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Criminal tourists

Police arrest two for hotel robberies of B1mn in cash

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'WE SIMPLY DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH PERSONNEL'

Bus ban fails

Police fail to enforce big vehicle ban during rush hour on deadly Patong Hill

By Chutharat Plerin

POLICE have blamed reckless drivers and not having enough officers to enforce the law for heavy vehicles, including Phuket tour buses, breaking the ban on crossing Patong Hill during peak traffic hours.

"We admit that we cannot have police officers at the checkpoint 24/7. We wish we could but we simply do not have enough personnel. We can only provide officers at the checkpoint at random times," Col Thithirat Asakit said.

Col Thithirat is the superintendent of the Thung Thong Police Station, which is located just 150 meters from where the checkpoint is located.

"I am not shirking responsibility," he said. "We know it is our job is to enforce the law and make the island a safe place to the best of our ability.

"But we can only arrest lawbreakers when we have enough officers present to do so. I will see if we can make sure that officers are at the checkpoint more often."

The statement follows an incident in which a tour bus carrying Chinese tourists plunged down Patong Hill on December 11 during the heavy vehicle ban.

Col Thithirat also called for all motorists to obey traffic laws in order to make their lives safer.

"People are aware of them, but they ignore them. It is the same as people on motorbikes not wearing helmets, even when they know it is for their own safety," he said.

"I would like to ask motorists to obey and respect laws that have been made to protect society. These laws are meant to be obeyed.

"We will keep on with our job, checking and arresting people who break the laws. However, the best solution is if everyone follows the rules. That will cause less problems."



Officials announced that the large-vehicle ban would be enforced at peak travelling times after a series of crashes and deaths on Patong Hill.

Welfare officials tread carefully in sea gypsy child prostitution case

OFFICERS are treading carefully as they investigate reports of sea gypsy child prostitution and youth drug abuse at Rawai Pier.

The pervading fear among all departments involved is that any direct confrontation could drive the children deeper into a world of crime.

Full Story Page 2

Kamala rubbish raises stink with local residents

A COMPLAINT was filed directly to the National Council for Peace and Order due to the failure of officials to stem a growing tide of trash at a sprawling dump site on the coastal road between Patong and Kamala.

"This garbage dump is filthy, covered with flies, dengue mosquitoes and is a disgrace!" the letter stated.

Full Story Page 6

Tourism of 2014: from martial law to mafia cleanup

IT HAS been a wild year for Phuket, as the deeply entrenched taxi mafia was uprooted and the island's beaches cleared. It appears that only jet-ski operators were able to survive the lasting crackdown unscathed.

Sit back, as we take a look at the Gazette archives and see what news was truly game changing this year.

Full Story Pages 4-5







This Week



Finance

Don Freeman explores the perfect investment for retirees. Page 10



Property

Did Santa leave you a present of many happy returns? Page 23



Food Don't

Don't let festive drinks tip the scales the wrong way.

Page 25





Well-Being

Rita Dobson reveals the naked truth about counselling. **Page 28**





In Focus

Journey into the mind of celebrated seer Lynda Woolf. **Page 30**



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Sport

Thais deliver knockout win in ancient muaythai tournament. **Page 31**



Officers tread wearily in child prostitution probe

By Chutharat Plerin

OFFICERS are treading warily as they investigate reports of sea gypsy child prostitution and youth drug abuse at Phuket's Rawai Pier. The pervading fear among all departments involved is that any direct confrontation could drive the children deeper into a world of crime.

Pimporn Khorsantiwichai, director of the Phuket office of Social Development and Human Security, confirmed to the *Phuket Gazette* that welfare officers have spoken to villagers in confidence about the issue.

"We talked to local parents of young children about the problems. We are taking action, but it has to be done very carefully – step by step," Ms Pimporn said.

Reports that children and teens at the sea gypsy village in Rawai were providing sexual services in exchange for money to buy drugs raised fears that the minors were entering a downward spiral of drugs and prostitution, with girls as young as 10 reportedly taking part in the illicit transactions.

Law enforcement remains a last resort, Ms Pimporn noted.

"We do not want to enforce the law over this sensitive issue," she



Welfare officers are worried that direct police action at Rawai Pier could result in pushing the children further away from help.

told the *Gazette*. "We have explained our concerns to the villagers so that they are aware of the problems and the consequences."

"However, we cannot fix the issue alone. We have been in touch with Rawai Municipality officers to help keep an eye on the children and the community."

Rawai Mayor Aroon Solos confirmed that his officers were also treating the issue with care.

"We have spoken with villagers – the parents, village elders and their community leader – and

asked them to help us," he said.

"Our job is to help the community. We cannot just jump in if they do not allow us, and this is a very sensitive issue.

"We asked the villagers to let us know if they see anything wrong, and told them not be afraid of talking to officers,"

However, the sea gypsy community leader last month confirmed that community members were afraid of violent repercussions from drug dealers if officials were directly contacted.

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Krabi man attempts to slay police officer with machete



One officer was injured after the man attacked him with a machete.

A KRABI man attempted to slay a traffic police officer with a machete in front of hundreds of tourists after he was issued a warning for parking in a no-parking zone in the beach town of Ao Nang on December 22.

Sgt Apichart Narksa-nga and Sgt Jirameth Laosirikul of the Krabi City Police had noticed a pick-up truck parked in a prohibited area near the longtail jump-off point to Railey and Tonsai.

"They approached Thawatchai Phodhirak, 21, to issue him a warning. However, instead of acknowledging the violation, he started verbally abusing the officers," Lt Veerapan Khongpul of the Krabi City Police said.

Given Mr Thawatchai's reaction, the officers decided to search the truck. They quickly found a long -bladed machete.

"Mr Thawatchai then tried to drive away, but the officers were able to take away his keys," Lt Veerapan said. "That's when he pulled a machete out from behind his seat and tried to stab Sgt Apichart, who then attempted to flee. Mr Thawatchai got out of the truck and started to chase Sgt Apichart to kill him."

At this point, Sgt Apichart drew his gun and fired a warning shot into the sky. However, Mr Thawatchai continued to pursue him, Lt Veerapan said.

"He had no choice but to shoot Mr Thawatchai twice in the leg to stop him. Even then, Mr Thawatchai didn't immediately stop. He continued to chase Sgt Apichart for a few moments longer, before falling down."

Mr Thawatchai was charged for the attempted murder of a policeman and carrying a dangerous weapon in public.

"We are suspicious that he might be using some form of methamphetamine, so he will be tested for drugs," Lt Veerapan said.

- Kritsada Mueanhawong



Mr Grainge was caught with meth.

Kiwi busted for dealing coke, meth

A NEW Zealand man was charged on December 24 for dealing drugs in Phuket after being found in possession of *ya ice* (crystal methamphetamine) and cocaine.

Taylor Grainge, 41, was nabbed by Patong Police during a holiday crackdown on crime, explained Patong Police Deputy Superintendent Khunnadet Nanongkhai.

"We put a sting operation in motion after learning that Mr Grainge was selling drugs in the area. When we arrived at the meeting point, we presented our badges and searched him," Lt Col Khunnadet told the *Gazette*.

"On his person we found 1.25g of *ya ice* and .95 grams of cocaine."

Mr Grainge was booked and charged for possession of a Category 1 and Category 2 drug with intent to sell.

- Voratuss Intasee

Police arrest tourists for B1mn Patong robberies

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

AN IRANIAN and a French tourist have been charged for robbing guest safe boxes at three Phuket hotels and making off with more than a million baht in mixed currencies.

Staff at one hotel said the men gave them spiked drinks that made them fall asleep, so that the pair could break into the safe boxes for guests and steal their contents.

Shahram Ghorbaniafshar, 48, from Iran, and French national Stephane Emery, 42, were arrested at Baan Tonsai Natural Resort in Patong at about noon yesterday.

"We found cash in several currencies cash totalling about a million baht in the room," said Lt Col Sutthichai Tianpho of the Patong Police.

"We also found screwdrivers and other tools they used to break into the boxes, and the clothes worn when committing the robberies."

An exacting search by officers also found 100,000 baht hidden in Mr Emery's rectal cavity.

Police received a spate of reports on Wednesday night, with the CCTV footage at the



A search revealed 100,000 baht in Mr Emery's (center) rectal cavity.

staff from the Sutin Guesthouse, Baan Luktan Resort and Sawasdee Guesthouse [names provided by police in Thai only] all reporting they had been robbed.

"We could see the suspects on

Brunch by Regent- a true culinary experience

guesthouses, but they were wearing helmets," Col Sutthichai told the Phuket Gazette.

"So we checked CCTV along the streets to see in which direction they were heading. However, we could not make out the license plate."

Officers later found a motorcycle matching that used in the robberies parked at the Tonsai Bangalow, and placed the motorbike and two men riding it under surveillance.

"We followed them to an exchange booth, and after checking the CCTV footage again, we were confident they were the suspects we were looking for, so we moved in and made the arrests," Col Sutthichai said.

"While we were searching their hotel room, they attempted to bribe us with 100,000 baht cash. If they actually had tried to hand us the money, we would have charged them for that also."

Receptionists at the Baan Luktan Resort told police that the men gave them spiked drinks that put them asleep.

"They said that the men gave them a drink when they came to ask about the guesthouse," Col Sutthichai explained.

Then they felt sleepy. We will investigate this further, and if we find that the men spiked a drink in order to carry out the robbery, they will be charged for that too."



Mr Anucha, 25, was killed in the accident. However, his 15-year-old nephew survived.

Helmetless driver dies in holiday bike crash

ONE man died and a youth was injured in a Phuket motorbike accident just 15 minutes into Christmas Day.

"According to witnesses, the motorbike was travelling southbound at high speed when it hit the median strip at the Baan Nai Klum U-turn, near Tesco-Lotus Thalang," said Lt Col Sanit Nookong of the Thalang Police.

Anucha Promraksa, 25, was pronounced dead at the scene, but his nephew Surawut Chomsri, 15, survived the crash.

"Witnesses told us that the motorbike hit the median, causing the bike to fly up in the air," said Col Sanit.

"Luckily, Mr Surawut was thrown clear and received only minor scratches and bruises, but Mr Anucha was not so lucky. Neither of them was wearing a helmet," Col Sanit said.

Mr Surawut was transferred to Thalang Hospital.

"Mr Surawut is still in shock after the accident, so we will wait until he has recovered before we question him about what happened," Col Sanit said.

- Thawit Bilabdullar

Phuket light-rail system to cost B23bn

THE long-awaited light-rail project, expected by many to help alleviate island's every-worsening traffic congestion, is expected to cost 23 billion baht, it was revealed last week.

Kanok Khemnak, an expert in assessing the environmental impact of mass-transportation systems, delivered the news at a meeting of officials at Boat Lagoon Marina, in Koh Kaew, on Tuesday.

The plans and design details are still being finalized, but we expect to submit the general plan to the Office of Transport and Traffic Policy and Planning [in Bangkok] on January 5," said Mr Kanok, managing director of Enrich Consultants Co Ltd.

Mr Kanok and Enrich Consultants were



The proposed system. Image: PR Department

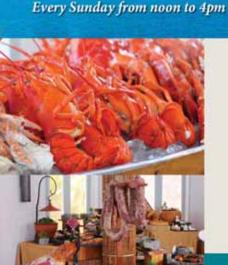
hired to assist in the 118-million-baht feasibility study for the light-rail project, and were also hired to evaluate the seven possible routes for the proposed Patong tunnel.

The light-rail system will originate at Tha Nun, in Phang Nga, on the north side of the channel that separates Phuket from the mainland, and continue to Phuket International Airport, then head south through Phuket Town and Saphan Hin before continuing along Chao Fa East Road and terminate at Chalong Circle.

"The project will cost an estimated 23bn baht," Mr Kanok explained. "However, we're still deciding whether to use contractors to complete the entire project or to launch a joint venture between the government and the private sector."

Planners hope that the light rail becomes a popular form of transport for tourists and island residents, especially students.

- Khumpee Prasertphol



Every Sunday, the Regent Club at Regent Phuket Cape Panwa becomes a celebration of delicacies from around the world Choose from sumptuous Sunday Roasts cooked from free range & farm raised meats, oysters, fresh lobsters & seafood, organic salads, artisanal cheese, handcrafted bakery & pastries, healthy & organic raw juices, European cold cuts, made-to-order Belgian waffles and desserts that will surely revive your senses. Accompany the celebration with tempting beverages offers and fine wines.

> THB 1900++ per person includes free flow of soft drinks THB 2400++ per person includes a bottle of white, red, rosè wine or Chandon per couple Children aged 4-12 years old eat half price plus free access to the Kid's Club Advance reservation for The Brunch by Regent is required

Brunch by Regent offers a truly gastronomic experience with the stunning views of the Andaman Sea.

about 100 students in essential lifesaving skills at a special training event last week.

The emergency-response event was held at the Phuket ICT Skill Development and Learning Center in Saphan Hin on Wednesday, with the aim of instructing students on how to respond to different emergency scenarios.

"As part of our drive to become Phuket's leading learning center, we plan to provide courses [to students and adults] on a different topic every month," said Dr Jirawat Taengthong, the center's director.

"We encourage teachers, parents and students to visit the center, so that they can see firsthand exactly what we do."

As part of the rescue training children, Passakorn Sirichuchote, head of the rescue workers' division at the wellknown Kusoldharm Foundation, was invited to instruct children on how to administer first aid, using any useful item at hand.

'When administering first aid, it's important to keep calm, so that you can assess the situation and put to use anything nearby that



The kids got to take part in the demonstrations during the training.

might assist you in the job," Mr Passakorn advised.

Pairach Jiwliw of the Phuket City Fire Department agreed, stressing the need to keep calm and focused when responding to a fire.

"The most important thing in this kind of emergency is not to panic. This is the first step before helping yourself and others," he said.

Paitoon Silapawisut, from the Phuket office of the state-based Road Accident Victims Protection unit, pointed out the importance of wearing helmets when riding a motorbike.

"Wearing a helmet is crucial for you own safety no matter where you are going, or how short your journey is," he said.

"If your parents don't provide you with one, please tell them that it could save your life."

Dr Jirawat explained to the students that emergencies could strike anywhere, anytime.

"Being well prepared for any emergency is important. One day you might save someone's life with the skills you have learned," he explained to students.

- Chutharat Plerin

Students learn to save lives Tourism

AS THE year comes to a close, it is time to reflect on 12 months, 365 days and 8,765 hours of news that transformed Phuket and deeply affected how the island is perceived by the outside world.

Here, the Phuket Gazette's Somchai Huasaikul looks through our archives at the game-changing moments of 2014.

'After tackling the taxi mafia,

the NCPO turned full atten-

tion to its "Blissful Beach"

campaign to rid the island's

strands of illegal encroach-

ment in all their forms.'

THE year that was 2014 started out like many that preceded it, with continued expansion of the island's tourism industry, despite continuing complaints about

ket's tuk-tuk mafia, jet-ski scammers, growing environmental concerns and fears surrounding tourist safety in general.

At the start of the year, Phuket Provincial Hall was the site for near daily street protests led by the People's Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC). Aimed at forcing PM Yingluck Shinawatra to step down so that Thailand could somehow be "restarted" as a corruption-free realm under a

new Constitution, the PDRC claimed an appointed ruling board would run the country until all the necessary changes were carried out, and Thai politics was rid of the influence of the Shinawatra clan once and for all. T h

government's Center for the Administration of Peace and Order (CAPO) helped maintain some semblance of order during "Bangkok Shutdown" street protests

on January 13, and related protests in other parts of the country, but the political climate intensified nationally – including in Phuket – as the February 2 snap election called by PM Yingluck approached.

rat Party refusing to take part in the polls and voting at numerous polling stations in Bangkok, Phuket and other parts of the south disrupted by PDRC protests, the Election Commission annulled the results, recommending that a new poll take place in May.

But on May 7, Yingluck and several other ministers were ordered out of office following a ruling by the Constitutional Court over the controversial transfer of a senior official in 2011. Fears of Red Shirt riots like the bloody clashes in Bangkok in March 2010, led the Army to declare

Martial Law on May 20. Two days later, the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) seized power and coup leader Gen Prayut Chan-ocha was named as acting prime minister.

REBOOT

The reality of yet another military coup struck some observers in the same way Dorothy must have felt when she suddenly reawakened, after her spinning house crashed down with a thud in the Land of Oz. The initial reaction in the Phuket tourism industry was fear that the take-

> over would be like the 2006 coup that preceded it: a public relations blow sure to cause a plummet in arrival figures, but with no real benefit for Phuket tour-

But, like Dorothy opening the door to a colorful Munchkinland, it did not take too long for the NCPO to convince observers that Phuket's systemic corruption was to be a primary target in its goal of "Re-

turning Happiness to the People". In terms of timing, the takeover probably could not have come at a better time for Phuket: the onset of the low-season for tourism.

One of the NCPO's first orders business was Phuket's notorious With the yellow-aligned Demo- transport syndicates. On June 4, the military carried out an offensive that saw an initial batch of 70 illegal taxi operators arrested, with at least 108 people eventually charged for involvement. including Karon Mayor Tawee Thongcham. In late August, the raids extended to Patong, where the late former Mayor Pian Keesin and his son were among 82 suspects arrested on charges of extortion and collusion.

> The former Mayor, who narrowly survived the tsunami and barely avoided driving into a sinkhole on Patong Hill Road (aka Mt Mayhem) in 2009, will never face



martial law: at a glance

trial for the charges against him: he died unexpectedly in the bathroom at his secondary home near Phuket Town in early October.

After tackling the taxi mafia, the NCPO turned its full attention to its "Blissful Beach" campaign to rid the island's strands of illegal encroachment in all their forms.

On June 12, more than 100 businesses operating along the beachfronts at Surin, Bang Tao, Laypang and Layan beaches were ordered to remove their structures or face having them demolished. Many popular beach clubs were part of the ongoing offensive, which also extended into the Sirinath Marine National Park.

Images released in early June of the "new" Surin Beach free of all illegal construction, went viral on social media in June, further cementing public opinion that issues of democratic development aside - the NCPO was at least taking long overdue action to address some of the island's most entrenched problems.

While most of the changes were seen as shaping things for the better, the complete ban on parasols made headlines with the arrival of the high season, when a group of Swedish tourists were forced to remove the beach umbrella they had brought to the beach themselves, to protect their fair-skinned children from the sun's deadly rays.

It was becoming apparent that the complete parasol ban may have

been a case of "throwing out the baby with the bathwater", so as the high-season progressed, the Navy decided to ease the restrictions somewhat and allow tourists to "BYOP" (bring your own parasol).

Perhaps the most surprising turn in the Bliss-Beach campaign came in late Septemwhen ber, Police Region 8 authorized summonses for 15 people, again,

including Karon Mayor Tawee, for in December, another Russian illegally issuing permits for local beach vendors to use public beach

'Despite the overall trans-

formation of the beaches

for the better, the reviled

jet-ski rental and parasail

businesses somehow

managed to survive.'

Under the illegal scheme, which had been going on for decades, income from divvying up beach land for rent to private vendors easily exceeded 1 billion baht annually at both Kata and Karon beaches, it was revealed.

JET-SKIS FLY UNDER RADAR

Despite the overall transformation of the beaches for the better,



Army personnel sweep Patong Beach clear of all vendors during the military action against problems that have plagued the island. Photo: Gazette file

the reviled jet-ski rental and parasail businesses somehow managed to survive, albeit with yet another set of "new rules" to regulate them, including new zoning measures and a "three strikes and you are out" policy for violators.

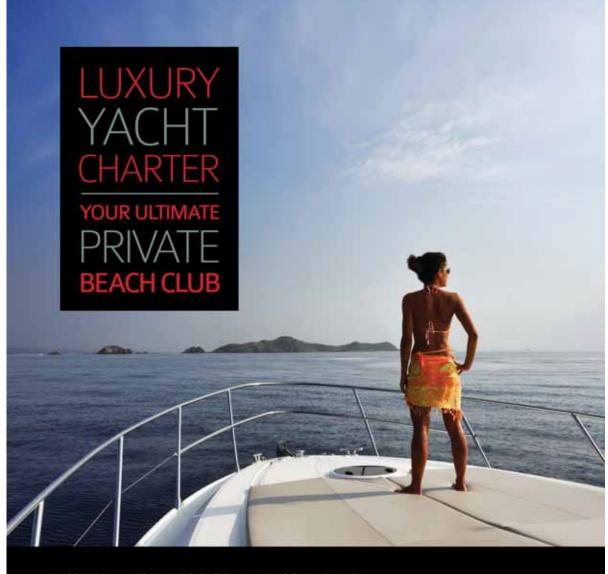
Under the new rules, jet-skis and parasol speedboats could continue to operate outside swimming

zones, but would supposedly not be allowed directly onto the beach itself. Despite the changes, the industry took yet another blow to its safety reputation in late October, when a tourist survived being run over by a jet-skitowing vehicle in Kata. A few days later, a Russian tourist died from head injuries while operating a rented jet-ski in Patong. Then,

tourist survived multiple deep gashes to his leg when hit by the propeller of a parasail boat in Kata.

As 2015 gets underway, it will be interesting to see if the Phuket Marine Police, which is responsible for marine safety issues along the island's coast, continues its support for the controversial jet-ski and parasail industries that are the source of so many complaints, injuries and

For a related story on Phuket's tourism industry infrastructure development see page 8.



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Trashed along the coast

By Chutharat Plerin

OFFICIALS are struggling to stem the growing tide of trash at what has become a sprawling dump site on the coastal road north of Kalim, between Patong and Kamala on Phuket's west coast.

The news follows the *Phuket Gazette* receiving a copy of a complaint about the site sent to the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO).

"These pictures are what tourists from around the world and local residents see when they drive along the coastal road from Patong to Kamala," said the complaint, in English and in Thai, filed by a local group of residents.

"This garbage dump is filthy, covered with flies, dengue mosquitoes and is a disgrace!... Burmese families with small children sit and go through this garbage covered in flies, broken glass, putrid leaking sludge, rats and other vermin."

In response, Kitikraisri Keawwan, chief administrative officer at the Kamala Tambon Administration Organization (*OrBorTor*), told the *Gazette* that his office had not received any orders from the NCPO.

"We are aware of the problem and we have received several complaints about it, but have not heard from the NCPO," he said.



The trash pile on the coastal road from Patong to Kamala keeps on growing. Photo: Supplied

"We are not ignoring it. We are trying to identify who is the current owner of the land so we can order that person to clean it up."

Mr Kitikraisri explained that the site had long been used for dumping refuse.

"Previously, former Patong Mayor Pian Keesin was the contact person for cleaning up the site. Every time we received a complaint about the trash, we just called him and he sent men to clean it up," he said.

"But I cannot tell you whether or not it was his land. We never bothered asking him. As the trash was on private land – within limits, people can use their own land as dump sites – and as long as it was sorted out we didn't care whose land it was, we just wanted it cleaned up."

However, since Mr Pian passed away earlier this year, Kamala officials have no idea who to ask to clean up the site, Mr Kitikraisri confessed.

"Please understand that there is little we can do about private land," he said. "The landowner is responsible for taking care of his or her land, which includes keeping the area clean.

"But right now we honestly have no idea who owns it. Since Mr Pian passed away, we have not been told what is going on there. We are working on it."

Mr Kitikraisri said his officers were powerless to even install a sign to prevent people from dumping more trash on the sprawling pile.

"It's private land. There's nothing we can do unless the trash starts to spill onto public land," he said.

To avoid similar complications in the future, the Kamala *OrBorTor* is attempting to compile a list of all landowners in the area, Mr Kitikraisri said.

"We are looking to create a database of every plot owner in Kamala, and we want to make sure that we are informed when people sell their land so we can update this database," he said.

"This will help to avoid these sorts of problems in the future."





Google Play let's you add the app to your wishlist. Image: Google Play

Tsunami-warning app not in English

BUDGET issues have prevented the English-language version of the tsunami warning application for smartphones from being released, two years after the announced release date.

"We have yet to make any further progress in developing the application," National Disaster Warning Center (NDWC) Specialist Yaiying Sirithanapivat said in a telephone interview.

The application was up and running for Apple and Android devices in December 2012, with the promise that an English-language version would be available by January 2013. The application allows iPhone and Android phone users to receive instant notifications of tsunami alerts and warnings issued by the center.

However, most of the NDWC budget allocated for tsunami preparedness has been used for warning-system maintenance, updating the software for the application and other needs, explained Ms Yaiying.



The app. Photo: Chutharat Plerin

"We have already planned the next budget and asked for the funds necessary to make improvements to the application, which includes additional language options," she said.

"However, we are still waiting for the budget to be approved."

The Thai version of the application is fully functional and can be downloaded free from the Apple App Store or the Android Market.

- Khumpee Prasertphol

Monkey business

First PERSON

IT SEEMS that the growth of Phuket as a world-class holiday destination has come at a cost to its environment, natural resources and wildlife. Thailand's laws on the protection of nature and wildlife are fairly well written, but it is clear that enforcement has been lacking – big time.

The days when you had to drive through a thick forest to get to Patong from Phuket Town are long gone, although on the tops of the mountains and hills, you can still see large green patches and tall trees. The villa parks and bungalows, however, have slowly eaten into both sides of these hills and here and there you can see land clearings and buildings gradually moving further up. As far as I remember, these were protected

forest areas 10 years ago - and should be so now.

Fifteen years ago, there were hardly any touts parading protected wildlife around the tourist areas such as gibbons, langurs, snakes and lorises. However, in

the past few years, they have been coming and going – openly harassing tourists and pushing them to take photos with a little monkey or other protected species.

Obviously the local law enforcement officers are aware that these touts act illegally, as we - in our capacity as a wildlife protection agency – have sent numerous complaints to them about the situation. However, there has been very little change.

Sirinath National Park is probably best known to the people of Road. Indeed, that next night the



Edwin Wiek is founder and director of the Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand (WFFT), an NGO protecting wildlife and nature in Thailand and Laos. He has been living in Thailand since 1989 and in 2001, founded WFFT.

Here he talks about the mammoth problems facing wildlife protection forces, including systematic corruption at local level.

Phuket, as the site of many scandals involving illegal occupation of its land and encroachment by influential people. Not many know about its bio-diversity; the mangrove forests it houses and the fact that sea turtles used to come up to its beaches to lay their eggs. I

The infrastructure can

hardly handle the

amount of tourists in

some areas, and as

more green jungle is

lost, it won't be long

before it's replaced by a

concrete one.

witnessed several eviction orders by officials of restaurant owners and small shops on the beaches and read in the newspaabout pers investigationsinto the encroachment of five-star resorts

into the park. But to date, I have not seen any of these companies evicted from these areas.

I am left wondering why such clear laws can be enforced elsewhere in Thailand, but yet seem to be ignored in Phuket.

When I met the former police chief of Patong in February 2013 about the touts on the beaches with protected wildlife, he bluntly told me that I made things up that there were no people around parading wild animals on Bangla streets were empty - case closed. Three days later a man with a baby gibbon on the beachfront road told me he paid 500 baht a day to be licensed to walk around with wild animals.

In 2010, I asked the provincial forestry director to confiscate 12 orangutans from an unlicensed zoo. Three days later, he miraculously provided that license and asked me to come and see it the week after. Case closed. I fear that those encroaching on park land might soon find their title deeds legal, as large sums of money are involved - yet another case closed. I am not holding my breath.

Phuket is still a beautiful island, with great hotels, resorts and entertaining attractions, with an amazing coastline and stunning green forest areas. The combination of luxury and nature attracts many people to the island. The infrastructure can hardly handle the amount of tourists in some areas, and as more green jungle is lost, it won't be long before it's replaced by a concrete one.

Somehow it all has to stop. If officials enforce existing laws, it still can.

For more information on the work of WFFT visit: www.wfft.org



Not all buffets are worth paying the ransom. Photo: Dorina Andress

Compulsory buffets are hard to swallow

SOME things we take for granted in life as inherently being part of it. Certain givens that have absolutely no right to exist are foisted on us, yet we blithely accept them as being part of existence.

Tourists while abroad are often victims to this mindset, reasoning that any aberration in their perceived logic must be put down to "cultural differences," and "misunderstandings."

Follow this sort of unquestioning acceptance in Phuket and within hours of arriving you'll be running red lights on a clappedout Honda Wave and driving with your entire family with a borrowed pint-sized canine down the wrong side of the road. Or worse, shovelling ice cubes into vour beer.

Just because it's done, doesn't mean that it is right. So the very fact that people are willing to pay a small fortune for a tatty buffet and to be entertained by rank amateurs just because their chosen hotel loftily decrees that they must, does not make it right either.

I'm talking about the Christmas and New Year's Eve "compulsory banquets" where outlandish fees are demanded as part festive season holiday arrangements.

All too often, unsuspecting

Island View

By Lis Kinswoman

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

guests discover to their horror that all of a sudden there is a weighty fiscal appendage to their tightly thought-out holiday finances, and there is absolutely nothing they can do about it.

Compulsory, tatty buffets are at best dubious and at worst caddish. Not every hotel stoops this low, and some compulsory buffets are almost worth the ransom, but show me a quality compulsory buffet with free-flow wine at reasonable prices and I'll eat my Jimmy Choos.

No, not only do certain hotels charge like a wounded bull for their alcohol-free Christmas and New Year's buffet, but they'll actually ask you for extra for a glass of bubbly at midnight.

Now that the emperor's new clothes are exposed there are probably going to be howls of protests from decent hotels claiming their innocence and ominous silence from those guilty of this gouging. Shame on you.

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

How can I sell my vehicles after I have left Phuket?

TWO months ago, after nine years on the island. I decided to leave Phuket, mostly due to the sad fact that Phuket has lost all of its charm. I once loved living in tropical paradise among honest, kind, smiling locals, which brings me to my current dilemma: I own a car and motorbike and a house full of furniture.

The furniture is not an issue as there are many newbies at this time of year who buy it faster than I can list on the many online buyand-sell websites.

The one major issue I am faced with is my car and motorbike: My question is, how can I transfer my blue book and green book without physically being present in Thailand?

Australia



By the power of attorney, you may sell your old dodger. Photo: Supplied

Pluetinai Yangyuen, an officer in the Vehicle Registration Section of the Phuket Land **Transport Office, replies:**

It is possible to register the transfer of ownership of a car or motorbike while the owner is overseas.

However, most importantly, you will need to have a person in Phuket empowered by a power of

attorney to transfer the ownership of your vehicles on your behalf.

Please note that we will investigate to make sure that the person who presents the power of attorney is actually representing the owner.

That person will also need to bring to our office a copy of your passport signed by you; any proof your immigration status during your stay in Thailand and a copy of your work permit if you have or had one.

Situations where the visa of the foreigner transferring the ownership of the vehicle has expired will be handled case by case.

Your representative will also need to present the sales receipt or transfer agreement as proof of purchase, signed by you or your representative, and the person buying the vehicle.

It costs 105 baht to transfer ownership of a car, plus a duty of 500 baht per 100,000 baht value of the car as deemed by a Department of Land Transport mechanic who inspects the vehicle. This duty applies only if the vehicle is deemed to be worth more than 100,000 baht.

It costs 105 baht to transfer

ownership of a motorcycle, plus a duty of 50 baht per 10,000 baht value of the car as deemed by a Department of Land Transport mechanic who inspects the vehicle. This duty applies only if the vehicle is deemed to be worth more than 10,000 baht.

There will be a fine if the registration has expired, but the total transfer fee will not exceed 1,000 baht.

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

Submit your issue at

www.PhuketGazette.net/ **IssuesAnswers**

Island's AEC success hangs in the balance

WHILE the past year brought unprecedented developments in reclaiming public beaches from the hands of corrupt local politicians, the fact remains that the days of Phuket getting by solely on its merits as a beach-tourism destination have gone.

The terms of the Asean Economic Community (AEC) are set to come into effect in 2015, in theory transforming its 10 member states into a single bloc comprising the world's seventh-largest economy.

It is hard to discern the reality from the hype, but to many alert onlookers, the AEC is just another manifestation of a trend toward regional economic integration that started decades ago. Few parts of Southeast Asia have been more greatly affected than Phuket, which has already proclaimed itself as the "Tourism Hub of Asean".

The past year has clearly demonstrated that the trend here is one of increasing urbanization as the island consolidates its position as an important domestic and regional hub for retail commerce, in addition to its unrivalled array of tourism options.

Under the heavy yoke of the island's criminal transport syndicates for years, it was if the entire economy was being driven with its handbrake on; with the cost of reaching attractions making the cost prohibitive for many tourists.

With the "thug factor" now hopefully eliminated, 2015 should see a large increase in new public transport options, like last year's launch of the Airport Bus service to Patong, rather than more road projects that risk transforming our landscape into an island replica of the traffic chaos in Bangkok.

While the ousted government of former premier Yingluck Shinawatra snuffed out previously-approved funding to build a world-class convention center in Phuket in 2012, the island's hosting of the Asian Beach Games in November demonstrated that it still has the collective resources to successfully host major international events – even under martial law.

Another major development announced for the island in the past year was that The Mall Group is set to invest 20 billion baht for the development of the 150-rai BluPearl mega-project in Kathu.

Regional integration will no doubt expand well beyond the borders of the 10 Asean states, as indicated by the recent agreement between the Thai and Chinese premiers to embark on a US\$10.6bn (350mn baht) investment for high-speed railways linking the two countries.

Already well established as a regional aviation hub, Phuket is well situated to take advantage of improved regional transport under any Asean "open skies" agreement. But the most important key to moving forward must be to ensure that all future development – public and private – is carried out in a way that protects what is left of the natural environment that established Phuket as a prime destination in the first place.

Phuket Gazette

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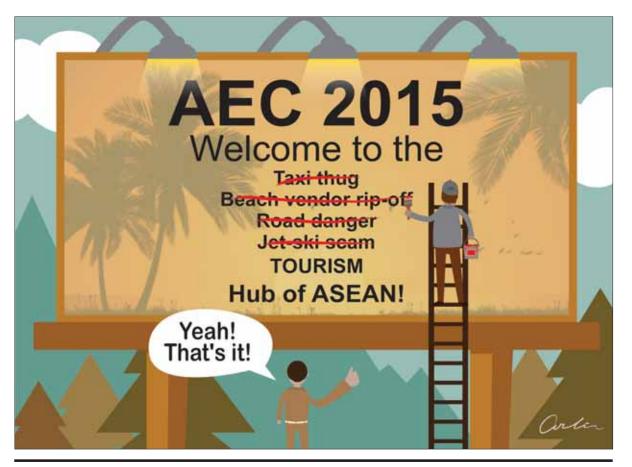
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Ten years on: strength in recovery

Re: Gazette online, Phuket tsunami memorial ceremonies begin tomorrow, December 25

I remember it well. I had family living there at the time and we arrived two days later.

I found a new respect for the Thai people once [I got] there.

Thai people once [I got] there. They just bounced back up and started building again, fantastic.

> Darran Wade Facebook

Karon Beach trashy, unacceptable, says holidaying family

We booked two weeks in a hotel on Karon Beach and it is the dirtiest beach I have seen so far in my life! (I have been to beaches in America, Europe, the Caribbean and in Southeast Asia).

The streets in Karon are much cleaner than the beach itself, which is full of trash.

Sorry to say, but this beach is not recommendable, especially for families like us who have small children.

> Swiss Family Phuket

Knee-jerk reactions unnecessary for lake diving accident

Re: Gazette online, Mystery surrounds deaths of Phuket cave divers at Khao Sok National Park, December 25

Phang Nga Vice Governor Witchawut said that officers would be moving to close the dive sites in the Chio Lan Reservoir to tourists, leaving it open only for scientific efforts. Why? What a stupid reactionary move. This is about the only place for good cave diving in Southern Thailand, and because of one accident they want to close them down? This just shows that V/Gov Witchawut

Letters

to the Editor

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

knows nothing about this sport.

It's actually one of the best places I've seen for cave dive training. I'm no expert but I am cavern certified and have been diving in caves and caverns for over 30 years. Chio Lan Lake has great conditions for training as the two caves I've been in are not very deep (one starts at the surface), there are no currents and the visibility inside the caves is very good. Okay, I'd rather be in the Yucatan – the Chio Lan lake isn't world-class, but training cave divers keeps the sport safer.

No training means more cowboys. And it sounds like these two divers just had bad luck with their equipment from what I have gleaned from the article, they were not cowboys.

John B Williams Facebook

Can Thailand please get mail service fixed

The express mail service (EMS) in and around Irawadee, Ketho area, is in a state of disarray to say the least.

We can go up to a month without any mail, and then I find a stack of mail under my windshield wiper of my car! We have a house mailbox and it's located right beside the house number.

Today, I had my next door neighbor delivering not only my mail, but mail to five other houses on the street, as it was all just put in their mailbox.

I know I've had plenty of mail not arrive, and it's really no wonder with the state of this service.

I'm tired of not receiving my

mail in an appropriate manner and time frame. I've asked my wife to speak to the EMS facility for the area, but of course she is afraid if we complain to them then we will never see any mail.

> Kevin Irawadee

Helmets simply save lives, so wear them

Re: Gazette online, Phuket uncle dies, nephew survives Christmas Day motorbike crash, December 25

As a big bike rider I have no sympathy.

If you are stupid enough to ride a bike without a helmet, and [if you] have an accident, you will probably die.

This is called natural selection.

Luca Brasi Facebook

Show the world whose lives are really valued

Re: Gazette online, NDWC tsunami-warning app still not in English, December 26

This is completely unreasonable. If providing this potentially essential life-saving service to the millions of tourists who visit the Andaman Coast each year was truly a priority, it would have been taken care of already.

Between Thailand and the Japan International Cooperation Agency [JICA], it should be no problem getting something sorted.

Or, if the government isn't too proud, maybe just asking for help – I'm sure someone would volunteer to do it for free – could save thousands of tourists' lives.

How embarrassing to have to admit this at a time when the whole world is watching.

Tony Kleinschmidt Chalong

Boat Lagoon sails into new class

By Maciek Klimowicz

DO YOU know why the iPod succeeded? After all it's just another MP3 player. Yet it's so much more than that: a fashion accessory, an icon of a certain lifestyle, a symbol of fun and a music player. It looks beyond the obvious and expands the concept that leads to such a hit.

Here in Phuket, it's Boat Lagoon that's aiming to be more than you expect.

You hear the name Boat Lagoon Marina and you probably think boats – row after row of shiny yachts waiting to be taken to sea – with packs of sea dogs taking care of their vessels. Is there a place there for non-sailing types?

Yes, there is, and there will be more. Boat Lagoon is opening up and showing its new, true nature – that of a lifestyle destination reflected in its new name – Boat Lagoon Marina Village.

This current expansion is a consequence of steady and sustainable development, which the Boat Lagoon has been undergoing since its founding almost 25 years ago. While other marinas in

Thailand have tried to enter the lifestyle market from the outset, Boat Lagoon owners chose to build a strong foundations in the marine business and then add to the concept.

It has grown into more than just a yacht marina, as it now boasts a large number of permanent residents, hundreds of meters of retail space, a big hotel and more. Expansion into the lifestyle and events market is yet another step in its evolution.

This transformation, fitting perfectly with a recent wave of dynamic development on the east coast of Phuket, is already visible at the entrance to the complex, where a massive metal sculpture is catching the eyes of passersby. If they ever slow down, they will notice a row boutiques and bistros inviting them to enjoy the Boat Lagoon and find out more.

In addition to a variety of restaurants now servicing the marina, the area provides space for an enjoyable walk down a leafy promenade – something that cannot be said about many other spaces in Phuket. And now, thanks to a new footbridge – opened last



Boon Yongsakul, deputy managing director, is helping transform the Boat Lagoon into a true lifestyle destination for Phuket.

week – it just got better.

"We want this space to be more dynamic and lively; the bridge will allow people to move around the Lagoon more freely", explains Boat Lagoon Deputy Managing Director Boon Yongsakul.

The bridge does just that, allowing pedestrians to cross from

the Admiral Prince Abhakara Kiartivongse statue – the father of the Royal Thai Navy – to Boat Lagoon's lighthouse that offers fantastic views from its top. And when a boat needs to pass, the bridge opens up like a gate to the seas.

It's next to Abhakara's statue

that a ceremony was recently held to ask the much revered Prince and deities for good luck with the Lagoon's expansion – an ambitious project that includes even more lifestyle outlets, as well as various events, such as a stylish weekend market, to take place within the complex.

Named after the Lagoon's iconic lighthouse, the market aims to bring Thais and expats together and enjoy a more tasteful kind of weekend event. With hand-picked vendors manning the stalls, live performances and different themes for each event, its goal is to bring new quality to the market concept and even more life to the East coast of the island.

Speaking after the merit making ceremony at the foot of Admiral Prince's statue, Boat Lagoon founder Kanit Yongsakul said, "If you ask Abhakara for help with something positive, it's sure to succeed."

"Income is secondary to us. What we want is to give Phuket residents a place for leisure time – a space where they can take a walk with their families, have a good meal and enjoy themselves," he added.

Island's star rises globally

PHUKET has become an increasingly popular destination for international tourists and its image has spread globally since the Indian Ocean tsunami hit the resort island about 10 years ago.

"Nowadays, Phuket can claim to have good connectivity for air travel. Airlines from the Middle East, Scandinavia, Hong Kong, South Korea, Australia, Malaysia, Singapore and mainland China are operating direct flights into Phuket," said Ittirit Kinglake, president of the Tourism Council of Thailand.

The island first became a tourist destination in 1981 when Thai Airways International started operating flights from Bangkok. Ten years later, air capacity was packed and Phuket laid claims to being "the fastest-growth resort in Asean".

In 2004, however, when the devastating tsunami hit the island and many other beaches along the Andaman coast, the tourism sector in the area experienced enormous damage and business plunged to almost zero immediately after the disaster.

"Hotels faced single-digit occupancy rates after the event, but the island bounced back to normal within just two months, thanks to the great relief measures," said Wichit Na-Ranong, one of the country's most recognized hotel veterans and owner of Indigo Pearl Group in Phuket.

"Sweden was the first country to send charter flights directly to the island [after the disaster], followed by a mass of European tourists, while Asian visitors at the time hesitated, but soon afterwards flocked to the island."



The island's popularity has seen year-on-year growth. Photo: Gazette file

In the year of the tsunami, some five million tourists visited Phuket, 30% of them foreigners. The island in 2013 welcomed 12 million visitors, in a year when 24 million foreign visitors came to the Kingdom.

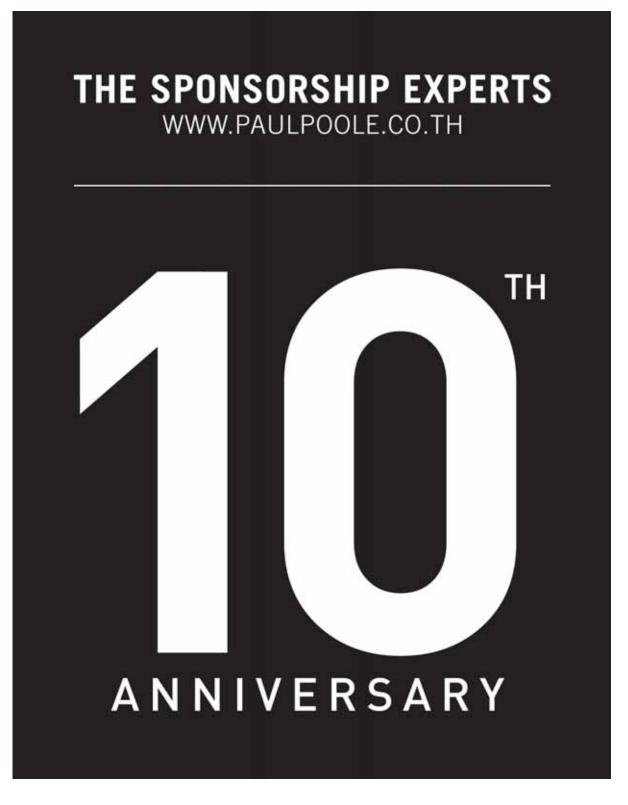
Moreover, the ratio of foreign and local visitors switched around completely over those nine years, from 30:70 to 70:30, Wichit said.

"Phuket now is the best place for the international community, and this could continue for another 10 years. However, fundamentals and competency need to be improved, lest there be further congestion," he added.

Visitors from new markets have come to the island in growing numbers during the past decade, notably from the Middle East, China, Russia and India, as well as from other nations in the West.

The American Chamber of Commerce has also stepped in to help Phuket, by drafting a longterm plan to reposition the island as a quality destination, as well as to reinforce branding and marketing in international markets.

- The Nation



Perfect investment for retirees



Finance

By Don Freeman

THE headlines for the past few weeks have not been pleasant. Stocks have been dropping, oil crashed and if that wasn't bad enough we had the Ebola crisis. When news like this hits, some people want to run and hide, but I look at it as an opportunity to put money to work. I never invest 100% of my money and like to have cash set to one side for when an opportunity presents itself.

Now most people don't realize this, but the US is the largest energy producer in the world. This year, it eclipsed both Saudi Arabia and Russia as the top pro-

ducer of both / I'm focusing on energy crude oil and natural gas. infrastructure companies. The US now These are the companies produces over that run the "toll-roads" that 11 million barrels of oil per connect the crude oil day. This is straight out of the ground to one of the reasons why oil the refineries that refine it, to prices have the pipelines that transport dropped from the finished product. over US\$100 to US\$80. The

oil. With so much oil out there, there's no need for high oil prices.

However, as oil prices drop, that's bad news for oil companies. This means that they are now getting less money for every barrel of crude oil that they sell. And that's precisely why I'm staying away from oil companies.

Instead, I'm focusing on energy infrastructure companies. These are the companies that run the "toll-roads" that connect the crude oil straight out of the ground

to the refineries that refine it, to the pipelines that transport the finished product.

Right now, my clients and I are buying into the Alerian MLP ETF and this is being added to my long-term ETF portfolio. I see this ETF as the best way to capitalize on the energy boom in the

The Alerian MLP ETF comprises the companies that own these assets. As oil supplies increase, more pipelines, storage tanks, and processing centers are required to connect oil reserves to industrial regions. Over the next 25 years, an estimated US\$250 billion will be spent on energy infrastructure.

The best part about energy infrastructure assets is that they

> are not dependent on the price of oil. Instead, their business model is based on volume, not on the price of oil or natural gas. This is why the Alerian MLP ETF is so attractive.

The other fact is that the world is awash in thing I like about energy infrastructure assets is that they are their own monopoly. In other words, once a pipeline is built there won't be another pipeline built right alongside it. As a lot of folks in the US know, getting approval for pipelines is not easy. The largest pipeline planned in nothern Amercia, the Keystone XL, which would bring crude oil from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, remains bogged down in political wrangling between Republicans and Democrats.

For retirees, the Alerian MLP



Not investing 100% of your money leaves chances to pounce on new opportunities. Photo: 401kcalculator.org

ETF is perfect because it provides inflation protection. There's nothing better than owning real assets like pipelines, storage tanks and processing centers. The income that investors get is driven by the stable cash flows that these assets generate. These assets don't care what the stock or bond markets are doing, they make money regardless.

Since the Alerian MLP ETF was formed in August 2010, it has delivered a 12.71% annual return to investors. Had you invested US\$10,000 at inception, you would have US\$16,338 today.

The Alerian MLP ETF has over US\$9bn in assets and its top holdings include the premier energy infrastructure companies in the US. By buying the Alerian MLP ETF, one holds interests in MLPs such as Kinder Morgan Energy Partners, Enterprise Products Partners, and Energy Transfer Partners. One could buy these individually, but in point of fact the Alerian MLP ETF does all of that for you and gives you much broader diversification. Altogether, the Alerian MLP ETF has 25 energy infrastructure MLPs in its

For US investors, there are no K-1s or complicated tax reporting documents and there is no leverage. This is important and gives one peace of mind. That's why in today's market, with fear

starting to rear its ugly head, I see the Alerian MLP ETF as a great place to park some money. It's certainly a much better investment than gold and one that pays you a regular quarterly dividend. Now, that's what I call sleeping better at night.

Don Freeman is president of Freeman Capital Management, an independent US Registered Investment Advisor. He has over 20 years' experience and provides personal financial planning and wealth management to expatriates living in Phuket. Specializing in UK and US pension transfers. Call 089-970-5795 or email: freemancapital@gmail.com.

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'Fiscally strong' Thailand hopes to see investor confidence boost

THE Finance Ministry on Wednesday said the country was fiscally strong with a treasury balance of 229 billion baht, which would boost the confidence of foreign investors, while state expenditure would help drive economic growth next year.

Deputy Finance Minister Wisut Srisuphan said after visiting the General Comptroller's Department that the treasury reserve remained strong and was sufficient for the government's planned expenditure.

While the reserve may later fall to about 110bn baht due to the acceleration of budget disbursement for investment, the treasury balance is expected to reach 370bn baht at the end of the fiscal year in September due to additional tax revenue, he said.

Given its economic stability -

Country still fiscally strong a with treasury balance of 229 billion.

with high foreign reserves, low inflation and low unemployment, Thailand is seen to have creditworthiness to deal with any economic volatility.

During the first quarter of fiscal year 2015, budget disbursement has totalled 930bn baht, said the deputy minister.

Krisada Chinavicharana, director-general of the Fiscal Policy Office, said that in cash terms, government revenue sent to the ministry totalled 312.29bn baht for the first two months of the fiscal year, down 6.1% year on year.

Budget disbursement was up 11.5% at 573.36bn baht. With an off-balance budget deficit of 17.63bn baht the government's cash balance was in deficit to the tune of 278.7bn baht.

The government made borrowings of 25.82bn baht, leaving a cash deficit of 252.88bn baht.

At the end of November, the treasury balance totalled 242.87bn baht.

- The Nation

January 3 - 9, 2015 PHUKET GAZETTE 11

WHAT'S ON in Phuket

December 26-Jan 5. Phuket Red Cross Fair

The Phuket Red Cross will host its ever-popular annual fair at Saphan Hin. There will be OTOP products for sale, festive foods and performers taking to the stage each night. Top lucky draw prize will be a Toyota Altis 1.6.

January 3, 7pm-11:30pm. Beatlemania is back at Two Chefs!

Beatlemania is back! This time we are doing the show @ our Sky Bar in Two Chefs Kamala. Our famous house band will play all the classic Beatles songs. A Beatles-inspired set menu available as well as the regular Two Chefs a la carte menu. Come for the food and Stay for the fun!

January 18-26. Foundation for Shamanic Studies presents courses in Phuket

The Foundation for Shamanic Studies presents its first courses in Phuket, Thailand, from January 18-26, 2015. Book now at www.shamanism-asia.com/2014/



11/thai, or call 081-891 5539 for more information.

February 12-15. Phuket Yacht Show

Phuket Yacht Show, the largest charter event in Southeast Asia, is launching in Phuket early next vear.

The inaugural event will take place from 12 to 15 February 2015 at the Phuket Yacht Haven Marina – the largest marina in the region. The exclusively on-water show will combine the best aspects of yacht charter, boating and luxury

events, giving visitors the opportunity to discover and experience the yachting lifestyle. Launched on the back of the hugely successful Singapore Yacht Show, the Phuket Yacht Show is organized as a result of increased demand from the industry and points to the emerging importance of Asia as a luxury yachting region and destination, set to catch up to Europe.

The Phuket Yacht Haven Marina can accommodate between 50 and 70 superyachts, providing capacity that is unmatched anywhere else in Asia.

February 14 Valentine's Day

Saint Valentine's Day, also known as Valentine's Day or the Feast of Saint Valentine will be celebrated throughout the island. With many resorts and restaurants preparing special moments for courting and married couples. Best to plan ahead and book your table long before February arrives.

April 6. Chakri Memorial Day

Chakri Day commemorates the origins of the Chakri dynasty, founded by Rama I, who established Bangkok as the nation's capital. HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej is the ninth monarch of the Chakri dynasty.

March 4. Makha Bucha Day

Makha Bucha Day, which falls on the full moon of the third lunar month, commemorates Buddha's ordaining of 1,250 monks who had arrived unannounced from afar only nine months after the Gautama Buddha attained enlightenment.

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12 PHUKET GAZETTE January 3 - 9, 2015

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EXCLUSIVELY AMARI: L to R: Tipaporn Koonphol, deputy GM; Pierre-Andre Pelletier, vice president and area GM South Thailand; Yuthachai Charanachitta, president and CEO of Amari Estates; and Richard Margo,

Boat Lagoon celebrates changing winds



SAILS FULL: L to R: Boon Yongsakul, deputy managing director; ML Sirithip Yongsakul; and Kanit Yongsakul, founder of the Boat Lagoon celebrate yet another tack as they gain momentum.

Breaking for a little more Christmas cheer



ON A MISSION: L to R: Chaoum Putrod; Nathaphat Khaphat; Supot TREE IN A BOTTLE: Wirachai Pranveerapaibool, CEO of Attitude HOLIDAYS WITH ATTITUDE: L to R: Jitchaya Khocharat, Attitude Tanubamroong; Jantana Jaikwang, Phuket Gazette; and Kanjana Club, and his wife Kanokpan build Christmas terrariums at Club assistant marketing manager and Jantana Jaikwang, Sriboonsom, Phuket Gazette.



Saturday Condos' holiday event.



David Xavier, Impiana Private Villa Kata Noi GM - Thailand, accepts the Now Travel 2014 award for Asia's top villa resort.

Asian villa resort above Russian fairy tale at Dance World Studio



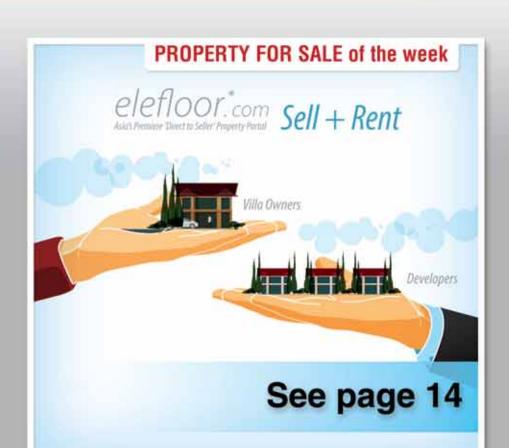
DANCE LIKE A RUSSIAN: Phuket children put on a performance of the fairy tale Gusi-Lebedi.

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*The Gazette is the top-ranked Website for Phuket. (Google Analytics)







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Property Classifieds

Properties For Sale

LAND FOR SALE IN PHUKET (SAKOO)

1 to 5 rai, Chanote title, 10 mins south of airport. Fixed price: 2.9 million baht per rai. Tel: 087-076 6016. Email: kanchanajit09@ gmail.com

TOWN HOUSES FOR SALE

Koh Lanta: 5 town houses for sale on main road at Klong Tob (opposite Rawi Warin Resort). Starting price: 4.8 million baht per unit. Special price for all 5 together. Tel: 081-846 2980. Email: huber.markus@blue win.ch

QUIET NAI HARN POOL VILLA

Well-maintained 2-storey traditional Thai-style pool villa with 3 bedrooms, in small group of 4 homes, private and serene. Desirable location with a short walk to Nai Harn Beach, restaurants and shops. Perfect for investment. Price reduced to 4.3 million baht. Email: rgartland@ comcast.net

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12th floor. 42sqm. Kitchen, bathroom. Fully furnished. 4.5 million baht. Khun Jira 085-475 0299, Tom 081-087 2834.

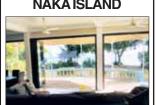
KATA HOUSE SALE

4 bedrooms. Reduced price, must sell. Was 3.5 million baht, now 2.99 million baht. Tel: 082-465 9939.

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POOL HOUSE



Near Heroines Pa Khlok Road, 250sqm. Land 452sqm. 3/4 bedrooms, 3 baths, 4 a/c, big kitchen, furnished, pool 9 x 3m. Price: 5,250,000 baht. Tel: 089-854 0277. Email: cata yacht@csloxinfo.com

LAYAN LAND FOR SALE

11 rai of beautiful flat land for sale in Layan. Short drive to beach. Very quiet area. 3.5 million baht per rai. tel: 081-927 4027 (English), 089-813 1447 (Thai). Email: atrennie @yahoo.com

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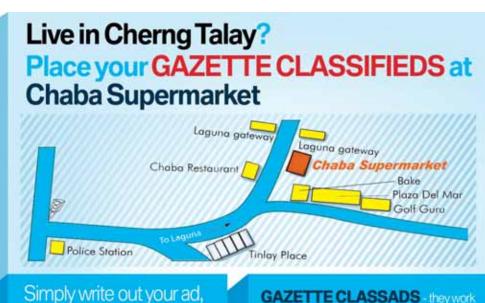
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Condo, pool, security, 46sqm fully furnished. Tel: 089-728 4005. Email: tha mad17@yahoo.com

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2 bedrooms, also 1 bedroom, kitchen, lounge. The Point near Central Festival, many facilities. Tel: 081-892 0038.

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1 bed, furn apt, living room, balcony, pool, gym, parking, WiFi, cable. Avail now. Want reliable, trustworthy LT tenant, good rate for right person. Tel: 085-069 0938. Email: neiln 5nh6@gmail.com

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PATONG CONDO FOR RENT

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2 bedrooms, also 1 bedroom. kitchen, lounge. The Point near Central Festival, many facilities. Tel: 081-892 0038.

NEW OCEAN-VIEW CONDO

New 1- and 2-bedroom units with expensive furniture inside from the owner. Long and short term. Sea view, huge balcony, TV panels, WiFi, free parking, pools, gym, detox center, sauna, massage. The best choice for living! Email: osa. com@me.com

PRIVATE POOL VILLA

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2 bed and bathroom, Western kitchen, 3 LCD TVs, 3 aircons, terrace, car park, big pool. 120sqm, seaview. Long-term rental only. Tel: 081-824 1385.

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Household

Items

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Filipino cook wanted for western food and Thai food. Must be able to speak and write English. Tel: 076-345670, 083-392 8462. Email: cc@ bayshoreprojects. com

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Enthusiastic, fit, sociable, snorkelling trainer & safety person required for speedboat tours. Thai or foreign with the correct qualifications. Excellent English a must. Send photo with CV. Excellent pay for right person. Tel: 076-289044, 086-011 5340 (English & Thai). Email: work for simba@gmail.com

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Soi Dog Foundation seeks a

Fund-raising Officer who will manage Soi Dog's donor database and send emails to supporters around the world, working closely with other members of the fundraising team. The position requires excellent attention to detail. Applicants should be reliable, consistent, comfortable with computers, fairly competent at writing in English, and love cats and dogs. To apply, please send a CV and cover letter to belinda

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Wanted Thai female office staff. Tel: 098-692 1132 (English). Email: jolie031600@gmail.

INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION

Thai person who can speak English and, importantly, Chinese. Will work with Chinese and Russian customers. If experienced in real estate business, there will be a great salary. Phuket Project Co, Ltd. Tel: 093-587 3711.

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Gym Attendant (1 position)

Thai national

Experience in the similar position

Have good personality

Love to exercise Adaptable to hard work and active working environment

Willing and able to work night shifts Accountant (1 position)

Thai national

Excellent experience in accounting

Computer literate

Knowledge about income tax 1/3/53, value added tax 30

Good English communication Gear Store Attendant (1 position)

Excellent English communication Have at least 1 year experience in similar position

Computer literate

Willingness to work night shifts

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If interested, applicants are invited to come by with their resumes – which should indicate qualifications and experience – as well as a transcript and expected salary and photo, or email them to:

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Native speaker for English, Chinese and Japanese. Bachelor's degree or higher. Must be able to teach various ages of students.Tel: 076-219337, 095-429 5251.

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Enthusiastic, fit, sociable, snorkelling trainer & safety person required for speedboat tours. Thai or foreign with the correct qualifications, Excellent English a must. Send photo with CV. Excellent pay for right person. Tel: 076-289044, 086-011 5340 (English & Thai). Email: work for simba@gmail.com

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Villa-bungalow style only, 20-40 rooms, max 20 mins drive from Patong, min 50% sea view rooms. Wanted for long term rent. Tel: 084-690 1139. Email: ppvisseur@ hogest.com

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2003 BMW X5 BLACK



Electric, LPG, leather. Tel: 084-054 8122.

100



2007, excellent condition. Price: 85,000 baht. Tel: 084-840 4317.

YAMAHA YZ 250F

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For sale April 2012. 420,000 km auto. Silver.350,000 baht. Tel: 081-143 9824 (Thai), 085-851 2251 (English). Email: peterwo@me.com

Motorbikes

HONDA CB500F



Year 2012, 12,000km. Excellent condition. For sale at 165,000baht Tel: 081-550 7379 (English & Thai).

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Ex-condition 2007. New cost 1.2 million baht, 595,000 baht. Also BMW F650GS like new cond. 2007. New cost 700,000 baht 295,000 baht, incl. new BMW panniers. Call Mike 081-787 1752 or emailmjoneilluk @ yahoo. co.uk

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KeeWay 200cc excellent condition, used very little. Only 3,000km on the meter. Very low price for a very good motorcycle. 49,000 baht. Tel: 089-289 0214 (Thai) . Email: janne kipregut @hotmail.com

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Pick-ups

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Year 2012, 60,000km. Price: 850,000 baht. For more information, please call 088-753 7491 (English). Email: rus. zapestate@mail.ru

2011 TOYOTA VIGO 4WD



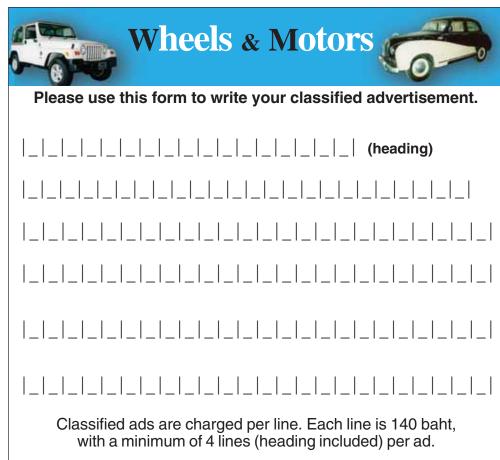
Excellent condition with a low 18,500km. Dual cab, leather upholstery, manual gearbox, 3-liter diesel engine. No accidents, service history. Just not using it, so it must go. 700,000 baht or best offer. Please ask for Khun Aey. Tel: 076-527687, 095-410 2414 (English & Thai). Email: edshiels@gmail.com

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4.1M/40HP RIB. NEW (09/2014)!



Only 3 months old. Used for just 14 hours. Suzuki engine and boat under warranty (Suzuki Shop). Bimini + Trailer + Tube Cover. Tel: 098-708 6632 (English), 093-584 0565 (English). Email: nono240@gmail. com

AVON 400 JET RIB



2006 Avon 400 Seasport Jet RIB. Seats 6, 80HP, trailer and custom covers included. 300,000 baht o.n.o.Tel: 082-288 0668 (English). Email: davidcram mond@msn.com



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BIC Open, excellent condition. 75,000 baht includes trailer and cover. Tel: 081-837 5774(En-

BENETEAU OCEANIS 370 (1991)

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SAIL I POWER **NEW I PRE-OWNED**

THE SOLUTION TO THIS WEEK'S

Cryptic crossword



Abbreviations: UPPER CASE (if used as part of anagram, in brackets).

Normal spelling: lower case.

Anagrams: italic (indicated in clue by words 'out', 'possibly', 'strangely', 'wild', or similar).

Letters left out: underlined.

9. HOUSEWORK: house-work 10. PREDICATE: predicate 12. MAIN: main 13. EDITOR: roteid 14. LAEMHIN: menhail 15. IRREGULAR: rulerirag 17. CONCIERGE: Co.-regnice 18. NUCLEUS: uncle-U.S. 19. MEEOWS: somewe 20. FRET: F-R-et 23. GROUNDNUT: gruntundo

25. TAXIMETER: T-tireexam 26. OILY: O-I-L-Y 27. AVENUE: a-venue

29. STAFFER: fast-ref[rev] 32. REPAPERER: prepare-E.R. 34. SIDETRACKS: tracesdisk 35. PRIMATE: trampie 36.

HUSSAR: rushas 37. STAG: gats[rev] 38. INTHEREAR: ratinhere 39. SANDSTONE: andsosent

1. CHAMPION: chapnoim 2. JUNIORSCHOOL: ourjohncoils
3. CONDOLES: nodclose 4. SKATER: takes-R 5. SPIRACLE: spira-C-l-E
6. SEALINGWAX: laxwesigna 7. KINETIC: kin-cite 8. SEENBETTER: enterbeset 11. ABHOR: harbor 16. GREENS: greens 19. MET: me-T 21. RATIFICATION: factirationi 22. IMPAIR: impair 23. GEOGRAPHIC: g-E-o-graphic 24. NEVERNEVER: N-ever-never 25. TOE: To-E 28. NORTHERN: no-R-the-R.N. 29. SUSTAINS: saintsus

30. RESIGNED: re-signed 31. SPEAKER: askpeer 33. Pa-in-T

34. DESIST: side-St.

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Private Aircraft and Flight Services in Phuket

Rockwell Commander 114 HS-AWS



Built: 1976

Registration: HS-AWS (in Thailand for the last 6 years) Previous Registrations: N4798W – USA

N479GE – USA I-ECCE – Italy G-BVNL – UK

Lycoming IO-540-T4B5D (1,300 hours, 700 hours to TBO). Prop: B3D32C419/82NHA-5. Overhauled Feb 2011 (7 years to TBO). C of A Due 11th November 2011. New 5-year Permit. 100 hour check completed 19 Feb 2011.

Specs:

Horsepower: 260
Top Speed: 166 kts
Cruise Speed: 157 kts
Stall Speed (dirty): 55 kts
Rate Of Climb: 1088 fpm
Ceiling: 17,400 ft

Gross Weight: 3140 lbs
Empty Weight: 2094 lbs
Fuel Capacity: 68.00 gal Usable
Range: 700 nm
Fuel Av Gas 100LL
1 crew plus 3 passengers

Radio and Navigation Configuration: Fully IFR equipped, 2 Garmin GNS430 VHF/COMM/NAV/GPS/TERRAIN, Garmin GI-106A VOR/LOC/GS/GPS CDI. King KN64 DME. Garmin GTX 320/327 Transponder with Mode C via Ameri-King AK350-30 Height Encoder. Garmin GMA 340 Audio Panel. Bendix King KR-87 ADF. Sandel SN 3308 EHSI. Century IIB Autopilot Dual Axis and S-Tec Altitude Hold. WX-500 Stormscope.

Price: 3.75 million baht. Located at Thai Flying Club, Bang Phra.

Contact Tony Scragg at 081-906 3250, or email tony_scragg@hotmail.com

HAVE A PASSION FOR AVIATION?

If you have an aircraft for sale or an interest in aviation and wish to learn how to fly or buy an aircraft or arrange a private flight, etc. Website: www.aeropromgr.com/ newsletter

TECNAM P-92

- Price: 1.5 million baht
- Registration: U-B08
- Year of Manufacture: 2002
- Equipment: Full standard equipment
- Engine: Rotax 912-80HP 350hrs. Tel: 081-840 8418.

AIRPLAY ALTIS MICROLIGHT

Superb trike with Konig radial engine. Great economical fun. Little used. Please contact for more information. Tel: 089-111 6457 (English & Thai), 081-397 7598 (English & Thai). Email: kajoda1954@yahoo.co.uk

YOUR HELICOPTER

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1999 ROBIN 2160i

I would like to sell my Robin aircraft or trade it for a 4-seat Cessna or Piper (based in Hua Hin). The Robin: TTAF 300hrs. SMOH 60hrs. This is a well-equipped, two-seat aerobatic aircraft. Has the Christen inverted oil system. Excellent inside and outside. King KMA24 audio panel, KX155 nav/com, KI203 vor, KY197A comm, KN64A dme, KR87 adf, KT76A transponder, CSPA400 i-com, FP5 fuel computer, CHT, OAT, Pitot heat. Price: 4 million baht. Please contact Thom. Email: thos w@ hotmail.com







PHUKET GAZETTE 21 January 3 - 9, 2015



Remembering tsunami victims



HONORING THOSE LOST: Prime Minister Gen Prayut Chan-ocha chairs the ceremonies in Phang Nga, north of Phuket. Photo: Woranut Pechdee



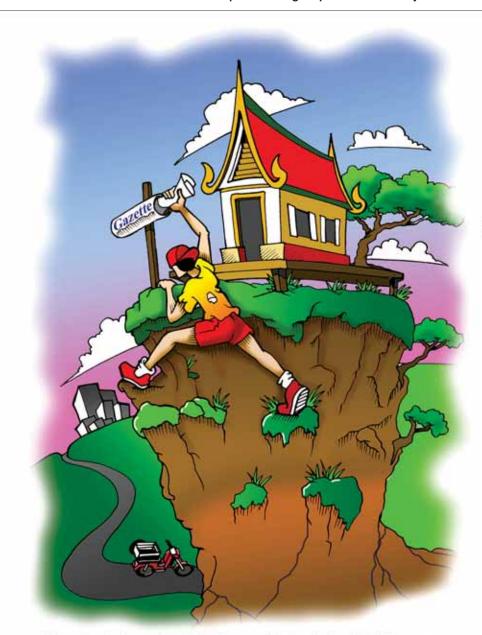
REVERENCE BEYOND MEMORY: A child takes part in the Light Up Phuket ceremony. Photos: Chutharat Plerin



Claude de Crissey and his wife take part in the ceremony on Patong Beach.



French Honorary Consul to Phuket British Honorary Consul to Phuket Martin Carpenter joins hundreds on Patong Beach.



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22 PHUKET GAZETTE January 3 - 9, 2015

COFFEE

DiCa

9. Accommodate employment of domestic labor (9)

Cryptic Crossword

10. Assert as true that which relates to the subject in the sentence (9)

- 12. Most important sea in poetry
- 13. Rote I'd reiterated for the head of the publication (6)
- 14. Men hail new port in Phuket (4,3)
- 15. Inconsistent ruler I rag erratically (9)
- 17. Company arranged Reg nice porter (9)
 18. Uncle arranged U.S. center (7)
- 19. Some we upset with catcalls (6)
- 20. French run and, in France, worry (4)
- 23. Grunt, undo carefully, a peanut (9)
- 25. Local cab in time arranges tire exam (9)
- 26. Unctuous circle I left unknown (4)
- 27. A rendezvous or the way leading to it (6)
- 29. Newspaper employee fast arranging return of short reference (7)
- 32. Carefully prepare the UK queen for one who redecorates walls! (9) 34. Sidetracks by little Diana's treations (0)
- tises (9) 35. Untidy tramp, i.e. one of the highest order of mammals! (7) 36. Wildly rush as light cavalryman
- 37. Turn gangsters pistols on animal (4)

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38. Rat in here, maybe at the back

39. And so sent out for sedimentary rock (9)

Down

- 1. Different chap? No I'm the winner (8)
- 2. Our John coils around in elementary education institution (6,6)
- 3. Sympathizes with, nod, close around (8)
- 4. Winter sportsman takes different river (6)
- 5. Whale's blow-hole spiral, cold inside note (8)
- 6. Maybe lax, we sign a dated letter closure (7,3)
- 7. Family cite upset due to motion (7)
- 8. Enter set, be possibly not the best available! (4,6)
 11. Not right, possibly harbor hate!

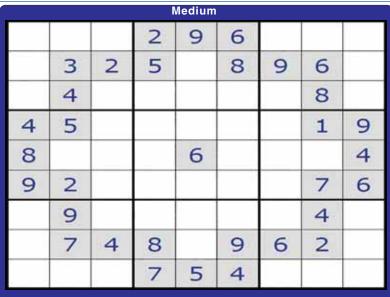
- 16. Healthy vegetables for ecowarriors! (6)
- 19. Encountered me on time (3) 21. Fact; I ration, I rewrite approval (12)
- 22. Spoil odd numbers at the casino (6)
- 23. Go to hide Eastern computer visual regarding study of the earth (10)
- 24. U.K. installment plan new always? Not at all! (5,5)
- 25. To echo a digit (3)
- 28. No river the Royal Navy shows at the top of the map (8) 29. Supports confused saints hiding us (8)
- 30. Came to terms with and put one's name to again (8)
- 31. Commentator upset. Ask peer! (7)
- 33. Do a picture of Father in time
- 34. Wrong side street, give up! (6)

Words from the wise:

"A person often meets his destiny on the road he took to avoid it."

— Jean de La Fontaine

"The future belongs to those who prepare for it today." - *Malcolm X*



SUDOKU: Each row, column and 3x3 sub-grid must contain the number 1-9 once only. © Kevin Stone (brainbashers.com)

Hard 2 9 2 4 1 6 5 8 4 1 3 2 4 8 6 5 6 8 7 3 4 6 5 8 1 3 9 4 6 8

CAPRICORN (Dec 22-Jan 20):



As the clock struck midnight, you may have been the one organizing all the fun and games. The

New Year began on an upbeat note with you eager to pursue your dreams. Mind, a desire to grab a bargain could distract you. If you're geared up for the sales have a list and a budget, then you won't go too far wrong.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21-Feb 19):



Though you may have prefered to see the New Year in quietly, you'll be ready for action from day

one, especially if someone involves you in a cause that's dear to your heart. Once Venus and Mercury enter your sign your focus will be intent on getting your brightest and best ideas up and running. Do look to make Sunday a day of rest, though.

PISCES (Feb 20-Mar 20):



Your New Year's Eve no doubt sizzled, especially as you were off with many of your friends. However,

if you've been burning the candle at both ends, you'll need to recharge. Relax, gather your thoughts and single out any bright ideas. Meanwhile, the weekend's Full Moon could spell romance with a capital "R".

ARIES (Mar 21-Apr 20):



You'll hit the ground running this 2015, as a Mars Jupiter link gets you excited about a brand new

start. Your New Year's Eve was an effervescent and somewhat indulgent occasion, which you no doubt reveled in. Yet, the good times continue on as a social blitz and a Full Moon encourage you to play host and enjoy the occasion.

TAURUS (Apr 21-May 21):



With New Year's Eve turning out to be a delightful experience, embrace 2015 with open arms and decide to

make it your best. From the very first days of the New Year, focusing on your career will encourage you to leave the past behind and look ahead to future successes. Later, someone may have wonderful news to share.

YOUR horoscope

GEMINI (May 22-June 21):

By Patrick Arundell



The run up to the New Year was no doubt fun, but life will continue to get more and more exciting after mid-

night fireworks, as you move into 2015. You'll be ready to take control of your destiny and steer your ship in the direction of your dreams. The Full Moon though, hints at a tendency to splurge. However, careful shopping will bring its rewards.

CANCER (June 22-July 23):



There'll be plenty of folk celebrating the beginning of 2015 with you, whether you're relaxing, en working How-

partying, or even working. However, watch out for a rebellious streak which could alienate a certain person. Meanwhile, the weekend Full Moon can help a budding romance along if you're open to a heart-to-heart share.

LEO (July 24-Aug 23):



It's an excellent week for work efforts as your positive attitude can go a long way to impressing the

right person. In addition, communication flows and relationships sparkle as Venus and Mercury zip into Aquarius. Social opportunities become more plentiful, while key relationships benefit from greater interaction.

VIRGO (Aug 24-Sept 23):



Though tempting, it will help not to take everything too personally, especially over this New Year's holi-

day. If a significant other seems not to be themselves it might be that they need space to gather their thoughts and reflect on what's best for them. However, the weekend Full Moon can be excellent for parties and fun.

LIBRA (Sept 24-Oct 23):



You'll start 2015 on a more serious note as Saturn in Sagittarius encourages you to organize your

thinking and plan ahead. Even so,

the first week of 2015 could be exciting from a social point of view, as you connect with friends old and new. Later, you may find yourself in the limelight – which can be used to your advantage.

SCORPIO (Oct 24-Nov 22):



There's a positive focus on your home and family sector amping up the New Year's vibe and enhanc-

ing your enjoyment of the occasion. But you could soon be busy after taking time to relax on New Year's Day. Meanwhile, the Full Moon in Cancer could be a reason to adopt a newer and bigger version of a goal you hope to achieve.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23-Dec 21):



You may be motivated to concentrate your energies and resources on ideas that need muscle and perse-

verance if you're to succeed. Yet, this week's influences can reinforce your belief that whatever you set your mind to, you can achieve. Meanwhile, a happy and dynamic social life ensures a lively and positive start to 2015.

Santa Claus' rental returns



Property Watch

Desmond Hughes

WHAT did Santa Claus bring you via your property investment this Christmas? Was it 5% guaranteed net rental return on your property investment? Six %? Seven %? A 60:40 or a 50:50 split of all expenses and rental returns after expenses?

Looking at the wide mix of so-called guaranteed returns promised in property ads, online and on billboards in Phuket, it is hard to know what will be underneath the wrapping paper when you have paid your purchase price and received your first income statement from the developer or property manager responsible for your rental return.

In order to understand what is really on offer. It is worth for a moment considering the mind of a developer or a property manager offering a rental guarantee. Please let me assure you that such an offer is not entirely based on charity.

INCREASING SALES OPPORTUNITIES

Property owners may be looking at their buy in Phuket as a mixture of financial investment, but often with the added benefit of receiving what is known as usage entitlement. This may seem strange surely you have already bought the property and therefore can use it as you wish to, no? If you accept that the property is bought to create an investment yield, you will also have to accept that in order to maintain that yield, the property needs to be in use, particularly in high season when rental demands and prices are tangibly

Developers are competing against others in the market. Therefore they are forced

to ensure that the property not only enjoys an attractive design and location, but also that it can function as a rented-out holiday home so that the buyer is not left feeling that their property is standing idle most of

So, developers sit down at their financial tables, sharpen their pencils and come up with what they believe is a workable formula. This comprises the sale price of the property; the property management and rental management fees and expenses, including human resources to maintain the rentals; and perhaps some capital renovation planning – if the developer is willing and/or able to think that far ahead.

This activity is designed to increase sales opportunities. It is therefore for the buyer to beware and to look carefully at what is really on offer, and to compare the product with other investment-style products.

RETURN ON MONIES, **REAL COSTS**

There is safety in bricks and mortar, subject to its quality, location, sustainability of the market, demand, political and legal environment, global economy and finally the quality of the property's legal title. Investments in stocks and shares for the middle classes of the world have taken a beating due to the ineptitude of wealthy banks in managing monies and risk. However, the banks still take their fat fees on every transaction and charge you for the privilege of deposits, as they have done so since banks first existed.

When you buy a property with a rental guarantee, you are also buying an ongoing contractual liability. More often than not, the rental guarantee will expire after a period of, say, three years. After this period, the property – even the managed common areas and facilities – will need capital renovation. This will eat backwards into any



Did Santa leave any promising property investments under your tree? Photo: Aurelien Selle

return you have yielded from the property. Further, management fees and costs will increase with rising costs in accordance with Phuket's inflationary costs. Phuket is not a cheap province for costs and services. On that basis, do your math conservatively.

SANTA HAS SOME GOOD GIFTS

Fortunately, there are many positive stories in Phuket regarding rental returns. Typically in high-end or well-maintained, middlebracket properties with good solid experienced and/or branded management, rental returns in high season can cover all property expenses for the year, and low season rentals then become the cream of the investment. This applies where manager and buyer share the risks and rewards of the rental returns. For many, the rental guarantee is simply a monthly or quarterly cheque, with the comfort that the property isn't backed by a derivative hedge fund operating on high commissions and super highrisk investments.

Look carefully underneath your Christmas wrapping paper this year to make sure you didn't miss anything and have a very prosperous New Year.

Residential market to grow 5-10% in 2015: developers

THE residential market should perk up 5-10% next year on economic growth of 3-5% and new mass-transit routes, major devel-

"We believe that the property market in 2015 will be better than this year by up to 10%," Thongma Vijitpongpun, president and chief executive of Pruksa Real Estate, said recently.

The government plans to fire up infrastructure projects that will spur the economy at a faster gait than last year, while residential demand started to revive this quarter after home-buyers delayed purchase decisions since the first half of this year.

This shows that the desire to buy a home will still be strong in the coming year especially for occupancy, Mr Thongma

Srettha Thavisin, president of Sansiri, said that if gross domestic product grew (GDP) by 3 per cent, that would drive the property market up about 4.5 per cent, because on average GDP growth of 1% translates into



Srettha Thavisin, president of Sansiri, said that growth in GDP would bolster growth in the property market. Photo: Gazette file

about 1.5%.

Whether the property market will grow next year depends on whether the economy grows, he said. However, the market in 2015 will be certainly better than this year, which slackened by about 10% from 2013.

"The market dropped more than 20% in the first half of the

property-market growth of year. It started to recover in the second half but that was not enough to catapult full-year market growth.

"But in the new year, I'm confident that the country's political situation will be stable. That will drive the country's economy and also lift the property market over this year," Mr Srettha said.

- The Nation



Different: European-style pool villa



Phuket Pads Patrick Lusted

MOST villas available on the island are either in Thai or Balinese style and as the Thais say, "Same, same"! But this unusual

Thais say, "Same, same"! But this unusual and well-designed property stands out from the crowd with its European design. One of the main attractions is that it is a perfect family home in which to entertain and comes with great amenities.

The house includes many extras usually found only at a higher price, like a study, a second family room/lounge, ducted air conditioning, a laundry room, screened windows and a guest toilet. There is also roof space with great views and a sala.

It features an unusual and airy modern design with an open-plan living area. The Western-designed kitchen has a compact, U-shaped design with wooden cabinets and black marble countertops. It also has a built-in ceramic hob, hood, oven and a large-capacity refrigerator. The dining area sits adjacent. The lounge covers a large area and opens up to green views and a terrace.

Outdoor areas include a pool terrace with a large sala and bar. The generously proportioned pool has a Jacuzzi seating area along with wooden and concrete decking. It also has a large garden of 800sqm and is built on sloping land with scenic views from the

MAIL: INFO@ROYALPHUKETMARINA.COM

WWW.ROYALPHUKETMARINA.COM



The property offers a welcome change to the usual Thai or Balinese style pool villas found throughout the island. Photo: Supplied

many balconies and from the large rooftop terrace. The impressive entrance has an automatic gate and a carport for two vehicles.

The villa's five bedrooms each have ensuite bathrooms with built-in or walk-in closets, with a Jacuzzi-style tub in the master suite.

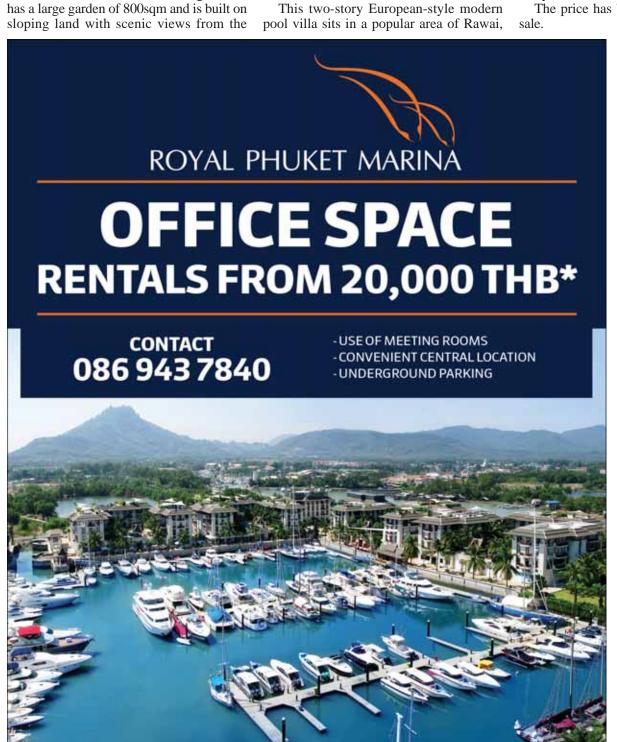
lending easy access to restaurants, bakeries, convenience stores and of course beautiful Nai Harn Beach only a couple of kilometers away. Phuket Town, Central Festival mall, international schools and the island's main hospitals are only 20 minutes away.

The price has been reduced for a quick sale.

The property is available leasehold or freehold and has a *Chanote* title.

Indoor area: 550sqm. Total area: 800sqm. Price: 23.9 million baht.

For more information contact: Patrick Lusted at Siam Real Estate. Quote reference number: HSSV6793. Tel. 076-288908 www.siamrealestate.com



*MONTHLY RENTAL PRICE BASED ON 45 SQM

Banyan Tree Phuket launches luxury residences for end users

NOTED developer Laguna Phuket is bringing 19 new five-bedroom luxury villas to the property market

Named the Banyan Tree Grand Residences, the living area has been upsized from previous offerings to over 760sqm.

Pricing starts from 101 million baht.

The project is targeting end users who are looking in the estate.



Banyan Tree residences are lauded for their style. Photo: Supplied

It's location is adjacent to the Banyan Tree Double Pool Villas.

– *Bill Barnett*





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Drink cheats for New Year

By Craig Burton

I AM mainly talking alcohol this week, because I honestly think that soft drinks are such a poor cheat option. By that I mean compared to alcohol, soft drinks give low rewards on a social level for high sacrifices of a physiological level because of the amount of sugar or artificial sweeteners which are in fact toxins.

What about fruit juice? Short answer: the sugar content is very high, so try to avoid them. Eat whole fruit to get your vitamins and to keep the fiber intact.

Here are my thoughts about drinking:

Alcohol belongs in the cheat meals category, and it should never be consumed alone, but instead, if you like a drink, saved for occasions to be shared with good company. I know there are a lot of so-called experts out there saying a couple of standard drinks a day is okay and you can still lose body fat. Well, that may be true but it may well take double the time to do so. How much alcohol can someone consume and still get a good result, like losing 1-2cm off the waist per week? It's very individual (much like the amount of alcohol it takes to get drunk) and another important reason to keep an accurate food diary (especially in the early days). Compare weeks of no drinking to drinking while trying to keep all else similar. You may find you can go out one night per week and still get good results after a few drinks and some cheat meals. Enjoy the testing.

When it comes to social situations and alcohol, here is my advice:

If you want to drink, then have a drink and enjoy it – but don't



A glass of water between guilt-free drinks might be a reasonable solution. Photo: Kenny Louie

feel guilty or that just spoils the experience. You can minimize the damage of alcohol by following these tips:

- 1. Eat a high protein and low carb meal with it (so meat and vegetables)
- 2. Take a glass of water between each drink
- 3. Choose lower calorie drinks like wine over beer.
- 4. Choose high-quality alcohol so you can really enjoy it – gener-

ally speaking, the more you spend, the more you savor and the slower you drink

5. Avoid buying rounds

If you don't want to drink, then just don't. It's actually easier than you think and most real friends will accept it. That's about as complicated as it needs to be. If you feel weird just drinking water, get some sparkling water with lime or something similar, it's really not a big deal. People might

notice, but all you need to say is, "no thanks" when offered a drink or "none for me to tonight" if people ask why. You don't need to launch into some spiel about weight gain and being healthy. That's your own business.

If you feel you have to drink every time you go out but don't really want to, what does that say about your character? Perhaps it's time to start asserting yourself.

If you need to drink daily then

perhaps ask yourself why. If it is to relax you - then maybe look into other techniques such as exercise, meditation, or taking up a hobby.

Bottom line: Take responsibility and don't fall victim to your situation. If your friends are the types to berate you for not drinking, then maybe it's time to find new friends. Most adults understand that some people drink and some people don't, and it's simply not a big deal.

Here are three reasons why drinking alcohol is not good for fat loss:

- 1. Alcohol has a bad effect on one of the most important organs for fat loss – the liver
- 2. Alcohol contains a high amount of empty calories
- 3. Estrogenic effects: If you want man boobs and a belly like a pregnant girl then drink alcohol regularly, especially beer which is a higher estrogen source than

"Observations that men with alcoholic cirrhosis often show testicular failure and symptoms of feminization have suggested that alcoholic beverages may contain biologically active phytoestrogens as congeners. Biochemical analyzes have identified several phytoestrogens in the congeners of bourbon, beer and wine. Studies using subjects who produced no estrogen themselves demonstrated that phytoestrogens in alcoholic beverage congeners exerted estrogen-like effects in both animals and humans. Those effects were observed even at moderate drinking levels."

For women it can lead to a hormonal imbalance called estrogen dominance that can lead to mood swings and physical changes.

Give me a virgin, please



EXCESSIVE drinking is a natural disaster waiting to happen. Where else will you run into earthquakes, mudslides, hurricanes and flaming volcanoes all in the same place except on a cocktail list? What else except booze causes otherwise stationary and benign items such as trees, power poles, telephone kiosks and the occasional parked police car to suddenly wrap around the front end of your vehicle?

Most people who have woken up with that dreadful feeling of an impending hangover will have

posed themselves the salient question: "Just why the heck am I pouring toxins into my body?"

Why indeed? But those who believe that non-alcoholic drinks are boring may be surprised at how many cocktail arrangements there are that taste just as good without that familiar stab of methanol. And it's comforting to know that Thailand is one of the best places on earth for easily attainable and vitamin-packed fresh-fruit smoothies.

- Lis Kinswoman



Life & style











nvironment

A variety of reef fish were found dead and then documented by a local diving instructor, while reports of more dead fish rolled into the Gazette. Photos: Supplied

Piscine pollution: killing fields

By Patrick Campbell

SOME time ago a friend rang to say that the beach at Kata was littered with dead fish - mostly of an emerald green color. My guess was that they were reef-dwelling parrot fish and out of curiosity, I decided to venture down to Nai Harn Beach. A scene of carnage awaited me; there were hundreds of very dead fish above the high water mark, bloated and fetid in the blazing afternoon sun. In one ten-meter stretch of beach, I counted 40 corpses. Like so much flotsam and jetsam, these bronze carcases were almost certainly surgeonfish or triggerfish – zoo plankton or algal feeders with characteristic deeply forked tail and stout rugby ball-shaped bodies. Later I heard that similar scenes involving different dramatis personae had been enacted both at Kamala and Koh Racha Noi: witnesses noted par-

swimming in disoriented circles.

Worryingly widespread, this episode suggested lethal contamination of a substantial area, perhaps 30 miles in extent, of the Andaman Sea. And worse, the area mainly af-

fected seemed to be the coral reefs and their piscine inhabitants. What happened? Your guess is as good as mine. In the past, such episodes have spawned official refutations of likely causes: toxic dumping; the illegal use of dynamite or cyanide; or the release of uncontrolled effluents. In this particular case, the Phuket Marine Biological Center (PMBC) stated that autopsies on the victims revealed no obvious clues, stating, "The results were inconclusive... we have yet to determine the cause of death."

So here's my take on the topic. In this writer's humble estimation, the slaughter was a likely consequence of the recent abnormally high rainfall, with overloaded wastewater systems; storm drains at bursting point; and domestic emissions and raw sewage entering the rivers and the ocean. It has happened before, usually at this time of year, and until Phuket adopts more stringent building

laws – especially sensible limits on high-rise, high-density apartments and starts effectively to protect forests and mangrove swamps, and above all develops adequate waste and sewerage facilities – it will happen again... and again.

A major factor in oceanic contamination worldwide is a procedure known "eutrification," a polite word for the harmful consequences of nutrients, sometimes in the form of chemical fertilizer, being rashly applied to commercial crops, or indeed, to garden plants in order to increase yields or vigor. In periods of extreme precipitation, these substances are subsequently leached from the soil, and ultimately find their way into the sea - a sink for everything that mankind seeks clandestinely to jettison.

scenes involving different dramatis personae had been enacted both at Kamala and Koh Racha Noi: witnesses noted parrot fish with bulging eyes

Put another way, it is the process whereby run-off from agricultural practices – in the form of both spraying and feeding, as well as from so-called

/ Either the fish were

exposed to unacceptable

levels of contamination

from any number of pos-

sible sources; were

feeding on toxic micro-

organisms; or were

suffering from a lack of life-

giving oxygen.

developments and their inadequate septic systems - enour waterways, or seeps through the soil in the form of sludge and gradually contaminates the ground water. Loaded with these manmade nutrients,

and with fewer trees, mangrove swamps and marsh vegetation to help absorb, filter and neutralize these noxious man-made products, Mother Earth finally disgorges them into the sea.

And that is without taking into account what is euphemistically called "point source pollution". If you don't know what this is, look around the beaches and rocky outcrops of Phuket's shoreline at low tide and you will see raw sewage pipes snaking out into the ocean. Only recently, black rivers of sludge have invaded beaches at Koh Racha and Karon. No prizes for guessing where all that comes from.

As if that were not enough, Phuket has other features, some of them peculiar to this island, which exacerbate the problem. Dotted around the place are manmade lakes, the legacy of centuries of tin mining. The water and surrounding areas have



A parrot fish found swimming in circles before dying near Koh Racha Yai. Photo: Supplied

long been contaminated, and not just by metallic residues such as particulate waste - so called acid mine drainage – but by suspended sediments, and worse by sulphates and poisonous chemicals, sometimes found in conjunction with tin. Add to these a number of other local pollutants: the spoil from Phuket's insatiable building activities, routinely dumped on the surrounding soil; the slow percolation of methane from decaying waste in landfill sites (Phuket generates 800 tonnes of garbage per day); and the likely impact of indiscriminate shrimp farming, which not only uses chemical fertilizers and antibiotics, but has annexed many hectares of mangroves - and you have some inking of the gravity of the issue.

The cumulative impact of all these activities on the local marine environment is self-evidently disastrous. One effect has been a periodical increase in algal bloom or phytoplankton. With more so-called nutrients to feed their habit, algae proliferate and thrive. On occasions, these blooms are so concentrated, they can change the actual color of the sea. Often these algal eruptions are toxic. But

harmful or not, when these micro-organisms die, they deplete the water of oxygen and contribute to the condition – as does the discharge of suspended sediment and waste into unclouded seas. Known as hypoxia, this condition causes fish to suffocate and damages precious and delicate ecosystems such as coral reefs.

In my estimation the most plausible reason for the sudden and recent demise of so many marine creatures is linked to this concoction of noxious brews. Either the fish were exposed to unacceptable levels of contamination from any number of possible sources; were feeding on toxic micro-organisms; or were suffering from a lack of life-giving oxygen. In this connection, it is worth noting that some of the casualties apparently showed symptoms of asphyxiation, with their gills clamped tightly to their sides. In a global context, it has been estimated that recovery from the damage meted out to our seas from eutrification will take – wait for it – 1,000 years to repair...

So there are a number of identifiable villains in this doleful scenario: and all are alive and

flourishing in Phuket. One is domestic and industrial garbage and sewage in its various manifestations, another is chemical compounds such as phosphates from detergents, and a third is stuff applied to the land in the form of insecticides, herbicides and fertilizer. It is in this last category that gardeners can maybe lend a small helping hand by avoiding overzealous applications of chemical nutrients or pesticides on our flower beds and instead, attempting where possible, to use organic alternatives. More than 95 per cent of sprayed insecticides and herbicides reach a destination other than their intended targets.

And consider this: commercial granulated fertilizer contains three elements: nitrogen, phosphate and potassium. Of these, phosphates and to a lesser extent nitrogen, are absolutely key players in the process of eutrification, in the pollution of our once pristine seas.

If we all cut down on the use of phosphates alone, we might – just – help arrest a process whereby our seas are being defiled, maybe might even save the lives of a few precious trigger, parrot and surgeonfish.

Hey you, get off my cloud



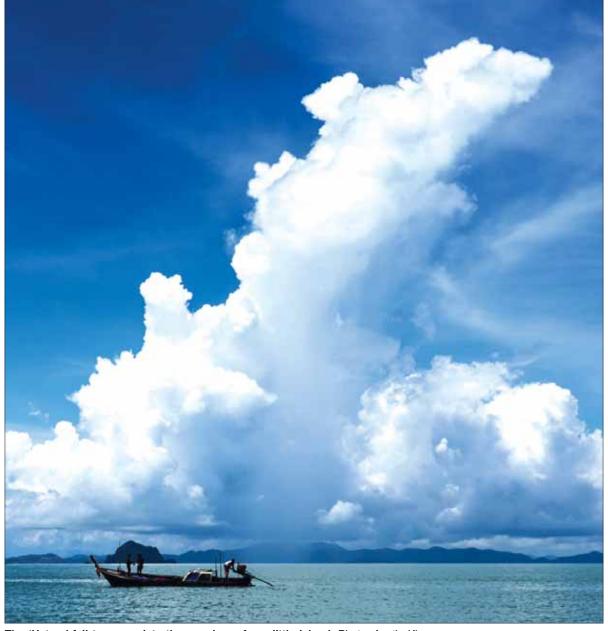
Island Fever By Bill Barnett

OVER the years, old Mick and Keef have amazingly managed to somehow keep the rolling thunder of Rock 'n' Roll headed on the upward curve. Sure, it's been a bit of a zig-zag at times, but still they remain intact. In a manner of speaking that is. I'd of course have a hard time naming a post-1990s Stones tune, but still they have so many extra credits earned from the 60s and 70s, that forgiveness is more than a beat away.

In the early days of 2015, I remain stunningly optimistic and the real target of any overhanging angst from too many drinks on New Year's Eve still remains the small but verbose island group known as "The Haters". This term has someone entrenched itself into our vocabulary over the past decade and remains an excellent description of negative naysayers.

On an island such as Phuket, the backyard in which we live remains small, segmented and incestuous. Though everyone does not know everyone, there is always someone who fits into the "Five Degrees of Separation" theory. It's increasingly hard to remain anonymous and those who try to only seem to end up on the front page of a newspaper or website surrounded by smiling Thai policemen or flanked by a man from Interpol in a suit.

Last year was of course one of serious change, and more dynamic fluctuations than anyone could chronicle in a mere newspaper column. Still, things remain fluid and the best advice is to lock into the spirit of one of the "Stay Calm"



The 'Haters' fail to appreciate the wonders of our little island. Photo: Austin King

logos and tick the patience box.

My inner rage, though, remains reserved for "The Haters" whose constant barrage against traffic conditions, beach umbrellas, taxis, government, Russians, Chinese,

or any other of a dozen so-called themes goes on unabated. I, of course, do from time to time make fun of Thai Airways and the airport, but again dark humor remains a misunderstood form. It's not cynicism; it's more the inner demons having a laugh.

If I were to ask a man on the street to create a pro and con list shouldn't be anymore. about Phuket, the exercise would truly be enlightening to see which

course the journey took. What about the silent majority who do not take to the internet under pseudonyms or revel in dank selfpleasuring anonymity? Is endlessly whining better than sex. Or is it a reversion to the crib?

My mission in 2015, which will no doubt zig-zag and weave, will be to have a look at what's going right on the island; from a surging technology scene, to the arts, design, food, tourism and property sectors. In other words, stories that don't hit the headlines, such as how homegrown enterprise is ticking things up a notch.

Like it or not, the bad news will continue to dominate the headlines. So often when I travel abroad and tell people I am from Phuket the barrage of questions about murders, violence, beaches gone amok and just general screwiness makes me want to exit quickly. I'm often left wondering is my Phuket the same island I live on? Where is the pride, the love of place and people and general optimism gone?

Any reader knows I love my coffee and those caffeine breaks at Bake continue to have me reaching into my pocket all too often, but what keeps me getting up every day is not to fly into a rage of absolute despair or anger. But the love of the day and the place I've found myself in certainly do.

Rose-tinted glasses? Not at all. Small doses of angst? Absolutely. Occasional loathing? Yes, sir. But at the end of the day, the thin divide between "Doers" and "Haters" is growing wider. If there were any question before as to what side I stand on, there





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Counseling: defining help



ROUGHLY one out of 15 people are affected by poor mental health at least one time in their life, but many don't realize that they need help, that help exists, how it works or indeed how to find it. Most of us have heard of counseling (also referred to as therapy or psychotherapy), but that doesn't help people understand what counseling is or what to expect.

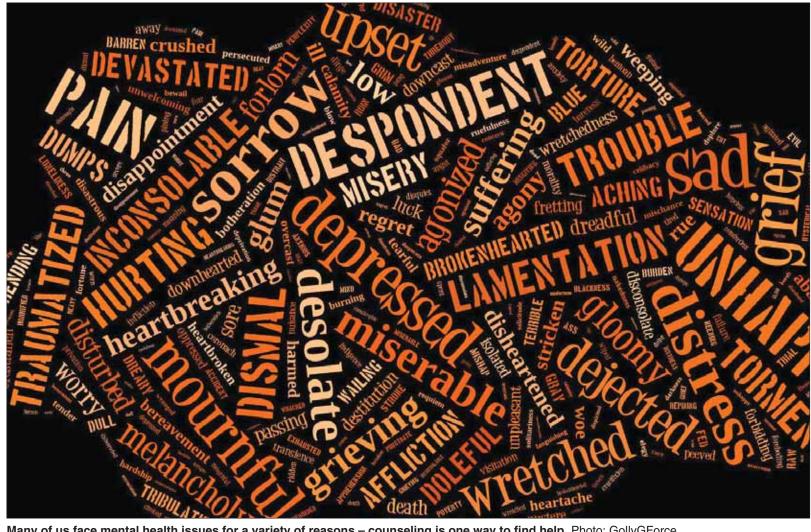
Just to get the ball rolling, let me paint a fictional example for you of a scenario I have seen many times over the years.

Susan, James and their son Charlie, moved to Phuket last year amid great excitement and expectations about living in an island paradise. At first, everything was new, exciting and fun and James advanced his career in the company. Soon, however, James was spending less and less time at home and Susan was left to cope with raising a child in a foreign land while building a social network.

When James was home, he just wanted to relax and enjoy Phuket. The two soon began to quarrel – something that Charlie had never seen before. Charlie began to act up in school, which then led to more tension at home. Within nine months of moving here, life in their island paradise was beginning to tear the family apart.

The school suggested Charlie see a counselor. It soon became clear that Charlie's issues were not purely his own and that the parents' participation was critical; not only for Charlie but for their own happiness as well. The counselor held sessions with Charlie alone, then individually with each parent and together, and then finally with the family as a whole.

Everyone in the family learned a lot about themselves as people and also how their actions, words and



Many of us face mental health issues for a variety of reasons - counseling is one way to find help. Photo: GollyGForce

attitudes affect the other family members. The counselor helped the family prioritize their issues and deal with them in a constructive manner. Susan and James were pleasantly surprised to see that their counselor remained neutral throughout the process and allowed them to individually air their views without interruption. For the first time in months, Susan and James were able to address their problems by expressing how they truly felt. Eventually, life became easier and the family bond strengthened to the point where they could thrive together and individually.

This is what counseling is. It provides a safe, confidential place to talk about issues in your life. It is a process whereby client and counselor come together to create a strong therapeutic relationship to enable effective changes in the life of the client or enhance their well-being.

Some individuals come for counseling because they are finding life events difficult to deal with, such as relocation to Thailand, divorce, bereavement or health issues. Others want to improve their relationships, better understand themselves or to reduce particularly disruptive behavior. Children and adolescents may attend counseling because of a change in their behavior due to bullying, friendship issues, excessive worry, fear or anxiety, sibling issues, parental separation or divorce, or exam preparation.

Most counselors work with clients face-to-face. Other counselors are available for consultation over the telephone, online, or in a group. Whichever setting you and your counselor decide upon, it is valuable to be aware of what to expect during your first encounter.

The first session explores what you feel you are coming to counseling for, what you would like to achieve during the sessions and agreeing on how you will both work together. In some cases you may not have any idea of what you are

coming for and what you hope to get out of it. This is perfectly okay.

Your counselor should make you feel able to relax and not feel pressured or rushed and will ask you a number of questions to assess how you can work together.

Rita Dobson, MBPS, BACP, is a professional counselor with a graduate diploma in psychology and an MA in counseling from Monash University. Rita has lived in Southeast Asia for more than 20 years. She has been working with youths in community centers, schools and young offenders' institutions, as well as supporting their families. Rita can be reached at rita@balancegroup.asia



What to expect from an ethical first encounter

key items you may wish to dis-

How will you both decide if counseling is helpful?

- How many sessions will you have together before you review your progress and determine how many future sessions will be necessary?

- What happens if you are unable to attend a scheduled session?

- Your counselor's qualifications and experience.

How your counselor intends to work with you.

If you choose to go ahead with Which approach will be used?

your chosen counselor some - Does the counselor maintain all adhere to an ethical framerecords?

> - Can you contact the counselor out of hours?

Ethical counselors will discuss the above items with you during the first session and will have a written agreement referring to the points. This is necessary as it clarifies issues as to what was agreed upon. Members of counseling associations, such as the British **Association for Counseling and** Psychotherapy and The Austra-

lian Counseling Association, work and conduct themselves in a professional manner according to its procedures. Please note that a counselor should not:

- Make any decisions for you, by advice giving or persuasion.

Take advantage of you in

- Offer to "fix" your issues

 Judge you Talk about their own

problems

Discuss your relationship inappropriately with others

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Woolf in shepherd's clothing

Internationally renowned clairvoyant stops in Rawai for a 'look'

By Barry Daniel

LYNDA Woolf is a celebrated seer,

currently visiting the Atsumi The almost addictive Health and power of hand-held Wellness Center in Rawai to disinternet devices, is pense wisdom dumbing us all down and to those in need building psychological of her extraordinary services. barriers between our Hailing from consciousness and our

a stunningly beautiful corner of the US, Lake Tahoe, Lynda called

largely to facilitate her work as a lived a multitude. But even if you psychic practitioner and healer find such a leap of faith to believe

throughout Asia. Listing royalty, politicians Hollywood A-Listers such as Demi Moore, Sly Stallone and the late Dudley Moore among her famous clients, Lynda has even deployed her remarkable talents to aid the FBI with some of their criminal investigations.

With such an

impressive reputation preceding her, I was naturally a tad nervous, and maybe even guarded as I approached our meeting in a lovely outdoor sala set in the relaxing gardens of the Atsumi Center. Would her extraordinary intuition and spiritual connections en-

torrent of repressed misdeeds? I probably shouldn't have worried, for Lynda turned out to be a clairvoyant and mystic who is charming lady, sporting rather ex-

otic purple hair, who immediately put me at ease with her approachable and friendly manner.

Lynda would quantify her unique talent for seeing and understanding people in terms of spirits, angels and past

Singapore home since 1996, lives of which she claims to have

deeper emotions and

sources of wisdom.

/ Being based in

Singapore, I see this to a

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tinually wired into the

cyberworld, meaning that

they miss out on so much

of the beauty, truth and

understanding that is in the

reality all around them.

- Lynda Woolf

in such things difficult to make (as do I) there's no that doubt pos-Lynda sesses charm. intuition and insight - all of which help make her an exceedingly able counselor and guide.

Who then are the clients who seek out Lynda's unusual services?

Do they have any unifying traits? "Transformation is the word I would use," says Lynda. "Most of the people who come to consult with me are seeking a transformation of some sort. They are in a place in their lives where they're



Lynda Woolf sits down with the Gazette at the Atsumi Health and Wellness Center in Rawai.

emotions, and this is a role for

which she seems to be naturally

gifted. She's an intelligent and

easy-going conversationalist... a

bit like a classic matriarchal

figure, dispensing good sense and

unhappy or dissatisfied and they want to change."

That is of course very true of most visitors to any health and wellness retreat such as Atsumi. We tend to book ourselves in for a detox, fast, cleanse and psychic recalibration of our lives, not when things are going swimmingly, but

wisdom. rather when the foreboding clouds of life's traumas are gathering. Hence it's true that Lynda needs to be a sensitive guardian and guide of so that they can achieve the

Lynda's passion is to give people the information and tools they need to continue to move forward in their lives and to do this she uses all her five senses, as well as her extraordinary intuition to help people find themselves and their own power

changes they desire.

While Lynda is well known as a television personality, radio presenter and newspaper columnist and will even do consultations by email or Skype, she is somewhat distrustful of the technological changes that are transforming our

"The almost addictive power of hand-held internet devices is dumbing us all down and building psychological barriers between our consciousness and our deeper emotions and sources of wisdom,"

"Being based in Singapore, I see this to a terrifying degree. The population there, particularly the young, seems entirely robotic and continually wired into the cyberworld, meaning that they miss out on so much of the beauty, truth and understanding that is in the reality all around them."

Lynda travels extensively between her clients to destinations all around the world including the US, Asia, Australia and Europe. Her ability to understand different cultures, philosophies and religions makes her unique and she is a blend of her travels and experiences that have enhanced her wisdom, clarity and intuition. Certainly Thailand's Theravada Buddhist tradition with its focus on meditation and reincarnation is close to her heart.

As someone who studied science at university, I found it hard to subscribe to many of the entities and tenets of Lynda's psychological view, lacking as they do hard scientific evidence to back them up. However when I looked at my watch I realized that we had enjoyed an extremely fascinating two-hour conversation covering a huge range of topics and I thought that maybe I was being a bit mealy mouthed in splitting semantic hairs about whether spirits and past lives really exist.

For whatever labels we choose to describe her sources and abilities, it's clear that Lynda is someone with a great deal of wisdom and guidance to impart to those who seek her help.



Thais rule knockout fest

By Chutharat Plerin

THAI fighters dominated the Kard Chuek Original boxing event at Saphan Hin on December 25, winning eight of the 10 fights against their international rivals – seven of them by knockout.

Only one fight was decided on points, with Petcheak Lookporkhun defeating Saliman Sing-Patong of Algeria in the opening bout.

To get the event underway at 4pm, fighters performed a demonstration of muay khat chueak the ancient form of Thai boxing in which fighters wrap rope around their fists.

Joining the hundreds who turned out for the event were Phuket Governor Nisit Jansomwong; Narae Laovichaya, deputy permanent secretary of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports and Rear Admiral Teansiri Montriwade, deputy commander of the Royal Thai Navy Third Area Command in Phuket.

The 10 listed fights were televised nationwide on Channel 5 and



Thai fighters won eight of the 10 fights against international boxers, seven of them by knockout. Photo: PR Dept

Thai Global Network (TGN).

Eight of the 10 fights on the

broadcast to 170 countries via the event card were in *muay khat* modern style with gloves. chueak style, while two fights on

Before the listed fights began, the night (1 and 7) were fought—the only women's fight—and the only fight between two Thai nationals - on the night was held, with Hongyoklek Liangprasert defeating Porntip Thanakorn.

After Petcheak's victory on points, Famongkol Liangprasert, Robert Masod Muaythai, Teerapong Korkiatwit, Phuthai NS Sport, Paisrithong Kiatprapat, Yodpolice Korkiatwit and Resort Liangprasert all won their bouts by knockout.

However, Oliver Sing Patong of Algeria and Arthur Sing Patong of Cambodia won their fights, both also by knockout.

"I am not a big fan of muaythai, but these fights held all of my attention. I couldn't leave my seat from the first fight until the final round," said Governor Nisit.

The governor recognized the important contribution muaythai as a sport makes to Phuket's tourism industry.

"There are at least four stadiums and 45 Thai boxing camps in Phuket," he said. "Many tourists attend classes at these camps, bringing millions of baht to Phuket in income."

Pencak silat fighters brace for world title

AT LEAST 600 fighters from 36 countries have confirmed to contest the 16th Pencak Silat World Championship, to be held at Saphan Hin from January 7-17.

More athletes are expected to vie for their respective titles in the tournament, said Panu Uthairat, president of Pencak Silat Association of Thailand (PSAT).

"We have invited athletes from 47 countries in total," he noted.

Mr Panu told a meeting held recently at Phuket Provincial Hall that he expected Thais to perform well in the tournament.

"We believe Thais will get at least two gold medals from the competition," he said.

"We are almost 100 per cent ready," added Mr Panu. "I would like to thank everyone involved for such good preparations. Deputy Prime Minister Gen Prawit



Pencak silat fighters will battle in Phuket for world title glory. Photo: Woranut Pechdee

Wongsuwa will chair the opening ceremony."

Phuket hosting the Asian Beach Games last year, and other international sporting events, demonstrated how well events could be staged on the island, he

"In the meantime, Thai athletes will gain more experience in international competition."

- Chutharat Plerin





Sunday Brunch at Mint restaurant

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