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Santa's Phuket pit stop

IT'S that time of year again... and in homage to the white-bearded man with the belly, we have a 12-page Season Special supplement wrapped inside this issue of the *Phuket Gazette*.

It's dedicated to all things Santa, and New Year.

As we inch closer to 2012, what could there possibly be to look forward to next year?

Well, plenty on Phuket, according to our jolly posse of interviewees in our High Hopes 2012 story.

There's more. Find out what Arizona, machine guns and Santa Claus have in common in our Weird World News page.

There are gift ideas, Domsday economics 2012 and a whole lot more inside our Season Special supplement. We hope you like it.

Merry Christmas Phuket!

Manhunt launched for MMA brawler

By Stephen Fein

POLICE have launched an island-wide search for 27-year-old Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) fighter Junie Allen Browning following two brawls and his escape from Patong Hospital.

The manhunt follows him being involved in a brawl at a bar in Karon last Sunday and then his continued fighting with several foes at Patong Hospital, where all the people involved in the melee had been sent for treatment.

Browning, originally from Lexington in the US state of Kentucky, later escaped the facility and has not been seen since.

Tianchai Duangsuwan of the Chalong Police on Wednesday told the *Gazette*, "We have searched everywhere, but we still haven't found him. I have heard that he was at one boxing stadium in Chalong, but we couldn't find him."

The search has now been expanded outside of Chalong Police District, which covers the south of the island.

Immigration Police have been



Junie Browning in Phuket. He is now wanted by police for brawling, first in a bar and then in the emergency ward at Patong Hospital. Photo: Facebook

contacted and are closely monitoring Immigration checkpoints at both Phuket International Airport and the land checkpoint at Tah Chat Chai.

An MMA insider on the island told the *Gazette* that Mr Browning had an anger management problem that worsened considerably when he drank alcohol.

"This does not shock me at all. I was just waiting for him to

screw up and get caught. It's really too bad.

"When sober he can be a really nice guy, and he is a very talented fighter when he applies himself," said the source.

Browning, who once appeared in the reality TV series *The Ultimate Fighter*, is known to have been in training at a long-established Muay Thai camp in Chalong.

However, he has not appeared at the camp in months, a source there confirmed.

According to a report on the *MMA Weekly* website, Browning has run afoul of the law before.

In 2009, he was arrested after taking a handful of pills in an alleged suicide attempt, before assaulting several nurses at a local Las Vegas hospital.

The brawl in Karon also reportedly involved him attacking female bar staff.

However, Browning adamantly denied this in a Facebook posting uploaded after his escape.

"Apparently in the news they are saying their were women involved... The only women involved was a Thai women friend of theirs that sliced my forearm open with a 6-inch blade," he said.

"At no point was any women involved. Even at the hospital I was nothing but polite to every member of their staff.

"Not until a little birdy told me that the person that hit me with the mug was in the next room did I explode," Browning said.

Convention center project gets Cabinet extension

THE Cabinet has extended the deadline for the Finance Ministry to build a world-class convention center in Phuket.

The Treasury Department, which is responsible for bringing the decades-old dream to reality, now has until 2014 to sign a construction contract for the project.

Before the extension was granted at a Cabinet meeting on Tuesday, the Treasury Department had expressed mounting concern that the July 2012 deadline to sign a contract with the project contractor was fast approaching.

Failure to meet the deadline would require the project's 2.6 billion baht in funding

to be returned to state coffers.

The project plan has yet to gain Environmental Impact Assessment approval from the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning, which rejected the initial application citing environmental and economic problems.

The Cabinet on Tuesday also approved financial aid for flood rehabilitation.

The government will give 4.4bn baht to the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC) as compensation for lost interest income in helping customers, mainly farmers, to recover from the unprecedented flooding, as proposed by the

Finance Ministry. The BAAC's flood-relief support for individual farmers will be extended to cover cooperatives, community-based enterprises and village and community funds, as well as certain other groups.

Under the scheme, the bank will grant a debt moratorium for three years starting this year, with zero interest.

New three-year loans will be charged only 4 per cent or the minimum lending rate minus 1 percentage point.

The bank reported that 127,373 farm households that had been affected by floods held outstanding loans totaling 12.6bn baht.



One of the concerns listed is that the proposed site is a nesting place for turtles.

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This Week

News Special



How runaway Manel, 12, survived the streets of Patong. **Pages 4-5**

First Person



Emergency medic speaks on saving lives at Vachira Hospital's ER. **Page 9**

Looking back



The Chinese social elite expatriots of yesteryear. **Page 19**

Film



What films were voted best at the movies in 2011. **Page 20**

Property Watch



In with the in-crowd. Places you have to be seen in. **Page 28**

Sport



The King's Cup 2011. Strong winds push Team Premier on to victory. **Page 46**

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Mangrove land grab allegations continue

By Atchaa Khamlo

ABOUT 50 local residents last Friday morning protested over alleged encroachment onto eight rai of mangrove forest land in Rassada, on the east coast of Phuket.

Despite the fact that trees had already been cleared, the protesters were trying to prevent Phuket Land Office surveyor Thanawut Jiarabutr from surveying the land, ownership of which is claimed under a *Sor Kor 1* land deed presented by Air Mardsri.

Initial talks at the protest site between local people and Mr Mardsri were arbitrated by Deputy Muang District Chief (*Palad*) Suwat Bubphaphoe. The discussion failed to resolve the matter, so it was decided to continue the proceedings at Muang District Office.

Discussions ended with both parties signing an agreement promising to cease activities until the case was investigated. The main point of contention was the authenticity of the deed held by Mr Mardsri.



Land Office surveyor Thanawut Jiarabutr (right) discusses the property boundaries with local villager Sangkom Sintupradit. Photo: Atchaa Khamlo

Rassada Village 2 headman Sangkom Sintupradit told the *Gazette* that the forest had been cleared about nine months ago by Mr Mardsri and his partner Adisak Preekarn.

"They used the *Sor Kor 1* [as authority to carry out the work], which I'm not sure is right. So I would like the government officials to examine the document before doing anything [else]."

Mr Sangkom said that the forest was destroyed before he took up his position as headman about six months ago.

"I'm not sure if the previous headman was involved in this matter. The mangrove forest has been preserved for a long time and we were continually planting new trees. We are quite sure that the mangrove forest does not belong to anyone," he said.

Lifeguard dies after rescue effort

A LIFEGUARD died in the waters off Karon Beach Phuket after rendering assistance to a kite surfer last Thursday.

After helping the surfer back to safety in front of the Centara Grand Beach Resort Phuket, Pongsatorn Sea-Lim, 43, passed away from apparent exhaustion while trying to return to shore, according to resort General Manager Denis Thouvard.

Mr Pongsatorn, a Phuket native, was contracted through Karon Municipality and was very well trained for his job, Mr Thouvard said.

A full medical examination will be made to better understand the cause of Mr Pongsatorn's sudden demise, he added.

"We would like to commend Khun Pongsatorn's diligence and expertise in performing his duty in the most professional way at



Tourists play in the surf at Karon, where lifeguard Pongsatorn collapsed.

all times. A great colleague to all of us, it should be mentioned that so many guests he met on the beach became his friends. The entire staff and management of Centara Grand Phuket would like to extend our deepest condolences to Khun Pongsatorn's family members. He will be dearly missed

by all of us," he said.

Mr Pongsatorn was the second person to die at Karon Beach in less than a 18 months. In August last year, Bahraini tourist Ali Abdulaziz Salman Alsaed drowned in heavy surf in the same area. He was just 25 years old.

— Chutharat Plerin

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Tests are being conducted to determine the turtle's illness.

Experts race to save green sea turtle

A YOUNG green sea turtle was rescued off Yacht Haven Marina on Tuesday.

Dr Patcharaporn Gaewmong of the Phuket Marine Biological Center identified the turtle as a green sea turtle about 10 to 15 years old, weighing about 15kg.

"We have yet to determine its gender," Dr Patcharaporn said.

"The turtle has no wounds. However, its skin is scratched and macerated [chronically wet and soggy]. Also, the eyes are hollowed, which may be caused by dehydration," she said.

Dr Patcharaporn explained that treatment will begin with energy replacement fluids, as the turtle is very weak, as well as antibiotic and anti-inflammatory medications.

"After that, we will test a blood sample and perform an ultrasound examination on its internal organs in order to ascertain the cause of illness," Dr Patcharaporn said.

— Warisa Temram

Man on ledge claims being hit squad target for days

By Atchaa Khamlo

TRAFFIC on Phisit Gorani Road near Patong Temple screeched to a halt at about 7pm last Saturday as motorists and other passers-by watched a team of rescue workers snatch a man from the ledge of a three-story building while he was preparing himself to jump.

The man, 25-year-old tattoo artist Surasak Buranaphanit, later told police he was being hunted by "powerful men" trying to gun him down.

"We saw Surasak running around the building at about 6pm," said Lek Manop, a shop vendor in the building.

"He somehow got up onto the roof and threatened to jump off. While we were trying to talk him out of it, he told us that some people were trying to kill him," he added.

Describing Mr Surasak's frantic efforts to get to the top of the building, Mr Lek said, "He looked like he was on drugs."

Police, Kusuldham Rescue Foundation workers and officers from the Patong Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation soon arrived to try to convince Mr Surasak not to jump.



Surasak said he feared for his life.



Police place Surasak under arrest.

During their attempts, Mr Surasak kept yelling that he had "a problem" and repeatedly stepped out onto the ledge, indicating to the rescue team that he was serious in his intent.

Meanwhile, the crowd of on-lookers and motorists below continued to grow.

After about 30 minutes of talking with Mr Surasak, the rescue team distracted him and then rushed



Surasak repeatedly hung his leg over the ledge. Photos: Atchaa Khamlo

to retrieve him from the ledge.

He was then taken to Patong Police Station.

Police officer Lt Patapee Srichai told the *Gazette* that during questioning Mr Surasak told police that for the previous two days he was being chased by a group of "powerful men" who were trying to shoot him.

"He wanted people to help him, so he climbed on top of the

building so people would notice him and help him," Lt Patapee said.

Lt Patapee asked Mr Surasak, who is originally from Chumphon province, to call his sister to come to Phuket and pick him up.

Mr Surasak spent the night in protective custody at the police station.

No criminal charges were filed by the police against Mr Surasak over the incident.

Belgian fraud suspect brain dead in Phuket

A BELGIAN man embroiled in several fraud cases in Phuket is in a coma at Vachira Phuket Hospital, where he is being kept on life support until his organs can be removed for donation.

Long-time Phuket resident Yvon Van Eyersen, 58, was perhaps best known to Phuket residents as the manager of the now-defunct Easy Fitness Center, located just south of Central Festival shopping center, on Chao Fa West Road in Wichit.

Almost 2,000 members who paid 4,000-baht joining fees to the club lost out when the company closed abruptly in April 2009 and Mr Van Eyersen subsequently fled to Bangkok.

Mr Van Eyersen is understood to have served jail time until his release on bail about three months ago, the *Gazette* has learned.

Sources told the *Gazette* that Mr Van Eyersen was involved in at least three legal cases in Phuket, including misappropriation of 6 million baht in customer investments from his Phuket Patong Assets Company in 2009.

His business dealings also led to the breakup of his marriage. His ex-wife, a principal in a company he controlled, was later cleared of any wrongdoing.

Hospital staff said Mr Van Eyersen was declared brain dead



Yvon Van Eyersen

after suffering a stroke and slipping into a coma.

Staff at the hospital said a relative had signed organ donation release forms and the Belgian Embassy was coordinating with the hospital to arrange transfer to Bangkok for an organ donation procedure.

— Stephen Fein

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Swedes face first day of murder trial

TWO Swedish men accused of the stabbing murder of Maksim Schantz in Koh Kaew on August 1 appeared in court on Wednesday for the first day of their trial.

Johan Sebastian Ljung, 25, and Tommy Viktor Sonderlund, 26, have denied the five charges against them: possession of an unlicensed firearm, carrying a gun in a public area, carrying a knife in a public area, theft of a motorbike and premeditated murder.

The murder of Mr Schantz is thought to be the result of a failed

Pattaya business deal between the three. At the time of their arrests it was revealed that Schantz had been involved with a call center scam operated by, amongst others, Ljung and Sonderlund.

Today's hearing focused on their testimony. They are due to appear in court again on June 21 for questioning of the plaintiff and on August 14-15 for questioning of the defendant.

In the meantime, they will be remanded in the Phuket Provincial Prison.



Swedes gone sour. Photo: Gazette file



At "Into the Sea", the signature restaurant at the Evason Phuket & Bon Island, chef Lluís Cantons's Modern Logical Cuisine showcases his latest innovation in the form of new, creative interpretations of a cuisine that has both visual and textural appeal. The taste and focus on fresh wholesome and local ingredients are paramount.

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Schoolgirl disappears after Facebook session

A DISTRESSED mother is appealing to the Phuket public for help in finding her 12-year-old daughter, who has been missing since Tuesday, December 6.

The mother, 43-year-old Samruay Saenthaweesuk, reported her daughter Samudchaya "Nong Pin" Yanpunya missing with the Phuket City Police on Tuesday.

Mrs Samruay also contacted the Phuket Reporters' Club at Phuket Provincial Hall December 8 asking for help.

She told reporters that Nong Pin, in her last year of primary at the Ban Talaad Neua School in Phuket Town, was last seen on Tuesday leaving an internet café at the mouth of Soi Lor Rong in Phuket Town.

Nong Pin, who lives with her grandparents in Wichit because her parents are separated, is known to have skipped school that day and gone to an internet café "to do homework".

Like many local youths, Nong Pin is an avid user of the social



A photo from the Facebook account of a missing Phuket schoolgirl.

networking website Facebook, where she has over 250 friends and goes by the user name "Pinnee Smile".

CCTV images of Nong Pin recorded on Tuesday showed her coming and going from the internet café several times. As she left the last time she was unaccompanied and did not appear to be under any stress or in a hurry.

However, her mother fears Nong Pin may have fallen victim to an internet stalker and is pleading to the public for help in locating her.

"I fear she may have been kidnapped," she said.

After questioning friends and teachers at Nong Pin's school proved fruitless, the desperate mum consulted two fortune tellers to see if they could divine her whereabouts supernaturally.

The first fortune teller, in the family's original home of Prachuap Khiri Khan, sensed the schoolgirl was likely on holiday with a wealthy "tomboy" (lesbian with masculine traits) in Bangkok.

The second fortune teller, from Phuket, said he had a vision that Nong Pin was approached in the internet café by a man named "Dum", who serves as a *mah song* spirit medium at a local Chinese Shrine. She consented when Dum asked her to go with him, the fortune teller said.

At the time of print Nong Pin had yet to contact friends or family.

Anyone with information that may help locate Nong Pin is urged to call Mrs Samruay at 087-2848380 or Phuket City Police Station at 076-212115.

Missing

ADULTS from nations across the world fall victim to many of the pitfalls of Phuket. However, two young girls stranded in a foreign country after their father was sent to prison managed not only to survive, but seemed to find new lives in Phuket's famed nightlife capital, Patong. But their stay on 'paradise island' wasn't all fun and games. The Phuket Gazette's Atachaa Khamlo reports.

TOURIST Police volunteer Narada Hanks was on patrol on Soi Bangla at about 11pm on December 8 when she looked up and saw the girl, 12 years old, in a long dress and talking to three men near the entrance to Soi Crocodile.

The girl's hair was cut much shorter than in the photograph she had seen, but that photo was taken when the girl was seven years old.

Certain she had found the right girl, Mrs Hanks with fellow Tourist Police volunteers Omar Al Quraiani of Jordan and Italian national Sergio Bongiovanni approached her and started a conversation that confirmed she was indeed Manel, reported missing by the French embassy in Bangkok.

The embassy had issued notices for police to be on the lookout for Manel and her 11-year-old sister Chaima after the girls' grandmother back in France told them she had learned that their father had been arrested in Phuket on drug related charges.

At a press conference last Saturday, Claude de Crissey, the president of Tourist Police foreign volunteers in Patong and owner of the Royal Phawadee Village, which the volunteers use as their headquarters, explained that Chaima had been found about two weeks earlier.

"Patong police informed us that they had found a motorbike left parked in Patong. The motorbike had been rented out to a Frenchman who used Chaima's passport as collateral - and the motorbike rental operator still had the girl's passport," said Phawadee de Crissey, Claude's wife, who helps the Tourist Police volunteers with their operations.

Police told Mrs Phawadee that Chaima was staying at Goodnight Guesthouse 2, where she was being treated very well.

"I went to see her and called French Consul Pierre Blondel [from Bangkok], who flew to Phuket the next morning. She was brought to stay here at my hotel

until she was flown back home last Thursday [December 1]," Mrs Phawadee said.

At the press conference, Mr de Crissey described the girls being found safe and unharmed as nothing short of incredible.

"This can be a dangerous place for so many people. And all the

police had to go on was the girls' names and a photograph taken years ago," he said.

But life with their father had not been easy, either.

"The two girls came to Phuket with their father in July 2011. The girls' mother died about five years ago. I think he came here to start a

new life, to find a job and to stay here," said Mr de Crissey.

In France, the father worked in construction, and work was sporadic.

"The father had a friend who ran a tattoo business in Phuket, and he offered the girls' father a job," he said.

Also a possible factor in the decision to come to Phuket was that the father also had a son, now 10 years old, with a Thai woman who lived in Phuket, Mr de Crissey explained.

"Like a second family," he said.

When Manel and Chaima arrived in Phuket, one family stayed in a house in Kamala, and the other in a house in Thalang.

But then relations became strained.

"The father often disappeared for days, sometimes up to three days at a time, but he always came back," said Mr de Crissey, translating for Manel at the press conference.

"Also, the Thai girlfriend [sic] could be a bit 'excessive'," translated Mr de Crissey.

The Thai "stepmother" argued with Chaima all the time, and there were big arguments between her and the girls' father.

Manel described that sometimes the "stepmother" would even "break a beer bottle over the head".

Manel argued with her father, too, said Mr de Crissey.



Narada Hanks was the first to spot Manel on Soi Crocodile.

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French girls rescued



Tourist Police volunteers only had Manel's name and a five-year-old picture of her when the search started.

"They had a problem and they left the house in Thalang. And then Manel had a big 'problem' with her father, so she ran away," he said. That was in July.

Then the girls' father was arrested.

Manel described how she was called to come to Patong Police Station, where she was told that her father had been arrested on drug charges involving marijuana. Young Chaima was on the floor crying.

The girls were told that a consular official was on his way to see them. Twenty-four hours later no one had turned up and the police had to turn the girls away.

The girls then became separated. Chaima stayed at the Goodnight Guesthouse and Manel asked for help from a female friend who was staying in Kathu. The woman took her in, gave her food to eat, clothes to wear and a place to sleep.

Manel even started to enjoy a slice of life that people fly from around the world to enjoy in Phuket. Each day, she woke up at 2pm, went to the beach to see her 19-year-old "beach boy" boyfriend – "no good time like that – just cinema, look TV," she laughed – and she went to Rock City at night for the live music.

She went looking for Chaima, but couldn't find her. She asked the police, but they said they didn't know, Manel told the press.

But it wasn't all holiday in paradise. Manel recounted one incident back on July 18 that made it clear to her how dangerous it can be for a young girl on her own.

"I was in a tuk-tuk and it was going very fast. After we arrived at my destination I noticed another tuk tuk behind us, and then I realized that it was following me.

"They put me into the back of the second tuk-tuk, which was empty. I started kicking and struggling, but one man put his hand over my mouth and the other held my feet.

"I heard a man say, 'Don't worry. He's my friend.' But I struggled so hard that I broke free. I ran to a woman nearby, and she called the police," Manel said.

The two men were arrested and charged for the attack.

Life in Patong then returned to its normal routine for Manel, until Tourist Police Volunteer Hanks found her.

Manel was flown out of Phuket on Tuesday, back to France where she was to be reunited with her sister Chaima at a social services center in Dijon.

"A judge from a Juvenile Court will look into the girls' case and discuss with the family what is the best course to take," said Consul Pierre.

Their father will join them soon.

"He is being held by Immigration in Bangkok since he was transferred there on November 29 after it was found

he had also overstayed his visa after being released from Phuket Provincial Prison," said Mr de Crissey.

Looking back over the ordeal of the two girls, Mr de Crissey spoke favorably of Patong Police. "I don't want people saying that the police don't care. There was nothing they could do. They had no right to lock her in the jail.

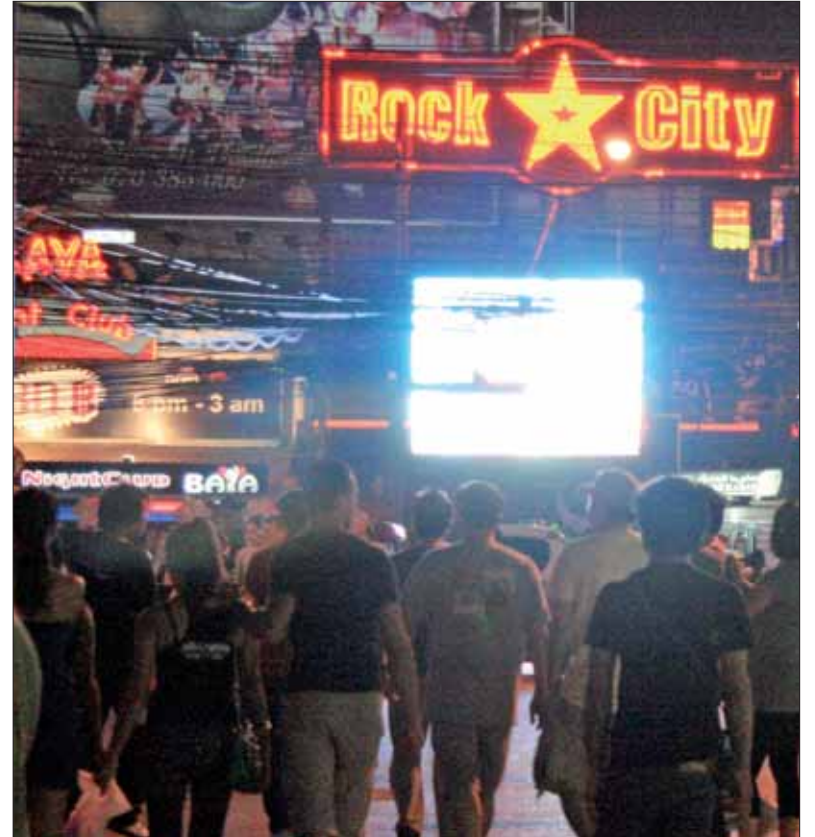
"When we needed to know where the father was, we knew within one hour. And when we needed to find Chaima, we found her within one evening – within three hours, actually.

"So don't bang these people. The problem is not the police – it is a

family problem and just how the system works," Mr de Crissey said.

As for Manel, will she ever consider returning to Phuket?

"Sure – when I turn 18," she comfortably laughed. "Easy..."



Manel entertained herself at night with live music at Rock City.

CHRISTMAS IS MAGNIFIQUE



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The Belgian ex-pat being carried to safety. Photo: Marc Mulloy

Expat saved in beach rescue

AN EMOTIONALLY distraught man was saved from drowning at Phuket's Nai Harn Beach last Friday afternoon.

It was the fourth time in recent weeks that the man has been rescued from drowning in the same fashion.

Beach vendor Song "Dui" Saingtong told the Gazette that the Belgian man, was in his 40s and a regular visitor to the beach, had arrived at about 4pm.

"He was very drunk and he dragged his own private kayak into the water and started paddling. When he was about 60 meters offshore, the kayak overturned and he was in the water," said Mr Song.

"The lifeguard kept a close eye on him and when the kayak overturned the man disappeared from view, so the lifeguard raced out to rescue him," he added.

When the man was brought safely back to shore, he was unconscious but breathing easily on his own, Mr Song said.

"When he regained consciousness, he kept calling out his wife's name. She came to the beach and he started to calm down," he added.

A Tourist Rescue Center officer at the scene told the Gazette that the man did not want to be taken to hospital.

"He has done this three times before," another Rescue Center officer confirmed.

— *Atchaa Khamlo*

Patong Carnival attracts a host of top Thai bands

THE Patong Carnival was scheduled to start on Thursday evening with the traditional parade, launching the annual week-long festivities held in Patong each year to mark the arrival of the tourism high season.

To add to the high prominence of the event, Thai drinks magnate Thai Beverage Co Ltd (ThaiBev) has lined up a huge range of top stars to provide the entertainment on one of the two stages.

Among the stars to entertain the crowds are Luang Kai, Job2do and Labanoon.

On the Soi Bangla main stage, evening concerts are scheduled to start at 7pm.

Stage 2, located on the football field next to Loma Park, is sponsored by ThaiBev.

Nightly concerts are scheduled



Just three of the Thai music legends appearing on stage 2: Baowee, Job2do and Bew Kanlayanee.



to start at 9pm.

Go Kai and Nai Son are on the bill to play Friday night, December 16, while Bew Kanlayanee is expected to take the stage Saturday night.

On Sunday evening, stage 2 hosts the Southern Thai style singing of Luang Kai. And on Monday night, probably the most recognizable Thai band to for-

eigners, Job2Do will be performing their own brand of Thai reggae.

The last night of the carnival will see rock band Labanoon bashing out the power chords before the curtain falls on another Patong Carnival.

"Before we used to bring famous singers from Bangkok to perform, but local Thais said they

would prefer to watch someone from the Southern on stage," said Soksak Rattana, ThaiBev Marketing manager in Phuket.

"So I contacted the big artists who were originally from the south. They are all very good entertainers and I'm sure everybody is going to have a great time," he added.

— *Chaiyot Yongcharoenchai*

Man burns brother in a urine-provoked attack

AN ELDERLY Samut Prakan man allegedly doused his own cancer-stricken younger brother in gasoline before setting him on fire in a case of unbelievable savagery last week.

Before launching the attack, Thawat Limyothin, 61, was apparently hit by drops of liquid that fell from the ceiling below a room in which his brother Kiatchai Limyothin, 50, was convalescing.

Mr Thawat reportedly thought it was Mr Kiatchai's urine, sending him into a rage.

After committing the brutal crime, Mr Thawat fled the scene.

Police were alerted to the crime on the afternoon of December 10 after receiving reports of a fire at a shop house on Phrapradaeng-Bangkorbu Road in Talat, Samut Prakan.

The blaze took two fire engines 10 minutes to put out. By then, Mr Kiatchai's wife,

Wanyupha, had already rushed her husband to hospital, but not before he had suffered severe burns.

Kulapthip Kritphonphiman, 50, one of nine family members who shared the house, witnessed the brutal attack.

Mrs Kulapthip, a daughter-in-law of the house's owner Khatiang Saetang, 80, said Mr Kiatchai had cancer and had been recovering in a room on the house's third floor after being discharged from hospital the previous day.

Mr Thawat was sleeping in the room below that of Mr Kiatchai. He was hit by two drops of liquid, which he thought was Mr Kiatchai's urine, and flew into a rage, Mrs

Kulapthip said.

Storming out of the house, he grabbed a 20-liter oil canister before carrying it to his brother's room, dousing him in oil and setting him alight. He then turned and fled the house, "without looking back", said Mrs Kulapthip.

After smelling the smoke, Mrs Wanyupha found her husband in flames. She doused the fire and rushed him to the hospital.

The two siblings had apparently been in conflict for some time. Mr Kiatchai reportedly spilled water on a regular basis, causing arguments between the two men.

Police are charging Mr Thawat with starting a fire that caused serious injuries to another person and have issued a warrant for his arrest. Mr Kiatchai is recovering in the hospital from severe burns.

Source: Nation Breaking News



THE SURFACE

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EURO CREATIONS

Arisman surrenders on Phue Thai Party's watch

ARISMAN Pongruangrong, a core leader of the red-shirt movement who famously escaped capture by police commandos by climbing out of a hotel room window in April last year, has turned himself over to the authorities.

Mr Arisman was wanted on terrorism charges for his role in the protests, which ended in a brutal army crackdown on May 19 last year.

Mr Arisman, a former Thai country singer, is known for his hot-headed speeches, including at least one in which

he urged red shirts to burn the country down if the Army staged a coup.

Mr Arisman denied any wrong doing and said he now had confidence in the country's justice system.

Since Mr Arisman went on the run 20 months ago, Yingluck Shinawatra's Pheu Thai Party has taken power, leading analysts to believe he surrendered with the expectation of receiving a more lenient treatment than he would have gotten under the previous government of Abhisit Vejjajiva.

"I only called for democracy, not the destruction of anyone or anything, but now there is no more necessity to stage a rally because we have a government that comes from the people's voice," Mr Arisman, was quoted by the Associated Press as saying.

Mr Arisman said he had spent much of his time on the run in Cambodia.

The Bangkok Criminal Court denied bail for the suspect, noting that he had taken a long time to surrender and could try to flee again.



Arisman turns himself in. Photo: The Nation

Abhisit defends handling of reds

AROUND THE nation

THE spectre of last year's red-shirt protests, in which at least 92 people were killed, was resurrected last week when former premier Abhisit Vejjajiva and his deputy Suthep Thaugsuban gave statements to police about their handling of the unrest.

Mr Abhisit insisted the government was "tolerant" in its handling of the protesters and that its actions complied with international standards.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister Chalerm Yoobamrung has claimed that the so-called "men in black", the armed men who fought against the military during its crackdown on the demonstrations in Bangkok, were police officers.

Mr Chalerm also claimed that a police officer was behind the assassination of rogue military officer Seh Daeng at the height of the red-shirt protests.

Last Friday Mr Abhisit was



Red-shirts take to the streets as Mr Abhisit defends his handling of last years protests. Photo: The Nation

questioned by police for three hours as part of their investigations into 16 of the deaths that are thought to have involved members of the security forces.

A day earlier, Mr Suthep was

interviewed regarding his role as head of the Center for Resolution of the Emergency Situation (CRES), which was charged with resolving the conflict.

Reported by AFP, Mr Abhisit

said, "I told the police about my role at the time as the prime minister who ordered the creation of the CRES. But as for CRES's operations, I was not the one in charge, CRES director Suthep was."

Mr Abhisit told reporters that he believed the investigation was "important to achieve reconciliation".

"We have to cooperate in finding the truth without political interference," he said.

Meanwhile, Mr Chalerm, the Pheu Thai government's ram-bunctious deputy premier, claimed that the infamous "men in black", blamed by many for provoking the army into cracking down violently on the red-shirt protests, were police officers.

He added that a group of policemen from the Northeast carried out the assassination of Army specialist Maj-General Khattiya Sawasdiaphol, also known as "Seh Daeng".

Mr Khattiya was fatally shot while giving an interview to the media at the red-shirt rally in the heart of Bangkok in May last year.

"I am following up on this case," Mr Chalerm said.

Democrat Party spokesman Chavanond Intarakomayyasut urged Mr Chalerm to stop influencing police investigations by giving public comments on cases.

"I also wonder if he has personally hired detectives, because he seems to know everything," he said.

Gordon gets 2.5 years for insults to The King

A THAI court last week sentenced a United States citizen to two-and-a-half years in jail for insulting King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

Thai-US dual citizen Joe Gordon translated sections of the unauthorized and banned biography of HM The King, "The King Never Smiles", and posted them on his website.

The case is unusual because Mr Gordon, 55, committed the crime while he was living in the United States.

US Consul-General Elizabeth Pratt, who was at the Criminal Court for the verdict, said she was concerned about the "severity" of the sentence and the state of freedom of expression in Thailand.

"We support freedom of expression both here in Thailand and around the world. We fully consider Joe Gordon to be a US

citizen," Mrs Pratt told reporters.

Mr Gordon, whose Thai name is Lerpong Wichakammart, pleaded guilty in the high profile *lese majesty* case in exchange for a reduction of his sentence from five years to two and a half years in prison.

Before sentencing, Mr Gordon had been repeatedly denied bail.

Mr Gordon, who has lived in the US for 30 years, was arrested in May when he returned to Thailand for medical treatment.

He had uploaded to his website translated sections of journalist Paul Handley's book "The King Never Smiles", which presents a critical view of HM The King's reign and achievements.

Mr Gordon, who was shackled in leg irons during the proceedings, said he would request a royal pardon from HM The King.



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Making it on minimum wage

GOVERNMENT assistance to help solve the chronic labor shortage in the island's tourism industry is unlikely to have much impact this high season given Phuket's reputation among Thais and expat residents as an expensive place to live (see business pages).

A look through threads on popular online forums such as ThaiVisa.com makes it clear that many in the expatriate community spend a great deal of time bemoaning the "high cost" of living here. This is despite the fact that many of those complaining chose to relocate here precisely because Phuket offers such a good combination in terms of quality of life and cost of living.

The *Gazette* of course recognizes that the cost of living in Phuket is significantly higher than most other parts of the Kingdom, but that is largely because it has so much more to offer – and high demand drives up prices.

The odious practice of race-based double-pricing aside, Phuket is still an inexpensive place to live compared with comparable destinations abroad. Indeed, hotel rates here are about 30 per cent less than in rival destinations in the region due to oversupply. Phuket is also only marginally pricier than other parts of Thailand, provided one "goes local" to a degree, staying away from tourist-oriented ripoffs, learning to speak a little Thai and developing some basic bargaining skills.

One of the great things about Phuket is the vast range of goods and services on offer, enough to satisfy the needs of everyone: from the super-rich down to the scores of low-wage workers from Burma who do the toughest work here.

Based on the current minimum daily wage of 221 baht per day, these laborers can currently pocket around 6,600 baht a month, maximum. How they manage to survive, and in some cases even raise families, is a testament to their resourcefulness.

Unfortunately, Burmese, Cambodians and Laotians are currently restricted from all but the most menial jobs, such as in the construction, fishing and rubber industries. Despite this, untold thousands of them are already working in tourism-related jobs, legally or otherwise. Most speak passable Thai, while many have English-language skills.

In order to keep as many Thais employed as possible, current labor law has as its main tenet that foreigners are allowed to work only in positions that Thais are either "unwilling" or "unable" to do.

As the current shortage indicates, there are currently not enough Thais willing to do these jobs. As such, it is time the government considers opening more service jobs to the scores of foreign workers who would be more than happy to fill them.



Swimmers get off the beach!

Re: Gazette online, Phuket Opinion: Time to rein in the beach cowboys, and those who do not govern them, December 11

I really believe the time has come for strong action here at Patong Beach. Tourists must simply not be allowed to enter the water, with stiff fines for violations. I envision Patong as a world class jet-ski and parasailing beach only. If a tourist wishes to swim, he or she can do so at another beach. Tourists can still be allowed to sit on the sand and watch the sights at Patong Beach, but they must stay OUT of the water.

sherlock holmes
Gazette Forum

Letters to the Editor

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

pay for hotel rooms and then hear that the police will release the criminal, because he is poor and can't pay the fine! This happened to me. A guy hit me and they arrested him, but the police asked me to not press charges, because he had just got out of jail and if I insisted on having him charged he would have to go back to jail. Thai style.

Richard
Phuket Forum

do little to remove smoke from the smaller area still occupied by the same amount of smokers. Someone must have realized that the smoke was now escaping via the door into the coffee shop and airport lounge. So now a double-door arrangement has appeared, taking away another fifth of the space in the smoking lounge.

What used to be a really welcome respite before getting on a non-smoking flight for 10 hours or more has become a nasty, sordid experience that even hardened smokers find depressing.

I have no wish to upset non-smoking fellow travellers. I fully understand that they find the habit of smoking obnoxious and I respect their feelings on the matter. However, there does come a point when, even as a smoker, I have the right to question the state of affairs.

Please can something be done to improve the standards of the airport's one and only smoking room?

D Marx
Chalong

Buoy burdens

Re: Gazette online, Phuket Opinion: Time to rein in the beach cowboys, and those who do not govern them, December 12

I am a former employee of a well-known hotel on a southern Phuket beach. Every year our hotel was forced to purchase buoys and ropes to seal off a part of the beach for swimmers. The local municipality does nothing to assist [us]. Guests would give us letters and ask us to send these to the authorities, which we did, but to no avail. Even ATVs are now seen on the beach, speeding along [close to] hundreds of tourists. Policing? Zero.

mk
Gazette Forum

Smoking in a cupboard

When I first visited Phuket in 2003, Phuket airport had a great smoking area. It was a large open-air balcony located past immigration, customs and security in the international departure lounge. No fume extractor system was required, as it had one wall open to the outside and was separated from the lounge by a wall and glass door. Over the years, I have seen this wonderful facility reduced in size by more than half, to the point where it has become little more than the size of a cleaner's cupboard.

Those in power obviously realized that more money could be made by building and renting out the space. Currently a coffee shop offers access to the smoking area, hardly beneficial to smokers or non-smokers buying coffee. To add to the misery, windows have been fitted to the balcony wall, which in effect makes the smoking area a small room in which a breeze can no longer circulate.

The line of small extractor fans

Victims staying for justice helps tourism

Re: Gazette online, Phuket Police need help from tourists: investigator, December 8

So they want a tourist to remain in Phuket, lose his flight home and pay for a new flight,

Living without fear

Re: Gazette online, Austrian tourist stabbed, robbed by Phuket youth gang, December 7

There is no fear of consequences from these kids, or from any of the lowlife criminals on this island for that matter. This is not an isolated event; it is a growing lifestyle in Phuket. Tourists are picked like fruit, knocked out with drugs and robbed, beaten and robbed, killed and robbed, stabbed, defrauded, scammed and efficiently harvested like crops. Glad the police found a few this time. Tip of a sad iceberg.

Northern Tours and Adventures
Gazette Forum

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Editor: Parichat Utintu
News Manager: Chris Husted
News Editor: Stephen Fein
Features Editor: Neil Quail

Managing Director: Oranee Hildebrand
General Manager: Natthira Susangrat
Production Manager: Suchart Changate
Publisher: The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd

Contact us:

Editorial: news@phuketgazette.net
Advertising Sales: adsales@phuketgazette.net
Classified Advertising: classads@phuketgazette.net
Website services: anna@phuketgazette.net
Gazette Guide: guide@phuketgazette.net
Events Sponsorships: events@phuketgazette.net
General: info@phuketgazette.net

Telephone: 076 273555 (10 lines) Fax 076 615240

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It's about saving lives

FIRST PERSON

I FIRST realized I wanted to be a nurse when I was in high school. I didn't think about becoming a doctor, because doctors only help patients with their illnesses, but a nurse is involved from the beginning and they are there throughout the healing process and also there when the patient leaves hospital. I like the fact that I get to have a close relationship with patients.

I started working as a registered nurse at Vachira Phuket Hospital immediately after graduation. I chose to work in the emergency unit because the work is much more challenging than it is in other wards.

We are not like any other ward in the hospital. The emergency room doesn't serve patients by queue number. We have a screening table and categorize patients by the emergency level of their case. There are emergency cases, those who come to the hospital bleeding heavily, not breathing or unconscious and they will get treatment within 10 seconds. Then there are urgent cases, where patients with broken bones or other injuries (not bleeding heavily) come in and they will be treated within 30 minutes. Lastly, there are non-urgent cases, which are patients that come in after regular hospital hours with just a headache or a regular illness; these patients will be treated last.

Most cases that are dealt with in the emergency room are from accidents and most accidents involve motorbikes. Some are serious and some [accidents] just cause minor injuries. We usually get reports from 4pm-7pm on the



Kittituch Maitreejit, 24, is a registered nurse at Vachira Phuket Hospital's emergency room. The Phuket native received his bachelor's degree from the Faculty of Nursing at Boromarajonani College of Nursing, Nakhon Si Thammarat. Here he shares some of his experiences of working in one of Phuket's busiest hospitals.



EMT at Vachira Phuket Hospital carries out external cardiac compressions.

weekdays and 4pm-2am on the weekend. Extended weekends are the busiest time for us, especially during the seven dangerous days around both the New Year and the Songkran celebrations. We always organize extra teams during these times of the year.

One case I worked on was an old man who came in with severe heart pain. We performed the EKG [electrocardiogram] test and discovered that he had a myocardial infarction. We were able to save him, but if he had come in a little later, he might not have made it.

He is safe and getting back to his normal life again. Every time

he comes back to see the doctor he comes to see me and thanks me for what I did. That makes me feel so good inside and reminds me why I wanted to be a nurse in the first place.

Some might treat their job like a routine; they just get through the day by getting whatever they have to do over with, so they can enjoy their personal time. But for me, helping people is more than just a job. When I see the faces of the people waiting for their loved ones outside of the emergency room, I know I have to try my best to save their lives. It is the best feeling in the world to help them.

Putting down a Phuket infrastructure myth

Island View

By Steven Layne

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

MANY o'coffee break and lunch hour have dwindled away in what to me is rapidly becoming one of the most annoying topics of debate: Phuket's transportation system, or lack thereof.

Ask most expatriate residents and self-proclaimed gurus on an indefinitely extended holiday, about the situation, and they'll matter-of-factly inform you that the island's infrastructure is a product of the local mafia.

Dare to entertain such a notion and you'll learn that the only hope for Phuket – these ever-enlightened wise men insist – is for "Bangkok muscle" to come in and sweep the island clean. That way Phuket can become just like Pattaya, Bangkok or any other place o'er the rainbow, take your pick.

One thing in particular that gets my blood boiling is the insistence that recently implemented taxi fare standards in Phuket are unreasonable – that a 48 kilometer trip (45 minutes to an hour) from Phuket International Airport to Karon beach at 1,300 baht is "ridiculous and a comparable trip anywhere else in the world would be cheaper".

Let's expel such myths once and for all.

From Hong Kong International Airport to Aberdeen (about 44 kilometers for a 40-60 minute commute) a metered taxi would cost about 375 Hong Kong Dollars or about 1,400 baht; similarly, a taxi from London Heathrow Airport to Central London would be no less than 42 UK pounds (about 2,000 baht); from Tokyo Narita Airport to central Tokyo, minimum 20,000 yen (about 7,900 baht). Indeed, comparable trips (using distance and/ or time as a

factor) by taxi in Paris, Berlin, Oslo, Amsterdam Sydney, Zurich, Rome, New York, and Honolulu would all cost more than 1,300 baht!

Even if this is Thailand, let's not dismiss the fact that Phuket boasts the highest cost of living in the country. Personally, I am not willing to pay 1,300 baht to get to Karon from the airport. But if I were here on holiday with the goal of getting to my hotel ASAP, I wouldn't hesitate to pay such a fare. However, as a Phuket resident living on modest earnings, the choice is simple: get your own wheels or suck it up and use the local public transport. Before I finally got my car, I was accustomed to using local public transportation, which is cheap and reliable during standard working hours.

If I ever needed to get to Karon from the airport on a budget, I would just catch the airport bus to Phuket Town, about an hour commute at 80 baht. From there, I would continue on a 40 baht *songtaew* the rest of the way, an additional 30 minutes. Creating a total price, for only a slightly extended commute, of 120 baht. Perhaps someday the proposed direct bus will do the same trip in under an hour for 100 baht or less.

In the mean time, the transport situation in Phuket will continue to improve – even if such progress happens in tiny increments. Change is inevitable, and the best changes won't likely happen overnight.

Issues & Answers... ...asking the questions that affect you...

Clarifying how to get your Thai passport

I read your First Person "Travelling Thais to get new Services in Phuket" and was confused about what I had to do to get a passport for my Thai husband. Do we come into the office here in Phuket to file for a passport?

Where do we pick it up? Do we have to wait for it to be mailed to us, because we can wait a couple of weeks, but I know the mail is running slow due to the flooding. Also the article said that it only took twenty people needing passports to get a mobile unit sent out – this doesn't sound like many at all.

Susan Morrow
Phuket Town

Phuket Passport Office Chief Benjapa Tubthong replies:

Thai people aged 20 and over who would like to file a passport application can come to our office.

Only a Thai ID card is required.

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

Submit your issue at

www.PuketGazette.net/IssuesAnswers

For applications submitted in Phuket, the process takes about seven days and you will be sent your new passport by post. Post is no longer being delayed by flooding in Bangkok.

In cases where you can't wait seven days there is another option: you can apply in Bangkok. It will take three days to process there and you will be able to collect your new passport from the Bangkok office.

The number of people needing a mobile unit is currently irrelevant. It wouldn't matter if it was a thousand people, because the dispatching of mobile units needs the authorization of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Where to play with my shuttlecock?

I will be visiting Patong, Phuket around March and April 2012. Is there a badminton club somewhere? How do I get a game with someone when I am over there?

Ian Dickinson
United Kingdom

Khunphon Pong Sri, owner of JJ Badminton Court, replies:

JJ Badminton Court is located on Rasadanuson road, Ban Kuku, Muang, Phuket.

It has 10 courts and costs 150 baht per hour. At this point in time we don't have a membership system set up.

However, call us at 076 52 5880. We would be glad for you to visit our badminton courts.

Kanpitcha Srikijaroenchai, owner of Andaman Badminton, replies:

Andaman Badminton Club is near Suan Luang Park, located on Phattana road behind Smart Gym,



A natural, slow (green banded) shuttlecock.

Talard Nua, Muang. It's the choice place for people who love to exercise.

We have 14 courts, eight of them are rubber and six of them are cement.

The rubber courts cost 150 baht an hour and the cement ones cost 100 baht per hour.

We are open between 4pm and 10pm. If you come after 6pm you'll have to make a reservation. I also suggest that you bring a partner with you, as it might be difficult to join a game if you come alone, because people usually come in groups. You can call us on 089 645 2848.

In Brief...

New Bangkok Airways Airbus to fly Phuket, Koh Samui, Chiang Mai, Bangladesh and India

BANGKOK Airways recently acquired a new Airbus 319, the airline's 18th aircraft.

With a total of 130 economy seats, the new craft will fly domestic and international routes serving at least five destinations including Phuket, Koh Samui, Chiang Mai, Bengaluru (Bangalore, India) and Dhaka (Bangladesh).

The latest addition to the Samui-based airline has been named, "Bangkok", and is the seventh Airbus 319 on Bangkok Air's current fleet of 18, which also includes eight ATR 72s and three Airbus 320s.

True Move launches new 3G+ and Wi-Fi service island wide

True Move has launched services for 3G+, its latest high speed wireless network offering, available all across Phuket, Bangkok and in every provincial seat nationwide.

Touted to be faster, stronger and more versatile than the company's predecessor 3G service, packages under the refined network – operating at a frequency of 850 megahertz per second – are promising speeds of up to 42 megabits per second (mbps).

3G+ service is offered in combination with nationwide Wi-Fi service that touts up to 8 mbps, and is reported to be accessible via 100,000 hot spots nationwide.

– Warisa Temram

Pornthip packaging takes to world stage

By Steven Layne

PORNTHIP (Phuket) Co Ltd, the island's most recognized food-gift brand, submitted two of its award-winning products to contest in the AsiaStar Awards 2011, also known as the "Packaging Oscars of Asia".

Having recently achieved national recognition at the ThaiStar Packaging Awards 2011, Pornthip's Andaman and Sino-Portuguese gift sets will now join the regional ranks along with 54 other submissions in the Consumer Package category.

Winning will not be a piece of cake, as submissions include only national level design award recipients from all over the Asia-Pacific region – the cream of the crop in Asia production.

Nonetheless, Marketing Manager at Pornthip, Nuthaya Krakoljanad, told the *Phuket Gazette* she remains hopeful.

Launched for Phuket's tourism markets in November 2010, Miss Nuthaya described the Sino-Portuguese and Andaman gift sets as collectible, cardboard, food gift

boxes that contain a variety of local snacks and sweets or *kanom*.

The Sino-Portuguese set features a collection of model replicas of some of Phuket Town's most famous historical buildings including the Phuket Thai Hua Museum, the City Clock Tower, Ang Mo Laow house, the Phuket Mine Museum and other antique architectural heritages around Dibuk Road, Thalung Road and Soi Romanee.

"The idea was to create a package worth keeping and at the same time remind and inform tourists about Phuket's heritage. We chose cardboard so as to not add to the plastic trash problem. Even if the packages are thrown out, they can degrade easily," she explained.

Appealing to animal lovers is the Andaman Gift Set: a collection of 12 sea creature character-box packages for dried seafood, fruits, cashew nuts and other local preserved and processed snack items.

While the Sino-Portuguese packages serve mainly as collectible items, Miss Nuthaya explained that the Andaman (character) packages were designed with 'reuse' in

mind, noting that the boxes can be used by children as coin banks or for keeping pencils and markers.

Though the idea and concept of the packages were the brainchild of Pornthip Chairman Wirawat Piamwiattiku, Miss Nuthaya confirmed that the actual designs were produced by Kamonthip Utarwuthipong and Nuntachai Santadkarn of Design Sense Ltd Part, a Bangkok-based design and branding consultancy.

Miss Nuthaya pointed out that the products were designed exclusively for the souvenir and food gift market, and not for export due to many of the snacks having a shelf life of less than six months.

She noted that in addition to the ThaiStar award, the Sino-Portuguese package design has also won two other design awards this year.

In October, it was the recipient of the Good Design Award (G Mark) in Japan and was one of 13 recipients of the "Design Excellence Award" (DEmark) at this year's Prime Minister's Export Awards held in Bangkok in Sep-



Above: Miss Nuthaya shows off the Andaman gift set. Below: An exhibit of the Sino-Portuguese gift set.



tember, which also includes categories that are for products not being exported.

As for the upcoming AsiaStar 2011 awards, which also includes submissions in categories for packaging designs for transport (13 entries), ecology (7 entries) and by students (42 entries), Miss Nuthaya is hopeful that Pornthip will do well when the entries are judged on January 11, 2012, in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

City park high-rise promising

ANNUAL returns of up to 10 per cent are being promised to those who invest in the condotel portion of The Light Suan Luang condominium project in Phuket Town.

Backed by Phuket Living Co Ltd, a former partner in the Royal Place Condominium project on the bypass road, The Light Suan Luang is a 447 million baht, 15-storey complex with a total built-up area of about 12,000 square meters.

Currently under construction on a 3,100 sqm plot off Chao Fa East Road, southeast of Rama IX (Suan Luang) Park, structural work is now half complete and should be finished by February. Interior work will require another several months to complete. Project completion is scheduled for June next year.

Upon completion, The Light Suan Luang will be one of Phuket Town's highest residential com-



MILLION BAHT VIEWS: Promotional poster for The Light Suan Luang condo. INSET: A view at the project's construction site, from the west side.

plexes. The other, the 15-storey Supalai Park@Downtown on Suthat Road, is also set for completion by the middle of next year.

Parichat Sena-norit, Marketing Manager of development firm Phuket Living Co Ltd, said, "The Light Suan Luang offers spectacular city, garden, and sea views with

a total of 186 units including studios, one and two bedroom units and penthouses."

Rooms on floors six, 11, 12 and 12a (13) have been designated for the project's condotel scheme.

"We will manage a total of 40 freehold units like hotel rooms for at least two years. We can guar-

antee returns of 6 to 10 % to the owners," she said.

"New contracts, to be considered at the end of the initial two-year period, will depend on how successful the business is going. The owners will not be obligated to sign new contracts and can choose to manage their unit independently if they wish," she said.

Foreign nationals are a prime target market and currently make up about 20 per cent of the project's confirmed tenants. About 75% of all units were sold off-plan, she said.

"We have about 20 units remaining [for the condotel portion]," she said. Units range in price from 1.7mn to 4.6mn baht.

For more information contact Phuket Living Sales Office (T:076-223344, W:TheLightCondo.Com).

– Steven Layne

Rub hub in the works

TRADERS in Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia are discussing plans to establish a physical rubber market next year, with an aim of centralizing international trade of the benchmark commodity.

According to an online report by the financial news agency Bloomberg, representatives from the Committee on Strategic Market Operations at the International Rubber Consortium Ltd, Indonesia Commodity & Derivatives Exchange, the Agricultural Futures Exchange of Thailand and the Malaysia Derivatives Exchange

recently held a meeting in Phuket to discuss the plans to establish a central trading rubber trading facility in Southeast Asia.

Though details of the proposed rubber hub were not disclosed, the report said that the Tokyo Commodity Exchange is tracking progress of the contract plan.

Since Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia account for 70 % of the world's natural rubber output, a regional market would contribute to increased pricing reliability and transparency, the report said.

– Bloomberg

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Labor shortage critical

By Warisa Temram

PHUKET: Industry analysts describe the labor shortage in the Phuket tourism industry as "critical", with as many as 4,000 vacant hotel positions as the island enters its annual high season for tourism.

Bhuritt Maswongsa, a vice president of the Phuket Tourist Association, said, "The lack of hotel employees has now reached a crisis point with 3,000 to 4,000 unfilled positions. Most are rank-and-file positions such as hotel receptionists, food and beverage service staff, kitchen crew and room maids. There is no shortage of managerial staff."

While Phuket already has a huge population of migrant laborers from other parts of Thailand, over 300,000 by most estimates, there are still not enough to meet the increased demand in the high season.

"Workers are aware that Phuket has the highest cost of living of any Thai province, but with monthly salaries not that much higher. Some companies have tried to solve the problem by providing free accommodation and other benefits, but they are still not enough to attract more people to



IN NEED INDEED: Analysts have estimated there are up to 4,000 job vacancies.

apply for jobs, said Mr Bhuritt, who is also deputy general manager at the Patong Resort Hotel.

Many people in flood-affected provinces including Bangkok have been laid off, but Phuket's reputation as an expensive place to live continues to deter people from seeking employment here. Fears of a recurrence of the 2004 tsunami disaster also continues to dissuade more migrant workers from relocating here, he said.

"In addition, a large segment of the unemployed nationwide are highly educated people who don't want to work as service staff.

They prefer management positions or opening their own businesses.

"The Government should step in and help solve this problem. Schoolchildren these days are only taught the value of education as it pertains to finding high-paying jobs. There isn't enough emphasis placed on the value of the work experience," he added.

The tourism industry labor shortage is a chronic, year-round problem in Phuket, but worsens during the high season when the number of visitors swells, he said.

Kritsada Tansakul, another PTA

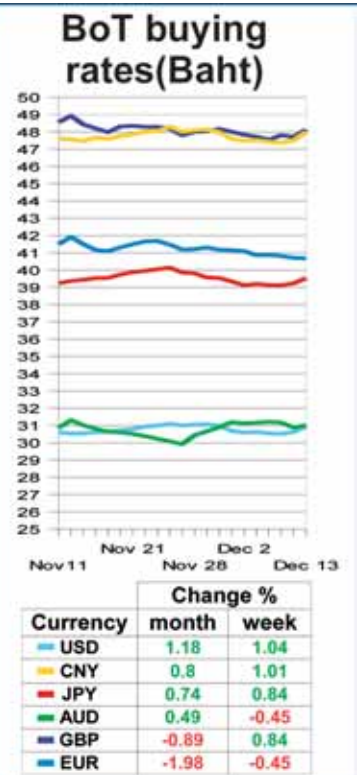
vice president, estimated the number of vacancies year round at about 1,800, the figure increasing to about 3,000 in the high season.

"This is the busiest time of the year for tourism in Phuket and labor demand has increased with the opening of many new guest houses. Those who work for a while and get enough experience move on to higher-paid positions, open their own businesses or move back to their home towns. This is why so many places are short of workers," he said.

Mr Kritsada suggested that employers seeking staff in other provinces provide them with free transport to the island as a way of demonstrating commitment and reliability.

Phuket Provincial Employment Office (PPEO) Chief Noppadol Ployudee said his office had tried various strategies of attracting more tourism industry workers to Phuket, but without much success as demand still far outstrips supply.

The PPEO organized job fairs in Nakhon Ratchasima and Si Sa Ket to try and attract workers to Phuket, but they weren't very successful. Most people are deterred by the high cost of living in Phuket which is higher than elsewhere in the country, he stressed.



Commodities		
	Current	Change (%)
Benzine 91	35.01	0
Gasohol 91 E10	31.98	0
Gasohol 95 E10	33.73	0
Gasohol 95 E20	30.98	0
Diesel	29.03	2.11
Thai Gold (96.5%)*	25,050	-1.76
Raw block rubber**	87.4	0.8
Raw liquid rubber**	88	0
STR block rubber***	106.15	0.84

*Price per one Baht unit = 15.244 grams
**Local price
***FOB via Bangkok
Source: Department of Internal Trade and Office of The Rubber Replanting Aid fund



BOOST A MOVE: Dancing Matt's groove promotes tourism in Bangkok.

Dancing globetrotter gives boost to tourism

INTERNET sensation Matthew "Dancing Matt" Harding was in Phuket last week to record his latest video and promote the Tourism Authority of Thailand's most recent promotional campaign: "Go Thailand: All That Is Missing Is You".

Perhaps the world's most well-known globetrotter, Matt's visit to Phuket lasted just one day. He met with the media at Mission Hills Phuket Golf Club prior to a shoot in the Kata-Karon area.

"This is my first time in Phuket, but my third or fourth time in Thailand. Phuket is beautiful. I spent some time watching the sun rise this morning. Today was a beautiful day," he said.

Dancing Matt certainly gets around. The video game designer and internet celebrity has done his trademark jig at hundreds of locations on six continents, and he shows no sign of slowing down.

After leaving Phuket, Matt plans

on visiting Bali, Manila, Hong Kong, the Maldives and Dubai before heading home to the United States.

Matt made stops to do his dance in Ayutthaya and Bangkok before he arrived in Phuket.

Matt is often cited as an example of an ordinary person transformed into a global celebrity via internet-based social networks. He started out simply by recording videos and posting them on YouTube for his family to watch, but many people fell in love with his simple but happy style of dancing and started monitoring his travels, turning him into a YouTube celebrity.

"I cannot really remember how many countries I have been to. I would say more than a hundred, and Thailand is my favorite. I will tell the world that Phuket is so beautiful. I am planning to come back to Phuket for vacation as well," he added.

- Chutharat Plerin

Wanted: Middle Eastern tourism

A CONSORTIUM of Phuket and Krabi tourism representatives recently returned from the Middle East where they held a road show to lure tourists back to Thailand.

"The floods scared many tourists who planned to visit Thailand. Many of them canceled their trips since they thought it was that bad," said Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (OrBorJor) President Paiboon Upatising.

The main objective of the road show, held in Dubai, UAE, and in Doha, Qatar, from November 28 to December 1, was to restore tourists' confidence in visiting Thailand, particularly Phuket and Krabi.

Mr Paiboon and other Phuket OrBorJor officials were joined by senior members of the Phuket and the Krabi tourist associations, and representatives from the Tourism Authority of Thailand.

"This road show was very successful. There are many people interested in Phuket. Part of the reason is because there is a direct flight from Doha to Phuket provided by Qatar Airways," said Bhuritt Maswongsa, a Phuket Tourism Association vice president.

"The Middle Eastern tourist market in Phuket has grown 100 per cent. We would like to maintain the number of tourists

coming from this region. This group of tourists can be our main target market during the [tourism] low season," he stated.

Krabi Tourism Association Vice President Ittarit Ginglek added, "We had a lot of people interested in Krabi. Although there is no direct flight from the Middle East [to Krabi], we are close enough to Phuket that we can attract people to come.

"We have our certified Halal food project up and running, which caters to tourists from this region. . . We are ready to welcome Middle Eastern tourists," he said.

- Warisa Temram

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Fourth 3G supplier to aid Phuket

CAT is set to roll out their new “My” service in January of next year.



AIS – HSPA works with the iPhone 4, 4S (right) and iPad 2, but does not work with the original iPad, or the iPhone 3G (left) or 3GS. Photo: Yutaka Tsutano

MAY I present some good news, some not-so-good news, and some news that keeps crawling out of the mailbag, like a gift from Santa that can't be returned.

We've waited years for 3G wireless internet service in Thailand. Now, suddenly, over the course of the past six months, we've got 3G coming out of our ears, in a wide array of incompatible, mind-numbingly complex varieties that even the sales clerks don't understand. And we ain't seen nothin' yet. There's at least one more phone company to Michael Crichton and *Jurassic Park*, we've hit a point in Phuket where “3G will out”. In spite of a decade of delays in auctioning off a specific channel for 3G communication (the so-called 2.1 GHz spectrum), with all sorts of porcine pretenders snorting at the trough, we've seen a plethora of 3G services, first from True, then from AIS, then from TrueMove (a subsidiary of True), and now DTAC. It looks like CAT is on the way, with its “My” service still rumored to be rolling out in January.

Here's a quick overview of where we are, and where we're headed.

Right now, AIS has the best 3G coverage on the island, with towers in almost all of the high traffic areas. It's reliable, with few reported outages, although service goes up and down in Rawai when it's raining. AIS is reasonably fast with typical international download speeds ranging from 700 to 1,500 Kbps, which is generally fast enough to stream video over a telephone or iPad, or run Skype with video. To see the latest reported internet

speeds, visit PhuketInternetSpeed.com, click on Search, and choose the Provider AIS – HSPA (3G). AIS service works with the original Samsung Galaxy S, the iPhone 4, 4S, and iPad 2, but does not work with the original iPad, or the iPhone 3G or 3GS. To see if your phone or tablet will work with AIS, take a look at gsmarena.com and see if your device supports HSPA at 900 MHz.

Surprisingly, even though TrueMove-H uses the theoretically superior HSPA+ technology, we're seeing TrueMove-H international download speeds between 600 and 1,400 Kbps, on average.

Reliability is good, but iPad 2 users report they have to reset their 3G carrier all the time. Coverage is good, but not as extensive as AIS. While True undoubtedly has the better technology, they aren't opening up their overseas lines. The net result is that, for international access here in Phuket, TrueMove-H isn't any faster than AIS. TrueMove-H will work with the iPhone 3G, 3GS, 4, and 4S. It will not work with the original Samsung Galaxy S. To see if it will work with your phone or tablet, go to www.gsmarena.com and look for HSPA support at 850 MHz.

DTAC just started a 3G service a few weeks ago. We don't have enough information collected to tell how fast it's running, but we do know that it uses the same towers as TrueMove-H. (Both True and DTAC sublease from CAT, which actually owns the towers and the frequency.) I've heard that there's extensive coverage in Phuket Town, but

haven't heard anything about outlying areas. DTAC has no reliable information about its Phuket HSPA service anywhere that I can find. The one map that's accessible online only shows the old EDGE/ GPRS towers, with the admonition “The Thai authorities have yet to issue licenses for 3G services”. Meh. DTAC service should be available for all of the phones and tablets that are covered by TrueMove-H.

You'd think that telecommunications companies would spotlight their latest wireless internet services with easily accessible details about what's on offer, and how much it costs. But of course you'd be wrong.

CAT has repeatedly said that it expects to get its “My” service up and running in January. The big benefit to CAT is that it's cheaper than the alternatives: AIS and TrueMove charge B 799 per month for “unlimited” service. CAT is on record as offering the same for B 590. “Unlimited” is a relative term; the rules seem to change from week to week, but right now “unlimited” at AIS and TrueMove seems to be pegged at 5 GB of data per month, after which your speed is throttled way back. CAT says “unlimited” is 4 GB per month. As for DTAC, who knows?

Please keep reporting your speeds! Crowd-sourced speed reporting really works. Write to me, Woody@KhunWoody.com, if you're concerned about how to get started. Take it from a card-carrying Dummy, it's easy.

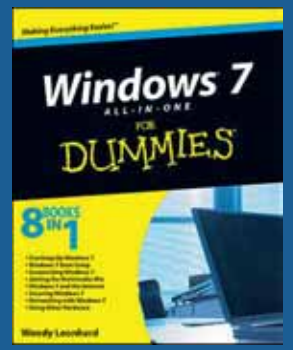
Live Wire is Phuket Gazette columnist Woody Leonhard's weekly snapshot of all things internet in Phuket. Follow him on Twitter: @PhuketLiveWire, or “like” his page at facebook.com/SandwichShoppe



Live Wire

By Woody Leonhard

Computer clinics morph



I HAVE been running weekly Computer Clinics on Sunday mornings at the Sandwich Shoppes for almost five years.

Many of you have written to me over the years, saying you can't make Sunday morning meetings or that many meetings have become standing-room-only affairs.

And – the final straw – I'm going to be starting a new book as soon as Windows 8 goes into the beta test phase. For about three months, I'm going to be locked away in my Dummies Book Bunker, churning out the 850-pages-or-so that will become known as *Windows 8 All-In-One For Dummies*.

I'll continue to write weekly *Live Wire* columns for the Gazette. Unfortunately, I won't be able to make it to weekly Computer Clinic meetings. You'll also notice a lapse in my activity on Facebook, Google+ and Twitter.

Seth Bareiss and I are will put together Wednesday afternoon meetings, twice a month, at the new Sandwich Shoppe location in Chalong (right around the corner from the old location). The Clinics will be hosted between 1 and 3pm on the second and fourth Wednesdays of every month, starting in January. We'll also run an afternoon clinic at Sandwich Shoppe Patong, on the first Wednesday of every month.

A group of stalwart Computer Clinic die hards have volunteered to keep the Sunday morning meetings going, but in a changed format, with an emphasis on solving PC problems and person-to-person networking. Bring your computer by Sandwich Shoppe Chalong on Sunday morning and see if the assembled guri can solve any PC problems.

Watch the *Phuket Gazette* Events Calendar for all the latest. – Woody

Gazette iPad App goes ‘top of the chart’ for Phuket

WITH close to 4,000 downloads since it's launch, the *Phuket Gazette's* latest iPad App has soared to the top of the App store's search results for “Phuket”.

The new version (1.1), launched on November 28, is rated 4.5 by the

Apps store and boasts greatly expanded content over its predecessor (1.0) launched in March of this year.

Among the new version's primary drivers are a striking new design; a new section dedicated to Sports; and the ability to

watch Phuket News and Events television streaming from the *Gazette's* PGTV channel.

Also in the new package are easier navigation, expanded social networking functions, and a user friendly ability to adjust font sizes.

According to the *Gazette's* marketing manager, Kristi Matzenberger, there is a “very cool” and completely silent [non-flashing, non-streaming] information box at the top of every page in the App.

“It doesn't roll, tick, stream, flash or otherwise distract readers. Its messages simply whisper in and whisper away, fading in and fading out, like mist,” she said.

The messages in the box include events (happy hours, brunches, wine dinners, regattas, triathlons, music festivals, trade shows); public holidays; selected classified ads; and the odd factoid.

Users of the *Gazette's* new App

will continue to enjoy all of the popular features including Daily News, Queer News and Lifestyle features, as well as the ability to comment in Forums; to place Classifieds; to promote Events in the Calendar; and to address edi-

tors with regard to issues that affect daily life on Phuket.

As for the future of Apps and

iPads generally, John Magee, publisher of the *Phuket Gazette*, is optimistic.

“I don't know whether the recent acceleration in downloads of our App is attributable to the huge expansion in content – now roughly 80,000 pages – or whether it's just the growing realization that tablets are a very important medium for accessing news and information,” he said.

“There are now roughly 32 million iPads out there and Apple are currently selling about 2.6 million a month. We were lucky to have entered that market when we did,” he noted.

All content in the iPad App originates from the *Gazette* Online, which continues to enjoy Google's top ranking for any website in or about Phuket.

Phuket Gazette readers are invited to download the new App, which is free of charge.

– *Phuket Gazette*



Kristi Matzenberger



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Bad investments: A fiscal toy story

A guide to where you shouldn't put your money

Retirement Years

By David Mayes

I OFTEN write about things which I think may or may not be worth considering as an investment. Today I would like to try and get my readers to understand some things which generally are considered as bad investments.

Professionals in my industry usually will vary greatly on their opinions of what is a good investment at any one point in time, but one area in where there is a lot of agreement is in things which generally should not be considered as an investment.

I am not saying you should not buy any of these following things, but just understand the difference between a toy and investment and what percentage your wealth is appropriate for each. One mistake I commonly see is people putting way too much of their net worth into a toy and justifying it to themselves as an "investment". This is

especially true for cars, and even more so in a country such as Thailand, where they are taxed to the moon and a rip off in my opinion. I am not saying you should not have a safe and reliable vehicle to get you from point A to point B, but simply that your budget should not be stretched because back in America you drove a BMW and feel like you would be taking a step backwards in life by driving anything less.

Unless your income has tripled in line with the increase in stocker prices in this country compared with back home, keep your car budget in line with your finances and not your preferred brand. Don't kid yourself that you are making an investment by buying a high end vehicle, even though they depreciate slower here than back home, an investment is something which should appreciate. A Honda Jazz will get you around just fine, anything above this is a luxury which is cutting into your investment budget unless your wealth is such that the

difference in sticker price for upgrading to a Benz doesn't make you blink.

Generally speaking I think most people overspend on cars and trade in for new vehicles far too often to try and keep up with the infamous Jones family. Boats are second on my list of wastes of money. Don't get me wrong, I love them, and in fact plan to move my whole family onto a sailboat at some point in the future as long as I can figure out how to get over my wife's fear of sun-tans. Unless you are a serious water lover and plan to spend day after day on your boat, it is much cheaper to rent them. If you have money to burn go ahead and buy one, but there is a reason they call a boat a "hole in the ocean that you pour money into".

These are just two common toys which often soak up a disproportionate share of people's wealth, but the list can include planes, toy figurines and other collectibles, and even sometimes properties (if they are a second

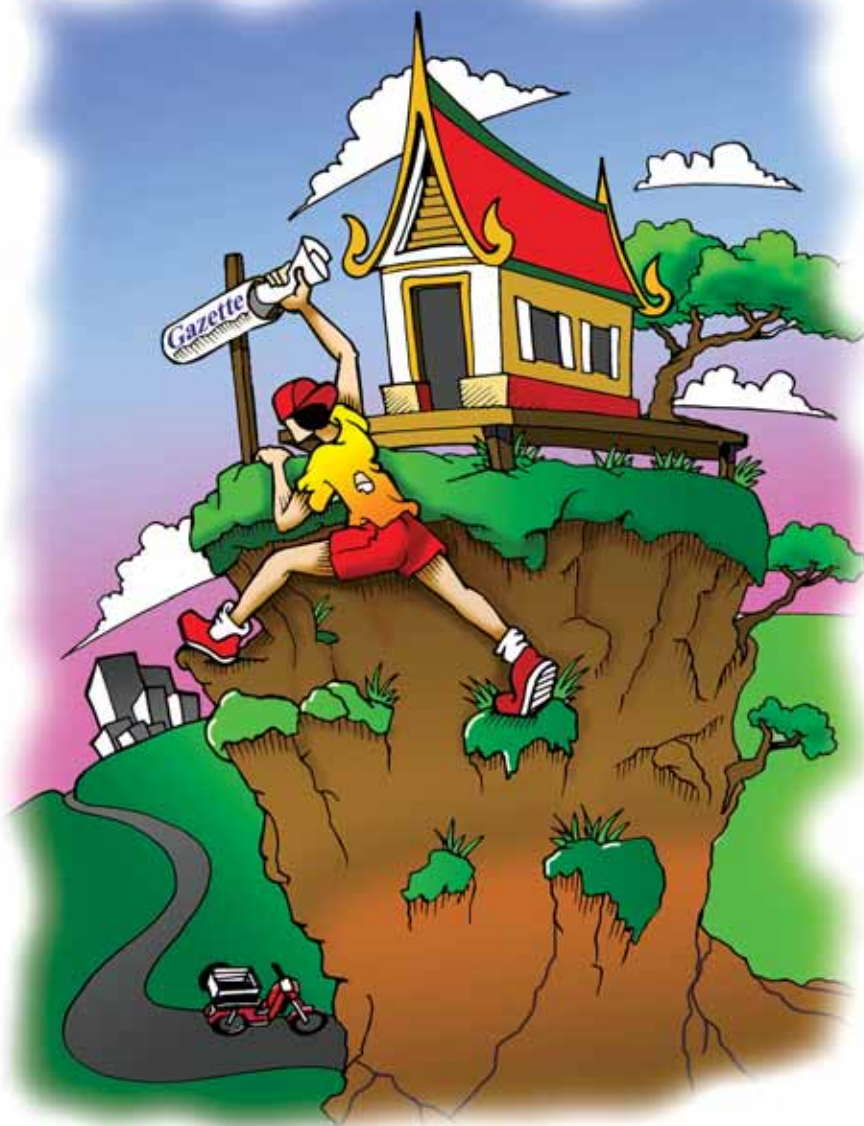


What's the difference between a toy and an investment? Photo: Retromobile

property that is not appreciating and is a drain on resources due to maintenance costs). The main distinction between a toy and an investment is pretty simple. Does it appreciate or depreciate? Does it generate income or require costly continuous maintenance? If you plow the bulk of your free cash into investments and are sparing in your purchase of toys,

you can make sure your wealth is around to take care of you in the event you should live to be 102.

David Mayes MBA lives in Phuket and provides wealth management services to expatriates around the globe, specializing in UK pension transfers. He can be reached at 085-335-8573 or by email at david.m@faramond.com



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Water, water, everywhere!

Property and families have been destroyed by the recent floods in Thailand. What is Mother Nature trying to tell us?



SWAMPED: The average annual rainfall for Thailand has jumped from an average of 1,200mm a few years ago to over 2,000mm in 2011. Photo by Daniel Julie

By Patrick Campbell

WHEN I flew across the Pacific some weeks ago, the final descent took us over the central plains of Thailand. Looking down, there was water as far as the eye could see.

It was a scene awash in melancholy: paddy fields and roads submerged out of sight, whole settlements isolated by flooding, and the few trees in the landscape were up to their boughs in water.

We all know the power of this inundation: now more than 600 people are missing, hundreds of thousands rendered homeless and destitute, the livelihoods of countless farmers gone. The financial cost is massive; the human cost incalculable.

And who is to blame? While attention in the national media has focused on the slow and indecisive action on the part of politicians, illegal building across canals, on “dams and water management designed for an older era”, few have judged the

actual storms to be anything other than a natural catastrophe, an occurrence, like earthquakes, hurricanes and droughts, to be expected. Hardly anyone has attributed any blame to greenhouse gas emissions or global warming; to man’s mismanagement of the planet. But it is worth noting that the average annual rainfall for Thailand has gone up steeply from 1,200mm a few years ago to over 2,000mm in 2011. Pure coincidence? Maybe, but one thing is certain, if you tamper with Mother Nature, sooner or later, she will get her own back.

We are living in an era where climatic patterns, particularly in tropical regions, have been rendered unstable by an atmosphere struggling to deal with its highest concentrations of carbon dioxide in 600,000 years.

Although the jury may still be out on the effects of global warming on rainfall, it looks increasingly more likely that there

is an effect. Put crudely, warm air holds more moisture than cooler air, and this causes heavier precipitation. What is accepted by ecologists everywhere, is the almost irreversible impact of global deforestation. If Thailand’s recent rash of floods has a root cause that predates the mismanagement of its rivers, dams and canals, it resides in its systematic destruction of rainforest.

Thailand’s recent record is lamentable and a consequence of cultivating cash crops, commercial logging, forest fires, industrial and urban development. From 1945 to 1975 Thailand lost 28.4 per cent of its forest cover; between 1975 and 2005, about 60 per cent of the remaining primary rainforest was lost.

The effect of this on the atmosphere is tangible. After all, the foliage of trees filters out huge amounts of carbon dioxide during photosynthesis, and also releases life-enhancing oxygen

into the environment. Cut the trees down, and oxygen levels will be seriously depleted. Worse, if you use slash and burn techniques, most of the stored carbon will be released back into the air. It is estimated that tropical deforestation discharges 1-5 billion tonnes of CO₂ into our polluted atmosphere every year.

Arboreal degradation does not help. Replace tropical bio-diverse forests with a mono-specific cash crop such as rubber trees, oil palms or – as has happened in north Thailand – with eucalyptus, and most arboreal benefits will disappear. Such crops drain the same nutrients from the soil time and time again eventually depleting these plantations, which may become arid.

However, there is another affect of deforestation that is precisely relevant to Thailand’s present watery problems. Trees are nature’s way of coping with saturated earth and too much water. Their canopies act as spongy umbrellas, soaking up much of the rain as it falls, and slowing down the process of surface run-off.

The water that does reach the ground is quickly absorbed, first by organic matter such as leaf litter and then by root systems. These roots both take up moisture, and create channels in the soil, which increase the rate of absorption of water. Better still, a living tree “breathes” by a process known as transpiration, thus gradually returning 99% of this retained moisture back into the atmosphere.

Trees have one other crucial function. Their roots help to bind and retain soil, especially precious, humus-rich top soil. This layer of soil is usually thin and often conceals rock beneath. Protected by rainforests, the rate of top-soil erosion is low, but in areas denuded of trees the rate is high.

When trees on steep slopes are removed (often illegally) by loggers or so-called property developers, the effect is to make whole hillsides prone to rock slips and landslides.

A warning note was sounded during the heavy rains of 1988, when whole areas of Khao Luang mountain in south Thailand, partly cleared to make way for a rubber plantation, crashed down on the villages below. Several hundred inhabitants were killed.

I live in Phuket because it is a mountainous island and because secondary rainforest still covers most of its uplands. Phuket has escaped serious flooding during the recent heavy downpours. However, where hillside trees have been uprooted in the name of “progress”, such deforestation has resulted in mud-slides, which have caused considerable damage, and threatened to engulf the properties below.

And it is not just the landscape that has suffered here. Much of this liquefied soil or silt finds its way onto beaches and worse, into the sea, where the run-off creates huge slicks of suspended particles of mud.

Coral, along with its precious micro-organisms, undisturbed for aeons in limpid seas, is suddenly engulfed by suffocating clouds of silt. It dies.

But in parts of northern and central Thailand, in the plains of the rice belt and beyond, the problem is incomparably worse. Too few trees to help mop up the surplus water, to absorb all that excess moisture and gradually return it to the atmosphere. Only flooded roads and paddy fields, swollen, silted waterways, and sodden settlements.

Mother Nature is not a respecter of persons or resources. The inevitable breaching of Bangkok’s defenses was only a matter of time. One of the world’s great citadels has failed to keep her fury at bay.



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Phuket jet-skis on the rise

PHUKET: The Phuket Marine Office has decided to take it easy on jet-ski rental operators who haven't registered their jet-skis, the quarterly meeting of Phuket's honorary consuls was told at Phuket Provincial Hall yesterday.

"Since we started managing jet-ski rental operations in 2007, we have had 219 jet-skis [for rent]. We are still trying to control the number of jet-skis [for rent]. However, we have found 70 jet-skis that are unregistered," Phuket Marine Office Chief Phuripat Theerakulpisut told the consuls.

The Marine Office is not planning to take legal action against the offending jet-ski operators, but instead has asked them to cooperate with his office's efforts, he said.

The 70 jet-skis are planned to be brought into the system and registered under a specially created category with the Phuket Marine Office.

"Also, the jet-skis will be registered for particular zones, which means that jet-skis being rented out in Patong cannot be used in other areas," he added.

The primary aim of the move is to be able to make sure that all rental jet-skis in Phuket are covered by first-class insurance, said Chief Phuripat.

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Phuket TV

Regatta to start in early December

Phuket Regatta, Asia's biggest and most popular Regatta in the south of Phuket from the third to

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Sports

FC Phuket to battle Warriors in Saraburi on Saturday

FC Phuket returns to action tomorrow evening when they will face Saraburi FC.

A 6pm kickoff at the Saraburi Provincial Administration Stadium, the match follows a 41-day hiatus from league football for the team.

Phuket's Sarach Yooyen, who competed in the 26th Southeast Asian Games in Indonesia as well as give players and coaching staff who were affected by flooding an opportunity to tend to their homes and families.

It is because of the floods that Phuket Coach Sompong Wattana will not be heading the team this weekend.

In his place will be Assistant Coach Apichart Mosika. Apichart, a 57-year-old native of Nakhon Si Thammarat, started training the team on November 18.

Club Secretary Soranun Sanae explained, "Coach Sompong's house in Bangkok has been flooded and he needs time to take care of this, and has asked his friend, coach Apichart, to help."

In 2010, Apichart was head coach for Division Two side Rayong FC.

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MY pleasure by the bay

The 11th annual Asia Superyacht Rendezvous graces Phuket this week



MY ONYX: One of the Superyachts expected at this year's event.

PHUKET romantics who like sitting on the beach gazing off to the distant horizon at sunset are in for treat this weekend as some of the finest luxury yachts in Asia ply Phuket's west coast as part of the annual Asia Superyacht Rendezvous.

The Rendezvous, now in its 11th year, is the longest-running superyacht event in Asia and boasts the largest gathering of superyachts in the region, explained Nina Larsson, Public Relations and Event Manager for the Rendezvous.

Confirmed to join this year's edition of the premier are the Sailing Yacht (SY) *Asia*, Motor Yacht (MY) *Onyx*, MY *Maverick*, MY *Aveline*, MY *Hye Seas 2*, MY *Cavallino*, MY *Andara*, MY *Celebrity*, MY *Samax*, SY *Cilam* and the SY *Silandra*.

The event gets underway on December 16 with the marshalling of the superyachts in Surin Bay, where captains, crew and guests will head ashore to the Surin Hotel.

Race Director Andy Dowden will conduct the Captains' Brief-

ing at 6pm with sailing instructions for the next day's course, before loosening his top button for the opening cocktail party on board the MY *Andara*.

"Andara Resort & Villas Phuket has customized two private motor yachts – the 28m *Andara* and the 35m *Celebrity* – to explore the coastline and visit nearby islands in absolute luxury," said Ms Larsson.

"Finished to match the Andara standard, the yachts offer the same level of comfort and service while floating on the crystal clear Andaman Sea," she added.

The superyachts will get underway at the respectable time of 10:30am the next day on their cruising course, to be set according to conditions on the day.

After a jaunt along Phuket's west coast, the superyachts will reconvene back in Surin Bay in time for The Feadship Challenge and Cocktail Party.



LOCAL CELEBS: Andara and Celebrity will be hosting some parties.

Now a tradition at the Rendezvous, the "Challenge" is a gutter boat race in which crew from the competing yachts are required to construct a unique model boat from a simple kit and with only one team member's wind power, blow it down a three-meter gutter course amidst cheers from all.

Teams will be competing for nothing less than the glory of being crowned champions for 2011.

The final day of the event this year will see crews contesting the Rendezvous' first-ever "Treasure Hunt".

"The Treasure Hunt is an exciting booty scramble that will take place both on land and in the water around the Surin Bay," Ms Larsson explained.

"It will involve different stations with clues and riddles and will also involve the yachts, crew, owners and guests," she added.

Mrs Larsson gave no hints as to either what the treasure hunt

will require the teams to do or what the prize will be.

"Secrecy is utmost," she smiled.

The latest fun contest to be added to the Rendezvous marks the event's growth in appeal to superyacht owners over the past decade.

"While enjoying a luxury yacht setting, some of the Asia Superyacht Rendezvous superyachts stream out for the distinctly different cruising on Thailand's Andaman coast following our event," said Gordon Fernandes, General Manager of Asia Pacific Superyachts and co-organizer of the annual prestigious event.

"Owners, captains and crew love visiting Phuket as Southeast Asia offers so much in diversity and adventure. Phuket is stepping up to be the Monaco of the East," added co-organizer Captain Charles Dwyer of the sailing yacht *Yanneke Too*, renowned in Phuket as one of the premier cruising yachts in the region.

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FEAST FOR THE EYES TOO: The Andaman coastline will be the backdrop to this Rendezvous.

A blistering effort yields stout respect

By Marc Mulloy

THEY may not have made their way into the Guinness Book of World Records, but Jay Walker and Russell Distance Russell made their way into local folklore on December 11 after walking three-legged for over 16 hours and 40 minutes and covering over 70km.

The two men, also known on the island by their DJ monikers "Shark" and "Sniffer" were trying to break the current 3 legged world record of 100.13km which was set back in 2008 and were doing it to raise money and awareness for The Phuket Animal Welfare Society (PAWS).

Despite a valiant attempt they were forced to retire after 70km with severe blisters making it impossible to walk.

"Half of my foot had just peeled off and I walked the last few kilometers on raw skin - which I can tell you, is mighty painful," said Jay.

Speaking to the *Phuket Gazette* after the attempt a bedraggled Russell described the ordeal.

"It was an immense experience and incredibly painful. We were on the brink of doing some serious injury. 70km is almost two back-to-back marathons which we did three-legged - a totally different gait," he said.

Despite not reaching their goal, they did achieve their target of raising funds and awareness for PAWS with over 100,000 baht

raised in sponsorship.

"We had a few people sponsor us just for doing it and others per kilometer. The interesting thing is if we had attempted this a couple of years ago, when the record stood at 38 km, it would have been easy. I now have a lot of respect for the Australian record-holders and would love to meet them to find out if they hit the wall as we did and to see what training they did."

When asked if he would ever attempt this record again Russell was unequivocal, "I don't think so. Watch this space, but I'm pretty sure I won't be attempting this particular record again. The biggest thing for me in this attempt has been the support that we've had from people all over the world who sponsored us, gave us messages of support and particularly those who came to the Thanyapura Sports and Leisure Club to walk with us throughout the night."

Despite not having broken the Guinness World Record they both set a personal record of being strapped together for 16 hours and 40 minutes while walking 70km and it is unlikely that anyone will break that particular record again.

"It's a kind of bittersweet feeling. We're devastated that we missed the mark, but hugely proud of what we actually accomplished" said Russell.

If you'd like to help PAWS then go to W: pawspuket.com for more information.



DISAPPOINTED: Russell was at the PAWS fundraiser after the ordeal.



Russell and Jay were able to keep up a steady 5kph in the beginning.



THREE'S A CROWD: One problem with a three legged walk is constantly changing your gait to accomodate your partner.

Electrofest to hit Karon

FOLLOWING a trend in electronic music festivals around the world Phuket is set to throb and pulsate its way into the New Year with its very own festival.

Last year Pattaya was host to a Creative Electronic Music and Dance Festival organized by the Department of Intellectual Properties and the Ministry Of Commerce.

This year's Phuket Electronic Music and Dance festival will be held on Karon Beach in conjunction with New Year festivities in an effort by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) to rebuild tourist confidence and improve, through music, the image of Thai tourism.

Another goal of the Phuket Electronic Music and Dance Festival 2011 is to encourage talented young Thai electronic artists and modernize the electronic music industry in Thailand. To this end there will also be a Creative IP DJ Hunt 2011 Southern Region, to promote electronic music in Thailand, with prize money of 20,000, 10,000 and 5,000

baht for the top three winners as well as prizes from co-sponsor Pioneer DJ.

The two-day festival will showcase an exciting line up of more than 30 local and international DJs

Top Thai DJs include J Monton and Dom Parkorn Lam, Mark Brain, Slick and Domination (winner of the Best Video DJ of the World contest in Dubai 2011).

This is also the first time that more than ten top clubs in Phuket will participate in the festival.

The Creative IP DJ Hunt will take place on Karon Beach starting at 3pm on December 30 with the opening ceremony at around 10pm. The following day the New Year 2012 Countdown Ceremony on Karon Beach will start at around 11:30pm.

Fashion TV is also a co-organizer of the event and will broadcast the event to its audiences around the world.

This mega-event is sponsored by the *Phuket Gazette* and partner *Blue Wave 90.5FM*.

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An improvement on perfection?

On the Menu

By Sam Wilko

DEPENDING on your concept and interpretation of life, you could take the "If it ain't broke don't fix it" approach or simply strive to improve what you're actually already very good at. Silvano Amolini, Executive Chef at Dusit Thani Laguna is most definitely a man of the latter category.

And typically of Signor Silvano, he has recently introduced an innovative new menu in the resort's flagship restaurant, La Trattoria. Hopefully without falling back on hyperbole, I could hand-on-heart say that its range of textures, tastes and presentation is nothing short of sensational – not that last year's award-winning selection wasn't an entrancing wander through Italian gastronomic excellence, mind you.

As mentioned in a *Gazette* review of La Trattoria last year, Chef Silvano is a markedly distinctive culinary craftsman; his dishes stand out because of his light approach to clever pairing of flavors and textures: Put more prosaically, he's a one-off.

And La Trattoria itself is no slouch: It's a pleasure to sit early evening on its terrace and watch the sun slip into the Andaman while the thwack, thud and hiss of waves hitting Bang Tao Beach mingle with a far-off tinny operatic Italian baritone. This restaurant certainly has the "it"

factor in spades and is one of Phuket's most distinguished beachside eateries.

Space limitations dictate that it'd be impossible to go through all the changes that Chef Silvano has introduced but, in the words of the maestro himself, "It's a new dimension". For starters, tuna carpaccio with crispy fennel, rocket salad and orange wedges is swiftly followed by crispy poached egg on a perfectly-executed bed of sautéed spinach cheese fondue and mushrooms.

Sound good? It gets even better with an excellently piquant Australian mussel stew with Italian parsley, fresh tomato, black pepper, garlic croutons and Sardinian *fregola* pasta.

From the Noodles and Risotto menu selection comes a saffron risotto with duck *foie gras* and veal reduction which is probably the best risotto I've sampled in years – the *foie gras* more than complementing the dish. From the Mains Fish section we try out pan-fried grouper filets with capers and parsley sauce, marinated zucchini and slabs of white polenta. Moving on to the Mains Meat dishes, lamb chops with Sicilian pistachio crust, braised red onions and carrot purée is good, hearty Italian country fare with a strong character and excellent aftertaste.

Finally, a crunchy Sicilian cannoli with sheep ricotta, candied fruits and chocolate shaves admirably represents the *dolce*

selection.

And here's the part you've been waiting for: price-wise the most expensive dish, the lamb, clocks in at 1,100 baht while starters are 380 baht and mid-range prices around 500-600 baht apply for the noodles and risotto.

After a few discreet inquiries, we learn that about 80 per cent of the surrounding tables are taken by repeat diners, some on their sixth-night running. I daresay that I'd join them if I lived close enough and had the money, but hey, we can all dream.

The restaurant's wine list thankfully eschews the "all-Italian" approach and embraces world wines from a decently priced 1,100 baht bottle to a blowout 25,000 baht Bordeaux premiere crue.

I'd rate La Trattoria the best Italian fine-dining restaurant in Phuket (and by extension in southern Thailand) for its winning combination of setting, excellent cuisine and impeccably-sourced ingredients, faultless service and fair-minded prices. It's certainly not cheap for Phuket, but is in fact a bargain for Swiss and Australian tourists, both of whom have great current exchange rates. If you're looking for fine Italian dining in an elegant setting I'd highly recommend La Trattoria.

La Trattoria, Dusit Thani, Laguna T: 076-326900 – Open: Breakfast 7-11am, Dinner 6:30-10:30pm, Dress code: Casual, no shorts, Seats 130.



BIG MUSSELS: A piquant Australian mussel stew with Italian parsley, fresh tomato, black pepper, garlic croutons and Sardinian *fregola* pasta.



Dusit Executive Chef Silvano Amolini



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DIVINE: Crispy poached egg on a perfectly-executed bed of sautéed spinach cheese fondue and mushrooms.

Nyonya-Baba link to Phuket and Penang

Looking Back

By Anand Singh

THE Chinese community in Malaya grew rapidly during the 19th century.

During this period, many Chinese immigrants were arriving in Malaya in hopes of finding jobs in the booming tin-mining industry. Most of the Chinese immigrants were concentrated around large tin centers along the Malay Peninsula, such as Malacca, Penang and Phuket.

Chinese immigrants were usually young unmarried men. Even if they were married, few would have brought their wives with them on such a long and difficult journey into a completely new world. Many Chinese immigrants were therefore not reluctant to take Malay, Sumatran or Javanese women as their wives or concubines once they had settled down. Their descendants, who were ethnic mixes of Malay and Chinese, became known as "Nyonya-Baba". The Nyonya-Baba soon became a separate group within the Chinese community in Malaya. The descendants of first generation Chinese settlers were mostly of Sino-Malay ethnic mixes.

The Sino-Malays who were born in Penang, Malacca and other cities on the peninsula in later years developed their own unique culture. They retained some of the Chinese traditions that had been passed down from their forefathers, but also adopted many aspects of Malay and Western culture.

The term "Baba" is derived from Hindi and is often used in Indian culture to address a respected elder or a wise person. Ethnic Chinese men who were born in the strait settlements during this time were often addressed as Baba, as a sign of respect.

Women on the other hand were addressed as "Nyonya", a Malay term used to address non-Malay women of high social standing. The term "Nyonya" could be traced back to the Portuguese language, meaning "grandmother". Whilst Baba men preferred to dress themselves in suits and western attire, the Nyonya ladies dressed in distinctly Malay clothes. Their home-cooked food was an interesting mix of English, Malay, Thai, Indian and Chinese cuisine.

Although English was the preferred language of education in the Nyonya-Baba community, the Nyonya-Baba of Penang spoke a strange mixture of Hokkien Chinese, English and Malay. Marriages were kept within the community and between those of equal socioeconomic status. After the marriage, the man would

move in to live with his wife's family. Because of this it was not uncommon for wealthy families to seek promising young bachelors to marry their daughters, in order to increase the amount of "talent" in the family. The sons-in-law would help support his new family by joining and working for the family business.

The earliest Nyonya-Baba community probably started in Malacca. In Malacca and Singapore, they are sometimes referred to as "Peranakan Cina", or "local-born Chinese". To be Nyonya-Baba, one had to be born in Malaya, Sumatra, Java or any of the strait settlements. However not every ethnic Chinese born in Malaya was a Nyonya-Baba unless they displayed certain characteristics. They dressed a certain way, spoke their own mix of languages and were typically educated in English.

Because of their inherited wealth and their English-medium education, most Nyonya-Baba families were economically better off than first generation Chinese immigrants.

Their fluency in English allowed them to work in the British civil service or as doctors and lawyers. Together with their family wealth and social connections, the Nyonya-Baba community rose to become the Chinese elite during their heyday.

The community in Penang started much later in the late 18th or early 19th century. The Nyonya-Baba people were coastal traders and businessmen. Many Baba men built their network of business interests in many small ports and towns along the Thai-Malay Peninsula, all the way up to Rangoon.

From the 19th century onwards, Nyonya-Baba culture had become evident in Phuket as more and more Baba businessmen ventured into Phuket's tin-mining industry.

Since the 19th century, Phuket became an important tin-mining center for Chinese businessmen in Penang. Soon many more Nyonya-Baba were settling in Phuket as the tin industry grew and more wealthy families started establishing their business headquarters on the island.

The Nyonya-Baba elite of Phuket strengthened their relationships with the Penang Nyonya-Baba community through marriage alliances. Well-bred Nyonya from Penang were highly sought after as daughters-in-law by wealthy families in Phuket. Marriage was a way of creating more wealth amongst the wealthy, therefore the rich usually married within their ranks. During this period, although Phuket was part of Siam, and Penang was an island within the British Empire, Phuket was more closely tied with Penang than with any other city in the region.



DAPPER: Nyonya-Baba men favored Western attire.



DEMURE: The women leaned towards Malay styles.



ORIENTAL ORNATE: A distinct Chinese influence can be seen within Nyonya-Baba homes of Phuket.



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Movie review of 2011

A run-down of movie releases over the past year



Film

By Fraser Morton

EXPECT a barrage of year end reviews and lists in coming days.

Newspapers love them. They close a chapter, let us remember if we should remember a year at all, and remind us of what, if anything, we should hold onto from these past 12 months.

Was the *Tree Of Life* a defining moment in cinema history, or a yawn-a-minute trip down the rabbit hole to passing out on the sofa? In a world gone mad with lists and awards, here is our homage to the list and our "Not Best But We Think They Should Be On A List Of Films Of The Year Award". There's also a selection which irked us too. And one book, just to be different.

January was depressing

It takes a few weeks for us all to get into the swing of a new year, and the same was true for film in 2011. It was slim pickings, but *Company Men* (Ben Affleck, Tommy Lee Jones, Kevin Costner) a drama about a group of company men who fall on hard times during post-credit crunch America was a surprise hit. We salute this little-known film and in the same sentence advise you to sidestep *The Green Hornet* (Seth Rogen, Cameron Diaz) released in the same month.

February was not fun

Bieber fever gripped the world again, with the release of his documentary *Never Say Never*. With US\$ 98 million in US box office takings to date, the world is still mad for the 17-year-old singer.

March was for mega-budgets

The month started with release

of *The Adjustment Bureau* (Matt Damon, Emily Blunt). It amassed US\$ 128 million from a budget of US\$ 50mn. It was terrible, but turned a profit. *Rango* will no doubt feature on many 2011 lists. Starring Johnny Depp, this computer-animated Western about a chameleon, *Rango*, was a critical and box office success, taking more than US\$ 242mn in the US alone from a US\$ 135mn budget.

Sci-Fi action flick *Battle For Los Angeles* was the month's other box office mega-movie. Aaron Eckart starred as the platoon sergeant hellbent on stopping a fleet of hellraising aliens from taking over Earth. With a budget of US\$ 70mn, the movie took a staggering US\$ 211mn. *Limitless* (Bradley Cooper, Robert De Niro) was another hit, reeling in US\$ 156mn from a US\$ 27mn budget.

Jane Eyre, *Kill The Irishman* and *Paul* were the less grandiose films of the month that piqued our interest.

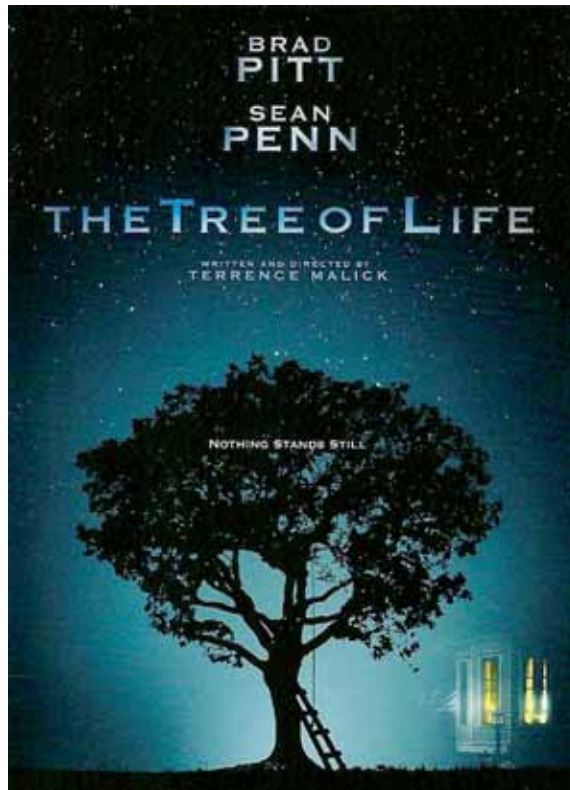
April was a long time ago

The Conspirator, directed by Robert Redford, was one of the films of the year. Delving into the events surrounding the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln, and starring the trio of James McAvoy, Tom Wilkinson and Erin Wright, this was a beautifully executed film and a must see if you like historical dramas.

Water for Elephants with *Twilight*'s Robert Pattinson and Christopher Waltz was the most

underrated film of the year. Set in the time of the Great Depression, this was a charming slow dance back in time.

The Greatest Movie Ever Sold



MOVIE OF THE YEAR: *Tree of Life* won the Palme d'Or, but was it the movie of the year?

from *Super Size Me* director Morgan Spurlock was a fun, fascinating launching pad into the heady world of Brand America. If you liked his previous documentaries, you won't be disappointed on this outing.

May was momentous

US\$ 485mn said cinemagoers paid appreciation to *Thor*. The hammer-wielding blonde barbarian-god banished to Earth to meet the damsel-in-distant distress was a formula which resonated with audiences worldwide. It helps having Natalie Portman and Anthony Hopkins nailed to the movie poster too to pry open movie fans' wallets.

Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides was the fourth time Johnny Depp got dressed up as Keith Richards, and fans of the franchise weren't disappointed, US\$ 1 billion at the box office is testament to that.

Then there was the movie everyone in Thailand was waiting for: *The Hangover Part II*. The Wolf Pack's tawdry exploits in the capital, or "Hola, City of Squalor", was a laugh-a-minute dredging of debauchery. A throng of Phuket expats served as extras in the film, which made it feel, for a moment, like Hollywood had extended an open hand to Phuket.

The Tree of Life won the Cannes Palme d'Or, and the film of the year according to many. A surreal tale of the meaning of life viewed almost dialogue free through the eyes of a man who casting his gaze back on his life, and the loss of his brother. With dramatic scenes taking the viewer into the far reaches of space and into supernovas, to gusting

through nebulas and diving into the deepest, darkest pockets of Earth's oceans, and surging with waves crashing to shore, this movie takes you on a journey of interconnectivity. Life is indeed a tree. It's either the most beautiful film you've ever seen, or a fast way to fall asleep on the sofa. Either way, you have to experience it.

June was just super

JJ Abrams *Super 8* alien-on-the-lam flick was on most people's lips in June. As was *X-Men: First Class* and another comic book adaptation *Green Lantern* which we thought were hmmm-kay, and worth a few hours of your time if you like the genre. Oh, and of course, *Transformers: Dark Side Of The Moon* sent fans of Michael Bay's slow-motion action sequences into a state of well robotic sensory overload. It didn't compute with the critics despite being a box office smash (more than US\$ 1bn).

July was for funnies

Horrible Bosses was the comedy release of July, if not for the sole amusement of seeing Colin Farrel in his fat suit, acting absurdly funny in the theme of the movie's title.

Cowboys & Aliens (Daniel Craig, Harrison Ford) wasn't meant to be a comedy, but we giggled and liked it nonetheless.

Other funnies of July included *Friends With Benefits* (Justin Timberlake, Mila Kunis) which we rolled our eyes at, but had millions reaching in their pockets to see.

That little-known franchise of films, Harry Potter, churned out another one in July, *The Deathly Hallows Part II*, and was the box office hit of year at the time of writing with US\$ 1.3bn.

August was for Apes

Any movie where an ape rides a horse is worth some ink. *Rise Of The Planet Of The Apes*: see it, enough said.

The Inbetweeners movie, a spin-off from the sit-com about a group of hapless British teenagers, was a surprise hit with critics and at the UK box office, generating a UK45mn pounds from a UK3mn pound budget.

One Day, starring Anne Hathaway and Jim Sturgess, was the romance film of the year in our eyes. A tale of enduring love adapted from David Nicholls 2009 novel. Well acted, well written, well directed. Touching, simple and a rare beauty in a genre filled with tragedies.

September sucked

This was the worst month for movies in our mind. *Apollo 18*, *Shark Night 3D*, *Creature*, *Warrior*, *Straw Dogs* and *Abduction* were

all easily forgettable and we were glad when October rolled around.

October was for the kids

Action-comedy *Johnny English Reborn* was fun and a great one for the kids with Rowan Atkinson reprising his role as the bungling secret agent. The film reeled in a credible US\$ 145mn from a US\$ 45mn budget.

Three Musketeers was another hit with the young ones and a well-known children's tale brought to life on the big screen, and was another US box office success, earning US\$ 132mn from a US\$ 70mn budget.

November was horrific

In Time, with Justin Timberlake and Amanda Seyfried (the one that looks like Dakota Fanning) is a contender for "Most Poorly Executed Film With A Good Premise Award". It's laugh-out-loud bad.

Winner of "Sickest Movie Sequel Ever Award" goes to horror flick, *Human Centipede 2*. Banned in most countries, it took less than UK1,000 pounds at the British box office on opening weekend in November. Why? It's too hard for most sane people to watch. Moving on.

King of horror, Stephen King dragged November kicking and screaming back into our hearts with his novel, *11/22/63*. This 849 page masterpiece is a must-read in our point of view and is our contender for "Book Most Likely To Be Made Into A Film Award", hence making the cut on our list. The premise: A teacher travels back in time to stop the assassination of JFK.

What if three shots didn't ring out in Dallas? What if Oswald never got his chance? What if JFK had lived? What if? Please go out now and buy this book. This is Stephen King's masterpiece of popular culture writing. This is a move away from the comfort of his horror sanctity and a mature leap into a new realm of suspense.

December was bloody brilliant

I hear the screams in my dreams. Legions of shrieking women echo in the shadows of a darkened cinema. I will never utter a bad word about *Twilight*. I have stood on the sidelines of the vampire craze that's sunk its teeth into pop culture for the past five years.

I understand the attraction, but it still makes me scratch my head in puzzlement. But if millions around the globe want to "ooh and ahhh" at Bella Swan's adventures, then I am not going to upset them. It's a cliché to groan about *Twilight* if you're a guy. So I won't.

The movie event of December was, and still is, the release of *Breaking Dawn*. Souvenir cups and tubs are available still at Phuket cinemas.

If you would like to lambast the writer for his choice of movies, and one book, then email features@phuketgazette.net

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Urairat Atiset

KNOWN as “Ji Eng” or sister Eng, Urairat Atiset has attracted the deepest of respect from her circle of friends and family. This term of endearment is culturally symbolic and denotes not only well-known, but also a well-loved personality.

Born into the illustrious Phuket family of Thavornvongwong, Urairat is the fourth generation of the migrant family of Ongs. As with many Chinese settlers of the day, her grandfather owned numerous mines in and out of town and he also established what was to become an important landmark of Phuket City, the Thavorn Hotel on Rasada Road.

Young Urairat graduated with a degree in medical technology from Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. In 1973 she began working as a lab technician at the Phuket Vachira Hospital and continued for for five years before meeting and marrying her husband, Sombat. Although the marriage was an arranged affair, it was a decision Urairat has never regretted. Sombat was a good friend of her elder brother and his fine demeanour endeared him to her family.

“My mother, who was a good judge of character, told me that Sombat was a good man and if I married this hard-working person I would only prosper. I respected my parents’ decision and they have proven right. Sombat is in

THAI
gallery
By Nanthapa Pengkasem

fact a model husband.”

Their wedding was the talk of the town, so grand it was presided over by three governors from the southern provinces. As a gesture of goodwill, the couple donated all the wedding gifts to the their alma mater, the Phuket Thai Hua School.

Once married, the couple embarked on building their own businesses quite apart from Urairat’s family’s line. In 1984 they built Kata Thani Hotel far away from the town center on the little-known but pretty Kata Noi beach. This stylish hotel has grown over time and now boasts 500 plus rooms, bungalows, and six swimming pools.

With Sombat at the helm, the Atisets diversified into timber production and opened two plants in Phang Nga, producing plywood and particleboards recycled from rubber trees.

As the Atisets were busy building their empire, the division of labor was clear; while Sombat oversaw the overall running of the businesses, Urairat would take care of the finances. This perfect partnership continued for more than three decades until recently,

when Urairat decided to step back and let her three grown-up children take care of the businesses.

Still acting as the vice president of Kata Thani Hotel, Urairat now devotes more of her time to charitable work. As newly elected president of the Phuket chapter of the Business and Professional Women’s Association of Thailand (BPWAT), she is busy implementing its multi-faceted programs for the welfare of women in the region. Other public titles include the president of the Observation and Protection Center of Phuket, jury member of the Phuket juvenile court, and board committee member of the Thai Red Cross.

All these charitable works may take much of her time, but Urairat has a passion for the Chinese gentle martial art called Dao De. This spiritual exercise, which has its root in Taoism, is done slowly and gracefully to the tunes of meditative music. So passionate is Urairat about Dao De that she founded the Phuket Dao De Xin Xi Association, which counts no less than 500 members in this region alone.

“I would encourage everyone to practice Dao De. It’s a wonderful form of exercise that is not only good for your physical body, but also sharpens your mind, gives you grace and a sense of purpose. It keeps me sane,” says the amiable Urairat.



About Thai Gallery

The individuals profiled in “Thai Gallery” are chosen on the basis of their contributions to Phuket as an *international* community, and, often, for having made those contributions through successful social and/ or working relationships with foreigners. This implies some foreign language skills and an interest in interacting with different cultures. They are people who in our experience help make the lives of expats far more enjoyable here than might be the case without them.

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King's Cup review

By Bruce Stanley

IT HAS been quite a few years since I've joined the melee of press at Phuket's King's Cup Regatta. But this year was special. It was the 25th regatta and the closing party was a celebration of a sailing event that has survived such catastrophes as tsunamis, bird flu, economic disasters, change of venues and unreliable sponsorship.

The King's Cup Regatta was launched in 1987 which was the same year Phuket reached out to the world and invited global visitors to the island. It was the year that the Phuket Yacht Club opened on Nai Harn Beach, but also marked the opening of the Dusit Laguna, the first of the Laguna Phuket resorts, the Phuket Arcadia Resort (now branded a Hilton) at Karon Beach and Le Meridien Phuket just south of Patong Beach. It was an exciting year to be on the island.

Mom Tri Devakul, a Harvard trained Thai architect who built the Phuket Yacht Club and The Boathouse, inspired the inauguration of a sailing regatta to



The Royal Thai Navy 1 team (above), winners of the IRC 2 Class with Skipper CPO1 Wiwat Poonpat (right, holding the trophy).

mark King Bhumibol Adulyadej's 60th birthday as His Majesty was a skilled and award winning sailor. The first regatta was mostly a family affair with almost any boat found floating around Phuket invited to join. Twenty-five years ago, few of Phuket's local Thai residents understood why anyone would want to spend time on a boat in the strong sun which was certain to darken the skin. So the Regatta was mostly an expat affair assisted by the long established

Royal Varuna Yacht Club from Pattaya.

I worked in the media center in the early 1990s and observed some of Phuket's legendary sailors as Andy Dowden, Jan Jacobs, Bill O'Leary, Neil Cumming, Phil Hollywood and David Ratcliffe grapple with trying to organize a rather unruly sailing community into a respectable regatta. Tempers and egos often collided but each year the Regatta seemed to have a firmer footing. With the steady



Team Premier, winners of the IRC 0 Class, with Skipper Hannes Weimer (holding the trophy).

guidance of some of Thailand's most experienced sailors and businessmen, the numbers of participants and classes of competitors grew.

Duncan Worthington has been on the Organizing Committee of the King's Cup since the late 1990s. He is the sole survivor of the original team who produced the annual event. He has served as Director of Media and Communications for the past eight years.

"Every year we struggle to find sponsors and to broaden the appeal of the King's Cup. We are proud that it is the most popular, well attended regatta in Asia due to the quality of keel boats and multi-hulls that participate. The King's Cup Regatta has grown in international stature. This year we had sailors from 33 countries from as far away as Kenya, Ireland, Turkey and a large contingent from Russia," said Duncan.

Duncan and the Organizing Committee begin work in March and meet throughout the year to create a Regatta that will maintain its reputation as the leading racing event in Asia. Critical to their work is Simon James who sets two courses, one for the sleek, faster boats and another for those craft not built to compete in a fast moving regatta.

Though the main sponsor for the 2011 King's Cup Regatta was PTT, a major petroleum corporation, the event could not happen without the generous support of the Kata Group of Resorts. Some years ago when the Phuket Yacht Club was sold and the new owners decided not to support the regatta, David Ratcliffe approached Khun Pamuke Achariyachai, MD of the Kata Group, and offered to move the regatta to Kata Beach. Khun Pamuke immediately embraced the idea and the King's Cup has been based at the Kata Beach Re-

sort ever since.

"The King's Cup is one of Phuket's best events. It brings about 1000 sailors to the island during the regatta and an estimated 40 million baht is added to the local economy from accommodation and meals," added Duncan.

But still the King's Cup is not the event I remember from twenty years ago. When I attended the awards ceremony, I was pleased to see ML Usni Pramoj, who has represented HM King Bhumibol for 23 years, on the stage presenting the winners with their trophies. Also, Radab Kanchanavanit, who hails from a pioneering family of Thai leisure sailors, was Master of Ceremony. Peter Cummins, the legendary Pattaya journalist who has reported on every Kings Cup since 1987, was seen in fine form. But the great names in Phuket sailing were missing.

Again Duncan commented, "We'd like to see more participation from the local community. It seems the King's Cup Regatta has become such a high profile international event which perhaps discourages our local sailors."

An exception to this is the Phuket Sailing Squadron, based at Ao Yon on Phuket's southeastern shore. The outfit's leader, Katy Gooch has been training young Thai students in the skill of racing dinghies. She provided twenty entries in this year's event.

Also, for the first time, 19 kite boarders from around the world were invited, each of whom brought their own sponsors.

For those of you who couldn't attend, the King's Cup Regatta is a great celebration of humans' ability to have fun with the wind and sea while testing their skills racing against one another.



Duncan Worthington.

Karon Beach

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WHAT'S ON in Phuket

December 2 to 24. Christmas Eve Dinner & Salsa Party

Les Anges is delighted to invite you to our Christmas Eve and Salsa Party. Dance a Cha-cha, Bachata, Samba and Rumba to our music and enjoy your Christmas Eve on the Boardwalk of Les Anges. Reservations are recommended due to limited seating. 1,400++ baht per person. From 8pm to 12:30am, Les Anges restaurant in the Royal Phuket Marina. Contact Murat at 081-7973364, muratc@royalphuketmarina.com or visit royalphuketmarina.com.

December 16 to 18. Asia Super yacht Rendezvous Phuket

Phuket is starting to become a hub for Superyachts in South East Asia. The 11th Asia Superyacht Rendezvous, which is organized by Asia Pacific Superyachts, will be held at the award-winning Surin Hotel from 10.30am to 10pm. We are proud to announce that FeadShip, the premier motor yacht builder, is returning as Principal Sponsor for this prestigious event. Boat International Media is the international media partner, who will bring the event worldwide exposure. Yacht Style is | the national media partner, and this year we are happy to announce that the *Phuket Gazette* and *PGTV* will be our local media partners. Contact Nina Larsson at 076-296440, pr-comm@asia-super-yacht-rendezvous.com or visit asia-super-yacht-rendezvous.com.

December 16 and January 6. Navrang Mahal Curry Fridays

We present Curry Fridays at

December 18. Phuket Yacht Club Christmas Fun Day

Christmas Bash and Fun Day Sail
on Sunday, December 18 from 9am to 5pm.

Food served at 1pm.

Please bring a small gift with your child's name clearly labeled
(Santa may arrive). Games and activities on the beach for kids. Fun race too.
If sailing, contact Andrew at andrew@leemarine.net on 081-8941530.

Reservation for catering purposes
Donna Stephens at 081-6120075,

phuketyachtclub@gmail.com or visit phuketyachtclub.info.

Navrang Mahal India Restaurant from 7 to 11pm in Karon Sea Sands Resort & Spa. Here is your chance to enjoy an authentic and lavish Indian Curry Buffet on Friday only 449 baht nett! Draught Beer by the glass: just 50 baht nett. Special discount on beverages. Reservations at 076-286464 ext 4, sm@karonseasand.com or visit karonseasand.com.

December 17 to 18. Phuket Youth Sailing Club Last Chance Regatta 2011

Open to all Dinghy Classes & Beach Cats. Skippers briefing at 09:30am with race start at 10am. Classes: Optimist Open (Born 1996 or after), racing Saturday and Sunday. Topper Open (Junior, Youth and Adults), Laser Standard Tasar Beach Cats. Entry Fee (includes BBQ) – Members: 250 baht per person. Non-members: 350 baht per person. Crew needed and boats available

for charter. Special Promotion Boat Charter: free for PYSC friends. Come and join our Group of Friends for 500 baht per year. Come and join the Club's Christmas BBQ for 150 baht. Cold beers and soft drinks available. Prize giving at 4pm. This event is sponsored by the *Phuket Gazette* and *PGTV*. Phuket Youth Sailing Clubhouse, Ao Yon Beach. Contact Katy Gooch-Firmin at 085-2159185, phuketyouthsailing@gmail.com or visit phuketyouthsailing.org.

December 17. Christmas Markets

Due to popular demand, we will be holding two Christmas Markets this year, selling unique Christmas gifts, decorations, jewelry, homeware as well as tasty treats: mince pies, Christmas cookies, Christmas cakes, etc., and a Gingerbread House raffle. There's Santa's grotto, face painting and carol singers to entertain the kids. If you have something beautiful to sell, a table costs 500 baht, which is donated to charity. You keep any profit that you make on the day. This event is sponsored by the *Phuket Gazette*. From 3 to 6pm, at Da Vinci's Restaurant. Contact Chantal Fernandes at 089-8742942, chantal.fernandes@gmail.com or visit thegoodshepherd.info.

December 23. Special Promotion for Indian Feast

Royal Phuket Marina is pleased to introduce you to our new Special Friday Indian Feast. We

are delighted to offer a 25 per cent discount on the Indian Buffet and 10 per cent off the listed menu on Friday nights. This Authentic Homemade Indian Buffet will be prepared and served by our very own in-house Indian Chef, Padum Kahtri. Only 495++ baht per person. From 7 to 10pm at Les Anges, Royal Phuket Marina. Contact Murat at 081-7973364, muratc@royalphuketmarina.com or visit royalphuketmarina.com.

December 24 to 25. Christmas at Kata Center and Karon

Two Chefs Kata Center and Two Chefs Karon are on the December 24 to 25, serving our great Christmas plate.s For only 695 baht you will get a big mix of all the classic Christmas food, such as Christmas ham, different kinds of herrings, smoked salmon and much more you cant miss it. Also, at Two Chefs Karon we have our House band playing so there is going to be a great party. Reservation at 076-330065, katacenter@twochefs-phuket.com or visit twochefs.com.

December 24. Christmas Eve Dinner Buffet and Party

Live Music with the fabulous Big Bamboo Band featuring a delightful Holiday Buffet with imported roast Turkey, stuffing, cranberry and all the trimmings, fillet of Salmon, roast Duck curry, and a large selection of Appetizers, Salads and Desserts on December 24 from 6 to 11:30pm at Friendship Beach Waterfront Resort, Rawai Beach. Welcome glass of holiday punch. Adults: 1,200 baht ++; Children under 12: 350 baht ++. Contact Charlie at 089-7285304 or Kartoon at 087-4190239, chef@friendshipbeach.com or visit friendshipbeach.com.

December 24. Christmas Salsa

After the overwhelming success of our Salsa Nights, and by popular demand, we are delighted to invite you to our Salsa Event at Royal Phuket Marina on Christmas Eve, December 24 from 8 pm to 12:30am at Les Anges restaurant in Royal Phuket Marina. Dine and Dance the Cha-cha, Bachata, Samba & Rumba Live on the Boardwalk outside Les Anges. A Christmas Menu is also available. Entrance: Free. Dress: Colorful. Contact Murat at 081-7973364, muratc@royalphuketmarina.com or visit royalphuketmarina.com.

December 25. Christmas Lunch and Dinner

Join us on Christmas Day for Scruffy's delicious Christmas special: A big plate of roast turkey, roast pork and crackling with roast potatoes, apple and cranberry sauce, stuffing and homemade gravy.

Christmas pudding with hot custard for dessert from 11am to 10pm at Scruffy Murphy's Patong. Only 499 baht with a free bottle of local beer or a glass of wine. Reservations on 076-292590, or info @scruffymurphysphuket.com, or visit scruffymurphysphuket.com.

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CLOWNING AROUND: at the PAWS Quest family fun day.



KIDS AWAY: A raft race at the PAWS Quest family fun day.



BAGS OF FUN: The new SY Baggy from PinkShrimp Yacht Charters viewed the King's Cup with the team from designedbywoulfe and other media.

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Team Snail from Hong Kong.

King's Cup Regatta 2011

After the races came the parties

Photos by Fraser Morton and King's Cup.



Royal Thai Navy 1, winner of IRC 2 receives the trophy from Saravut Churinta (4th right), Phuket Oil Terminal Manager and Boonyawat Byddhimetapong (3rd right), Engineer, representative from PTT Group.



The Centara Grand team



VIPS: from left; Admiral Varong Songcharoen, RTN and Committee members of PKCR; Kevin Whitcraft, President of the Phuket King's Cup Regatta Organizing Committee; Adolph Knees, Co-founder of PKCR; Denis Thouvard, General Manager at Centara Grand Beach Resort Phuket; and Santi Kanchanabandhu, Sponsorship Director of PKCR.



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GAZETTE CONNECT QUIZ

There is a single connection between all the quiz answers. Can you get it before the last question?

1. Giving your Answer alphabetically, which 2 cities are the subject of *A tale of 2 cities*?
2. Which ancient Italian port and city is where Virgil died (current name)?
3. Which water based crisis of 1956 led to accusations of collusion between Israel, Britain and France?
4. This major city is now called Mumbai, how was it previously known?
5. Which famous city, served by Dum Dum airport is the capital of West Bengal and a famous port?
6. Merlion is the symbol associated with which Asian republic?
7. The airline Cathay Pacific serves where in particular?
8. Which city in Japan approximately 20 minutes from Tokyo by train is the countries fourth largest city and is arguably Japan's major port?
9. In which city would you find the Golden Gate Bridge?
10. In which city would you find the famous Waldorf Astoria Hotel?
11. In which Capital City would you find the Wallace Collection and The Geffrye Museum?

What's the connection between all of the answers?

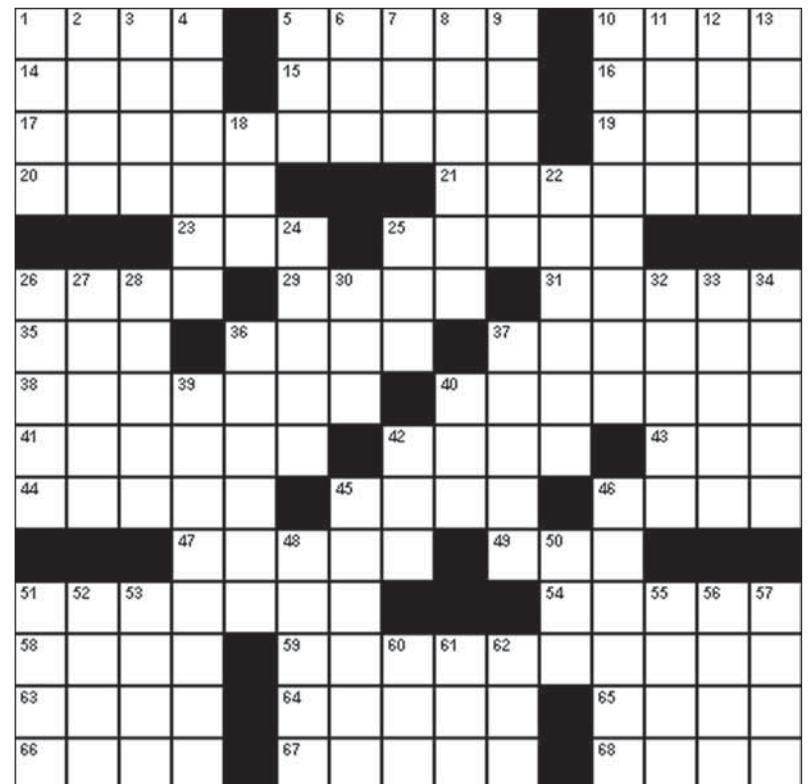
Quiz answers on page 41

Across

1. First name in spydom
5. "A Doll's House" playwright
10. Curtain holders
14. Sounds of disgust
15. Release
16. ...baked in --
17. Cudgel
19. Domesticate
20. Alleviates
21. Arctic gale
23. Aliens, briefly
25. Speech sound
26. Repair
29. Tory rival
31. Paddock
35. Baseball stat
36. Actress Bonet
37. Ice cream topped with syrup
38. Later edition
40. Ship ropes
41. Greek goddess of the moon
42. Fluster
43. PBS benefactor
44. Smart guy
45. Angry reaction
46. Back talk
47. Actress Taylor
49. Half of MCII
51. Stimulated
54. Author of fables
58. Greek peak
59. Divide anew into districts
63. Chow --
64. Night noise
65. Pro --
66. Formerly, formerly
67. Kett and James
68. Eastern nanny

Down

1. Inspiration
2. Turkish bigwig
3. "Is -- it?"
4. Out, in bed
5. Land in la mer
6. Babylonian title
7. RR stop
8. Milk and egg drink
9. Not at all
10. Brisk



11. Colorful fish
12. Thin change
13. Clairvoyant
18. D-Day craft
22. Shelter
24. Hog
25. By means of
26. Vice --
27. Staggering
28. Sap tree
30. DDE's predecessor
32. Minneapolis suburb
33. Back streets
34. Impressionist Edgar
36. Joined

37. Measured
39. Disloyal
40. -- Tafari (Haile Selassie)
42. For shame!
45. Regret
46. Mountain range
48. Suckle
50. Back muscle, briefly
51. Household
52. Belgian river
53. Greek letters
55. "The King and I" setting
56. Twice tetra
57. Egyptian deity
60. Part of an e-mail address
61. 401(k) alternative
62. French possessive

*Provided by BestCrosswords.com.
Used with permission.*

Puzzle solutions on page 41

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): Sagittarians' earning potential is set to peak during the second half of December. Even if you have planned to take a long break over the holidays, there could still be opportunities to make new worthwhile contacts and follow up on approaches made recently. Those with a birthday in the coming week should see their luck in love improve during the year ahead. Where romance is concerned, a water sign is predicted to light your fire.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): Capricorns are advised not to lose heart over an ongoing financial dispute. There are signs that slow, but steady progress is being made behind the scenes. Expect an air sign to give practical advice on Monday or Tuesday. Where romance is concerned, the stars suggest that a water sign you met recently is waiting for you to show more interest. Those already committed may have issues with their partner's spending this weekend.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): Someone close to you appears tempted to sugarcoat the truth this week. Those born under the

sign of Aquarians who suspect that they are being kept in the dark should ask some serious questions. Wednesday and Thursday are the most auspicious days to get to the bottom of this matter. Your chances of being reunited with a long lost earth sign friend are strong during the second half of December.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): Auspicious astral conditions should support your intentions of spending a peaceful holiday season, but there are hints that a last minute work obligation needs immediate attention this week. Counting on too much support from colleagues is inadvisable. Pisceans who can't get another water sign out of their minds should be patient. The stars indicate that you are likely to meet this person again in the New Year.

ARIES (March 21-April 20): In the world of work, something that seemed like a good idea recently could turn out to be more trouble than it's worth. Arians are advised to think twice before making rash commitments this week. The stars suggest that January will be an auspicious month to head in a new direction. A dream you have this weekend holds significance where romance with an air sign is concerned.



TAURUS (April 21-May 21): Taureans will have reason to see that their opinions are valued by others this week -- another earth sign could hold the key to your success in the world of work. Your social scene livens up when a fire sign makes a surprise return and the stars suggest that this might lead to a romantic relationship. Those already spoken for have a brainwave about what to give their partner for a Christmas gift.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): Geminis who took distance from a water sign friend, whose behavior has been inconsiderate, will need to address the issue. This rift could cause problems during holiday season socializing as mutual friends will be caught in the middle. Sunday is the most auspicious day to aim for reconciliation. Your romantic outlook is sparkling, with the spotlight on an end of year commitment being made.

CANCER (June 22-July 23): Cancerians who are keen to keep their holiday season plans private could be challenged by a fire sign friend this week. There are signs that this person is determined to include you in their festivities and you will need to come up with a creative excuse not to be available. Money matters are well starred during the second half of December -- expect a debt to be repaid by the end of the year.

LEO (July 24-August 22): Meeting deadlines is forecast to put Leos' patience to the test this week. Certain colleagues may try to leave you with an unfair amount of work to do while they take an early break. The stars advise making your limits clear on Monday to avoid stress later in the week. In the realm of romance, a new partner's heavy hints for an expensive gift are hard to ignore this weekend.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): Even easy going Virgoans could be affected by the stress of others around them this week. The stars indicate that some of your friends or family members who have left holiday arrangements to the

last minute could try to give you more responsibility. Where romance is concerned, there are signs that a partner is finding your lack of commitment confusing. Those who are single could decide to follow up on an introduction to a water sign.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): Your outlook for the second half of December is positive. Those born under the sign of Libra who want to make changes in their working lives next year should seek advice from someone with a similar background. The stars suggest that putting feelers out before the end of the year could bring welcome results. Lucky days for romance are Tuesday and Wednesday -- an earth sign has promising ideas for an intimate holiday season.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): The sting in your tail could be activated by a family member this week. Those born under the sign of Scorpio who want to let the holiday season pass by with little fuss are forecast to find that this person has other ideas. The best day to make your feelings clear is Wednesday. Where affairs of the heart are concerned, Cupid is ready to encourage a meeting with an air sign for those who are single.

PROPERTY Gazette

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Mandala takes home Best Condo award

Chalong Marina ready in 2012

WORK on the 70-million-baht Chalong Bay Marina project is now about 90% complete and should be finished early in the new year, officials say.

Phuriphat Teerakulpisut, Chief of the Marine Department Region 5 office in Phuket Town, said opening of the 44-slip facility will improve the island's ability to accommodate the growing number of yachts that port in Phuket or visit the island.

Once completed, the project will be turned over to the Treasury Department and then the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (*OrBorJor*), which already oversees operation of the existing Chalong Pier and related facilities, he said.

"The one-stop service center will offer a variety of services including an Immigration arrivals and departure checkpoint, Customs and Immigration offices, a Marine Department Office and improved facilities for tourists, many of whom already use Chalong Pier to travel to other islands in and around Phuket," he added.

However, Mr Phuriphat expressed disappointment that plans to build a much larger, 200-slip facility in Chalong Bay failed due to lack of funding and "other problems". [*Including local resistance and a public hearing process. -Ed*].

The number of yachts visiting Phuket is now at a record high, but the five existing marinas on the island can only accommodate a maximum of about 1,000 boats at a time. Some 2,000 vessels currently clear customs and immigration at Chalong Pier, he said.

Lack of facilities or a clear policy to further develop Phuket as a marine tourism destination could result in a loss of "quality tourists" to rival destinations in Singapore, Malaysia and especially Vietnam, he added.

To help solve the problem, his office has requested a 6 million baht budget in fiscal 2012 to sink 300 more moorings: 200 in Chalong Bay and 100 at Ao Por. If approved, the project will reduce coral reef destruction caused by anchors, better organize movement of vessels and increase government control, safety and security in these areas, he said.

MANDALA Condominiums took home the prestigious Best Condo Development (Phuket) at The 2011 Thanachart Bank Thailand Property Awards, held December 6 at the Grand Hyatt Erawan Hotel in Bangkok.

Mandala Condominiums – a collection of 24 over-sized apartments, all with private pools and located in Phuket's prestigious Laguna area, was recognized at gala ceremony attended by more than 600 CEOs, managing directors, developers and other senior management figures from the national and regional property sector.

The award is particularly significant to the project's developer Staffan Nordstrand who started building Mandala Condominiums at the beginning of the world financial crisis in September 2008 without any pre-sale purchases or any guarantees when the economic climate would improve.

Mandala Condominiums sold 50% of their 24 total units which reflects their efforts during the global economic downturn. With this award they are now poised to further capitalize going into Thailand's tourism season as one of the island's only completed,



The Mandala Condominium Team (left to right); Mr Tom Travers (Indigo Real Estate), Mr Staffan Nordstrand (Developer, Mandala Condos), Mrs Prim Suwannalert (Mandala Condos) and Mr Songchai Pongprasert (DCM Solutions Ltd)

new condominium developments.

"We are very proud of this award as it acknowledges Mandala's ongoing commitment to high-quality standards," says Nordstrand a Swedish national who has been operating a con-

struction business in his homeland since 1974. "We've achieved this award by following very tight ISO international building standards to manage Mandala's quality, timing and economy."

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2011
SOUTH EAST ASIA
PROPERTY AWARDS
WINNER
Best Developer (Thailand)

Beach Club bingo



Property Watch
By Bill Barnett

FOR globetrotting partygoers the line up of posh beach clubs has led them for years from Ibiza, to Miami's Nikki Beach and down to the Caribbean for sundowners on St. Barts.

Asia's beach club evolution kicked off with the iconic Ku De Ta, and has now shifted into top gear with Cocoon, Potato Head and the Rock Bar at the luxurious Ayana Resort. A recent visit to the latter hallowed spot came complete with a night-club-like-queue that hit three digits.

Here in Phuket, Twinpalms' Catch was an innovator along with Baba at Sri Panwa, which continues to draw a "hi-so" crowd from Bangkok and abroad with star-studded events.

One new project that has caught my eye is the pairing of the Angsana Resort (formerly Sheraton Grande Laguna) with Attica entertainment from Singapore. The two are teaming up on the Xana Beach Club in the center of popular Bang Tao beach. Construction is underway and an April opening is on the cards.

Attica is best known for their popular outlet in trendy Clark Quay, which is under the same moniker and specializes in buzzy events.

Looking at plans for the project, some of the cool hardware includes an Olympic sized swimming pool and thirty meter swim up bar. Double sun loungers are also a feature, but the "killer apps" are the cabanas, which hold up to 14 people and are equipped



LIFE'S A BEACH: 2012 will likely be The Year Of The Beach Club.

with service callers for when you simply can't make it up from the day bed to order another round of drinks for your new best friends.

A special party boat will ply the Laguna Phuket lagoons with onboard drinks. The ultimate destination for the boat will be a view of the west coast sunset and yes, there cocktails and food will follow.

Eating options are highlighted with an Australian fusion menu, barbecue, seafood and for the healthy few a raw foods option.

Mission possible for the group is creating the big vibe of Ibiza, with imported DJs from Europe and some type of secret nightly show. We have no idea what it is,

so well have to wait just over three months to find out.

On an island gone into convulsions with massive amounts of visitors quenching their lips with those tasty cocktail, beach club mania is set to dominate the next year or so storyline.

Another recent Bang Tao opening was Bliss Beach Club. Early reports are that the build-out and fit is done nicely and the food is getting a thumbs up too. Drinking, dining, lounging, yes and the inevitable setting of the sun are drawing interest.

In the South, Re Ka Ta at the Boathouse rolled out just in time for the King's Cup. Designed by Bali-based Fredo Taffin, who incidentally worked on Bali's Ku De Ta, the Re Ka Ta, with new management and ownership of the hotel and outlets from the group behind Trisara, is gaining followers already.

Turning the table up North, Malaiwana will unveil "Up" on December 17th with an imported chef and a concept that is being kept hush-hush. Located on the glamorous Nai Thon Golden Mile, expect this to draw an upscale crowd.

There remains a number of excellent and established beach spots from the casually hip Reggae Bay on Bang Tao and Siam Blue, to Kalim's IndoChine and of course, sunset watching does not get any better than at Joe's Downstairs.

There will be more to come, and 2012 will likely be The Year Of The Beach Club.

Writing this, my toes can almost feel the waves lapping with a warm gentle swell and where is my mojito, time to head to the beach it seems.

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

Laguna

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<p>3 Laguna Village Townhomes I THB 17.5 M</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-storey semi-detached 4 beds 4 baths • garden private pool 	<p>4 Laguna Village Townhomes II THB 18 M</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 beds 3 baths fully furnished • lagoon view private pool
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Village wins best shared ownership development

THE Village Coconut Island, has been awarded "Best Shared Ownership Development" in the inaugural South East Asia Property Awards which assists in promoting high levels of real estate opportunities available in South East Asia.

The Village Coconut Island's latest accolade sits aside the 2010 Thailand Property Awards "Best Villa Development" and recognition as one of Asia's Top 20 Resorts by Property Report Asia.

Chris Gordon, owner of The Village Coconut Island said, "We are delighted with this accolade and to be working with the Absolute World Group whose shared ownership expertise and global network has been an incredible asset."

Set on a coconut-fringed private island, less than five minutes by boat off the east coast of Phuket, the Village Coconut Island comprises a total of 236 – 2, 3, 4 and 5 bedroom private pool villas and Jacuzzi suites.



Bryan Lunt receives the award.

Facilities in abundance include two pools, water slides, a state-of-the-art health and wellness spa, deli, three restaurants, beach bar, 24-hour concierge, children's club, fitness centre, two tennis courts, golf and access to a variety of day-trips. Set within 33 acres, the landscaped resort has a 550 meter private beach front with spectacular views over Phang Nga Bay.

For more information please visit W: mycoconutisland.com.

In brief...

Luxury Phuket – the movie

A NEW movie "Phuket: Luxury Living" produced by Red Sky Vision from London was screened this week which was based on a storyline that follows the evolution of the islands property sector. Featured contributors included Gulu Lalvani, Mom Tri, Allan Zeman and Bill Barnett.

The movie can be seen online at PhuketFuture.com

Advance Aviation eyes private jet market

BANGKOK, Phuket and Chiang Mai are increasingly seeing growth in the private jet charter business.

Bill Heinecke's MJets was an early entrant and has established a strong business base.

Now Advance Aviation a leading helicopter operator is moving into the market with a recent acquisition of a Gulfstream jet. The aircraft was reportedly purchased from Hong Kong's Peninsula Hotel.

Plans for the addition of a private jet facility as part of the Phuket International Airport upgrade have been said to be in the works, but a final operator apparently has yet to be chosen.

Micro-tripping meets flash sites

SPUR of the moment travel is on the rise both here and aboard.

Given the array of low-cost airline carriers and direct flights to nearly everywhere, last minute getaways are becoming a common part of everyday culture.

Go to flash auction sites and "cheap" looks to be continually re-inventing itself.

There does remain a great amount of chatter by hotel chains and OTA's about whether the Groupon slipstream is sustainable?

Is there long term value, or is this just a fad? What about the need for loyalty as many of these sites do not have repeat customers so where is the brand value?

For now - one thing is certain Jumpin' Jack Flash or micro-tripping are voices to be heard, and no doubt potential head on beds.

Air Asia to sport weekend uniforms

THOSE savvy marketing guys at brand icon AirAsia keep pushing the envelope on innovative ideas.

In a marriage between chic and functional, the airline took on designer Nick Harries of HPE who has worked with AC/DC, international golf and tennis players and even delved into Formula 1.

There was a recent launch of new uniforms for the carrier which includes nano-technology and compression wear.

Special sporty weekend uniforms are now a second more casual offering which has to have the flight attendants smiling even more.

Great ideas continue to roll out of the low-cost airline realm these days.

– Bill Barnett

Check your project management

WHEN buying property in a managed estate, careful scrutiny of the project management might be one of the most neglected points.

This may have negative consequences particularly in cases where the applicable laws or regulations do not provide minimum standards and a legal framework regarding project management.

Typically, poor management causes disputes between residents and their project manager. Therefore, the manager should perform all duties in a diligent, cost effective and transparent manner and maintain proper statements of account itemizing all income and expense and make such statements accessible to the residents if requested.

A buyer should initially check whether the appointed manager has the required expertise and a proven track record. In the case where an internationally recognized management company has been appointed, this might be some indication that the management services will be performed with the necessary professionalism. Talking to existing project residents may also provide first hand insight.

Furthermore, a buyer should investigate whether project residents can participate in the project management through voting rights in a corporate body

Property Legal By International Law Office

or committee managing the project, for example.

In some cases, buyers are required to sign a management agreement appointing a project manager. Such management agreements should, as a minimum, describe what management services shall be provided, what pro-rata payments will need to be made by the residents to the manager and what remedy or sanctions will apply in case that either the manager or a resident is in breach. Furthermore, the residents and their manager should agree on a fair and effective dispute resolution mechanism.

Before signing a management agreement a buyer should discuss with the developer whether all relevant points are clearly described in the agreement, i.e. what costs may incur in connection with the management services. Such costs may include monthly management fees payable for the management, maintenance and upkeep of the common areas and facilities, utilities expenses, insurance premiums and property taxes. The management fees are generally paid pro-rata by all project resi-

dents and calculated either on a "sqm-unit-basis" or standardized rates subject to change from time to time.

In addition, buyers may be required to contribute to a capital reserve or sinking fund, which is normally a one time payment to provide the manager with additional funds required to repair or partially replace a common area or facilities. However, a buyer should note that the replenishment of such a sinking fund may be necessary once the initial contribution has been used up.

A buyer should further understand that besides the costs for common area management additional expenses will occur and be payable in connection with its specific unit such as renovation works, insurance premiums and utilities expenses.

To summarize, careful scrutiny of the project management is of great importance to avoid a rude awakening when the first bill of running costs suddenly arrives at your dream home.

This article has been written by International Law Office Patong Beach Co., Ltd., a Phuket based law firm for informational purpose only. In case of inquiry, please contact Michael Greth, Consultant by phone: 076-222-191-5 or email: michael@ilo-phuket.com.



JUST ADD WATER: Management agreements should, as a minimum, describe what management services shall be provided. Photo: Lummy

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Construction commences Q2 2010 and Completion during Q2 2012

Put a cork in your garden



Millingtonia (Indian cork tree)



Fabaceae



Crista galli : Photos from flickr

THERE are small trees around Phuket that you simply never notice until they suddenly burst dramatically into bloom.

Millingtonia (Indian cork tree) is one of these. A verdant way-side presence during the monsoon, it comes into its own in October, producing masses of white, fragrant flowers which account for one of its popular names of "tree jasmine". A more profuse bloomer than any of the jasmine family, the young five-petalled flowers are

pendant and bell-shaped, only revealing their similarity to jasmine when fully open.

Moreover, these panicles or clusters are produced at the end of long, elegant white stems. No wonder this tree is popular in Phuket, where it is known simply as *biip*. Some imaginative developers employ it as an ornamental tree for lining the avenues of residential estates: Patak Villas in Chalong, for instance, has many of these trees, all currently in fragrant bloom.

There are other reasons why it is a good choice for street or garden. One is its rapidity of growth. It takes only six to eight years to reach maturity and will flower much earlier than that. And *millingtonia* quickly develops an attractive shape, with an elongated trunk and relatively open crown. Perfect for gardens where you want to cultivate smaller shrubs underneath without depriving them of too much sun.

The Indian cork tree is an only child, without relatives of any description. Thank goodness, it is widely distributed in Phuket, especially by birds, who have a liking

for the flat, capsule-like seeds. It is quintessentially a South East Asian tree and is apparently not much cultivated elsewhere. Indeed, it revels in the hot humid climate which characterizes this part of the globe, where it will tolerate poor soil so long as it gets a sufficiency of moisture and sun.

Erythrina (the coral tree), on the other hand is a member of the substantial genus of *fabaceae*, small trees and shrubs with spiny trunks and branches, that belong to the pea family. Although there is a white variety, most possess strikingly beautiful red flowers that either droop in dense coral clusters (*crista-galli*) or are borne on long spikes (*fusca*). *Crista galli*, the most exotic family member, has the common name of cockspar coral, since its blooms resemble the comb of a cockerel.

However, there are several advantages to having a coral tree in your Phuket garden. In well-drained soil and over a dry period - it is free-flowering, and has attractive, three part leaves which are either a vivid dark green or, in the case of *variegata*, boldly patterned with bright yellow. It is



Erythrina (the coral tree) : Photos from flickr

moreover, mostly evergreen. Normally, the leaves fall once a year, allowing the brilliant scarlet flowers to be fully visible; in other cases, the leaves and blooms appear together.

Unlike *millingtonia* which has a long slender stem, the coral tree has a short trunk which means that its height rarely exceeds three meters. And its nectar-rich flowers mean that it attracts a wide variety of nectar-feeding birds. Definitely one for the ornithologists among you....

If you have a question or a garden that you would like featured, you can email me anytime at: drpaccampbell@gmail.com

Love for Oriental life

Decor

By Attacha Khamlo

ORIENTAL Living is an established purveyor of exclusive interior design concepts and Asian art and renowned for their influence in establishments on Koh Samui for over 20 years.

With a great degree of interest in Oriental Living's diverse product range coming from Phuket, managing director Michael Dietvorst, decided to expand the company's profile.

On December 8, a grand opening ceremony was held at their new premises on Srisoonthorn Road in Cherng Talay, Thalang.

Speaking to the *Phuket Gazette*, Michael explained why his business has had continued success for over two decades.

"Oriental Living products complement exclusive interior design and award winning living design. We have about 1,500 designs in our collection which we mix with art and accessories. We are a 'one stop service' for furniture and interior design," Michael said.

One of the differences that set us apart is that we have a lot of exclusive brands. I'm always looking for things our clients can not get elsewhere. In this sense we are unique because the brands you find here are not found in many other places," he added.

Despite such a vast range of designs to choose from, Michael is very particular with regard to ensuring that their clients achieve the desired effect through consultation and advice.

"We have a number of design experts to help with suggestions for our clients. For us, the most important

thing is to listen to what our customers want. Personal styles and budgets are important to each individual. We are not going to tell them that they should have this and that," said Michael.

Having such a diverse range of styles allows Oriental Living clients the opportunity to discuss alternatives and combine resulting in a unique result.

"We are really flexible and we do mix a lot of styles. For me comfort is very important, especially when one considers a holiday situation. You want an environment where you can lounge. It's a tropical lifestyle," Michael explained.

Oriental Living began as an art gallery on Koh Samui to which a restaurant was added. Developing into a thriving interior design company, Phuket resident are already exploiting its reputation.

"Even though the showroom has been opened for just one month, we have a received a lot of good feed-

back and we already have many good customers - something we did not expect.

"For example now we are working with Thai company and a foreign couple who want us to design their house. They visited our showroom and have assigned Oriental Living to manage the whole interior in their home," said Michael.

For more information on Oriental Living designs and products visit oriental-living.net



Some of the designs and styles on offer from Oriental Living (above).

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LAND AT CHERNG TALAY

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STYLE & CLASS

This stunning Tropical Style Villa is on 800sqm land and situated in a sunny and secluded Cul de Sac Road between Chalong and Nai Ham. It is located on a private road in a small and exclusive Swiss-Thai Villa development. The building features a spacious living room and dining room, 3 large bedrooms, 5 bathrooms, European kitchen, maid, quarter, a guesthouse, basement, a double size garage and a 12m pool with sala. It is built with the highest standard, water-filter installation, 3 septic tanks, and premium standard materials like teakwood windows, terrazzo floors, sandstone walls and pillars. The water supply is secured by own well. Chanote title deed is available. Price 18 million baht

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50,000 BAHT MONTHLY RENT



Hotel, bar, pool. 9 bedrooms, 9 bathrooms, furnished, kitchen, lobby, laundry, garden, WiFi, cable TV, 2 motorbikes. Good profit. 100m from Rawai Pier. Warranty 100,000 baht. Low key money. Available February 17. Tel: 084-242 8914. Email: phuket7@yahoo.com Website: www.thai dreamvilla.com

NAI YANG HOUSE FOR RENT

Quiet, fully furnished 2 bedroom with ensuite bathrooms, aircon, satellite TV. Only 500m to Nai Yang Beach and 2km to airport. 12,000 baht per month. Tel: 089-667 1844 (English & Thai). Email: slarti@onthenet.com.au

B.L. APARTMENT

New in Kathu. Big rooms, 1 bedroom, 1 living room, aircon, cable TV, ADSL, hot shower, garden, and car park. Rent: 7,000 baht per month. Tel: 081-692 3163.

BOAT LAGOON TOWNHOUSE

For rent, fully furnished, 3 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, swimming pool, car park, very secure. Contact Khun So (owner). Tel: 081-344 4473, 081-862 2962.

STUDIO FOR RENT

In Phuket Town, fully furnished, kitchen, aircon, TV. Near Dowroong School. 5 mins to Central, Big C. Rent: 6,000 baht per month. Tel: 081-719 7015.

HOUSE FOR LONG-TERM RENT

In Chermg Talay. Single house, 240sqm, with furniture, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, big living room and parking for 2 cars. Located at "The Valley 2", not so far from the Laguna area. Rent at 22,000 baht per month. Interested? Please call for more details or to view. Tel: 089-009 1006, 081-568 1120.

SHOPHOUSE FOR LEASE OR RENT



On Thepkasattri Rd. Near Super Cheap. 150sq wah. Long-term rent: 150,000 baht per month ono. Lease 5 million baht. Tel: 089-646 4786, 081-471 9331, 081-535 1208.

ORCHID KATHU HEIGHTS

Stylish serviced apartments. Studio, 1 bedroom, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms. Rooftop pool, Free WiFi. Also beachfront condo available. Tel: 081-892 0038. For further details, please see our website at www.orchidkathu heights-phuket.com

PATONG POOLSIDE STUDIOS

Furnished Studio with 42" TV, kitchenette, aircon., cable, WiFi, parking. L.T 24,000 per month. Tel: 080-052 8082 (English). Email: phvcondo@aol.com

LOVELY HOMES FROM 13,000 BAHT

1 & 2 bedrooms, fully furnished, long-term, near Chalong Circle. Tel: 089-475 1200 (English & Thai). Email: info@welcome-inn.com For further details, please see our website at www.welcome-inn.com

2-BEDROOM TWIN HOUSE



In Phuket Town. 20,000 baht/month.

Surface: 45sq wah (180sqm).

- 2 storeys: ground floor with living room, kitchen, bathroom, terrace, garden and parking lot.

- Top floor with 2 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, 2 balconies and living room

- Peaceful area in a nice neighborhood (and uncommonly large roads)

- Only minutes away from Bangkok Hospital Phuket and Central Festival

- 24-hour security

- Clubhouse with swimming pool

Call 081-868 7676 or 089-868 2268 for more information or house inspection.

CHALONG HOUSE

Fully furnished, bed, bath, kitchen, living. Good area. 7,500 baht per month. Tel: 081-541 9734. Email: Chavej432010@hotmail.com

CONDO FOR RENT, PATONG

10th floor view of city, ocean, mountains. Corner window unit, 55sqm, hot water, aircon, safe, TV, WiFi, refrig, closets, shelves, microwave. Repainted, ready. 15,000 baht per month. Minimum 6 months. Water, electric included. Tel: 087-265 9977. Email: jimmys@loxinfo.co.th

KATA SEA VIEW VILLA

Top location, 3 bedrooms, Roof top with Spa, 17m pool. Immaculate. Available now long/short-term. Tel: 083-182 2170. Email: i.charles69@yahoo.com

HOUSE FOR RENT IN KATHU

3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, fully furnished, 2 aircons, kitchen, small garden, cable TV, internet. 25,000 baht per month. Tel: 086-739 3220.

FULLY FURNISHED HOUSE

2-storey houses, 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms. Quiet area, near Panwa Bay. For further details, please see our website at http://panwagreen.weebly.com

30,000 BAHT MONTHLY RENT



Thai Dream Villa guesthouse. 5 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms, furnished, kitchen, living room, laundry, garden, 2 terraces, WiFi, cable TV, 2 motorbikes. Good profit. 300m from Rawai Pier. Warranty 50,000 baht. Low key money. Available February 1. Tel: 084-242 8914. Email: phuket7@yahoo.com Website: www.thai dreamvilla.com

KATA SEAVIEW WESTERN APART



1-bedroom, great sea view, penthouse, 100sqm, with huge terrace, 2 bedrooms, 2 baths, ground floor 115sqm with 60sqm covered terrace. Sat TV, Internet, fully furnished, fitted kitchen, parking. Tel: 084-840 1262. Email: north8east98@yahoo.com

35,000 BAHT MONTHLY RENT



Rawai pool guesthouse, 6 bedrooms, 6 bathrooms, furnished, kitchen, laundry, covered parking, WiFi, cable TV, 2 motorbikes. Good profit. 300m from Rawai Pier. Warranty 50,000 baht. Low key money. Available now. Tel: 084-242 8914. Email: phuket7@yahoo.com Website: www.thaidream villa.com

STUDIO FOR RENT IN CHALONG



Near Land & Houses with pool. 5 rooms, fully furnished, WiFi. Short-term/week or long-term. Tel: 081-809 2625. Email: phuketdee1@yahoo.com

LERSUANG HOUSE SURIN BEACH

3 beds, 5 baths, pool, jacuzzi, sauna, fully furnished, 700sqm of land. Tel: 081-737 1678 (English & Thai). Email: supotpac@phuket.ksc.co.th

LAND FOR RENT

2 building plots to let long term. 820sqm in Kata Noi 250 meters from the beach. Good for residence/business. Email: juntana koliver@msn.com

HOUSE IN MAI KHAO

For rent on 1/2 rail land and safe area. 10 mins to airport and beach, fully furnished, 2 bedrooms, 3 aircons, sala, charming garden, ADSL, European kitchen. Tel: 081-719 7015. Email: eanfievat@voila.fr

NEW HOUSE FOR RENT



At Pa Khlok, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms with a small garden, quiet area. Rent: 8,500 baht per month. Tel: 081-607 8567. Email: suksavat@hotmail.com

HOUSE CHALONG BEACH

Furnished, 3 bedrooms. Duplex long-term 12,000 baht per month, internet, cable TV, swimming pool, garden. Tel: 089-470 6104.

HOLIDAY POOL APT&VILLA KATA

Pool Penthouse 1, 2, 3 beds (some for Xmas/NY). Family pool villa 3 beds. All sea view. Email: resortgm@gmail.com

NEW KATA HOME WALK TO BEACH

Gorgeous new home, 2 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, security, 25,000/35,000 with car. Quiet. Available Jan 10. Tel: 053-892369, 081-472 1010 (English & Thai). Email: kahunadan@hotmail.com

LUXURY POOL VILLA

3 bedrooms, has everything. Low rates. Day/week/month. Near Laguna. Tel: 089-594 4067.

2-STOREY HOUSE FOR RENT



3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, European kitchen. Kathu area. Near Loch Palm Golf Course. Rent: 37,000 baht/month. Sale: 8.5 million baht. Tel: 081-440 0101.

BALINESE POOL VILLAS

Luxury boutique villas available for short or long-term rent. Swimming pool, two or three bedrooms. Rates from US\$ 89 per night. Tel: 076-384691, 087-264 9695. Email: enrico@easyhomephuket.com For further details, please see our website at: http://villasuksan.com/gallery.htm

VILLA IN RAWAI

2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, furnished, internet, cable TV. Available now. Tel: 083-641 9327. Email: rawaipoolvillas@hotmail.com

PATONG LUXURY APARTMENT

16,000 baht for long-term rent. Website: www.johnshoney moonsuite-phuket.ch

LONG-TERM RENT

1-2 bedroom, furnished house, beautiful garden. Chalong area. Rent: 10,000 baht per month. Tel: 081-892 4311.

BRAND NEW HOUSE FOR RENT



New townhouse for rent. Near BIS and Boat Lagoon.

- 88sqm of luxury living

- 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms

- Fully furnished

- 4 air conditioners

- European kitchen

- Car park

- Communal pool

Rent: 16,000 baht per month. Long term rent

15,000 baht per month.

Contact John. Tel: 086-904

4267. Email: johngriffinphotography52@yahoo.co.uk

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House repairs, renovations, construction. English, Swedish and Thai-speaking personnel. Please contact for more details. Tel: 083-394 8337(English), 080-141 4577 (Thai). Or send email to: mattias@zionproperty.com

OFFSHORE WORKER

Many expat offshore workers find it difficult to obtain finance, but there is some good news! Right now the QLD government is giving a \$10,000 Building Boost Grant to anyone who takes out a mortgage on building a new property in the boom town of Mackay, Queensland. Let our professional Australian mortgage broker get you the finance package for an investment property you need. If you already own a property or are paying tax in Australia or New Zealand, you can easily qualify. Contact Sam or Dale. Tel: 087-885 1522, 082-277 9105 (English). Email: offshorefinance@hotmail.com

Property Wanted

PAUL COOPER (PHUKET PALACE)

If you are looking for formerly known Paul Cooper of the Phuket Palace resort. Email: lookingforcooper@hotmail.com

CONDO FREEHOLD

I am looking for a foreign freehold condo in Patong. Prefer proximity to Soi Bangla, beach, etc, but not too fussy. Studio to 2-beds. Suitable for rental income. Up to 2 million baht. Please send email to: doctorlaptop@iinet.net.au

Accommodation Available

HOUSE FOR RENT

3-bedroom, 1 aircon, 2 bathroom, a living room, furnished house near Central Festival. Tel: 081-537 9878, 089-729 8472 (English & Thai). Email: suwittrai@hotmail.com

PATONG STUDIO CONDO

Furnished studio. Ocean/city/mountain views, pool, balcony, kitchenette, aircon, cable, WiFi, parking. Long-term rent. 15,000 baht per month. Tel: 080-8283 4188. For further details, please send email to: mauigreg@hotmail.com

SURIN BEACH: HOUSE & GARDEN

3 bedrooms, 2 toilets – fully fenced c/w large garden. Outdoor kitchen and living area. Tel: 075-664600, 086-941 0410. Email: here@fastmail.fm Website: Please see website & link to photos at see.rental.here.fastmail.fm/

APARTMENT FOR RENT

Apartment on 8th floor of Patong Tower, 90sqm. Fully furnished. Beach and mountain view. Tel: 076-344922, 081-9784982 (English & Thai). Fax: 076-341870. Email: jctailor@loxinfo.co.th For further details, please see our website at www.bluewaterphuket.com/patong_apartments_ocean_mountain_view.html

2 BED PENTHOUSE NEAR BANGTAO

200m from south end of Bang Tao beach, full furnished, roof sala, free WiFi, pools, gym, cleaning services available upon request at lowest cost. Available now. Price from 35,000 baht per week. Email: suppamas@live.com

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With FREE internet and organic gourmet breakfast. 2 for 1 special plus 50% discounts on your car rental includes 24 FREE service options for only 700 baht per day. For a special offer. Tel: 089-723 5444, 081-538 5554 (Thai). Email: info@gardenvilla.phuket.com For further details, please see our website at www.flickr.com/photos/54619340@N07/

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Quiet area, nice and clean, 300 mtrs from the beaches. Tel: 080-078 0931 (Thai). Email: rawai.reservation@yahoo.com

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3-BED POOL VILLA SEAVIEW

Family pool villa available for X-mas + NY, on exclusive estate. Email: resortgm@gmail.com

LAND & HOUSE FOR RENT

4-bedroom house and a 20sqm-showroom on 700 sqm land, main road to Cape Panwa. 15,000 baht/month. Tel: 089-486 2747, 086-568 1744. Email: sapmanee@gmail.com

2-BED PENTHOUSE NEAR BANG TAO

200m from south end of Bangtao Beach, full furnished, roof sala, free WiFi, pools, gym, cleaning services available upon request at lowest cost. Available now. Price from 35,000 baht per week. Email: suppamas@live.com

HOLIDAY RENTAL KARON BEACH

I will leave my Karon beachfront 2-bedroom, 2-bath condo from early December to early Jan. Will rent to mature parties for less than the cost of a hotel room. Tel: 088-8695536 (English). Email: rtj1111@yahoo.com

SEAVIEW CONDO FOR RENT

2-bed/bath, furnished, western kitchen, com pool, short-long term. Tel: 087-998 2590, 087-393 5462. Email: kata4rent@gmail.com

LAND & HOUSE FOR RENT

4-bedroom house and a 20sqm-showroom on 700sqm land, main road to Cape Panwa. 15,000 baht/month. Tel: 089-486 2747, 086-568 1744. Email: apmanee@gmail.com

400-1,000 BAHT/DAY



Rawai pool guesthouse. Nice rooms with cable TV, aircon, fridge, WiFi. From standard to very big family rooms with two double beds. Price range from 400-1,000 baht/day. Cars and motorbikes for cheap rent. 300m to Rawai Pier. Tel: 080-328 9986. Send email to: phuket7@yahoo.com

Accommodation Wanted

MONTHLY RENTAL

I am looking for a house, villa, apartment, or other furnished accommodation to rent on a month-to-month basis, beginning Dec 18. If you have something available, please contact me. Email: camster1964@gmail.com

LOOKING FOR RENTAL

Two Frenchies are looking for 2 bungalows (or apartment) of 1 bedroom, or one with 2 bedrooms in proximity of Karon or Kamala Beach for about 3 weeks from December to January. Please email: titesannonces@yahoo.fr

Household Items

2ND HAND SOLAR PANELS

Selling 2nd hand solar panels. Monocrystalline (Siemens, made in USA) 50W and Polycrystalline (Solartron, made in Canada) 53W. 4,500 baht per panel. Used for 4 years only; can still work for 10 years up. Email: phuketgreen@yahoo.com

A. JACOBSEN EGG CHAIR

Arne Jacobsen inspired "Egg" Chair for sale. Excellent condition. 88 (L) x 80 (W) x 106 (H). High quality aniline leather in chocolate brown. Swivel base in polished stainless steel with tilting function. 40,000 baht ono. Email: beijingmarcher@yahoo.com

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cool kids basko car seat for new born up to 13kg. only 1,000baht. Please contact for more details. Tel: 083-392 6850. Email: jaa-1983@hotmail.com

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Showroom samples available at special Prices!

- Upholstery Sofa and Cushions - 19,000 baht
- Outdoor Poly Rattan Sofa with Cushions at 19,000 baht
- Lamps for floor, table and desk Prices from 1,000 baht
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Please call 076-617101, 081-958 5949
Or Email to maple_winter@yahoo.com
so we can Email pictures.

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Please use this form to write your classified advertisement.
Then hand it to any of our agents.

_____ (heading)

Classified ads are charged per line. Each line is 120 baht, with a minimum of 4 lines (heading included) per ad.

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is a dynamic and progressive inbound ground-handling agent offering the most comprehensive and professional quality service for tourists. To be well prepared for the continuing successful expansion of our client base we require highly qualified and energetic staff. The company is currently looking for experienced professionals as

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- Fluency in spoken and written English (Some knowledge of other language is an advantage)
- Computer, Internet, E-mail and MS Office literate essential
- Self-organized and willing to accept the challenge of a very demanding position.
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The remuneration package will be commensurate with the successful candidate's qualifications and experience. Interested applicants should send their curriculum vitae indicating their work experience, present and expected salary with a recent photograph to:

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Tel: 076-282906 Fax: 076-282867 Mobile: 081-893 9925

Email: travelsasia@3bbmail.com**PART TIME (FLEXI TIME)****REAL ESTATE MARKETING PROFESSIONAL**

- The ideal candidate must have a good command of English, be currently or has previously worked in the field of real estate marketing and have strong background in high-end real estate marketing.
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- Part time hours to suit (flexi time) with high rate of pay and good working conditions
- Open to both Thai nationals and foreigners.
- Company car available when needed.
- Office based in Kathu.

Want to know more?To arrange an interview call **Mr Geoff** on **081-854 0061**

Resumé with current photo required before interview
Email to: mrgoeffcurry@yahoo.com

Phuket Gazette

The Phuket Gazette seeks to fill the following position:

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- ▶ Thai national (able to read, write, speak fluent Thai)
- ▶ Ability to communicate clearly in English
- ▶ Clear thinking in order to identify what makes a good news story
- ▶ Initiative and enthusiasm to track down the story
- ▶ Photography skills
- ▶ Able to manage own time effectively
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Good salary for the right candidate.

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A. Muang, Phuket 83000

Tel: 076-273555 Fax: 076-615240

Windy Boats

(Thailand) Co LTD)

Position: Office Administrator & Marketing Executive
Summary Responsibilities:

- ❖ Assisting Manager in executing a wide variety of details that involve the direct mail, email broadcast campaigns, outbound calls, marketing trade shows and events, public relations, other marketing plans. Interfacing with counterparts and building up relationship with marketing suppliers, agents and customers.
- ❖ Attending tradeshow, company sponsored promotions and events.
- ❖ Preparing standardized presentations, charter proposals, agreements, and other documentation when needed. Handle booking of charters, and ensuring the customers will be satisfied with the luxury Windy boats and service.
- ❖ Manage petty cash and ensure accurate, timely and cost-sheet for charter and boat management. Perform a series of secretarial functions for the Manager.

Salary: Negotiable + intensive + allowances

Bachelor degree in related field, a background within the marketing field will be an advantage. Good command of English language both speaking and writing and computer skills. Good communication skills, out-going personality, self-motivated, and capable to work without close supervision.

Contact khun Bow: jariya.sungdong@windyboats.asia**Mobile: 080-529 6928****NANNY WANTED**

Experienced, loving and caring nanny. Working for a happy nice expat family. Good salary with benefits.

Tel: 088-760 6922.**LOOKING FOR NANNY**

Starting from Dec 23 to Jan 14. Must be fluent in English. Please send email to: bharti.schneider@gmail.com

THAI STAFF WANTED

Work in the sun, good salary, commission, 5 to 6 hours of work a day. Work 6 days out of 7. Tel: 081-968 5963. Email: cc@bayshoreprojects.com

ABC INTERNATIONAL NURSERY

in Rawai is searching for a full-time K1 teacher and a Thai teaching assistant for K2. Following the International Primary Curriculum early year program, both position for teaching and a love of children. Only applicants with a teaching qualification at degree level and fluency in English should apply. Applicants should be prepared to give a sample teaching session and present references and certificates. Tel: 082-277 9490. Please email your application to: pburacorn@yahoo.com

LOOKING FOR THAI SECRETARY

Just for the person who can speak French. Full or part time. Office in Pa Khlok. Tel: 081-893 5270. Email: mrdu pouy@yahoo.fr

FINNISH STAFF

Finnish-speaking female staff, 20-30 years old, wanted. Send CV with photo to: rainforestjob@gmail.com

RECEPTIONIST

Hotel in Patong requires female receptionist with good English skills. 2 days off per week. Tel: 081-892 1621.

TEACHING AT PSU

Prince of Songkla University International College, Hatyai Campus is looking for 2 PhD. Lecturers as the following: 1. Multimedia and Animation 2. Art and Design. Contact Kanokrat. Please send a cover letter resume and your certifications to kanokrat.c@hotmail.com For further details. Please see our website: www.uic.psu.ac.th

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Interested applicants please send your resume to
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Previous experience required for hotel in Rawai. Tel: 081-797 7898.

THAI STAFF WANTED

Booth staff, good salary, commission, 5 to 6 hours a day, 6 days per week. Tel: 081-968 5963. Email: cc@bayshoreprojects.com

NATIVE ENGLISH TEACHER

Chalong kindergarten is looking for experienced teacher for class of 10-12 children ages 3-7. Mon-Fri 8-4. Start January 4. Tel: 080-624 7060. Please send resume to: phuketpreschool@yahoo.com

MANAGER AT ANDAMAN COVE

Andaman Cove is looking for a new manager for the 29 luxury condo area within Evason, Rawai. For more information, contact K. Gim. Tel: 085-918 2238. Email: waruneehangan@hotmail.com

RENTAL ASSISTANT & LISTING

Must have good command of English written and spoken. Must be able to work with Microsoft Office and know how to use the internet. The candidate must be a team player, have good social skills and be able to work independently. Thai national only. Tel: 087-882 2856 (English). Email: luc@phuket-tropical-realestate.com

JOB WITH A SEA VIEW

Office Admin - Secretary (Thai) needed for property sales office in Naithon. Fluent in English and Thai (speaking, writing, computer skills, email, Internet) required. Tel: 084-840 7624 (English). Email: sales@vistadelmarphuket.com

SALES MANAGER AND SECRETARY

Sunrise Ocean Villas located at Ao Por is looking for motivated staff: female, 23-35 years old. Must speak English, with good computer skills. Salary, bonus and commission. Tel: 081-343 0777. Email: montha_phuket@yahoo.com

EXECUTIVE HEAD CHEF

Medium-size hotel in Patong is looking for an experienced Executive Chef. The successful applicant should have at least 5 years' experience, speak good English and be familiar with high-end quality catering, including weddings, parties and boat catering. The position entails the management of two hotel-size kitchens and the staff therein. The applicant should be highly motivated, organized and punctual. This position is perfect for a self-starter who enjoys being part of a dynamic and successful team. Remuneration is negotiable. Applications to be submitted to: phuketgolfer@gmail.com

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1. Administrator	Salary 15,000	5 positions
2. Cashier	Salary 10,000	10 positions
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We are looking for dedicated long term staff to join our dynamic Phuket-based team in the following positions:

1) Chief Financial Officer.

Must have strong accounting background and leadership skills.

2) Network / IT Administrator.

Windows desktop support and Linux server admin experience essential. Additionally, exposure to both SharePoint and Joomla is desirable.

3) PHP & MYSQL Developer.

English fluency and excellent communication skills are also a must. Competitive salary and benefits.

Send CV with photo and cover to
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For further details, please see our website at
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Ultimate luxury villas developer in Phuket is seeking

Project Manager (Foreign Nationality)**Job qualifications**

University graduate, civil engineer qualify
At least 5 years experience at management level
Experience in construction field and property development

Main Job Tasks and Responsibilities

- Lead the planning and implementation of projects
- Facilitate the definition of project scope, goals and deliverables
- Define project tasks and resource requirements
- Develop full scale project plans
- Plan and schedule project timelines for contractors and designers to get works back on track
- Implement and manage project changes and interventions to achieve project outputs
- Project evaluations and assessment of results
- Manage consultant contracts and payments
- Develop and maintain communication plan
- Manage and resolves issues that appear on the issues log
- Prepare monthly and weekly reports
- Client liaison

Contract Manager (Thai/Foreign nationality)

University graduate, preferable law and business degree holder
3 years experience in construction or property development business
Fluent written and spoken English and Thai

Main Job Tasks and Responsibilities

- Overall planning, directing and coordinating the construction project
- Scheduling and coordinating all types of design during the construction process
- Selecting, hiring, and high level overseeing the work done by the contractors
- Responsible for scheduling and estimating the time required to complete the project
- Overseeing the selection of trade contractors and general contractors who are ideal for the completion of a project

Campbell Kane (Thailand) Ltd.

222 Moo 7, Pa khlok Sub-district, Talang District, Phuket Province 83110 Thailand
Email: annie@campbellkane.com, Mobile: 081-4190450-3, F: 076-529673

campbell kane

**Positon : Assistant Resort Manager**

We are seeking an adventurous, motivated and experienced person to join us to work on the beautiful remote Island called Koh Pra Thong for the period of October through April.

Responsibilities:

Assisting Resort Manager in daily resort operation but mainly responsible for all administrative functions such as handling daily bills for the resort, bookkeeping, vendor payments, correspondence, and maintaining accurate reservation records.

Requirements:

1. Male or Female - Aged 28 years and up
2. B.A Degree
3. Good spoken and written English and Thai.
4. Good literacy with Microsoft Office
5. Pleasant personality, service-oriented and good problem-solving skills
6. Prefer Hotel/Travel or customer service-related experience.
7. Experience with billing and knowledge of PayPal system is an advantage

Interested candidate please send resume, a recent photo and expected salary to Khun Pissa Tipsombut Email: pena@goldenbuddhaharesort.com

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We are principally engaged in the development and management of a large-scale mixed property development project in Phang-nga, Thailand. The site, located within the Thai Muang district, is planned to develop as an all-season resort with high-end residential real estate, hotels and other facilities. To achieve this aim, we invite high-caliber professional individuals to join our site team based in Thai Muang (30km north of Phuket).

(1) Assistant Accountant

(Ref No. P01/11)

Prepare monthly account, AP, GL and bank reconciliations, liaise with Revenue Department on tax matters, review accounting documents and make appropriate accounting entries.

- Degree holder in accounting with 3 years' accounting/auditing experience
- Construction accounting experience will be a definite advantage
- Excellent command of spoken and written Thai with good spoken and written English
- Well versed with Microsoft office applications

(2) Accountant

(Ref No. P02/11)

Prepare monthly account, financial statements and reports, handle tax matters, check and verify accounting entries and other ad-hoc accounting duties.

- Degree holder in accounting with 5 years' accounting/auditing experience
- Construction accounting experience will be a definite advantage
- Excellent command of spoken and written Thai with good spoken and written English
- Well versed with Microsoft office applications and accounting software

(3) Document Control Officer

(Ref No. P03/11)

Responsible for documentation administration and records management of the project, manage and supervise the organization of a significant project document control system and software.

- Tertiary qualified with solid experience related to administration and records
- Good computer literacy, some programming experience is an advantage
- Detail-minded and with fluency in both written and spoken Thai and English

(4) Legal and Company Secretarial Officer

(Ref No. P04/11)

Assist Legal Department and Company Secretarial Department on enforcement of corporate compliance issues, assist in simple translation work and ensuring proper and timely delivery and sign off on important documents from headquarters.

- Degree holder in Law with at least 3 years' relevant experience
- Experience in handling company secretarial documents and legal documents
- Experience in handling translation between English and Thai
- Excellent command of spoken and written Thai with good spoken and written English

(5) Planning Officer

(Ref No. P05/11)

Assist in preparation of planning submissions and building permits' documentation, prepare strategic programmes like design, procurement and construction schedules, review site progress reports, monitor and review development schedule trends and reporting delays, and recommend corrective action.

- Degree holder in Civil Engineering with at least 5 years' relevant experience
- Knowledge of full project lifecycle incl. design and procurement and planning software
- Experience in handling translation between English and Thai
- Excellent command of spoken and written Thai with good spoken and written English

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– Arrange and co-ordinate meetings and business trips, visa and travel

– Support our overseas partners

– Guest relations: arrangement and coordination

– Travel arrangements, booking hotels, flight tickets, driver coordination, etc

– Any other duties as requested by the director

Requirements:

- Female, 26-30 years old
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- Fluent British English and Fluent French
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SOLUTIONS TO THIS WEEK'S PUZZLES

Crossword puzzle:



Impossibly Possible Quiz answers:

1. London and Paris
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3. Suez
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5. Calcutta
6. Singapore
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9. San Fran.
10. New York
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Connection: Philias Fogg's voyage route in *Around the world in 80 days* by Jules Verne.

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International Sport

Chelsea win ignites title race

FRANK Lampard, marginalized in recent weeks, came off the bench to power the ball from the penalty spot and hand Chelsea a vital league win against league leaders Manchester City at Stamford Bridge.

The Blues, still seven points behind despite the win capitalized on the dismissal of City defender Gael Clichy for a second bookable offense – their third player sent off in their last six games.

Man City started the game in superb fashion when Sergio Aguero perfectly weighted a pass with the outside of his boot to Mario Balotelli, who calmly rounded the Chelsea goalkeeper to slot the ball home.

They should of doubled their advantage in the 14th minute with Aguero involved again. Unfortunately for City he dragged his shot wide after taking the ball past Bosingwa and wrong-footing Ashley Cole.

City also had a genuine penalty appeal

waved away when David Silva dropped under Bosingwa's attentions.

More through determination than difference in quality, Chelsea hauled themselves into the game, and 11 minutes before the break, Raul Meireles volleyed home a cross from former City player Daniel Sturridge into the top of Joe Hart's net.

Chelsea looked to exploit the numerical advantage after Clichy collected two yellow cards within twelve minutes of the restart. Andre Villas-Boas introduced Lampard while his counter-part, Roberto Mancini, seemed content to leave with a draw and strengthened his defense.

In the 81st minute Joleon Lescott blocked Sturridge's shot with a raised hand which gave the referee no alternative other than to point to the penalty spot. Lampard drove the ball down the middle to secure the points.



FIRESTARTER: Frank Lampard blasts the ball from the penalty spot to give Chelsea victory at Stamford Bridge and boost their title challenge. Photo:AFP

PREMIER LEAGUE TABLE			
MONDAY, 12 DECEMBER 2011 21:54 UK			
TEAM	P	GD	PTS
1 Man City	15	34	38
2 Man Utd	15	21	36
3 Chelsea	15	15	31
4 Tottenham	14	12	31
5 Arsenal	15	8	29
6 Liverpool	15	5	26
7 Newcastle	15	2	26
8 Stoke	15	-8	21
9 Aston Villa	15	-1	19
10 Norwich	15	-4	19
11 Swansea	15	-4	17
12 Everton	14	-3	16
13 QPR	15	-11	16
14 Fulham	15	-2	15
15 West Brom	15	-9	15
16 Sunderland	15	0	14
17 Wolves	15	-12	14
18 Wigan	15	-15	12
19 Blackburn	15	-12	10
20 Bolton	15	-16	9

PREMIER LEAGUE FIXTURES			
SATURDAY, 17 DECEMBER 2011 22:00			
Blackburn VS West Brom			
Everton VS Norwich			
Fulham VS Bolton			
Newcastle VS Swansea			
Wolves VS Stoke			
Wigan VS Chelsea		00:30	
SUNDAY, 18 DECEMBER 2011 19:00			
QPR VS Man Utd			
Aston Villa VS Liverpool		21:05	
Tottenham VS Sunderland		22:00	
Man City VS Arsenal		23:10	
TUESDAY, 20 DECEMBER 2011 02:45			
Wolves VS Norwich			
TUESDAY, 20 DECEMBER 2011 03:00			
Blackburn VS Bolton			
WEDNESDAY, 21 DECEMBER 2011 02:45			
Aston Villa VS Arsenal			
Man City VS Stoke			
Newcastle VS West Brom			
WEDNESDAY, 21 DECEMBER 2011 03:00			
Fulham VS Man Utd			
QPR VS Sunderland			
Wigan VS Liverpool			
Everton VS Swansea			
THURSDAY, 21 DECEMBER 2011 03:00			
Tottenham VS Chelsea			

Thai golf is Open



FACE OFF: Darren Clarke and Lee Westwood will look to take honors at the first Thailand Golf Championship being played in Chonburi.

THE inaugural Thailand Golf Championship, scheduled to tee-off Thursday with a star stud lineup, though missing is Rory McIlroy who had to withdraw on doctor's advice.

Set at the Amata Spring Golf and Country Club Chonburi, a prize pool of US\$1m is up for grabs at the final stop on the Asian tour. The 7,450 yard par-72 course will challenge any player,

boasting the only floating island green, at its par-3 17th, in Asia.

Open winner Darren Clarke and number three Lee Westwood will provide golfing fans with entertainment, together with Thongchai Jaidee, the highest ranked Thai at number 151 in the World.

Stroke play rules will apply, with the top 65 making the cut. The course constantly harries the golfers – particularly the 18th.

Sport briefs...

FORMULA 1: Red Bull and Ferrari are to withdraw from FOTA following a build-up of mistrust concerning adherence to the Resource Restriction Agreement. Some commentators think the move will allow Red Bull to dominate the sport for years.

OLYMPICS: BBC's Newsnight has claimed that boxing medals for the London games may be fixed. The allegations have been refuted by an IBA committee following a two-month investigation into funding of US\$1m by the Azerbaijan government.

FOOTBALL: FA Cup third round draw gave some interesting fixtures, most notably arch-rivals Man Utd to play Man City. Four non-league teams still survive with Wrexham, top of the "old conference league", could upset Brighton. Matches to be played on 7-9 January 2012.

Aussies stick it to Spain in Champions Trophy

AUSTRALIA'S Olympic field hockey campaign received a massive boost last Sunday when they defeated Spain to claim their fourth consecutive Champions Trophy title in Auckland, New Zealand.

Remarkably, the only goal came from the game's only penalty corner in the 57th minute when Australia skipper Eddie Ockenden tapped in a rebound after an initial drag-flick from Glenn Simpson was saved.

At the final hooter, the Kookaburras achieved their 12th victory in the history of the 33-year-old competition.

Aussie coach Ric Charlesworth was satisfied with his squad's performance on the day.

"It was a tough match, but I was very pleased. We defended well and that was the difference."

Australia's Jamie Dwyer collected the tournament's top scorer



KILLEROO: Eddie Ockenden (c) celebrates his goal. Photo: AFP

award with seven goals in six games and was named world player of the year for the fifth time.

Spain's captain Santi Freixa was best player of the tournament.

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Phuket endure volcanic obliteration in Buriram

By S Fein and S Layne

FC PHUKET have sealed their fate to remain in the Thai Premier League Division One league for next season, following a humiliating 0-7 loss to league champions, Buriram FC on Sunday.

Indeed, Sunday's pummeling represents the Southern Sea Kirin's worst result in the current season, and ever since being officially incorporated in 2009.

Played at the recently built New I-Mobile Stadium in Buri Ram city, the Volcanoes took an early lead with goals by Sumanya Burisay and Suriya Domthaisong in the sixth and ninth minutes.

Battered but not yet beaten, Phuket looked to be Buriram's equal throughout the rest of the first half, with balanced possession and a handful of commendable

attempts on goal from both sides.

The score remained in the home side's favor 2-0 into halftime, however.

The handful of green-clad fans in attendance and several more tuned in to the live broadcast from Nok Sanam coffee shop across from Surakul Stadium in Phuket Town, came to the edge of their seats when a shot by Phuket's Kone Adama hit Buriram's cross bar in the opening minutes of the second half.

However, Buriram persevered with attacking game that was met with a complete defensive collapse of Phuket, resulting in a plethora of goals by the Division One champions, starting with Suriya's second goal at 68 minutes.

From then on misery ensued for the Southern Sea Kirin, who conceded four

more goals in a 12 minute period.

Buriram's Jirawat Makkharom struck on 75 minutes, complemented by a score two minutes later by Portuguese-Brazilian import Douglas Gardoza, who had just come off the bench to score his 15th this season.

Samanya scored his second of the match in the 81st and the nail in the coffin came with a final goal by Ekkachai Sumrei.

Notably, the result is the second 7-0 blowout this season. The first one was achieved by second placed Chainat FC one week earlier (December 4) against visiting Air Force United.

Along with Buriram, Chainat also clinched promotion to the elite Thai Premier League for next season after blowing out Rajpracha 4-0 on Saturday.

This leaves only one promotion ticket left, of which Big Bang Chula United are well positioned to seize. The Pink Panthers only need four points from their remaining three matches to do so.

Otherwise, both Songkhla and PTT Rayong are clinging on to a thin strand of hope, one that requires winning all of their remaining matches.



LAVA: The crowd at I-Mobile Stadium was on fire.

PHUKET'S REMAINING FIXTURES THIS SEASON

DECEMBER 17: AWAY 03.00pm

vs Thai Honda

@ Phra Chom Klao Stadium, Bangkok

DECEMBER 21: HOME 6pm

vs Suphanburi

@ Surakul Stadium

DECEMBER 25: HOME 6pm

vs Air Force Utd

@ Surakul Stadium

JANUARY 07: AWAY 03.00pm

vs Chainat FC

@ Chainat Stadium, Chainat

JANUARY 07: HOME 03.00pm

TBA vs Bangkok FC

@ Surakul Stadium

Meanwhile, at the bottom of the table, the battle to avoid relegation (four teams) will be contested among Thai Honda, RBAC, Chiangmai, Bangkok FC, Customs United, Air Force, Suphanburi and Chanthaburi, the end of the season fast approaching.

FC Phuket, now in seventh place, are set to play last-placed Thai Honda in Bangkok this weekend before returning to Phuket for two home fixtures (see above).

Krabi, Pattalung vying for promotion

DIVISION Two Champions League playoffs conclude this weekend, with four teams to be promoted to the Thai Premier League Division One league via a two group, six team knockout system.

Promotion spots have already been claimed by Ratchaburi FC and Nakhon Ratchasima FC (Korat), with southern teams Pattalung FC and Krabi FC among five outfits still challenging for the other two places.

Krabi, currently second in Group B with 18 points will have home advantage at their Provincial Stadium this Saturday over Rayong FC, who trail by a solitary point. The game effectively becomes a grand final with no other team in

contention for promotion in this side of the draw, though Krabi require only a draw to claim the prize.

The Andaman Eagles visited the Wild Horses in the first game of the play-offs in Rayong, leaving with honors even in a goal-less draw.

The rematch kicking off at 4pm will likely see attacking play by both sides with everything to win or lose.

At the same time, a Group B "Battle for Isarn" will be taking place in Nakon Ratchasima. Current group leaders with 19 points, the Korat "Swat Cats" have already sealed promotion and are simply looking to be crowned group champions, with a victory over fourth placed, Roi Et United.



SOUTHERN SURGE: Krabi's Wirasak Ji-un (left, blue) holds ground and Pattalung's Mohamed Hassan (right, black) drives. Photo: Football Siam

The 2011 Isarn regional league champions, nicknamed the "White Squirrels" have no hope for promotion, but if they defeat Korat, coupled with a Krabi victory, the



Andaman Eagles will get group champions' honors, and thus a shot in the Champions League playoff championship on Christmas Eve in Bangkok.

Should Korat and Roi Et draw, and Rayong are able to prevail, Korat will be confirmed group champions bearing in mind their substantially better scoring record over Rayong.

The remaining Group B match will decide the wooden spoon. North Krungthep FC will host the Lamphun Warriors in Bangkok. Both, their hopes of promotion over, will remain in Division Two regional leagues, though the game may provide good value as each tries to avoid the ignominy of finishing bottom.

The outcomes for two of Sunday's three Group A matches – all to be played simultaneously at 4pm – will determine the group's remaining promotion ticket.

Pattalung will have high hopes, as they face the weakest team of the group at home. Their opponents, the 2011 Bangkok regional league champions,

Kasetsart University with a lowly 4 points, can only try to salvage some pride from what has been a terrible playoff campaign, winning only once against Pichit.

If the Southern "Swiftlets" can hold their nerve on Sunday and defeat the "Emerald Nagas" in front of what will undoubtedly be a rowdy and energetic southern Thai crowd at the Pattalung OrBorJor stadium, the 2011 Southern league runners up will seal promotion.

However, should Pattalung lose, and Loei City (3rd place) and Pitsanulok (4th place) draw, then the promotion ticket will be decided on goal differences. If a winner from the game in Loei emerges, a draw for Pattalung will not be enough for promotion.

The outcome of the last group A match between Ratchaburi FC and Pichit FC will have no effect on promotion or the championship finals. The Ratchaburi FC "Dragons", runaway leaders on 19 points, have already been crowned Group A Champions and will likely play with reserved tempo on Sunday. Pichit, with 10 points have no hope of promotion and can only strive for a dignified finish.

Both Third-place and Championship matches will be held on Christmas Eve at the 76-year-old, 30,000-capacity, Supachasalai Stadium in Pathum Wan district of Bangkok (next to MBK), at 4pm and 6.15pm respectively.

For the latest updates of Thai League football, continue to check PG online.

– Steven Layne

Sport

PYSC star in King's Cup Dinghy events

A STRONG fleet of 34 Optimist and eight Lasers took part in the recent Phuket King's Cup International Dinghy Regatta with fifteen sailors from Phuket Youth Sailing Club (PYSC) between the ages of seven and 15 who joined other sailors from Phuket, Phang Nga, Samui, Songkhla and Sattahip to take part in the three-day event.

On day one, the course was set to challenge the youngster's sailing skills who had to thread their way through moored boats off Kata Beach.

With two races completed, race three got underway in disappointingly calm conditions. Shortly thereafter, the fleet was hit by a very strong squall bringing winds of up to 35 knots which caused

many of the boats to turn over.

The more experienced sailors enjoyed the extreme conditions and three Optimist sailors finished in style with PYSC, Akapoj Kankaew posting his first win of the day. In the Laser Fleet, all the sailors finished the race with Patteera Mee-u-samsen winning the race to give her three wins for the day.

Recognition should be given to the many boat owners who helped rescue sailors and to spectators for collecting boats that had been washed up in the surf.

Day two began grimly with rain and no wind to start proceedings, but a light northeast flow arrived allowing the first race to get underway. However, the wind didn't stay for long and both fleets were

becalmed requiring much patience and concentration on behalf of the sailors. Eventually some progress was made, but both courses had to be shortened to enable the boats to finish within the time limit.

On day three, the battle for first place in the Optimist Class continued between the leader, Akapoj Kankaew, representing PYSC and Sattahip-native, Sutida Poonpat. Although Sutida won both races, it wasn't enough to clinch the title with Akapoj eventually claiming first and PYSC securing seven places out of the top eight.

In the Laser fleet Patteera Mee-u-samsen kept her lead winning the event posting four firsts out of six races.

— Phuket Gazette



WINNERS: Trirat Manthong (PDS, Laser Class); Patteera Mee-u-samsen (PKCR, Laser Class); Anapat Ngarmdee (PDS, Optimist Class); Akapoj Kankaew (PKCR, Optimist Class).



SUPER SAILORS: PYSC competitors at the 2011 King's Cup Dinghy regatta.

Village claim first victory over Tigers



Ryan Dunn during his spell.

A SECOND win for the Village in the Island Furniture League ensured a leap frog into first place after a demolition of league newcomers, Thanyapura Tigers at the Alan Cooke Ground (ACG) on Sunday.

Tiger's won the toss and put the Village into bat, but their strategy backfired. Ill-disciplined bowling churned out 79 wides which in turn resulted in a 40 over match dragging into a 53 over nightmare. Adding further misery to their fielding disaster was a five over penalty incurred for not bowling their overs in the allotted time.

Opener Martin Foster hit an unbeaten 40 runs, supported by fellow opener and captain James Firth (16), Paul Stamp (15), and last bat Diwan Mydeen (11 not out). Extras top scored for the Village with 84 out of the total of 185 all out.

The opening stand of 84 from Foster and Firth set the platform for the innings until Tigers' captain, Barry Buck, handed over the wicket-keeping gloves to Martin Hill in the 15th over. He dismissed Firth with his very first ball and continued the onslaught taking the first five wicket haul at the ACG for 28 runs from his 8 overs.

However, the damage was done with the opening spray of Ryan



Tigers captain Barry Buck.

Dunn, Roshan Jaysuriya and Hill.

Tiger's innings began with opener Dunn who looked to prove his 80 not out against the youthful Leopards in his previous match was not fortuitous. And he started confidently by dispatching Village opening bowler Tom Gordon for six. Despite the dent to his figures, Gordon bore down on Dunn and clean bowled him with his next delivery.

Foster managed to dismiss Hill and Smith in similar fashions when he took advantage of the batsmen leaving their crease to whip the balls and claim two run outs.

Roshan Jaysuriya (24) and Dan Smith (15) put on a 52 run partnership to offer a semblance of respectability to the Tiger's innings.

Tigers eventually succumbed after 25 overs for 123 runs. Pick of the bowlers for the Village were Tom Gordon (2 for 29), Craig Patterson (2 for 17) and Martin Forster (2 for 33).

Barry Buck, captain of the losing side, was awarded man of the match for his 5 wicket haul, with Foster taking second and Jaysuriya placing third.

On Sunday December 18, the young Leopards take on the might of Laguna in what could prove a decisive game for both teams.

— Phuket Gazette

Phuket golfers set for Youth Games

PHUKET Youth Golf Club are to send one young player to compete in the United States before preparing for the Phuket Youth Games to be held from May 28 to June 5 with 10 other members of the club.

Jinjuta Thongtan, a student in Satee School Phuket, has been selected to represent Thailand I at the World Junior Golf Series to be held at Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida on December 20 to 24.

The 16-year-old has been playing golf for six years and is confident of her chance to do well in the competition. She is currently ranked 1,312 by the World Amateur Golf Ranking system.

"I will do my best to give Thailand a golfing reputation," she said.

The team selected to play in the Youth Games consists of six boys and five girls.

Pantamit Wananup, Waigoon Katehom, Tantai Butnongsang, Watcharathon Jirapacharasin, Noppasit Porramajaroenrote and Umnard Kerdkrason will represent the boy's team while Jinjuta Thongtan, Chuennapa Jaritngam, Kannika Aiwsakol, Ploytalay Luksameesangjan and Saranporn



TEED UP: Phuket Youth Golf Club members including Jinjuta Thongtan (center).

Langkulkettrin.

"The team has spent the last two months immersed in practice preparing for the Khon Kaen Games," said president of the Phuket Youth Golf Club, Thammawat Wongjaroenyos.

Thammawat expects the team to walk away from the Trang tournament with two gold medals.

"The top players from the Khon Kaen competition will be invited to play in the Phuket competition in May next year," he added.

Pariwat Pinsawat, 14, will be attending the Trang competition with the team and was pointed out

by Thammawat as one of the best emerging young golfers.

"Pariwat is turning professional and plans on going to Japan. Recently, at the Mazda Country Club, he came in eight under par. With a record like that he should go far," he said. For more information on Junjita's progress visit wjgs.org.

— Atchaa Khamlo

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King's Cup 2011 unfurls

FINAL day's racing at the 2011 Phuket King's Cup Regatta was a pressure filled cauldron of excitement with honors in many classes still to sail for.

The strongest winds of the week were forecast for the final day and they turned up perfectly on cue.

The conditions played into *Team Premier's* hands as skipper Hannes Weimer and crew took a win from the first race and a second in the final race to conclude the series as IRC Zero Class winner on 13 points, ahead of Neil Pryde's *Hi Fi* and Sam Chan's *Freefire* in second and third respectively.

"We've raced in 10 King's Cups now, but this is the first time we competed as our own team under the name of *Team Premier*. I was feeling fairly comfortable going into the last race because I believe we have the fastest boat; she is a good all-round performer, so we get results whether the wind is light or 17 to 18 knots. It's extremely satisfying to win after trying many times before," said Hannes.

IRC 1 Class has been thrilling throughout the week with so many strong entries from around the world. Yasuo Nanamori and his all-Japanese *Karasu* team delivered a consistent performance taking first in the class.

Steve Manning's *Walawala 2* scored a second and a first on the final day to take second place overall, from Singapore entry *KukuKERchu*, skippered by David Ross, in third.

The IRC 1 Class was arguably the most competitive of all with

13 boats and sailors of 17 different nationalities. Winning entry *Karasu* is the first-ever all-Japanese team to win their class at the Phuket King's Cup Regatta.

Thailand scored a magnificent victory in IRC 2 Class, as Chief Petty Officer First Class Wiwat Poonpat's team on *Royal Thai Navy 1* honoured His Majesty the King of Thailand with a clear class win.

"We are very proud to be able to take overall victory for His Majesty the King's birthday. I'm sure all Thai people will be very appreciative of this result, and hopefully we can encourage more people into the sport of sailing. I was quite confident coming into the last race, but until we crossed the finishing marker, we were never totally sure if we could do it. I'm very happy with our performance in this regatta. The team has trained hard and has been very well disciplined," said Wiwat.

Second place went to Singapore entry *Foxy Lady V*, skippered by Bill Bremner with Russian entry *Ruby Tuesday*, skippered by Arbuzov Andrey, in third.

Firefly 850 Sport Class racer *Moto Inzi*, skippered by Roger Kingdon, put in a strong final day performance with a first and a second to claim class victory by a single point over their nearest rival, *Voodoo*, skippered by Hans Rahmann.

In the Multihull Class, Alan Carwadine's *Sidewinder* was unmatched in consistency and finished the runaway winner with two wins today to take the class title. Second place was claimed by *Da Vinci*, skippered by Mick Coleman, with David Liddell's *Miss Saigon* in third.

Titania of Cowes, a British team which delivered consistent wins throughout the week performed

strongly in the final stages to take the Premier Class. Despite the best efforts of rivals *Baby Tonga Strongbow* skippered by Peter Sorrenson, Richard Dobbs' *Titania of Cowes* team sealed victory with third and first place finishes on the last day of the Regatta. Third place was secured by the stunning 82-foot *Swan* from China, *Chao Ren Plus One*, skippered by Wang Bin.

Venture, lead by Mark Crisp, dominated the Bareboat Charter Class, and claimed second place finish in the final race of the series today. The team have been largely uncontested throughout much of the competition; a testament to the outfit's professionalism and preparation in a class which attracts entries from across the world.

Second place went to *Sail Plane* skippered by Oliver Heer with *Tonicola 2*, skippered by Mikhail Beloborodov in third.

Modern Classic Class was won by Bo Standergaard's *Patrice III* by two points from Peter Wood's *Windstar* in second and Nicholas Smith's *Free Wind*, in third.

In the Cruising Class, *Odin*, manned by Aquacraft Asia, finished with a win and a win overall. Second place went to William Sax's *Astraeus* with Jack Cristensen's *Linda* in third.

In the Kiteboard Class, an exciting exhibition event at this year's Phuket King's Cup Regatta, France's Olivier Dansin won four out of five races in the Series to be the flyaway winner. Thai star and two-time Asian Champion, Narapichit Pudla, finished second overall with Turkey's Salih Alexander in third.

The Phuket Gazette and PGTV are proud sponsors of the Phuket King's Cup Regatta



CLOSE CALL: Team Premier and Evolution Racing keeping tight.



Neil Godbold and Willy Kerr of the KTA.



Kiteboarder enjoying hanging about at the PKCR.



Royal Thai Navy 1 at full sail.



RTN 1 Skipper Wiwat Poonpat.



FULL TILT: *Karasu* was the first all Japanese crew to compete at the Phuket King's Cup Regatta. All photos by Guy Nowell

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Flynn second on Asia Pro surf tour

Thirteen-year-old surfing star Annissa Flynn from Phuket closes her 2011 surfing season with top-ranking success

ANNISSA Tita Flynn, Phuket's own super surfer has returned home after three weeks on the road to finish up the 2011 surfing season on a high.

Having posted three wins and a second place at competitions held in Hong Kong and Malaysia, Annissa has finished second overall in the professional women's ranking for the inaugural Asian Surfing Competition (ASC) Pro Calendar 2011.

Three weeks ago, Annissa traveled to Hong Kong for the 7th Reef Cup 2011 event with hopes of going one better than last year, where she finished first in the women's open division and second in the Groms (junior) event. Many people don't see Hong Kong as a surfing destination, but nestled in the New Territories is Big Wave Bay. Competitors and spectators alike have to carry their boards, sleeping bags and tents into the park, and setup camp in the sand dunes behind the beach break. Then over two days the competitors get to take on the monsoon-generated South China Sea swells.

Annissa entered both the Groms and the Women's Open Short-Board events and claimed the winners trophies in both.

Following a brief return trip home a fortnight ago to catch up on her schoolwork at Satee Phuket, Annissa traveled to Terengganu-Malaysia to compete in the Quiksilver Best Event Surf Contest at Batu Burok Beach.

Annissa won her heat and then confirmed her position as one of Asia's best surfers by defeating her arch rival and four-

time Indonesian surfing champion, Yasnyiar Gea, to win the Women's Open Division. It was a particularly sweet victory for Annissa, as Gea had claimed first place ahead of the 13-year-old at her home competition – the Quiksilver Best Event on Patong Beach.

Tim Hain, organizer of the ASC Tour asked Annissa about her expectations of winning this event.

"I didn't think I had a much of a chance to win because I'm the smallest and youngest of the girls, and with the conditions today it was really hard. But I'm so happy to have won this, really happy, and I'm very thankful to my Dad and Mom, to Quiksilver and Ark surfboards for supporting me, so I could come here and compete," she said.

Last weekend Annissa also competed in the final ASC Tour event for 2011 – the Billabong Cherating Pro.

In Sunday's finals, Annissa had another glorious battle with Gea. However, the Indonesian picked up a great wave in the dying seconds and with two of her trademark powerful cutback maneuvers she managed to steal the title from Annissa by just 0.7 points – the narrowest of margins.

This was the second time that Annissa had been leading in a final to be pipped at the post by Gea.

Annissa is already back to school. But not for long, as the ASC Pro Surfing Tour 2012 starts again on January 6 with the Big Foot Monsoon mayhem event at Desaru in Malaysia. As an international sports star on the rise and so many years ahead to fulfill



WAVE RIDER: Annissa cuts through the surf on her way to winning in Malaysia. Photos: Tim Hain



WINNING SMILE: Collecting her prize money



STAR TREATMENT: Media frenzy begins.

expectations, it is a daily struggle to meet the financial requirements for travel and accommodation. To keep Annissa competing at the level necessary for continued development, even with such sponsors as Quiksilver and Ark Surfboards, it is vital

that she receive financial assistance from local business or private interests. For more information on how to assist Annissa in her attempts to become Asia's number one surfer email malflynn@gmail.com or T: 081 970 1963.

– Phuket Gazette

the 11th ASIA SUPERYACHT RENDEZVOUS

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A first for Premier



ALL HANNES ON DECK: Team Premier glides through the waters off Phuket at this year's King's Cup Regatta. Skipper Hannes Weimer below right.

THIS year was the 25th anniversary of the Phuket King's Cup Regatta.

The event attracted the largest fleet in the competition's history with 91 keelboats and multihulls, 38 dinghies, 19 kiteboards, and over a thousand sailors from 33 countries across the globe.

Conditions have been good for much of the week, and comments centred on the enjoyable racing and spectacular beach side parties each evening.

Kevin Whitcraft, President of the Phuket King's Cup Organising Committee, said, "This anniversary year has been an event of particular poignancy. To see a great number of keelboats and multihulls, strong levels of ability in the International Dinghy Class and the introduction of Kiteboards, this has been one of the most exciting Regattas in years. Our sponsors have also supported us strongly each and every day, and everybody has had an enjoyable week. The

Phuket King's Cup Regatta is renowned throughout Asia, and with good wind and beautiful conditions, the racing has not disappointed. We continue to push the Regatta, to innovate and to improve it, so it has lived up to its billing as the best Regatta in recent years."

For a full report on the final day's race see page 46 and for more photos from the event's award parties turn to page 22



Photos by Guy Nowell



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December 17 - 23, 2011

PhuketGazette.Net

PHUKET'S MOST WANTED

Holiday Heroes

SANTA SIGHTINGS

Bizarre Christmas tales from around the world

CHRISTMAS ON THE JOB

Spare a thought for those working the holidays in Phuket

YOUR RESOLUTIONS

What Phuketians are hoping for in 2012



PHUKET 2012

Why locals have their own simple lingo for Doomsday economics

SEE P11



Celebrate Christmas and New Year

2012

Season Greeting of

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Last-minute

IF YOU haven't bought your loved one's Christmas gift by now, then it's almost time to panic, but not quite.

It's way too late for Amazon.com to be of any help, unless you want to open presents on your lonesome in January.

Friends are no doubt nattering about what they bought for their families and this – well – just makes you feel even worse, right?

Don't fret. Calm down and read on. We understand the last-minute shopping rut you now fester in.

That's why we've assembled a list of gift ideas you can buy or make in a hurry just in time for Christmas Day.

Sony DPF-HD1000 Price: 6,990 baht



An oldie but a goodie

PHOTO ALBUMS with photos you've selected make great gifts and say, iHoney, I really put some thought into this. Under no circumstances give your loved one an empty photo album. This would be like giving someone air for a present.

Photo developers are plentiful on the island, not quite 7-Eleven plentiful but there are many.

Ransack your darling's hard drive, find the best photographs of you together and save them in a file called iMy Love or something equally corny.

Print them or buy a snazzy digital photo frame (pictured above) and you're done.

A great selection of digital photo albums are available from most good electronic and camera stores in Central Festival and Jungceylon.



iChristmas

THE iSTORES at Central Festival and Jungceylon are always mobbed with children ogling the latest gadget wizardry from Apple. Adults seem to like them too, and you just can't go wrong with anything in these days.

iPad2 prices range from the 16GB model with WiFi (15,900 baht) to the 64GB model with WiFi + 3G (25,900 baht).

The latest iPod touch is also available at the aforementioned stores.

Prices range from 6,500 baht (8GB) to 12,900 baht (32GB).



Smile...it's Christmas

GETTING that Hollywood smile is not out of reach here in Phuket.

Paying for your loved one to get those ghastly coffee-stained teeth sorted out once and for all is one bright gift idea.

Teeth whitening at Promjai Dental Clinic at Patong Merlin Hotel costs between 9,000 and 12,000 baht.

From start to finish you can be waltzing out the front door in one and a half hours with your new pearly whites and looking like you're ready for a strut down the red carpet at a Phuket party anyway.

See www.promjaidental.com



Tom Cruise



Katie Holmes

Christmas!



Markets

Saturday, 10th Dec
Da Vinci's Restaurant, Nai Harn
3pm – 6pm

&

Saturday, 17th Dec
Canal Village, Laguna
3pm – 6pm

Selling everything from Christmas decorations, cards, handmade gifts, unique home ware, jewelry and much more...

Tasty festive treats including mince pies, Christmas cakes and cookies
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For more information please contact: chantal.fernandes@gmail.com

Christmas ideas



Buying the Big Bird

BUTTERBALL frozen and fresh whole turkeys are available at Villa Market and Big C Extra, Jungceylon, with prices ranging from 1,200 and 3,000 baht depending on weight. Also check out Tops located in Central Festival and Tesco superstores in Phuket City and Thalang.



No tree this year?

IF YOU haven't got your Christmas tree yet, then you need to act fast. You are in imminent danger of being branded a Grinch.

Villa Market in Chalong has 2-2.5-meter tall artificial Christmas trees imported from France for 9,900 baht. Better hurry, the Grinch moniker is looming. Location: HomePro shopping complex, Chao Fa West Rd, Chalong (50 yards from the roundabout). T: 076-381-888.

Robinson, Jungceylon, also has a wide variety of Christmas trees ranging in size from a few centimeters (79 baht) to towering 3-meter tall (11,000 baht) fake ferns. There's also enough tinsel on sale to dress a forest.

Yacht a way to spend Christmas

HOW ABOUT treating you loved one, or the whole family and a throng of friends, to a luxury yacht charter.

Andara Resort & Villas has two pleasure craft in an 85 foot and 107 foot Italian-made Bagliettos in both available for charter.

Prices and times of trip vary between the two yachts and between seasons.

What better way to celebrate the festive season than in style at sea.

See www.andarayachts.com for more.



Diamond pleaser

DIAMONDS for him or her are exorbitantly priced Christmas presents with wow factor.

If you want to splurge on sartorial splendor then you can't go wrong with gifting your loved one with diamonds for Christmas.

But where to go? Andaman Pearl in the jewelry section, first floor of Central Festival.

T: 076-209085

M: 081-8921337



Diamond set:
18K white gold
earrings, pendant
and ring
Price:
Was 102,900 baht,
now 70,000 baht

Diamond ring price:
Was 44,000 baht,
now 29,000 baht

Ginger gifts

IF IT IS ornamental cuddly toys, throw cushions or kitsch knick-knacks for your home, then there's a little shop called Ginger you need to check out.

Located in the Asian Arts & Crafts section of Central Festival, Ginger is a welcome splash of color in this little enclave of the mall.

Hand-woven cuddly animals make a great gift, and young or old we all like a cuddle.

You can pick up a long-neck giraffe for 5,900 baht or baby bear for 1,900 baht. There's a zoo of mammals to choose from.



Toiletries goody set: 1,795 baht



Biscuit basket: 1,695 baht

Oh gosh...a bit o' Marks & Sparks' posh!

MARKS and Spencer is one of the best-loved retailers in the United Kingdom. About 21 million shoppers walk through Marks & Sparks' doors each week, and now Phuketians can enjoy the best of British too.

Here's a few Marks and Sparks' gift ideas available from the Central department store at Central Festival.

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It's a tough life...

CHRISTMAS

on the job in Phuket

Legions of tourists are descending on our fair isle to partake in Christmas festivities featuring wondrous beachside meals, tons of love-inducing mistletoe and a veritable tidal wave of intoxicating libations. But spare a thought for the many Phuketians who will be working flat out to keep the island smoothly functioning, while you are – well – merely flat out and just trying to function smoothly.



DOCTOR Siam Poontanangoon is Head of Neurosurgery at Bangkok Hospital Phuket. December 25 is not like every other day for him, although it is a day of work.

As Doctor Siam says, "Christmas Day will start at 7am at the hospital for meif I am lucky. If there has been an emergency such as a major road accident on Christmas Eve, I may have to be in the wards much earlier. Christmas Day is often far busier for my department because of the sad fact that many more accidents occur over Christmas and so we see far more patients with urgent medical needs."

While we are enjoying our turkey, champers and mince pies, Doctor Siam and his team will be hard at work treating and often operating upon patients with brain and neurological damage. Christmas is a time not of celebration, but of extremely hard work and duress for Doctor Siam who makes the shocking point that up to ninety per cent of Christmas accidents are alcohol related. If he could have one wish fulfilled this Christmas, it would be that his workload would be reduced by the simple expedient of people remembering not to drink and drive.



Patcha Thaptimon – Exotic Dancer at the Aphrodite Cabaret, Phuket City, will wake up as normal at about 2pm on Christmas Day as she will have been working the evening before.

"I live with the other performers in the apartments next door to the Aphrodite Cabaret and after a bit of gossip about what happened in Soi Bangla the previous evening, we'll get straight into a run-through of the show for the evening's performances. I'll do some limbering exercises, then we'll rehearse for about two hours. We do at least three shows a night, maybe more as it's Christmas and Phuket is full of visitors, so I have to relax and save my energy for the shows."

At about 5pm I start putting on my make-up and my gown for my first number which takes me about thirty minutes.

Then we have shows at 6pm, 7:45pm and 9:30pm, each one lasting 75 minutes, but we always go out and mingle and have pictures taken with the audience after each performance, so it's usually a rush to get ready for the next show.

We have 15 different set and costume changes each show, so by the time we finish work at about 11pm, I need to relax. But seeing as it's Christmas I expect we'll head for Soi Bangla and a disco."



Coconut Culler Khun Nop is a wizened, mahogany-brown streak of a man with a twisted grin and a cigarette pasted permanently into the corner of his mouth. On Christmas Day he will be shinnying up the slender trunks of vertiginous coconut trees, a glinting machete tucked into his belt, just as he does on every other working day of the year. He will hang with death-defying insouciance from the top-most fronds and then lop off the abundant nuts that hang there. They plummet to earth with ear-splitting venom where his son Petee scurries expertly about, dodging the aerial bombardment and gathering the fleeing nuts into his papa's motorcycle sidecar.

"I am Buddhist man so will spend December 25 like any other day working in coconut trees," Khun Nop said.

"It will be good day, 'cause we take nuts to the market and sell. Then in evening family have good meal and I drink some Thai Whiskey so have happy Christmas too."

MICHAEL MASSEY, Director of Atmanji Wellness Centre, Rawai, plans to spend the day at Friendship Beach working with visitors from various countries helping them cleanse, detox and rejuvenate.

"My day will start with yoga and meditation overlooking the beach at 7am. After fresh fruit drinks we will retire to our chalets for colonic cleansing. We will run a group therapy session in the afternoon exploring emotional blockages, followed by a massage. At sunset we'll take the group to see the Big Buddha and after drinks of cleansing herbal nutrients and colloidal it's early to bed at 10pm.

Those visitors on the full detox program don't get any lunch, but as I'm here year round, I think I'll treat myself to a salad and chicken splurge, and maybe even a glass of wine before bed!"

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BIG

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23 December 2011 – 1 January 2012 @ The Port Arena



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Festive Activities @ The Port Arena

- **Give & Share for Christmas Eve**

24 December 2011, 3:00 p.m. onwards

Join us in the joy of giving. Spread the festive spirit among underprivileged children from the Child-Watch Phuket Foundation. Play games onstage and give special gifts to the kids. Santa Claus along with colourful clowns will of course be there to give the kids the most memorable day.

- **"Ray of Happiness" Christmas Party**

25 December 2011, 6:30 p.m. onwards

Celebrate "BIG" this year. Enjoy a breath-taking concert by Thailand's best pianist, **"Tor Saksit"**, including ravishing routines and kaleidoscopic costumes, all in the True Festive Spirit.

- **Ring a Bell Water Fountain Show**

24 - 26 December 2011, 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. only!

It's definitely that time of the year if fountains are singing and dancing along to their favourite festive tune: Jingle Bell Rock! Who can resist?

- **Jungceylon New Year Celebration**

31 December 2011 & 1 January 2012, 7:00 p.m. onwards

Refresh your spirit and get ready to welcome New Year 2012 with a bang at one of the best seats in the audience for this fantastic stage show.



For more information, please visit our Promotion Booth, The Port Arena.

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- Etc.



New Year Buffet Dinner Just THB 3,999 net per person

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A STRANGE facet of New Year in Phuket is waking on the morning of January 1 bleary of eye and aching of sinew and saying to yourself, "Right that's enough of the dissolute and indulgent lifestyle into which I have plummeted in this hedonistic playground. From now on it will be soda water, daily exercise and good deeds for me and no compromises."

Hope, and its close cousin self delusion, spring eternal in the human breast and while statistics show that over ninety per cent of New Year's resolutions are broken within the first week there are many Phuket denizens who mean what they say and actually stick to them. Here's a selection...

A little fishy wishy for New Year...



Khun Fin – Koi fish (left), Natural Restaurant, Phuket Town

"Excuse me....could we have a word? We're from the *Phuket Gazette* and asking people and – well – fish about their New Year's resolutions."

"Oh well you've come to the right place. I can tell you a few things we fish would like to see improved around Phuket and that's for sure."

"Really?"

"Oh yes. We get all sorts in here you know. Drunken tourists. Old guys with girls half their age. People selling dodgy timeshare condos. We see everything from down here, but no-one knows we're looking and taking it all in as we quietly swim about."

"Oh right. Well that sounds just what we're after. So what are your thoughts about next year?"

"The only problem is that as you might have heard we carp have absolutely no short term memory.....we can't remember a thing from one second to the next. So, what did you want to know about?"

"Look, don't worry about it, we'll ask somebody else."

"Er, do you have any ants' eggs with you by any chance?"

But seriously, let's give the final word to John Gray (pictured above, right) who says, "On New Year's Eve, join me in rejoicing. Step outside, spread your arms to the stars and give thanks to the universe for our glorious little planet.....and let's promise to take better care of it next year."

Words by Baz Daniel

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High Hopes for 2012



John Gray – Phuket Environmental Warrior

"My resolution is to increase my commitment to protect all living things. All life is interconnected, from the Universe, Mother Earth (infected as it is with overpopulation and global warming) to animals suffering the evils of 'Asian' medicines and human inhumanity: elephants, tigers, rhinos, sharks, even our local *tokay* (gecko). Our local animal holocaust includes dolphin and porpoise prisons, photo gibbons, the dog meat trade and animal 'husbandry'. Even Phang Nga Bay is a living organism suffering over-commercialization.

We primates are the most marvelous machine we know, capable of reaching the stars. If we still have compassion, we suffer the pain of the animals which share this planet. They all have souls, intelligence, emotions and families the same as humans."



Bhuritt Maswongssa – Vice President Marketing, Phuket Tourist Association

"I have the responsibility for promoting Phuket as a tourism destination, driving maximum arrivals and resulting revenue, so I have a great belief in green and sustainable tourism development for Phuket.

Higher numbers of tourist arrivals mean more environmental, cultural and social impacts and this does not bode well for future sustainability unless these impacts are effectively managed. The problem we have at present is that most in our industry have a very short-term attitude and are concerned about profitability now.

My resolution would be to put in place government and private sector bodies which have the mandate to control and regulate the way in which tourist development occurs. They need to be well-funded and have the 'teeth' to make policy work."



Bill Barnett – Phuket Lifestyle Guru

Bill Barnett is the Managing Director of resort, property and hospitality consultants C9 Hotelworks and a veteran Asian-based hotelier with experience that embraces the Four Seasons, Regent, Ritz Carlton, Grand Hyatt, Westin and Hilton groups.

Known for his trenchant yet humorous columns in the *Phuket Gazette*, Bill had this to say about his wishes for 2012.

"While I hope that Thailand continues to be a life less ordinary, after so much recent excitement perhaps for 2012 a little more 'ordinary' might be a nice change for a while.

As for my own wishes, I would like to see no import tax on wine and more time to spend in my favorite place in the whole wide world – Phuket."

FESTIVE SEASON 2011



BANYAN TREE
— PHUKET —

Festive Season at a Glance

Christmas Eve Degustations

Winter Wonderland, a Christmas Buffet at WATERCOURT
Candle Light Christmas, Gala Set Dinner at TRE
Tropical Christmas, Thai Delights at SAFFRON

A Culinary Voyage into the New Year

Pearl of the Andaman, Gala Buffet and Entertainment at LAGOON DECK
Party by the Lagoon, an International Buffet with a Family Atmosphere at WATERCOURT
Dining amongst the Stars, 7 gourmand courses at TRE



WATERCOURT
7.00pm – 10.30pm

CHRISTMAS EVE

Christmas Eve Buffet at THB 6500 nett

NEW YEAR'S EVE

International Family Buffet THB 7900 nett
incl. one glass of champagne



Saffron
7.00pm – 10.30pm

CHRISTMAS EVE

4 Course Set Dinner at
THB 6000 nett



Tre
7.00pm – 10.30pm

CHRISTMAS EVE

5 Course Set Dinner at THB 6000 nett

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Dinner amongst the Stars THB 9900 nett
incl. half bottle of champagne



Lagoon Deck
8.00pm – 2.00am

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Pearl of the Andaman Gala Event
THB 18900 nett
incl. one glass of champagne

THE

SANTA FILES

SANTA SACKED IN BIG APPLE

NEW YORK'S Suffolk County has done the unthinkable – fired Santa Claus.

That's right, this year Santa will not be coming to the small community as times of austerity mean the county's scant coffers can't afford him.

The county executive said he could not justify paying Santa US\$660 from his US\$2.7 billion budget this year, Reuters reported.

The man who usually dons the famous red suit each year is World War II veteran and former homicide detective David Mckell, 83, the county's Santa for the past nine years.

The county executive – dubbed a Grinch by opponents – said that since 750 county employees were facing layoffs as a result of budget restraints the role of Santa should be voluntary.

Dozens of people have since come forward offering to pay for their beloved Santa out of their own pockets, with one good citizen pledging Mckell's fee plus gas money.

SANTA AND HIS MACHINE GUN PHOTO-SHOOTS

AN ARIZONA gun club is celebrating Christmas in strange style this year by hosting "Santa and machine gun" photo-shoots.

Families are being invited to pose with Santa and his US\$80,000 mini-gun (same kind the Terminator used in the movie sequel) at the Scottsdale Gun Club.

Photo subjects can even test-shoot the guns after they pose for photographs.



JAPAN, Yokohama: A Santa diver feeds a five-meter whale shark 'Hachibei' at the Hakkeijima Sea Paradise aquarium. Christmas attractions started last month at the aquarium and will run through Christmas Day. Photo: AFP

BRITONS OPT FOR 'SECRET SANTA' TO SAVE MONEY

SECRET SANTA is always a hit with businesses throughout Thailand, but in the United Kingdom it's being used as a way for people to save money.

About a quarter of all Britons plan to keep costs down this Christmas by using Secret Santa.

The co-operative gift system is made up of group members who buy just one present for a member of the group.

There is usually a maximum amount that can be spent

on a present, dubbed "tactical gifting" by consumer research groups.

Now cash-strapped Britons are using the system for family and friends, according to the *Telegraph*.

A survey of 2,000 adults in the UK also found that seven in ten people are making deals with loved ones to cap the amount they spend on gifts this year.

– Fraser Morton

Hoof over to PhuketGazette.net to catch a herd of Weird World News every Friday



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Lost in meltdown translation 2012

Why **Phuket** is the place to escape the doom and gloom of the world economic crisis, and the local lingo we use to decode **financial jargon**

WITH Christmas and New Year just over yon horizon the world's media is hardly full of "seasonal good cheer". Global economic "fear" is closer to the mark, and the pound, and the dollar.

The news from Europe and the United States is of deepening debt crises, slowing economies, plummeting consumer confidence and the possibility of another global recession. Not exactly the stuff to make you jam a sprig of mistletoe behind your ear, jump on your reindeer and rush about delivering largess and breathless kisses to all and sundry.

The "wan" – sorry – bankers, lawyers and financiers who got us into this horrible mess have developed a weird sort of argot designed to confuse the ordinary punter about what exactly is going on in their Doomsday economics.

For example something called "collateralized debt swap obligations" played a major role in the US housing debacle. But what on earth are they?

Here in Phuket things are a lot simpler than in the heady world of international high finance. We call things by their real names.

Down in Nai Harn a "debt swap obligation" simply means that I owe my mate Sam the price of the few beers we had the other night

at Nikita's because the ATM at Chalong Circle was on the blink again and so I couldn't get a couple of "purple pleasure passes" out to pay for my share of the grog.

Then there are "toxic sub-prime assets". What?

The only "toxic sub-prime assets" you'll find in Phuket are when you open your refrigerator on a Saturday morning and discover that the snapper fillets you bought last week at the Rawai fish market are past their "cook by" date.

Mere mortals living in Phuket probably feel a sense of overwhelming helplessness about all this ongoing global grief, but casting one's eye about the island's bounteous pleasures, you might start feeling a little smug. Phuket looks to be a very fine place in which to ride out the world's economic turmoil for 2012 and maybe long after that. How so? Leaving temporary flood-induced price rises to one side, one clear reason is the reasonable cost of living. More importantly it is also the exceptional quality of that existence, on the King of Bhutan's famous Happiness Index, that your money buys.

Phuket is a wonderfully "democratic" island catering to villa-owning jet-setters, everyday working people and penurious backpackers and yes, freelance writers alike. It offers all these denizens the abundant pleasures of a seductive climate, free access to beautiful beaches, forests, sunsets, clean air and peace and quiet. This is not at all the case in much of the rest of the world where access to these things is rapidly disappearing or becoming the jealously-guarded preserve of the rich.

There's a down-to-earth Thai quality to life here, in which great focus is placed on ensuring the most important human needs are amply satisfied. The local food is an excellent example, being abundant, varied, healthy and extremely good value for money, including that in the ubiquitous street-side noodle stands.

You can buy clothes and household goods at the daily markets which move around the island, or at the big store chains at rates that are very inexpensive compared to international averages. You can find cold beer, great wines and fine music, or eat every sort of local and international cuisine in the most stunning beachside locations.

Today, free Internet access is available all over the island so you can happily check the latest fall in the markets, while you watch your kiddies playing safely in the sand at the water's edge.

You can read *The Nation* or the *Phuket Gazette* while sipping

excellent coffee and munching a freshly-baked croissant, or tune into the BBC or CNN at any time to make sure the global apocalypse is progressing as it should, while you blithely work on your tan.

All in all, if you had to select a bolt hole in which to ride out the storm roiling the globe for a couple of years, you could do a hell of a lot worse than choose Phuket and the Andaman as your sanctuary.



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