

The Phuket Gazette

Volume 11 Issue 34

News Desk - Tel: 076-236555

August 21 - 27, 2004

Daily news at www.phuketgazette.net

20 Baht

The Gazette is published in association with

The **Nation**

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Sriyada up for TRT. Wisut too?

By Kamol Pirat & Sangkhae Leelanaporn

PHUKET: As the national election scheduled for February, 2005, draws near, the ruling Thai Rak Thai (TRT) party has announced that Dr Sriyada Palimapan will again be its candidate for District 1, which encompasses Phuket City and nearby areas. Former Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (*OrBorJor*) Vice-President Wisut Santikul says that he is considering a TRT approach to run as its candidate for District 2, which covers the rest of the province.

Dr Sriyada, who failed in her bid to win a seat for TRT in the last general election in January 2001, has since changed her first name from Yada to Sriyada. The prefix "Sri" was added by the candidate in June in the hope that it would bring her good fortune.

"I changed my name to Sriyada after being warned by many people that my old name was too short and not good. I am 36 years old and wise enough to know that my life would improve if I changed my name," she said.

It will likely take more than good fortune and a new name to wrest a parliamentary seat from the Democrats, who have long enjoyed a virtual stranglehold over the province.

Their dominance was re-confirmed in March, when the Democrats managed to get 19 of their 20 *OrBorJor* candidates elected, giving them an overwhelming majority in the 24-seat council. The *OrBorJor* elections nationwide marked the first time national politics played a direct



Sriyada - formerly Yada - Palimapan: 'I am ... wise enough to know that my life would improve if I changed my name.'

role in Thai provincial politics.

However, Dr Sriyada said she was fully confident of winning in the next election because Phuket residents now realize the benefits of voting for a candidate from the ruling TRT Party, which aims to win 400 of 500 parliamentary seats and establish Thailand's first non-coalition elected government.

"In the last general election, people made their decisions based on custom and their per-

sonal connections with the candidates. But in the next election, the situation will be different; people will consider how the policies of each party will benefit them.

"The government led by Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra has [implemented] many successful policies to demonstrate its effectiveness, such as the village fund for the poor," said the dentist.

Continued on page 2

Scammers hit shop three times in a week

By Gategao Phetsawang & Kamol Pirat

PATONG: Credit card scammers hit one mobile phone shop in Patong three times in five days.

Two attempts failed when the shopowner telephoned the bank to make sure the cards were genuine, but a third gang got away with paying for mobile phones and top-up charge cards with fake credit cards.

The first attempted fraud at Ploy Telecom was on August 9, when five Filipinos, four men and a woman, tried to buy two mobile phones, a DVD player and three mobile phone account top-up cards, worth a total of 57,184 baht.

Shop-owner Patchara Budtayotee was suspicious of the combination of the look of the five Filipinos, the fact that they were attempting to pay with a Visa card, and the fact that they did not haggle over the prices of the expensive goods.

She called the Credit Card Center of the Thai Military Bank, which issued her shop with a credit card transaction machine, and was told that the card number was genuine and was issued by a bank in the US - but not CitiBank, as indicated on the card presented by the Filipinos.

She called the police and undercover officers arrested the gang.

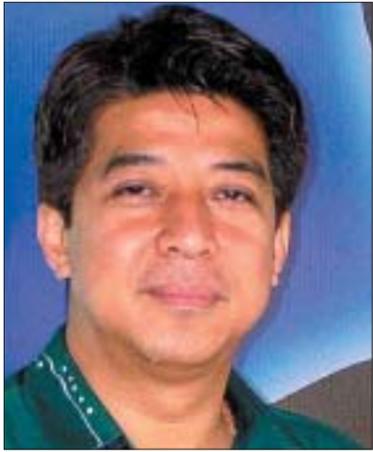
The men arrested were named by police as Jody Dabanoot, 31; Patric Carmichael Carivella, 25; Anchado Veetusio, 18; and Benjy Lloyd Castillo, 23. The woman was named as Iris Ortanez, 22.

Pol Col Chalit Thinthanee, Continued on page 3

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Wisut Santikul: decision by the end of the month.

Wisut mulls approach from TRT

From page 1

Dr Sriyada emphasized that the Prime Minister recognizes the importance of Phuket to the nation, and has demonstrated this through plans to establish the province as a center for information technology and marine tourism.

It will be up to the people of Phuket to decide whether they share this vision of Phuket when they go to the polls, she said.

Dr Sriyada told the *Gazette* that TRT has already picked a District 2 candidate, but declined to name the person.

However, the *Gazette* has been able to confirm that former *OrBorJor* Vice-President Wisut Santikul has been approached by TRT to stand as District 2 candidate, but has yet to make a decision.

During his bid for the Presidency of the *OrBorJor* in March, K. Wisut repeatedly denied rumors that he was aligned with TRT, consistently maintaining that provincial politics should remain free of interference from national political issues.

K. Wisut told the *Gazette* on August 16 that he had been approached by a TRT representative to run on the party's ticket in District 2, but has still not made up his mind.

"I have not replied to them yet. I am still thinking it over. I expect to announce by the end of the month whether I will join the TRT and run as its District 2 candidate," he said.

Chuan Leekpai speaks: page 10

Phang Nga councillors elect replacement for slain leader

By Kamol Pirat

PHANG NGA: Members of the Phang Nga Provincial Administration Organization (*OrBorJor*) have elected Arkhom Thongjerm as their new Chairman to replace Nithas Siribenjakul, who was gunned down at Takuapa Bus Terminus on July 30.

Phang Nga *OrBorJor* Deputy Chairman Chot Chatpong told the *Gazette* that K. Arkhom – the only nominee – was elected unanimously at an *OrBorJor* meeting on August 13.

Members of the assembly had previously agreed that K. Arkhom should serve as Chairman for two years, followed by

Auychai Ponphom from Thungmaphrao district.

However, K. Chot said the regulations stated any replacement should stay in post until the end of the *OrBorJor* term (in 2008) "unless he dies or resigns before that date".

It remains to be seen whether K. Arkhom will honor the original agreement by resigning after two years.

Police are still investigating the murder of K. Nithas, and the *OrBorJor* called on them to do a thorough job. "The members of the Phang Nga *OrBorJor* ... have asked the police to investigate his conflicts seriously and to arrest the gunman as well as whoever

pulled the strings," said K. Chot.

He added that K. Nithas had had no problems with *OrBorJor* members, so there was no reason why any of them should have wanted him dead.

Pol Col Aroon Keawthane, Superintendent of Takuapa Police Station, told the *Gazette* the police investigation was continuing.

He said, "We are working hard, night and day, to solve this murder. We have set up two police teams, plus there is a team from the governor's office keeping a close eye on the case."

Col Aroon admitted that the investigation was very difficult. K. Nithas had many conflicts in

many provinces, including Surat Thani, Phattalung and Nakhon Sri Thammarat.

The colonel refused to give details of the conflicts in other provinces but he did stress that his officers had not ruled out the possibility that a disagreement with a local politician was behind K. Nithas's death.

He said, "Our investigation initially found he was involved in 13 disputes that might have led to his death, but we have now ruled out five of these as not being connected to the shooting.

"Eight are still being investigated, and we will continue our investigation until we arrest the gunman and close the case."

Thailand, KL reach border pact

By Gategaeo Phetsawang

PHUKET: Thailand and Malaysia have agreed in principal to do away with the current system of passes that allows nationals from the two countries to cross the border without a visa.

Under the agreement, future cross-border travel will require no more than the presentation of "smart cards", systems for which are now being developed by both nations.

The announcement followed a meeting at the Cape Panwa Hotel on August 16 between Thai Interior Minister Bhokin Bhalakula and his Malaysian counterpart, Minister of Home Affairs Dato' Azmi Khalid. A total of about 45 officials from both countries attended the talks.

After the meeting, K. Bhokin told a press conference, "Both sides agreed that linking our smart card systems would make travel more convenient."

Thailand hopes to have its smart cards operational nationwide by 2006, but expects the system to be up and running in the southern border provinces by the end of this year. Malaysian officials expect their smart card



Thai Interior Minister Bhokin Bhalakula (right) and his Malaysian counterpart, Dato' Azmi Khalid, address the press after their Cape Panwa talks.

system to be ready by the end of 2005.

K. Bhokin said that the Malaysians had proposed doing away with dual Thai-Malaysian citizenship and making those currently holding two passports decide on a single nationality.

The dual nationality has taken on greater significance since the increase in violence in the predominantly-Muslim deep

south of Thailand in the past year.

Some have charged that dual citizenship allows insurgents to stage violent attacks in Thailand before fleeing across the border into Malaysia to escape arrest.

Both sides also agreed to hold twice-yearly security meetings and to improve education links between the five southern Thai provinces and neighboring

would be finished by 2006. We have [only] 25 million people in our country [but] we [expect] to finish it by the end of 2005. So Thailand is moving very fast."

Siwa Sangmanee, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Thai Interior Ministry, said a committee would be set up at a later date to work out the regulatory requirements of the new system.

states in Malaysia, said K. Bhokin.

Dato' Azmi Khalid said he was impressed with Thailand's efforts to institute the smart card system.

"If we can access each other's information databases, both countries will benefit. We are very happy to see that the development of a smart card system in Thailand is moving very fast.

"I couldn't believe it when I heard that a smart card system for 60 million people

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Arthorn Tongwattana: Accorded funeral honors from the Royal Palace.

Tin baron dies after short illness

PHUKET CITY: Arthorn Tongwattana, a senior figure in Thailand's tin industry for decades, and Finland's Honorary Consul for Southern Thailand, died on August 12 at the age of 73.

Krabi-born K. Arthorn had been President of the Mining Industry Association of Thailand since 1979, and was a member of the Phuket Town Municipal Council from 1961-1985.

He had also worked as a representative of the US Reconstruction Finance Corporation and the US Federal Facilities Corporation, both of which were involved in helping restore Thailand's economy after World War II and in aiding US business ventures.

In the post-war years he was also the

US representative for purchases of tin from Thailand for the US armed forces.

He had received many awards during his life, including the Albert Einstein Medal for Peace in 1989. In 1992 he was named "Thai Role Model" for Phuket Province, and he was a member of the Phuket Rajabhat University (PRU) Council from 1995.

Somkhuang Petmeaun, Director of the PRU Rector's Office, told the *Gazette*, "He had been in failing health for several months and had been seeing a doctor because of blood-pressure problems.

"His secretary at Apiwatthanathorn Co Ltd told me that on the day of his death he asked her to fetch a file, then went to the bathroom. He was gone for a long time and she became concerned. After the door was

opened by security, K. Arthorn was found lying on the floor.

"At about 1:30 pm, he was taken to Ruampaet Hospital on Phuket Rd, where he was pronounced dead on arrival."

Lustral water and a flame were sent by the Royal Palace for use in the funeral rites. On August 13, the body was laid out and bathed with the lustral water by the Governor of Phuket, Udomsak Usawarangkura, acting as HM the King's representative.

The Governor is due to use the flame from the Royal Palace to begin the cremation on August 21 at Wat Lattivanaram (Wat Tai).

The deceased is survived by his wife Rajit and two sons.

— *Dhirarat Boonkongsae*n

Caddy's deadly lover still at large

PHUKET: The police corporal accused of murdering his golf caddy girlfriend has still not turned himself in, police said on August 17.

Pol Cpl Nanthawat Thongwanbua is accused of shooting dead his 23-year-old girlfriend, Supanee Yongtong, on August 8.

On that day K. Supanee, a caddy at Loch Palm Golf Course, visited a friend, Junthawon Terdtong, at Bangtong Villa in Kathu.

K. Junthawon told police Nanthawat came to her home and asked to speak with K. Supanee. Around midnight an argument erupted and K. Junthawon went to summon help from a neighbor. While outside, she heard a gunshot.

Nanthawat was seen riding away from the house on his police patrol motorcycle. K. Supanee was found lying dead on the floor. Police say she died instantly from a .38 gunshot wound in her neck.

Nanthawat's father told police last week that his son would surrender "within two or three days" but nearly a week later, this still had not happened.

Pol Maj Ampholwathana Saengruang of Tung Tong Police Station said, "If he has not surrendered by [August 20], we will issue a warrant for his arrest."

— *Kamol Pirat*

Three murdered in night of violence

By Kamol Pirat

PHUKET: Three men were killed in three separate incidents in a night of violence in Phuket.

The first victim was 21-year-old Amnart Niget, of Chumphon, who was fatally shot outside the Summer Hotel in Patipat Rd, Phuket City, at 2 am on August 12.

Two hours later, a restaurant employee was beaten to death by a gang of teenagers, also in Phuket City.

And, at around the same time, a 19-year-old man was shot dead at his barbecue stand outside a hotel in Patong.

In the first incident, K. Amnart was pronounced dead at Wachira Phuket Hospital after being shot in a fight. Police later arrested Thiensak Ak Paiboon, 25, close to where the fight had taken place. He admitted shooting K. Amnart, but claimed he had acted in self-defense.

However, a police spokesman quoted witnesses as saying that Thiensak had been driving past the hotel when he saw K. Amnart outside. He got out of the car and approached K. Amnart. An altercation ensued, during which Amnart knocked Thiensak to the ground. Thiensak then pulled out a 6.35mm handgun and shot K. Amnart.

Police said Thiensak had been a volunteer police officer in Phuket, but had been suspended more than three years ago because of a tendency towards violence.

Police arrested Thiensak and charged him with causing death.

In the second killing, 30-year-old Sanae Nuchumpoo, who worked at Kung Ja night spot, was attacked after calling the police to disperse a gang of unruly teenagers.

Staff told police K. Sanae had been playing draughts outside the Surin Rd restaurant when around eight teenagers arrived on motorbikes. The youths shouted loudly and smelled of glue.

K. Sanae called the police, a patrol car arrived, and the teenagers ran away. But after the police left, the teenagers returned and beat K. Sanae senseless, then fled. Their victim later died in Wachira Hospital.

In Patong, barbecue vendor Suwan Panleua was shot in the head at close range as he worked near the entrance of the Patong Resort Hotel. Police later said K. Suwan, of Nakhon Sri Thammarat, had been killed because of a dispute over a grilled chicken stand.

Witness Chuechart Pinsuntorn told police that two men had

arrived on a blue Honda motorbike; they parked the bike about four meters from K. Suwan's barbecue pushcart then walked up to him. One man drew a handgun and shot K. Suwan in the head. The men checked their victim was dead, then drove away.

The murder weapon was a home-made handgun firing shotgun cartridges.

Police later found the motorbike at the Champ noodle stand, near the entrance to the Safari Elephant Camp.

The bike was found to belong to the owner of the noodle stand, 31-year-old Uten Phattana-wong, who later admitted that he had hired a drinking partner, Khosin Songklap, to kill K. Suwan.

Pol Maj Sophon Barirak told the *Gazette*, "Uten said his reason for killing Suwan was that, three months ago, he was in a dispute with a grilled chicken vendor, Pornchai Na Manee, over territory for his mobile restaurant. They fought and Suwan went to help Pornchai and kicked Uten, injuring him."

Uten was angry. When, in his home town, Nakorn Sri Thammarat, he met Khosin, 25, he hired him to kill K. Suwan.

Maj Sophon said Uten and Khosin had both been arrested and charged with causing death.

Credit card scam gangs arrested

From page 1

Superintendent of Kathu Police Station, said Ortanez said she bought the fake card in Bangkok for 6,000 baht.

All five were charged with six counts of fraud. If found guilty, they face up to three years in jail, or a fine of up to 6,000 baht, or both, on each count.

Three days later, three Malaysians successfully used fake cards to buy mobile phones and call cards, but five other Malaysians who tried to scam the shop on August 14 were not so lucky.

K. Patchara said, "Five people came to the shop. They said they would use their credit cards because they didn't have enough cash, and showed me passports and credit cards.

"I became suspicious when they ordered 12 Nokia 7610 phones, which cost 21,900 baht each, and didn't ask for any discount. I called the bank and discovered that the cards were fake. Then I called the police."

The accused, a woman named by police as Neoh Paik Poh, and four men: Jerry Hong Siong Beng, Lim Yih Chyuan, Lian Hock Poo and Chin Khye Sheng, were found to have a total of 43 fake credit cards and three fake Singaporean passports.

Pol Lt Col Boonlert Onklang, of Kathu Police Station, said the Malaysians were charged with being accomplices in the forgery of documents and fraud. Three of them were also charged with having forged passports.

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Queer News

Monk vs snake

LOEI: An old monk who went to free a helpless kitty from the jaws of a python found himself fighting for his own life when the serpent objected to his intervention.

The curious tale occurred on the evening of August 3 at Pa Baan Pha Klang Dong Temple in Chiang Kan District, where senior monk Phra Ajarn Vikrom saw the helpless pussy in the jaws of the beast, a four-meter python.

Just as the constrictor was getting ready to swallow its prey, Phra Vikrom picked up a knife and began to slash. The python released the cat and clamped its jaws on the monk's left hand. The monk continued to slash – until the knife handle broke off.

After about 15 minutes, the python finally let go and slithered off into the woods, leaving a trail of blood behind it.

Shaken, Phra Vikrom, 68, turned his attention to the cat. It had already died, the life crushed out of it by the snake's coils.

"The snake suffered many serious wounds, but it was still alive and escaped into the forest. I wasn't badly hurt. The next morning I got up early to beg for alms. I told the people my tale and later called officials from the forestry department. I asked them to catch the wounded snake and release it in a more remote area."

When the forestry officials arrived they found the python with its intestines hanging outside its body.

Everyone was surprised that the body of the dead cat was missing, until they looked more carefully at the snake.

"The snake must have been very hungry, because even in its injured state it apparently crawled back later and swallowed the cat," said a forestry officer.

Source: Khom Chad Luek

By Sangkhae Leelanapaporn & Kamol Pirat

On August 25, Phuket Governor Udomsak Usawarangkura will have 10 minutes to pitch development project proposals, requiring a total budget of nearly 2 billion baht, to Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra during the PM's "whistlestop" tour of the South.

While the proposals include improvements to the island's water management and IT infrastructure, nearly half the budget to be requested is earmarked for improving Phuket's roads, including the construction of two underpasses on the bypass road and a new road from Chalong to Patong.

The project with the best chance of getting approval is the PM's own brainchild – the beautification of the main road from the Sarasin Bridge to Mission Hospital in Phuket City, which is expected to cost 56 million baht.

Wanchai Wattanasiri, Chief of the Phuket Highways Office (PHO), said, "I think this project will be approved by PM Thaksin because it is his policy to see the main roads in every province decorated with plants to make them more beautiful."

The biggest projects to be proposed will be underpasses to allow traffic to flow, uninterrupted, along the bypass road, under both the Darasamut and the Baan Samkong intersections. The underpasses will require a total of 800 million baht to complete.

K. Wanchai explained that, if approved, the underpasses will be the first in southern Thailand. "We do not want to build overpasses because they would spoil the view, even though underpasses cost twice as much," he said.

"And we cannot build only one underpass at either the Darasamut or the Samkong junctions because if we build an underpass at one, traffic will back



ROADS TO

up at the other. So if we build one, we must build the other," he added.

K. Wanchai explained that the underpasses, which will cost 400 million baht each, will be similar in design to the Laksi Underpass in Bangkok. "We have yet to draw up detailed plans, but we have taken pictures of the Laksi Underpass, and will have the designs for the Phuket underpasses drawn up from those," he said.

The underpasses, which will each take about two years to complete, will be at least 300 meters long, with two lanes each way separated by a dividing wall. Safety features will include lights, fire-prevention equipment, emergency lighting, and an automatic water pump to prevent flooding, K. Wanchai said.

He added that motorbikes

will not be barred from using the underpasses, though no plans have been made to dedicate lanes to them.

The budget includes the improvement of turnoff lanes at both the Darasamut and the Samkong junctions, K. Wanchai said, adding, "I have heard that Central Festival Phuket plans to have a turnoff lane so that customers can safely enter the complex. There should be no problems there."

K. Wanchai said the two underpasses are much needed because of the increasing volume of traffic on the bypass road, especially during rush hours and in the area of the shopping complexes.

This year's PPHO annual survey of traffic in July found that, from 7 am to 7 pm, 25,966 northbound vehicles passed the

entrance to QSI Phuket school on the bypass road – an average of 36 vehicles a minute.

Contemplating the possibility that PM Thaksin may not approve the underpasses, K. Wanchai said, "If the Governor really wants to make this project happen, he should be able to come up with at least half the required budget [from national budget funds allocated to provincial development]."

"The Highways Department could [provide the funds] alone but it would be difficult because of the size of the budget required," he said.

The other major road project to be presented to PM Thaksin is the construction of a new road linking Chalong with Patong.

Tepcharoen Ocharos, Chief of the Phuket Provincial Rural Roads Office, which will be responsible for building and maintaining the road, told the Gazette that the proposed road will join the road from Wat Luang Phu Supa, off Chao Fa West Rd in

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From left: Stunning views from the top of the route of the proposed Chalong-Patong road; Patong's road to nowhere, Phanmeuang Rd; Road marker (next to pickup truck) delineates the eventual edge of the Rawai beachfront road.

construction of the road next year," he said.

He added that the 2.9-kilometer road will pass the Jungceylon mall, giving motorists another way of getting to it.

In the south of the island, plans to expand Wiset Rd, in Rawai, to four lanes are already being put into effect.

PHO Chief K. Wanchai explained that the road will be widened from Chalong Circle to the Rawai Tambon Administration Organization offices at the southern end of the beachfront, but no further.

"We will not widen the road to Laem Promthep because it is on a hill where we want people to drive slowly," he said, adding that there was, in any case, not enough state land running the length of the road to expand the thoroughfare to four lanes.

"If we do widen the road to Laem Promthep, we will widen only the verges," he said.

Although neither the plans nor the budget for expanding the Rawai beachfront road have been finalized, K. Wanchai said roadside markers have been posted along the road marking the eventual edges of the road, and that the land required has already been bought by the PHO.

Looking further into the future, the PHO, the Thalang District Office and Pa Khlok Tambon Administration Organization have laid plans to expand each of the two of the road lanes from the Heroines' Monument to Baan Pa Khlok to 2.5 meters wide.

However, K. Wanchai said the plans are experiencing the same problem of not having enough roadside state land to add more lanes. "Land surveys are complete, but no cost assessment or budget proposals have been prepared," he added.

THE FUTURE

Chalong, with 50 Pi Rd in the hills of Patong.

K. Thepcharoen said that the 2.5-kilometer extension will be a two-lane road, with an asphaltic-concrete surface, street lights and underground roadside drains, and will cost about 35 million baht.

"The budget comprises two parts: 15 million baht to build the road, and 20 million baht to build earth-retaining walls to prevent landslides. We want the new road to be accident-free, so we will make the road wider at each curve to make it safer," K. Thepcharoen.

"Phra Barami Rd [Patong Hill] is subject to closure when there are traffic accidents, especially during the high season when many tourists drive to the beach. During the monsoon season, heavy rain and strong winds can cause landslides that block the road. The new road will give people an option if there are problems on Phra Barami Rd," K. Thepcharoen said.

He added that the new road could even become a tourist attraction, especially for cycling enthusiasts, as the panorama from the top of the Nakkerd Hills, which the road must go over in order to reach Patong, takes in all

of Chalong Bay, with Phang Nga Bay as the backdrop.

However, it is these hills that could also pose the greatest threat to the green light being granted for the Chalong-Patong road. The road must pass through Forestry Department land, so permission must be granted by the central government.

"Last month the Governor sent a request to the Cabinet to make the road through the forest land. I believe the Cabinet will agree with his request because the new road is in line the government's policy to promote Patong."

K. Thepcharoen added that the project is also subject to an environmental impact assessment (EIA). "If this project is cleared by both [the EIA and the central government], we will start construction next year."

While these major projects are in the spotlight and will be presented for the PM's approval, the PHO and other local authorities already have other major roadworks either under construction or on the drawing board.

One project already under way is the expansion of the roads at the Y-junction near the entrance to the Prince of Songkla University to four lanes.

Kathu Chief Administrative Officer Wuthi Sayaphan explained that the current roadworks there are just Phase I of a long-term project intended to expand Wichit Songkram Rd section-by-section so that it will eventually have four lanes all the way from the Caltex gas station to the bypass road.

The same is planned for Phra Phuket Kaew Rd (from the Caltex intersection to Lotus), with a four-lane spur road joining Phra Phuket Kaew Rd to the Y-junction.

Phase I will see four kilometers of the three main roads leading up to the junction each expanded to four lanes, at a cost of 81 million baht, which has already been approved.

The roadworks there started in January and are scheduled to be complete by early next year. K. Wuthi said, "Once Phase I is complete, we will then move on to expand other parts of those roads."

Another project is Patong's four-lane "road to nowhere", of-

ficially called Phanmeuang Rd, which starts at the north end of Sirirat Rd and ends abruptly at a klong just 400 meters further north.

Progress on the construction of the road, which is planned to join Phra Barami Rd at the north end of Patong, stopped short when the Department of Public Works and Town & Country Planning (PWTCP) ran into a brick wall when trying to appropriate the land required to build the road.

K. Thepcharoen said that the PWTCP has already spent 109 million baht on acquiring 75% of the total land needed for the road, and on completing the existing 400m stretch of blacktop.

"We have already surveyed and planned the course of this road. If we had the budget, we would continue at once.

"Land in Patong is very expensive, which makes it difficult for us to appropriate it. But I expect this process to be finished by the end of this year and to start

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By Anongnat Sartpisut

HM Queen Sirikit's words that "No batik in the world can compare with Thai batik, because it is so delicate," are, says Sirichai Jansongsang, "etched on my heart."

K. Sirichai, a big admirer of Queen Sirikit and the owner of a successful batik business, has just overseen the creation of a gift for Her Majesty – a piece of batik that could well be a record-breaker.

The batik was produced to mark Mother's Day and 72 yards long, one yard for each year of Queen Sirikit's life. It is believed to be the longest length of batik in the world, and it was made here in Phuket, at Phuket Rajabhat University.

K. Sirichai, the project's design director, said, "It was my dream to do something for our Queen. Ten years ago, I was in a batik exhibition in Bangkok. Her Majesty bought all the work I had on show."

K. Sirichai – who has also made a batik silk dress for Queen Sirikit – sketched out in pencil the marine-themed design of the 72-yard batik. Current and former arts students and batik producers from Phuket and surrounding provinces traced over his outlines in liquid wax – to prevent the colors running into each other – before filling in the outlines with fabric paint.

At any one time, between 100 and 300 people worked on the fabric. Just three hours and 20 minutes after K. Sirichai first picked up his pencil, the painting was completed, although it was another 10 hours before the dyes were fixed and the fabric boiled and finished.



K. Sirichai chose "Under the water of the Andaman Sea" as the theme of his piece. "I love the sea," he said. "Whether I have been poor or rich, it has given me life."

Working at an aquarium enabled K. Sirichai to study marine life in detail, and he applied what he saw to his batik.

It won him first prize in a competition. He said, "I was the only person to use a sea design for batik on Thai silk, and since then, the sea has been my symbol."

K. Sirichai is himself a successful former student of Rajabhat. A native of Nakhon Sri Thammarat, he arrived in Phuket with just 600 baht. Encouraged

by his girlfriend, he enrolled in an applied arts course, working at two jobs to fund his studies.

Now, his batik business turns over about a million baht a year, and his work has been featured in exhibitions in France and the Netherlands.

He said he would like to see others benefit from batik in a similar way. "I would like all the Andaman provinces to be a batik region and I hope this fair will build good links among batik makers in Phuket," he explained.

The length of batik will be presented to Queen Sirikit by Phuket Governor Udomsak Usawarangura.

Said K. Sirichai, "I believe



Left: K. Sirichai mixes up a batch of wax for marking out the design. Above, some of the hundreds of volunteers pose with the completed batik.

A batik fit for a Queen

that it will be a national treasure, and I hope it is associated with Phuket, and that future generations will value it. It is the most important work in my life, what we do for our Queen."

K. Sirichai's shop, Chai Batik, is at 16/3-4 Moo 3, Chao Fa East Rd, Tambon Wichit, Amphur Muang, Phuket 83000. Tel: 076-214502 or 076-354099. Fax: 076-214502. Mobile: 09-8713292.

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Widower hits jackpot, wins hearts

More than 100 women have sent love letters in a bid to win the heart of a man who won 25 million baht in the July 1 lottery draw, but he has turned them all down so he can be reunited with his estranged first wife.

Widower Pan Srichonjaeng, 59, said that since he won the big prize he has received numerous visits from friends looking for a quick loan, and marriage proposals from women across the country through the post. Some women even traveled to his home in Chiang Mai to market their charms.

After he entered the monkhood for three days to escape the harassment, K. Pan visited his estranged first wife, Kham Sikuna, 57, and asked her to re-marry him.

Get real: UBC has made history among local cable-television providers by introducing "Academy Fantasia", a Thai version of the reality shows that have proven successful around the world.

Twelve people chosen to take part in the program are coached in singing and acting. Viewers have 24-hour access to watch the competitors as they share the same house and judge the competitors via an SMS voting system. The contestant with the lowest number of votes each week is eliminated from the competition.

However, UBC has agreed to limit voting for the final round on August 21 to one vote per viewer following an earlier sit-in demonstration by a live audience unhappy with the voting results. The crowd booed one contestant off the stage because her mother was suspected of buying votes.

Cocks spreading disease? Singer Ad Carabao called for Public Health Minister Sudarat Keyuraphan and the Livestock Development Department chief to resign if it turns out that fighting cocks were not spreading bird 'flu.

The singer, well known for his nationalist TV commercials for Chang Beer, said members of his Association for the Promo-



REFUND: Four-year-old Sakon Panasuwanrat shows off a 20-baht note he and his mother received from Maab Amarit Hospital in Chumphon province. The reimbursement, along with an apology from the hospital director, followed a three-year legal battle in the Administrative Court system. The hospital charged the boy a 20-baht "hospital fee" for treatment that should have been free under the social welfare system.

tion of Fighting Cock Raising would stop cockfighting activities for three months. If avian 'flu remained in the Kingdom after that period K. Sudarat and Livestock Department head Yukol Limlamthong should resign, he said.

The association disputes a claim by the authorities that fighting cocks, which are transported from province to province for competition, were to blame for the recent domestic outbreak of bird 'flu. The Livestock Development Department issued a ban on cockfighting earlier this month.

Break with tradition: Revered monk Luang Ta Maha Bua attacked last month's appointment of a seven-member panel of senior monks to work for the ailing Supreme Patriarch.

"The appointment will cause divisiveness among Thai Buddhist monks," he said.

The monk said the appointment was a departure from the age-old tradition that only the monarch could sanction the position of His Holiness.

He was commenting on the government's decision last month to form a collective leadership for Buddhist affairs until His Holiness recovers from age-related illnesses and resumes his duties.

Old bones: Fine Arts Department archaeologist Sureerat Bubpha confirmed that a skeleton discovered recently in the middle of a vegetable farm in Maha Sarakham Province's Kosum Phisai District dates from pre-historic times.

She suggested the site be developed as tourist attraction.

The skeleton, which was found with pieces of ancient pottery nearby, was reported to the government by farm owner Chom Duangkuna, 68. The farmer has used a canvas to cover the skeleton, which has attracted a number of locals in search of winning lottery numbers.

"I hope the government ar-

chaeologists will excavate and explore the site very soon as it is now the rainy season," he said, adding that if archaeologists did not dig up the skeleton soon, he would move it to the local Sangha office so locals could come to pay their respects.

Going batty: A virus found in bats in eight provinces has so far not spread to humans, but four groups are monitoring the situation and the potential risk posed by the disease, said award-winning researcher Dr Thiravat Hemachudha.

The eight provinces are Sing Buri, Chon Buri, Surat Thani, Ayudhaya, Chachoeng-

sao, Rayong, Prachin Buri and Ratchaburi.

The Nipah virus, which can cause encephalitis in humans, swept through Malaysia from 1998-1999, leaving 105 dead people and 1.1 million culled pigs in its wake. In Bangladesh, two medical reports have confirmed the direct transfer of the Nipah disease from bats to humans.

According to the World Health Organization, the manner in which the virus is transmitted from animal to animal, and from animal to human is uncertain. Research suggests that close contact with contaminated tissue or body fluids from infected animals is required.

Siamese twins: Doctors said that two newborn twin boys born in Khon Kaen could likely be separated, but that the procedure will have to wait until the boys are at least one year old.

The twins, given the names Nontakan and Nantawat, are connected at the chest and stomach.

X-ray results revealed that the boys have separate hearts, lungs and all other internal organs, except a liver, which they share. They also share a navel and some veins, said Dr Surachai Saranritthichai of Khon Kaen Hospital.

The twins' mother, Ooy On-lao, 29, said she had no clue that her babies would be conjoined as the ultrasound result had not indicated any such signs.

"My husband and I are very poor and we are not sure we can find enough money to give them the special care they need," said K. Ooy, a shoe factory worker.

Around the Nation news round-up is sourced from the pages of The Nation and Kom Chad Leuk newspapers.

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New Mayor – Samui's last hope?

In a recent interview with the local press, newly-elected Koh Samui Mayor Wana-gorn "Sot" Ratanapak revealed that he believes Samui is in desperate need of attention. It is an opinion held by many island residents.

Mayor Sot promised to focus his efforts on a major shake-up of the local bureaucracy to work for a cleaner, safer and better-organized Samui, returning the island to the idyllic natural paradise that it once was.

Under his direction, the municipality is currently collecting information from all the village heads regarding their particular needs. He has also called on the general public to become more involved in the democratic process, and to report to him personally any misconduct or inefficiency on the part of government officials.

Despite some serious staffing issues and a budget deficit

that he reports as being in the region of 30 million baht, K. Sot is confident he can make a difference to the island.

This first directly-elected Mayor of Samui recently built a large and luxurious resort on North Chaweng beach. Rather than cry foul, many people in the tourism industry feel this represents an "acceptable" vested interest, because he at least has his own stake in maintaining the island's appeal to foreign visitors.

In fact, some people feel K. Sot may be the last chance for an island that is becoming dangerously over-developed and teetering on the brink of self-destruction.

Talk of the town: Surat Thani played host last month to a short visit by PM Thaksin Shinawatra, who was in the area as part of his "mobile Cabinet" meeting in Nakhon Sri Thammarat last month.

About 3,000 people gathered to join local dignitaries in welcoming the great CEO to the province, where PM Thaksin was presented with a hefty budget request by Governor Theera Rojanapornpan, in this case for 1.2 billion baht.

The funding would be used to improve provincial waterways and garbage disposal systems, develop seaside tourist attractions and Khun Thalee Lake, improve the landscape of Koh Samui, and fund a gas pipeline to Nakhon Si Thammarat's Khanom district. 72 million baht has been earmarked for development projects on Koh Tao.

PM Thaksin said that the proposals were sensible, well-prepared and reasonable, compared with those put forward by some other provinces. He noted that some provinces had requested seven or eight billion baht, without specific cost breakdowns.

PM Thaksin also stressed the importance of reliable water and electricity supplies, and said that Surat Thani should focus on becoming a major tourist destination and transport hub for the south of Thailand. He also mentioned that Koh Samui has suffered from some regrettable mistakes made in the past.



Splash for Trash! On September 18, local scuba divers will again pull on their dive gear and take the plunge to remove rubbish from the waters surrounding Koh Wao, also known as 'Dragon Island'. This year, Koh Samui Easy Divers is organizing the local cleanup. For more information contact Tel: 077-413373.

additional funds should the basic annual budget run dry.

He praised a local initiative to develop swampland in the province, in order to create water supply and recreational areas, and said an electricity-producing trash incinerator similar to one in Chonburi might be suitable for Koh Phangan.

The visit was hailed as a great success by provincial leaders, who are now no doubt hoping that the CEO's words will be translated quickly into cold, hard cash.

Imagination needed: A contest has been organized to improve road safety on Koh Samui, which has one of the highest per-capita incidences of road fatalities in the country.

Budding engineers are invited to submit their proposals to the local Social Welfare Department before September 20, and prizes with a combined value of 100,000 baht will be awarded to the best entries.

Some cynical local observers have suggested that the money would be more effectively spent on buying helmets for motorcyclists.

Cdr Swan is a writer with Koh Samui's community magazine.

FROM THE GULF OF THAILAND



By Commander Sammy Swan



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Pruerk-lawan	112.6	11,850,000	100,000	3,455,000	8,295,000
Pruerk-umpai	157.80	14,480,000	100,000	4,244,000	10,136,000

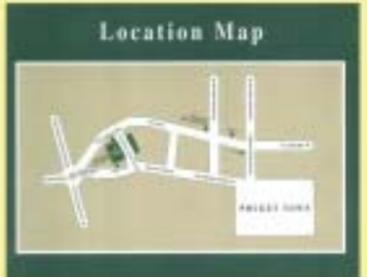


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Location Map



This week



GRADUETTE: *Gazette* reporter Gategao Phetsawang (center) celebrates achieving her BA in English with fellow graduates of Phuket Rajabhat University Sirima Samphan (left) and Oranut Suikim (right) at the award ceremony on August 7.



IN BLOOM: Tepcharoen Ocharos (wearing sunglasses), Chief of the recently formed Phuket Provincial Rural Roads Office, and fellow officers celebrated HM The Queen's 72nd birthday by planting 200 pink cassia trees in the grounds of their Thalang office.



DELIGHTFUL, DELOVELY DEEVANA: Celebrating the opening of the Deevana Patong Resort & Spa are (from left): Resident Manager Jiraporn Supich; Managing Director Jariyawadee Suvunditkul; and General Manager of the Andaman Group, Kongsak Chunhaeatchapan. Deevana was formerly The Bayshore Resort Hotel.



FLEXIBLE FRIENDS: At the Mangosteen Resort and Spa launch party for Bartercard are (from left): Graham Brain, MD of Bartercard (Thailand) Ltd; Dr Prasit Koeysiripong; Michael Massey, Brokerage Manager of Bartercard (Thailand); and Hajo Von Keller, Director of the Mangosteen.



ABOVE: Alistair Why (5th from left), Managing Director of the Aspasia Phuket boutique resort in Kata celebrates with his management team the opening of the resort's Malina's Restaurant on August 5.



MADE FOR SHOPPING: Tesco Lotus Store Director Piyaporn Charoensinrongruang (2nd from left), Boots Retail Managing Director Richard Morgan (2nd from right), and the Phuket representative of The Thai Red Cross Society, Wipaphan Kusuwan (right), open the Tesco Lotus branch of Boots on August 6.

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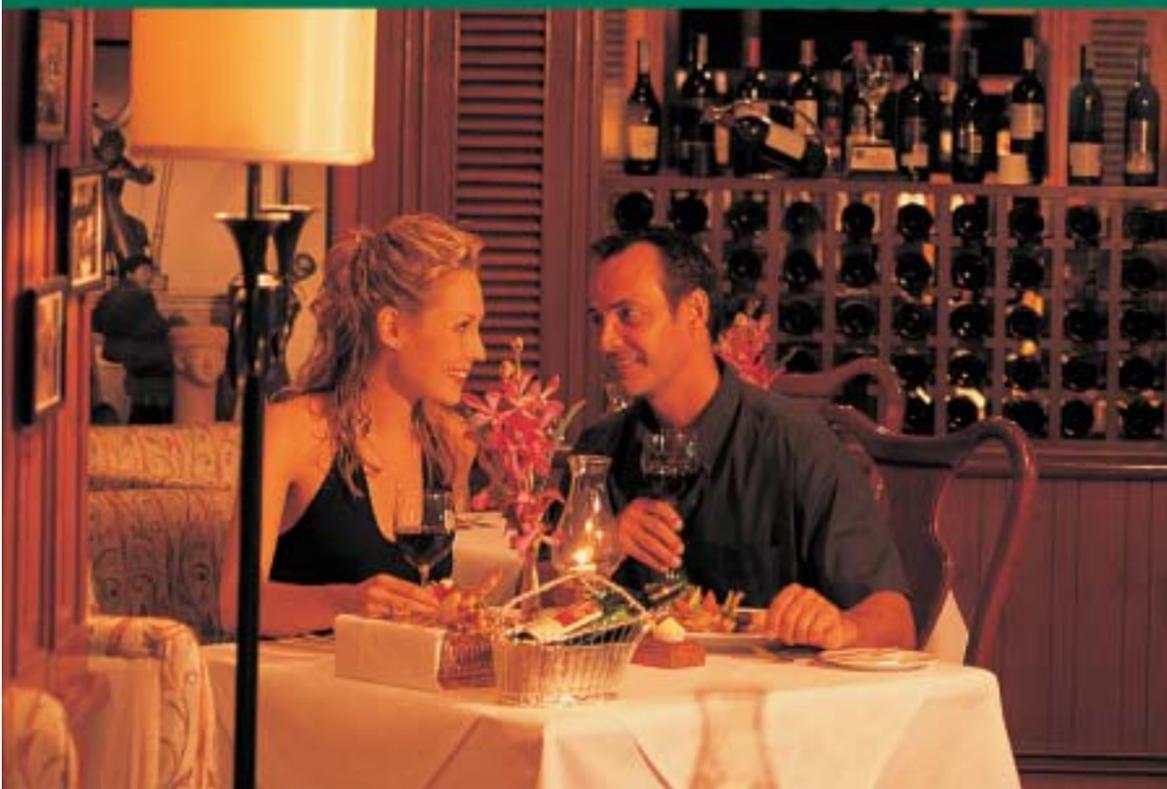
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Quieter

A native of Trang, Chuan Leekpai trained as a lawyer. He became active in politics in 1969 and rose to become leader of the Democrat Party. He was Prime Minister between September 1992 and July 1995; at the time, he was the longest-serving popularly-elected official in Thailand's history. K. Chuan was returned to office in 1997 and was Prime Minister until 2001, when the Democrats lost the national election to Thai Rak Thai. Although K. Chuan stepped down as Democrat leader last year, he is still heavily involved in Thai political life. He is seen as one of the Democrat's best assets because of his 'squeaky clean' image. K. Chuan was in Phuket recently and, in conversation with *Gazette* reporters **Kamol Pirat** and **Anongnat Sarpisut**, he reflected on more than three decades in Thai politics, and talked about his plans and hopes for the future.

Gazette: What are you doing now you have retired?

K. Chuan: I am 66 and although I retired from the leadership of the Democrat Party last year, I am still a Democrat MP and a member of the party's consultative committee.

I still have a responsibility to work, and I try to do my best, and be an effective voice for the opposition. Now, I have more time to go to the provinces, to meet people and canvass for my party.

Gazette: How is your health?

K. Chuan: I've had two heart operations in the past two years. I am better and stronger than I was, but I must eat healthily and I know it is necessary to exercise frequently.

Gazette: It seems that you still enjoy politics.

K. Chuan: I am enthusiastic

about working for the Democrat Party. In this area – the south – people always elect us to work for them, and I will continue to work to ensure a Democrat victory in the next general election.

Gazette: What has been your involvement in international affairs since your retirement?

K. Chuan: Well, the Indonesian Election Committee invited international organizations to observe the first round of the country's presidential election, on July 5.

One of these organizations was the Carter Center, which was founded in 1982 by former US President Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn.

Former President Carter invited me to be a co-leader in observing the election, because he felt my administration had been democratic. They needed us to monitor the election process and suggest improve-

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together to solve them.

At present, it is difficult to express an opinion that differs from that of the government. The government has the power to control all things, including the media.

When I was elected, vote-buying was not as big a problem as it is now. I have been involved in Thai democracy for 35 years, and although I have only a small role now, I know from my own experience that vote-buying is only one of many problems in the political system in Thailand.

Gazette: How do you spend your free time?

K. Chuan: When I go anywhere I take a sketch book with me. My pictures are simple – after all, I am not a professional artist. Instead of recording things in

writing, I draw a picture.

One organization asked to mount an exhibition of my sketches, but I fell ill so it was cancelled.

I would still like to have an exhibition of my pictures,

though; I would like it to be this year.

Gazette: How is your family?

K. Chuan: Currently, my son lives with his mother in Chiang Mai. I still call them. My mother is also well.

Gazette: What are your plans for the future?

K. Chuan: I don't have clear plans for my future. My responsibility is still as a Democrat MP; being an MP is my priority in politics. I have a close relationship with ordinary people, and, because I am an MP, I can help them.

I have seen many politicians who, when they retire, choose to leave public life completely, but I'm still happy for people to contact me, whether I am an MP or not. I will always have a responsibility to work for my party.

I have been a special professor at several universities for more than 10 years, and a special professor at Chulalongkorn University for 20 years, and I intend to continue teaching.

I also plan to write more books. My books are aimed at organizations and institutes, but I don't focus on theory – I leave that to the academics. Instead, I write about what I have experienced.

I don't want to be Prime Minister or to have a major position in politics now; I'm happy to be an MP. When my body has had enough of politics, I will return to Trang province, and spend the rest of my life there.

ments. We met all Indonesia's top politicians.

It was important for outside organizations to be involved in the election. I think they invited me to be an observer because of my experi-

ence in a democratic system in Thailand.

Gazette: Would you like to do this kind of work on an international scale?

K. Chuan: I would prefer to be

part of the democratic process in Thailand. I think Thailand still needs to learn the meaning of the word "democracy"; there are still many problems in our democratic process and we politicians need to work

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The Thai connection

The most highly publicized yacht launch this year was that of the 75-meter *Mirabella V*. Groundbreaking in several areas, *Mirabella V*'s carbon-epoxy mast towers 88m into the air and she is, by a wide margin, the largest single-masted yacht in the world.

Less well known is her Thai heritage; she is the second generation of a line of sloops originally built in Jomtien, Thailand.

In the early 1990s, Joe and Luciana Vittoria established Concorde Yachts in Pattaya and launched the first of the magnificent *Mirabellas*. Their design brief was specific: the vessels should be as luxurious as large motor yachts but have hull forms similar to large racing yachts.

Designed by renowned naval architect Bruce Farr and destined for the high-end charter market, the yacht was to allow guests to revel in the highest levels of comfort whilst sailing along at a cracking 16 knots.

Four yachts and 13 years later, *Mirabella V* was launched by VT Shipbuilding from its Portsmouth shipyard. Designed by the prolific Ron Holland, the project brought together technical expertise from around the world.

Her vital statistics are awesome. *Mirabella V* carries 3,400 square meters of sail and with her 150-ton drop keel lowered, she draws 10m. In a strong breeze, she races along at 20 knots as the crew of 12 pamper visitors. As well as an array of water-sports equipment, guests can also enjoy her outdoor cinema.

Mirabella V has attracted such interest that she has currently embarked on a very busy charter season in the Med, with bookings in the Caribbean for the forthcoming winter season.

Not bad when you consider she charters for the princely sum of US\$250,000 (about 10 million baht) a week. Every aspect of the project is on display at www.mirabayachts.com. My thanks to Ron Holland Yacht Design for supplying the photos used in this article.

The Sun also rises: In early July, Larry Ellison's megayacht *Rising Sun* pulled away from the dockside in Germany to undergo her sea trials and claim the title of the world's largest yacht.

Usurping Paul Allen's *Octopus*, which held the title for just a few months, *Rising Sun* is an overwhelming 137m long. Opinions are divided regarding her design, which comes from the office of the late, highly influential Jon Bannenberg.

Instead of blatant opulence, she is somewhat stark looking. With hull lines echoing a military vessel, her superstructure consists of two upper decks sheathed completely in glass. These glass sections – apart from the wheelhouse – have remained under covers, possibly because some of the panels were not yet ready for installation.

However, if *Rising Sun* is a disappointment to those who think the biggest should also be the brassiest, personally I think she is a triumph of subtle, contemporary design.



Mirabella V: Yours for a week for a paltry 10 million baht.

Perhaps the most sublime aspect of her lines is that it is all but impossible to guess her true length. Instead of appearing unwieldy and inflated, as *Octopus* strikes many, *Rising Sun* is long, low and minimalist – very Larry Ellison.

Mr Ellison has a penchant for owning some of the most radically-designed yachts built. Although he has just sold *Katana* to make way for *Rising Sun*, I was relieved to hear he was keeping *Ronin* (formerly *Izanami*), the stunning Lurssen yacht designed by Sir Norman Foster.

Bullish outlook: A recent visitor to Samui was the 170ft Feadship *Battered Bull*. She is one of the most traveled superyachts in the world and, since her launch in 1995, has completed two circumnavigations of the world.

The owners are avid divers, and *Battered Bull* is one of the few yachts in the world to carry her own decompression chamber. In addition to Samui, she also called in an Bangkok. Move over Whitney Houston, *Battered Bull* has to have been the most glamorous visitor to Bangkok in years.

With the Samui Regatta going from strength to strength in just a few short years and a marina on the way, this is a very exciting time for all boating enthusiasts on Samui. So much so that there is now a branch of SEAL Superyachts Asia on the island, run by superyacht skipper Charlie Dwyer.

Battered Bull has an excellent website at <http://www.yachtbatteredbull.com> – which details her cruising history. She is now steaming to the Solomon Islands, before heading for Australia.

Stunning in Sardinia: Phuketian yacht-lovers were thrilled to see two mega-sailers, *Perseus* and *Liberty* from Perini Navi, grace our shores earlier this year.

However, Sardinians were treated to a much more glorious sight when the inaugural Perini Navi Cup regatta was held on July 14 at Porto Rotondo, Sardinia.

The 14 yachts that gathered constituted almost half of the 30-strong Perini Navi fleet. In thirty-knot breezes, the yachts achieved an average of 14 knots with one of the Phuket visitors, *Perseus*, apparently in contention. *Principessa Vaiva* was, however, crowned overall winner.

Judging from the pictures, it was one of the most breathtaking sailing events in recent years. I have yet to confirm whether the event is to be held at Porto Rotondo every year or whether the venue will change. If it is not static, I plan to launch a one-man campaign to lobby for the regatta to come to Thailand one day.

Well, we can all dream, can't we?

Have you spotted a superyacht in Phuket waters? Want to share the poop on a super sloop? Send an email to Dominic Stroud at: superyachts@phuketgazette.net

Superyacht

WATCH

By Dominic Stroud

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Decor Ideas with Siripansa CLASSY GLASS

When people think about glassware in the home, they usually think only of water glasses and glass vases. But there are many more ways in which glass can enhance a home.

A well-chosen glass or crystal ornament can brighten up any part of a room, while a prominent cabinet of glassware makes an eye-catching display.

The smooth surface of glass, formed when sand and other ingredients such as soda ash and limestone are heated together to more than 1,000°C, also makes it ideal for mirrors. A strategically-placed mirror will reflect light to brighten even the darkest corner.

Glass looks fragile, but some forms can be stronger than steel. Glass does not react with most chemicals, so it has many

uses. It can, for example, be made into plates and cups, or into attractive containers for cosmetics.

Aside from its practical uses, glass is a popular choice for ornaments.

Plain pieces are perhaps best for showing off the purity and transparency of glass, while more ornate items give creators the chance to show off their skills, whether in cutting the glass to create maximum sparkle, or in creating figures of ethereal delicacy from molten glass.

It may sometimes be hard to spot the difference between a mass-produced piece of glass and one that has been painstakingly made by hand: a tumbler blown by a master-craftsman, for example, and one molded by a machine.

However, when it comes to

buying a special piece, people who are not on a rock-bottom budget are often prepared to pay extra for a handmade piece, because they know they are buying something unique.

Theirs may not be the only ornament of its kind in the shop, but no two handmade pieces will ever be exactly the same.

— Siripansa Somboon

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A taste of Cuba on turtle beach

It's early on a sunny afternoon when I arrive at the JW Marriott Phuket Resort and Spa. After the hour-long drive the pale green welcome drink is reminiscent of green tea, and is refreshing and much appreciated. But it's not tea; it's a Mojito, (pronounced with that throaty Hispanic "j" that sounds like an "h").



As we sit in the Sala Sawasdee lounge, Aekphon Phothiphrom, Director of Restaurants, explains, "The Mojito is Cuban in origin so we use two types of the finest Havana Club rum, which is oak-scented and gold-colored."

Ingredients: 1½oz light rum; ½oz gold rum; 2 tsp white sugar; 1½oz lime juice; 1oz syrup; 10-12 mint leaves; club soda to taste.

Method: Crush some of the mint leaves with sugar in a mortar until well-blended, and spoon into a tumbler-sized glass. Put ice in the glass and add lime juice, syrup and soda. Add rum and decorate with mint leaves. Note: syrup is made by boiling sugar and water.

A short walk away from the Sala

Sawasdee is the Pool Bar. Here the sound of waves accompanies a pleasant sea breeze. The hotel has its own crimson-colored cocktail called the Little Turtle.

"The turtle is the symbol of the hotel, so the drink complements the hotel.

"We put a blend of Thai fruits into the cocktail. The red color you see is from the Grenadine and the locally-grown cashew apple. Cashew is a bit bitter but has a sweet taste as well, which makes it suitable for cocktails," says K.

Aekphon. "There's quite a lot of alcohol, but it's got a lot of juice also."

Ingredients: 1oz Mekhong whisky; ½oz Galliano; ½oz Triple Sec; 1oz cashew apple juice; 2oz pineapple juice; 1oz lychee juice; 1oz lemon juice;



½oz Grenadine syrup; slice of star fruit for decoration.

Method: Decorate a tall glass with the star fruit. Squeeze cashew apple to make juice. Put into shaker with other ingredients and three or

four ice cubes. Shake until well-blended and pour into glass.

— Anongnat Sartpisut

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If you believe the hype, Macau – now linked to Thailand via super-cheap flights on low-cost carriers – is set to become the Las Vegas of Asia.

The one-million-square-foot, US\$240 million Sands Casino opened in May, with much fanfare and not a little chaos. Thousands of customers stormed in, after hearing rumors that the management was handing out free chips. But rumors they were, and rumors they remained.

More casinos are due to open in the years to come, and gambling continues to be the main industry in this quirky, former Portuguese colony. In addition to the usual suspects – baccarat, blackjack and roulette – punters in Macau can stake their cash on such Chinese favorites as *dai siu*, *fan tan* and *pai kao*.

Meaning “big little”, *dai siu* is played with three dice, and the idea is to guess whether their total will be from three to nine or ten to 18. *Fan tan* – estimating the number of buttons the dealer scoops into a cup – hardly ranks as a spectator sport, and *pai kao* – a form of dominoes, is unusual in that the casino doesn’t play, but deducts a 3% commission from the winnings.

Just remember that whatever you’re playing, the house enjoys a built-in mathematical advantage. So quit while you’re ahead.

It’s not simply the casino industry which is growing. New amusement parks are springing up as well. But while transformation and reconstruction may be “on the cards”, on the culinary front Macau remains staunchly and pleasantly traditional.

Eating out is one of the great entertainments here, typically somewhere like Espaço Lisboa – just off Coloane’s village square – whose laid-back charm belongs to the 1950s, and whose menu could not be more solidly Portuguese. The duck rice

Macau: where food is always a good bet

TALES OF A TRAVELER

By Ed Peters

Right: The architecture of the older parts of Macau is a reminder of its Southern European links.

Below, left: Racecars in the Macau Grand Prix flash past the Lisboa, one of Macau’s oldest casinos.

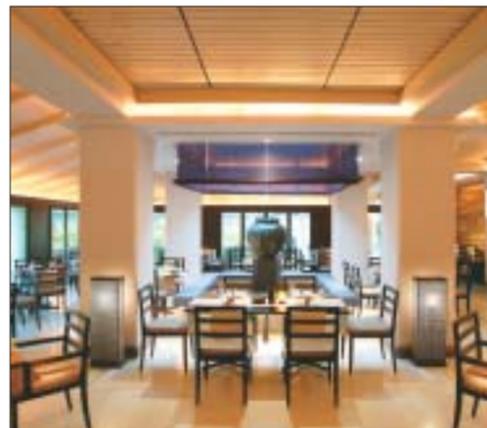
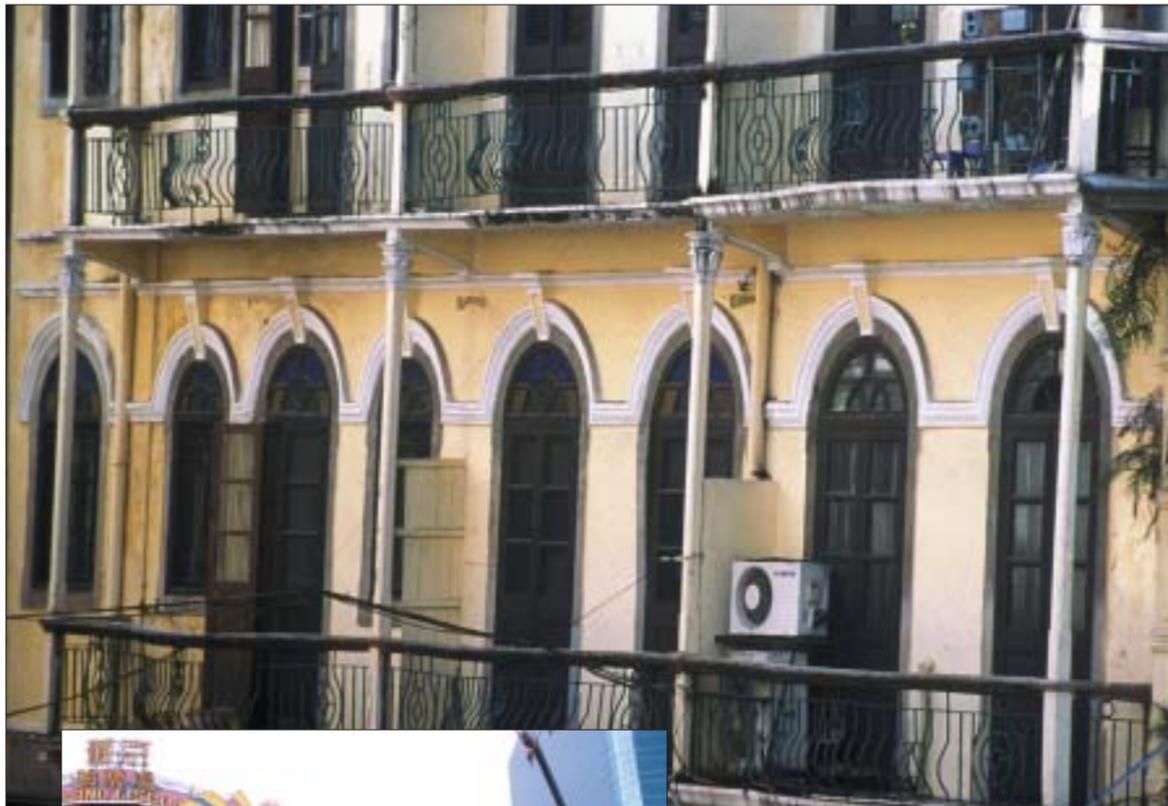
Below, right: Classy eating ambience at Naam Thai restaurant.

is practically obligatory, or pick up a couple of egg tarts from Lord Stow’s Bakery around the corner as a souvenir.

A little further south, the beachside Fernando’s is similarly authentic but may be a little boisterous for some tastes.

From the sublime to, well – Robuchon a Galera – overseen by “chef of the century” Joel Robuchon himself, is contained in the bizarre surrounds of the Hotel Lisboa, yet rated by many to be one of the best restaurants in Asia. But take note that the degustation menu is 1,400 pataca (7,100 baht) a head, there are 1,900 wines in the cellar, and the joint shuts at 10:30pm on the dot.

Rather less haute-cuisine, the 130-year-old Clube Militar is no longer an exclusive or mili-



tary club, but it does ambience brilliantly, while its Portuguese cuisine is more than adequate.

Looking at Asian and fusion options, both Barra Nova and Galo are recognized as temples of Macanese cuisine. Similarly, Naam, a Thai restaurant which is part of the Manda-

rin Oriental Hotel’s Backyard Resort, has won a loyal patronage since it opened just over a year ago. There is also a string of Thai eateries along Rua de Abreu Nunes.

Finally, Plaza is one of the most popular Chinese restaurants, churning out dim sum and

all manner of other dishes for the munching multitudes all day long, from early morning.

So, even if you lose your shirt in Macau, make sure you keep a little money tucked away so that you can console yourself with some excellent cuisine from around the world.

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KIDS THE FUN PAGE FOR ALL THE FAMILY

Hidden Words

Hidden in the grid below are the names of at least 35 European cities. The words may read vertically, horizontally or diagonally. They may also read right-to-left or down-to-up. See if you can find more than your family or friends. Score: More than 15, good; more than 25, very good; 35 or more, excellent.

C	O	P	E	N	H	A	G	E	N	F	O	Z	M	D
M	E	N	G	O	L	O	C	E	R	I	B	F	S	U
C	A	X	O	P	B	W	C	A	A	M	E	W	J	B
N	T	R	A	M	A	O	N	P	H	A	L	O	R	L
G	A	R	S	S	R	K	N	E	Z	N	G	G	P	I
T	I	P	R	E	F	E	L	N	Y	C	R	S	S	N
S	N	A	L	U	I	S	L	L	L	H	A	A	N	D
F	W	D	R	E	I	L	O	A	N	E	D	L	O	P
P	G	T	N	N	S	O	L	O	P	S	E	G	Y	H
T	B	O	K	S	P	X	D	E	B	T	I	K	L	Z
O	S	I	B	R	Z	N	V	Z	S	E	C	I	N	I
S	C	E	E	U	O	J	V	B	E	R	L	I	N	R
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N	I	I	N	A	L	I	M	N	M	M	B	L	O	M
L	C	X	S	K	H	A	L	R	L	U	G	U	S	E
H	A	L	E	Q	E	C	Y	U	O	N	O	K	M	O
X	I	T	P	R	A	G	U	E	H	I	X	R	K	Y
C	K	I	H	S	B	E	G	B	K	C	A	A	K	F
A	N	O	L	E	C	R	A	B	C	H	N	W	D	I
S	A	N	Y	N	N	T	U	C	O	F	N	R	Q	R
W	V	O	O	T	S	S	C	S	T	E	E	L	N	X
E	D	I	N	B	U	R	G	H	S	V	I	H	X	B
Y	S	T	T	E	S	N	E	S	X	E	V	T	L	Y
S	O	F	I	A	G	I	E	K	F	F	L	F	Y	M
A	H	N	U	E	D	M	L	N	L	C	P	S	Q	D

Get your brain in gear with The Monster Quiz



- Who starred in the 1965 movie, *The Spy Who Came In From The Cold*?
- What is the real name of the author on whose book the movie was based?
- Which Thai province lies between Nakhon Phanom and Ubon Ratchathani?
- Armand Hammer was head of which oil company?
- Who composed the *Peer Gynt Suite*?
- Who composed the music for *The King & I*?
- Which band recorded the 1966 hit *For Your Love*?
- Which country did the Capets rule from 987 to 1328 AD?
- Which US state takes its name from the Chippewa for "great water"?
- Bandleader Desi Arnaz, husband of Lucille Ball, once had a job cleaning what?
- What is the correct word for a diamond-shaped piece of glass used in a lattice window?
- Which boxer was known as "The Wild Bull of the Pampas"?
- Where was Marco Polo staying when he dictated the tale of his adventures in China?
- Which singer was born with the name Annie Mae Bullock?
- What might a prig napper be arrested for?
- Who or what is the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street?
- Leo and Aries are two of the "fire signs". What is the third?
- In a plutocracy, who's in charge of the country?
- In Cockney slang, how much money is "a mon-key"?
- Before becoming a brand of shoes, who or what was Nike?

Answers next week

Never a Cross Word!

Across

- Theatrical or musical presentation, for example.
- Leave it out.
- Between your legs and your feet.
- Hansel's sister.
- Mr Warhol.
- Apple leftover.
- Regional manner of speaking.
- Indian city.
- Tiny particle.
- Youngsters.

Down

- Spike.
- German river.
- Lion's coiffure.

1		2			3		4		5
6				7					
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9	10					11		12	
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14		15			16			17	18
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22									

- Material for stockings.
- Schoolwork.
- Caesar's X.
- *** de Janeiro.
- Bear's lair.
- Winning tennis shot.
- Venomous snake.
- Juliet's boyfriend.
- Consumed.
- Top newspaper in London and New York.
- Hamlet, for example.

Solution next week

Brain Buster!!

When Jim Birdbrain bought a parrot, the petshop salesman assured him that it would repeat any word it heard.

About a week later, Jim took the parrot back, complaining it hadn't said a single word. Assuming the salesman did lie about the parrot's abilities, why wouldn't it talk?

The parrot was deaf.

Answers to last week's Monster Quiz

- Chips (CHiPs); 2. Antarctica; 3. Semtex; 4. Lawrence of Arabia; 5. Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius; 6. Alexander Solzhenitsyn; 7. *Fiddler on the Roof*; 8. A person fond of his own opinions; 9. Antoine de Saint-Exupery; 10. Helen of Troy; 11. A round window; 12. Mata Hari; 13. By firing squad; 14. Leopard; 15. Uruguay; 16. Ivan Lendl; 17. Horse racing; 18. New Hampshire; 19. Solomon Islands; 20. CBS.

Solution to last week's Crossword

P	L	O	U	G	H	S	H	A	R	E
O	N	G	O	B	B	A				
M	U	R	D	E	R	N	E	S	T	
I	E	N	A	E						
U	S	E	R	S	E	S	A	M	E	
I	C			H	A					
H	A	R	O	L	D	V	I	P	S	
N	A	I	I	H						
W	A	N	T	N	E	L	S	O	N	
E	N	G	L	E	R					
T	H	E	R	M	O	M	E	T	E	R

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The Passion of the Bar Closures

The recently-released controversial motion picture *The Passion of the Bar Closures*, has led to amazing scenes outside theaters across the length and breadth of Thailand.

Here in Pattaya, bar owners and working girls alike are taking to the streets, denouncing the film as nothing more than celluloid propaganda.

Set in the days of splendor, around 1650, the confrontational movie was produced by the eminent Hollywood actor/director/politician/weightlifter Arnold Stormwaterdrainführer.

Taking a sabbatical from governing California so he could come to Thailand to produce the movie, he said he now feels reinvigorated to the extent he may run for President of the United States in a few years. "After zat I have no furzer territorial ambitions," he stated.

He spent much of his time doing "research" in the bars of Pattaya, particularly in the Soi 6 area. Asked what he most enjoyed about Pattaya, Stormwaterdrainführer exclaimed, "Before, I vas ze vun doingk all ze groping. But in Zoi Zix, it vas der girls groping me!"

In one of the movie's opening scenes, we are left in no doubt as to the meaning and purpose of

this potential cinematic classic.

The well-known character actor Watta Loadofoldcobblers, playing the part of senior government minister Preacher Malcontent, proposes the immediate closure of all bars in the kingdom to Toxic Shinsofleather, the kingdom's Fearless Leader (played by TRT Voteonefor-meagain).

"I, a mere slimy turd on the sole of your imported Chinese shoes, humbly propose to your Fearless Leadership that we immediately order the smelly foreign devils from our exalted shores.

"They have no desire to understand our customs and our ways, but merely to open ale taverns and lure the flower of our youth, both girls and boys – and possibly the occasional unsuspecting farmyard or aquatic creature – into their despicable clutches, despoiling them and teaching them bad habits."

To which the Fearless One replies: "On the fourth day of the waxing moon, being the Feast Day of the Copulating Buffalo, I shall order all foreign-controlled ale taverns to douse their candles and bar their doors at sunset."

The Interior Minister suppresses a smile. "I, a lump of fetid lizard droppings, will order it done, oh Wise and Immensely Wealthy One."



FROM THE STREETS OF PATTAYA

By Duncan Stearn

Leading Pattaya movie critic Soy Boockow described the dialogue from the movie's most poignant scenes as "excremental".

In the latest edition of *Pattaya Today* newspaper, Boockow claims the dialogue "belongs in a children's nursery rhyme," and elaborates, "I can't believe anyone is taking this tripe seriously and getting so worked up over it."

The usual pot-stirrers (and smokers) have all waddled into line to rail against the production, claiming it's the thin end of the wedge, the short end of the pointy stick, the last-unused condom in the chicken coop.

A Greenpeace spokesperson, Sunshine Daisy Wallflower, said that she felt the vivid scenes involving Dutch traders farting and burping in the markets, must have exceeded the amount of potentially harmful greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere.

"We were also concerned about the number of frogs and goldfish employed as props in scenes inside those wooden pole-dancing palaces," she said.

"How the producers managed to get their cameras where they did must have caused untold psychological trauma, especially to the frogs. The look of sheer embarrassment in their bulging eyes made me blush."

British morals crusader Mrs Victoria Curmudgeon, OBE, went even further in her condemnation, saying "the flagrant depiction of female genitalia was for prurient purposes, and could only be there for the titillation of the weak-minded youth of today, most of whom should be chemically castrated.

"It's clear that the very fabric of modern society began to unravel when sales of corsets and petticoats declined in the free-love era of the 1960s."

Mrs Curmudgeon, the former headmistress of the exclusive Lickem-on-Toppe Girl's

Finishing College in Surrey, achieved notoriety here in Pattaya a couple of years ago when she led a protest against the showing of the Thai-produced movie *Suriyothai*, claiming that scenes of Thai women wandering about bare-breasted were "an affront to moral decency."

Later, grainy black-and-white pictures of a woman bearing a remarkable resemblance to Mrs Curmudgeon fondling the nether regions of a young Thai man appeared in the Thai tabloids.

The newspapers claimed she had been photographed inside the Throbbing Members Boys A-Go-Go.

But this reviewer begs to differ with the movie's detractors.

In particular, the graphic scenes of bar patrons being compelled at musket-point to expose their private parts to others and urinate into small vials have given this movie an edge that rivals such classic blockbusters as *Spiderman*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and *Mr Bean*.

The Passion of the Bar Closures has an "R" rating and is currently showing at Royal Garden and Big C.

Or pirated DVD copies can be purchased at any stall along the beach road.

In The Stars

by Isla Star

LEO (July 24-August 22): Commitment is a temptation this weekend, but keep the bait dangling and do not make an agreement until celestial conditions early next month favor you. A steamy atmosphere mid-week makes it hard to concentrate at work. A long walk by the sea will cool your thoughts.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): Virgoans who feel lately that they've been taking two steps forward then three

backward will make progress this week. Everyone can now see your point of view. This weekend, when someone's flirting makes the message clear, you will feel like the cat that's got the cream.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): Striking the right balance between work and family could be difficult this week. Children are especially likely to require attention and this could conflict with deadlines. Take a long, hard look at

your working life; there may be a way to alleviate some of the pressure. Thursday brings financial luck.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): An idea that took root last month suddenly starts growing faster than a jungle weed. You won't want to lose the momentum and may need to set other matters aside. A new relationship could suffer as a result of your one-track mind. If this person can't understand the reasons for your inattention, perhaps it was never meant to be.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): Sagittarians who have been waiting for the right moment to show their feelings can do so now. Positive vibrations continue during the following days; this will be a week to remember. You will be able to finalize an agreement relating to property, and satisfy everyone involved. Important news from abroad will arrive: seeing will be believing. The number 3 brings luck.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): You are at your most sparkling this weekend and your magnetism will attract others. Single Capricorns should be tactful when choosing company. Cancer and

Leo are the ones most likely to float your boat, but Sagittarius could help you to take the tiller. Do not take time off work next week if there are issues to be completed by the month's end.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): The cool approach is working well for Aquarians who want to keep their interest hidden. Business agreements are coming up aces, but until others have shown their cards, the less you say, the better. Communications are generally hindered until the end of August; keep copies of important messages. Expect a revelation this week.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): The final days of August will prove challenging for you but your wits should be enough to help until life becomes calmer. Issues – both personal and career – will be settled. You may be able to start planning that much-needed break. Wear seaweed green to encourage clear focus.

ARIES (March 21-April 20): Cosmic energy is on your side this week, but time isn't. Arians may need to cut some corners to achieve goals. Make sure that you manage to

relax among all the activity. Dig your hooves in if people start applying the pressure.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): If the romantic spotlight has not shone on you recently, don't give up hope. August will unfold into a sensual period that you won't want to end. Signs are very positive for Taurus who believe they have met their soul mate. Follow your heart if you doubt the permanence of a new relationship.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): Once in a while Geminis are in danger of losing their footing. This could occur mid-week; remain alert if you have business appointments scheduled during then. Let passing romantic fancies blow away in the breeze. The color terracotta will help to keep you grounded.

CANCER (June 22-July 23): You may have to deal with a somewhat fraught home atmosphere this weekend. Offer gentle advice to a family member who is as prickly as a cactus. Keep an eye on your finances, although additional income is forecast for those who are interested in moonlighting. The number 8 has special meaning towards the end of next week.

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A bitter-sweet tale of twins

The story of Shaky and Rattle is a typical one in Phuket. When just five weeks old, male Shaky, twin sister Rattle and another sister, Roll, were dumped at a temple at the north end of the island.

Animal welfare volunteers visit the temple regularly and the abbot is sympathetic to the animals living there. Unusually for puppies dumped so young, all three survived the first critical weeks of their lives.

Roll was independent and difficult to approach but the inseparable Shaky and Rattle loved people. They were more interested in being loved than in eating.

However, when Shaky and Rattle were 14 weeks old, fate stepped in and changed one of their lives forever.

Yu, the manager of JJ's bar in Cherng Talay, and her partner John Jones, decided that they would like a soi dog as a companion for their pedigree Shitzu, Joey. Their only stipulation was that it must be male.

After visiting a couple of temples, K. Yu spotted Shaky and the search was over. The young dog quickly adapted to his new life.

John Jones recounts the story. "We were amazed how quickly he settled in. He really is a fabulous little dog. Our young son can do anything to him and he takes it all in stride. Shaky is fearless although he never shows any aggression. Our customers think he is wonderful.

"On returning home recently, we found two large cows in our driveway. Joey barked and they turned to charge him. Shaky flew at

them, nipping at their heels until they ran off.

"He is also a great house dog, and lets us know whenever strangers are approaching. Why anyone would buy a pedigree here when there are so many dogs like this around?"

Brought up with love as well as a good diet, the energetic six-month-old Shaky now weighs 11 kilograms.

It is a different story for Rattle. She had continued to show the same happy temperament as before, but her health began to decline rapidly despite regular feeding. Depressed and weighing barely five kilograms, she gradually stopped eating.

With her immune system failing, she developed an allergy to flea bites that tormented her. She also bears the scars from the bites of more dominant dogs at the temple.

Her allergy is now being treated and her skin and coat will recover if she has the attention she needs, but this will probably never happen.

She is no longer a cute little puppy and one day soon, like so many others, will be found dead among the temple rubbish.

The moral to this tale is that dogs are not wild animals; they were long ago domesticated by man and need man to survive.

If you are thinking of buying a pedigree puppy, please remember Rattle and the countless others like her.

To adopt a soi dog or puppy, contact any of the following numbers: Tel: 09-8959965; 01-9704772; 07-2795617; 09-970-1392.

Top Dog is always pleased to receive comments and news about animals. Email him at: topdog9@myway.com



By Top Dog



Above, Shaky with Yu and John Jones. Top of page, Rattle remains in the wat, getting sicker every day.

High anxiety in the low season

In the early 1990s, David Walker and I were running Scuba trips in Southeast Asia. During the winter we went to Thailand; in the summer we went to Indonesia.

In 1992 we decided to go to Phuket with our small dive group, even though it was July and the rainy season.

We arrived in Phuket and put our guests up at bungalows at the Kata Beach Resort. They wanted to sleep, so David and I headed to Jimmy's Lighthouse Restaurant in Ao Chalong. Jimmy's was our hangout; it served Thai and Western food and Jimmy Pearson helped us in all sorts of ways.

We found Jimmy at the bar and asked him if there was a dive boat we could charter to take us and our guests to the Similan Islands for several days of diving. He said that as long as the weather remained benign, we had a good chance.

The following day, he told us that Captain Dave, who owned the motorized sailboat *L'Escargot*, his girlfriend from New Mexico and the Thai crewman would meet our requirements and would be ready to sail tomorrow. We rounded up our group and gear and were on board the next day, ready to go.

We sailed off to the northwest, arriving after 12 hours off Similan No 4. We spent four days diving the lee sides of the islands, avoiding the chop and windy conditions off the western shores. Between dives we snorkeled, explored the islands, ate and sunbathed.

On the fourth day, the captain told us that the wind was now coming from the southwest; a major cyclone was blowing in our direction; and we were about to discover the meaning of "off season". We should leave immediately, he said. David and I promptly agreed.

Half an hour later we were out of the shelter of the island and under full sail, headed southeast for Phuket. We sped along at 7 knots through choppy seas with four- to five-foot swells. I went below to brew a pot of coffee. I heard David and the captain talking in worried tones and I came up again to rising seas and winds.

Half an hour before sunset the wind was 40mph, with 20ft swells coming from our starboard beam. Curtains of rain blew across the water, briefly drenching us. We told our guests to put on their life jackets and we checked the inflatable dinghy.

We lowered the mainsail and lashed it to the yardarm. We tied the boom to the deck to keep it from going overboard. We were



EARTH WATCH

By Robert Cogen

still making 8 knots with a hull designed for a maximum 7 knots; we were flying.

Then the captain said: "Oh shit, our steering's gone." The words hung like neon above our heads. He went to the auxiliary steering below deck and it worked. I watched the compass and relayed headings to the captain.

As the sun sank, the sky was dark gray in the West, a single solid cloud with pale curlicues decorating it at 10,000ft.

I was secretly glad when it got too dark to see the waves hitting our side. We continued southeast. At midnight, we encountered a group of Thai fishing boats pulling up anchor and heading for safety in Phuket.

The fishermen told us to follow them through the tiny islands off the south end of Phuket to Ao Chalong, but we decided to go around because our engine was not working; we were dependent on our sails and did not want to risk being swept onto the rocks of one of the islets.

We arrived at the entrance to Ao Chalong about 4:30 am. We moored and went ashore.

David asked the captain whether he would mind if he kissed the ground when we got ashore; the captain expressed no objection and David did indeed kiss the sand when we arrived.

We took our guests to their bungalow, showered and lay down but could not sleep. We dressed and returned to Jimmy's to standing applause.

I was asked if I had been afraid. "Yes," I replied, but added I'd had a song running through my head that kept me from going over the edge. The song was *Peoria*, the lyrics of which begin:

Lifeboats here, lifeboats there.
Hear the screams and moans.
The captain yelled, "All hands on deck!"
And then in trembling tones,
"Oh, how I wish I was in Peoria,
Peoria tonight."
"Oh how I miss those girls in Peoria, Peoria tonight..."

Eventually I found sheet music for *Peoria* and we all signed it and presented it to the captain, who, I believe, had it framed and hung on the wall in the cabin of *L'Escargot*.

Robert Cogen is a well-known California lawyer and a broadly experienced naturalist with a degree in zoology. Email: indepth@asis.com.

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Let's make the best of our roads

The road projects to be proposed to Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra (see Inside Story, pages 4 and 5) epitomize Phuket's plans for continued rapid growth; the authorities believe that Phuket needs better roads, and that it needs them now.

The island's roads have become the subject of increasing numbers of complaints from motorists: roads are too narrow and congested; they are in poor condition; there are few alternative routes; and are generally unsafe.

It is therefore encouraging to see the Phuket Highways Office (PHO) addressing these concerns, and putting an emphasis on planning and safety.

There are also those who complain that highways are an eyesore that may harm tourism. The PHO has acknowledged this viewpoint, too, by making clear its preference for underpasses along the bypass road. Although twice the cost of overpasses, tunnels will, it is hoped, have less impact on the island's scenery.

The PHO's dedication to making Phuket roads safer is also apparent in its budget request for the proposed new road to connect Chalong and Patong. More money is being requested for ensuring the necessary safety features for the steep route than for the road construction itself.

One major effect of improving Phuket's main arteries will be that coachloads of "hit-and-run" tourists will be fast-tracked to popular tourist sights. This should ease traffic congestion in general and leave the unspoiled hideaways to those willing to invest the time and effort in finding them.

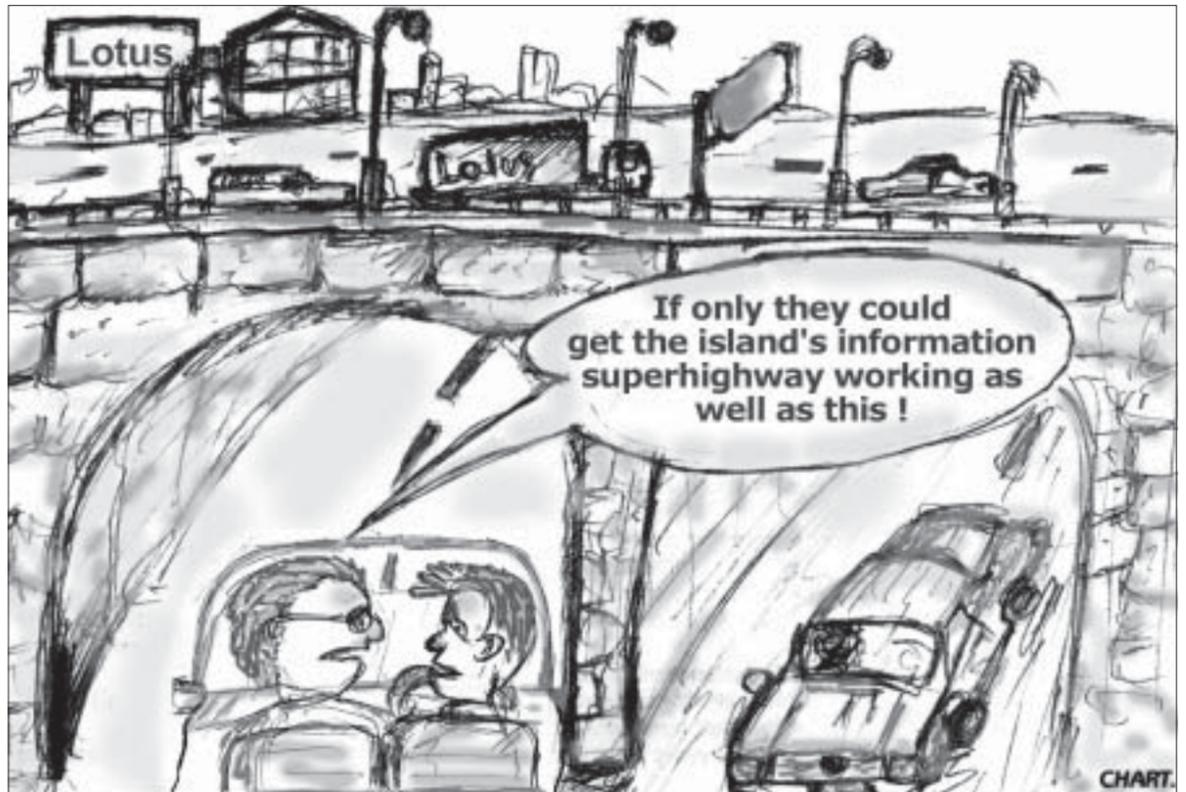
Improved safety and better traffic flow are unlikely to be enough to silence those who complain that further development will make Phuket a less desirable place to live or to visit.

But these people need to accept that more and more people are choosing to live in or visit Phuket. It is impossible to stop development. The best that can be done is to improve infrastructure continually to ensure that the negative impact of development is minimized.

Those who would advocate a return to the innocent days of winding, rustic tracks may wish to ponder the letter from a *Gazette* reader on Koh Lanta (see Letters to the Editor, issue of August 14). He longs for the day when that island gets its first paved road. This, he reasons, will make Koh Lanta more attractive for tourists and improve the lives of residents.

Roadbuilding is an inevitable companion of development. Since Phuket must have roads, we should at least strive to have safe, attractive ones.

- The Editor



Letters

The *Gazette* is pleased to receive mail from readers. Please write to us at 367/2 Yaowarat Rd, Amphur Muang, Phuket 83000, fax to 076-213971 or send an email to editor@phuketgazette.net with

your views for publication in our next issue. We reserve the right to edit all letters. Pseudonyms are acceptable only if your full name and address are supplied.

Where have the beaches gone?

In 15 visits to Patong over a 20-year period, we have seen a lot of changes. Where has the beach gone? All we saw in May was umbrellas and chairs.

Patong Beach and Bay used to be prime attractions. Now there's just a forest of umbrellas - there are far too many. Is there no control?

GA
Australia

Phuket people going to the dogs, again

Having just received yet another invitation to a gala dinner to help sponsor the sterilization of strays in Phuket, I wonder when the Phuket Animal Welfare Society and other dog charities are going to wake up and realize their money would be better spent improving any dog pound facility, if they feel it is not up to their standards, rather than letting the animals remain filthy and free.

As an animal lover, I must also admit that I am a stray-dog hater. Having been attacked by a dog as a child, the memory has stayed with me throughout my life. Like many homeless in the world - beggars, pickpockets, thieves and murderers - there is a better place for them. They just need to be given shelter, taken home, to a prison cell, whatever it takes. But leaving them in the streets doesn't help them or anyone else.

A friend, my girlfriend, myself and a small girl I saw on Patong Beach one morning have

all been victims of dog attacks. Just imagine how prevalent such attacks must be. Enough is enough. I'm sure the same situation does not occur in any of our home countries, so why let it occur here?

Perplexed
Patong

Road planning and wishful thinking

I was staggered at the response from Phuket City Public Works Director Fon Butkatunyoo [Issues & Answers, online *Gazette*] to your reader's question regarding the new road that exits onto Chao Fa West Rd via Soi Nakha.

This road has been 18 months in construction, and possibly as long again in the planning, but they are only now "in negotiations" to obtain the last 50 meters of land needed to complete it?

Surely, before a project of this size and cost is undertaken, somebody should have made sure that all the land required was available.

What happens if this land cannot be bought? Phuket gets a completely useless road costing many millions of baht of taxpayers' money. If the land is obtained and the road eventually finished, I am sure it will be widely used.

For this reason, I hope plans are already in place to put traffic lights at the junctions of both Chao Fa East Rd and Chao Fa West Rd. Otherwise, Phuket will have two more very dangerous intersections.

John Lunn
Phuket

You can't be serious

After reading about Steve Rutter's dream [*Toon Town*, issue of August 14], I hardly know where to begin. A fairground with one of the world's biggest Giant Octopus rides? On Rawai Beach? I still can't believe it, don't want to believe it.

The authorities have just succeeded in ridding the beachfront of those seafood stalls. (They were long a familiar sight there and, in my opinion as a Rawai resident, did more good than harm.) Now they will be replaced - albeit on the other side of the road - by a fairground?

I cannot fathom why the authorities would allow such a ghastly intrusion into this idyllic area. Assuming, that is, that they have approved it.

Maybe I should leave and settle down in Blackpool, since I am not too pleased with what's happening to the nicer parts of this fabulous kingdom.

No, I've got a better idea. I'll stay here. Turn around that boat that's carrying all the pleasure-park mechanicals and send it back to Blighty. It may be Steve's dream, but please, *please* tell me it was only a dream. Tell me it was all just a big, nasty joke.

Peter Notley
 Lover of Thailand,
Phuket, beautiful islands and
undisturbed seashores

Rawai OrBorTor Chairman Arun Soros notes: "I haven't heard anything about this yet. If they want to do such a business in Rawai, they must first consult with the OrBorTor so that local leaders can consider the relative merits of the project."

The Phuket Gazette

In association with The Nation Multimedia Group PCL

Editor: Rungtip Hongjakpet
Managing Editor: Alasdair Forbes
Deputy Editor: Chris Husted
Chief Reporter: Sangkhae Leelanapaporn
Investigation Team: Dhirarat Boonkongsan, Gategao Phetsawang, Kamol Pirat, Anongnat Sartpisut, Siripansa Somboon
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Website Services Manager: Natthira Susangrat
Distribution Manager: Passara Kaewbumroong
Financial Controller: Benjawan Lukthan
Publisher: The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd

Contact us

Advertising Sales: adsales@phuketgazette.net
Classified Advertising: classads@phuketgazette.net
Website Services: anna@phuketgazette.net
Shopper Card inquiries: shopper@phuketgazette.net
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Telephone: 076-236555 (10 lines) **Fax:** 076-213971

The views expressed in the Phuket Gazette are those of the writers and contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher, the editor, the shareholders, or the directors of The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd.

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Letters conveying views and suggestions are published here. Those seeking comment from government officials and/or business owners are published in *Issues & Answers* on the facing page.

Marine tourism: a case of think or swim

Ocean Rover was surveyed by the Thai Marine Department according to IMO (International Maritime Organization) and Solas (International Convention of Safety of Life at Sea) standards. She received a passenger ship safety equipment certificate, which is issued only to vessels of sound construction with the correct number and type of life buoys, life rafts, life vests, distress flares, emergency satellite-, radio- & radar-transponders, firefighting equipment, multiple water pumps, and so on.

Also required is redundancy in electronic equipment, all of which must be to GMDSS (Global Maritime Distress & Safety System) specifications.

Our company also has a safety management certificate (SMC). This covers company and shipboard procedures for safety, firefighting, preventive maintenance and crew training.

All of *Ocean Rover's* crew members have completed the required STWC 95 (Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping Convention 1995) training courses. Senior crew members have taken additional courses in navigation, radar operation and advanced firefighting, among others.

In the West all this is basic stuff. You cannot take commercial passengers to sea if your boat is not safe, period.

Sadly, in Phuket *Ocean Rover* is the exception, not the rule. I literally begged the maritime authorities to inspect and license my boat to international standards.

Eventually they did, and the ensuing IMO licensing procedure was a useful learning experience for all parties involved.

There are hundreds of dive and tour boats in Phuket, but I know of only three that are IMO certified. If Phuket were located in the West, most of the local fleet would not be allowed to leave port. In view of Phuket's boom as a center for marine tourism, this is not a happy situation.

Over the years Phuket's fleet has evolved. Nowadays there are many large



Jeroen Deknatel at sea with his kids – wearing life vests, naturally.

FIRST PERSON

Jeroen Deknatel of Fantasea Divers and Ocean Rover Cruises has been involved with diving and boating in Phuket since 1979. His company operates top-end liveaboard dive tours aboard the *Ocean Rover*, a fully-licensed 30-meter custom-designed dive boat. Here he talks about the safety features on his vessel and the need for better enforcement of maritime safety regulations in the Phuket tourism industry in general.

tour boats plying our waters. Astonishingly, many of these lack any safety equipment other than life vests.

Many of these vessels, although good-looking, are substandard from construction and engineering points of view. Eventually an accident is bound to happen – there have been several narrow escapes already – and the result, besides the tragic loss of life, will be a tidal wave of negative publicity for Phuket.

Marine tourists trust us with their lives. They have a right to expect that they will be safe while in our care. Because of strict safety regulations in their home countries, tourists expect standards to be the same here. They assume they are in good hands, and never question the ability of the operator to provide a safe voyage. After all, they reason, the operators have such attractive websites, surely they must be professionals.

From a business point of view, the current situation is frustrating. Building

and operating a passenger vessel to international standards is expensive, so I have to charge higher prices.

Tourists assume these higher rates are all about luxury and high profits. They do not realize that maintaining high safety standards, constantly upgrading your equipment to meet with new requirements and regularly sending your crew to training courses costs a lot of money – more money than most boat owners are willing to part with. These owners tell their clients that they can provide the same experience for a lower price, and so far they have been able to get away with it.

Currently, law enforcement focuses on arresting boat captains involved in accidents. This creates a driver-fled-the-scene attitude, with the captain worrying more about escape than about leading his passengers and crew safely through the crisis.

It would be much better to go after the boat owner. Often it is the owner's

greedy and ignorant attitude toward safety that causes a mishap in the first place.

Ultimately, the moral and legal responsibility for ensuring that marine tourists travel safely lies with the boat owner/operator. There are of course always risks when going to sea, but it is the operator and his crew who must ensure that passengers are safe from being injured or killed by the vessel sinking, catching fire or experiencing mechanical or structural failures.

It is high time the authorities put some serious pressure on Phuket's boat operators. Forget about fines, they don't hurt enough. A better approach would be to stop unlicensed boats leaving port. The resulting outcry from stranded passengers as well as the canceled tour operator contracts would be a much stronger incentive for owners to do the right thing.

Thailand is already party to the IMO and Solas agreements. What must be done now is to force boat owners to comply.

If the marine authorities have problems getting boat owners to put safety before earnings, perhaps other government agencies could get in on the act. For example, the Tourism Authority of Thailand could make proof of IMO compliance a mandatory requirement for tourism business operator's licenses for marine tourism companies.

This would also serve as a wonderful opportunity to do something about the overcrowding at the Similan Islands. Marine Park authorities should not allow entry to commercial vessels without a passenger ship safety certificate. Just enforcing that one simple rule would do wonders for those beleaguered islands.

Total IMO compliance would lift Phuket's marine industry to a higher level and make economic sense at the same time.

The added advantage is that marine tourists would enjoy the kind of quality experience the Government says it would like our visitors to have: a safe trip on a professionally-operated vessel cruising in an uncrowded environment. Believe me; they will be happy to pay for that.

Online problems

I use a wireless modem to access the Internet as my home does not have a landline.

I currently use DTAC for this and pay about 1,300 baht per month for unlimited service using a GPRS Sim card. I have had the service since June, 2003, but many times the service is below par and often it is just okay. Unfortunately, I have no choice.

I recently had problems with the connection. After many calls to DTAC in Bangkok – and having to pay for the calls – they told me that the fiber-optic cable was broken and would take a week to fix.

Last year, during the Apec conference, I could not use the service for five days. At Christmas I could not use it for six days. Now I will not be able to use it for one week. I always ask DTAC to call me back; about 50% of the time they do.

I have asked them why I

have to pay the full charge every month when I can't use the service. They tell me they will look into giving me a reduction and call me back. They never do. Nor have I ever received credit.

You can check with them, giving my number; they have a list of all the times I have placed complaints. How can they continue to sell Sim cards for GPRS access when they can't even provide service for the ones they have already sold?

Phuket a Cyber paradise? What a joke.

Unhappy in Kamala

Virat Jaruchoktawechai, Director of the DTAC Customer Service Group in Bangkok, replies:

If a customer calls the DTAC customer service center, our staff will assist him immediately if we know what the problem is. Otherwise, we will inves-

tigate and call him back after we have identified the cause.

Refunds are given on a case-by-case basis. In this case we were able to reach an agreement with the customer after meeting him in Phuket.

Previously [at the time the customer lodged this complaint], DTAC's GPRS service was charged at a fixed monthly rate (1,300 baht) plus 10 satang per megabyte of information exchanged. The customer also had to pay for the phone call.

If the customer could not download, he had to pay only the fixed fee and the cost of the call, not the per-megabyte fee.

In this case, the customer's complaint alerted us to problem and engineers were sent from Bangkok to fix it.

The connection was fixed and the service restored to the customer's house and the surrounding area.

Issues & ANSWERS

Want to know how to get something done? Can't understand some of the dafter things that seem to go on in Phuket? Want to pitch an idea to Phuket's authorities or institutions? Then this is the forum for you. Submit your queries or suggestions to us and we'll ask the appropriate people to respond to them.

Write to: The Phuket Gazette, 367/2 Yaowarat Rd, Muang, Phuket 83000. Fax 076-213971, or submit your issue at www.phuketgazette.net

Where can I get some balls?

Where can I find 32 new pétanque boules and some smaller "cochonnet" target boules?

Sad Victor Rawai

Somkid Raksayot at Super Sport store replies:

Our shop sells pétanque boules of three different weights: 690 grams, 790g and 890g.

They are available in packs of three for 750 baht, packs of six for 1,500 baht, or packs of 12 for 3,000 baht.

Thirty-two boules is a large order, but we can order them from Bangkok and have them in Phuket for you within 10 days.

For more information contact us at 36 Tilok-U-Thit Rd, in Phuket City. Tel: 076-256530.

The fading of a flower child

Ann Beattie was a product of good timing. When her short stories were first published in *The New Yorker* in 1973, when she was 26, she was the first out of the gate as the literary poster child of the Love Generation, for whom pot-smoking and Bob Dylan were a big deal.

Her first novel, *Chilly Scenes of Winter*, was published three years later to great critical acclaim. John Updike cited "the stoic bewilderment of a generation without a cause".

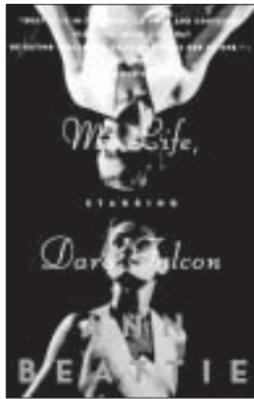
Her characters were not the angry activists of the hard-rock '60s, but those washed up in the '70s aftermath: damaged soft-rock James Taylor souls.

She certainly struck a nerve, though the sameness of her male characters often irritated me. They all had Waspy first names like Fletcher or Chandler or Hamilton, worked at things like environmental PR, and were hopelessly feckless lovers.

Then Ann Beattie went into a critical eclipse, complaining that *The New*

Yorker would no longer publish her short stories. She seems to have recovered, and to date has produced six novels and six collections of stories. I picked up *My Life, Starring Dara Falcon* (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1997, 307pp) at the Neilson Hays library, thinking it was her latest novel, but no, it's her fifth.

All I can say is she's gotten better, writing in her 50th year. The male characters are named Bob, Frank and Tom and they're in the greenhouse business in Maine. The novel is narrated by Jean Warner, brought up by a spinster aunt after her parents' death in a plane crash.



The aunt was emotionally distant, yet managed to waste a good chunk of the parents' insurance money. Jean never fitted in at high school, and dropped out in her second year at the University of New Hampshire in 1975 to marry Bob Warner and settle down in the small town of Dell, Maine. She was adopted into his extended family: two brothers, sister, sister-in-law, mother, grandmother and assorted nieces and nephews.

Into this placid rural life sweeps Dara Falcon, who for a short time had gone to high school in Dell, and has now returned, after a vaguely successful acting career in Los Angeles.

Dara is very much a figure out of the British TV comedy *Absolutely Fabulous*, garish in speech, eccentric of dress, intensely fond of champagne, and instantly devoted to Jane whom she calls "sweetie". She becomes Jean's best friend and mentor.

Tom Van Sant, another returning native, sets up a rival greenhouse to the one owned by Bob and Frank Warner. Dara wastes no time seducing and moving in with him, causing his pregnant girlfriend to flee to Florida.

She then seduces Frank Warner, causing such disruption that Jean is inspired to leave the family, and enrol in the University of Connecticut.

Dara, meanwhile, has moved to New York and is hustling an elderly producer to put her on stage. It takes Jean years to figure out just how devious and self-obsessed Dara is, culminating in the revelation that Dara had tried to seduce Liam

Cagerton, Jean's English boyfriend at college.

There is a climactic meeting in a bar when Jean has a final realization: "If you didn't know better – if you didn't know that Dara herself was always Pandora's box – the temptation would be simply to reach out and embrace her. I fought that urge in the bar, knowing by then that even

letting her hold my hand, I could be subsumed in her cat's cradle of lies and deceptions and half-truths, all so very well acted that, in the moment, you would believe whatever she wanted you to believe. You were never really on an equal footing with Dara in any situation; though it might have seemed that you had volition, or even power, ultimately you remained at her mercy. She was the most manipulative person I have ever met."

This passage is typical of the novel: pages and pages of analysis. The novel ultimately grows tiresome and limp. There are some fine flashes of humor – Beattie is particularly good with kids – but this reader, at least, grew bored with the soap opera long before it was over.



Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt

Softly, softly, with Office service pack

There's a new update for Office 2003 called Service Pack 1 (SP1 to its friends). As regular readers know, updates to Office have always been full of, shall we say, surprises for the unwary.

In this issue I'll explain what is supposed to be in SP1 – and how to install it. I'll let you know the real effects later, after I've had some time to test SP1 and see how it behaves.

Historically, Office updates have had some problems with the installation/updating process – once the update is installed the programs usually work well enough. However, Microsoft is often sluggish about posting details of any problems that arise

from one of its Service Packs.

I recommend you hold off downloading and installing SP1 for a few days or weeks, especially considering that there's no direct way to uninstall it. Once you've installed Office 2003 SP1, to remove it you would have to uninstall Office 2003 entirely then reinstall it from the original CDs.

Office 2003 SP1 is a collection of fixes for bugs – sorry "issues" – in the various programs that make up Office 2003. Some of the fixes are for bugs that Microsoft has already admitted; others are fixes for bugs that the company has not previously acknowledged. SP1 replaces or includes any previously released security updates for Office 2003.

There is a single downloadable update for the "major" Office 2003 programs, plus shared programs. In addition, there are separate SP1 updates for

OneNote 2003, Project 2003, Project Server 2003 and Visio 2003.

The main SP1 download is 18MB (<http://office.microsoft.com/officeupdate>) but there's a larger version for people with more specific troubleshooting needs that is a whopping 73MB. You can presumably get both updates via the Office Update Service, but I'm still dubious about the reliability of updating software this way.

I am more comfortable with downloading the patch separately and installing it when I am ready. This is also more efficient when you have to update more than one computer because you have to download the patch only once.

Although the instructions from Microsoft do not explicitly recommend doing so, it would seem prudent to update all Office 2003 programs at the same time. Using a mix of the original and the SP1 versions of Office 2003 programs on the same computer – for example, applying the main SP1 patch but leaving Project 2003 or OneNote 2003 unpatched – may prove troublesome.

With the exception of OneNote 2003 there seems to be little, if anything, in the way of new features in SP1. All the changes seem to be bug or security fixes.

However, if you install SP1 you will lose access to Microsoft's Internet Free/Busy Service that allows Outlook users to coordinate their calendars on line.

This feature is being discontinued later this year, so access is being dropped now. If you need the Internet Free/Busy Service then you need to find a replacement fairly soon. Do not apply any SP1 updates until you do.

There's a list of bug fixes for each Office 2003 program. Some of the more important ones are:

WORD:

- The message "The document contains no comments or tracked changes" no longer appears when reviewing a document for tracked changes in Word 2003 that does contain them.

- An XML file that contains line breaks and base64-encoded data no longer refuses to open in Word 2003.

- You will no longer receive an error message after you save a Word 2003 document as a PDF file by using Adobe Acrobat 5.05 PDFMaker.

OUTLOOK:

- The envelope part of an email message no longer goes missing when you send multiple email messages from an Office 2003 program.

- Smart Tags in Outlook 2003 email messages no longer refuse to function after you install Microsoft Windows XP Service Pack 2.

- Previous rules in Outlook Web Access no longer go missing after creation of a new Outlook 2003 rule.

EXCEL:

- Correct subtotals or grand totals are now maintained when calculating any form of the VAR, VARP, STDEV or the STDEVP functions using a pivot table.

- Excel 2003 no longer stops responding if you switch to another program while the "cell validation" dialog box is open.

FRONTPAGE:

- You can now include an Active Server Page (ASP) page inside another ASP page.

- The Advanced view of an XML page subview no longer goes blank on a Microsoft Windows SharePoint Services Web site.

A link to a complete list of all the fixes in SP1, listed as an Excel worksheet, is available at <http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=842532>

On the fix lists for other parts of Office you'll see some bugs that have been publicly acknowledged in the Knowledge Base, while others have been kept secret by Microsoft.

Note that although SP1 is available, the matching update for the Office 2003 Multilingual User Interface Pack (MUI) is not. You should wait until both updates are available before applying SP1 to any computer using the MUI.

Woody Leonhard has written a number of books in the "...for Dummies" series on computing. Readers can contact him at: woody@kahunwoody.com

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Property market moves into a new arena

By Gategeo Phetsawang

PHUKET: Another major real estate agency recently opened an office in Phuket, an indication that the island's property boom continues to grow apace.

James Saunders, General Manager of CB Richard Ellis (CBRE), which recently opened its office in Koh Kaew, said his company, which had been in Bangkok for many years, believed the growth in the Phuket property market meant the time was right to open an office here.

Other agents already established on the island are reporting price rises in some areas of as much as 600% in the past 18 months, and growing interest in property in traditionally less-popular parts of the island.

Mr Saunders said global interest in Phuket residences was growing and Phuket was becoming an important resort destination on the world stage.

He said, "The number and quality of residential stock in Phuket has now reached a level where there is strong demand, especially from foreign buyers."

"It is important to note that we do not believe Phuket is merely going through a short-term boom. We expect to see five to 10 years of steady growth."

Mervyn Baines, director of Asia Land, said his company has seen tremendous interest in property in Phuket, particularly over the past two years.

He said, "Prices have gone up continuously, even on the east coast - 600% in 18 months. There is a lot of interest in the east coast, and lot of new projects."

"Land is still available, but there will always be demand for property in Phuket."

Phuket Land is one of the longest-established agencies in Phuket, having been in business for 22 years.

Managing Director Bob Andrews said that although prices rose rapidly between 1990 and 1997, they slowed between 1997 and 1999, due to the devaluation of the baht. Since 1999, though, prices have soared.

"Phuket is becoming more popular," he said. "There are many reasons. One is that Thailand has few ethnic problems. Another is that Thailand is a stable democracy."

"[In Phuket] there are international hospitals, schools, and an international airport, and comments by the Thai government that they want to invest money in Phuket."

Mr Andrews said the authorities should monitor planning issues, while the completion of the land titles investigation would be good for investor confidence.

Although the west coast was the first area to experience considerable growth, he agreed that prices on the east coast are now starting to rise rapidly, too. However, while properties are "doing well" in Rawai, Nai Harn

and Chalong, the prime area is still around Kamala, Surin and Bang Tao, he said.

He predicted that prices are likely to rise further still as buyers take advantage of the opportunity to take out mortgages to buy property in Phuket.

Mr Andrews explained, "In the past, foreigners were not able to borrow money to buy on Phuket, but now financing is starting to arrive, even though it is at a very embryonic stage."

"As [finance] becomes more widely available, it will enable more people to buy in Phuket. The laws of supply and demand mean that prices will go up."

Mr Andrews said he is not particularly concerned about competition from the new player, CBRE.

The Internet means that buyers all

over the world can now deal direct with agents on Phuket rather than having to go through an international agency with offices all over world. Sometimes a smaller organization can give better, more personalized service than a bigger one, he added.

Mervyn Baines of Asia Land is also unworried. He operates, he said, in a different market from the big players. "My business tends to be [in properties] under 20 million baht."

"[When it comes to] the big companies who are coming in, their main market is 20-million-baht-plus. I also do a lot of retail land sales and medium-priced housing," he said.

Another international company, which arrived in Phuket last year, is Knight Frank Chartered (Thailand) Co

Ltd. Managing Director Stephen O'Brien told the *Gazette* that the boom in the property market is bringing a lot of new projects and an increasing number of experienced brokers to Phuket.

But, he said, the more people there are, the better the choices for buyers and the greater the benefits for Phuket.

He acknowledged that his business would be affected by the arrival of CBRE. "Surely it will impact not just on us but on everyone in the property market."

"I won't hide the fact that we will lose market share because CBRE has just set up and they will become big in time."

However, he added that he was confident that his office had a good enough reputation to continue attracting clients.

Why Europe looks tempting

Most investors in financial markets are finding that 2004 has so far not been a pleasant year. The announcement in late July that American Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth had fallen from an annualized rate of 4.5% in the first quarter to only 3% in the second was not good news.

This was followed by an announcement at the end of the first week in August that the US had managed to create only 32,000 more jobs. This is virtually stagnation. US investment banks quickly lowered their expectations for third quarter economic growth. For example, JP Morgan moved from a forecast of 4% for this period to 3%.

But what looks like bad news requires more analysis. Growth of 3% is more than acceptable for mature economies such as the US or Europe. Sustained growth rates at much higher levels are in fact most likely to cause inflationary pressures to build over time.

In the short term, they will certainly lead to central bank intervention to move interest rates upwards. For example, interest rates will rise far more rapidly in an environment of 4.5% economic growth than in one of 3%.

The biggest problem with the July job creation figures was that financial market consensus was for a much higher figure, over 200,000. Some commentators were saying before the announcement that many economists were expecting a figure as high as 350,000. Against these expectations, 32,000 was very disappointing, but it is only one month's figures.

Financial markets already have enough to worry them; oil prices and terrorism are just two of the factors. Combine these with some evidence of a slowing economy, which naturally leads to reduced corporate profit expectations, and the reaction of stock markets is understandable.

Technical analysts are another group overwhelmingly placed in the "bear camp". These are people who in their "purest" form analyze price movements and graph patterns to predict the future movement of whatever is the object of their attention.

The call from this group is for stock markets (in most countries) to re-test their lows of 2003. If they are right - and I emphasize the "if" - this is grim news. I have heard technical analysts commenting that they see the price for light sweet crude at US\$57 a barrel by the end of 2004, and US\$75 a barrel by the end of the first quarter of 2005.

I sincerely hope they are wrong. At the time of writing the price of oil was just under US\$45 a barrel - already a record. But in real terms after adjustment for inflation, it is well below 1974 prices or even 1990/1991 pre-Gulf War I prices. In fact, oil would have to be at US\$70-\$80 a barrel to match these prices in real terms.

However, not all the news is bad. The US manufacturing sector is expanding, economic growth is still reasonable and "same store sales" (the total sales recorded by a set group of retailers each month) rose 7.8% in the US in July, 8.3% in Asia and 2.1% in Europe. The global average was 6.4%.

In fact, global growth is very encouraging, apart from in the Euro zone. Even there, there is at long last improvement. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) expects the Euro zone to grow by 2% in 2004. This may sound weak but compared with recent years it is a decided improvement.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) expects the German economy to grow 1.75% in 2004. This, if correct, is a major step in the right direction. The



MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson

chief economist of Deutsche Bank, Germany's largest bank, expects the German economy to grow as much as 3% in 2005. In German terms, this is a boom.

Corporate profits in 2004 have been very encouraging so far for the Euro zone. Stock markets are cheap and prices have been falling, making price/earnings ratios increasingly attractive.

European stock markets are poised for a rise; the biggest threat is from a downward movement initiated in the US, which would cause prices to fall in sympathy.

They would rise, but from a lower base and this would, in turn, delay the recovery of stock markets by some months.

Stock markets such as that of France, as measured by the most common index, the CAC 40, are down from record levels of almost 7,000 to around half of that today. Germany's Dax 30 is a long way below half its peak of early 2000, when it was over 8,000.

These have always been

excellent stock markets in which to invest in the "good" times; there are many substantial companies. During periods of good economic growth, profits from Euro zone stock markets will comfortably exceed those of the US and the UK.

However, they are relatively small compared with their Anglo-Saxon counterparts. For example, the combined market capitalization of the French and German stock markets is significantly smaller than that of the UK.

For those interested in European investment, the wisest course of action would appear to be to commit funds over a period of time. Of course, if you wait until it is "safe", then most of the gains will probably have already been made. The best time to invest, as the old saying goes, is when "there is blood in the streets".

Following the herd may be comfortable but it is generally contrarian investors who make most of the money.

Richard Watson runs Global Portfolios Co Ltd, a Phuket-based personal financial planning service. He can be reached at Tel and Fax: 076-381997, Mobile: 01-081-4611. Email: imm@loxinfo.co.th.



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Classic but underrated courses

In the past few weeks there have been three major championships played on classic British golf courses; two of which are not normally considered worthy of taking space on the same page as Royal Troon.

A few weeks ago the world watched American long-shot Todd Hamilton beat the best in the business, making this year's British Open one of the most exciting in recent years.

As July came to a close, Briton Karen Stupples won the British Women's Open at Sunningdale, Ascot.

In between these Opens, a third major tournament, the Senior British Open, was played at one of the greatest but least-known links courses: Royal Portrush.

While no one could deny the pedigree of Royal Troon, few have heard of Royal Portrush, and even fewer know anything

about Sunningdale. I mean, it's not even a Royal.

Both of the latter layouts are superb examples of the remodeling work of English architect Harry Colt. These are courses that get the blood flowing; Colt, in fact, considered Portrush his masterpiece.

The courses have been around for years and were not built to sell homes or entice people to resorts, like so many modern courses. They exist for golf and golf alone.

Here's what Tom Watson says about Portrush:

"This is one of the best links I've ever played. This is a wonderful test of golf. There's not a bad hole on the golf course."

Watson, a connoisseur of links golf, has won five British Open titles (every Open is held on a links). He won last year's

Senior British Open at Turnberry in Ayrshire, Scotland, where he also won the 1977 British Open, after a memorable duel with Jack Nicklaus over the final 36 holes.

Tom Kite, like Watson, has fallen for Portrush. The 1992 US Open champion had never seen the links before the Monday. He was so enamored of it that, on the

Tuesday, he took a camera with him during a practice round. He declared the 6,822-yard course "just a fabulous test".

The women encountered another fine course in the

Women's British Open. Karen Stupples opened the final round of her first major win, with a remarkable eagle, double-eagle (albatross) start.

Sunningdale will always have a place in my heart. This "sand belt" course near London was the venue for my first British Boys Championship and my first appearance representing Wales Juniors.

In the team match against Ireland I found myself two down

after two holes to a giant of lad called Tom Corridan. This guy stood more than 2 meters tall at the age of 17. I was a 15-year-old (even skinnier than I am now), weighing a mere 60 kilos.

Big Tom hit the first hole, a par 5 with a drive and a 7 iron! One down.

Big Tom hit the second hole, a par 5, with a drive and a 5 iron! Two down. Little Jon fell into some kind of golfing trance and birdied seven of the next eight

holes to stand 5 up with just eight holes to play.

I woke up and fell back to earth with a bogey and three pars over the next four holes, but it was enough to close out my encounter with Goliath by a flattering margin.

As Karen Stupples will testify, Sunningdale is a great golf course, because it's not conforming to standard criteria or based on a restrictive formula.

Back-to-back par 5s to start a round are unheard-of in modern golf design. The ninth hole is the third par 5 on the front side.

Even more unheard-of these days is the fact that there are two driveable par 4s in the front nine, and another at the devilish 11th.

Sunningdale is a great course because it is the best collection of holes that the property had within it. Luckily for us, Harry Colt designed courses at a time when the prevailing "wisdom" had not yet been invented.

Royal Portrush is a par of 73. That's not standard either, but it's great fun. A modern architect would have been tempted to convert one of the par 5s to a long par 4, then stretch the par 3s to the limit to get the course over 7,000 yards. It would have been the worse for it.

The Women's British Open – and indeed, women's golf in general – is finally getting the attention of the golfing public. A recent announcement stated that the Old Course at St Andrews, Scotland, will for the first time play host to the 2007 Women's British Open.

The Old Course first played host to the men's British Open in 1873 and has been the venue for another 25 since then.

The home of golf, as the Old Course is known, has hardly been hospitable to women's golf, though. It should have held the Women's British Open long ago.

To me, it's fascinating that women's golf, much like wo-

men's tennis, appears to be becoming increasingly popular with male viewers. I have felt that, over the years, the men's game has become more and more stereotyped.

Due to technological advances, many of the men play a similar game. To give you an idea, the US Open was held at

Shinnecock Hills this year. It was also held there in 1995.

In that year, only five players on the tour had a year-end average driving distance over 280 yards. This year, up to the US Open in June, more than 130 players had achieved that average driving distance

Why then, is the women's game gaining in popular-

ity? In my view, the reason, in golf as in tennis, is that women are now playing a game of similar standard to that of the world's best players of the respective sports, at the time when the two games have emerged into the world's consciousness.

Women golfers and tennis players play a game we can relate to. Power and finesse are balanced in just the right proportions.

Their driving distances create the need for a full variety of second shots, and less reliance on backspin means more imagination in approach shots.

As far as golf goes, women play the kind of game around which most of the great courses of the past were designed.

The women are likely to provide a fantastic spectacle at St Andrews in 2007. Tiger Woods made a mockery of his Open win in 2000, not finding a fairway bunker all week.

Was it great course management? Maybe, but that's an easy job when almost none of the bunkers are in play for him, given the distance he was driving the ball.

There's nothing better in the game than authentic championship golf which is usually played on the courses that golfers want to visit at least once. Even those who can't get there can at least see why championships stand out from other tournaments.

The game has just witnessed three weeks of authentic championship golf. The players know this, and the golf world is coming to appreciate it, too.

Finally, to those of you who haven't played one of the great older courses yet, make sure you play at least one of the classics before you hang up your clubs.

Jon Morrow is a golf course design and construction consultant. Tel: 01-7284492. Email: jonmorrow63@hotmail.com

TEE TO GREEN

Jon Morrow



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30 Ft 1990	Bayliner Sunbridge 2855 New King Cobra 7.5 L	THB 1,900,000
29 Ft 2003	Prowler 9000 Honda 4-stroke, 2 x 50 Hp	Price on Application
28 Ft 86/02	Italian Open Sportfisher Yamaha 200 Hp	THB 1,500,000
18 Ft 2000	Skip Jack 18 Yamaha, 2 x 85 Hp	THB 750,000
Sail		
60 Ft 50/03	Indian Dhow Isuzu 84 Hp	THB 4,500,000
57 Ft 1985	B. Roberts motor sailor Ford, 120 Hp	US\$ ONLY 100,000
56 Ft 1973	Classic Coten Steel Ketch Perkins, 64 Hp	US\$ 70,000
48 Ft 83/03	Freers 48 Perkins, 87 Hp	US\$ 88,000
46 Ft 1981	Hereschoff Ketch Ford, 80 Hp	US\$ 127,500
42 Ft 1987	Westail 42 Perkins, 50 Hp	Euro 80,000
41 Ft 1978	Bluewater 41 Ford Lees Marine, 72 Hp	US\$ 128,000
31 Ft 1983	Mazi 95 (Peterson)/Volvo Penta, 22 Hp	Reduced to US\$ 28,000

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PHUKET ALPHA



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Suan Maejo fall victim to Tiger attack

PHUKET CITY: Phang Nga's Tiger Juniors dominated Suan Maejo in an under-11s first-round tie at Rassada Keha football field on August 12. This was the opening match in a five-a-side soccer tournament held to celebrate HM the Queen's birthday.

The goals all came in the second half after a 0-0 first half. Tigers' Durongkorn Tuwapirun failed to capitalize on a corner early in the second half but a minute later Maejo's Apisit Tongjerm dribbled the ball up the pitch before lofting it to the head of Jakrit Seangnoi, who put it in the Tigers' net.

A minute later Tigers' Jirayut Sawangkit equalized, then put his side 2-1 up from a short free kick.

A Nattapon Kraituk header found its mark in the 4th minute of the half, giving the Tigers a 3-1 lead. Jirayut made a run up the left side and passed the ball to Durongkorn, who scored another for the Tigers, making it 4-1.

In the 9th minute Jakrit got one back for Maejo, but the Tigers stayed composed and the game ended 4-2 in their favor. They go on to meet Fire Prevention Youth on August 21.

Fat Boys enter darts fray

PATONG: Good news from the organizers of the Patong Darts League: a squad from Fat Boy Saloon on Soi Sea Dragon will replace Anton's in the schedule, eliminating the need for darters to sit through boring bye weeks.

August 10 results: Happy Days 4, Dog's Bollocks* 5; In-Between* 9, Valhalla 0; Shakers 3, Didi's* 6; Piccadilly 3, Off-shore* 6; Two Black Sheep 1, Champs* 8. (*Beer leg winners.)



POWER STRUGGLE: A singer from Buddy's Caf  blocks Vice-Governor Niran Kalayanamit's attempts to get near the ball during a soccer friendly at the Chai football field, Phuket City on August 10. V/Gov Niran was one of the stars of a Kamnan-Phu Yai Baan Association team, which made the mistake of fielding a conventional side of 11 players. Buddy's Caf  overwhelmed the opposition 3-2, thanks in part to having 25 players on the pitch.

Plookpanya in national finals

Anongnat Sartpisut

PHUKET CITY: Tessabaan Plookpanya School's boys' volleyball team is in the finals of the 18th Siam Cement national championships, after winning a hard-fought victory over Chumpon's Sriyapai School in the southern selection rounds held at the Saphan Hin Sports Complex on August 10.

As former champions of the southern region, Plookpanya went into the match as favorites.

But the Sriyapai team had other ideas and did a good job of blocking the ball and knocking it back into the Plookpanya court. The two teams were evenly matched and the scores reflected that: the teams leveled at 22, 24 and 26 points. Finally, though, Plookpanya broke ahead to take the first set 28-26.

The teams were less evenly matched in the second set, which Plookpanya won easily, by 25 points to 19. Although Sriyapai came back to take the third set 25-23, Plookpanya was back on form in the final set, which it claimed with a resounding 25 points to 13 to win the best-of-five-sets match.

Plookpanya and the girls' team from Krabi's Kanjanapisek Wittayalai School will represent southern Thailand in the national finals at Sripatum University, Bangkok, on November 12-16.

Boys' results: 1. Tessabaan Plookpanya School, 2. Sriyapai School, 3. Saadd Paderm Wittaya School, 4. Tungsong School.

Girls' results: 1. Kanjanapisek Wittayalai School, 2. Krabi Sports Association, 3. Tungsong School, 4. Nakhorn Sri Thammarat Sports School.

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Out with the Olds

General Motors has made a historic decision and will phase out one of its oldest brands, Oldsmobile, over the next few years. Chief Executive Rick Wagoner described it as "one of the most difficult and painful decisions, because of the history of the Oldsmobile division".

Despite this edict from Detroit, GM says customers will continue to receive full support and all warranties will be honored. In addition, Oldsmobile customers who bought or leased a 1999 model or later, will receive US\$1,000 toward the purchase of other GM vehicles.

"It is the oldest automotive brand in America," said Wagoner. "It has a history rich in innovation and success stories, including dozens of legendary cars."

Oldsmobile dates back to 1897, when it was known as the Olds Motor Vehicle Co, named after Ransom Eli Olds, the son of a machine shop owner from Ohio. His first car was a three-wheel, steam-driven machine with tiller steering.

In 1892 he built a more conventional, but still steam-driven, four-wheel vehicle. Three years later, in conjunction with carriage maker Frank Clark, he designed and built an internal combustion gasoline engine, which was fitted to a four-wheel vehicle. Engine production began in earnest in March 1897, before the company was officially incorporated



Left: Oldsmobile dates back to 1897. It produced its first Curved Dash Runabout model in 1901.



in September that year.

Ransom Olds moved his company from Lansing, Michigan, to Detroit two years later to begin work on a new model that would eventually appear in 1901. Called the Oldsmobile Curved Dash Runabout, it was the beginning of Oldsmobile proper. The Curved Dash sold

for US\$650, and the company made the bold claim that, "it will run almost 40 miles on a gallon of gas".

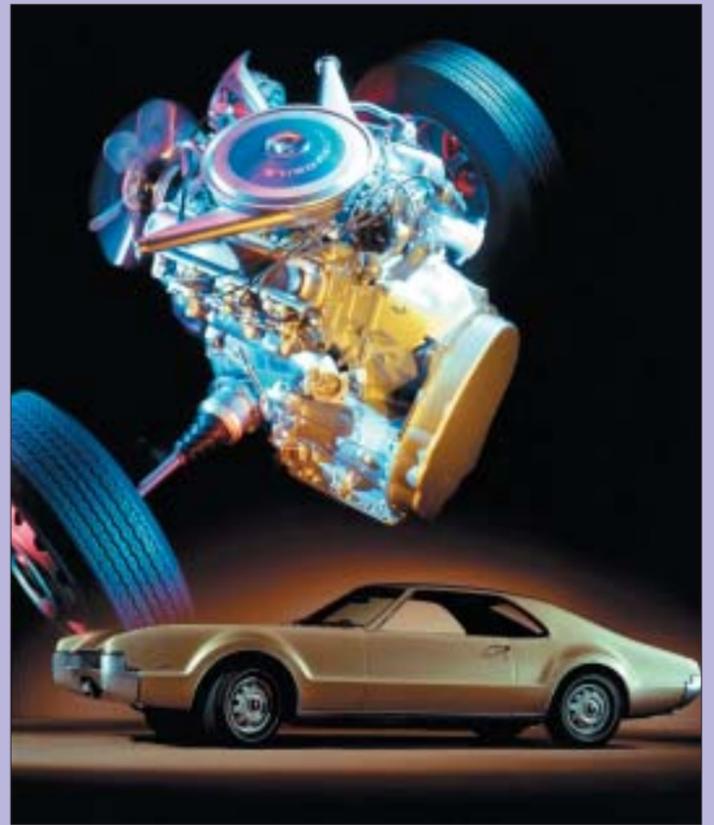
It was light and reliable, so much so that the US postal service bought a fleet of vehicles,

giving the Curved Dash immediate credibility and tremendous visibility across the US.

In 1905, a pair of Curved Dash models made a historic cross-country journey from New York to Portland, Oregon. The winning car - Old Scout - driven by Dwight Huss and Milford Wigle, completed the trip in 45 days, while the sister car driven by Percy Megargel and Barton Stanchfield - Old Steady - arrived a few days later.

In the war years of 1940-1945, civilian car production ceased, and the Oldsmobile factory began helping the war effort by making cannons and shells, using the popular slogan "Keep 'em firing."

In 1943, in the middle of this period of relative automotive inactivity, Oldsmobile became a division of General Motors, but by then, Ransom Olds had long since left to set up another company making a car called the Reo, the named based on his initials.



Above: The front-wheel drive Toronado, introduced in 1966, won critical acclaim. Four generations of the car were introduced before the model went out of production in 1992.

Above, left: The 1949 Rocket 88 convertible is considered a standout model.

BEHIND THE WHEEL

By Jeff Heselwood

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transmission, which made the car costly and heavy.

Despite its size, weight and front-wheel drive configuration, the Toronado handled as well as its rear-wheel drive rivals. US magazine *Motor Trend* rated it highly enough to vote it "Car of the Year".

In 1997 Oldsmobile celebrated its centenary, and now, after a period of badge-engineering, mainly using sister company Chevrolet hardware, Oldsmobile has been phased out.

The last cars rolled off the assembly line on April 29, ending a 107-year era of automotive history.

Fortunately for motoring historians, an Oldsmobile Heritage Center has been established at Lansing, Michigan, where visitors can examine the history of the oldest US automaker.

Jeff Heselwood may be contacted by email at jhc@netvigator.com.

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Guest chef

By Jenna Wise

What happens when a man is born in the United States into a French family with Basque roots, trains as a chef in France, then works extensively around Asia? Diners at Malina's bistro, bar and bakery now have the chance to find out.

Malina's is one of the restaurants at The Aspasia Phuket, a new, stylish boutique resort set on the hillside above the northern end of Kata Beach. The executive chef responsible for the menu at Malina's is Michel Cottabarren, who was born and raised in San Francisco, but whose family is French.

When he was 17, Michel went to France and followed a chef's apprenticeship near Bordeaux. This took two years to complete and Michel worked in France for six years afterwards.

In 1996, he left Europe. He says, "Since then I've lived and worked as a chef in Hawaii, Bali, Taiwan, China and now Thailand."

It was in Bali that Michel had his first experience of cooking Asian food. He went there to open an Italian restaurant, but was soon intrigued by the exotic variety of ingredients available.

The result is the menu at Malina's, which offers guests innovative Western cuisine as well as selected Thai specialties, an eclectic choice of dishes reflecting Michel's culinary experiences from around the world.

Parma Ham Sushi Roll For four people

Ingredients:

- 16 slices Parma ham;
- 100g Inoki mushrooms;
- 100g mustard cress;
- 1 avocado;
- 2 large red bell peppers, grilled;
- 2 cloves of garlic, chopped;
- 2 sprigs fresh parsley, chopped;
- 1 tablespoon white vinegar;
- 1 tablespoon sugar;
- Salt and pepper to taste.

Method:

Divide the Inoki mushrooms and mustard cress into 16 small bunches. Slice the avocado and one of the bell peppers into 16 thin strips each.

Lay each ham slice flat on a board and place a bunch of mushrooms and cress onto each one. Roll them up, then carefully



Aspasia chef Michel Cottabarren with Parma Ham Sushi Roll (square plate) and Apple Tart (front).

For the apple topping:

- 600g Granny Smith apples;
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice;
- 1 tablespoon lemon zest;
- 2 tablespoons sugar;
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon powder.

For the port jelly glaze:

- 4 tablespoons apricot jam, mixed with 100ml ruby port.
- 1 tart mold, 25cm diameter.

Method:

To prepare the pastry, put all the ingredients into a bowl and mix and knead until it forms a fairly thick dough. Put this into the fridge to rest for two hours.

To make the cream filling, mix the sugar, egg yolks and cornstarch well together. Heat the cream and vanilla flavoring in a pan.

When this boils, pour it into the first mixture. Blend together well, then put back in the pan and onto the heat to simmer for 2-3 minutes. Remove and allow to cool completely.

Peel, core and thinly slice the apples. In a large bowl, stir the slices with the lemon juice, zest, sugar and cinnamon. Leave this in the fridge for two hours.

Roll the pastry dough out and press into the tart mold. Bake this in a pre-heated oven, temperature 180°C/350°F.

Remove and allow to cool. Spread the cream filling over the pastry base and lay the apple slices on top. Bake for 20 minutes and spread warmed port jelly over the top when the tart has cooled.

Malina munchies

Apple Tart To make one tart

Ingredients:

For the pastry:

- 300g flour;
- 150g sugar;
- 200g butter;

- 200g Stilton or blue cheese;
- 2 egg yolks.

For the cream filling:

- 200g whipping cream;
- 50g sugar;
- 1 teaspoon vanilla flavoring;
- 2 egg yolks;
- 2 teaspoon corn starch.

bind each with a strip of bell pepper.

Skin and chop the other bell pepper, then put this, the garlic, sugar, salt and pepper into a blender. Add about 6 tablespoons of water gradually, in between blending. When you have a smooth puree, add the vinegar and blend for a further 10 seconds.

To serve, place four rolls onto each plate and drizzle some dressing on the side. Decorate with scattered fresh parsley.

Malina's is at The Aspasia Phuket, 1/3 Laem Sai Rd, Kata Beach, Phuket 83100. (Follow the steep road leading up to the entrance of Peach Hill Hotel, continue past and The Aspasia is on your left). Tel: 076-284414. Open from 7am to 11 pm, every day.

If you have a recipe you would like to share with our readers, please email chef@phuketgazette.net.

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Construction Update

by Anongnat Sartpisut

A comfortable environment where residents can unwind is the chief selling point of a development close to completion near Nai Yang Beach.

The developers of Baan Rungravee reason that people may not need a large house after spending most of the day at work, but a home should still be a place to relax outside working hours.

The developers, Thasanee Bunyang and Raveewat Sitthisuk, are in the process of building 47 homes, detached and semi-detached, on eight rai of land in Mai Khao.

K. Raveewat, managing director of the project, told the *Gazette* that the homes are "American" style, and may be bought fully furnished and equipped.

He said, "The exterior design is simple but luxurious. As for the inside, customers can get help and advice from our interior designers. Some of our customers want to walk into a new home that is fully furnished, equipped and decorated, while others prefer to bring their existing furniture and decorate it themselves.

"We have to accommodate both types of customer; we want



Left: Baan Rungravee is surrounded by nature.

Below: One of the detached houses, selling for around 2.5 million baht.



A place for relaxation

our buyers to be as comfortable as possible in their homes."

He added, "In terms of services and facilities, we have a tropical-style clubhouse, with a

small bar serving snacks and drinks, a swimming pool, 24-hour security, and a sauna and fitness center. Each house has a private well, as well as a system that pipes

insecticide underground, to protect against termites."

K. Raveewat said the homes are well-spaced within landscaped grounds. "Our aim is to have a small, peaceful, secluded development, not one that is busy and crowded," he explained.

Construction started in March last year and K. Thasanee and K. Raveewat expect the development to be complete by the end of October this year.

Detached properties stand on plots of between 200 and 280 square meters of land, and have 150sqm of living space, comprising three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a kitchen and living room. The standard price is 2.5 million baht.

Semi-detached homes have

100sqm of living space – two bedrooms, one bathroom, a living room and a kitchen – on 120- to 140-sqm plots and cost 1.5 million baht.

K. Raveewat said, "The properties are aimed at customers in north Phuket – hoteliers, airport staff or anyone who loves to live close to the beach; the houses are only three minutes away from Nai Yang Beach.

"They are also within easy reach of the Blue Canyon golf course and the airport – both are within cycling distance."

For more information, contact K. Thasanee at Tel: 076-239918, Fax: 076-239919, Mobile: 01-9202527 or Email: sivapatt@hotmail.com



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Home of the Week

Blue Canyon

CLASSY CONDO



A large condominium with stunning valley views has recently been refurbished to a very high standard and has now come on the market.

The 280-square-meter condominium is in the prestigious Blue Canyon estate, in an apartment block beside the famous golf course.

The complex is around seven years old, but this particular apartment has recently been extensively refurbished, and now boasts high-quality fixtures and fittings, and teak floors and walls throughout.

The apartment is on three floors. The ground level has a reception hall with a marble floor, along with a maid's room and separate bathroom. A teak stairway with teak bannisters leads up to the first floor.

The main living area is on the floor above, and comprises a large open-plan living-and-dining room and a Western kitchen and breakfast bar.

In the living space, there is a large television built into a teak shelf unit. The area opens onto a balcony, which has a barbecue and offers fabulous views across the golf course.

The kitchen is fitted out with Smeg appliances, includ-

ing a hob, oven, extractor hood and huge fridge-freezer.

On the top floor are three bedrooms. The master bedroom has fitted wardrobes and an ensuite bathroom complete with jacuzzi. The other two bedrooms share the second bathroom. Both bathrooms are lavishly finished in teak and have marble washstands and bath surrounds. The third bedroom doubles as an office.

There is air conditioning throughout and recessed ceiling lights with dimmer switches. The utilities include UBC satellite TV, telephone, well water and three-phase electricity.

The owner is entitled to use club facilities, including the swimming pool, gym and spa, and to special rates on golf course green fees.

Although the location is ideal for keen golfers, the property is well-placed for non-golfers, being only five minutes from the airport, 10 minutes from Yacht Haven Marina and 20 minutes from Phuket City.

The apartment is currently foreign-owned and has Chanote title. It is priced at 14.5 million baht.

Teak is a feature in the living-dining area (main picture) and, indeed, throughout the apartment, which commands expansive views over the manicured landscape of the Blue Canyon golf club (above).

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Gardening

with Bloomin' Bert

You just can't trust some people. I'm not sure what it is, but some people may be the most pleasant, amiable, life-and-soul-of-the-party types, but there's something about them that's just not right.

Plants are no different – metaphorically speaking; I've yet to see a plant that enjoyed nights on the town or party-going. What I mean is that many of them look spectacular and do a wonderful job of just sitting in a corner and brightening up the garden.

But there's a dark side to their character. Despite their style and good looks, they're poisonous, and are just itching (I had to get that word in) to get you.

Just outside the *Gazette* offices, there's an impressive example of one of the more malevolent good-lookers in Phuket, found all over the island and throughout Thailand.

The yellow oleander, also known as the "lucky nut", is a serious dark horse that really is out to get you. There's nothing lucky about this insidious plant. Just about every part of it is extremely poisonous.

However, it's certainly done a good PR job for itself, as the almost-continuous displays of

A poisonous charmer

bright yellow flowers are always spectacular. That's the catch – it just doesn't look as if it would harm a hair on your head. At least poisonous toadstools do a reasonable job of warning you off, presumably thinking you should work on the premise that something as ugly as a toad should be avoided.

As a colorful addition to your garden, the yellow oleander does the job very well. It's another easy-care shrub that requires minimal maintenance. I'm sure that nobody has done anything for the oleander near the *Gazette* office for years – no water or pruning or any degree of care whatsoever, but it still looks amazing.

That said, there are plants like this all over Phuket. You see them thriving at the side of the road or wherever, and decide that the similar examples in your garden at home can thrive perfectly well with the same treatment. This philosophy never works, of course, as they invariably die at home without proper attention.



Look; don't touch: the oleander is a veritable warehouse of toxins.

They've been spoilt for too long.

The oleander can be trained into an impressive small tree if you remove the suckers that regularly appear at the base – see the warning about this later. It also does well as a quick-growing screen. Plant a few of them five

to seven feet apart, and very soon you will have a really effective divide between you and your rather-too-inquisitive next-door neighbor.

The bright yellow flowers that adorn the plant almost non-stop are funnel-shaped, and appear at the ends of stalks sporting long shiny leaves. There's a clue here – if you see a plant with smooth, shiny leaves it's very likely to be poisonous. I'm not sure why, but this seems to be the case.

And this one certainly is very poisonous. The nastiest parts of the plant are the leaves, the small green fruits that appear after the flowers, and the white rubbery latex that oozes from

cuts in the stem. This sap is unpleasant stuff, so you definitely need to wear gloves when pruning it, which it will need on a regular basis.

There is a whole list of really stupid things you shouldn't do with oleander. Before I go on, please bear in mind that I'm certainly not advocating any of these ideas, as any of them could be seriously dangerous.

Don't use stripped oleander twigs to barbecue your sausages at your next barbecue. Don't whittle whistles out of the branches. Don't let your dog or cat get its roughage intake from the oleander. (Yes, they're daft enough to try.) Don't put a beehive next to a yellow oleander and harvest the honey. Don't burn the suckers after you cut them off, as even the smoke produced is poisonous, and never let kids collect the cute "lucky nuts".

You may snort in disbelief, but there are records of people doing all the above. Even the beehive story is true – there is evidence that a woman nearly died from honey poisoning; all down to the yellow oleander.

If you have kids who are sometimes a little too adventurous, or a pet that has a heart of gold but is totally clueless, then the yellow oleander isn't the ideal addition to the garden. If neither of these apply, and your idea of tending the garden is to sit there with a beer and admire it, the oleander's perfect.

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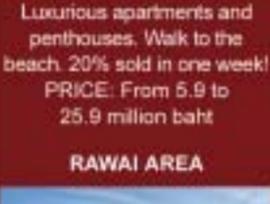
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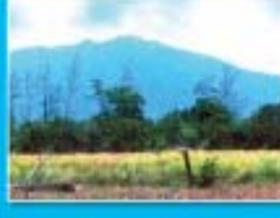
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- Salon-Beauticians/Hair Dresser
- Spa Receptionist
- Spa Therapist

Please send your resumé with a recent photo or apply in person to:

Human Resources Department
Three Dolphins Resort Co, Ltd.

Trisara

60/1 Moo 6 Srisoonthorn Road,
Cherng Talay, Thalang
Phuket, 83110 Thailand

Tel: 076-310354 Fax: 076-310300 or via email to: hr@trisara.com

COCOON DESIGN (PHUKET) CO LTD

We are a fast-growing retailer of Asian contemporary homeware and we are looking for dynamic individuals to join our team.

Retail sales

Location: Central Festival Phuket
The Plaza at Surin beach

Requirements:

- Diploma or bachelor's degree
- Male/female, age 22-32
- Good command of spoken English
- 1-3 years' experience in retail or service industry
- Knowledge of POS (express program) is an advantage
- Good computer skills (Word, Excel)
- Self-motivated and energetic

Accountant

Requirements:

- Diploma, bachelor's degree in accounting or related field
- Female, age 25-35
- 1-3 years' Accounting experience with handling of local tax issues
- Knowledge of POS (express program)
- Good command of spoken and written English
- Good computer skills (Word, Excel, e-mail)
- Good interpersonal skills

We offer an attractive salary and benefits

Interested persons, please send application letter with resumé of career to date and one recent photo to:

Duangtip Chaturachinda
118/1 Moo 3, Srisoonthorn Rd, Cherng Talay,
Thalang, Phuket 83110
e-mail: cocoon_lisa@hotmail.com

ADM, ACCOUNTING,

Office manager. Full-time position for Thai competent in English and Excel/Word. Of fice manager with experience and enthusiasm as a team player. Email us if you are the right person and available now. Salary starts at 10,000 baht a month. Tel: 06-6916530. Email: info@newspaperdirect-phuket.com

ADMIN OFFICER

Administration officer wanted. Must be fluent in English, good with Excel & Word programs, service-minded and enthusiastic. Based at Yacht Haven Marina (Kor Ane). Pls contact for details and to apply. Tel: 076-273321. Email: suporn@thaimarine.com

RESTAURANT STAFF

The following staff are needed for a new Thai/European restaurant in Patong opening September 1: 3 chefs; 2 assistant chefs; 5 waitresses; 1 cashier. Please contact for details or to apply. Tel: 09-8093566. Email: lennartviber@hotmai.com

BOI COMPANY

Well-known company – with 8 branches around the world and investment in Phuket with BOI support – seeks Thai nationals for the following positions: Accountant; Electronics Engineer; and Drivers. Please apply urgently by email: tailor@loxinfo.co.th

SECRETARY/CLIENT

support. Property development company seeks an enthusiastic and hardworking person to run the administration office and to assist with sales/client support. Must have very good computer skills as well as good written and spoken English. Contact to apply. Tel: 076-271188. Email: tony@maan-tawan.com

Secretary

For New Events & Technical Productions Company in Phuket.

Qualification:

- Age 23 years plus, male or female
- Excellent command of written & spoken English
- Computer literate in MS Excel & Word
- Willing to take responsibility and work under pressure
- Pleasant with service minded personality

If interested please send your resume with recent photo to
38/2 Moo 2 Srisoonthorn Road, Cherngtalay, Thalang,
Phuket 83110
E-mail : workstation71@hotmail.com

SECRETARY WANTED
secretary with good CV to join our team for project. Please contact. Tel: 09-6525664. Email: platinumresidence1@hotmail.com

URGENT

Accountant needed to join our team for a building project. Tel: 09-6525664. Email: platinumresidence1@hotmail.com

RECEPTIONIST/

secretary. Full-time Thai receptionist/secretary required for office work. Computer literate; good English; professional appearance; good personality. 10,000 to 12,000 baht per month. Tel: 09-7725077 Fax: 076-296255. Email: desandanna@hotmail.com

NEWS REPORTERS

and photographers. After several years, we are giving one of Phuket's oldest and best-known travelers' websites a relaunch. We need local online reporters and photographers to get fresh articles, information and recent pictures. We pay by article (min 1,000 words and 3-5 pictures). Photographers will be paid by picture series. Good command of written English is mandatory. Applicants should be familiar with every aspect of tourist and expat life on Phuket. Please email: juergen@trv.net or for further details, please see our website at: www.trv.net

ACCOUNTANT

Accountant wanted for company based at Yacht Haven Marina (Kor Ane), in Thalang. Must be able to communicate in English and have stock and inventory experience. Please contact for more details and to apply. Tel: 076-273321. Email: suporn@thaimarine.com

EXTRA INCOME

Need extra cash? Work at home at your own pace. Large company looking for reps. For more information, please email: phuketcash@hotmail.com

NURSERY TEACHER

QSI Phuket seeks a qualified nursery teacher. Start date: August 23, 2004. Please contact for details. Tel: 076-354077. Email: qsi@phuketinternet.co.th

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367/2 Yaowarat Rd, Phuket City Tel: 076-236555 Fax: 076-213971

Island Job Mart

Silk Entertainment Limited

Silk Restaurant & Bar, a contemporary Thai-style restaurant located in Surin Area, Phuket, is seeking dynamic & independent candidates for the following positions.

Personal Assistant to General Manager

- Female, Bachelor's Degree in Business Management, Marketing or related field.
- Have a pleasant personality, be organized, enthusiastic and self-motivated with excellent interpersonal communication skills.
- Excellent command of English, both written & spoken.
- Good computer skills in MS Office & others.
- Experience in F&B industry & able to write & set up menus will be an advantage.

Accountant

- Male/Female, Bachelor's Degree in Accounting or higher.
- Experience in F&B industry of at least 5 years.
- Knowledge of accounting software POS system.
- Good command of English/spoken Cantonese is an advantage.

Restaurant Manager

- Aged between 25 years and 40 years.
- Excellent command & understanding of the English language.
- Able to control & run a restaurant.
- Able to work within fiscal controls & meet budget forecast requirements.
- Ability to lead staff by example.
- Self-motivated, great organizer & trainer.
- 3 years in a similar position in a 5-star establishment.
- Good communicator, pleasant personality, energetic & passionate about work.
- Knowledge of food & wine.
- Knowledge of POS system, computer-literate.

Executive Chef

- Aged between 25 years and 40 years.
- Good command & understanding of the English language.
- Ability to lead staff by example.
- Self motivated, great organizer & trainer, energetic & passionate about work.
- Previous experience in both Thai & modern-Western cuisine.
- Excellent understanding of kitchen organization & hygiene standards.
- Able to control all kitchen & related costs in line with set budgets.
- Able to write & cost menus, provide daily specials & train staff.
- Computer-literate.

Restaurant Hostess

- Aged between 22 years and 30 years.
- Excellent command & understanding of the English language.
- Able to speak other languages besides English & Thai.
- 2 years in a similar position.
- Some knowledge of food & wine preferred.
- Good communicator, pleasant personality, energetic & passionate about work.
- Knowledge of POS system, computer-literate.

Sous Chef

- Aged between 24 years and 28 years.
- Good command & understanding of the English language.
- Ability to lead staff by example, great organizer & trainer.
- 2 years in a similar position in a 5-star establishment.
- Good communicator, pleasant personality, energetic & passionate about work.
- Previous experience in both Thai & modern-Western cuisine.
- Excellent understanding of kitchen organization & hygiene standards.

Bar Manager

- Aged between 25 years and 30 years.
- Good command & understanding of the English language.
- Ability to lead staff by example, great organizer & trainer.
- 2 years in a similar position in a 5-star establishment.
- Good communicator, pleasant personality, energetic & passionate about work.
- Knowledge of POS system, computer-literate.
- Excellent understanding of kitchen organization & hygiene standards.
- High degree of knowledge in making & serving first-class cocktails & beverages & able to control bar stocks & costs.

Cashier

- Good command & understanding of the English language.
- Honest & keen to succeed in whatever you do, able to lead by example.
- Good communicator, pleasant personality, energetic & passionate about work.
- Knowledge of Micros or other POS system.
- Minimum 2 years in a similar position.

Service Staff / Bar Staff

- Experience essential, team players & willing to learn.
- Good command & understanding of the English language.
- Pleasant personality, energetic & passionate about work.
- Min. 2 years in a similar position or experience in the hospitality industry is preferred.

Cooks / Stewards / Cleaners

- Experience essential, team players & willing to learn.
- Reasonable understanding of the English language (not essential)
- Pleasant personality, energetic & passionate about work.
- Min. 2 years in similar position or experience in the hospitality industry is preferred.

All positions for Thai nationals only

If interested, please send your resumé & recent photo to:
 -General Manager- 63/2 Moo 3, Cherng Thalay, Thalang, Phuket 83110
 Tel: 076-271241 Mobile: 01-2712471 Fax: 076-271242
 E-Mail: quoka@phuket.ksc.co.th

ZANZIBAR

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Zanzibar Outlet Manager

Previous Pub management experience, able to speak fluent English, outgoing personality, able to manage and budget, expats welcome to apply.

Bar Staff, Service Staff and Cocktail Barman

We are also looking for smart, attractive male & female service staff. Basic knowledge of English Language would be preferred. Over the age of 18 years. Uniforms and meals provided. Be part of Phuket Town's most famous hotel.

Interview date 1st September 2004
 10 am – 3 pm
 At Royal Phuket City Hotel

Please bring Photos and all relevant documents.
 Or Tel: 076 233 333 fax: 076 233 385
 Zanzibar@royalphuketcity.com



The Racha

Embark on a challenging career with the newly opened The Racha in Phuket, a deluxe resort located on Racha Island featuring 70 spacious villas.

We are now looking for enthusiastic and passionate individuals to join our team.

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- ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE HOUSEKEEPER
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- LAUNDRY SUPERVISOR
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- DUTY MANAGER (FRONT OFFICE)
- GUEST SERVICE OFFICER
- GUEST SERVICE ATTENDANT
- BOAT CAPTAIN SUPERVISOR
- MARINE TECHNICIAN
- BOAT CAPTAIN
- BOAT CREW ATTENDANT
- SPA THERAPIST
- NIGHT AUDITOR
- RESTAURANT CAPTAIN
- WAITER / WAITRESS
- BARTENDER
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- CHIEF STEWARD
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Please submit your letter of application together with your CV and a recent photograph to:

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 E-mail: hr@theracha.com
 Website: www.theracha.com

Tout, Trader & Trumpet

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37-foot wooden speedboat for sale at 350,000 baht. Call for details. Tel: 01-6931425.

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Bulletins

Alcoholics Anonymous

is holding meetings in English at the following places:

Phuket City
Mission Hospital
on Wed and Sun at 7 pm

Phuket International Hospital
on Fri at 7 pm

Patong
Patong Hospital
on Mon, Tue, Wed, Sat, Sun
at 7 pm and on Fri at 8 pm

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DISSOLUTION OF
marriage. Notice by Advertisement. Rule 42(3) Family Proceedings Rules 1981, in the District Court in Auckland FAM-2004-004-1944. To: Saranchana Hannon, aka Saranchana Antil, formerly of unknown address. Karl Andrew O'Connor has filed an application against you for the following order: DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE. A copy of the application with a notice containing information for you may be obtained from my office.

If you do not file at least one of the following documents within 35 days of publication of this notice, the case may proceed without you being heard:

1. A notice of defence
 2. A request for an appearance
 3. A request for a hearing
- Dated at Auckland this 23rd day of July, 2004.
Deputy Registrar.

Any person knowing the whereabouts of the above-named Saranchana Hannon, aka Saranchana Antil, is asked to bring this notice to their attention.

Business Opportunities

PATONG
guesthouse. Small easy-to-manage "boutique" guest house with 5 apartments/rooms and restaurant. All rented. Very good profits. Long lease, 1st-class plant & equipment. A genuine business, all books correct and for only 2 million baht. Please phone for details. Tel: 01-9241447.

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on Koh Lanta. 10-year lease at 60,000 baht per year! Beer garden, owner's accommodation, staff room and nine bungalows. Take-over price before upcoming season: only 3.5 million baht. Email for details. Email: thai667@hotmail.com

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INVESTORS WANTED
We are seeking investors for exciting Danish fast food chain in Patong. Invest 175,000 baht or, as franchise concept, 350,000 baht. Please contact for more details. Tel: 06-2989500. Email: la@grillhousedk.com www.grillhousedk.com

RESTAURANT
& house. in Ao Nang (Krabi). Nice location, romantic atmosphere, 40 seats. Total rent only 8,000 baht. Buy the total inventory of the house and restaurant for only 250,000 baht. Includes new motorbike, UBC, etc. Just move in and open the business tomorrow. Chance of a lifetime. Tel: 06-1473890. Email: info@sabai.nl

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investment opportunity in land in the Patong area. Own your own shares 100%. Call for details. Tel: 07-8893838.

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Guesthouse near the Sheraton and Central Sofitel resorts, Krabi, for sale. 60m from the beach. Tel: 01-3703109, 06-6823119.

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I have three lovely dogs that need homes, I am leaving very soon. I don't want to have to put them down. They are well behaved and I love them all. Tel: 076-388349, 09-470-1249. Email: erikapotgieter55@yahoo.co.uk

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Thai dog, brown, black and white. Very short legs with long body and bushy tail. Family dog that has disappeared from our home in Baan Suwan Naramit. Answers to Tommy and was last seen wearing an orange, pink and yellow collar. He is missed badly by our entire family. Reward for any information leading to his return, no questions asked. Tel: 01-9780496. Email: hfredread@hotmail.com

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Personals

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seeking lady. I will be returning to work in Phuket in September and will settle there permanently. I have a good job, am loyal, honest and am seeking an ambitious, intelligent lady, 24-35, for long-term romance. Please contact by email to: mysammy11@yahoo.com

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1993 model, white, engine and transmission technically perfect. Body needs to be repaired a little. If you want to have a look, please contact. Tel: 01-8957848. Fax 076-354130. Email: bell_jidapha@yahoo.com

Motorbikes

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10-month-old 125cc bike - in blue - with disc brake, electric start, mag wheels, helmets, log book, etc. Has covered 4,000km. Australian owner. 20,000 baht. Tel: 06-9423368.

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Dark blue 4-door Kia Sportage in very good condition. Includes 10-pack CD. 325,000 baht. Pls call for details. Tel: 01-3968550.

TOYOTA SOLUNA

1997. 260,000 baht. Full options. Call Tel: 06-2723391.

HONDA CIVIC

Very nice metallic (ruby) red Honda Civic for sale. Please call after business hours for details. Tel: 09-6452576.

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Reliable 1500 engine, smooth runner. Good body work. Aircon, central locking, new stereo, insurance till December. 140,000 baht for a quick sale. Email: edisons@aol.com

TOYOTA SOLUNA

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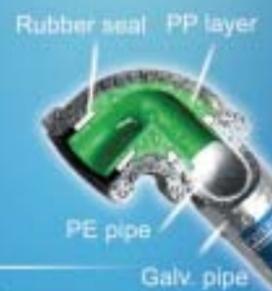
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