Maimed pilot: ‘I will fly again’

By Dan Waites and Kitima Pornmongkhonwatt

IRLINE pilot Scott McDonald is trying to put his life back together after his lower calf and foot were sliced off by a speeding motorbike in Phuket late last month.

As he lay bleeding by the side of the road, a passerby who witnessed the accident used the American’s cellphone to call for help – before pocketing the device and fleeing the scene. Mr McDonald has undergone surgery at Bangkok Hospital Phuket seven times since the accident.

He is hoping a prosthetic foot will allow him to resume his career as a pilot with Cathay Pacific – and continue to indulge in his great love, golf.

The smash happened shortly after midnight on January 24. Chicago-native McDonald, 43, was heading up Thepkrasattri Road towards his home at Yacht Haven when his phone rang.

He parked his Harley Davidson Fatboy by the side of the road, just north of Blue Canyon Country Club.

Turning the parking light on and still straddling the bike, he answered the cellphone. It was his girlfriend Wan calling to ask when he would arrive home.

He told Wan he would be home in 10 minutes. “Just as I was saying that, wham. I got slammed into by a car. And from there I don’t really remember a lot. I was in shock,” he said.

Wan was still listening, horrified, on the cellphone. “I heard screaming, ‘Ah! Ah! Ah!’ said an investigation was underway to discover who was at fault.

At the time of writing Mr McDonald, an eight-year resident of Phuket, was due to have his leg sown up on February 4. “I have his foot, now infected, sown down but not out: cathay Pacific pilot scott mcDonald now hopes a prosthetic foot will allow him to continue his career. He decided to follow doctors’ recommendations, choosing amputation.

“The prosthetics they can make are very up to par these days,” he said.

Mr McDonald’s employers, Cathay Pacific, have been “very, very supportive”, he said. “They told me just the first or second day afterwards, ‘remember your career is not over with Cathay Pacific’.”

The driver and passenger of the motorbike that hit Mr McDonald are receiving treatment at Vachira Phuket Hospital.

Inspector Sarit Budsang of Tat Chat Chai Police said an investigation was underway to discover who was at fault.

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Introduction

PHUKET: Three Phuket fishermen lost at sea for a week had to paddle their broken-down boat 19 miles before finally being rescued by the Royal Thai Navy.

Chusak Sae-aung, 43, Sanchai Pinnke, 35, and Praween Sungsoorn, 26, on January 22 set out in a longtail boat from Saphan Hin for what they thought would be a routine fishing trip.

But after the men failed to return home on January 25, their worried families alerted the Royal Thai Navy Third Area Command, which launched a search and rescue mission over the Andaman Sea.

As days passed, fears grew within the Saphan Hin community for the fishermen’s safety. The men’s family members visited Chalong Temple to pray for their safe return.

Mr Chusak said the longtail’s engine failed at about 4pm on January 23 not far from Koh Racha Noi, about 18 miles south of Phuket.

“We could see the island in the distance, but we kept drifting further away from it. We tried to make a sail from old sheets we had on board, but it didn’t work,” he said.

But without a marine band radio and unable to get signals on their mobile phones, the trio’s fear grew as night descended.

“We couldn’t sleep because of strong winds and we had to stand and balance the boat. We didn’t think we would see our families again,” he said.

The next morning, the men made three paddles from scrap wood with tools they had on board and began paddling their way back to Koh Racha Noi, albeit slowly.

Continued on page two

Lost fishermen paddle to survival

RESOURCEFUL: The three men with their makeshift paddles.
**Shade sails**

**awnings**

tensioned fabric structures

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**Indian territorial waters.**

Over the next four days, the men saw at least 10 commercial ships pass nearby. 

“We waved our flag and screamed, but no one came for us,” Mr Chusak said.

“We paddled as far as we could, but the boat is very heavy,” he said. Mr Sanchai said when he was exhausted from paddling he would repeat the name of his three-year-old daughter Baithong (banana leaf) over and over to give him strength.

“She kept me paddling and kept me alive,” he said. Meanwhile back on Phuket, Mr Sanchai’s wife and little Baithong visited the dock where the fishermen’s boat was usually docked.

“Baithong would point at where the boat usually was and say ‘papa’,” Mr Sanchai’s wife said.

By January 29, the men had only two containers of water. All three were taken to Vachira Phuket Hospital for treatment. Speaking to the Gazette on February 2, Mr Sanchai said he would like to thank the Royal Thai Navy for rescuing him, but said he would have to get back out to sea soon.

“We will have to go out again. We paddled as far as we could. We are very little to ration our food supplies,” he said.

On the morning of January 29, the men had only two containers of water left. Unbeknown to them, they had drifted so far from Phuket with five kilos of rice.

“We saved water we didn’t boil our rice. We ate very little to ration our food supplies,” he said.

The men say they will not get stranded at sea again as they plan to purchase a marine radio.

But before they do, the three men plan to honor their pact and enter the monkhood.

**Fifty firemen fight blaze**

IT took over 50 firefighters more than two hours to bring a blaze at a recycling center in Wichit under control on February 2.

The blaze started at about 7:40pm at the Naka Recycle warehouse, just north of the turnoff to Wat Naka on Chao Fa West Road. A total of 18 fire engines as well as Phuket City Police, Kusoldharm Foundation workers and Phuket Governor Wichai Phraisa-ngop rushed to the scene. The last flames were finally extinguished just before 10pm.

The next morning, little but charred remains of paper, cardboard, clothes, plastics and other recyclable materials remained in the warehouse, which was formerly a lumber yard.

The wooden warehouse structure, however, remained intact. Police are now investigating the cause of the blaze.

— Atechaa Khamlao

**TAT to keep ‘zero fare’ packages out**

THE Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) is working to establish a standardized system of ‘branded’ tours to Phuket specifically for the Chinese market.

The initiative, intended to keep ‘zero tour fare’ package operators out of Phuket, was discussed at a meeting of tourism industry leaders held at The Metropole hotel last month.

Chairing the meeting was TAT Deputy Governor for International Marketing Sansern Ngarnsri.

Under the plan, tour companies would be allowed to submit an unlimited number of tour programs for approval by a review panel comprised of TAT officials, members of the Thai-Chinese Tourism Alliance Association (TCTA) and other government agencies and private sector groups.

Once approved, the packages would bear annually renewable verification logos, certifying them as tours approved by the TAT, Ministry of Tourism and Sports as well as the government of China, which last year outlawed sales of tours without fixed itineraries.

Participants will now begin working to establish how many different tour categories should be offered and what the exact qualifications for each should be.

One possibility presented at the meeting was to categorize tours into ‘platinum’, ‘gold’ and ‘silver’ options, each specifying such factors as the star-rating of the hotels to be used, meal prices and restrictions on the amount of time allocated for shopping. ‘Platinum’ tours, for example, would see tourists staying at five-star hotels and not having to take part in any of the ‘shopping trips’ that have become a major source of complaint among Chinese tourists visiting Thailand.

Participants will hash out the details in meetings to be held in Chiang Mai and Koh Samui before drafting a proposal and sending it to the Ministry of Tourism and Sports for approval.

The TAT sees China as a high-potential source of inbound tourists. About 770,000 Chinese visited Thailand in 2009, down slightly from 2008 when 819,000 visited.

Phuket Tourist Association (PTA) Vice President Blhurritt Mawongsang said the move is intended to keep ‘zero tour fare’ operators out of Phuket.

— Atechaa Khamlao and Stephen Fein

**PHUKET DAILY NEWS**

**February 6 - 12, 2010**

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**NEWS**

**PCF 218**

**To Cape**
Camp owner defends rampaging elephant

THE owner of an elephant that recently went berserk and injured two Swedish tourists has defended the beast, blaming its mahout for the incident.

Trin Khanwilaikul, owner of ‘Camp Chang’ in Kalim, said the elephant named ‘Captain’ would not be punished for the rampage, which also damaged a car.

“He is a nice elephant, but he had the wrong mahout. It is like a car being driven by someone other than its owner,” she said.

Captain, a 20-year-old bull, is one of seven elephants owned by the camp. Only two are males.

On the afternoon of January 25, Swedish tourists Gustav Carlsson, 31, and John Haraldsson were riding Captain at the camp.

Mr Carlsson’s 31-year-old wife, Hanna Agnarsson-Carlsson, and the couple’s 10-year-old son Oscar were on another elephant. Mr Haraldsson’s wife and four-year-old son were on a third.

Just the day before, Gustav and Hanna had held their wedding on Phuket, attended by a large party of Swedes.

Mr Carlsson said Captain’s mahout had been poking the bull’s head and neck with a sharp stick for 20 minutes prior to the incident.

The elephant seemed to be getting angry, he said.

When Captain stopped moving, a mahout on the elephant behind fired a slingshot at his bottom.

With this, Captain went berserk.

The raging bull grabbed a tree, pulling it down onto a car. “We were shocked and very scared. We thought we would get killed,” Mr Carlsson said.

The mahout jumped off. “The elephant continued to smash more trees,” he said.

The two tourists managed to get off Captain’s back by grabbing an overhead cable and jumping onto a car below.

“We jumped off the car. Suddenly the elephant rolled the car over before stepping through its window,” Mr Haraldsson said.

Then he turned to us. While we were trying to run away I realized I had hurt my left foot. I’m not sure if the elephant stepped on it and broke the bone,” he said.

With a bone protruding out of his left leg, Mr Carlsson managed to make it hopping onto one leg into a nearby hut, where the rest of the party were already hiding.

Terrified, the group cowered in the hut while the elephant continued its rampage.

“The bad stuff lasted about 15 minutes,” Mr Carlsson said. “I heard the elephant was back to normal about 30 minutes later.”

“My son saw the whole thing. He was very scared and was crying a lot. Luckily my daughter wasn’t there,” he said.

Mr Haraldsson flew home to Sweden on January 27 for treatment on his bruised knee.

Mr Carlsson was treated at Phuket International Hospital for a broken left leg and bruised heel.

“I think we’ll come back to Thailand, probably in the next three to four years. But we’ll never ride an elephant again for sure,” he said.

Camp owner Ms Trin was keen to defend animal welfare standards at the camp.

“We treat our elephants very well. You can see that our elephants are very healthy and big,” Ms Trin said.

– Atechat Khamlo

Top cop shuffles off

PATONG’s top cop, Kathu Police Superintendent Grissak Songmoonmark, has been transferred off the island in the latest police reshuffle.

Col Grissak will take up the significantly less hectic position of Superintendent of Kuraburi District Police in Phang Nga.

His replacement, effective February 19, will be current Tong Tong Police Superintendent Arayapan Pukbuakoo.

Col Grissak seemed saddened by the news of the transfer to rural Kuraburi, Phang Nga’s northernmost district and a far cry from the bright lights of Patong.

“I have been working here since June, 2007,” he said. “I didn’t request the transfer, but those are my orders. What can I say? I have to go.”

As for his new posting, he said: “I have never been there before, but I think it will be good and will give me a chance to make new friends. I have held many positions in many different locations, so the adjustment should not be difficult at all.”

“It is hard to say at this time how people will react to the transfer, but I put my heart into my work to keep Patong safe and secure, so I think those who want Patong to remain peaceful will be sad,” he said.

“I would like all Royal Thai Police to have good morale, never giving up so they can work hard to serve the people,” he said.

The latest reshuffle saw 26 officers stationed in Phuket transferred to other provinces.

Phuket Immigration Superintendent Chanatpol Yongbunjerd has been transferred to a position in Bangkok.

– Gazette reporters
Rage on the road leaves expat dead

ROAD rage claimed the life of an elderly German expat late last month. On the evening of January 27, Wolf-Dieter Kesselheim, 66, was stabbed to death in an altercation with three Thais on the busy Wiset Road from Chalong Circle to Rawai. The next day, police arrested 32-year-old Pittaya Srijitraporn for the killing. Mr Pittaya claimed he acted alone — and in self defense. Yet friends of Mr Kesselheim dispute Mr Pittaya’s account. Dan Waites reports.

AROUND 200 people attended the funeral of Wolf-Dieter Kesselheim at Chalong Temple on the morning of January 3.

A prominent and well-respected member of the island’s German community, Mr Kesselheim had lived in Thailand for more than 30 years. For the past two decades, he worked for a company selling military equipment to the Thai armed forces.

This was no fresh-off-the-plane retiree, looking to spend his twilight years in the sun.

We have just one first-person account of the fight that ended Mr Kesselheim’s life: that of his confessed murderer, Pittaya Srijitraporn.

Mr Pittaya was picked up by police at Kata Viewpoint, where he made a living charging tourists to have their photographs taken with sea eagles.

On the morning of January 28, he was made to re-enact his version of events for the media.

Mr Pittaya’s two young cousins were also present at the re-enactment, their faces hidden behind balaclavas because they are both minors.

Though some witnesses said all three Thais were involved in the fatal scuffle, Mr Pittaya claimed he acted alone.

Mr Pittaya said he had just picked up the younger Thai from school and was driving him home on his pink Yamaha Fino when the incident took place.

He confessed to cutting off Mr Kesselheim’s pickup truck at around 7pm outside Chalong Police Station.

According to Mr Pittaya’s account, this angered the German, who followed the three Thais in his pick-up to Chalong Circle, shouting at them and giving them ‘the finger’ along the way.

Both vehicles turned off the traffic circle onto Wiset Road, heading towards Rawai, with the German honking his horn angrily, Mr Pittaya said.

Eventually, Mr Pittaya pulled over in front of the German’s truck, forcing him to a stop in front of a 7-Eleven store.

Mr Kesselheim was ‘too drunk’ to talk the incident through, his killer claimed.

Mr Pittaya said the German got out of the truck and punched him in the face, starting a scuffle he realized he could not win against the larger, but much older, man.

When Mr Kesselheim got him in a headlock, the Thai pulled a knife from his pocket and stabbed him twice in the chest, he said.

After the German fell to the ground, Mr Pittaya and his cousins fled on the motorbike.

But at least one long-time friend of Mr Kesselheim has come forward to question Mr Pittaya’s version of events.

The woman, who for safety reasons wishes to remain anonymous, claims the Thai’s ‘self-serving’ account is not credible for several reasons.

“Wolf lived in Thailand for more than 30 years,” she said.

“He spoke fluent Thai and he knew how to behave. I never saw him stick his finger up at anyone.”

The friend said she could not believe Mr Kesselheim was drunk at the time of the incident.

“Mr Kesselheim was ‘too drunk’ to talk the incident through, his killer claimed.”

The friend said she could not believe Mr Kesselheim was drunk at the time of the incident.

“He liked to drink sometimes, sure, but he was on the way to a business meeting. He would never have been drunk at that time.”

The woman described Mr Kesselheim as very safety conscious. “I am amazed Wolf got out of his truck under those circumstances,” she said.

“Central to Mr Pittaya’s assertion that he acted in self-defense was his claim that the 66-year-old German had him in a headlock when the stabbing took place.

“It’s impossible,” the friend said. “If I have you in a headlock, there’s no way you can stab me in the chest like that.”

Mr Pittaya has been charged with the premeditated murder of Wolf-Dieter Eugen Kesselheim.

If convicted he could face a jail sentence of 15 years to life or even the death penalty, depending on the court.

At last report Mr Pittaya was still in detention at Phuket Provincial Court and police were continuing their investigation.

Under Thai law they have up to 84 days to complete the investigation and file court charges.

Police said the two minors were not involved in the murder and will not be charged with any criminal offenses.
A NATIONAL park that includes some of Phuket’s most stunning stretches of coastline is under siege, the park’s chief has warned.

Leatherback turtles recently returned to Sirinath National Park’s Mai Khao Beach to lay their eggs after an absence of years.

Despite this unexpected good news, park director Nonthawit Chaturabandit is warning that unless something is done about encroachment and coastal erosion, there may not be much left of Mai Khao and Nai Yang beaches in just a few years’ time.

The 56,000-rai park includes both beaches, as well as the hilly, forested region south of Nai Yang and 43,000 rai of protected water and offshore seabed.

Mr Nonthawit said 260 people have encroached upon more than a fifth of the 13,000 rai of the park land.

Many are farmers who are trying to prove they occupied the land before its establishment as a national park. If they fail to prove this in court, the park would reclaim their landholdings, Mr Nonthawit said.

Intruders recently encroached on an additional three rai of park land. After the authorities noticed that buildings had been erected on park land, they destroyed the structures.

Ton Son pine trees found along both Mai Khao and Nai Yang beaches were also under threat, he said.

A police investigation is currently underway over the mysterious felling of eight of the trees at Mai Khao late last year near the West Sands hotel and condominium project.

Natural forces are also eroding the park as wind is eroding exposed land on which the pine trees stand. Three or four of the trees have already fallen for this reason and coastal erosion is threatening another.

After touring other encroached forest areas in Karon and Patong, the team visited a 100-rai plot located inside the reserve and just 300 meters from the Bang Khanoon Agro-forestry Office.

Many of the trees in the area had already been felled, while others stood dying.

Encroachers had cut deep rings around the tree trunks, allowing the sap to leak out.

Recently it also emerged that human encroachment had laid waste to more than two-thirds of a large forest reserve, also in the north of Phuket.

The Bang Khanoon forest reserve in tambon Thepkrasattri originally covered more than 5,000 rai, but just 1,500 rai of virgin forest remain.

In January, Phuket Governor Wichai Phraisa-ngop accompanied an inspection team from the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (MNRE) to the site of the latest devastation.

Led by MNRE Inspector General Monthip Siriratana Tabucanon, the team were in Phuket to witness first hand the extent of the island’s encroachment problem.

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Many of the trees in the area had already been felled, while others stood dying.

Encroachers had cut deep rings around the tree trunks, allowing the sap to leak out.

Dr Monthip said the MNRE had ordered local officials to use aerial photography to detect deforestation on the island.

Any future damage would be reported directly to Natural Resources and Environment Minister Suwit Khunkitti and subsequent investigations would determine whether local officers were involved, she said.

Figures released by the MNRE’s Phuket office last year showed the rate of forest destruction in Phuket had quadrupled over the last six years.

The park chief said he hoped Prince of Songkla University researchers could help determine the best shape and length for the breakwater and come up with a cost estimate.

“If we do nothing, erosion will destroy the coastline,” he said.

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**Rice to the rescue**

Workers load 100 tonnes of Thai rice from government stocks onto a Thai Airways International cargo plane for a humanitarian flight to help victims of quake hit Haiti.

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**Queer News**

**Woman bares all on Bangla**

PHUKET: While it’s not unusual for Thais to make merit after good fortune comes their way, one woman put a fruity new twist on the custom on January 19.

The woman, who gave her name as ‘Toy’, stripped off on Soi Bangla and ran around naked to thank spirits for granting her wish of finding a foreign husband.

The report did not say what her new husband thought of the ritual.

The somewhat intoxicated Mrs Toy, who appeared to be in her thirties, took off all her clothes when she crossed at the end of Soi Bangla and ran around naked to the streets of Patong.

She said she had wished that she would find a foreign husband when she moved to Phuket and promised that if her wish came true, she would dance naked in the streets of Patong.

When she finally met the farang of her dreams, she had to pay back the spirits with her nude display.

Police held the woman until she sobered up, then let her go home fully dressed.

Source: Siang Tai

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**Gaur goes man to death**

CHACHENGSAO: A farmer died after being badly gored by a gaur, a species of wild cattle.

Thanomsak Sae-sim, 43, spent a week in hospital following the attack, suffering from a broken back and cerebral edema. He succumbed to his injuries on January 27.

The victim’s mother, Angun Sae-sim, said Mr Thanomsak was working in a cassava field when the attack happened on January 19.

The gaur rushed out of the trees and gored Mr Thanomsak before throwing him into the air with its horns numerous times. Finally the victim’s friends managed to scare the beast away by banging sticks and shouting. They rushed Mr Thanomsak to hospital, Mrs Angun said.

Gaurs are the largest species of wild cattle in the world. They are classified as a threatened species and are rare in Thailand.

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**Karaoke fan loses penis**

CHACHOENGSAO: A woman almost severed her husband’s penis on January 31 after seeing him kiss a karaoke singer on the cheek.

The pair were drinking at home with about 10 friends when Anand Ongsombun, 48, began to get a little too close to a guest who worked at a local karaoke bar.

Mr Anand reportedly asked if he could kiss the singer on the cheek. This so enraged Mrs Anand’s wife, 53-year-old Uri Emmod, that she ran to the kitchen, grabbed a knife and slashed at his husband’s groin.

Rescue workers rushed Mr Anand to hospital, where surgeons managed to reattach his organ with more than 20 stitches.

Mr Anand said his wife was very drunk when she attacked him so he would not press charges.

Source: Khao Sod

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**American hotelier takes life over huge losses**

CHIANG MAI: An American hotel and bar owner was found dead in his condo on January 28 after an apparent suicide. His business had reportedly been suffering heavy losses.

Forty-eight-year-old James Gregson was found by his housekeeper in the bathroom of his condo in the Twin Peaks development on Chang Khaen Road.

Police found a half empty bottle of Lannate insecticide and two cans of soft drinks. The room was locked from the inside and there were no signs of a struggle, police said.

Mr Gregson’s housekeeper, Kritiya Suriya, 35, said Mr Gregson had recently invested 10mn baht in leasing the Sri Tokyo hotel in Chiang Mai and converting it to the Landon Lanna Hotel.

The hotel, opened in October 2009, is aimed at gay holi-day makers. It claims to have the largest gay bar in the North.

Mrs Kritiya told police that Mr Gregson had said he was losing large amounts of money on the venture.

He also told her that his gay hotel businesses in the US were also losing money.

Police said they believe Mr Gregson killed himself because of business worries.

Source: Thai Rath
Thousands of US servicemen stationed aboard the USS Nimitz and its support vessels arrived in Phuket on January 31 for five days of rest and relaxation.

Anxious to get off the 333-meter vessel after a month on board, sailors and marines quickly formed a long line on the hangar deck.

USS Nimitz Commander Adm John ‘Fozzie’ Miller said the US servicemen were ‘delighted’ at getting the chance to visit Phuket and meet the Thai people. He described Thais as ‘great friends’ of the American people.

All staff going ashore had been thoroughly briefed on a range of safety issues and were committed to being ‘good guests’ during their stay in Phuket, Adm Miller said.

Teams of volunteer US servicemen will take part in community relations or ‘Comrel’ projects at two local schools during the liberty leave, he said.

The Comrels are organized with the Rotary Club of Patong Beach.

Today and tomorrow sailors from the USS Nimitz will paint the cafeteria at Baan Ao Nam Bor School in Ao Makhham, near the Deep Sea Port.

Meanwhile, sailors from the escort vessels USS Pinckney and the USS Rentz are scheduled to paint classrooms, hallways and fences at the Baan Sai Nam Yen School in Patong.

Once ashore, sailors found a number of vendors and taxi drivers eagerly awaiting their arrival.

Large bottles of ice-cold Heineken sold from Styrofoam coolers at 100 baht each were popular among the sailors, who are denied the right to drink on board.

– Gazette reporters
It’s so good Phyo you

Ani Phyo, named the world’s “sexiest raw vegan woman” by Vegetarian Star news, recently gave a workshop at Mom Tri’s Villa Royale resort on how to make delicious meals using her raw vegan recipes.

Ani has received additional awards from online vegan pundit ‘Best of Raw’, including Best Chef, Favorite Cookbook and Favorite Educator.

By eating a clean, healthy diet of foods rich in the nutrients it requires, our body needs to eat a healthy raw foods meal every day and then the body will regain its natural strength.

“Ani advises that each of us think more consciously about what we eat and what we do with our body. This is part of the Buddhist concept of being mindful.

“The skin is the largest organ of the body. Whatever we put on our skin goes into our blood stream. We need to be careful even when we take a shower that chemicals are not put into the water which can be absorbed or environmental stress. The same goes for deodorants and shampoos.”

But Ani’s main message at the workshop was how to prepare nutritional foods made from raw ingredients. She does not favor the use of any animal products. “Milks is good to feed to baby cows. But we are not cows so should not eat dairy products as many people can not digest these products without creating some strain to the digestive system.”

She also advises using nuts mixed with fruit, ground in a food processor, instead of processed wheat which can cause bloating, intestinal inflammation, diarrhea and malnutrition.

“The body craves good nutrition. People often overeat as the body is hungry for vitamins and minerals. I tell my clients to eat a healthy raw foods meal every day and then the body will not crave as much less nutritious food. Raw foods are mostly fiber and water and full of nutrients.”

Ani has a number of books and DVDs to her credit including Ani’s Raw Food Kitchen, which was awarded ‘Best Vegetarian Cookbook USA 2007’.

To watch Ani’s videos and get free access to recipes, check out her website at www.AniPhyo.com.

Celebrity raw food chef Ani Phyo proves that vegans can enjoy good health and good food.

Although the use of any animal products.

In order to respect and care for our bodies people need to eat a healthy diet of foods rich in the nutrients it requires.”

“We need to eliminate cooked and processed foods that have little nutritional value. In order to respect and care for our bodies people need to eat a healthy diet of foods rich in the nutrients it requires.”

“There are four distinct areas of stress. The first is emotional stress which can be helped through meditation and living in healthy relationships. The fourth is nutritional stress which requires feeding the body a diet that can allow it to thrive and deal with the other stresses.

Ani advises that each of us think more consciously about what we eat and what we do with our body. This is part of the Buddhist concept of being mindful.

“The skin is the largest organ of the body. Whatever we put on our skin goes into our blood stream. We need to be careful even when we take a shower that chemicals are not put into the water which can be absorbed or environmental stress. The same goes for deodorants and shampoos.”

But Ani’s main message at the workshop was how to prepare nutritional foods made from raw ingredients. She does not favor the use of any animal products. “Milks is good to feed to baby cows. But we are not cows so should not eat dairy products as many people can not digest these products without creating some strain to the digestive system.”

She also advises using nuts mixed with fruit, ground in a food processor, instead of processed wheat which can cause bloating, intestinal inflammation, diarrhea and malnutrition.

“The body craves good nutrition. People often overeat as the body is hungry for vitamins and minerals. I tell my clients to eat a healthy raw foods meal every day and then the body will not crave as much less nutritious food. Raw foods are mostly fiber and water and full of nutrients.”

Ani has a number of books and DVDs to her credit including Ani’s Raw Food Kitchen, which was awarded ‘Best Vegetarian Cookbook USA 2007’.

To watch Ani’s videos and get free access to recipes, check out her website at www.AniPhyo.com.
Current data shows Phuket as the Province with the highest incidence of people infected with HIV and AIDS and that 60% of all new HIV infections occurred in teens and young adults aged 15 to 25 years-old.

The Life Home Project Foundation (LHPF) is addressing the urgent needs of the island’s HIV community by providing a secure home for women and children affected with the virus, while also promoting HIV/AIDS education.

Their Koh Sireh shelter presently accommodates 30 women and 25 children living with HIV/AIDS. It provides childcare services, hospice care, health education and family support to the those living at the LHPF house, as well as another 170 children around Phuket.

During their stay, women participate in training workshops held on the premises to promote self-sufficiency and self-esteem through occupational skill building classes in sewing, art, and handicrafts.

The safe and supportive environment helps families cope with the effects of living with HIV/AIDS.

LHPF aims to educate the youth of Phuket to the dangers of unprotected sex, in order to prevent future unwanted pregnancies and the spread of HIV/AIDS infection.

Part of the community outreach program includes a telephone hotline which offers counseling, HIV information, medical treatment options and general health care tips. They also operate a local radio station program for the purpose of raising HIV/AIDS awareness.

LHPF services are available to all island residents, but cater to many disadvantaged and at-risk people, including women’s groups, families in crisis, teens, immigrants, and people working within the sex trade.

In recent years LHPF has been surviving on generous donations mainly from Europe, some small donations from UNICEF and Global Fund USA.

On March 27, the Life Home Project Foundation will host Phuket’s first St Patrick’s Day Ball and fundraising event at the JW Marriott Phuket Resort and Spa in Mai Khao.

To celebrate all things Irish, the event will feature traditional Gaelic music, dancing, food, and auctions. Proceeds will go towards supporting the foundation.

The evening of fun begins with welcome cocktails at 6:30pm. The dress code is Irish national costume or black tie.

Event tickets are 3,000 baht each. For more information about LHPF organization or for event tickets contact Daroong on 076-614 060 or 081-3979 809.

LHPF is currently in the process of taking donations for the ball’s live and silent auction prizes. Donations of hotel accommodation, dinner vouchers, art work, charter flights, golf green fees, gym sessions, yoga classes, diving courses and more are welcomed by LHPF.

For auction donation details please email Julie Street at Julie@tawanproperties.com, or Hélène Fallon Wood at irelandconsulatephuket@gmail.com, or Kathy Coulson at kcoulson@bisphuket.ac.th.

Life Home Project staff and volunteers from Prince of Songkla University participate in a kids activity day at the Koh Sireh shelter.
B ack flipping three feet into the air, walking on his hands, cartwheeling whilst flailing legs kick the air and onlookers hold their breath is a daily occurrence for Joaquin ‘Mr J’ Foster-Gross.

The 32-year-old American born traveler is a Profeta (Teacher) of the Brazilian martial art Capoeira. On a month-long visit to Phuket, Mr J recently hosted a free-of-charge workshop at Phuket International Academy (PIA). Among his 30 Capoeira disciples – both young and the slightly older teachers and parents who turned up – was eleven-year-old PIA student Olivia De Perthuis.

“It was my first time and I loved the movement involved in Capoeira. And the music, too,” she said.

Mr J has studied and taught with Capoeira mestres both in the Americas and Africa over the past 15 years and said the martial art form can build bridges between everyone, everywhere.

Mr J said debate still reigns over the origins of Capoeira, but most agree it was African slaves from today’s Angola, that brought the art form to Brazil in the 1600s.

Some interpretations suggest Capoeira was a form of slave rebellion to their masters disguised by a facade of dance. So much so, the rebellious martial art was outlawed in Brazil in the 1800s, Mr J said.

It wasn’t until 1930, when Brazilian authorities recognized the cultural value of Capoeira, that they lifted the ban.

Since then, Capoeira has morphed into fragmented forms, transcended its Afro-Brazilian roots and is practiced from Tokyo to Toronto, LA to London – and now, in Phuket, Thailand.

Mr J’s two hour workshop at PIA, saw children as young as six form Roda’s (circle of life), sparring with one another while accompanied by ritualistic music.

The sparring is marked by fluid non-contact acrobatic play, feints, and extensive use of sweeps, kicks, elbow strikes, and punches, Mr J said.

Mr J said whilst in the Roda, Capoeiristas enter into a dialogue of expression through kinetic energy, reading and anticipating each others next feint or move.

At the PIA workshop, Mr J gave a five-minute Capoeira demonstration, executing a series of evasive cartwheels and double spinning kicks for his drop-jawed disciples.

With elated students leaving the workshop, invigorated with their new-found martial art, Mr J said the response was inspirational.

A new martial art form has been embedded in the subconscious for a select few on the island. It is Mr J’s hope that seed of inspiration can be continued after he jets off back to America.

To find out more or talk to Mr J about Capoeira contact: joaquin.fostergross@gmail.com

– Fraser Morton
EX-PAT GALLERY

Debbie Dionysius

Debbie is part of a small cadre of senior managers in the office. Some of the many staff not in that group seemed to be dashing around everywhere, possibly trying to look as if they were doing something massively important. But Debbie sits at her desk unfazed and with the usual smile that says, “Nice to see you; what’s happening, and if it’s not important make it quick and get out of here so I can get back to business!”

Its Laguna Phuket’s Destination Marketing office and Debbie Dionysius is head of it. She knows what she’s doing. At the moment, she’s organizing a new Laguna Phuket Advantage Card program and laying the groundwork for the resort’s first International Asia-Pacific Championship Ironman 70.3 event in 2010.

She has very successfully organized and managed both commercial and charity events, including the ESPN STAR Sports charity weekends; a couple of tennis tournaments featuring none other than Paradorn Srichaphan; a ‘Phuket is Back’ post-tsunami campaign; several marketing themes; and multiple marathons and internationally recognized Laguna Phuket Triathlons.

She has also played major roles in the Phuket Tsunami Recovery Fund, assisting local people to rebuild their lives, homes and boats; the Laguna Phuket Community English Language Centre for locals; the Michael Learns to Rock concert for the Life Home Project for HIV infected mothers and children; Star Aid and other annual gala events; and many more.

It doesn’t all happen on the same day, fortunately, or the routine, organized mayhem in Debbie’s office would collapse into total chaos. Every one of these events is a marathon of organization and executing detail, requiring a calm and collected person to put it all together and make sure that everything runs smoothly, or at least appears to unfold according to plan.

Debbie knows how to remain cool and perhaps that’s why her associates clearly value her efforts, and have done so since she arrived on Phuket in early 1995 to accept a position as Personal Assistant to the then Assistant Managing Director of Laguna Resorts & Hotels, Khun Eamsri.

Soon after joining the resort mega-complex, Debbie, as Manager of Destination Marketing, began to work directly for Laguna Phuket Managing Director James Batt, a master diplomat who seemed to excel in the day-to-day battles with local bureaucrats and other trouble makers. Among locals, James acquired the honorary title of “Mayor of Laguna”. Since his departure over three years ago, the reins have been taken over by Michael Ayling, formerly Financial Controller at Laguna, to whom Debbie now reports.

“We constantly have a lot going on with both events and non-event related marketing activities. Just organizing the Laguna Phuket Triathlon—an internationally recognized event—is a full time job.” Wikipedia says “The Laguna Phuket Triathlon is considered Southeast Asia’s premier triathlon. [It is] one of the world’s most successful ‘destination distance’ triathlons, meaning it does not conform to any of the standard triathlon distances.”

Raised in rural Queensland, at age 18 Debbie began to explore the world and vowed to spend as much of her life overseas as possible. So far, that amounts to about 20 years of living in Sweden, the USA, UK and Thailand, with bouts of extensive travels thrown in between plus a few valuable years working in Sydney’s travel industry.

The mother of two daughters, ages 9 and 6, she has adjusted well to Phuket and clearly continues to get a buzz out of her many challenges with one of the world’s greatest resort organizations.

And what does the future hold? “I guess I’m here for awhile longer as life in Phuket is just too good to give up!” she says with her usual wry acceptance of the way things are.

— Graham Doven

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, ahh, 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.
BEACH BEAUTIFICATION: Sustainable Smiles, an environmental non-profit organization, held a beach clean-up on January 29 on Thai Muang Beach in Phang-nga Province. Over 340 students and community members came out to help clean 4km of beach front while learning about the importance of protecting Thailand’s marine ecosystems and other natural resources.

FIESTA FANTASTICA: Guests danced under a full moon at the Caliente Salsa party held at Royal Phuket Marina on January 30. Bodies moved to Latin beats, while the tequila and music flowed freely late into the night. Pictured are (from left): Bota girl; RPM PR & Events Manager Murat Can Sakarya; Tequila girl Jade; Managing Director of Internship Thailand Jorge De la Torre; and DJ Ricardo from Latinos Sabotaje, Bangkok.

SNAP HAPPY: Photographers Rattapong ‘Boy’ Pollakornand and Phonsunt ‘Deng’ Phathrapeephan pose during the grand opening party for their creative joint venture D-IMAGEPLUS at Lad Yai Chill House on January 30. The informal event featured portrait and landscape photo exhibitions and a video presentation from the gallery’s proprietors accompanied by wine specially selected by Evason’s sommelier Monika Biedka-Vescovi.

HELP FOR HAITI: The Kids Love Kids Haiti fundraiser was held at ABC Nursery in Rawai on February 1, raising about 80,000 baht for the UNICEF emergency fund. Local businesses, including Evason Spa & Resort, Mom Tri’s Villa Royale and the Holiday Inn contributed to the silent auction with prizes such as free hotel nights. Pushing the raffle bids along were a multitude of dinner vouchers courtesy of Don’s Mall, Los Amigos, Two Chefs and even babysitting and house cleaning services from ABC Nursery.

HIGH-END HAUNT: Absolute Nakalay Beach Resort opened on January 27 with a fabulous party. Developed by Absolute Resorts & Hotels, it is the latest addition to their growing portfolio of resorts. Pictured are (from left) Absolute Resorts’ Managing Director Khun Supachart Ruamsam; Chairman Bryan Lunt; CEO Vladimir Sucevan; VP of Sales Svetlana Kostromitina; and Director of A-Plan Properties Darren Judges.

MONASTIC MORNING: At dawn on January 31, ceremonies were held throughout Thailand for the ordination of 100,000 monks. At Wat Kuean in Phuket Town, 150 Nagas, or monk candidates, started their religious indoctrination with Vice Governor Teerayuth Eimtrakul leading the grand opening ceremony. The mass ordination period runs from January 19 to March 8. A ceremony will also be held at Wat Kuean on February 8.

BEACH BEAUTIFICATION: Sustainable Smiles, an environmental non-profit organization, held a beach clean-up on January 29 on Thai Muang Beach in Phang-nga Province. Over 340 students and community members came out to help clean 4km of beach front while learning about the importance of protecting Thailand’s marine ecosystems and other natural resources.
Dining divinity discovered at DaVinci

On the menu

Elizabeth Branca

Look for the Vitruvian man in Nai Harn and you’ll find DaVinci Ristorante Pizzeria, which offers a variety of Italian fare in their alfresco up-market plaza.

Reminiscent of Florence’s great piazzas, DaVinci’s venue sprawls into three distinct restaurant personalities: the sexy hot-spot V-lounge, the family-friendly DaVinci Pizzeria with adjacent kid’s play area and the outdoor bistrot-style Ristorante with private dining room.

Marc Norris, the general manager and DaVinci partner, has been greeting his customers almost nightly since he took over the spot in January 2009.

The gracious and ubiquitous Norris takes his job seriously. “As an owner and manager I could just sit in the corner enjoying my food and wine all night, but I like to know my customers and make sure they had a great dining experience with us.”

After years as a high profile electronics marketing executive, Norris wanted to try something different. “The only restaurant experience I had before DaVinci was eating at great restaurants for 30 years.” But from the way he gushes about food textures, smells and tastes, you’d never label him a neophyte gourmand.

Executive chef John Keattisak Engchuan has been with DaVinci for three years and understands the flavorful nuances of regional Italian cooking by using earthy extra virgin olive oils, pungent pecorinos and beautifully ripe ingredients. This Thai chef interprets Italian cuisine as if he hailed from the lemon groves of Positano and his last name ended in a vowel-bellissimo.

“Have we one of the finest pizzas in Phuket,” teuts Mr. Norris, “because of our authentic brick pizza oven and our fresh ingredients.” From classic Margherita pizza with creamy mozzarella, fragrant basil and ripe tomato to their savory Salamino and Gorgonzola pizza, DaVinci does pizza to perfection, all priced under 300 baht.

Packing in crowds every night, the pizzeria is especially popular with families due to the adjacent children’s play area. After a quarto-frommaggio pizza, parents have the opportunity to enjoy a leisurely glass of Bosco Del Cermioli Rosso house red, while the kids amuse themselves nearby with Legos, building blocks and a drawing table; sounds like a slice of heaven.

The dark wood furnishings, candlelight and white tablecloths are a Melanie of European and tropical influences. Well-heeled tourists and casually attired locals alike enjoy DaVinci Ristorante’s artfully plated signature dishes and languish happily over entrees made with fresh herbs, pastas, seafood and meats.

For the perfect starter, the Bruschetta DaVinci, with its garlicky goodness and sweet Roma-style tomatoes served on a thick slice of daily baked peasant bread, pairs perfectly with the pear bouquet of the Grapes del Frutti Pinot Grigio.

Appetizer selections range from traditional Misto and Caprese Ensaldas, with locally purveyed ripened veggies and aged balsamic; the Affettato Misto platter is piled with cured meats like prosciutto and salami. Somewhere between the first course and the entree, diners begin to realize DaVinci’s culinary success doesn’t come from labor intensive recipes bona fide by Le Cordon Bleu, but rather from the simple goodness of their fresh ingredients.

The menu celebrates the flavorful and relaxed tastes of the Mediterranean, listing dishes inspired by the soil and sea, like white snapper cooked in olive oil and white wine, and Black spaghetti with squid and prawns in chunky tomato sauce.

The signature entree, the Filetto DaVinci, is a buttery soft cut of beef with fresh creamed spinach and golden potatoes served with a white truffle cream, similar to a béchamel, and worthy of its fanatical following.

It would take a sizable amount of willpower not to indulge in the wildly decadent chocolate custard with chocolate tops on the espresso martini, or just sip an espresso on the brightly pillowed rattan couches while the chilled-out music blends the sounds of Sade, Moby, Simply Red and Café del Mar into a perfect distant rhythm.

The lounge’s focal point is a state-of-the-art, glass encased wine room which not only showcases DaVinci’s impressive wine collection, but a Ferrari F-1 engine block from the 2004 racing season. Ferrari’s engine block and the D’Abuzzo Montepulciano on display inspire a lot of conversation from the bar, where diners, music lovers and singles converge under the stars.

DaVinci Ristorante Pizzeria is open seven days a week from 5:30pm till late. Reservations are recommended on weekends. W: davinciphuket.com. T: 076-289 574.
“Invite Your Beloved to White Box & Make Her Feel Special”

White Valentine

Reservation:
076-346271
Complimentary
One Way Pick Up Service

Sunday 14th Feb

Romantic Dinner 4 Courses / Love Potion Cocktail
Smoked Salmon Wrap w/ Guacamole / Sea Food Lover Basket (Rock Lobster, Mussel, Clam, Tiger Prawn, Oyster, Squid)
Lamb Saddle w/ Pesto “En Croute”, Polenta Tart w/ Fennel Confit & Grilled Artichokes, Piquillos Coulis
“Pomme d’ Amour” & Strawberry Prosecco w/ Orange Sorbet
3,500 B net / Couple

247/5 Prabaramee Rd., Kalim Beach, Patong / www.whiteboxrestaurant.com

St. Patrick’s Ball
(LHP benefit)
at
JW Marriott Phuket Resort & Spa
on Saturday, March 27th, 2010

Event tickets 3,000 baht each
or a table of 10 for 30,000 baht
Includes pre-dinner cocktails,
free-flow wine, beer and dinner
available from Monday, February 8th, 2010

Dress Code: National Costume / Black Tie
Welcome Cocktails 18.30 - 19.30. Dinner 20.00

For more information and tickets please contact:
Life Home Project - Daoroong (Joojee)
076-614060 or 081-3979809 (joojee88@yahoo.com)
or
Khun Nid, Or and Ne. Tel: 086-9481580
**February 14, Chinese New Year**
Chinese New Year starts with the new moon on the first day of the lunar calendar and is the biggest social occasion in the Chinese tradition. It is celebrated with gusto amongst Thailand’s sizable ethnic Chinese community and legions of Chinese tourists from neighboring nations who choose to enjoy the holiday in Phuket.

**February 14-20, We Love Yoga @ Abbysan, Phuket**
Share Yoga with your beloved in one or more of these special sessions for month of love with Dr Abbashekar and Danny at Abbysan Yoga.

- **Feb 14** Enjoy harmonizing fun with ‘Friends & Family Yoga’ from 10:30am to 2pm. Price: 1,500 baht for groups of three.
- **Feb 17** Improve your intimate touch of love and movement with ‘Couple Yoga’ from 5:30pm to 7pm. 1,200 baht per couple.
- **Feb 20** Individual ‘I Do Yoga’ sessions any time between 8:30am and 7:30pm. 500 baht per person. Abbysan Yoga Studio is near Central Festival. For more information contact Dr Abbashekar. T: 076-304277, E: ex@abbysan.com, W: abbysan.com.

**February 14, Valentine’s Day Jazz in the Park**
French big band sound the JCB Jazz Cool Band will be basking jazz favorites from the likes of Duke Ellington, Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole, Glenn Miller and Count Basie at Queen Sirikit Park – San Chalermpruk 72 Years – (opposite the Lemongrass restaurant) from 7pm until 9:30pm on February 14. Organized by The Rotary Club of Tongkah to raise funds for the Bang-neaw School Library, the Big Band Jazz Concert will include a Classic & Super Cars show. For ticket contact Chaisak Koasymboon, T: 076-304090.

- **February 14** Sample exquisite pastries from world-renowned Le Cirque pastry chef Lillian Chou for a special Chinese New Year at Sala Phuket
- **February 15-19, Mid-Term Brazilian Soccer Camp at PIASAWC**
Brazilian Soccer Schools (BSS) are putting on a five-day Brazilian Soccer Camp for boys and girls, aged 6 to 12 years from February 15 to 19 at the Phuket International Academy Sports, Arts and Wellness Centre’s FIFA futsal field. 4,000 baht per child or 800 baht per day per child. From 8:30am to 12:30pm. Email or call to register or for more info. T: 076-336000, E: activities@phuketinternationalacademy.com or raewyn@phuketinternationalacademy.com.

**February 24 & 25. Blues Festival Fund Raising Dinners**

**February 26-27. Phuket International Blues Festival**
The fifth annual Phuket International Blues Festival is rocking back to the Hilton Phuket Arcadia Resort, Karon Beach. From 6pm to 1am, returning by popular demand is Rich Harper, and from Malaysia comes AkashA world music band. Top Australian musician Richard Clapton and his band will close the show Friday. Topping the bill on Saturday is the legendary Charlie Musselwhite and his band from the USA. For tickets and more info contact Andy Anderson. T: 086-682 2639, W: phuketmusic@yahoo.com, W: phuketbluesfestival.com.

**Free Computer Clinics**
Have a computer problem? Frustrated with your Internet connection? Upgrading from a pirate copy of Windows? Want to know where to buy a computer, or get one fixed? How about “3G” phones, or “HD” TV?
Join “For Dummies” author and Windows victim Woody Leonhard at one of his FREE weekly Computer Clinics, held every Sunday morning at Woody’s Sandy Shoppes in Chalong, Patong and Laguna. Even if you don’t know a USB from a DVD, drop by and ask away. All clinics are from 10am-12pm.

**February 7 – Patong**
**February 14 – Laguna**
**February 21 & 28 – Chalong**
For more info contact Woody, T: 076-290468.

**February 14, FREE Mac Clinic Patong**
Come by K. Woody’s Sandy Shoppes in Patong for a totally free Mac Computer Clinic. Bring your Mac, questions, problems, and friends along. Your host is Shane Roney from Elite Asia; Apple Authorized Reseller, Apple Certified Technical Consultant, and contributor of “Me and My Mac” to the Phuket Gazette. From 12pm to 2pm at K. Woody’s Sandy Shoppe Patong. For more information contact Shane Roney. T: 076-364570. E: info@eliteasia.org, W: eliteasia.org.
The pound loses its sterling worth

By Richard Watson

Richard G. Watson runs Global Portfolios Co Ltd, a Phuket-based personal financial-planning service, and has over 25 years experience in this field.
Office: 076-381997 Mobile: 081-0814611. Email: imm@loxinfo.co.th
www.global-portfolios.com

The pound loses its sterling worth facing the euro, yen and US dollar. As promised, this week is about the pound sterling.

It would not, however, be doing justice to the global situation without referring to the Chinese currency, the yuan. China has built up the world’s largest foreign currency reserves at around US$2.4 trillion. In 2009 alone this increased by almost half a trillion dollars.

China’s currency is not convertible and recently has been effectively pegged to the US dollar at a rate that most analysts believe undervalues the Chinese currency. This certainly makes exports highly competitive and trade numbers from 2009 reflect this: China became the world’s largest exporter, dislodging Germany from the top position.

The lack of convertibility in the Chinese yuan limits its participation in the current world of floating rates.

The pound sterling is, naturally, fully convertible. Before the current global financial crisis, the pound appreciated strongly, especially against the US dollar. It was then trading at around two US dollars to the pound. This exchange rate was last seen in 1992 and in both cases, the pound was greatly overvalued against its US counterpart.

Most currency analysts agree that the pound is worth between US$1.50 to US$1.60. Recently, the pound has traded in a range of US$1.59 – US$1.66. The problems faced by the US economy are also strongly evident in the UK economy. In fact, the UK economy is strongly linked to the US, not only in terms of trade flows and investment, but also in style.

The boom in real estate, consumer indebtedness and banks lending money without much credit information were equally common on both sides of the Atlantic.

Britain has found itself in something of a ‘holy mess’ and the situation has been greatly aggravated by its own Labour Party government. Before the crisis, the government had gone on a spending spree, which left little in the coffers for when the economy encountered problems.

In addition, during this time, the government had increased the hiring of public service workers known in the UK as the civil service. Former prime minister Tony Blair had encouraged a flow of talent from the private sector to the public sector by offering high salaries to the ridiculous extent that government salaries, on average, were higher than private sector incomes. That was certainly not a mistake made by the Americans.

In last week’s article, some of the focus was on the Greek economy and the difficulty it faced with huge budget deficits and an inability to devalue as a result of being part of the Euro currency bloc.

Britain has very similar problems. Most analysts believe that the budget deficit this year will be in the region of 13 percent, which is similar to Greece. The UK budget deficit will almost certainly be the highest of any major industrialized economy.

In reacting to the impending crisis, the UK had one great advantage over any member state in the Euro zone: its own currency. This allowed the UK to devalue the currency, which in turn, made exports more competitive and imports more expensive. This created a safety value for the pound sterling.

Huge challenges remain: budget deficits at 13 percent are simply not sustainable. A general election is due within the next few months – most likely in May. The shadow finance minister has said that if his party is elected, within months – the ‘honeymoon period’ his party will be in the region of 13 percent, which is similar to Greece. The UK budget deficit will almost certainly be the highest of any major industrialized economy.

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TAKE A BREAK  PHUKET GAZETTE  17

PUZZLES

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID QUBLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backwards. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

YELLOW ROSES  Solution: 5 letters

R E O T N E M I T I C X E E
E E S F L O W E R S S F G X
G V L U F R E E H C O A N P
N I I A A O E O R D E M A R
I L V T T P R D Y U T I H E
N E Y I I I I I S I O N U L C S
N D U G N S O V C N M Y L S
I Y M P O G O N E E G E U O I
G V O R B L E P S H A D E S O
E N O U O E O S A H E N L K
B E D S O L A P S R I S I N M
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I A T N V E C S O O N S S O
F V E D T H M R A W W E S L
T E E W S Z E E N T H G R B

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Apology, Beginning, Bloom, Bright, Buds, Care, Change, Cheerful, Closeness, Color, Date, Deliver, Encourage, Envy, Event, Excitement, Expression, Family, Flowers, Fortune, Gift, Giving, Message, Mood, Offering, Order, Partner, Positive, Relationships, Relative, Send, Shade, Shine, Show, Smile, Spouse, Stem, Store, Sunny, Sweet, Uplift, Vase, Warmth

HIDATO®

Complete the grid so that numbers 1-138 connect horizontally, vertically or diagonally:

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  11  12  13  14  15  16  17  18
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Difficulty:

February 6 - 12, 2010
Puzzle Solutions

Wonderword Solution: Battleship
Solution to this week’s crossword:

S H E A R S
O V E R T
G R E A S E S
O U T S E T
W O R E N
I N A S P O T
T H A T W A S
N O L A D Y
B A R N O N E
R I T E S
D A L E S
I N S P
R E T I R E E
E A T O N
L O T T
E L I D E
K I N G
P E N G U I N
A H S
C A N E S
R O O T
P E T U N I A
U T E
T R O T
S N
A B O N E T O
R E S T R A I N E D
T A S T Y
C O I N
O A S I S
W O N T
F L U T E
B O G
S I R G W A I N E E S
B A I T S
D E E R E
L E I L A
O C T S
S A E N S
S P E E D T R A P S
P A T I E N T
E T G
A T R I
H E Y
I S E E Y O U
A D I T
S L G A N
T E R R O B B E R
B A R O N
H A L L O
S T E T
A R O M
E M E N D E D
K I W I
D O U B T
P E A B O
A N E A R T O
P R A I S E
T H E L O R D
T R E N T O N
G O O L E
R A I D E D
S E T T E E S
Y E A S T
E R N E S T

Monster Quiz Answers

1. Author John Milton lost which sense?
2. What are camel-haired brushes made of?
3. According to fable how did Aeschalus die?
4. Which playing card sends Raymond Shaw into a trance in The Manchurian Candidate?
5. Eiffel designed the famous tower in 1889. What was his first name?
6. The Salk vaccine is used against what disease?
7. Which zodiac sign falls between June 23 and July 23?
8. Which alloy contains at least 50% iron and 10% chromium?
9. Which American gangster reputedly said “public service is my motto”?
10. Sir Francis Drake’s ship, the Golden Hind, was originally called what?
11. In what 1968 film did Elvis play an American Indian?
12. In Victorian England, what type of chronometer was known as a “servant regulator”?
13. Which country first used the fountain pen?
14. What is the popular name for the ballad Londonderry Air?
15. Freyru was the Norse god of what?
16. TAP is the national airline of which country?
17. In which country would you find the port of Fray Bentos?
18. The Koh-i-Nor is a famous diamond. What does its name mean?
19. A nometer is used to measure the rise and fall of what?
20. Discovered in 1583, what was Britain’s first colony?

Answers below

Get your brain in gear with the Monster Quiz

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Answers below

Hidato: How to play and this week’s puzzle solution.

Hidato Puzzle Solution

1. Sight
2. Either squirrel, pony, bear or bear fur
3. An eagle dropped a tortoise on his head
4. Queen of diamonds
5. Gustave
6. Polio
7. Cancer
8. Stainless steel
9. Al Capone
10. The Pelican
11. Stay Away Joe
12. Alarm clocks
13. Egypt
14. Danny Boy
15. Fertility
16. Portugal
17. Uruguay
18. Mountain of light
19. The height of the waters of the Nile
20. Newfoundland

WHATZIT?
solutions
1. Buck up!
2. Everything is under control.
3. Fly in the ointment.
4. Author John Milton lost which sense?
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NASA seeking moonriver

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): The outlook is clear for Aquarians to move forward with a delayed project. During the remainder of February, the stars will support your efforts to succeed in new areas and there are also signs that old ideas will be revitalized. Romance is subject to an uncertain period – an earth sign’s cool attitude could become motivation to end this relationship. Those with a birthday in the week ahead start to see finances improve in the coming years.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): Those born under the sign of Pisces who have been feeling like a big fish in a small pond should see opportunities that suit their talents better this week. Your endeavors to move forward are about to pay off, but balancing new demands with family responsibilities may prove tricky. Tuesday is your lucky day for financial gain, and Sunday and Monday should turn out to be sparkling days for romance.

ARIES (March 21-April 20): The stars indicate that boredom with work is becoming an issue that you can no longer deny. However, your imagination is stretched by an encounter with an artistic Taurean friend this week. More creative employment could help Arians realize their full potential, but you should not rush to make changes. Romance with Leo is well-starred, but finding common interest with Scorpio will prove to be a challenge.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): Those Taureans adrift in a sea of uncertainty receive useful advice from another earth sign this week. If your doubts are connected to a relationship this week, you may need to work hard to mend broken bridges. Wednesday is an auspicious day to lay your feelings on the line. Money should trickle toward you this week, and one financial commitment will become less of a burden. Wear a piece of crystal to enhance mental clarity.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): Gemini’s lack of feeling too much time in a fantasy world are sharply reminded of reality this week. The stars hint that a forgotten business commitment could demand your full attention and you may need to work hard to mend broken bridges. Wednesday is the most auspicious day to make demands. Those with a partner are advised that a small romantic gesture can go a long way.

CANCER (June 22-July 23): Your luck with money gradually improves, but a larger-than-expected bill could dampen Cancerians’ moods this week. Those who have been considering asking for a pay rise at work should schedule an appointment for Tuesday when the stars will be right. A successful outcome in romance depends on honesty – a secret you have been reluctant to confess may not turn out to be the bombshell you expected.

LEO (July 24-August 23): The atmosphere at work looks good for Leo this week and a project that you anticipated would be tricky should prove to be relatively straightforward. The tide is about to turn for those who have been suffering from cash flow problems. The stars predict that your bank account will benefit from an overdue payment this week. Love with Taurus becomes a concrete possibility.

VIRGO (August 23-September 22): Those Virgoans seeking ways to reinvent themselves are highlighted to be supported in their efforts this week. Success to reinvent themselves are routine. An unexpected romance depends on honesty – a secret you have been reluctant to

LIBRA (September 23-October 22): This week, some Librans could be tempted to borrow more than they can afford to pay back. Avoid this potentially slippery slope by working out a new budget which involves cutting back on some unnecessary luxuries. Someone who you’ve haven’t seen for a long time is forecast to make contact by the middle of February. This should cheer up those whose social circle has recently dwindled due to friends’ departures.

SCORPIO (October 23-November 21): Scorpios will not be able to enjoy moonlight much free time this week. Those who have recently begun a new job will be busy as bees, but enjoyment is highlighted to be strong motivation. A personal relationship is tested when your partner expresses a desire to relocate – treading water is the recommended reaction. Your lucky day for finances is Monday.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22-December 21): Where business is concerned, your plans will be subject to last minute changes this week. Sagittarians should be ready to go with the flow, particularly when dealing with an impatient partner. In the realm of romance, there are signs that someone who gave you the cold shoulder recently has had a change of heart.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): After a shaky start to the month, Capricorns can look forward to a less stressful time this week. Nothing ventured will be nothing gained and the astrological atmosphere will support your efforts to take some risks until the middle of the month. Romance brings some pleasant surprises – an air sign who you have delayed approaching is keen to get to know you this weekend.
Stop ‘zero tour fares’ before they start here

Plans by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and three tourism business associations to take measures to stop ‘zero tour fare’ operators from setting up in Phuket are laudable, especially given the damage such outfits have already done to the inbound Chinese market in places like Chiang Mai and Pattaya. (See news page)

Often run out of Bangkok, zero tour fare operators pay foreign travel agencies on a ‘per head’ basis – typically US$50 or US$100 – for each tourist they bring in.

The operators provide the tourists with accommodation upon arrival, but to recoup their investments they take their guests on ‘special’ sightseeing tours and shopping sprees, using coercion and reportedly even threats to get the tourists to spend money.

The tour operators make back their money on commissions, thus ensuring there is almost no let-up in the high-pressure tactics the tourists are forced to endure.

The net result is a holiday hell for the tourists, who are held virtual hostages in a foreign land, not knowing where to turn for help and in some cases being abandoned.

Zero tour fare operators have been a major source of complaint to the Chinese government, which last year moved to stop the practice by making it illegal for travel agencies in that country to fly out tourists who have not seen their itineraries in advance.

Unfortunately, some operators continue the practice – at the expense of Thailand’s reputation in what should be its fastest growing market. Rather, overall tourist arrival figures from China have been falling in recent years, despite China’s strong economy and a number of positive factors that should make China the next great tourism frontier for Thailand.

Fortunately, Phuket has largely been spared of zero tour fare operators, but in large part because hotels here are generally too expensive for the operators to afford. In fact, Phuket has been enjoying steady growth in the number of arrivals from China, thanks to an increase in Chinese cultural heritage.

Another factor the TAT should consider is the future effect that needs to stop now!

According to a Gazette Online article [<i>Phuket minimum wage increased 7 baht. December 30, 2009</i>], there is a minimum wage for Thai people.

It wasn’t until recently that I realized this was an extremely common occurrence. As I started expressing my anger to my fellow expats in Phuket, it seemed like just about everyone has lost some clothing that was once dear to them.

They do get free food twice a day, but they still have to pay for their accommodation.

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Westernized. But a recent trip to a salon in Phuket Town left me in a sweat as I dropped to the floor; 3,000 to 5,000 baht to dye my hair?

‘I’m very flattered that many Thais seem to adore my artificial golden locks, but are they aware that they’re not actually made of gold? Those aren’t Western prices, those are sucker prices. I guess they’re up to speed on the western stereotypes associated with ‘blonde-IQs’.

Michael Weldon
Udon Thani

Where are my underpants?

Since arriving in Thailand about a year ago, I’ve lost count of the number of clothing articles I’ve had to replace because they were lost by laundromats.

Too many times have I felt the sudden pang of anger when I notice the absence of one of my favorite shirts or pants.

It wasn’t until recently that I realized this was a completely lost in translation. Unfortunately, the beaming smile doesn’t put the pants back around my waist.

Jaywalking is very popular in Thailand, but I have never seen a police officer put a stop to it in all the time I have spent in this country.

Michael Weldon
Udon Thani

Surin’s got top cops

Surin Province police officers seem to have their act together. On a recent visit there I saw hundreds of police boxes, many on street corners. All were manned by officers.

In Surin, the police boxes are clean, in good repair and freshly painted. I saw one man try to cross the street against the light. He was called out by an officer, who explained to him he should cross only when the light is green.

Jaywalking is very popular in Thailand, but I have never seen a police officer put a stop to it in all the time I have spent in this country.

Michael Weldon
Udon Thani

Goldie-priced locks

Because of Phuket’s interesting cultural hybrid of ‘East meets West’, I understand that some prices are going to be more
When I was young I didn’t want to become a teacher. However, when I took part in my high school’s learning exchange program and went to the US, everything changed. I compared the school systems of the US and Thailand, which were as different as heaven and hell. This comparison has angered some people in the local education system, but I feel strongly about my nation’s failing schools.

I was one of 99 people who traveled to Bangkok to draft the 1997 constitution, which was the country’s first drafted by a popularly elected constitutional Drafting Assembly. Previously we had many constitutions, but they were written by men in Bangkok who didn’t represent the people living throughout Thailand.

Being one of the few women to make up the drafting assembly, I fought for the right of every child in Thailand to have free education. When I attended high school, 50 years ago, my family paid 120 baht for tuition, high school, 50 years ago, my free education. When I attended assembly, I fought for the right of women to make up the drafting committee.

In 1998, I sold my business and traveled to the US, where I spoke at the Library of Congress about education reform and Thailand’s human rights agenda. The experience reaffirmed my admiration for the American education system and I took away many good examples of successful teaching models.

In a Thai classroom, students must sit quietly and listen, but in the US the students have the freedom to ask many questions. I remember back when I was a student – if I asked my teacher questions, she got mad.

This is the wrong attitude. A classroom gives children the foundation and courage to be confident. I found the US classrooms full of students voicing ideas and teachers encouraging students to be independent thinkers.

The Phuket Educational Services Area Office has a school evaluation every three years, and I have participated twice in the last six years. If they invite me again this year, I would like to attend and tell them I am very disappointed in the slow progress of our schools.

After decades of observing classrooms in different schools throughout Phuket, I want to institute some big changes in their curriculum. I see the need for more effective lessons, but it is not easy to make changes here. Students in Thailand study for 12 years, but afterwards can’t speak a word of English. That is the failure of Thai teachers. They are often afraid to speak English. The instructors often teach straight from textbooks and don’t engage their students. Their approaches are antiquated and based on memorization techniques.

Teachers simply read aloud to their students from old textbooks and don’t engage them with current and authentic resources they need. In my experience, our schools with the books and teachers often teach from textbooks and don’t engage them with current and authentic materials that inspire students to think progressively. Despite the government’s slow pace of educational reform, many of the changes needed to improve our system to start in the classroom.

When teachers instruct from the heart – and not the textbook – children learn more. It is important to provide our schools with the books and resources they need, but we also need to call on teachers to show students the value in learning.

Above all, students need to learn that their curiosity is a good thing.

My Thai wife and I moved permanently to Phuket in August last year. We are having trouble getting our mail, and don’t know where to turn.

My sister has sent us nine packages, but we have only received two. The most important of these is a DVD of our 30th wedding anniversary, plus four CDs of photos taken in different areas of Thailand over four vacations.

My nephew mailed the package from Austin, Texas, US on December 8, 2009, but as yet they haven’t arrived. Is there anybody anywhere on this island who could talk to about my mail? The CDs cannot be replaced.

Stanley Kent Ebner
Phuket

Ms Pachathida, an administrator at Phuket Post Office, replies:

You must have a receipt from the sender of your package, that includes the delivery address. Maybe the sender can scan and send it to you. Then bring the receipt to your local post office.

Ask to speak to the Lost Mail Department and fill out a form, giving details of your lost packages.

Our staff will then conduct checks with the Bangkok Post Office and international postal services. It will take a little while. If the sender has an internet tracking number, then they should check online.

For more information: 12/16 Montri Road, T. Taladai, A. Muang, Phuket 83000. T: 076-214337, F: 076-218637.

My husband has the rare blood type A Rh negative and would like to donate at the Regional Blood Center in Phuket after we arrive from Helsinki, Finland. However, someone told us that if you are over 60 years of age, then you can’t give blood. My husband is 66 years old and healthy. Can he donate blood?

Paula Champagne
Helsinki, Finland

 Pornthip Rattajak, an officer at the Phuket Regional Blood Center at Saphan Hin, replies:

Normally the age is 60, but if your husband is healthy and has donated his rare blood type regularly in the past, then he can come to the center for screening and our staff will decide whether we can accept the donation.
Welcome to Supersports

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Surprisingly get 10%* discount plus 7% VAT refund at Supersports stores**
See it around !!! Through out 2010

*For regular priced items exclude gift, exercise machine, massage chair, and sunglasses. **Check participated stores in the coupon.
Super Bowl XLIV (that’s 44), the culmination of the NFL season and the biggest annual sporting event of the year, will kick off in the early hours of February 8 (Thai time). The New Orleans Saints and the Indianapolis Colts will meet in Miami to decide the destination of the next Vince Lombardi trophy.

It will be an historic occasion for the New Orleans Saints, who will be determined to ensure that their first Super Bowl appearance is a successful one. The Colts, by contrast, will be making their second Super Bowl showing since the 2006-2007 season.

The Saints first ever Super Bowl is particularly significant coming just five seasons after Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans and forced thousands of people to take shelter in the Louisiana Superdome, rendering the stadium unsuitable as a sporting venue for the entire 2005-2006 season.

The New Orleans Saints were forced to play their home games in neighboring cities that year, failing to make the divisional playoffs and finishing with an overall record of 3-13.

Expats in Phuket have been known to make an early rise – or all-night plunge – to be awake for the 6am kickoff of the Super Bowl. This year’s game is especially important for local resident Karen Ellisón, who is both owner of Duke’s Big Board Bar @ Kata and a native of New Orleans. Ellisón will make sure her pub is up and running for football fans the morning of the game.

“Living in Southeast Asia redefines the concept of a traditional evening ‘tailgater’ Here, it’s a breakfast time event for the foolhardy folks willing to catch an early hour kick-off. No matter, we still get to catch the game live and replace burgers and hot dogs with bacon and eggs. At Duke’s Big Board Bar in Kata, we’re just trying to make everyone feel at little bit of home... while away from home,” she said.

For Ellisón and other natives of New Orleans, the Saints’ first Super Bowl appearance is about more than just football. “Like the tsunami which devastated Phuket in 2004, New Orleans was decimated by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The spirit of New Orleans, affectionately called NOLA, has been experiencing a rebirth under the Fleur-de-lis so proudly worn by the Saints,” she said.

Things turned around in the seasons following Hurricane Katrina as the Saints worked their way towards winning records and discovered superstar talent in running back Reggie Bush and quarterback Drew Brees. Their success continued this year, finishing the regular season and booking a spot in the playoffs with a record of 13-3.

After stomping past the Arizona Cardinals 45-14 in the NFC semi-finals, The Saints overcame veteran quarterback Brett Favre and the Minnesota Vikings for the rights to show in Super Bowl XLIV.

The Colts route to Super Bowl was more routine practice for the conference’s closest team. Quarterback Peyton Manning – who is arguably the best player in the NFL today – continues to claim his future spot in the NFL Hall of Fame with his precision passing and widely respected team leadership.

The Saints’ journey into the game as slight underdogs, will be looking to dynamic running back Reggie Bush to find a way through the Colts defense.

The Colts will, as always, be reliant upon Manning, who led them to their Super Bowl success in 2006. The Saints will be hoping for an opposite number Drew Brees, who has enjoyed the best season of his career to date, can conjure up a match winning performance.

A TV audience of in excess of 90 million is expected in the US, with millions more likely to tune in around the world. Kickoff is set for 6:25am Thai time and the match will be screened live on True TV and Astro Supersport.

**Futsal talent shows at tourney**

Phuket International Academy held a five-a-side futsal tournament on January 31, the first of its kind in Phuket. The tournament, which brought some impressive newcomers and veterans alike, was organized by local footballer Cyril Lugnier and attracted seven teams.

The games were played on the pristine new artificial futsal pitch at PIA under rules broadly matching those in neighboring cities that year, failing to make the divisional playoffs and finishing with an overall record of 3-13.

Futsal talent shows at Phuket for an earlybird show.

The Lousiana Superdome, used just five years ago as an shelter for those displaced by Hurricane Katrina, was between Jambos – containing the pristine new artificial futsal pitch at PIA under rules broadly matching those in neighboring cities that year, failing to make the divisional playoffs and finishing with an overall record of 3-13.

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The Saints go marching into Miami

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The Louisiana Superdome, used just five years ago as a shelter for those displaced by Hurricane Katrina, became the home of one of the NFL’s best teams this season. The Saints make their first Super Bowl appearance at 6:25am Thai time on February 8, bringing out Phuket’s diehard football fans for an earlybird show.

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One old light bulb contains enough harmful chemicals to poison 6,000 gallons of water. Arsenic, cadmium, lead, mercury and magnesium are also among the hazardous chemicals seeping into Phuket’s natural environment and killing off wildlife.

The chemicals often come from used electronic goods, which are either dumped on the side of a road, or mixed up with all the other waste on its way to Phuket’s incinerator.

However, local government officials, businesses and NGOs recently joined forces to stem the flow of these harmful chemicals by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that sets new standards for the disposal of electronic junk – from washing machines and refrigerators to old computers, printers and batteries.

The Waste of Electronic and Electrical Equipment (WEEE) agreement was signed by Vice Governor Teerayut Eimtrakul, Mayor Somjai Suwansupana, the Phuket Business and Professional Women’s Club (BPWC) and 28 other local organizations during a ceremony at Central Festival on January 23.

The MoU outlines a separation and disposal plan for a broad range of electronic junk, including special provisions for the disposal of office and communication devices such as computers, printers, and telephones; entertainment devices, lighting equipment, household tools, sports and recreation equipment, medical equipment and devices from industrial facilities.

Commenting on the waste disposal plan, BPWC Vice President and Project Manager Nipa Nganthavee said that until the MoU signing, Phuket had no facilities for properly disposing of such waste.

“All kinds of trash, including electronic waste, gets piled up at the landfill behind the incinerator. Toxic chemicals from the old equipment can overflow into waterways and have dangerous consequences for humans and the environment,” she said.

Sets of WEEE bins where the public can dump large and small items of electronic waste in designated repositories have been placed in four locations around Phuket. One set of WEEE bins is located at Phuket City Municipality offices on Narisorn Road and another in front of King Rama IX Park (Suan Luang).

Another two sets are located at Bangneaw and Samkong schools.

Bins for smaller items such as batteries, telephone chargers and light bulbs have been placed in 26 schools in Phuket Town. More bins will be made available in the near future, a BPWC spokesperson said.

“WEEE bins will be emptied once a month and the electronic waste taken to the Saphan Hin incinerator site. The waste will be stored there until World Environment Day, when officials from Bangkok will inspect and remove it for safe disposal,” said Ms Nipa.

As Chinese New Year is traditionally a time for clearing out clutter, Phuket Municipality is running a free pick-up service for electronic waste in Phuket Town from February 1 to 12.

As part of their public awareness campaign, the BPWC will be at the Phuket Old Town Festival from February 19-21.
Discountville threatens luxury market

It all started when the Berlin Wall came tumbling down in 1989. After that, Russia Incorporated dissolved into Western capitalistic fervor, the likes of which have not been seen since the untimely (though well deserved) death of disco. Social change soon opened the door for Russia to contribute to a worldwide pop culture movement. From this we were given numerous fresh faces in the National Hockey League, tennis cover girl Anna Kornikova and even that kinda scary all-girl talentless pop duo, t.A.T.U. We should note, however, that the West did bring us Paris Hilton, so we probably break even.

Dusting off the old history books, it seemed like a fresh meaning was given the famous words of former US Secretary of Defense James Forrestal, who in 1949 coined the phrase, “The Russians are coming. The Russians are coming.”

Today, 61 years after Forrestal’s infamous warning, as we cruise the mean streets of paradise in high season 2010, we seem to be in the midst of another invasion, the likes of which have not been seen since the tanks rolled into Yugoslavia in 1941. Only it’s not just Russians, but masses of tourists from around the world, all looking for the cheapest deals in accommodation.

Phuket tourism is on the rebound like a basketball overinflated with helium, though this time out it’s a numbers game. While spending per tourist is less, a whole new face of visitors are on the rise. Charter flights are bringing in the tourists in droves, highlighting a contrast between the ‘new tourist’ and the ‘old tourist’ of Phuket.

It’s not unlike the school busing of US integration programs of the 1960’s between inner cities and squeaky clean suburbia. As we know, Phuket is no angel, and bar girl-touting pubs are pushing out from the confines of Patong and into Rawai and Kamala at breakneck speed. We can’t blame the Russians or anyone else for that; but frankly speaking, a tourism industry that resembles the hard times at discountville could derail the island’s once promising luxury profile.

It’s hard not to get caught up in a xenophobic funk, wondering if similarities between Phuket and that other whispered P-word (the infamous Pattaya) are starting to emerge. Looking at the rising tide of mid-scale hotels coming up, it’s like quenching the thirst of an alcoholic: more and more drinks, but no amount of booze will satisfy the mounting appetite.

As development here continues, the simple fact is that we could soon be taken over by a tourism market similar to the Walmart business plan – rapid expansion and discount prices. That’s not an altogether bad thing, as they do have some really good deals, but it’s also not likely to be a place I’d like to spend much time. My Walmart visits are typically cut-and-dry: a quick entrance, find what I’m looking for and dash for the exit, all while trying to not make eye contact with any of the borderline nut cases known to inhabit these environs.

Feeding the beast we know as tourism is increasingly difficult. With so many long-haul higher end tourists staying home, filling empty hotel rooms has to be done at cheaper prices in order to keep the cash drawers full. I’m reminded of the quote by Samuel Johnson, “He who makes a beast of himself gets rid of the pain of being a man.”

Since I’m fresh out of epiphanies at the moment, and cooler nights and later dawns are becoming quite common, I have recently been sleeping quite sound. I can’t say I’m lying awake much, pondering this new twist in Phuketland. But of course, all this may change. Come summer, the early rising sun, paired with hot and humid tropical nights, will bring the anxious sweat. I know it will. It’s only a matter of time.
Mai Khao water park turns on the taps

The 22,400-sqm Splash Jungle Water Park at West Sands Phuket opened its gates last week, offering Phuket tourists an all-day attraction on par with US theme parks.

Splash Jungle, Phuket’s first modern water park, opened last week on the grounds of the West Sands resort just off Mai Khao Beach.

Among the park’s many attractions are a 335-meter ‘Lazy River’ water ride that meanders through seven themed sections: Inca-Mayan, Africa, Asia, Turkey, Northern Europe, North America and even the North Pole.

Two high-octane slide rides are sure to please thrill-seekers: ‘The Boomerango’ and ‘The Super Bowl’.

The Splash Jungle also features a wave pool, a family play area, a bar, a cafe and a number of shops.

The park, built at a cost of half a billion baht, covers 22,400 square meters and holds six million liters of water.

The project was designed and manufactured by White Water Industries of Canada, which claims to have over 4,000 projects around the world, including work on Disneyland and Sea World in the US.

Among the many dignitaries at last week’s grand opening ceremony were Phuket MP Raywat Areerob and Phuket Vice Governor Teerayut Eimtrakul.

Despite being located just back from Mai Khao Beach, the park does not make use of the abundant supply of sea water on its doorstep. Instead, tens of thousands of liters of fresh water were trucked to the site to initially fill the pools.

For day-to-day operations, the water comes from a natural underground supply near the site.

Splash Jungle Water Park’s CEO Tony Cousens, who took up his position about three months before the park’s opening, would not reveal how much of the water used at the park is then released or recycled, but claimed the underground filtration system was state-of-the-art.

On the first day of operations, the opening ceremony was conducted under the beating sun and executives soon realized that the park distinctly lacks any shaded areas, something which guests pointed out could discourage locals from spending any length of time at the park.

Introductory entry rates for tourists (until April 30) are 1,795 baht per adult and 1,050 baht per child. Children under 100cm tall are not charged. Locals and foreign residents pay a slightly discounted rate of 1,500 baht per adult and 1,050 baht per child.

An expat resident and father who drove his family to the park without knowing the entry fees beforehand told the Gazette he was surprised at the high price of the tickets.

Mr Cousens said the entry prices were good value when compared with other Phuket tourist attractions, because visitors can spend the whole day at the park and don’t have to pay for any of the rides once inside.

“We also plan to offer discounts to locals during Songkran (Thai New Year),” said Mr Cousens.

The park is open daily from 10am to 6pm.
Residential developer Supalai Public Company Ltd plans to begin construction of a 15-story condominium development on Montri Road in Phuket Town in June.

Supalai Park @ Downtown Phuket will be the fourth residential project built in Phuket by Supalai Co.

The developer’s previous Phuket projects include Supalai City Resort, Supalai City Hill and Supalai Hill.

Marketing Manager Prawit Akrawarawong, said the new condominium development’s central location near Sengho Book Store was chosen because it offers good views of the sea and the convenience of being in town.

“The units (starting at 1.21 million baht) are designed to be affordable homes for local residents who want to live in the center of town for convenience. Many of the buyers are locals who already know and trust the Supalai brand, but we are attracting foreign buyers who are looking for well designed, high-quality holiday homes,” said Mr Prawit.

The development covers 4.5 rai and comprises a total of 518 one- and two-bedroom units ranging in size from just under 30 square meters to more than 66sqm.

There are three types of one-bedroom Andaman Suites, ranging from 29.5sqm to 37sqm with an open-plan bedroom and living room arrangement, a pantry, balcony and bathroom with shower.

In the 43-sqm one-bedroom Executive Suites the bedroom and living rooms are separated and there’s a corner balcony off the bedroom.

The 45.5-sqm Deluxe Suites and 51.5-sqm Presidential Suites have similar dovetail layouts. The 66-sqm Family Suites are the only two-bedroom, single-bathroom units.

The developers have included a number of green features in the design of the building, which has a north-south alignment to reduce direct sunlight into the fronts of the units and allow the wind to circulate and naturally cool all the units. The roof has 1,000 square meters of green space as a recreation area for residents. The greenery also acts as insulation to help keep the building cool during day time.

Communal facilities include 217 parking spaces, a 20-meter-long swimming pool and terrace, a fitness center and a central lobby. Two elevators will give residents access to their units.

Construction of the project is expected to be complete by May 2012.

The contract for construction of the project is still under tender.

The 15-story Supalai Park @ Downtown Phuket will offer ‘affordable’ one- and two-bedroom condominium units starting at just over a million baht.
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Mid Town, Royal Place Project. Studio condo, fully furnished, in the heart of Phuket Town. Tel: 086-476 9612.

ROYAL PLACE CONDO

New 375 sqm 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

SURYA BEACH

Land on Soi Haad Suin 2 for sale. 2.2 Rai, 5 min walk to Surin Beach. Email: costelos@examail.com

SHOPOUSE - CHALONG

Shophouse - Chalong

12 months old. 3 storey, 3 bedroom, 1 storey, 2.5 bath, 1 km south of Circle. Full kitchen, 1 air con, hot water, all-glass front door, office furniture, beds, very clean. Rent 28,000 per month. Valued at 3.7 million, you pay 3.6 million baht, including additions. Bargain! Tel: 086-476 2093.

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CHEAP HOUSE FOR SALE

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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.

LAND AT PA KHLOK

49.5a, nice flatland, Chanote. 2.5km from Heroines’ Monument. 1.7 million baht per rai. Tel: 083-180 2143.

LAND AT PA KHLOK

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Top spec villa, 600m from beach. 49 rai, nice flat land. Chanote, nice flat land. Tel: 084-993 1115. Email: fritzi@phuket-luxury.com

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Modern studio apartment, fully furnished, beachside 400m. 1 million baht. Tel: 081-082 5707.
VILLA FOR SALE NEAR LAGUNA
3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms. Open-plan kitchen, living room. The villa is fully airconditioned and furnished. Built on 360sqm, 176sqm living area, with a beautiful garden. The location is only 10 minutes to Bang Tao beach and 5 minutes to Kata. Price 5.5 million baht. Tel: 089-813 7880. Email: kwanphuket@hotmail.com

VILLA FOR SALE PATONG
2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, pool, sala, car parking. Near Boat Lagoon. Pool & sala. Price 4.2 million baht. Contact Andy at Tel: 081-545 5225. Email: info@allaboutweb.com

BEAUTIFUL NAyi 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: alisservices29@gmail.com

LAND AT LAYAN BEACH
1.8 rai, 76sq wah, 100 meters from the beach. Chanote title. 2 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms. Price 25 million baht. Tel: 084-303 7222.

HOUSE & FURNITURE FOR SALE
Single house, 60sqm, 2 floors, 3 bedrooms and 3 toilets. In Chalong. Good location. Tel: 089-873 1009. Email: talyanjal@gmail.com

LAND AT PA KHLOK
1.9 rai, 76sq wah, 100 meters from the beach. Chanote title. 2 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms. Price 25 million baht. Tel: 084-303 7222.

PERFECT LAND
Nearly 2 rai at Bang Tao. Very good location for business. 18 million baht. No agents. Tel: 089-893 8524. Email: suphacha_noi@hotmail.com

SALE HOUSE KATHU
3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, swimming pool, 73sq wah. Please contact for more details. Tel: 090-908 4873.

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5 bedroom Thai style villa in Phuket. Magnificent Phang-Nga Bay sea view. 3 big bedrooms are en-suite with seaview. Private swimming pool. Land plot 730.8 sqm. construction area approx. 573 sqm. Full security service. Located at Rammal Chaalay Estate. 24.9 million baht. Tel: 089-474 2234.

NEW HOUSE IN PATONG
4 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, 2 car parking, nice flat land, quiet area, 2 rai. Price: 120 million baht. Tel: 081-893 8524.

TOWNHOUSE, 2 STOREY
opposite Boat Lagoon. 24sq wah, 3 beds, 2 baths. Email: info@alabboutweb.com

LAND AT PATONG BEACH
Top quality land plots for sale in the hills at the North end of Patong Beach. Elevation: 47m. Very quiet and natural location with wide access road, undercover service, and good water supply. Contact Andy at Tel: 081-891 3466. Fax: 076-296160. Email: antc@phuket.ksc.co.th

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New Pool Villa in Pool Lagoon. 14 million baht. Tel: 076-238948, 081-968 9046 (English & Thai), 081-363 9730 (English & Thai). Fax: 076-273466. pen@phuketpropertytrip.com For further details, please see our website at http://www.phuketboatlagoon.com

LAND AND HOUSE, RAWAI for sale. 1,300 sqm, 4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, internet, tel, cable TV, LBC, wastewater treatment, no external gate remote, garden springer, garden light. Price 12 million baht includes furniture, utility house more than 770sqm. Big garden and house. Soi Kok Yang, Rawai, Phuket, next to Two Villas. Tel: 078-275 1445.

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94sqwah, 4 bedrooms, bathroom, full furnished. Price 4.5 million baht. Tel: 087-886 4208.

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POOL VILLAS

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NEW TOWNHOUSE

LAND PATONG

NEW TOWNHOUSE

POOLSIDE APARTMENT

LARGE FAMILY HOME

New Pool Villa in Pool Lagoon. 14 million baht. Tel: 076-238948, 081-968 9046 (English & Thai), 081-363 9730 (English & Thai). Fax: 076-273466. pen@phuketpropertytrip.com For further details, please see our website at http://www.phuketboatlagoon.com

LAND AND HOUSE

POOL VILLAS RAWAI

LARGE FAMILY HOME

NEW CONDO PATONG

NEW TOWNHOUSE

LAND PATONG

PRIME PLOT READY TO BUILD
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SEDA SELL TWO HOUSES

NEW CONDO PATONG

LARGE FAMILY HOME

NEW TOWNHOUSE

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One month holiday let start March 25, Kamala, Kata, Kathu areas, 3-4 bedrooms. Must have pool. Contact Marcus. Tel: 087-992 8515.

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Windsurfing board with sail for sale. Only 15,000 Baht! Tel: 081-754 7599. Email: csutivas@hotmail.com

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Hobie Cat 16 in very good condition for sale. Only 139,000 baht. Tel: 089-932 5175. Email: wojidkowbengt@hotmail.com

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Brand new 2009 RXT-IS 255hp (last unit). 70 mph! Special price: only 550,000 baht. Tel: 081-754 7599. Email: csu@tas@hotmail.com

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A 6 HP Suzuki 4-stroke Outboard long-shaft engine. Tel: 081-797 0385 (English). Email: wayneeadrahham@gmail.com

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- Bachelor’s degree
- Good English skills
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   Tel: 076-249657-8.
   Email: svcp@svensonhaircenter.com

Island Job Mart

British International School, Phuket

The British International School, Phuket is a leading international day and boarding school (18 months-18 years) offering a quality education to the international community of the Asia/Pacific region. We are seeking qualified candidates to fill the following positions:

JUNIOR SECRETARY at office of the Headmaster
- Female, Thai national
- Bachelor Degree in related field
- Excellent English, Computer literacy and good people skills
- Able to coordinate with other department in academic function

PE Assistant
- Thai National
- University Degree, Physical Education Major or related fields
- Good English, Positive, willing and hard working
- Knowledge of local schools or clubs to arrange fixtures
- Knowledge of local facilities & sports opportunities
- Coaching qualifications to coach a team such as Basketball or etc.
- Be able to do a supervisor for Military Training & Teaching Assistant
- Be able to work flexible Day 1 pm to 6pm, all day Saturday

Please send a short letter of application, Curriculum Vitae, recent photograph and e-mail/tax and telephone contact to: British International School, Phuket

Positions Available:

- Cluster Director of Human Resources
- Cluster Director of Loss Prevention
- Cluster Account Manager
- Cluster Account Executive
- At Your Service Agent (Caterer)
- Loss Prevention Supervisor / Officer
- Housekeeping Supervisor

All positions are based in Phuket and require self-motivation, confidence, excellent interpersonal and pre-active skill. A high degree of proficiency is English is necessary. Any candidates with the above qualifications submit a resume with a recent photograph to:

Human Resources Department
Courtyard by Marriott Phuket at Patong Beach
48 Ruan Jai Rd, Patong Beach, Kathu, Phuket 83156
Tel: 076 137 009 Fax: 076 137 940 E-mail: CLHCTCVR.HR@courtyard.com

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ACCOUNTANT
Thai accountant required for SCUBA diving Liveaboard Company in Phuket. Responsible for bookkeeping, accounting procedures, salary admin, stock control, monthly and annual tax forms, and Social Insurance. Will also be responsible for submitting and renewing all kinds of documents, e.g., licenses, etc. Must be able to arrange an interview, please telephone: 076-263819, 084-932 4109 (English). Email: mshanu@hotmai.com

NURSE NEEDED
Full time nurse required. Thai National only. Care for 89 year-old man with 12-year-old son. Both a car and motorbike are provided, as well as accommodation and all living expenses. Salary up to 15,000 baht per month. More able to drive and will supply the vehicle. Pay is 15,000 – 20,000 baht a month. Must be able to speak and write English. Submit resume for review and consideration to bob_tames@yahoo.com

ANNEXED CHIANG MAI

APLUS PLUS SOFTWARE

Position: Sales Center

- Male 20-30 years old
- Vocation certificate
- Bachelor degree in Electronics
- Completed military training
- Good health
- Trustworthy, motivated and self-reliant
- Experience preferred

All applicants must submit full resume by email: info@aplushplussoftware.com

We will contact applicants by return.

SALES CENTER

Rapidly growing company seeks sales center agents for multiple products. Fluent English speakers only – any nationality. Earnings of 50,000 baht per month possible. Must be sales-oriented and web proficient. Foreign nationals must hold a Bachelor’s degree. Tel: 088-858 622.

CASHIER

Min-mart requires part time and full time Cashier. Thai national, good English, computer skills. Forward CV and email: info@buonappetitgroup.com

2 SWEDISH RESTAURANTS

In Bang Tao Beach, open all year. Two chefs wanted to cook farang food and a Waitresses. Good spoken English required and salary for experienced candidates. Tel: 081-787 3167.

Employment Wanted

EXPT MECH ENGINEER

Expats looking for work in the engineering & machine tooling or similar. Part or full-time, or partner. Email: click4me@myway.com

ENGLISH TEACHER

Native English speaker. 20+ years experience in Asia. MA (Hons), DELTA. Private lessons, conversation, business, etc. Tel: 083-175 1920. Email: gregmakay67@hotmail.com

Accountant

TAKING HIRING

The majestic Centara Grand Phuket Beach Resort is now seeking to recruit senior members of its pre-opening team. The first phase of this resort, with its distinctive Swiss architecture, will be opening in mid-2010. This 262 room 5 star resort occupies a stunning direct beachfront location on Kamon Beach and will be a spectacular addition to the shores of Phuket.

The Centara Grand Phuket Beach Resort will offer the finest accommodation, including Pool villas, Pool Suites and Premium Club rooms in a 5-star environment. Dining options are varied and creative, while meeting and event rooms are large and flexible and feature several indoor and outdoor options. Leisure facilities include 11 outdoor pools and 7 indoor pools and are highlighted by a waterpark and pools, as well as a children’s play centre.

We are seeking applications from outstanding, talented professionals, who share our passion for providing warm and caring levels of customer service. You should be highly motivated and look forward to joining us for this interesting opportunity and to creating a career for yourself within the growing brand of Centara Hotels & Resorts.

Hiring

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Write comments for websites in blogs. Native English and PC literate. Earnings of 50,000 baht per month possible. Must be sales-oriented and web proficient. Native English speakers only – any nationality.

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Native English speaker. 20+ years experience in Asia. MA (Hons), DELTA. Private lessons, conversation, business, etc. Tel: 083-175 1920. Email: gregmakay67@hotmail.com
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Room 45 seats as well as restrooms, good location, due to personal health reasons, I have to
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In Nai Harn, seek 50% partner with 25 million baht. Tel: 085-792 0908.

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For sale of rent. Located on Chaoda East Road, 6,500 baht per month. Tel: 081-537 6866.

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