh water.

GRD Acting Director-General Somkid Buapeng said that water shortages on Samui are increasing in severity each year, mainly because of the growing number of tourist arrivals to the

island and a subsequent explosion in the number of migrant workers needed in the tourism sector.

The GRD study will look into the impact of such a project on the natural environment, as well as the quality and management of the water to be supplied. It is scheduled for completion early next year.

According to the National Institute of Coastal Aquaculture, in the next six months many

southern provinces are likely to experience a drought because of El Niño. With a total of some 2 million tourists expected to visit Samui, this could mean very serious water shortages.

The groundwater dam will not be completed in time to ameliorate an imminent drought, so the local authorities are advising residents and businesses on the island to look at ways to save water over the coming months.



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Yala villagers refuse to return home

Government officials have failed to persuade 227 Buddhists who have sought refuge in Yala's Wat Nirot Sangkharam to return home – despite a guarantee of safety.

Officials went to the temple and told villagers to return to their homes, said the wat's Abbot, Prakhru Kem Wongsanukarn.

"I urge the superiors of these officials to stop [telling the villagers to go home] unless the government has proper measures to provide safety for them," he said.

If the situation is not improved the wat will continue sheltering the villagers, he added.

Jaran Kriangsriprom, one of the Buddhists who has sought refuge, said government officials had given unconvincing information about the situation in his village. "They lied. They told us our villages were safe, but a few of us returned to inspect the area and soldiers there admitted it was not safe at all," he said.

Even officials there feared for their safety, he said, adding that no villager dared to return.

Officials don't care about the well-being of Buddhist villag-



THEY'RE ON FIRE: Songkhla Zoo has scored another success in its endangered wildlife breeding program with the birth of a rare Asiatic golden cat (*Profelis temminckii*), known in Thai as *seua fai*, or fire tiger.

The kitten, the progeny of a nine-year-old male called Tew and a seven-year-old female called Cherry, is the second to be born in the zoo since the start of the project two years ago.

A competition has been launched to name the kitten and results will be announced on January 13.



ers, they care only about preventing internal migration and maintaining their image, he said.

Another villager, Thongchai Eamniran, said that officials could not cover up the situation in Than To and Bannang Sata as every local villager was aware of the

looming threat of violence.

Man rapes niece: A man in Nakhon Sri Thammarat was arrested in the early hours of November 26 for the rape of his 11-year-old niece. After his arrest, police reported that the man,

Khongsak Jidaramat, 26, confessed to the crime saying that the girl was already very attractive and was mature for her age.

The rape was reported to the police two days earlier by the girl's parents. The victim's father said that he had left her and her eight-year-old sister at Khongsak's father's house while he and his wife went out of the province on business. He added that he never thought the girls would be at risk from Khongsak as he was a relative and had an 18-year-old girlfriend who lived with him in the house.

On the night of November 24, as the girls were sleeping, Khongsak crept into the room and began to sexually assault the older sister. The younger girl tried to fend off the attack, but Khongsak

retaliated by choking her and covering her face with a pillow before finally dragging his victim to the bathroom where he continued the attack, the victim's father said.

Police arrested Khongsak just over a day later in a house in Tambon Tha Wang, Nakhon Sri Thammarat. Police reported that he confessed to the crime and also admitted to being close to an influential *kamnan* (sub-district chief) in the province, and that he had served a five-year prison sentence for attempted murder, being released only about a year ago.

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



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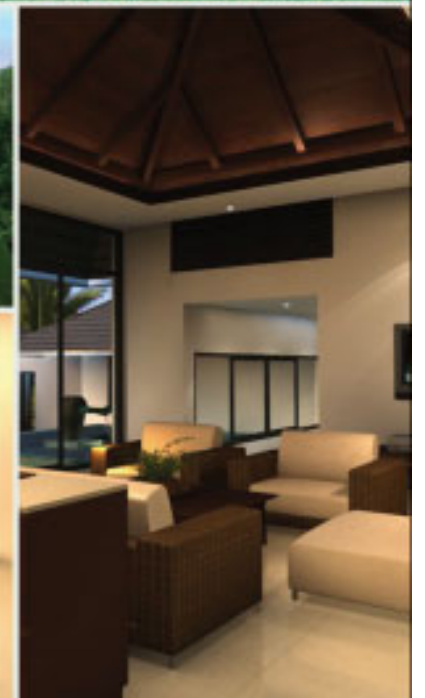
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Well, who wouldn't accept the kind offer of a weekend break at a seaside resort, namely Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort (LMPBR), just south of Patong?

LMPBR is so close to home that the car barely has time for the engine to warm up, and my delightful companion barely has time to apply nail varnish, spill said nail varnish all over the Connolly hide interior of the Aston, and select a CD before we arrive.

That LMPBR is so close is a blessing. Realizing that I have left my newest favorite book, Toby Young's *How To Lose Friends and Alienate People* back at the manse, I am able to nip home, take the washing out of the machine, rearrange the furniture, hang a rare print of Botticelli's *Venus and Mars* and return to the rather plush room overlooking Relax Bay before the ice in the G&Ts has stopped spinning.

LMPBR has 470 bedrooms, but the intimacy of the place gently fools one into thinking that it is far smaller.

It seems that most of the bedrooms are occupied by people who hale from Mother Russia. "Splendid," say I, knowing that Russkies tend to enjoy themselves a bit, some 15 years after being unshackled from the bonds of communism and reshackled with the bonds of capitalism.

We meet a number of the very pleasant personnel at LMPBR, not least of whom is the charming Sales & PR Manager, Narumon Chansriharaj, who gives us a guided tour before introducing us to Ian Sherlock, the resort's Executive Chef.

Ian, and I say this with respect, is not a man easily missed in a crowd. Tonight he is resplendent in his yellow chef's tunic – his own design, I must add; he has a different color for each day of the week – and greets us with hearty ebullience.

Ian is from Preston, Lanca-

TICKLED PINK



Ian Sherlock's seared snow fish with Kikkoman broth, noodles and kale – and no saké.

On the menu



WITH
Andy Johnstone

Tonson at Meridien

shire, in the northwest of England, but has been around a bit; he has worked in the Mandarin Oriental Hong Kong, the Island Shangri-La Hong Kong, the Royal Mirage Dubai, the Hotel InterContinental Dubai, Le Royal Meridien

Manama Bahrain and the Hyatt Regency Casablanca to name but a few. While in Dubai, he helped to bake the *Guinness Book of Records* Longest Cake.

Dinner tonight is in the Tonson Bar, one of ten F&B outlets at LMPBR. There is music, dancing, liveliness; it's a positive maelstrom of excitement here. It's vibrant, it's fun, it's Mardi Gras, New Year's Eve and a bar mitzvah rolled into one.

"Duck," offers my companion. "Lovely," say I, until I realize that her single word is both a statement of fact and a warning. Ian has dreamed up Mexican Caesar Salad with five-spiced duck for our delight. I could not have dreamed that a child at a nearby table could be so accurate with a tomato.

Dismissing the fruit's impact, I breath in the heady aroma of Tung Hing cinnamon,

powdered cassia buds, powdered star anise and anise seed, ginger root and ground cloves and feel myself to be in seventh heaven. By turns warm, cool, melting, crunchy, spiced and sweet – good duck always has a slightly sweet taste – it's just downright fab.

My muse bids me taste the margarita sent to accompany this fine fusion – damn, the F-word – dish. The taste of the drink mirrors the taste of the dish. A five-spice margarita? Oh yes.

There is a moment of slight confusion as the second course arrives – in the shape of two coffee mugs apiece. "Quick dinner," I blurt out, before Ian gives us a mischievous look that speaks tomes.

He knows he's a great chef, and we know he's a great chef. He's a bit of a tease in the kitchen, mixing things up, playing with

the expected taste and the look of a dish before turning it around as if to say, "Aha! Fooled you." Preconceptions begone.

The second course comprises two soups: Camembert with scallop and green onion with truffle, each served in a mug.

There is something oddly familiar about the presentation of the soups. Even here on a balmy evening, the comforting sight of soup – but not just any soup – in a mug brings back memories of wintry childhood days, fly-fishing expeditions and sitting in an armored vehicle in the middle of Salisbury Plain.

Seared snow fish with Kikkoman broth, noodles and kale is next, and has us on the verge of blows. I swear blind there is saké in the broth. My Fair Lady disagrees – violently – and comes at me with a spoon.

I manage to grab her delicate wrist just in time to stop her from scooping me to death. Ian appears, as if by magic, and whispers in my ear, "No saké." And with that he is gone.

I am almost full to bursting, but my companion twists my arm – literally; she's not as delicate as she looks – into enjoying one of Ian's signature desserts: Caramelized mango with black rice crème brûlée and coconut sherbet, a reconstructed version of the Thai classic.

Brave, adventurous, pretty bloody cheeky in fact, but oh so good. A faultless meal.

Tonson Bar & Restaurant at Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort, 29 Soi Karon Nui, Phuket. For reservations or more information, call Tel: 076-340480 or email: n.chansriharaj@phuketbeachresort.lemeridien.com. Also, visit www.iansherlock.com



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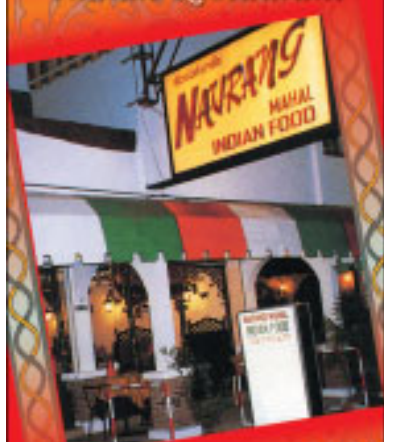
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The modern-

Rocky Donald Bonow was adrift for three weeks. Facing light winds – or no winds at all – three storms a day and a quickly diminishing store of food, he was in bad shape. And, as he recounts, it all began with a *krathong*.

Rocky has a long history with this region and spent years running make-shift tour operations from the beaches of Krabi and Phuket.

During one fateful chartering operation he was ferrying customers from the Phi Phi Islands back to *Moonstar*, his 44-foot sailing yacht. On the way to the boat, his dinghy encountered two *krathong* in the water. Admiring the pretty colors, one of his passengers picked up a flower and a banana as mementos of the trip. According to Rocky, “things just haven’t felt the same since.”

The *krathong* is a traditional Thai method of ridding ships, and people, of bad luck. The belief is that by putting flowers, offerings and a personal item of a person or a ship on a float and setting it on the water it will send all the bad luck away with the waves.

But picking up someone else’s *krathong*, on the other hand, is a sure way to pick up that bad luck. Judging by the several one-meter-wide *krathong* the *Moonstar*’s passengers picked the flowers out of, the ship discarding them had plenty of bad luck to cast off.

That same day Rocky’s boat was struck by a sudden and forceful storm, and the first bolt of lightning hit the ship’s mast, shorting out all of the electronics on board except for a TV his daughter was watching at the time.

“After that things went funny,” Rocky said. Sensing the change in fortune, he invited Buddhist monks to come aboard and bless the boat, but to no avail. “Sometimes I still feel that ‘something’ is here on this boat,” he said.

After the tsunami of 2004, he hit hard times in Phuket as tourist numbers dwindled and the tourists who did come were on package tour groups, not the backpackers he relied upon.

On the ocean for 39 days and adrift for more than 20, Rocky Bonow survived by rationing his canned fish, eating plenty of instant noodles and drinking rainwater. After his ordeal he spoke with the *Gazette*’s Zach Fridell about his experience, which he simply calls “bad luck”.



Seeing his options beginning to evaporate, Rocky set sail on the *Moonstar*, alone, to the Cocos Islands approximately midway between Sri Lanka and Australia. As he arrived, without charts or maps, Rocky was unable to figure out how to get into the harbor and was eventually towed to port by a rescue ship.

But Rocky’s luck seemed to follow him even when he was safely on shore. After two years on the Cocos he found little work and few tourists, leading him to attempt the sail back to Phuket on October 17.

Two weeks off the coast, heading north past Sumatra, disaster once again caught up with the modern Job, when storms tore his sails and left him adrift about halfway along his journey to Phuket.

In an attempt to continue east, he tacked north and south through the Andaman, putting up sails when he could catch a wind and quickly taking them down when storms came so the damaged sails would not rip apart entirely. His spare sails were too big, he explained, and the winds

were against him or too calm. The only wind he saw were the storms, which hit him every day. Rocky estimated he was drifting about five miles east per day, and after a couple of weeks he said it started to take its toll.

“It wears on you, grinds on you after a while,” Rocky said. “I started to not wake up with my alarm clock and I got thrown out of bed by the storms.”

His food supplies were adequate but running low, as was his cooking gas. Around November 10 a passing ship attempted to give him food, but Rocky couldn’t catch a break.

“It was a windy day and I saw a big plastic bag they had filled with food. I told a crewman that he needed to drop it upwind from me, but he must have not put anything that floats in there, just canned food,” he recounted. “As soon as they dropped it, it just sunk straight away.”

On November 15 Rocky finally found some relief. After hailing a passing Russian cargo ship, the captain offered to tow him east as they were making their run, so they threw him a line.

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day Job?



Rocky is safely back on firm ground after spending three weeks adrift as he attempted to sail from the Cocos Islands to Phuket.

The only condition is that they had to go at their normal speed of 14 knots.

As his yacht skipped through the water behind the big ship it took all the bottom paint off his boat, Rocky said.

After 17 hours of towing, Rocky had covered more distance than he had in the weeks before, and the ship left him about 100 kilometers southwest of Phuket. From there it took him five days to get close enough to Phuket to be noticed by other ships.

On Saturday November 25 the Phuket Marine Police re-

ceived a report from fishermen that Rocky's yacht was adrift and helped tow him into Chalong Pier, where he has remained. From October 17 to November 25 he had been on the water, but was still strong enough to get off the boat unaided.

So does the bad luck still follow him? Rocky said he hopes the days of misfortune are reaching an end.

"There's still a touch of it," he said. "But I don't feel it as strong as I did before."

Good thing for Rocky, although it's hard to imagine how his luck could get much worse.

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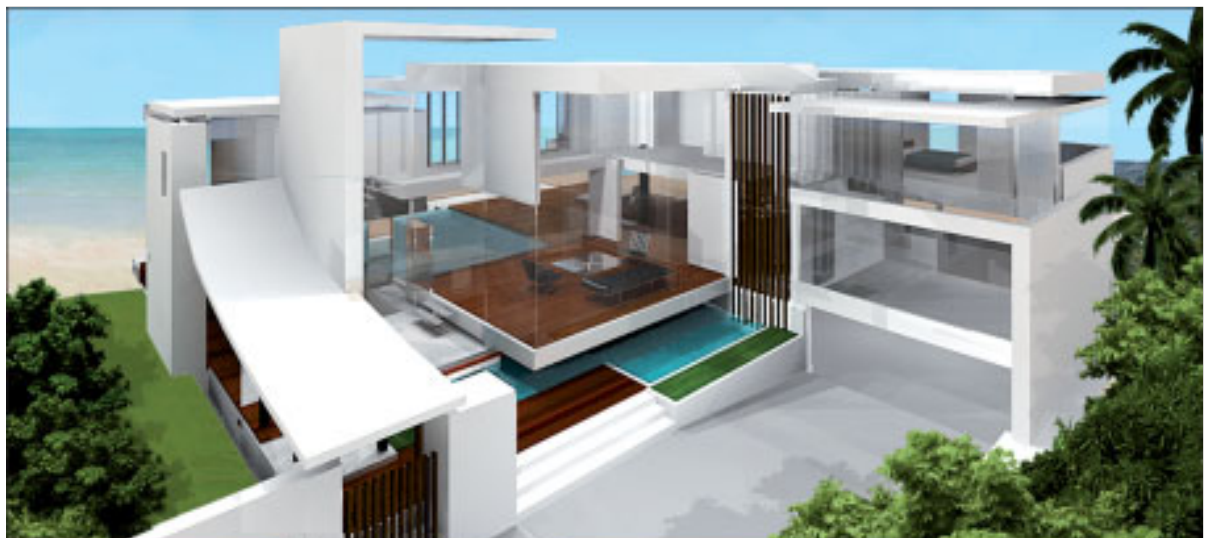
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Happily Ever After

Recent weddings in Phuket



Peter Scouse of England and Aumaporn Taothong were married at their home in Kathu on the morning of November 16. The couple had a reception at Pat's Bar & Restaurant in Kathu the same evening, attended by their son, Tommy. When they are not busy tying the knot, Peter and Aumaporn run the Jug & Crocodile Bar on Soi Seadragon in Patong.



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This week



LIONHEARTS: Phuket Governor Niran Kanlayanamitr (center) receives 51,000 baht presented by Helmut Goergen (right), President of the Lions Club of Andaman Sea. The money, to go to supporting flood victims in northern Thailand, was donated by the LC Andaman Sea and sister clubs LC Urawa Nishi and LC Nagao in Japan, and LC George Town in Malaysia. The three Lions Clubs of Phuket also gave the Governor 38,000 baht for the flood victims.



AUTHORS' ADVENTURES: Miguel Kirjon and Meng Lin Chen autograph a copy of *Juk's Adventure in Bangkok*, one of the two new releases in the multi-language *Juk's Adventures* series, launched at Royal Phuket Marina on November 26.



BE OUR GUEST: Christoph Spiess (2nd from right), General Manager of Central Karon Beach Resort, welcomes Dutch guests (from left) Cathy Jaspers, Ine Jaspers, Gerard Jaspers and Hans Jaspers, the hotel's first guests since reopening November 23 after a major renovation.



CAUSE FOR CLEANING: Lily Udomkunnatum (2nd from left), Managing Director of the Burasari Resort in Patong, hands over 500 T-shirts donated by the resort to Um-pien Tuentin (2nd from right), chairman of the 16th Diving for Cleaning Coral Reef and Beach Competition, held at Patong December 5.



PACKED LUNCH: Manoon Butt (4th from left), chairman of the Pakistan Thailand Friendship Association (Phuket) and Managing Director of Ali Baba Indian restaurant in Patong poses with family, friends and fellow "Pak Thai Association" members before the club's annual meeting and party at his restaurant on November 5.



HOTEL TALK: Jaye Walton (right), Honorary Consul General for Thailand in South Australia and Northern Territory as well as producer and host of *Thai-Oz Talk with Jaye Walton* interviewed Denis Thouvard, General Manager of Le Royal Meridien Phuket Yacht Club, on the subject of hotels for her show.



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A4: not just good on paper

BEHIND THE WHEEL
By Jeff Heselwood

For a remarkably unremarkable car, the Audi A4 has picked up many awards, the latest from the respected Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) in the United States.

The IIHS has given its highest rating of "Top Safety Pick" to both the Audi A4 and A6 models. It makes Audi the only German manufacturer with two prize-winning vehicles.

The institute carries out crash tests on behalf of the US insurance industry to establish their safety standard. The tests include frontal, rear and side impact results. The side impact test is particularly relevant as it involves the vehicle being struck from the side by a barrier at a speed of 50kmh. The barrier itself is shaped to resemble the front end of a pick-up or large SUV. Structural deformation as well as the kinematics and stresses to which passengers would be subjected are then evaluated.

The body of the A4 is a combination of steel and aluminum. The front is built primarily of special high-strength steel panels, where the main priority is to absorb impact energy, while within the floor area three large beams of varying thickness according to load also absorb impact forces. The advantage of this method of construction is high rigidity, but low weight.

The A4 has been around a while now, but is still one of Audi's most popular models. There is a wide range of engines available – depending on the market where the vehicle is on sale – the most popular versions being the 2-liter gasoline model developing 130bhp (96kW) and the similarly-sized TDI diesel unit, offering 140bhp and a mammoth 320Nm of torque. Respective performance figures of these two



engines are an equal top speed of 212kmh and 0-100kmh sprint times of 9.9 and 9.7 seconds.

These models are front-wheel drive, but larger-engined models can be specified with quattro four-wheel drive. Although Audi did not pioneer all-wheel drive, it certainly perfected it at a time when other manufacturers considered the system to be heavy, bulky and unnecessarily complicated. Audi released the Ur-Quattro in 1980, making it both the first car to feature Audi's quattro system and the first to mate all-wheel drive with a turbocharged engine.

The power plant was a 2.1-liter, overhead-cam, 10 valve, straight-five originally producing 200bhp (149kW) and eventually receiving upgrades to 210bhp. Latterly Audi introduced a twin-cam producing 220bhp. It was considered one of the most significant rally cars of all time, and was one of the first to take advantage of the rules that allowed the use of all-wheel-drive in competition. The Quattro was an instant success, winning on its first outing on the rallying circuit.

Total road car production of the amazing Quattro was 11,452 cars over the period 1980-1991.

The humble A4 is racing in German touring cars (DTM), but other than that, Audi's involvement in top level sport is confined to its Le Mans' racers, which

achieved victory in June 2006 with a diesel-engined prototype, the first oil-burner to win the 24-hour French classic.

The all-aluminum V12 die-

The Audi A4 has just been named "Top Safety Pick" by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, the latest in a flotilla of awards given to the German saloon.

sel motor produces a healthy 650bhp, but more relevant, a staggering 1100Nm of torque. It was also relatively economical and required no more fuel stops than lesser cars over the 24 hours.

But back to the road-going A4: the interior is nicely fitted out without being luxurious. The air-conditioning though, does have separate temperature controls for driver and front passenger, and all five seats are equipped with three-point seat belts. Dual-stage front airbags are fitted, along with side bags and full-length air curtains. Only the front windows are power operated, but so too are the exterior mirrors.

The A4 is a solid, well-engineered and inherently safe saloon that deserves a second look.

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



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Here's to shady characters

By Suganya Semacote

A desire to look cool or to suggest a degree of the celebrity about one-self (Next time you land at an airport, wear sunglasses and organize in advance a few friends to run up to you, asking for your autograph. It works) are among the best reasons for a pair of sunglasses.

The much-maligned Emperor Nero is reputed to have worn polished gems while on the fiddle or watching gladiators, and as for Jackie O, the world was shielded from the sadness in her life and eyes – the eyes are the windows to the soul, after all – by her oversize sunspecs.

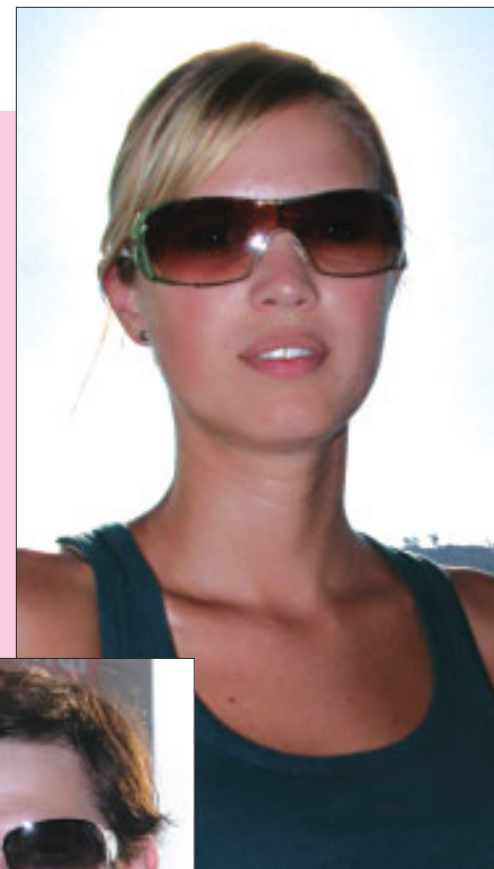
And where would General Pinochet's paramilitary death squads be without their obligatory and anonymity-giving mirrored shades? In prison, probably.

Anyway, some people even wear them to shield their eyes from bright sunshine and specks of dust flying into the face at 80kmh while on the road.

But what's hot today in the world of sunspecs, and where to find them?

Finding a pair of sunglasses in Phuket is easy; the downside is that many of them are copies – illegal, sure, but one of the benefits of living here – and although they look the part, they may not offer protection for the delicate optical organs.

Excessive exposure to ultra-violet radiation (UV) can cause short-term and long-term ocular problems such as photokeratitis, snow blindness, cataracts, pterygium and various eye cancers, therefore a good pair of specs will protect against UV.



But price is not necessarily an indicator of quality.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission reported that "Consumers cannot rely on price as an indicator of quality." One unscientific survey carried out by WCBSTV in New York found that a US\$6.95 pair of sunglasses offered slightly better protection than Michael Kors or Salvatore Ferragamo shades.

Sunglasses should block 100% of UV rays; look for a sticker that says "400 UV protection", the top mark.

Stop by Central Festival Phuket and splash your cash on a range of styles from Phuket Sport Planet and Optical, both on the second floor.

Phuket Sport Planet Tel: 076-233 268, 016913940. Optical 2nd Floor Central Festival Phuket 076-249672.

Clockwise from top left: Oakley Grapevine, 5,800 baht; Oakley Medusa goggles and helmet, 34,580 baht; Oakley Dark, 7,450 baht; Dior 7,500 baht; Givenchy 7,840 baht. Center: Armani, 5,250 baht.



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Hair apparent



Separating the hair into sections comes after careful washing and drying.



George making the 'track' – tiny braids – to which the extensions are bonded.



Gluing the extensions in place is a fiddly business requiring steady hands.



The end result and only the model – and George – can tell whether it is or it isn't.

Long hair has always been considered feminine and beautiful, but to grow lengthy locks takes an awful lot of patience.

With the development of hair extensions, however, long hair can become a fashion accessory, even for just one night.

Now, as fashion – or is that trashion? – divas from Paris Hilton to Victoria Beckham shamelessly display their lengthened tresses, this process is becoming more popular and in demand enough to be found in most salons.

If you're looking to add a couple or 12 inches to your mane for the upcoming holiday parties, West One, on the second floor of Central Festival Phuket, is the place to go, and George Sriviroj

is the "mane" man [*Groan. Ed.*].

George lived in the UK for 23 years, working at a hair salon before settling in Phuket, and has developed his techniques – as well as quite a reputation – here.

He began his hairdressing career at the acclaimed Vidal Sassoon salon on London's Bond Street, before moving to the award-winning Alan International and then his own, eponymous salon in the capital.

He was the right man in the right place at the right time. The renowned Athena Salon, also in the heart of London's West End, claims to have originated the technique of hair extensions 25 years ago, George said.

"Human hair wins over synthetic hair every time because it is so adaptable. It can be curly or

straight, dark or blonde, and can be permed or colored as desired," said George. West One, owned by George and Jack Yooto, uses only 100% natural human hair.

The process of achieving long hair by adding extensions can take two to three hours and three to four stylists.

They start by washing the hair and then carefully divide it into sections so the bonds will stay hidden no matter how the customer fixes their hair.

The customer requires just two to three inches of his or her own hair for the process to be effective.

A tiny braid or track is made horizontally around the back of the head, in the middle of the scalp underneath the hairline to keep them hidden.

Sections of hair are attached to the head by gluing them to the track.

The old method of applying hair extensions used heat to singe the hair to make a track. Another recent advance is the development of a protein glue with which to attach the extensions.

This makes them easy to be removed, as well as allowing the hair to be washed, permed styled and dyed as normal.

"The key to making hair extensions look natural is a good haircut and coloring afterward," said "Hair Maestro" George [*Stop it. Ed.*]. "After the extensions are in customers are asked to come back every three months for a hair check up," he noted.

Hair extensions are not only fashionable, but can be a great

solution for those with thin hair, little patience, a desire to look different quickly or suffering from a bad-hair day.

The procedure to remove hair extensions takes around an hour.

Prices start at 15,000 – 20,000 baht per session for a total of 20 to 25 inches of extensions, although for more than 25 inches, the price is higher.

The extensions usually last about eight months before needing to be completely re-done, a case of – wait for it – hair today, gone tomorrow [*That's it. You're fired. Ed.*].

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Spa MAGIC



By Janyaporn Morel

Muslim Spa, Rawai

Tucked away in Baan Bang Khon Tee, Rawai, is a spa with a difference. In contrast to the majority of the other spas on the island, designed to massage the stress out of the bodies and the money out of the pockets of visitors, Muslim Spa is a community project aimed at helping local villagers.

Despite the name, people of all faiths – or of none at all – are welcome to try the treatments.

On hearing about the project, I was intrigued at how the experience would differ from the many commercial spas I've had to test in the grueling role of spa reviewer.

The spa is hidden about 800 meters down Soi Masjid Bang Khon Tee, which is about half a kilometer to the west of Chalong Circle. I am surprised to find that Muslim Spa is simply a two-story private house. The ground floor has been arranged with six mattresses and the walls are decked with shelves displaying a

Souled on a blessed spa



Left, Spa Manager, Prissana Saisamor, prays for God to help relieve the patient's aches and pains before she begins the massage.

Below, six different herbs are combined in the pain-relieving compresses used at the spa.



duced to the project by WV. The spa provides a valuable wage for the women.

K. Damrong studied herbs and the preparation of natural body treatments at the Prince of Songkla University Phuket Campus. He is now in charge of sourcing products for the spa, and many of the products used are made by him. He said that all products offered can make the body look and feel younger and healthier, and help in lifting one's spirits.

The six mattresses where the treatments take place are covered with white bedsheets and colored batik sarongs, which gives the spa the feel of an original Southern Thai house.

The list of treatments posted on the wall offers Thai traditional massage, foot massage, oil massage, herbal steam sauna, body scrub or skin polishing and Thai traditional massage with a hot herbal compress.

K. Prissana says that the herbal compress or *look prakop* is very good for relieving pain. The compresses are made by blending six kinds of herbs: leech lime skin, lemon grass, *phlai* (a kind of ginger), tamarind leaves,

Borneo camphor and cinnamon camphor.

I decide to have a Thai traditional massage. K. Prissana tells me to change into a sarong and lay down on the mattress.

"Here, when people are massaged they do not feel pain, as we pray while we work," she explains.

She starts to apply the massage oil on my feet, explaining that this massage oil is blended from coconut oil, borneo camphor and *phlai*.

K. Prissana puts her hands in front of her face, praying quietly. I can't quite hear what she is saying and am not even sure what language it is. She explained later that she asks God to help the patient to recover from any pain they might have.

K. Prissana can also massage using foot reflexology. After she touches a point on the sole of my right foot, she says that I often have migraine headaches, which is true. She then tells me to lay down on my back and she continues to massage my feet before beginning to tread gently on my legs.

"Many customers like the part of the massage where the masseuse uses her feet. They say it's softer than using the hands and also less painful," K. Prissana says.

She then massages my body with her hands. She asks me to sit up so she can massage my back and says another prayer before she begins. She explains that I have back pain problems because I sit too much so she asked God to relieve the pain.

She finishes by massaging my head and temples. When I stand up again, my body feels light and relieved from all tension. I feel a different person from when I arrived.

This massage treatment costs 150 baht for 45 minutes.

Muslim Spa is at 48 Moo 4 Soi Masjid, Wiset Road, Tambon Rawai, Muang, Phuket. For more information call Tel: 086-9520756.

wide selection of spa products. Next to the house there is a small annex housing a sauna for herbal steam treatments.

I am welcomed by Prissana Saisamor, the manager, who, with her husband Damrong, also owns the house. She explains that the Muslim Spa, which has been open since February, aims to help tsunami-affected villagers in Bang Khon Tee earn a living.

The idea for a community spa was inspired by the traditional knowledge of massage tech-

niques that some villagers possessed. With the help of the World Vision (WV) charitable foundation, five women from the village were able to complement their knowledge by attending a Thai massage school here in Phuket. The Phuket Office of Sport and Recreation Development also supports the project.

The five masseuses currently employed at the spa the fees paid by villagers from Bang Khon Tee village and other customers, some of whom are intro-

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THE REALLY BIG MATCH

The countdown to the 2008 Olympics in Beijing is already on, but the world's greatest, or at least one of the most interesting, sporting tournaments – elephant polo – takes place not once every four years but on average every four months.

No matter if you missed the tourney in Chiang Rai last September, or the more recent thunder of hooves and clatter of sticks in Nepal, *Homo sapiens* and *Elephas maximus* will be battling it out again beneath the ramparts of Galle Fort in Sri Lanka this coming February.

Jumbo polo, as it's popularly known, is simultaneously hilarious and thrilling and is the ultimate spectator sport.

Started as a one-off *jeu d'esprit* in 1981 by Cresta runner and former tiger hunter Jim Edwards, elephant polo took off with a vengeance and for the last two and a half decades man and beast have come together to enact their bizarre rituals.

With entry fees of US\$7,000 or so per team, this is certainly not a cheap sport, but spectating is free and there is no doubting who gets top billing in this show.

Royalty and aristocracy can fly in, and polo poseurs flex their ids, but the men-of-the-match award always goes to the elephants.

Long noted for their intelligence, the pachyderms catch on remarkably quickly, stepping daintily to avoid the ball beneath their feet, lolloping forward with alacrity in pursuit of a good shot and – if they feel nobody's looking – discreetly hoofing a goal.

It's like an aircraft with three pilots as the player bawls frantically and the mahouts kick in vain while their mount determinedly heads along what it considers the right line of attack.

Teams are four elephants a side, and games are divided into two 10-minute chukkas, individual time intervals of play, separated by a 15-minute interval when opposing teams swap some mildly malicious banter. Smaller elephants are better in attack, the larger ones are unrivaled for blocking tactics.



Elephants wait patiently for their riders to decide a scrimmage, or at least for one of them to hit the darn ball.

TALES OF A TRAVELER

By Ed Peters

Apart from dangerous play, the major no-no likely to excite the referee's whistle is when more than two elephants from the same team stray into the D around their goal. Lining up a passel of pachyderms to wall up

a goal mouth is, well, just not cricket.

Climbing on board is half the battle. Accommodating beasts offer a leg, otherwise mounting entails a scramble over its backside. Once your feet are tucked into a rope on either side, somebody presses a hidden button and the lift rises slowly skywards. It's a feeling of pure power, as the 5,000-kilo quadruped ambles forward; stately, measured, unstoppable.

Wise novice passengers make friends with the mahout, who, like his charge, has a fondness for beer, and knows which way the game is likely to turn out.

As play begins there's a feeling of floppiness, a certain spasticity in trying to wield a two-meter-long stick which wantonly disobeys every effort to connect with a far-away ball.

There's a delicious, tingling fear too, as whooping opponents canter in range intent on stealing

the ball; there's the exhilaration of connecting; the double joy of a goal scored; sweat and nagging pain from torn biceps and a throat hoarse from shouts of defiance and encouragement.

Sticks rattle at a throw-in and the dust flies. Gray bulks scrimmage together then break loose and lumber goalwards, as the thrilled crowd of locals and international guests yelps in exhortation.

Tally ho, Jumbo!

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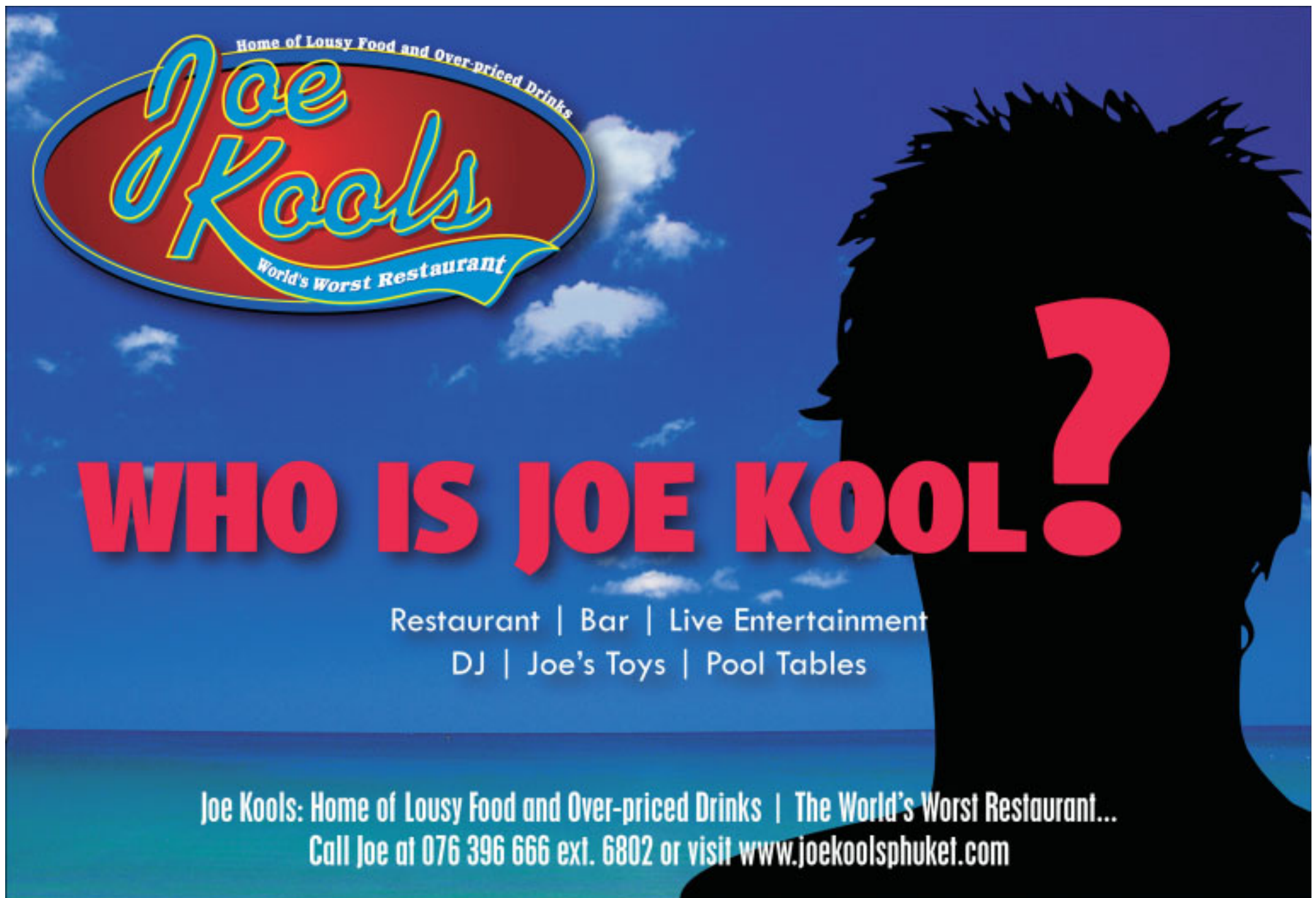
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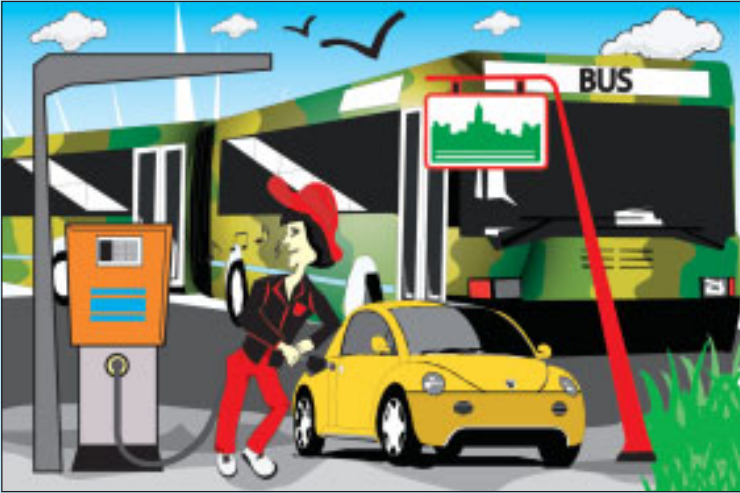
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Puzzles

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?
Solution on next page.



su | do | ku

© Puzzles by Pappocom

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

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

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. Beware: there is only one solution to this puzzle, which is on the next page.

The Cryptic Crossword

ACROSS

1. Between Milan team. (5)

4. Unpleasant average. (4)

6. Scotch sword. (4)

10. Vital pal takes four on overtime. (7)

11. Put on a burst spike with Ted. (7)

12. Get tighter with northern missile. (6)

13. Like buccaneer, take direction to inhale. (8)

16. Poison ant crime? (11)

18. Ate bad beverage. (3)

20. Fuel chatter. (3)

22. Oops! I burp or, confused, scornful. (11)

24. Soccer players get the point: underwear! (8)

25. Canvas on fish. (6)

28. Canned in hotel; got narrower. (7)

30. Liken to damaged trilogy writer. (7)

31. Major constellation. (4)

32. Piece of art? Edgar Allan’s got a thousand! (4)

33. Was Lawrence murder? (5)

DOWN

1. Little devil completing; it’s about to happen. (9)

2. Inns make a five – in seabirds. (7)

3. Proportion of vermin I love. (5)

4. Thaw me with officer. (4)

5. Commercials, as in note. (3)

7. Exile not in play line-up. (7)

8. Lad, the French make a big spoon. (5)

9. Navy rebel may meet ruin. (8)

14. Sigh! Departed Asian city, they say. (6)

15. Code for each fastener. (6)

17. Dying for frog noise. (8)

19. As offspring, with an extra couple of notes sounding similar. (9)

21. Ghosts’ drinks. (7)

23. Bully work at printing plant. (7)

24. Town heard feline? Ooh! (5)

26. Let Al be depressed. (5)

27. A male cat’s particle. (4)

29. Five hundred bend no pair. (3)

Compiled by Tortuus. © 2006

Solution on next page

Scribble Space

EZ TRIVIA QUIZ

1. Which is the westernmost province of Thailand?

2. Name the 2006 Thai-made cartoon movie about an elephant.

3. Who plays James Bond in *Casino Royale*?

4. Name the current chart-topping album by Josh Groban.

5. Name the mountain range between France and Spain.

6. Which country is to the west of Myanmar?

7. How many stars are there on the Australian flag?

8. In Phuket, which roads does Soi Romanee link?

9. Roughly how many kilometers are there in five miles?

10. Which famous monument is in Agra, India?

Answers on next page

Rhyme Time

The words described below all rhyme with ‘play’.
What are they?

1. Wintertime conveyance.

2. Unravel at the edges.

3. The smell of a wine.

4. Put on show.

5. Lack of organization.

6. Hairpiece.

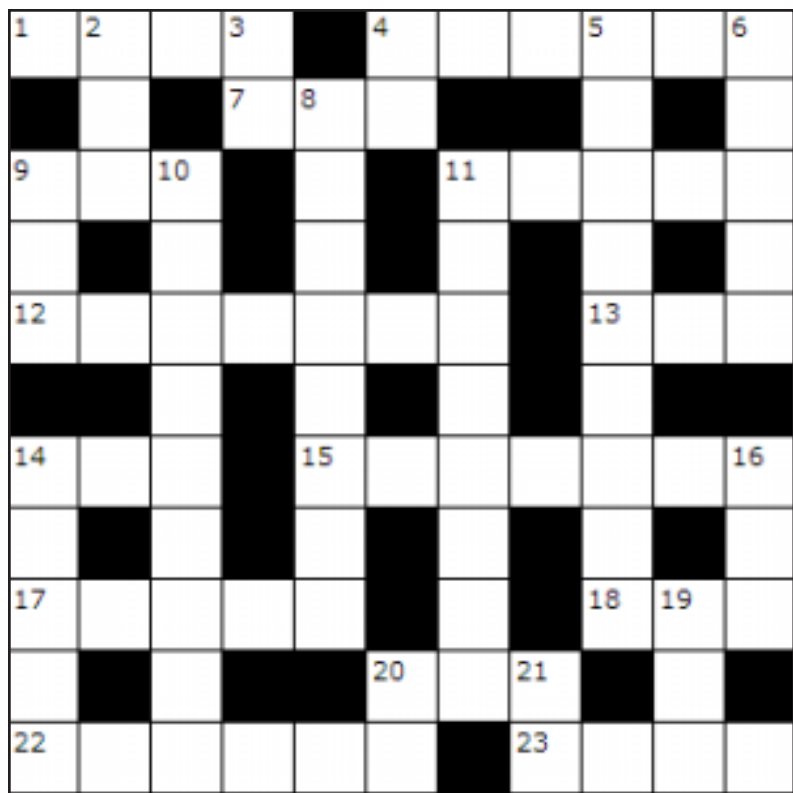
7. Gathering in the evening.

8. Food for horses.

9. Check how heavy something is.

10. Domino with three pips.

Answers on next page



Quick Crossword

ACROSS

1. Artist Salvador.
4. Tenant.
7. Where to "take the waters".
9. Lower limb.
11. Province east of Phuket.
12. Solar clock.
13. Organization feared by all Americans.
14. Zero.
15. Not analog.
17. Ape.
18. Chest bone.
20. Stereo component.
22. ***** and Gretel.
23. Burden.

DOWN

2. Consumed.
3. Exists.
4. Between So and Ti.
5. Roman entertainer.
6. What trains run on.
8. Like table of elements.
9. "The" in Spanish.
10. Ladies' companions.
11. Thousandth of a tonne.
14. Sprite.
16. Small laboratory.
19. Debtor's note.
20. Mr Capone.
21. Italian river.

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 of the Wright Brothers was first to fly the Kitty Hawk? | flight, which airfield did Charles Lindbergh take off from? | jet airliner, the Comet? |
| 2. Who piloted the first aircraft to successfully break the sound barrier? | 9. Name the first known aviation fatalities. | 16. How many passengers could it carry? |
| 3. Which is the world's largest powered aircraft? | 10. In which year did they die, and how? | 17. What is the maximum number of passengers the Airbus A380 will be allowed to carry? |
| 4. What does the last part of its name mean? | 11. In 1908, Orville Wright crashed an aircraft. Who died in the crash? | 18. Roughly how many kilometers of wiring are there in an Airbus A380? |
| 5. Name the first aircraft to go round the world without landing or refueling. | 12. In ancient Greece, who died because he flew too close to the sun? | 19. Manfred von Richthofen was World War I's top ace. Who was second? |
| 6. Who was the woman pilot on board? | 13. In ballooning terms, what does "dirigible" mean? | 20. In 1960, Capt JW Kittinger made a parachute jump from what height? |
| 7. How is she related to the pilot in question 2? | 14. In 1890, Clément Ader flew an aircraft powered by what? | |
| 8. On his transatlantic | 15. Which firm made the first | |

Answers below left

Puzzle Solutions

EZ Trivia Answers

1. Mae Hong Son; 2. Khan Kluay; 3. Daniel Craig; 4. Awake; 5. The Pyrenees; 6. Bangladesh; 7. Six; 8. Thalang Rd and Dibuk Rd; 9. Eight; 10. The Taj Mahal.

Monster Quiz Answers

1. Orville Wright; 2. Chuck Yeager; 3. The Antonov An-225 Mriya; 4. Dream; 5. Voyager; 6. Jeana Yeager. 7. She is not; 8. Roosevelt Airfield on Long Island; 9. Pilâtre de Rozier and Pierre Romain; 10. 1785, when their hot air balloon exploded; 11. Lt Thomas Selfridge; 12. Icarus; 13. Steerable; 14. Steam; 15. De Havilland; 16. Between 36 and 44; 17. 853; 18. 500 kilometers; 19. René Fonck of France; 20. 31,300 meters.

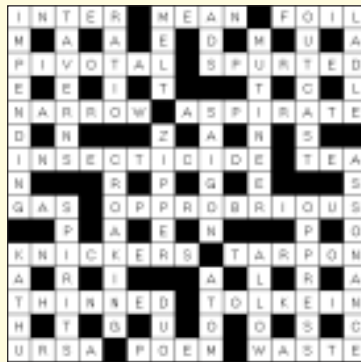
Rhyme Time Answers

1. Sleigh; 2. Fray; 3. Bouquet; 4. Display; 5. Disarray; 6. Toupée; 7. Soirée; 8. Hay; 9. Weigh; 10. Trey.

Solution to this week's Cartoon Puzzle



Cryptic Crossword



Quick Crossword



Sudoku



We're all familiar with the sad figure of the Whining Farang who makes no effort to understand the language and culture, or even the cuisine, of Thailand and incessantly writes letters to the editor marshaling all his petty complaints about the Kingdom yet, curiously, refuses to leave.

What we have here with Richard Rubacher is the opposite: the Pollyanna Farang whose book *Thai Touch* (Paiboon Poomsan Publishing, Bangkok, 2006, 220pp) is one long, gushing paean to the "magical kingdom" of "Amazing Thailand". Rubacher arrived in Thailand six years ago, at the age of 64, on the advice of a friend who is married to a Thai.

"Thanks to his ceaseless goading, I took the hint and came to the Land of Smiles, not realizing how much I was going to resonate with the Thai people and their culture," he writes. "Instead of a cultural clash, I was immersed in a cultural cuddle."

Naturally this aging flower child is into meditation, yoga, reflexology and crystals. To his credit, Rubacher makes an effort to learn the language and, with his sharp sense of humor, manages to strike up a great many friendships with Thai people. His first chapter "Welcome to the Magical Kingdom of Thailand" is addressed to a presumably ignorant American audience. I find the fawning tone awfully hard to take:

"In Thailand, beauty surrounds you. Beauty embraces you. Beauty breathes its spirit into your heart..."

"To paraphrase Elizabeth Barrett Browning: 'Thailand, why do I love you? Let me count the ways.'"

Pollyanna in Thailand



Off the SHELF

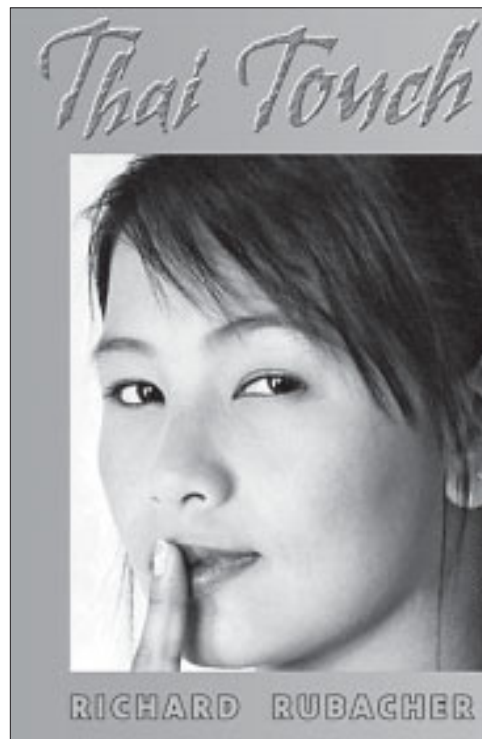
By James Eckardt

He loves the Thai temples, Thai language, Thai nicknames, Thai smiles, Thai sense of humor, Thai politeness and courtesy, Thai fruits (as a Californian, he practices the state religion of vegetarianism), cheap dental costs, health care and house rent, and, of course, Thai women.

"About older men and Thai women: not only do older farang men chase younger Thai women, they also catch them," he writes.

You wonder where he's going with all this cloying treacle. But suddenly he springs a half dozen quirky stories on the reader, first published in *Metro*, the magazine for trendy Bangkok yuppies. John Twigg, publisher of *Metro*, even provides a back-page blurb: "Rubacher's is a wacky world. He has a knack for sniffing out bizarre tales and bares Thailand like no other."

Thus there's a story of Khammikka na Songkhla who introduced "breast slap-



ping" to increase bust size. This proved wildly popular with women coming from all over Asia for therapy.

There's also a bust enhancement exercise program promoted by the Department of Thai Traditional Medicine. Rubacher then phones the embassies of Switzerland, the US, Italy, France, Laos, Malaysia, Denmark and Mexico to ask if their countries have a similar government breast enhancement program. The replies are hilarious.

The next chapter deals with the penchant of Thai women for castrating errant husbands. You know you shouldn't laugh, but you do. He interviews Dr Surasak Muangsombot who has heroically reattached 34 wayward penises.

Then he picks out four Thai women each of whom resembles one of the four characters of *Sex and the City* – Carrie, Miranda, Samantha, Charlotte – and interviews them about such burning questions as public sex, penis size, sex with virgin males and men as sex objects.

In the next story he's off to investigate Pissamai Trapsukhorn, a 72-year-old fortune teller (*mor doo*) who anoints her clients with her own breast milk. She is eerily prescient about events in the author's life and ends up predicting that he will never get sick and never die. Oops. And he believes her.

He believes a lot of things. He devotes his next two stories to profiles of a spiritual adviser and meditation master who are prone to sprouting New Age bromides. He returns to more solid ground with the story of his Thai girlfriend, a foot massager turned hairdresser whom he calls "Lek Lick". They share a love of yoga and Latin dancing.

The book stumbles to a close with four stories of tourist boilerplate. Members of a Pattaya social club "unashamedly toast Thailand by counting their blessings for living in a land they call paradise".

The New Age giddiness aside, Rubacher's heart is in the right place.

PHUKET DIARY

www.phuketgazette.net/calendar

Until December 10: Phuket International Marine Expo (PIMEX)

Southeast Asia's premier boating and lifestyle show, PIMEX, now in its fourth year, is one of Thailand's biggest international events, showcasing every aspect of marine leisure and island lifestyle, including yacht sales, yacht charter, marine services and properties on Phuket, Koh Chang and Koh Samui.

A great day out for the family, PIMEX has various food outlets all catered by Watermark. No entrance fee. There is a party on December 10, with live music and open to all – entry is free. Cash bar. Starting 6 pm.

Until March 30: Rewind at Watermark Bar & Restaurant

Watermark and Tommy Double T (Soundwaves) hook up once again to bring you more sleeve-rollin', fringe-flickin', tramline shavin', ass-shakin' good times.

Rewind – something new by way of something old taking it back to where it all began.

Every Friday at Watermark we will Rewind to the best sounds of the '70s, '80s and '90s, from the Sex Pistols to the Chemical Brothers. Disco classics? New Romantics? A journey thru New Wave, ska and disco. Duran Duran, Madness, Soul II Soul, Motown, Philly Soul and sooo much more.

Happy Hour 5-7 pm. Rewind 7 pm-midnight. Admission free.

December 10 and 11: Constitution Day.

A somewhat ironic public holiday for a country that currently has no constitution, Constitution Day remembers the date on which the first of many Thai constitutions was promulgated by King Prajadhipok (Rama VII) in 1932, bringing an end to the absolute monarchy.

Since the anniversary falls on a Sunday, the Monday is taken as a substitute day off.

December 16 and 17: Jazz Royale Festival.

The Jazz Royale Festival – organized to honor HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej's 80th birthday – will be held at Karon Beach.

Among the big names to perform in the show are Kenny

G, The Dizzy Gillespie All Star Band and jazz great Ahmad Jamal.

Tickets are priced at 1,500 baht and are available from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) office on Thalang Rd, Phuket (Tel: 076-211036, or Thai Ticket Master at Tel: 02-2623456 or online at thaiticketmaster.com.

The schedule is as follows: December 16: James Moody with the Roberta Gambarini Quintet, Georgie Fame, Paquito D'Rivera/Claudio Roditi, Ahmad Jamal and Kenny G.

December 17: Marta Topferova, the Regina Carter Quintet, McCoy Tyner and The Dizzy Gillespie All Star Big Band.

December 12: Book launch and live blues.

The Trilogy is complete: *The Reckoning* is the final book in the *Vampire of Siam* trilogy.

At the Watermark Bar & Restaurant from 7 pm, author Jim Newport reads from *The Reckoning*, *Chasing Jimi* (based on Jimi Hendrix), and his entertaining blog from the set of *Bangkok Dangerous*, a film project starring Nicholas Cage.

Signed copies for sale. Live blues by Jimmy Fame & The Groove Doctors. Admission free.

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The weak links in the chain of disaster mitigation

Last week, almost two years after the December 2004 tsunami disaster devastated the Andaman Coast, a milestone was reached with the launch of the US-built DART-2 tsunami detection system, which should be operational by the time this edition goes to print (see News pages).

Although this is only the first in an array of 20 sensors planned by UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanic Commission, the deep-sea buoy is a good first step toward implementing a regional solution to what is truly a regional problem.

Thailand should be proud that it is the first Indian Ocean nation to launch such technology. It should also be grateful to the US agencies responsible for building and funding it.

Unfortunately, disaster mitigation is a battle that cannot be won by high-tech solutions alone. The ability to detect a tsunami hazard is only the first in a chain of events that form the "end to end" warning system envisioned by UNESCO. Within minutes of an earthquake, warnings need to be issued to all national disaster warning agencies, such as Thailand's National Disaster Warning Center.

From there, local governmental bodies need to first receive and then issue warnings and conduct speedy evacuations. This last link in the chain will likely become its weakest, especially when two more DART-2 buoys are deployed in 2007.

There are several reasons why this last step is the weakest. For a start, the system of tsunami warning towers that ring Phuket do not yet cover all risk areas. But just as importantly, in some of the areas they do cover – most notably Patong – they remain likely to go unheeded by many. The tourists may not know the meaning of the siren and could confuse it with the regular barrage of sound heard there on any given night of the week.

Even if people do hear the warning and know what it means, there will likely be problems with evacuations. The tsunami evacuation signs that direct people to high ground are difficult to see, thanks to the presence of so many signs, banners and other paraphernalia along our roadways.

For these reasons, it should be up to each and every local administrative body to take whatever steps necessary to ensure they are capable of conducting comprehensive and timely evacuations of all risk areas under their jurisdictions.

Unfortunately, the earthquake and subsequent events of the night of March 28, 2005, indicated that most were not – and not much appears to have changed since then.

– The Editor

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Letters

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

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

Tuk-tuk trauma

I read the news story *Patong tuk-tuk driver stabs Welsh tourist* in the December 2 issue of the Gazette. I'm not surprised by the attack, but I was very upset at reading that the tuk-tuk driver went free, released on bail.

Whatever the reason of the dispute, no-one should be allowed to stab a person and go free. These people are dangerous; they are the shame of Phuket.

To let such a criminal go is more evidence that the tuk-tuk mafia rules the island.

MdL
Patong

Patong's one way, the wrong way

Someone's thought processor is not hitting on all cylinders. One trip on Thaweewong Rd (the beach road) circa 4 to 6 pm north or south bound would make it indelibly clear that in no way will Thaweewong Rd be able to handle all of Patong's north-bound traffic.

With tuk-tuks pavement to pavement, rental cars, rental bikes, commercial delivery trucks, Patong to Phuket and return buses, company employee pickup and drop-off buses, absurd would be an understatement.

In regards to "baht buses", the local administrative bodies of Phuket and Patong are so afraid of the tuk-tuk cartel that they just turn the other cheek over and over and allow the cartel to make Patong/Phuket the most expensive transportation center in all of Thailand, and not just one of the most expensive as indicated in a previous publication.

It is not rocket science to

realize that baht buses would reduce the sometimes-100-strong tuk-tuk parking lot that has developed. Now it will cost you 100 baht to get 100 meters or one kilometer. If you don't like it, tough: walk.

Patong is desperately in need of good governance.

Farang Rak Thailand
Phuket

No complaints about the mail in Rawai

I think the postman is doing a good job. My sister-in-law sent me a parcel from England and we waited in anticipation of the goodies that would arrive. But three weeks later it was returned to her.

After coming all the way to Phuket, it was returned to the UK because we had forgotten to add "Moo 4" to our address. After she posted the parcel again, this time with the full, correct address, the parcel arrived some 10 days later. I can't complain about that.

Sharon Cook
Rawai

Well, mine goes missing in Thalang

The reader's letter "Where have all the letters gone" (Gazette, Nov 25) struck a raw nerve with me.

There are so many wonderful things about Thailand and I am grateful for being allowed to live here. The postal service, however, is not one of them. It really is bad.

Over the past three months I have had 13 letters go astray including three from my bank in the UK (one containing a replacement credit card), two from

friends containing photographs which are now lost forever, also many others from friends in Belgium and America. Thank heavens for email and the telephone.

Even local mail written in Thai, such as UBC and utilities bills, can take three weeks to arrive. Some I never receive, for example from my Internet service provider. When I first came to live in Thailand it was nowhere near as bad as it is now, I even received mail that had the incorrect address on the envelope.

Even taking the above into consideration, I love Thailand and its people.

Tomas Fletcher
Cherng Talay

Does Phuket need pit bull terriers?

I am most concerned that pit bull terriers are being bred and sold so easily in Phuket. The island already has a problem with stray dogs on its streets and beaches.

If the breeders are not monitored, then I can only imagine what is going to happen in years to come when abandoned pit bulls may breed with the strays.

The dog welfare organizations are doing an excellent job of neutering as many stray dogs as they can, but this is going to create even more problems for the volunteers.

To my horror, apart from reading a "For sale – American pit bulls" sign on a tree at Karon recently, I visited a vet and saw pit bull puppies being advertised for sale in the surgery.

Pit bulls are now considered an illegal weapon in Northern Ireland. Such are the concerns of the Northern Ireland Government that they have declared an am-

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

Letters

nesty for owners of pit bull terriers to hand in their dogs and thereby avoid prosecution.

The dogs will then be put down.

Pit bulls are most often bred for their aggression and for fighting. I can only ask myself if this could be the reason why they are now being introduced to the island.

I cannot believe that the people breeding these dogs are doing so for the love of the breed or to save the breed from extinction, but can only see this irresponsible breeding as a way of making money.

Concerned dog lover
Phuket

Shameful state of facilities for the disabled in Phuket

I am writing to complain about the infrastructures for the disabled that are worsening instead of improving [*Gazette*, edition of November 25].

First of all at the airport. When I departed in March I used the disabled toilet in the departure hall close to Chester Grill and at the wash basin, there was no water. I returned this year and still no water. Of course no soap, no air conditioning in the toilet and the door was difficult to open. Frankly speaking, this made me think there is a lack of respect for disabled persons; they wouldn't leave the toilets for non-disabled people without water and soap for six months.

Then let's talk about Patong. Last year Thaweewong Rd was re-paved and I hoped that was made to be as accessible as the one in Rat-u-thit 200 Pi Rd.

No way. High curbs that require the wheelchair user to run on the road with vehicles remain.

On the beach side, the situation has worsened.

Last year every single point of access was wheelchair-friendly; this year there are only two points: in front of Soi Bangla and in front of the Ocean Mall.

In Rawai they're building a pavement on the beach side of the road. The first part, in front of the Sala Loy restaurant, has been built, but there is no ramp to get on. Why? If the ramps are made while building, they are practically costless.

I'm really disappointed. I love Phuket and I try hard to convince people that it's developing and becoming a first-class tourist destination, but I think that to be considered first class, the place must take into consideration the needs of disabled people.

I hope the administration of the island will reconsider its policy toward disabled persons and improve the beauty of this island.

Claudio Santini
Rawai

A very hard road ahead for Phuket

FIRST PERSON

Supphasak Nunsang, 58, has just moved from Nakhon Sri Thammarat to Phuket to fill the position of Director of Phuket Provincial Highways Office (PPHO). He has big plans for road improvements and beautification projects and promises to come through if the residents and government will support him.



I was born in Nakhon Sri Thammarat and moved to Phuket, living here until I graduated. I then moved to Bangkok to work. In time, I became chief of the Department of Highways in Nakhon Sri Thammarat for three years and in Trang for two years.

My family is based here in Phuket, and I have traveled back and forth between Bangkok and Phuket for many years. As you may gather, I have seen so many changes to Phuket, and since I was quite young.

I can see all the changes on the island from when the roads were small, there was less traffic and no bridge between Phuket and Phang Nga existed.

I moved back to Phuket in October of this year. My first assignment was to develop the highway project between the Thainaan Restaurant intersection and Rawai. It is expected to be complete in March.

We have received many complaints about the road over Patong Hill and the number of accidents from the condition of the road – it is very steep and windy – or the driver's lack of experience.

The road has been in use for many years and its surface is getting old and slippery, especially when it rains, so we have considered making the surface rougher to enable tires to achieve better purchase on the road.

We discussed this issue with the Highways Department, and are awaiting its decision on the estimated 10-million-baht cost of the project.

Another stretch of road that is dangerous is the turn at Baan

Kho En, the village close to Yacht Haven, on highway number 402, [the road from Tha Chat Chai into Phuket City]. Many accidents have occurred here, so we are trying to fix this problem.

The road is too narrow at the curve, and again, we are awaiting approval of the budget – 15 million baht – before work commences.

The next thing I want to do is improve the scenery along the highway starting from Sarasin Bridge all the way into Phuket City. My department will request a budget to improve how it looks. Even though that I am not originally from Phuket, I have been living here for almost my whole life so I want to see Phuket to become more beautiful, well, remain as beautiful as it was.

We are not only going to improve the main roads, but we will also look at improving all the roads that are in tourist areas. Phuket's roads, however, do not have a sidewalk and tend to lack additional space so it can be difficult for us to do anything, such as widening the roads.

Other projects that we are working on right now include installing traffic lights and warning signs that will help to reduce the number of road accidents, but all of these projects require money. If I don't receive the budget, then there is very little I can do.

Phuket, compared to the other 14 provinces in south of Thailand, gains so much more income than others from tourism. Just look at all the flights that land in Phuket, containing – generally – foreign visitors

The government should pay more attention to Phuket because

Phuket has brought so much money into the country. Reciprocally, I think that the country should put more money into Phuket to maintain and to its improve tourism facilities.

I spend time at weekends driving around the island, looking at the highways and the changes that have been made to the island.

I feel sorry when I see all the new homes that are being built, and I think that it would be awful to see Phuket less "green".

The island is supposed to be divided into different zones, a tourist zone with the hotels and a preservation area, which is supposed to be left as it is. However, money talks, which in this situation means that if you have the money, you can own the land.

In Kamala, I was shocked to see all those new million-dollar homes on the hill.

I imagine that, if someone goes up there expecting to see the sea, they might be disappointed because the view is now blocked by these homes.

If comparing Phuket to other provinces, Phuket is so much better in many ways; for example everybody here has a job.

Most of them are businesspeople and they are busy trying to make their living, so they rarely join us when we invite them to meetings to share their ideas on how to improve the island.

I think that people should help each other in all ways they can. For example, if these businesspeople do not have capital, then they should help by using their power.

For example, if they don't

have money to buy trees for us, then at least help us plan the plantings, but if they do not have either, then at least help by sending their support.

Another problem that we are now facing is all the construction trucks that have been driving around the island in and out of the muddy roads, bringing dirt with them. The mud is deposited on the main roads and makes the city dirty.

I will have to talk to someone about this problem and ask for their help because it is impossible for us to go and clean it all up by ourselves.

People complain to us about the flooding. In the old days when it rained, water would drain away, but now people are building homes on ground higher than the road level, so now the road becomes the drain way and causes flooding.

This is not only a problem in Phuket but everywhere because things are growing, yet the amount of available land remains the same.

In order to improve the roads in Phuket and other provinces is the land, sometimes the department must to buy land from the people.

The problem is that the landowners are, more often than not, unwilling to sell it to us. Because the value of land is now so high, the owner often wants only to sell it to us at the market price or above.

However, we have only a limited budget, and often cannot agree on a price.

Ultimately, I believe that if everybody cooperates, then Phuket can become so much better.

In The Stars

by Isla Star

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): Beware of control freaks this week. Someone is determined to place you firmly under their thumb and it will be easier to avoid than to wriggle out after the deed is done. Working and playing hard are high on your agenda as the holiday month gets under way. Those looking forward to a birthday this week should ask a Gemini friend to make the celebration arrangements.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): Take better control of your finances. Your usual practical approach to money matters is likely to be compromised due to your desire to impress someone. Unexpected bills later this month could land you in a sticky situation, so keep some cash locked away. Romance with Leo is predicted to be one-sided, with most of the interest coming from you. Libra is more honest and will not take advantage.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): Opportunity is about to knock, so make sure you are available to answer that knock. Much as you would like to visit overseas family during the holiday season, this is looking less and less likely. However, a surprise visitor will soon knock your socks off. Pay careful attention to financial transactions on Tuesday when the chance of an irreversible error being made is high. Number 1 is lucky on Thursday.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): Your tendency to worry about what others think could take over this week. Cultivating self-confidence should be high on your list of New Year's resolutions. At work, intrigue seems more exciting than meeting deadlines, which means you could be putting in overtime during the holiday season. Scorpio would like to hook up with you and will dangle the bait soon. The color azure blue enhances your energy.

ARIES (March 21-April 20): Relationships will occupy your time this week. Anxious Arians will receive good news concerning the health situation of someone close to them, but you should also focus on taking care of yourself. A misunderstanding with a work colleague is likely to sour your day on Monday. Giving in graciously is the only option. The planets are poised to support any efforts you make to branch out in a new career direction.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): This weekend promises to be an enjoyable social time for you. Where work is concerned, you should resist the temptation to accept more commitments as these could easily turn out to be more complicated than you are led to believe. Money matters are well-starred; you should

be in a position to splash out on something special late next week. The color silver encourages clearer thinking.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): An attack of jealousy prompts Pisces to try to rock your boat of contentment on Sunday. While they may have valid reasons to be depressed, you shouldn't waste much time sympathizing. Aside from this, the days ahead promise to be the calm before the storm of activity that is brewing for your holiday season. Someone to whom you extended an invitation earlier in the year is due to make an appearance.

CANCER (June 22-July 23): You will get a chance to make contact with someone you have been missing. This is one romance that could safely be rekindled without anyone getting burned. Don't listen to the advice of Scorpio regarding this affair. A recent night out may lead to an explanation for your partner. The number 5 can bring luck on Monday.

LEO (July 24-August 22): You won't venture far from your lair this week. If this is because you're feeling under the weather, don't tempt fate by trying to do too much. A domestic misunderstanding could cause you to lose your cool on Tuesday. Allow the person concerned to have their say before jumping to crazy conclusions. Money matters require tactful handling midweek when Sagittarius comes up with a different calculation to yours.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): Changing your perspective on a certain situation will allow progress to take place. The peace of mind this brings will stop the dizzy spinning of recent times. Where work is concerned, expect to be contacted by Aries who has good news to pass on. Saturday is forecast to be a day of romance; your partner appreciates the small, but meaningful gestures you make.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): A dream you have this weekend provides inspiration for more fulfilling work. Your hidden talents need to be exploited. Cash is due to flow in your direction by the middle of December, but it may not be as much as you expect. Make this the week for facing up to appointments with bureaucrats as the stars will support you.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): Setting the cat amongst the pigeons on Sunday could bring you some grief. Don't interfere with a situation that has very little to do with you. If you're single, better luck in love means you can look forward to a holiday season spent in the company of someone special. The color sandstone encourages an earthier perspective.

Looking for love in all the right places

Dear Momma Duck,

I have been in Thailand for many years now and I am still having trouble meeting a decent Thai girl to have a relationship with.

I have learned to speak a little Thai but not enough to start a conversation, just simple words. It seems as though Thai girls are only interested in *fa-rang* (white men).

When I try to meet a girl on the street and I speak to them in English, they tend to shy away and give me a unpleasant look and make me feel like an idiot.

Maybe because I am Asian-American and look like I am Thai, they don't want to talk to me. I don't want any bar girls or girls that look for men for sex.

Please help! Tell me the secret of meeting a Thai girl.

Sam Tsan

Dear Sam,

I agree that your Asian looks will make you less visible and much like the local Thai guys around town, but don't lose heart yet. The night is still young.

I have an American-Asian friend who has a lovely Thai wife. She operates an excellent restaurant in Patong.

In Phuket it is important to join groups or situations (such as a health club or sports group) where you can meet "normal" girls.

Another idea is to volunteer to help teach English at a local primary school, hospital or hotel, where you could then meet teachers, nurses, other

professional staff and some of their friends.

In our culture Thai women normally meet potential partners in group situations, not by talking to someone on a street or in a shop. Indeed, as you indicated, most women's initial assumption will be that you are Thai, therefore

you will definitely scare them off by speaking English.

They will also be scared off, too, by such a direct approach because few Thai men would do that, except perhaps to make a pleasing joke or comment in Thai, aimed at putting the woman at ease.

Go to art or other cultural exhibitions at hotels. If you have a profession or business, you could join a service club such as Rotary or Lions, some of whose meetings are in English.

You will not meet "normal" Thai girls by staying at home or hanging out at bars.

Please also bear in mind that building a relationship takes energy, time and money. So be patient and move very slowly.

Do learn to be sensitive about our culture and customs so that your behavior will not scare the girl away. Make a real effort to learn our language.

Also remember that, during a courting period, a girl will feel more at ease if she can bring her close friend/s along.

There are many well-educated Thai women who are still single and looking for the "right" person.



Momma DUCK

By Wanida Hongyok
momma@phuketgazette.net

There are many well-educated Thai women who are still single and looking for the 'right' person.

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'Tis the season to be...

Time flies when you're having fun, as they say, and if that idiom has any truth to it we must have been having lots of fun this year – excluding the military coup and the countless deaths in the restive Deep South of course – because last Christmas seems to have been no more than a week ago.

And yet here we are again, at the beginning of December and sailing merrily into the festive season; the time of year we all eagerly anticipate as it means receiving presents, eating excellent food, perhaps sampling some mulled wine if we're lucky, and of course spending quality time with loved ones.

Christmas is arguably the world's most widely celebrated holiday apart from New Year, and is a quintessential part of Western culture – and now, increasingly, Eastern life.

Celebrations around the time of year when we now mark Christmas date back to around 4,000 years ago – 2,000 years before the birth of Christ.

The earliest such celebrations can be traced to the Mesopotamians, who originated the traditions of giving gifts, singing religious songs and holding processions. Their celebrations went on for a full 12 days.

The Babylonians and the Persians held a similar festival, while the Scandinavians held one called Yuletide. Central to this was a special feast enjoyed around a huge fire on which burned the "Yule log".

As for the ensemble of sub-traditions that have been subsumed into the main tradition of Christmas, they are the calling cards of several different cultures.

The tradition of "decking the

Our proximity to the day, or rather the night, when a jolly fat man dressed in red comes to call, is a fact clearly not lost on Phuket's shopping centers.

halls", for example, began with the Romans, who decorated their halls with garlands of laurel and hung candles on evergreen trees – a tradition we continue today, although most of us are probably a little too safety-conscious to light trees on fire in our own homes, so we make do with colorful baubles and tinsel that starts to fray the moment you start draping it on the branches.

Kissing under the mistletoe, which nowadays we use as an ingenious ploy to snag that cute guy/girl we've been secretly drooling over for the entire school year, was first associated with the Roman festival known as Saturnalia.

It was believed that such a kiss would result in deep, lasting romance, or at least a very close friendship.

However, before you consider puckering up under that little cluster of leaves it might interest you to know that the word mistletoe derives from old Germanic meaning "s**t on a stick" – not joking.

As for the wondrous invention of the Christmas stocking, no one seems quite sure how that tradition was started, or why.

The most likely explanation



Youth 'n ASIA

By Amy Van de Castele

is that it resulted from a mixture of cultural traditions such as the Dutch putting out clogs stuffed with straw for the reindeer to eat, or Italian children setting out their shoes for the good witch La Befana.

The stocking's purpose is to serve as a receptacle for the gifts Santa Claus hauls down the chimney, but of course only good boys and girls will get anything – those of us with slightly less savory characters should receive only a lump of coal, although quite

frankly Phuket probably doesn't have any coal, so perhaps an unripe coconut could serve as a substitute.

This particular tradition is most unfair to teenagers, because it means that if we have traditional parents who religiously follow every aspect of Christmas we won't be getting any presents, as the chemicals in our brains practically hardwire us to behave badly.

That's our excuse anyway, and it's a justified one – it's been scientifically proven that during the teen years different parts of our brains are developing at different rates and this leads to errors in communication between those separate parts.

So teenage misbehavior is practically guaranteed, but as we can blame it on our brains, withholding presents would just be pointless and cruel.

Anyway, now to conclude this little history lesson; eventually the holiday was acquired by the Christians, who molded it to fit their religion and declared it a fitting occasion for celebrating the birth of Christ.

That is the most popular notion of the holiday that has continued to this day.

As for Father Christmas, he was originally called Saint Nicholas but no more shall be said about him just in case this article falls into the hands of younger siblings who so eagerly anticipate his visit.

Reverting, at last, to the present, our proximity to the day, or rather the night, when a jolly fat man dressed in red comes to

call, is a fact clearly not lost on Phuket's shopping centers.

They are already erecting Christmas trees and selling stylish winter clothing – presumably for tourists to take back with them to their native cold climates and not to be worn here, unless you want to be boiled to a crisp in five minutes.

It is rather odd though, to step out of the blazing tropical sun into a department store and be confronted with rack upon rack of colorful scarves, woolen sweaters, gloves, cardigans and fur-accented jackets.

It makes you doubt your sanity – almost. It is also, admittedly, rather amusing to sit in a café gazing out at a lush green rainforest-cloaked hill or Patong's bustling beach road, depending on where you are, and at the same time have your ears gently titillated by jazzy Christmas carols about sleigh bells ringing and snowflakes falling.

Weird though it may seem to celebrate such a holiday in a tropical country with a predominantly Buddhist population, you should discard the Christmas stereotypes of snow and sleigh bells and reindeer, because the basic principle of the holiday is to celebrate the love of family and friends and to spend a happy day in their company with plentiful helpings of good food, good drink and good cheer.

When you view Christmas from that perspective you begin to realize that, snow, Father Christmas or not, it's a special and equally relevant holiday wherever in the world you are.

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THE BIG PICTURE

and how to make it smaller

If you're like me, you plan on taking a lot of photos over the holidays. And if you're like me, you probably show the pics to a few people, maybe put together a CD to send back to relatives in the States or Europe, and then they're pretty much forgotten until... well, I guess that's the problem... they're pretty much forgotten.

Once upon a time, you might've tried to email a few pics to some friends and family, but nowadays with your 6-megapixel camera, every picture you send takes about two hours to upload. Law of diminishing returns.

No doubt you know that more pixels mean better quality pictures (although sooner or later the lens quality sets the upper limit). After all, that's why you shelled out the bucks for a good camera. But the ramifications of all those pixels may not have struck you until you tried to email a picture.

If you're sending a proof of the next cover of National Geographic, hey, use all the pixels you can stand. But if you're just trying to send the grandkids a pic of your new rose garden, all those bits only get in the way.

High-resolution digital pictures take a huge amount of space. But what does it all mean? A pixel is a dot, give or take a semantic hair or two. If you have a 3.1-megapixel camera, it takes pictures that measure 2048 dots across by 1536 dots high.

Before the camera stores the picture on disk, it uses a compression method – typically JPEG

– to reduce the size of the file.

Chances are good that your camera has settings that save pictures in lower resolutions: 1600 x 1200 pixels, 1280 x 960, 1024 x 768, 800 x 600 and 640 x 480 are all possibilities that just happen to correspond to standard Windows screen resolutions. Your camera probably gives these settings truly illuminating names, such as Hi, Med and Lo.

When you take a shot with a camera that uses 2048 x 1536 dots and you ask for pictures at 1600 x 1200 dots, compression kicks in, and you end up with a

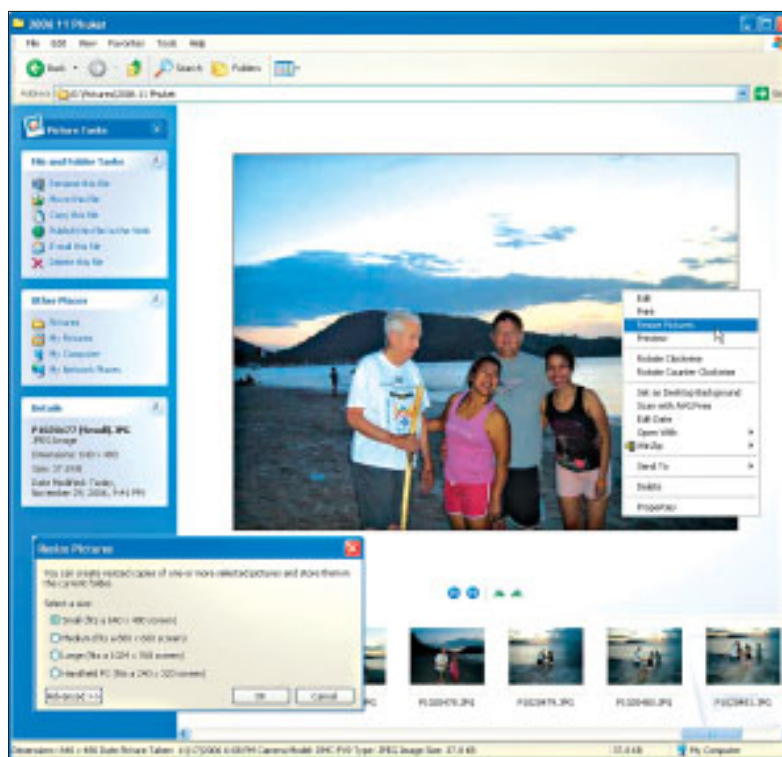
file that's about 750,000 bytes in size, give or take 10,000 or 20,000 bytes. Variations occur because

some shots compress more readily than others: Take a picture of the Pillsbury Dough Boy in a blinding winter snow, and you use fewer pixels than shooting, say, Eminem's hair.

When you reduce the resolution of a picture, you make it a little more fuzzy – but a whole lot smaller, and thus easier to ship over the Internet.

Even if you can send a half-dozen 3.1-megapixel pictures to, say, your lawyer, if he doesn't have a fast line, you tie up his Internet connection for 30 minutes. I don't know how much your lawyer charges for a half hour of staring at Outlook downloading files, but mine wasn't too amused.

You should not send those huge files out over the Internet. Unless you know for a fact that your correspondent can handle



big, big emailed files, you do her a huge disservice by clogging her inbox with stuff she doesn't need.

Microsoft has a free resizing tool that surprisingly few people know about. To get it, use your favorite browser (Firefox, right?) and go to: microsoft.com/windowsxp/pro/downloads/powertoys.asp. Download the file listed as: ImageResizer.exe

The main PowerToys page identifies this particular PowerToy as the Image Resizer. The program listed for download on that page is called ImageResizer.exe, but it's really called ImageResizerPowerToySetup.exe, as you find when you download it.

After the file is downloaded, run ImageResizerPowerToySetup.exe. Windows steps you

through a very simple installation wizard.

The Image Resizer PowerToy works by attaching itself to the right-click menu for picture files: If you right-click a picture file, or select a group of picture files and right-click them, the resizer appears on the menu. The resizer has no separate program to run.

Use Windows Explorer (say, Start, My Pictures or Start, My Computer) to find a picture file that you want to resize. Right-click the picture and choose Resize Pictures. You see a list of resize options, as shown in the screen shot. Pick the size you want and click OK.

The resizer kicks in and produces a reduced-size copy of the

original picture(s) with the name altered, sticking it in the same folder. For example, if you right-click a file called MyPic.jpg and choose Small, the reduced-resolution copy is called MyPic (Small).jpg, and it's placed in the same folder as the original. It's as simple as that.

Be careful never to check the Resize the Original Pictures (Don't Create Copies) box unless you know for an absolute fact that you have the original file somewhere. If you select this option, the picture gets changed, and the original is overwritten. The net result is that you can't recover the original picture.

The picture in the screenshot was originally at 2816 x 2112 resolution, and that file occupies 2.48MB. The 640 x 480 (Small) version you see takes up only 38K – less than 1/60th the size of the original. It could take five minutes or more to download the original on a slow dial-up modem (or ADSL line in Phuket, for that matter), whereas the (Small) version downloads in seconds.

The resized picture isn't smaller in the sense that it appears smaller in Thumbnails view in Windows Explorer. It's smaller in the sense that the file is smaller.

The resized file is a picture in its own right. You can email it, post it on a website, edit it, put it in a document or use it in any way a picture can be used.

Currently, Woody Leonhard (woody@khunwoody.com, www.askwoody.com) spends all of his waking hours slaving away on two new Windows books, Windows Vista All-In-One Desk Reference For Dummies, and Windows Vista Time-saving Techniques For Dummies. They should be available worldwide in January.



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ON THE MOVE



Darika Hom-Uem, from Sakon Nakhon, has been appointed Spa Manager at IN-DI-GO Spa at the Indigo Pearl resort. She is a holder of a master's degree in Tourism Management from Surrey University, England. On returning to Thailand, K. Darika was trained to be a spa manager to Ministry of Health standards at Iswara Spa. She also has experience as a university lecturer, beginning her career teaching English and tourism.



Thanaruch Thayakorn, from Bangkok, has been appointed Assistant Medical Director/Aesthetic Medicine specialist at Phuket Laser Center. He has a degree in medicine from Pramongkutklao College of Medicine and a Certificate of CME Participation, Dermatological Society of Thailand and a Diploma in Aesthetic Medicine from the American Academy of Aesthetic medicine (AAAM). Before he joined Phuket Laser Center he was Skin Specialist at Apex Skin Care Clinics.



Surat Kanthanakit, 39, from Bangkok, has been appointed Director of Food & Beverage at the Royal Paradise Hotel & Spa. He has a Hotel and Tourism degree from Vidhayanukorn Vocational College in Bangkok, and more than 19 years' experience in four- and five-star hotels in Phuket, including working as Banquet and Beverage Manager at the Novotel Phuket Resort and Food & Beverage Manager at Dusit Laguna Resort Hotel.

Shophouse boom continues

By Natcha Yuttaworawit

PHUKET CITY: The huge upward shift in the number of shophouses being built in and around Phuket City shows no signs of abating as developers target newcomers to the island seeking business success on Phuket and local residents moving toward a more urban lifestyle.

Capitalizing on the trend is the Royal Street Arcade development, with its 59 three-story shophouse units on 18 rai being built diagonally across Samkong Intersection from the Tesco-Lotus supercenter.

The initial stage of the Royal Street project was so successful – with 56 units sold at prices from 6.9 million baht each – the devel-

oper is now moving ahead with construction of two more stages that will be open to reservations next month.

The second stage, on the same site, will be 25 “home-office” units, followed by a third stage of three seven-story condominium blocks each comprising a total of 160 residential and commercial units. The ground floor of each building will be occupied by commercial tenants, similar to shophouses. Response has already been good, with 15 units reserved at prices from 6.5 million baht apiece.

The condominiums are intended to cater to the urban lifestyle of younger tenants, with prices ranging from 1.7 million for a 35-square-meter, one-bedroom



Royal Street Arcade: 56 units sold at 6.9 million baht each.

flat to 2 million baht for a 75sqm, two-bedroom condo.

In addition to being a residential address, Royal Street aims to provide a sense of community for the residents with the plans for a park, swimming pool, fitness and spa, beauty salon, laundry and restaurant.

The added advantage for developers is that there are built-in customers for the shophouses, with condo residents surrounding the business.

It is this “ready-made market” of residents in housing projects that has seen the boom in shophouse construction beyond the bounds Phuket City. Former Phuket Senator Paiboon

Upatising, developer of the Phuket Villa residential projects, said that although his main market is residential villas, he always includes shophouses in his developments to serve the community that will live in the homes.

Over his 20 years in land development in Phuket, K. Paiboon's Phuket Villa projects comprise a total of more than 3,000 homes. “Shophouses are not my main type of project because I usually just build villas. But it will provide service for the people who live in the villas,” he said.

The shophouse boom is so enticing it is attracting new players to join the fray. Chat Kulvanich built Samkong Place, the 13-

unit pink-and-green buildings just south of Bangkok Hospital Phuket on Yaowarat Rd. “I originally owned a motorcycle dealership on this land and I have a little bit of construction experience, so I decided I should do something with the land,” K. Chat said.

“I had owned the land for a long time, and I saw that the shophouse business was growing in Phuket so I decided to develop my land. I decided that was better than just selling the land itself, and since it's near the town center it makes a good place for shops.”

The project was so successful that he is developing another set of shophouses, with units selling from 6.5 million baht apiece.

“My second project is Samkong Property, located next to Samkong Place. Samkong Property will be another 13 shophouse units, of which five have been completed so far,” he said.

K. Chat explained that his shophouses have been popular with people who have moved from other provinces and want to open a business in Phuket, and with Phuket people whose family home is far from the economic town center.

“I also have plans for a third project, where I will build apartment blocks behind the first two shophouse projects,” he added.

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In recent years the majority of investors have sought security as their first priority. The stock market crashes of the early 2000s made areas of risk unattractive.

This, in turn, has led to many investors seeking the relative safety of commercial property investments. In the UK, for example, the institutional market is now almost GBP350 billion in value (about 24 trillion baht).

There are three ways of accessing this market. First, via the direct purchase of commercial property, although this requires specialized knowledge, continuing administration and very deep pockets.

Second, one can buy commercial property shares in listed companies or in listed funds that invest in commercial property.

The disadvantage of this route is that the investor is effectively investing in two different asset classes: commercial property and the stock market.

This means that even with a commercial property making an attractive position, negative sentiment in the stock market can cause investment values to fall.

This has happened in recent years and is very frustrating for investors.

The third route is to buy shares/units in a mutual fund/unit trust that invests directly in bricks and mortar.

This approach gives the investor several advantages; the underlying investment is valued on an ongoing basis by independent groups who specialize in property valuation.

It does not require large amounts of capital and the investor can use the fund for income purposes or simply allow the gains to compound in value.

It also allows for an easy exit whenever required.

The UK commercial property market has been very attractive for a number of reasons. Performance is a key factor; the Investment Property Databank Annual Index for 2005 reported annualized returns for the previous 25 years that on average provided a 10.9% annual return.

This has been helped by laws in the UK, which are very supportive and transparent – which is not the case in a surprisingly large number of countries.

UK insurance companies have also recently begun investing more in the commercial property market. Between 2000 and 2003 insurance companies using “with profit” funds lost heavily in the stock market.

The UK regulator has therefore now insisted that their exposure to the stock market must be significantly reduced.

This has led to the average proportion of their assets allocated to the stock market falling from 75% - 80% to the present maximum of about 55%.

As the alternatives of cash and bonds are relatively unattractive, many companies have been forced to increase their allocation in commercial property. This means a significantly higher

RISKY business



MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson

amount of administration for them but for other investors it means a continual supply of new money entering this sector, increasing overall demand.

I recently wrote an article on the Glanmore Property Fund; it seems that I was not the only admirer of this fund. In fact, it was purchased in early November by Deutsche Bank, Germany's largest bank. However, for investors in this fund, everything continues as normal, the difference being it now has a very large parent.

An alternative property fund is The Frontier Commercial Property Fund PLC, which is registered in the Isle of Man. This fund is available in three different currency classes: Pound sterling, euros and US dollars.

Frontier offers a different approach: it is a “fund of funds”. This fund actually invests in six different property funds from some very well known groups.

The funds are:

UBS Triton Property Fund (Jersey Class), this is part of the Union Bank of Switzerland;

Thames River Property Growth and Income Fund, a UK group;

Merrill Lynch Property Fund which, due to the recent merger between Merrill Lynch and Blackrock in September 2006, means that the actual management of this fund, from October 1, 2006, changed to Blackrock. Merrill Lynch is more commonly noted as a stock market investor but this merger has also meant that the new combined group is now the largest bond manager in the world, pushing PIMCO into second place.

Schroders Indirect Real Estate Fund;

M & G Property Fund (Institutional B Class);

New Star Property Unit Trust.

The total underlying assets of these property funds is more than GBP six billion (about 420 billion baht). These funds mainly hold “bricks and mortar”, but include around 15% of property shares. This fund is not available directly to the general public, but can be accessed.

The final fund to be covered in this article is the Premier Diversified Property Fund. It is also based in the Isle of Man.

This fund holds only physical property, no property shares. This fund claims to only invest in quality commercial property with financially-secure long-term tenants.

It avoids hotspots such as central London, focusing mainly in the office and warehouse sectors. It feels that these areas will provide a more stable return to investors in coming years rather than retail holdings that may have peaked in this economic cycle, especially in the secondary market.

Again, this fund is available in pounds sterling, euros and US dollars, and is proving popular to international investors.

Both Frontier and Premier do not levy any initial entry charge to their funds, but both charge an exit penalty for early encashment in the first few years.

Frontier allows investors a 5% penalty-free income and Premier 7.5% income. These are designed for investors with a medium-to-long perspective who are looking for low volatility in their portfolios.

Further details of these and other funds are available through me. Frontier will also be launching an international property fund in January 2007.

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: 081-0814611. Email: imm@loxinfo.co.th.

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A good ol' traditional brawl

By Scott Mallon

Every April in Thailand there is a relatively unknown sporting event unlike any other in the world. Known in Thailand as the *muay kaad chuak*, it is also known by some as the "Bare knuckle", using the brutally simple rules abandoned by mainstream Muay Thai fighting in 1923. Bound Fist Boxing is illegal in Thailand, but once a year fighters from Thailand and Burma come together to take part in an event that has taken place for hundreds of years.

Muay kaad chuak is the Thai parallel of Burma's *Leth Wei* style of fighting. Elbows, knees, punches, kicks, throws and even head-butts are allowed. To preserve some sense of civility there is no hitting an opponent while he's down; poking in the eyes is not allowed, nor is biting.

Bare knuckle is a slightly misleading term though, as the fighters' hands are not actually bare. While they don't use gloves, they do have their hands wrapped with a hemp rope or boxing wraps. These wraps are taped as

in Western boxing to form two cast-like weapons. Fighters may be outweighed by as much as 30 pounds, a weight difference unheard of in most boxing rings. Each fight lasts for five, three-minute rounds. Rarely do the participants finish the bouts with movie-star looks. Cuts, abrasions and swelling to the point of gross disfigurement are all part of the game. Victory comes by surrender or knockout. If both participants are still standing at the end of the bout, the fight is declared a draw.

Muay kaad chuak takes place at the peak of the hot season in the sleepy little town of Mae Sot, on the border with Burma. It's held during the Songkran Festival in mid-April. The first day or two of the event showcases the more skilled fighters, while the last day pits members of the crowd against each other, always a Thai versus a Burmese.

Sometimes those fighting are settling a grudge; other times they are simply drunk and inspired by patriotism.

Among the Thais, *muay kaad chuak* fights honor Thai



soldier Nai Khnom Tom, who, as legend has it, fought and defeated no less than nine Burmese fighters in the 18th century to win the independence of Siam. To this day, Nai Khnom Tom is deeply revered in Thailand and similarly, these fights are a throwback to ancient times.

Fights begin early in the afternoon. In April the air is thick

and heavy, making it difficult for even the most fit and acclimated fighters to catch their breath. There is a circus-like atmosphere in the crowd and the underlying loathing Thais and Burmese have for one another compounds the intensity of the occasion.

The Burmese invaded Siam in the 16th and 18th centuries capturing Chiang Mai, and in 1767 they burned and plundered the former capital of Thailand, Ayudhaya. As recent reports in this paper reflect, the Thais have never forgotten this – and neither have the Burmese. The Burmese crowd takes up one side of the ring and the Thai occupy the other.

There are underground bare-knuckle contests elsewhere in the world, but the number of

truly skilled fighters willing to travel to Thailand or Burma for this event is limited.

Even in Burma, where bare-knuckle fights are a regular occurrence, the pool of professional fighters is relatively small. Couple this with the military governments' reluctance to let their people out of the country, especially their best fighters, and you are not going to end up with their finest representatives serving as international ambassadors for the discipline.

Thailand has a large number of fighters available, but top level fighters from Bangkok almost always decline to take part in *muay kaad chuak* because the purse is usually much lower than they are used to receiving – while the risk of getting injured is greater.

The Burmese come from all parts of their country to participate in the event. They make their way via bus, train or motorcycle. A few years ago, one group of Burmese fighters rode their motorcycles for five straight days over rugged, unpaved terrain to fight for a purse that nets them less than 900 baht.

Muay kaad chuak is a violent affair, at times it's downright brutal; yet year after year, national pride and tradition keep the event alive.

Scott Mallon is a freelance Bangkok-based boxing reporter and photojournalist originally from Florida. He contributes to a number of boxing publications including *The Ring*.

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Brazilian wins Laguna Phuket triathlon

By: Natcha Yuttaworawit

CHERNG TALAY: Twenty-one-year-old Brazilian Reinaldo Colucci, racing in the men's professional category, scooped first place in the Laguna Phuket Triathlon held on December 3 with a finishing time of 2:30:58. Last year's winner Samantha McGlone from Canada retained her crown in the women's professional category with a time of 2:48:34, finishing in tenth place overall.

Despite finishing only eighth in the swim, the opening event, Colucci's first- and second-place times in the cycling and running, respectively, were enough to leave him with a comfortable 2 minute 41 second lead over second-place finisher, Terenzo Bozzone from New Zealand. Italian Massimo Cigana came in third with a time of

2:35:31. Last year's winner, Australian Greg Bennett, could only manage fourth this year.

After the race Colucci said to the crowd, "It's a wonderful race in a wonderful place. It's very hot, but I like it."

Second in the women's professional category was Briton Leanda Cave, who finished a fraction over two minutes behind McGlone. International Triathlon Union world Number 4 Laura Bennett managed to pip her husband, Greg, by one place, finishing third with a time of 2:54:02.

The first Thai to finish was Chadarak Chaikamjorn coming in 33rd overall and fourth in his category, the men's 30-34 age group.

Sadly, this year's event was marred by the tragic death 43-year-old competitor William Scott Stewart of Briton, who suffered a heart attack during the swim (see news section).



Reinaldo Colucci, 21: the first Brazilian to win the Laguna Phuket Triathlon.

PATONG DARTS LEAGUE

PATONG: Just three weeks into play in the new league and Coyote are out in front with nine points thanks to 3-point wins in all their matches. Their latest victim was Shakers, who went down 8-1. Meanwhile, Dog's Bollocks pulled off an upset by taking down defending champs Didi's 5-4 on the road. Didi's won the beer leg to salvage a point, however.

November 28 results: Didi's* 4 Dogs Bollocks 5; Queen Mary 3 Piccadilly* 6; Beach House* 6 Offshore 3; Coyote Bar* 8 Shakers 1; Valhalla* 5 Funky Monkey 4.

Standings: 1. Coyote Bar (9 pts); 2.= Queen Mary, Didi's (6); 4.= Shakers, Piccadilly (5); 6.= Valhalla, Offshore (4); 8.= Dog's Bollocks, Beach House (3); 10. Funky Monkey (0).

December 12 matchups: Funky Monkey v Didi's; Piccadilly v Shakers; Dogs Bollock's v Offshore; Coyote Bar v Queen Mary; Beach House v Valhalla (home team first).

Minx wins ACYC series

CHALONG: A year's worth of sailing races culminated in an awards ceremony on December 1 at the Ao Chalong Yacht Club, presented by Master of Ceremonies Andy Dowden.

After a series of 15 races throughout the year, *Minx* won the Racing Class, coming out ahead of second-place *Cinders* and third-place *Fidji*.

In the Multihull Class, *X Cat Riot* took first, followed by *Moto Inzi* and *Charro*.

Four Winds took the top prize in the Cruising Class, ahead of second-place *Eos* and third-placed *Sophia*.

Final results

Men's professional:

1. Reinaldo Colucci (BRA) 2:30:58
2. Terenzo Bozzone (NZL) 2:33:39
3. Massimo Cigana (ITA) 2:35:31

Women's professional:

1. Samantha McGlone (CAN) 2:48:34
2. Leanda Cave (GBR) 2:50:35
3. Laura Bennett (USA) 2:54:02

Men 18-24. 1. Peter Aquilina (AUS) 2:56:30 2. Ben Greenfield (USA) 2:57:01 3. William Preston (GBR) 3:04:39.

Men 25-29. 1. Peter Gibney (GBR) 2:55:11 2. Till Von Bothmer (GER) 2:55:20 3. Shahrom Abdullah (MAS) 3:00:05.

Men 30-34. 1. Assad Attamimi (AUS) 2:58:37 2. Mark Jansen (AUS) 2:59:28 3. Todd Dooley (USA) 2:59:44.

Men 35-39. 1. George Lawson (AUS) 2:48:51 2. William Work

(HKG) 2:57:31 3. Richard Hall (HKG) 2:57:34.

Men 40-44. 1. Richard Schildknecht (SUI) 2:54:43 2. Joseph J Wojcik (USA) 2:59:57 3. Kevin Timmons (GBR) 3:04:26.

Men 45-49. 1. Scott Molina (USA) 2:56:54 2. Doug Morris (USA) 3:05:00 3. Sandro Angelastri (SUI) 3:06:09.

Men 50-54. 1. Graham Plews (GER) 3:10:21 2. Angelo Tavares (POR) 3:16:44 3. David Bishop (AUS) 3:18:54

Women 18-24. 1. Shiu Yan Szeto (HKG) 3:34:40 2. Heather Jackson (USA) 3:45:08 3. Natcha Pianprasobsuk (THA) 3:45:43

Women 25-29. 1. Kelley Toy (NZL) 3:24:43 2. Cary Greigor (USA) 3:25:13 3. Kristy Housley (AUS) 3:29:30

Women 30-34. 1. Nathalie Marquet (FRA) 3:25:41 2. Samantha Stevens (AUS) 3:30:04 3. Anna Helowicz (GBR) 3:30:28

Women 35-39. 1. Rebecca Thorburn (HKG) 3:27:47 2. Jen-

nifer Hechler (BRA) 3:29:47 3. Dawn Mattinson (ZIM) 3:31:27

Women 40-44. 1. Millicent Thweatt (USA) 3:22:20 2. Pips Kumleben (AUS) 3:37:30 3. Cristiano Esclapon (ITA) 3:40:30

Women 45-49. 1. Robyn Scott (AUS) 3:21:18 2. Lynda Sharp (GBR) 3:29:11 3. Anne Knechtboyer (CAN) 3:33:10

Women 50-54. 1. Lynn Harrop (AUS) 3:54:14 2. Deb MacLennan (AUS) 4:05:36 3. Ana Leitao (BRA) 4:21:33

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Construction Update

by Janyaporn Morel

Work starts on Sai Taan sequel

CHERNG TALAY: As work continues to complete the second stage of the sold-out Sai Taan project by end of year, Douglas Ferguson, Director of Sai Taan, is moving ahead with the project's third development – Sai Taan Villas.

In July 2003, Sai Taan started its first development with the purchase of about eight rai, with a view to building nine walled, garden villas near the Laguna complex. As of July this year, Sai Taan had completed and transferred ownership of 20 villas on about 17 rai.

Mr Ferguson explained to the *Gazette*, "We called the project Sai Taan because at the entrance to the development we have banyan trees (*"sai"* in Thai) and sugar palms (*taan*), which were already on the land when we bought it."

The third project, Sai Taan Villas, will comprise 19 luxury villas on 17 rai near the original Sai Taan site at Cherno Talay. The construction is about 10% complete.

"We started selling Sai Taan Villa units in March this year; 13 units have been sold, leaving only six units available. We expect to finish all 19 villas within the first quarter of 2008," Mr Ferguson said.

He explained that, different from the original project, the new villas will have bigger kitchens and more detailed designs to emphasize good functional living. The land plots will be larger, with a minimum plot of 950 square meters and a maximum plot-size of 1,250sqm available.

Each unit will be a single-story, three- or four-bedroom villa in contemporary Thai style, with prices starting at 24.5 million baht



The new Sai Taan Villas will share the same fundamental design of the original project (pictured), with contemporary Thai pavilions around a central private pool, but the living areas will be bigger and one-bedroom Garden Suites will be available.

for a three-bedroom villa on a 950-sqm plot.

The living area for the standard three-bedroom villa will be 247sqm, plus a 10 x 4.5-meter private pool. "The fourth bedroom is optional, because it is a stand alone building with interior area of 35sqm, which we call the Garden Suite, making the total living area 282sqm," Mr Ferguson said.

The standard villa comprises a master suite and two more bedrooms,

all with en-suite bathrooms, and a central living area of about 65sqm, including breakfast bar, dining room and living room with pitched ceiling, that overlooks the terrace, pool and garden.

"The design is a blend of modern and traditional Thai style. We have big pitched roofs to make the units look nice and a little bit cooler. They have very high ceilings; especially people who used to live in condominiums in Hong Kong can see the big difference.

"One attractive feature of the villas is that they are all completely enclosed, so they are very private," Mr Ferguson said.

"We have expats from Hong Kong and Singapore looking at having a holiday home in Phuket and we are beginning to see more interested clients from Europe and the Middle East, though about 70% of our clients are from Hong Kong," he added.

"We ask for a management fee of 19,000 baht a month from each house. This fee covers the central security, pest control, pool cleaning and chemical balancing, garden maintenance and garbage removal.

"I think we have very good products in a great location. We offer very secure ownership packages and a very comprehensive purchase agreement so that

people understand what they are getting and how the ownership works.

"It's easier for us to sell our projects now because of the success of the first project. Of course there are more developers now, but we can turn to the potential clients and say to them, 'Here's what we have built already.' That gives people confidence that we know what we are doing," Mr Ferguson said.

Sai Taan sales office. 3/14 Moo 5, Srisoonthorn Rd, Cherno Talay, Talang, Phuket. Tel. 076-271257-8. Email: info@sai-taan-phuket.com Website www.sai-taan-phuket.com

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Decor

by Suganya Semacote



Using classic cream color as the base allows furniture and even people to add lively color to a room.

Decorating for taste

Hidden among the Sino-Portuguese style shop-houses on Rassada Rd in the heart of Phuket City is The Taste Phuket – a find for the weary traveler looking for a night's rest or for the night owl ready to soak up music and have some fun.

Malida Vaidyanuvatti, interior designer from Bangkok and General Manager of The Taste, graduated in interior design and has 12 years of design experience.

After a period of living in England, she worked as a designer in Singapore for six years before moving to Bangkok, where she worked as an independent interior designer. K. Malida relocated to Phuket five years ago and joined a group of designers in their business ventures, which included the creation of The Taste.

Formerly known as XVI, The Taste was given its new name after K. Malida and her partners realized the opportunity to take over an adjoining shop-

house, adding 10 more guest rooms.

The expansion was testament to XVI's popularity, of which its classic Sino-Portuguese exterior and contemporary interior is a major attraction. K. Malida explains, "If we do not design for our clients, we want to design for ourselves in our style. We use contrast to make the difference. Outside is old Sino-Portuguese style but inside has a modern look."

The decor within is chic with clean lines and attention paid to precise details. The furniture is made in Bangkok, based on designs by the group. The pieces are made specifically for The Taste Phuket, not mass produced, giving the venue a unique look.

"Simple design structure tells in detail. Sometimes we do not need much style, just simple form," K. Malida explains.

"We use modern items with fine details, such as seen by our lamps and the texture and style of our wallpaper, but we also use the classic, smooth color cream,

such as with our white bead curtains. We use white to set off the look of the furniture and the other decorations, even the floor. It looks plain but it's the guests themselves who walk in and fill in the color, style and feeling of the rooms," says K. Malida.

The attractive simplicity on show at The Taste Phuket has proved so popular that K. Malida and her partners have used the same combination at the SriLanta on Koh Lanta, and again in the coming SriTara, which is due to open by the Mae Ping River in Chiang Mai's Old Town district in October 2007.

However, K. Malida says, it is important to keep each venue special, they must have their own finishing touches. Trends in modern and alternative design will be considered during completion of the SriTara, she adds.

The Taste Phuket. 16/18 Rassada Rd, Phuket City. Tel: 076-222812. Email: reservation@thetastephuket.com Website: www.thetastephuket.com

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Home of the Week

Rawai

Eco-cool and simple

With today's emphasis on reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, you might expect a house that remains on average 4 to 9°C cooler than the outside temperature would get a lot of attention, yet it has not.

The largely-ignored Baan Harn Song Program is now defunct and is no longer making these plans available.

The four homes produced under this program demonstrate, however, that if you are willing to accept some design limitations and use common sense in selecting building materials, then it is

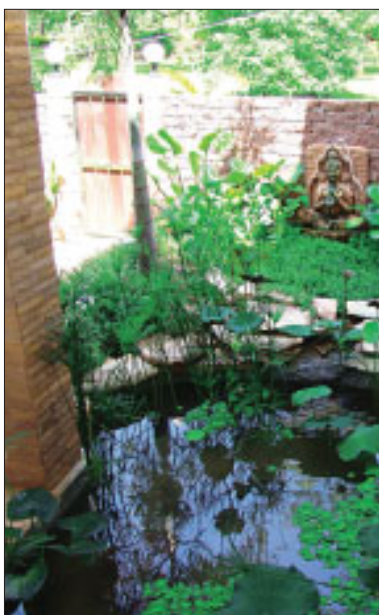
relatively easy to build a home in Phuket that remains comfortable without air conditioning.

The design focuses on preventing heat buildup in and around the home by harnessing the cooling monsoon winds. Each Eco-Cool home is built facing north-east.

Double-width, extra-large windows are positioned on the north and south sides of the house to catch the monsoon winds.

The louvered wooden shutters used in place of glass window panes allow air flow even at night or during rain storms.

The steep-angled roof not



only affords protection from rain, but also acts as the primary heat shield. The roof runs on an east-west axis to reduce the surface area exposed to the sunlight and the shiny, light-gray ceramic tiles reflect heat.

The extended eaves prevent heat buildup by shading the sides of the house from the tropical sun. Rainwater is collected and stored in a 20,000-liter underground water tank.

The open-air design affords

an outdoor, tropical lifestyle. The main daytime living area of this home is a large, sheltered, naturally-cool patio overlooking the pool and surrounded by a lotus/fish pond with a beautiful waterfall.

This spacious 240-square-meter, three-bedroom, three-bathroom home comes with a large office area, fully-furnished modern kitchen, designer bathrooms and finished hardwood doors, windows and floors.

At 10 million baht, the house sits on a 400sqm plot and offers both privacy and security.

Gary Ebsen, Managing Director of Eco-Cool Thai Homes, maintains an open-house policy to showcase these simple and effective energy-saving options to potential buyers and anyone interested in owning or building a home in Phuket. He can be reached at Tel: 087-8987062 or at Email: ebseng@yahoo.com



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the Week section?**

Is your home:

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Gardening

with Bloomin' Bert

Bert's monumental cock-up

What's wrong with the word "cock"? It's a male chicken; the bird that makes annoying noises first thing in the morning. What's the problem with such a simple word?

There will inevitably be those among the *Gazette* readership who will already be cringing at the prospect of what may come next. If you'll pardon the expression.

And that's the problem. I understand that there are those among us who may choose to misconstrue words that have a perfectly innocent dictionary definition. If I was the type of person with an infantile urge to list a whole pile of double entendres, I'd do so, but you know me better than that. So I won't. Or maybe I will.

I certainly won't mention the glorious day when the commentator of a five-day cricket test match, obviously desperate for something to liven up the proceedings in an otherwise dull game, commented on who the principle players were at that particular moment: "The bowler's Holding, the batsman's Willey."

These "misunderstandings" have been around for years. Hands up who remembers that children's cartoon on the BBC that came on just before the news, *Captain Pugwash*? For years I fondly remembered the cast of characters: Master Bates, Seaman Staines and Roger the Cabin Boy. I only recently discovered that in fact, the crew of the famous Black Pig ship included sailors with no such names. How disappointing. The real crew consisted of Master Mate, Tom the Cabin Boy and pirates Barnabas and Willy. Well, "Wil-



Celosias – also known as cockscombs – are hardy plants, despite their velvety blossoms.

ly" is up there, I suppose. Can I say that?

The Americans have managed it for real. The cartoon *Rocko's Modern Life* was famous for these. They got away with a fast food restaurant called Choke-y Chicken, a board game the characters play called Spank the Monkey, and an eye doctor cupping one of Rocko's eyes in his hand and asking him to "cough, please".

Back to the cock, anyway. The head of a cock is inevitably crowned with a magnificent red growth that flaps around in the breeze; something that has no other purpose than to impress the females of the species. You're absolutely right – that rather daft flappy piece of skin is known as the cockscomb.

Coincidentally, there's a plant that thrives here in Phuket that has exactly the same name,

cockscomb – though scientific types know it as the *Celosia cristata*.

Celosias are probably one of the most eye-catching annuals to grow in the garden. Their vivid hues virtually glow – the one in the picture is in my front garden. It's almost as if some maniacal painter has been given the commission to produce the deepest color they could come up with. This is it.

Celosias are available at most garden centers in Phuket at the moment. Once you get them home, you'll find that they're pretty versatile and will be happy to grow in most any type of soil (even heavy clay) as long as they are in full sun. They will survive heat and drought unscathed.

These things are all over the place. Public gardens and highway departments aren't daft – they take advantage of the low-

all possible. If you touch the flowers; they're soft in a very unflowerlike way, though not at all limp. The cockscomb feels a bit like velvet; hardly your typical flower.

They grow well in both humid and arid conditions, and their flowers can last for up to eight weeks. A high number of seeds can be produced by each flower, up to 43,000 per ounce. The plant often grows up to one foot in height, though many are smaller. The leaves are either green or bronze/maroon, depending upon the cultivar. The flowers are usually red, yellow, pink or orange, though other colors can be found. With some hybrids, a variety of colors are present on the same plant.

It's quite likely that a request for a cockscomb in Phuket will be received with far fewer sniggers than in many gardening establishments in the West. You never know your luck though – one of the proprietors may have a sense of humor as warped as many of us.

This reminds me of the story of a young lady who walked into a shop and asked the owner for a double entendre. So he gave her one. Fnarr fnarr.

Want to know more about a plant in your garden?

Email Bloomin' Bert at: bert@bloominbert.com

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Property Gazette

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Property Gazette

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- Beautiful, 4-bedroom, Kathu Golf Home, furnished. Option 2 year rental return @6% fall in love at first sight. Stunning home & deal only 16.0 million baht.
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Property Gazette



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900SQM RAWAI

Reduced again. Motivated sale, 2.4 million baht. Has electricity, water bore and road, with two partly-built homes. Bordered by creek with nice palm trees. Thai company also available with sale. It was priced at 3.7 million baht, now reduced to only 2.4 million baht. Tel: 076-346346, 086-2726508. Email: info@phuketrealstate.com

CHALONG FOR SALE

Superb 1-story house. 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, kitchen, interior Thai style (Swiss quality), nice garden, safe area, ready to move in. Price: 6.2 million baht (owner going back home). Tel: 087-2833482.

HOTEL AND RESORT FOR SALE



Hotel in Patong, near Soi Bangla, 50 rooms, large beer garden, contracted with European tour operators, one of Patong's most reputable flagships. 98 million baht, well-booked resort in Rawai/Yannui, 4 huge villas, 2 guesthouses, 2 apartments, swimming pool. 34 million baht. Please contact. Tel: 076-381490. Email: info@sea-property-international.com

40 BEACHFRONT

Koh Yao Yai. Chon Lat Beach with famous views of Krabi and 100's of islands. 150 meters of white sand beachfront, water, road and electricity. 3 million baht a rai. Ideal for a resort or an investment project. Tel: 076-346346, 086-2726508. Fax: 076-346263. Email: info@phuketrealstate.com

PATONG TOWER CONDO

Chanote freehold, refurbished. 4.2 million baht. Tel: 087-8893838. Email: lovephuket@hotmail.com Land Patong, quiet area 1,260sqm. 2.5 million baht. Call GimTel: 081-3708114.

NICE HOUSE PATONG

With pool. 200sqm, 3 bedrooms, 500sqm land, 900 meters from beach. Tel: 076-292-596, 086-2678477. Email: tourniechristian@hotmail.com

MODERN VILLA FOR SALE



Private sale in Thalang. Built at the highest standard. 2 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, pool. Price: 9.5 million baht. Tel: 089-7272822. Email: tonpa@gmx.net

2 HOUSES FOR SALE



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SEAVIEW LAND

For sale. Rawai location, urgent sale. Half rai: 3 million baht. 1 rai: 6 million baht. Sale by owner. All land perfect sea view. Please call for more details. Tel: 089-7291391.

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With ADSL. Top floor, aircon, mountain view, all newly-remodeled Rawai condo. Please call for more information. Tel: 086-0760141.

HOUSES

On my island. My name is Wellta, I have a big website with houses for rent and sale on the island. Welcome to Phuket! Tel: 081-9680309. Email: info@houseinphuket.com For further details, please see our website at: www.houseinphuket.com

THE LANE BEACHFRONT



1.4 rai with absolute beachfront 50m. 1-bedroom house with detached garage and guest room. 9 million baht. Tel: 089-473-1165. Email: jerrygapt@yahoo.com

LUXURY HILLSIDE

Villa. Magnificent new 2-story hillside villa featuring 3 bedrooms with en-suites, infinity pool, maid's quarters. Tastefully finished and furnished in traditional Thai style with spectacular views of Patong. Please contact for more information or to view. Tel: 081-6911580. Email: homeinphuket@gmail.com

NICE BIG VILLA

For sale. A well-designed villa with 4 bedrooms, fully furnished with teak wood indoor decoration, Thai & European kitchen. Large swimming pool with outdoor fresh water shower. Big garden with well-landscaped design. Located in quiet and secure area. Please contact now! Tel: 081-892-1108. Email: info@grottino-beach-inn.com

TWO SHOPHOUSES

Samkong area. 5 mins to Tesco. 3 floors, 1 with modern shopfront, 3 years old. 3 + 2.8 million baht. Tel: 076-254063, 087-2652889.

SALE CONDO

Freehold. Rawai beach condo. Nice room, can register in foreigner's name. 27sqm. Newly decorated. 300m to Rawai Beach. Please call for more details. Tel: 084-658-4437. Email: property1998@hotmail.com

BARGAIN HOME/ SPA POOL VILLA



Romantic Thai/Bali tropical villa built in spa/resort style with courtyard, garden and pool, near Kamala Beach. Only 8.9 million baht. 4-bedroom, 5-bathroom villa blending traditional temple-style architecture with hip, trendy resort spa design. A great location, along Bang Waan Rd, a popular, peaceful, quiet and safe farang enclave, in one of the island's most charming neighborhoods.

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Carport/exotic entranceway, 4 air cons, hot running water.

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Please contact Ann 66 1 868 7676 or email: ann@mms.ais.co.th

Property Gazette

Properties For Rent

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300m to beach, clean, modern, comfortable apartment. New aircon, big fridge, double bed, pool & parking. Tel: 081-0825707. Please see our website at: www.phuket-accommodation.info

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2-3 bedroom apartment fully furnished, UBC, phone, etc. 25,000 baht a month long term. Tel: 081-8111067.

COMMERCIAL

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BEACHFRONT

For rent. Nice bungalow. Fully furnished with kitchen. Front of the beach at Chalong Bay. 15,000 baht a month. Tel: 089-7297978, 084-658-4437. Email: property1998@hotmail.com

LARGE HOUSE

For rent. Kathu. 3-bedroom, 2-bathroom, furnished house for long-term rent. Phone line, UBC, garden, etc. Close to golf course & international school. Located on quiet, private road 25,000 baht a month. Tel: 076-323663, 089-8752532. Fax: 076-323663. Email: paulstrong23@hotmail.com

HOUSES

On my island. My name is Wellta, I have a big website with houses for rent and sale on the island. Welcome to Phuket! Tel: 081-9680309. Email: info@houseinphuket.com For further details, please see our website at: www.houseinphuket.com

PROPERTY FOR RENT

Beautiful new 2-bedroom villa fully furnished with aircon. 2 minutes to Rawai beach. Private pool in walled tropical gardens. Available early Jan. Min 6 months let: 35,000 baht a month. Tel: 081-9701716.

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Lovely office on Nanai Road. Contact Paul (English) or Noy (Thai). Tel: 076-292133, 086-9520088. Email: paulcamo@hotmail.com

HOUSE FOR RENT



Kata Beach, perfect sea view, 3 bedrooms, open-plan living/dining, swimming pool, sundeck, garden, separate guesthouse with rooftop sala. 140,000 baht. Contact for more information. Tel: 076-381490. Email: info@sea-property-international.com

2-BEDROOM HOUSE

In Boat Lagoon, furnished, serviced. Short term: 40,000 baht/month. Long term: 35,000 baht/month. Now available. Tel: 086-2820567.

4-BED, LONG TERM

Spacious home, 4 bathrooms, spa, pool, aircon, phone, garden, great location. Chalong. 65,000 baht a month. Tel: 086-2817605.

NEW HOUSE

For rent or sale. In Kathu. 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, furnished, garden, aircon. Near Lotus, Central and Patong beach. Rent 25,000 baht/month. Sale at 4.5 million baht. Contact K. Yupa. Tel: 081-7356684, 084-187-1939.

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7 rooms, 540sqm, on 1 rai in Sapam, Phuket City. Looking for long-term renter. Contact Tel: 086-6893289, 084-065-1133.

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Beautiful Patong Tower Beach Condo with stunning 280 degree panoramic views of the ocean, mountains and town. Large outdoor patio and wrap-around balcony. Completely renovated, Internet and washing machine. Available from March 1, 2007. Tel: 086-2815349. Email: txxt@yahoo.com For further details, please see our website at: www.PatongTowerRental.com

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EXOTIC KATA

Oceanfront, 5-star, luxury 1-bedroom apartment. Spa, pool, quiet area, sea view, available December. Tel: 089-9726017. Email: asiasail@yahoo.com For details, see www.koumbele.com/kata1

SHOPHOUSE

For rent. 2 stories, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, near Kunenti, Chalong Bay. Tel: 089-4736886.

DETACHED HOUSE FOR RENT/SALE



Located in Pa Khlok area, just 7 minutes from international school. Fully-furnished house with 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms. Ready to move in. For rent at 20,000 baht a month, or for sale at 2.45 million baht (negotiable). Tel: 081-539-9269.

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Chao Fa. Located in secure estate, 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, lounge, kitchen, dining room, study, laundry room, fenced garden, ADSL and UBC. 35,000 baht a month. Seeking long-term renters (6 months plus). Fax: 076-323-421. Email: somlerdee@yahoo.com

3-BEDROOM HOME

Chao Fa Rd, 207 sq wah, 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, nice living room, good kitchen, cool garden, parking for 3 cars. Fully furnished. For rent at 40,000 baht a month or for sale at 6.7 million baht. Tel: 081-5978315. Email: phuket8@hotmail.com

LOVELY, 4 BEDROOMS

Chalong, 4 bathrooms, spa, aircon, pool, garden. 800sqm, UBC. Quiet area. 65,000 baht a month. Call for more details. Tel: 086-2817605.

HOUSE FOR RENT



Chalong, direct beachfront, 3 bedrooms, open-plan living/dining, large garden, no swimming pool, furnished, 75,000 baht, min 12-month contract, Tel: 076-381490. Email: info@sea-property-international.com

CHALONG BEACH

3 bedrooms, furnished townhouse, as new. Long term: 10,000 baht a month. Tel: 089-4706104.

SHOPHOUSE BLOCK

5 terraced houses for rent on the bypass road. 35,000 baht a month. Please call K. Vachira for more information. Tel: 081-3269495.

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House with pool, spa, poolside bar, aircon, large garden, like resort. Lease: 39,000 baht a month. Tel: 089-5944067.

SEAVIEW HOUSE

In Patong. 2 bathrooms, 2 bedrooms, large lounge, kitchen, furnished, aircon. Tel: 087-8700434.

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Island Job Mart



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- 1. Estate Manager:**
 - Age over 28 years
 - BA in Management or related fields
 - At least 2 years experience in building/estate management
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 - Strong leadership, good problem solving skills
 - Able to work under pressure
- 2. Chief Engineer:**
 - Male, age over 25 years
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 - At least 2 years experience in building services
 - Knowledge of system maintenance management is an advantage
- 3. Project Coordinator:**
 - Age over 22 years
 - BA in related fields
 - Self motivated and possess good coordinating and problem solving skills with service mind
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 - Male or female, age 25 - 30 years
 - BA in Accounting or Finance
 - At least 3 years experience in related fields
 - Familiar with accounting software and knowledge of MS Office, especially MS Excel
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 - Proficiency in both written and spoken English
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 - Female, age over 22 years
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SALES/OFFICE

Person required. Our office in a Karon hotel needs a Thai English-speaking person to sell our company's excursions. Good English required, and some computer skills. Phone for interview. Tel: 076-289044, 081-0817163. Fax: 076-289044. Email: Info@simbaseatrips.com

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Looking for staff. Good English speakers for restaurant/kitchen/bar/cleaning/more. Call Cim. Tel: 087-1887518.

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A recent promotion creates an opening for a girl Friday to do sales, administration and assist the operations manager in a Charter/Cruise Business. Tel: 087-8866919. Email: Neil@SpaBoat.com For further details, please see our website at www.spaboat.com

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Food take-away manager. Please send details of experience to. Email: fastfoodtakeawaypatong@yahoo.com Tel: 088-8939089.

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We are an Internet travel agency and need a Thai female with good communication skills in English. Good personality, self motivated. Experience with MS Word and Excel would be an advantage. Tel: 076-342750, 086-2672462. Email: shall@loxinfo.co.th Please visit: www.tropicalgolf-spaholidays.com

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Job Openings at Mövenpick Resort & Karon Beach Phuket

Moevenpick Resort & Spa Karon Beach Phuket - Thailand is looking for a **Director of Sales** and a **Marketing & Communications Manager**

Located on Karon Beach, the hotel is the perfect place for relaxation in some of the most beautiful natural surroundings in Thailand. With 382 rooms and butler serviced residences, the F&B department features 4 restaurants, 3 bars a 24 hours room service and large banqueting and conference facilities.

• Director of Sales

Job Specifications

The main responsibility is to manage the total sales efforts within the hotel & the sales office to generate pro-actively revenue. The basic guideline to do this is the hotel's Marketing Plan as well as the Business Plan.

He/she ensures that the Hotel consistently disposes of adequate, motivated and skilled personnel within the sales team. At all levels and at the right time, with considering both, customer oriented (quality) as well as commercial aspects. He/she cares that sales office administration and filing is properly organized and according to our standards.

In performing these duties he/she shall at all times maintain good relations with his/her supervisor, the Rooms Division and Reservation department.

Preferred Knowledge/Qualifications:

1. University graduate. Fluency in written and spoken English.
2. Minimum 5 years hotel sales experience including 2 years management experience.
3. Have international Hotel chain experience in Asia
4. Local market knowledge is preferred with extensive contacts in overseas markets, MICE and FIT segments.
5. Must possess strong leadership and organizational skills.
6. Pleasant personality and good communication skills.

• Marketing & Communications Manager

Job Specifications

The Marketing Communications Manager is critically important to successfully liaise with local media and other partners such as visiting press. MCM is responsible for all media publishing. He/She is also responsible for the coordination with the local and internal photo shooting events. He/She should coordinate and facilitate all promotions of the hotel. MCM is also responsible for the coordination of all collateral production and arranging and managing direct mail projects.

Preferred Knowledge/Qualifications:

1. University graduate, with preference given to Marketing Communications
2. Minimum of 3 years in Media and/or Marketing, Public Relations and Advertising experience is required and prior Hotel knowledge is preferred.
3. Must be very organized, able to prioritize task. Must have the ability to follow up operational and media requests such as monthly media roster to assure adequate representation in local and international publications.
4. Excellent command of English reading and writing ability is required. Proficient knowledge of Word, Excel, Power Point and Lotus. Other languages such as the local language is preferred.
5. Flexible and independent's work spirit and be able to work under the pressure.

Please submit your detailed resume and recent photograph to the Human Resources Department.

Moevenpick Resort & Spa Karon Beach Phuket
509 Patak Road, Karon Beach, Phuket 83100, Thailand
Phone +66 76 396139, Fax +66 76 396122
patteera.maneesri@moevenpick.com
www.moevenpick-hotels.com



MÖVENPICK
Resort & Spa Karon Beach
Phuket

NANNY POSITION AVAILABLE

Location: Surin beach, Phuket

Hours: 7:30am-7:00pm Monday-Friday

8:00am-12:00pm Saturday

Duties: Care of 14-month-old baby girl.

Qualifications: Speak/understand English. Childcare experience essential. Must be very reliable and responsible as both parents work full time 5 days/week. References and full medical will be required.

Salary: Good salary (negotiable depending on experience)

Contact: Gareth Tel: 081-8944582
Tamsin Tel: 081-9788280.

ADMINISTRATIVE

Officers. To manage the office documentation and related tasks. Also for HR and admin function. Requirements: well-organized, energetic, hard working person with attention to detail, ability to communicate in English and knowledge of MS Office, Adobe, Illustrator, etc. Send CV to Email: bee@destinationair.com or call Tel: 076-328599.

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Island Job Mart



URGENT - UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

Samui Villas & Homes is looking for its new Sales and Marketing Assistant for the Holiday Villas Management Division.

The candidate must have the following pre-requisites:

- Thai National
- 3 to 5 years' experience in Hotel Sales & Marketing at midmanagement level
- Very familiar with Internet business environment is a plus
- Traveling abroad will be part of the mission
- Good command of written and spoken English
- Computer literate
- Independent and responsible with good common sense and initiative
- Excellent salary package according to experience and qualifications with incentive on overall and production performance

Candidate must be able to start immediately or at earliest possible time.

Samui Villas & Homes Co Ltd

Koh Samui Office: 11/7 Moo 1, Bophut, Koh Samui, Surat Thani 84320, Thailand.
Tel: + 66-77-427648 Fax: + 66-77-427649
Email: golf@samuivillasandhomes.com
www.samuivillasandhomes.com



LOOKING FOR MAID

Foreign couple is looking for a long-term maid with basic English. Working location: Kamala, in a new house. Must be honest and self-motivated. Maid has to stay at our place for cleaning and cooking. Good salary for the right candidate. We offer private maid room with bathroom, TV, etc. Please call or email for interview. Tel: 086-1727974. Email: rene.koller@bluewin.ch Please see our website at: www.romsai.ch

RESTAURANT STAFF

A new Indian restaurant called Little India will be opening mid-December and needs the following experienced staff: manager, waiter, waitress, cashier. Please send CV (email or fax) with details of experience as well as previous and expected salary. Tel: 076-254827, 01-8937028. Email: Sutisa.potter@gmail.com

OUTSIDE AIRLINES SALES

Marketing and PR (2). Thai with tourism experience required. Requirements: energetic, hard working with sales skills and able to communicate effectively in English. Own laptop a plus. Send CV to bee@destinationair.com or call Tel: 076-328599.

job opportunity
Legal & Property Consultancy Firm in Phuket urgently requires
Executive Secretary
(Personal Assistant) with these qualifications:
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> Able to translate Thai-Eng & Eng-Thai.
> Computer Literate: MS Word, Excel.
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OFFICE SECRETARY

Real estate agency's Chalong branch requires female for office. Good written and spoken English, computer skills and results oriented. Duties will be property scouting, telemarketing and following up listings for our properties. Salary up to 15,000 baht + incentives scheme. Tel: 084-0535780. Email: info@ayudhya.net

OFFICE STAFF

Receptionist, admin & secretary. Good English & computer skills. Tel: 076-260468. Fax: 076-260440. Email: admin@tacticalcapital.net

BARTENDERS

Qualified bartenders needed. Thai ladies for elegant bar near the beach at Patong - Dolphin Bar. Good salary, lady drinks tips & commissions on sale. Call Richard at Tel: 087-2677965.

BAR MANAGER

Thai lady, some English, good customer care to lead team of six girls. Dolphin Bar, near beach at Patong. Good salary, commission on daily income basis. Call Richard at Tel: 087-2677965.

SOUS CHEF

Young ambitious sous chef required to work with internationally known celebrity chef Keith Floyd at Floyd's at Burasari. Send resume now to Mr. Chris Green. Email: chris@burasari.com

LAW FIRM PHUKET

Looking for lawyer & secretary. Send resume to Email: scphuket@yahoo.com

SALES REPRESENTATIVE

Highly-motivated Thai national with excellent spoken English required for busy real estate office. Previous sales experience not necessary. Good salary plus excellent commission. Please contact for more information. Tel: 076-527565. Fax: 076-527564. Email: cv@phuket ocean villas.com

PROJECT MANAGER

Engineer. Need good architectural skills, perfect English, experience with big projects, good salary & willing to work for a good future. Please contact by email: info@platinum residencepark.com

INTERNET CAFE

Full- or part-time staff wanted to work in trendy Internet cafe and restaurant in Phuket City. Please call for more information. Tel: 076-223210, 084-0143121.

SALES ASSISTANT

Wholesale food company is looking for a sales assistant. Basic knowledge of English required. Call Simon. Tel: 084-1893070.

SOLAR TECHNICIAN

and sales. Wanted: Technicians, sales and fitters for PV & solar hot water systems. Diploma or experience with solar energy is required. Please contact. Tel: 076-378361, 081-7722300. Fax: 076-244652. Email: info@phuketsolar.com

HOUSEKEEPER KUALA LUMPUR

Live-in housekeeper wanted for Thai-speaking British family. English not necessary. Duties include cleaning, laundry, dog walking, cooking and some childcare. 6 days a week. Excellent salary and all living expenses. SMS Singapore/Malaysia or email name and contact number and I will call you. Interviewing in Phuket from December 29. Tel: 65-91187043, +60-172032803. Email: ritalouisedobson@hotmail.com

WORK FOR INTERNET SHOP

We're looking for:

-Women, Thai nationals, to work as cyber cafe receptionists. Full time or night time (18:00 to 24:00). Possibility of lodging. Patong, Phuket City or Kata.

-Men, Thai nationals, to do computer maintenance work.

Please contact K. Yupha by email or by phone. Tel: 076-341255, 089-471-9712. Email: leco@liontchai.com

RESTAURANT MANAGER & CHEF

Sunset Beach Resort is looking for a restaurant manager & European chef. Please contact for more information.

Tel: 076-342482-5.

Fax: 076-342500.

Please send CV to: info@sunsetphuket.com



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- Full driving license and your own transportation
- Fluent English speaker (some knowledge of Thai would be advantageous)

You will also possess the following attributes:

- A team player
- Positive and outgoing personality
- Excellent communication skills
- A flexible approach to your work

Interested candidates are invited to submit their applications, full resume and a recent photo to:

SEA Property International

5/3 Moo 5, Viset Rd, T. Rawai, A. Muang, Phuket, 83130
email: HR@sea-property-international.com
www.sea-property-international.com

STAFF REQUIRED

To work with new company. All positions require a good command of English. Thai nationals only.

- Secretary/Research officer (marketing)
- Computer system operator
- Designer (web and print)
- Accounts clerk

Tel: 085-7962880. Please send CV and salary details. Email: hr@auchencairn.com

CLEANING IN KARON

Small guesthouse wants Thai lady to clean 3 rooms, 10:00-13:00, 7 days. 3,000 baht a month. For more information call Tel: 086-2718254.

OFFICE STAFF

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GUITARS, AMPS ETC

Guitars, amps, drums for sale. Leaving Phuket. Call for details. Tel: 081-5379196.

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State-of-the-art equipment for the serious disc jockey. Two Technics SL-DZ1200 CD turntables and a Pioneer DJM-600 mixer. Pristine condition. New price is over 150,000 baht; now selling it all for 100,000 baht or nearest offer. Tel: 081-9580815. Fax: 076-283251.

Bulletins

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Mission Hospital Phuket City

Wed and Sun 7 pm

Bangkok Phuket Hospital Phuket City

Fri 7 pm

Patong Hospital Patong

Mon, Tue, Wed, Sat, Sun

at 7 pm and Fri at 8 pm

For Phuket info (English)

call 081-9564031,

081-8912895

Scandinavian speaking Group

Wat Karon School Karon

Tue 7 pm and

Nov-April only on Sat 7 pm

Tel 081-2732053 Nor

087-2795636 Nor

086-7458910 Swe

For info on other Thailand

AA meetings inquire

at Tel: 02-2318300

(for Thai language press 3)

www.aathailand.org or

email info@aathailand.org

CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICES

Add love, peace and joy to your Christmas this year and join us in singing carols and watching our Christmas show with a difference! Come together with people from all over the world at Phuket Christian Centre, Phuket City, on Friday, December 22, at 7:30 pm (Traditional Carol Service) and December 24 at 10:30 am (Christmas Celebration Service). Please contact for further information. Tel: 076-246381. Email: Fisherbernadine@yahoo.com

PHUKET CHESSCLUB

Saturday from 2 pm. Please contact for more details. Tel: 081-8948446. Email: info@southernfriedrice.com

Business Opportunities

BAR FOR SALE

Popular and successful Amigos bar in Soi Seadragon for sale. Pool table, darts, own sound system. Price negotiable dependant on length of lease required. Tel: 087-883-8721.

WORKING PARTNER

Needed for new exciting "never seen before" biz in Koh Samui. Price for partnership: 1 million baht. For further details please email: admin@no1phukethomes.com

BUSINESS IDEA

Looking for a business idea or opportunity? Email: admin@no1phukethomes.com For further details please visit: www.no1phukethomes.com

SHOPHOUSES FOR SALE



Promising business location, very close to Chalong circle, large shop/office area, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, toilets, perfect for business and living in one. 3 units, from 5.5 to 6.5 million baht. Tel: 076-381490. Email: info@sea-property-international.com

BUSINESS IN PHI PHI ISLAND

Now for sale in a top location. Popular fast food corner and Internet business, plus owner's room with balcony. 14-year contract and low monthly rent. Please contact for more details. Tel: 081-0820039. Email: asiantips@gmail.com

RESTAURANT

For lease. Located at Kata beach, 2 floors (live in). Fully furnished, ready to move in. Tel: 081-9206054.

BEAUTY SALON

Beauty salon for sale in Kathu 150,000 baht or rent for 8,000 baht a month. You can live inside. Please contact for more information. Tel: 084-8448589. Email: bb-anaiya@hotmail.com

GUESTHOUSE

For sale. Take over in high season. Patong main road, 5-year lease. 8 rooms, bar, restaurant, fully fitted. Please call for more information. Tel: 089-648-9932.

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BAR/RESTAURANT

Long established. More than 200sqm. Minutes from Karon Beach in prime tourist area. No key money 5+5-year lease available. Rent: 69,000 baht per month. Please contact Mark for more information. Tel: 087-2742759. Email: britcorp@hotmail.com

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Ejection seat bungy fun ride machine, imported from Austria. Full working machine and operating site, in Kathu next-door to go-cart track. This ride launches 2 people in a safety cage 60m into the air at a speed of 100kmh, in 1.8 seconds. I am looking for a working partner to invest and help run the ride. For full details contact Andy. Tel: 081-891-3466. Fax: 076-296160. Email: antc@phuket.ksc.co.th

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Guesthouse located in Patong for long-term lease. Recent construction, ready to run for this high season. Key money: 800,000 baht. Monthly rental fee: 150,000 baht. Urgent sale, price reduced! Tel: 086-0043008. Email: info@ayudhya.net For further details, please see our website: www.ayudhya.net

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For sale. Unlimited income potential! Price for quick sale: only 500,000 baht. Please email for information. Email: info@fun-dating-thailand.com

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Patong. Sea view, pool, VIP restaurant, 23 rooms complete. Tel: 084-6301770.

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3-story building inside Ocean Time Square department store Phuket City. Tel: 081-890-9891, 086-3053922, 081-4452156.

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In Patong on Soi Sansabai (opp. Soi Bangla) with full equipments. Good location. Please contact for more details. Tel: 089-4729870.

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Famous Patong cabaret bar. Tel: 081-8955242. Email: junaworn@hotmail.com For further details, please see our website: www.katoysrus.com

PATONG BAR(S)

Wishing to concentrate on one bar, have the option of either GoGo in Sea Dragon (6-year lease) or Beer Bar (2-year lease) in Happy Rd (next to Seduction disco). Tel: 089-9546433. Email: kjralph@hotmail.com

PROPERTY COMPANY

Thai registered. Full architect designs for six units, pool and site plan. Website. Thai business bank account. Negotiations for land in progress. Business for sale or partnership considered. Suit retired builder or architect. Please email: builderritire@yahoo.co.uk

GUESTHOUSE SALE

/lease. 4-year lease, no rent until May 2007 or will sell with land. Close to beach. Tel: 076-342280, 081-9781956. Email: palm@phuket.ksc.co.th

HOTEL FOR SALE

All 26 rooms with balconies and view of Karon beach. Tel: 087-0599180.

TIME IS MONEY!

Farang offer for Thailand. Applications from Thai women are welcome, too! Establishment of new Thai Ltd company. Visa and work permit no problem! No competition, no wasting time, clients enough! Start-up investment: 30,000 euros. Email: adventuraintern@hotmail.com

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RESTAURANT

Karon. 1 million baht. Key money: 400,000 baht. 4-year lease. Everything sells with the business. Must be viewed, bargain price. Call Tony. Tel: 089-4731351.

BAR FOR SALE

Soi Gonzo, Bangla Road. 2 years left on lease. Genuine sale. 900,000 baht. Tel: 085-7826492, 085-7571301.

BAR / RESTAURANT

Including two rooms for rent. Nanai Rd, Patong. Tel: 081-0809802.

INVEST 500,000 BAHT

in our company for 10% share. Will pay 200,000 baht per month. Tel: 085-888-0636, 085-8881637.

BAR/RESTAURANT

Water front. Next to Marina. 1.5 million baht. Please call for more information. Tel: 085-7838336.

FOR SALE/RENT

Restaurant, Koh Lanta. Seats 27 inside, 12 outside. Lease contract to Mar 31, 2009. Rent: 200,000 baht per year. Asking price: 150,000 baht. Rent until Mar 1, 2007 included in the price. Please contact Khun Conny for more information Tel: 089-9858309. Email: crockstrom@hotmail.com

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For sale, 2.5 stories, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms. Near Kan-eng 1, Chalong bay. Tel: 089-4736886.

BEACH RESTAURANT

Restaurant/bar on Surin beach with chairs. 1.7 million baht. No key money. Tel: 081-0898643. Email: opportunity@hotmail.com

KARON BAR

For sale. Pool table, TV, Music system, etc. Please call for more information. Tel: 089-5879551.

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NAIL/MASSAGE

Salon Patong Beach. Must sell this month. 265,000 baht. Bangla Rd. Contact Anna. Tel: 089-0468603. Email: gordytlc@yahoo.com

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NEED HELP WITH

Pearl. I need some help with uploading PHP Pearl script and maintenance of a website. This would be part-time work. Tel: 08-70929921. Email: joe_anusara@yahoo.com

Miscellaneous for Sale

INTERNATIONAL TRANSLATION OF FOREIGN DRIVERS LICENSE

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- < 6,000 baht, valid up to 20 years
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