

Phuket Gazette

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‘SIX KILLED IN SEVEN DAYS DURING SAFETY CAMPAIGN’

Deadly roads

■ Safety experts seek solutions to some of the most dangerous roads in the world

By Kongleaphy Keam

DESPITE the devastating death toll during the ‘Seven Days of Danger’ road-safety campaign – reaching six this year, triple last year’s total – the number of fatalities from road accidents on the island have gradually declined throughout the last seven years, confirmed the Thai Road Safety Network (RSN).

The number of road deaths has reduced from about 200 in 2008 to just over 100 in 2014, explained Wiwat Seetam-anotch, the deputy chair of RSN and an executive adviser to the National Institute of Emergency Medicine.

Despite efforts to reduce accidents, Thailand annually has an average of more than 26,000 traffic-accident deaths and remains, on a per capita basis, home to the second most dangerous roads in the world behind Namibia.

In comparison, Thailand’s fatality rate is 15 times higher than the UK, which has a similar population but only yields about 1700 deaths annually.

“There are three main factors



Mutslim Dakhan was the second of six people to die during the ‘Seven Days of Danger’. Photo: Winai Sarot

leading to these fatal crashes: roads, vehicles and drivers,” said Mr Wiwat. “We are doing our best to tackle the core problems festering in each factor in an effort to see a further 50 per cent reduction in road deaths in the next five years.”

HOW YOU DRIVE

Efforts in the battle against drunk

driving received much-needed additional ammunition when Michael Woodford, the executive chairman of Safer Roads Foundation (SRF), and his wife Anunciacion Somavilla, presented 39 Lion alcoholmeter SD-400s breathylizers to then-Phuket Governor Nisit Jansomwong on August 27.

“I’ve been utterly consumed in a whole range of road-safety

endeavors in the UK and around the world, so many of which are literally life-and-death issues,” Mr Woodford said. “Even on holiday, I spend several hours a day dealing with urgent issues, which as they often relate to life-and-death, simply can’t be put on hold until I return....”

Continued on Pages 4-5

Tourist killed by speedboat propeller

FRENCH tourist Sylvie Thiebaut was killed while snorkelling after she was struck in the head by the propeller of a speedboat.

The speedboat captain fled the scene, only to turn himself in at Thalang Police Station that night.

Full story Page 3

BUSINESS



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Desmond Hughes weighs the pros and cons of life in North and South Thailand.

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Teen injured in jet-ski accident

A SIXTEEN-year-old Finnish tourist was injured in a jet-ski accident on Kata Beach on January 4.

Akseli Elias injured his leg in the crash. Lifeguards administered first aid before he was taken to Phuket International Hospital.

Hospital employees declined to reveal the extent of the injuries.

– Winai Sarot

17-year-old dies in kayaking accident

A MAN died while kayaking with two friends in the Tah Jeen Canal in Phuket on January 5.

Unable to swim, 18-year-old Charnis Kilngklip died after his kayak began taking on water and sank.

His friends tried to search for him with the help of a nearby speedboat repairman but gave up the search after 20 minutes.

Rescue workers were able to recover Mr Charnis's body.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

More than 20 bus drivers busted for drugs

OFFICERS arrested more than 20 bus drivers between December 30 and January 1 for amphetamine use as the drivers made their way through the Tah Chat Chai checkpoint.

Dive instructors spend NYE in jail for working illegally



Seven Phuket dive instructors spent New Year's Eve in jail on Phi Phi Island after being arrested on the dive boat Aragon for working illegally. The dive instructors, six of whom were Chinese nationals, were held overnight on Phi Phi and then transferred to Krabi City Police Station, where they were held until their court hearing on January 2. All seven suspects were certified dive instructors with work permits. However, the work permits were for Phuket, not Krabi. For the full story, visit PhuketGazette.net. Photo: Gazette file

The arrests followed in the wake of the establishment of a joint task force of police, local government officials and provincial officers formed by Phuket Governor Chamroen Tipayatpongata. The task force aims to tackle drug use by public transportation drivers and other professionals working with tourists.

Officers suspended the driving licence of each of the bus drivers for 30 days and fined each of them 10,000 baht. Additionally, they will begin a rehab program.

– Kongleaphy Keam

LOCAL NEWS Briefly

Navy mission rescues seven lost at sea

A ROYAL Thai Navy rescue mission on December 30 saved seven sailors who were left adrift about 150 nautical miles from Phuket after an engine explosion caused their cargo ship to sink.

All crew members arrived at the Deep Sea Port in Phuket after receiving medical care on the rescue boat. Officials found them in a life raft two days after the boat sank – one of the men was unconscious.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

Road-raging minivan driver surrenders

A KRABI van driver surrendered to police on January 5 after a video clip of him driving erratically and attacking a foreigner on a motorbike went viral on social media.

Pornthep Petsut, 32, was charged with assault based on

the evidence in the video clip recorded and posted by university student Somboon Ajariya.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

Angelina Jolie's visit to Phuket temple sparks Hindu buzz

OSCAR-winning actress Angelina Jolie has received a wave of support from members of the Hindu community, after they learned of her visit to a Hindu temple in Phuket in the last week of December.

Rajan Zed, president of the Universal Society of Hinduism, welcomed Ms Jolie's reported interest in the religion.

He also offered the actress assistance, saying that he, or any other Hindu scholars, would be glad to guide her.

– Phuket Gazette

Latvian busted for making off with millions in luxury goods

POLICE arrested a Latvian man on January 4 for stealing luxury accessories worth more than 2.5 million baht from a

shopping mall in Phuket over the weekend.

Kristaps Kosogovs, 29, was apprehended at his Rawai hotel room after police were able to track him down using CCTV footage, confirmed Tourist Police Chief Urumporn Koondejsumrit.

Mr Kosogovs was caught in possession of two Piaget watches, worth about 1.2mn and 1.3mn baht respectively, as well as an Aigner handbag worth about 10,500 baht.

Mr Kosogovs confessed to stealing the items from the shopping mall and was charged with theft.

Police declined to reveal the name of the shopping mall.

– Chutharat Plerin

Ganja dealer arrested with 11kg of weed

POLICE arrested a 22-year-old man for possession of about 11 kilograms of marijuana, an illegal firearm and other drug paraphernalia at a location near Bangkok Hospital Phuket on December 30.

Subinnimit Rakvet, 22, was charged for possession of a Category 5 drug with intent to sell, possession of a Category 2 drug and possession of an illegal firearm. – Winai Sarot

Former officer arrested for moving ya ice through airport

A FORMER Royal Thai Air Force officer was arrested at Phuket International Airport on January 3, as she attempted to smuggle ya ice (crystal methamphetamine) from Bangkok to Phuket.

Chutima Somboonrit, 29, was arrested with about 40 grams of ya ice and drug paraphernalia, confirmed officials from the Phuket Provincial Police.

Officials received a tip-off from one of their sources that a woman fitting her description would be bringing in drugs from Bangkok via a Nok Air flight.

Ms Chutima confessed to the police that she had been hired for 5,000 baht to deliver the drugs.

She was charged for possessing a Category 1 drug with intent to sell.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

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Speedboat driver hits, kills French snorkeller in Krabi

By Chutharat Plerin

A FRENCH tourist was killed while snorkelling south of Poda Island in Krabi after she was struck on the head by a speedboat propeller on Tuesday.

Sylvie Thiebaut, 52, was on a multi-day island trip with her husband and five friends when the incident occurred.

"We were informed of the incident at about 3pm. The speedboat driver fled to Phuket after the accident," Phuket Marine Police Chief Panya Chaichana told the *Gazette*. "We were able to trace the speedboat, belonging to Amazing Canoeing Group Co Ltd, to Ao Por."

Later that day, the 29-year-old captain, Yothin Suebsak, turned himself into Thalang Police. Officers also arrested Myanmar national Maling El @ Aee, 29, who was working on the speedboat at the time of the accident.

Mr Yothin told officers in Phuket that he was unaware that the tourist was killed in the accident.

"Mr Yothin claimed that he did not see the victim snorkelling," said Col Panya. "He saw a man waving and a dinghy coming to pick someone up,



Mr Yothin (in pink) told officers that he didn't see the woman in the water. Photo: Phuket Marine Police

but said he had no idea that Ms Thiebaut had been killed. The only thing he knew was that someone was injured. However, he needed to take his clients back to Ao Por. So, he reported the accident to the speedboat owner on the way back."

The owner of speedboat So Cool 1, Watchara Pasompol, confirmed that Mr Yothin had been taking nine – two Italians and seven Russians – out for a day trip from Ao Por.

Ms Thiebaut, her husband and five friends were part of a 16-person trip that left Phuket on Monday. They spent the night on Koh Hong, before snorkelling at Koh Poda.

On Wednesday, Mr Yothin and Mr Maling were both taken to Krabi City Police Station for further questioning.

"I have yet to question Mr Yothin about the incident. He was questioned in Phuket. However, it's important that I

also talk with him and hear his side of the story," Maj Jarun Nabphet of the Krabi City Police told the *Gazette* on Wednesday morning.

"As for Mr Maling, I will look into whether or not he was working legally on the speedboat and what role, if any, he played in the accident.

"We will question the parties involved and then look at what charges, if any, will be filed against them."

Man admits to attempted rape of 8-year-old



Wuttichai Srithai. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

A TRANG man confessed to police that he attempted to rape an 8-year-old Russian tourist on January 1.

Karon Police confirmed to the *Gazette* that former hotel employee Wuttichai Srithai, 30, admitted to coaxing the girl into a room after seeing her playing on a computer on the ground floor of the hotel. Police declined to name the hotel.

"The girl shouted for help. Passersby heard her call and were able to break open the door," said Lt Nipon Tamsung of the Karon Police. "The suspect immediately fled the scene."

Hotel staff were able to confirm Mr Wuttichai's identity using CCTV footage.

Mr Wuttichai was charged with the attempted rape of a minor under the age of 13, which yields a maximum penalty of up to 20 years imprisonment, a fine of up to 40,000 baht, or both.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong



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Topless tourists fined for busty display in Patong

POLICE fined an American and Austrian tourist for public nudity after a video surfaced of the pair sitting on the window sills of a slow-rolling SUV, exposing their bare breasts to those on the streets of Patong on January 2.

"We were made aware of the video at about 2pm on January 3," said Lt Col Sutthichai Thianpho of the Patong Police. "It didn't take long to track down the suspects as we had the licence plate number of the vehicle."

American national Adrianna Martin, 20, and Austrian national Camille Prymann, 25, were apprehended on January 3 after police traced the SUV to Malee Villa in Rawai, where they were informed that the vehicle was reserved for guests.

The pair were brought to the Patong Police Station where



The women were lectured and then fined 500 baht. Photo: Patong Police

officials informed them of the charge of indecent public exposure.

"We explained to them why such behavior was inappropriate

and charged them for public nudity. They both said they understood and each paid the 500-baht fine."

— Chutharat Plerin

The fight

From Page 1

... "The problem for me is that if you can't change things, then in a way you resign yourself to that fact and don't worry, but when you realize that you have an ability to address some of the dangers on the world's roads, then it becomes a lifelong obligation."

The increased presence and support from SRF is not taken for granted, assured Phuket Provincial Police Commander Teeraphol Thipjaroen.

"The 39 breathalyzers have been very useful in our crack-down on drunk driving; they are allowing our limited number of officers to be more efficient and effective," Col Teeraphol said. "In October and November, we arrested 416 people for driving under the influence – that's more arrests than all of 2014."

Col Teeraphol vowed to maintain the campaign against drunk driving on the island, which was launched well ahead of the nationwide 'Seven Days of Danger' campaign.

"We know that there will continue to be people operating motor vehicles while under the influence. However, I would like to encourage everyone to think twice before drinking and driving – you're not only risking your life, but the lives of others," he said.

The colonel's focus for road safety, however, isn't just on drunk driving.

"We will continue to be on the lookout for people breaking all types of traffic laws."

Mr Wiwat of RSN is empathetic to the difficulties facing police as they attempt to enforce traffic laws.

"There are simply not enough officers," said Mr Wiwat. "However, enforcement continues to be very soft for traffic violations. Those who are caught must be dealt with strictly."

Failure to wear a helmet, drunk driving, speeding, running red lights, ghost driving and illegal u-turning are just a few of the numerous traffic violations regularly witnessed by motorists on Phuket.

"Starting in 2010, we increased our enforcement of wearing a helmet," Mr Wiwat said. "From that initiative alone, we saw a reduction of 30 deaths per year."

In 2014, Phuket was ranked the top province for the high-

est rate of helmet use in Thailand. The three previous years, the province was ranked number two.

"In addition to carelessness or disregard for the law, the quality of drivers on Thailand's roads is very low," Mr Wiwat said. "The quality of drivers who are able to pass the test and get a driver's licence is still very low – they just aren't necessarily good, safe drivers."

WHERE YOU DRIVE

The conditions of Phuket's roads also play an enormous factor in the accident rate on the island, Mr Wiwat said.

"In developed countries, there are clear differences between inner-city roads and highways – like an expressway – which connect one city to another. However, in Thailand, small communities are strewn along major roadways, which creates a dangerous mix of slow and fast traffic," Mr Wiwat explained. "Thepkrasattri Road is a perfect example of this. In areas that the road bisects a community, there are people trying to cross the road, make u-turns and make other maneuvers on the road, which creates a very dangerous situation."

However, perhaps a greater concern, are specific unsafe areas on roads, such as dangerous u-turns, particular curves, slippery roads, dust and gravel, and the lack of enough signage to warn motorists of dangerous sections of the road ahead.

"My wife Nancy and I are spending millions of pounds of our own money over a three-year period to fund more than a hundred remedial schemes at the country's worst accident 'black spots'," Mr Woodford said. "And the engineering and traffic management systems (speed and red light cameras) will bring an immediate and dramatic reduction in casualties."

Over the last seven years, RSN has worked with local authorities to rectify more than 40 'black spots' on Phuket alone.

"We have installed more necessary traffic lights, improved safety at u-turn points, created more road medians, fixed slippery roads and so on," Mr Wiwat said. "Just between 2008 and 2010, we fixed about 20 black spots and found that our remedies decreased the number of traffic accidents on the island by about 30 per cent."

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to make island roads safe

Next year, more than 10 deadly sections of Phuket's roads are set to be fixed.

WHAT YOU DRIVE

The fact that the vast majority of those travelling on Thailand's roads do so on motorbikes is another factor to the country having some of the most deadly asphalt in the world.

"Motorbikes are cheaper than cars, but also more risky. According to our statistics, 80 per cent of road deaths in Thailand are motorbike riders," Mr Wiwat said.

However, Thailand's weak control over the safety standards of vehicles is also an issue, Mr Wiwat explained.

"In Europe, they have the European New Car Assessment Program (Euro NCAP) and in Japan they have the Japan NCAP. However, Thailand does not have similar standards," he pointed out.

In fellow Asean Economic Community member country Vietnam, SRF recently hosted a workshop for the CEOs of



Despite the checkpoints set up throughout the island, six people were killed during the 'Seven Days of Danger' road-safety campaign. Photo: Gazette file

the country's motorcycle/moped manufacturers, senior government ministers and NGO members in order to gain a consensus to introduce 'Automatic Headlights On' (AHO) at the earliest possible opportunity.

"The improved conspicuous reduces fatalities and

serious injuries by between 10 per cent to 20 per cent and is a simple wiring change during manufacture and costs absolutely nothing. If we are successful with the introduction of AHO, it will save hundreds of lives a year," Mr Woodford said.

"Disturbingly, 108 people

were killed on your small island last year [2014] and many hundreds more seriously injured, which brings home the need to do everything we possibly can to reduce this pointless carnage.

"What impressed me was the sincerity and positive attitude of the Governor, and also the

police commander, who both clearly care passionately about acting quickly to reduce fatalities and injuries on the island's roads."

Speaking with the *Gazette*, Phuket Governor Chamroen Tipayapongtada urged the public to take road safety seriously.

"There are more and more vehicles on the our roads every year and we must take responsibility for our safety and the safety of other motorists. At the provincial level, I have tasked relevant authorities to tackle this issue head on," Governor Chamroen said. "Please follow the traffic laws set in place."

Mr Woodford assured the *Gazette* that SRF was fostering an important relationship with the local government and was eager to assist in improving road safety on the island.

"SRF always wants to work in a way where the local people are involved and supportive, and it was clear from our visit in August that the local government and the police are fully committed," he said.

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Bar girl 'added injury to insult'

Though there have been significant improvements over the last decade in tackling road-safety and safe-sex issues, we still have a long, hard road ahead of us in order to create a safer Phuket. — *Isaac Stone Simonelli*

Panel silent on Rajabhakti case

THE Defence Ministry panel looking into the Rajabhakti Park scandal says it has no plans to release its investigation results to the public. Nor will it submit the results to the Office of the Auditor-General (OAG), which is also investigating alleged corruption.

"We have checked all facts about the Rajabhakti Park project. It's not about nailing down culprits," the ministry's permanent secretary General Preecha Chan-o-cha said on January 4.

He explained that his ministry had already provided all relevant information on the project, except identifying culprits. That would be the duty of other related agencies.

The Defence Ministry set up the fact-finding panel late last year, after the park project became mired in corruption allegations. The park is located on land owned by the Army in Hua Hin.

Move to seize licences from drunk drivers

PRIME Minister Gen Prayut Chan-o-cha vowed on January 4 to continue measures against drunk drivers – but said that he would rather seize drivers' licences instead of impounding their vehicles.

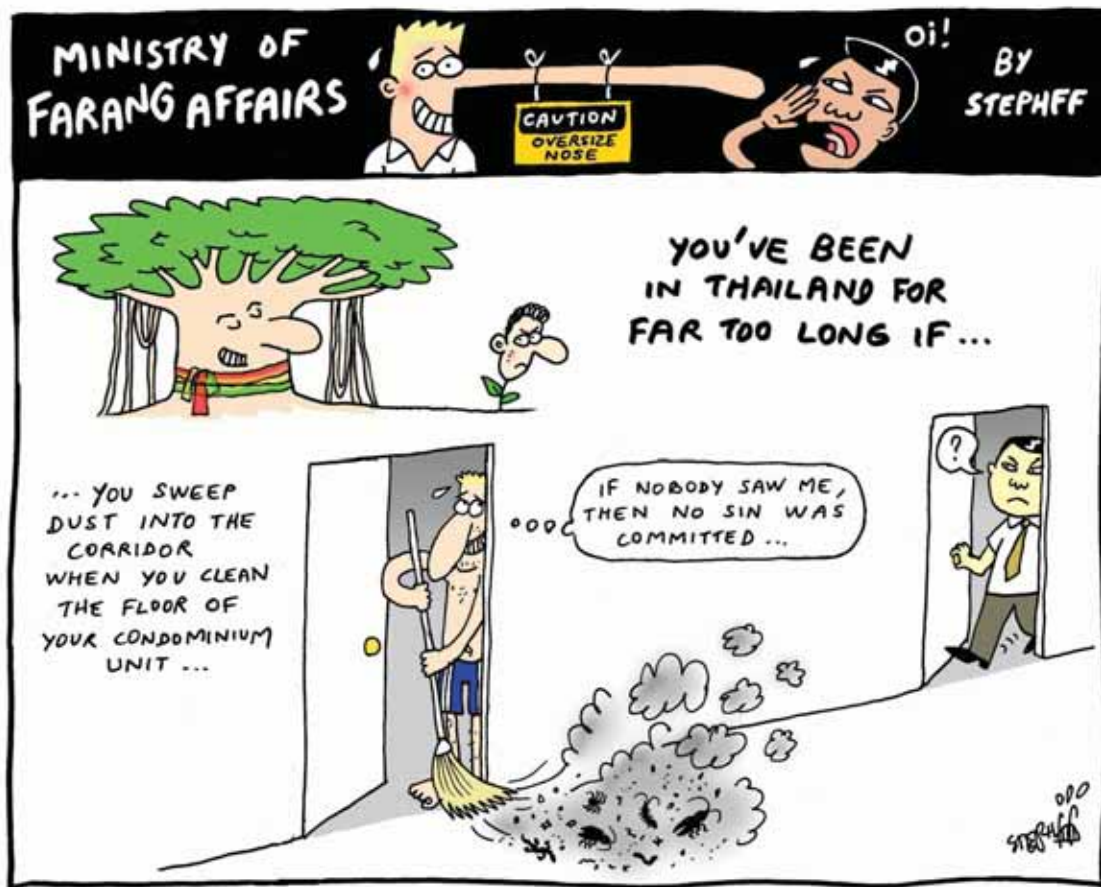
However, Police Chief Chakthip Chaijinda said that police wanted to continue to impound vehicles on all major holidays – as it had yielded a satisfactory result.

Justice Permanent Secretary Chanchao Chaiyanukij said he would propose that the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) continue to seize drunk drivers' vehicles until the Songkran Festival and seven months beyond that.

Mr Chanchao said the criteria could be amended so it would not just depend on officers' discretion, in a bid to prevent corruption.

Hospitals fear major impact of legal advice

MEDICAL service providers and patients stand to experience a huge impact from the State Council's ruling on universal health coverage, which could prevent its budget being used



for hospital utility expenses and preliminary financial assistance in medical malpractice cases.

However, to prevent massive adverse impacts, the National Health Security Office (NHSO) board resolved on January 4 that it would continue with its current budgetary practices.

"I will take responsibility for this and so will other board members," Public Health Minister Piyasakol Sakolsatayadorn said in his capacity as chairman of the NHSO board. "This is because we have to act in the public interest."

He added that the NHSO board also planned to appeal the ruling.

Deep South fights plans for coal power plant

PEOPLE in Pattani and neighboring areas on January 2 set up a network to take action against the construction of a coal-fired power plant in Songkhla's Thepha district.

They claim the plant will pose a threat to national security, as well as people's health and livelihood in the Deep South.

During the launch at a community center in Pattani's Nong Chik district, 200 participants were told about the negative impacts the power plant will have, including claims that the plant would deal another blow to the region's yet-to-be-solved unrest.

NATIONAL NEWS Briefly

Vietnamese pickpocket gang busted in north

FIVE Vietnamese nationals were arrested for stealing cash from crowded shops in popular tourist areas in Chiang Mai's Muang district.

The gang – comprised of four men aged 18-44 and a 23-year-old woman – were presented to the press along with 3,530 baht and nine mobile phones on January 2. They had allegedly carried out similar crimes in Chiang Mai province twice before.

Special help for fishermen given green light

THE Cabinet on December 29 approved two measures to help fishermen suffering from the increased enforcement of laws and measures to deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

The first move is to use 215 million baht to buy back the boats of fishermen who cannot comply with the tougher regulations or those who want to leave to try another vocation.

The second measure is to ease access to soft loans from the Government Savings Bank for operators who need to upgrade their equipment and boat so they can continue fishing.

Tourists warned about elephants in the wild

TOURISTS travelling to the Khao Yai National Park have a

great opportunity to encounter wild elephants. However, the park chief, Kanchit Srinoppawan, explained that it was dangerous to get too close or photograph the animals.

Locals standup for teen who denounced gold operation

ABOUT 40 villagers gathered on December 29 to show their support for a schoolgirl who was reportedly asked by a school director to apologize to a gold-mining firm that is threatening to sue her and the school.

The 15-year-old received a summons after the gold mining firm decided to file a libel suit against her in response to her appearance on a TV program called 'Citizen reporting' on Thai-PBS.

Five insurgents sentenced for 2004 attacks

THE Supreme Court on December 29 handed life sentences to three men and jail terms of 13 years and four months to two others after they were found guilty of terrorist acts in the Deep South more than a decade ago.

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Phuket, drive defensively

DESPITE some positive developments with law enforcement, the sobering results of this year's 'Seven Days of Danger' road-safety campaign shows that Phuket still has a long way to go before the island's road safety is at an international standard befitting a world-class tourist destination.

The introduction of more proactive law enforcement measures to catch motorists for moving violations is revealed in some of the arrest statistics that were released at the end of this particularly grim period of accounting.

There was a marked increase in the number of motorists caught for such moving violations as drunk driving, speeding, making illegal u-turns and 'ghost riding' when compared to previous campaigns. Yet despite this positive development, the end result remains depressing and unacceptable: six dead and 75 injured during the period.

As opined in this space many times over the years, the underlying cause of all these needless, devastating tragedies is not our woefully understaffed, undertrained traffic police. It rests in a culture of carelessness, a form of wishful thinking that allows otherwise rational beings to take to the roads with a self-perceived sense of personal safety so overwhelming that they feel that the laws of physics simply do not apply to them.

The unprecedented crackdown on drunk driving is a good place to start and is long overdue, but we certainly need a more holistic approach that goes beyond random blood-alcohol testing and gets to the root cause of the problem: a lack of personal responsibility, not only for one's own safety, but for others who share our roadways.

Ask about any Thai who has experienced driving in Europe or North America and it is difficult to get them to stop talking about just how different – and better – it is. The great enigma is why a country known for smiles, hospitality and social etiquette seems so incapable of transferring those qualities to the tarmac.

It goes without saying that Phuket roadways are dangerous enough in themselves to warrant great caution. What is needed is a paradigm shift that moves the situation from the current norm of widespread, wanton recklessness to something more logical, sensible and responsible.

As this will never be accomplished by law enforcement or top-down dictates, we have to start from the bottom. As 2016 unrolls before us, the Phuket Gazette urges all readers to work 'driving defensively' into their list of New Year's resolutions.

As an old driving safety slogan from the west once put it: 'The life you save might be your own'.



Diving industry work permits need review

Re: Phuket dive instructors put behind bars for working illegally, January 4

For a long, long time already it has been clear that working in the diving industry for farangs is always just 'semi-legal' and up to the whims of the local police.

And yet, still there is nothing really done to fix this problem. If an instructor follows standards or company work routines, he breaks the laws. It's a bad joke, but not for people who pay money for a permit that doesn't cover the jobs they have to do.

*Wiesel
Gazette forum*

Tourist police need to man help centers

Re: Tourist help center locations yet to be decided, January 4

As stated in my comment previously, they quoted 24 hour assistance with multilingual skills.

Never going to happen. They can't afford the premises and two shifts of multilingual Thais.

Any multilingual Thai won't work for peanuts.

Make the Thai tourist police man these centers; that's what they are paid for – not sitting on their butts doing nothing in Phuket Town and not answering the phone or immediately hanging up when they hear a foreigner's voice.

*Skip
Gazette forum*

Letters to the Editor

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

No real deterrents for drunk drivers

Re: More than 20 Phuket bus drivers arrested for drug use, January 2

Being drugged out of your mind whilst driving a bus of people and all you get is a 30-day suspension of your driving licence?

In most countries you would be thrown into jail for a few years and banned from driving for a long, long time.

With Thailand having the second highest road fatality rate in the world, it seems that no lessons have been learnt here, and that there are indeed no deterrents.

*Harry
Gazette forum*

Police should release their own statistics

Re: Four dead on Phuket roads by New Year's Eve, January 1

Fascinating. So when the police charge offenders they report each case individually to the DDPM? Is that how it works?

I wonder why the police don't release the numbers themselves. It would be interesting to see more information, like locations.

I mean, 'overtaking in a re-

stricted zone'... when did you ever hear of the police enforcing that one? A suspicious soul might even suggest it never really happened.

*Captain Jack
Gazette forum*

Ghost riding a real issue in Songkhla

Re: Road fatality numbers grow on day two of road-safety campaign, December 31

Ghost riding is rampant in Songkhla Town, especially on the road to the city center, past Tesco. Night and day, cars and motorbike riders with and without helmets, red tail lights frequently not working and often without headlights, are driving at speed.

You could forgive a visitor believing that it is legal.

Where are the police and road management enforcers?

*Seht1912
Gazette forum*

Officers reducing users at street level

Re: Phuket drug dealer busted with 11kg of marijuana, December 31

Thai police may be heavily invested in pot's illegality, but at least they are, in fact, reducing the number of pothead teenagers endangering the rest of the country's citizens at street level.

This is not a nation ready for legal pot.

*Ed Struthers
Gazette forum*

Phuket Gazette

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Taking Patong to new heights

FIRST PERSON

CURRENTLY, Phuket has a Building Control Act that limits the height of buildings in different zones around the city, including Patong. In addition, the central government also has many specific restrictions about buildings in the area.

Due to this, it is difficult to accommodate the growing population and tourist community in Patong. Owners are forced to build outwards instead of upwards, taking up more land and reducing the amount of natural foliage. This eventually yields many environmental problems, such as flooding.

The Department of Public Works and Town and Country Planning has a very intricate colored zoning system throughout the island that determines the density, height and type of buildings, if any, that can be built.

Due to the economy, real estate market and height restrictions, the current limitations are unsuitable.

So many people purchase land – which has risen from 100,000 baht per rai, to more than 200 million baht per rai – and expect to be able to build large resorts and hotels on them. Currently, buildings in Patong are restricted to a height between 12 and 23 meters and I am constantly dealing with people who are trying to break the law and build high-rises.



Chalermluck Kebsup is a native of Phuket and has served as the mayor of Patong since May 2014. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in Law at Ramkhamhaeng University and received her master's in Political Science at Sukhothai

Thammathirat Open University.

Here she talks about the problems Patong faces due to the limited availability of area for development and how to utilize the land to its greatest potential.

The municipality is unable to extend the 23-meter height restriction on its own, even though we want to see the land in Patong used to its greatest potential. Each government office has to adhere to certain

Allowing people to build taller buildings will not only accommodate the growing population, but will provide more green zones in the area by not using the entirety of the land purchased for construction.

restrictions in regards to allowing people to build on the land, including those by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, which oversees height restrictions and zoning regulations.

Allowing people to build taller buildings will not only accommodate the growing population, but will provide more green zones in the area by not using the entirety of the land purchased for construction. This will leave some room for trees and nature to grow, which will help in cooling down the area and also prevent flooding.

Because it is a sensitive subject and many government offices – including those in the central government – have so many restrictions, it is difficult to change the law or make changes to policies. As of now, the former laws implemented in 2010 remain in place, making it difficult to remove and manage illegal buildings.

As most people can tell, many buildings in Patong – many of which are old – do not follow the law.

The best course of action at this point is to control the newer buildings and projects and make sure that they are following all the laws, including the Building Control Act.

I plan on holding a meeting with all relevant officials to go over the current laws and restrictions and to table ideas that can help move Patong's growth forward.

Until then, I will ensure that all buildings and owners are following the current laws, and that those who are not will face consequences under the law.



Fear of lawful repercussions may save more lives. Photo: Chutharat Plerin

Fear saves more lives

AS DISHEARTENING as it is to see our hopes of having zero deaths on the roads during the 'Seven Days of Danger' road-safety campaign dashed this year, the reality of the situation is that the goal is so unreasonable that officials are simply setting themselves up for failure.

Last year, there were a total of 108 road deaths in Phuket; that's someone dying every 3.3 days on the island's roads. So, if the seven days marked for the safety campaign were seven normal days of the year, we would still expect to have two people die. However, as officials know, these are seven of the most dangerous days to be on the roads in Thailand, as drunk driving during the festive holidays skyrockets.

So what is the value of setting a goal so high? Clearly setting a goal of only two people dying during the campaign seems morbid to say the least. Nonetheless, within just 30 hours of the start of the project, that is exactly what happened.

However, after years of seeing the annual goal obliterated, even the police hardly seem convinced that it is a possibility.

"Though it will be hard to achieve our goal of zero road deaths during this campaign, we will do everything we can to ensure the safety of motorists," Lt Col Rungrit Rattanapagdee

Island View

By Alex Stone

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

of the Phuket City Traffic Police told the *Gazette* this year.

Nonetheless, the heavy publicizing of police checkpoints and genuine increase in the number of people fined for not wearing a helmet, driving without a licence or drunk driving, is a godsend.

Even more important than the checkpoints on primary routes such as Thepkraassatri Road – which is paved with numerous road deaths each year – are those established on secondary roads. If police make it impossible to travel to any party destination more than five kilometers away, then motorists will be forced to reconsider how they proceed during this festive season.

Though a campaign such as the Seven Days of Danger, with its depressingly unachievable goal, deserves the full support of expats, locals and tourists, police need to continue to develop a more omnipresent mystique for road safety. Something that will generate the kind of fear that forces potential drunk drivers to just grab a taxi, a nearby hotel room or crash on a friend's couch for the night.

Words from the Wise

"You will never be happy if you continue to search for what happiness consists of. You will never live if you are looking for the meaning of life."

– Albert Camus

"Education is an admirable thing, but it is well to remember from time to time that nothing that is worth knowing can be taught."

– Oscar Wilde

Issues & Answers

Why are the trees near SuperCheap gone?

LAST week, while driving past SuperCheap on Thepkraassatri Road, I noticed that all of the trees in the road medians have been cut down.

I was wondering if it is because people have complained about the bad smell they emit during their blooming season. If not, why are they all being cut down?

Samak Luedwonghad, director of the Phuket Highways Office, replies:

The trees, known as black-board trees or *alstonia scholaris*, need to be cut down every 4-5 years, as their branches are very

brittle and break easily. This can cause them to fall onto oncoming traffic, especially when it rains or is windy.

Furthermore, when the trees reach a certain height, they tend to block the light from the street lights, possibly hindering drivers' vision at night.

The trees will start growing again in a few months. By then, we will maintain them in order to prevent them from growing to the point where they can cause potential hazards to motorists.

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

Submit your issue at:

www.PuketGazette.net/IssuesAnswers

The 'not so sexy' New Year's resolution

Finance

By David Mayes

MANY people like to make New Year's resolutions, and the most common ones tend to deal with health. Sadly, most people do not stick with their resolutions for very long, and I will get to one of the main reasons for this in a bit, as well as how to avoid falling into this trap.

But let's consider a way you can use this time of year to make a change in another very important part of your life. Financial planning may not be the sexiest area in which to make a New Year's resolution, but it could very well have the biggest impact on your long term happiness.

I like to use this time of year first to reflect on the previous year and how things have gone with my financial situation. Some years I would rather forget the disasters that have come to pass, whereas others have left me wondering how I had gotten so lucky and hoping it would continue. Regardless of what happened, it is best to always take a look at where we are now and plan how to go forward from there.

The previous year's plans and hopes and dreams are now history. If you had a bad year, the worst thing you can do is to try to aggressively make up for it. Emotions and planning do not combine well. Similarly, if you had a great year, the worst thing you can do is start spending money as if the good times are going to last forever. They never do.

Now for many people, saving money for the future is similar to starting exercising. It is something we are always going to do tomorrow. Or if it does make it into our resolution for the year, by February we have



Make some financial New Year's resolutions that don't revolve around winning the lottery. Photo: Carol VanHook

reverted to our old habits of spending every baht we make. One big reason why so many people stop exercising is that working out as a goal in itself is not very satisfying. Once you miss a workout here or there, it becomes easier and easier to just forget the whole thing. Similarly committing to saving a certain amount of money each month is jeopardized as soon as you have your first blow-out month and so it becomes easier and easier to continue being financially reckless.

One thing that helps many stick with exercise is setting a future goal that each routine

workout helps build towards, such as a marathon, or a 10k run. This way a missed workout often gives you an incentive to get back on schedule quickly because you are worried you will not meet your goal, or suffer even more because you are not fully prepared. Similarly, setting an amount of saving for the whole year based on what you can reasonably afford each month, relieves the likelihood of throwing in the towel because your mates visited from out of town and you were "forced" to go on a spending binge. You simply double up your efforts the next month to

get back on track for your goal. It is the longer term prize your mind is focused on rather the short term monthly goal. As you track your growing savings account you will begin to get positive reinforcement that also helps stick to your plan.

Regardless of which area you need to plan for in terms of the future, there is no better time to do a thorough review of your situation and what you want to achieve than at the start of a new year. This could be in terms of philanthropic goals, business goals, saving for retirement, or future education costs. If you don't plan for your

future, you are exposing yourself to the whims of chance. Even if you fall slightly short of the target you set at the beginning of the year, you are almost certain to get further than you would without doing any planning or goal setting at all.

David Mayes MBA resides in Phuket and provides wealth management services to expatriates around the globe, focusing on UK pension transfers. He can be reached at david.m@faramond.com or 085-335-8573. Faramond UK is regulated by the FCA and provides advice on pensions and taxation.



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TAT projects billions in spending

THE Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Phuket Office expects that when the final numbers are in, more than 4 billion baht will have been generated over the holiday season.

"All flights to Phuket have been full, with hotel operators reporting about 80 per cent occupancy," said Anoma Wongyai, director of the TAT Phuket Office.

"Most of the Asian tourists are coming from China, but there are also some from Korea and Japan. Additionally, we are seeing a number of European tourists from Germany, the United Kingdom, Russia and Scandinavian countries arriving on the island."

However, Ms Anoma admitted that although Phuket has been seeing better spending than other



Tourists arrive, ready to spend. Photo: Gazette file

provinces in Thailand, its performance during this year's peak season does not match last year's.

"The many internal issues that Thailand has faced this year, as well as the pessimistic global economic climate, are having a negative impact on overall spending," she confirmed.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

How much is a 'like' worth anyway?



A 'LIKE' is a measure on Facebook of how popular a page or a post is with other Facebook users.

Someone recently asked me what a 'like' on Facebook was worth to a business. It started me thinking, could an actual value be placed on a 'like'? The answer of course is yes, but for each business this value would be different.

The first thing to appreciate is that any legitimate 'like' or 'share' will have a positive value and impact on your business. This is because people place more value on positive peer recommendations than advertising, and Facebook does this very well by showing us who in our circle of influence also likes a particular post, page or newsfeed item.

Secondly, to be able to determine useful information a business must know the statistics and values at each step of its sales and marketing process. Every business should already know these numbers if they take their marketing seriously.

Now, to actually measure the value of a 'like' or 'share' would be determined by each



Facebook 'likes' can translate into net profit for companies if revenue per like exceeds cost. Image: Hamazasp

individual business, their sales and marketing funnel, capture methods, conversion rates and, of course, the actual unit revenues and profit margins for their product or service.

So the value of a 'like' would be the revenue (or profit) generated by the sales from the relevant post or page, divided by the number of 'likes'.

If we represent this concept in terms of a simple formula it would look like this:

Value of a Like (v) = number of sales (n) x \$ profit per item sold (r) / number

of Likes (l).

The important factor is that the net profit from the increase in sales per 'like' is more than the cost of attracting a new 'like' (note that we are looking at profit here, not revenue), otherwise all we are doing is just undertaking a very expensive branding exercise.

Let's use a live example. Recently we designed a post for a client and boosted it for 500 baht. The ad generated 610 'likes', 8 'shares' and 75,000 baht in revenue.

In our example $v = 75,000 / 610$ or 122 baht per 'like'. Our

cost of a 'like' was $500 / 610$ which was 0.85 baht per 'like'.

Each 'like' was costing less than a baht and generating 122 baht in profit. Overall this was an incredibly profitable campaign.

And the same formula would apply to any business.

There are other benefits too. A 'like' or 'share' immediately has a positive impact on perception. Our friends see it and trust our opinion and experience. It also means that Facebook users know that the content is popular, and in return they reward the content by sharing it with more people. If

people are engaging in their posts, Facebook rewards them with more impressions and cheaper rates.

Remember, most people follow trends as opposed to starting them, so this has a very positive benefit.

So if your post leads to a positive interaction, respondents will move into your sales funnel, generate interest, then a sale.

Once there, we can accurately measure the sales value that results. Knowing these figures, we can then see if our Facebook advertising is working. If we are not getting a positive return then we need to look at the ads or posts we are using, and how that links with our sales funnel in generating sales.

If we analyze each marketing process, we can soon see where we have a weakness and improve it.

The end result – we can make our 'likes' worth even more, and that means more money in the bank.

Simon Wetherell is a social media expert and lawyer. He trains businesses and individuals on how to profit from the social media industry. For more information visit PhuketOnlineMarketingSchool.com or call 095-085 3355.

Key agencies to collaborate on new institute

KEY officials and industry leaders have initiated the development of an investment institute in Phuket in order to aid those looking to invest on the island.

"Phuket already has a Board of Investment (BOI) to guide investors about matters of private and public investments. However, in the past, investors have often been bogged down due to limited understanding of environmental issues and investment processes, which hinders the smooth flow of business activity," said Phuket Governor Chamroen Tipayapongtada.

"Establishing an institute at Provincial Hall will provide a convenient one-stop solution for investors. The proposed institute will guide them through the entire process of investment, from start to finish."

Several key agencies, including the Software Industry



Gov Chamroen (right) speaks with industry leaders about the plan. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

Promotion Agency and BOI, will be working together on the project, as well as lawyers and consultants from Phuket and other Andaman provinces, Governor Chamroen explained.

Though the project is in its initial phases, Gov Chamroen

said that they would ensure that all concerned agencies will act as quickly as possible in order to get the initiative up and running.

"We will consult with the Public Works and Town and Country Planning Phuket Office, the Phuket Provincial

Office of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, as well as other related agencies and the business community, before submitting an official proposal to the Cabinet," said Gov Chamroen.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong



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A fresh new year

Central Festival Phuket invited all to join in an auspicious merit-making ceremony ahead of the new year with the giving of alms to 99 Buddhist monks at Lanlom on December 30.



GIVING BACK: (From L-R) Phuket Governor Chamroen Tipayapongtada; Teerapol Thipjaroen, Phuket Provincial Police commander; VIP guest Pattanapong Aekwanich; and Wilaiporn Pitimanaaree, Central Festival Phuket's GM and senior vice president of property management.

Reporter supporters

Simon Group supported the work of the Phuket Reporter Club on December 24 by giving them a new computer to use in their office.



GETTING TECHNICAL: (From L-R) Wichan Swaengwong, GM of Simon Group Co Ltd; Siwalee Tiangtham, Phuket Reporter Club PR; Boonrat Apiwanthanakorn, president of the Phuket Reporter Club; Pornthep Rouyrin, vice president of Simon Group Co Ltd; and Pornwit Rouyrin, vice president of Simon Group Co Ltd.

A heartfelt thank you to all of our friends



Natthira Susangrat (left), Phuket Gazette GM and Athitiya Iamitthipo, marketing and communications manager of Hilton Phuket Arcadia Resort & Spa.



(From L-R) Isaac Stone Simonelli, managing editor of the Phuket Gazette; Nattinee McMillan, meetings and events sales manager of Point Yamu by Como; and Sarankorn Phongtasanon, executive secretary to the GM of Point Yamu by Como.



(From L-R) Kantima Kullawit, assistant PR manager of Angsana Laguna Phuket; Oranee Hildebrand, Phuket Gazette MD; Michelle Alejo, Banyan Tree Phuket assistant manager of marketing communications; and Wen Mo, food and beverage marketing manager at Angsana Laguna Phuket.



(From L-R) Chuleeporn Thaneerat, sales coordinator at The Racha Resort; Natthira Susangrat, Phuket Gazette GM; Parpun Dumrongsinth, director of sales at The Racha Resort; and Chadaporn Makchumnum, The Racha Resort's assistant marketing manager.

Sweet FantaSea



Phuket FantaSea PLC was recently awarded with three international distinctions: ESQR's Quality Achievements Award 2015 from the European Society for Quality Research, UK; the Golden Medal for Quality & Service Award from the Worldwide Marketing Organization, Australia; and The Bizz Award 2015 from the World Confederation of Businesses, USA. The awards received reflect the continuous efforts in quality, service and business standards improvement to achieve the company's vision to be a leader in international tourism.

Kittikorn Kewkacha, president and chief executive officer of Phuket FantaSea PLC shows off his company's ESQR's Quality Achievements Award 2015.

Time to tee off

Goh Chok Tong, Singapore's second and former Prime Minister played at Laguna Golf course with his friends while on vacation in Phuket.



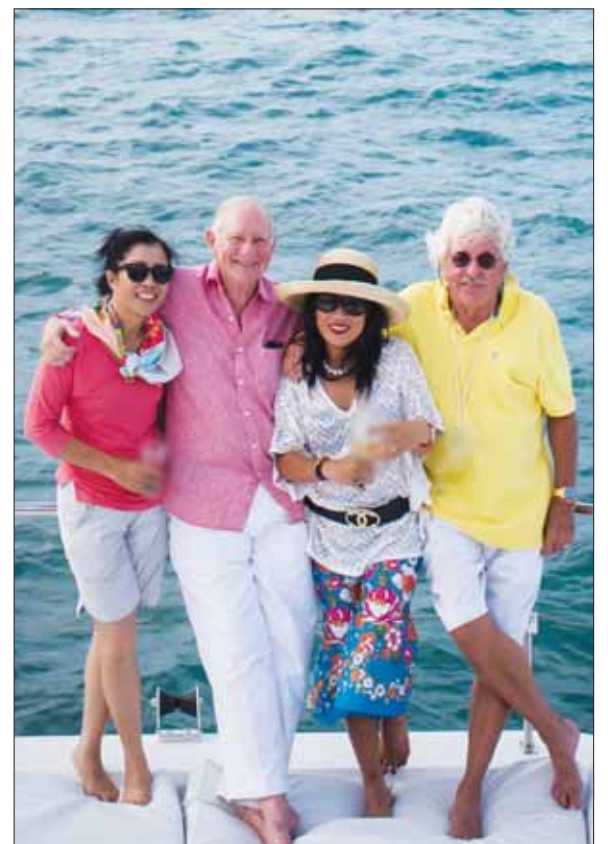
TEE FOR TWO: (From L-R) Crystal Zhong, assistant marketing manager of Laguna Golf Phuket; Goh Chok Tong, former Singapore Prime Minister; Kannika Janjampa, assistant club manager of Laguna Golf Phuket; Walaiporn Pattamavichitvong, club manager of Laguna Golf Phuket.

New Year's cruises and champagne dreams

About 48 lucky Phuketians rang in the New Year as guests of Eric Smulders and Oe Uraiphan aboard the luxury power cat *Osu VIII* for a champagne sunset cruise.



About half of the guests wound up in the bows of the vessel with repeated encores from guitar maestro Stefano and his enchanting repertoire of Italian ballads.



(From L-R) Janpen Arno and John Magee with cruise hosts Oe Uraiphan and Eric Smulders.

Red Cross first prize winner yet to collect Vios



Gov Chamroen (left) and wife help to draw the winning ticket at the Red Cross Fair. Photo: OBJ PR

THE winner of the Phuket Red Cross Fair lucky draw grand prize has yet to claim their Toyota Vios after the winning ticket was announced on January 4.

Phuket Governor Chamroen Tipayapongtada, and his wife Vassana Tipayapongtada, president of the Phuket Red Cross, led the lucky draw center stage at Saphan Hin, closing the annual 11-day event.

The winning ticket number is 59160. Other major prizes drawn include:

- 2nd prize: Toyota Hilux Revo Smart Cab pick-up truck
- 3rd prize: Motorcycles
- 4th prize: i-Phone 6s
- 5th prize: Gold necklaces valued at about 4,600 baht

Additionally, anyone who has a ticket ending with 751 may claim an electric fan.

Winners may claim their prizes until February 28 by bringing their winning ticket to Phuket Provincial Hall in Phuket Town, Monday through Friday, between 8:30am and 4:30pm.

– Sukawin Tanthavanich



After launching its first two events in 2014, FMD returns to Phuket with an exciting lineup of fighters. Photo: FMD PR

Full Metal Dojo ready to kick off

THAILAND's leading Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) promotion, Full Metal Dojo (FMD), is returning to the island with its 8th event 'FMD8: Return of the Mack' on January 10 at Seduction Nightclub in Patong.

After launching its first two events in Phuket in 2014, FMD moved to Bangkok and has now returned to the Pearl of the Andaman, showcasing the best local and international fighters in Thailand and Southeast Asia.

The event will be held at the peak of the tourist high season, featuring the first ever former UFC fighter to compete in Thailand, as American Tommy Hayden, now at Hero Factory, Bangkok, takes on the highly experienced Australian Gokhan Turkiymaz from Phuket Top Team.

FMD lets fans stand cage-side to experience the unique MMA atmosphere up close and

personal. The event is hosted by leading regional MMA promoter Jon Nutt and Thai fitness celebrity Mark Abbott.

Seven fights have been an-

nounced thus far, with more to come.

Pre-sale tickets are 1,000 baht, tickets at the venue will be available for 1,500 baht.

For more information contact fullmetaldjo@gmail.com or visit www.facebook.com/fullmetaldjo.

– Phuket Gazette

Fight Card January 10

Lightweight 155lbs/70.3kg Gokhan Turkiymaz (13-12) Phuket Top Team vs Tommy Hayden (8-3, former UFC) Hero Factory, Bangkok	100+ combined fights) Amazing Muay Thai Gym, Hua Hin vs Singh Noi (0-0, 18-12 Muay Thai) Lion Muay Thai, Phuket	Vy Srey (1-0) Selapak Gym, Cambodia vs Strawweight 115lbs/52.2kg Veerayuth 'Oak' Pinyoporn (1-0) EMAC Gym, Bangkok
Featherweight 145lbs/65.8kg Amr Maher (3-1) vs Christian Tremayne (Pro Debut, 5-4 amateur) Belt holder for Battle Field Vancouver	Sarayut 'Ness' Kurubvong (0-1) Boxer Rebellion, Bangkok vs George Farrow (Pro debut, 4-1 amateur) Maximum Gym, Phuket	Wisava Kaweewarakorn (0-1, 4-2 amateur, 9-4 amateur boxing) Maximum Gym, Phuket Haider Farman (0-1, 3-1 amateur) Combat 360, Khao Lak vs Sim Bunsrun (1-3, 2-0 amateur) Cambodian Top Team
Catchweight 121lb/55kg Khadja Aiyada Verpoest (Pro Debut, 4-2 Muay Thai) Bangkok Fightlab vs Supachai Sungpasert 'Birdy Tor Buawmas' (0-0,		

Phuket celebrates annual Children's Day

CHILDREN and parents on the island are anticipating the hustle and bustle of a day full of entertainment and fun activities as Phuket celebrates Children's Day on January 9.

The first Children's Day in Thailand was held in 1956. Since then, government leaders have annually branded the event with a slogan. This year's slogan, created by Prime Minister Gen Prayut Chan-o-cha, is 'Knowledge and virtue together will move us into the future'.

"We acknowledge how important children are to our society, as they will grow up to be adults and drive our country forward," said Phuket City



Children's Day festivities will be held on January 9. Image: RTN

Mayor Somjai Suwansupana.

Here is a schedule of some of the local festivities:

Patong:

8am to 3pm: The event will be held at Loma Park on Patong beachfront road, offering a variety of entertainment and food.

Phuket Town:

Phuket City Municipality will hold Children's Day festivities at Saphan Hin, with a certificate-giving ceremony to acknowledge the achievements of outstanding children. Additionally, there will be more than

30 educational booths arranged by multiple schools, activities for kids and parents, as well as free food and drinks.

Phuket International Hospital:

8:30am to noon: There will be a variety of games, entertainment and information offered by doctors, nurses and medical staff to spark inspiration for those who want to pursue the field of medicine.

Cape Panwa:

9am to 4pm: Kids get free admission to Phuket Aquarium, where they can experience the marvels of the underwater world.

8:30am to 3pm: There will be many unique opportunities for kids joining the festivities at the Royal Thai Navy Third Area

Command base, including the chance to board the ship *Saiburi* and step inside a helicopter.

Wichit:

8:30am to noon: There will be giveaways and activities at Suan Sri Phuvanart Park, including student performances, live music and a magic show.

Rassada:

8am to 3pm: The Rassada Municipality Office will hold games and contests and offer a variety of mouthwatering food.

Kathu:

8:30am to 3:30pm: Activities and entertainment will be on offer at Prince of Songkhla University Phuket Campus on Wichitsongkram Road.

– Phuket Gazette

Fusion food gets down in town

By Katie P Arnold

ADDING to the island's prestigious appointment as a 'City of Gastronomy' by UNESCO – bestowed for its long, unique culinary history – is the newly opened Surf & Turf restaurant on Phang Nga Road, near the Promthep Clock Tower.

German Chef Tom Koeffer and architect Pang Onyen, from Hat Yai, opened this culinary wonderland on December 1.

With 11 years of experience, Tom has graced the kitchens of a number of famous French restaurants, including Haus Meer; Sasha's Rotisseries and Bar; and even Ratatouille.

"Tom and I wanted to create dishes that still had the perfection and elegance of fine dining, but with a fusion style where people feel more comfortable and familiar with what they are eating, making them excited to try new things," says Pang.

So what is the food like at Surf & Turf?

If you're not sure where to start on the menu, dig into the grilled beef cubes with tartar sauce and salad in a puff pastry – it's to die for. The fresh vegetables from the local market meld perfectly with the tartness of citrus and creaminess of the



Surf & Turf in Phuket Town brings new flair to fine-dining recipes. Photo: Amber Kissner

tartar sauce, which tastes as if it's been infused with fruit. However, it hasn't been. The magic is merely in all of the flavors coming together to create a unique taste-bud experience.

On the surf side, one must try is the seabass with prawn sauce, spinach and

passion fruit, which is absolutely incredible, and just as beautiful and well blended as the grilled beef.

The key to the menu's success? Love.

"Love is the most important ingredient when I cook. One of the best feelings that you can have is when you do some-

thing that you love and people love it too," Tom says.

The concept behind Surf & Turf is not only to blend classic western dishes with the results of other culinary styles from the region, but to bring together the world of food and art.

Well known for her Edward Gorey-esque murals – which can be seen adorning the walls of Surf & Turf, as well as many frequented Phuket Town hang outs, such as Ghetto Child's and Smokin' Fish – Pang plans on opening an art exhibition space in the restaurant to bring together people who love good art and good food.

As for new culinary adventures for this amazing duo, be on the look out for their specials, which in the past have included mushroom risotto with parmigiano foam and homemade beef ragout, and new dishes that will feature their homemade German sausage, which won the hearts of patrons at Boat Lagoon's Lighthouse Market last year.

The food, like its creators, is innovative and unforgettable – a perfect addition to Phuket Town's revered gastronomical diversity.

Eye of the beholder

KAWITA Vatanajyankur's resolutely sensual videos showing her getting intimate with shaved ice and various juicy fruits are among the artworks riveting Londoners' attention in the 'Thailand Eye' exhibition at the Saatchi Gallery.

The influential boutique of contemporary art is helping 23 Thai artists develop some international muscle with the help of its director Nigel Hurst.

What's spinning heads right now in London will be seen in Bangkok, at the Art and Culture Center, in March.

Along with Kawita's photos and videos of her experiments with a juicer, an ice shaver and a weight scale, there is Pannaphan Yodmanee's stunning installation 'Prophecy'. It has Buddha figurines embedded in horizontal remnants of a concrete wall bearing a faded mural, one chunk suspended from the ceiling.

This is 'the future of art' in Southeast Asia, declares the gallery, which has already hosted similar shows from elsewhere in the region.

"For a young artist like me it's a great opportunity to exhibit here, and a lot of Europeans have expressed interest in my work," Ms Kawita told *The Nation*. Mingling performance art with various media, she's exploring



'Thailand Eye' will make its move to Bangkok. Photo: The Nation/Phatarawadee Phataranawik

humanity's physical and spiritual limitations. Using her own body, as inspired by the Serbian artist of considerable controversy Marina Abramovic, Kawita challenges women's mundane role in the kitchen.

"It's a great experience working with a professional gallery like Saatchi," says Ms Pannaphan, whose installation was made specifically for the London space. An earlier version of 'Prophecy' sold for more than one million baht in China.

The gallery worked in collaboration with the Culture Ministry, Singapore's Parallel Contemporary Art, the Bangkok Art and Culture Center, and the insurance firm Prudential.

– *The Nation*

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When only a fraction is enough



On Deck

By Duncan Worthington

WHAT happened to fractional boat ownership? In the not-too-distant past, shared ownership of boats seemed to be the 'thing'. A great way to introduce non-boaters into boating, and then retaining leisure boaters, with a cost-effective form of ownership. A panacea.

In Phuket the concept caught on, but was short-lived.

Early pioneers included Simon James, Royal Phuket Marina and Twinpalms, with the island's fractional real estate pioneers, Absolute World Group, and Go Boating following suit. However, the concept never really took off the way people expected it to.

Fractional real estate was introduced into the US in the early 1990s and remains a popular form of ownership of second and holiday homes to this day.

On the back of this success, the US were quick to expand the fractional concept to many other products, including boats, and today fractional boat ownership is a worldwide concept.

One of the 'big' fractional boat offerings announced a few years back was by the London-based YachtPlus superyacht company, who at the time commissioned 10 new 135-foot Lord Norman Foster-designed superyachts. One of those originally commissioned superyachts, Ocean Emerald, today lies in Thailand.

The concept of fractional boat ownership is a sound one. Purchase, operation and maintenance costs are shared between the owners, thus significantly reducing the price of boat ownership for each individual. For many day-trip boat owners – those who like to use their boat infrequently – a shared ownership option makes a lot of sense. And for those who wish



The sun has set on fractional ownership of boats in Phuket, but it's hard to understand why. Photo: Blueworld Safaris

to trade up to a craft beyond their financial reach, a fraction share in said boat at a fraction of the cost is viable and attractive.

Alternative and more creative ownership models are likely to see a comeback and pick up

more traction in Thailand.

Fractional boat ownership is an ideal way to introduce first-time boaters – Thai, expatriate, second-home owners – into boating. Barriers to entry such as price, ongoing costs and knowl-

edge, are reduced considerably and with Dry Stacks available in the key sailing destinations of Phuket and Pattaya, the boating proposition becomes more convenient and hassle-free.

Beyond the lifestyle, there is the economic proposition: the time when the boat is not being used by its owners it is offered for charter with the revenues shared and put towards offsetting the ongoing costs.

With professional and cost-effective fractional ownership offerings on mid-sized boats of 10 to 15 meters in Phuket, the potential growth in this segment is high.

Duncan Worthington is a long time Phuket resident and through Infinity Communications (www.infinity-comms.com) consults for leading consumer brands, hospitality and marine clients in Thailand. In his 'spare time' he runs the marine portal www.MarineScene.asia. #OnDeckPhuket

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PIMEX boat show underway at RPM



The 65' Chloe Giselle is on display at PIMEX. Photo: Spirit Yachts

CURRENTLY underway, the 13th Phuket International Boat Show (PIMEX) presented by Thailand Elite, is fully booked, offering a display of yachts in-the-water and marine equipment, cars, luxury property and lifestyle goods in the waterside Exhibition Hall at Royal Phuket Marina (RPM).

"We're very happy with the turnout, and with over 5,000 independently verified visitors, this year it is one of the busiest shows to date. However, our focus for PIMEX goes beyond the numbers. Our focus is on attracting quality visitors, the type with an interest in the offerings at the show and those who have purchasing power," said Andy Dowden, PIMEX show director. "Having talked to many people at the last show, the feedback

from exhibitors and the interest from serious buyers has been very encouraging. We expect there to be a lot of business done after the show as a result of leads and contacts made."

There are more than 50 yachts in the water and over 100 exhibiting brands taking part in this year's event. One of the 50 yachts booked in the water is the classic design 65' *Chloe Giselle*, brought to the island from UK-based Spirit Yachts.

In the Town Square, Rolls-Royce, Aston Martin and BMW will be joined by Softub, which specializes in outdoor jacuzzis.

And for something new and very different check out a new twist on the traditional surfboard: Electric Surfing Lampuga.

– *Phuket Gazette*

Choosing the right insecticide



A GOOD friend, Graham, an airline captain, asks “Can you recommend an all-round weed-killer, not for the garden but for the grass and weeds out in the road by my house?” He adds: For the last two months, we have fed the pretty caterpillar population (green with blue eyes) and love the butterflies into which they develop, but we now feel we have fulfilled our obligation to nature and would like to know if there is a spray we can use, if only to persuade the butterflies to move into the next garden.”

As well as possessing a mischievous sense of humor and a wonderful villa, perched high above Kata with spectacular sea views, Graham and his charming wife, Mo, clearly have the right instincts about Mother Nature.

Since the weeds include grass and are not in Graham’s garden, I would advise the use of a non-selective weed-killer. Two that are widely employed here (although you will need to check the label) are paraquat (manufactured by Syngenta) and the much more recently developed Roundup



Non-selective weed killers work by killing the roots of the affected weeds. Photo: Lupin

(Monsanto). Both are contact herbicides that work by killing first the foliage and then the roots of affected weeds. Personally, I would always prefer to use paraquat since it is deactivated once it makes contact with the soil, and leaves no toxic residues in run-off or ground water. Typically, it is diluted 50 to 100 fold in water before application. Roundup is fiercely effective stuff and remains

active for a whole year. But there is growing evidence that the chemical (glyphosate) can cause limited environmental damage. Neither of them pose any threat to pets.

As for your caterpillar problem, you deserve a pat on the back for your forbearance. They are probably the larvae of the splendid oleander hawk moth, and while you don’t specify which shrubs they are molesting, I would guess either

adeniums (which have few enough leaves anyway), tabernaemontanas or oleanders. Personally, I remove the sprig on which they are feeding, and throw them over the wall, but they are voracious feeders and I recognize the need for more drastic action. In any case the critters are perfectly camouflaged for their environment and hide under the leaves. So, even with the eagle eyes of a pilot, they are diffi-

cult to spot.

A systemic insecticide, which is watered in at the roots and spreads throughout the foliage is therefore – if you will pardon the pun – the obvious solution. But, while the horror chemicals – organochlorides such as DDT, dieldrin and chlordane – are now banned, the newer compounds such as carbaryl, while not retained in the food chain, still kills beneficial insects such as bees.

Alternative ‘natural’ or organic pesticides – which I would strongly advocate using – include those based on nicotine, pyrethrum and neem (a local tree) that are all produced by the plant in question (tobacco, aster or neem) to counter the munching habits of insects. Just as your toxic caterpillars protect themselves from predators because they feed on poisonous plants, so your neem and nicotine plants safeguard themselves by producing insect repellants.

If you have gardening or environmental concerns, contact Patrick at drpaccampbell@gmail.com. Many of his creative and academic publications can be found at his website: GreenGaloshes.com.

BROADCASTING PHUKET TO THE WORLD

Phuket Today takes the Pearl of the Andaman to an international audience. PGTV's one-hour show features the personalities, lifestyle, sports and leisure activities that make Phuket famous.

Produced by PGTV, the show is designed to promote Phuket to tourists and the international community in Thailand.

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Thailand: North versus South



THE divide exists in many places worldwide and in Thailand, it exists too. As I holiday regularly in Chiang Mai, I wondered whether the grass is greener up here in the North. Should I up sticks with my family, sell my Phuket property, relocate my business to a more modest micro-economic environment and 'escape' the throngs of sun-lotion embalmed visitors propping up the Phuket economy?

TOURISM ENVIRONMENT

If you don't like tourists, don't live in a place they like to visit and there are some beautiful spots in the remote provinces in Thailand where tourists are few and far between. But if you like good massages, restaurants, retail therapy and easy international transport, then you will inevitably be rubbing shoulders with abundant tourists who like these same things.

Phuket attracts tourists who love the beaches, seafood restaurants, busy Bangla Road, beach bars, and some Southern Thai-Chinese culture all mixed together in a hot melting pot.

Chiang Mai has a bunch of tourists too. They don't visit for the beaches, but they do hang out in coffee shops, eat healthily, explore National Parks, and take photos. If you don't like tourists in Phuket, you won't like them in Chiang Mai either.

FOOD

Thai food is world famous for a reason. It is fantastic. In the North you can get a more diverse and authentic selection of Northern food, but you must search if you want to sample



Both North and South Thailand have their draws. Photos: Ryan Harvey (top), Mark Huber (bottom)

more than *khao soi* and Chiang Mai sausage.

Everyone's idea of Thai food is different, but naturally Thais know their cuisine best. Northern food has amazing hot pots and tomato-based dishes. In Phuket, you can also get an amazing selection of dishes, such as my favorite stinky green 'stor' beans stir-fried with prawns. Yummy!

POLLUTION

Some of my friends who have lived in Chiang Mai mention pollution as their most serious negative aspect of living there.

I also have friends in Singapore, mainland China and Indonesia who say the same. They all suffer from the selfish uncontrolled acts of governments, farmers and companies exploiting their power at the expense of the health of others.

In 2015, Phuket suffered the worst air pollution seen in 13 years, after winds carried the haze up from Indonesia. Though the haze lasts longer up North, unless something is done, Phuket won't be far behind. Mark this down as a 'can't do anything about it except complain or leave'.

EXPENSES

For some reason, Phuket is up to 40 per cent more expensive in many respects than Chiang Mai. I visited Rajapruek Park – inordinately beautiful and it cost me just 100 baht for myself; my wife and my son to enter, unlike the abundant rip-offs around Phuket.

HASSLE FACTOR

We spent a whole day in Rajapruek Park and truly relaxed. I would be concerned about visiting the beach in Phuket for a family day with-

out assurances that I wouldn't be hassled for taking an umbrella and a bed. I have avoided beaches on the whole in Phuket in 2015 as I simply don't want even a small risk of hassle on a family day out.

PROPERTY

I looked at the prices and property options up north. In the Nimmaphan district, you can pick up a condo for just over a couple of million baht very centrally located and near to the main shopping area. You will be able to walk to your local pub and restaurants, but pushing a pram isn't easy.

If you venture out of the city, you will find stunning properties with lovely countryside, lake or river views. The diversity of foreign-inspired architecture is less apparent in the increasingly white walled and European-roofed Phuket estates, but around Chiang Mai you will find lovely Lanna-inspired designs and you'll feel the culture in the properties.

The price of property and the price of land for those who are allowed by law to buy land, is more reasonable in Chiang Mai.

DECISIONS, DECISIONS

I live in Phuket and holiday in Chiang Mai. I am sure many Chiang Mai-based expatriates and Thais do the opposite. There is good and bad in the North and South of most places worldwide and the same is true here. However, if you are buying for investment purposes, then Phuket property prices have risen more, and to larger peaks, than in the North.

Desmond Hughes has been an owner and operator of his law firm in Thailand for 12 years, and is a senior partner at Hughes Krupica law firm www.hugheskrupica.com

Sansiri launches Baan Mai Khao development

SANSIRI Public Company Limited has officially launched its recently completed Baan Mai Khao beachfront condominium development.

The development includes 206 ready-to-move-in units with up to three bedrooms, including single unit, duplex and penthouse, explained Uthai Uthaisangsuk, Sansiri's senior executive vice president.

Prices start from 13.5 million baht

with a guaranteed yield of six percent for two years.

Baan Mai Khao is the only beachfront condominium development on Mai Khao Beach so far, which houses a number of reputable 5-star hotels and resorts.

The lobby is designed in the Sino-Portuguese architectural style and opens up to the Andaman seafront. The facilities also include a 70-meter

swimming pool.

To celebrate its launch, Sansiri has implemented a 'Earn from the Holidays' program, where a buyer in the Rental Guarantee Program can trade their 60 vacation days for stays in 15 Sansiri projects across the country, in addition to a guaranteed rental yield of six to seven per cent, depending on the development.

"Managed by our subsidiary Plus

Property, the 'Earn from the Holidays' program aims to build a new model for condo buyers, delivering higher rental yields while offering increased holiday options around Thailand. From the government's 2015-2017 strategy on tourism, Sansiri believes that the program will attract more Thai and international investors this high season," said Mr Uthai.

– **Kongleaphy Keam**

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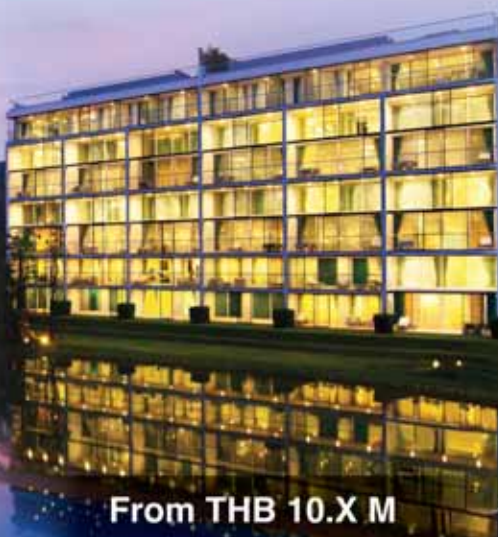
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- Able to work 2 days/week (15,000 baht per month)
- Proficient in English language, speaking and writing
- Well-organized for file organization and daily assigned tasks
- Able to cooperate with bank, lawyer and accountant
- *A good background in sales & marketing would be an advantage.

Please contact Por.

Tel: 095-429 6655. Email: d.natthasinee@gmail.com

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Full time for immediate start. Thai national, good standard of English. 1.5 days off per week. Salary + bonus. OTE 30,000 baht. Ao Nang, Krabi. Tel: 075-637437, 081-077 5698 (English). Fax: 075-637669. Email: monthinfo@baansanthiya.com

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1 Marina Manager. 2 GSAs. All positions require good English command and service minded. Tel: 075-818 765. Email: sornkom.k@holidayinnkrabi.com

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Please contact Nina. Tel: 089-729 6244. Send resume to ninaphuket@hotmail.com or Nina.Neale@InternationalVillasPhuket.com



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Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree in Business Administration or related fields
- At least 2-3 year experience as Sales Manager in the hotel
- Very good command of English communication skills
- Energetic and proactive
- Able to work competently in administrative work
- Ability to work independently, resourceful and keen to learn

Responsibility:

- Identifies and analyzes competitor and to be able to generate revenue
- Organize periodic sales calls to achieve the target
- Coordinate with regional team in order to obtain local and international business to hotel

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Please apply via email including a detailed resume to:
tassaneeya@redplanethotels.com

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Project Owner : Anawatt Limited Company's registered no. 0105646144265. Head office : 475, Sri Ayudthaya Road, Thaniot, Phayathai, Rajbhui, Bangkok, 10400. Registered capital (THB) : 10,000,000. Paid up capital (THB) : 2,500,000 (as of date 3 August 2015). The President : Mr. Saeetha Thavasin. The Project : Baan Mai Khao Condominium's registered no. 3/2558, Land title deed no. 6235, approximately area 13-2-60 Rai, located at Mai Khao Sub-District, Thalang District, Phuket Province, as a Condominium of 3 (storeys) of 6 (buildings) and 5 (storeys) of 3 (buildings), total of 206 units, (for residential : 206 units, and for commercial : units). The Land and building have been mortgaged with Siam Commercial Bank P.L.C.. Condominium units promptly to be transferred within 30 days upon the purchaser has paid the unit price in full together with the sinking fund, common fee, tax and other fees as prescribed by Project Owner or the Condominium Juridic Person subjected to the Condominium law. *Terms and conditions apply. / Featured images consist of photography on location with simulated atmosphere and surroundings. For any questions regarding the images, please contact our customer service staff or visit the project site. Tel : +66(0)2 201 3999.

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