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Seeking UN heritage status

By Pakamard Jaichalard and Stephen Fein

PHUKET is looking to secure a coveted United Nations World Heritage listing for the century-old Sino-Portuguese buildings in Phuket Town.

The senate committee has asked the Culture Ministry to push for buildings in town, or the entire island, to apply for listing.

Culture Minister Nipit Intarasombat said earlier this week that he had assigned the Fine Arts Department to determine whether the Old Town matches the selection criteria used by the World Heritage Committee.

The Senate committee's panel for securing Phuket's world heritage status for the development of tourism has proposed two options.

The first is to register the Sino-Portuguese buildings as world heritage sites. The ministry was asked to preserve and restore the structures as close to their original condition as possible, while improving the looks of the buildings by burying ugly overhead electricity wires.

If successful, Old Phuket



GOLDEN OLDIES: Buildings in town could soon gain United Nations World Heritage status. Photo: Peranakan Assn

Town would be jointly listed with Malaysia's Malacca and Penang, which all share this traditional style of architecture.

A second option is to register the entire island based on all its cultural and natural features.

The Sino-Portuguese style, which boasts influences from the

East and West, first appeared in 1511 on the Malay Peninsula.

Similar style buildings can also be found in Ranong, Krabi, Phang Nga and Trang. Most were built during the time of Phraya Rassa-danupradit Mahissarakuldi, who governed Monton Phuket from 1901 to 1913, during the reign of

King Rama V.

In 1994, Phuket Municipality declared a 210 rai area of Phuket's Old Town as a protected area, banning construction of buildings more than 12-meters high.

Dr Prasit Koeysiripong, former president of the Old Phuket Foundation, said it was a "good idea"

to have the buildings listed.

However, more improvements were needed, such as better parking access for tourists and locals, and the unblocking of traditional *ngor kha kee* arcades to serve as pedestrian walkways, he added.

He would also like to see signs put up with historical information about buildings of interest.

"Some of the buildings were once opium dens and others were World War II era dance halls. It's quite interesting," said Dr Prasit, who grew up on Krabi Road.

Dr Prasit said a second museum in the area would also increase the area's attractiveness to tourists and locals.

"There has been talk about turning the old Standard Chartered Bank building into a museum for five years, but nothing has become of it," he said.

As for plans to bury electricity cables along Krabi and Dibuk roads, the second phase of a three-phase project in the area, he said the project should begin soon and take four months to complete.

Work should get started as soon as possible to ensure completion before the arrival of the monsoon season, he added.

Tuptim clings to life as operation approaches



BRAVE: Tuptim Jadngooluem

By Andrew Jennings

THE condition of seven-month-old baby Tuptim Jadngooluem has stabilized in recent days, with doctors hopeful she can now finally have the life-saving operation she needs on Wednesday.

Tuptim, who was diagnosed with a terminal case of biliary obstruction in the liver at three months, remains in a serious condition in the intensive care unit (ICU) at Ramathibodi Hospital Bangkok.

Earlier this week, Tuptim's condition deteriorated rapidly after she suffered internal bleeding and a lung infection. Doctors feared she would not be strong enough to undergo surgery, meaning they would be unable to save her life.

Thankfully, a series of injections last Tuesday helped stop the bleeding and the hospital has now penciled in Tuptim's operation with Bangkok-based specialist Sumate Teeraratkul for this week.

Tuptim, the only daughter of Rattanachai "Kru Nai", a popular trainer at Tiger Muay Thai in Chalong, was originally due to have the operation last Friday.

However, it was then rescheduled for January 28 so she could gain enough strength for Dr Sumate to safely proceed with the complicated 18-hour surgery.

Now, providing she remains in a stable condition over the next few days, the operation will go ahead.

The campaign to save Tuptim's life caught the imagination of the world last month, when

over US\$65,000 was raised to cover the cost of her operation, including a US\$50,000 donation from Ultimate Fighting Championship President Dana White.

Grainne Farrell, who headed up the fundraising effort to save Tuptim, told the *Phuket Gazette* that fingers are crossed that the operation will go ahead as planned this week.

"She was not doing so well early in the week, but the injections stopped the bleeding and her improvement has been great. The surgery is now planned for the January 19," said Ms Farrell.

Kru Nai and Tuptim's mother, "Khun Nit", have remained by their daughter's side in Bangkok since she entered hospital in mid-December.

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This Week

Around the Nation

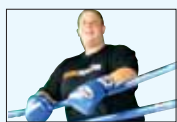
Pressure mounts for PM Abhisit over the 'Phnom Penh Seven' debacle. **Page 8**

Business



Phuket's annual PIMEX boat show rakes in half a billion baht. **Page 11**

Health



Brit James Mason puts the gloves on in his fight to lose weight. **Page 13**

Property



Three Dolphins splash out on Mom Tri's iconic Boathouse. **Page 21**

Classifieds

Everything you need at prices you can afford, from jobs to homes.

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Sport



Local golf prodigy Pariwat Pinsawat is taking the hype in his stride. **Page 35**

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Woman beaten over selling fruit at Surin

By Atchaa Khamlo

TWO men have been summoned to Cherg Talay Police Station for questioning about a vicious daylight assault on a fruit vendor at Surin Beach last Friday.

Maiwadee Tonglaw, 24, was beaten unconscious – allegedly for selling fruit in front of the men's family restaurant.

Ms Maiwadee, the daughter of Sawang Tonglaw, who heads a group of beach vendors on Surin Beach, required hospital treatment for neck and head injuries sustained during the attack.

Ms Maiwadee's sister, Wanida Tonglaw, told the *Phuket Gazette* that Maiwadee was approached by six men "representing" the restaurant. The men allegedly threatened to kill her if she continued selling fruit in front of the restaurant.

They then proceeded to beat her, Ms Wanida said.

"They told her that she'd been warned before, but Maiwadee told them she was doing nothing wrong. They started beating her and stomping on her face," said Ms Wanida.

"Many young vendors on the beach who walk past their restau-



SURIN SUSPECT: Prakhun Koeliyanont: 'I did not stomp on her face.'

rant are intimidated. They scare people with guns," she added.

Ms Maiwadee was released from hospital on Tuesday.

Prakhun Koeliyanont, 44, told the *Gazette*, "I did not stomp on her face. I asked her why she was still selling fruit, as I had asked her not to do it. But she talked back, saying, 'How big you are.'"

"I grabbed her hand gently and asked her why she talked like that, but she threw her tray of fruit at me. I dodged and pushed her to the ground for protection."

Thalang District Chief

Naruenart Supattarapateep on Tuesday met members of Ms Maiwadee's family and representatives of the restaurant in an attempt to solve the problem of intimidation of beach vendors.

Chief Naruenart said he knew the intimidation had been ongoing for a long time and that it was a difficult problem to solve.

He added that Phuket Governor Tri Augkaradacha was aware of this latest incident and that businesses would be blacklisted if acts of intimidation were proved true.

Phuket has too many hotels: Poll

A CLEAR majority of *Phuket Gazette* online readers believe the island's hotel industry is in a state of oversupply, the results of our latest poll reveal.

Overall, more than half of those taking part (58.9%) thought there were too many hotels in Phuket, compared to just 17.1% who thought there were not.

However, almost a quarter of all those taking part (24%) answered "I don't know".

In a demographic breakdown, 81% of expat residents thought there are too many accommodation establishments on the island, compared to just 10% who held the opposite view. Only 9% said they didn't know.



Patong Beach. Photo: Nicky Vermeulen

"I don't know" was the most common reply (41%) among Thais taking part. Of those who did have a clear opinion, those who thought the hotel industry was in

a state of oversupply (33%), slightly outnumbered those who thought it was not (26%).

Even tourists and visitors to Phuket, those who stand to benefit the most from a hotel glut, thought there were too many hotels on the island.

Thirty-nine percent of tourists thought the situation was in a state of oversupply compared to just 23% who thought it was not. However, a large fraction of those who took part, 38%, said they did not know.

A total of 525 people took part in the two-week poll, launched on Christmas Day – the unofficial start of the peak season for tourism in Phuket.

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Gypsies fight for rights

Cabinet resolution branded 'just a piece of paper'

By Pimwara Choksakulpan

MORE than 70 representatives from 30 sea gypsy communities across the six Andaman provinces met officials in Phuket earlier this week to voice grievances and defend their way of life.

The meeting, at Phuket Community Hall, followed the arrest and release of 17 sea gypsy fishermen of the Pramongkit clan arrested in late December for fishing inside Had Jao Mai Marine National Park in Trang.

Kantang Police, who arrested the men after receiving a report from a park official, seized as evidence 3,100 kilograms of spiny Murex shellfish, one pickup, three longtail boats and other fishing equipment.

Vehemently denying having fished in park waters, the sea gypsies said they showed the arresting officers a copy of a Cabinet resolution passed on June 2 last year, stating the official government policy to protect the sea gypsies' traditional way of life.

After further investigation, Kantang Police dropped the charges on January 4.

"Those shells were not protected species and we have the right to collect them. No matter how hard we tried to explain this to the officers, including showing a copy of the Cabinet resolution, they didn't care. They said they wanted to put us in jail anyway," one of the fishermen told the meeting.

The Pramongkit sea gypsies, from Rassada and Rawai, have yet to return to Trang to reclaim their boats. Without them they cannot make money to cover living expenses, one said.

The Cabinet resolution set short and long-term policies with measures to ensure the sea gypsies could continue their traditional hunter-gatherer way of life in a sustainable way. These included the continued use of old-style fishing equipment, access to traditional fishing grounds that have since been declared as inside marine national parks, fast tracking citizenship requests and issuance of ID cards to ensure access to public education and health services, and maintenance of local culture and traditions.

Sea Gypsy representative Sanit Saechua of Rawai told the gath-



SIMPLE LIFE: Stockholm University researcher Yara Lotfi is living with Morgan sea gypsies on Koh Surin to study how their hunter-gatherer society is coping with a changing world. The people there are committed to maintaining their traditional and sustainable way of life, according to her initial findings. Photo: Stephen Fein

ering there are about 12,000 sea gypsies in more than 30 groups scattered across Thailand's Andaman Coast territorial waters.

Despite some publicity about their way of life in the wake of the 2004 tsunami disaster, they still live as second-class citizens and don't have the full rights enjoyed by other Thai citizens, he said.

Land rights issues were the biggest concern. Most sea gypsy communities are located in coastal areas, and many do not have land title deeds. Some sea gypsy cemeteries are now located inside marine national parks or other areas designated for tourism purposes, Mr Sanit said.

Sea gypsy Yupa Chaonam of the Phi Phi Island community said, "Before we lived on a two-rai area given to us by the Royal Family, but now 34 families have to crowd into an area of just over one rai. We are not allowed to do anything [in the surrounding area], which we are told belongs to a developer. We just want to know what is our territory and what is not. It's as if we are a forgotten people with no public development for us."

On the topic of citizenship, Mr Sanit said about 30 per cent of sea gypsies living in Thai territory had yet to be issued National ID cards. Most, about 3,200, were living in

areas off Ranong, while some 900 were in Phang Nga. Only about ten sea gypsies in Phuket lacked ID cards, he said.

"These people lack access to public health services and can't even travel without fear of being arrested as illegal aliens," he said.

There to hear the grievances in person was Preeda Kongpaen, a member of a government-appointed advisory panel on how to best restore and maintain the traditional sea gypsy way of life.

She told the meeting that all the concerns she heard that day would be reported to the Cabinet through the Ministry of Culture, which would push to make the measures specified in the resolution have an impact on the problems.

"The government must pay more attention to solving the problems faced by these people. They inhabited these areas long

before the tourism boom, so their livelihoods should not suffer as a result of governments tourism development policies," she said.

Mr Sanit said sea gypsies were disappointed with the failure of the June 2 resolution to translate into real change.

"At first, the Cabinet resolution seemed like a good policy to support our rights, but in the end it is just a piece of paper. Government officers don't put it into practice," he said.

But he did acknowledge the gathering itself as a positive step for the sea gypsies.

"It will at least present us as 'somebodies' in this society, not 'nobodies' as we were before," he added.

For more on this story, see our editorial column on page 8.

Record number coming to Laguna MICE event

THE Laguna Phuket resort complex in Cherng Talay will host the island's largest-ever "Mice (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions) event in April and May next year, when some 20,000 Amway sales representatives from across China will descend on the island.

Debbie Dionysius, director of destination marketing at Laguna Phuket, said the resort has signed a contract with Amway China Company Limited to provide 940 rooms for 20 nights for the sales reps.

The event falls under the "incentives" aspect of the MICE market, as the attendees will be flown in at the company's expense as a performance reward.

The exact dates have yet to be announced, but the event is scheduled to begin on or around the time of the Songkran festival in mid-April, 2012.

Delegates to the Amway China 2012 Southeast Asia Seminar will be flown in waves of about 1,800 to 1,900 people each, spending four nights at the resort, she said.

To help prepare for the event, Ms Dionysius and three colleagues will travel to Sydney, Australia at the end of the month to observe Amway China 2012 Southeast Asia Seminar.

Laguna Phuket has a total of 1,300 rooms. All of the resorts will play host to the delegates, with the exception of the Outrigger and the Laguna Holiday Club resort.

Ms Dionysius the event could be the largest single event ever staged on Phuket.

— Stephen Fein



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Scam alert Fearsome ghost – or black magician's lab?

By Pimwara Choksakulpan

POLICE are hunting a group of scam artists wanted for impersonating the Phuket governor to solicit donations for an imaginary provincial development campaign.

In a meeting last week, Gov Tri Augkaradacha warned people not to fall victim to the scam.

The scammers have been calling both government offices and private businesses asking for monetary donations.

The amount they typically ask for ranges from 30,000 baht to 40,000 baht.

The funds are purportedly needed for a "provincial sports development program".

Among the mobile phone numbers used by the group were 083-9644413 and 086-1700012, he said.

He also gave the account number of two Kasikorn Bank accounts set up in Bangkok to accept the swindled funds.

As part of their pitch, the scammers make reference to Football Association of Thailand president Worawee Magudee in an



Gov Tri is "very" angry that the scammers are using his name.

attempt to present their fund-raising drive as legitimate, Gov Tri explained.

Gov Tri said he was very angry that people were using his good name to defraud people.

Among the victims was his own son-in-law, who transferred about 60,000 baht to the con artists, he said.

Phuket City Police Superintendent Wanchi Ekpornpit is leading the investigation, he said.

RESIDENTS of a village in Chachoengsao province are puzzling over the source of strange red lights which have been seen floating near the village pond almost every night for the past month.

Some say the lights are a *phi kraseu* – a fearsome Thai ghost which manifests as the head of a beautiful woman, but with her internal organs hanging from the neck. Others say the lights started after the disappearance of a local black magician.

On January 9, a *Thai Rath* reporter met Naret Sutcheun, 48, a member of the Nongyao Tambon Administration Organization (*OrBorTor*).

Mr Naret said he knew several friends who claimed to have seen the weird lights.

The apparitions, about two meters tall, appear as twinkling balls of light about the size of fists. Some say they are ghosts with heads and intestines trailing beneath them, like *phi kraseu*.

Many villagers have tried to ap-



proach the lights, which appear near the village pond and around the edges of the rice fields, but they disappear before they can get close.

For his part, Mr Naret said he didn't believe the lights were *phi kraseu*. There was, however, another explanation for the lights doing the rounds in the village, he added.

Several years ago, a resident aged about 35 mysteriously left the village. When he returned two years later, he told his friends and parents that he had been in Nakhon Ratchasima studying black magic with a teacher.

He said he was going to use his knowledge to make money and make his mum and dad rich. He persuaded his mother to build him a special hermitage – at a cost of

about 100,000 baht – for him to use to work as a medium.

Villagers heard about this man's work and started coming to have their fortunes read or bad luck exorcised. This went on until about a year ago, when the man had an argument with his mum – and promptly disappeared.

The man left all his amulets, charms and magical equipment in his mother's house, without explaining their importance or how to look after them. Not so long ago, she threw all the potent magical trinkets out, dumping them by the side of the house.

It was shortly after this, some villagers say, that the lights started to appear in the same spot where the magic items were dumped.

Prasit O-satanon, 57, told *Thai Rath* he had seen the weird lights the night before the interview. It looked just like *phi kraseu* from an old Thai movie, he said.

Despite what he had seen, however, Mr Prasit said he could not believe the thing was a *phi kraseu*.

Big winners at the Red Cross lottery

ATIPHON "Tu" Wongmaha, the human resource manager at the Blue Marine Resort & Spa in Kalim, has won the top prize in the annual Red Cross Fair lucky draw: a townhouse valued at 2.5 million baht.

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

The 37-year-old Rayong native won the prize with his winning ticket number 15279.

Mr Tu, who has lived in Phuket for the past 16 years, told the *Phuket Gazette*, "Normally, I don't have such good luck. I couldn't believe it. At first I thought it was a con artist. Then Khun Piroj, the chief of the Public Health Office in Patong, confirmed on the phone that it was true. I was shocked. Wow! Unbelievable!" he said.

"I would like to give this house



Anun Benrasoi (right) won a Toyota. to my wife...as a gift for the new year," he added.

Winning the second major prize, a brand-new Toyota Hilux Vigo pickup truck, was 60-year-old Phuket native Anun "Mohamad Unan" Benrasoi, village chief of Moo 5 in Tambon Koh Kaew.

Nopparat Wongchitsue, a 45-year-old, Phuket-born shopkeeper, was the first the claim one of the five motorbikes in the draw.

– *Phuket Gazette*

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High season scuba nose dives

By Anand Singh

FOLLOWING a lukewarm start to the diving season, dive operators in Phuket are voicing concerns for the year ahead.

The past two months has witnessed unusually bad weather, resulting in operators having to cancel trips.

According to Mr Gilbert Redmann, managing director of Sunrise Divers, Phuket's dive industry is suffering because of several external factors – an unpredictable climate being one of them.

"In previous years it was the norm for clients to book 'liveaboard' dive trips online, sometimes months before their holiday.

Right now dive operators often have to come up with last minute offers in order to fill empty spaces on these trips.

We are getting fewer online bookings and more walk-in customers than ever before," Mr Redmann said.

Tourists are now booking less in advance because they are aware of the likelihood that good deals

will be available, even if they book at the last minute, he added.

"In recent years the number of hotels in Phuket has increased significantly.

"Hotel rooms have become more readily available for last-minute bookings.

"As a result tourists feel they have more choice and the luxury to wait and see.

"This is also the case when they book diving trips. Holidaymakers do not feel the need to book in advance anymore," said Mr Redmann.

He believes Phuket's dive industry may take a downturn next year, due to factors such as persistent economic problems in Europe, the unstable political situation in Thailand, and environmental problems, like coral bleaching, affecting many of the top dive sites in the region.

These long term factors will affect Phuket's dive industry more than the bad weather, Mr Redmann believes.

Marketing manager of Sea Bees Diving in Chalong, Mr Frank Mueller, said the number of divers the company had in November

was down by 15 per cent compared to the same time last year.

He is, however, more optimistic about the coming year.

"Although the European market has been disappointing, the diving industry in Phuket has been sustained by regional and Australian customers who still find Phuket an attractive diving destination," Mr Mueller said.

"In the past we have relied quite a lot on the European market.

"This also has to do with the fact that many dive operators here are owned by Europeans, but the European crisis is a lesson for us to diversify and not only rely on one market," he added.

Both industry experts believe that quality diving will be the main appeal of the Phuket industry. As long as the natural beauty of the dive sites is preserved, divers will come looking for them.

Mr Mueller believes that dive operators who care about quality ahead of cost cutting, will do well in the long run, regardless of short-term market conditions.



SCUBA ON THE ROCKS? The dive industry is experiencing a tough time.

Cashing in on tuna

A DELEGATION of Taiwanese investors visited Phuket Governor Tri Augkaradacha last week seeking support for their plan to set up an operations center in Phuket to take advantage of increased tuna stocks in the Andaman Sea.

Taiwanese executives from Seaspire International, a seafood processing and trading company based in Singapore, met Phuket Gov Tri at Provincial Hall.

Speaking for the delegation was its Thai representative Supakorn Boonkhamied, who told Gov Tri that unknown forces had somehow caused large stocks of Indian Ocean tuna to migrate from waters off Indonesia and into the Andaman Sea.

To take advantage of this, Seaspire International wants to move its regional operations base from Indonesia to Phuket, which already has the third-largest tuna industry in Asia, with 200 tuna fishing boats.

The move would see the company's 300 tuna fishing vessels move to Phuket, more than doubling the island's existing fleet.

The company is seeking government assistance in fast-tracking an export license application made by its Thai subsidiary to the Ministry of Commerce.

The license is needed as the company's catch is exported solely to markets in the US and Japan, he said.

"We need a cold storage facility to keep our fish as fresh as possible, because we can only fish for tuna six months a year. We are ready to gear up for this business and hope to find the right location by the end of March," he said.

Gov Tri told the group he would liaise with all the relevant government agencies to ensure that all the necessary documents are processed as quickly as possible.

– Pimwara Choksakulpan

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Reds return to Ratchaprasong in the tens of thousands



Red shirts in Bangkok on Sunday. Photo: AFP

ANTI-government protesters on Sunday held their first mass protest in Bangkok since the state of emergency was revoked, once again turning Ratchaprasong Intersection into a sea of red.

Police estimated more than 30,000 red shirts gathered for the rally.

The demonstrators demanded the release of red shirt leaders jailed following last year's protests. They also demanded justice for the 91 people who died during the 10 week protest which ended with a bloody crackdown on May 19.

Government spokesman Panitan Wattanayagorn said the government was pleased with the lack of violence on Sunday and noted that the red shirts were acting within the rule of law.

Panitan told the BBC that he accepted the protest movement had probably moved beyond its patron, exiled former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, into something more broad-based.

Nevertheless, speaking from an airliner somewhere over Europe, Mr Thaksin phoned in to the protest, telling them he

would do "everything in his power" to bring happiness and prosperity to the Thai people.

MP Jatuporn Prompan, the only core red shirt leader to escape jail because of his parliamentary immunity, did not speak at the protest. The Criminal Court recently barred him from involving himself in political actions.

The red shirts have vowed to hold rallies twice a month until their leaders are released. On January 25, the yellow shirt People's Alliance for Democracy will hold its own rally to demand the government take a firmer line over a border dispute with Cambodia.

Pressure on PM over 'Phnom Penh Seven'

PRIME Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva is under increasing pressure to explain his role in the case of seven Thais facing trial in Phnom Penh for trespassing into Cambodia.

A video released on YouTube showed one group member, Democrat MP Panich Vikitsreth, on the phone to an aide, asking him to tell the PM's secretary that he had crossed the border.

"Please tell Somkiat [the PM's secretary] to inform the prime minister that we are already inside Cambodia. I planned to call the prime minister myself but it is okay now," Mr Panich says.

Influential political magazine *Matichon Weekly* said the footage showed Panich was not on a personal mission but was carrying out a task given to him by PM Abhisit himself.

The video provided the first clear evidence that PM Abhisit "constantly played a double game", only admitting to political machinations when forced to by

AROUND THE nation

evidence, the magazine claimed.

At a news conference on January 5, the PM admitted he was aware of the group's trip but said he thought they were going to Prachin Buri province. Yet as influential political blogger *Bangkok Pundit* pointed out, Prachin Buri province does not border Cambodia.

Abhisit said the group was merely attempting to address the concerns of local villagers who owned land in the border area but were being prevented from using it by Cambodian troops.

He said the footage released on YouTube had been cut, and missing footage of Panich saying he "believed he was in Thai territory".



MP Panich at Phnom Penh Municipal Court on January 6. Photo: AFP

Bangkok Pundit wrote, "If at one point, Panich refers to them being in Thailand, how does that exactly change when he also clearly states at another point he was in Cambodia?"

On Sunday the PM used his weekly address to the nation to deny the group deliberately crossed the border.

The PM urged Thais throughout the country to give moral support to the seven and said the government was doing everything

it could to secure their release.

The group faces charges of illegal entry into Cambodia and unlawful entering of military areas, charges with combined maximum jail terms of 18 months.

The seven appeared in the Phnom Penh Municipal Court on January 7 in blue prisoner dresses.

Panich told the court that he had "crossed into Cambodian territory unintentionally," his Cambodian attorney Ros Aun told AFP.

—Phuket Gazette

China to build 'city' on Thai soil

CHINA plans to build a massive US\$1.5bn "commercial city" in Thailand to re-export Chinese goods to markets in the West while avoiding paying costly import tariffs.

The China City Complex will house at least 70,000 traders on around 700,000 square meters of trading space, equivalent to 100 football fields, according to *China Daily*.

The move comes around one year after China signed a free-trade agreement with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) which removed or dramatically reduced tariffs on traded goods.

Routing goods through Thailand will allow China to avoid high tariffs imposed on its goods by the United States and the European Union. Tariffs on goods imported from Thailand into those countries are much lower.

The plan will also give the appearance of reducing China's trade deficit with those countries, which hit \$16.8 billion with the US in November and \$13.6 billion with the EU, according to Bloomberg.

Construction on the center, which will be located close to Suvarnabhumi Airport on Bangkok's Bang Na-Trat Road, is expected to begin in March and be completed in 2013.

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Monkey business

I was on Phi Phi island recently and was horrified to see a family of gibbons being used to lure tourists into one of the island's bars.

They were dressed up and appeared to be addicted to alcohol and nicotine. The worst thing was that it was young western travelers with their pockets most probably lined with "gap year" money who were exploiting the poor creatures – so a desperate need for money isn't even an excuse in this instance. Truly disgraceful.

*Disgusted,
Chalong*

From the outside looking in

As a frequent visitor to Phuket, with annual lapses where I return home to save up for my next visit, I have a unique view of Phuket in time lapse and do not like what I see. Since when did this beautiful island succumb to thugs both on the beaches and on the roads? The horror stories of beatings, murders and rip-offs are increasing at a frightening rate. Instead of worrying whether a tourist drinks a beer within the 10,000 kilometer national park zone I suggest authorities step outside and read the writing on the wall. There are a lot of walls too but that's a different story.

*Concerned tourist,
Brighton*

Phuket playboy

How refreshing to see the interview with Bob Sinclar (*P13 Phuket Gazette* January 8). It's good to know that *The Gazette* keeps up to date with what's happening in the music scene and other issues that interest

Keeping sea gypsy aspirations afloat

Phuket Gazette

THE "sea gypsy summit" recently held in Phuket [See page 3] sheds a good deal of light on the many issues currently facing the people of the Andaman Sea as they try to maintain the language, culture and traditions handed down to them by their ancestors.

To its credit, the government of Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva has expressed far more interest in helping the sea gypsies than previous administrations, as was evident in the Cabinet resolution issued in June last year.

But far more needs to be done to address the root cause of the problems they face in trying to set course for a brighter future in the face of increasing globalization, environmental deterioration and other changes that seem to be coming at all of us at an ever-increasing rate.

Although most sea gypsy groups traditionally lived aboard all-purpose houseboats and moved to safe harbors when necessary, over time circumstances forced them to abandon this truly nomadic way of life in favor of a semi-nomadic one, staying in stilted villages on the beach and venturing out in longtail boats in search of fish and other marine creatures. The change may have seemed like an improvement at the time: they were no longer constantly imperiled by rough monsoon-season conditions at sea. But little did they know that they were taking their first steps down the path that would eventually land them in the same pre-

dicament as numerous other shanty communities that have sprung up all over the island in recent years – including one right behind Phuket Provincial Hall.

The root cause is the lack of legal claim to the land they inhabit, often because it has been zoned as part of a national park, protected mangrove forest or simply because it sits on a beach, which is by definition in the public domain. In many of these cases the government agencies involved allowed them to stay, in part because their presence was suited to the shameless tourism promotion policies that have been in place here for decades.

However, as the 2004 tsunami made clear to the world, there have also been numerous cases in which land they occupied for decades somehow ended up in the hands of real estate developers or other private-sector parties, typically Bangkok-based businessmen.

Mr Abhisit and associates know full well how property rights issues in Phuket can be a real Pandora's Box. It is of course impossible to redress all the injustices of the past, but putting special care in addressing the problems facing sea gypsy communities would be a nice way forward for the future.

us to want to spend our hard earned money on. Even Linkin Park would do, Thais love Linkin Park! Basically – any band, except Nickelback! We also need a real alternative nightclub. Establishments playing rock music are few and far between on this island.

It's not a case of lack of demand either because I know many people living here – myself included – who are avid rock 'n' rollers back in our cities and are grossly disappointed by the fact we can't enjoy a good night out head banging to something other than AC/DC and Metallica covers in Patong.

I doubt it's a lack of appropriate venues either. Thaitanium perform on a stage set up opposite Patong beach and always rake in a huge audience. Too small for a big international band? How about the football stadiums in Phuket Town? There's also a new convention center due on Phuket in the next few years that would be suitable. These are the kinds of places bands are playing at in other countries. We've got enough conventional rest and relaxation here on Phuket. It's time we got some R'n'R of a different kind!

*I'm with the band
Kathu*

Drink, or else...

I had my first visit to Promthep Cape today. I have been here more than three years and was headed to Nai Harn for a meeting. Drove on over to the Cape and bought a beer at the little shop across from the parking lot. Walked toward the stairs going up the viewpoint and there is this big sign: "No Alcohol... up to a 2,000 baht fine". Then, 30 feet inside the sign and to the right is a full service bar! I love this country!

*James Bond,
Phuket*

Day out at PIMEX floated my boat

What a great day I had at PIMEX. The weather was perfect and the cars and boats a treat to behold. Well out of my price range but a great day out. My thanks to all those responsible for putting it on.

*R. Schwartz,
Germany*

Bring on some bands

It's all fine and well that Phuket has famous international DJs like Steve Aoki and Bob Sinclar coming to "rock the house", but how about getting some bands to come play? Musicians and bands like Foo Fighters or Jack Johnson, who are mainstream enough to attract the crowds, but still cool enough for

younger readers. I particularly liked the classic, time tested Q&A style Fraser Morton used, which reminded me of a Playboy interview. The cheeky questions also spiced up my day and the quote about French cheese had me laughing. Well done *Gazette*, let's have more great interviews like this.

*Pierre Tremblay,
Patong*

Issues & Answers...

Rocky road to development

We are a group of house owners on Kamala Soi Tho Kiet Moo 5.

We would like to ask for your advice on how to find out who is responsible for the road (the only road) leading to our houses.

The road is so bad that people have been injured falling off motorbikes; our cars are damaged and regularly get flat tires due to the terrible and treacherous road surface.

It is dangerous for the families and children who attend the school positioned on the road.

In addition it has dangerous corners that do not properly show oncoming traffic.

It is just a matter of time before someone is seriously injured and hospitalized.

If this is not enough there is a rubbish disposal area at the end of the road which is home to all sorts of vermin and stray dogs and cats.

In short the road is a blemish on the community in which we

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

Submit your issue at

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live. It is affecting our peaceful lives as not one day goes by where we don't curse this obstacle track that is meant to be a "road".

It devalues our homes and affects our peaceful and law abiding lives.

It has to change!

According to the village headman, the road is privately owned and leased by his brother. As the road is private, the Tambon Administration Organization (*OrBorTor*) has no responsibility, we have been told by the village headman.

The owner of the road says he has an agreement with the developer to build a new road but this is yet to happen. The developer is using the road for his development

projects and has been promising to build a new road for over six years. The road just keeps getting worse.

Just a few days ago the developer filled the many 10-inch-deep holes with some dirt again after some people complained, but we know that in only a few weeks the road will be nearly impassable again.

We are about 30 houses and wonder how it can happen that nobody seems to be responsible for the road leading to a public housing estate?

*All house owners at Soi Tho Kiet
Kamala Beach*

Santi Sariya, Kamnan for Tambon Kamala (Community representative for Kamala Sub-district) and brother of the developer of the Kamala Kiri housing estate, replies:

The road is in such poor condition because big trucks use it to access the Chairuth Hotel construction site.

We fixed the Soi Tho Kiet road surface by filling in the potholes with

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Losing battles in the tuk-tuk price war

FIRST PERSON

THERE are about 2,000 "black" taxis and tuk-tuks operating in Patong alone, compared to about 1,200 registered tuk-tuks in all of Phuket – at least 400 of which are in Patong.

This is causing a price war.

For example, our fare from Patong to Phuket Town is 300 to 400 baht one-way, but some of the black-plate taxi drivers charge only 200 baht for a whole day because they make commissions by stopping at certain shops where their passengers buy souvenirs.

The next day, these passengers come to us expecting to pay the same price they paid the black taxis, but we cannot do that. This means any steps to standardize fares will not work.

So I would like to ask the police to set up checkpoints to arrest and fine illegal operators.

If all tuk-tuks and taxis are properly registered, the fare system can be set. Also, if any taxi drivers do something bad or if passengers lose something in the taxis, we can follow up and find them. In my group, if the rules are broken, such as fighting or stealing, management always punishes those at fault.

Previously, over 300 black tuk-tuk drivers applied for the vehicles to be registered as public transport vehicles at the Transport Office, but we opposed the move because there are already too many tuk-tuks.



Wiraphong Kongbun, 45, is the president of a group of more than 50 registered tuk-tuks in Patong. The Nakhon Sri Thammarat native became a tuk-tuk driver in 1991, and became the manager of the tuk-tuk stand in front of Jungceylon about 10 years ago. Here he talks about the problems created by illegal taxis and tuk-tuks, and how they are an obstacle to creating standard fares and regulations.



Tuk-tuks queuing in Patong. Photo: Apinun Saithong

Some of the tuk-tuks were registered but more than 100 were denied. But, because they had already been built and were ready to go, they are still operating in Patong but not registered as commercial passenger vehicles.

The Transport Office designated locations where tuk-tuks and taxis can operate, such as Kata, Karon and Patong, but many registered taxis from other places

are showing up in Patong along with black taxis – and the transport officers and police neglect these problems.

Now, the taxi groups cannot unite because there are too many illegal taxis.

There used to be presidents of taxi groups in Patong, but now there is no-one at the top governing them – there are too many taxis to control.

Vaccines: More harm than good?

Island View

By Marianne Jaedick

Do you have an opinion to voice?
Email Editor@PhuketGazette.net

IN THE December 11 issue, there was an article about an upcoming polio vaccination campaign [*Phuket Gazette, Rotary joins anti-polio effort, December 11*].

You should be aware of some things that many professionals, including medical doctors, microbiologists, virologists and medical journalists, as well as alternative practitioners and concerned parents found out regarding vaccines – especially the polio vaccine.

Since 2000, the live oral polio vaccine (OPV) has not been administered in many countries because since the 1980s, the only cases of polio in these countries was caused by the vaccine.

It has been acknowledged, even by "mainstream medicine" that children who receive the OPV will secrete the live virus for at least eight weeks after vaccination, thus giving the disease to caretakers who change diapers or other children and adults that use the same toilet.

Are people receiving vaccinations now informed of this?

During the last big outbreak in Nigeria, 124 children were paralyzed by the polio vaccine. The World Health Organization (WHO) issued a warning that this vaccine-spread virus might extend beyond Africa.

However, it took about two years until the public found out about this. The information was not volunteered by the WHO, but they had to admit it after journalists uncovered it.

The same thing happened in Haiti about 10 years ago.

Also, in Japan, scientists found the polio virus in rivers and wells

– not the wild strain, mind you, but the vaccine strain.

Up to the 1990s, both polio vaccines – Salk and Sabin – were cultivated on the kidney cells of green monkeys, and thus were contaminated with monkey cells. The monkeys can live with these viruses very well, but humans get brain, lung and bone cancers, and leukemia from them.

Some of the poisons found in vaccines are the most toxic poisons on Earth: Formaldehyde, mercury, aluminum, polymyxin B [an antibiotic no longer on the market for "normal" treatment because of the severe side effects, but still allowed in vaccines] and a lot of other stuff that doesn't have to be declared.

No wonder our kids now are plagued with so many autoimmune illnesses.

It has been estimated that every second child is allergic to something, one in every 500 children [as of 2007] in Europe has some form of cancer by the time they are 15 years old and it's increasing by one per cent every year.

It also seems more kids have asthma, one of the greatest killers of our time.

In Finland, they have the highest rate of juvenile diabetes and also the highest vaccination rates in children.

If you are really interested in this topic, check out www.nvic.org and www.thinktvice.com.

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



The road was recently patched with gravel and dirt.

gravel as a temporary measure.

I understand the condition of the road is making people in the area unhappy. But this is not for me to make a decision on and pay for all alone. It will cost quite a lot of money, probably more than 100,000 baht, to make the road high quality.

When my older brother arrives from another province we will sit down together to find a solution.

Son Sariya, developer of the Kamala Kiri estate, replies:

We spent a lot of money on building the street and we even installed streetlights.

Normally, developers charge extra for this, but we didn't.

Somporn Oon-Phong, Public Works and Town & Country Planning Engineer at Kamala OrBorTor, said:

There is nothing we can do to fix the street, not even ask for the budget to fix it, because it is a private street.

You can gather a petition or a collection of letters of complaint from all your neighbors and submit them at the Kamala OrBorTor office.

The complaints must specify the name of the street, the names and addresses of all the people filing the complaints, and describe the problem in detail.

The Kamala OrBorTor Public Works and Town & Country Planning office will invite the developer to meet with us so we come up with a solution together.

Otherwise, there's nothing we can do about it.



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Banks agree on new flat-rate transfer fee

By Anand Singh

BANKS across Thailand have agreed to reduce fees for inter-bank money transfers in an effort to minimize costs for corporate customers. The new fee structure, proposed by the Bank of Thailand (BOT), became effective nationwide last month.

There used to be three levels of charges in the fee structure for inter-bank money transfers. Customers were charged 12 baht per transaction under 100,000 baht, 40 baht per transfer under 500,000 baht, and 100 baht per

transfer over 500,000 baht but under two million baht.

Under the new structure, inter-bank money transfers under two million baht will be charged a flat rate of 12 baht per transaction.

Mr Thanapong Tumpen, head of Business Cash Management at Siam Commercial Bank, Chao-Fa Road branch, said that the new policy will benefit banks' business operators through reduced banking costs.

"Some sectors, like agriculture and retail, are likely to benefit more than others from the new fee structure," Mr Thanapong said.

"Stores and hypermarkets often have to transfer large amounts of money to several different suppliers in payment for products. Often companies choose to pay their employees through money transfers. Now that there is a low flat-rate charge for inter-bank money transfers, it could save retailers a lot of money," Mr Thanapong said.

Agricultural and retail firms may save up to 80 per cent in banking costs from the new fee structure, whereas hotels and tourism businesses in Phuket may benefit less from the new policy, Mr Thanapong added.



BANKS IN IT TOGETHER: Inter-bank money transfers now cost less.

"Hotels and service sectors in Phuket may see banking costs fall by not more than 50 per cent. This is because many hotels still prefer to pay employees with cheques ...Only 20 per cent of hotels here actually use e-banking intensively," Mr Thanapong added.

The new fee structure will encourage companies to opt for e-banking, since cheques cost issuers 15 baht per transaction.

Under the new policy, companies will save three baht every transaction if they choose to transfer money instead.

Feathering your retirement nest egg with cash

WELCOME to the first of a new series of articles focusing on financial topics tailored to those who have chosen Phuket to live out their golden years.

Investing is a topic where the individual's personal circumstances play a very large part in determining what is appropriate for that individual to consider, yet the top priority is nearly always protecting the nest egg.

One asset class not talked about much by those in the investment sector is cash.

It is obviously not a field where wealth managers make money from providing advice on, though many retirees need to be reminded of this.

Some people simply cannot stomach the thought of making any loss on their nest egg, even if it were temporary and the money to be regained in a few years.

For a retiree, the added stress of knowing there will not be another paycheck in their lifetime makes any investment volatility hard to stomach.

Many risk-averse retirees mistakenly think that by investing in bonds, as long as all the underlying companies don't default, they are safe from capital losses.

Unfortunately, as interest rates rise, the value of a portfolio of bonds goes down.

Hence, an investor in a fairly conservative bond fund can still lose money, and with rates at historic lows, it is more of a question of when, not if.

But for the most risk-averse investor, 12-month bank deposits are about as safe as one can get.

Banks aren't paying much in interest these days, but that is the price one pays for a guaranteed positive return.

Retirement Years

By David Mayes

This doesn't mean there are not risks involved with depositing your money in a bank. The big one – and the easiest to overcome – is the risk of the bank going bust.

Most jurisdictions have accounts guaranteed by the government up to a certain limit. Simply open enough accounts to have the amount in each under the limit.

Another risk is inflation eroding returns on 12-month deposits. A period of high inflation can seriously weaken the real value of cash holdings.

The unfortunate fact of life is that there is no way to eliminate all risk, so one must always choose between investment risk and inflation risk to some extent.

A big mistake many retirees make is allowing their advisor to push them into investments they cannot stomach risking.

This is no good for the client and the advisor, as a prolonged down period will see both driven nuts: the client from worrying, and the advisor from constantly needing to reassure the client.

If you know you are risk-averse, be very assertive with your financial advisor that you only want a bank deposit.

They will not want to hear this as they will not make any money from it. This is one of the unfortunately unavoidable conflicts of interest that exists in the industry.

The trick is that one doesn't need an advisor to open an off-shore bank account as an expat.

All you need to do is go to the website of a bank you like, download an application form, fill

it in and send it to them.

They will contact you with any additional requirements.

Be wary that the bank will most likely have one of their wealth managers follow up with you, and they often use their respected brand to gain the trust of people who shouldn't be investing in the products they push on them.

I have sat down with many retirees whose life savings have been thrown completely into the stock market with disastrous results, which the people do not have time to recover from, because they trusted the brand name.

Be firm if you want to remain in cash and don't let anyone talk you into doing anything you aren't comfortable with.

David Mayes MBA is a wealth manager for Faramond. E: david.m@faramond.com

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Boat show nets B510mn in sales

By Alexandra Andersson

THE eighth Phuket International Boat Show (PIMEX) last week recorded more than half a billion baht in transactions and attracted 5,500 visitors from throughout the region, organizers say.

"The sales and turnout indicate rapid growth in the regional marine industry, and that PIMEX reinforces Phuket's position as a marine hub in Asia," said boat show Director Andy Dowden.

PIMEX 2011 was the largest to date, with 86 companies exhibiting at Royal Phuket Marina – a 25 per cent increase on last year.

Boat displays were also up, with 47 boats in the water compared with 35 last year.

Among the many repeat exhibitors were new additions to the show, both local and international.

Boat brands from all over the world, ranging from 30 to 87-foot superyachts, with a

cumulative value in excess of US\$100 million, were on display, as was the all-new XJ Jaguar on a central floating dock.

Seven boats were sold during the course of the show as well as numerous luxury cars and marine accessories, but the largest profits are expected to materialize in the coming months from leads and contacts made at the event.

The first day attracted a record number of visitors and saw the sales of two boats, a Monterey 298SS Super Sport and a 33-foot Fountain powerboat, and one of the coveted top-of-the-line Jaguars.

"The first two days were good for everybody, and had a positive feel to them," said Hakan Lang, Managing Director of Derani Yachts, who sold the Monterey Super Sport.

"This year's show was probably the best from Derani Yacht's point of view in terms of visitor

quality and numbers," he added.

Many exhibitors reported similar feedback regarding client quality at the show.

"We have made many good leads that we will follow up...Most of the interest in our boats came from Russian, Malaysian, Indonesian and French buyers," said Robert Hawkins of Princess dealership, Boat Lagoon Yachting.

With overall feedback being positive, there was just a few suggestions for future expansion PIMEX may want to consider.

"I am happy with this year's results, although I think we might be able to have more boats in the water if we considered a show a few months later in the year, since access to boats is limited at the peak of the high season," Mr Lang said.

See page 19 for our photo special of the event.



PULLING POWER: The PIMEX boat show last week reeled in thousands of boat lovers over four days. Photo: Atchaa Khamlo

Businesses to benefit from ASEAN zone 2015

BUSINESS leaders are urging small and medium-size tourism operators to improve services in preparation for Thailand joining the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015, *The Nation* reports.

President of the Thai Hotels Association Prakit Chinamourphong says the AEC would bring tougher competition to tourism destinations in the country.

The 10 ASEAN member states will implement the ASEAN single market by 2015, after

which goods, services, capital and labor will move freely between the member states.

Mr Prakit said the single market could have both negative and positive effects on Thai industries.

Thai tourism industries will benefit from increased tourist arrivals from member states, however, Thailand may equally lose some regular visitors to emerging tourism destinations like Vietnam, he said.

The Nation reported that the Tourism

Council of Thailand (TCT) has laid out an eight-step strategy to develop the tourism industry so that it is ready for the establishment of the AEC.

The strategy will aim to improve the country's competitiveness, targeting quality tourists and co-operating with international tourism organizations.

It will also help local communities create new tourism products.

The TCT has asked the government to

help Phuket and Koh Samui specifically target high-end visitors.

Apichai Sakulsureeyadej, President of the Tourism Technology Association believes the key to increased tourism competitiveness lies in improving tourism technology and online marketing.

He believes tourism businesses need to invest in new technology and IT systems so they can reach customers faster.

– Anand Singh

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On the Buddhist path in India

By Bruce Stanley and
Nanthapa Pengkasem

EACH year more than 30,000 Thais make the pilgrimage to historical Buddhist sites in India, places where the founder of Buddhism, Siddhartha Gautama, was born, preached his first sermon, attained enlightenment, and died.

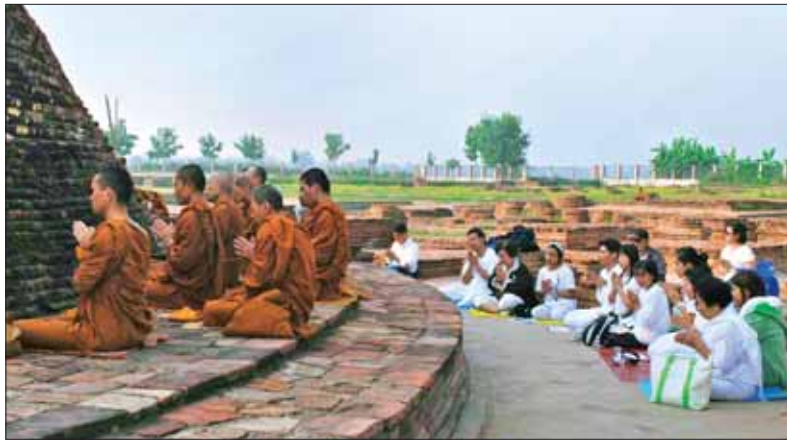
Recently, Wanida "Momma Duck" Hongyok and her friend Nanthapa Pengkasem joined a Phuket-based tour to these Buddhist holy sites organized by Suvimol Teerawattanasarn, Ticketing Manager at SEA Tours in Phuket City.

The members included eight Buddhist abbots. The remaining 20 were monks and local Buddhists making their first pilgrimage.

The group's first stop was at Bodhgaya, where The Buddha is said to have attained enlightenment under a Bodhi tree.

Nanthapa recalls how the tour began shortly after leaving Gaya provincial airport, heading towards the Great Bodhi Tree temple.

"We came to see the sacred



PILGRIMAGE: The Phuket group of monks and devout Buddhists in India.

sites where The Buddha lived some 2,500 years ago. These included his birthplace at Lumbhini, Bodhgaya, where he reached enlightenment, Sarnath where he preached his first sermons and the place where he passed away at Kushinara," Nanthapa said.

"With the exception of Lumbhini in Nepal, these four sites are dotted around the states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, east of Kolkata. Thais call these places, "*Sanvejaneeyasatan*", literally meaning "places of great pity," she added.

The Phuket group spent their first night at the Thai temple in Bodhgaya. All of the monks and a few committed devotees spent the entire first night under the Great Bodhi Tree meditating. The less fervent of the group stayed in the relative comfort of the temple's dormitory.

"When we arrived, the monks were busy preparing the temple for the arrival of Thailand's Crown Prince. Still, they found time to graciously receive our group and our "*Pha Pa*", our donation tree



ON THE PATH FROM PHUKET: Wanida 'Momma Duck' Hongyok (left) with Nanthapa Pengkasem on their journey to Buddhist sites in India.

covered in money contributed by group members and their relatives back in Thailand," Nanthapa said.

The group carried on their pilgrimage to North India.

"Bihar and Uttar Pradesh are among the poorest of Indian states. The roads have a single lane and are full of potholes. Progress was slow. Fortunately, we had the kind services of Phra Abhichart, a young Thai monk who studies at India's Varanasi University. He shared stories about The Buddha's life and his teaching and about India in general," Nanthapa added.

The group passed through the busy markets and parched fields of Central India while the monks told them stories of Buddhist facts and folklore.

"The abbots, who always sit in the front of the coach, would join in and give talks extolling The Buddha's virtues. They reminded us not to shop or sightsee, but to follow Buddha's footsteps, relinquish all of life's illusions, and live like The Buddha by ridding oneself of all desires to find inner peace," she recalls.

Phuket's pilgrim tour continued in the low valleys and up into the mountains, where they visited caves, temples and important Buddhist sites.

"We travelled over many hun-

dreds of kilometers each day. Our toilet stops would be in the middle of a rice field with women scrambling to the left of the road, men to the right.

Eventually we would reach our accommodation at a temple and have a quick meal. Then monks would lead us off to pray and meditate at some of the sacred sites before an early bedtime in preparation for a very early start the following day," Nanthapa said.

The group spent 10 days crossing Central India.

"The fatigue of travelling so many hours each day, combined with many sleepless nights in temple dormitories can be very tiring. Still I must say there were moments of revelation. You can't beat the bliss of meditating on a cool and foggy morning with the sun rising above the peak of Mount Kitshakut, where The Buddha lived in a cave," Nanthapa said.

Suwiwol at SEA Tours will be organizing another 10-day tour of Buddhist sites in India later this year. Total cost is about 55,000 baht. People of all nationalities and religions are welcome to join.

For more information contact T:076-218417 or E:tktpuket@seatoursthai.com

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Brit punching his way to a better life

By Andrew Jennings

BRAVERY comes in many guises. For 27 year-old Briton James Mason, it meant leaving his home and job to travel to Phuket with the aim of losing 104 kilograms (229 pounds/16.3 stone).

Following seven months of full-time training at the Tiger Muay Thai (TMT) camp in Chalong, James has already shed an incredible 51kg.

Although the journey to his target weight of 90kg is only at half way, the last six months has pushed James to breaking point, both physically and mentally, but also changed his life.

His story began on June 11 last year when he woke up and said to himself, "that's it, enough is enough, it's time to lose weight."

He had long known he had to lose weight, but had put it off, stuck in a routine that mainly involved binge eating.

"Food was an addiction for me," recalls James.

"I would get up in the morning, eat two big bacon and sausage sandwiches, then head to work and have another two big sandwiches.



BEFORE THE BELLY BOUT: James Mason before he began his journey to fitness on Phuket.

'This has become an emotional journey for me. Sometimes I wake up and I'm down on myself, thinking what I'm doing will never be enough.'

I'd grab whatever I could for lunch and then always takeaway food for dinner, whatever was convenient," he said.

Weighing 194kg, James had zero confidence, while his health and outlook on life was plummeting.

"My back was hurting and my breathing was terrible. I couldn't walk to the shops without having to stop.

I would get embarrassed by the constant stares and comments from people.

"It got me down, but I knew the only person who could fix it was me," he recalls.

After trying various diets with no success, he looked to an alternative weight-loss option – a Muay

Thai training camp in Thailand.

"I left the UK to get away from my comforts. I needed a complete change of lifestyle away from my home surroundings," he says.

After visiting 12 Muay Thai gyms around Thailand, James decided on Tiger Muay Thai – a place he immediately fell in love with.

"As soon as I set foot in Tiger I got the right vibes, that the people there would give me the motivation I needed."

He knew the hard work was about to begin as the seismic shift in his routine shocked him physically and mentally.

"It hit me hard. Being on a new diet of just chicken, fish, vegetables and fruit, with very little carbohydrates, meant I had no energy. I got stomach cramps and was always hungry."

"At the beginning I had no confidence. I hated training when the gym was busy. People would look at me, it was embarrassing. After a while however everybody at TMT started motivating me, making my negative faults positive, motivating me to carry on," he says.

James has shown remarkable mental toughness to get to where he is today. Two and half months into his training he suffered a serious leg infection and spent 17 days in hospital. There was a real possibility his leg would be amputated.

Thankfully, after three operations and an eight week recovery, James was back on his feet and back in training.



FIGHTING TO GET FIT: James has lost 51 kilograms only six months into his battle with the bulge. Photo: Andrew Jennings

"The leg infection set my confidence back. I was thinking 'I've come to Thailand to change my life and I could lose my leg'. But the support I got from everyone at TMT was amazing, somebody would come visit me everyday.

"Having lost all my motivation and confidence, I was close to returning home, but I stayed and it has made me stronger and more determined," he says.

Today, James is more focused than ever on reaching his target weight. After first arriving at TMT he would train once a day.

Now, he trains four times a day, getting up at 6am and sometimes not finishing training until 11.45pm. James typical day involves 40 minutes weight training,

an hour of Muay Thai, two hour Mixed Martial Arts and then a 10km walk.

James cannot speak highly enough of all the trainers at TMT. "Sometimes I wake up and I'm down on myself, thinking what I'm doing will never be enough. But the TMT trainers have been brilliant, motivating me to continue.

"I would never dreamed of chatting up a woman, but now, I most certainly would," he says with a smile.

TMT is sponsoring James on his quest to reach his target weight, providing him with free training and equipment.

You can follow his progress at W.jamesmason.tigermuaythai.com

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When the sun set on the Burmese sacking of Thalang

AT THE end of 1809, a Burmese army invaded the south of Siam once again. The enemy laid siege to Thalang, the largest town on Phuket. In reaction, HM King Rama II ordered several armies to march south and help the people of Thalang.

Phraya Tainam, an experienced Siamese general had earlier tried to land a Siamese army on Phuket, in order to counter-attack the besieging Burmese. However, before he could land forces on the island, a threatening Burmese fleet was sighted nearby. The naval battle that followed resulted in severe defeat for the Siamese. Phraya Tainam himself was killed when his ship exploded from a gunpowder accident.

The naval disaster bought some time for the enemy, but not much. It soon became apparent that more Siamese troops were marching towards Thalang from all directions. One of the armies, led by Phraya Dasayodha from Chaiya, had already made it to Phang Nga and was waiting for favorable winds to cross the channel to Phuket.

The Burmese knew that if they wanted to sack Thalang, they had to do it quick. Therefore they hastened their attack and stormed Ban Tha Rua, another major town on Phuket, which fell within a day. After Ban Tha Rua was sacked and looted, more Burmese troops were diverted towards reinforcing the siege on Thalang. By that time the locals of Thalang had already held out for four weeks, with supplies long depleted. The Burmese made a final assault on the settlement on January 13, 1810. The town's inhabitants, weary and outnumbered, could not hold out any longer and the town fell to the invaders later that day.

According to the Bangkok Annals, the Burmese plundered the town for its riches. Not wishing to stay and rule, they took everything of value back with them to Tavoy, leaving the rest of the town to burn. Many of Thalang's inhabitants were killed in the massacre that followed. Some were taken as slaves back to Tavoy. Others fled into the nearby woods.

When news of Thalang's fall reached Bangkok a

month later, HM King Rama II was greatly displeased. He had a message sent to Chao Phraya Yommaraj. By then the general had already marched with his forces to Trang. In his letter, HM The King criticized Yommaraj for his lack of sound action, resulting in the Burmese sacking of both the island's main towns. HM The King pressed the general to be on alert since there was widespread speculation that the marauding Burmese may attack Trang and Nakhon Sri Thammarat next.

In reality however, neither of the cities ever saw the enemy's banners near their walls. Surprisingly enough, by 1812 the Burmese landed on Phuket once again, this time with around 5,000 men. They set up camp near Thalang, building stockades three quarters of a mile outside the town.

When news reached Bangkok that another hostile army had landed on Phuket, HM The King immediately ordered his war minister, the Chao Phraya Kalahom, to muster an army of 8,000 men from the Malay states that owed allegiance to Siam. They were to march north to Thalang immediately, and meet up with HM The King's younger brother, HM The Vice-King, and 2,000 royal troops from Bangkok.

This time however, events were to be different. Barely had HM The Vice-King's army reached Chumphon when news reached him that the Burmese had been compelled to lift the siege and withdraw from the island.

This time the people of Thalang found a way to save themselves rather than wait for Siamese forces to come to their rescue – some local officials of Thalang managed to capture three influential Burmese prisoners.

The officials sent the Burmese captives, along with a letter to HM The Vice-King in Chumphon, who kept the prisoners as hostage and deterrence against future invasions.

He then marched with the royal army back to Bangkok, without having to shed any blood.

After 1812, the Burmese never returned to Phuket with a hostile army again.

Looking Back

By Anand Singh

Photo: Fraser Morton



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Michael Hosking

MICHAEL Hosking is Managing Director of Midas Promotions, one of Asia's largest concert promoters, and a director of Sai Taan, a collection of 76 luxury villas in Cherng Talay.

He was born in Singapore, where his father was posted in the Royal Navy, but received much of his education at St John's College in Southsea, England. At just 17 years old, with winnings from a lottery ticket, he went to a local travel agent to buy a ticket out of England.

"I had won 50 pounds and asked the agent what was the warmest and farthest destination from England to which I could fly. There was a promotion to Bahrain for 49 pounds and that's where I went."

He had no contacts and just a little pocket money, but the enterprising young man got a job on a building site in the capital, Manama, working with a jackhammer.

He soon noticed there was a shortage of T-shirts marketing businesses. When he had saved enough money, he went to the local market and bought Chinese-made cotton T-shirts, onto which he had logos and events printed. He then went door-to-door selling them to maximize his profits.

"I started in the rock promotion business, printing the T-shirts and then helping the band managers to secure local arrangements. When

EXPAT gallery

By Bruce Stanley

I was 22 years old, I launched my first concert, "The Hollies", which I presented around the pool at the Sheraton Hotel Bahrain. The concert sold out."

Michael remained in Bahrain for 15 years promoting concerts. He produced events featuring such performers as Dave Allen and Leo Sayer. And, a keen Manchester United fan, he promoted that team's first Asian tour, in 1986.

His reputation grew. In 1989, he took basketball's Harlem Globetrotters on a 40-match tour around the Middle East and India. During the Gulf War, he organized entertainment for American soldiers who took their R&R in Bahrain, while his company supplied the military with badges, caps and T-shirts.

During the early 1990s, Michael moved to Hong Kong under a concert promotion deal sponsored by RJ Reynolds, the major tobacco manufacturer. He launched a popular tour for Paula Abdul throughout Asia, including China where she was the first American female pop star to perform there.

When RJ Reynolds was prevented from sponsoring concerts the following year, Michael went on his own organizing tours for Bryan Adams, the first Western rock act in Vietnam, and Bon Jovi.

By 1994, Midas had offices in Hong Kong, Singapore and Manila and was promoting such stars as Ricky Martin, Sting, Robbie Williams and Roxette.

"Our biggest concert was Michael Jackson in Manila. We had to guarantee a US\$3.5 million advance. The tour included a technical and performing cast of 211 people carried on five airplanes, with a ship carrying the staging."

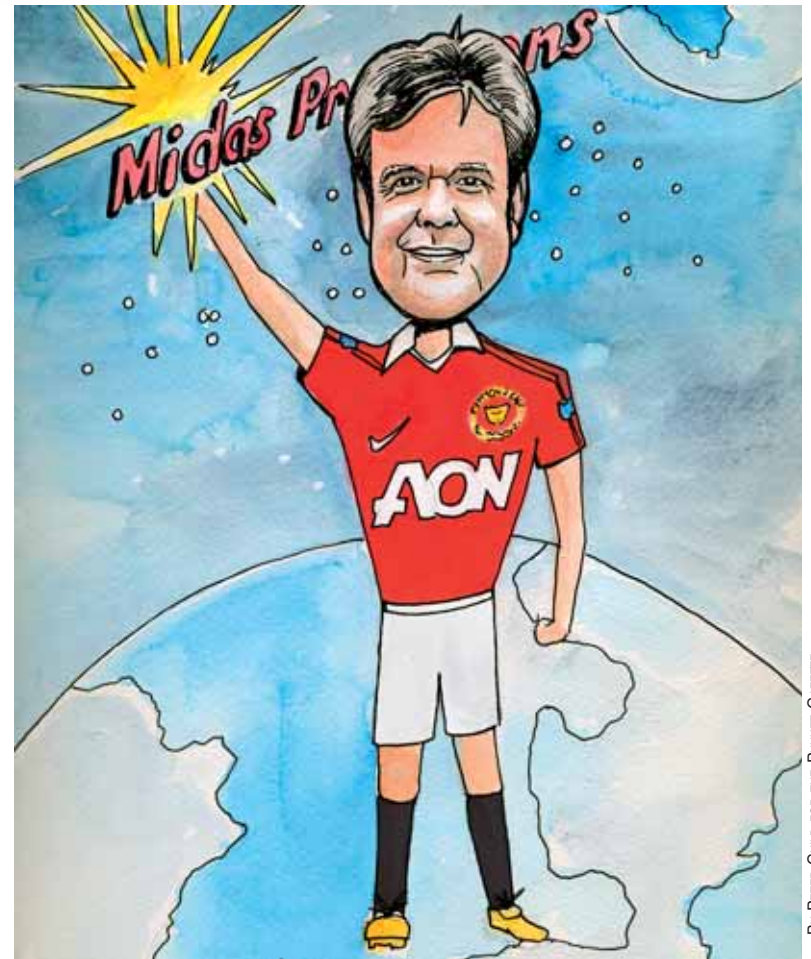
How did he succeed?

"I'm a finisher. I believe in committing to projects and delivering above expectations."

Michael first visited Phuket in 1999 for a friend's party. When he returned home to Singapore he told his wife Rona that he wanted to move the family here.

"I really like how multi-cultural Phuket is, with international hospitals, shopping and schools. It's a great place to raise a family."

In his spare time he now raises funds for local charities and is helping to build a new church. He also indulges his real passion, football, although he notes that these days, "My efforts as coach are better recognized than my ability as a player!"



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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Dull days down the Nile River

Books

By James Eckardt

The Black Nile

By Dan Morrison

AFRICA has recently proved a fertile place for travel writers: Paul Theroux's *Dark Star Safari*, Tim Butcher's *Blood River* and Aidan Hartley's *Zanzibar Chest*, are just a few examples of literature inspired by the continent recently. The latest is *The Black Nile* (Viking, New York, 2010, 307pp), subtitled "One Man's Amazing Journey Through Peace and War on the World's Longest River".

The author is Dan Morrison, a young American freelancer who, in the face of diminishing writing assignments, writes his first book. He traces the Nile from its source in Uganda's Lake Victoria to its entrance into the Mediterranean Sea in Rosetta, Egypt.

Unfortunately, Morrison doesn't have the writing chops of his predecessors – the acerbic wit of Theroux, the descriptive suspense knack of Butcher and moral earnestness of Hartley all outdo him.

This book takes too long to get started in Uganda and then rushes to a travelogue conclusion in Egypt.

A point in case: It takes 58 pages for Morrison and his oldest friend Schon Bryan to launch a small boat on their voyage down the Nile.

They travel on the river for only a few days when they are forced to abandon the boat because of danger from a terrorist cult called The Lord's Army. Schon Bryan departs for his home in North Carolina, leaving Morrison to continue on alone. Except for two brief ferry trips in the south of Sudan and in Aswan in Egypt, Morrison travels by bus and spends days at a time mooching off of aid workers for food and shelter.

The book turns as boring as his journey. There are so many NGO workers in southern Sudan that there

is a "humanitarian community" weekly happy hour and a large chunk of Uganda's fish and vegetable sales have been diverted to that booming market.

The ending of the civil war in Sudan and a scheduled referendum for independence for the South form the context for random interviews he conducts with both government officials and rebels. However, it's still fly-by-night, parachute journalism.

Occasionally, Morrison will crank himself up for a nice passage of prose like this description of a car ride through the Ugandan town of Malakal with Ter Majok, the head of the Adventist Developing & Relief Agency (ADRA): "We roared through these streets in Ter's stripped-down Land Cruiser, racing past compounds clad in tall reef fences, riding invisible currents of red paste. Ter jerked the wheel like a bargeman negotiating a villainous

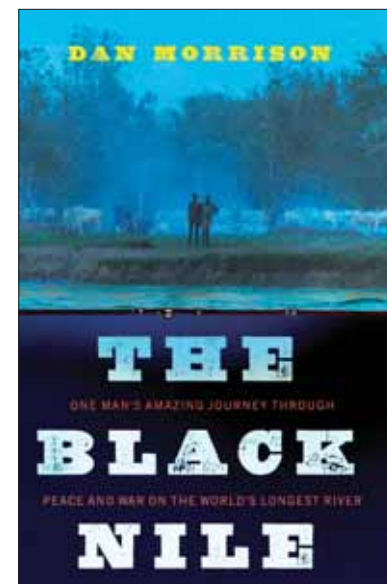
stretch of river while I braced my knees against the peeling dash and squelched the urge to cry out. He charged up one street, only to find a mud sea – complete with Muscovy ducks – blocking the way, and doubled back with a horrible, fishtailing 180 degrees to the left and to the right to propel us across the slime

... We whipped around another corner, clotted a pair of tethered cows with a coat of finely milled Upper Nile loam, cut across an empty field clotted with a few outbuildings and slurshed to a stop outside the ADRA guesthouse."

There are few passages like this and they are scant compensation for the dreary repetition of lousy meals, filthy accommodations and endless waits for transport.

Toward the end of the book, during his time in Khartoum, he does provide some context for the Sudan's civil war. He points out three Arabic tribes just north of the capital who had long seen themselves as the elite and natural rulers of the Arabs as well as the non-Arab Muslims in Darfur and the non-Muslim black Africans in the South.

They took all the power and money and now there will be hell to pay. Toward the end of his time in Sudan, Morrison's reflections are bleak and ambiguous, lacking in substance. I learned some things about the troubles in Uganda, Sudan and Egypt, but in the end I wouldn't recommend *The Black Nile*. It just isn't a good enough read.



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WHAT'S ON in Phuket

January 15-16. Phuket Airpark Aviation Show

Airplanes from all over Thailand and Malaysia will be on show at this event. From 10am-7pm, meet the pilots and see the aircraft. There will be flying games, a barbeque and a bikini contest for the Miss Phuket Airpark 2011 title. To enter the pageant contact Gift at E:gift.th@hotmail.com. Open to ladies between 19 and 28 years old. Contestants will receive 500 baht and a free bikini while the runner-up will win 3,000 baht, second place 5,000 baht and the winner, 10,000 baht. This event is sponsored by the *Phuket Gazette* and Bikini Banana Dot Com. Contact Robert or Tom Claytor on T: 076-529543, E:robert@thephuketairpark.com or visit W:phuketairparkfly-inpilots.blogspot.com.

January 15 & 22. Saturday chill out on Bon Island

Join Evason Phuket on Bon Island every Saturday for a chill out session. DJ Ricky will spin the tunes while you indulge in an unforgettable experience with all the food and drink you can handle. Price is 1,900 baht nett per person, inclusive of modern tapas, local beer, house spirits, cocktails, soft drinks and juices. From 7-11pm. Complimentary transport available from Evason Phuket pier. Contact Bernardo De La Garza on T:076-

January 23. PCF Rubber Duck Race



There will be dragon boat, kayak, home-made raft and cardboard box races. Ride in classic cars, jump on a trampoline and kids can enjoy arts and crafts. There will also be a Delightful Duckling costume contest, a terrific magic show by Joe Conrad, and much, much more is on the agenda for the day. Great food and drinks available at very reasonable prices. The highlight will be the second Great Phuket Rubber Duck Race. This year will see 2,000 ducks enter the race! Amazing prizes and a great day for the whole family. Contact Alasdair Forbes or Janyaporn Morel on T:087-8849964, E:alsadair@phuketcharity.org or visit W:phuketcharity.org/pcf-race-day for more information on this charity event.

381010, E:fbma-phuket@sixsenses.com or visit W:sixsenses.com to find out more about the event.

January 17-23. Yoga classes with Patricia Romero at PIA

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450 baht per person per class, 4,000 baht per person for 10 classes or 7,000 baht per person for 20 classes. Introductory rate from January to April 28, 2011. Special 20 per cent discount for 10 and 20 classes and 10 per cent discount for single classes. Contact Weena on T:076-336030, E:mtc@phuketinternationalacademy.com or visit W:phuketinternationalacademy.com for more information.

January 20. PIWC brunch

The first brunch of 2011 will be at the Radisson Hotel in Cape Panwa at 11am. All are welcome. Price is 600 baht per person, 450 baht for members. For registration contact Carole Dux on T:076-200730 E:info@phuketiwc.com or visit W:phuketiwc.com.

January 21. Curry Fridays

Every alternate week. Enjoy an authentic and lavish Indian curry buffet. Selections include all-time favorites chicken tikka masala, very hot mutton vindaloo, juicy kebabs, Goan fish curry, chickpea curry and many more. Served with nan bread and basmati rice. All you can eat for only 449 baht nett. Draught beer by the glass for just 50 baht nett. Special discount on beverages. From 7-11:30pm. Contact Seemant Raju on T:076-

286464, E:sm@karonseasand.com or visit W:karonseasand.com for more information.

January 22. QSI Annual Phuket Fun Run

Registration for the ninth annual QSI fun run is at 8am at Bang Wad Dam in Kathu. There will be events and awards for children aged five to nine and school teams for the one kilometer, 6.5km and 13km runs. The Team Challenge event is open to businesses, NGOs and social teams. There will be free water for runners, great food and drinks, jumping castles, a band, DJ, raffles and silent auctions all for a complete family fun day! The *Phuket Gazette* and PGTV are sponsors of this event. Contact Jantira Nobnorb or Alan Siporin on T:076-524243, or at E:qsi@phuketinternet.co.th or visit W:phuket.qsi.school.org for more information.

January 24. Classical concert at Mom Tri's Villa Royale

Mom Tri Devakul has invited HE Adm ML Usni Pramroj to perform at Villa Royale, continuing the tradition of the Baan Kata Arts Festival, a celebration of art and cultural events. The program includes Joseph Haydn's string quartet in F major, Op 77, No 2 and ML Usni Pramroj's string quartet No1. HE Admiral ML Usni Pramroj, a privy councillor, is also an accomplished musician and composer. String Quartet No 1 was inspired by the turmoil in Bangkok. A three-course set menu will be available on the evening, in addition to the á la carte menu. Price is 500 baht per person and includes a cocktail reception. Contact Sylvie Yaffe on T:076-333569, or at E:pr@villaroyalephuket.com or visit W:villaroyalephuket.com for more information.

February 2. The practices of a Zen peacemaker by R.J. Halifax

The practices of a Zen peacemaker gives a skillful approach to living a meaningful life. Taught by Roshi Joan Halifax, PhD, who is a Buddhist teacher, Zen priest, anthropologist, and author. She is Founder, Abbot, and Head Teacher of Upaya Zen Center, a Buddhist monastery in Santa Fe, New Mexico. As a founding teacher of the Zen Peacemaker Order, her work and extensive practice of over three decades has focused on engaged Buddhism. Cost is 300 baht per person and the session is from 5-7pm. Contact Weena on T:076-336030, or at E:mtc@phuketinternationalacademy.com or visit W:phuketinternationalacademy.com for more information.

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YOUR Phuket

THERE were plenty of giggles, mischief and fun last weekend as the island's young ones celebrated Children's Day. Here's a glimpse of what went on...

LEFT: Radisson Plaza Resort Phuket Panwa Beach presented gifts to Baan Ao Nam Bor School, Laem Panwa School and Navy Base Section 3, which arranged activities and events for local children.

Back row, from left: the resort's Director of Human Resources, Sunisa Suthasiri; Ao Nam Bor School Director Preecha Puenrak; and the resort's Marketing Communications Manager, Kimberley Sproule.

A day for the children

ALL ABOARD: At the Phuket Deep Sea Port at Ao Makham, children and their families were invited on board HTMS Bang Pakong.



CHILD'S PLAY: Srisoonthorn Tambon Administration Organization (OrBorTor) hosted a variety of fun events for Children's Day.



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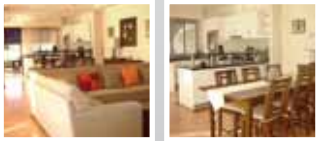
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Pimex appeal turns heads

THE Phuket International Boat Show (PIMEX) was held last weekend at the Royal Phuket Marina. Luxury cars and marine accessories were on show alongside a bevy of boats for the 5,500 strong crowd to view and, in some cases, buy. The event was also a hit with families and music lovers, with Mexican band La Sobrosa Sabrosura (left) putting on a string of soulful performances for boat lovers each day of the event.

Photos: Fraser Morton and Atchaa Khamlo

RUNNING THE SHOW: PIMEX Show Director Andy Dowden (right) opened the show on January 6.

THEY WERE THERE, TOO: Helping to get the show underway was Wannaphap Saksombul, Assistant Director of the Tourism Authority of Thailand, Phuket Office, Gulu Lalvani, Chairman of Royal Phuket Marina, Somkiat Sangkaosuttirat, Vice Governor of Phuket, Andy Dowden, Seven Smulders, TCEB Advisory Board and Paul Woodward, Managing Director of the Global Association of Exhibition Industry.



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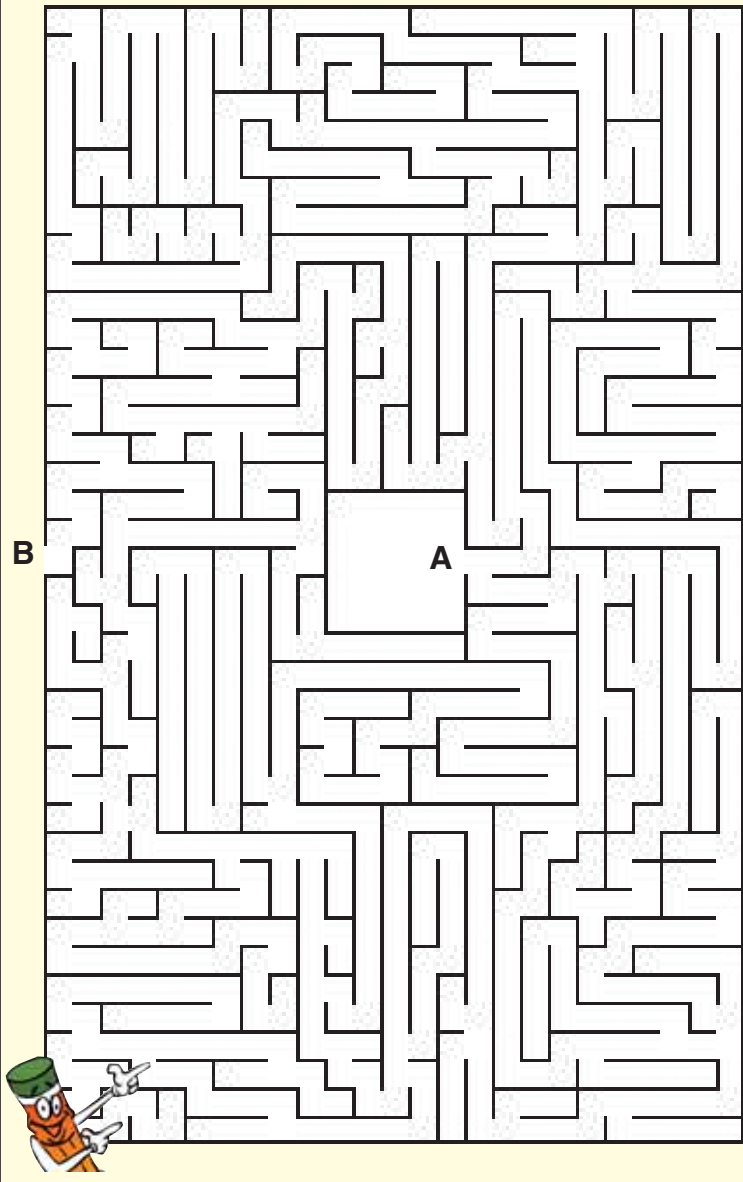
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A *Gazette* staff member completed this maze in one minute. Can you beat their time? Make your way out of the maze.

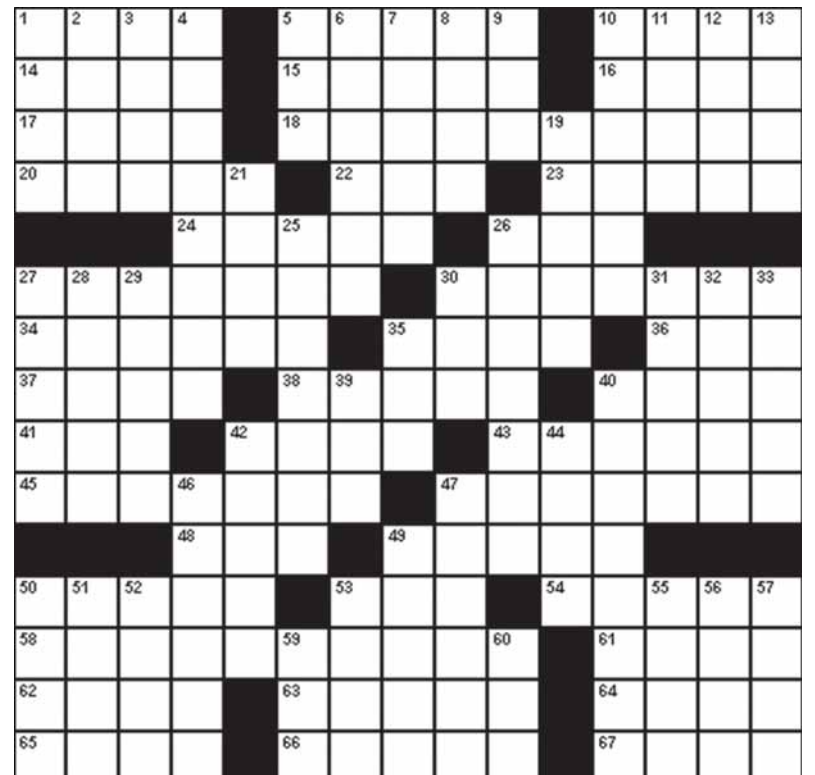


Across

1. Not feminine
5. Mournful sound
10. Outstanding
14. Bread spread
15. Ancient region of Asia Minor
16. To___(perfectly)
17. Place
18. Art of teaching
20. Failed to
22. Thrice, in prescriptions
23. Ship floors
24. Shy
26. Against a proposition
27. Austere
30. Verbiage
34. Period of the year
35. Obstructs
36. Airline to Oslo
37. Goes down
38. Clapton wants to set his watch back to ___ time
40. Present
41. Suffix with Capri
42. Tirade
43. Wide-mouthed bottle
45. Small bouquet
47. Property is transferred to ___
48. Chemical ending
49. Grenoble's river
50. Dupe
53. Agt's take
54. Snob
58. Saltwater aquarium
61. Brain wave
62. Pace
63. Conductor Georg
64. Travel on water
65. Gap
66. So far
67. Tree frog

Down

1. Shape
2. Et ___
3. Bird feed
4. Wife of a nobleman
5. Hide of a small beast
6. Originating in the mind
7. Broke off



8. Liar
9. Fall behind
10. Remnant
11. Auricular
12. Quarter bushel
13. Cong-meeting
19. Smells
21. Bandleader Puente
25. Coins and bills
26. Small round boat
27. Organization synonym abbreviation
28. Handle
29. Provide food
30. Has been
31. Continental identity of

- a Chinese person
32. Faux pas
33. First name in cosmetics
35. Deli order
39. Article in Le Monde
40. Sickly looking
42. Babbled
44. Broadcasts
46. Shawl worn in Mexico
47. Sagacious
49. With no emotion
50. ___Hashanah
51. Prefix with plasm
52. Rind
53. Career golfers
55. Jazz singer Anita
56. Trompe l'___
57. Western Samoan money unit
59. Botanist Gray
60. Cambridge school

Provided by BestCrosswords.com.
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Puzzle solutions on page 29

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): Capricorns should see that it pays not to turn molehills into mountains this week. Your practical approach protects you while others waste time achieving nothing. Those who are single are predicted to be on cloud nine when a shy water sign finally takes the hint. If your birthday is due in the week ahead, expect to see more rewards for your hard work in the coming year. Your lucky number this week is four.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): Aquarians' social life picks up pace this week. The stars predict that this activity could cause some friction in a romantic relationship, particularly if your partner doesn't share your taste in friends. Where business is concerned, a fire sign is indicated to break promises midweek. The second half of January is not an auspicious time to take any financial risks. Wear the color bronze to help balance your emotions.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): Take care of small details this week and the big picture will become clearer. Where business is concerned, the stars advise play-

ing it by ear as changes will happen at short notice. Romance falls under positive astral conditions. Single Pisceans can expect their hearts to beat faster when an earth sign makes contact this weekend. Those relationships will be happy about their partner's new hobby.

ARIES (March 21-April 20): Forward planning is necessary for Arians to succeed this week. Where work is concerned, another fire sign is likely to fly off the handle if faced with last minute choices. Keep spaces in your schedule on Wednesday and Thursday as appointments are likely to be mixed up. A project that was abandoned late last year is forecast to start taking shape again between now and the end of the month.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): Taurians should resist pressure to make decisions mid-week. The stars show that your powers of reasoning will not be at their sharpest. Where money is concerned, your usual caution may be disturbed by a friend this weekend. A romantic situation you believed to be finished could be rekindled - reflection on what went wrong will help you decide whether you want to pick up.



GEMINI (May 22-June 21): Compromise is a key word for those born under the sign of Gemini this week. You will not see results if you expect to have everything your own way. The stars suggest that both work and personal areas of your life will benefit from this advice. This weekend there are signs of a romantic adventure happening close to home. Someone you have always seen as a platonic friend begins to be interesting on a different level.

CANCER (June 22-July 23): Personal finances need more careful management if Cancerians are serious about saving. Those who resolved to put more aside for rainy days this year should work out a viable plan. Family or friends with problems loom large this week - avoid emotional drama by resisting criticism. Romance is a relaxing factor, with emphasis on an earth sign confessing their true feelings this weekend. Five is lucky on Monday.

LEO (July 24-August 22): The spotlight falls on the impression you make on others this week. Leos' usual charm could be affected by concerns over a financial issue, but the stars show that this matter will be resolved very soon. Your chances of securing a business deal are strongest on Wednesday and Thursday. Those who are single are forecast to attract a like-minded water sign. Wear the color sky blue to encourage a lighter mood.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): The stars advise Virgoans to stick with the security they know rather than taking risks during January. A job offer may appear interesting early next week, but there could be a hidden catch. Someone who played a supportive role in your life last year now becomes a friend in need. A romantic connection with a water sign will flow more easily if you keep it cool.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): An unresolved issue from the past comes to light for Librans this week and the stars suggest that you will be pleased with the outcome. The second half of January is forecast to be a fulfilling time

and should enable you to end the month on a positive financial note. This is an auspicious time to present ideas to those with influence.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): People find you more approachable this week and communication is highlighted to bring satisfying results. Changes in financial arrangements between now and the end of January will be to your advantage. Where romance is concerned, you should not listen to idle gossip this weekend. It is likely that an air sign is suffering from jealousy and would like to stir up some trouble. Your lucky number this week is eight.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): Sagittarians should be prepared to take responsibility for their words and actions. You could be caught off guard by someone wanting to know more midweek. The best day for contact with bureaucracy is Wednesday and finances are best handled on Thursday. Those who have been secretly holding a candle for a water sign should learn that their interest has been noted. Wear the color plum to encourage strength of mind.

PROPERTY Gazette

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Kata landmark Mom Tri's Boathouse sold

THE owners of the Trisara resort have announced an agreement to buy Mom Tri's Boathouse, the long-established resort and restaurant complex on the beach in Kata.



The Boathouse issued a statement last week that Narong Pattamasaevi, Executive Chairman of the Three Dolphins group that owns and operates Trisara, has signed contracts to acquire 100 per cent of shares in The Boathouse Inn and Restaurant. The deal includes other related real estate properties in Phuket, including the two Oasis open-air restaurants next door.

Mr Narong said the new owners are dedicated to continue in the same tradition that has made The Boathouse famous.

The resort will remain under the management of Louis Bronner, who brought the resort its first Wine Spectator award in 1995.

The Boathouse was established over two decades ago by Mom Luang Tridhoyuth Devakul, better known as Mom Tri.

The title Mom Luang (ML) in Thai is reserved for people of royal descent. The Boathouse has 33 rooms, plus pool villas and suites overlooking Kata Beach.

– *Phuket Gazette*

Saphan Hin plans on hold



ON HOLD: Plans to develop a new tourist center at Saphan Hin have been put on hold by Governor Tri Augkaradacha.

By Pimwara Choksakulpan

PLANS to develop a tourist center at Saphan Hin in Phuket Town have been put on hold after Governor Tri Augkaradacha declined to give the project's pre-feasibility study the green light, at this time.

The plan was pitched to Gov Tri by Norwegian maritime engineering company LMG Marin at a meeting last week.

Saphan Hin is Phuket Town's largest park and its seafront has long been earmarked as a location for a major new tourist development. The proposed development would include both onshore and offshore facilities around the man-made peninsula, covering 500,000 square meters. It would feature a

hotel, apartments, a business zone, a public park, a university and a research institute.

Following a site survey and unofficial talks with Phuket Town Mayor Somjai Suwansupapana, LMG Marin were keen to carry out a pre-feasibility study of Saphan Hin to analyze whether a new development was possible.

The estimated budget for the study was US\$4 million (more than 122.8 million baht).

The offshore facility includes the installation of a concrete platform beneath the sea just offshore, which part of the development would be built upon.

LMG Marin representative Natthasak Songserm told Gov Tri that construction of such a plat-

form would not be detrimental to the local environment.

"Offshore development needs high end technology and LMG Marin can meet that qualification. A development at Saphan Hin will help boost tourism," said Mr Natthasak.

While agreeing with the need to add value to Phuket's tourism industry, Gov Tri refused to give the pre-feasibility study the go ahead at this time, saying he first needs to gauge opinion among other Phuket officials and residents of Saphan Hin.

The company is now waiting for Gov Tri to approve the study before proceeding. If given the go-ahead, the study will take one year to complete.

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Property swapping here, there and everywhere



WORLD IS YOUR OYSTER: The 'home swapping' trend is catching on, as more people learn their home can actually pay for their holidays. Photo: Flickr

FOR many, the word "swapping" can have some very different and diverse interpretations. Go back to 1969 and the Paul Mazursky movie *Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice*, which certainly had a slight twist on the theme.

Later, Sean Parker and Shawn Fanning caught the public's imagination with the record company slaying Napster, where music became "freeware" – downloaded from the internet and shared or swapped.

While now, our voyage leads to the merging of resort homes and property owners who are looking to change places and spaces.

It's "fusion property" and I can almost hear a deep sigh of relief from my beleaguered editor who often suffers from erratic side trips into the realm of the bizarre, as he comes to the realization this is actually a column about property.

As high season and the cocktail circuit of booze-filled conversations moves along, I find myself count-

ing how many island property owners have mentioned a trip into the world of "home exchanges".

For both full and part-time residents of Phuket, the allure of a free villa in the Swiss Alps or a rollick in the Tuscan countryside is too good to resist.

So why not take a beautiful resort property and all the sun soaked luxury Phuket offers and also find an alternate experience in some far-off snowy mountain resort – or even urban New York City? Surfboard or snowboard? Jekyll or Hyde? Up to you.

Intrigued, I started to make a few phone calls to recount exactly who said what between endless glasses of red wine.

I also began to see a common thread of websites – referenced in far more sober surroundings. By all accounts from those "in the know", one of the premium

websites is ExclusiveExchanges.com, which touts itself as "The Luxury Home Exchange". For an annual membership fee of US\$159, the website offers access to a wide



assortment of houses which can accommodate anything from a small group of four to ultra units for over 20 people. HomeExchange.com is another site, offering more mainstream content. It has over 38,000 listings in 137 countries. The slogan on the site is, "Travel anywhere...for free".

The resources on this site are considerable, with FAQs on topics ranging from sample letters and agreements to getting to know your exchange partner and a trading guarantee. If you don't trade in the first year, the next year's membership is free. A 12-month membership costs about US\$119.

As with all things internet-related, the number of home exchange sites is on the rise.

Another high-ranking site is HomeForExchange.com. Priced from just US\$59 per year, its unique selling point includes

last-minute trades and a host of recommendations.

Those keen on playing spin the bottle with Google, Yahoo or Safari search engines will discover even more possibilities. Even uber-popular Craigslist.org has a section titled "Housing Swap".

Based on discussions with a number of local homeowners who have done home exchanges, experiences seem to run the gamut from absolute joy to disenfranchisement.

Though many sites have repeat users, working with a number of websites to find the best fit is perhaps key to successful swaps.

It seems that getting off the rock, especially now with easy access and an increasing number of value-oriented flight options, is becoming more and more of a reality.

All this can be done while putting your existing investment in Phuket property to work in an increasingly accessible world with changing places and faces. Seeing something other than the old "same-same" has never been easier.

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

In brief...

Mandala gets into vacation rentals

THE recently completed Baan Mandala development in Bang Tao is retaining five units for a vacation rental operation.

With tourism numbers surging, the project developer sees considerable potential in retaining a limited inventory. Rates are offered for both weekly and monthly increments and seasons are sectioned into peak, high and summer.

Two bedroom units accommodating four adults range from 35,000-49,000 baht a week to 129,000-179,000 baht a month. Free Wi-Fi, cable TV, flat screen TV's are an added value component of the offer.

Kamala Falls rises to the finish

BEN Daniel's Lotus Trinity Group is working towards completion and registration for the first two phases of the Kamala Falls condominium project in July.

Over 70 per cent of the 77 units in phases one and two have been sold. Phase three of the project is currently being reviewed and some configuration changes made on the back of customer demand. The developer is making progress towards completion of units, and has obtained 140 million baht to complete the project.

MBK swings into Loch Palm

THAI firm MBK have opened a 47-room hotel at the Loch Palm Golf Course in Kathu – the Tinidee Hotel@Phuket.

MBK also own the 139-room Tinidee Hotel@Ranong as well as the Pathumwan Princess in Bangkok and Sheraton Krabi Beach Resort.

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

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Property Legal

By International Law Office

IT IS very important to know the difference between an apartment and a condominium unit, especially when considering investing in one in Thailand.

Distinguishing the two may not be as easy as it seems. Contrary to popular belief, a quick inspection of the project is often not enough to identify which category the project belongs to. A development built as a condominium project could be designated as an apartment project at another location.

Another factor often incorrectly used to distinguish an apartment from a condominium unit is the form of ownership of individual units.

Many people believe that condo units can only be sold and subsequently owned as freehold, whilst apartments can be leased out. This is simply not true. The misunderstanding might stem from buyers usually seeing condominium units being advertised on freehold basis, but apartments being "sold" as leasehold only.

However, it needs to be understood that Thai law generally prohibits foreigners owning more than 49% of the saleable area in any condominium project.

Therefore, developers seeking foreign buyers usually offer the remaining 51% to foreigners on long-term leases, particularly in tourist areas that are less attractive to Thai buyers.

Defining the difference: Condos vs apartments



VIEWPOINT: There are many widespread misconceptions over the difference between condominiums and apartments. Photo: Thienzieyung

One of the easiest ways to truly distinguish a condominium from an apartment is the rights associated with the individual ownership of a single condo unit. The owner of a condo unit acquires not only ownership to the individual unit, but also an interest as co-owner in the common property of the project in which the unit is located.

This interest in the common property, which is jointly owned

by the co-owners of the condominium, provides a share in the common property as a whole but not rights to a specific area of the common property.

Further, the owner of a condominium unit is granted voting rights that can be exercised during meetings of the co-owners called by the manager of the condominium development.

The "buyers" in an apartment

project do not acquire direct freehold interest in the common property nor voting rights in a corporate body managing the project. They usually only get lease rights to their individual units along with the right to use the common areas.

Even this distinction is now becoming somewhat blurred. Some sophisticated apartment developers have started using legal structures for their projects, pro-

viding their "buyers" with some sway over the common areas.

This is being done more and more through a corporate structure that could be best described as a "hybrid" between a condominium and an apartment project.

This article was written by the International Law Office Patong Beach Co Ltd. Email Michael Greth, Consultant, at: michael@ilo-phuket.com.



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Going for gold with Allamanda

Gardening

By Green Sleeves

NEXT up on our Top 20 Phuket Plants list is a real gem, and one that has bright trumpet-shaped blooms that can be seen festooning gardens with vivid yellows and pinks around the island.

What is surprising about this one – *Allamanda Cathartica* – is that it never stops flowering. Come rain or shine, the blooms appear every day, and unless there are high winds or torrential storms knocking them to the ground, they produce in profusion.

The Allamanda, or golden trumpet, is the quintessential tropical shrub – lush, colorful and flamboyant. The large, glossy, deep green leaves technically define it as a vine. They are the perfect foil to the flowers which can be a burnished golden-yellow or a velvety cerise-pink, both of which are shaded even more intensely at the heart of the blooms. Unsurprisingly, one of its nicknames is the buttercup flower.

Up to seven centimeters long, these floral trumpets have a wide throat with five overlapping petals.

They are less pendulous than Brugmansia blooms which hang vertically down from horizontal branches. Allamandas have stronger stems and look you straight in the eye from the glossy foliage.

There are usually several lush buds on a single stem, each one waiting to enjoy its day in the sun as the previous flower fades. The show never stops.

Allamandas come from Central



LOVIN' IT: The *Allamanda Cathartica* can be found all over Phuket. This bloomer loves the climate, and it shows in its beauty. Photo: Eduardo A. Pacheco

and South America where they grow so vigorously that they have become naturalized. In some places they are even invasive.

In the wild, they are usually found near river banks since they have a predilection for water.

That is one cultural requirement you cannot ignore: The shrub does not like to dry out completely, but once established, it does shoot roots that will withstand most periods of drought.

It is a real sun-worshiper though and likes neither full shade nor alkaline soil conditions.

While the shrub can be propagated from seeds, most cultivars do not produce the prickly seed pods. Your best bet is to propagate from cuttings, they take amazingly well.

Talking of cultivars, the Alla-



Photo: Peter Long

manda has been extensively hybridized, especially in the US where apricot, white (Alba) and orange varieties exist.

A common inhabitant of Phuket gardens is the lilac-pink A. Blanchetti (also referred to as *Violacea* in some books), which has pale green leaves. This purple species is a less profuse bloomer, and grows less vigorously than A. Cathartica.

It has a tendency to twine and can become straggly if deprived of full sun. A double yellow variety is also available in some garden centers. It is almost as vigorous

as its single counterpart.

While A. Cathartica is a rapid grower – it will reach several meters in height and breadth – it will not do so unsupported. After all, it is basically a tendril-less vine with a heavy superstructure. A wall is ideal.

Other species are less spectacular but still useful as garden plants.

A. Schotti is a dwarf variety which is especially popular with park gardeners in Phuket. It has a compact form, and has the same capacity as its bigger brother to flower more or less all year round. The flowers are smaller, but of a similarly intense yellow; the leaves are narrow and pointed.

Schotti is often used as a hedge since it responds well to pruning. It will form a bushy plant if regularly pinched back and occasionally clipped. If not controlled, it may become leggy, particularly if its supply of sun is limited. It is, however, easy to grow and cheap to buy. A good starter shrub.

Certainly A. Cathartica is a must for inclusion on our Top 20 Phuket Plants list. It is in fact an island favorite: showy, floriferous, hardy and with beautiful foliage. It does have toxic sap, but then so do almost all members of the *Apocynaceae* family. A small price to pay for such a beautiful bloom.

If you have a garden that you would like to be featured, please email pcampbell45@gmail.com

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Tip of the week

Serious soil

THE reason some plants can't tolerate alkaline conditions is because they are unable to extract the iron they need from the soil.

The tell-tale signs of this is a yellowing of the leaves, a condition known as "lime-induced chlorosis". The pH level can be lowered by adding chelated iron.

Predominantly clay soils (as in Phuket) are composed of tiny particles which bind together.

They hold moisture like a sponge, becoming very heavy in wet weather, but shrink and harden in dry conditions. It makes life difficult for plant roots and, indeed, for gardeners.

The texture and workability of clays will improve if the soil is mixed with well-rotted manure, compost, gypsum or peat. A dressing of lime also helps, but will push up the alkalinity.

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2 LUXURY POOL VILLAS



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3-bedroom house in Koh Kaew, near Boat Lagoon. Owner is moving to Europe. Price: 3.1 million baht. Tel: 081-606 4467.

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REMOTE SEARCHLIGHT

Guest stainless remote operated, motorized, 12v spot / floodlight. In excellent condition. 7,000 baht. Please call for more information. Tel: 081-397 7598 (English & Thai). Email: kajoda1954@yahoo.co.uk

FIBERGLASS BOAT

30-foot monohull. Needs work. A bargain at 120,000 baht. For further details, please email: jkgk24@hotmail.com

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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!

TO: The Phuket Co Ltd, 79/94 Moo 4, Thepkasattri Rd
T. Koh Kaew, A. Muang, Phuket 83000

YES, I want to receive the PHUKET GAZETTE for a full year - 52 issues!

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SOLUTIONS TO THIS WEEK'S PUZZLES

Crossword puzzle:

COFFEE
break



To ensure clarity,
please airmail.
Do not Fax!



WEST SANDS VACATION CLUB
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

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.

Text & Layout Editor**Job Description:**

- Knowledge of German language
- Work with text-editing program
- Art or imagination in design
- Team work and cooperating with related departments

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.
- Incentive bonus: depends on quality, skills and experiences.

Interested applicants apply at:

VS Asia Co., Ltd. (Human Resource Department)
42 Moo3, Palai2, Chaofa Rd., Chalong, Muang, Phuket 83130
Tel. (00)66-76-380600 Fax. (00)66-76-380605 Email: info@vsdma.com

SHOP MANAGER WANTED

Excellent salary for an English-speaking person at a bar / massage shop on a busy beach. 3 to 9 months' work. Tel: 081-606 4467.

RECEPTIONIST WANTED

Small, fine jungle lodge in Khao Sok requires young Thai (only). Must have excellent English, computer skills, and hotel experience. Must also love nature. Starting salary: 13,000 baht. Email: theeranuch_limbos@hotmail.com Website: www.khaosokaccommodation.com/index.html

WAITERS / VILLA STAFF /++

– Waiters: Italian Restaurant. Must have experience and excellent English. 14,000 baht per month + transport, etc

– Villa Staff: Live-in. Must have English and Experience

– English Teacher: Part time. Need qualified native speaker

– Cafe Server: Boat Lagoon. Must have some food prep. Sole charge position. Please contact for further details. Tel: 076-302040. Email: scot@toon.co.nz

FRENCH TEACHER REQUIRED

Phuket International Academy Day School is looking to employ a teacher of French as soon as possible. Ability to teach French as a first and second language is an advantage. Tel: 076-336000. Email: coco@pia.ac.th For further details, please see our website at www.pia.ac.th

ACTORS FOR TV AD

Thais needed for cosmetic ad. Amateurs welcome. High salary for 1 day's work. Send photo to: solisungyor@hotmail.com

PR / MARKETING STAFF REQUIRED

Marketing staff required by Real Estate company for our new marketing drive. Must be fluent English speaker and have outgoing personality. Excellent package includes salary plus commission. Start February. Tel: 076-271315, 083-968 8938. Email: mark@phuket-landandhomes.com

A JOB OFFER

I'm looking for a Thai national who can speak Russian, French and/or English and who can work with tourists. Tel: 087-705 3662. Email: jens@paradisisaar.ee

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, Thepkasattri Rd, Koh Kaew
A. Muang, Phuket 83000
Tel: 076-273555 Fax: 076-615240

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

ADMINISTRATOR

Real estate company requires Thai national with fluent written and spoken English and previous admin / customer service experience. Good salary and benefits package. Tel: 076-527565. Please send CV and expected salary to info@phuketoceanvillas.com

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: d a r a g h @ t e c h w o r x - p r o j e c t s . c o m or fax CV to 076-325144. For further details, please see our website at www.new.techworx.biz

SUSHI BOX

Manager required. We need a Thai national aged between 25 and 40. Must have food and beverage experience. Duties include staff training, ensuring food and beverage cost control, and maintaining our high standards. Tel: 087-080 4258. Please send your CV with a current photo to sushibox.th@gmail.com

SALES REPRESENTATIVE WANTED

Diving company needs 2 sales representatives. Thai nationals with fluent English required. Tel: 086-654 3139 (English). Email: miguel-van@hotmail.com For further details, please see our website at www.andamanapnea.com

KOH SAMUI SALES MANAGER

Thailand Holiday Homes are the nation's leading holiday home rentals company based in Pattaya. With eight years experience and success in Pattaya under our belt, and off the back of a monumental year in Phuket, we are now striving to expand our holiday rental home and real estate portfolio in Koh Samui.

We require a hands-on Sales Manager in Koh Samui with a dynamic and tenacious personality to seek out villa owners and resort management and introduce their properties to a vast worldwide audience via our website, giving them maximum exposure.

There is exceptional earnings potential for those willing to work hard to achieve results. This is a job on the front line and not for the faint-hearted!

Job Requirements: Strong character, pro-active personality, a strong desire to achieve, flexibility, reliability, sales mentality.

Candidates must be able to be based on Koh Samui.

Tel: 038-233010, 085-089 9965 (English). Email: sales@thailandholidayhomes.co.uk

RECEPTIONIST / BARTENDER

Salary 8,000 baht per month plus service charge and commission. Position available now. Must speak and understand English. Relief shifts: morning, afternoon, and evening. Front desk experience helpful. Knowledge in bar beverage. Should be high-energy, friendly and outgoing with guests. Tel: 076-333222, 086-604 1033. Email: sales@ccbloomshotel.com

2 OPENINGS

1) Director of Tourism and Finance. Function as Director of the company for the Tourism Division and handle AR / AP and Balance Sheet Reconciliation. Monthly salary up to 25,000 baht, depending on experience and capability.

2) Operations Manager. Manage the operations of 2 USA made Sport Fishing Boats. In charge of maintenance logs and schedules. Accompany trips as required and directed by the managing director. Expat highly desirable. Up to 30,000 baht a month. Email: martin@phuketfishboat.com For further details, please see our website at www.phuketfishboat.com

Looking for a job?

Looking for a better candidate?

Find more Recruitment Classifieds at www.PhuketGazette.Net/!



Erawana Co., Ltd. has developed over 100 villas in Phuket since 2003. To support our continuously growing business, we are currently seeking individuals for **3 Sales Executive Positions** who possess the following qualifications:

Sale Executive

- Age 22-30 years old / Male or Female
- Good command of English both speaking and writing
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Minimum 1-2 years of working experience, any direct real estate experience will be considered favourably
- Salary 12,000-16,000 baht not including commission
- Valid car driver's license

Please e-mail your resume to: info@erawana.com
or contact us at: 089-729 2989

CLX ASIA

CLX Group is one of the World's leading premedia companies in Europe. The group maintains a strong international position in color management and image retouching for prepress production of catalogs, magazines, and advertising campaigns. The Phuket operations have been well established and are growing well.

With the recent expansion plan, our client would like to fill the following positions to support their Phuket operation.

GERMAN COORDINATOR (several positions)

Location: 44 Moo 3 Palai Soi 2, Chalong, Muang Phuket

Responsibilities:

- Support production admin activities (ie. download images, data-entry, e-mail, scan photo, etc).
- Help prepare and organize data for day-to-day operations of the production activities.
- Prepare reports and records for management.
- Coordinate and ensure effective communication between the production departments and external business partners overseas.

Qualifications:

- Any nationality
- Must speak fluent German and Thai
- Male/ Female, energetic.
- Experience in computer admin or related fields are an advantage.
- Solid computer skills with good experience in preparing data and reports.
- Highly self-motivated and willing to work towards tight deadlines.
- Honest, proactive and assertive to work with the team. Ability to develop effective relationships with Phuket team and business partners overseas.

CLX Asia offers excellent benefits including a highly competitive salary. The company will provide full training, but industry knowledge and experience would be an advantage.

If you are enthusiastic about computer graphic professional and desire to work in an environment where your skills can be developed and supported, please state which role you are interested in and email your CV and a covering letter to: resumes@premediajobs.com or call 086 475-3694.

For more info, please visit www.premediajobs.com/jobs_center

Premedia JOBS



SALA Phuket Resort and Spa:

SALA Phuket is a stylish 5-star resort located on Maikhao Beach, Phuket. The property offers 79 luxurious villas and suites on unspoilt beach frontage.

SALA Resorts and spas is a home grown Thai hospitality company which owns and operates three luxury resorts in the Kingdom.

We are looking for the following professionals:

Food & Beverage

- FB Supervisor
- Senior Waiter / Waitress
- Hostess

Front Office

- Front Office Supervisor
- Guest Relation Officer
- Bell / Driver

Engineer

- Senior Pool Cleaner
- Technician

Housekeeping

- Room Attendant
- Gardener (คนสวน)

If you have what it takes and you would like to join our dynamic team, please forward your CV or contact our Human Resources Dept. Contact details below.

Human Resources Department

333 Moo 3, T.Maikhao, A.Talang Phuket 83110 THAILAND
Tel: 076-338888 # 2011-2013 Fax: 076-338810 E-mail: hrphuket@salaphuket.com
For more information about SALA Phuket Resort & Spa Please visit our website at www.salaphuket.com



AGENCY+

Sales Manager / Section Head – Sales (Phuket)

Responsibility: Responsible for planning, supporting, control and manage the team to work together harmoniously and developing the working system for the efficiency achieving the company assigned target.

Required Qualifications:

- At least 3-5 years experienced in property resale or leasing.
- Experienced in management level with at least 2 subordinates will be advantage.
- Good personality, creativity and strong leadership skills

Senior Property Consultant / Property Consultant (Phuket)

Responsibility: Responsible for property resale and leasing and other work assigned from the supervisor.

Required Qualifications:

- At least 1-3 years experienced in property resale or leasing.

All position required:

- Fluent in English and able to operate computer.
- Own a car and driving proficiency will be an advantage.
- Able to work 6 days a week.

Plus Property Company Limited

Please send resume to nattha@sansiri.com, recruit@sansiri.com

For more information please contact 0 2201 3173, 0 2201 3168

www.sansiri.com

www.sansiri.com/th/career



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
Webiste: www.hexacon-property.asia



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 Thepkasattre Rd, Kohkaew, Muang, Phuket
Tel: 076-360833-38 Fax: 076-360840 Email: prasertm@royalphuketmarina.com

Articles
For Sale

BIG STATUES



For sale: 2 natural stone guardian lion statues weighing 750kg each. Price: 90,000 baht for each. Tel: 087-077 7314.

LEATHER SOFA & RECLINER

3-seat leather sofa and recliner. Light beige color. Excellent condition. Has to go, new furniture ordered. 10,000 baht for the lot or near offer. Tel: 083-395 7506 (English). Email: icebergs333@yahoo.com.au

POND BIO FILTER FOR SALE

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

DOG / CAT CAGES

Pet cages in two sizes: Big (2m x 1m) and small (1m x 90cm). Also have some cats. Tel: 081-271 8923 (English & Thai). Email: garfield_catfarm@yahoo.it

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Optimum Nutrition, Dymatize, Gaspari, MuscleTech, BSN Supplements available now. Free shipping anywhere in Thailand. Vitamins, Protein, BCAAs and other supplements. Shop online now. Paypal accepted. Tel: 082-415 9925. Email: bill@naiharmgym.com Website at: www.naiharmgym.com/store/

AIRCON UNITS

LG 2 X 18000 BTU, 2 x 12,000 BTU. Nearly new. Price: 50,000 baht for the lot. Please call. Tel: 083-593 6955.

SUPER CRAZY SALE!

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.

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

PS3 GAMES

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

WIFI, TELEPHONE, FAX

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

Bulletins

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

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

Stereo Lab Restaurant - Surin Beachfront
Thur 9:30 AM

Scandinavian Speaking
Meetings-Karon
Tue and Sat 7 PM (Nov-April only)
Tel: 086-9440460 Sive, 082-2765998 Nor

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

SPONSOR

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@phuketiwc.com

Business Opportunities

HOTEL FOR SALE/RENT

Hotels and guesthouses for sale & rent. Tel: 081-537 9684. Website at: www.hotelforsalephuket.com

RESTAURANT FOR RENT

In Kamala with seaview at a good location. Tel: 081-271 0190. Email: t_vogue@hotmail.com

MASSAGE SHOP - CHEAP

4-bed/2-chair massage shop with aircon. Low rent. Located in downtown Ao Nang, Krabi. For sale at only 100,000 baht. Email: camnet@ymail.com

NEW LAUNDRY FOR SALE

On Nanai Road. No key money. It has 50 regular customers. Rent: 150,000 baht. Tel: 080-690 8978.

GUESTHOUSE IN KARON

Price reduced to 2.4 million baht. Lease is available for 3 or 6 years. Occupancy rate: 70% in low season, 90% in high season. Email: ninapartments@hotmail.com Website: www.ninapartmentsphuket.com

BAR WITH ACCOMMODATION

For sale. On Bangla Road. Contact David. Tel: 086-855 8525. Email: migs2008@live.ie

BUSINESS FOR RENT



Near Wat Suwan (temple). 40 rooms for long-term rent. Please contact to K.Kung. Tel: 081-970 8339 (Thai).

BAR FOR SALE

On Bangla Road. As new. At an excellent location. Tel: 083-500 8729.

LOOKING FOR A PARTNER

We are looking for an active partner or investor for our bakery / restaurant. At a good location in Patong. Tel: 085-781 1841. Email: tjm2030@gmail.com

BAKERY / RESTAURANT

At a good location in Patong for rent. Tel: 081-846 2723. Email: didi@loxinfo.co.th

BUILDING & BUSINESS FOR SALE

Four-storey commercial building in the Paradise Complex area, the center of Patong. Building is at the front of the soi (way in) and visible from the major (Rat-U-Thit) road. Ready to move in and carry on business (internet cafe and guesthouse). Price: 10 million baht. Tel: 089-471 9712. Fax: 076-341 861. Email: dawyth@yahoo.com

BRAND-NEW HOTEL

Great location. Huge return on investment possible. A unique boutique hotel. 8 floors, high roof-top bar and pool. 35 rooms. 97 million baht. Tel: 082-539 4540. Email: Dtslimited@gmail.com

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In Kata / Karon. Owner relocating. 1.5 million baht. Nine+ years remaining on lease. Tel: 076-344922, 081-978 4982. Email: jctailor@loxinfo.co.th For further details, check www.bluewaterphuket.com

MASSAGE SHOP FOR LEASE

On Patong Beach road. 2nd floor shop. Price: 2.8 million baht. Contact Khun Yuu. Tel: 081-428 7894.

ROOFTOP RESTAURANT FOR RENT

On the top floor of Sinthavee Hotel, Phuket Town. Convenient for a restaurant or bar. Also, a discotheque on the 2nd floor (with license). Tel: 087-270 9093. Email: a.pueng@gmail.com

SHOPHOUSE AT BEST LOCATION

For rent or sale. A beautiful 3-floor shophouse with aircon, jacuzzi, Internet, phone and expensive furniture. The Royal Place, opposite Tesco Lotus. Tel: 081-396 7619.

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4 floors corner building on Bangla Road, 3 units wide, open versatile space, 150sqm per floor with large terrace, 2+3 years lease contract. Ready to take over. Tel: 081-956 9903. Email: office@sunbeammanagement.com

CHALONG RESTAURANT

Great location on busy Chao Fa Rd. Easy parking, big outdoor patio, fully equipped. 280,000 baht. Tel: 080-706 1350 (English), 082-420 6877 (Thai). Email: palmbua.siam@live.ca

RESTAURANT ON PATONG BEACH

8 tables, 2-year lease at 30,000 baht per month. No key money, 3 months rent in advance. Tel: 087-706 7142. Email: interval@loxinfo.co.th

KARAOKE BAR IN KATHU

With 2 karaoke rooms, a computer VIP with aircon, 2 staff rooms. Recently refurbished. Price: 330,000 baht. Tel: 081-089 7690.

5-STAR BAR FOR SALE

Newly renovated, modern and spacious bar. Low rent, long lease, no key money. Pool table, aircon, 3 TVs, fully furnished, 2 toilets, large terrace balcony, new sound system and lighting. A 'must see' opportunity. Email: rossdrinkald@hotmail.com

GUESTHOUSE FOR SALE

At Karon Beach. Tel: 089-723 4278. For more info. www.guesthouse.phuket.exotic.com

RESTAURANT FOR SALE

Steveos Chalong circle. Great client base. Tel: 083-690 7737. Email for details at: steveastray@hotmail.com

KAMALA RESTAURANT / BAR

2 floors, great potential. Taking offers. Tel: 082-776 3497. Pls contact me by email: tastyphuket@gmail.com

SALON FOR SALE

On Nanai Road. Fully equipped. Price: 149,000 baht with no key money. Rent: 9,000 baht per month. Tel: 089-645 7088.

FRONT BANGLA BAR FOR SALE

Bar in Patong with amazing (best) location for sale. Serious inquiries only. Tel: +1-514-295 2252. Fax: +1-514-849 5888. Email: benoit.lacaille@gmail.com

BAR FOR SALE

Direct access to Bangla Road. Take over a running business. Staff and systems in place. Modern and up-to-date systems and outfit. Tel: 081-956 9903 (English & Thai). Email: office@sunbeam-management.com

LUCKY LUKE BAR

New bar and salon in Bel Aire Plaza at the corner of Sai Nam Yen Rd and Rat-U-Thit Rd. Must be seen. All new with cowboy-style furniture, pool, darts and aircon. Beauty salon fully equipped with massage and hairdressing, etc. Takeover amount: 1.55 million baht. Monthly rent: 32,500 baht. Good and profitable. Owner leaving. Tel: 080-142 7581 (English). Email: bentminutti@gmail.com

URGENT SALE! / GOOD PRICE

massage and Fish Spa. Ready-to-run business. Located in Patong Center. Please contact for more information. Tel: 083-972 4994. Email: saifar.s@hotmail.com

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	Sun.	2, 9, 16, 23, 30	6, 20, 27	6, 13, 20, 27	

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Pariwat takes the hype in his stride

By Andrew Jennings
and Samaporn Janyanon

PHUKET golf sensation Pariwat Pinsawat is a teenager with one goal in mind: To become a professional golfer. The 14-year-old has been hailed a golfing prodigy destined for the top of the game following a remarkable year.

Season highlights for Pariwat included lifting the PCC-Mazda Championship Cup, an incredible fifth-placed finish against a professional field at the Mercedes-Benz Masters Thailand Championship, and also winning a brand new Mazda car for a hole-in-one at the Phuket Country Club.

Pariwat finished last year as the top ranked player in his national age group and is also an integral part of the Thai national golf team.

Following his exploits last year, the pressure of expectancy is likely to follow Pariwat heading into this season. At the moment, the youngster is taking all the attention in his stride.

"I don't feel pressure, I just go out there and do my best," he says.

Pariwat, who lives in Chalong and attends Satree Phuket School, took up golf when he was eight years old, after his grandfather Prachuab Subcharoen introduced him to the game. Prachuab remains his coach today.

At his tender age, Pariwat is required to balance school with his passion for golf. So far he hasn't had any problems juggling both.

"I don't feel it has been difficult to divide my life between studying and playing sport. I practice golf everyday when I finish school and most weekends," he adds.

Pariwat, who speaks English and Mandarin, says Phuket Country Club is his favorite golf course on the island and ranks Irishman Damien McElroy as his role model.

"McElroy is my inspiration.. I love his style of golf and he is young like me. I would love play like him in the future," he says.

Looking back on last season,

Pariwat was delighted with his performance against the professionals at the Mercedes-Benz Masters in June.

"It was really exciting and great practice for me to go up against 140 professional golfers. I wasn't thinking about winning, it was just about the experience," he says.

Pariwat, who also plays the piano, finished top of the leader-board at the end of the two-day PCC-Mazda Championship Cup in late October as well.

Not only did he lift the prestigious Amateur Cup, he also went home with a brand-new Mazda car after firing a hole-in-one at the course's 14th hole. Being only 14-years-old, Pariwat handed over the car key to his rather pleased father.

As with any aspiring golfer, Pariwat has some weak points in his game he is trying to iron out.

"My body is not strong enough, when I swing I'm not completely stable. I will exercise more to prepare my body," he says.

Pariwat's long-term goal is to



YOUNG GUN: Pariwat Pinsawat, 14, is Phuket's leading young golfer.

go to a college abroad where he can play golf, before turning professional.

"I love the sport of golf. I would like to be a professional golfer one day. I plan to study

abroad, but at the moment I have no idea where," he says.

Pariwat is back in action this weekend at the TGA-CAT Junior Golf Ranking Competition at Pakasai Country Club in Krabi.

Aussie mountain bike champ trains in Phuket

By Andrew Jennings

CURRENT Australian Men's Cross-Country Mountain Bike Champion, Damien Enderby, visited Phuket last week in preparation to defend his title next month.

A native of Lake Macquarie in New South Wales and a Corporal in the Australian Defense Force, Enderby is one of the world's top specialist cross-country mountain bike racers.

He is also a former winner of the Australian XTERRA Off-Road Championship.

Unfortunately, just after arriving in Phuket last week he picked up a stomach bug which interrupted his training for five days.

However, he was back in the

saddle last Sunday morning when he embarked on a bike ride through some of the island's more remote areas with members of Phuket's very own merry band of mountain bike enthusiasts, the Phuket Hash House Harriers.

The cycle took the group off

road around Phuket's northern reaches, traversing up and down dirt tracks and through thick forest, taking in some stunning scenery.

Speaking to the *Phuket Gazette* about his visit to the island, Enderby was already looking forward to returning.

"I really enjoyed my visit to Phuket. Despite my illness I didn't lose any fitness and I'm already looking forward to coming back very soon," he said.

The next Phuket Mountain Bike Hash will be on Sunday 23rd January.



CHAMPION: Damien Enderby (right) alongside Allan Mossop of the Phuket Hash House Harriers

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'Fun regatta' returns next month

NEXT month Phuket, Phang Nga and Krabi will provide the backdrop for one of the world's most scenic sailing events, The Bay Regatta.

Formerly known as the Phang Nga Bay Regatta, the event has been renamed this year to reflect its true nature and will once again take in the most stunning maritime scenery in Thailand.

The Bay Regatta, which will take place February 9 to 13, is now in its 14th year and remains a hugely popular fixture on the Southeast Asia yachting calendar.

Affectionately billed as "the fun regatta", it appeals to the serious racer as well as the not-too-serious.

Entrants from all over the world will be taking part next month, competing for honors in Racing, Cruising A, Cruising B, Multihulls and Firefly 850 classes.

For the 2011 event, boats will "roam" for four days from the east coast of Phuket to Koh Yao Noi, and then on to Krabi.

The last day of racing will finish in southeast Phuket.

For more information and to register for the event visit W: acyc-phuket.com/bayregatta.htm

New kids on the block

By Andrew Jennings

FC PHUKET'S squad rebuilding gathered pace this week with the unveiling of four new players at Surakul Stadium on Wednesday evening.

With a further 10 new faces expected to sign for the club in the coming days, the Southern Sea Kirin will have an entirely different complexion come the start of the new season on February 12.

The off-season has witnessed an upheaval of the club's playing staff, with several star names from last season's promotion winning side moving on to

pastures new, including Diarra Ali and Nene Bi Tra Sylvestre.

Phuket held a number of trial training sessions this week at Surakul Stadium as they attempt to bolster their player head count ahead of their big kickoff in Division 1 next month.

At Wednesday's trial session the club showed off their four confirmed new signings. They include Korean midfielder Choi Wan Geon, signed

from Nakhon Pathom, goalkeeper Theerawat Pinpradab from Muang Thong United, Watcharapong Channgam from Air force United, and Wiratrot Chanteng signed from Pattaya United.

FC Phuket director Narubas Aryupong also confirmed that a further five players from last year's Premier League champions Muang Thong United – and five more from Rajpracha Nonthaburi FC – will arrive in Phuket this week to sign for the club.

Only 10 of last season's squad will remain at the club for the 2011 season.

Phuket is looking for a new manager after last season's boss Arjharn Songngamsap confirmed last week he would not be staying on for a second term.

Mr Arjharn will however remain on as a coaching consultant until the time Phuket puts a new manager in place.

"The team needs to have 30 players for the new season," Phuket Secretary Sorranan Sanae said. "Coach Arjan will select the squad in the next two or three days."

THE NEW BOYS:
From left are Wiratrot Chanteng, Watcharapong Channgam, Theerawat Pinpradab and Choi Wan Geon



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