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Fire ravages village, 85 homeless

By Tipwarintron Tanaakarachod

MAI KHAO: Less than five years after it was flattened by the tsunami, the Ban Hin Look Diow sea gypsy village has again been ravaged – this time by fire.

At about 1.30pm on June 30, a fire broke out in one of the homes and quickly spread to 16 others, leaving 85 of the village's 215 residents homeless.

Boonchuey Varee, whose home was destroyed in the blaze, blamed the fire on a short circuit.

Only a few women with young children were in their homes at the time, he said.

"We were lucky nobody was injured or killed," he added.

However, the fact that the homes were virtually deserted at the time also meant there was nobody on hand to douse the flames, even though there are abundant water sources in the area. The stilted homes were built over a small lagoon protected from the sea by mangrove forests.



The charred remains of the Ban Hin Look Diow sea gypsy village in Mai Khao.

Homeless, Dao Prabsamud, 35, said it was too early to estimate the cost of the damage or to determine where the fire started.

The modest homes of wood and corrugated zinc panels get very hot at midday and most resi-

dents leave them to work or seek shade outside, she explained.

The Phuket Provincial Administration Organization and the Mai Khao Tambon Administration Organization have set up a large tent nearby to provide shel-

ter for the 85 homeless men, women and children.

Phuket has seen at least four major fires since June 25, with blazes in Kata, Patong and Wichit. See inside for more details on the fires.

Internal Security Act to cover Phuket for 15 days



Could scenes like this accompany the meeting later this month?

PHUKET CITY: Phuket will for the first time fall under the Internal Security Act (ISA) when it hosts the 42nd Asean Ministerial Meeting and related activities to be held at Laguna Phuket from July 17 to 23.

The cabinet on June 30 approved the strict measure for 15 days, from July 10 to 24, for an area covering the entire island and extending five kilometers offshore.

The move is intended to give the government heightened pow-

ers to deal with any unrest.

By invoking the act, the government does not need to declare a state of emergency to enforce tougher rules and regulations. An Internal Security Operations Command (Isoc) panel chaired by the prime minister will also be set up.

Although it will infringe on people's basic rights for the duration, the move is aimed at boosting international confidence in Thailand.

In addition to foreign ministers from Asean's 10 member countries, counterparts from the US, China and Japan are expected to attend.

Army chief Gen Anupong Paochinda said all branches of the armed forces jointly proposed to cabinet the use of the act for the

duration of the event and the week preceding it.

The law, initiated by the military-backed government last year, lets the premier mobilize forces from any agency for security reasons. Article 18 of the law authorizes the premier in his capacity as Isoc director to impose curfews, prohibit the movement of people and vehicles and block commuting routes.

The act also authorizes the premier to enact special security measures without having to declare a state of emergency.

The government fears the red-shirted anti-government protesters might disrupt proceedings as they did with the Asean Summit in Pattaya over the Songkran holidays in April.

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Patong burns again

Holiday in hospital?



The burned-out building blocked from view with corrugated zinc panels.

PATONG: In the latest fire to hit the beach road in Patong, an Indian restaurant, a tailor shop and a pharmacy were gutted in a pre-dawn blaze on June 25.

The fire broke out at about 3am in a two-story building on the corner of Soi Post Office, just north of McDonald's.

Five fire engines from Patong Municipality were able to contain the blaze, but two shophouse units on the ground floor selling souvenirs and the "Kwality India and Thai food" restaurant on the second floor were gutted.

A Siam Commercial Bank exchange booth and ATM on the ground floor beneath also sustained some damage.

Those suffering losses from the blaze were restaurant owner Wirote Umarahada, 43, and souvenir shop owners Surachai Tunkij, 45; Suphin Pimsuwan, 42; and Pongpetch Pimsuwan, 35.

Mr Pongpetch told the *Gazette* the fire started on the ground floor and spread very quickly, fueled by bags, clothes, shoes and other items on sale to

passing tourists.

"By the time I got there everything inside was burned. Overall, I think the damage will be about eight or nine million baht.

"I took out an insurance policy a few months ago, but unfortunately my colleagues were uninsured," said Mr Pongpetch. "I don't know the cause of the fire. It wasn't arson like the fires at Jintana Plaza, as we don't have any conflicts with anyone," he said.

Police forensics and fire department investigators have already visited the site and will release their findings soon, Mr Pongpetch said, adding that he would ask his landlord to lower the rent.

Kathu Police Superintendent Grissak Songmoonrak said all the owners said the fire started in the middle unit of the building, which comprises three shophouse units.

Unlike numerous other fires along the beach road in recent years, the electric cables running along the sidewalk outside were not damaged.

-Khunakorn Terdkiatkhachorn

PHUKET CITY: The Public Health Ministry plans to develop Phuket into a "medical knowledge center" where medical students will receive specialist training.

The move is part of a five-year plan to double the revenue of the medical service industry to 400 billion baht by 2014 and to further establish Thailand as a medical hub and world-class spa destination.

Dr Wiwat Sitomnoch, deputy director of the Phuket Public Health Office, said Phuket provides a wide variety of medical services, including elective and cosmetic surgery and dental care with three international hospitals, local health offices and some 200 private clinics.

These and supporting infrastructure will allow Phuket to become a medical knowledge center in the near future, he said.

Phuket also saw the opening of the Phuket Medical Science Center on Bangjo Road in Thalang last month.

The center is dedicated to preventing the spread of Legionnaires' disease, chikungunya, food poisoning and a host of other preventable medical conditions.

Wichien Juthamongkol, president of the Phuket Spa Association, said the five-year plan will involve upgrades to the Thai spa, massage and health service industries.

Total revenue from Thai spa and massage should account for 80 billion baht of the total target of 400 billion baht in 2014, he said.

So far, there are 200 spa operators in Phuket but only 70 have been licensed by the ministry. However, the association plans to increase the number of certified spas to 100 by the end of the five-year plan.

In addition, the association will promote more hotel spas. At present only 50 of Phuket's 400 hotels offer spa services.

The success of the plan will reduce risks to the spa industry, which is currently highly reliant on tourism, Mr Wichien said.

-The Nation



Name that panda!

In a bid to finally put a name to the panda cub born at Chiang Mai Zoo in May, Thailand Post are holding a nationwide postcard naming lottery.

From June 22 to August 5, people are being urged to buy one of four five-baht postcards bearing the names Kuantai, Thaicheen, Linping and Yingying.

The postcards are available at 11 Phuket post offices. The name that registers the most votes will be announced on August 12.

From the winning batch of postcards, one lucky card will be drawn. The sender will be contacted and receive one million baht in cash, a new car and a four-day, three-night package tour from Bangkok to Chengdu, China for two people.

The first runner up will receive the car and package tour combo, while the 12 third-prize winners will win expenses-paid trips to Chengdu, China.

Officials expect to sell at least 100,000 postcards by August 5 in Phuket alone.

Dolphins beached

Locals at Saphan Hin were quick to alert officials at the Phuket Marine Biological Center (PMBC) following the discovery of a male and female spotted dolphin on Sansuk Beach on June 20.

PMBC veterinarians were unable to save the life of the female dolphin, but at the time of writing the male was recovering under the watchful eyes of PMBC staff.

Dr Patchanaporn Kaewmong said they are now helping the male dolphin regain his strength after the ordeal. She was unsure what had caused the pair to become stranded.

"Normally they will stay together with the entire group but I don't know why these two were grounded here," she said.

Dr Patchanaporn said an autopsy that was carried out on July 1 revealed the female dolphin was malnourished, leading to speculation that an infection in the digestive system was the cause of death.

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THE REAL DEAL: On an inspection tour of Soi Bangla in Patong on June 25, Deputy Minister of Commerce Alongkorn Ponlaboot (center) said the ministry was now going to get tough on the trade in counterfeit goods. "We are serious about this campaign," he told the *Gazette*, adding that Thais and foreigners caught handling counterfeit goods could face fines and jail terms. Mr Alongkorn also said he expected Phuket Governor Wichai Phraisa-ngop (right) to help oversee the campaign in Phuket.

Patong bars to close on Asarnha Bucha Day

PATONG: All entertainment venues in Patong will close on July 7 to observe the Buddhist holiday of Asarnha Bucha.

Sompetch Moosopon, president of the Patong Entertainment Business Association (PEBA), said the PEBA committee met at the Baan Sukhothai Hotel & Spa on June 23 to discuss plans for Asarnha Bucha Day, which is a public holiday in Thailand.

Although the day is a Buddhist holiday, closing is non-compulsory.

It was agreed to hold merit-making ceremonies as well as a range of activities aimed at building camaraderie among the scores of people employed in the Patong nightlife entertainment industry.

"This will be the seventh consecutive year that we will close entertainment venues in Patong to give workers the chance to make merit and reflect on the importance of Buddhism. We want to establish this as a tradition for Soi Bangla and all of Patong," he said.

Employees of over 400 entertainment venues are expected to take part, he said.

Events will kick off just after dawn, a time when many nightlife workers are normally going to bed.

At 7am there will be an alms-offering ceremony organized by Patong Municipality, with merit-makers offering monks rice, non-perishable foodstuffs, robes and other necessities.

Financial contributions will also be accepted by the Patong Hospital Foundation, a charity set up to help poor patients pay their medical bills, he said.

The Patong Football Field on the beach road will be the focus of activity in the afternoon, when "sport color day" activities will see workers from vari-

ous nightlife establishments band together into nine teams, each with a different color.

Bar boys from Soi Paradise and other sois catering to the needs of gay clientele will compete on the purple and pink teams, for example.

The wide range of competitive events will include such classics as tug-of-war and sack races. Awards will also be given to the teams with the best cheering sections.

"We want to develop harmony and give everyone a chance to have fun with one another," Mr Sompetch said.

The merit-making and team-building activities will help create a unified spirit, helping industry workers fight together to survive during these tough economic times, he said.

The economic downturn has hit the industry hard, with the number of tourists down an estimated 50% year-on-year, Mr Sompetch said.

"I can't predict what the situation will be like by the end of the year, but I don't see any positive signs," he said.

In light of the economic downturn, PEBA strongly supports extending operating hours past those currently mandated by the Ministry of Interior (MoI).

The MoI currently issues licenses under six categories depending on the nature of entertainment and services offered, and whether the establishment falls inside a designated entertainment zone. Currently, the latest any nightlife venue in Phuket can legally remain open is 2am.

PEBA's most recent bid to have operating hours extended received a cool response from Phuket Governor Wichai Phraisa-ngop last month.

-Kamol Pirat

TAT expects 14mn foreign tourists in 2010

PHUKET CITY: The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) expects 14 million foreign tourists to visit Thailand in 2010. It also expects an additional 90 million trips by domestic holidaymakers – to Phuket, Chiang Mai, Pattaya, Koh Samui and other key tourist destinations – generating a total of 960 billion baht.

If achieved, the number of inbound tourists will represent a 5.6% increase over 2009's expected 13.2 million visitors. International tourists are expected to generate revenue of 540 billion baht next year, up 6.4% from this year's targeted revenue of 530 billion.

Following Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva's visit last week, officials in China withdrew the country's official warning against travel to Thailand.

The move is expected to draw more than 100,000 Chinese tourists to Thailand, including Phuket, in the remaining months of 2009.

Acting TAT governor Pensuda Priaram said the agency would concentrate on attracting tourists from South Asia and the Middle East, regions that have suffered less than others from the

global economic crisis.

"In 2010, the TAT hopes to attract 823,000 tourists from South Asia, up 13%, generating revenue of 25 billion baht, up 15.4%. Also, 450,000 tourists from the Middle East are expected to visit Thailand, spending about 19 billion baht," Ms Pensuda said.

The TAT hopes arrivals from all over Asia will grow by 3.8% next year to 6.9 million visitors, bringing in revenue of 162 billion baht.

Some 4.7 million tourists from Europe are expected in 2010, generating revenue of 237 billion baht.

The numbers of visitors from the Americas and Oceania are also expected to grow, by 4.9% and 4.2% respectively, providing revenue of 46 billion baht and 37 billion baht, respectively.

However, visitors from East Asia, particularly Japan, South Korea, China and Hong Kong, are expected to drop 14.9% to 6.7 million. Revenue from these sources will fall 21.7% to 156 billion baht. Tourists from Africa are also expected to plunge 17% to only 90,000.

Weerasak Kowsurat, chair-

man of the TAT board, said the agency is also planning to approach niche markets like diving, youths, weddings, golf, shopping and senior tourists.

The government has extended the exemption on fees for tourist visas until March 31, 2010. The exemption will apply to visa applications made on arrival at all international airports and at Thai embassies.

Wansadet Thavornsuk, deputy governor for domestic markets, said the TAT planned to spend 500 million baht to boost domestic tourism next year. One measure will be encouraging public and private organizations to hold meetings and conferences within Thailand.

Thai Hotels Association president Prakrit Shinamourphong said an end to political unrest in Thailand would be a key factor in driving tourism over the coming year.

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Fire in Kata following vigilante smoke-out

By James Goyder and Tipwarintron Tanaakarachod



Fire rages in Kata after attempts by vigilantes to smoke out a thief.

KATA: Wasteland opposite Kata Night Bazaar was ablaze on June 25 following attempts to smoke out a suspected thief on the run.

At 7.30pm, eyewitnesses

reported seeing a Burmese man snatch a mobile phone from another Burmese male outside a tailor's shop on the busy Thai Na Road in Kata. The man then ran off in the direction of Kata Beach.

The suspect was pursued by police south along Kata Road but escaped along a pathway that connects Kata Road to Pak Bang Road and runs parallel to the beach, witnesses said.

The police blocked off both ends of the narrow path that cuts through the Club Med complex but the suspect was able to escape.

Around 20 minutes later, fire was raging across wasteland adjacent to the complex, near the area that police had been searching for the suspect.

No injuries were reported and no buildings were damaged by the fire, which was quickly put out by the fire brigade, and caused bars along the popular strip on Kata Road to become engulfed in smoke.

Kata police told the *Gazette* that civilians joined in the hunt for the suspect and that the fire broke out when the vigilantes attempted to smoke out the suspect.

It has not been confirmed whether the suspect was eventually apprehended.

Twelve donate land for new Phuket airport road



Phuket Governor Wichai Phraisa-ngop (left) accepts land ownership documents from one of the donors. Photo by Kamol Pirat

PHUKET CITY: A provincial plan to build a second airport road took a small step forward last month, thanks to 12 private landowners who donated land for the project.

The handover took place on the night of June 22 at the Ban Prujumpha School in tambon Thepkrasattri, where the landowners personally consigned land title deeds and related documents over to Phuket Governor Wichai Phraisa-ngop.

Gov Wichai has been pushing four new road projects for the island since taking up the gubernatorial post in mid-March.

The largest of these is the second airport road, which would cost an estimated 400 million baht in construction costs alone, the governor said.

The proposed route would follow electric power pylons all the way from a point near the airport to the bypass road in Koh Kaew, a total distance of around 21 kilometers.

Large trucks would be restricted from using the road.

Much of the land is owned by the Electric Generating Authority of Thailand, but the proposed route also cut through 210 plots of private land, 177 in Thalang district and 33 in Muang District.

Most of the land donated on June 22 was owned by the Ngantawee company in tambon Thepkrasattri Village 3, which was unable to develop the land

due to state regulations on building near power lines.

The handover of plots clears the way for construction of a three-kilometer stretch of the proposed road.

Also attending the handover ceremony were Thalang District Chief Chaiwat Taephee and Paitoon Lertkai, head of the Phuket Provincial Land Office.

Gov Wichai said he had already discussed the need for a second north-south artery with residents of tambon Thepkrasattri. Most agree the project is needed to decrease traffic congestion along Thepkrasattri Road, especially in light of the airport expansion plan that will almost double airport passenger traffic capacity to 11.5 million by the year 2016.

However, the governor admitted that not all of the landowners were prepared to turn over their land to the state without remuneration, especially those living in dwellings on small plots along the proposed route who have no place else to go.

The governor said he would meet with the landowners personally to work out a solution and that he hopes to begin the first phase of the project within two months' time.

If all goes according to plan, the work will be carried out by the Phuket Office of the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, he said.

-Kamol Pirat

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Free tourist visas backfire on honorary consuls worldwide



By Fraser Morton and Daniel Waites

The future of honorary Thai consulates around the world is in doubt following the Thai government's move to waive tourist visa fees until March 2010.

The Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) on June 24 announced all foreigners applying for single-entry tourist visas at Thai embassies, consulates and honorary consulates will be exempt from fees.

The move is intended to boost ailing tourist arrivals and follows a similar interim scheme earlier this year between March 5 and June 4.

The MOFA labeled the interim scheme a success, with early indications pointing to marked improvements in tourist arrivals during the period.

But some honorary Thai consulates fear the latest free-visa period will cost them millions of baht in lost revenue and could result in their closure.

Alan Taylor, Honorary Thai Consul in Hull, UK said unlike embassies and consulates, the 450 honorary consulates worldwide rely on commission earned selling tourist visas.

"We won't be closing, but some will certainly be closing their doors," he said.

In light of the announcement, his office would have to look at ways of mitigating the

"huge drop in visa income", he added.

Mr Taylor estimated the Hull office stands to lose in the region of UK£112,000 or 6,350,000 baht in the peak period from September to November.

The Hull office issues around 4,000 single-entry tourist visas in this "peak time."

MOFA sources in Bangkok told the *Gazette*, "We have already sent a budget report to the Ministry of Finance (MOF) outlining plans to re-pay tourist visa fees to honorary consulates for the last three months," referring to the interim visa exemption period.

Additional budget reports have yet to be compiled for the new visa-exemption period from June 25 to March 10 2010. Additional talks are needed between the MOFA and MOF, the source added.

Pledges of reimbursement of lost revenue came as news to Mr Taylor and honorary consulates worldwide, who claim to have been left in the dark.

"We've had no contact whatsoever," said Mr Taylor. "No money has been offered and we've been told nothing."

"The Thai government has made its decision and we just have to accept it."

William Dunn, Honorary Thai Consul in Brisbane, Australia played down the MOFA's reimbursement claims, branding the

notion a lost cause.

"It would cost the government a fortune," he said. "They have talked about it but they won't do it."

Mr Dunn said those offices that relied heavily on tourist visa revenue would be worst affected.

Citing additional services offered at the Hull and Brisbane consulates, including non-immigrant visa processing, translation work and outreach work with Thai-immigrants, Mr Taylor and Mr Dunn were adamant their offices would not close but admitted they would lose substantial proportions of their income.

Mr Dunn questioned the sensibility of the decision, saying the fee (UK£28) is minimal in respect of tourists' overall holiday budget. "It's the same cost as a few drinks on holiday," he said.

News of the waiver was issued by Thai embassies to honorary consuls worldwide on June 24, the evening before the new policy took effect.

Adding to the confusion, Mr Taylor said between June 5 and June 24 this year his office had to revert to issuing paid single-entry tourist visas.

With the new policy his office will again process tourist visas free of charge – and with no commission.

Condemnation of the new policy on the ThaiVisa.com web forum and the *Gazette/ThaiVisa Phuket Forum* has been plentiful.

A spokesperson for the Honorary Thai Consulate in Calgary, Canada wrote, "This decision, as well as the previous decision waiving tourist visa fees for 90 days, has been a great disappointment to us here in Calgary."

It seems as if Thailand is attempting to get rid of all honorary consulates around the world, no matter how helpful and successful they have been..."

"This is a very sad blow to all honorary consulates," the spokesperson said.

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American arrested for child abuse

UDON THANI: A 73-year-old American man was arrested after being found with a 13-year-old girl in a "sliding curtains" hotel room in the early hours of June 25.

Police raided a room in Ban Yen Bungalows in Muang District after being tipped off by a member of the public that an old foreigner had been seen going in with a young girl.

In the room, police found Californian Linwood Jinam naked taking photographs of a 13-year-old girl, who cannot be named for legal reasons.

The girl told police she worked selling flower garlands behind Centerpoint market in Udon Thani.

Mr Jinam stopped to buy garlands from her and struck up

a conversation in a mixture of Thai, English and sign language, she said. He implied that if she came with him in the car, he would buy her a new mobile phone and give her some money.

Mr Jinam fully reclined the passenger seat of his pickup truck and made her lie covered by a sheet for the length of the journey, she told police.

At the hotel, he forced her to take her clothes off, she said.

Mr Jinam denied coercing the girl, saying she was a willing participant.

Police have charged him with indecent assault of a child younger than 15 as well as immigration offences.

Source: Kom Chad Luek



Workers at an elephant park in Ayudhya use water-based paint to make elephants resemble panda, mocking the "panda fever" that has gripped Thailand since the birth of a panda cub at the Chiang Mai Zoo on May 27. The publicity stunt was aimed at bringing more attention to the plight of the Thailand's elephants – the country's national symbol.

Queer News

Cabbages and condoms, literally

SONGKHLA: In Bangkok there is a popular restaurant chain known as Cabbages and Condoms, brainchild of well-known activist Mechai Viravaidya (aka "Mr Condom"), who has been internationally lauded for his efforts to promote condom use as a way of stopping HIV/Aids.

At the restaurant, condoms, rather than mints, are served after meals.

The efforts to bring together vegetables and prophylactics has yet to catch on in the southern city of Haad Yai, however.

Customers at a fresh market there were given a nasty shock recently when they found bundles of vegetables they had bought were held together with condoms.

On June 22, 36-year-old Sudjai Phromlet bought a bundle of vegetables at Plaza Market in downtown Haad Yai and took them home for his wife to make dinner.

As she was unwrapping them, however, she suddenly called out to him in disgust and, somewhat melodramatically, vomited all over the kitchen, Mr Sudjai said.

Mr Sudjai's wife showed him that the bundle of vegetables was tied up with part of a condom instead of the usual elastic band. On closer examination, it turned out the market trader had tied the vegetables with the rubber ring from the base of the condom, though there were still a few bits of the sheath hanging off.

The disgusted Mr Sudjai then contacted a local journalist to go and investigate.

The journalist and Mr Sudjai headed back to the stall where the offending bundle of vegetables had been bought.

At the stall, belonging to 51-year-old Porn Kaowmanee, they found all the bundles of vegetables on sale were tied together with contraceptive devices.

Mrs Porn admitted she had indeed used condoms to tie up bundles of vegetables, though she insisted the johnnies were clean and unused. She said this was the first time she had tried using condoms to tie her produce.

She had run out of elastic bands and lived a long way from the shop, so instead of traveling all the way to buy new ones, she asked her daughter-in-law to bring some condoms in from the condom factory where she works. Haad Yai is the centre of Thailand's rubber production industry, which is a world leader in condom production.

Mrs Porn said all the condoms used were defective products that had never been near a penis.

She never thought her customers would find having their vegetables tied up with condoms disgusting or unhygienic in any way. Despite the condoms working just as well as rubber bands, Mrs Porn said she would go back to using elastic bands to avoid losing any more customers.

Source: Khao Sod

Govt gets tough on cellphone text spam

BANGKOK: Fed up with pestering SMS messages? Authorities have come up with an idea to rescue you.

The Prime Minister's Office Minister Satit Wongnongtaey said the government has plans to introduce a "Do Not Call Center" in a bid to block unwanted SMS messages.

Satit is also the chair of the Consumer Protection Board.

In foreign countries, telemarketers and attention getters are barred from contacting someone who has registered his or her phone number with a Do Not Call Centre.

A meeting of the Office of the Consumer Protection Board (OCPB), National Telecommunication Commission of Thailand, all mobile phone operators and Office of the Insurance Commission will discuss the issue on July 4 in a bid to identify ways of blocking unwanted SMS messages, OCPB Secretary General Niroth Charoenprakob said.

The OCPB will find out how advertisers get consumers personal numbers then ask mobile phone operators to help block the SMS messages and open hotlines for consumer complaints.

New regulations to guard personal privacy will also be considered, he said.

Initial investigation has found that some banks give customer numbers to insurance companies so they can sell policies via mobile phones. Numbers have also been sold to advertisers by cellphone operator employees and administrators of certain associations, he added.

The OCPB is getting more and more complaints about pestering phone calls and SMS messages. Dr Satit revealed his idea after a survey by Assumption University on Sunday showed most people wanted the government to step in and protect them.

Of 1,379 respondents, 71.6% said the government should stop such intrusive marketing techniques from disturbing their lives.

Many respondents cited irritating adverts for fortune-telling services, credit cards, games, photos and ring tones.

A draft bill of a new personal data protection law with measures to stop such practices will sail through the next parliamentary session, Dr Satit predicted.

Source: The Nation

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Conscripts at a naval training center wash their hands to help prevent the spread of infectious diseases. A Navy cadet stationed at Sattahib Naval Base came down with A(H1N1) influenza on the morning of June 29, becoming Thailand's third death among the 1,330 confirmed cases at the time, a mortality rate of 0.23%.

Tourists rush for glimpse of feeding whale sharks

PRACHUAP KHIRI KHAN: Tourists have been rushing to see two large whale sharks feeding off beaches in Bang Saphan District.

The two sharks, one around 10 meters in length and the other around six meters, were spotted by fishermen on June 26 off Ban Don Amran and Ban Krut beaches. The sharks were seen feeding less than 30 meters from the shore.

Fisherman Nin Srimuang, 45, said that while he saw whale sharks fairly regularly out at sea, it was unusual to see them so close to the beach.

Suphot Songsiang, Deputy Chairman of Mae Ram Pheung Conservation Group, said the whale sharks could be seen from the beach without binoculars.

Whale sharks feed only where the water is very clean and has a high concentration of plankton, he said. The appearance of the sharks is a testament to the water quality of the beaches in the area, he said.

Industrialists pushing for the development of the stalled Sahaviriya Iron and Steel iron smelting plant planned for Bang Saphan should take a close look at the environment they would be putting at risk if the project ever become a reality, he said.

Source: MCOT/Khao Sod

Cigarette alternative raises concerns

BANGKOK: Authorities will have to watch out for "nicotine gel", a cigarette alternative that looks set to attract smokers but may be harmful to health.

The nicotine gel is touted as a solution for people who feel the urge to smoke in smoking-free places. Its makers say it creates the experience of having a cigarette within 30 seconds.

However there is still no research to confirm the product is really safe, and it is not yet a certified quit-smoking product, Thailand Health Promotion Institute president Dr Hatai Chitanondh said late last month.

The nicotine gel is already available at more than 400 retail shops in Malaysia. Despite being banned in Thailand, the product has the potential to find its way to Thai smokers via internet advertisements.

As such, product movement in Thailand must be closely monitored, Dr Hatai said.

The gel could make people take in too much nicotine too fast, he warned.

Side-effects including higher blood pressure and faster

heartbeat rate could endanger people who have underlying diseases, he said.

The manufacturer plans to introduce it in Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, South Korea, Hong Kong, China, India, Brunei, Australia, New Zealand and Vietnam, Mr Hatai said.

Thailand has also banned the sale of electronic cigarettes.

Made of stainless steel, the e-cigarette has a chamber for storing liquid nicotine in various concentrations. Powered by a rechargeable battery, it resembles a real cigarette. Users puff on it as they would a real cigarette but it produces no smoke. Rather, it produces heated mist that is absorbed into the lungs.

Companies often market electronic cigarettes as a healthier alternative to tobacco smoking.

However, the World Health Organization last year issued a release warning it does not consider the electronic cigarette to be a legitimate smoking cessation aid.

The WHO said it had no scientific evidence to confirm the product's safety and efficacy.

Source: The Nation

From syringe to syrup

BANGKOK: Injecting drug users can now access methadone treatment as a heroin substitute for up to two years, Deputy Public Health Minister Manit Nopamornbodi has announced.

The move comes after the Public Health Ministry signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on co-operation in harm reduction with eight state agencies to provide long-term methadone treatment to injecting drug users as a heroin substitute.

The deal aims to ensure drug users' rights to access treatment and care equal to patients with other diseases. It also seeks to ensure their right to access quality and standard services with the ultimate goal of treatment and rehabilitation to empower them to reject drugs.

It also aims to cut the spread of HIV/Aids and other

communicable diseases, notably among people who inject drugs.

Under this collaboration, injecting drug users can get comprehensive treatment, rehabilitation and access to harm reduction programs at 147 hospitals nationwide which work with the National Health Security Office to provide the universal health scheme.

Injecting drug users will be able to attend the methadone program for two years. Previously, the National Health Security Office only allowed drug users to access the program for 45 days.

A representative from the network of injecting drug users, who did not want to be named, said the methadone course should not be limited to two years. It should run until people could quit drugs.

Source: The Nation

Robbers net Bt15mn in gold truck heist

SAMUT PRAKAN: Armed robbers made off with 15kg of gold bars in a hold up of a delivery truck on the Bang Na-Trat highway on June 22. The gold is worth more than 15 million baht.

At a U-turn, the bandits used two cars to box in the truck belonging to Bangkok Essay Office, then threatened the driver with pistols.

At 3:30pm, police found 30-year-old truck driver Adisak Arisawat and passenger Adisak Phisamon, 24, handcuffed in the back of the truck in Bang Sao Thong District.

The men told police they had been transporting 15kg of gold bars as well as a quantity of silver to gold shops on Bangkok's Yaowarat Road.

As they were making a U-turn under Khlong

Mahacheun Bridge, they found their way blocked by a parked car. Another car then pulled up behind so they could not reverse.

Four masked men got out of the cars. One man smashed the truck window with a metal bar while two more threatened the truck's occupants with pistols.

The robbers handcuffed the men and made them sit in the back of the truck. The robbers then drove the truck away from the scene and abandoned it by the side of the road.

Police said the robbers are likely to have known the route taken by the truck, as the company made gold deliveries twice a day using the same route.

Source: Khao Sod

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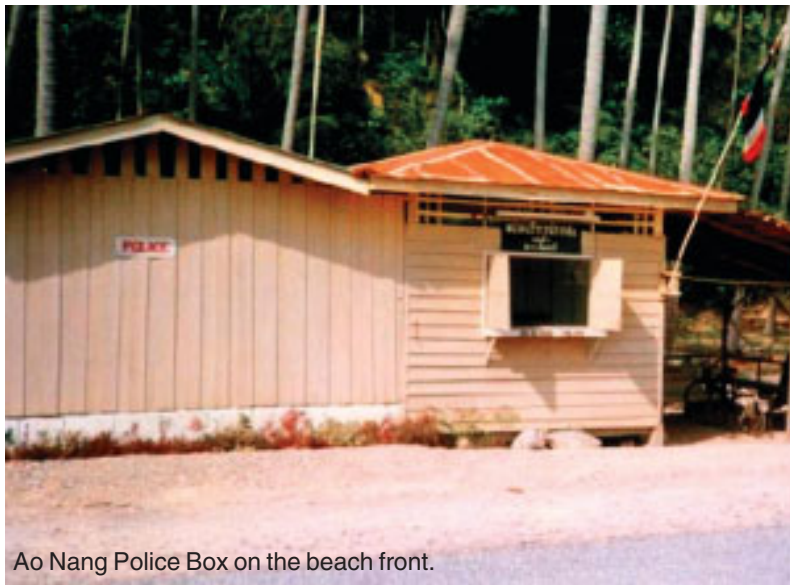
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All quiet on the Western front



ACROSS THE BAY

By Gus Reynolds



Ao Nang Police Box on the beach front.



Ao Nang Beach

Monotonous rainfall is the only sound drowning the hushed silence in Krabi these days. Rain, rain and more rain.

With Bangkok Air and Tiger Air canceling their service for the low season, the province has been starved of some much-needed excitement in recent days and weeks.

But that all changed when a gang of thieves heisted 8 Toyota Hilux pickup trucks in the wee hours of June 20.

The incident shook the locals from their reverie, as many of the old families' cars were stolen, so it certainly wasn't local pranksters or a local gang as they would know better.

Someone knew what they were doing and those trucks have probably already been re-sold in Cambodia or elsewhere.

The hunt for the thieves continues and momentarily the peace and tranquility in Krabi has been shattered.

To further deflect the boredom, I thought I would provide a little mental stimulation to keep those neurons working during the lull.

I have provided a Krabi history knowledge exam created to test your wits on the trivial things that have occurred here over the years and to see if you've been paying attention.

The answers are at the bottom of the page, but be honest – no cheating.

1. What year did Krabi Resort open?
a) 1992 b) 1985 c) 1982 d) 1974
2. What was the average room rate for a beach front bungalow that year?
a) 300 baht b) 750 baht c) 1,200 baht d) 180 baht
3. Who was the original voice of the Muay Thai loudspeaker truck?
a) Bob Hope b) Gary Pinker c) Larry Rankin
d) Chuan Phukaoluan
4. What was the name of the original Ao Nang bar, located on the (then) hillside by the current location of the Irish Rover?
a) Blues Pub b) Yellow Sun c) Green's Bar
d) Black Cat
5. What was the previous and most popular name for the current Soi RCA Entertainment?
a) Soi Excitement b) Soi Rejection c) Soi Cellulite
d) Soi Disappointment
- 6) What was the name of one of Ao Nang's original pizzerias that had a sign claiming "millions served"?
a) Millionaire's Pizza b) McDonald's Pizza c) Pizza Hut
d) Don's Pizza
7. What was the name of the restaurant, bakery and bungalows at the current site of Centre Point?
a) Mr Bill's b) 24 Hour Inn c) No Tell Motel
d) Gift's Bungalows
- 8) What was Krabi Town's first fast food restaurant?
a) Starbucks b) Café Europa c) KFC
d) The Farang Falafel stand
- 9) What now-defunct Ao Nang bar was founded by a former member of the French Foreign Legion?
a) Paris Café b) Amour Bar c) Austria Hut d) Attench Hut
- 10) How many bottles of wine has the La Luna Italian Restaurant sold in its 15 years of existence?
a) less than 10 b) more than 100 but less than 200 c) none
d) 500 to 600
- 11) How many bottles has the proprietor of the La Luna Italian Restaurant personally consumed in the last 15 years?
a) 600 b) 700 c) 800 d) 900+
- 12) The accompanying photo of the Ao Nang Police Box on Ao Nang beach front was taken in what year?
a) It is the new plan, not yet constructed b) the current police box
c) circa 2000 d) circa 1990
- 13) What was the cost of one rai of Ao Nang beach front (see photo) by the Last Café in 1960
a) 20,000 baht/rai b) 50,000 baht/rai c) 100,000 baht/rai
d) 2,000 baht/rai

Answers:

1) c 2) d 3) c 4) c 5) d 6) d 7) d 8) c 9) c 10) d 11) d 12) d 13) d

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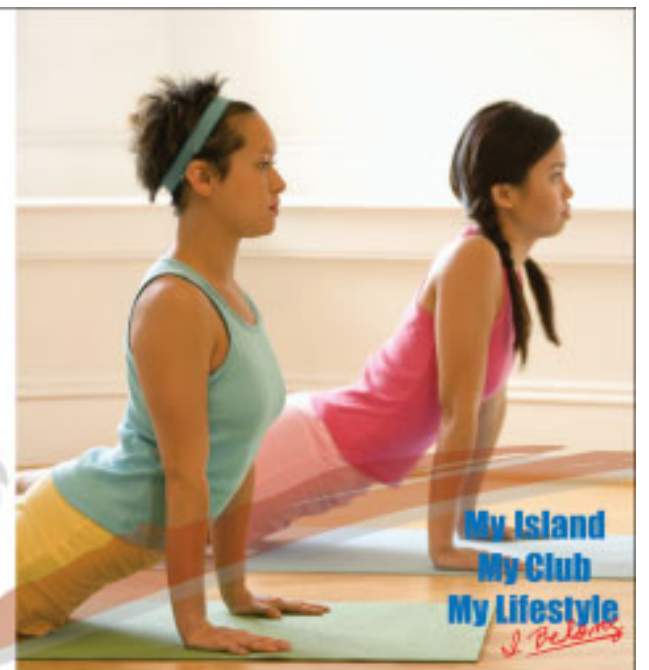
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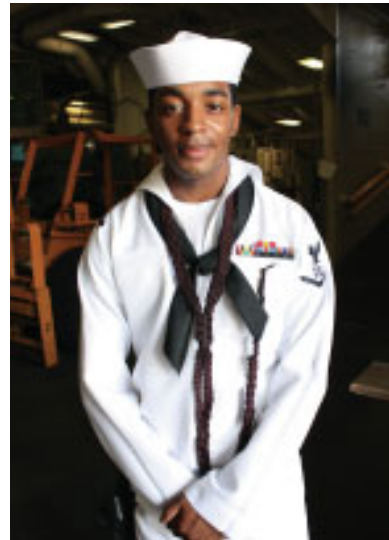
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Safety in numbers


Phuket welcomes 5,700 US Navy personnel and marines from five warships anchored off the island while the troops enjoy some R&R.



The unprecedented arrival in Phuket of five US Navy ships on June 25 gave a boost to the island's tourism industry and local economy, with about 5,700 US sailors and marines enjoying R&R on Phuket. Among the vessels was the massive 208-meter stealth ship the *USS New Orleans* amphibious transport vessel, with just over 1,000 crew members, about 10% of whom are female officers.

The *USS New Orleans* is a relatively new "stealth ship" designed to give off a radar signature that makes it appear about one eighth of its actual size.

According to Commander Davies, the vessel has expanded medical capabilities and larger flight decks specifically designed for humanitarian missions. Three on-board generators convert 62,000 gallons of seawater into potable water each day by a process of reverse osmosis. Below deck and aft, a huge hovercraft designed to carry trucks and equipment can be deployed by flooding the well deck with up to eight feet of water. Photos by Dan Miles.



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Phra Thada: From middle management to meditation

Phra Thada Jaranatharou is a teaching monk with the Dhammakaya Temple in Phatun Thani Province who has conducted numerous free meditation instruction courses in Phuket. Born in Bangkok's Thonburi District as Thada Vitagsaboot, he graduated with a Bachelors' Degree in Industrial Electrical Technology from the prestigious King Mongkut Institute of Technology in 1984. He went on to work for Nokia in Bangkok before being sent to Nokia in Tokyo to work in middle management, a position he held for over three years. Then, in 2004, he quit his job and ordained as a monk. Here he talks with Gazette News Editor Stephen Fein about how he came to be a monk.

Stephen Fein: You first came to the Dhammakaya Temple in 1983. How did you get involved with it?

Phra Thada: I just saw an exhibition about the *Dhamma* posted at the school for everyone who might be interested in it. I was really interested in the *Dhamma* exhibition and there was an offer to visit the temple with free transportation. So that Sunday I took the chance to go visit the temple.

SF: What were you like as a child?

Phra Thada: Naughty. Just normally naughty; there was nothing very special about me. I was just always very inquisitive and hungry for knowledge. I think I have a good capability to learn, yes, but I was not always a good student. But when I was attentive I could study very well.

SF: Do you come from a religious family?

Phra Thada: No. A very average family. My father worked for a state enterprise, EGAT. My mother was a housewife who sold cookies to help make ends meet for the family.

SF: When you told your parents you were interested in Buddhism how did they react? As a child did you ordain as a novice in the Thai tradition?

Phra Thada: They were just surprised. But my mother never got to see me ordained. It was because of my mother's death that I first entered the monkhood. It was a little over 20 years ago that she passed away.

SF: And your father?

Phra Thada: Oh, he supported me to ordain for my mother, but he did not support me staying longer than necessary.

SF: And how long did he think was necessary?

Phra Thada: At that time, just a few weeks because I took leave from work.

SF: What was it like living in Japan?

Phra Thada: I meditated daily, but I was very busy with my managerial role. During my first few years I did not pay too much attention to my spiritual life. When I first joined Nokia I joined

as a telecommunications instructor, but I advanced through the ranks and became a manager, then middle management. But in Tokyo I was in a managerial position – I just managed engineers.

SF: When you become a monk, don't you have to completely divest yourself of your old life? How does it work financially? It seems like you had a good job for a long time. Did you have to give all your assets to the temple?

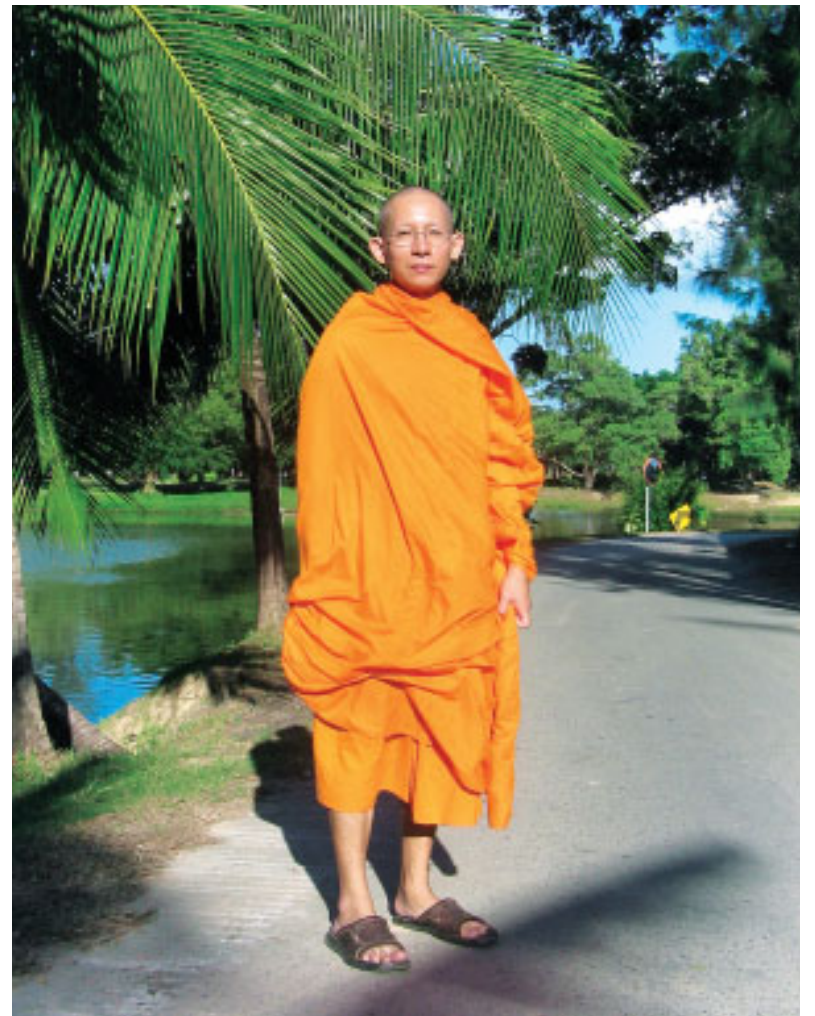
Phra Thada: Yes, that is basically what I did. All I had at the time – a big amount of it – I donated to the temple. A lot of my possessions I gave away to my relatives.

SF: How did you feel after you did that?

Phra Thada: Oh, fantastic (laughs). You don't have much to worry about and you know for sure that you are not going to die of hunger. A lot of people are willing to feed you – just behave well as you are expected to as a monk and everything will be fine.

SF: When I told a friend I was coming here to learn to meditate, one friend said, 'Oh, so you are just going to sit around and do nothing'. But seriously, did you ever get bored as a monk? Obviously you are not meditating all the time.

Phra Thada: (laughs) No, not all the time. Well, I think there is a lot of misconception about monks. Just like in any profession there are some people who are really



Phra Thada at Suan Luang Park, next to the Phuket Meditation Center.

busy and others who are just wandering around with nothing to do. But monks in this particular temple, Dhammakaya, are pretty busy. We have lots of projects trying to bring about peace in the world – that's why we have so many branches all over the world. I am one of the very busy monks and I actually find it quite challenging to find an hour-and-a-half to meditate every day. But when I find time to meditate I appreciate it. I never get bored.

SF: For me the only time I can work meditation into my life is after my morning workout, after my wife and daughter are off to school. For me it has become a part of my workout, when I am finished as a way of cooling down. That got me wondering. Except for the Shaolin Warriors, I never see monks exercising – is it frowned upon or

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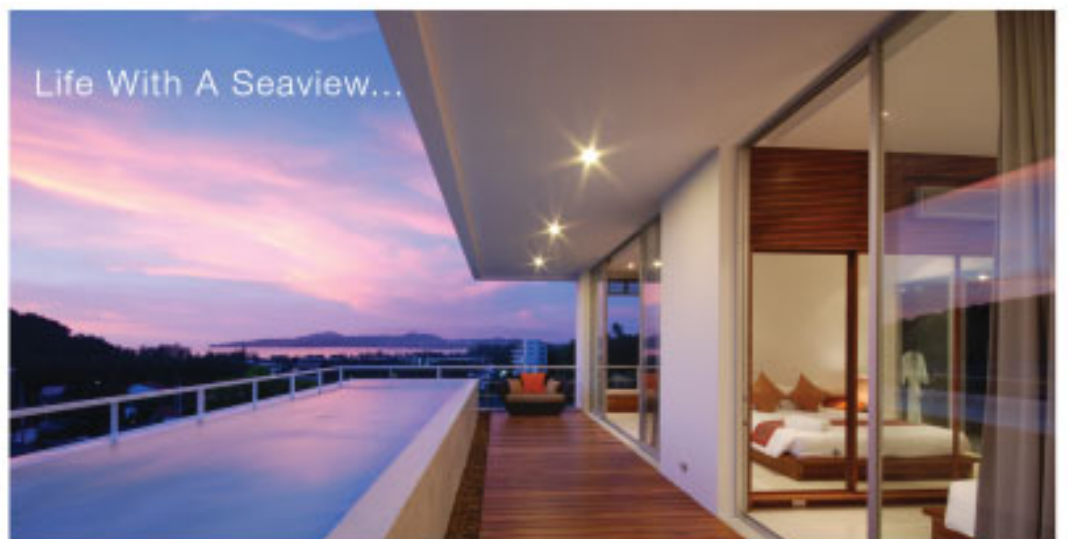
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something? Do you exercise?

Phra Thada: Yes (emphatically). The morning alms round. I consider walking for 40 minutes early in the morning every day good exercise. I also do some stretching, a light form of yoga. I do push-ups too.

SF: How many monks are there at the main Dhammakaya Temple in Phatum Thani now? Besides Phra Sander and Phra Nicholas, do you have any more *farang* monks?

Phra Thada: Currently there are about 1,000 monks altogether, with about 300 novices. There are four or five more *farang* monks, at least. One from Russia, one American and one Australian. There is also one from Mongolia too.

SF: I am a news editor and I sometimes notice stories about rogue monks in our sister newspaper *Kom Chad Luek*, but they aren't run in our other affiliate English-language publication *The Nation*. Sometimes I am in a position of having to decide whether to run these stories or not. What do you think the criteria should be? Do you think monks should just be treated the same way as ordinary people by the media?

Phra Thada: I think if you just do with good intention and just state the facts, without hinting to people that it is some kind of crisis, then I think it should be okay. But then again, I understand that in the media world the "good news" is not really always "good news", because you can't sell too much good news to the people.

But you have to think what it will bring to society. Even me as a monk, I admit that you cannot expect 200,000 monks countrywide to behave correctly all the time. It didn't even happen during Lord Buddha's time. You see, monks have these 227 precepts to observe. Where did they originate? At the beginning Lord Buddha did not have any precepts for monks to observe. But later one monk did something wrong and the Buddha laid down one precept prohibiting that, then one

after another.

What I mean to say is that there will always be people doing some bad things in our *sangha* community, but we have survived 2,500 years with that fact. But I think it would be bad for society if we stress or try to hint that monks are somehow not that trustworthy or respectable anymore. To put it rather bluntly, not-so-good monks have always been around since Lord Buddha's time, right? But if you just say, "okay this is what happened" and state that facts, then it would be okay. But what happens sometimes is that people try to sensationalize it in order to sell newspapers – and that is not good.

SF: Your background is in science. When you were studying engineering you must have studied entropy, quantum physics and concepts like the Heisenberg's uncertainty principal, which states that [at the atomic level] the tool of measurement actually affects the thing you are trying to measure. Now that you are a cleric, what do you think of attempts, like those put forward in *The Tao of Physics*, that have tried to relate some of these concepts with Eastern religious beliefs? Do you try to bring the two together somehow?

Phra Thada: That's an interesting question. I used to subscribe to science journals when I was young. At around 20 I also liked to read science fiction, Asimov for example. When you mention that observation somehow effects the ongoing phenomenon, that is true.

You come to the point where you have to accept the limit of the physical measurements of empirical science. For example, I was just telling my students that 400 years ago Mr Galileo got into trouble for telling people that the earth orbited the sun and not the other way around. It was only about 70 years ago that Mr Hubble, using his telescope, discovered galaxies. So it wasn't that long ago that Western science couldn't tell us anything beyond our own solar system.

But the Lord Buddha stated 2,500 years ago that there is this

endless universe and that even during the destruction of the world there can be three causes, by water, fire or wind. He said that if the world was to be destroyed by fire then there would be seven suns in the sky. It was only recently that, through the Hubble Telescope I believe, scientists have observed solar systems with more than one sun, with five, six or seven suns.

This is a kind of proof to me that the Lord Buddha, somehow, was ahead of this science as we know it. I still seek knowledge by reading. I have read a lot of books in my life – too many books perhaps. I also use the internet to learn more about science, but it just convinces me all the more that somehow Lord Buddha was ahead of all this.

Also, knowledge is considered one part of human wisdom. According to Lord Buddha, there are three levels of wisdom. The first comes through learning, listening, asking, researching. The second comes through analyzing, thinking, reasoning, like most scientists do, with experiments also.

But the third level, the highest level, comes from not thinking, from making your mind still through meditation – the right kind of meditation. Then you can achieve the kind of knowledge the Lord Buddha achieved. And that, I think, played a big role in my becoming a monk. I studied engineering. I was working with this high-profile, high-tech company, but I still think it could only give me very limited answers

about what is happening around us. So, in this case I really have strong faith in Buddha's enlightenment.

SF: So you think your career path took you into the third level?

Phra Thada: That's my aim, yes.

SF: I was raised a Catholic, but I got interested in Buddhism and meditation while in university. Maybe it is my upbringing, but I still really have difficulty accepting the idea of reincarnation. If you don't have a pre-existing belief in reincarnation, how big of a stumbling block is that? Is it something you can work through with meditation?

Phra Thada: In fact, whether or not we have past lives is not really that important. I think the thing that people really want is true happiness. In the Lord Buddha's point of view, the complete deliverance of Nirvana is to get out of this suffering completely. According to his discovery, in order to lead people from

this step to that step, the complete deliverance that is Nirvana, you see that people are at different levels – different stages of development.

If you are going to tell 100 people to attain this Nirvana, I think on average only a few of us would like to go there, because we are still enjoying this world. In that case, Lord Buddha told the truth that in order to lead the life, you have to be happy in this life. And also be careful, because you would like to be happy in the next life also. So in this lifetime, to be happy you have to do this and that, and you should avoid doing this and that. Because the next life exists and you are going to receive retribution for whatever you do now. But it is possible that if, through your own reflection, you think that you should rid yourself of all defilements and try to reach Nirvana is this lifetime, then past lives and next lives don't matter at all – because you just try your best now to practice meditation, understand yourself and go the middle path towards Nirvana.

To learn more about meditation and Buddhism, visit the Phuket Meditation Center on alternating Sundays for a free two-hour session conducted in English. The next session is Sunday, July 12.

To get to the center from Central Festival Phuket, head south on the bypass road and turn left into Wirat Hongyok Road at the first set of traffic lights at the sign to Wat Naka. Make a U-turn when you see the park on your right about one kilometer past the temple, then take the next left into Soi 7 and turn left again into Soi 7/2.

For more information contact Zai 083-9688717 or visit the website: www.meditationthai.org.

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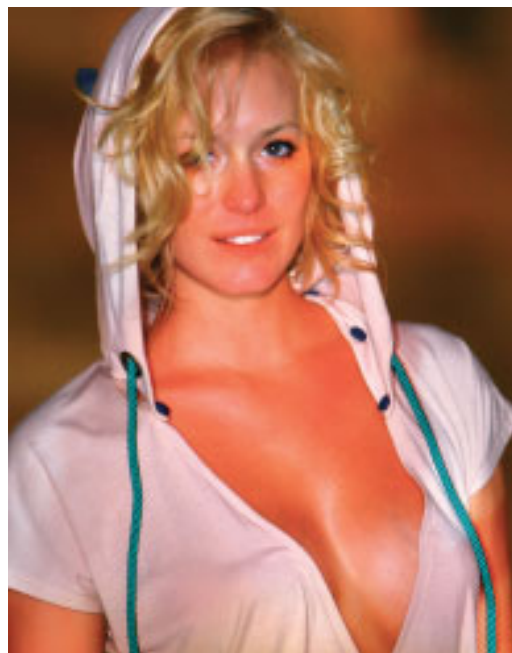
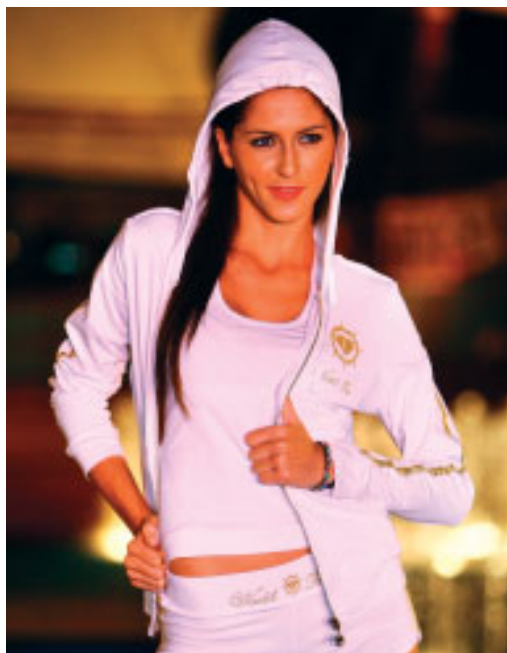
First fashion frenzy finale

Phuket International Fashion Week ended on Tuesday after a marathon seven nights of fashion shows and pop concerts at Jungceylon Shopping center in Patong where Phuket's fashion victims came to see and be seen.

Over 100 models and celebrities strutted their stuff in the first ever Phuket International Fashion Week which also hosted 27 of the Thailand's top music artists performing seven concerts over the seven nights.

Despite smaller crowds than expected the ambitious event proved that Phuket has what it takes to host such a show which may be the first of many.

Photos by Christian Mouchet & Sakorn Saengtongsamarnsin



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TOURISM AUTHORITY OF THAILAND, PHUKET OFFICE
TEL:076-212 213, 076-211036.

www.tourismthailand.org/thailandgrandsale09



EXPAT GALLERY

Duncan Worthington

Duncan Worthington is an enterprising British expat who has made a difference in how people learn about Thailand's real estate market. He publishes *Property Report Thailand*, this country's primary source for information about all aspects of the property market. His publishing company, Ensign Media, which he operates with partner Terry Blackburn, based in Singapore, launched a sister publication, *Property Report Singapore-Malaysia-Indonesia*, two years ago to expand upon the company's grasp of who and what is happening with the development of the property market in the extended region.

Duncan has quickly risen to the top of Thailand's energetic property development industry as his publication offers relevant, timely information to a market eager for the latest news and statistics on where and how to invest in some of the world's most interesting real estate.

In 2006, he presented the first 'Thailand Property Awards', which have become an industry gauge of success. Wherever one travels in Thailand, billboards offering high-value estates carry the distinguished seal of recognition by the coveted Property Awards held each year in an upscale Bangkok hotel.

"We had over a hundred guests at our first property awards, held at the JW Marriott in 2006, and last year that number grew to 550 at our presentations at Bangkok's Conrad Hotel. Last year, we presented 21 awards from 360 nominations, the top award being 'Best Developer'," he says.

Duncan first came to Thailand twelve years ago on a six-month internship with Siam Safari Nature Tour. He was completing a Masters Degree in Rural Resources and Environmental Policy at Wye College in Kent.

"I've always preferred life in the countryside, so I was delighted to spend six months in Krabi province working with eco-tours in pristine nature. I immediately adapted to Thai food and found Thai culture intriguing. When my internship was finished, I decided to stay in Thailand."

For the next couple of years, Duncan learned about the marketing side of eco-tourism and traveled around North Thailand and surrounding countries. When he was offered the opportunity to manage the art department at Artasia Press in 2000, he found he could combine his love of travel with his interest in magazines. By 2002, he was ready to strike out on his own as he wanted to publish his own material. First

came the *Phuket Marine Guide*, in October 2003, and by May 2004 the first property magazine, *Asia Property Report*, was already on the newsstands around Southeast Asia.

"Initially, we had planned to cover the entire region, from Hong Kong to Indonesia, but we found there were many challenges with creating a distribution network. When we restructured to produce a monthly magazine with local distribution, we met with success. And we've grown exponentially ever since."

In 2005, *Property Report Thailand* printed 10,000 copies, providing current and relevant information about market trends, new launches, and key industry figures. Today, the print run has doubled, with 65 per cent sold in shops, bought by investors and potential home buyers keen to know the latest developments on what and where to buy. And the business has successfully returned to regional distribution in both Hong Kong and Singapore.

In his spare time, Duncan says he plans to launch more magazines.

"I believe there will always be a demand for relevant, quality magazines as people like to touch and read and be amazed by remarkable photos and graphics," he says.

— Bruce Stanley



BY PETER CHILD FOR THE PHUKET GAZETTE

ABOUT EXPAT GALLERY

The individuals profiled in the *Gazette's* 'Expat Gallery' series have been chosen on the basis of their contributions to Phuket, and, as foreigners, for having made those contributions in successful partnerships with Thais. For many, the contributions have entailed significant investment, often at a time (mid-80s to mid-90s) when the rules of business were, ah, not entirely clear. Some of our subjects are not business people at all, but have added real value to Phuket as English teachers, journalists, artists, engineers, fund raisers, etc. But all have one thing in common: if there were a *Who's Who in Phuket*, they'd be in it.

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CAT'S GOT THE CREAM: The Absolute Group of companies recently invited English cricket legend and TV presenter Phil "The Cat" Tufnell to Phuket as an ambassador of the Absolute Brand. Pictured with Mr Tufnell is Mrs Able Wanamakok, Assistant Manager of Marketing at the *Phuket Gazette* and PGTV News anchor.



THE KIDS ARE ALL WHITE: Kids from the Phuket Has Been Good To Us Foundation's Coconut Club joined the Phuket International Fashion week pre-party at White Box on June 23. Pictured with the children are (from left) Mr Marc Antonie Audibert, General Manager of White Box Restaurant & Bar; Mr Peter Hamilton, Director of the Phuket Has Been Good To Us Foundation; Mr Stephen Hider, Vice President of Phoenix Management Co Ltd; Mr Trisorn Triboon, President of Phoenix Management Co Ltd and Ms Susanne Ultmann, Executive Assistant Manager of Baan Rim Pa Group.



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY: The Phuket Sunshine Village Foundation held a party on June 28 to celebrate the foundation's second anniversary. The children of the village entertained guests with musical performances before sitting back to enjoy plenty of yummy snacks and drinks.



THE AMBASSADOR'S RECEPTION: Mr Claude Sauter (right), General Manager of Cape Panwa Hotel & Spa, Phuket, recently welcomed British Ambassador to Thailand HE Quinton Quayle (left). Mr Quayle was in Phuket to meet members of the British Royal Navy, who arrived in Phuket on the British warship *HMS Bulwark*.



HAVE AWARD, WILL TRAVEL: Mr Vorasit "Wan" Issara (center), Managing Director of Charn Issara Residence Co Ltd, attended the Anywhere Travel Awards 2008 to receive the accolade for Best Luxury Hotel on behalf of Sri Panwa resort. Voting was open to the readers of *Anywhere Magazine*, Thailand's leading travel magazine. Also pictured are Editor-in-Chief of *Anywhere Magazine* Miss Pimmara Intrawityanunt (left) and Miss Palawi Bunnag (right).



COMMUNITY CARE: Volunteers from the *USS Mitscher*, including several of the ship's officers and their Command Master Chief (CMC) John E. Lambert, traveled to the Home and Life Tsunami Orphanage in Phang Nga with the Rotary Club of Patong. At the orphanage, the sailors, along with many of the older Home and Life children, put two coats of fresh paint on all the external walls of the buildings. Photo Dan Miles



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Satree students do their best for Thailand

By Khunakorn Terdkiatkhachorn

With the flick of her magic wand the Fairy Godmother turned a lowly pumpkin into a glittering stagecoach, fit to take Cinderella to the ball. An impressive feat, no doubt. But no less impressive are the fruit transforming talents of three Satree Phuket School students.

Without a wand in sight, Patteera Puengthin, 16, Sasikarn Chuayprod, 17, and Chidapa Puekpetch, 16, turned a pumpkin, a papaya, a cantaloupe, a watermelon and a few yam beans and taro corms into a stunning underwater vista. The girls' efforts took them all the way to the finals of the Ministry of Education's "Our Best for Thailand 2009" competition in Bangkok – and scooped them first prize in the fruit and vegetable carving category. Magic.

"Our Best for Thailand" saw teams from schools all over the country compete to be crowned the best in 57 different areas of mathematics, science, languages, ethics and arts. More than 7,500 students made it to the finals at the Impact convention center in Bangkok in April.

The Satree team had to fight their way through 10 months of local and regional rounds to make it to the finals. They had never reached the last stage of the annual event before.

The girls had to carve a scene reflecting the Ministry of Education's theme for the competition: "Travel around Thailand to develop the Thai economy".

The team designed an underwater scene complete with fish, coral, rocks, sand and boat, reflecting the attractions that draw tourists to Phuket.

Each piece of fruit was selected for its unique qualities. For example, taro corms were carved into fish because they have an internal texture resembling fish scales, while yam beans were carved into flowers because of their pristine white flesh.

Competition rules allowed the students to embellish the scene with other objects. Branches were painted black and used to suspend the taro fish above coral made from pumpkin, cantaloupe and papaya.

And smooth white sand was taken from Karon Beach itself, making this a work of real Phuket art.

"We won because of the intricacy and elegance of our carving. The students worked hard but they also have real talent," Mrs Orapin said.

Sasikarn Chuayprod, a Mor 6 student and one of the three talented youngsters, told the *Gazette*, "My mom and teacher encouraged me to learn



ABOVE: (From left) Miss Patteera Puengthin, 16, Miss Sasikarn Chuayprod, 17, Miss Chidapa Puekpetch, 16, and head of domestic science at Satree Phuket School, Mrs Orapin Hongyok. BELOW: The winning scene.

carving because I had difficulties concentrating. It's fun and it makes me happy. I get really excited when I find a new texture to create."

Of course, the "Our Best for Thailand" win may only be the beginning for these ambitious young ladies. "Next, we want to compete in an international competition," Miss Sasikarn said.

"This win will help me get a job after I graduate from university. Lots of hotels and resorts have already asked me to work for them. I still haven't made a decision about my future career. I just tried to do my best today," she said.



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The death of an American giant

BEHIND THE WHEEL

By Jeff Heselwood

With the effective demise of Chrysler – at least as an autonomous company following President Barack Obama's declaration that it should go ahead with the merger with Fiat – the world has lost one of the greatest names in automotive history.

In 1924, Walter Percy Chrysler built his first car, the Chrysler Six. Boasting America's first affordable high-compression engine, it established Chrysler's long-standing reputation for quality engineering. A number of further automotive advances can be attributed to Chrysler, including 'floating power' engine mountings which reduced vibration, the legendary hemi-head V8 engine, torsion bar suspension, the TorqueFlite automatic transmis-

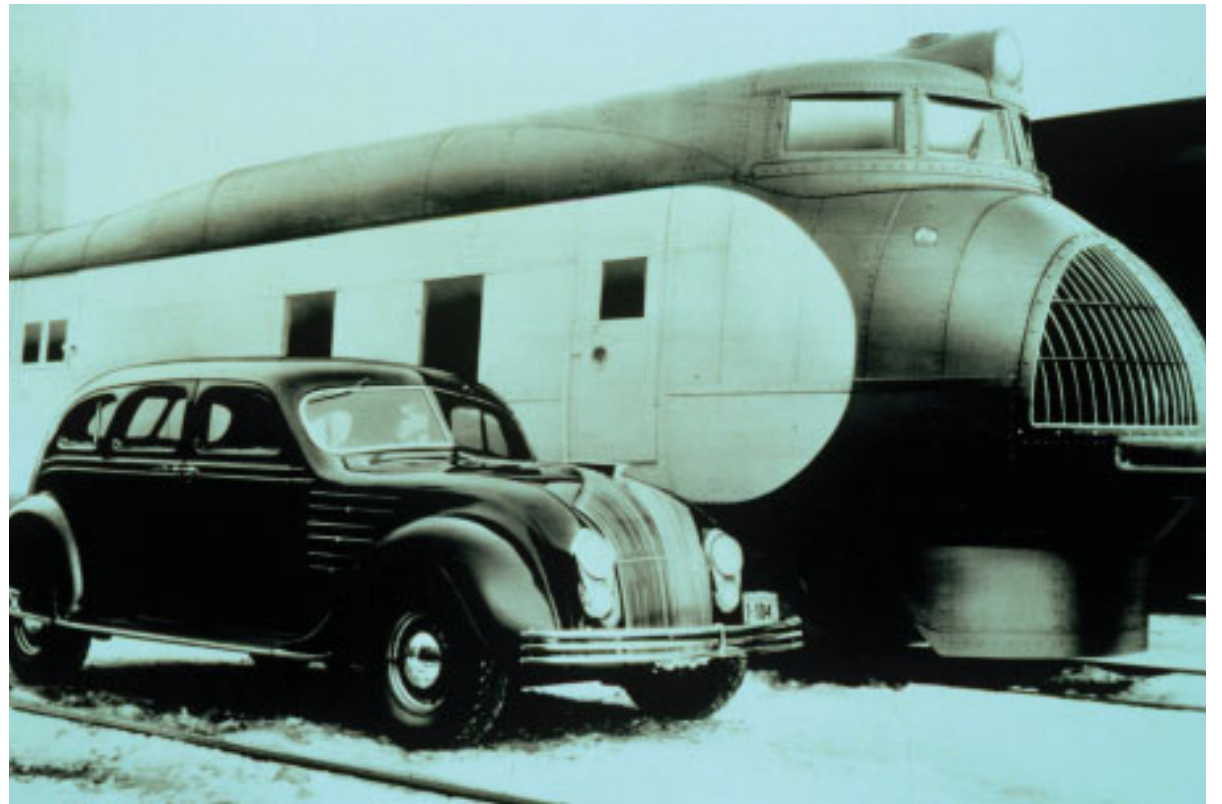
sion and, of course, the world's first aerodynamic production car, the 1934 Chrysler Airflow.

Walter P. Chrysler was born in Wamego, Kansas, on April 2, 1875. The family was of German origin but had lived in America since the late 18th century.

After taking an apprenticeship with Union Pacific Railroad and rising to the position of superintendent of motive power at the Chicago Great Western Railroad, Chrysler bought his first car when he was in his early 30s – a Locomobile tourer. At the time the car cost an astronomic US\$5,000 and Chrysler had to borrow heavily from a local bank. He drove his new purchase home and took it apart to see how it was made. This would be the start of his career in the auto industry.

The 1934 Airflow was the brainchild of Carl Breer who drew inspiration for the car when he watched a flight of air force fighters which he mistook for a flock of geese, so streamlined were their lines.

After a number of prototypes, the first production Airflow was launched with a choice of three engines in January, 1934. Besides the engines, everything



A number of further automotive advances can be attributed to Chrysler, including 'floating power' engine mountings which reduced vibration, the legendary hemi-head V8 engine, torsion bar suspension, the TorqueFlite automatic transmission and, of course, the world's first aerodynamic production car, the 1934 Chrysler Airflow.

was new, especially the exclusive use of steel for the chassis and body panels – a first for the automobile industry. No wood was incorporated in the new car,

which was unusual for the time. The first of the Airflows delivered to customers were blighted by quality control problems and there were numerous complaints. Only 11,292 were sold in 1934.

Chrysler's major contribution to the automotive world was the acquisition of Jeep from American Motors when it bought AMC from Renault in 1987. The Grand Cherokee and the Jeep Wagoner are still extremely popular, with the former built as far apart as Austria and China, as well as Detroit.

In 1998, the then chairman of Daimler AG Jürgen Schrempp and Chrysler's Bob Eaton engineered a 'merger' of the two companies to form DaimlerChrysler, at the time the world's fifth largest automaker.

The move transpired to be more of a takeover rather than a merger by the Germans and the majority of Chrysler executives were replaced by their German colleagues, including Eaton himself.

Current Daimler chairman Dieter Zetsche that took on the challenging role at Chrysler before he was ultimately selected to replace Schrempp.

Zetsche, who previously

transformed the Mercedes-Benz truck division and brought it into profit, eventually sold an ailing Chrysler to Cerebus, the private equity group.

In October, 2008, Chrysler CEO Bob Nardelli, along with the recently departed GM boss Rick Wagoner and Alan Mulally, Ford's chief executive, went cap in hand to Congress to ask for a much-needed bail out.

Congress acquiesced and the U.S. Treasury advanced a US\$4 billion lifeline in late December to save the ailing car manufacturers.

In late March, President Obama asked Wagoner to step down and urged Nardelli to speed up discussions with Fiat's Sergio Marchionne.

The merger will both save Chrysler as an automaker, but will also give it access to Fiat's extensive range of small car platforms and engine technology.

Sad though it is, saving the plants and the workers' jobs was of prime importance to the Obama administration and sentiment clearly played no part in the decision.

Jeff Heselwood can be contacted at jhc@netvigat.com



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EVENTS CALENDAR

Upcoming events on the island

Quiksilver Thailand Surf Series King of the Jungle



The 2nd of three Quiksilver Thailand Surf Series (TSS) events will take place at Kamala Beach on August 14-16. Under the rules of the International Surfing Association, the Quiksilver Thailand Surf Series will become part of the Asian Surfing Championship ranking system, offering a platform for Thai surfers to compete with other Asian surfers in meets around the region. Participants from 15 countries are expected to take part in the four divisions: short board, long board, groms (kids) and women. TSS is organized by the Phuket Boardriders Club and sponsored by local government and businesses. From 7am to 6pm. For further information contact Phuket Boardriders Club. T: 081-956 5854 E: joob@phuketboardriders.com. W: www.thaisurfseries.com.

July 5. FREE Computer Clinic – Patong

From 10am to noon, at Sandwich Shoppe Patong. For further information contact Woody Leonhard. T: 076-290468. E: woody@KhunWoody.com. W: www.KhunWoody.com.

July 7. Coral Seekers Junior Survivor

Calling all challengers aged 6-18. Looking for a new experience during the holidays this year? This action-packed day includes professional supervision, all water and soft drinks, fresh fruits, a delicious lunch and a souvenir bandanna. Experience a thrilling speedboat ride to our desert island where tribes battle to be crowned Tribe of Champions. You'll have the chance to enjoy the island's many activities, including volleyball and kayaking, before jumping back on your speedboat to whiz back to Phuket. Only 2,850 baht per Survivor. This event can also be booked privately for other dates – perfect for birthday parties. From 8am - 5pm at Desert Island in the Andaman Sea. For further information contact Stuart Clark. T: 081-956 9961. E: info@coralseekers.com. W: www.coralseekers.com.

July 7. Asarnha Bucha Day

This full-moon day of the eighth lunar month commemorates the Buddha's first sermon to his first five disciples after attaining Enlightenment more than 2,500 years ago. Evening candlelit processions are staged in all Thai Buddhist temples.

July 8. Buddhist Lent Day (Khao Pansa)

Occurs one day after the full-moon day of the eighth lunar month (Asarnha Bucha). Khao Pansa marks the beginning of the annual three-month Rain Retreat during which Buddhist monks customarily stay at a particular temple to study and meditate. The monks are not allowed to stay overnight at any other location during this period. A candle festival is held annually on this day. Sculpted beeswax candles, generally depicting mythological creatures, are carried in a ceremonial parade in each province before being presented to local temples.

July 10-16. Hopeful Beauty Fertility Exhibition Art Group

The exhibition is organized by a group of fine arts instructors from the Faculty of Architecture at Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya, Songkhla Province. Together, the creative ideas of the instructors, who are originally from each of the main regions of Thailand

(North, Isarn, Center, and South), reflect the specific characteristics, authentic local life, culture and beauty of a uniquely Thai environment. By means of such an art exhibition we are able to express and share aesthetic values with Thai society. From 9:30am to 5pm at 69 Yaowarat Rd, Phuket Town. For further information contact Khun Kris. T: 084-051 7419. E: art.rdv@gmail.com. W: www.art-rendezvous-gallery.com.

July 12. Phuket Surf Lifesaving Carnival 2009

The Phuket Lifeguard Club, a non-profit organization established in 2003, invites you to join Phuket's second-ever Surf Lifesaving Carnival at Loma Park, Patong Beach on July 12 from 8:30am to 5pm. The carnival consists of 80 events for under 18s to over 50s and is open to local and international competitors with a variety of swimming, rescue and sprint events. The emphasis is on having a great time and being part of a great sporting event. The event is being sponsored by Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort. For further information contact Jayne MacDougall. T: 089-645 2576. E: jayne.macdougall@lemeridien.com. W: phuketlifeguard.com.

July 12. FREE Computer Clinic – Laguna

From 10am to noon at Sandwich Shoppe Laguna. For further information contact Woody Leonhard. T: 076-290468. E: woody@KhunWoody.com. W: www.KhunWoody.com.

July 14. French National Day at Royal Phawadee Village

Celebrate French National Day with friends and family from 6:30pm to 11:30pm at Royal Phawadee Village, Patong Beach on Tuesday, July 14. Our one-star Michelin chef Mr Yvon Blandin of Mae Nam Restaurant and Chef Lugsanawan Panpwan of La Boucherie restaurant will be making authentic French cuisine for what will be a thoroughly enjoyable and unforgettable celebration. To join this exciting event, please book before July 10. For further information contact Claude de Crissey. T: 076-344614, 076-345576 or 081-893 6677. E: claudede@crisseyco.com. W: www.royal-phawadee-village.com.

July 16. Wine Tasting @ Wine Connection Bang Tao

West End Australia Winery is coming to Wine Connection Bang Tao for an evening of wine

tasting from 6.30pm to 9.30pm. Includes six glasses of wine, a tapas buffet and live music for 300 baht per person. For further information contact Pascal. T: 076-482411 E: fb.phuket@wineconnection.co.th.

July 16. Boathouse Writer's Night with S. Tsow

S. Tsow washed up on the sunny shores of Thailand in 1986. While his main occupation was teaching English at Thammasat University, he contributed humor and travel articles to the Bangkok Post and The Nation, resulting in collections published in two books, Thai Lite 1 and Thai Lite 2. Tsow has also been writing for the Phuket Gazette for well over a decade, and is now approaching his 200th Tsowndings column for the newspaper. "Somebody must tell this guy it's time to quit," critics have grumbled, but Tsow, now a senile 71, responds by turning off his hearing aid and croaking, "I'll keep inflicting literary atrocities upon the public till they pry the keyboard from my cold, dead hands." From 7pm to 9pm at Mom Tri's Boathouse. For further information contact Lisa Sol. T: 076-330015. E: pr@boathousephuket.com. W: www.boathousephuket.com.

July 19. FREE Computer Clinic – Chalong

From 10am to noon, at Sandwich Shoppe Chalong. For further information contact Woody Leonhard. T: 076-290468. E: woody@KhunWoody.com. W: www.KhunWoody.com.

July 22 – 26. Six Senses Phuket Raceweek

Six Senses Phuket Raceweek is a yachting regatta staged off Phuket's southwest coast in the windy monsoon season. Offering four days of world-class yacht racing across seven classes, combined with five nights of fantastic five-star beachside parties, Raceweek attracts yachts, skippers, crew and party animals from around the world. Whether you come to race your own yacht, charter a local yacht to race, find a crew place on someone else's yacht or just enjoy the parties, this is one of the most glittering sailing events in Southeast Asia. Check out our website, including the "crew wanted" pages – someone is always short of crew. From 10am to 12pm at Evason Phuket & Six Senses Spa. For further information contact Grenville Forham. T: 076-264491. E: raceweek@image-asia.com. W: www.phuketraceweek.com.

July 26. FREE Computer Clinic – Chalong

From 10am to noon, at Sandwich Shoppe Chalong. For further information contact Woody Leonhard. T: 076-290468. E: woody@KhunWoody.com. W: www.KhunWoody.com.

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Where is the global economy heading?



MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson

The shock of the near collapse of the global financial system in the fourth quarter of 2008 has started to abate. In a newly published review of the global economic outlook, even the World Bank credits governments "en masse" for taking the required measures to support their economies.

In the same report, however, the World Bank has adjusted its global economic growth prediction downwards, from -1.6% for 2009 to -2.9%. The last time growth, or "negative growth" as it is often termed, was this bad was back in the 1930s.

Most economists, regardless of whether or not they have seen the "green shoots" of recovery for 2009, see better times ahead next year. What exactly will happen in 2010, however, has brought a major split in opinion. One group sees anemic economic



Australia enjoys a legal system revered as one of the world's best. An interesting inclusion in any investment portfolio. Photo by Mfield

growth for some years to come; many economies have to adjust to years of overkill in terms of consumers spending on credit with low or non-existing savings levels. However, not every analyst agrees. Some cite rapid real increases in government spending – this is certainly the case in the UK.

In 2000 or thereabouts, the British government started to substantially increase the numbers and average remuneration of the civil service. This, combined with the rapid extension of credit throughout the country, led to a consumer boom which meant that Britain escaped the recession of 2001 to 2003 that affected so many other countries.

Unfortunately for Britain and indeed many other countries, good economic conditions – characterized by reasonable economic growth, low unemployment and soaring residential and commercial property markets – generated a culture of excessive spending. The creation of too much debt was the catalyst that allowed the property markets to reach eye-watering levels.

One country that stands out from the rest involved in the now long-distant boom was Australia.

Certainly, Australia enjoyed rising property markets. However, bank lending never reached levels of lunacy and although property prices have fallen, it has not had a disastrous effect.

Australia's banks have survived the credit crunch, and while the credit rating agencies have downgraded their credit ratings, their sustainability isn't in jeopardy. Australian banks were simply better managed than most of their US and UK counterparts.

In addition to falling property prices, Australia's stockmarket and currency both felt the impact of the global slowdown/recession. The Australian dollar reached a high of US97.5 cents in 2008, before falling sharply to around US60 cents.

This fall was followed by a rapid rebound to its current price of around US80 cents. Much of

the price recovery was caused by two factors. Firstly, it rapidly became apparent that the Australian recession was likely to be short and shallow. Secondly, Japanese investors soon rediscovered their appetite for Australia. While major economic blocks now have interest rates at 1% or lower, Australia has managed to keep rates above 3%. This gives the country's domestic savers some return on their bank deposits, but also encourages the Japanese, who currently receive nothing at home.

Several other factors favor Australia, the largest of which is the country's substantial mineral reserves.

The growth in China and India produces continued demand for Australian mining products and this is a vast source of income and employment.

Australia's two mining giants, BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto, are the largest and second-largest mining companies in the world, respectively. Rival miner X Strata tried to organize a "merger of equals" with rival mining group Anglo American in June 2009. The combination of these two groups would have just topped Rio Tinto but would have only been around 60% of the size of BHP Billiton.

China's state-controlled Chinalco tried a substantial take-

over of Rio Tinto but the Australian government refused to ratify the deal.

The realization that the outlook is essentially very healthy for the future of the Australian economy has also allowed the Australian stockmarket to make substantial gains so far in 2009.

Australia is a country of contrasts. Geographically it is large, with an area close to three million square miles, but it is home to a mere 21 million people. It is often reported that Australia is the most urbanized country in the world due to its vast, empty expanses. The Australian Tourist Board has often stated that although Australia can be very hot, it actually has a higher snow coverage than Switzerland.

The Australian economy is not just dependent on mineral exports, although they are of great importance. The financial sector is advanced, with a substantial number of major foreign financial institutions resident in the country to add to a sophisticated domestic financial sector.

Australia also has large service and manufacturing sectors contributing to its economy. The latter is often not well known but can usually be relied upon to produce products of very high quality.

For investors, Australia offers easy access to financial markets. These can be approached in a variety of ways. Investors who want access and to keep the currency of investment in their "home" currency will find a good variety of choices, while alternatively, investment can be made directly into Australian dollars.

Richard G. Watson runs Global Portfolios Co Ltd, a Phuket-based personal financial-planning service, and has over 25 years of experience in this field. He can be reached at: 076-381997 or 081-081 4611. Or email imm@loxinfo.co.th. Web: www.global-portfolios.com.

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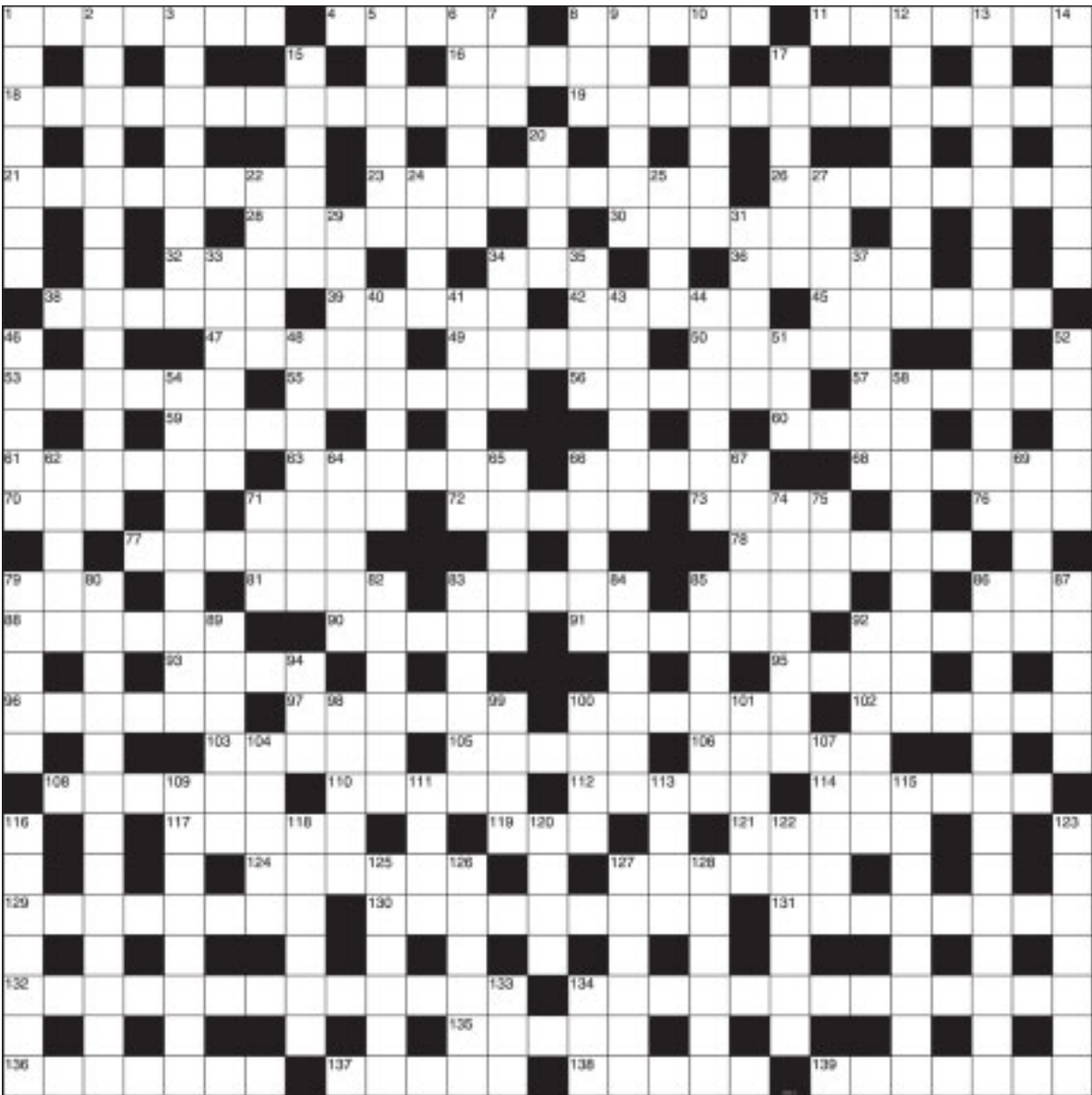
Spot the Difference



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







The BIG Crossword

© Lovatts Publications Pty Ltd

Across

1. Avoiding

4. Bookcase part

8. Braid

11. Rocket launch (4-3)

16. Luggage tag

18. Rain

19. Flock of farm birds (6,2,5)

21. Investigate

23. Former times (5,4)

26. Masculinity

28. Sills

30. Dog, red...

32. Grind down

34. Livid

36. Non-reactive

38. Incites (4,2)

39. Sicilian crime organisation

42. Lease again

45. Australian (colloquial)

47. Short office notes

49. Genuine thing, the real...

50. Window material

53. Blood component

55. Punctual (2,4)

56. Stared

57. High quality cigar

59. Responsibility

60. Oil cartel

61. Back teeth

63. Cooks' smocks

66. Solidarity

68. Laundry machines

70. Poet's word for before

71. Pastry meals

72. Just managing,... out a living

73. Marsupial pouches

Down

76. Night &...

77. Sheep's wool

78. Gives birth (of dog)

79. Spanish cheer

81. Please reply (1,1,1,1)

83. Gave up (territory)

85. Biting insect

86.. ...of Galilee

88. Avail

90. Hard worker,... beaver

91. Most uncommon

92. Pasting

93. Dusting powder

95. From Bangkok

96. Hassle

97. Slept lightly

100. Earnings

102. African fly

103. Because

105. Direction

106. Charade

108. Presented (play)

110. Platters

112. Enlighten

114. Detesting

117. Exclusive group

119. A Nightmare On... Street

121. Stench

124. Lots

127. Indian port, now Chennai

129. Recovers (goods)

130. Step in

131. Thin sheet of skin

132. Of national assembly

134. Upsettingly

135. Tennis champ,... Sharapova

136. Brightest (future)

137. Lively

138. Perseveres,... on

139. Prejudiced

66. Below

67. Gapes

69. Crow relative

71. The P of RPM

74. Cosy talk

75. Solidify

79. Vows

80. Group loyalty (6,2,5)

82. Beggar

83. Stalk vegetable

84. Became apparent to,... on

85. Alight (3,3)

86. Defenceless person (7,6)

87. Say yes

89. Cord tuft

92. Cake

94. World news service (1,1,1)

98. Behaved

99. Medicine amount

100. Single article

101. Town boss

104. Local phraseology

107. Opted

109. Setting agent

111. Prayer ending

113. Tehran is there

115. Increasing threefold

116. Paint-removing tool

118. Hurls

120. Nobleman

122. Condemned

123. Mottled (sixties fabric) (3-4)

125. Cat's brood

126. Weather disturbances

127. Humdrum

128. Dimpled

133. Tibetan ox

134. Downturn

Solution on next page

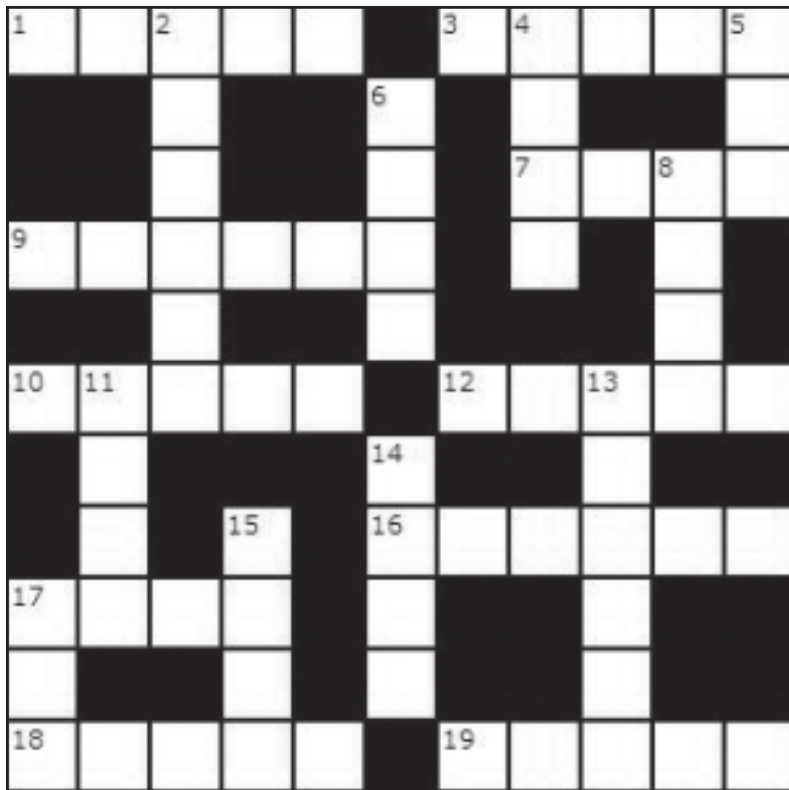
su | do | ku

© Puzzles by Pappocom

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

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

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



Quick Crossword

Across

1. A boorish person
3. Instrument
7. Catch a wave
9. Not as quick as
10. Money
12. Things
16. Modest
17. In the garden
18. Strange
19. Stars in movies

Down

2. Foetus
4. Misplaced
5. Mythical creature
6. ...of cows
8. Top of a house
11. US state
13. Cheerful
14. Someone who cooks
15. Smell
17. Tool

Solution below

Get your brain in gear with the

MONSTER QUIZ

1. What was the name of the first James Bond book?
2. What kind of animal is a lurcher?
3. What is the official currency of Austria?
4. What is the Islamic equivalent of the Red Cross?
5. In the fable, who sold a cow for five beans and then grew a beanstalk?
6. How did Alfred Nobel make his money while he was alive?
7. Who was the first athlete to run a sub four-minute mile?
8. What is Munro another term for?
9. Which car company makes the Celica?
10. Air Lingus is the national airline of which country?
11. Who discovered radium?
12. What does an alopecia sufferer lack?
13. Who painted *The Haywain*?
14. Triskadeccaphobia is the fear of what?
15. What is a baby rabbit called?
16. Which country had The Dauphin as a ruler?
17. Who did Michael Caine play in the movie *The Ipcress File*?
18. Who won the European song contest with the hit *Save All Your Kisses For Me*?
19. Which country had the Guns of Naverone installed?
20. Ictheologists study what?

Answers below



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Puzzle Solutions

Solution to this week's Quick crossword



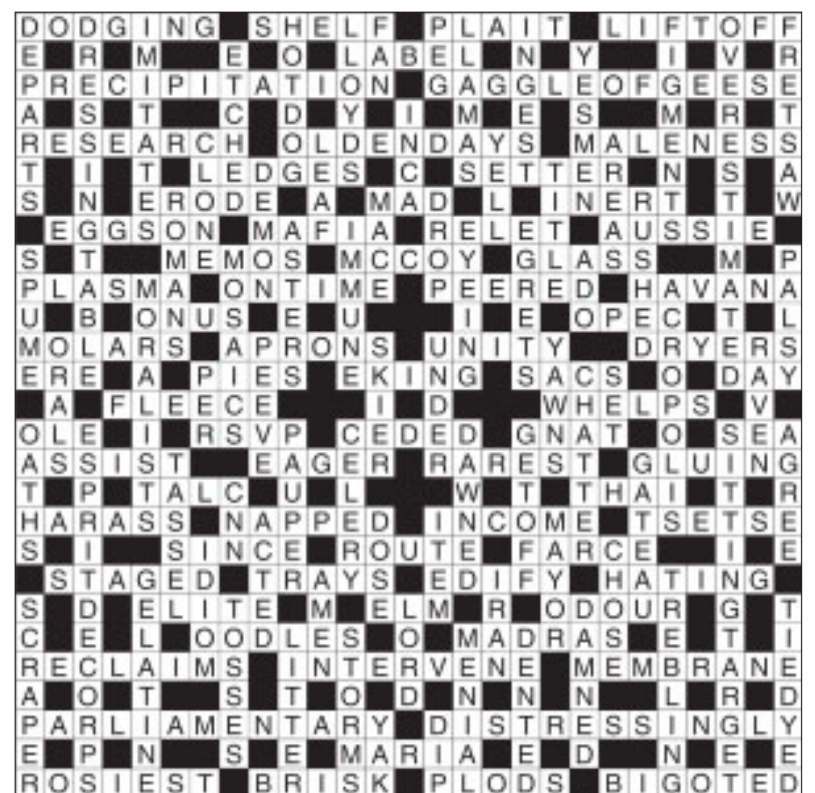
Monster Quiz Answers

1. Casino Royal; 2. Dog; 3. Schilling; 4. Red Crescent; 5. Jack; 6. Invented Dynamite; 7. Roger Bannister; 8. Mountains in Scotland; 9. Toyota; 10. Republic of Ireland; 11. The Curies; 12. Hair; 13. John Constable; 14. Number 15; Kit or Kitten; 16. France; 17. Harry Palmer; 18. Brotherhood of Man; 19. Turkey; 20. Fish.

Solution to this week's Sudoku puzzle

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

Solution to this week's BIG Crossword



Solution to this week's Cartoon Puzzle





Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt

I picked up Bernhard Schlink's novel *The Reader* (Phoenix, London, 1997, 216pp) because it had Kate Winslet on the cover, the star of the movie that was nominated for five Academy Awards, including best picture, best actress and best director. But I only decided to buy it after I read the reviews – "novelizations" of famous movies are the lowest form of dreck.

The original novel in German came out in 1995 when the author was 51 years old, following a distinguished career of teaching the history and philosophy of law. He had turned out some crime novels before but his first serious novel *The Reader* was greeted with a tumultuous reception.

This slender novel is simply told and exquisitely plotted, its very restraint conducive to huge emotions. It is the story of a ro-

mance in the late 1950s between a 15-year-old schoolboy and a 35-year-old tram conductor. Hanna is blond, beautiful, strong, proud, touchy, dominant and offhand. Michael is a typical jumble of teenager emotions, recently recovered from a long bout of hepatitis. In fact, it is a spell of weakness that brings the two together as Hanna rescues Michael from a vomiting spell and sends him on his way home. When Michael returns to thank her, he covers himself with black dust when fetching coal from the basement for her. She orders him into her bathtub and the quick start of a sexual romance.

Michael feels himself infinitely superior to his inexperienced classmates and in a burst of energy and confidence he quickly makes up his lost classwork and shoots to the head of his class.

The two establish a routine: Michael reads to her for an hour or so from the great German and Russian novelists, then they take a bath, climb into bed, make love and sleep until Hanna has to go to work or Michael back home.

The next day they do it all over again. Of her past, Hanna tells him only that she grew up in a German community in Romania, came to work in a Siemens factory in Berlin, then joined the army during the war. To the rest of his queries, she waves her hand in dismissal. One day, she simply disappears. Michael is devastated. This loss will emotionally cramp him for the rest of his life.

Now I wish I didn't know the broad outlines of the movie's plot because it spoiled the plot's great surprise for me, but then again, I wouldn't have picked up

the book if it hadn't been for Kate Winslet's mug.

I'll reveal the surprise because just about everyone knows it: Hanna was an SS guard in various concentration camps in Poland. Michael is a law student when she is put on trial for an atrocity that happened on the death march west toward the end of the war. For a school law project, he appears in

court every day, although Hanna only acknowledges him with a single look towards the very end of the trial.

This situation forms a scaffolding for a great many philo-

sophical quandaries.

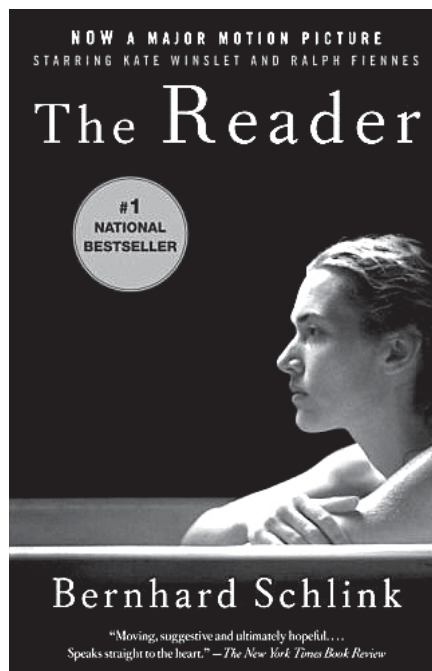
"I wanted simultaneously to understand Hanna's crime and to condemn it. But it was too terrible for that.

When I tried to understand it, I had the feeling that I was failing to condemn it as it must be condemned. When I condemned it as it must be condemned there was no room for understanding.

But even as I wanted to understand Hanna, failing to understand her meant betraying her all over again. I could not resolve this. I wanted to pose myself both tasks – understanding and condemnation. But it was impossible to do both."

There are still a great many plot twists ahead as the novel spans more than 40 years, so even if you do know Hanna's big secret, there are plenty more to come.

The novel succeeds on many levels, as an intimate and touching romance and a philosophical inquiry to a great many moral issues. Most of all, it ends with a grace note of redemption for Hanna for whom the reader learns to care desperately.



Horoscopes



Isla Star

CANCER (June 22-July 23): Most Cancerians will be riding on the crest of a wave this week. Your independent spirit appreciates the freedom of choice that this month brings. Those celebrating a birthday during the coming days can expect the year ahead to be far more productive than the one passed. The stars are ready to back up your desire to start a new business, but it would be wise not to diversify too much.

LEO (July 24-August 22): Leos could be subject to a mood of loneliness during the first days of July. This is the ideal time to contact friends you haven't seen much of this year. Where love is concerned, Scorpio is ready to shower you with affection, but Taurus is more concerned with their own needs. Employment starts to become more satisfying, particularly if you are prepared to accept more responsibility. The number seven can bring some luck on Wednesday.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): Those born under the sign of Virgo who cannot decide whether a long distance relationship is worth the effort will see that true love finds a way. Astral influences during the first part of July affect your personal relationships in a benevolent way. In the world of work, a problem shared becomes a problem halved. Libra is ready to give the support you need. Wear the color maroon to encourage a steadier outlook.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): Life is predicted to be a walk in the park for Librans during July.

Your mood picks up due to several fortuitous events this week. A longstanding legal dispute should certainly be settled in your favor and affairs of the heart become more relaxed. This is the perfect time to begin rebuilding a family relationship that was broken earlier this year. The number nine can bring good fortune next Tuesday.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): If you are prepared to allow others to take advantage, this is the week they will do so. Those born under the sign of Scorpio who are feeling vulnerable are advised to retain a low-key position during the first part of July. One person who can be trusted is an Aquarian friend. Where romance is concerned, you discover that less can mean more. Wear a piece of dark green jade to encourage strength of character.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): The middle of the year is usually a positive time for Sagittarians and you should now see an improvement in business affairs. Those who are self-employed may need to take more help on board and this could require searching further afield than you expect. Delay travel until the second half of July – at this moment, you can achieve more by staying close to home. The luckiest day for finances is Tuesday.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): Capricorns will be happy to have enough spare time to watch the bamboo grow this week. Having made an impor-

tant, possibly life-changing decision at the end of June, you should feel confident that things will finally go your way. As July progresses, look forward to a more settled atmosphere where love is concerned. A water sign who has been acting hot and cold is forecast to reveal their true feelings.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): There is a possibility that Aquarians will dig themselves into a pothole this week. The stars suggest that you made promises too easily at the end of June and people could now expect them to be fulfilled. Monday is the best day for offering apologies. Love becomes more of a two-way street and you realize that someone you've been growing closer to could be the partner of your dreams.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): The astral atmosphere will encourage Pisceans to push themselves a little bit further this month. During the first week of July, you clearly see that more effort is required to succeed in your chosen business direction.

Putting too much trust in others is inadvisable, although someone born under the sign of Leo will show that they are capable of more than you thought. Problems concerning housing are highlighted on Tuesday.

ARIES (March 21-April 20): Arians' outlook for July is strong, with emphasis on money flowing more towards you. A water sign friend is forecast to ask for a loan when they learn of your improved circumstances. You should insist on some kind of security before offering help. Romance brings satisfaction – an air sign appears to have stolen your heart. Wednesday is the best day for signing agreements relating to property. The number nine is lucky this weekend.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): Travel is positively highlighted during July and many Taureans could find themselves in places

they never expected to see. Pisces is the ideal companion to share some adventures with, but a Scorpio friend's stress would rub off on you. Keep a close eye on monetary matters as mistakes are highlighted later next week. A romantic partner pours their heart out this weekend, but this could be a case of too much too soon.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): Turn the other cheek to avoid losing face when dealing with bureaucracy next Monday. Impatience is highlighted to affect your week and your scratchy mood could cause unnecessary arguments. The romantic atmosphere becomes heated this weekend when an old flame stirs up jealousy with your current partner. Single Geminis start to see a fire sign acquaintance in a different light. Wear the color lavender to encourage a more laid-back outlook.



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The Great Gig in the Sky

For some, the death of Michael Jackson came as no surprise. For others it was a shock. For the people who profit from his celebrity status, dying was probably the best career move Michael Jackson could have made.

As CD and DVD sales of Michael Jackson's work from past to present go through the roof and entrepreneurs produce a plethora of Michael Jackson memorabilia, he is probably worth more now and in the foreseeable future than he could have been if he'd actually pulled off the planned stint of concerts in London.

The media had already killed him off and left him for dead anyway. If Michael Jackson had performed in London as planned, it would have been a huge gamble. Mainstream media would have jumped at the chance to poke fun at his attempted revival. The news would have focused more on his latest skin job than on his new music and moves.

If he had failed at putting on a top-notch performance, his name and fame would have eventually faded into obscurity.

As it turned out, Michael Jackson went out with a bang while still being recognized for his achievements rather than solely for his failures. That bang will resonate for a long time while pop media wrings Jackson's life (and death) story for all it's worth. The wringing could go on for weeks, months or even years.

Within a week of the star's death, the Jackson family saga has taken on soap-opera proportions on news channels.

Tribute concerts and commemorative memorabilia are suddenly all the rage. *TIME Magazine* came out with a special "commemorative edition" within days of the news that the entertainer had died.

The media spotlight trained on the star's story will be a long-term distraction to the general public from important global issues that are affecting thousands of others around the globe.

While major international news channels hold round-the-clock vigils outside the Jackson family home to break news of the most recent car to go through the gates, less air time is given over to coverage of stories on war-torn countries, refugees dotted around the world and the injustices of this world being meted out on the innocent.

He was a complex and mysterious man. His death, no doubt, will turn out to be just as complex and intriguing. And while experts search for a particular reason for his sudden death – someone or something to blame for the star's early demise – the media circus will continue to revolve on speculation.

Who or what fuels the frenzy? Does a celebrity's death feed demand among viewers and readers or is it created for them? Perhaps it is just easier to deal with than some of the more pressing issues we should all be worrying about.

– 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.

Illegal off roads

On the road south of the Kata-Karon viewpoint, there are now three businesses that offer off-road vehicle "adventures". The vehicles being used are commonly called ATVs.

They are unlicensed, probably uninsured, lack proper safety equipment and, are at times being operated by children.

They travel illegally on the public roads, at slow speeds, in long trains of up to 20 vehicles and cause disruption to the smooth, safe flow of regular traffic.

Several years ago, the *Phuket Gazette* ran an article complaining about this illegal activity. At the time the police authorities stated that these ATVs would not be allowed to operate on the roads of Phuket and yet the practice continues.

They usually operate them in the viewpoint area, but I have observed them around Nai Harn Lake, on the road up to the windmill, and even in the Rawai Beach area.

I wonder why a fatal accident must occur before appropriate action is taken to eliminate this illegal, unsafe activity.

Jay
Phuket

Tesco-Lotus exits

Having recently witnessed yet another accident, possibly a fatality, at the northern exit of the Tesco-Lotus car park, I have to wonder how many more accidents and fatalities there must be before local authorities and / or Tesco-Lotus do something about it. The exit allows traffic to go

left or right, but those wishing to turn left are held up by those turning right.

The exit should either be made bigger or ideally traffic should be barred from turning right into the oncoming traffic.

Mervyn Baines
Thalang

Bar closing times

I think if the bars have to close "legally" at 2am [*Gazette* online, June 25], tourists are going to go elsewhere to find some entertainment.

In the UK bars close at 1am, so the opportunity to be able to be entertained until the early hours of the morning is a big novelty.

This means that lots of people don't head out to the bars until midnight because they know they can drink later than they do at home.

With the economic crisis as it is, the entertainment committees should be encouraging longer opening hours, not shorter.

I hope Asarnha Bucha is a real success. I wish I could be there but I can't get to Thailand until November. In the meantime, have a happy day everyone.

Mick
Guernsey, UK

Counterfeit goods

Despite everyone knowing that buying counterfeit goods is illegal [*Gazette* online, June 26], we all like to buy counterfeit sunglasses, T-shirts, CDs and DVDs here on Phuket. To my annoyance, I have just found out that my two 32-GB flashdrives from Jungceylon's computer section are fake and I can only down-

load 79 of my 256 CDs onto one of them. I am not happy about this at all.

Perhaps you could pass this letter on to somebody who can chase it up please. Despite all this, I must say it makes me laugh.

Alan Vacquier
Nai Harn

Asean Security Act

I have just read that Thailand will enforce its Internal Security Act in Phuket during the upcoming 42nd Asean Ministerial Meeting and related activities to be held at Laguna Phuket from July 17 to 23 [*Gazette* online, June 30].

Fair enough. But what does that mean to the people living peacefully here, *farangs* and Thais? How will this affect our daily lives?

James
Phuket

Electronic visas?

Re "Free visas backfire", [*Gazette* online, June 26], I would not shed one tear for these honorary consulates, they are a blast from the past. In my opinion, Thailand should abandon visas totally, except for certain countries. A visa-free stay of up to three months without hassle will make a difference.

The honorary consuls who claim the number of applicants will increase dramatically because people get something for free have lost the plot. A few bucks saved will not do the trick. Thailand could set up an electronic visa system if it still insists on using visas.

Wrecker
Gazette/Thai Visa
Phuket Forum

Letters conveying views and suggestions are published here. Those seeking comment from government officials and/or business owners are published in *Issues & Answers* at www.phuketgazette.net.



FIRST PERSON

Following the WBC strawweight title fight between Oleydong Sitsamerchai and Muhammed Rachman on May 29, the *Gazette* published in its editorial column an open letter to WBC President Jose Sulaiman.

The letter was to inform the WBC that Bangla Stadium in Patong had chosen to impose a double-pricing policy at the match, with Thais charged a maximum of 300 baht, while foreigners were admitted at a minimum of 2,000 baht. The *Gazette* pointed out that pricing of tickets based on perceptions of race or nationality was in conflict with the WBC's own code of ethics, which states that "people in the professional boxing industry should oppose discrimination on the basis of race, nationality, religion and act forcefully to counteract it, never co-operating with those who practice it".

The editorial ended with an entreaty to the WBC to take steps to apply, as a precondition, fair and equitable ticket pricing structures for events it sanctions in the future. The following is Mr Sulaiman's official – and therefore unedited – reply to the letter.

It came today to my attention an article published in which an act of discrimination allegedly happened during the celebration of a boxing match, where tickets had a price for foreigners and a different one for local fans. It seems funny, however, that this time it looks that the discriminated are not the poorest.

The backbone of the World Boxing Council are safety for boxers and human equality, as it was proved by a letter from Nelson Mandela when he left jail in South Africa, commending the efforts rendered by the WBC for 19 long years of our unwavering struggle against apartheid.

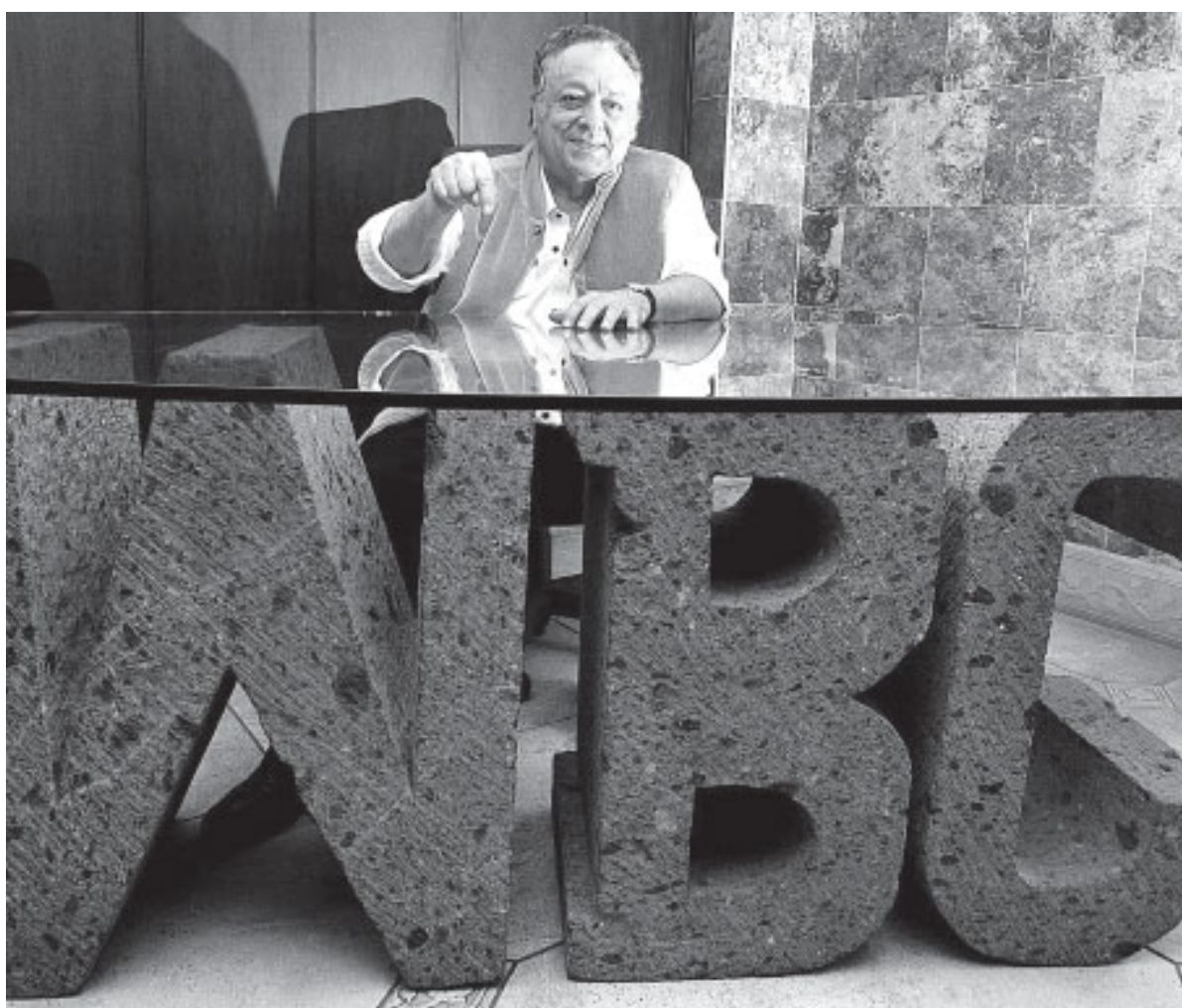
The WBC would not certify any act of discrimination in any activity in our world of boxing if the action was intended to be that.

During my 60 years in boxing, I have always seen different prices in boxing matches for the different sections of the arena, but never had I seen, nor had I known of different prices according to nationalities and it would be interesting for me to know the objective, as I know for a fact that in Thailand boxing matches are sponsored, but not charged to the attending fans.

It is a real surprise to me what I read and hope that the promoter has an explanation for you, as the WBC would never accept an act of discrimination in any manner.

Please accept my most respectful regards, as well as my personal appreciation for the special good coverage that you have always given to the sport of our love, boxing.

Jose Sulaiman
WBC President



Issues & ANSWERS

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

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

How can I stop my sadistic neighbor from constantly beating his dogs?

I've been renting a house in the Sai Yuan area of Rawai for the past two months and every day, usually in the late morning and early afternoon when the soi is quiet, I can hear a *farang* neighbor literally beating the living daylights out of his dogs who are kept locked in kennels at the back of his house.

This is very distressing as the house is in close proximity to mine and I can hear nothing other than the thwacking noise and the subsequent whimpering of the dogs.

It's almost as though the neighbor were somehow enjoy-

ing beating his dogs.

I really can't bear the thought of this going on for the duration of my stay, plus I'm concerned about the odd and sadistic behavior of my neighbor. If it were a one off with someone losing their temper with their pet, as people sometimes do, it would still be awful to witness, but this seems to be a daily ritual and it is really creeping me out.

What can be done to protect those poor dogs from their cruel owner?

Concerned dog lover
Rawai

An officer of the Provincial Ombudsman's Office (Damro-ngtham Center) replies:

If you wish to try and stop your neighbour, the first thing you must do is come to the *Damro-ngtham Center* at the Phuket Provincial Governor's Office to fill out a complaint form. However, we must stress that you must have the proof that the dogs in question are being abused by their owner.

A picture or a video showing your neighbor abusing his dogs would be ideal.

If you have no proof then

there is nothing we can do as it is simply your word against his.

If you have evidence then we can go and investigate to see if we can do something to prevent any further cruel treatment handed out to the dogs.

In the interest of saving time, please ensure that you also supply us with the correct address of your neighbor.

For more information contact Phuket Provincial Governor's Office, *Damro-ngtham Center*, 5 Narisorn Road, Muang Phuket 83000. T: 076-222886 #6815. F: 076-213203, 076-354875. E: phuket@moi.go.th.

From the beach to the big time

Rugby in Phuket continues to go from strength to strength and the sport's success on the island can be largely credited to Pat Cotter, one of the founding members of the Phuket Vagabonds, Phuket's first rugby team, and the driving force behind the hugely successful annual rugby 10s tournament.

Rugby is now played regularly in Phuket by boys at the British International and Sainamyen Schools, as well as by the Phuket Vagabonds and its veterans team, the imaginatively named Phuket Viagrabonds.

It is a far cry from when Pat first moved to Phuket in 1991.

"There was no rugby at all in Phuket at that time. I used to play for the British Club when I lived in Bangkok. After moving to Phuket I ran into a couple of friends who I had played with up there – Ben Hennessy and Steve Wainwright. As there was no opportunity for games here we started playing a bit of touch rugby on the beach," Pat recalls.

This year the Rugby 10s attracted around 500 players as well as their friends and families, a far cry from the humble beginnings of the sport on the island.

"The Sri Lankan champions Kandy wanted to come over to Phuket for an end-of-season tour and were looking for a game. We got a few like-minded people together and put out a side that was totally outclassed and lost by a score of 52-5 but the Phuket

Vagabonds were born. A few of the originals are still playing now, notably Steve "Hot dog" Hatchett who is our oldest playing member at 54," says Pat.

The potential of Phuket as a rugby destination was immediately apparent and the Vagabonds would regularly play visiting navy teams: but something was missing.

"We needed something to give teams an excuse to visit. Our first attempt was a 15-a-side tournament between four teams – Phuket, Abu Dhabi, Aussie Air Force and the Singapore Bucks.

"Abu Dhabi won that one but it was decided that 15s wouldn't grow and as sevens were being played all over the place, with most of the Phuket team being long in the tooth we decided to try out the 10-a-side format," Pat revealed.

The inaugural Phuket Rugby 10s tournament took place at Saphan Hin and attracted five teams including the Phuket Vagabonds, or the *Phuket Gazettes* as they were known back then. The tournament was won by the Hong Kong Football Club and the Phuket 10s was born.

"Since then it has gone from strength to strength, to the point where we are now at the limit of teams we can have due to the

facilities. We have 24 teams in the main competition played over the weekend, and since a lot of regular players are now getting on, we introduced the Coffin Dodgers veterans competition a few years ago which now has 12 teams playing on the Friday and is just as competitive as the main competition," says Pat.

Pat (standing to the right of the scrum in the background) referees a game between the Vagabonds and sailors from the HMS Bulwark that took place while the British vessel was anchored in Phuket.

The Phuket 10s also raise money for the Asia Center Foundation, an NGO that helps disadvantaged children and children-at-risk by providing care, training and education.

The 2008 Rugby 10s raised close to 700,000 baht and Pat subsequently received the prestigious Spirit of Rugby Award from the IRB in London, in conjunction with Roelien Muller of the Asia Center Foundation.

One of the highlights of this year's tournament was a 15-a-side rugby match between

Sainamyen School and BIS. Pat and the Vagabonds have been instrumental in introducing rugby to the youth of Phuket.

"I started playing when I was at primary school. I like the team work, the physicality, the social aspects of the game, the camaraderie – everything to do with the sport. With rugby there is no discrimination. You can walk into any rugby club in the world and you are accepted regardless of nationality or religion," says Pat.

Pat is hoping to introduce the sport to even more schools in Phuket but admits maintaining children's interest in the game is an arduous task.

"We are developing a youth program and the hope is to get more schools involved with the aim of starting a junior league hopefully by the end of the year. There is a new sports club being built at the Phuket International

Academy who want to help develop the sport on the island and give us a permanent base to run the rugby operation," he says.

The sport of rugby in Phuket continues to grow. Officials from rugby powerhouse, New Zealand are considering setting up a rugby academy here and the Thai Rugby Union is also looking at Phuket as a venue to host visiting teams as well as international events like the 80-80 rugby and regional rugby sevens tournaments.

With events and developments like these on the horizon, it is a far cry from the days when Pat would chuck a ball about on a beach with a couple of friends. With the enthusiasm for the sport being shown – from school boys to veterans – Phuket's appeal as a rugby destination is only going to grow.

-James Goyder



Pat Cotter



Akapoj secures victory in Optimist class

The second Phuket Yacht Club three-month race series sponsored by Topper Sail Phuket and day sponsors Niche Wines reached its conclusion on June 21, following yet another day of top-quality sailing.

Competitors were greeted by a steady breeze which produced some exciting racing across all four of the classes.

The undoubted star of the day was Akapoj "Tik" Kankaew, who won all three of the day's races in the Optimist class to secure the overall title ahead of Sukana "Ann" Saimorn and Chalip "Lip" Payatsup who finished second and third respectively.

Also worthy of mention were the performances of Arunsak "Long" Wannasuk from the Phuket Sunshine Village who performed fantastically in what was his maiden regatta.

In other classes, Roger Kingdom emulated Tik in securing the day's racing as well as overall honors on his Weta in class one (see photo), a feat that was matched by Andrew and Donna Debruin in their Tasar in class two despite some stiff competition.

Zak Bermons took the honors for the day in class three, but his success wasn't enough to dislodge Alex Hamilton from the top of the overall standings.



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New-look Sea Dragons return to action on July 5

The Sea Dragons of Phuket return to action on Sunday July 5, after the six-week mid-season break determined to make amends for their dismal start to the season.

In seven matches, the team accumulated just four points from a possible 21 and found the back of the net a mere six times, leaving them second from bottom. To make matters worse for Sea Dragons fans, Phuket FC were unable to pick up a single point at Surakul Stadium, conceding 11 times in the process.

Despite such negative statistics, supporters can look forward to the second part of the season with renewed optimism thanks to the hard work of Phuket FC coach Somsak Waijarean.

Desperate to improve his side's dismal league position, coach Somsak has spent the break relentlessly searching for new players.

In addition to scouring the region for talent, Somsak has been training his new-look Phuket FC non-stop in a bid to get the Sea Dragons away from the foot of the table.

"I joined the team after their first league match in Division Two. The old coach quit following the 4-1 defeat at home to Satun. We played three more games at home and we lost all of them. We're in seventh position and only have four points. During the break I have brought in 15 new players, because the old team wasn't very good," Somsak said.

"We now only have two players that played for Phuket FC before the break - Anurak 'James' Petluan, the team captain, and goalkeeper Suthep 'Lek' Sae-Ung," he added.

In the first half of the season, it was noted that the Sea Dragons were the only side to not field any foreign players and that performances may have suffered as a result.

"We now have four players from the Ivory Coast and one from Nigeria who we picked up through an agent of Chonburi FC. We did have a number of other players have trials with us, but they weren't fit enough to make the side," Somsak revealed.

There were times in the first

half of the season it looked apparent that the Sea Dragons had been thrown together at the last minute, such was the lack of team cohesion.

With so many new players in the side, Phuket FC fans might be concerned that history might repeat itself. Coach Somsak, however, doesn't believe this will be the case.

"A lot of these players have played together before so they are familiar with one another. We've also spent a lot of time in training working on playing as a team," he said.

In Phuket FC's last fixture they faced this Sunday's opponents Narathiwat, suffering a 2-0 defeat, but coach Somsak believes Sea Dragons fans can anticipate marked improvements in their performance this time round.

"We have a great chance to win because we have changed the majority of the team and we've been training very hard. We also had a coach come down from Bangkok to help train the players and get them fitter," he revealed.

Fitness, it seemed, was a key issue for the side. There were a number of matches in the first half of the season where the Sea Dragons were exhausted in the second half, allowing their physically-fitter opponents to gain the upper hand. The players' lack of fitness was something that was not lost on Somsak.

"I noticed the Phuket players were tired in the first half. They could only play for about 30 minutes. This is something I don't want with the new team. We have been training every day from June 1, seven days a week. We are ready for the next match," Somsak said.

With the Sea Dragons second from bottom, any chance of promotion has virtually disappeared but Somsak has set his side the target of three wins from three in their remaining home fixtures.

"We still have seven matches left, three here in Phuket and four away from home. At the very least we must pick up nine points from our home games," he said.

If they are successful then at least Phuket FC's long-suffering supporters will have some-



Coach Somsak addresses his new-look side ahead of their next match against Narathiwat on July 5.

thing to cheer about.

Phuket vs Narathiwat will take place at Surakul Stadium on July 5, kick off at 7pm.

If interested in joining the ever-expanding Phuket FC Supporters Club, please email Dan Ogunshakin at phuketfcsupportersclub@hotmail.co.uk or join the Phuket FC Supporters Club group on Facebook.

-Thanasorn Chookate

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Spicing things up

When I last wrote about edible plants, the article had a polemical edge, since I was protesting – along with hundreds of fellow conservationists – at the absurd governmental decision to prohibit the use of thirteen herbs and spices that had been used as natural pesticides by generations of Thais. Today, I want to sound an entirely positive note.

After all, Thai cuisine, now acknowledged as one of the great cuisines of the world, owes much of its status to the magnificently varied produce of the Kingdom. If you count the different kinds of fruit and vegetables at your local wet market, you will probably arrive at a figure not far short of 100 varieties. An extraordinary cornucopia. And that is without taking into account the range of sea food – the fish and crustaceans – that are also on offer.

Of course, this *embarras de richesse* needs seasoning to bring out and enhance the natural flavors. That is where herbs and spices fulfil a key role. They often have, moreover, the added benefit

of acting as natural preservatives. Most of these aromatic plants did not originate in Thailand – pepper, cardamom and cinnamon come from India, cloves and nutmeg from the Moluccan archipelago (now Indonesia), star anise and cassia from China.

Nature & Nurture



By Patrick Campbell

But these highly prized and formerly costly ingredients, usually in the form of dried seeds, were introduced to this country initially by traders and latterly by the mass immigration of both Chinese and Indians to Southeast Asia in the nineteenth century. As those of us who daily enjoy Thai cooking can testify, no people

have embraced this spice culture more enthusiastically.

So where do we begin? Well, Thais would start with chillies (capsicum). Lots of them. They consider a dish without chilli (*prik kee fah*) to be at best an insipid concoction. The ubiquitous seed pods are sold in many styles: green (unripe), red (ripe) and dried (red brown), the latter often coarsely ground in a pestle and mortar to provide a condiment – just as Europeans use salt and pepper.

Though chillies are an aromatic plant not native to Asia, but rather Mexico, they grow everywhere here. Most pests will not touch them. All the plants need are reasonable conditions for growth and they will reward you with an attractive display of glossy red and green seed pods that you can pick and pick again. And they will grow readily from seed.

Originally, pepper was the main source of spiciness in Asian food – as it still is in many Western dishes. The chilli, introduced from the New World, came later. Once so valuable it was sold by the grain in medieval Europe, pepper comes originally from the Malabar coast of India. But the



Thais consider a dish without chilli to be at best an insipid concoction, while pepper was the main source of spiciness in Asian food.

vine will happily grow in a Phuket garden if it is given a spot out of direct sunlight and with plenty of moisture. Bunches of green berries like tiny grapes will soon appear.

Personally I prefer them as they are – crunchy and not mouth-numbingly hot – but they are normally picked and sun-dried to produce the familiar whole black peppers. What is less well known is that the berries, which develop reddish skin on ripening – sometimes have this covering peeled away before being bleached in the sun. This technique produces white pepper. Same plant: different result.

I only mention mustard in passing, principally because it is not, strictly speaking, a tropical plant. Happier in temperate climes, fields of yellow mustard were a feature of my English childhood. Tewkesbury mustard was a local delicacy. Nonetheless, it is another aromatic seed, and one of the oldest spices in the world.

Widely used in Asian cooking, especially in India, the whole seeds are traditionally fried in oil or *ghee* (butter) until they pop and release their flavor. They are also added to *dhal* (lentil) soup and other vegetable dishes. There are three principal varieties, black (*nigra*) which is the hottest, white (*alba*) and brown (*juncea*), now the most widely grown. The plant is a herbaceous annual, a member of the *brassica* (cabbage) family, that grows about a metre high, and produces large smooth seed pods. Apparently, it will grow in any fertile, well-drained soil. I say apparently because I'm going to try raising it from seed in my Phuket garden, well away from direct sun, if only because my Thai partner has taken an instant liking to it, served Western-style, as a yellow paste smeared

on cooked meats.

Much more central to Thai cuisine is coriander (*coriandrum sativum*). It has a marked advantage over pepper and chilli in that the whole plant can be used as a flavoring agent. Thais know this well: great improvisers, they even utilize the root. Crushed with garlic and black pepper, it combines to make a familiar seasoning.


Its seeds, usually heated before being crushed in order to release their characteristic orange aroma, are even more ubiquitous – an ingredient in most Thai curries, curry pastes and powders. Bunches of leaves, which resemble parsley, are a familiar sight at any wet market and a frequent garnish, along with winged beans and cashew leaves, at the humblest Thai lunch.

In this beneficent climate, coriander will grow readily in a garden. I can vouch for that. And if you do not have a vegetable plot, it will thrive in a container packed with good compost. As with mustard, it is worth trying to cultivate from seed. Coriander dissipates some of its aroma after being kept: how much nicer to bring the leaves to the salad bowl straight from the garden.


Finally cumin, another herbaceous annual that is cultivated for its scented seeds. It has the merit of looking good in the herb garden, with feathery leaves that resemble fennel and attractive umbels of seeds. They have a mild aniseed flavor.

A staple of Tex-Mex cuisine, Thais also find it well worth cultivating: it adds its distinctive flavor to a wide range of curries and pickles. And cumin plants will not suffer in tropical Thailand – they are used to the hot dry conditions of their native Egypt. I've put some seeds in pots and they're cumin along nicely...


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Over 100 companies to descend on Phuket for 2009 property exhibition

Phuket is set to welcome more than 100 companies to its shores as part of the Architect and Engineering Exhibition 2009 later this month.

The exhibition is being staged with a view to establishing new networks among real estate, development, hotel and construction businesses and personnel in the South of Thailand.

The event will take place on the second floor of the Royal Phuket City Hotel.

The exhibition is the brainchild of Property Information Center (PIC) Phuket Co Ltd director Thanet Traiwut, who believes the exhibition will allow like-minded people to pass on useful information and skills for the future and make long-term business connections.

The event, which will run from July 16 to 19, is expected to attract visitors from Koh Samui, Ranong, Phang Nga, Khao Lak, Krabi and various Andaman Sea islands as well as Phuket.

The visitors are likely to include real estate project owners, hoteliers, developers, architects, designers and contractors among their ranks.

For the previous 10 years, Delice Thai Co Ltd, a sister company of PIC Phuket, organized a similar exhibition, but this year Mr Thanet expects the event to offer a lot more to attendees.

"This year we wanted to do something different. For the last 10 years Delice Thai Co Ltd arranged an annual exhibition but it only focused upon furniture and equipment for hotels. Over the last decade the Phuket real estate industry has grown substantially, so we wanted to include more aspects to make it more appealing to a wider audience," he said.

PIC Phuket itself was only established two years ago when it split from the Bangkok-based Delice Thai to look after the company's interests in Phuket.

Over the course of the four-day event, visitors will have the opportunity to browse the exhibits as well as take part in a number of forums, presentations and seminars hosted by some of the companies on display.

The exhibits are expected to cover a wide range of property-related areas including construction materials, pool and spa systems, alarm and CCTV systems, as well



Visitors to the 2008 Architect and Engineering exhibition check out what was on offer at one of the displays.

as furniture and machinery. Despite the downturn in the global economy which has caused a dramatic decline in tourist numbers and deeply impacted upon property development in Phuket, Mr Thanet believes this is still the perfect time to host the exhibition.

"The high-end property market in Phuket is finding it dif-

ficult to make any sales because there is no demand from buyers, but the mid-range sector is still doing fine.

"I think this is a good time for hotels in Phuket to make any renovations they feel they need. Some hotel owners came to me and said they believe this quiet low season is a good chance to renovate their hotels because after the 2004 tsu-

nami a lot of properties never had a chance to properly prepare for the next high season," he said.

For more information visit PIC Phuket Co Ltd (Delice Thai Co Ltd), 97/13, Village 4, Tambon Wichit, Muang, Phuket 83000. T: 076-522827-8. F: 076-522825. E: info@delicethai.com.

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-Thanasorn Chookate



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Spa industry under pressure amid downturn

By Achara Pongvutitham

Thai spa operators in Phuket are implementing a "leave-without-pay" strategy in an attempt to retain skilled staff and keep the industry afloat amid the economic downturn.

In addition to the steep fall in tourists, they are also facing tougher competition from foreign investors, particularly from South Korea, who are opening spa businesses, mainly in Phuket, to woo tourists from their country.

The global economic crisis and the widespread type-A (H1N1) influenza have led to a sharp drop in travelers to major tourist destinations such as Phuket. The problem has created a domino effect, not only for hotels and tour agent businesses, but also related services.

The steep fall in the tourism industry will also hit Phuket's plan to become a medical hub. The province is seen as having great potential to achieve the goal as advanced medical technology and other treatments have already been set up in private hospitals, besides dental clinics. Foreign tourists are also a major customer group to have medical treatment during their holidays, taking advantage of the cheaper price and international standard treatment.

Panjanorn Limpanavisit, spa manager of Cheraim Spa Village,

said they had seen a 60% drop in customers because of the crisis and the influenza outbreak. Normally, the company has an average of 150-200 guests per day.

So far, the company has employed 150-160 staff, including masseurs. However, the drop in business in line with the economic slump has forced the company to tell employees to have more holidays.

For instance, management-level staff will have to increase their off days from four to 11 while other staff will stay away for seven days, from four days at present. The extra holidays will be deducted from their salary.

"We started this program since the closure of Suvarnabhumi Airport last year to retain our staff and keep our business going. Our staff are also happy with this measure as they can save their jobs," Ms Panjanorn said.

In addition, the company has launched a re-training program to maintain its service standard during this tough time.

Tachapon Tephabuttra, managing director of Sukko Spa Co, said the company manages not only a spa but also resort business. Its occupancy has dropped from 30-40% to 10% at the moment. Day-spa customer numbers have plummeted from 120-150 to 50 clients per day.



Phuket's spas are facing tougher competition from foreign investors, particularly from South Koreans, who are opening spa businesses on the island to woo tourists from their country. Photo by Chris Hondros/Getty Images/AFP

"We were hardest hit during the closure of Suvarnabhumi Airport. Our customers plunged 50%. We expect a 50% drop in customers this year, also," he said.

It is estimated that inbound tourists to Phuket will drop from an average 5 million per year to 2 million this year.

However, the company has

no lay-off policy. Instead it is attempting to retain all its workers. As a result, the company has had to cut the salaries of management-level employees and compensate them with extra holidays.

"Our staff have volunteered to take leave without pay to keep their jobs," Mr Tachapon said.

However, employees drawing salary not over 6,000 baht are

not included in the program.

Mr Tachapon added the company had also created a "volunteered vacation" program, which allows employees to have longer-than-normal holidays. However, it is also managed under the "leave-without-pay" policy.

Mr Thachapon pointed out that a majority of the company staff come from other provinces.

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To have and to hold, until land do us part

The Director of the Land Department was recently reported to have issued a warning: that land purchases by Thai nationals using money from foreign spouses are illegal and a possible revocation of title may result. This report has created serious concerns in the expat community and a call for clarification has emerged.

Is it illegal to give my Thai wife a cash gift to buy the land she wants to acquire? Is the Letter of Confirmation not sufficient proof that my Thai wife used her personal property in the land purchase? Will the fact that I am a foreigner prompt investigation on my wife's land acquisition?

These are just some of the questions shared by many foreigners which comes as no surprise following the quoted official statement. I'll try to shed light on this continuing issue by examining the legal provisions, their implication on the prohibition against foreign land ownership and the consequential effect on the Thai spouse's title over the purchased land.

How the Land Ownership Prohibition came into being

Foreigners, as a matter of general rule, are prohibited from owning land in Thailand. This prohibition, under former Land Office policy, was extended to their Thai spouses.

It was only in 1999, through a Ministry of Interior regulation, that the prohibition was lifted and the right to own land was restored to Thai nationals married to foreigners. Thai spouses of foreigners are now permitted by law to acquire land, provided it remains their personal property without any foreign claim.

Since land ownership is a reserved right for Thai citizens, only Thai citizens can exercise control over the administration and disposition of land in Thailand. However, it would be difficult to deny that there are no cases where foreigners use Thai nominees to circumvent the mandate of the law. This usually occurs when the foreign financier takes over the administration and disposition of the land from the purported registered owner. This is exactly what the law seeks to avoid.

Marital relations between a Thai national and a foreigner is one of the avenues where prohibitions on foreign land ownership can possibly be evaded. Thus, to avoid this situation, the law re-

quires that before a title over the land can be registered, the foreigner – together with the Thai spouse – must jointly execute a standard Letter of Confirmation at the Land Office stating that the money used is wholly *Sin Suan Tua* (the personal property of the Thai spouse alone).

The Letter of Confirmation serves as the foreigner's waiver of any interest or claim over the land. Consequently, the Thai spouse shall have absolute control over the property.

Source of purchase price

The legality or illegality of the land purchase is not determined by the original source of the purchase price per se. What is crucial, is that the purchase price is regarded as the personal property of the Thai spouse, so the land will be excluded from community property and beyond the control of the foreign spouse.

This idea finds support in Section 1471 of the Thai Civil and Commercial Code, which states that *Sin Suan Tua* or personal property consists of, among other things: a) property acquired by either spouse during marriage through a will or a gift and b) *Khong mun* (property given by a man to a woman as evidence that the marriage shall take place – like an engagement ring).

The law only provides for

delivery as a sufficient requirement for the validity of cash gifts and *Khong mun*. Thus, although the money originally comes from the foreigner, if it is passed on to the Thai spouse in the manner mentioned above, the money becomes the personal property of the latter. That money can then be utilized by the Thai spouse in whatever purpose he or she deems fit, such as the purchase of land.

Legality of loan instruments

What if the money is given as a loan? In the absence of a prenuptial agreement stipulating the contrary, property acquired during marriage is considered as *Sin Somros* (community property).

The loan may fall under this category and thus excludes it from the personal property of the Thai spouse. Therefore, it would appear that by giving a loan to the Thai spouse, a strict interpretation of the law would mean that it may be a violation with regard to the source of funds.

Security of title

Many foreigners are concerned that their Thai spouses' title over the property may constantly be questioned in view of suspicions for possible violation of the law. However, the Director of the Land Department was also reported as saying that there is no policy to investigate land acquisitions on mere suspicions alone.

According to the Director, the rights of the individuals are respected and their declarations



Photo by AFP

A WARNING SIGN ON THE ROAD TO DEVELOPMENT: Land purchases made by Thais with money from foreign spouses is illegal.

are assumed to be true.

It is still safe to assume that, like any other civil-law countries, the presumption of the law is in favor of the regularity and validity of official acts. Simply put, the land registration, and such presumption, may not be disturbed without cause.

Conclusion

The law essentially seeks to prevent instances when land ownership, although vested to a Thai national, is under the control of a foreigner.

So, the crux of the matter is not where the purchase price originated – for as long as such amount has already acquired the character of the Thai spouse's *Sin Suan Tua* upon purchase of the land – rather it should be on who exercises the right of ownership over the property.

Foreign land ownership and dominion over it is clearly prohib-

ited in the Kingdom. However, foreigners are not absolutely prohibited from having legal interest over pieces of land.

Leaseholds, superficies and usufructs (the legal right to profit from property belonging to someone else) are some of the legal options available to foreigners. Thus, to guarantee full protection of the law, full compliance is recommended.

The above discussion is intended for general guidance in matters of interest only. Nothing contained herein shall be construed and/or understood to be legal advice.

This article was written by Kert Stavorn and Yehlen Sanchez. For more info contact Siam Legal (Phuket).
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Property Gazette

Properties For Sale

VILLAS CLOSE TO BIS



Pool villas with 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms and swimming pool. Close to British International School. From 13 million baht. Please Contact: K. Prasong 081-3969307 (Thai), K. Hua 089-7492186 (Eng).

CHANOTE, 29 RAI

at 1.6 million baht per rai. Nice and cheap land 12 minutes from Phuket airport. Located 200m from main road, electricity/ water well/ road access to the land. Good for housing project. Tel: 081-538 7050. Email: talayjan@yahoo.com

LAYAN LAND

for sale. 11 rai, flat land. Price 4.5 million baht per rai. Tel: 089-813 1447.

LAND IN PHANG NGA

for sale. 9.8 rai working fruit farm, 300+ trees, 5 fish ponds, 2 farm houses suitable for fishing park, 5 kms Phang Nga, 45 mins Phuket airport. Chanote title deed 4,700,000 baht Tel: 086-274 0056 English or 087-895 3099 Thai.

THE ROYAL PLACE

4th floor unit with 2 balconies. Approx area: 42sqm. Fully furnished, ready to move in. Email: info@allaboutwebanddesign.com

ROYAL PLACE CONDO

New 37sqm one bedroom condo for sale at Royal Place, near the Tesco Lotus intersection on the Bypass Road. Comes fully furnished including all electrical appliances. Ready to move in August. Complex has pool, gym, restaurant etc. 1.85 million baht. Tel: 083-982 3768. Email: drbeamshaw@gmail.com

SALE OR RENT VILLA



Below market price (THB). Normally the villa can lease 300,000 to 350,000 monthly. Must sacrifice due to poor global economy. It is the most expensive and most beautiful villa next to Loch Palm golf club. We would like to lease minimum 3 years with the following conditions. First year 2m excluding management, utilities, any extra costs, garden and swimming pool. 2nd year 2.5m and last 3rd year 3m. Must pay in advance each year.

No other deposit required. For sale 45m.
For details, please email me your interests at
info@queenmarines.com

LAND NEAR YACHT HAVEN



for sale. Area: 511 square wah, 38,000 baht per square wah. Contact Mr Tachin Tel: 081-7871811, Miss Kob Tel: 081-273 3303.

SHOPHOUSE - CHALONG

12 months old, 3-storey, 3 bedroom, 2.5 bath, 1 km south of Circle. Full kitchen, 1 aircon, hot water, all-glass front door, office furniture, beds, very clean. Valued at 3.7 million, you pay 3.6 million baht including additions. Bargain! Tel: 086-476 2093, 085-785 1597.

80 RAI FOR SALE, CHANOTE

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Functionable, 2 bed, 2 bath, kitchen and living room. Just 10 minutes to beach. Only 6.9 million baht. Tel: 076-289900, 081-970 0743. Fax: 076-613114. Email: eve@twovillas.com

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PRIVATE SALE OF HALF A RAI

in Ao Makham. Land is located opposite Port of Phuket and next to Bel Air Cape Panwa Resort. Price 4.2 million. Tel: 081-891 5932, 089-035 6702.

HOUSE & FURNITURE FOR SALE

Single house, 60sqm. 2 floors, 3 bedrooms and 3 toilets. In Chaipruek Village at Land & House, Chalong. Good location and entrance from By-Pass road. Built 2 years ago. Tel: 084-627 7001.

SURIN BEACH

Land on Soi Haad Surin 2 for sale. 2.2 Rai, 5 min walk to Surin Beach. Email: costello@exemail.com.au

LAND AT PA KHLOK

1 rai, 18sq wah, Nor Sor 3 Kor, Tha-Rue-Pa Khlok - Muang Mai Road. Near Mission Hill. Price 3.5 million baht. Tel: 089-472 9118.

NEW BRAND CONDO

Mid Town, Royal Place Project. Studio condo, fully furnished, reasonable price. Tel: 086-476-9612.

NEW 4 STOREY BUILDING



for sale. 7.5 million baht. 5x20m, furnished, good for office or clinic. Tel: 086-524-4055. Email: yuwandabier@yahoo.com

COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

for sale. Each building has 3 floors. On big road at Kamala Beach, near Krungsri Bank. Price 20 million baht. Tel: 083-180 2143. Email: pookie.lovely@gmail.com

PERFECT LAND

Nearly 2 rai at Bang Tao. Very good location for business. 18 million baht. No agents. Tel: 086-944 2065, 087-689 9679. Email: tasuwan@hotmail.com

LAND AT CHERNG TALAY

390sqw, nice flat land, quiet area, chanote. In Pasak Soi 5 near Laguna Home. Price: 6 million baht. Tel: 089-472 9118, 086-709-2933.

PARICHART VILLAGE, CHALONG



35/20 Soi 1. 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 2 aircons, some furniture, 50sq wah, garden. For sale or for long-term rent. Must see. Contact Nina. Tel: 087-689-9679. Email: tasuwan@hotmail.com

LAND URGENT SALE



3 rai freehold. Spectacular seaview, private, 3 minute drive to Jungceylon. Suitable for building holiday homes. Tel: 089-973 1447. Email: tommakomc@gmail.com

30 RAI IN TOWN

Long lease. Near Dowrungs School in Phuket Town. Tel: 081-6912526.

INEXPENSIVE SEAVIEW PLOTS

1/3 rai, Chanote title near MH Golf Course, 700,000 to 900,000 baht. Contact Chris. Tel: 086-942 1930.

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BEAUTIFUL NAI YANG LAND



9.5 rai, beachfront. 5 minutes to Phuket airport. Asking price: 120 million baht. Chanote. Must see. No agents. Please contact via email: allservices29@gmail.com

HOUSE IN KATHU



50sq wah, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, furnished. For sale 3.9 million baht. Tel: 081-691 3285. Email: yuwandabier@yahoo.com

3-STOREY APARTMENT



for sale. 70sq wah, 14 rooms, motorbike park. Four years old with Chanote title. Currently fully rented out. Good return. Asking price: 9 million baht. Tel: 087-270 9093.

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CONTEMPORARY VILLA FOR SALE

4 bedrooms, 6 bathrooms, 4m x 12m pool w/Jacuzzi, living room, dining room, Western kitchen, maid's room, solar hot water, sala, built-in BBQ, parking for 3 cars, electric gate, CCTV & alarm system and nice tropical garden on a 1,606sqm plot with over 400sqm of living area. 16 million baht. Email: nisaya@yahoo.com

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only 7.5 million baht. Fully furnished, 2 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, pool, sala, full Western kitchen, auto gate alarm, 500m to beach. Free hold. Contact for more details. Tel: 081-691 3029. Email: kris_silanachai@yahoo.com

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1.2 million baht. 300sqm Soi Naya, Nai Ham Beach, 2.1 million baht. 400sqm, 2.5 million baht. Tel: 086-684 5368. Email: alex@sai-nam-naya.com

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Property Gazette

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near the main road to Baan Don, Chermg Talay. 68sq wah. 1.1 million baht. Tel: 089-472 9118. Email: honda.1437@yahoo.co.th

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Chao Fa East Road, Chalong. Modern Thai house, total area: 524sqm with swimming pool, terrace, tropical garden, covered carport and home security. 3 bedrooms, Western and Thai kitchen, living and dining rooms, and 4 bathrooms within air-conditioned surroundings. Tel: 087-689 9679, 089-772 7012. Email: a.tu2.corazon@gmail.com

PHANG NHA LAND

21 rai of beachfront land, 10 minutes from Phuket bridge. Ideal for resort project. 15 million baht per rai. Tel: 081-396 3784. Email: oligi10@hotmail.com

LUX 4 BED/RM VILLA W/POOL

Quiet tranquil location yet ideal for beaches, schools and shopping. Daily or monthly rental available. Ask for full details. Tel: 076-378361, 081-676 4849. Fax: 081-772 2300. Email: william.amonoo@gmail.com

PATONG HILL CONDO

As new. Luxury one bedroom condo, city and sea view, fully furnished with pool. 6.5 million baht. Ready to live in. Tel: 085-478 6645. Email: graemeste@gmail.com

PANORAMIC SEA VIEW



Karon land for sale. 15 rai. Chanote title. Hillside, panoramic sea view, quiet area. Very good location for business. 15 million baht per rai. No agents. Please contact by email: allservices29@gmail.com

Mai Khao Land for sale



Mai Khao land plot for sale ready to build 150 m from the beach, 150m from West Sands 500 sqm / 800 sqm or 1 Rai. Price: 6M / 8M / 15 MTHB

Tel: 080-719 8627

CHALONG LAND

Half-rai plot on private estate, with adjacent lake and park, in residential area close to Chalong Circle and HomePro Village. Terrific location. All infrastructure in place and underground. 10-metre wide road. 6 mill baht, but land & villa package preferred. We can build for you. Tel: 089-652 1951. Email: notley.peter@gmail.com

SUPER CONDO SALE PATONG

R.O.I. 6 condos, 50 sqm, furnished, great location, package deal. 16.5 million baht. Call Real Pro Co Ltd. Tel: 076-345238. Frank: 084-078 2753. Email: info.realpro@gmail.com

BEAUTIFUL POOL HOUSE

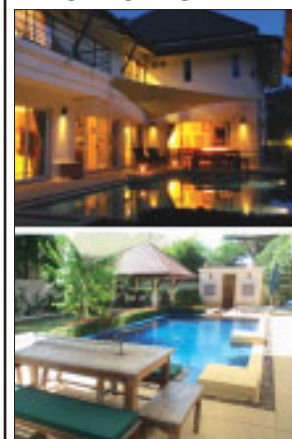
800sqm land, 350sqm living space. 12.5x4.5sqm stunning pool, modern family house with landscaped gardens. 12.9 million baht. Tel: 085-212 1794. Email: lan@evocation.net

TWO STOREY VILLA IN LAGUNA



3 bed, 3 bath, living room, quarter with bath, living room, dining, Euro kitchen, study area, pool, patio & deck area, garden, balcony, carpark, security, fully furnished, telephone line. Living area 506.25sqm, land area 349.73sqm. US\$1 million. Tel: 085-069 2800. Email: natalik555@mail.com

RARE INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY



due to relocation. Luxury 5+1 bedroom villa conveniently located 800m from BIS and central to marinas, shopping, golf, airport and beaches. 500sqm of practical, contemporary living with indoor or outdoor entertaining, excellent bathrooms and spacious bedrooms. Functional kitchen with open plan dining. Safe and secure estate. Perfect for a young family. Excellent rental return for investors. Sale price 18.5 million baht. Tel: 084-442 1580. Email: tara@blythfamily.org

CENTRAL PATONG

shop space: 90sqm. 2 floor multi-use bar, massage, cafe. Long lease no key money, relocation forces. Sale 400,000 baht. Email: businss@worrall.info

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Property Gazette

Properties For Rent

RAWAI/CHALONG



2/3 bedroom pool villa. Modern, furnished, Western-style villa with lush garden. Includes water, ADSL, cable TV, cleaning lady etc. Tucked away in a serene residential area of Rawai/Chalong, convenient access to the beaches, restaurants & shopping centers. 65,000 baht per month. For more info send email to: info@phuketLP.com

HOUSE IN KATHU



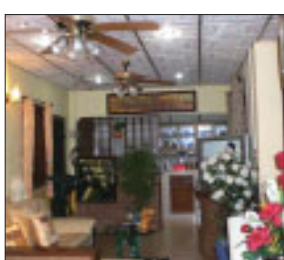
54sqm, 3 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, fully furnished, 2 floors. 18,000 baht per month for rent. 4.9 million baht for sale. Tel: 081-691 3285. Email: yuwandabier@yahoo.com

SEAVIEW CONDO IN KAMALA



240sqm full seaview condo at The Plantation. 2 suites, 1 study convertible to 3rd BR, 3 bath, large terrace and outdoor bath. Pool, gym in complex. 70,000 baht per month > 3 months. Short term OK, rate negotiable. Please contact Tel: (852) 9451-9793. Or email to: jkam@pobox.com For further details, please see our website at http://www.kamalaseaview.com

HOUSE IN KATHU



2 bedrooms, fully furnished, aircon, cable TV and TV set. Just bring your bag. 12,000 baht per month. Contact Khun Wannee. Tel: 089-288 9936. Email: wannee123@hotmail.com

LIVE AND WORK IN YOUR HOME ON KAMALA BEACH

Western-style house, 48,000 baht a month. Minimum 3 months lease. Available now. 2 bedrooms with aircon, 2 bathrooms, fully furnished, ceiling fans throughout. Western kitchen amenities. 200 sqm including dining sala and large uppersundeck. Furnished home office. Price excludes utilities, UBC, ADSL. "No advanced bookings for high season" Contact Don. Tel: 081-894 3839. Or send email to: paddypower99@yahoo.com

RAWAI HOUSE

for rent. Fully furnished, 2 bedrooms, long-term. 10,000 baht per month. Tel: 081-273 1572.

SPACE FOR RENT

2nd floor Kata Plaza, corner area, 365sqm. 500 baht per sqm. Contact Khun Worawit. Tel: 081-978 6700.

PATONG STUDIO 28SQM

Aircon, hot water, kitchen, fridge, TV, DVD. 15,000 baht a month. Tel: 089-971 5664.

CHALONG NEW HOME

2 bedroom townhome with telephone, cable TV and aircon. Tel: 089-652 1473 (English). Email: anandaestates@yahoo.com

ROYAL PHUKET MARINA

Luxury apartment on the marina, 2 ensuite, King bedroom, etc. Large private deck directly on the 20m pool, fine gym, spa and top restaurant. Long-term: 100,000 baht per month. Short-term: up to 75,000 baht per month. Call Lotus 086-281 6299 or Luk 087-840 8163.

4 BEDROOM VILLA RAWAI

Beautifully furnished, fully airconditioned, immense living area, 2 kitchens, big garden with 10x4 private pool. For rent or sale. Tel: 085-783 1890

POOL VILLA NEAR BIS

450sqm. 3 BR, 5 bath, private pool. Long-term only. 65,000THB/mth. Please contact for more info. Tel: 083-503 3328. Fax: 076-261945. Email: samon08@hotmail.com

PATAK VILLA

house for rent or sale. Patak Villa, Soi 8. 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom, 2 aircon. 250sqm with garden near Chalong pier. Price for sale 4.2 million baht or for rent 18,000 baht per month. Tel: 083-389 5080.

PALAI GREEN

for rent. Fully furnished, 1-3 bedrooms, aircon, hot shower, free cable TV, ADSL internet. Start from 9,000 baht per month. Near Chalong Bay. Please call: 081-892 4311 (Eng speaking).

HOUSE AT CHALONG



for rent. New single house, 60 sq wah. 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, aircon, cable TV, ADSL. 15,000 baht per month. Tel: 081-569 7068. Email: sirio@tisco.co.th

LARGE LUXURY HOUSE



for rent, 5 minutes to Rawai-Nai Harn beaches. 6 bedrooms, 7 bathrooms, big garden, large swimming pool, big sala. Long-term rent. 60,000 baht per month. Tel: 081-397 1835.

B.L. APARTMENT FOR RENT

New in Kathu. Big rooms, 1 bedroom, 1 living room, aircon, cable TV, ADSL, hot shower, garden, car park. 8,000 baht per month. Tel: 081-692 3163.

HOUSE IN KATHU

for rent. 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, swimming pool, fully furnished. 25,000 baht per month. Tel: 089-908 4873.

LAND LONG LEASE

30 rai, flat land, nice location on main road. Phuket City near Downroong School. Tel: 081-691 2526.

3 BDRM HOUSE FOR RENT

near Heroines' Monument. Furnished, ADSL, cable TV, A/C. 12,000 per month. Tel: 086-277-8461. Email: brunuiviv@hotmail.com

BEAUTIFUL HOME IN KAMALA

Furnished, roomy 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom house in quiet Kamala neighborhood. Available immediately. Short walk to beach, outside tsunami zone. A/C (3 units), hot water, full kitchen, storage room, garden, car port. 25,000 per month or 20,000 per month with one year lease. Tel: 086-941 8593. Email: pagon_28@hotmail.com

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2 bedroom, furnished townhouse near mountains. WiFi, aircon, kitchen, 3 bathrooms, cable TV, balcony. Move straight in. Tel: 076-296391, 086-942 0957. Email: jdean@loxinfo.co.th

NEW HOUSE FOR RENT, THALANG



Close to Laguna. Fully furnished, 2 bed, 2 bath, hot water, washing machine, ADSL. 10 mins to Bang Tao Beach and Layan Beach. Mountain view. 15,000 baht per month. Tel: 089-874 2960. Email: wawa.phuket@gmail.com

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RAWAI BEACH POOL VILLA



1, 2, 3 or 4 bedroom, bathroom, ADSL, 500 baht per day. Monthly low rate. Tel: 086-940 8914. Or email: rawai1@yahoo.com

850,000 BAHT PER YEAR



Rawai Beach. Bar, pizzeria and guesthouse. 700sqm, 9 bed, 9 bath. Contact. Tel: 086-940 8914. Email: rawai1@yahoo.com

KAMALA BEACH VILLAGE

Long-term rental. 100sqm, two double bedrooms, fully furnished modern apt. Communal pool, restaurant, gym and bar. Only 50 meters from Kamala Beach. 30,000 baht per month! Tel: +44-127-987 7745, +44-797 7208868. Fax: +44-127 9817499. Email: paul.stewart@sas-group.co.uk

HOUSE + BIG GARDEN, BANG TAO

3 single houses for rent in a very quiet area in Bang tao (Laguna) at the edge of the forest. Very private. From 2 to 3 bedrooms, rent from 12,000 to 15,000 baht per month. Please contact more details. Tel: 081-090 9642. Email: jeorge@dellapietra.ch

PATONG OCEANVIEW



Located above Patong Beach this 3 bed, 3 bath house with modern kitchen is PRICED LOW for long-term rental. Private pool, ADSL, UBC, cable TV and WHAT A VIEW! Can move in July 1st. Tel: 087-882-1963, 089-867 2430. Email: benlee53@hotmail.com

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12nts capacity, 120 pax. 13 million baht for sale, 300,000 baht per month for rent (ideal for private charter). Contact. Tel: 089-138 3838. Email: yuwandabier@yahoo.com

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Feel Free double 'sit-on' canoe with paddles. Hardly used. 20,000 baht. Call or mail for further details. Tel: 089-000 0200. Email: tonygbr@hotmail.com

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Beautiful Sea Ray Sundancer. Fully loaded. 300 hours. 2.3 million baht. Immediately available. Tel: 076-317538, 085-111 1455. Please sent email to: uwed@avia-star.com

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2X225 hp Honda 4-strokes. Price 3.9 million baht exVAT. LOA: 11.9m. Beam: 3.6m. Material: fiberglass. Max speed 45 knots. Cabin: living space, kitchen with microwave oven, bedroom (king size bed) with 38" flatscreen TV, toilet, shower and small generator. Excludes 50 mile rathyoan radar. Agent welcome. We will also build your fiberglass sports yacht to your specifications. Tel: 086-885 6885. Email: phuketyachtsales@gmail.com

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Private speedboat in very good condition for fishing and diving. Also built for private tours. For sale at 1,200,000 baht. For more information, please contact Mr Roman. Tel: 076-485610, 087-881 0031. Fax: 076-485145. website at <http://www.similan.net>

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Small dingy, about 3 or 4 meters, suitable for 3.5hp outboard motor for inshore pleasure. Tel: 076-388569, 085-794 6514. Email: hparkin@hotmail.com

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Brand new, 36 feet long. All fiberglass composite construction. Forward cabin. Email: jgkg24@hotmail.com

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for sale or rent. Nissan 450hp, 25kw, 21m. Generator: Bauer compressor or cert 45 pax. Pay over 3 years. Price 3.5 million baht. Email: colona@loxinfo.co.th

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Email: wanpen.duangjit@cbre.co.th

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Accounting

Qualifications:

- Age between 25 - 40 years old
- Good command of English
- Experience in use of quick books

International Law Office Patong Beach Co., Ltd.
Email: sam@ilo-phuket.com
Tel: 076-222191 or fax: 076-222196.

PERSONAL ASSISTANT

A++ Software, based in Thalang, requires a capable personal assistant to the directors. Thai national, must speak and write English well, computer literate, good organisational skills. Salary negotiable, accommodation available. Please contact. Tel: 076-512746, 087-417 8860, 080-524 6660 (English). Fax: 076-512747. Or send email to: carol@aplusplus software.com

CHEF WANTED

Farang or Thai to work in English bar. Must be able to cook farang food especially English pub food. 6 days per week, hrs 12pm - 10pm. Bar in Laguna area. Tel: 089-474 0431.

SALES PERSON

Real Estate business requires dynamic sales person with sales background, aged 30-40. Fluent English, computer skills and results oriented. Forward CV via mail. Tel: 086-004 3008. Email: asiacasa@gmail.com

DIVISION MANAGER

Small boutique villas resort seeks experienced property care and guests relations manager for full time position. Candidate must have bachelor degree in hotel and tourism management or related field, and strong organizational and problem solving skills. Please contact for more information. Tel: 086-004 3008. Email: asiacasa@gmail.com

SALES EXECUTIVE REQUIRED

Established real estate agency is seeking motivated individuals for the position of Sales Executive. Applicants should be fluent in English and Thai and have good computer skills. Excellent salary plus commission. Driving license essential. Tel: 076-527565. Apply to cv@phuketocceanvillas.com

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for deliveries around Phuket. 7,000 baht per month plus gasoline. Please contact for more information at tel: 076-385221, 089-428 0230. Or send email to: giovannifrova@libero.it

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Full time, must be taller than 1.65m and weigh more than 75kg. English and Thai speaking is a must. Not older than 35 years. Drivers licence. Tel: 081-537 6866.

OFFICE POSITION

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Account Payable Supervisor
Executive Sous Chef-Thai Cuisine
Resort Hosts
Commis de Cuisine

Qualifications required:

- Good command of written and spoken English
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We offer competitive salaries, minimum guaranteed service charge 7,000.-Baht, 5-days working/ 2-days off a week, 15 days Public Holiday, duty meals, uniforms with service laundry, group health insurance, talent training and development etc. Interested persons please send detailed full resume & enclosed a recent photo and expected salary by e-mail at recruit@paresaresorts.com

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GREAT OPPORTUNITY

Guesthouse with Restaurant & Bar in Kata! 10 rooms, A/C, fans, fridge, cableTV. The restaurant is marine style and the bar has a stage for live performances! Comes with WiFi and either a short or long-term Lease! 2 million baht plus rent at 42,000 baht per month (water included). Rent payable monthly. For further information, contact email: 74sean@gmx.net or Tel: 087-275 1373.

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Trip To Penang	<table border="1"> <tr> <th>Day</th> <th>May '09</th> <th>Jun '09</th> <th>Jul '09</th> <th>Aug '09</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Wed.</td> <td>13, 20, 27</td> <td>3, 10, 17, 24</td> <td>1, 8, 15, 22</td> <td>5, 12, 19, 26</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sun.</td> <td>17, 24, 31</td> <td>7, 14, 21, 28</td> <td>12, 19, 26</td> <td>2, 9, 16, 23</td> </tr> </table>	Day	May '09	Jun '09	Jul '09	Aug '09	Wed.	13, 20, 27	3, 10, 17, 24	1, 8, 15, 22	5, 12, 19, 26	Sun.	17, 24, 31	7, 14, 21, 28	12, 19, 26	2, 9, 16, 23
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TOYOTA FOR RENT

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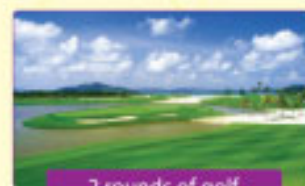
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