

Phuket Gazette

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Merry Christmas

ANOTHER year full of ups and downs is about to draw to a close.

As this issue goes to print, thousands of travellers are trying to find their way to Phuket's shores from the cold shelter of snowed-in airports across Europe and the UK.

Thousands more have already landed in Phuket, helping to usher in the high season by joining the carnivals and festivities being held across the island.

To round out our Christmas Day issue, this edition features a special present from a Ghost of Phuket's Christmas Past: Steve Rosse.

If you still haven't found what you're looking for either, don't miss out on his very Phuket Christmas tale inside.

Whether this is your first visit to the island or you are a stalwart of several decades living in Phuket, the *Phuket Gazette* thanks all our readers for another year of their wholehearted support and wishes one and all a very Merry Christmas.

World rallies to save our Tuptim

By James Goyder
and Andrew Jennings

SEVEN-month-old Tuptim Jadngooluem has been given a second chance at life after over US\$65,000 was raised in one week to cover the cost of her life-saving operation.

Tuptim was admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU) of Ramathibodi Hospital Bangkok last week, suffering from internal bleeding.

Doctors did not think she would see the new year.

The only daughter of Rattanachai "Kru Nai", a well known trainer at Tiger Muay Thai in Chalong, Tuptim was diagnosed with a terminal liver condition known as biliary obstruction when she was three months old.

The only option to save her life is a parental donor liver transplant – a complicated 18-hour surgery during which a portion of the parent's liver is removed and placed inside their child.

Mr Rattanachai, and Tuptim's



SECOND CHANCE: Tuptim with her mum, Ms Nit. Photo: SaveTuptim.yolasite.com

mother, "Khun Nit", were facing the dire prospect of their daughter dying as they were unable to afford the 1.5 million baht to pay for the operation.

The fund-raising campaign to save Tiptum captured the imagination of the world this week, culminating with Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) President

Dana White agreeing to pay for the operation.

Mr White came across a plea for donations to save Tuptim on a Mixed Martial Arts forum and confirmed he would pay the US\$50,000 to cover the cost of the surgery.

The generosity of Mr White, coupled with the tireless efforts of the people at Tiger Muay Thai, now means Tuptim will get her operation on January 14.

It will be carried out by renowned Bangkok-based specialist, Dr Sumate Teeraratkul, who has an over 90 per cent success rate in performing the procedure.

Ms Nit is amazed by the number of people who have contributed to help save her daughter's life.

"I don't know how to thank everyone enough. Everyone has worked so hard to try and get money for Tuptim. I say thank you but I know in my heart that is not enough," she said.

People can still donate to help Tuptim through the website SaveTupTim.yolasite.com.

Two dead, four injured in grenade blast

POLICE believe an explosion that killed two and injured four people in Rassada this week was caused by an M67 grenade.

Police arrived at the scene near Rassada Pier on Monday afternoon to find a man dead on a bench in front of a house on Soi Wanich 1.

The man, identified as Sutthi Saeung, 25, of Nakhon Sri Thammarat, suffered wounds to his chest.

His right hand was also blown off.

Police said that Mr Sutthi, a crewman on the *Chok Maneedech*, had shown the grenade to friends for fun when it slipped

out of his hand and exploded.

Mr Sutthi reportedly arrived at the scene drunk and continued to sit and drink beer in front of the house with a friend and three girls working in a nearby karaoke.

While he was drinking, he pulled out the M67 grenade to show the others and said that he bought it as a gift for the girls on the soi.

However, the grenade slipped out of Mr Sutthi's hand and as he tried to catch it, he only managed to grab the pin as it fell to the ground and detonated.

Mr Sutthi's friend, who remains uniden-

tified, later died at Vachira Phuket Hospital of wounds sustained in the explosion.

Four others were injured in the blast.

Sunee Pompetch, 36, from Nakhon Sawan suffered serious injuries to her left leg and torso.

Hansa Monkol, 21, sustained wounds all over her body.

Mr Kian Saepu, owner of a grocery shop next to the scene of the explosion, suffered wounds to his back while a 20-year-old woman identified only as "Patchree" suffered a hand injury.

– Yodsak Jarana



Confusion after the blast. Photo: Yodsak Jarana

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This Week

Water woes

Is Phuket tap water really safe to drink? We investigate. **Page 6**

Business



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Christmas special feature



Home alone for Christmas in Thailand. **Page 14 & 15**

Construction



Nai Yang villa project amplifies the meaning of 'going green'. **Page 27**

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Everything you need at prices you can afford, from jobs to homes. **Pages 31- 42**

Sport



FC Phuket gunning for glory in final push for promotion. **Page 44**

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Scores turn out for PAD meet in Phuket

By Atchaa Khamlo

MORE than 1,000 people from throughout the South gathered in Phuket for the yellow-shirt People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) conference on Tuesday.

PAD Phuket coordinator Aparat Chartchutikumjorn confirmed that people had come from Krabi, Surat Thani, Phang Nga, Nakhon Sri Thammarat and as far as Bangkok and Phetchaboon to attend the conference.

Security for the gathering at the Royal Phuket City Hotel in Phuket Town was tighter than usual, with guards conducting a sweep of the ballroom and inspecting guests' vehicles on arrival.

The meeting was called to explain the PAD's stance on the territorial dispute between Thailand and Cambodia near Preah Vihear temple.

The PAD's position on the issue differs from that of the ruling Democrat government headed by PM Abhisit Vejjajiva, which has been a factor in waning yellow-



PAD spokesman Panthep Puapongpan at the conference. Photo: Atchaa Khamlo

shirt support for the Democrats.

Heading the conference were PAD leaders Maj Gen Jamlong Srimuang, Pipop Thongchai and New Politics Party leader Somsak Kosaisook.

Media mogul and PAD founder Sondhi Limtongkul as well as PAD leader and Democrat MP Somkiat Pongpaiboon did not attend.

Mr Somsak said, "We have al-

ways received a good response from Phuket."

He explained to the *Gazette* that the conference in Phuket last night was just one of a series to be held nationwide.

"We will continue to inform the people across the country about this issue until we hold our protest [in Bangkok] on January 25," he added.

Internet yacht clearance closer

TRAVELERS entering Thailand via the new Chalong Marina will have the option of submitting official entrance and registration documents electronically, before reaching the port.

The Software Industry Promotion Agency (SIPA) is on schedule to complete the new registration system by February as construction on the complex continues.

Construction is expected to finish by September next year.

SIPA aims to streamline arrival procedures, most notably cutting down on the time spent filling out forms, explained SIPA project manager Pracha Asawateera.

"The Marine Department, Immigration Bureau, and Customs are all responsible for each yacht, crew and cargo check-in. Each department has a different form for visitors to fill in and the prob-



Yachties at Chalong Immigration.

lem is that it takes so much time for them to complete all three," he said.

"We are developing a system to bring all of the forms into one single document. Nearly 40 per cent of the information is repetitive, so this will save time," Mr Pracha said.

The new system will allow incoming vessels to register with the Thai authorities via the internet.

The process will include a total of five steps: general entry declaration, importer information, crew list, passenger list and cargo information.

After submitting their information online, boats will be issued an "ID ticket" via email which will include an appointment time for owners, crew and passengers to report to the Chalong Marina in person.

The website URL has yet to be decided, Mr Pracha said.

He expects the system to be finished around the end of January or early February, after which a month-long testing phase will begin, followed by staff training.

"After the system is stable, we will be happy to conduct training seminars for tourists with program demonstrations," Mr Pracha added. **- Janpen Upatising**

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Strong baht, not snow affecting tourism

By Janpen Upatising

THE heavy snowfalls that forced airports across Europe to close this week is only a short-term problem and will not dramatically affect Phuket tourism, say key local industry figures.

A more likely the culprit affecting Phuket tourism is the strong baht, they say.

Suchart Hirankanokkul, president of the Thai Hotels Association (Southern Chapter), told the *Gazette*, "I think the airport closures will not last long. The heavy snow in Europe may have a slight effect on hotels in Phuket as tourists may not cancel their bookings, but just check-in late due to the incident," said Mr Suchart.

"This is not as serious as the Iceland volcanic ash cloud [in April]. That had much a greater impact; flights stopped for weeks. I think this [the snowbound airports] will last only two or three days," he added.

Bangornrat Shinaprayoon, director of the TAT South Region 4 Office in Phuket Town, agreed.

"I do not think there will be a huge effect on tourism here. The flights are just delayed," she said.

However, Mr Suchart said, "The number of bookings from Europe [this year] is quite low.



SNOWED IN: A plow clears the way at Heathrow Airport. Photo: AFP

European tourists have to pay more [to come to Thailand] because the economic situation in Europe is not good and the Thai baht is strong.

"Some tourists are booking for one week, instead of two weeks like they used to, causing an overall fall in the bookings [for December]," he explained.

Dr Sirichai Silapa-archa, chairman of the Phuket Chamber of Commerce, had a brighter outlook on the current scenario.

"I think the airport closures in Europe is good news for us. I believe that once the airports reopen, more travelers will want to leave their home countries to escape the cold winter," he said.

Locals up in arms over Russian guides

ABOUT 100 local business operators massed at Provincial Hall on Monday to file yet another official complaint about Russians working illegally as tour guides.

The complaint also alleged that Russian guides were working as taxi drivers.

In Thailand, both professions are reserved for Thais.

The complaint, received by Vice Governor Nivit Aroonrat, listed four issues local operators said needed Provincial Hall attention.

Among them were a call to in-

vestigate companies hiring such guides, and to investigate alleged complicity by Phuket Tourism Business and Guide Registration Office Chief Piyasuda, who they alleged had close relations with such companies.

V/Gov Nivit said he would set up a meeting between the Guide Chief and the operators to resolve the matter.

— Pimwara Choksakulpan

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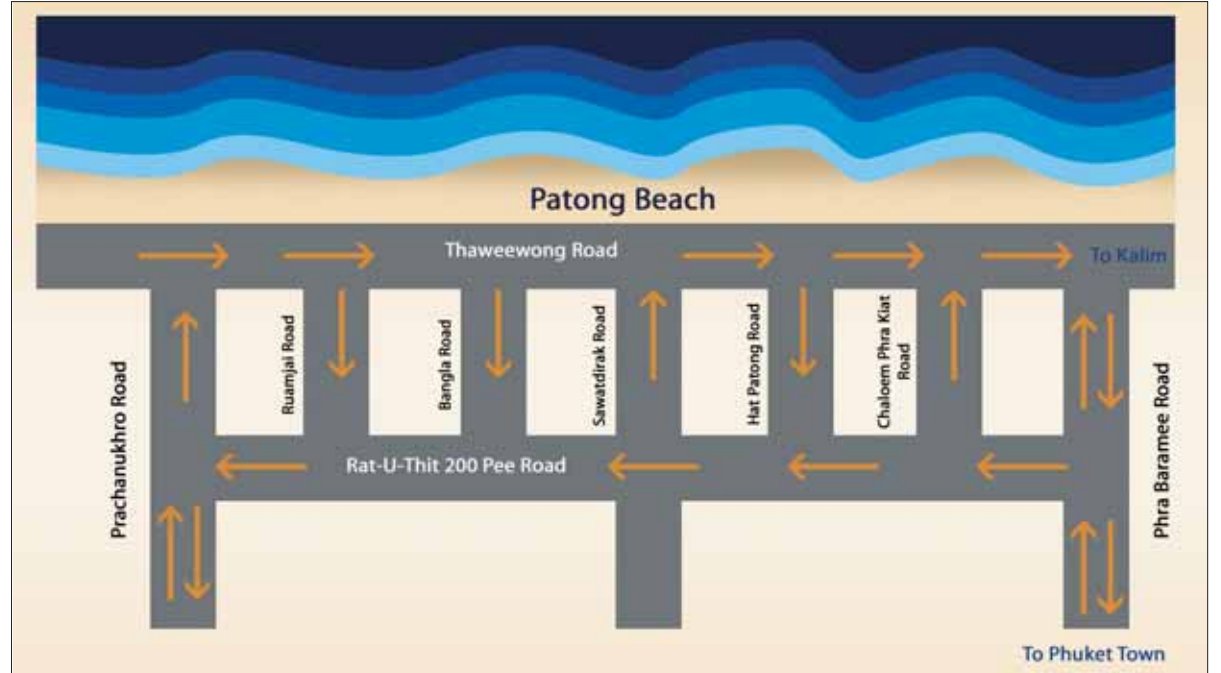
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Patong overhauls one-way streets



Signs are being installed to allow traffic to flow in accordance with the new one-way system as above.

By Atchaa Khamlo

CHANGES in Patong's traffic system moved a step closer this week when officials confirmed that new road markings and signs will soon be in place.

A map detailing the new one-way system was also released.

Five roads connecting Thaweewong Road (the beach road) and Rat-U-Thit 200 Pee Road are set to all become one-way, doing away with the current system, which has traffic switching to the right side of the road instead of the left.

All five roads are located between Prachanukhro Road at the south end of Patong and Phra Barami Road to the north, both of which will remain unchanged in the new system.

The project, which is hoped will help with Patong's chronic traffic woes, has been held up for months following disagreement on several minor points.

With most of the issues seemingly ironed out, Patong Municipality Chief Administrative Officer Phunsak Naksena told the *Gazette* he is hopeful the new one-way system will be operating by the middle of next month.

"Phuket Provincial Police will announce when the plan will be implemented. Traffic signs will be put up before it is expected to commence on January 15, but it first needs confirmation at a meeting about traffic management [to be held on December 23]," said Mr Phunsak.

There will be large billboards in both Thai and English around Patong to inform tourists about the new traffic system, and brochures in both languages including a map will be distributed.

The meeting to be held on Thursday was to put the finishing touches on plans for public parking areas on the Beach Road, with tuk tuk parking still the main concern.

Last week Kathu Traffic Division Inspector Jakkawat Buntawekulsawat said, "Tuk tuk management is our next plan. They will not be allowed to park in long lines like they have been doing. There will only be a few marked areas where tuk tuks are allowed to park".

Patong Mayor Pian Keesin said he was confident that 50 per cent of parking on the beach road will be reserved for public use.

"We will begin managing the parking area on Thaweewong Road first, then Rat-U-Thit 200 Pee Road, before extending it throughout Patong," he said.

There was a favorable reaction from Patong business owners at a meeting held earlier this month.

Arnut Lawlang, 36, representing vehicle rental companies on the beach road, said, "We agree with this plan, but we would like signs in Thai and English to clearly show which areas are for rental vehicles and which are for public use."



Germany's rising Michelin Star-Chef Jens Jakob is coming to the Evason Phuket & Bon Island to present his Cuisine Philosophy.

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Call to expand Street Festival

By Janpen Upatising

THE Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) says next year's Phuket Street Show Festival will have to take up all of Queen Sirikit Park in order to prevent a repeat of the congestion that occurred along Thalang Road during the inaugural event last weekend.

Bangornrat Shinaprayoon, director of the TAT South Region 4 office in Phuket Town, expressed surprise at the huge crowds. An estimated total of 20,000 people attended the event.

"We expected about 10,000 people to come, but we never sought any profit from it. The main objective was to draw people to Old Phuket Town, where local vendors would earn revenue by selling food and other products," she said.

The street performers were impressed by the crowds, said Director Bangornrat.

"The audiences had great interaction with the performers during shows and they were proud to show off their talents in Phuket because it is a world-famous tourist destination," she said.



Brazilian 'James' performing during the festival. Photo: Nicholas Aldstadt

Director Bangornrat named the acrobatics performances and an exhibition by Le Tennis as highlights of the festival.

"But I think the shows were all interesting and well received," she said.

One of the problems with the event was the narrowness of Thalang Road, Mrs Bangornrat added. "We couldn't predict how many people would attend, but it

turned out that there was a great deal of interest in these kinds of activities.

"Next year we will have to spread the event into Queen Sirikit Public Park to support all the visitors. But this year another event had already been booked at the park, which made the available area small and limited," she said.

"As for the other problems we encountered, such as setting up

zones for food sales and traffic control, we will need to hold discussions with the relevant agencies and Phuket City Municipality."

Next year we want the municipality to organize the event since it is in an area under their jurisdiction," she said.

The TAT would stay involved in a supportive role that would include promoting the festival, she said.

Bhuritt Maswongsa, the Patong Tourist Association's vice president for marketing, said the show was a good idea, but suggested that the organizers consider moving next year's festival to Suan Luang Park or Saphan Hin and doing away with fixed stages.

"Shows like this in Japan and Korea are normally held in parks, where people can stroll around at their leisure and form circles around the performers they want to watch.

"But at this event there were such big crowds that not everybody who wanted to watch could see the performers," he added.

Additional reporting by Stephen Fein

Free polio jabs to continue



A Burmese father holds his child while a Health officer administers a polio vaccine.

Photo: Rotary Club of Patong Beach

THE Phuket Provincial Health Office joined forces with Rotary Clubs on Phuket for a mass free polio-vaccination campaign on Wednesday.

The Rotary Club of Patong Beach reported about 250 children being vaccinated on the day.

The vaccinations were administered free at centers set up at government schools and hospitals, and by mobile clinics that visited workers' camps around the island.

A second mass vaccination day has been set for January 19.

Red Cross Fair top prize house unveiled

THE Phuket Red Cross has revealed the 2.5-million-baht home that will be raffled off as top prize at its upcoming annual fund-raising fair – be held at Saphan Hin public park from December 30 to January 9.

The two-storey townhouse in Phanason Villa housing estate at Bor Rae in Wichit covers 21 square wah.

The three-bedroom home was donated by Bangkok-based real estate developer Phanason, which has built many residential projects in Phuket in recent years.

Tickets for all raffle prizes are 100 baht each.

If the grand prize is won by a foreigner – and as Thai law prohibits foreigners from directly owning land – it would be up to the foreigner to find a legal way to accept the prize or sell it on, a



The top-prize house.

Red Cross spokesman told the Gazette.

The winner will have until February 28 to legally accept the home, or the prize will have to be "returned" to the Red Cross.

There will not be a redraw to determine another winner, the spokesman said.

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Prisoner overload

By Atchaa Khamlo

IF THE rate of new inmates being incarcerated at Phuket Prison continues to rise, the island is going to need another prison, says the acting warden.

"The number of prisoners keeps rising, but the space at the prison remains the same," acting prison chief Nopporn Rattanawai told the *Gazette*.

The long-overcrowded prison is already systematically moving inmates to prisons in other provinces to make space for incoming convicts.

"To help alleviate the problem, we transfer as many inmates as we can to prisons in other provinces, such as Trang and Phatthalung – that helps a lot," he said.



Prisoners clean up the open-area prison dormitory. Photo: Gazette file

However, it is the prison's "revolving door" that is the main problem, said Mr Nopporn, who has watched inmates at Phuket Prison come and go for the past decade.

"Our actual capacity of 1,200 inmates leaves little space for pris-



THE GATE: Each month hundreds of new inmates arrive at the already overcrowded prison. Photo: Gazette file

oners to sleep, but we regularly have nearly 1,400 inmates when Immigration bring in illegal alien workers.

"They are always held at the prison for a few months before being released, then a new batch arrives," he said.

"We have to make a plan to give them a place to sleep," he added.

Expanding the current facility in Phuket Town, built more than a century ago, is not an option, Mr Nopporn said.

"Some buildings have been extended, such as the women's

section," he said, but added there was no room to build more facilities at the six-rai prison.

The long-term prison population hovers around 1,250, he said. This includes more than 100 women, with most inmates being originally from other provinces and most jailed for not more than five years.

In general, more than half of all inmates are serving time for drug offences, he said.

There are in total more than 100 foreigners from a variety of countries, including the UK, Germany, Malaysia, Singapore, Cameroon, India and even the Bahamas – as well as Myanmar (Burma).

Most of the foreign inmates have been jailed for minor offences, such as illegally staying in the country or performing activities without the proper permits, said Mr Nopporn.

"Any person sentenced to more than 15 years in jail is moved to a bigger prison, such as in Bangkok and Nakhon Sri Thammarat," he said.

Foreign prisoners are transferred to Bangkok, such as the well-known Klongprem Central Prison and Bang Kwang, where it is more convenient for embassy staff to visit them, Mr Nopporn added.

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Is our tap water safe to drink?

By Pimwara Choksakulpan
and Stephen Fein

THE heads of the two major waterworks agencies in Phuket say their water is safe to drink after it leaves the treatment plant, but experts warn otherwise.

Pisak Chalayut, manager of the Phuket Provincial Waterworks Authority (PPWA) that supplies water to parts of Wichit, Chalong, Rawai, Kata, Karon, Patong, Kathu, Koh Kaew and Phuket Town said:

"I can say that tap water from the PPWA is clean enough to drink because we check and analyze water quality every day. Sometimes after we have fixed mains water pipes, the water turns red. Just let the water flow for a while and it will become clear again.

"If you have problems about water turning red or want more information about your supply, please check where you get your supply from and contact that office directly, because so many people incorrectly presume that they get their water supply from us."

Sawong Sri-in, director of the Waterworks Department at Phuket City Municipality which supplies most of the city, said: "Phuket City Municipality buys tap water from the PPWA and we also produce some ourselves.

"I can say that generally our tap water is safe to drink. We check and analyze our water quality every day.

"But some mains water pipes



Authorities say Phuket tap water is treated to international standard, but would you drink it? Photo: Nicky Vermeulen

have been in use for a long time, and this might cause some sediment to be carried by the water passing through the pipes. This of course is after we have treated the water to potable standard."

Brad Kenny, an environmental engineer and managing director of Environmental Solutions & Protection on the bypass road, said he believes water from the plants meets international drinking-water standards.

However, he expressed concern about tap water becoming contaminated between the treatment

plant and the tap.

"I believe that as water leaves the water treatment plant it is potable, meeting international drinking water standards. Most water sources we have tested over the past 12 years in Phuket pass international drinking standards as far as physical and chemical analysis.

"However, like any tropical region of the world, bacteria is a concern and total bacteria counts are normally high," he said.

Specific bacteria tests normally performed are for E. coli and coliform, which are used as indicators for disease-causing bacteria, Mr Kenny explained.

"In our 10 years of testing water samples in and around Phuket, some samples have tested positive for coliform. Very few samples have ever tested positive for E. coli.

"These bacteria findings in source waters in the general Phuket area are not alarming and several very conventional technologies are effectively used to destroy all bacteria. Chlorine, ul-

Any contamination that does occur will most likely take place somewhere between the treatment plant and one's tap, he explained.

"Once water leaves the water treatment plant, here in Phuket or in your home country, no one has total control of all of the places the water could become re-contaminated: the water mains, the plumbing in your house, apartment, hotel, and most of all your own water storage tank.

"This fact makes every location unique and the actual potability or quality of your water can vary from when it leaves the water treatment plant.

"The only way to be sure is to test the water coming from your own tap. Home testing does not happen often because to test for all 33 items considered by many to be the 'International Drinking Water Standard' is expensive, costing around 14,000 baht per test.

"Testing for the three bacteria mentioned earlier costs around 3,000 baht," he said.

"The best way to ensure that the water at your home is drinking quality is to be sure your own supply pipes are in good order and of good quality, along with quarterly cleaning and disinfecting any water storage tanks you have."

"A final solution is to have a properly working filtration system installed at the point of use, like your kitchen sink, to remove all bacteria, cysts, viruses and other possible physical and chemical contaminants," said Mr Kenny.

"A good-quality reverse-osmosis (RO) system is the best choice. A small under-counter RO system will cost not much more than the comprehensive water testing, around 24,000 baht.

"Good quality RO systems also have several standard filter cartridges that will remove the typical by-products of chlorination, which is the standard way to destroy bacteria at the water treatment plants around Phuket," he added.



Sometimes it depends on the tap.

traviolet light, ozone and several other methods are used around the world quite effectively to destroy bacteria," he added.

As for sediment occasionally turning water red, he said, "This is normal around the world and there is nothing alarming or unusual in Phuket."

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Emergency rule lifted, but tough laws stay

THE Thai government bowed to international pressure and lifted the emergency decree in Bangkok on Wednesday, though the similarly draconian Internal Security Act (ISA) will now apply in its place.

Thailand had faced widespread criticism for continued enforcement of the emergency rule, which banned gatherings of more than five people and allowed security forces to detain suspects for 30 days without charge.

The decree also allowed the authorities to declare curfews and censor and ban publications.

Critics said it was used to harass government opponents.

The Center for Resolution of the Emer-

gency Situation (CRES), responsible for enforcing the decree, will be dissolved.

The measure was enforced in Bangkok and 23 other provinces in early April in response to mass demonstrations by anti-government "red shirt" protesters loyal to fugitive ex-premier Thaksin Shinawatra.

The 10-week protests saw the red shirts occupy large sections of Bangkok's central business district, demanding Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva dissolve parliament and hold elections.

The protests were brutally put down on May 19, with scores of deaths and the burning of key buildings in the capital and across the Northeast.

The emergency decree was gradually

lifted in provinces around the country as CRES deemed them free of unrest.

Minor bomb blasts, which had continued sporadically in Bangkok and neighboring provinces, were used to justify continued emergency rule there.

On Wednesday, the decree was finally lifted in Bangkok, Nonthaburi, Pathum Thani and Samut Prakan.

"The cabinet evaluated the current situation and found that the movement by protesters is more peaceful, lawful and largely symbolic," said government spokesman Supachai Jaisamut.

The move reportedly came at the insistence of Mr Abhisit, who wanted to restore Thailand's image overseas.

Nevertheless, the government will now use the ISA to ensure any unrest is quelled.

The ISA allows security forces to detain suspects for seven days without charge and gives them wide-ranging powers to deal with situations deemed a threat to national security.

The government will also reserve the right to reinstall the emergency decree at any time.

The lifting of the emergency rule signals a more conciliatory tone from the government in its dealings with the red shirts.

The government is in talks to help some 100 jailed red shirt protesters receive bail and legal assistance.

— *Phuket Gazette*

Cops nab 'Iranian mafioso'

A FORMER member of Iran's national karate team was among two suspected members of an alleged Iranian "mafia" rounded up by police on Tuesday.

Bangkok Crime Suppression Bureau cops arrested Majid Farsi, 37, after an Iranian businessman claimed Mr Majid tried to force him to pay protection money.

The victim, whose name has not been released, claimed Mr Majid told him he would be killed if he did not pay 24,000 baht.

Mr Majid faces charges including murder, extortion, armed robbery, rape and kidnap.

A second suspect, Hamid Resa Samani, 39, handed himself over to the cops later the same day.

Further investigation revealed Mr Majid was on bail for murder. The suspect had allegedly killed a man in the Sukhumvit area who refused to pay protection money.

Mr Majid claimed he did not know the victim and that a friend had recommended they meet because they were both Iranian. He denied the charges.

— *Khao Sod*

Bodies return home

Twenty-five Thais killed in Malaysia's 'worst ever' road accident

AROUND THE nation

THE Thai government sent two Air Force transport planes to Malaysia Wednesday to recover the bodies of 25 Thais killed in a horrific bus accident on Monday.

The crash, in which 27 of 37 passengers died, has been described as the worst road accident in Malaysian history.

The accident happened when the bus smashed into a road divider and overturned into a ditch, MCOT reported.

The tourists were returning to Kuala Lumpur from a trip to the picturesque Cameron Highlands in Malaysia's Perak State.

At least 22 people were pronounced dead at the scene, while five succumbed at Raja Permaisuri hospital in nearby Ipoh City.

The driver, his assistant and a tour guide were reportedly among the dead.

Ten people were being treated



Only 10 people survived the tour bus crash which killed 25 Thais and two Malaysians. Photo: AFP

for injuries at the hospital.

The government chartered two Royal Thai Air Force C-130 Hercules aircraft to leave Don Mueang Airport at about 10am Wednesday for Subang Royal Malaysian Air Force base near Kuala Lumpur.

Among the passengers were a team of doctors and Consular Affairs Department deputy director-general Mathurapojana Ittharong.

Thai Foreign Ministry Department of Information Deputy

Permanent Secretary Thani Thongpakdi said that two members of each victim's family were allowed to travel on the planes.

He said 36 family members applied to join the trip.

— *Phuket Gazette*

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In a rut

With all this rain, the road outside my house has become a river and I crunch the underside of my car every time I leave home.

My neighbor added some cement in front of his entrance thereby diverting the water to my side of the road creating a deep drain.

If I do the same there will be a deep ditch down the middle of the road which will not be any better.

I have contacted my local council who tell me, as they have for the last five years, that there is no budget for resurfacing the road but they will add more stones when it gets dry.

The stones will wash away again next rainy season so I wonder if this is really cost effective. Meanwhile my car and I are in a rut.

Jacob Lowry
Chalong

The great banana conspiracy

Why won't anybody on this island sell me a damn banana?

I see banana vendors at every market I visit, but when I ask the vendors to slice one off for me they invariably say through sign language "No can do! You gotta buy the whole bunch".

Why can't they understand that I only want or need *one* banana?

I am not feeding a colony of macaques or an elephant here – I just want my potassium fix. If I buy a whole bunch they will just rot, turn black and go uneaten.

When I was growing up my parents used to tell me "think of

Street show a victim of its own success

THE Phuket Street Show festival last weekend was a wonderful coming out party for Old Phuket Town following its recent facelift, but in some ways the unexpectedly huge crowds turned the fête into a victim of its own success (see news page 4).

Whoever came up with the idea to host world-class street performers in the old quarter is to be given a great deal of credit, as the performers provided just the right kind of entertainment that could be appreciated by every member of the family, young or old.

As it relies more on movement and gesture than the spoken word, performance art is also perfect for an international destination like Phuket.

The festival also provided a pleasant alternative to the sewage stench, touting, streetwalker solicitation and drunken debauchery tourists inevitably have to endure when trying to enjoy the Patong Carnival, which was held concurrently.

However, as anyone who attended on Saturday night will confirm, the huge crowds presented problems in certain areas. Particularly, there were problems along Soi Romanee and in places where stages were set up in the middle of the street, blocking the flow of pedestrians trying to pass by.

Some have already recommended moving the festival to Suan Luang or Saphan Hin next year in order to take advantage of the greater area and availability of parking.

Of course it would be great to have more

all the starving children in Southeast Asia" to try and get me to eat my carrots.

Now that I am over here it amazes me how the locals not only don't seem to care about wasting perfectly good food, but even seem to have unspoken rules in place to actually encour-

age obscene wastage.

As a test, I once offered to pay five baht for one banana on a bunch of 12 that was priced at 15 baht for the lot.

Their pricing works out to less than one baht per banana, so I thought they would jump at the chance to pull in top whack.

Phuket Gazette

performances in those parks, but the *Gazette* feels that with a bit of tweaking and better planning, most of the issues that surfaced during this year's event could be overcome and the festival developed into a signature event for Old Phuket Town.

After all, there are already numerous events held at Suan Luang and Saphan Hin. Local residents in and around both areas have begun to complain of sanitation problems, security issues, "hospitality fatigue" and a host of other problems.

Few there will complain if yet another large event is hosted elsewhere.

As mentioned by local TAT office director Bangornrat Shinaprayoon, this year's event could not use Queen Sirikit Park as a main staging area, which forced almost all of the activities on to the narrow Thalang Road.

If two or three of the acts were held inside the park and others set up in areas where they would not impede pedestrian traffic, Thalang Road would serve more as an intimate walking street rather than a bottleneck to the masses.

The traffic mayhem of last weekend could also be largely avoided simply by using the Provincial Administration's pink buses or other vehicles to shuttle in visitors from remote park-and-ride areas.

They didn't. It was the same old reply: "Sorry mister, you are out of luck".

I suspect there is some sort of conspiracy at work here, but to what end?

It's all a mystery to me.

Reginald Lewis
Samkong

Lucky nuts abound

Re: *Phuket Gazette*, Singaporean *Ho* fails quest for 'lucky nuts', July 30

I found this story most interesting and loving peanuts, especially the local steamed ones, I admit paying more attention to the pods since reading the article.

It is rare and I was almost sure I was never going to encounter one.

And then, on the night of Loy Krathong, I discovered one with five "nuts" in a pod, remembering your story and keeping it. Three days later, another one – wow...

So what do I do with them?

H₂O Dragonfly
Thalang

Best wishes for 'Tuptim'

I would simply like to join the chorus of those on Phuket – Thai and expat – in praise for the goodwill of Mr Dana White.

Truly remarkable that a man of such character still exists in this modern "survival of the fittest" corporate money-grab.

The speed with which this has unfolded is also worth noting.

It seems as though professional fighting communities around the world get a bad wrap for being full of violent, heartless thugs. Wrong.

Cheers to the Phuket muay thai community for their drive to raise money and to Dana White and the UFC for bringing this Christmas joy. I believe I speak for us all in wishing Tuptim and her family all the best.

Roger Tremont
Bang Tao

Phuket Gazette

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Issues & Answers...

Making a marriage official

How do I become a marriage celebrant?

Interested
Kathu

Crystal Riedemann, Wedding Services Manager at Laguna Phuket, replies:

Wedding celebrants are used to conduct weddings at Laguna Phuket's Chapel on the Lagoon and elsewhere in Phuket.

Our Wedding Chapel hosts legal or religious marriage ceremonies, but weddings conducted by celebrants are symbolic events.

We believe a celebrant is one of the most important elements in a marriage ceremony, and as such it is not a role to be taken lightly.

Becoming a marriage celebrant is not difficult, but it is not a job for the fainthearted.

Celebrants should have faith in the bonds of marriage and this must be conveyed to the couple through the manner of communication.

Send us your queries and we'll ask the right people to respond to them.

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IssuesAnswers

Although there are courses to be trained as a marriage celebrant, this is not a requirement.

The basic necessity is that a celebrant must have great public speaking talent and be able to make a nervous wedding couple laugh.

Since guests may be filming the happy moment, it's imperative that a celebrant has a voice that is clearly projected and allows everyone to be part of the proceedings.

Men tend to be more successful as celebrants, as a deep male voice lends credibility and a level of seriousness to the event. However, it should be noted that many cultures prefer a female celebrant.

A marriage celebrant should always be presentable and well dressed; after all, couples will be looking at him or her in their photo album for many years to come.

If you think you have the qualities required to be a wedding celebrant, visit your local resorts and present yourself to the events manager.

You will soon find out if you are right for the job, or if you're more suited to a different vocation.

Taveesak Pethsuwan, Chief Administrative Officer at Muang District Office, replies:

A man and woman can be married in Thailand without going to their local District Office in person.

To do so, they must first submit a completed Registration of Marriage Application form (KorRor1) with the local District Office at least three working days before the wedding.

The KorRor1 is available at any District Office.

Both the bride and groom must sign the form, which must have

Get involved to keep construction civil

FIRST PERSON

THERE are a lot of construction projects taking place around Phuket at the moment and people living in the construction "zones" often don't know about them until work actually begins.

This is a problem because if they are badly affected by the project, they will voice their protest too late.

I urge local people to get more involved in the very first stages of local construction projects. They should pay more attention to what's going on in their neighborhoods, voice more comments at public hearings and fill in questionnaires when asked.

I always hear that people ignore the questionnaires or refuse to comment and even though some attend the public hearings, they don't pay much attention to the issues.

Arranging public hearings and distributing questionnaires are required with all environmental impact assessments (EIAs) and initial environmental examinations (IEEs).

For those living next to construction projects, if your property is damaged in the process you can ask for documents guaranteeing protection from damage at your local municipality or administrative organization where the EIA or IEE reports are kept.

You can use these documents to seek compensation from those responsible and you don't need to file a complaint in court.

These documents also serve to



Phuket Natural Resources and Environment Office Director **Ongart Chanacharnmongkol**, 56, talks about how to prevent problems between local people and construction companies developing projects near their homes.



ATTENTION: Phuket locals at a public hearing. Photo: Pimwara Choksakulpan

ensure construction companies are more careful and try not to damage the area around their projects.

If a project is to have a large impact on local people – for example a deep-sea marina or large hotel – I would like to see project owners and licensed firms publicize the plans well.

They should set several public hearings and place importance on the comments given by people living in the area. They should be sure to address any concerns with preventative measures.

For example, if a project is near the sea and locals say they need access to the beach, developers should provide a walkway for them. Developers should also keep records of all protests.

If both parties show sincere gestures – locals actively present their comments and concerns from the first steps of the project and developers willingly cooperate to find solutions – I am sure local lifestyles and development can go forward together without any problems.

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...asking the questions that affect you...



A couple ties the knot at Laguna Phuket. Photo: Laguna Phuket

signed photocopies of the couple's passports or ID cards attached.

Anyone can submit the form at any District Office on behalf of the bride and groom.

A processing fee of 200 baht will be charged when the form is

filed at the District Office.

After the KorRor1 has been approved, the District Office will send one of its officers to witness the wedding ceremony.

After the ceremony, the bride and groom must complete the

Registration of Marriage form (KorRor2).

The KorRor2 must have signed photocopies of the passport or ID card of both the bride and groom attached.

Two different witnesses must sign the KorRor2 – not including the District Office witness.

Anyone can be a witness, but signed photocopies of the witness' ID cards or passports must be attached to the KorRor2.

After the bride and groom and the witnesses have all signed the KorRor2, the officer attending the ceremony will then sign the form as a final witness.

Once the officer has signed the form, the couple are legally man and wife.

The bride and groom will then receive their Certificate of Marriage (KorRor3), which the officer attending the ceremony will sign as registrar and affix the official seal of the District Office.

This is why we need the KorRor1 to be submitted several days before the wedding ceremony takes place.

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Sound advice in time for Christmas

AS THE end of another year speeds towards us, I would like to wish all Phuket readers of Island Investor a very merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

On this theme it should be in everyone's interest to review one's financial health. Financial checkups are as important as medical checkups and should be conducted at least as regularly.

Here is a list of financial matters that should be considered going into the New Year.

• Build up your cash

What was once considered safe may not be now. With unemployment at very high levels throughout the world, many of us who thought our jobs were safe may need to reconsider. Be smart and start to build up your cash reserves just in case the axe falls.

• Bank safely

For a long time people trusted banks – all banks. That's not true anymore. More than 200 banks have gone broke since the financial crisis started in 2008. Look again at the bank that holds your hard-earned savings. How safe is it? How well run is it?

• Choose financial products carefully

Most investors should avoid transparency issues and the credit

risk and liquidity issues associated with most structured products and investments. Why invest if the product is overly complicated? A good rule to follow is: The simpler the investment, the better the investment.

• Avoid interest rates that are "too good to be true"

Be sure that your returns on cash are obtained without compromising security or liquidity. Banks that offer unusually high deposit rates are doing so for a reason – they are finding it difficult attracting deposits. Do you really want to trust your deposits to an institution that is struggling?

• Diversify and watch your investment portfolio

A key mistake many investors make is holding too many assets in one particular investment. This may be a legacy issue, such as holding a disproportionate amount of shares in the company you used to work for. Emotional attachments can be dangerous. Spread the risk of by diversifying your investment portfolio.

• Be aware of currencies

The baht has appreciated against most major currencies this year. Thailand's better fundamentals and the flow of foreign capital into the country has attracted in-

Island Investor

By Bill Anderson

vestors to the national currency. This trend is likely to continue over the medium to long term, albeit with periods of weakness. You might not want to have all your income-generating assets in other currencies whilst your spending is in Thai baht.

• If you have a UK pension, make sure it can be transferred overseas

Many retirees in Phuket have UK pensions that have suffered considerably due to the strength of the baht. In addition, many UK pension schemes are "underwater" as they do not have enough assets to pay their current or future retirees. Are these schemes really safe if the former employer fails? A transfer to an overseas pension scheme such as a QROPS (Qualified Recognized Overseas Pension Scheme) should be considered.

• Make sure you are "non-domiciled" for tax purposes

As the UK struggles to get its finances in order, the desire to increase revenues from its expats is growing stronger. Inland Rev-



EXPENSIVE SEASON: Counting the cost of Christmas. Photo: Nicky Vermeulen

enue is increasingly checking whether an expat is really an expat. Do you have property in the UK? Do you hold memberships to golf clubs? Do you attend a regular annual event in the UK? Just because you spent less than 91 days in the UK each year is not enough these days to convince the authorities you are not subject to UK tax.

• Beware inheritance tax traps

Inheritance tax planning is a crucial but largely ignored issue for expats with substantial assets. For a surviving spouse or unmar-

ried UK national, all assets above UK£325,000 will be subject to 40% inheritance tax upon their own death. Using a trust can mitigate some if not all potential liabilities. Do you really want to hand over 40% of your hard earned wealth when you die? No, didn't think so.

Enjoy the festivities but make a resolution to take a look at your finances in the New Year.

Bill Anderson is the Phuket Associate Director of MBMG International. E: bill@mbmg-international.com

Base wage rise 'won't spur inflation in Phuket'

By Anand Singh

PHUKET will not be affected by inflation following the cabinet's approval of a rise in the national minimum wage, according to local officials.

Phuket workers were given highest minimum wage in the country at 221 baht per day, following the cabinet's approval earlier this month.

The increase, to take effect from January 1, will no doubt be welcomed by low-income workers on the island, many of whom are migrants from Burma.

The move follows The Central Wage Committee's decision in September to increase Phuket's minimum wage from 204 baht to 214 baht.

Arwut Wongsavas, assistant head of the Phuket Commercial Office, says the rise will not affect the majority of low-income earners because most Phuket employers pay wages above the minimum rate.

"Prices in Phuket are higher than the



ON THE UP: Phuket workers have the highest minimum wage rate in Thailand. Photo: AFP

national average. Most years we also have a higher inflation rate than the rest of the country. This is because retail costs are high in Phuket, owing to high land prices and expensive rent. These extra costs push up retail prices", Mr Arwut said.

"This is why average wages in the province are quite high and independent of government intervention. I believe that the minimum wage increase will not have much of an effect on Phuket prices in general because it will not affect the majority of workers here," Mr Arwut added.

Despite rising oil prices, Phuket should be able to stave off inflation in the coming year, he said.

"Judging from previous oil price rises, Phuket's retail sector does not react significantly to changes in oil prices. When oil prices increase, retailers are reluctant to pass on the extra cost to consumers because it will reduce their

competitiveness. Government agencies also work with large suppliers to ensure market price stability for many commodities. External factors are unlikely to affect consumer prices straight away," he said.

It is expected that Phuket's inflation rate will come in at around 3.2% at the end of the year.

According to Mr Arwut, this is lower than the 3.5% that had been expected. An inflation rate above 3% is higher than the national average, but is still considered a desirable rate for the island's economy.

To offset inflationary pressures the Ministry of Commerce this year froze prices of several commodities, but the measure is set to expire at the end of this year.

By next year it is likely that prices of goods, such as chemical fertilizers, palm oil and agricultural crops will rise, according to reports from *The Nation*.




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AMCHAM forms Greater Phuket Chapter

THE American Chamber of Commerce in Thailand (AMCHAM Thailand) has announced the formation of a Greater Phuket Chapter.

AMCHAM Thailand is the leading foreign business organization in Thailand and has recognized the surging economic importance and prominence of Phuket as Asia's leading resort destination.

Established in 1956, AMCHAM Thailand now has over 660 member companies and almost 2,000 professionals including corporate representatives and individuals. Membership is international and includes a large contingent of non-American based companies as well as leading Thai groups.

AMCHAM member companies provide more than 250,000 jobs in the Kingdom and represent investments of more than US\$35 billion.

Co-ordinating the Phuket Chapter are Bill Barnett, Managing Director of C9 Hotelworks, and John Magee, Publisher of the *Phuket Gazette*.

AMCHAM is one of 30 foreign chambers and business associations registered in Thailand.

Two months ago, a successful AMCHAM Thailand function was held at Laguna Phuket with over 140 local and Bangkok business people attending. Next year the Chapter will provide a forum for the island's businesses to work together in the development of "Brand Phuket".

For those interested in participating, application requests should be directed to Khun Orn at orn@amchamthailand.com. For general information, visit W:amchamthailand.com.

— *Phuket Gazette*

Push for more medi-tourists

By Pimwara Choksakulpan

DEVELOPMENT and promotion of southern Thailand as a medical tourism hub was the topic of an international conference this month at the Royal Phuket City Hotel.

IMT-GT (Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle) co-operative initiative officials participated in the "IMT-GT Medical Tourism" meeting chaired by Thailand's Ministry of Tourism and Sports Permanent Secretary Sombat Kurupan on December 15.

Among the 350 people in attendance were representatives from all three countries involved with tourism and medicine in both government and private sectors, including delegates from Bangkok Phuket Hospital, Phuket International Hospital and Vachira Phuket Hospital.

The conference was held to "discuss and brainstorm" strategies for promoting and developing

Thailand as a medical tourism destination.

Mr Sombat said, "With improving technology in medicine, the number of elderly people will increase, and the southern provinces – especially Phuket – are ideal locations to promote for medical tourism. While receiving treatment, tourists can also enjoy the natural environment, culture, food, nice weather and nightlife.

"These economic and local factors will help push Thailand to become a medical tourism hub in the near future."

He said that Thailand has potential to become a medical tourism hub because it offers "high-technology" medicine along with alternative options such as spa treatment or Thai massage at low costs. Added to the allure of Thailand as a medical tourism destination are its overall low cost of living and excellent services, he said.



MEDI-MEET: Officials at the IMT-GT Medical Tourism conference.

There is an average of 1.45 million medical tourists each year in Thailand, which is expected to grow to 1.6 million for 2010, Mr Sombat said.

The increase in numbers is expected to generate about 60 billion

baht in revenue for 2010 and rise to 100 billion for 2015, he added.

The IMT-GT's proposals will be included in the National Tourism Development Plan 2012-2016 which will be delivered to the cabinet next week, Mr Sombat said.

Asian investors want a piece of Phuket

ASIAN investors from China, South Korea and Singapore still see Phuket as a strong market with growth opportunities, according to Phuket governor Tri Augkaradacha.

"Foreign investors showed particular interest in the island's public projects. At least three Chinese companies have proposed plans to build the island's light rail system. A Korean company has also entered talks with the local government to build the Patong tunnel," Gov Tri said.

Russian investment groups have also shown keen interest in Phuket's hospitality sector, with many investing significant amounts in Phuket hotels in the past year, he added.

"Recently a businessman from

Hong Kong approached me because he wanted to invest in Phuket's software industry. He said he was impressed with the investment potential Phuket has to offer, particularly in Kamala. He also wanted to promote the island to fellow investors in Hong Kong who work in retail, wholesale and real estate sectors," Gov Tri said.

Although Gov Tri said he welcomed foreign investment, he added that his foremost concern was to make sure investment and development would not lead to environmental degradation.

"Provincial government agencies will do their jobs to ensure that investment and development is carried out in line with the laws and regulations that we have in

place," Gov Tri added.

But he expressed concerns over the environmental impact assessment (EIA) procedures that have been set by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

Environmental impact assessments are carried out by central

agencies and take as long as six months to complete, according to current EIA procedures.

Gov Tri said the complexity of the procedures and the length of time it takes may prove to be a hindrance to foreign investment.

— *Anand Singh*

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But I still haven't found

A curious tale just in time for Christmas about one man's search for happiness on his own in Phuket.

By Steve Rosse

ABE Schrute grabbed the waiter by the elbow. "Where the hell's my green onion?" he growled at the teenager. "The fried rice comes with green onion!"

The waiter tried a smile, but it was only half-hearted. He couldn't understand a word that Abe was saying, but it appeared that the old farang had counted the grains of rice on his plate and found them lacking. The waiter didn't know much English, but he knew that a farang who had the money to come visit Phuket should be able to afford something other than fried rice and a bottle of water. Especially on the night they called "Clit-mat Eep".

Abe tired of waiting for a response. "Balls! Horsecrap! If yer gonna work in a restaurant, ya gotta learn English!" The boy twisted his arm away and scampered off in fright. "Damn it. Pay 80 baht for a plate of fried rice, and no damn onion. Onion's the best part." He ladled generous amounts of the chilies and fish sauce, provided free in little caddies in the center of the table, onto his rice and began to eat. Abe hunched over the table, his skinny left arm wrapped around his plate as if he was afraid someone would try to steal his food. He shoveled the rice into his mouth and washed it down with gulps of water. When he was finished, he counted out 100 baht in coins from a plastic bottle he wore on a string around his neck and left them on the table.

The young waiter was seated by the door watching the TV

hung over the cashier's station. As Abe approached him the young man stood up and delivered a little bow and his best "Melly Clit-mat!" But as Abe passed, a few grains of rice sticking to the gray stubble on his chin, he shouted at the boy: "Balls! Horsecrap!"

THE TOURISTS

He stopped just outside the door and looked suspiciously up and down the street. The sidewalk was crowded with tourists. Abe plotted a path down the block toward the beach road, a path that would expose him to the least risk of contact with other people.

He had gone no more than ten paces when he noticed a European couple handing out money to a gaggle of excited children selling flower garlands. The tourists were both fat and sunburned, and only an enormous purse distinguished the female from the male. The children were chattering and giggling and hanging garland after garland around the necks of the foreigners, who appeared to be just as giddy as the kids. As Abe passed he pulled the sleeve of the spherical male half of the pair and said, "You know, these kids are all controlled by gangsters. That money's just going to buy dope for some speed freak."

The man looked at Abe with shock. "Vhat does it matter?" he said. "Look at dese kids. Look how happy dey are. I buy all dere garlands and dey get to go home early, maybe get some sleep tonight. It's Christmas! Vhat's wrong mit you?"

Abespat "Balls! Horsecrap!"

at the tourist and stalked on down the street.

HOME ALONE

He turned left at the beach road and started south down the dark promenade. Most of the tuk-tuks that passed didn't bother to offer him a ride. The local drivers recognized him by his hunched shoulders and knobby knees. They knew he would rather walk than pay for a lift.

When he came up the driveway to the Chai Dee Bungalows Abe stood for a moment to catch his breath in the shadows outside the open-air, cement-floored space that the management liked to flatter with the name Sala Lahn Chai Seafood Restaurant. The sala was only a tin roof on some concrete pillars (it had been built originally as a car port) and it was half way up a good sized hill, across the road and at least fifty meters from the sea. On this night the place was made festive with strands of electric fairy lights strung between the joists of the roof, cardboard angels taped to the concrete pillars, and crowds of young budget travelers noisily enjoying themselves.

"Balls," grumbled Abe from his vantage point out on the driveway. He ran a critical eye along the buffet. "Idiots. Paying 800 baht for barbecued chicken and canned cranberry sauce." He skirted the restaurant and made his way to his bungalow, which stood pretty far up the hill, at the end of a brick path from which most of the bricks had sunk out of sight into the mud. It was the bungalow farthest from the

restaurant and the road and the sea, and thus the cheapest room in the place.

He let himself into his room, turned on the light, and immediately looked around to make sure that nothing was missing. While Abe had a small fortune in a Cayman Islands bank, what few material possessions he owned were present in the bungalow: his travel clock on the bedside table, his carry-on bag in a corner, his toiletries kit next to the sink. One of his T-shirts was hanging in the closet, one hung on the drying rack in the bathroom, and one was on his back.

THE LETTER

As he checked his wallet and passport, which were hidden under a corner of the carpet under his bed, Abe noticed an envelope on the floor which had evidently been pushed under the door while he was away at dinner. It was an air mail envelope from home, and the postmarks showed that it had followed Abe from Bangkok to Chiang Mai, Ko Samui and Krabi before finally finding him on Phuket. The return address on the envelope was that of a law firm in Des Moines, Iowa. When he saw that, Abe laughed out loud. "You guys never give up, do ya?" Throwing himself onto his bed he ran a bony finger under the envelope's flap.

The letter was almost identical to the previous dozen or so that Abe had received in the two years since he'd left the US. The firm of Caplan, Seidman and Pidgeon were informing Mr Schrute that in his absence the court had found in

favor of Mrs Belle Jacob and awarded her one half of the proceeds of the sale of the Happy Bonz Dog Toy Co, once owned in partnership by Mr Schrute and the late Mr Jacob. Mr Schrute was ordered hereby and forthwith to return said moneys to Mrs Jacob, along with interest and penalties, or be in contempt of court and liable to a jail term of not less than three years, etc.

"Balls!" Abe wadded up the letter and threw it across the room, missing the waste basket by more than three feet. He was about to treat the envelope the same way, when he noticed that there was another piece of paper inside. The paper was small, pale pink in color and torn from a note pad of a style that a certain kind of Midwestern woman keeps next to the phone in her kitchen. In the upper left corner of the page was a cartoon of a cat watching butterflies through a window. The handwriting was in violet ink. He read the note with a scowl.

"Abe," the missive said, "I'm not asking for the money for myself. Tim wants to go to medical school and he'll never be able to afford it without the money from Marty's company. And it was Marty's company as much as yours. Say what you will about Marty Jacob; he was always a good man of business. I'm only asking you to do the right thing. Love, Belle."

Abe smashed the pink paper into his fist and tossed it across the room. This time he missed the waste basket by five feet. "Horseshit," he said to the walls. "Breaks my heart 40 years ago and now she wants me to pay for little Timmy to

what I'm looking for

go to school. Marty was never a good man of business. He was up to his neck in debt when he died. Carrying that debt around is what killed him. She knows that. She had to sell their damn house to pay his debts. Screw her."

I'M OUTTA HERE

Abe paced for a minute. "I gotta have a drink," he said to the empty room. Reaching under the bed he lifted the corner of the moldy carpet and pulled out his wallet. He carefully selected two red notes from the wallet, and just as carefully replaced the wallet under the bed. Then he went down to the restaurant.

In the Sala Lahn Chai the noise of Slavic Christmas carols was blaring out of cracked speakers. Gangs of grubby European twenty-somethings in carefully groomed dreadlocks milled around, drinking Mekong-soda and tripping over chairs. A dog was under a table, chewing on an expensive running shoe he'd found outside the front door of somebody's bungalow. Abe crept around the edge of the crowd until he came to the cashier. "Gimme a bottle of Sangthip, a bag of ice, and a bottle of Sprite," he said to her. The girl was wrapping the bottle of whisky in newspaper and Abe was holding out his money to her, but the bills were immediately swept aside by a fat brown hand, dimpled at the knuckles.

"Doh' you worry, Missa Eb!" said a voice at Abe's elbow. Abe looked down into the doll-like face of Papa Boon, the proprietor of the Chai Dee Bungalows, who on this night

was dressed in a red felt jacket trimmed in white cotton wool, which was too small across the shoulders and left his chest exposed. On his head was a red felt hat that stood straight up like a traffic cone.

"You welly goot customah! Papa giff you fum Clit-mat!" The jolly old man reached over the counter and pulled a Snickers bar out of the candy display and dropped it into the bag with the whisky, ice and soda pop.

"Melly Clit-mat Missah Eb!" he said.

Abe tried to protest, saying that he wanted no favors, but Papa Boon was abruptly dragged away by a gang of happy Swedes for drinks at their table. Abe stood at the cashier's counter for a moment, looking somewhat wistfully at the party, and then he took his bag up to his room. As he trudged up the hill he noticed that there were no lights on in any of the other bungalows. Around his lighted window there was nothing but dark jungle all the way to the top of the hill, where a pale full moon was made hazy by the humidity. He was the only person at the Chai Dee not at the party.

ROOM FOR THOUGHT

As he set out a glass and put the ice into a bowl, Abe listened to the sounds coming up from the restaurant. Somebody was singing "Oh, Holy Night" in French. He put the candy bar beside the glass and pulled out the Sprite and whisky. The cashier had wrapped the bottles in pages from the previous week's *Phuket Gazette*, and as Abe slowly unwound the stiff paper, his mind still on the music floating up from the restaurant, a picture caught his eye.

It was a photo of a foreignman, of advanced years and nondescript features. For some reason the face looked familiar to Abe, and he read the caption to see if it was some-

one he might have met on the island. "Mr Cecil Fowler, aged 64, was found dead in his condominium at Fang Sope Villa on December 10. The medical examiner at Vachira Hospital determined the cause of death to be an overdose of pain medication, and listed the death as a suicide. Because Mr Fowler left no will, and because of the advanced state of decomposition of the body, the Australian Embassy has ordered that the remains be cremated. There will be no memorial service."

Abe had never met Mr Fowler, but as he looked again at what was obviously a reproduction of Mr Fowler's passport photo he knew why the face was so familiar. Mr Fowler looked a lot like Abe.

His legs felt weak and he sat down heavily. He made himself a stiff drink and tore the wrapper off the Snickers bar. Its chocolate was coated with a grey crust of decomposition. Abe put it down without taking a bite.

From his seat at the desk under the window he could see down the hill to the restaurant and past it to the empty beach road, and beyond that to the sea. Moonlight was reflected in the perfectly flat water, stretching all the way out to the horizon. A single yacht rode at anchor in the bay. Twinkling lights were strung in a dotted chevron from the stern up to the tip of the mast and then down to the prow; these lights were reflected in the water under the boat in a shimmering V. The lights looked to Abe like a pair of blinking arrows, one pointing up, one pointing down.

Abe thought about Mr Fowler, rotting in the tropical heat on the floor of his condo. His absence from his usual haunts must have gone unnoticed by his neighbors. No friend came to check on him. The body probably wasn't found until the rent was overdue.

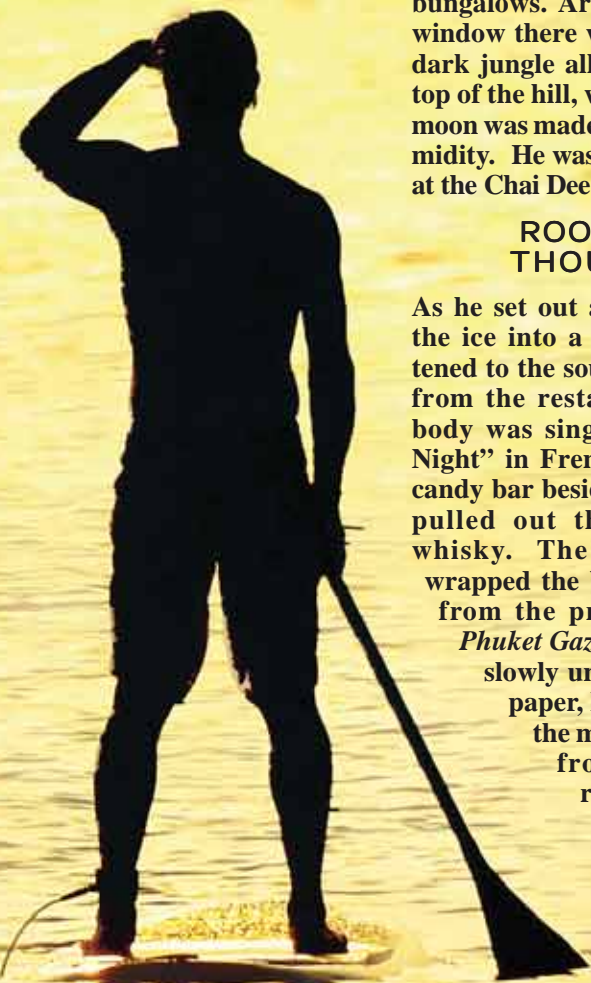
MOVING ON

As Abe finished his drink Bob Marley's "Santa Claus is Comin' to Town" floated up the hill. He was suddenly hungry again. He hadn't had cranberry sauce since he was a boy. "What if that was turkey," he said aloud. "A great big turkey, and not chicken after all." He thought he would definitely go down and join the party. He didn't think about the price at all. But first, he thought, he would write a letter.

He pulled some paper and a pen out of the desk drawer. The paper had "Chai Dee Bungalows, Phuket, Thailand" printed on it and it had been in the drawer so long that its corners were yellow and curled.

As his little clock on the bedside table beeped twelve times to greet Christmas Day, Abe wrote, "Dear Belle. Sorry it's taken me so long to get back to you, but I've been traveling around Thailand, and the mail's not so good here..."

Steve Rosse is the author of two books about Phuket, Expat Days and Thai Vignettes, available from www.bangkokbooks.com



Not a good choice, Johnny

Film

By Scott Phillips

The Tourist

Director: Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck

Starring: Johnny Depp, Angelina Jolie, Paul Bettany, Timothy Dalton

Genre: Action/Thriller

Gazette Rating: 3.5/5

WITH Johnny Depp and Angelina Jolie heading an abundance of big Hollywood talent, *The Tourist* delivers a satisfying heist movie that makes decent – but not great – use of its stars.

Though it may not have the class of *The Thomas Crown Affair* or the charm of *Ocean's 11*, it's still a fun and sexy story of thievery that pays homage to Europe's most romantic cities.

In a role we're accustomed to seeing Jolie play, her character, Elise, opens the film as the subject of some elaborate surveillance efforts.

She walks with a purposeful stride and flaunts shiny designer clothing, often with a smirk on her face, hinting that she's always a step ahead of those tailing her.

Scotland Yard is keeping very close tabs on her, following her through the streets of Paris to a breakfast cafe, where she receives a message from a mysterious man.

He is known only as Alexander Pearce, and he is at the center a 750-million pound theft that both the cops and the mob aim to recover.

The message tells Elise to board a train to Venice and find



A-LIST DUO: Johnny Depp and Angelina Jolie star in *The Tourist*, due to open in Phuket this month.

a man that matches his height and build.

She walks through the train cars seeking a target, giving a look no man could ignore until she comes across Frank (Depp), whose jaw almost hits the floor as his eyes meet hers.

He's a school teacher from Wisconsin, somewhat shy and reclusive, and definitely not used to dealing with high society – but he's the everyman that fits perfectly into Elise's unknown plan.

Elise makes quite an impression on Frank, so much that she has trouble getting rid of him after he's served her purpose.

Turns out the stubborn Frank, a lone tourist traveling around Europe, is willing to put forth a bit of effort to keep Elise in his travel plans.

This makes the film a lot of fun, not to mention realistic.

After all, ask any man: if Angelina Jolie randomly sat across from your table as you were sightseeing alone, how much effort would you put forth to keep her around?

Frank is obviously in over his head, but he's enamored, so he throws himself aimlessly into the criminal world.

Depp plays him with a signature innocence and disassociation, and Jolie gives the right touch as the enigmatic damsel behind it all.

Depp and Jolie are both part of the Hollywood elite that became superstars by adding a commanding screen presence and charisma to their good looks.

Qualities that lend themselves

well to heist flicks.

Despite this and their individual performances, the chemistry between them in *The Tourist* always feels a bit constrained.

This shortcoming is not necessarily the fault of the actors. The screenplay just doesn't call for a lot of scenes in which Elise and Frank actually get to interact as they dodge bullets and steer speedboats through the canals of Venice.

It may be fun to watch, but ultimately, there's a void in the characters that will likely keep movie buffs from coming back for a second viewing.

Still, if you've got a date night coming up and you're looking for something light and fun, look no further. *The Tourist* is slated to hit SFX theaters this month.

What else is on...

Tron Legacy

Director: Joseph Kosinski

Starring: Jeff Bridges, Garrett Hedlund, Olivia Wilde, Bruce Boxleitner

Genre: Sci-Fi/Action

Gazette Rating: 3/5

IN DISNEY'S latest, a US\$170 million 3D sci-fi flick, Jeff Bridges reprises the role he played 25 years ago, when the first *Tron* film concluded with his character, Kevin Flynn, stuck inside a video game.

Now, still trapped, his 27-year-old son has conveniently grown up to become a tech geek who decides to investigate the mysterious disappearance of his father.

Not long after which, he too finds himself racing his way through a virtual world.

There was good cause to make this film – special effects have come a long way since the early 80s – and those who like to be dazzled by bright lights and an abundance of 3D action will not be disappointed.

Think of it this way: if you thought the trailer looked cool, you'll enjoy the movie.

The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of Dawn Treader

Director: Michael Apted

Starring: Georgie Henley, Skandar Keynes, Ben Barnes, Will Poulter

Genre: Fantasy/Action

Gazette Rating: 2.5/5

THE lackluster *Chronicles of Narnia* gets its third installment with *The Voyage of Dawn Treader*, based on the classic fantasy children's fable from author CS Lewis.

Brother and sister-duo, Edmund and Lucy, enter the wardrobe into the dreamworld of Narnia to join royalty for another fantasy-filled adventure, complete with dragons, magic, and of course, the talking lion.

Despite the awesome source material, the third film falls just as flat as the first two.

Kids will be entertained, sure, but don't expect an adaptation that will engage their imaginations like the novels can.

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Serving green cuisine in Samkong

Cheap Eats

By Stephen Fein

MUCH has been said in recent years about the mounting environmental problems facing Phuket, but despite all the talk it's hard to find many businesses that have taken clear-cut steps to reduce the amount of trash they produce.

This week's Cheap Eats column features a restaurant that only produces a wide range of delicious, low-cost dishes, but does so with minimal environmental impact.

The White Tent restaurant, on Hongyok-Uthit Road in the Samkong area of Phuket Town, operates a thriving business in an area where competition is fierce, to say the least.

In terms of dining opportunities, it is hard to think of a better place to live than Samkong, which is home to literally hundreds of excellent restaurants and food stalls with an unrivaled variety of delicious, low-cost dining options.

White Tent is easy for foreigners to miss because there is no English-language sign in front and its clientele is predominantly young Thais, many of whom converge on the restaurant's 28 tables at around dusk.

Also missing is the white canopy that covered much of the open air dining area when the restaurant opened seven years ago. To find White Tent, look for a row of motorbikes lined up along the road opposite Samkong Park.

White Tent is a nice enough place to dine, but many customers also take advantage of its takeaway service. The chefs can produce any meal on their extensive menu and will cook up just about



GREEN IS GOOD: White Tent restaurant switched to biodegradable packaging last year. Photos: Stephen Fein



any Thai dish you desire.

More than enough for a family of three, my last meal there comprised four dishes: pork fried in garlic (40 baht), "New Orleans" style barbecued chicken wings (45 baht), *Tom Yum Kung* (60 baht) and *Yum Thalae* Seafood Salad with rice vermicelli (60 baht).

One nice thing about walking

out of White Tent with a takeaway order is knowing that almost all of the packaging is biodegradable.

With the exception of soups and drinks, most dishes are served in biodegradable boxes made from recycled paper that are lined with banana leaf – a far more appetizing sight than a polystyrene foam box. All the boxes are then placed in



biodegradable plastic bags.

Restaurant manager Thitaya "Kid" Hayeeyasin said that the packaging costs slightly more than packaging and foam, but not enough to drive up food prices.

"It can all be bought at the wet market on Ranong Road," she said.

She added that the boxes come in packs of 100 that sell for 200 baht,

while the banana leaf is sold for 15 baht per kilo. The biodegradable plastic bags sell in packs of 30 that sell for 28 baht each.

Given these prices, it is a shame there aren't more restaurants on the island following suit.

White Tent is located at 87 Hongyok-Uthit Rd in town, opposite Samkong Community Park. Tel: 083-6457631.

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Pirates take Le Meridien by storm

By Alexander Maycock

BRINGING a bit of historical silliness to the stage of Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort turned out to be a big hit with the audience at the premiere of *The Pirates of Phuket* last Saturday.

A mix of expats and tourists, the audience was split almost evenly between kids and parents, all of whom had a good rib-tickling courtesy of the Andaman Players.

"A very nice show," Frenchman Gilbert Melki said. "Good for all the family and a dynamic mix of humor to suit all tastes. The interaction with the crowd was a nice touch – the children in the front row certainly enjoyed themselves."

The pirate-powered musical production features several unsavory characters caught up in an

askew re-imagining of the invasion of Phuket in 1785. They soon find their cunning plans and dreams of empire-building overwhelmed by events beyond their control.

"I think many in the audience, particularly the parents, could see parallels between their own lives and the situations on stage," said writer and director, Simon J Hand. "It was great to see that not only were the kids glued to the action, but all the grown-ups seemed equally enthralled with the story."

Perhaps the most popular character with the kids was Princess Pashtina. When she opined: "How can I be a proper princess without any credit cards?" A little girl in the audience called out: "You can be a Barbie!"

After the show, the cast



Photos: Daniel Wolf

THE PLAYERS: The Andaman Players' *Pirates of Phuket* show was a rip-roaring success at Le Meridien.

mingled with the audience. Actress Joyce Madbak, who plays Pashtina, was approached by two nervous little girls who asked if she was a real princess. "I said,

'Of course I am. I'm in pink and I have a tiara?' And the girls agreed."

The *Pirates of Phuket*'s next explosive performance takes to

the stage of the Green Man on December 26.

For further details call Jessica on T: 083-6437617.

Sanchez adds a touch of fame to Famous

By Nicky Vermeulen

GRAMMY Award winning DJ Roger Sanchez was on Phuket last week as the feature act at the grand opening party for the Famous Nightclub at the

Jungceylon complex in Patong

More than 3,500 partygoers streamed through the doors of the new nightclub to dance the night away to the world-famous international DJ.

The venue, previously the

Sound nightclub, underwent extensive renovation over the past six months to ensure the jaw dropping effect it received on opening night.

Perhaps the most awe inspiring feature of the club is the ceiling, which holds a 20-meter-long glass-bottomed swimming pool located on the fourth floor, enabling those on the dance floor to marvel at the view of those swimming above them. Likewise, if you're on the top floor's Famous Roof Top Beach Club and Restaurant and decide to take a dip in the pool, you will be able to watch the clubbers dancing away under the flashing LEDs below.



SUPERSTAR DJ: Roger Sanchez at Famous last Sunday. Photo: Angel Eyes

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Andy Andersen

ANDY Andersen is the creator and Executive Director of the Phuket International Blues Rock Festival, a celebration of music taking place in February every year at the Hilton Phuket Arcadia Resort & Spa.

He is the impresario directing operations for the festival. He is inspired by the music he presents and enthusiastic about the support he enjoys from the musicians, the crowds and the sponsors.

"With strong support from the Hilton, HotelTravel.com and the *Phuket Gazette*, we held our first festival in December 2005, featuring American Rich Harper and 60s Blues legend Victor Brox who played in the original stage production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

"The opening night of the event we had torrential rain and almost had to cancel the show. But we were able to move indoors at the last minute and had a good turnout. Now the festival is in February which is better for an outdoor event."

Andy was born in Norway and spent the next 23 years there. After his first ride in an airplane as a boy, he wanted to become an airline pilot. But first he majored in English in school and developed his talents in music.

"I grew up in a musical family and started playing guitar at age seven. At age 12 I got a Fender Stratocaster and joined *The Saints*. I played in the

EXPAT gallery

By Bruce Stanley

era of the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. In 1970 I joined the band *Gnom* on drums, where I had more talent, and we became quite a sensation with our 1950s show featuring music by Elvis Presley, Buddy Holly and Chuck Berry."

Gnom were signed to a recording contract and produced two LPs. The band customized a bus and spent the summer of 1973 touring around Norway to enthusiastic audiences.

While playing music was exciting, Andy kept his mind on his goal of becoming an international airline pilot. He worked three jobs simultaneously in 1974 to save enough money for tuition for flight training.

The following year he enrolled in a major American pilot training school, at Vero Beach, Florida.

Andy spent 30 years in cockpits. He started as a flight instructor and worked his way up through the industry as a charter pilot, then commuter airlines and then his goal – United Airlines, where he spent more than 20

years. He retired in 2005, the year he produced the first Phuket International Blues Rock Festival.

"During my career with United, I flew Boeing 747s across the Pacific quite often – to Hong Kong, Tokyo, Beijing and Bangkok.

"I first came to Phuket in 1998 on a holiday and loved it and started returning three times a year. When I was getting close to retirement, I decided to design and build a home on the Laguna Phuket golf course."

After the December 2004 tsunami, Andy decided to produce a positive music event to help Phuket in the recovery. He contacted Rich Harper and asked him to be the headliner.

"When I was based in Los Angeles for United, I walked into a club in Redondo Beach and had a phenomenal experience when I first heard Rich play. He is consistently held in high esteem in the music industry for his Blues artistry."

For the 2011 International Blues Rock Festival, Andy has invited Curtis Salgado to headline the event. Curtis was 'Male Performer of the Year' at the annual American Blues Awards in Memphis.

"The Festival grows in numbers and spirit each year and is supported by local talent, who I always encourage to join our celebration of blues and rock."



BY PETER CHILD FOR THE PHUKET GAZETTE

About Expat Gallery

The individuals profiled in "Expat Gallery" are chosen on the basis of their contributions to Phuket, and for having made those contributions in successful partnerships with Thais. For many, the contributions have entailed significant investment, often in the mid-80s and 90s when the rules of business were, ahh, not always clear. Some are not in business at all, but all have one thing in common: if there were a *Who's Who in Phuket*, they'd be in it.



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Nestled atop the hillside above Kata Beach, just a short drive from the white sandy beaches and charming sea-side village of Kata, The Heights Phuket showcases stunning views of the Andaman Sea. With easy access to world-class amenities and recreational choices, experience the luxury of complete island living, all from the comfort of one of Phuket's most exclusive residences.

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Cult near its endgame

Books

By James Eckardt

Mary Ann in Autumn

By Armistead Maupin

ARMISTEAD Maupin is a cult writer. In 1978, he published *Tales of the City*, interconnected stories refashioned into a novel from columns he wrote for the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

This was followed by *More Tales of the City*, *Further Tales of the City* and five other novels.

A loyal fan base has followed him everywhere.

The author identifies as a gay activist but refuses to allow his books to be pigeonholed as gay novels.

As, indeed, they are not. His gay characters are only a part of the swirling sexual mosaic that is San Francisco.

The first novel centered on Mary Ann Singleton from Cleveland, Ohio, who arrives in San Francisco and takes up residence at 28 Barbary Lane where a mixed group of gay, straight and bisexual young people are presided over by a marijuana-growing landlady named Mrs Anna Madrigal who, it turns out, had formerly been a husband and father to two sons.

San Francisco is the real hero of the novel, a mellow haven for the laid-back, eccentric and

trendy with Zen Buddhism, vegan culture and shops selling organic dog food.

The new novel in the series is called *Mary Ann in Autumn* (HarperCollins, London, 2010, 287pp).

Mary Ann, who had become a local TV talk show hostess, left her husband and daughter to pursue a TV career in New York.

She returns to San Francisco two decades later, at the age of 57, in flight from two personal disasters.

First she catches her husband having it off with Caliope, Mary Ann's own young, female "life coach" on Skype while he was away on business in Venice.

She then finds out she has uterine cancer and flees to San Francisco to see old friends.

Mrs Anna Madrigal is old and frail now, tended to by her roommate Jake Greenleaf who is a trans-man, a woman who has had a double mastectomy, passes

as a man and yearns for the final gender reassignment operation.

Jake's partner in a gardening business is Michael "Mouse" Tolliver who is Mary Ann's oldest and closest friend.

Heavy from the side-effects of the anti-HIV drugs he has been taking for a decade, Michael is the "husband" of the much younger Ben, a furniture maker.

A lesbian couple, two more old friends from previous novels, put Mary Ann onto a competent surgeon while Michael offers Mary Ann a place to stay and a comforting shoulder. Another running plot is that of Mary Ann's abandoned daughter, Shawna, who has become a popular sex blogger.

She has left her possessive lesbian lover in New York and taken up with Otto the Clown in San Francisco.

She feels an uncanny attraction to a dying bag lady who is a

heroin addict nicknamed Princess Leia. There is indeed a connection.

Leia was abused as a child, sold by her parents to a pedophile named Norman who had once occupied the "pentshack" on 28 Barbary Lane.

Norman had fallen in love with the young Mary Ann but when she learned of his pedophilia, she pushed him off a cliff, but he didn't die.

He has come back now a gun and with the true story of Princess Leia.

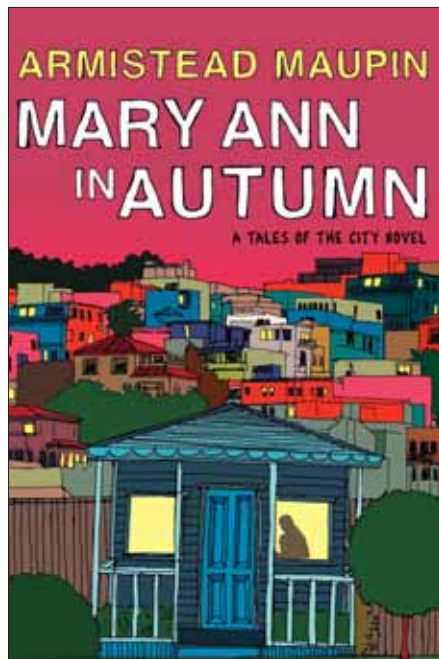
Meanwhile, Norman had previously been introduced as the sad and lonely old man whom Ben befriends at the dog run of a local park.

It's clear to see that this is all rather fey in tone and Dickensian in plot, but the characters – for all their oddities – are sympathetic as they help each other through sickness and their approaching old age.

My custom is to dog-ear a page when I'm struck by a particularly funny or affecting quote.

I didn't dog-ear a single page of *Mary Ann in Autumn* but if the prose is not particularly elevated, the story is fast-paced and entertaining and worth a read.

Reading the entire series from 1978 would obviously gratify fans who can follow their favorite characters through three decades of momentous American social change.



Jim Algie on 'Bizarre Thailand's' dark side

THE perfect Christmas gift if you're looking to put some sharp edge back on a holiday softened by all that tedious family warmth is *Bizarre Thailand, Tales of Crime, Sex and Black Magic* – a compilation of travel stories by Jim Algie written when he was honing features at *The Nation*.

If you've already been to Siriraj Hospital's chamber of horrors or on a cruise around Bangkok with the "body snatchers", you haven't experienced it through the eyes of Jim Algie.

He's smart and funny in a quirky but harmless way – in fact he's perhaps too respectful of his subject matter.

Even with Nen Aer, the monk defrocked for practising voodoo, who ended up in jail for trying to heal female devotees with his penis, is described as "not so bad".

Algie has tremendous fun visiting the dude ranch, and he's heartfelt in reporting the sex workers' troubles, but it's the genuinely bizarre that generates his best writing.

These chapters cover well-known ground in thoughtful new ways – amulets, the macaques of Lop Buri, Phuket's flesh-shredding Vegetarian Festival, Cobra Village, Tortoise Town and fighting fish.

If this is a compendium of stories updated, the closing chapter is fresh and full of promise for more and better. Perhaps because he's not writing for a newspaper or magazine, Jim is here more relaxed, more forceful, and more moving.

It's about a typical Thai funeral, if any funeral can be described as typical. The rites and practices will strike foreigners as weird, but of course the rest know better. Algie also offers something else: a reminder that in reincarnation, even if it's just people's faith in it, life goes on – for all its bizarreness.

– By Paul Dorsey, *The Nation*

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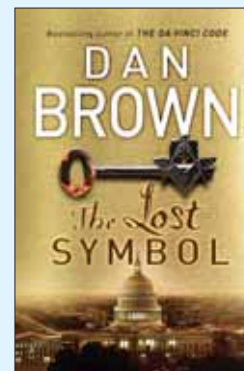
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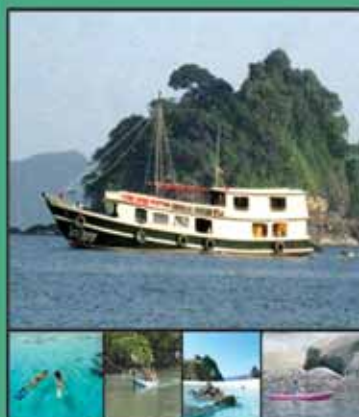
Bestsellers

English language books in Thailand

- 1) **Lost Symbol** – Dan Brown (390 baht)
- 2) **The Return Journey** – Maeve binchy (420 baht)
- 3) **61 Hours** – Lee Child (390 baht)
- 4) **The Girl Who Played with Fire** – Stieg Larsson (420 baht)
- 5) **The Monster in the Box** – Ruth Rendall (420 baht)



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WHAT'S ON in Phuket

December 25-Jan 9. Kids Adventure Camps at PIASLC

From 9am-4pm at PIA Sports & Leisure Club. Kids go on adventure this Christmas. Children from 7-12 years old can join the fun with a wide variety of activities to choose from. Each day will combine a range of adventurous activities from snorkeling and kayaking to water parks and ATVs. December 20-January 9, 2010 (closed 25th/26th Dec and 1st/2nd Jan). PIA members receive a 10% discount. Prices include transfers, snacks and refreshments. Contact Martin Ware on T: 076-336000, E:activities@phuketinternationalacademy.com or visit W:phuketinternationalacademy.com for more information.

December 25-Jan 15. Royal Phuket Marina Facebook comp

Royal Phuket Marina has a competition on their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/royalphuketmarina. Win a boat tour for two to Phang Nga Bay, Koh Phi Phi or Krabi, including lunch. "Like" their Facebook page and guess the names of the islands pictured, which are easily reachable from RPM. Competition closes 15 January. Contact Fredy Munger on T: 089-973 4421, E: fredy@bitsiren.com or visit W: royalphuketmarina.com to find out more.

December 25. Islander Traditional Christmas Dinner

Enjoy a traditional three-course Christmas dinner at the Islander Restaurant in Patong. Menu includes prawn cocktail starter, roast turkey main course with all

December 26. Pirates of Phuket panto



The Andaman Players take to the stage at the Green Man pub in Chalong on Boxing Day for their annual stage production, this year titled The Pirates of Phuket. Follow the misadventures of three very different villains and a band of cut-throat pirates as they descend upon Phuket. Contact Michael Flynn on T: 081-9701963, E:info@andamanplayers.com or visit the Andaman Player's facebook group for more information.

the trimmings and Christmas pudding with custard plus a glass of house wine. Price is 895 baht. Book early to avoid disappointment. Contact Kanha on T:081-893 6072 E:kanhathamyorm@hotmail.com for more information.

December 28. Family Day to Koh Mai Thon & Coral Island

Embark upon a luxury 30-meter catamaran voyage. Sail to Koh Mai Thon for dolphin watching, snorkeling, kayaking and enjoy breakfast and lunch on board with a pirate adventure theme with costumes and face painting for children. Departs from Chalong Pier. From 8am-4pm. Contact Phuket Sailing Adventures on T:085-184 8490, E:phuketsailingadventures@gmail.com or visit W:phuket sailingadventures.com

December 28. DJ Chris Samba at 360 Bar, The Pavilions

From 6-11:30pm. Pre-New Year warm up at 360 Bar. Chris Samba, the music director at Hong Kong's hottest nightclub, Dragon-I, will DJ at 360 Bar at The Pavilions. Half price happy hour will be from 5:30-7:30pm. Contact Linda on T:076-317600 E:rm.phuket@thepavilionsresorts.com or visit W: thepavilionsresorts.com for reservations.

December 31. New Year's Eve Celebration and Buffet Dinner

From 6pm at Friendship Beach Resort, Rawai. Featuring imported beef filet, grilled salmon filet, award winning barbecue ribs, seafood, desserts and much more. Party all night with The Big Bamboo blues-rock band. Free Champagne at midnight, party favors. Great fireworks displays from the waterfront restaurant and bar. Price is 1,250 baht+ for adults and 390 baht+ for children. Contact Margy on T:089-9087486, Charlie on T:089-7285304 or E:chef@friendshipbeach.com for more information.

December 31. Catch Beach Club – New Year's Eve party

New Year's Eve beach barbecue from 8pm and countdown beach party from 10pm. 7,500++ baht per person. Enjoy a sumptuous buffet and an unforgettable New Year's Eve. Free-flow drinks. Special international guest

DJs. Contact T:076-316500, E:chariya@twinpalms-group.com or W:twinpalms-phuket.com to find out more.

December 31. New Year's Eve

New Years Eve is a public holiday.

December 31. New Years Eve at Six Senses Sanctuary

The evening starts at 7pm with a cocktail which will be followed by fresh and refined continental sea-themed food prepared in the outdoor living kitchens. The party will include dance performances, magic shows, fireworks displays and DJs. Dance the night away and welcome the New Year with joy and well-being. Price is 6,855 baht net. Contact Nancy on T:076-371400, E:prnaka@sixsenses.com or visit W:sixsenses.com/sixsenses sanctuaryphuket to find out more.

December 31. New Year's Eve Dinner at Royal Phawadee Village

From 7pm, enjoy a unique New Year's experience that you will only find at Royal Phawadee Village's gala buffet and cabaret show. Thai-style dance performance, games and a fireworks display. Price is 3,000 baht per adult and 1,500 baht for children. Contact Mr Bao on T:084-8492122, E:bao@phawadee.com or visit W:royal-phawadee-village.com to find out more information.

December 31. Caribbean New Year's Eve at Serenity Phuket

Cocktails, reggae and Caribbean tunes by the Coconut Head Band, barbecue buffet, fireworks and a lucky draw. Price is 5,900 baht net for adults and 900 baht net for children under 12. There is also an after-dinner count-down party including a midnight buffet at 900 baht net per person. Contact Gee on T: 076-371900, E: rsvn@serenityphuket.com to find out more information.

December 31. Pearl of the Andaman at Banyan Tree

An evening of chic glamour with Champagne and a fire show as you enter into the magic fairyland of the "Pearl of the Andaman" to enjoy a selection of traditional Thai entertainment. Welcome in the new year with a spectacular fireworks display, dance the night away to music from an eight-piece dance band and special guest DJ. Price is 18,500 baht per person. Other pricing options are available. Contact Library on T: 076-372400 E: library-phuket@banyantree.com or visit W: banyantree.com to find out more information.

January 1. New Year's Day

The International New Year is widely celebrated throughout the Kingdom of Thailand as a public holiday.

Free Computer Clinics

Is Windows driving you NUTS? Want to know about the best Internet connections in Phuket? Need help finding a repair shop or a dealer that knows what they're doing? Join For Dummies... author and local Windows guru Woody Leonhard in his free weekly seminars. Sponsored by Woody's Sandwich Shoppes and the Phuket Gazette.

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January 9 – Laguna, January 16, 23, 30 – Chalong**

For more info contact Woody T:076-290468

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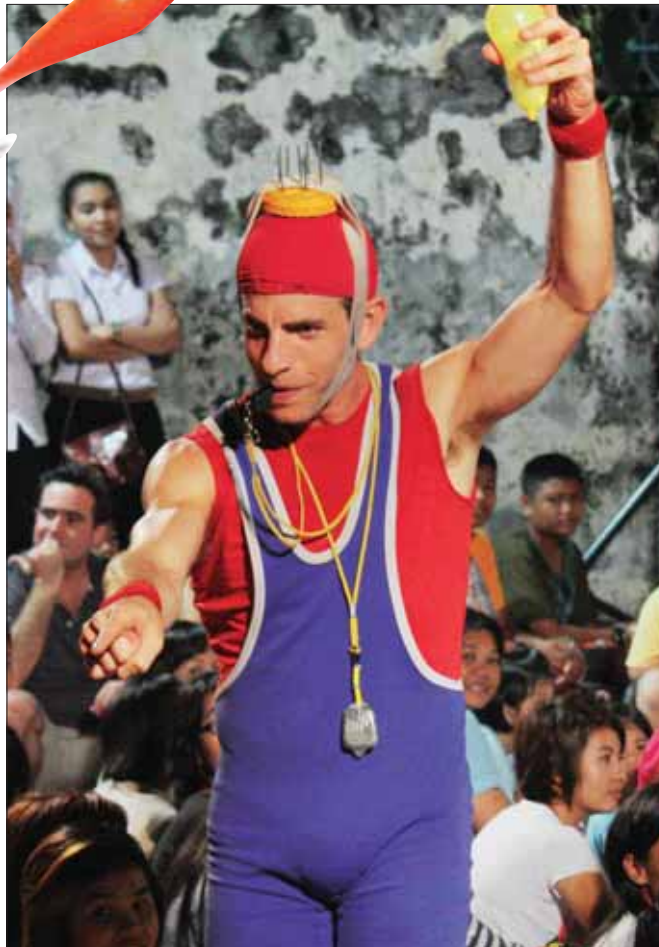
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Street style



WHAT A HANDFUL: The first-ever Phuket Street Show Festival was a hit with large crowds flocking to Old Phuket Town to see street performers from around the world strut their stuff. Brazilian BMX trickster James put on a show that saw him juggling while performing BMX stunts, riding a miniature bicycle through a fire hoop, spinning plates and weaving through a lasso. Photos by Nicholas Altstadt



HEADS UP: The Acrobuffos street comedy duo was down to one man, who managed to captivate the audience by including everyone in the show. No one was safe from the American's good-natured assault as he brought "innocent civilians" into armored combat with a barrage of water balloons.



WITH THANKS: Mercure Patong hotel recently hosted a "Thank you" local media on December 16. Mercure recently celebrated its third

**YOUR
Phuket**



FESTIVE GREETINGS: Representatives from Tinidee Hotel stopped in at the Phuket Gazette office to wish us a happy festive season. Gazette Managing Editor, Chris Husted (left) with Tinidee Hotel Manager Arunya Sirigul and staff.

Twin town: fathers overjoyed



SEEING DOUBLE: The Polpongsa family and Khalili family celebrated the birth of their twins, who were born a day apart, on December 20 and 21 at Phuket International Hospital. Both families were blessed with one boy and one girl.

Correction

In the *Phuket Gazette* December 11 issue, page 14 Travel, *Dirt Biking Down South*, two photographs were credited incorrectly. The photographs belong to Teerapong Tansrisuroj and Marco Livio Sinibaldi. The mistake is regretted.

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HONORARY CELEBRATION: Honorary Consul of Ireland Helene Fallon Wood and her husband Peter recently hosted a Christmas dinner at DaVinci Restaurant in Nai Harn. A number of Phuket's honorary consuls and senior officials attended. Mark Norris of DaVinci and Bart Duykers of Andaman Wine Club were the gracious hosts on the night.



ALL SMILES: Parichart Situntrakool (center), owner of PapaCrab Boutique Guesthouse in Kamala, held a relaunch party on December 5 following a renovation project.



GATHERING FOR ART: Soul of Asia celebrated the opening of the greatly enlarged and glittering new gallery at Plaza Surin last week. Hosting the many guests at the festivities were gallery impresario Eric Smulders and partner Uraiphan ('Oe') Saesin. Officiating were Hong Kong-based property developer Alan Zeman (far left) and Phuket's Honorary Consul for The Netherlands, Seven Smulders (far right).



UNITED FRONT: Four resorts in Mai Khao recently held The North Phuket Culinary Arts Festival, featuring Phuket's longest dining table, which stretched a whopping 300 meters. Pictured are JW Marriot Marketing Communications Manager Chantanut Kaewphet (left) with Renaissance Phuket Events Manager Katesuay Dornbandin, Renaissance Phuket Marketing Communications Manager Kulchada Boonrawd and Guide Vision Public Relations Officer Sasithornrat Promwichai.



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Ladachon

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Pruerk-Ampai	111	6,570,000	100,000	3,185,000	3,285,000
Ladachon	100.72	6,980,000	100,000	3,390,000	3,490,000

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Location Map

The Impossibly Possible Quiz

Christmas quiz:

- Which city is believed to be the birthplace of Jesus of Nazareth?
- What did "my true love give to me on the 11th day of Christmas"?
- In the TV show *The Simpsons*, who or what is Santa's little helper?
- Who were Balthazar, Melchior and Caspar?
- How many of Santa's reindeer have a name beginning with "D"?
- What did Harry Potter get for Christmas during his first year at Hogwarts?
- Which country is the largest exporter of Christmas Trees?
- What guided the three wise men to Jesus?
- In which Christmas carol is it fun to ride a one horse open sleigh?
- What is the biggest selling Christmas single of all time?
- What is the name of Santa's only female reindeer?
- Who was mommy kissing underneath the mistletoe last night?
- By what name is the song *Adeste Fideles* better known?
- What Christmas carol's opening line is "Oh! You better watch out, you better not cry, you better not pout..."?
- What did the children put on Frosty the snowman to bring him to life?

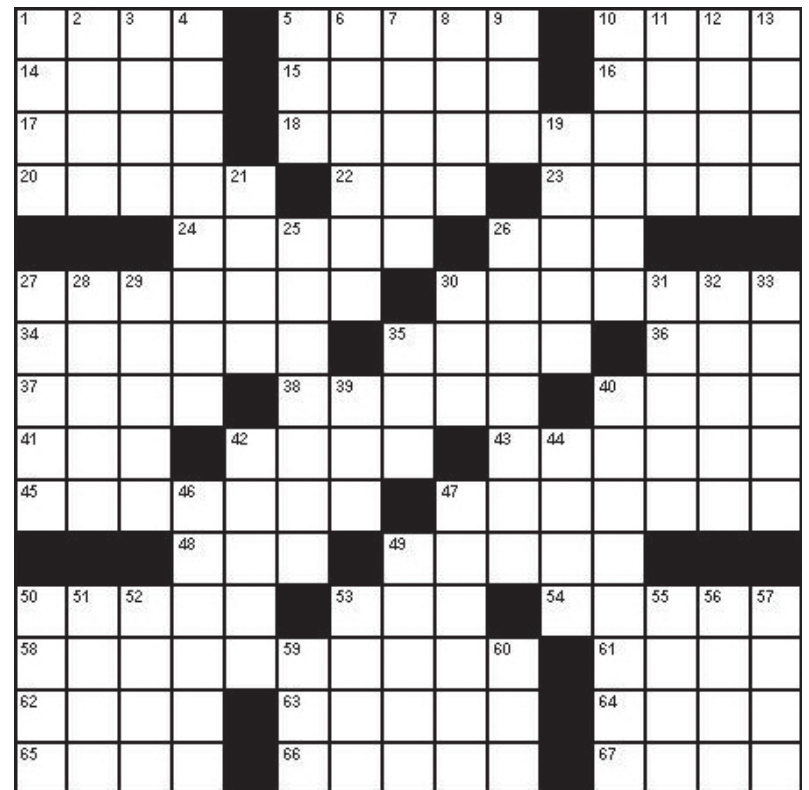
Quiz solutions on page 33

Across

- Yeah, right!
- Small branch
- Single entity
- Fix up
- Functional
- Crown of the head
- Affirm solemnly
- Make a written copy
- Strap
- Greek alphabet 7th letter
- Took on
- Monetary unit of India
- Kapital
- Costumed procession
- Imperfections
- Citrus fruit
- Dies —
- Handwoven Swedish rug
- Star— tuna
- Like most movies
- Conduit
- Compass point
- Other, in Oaxaca
- Sloppy
- Hopelessness
- Skin of animal
- Jamaican popular music
- Daybook
- Farewell
- Biblical beast boat
- Attach
- Slandorous
- Subterfuge
- Temperate
- Prepares for publication
- Brockovich
- Canadian gas corporation
- Golden Horde member
- Designer Schiaparelli

Down

- Asian sea
- Golfer Ballesteros
- Brain wave
- Exhausted
- Furrow
- Still
- Mazda model (AKA Roadster)
- Forearm bone
- Paris possessive



- Revolt
- Neet rival
- Let —
- Ticked (off)
- Abrade
- Dutch name of The Hague
- Sluggishness
- Salty Mideastern body
- Jabbed
- Come up
- Tenuous substances
- Doctor of rap
- Oppress grievously
- Greek goddess of fortune
- Lustful deity

- Call — day
- Sheet music abbreviation
- Like some airport shopping
- Loose fiber used for caulking
- Zhivago's love
- Pretended
- Monetary unit of Zaire
- Legal right
- Apex, pinnacle
- Raised platform
- Ailments of body or society
- Verdi heroine
- Roll up
- Egyptian goddess of fertility
- Lawless character
- After taxes
- Georgia, once. (Abbr)

Provided by BestCrosswords.com.
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Puzzle solutions on page 37

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): Capricorns are usually conscientious about doing their work thoroughly. However, this week you could be tempted by a suggestion to cut corners – the stars suggest that this will cost more time in the long run. If your birthday falls in the week ahead, family relationships are predicted to be more satisfying in the coming year. Wear the color holly berry red to encourage a more enthusiastic approach to the holiday celebrations.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): Past experiences are likely to affect your point of view this week. The stars predict that many of those born under the sign of Aquarius will be considering carefully before reacting to the offer of new employment. The final week of December should be a fulfilling time and this also applies to the area of romance. Christmas celebrations with a new partner give you hope for a positive future.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): The stars suggest that certain Pisceans who planned to ignore the Christmas cheer will enjoy festivities more than anticipated. Someone born under an earth sign is forecast

to extend an invitation for low-key celebrations that should suit your needs. Those who were recently disappointed in romance learn of more reasons why that relationship could never have succeeded. Wear the color tangerine to encourage a sweeter mood.

ARIES (March 21-April 20): Some Arians may have to pay the price for acting on the spur of the moment earlier this month. Your negative mood could dampen others' Christmas spirit this weekend – taking some quiet time out will help you to see life from a calmer perspective. A gesture from an earth sign this weekend is more welcome than any material gift. Wear the color apple green to encourage a livelier outlook.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): The Christmas weekend should prove to be an enjoyable time for Taureans. Your planning skills are appreciated by those sharing the celebrations, but you could be irritated by a water sign family member's laziness. Where romance is concerned, meeting an air sign under the mistletoe is a welcome coincidence. Tuesday and Wednesday are lucky days for meetings concerning possible business developments in the New Year.

YOUR horoscope

By Isla Star

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): Those Geminis who left Christmas preparations to the last minute will be starting the holiday weekend in a frazzled mood. You may want to take a rain check on an invitation that would involve being with people you don't know very well. The stars suggest that a family get together on Sunday will help to remind you that simple pleasures can be the most satisfying. Wear the color walnut brown to encourage contentment.

CANCER (June 22-July 23): Cancerians whose homes are a hive of activity this weekend will be looking for excuses to escape. The stars predict that your absence from festivities could provoke arguments. Those who are undecided about whether to pursue a romance with another water sign will find a clear answer. The temptation to ignore work matters will be strong, but events midweek demand your attention. The number five can bring good luck on Thursday.

LEO (July 24-August 22): Business is forecast to boom in the New Year and this week Leos catch a glimpse of future developments. Your holiday enjoyment is enhanced by the surprise arrival of a family member or close friend. Those whose partner has been distracted lately will appreciate quality time together this weekend. Pisces' presence at a Christmas party is the icing on the cake for singletons. Wear the color sparkling silver to enhance your attraction.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): Virgoans who are tired of playing the role of underdog at work should be able to solve this problem soon. The stars suggest that a meeting midweek will provide the perfect opportunity to air your feelings. Lonely hearts are predicted to meet another earth sign at Christmas celebrations this weekend. Those already committed find a perfect last minute gift for their partner. The number seven can bring good fortune next Wednesday.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): This Christmas weekend is an auspicious time to contact someone you fell out with earlier in December. The stars suggest that your gesture of goodwill will ensure a happy recon-

ciliation. Financial matters continue to be well-starred and Librans are forecast to hear of an appealing employment opening. Romance may be prickly when a partner doesn't want to join in with festivities. Wear the color snow white to encourage a more philosophical outlook.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): The spirit of Christmas helps some stressed Scorpions to forget their problems. An air sign is predicted to offer useful advice this weekend and the stars indicate that you should act accordingly. Wednesday is the best day to set events in motion. Where romance is concerned, a relationship with Aquarius now appears more promising than you previously thought. Wear the color cranberry red to encourage a more optimistic outlook.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): Sagittarians are more content with what they have. This weekend's forecast is to help you end the year on a peaceful note. An unusual Christmas gift could inspire a new hobby. A blind date could be the start of something special for those who are single. Lucky days for finances are Wednesday and Thursday. Wear the color ivy green to encourage honesty.

PROPERTY Gazette

News | Construction | Gardening | For sale | For rent | Classifieds

Touch on track for green villas

By Pimwara Choksakulpan

WORK on the environmentally-friendly Phuket Touch Green Villas is on schedule for the planned soft opening in March 2011.

Work on the 300-million baht project began in April. When completed, the 24-rai complex near the beach in Nai Yang will feature 25 one-bedroom villas, 14 two-bedroom villas, a shopping arcade, swimming pool, spa, sauna, fitness center, game room, restaurant and bar, and tennis and squash courts.

Elaborating on their environmentally-friendly establishment, Phuket Touch Company General Manager Vithaya Nganthavee said the main aim of the project is to keep residents and guests in as much harmony with nature and the local community as possible.

Akin with Mother Earth, 70% of the total area comprises water surfaces. The developers have also been very careful not to cover any land surface with soil or rubble.

Instead, each villa is connected to the lobby with wooden bridges traversing the surrounding foliage.

"We've tried to maintain its natural condition by keeping every single tree and planting more local species, including mangrove plants," said Mr Vithaya.

Vehicles with engines will be prohibited inside the complex, though bicycles will be permitted, he said,

"Phuket Touch Green Villa's main advantage is the location. It's conveniently close to the airport, but also close enough to Nai Yang Beach to ensure peace and quiet."

Construction materials used on



WATERWORLD: The compound at Phuket Green Touch Villas comprises 70% water surfaces, with each villa connected to the lobby by a bridge.

the project include hi-tech, processed rubberwood.

Project contractors Tortrakul & Associates Consulting Engineer Ltd (TACE Ltd) will be responsible for construction of the project, which was designed by Consultant of Architecture Co Ltd. Landscape design is by Landscape Dreamwork Ltd, while interior design and decor falls to

Hybrid Design Co Ltd.

As the units are not for permanent sale, those interested in spending time at the Phuket Touch Green Villas will have the choice of a 15-year lease contract or a timeshare agreement designed to suit their needs.

Sizes vary from 90 square meters for the one-bedroom units, five of which have already been

snatched up at about 9.5 million baht each, to 140 sqm for the two-bedroom units that are offered at 13.5 million baht each.

All of the villas are fully-furnished, come with whirlpool baths and are decorated in a modern Thai design theme.

"We offer everything, our guests need only bring their suitcases," said Mr Vithaya.

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Santa's bag of property top picks

AS I sit at my computer I start to get a cold, nippy numbness in my fingertips – as the “festive” feeling of the Christmas season takes hold, I imagine an arctic wind blowing from the North Pole.

Reality sets in when I realize that the air conditioner has been set on “max”. “Brrr” is the only noise that comes from my lips – nothing a quick slap to the head can't fix.

But wait, this is the season to be jolly.

Santa's elves are wrapping up last-minute gifts and scanning wish lists from around the globe which are filled with iPads, iPhones, BMW's, Iron Man walking robots, Chanel to Cartier “brand mania”, singing Justin Bieber dolls, yoga mats, flat-screen TVs and the random yak or two.

While Phuket's highways, byways and sois are teeming with holiday cheer and loads of tourists, optimistic real-estate agents are quietly setting out their yuletide stockings.

The good news is Santa's bag is filled to the brim with real estate offerings: old, new, for sale, for rent – no lack of choices or great deals this year.



Property Watch

By Bill Barnett

For the “bigger is better” crowd, the Malaiwana Residences in Nai Thon are offering some of the island's most dynamic views with their 12 duplex apartments and penthouses.

Nearby, the luxury Istana estate, designed by Gary Fell, has come back to life with new construction underway.

Phuket's northwest corner is increasingly creating a sensation amongst the jet-set crowd.

On the “millionaire's mile” in Kamala, headquarters to arguably the highest concentration of high-end villas in Thailand, comes Waterfall Bay, a boutique development comprising three ocean-centric dream homes – only one property remains on the market.

The up-and-coming area south of Patong – the headland overlooking the bay – is creating an entirely new vibe with upscale hotels and property developments.

The Absolute Twin Sands Resort and Spa on Tri Trang Beach

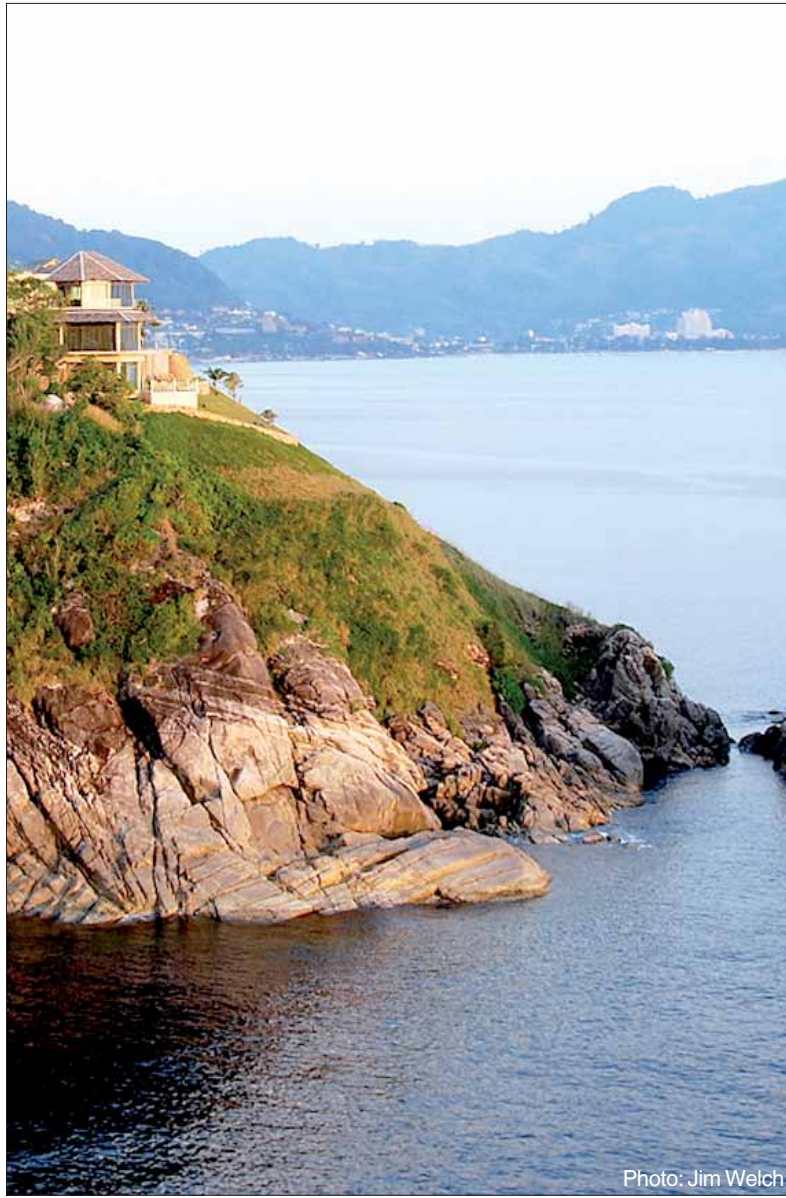


Photo: Jim Welch

HOUSE ON THE HILL: Luxury properties in the Kamala hills are in demand.

is a hospitality-oriented residential project with 45 units and the nearby Bluepoint condominium is offering stylish units.

Other familiar names which still have units backed by strong locations and expert development include: Laguna Phuket's Lofts (managed by the Outrigger hotel chain of Hawaii), Richard Pope's Kata Rocks, and the recently completed Quarter and Mandala condominium in Surin.

Shoppers this season are seeing a surge in project completions and a maturing real-estate market offering a formidable resale or secondary sector.

Buyers with cash on hand may find bargains-a-plenty after the global economic shakedown, as seller stress or distress has fueled a “let's make a deal” mentality.

Phuket's decade-long “rags to riches” real estate story has seen the evolution of a fairly defined clutch of local property agents, websites, consultants, building inspectors, legal advisors and property management firms, all set to support prospective buyers.

As a child, I remember getting a toy “snow globe” which showered snowflakes when shaken. It stirred my imagination with the tiny house sitting in a far away tree-lined paradise.

Now that childhood imagination can be reality. Although tropical life being what it is, Santa riding in on a surf board rather than a sleigh may be part of our own altered reality.

Bill Barnett is Managing Director of C9 Hotelworks and can be contacted through www.c9hotelworks.com.

In brief...

Focusing on Cyan

A NEW project in Kamala, Cyan Resort, is targeting property investors who want to focus towards ongoing rental returns.

The project is comprised of 18 units, 16 of which are 105 square meter, two-bedroom units, and 277 square meter three-bedroom penthouses. Prices start from 8.9 million baht. The property recently broke ground and is expected to be completed within a year.

A key feature promoted by the developers is the access to bank financing through United Overseas Bank.

According to the group, a subsidiary of PIDC Co Ltd, they are looking to launch another six Cyan-branded projects on the island over the next three to five years.

Waterfall Cove rises

BOUTIQUE development Waterfall Cove has just one remaining property for sale. Located on Millionaires Mile in the Kamala hills, the development features a private estate of just three properties.

Designer Donal Coyle of international firm SLA is leading the project team. Construction is underway with completion set for the end of next year.

Villa A, with a plot size of over two rai, and approved building covered space of 600 square meters, will command a price of between US\$3.5 to four million, depending on buyers choice of finishes.

Resales ‘peaking’

ALL signs point to a surge in owners listing properties for resale this peak season.

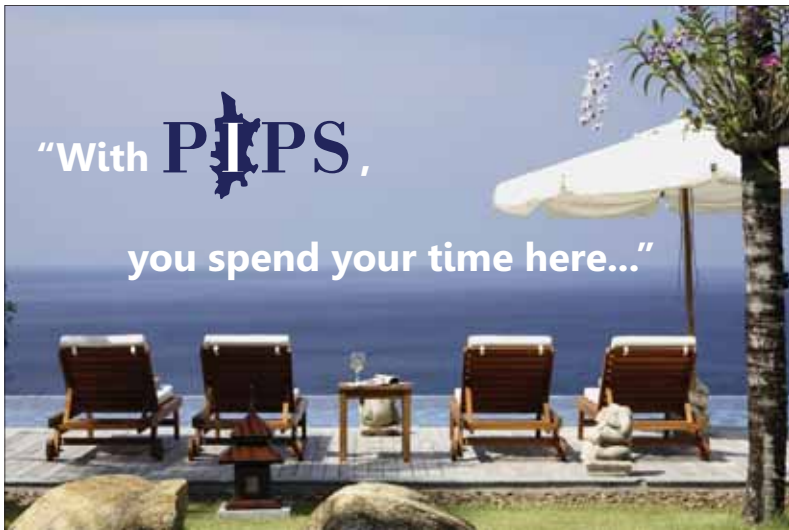
A number of the leading agents on the island point to a rise in secondary properties popping up on the market.

While this seasonal trend has existed in years past, the sheer volume over the past month has many agents becoming more selective or even rejecting ad hoc owners.

Do you have any breaking news about Phuket property? Email property@phuketgazette.net

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Vijitt's design vision for life

DESIGNING a Phuket resort to integrate Thai history and culture with Western perceptions of what makes a luxurious holiday experience is a challenge the family owners of The Vijitt Resort Phuket took up five years ago.

Located on Rawai's Friendship Beach, the Khoopongsakorn family opened the resort in 2008. The careful planning and consultation for a full year before starting to build in 2006 is evident in the use of Thai materials and design of the 92 stand alone, luxury villas and the 44 rai of existing and planted native tropical trees and flora that surround them.

Bangkok architects Movida Co Ltd had never designed such a large-scale resort before but were selected for their creative use of local materials and their experience in interior and exterior design.

Named after Vijitt Khoopongsakorn, from a prominent Phuket Town business family, he founded the resort in 1975 on land he had owned since 1938, with 30 bungalows built from wood remaining

LUXURY
living

in the area. The reincarnated resort, now managed by his grandsons, maintains the founder's vision by using many locally sourced materials.

All 92 luxury villas reflect southern Thai architectural style. A large double bed in the center of the main room sits on polished

cement inlaid with patterns set in local bamboo. An extremely high stud to the cedar tiled, or, alternatively, thatched, roof, and two sides of floor to ceiling windows generate an airiness that nicely offsets the darkness of the teak struts and beams.



FAMILY TOUCH: Named after Vijitt Khoopongsakorn, the Vijitt Resort Phuket is now run by his grandsons.

Space abounds.

Nice environmental touches are everywhere in the villas. In each bathroom a large, hardwood stand of "branches" encourages reuse of towels. Non chemical materials are used for cleaning. Water preservation is a priority.

The resort's landscaping generates an environment that encapsulates its tagline: "serenely secluded." Many comments on

Tripadvisor, favorably refer to the resort's natural tranquility. Here's one from a Scottish guest: "Friendly, yet quiet. Functional yet rustic. This collection of private houses around a set of central resources is the perfect getaway".

With 24 kinds of trees and numerous species of tropical fauna, including lemongrass lining the walkways, there is a veritable riot of nature that helps generate that type of comment. Circular designs sourced from local river stones decorate the numerous paths.

A 40-meter infinity pool along

the 250 meter Friendship Beach frontage is painted darker to maintain water temperature.

The nearby The Savoury restaurant and bars continue the Thai/Western design theme.

The signature Baan Vijitt Restaurant perhaps best captures the owner's vision. Once the family's weekend home, the Sino-Portuguese house retains some of its original roof tiles and the doors and window frames are also from the original building. Inside, the same polished cement floor emits its own history of a bygone era.

— *Phuket Gazette*



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Hot for Heliconas

Gardening

By Green Sleeves

HELICONAS are expanding at a great rate, but not the plants themselves, though they are no slouches when it comes to hasty growth.

The expansion refers to the increase in new forms, linked to the discovery of new varieties by plant hunters, from its protean ability to change shape.

As a genus of about 100 to 200 species of flowering plants, the consequent development is that enthusiasts are kept busy by endless new cultivars.

The Heliconia has an array of colors, shapes and sizes, and is now so popular that it has its own organization, the Heliconia Society International.

It is a Top 20 must.

One of the reasons for its popularity is its durability and adaptability.

Widely used as a landscape plant, it also has huge commercial potential for the florist's trade.

One grower in northern Australia produces two tonnes of cut flowers every week, and since they keep well, they can be distributed all around the world.

Even driving around the small island of Phuket, there is evidence of how popular this plant is.

Used extensively as a border plant and especially to front garden walls, its less exotic forms are



IRIDESCENT: Heliconias are known for their vivid color. Photo: Kenpei

useful for providing a rapid and colorful screen. The most common, *Heliconia Psittacorum* and *Heliconia Stricta*, have small, upright and brilliantly colored red and creamy-yellow bracts.

There is now one particularly vivid yellow-orange cultivar colloquially named "golden torch".

The cane-like stems, which sprout from underground rhizomes

or tubers, carry both the bracts and long, spathe-shaped leaves.

Somewhat reminiscent of cannalily foliage, these lush, bright-green leaves are one of the principal attractions of the plant.

Even when the Heliconia is not flowering, make good decorative additions.

The actual flowers are small white bits which carry the pollen in the middle of the dramatic bracts and are relatively insignificant.

The range of nicknames given to Heliconias include lobster claw, false bird of paradise – which is an indication of the exotic forms some of these plants can assume.

The "firebird" has huge, upright, bracts which are fleshy and bright-red.

In other cultivars such as *Heliconia Rostrata*, the "flowers" may be more than a foot long and hang heavily down in rich hues of yellows and reds.

One of the new cultivars, "sexy pink", is a most unusual combination of pink and greenish-blue; the parrot Heliconia has bright "plumage" resembling that of the bird.

Along with the increase in the showiness of cultivars has come an increase in their size and vigor. Many varieties can reach three meters, so care must be given to their position in the garden.

Remember too that all Heliconias are very thirsty plants, so they are best planted at the end of the rainy season when the soil is most saturated.

They will also need feeding at regular intervals and some protection from the tropical heat.

If the plant is in full sun, give it a protective mulch of bark or dead leaves. It is always better to position it in partial shade.

It is also a good idea to cut off excess leaves to stop it from losing too much moisture, and consequently dehydrating.

Heliconias are rhizotomes, meaning they have underground tubers and propagate, like cannalilies, spread beneath the soil and then produce new shoots which may be some distance from the main plant.

Granted this habit, they will eventually form large clumps which will need to be divided up.

Since the original heliconia will only survive for three or four years, this should be done as a matter of course after two or three seasons.

Divide and multiply.

Tip of the week

Garden jargon made easy

GARDENING books and horticulturalists often resort to technical language to describe plants and the processes associated with them. Such terms serve a very real purpose, since they offer a precise and concise description of botanical characteristics. Take the phrase "terminal raceme".

To put it into layman's terms, you would have to say something along the lines of "a hanging cluster of small flowers attached by their stalks to a central stem, produced at the end of branches".

While writers try to explain such terms or include them in a glossary, there is not always space to do so.

It is always helpful to give examples. If you refer to a "pinnate leaf" – which means a standard one constructed somewhat like a feather with veins arranged on each side of a central rib – your illustration might include cannas, dracaenas or heliconias.

When speaking of a "sport" in gardening, it is referring to an spontaneous mutation in the plant when breeding. The plant develops a new trait as a consequence. If that trait remains in plants grown either from its seed or a piece of the original plant, the new plant gets a name and is known as a sport. A sport will be identical to the parenting plant in every way except one.

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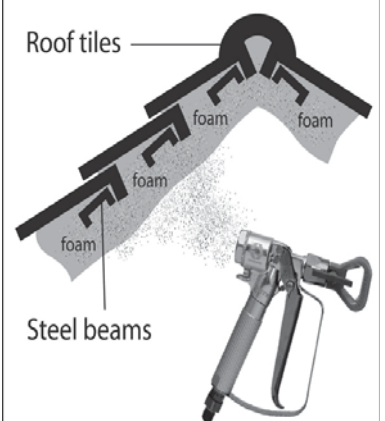
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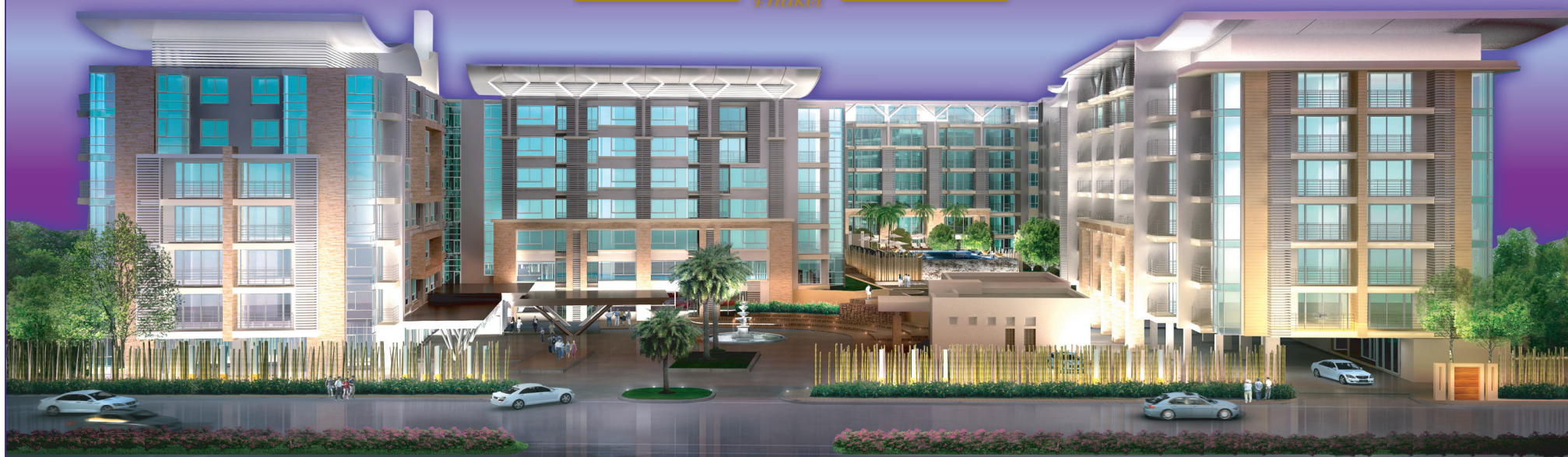
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Properties For Sale

KATHU LUXURY POOL VILLAS



Close to BIS and Patong Beach: 2 and 3-bedroom villas with swimming pool. From 8.5 million baht. Tel: 076-321445, 089-724 7211. Email: info@botanvillage.com For further details, please see our website at www.phuket-cottages.com

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3beds, 3baths. 384sqm. We offer private finance to foreigners. Urgent sale / super deal. Tel: 085-887 7414 (English & Thai). Email: nimirphuket@gmail.com

LAND FOR SALE

15 rai of land for sale. At one of Phuket's most desirable locations. Suitable for one or two houses. Price: 22 million baht. Please call for more info. Tel: 089-474 0431.

PATONG APT

2-bedroom apartment for rent or sale. 87sqm unit on the 5th floor with seaview. Fully furnished. Tel: 081-891 6502. Email: andrea.capucci@gmail.com

SEAVIEW LAND KOH YAO NOI



The land is accessed by a concrete road and solid soil. It comes with a Nor Sor 3 covering almost 7 rai (2.77 acres) and 5-meter private road access. 150 meters from the sea. Developers take note of this terrific opportunity. The area is very private with very beautiful sea views, overlooking also nearby islands. Not far from Tondo Pier and Koh Yao Noi Pier (Manoh Pier). The land is ideal for a residential development. If you are seeking an opportunity to invest in solid ground which provides you with great value, here is the right answer. Please contact directly to the real owner for details and an appointment for inspection at the site. Tel: 087-276 7997 (English & Thai). Email: offy_ddcafe@hotmail.com For further details, please see our website at www.phuket butler.com/node/1532

PHUKET COUNTRY CLUB CONDO

Freehold! 59sqm. 1 bedroom with bath on 5th floor. Needs renovation. 1.9 million baht. Tel: 081-085 6715 (English). Email: surlamer05@yahoo.com

URGENT SALE! KAMALA



50% auction. Price: 39 million baht. Contact for more information. Tel: 087-077 7314.

2 LUXURY POOL VILLAS



in Nai Ham. 3 buildings with 3 bedrooms and 3 bathrooms in Balinese and Thai style, built from teak and other first-class materials. 800sqm land with Chanote title. Includes a wall fence and an electric gate. The property has a pool with a waterfall and jacuzzi, a maid's house, a covered terrace and carport. Asking price: 16 million baht. Tel: 083-388 8036 (English or German), 089-972 5378 (Thai).

NEW VILLA IN LAGUNA AREA

Brand-new finished villa in Laguna area. Near beach and golf course in a gated community. It has 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, a detached master house with an office, a big living room with an open kitchen. U-shaped around a pool area on 680sqm land with 2 carports. With Chanote title. Building was finished November 2010 and has never been used. Price: 16.3 million baht. Contact Mrs S Wathanti. Tel: 080-697 1657. For further details, please visit at www.anchanvilla9.magix.net

NAI HARN LUXURY CONDO



2-3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 111sqm. From 4.5 million baht. Must see. Tel: 084-993 7308. For further details, please see our website at www.amphaiseabreeze.com

KATA SEAVIEW, 4.9 MILLION BAHT

For details, please click on the link: <http://oceanviewkata.shutterfly.com> then contact us for further information. Tel: 089-832 1238, 408-627 5793 (English). Email: maurick1@yahoo.com

STYLISH BUILDING

500 meters to Chalong Circle, 3 units together, 3 floors, beautifully decorated for luxury products showroom. Please contact for price. Tel: 081-968 9046 (English & Thai). Email: v-careservice@hotmail.com

KOH MAPHRAO 37+ RAI

280 meters of seafront at the most beautiful spot on the island. Must see. Price: negotiable. Tel: 081-891 8930 (English/German), Buijai baan 081-956 3374 (Thai).

BRAND-NEW CONDO

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

NAI HARN APARTMENT



Furnished 106sqm unit on top floor. Freehold with a swimming pool and gym. Price: 4.8 million baht. Tel: 087-283 3358.

HOT DEAL POOL VILLA



8.49 million baht (price reduced from 11.5). 3-bedroom Balinese villa in Rawai with 762sqm of land area, 178sqm of living area, and a private pool. Fully furnished. Tel: 076-381482, 087-383 5453 (English). Email: fretif@hotmail.com

LUXURY GOLFVIEW VILLA



State-of-the-art 4-bedroom villa, close to BIS and 12 mins to Patong Beach. 16.8 million baht. Tel: 076-321445, 089-724 7211 (English). Email: julien@phuketimmo.com

5-BED THAI-STYLE POOL VILLA

Laguna area, on 1 rai, luxury finishing, large pool, 500sqm of living space. Tel: 087-893 4636 (English & Thai). Email: annericphuket@hotmail.com

2-BEDROOM HOUSE

Tel: +61-4-2917 3103, 087-269 6236, 080-172 5444 (English & Thai). Email: cns@vestas.com For further details, please see the website www.simplesite.com/cns

58 RAI IN TAKUAPA

Palm oil farm, include house. Trees 10 years old. Price: 10 million baht. Tel: 089-594 4017.

11 RAI HOBBY FARM

200km from Phuket. 1 hour to Surin island. With Chanote title. Price: 4 million baht. Tel: 089-594 4017.

BANG TAO PENTHOUSE

140sqm unit, plus a roof, garden and private pool at a beach resort. Price: 16 million baht. Comes with 2 pools, a gym, WiFi and 24-hour security. Tel: 084-716 0502.

LAND NEAR BIS

For sale. 2-rai 2-ngarn 48.5 sq wah plot near British International School. Price: 7.7 million baht per rai. Tel: 02-655 0092-3, 081-899 4543.

NICE AND SPACIOUS HOUSE



In Heritage Project, Kathu. 2 floors, fully furnished, 3 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, 1 maidroom. 234sq wah. 18 million baht. Tel: 081-8920190 (Warit), 089-6464823 (Rattana). Email: prayoon_jp@hotmail.com

FRUIT FARM 7.5 RAI

Tropical private farm north of Khao Lak, situated by the river. Beautiful exotic fruit farm property of 12,000 sqm. Houses, pool, marina. 18 million baht. Tel: +46-708-500227, 084-745 1418 (Thai). Email: consulting.asia@telia.com www.consulting.asia.co.th

3-BEDROOM HOUSE

62sq wah, 2 bathrooms, Villa Dawroong. 4.5 million baht. Contact Khun Tar. Tel: 076-377052, 089-971 1268.

TWIN VILLAS AT NAI YANG



Only 600 meters from beautiful Nai Yang beach, this modern pool villa is perfectly located. Featuring a chic, clean-cut design coupled with a choice selection of quality materials and furniture, this villa is a promising investment for holiday seekers and permanent residents. Price: Bt10.2mil. Contact Khun Penprapa. Tel: 087-898 9646. Email: penprapa2526@gmail.com

SEAVIEW LAND

North end of Bang Sak Beach. 68 meters of road frontage. 2 rai 3 ngan and 52 sq wah. Price: 7.5 million baht. 6km north of Le Meridien Khao Lak Beach & Spa Resort. Tel: 081-894 7644.

PATONG TOWNHOUSE

In a quiet soi off Nanai Road, near shops and markets. Includes 2 bedrooms with fitted wardrobes and 2 bathrooms, one with a bathtub. Comes with quality interior design and a large European-style kitchen. We accept offers over 5.5 million baht. Tel: 089-290 8147 (Thai), 089-989 9535 (English).

PATONG TOWER

1 bedroom full oceanfront foreign freehold 69.41sqm. 8 million baht. Email: egarand@aol.com

HOUSE & FURNITURE

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

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BEAUTIFUL BANG TAO

Beach garden penthouse. Includes a jacuzzi, roof and garden. Near beach. Price: 9.95 million baht. Tel: 084-630 2416. Email: jonhassall@aol.com

BANG TAO HOUSE FOR SALE

2 bedrooms, 1 bathroom with TV and ADSL. Tel: 080-627 6207. Email: zuuets@gmail.com

VERY SPACIOUS EUROPEAN

Villa in quiet area in Rawai. Quality building by Dutch constructor. Large living area and huge terrace. 3 bedrooms with aircon, 3 en-suite bathrooms, 1 separate guest toilet. Western kitchen, garage, beautiful garden, laundry, True Visions TV. 650sqm plot with Chanote title. Price: 9.8 million baht. Please contact Paula. Tel: 084-844 1486. Email: meeuwissenpaula@hotmail.com

LAND IN RAWAI

Best land, from 1.8 million baht for 464sqm. Many plots to choose from. Tel: 084-111 3977 (English & Thai). Email: stefan@stefan.asia Call or mail for further details. Photos and details, check website at www.stefan.asia

PRIVATE SALE OF HALF RAI

At 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.

TOWNHOUSE 2 STORIES

Opposite Boat Lagoon. 24sq wah, 3 beds, 2 baths. Email: info@allaboutwebanddesign.com

PRIME LAND

In Layan Soi 7, close to the beach, a lake, a main road and an electricity supply. Ideal for a private house. Tel: 081-787 4383, 081-968 3549.

HOUSE FOR SALE

Baan Suan Loch Palm. Price: 9.5 million baht. Contact: Wanisa. Tel: 088-765 1826.

SEAVIEW LAND FOR SALE

Near Supalai Resort on the east coast of Phuket slope. A 3-rai plot with road and electricity access. Price: 3.6 million baht per rai. No agents please. Tel: 080-520 2989. Email: pakapoms@yahoo.com

BEAUTIFUL LAND QUIET LAND PLOT

in Nai Harn. A walled property with Chanote title. It has an electric gate and private concrete entryway. About 600sqm in total, including all facilities with a private well and water tank. The plot is beside a property with luxury villas. Ready to build on. Asking price: 2.6 million baht. Tel: 083-388 8036 (English or German), 089-972 5378 (Thai).

PATONG TOWER 1 BEDROOM

Modern, fully furnished 1-bedroom apartment. 68sqm, freehold. Price: 6.5 million baht. Tel: 081-088 8099.

1,100SQM LAND PLOTS

Very nice land plots on a secure development estate, 500m from a golf course. For sale only. Price: 1.89 million baht. Tel: 081-343 0777. Email: montha_phuket@yahoo.com

THE HEIGHTS PHUKET

Ocean, pool & mountain view. Price: 19.5 million baht or best offer. Tel: 086-883 9815.

MUST SELL: 1.9MB OR BEST OFFER. NEW MODERN RENOVATED ONE-STOREY TOWNHOUSE WITH 3 BEDROOMS. WITH CHANOTE TITLE. IN PHUKET TOWN, CLOSE TO LOTUS, A PARK AND A SCHOOL. IN VILLA 3 QUARTER, WHICH HAS A BIG POOL, TWO TENNIS COURTS AND A GYM. TEL: 081-788 8280 (ENGLISH), 081-791 1525 (THAI). EMAIL: MAURICE.PHUKET@GMAIL.COM**SURIN LUXURY POOL VILLA**

Luxury pool villa with 3 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, a maid's room and a garage for 2 cars. Land 940sqm, 450sqm construction and 250sqm living area. 1 minute walk to Surin, Bang Tao Beach, opposite The Chedi, Amanpuri Resort. Close to high-end restaurants and bars. A quick sale for 25.5 million baht. Please contact us for more info. Tel: 087-277 5451, 081-536 1101. Email: srbolu55@yahoo.co.uk

OCEANFRONT LAND, MAI KAO

7.5 rai plot with 168 meters ocean frontage Nor Sor 3 Kor, ready to build. Surrounded by a peaceful and natural environment. The ideal place for secure investment. Price: 15 million baht per rai. Call 081-970 9196 for more information. Email: helena.klaic@pick-place.si Website: www.maikao.info

VILLA FOR SALE

In Patong. It has 2 living rooms, 4 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms, 2 kitchens, a garden, a swimming pool and a jacuzzi. Please call for more info (between 4pm and 8pm). Tel: 083-390 9001.

PATONG APARTMENT FOR SALE

9th-floor unit in a condotel. 28sqm, fully furnished. Ready to move in. 10 minutes to beach. Price: 1.5 million baht or nearest offer. Tel: 089-909 3882.

CONDO FOR SALE

75sqm, near Dowroong Wittaya School. Fully furnished with 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, a kitchen, a balcony, a living room. Includes 3 aircons, a fridge, etc. Price: 2.2 million baht. Freehold. Email: thailand112@hotmail.com

KATHU HOUSE (URGENT)

140sqm house, 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, fully equipped, internet, air conditioned, possibility for another bedroom, open kitchen, big living room, garden with possibility to do a swimming pool. Chanote title. Asking 6.2 million baht (negotiable). Tel: 076-319003, 081-086 0733 (English & Thai), 080-887 3732 (English & Thai). Email: thaivid@hotmail.com

TWO PLOTS MISSION HILLS

206sq wah plot. Flat land units with a mountain view for small developments. 20 plots, with Chanote title and access to electricity. Price: 1.6 million baht. 6-rai hilltop plot with sea and mountain views, including Chanote title. Price: 4 million baht per rai. Tel: 087-978 5804.

LUXURY VILLAS IN RAWAI

3-4 bedroom villas with 2 storeys. 327sqm, fully furnished and airconditioned with a big garden and ample parking. At a quiet location in a gated community with 24-hour security. Price: 11.9 million baht. Tel: 087-893 8747.

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12.5 RAI OF LAND

12.5 rai overlooking Loch Palm Golf Course. Perfect for small development. Sub-divided with infrastructure. Chanote. 50 million baht. Tel: 081-893 3462 (English), 081-956 3166 (Thai). Email: 12.5rai@gmail.com

CONDO:**1.5 MILLION BAHT**

74sqm, 2 bedrooms, 1 bath, 3 aircon units and kitchen. Tel: 085-782 8881 (Thai), 081-895 6629 (English). Email: arunrat65@hotmail.com

LAND FOR SALE

4 rai at Bang Jo near main road. For a quick sale from owner: 13 million baht. Tel: 081-956 0527. Email: tuenjai1@hotmail.com

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140sqm unit, plus a roof, garden and private pool at a beach resort. Price: 16 million baht. Comes with 2 pools, a gym, WiFi and 24-hour security. Tel: 084-716 0502.

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SOLUTIONS TO THIS WEEK'S PUZZLES

Crossword puzzle:

1	A	S	I	F	5	R	A	M	8	U	S	10	U	N	12	I	T
14	R	E	D	O	15	U	T	I	L	E	16	P	A	T	E		
17	A	V	E	R	18	T	R	A	N	S	19	C	R	I	B	E	
20	L	E	A	S	H	21	E	T	A	22	H	I	R	E	D		
					24	P	A	I	S	A	26	D	A	S			
27	P	A	G	E	A	N	T	30	D	E	F	E	C	T	S		
34	O	R	A	N	G	E	35	I	R	A	E	36	R	Y	A		
37	K	I	S	T	38	R	A	T	E	D	40	D	U	C	T		
41	E	S	E	42	O	T	R	A	43	S	44	L	U	S	H	Y	
45	D	E	S	P	A	I	R	47	L	E	A	T	H	E	R		
					48	S	K	A	49	D	I	A	R	Y			
50	A	D	I	E	U	53	A	R	K	54	A	F	F	I	X		
58	C	A	L	U	M	59	N	I	O	U	S	61	R	U	S	E	
62	M	I	L	D	63	E	D	I	T	S	64	E	R	I	N		
65	E	S	S	O	66	T	A	T	A	R	67	E	L	S	A		

Impossibly Possible Quiz answers:

1. Bethlehem, 2. Pipers piping, 3. The pet dog, 4. The three wise men, 5. Three: Donner, Dasher and Dancer, 6. An invisibility cloak, 7. Canada, 8. Star of Bethlehem, 9. Jingle Bells, 10. White Christmas, 11. Vixen, 12. Santa Claus, 13. Oh Come All Ye Faithful, 14. Santa Claus is Coming to Town, 15. An old top hat.

Would you like to keep up on what's happening in Phuket - the good, the bad and the bizarre? Let us share it with you - every week!

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Must have excellent spoken and written English skills. Experience in property and people management essential. Good communicator, structured and system-oriented. Thai National required. Please contact for further details. Tel: 084-848 0000. Send CV and salary requirement to info@villachangrajang.com

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That sells electrics seeks a sales engineer in Phuket. A minimum of 2 years' electrical experience. Must have car. Tel: 02-673 9857-9. Email: hr@thjungasia.com



BANYAN TREE
— PHUKET —

Phuket, Thailand – Bordered by the golden sands and gentle waves of the Andaman Sea and within a cluster of 5-star hotels in Laguna Phuket lies Banyan Tree Phuket, a luxury resort in the Phuket tropics exuding rest and tranquility. A paradise of extraordinary natural beauty, it is no wonder Banyan Tree Phuket has earned accolades from leading magazines the world over. A 'Land of Smiles' indeed under the sheltering canopy of the Banyan Tree.

To date, the Banyan Tree Group manages and/or has ownership interests in over 20 resorts and hotels, over 60 spas, in excess of 60 retail galleries, as well as two golf courses.

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Banyan Tree Phuket is currently seeking highly motivated and result oriented candidates with IDEALS to join our professional team in the following positions :

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Chief Engineer
Executive Housekeeper
Sales Manager
Revenue Management Manager
Security Manager
F&B Service Manager
Assistant Financial Controller

Key Requirements :

- Minimum of 3-5 years of experience in the field or position
- Good command of English
- Strong Managerial skills
- Ability to lead, motivate and develop a team of individuals
- Ability to work under pressure
- Capable of preparing reports and presentations in English
- Working knowledge of local culture

Please submit your application and full resume with recent photo to:

Ms. Prapaipan Reingpat
prapaipan.reingpat@banyantree.com
Director of Human Resources
Banyan Tree Phuket
33, 33/27 Srisoonthorn Road
Cherngtalay, Thalang, Phuket 83110
Fax: 076 325 013

www.banyantree.com • www.angsana.com • www.lagunaphuket.com



Marriott Vacation Club, Asia Pacific, a leader in the global vacation ownership business, is looking for a competent individuals and active professionals to join our team in the following positions;

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- MARKETING ASSISTANT
- MARKETING CUSTOMER CONTACT
- RECEPTIONIST
- MARKETING EXECUTIVE
- MARKETING OPC
- SALES & MARKETING CALL CENTER
- SALES ASSISTANT
- GENERAL ADMIN ASSISTANT
- SALES EXECUTIVE MULTI LANGUAGES
(ENGLISH, RUSSIAN, GERMAN, CHINESE, JAPANESE, BAHASA)

Bangkok Base

- TELE MARKETING

Require self-motivated, confident people with excellent interpersonal skills and proactive, proficiency in English is necessary. Candidates with the above qualifications should submit a resume with a recent photograph to teerawit.koonlachat@vacationclub.com or fax 076-303625 or mail to:

MVCI, Asia Pacific
234 Maikhao, Talang
Phuket 83110, Thailand

Or Apply in person
on Monday - Friday
at 10.00 am – 3.00 pm

Phuket Gazette

The Phuket Gazette seeks to fill the following positions:

Reporter (3 positions)

The successful candidates will be Thai nationals with initiative, outgoing personalities and plenty of experience about the world and how it works. Also essential are the ability to communicate in English, both spoken and written, and a car. Knowledge of Burmese (1 position), passion for sports (1 position) is an advantage.

Good salaries for the right candidates.

Qualified candidates are invited to send a CV by email to Oh@PhuketGazette.Net
Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd

79/94 Moo 4, Thepkasattri Rd, T. Koh Kaew
A. Muang, Phuket 83000
Tel: 076-273555 Fax: 076-615240

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Mai Khao Beach, Phuket

Be a part of something fantastic! West Sands Vacation Club is seeking additional outgoing, motivated individuals to join our growing fun-filled family. Competitive salaries and benefits.

Sales Executive	2 Positions
Sales Team Leader	1 Position
TO Sales Executive	1 Position
Russian Sales Executive	1 Position
Russian Marketing Executive	1 Position
Thai Marketing Executive	2 Positions

Send resume or CV with recent photo to mark@west-sands.com



Laguna Holiday Club, the fastest-growing Vacation Club in Asia, is urgently seeking:

Sales Representatives

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career@lagunaholidayclub.com

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Find more Recruitment Classifieds at www.PhuketGazette.Net/

ERAWANA www.erawana.com

Erawana Co., Ltd. has developed over 100 villas in Phuket since 2003. To support our continuously growing business, we are currently seeking energetic, open-minded individuals who are highly motivated to apply for the following position:

Sales Manager

- Prepare all sales and marketing materials
- Present projects to potential customers
- Support existing customers (after sales service)
- Improve relationship with other sales agents
- Manage entire sales process (legal, land office, etc.)

Please note that this position is only open to native English speakers. Compensation package includes a base salary starting from 50,000 baht, commissions based on sales performance and annual bonus.

If you are willing to work hard and are result-oriented, please send your resume to info@erawana.com. We regret that only short-listed candidates will be notified.

Office Address Erawana Co., Ltd.
19/10 Moo 6, Soi Khok Tanode 2, Baan Don-Layan Rd., Thalang, Phuket 83110
Tel: 076-275 022-3 Mobile: 089-729 2989
E-mail: info@erawana.com

HEXACON PROPERTY

HEXACON PROPERTY STAFF WANTED

We are looking for professional staff for our expanding property company in Phuket.

We are looking for English, Russian, Italian, German, French, Spanish and Thai-speaking sales staff with experience in the property business.

We want good sales people, based on high commission, as well as an experienced accountant.

Our strategy is to represent a select group of the best projects on and around Phuket.

This includes condominiums and villa projects in the best locations.

Our strengths are that we work internationally, have substantial knowledge about Phuket and that our staff speak several languages such as Thai, Russian, English and Scandinavian.

If you have what it takes please submit a resume / CV, a recent photo and expected salary to: michael@hexacon-property.asia

We need the following staff:

- 1 Accountant / Secretary (Thai Only)
- 10 Sales with good experience
- 5 Salespersons for our booths in Jungceylon and Patong area (Thai only)

HEXACON PROPERTY Co., Ltd.
1 Moo 8 Chaofa West Road, Chalong Sub-district, Muang Phuket District, Phuket Province, Thailand
Website: www.hexacon-property.asia

ROYAL PHUKET MARINA

Royal Phuket Marina is Asia's most sophisticated and high-tech yachting haven, a world-class destination combining luxury waterfront living with a state-of-art marina, is now looking for enthusiastic and motivated candidates in the following position:

Sales & Marketing Manager (Expat or Thai National)

Job Descriptions and Responsibilities:

- Take charge of all sales and marketing activities
- Provide leadership to the day-to-day operations of the sales and marketing department, while maintaining focus on the company's strategic goals
- Develop the strategic marketing plan for all projects
- Develop, maintain and improve business relations with all customers of the company
- Operate with outside agents and other service providers
- Develop, implement and manage eMarketing strategies, plan activities for the assigned RPM products, which align with brand strategies; ensure KPIs (key performance indicators), and other goals/objectives will be met or exceeded

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree in a real estate and / or marketing related field
- Minimum of 5 years experience in sales & marketing management capacity in real estate, residential sales is a must
- International experience with a large real estate developer is a major advantage
- Developed communication and presentation skills
- Strong motivational, innovative, and interpersonal skills
- Proven leadership ability to influence, develop, and empower employee to achieve objectives

Interested candidates please sent fully detailed CV, recent photo, current and expected salary with other related documents to:

HR Department
Royal Phuket Marina
68 Moo.2 Thepkasatree Rd, Kohkaew, Muang, Phuket
Tel: 076-360833-38 Fax: 076-360840 Email: prasertm@royalphuketmarina.com

Phuket Gazette

The Phuket Gazette seeks to fill the following position:

SUB-EDITOR

- ▶ Fluent in English
- ▶ Able to work to strict deadlines
- ▶ A team player
- ▶ Naturally curious about the world, especially Phuket and what affects its residents
- ▶ Newspaper experience and/or layout skills, especially in PageMaker or InDesign, required.

Qualified candidates are invited to send a CV and writing sample by email to editor@phuketgazette.net

The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd
79/94 Moo 4, Thepkasatree Rd, Koh Kaew
A. Muang, Phuket 83000
Tel: 076-273555 Fax: 076-615240

Career Opportunity 

VS Asia Co., Ltd. was established in Phuket, and over 35 years experience in professional printing & information technology and post-production for clients in Europe, Asia and worldwide.

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Job Description:

- Knowledge of German language
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Qualifications:

- Male/Female, Thai National Only
- Fluent German language in reading + writing
- Good knowledge of computer (Windows or Macintosh) and Internet
- High responsibility and punctuality
- Able to work as a shift with team or independently

Salary & Welfare:

- Salary, Social Security Insurance, Tax, Food, etc.
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Interested applicants apply at:
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42 Moo3, Palai2, Chaofa Rd., Chalong, Muang, Phuket 83130
Tel. (00)66-76-380600 Fax. (00)66-76-380605 Email: info@vsdma.com

Seduction
BEACH CLUB & DISCO

BAR AND PROMOTION STAFF WANTED!

Seduction is opening Factory Bar on Bangla Road in November 2010. Factory Bar will offer international dance music, trendy cocktails and a stylish interior. We are looking for outgoing bar staff and promoters to give out flyers with a commission salary. Good english skills are necessary.

Send your application with photo by email to susanna.karranto@sk-ravintolat.fi or come and fill out a form at the Seduction office.

The office hours are Monday-Friday from 10am-5pm.
Tel. 076-340 215.

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Tel: 086-060 7712. Please email us for details. Email: thepixelstudiosjulie@hotmail.com

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Tel: 080-624 7060. Email: phuketpreschool@yahoo.com

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Part-time position, working from home. Good organizational and computer skills. Excellent written and spoken English. Western. Please send CV by email: info@villachangrajang.com

PHUKET BABYSITTING AND HOME NURSE
a company specializing in professional services to families and mothers needs an English-speaking person who enjoys contacting clients and can manage enquiries, bookings and staff. Age and looks are not important, but enthusiasm and a sense of responsibility are. Our office is near Central Department Store. Please call Joy for an interview: Tel: 081-797 1497. Email: info@phuketbabysitting.com

BANG TAO RESTAURANT
We need 1 European chef and 1 Thai cuisine chef. Please contact Peter. Tel: 087-882 1445.

PURCHASE MANAGER
Audio / Visual and electrical company. Must have good experience in dealing with supply companies, import, and logistics. Fluent Thai and good English speaker and strong personality preferred. Please send email: daragh@techworx-projects.com or fax CV to 076-325144. For further details, please see our website at www.new.techworx.biz

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Asia Web Direct is seeking IT developers with 2 years experience. Great working environment. Send your resume now. Email: recruitment@wotifgroup.com

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130 PS3 games for 24,000 baht. Email: svalle66@gmail.com

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GAS OVEN

Large gas oven for sale, 3 months old, little used. 22,000 baht. Please contact for more information. Tel: 089-197 7438 (Thai), 088-168 8145 (English). Email: olay1@yahoo.com

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Pond bio filter model CBF-1100 1.0Hp with UV light. Included submersible pump arwan model:KSV-151. Price new: 30,000 baht. Selling for: 12,500 baht. Please contact Tel: 076-273087, 081-978 5901 (English), 081-956 3775 (Thai). Fax: 076-273087. Email: moose@waterworkwarehouse.net

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WiFi unit, a telephone, and a fax for sale cheap. Please contact for more information. Tel: 086-953 8616. Email: harlequinjen@gmail.com

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LG 42" plasma TV and home theater: 21,000 baht. Fino: 21,000 baht. LG washing machine: 5,000 baht. Sofa: 4,000 baht. Fender guitar amplifiers: 6,000 baht. Tel: 087-888 1247.

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Bulletins

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a child. The Phuket International Women's Club is a volunteer organization raising funds for educational scholarships. We rely on the goodwill of donors and sponsors—small and large. If you would like to put something back into the community in which you live, contact us to find out more about giving a prize or being a sponsor. Please call K. Carol (Tel: 087-417 8860) or K. Sue (Tel: 087-277 6948). Or email: info@phuketiwcc.com

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For Phuket info (English) call 081-8912895, 081-8954763 or email: phuketaa@yahoo.com

English Speaking Meetings
Mission Hospital - Phuket City
Wed and Sun 7 PM

Bangkok Hospital - Phuket City
Fri 7 PM

Patong Hospital - Patong
Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri, Sat, Sun 7 PM

Green Man Restaurant - Chalong
Tue 1 PM

Scandinavian Speaking
Meetings-Karon
Tue and Sat 7 PM (Nov-April only)
Tel: 086-9440460 Swe, 082-2765998 Ncr

For info on other Thailand AA
meetings inquire @ 02-23118300
(for Thai language press 3)
www.aathailand.org or
email: info@aathailand.org

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BUSINESS FOR SALE

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Two massage shops in Patong. Both are busy and successful, guaranteeing a great income. Price: 3.3 and 5.5 million baht. Tel: 081-303 2202.

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Urgent sale of Food Shop at Patong beachfront and a shop in Bangla. Contact me for details. Tel: 080-391 8701 (English & Thai), 080-533 9397. Email: bell_jidapha@hotmail.com

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For sale by Chalong Bay. Bar downstairs, massage upstairs, fully furnished. Rent: 9,500 baht per month. Tel: 086-682 0634. Email: gay7@siamza.com

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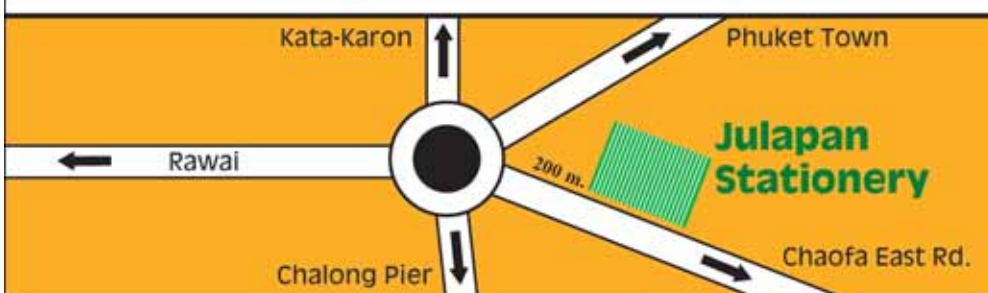
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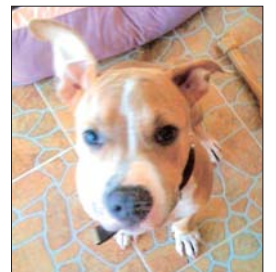
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Headstart invest in new pitch

CONSTRUCTION work has started on a new synthetic football pitch at Headstart International School Phuket.

The project, which is a collaboration between Headstart and local businessman Karl Ward, is expected to open early next year.

The previous grass pitch was only installed last year but has not stood up to the rigors of regular football during the rainy season. Mr Ward is hoping the new surface will be suitable to play on by early 2011.

"Work has already started and they are currently moving the playground from the front to where the old pitch used to be. The new pitch will be built at the top area where the playground is now. I anticipate it could be finished within four months," he said.

"Most likely we'll be playing football not futsal. We are aiming to make it a six-a-side for adults and seven-a-side for kids," Mr Ward added.

He also confirmed that the pitch, which is situated at Headstart in Kathu, will be available to the general public. Visit www.phuketfootball.com for more details.

— James Goyder

Lomas shine in Bangkok

By Andrew Jennings

PHUKET Lomas Rugby Club is celebrating a famous victory for one of its youngest teams at the Satit Kaset Youth Rugby Festival in Bangkok.

The two-day festival, held at the Kasetsart University Campus last weekend, has quickly established itself as one of the most prestigious youth rugby events in Asia, with teams from 15 different countries competing.

Although the Lomas sent three youth teams to the capital last weekend to compete in three age divisions, there is little doubting who proved the stars of the show.

Prior to last weekend the Lomas Under-10s had never previously toured as a team, in fact they had never played in a competitive match, while many of the players had never been outside of Phuket.

However, this didn't stop them winning four out of five games in Bangkok to be crowned Under-10 champions at the first time of asking.

Despite narrowly losing their opening game to King's College Bangkok, the Under-10s showed great character to win all of their remaining games to lift the title.

Plearn Pattana School were put



FESTIVAL WINNERS: The boys from Phuket Lomas Under-10s show off their winning medals in Bangkok.

to the sword in game two, while competition favorites Pramaesakkolsongkroh were no match for the Lomas in game three.

It was on to their last group game and a meeting with Pramoch Raminthra Wittaya School. With attack and defense in perfect unison, the Lomas cantered to a comfortable 15-0 win.

The final was a rematch with Plearn Pattana, but nothing was going to stop the Lomas and they duly delivered when it mattered with a fine performance in the decider to become champions at their first attempt.

"Simply brilliant" was how Lomas coach described the Under-10s performance over the weekend.

Elsewhere at the festival, the Lomas Under-12s were drawn in a difficult group which included two powerful expat teams from Bangkok.

Despite winning two and drawing one of their four group games, they agonizingly missed out on a place in the final on scoring difference.

The Lomas Under-15s were entered in the Under-16 section at the festival and found the going

tough against older and stronger opponents. Despite this they gave a good account of themselves, winning one of their three games.

Next on the calendar for Lomas Rugby Club will be the Bangkok 10s in February when they again hope to send three teams.

The club would like to thank their sponsors Island Furniture, Siam Adventure Divers, Aussie Bar and PMA T-Shirts, also The Patong Municipality, Prince of Songkla University and everyone who has contributed to the Phuket Lomas Rugby development.

Fair Play now for everyone

REGISTRATION remains open for any youngsters interested in joining the popular Fair Play League which starts next month.

Last year the league was only open to children from certain schools, but due to its popularity organizers have decided to open it to children from all schools.

The league is scheduled to start January 16 and will run until March, with matches taking place on Sundays. The venue will alternate between the British International School, the Youth Football Home, and Phuket International Academy.

Although teams will be divided randomly, organizers will ensure that all teams are of a similar level.

The Under-13 League will be seven-a-side open to anyone born

between 1998 and 2000, as well as girls born in 1997.

The Under-16 League will be 11-a-side and open to anyone born in between 1995 and 1997, as well as girls born in 1993.

Thanks to shirt sponsors The Yorkshire Inn and Tawan SEA Adventures, the cost is 400 baht for the entire season. Players will receive a football kit as well as polo shirts and a medal at the end of the season.

The Fair Play League also requires parents to volunteer as coaches.

Players or coaches wishing to take part should contact Martin Hill of Brazilian Soccer Schools at E:bss@phuketinternationalacademy.com

— James Goyder

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FC Phuket gunning for glory

By Andrew Jennings

FC PHUKET took a giant stride toward promotion to Division 1 of the Thai League with a comprehensive 2-0 victory over Rayong FC at Surakul Stadium last Sunday.

The win moved Phuket two points clear of Rayong and means victory against Samut Prakan on Saturday will secure promotion.

Phuket supporters will be hoping their team can continue their excellent home form and clinch the three points they still need to go up a division.

Should Phuket draw with Samut Prakan, and Rayong defeat bottom-of-the-table Loei City in their final group game, it will go down to goal difference. Phuket is currently one better off in that department.

Phuket and Samut Prakan played out a scoreless draw earlier in the playoffs. Chainat FC remain a point clear of Phuket at the top of the group after defeating Loei City 3-1 in their latest fixture.

Phuket went into last weekend's playoff match with Rayong knowing only a victory would keep their hopes of promotion alive. They didn't disappoint, producing a thoroughly impressive performance.

Ivory Coast import Diarra Ali was the star of the show, netting a goal in each half to keep Phuket's promotion destiny in their own hands ahead of Saturday's final playoff game.

The game against Rayong proved surprisingly one sided with the Southern Sea Kirin on the front foot right from the first whistle. They should have won the game by a more comfortable margin.

Phuket created a number of glorious chances throughout the 90 minutes and could have had the game sewn up by half-time. Out-classed, Rayong could have no complaints in defeat.

Chances came and went for Phuket early in the game before the lively Thawin Butrasombat was chopped down in the penalty

on 24 minutes. Sure-footed Ali converted the resulting spot kick.

There was a bizarre scene at half-time when Rayong, who were wearing red jerseys in the first-half, emerged from their dressing room wearing a blue strip. Officials told the players to change back to their red kit so the second-half could begin.

The incident made little difference to action on the field as Phuket continued to pile on all the pressure in the second half, limiting their opponents to a couple of weak efforts from long distance. Ali fired his second goal midway through the half from close range, ensuring victory for Phuket.

Meanwhile, Phuket FC administrator Kazira Hans has confirmed star midfielder Camara Ahmed is set to leave hospital next week. Camara has been at Vachira Hospital Phuket since suffering a heart attack during a home match against Chainat in October.

On his condition Ms Hans said, "He (Camara) is getting better. He responds when we call his name and he is able to look at us. He can move his fingers and toes, but he still cannot move his body. Doctors feed him through a tube."



SO LONG RAYONG: FC Phuket moved one step closer to promotion after dispatching of Rayong FC at home last Sunday. Photo: Apinun Saithong

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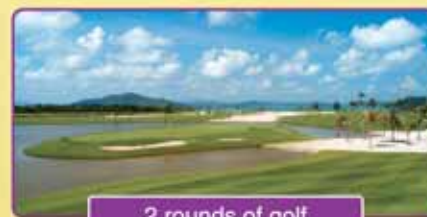
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