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Suspected terrorist Atris Hussein was arrested earlier this month. Photo: The Nation.

US terror alert lifted

GOOD news for the Phuket tourism industry has come with the US warning of a possible terrorist threat in Bangkok having been removed from its website, where it had been on the main page.

The warning was replaced with a more general alert for East Asia, which does not name any specific countries or places. However, 14 other countries still have either travel advisories or alerts for Thailand.

Thani Thongphakdi, Director-General of the Foreign Ministry's Department of Information, described the removal as a positive development.

Fish truck driver kills five, gets bail

THE driver of a truck whose reckless driving killed four young Swedish tourists and their Thai driver in Phang Nga last week has been released on bail, the *Phuket Gazette* has learned.

An officer at Phang Nga Provincial Court told the *Gazette* last Wednesday that the driver, 27-year-old Muhummaryukee Jehyusoh, requested bail release on February 3.

Released three days later after coming up with a 300,000 baht bond, he is scheduled to appear in court on February 14.

Khok Kloy District Police duty officer Santi Prakobpran said Mr Muhummaryukee confessed to being the driver of the truck, but provided no details as to what caused the vehicle to traverse the gullied median strip and slam head on into a Toyota Altis driven by 26-year-old Wichit Phromluang of Udon Thani province.

Mr Wichit was killed instantly by the impact, along with four



Remains of the Toyota after the truck driven by Muhummaryukee Jehyusoh (inset) crossed the median strip and struck it. Inset photo: Lars G Dikander

young Swedes on their way to Koh Tao in Chumphon Province.

They were identified as: Johan Svensson, 21, and his girlfriend Frida Falk, 22; Tobias Larsson, 21, and his girlfriend Elin Hedbris, 21.

Mr Muhummaryukee walked away from the collision unhurt and

fled on foot. After conferring with his employers at the Choteapatama Company in Narathiwat, he surrendered himself to Khok Kloy Police on February 3.

News of the crash was a top story in the Swedish media, especially in the small town of Vargås,

where all four Swedish victims had attended school and lived.

Malin Henriksson, news editor of the *Hallands Nyheter* newspaper in Varberg, told the *Gazette*, "I can say that their deaths have touched the whole community. There have been gatherings in the town church, at the square and at the sport clubs where Johan Svensson and Tobias Larsson were active."

Johan Svensson played handball in the team HK Varberg and his partner Frida Falk was a former track and field athlete.

Tobias Larsson played football for Varbergs GIF, which put up a memorial to him on its website describing him as team leader.

"Why should young men be taken away when they just should begin to blossom?... Why should parents, siblings, relatives and friends have to suffer that? Why, why, why?" wrote club chairman Mats Eriksson.

Continued on page 3

Valentine's Day launch for anti-AIDS campaign

By Atchaa Khamlo and S Fein

PUBLIC health officials will launch a "Getting to Zero AIDS" campaign on Valentine's Day to combat HIV/AIDS in Phuket, which has the highest incidence rate in Thailand, according to government statistics.

The campaign will kick-off with a festival on February 14 at Phuket Rajabhat University, said Phuket Public Health Office (PPHO) chief Sak Tanchaikul.

There will be AIDS prevention exhibits, a student stage performance about high-risk behavior and a debate and lecture by medical experts, said PPHO Chief Sak.

To draw in as many people as possible,

famous singers Bew Kalayane and Jeab Benjaporn are slated to perform at the event.

"The fact that Phuket has the highest incidence of HIV/AIDS of any province in Thailand is a concern for the tourism industry. The PPHO will begin the 'Getting to Zero AIDS' project as part of the United Nations joint HIV/AIDS program, which aims to achieve three goals: zero new infections, zero deaths and zero stigma and discrimination," said PPHO Chief Sak.

According to PPHO statistics, from 1989 to December last year, there have been 7,415 HIV/AIDS patients treated in Phuket. Of these, 1,945 have died.

Last year 99 new cases were identified

in Phuket and nine patients died.

The PPHO's plan is to reduce the amount of new HIV infections by about 66 per cent this year. It also hopes to reduce to less than two per cent the number of HIV-infected newborns, he said.

The PPHO aims to achieve its second goal of halving the annual number of HIV/AIDS deaths by 2016. Providing equal medical treatment for all HIV/AIDS patients will be the key to reaching this goal, he said.

The PPHO also hopes to introduce laws and policies that will stop discrimination against HIV/AIDS infected people in the work place by 2016, said PPHO Chief Sak.

For more on AIDS in Phuket see page 9



PPHO Chief Sak Tanchaikul lays out plans to take Phuket to 'Zero Aids'. Photo: Atchaa Khamlo

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This Week

News



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Another child lost in 'lethal lagoon'

Chutharat Plerin

THE drowning death of another child at Nai Harn Lagoon last weekend is causing authorities to consider closing the popular recreational area to swimming.

The latest victim, six-year-old Supathanwa Choophuek, was reportedly alive when Nai Harn Beach lifeguards pulled him from the water on Sunday, but he died later at Vachira Phuket Hospital.

Nai Harn lifeguard chief Samart Chandee, who was in Krabi at the time of the incident, said "On my return today I was told by staff that a boy was pulled from the water in the same place that Methee drowned last year."

Methee, 7, was rescued unconscious from the water near the Nai Harn Lake sluice gate, which forms an estuary that flows across the beach and into the sea on New Year's Eve. He died after being kept on life support in the intensive care unit at Vachira Hospital in Phuket Town for three days.

"After the death of Methee, Rawai Municipality announced plans to put up warning signs around the lagoon to prevent further accidents," he said.



Children at play at the popular Nai Harn Lagoon. Photo Jim Welch

"I'm going to talk to Rawai Municipality administration officers to check on the progress," he added.

Following the second fatality in such a short time, chief Samart will ask the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (OrBorJor) for extra funding for four more life guard stations, one of which would be at the lagoon.

"I understand the area is beautiful and villagers like to promote it for picnicking, but children who can't swim must be supervised by parents at all times. They should never be left alone, as in past cases," he said.

"Parents assume that that the water is only waist deep, but in only one step it becomes chest height and in two it's over their heads," he said.

In light of this most recent tragedy, Chief Samart admitted he is seriously considering closing the lagoon to all swimmers.

However that might be a difficult rule to implement and enforce, he said.

"I don't think villagers will accept a no swimming order, because they make a living selling food here," he said.

"If so, there would not be much I could do," he added.

Civil servant searches for missing mother

A CIVIL servant in Nakhon Ratchasima is appealing to the public for help in finding his mother, last seen in Phuket.

Kriengsak Muangkod, said his 65-year-old mother Boonna Muangkod was last seen in Karon on June 3 last year.

She was originally scheduled to travel back to Mukdahan province, on May 11, he added.

Mrs Boonna has now been unaccounted for for eight months.

She was last seen wearing blue pajamas with a white-floral pattern. If anyone sees a woman resembling Mrs Boonna who walks with a limp and speaks with



Ms Boonna: missing since June a northeastern dialect please call 081-5929212 or 083-9057013.

Anyone providing information that leads to locating Mrs Boonna will be rewarded.

Fears for 'overboard' woman

A SEA search by the Thai Navy for an Australian woman reported to have fallen overboard from a yacht off the coast of Trang was called off last Wednesday.

News that a search was underway for Carmel Brookes, an Australian-born resident of Langkawi Island in Malaysia, was first reported to the *Gazette* by her close friend Michelle Black the previous day.

Ms Black was desperate for information about the search after learning from friends that Ms Brookes fell overboard from the yacht *Moondancer* off the coast of Trang on February 2.

Ms Brookes was sailing from Langkawi to Phuket with her companion Dr Gerald Goeden when



Ms Brookes: missing for 9 days.

she fell overboard. The circumstances of how she came off the vessel were unclear.

"We cannot understand it as Gerry is a very experienced yachtsman. He was working on a coral reef project at the Andaman Resort Langkawi," Ms Black wrote.

"He and Carmel were taking a holiday from his work to go sailing for a few weeks and had been planning their trip for some time. Carmel had been very excited and happy about it. I am a close friend of hers and I cannot imagine how this could happen to her, as she is always so careful and has been sailing with Gerry many times before," she added.

After several attempts to contact various navy units, the *Gazette* was finally able to confirm on February 8 that the Thai navy had found *Moondancer* with Dr Gerald still aboard, but that a sea search involving Royal Thai Navy, Marine Police and Koh Rok National Park staff had been called off on the same day.



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CENTARA GRAND BEACH RESORT PHUKET

'Taxi mafia' halts medical pickups



Bangkok Hospital Phuket.

A PHUKET hospital has complained that 'taxi mafia' are preventing its drivers from picking up patients from certain resort hotels.

Pareeya Jullaphong, director of business development at Bangkok Hospital Phuket voiced the complaint at a meeting at Phuket Provincial Hall on February 2, which was chaired by Phuket Vice Governor Sommai Prijasilpa.

"Taxi mafia has prevented hospital vehicles from picking up patients for about a year," she said.

"Sometimes we have to pick up patients from hotels as part of our service agreement. We have to hire other vans or limousines to pick up our patients, because we do not use ambulances to pick up customers who are not emergency cases. When we go to pick them up from the hotels, local taxi drivers surround our vehicles, scaring our customers," she explained.

The complaint was one of many aired about tourists being cheated.

'Meth blue' users at risk

By Phuket Gazette

PHUKET health officials have issued a warning to students not to take the chemical "Methylene blue" in an attempt to hide methamphetamine use from authorities in drug testing.

Muang district chief Supachai Pochanakul recently described the trend of growing drug abuse by schoolchildren in Muang district as "very worrying".

The statement followed a recent round-up of 19 truant school children in secondary schools, 15 of whom tested positive for *ya ba* (methamphetamine pills).

Mr Supachai said the drug of choice among the children was *ya ice* (crystal methamphetamine), typically bought from suppliers in Patong. Some of the youths caught using the drug recently confessed to taking 'a kidney cleaning' pharmaceutical drug in order to test negative if forced to provide urine samples.

Phuket Provincial Health Office (PPHO) chief Sak Tanchaikul explained that students in Phuket were taking the compound in pill form so that their urine would appear blue, rather than tell-tale purple that indicates a positive result for methamphetamines use in urine testing.

"This group of students take Methylene blue to induce vomiting and make it difficult to detect



Methylene blue. Photo: Amanda Slater

traces of *ya ice* in their urine. This is first time I have heard of anyone using Methylene blue for this purpose," said Dr Sak.

Although widely described as a "kidney dialysis" medication, the drug is actually administered only to patients who suffer dangerously low blood pressure as a result of dialysis.

Any blue urine samples that come back during drug testing will be sent to the Regional Medical Sciences Center Phuket for further examination, Dr Sak said.

"We are going to investigate this matter in light of the drug crack-down policy ordered by the Ministry of Interior. I will coordinate with drug stores to control



Ya ice (crystal methamphetamine). Photo: Psychonaught

the sale of Methylene blue since it can easily be bought at any drug store," he said.

"I may also contact the Food and Drug Administration to enforce a special Methylene Blue control law in Phuket," he added.

Officials in Phuket use a "meth cassette" test kit in conducting urine tests. If the urine turns purple, the test is considered positive, although the results need to be verified by more accurate blood testing.

Dr Sak believes students might have been told about the effect of Methylene blue from someone with specialist knowledge.

In the future, any students found with blue urine will have to

present documented proof that their use of Methylene blue is for legitimate medical purposes, he said.

"Generally, human urine is pale to dark yellow. So if any school has a student producing blue urine they need to ask that student to present a doctor's certificate. That information should then be sent to PPHO so we can investigate and advise," said Dr Sak.

"Normally we use urine samples to test for the presence of drugs. Anyone with blue urine will immediately be suspected of trying to hide something and the sample will be sent to the Regional Medical Sciences Center Phuket for closer examination," he said.

Phuket royalists protest Nitirat



The group vowed to continue if Nitirat did not desist.

A GROUP of royalists gathered at Phuket Provincial Hall on February 3 to show their opposition to the 'Nitirat' group of seven Thammasat University law professors recommending changes to Chapter 2 of the Constitution and article 112 of the Criminal Code, which deal with *lese majeste* and bans criticism of the Monarchy.

About 20 protesters, led by Don Limnanthaphisit and Saman Kohlek, arrived with a letter of protest, which was accepted by Vice Governor Somkiet Sangkaosutthirak.

"Nitirat is not a group of scholars, but a band of betrayers," read one of the many signs.

"I do not see this as a way of fostering harmony in our nation. Decreasing the power of the King would actually destroy the stabil-

ity of our Kingdom," he added.

"When His Majesty the King Bhumibol Adulyadej first ascended to the throne he vowed to reign with righteousness for the benefit and happiness of the Siamese people... HM The King has kept his promise," he said.

— Chutharat Plerin

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Horrific crash leaves five dead

From page 1

THE accident again turned the Swedish media spotlight on the safety of Thailand as a tourist destination.

A report on the Swedish website *Svenska Dagbladet* listed Thailand and Turkey as the two tourist destinations with the largest number of Swedish fatalities in both 2009 and 2010.

Capt Santi said the bodies of the four Swedish victims were trans-

ported from Vachira Phuket Hospital to Bangkok on Wednesday for eventual repatriation.

"I'm waiting for relatives of the Swedish victims to arrive, as I have to collect some more information as part of the investigation process," he said.

The body of the taxi driver of the Toyota Altis Wichit Phromluang was already claimed by his relatives who arranged a cremation ceremony at Wat Ketho in Kathu, he said.



Memorial to the late Mr Larsson set up by his football club Varbergs GIF.

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Transport still the biggest issue for airport revamp

THE tricky subject of transportation overshadowed other matters at a meeting intended to address concerns over Phuket International Airport's expansion project.

The meeting, held at Kata Beach Resort on February 2, was attended by both public and private sector representatives from Phang Nga, Krabi and Phuket.

Chairing the meeting were Tuyaratt Achariyachai, Chairwoman of the Senate Standing Committee on Tourism, Pratuang Sornkham, Director Phuket Airport and Chaturongkapon Sodmanee, Airports of Thailand Public Com-

pany Limited (AOT) executive vice president of engineering and information technology.

The matters discussed ranged from restroom facilities, the number of immigration counters and general safety issues. However, car parking and taxi services were the most talked about.

Methee Tanmanatragul, advisor from the Thai Hotels Association, noted that the way airport taxi services are currently managed needed changing. He suggested that Phuket Airport use the model employed at Suvarnabhumi Airport, where taxis queue up and the

drivers paying a 50 baht fee.

Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic, Anurak Tansiroj, also had an observation concerning the airport transportation.

"I have heard that taxis are expensive because the drivers have to pay a high commission to pick up passengers. Also the taxi drivers are very competitive trying to get passengers and have grabbed tourists. This is a problem that needs to be fixed, because internationally it doesn't look good," he said.

Garun Panitpichetvong, Pheu Thai Party director, asked that the project move forward without corruption, and also commented on transportation matters.

"The parking lot allocation needs to be solved. Right now limousines, taxi vans and taxi cars take up most of the parking spaces," she said.

"All issues brought up in the meeting we will consider in order to help improve the plan," Flg Off Chaturongkapon said.

- Atchaa Khamlo



Paradise in sight, but getting out of the airport might not be so easy.

Tough love



A pile of cash collected by a street beggar in Phuket. Photo: Gazette file

By Atchaa Khamlo

PHUKET government departments are coordinating a crack down on street beggars this Valentine's Day.

On February

14 at 1:30pm,

Governor Tri

Augkaradacha

will implement

policies to remove

beggars in all

three Phuket districts.

This will be

done in accordance

with the

Control of Beggars

Act BE 2484

(1941), which

requires that

provincial officers

arrest vagrants.

"To solve the problem of the many vagrants in Phuket, Governor Tri Augkaradacha has tasked the Phuket Provincial Office of Social Development and Human Security (SDHS-Phuket) to cooperate with police, immigration officers, health officers and other local organizations," said SDHS-Phuket Chief Chaunchom Chanthawong at a press conference on January 31 at Provincial Hall.

"Vagrants can always be seen at tourist locations and market

fairs begging for money. Some are voluntarily here in Phuket to earn money, while others are being forced to beg," she said.

"Phuket is a tourist destination, if we have too many beggars on

our streets it says

that we don't have

a high quality of

life or adequate

safety here," she

added.

The beggars

tend to be children,

women and

disabled or elderly

people. They are

often poor Thais

or illegal alien

workers from

Burma, Laos or

Cambodia she

explained.

"The problem will continue if people keep giving money to beggars, even just a little amount.

"We need the cooperation of policemen on the streets to deal with this aspect of human trafficking and to be strict on beggars," she said.

SDHS-Phuket records show 30 beggars were arrested last year.

Though many beggars arrested by SDHS-Phuket make more than 500 baht a day, Chief Chaunchom explained that most of those from abroad are brought here by a "bro-



SDHS-Phuket Chief Chaunchom Chanthawong

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for street beggars in Phuket

ker", who receives the majority of the money made.

Chief Chaunchom noted that the organizers frequently used beggars that generated pity, such as children, those missing limbs or those that are mentally ill.

Once arrested there are several things that can happen to the beggars depending on their nationality, age and their mental and physical condition, said Chief Chaunchom.

Thai nationals between 18 and 60 years old will be sent to the Southern Home for the Destitute (Sichon Home) in Nakhon Srithammarat for rehabilitation and career training, while those less than 18 years old can expect parole with a warning given to their parents. However if their parents cannot be found they will be sent to Phuket's Shelter for Children and Families.

Those over 60 years old will be sent to the Social Welfare Department's center for old people.

The Phuket Immigration office deals with foreign nationals, which are usually deported, she said.

Health officers are usually only involved in a case if there are signs that the vagrant is suffering from mental illness or serious contagious diseases, such as leprosy, she added.

"A beggar arrested for a first offense will spend three months undergoing social development and welfare care. They will receive year for a second offense and two years if they are caught a third time," explained Chief Chaunchom.

"If they behave well and have relatives that are able to take care of them they may be able to leave early," she added.

"Many Thai beggars go back to begging after they are released from care. If they are arrested again, inquiries against their social security number will tell us their criminal history. They won't be released again until they have been rehabilitated," she said.

"If in pity, we give them money, then the business operators who force others, such as old people and children to do the begging will just continue," said Vice Governor Sommai Preechasin who also attended the meeting.

"Instead we can donate in other ways, such as giving money and necessary things to care organizations and sheltered homes," she added.

"Should anyone wish to donate money to disadvantaged people they can contact to us [SDHS-Phuket]. We are always happy to forward donations to the relevant organizations," Chief Chaunchom concluded.

To contact the SDHS-Phuket to make charitable donation call 081-8918819, 076-240414, hotline 1300 or send a fax to 076-240415.



Police officer looks through the contents of a street beggar's daily collection. Many beggars collect over 500 baht a day. Photo: Gazette file

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QUEER news

Cuckhold's vengeance

A MAN in Chiang Mai recently confessed to taking brutal revenge on a 60-year-old man who slept with his wife.

Cuckhold Kaew Intha, 47, shot Tue Jaima in the head – before hacking his penis off with a knife and placing the guilty member on the dead victim's chest.

Police from Maeka Police Station in the Northern province were alerted to Mr Tue's brutal demise on February 4, and found the horrific scene at the dead man's house in the middle of an orchard in Ngiswong village.

Mr Tue was killed by a single bullet, which entered his head just below his ear. Mr Kaew, who fled the scene, handed himself in to police the following day.

The killer admitted that he had murdered Mr Tue in a rage after discovering that he had had sex with his wife many times.

Mr Tue said he had previously confronted the victim over the crime and the man had responded with nasty words and ridicule.

He told police he had reached the limits of his patience and so decided to kill Mr Tue. He said that after shooting Mr Tue, he cut off his penis and placed it on his chest "to show other people what happens when you mess with a villager's wife", according to *Khao Sod* newspaper.

Lt Col Thongchai Kannika, of Maeka Police, said they were charging Mr Tue with premeditated murder, possessing a gun without permission and carrying a firearm in a public place.

New shine for old shrine



The new shrine by Tan Yeow Wooi. When completed it will be one of the largest shrines in Phuket.



Over a hundred years old, the original shrine is much in need of refurbishment. Photo: Warisa Temram

WORK is currently underway on a new cultural museum and shrine that will showcase the way of life and traditions of Phuket's ethnic Hainanese community, which date back to Phuket's tin mining days.

Former Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai was in Phuket last week to preside over a pillar-laying ceremony at Thni Kong Thua Shrine in Wichit.

Built over a century ago, the original structure is one of the oldest shrines on the island and badly in need of replacement. The work follows a decision by the shrine committee to erect a new shrine as well as refurbish and preserve its predecessor as a museum.

Mr Chuan was joined by Phuket Democrat-Party MPs Anchalee Vanich-Thepabutr and MP Raywat Areerob, former MP

Tossaporn Thepabutr, Phuket Vice Governor Somkiet Sangkaosutthirak, Wichit Mayor Kreetha Saetan, Thni Kong Thua Shrine committee members and local residents.

Benjamas Koeysiripong, president of the Thni Kong Thua Shrine committee, said the work was long overdue.

"The original shrine was built more than 100 years ago at Baan Leam Chan, in Wichit Village 2. The building was really old and started to suffer damage, so the shrine committee agreed to build a new structure in the same area to replace the old one," said Mrs Benjamas.

The new building, two storeys high, will be built in the traditional and highly ornate Hainanese style. Malaysian architect Tan Yeow

Wooi, an expert in Chinese shrine design, has drawn up the plans. The entire project is funded at 40 million baht.

Under the plan, the ground floor would serve as the museum, while the upper floor would house the offerings altar and serve as the new place of worship.

The old shrine will be moved 40 meters away from the new one and covered with a roof structure to protect it from the elements.

"We want to protect and preserve the original shrine as an archaeological site. This shrine used to be the place where all "Pee Tao Jang" people (tin miners with long braided hair) came to congregate," Mrs Benjamas explained.

"They needed a place and materials to perform their religious ceremonies, so they sent a repre-

sentative back to China. He returned with holy incense, wooden sculptures of Chinese gods and other spiritual objects needed. The original shrine was very small," she said.

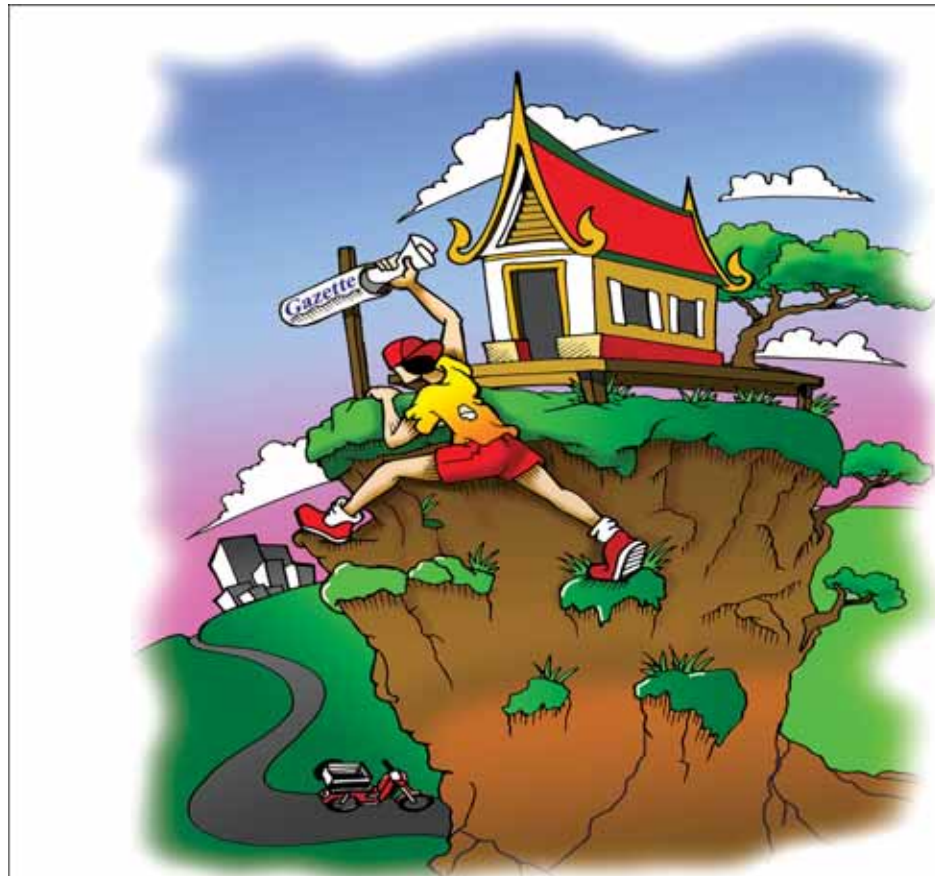
Over time the shrine grew along with the Pee Tao Jang community.

"When it became too small, the Pee Tao Jang community members donated money for expansion projects and a new shrine was built on adjacent land belonging to Mr Lorbie (Sae-lor) and Mrs Kuad, both ancestors of the Thepabutr family. The Baan Laem Chan community, especially the Thepabutr family, took good care of the shrine in the past and continue to do so in the present," Mrs Benjamas said.

– Warisa Temram



Members of the shrine committee and other supporters pose for a photo before the old Thni Kong Thua Shrine in Wichit, one of the oldest in Phuket. Photo: Warisa Temram



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Promise of 'drug free Thailand'

THAILAND's controversial deputy prime minister Chalerm Yoobumrung has pledged to eradicate all drugs from the country in one year.

Mr Chalerm promised there would be no extrajudicial killings of the terrifying type that allegedly took place during former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra's infamous "War on Drugs" early in 2003, during which time at least 1,000 suspected drug dealers are believed to have been killed by Thai police, according to human rights groups.

Instead, the government would focus on reducing supply and demand for drugs by seriously cracking down on dealers, preventing the import of precursor chemicals, punishing any officials involved, and asking night entertainment venues to prevent drug taking, Mr Chalerm said.

He urged police to erect barbed-wire fences along northern borders, including the one in Chiang Rai's Mae Sai District.

AROUND THE nation

Mr Chalerm said 87 per cent of illicit drugs were smuggled through eight border provinces, particularly Chiang Rai, Mae Hong Son and Chiang Mai.

'But if drug dealers fight against the [police] officers, we have to resort to protect [ourselves].'

— Mr Chalerm

Mr Chalerm also warned dealers to quit, saying they could be victims of "silent killings" by fellow dealers — but not by police.

Among actions under current government consideration is the setting up of a special prison for drug dealers in Nakhon Ratchasima's Si Khiw District.

Convicts are believed to control much of Thailand's drug trade. The new prison would employ jammers to block mobile phone signals, an expensive technology

that few other Thai prisons can afford.

Mr Chalerm said the prison would employ wardens who would be specially chosen for their incorruptibility.

Corrections Department Chief Suchat Wonganantachai said the idea of a special prison, if approved, would take a while to materialize, but the department could separate drug convicts from others right away.

For example, Zone 2 in the high-security Bang Kwang Prison could be reserved for drug convicts serving life sentences. This would stop inmates from recruiting network members and the new zone would have stricter rules on guest visits, which would be thoroughly monitored by security cameras, Mr Suchat said.

Mr Chalerm said the government already had some success in clamping down on the drugs trade since it took office in August last year.

Over the past four months, anti-drug agencies have seized more than 16 million speed pills, 500 kilograms of *ya ice* (crystal methamphetamine),



Chalerm Yoobumrung plans to end drug trafficking in Thailand. Photo: The Nation

200 kilograms of heroin and three tons of marijuana.

Authorities have also confiscated property worth more than 600 mil-

lion baht from drug dealers, according to television news reports from the state-owned National News Bureau of Thailand.

'Move our capital to Northeast': scientist



Local residents make their way through floodwaters using various water-borne modes of transportation in the Rangsit district on the outskirts of Bangkok on November 16, 2011. Photo: Saeed Khan / AFP

A PROMINENT Thai scientist has called for the country's capital to be moved to the Northeast, saying that Bangkok was no longer viable because it was sinking every year.

Dr Art-Ong Jumsai na Ayudhya, a former scientist at the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), was speaking at a seminar on climate change, natural disasters and the future of Thailand when he made the suggestion of moving the Kingdom's capital.

Citing the rising amount of rainfall and rising dam water levels during the previous two years, Dr Art-Ong said the trend would worsen in 2012 and in coming years.

The authorities will have to increase efficiency in draining excess water into the sea, he said.

Leaders should consider relocating out of Bangkok, which has been the country's capital for more than 200 years, to a location on higher ground, such as somewhere in one of the 16 northeastern provinces, he said.

Relocation of the capital would take at least 20 years, he said.

In the second half of last year, Thailand was hit by the worst floods in more than half a century, most of it in the country's central region.

At least 815 people were killed and another 13.6 million affected by flooding that hit 65 of Thailand's 77 provinces.

Twitter censorship welcomed

THAILAND has become the first country to endorse Twitter's new censorship policy, which allows tweets to be censored at the request of individuals, companies or the government.

The social networking giant provoked widespread outrage among free-speech advocates last month when it announced new rules that would allow the blocking of tweets that might violate country-specific laws.

A tweet censored in one country would still be visible in others, however.

Thailand already has a team of information technology experts who trawl the internet looking for

websites deemed insulting to the country's monarchy. Since December, the task force has been able



to block more than 1,156 websites, the United Kingdom's newspaper *The Independent* reported.

Information and Communication Technology Minister Jeerawan Boonperm called Twitter's decision a "welcome development" and went on to say that the ministry had already received "good co-operation" from internet companies such as Google and Facebook, according to *The Guardian*.

China has also praised Twitter's controversial new policy.

The Chinese state-run *Global Times* newspaper said in a recent editorial that: "It is impossible to have boundless freedom, even on the internet and even in countries that make freedom their main selling point."

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Muddled map skills in Phuket

Over the past century, mankind has made astonishing progress in our understanding of the nature of our universe, but it seems the ever-increasing pace of technological advances now outstrips the ability of many of us to put it to the best possible use.

One good example is in the field of cartography. Maps produced with painstaking effort and considerable risk a century ago pale in comparison to the wealth of geographic information available to us today. Global positioning satellites, lasers, computer technology, the internet and scores of other advances have literally put the world at our fingertips – at least for those of us who know where to look.

Few places should stand to benefit more from such advances than Phuket, which annually plays host to millions of visitors who need to get their bearings and naturally turn to maps for help.

Some excellent printed maps of Phuket are available, such as the excellent English-language Streets of Phuket by Image Asia. Yet so scant is the interest in maps among most people in Phuket that the company feels there is insufficient interest to launch a Thai version, even though most of the heavy lifting has already been done.

The truth is that the vast majority of Phuket residents continue to grope in the dark, unable to read simple maps well enough to make their own lives easier, let alone help foreign visitors.

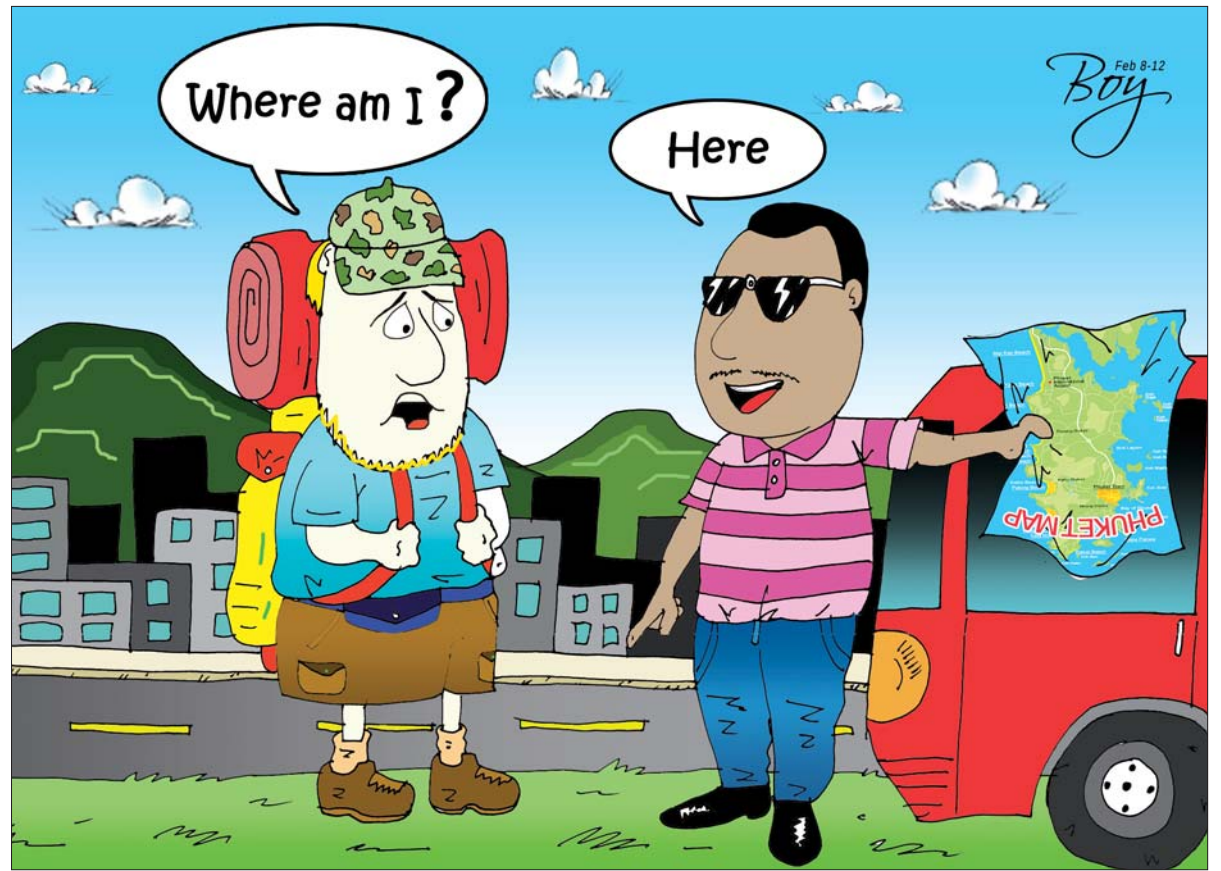
A common sight in Phuket is the roadside tourist carefully studying a free map (collected from the airport), with a local trying in vain to assist, because he lacks the required language and map-reading skills.

The failure of the Thai school system, including some of its most prestigious institutions, to get students to master basic map-reading skills is a national scandal that gets little, if any, attention.

It would be impossible to estimate the number of man-hours wasted as a result, not to mention the unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions from all the hours “map illiterates” spend driving around in circles, hoping that serendipity will somehow steer them to their destination.

The people here who should have the best map reading skills, people in the public transport sector, are often as inept as the general public in this regard. Many don't even know the names of the roads that they drive on almost every day. Instead they depend on an ill-defined set of “mental landmarks” and instructions from passengers, many of them on the island for the first time.

The resulting confusion, and violence that sometimes ensues, is just another manifestation of the truly woeful state of public transport in Phuket.



Hounding on the issue

Re: Gazette online, Phuket expat reunited with 'best friend' Micky, January 31

This is an extremely distressing article, but I imagine that the authorities in Phuket will do little to resolve it.

My dog got kidnapped (not in Nai Harn) and I placed about 100 reward posters in the area. About a week later I had my dog back. Money talks.

The people snatching these dogs should feel ashamed. Clearly they are doing it for money. They should be fined 10,000 baht.

AdamLookingForEve
Gazette forum

Letters to the Editor

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

a few nice cats until someone came and took them away.

One cat came back with a rope around its neck, but a week later was taken again by an unknown person on a motorbike.

The neighbor still cries every day and says that it feels like she has lost family members.

Leo
Gazette Forum

have any considerable short or medium term benefit. Education is key and that could take a generation or two. But no reason not to try.

I think water (the shortage and use of) would be a better environmental issue to pay attention to.

Duncan
Gazette Forum

Stop the rot

Re: Gazette online, Phuket school kids busted on meth, January 31

There are some very evil people about hell-bent on destroying the lives of innocent young people.

This drug [ya ba] is widespread in Thailand, so it was great to see in the papers today that the Government is cracking down on vice, drugs, unlicensed night clubs and karaoke venues.

There are many very evil people in all categories of society involved in this trade of destruction.

irishkev24
Gazette forum

Black taxi parking only

Re: Gazette online, Bangkok squad to tackle illegal taxis, February 1

I definitely hope they will look at the problems in Karon. There are three marked taxi-parking-lots, but the black taxis don't use these. They park just next to them using up the “public” lots, and if you try to park your car there (in the public lots), they will scratch your car.

Fritz Pinguin
Gazette forum

Afraid not to pay

Re: Gazette online, Phuket expat reunited with 'best friend' Micky, January 31

Six months ago my Thai Ridge-back puppy went missing from outside my Sai Yuan home. Our vet told us of a lady, who she did a house call for, and saw our dog fenced in.

We went to see the lady and found our dog fenced in with his collar and ID tag clearly visible with our phone numbers and address. She still demanded 10,000 baht.

We paid because we were afraid not to.

Flickado
Gazette Forum

The way I don't want it

Whenever I go into the McDonald's burger joint at Tesco Lotus invariably the burgers are already sitting on the hot-tray. Three times I have been served one of the either dried-out or soggy, pre-assembled burgers, and three times I've either complained, or more recently just walked out.

When they start producing the burgers fresh, I'll consider going back. Until then I'll eat at Subway when I want the occasional foreign fast food.

MD
Chalong

Nine lives is not enough

Re: Gazette online, Phuket expat reunited with 'best friend' Micky, January 31

There are also lots of cats stolen in this area. My neighbor had

Issue bags or bags of issues

Re: Gazette online, Phuket 'anti plastic bag' campaign kicks into gear, January 30

The anti plastic bag campaign is commendable. I doubt it will

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Protecting Patong 'working women'

FIRST PERSON

MANY friends of mine, even AIDS patients, have asked me if I'm worried about working with people who have AIDS. 'No' I tell them, 'it's my job.'

I suppose there's a small risk when giving injections or taking blood, but I'm trained and I know how to protect myself from HIV transmission.

The hardest part of my job is to change people's behavior. It doesn't matter how hard we try to educate them [night entertainment workers]; it means nothing if they won't take steps to protect themselves.

They usually know what the best protection against HIV transmission is, but in reality I'm not sure how much they actually do to prevent infections. But we keep working on it, because that's what we can do. And I don't believe we can stop them from working, because that's what they have chosen to do.

What the government should be doing is educating them on how to protect themselves, why to protect themselves and when necessary, what to do should they contract the virus.

We've recently been sending our team to Patong every week. They visit the nighttime venues to check that the workers have their pink books (record of HIV examinations) and talk with them.



WANWIMOL Weerawattanayotin, a 43 year old Phuket native, graduated with a Bachelor degree from Boromarajonani College of Nursing Songkhla. Since 2005 she has been a registered nurse at Patong Hospital working with Patong's night entertainment workers.

The women who work in Patong are there for all sorts of different reasons. Some resigned from normal jobs just to be bar girls. Others work there because of family problems or financial issues. Years ago, I did research that targeted the massage parlors. Some of those I interviewed were earning up to 80,000 baht a month, had fancy cars and even houses.

I've talked to men and women in 'the business' and asked what they think about their jobs. The reply is always the same: it's an easy job and good money. Some don't like the work, but it supports family members back in their home towns.

According to the Phuket Public Health Office this province has the highest number of HIV and AIDS patients in Thailand. I suspect this is because we are more diligent about researching and reporting the data than other provinces. However, I do see the number of AIDS patients increasing. Our clinic is now treating about 300 patients with

antiretroviral drugs.

Maybe people have stopped worrying so much about being infected with HIV, because they know there are medicines allowing AIDS patients to live longer, or perhaps they just figure it won't kill them right away. Others don't realize they have HIV until it is too late.

It's not just HIV or AIDS either, last year we carried out random testing in Patong. We found 80 per cent of those we tested had a venereal disease. If everyone took protective measures, we wouldn't have any more new patients. Sadly, we continue to see people come in with venereal diseases. We hear excuses like they were drunk or their customers don't like condoms.

I would advise others not to judge whether or not someone is HIV positive from their appearance. You can't see the disease without a blood test. Also, don't despise these people just because they have HIV. These people are just trying to live like everyone else.

'Butting in line'



'Butting' into a queue even seems to happen from time to time at St Peter's Square in the Vatican. Photo: Vmenkov

QUEUEING up to make a turn at a major traffic junction during Phuket rush hour is a good opportunity to practice patience.

On the way to the office, I've come to recall nearly-forgotten days from my childhood.

Thanks to Phuket's traffic, one particular term from my school days has been reborn: butting.

"Butting" referred to the act of cutting or skipping in line, or as someone from Europe might know it "queue jumping", and in Thai, "*sang queue*".

Rewind back to my elementary school in Colorado, USA.

After recess, lining up with 30 classmates to take turns rehydrating from a single water fountain required patience.

There was always one impatient kid who would butt in to line every time the teacher wasn't looking.

Usually, other students were keen to tell the teacher, which ensured the student would be sent to the back of the line.

Fast forward to the present day. I'm in my car patiently queuing up at the Bang Koo intersection, just outside Phuket Town.

It's a lot like lining up for a drink of water at school decades ago.

Island View

By Jao Thep

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

Only now, instead of kids queue jumping, impatient drivers are butting lanes. Every morning I've observed at least two drivers for every 10 cars lining up to turn, who drive to the front of the lane and casually butt in.

These people completely ignore the lane markers and only occasionally do they give the courtesy of turning on their turn signal before cutting in.

As much as I wish I could blow the whistle on them, I've reluctantly accepted that there is no authority figure to take charge and put a stop to the nonsense.

Perhaps some do have a valid reason for *sang queueing*. What if a loved one of theirs was hospitalized, or they are running late for a meeting critical to their livelihood?

Rather than getting worked up, I am better off accepting that this is part of Phuket, and continuing to work on harnessing the challenging art of being patient.

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

Who will take my clothes?

I am moving back to Australia in a few weeks and have some children and adults clothes, as well as household items I would like to donate. I have searched but cannot find where to do this. Can anyone help?

Kate Douglas
Rawai

Phuket Red Cross administration officer Sarawut Rukkaw replies:

You are welcome to donate

your clothes at the office from Monday to Friday at 8:30am to 4:30pm.

We collect clothing and then give it away whenever there is need or when we are part of an event.

Our office is located at 38/34 Rattanakosin 200 Pee Road in Saphan Hin, Phuket Town near the Phuket Provincial Employment Office. You can also call us for more information about making donations at 076-211766.

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

Submit your issue at

www.PhuketGazette.net/IssuesAnswers

Parking Fees for Cars at Chalong Pier

I've lived in Chalong for three years and have never paid any fee to park at the Chalong Pier parking lot.

Three weeks ago, a lady who had been sitting in a lawn chair approached us after we parked and asked for 40 baht. Is there now a parking fee?

Is there a sign posted that tells the fees? I noticed there were many vans parking in the same area but the lady only approached me, not the other six vans parked

at the same time.

A friend I met at the pier said she paid 20 baht to park, not 40 baht.

What is going on here? Also what is the fee for car parking outside Robinsons in Phuket Town?

I know there is a sign for motorbikes posted, but not for cars. Is that a scam? Thank you for investigating.

8YearsInTH
Chalong

Chalong Municipality Chief Administrative Officer (Palad) Woodypong Promtavee replies:

We do not have a parking fee collection policy anywhere in Chalong. It is free for anyone to park at Chalong Pier.

If you were asked to pay a parking fee, then I am sure it is a scam. After payment of any legitimate government fee you get a receipt from the collector that bears an official stamp.

In this case you should file a complaint at Chalong Police Sta-

tion or come to see us at the Chalong Municipality office.

Please spread the word that there is no authorized fee for parking at Chalong Pier to help prevent others from being taken scammed.

Phuket City Municipality Administration Department Prayong Suaysoon replies:

Phuket Municipality collects parking fees in certain parts of Phuket Town as per government policy [for a *tessaban nakhon*]. Currently there are 20 areas where such fees are collected.

Tilok Uthit 1 Road, nearby Robinsons department store, is one of these areas.

Car parking is five baht for the first hour and 15 baht for each hour thereafter.

Motorcycle parking fee is two baht at the first hour and three baht per hour after that.

Please be informed that a *tessakij* (municipal officer) will always issue you a parking receipt after payment.



Phuket Red Cross welcomes donations, even silk shirts. Photo Jeff Leigh

Phuket gets ready for Chinese Amway reps

By Atchaa Khamlo

THE Laguna Phuket resort complex in Cherng Talay is gearing up for its largest-ever incentives event in April and May, when it will host some 16,000 Amway sales representatives from China.

Phakwipho Tanpradit, project manager for Laguna, said the Amway employee seminars will run from April 15 to May 14. They will arrive in staggered batches, with about four to six hundred participants daily.

At a recent media conference on January 31, Ms Phakwipho explained that Laguna Phuket hotels would accommodate the guests,

with four hundred VIPs staying at the Banyan Tree Phuket.

The remaining guests will stay at the Dusit Thani Laguna Phuket, the Laguna Holiday Club Resort, the Best Western Allamanda Laguna Phuket, the Angsana Laguna Phuket and the Laguna Beach Resort, she said.

Events and activities will include trips to islands in Phang Nga Bay such as Koh Phi Phi or Koh Hei.

Starting April 17, a Chinese-themed dinner for seven to nine hundred diners will be served nightly for the duration of the event.

Amway China representatives will arrive in Phuket from Taiwan mid-month to organize the event,

then return on March 10 to set up the party, she said.

Central to the event will be a floating stage set up for entertainers at the gala dinner venue.

Expressing concern, Phuket Vice Governor Sommai Prijasilpa asked Ms Phakwipho to give special consideration to water safety issues throughout the event.

The floating stage will be organized by Amway, but we will have workers help in some of the preparations, Ms Phakwipho told her.

Rough seas are another concern, as the event will be held at a time of year when monsoon conditions typically set in, causing dangerous riptides and other

hazards.

In terms of logistics, arrangements are well underway.

We've already completed a lot of the preparations. At Phuket Airport there will be a priority lane to facilitate the large number of guests arriving, whose buses will have a police escort," she said.

Arrangements for parking buses at the locations the groups will visit, including Patong, have already been arranged, she said.

Also there will be small One Tambon One Product (OTOP) sales booths in all host hotels, she added.

The representatives should have some extra pocket money, because growth Amway in China has been



Vice Governor Sommai Prijasilpa

growing phenomenally since China revised its law prohibiting direct sales in 2005.

The *Phuket Gazette* in November reported that the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau expect the Chinese visitors to generate 1 billion baht in revenue for the local economy during their stay.

By 2008, China was Amway's single largest market, reporting 28 per cent growth and sales of US\$2.5 billion.

Bloomberg Businessweek reported in April 2010 that the company had 237 retail shops in China, with 160,000 direct sales agents and US\$3 billion in revenue.

'Junior Big C' opens in Kamala

OPENING ceremonies were held last week for a new Big C Market in Kamala, on Phuket's west coast.

The new branch is Phuket's second 'Junior Big C', following the opening in December of the island's Rassada branch, located on Thepkasattri Road in Phuket Town.

The Kamala Big C is the 13th Big C Market to be opened nationwide, and only the third in Southern Thailand; in addition to the two branches in Phuket, another branch is located in Phang Nga province.

Presiding over the opening ceremonies in Kamala was Kudatara

Nagaviroj, Director of Corporate Relations for Big C Supercenter Plc.

"Kamala is home to a growing population of both Thai and foreign residents with high purchasing potential. We wanted to increase the convenience for accessing and distributing daily essentials, while offering top savings and bargains," he said.

Mr Kudatara noted that the newest Big C in Kamala employs about 45 'new-start' locals in addition to 15 Phuket residents who have transferred from branches in neighboring provinces.



CR Director Kudatara Nagaviroj

These 60 Phuket employees represent 75% of the entire staff (about 80 employees in total).

Located on a 1,024 square meter plot, the new facility is stocked with more than 15,000 items including fresh food, dried food, clothes, household amenities, IT and electrical appliances.

"The prices at the Kamala branch will be equal to those at Phuket's Big C Supercenter [on Bypass Road], so customers can be sure they're getting the best deals," Mr Kudatara said.

Big C now has four Phuket operations. In addition to its two Big C Markets and Supercenter branch, there is also a Big C Extra attached to Jungceylon Shopping Centre in Patong.

— Steven Layne

Limited Partnerships are on the way up

REGISTRATIONS for new Limited Partnerships (LP) made across Thailand last month, nearly doubled from the previous month, statistics from the Ministry of Commerce's (MoC) have revealed.

The news was announced earlier this week by Siriwat Kajornprasart, Deputy Minister of Commerce, who presided over a press conference at the MoC's Department of Business Development in Nonthaburi.

Representing a combined value of more than 17.4 billion baht, Mr Siriwat said that 5,087 new LP registrations were made last month, nationwide.

This is compared to only 2,537 LP registrations made in December 2011, equating to a month-on-month increase of 99 per cent.

Mr Siriwat noted that the year-on-year change represented a 4 % decrease, however, when compared to January 2011.

5,307 registrations were made that month.

In all, 55,403 new registrations were made during the 2011 cal-

endar year, which represented a 9% increase when compared to the 2010 calendar year (50,776 registrations).

Of January, 2012's LP registrations, 1,945 (38.2 %) were filed in the Bangkok metropolitan area, while 3,142 (61.8%) were from other provinces.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Minister also reported that 1,094 company dissolution registrations were filed last month, with 347 (31.7%) of these in Bangkok and 747 (68.3%) in other provinces.

The combined capital value for these companies was estimated to be about 2.4 billion baht, he said.

The top three types of registrations for new businesses and dissolutions included general structural construction, recreational services, and real estate.

He pointed out that last month's company dissolution registrations represented a year-on-year increase of 79% with only 610 registrations filed in January 2011.

However, the number of dissolution registrations decreased by 71% month-on-month, with 3,709 dissolution registrations made in December 2011.

The total number of dissolution registrations in 2011 was 10,400, 43% more than in 2010, when only 7,250 registrations were filed.

As of January 31, 2012, there were a total of 504,659 private companies registered in the country, including both limited and non-limited partnerships.

This is in addition to 920 public companies, equating to a total of 505,579 registered companies.

— Steven Layne

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Toyota Sure opens shop

By Steven Layne

WITH so many new cars hitting the streets, the island's used car and trade-in market is rapidly growing – particularly good news for car owners having second thoughts about a recently purchased or leased vehicle.

Benchmarking market growth, Phuket's Toyota Pearl recently held the soft opening of Toyota Sure, the brand's renowned, second-hand car dealership, located off Chalermprakiat Road (Bypass Road) at the Bang Khu intersection.

Speaking exclusively with the *Phuket Gazette*, Phuket's Toyota Sure Deputy Managing Director Chaipat Na-Ranong said, "Our aim is to be a one-stop service. It's not uncommon for customers who buy a new car to change their mind and want to trade-in. "We provide that option for them, at good prices. Customers can rely on our trusted quality and service."

As for buy-in criteria, Toyota Sure considers cars which are less than 5 years old, or those which have clocked less than 120,000 kilometers.

"We will certify this type of car upon resell which means we

provide a warranty for one year or 20,000 kilometers, whichever comes first. We will still consider buying vehicles which are older than five years or have more than 120,000 kilometers.

"However we can not certify them upon resale," Mr Chaipat said.

Phuket's Toyota Sure is the 8th such branch to open in Southern Thailand. Other regional branches are located in Krabi, Trang, Haad Yai, Songkhla, Nakhon Sri Thammarat, Surat Thani and Chumphon.

Asked why Phuket's main Toyota dealer took longer than respective dealers in neighboring provinces to open a Toyota used car dealership, Chaipat said, "Actually, we've planned to open Toyota Sure in Phuket for quite some time.

"However, it requires a lot of



SOFT OPENING: Toyota Sure is located adjacent to the Toyota Pearl new car showroom at the Bang Khu intersection. Inset: Chaipat Na-Ranong.

investment to do everything all at once, and with business you always have to consider cash flow. I can't speak about the strategy of other Toyota dealers, but over the last 5 years, most of our concentration in Phuket has been in the new car market.

"Demand and sales targets for new cars have continued to increase every year. Now that the business is going steady, we are ready for the next step."

Toyota Sure employs a staff of

about 25, which includes a sales team, technicians and administration personnel. The total investment for the new Toyota Sure and Car Spa facilities, including land and construction costs, is valued at about 150 million baht.

Side by side with the Phuket Toyota Pearl main office and new car show

room, the newest addition sits on an area of about four rai (6,400 sqm), while the greater premises, spanning a total area of about 32 rai (51,200 sqm), also includes a stock yard.

"We are also planning to open a paint and body shop by the end of the third quarter," Chaipat said, noting that the total investment for the entire 8-year-long operation is valued at about 1 billion baht.

As for the hold-up in Phuket's Toyota Sure official grand opening,

Mr Chaipat explained, "Before we hold the grand opening, everything needs to be ready. Mostly we're waiting for furniture for the customer lounge and a new coffee shop, and of course, more cars.

"We aim to have at least 40 to 50 cars before we're fully ready, which should be within the next month or two."

Chaipat said that the Phuket showroom currently has about 10 to 15 used cars on display, of which about 40 % are buy-ins from Phuket, while the other 60 % were shipped from Toyota Motors Thailand, in Bangkok.

"When we're fully operational, we expect to have about 80 % of the cars to be from Phuket.

Our sales target for the first year is to sell at least 450 to 500 units, he said.

Owners of non-Toyota vehicles will not be neglected.

"Though about 80 % of our stock needs to be Toyota vehicles, we do consider buying and trading other known cars as well," he said.

For more information about trade-ins visit Toyota Sure, located at the Bang Khu intersection (junction of Thepkasattri and Chalermprakiat Roads), or call 076-377600.

PIH: Medical tours vital to economy

MEDICAL tourism in Phuket is flourishing and contributing greatly to the local economy, a representative from one of Phuket's major international hospitals has said.

Speaking exclusively with the *Phuket Gazette*, Peter Davidson, assistant manager of international services at Phuket International Hospital, said, "The number of people coming to Phuket for dental work and plastic surgery continues to expand dramatically.

Mr Davidson estimated that, between the island's top two international hospitals – Bangkok Hospital Phuket and Phuket International Hospital – at least 20,000 rooms are being booked annually by international tourists coming to Phuket specifically to do plastic surgery and dental work.

"Most of these medical tourists will stay here between 10 to 14 days on average. They come first to do their plastic surgery procedure, and then they book into a hotel.

"While they're recovering and waiting for their final follow up, they go on tours and spend lots of money, which directly benefits the economy.

The numbers are indeed significant, and continuing to expand, he noted.

"Each medical tourist spends between 100 to 300 thousand baht on their procedure and at least another 30,000 to 50,000

baht on accommodations. This is in addition to their daily spending of about 3,000 to 4,000 baht per day on food, shopping, new clothing and other essentials.

Asked about the level of competition from the growing number of private clinics located across Phuket, Mr Davidson said, "We don't think there is much competition. Most tourists coming to Phuket specifically for major medical procedure are more likely to book into one of the major hospitals.

"Some of the small clinics you



LAND OF SMILES: A lot is spent on looking good. Photo: D Sharon Pruitt

find in Phuket, such as those in shopping malls like Jungceylon and Central Festival, do basic procedures such as botox.

"People don't fly in from Aus-

tralia or elsewhere, and book a holiday just for small skin work.

"Dental [sector] is a little bit different, as there are a number of clinics spread around the island.

"However, I still believe that the two main hospitals are the biggest service providers [to international medical tourists].

"I think the main reason for this is because we are able to secure more international clients with reliable communications and can offer convenient and reliable booking procedures.

"We work with a number of partner hotels and tour agents around the island.

"Also, we have offshore agents based in Australia, Europe, the US and other places, who supply a large number of our clients. A lot of the smaller clinics don't have this capacity."

– *Phuket Gazette*



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Yet another PayPal scam

A READER wrote to me, asking if she's been scammed. Ends up, she's been taken for a ride, and the scam artist threatened to sue. Here's how it happened, in her words, with a few minor edits:

"Woody, I ran a series of ads in the *Phuket Gazette*, advertising an item I have for sale. I got an email from donorichard250@gmail.com, who said he wanted to buy it. We settled on a price, and this is what he wrote to me:

'Okay i agree with the price i will pay u cos i know it worth more than it, am on contract work in UK at the moment so The shipping agent will do the pick up of it and all papers work and collection at your location....

I will be paying through paypal is fast and secure as well, i paid last seller on here transferred to his paypal last time i bought a bike and was well good transaction.... You will have full payment with no any charges on payment.... Thanks

If you don't have an account with paypal.... you can Sign-up for one now through paypal.com, is well safe and secure and as soon as you have done that get back to me with your paypal-email, so that i can login soonest to my paypal to complete the payment ok.. I wait your soonest reply.'

"I didn't have a PayPal account, so I went to PayPal.com and set one up. I sent him my PayPal address, so he could pay me. This is what he wrote back:

'I have just complete the payment now through my account and i have added extra charges of \$400 for the shipment fee for my shipping agent and i believe that the PayPal will have send you the confirmation for my payment re-



Live Wire

By Woody Leonhard

ceipt confirmed with them to your PayPal email address..... i will want you to make sure you send the shipping agent the money for the pick up, so that they can schedule a time and come for the pick-up, cos that was how the last seller that i bought from as well was picked up by my shipping agent and was well safe. I wait to hear from you soonest ok.'

"And sure enough I received a series of messages from PayPal saying that Donovan Richard had sent me US\$1,050, with a Transaction ID and a breakdown of charges: \$650 for the merchandise, plus \$400 for transport. The last message from PayPal stated the Confirmed Transport Company (sic) is William Corbett from Devon, UK. This message from PayPal went on to say:

'Status : Pending - Transport Company Awaiting Payment.

NOTE: This is to confirm to you that the said amount has been successfully transferred by the Sender and been deducted from his Account which is ready to be credited into your account, been that this Payment has been subjected to be a Payment for a MERCHANDISE purchased from you, we reserve the right to make sure this transaction is safe and secured also to verify the legitimacy level on this transaction because of the high sum of funds involved.'

"I sent an email to the buyer and it became apparent that he wanted me to send US\$400 to William Corbett in Devon, via Western Union. I also checked my

PayPal account online, and there was no indication that I had US\$1,050 coming in, reserved or not. So I basically told the guy to either cancel the order or just send the funds to me, for the amount of the merchandise.

I got back an email from PayPal that said:

'FBI: Federal Bureau of Investigation.

It is important we know the status of the transaction between you and "Donovan Richard" otherwise "Legal Action" may be taken against you since you have not replied to the confirmation of payment made to your PayPal account by (Donovan Richard).

We believed you entered into agreement by requesting money through PayPal and by non response to the payment confirmation made to your account you have violate Phuket Gazette.net* and PayPal agreement. However the buyer has already contacted us in other to make report about your non response. We are ensuring to make PayPal a safer place, therefore we need to set confidence on our users. We request for the Scanned Receipt and the Western Union to the shipper in less than 24hours hours and we will fund the money into your account or face the consequences of "Legal Action". We have your information that we will use to track.'

"What should I do, Woody?"

Let me preface this by saying that the reader sent me copies of the emails from PayPal, and they all look legitimate – PayPal logos, a PayPal return address, even official-looking tracking numbers and ID numbers. If it weren't for the atrocious English in the "PayPal" emails, I could see how



CHECKOUT: Don't believe everything you read and check it out before getting your chequebook out.

the reader might've been very, very concerned.

But it's all a scam. From beginning to end. It looks like our scammer has included Phuket in his list of target locations, although I'm sure he's bullying a lot of advertisers around the world and I bet he makes a lot of money off it.

The heart of the scam – and the big tip-off to anybody who's reading – is the reference to Western Union. Anybody with a Western Union transaction number, knowledge of where the money was sent from and to, and an ID with the correct name on it can collect any amount. In this case, our scammer undoubtedly had a friend in Devon with a fake ID in the name of William Corbett. If the *Gazette* advertiser had sent the money to the "shipping agent," she never would've seen the money again – and would've had exactly zero recourse, in any court, anywhere.

Western Union and Moneygram dead drops are a favorite trick of botnet ripoff artists. Over the past few years, hundreds of millions of stolen dollars have flowed from banks through Western Union – frequently with recruited mules in the middle – to the botnet operators in Eastern Europe. It's quick, reliable, easy, and absolutely untraceable. Super high tech ripoffs have to get the money laundered somehow, and Western Union provides a remarkably good conduit.

There's nobody at fault, really.

PayPal certainly couldn't be held responsible because the scammer had faked everything, including the PayPal return address. (Remember that faking email return addresses – known as "spoofing" – is quite simple.) Western Union is doing what Western Union has done for a hundred years. And with the bucks passing through two or three different countries, the chances of the scammer getting stung are basically nil.

Be careful. It's a jungle out there.

Seth Bareiss holds computer sessions on every-other Wednesday afternoon, from 1 to 3pm. If you have a Windows problem that needs to be solved, drop by one of Seth's free afternoon sessions, or come to one of our free Sunday morning roundtables at Sandwich Shoppe Chalong. Details in the Events Calendar. Sponsored by the Phuket Gazette and Khun Woody's Sandwich Shoppes.

Live Wire is *Phuket Gazette* columnist Woody Leonhard's weekly snapshot of all things internet in Phuket. Shoot him mail at Woody@KhunWoody.com, follow him on Twitter @PhuketLiveWire, or "like" his page at facebook.com/SandwichShoppes.

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'Q day' is fast approaching

UK pension transfer law changes will come into effect on April 15. David Mayes explains their importance to Phuket expats.



LOOK BEFORE CROSSING: After Q-day the new rules will mean that from the date of transfer the provider will be required to report for 10 years. Photo: Garry Knight

Retirement Years

By David Mayes

MANY expatriates with UK pensions have held off on transferring them offshore due to the relative infancy of the industry and the fact that there has been little guidance on some of the more technical aspects relating to the transfers from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

That is all changing as the new legislation introduced recently in draft form is set to go live on the coming "Q day", as it has come to be known, when the legislation goes into effect on April 15.

The reason for an update of the original legislation is to put an end to the practice of "pension busting", first made popular in Singapore until their providers were blacklisted by HMRC, and more recently by providers in New Zealand, who were allowing clients to completely cash in their pensions. The good news is that the jurisdictions which have gone with the original spirit of the legislation, such as Guernsey, ought to emerge in an even stronger position and remain leaders in this market.

Much confusion has come about as a result of the draft bill, particularly of one clause known as "condition four" which states that residents and non-residents of a jurisdiction must have their pensions treated the same for tax purposes. To comply with this Guernsey has already laid the groundwork for a new set of pension provisions to be in place prior to Q day, in the event their lobbying for removal of the clause does not succeed. The extent and speed with which Guernsey has responded to the draft bill is further evidence of why this jurisdiction is the safest place to transfer your

pension. For those of you who have already transferred, you need not worry as the new rules will apply only to future transfers and are not retrospective.

Not all of the changes are good however, and if you have been considering a transfer there are some good reasons to try and push it through before Q-day. The main one of these is a change in the reporting requirements. If you get your pension to Guernsey before April 15, the provider will only be required to report to HMRC for five years from the date you left the UK. If this is long past then there are no reporting requirements. After Q-day the new rules will mean that from the date of transfer the provider will be required to report for ten years. This doesn't mean you are liable for paying taxes on your pension income, but it is obviously desirable to be off of the tax radar completely if possible.

The main benefit of transferring to a Qualifying Recognized Overseas Pension Scheme or QROPS are that income is not taxed at source, which in some instances can just about double the net value of a pension overnight simply by moving it to Guernsey. When you pass on, you also will not have to pay a hefty 55% bill in inheritance taxes. There are also increased investment options, such as those only reserved for the very wealthy back in the UK. Transfers often can take some time, so if you have been considering a pension transfer you might want to speak with your advisor and determine if you might yet be able to make it prior to Q-day.

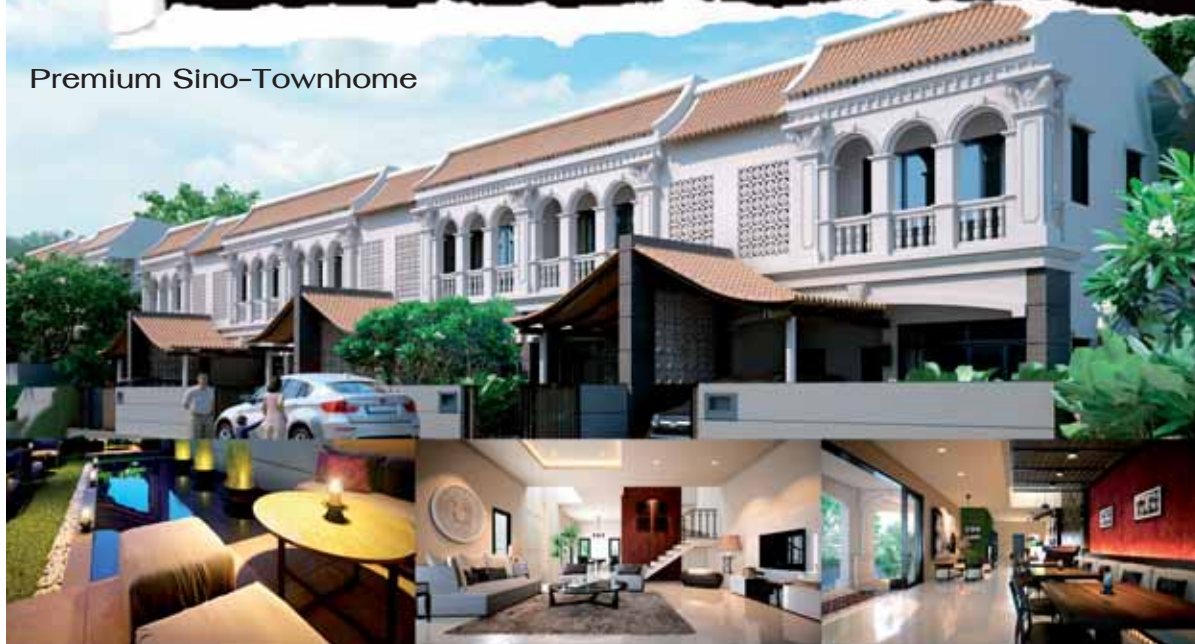
David Mayes MBA lives in Phuket and provides wealth management services to expatriates around the globe, specializing in UK pension transfers. He can be reached at 085-335-8573 or david.m@faramond.com

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All Images are artist impression

Love on a wing and a prayer

Finnish daredevil Jari 'Birdman' Kuosma will hurtle from the skies of Phuket into the waiting arms of his betrothed on February 25.



BIRDS OF A FEATHER: Jari and Nina have made a nest for themselves on Phuket and will marry in a private ceremony after the spectacular 13,500ft jump with only a wingsuit to fly in. But he knows how to do it; this will be his 5,023rd such jump.

By Bruce Stanley

JARI 'The Birdman' Kuosma is Phuket's own adventure action hero. He is known around the world for his sky diving talents and breathtaking exploits.

From his home country, Finland, to South America to Africa to Cali-

fornia and Florida in the United States, Jari has been thrilling audiences with his daredevil stunts in the air. And now he has made Phuket his home.

"I've always been excited about skydiving, since I was a boy in Finland. My father was an amateur pilot and when we

used to visit the airfields I was always watching the skies for the parachutes."

In 1999, he decided to abandon his plans for a career in telecommunications and started up a wingsuit development company – Birdman International Ltd, continuing to spend

as much of his time as possible jumping out of airplanes.

In 1993, he joined a Finnish team which broke the country's record for the largest free-falling formation. He moved to DeLand, Florida and qualified as a professional instructor. He jumped with his clients to ensure their safety.

In 1997, while Jari was BASE (Building Antenna Span Earth) jumping in Italy, he learned of Frenchman Patrick de Gayardon who had invented a webbing system between the arms and the torso, and between the legs. The idea was to allow sky divers to actually fly and remain much longer in the air.

Working together with a parachute and jumpsuit manufacturer, the trio devised a wingsuit made from ripstop nylon, a fabric with zero porosity so the wings would remain rigid in flight. They set up their manufacturing studio in Slovenia where they made their first 80 wingsuits. And they had their challenges when introducing the suits to airfields.

"The history of jumping out of airplanes is less than a hundred years old. Between 1930 and 1961, 75 men jumped from planes wearing wingsuits made from a single layer of canvas stretched from hand to foot. Only three were known to have survived the jump. So there was a lot of skepticism about the safety of

the wingsuit we developed."

However, word spread of the new suit and soon Jari had a successful new venture to add to his credentials. He eventually returned to live in his native Helsinki where he met the 'love of his life'.

"I must have moved back to Helsinki so I could meet my Nina. I met her seven years ago but proposed to her just five hours after we met. I knew she was the woman with whom I wanted to spend the rest of my life."

Jari and Nina are planning to marry in a private ceremony in Phuket on February 25. And on that same date, as the finale to the White Sand / Blue Sky Air Show, Jari will

don his Birdman suit and jump from an airplane to land on Surin Beach. "This will be a normal dive from 13,500 feet," he says. "Nina has also

jumped from a plane, but she's decided that on her wedding day she's going to keep her feet on the ground."

It seems that Birdman knows no bounds when it comes to being in the air. He has made 5,022 jumps, on one of which he even accompanied his 76-year-old mother on her first parachute leap.

He now looks forward to further indulging his passion and his business at Phuket Airpark.

"Nina and I have settled on Phuket as we think it's a beautiful tropical island and the perfect place to begin our married life," he says.



WINGMAN: Jari won't get himself into a flap before the big day.



PLANE SAILING: The kind of view of the departing airplane that Jari sees with every leap. Photo: Jussi Laine, bird-man.com

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CREATOR: Chef Kevin Fawkes was not afraid to try out interesting combinations. Photo: D-IMAGEPLUS



Barracuda Chateaubriand.



Smoked duck egg.



Roquefort ice cream.

An elephant that is hard to forget

By Marc Mulloy

PHUKET has elephants but at the elegant wine dinner held at the Evason Phuket last week, the only elephant there was the one featured on the bottles of Cos d'Estournel.

Evason Phuket has a long history of bringing great wines and winemakers together with guests at their special SLOW (Sustainable, Local, Organic and Wellness) gourmet dinners where the wines are paired with exciting innovations from the kitchen.

This evening featured one of the finest wines money can buy and was three years in the preparation

with the Singapore based representative of Cos d'Estournel, Valentine Bourrié, who cut through oodles of red tape to bring her ruby colored treasure to the table. Cos d'Estournel is a Grand Cru Classé from Saint-Estèphe and sits next to Château Lafite-Rothschild in the neighboring commune of Pauillac.

This is as good as it gets and Evason's Executive Chef Kevin Jean Fawkes had the enviable task of tasting the wines and then designing the menu.

First up was a 2009 Goulée blanc, similar to some Loire wines, this fresh and fruity white was paired with among other starters, Escargots Bordelaise. Yes, snails.

Next on the menu was barracuda realized as a Chateaubriand, served with beetroot with pancetta panna cotta. This delicious fish was presented with our first red, a Pagodes de Cos 2007 whose generous smokey aroma was like liquid velvet. The pagodes refers to the pagoda style roof at Clos d'Estournel and was our first hint that the wine's links with Asia go way back.

Valentine Bourrié explained how the wine is named after Louis-Gaspard d'Estournel who inherited 30 acres of vines in 1810, and then bought the whole hill or "Clos" as they call it in the local patois and created the fine wines over the next



CONNOISSEURS: Head of Cos d'Estournel's Asia office Valentine Bourrié and Evason GM Frank Grassmann. Photo: D-IMAGEPLUS

thirty years. The cellars he constructed are unique and built with pagodas, most probably to reflect his journeys to the Orient. Louis Gaspard d'Estournel was known locally as Maharajah of St Estèphe and the Indian Elephant mentioned earlier features on the label and is the winery's logo. The main door of the Château, a 'Bulund Darwaza' was imported from the Sultan of Zanzibar's palace.

It was the golden time for his wines which were drunk by Queen Victoria of England, Tsar Nicolas I of Russia, Emperor Napoleon III, Jules Verne and even Karl Marx.

She recounted some fascinating stories related to the Asian connection as Louis Gaspard d'Estournel sold his first wines in India.

One consignment of Cos d'Estournel shipped to India had to be returned for some reason and Louis Gaspard d'Estournel observed that the wine which had traveled had actually improved during the voyage as a result of the gentle swaying of the ship. He had the wine brought back to his cellars, endowed it with a label marked "R" which for the initiated meant "Returned from India".

Next up was a "three hour smoked duck egg" deconstructed and served with a mushroom

consommé and confit chanterelles. The perfect partner to this rich course was an opulent deep crimson Cos d'Estournel 2007 whose tannins washed over the rich yolk cooked at low temperature for three hours.

At our table were two Norwegians who were accustomed to our next dish, saddle of roe deer served with liquorice and celeriac baked in charred hay. They explained that it was reindeer that they normally consumed, but agreed that the 2004 Cos d'Estournel was sublime. This was what the Maharajahs would have drunk being a deep, dense and truly classic wine.



British Chef Kevin surprised us again with his final invention to match an amazingly sweet (120

g/l of residual sugar) 2001 Hungarian dessert wine Hétszölő (pronounced Edzele) Tokaji Aszu 5 Puttonyos.

"I was torn between a salty Roquefort to offset the sweetness or a dessert to match it and decided to do both with a Roquefort ice cream served with a salty caramel biscuit covered in gold leaf," he said.

Amazingly, it worked and the combination of flavors in those final mouthfuls is what brings true connoisseurs back again and again to the award-winning Evason gourmet dinners. *Magnifique!*

Bangers cyclists will change lives forever

THE kitbags are being put together and include vaseline, talcum powder, bandages and ibuprofen for swollen muscles.

Yes, it's time again for those hardy cyclists of the Bangers On Bikes Charity Bike Ride to furiously pedal from the capital of Thailand to the island province of Phuket.

The charity event was conceived three years ago by members of the Old Bangkok Bangers Rugby Club who were for some time involved in a rural rugby development program for Thai children. A group of Banger players would go up country and teach the local children the rudiments of the game of rugby union. It was on such a trip, that a few of the players had the privilege of meeting the children from Asia Center Foundation (ACF).

After the weekend training session was finished, the players decided to help raise funds for the worthy efforts of the ACF.

The ACF's long term mission is to build a

school they can call their own. So the players decided to do something out of the ordinary and organize a sponsored cycle ride from Bangkok to Phuket. In the initial plan the ride would take six days, however, it was over in five days. The first year the Bangers raised 350,000 and last year they boosted that sum up to 410,000 baht. This year, the boys hope to raise more than 500,000 baht and have involved another cause, that of the Nak Suu Tigers program in Bangkok whose motto is "changing lives forever".

One of the cyclists in the eleven-man peloton is not of the Bangers, but from their rival Phuket rugby club, the Viagrabonds. Richard Folds, is also skipper of the highly successful Patong cricket club and a popular umpire in the Island Furniture cricket league.

Richard participated in the journey last year and has been putting in hours of training a week to get into shape for the 2012 run.

"Last year when we did the cycle we

had seven guys, but this year there'll be eleven plus five support crew. Now with the amount of people involved we have to be a bit more organized and have actually booked hotels along the route," said Richard.

Speaking with Richard, it seems that he is relishing the challenge.

"Strangely, it got easier as the journey went on, even though we had some tough climbs and of course the traffic is always a worry. The hardest part for me was coming out of Bangkok along the salt flats and hitting a headwind. If you didn't stay with the group you were spat out the back and had to work hard to get back into the ride," he recalls.

The ride begins on February 20 and reaches Phuket on February 25. for more information visit arkintl.org or asiacenterfoundation.org.



The machine that will take Richard the 916km from Bangkok to Phuket



Richard shows his form during practice.

Funk it up at the 2012 Mango House Festival

ABSOLUT Mango House Festival 2012 organizers have announced their entertainment lineup for South Thailand's premiere house music event on March 7, 8 and 9 at the Mango House Bar and Restaurant in Lanta Old Town, Koh Lanta.

The house music festival is a popular event at the island's annual cultural extravaganza, the Lanta Lanta Festival.

Back by popular demand this is year is London's Ministry of Sound resident DJ, Two Good Souls. At last year's festival, Two Good Souls had the streets dancing with a sizzling five-hour set on the last night. This year they will play every night of the festival.

"We're thrilled to have all our Mango House family DJs playing at this year's special festival, and equally as happy to welcome Absolut Vodka Thailand as our new title sponsor," said event producer Duane Lennie.

Also back this year is the world's funkiest party host, Colin "Funk it Up" Edwards from Ireland, who will host a new afternoon house music session at the Absolut Mango House Festival 2012.

The Absolut Mango House Festival 2012 is a free event that starts each afternoon at 3pm with the "Sushi Lounge Party" hosted by Edwards, who is internationally known for his voice and immensely popular Funk It Up radio

syndication show and his signature "sexy, soulful style".

Edwards will welcome the discofied vibes of Thailand's DJ Nutrip and celebrity Japanese chef Massa, for a saucy afternoon of sweet, sexy house music and fresh and sensuous sushi.

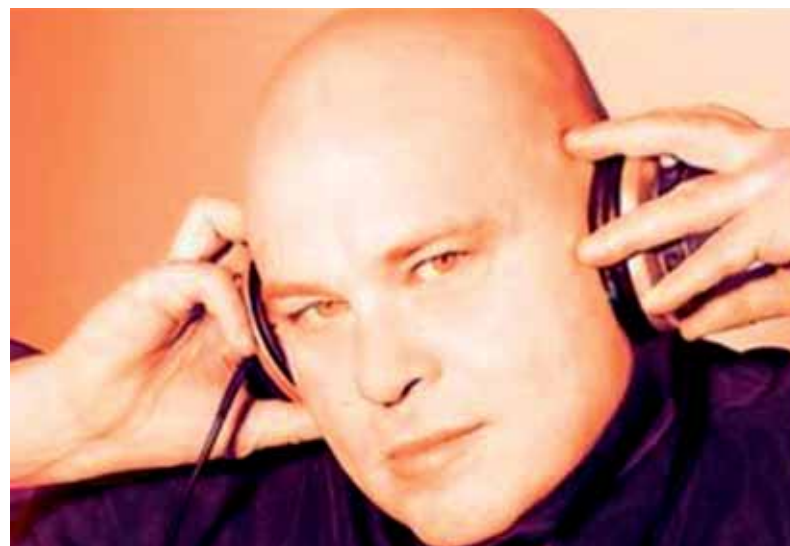
The evening "Absolut Dance Party", which last year attracted an average of 400 party goers each night, will feature four live DJs each night from 8pm to 2am including Canada's best resident beach DJ Tommy T and DJ Taz and DJ Q from the seriously funky-up Phuket House Mafia.

The Lanta Lanta Festival is an annual cultural event that showcases the town's cultural diversity. Its three distinct ethnic Thai groups – Chinese, Muslim and Sea Gypsy – have co-existed in harmony for over 200 years. The three-day event features an amazing assortment of traditional food, beverage and entertainment.

Lanta Old Town is an authentic, Thai fishing village on the east coast of Koh Lanta Island in Krabi province and could be considered one of southern Thailand's sleepiest villages.

The Absolut Mango House Festival 2012 is dedicated to "Funking up Asia" by promoting real house music events featuring world-class, international and regional DJs.

For more information visit manghousesessions.com or contact at 086 9486836. -Phuket Gazette



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Baht 3,500++ per person



Tuesday 14th February 2012 Valentine's Day

"Enchant, stay beautiful and graceful, but do this, eat well. Bring the same consideration to the preparation of your food as you devote to your appearance. Let your dinner be a poem, like your dress" by Charles Pierre Monselet.

Baht 1,850++ per person food only
Baht 3,235++ per person with wine pairing

Who's this Andy Smart anyway?

In the lead up to the next Punchline Comedy Club special "Whose line is it anyway?" on February 29, the Phuket Gazette interviews each of the cast.

Phuket Gazette:

Where and when were you born?

Andy Smart: I was born in Portsmouth in a nursing home that is now appropriately a Casino, in 1959.

PG: Any amusing tales from your childhood and/or school days?

AS: I drowned when I was 7 in the Basingstoke canal, and was clinically dead for about 2 and a half minutes. Luckily my father had been a deep sea diver and knew CPR and brought me back to life. I also broke the world record for distance covered in an hour on 3 ft stilts in 1973. When I was 17 I lived on the Mattoponi Indian Reservation in West Virginia USA for the summer.

PG: Did you attend University or some other Higher Education establishment?

AS: I went to Notre Dame Teacher Training College in Liverpool to do a General BA in Geography and Drama. ("Yond hill ist granite my liege!")

PG: How, when, where and why did you become a comedian?

AS: I started as a juggler on the street at Covent Garden, before joining up with Angelo Abela as the Vicious Boys in 1983 and we were Street Entertainers of the Year in 1984. I loved the life, I definitely wasn't cut out to do a 9-5 job. I love the sound of laughter in the morning!

PG: Did you/do you have any comedy heroes?

AS: I loved Tommy Cooper as a kid, the childish joy of a grown man telling bad jokes and failing to do

magic, entranced me, Morecombe and Wise too. Nowadays I love Sean Lock and Tom Stade, they aren't doing sets like anyone else, they take chances on stage. I also like Stephen Frost, he is relentless with the puns, and Steve Steen is pure unadulterated filth, he goes where I wouldn't dream of treading, they both have me in tears. Ian Coppinger is a dream to work with, never stuck for words and great at making up songs on the spot. His height is a constant source of comedy too!

PG: Have you been to Thailand before? If so, when, where and what did you like and dislike about it?

AS: Yes, but only Bangkok. We always have fun there. One late night we were walking home through Patpong, a moped pushed past us with two steel discs on the back. Stephen Frost saw them and said "Look boys, bongos" and proceeded to play them before screaming with pain as they were actually a cooker's heated rings. I haven't laughed like that for ages. Another time I was walking home on my own in flip flops, when I felt a sharp pain in my foot, I looked down and found that I had kicked a syringe. Like a fool I pulled it out and threw it away. On my return home I got tested for HIV and Hepatitis, but the doctor said I wouldn't be able to have sex for 6 months in case it developed later. I didn't like that. I will be wearing hiking boots this trip.

PG: Is there a difference between performing to an audience of expats and an audience at home?

AS: Not really, they shout out very similar things wherever we go. I still don't know why they find Toilet Brush or Dildo so hilarious. It would be nice if they came up with some original suggestions that we've never heard before. Especially the sex related ones, we've been doing this for 30 years, so we've heard them all a million times!

PG: Where is the best and worst place you have performed?

AS: New York is always fun, there is something in the air there. We did one amazing show there with Eddie Izzard and Mike Myers! Beirut is pretty stunning too. Worst? Qingdao in NE China. The audience was mainly Dutch and German market gardeners!

PG: Any amusing "Whose Line?" Live Show anecdotes?

AS: Because we don't know what the other person is going to say, we can end up laughing as much as the audience, there are times when no one can speak because we and the audience are all laughing, it would look so surreal if anyone came in at that moment.

PG: Any other useful info for an article about you?

AS: I have performed at 31 consecutive Edinburgh Festivals. I've performed at every Glastonbury since 1984. I've run with the bulls in Pamplona 53 times, one year I did all 8 runs from the 7th-14th of July! I am a professional poker player and have a 100 meters swimming certificate.

— Phuket Gazette



SMART MOVES: Andy gets ready to tackle the Phuket audience.



The joke question is: "What's the difference between Tom Cruise and a tuk-tuk?" Send your punchline to info@phuketcomedy.com for a chance to win great prizes and to get your answer read out at the show.

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FARAMOND
WEALTH MANAGEMENT

BIS to hold Spring Fair

THE Parent Teacher Association (PTA) of the British International School (BIS) are organizing a Spring Fair on March 24 targeted as a family day and open to the whole Phuket community.

The PTA's stated goal is to organize fundraising for enriching various education programmes at the school. They are helped in this by the generosity of the school owners who are donating the school grounds and by the efforts of the non-academic staff.

The fair will take place from 11am to 7 pm and will include live entertainment, side stalls with fun games for all ages, demonstrations of skills and mini sporting competitions.

Local businesses will also be on hand promoting goods and services and there will be a raffle for great prizes including a lucky draw for a Honda Wave bike.

For more information contact: E:tazdev07@me.com.



Phuket band The Legends Of Siam are also set to play at the fair.

Jan Sylan as described by an officer and a gentleman

Looking Back

By Anand Singh

CAPTAIN James Forrest is a significant character in Phuket's history as he was one of the few English naval captains who visited the island during the 18th century.

His travel accounts are useful because they vividly depict the geography of the island, the abundance of resources, trade and how the inhabitants of the island lived during that period.

Capt Forrest's visit coincided with important historical events on Phuket, while his own accounts help fill the voids in stories that come from traditional Thai historical sources.

In his writings, Capt Forrest referred to Phuket as Jan Sylan. His descriptions of the island two centuries ago are still clearly familiar. According to Capt Forrest, Jan Sylan was separated from the mainland by a narrow strait about a quarter of a mile wide. The island had no major rivers aside from a few fresh water streams that flowed from the hills into the sea. Farming was mostly done on the middle of the island and the beach areas were left untouched in their natural state. In Capt Forrest's opinion, beach areas were purposely not cultivated because the thick tropical vegetation may have acted as a natural barrier against military invasion. However the saltiness of the soil in beach areas would have made it difficult to grow crops around beach areas.

According to Capt Forrest, 18th century Phuket had three main harbors that could accommodate merchant ships. One was called the Pak Phra harbor and was located near the strait to the north of the island. Aside from that there were two more harbors that he mentioned in his accounts. One of them was said to have been on the western side of the island. Although Capt Forrest never gave a name to this harbor, many Phuket historians believe he may have been talking about Patong Bay.

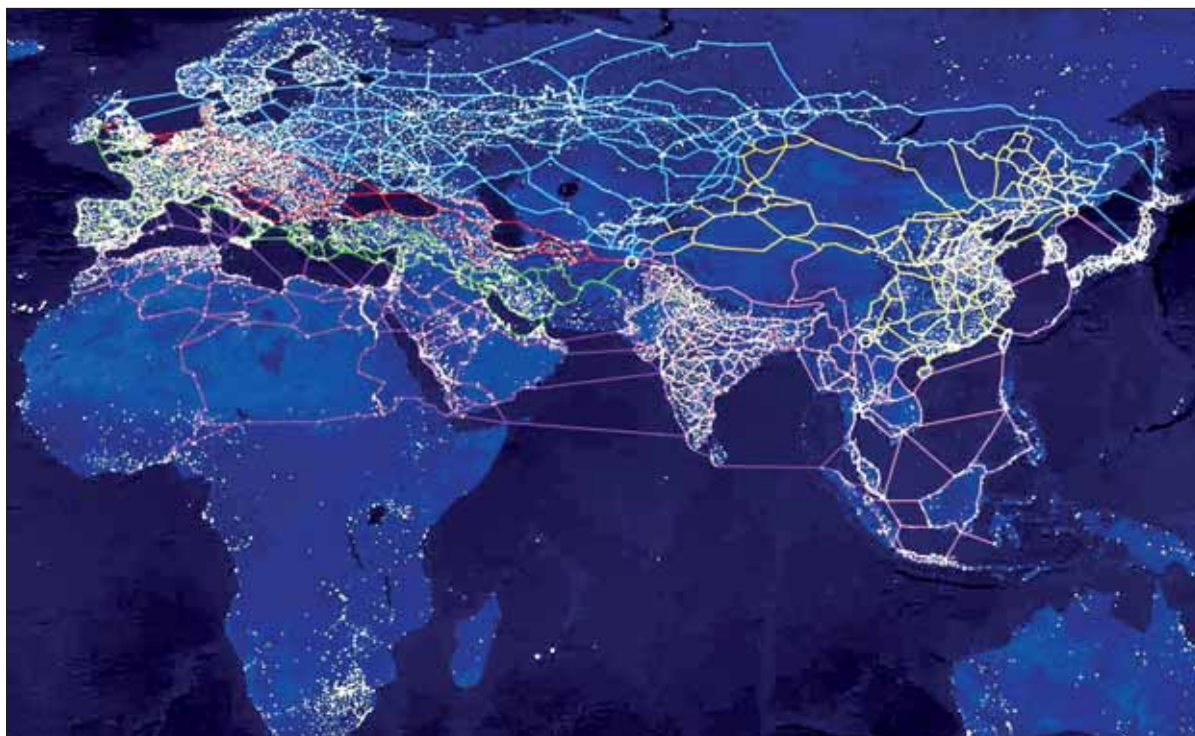
Tha Rua harbor is also mentioned by Capt Forrest in his writings. According to the captain, "it is an excellent harbor which is often frequented by merchant ships. A stream flows into the harbor". In 1784, Capt Forrest traveled up the narrow stream with a small boat to get to Ban Tha Rua, which is a small settlement inland. During that period, Ban Tha Rua was inhabited by around 80 households. The village was home to the governor of the island, Phraya Phimon.

According to Capt Forrest, Phraya Phimon was the most powerful man in Phuket during that time. Because the island was located far away from the ruling capital, the nobles were not rewarded adequately for their services to the crown, hence they were corrupt and the local people oppressed. Soldiers were armed with western made rifles, bayonets and krits (asymmetrical daggers commonly used in the Malay Peninsula). Capt Forrester estimated the population of the island at around 12,000 inhabitants.

Phraya Phimon received Capt Forrest as a dignified guest. According to the captain's accounts, he was taken to a house that belonged to the governor, around seven miles west of Ban Tha Rua village. He made the journey with another prominent English officer, Capt James Scott, who had also come to Phuket on a trade mission. It was a large house made entirely of wood. The surrounding area was used to grow oranges and other fruits. In the evening the governor treated his English guests to dinner. Although he did not speak Malay, Phraya Phimon had a Portuguese translator by his side to assist in the conversation.

During that period Phuket was already an important trading center in the region. Although tin was the most highly sought after commodity, Capt Forrest mentioned a more sinister trading activity. Opium trading, which started around 40 years before his arrival in Phuket, was becoming more prevalent because the island had been declared a free port. The British had been exporting opium from its colonies around the Bay of Bengal for years and during his visit to the island, Capt Forrest noticed that the Malays were trading tin for opium with the British in Phuket. They would then sell the opium to locals in nearby towns and islands, who would give them a variety of merchandise in return, including ceramics, tobacco and brass ware from Java and China. However even during that period, local authorities were not blind-sighted towards the dangers of opium. During Capt Forrest's visit, laws were already in place to prevent local inhabitants from using the increasingly popular opium.

The predominant currency used on the island was tin, which was minted into coins weighing around three pounds. Aside from European traders who come to the island for its precious resources, the Sultans of Malay states in the south were also avid traders in their own



THE OPIUM TRADE: The map above shows the opium trade routes. Ornate opium pipes (right) would have only been used by the wealthy. Photo: Rachel Haller

rights. But they were oppressive even in trade. Malay rulers received merchandise from Phuket without having to pay any tax.

The merchandise however would be sold in the rulers' dominions with considerable profit. According to Capt Forrest, the Malay trading ports used a variety of currencies. Many Indian currencies were widely used, although one of the most common in the region was Spanish gold.



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Searching to do the right thing

AT THE age of 70, Russell Banks has written 14 novels. I've read two, *The Book of Jamaica* and *Continental Drift* which work out moral quandaries found on the border between a white working class hero from New England and the exotic world of the Caribbean.

His latest novel, *Lost Memory of Skin* (Ecco, 432 pages), takes place in Miami and centers on a 22-year-old sex offender called The Kid who lives in an outcast squatter community of fellow sex offenders under-

neath a causeway over the bay between the mainland and the wealthy barrier islands. The community has its own hierarchy, the lowest being "chomos" or child molesters. They are all listed on the National Six Offender Registry, must wear ankle monitor bracelets and are forbidden to use the Internet or to live within 2,000 yards of a school, playground, park or other populations of children. They form a group of sad loners living in tents and makeshift shacks.

The Kid is no chomo, but he is indeed pathetic. Son of a single mom beautician with a rotating roster of boyfriends, the Kid grew up friendless, non-athletic, small and thin and slow in school. From the age of 13, his sole abiding passion was Internet pornography. His only companion is a souvenir iguana from Mexico that grew into a three-foot adult named Iggy. He joins the army, but is drummed out before he finishes basic training in Fort Drum, New York, for, ironically, distributing pornography: the DVD of a French-Canadian porn star named Willow for whom he's developed a crush and visits in a strip club across the Canadian border. He buys up and distributes her DVDs to make friends and is promptly busted.

He is busted again when he turns up at the home of a 14-year-old girl in Miami whom he's met on the Internet, carrying a six pack, a packet of condoms, a tube of lubricant and a porn video. After six months in jail, estranged from his mom, he is fitted

with an ankle monitor that he must not remove for 10 years. He gets a job as a busboy at a barrier island hotel and sets up camp under the causeway. His possessions are a pup tent, a sleeping bag, a bicycle and Iggy. The day that he loses his job for wisemouthing his boss, he loses his campsite in a police raid, along with Iggy, shot in the head at close range.

By this time, the reader is beginning to feel sorry for him.

"The Kid's no psychologist and he hasn't much insight into what makes a sex offender, but he had more sympathy for the men he's been living with than with the people who put them there even though he knows that most of the men living here, himself included, have done some very bad things."

No sooner has he moved back into the wreckage of his camp than he is visited by the Professor, an immensely obese sociology academic who decides that he wants to study the Kid and his community.

"The Kid reminds the Professor of Huckleberry Finn somehow. Here he is now, long after he lit out for the Territory, grown older and as deep into the Territory as you can go, camped out alone where the continent and all the rivers meet the sea and there's no further place he can run to. The Professor wants to know what happened to that ignorant, abused, honest American boy between the end of the book and now."

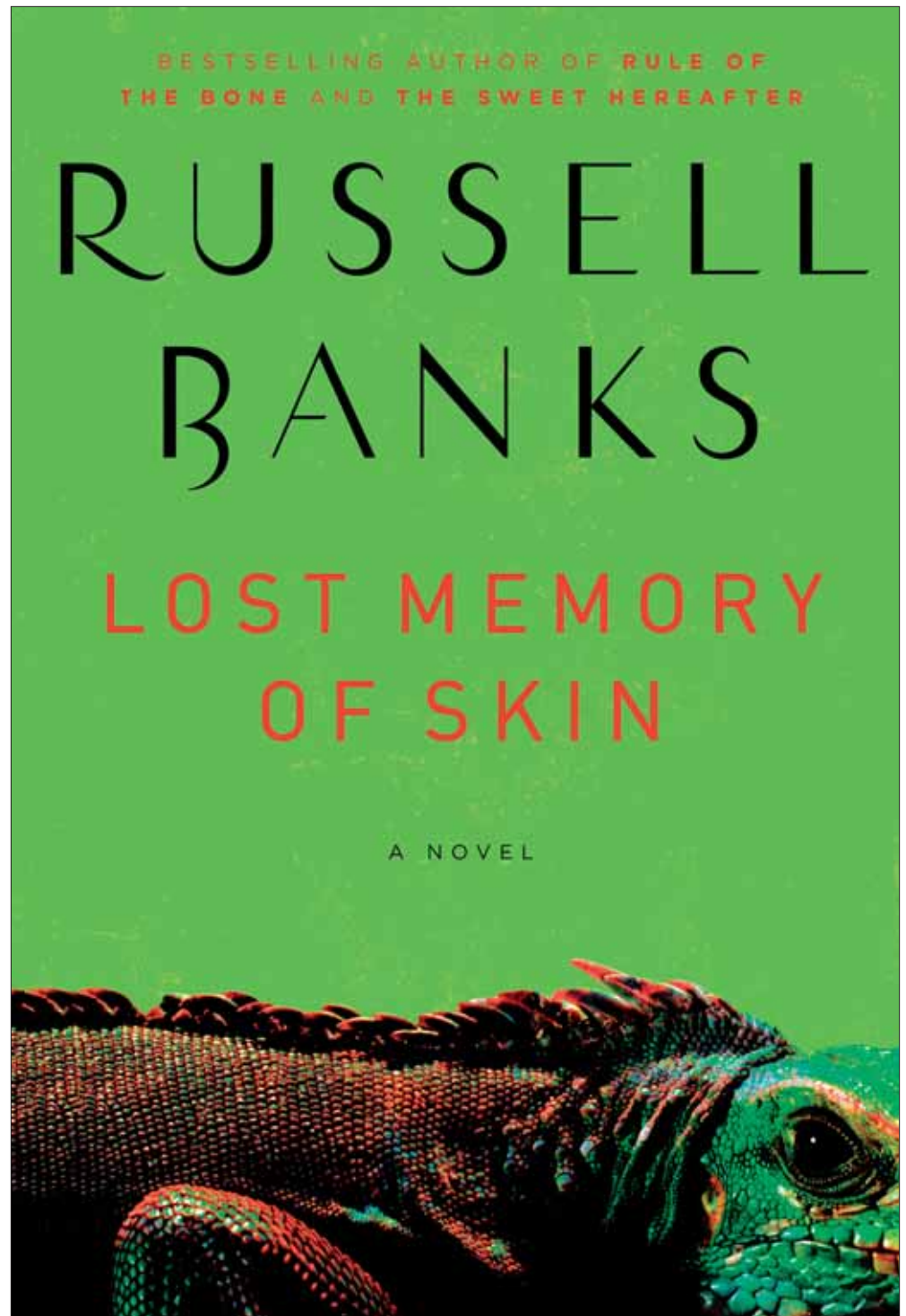
The Professor has his own secrets. Prominent in the civil rights and anti-war movements, he also led a double life as a government informer and later took his double-dealing life abroad. Someone has been in contact with his parents whom he hasn't seen in 40 years and he feels sinister forces closing in around him.

A storm wrecks the camp again and the Kid lits out for the Everglades, a place where he will face his final moral choices.

The ending is marred by a forced didacticism, but Banks's novel is nonetheless a triumph of empathy and insight.

Books

By James Eckardt



INSIGHTFUL: Banks gives his readers a chance to look into the life of a sex offender.

Europe's debt to the Byzantines

Book briefs

RICHARD Blake's novel *The Sword of Damascus* has now been published in paperback by Hodder & Stoughton.

His earlier novels have been translated into Spanish, Italian, Greek, Hungarian, Slovak and complex Chinese. This is the fourth in his series of critically-acclaimed and internationally best-selling historical thrillers.

Set in 687 AD, *Sword of Damascus* takes place against the life or death struggle of the Byzantine Empire against the first and greatest expansion of Islam. Expelled, after nearly a thousand years, from Syria, Egypt and increasingly from North Africa, the formerly dominant power of the Mediterranean world has been pushed further and further back - even to the very walls of its capital, Constantinople.

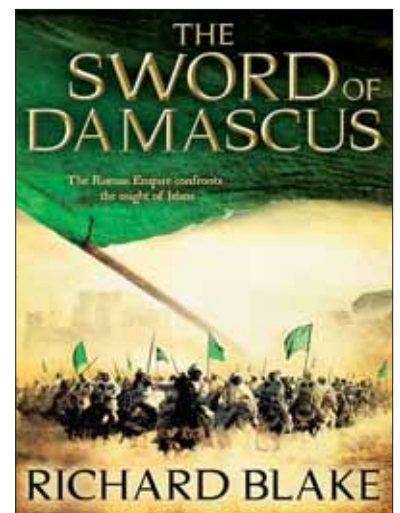
Everyone knows that Europe

owes two debts to Greece - for the victories at Marathon and Salamis that turned back the Persians. But who now remembers our third debt - to the supposedly decadent Byzantines? For they do save themselves from utter defeat, and they buy time for the rest of Europe. Almost at the last moment, they come up with "Greek Fire", a mysterious liquid - or is it a gas? - that turns back the Islamic advance and restores Byzantine control of the seas.

Yes, without this "miracle weapon," Constantinople would have fallen in the 7th century, rather than the 15th, and the new barbarian kingdoms of Europe would have gone down one by one.

But what importance has all this to old Aelric, who writes his memoirs and waits patiently for death in the remote wastes of northern England?

Little does he expect a double siege of his monastery, a kidnap-



A story from the Byzantine era during dying days of the Roman Empire.

ping, a near-fatal chase through the Mediterranean, and a confrontation at the end of this that will settle the future of mankind.

Will age have robbed Aelric of his charm, his intelligence, his resourcefulness, or of his talent for cold and homicidal duplicity?

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Niyom Tassaneetipagorn

THE extraordinary life of Niyom Tassaneetipagorn can be described as one of rags-to-riches. Born into a family of rubber planters with six siblings in Rawai, they struggled to make ends meet.

Niyom helped with the family chores and their small business by feeding pigs, selling vegetables at market and at weekends, he worked as a mobile ice-cream vendor.

He never dreamed that he would hold a degree in hotel management, spend four years with the prestigious Yacht Club and seven years with the internationally renowned Boat House. For the past decade, he has been at the helm of Laguna Resorts, one of the most successful tourism businesses in Thailand.

The turning point in his life came when he met a kind-hearted Belgian couple while working as their tour guide. Impressed by his hard-work and gentle demeanor, they invited him to study in Belgium with all his expenses paid.

After spending years living and studying in Europe, Niyom came back to Phuket at the age of 26 to start what was to be a long and successful career in the hotel industry.

He is part of the force that has established Laguna Resorts as a world-famous organizer and host of many international sports events such as the Laguna Phuket Triathlon and the Ironman 70.3 Asia Pacific. He speaks French fluently, is smart, confident, good-

THAI
gallery
By Nanthapa Pengkasem

natured, and well respected by both Thais and expatriates alike.

Niyom's fortune and position may have changed, but one thing remains in that he is as conscientious and hard-working as ever. His approachability as a "liaison man" a moniker by which he is known to many, he says, is due to the fact that he's a local man, to whom government officials and Thai staff feel they can turn if ever a misunderstanding arises.

"As a mediator between the local governments and my superiors, I have to balance the two cultures. I must be extremely diplomatic when dealing with the Thai *Pu Yais* (high-ranking officials), and then make my bosses understand our values. Cross-cultural thinking is such a delicate affair. Juggling it is an art which I haven't yet mastered, but I am learning new things everyday," Niyom says with a smile.

Part of his job requires him to be involved with the local communities in the areas of social improvement and environment awareness. It's the job he is more than willing to be a part of. He has worked hard and been rewarded for

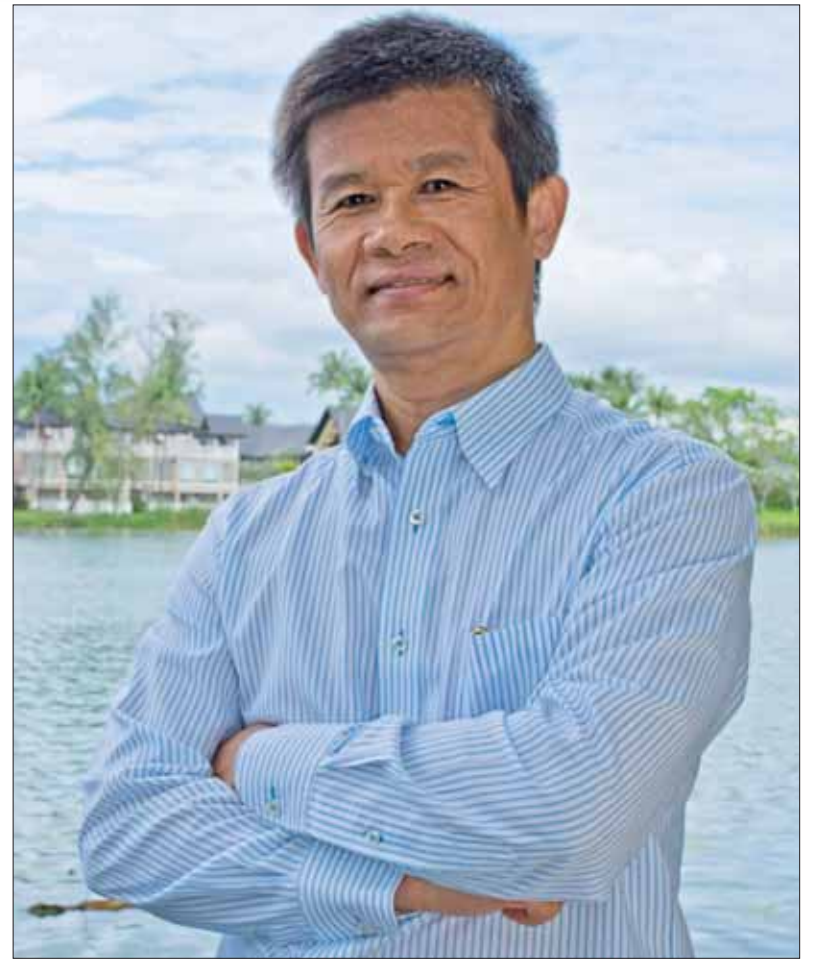
his deeds, he says. Now he wants to give back to his very own kind.

Niyom likes meeting people and he loves the challenges both his full-time and charitable works present. To balance life and work, he tries to jog everyday to keep fit. At 55, he is aware that there are only a few more years left to his working life, so he would like to take it easy to prepare for what he calls a "soft landing", referring to his retirement at 60.

Part of that preparation is holidaying abroad with his wife Natruethai every year. The couple recently traveled to Prague, Vienna and South Africa. His wife, who loves to *tamboon* (making merit at Buddhist temples), keeps him busy attending these religious activities.

As a man with experience in the hospitality business, Niyom believes that tourism in Phuket is still very much alive and flourishing, but he hints at the impending dangers of mismanaging the island's resources.

"It's a real shame that we use our resources insensibly and ignore environmental issues. We have beautiful beaches and lush mountains but manage to ruin it all. The way forward is for all concerned to have the courage to be honest, transparent, and to admit that we have problems. Then we can work together towards some sort of solution. No more 'never mind' mentality," he suggests.



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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White Sand / Blue Sky Air Show

Don't miss it! Birdman will jump out of an airplane and land on Surin Beach.

Markus Walther from Malaysia will be putting his Pitts Special S2B (below) into some incredible contortions early in the show.



Les Vorosmarthy, in his third Aerobatics show over Phuket, will again be shocking the crowds in his Extra 300 (above).

'Birdman' Jari Kuosma, seen here in his Blade II wingsuit, will be flying in nothing more than just that!

When? Saturday, 25 February 2012

Birdman? Phuket resident Jari Kuosma, age 42, from Finland [bird-man.com]

**Birdman often flies for miles in nothing but his wingsuit.
And on this occasion he has a very good reason for doing so.**

- Spectacular Stunts in classic, high powered aircraft @ 4pm
- Birdman Jump @ about 5:30 for sunset landing on the beach

Sponsorships Invited. Contact Pat@aeropromgr.com or 085-258 0006.

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WHAT'S ON in Phuket

February 11 and 25. Saturday Brunch

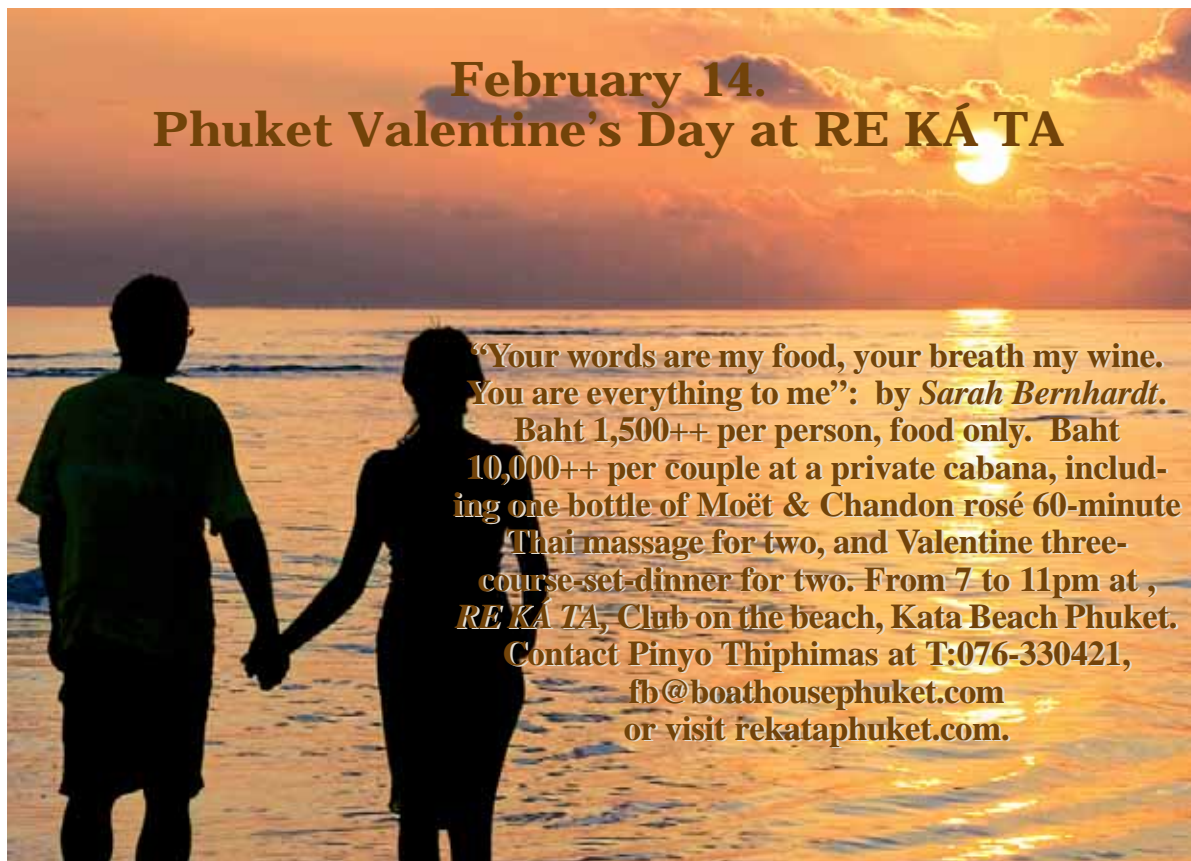
Saturday brunch from noon to 3pm at Two Chefs Kata Center! Every Saturday we are setting up our brunch buffet, filled to the limits with homemade delights. In our smoke house, we smoke all of our fish and meats by ourselves, and in the bakery we we bake all our own bread. With very well trained chefs and a Swedish head chef, we can promise that you won't leave hungry or thirsty. All this for only 395 baht, and if you add an extra 300 baht you can choose to drink what you want from our free flow alternatives. Reservation at 076-330065, katacenter@twochefs.com or visit twochefs.com.

February 11. Champagne Dinner

Who says you have to wait for Valentine's Day to get romantic? At The Pavilions, we believe in romance every day, but we highly recommend you mark this date if you really want to make love sparkle. A degustation menu at The Plantation Club will be impeccably paired with champagnes from Billecart Salmon. We invite you to join us from 7pm for a champagne cocktail. Dinner is priced at 2,900 baht++. Seats are booking fast so please reserve yours now! Contact Francois. T: 076-317600, fb.phuket@thepavilionsresorts.com or visit thepavilionsresorts.com.

February 11. Dominus Estate Wine Dinner at The Boathouse

Dominus, or, Lord of the Estate,



**February 14.
Phuket Valentine's Day at RE KÁ TA**

"Your words are my food, your breath my wine. You are everything to me": by Sarah Bernhardt.
Baht 1,500++ per person, food only. Baht 10,000++ per couple at a private cabana, including one bottle of Moët & Chandon rosé 60-minute Thai massage for two, and Valentine three-course set dinner for two. From 7 to 11pm at, **RE KÁ TA, Club on the beach, Kata Beach Phuket.**
Contact Pinyo Thiphimas at T:076-330421, fb@boathousephuket.com or visit rekataphuket.com.

a name chosen for excellence and long standing commitment to stewardship of the land, grants you the privilege to taste some of the world's finest wines from the Napa Valley. Renowned in the '40s and '50s, legendary in present times, the myth becomes a reality at the Boathouse Wine and Grill. From 7-11pm. 3,500++ baht per person.

February 14. Valentines day at Two Chefs restaurants

Bring your loved one and come to Two Chefs and enjoy our special Valentines set menu which includes a welcome drink, a small amusement, and for starter, a crayfish soup with cheese gratinated ciabatta breads. For the

main course, you choose between a grilled rib-eye steak served with a pink-pepper sauce, chantarell mushroom and a bacon & cheese potato or frutti di mare à la Two Chefs: grilled lobster tail and scampi served with a white wine sauce flavored with tomato and an asparagus risotto. For dessert there will be a chocolate and raspberry cake. All this for only 995 baht. From 5pm to 1am at Two Chefs. Reservation at 076-330065, 076-284155 and 076-286479 info@twochefs.com or visit twochefs.com.

February 14. Valentines Love by Les Anges

Royal Phuket Marina invites you to Valentine's Dinner at Les Anges. See our flyer for more information. From 7 to 11:30 pm at Les Anges restaurant. Contact Murat (Events & Group Manager) at T:081-7973364, muratc@royalphuketmarina.com or visit royalphuketmarina.com.

February 16. PIWC Monthly Lunch

The Phuket International Women's Club lunch will be held on February 16 starting from 11:30am to 2pm at "The Cudos" restaurant, Surin Beach. All are welcome and prior booking is essential. Price: 500 baht for members and 650 baht for non-members. Contact

Carole Dux at 085-7821332, info@phuketiwc.com or visit phuketiwc.com.

February 16. A Starlight Soiree

International Opera Star Julie-Anne Hunter, accompanied by British International School's very own Merja Makivirta on the piano and supported by talented students from BIS, will set the Phuket night aglow with an ensemble of popular operatic arias and classical pieces. Donation: 1,500 baht for the performance, 3 glasses of wine or beer and canapés. Dress: Cocktail. Thank you to Flame and Bake who are providing the canapés and Wine Gallery who are sponsoring the wine. From 6:30 to 9pm at Amphitheatre in BIS. Contact Tina Hall at 076-278146, tina@phukethasbeengoodtous.org or visit phukethasbeengoodtous.org.

February 17 and 24. Special Indian Feast Promotion

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 home-made 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 restaurant, Royal Phuket Marina. Contact Murat at 081-7973364, muratc@royalphuketmarina.com or visit royalphuketmarina.com.

February 17 and 24. Navrang Mahal Curry Fridays

We present Curry Fridays at 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.

February 18 to 19. Basketball Skills Camp at BIS

To be held on the first weekend of the February mid-term break. This is a great way to spend the first weekend of your break after the end of a hard-working school term! The camp will be run by former LA Lakers star Ike Nwankwo and his Top Flight Basketball Academy. Train and learn from the best in Thailand and play with top current professional players from the Thai National Team! This is the first of its kind in Phuket and one not to be missed. Open to all schools. From 9am to 4pm. Price: 3500 baht for 2 days. Spaces are selling out fast, so if you are interested contact Mr Tim Pearson at 076-335555, info@bisphuket.ac.th or visit bisphuket.ac.th.

Phuket Afternoon Computer Clinic

Is Windows driving you NUTS? Looking for a good internet connection? Need to know how and where to get your PC repaired, or your confounding questions answered? Drop by the new Afternoon Computer Clinics, hosted by Woody Leonhard and Seth Bareiss. Bring your computer. Bring your questions. Bring your sense of humor and let's see if we can solve your PC problems. Second and fourth Wednesday of every month. Sponsored by Woody's Sandwich Shoppes and the *Phuket Gazette*.

February 22. - Sandwich Shoppe Chalong
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BLISSFUL: (From left) Alastair Carthew – AC Public Relations, Giuseppe “Pepe” Viva – Bliss Beach Club GM, Jake Jacob – Gerard Bertrand Vinyards and Bart Duykers – Director of Andaman Wine Club at Bliss Beach Club.



A CLASSICAL TRIO: (From left to right) Brian Woulfe - Designed by Woulfe, Lister Hannah - Chairman PIA and Mom Tri Devakul at the recent Classical Music Concert at Mom Tri's Villa Royale. Photo: Dan Miles



FLORAL NOTES: Tim Berger, GM Consumer Products Division of L'Oreal Thailand recently presented a bouquet to Ann Thongprasom (left) a famous actress and a Brand Ambassador of L'Oreal Paris during the “Red Night and Oscar on the Beach Party” held at Centara Grand Beach Resort Phuket.



HOUSE HUNTING: Smith, Pach, Anda, Jeff and Ashley from KISP went to investigate different houses in Phuket and record their findings for school.



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The Bay Regatta 2012

SEE YOU ON TUESDAY: Ruby Tuesday's crew give a champion's cheer onboard. Photos: rolienphotography.com



PARTY TIME: There were parties galore at The Village, Coconut Island (above left and below) and at the Sheraton Krabi Resort.



SECOND THOUGHTS: Mark Norris from DaVinci's Yacht Charters presents the Phoenix representative with 2nd place prize.



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

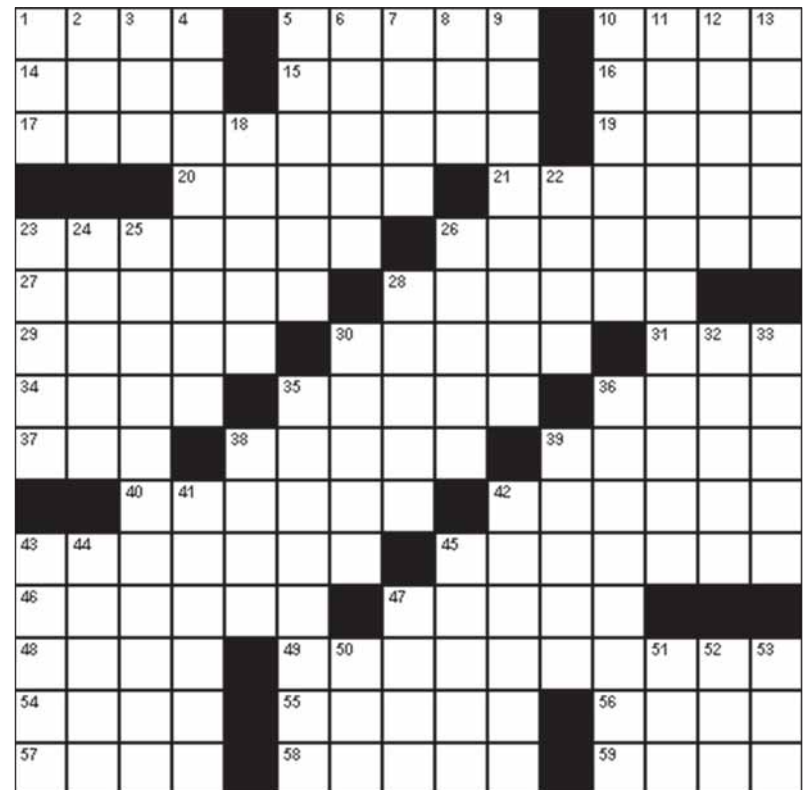
1. What is another name for a Scottish church?
2. What 2002 novel by Alice Sebold, is the story of a teenage girl who, after being murdered, watches from heaven as her family and friends struggle to move on with their lives?
3. The Aberdeen Terrier is better known as what type of dog?
4. What was the name of the Russian short-story writer, playwright and physician, considered to be one of the greatest writers in the history of world literature?
5. What is the name of the chain of islands in the southwestern Philippines?
6. What was the name of the American pediatrician whose book *Baby and Child Care*, was published in 1946?
7. Which village in Essex which sits on the River Colne, is famous for its Victorian viaduct that crosses the Colne valley?
8. Who was the Roman god of fire?
9. What was the name of the ferry that capsized after leaving Zeebrugge in 1987?
10. What's the connection between 1 to 9?

Quiz answers on page 39

- Across
1. Diamond cover
 5. Moor
 10. Gardner and others
 14. Author Seton
 15. Large wave caused by tidal flow
 16. Tabula ____
 17. Authorization to sell
 19. Earth Day subj.
 20. Sleep disorder
 21. Quantity
 23. Triangular
 26. Study of diseases of the ear
 27. Tater Tots maker
 28. Ethically neutral
 29. Foolish
 30. Burning gas
 31. Loss leader?
 34. Lo-cal.
 35. Army attack helicopter
 36. Celestial body
 37. Slangy assent
 38. Tree insect
 39. Steeple
 40. Show clearly
 42. Old West watering hole
 43. Odd
 45. Capital of Georgia
 46. Not tough
 47. As ____ resort
 48. Black-and-white treat
 49. Esteem
 54. Parentheses, essentially
 55. Sift
 56. Fish-eating eagle
 57. Grasp
 58. Dutch painter Jan
 59. Appraise, charge per unit

Down

1. Bit
2. "Wheel of Fortune" buy
3. Handwoven Scandinavian rug
4. Having royal privileges
5. Rupture
6. Alleviated
7. Turkish bigwig
8. Part of TNT
9. Tumor of the liver
10. Ring of color



11. System of vacuoles
12. For ____ (cheap)
13. Saline
18. Form of lyrical poem
22. Additional
23. Lace mat
24. Bert's buddy
25. US marine
26. Astrologer Sydney
28. "The Zoo Story" playwright
30. Physical power
32. Fortune-telling cards
33. Boxing venue
35. Formal assembly

36. Deep-fryer's concern
38. Common hop
39. Chip dip
41. Located above the water table
42. Pollen producer
43. Brown ermine
44. Earth
45. Animated
47. Fit to ____
50. Join a poker game
51. 401(k) alternative
52. Mich. neighbor
53. Born

Provided by BestCrosswords.com
Puzzle solutions on page 39

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): A talk with a close friend can mark the end of a story for Aquarians this week, but it will be important to accept that some things cannot be changed. Business should boom during the remainder of February for those who have been chasing up old contacts. If your birthday is in the week ahead, look forward to a year with less financial ups and downs. The number eight can bring good luck early next week.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): Pisceans won't be in the mood for going out much this week, but working on your own needs is forecast to bring you to a better place. Taking time out for quiet contemplation will show how to approach a romance related problem. Fortunate days for finances are Monday and Tuesday. Wearing the color butterscotch can encourage a softer mood. Your lucky number is two.

ARIES (March 21-April 20): Solutions will not be as clear cut as you would like this week. The astral atmosphere remains misty until after the middle of February – Arians are advised to tread water

where business or work related decisions are concerned. Personal relationships are fairly well starred during the second half of this month, but rushing commitments should be avoided. The number eight can bring good fortune.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): Calmer days lie ahead during the second half of February for those born under the sign of Taurus, with job satisfaction highlighted to increase. A romantic relationship with another earth sign gets the green light after an unsettled period. Those involved with an air sign will be happy to hear that their partner has had a change of heart regarding a major issue. Your lucky number is four.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): A power struggle is possible. Geminis who are determined to have the last word could see that a fire sign isn't ready to give in so easily. Thursday is the most auspicious day to meet this person halfway. Where romance is concerned, your sentimental side is strong during the second half of February. Those involved with a water sign will be ready to commit. The number six can be lucky on this weekend.



By Isla Star

CANCER (June 22-July 23): Cancerians are forecast to appreciate gestures made by others this week. Another water sign in particular will prove that they can be counted on when you need a friend. Some minor problems at work are predicted to come to the surface, but your troubleshooting skills should lay them to rest. Finances become better starred, but a discrepancy could cost valuable time midweek. Your lucky number is seven.

LEO (July 24-August 22): After a tricky start to February, Leos are forecast to be feeling as right as rain. Your ability to bounce back is respected by those in authority at work, with emphasis on a promotion being offered in the near future. In the realm of romance, another fire sign catches your eye this weekend, but making contact with this person may not be as simple as you hope. The number one can be lucky.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): Some Virgoans are getting irritated by a fire sign colleague's habit of putting on a show. The stars indicate that you will have opportunity to set this person straight early next week. Work matters fall under more auspicious astral conditions during the second half of February – expect to learn something to your advantage during the days ahead. Flirtation with a water sign brightens your weekend. Lucky number is three.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): Grasping at straws could see Librans taking wrong turnings this week, which may result in a difficult time during the second half of February. The stars advise that easy options will not necessarily be the best answer, particularly where business is concerned. Your romantic outlook is positive – those keen on starting a relationship with another air sign see that the coast is clear. Number five comes alive.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): Scorpions could be suffering from confusion this week. The stars advise putting your thoughts and feelings down on paper to help get them in perspective. A dream you

have about a work related situation can reveal that you're not as comfortable with it as you thought. An on-off relationship with an earth sign starts to test your patience. Number nine can bring good luck around the middle of the month.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): Sagittarians are advised to be less hard on themselves. Mistakes made at the beginning of month could still be causing you regret and too much dwelling in the past will prevent you from realizing that the future can be sunny. Those who are single are forecast to enjoy attention from an air sign this weekend – this person's positive energy could be just what you need. Lucky number is four.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): Twisted logic can interfere with the progress of business, but the stars indicate that another earth sign might just have a point. Wednesday is the best day to try approaching difficult situations from a new angle. There are signs that Capricorns involved in a hot new romance have been forgetting their friends – make this weekend a time for catching up. Number two can be good fortunate.

PROPERTY Gazette

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Vocation students to fill service vacancies

SHORTAGES of skilled personnel in Phuket's hospitality and service sectors look to be reduced with increased collaboration between key operators and the island's biggest, yet underutilized supplier of human resources.

Six major hotels, along with two food and beverage operators on February 7 signed bilateral agreements with the Phuket Vocational College to cooperate in jointly managing students' vocational education.

The eight operators include Best Western Allamanda Laguna Phuket, Duangjitt Resort and Spa, Boat Lagoon Resort, Outrigger Laguna Phuket Resort and Villas, ibis Hotel (Patong), Holiday Inn Resort Phuket, MK Restaurants and Oishi Group Ltd.

Presided over by Phuket Vice Governor Somkiet Sangkaosuttirak, the signing ceremony was held at the Phuket Vocational college.

Attending were academic administrators, instructors, guests and representatives and signatories from the respective operators.

Sunthon Ponrong, Director of Phuket Vocational College, praised the collaboration.

"For more than 70 years, management of vocational education in the [Thai] school system has largely been based at schools and institutions, where students were taught and trained in crafts for the agricultural, industrial, commercial, arts and home economics sectors, so they could go on to apply what they learned in various careers, in which operators would be the ones to hire them," he said.

"Presently, the vocational education act requires educational institutions to collaborate with operators in order to be able to produce vocational human resources to meet the needs of the actual labor market.

"[Initiating] bilateral management agreements is one approach that can solve the national prob-

lem of [lacking] human resource production and development, in terms of both quantity and quality. Thus, the Phuket Vocational College bilaterally collaborates

the Phuket Vocational College, to promote and support bilateral vocational management, by combining resources and efforts to produce a professional work force," he added.

Vice Governor Somkiet echoed Mr Sunthon, emphasizing the need and importance of bilateral agreements.

"This represents an important step in solving the national-scale problem of lacking adequate production and development of both the quantity and quality of human resources.

"Institutions have the role of training and instructing students, and operators will apply these human resources [students and skills]. This collaboration will be a joint effort across the whole process, starting from thinking and doing

and on to investing.

"All sectors are in agreement that institutions and operators must jointly manage [vocational] education and lay out a plan to ensure that the production and development of human resources is in line with the strategy of the national economic and social plan, as well as consistent with the demands of the labor market," he said.

"This collaboration directly benefits the students, who will, in turn, reduce the problem of [service sector] labor shortages. It will also benefit investors who struggle with human resource redundancies, and indeed it will benefit the country's competitiveness on the ASEAN and world stages, he added.

Under another similar initiative, Phuket Rajabhat University is collaborating with at least 20 Phuket Tourist Association member hotels, to provide the institution's tourism and foreign language students with not only practical skills but also paid on-the-job training and relevant hospitality experience.

— *Phuket Gazette*



RESOURCEFUL HUMANS: Students, administrators and operator reps pose with V/gov Somkiet (5th from left) and Sunthon Ponrong (5th from right).

with a number of operators in Phuket.

"By signing the agreements, [you] eight operators are showing intent to collaborate, cooperate and join forces with

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There's no such thing as an easy A

I AM often reminded by a chain of long suffering editors at this publication that my beat is property, tourism and leisure. Do I stray?

Yes, like a punch drunk lunatic, wired on rapid fire staccato sentences. Some of it makes sense. Other times, it even makes me look into the mirror and pose the question – what was I thinking?

Never mind, as we ease off the curve, hit the accelerator and take on the straight as far as the eye can see. Of course there may be an odd water buffalo hiding just off the pavement, ready to lumber right into the road. This is tricky business. One minute your whole life is in front of you and the next, you're just some road kill waiting for the police to come and outline the body with a can of white paint.

I'm hitting a bonus trifecta in today's column hitting all the three major food groups.

No matter where you turn, be it property estates, hotels or tourism destinations – everyone wants to be on the "A List".

I'm not even going to bother to look for the history of the term or give some vague understanding of how it came to be – I'm not falling into the evolutionary scheme of things.

Everywhere you turn from Hollywood celebrities, to school grades, to plotting out a course from point to point – you mostly start with A.

Strangely, in an age when telephone books have become a



Property Watch

By Bill Barnett

vanishing species, the scarlet letter mindset remains as prevalent as ever. Start grading economic categories (rich, middle class and poor) and you go ABC. Term property and it's the same thing – grade A is at the top.

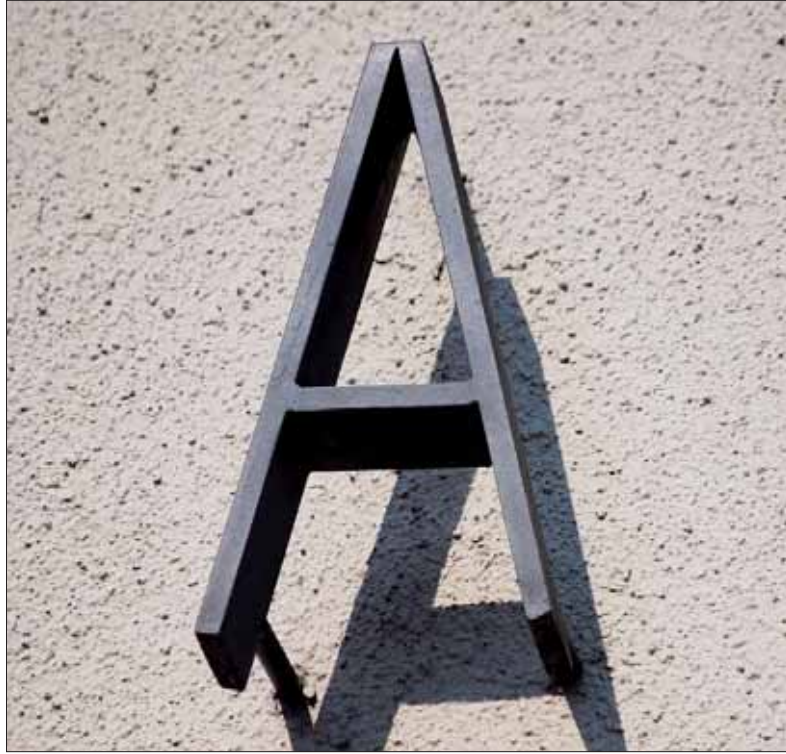
Hotels, well they look to the stars for a rating system which has run amok these days with 6, 7 and even 8 star resorts being touted. But yes, hotel chains especially love the brands starting with A.

Aman, Alila, Anantara, Angsana, Aloft, ACCOR and so it goes. Ride around Phuket and there are more developments that start with an "A" than I care to recount.

Of course we have the ignominious, and let me strike some controversy with the term "Andaman". Personally, and this is absolutely subjective, I cringe when I hear the name used to describe Greater Phuket. It lacks imagination, punch, and covers areas which are not even in Thailand.

Imagine an overgrown ape hitting a mallet when all that is needed is a small precision tool. I for one am not using the Andaman word to describe anything, unless I'm taking a slow boat to the Andaman and Nicobar islands in India (not Thailand).

With destination brands and contrived thinking, at the end of the day



A IS FOR ANDAMAN: Which by the way is in India. Photo: Simon Blackley

people can simple outsmart themselves in copycatting a term or falling into hierarchal thinking.

Look at BMW – iconic it is, but it means absolutely nothing aside from "Bavarian Motor Works". And it's a B, not even an A.

The last time I looked there are 26 letters in the alphabet (another A word), so please take a journey up and down the scales and find something else.

Look what the X-Files, X-Factor and X-rated porn did for that

lowly, also ran letter.

There is more to life than winding up in the A list, be bold and find another letter for that new hotel, property or destination. If Steve Jobs were still alive, I'd write and ask him for the A to be struck off the keyboard from all his company's devices. But yes, his company is on the A List as well.

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

In brief...

Billionaire Saudi prince is selling Mövenpick

Jones Lang LaSalle Hotels are brokering the sale of the 362 key Mövenpick Resort and Spa Karon Beach, Phuket.

With a land area of 82,828 square meters the property includes 175 rooms, 163 suites plus villas and 24 oceanview apartments.

The resort is owned by Kingdom Hotel Investments who purchased it in 2006 from an entity under the private equity firm LaSalle Investment Management.

Kingdom which is controlled by billionaire Saudi Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal has recently disposed of a number of hospitality assets including the Four Seasons Hotel Jakarta.

JLL Hotels who are exclusively handling the tender process have said they are receiving a high level of interest in the resort which is located on Asia's premier leisure destination.

Thailand in the Top 10 for retirement living

According to the publication International Living, Thailand ranks in the top 10 in the world for retirement living.

In order for the 2012 index based on a rating system that includes real estate, cost of living, climate, healthcare, entertainment, and infrastructure the top of the pops are -

- 1.Ecuador
- 2.Panama
- 3.Mexico
- 4.Malaysia
- 5.Colombia
- 6.New Zealand
- 7.Nicaragua
- 8.Spain
- 9.Thailand
- 10.Honduras

– **Bill Barnett**

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a collection of 24 over-sized pool apartments located next door to Phuket's prestigious Laguna area - has been named Best Condo Development (Phuket) at the 2011 Thailand Property Awards. Move in tomorrow.

Sale and purchase agreements: what is important to know?

A PROPERTY buyer or seller scrutinizing sales documentation may wonder what provisions should be part of a sales contract.

A sales agreement typically starts with a description of the parties who wish to enter into the agreement supported by passport copies or company documentation providing full details of the parties. A preamble or recitals may follow setting forth specific facts which form a basis or reason for the transaction contemplated under the agreement.

Certainly a precise description of the property should be contained in the agreement providing the parties with a clear understanding of what this transaction is all about. Such description should be accompanied by relevant documentation pertaining to the property and attached to the agreement such as title deed, house registration, construction permit or other relevant documents. In case that furniture or equipment would come with the property, then a detailed itemization of such should also be enclosed to the agreement.

Maybe the most important part of the agreement is the terms of payment. The terms of payment should stipulate the total purchase price, set out the installments payable, and respective due dates. In case of sale of a completed property a deposit may be payable on signing of the agreement; the balance on title transfer. However, a wary buyer may withhold full payment until title transfer at the land office. Off-plan transactions typically provide for payment in accordance construction progress with a final payment due either on delivery or transfer of the property to the buyer. Furthermore, the method of payment such as bank transfer or cheque payment may be agreed. In case of a bank transfer, the bank account of the seller should be provided in the agreement for clarification purpose. A seller may further promise that he or she shall collect official documentation from its bank

Property Legal By International Law Office

upon receipt of payment and provide them to the buyer along with proper receipts.

Furthermore, a seller may be required to provide comprehensive contractual warranties and representations in favor of its buyer. Such typically include the seller's valid title to a property free and clear of encumbrances or any other third party rights as well as unrestricted access.

A seller may further warrant that no litigation or investigation in the property is pending before any court or government agency. A seller should further warrant that no management fees, utility expense and property taxes levied against the property are outstanding.

Another important point is the closing costs, such as the parties' tax and fee liabilities incurring in connection with the registration of title transfer at the land office. In general, sellers should pay all taxes; transfer fees may be split between the parties, however, this is subject to negotiation.

Last, but not least, a fair and balanced default provision should be agreed on, which provides reasonable notice periods and an effective default remedy. For the case that a dispute would occur, a dispute resolution mechanism should be described in the agreement.

Apart from this, further miscellaneous provisions may be agreed on depending on the parties' individual requirements and the specifics of a transaction.

As always, before signing any sales documentation and/or making payments, either party should seek professional advice to ensure that the parties' interests will be sufficiently protected.

This article has been written by International Law Office Patong Beach Co., Ltd., a Phuket based law firm, for informational purposes only. In case of inquiries, please contact Michael Greth by email michael@ilo-phuket.com or phone 076-22219-(1-5).



WORK IT OUT: The terms payment should stipulate the total purchase price, set out the installments payable, and respective due dates. Photo: Images Money

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LAST STEP: A wary buyer may withhold full payment until title transfer at the land office. Photo: Alan Cleaver

Reading palms again



Gardening

By Patrick Campbell

I RECENTLY came across a letter in which the writer lamented the absence of palms on Phuket's beaches. Not like the Caribbean, he declared.

While this observation is more or less true, there are a few sprouting improbably from the sand dunes at secluded spots around the island. And anyway, there are plenty of alternative trees: avenues of casuarinas just yards away from beaches such as Nai Harn, and at the sea's edge, screw pines and sea almonds to lend an exotic and verdant touch to the shimmering sands.

Of course, it is the coconut palm (*cocos nucifera*) which one normally associates with tropical paradises. But it not a good choice for your garden unless you want a specimen lawn tree or two, and unless you have oodles of space the mature fronds may be nine feet across. My local spa has several coconut palms, fully sixty feet tall. However, they were obviously already there when the spa was created, and the designer, conscious of how effective they look near swimming pools, sensibly made a feature of them, and surrounded the swollen base of each bole with a circular bed of colorful and ground-hugging flowers.

Where less lofty palms score

over other small garden trees is in terms of their neat appearance, their ability to survive harsh conditions, and their distinctive aesthetic appeal. Silhouetted against a brilliant red sunset, they look superb. A tropical garden without palms is like a duck without water. And if you do want a coconut palm - useful and tasty as well as beautiful - you can always opt for a dwarf variety. The good thing is that they all contain sweet juice and delicious white flesh.

There are now dwarf cultivars which produce fruit when only three or four years old. However, the Malayan Dwarf and the New Guinea Dwarf are both something of a misnomer since they can attain thirty feet. Very much smaller and with a wide crown of leaflets is the Fiji Dwarf, a slow growing and wide-spreading variety, which, unlike most palms, provides dense shade. Another, *Red Spicata*, produces orange/red nuts. While the parent species produces a round crown of fronds at its lofty apex, many of these dwarf palms are characterized by a wedge-shaped arrangement of leaves.

Growing palms is a relatively straightforward business. Here in the tropics, *cocos nucifera* or *ma-phrao*, once established, enjoys full sun, but plant small specimens or sprouting coconuts in shade, and transfer them later to an open location. The root system is relatively small and since new roots form from



POSTCARD FROM PARADISE: Many people equate tropical islands with palm trees. Photo: Stephen Heron

the base of the trunk, even big trees can be successfully transplanted in the wet season.

One small palm which has received less than its due in these columns is the MacArthur palm (*mak khieo*). It has slender stems which form a clump, somewhat like the better-known golden cane palm. The feather-shaped leaves, however, have blunt ends, as though they have been snipped by crimping scissors. This feature in no way detracts from the tree's attractive appearance, for the leaves are not only glossy and dark green, but tend to discolor less as they age. Periodically, it produces panicles of flowers which are followed by masses of bead-like yellow fruits which turn brilliant red as they ripen.

The MacArthur palm prefers shade and will grow where there is little direct sun. Groups planted together can form an effective screen in a small garden. It can also be used as a potted specimen on terraces and patios. Preferring moist soil, it can, like most palms, be grown directly from seed.

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



The MacArthur palm with its masses of red fruits. Photo: thienzieyung

Tip of the week

Pre-emergence herbicides



WEEDING OUT: Get to them before they sprout. Photo: John Tann

HERBICIDES are classified according to what stage of weed growth they affect, as well as how they damage or destroy weeds. They are either synthetic or natural.

Pre-emergence herbicides work by inhibiting the growth of germinating seeds. They do not affect established plants, so they must be applied to the area before or immediately after the seeds sprout. So first remove existing weeds by hand if you are treating an area with flower beds or grass.

Note the chemical ingredient on the label and check to see how long the product remains active in the soil. Otherwise you may harm seeds sown later. Many pre-emergence herbicides are used to kill germinating seeds in lawns, especially invasive crabgrass, and are often used in combination with fertilizer. This increases the lawn's vigor and its capacity to compete against weeds. Chemicals used include *oryzalin*, *pendimethalin*, *proflam* and *clithiopyr*.

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* The Gazette Online is always at the TOP of Google for Phuket! (Source: Google Analytics)

See also the tool bar on our home page (as below) and compare the online numbers with other, similar sites.

Properties For Sale

HOUSE IN PHUKET VILLA 5 FOR SALE



46sq wah, furnished, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 3 aircons, carpark. Only 3.5 million baht. Tel: 081-787 7675.

LOCH PALM LAKE SIDE PLOT



Beautiful 36 meter lake frontage building plot of 1 rai on Loch Palm Golf Course. Water, electricity, street lighting, management and security all in place. Lease or freehold 15 million baht ono. Tel: 081-273 6959 (English), 081-968 9950 (Thai). Email: bobyapp@mac.com

1 RAI LAND

Quiet area. Int school, golf courses and marinas all close by. 3.5 million baht ono. Email: jase.shanahan@virgin.net

POOL VILLA NAI THON

2 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, 1 extra room, carport. Price: 6.9 million baht. Tel: 081-272 1648.

BEACHFRONT HOUSE 2BED 8.5 MB

155sqm. New ready to move in. Private & common pool. Furnished. Tel: 087-897 0501 (English), 089-588 1919 (English & Thai). Email: aleksa79@inbox.ru

30 RAI IN TOWN

Flat land near Dowroong School in Phuket Town. Tel: 081-691 2526.

NAI HARN LUXURY CONDO



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

LUXURY HOUSE IN GOLF VILLE



22 million baht. An excellent location at Anuphas Golf Ville in Kathu, land plot size 650sqm. Comprises 3 beds, 1 office, 4 baths, large swimming pool with jacuzzi, European fitted kitchen, terrace and indoor dining area, separate lounge with built-in bar, extensive security. View now. Tel: 084-293 7923 (English & Thai).

RAWAI - SEA VIEW VILLA

Fully furnished, 3 bed, 2 bath plus maid's quarters, on a 640 sqm plot. With private pool, Jacuzzi, security alarm, car port with electric gate and mature garden with irrigation system. Great potential at only 10 million baht with Chanote title and Thai company if required - (rental terms on request). Tel: 081-958 6173 (English), 085-785 0314 (Thai). Email: bjsimpson7@aol.com

SEAVIEW LAND PLOTS BANG TAO

Amazing Ocean Views, Direct from developer, ready to build. Call for details. Tel: 086-267 0157. Email: bannuaton@yahoo.com

BARGAIN 2-BED CONDO NAI HARN

6.3 million baht. 115sqm, 2 bed, 2 bath, freehold, furnished, fully renovated, 4 floors. Palm Breeze. Tel: 087-897 0501 (English), 089-588 1919 (English & Thai). Email: aleksa79@inbox.ru

5-BED THAI STYLE POOL VILLA

On 1 rai of land. Luxury finishing, all with en-suite bathrooms. Tel: 087-893 4636. Email: annericphuket@hotmail.com

BEACHFRONT STUNNING LAND



2 rai on Naka Yai Island, 47m beachfront. Suitable for luxury villa or small boutique resort. Tel: 086-278 8300. Email: izzy.serenitygroup@gmail.com

HOUSE IN KATA

5 mins to beach, large modern 3-storey house, furnished, 3 beds, 2 full baths, aircon, spacious living room, garage with laundry and overhead storage, security door/windows, large covered patios. Company transfer available. 5.5 million baht. Tel: 081-131 5751. Email: seadog5000@yahoo.com

PATONG TOWER CONDO

Modern, fully furnished, 65sqm, 1 bedroom, freehold, great rental returns. 6.5 million baht. Tel: 081-088 8099. Email: finobkk@yahoo.com

LAND FOR SALE

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

OCEAN VIEW LAND BANG TAO



Luxury hillside project, over 1,000sqm. Price: 5.5 million baht. Next to river w/waterfall. Road, utilities. Tel: 084-445 8880 (English). Email: philipagordon@yahoo.com

NICE PLOT FOR SALE



Near Layan Hill Estate. (Manik-Bang Tao area). Ready to build housing/pool villas. Chanote title. Price: 7.2 million baht. Neg. Contact owner on 080-520 2989. Email: talayjan@yahoo.com

CHALONG 2-BEDROOM HOUSE

New detached house for sale. 2 bedrooms, en suites. Large walled garden. Price: 2.2 million baht. Contact Jai. Tel: 089-817 4864. Contact Jai.

5.75 RAI - BANG PAE

Nice, flat land. 22 million baht for all, or 4 million baht per rai. Tel: 081-693 4075.

KAMALA HOTEL ROOM

20 years left on lease. No kitchen. 2 pools, jacuzzi. Monthly fees 2,700 baht. Price 900,000 baht. Tel: 084-716 0502.

VILLA FOR SALE



Nai Harn, 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, swimming pool, 1 rai. Price: 14.5 million baht. Soi Nanachat 49/90. Tel: 088-443 8704.

2 HOUSES IN RAWAI FOR SALE

1 new house, 3 bedrooms, saloon, European kitchen, roof terrace. 1 luxury bungalow 2 bedroom, saloon, pool, European kitchen and etc. Tel: 087-889 4160. For further details, please see our website at www.naiharn-villas.com

HOUSE FOR SALE IN BAAN PROMPHAN

2.5 floors, 5 mins to town, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, Good for stay! 2.85 million baht. Tel: 083-506 9155. Email: sumitra.saetan@gmail.com

PRIVATE SALE OF HALF A RAI

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

KAMALA NICE HOUSE

2 bedrooms, aircon. Quiet area. Price: 3.7 million baht. Tel: 080-320 0426.

24 RAI CHEAP CHALONG

24 rai close to Phuket Zoo. 3.8 million baht per rai. Direct from owner, with chanote title. Email: landchalong@gmail.com

THE ART OF TROPICAL LIVING



Pool villa on 700sqm land, with option for the neighboring plot + 740sqm. Villa located in a small exclusive, quite development in Rawai. A spacious living and dining room, 3 large bedrooms, 5 bathrooms, European kitchen, maid's quarters, a guesthouse, a double-size garage, 12m pool, sala, jacuzzi. Built to highest standard. Full basement. Chanote title. Price: 17 million baht. Contact Yupin on 081-817 4805 (Eng & German). Email: residler@gmail.com

KATHU LUXURY POOL VILLAS



Close to BIS and Patong Beach, 2 and 3-bedroom villas, from 8.8 million baht. Tel: 073-321445, 089-724 7211 (English). Fax: 076-323724. Email: julien@phuketimmo.com For further details, please see our website at www.phuket-cottages.com

SUPERB CONTEMPORARY VILLA



5 bedrooms. Between Boat Lagoon & BIS. 120sqm swimming pool, fully furnished. 26 million baht. Tel: 082-276 4314, 082-276 4318. Email: caronitk@hotmail.fr See our website www.phuketfinder.com

CHEAP LAND FOR SALE

Close to Phuket International Airport. 4 rai, Chanote title. 3.8 million baht per rai. Tel: 081-868 7676. Email: phuketann@gmail.com

HOUSE IN PHUKET VILLA 5

at Phuket Villa 5. Living room, dining room, office, 5 bedrooms, 4 shower/WC, store, kitchen. Plot 521sqm. Asking 7.2 million. Tel: 081-956 6462 (Thai), 086-682 4356 (English). Email: siam@gmx.net For further details, please see our website at www.thai-swiss.ch/Immobilien.immobiliien.0.html

NAI HARN

Top sea view, fully developed, 1,250sqm, 40 meters above sea level, Chanote additional available, Construction permits. 12 million baht. Tel: 087-298 0200. Email: rwberger00@hotmail.com For further details, please see our website at www.phuket-seaview-land.com

HOUSE & FURNITURE

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

LAND AT CHERNG TALAY

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

POOL VILLA NAI HARN

3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms. Fully furnished and equipped, ready to move in. Two minutes from beach. Pool 8.5 x 3m, land plot 552sqm, Built 200 sqm. 13.5 million baht. Tel: 081-691 3681. Email: fedepandolce@gmail.com

LUXURY VILLA IN CHALONG



Baan Pranghtong Park. An exclusive residential gated community. House 660sqm on 3 levels. Land 1,600sqm, 5 bedrooms, 7 bathrooms, swimming pool 12.5 x 6m with spa, large sala, double garage. Freehold: 5 Chanote titles of 82sq wah (350sqm) each. Excellent investment potential on 2 plots with Chanote title, to build 2 other separate villas, fully independent with own entrance. Tel: 086-271 3260 (English). Email: crishausb@hotmail.com Website: www.tamata-phuket.com

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Properties For Rent

HOUSE FOR RENT NAI HARN



Near beach. 2 storey Thai style house with 12x6m common pool, big terraces. 2-3 bedrooms, kitchen, aircon, TV, WiFi. For rent from March 1. 25,000 baht/month. Tel: 083-388 8036 (English), 089-972 5378 (Thai). For further details, please see our website at www.phuketqualityhouse.com

KATA BEACH APT FOR RENT

Luxurious 90sqm, 1 bed, 1 gorgeous bathroom, no kitchen. Very private, no smoking, no pets. 15,000/month, long term only. WiFi and electricity included. Tel: 080-075 1321 (English), 081-326 2083 (English & Thai). Email: susan@eastcoastrubber.com

2-BEDROOMS BUNGALOW RAWAI

Aircon, WiFi, fully furnished, quiet location. 10,000 baht per month. Tel: 086-279 0837.

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>

THAI VILLA AND POOL

Nai Harn, long term, mid-March. 40,000 baht per month. Tel: 081-270 5126. Email: mervyn.crocker@yahoo.com

POOL VILLA RAWAI

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

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.

PATONG LUXURY APARTMENT

16,000 baht per month for long-term rent. Large pool. Tel: 081-080 8831 (English & Thai). Email: jstuder@loxinfo.co.th

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.

HOUSE IN PATONG



Newly built 40sq wah, near Sea Pearl project, Patong. 2 stories, 3 beds, 2 bathrooms, fully furnished, 2 aircons, kitchen with hood, refrigerator, dining room, living room, hot water, cable TV and internet. Tel: 089-469 1813.

PATONG POOLSIDE APARTMENT

52sqm, Furnished Western kitchen, 42" TV with Cable, WiFi & maid. Minimum 6 months. Rent: 22,000 baht per month. Tel: 080-052 8082 (English). Email: phvcondo@aol.com

KAMALA BEACH APARTMENT

Furnished, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, WiFi, cable TV, quiet, secure. 10 mins to beach. 16,000 baht per month. 3 months minimum. Tel: 083-645 3546.

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

KATA SEA VIEW VILLA

Luxurious 2 bed, 3 bath, private pool villa with water fall and ponds. Sea View. Fully furnished includes washer, flat screen, WiFi, TV, linen etc. No smoking, no pets. 1 week 40,000 baht. Long term (1+ months) 55,000 baht per month. Tel: 080-075 1321 (English), 081-326 2083 (English). Email: susan@eastcoastrubber.com

KATHU 1-BEDROOM CONDO

Modern, large, quiet area, fully furnished, modern kitchen, living area, 2 aircon. Close to everything. Contact Toon. Tel: 081-103 9646.

HOUSE FOR RENT IN KATHU

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

PATONG CONDO PRIVATE RENTAL

1 bed, fully furnished apartment available February 15. Swimming pool, gym, parking, WiFi, cable TV, 800m to Patong Beach. Tel: 085-069 0938. Email: northwo@hotmail.com

SINGLE HOUSE FOR RENT



At Land & Houses Park Chalong. 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, fully furnished, TV, internet, 4 aircon, Western kitchen, solar hot water, 24hr security. Clubhouse with large swimming pool. Tel: 087-273 6218, 081-085 3583.

LOVELY APARTMENTS



Phuket Town and also available close to central, cable TV, internet, security, swimming pool, gym. 15,000 baht to 20,000 baht PCM. Can also supply motorcycle and truck. Tel: 081-539 9612, 087-633 1472. Email: chrispalmer56@gmail.com

3 BEDROOM APT LAYAN BEACH

Layan Gardens. Luxury, large ground floor apartment. Swimming pools, jacuzzi, tennis court. Two minutes from Layan Beach and Laguna Resort. 60,000 baht per month, 6 months minimum. Tel: 082-605 6406 (English). Email: imarketingonly.com For further details, please see our website at www.layangardensapartments.com

KATHU NEAR POCHPALM

Apartment 58sqm, ADSL, cable, pool. 12,000 baht/month. Tel: 081-891 6632 (English & Thai).

BRAND-NEW THAI VILLA

Contemporary Thai-style villa, fully furnished. Thalang area. 10 mins to beach (Bang Tao, Surin, Layan). Close to Tesco Lotus. 1 bedroom: 700 baht per night. 2 bedrooms: 1,500 baht per night. 3 bedrooms: 2,000 baht per night, 3 bedrooms with big pool: 5,000 baht per night. Discount available for long-term rent with free pick-up from airport-villa-beach-Lotus. Contact tel: 089-795 6363. Email: vicky_grc@hotmail.com

HOUSE WITH LARGE GARDEN



For rent at Thalang. 80sq wah, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, fully furnished. 20,000 baht/month. Tel: 081-607 8567. Email: suksavat@hotmail.com For further details, please see our website at www.phuket-apartment-house.webiz.co.th

KATHU NEAR LOCHPALM

Big apartment, 180sqm, unfurnished, car port, terrace, internet, cable TV, swimming pool. 20,000 baht/month. Tel: 089-875 2856 (Deutsch), 081-891 6632 (Thai).

HOUSE FOR RENT

2 aircon bedrooms, 1 bathroom, living room, furnished house, kitchen, near Phuket Zoo. Tel: 081-537 9878 (English & Thai), 089-729 8472. Email: tiwus@hotmail.co.th

SEA VIEW MODERN STYLE VILLA

6 bedrooms, panoramic terrace, 17m sea-view swimming pool, Finnish sauna, sophisticated security system and much more. Available for rent for long term only at 160,000 baht/month inclusive of in-house maid service. Located just above Phunaka Golf Course in Chalong Hill. Tel: 081-892 7847 (English). Email: patrick@oceanic-global.com For further details, please see our website at www.oceanic-global.com/villa-neptune.php

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CHEF/KITCHEN MANAGER

Required for small hotel in Patong. Must have experience with Western food. Thai national. Tel: 076-342143, 081-606 5772 (English & Thai). Fax: 076-340300. Email: pauljames@expathotel.com

OPERATIONS MANAGER

Phuket Fish Boat Co, Ltd, Owner of Luxury Sport Fishing Yachts, requires a Full Time Operations Manager. Expat OK, Work Permit Provided. Responsible for operations of boats, booking schedules, maintenance schedules, crew supervision and reporting. Normal working hours: Mon-Sat, 8am to 5pm. However, must carry phone all the time to react to emergency. Starting pay is 30,000 baht a month. Apply at martin@phuketfishboat.com

PART TIME DRIVER WANTED

Driver with their own car to pick up food packages from five central locations - Mon to Sat - and deliver to the dog pound in Thalang every afternoon. Gas money and weekly wage. Email: sherin.peace@gmail.com

HEADSTART SCHOOL

We are currently seeking Thai or Filipino nationals to fill the following positions: Assistant Teacher, Art Teacher, Full time Supply Teacher. Tel: 076-612876, 088-765 5878 (English & Thai). Fax: 076-612877. Please send your CV to els@headstartphuket.com.

MANAGER FOR SPA & MASSAGE

shop wanted. Salary 12,000 baht, good English, friendly, Thai national. Tel: 086-474 9591.

COOK REQUIRED 7 DAYS

30m yacht requires a cook for 7 days from Feb 1st. Please call urgently. Tel: 087-630 8312, +60-12-932 0592 (English). Email: shiryn@zoho.com For further details, please see our website at www.sy-kayumanis.com

AQUACULTURE-FISH

Assistant manager. **English/Thai essential**, land-based farm, Australian company. Salary 20,000 - 30,000 baht (neg). 20 mins north of Sarasin Bridge. Email with qualifications and experience: al.debwaap@gmail.com

Phuket Gazette

The Phuket Gazette seeks to fill the following position:

Administration Assistant

The successful candidate will be a Thai national with an outgoing personality. Experience in business administration combined with good management and organizational skills is essential. A good command of written and spoken English is also important. Knowledge of PageMaker/InDesign and Office software would be an advantage.

Qualified candidates are invited to send a CV by email to neil@phuketgazette.net

The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd

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

ACCOUNTING

Basic knowledge of accounting, English not a must. Contact person: K.Ae. Tel: 076-273476. Email: accounting@phuket-yachts.com

LOOKING FOR BABYSITTER

Age 25-35, must have experience with 3-month-old baby, knowledge of English language is a must. Starting salary: 15,000 baht. Tel: 086-270 7506.

WANTED: THAI CAPTAIN

For boat in Chalong. English speaking. Salary 10,000 baht + 200 baht each day. Need immediately. Contact Delphine. Tel: 087-277 7395.

BARTENDERS WANTED

Roxy Bar in Phuket Town seeking bartenders with experience and good English. Full-time and part-time. Start immediately. Tel: 086-001 6138 (English). Email: karnwillows@yahoo.com

SPA MANAGER

Responsible for daily setup, a hands on role, salary position for well presented female, Thai national 25+. A good organizer with strong leadership. Skills: good written and spoken English. Customer focus. Tel: 086-745 7745. Email: kathy.ritchie@hotmail.com

RECEPTIONIST (THAI ONLY)

Tel: 090-492 2375. Email: cc@bayshoreprojects.com

BOOTH STAFF (THAI ONLY)

Work 6 days a week, good salary. Tel: 081-968 5963. Email: cc@bayshoreprojects.com

KINDERGARTEN SECRETARY

Must have a good English and computer skills. Mon-Fri 7:30-4:30. Chalong. Tel: 080-624 7060.

OFFICE SECRETARY

Needed by property management company. Must have good knowledge of Quick Books and be able to multitask. Thai applicants only, please. Tel: 076-384691, 081-978 7489 (English & Thai). Email: enrico@easyhomephuket.com

WEB DEVELOPER PHP/MVC

PHP Developer with strong MVC framework (Yii, CI, Symfony, ZEND) and JQuery. Tel: 082-283 8902. Email: Shayne.Micchia+ADS@gmail.com

NEW ANDAMAN COVE MANAGER

Andaman Cove Juristic Person is looking for a new Manager (Thai national) for 29 luxury condos/private residences inside Evason, Rawai. Knowledge of accounting and maintenance needed. For more information call Khun Gim at 085-918 2238 or email waruneehangan@hotmail.com

ASSISTANT/ SECRETARY

Available for foreigners only. Office and field assistant, background and knowledge with construction administration is an advantage. Tel: 081-968 5963. Email: cc@bayshoreprojects.com

CABLE SKI WAKEBOARD CLUB

is looking for long-term staff, no older than 30 years. English fluency and excellent communication skills are a must. Tel: 082-329 3207.



The Baan Yuree Resort & Spa in Patong is a foreign operated property with customers mainly from Australia and New Zealand. We are looking for key members of staff to join our fully occupied hotel who are interested in speaking and learning more English, providing quality service and enjoying the benefits of a good service charge and good working environment. We look forward to meeting you!

Front Desk Manager

- Must be fluent in spoken Thai & English - Thai or Foreigner OK
- Strong Computer Skills - Knowledge of Comanche a plus!
- Have strong leadership skills to lead, train and motivate a team
- Quality Service Oriented
- Previous Hotel Management Experience in Phuket a plus

Additional Open Positions for Thai Nationals

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| ● Guest Service Agent | ● Gardener | ● Spa Therapist (4) |

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Baan Yuree Resort & Spa 12/1 Petchakut Road, Patong Beach, Kathu, Phuket Thailand 83150 Tel: + 66 76 364 703-8, Website: www.baanyureeresort.com

British International School, Phuket

British International School, Phuket is looking for candidates to fill positions in the following areas:

- **System Maintenance** (ช่างระบบ)
- **Housekeeping** (แม่บ้าน)
- **Building Maintenance** (ช่างอาคาร)
- **Security** (เจ้าหน้าที่รักษาความปลอดภัย)

A/R Accountant**Qualifications**

- Thai national, Bachelor's Degree in Accounting or Finance
- Good/strong Command of written and spoken English Computer literate
- At least 1 year experience in accounting
- Customer relation skills and service mind are essential
- Knowledge in AccPac operate would be an advantage

Primary Secretary Assistant**Qualifications**

- Thai national
- Bachelor Degree in related field
- Excellent English, Computer literacy and good people skills
- Able to coordinate with other department in academic function

Teacher's Assistant**Qualifications**

- Thai National, Bachelor Degree in related field
- Teaching qualifications and experience of child care / teaching preferable
- Good command of spoken and written English
- Strong interpersonal and organizational skills
- Loves to take care with children

Benefits: uniform, group insurance, provident fund and etc.



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We are currently recruiting for the following roles:

Human Resources & Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training Manager • CSR Coordinator 	Room & Guest Service Department <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest Service Agent
Food & Beverage Department <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bartender (contract) • Waiters / Waitress (contract) • Assistant Restaurant Managers • Hostess (contract) 	Sales & Marketing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Villa Sales Manager
Trainees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management Trainees (12 month program) • Mandarin speaking trainees 	Villa Department <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Villa Attendant

If you are interested to apply for the above roles to join our team, please submit a letter of application, list the position you are applying for, attach your resume and a recent photo with your expected salary to:

dtlphmgr@dusit.com OR dtlpjobadv@dusit.com

Human Resources Department

390 Srisoonthorn Road, Chermatalay, Thalang,
Phuket 83110, THAILAND
Phone 076-362999

Phuket Gazette

As the result of a major expansion in its **Classified Advertising** business due to the launch of the newspaper's Nationwide Edition, the *Phuket Gazette* seeks to add a **Receptionist** to its existing team of five.

Qualified candidates will be:

- ▶ Thai nationals, aged at least 24
- ▶ Service-minded with an outgoing personality
- ▶ Able to work well with large numbers of advertisers, both foreign and Thai

and should have:

- ▶ A Bachelors Degree from a recognizable university
- ▶ A good sense of organization and respect for details
- ▶ Knowledge of basic office software

Knowledge of InDesign, Pagemaker or Quark Express would be a plus.

Qualified candidates are invited to send a CV to Khun Porntiwa, Assistant Manager-Classifieds, at Jeab@PhuketGazette.Net

The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd

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SOLUTIONS TO THIS WEEK'S PUZZLES

Crossword puzzle:

COFFEE break

1	T	A	R	P		5	H	E	A	T	H		9	A	V	A	S
14	A	N	Y	A		15	E	A	G	R	E		16	R	A	S	A
17	D	E	A	L	E	18	R	S	H	I	P		19	E	C	O	L
					20	A	P	N	E	A		21	A	M	O	U	N
23	D	E	L	T	O	I	D		26	A	T	O	L	O	G	Y	
27	O	R	E	I	D		28	A	M	O	R	A	L				
29	I	N	A	N	E		30	F	L	A	M	E		31	A	T	A
34	L	I	T	E		35	C	O	B	R	A		36	S	T	A	R
37	Y	E	H		38	B	O	R	E	R		39	S	P	I	R	E
				40	E	V	I	N	C	E		42	S	A	L	O	O
43	S	T	R	A	N	G	E		45	A	T	L	A	N	T	A	
46	T	E	N	D	E	R		47	A	L	A	S	T				
48	O	R	E	O		49	E	S	T	I	M	A	T	I	O	N	
54	A	R	C	S		55	S	I	E	V	E		56	E	R	N	E
57	T	A	K	E		58	S	T	E	E	N		59	R	A	T	E

Impossibly Possible Quiz answers:

1. A Kirk
2. The Lovely Bones
3. Scotty dog
4. Anton Chekhov
5. The Sulu Archipelago
6. Benjamin Spock
7. Chappel
8. Vulcan
9. The Herald of Free Enterprise
10. Connection: Star Trek (Captain James T. Kirk, Dr Leonard "Bones" McCoy, Mr Scott "Scotty", Pavel Chekov, Hikaru Sulu, Mr Spock, Nurse Christine Chapel, Vulcan - Spocks home planet & U.S.S. Enterprise)



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- Bow thruster
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► Warwick 47 (1994)



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International Sport

Halfpenny makes the Irish pay

By Dean Noble

THE RBS Six Nations kicked off at the Stade de France with underdogs Italy first on the menu for the French as they looked to improve on their second place showing behind England last year.

The Italians provided spirited opposition having much of the possession, however mistakes crept into their play which were punished by a professional "Les Bleus" performance.

An opportunistic touchdown by Vincent Clerc for a third French try with a chip over the Azzurri's defense by François Trinh-Duc effectively sealed the Italian's fate, with the French running out 30-12 winners at the final whistle.

The Calcutta Cup returned with England as they won a scrappy affair 6-13 at Murrayfield, their first victory in eight years on Scottish soil.

In a clash with Scotland's veteran team against England's new line-up, it was only a charge-down try scored by English fly-half Charlie Hodgson that separated the sides at full-time to the delight of interim coach Stuart Lancaster.

Dan Parks, who had a woeful afternoon at fly-half, and has since announced his "immediate" retirement, was the culprit when his attempted clearance was blocked, with the resulting try converted by Owen Farrell.

Leigh Halfpenny held his nerve to kicked a last gasp penalty to give Wales a dramatic 23-21 victory over the Irish.

Ireland went into the break with a undeserved 10-5 lead after Rory Best collected winger Tommy Bowe's pass and went over.

Halfpenny took over kicking duties for Wales from the misfiring Rhys Priestland and made an immediate impact to bring the Welsh back into contention with a penalty.

This was quickly followed up when George North broke through two Irish tackles, and offloaded one-handed to Jonathan Davies to score and Halfpenny again converted.

With Bradley Davies sin-binned for a dangerous spear tackle, the Irish quickly moved the ball and Bowe went over in the corner. Sexton failed to convert and squandered a penalty to put the game beyond the Welsh.

Reprieved, North completed a flowing move, and though Halfpenny finally failed to go between the uprights, he capitalized on Stephen Ferris' high tackle with less than a minute to go.



BOWE LEGS IT: Ireland's Tommy Bowe scores against Wales during the Six Nations international rugby union match at the Aviva Stadium. PHOTO: AFP/PETER MUHY

Blackburn outgunned

PREMIERSHIP action last weekend provided 31 goals, generously helped by a "magnificent seven" from the Gunners as they destroyed Championship-bound Blackburn Rovers.

Robin van Persie, top scorer in the league with 22 goals, bagged a hat-trick and Arsenal momentarily had fifth spot, but were edged back by Newcastle United following the Magpies 2-1 win over Aston Villa.

Tim Krul in the Toon goal constantly denied Villa and rounded off his fine day's work with an excellent save from substitute Gary Gardner.

Papiss Demba Cisse started paying back the £10million on his debut, controlling Jonas Gutierrez's cross and then slamming a volley past Villa's goalkeeper Shay Given.

Manchester City completed an important 3-0 result over a below par Fulham in a fixture heavily affected by the wintry conditions the UK is currently experiencing. The



Man City's Gareth Barry vies with Fulham's Danny Murphy. Photo: AFP

referee twice halted proceedings for ground staff to clear lines. Midway through the second half the snow-fall threatened abandonment of the match, however the conditions eased and City secured a two point gap over their nearest rivals, Manchester United.

United's 3-3 draw away to Chelsea left both managers bemoaning the officials at full time.

Alex Ferguson pulled no punches in his criticism of linesman Darren Cann for failing to signal the referee that last defender Gary Cahill impeded Danny Wellbeck when through on goal. Ferguson accepted the incident happened outside the box, but suggested a red card should have been shown.

Overall the match had everything a neutral could want. Ferguson paid tribute to both teams, saying it epitomized the very best of English football.

Sunderland got their third win in three in near blizzard conditions, where touch lines had to be painted blue. James McClean's solitary goal claimed the points for the Black Cats as they kept 10-man Stoke frozen out, despite their attempts to equalize right to the bitter end.

— *Phuket Gazette*

PREMIER LEAGUE FIXTURES	
SATURDAY, 11 FEBRUARY 2012	
Man Utd	Liverpool
19:45	
SATURDAY, 11 FEBRUARY 2012	22:00
Blackburn VS QPR	
Bolton VS Wigan	
Fulham VS Stoke	
Swansea VS Norwich	
Everton vs Chelsea	
SATURDAY, 11 FEB, 2012	22:00
Sunderland vs Arsenal	
SATURDAY, 11 FEB, 2012	22:00
Tottenham vs Newcastle	
SATURDAY, 11 FEB, 2012	00:30
Aston Villa vs Man City	
SUNDAY, 12 FEB, 2012	23:00
SUNDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2012	20:30
Wolves VS West Brom	

PREMIER LEAGUE TABLE			
WEDNESDAY, 8 FEBRUARY 2012 13:00 UK			
TEAM	P	GD	PTS
1 Man City	21	44	57
2 Man Utd	24	35	55
3 Tottenham	24	19	50
4 Chelsea	24	15	43
5 Newcastle	24	5	42
6 Arsenal	24	12	40
7 Liverpool	24	7	39
8 Sunderland	24	9	33
9 Norwich	24	-5	32
10 Swansea	24	-3	30
11 Everton	24	-3	30
12 Stoke	24	-13	30
13 Aston Villa	24	-4	28
14 Fulham	24	-6	27
15 West Brom	24	-10	26
16 QPR	24	-16	21
17 Wolves	24	-17	21
18 Bolton	24	-21	20
19 Blackburn	24	-20	18
20 Wigan	24	-28	16

SPORTS briefs...

NFL: The New York Giants took Superbowl XLVI with an epic win 21-17 over the New England Patriots, scoring the winning touchdown in the final minute of play.

Ahmad Bradshaw's six-yard run to take the title almost never happened. Bradshaw failed to follow instructions to stop at the one-yard line, in order to run down the clock and clinch victory with a field goal.

After the score, NE had 57 seconds to respond and Tom Brady's 'Hail Mary' was knocked away by the Giants' defense.

CRICKET: Pakistan completed its series whitewash of England securing a 71 run victory in the final game.

England's top-order failed again to deal with the spin of Saeed Ajmal though Matt Prior, unbeaten on 49, showed the only token of resistance.

Pakistan are unbeaten since the scandal of 2010, which resulted with prison sentences for former captain Salman Butt and bowlers, Mohammad Asif and Mohammad Amir.

England, with two tours of the sub-continent set for 2012, must improve match preparations, according to captain Andrew Strauss.

F1: Testing got underway at Jerez, Spain in preparation for the season with Kimi Raikkonen setting the fastest time on the first day for Lotus-Renault.

The new look Lotus E-20 car features the most graceful answer to the rule change requiring lower noses, where most others have been compared to the duck-billed platypus.

Remarkably, Force India-Mercedes driven by Scot Paul di Resta was second fastest.

Mark Webber's times for Red Bull improved dramatically once parts arrived that were delayed by fog.

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Super six football underway

By Neil Quail

WITH a plethora of modern sporting facilities springing up on the island, more and more organized competitions are also appearing to take advantage of the technologies being afforded to the local community.

Gone are the days of playing on a hacked out piece of wasteland in the searing afternoon heat because no lighting was available after 6:30pm. A tumble on such a ground could result in a slight graze or a severe gash depending on the size of stone encountered when plowing into the dirt.

Now with the establishment of such facilities as Football Island in Phuket Town, which joins the ranks of Thanyapura, Soccer Arena and just recently QSI, sports lovers and in particular, footballers are able to enjoy their beloved game in professional surrounds and not have to scamper away from work to make a 4pm kick-off so they can have a game before the sun goes down.

One man who has endured the football-playing venue dilemma for several years is Karl Ward from Sweden. Karl runs a web design company when not on the football pitch and following years of tournaments and weekend friendlies, decided to put together a league for players in Phuket Town. He also manages the phuketfootball.com website.

"There has always been a lack of organized competitions in the Phuket football community, so now that we have these new roofed artificial grass facilities conveniently located in the town [Football Island], why not get started?" said Karl.

"Everyone enjoys a properly



LIGHTS, CAMERA AND ACTION: The new Super Six League will take place at Football Island (above) under floodlights and under cover. Photos: Phuket Football

structured competition, and now is the right time and place. The expat football community in Phuket is growing quickly, and I think we should be offering an organized competitive format and with help from Football Island manager, Joseph Arimathea, and the Headstart International School we have done just that," he added.

The new Phuket Super Soccer League (PSSL) is up and running, having started on Wednesday evening. With 10 teams entered for the inaugural season, but organizers expect the number of participating teams will increase as the league develops.

"The league will be continuous. We will re-start new seasons a few weeks after the current one ends,

meaning there may be three to four seasons every year. As we get more teams involved, we may also consider two divisions with relegation and promotion," Karl said.

Such a facility and league is also a great way to bring the Thai and foreign communities together in order to enjoy the game of football. Indeed Karl mentions that there are already a number of Thai players and teams involved.

"The league set up currently has about 75% foreign players and 25% Thai players. There is one fully Thai team, four mixed teams and the rest are foreign in origin. However, several more Thai teams have already expressed interest for the next league season," said Karl.

"Football is very popular in Phuket, amongst Thais and for-

eigners alike. Previously, there have only been various low quality sand pitches around, but now that we have several floodlit artificial grass facilities that can be used at any time of day, it brings an entirely new dimension to the community, and welcomes more players into the game," he added.

As with all good sports people, they haven't forgotten the kids, who will carry the football baton as the current players move into the twilight of their amateur careers.

"There is also a football school for kids linked to the Football Island pitch, primarily managed by the Headstart International school. Both Joe and I from the Super Six league are also involved with organizing the football school, where

all kids are welcome," Kar said

The ten teams involved for the first season are Babynoname, Buk Bangduk, Morning Star, Nanai Boys, Phuket Serenity Villas, Pita Bar Phuketeers, Ristorante Rugantino, Russia United, Shakers FC and the Turbinators

The new Phuket Super Six Football League is played at Football Island which is next to Headstart International School opposite Makro. It is played every Wednesday and kicks off at 5:30pm until 9:30pm in a six-a-side format.

For information contact Karl (Eng) T: 085-5851133 and by email karl@phuketfootball.com or Joe (Thai) T: 088-8238952 and by email joe@phuketfootball.com.



DAYLIGHT DELIGHT: Shaded for afternoon games.



GAME WARDENS: Karl Ward (kneeling, 1st left) organizer of the Super Six league.

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Final putts seal PEGS titles



PEG CHAMP: (from left) Frank DePunder, Blair Speers of HotelTravel.com and Lindsey Wallace.

THE annual HotelTravel.com Phuket Expat Golf Society (PEGs) Championship 2012 was a fight to the finish with several key trophies won on the last hole of the two-day event at Loch Palm Golf Club.

Eighty PEGs golfers took to the course under trying playing conditions. The course played particularly tough on the second day with competition standard scratch (CSS) set by the player's scores.

Day two CSS came in at 75, three strokes over par. The CSS for day one came in at normal par 72. Men's flight A (blue tees) winner and low net champion Lindsey Wallace had to sink a crucial putt on the last hole to be crowned the reigning golf king for 2012 with a two-day total of 145.

Masaru Aoki was the flight A low gross winner with a total of 162. Men's flight B (white tees)

low gross winner was Mario Bicca who shot a combined 173 for both days. Low net champion Jarmo Orpana shot a very impressive total of 138.

For the ladies (red tees) the low net champion was Waranida Kamkerd, who recorded a two-day total of 145. Ladies low gross winner Parada Bergdahl also shot a total of 159 to take home silverware.

- Phuket Gazette



PRETTY PEGS: Waranida Kamkerd (left) with Parada Bergdahl. Photos: Dan Miles

Asian kiteboarding gets new media deal

By Neil quail

KITEBOARD Tour Asia (KTA) and television sailing channel Marine Scene Asia announced recently the signing of a media partnership agreement for the coming season.

Marine Scene Asia is a specialist sailing channel that produces programming that covers all aspects of the Asian yachting and boating scene.

In particular, it focuses on covering competitive sailing regattas which is an important new outlet and audience base for the KTA and kiteboarding.

"This is an exciting new media partnership for the KTA this season and one which will help us to bring kiteboarding and in particular kite racing more into focus as part of the competitive sailing world," said KTA founding director, Neil Godbold.

"Our goal is to showcase the marine scene in Asia to the world, using the latest IPTV technologies. Working closely with KTA this year we will provide a platform for this new and exciting sport to reach a larger audience," said Duncan Worthington, co-founder of Marine Scene Asia.



CHANNEL SURFING: Kiteboarding will soon be available to TV viewers on Marine Scene Asia.

Marine Scene Asia is a specialist sailing channel that produces a monthly program called *Go Yachting* which covers a wide range of yachting and boating happenings around the region. It also specializes in competition reporting of the region's major sailing regattas and it was at the recent Phuket King's Cup Regatta in Thailand where the

KTA and Marine Scene Asia first made contact. Following on from this first appearance of kiting in one of the World's major sailing regattas, the KTA and Marine Scene Asia are creating the first kiting channel to appear on a specialist sailing TV platform.

It is a positive development that reflects the growing interest in



KTA founding director Neil Godbold with Willy Kerr at the Phuket King's Cup Regatta.

kiteboarding as it becomes a potential future Olympic sailing class and both [Marine Scene Asia and the KTA] felt that this partnership would offer an ideal opportunity for the sailing community to become more familiar with the kiting scene and its competition formats.

The new programming kicks off with the first competition round of the season, the 'KTA power by Aqua Boracay' and will continue to follow the fortunes of the tour and other competitions as they continue through the year.

For the KTA and kiting this is a great step and one that is hopefully just the start of many more links with sailing and the marine industry at large.

For more information contact Duncan Worthington by email at go@marinescene.asia or visit marinescene.asia.

Synergy are BSS soccer champions

BRAZILIAN Soccer School's second international football tournament took place last weekend at Thanyapura Sports and Leisure Club (TSLC) with hundreds of young enthusiasts there to show their passion and flair for the beautiful game.

Team Synergy, a team that is co-sponsored by TSLC, won the U14 title and did so without losing a single match.

Nine local boys from Phuket made up the team with three players from the Youth Football Home and the rest of the team made up of young footballers from various schools around Phuket.

The Synergy outfit scored 33 goals in six matches and conceded only four proving to be naturals on their home turf, although the surface itself is synthetic.

On Sunday the semi final was a fiercely contested battle against a team representing Perth, Australia. The soccerroos were no match for Synergy and they were tied down by a scoreline of 5-2. Thalang Tigers had made into the final from the other side of the draw, but were no match for the Synergy team, who won the final on a 4-1 scoreline.

"We had never really played a tournament before and certainly didn't expect to win, we are very

happy and the boys deserve it" said Sean Panton, Team Synergy manager and managing director of Synergy Solutions Ltd.

BSS Phuket had also organized a "Plate" competition for losing quarter finalists. Regardless of results, this opportunity gave all the teams something to play for.

Sunday proved to be as exciting as predicted with some matches being decided by a "penalty shootout".

Every player received a BSS Phuket tournament medal and fond memories from a great day of sport. Head Coach of BSS Phuket, Martin Hill was delighted with the event's success.

"It was a great occasion with players from many different countries descending on Phuket. The tournament was executed well by BSS Phuket and our volunteer helpers. Special thanks must go out to our [BSS Phuket] U16 academy players who volunteered to be field marshals, the parents for scoring and our photographer for some amazing pictures. To have 34 teams from all different backgrounds compete over two days is a fantastic event and we are already planning for our third international tournament next year. BSS was formed in 1996 by Simon Clifford with only four players, we

now have over one million players training each week in many countries worldwide using our unique FDS training system," he said.

BSS Roll of Honor

U8 Division: Winner: Bang Jo United, Runners Up: BSS Hong Kong, Plate Winner: KJFC White.

U10 Division: Winner: BSS Hong Kong Blue, Runners Up: Youth Football Home, Plate Winner: Dragon Jnr

U12 Division: Winner: Samui Arena Academy, Runners Up: BSS Singapore, Plate Winner: Headstart FC

U14 Division: Winner: Synergy FC, Runners Up: Thalang Tigers, Plate Winners: Samui Arena Academy.

For information contact Martin Hill bssphuket@braziliansoccerschools.com or visit facebook.com/BSSPHUKET.

- Neil Quail



CHAMPS: Team Synergy with their BSS international winners trophy.



PACE: Players showing a good turn of heel.



FUNDAY OF FUTSAL: Martin Hill discusses tactics.

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Oh Lord, the MCC are coming!

By Neil Quail

THE rise of Phuket in world cricket continues on February 16 with the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), from Lords, the home of cricket, starting their Thailand tour with a T20 match at the ACG.

Founded in 1787, MCC is the world's most famous cricket club and its role in the game remains as relevant as ever. The organization is dedicated to safeguarding the spirit of cricket, promoting the sport to young people and looking after Lord's and the game's laws therein.

MCC's teams play around 500 matches a year. They set off for overseas tours to destinations as diverse as Tanzania and Cyprus to help promote cricket's international appeal. In planning these trips, MCC works closely with the International Cricket Council (ICC). Their efforts also help in assisting national squads towards the ultimate goal of one-day international or even Test status.

The boys from the MCC will be looking to get their Thailand tour off to a successful start in Phuket, but the local team won't offer their wickets that easily.

If you want to see our local team face the legends of Lords, come down to the ACG on Thursday for an exciting day and maybe the odd lemonade.

The following is a brief profile of the MCC touring team:

William Frewen (manager) is chairman of Teddington CC in the Middlesex League. He is also a golfer, rugby supporter, part

time sailor and National Hunt horse owner.

Will Hodson (captain) is an experienced MCC tourist having been to Italy, China, Hong Kong and the USA, but this will be his first as captain.

Richard Brown was one of the founding members of the Phuket Cricket Group in 2005. He has now moved back to the UK and lives in Northern Ireland where he plays for Templepatrick CC. In his youth, he played for Northampton Saints CC and Teddington CC.

Scott Corbett has toured with MCC once before to Croatia in 2009 and has recently taken over as the MCC Area Representative for the West Midlands.

Patrick Goodwin spent two years working in Thailand and while in Bangkok he played for the British Club and took part in the Chiang Mai 6's. He now plays for his local club Oxted CC.

Gareth Griffiths has spent several seasons playing in the West of England leagues as well as Middlesex, Essex and Surrey leagues. He is currently the MCC Area Representative for the West, South West region.

David Heyes has previously represented Cumberland CCC and the Lancashire Cricket Board. This will be his first MCC Tour.

Arif Mahmood plays his cricket in the Birmingham League and has toured South Africa and St Lucia with the Midlands CCC and Malaysia with them.

Rex Purnell is an Abbot Ale national cup



DEFENSE: Former Bangladesh captain Aminul Islam shows a backward defensive shot at the ACG which the Phuket team may be playing a lot of in their upcoming match with the MCC. Photo: Neil Quail

finalist in 1994, 95 and 96 with Chorley CC and won a European title with Gibraltar in 2000.

Thomas Rash has played EAPL cricket for the last six seasons with Bury St Edmunds as a seam-bowling all-rounder, he has also played in Napier and represented Suffolk CCC.

Will Rist plays his cricket by the motto; play hard, celebrate hard – from club cricket to first class matches. This will be his first tour with MCC.

Joe Shuttle plays for Amersham CC in the Thames Valley League and loves the infuriating yet addictive nature of the game. This will be his first MCC Tour.

Bradley Smith is also MCC's Area Rep-

resentative for the South East incorporating Kent and Sussex where he plays his club cricket for Eastbourne CC. He is a top order batsman and off spin bowler.

Alun Thomas plays for the successful Cardiff CC, winners of the SWALEC Premier League in 2012. He opens the batting and learnt a lot from Matt Maynard over last season, both on and off the pitch.

Umpire **Ian Ramage** is part of ICC's Associate and Affiliate International Umpires panel, but this will be his first MCC Tour.

This weekend also sees the Island Furniture League's tenth match, with Patong taking on the Village at the ACG.

Argies barge into first

AFTER a week's break, the Fair Play League 2012 resumed back at the British International School (BIS) on Sunday.

Judging by their efforts throughout the day, players had enjoyed the rest and were intent on ridding themselves of excess energy.

The U14 division matches were first to the field with one game on each of BIS's manicured pitches. Thailand and France drew 2-2 in a thrilling match, both teams having had opportunities to seal victory in the dying minutes. Meanwhile,

Germany White went down to a battling Brazil team on a 7-1 score line. However, in a shock result, undefeated league leaders Germany Green were defeated 6-3 by Argentina, who as a result of their win now joins the German team at the top of the table. It was a great game of attacking football, but it was Argentina who capitalized on opportunities in front of goal.

The U11 division was next to the arena. In the first round of matches, Thailand faded in the final minutes to lose 6-1 to

Germany White after a spirited display. Brazil continued their title charge with a 3-0 win over Germany Green. In the final match of the U11 first round of games, France came back from 2-0 down at half-time to sting Argentina with a brace of goals and earn a 2-2 draw.

A second round of U11 matches were played after a short break, much to the delight of the young stars. Thailand missed out on claiming their first point of the competition when they leaked a late goal and



CHEERS: FPL players salute BIS for the use of their football grounds.

lost to France, 5-4. Germany Green were impressive in their 4-1 win over Argentina and in the day's last match, Brazil conceded their first goals of the competition, but continued their

winning streak with a 3-2 victory over Germany White.

Week four of matches are scheduled to be played at Thanyapura Sports and Leisure Club in Thalung.

Thanyapura top the AFL

ROUND three of the Adult Futsal League (AFL) presented by Thanachart Bank provided plenty of action on Thursday at Thanyapura Sports and Leisure Club (TSLC).

Season 8 champions, and currently in the league's driving seat, were Portrait FC up against Honda. In a fast and furious match, Portrait FC didn't take their foot off the gas and eventually powered past Honda on an 8-2 score line. Five goals on the night from Portrait's striker Somsak certainly puts him in the picture for the golden boot award.

Thalang Tigers and Jitjongrut played out the second premier division match of the night. In a tense and even affair, Jitjongrut scored in the first half and man-

aged to hold on to keep the Tiger's at bay for a 1-0 victory and a deserved three points.

On the opposing pitch, SGS played Chevrolet in the evening's initial first division encounter. Another close first half saw SGS take a 2-1 lead into the break. Chevrolet then scored straight from the restart, but it was SGS that changed gear as they accelerated onto a 6-3 victory.

TSLC then played Ultraman in the last match of the day with both teams going into the match unbeaten. It was a guarded game, as neither team wanted to lose their league position. However, two goals in each half gave TSLC the victory and bragging rights with a final score of 2-0.

– Neil Quail



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Admission Fees (2 days access) - Ticket Hotline: 086 682 2639

General: THB 1,200 (advance purchase), THB 1,500 (at gate). VIP: THB 3,000 (advance purchase), THB 3,500 (at gate) incl. access to VIP area with free flow of beer & wine.

Full details at

PhuketBluesFestival.com

Sunday Feb 26:
21:00 Festival
Wrap-up Party @

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BEACH CLUB

The Festival is a Charity Event, profits donated to Patong Rotary Club, providing educational support for Phuket's underprivileged children.

Phuket Gazette

IMAGE asia



A gem of a fun regatta

By Neil Quail

TWO first-place and two second-place finishes gave Russian Arbuzov Andrev's *Ruby Tuesday* victory in Racing class of the 15th Bay Regatta which finished on Sunday.

Day four of the regatta greeted crews with clear skies and good wind as they left their anchorage off the Sheraton Krabi Beach Resort and headed to Ao Chalong for the regatta's final party and awards ceremony at the Ao Chalong Yacht Club (ACYC).

Andrev's fellow countryman, Nikiforov Evgenis on *Gastion*, came second on the strength of two seconds, a first and a third totalling eight points. Scott Duncanson's *Quantum Fusion* blasted through the water on the final day winning with a day's best time of 2:06:53, but having finished third in three earlier races ensured only third place overall in Racing class.

Cruising A class was won by Neils Degenkolw's *Phoenix* on the strength of three first-place finishes and a second placing, finishing with five points overall and the best score in the regatta. Jim Ellis' *Remington* came second with eight points. Richard Macfarlane's *Aida* claimed third spot

with eleven points, on three thirds and a second. Degenkolw's win gives him seven Bay Regatta victories placing him one behind Mark Pescott for overall Bay Regatta wins.

Gavin Welman's *Rascal* and Kevin Perran's *Rusalka* tied for points with eleven each in Cruising B class. However, *Rascal* won on countback finishing with two firsts, a fourth and a fifth. In comparison, *Rusalka* had two seconds, a third and fourth place finish. Charlie Preen's *Seventh Heaven* took third overall with thirteen points.

Bareboat Charter division saw Kochnev Petr's *Tonicola 2* and Kozub Sergey's *Creme Brulee* (or *Venture*) tied with six points each as both had two first and two second-place finishes, but *Tonicola 2* was awarded the overall win on countback. Paul Kendall's *Anchali* was third overall with 14 points.

Multihull Class was won by Andrew Stransky's *Fantasia* with two first and two second-place finishes totalling six points. Second went to David Robert's boat *Da Vinci* with a fourth, second and two third-place finishes for 12 points. Hans Rahmann's *Voodoo* grabbed third with 15 points.

For more information visit acyc-phuket.com.

The Phuket Gazette is a sponsor of the Bay Regatta.

EASTERN BLOC: Ruby Tuesday (left) keeps Ocean Agassy at bay as they head for Phuket during the "Fun" Regatta. Photo: rolienphotography.com



International Big Day Out



Thursday 16th February 2012

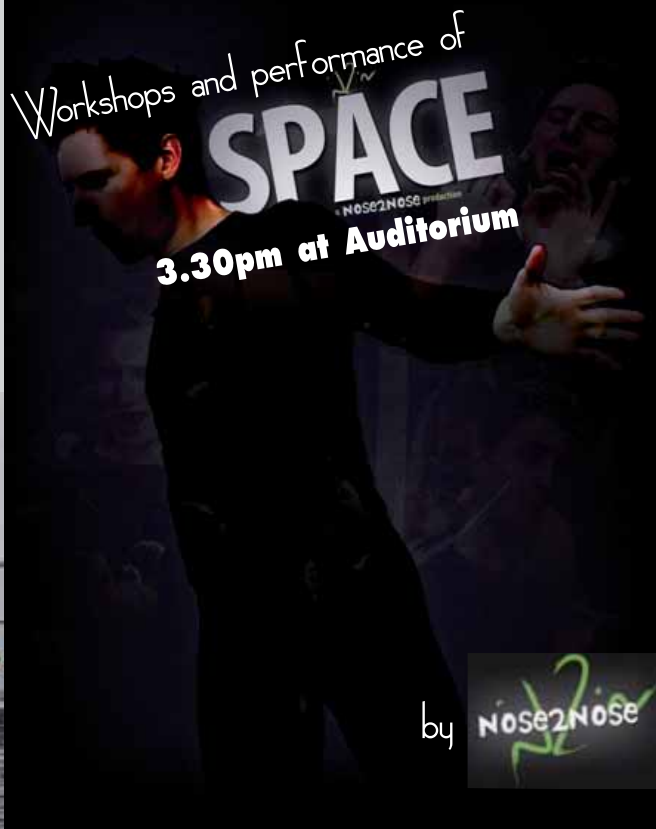
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Phuket Valentine's Day

Love is in the air...or possibly the beer

SAINT Valentine's Day is traditionally a time for romance, flowers, candle-lit dinners and the whispering of sweet nothings into the shell-like ear of the object of your affections. But in Phuket there can be other distractions.



HISTORY is unclear on whether any of The Beatles had journeyed to Thailand before they wrote their 1964 smash hit with its charmingly quaint lyrics...“Money Can't Buy Me Love.”

Clearly the lyricist Paul McCartney had never had the pleasure of a wander down Soi Bangla around midnight on almost any evening. Had he done so, he would have certainly witnessed plenty of filthy lucre being exchanged for love...or something that looks suspiciously like it, at all sorts of local entertainment venues. In fairness John Lennon did eventually come to his senses a few years later when he was quoted as saying, “Anyone who says that money can't buy me love isn't shopping in the right places.”

Possibly there's some confusion between “love” and its close semantic and linguistic bedfellow “lust” going on here in Phuket. But after a few of the local beers...it's a case of: “Will you stop nit

picking? Look she just finds me irresistibly attractive. OK?”

Traditionally Valentine's Day honors a series of “Valentines” who were in fact Christian martyrs. One Valentine in particular was secretly performing marriages at a time when the Roman Emperor Claudius II had enforced a law in which all young men were to remain single so that Claudius could improve the quality and size of his army. So, what a romantic sort of guy he was...forget L'amour, let's get on with the slaughter.

There's little doubt that “The Pearl of the Orient” holds abundant opportunities for Saint Valentine's romance, whether on a short term, financial basis, or featuring the more stable traditional manifestation of the phenomenon.

While acolytes of the former may flock to Bangla and its fleshpots, the traditionalists can avail themselves of wondrous beachside dinners, bathed in Prosecco and moon glow, in which

to plight their devotions, if they can afford the tab that is. Local resorts and upmarket eateries are always quick to jump aboard any marketing bandwagon whenever one happens to trundle along, and there are few better occasions for a male to lose his normal financial sanity than in pursuit of L'amour.

St Valentine's is big business in Phuket, no matter how long the commitment is going to last.

Many a male has been so caught up in the romance of Phuket's tropical island splendor, as to throw all caution to the monsoon winds and actually pop the question at a beachside dinner on February 14th. Beware, Phuket is one place where romance is certainly in the air, as well as the beer, and the Prosecco.

In all this, perhaps Dorothy Parker's wise observation is a pertinent last thought. Acerbic as ever, she remarked that the difference between sex for love and sex for money is that sex for love costs you a hell of a lot more!

Happy Valentine's.

— Baz Daniel







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LOVE FILES

COCKROACH LOVE

THE BRONX zoo is encouraging New Yorkers to pay for the privilege of naming their hissing Madagascar cockroaches after a loved one this Valentine's Day.

Nothing says "I love you" like giving your partner – or an ex – the honor of having a cockroach named after them. Ten dollars is the fee and for US\$25 you can name a couple.

Buyers get a certificate and also a replica chocolate cockroach to sweeten the deal.

VALENTINE'S BAN

THE UZBEKISTAN government has snubbed Valentine's Day this year. All romance-themed celebrations are unofficially banned.

Concerts and other activities laced with love have been scrapped across the central Asian country.

Instead of the annual splurge on heart-shaped treats and gifting flowers, Uzbeks who "have to" celebrate Valentine's Day are being encouraged to do so quietly and with minimal fuss and fun.

Readings of 16th century poems of their compatriots is one saucy show of affection being encouraged by authorities.

The country has a mottled history with Valentine's Day. One Uzbek newspaper, *Turkiston*, last year described the holiday as having "evil goals bent on putting an end to national values".



CHOCO DIP: In Hakone, Japan, one spa has a month-long chocolate bath to celebrate Valentine's Day. Drinking the choco-water is not advised. Photo: AFP

Uzbekistan is a predominantly Muslim country, but also has a large Christian following.

'ADULT ONLY' DINNER

IN UNRELATED zoological news this Valentine's Day, Pittsburgh Zoo is offering an "adult only" candle-lit dinner featuring a special presentation about animal mating rituals.

For US\$75 per person, guests can scoff on gourmet nibbles, including Goat Cheese Stuffed Strawberries and Salmon Wellington, while listening to the zoo curator talk about the intimate secrets of exotic animal mating.

But don't think you still have time to join in. You don't. It's sold out.

– Fraser Morton

Valentine's secret love unions led to his death

THE CATHOLIC Church recognizes at least three different Saints named Valentine, but the true origins of Valentine's Day remain unclear.

One theory is that the tradition of sending love messages on February 14 began when a man named Valentine wrote love letters to his mistress from his prison cell while awaiting execution for adultery.

But the most popular explanation is that St Valentine's Day is named after a Roman priest who was sentenced to death for secretly marrying Roman soldiers in defiance of a decree by Emperor Claudius II that soldiers must remain single.

The unpopular Claudius was having trouble recruiting soldiers for his armies because the men were loathe to leave their wives and lovers.

Claudius cancelled all marriages and engagements, but the priest, named Valentine, continued performing marriages in darkened rooms, whispering the words while listening carefully for approaching soldiers.

He was caught and sentenced to death, but as

he awaited his fate, many of the couples he had married came to visit him and brought flowers and notes of support.

One of those visitors was the daughter of a prison guard, and she would sit and talk to him for hours to keep his spirits up. On the day he died, Valentine wrote her a farewell note and signed it "From your Valentine".

The priest was beheaded on February 14, 269 AD, and in 496AD, Pope Gelasius proclaimed February 14 St Valentine's Day in his honor.

In the US, Valentine's Day is also remembered for the Valentine's Day Massacre of 1925.

Mob boss Al Capone eliminated seven gangsters from rival George "Bugsy" Malone's gang when he sent gunmen dressed in police uniforms to a bootlegger's warehouse in Chicago.

The "police" lined the seven gangsters up against a wall and opened fire on them with machine guns. No one was ever charged with the killings.

– Fraser Morton



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