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The Phuket Gazette

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Gov helps search for little Solitaire

By Shiona Mackenzie & Anongnat Sartsiput

PHUKET: Governor Udomsak Uswarangkura has assigned a team to help Sascha and Patchara "Riem" Meissmer investigate the identity and whereabouts of a Eurasian-looking girl in a photograph posted on the Internet.

The Meissmers believe the girl in the picture may be their daughter, Solitaire, who was identified as having died in last year's tsunami.

The Governor said on December 13, "The girl in the photo does resemble their daughter. We are not sure who she is, but I want to help the Meissmers find answers to their questions."

"The Royal Thai Police and Phuket Province will co-ordinate efforts to help them. With the local police we are now trying to investigate when and where the photo was taken, and what happened to the girl in the picture."

"We need to gather information on the children processed at the OrBorJor on December 27 and 28. We will check the list of passengers [evacuated by air] with the Phuket Provincial Immigration Office and the Thammasat center on relevant dates to see if there were girls of [Solitaire's] age on one of those flights. If there were, the next step will be to find out where they are now."

"I do not think there has been a mistake in the DNA matching process, as a number of different experts agreed that the match [of a body identified as being Solitaire, which was



Solitaire Meissmer with her father Sascha, in a photograph taken on Loy Kratong Day last year, just weeks before the tsunami.

later cremated] was 99.99%. Nonetheless, the Thai Tsunami Victim Identification (TTVI) unit will set up a team to re-examine the case."

TTVI Joint Chief of Staff Pol Col Pornprasert Kanjanarin said, "To reassure the family, we will look into the case again. However, we have full confidence in our [DNA matching] process."

Asked whether the original

DNA match might have been from a family other than the Meissmers, he responded, "In all cases, we have what is called a 'chain of custody' at every point in the process and we have documented everything. We know what samples were sent to the lab when and by whom, so we have confidence in the results."

"We can take a DNA sample again [from the Meissmers]

Continued on page 2

Immigration aiming to beef up staff at airport

By Sangkhae Leelanaporn

PHUKET: Pol Col Chirdchai Rattanametanon, the new Superintendent of the Immigration Office at Phuket International Airport, has applied for more officers in order to reduce tiresome delays in processing tourists.

Col Chirdchai told the Gazette, "I understand that there are not enough Immigration officers at the airport to process the volume of tourists, but I have already applied to my superior officer to have more officers stationed there."

He said that there are currently about 50 officers manning immigration counters at the airport, but added that half of them worked the day shift and the other half worked the night shift.

"We have officers standing by at both the arrival and the departure counters, but inbound and outbound passenger traffic totals around 7,000 people a day at the moment. We have nine arrival and six departure counters, but sometimes there are too many people at the same time. We are trying to solve that problem," Col Chirdchai said.

"We always serve children and elderly people first," he added.

The move to speed up Immigration clearance at the airport follows criticism from tourists.

One British visitor wrote to the Gazette, "I arrived on Tuesday, November 29 and waited nearly an hour, the reason being that there were not enough officers [on duty]. The Thai authorities should put on extra staff to speed up this process and cut down this annoying wait."

NEXT WEEK: 56-page issue to mark the Tsunami Anniversary. Don't miss it!

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Task force to blitz illegal labor

By Anongnat Sartpisut

PHUKET: A task force of about 50 officers has been set up to crack down on illegal labor in Phuket.

Phuket Provincial Employment Services Office (PESO) Chief Boonchock Maneechot announced the crackdown following a closed meeting on December 8 with Phuket Governor Udomsak Uswarangkura and new the Phuket Provincial Immigration Office (PPIO) Superintendent, Pol Col Prayut Chommalee.

K. Boonchock cited poor sanitary conditions at workers' camps and the increasing violence among illegal workers as the two main reasons for the crackdown.

"When officers have visited the camps where foreign laborers live, they have seen that the workers live in poor sanitary conditions," he said.

"We are looking at issuing warnings to employers if conditions at workers' camps are not satisfactory."

K. Boonchock said that Phuket has 23,308 registered



Employers who do not look after the sanitary conditions in their labor camps 'may get warnings'.

alien workers, but he estimated that about 30,000 illegal aliens are working on the island. He explained that the huge number of illegal laborers was mainly the result of employers bringing them

in from other provinces, chiefly Ranong.

To help solve the problems, K. Boonchock explained, the Ministry of Labor in Bangkok is considering introducing another

amnesty for illegal laborers to register – a period of amnesty was offered last year – and making health checks on foreign laborers arriving from other provinces mandatory.

"Phuket has many problems with Burmese. For example, there are Ya Khai Burmese minority group workers from Phang Nga who are now in Phuket. The Ya Khai in particular are violent, and often kill each other over disputes," K. Boonchock said.

He warned that some employers registered laborers in one province but then moved them to another province without registering the movement. This automatically – and immediately – meant the laborers were working illegally.

"If employers need to move laborers to another province, they must tell the PESO in their province and ask permission to do so," he said.

In response to the Governor's request for a solution to the problems, K. Boonchock told the *Gazette*, he will suggest using the Governors Act of 1914, which gives provincial governors the power to arrest, control and punish in matters concerning illegal labor.

To use this power, a Governor must first obtain permission from the Ministry of Interior.

Home stay project aims to aid tsunami relief

PHUKET: The Employers' Confederation of Thailand (ECOT) will launch a "home stay" pilot project this month in a bid to help tsunami sufferers long-term.

"The project will be launched on Koh Lone and at Cape Panwa, Ao Makham, Khao Khat and Baan Bo Rae. The idea is that local people will welcome foreigners into their homes so the visitors can learn about the local culture and lifestyle. The locals will derive income for themselves and their communities," ECOT Executive Director Siriwan Romchatthong explained.

She said that the project is intended to complement the Tourism Authority of Thailand's "Be My Guest" home-stay campaign for tourists to enjoy home stays in Phuket, Phang Nga and Krabi from December 23 to 29.

Koh Lone will be the first place to receive guests, with the other sites being promoted after surroundings have been improved and local people have been trained, K. Siriwan explained.

Kemchitra Chatraporn, National Consultant to the International Labour Organization (ILO) Post-Tsunami Livelihood Recov-

ery in the Tourism Sector project, said that the project has been funded by US\$20,000 (about 827,000 baht) from the United Nations Development Program.

K. Kemchitra added that the ILO has launched several projects to support long-term recovery in tsunami-hit areas, including a course that started in July that trained jobless hospitality and tourism staff, so that they will remain attractive potential employees.

Anyone visitor interested in home stay should contact ECOT at Tel: 02-2454310-4, Rawai Tambon Administration Organization (*OrBorTor*) at Tel: 0066 (0) 76-288651 or the ILO at Tel: 076-249276, Email: pk_tsunami@yahoo.co.th

Governor works on riddle of little Solitaire

From page 1

but not from the victim's body, which has already been cremated."

Mr Meissmer commented, "I am pleased that the Governor and the TTVI are willing to look into the matter; 99.99% is still not 100%, and I can't help wondering if there may have been a DNA mix-up of some kind."

K. Riem said, "On December 26, I held onto Solitaire as tightly as I could, but the second wave ripped her out of my arms. A friend later told me he saw my daughter being rescued. I have long sensed that my daughter is still alive somewhere, and when I saw the picture [on the Inter-

net], I felt more sure. We may yet find her.

"I can't get the photo out of my mind," Mr Meissmer told the *Gazette* earlier. "We cannot stop looking for Solitaire now. If we did, one day I might look at her photo and ask myself, 'Why didn't I look deeper into this?'"

"It is just possible that the girl in that photo is our daughter," Mr Meissmer said. "We have to do whatever we can to find out. I don't want to reach age 50 or 60 thinking I could have found my daughter years ago if only I had tried harder."

The photograph may be seen at www.phuketremembers.com/gallery/CIMG2608.jpg

Motor show at Central Festival

PHUKET: Vehicles and motor-ing accessories from more than a dozen car and motorcycle companies are on show in Central Festival Phuket's Grand Hall until December 18, from noon to 8 pm daily.

Machines on display at the Phuket Motor Show On The Rocks include BMW, Ford, Honda, Land Rover, Mitsubishi, Peugeot, Toyota and Volvo cars, along with JRD, Kawasaki and Yamaha bikes.

A Ferrari and a Maserati are also on show, as well as vintage motorbikes from Phuket's Baan Anurak motorcycle museum.

A Miss Phuket Motor Show contest takes place on December 18, followed by concert – "Alive Elvis".

Layan Marina construction to start next month

PHUKET: Construction of the 1.7-billion baht Layan Marina project will begin next month.

The Managing Director of Layan Marina Co, Nathaphut Na Pathalung, confirmed on December 12 that the project, on 51 rai of land at the north end of Bang Tao Beach, is going ahead.

He noted, however, that the start date has been put back in light of developments on neighboring pieces of land, most notably the parcel sold recently by Hongkong & Shanghai Hotels to Indonesian interests.

These developments have mandated design changes, he explained

He said, "We have not yet asked for a construction permit from Mai Khao Tambon Administration Organization because we are now about to embark on co-branding talks with Grand Hyatt, so the house and condominium style has changed from our original designs."

K. Nathaput added that there had been one more significant change to the plan - berths in the marina will be available only to those buying or renting homes in the project. This, he explained, is "because we would like to preserve the privacy and security of residents"

- Anongnat Sartpisut.

PIMEX show rated a success: 12 boats sold

KOH KAEW: As the Phuket International Marine Exhibition (PIMEX) 2005 closed on December 11, exhibitors were in buoyant mood. At least 12 boats were sold during the show at the Boat Lagoon, and initial estimates of solid sales achieved amount to approximately US\$4 million (160 million baht).

Dealers and brokers all reported new contacts made and strong leads to follow up from serious buyers. "I have not stopped talking to serious visitors since the show opened on Thursday," said a weary but elated Craig Murphy of Sunseeker dealers Max Marine Asia, at the show's closing party.

Nor was the upbeat mood restricted to yacht sales. "We have made better contacts here than we have at other shows in Asia," said Jim Scott, General Manager, West Australia, of Sea Slip Marinas, adding that he believed Phuket was the best venue for a regional show.

Along with every exhibitor in the Australian group, Mr Scott confirmed that he will be back for PIMEX 2006. Australia's Boating's Leading Accessories (BLA) also plans to return, with double the booth space next time.

PIMEX also provided an opportunity for local companies and overseas exhibitors to network in Asia's fastest-growing



Visitors check out some of the spectacular boats on display.

marine leisure market. During PIMEX eight new dealerships or agencies were established.

Among local marine product exhibitors, Gareth Twist of Yacht Solutions said, "We are marketing new products and have had a very good response during PIMEX. We will be back next year."

"We didn't close a sale during PIMEX," said Jeanette Skelton of Royal Phuket Marina, "but we met many people who were planning to move to Phuket and we were able to take them next door to show them around." Ms Skelton said she is confident that sales will result.

"PIMEX has developed a reputation as a serious boating and lifestyle show," said Grenville Fordham of Image Asia, adding, "While we are able to put more boats in the water than any other regional show, we are not renowned for surface gloss.

Just over 4,000 visitors attended the show during four days, 2,300 of whom were registered as trade visitors. "We are disappointed that we did not reach our target of 6,000 visitors," said Image Asia's Andy Dowden during his farewell party speech.

"However, we will keep working on our marketing program, targeted at Bangkok. This is a long-term approach, and we are confident that it will eventually bring results."

"At the scene of the stabbing, I found Uthairat Poonchan, 21, from Nakhon Sawan, still holding a knife. There was blood on the floor.

"She told me that she and Mr Ochner frequently had arguments about the victim's relationships with other women.

"She had used the knife to protect herself, she said, because he had hit and hurt her on previous occasions. She herself had cuts to her fingers and her right arm."

Uthairat, he said, had been arrested on a charge of manslaughter. The investigation continues.

German, 25, stabbed to death

PATONG: A 25-year-old German man died early on December 11 of stab wounds received in a furious argument with his Thai girlfriend in their rented room on Nanai Rd.

Pol Lt Col Chawalit Niamwadee, of Kathu Police Station, told the Gazette, "I received a call from Patong Hospital at 4 am that a man had been brought into the emergency room, where he had died of his wounds."

The dead man was identified as Anders Ochner. "He had been stabbed once in his right side and once in his upper chest, and he had knife wounds to his right hand," said Col Chawalit.

Cigarette tax leaps to 79pc

PHUKET: A proposal by the Excise Department to increase cigarette tax from 75% to 79% of the factory price was approved by the Cabinet December 6 and came into effect the following day.

Thai brand cigarette prices rose by 5 or 6 baht a pack, while foreign brands rose by 7 or 8 baht.

Under Thai law, tax on cigarettes may not exceed 80% of the factory price.

The Phuket Excise Office said that the price of cigarettes in the province will not rise until old stock is sold out, but the Gazette has learned that several local retailers have already implemented the rises.

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PULP FRICTION

In Phuket, the “veil of silence” fell on November 25, when Phuket Provincial Commander Pol Maj Gen Decha Budnampeth ordered officers at all levels, including station superintendents, to stop releasing case-specific information to the media.

Gen Decha told the *Gazette* that not only does he intend to uphold the order, but that he also agrees with the new policy. News conferences during which suspects are paraded before the press will be stopped and police press conferences about criminal cases will be a thing of the past in Phuket, he said.

Not only were the suspects’ constitutionally protected rights violated in such cases, but their statements – either to the police or directly to the media – often changed once their cases reached the court system. This could effect the outcome of their court trials, he said.

Gen Decha blames inaccurate and unethical reporting by both the media and the police. The maturity of individual police officers, and thus their ability to release accurate and appropriate information, varies from officer to officer.

“The same applies to members of the press, some of whom lack the education or experience to report accurately and without bias,” he said.

Evidence of biased and inaccurate reporting can be seen daily – in differing accounts of the same story by different media, he added.

Gen Decha also thinks that in the past the police have been given a raw deal by the media,

Following a directive by national police chief Pol Gen Kowit Wattana, police nationwide have been instructed to stop releasing details about cases still under investigation and parading suspects and victims at news conferences, or allowing their photos to be published by the press.

The media blackout has been lauded by activists as a long-overdue step to protect the rights of victims and suspects who have yet to be found guilty by the courts, but the press and television are finding it more difficult than ever to do their jobs.

The *Gazette’s* Sangkhae Leelanapaporn and Anongnat Sartpisut investigate.

who play up front-page news stories that reveal the police in a bad light – but relegate police achievements to the back pages. Such treatment has tended to reinforce a stereotype among the public that the entire police force is bad, he maintains.

Limiting media access to the police will better enable police to conduct successful investigations, he said.

“Criminal suspects these days are very smart – they fol-

low events by reading the newspapers and watching TV. If information about investigations is released, this may help them know what the police plan to do with them [and they therefore evade arrest],” he said.

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‘The constitution states that the people have the right to information, so if they deny us access to the news, they are denying the public of a constitutional right’

Phuket Reporters’ Club Chairman, Perapong Pholpramu.



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made aware of those people and what they are alleged to have done. But is it really fair if those people have yet to be convicted of any crime?”

In future, the decision on whether or not to re-enact crimes would be considered on a case-by-case basis, and then only with the permission of the suspect, he said.

Sarayuth Mullam, a lawyer with the SM International Law firm in Kamala and a law lecturer at the Prince of Songkla University’s Phuket Campus, told the *Gazette* that he agreed “about 50%” with the new police regulations.

In a perfect world, the time to present defendants in criminal cases before the public is not after their arrest, but after they have been convicted by a court of law, he said.

“They shouldn’t arrange press conferences after the arrests, because in some cases the court judge will throw out the case for lack of evidence. There have been cases in which it has taken the court up to three years before a case is thrown out for lack of evidence. If that happens, how can the family ever get their good name back?” he asked, adding that suspects could sue for defamation in such cases.

K. Sarayuth thinks press conferences should be allowed to proceed only when there is iron-clad evidence against the suspects, such as when they are caught red-handed committing a crime – and even then only when the chances of the case being thrown out are virtually nil.

He added that many of the news conferences and re-enactments in the past had occurred because suspects were unaware of their constitutional rights, and that most police didn’t bother to inform them of these.

Among these rights are that of a suspect to confer with a lawyer before undergoing police questioning, he said.

“Sometimes the media report statements made by a suspect only to find that these contradict their testimony before the court. This can have a bearing on the outcome of the case,” he said.

K. Sarayuth added that allowing suspects to speak to the media can sometimes help a suspect’s case, however – such as drawing attention to their case by claiming to the public that a confession was made under duress.

“Sometimes the police want to use the media to let their superiors, PM Thaksin or other politicians know that they are doing a good job – even if it violates a suspect’s rights,” he explained.

“Reporters sometimes don’t take suspects’ rights into consid-

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Phuket Provincial Commander Pol Maj Gen Decha Budnampeth: 'Some members of the press lack the education or experience to report accurately and without bias.'

eration in their rush to sell newspapers. Some reporters don't know about suspects' rights in the first place. I would encourage them to pretend that one of their own relatives was arrested by police on false charges and paraded before a press conference. How would they feel about it then?" he asked.

One of Phuket's most highly visible suspects this year has been Apichart Nooprod, Chief of the Finance Division of the Phuket Provincial Financial Office.

He was charged with conspiracy to steal 2.05 million baht in government tsunami relief funds that went missing from Phuket Provincial Hall on February 15.

The case is still under investigation, and K. Apichart has yet to be charged with any crime.

Thought by many to be a scapegoat, K. Apichart said he disagrees with the new police directive that would restrict media access to suspects who, like himself, have yet to be charged with

a crime – let alone found guilty of one.

"If there is no check on police work, how can they ever be held accountable? Left to their own devices, they will be able to do whatever they want. That's why I think the media should have the right to follow up on police investigations," he said.

The Phuket Reporters' Club Chairman, Perapong Pholpramu, told the Gazette he doesn't agree with the new policy, which he feels undermines the media's role in reporting the truth accurately to the public.

He said restricting media access to the police has only led to less accurate reporting, as journalists now have to rely on other witnesses and guesswork.

This also increases the likelihood of newspapers making mistakes and "getting into trouble" as a result.

He admitted, however, that it has always been up to the police what information they want to reveal: "I understand that they have the right to give us what-



Photojournalist Thongtuan Sukmuang: 'I've been in the media for 30 years, and I have never experienced a time when the police have denied access to the extent that they do now.'

ever information they want to give us," he said.

K. Perapong noted that the police were hardly alone among government agencies that restrict media access to information.

"Currently, many other government officials take the same approach, denying us the information we ask for. They should accept that government officials and the media need to work together."

K. Perapong said he found it unreasonable for government agencies to expect the media to do public relations work for them, but then to deny media requests for information by using the excuse that they need "to get approval at the regional level" first.

"Reporters have a duty to keep people informed about what is going on in society... The constitution states that the people have the right to information, so if they deny us access to the

news, they are denying the public of a constitutional right," he said. Although times are tough, reporters will persevere, he said.

"It is now more difficult to get accurate news for our readers, but we will continue to do our best to present the public with the facts," he said.

First-time visitors to the Kingdom are often shocked by the graphic images of violence con-

tained on the front pages of many Thai-language newspapers.

One of Phuket's most experienced reporters is Thongtuan Sukmuang, Andaman beat reporter and photojournalist for Thailand's best-selling Thai-language daily paper, *Thai Rath*.

K. Thongtuan also sees the new policy as a way to restrict public access to information.

"I've been in the media for 30 years, and I have never experienced a time when the police have denied access to the extent that they do now."

He said that presenting suspects before the media does not automatically imply their guilt – only a court of law can do that. The media have a duty to inform the public about who has been arrested, and on what charges, he maintains.

Likewise, he doesn't see why media reports about cases under investigation should affect the outcome of those cases.

"Investigation is police work. We don't try to interfere with the course of an investigation, only to report about it accurately," he said.

He added that achieving balanced and accurate reporting depends not only on information given by the police, but also from other sources.

Defending the use of gory accident and crime scene photographs, he said it should be up to the press itself to decide what is ethically acceptable.

"Pictures showing the dead? Don't we have right to publish them? I think we do. However, in cases where minors are involved, we choose not to. It should be up to the media itself, and should be done on a case-by-case basis, with ethical considerations," he said.

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Queer News

HOW TO GET TANKED

MUKDAHARN: With prices at the pumps rising ever higher, some people tend to forget that even at 25 baht a liter gasoline is one of the cheapest liquids available on sale anywhere – and is still a good deal cheaper than even the lowest-priced beers.

Perhaps that is why 31-year-old farmer Sa-ngiam Janlong of Tambon Baan Khoke in Mukdaharn has taken to drinking gasoline, rather than allowing it to be uselessly burned in an internal combustion engine.

A TV crew from the *Mun Plaek Dee* (That's Delightfully Strange) show tracked down Sa-ngiam to ask if they could film a segment about his daily routine. Sa-ngiam said he was glad to oblige, asking them to go to a nearby vendor for a bottle of gasoline so he could demonstrate.

The owner told the reporter that he had stopped selling gasoline to Sa-ngiam after learning he had been drinking it. Undeterred, Sa-ngiam simply took his business elsewhere.

Bottle of gasoline in hand, the reporters returned to Sa-ngiam's home, where he poured a tumbler of the stuff and prepared to drink up for the camera.

Asked why he enjoyed gasoline so much, Sa-ngiam said that he had been drinking it for two years. His normal daily consumption is about half a liter.

He said he drank gasoline because he likes the strong taste. Sometimes he mixed it with alcohol to get an extra kick. Sa-ngiam said he had suffered no ill-effects from drinking gasoline.

With the TV crew looking on, he downed its contents. "Saep!" (delicious), he said.

Dr Somsak Amornwiwat of Samitiwech Hospital said that Sa-ngiam's habit put him at risk of a number of life-threatening conditions, including bone marrow cancer and leukemia.

"If he doesn't stop drinking right now he'll be dead in five years," he warned.

Sources: *Modernine TV, Daily News*



Wanvisa Santiwikranont collects her prize of a voucher for laser tooth-whitening treatment at Promjai Dental Clinic from *Gazette* IT Manager Seubsak 'Big' Sahaworapun for displaying the 'We Love Phuket' sticker on her gold-colored Toyota.

Pride in Phuket campaign



Suchep Akrasanee collects his prize of a two-night, three-day stay in a junior suite at the Laguna Holiday Club from Phatsara 'Yui' Raktammakit, the *Gazette's* Classified Advertising Manager.

VITAL STATISTICS: PRIVATE CAR REGISTRATIONS JUMP 57.14%		
Type of vehicle	Nov 1, 2004 to Nov 30, 2004	Nov 1, 2005 to Nov 30, 2005
Cars with capacity for no more than 7 people	292	390
Cars with capacity for more than 7 people	7	11
Pickup trucks	222	318
Meter taxis	-	-
Motorcycles	2,978	2,328

Source: *Phuket Provincial Transportation Office*

WARNING: SELLING ALCOHOL TO PERSONS UNDER 18 YEARS OLD IS ILLEGAL

*When the taste is perfect,
it can be the start of a friendship.*



Students shot in bus ambush

One student was killed and four others injured when an unknown number of assailants opened fire on a six-wheel truck used as a school bus in Kanchanaburi's Lao Khwan District, police said.

Krisada Phothong, 14, died in hospital from six gunshot wounds. He was one of some 40 students on the bus, which was heading to schools in neighboring Suphan Buri.

A school director said that a group of boys who usually hang off the back of the truck were hiding inside the truck on this occasion, which made him suspect they were anticipating the attack.

Police investigating the case said the shooting may have been in reprisal for an earlier fight between some students who took the bus and a rival group of teenagers.

Market blaze: A fire raged through an old market in Nongthong's Wiset Chai Chan District, destroying more than 150 traditional shophouses at the riverside community there.

Anghong Governor Wiboon Sanguanpong said, "The damage is beyond estimation, as this is an old community with great historical value."

No casualties were reported in the fire, which destroyed more than 150 wooden houses. Those left homeless sheltered at a local temple.

The blaze began in a shop at around 2 am and took more than six hours to extinguish because none of the dozens of fire engines that responded to the alarm was able to squeeze into the small lanes at the heart of the market.

Mr Dengue Fever: More than 40,000 people have contracted dengue fever and 76 have died from the disease so far this year, Public Health Minister Pinij Charusombat said.

The South had the highest rate of infections, with an aver-



Monks at Wat Tham Yod Thong in Ratchaburi's Pak Tho District wear helmets during prayers to protect themselves from flying stones that come from blasting at a nearby stone mill and are destroying the temple's roofs.

The temple also suffers from a severe dust problem, and all but three monks have left as a result, Abbot Phra Athikarn Virat said.

The day after this photograph was first published, the Governor of Ratchaburi ordered the temporary closure of the mill and a subsequent investigation.

age of 128 patients per 100,000 people. At least 10,789 southerners contracted the disease and 17 people in the region died from it. The province of Nakhon Sri Thammarat was worst hit, with a ratio of 292 victims per 100,000 people.

Health officials in the region have been ordered to conduct weekly operations to destroy mosquito larvae and assign a "Mr Dengue Fever" to educate villagers about the disease.

The ministry hopes to halve the number of dengue cases next year, even though 1.2 billion baht has been cut from the ministry's budget for 2006, he said.

Orange crush: The Land Trans-

port Department will offer a 50% discount on fares for people using its transport services between December 21 and 27.

Piyapan Champasut, the department's Director-General, said the department would offer tickets at half price because many low-paid migrant workers and their families will travel home between December 21 and 27.

Estimates by the department indicate that some 300,000 people would be on their way home on December 29 and 30, and that the number of travelers should reach one million a day in the first days of the New Year.

In co-operation with private bus operators, the department will also provide an additional 200

buses along with its regular fleet to accommodate the larger number of expected passengers.

Shopper's paradise: Youngsters and shoppers will soon be able to seek peace through the Buddha's teachings at Siam Discovery Shopping Mall in Bangkok, where a pilot project will take place, Culture Minister Uraivan Thienthong said.

Presiding over the "Moom Sangob Pob Phra Dhamma" ("A Peaceful Corner to Encoun-

ter the Lord Buddha's Teachings") project meeting, K. Uraivan emphasized that the idea was not to draw people away from temples – but to provide easy access to Lord Buddha's teachings within shopping malls.

"It's not about building a temple in a shopping mall," she said.

"This will just be a 200-square-meter space with a room in which to pray and practice meditation, a reading and listening room and a library with books of the Lord Buddha's teachings."

Coughing it up: Smokers will have to pay a further five to eight baht per pack of cigarettes, as the government has decided to impose a higher excise tax as part of its anti-smoking campaign.

The excise tax, raised from 75% to 79% with immediate effect, will raise up to three billion baht in additional annual tax revenue for the country, Director General of the Revenue Department Utid Tamvatin said.

The tax hike will raise locally-made cigarettes by five to six baht per pack, while imported cigarettes may rise by seven to eight baht.

Among imported cigarettes, Mild Sevens now quotes the highest retail price at 60 baht.

"The tax hike, including other health-promotion measures, might reduce sales of the Thailand Tobacco Monopoly by 10 to 12%," K.Utid said.

The increase will be lauded as another victory for anti-smokers following the Public Health Ministry's recent push to get cigarettes removed from sight at retail outlets.

Around the Nation news roundup is sourced from the pages of The Nation and Kom Chad Luek newspapers.



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**ANDAMAN
COASTING**
By Franky Gun

My topic is a difficult one, as it concerns religion. I want to make crystal clear that it is absolutely not my intention to start a witch hunt, hurt anyone's religious beliefs and feelings, or damage the reputation of any of the many tsunami relief organizations in Khao Lak.

I signed off Christianity when I was 19 and very much sympathize with Buddhism, which I see as a philosophy of life rather than a strict religion.

I was outraged when I heard rumors from local people that some tsunami relief organizations would help local Thais only if they converted to Christianity, and that some of the baptism ceremonies would require the convert to step on a Buddha image to prove his or her change of religion.

Having lived in Thailand for 14 years, I know how scrupulous Thais are about anything that involves Buddha statues and images, especially where and how high to place them.

I therefore found it hard to believe that a baptism ceremony in Thailand could involve such ugly practices without causing outrage within the Buddhist community.

It made me feel sick just thinking about it, so I determined to discover the truth behind the tales.

One Thai woman, who asked that her name be withheld and that I not reveal her type of business, told me that a Baptist



Monks on their yearly pilgrimage from south to north in honor of the King's birthday pass the Khao Lak viewpoint.

All it takes is one black sheep...

relief organization in Khao Lak helped her with money to replace her business, lost in the tsunami, after converting her to Christianity. Part of the "deal" was that she would attend church on Sundays.

In an effort to get her business back on its feet again and to repay loans from other sources, she missed church a couple of times.

"It was not a lack of interest or a lack of belief in Christ,

but simply a lack of time," she told me. "I needed to work Sundays to keep my family alive."

What happened next was like a scene from a horror film. According to the woman, members of the Baptist relief foundation came a number of times to her business premises and shouted at her, threatening to take the donated business away if she did not go to church on Sundays. These were no idle threats. When she missed one more time, they came back and stripped her of her business, including bits and pieces of equipment she had bought herself from money earned during previous weeks.

She attempted suicide and is now receiving psychiatric help.

Today, there are more than 36 tsunami relief organizations active in Khao Lak, many of them with Christian backgrounds. During my interviews with representatives of some of these organizations, the story I heard was completely different.

The overall message from all those I spoke with was that they would help unconditionally, regardless of race and religion. Each and every victim asking for help would receive aid in equal measure.

The gist was, "We can't force anyone to become a Christian, as his or her heart must be ready and open to receive Jesus. If we were to put pressure on people to convert them, they would never become true Christians, and most likely would sooner or later return to their former religion anyway."

"So it would do no good; only harm."

Some Christian organizations have built houses for Muslim people, who are still Muslims today. The same goes for local Buddhists.

At Pakping Church, located at Khao Lak's northern end, opposite the fresh market and bus station, I saw a dozen local children playing and having a good time at the church's daycare center. Not one of their parents had converted to Christianity.

Asked about the baptism ceremony, all the NGO representatives I spoke with said it would include only a ceremonial rebirth in the pool of a nearby waterfall, along with recitations from the Bible.

Questioned about the desecration of Buddha images, every representative denied that this would be included in a baptism ceremony.

One, however, did tell me, "Yes, this was the practice of one organization. I can't remember their name, but they are not in Khao Lak any more."

DREAM

It is plain to me that most of the tsunami relief foundations really do good and help people. Without their support Khao Lak would not be where it is today.

Yet I still had my doubts regarding the conversions. I had a dream recently that seems to have cleared the fog a bit, for me at least:

A Thai woman was sitting next to me on a wooden bench, near a stream in the forest.

She said to me, "When I needed help the most, when I was broken, the Jesus people came and made me feel I was being taken care of, and was loved. They gave me shelter, they rebuilt my house and they fed my family. Who would blame me for following their spiritual path today?"

She then disappeared. I awoke shortly afterward, and was able to remember the dream.

But I leave it to the reader to make up his or her own mind about the conversion controversy.

Whatever the truth, I would strongly advise against pointing fingers at people who came here to help, and who evidently did bring relief.

Black sheep can be found everywhere. Unfortunately, it takes only one to mess up the reputation of the entire flock.

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The HeliThai Eurocopter Squirrel taking off from Boat Lagoon.

Taking a ride on a Squirrel

By Anongnat Sartpisut

That Phuket's vistas are beautiful is beyond doubt, but wouldn't it be nice to see the island from a fresh perspective? A new company, HeliThai, is now offering sightseeing trips that give a bird's-eye view of Phuket, Phang Nga and Krabi – from a helicopter.

Andre Salti, a former Eurocopter Chief Inspector Pilot and one of HeliThai's three partners, told the *Gazette*, "The idea came to me years ago, when I was delivering helicopters to a government agency in Thailand. Flying over Phang Nga Bay and Phuket, I thought the views were among the best I'd ever seen and I wanted to share the spectacle with others."

"HeliThai aims to bring a new dimension to Phuket's tourist industry. Guests in the island's many four- and five-star hotels expect to experience something here that can also be found elsewhere in the world. Phuket warrants international-level services."

The helicopter, an air-conditioned Eurocopter Squirrel, has a maximum speed of 120 knots or 222kmh, a range of 700km and can carry five passengers in addition to the pilot.

The company employs three full-time pilots, who are qualified and experienced, trained by Eurocopter and certified by the

Thai Department of Aviation. Mr Salti said, "The pilots work on a rotation basis because there's a limit to how many hours they may fly in a day."

Mr Salti loves being up there in a helicopter: "Flying in a helicopter is the best feeling in the world. I suspect our customers will enjoy it as much as I do, too. When you see something from the water or from the ground and then you see it from the sky, it's completely different. From above, in a helicopter, flying slowly, you get a gorgeous 180-degree panorama."

PHOTOGRAPHY

The company was founded in April this year by three partners: Thidej Maithai, Managing Director of Thai Flying Service and Thai Flying Helicopter Service; Nigel Watson, a helicopter consultant; and Andre Salti. It offers aerial photography and filming, aerial reconnaissance for real estate, medical evacuation, and hotel-airport transfers in addition to sightseeing tours.

HeliThai's Marketing Manager, Frederique Salti, said, "We have had photographers fly with us. We were able to fly very low – at about 100 feet – so they could take very clear photos. A helicopter flight is very flexible compared with that of [fixed-wing aircraft]."

About the medical evacuation service, Ms Salti said, "For

insurance reasons, we must collect a doctor from the Bangkok Phuket Hospital before flying out to a location to rescue anyone.

"Our Phi Phi tour is especially interesting," she added, "because, as it departs from Phuket International Airport, it covers a little bit of Phuket and Phang Nga Bay as well as the Phi Phi Islands."

HeliThai currently runs three tour packages, each for a minimum of four people:

- Phuket (Airport, Bang Tao, Patong, Kata-Karon, Surin, Nai Harn, Chalong). Duration: 20 minutes. Price: US\$135 per person (about 5,570 baht).
- Phang Nga (Airport, "James Bond Island", Koh Yao Yai and Koh Yao Noi). Duration: 30 minutes. Price: US\$200 per person (about 8,249 baht).
- Phi Phi (Airport, Chalong Bay, Koh Kai, Phi Phi, Koh Yao Yai and Koh Yao Noi). Duration: 45 minutes. Price: US\$300 per person (about 12,374 baht).

Flights are available between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm, seven days a week. The helicopter may also be chartered for US\$1,600 an hour or US\$4,800 a day.

For more information, contact the company at The Plaza, Boat Lagoon, 23/114 Thepkrasattri Rd, Koh Kaew. Tel: 076-273-464 or 01-9262102. Email: info@helithai.com. Website: www.helithai.com



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Stunning beachwear and sun dresses were shown off recently at the launch of Laguna Phuket's "Phuket is Back" campaign. The fashion parade featured designs from two Thai fashion houses – Kloset (celebrated designers Mollika Ruangkrittiya and Boon-Arak Raksawong) and the Muse line from Good Mixer (Chaiyun Sawantrat). The models included such fashion and TV personalities as Yoswadee Hasadeevijit, Sara Lane Marakul, Rujira Chuaykua and Sangtong Ket-U-Tong. The clothes were designed specially for the show, but other designs by Kloset can be found on the second floor of the Central Department Store in Central Festival Phuket.

Photos courtesy of Laguna Phuket.



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BEHIND THE WHEEL
By Jeff Heselwood



Audacious Q7

The new Audi Q7 luxury 4x4 is an extremely smart piece of kit, although for how long it will remain badged as a Q7 is currently in dispute.

Apparently Nissan, which lays claim to the Q-prefix, notably in North America with its highly successful luxury Q45 sedan, has filed suit against the German manufacturer. Industry insiders anticipate an out-of-court settlement from Audi, which could run to many thousands of dollars.

Based, inevitably, on the same platform as the Volkswagen Touareg and Porsche Cayenne, the Q7 offers just a little more comfort and refinement than the VW, yet it is not as pricy as the Porsche.

Configured to accommodate either five or seven passengers, the Q7 is extremely versatile; in the five-seater mode, it can boast a load of a huge 775 liters – the best in its class.

Although in some markets a 4.2 V8 FSI is available, it is the 3.0 TDI that will find favor in Asia. This common rail diesel offers adequate power and impressive torque: 233bhp (174Kw) and 500Nm respectively. Audi claims a 0-100kmh sprint time of just 9.1 seconds – not bad for a luxury SUV – while the top speed

is a healthy 216kmh. A diesel particulate filter is standard and the Q7 comfortably meets the stringent Euro 4 emission regulations.

Much of the suspension is aluminum for improved wheel control, particularly off-road, while adaptive air suspension is an option. The combination of air suspension and electronic damper control gives the best of both worlds, on- or off-road. Using this combination, the ride height can be varied from 165mm to a massive 240mm, while a knob on the dash selects the desired mode, be it sports or comfort.

As you would expect in a 4x4 of this quality, the very latest electronic gizmos are fitted, including ABS with brake-force distribution and brake assist, traction control, an electronic stabilization program (ESP) and an electronic differential lock. The ESP incorporates a system whereby if the driver brakes hard it suddenly it switches on the hazard flashers to warn following traffic.

There is also a hill-descent control which prevents the vehicle running away on steep declines and a roll-over sensor that applies the brakes if a critical point is reached during tight maneuvers.

Vehicles such as the Audi are often used to tow trailers, and the ESP incorporates a trailer stabilizer to prevent the trailer or box swaying at speed. Anyone who has experienced the high-speed

trailer-taking-over sensation will know just how frightening this can be, and any system that takes care of the problem is to be thoroughly welcomed.

Further electronic intervention comes in the form of an adaptive cruise control with a radar-assisted distance reader. This can now control distance and speed anywhere between zero and 200kmh and will brake the vehicle to a stop if necessary. The sensor, located behind the front license plate, takes continuous measurements determining whether the distance and speed in relation to the car ahead have changed. It will then adjust the speed accordingly, either accelerating or braking as is deemed necessary.

The collision warning system built into the cruise control has a range of up to 180 meters and will warn the driver of an

impending shunt, first by sounding a warning signal, together with a visual display on the dashboard, and secondly – if the driver has not reacted – by triggering a noticeable warning jolt and applying the brakes. The jolt is to alert the driver to an imminent problem.

Safety, as you would expect, is of paramount importance within a vehicle like the Q7; Audi has provided two-stage front airbags, front side bags and a full-length air curtain that covers the entire side window area including the third row of seats. Belt tensioners and force limiters are fitted to the front seatbelts.

Although the Audi Q7 will not come cheap, it appears to offer everything you would require in a luxury off-roader and more. Launched earlier this year at the Frankfurt show, deliveries should begin in early 2006.

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This week



Above, Privy Councilor and Statesman HE Gen Prem Tinsulanonda, chaired a recent meeting of the Bangkok Bank Advisory Board in Phuket. He is pictured being greeted on arrival at Trisara by the resort's General Manager, Anthony Lark.

Left: Dr Kantima Kunjara (3rd from right) Director of Corporate Communications and representative of UBC dealers in Southern Thailand, recently visited the media in Phuket and also handed out soccer balls to students of Baan Sai Nam Yen School, at the Phuket Graceland Resort & Spa.



FOR FATHER: Kanlayapa Panich, Upper Southern Thailand Sales Manager of Thai Airways, presents Dr Prasit Koeysiripong with a gift for being awarded the title of Phuket's Good Dad, on November 24, at the launch of the airline's new campaign, 'Spoil Your Dad in December'.



DEFINITELY BAZAAR: Officiating at the grand opening of the Andaman Bazaar, the high-end lifestyle and entertainment center at Club Andaman Beach Resort on December 1, were (from left) the Chairman of August Asia Consulting Pte of Singapore, Lt Gen (Rtd) Ng Jui Ping; Sainamyen Co Managing Director Sommai Phasee; and Toshio Mizuki.



SWEDISH SYMPATHY: Eva-marie Pettersson (left) and her team from the Kungshogsskolan in Ljungby visited Baan Kamala School on December 1. The Swedish school, which has already given musical equipment, this time presented gifts from students to their counterparts in Kamala, as part of a European Union project, School Help School. Also pictured is the Baan Kamala School Director, Preecha Puenrak (2nd from left).



ACCESSIBLE: Pictured at the grand opening of the Access Pool Resort & Spa on December 1 are, from left, Mirage Creation Account Executive Wariya Jinnatanapong; Kongsak Chunharatchapan, General Manager (Marketing) of The Andaman Group; Access Pool Resort & Spa General Manager Phonasi Charoensri; and Spa Manager Kanya Norkan.

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Around northern Laos on a bike

In need of adventure and fresh air? What better than a mountain-bike trip to northern Laos? Joining an organized tour with a back-up vehicle and plush accommodation was one option, however the timing did not suit. Instead, with safety issues in mind, I arranged for a local guide to take me on a 10+-day mountain circuit no tourist had cycled, carrying my own gear and sleeping in guesthouses.

Day 1: Flew direct from Bangkok to Luang Prabang. Assembled my bike and met my two humorous 24-year-old Lao cycling companions, T and Kamlet, and two trekking guides, Khamu and Hmong. I was "Papa" from Day 1 – fair enough since I'm 55, but more on this later. The language of Laos is very similar to Thai and the Lao people all watch Thai TV.

Day 2: Endured an eight-hour bus ride to Phonsavan, crossing three mountain ranges in cloud. At 1,500m – cold! I made my first mistake of riding the 5km from bus station to guesthouse on the wrong side of the road, forgetting we were in a former French colony.

Day 3: Covered 85km. Undulating partly off-road, ride to the Plain of Jars, visiting the three fascinating 2,000-year-old stone jar sites. Evidence of US bombing everywhere. This plain is vast – filled with cattle and horses, and reminding me of my younger days

TALES OF A TRAVELER

By Harry Usher

on a farm in the Scottish Borders.

Day 4: Rode 65km. A gentle, road trip to Muang Kham – a Hmong village – and beyond, to visit hot springs and one of the many foreign aid-funded irrigation projects servicing glutinous rice production. Sticky rice is the staple food in Laos.

Day 5: 87km. Up and up non-stop for more than 35km, followed by ups and downs and then a glorious descent of 20km to a guesthouse in Nam Nuan with no hot water and lousy food. T fell off his bike at about 40kmh during the descent and miraculously escaped with only a grazed thigh and a broken pedal. That night our knees were stiff and my "counterpain" was put to good use by all. Beer Lao had a better effect, though.

Day 6: Did 66km. Up and down on a picturesque rough track lined with wild flowers, to Vieng Thong. Following the source of the Kham River, we passed through many Blue Hmong and Khamu villages, always accompanied by idyllic background sounds of cow and goat bells – very like the Swiss Alps. Out of the blue, in contrast, a huge, new



On the road, the Plain of Jars, and a Hmong weaver.



articulated truck passed us on its way to Vietnam to bring back modern goods.

Day 7: 25km. A rest day, spent visiting hot springs and villages and drinking Beer Lao.

Day 8: Another 74 km completed. An easier day through a National Park, mainly down a steep-sided valley to a little guesthouse at Meuang Sup Huang where we bathed in the river.

Day 9: 51km. Passed through about 20 more villages to a guesthouse in Vieng Kham overlooking the River Ou. By this time

I was getting a little bored of eating rancid vegetable soup with sticky rice three times a day, so I ate Maggi noodles instead. By this time my faeces were turning green!

Day 10: 48km done. Another easier day in hot sunshine and beautiful mountain scenery, when suddenly, on rounding a corner, instead of another Hmong village we found ourselves in the small town of Nong Kiaw, surrounded by backpackers. Stayed in a comfortable guesthouse and visited the huge limestone cave nearby which had sheltered locals from US bombing.

Day 11: 148km. A long and mildly undulating trip back to a comfortable colonial villa-turned-guesthouse in Luang Prabang, with a hot shower. By this time

all the "counterpain" was finished and "Papa" was in front of the pack waiting for T and Kamlet!

Day 12: Cycled round the fascinating UNESCO World Heritage Site of Luang Prabang with something to see at every turn. UNESCO is funding the restoration of French colonial buildings here, which mix elegantly with the King's Palace, and the many colorful temples and gardens.

Our overall speed on this cycling trip varied from 6kmh uphill to 55kmh downhill. We travelled from 9kmh per day on hilly areas up to 16kmh on the last long day, allowing for lunch and photo-taking stops.

More than an adventure in clean mountain air, I experienced the beauty of Laos and its equally impressive people first-hand.



The King's Palace at the UNESCO World Heritage site of Luang Prabang.

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Getting to the bottom of wine's sex appeal

A restaurant manager recently told me he wanted to change from one of his Chardonnays in preference for another. In his words, the wine he plans to discontinue is "too angular and non-integrated"; he said he prefers the other wine because "it is much more refined and generous".

After hearing his reasons for the change, I found myself reflecting on how wine lovers tend to attribute human form or personality to wine in describing them.

With the restaurant manager's words fresh in my mind, I pored over some reviews in a popular wine magazine.

The magazine's critics reviewed and described wines using words such as vibrant, elegant, fat, focused, riveting, delicate, classy, rich, well-defined,

graceful, understated, austere and lean.

Some of the writers' descriptors were overtly sexual: racy, tight, yielding, penetrating, and "keeps you coming back for more". Some descriptors seemed poetic: "an iron fist in a velvet glove".

Others, however, seemed silly: "on the plump side, yet filigreed, but a breath of freshness sweeps in on the finish". One writer seemed to have run out of ideas and simply wrote "tons of flavor".

I suppose it is wine's power to evoke emotion that prompts wine lovers to speak about wines as if they were people rather than beverages.

The perplexing thing about these anthropomorphized wine descriptors is, even though they tell you nothing about what wine actually tastes like, they convey

WINE



By Steven Roberto

a complete and immediate impression.

In contrast, winemakers and food scientists are taught from day one to avoid anthropomorphizing and instead speak of wine solely in quantitative terms.

A winemaker would never say a wine tastes "vibrant" or

"racy" but rather would say "has a high degree of citrus flavor, especially lemon".

The reason professionals don't anthropomorphize is they need quantifiable and reproducible descriptors.

You can train someone to accurately recognize and quantify the taste sensation of, say, raspberry, in a wine, but you cannot teach them to do the same for elegance.

As a result, the wine descriptors of professionals can be boring and don't translate well to the consumer.

Looking at my own notes from a recent wine dinner, I described a wine as: "Brilliant ruby color, medium body and alcohol, high acidity, a strong primary taste and aroma of blackberry, with secondary flavors of black cherry and crushed dried violet. Short finish and soft tannin." My notes

exactly describe the wine, but might put someone to sleep when compared with the imaginative and inspired descriptors found in magazines.

Wine creates feelings in the heart, as well as tastes on the tongue, so it is perhaps no wonder people want to give a human essence to wine by describing it in human terms.

To all wine lovers I say this, go ahead and tell it like it is - if a wine seems racy and naughty, it's more fun if you say so, and everyone will understand.

Steven Roberto is a wine-maker and restaurant consultant from California. He is the Managing Director of en-Vision Phuket, a Phuket-based wine importer and consultant. Email: stevenroberto@lycos.com

Phuket Events Diary

December 15-26: Exhibition of original contemporary oil paintings. World of Paintings Gallery and Watermark Bar and Restaurant present an exhibition of contemporary abstract oil paintings by three artists. The venue is the Watermark Bar and Restaurant at the Boat Lagoon.

The painters are: Simon Cohen, whose works are a "...complex style of intoxicating spiritual abstraction"; Suthirak, who uses bold primary colors, heavily applied by trowel and brush, as well as mixed-media experimentation; and Makphat, whose works are described by one critic as "...richly textured and highly effective".

Open from 10 am until 10 pm.

For further information contact Jay at Tel: 04-0567451 or Email: worldofpaintings@hotmail.com

December 16-17: Phuket International Blues Festival. Hosted by the Hilton Phuket Arcadia Resort and Spa, the headliners are the Rich Harper Blues Band (US), and Victor and Kyla Brox (UK). They will be supported by five Thailand-based bands, including Soi Dogs, Cannonball and The Blues Machine. Tickets are 1,000 baht for one day; 1,600 baht for both days; and 3,000 baht for a two-day VIP pass.

The festival is presented by the *Phuket Gazette* and Hotel Travel.com

Go to the website www.phuketbluesfestival.com for further details.

December 19-20: Phuket Invitational Superyacht Rendezvous. The Phuket Invitational is an exclusive superyacht rendezvous held every Decem-

ber. Regular features of the rendezvous are a fun sailing event, afternoon cocktail parties on board the participating vessels, and a gala dinner party, complete with superb buffet and live entertainment.

For more information contact Tim Rice or Duncan McGregor at Tel: 076-340406 or 076-340932, or visit the website www.phuket-invitational.com

December 20-January 10, 2006: 1,000 Faces of Phuket Photo Exhibition. An exhibition of images taken by 12 photographers from the Phuket Photo Club, held at the Holiday Inn Phuket.

The exhibition, described by the organizers as "...the multiple visions of reality of those who see the island through a lens", will also offer selected works for sale, with proceeds going towards Ban

Nana, a home for street-children in Mae Sai, Chiang Rai.

For more information, contact Ten Achiravit at Tel: 01-9862547 or Email: churmung@yahoo.com, K. Danai at Tel: 01-8953709 or K. Asnee at the Holiday Inn at Tel: 09-4504512.

December 26: Tsunami Memorial events. Many ceremonies will be held in Phuket, Phang Nga and Krabi Provinces, to mark one year since the disaster. Details will be published next week.

December 30-January 1: Greenspirit New Year Festival 2005. See 2006 in with a three-day psytrance festival at Na Thai in Krabi.

Enjoy an international and national line-up, a free camping area, foodstalls and bars.

For more information, con-

tact Tel: 01-8940208, Email info@greenspiritkrabi.com, or visit www.greenspiritkrabi.com

January 27-31: QBE Phang Nga Bay Regatta. The ninth year of this fun regatta around Phang Nga Bay to Phi Phi and back to Phuket. As always, it will take place over the Chinese New Year with the registration and the opening party on Friday, January 27, followed by racing around Phang Nga Bay over the next four days, ending back in Phuket on the following Tuesday. The racing will take the fleet to Koh Yao, Krabi and back to Phi Phi before the final dash to Phuket. For further information contact Tom Howard at Tel: 01-7971120 or by email to: tom@sea-phuket.com. Race and party notices will be posted on the organization's website, www.bayregatta.com

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On the menu



WITH
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Sam's Steaks & Grill

And lo, it came to pass that in the run-up to the "festive season", Dining Out visited Phuket's very own Bethlehem – or should that be Bedlam? – Patong.

The parallels are there, if one looks closely enough: hordes of people making a migration – although for their hols rather than a census; some accommodation is little better than a stable; lowing cattle run amok – and there are more than a few asses.

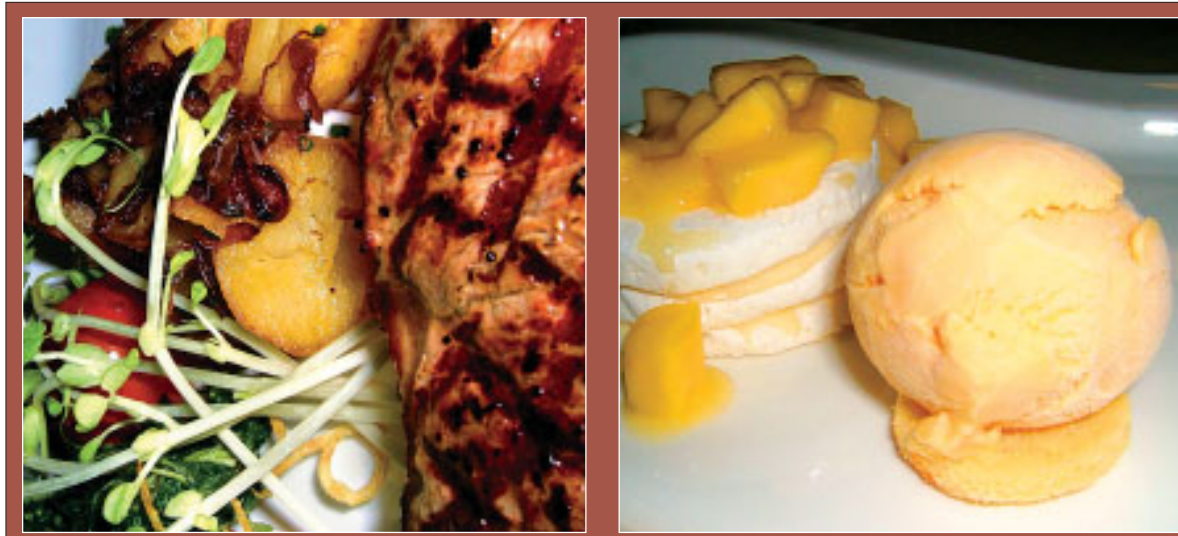
The chances of finding a virgin, or indeed three wise men, are somewhat reduced from all those years ago.

I also wonder what the gifts of the 21st century Magi would be in Patong. A bargirl, Viagra and a bottle of Happy Endings massage oil?

Patong has more than just the one star, but one of the brightest in its dining and accommodation firmament is Holiday Inn Resort Phuket.

The Holiday Inn, which reopened its refurbished main wing on November 1, staggered the opening of its restaurants between then and now.

One of the more recent to reopen is Sam's Steaks & Grill, and one would probably not recognize it from last year because



A rare and Adventageous treat

the redevelopment of the hotel – particularly the ground floor – has been extensive.

Accompanied by not one but two dining companions, one of them F&B Director Sakda Vareeporn, we dine at Sam's, which is something of a landmark on Phuket.

Polite and courteous – but never, thankfully, obsequious – the staff pull open the vast glass and brass door and guide us towards comfy seats. My companions get the sofa, I an easy chair.

We have already had a drink beforehand; The Bar is spacious, hip in a traditional way, and graced with black-and-white prints of Phuket old and new on the walls and ceiling. A Thai Elvis does his thang on Fridays.

K. Sakda selects a couple of glasses of Anakena Sauvignon Blanc, which has hints of passion fruit and herbs, to accompany our entrées. An excellent array of homemade breads and herb butter whets the appetite.

We plump for a platter of Sam's choices (420 baht), which includes confit of duck, crabmeat wonton, homemade chicken liver pâté and New

Zealand salmon, which is smoked in the hotel. I have yet to hear of anyone else on Phuket doing *that*. Splendid fish, with barely a trace of fat between the flakes – the sign of a good salmon.

In fact, the starters are all delightful. The confit, such sweet meat, yields to the gentlest of pressure from the cutlery, which itself will warrant a Mention in Dispatches later.

As we pause between courses – soup next – the restaurant begins to fill. It has 36 covers, including 10 in a private dining room for groups, separated from the main floor. Tonight that means a man of some advanced years and two ladies, no doubt his daughters, one of whom is feeding a baby. Did I mention the lovely pair of chandeliers?

Sam's benefits from a superb selection of jazz standards and new classics played at discreet but still-audible levels; such music matches perfectly the ambience of the restaurant.

The soups – lobster bisque and a broth of white leeks (185

baht) are superb. Some high degree of care has obviously gone into these, and all credit to the chefs – Thais to a man – for their skills.

Back to the cutlery. K. Sakda obviously knows a thing or two about the paraphernalia of dining, for the cutlery, and the crockery for that matter, are practical works of art.

The table knife has the width, not the depth, of the handle as its widest axis. Ergo, the widest part rests flat against the palm of the hand, resulting in less wobble and generally a more comfortable use of the eating iron.

The steak knives, made by Twin Fish, are solid with a full-length tang and a rounded, ergonomic handle and a clip-point blade. Sharp? Yes, though as we soon discover, the steaks require

very little effort to cut them.

K. Sakda chooses a sirloin, my companion opts for pan-roasted strips of beef with tarragon, garlic and tomatoes, and I choose a rare 300-gram porterhouse. Our choices come in at, respectively, 600 baht, 650 baht and 700 baht, with a choice of vegetables. Skillet-fried fingerlings of potatoes and crispy onions, and garlic spinach for me.

My steak is tender enough for a sharp tongue to cut through, and although K. Sakda exhorts me to try the Béarnaise, mushroom and pepper sauces, which I do and declare mightily good, my properly aged Australian steak is splendid as it is.

The bottle of Banrock Station Shiraz – we taste first blackberries, then smoky wood – goes with the meat exceptionally well.

For dessert, pavlova with mango in a lime dressing and locally made vanilla ice-cream, is my choice. The suggestion is made to pour a little of the chilled 2001 Anakena late harvest Muscat over the ice-cream. It accentuates the taste of the dessert and reveals tiny slabs of white chocolate nestling within the meringue.

And then it's back out into the night, vowing to return to Sam's for another rendezvous. A second coming is starred.

Sam's Steaks & Grill, Holiday Inn Resort Phuket, Patong Beach. Open 6 pm to midnight, last orders 10:45 pm. Booking is recommended. Tel: 076-340608. Email: fb_hirp@phuket.ksc.co.th

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The service is quack and the eating is easy: a lot of duck for a little bill

It's Soho delectable

By Shiona Mackenzie

Row upon row of shop-houses on the bypass road cannot conceal the hungry hordes flocking to a certain corner restaurant – Soho, where duck, barbecued or roasted, rules the roost.

Soho opened 18 months ago, and word-of-mouth advertising draws people from Patong and Rawai to dine there on a regular basis. After all, where else on the island can you find tasty and tender barbecued duck on a bed of rice for as little as 30 baht?

For big spenders ready to shell out 50 baht, in addition to an even more satisfying portion of duck and rice, you get some soup and cucumber to make a healthy lunch set.

And you can order a whole barbecued duck for 350 baht to 470 baht, depending on size. A

take-out service is also available.

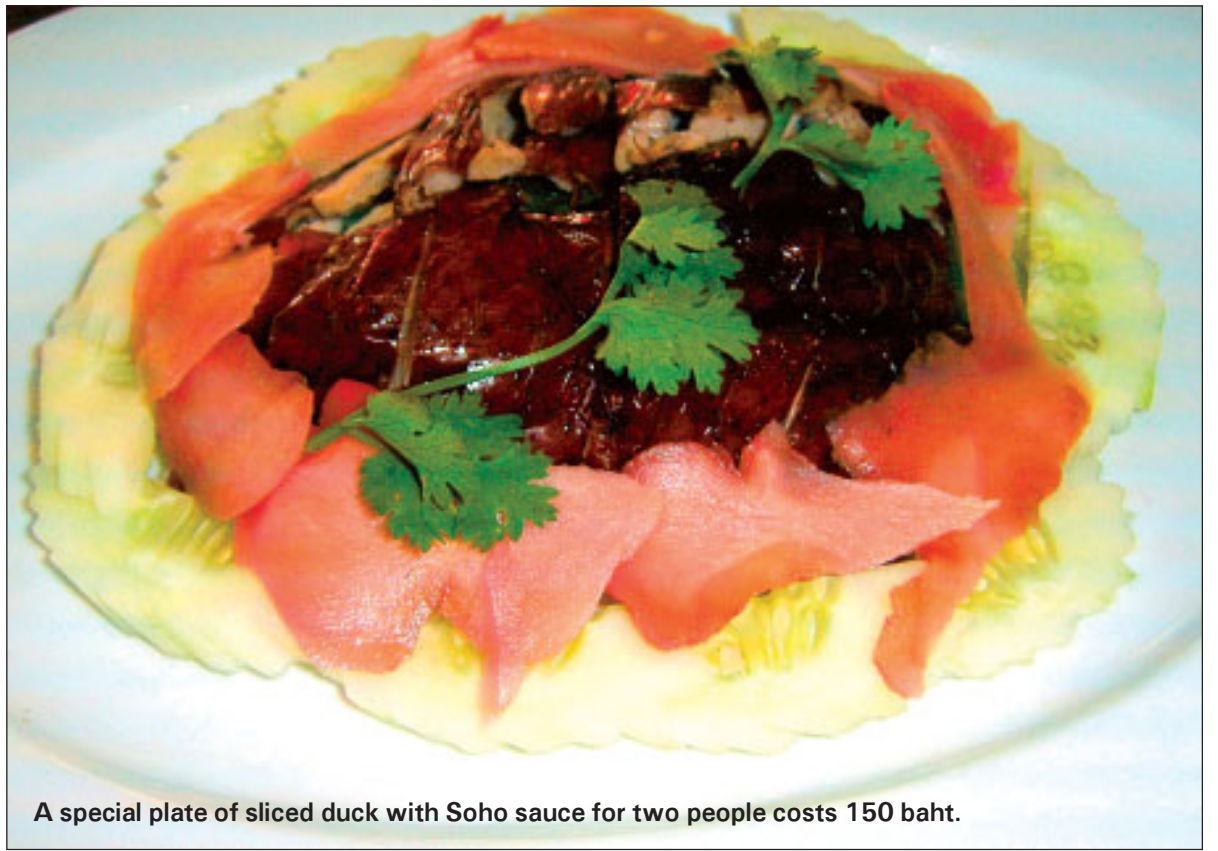
K. Num, 47, Soho's owner, and his team of nine full-time staff – including two chefs specially trained over a period of three months – serve an average of 100 people a day at the restaurant.

They not only prepare 25 ducks a day for Soho, but also supply another nine to a restaurant near Chalong Circle.

It takes a full 12 hours to barbecue a day's supply of ducks to K. Num's standard. "The secret of my success is quality," he says. "Maintaining a high quality of service and taste at a reasonable price is my mission."

K. Num's quest for the perfect duck dish began a decade ago, when he traveled to London to study art but ended up working in the restaurant industry.

"I worked for hotels and restaurants, in kitchens that ranged from Greek to Chinese.



A special plate of sliced duck with Soho sauce for two people costs 150 baht.



K. Num and his Soho restaurant.

That's when I got hooked on barbecued duck."

But after running a Thai restaurant in London for more than a year he returned to the Kingdom and found himself shrimp farming in Phang Nga province for the next seven long years.

"Every time I went to Bangkok, I scoured the restaurants for the taste of barbecued duck I missed from my time in England. Meanwhile, I was fortunate enough to make friends with a retired Thai chef who gave me some pointers for cooking duck.

"The shrimp farming business wasn't too good and I needed to rethink what I was doing with my life.

"With my English-speaking skills, I felt I'd do better in a place popular with tourists, so I came to Phuket three years ago and I am happy here, although my wife, Sujitra, who is a nurse, and my six-year-old daughter Jinchutaa continue to live in Phang Nga for the time being," says K. Num.

"From the various restaurants where I had sampled duck in London and Bangkok, I have

managed to put together the best ideas and created my original recipe for Soho.

"Maybe some day my dream of supplying deluxe duck dishes to hotels and catering for weddings and parties will come true.

"For now, I just think about how to expand our kitchen, because barbecuing and roasting so much duck requires a lot of ventilation."

K. Num's Soho, named after the popular West End area of London, is a local favorite where the decor may be spare, but the fine fare is worth every baht.

Also on offer: barbecued duck and crispy pork on rice for 40 baht; stewed chicken wings for 40 baht; and steamed duck with noodles in soup, large size, for 50 baht.

Soho, 102/3-4, Chalermprakiat Ror IX Rd (bypass road), Phuket City. Open daily from 7:30 am to 3:30 pm. Tel: 076-261-131 or 04-1926342.

Rak Mak! Awards

This week's lucky numbers:

<p>กจ 237 ภูเก็ต</p> <p>Brown Toyota</p>	<p>กม 1012 เชียงใหม่</p> <p>Blue Honda City</p>	<p>นช 7122 กรุงเทพฯ</p> <p>Silver Audi A80</p>
<p>กจ 8505 ภูเก็ต</p> <p>Silver Mercedes</p>	<p>กก 7326 ภูเก็ต</p> <p>Silver BMW</p>	<p>30 - 1006 ภูเก็ต</p> <p>White Isuzu Buddy Van</p>

The first three of these vehicles' owners to contact us can choose from the following three prizes: a dinner for two (Thai BBQ Buffet and Cabaret Show) on a Saturday night only, at Baan Yin Dee Boutique Resort Phuket; or a laser tooth-whitening treatment at Promjai Dental Clinic at either their Patong Beach or bypass road clinic; or a facial treatment with Majestic Cosmetics at the Jungceylon Clinic.



Please contact the Gazette quickly to ensure you get the prize you want. First come, first served!

Email: LovePhuket@PhuketGazette.Net, or call K. Pam at Tel: 076-236-555.

Offers expire December 27, 2005.

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If we spot it, you could win a Fusion Thai Set Dinner for two at Baan Yin Dee Boutique Resort Phuket; or one round of golf (18 holes) at Laguna Phuket Golf Club; or a one-hour refreshing spa for one at the Aspara Spa, at the Holiday Inn Resort Phuket.



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Call Gary at Tel: 04-0568420 or email: sales@garysholmes-associates.com www.garysholmes-associates.com

PUZZLES

The Cryptic Crossword

Hidden Words

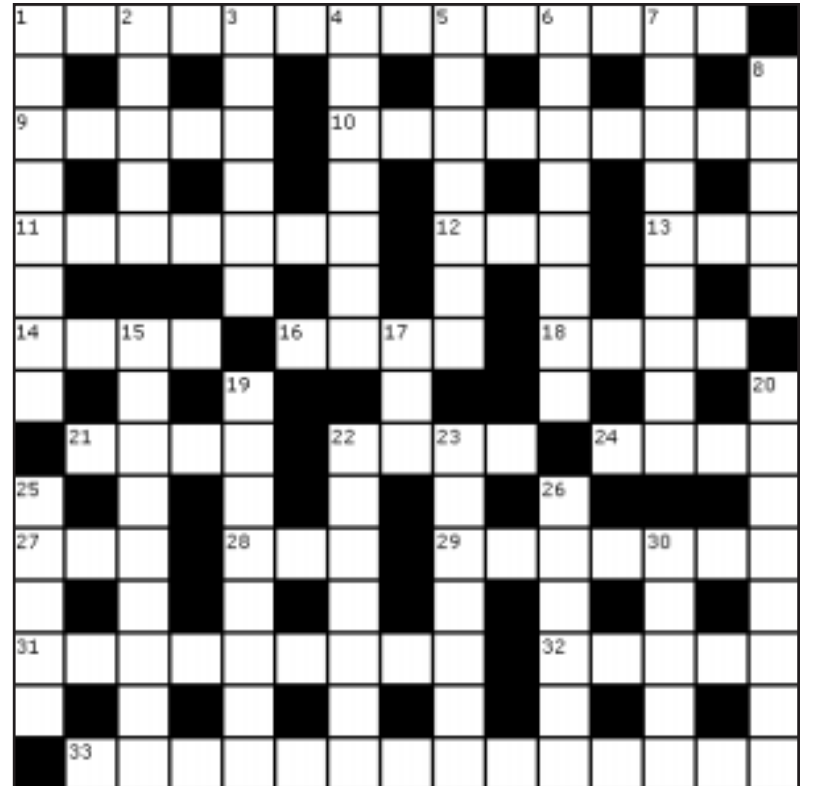
Hidden in the grid below are at least 20 terms related to soccer. The names may read vertically, horizontally or diagonally. They may also read right-to-left or down-to-up. Score: 10 or more, good; 15 or more, very good; 20 or more, excellent.

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

Solution on page 22

ACROSS

- Bad feeling when removed from one's post? (14)
- Black note in sale. (5)
- Not part of it, six muddled cretin. (9)
- Said Edward, to the nth degree.
- Tax large vessel. (3)
- Talk about gas mixture. (3)
- Ornamental ribbon is part of pasha's haute couture. (4)
- Letter's for Napoleon's insects?
- Fashionable fury. (4)
- University initially under college's legal aegis. (4)
- Transport - not in cabins. (4)
- Egyptian king's card game. (4)
- Aye! Partner has no church. (27)
- Computer component cracked cup. (3)
- Fliers or ten the French follow. (7)
- CIA trap is confusingly sycophantic. (9)
- Not available directory - that's the pits. (5)
- Wanton frame Sid twisted in. (14)



Compiled by Tortuus. © 2005

DOWN

- Brooklynite said this fellow's in camouflage. (8)
- Clog spy's activity by cutting age. (5)
- Lure Pa, deranged, into chest lining. (6)
- Late when finished being owed. (7)
- Local people perplexed naïve saint. (7)
- Dampness may be a mite sour. (8)
- No saint (airline takes note) is past yearning. (9)
- Damages rocky slopes. (5)
- Sweet discovery for Remsen and Fahlberg. (9)
- Time for the baseball stat. (3)
- Oddly, scan iris for spring flowers. (8)
- Correct after convicts interpret. (8)
- Corrosive, may result in twitch, we hear. (7)
- Brother and I hold northern church windpipes. (7)
- Red flower in Italian river very quite? Yes. (5)
- Wrongly, I aim on mistress. (3,3)
- Girl in Croesus' kingdom. (5)

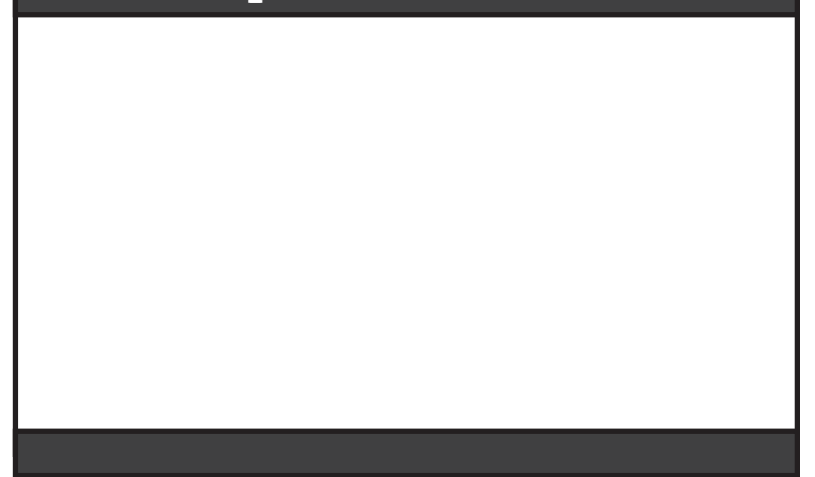
Solution on page 22

EZ TRIVIA

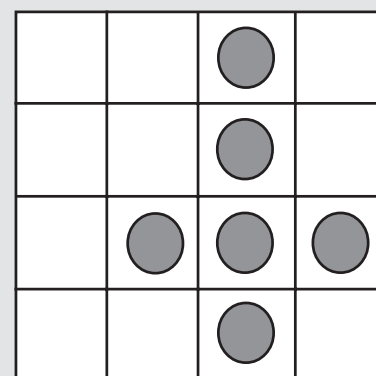
- What is the official national anthem of the US?
- Which weather phenomenon has a name that is Spanish for "little boy"?
- Which vowel is not in the top line of letters of a standard keyboard?
- Globe and Jerusalem are types of what?
- In Scrabble, which two letters have a value of 2?
- In the game of checkers (or draughts), how many pieces does a player start with?
- Which make of car has a double chevron as its logo?
- Which N. African seaport's name is Spanish for "White House"?
- How many people take part in a quadrille?
- In which city are the headquarters of the International Monetary Fund?

Answers on page 22

Scribble Space



Brain Buster!!



The coins in this grid form two lines, one of four coins and the other of three coins.

Can you move just one coin to make three lines, each of three coins?

Solution on page 22

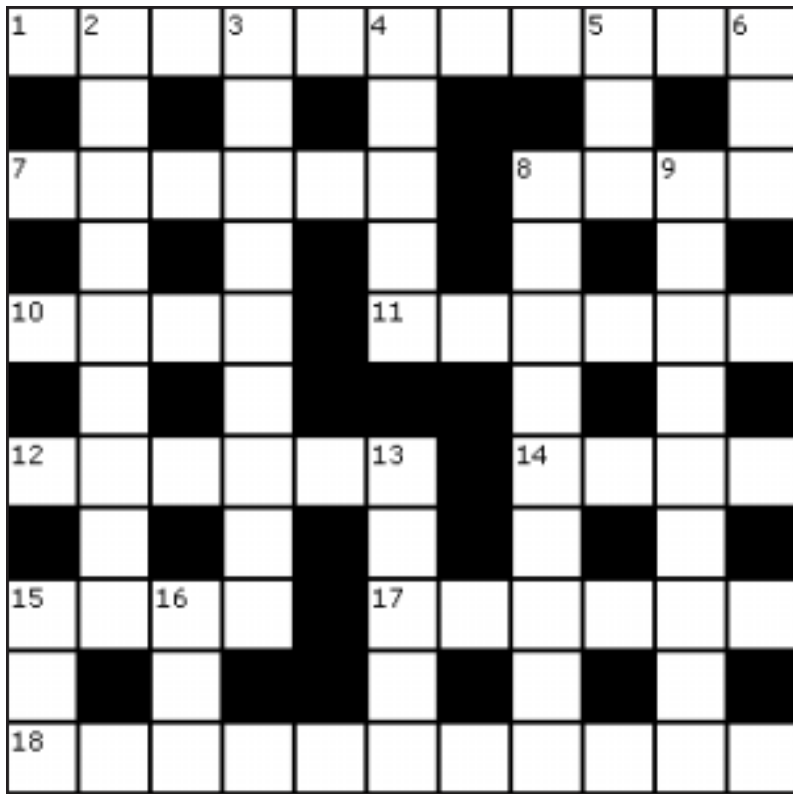
su | do | ku

© Puzzles by Pappocom

Solution, tips and computer program at www.sudoku.com

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

Sudoku is very simple: each row, each column and each "box" of nine squares within the puzzle must contain all the numbers from 1 to 9 with, naturally, no repetitions. Beware: there is only one solution to this puzzle, which is on page 20.

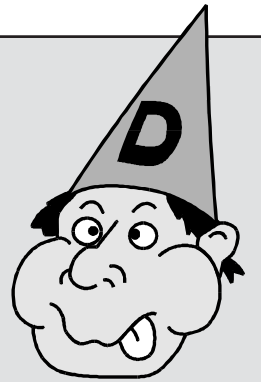


Quick Crossword

- | ACROSS | DOWN |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Ignoring orders. | 2. Easily annoyed. |
| 7. Builds. | 3. Collection of musicians. |
| 8. Dull pain. | 4. Follow on. |
| 10. Eye affliction. | 5. Computer key. |
| 11. Without difficulty. | 6. Digit. |
| 12. Dies down. | 8. Helper. |
| 14. Not fast. | 9. October 31. |
| 15. Wife of Zeus. | 13. A kind of boom. |
| 17. Tidier. | 15. Short for Henry. |
| 18. Oiling. | 16. Steal from. |

Solution below, right

Get your brain in gear with The Monster Quiz



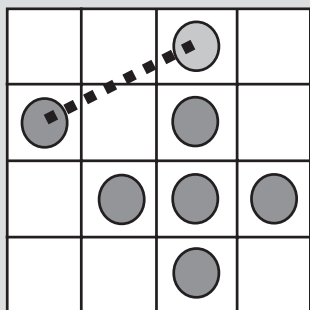
Kids! Ask Mum and Dad to help you find the answers to these questions. They're not easy but, if you do some research, you should be able to find the answers to all of them.

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Who was the first White Rajah of Sarawak? | 8. Professor David Crystal is famous in which field? | 15. Who began his entertainment career as Silent Sam, the Dancing Midget? |
| 2. Which famous novel was first published on December 17, 1843? | 9. Which city can be found at 31°57' S 141°27' E? | 16. What was the name of Zaire in its colonial days? |
| 3. In which year did the American Psychiatric Association remove homosexuality from its list of mental illnesses? | 10. Which band recently released its third album, <i>Jackinabox</i> ? | 17. What track does the <i>Chattanooga Choo Choo</i> leave on? |
| 4. Who was the Berlin Airlift's "Candy Bomber"? | 11. What was Cinderella's real name? | 18. What do chefs call "the master spice"? |
| 5. Where will the XX Winter Olympics be held, and when? | 12. What is the name for the temperature at which condensation begins to form? | 19. What Germanic race gave its name to acts of wanton destruction? |
| 6. Which country has won more Winter Olympics medals than any other? | 13. What would one measure with an anemometer? | 20. What do zoophyte animals disguise themselves as? |
| 7. <i>Le déjeuner sur l'herbe</i> is a work by which painter? | 14. What is spelled out in hyacinths on the cover of the Beatles' <i>Sergeant Pepper</i> album? | |

Answers below, left.

Puzzle Solutions

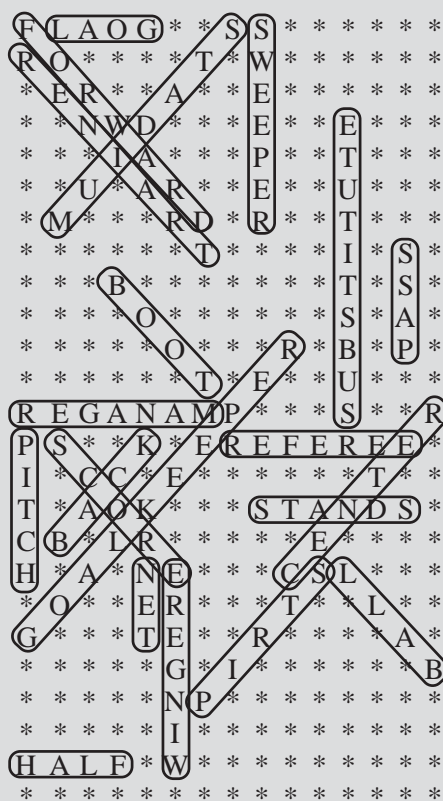
Brain Buster Solution



Monster Quiz Answers: 1. Sir James Brooke, 1803-1868; 2. A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens; 3. 1973; 4. Airplane pilot Gail Halvorsen; 5. Turin, February 10-26, 2006; 6. Norway; 7. Edouard Manet; 8. Linguistics; 9. Broken Hill, New South Wales; 10. Turin Brakes; 11. Ella; 12. The dew point; 13. Wind speed; 14. "The Beatles"; 15. Sammy Davis Jr; 16. The Belgian Congo; 17. Track 29; 18. Pepper; 19. The Vandals; 20. Plants.

EZ Trivia Answers: 1. *The Star-Spangled Banner*; 2. El Nino; 3. A; 4. Artichoke; 5. D and G; 6. Twelve; 7. Citröen; 8. Casablanca; 9. Eight; 10. Washington DC.

Hidden Words SOLUTION



Solution to this week's Cryptic Crossword



Solution to this week's Quick Crossword



Solution to this week's Sudoku puzzle



Do you qualify?

What a dive: Some people are decidedly ambivalent about even flying to the Pearl of the Andaman. "I was out of options and would have to suck it up and fly to Phuket. I snuck up to the Thai Airways counter and quietly purchased my ticket, all the time clinging onto my dive bag as if to say: 'see, I'm going to Phuket to dive. I love to dive. I can't get enough of it. I like to go to bed early every night without prostitutes so I can get up early and go diving. I'm not a pervert, damn it! I'm not!' ... The flight was uneventful. When I landed in Phuket I grabbed a taxi at the airport... I made it to my hotel, checked in and pretty much stayed there watching Discovery 'Travel & Adventure' the entire night. Of course, that was after I had dinner at a Go-Go bar, but who's keeping track of details?" (1)

Waiter, there's a rubber in my coffee: "You've got to love a country that sells a variety of deodorants both foreign and domestic, not to mention virtually all Listerine products; even the fresh burst, pocket pack, oral care strips. Personal hygiene is taken seriously here by necessity. There's a popular Bangkok restaurant called Cabbages and Condoms, owned by the former Minister of Health who was responsible for raising Aids awareness. Instead of a mint at the end of your meal you get a prophylactic with your coffee." (2)

Frightening farangs: "If your idea of a trip to Thailand is donning a pair of baggy fisherman pants, shaving your head, partaking of mind-altering substances during a 'Full-Moon' party on Koh Pha-Ngan and treating your copy of Lonely Planet as if it were some kind of bible you have my sympathies. You're about 30 years too late for the hippy trail and show a complete lack

OUTSIDE
IN
 By Lis Kinswoman
 Hello once again, Cybermates! Do you have what it takes to live in the Land of Smiles? Has it always been like this here? By way of an answer: "Oh, gentleman, sir, Miss Pretty Girl welcome you to Sultan Turkish Bath, gentle polite massage, put you in dreamland with perfume soap. Latest gramophone music. Oh, such service. You come now! Miss Pretty Girl want you, massage you from tippy-toe to head-top, nice, clean, to enter Gates of Heaven." Sounds dated but familiar, doesn't it? That, believe it or not, was from a calling card given to Somerset Maugham by a street pimp during his visit to Thailand in 1923. Except for "the latest gramophone music" some things never change.

of originality... One of the distinct cultural differences between Thais and Westerners is the way problems are dealt with. Thais think that farangs are strange for many reasons but not least for the way

they whinge and moan about things... Farangs in Thailand like to moan about the country they are a guest in. Their moaning takes many forms. Just pick up an English language newspaper and turn to the letters page, go to an Internet forum about Thailand or look through web sites such as this one.

"Millions of farangs come for vacations each year and hundreds of thousands have chosen Thailand as a better place to live yet we are not shy about having a moan or thinking we can resolve problems better than the locals... Farangs, with their bigger stature, steely blue eyes and maybe a shock of ginger hair can be quite an intimidating sight to Thais. After being in Thailand for a while and not seeing too many farangs I am starting to understand this. There are times when I am quite startled by the look of some farangs as they pass through. They... have lots of body and facial hair, a look of meanness in their eyes, tattoos, piercings and pirate-style haircuts. And that's just the back-packer girls." (3)

The right stuff: "Many people ask themselves have they got what it takes to live in Thailand. Try this questionnaire out to see if you have or not.

Do you want to teach English and get paid with pretty sea shells and colourful beads?

Do you want to live with a raddled prostitute who cheats you into financial ruin before f***ing-off back to her drug-dealing Thai boyfriend?

Do you want to become a fat, tedious, no-mates c**t with a bottle of Chang beer welded to your hand?

Do you want to amuse the ladies of the Nana Disco with your ridiculous dyed comb-over...?

Do you want to buy a dream bar, go broke and stage a dramatic death-plunge from your Pattaya balcony?

If you can answer yes to at least three of these questions, then get ready to pack your bags. You're off to live in Thailand!" (4)

Identification problems: "...clinging nervously to my seat as our hotel car careens through the streets of Phuket. We fly along bumpily, passing slow-moving trucks by edging into the oncoming lane, missing cars by what I am positive are inches. Being in the left lane confuses the hell out of me, and intersections are baffling to the extreme. "Buckle your damn seatbelt," hisses John, as we narrowly scoot by a large rickety metal bus. When we arrive at our hotel, I thank the driver so profusely I wonder if I'm suffering from Stockholm Syndrome." (5)

1. <http://www.unrealtravels.com/archives/000040.php>
2. <http://koreabridge.com/writings/nonfiction/lettertojim.shtml>
3. <http://phil.uk.net/thailand/>
4. <http://www.mangosauce.com/archives/000014.html>
5. <http://www.manbytesdog.com/Words/Thailand.html>



Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt

Englishman Toby Young worked on the staff of *Vanity Fair* magazine for two and a half years, but he basically screwed up in an obnoxiously drunken way, and found himself limited to photo captions and little squibs in the "Vanities" section.

His insider memoir about the magazine is aptly named: *How to Lose Friends & Alienate People* (Abacus, London, 2002, 342pp). Ultimately it's a sad book masquerading as a funny one.

The son of a famous socialist journalist who coined the term "meritocracy", Young attended Oxford, Harvard and Cambridge. He was appalled by the lock-step political correctness of Harvard as opposed to the spirit of open-minded inquiry that characterized the British universities. But he did have one experience there that galvanized him: a course on 1930s screwball comedies, taught by philosophy professor Stanley Cavell.

Here he came to idolize the hard-drinking wisecracking press

A VERY UNHAPPY DRUNK

reporters portrayed by Clark Gable, James Stewart and Cary Grant. They inspired him to found a British magazine called *Modern Review*. The only American magazine that he admired for its cheeky tone was *Spy*, co-edited by one Graydon Carter, who was later to succeed Tina Brown as editor-in-chief of *Vanity Fair*.

Carter and Young met for drinks several times in London. After six years, Young abruptly terminated *Modern Review* after he began to suspect that his partner in the venture, Julie Burchill, was conspiring to replace him as editor with her lesbian lover. Carter called Young and invited him to "hang out for a month" at *Vanity Fair*, with a kicker of \$10,000. Young flew off to New York in search of the American Dream.

He made his first mistake on his first day at the Condé Nast Building when he turned up in jeans and a T-shirt illustrated with a *Modern Review* cover shot of Keanu Reeves that is captioned: "Young, Dumb and Full of Come". He was shown by security to the service elevator.

Young produces some very funny bits as he compares American and British journalists. British journalists, for example, despise PR flacks while their American counterparts are en-

slaved to them. Of British journalists he writes: "We all accept 'freebies', of course, but it's considered bad form to write something gushing and complimentary in return. As far as most of us are concerned, the relationship between hacks and flacks is essentially adverb-sarial."

He adds in footnote: "Admittedly, I've occasionally said something nice in return of a MASSIVE bribe, but at least I've felt guilty about it. Really, really guilty."

He is also scathing about the New York career women he dates and invariably fails to bed.

"I always marveled at how unselfconscious they were about sizing me up. They invariably had a checklist of questions that they shamelessly ran through over the course of the evening. What did I do for a living? What part of town was my apartment in? What kind of car did I drive? It was less like a romantic encounter than an extremely tough job interview. By the time the check arrived I was surprised they hadn't asked for a urine sample."

In the end, as he turns increasingly morose, dilatory and drunk, Graydon Carter fires him, in slow stages. "Toby's like a piece of gum," he comments. "He lingers on the bottom of your shoe."

Eventually Young quits drinking and wins back the affection of Caroline, a fresh young English girl he had originally driven away.

He returns to London with this lesson learned:

"I was particularly disappointed by the spinelessness of New York hacks given how lively they used to be. I had arrived with tales of the legendary bad behaviour of Ben Hecht, Herman J. Mankiewicz and Dorothy Parker swimming in my head, expecting to find their modern day equivalents in the offices of *Vanity Fair*. I imagined this zany, madcap community where no

one stood on ceremony and everyone had a wisecrack at the ready.

"But that devil-may-care attitude, that sense of fun was nowhere to be found. Instead I was confronted with a regiment of pinched and hidebound careerists who never got drunk and were safely tucked up in bed by 10 p.m. ... In London, I'd seen chartered accountants behave with more abandon."

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LARGER THAN LIFE

By Graham Doven

Hoover plainly loves playing his golf, damn it

Jimmie Hoover recently bought a property in Phuket, although he lives in Seattle. He flew to Phuket to play in the annual British Business Association Phuket Charity Golf Tournament, held in November at Blue Canyon Country Club.

Why? Because he likes golf and he likes Phuket. The obvious said, it is still one hell of a hike for a game of golf. It's also probably why he shot two over par at Blue Canyon. Must have been jet lag.

I played in the tournament with Jimmie, Martin Carpenter – the former General Manager of Blue Canyon – who is well known for his golfing prowess and Richard from the Hong Kong Shanghai Bank in Singapore, a sponsor of the tournament.

Their combined handicaps were less than a third of mine, which means, in non-golfing terms, that out of the four of us I was about tenth.

Jimmie used to build Boeing 747 jets; 1,100 of them, in fact, although not all on his own. He also built the fuselages for his friend Fred, who was the president of Gulfstream Aerospace, maker of one of the world's most successful bizjet ranges.

He got into the aircraft in-



Jimmie Hoover (right) with Lars Ydmark, developer of Grove Gardens at Blue Canyon, after the BBA charity golf tournament.

dustry by following in his father's footsteps. "My father spent 45 years in the aircraft industry," says Jimmie. "I was always around it as a child, through my father and his friends."

Jimmie spent nine years with McDonnell Douglas, his father's old company, then a further 25 years at Northrop Grumman where they produced 747 fuselages, tail structures and other major components.

He is the Chairman of Primus International, which manufactures components, kits and assemblies for commercial jet aircraft. "Our products are typically found in the most critical structures and aircraft systems, such as the engines, doors, wings, vertical and horizontal stabilizers and actuation systems."

Doven: What attracted you to Thailand?

Jimmie: I have traveled extensively in Asia for 24 years. Of all of the countries that I have visited, I have found the combination of weather, food, people, culture and recreation in Thailand to be the best.

Phuket has the unique quality of being a thriving resort yet with a population of expats similar to myself involved in business. I have found this a good place to settle. I love to fish, to be on the water and to play golf, and all of these are abundant in Phuket.

Doven: What do you think of Phuket and its future?

Jimmie: I hope that this article

is not widely distributed because I am afraid of too much growth in Phuket. I have intentionally chosen to live on the east side of the island – away from all of the tourism and people – in the hope that I will have a tenure [away] from the rapid growth which is sure to turn the eastern side of the island into a heavily populated area.

Doven: US citizens, so far, have been fairly reluctant to visit Phuket. Is this because of the distance, or do most US citizens prefer more familiar destinations?

Jimmie: I believe, in general, that most Americans prefer short "commuter-hops" to their chosen resorts and playgrounds. Phuket is out of the [preferred] range and consideration of most US citizens. Phuket is not widely known in my country – I hope that it stays that way.

Doven: You are a serious golfer and obviously enjoy playing. How did you get to be that good? Did you grow up on a golf course?

Jimmie: I have had a golf club in my hands from the age of 12 and I hope to carry on playing until I die. I practiced for between four and six hours a day from the age of 12-30, so I consider golf a passion and a disease that I hope never to be cured of.

I didn't grow up on a golf course, and had to collect soda pop bottles for three weeks to have enough money to play on a public course in Long Beach, California, where I lived when I was a kid.

In The Stars

by Isla Star

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): Bright ideas are in abundance for you this week. Those celebrating a birthday who wanted to let this one pass quietly will be tempted to organize a last-minute party. Communication is well-starred, so plan to combine business with pleasure. But you should ensure that you still have energy to spare as the last week of December promises to be eventful.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): If you are ready for new beginnings, carefully note down New Year's resolutions. Whatever you want to happen is likely to do so next year, with particular emphasis on personal relationships. On Tuesday, Aries has a loaded question to ask; don't answer without carefully considering the consequences. Thursday is the best day for last-minute shopping.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): Finances occupy your attention for much of the week. Domestic harmony can be compromised by your partner's desire to entertain lavishly over the holiday period. Single Aquarians should refrain from coming on too strongly to someone this weekend as you are likely to scare them away. The color cherry red will encourage more money to flow in your direction.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): If you feel that family demands too much of you, this is the right time to lay down the law. You deserve to relax as a reward for hard work done this year and should not be reluctant to state your needs. You are advised to spend some quality moments with friends who know what makes you tick. Money matters will be sorted out to your advantage later next week.

ARIES (March 21-April 20): This week is very much a case of who you know and not what you know. You will be able to use useful contacts in order to take some leaps and bounds forward. While business matters progress smoothly, personal relationships are subject to some stops and starts; be prepared to give in gracefully. If you're single, Sagittarius is about to make an attractive proposition. There will be no excuses for celebrating Christmas alone.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): Inner strength is yours for the asking. Those of you who don't feel you made as much progress as you should have done with a creative project this year can look forward to great achievements in 2006. This week you receive a taste of the energy to come next year; put it to constructive use. A dream on Monday or Tuesday signals someone's romantic intentions.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): If you feel you've been stuck in the same rut for too long, you're about to make drastic changes. A chance meeting this weekend gives much food for thought, but you will have to move quickly or lose a golden opportunity. Romance is well-starred; listen carefully for subtle hints dropped by the love of your life regarding Christmas gifts. The number 5 is lucky on Tuesday.

CANCER (June 22-July 23): Your holiday season plans are about to be rearranged for the better. Those of you who weren't looking forward to spending precious free time with someone who leaves you cold will appreciate a cancellation. Pisces would like to know what really makes you tick. Ready or not, you won't be able to resist the temptation to indulge in some mutual flirtation this weekend. The color emerald green can help to eliminate negative emotions.

LEO (July 24-August 22): On Sunday, a trip into the unknown brings an exciting encounter. Generally speaking, the week ahead will not go according to plan, but you should be ready to get off the familiar jungle tracks. As long as you keep your paws firmly on the ground there won't be any nasty surprises. In romance, Scorpio reveals hidden depths but Aquarius has ulterior motives.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): An atmosphere of mystery remains at work and you need to demand clear answers. Those of you who are beginning to feel that your productivity has been taken for granted will be pleased at the outcome. If you take an honest look at this year it will be obvious that major ambitions have been realized. There will be plenty of opportunities to hone your skills in 2006. The number 8 brings luck on Tuesday.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): Those who have been unable to find their balance lately should start to feel better. Astrological influences will provide the necessary backdrop for you to make good progress in business and personal areas of your life. A tricky situation on Monday can be sorted out if you seek professional advice. Minor health worries will dissolve and your romantic outlook is positive. Wear the color amethyst to help banish unnecessary worries.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): The confidence that Scorpions have been lacking lately comes back in full force. It will be hard for others to resist your natural magnetism, but take care not to direct romantic attention towards someone who's already spoken for. Leo will appreciate overtures but Aries has other fish to fry. Money matters require careful handling mid-week when someone seems determined to make you pay more than the true price.

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The case for evolution grows stronger with every decade

There has been a plethora of articles in the past year or two arguing for various creationist hypotheses. The most recent of these has been "intelligent design".

The proponents of this faith argue that life is too complex to have arisen and developed, that is to say evolved, without the supervision and direction of a god.

This idea is fine as a religion, but it is entirely without scientific merit; there is not a single fact that supports intelligent design.

You cannot go out in the field, grow anything in a laboratory, or see anything through a microscope or telescope that supports this hypothesis.

Evolution is a theory that is supported by evidence. Theory in this sense does not mean an unproven hypothesis. Scientific facts are provable.

The forebears of most plants and animals are well represented in the fossil record. Only the very naïve could believe that God "planted" fossils in the earth to confuse us.



EARTH WATCH

By Robert Cogen

These same folks believe that the earth and the life upon it is only a few thousand years old, in spite of the overwhelming evidence that our planet has supported life for billions of years.

I remember as a child hearing creationists argue that each species was placed here on earth in its current form, including man, who was given the shape of God. They argued then as they do now that evolution is fiction.

Charles Darwin, Alfred Russel Wallace and most great biologists

believed in God, but accepted the proof of evolution found both in the fossil record and in contemporary observation.

When Darwin first published his evolution theory, there were only a couple of hominid species in the fossil record. Critics asked where the missing link was.

Now we have uncovered a dozen close relatives to man. The latest find is *Homo floresiensis*, a small cousin from what is now Flores Island in Indonesia, who lived there between 10,000 and 80,000 years ago. The most ancient representa-

tive of the human family found so far is *Sahelanthropus tchadensis*, who lived between six million and 17 million years ago in what we now call Chad.

Many other missing links have been uncovered. For example, the links between dinosaurs and birds have become well established. More than 100 years ago *Archaeopteryx* was discovered in Solnhofen, Bavaria in fossil beds about 150 million years old. It could fly or at least glide. It had teeth, unlike younger fossil species such as *Confuciusornis*, which had a toothless beak.

Sinornis, 140 million years ago, could fold its wings and *Iberomesornis*, which lived in what is now the Iberian Peninsula some 130 million years ago, had a large keeled breastbone to which powerful flight muscles were attached.

Before there were birds, there were several species of terrestrial dinosaurs with feathers. The feathers functioned as insulation. The carnivorous dinosaur *Sinornithosaurus millennia*, uncovered in north-eastern China, had feathers and could flap its wings – but could not fly.

Creationists have long argued that the absence of transitional fossils from land mammals to whales supported creationism. Whales still retain vestigial hip and thigh bones buried in musculature. There is now plenty of evidence, including DNA, showing that whales descended from

even-toed, hoofed mammals and are closely related to the hippopotamus.

Ambulocetus natans, the "walking whale that swims", was carnivorous; it lived in present-day Pakistan about 49 million years ago. It was the size of a big sea lion; its feet were webbed with tiny hooves on its toes and could both walk on land and swim. *Pakicetus* lived a few million years previously, in the early Eocene epoch. It lived on land but had a skull and teeth like the earliest family of whales.

Today we have more than a dozen transitional fossil forms that connect whales with terrestrial mammals.

The case for evolution grows stronger with every decade as fossil evidence, DNA and observation of species in transition expand. In addition, there is the continuing analysis of developing embryos which continue to demonstrate that "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny". In other words, the development of an embryo illustrates the evolution of that species.

And, believe what you like, there continues to be no evidence at all to support creationism in any form, including intelligent design.

This column is the last by Robert Cogen who, after some eight years, feels he has finally run out of topics. The Gazette offers him warmest thanks and best wishes for a future free of deadlines.

Four held after attempt to rob currency exchange firm

THE TIME machine
News from the past

From the Phuket Gazette, issue of December 1-15, 2000.

PHUKET TOWN: Four men who had lost money gambling

decided on November 11 to take an even bigger gamble – they held up a currency exchange company.

But their luck was still bad. They came away empty-handed

and were nabbed soon afterwards by police.

The four, identified by police as Jaroen Sakjapitak, 42, from Sakhon Nakhon, Jantai Singkam, 34, from Loei, Yodchat Chanwerat, 27, and Narin Ujaroenpong, 28, both from Bangkok, held up the Yanisa Travel Service Partnership on Chana Jaroen Rd near the Ocean Robinson Department Store at 4 pm.

Pol Maj Amnuan Kriwutthianant of the Phuket Town Police Station said that Somjai Junapichart, 33, the owner of Yanisa Travel, was behind the counter at the exchange company with her sister Somjit when the attempted robbery took place. There was also one customer, a woman, in the office at the time.

Two men walked in. One of them, later identified as Jaroen, pointed a pistol at the staff. He herded the customer behind the counter and ordered K. Somjai to open the safe.

The other, later identified as Jantai, who was carrying a knife, climbed on the desk and smashed the security camera.

The robbers' luck began to turn sour when K. Somjai managed to press a button to raise the alarm at the police station.

Then, while she was opening the safe at gunpoint, a male customer walked in, took one look

at the situation and ran out to phone the police.

The two robbers, worried that the police might arrive at any moment, left the office empty-handed, leapt on a motorbike and roared off.

Acting swiftly, officers arrested the pair outside Wat Sansook, about 800 meters from Yanisa Travel. They had dumped the motorbike and were climbing into a pick-up truck driven by their two accomplices.

The four admitted their roles in the attempt to rob the exchange company.

Foreigner Saves Child, Receives Hero's Ring

From the Phuket Gazette, issue of December, 1995.

SURAT THANI: Foul weather proved fatal to two passengers on Song Serm Travel Center's Express Boat to Koh Samui on November 10, but one of the 176 survivors owes the rest of his years – and at age two he has quite a few of them – to the intercession of an Englishman.

Jehtsadah Laoprahm was saved from drowning by Hugh Arthur, who became, in the eyes of little Jehtsadah's family, at least, a major hero. To confirm that status, Jehtsadah's grandfather presented Arthur with a solid gold ring, inscribed in English "Hero's Ring", at a ceremony attended by members of the press as well as the child's parents.

"This ring is presented merely by way of appreciation, and to show our esteem for one whose actions merit applause. The value of his help to my fam-

ily is – to me – beyond estimate," said Pramoon Laoprahm, the boy's grandfather.

Arthur also received a Certificate of Merit from the Chairman of the Amateur Radio Operator's Society who witnessed the deed.

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Police gag will not serve transparency in justice system

Crime reporting in Phuket has always been difficult. The initial part, when the police cars rush to the scene of a crime, is the easiest. Some newspapers even have "stringers" sitting full-time at police stations, ready to leap in their cars and follow.

But following up on cases in subsequent weeks and months, whether suspects are arrested or not, has never been easy. With the latest orders from Bangkok (see Inside Story, page 5 of this issue) that police must not discuss cases in detail, it has become all but impossible.

The *Gazette* has never carried lurid photographs of dead bodies, in the belief that such pictures serve no purpose other than to feed a nasty kind of voyeurism. No one will suffer if newspapers are barred from carrying such material.

Nor does the *Gazette* regret a great reduction in the number of crime "re-enactments", which at best served very little purpose and at worst descended into anarchy, with mobs of local people trying to mete out on-the-spot justice to the alleged perpetrator – despite the fact that he or she had not yet been tried.

Equally, an end to police press conferences, during which suspects are presented to news photographers, will be no great loss – and will certainly help support fairer trials.

What is troubling, however, is the reduction in transparency of the justice system. The fact that police officers in charge of investigating cases have effectively been gagged means that following cases through to their conclusions becomes more difficult than ever.

The suggestion by Phuket Provincial Commander Pol Maj Gen Decha Budnampeth that journalists should follow cases through the courts is a good one. However, Thai courts are not obliged by law to allow journalists to report on hearings – they may allow it or they may not – so publishing details of hearings is not always possible.

The difficulty with the new rules is that police involved in cases may worry that they will be stepping out of line if they say anything at all, and will therefore adopt a blanket "no comment" policy.

Any justice system needs to protect the rights of those accused of crimes, especially their right to a fair trial. Splashing their photographs all over newspapers may be prejudicial to that right, as may be quotes from officers asserting that the suspect is indeed guilty.

But the individual's rights must also be weighed against the need for transparency. Justice must be seen to be done. This is essential for public trust in the system. For the police to simply shut up will not serve this end.

– 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.

Just b**ping angry

I find that, as a *farang*, I am constantly beeped at by tuk-tuks and motorbike taxis whenever I walk in the street.

I have been beeped at while carrying a motorcycle helmet, while walking up to the door of my apartment (and abused for not getting on the motorbike taxi), and even when getting off another motorbike taxi!

This practice poses a traffic risk as it may cause *farang* to ignore the warning horns of responsible traffic users.

These drivers paint Thailand in a very poor light in the eyes of tourists, who they have a great deal of contact with.

Although I am generally a relaxed person, I find this behavior profoundly irritating.

It is, I am sure, a potential cause for conflict between *farang* and the drivers.

Do we have to wait for a number of tragic cases of "accidental steel-blade overdose" by *farang* before some action is taken?

Edward Raistrick
Patong

High-enders only need apply

I could not agree more with the *Gazette's* view: "Zero in on high-end, not zero-dollar tourists" (*Gazette*, issue of November 26).

If the Indonesian giant has yet to decide which kind of hotel it will build, let's hope that it will be a five-star Grand Hyatt and not something aimed more at the mass market.

As it is, Phuket has more than its fair share of mass tour-

ists as well as "economic refugees" from the West.

Since Phuket beaches are among the most beautiful in the world, I see no reason why it should not be promoted as a destination for "high-end" tourists as well as "high-end" residents.

The immigration law should be stricter in dealing with people coming to live on this island. After all, what Phuket wants is quality and not quantity!

However, in order to achieve that, Phuket still has a long way to go in improving its infrastructure, providing proper transport, getting rid of the tangled overhead cables eye-sore and speeding up ADSL connections and telephone lines.

While many other places have made use of the opportunity of the tsunami aftermath to clean up their beaches, the inability of the people in charge at Patong, Nai Yang and Kamala to bring order to their own beaches never fails to amaze me.

As I write my eyes are brimming with tears of rage because Nai Yang and Patong used to be the most wonderful places of all on Phuket.

Pauline Theva-Aksorn
By email

Lovely place – pity about the jet-skis

I have been to Phuket for each of my last six annual holidays in the sun among the world's friendliest people.

However, if there is one thing that ticks me off it is the total lack of respect that jet-ski users have for other beach users.

They race along the wave line only a few feet away from swimmers.

It would only take someone to be swimming along minding their own business for a serious accident to occur.

Patong Beach is quite long, with several areas devoid of tourists.

Why not set aside an area where the jet-skis must operate so they can do the stupid things that jet-ski users seem destined to do?

In that way the potential for serious accidents should be diminished, if not removed.

Better still, ban the bloody things altogether.

John Dedman
Perth, Western Australia

Leaf Bert alone!

Stacy Marion [*Gazette* Letters, December 3] should chill out and take a humor pill.

Bloomin' Bert's articles are informative and often make me laugh out loud. Gardening articles are usually pretty dull reading, but not with his style.

If she read his pages more carefully, she'd see he also takes digs at himself. If we can't laugh at ourselves and others, then there's no hope.

Simon Sheldrick
Karon

Tout and about

Reading the *Phuket Gazette* online, one feels a sense of déjà vu. Headlines: December 1, 2005: *Patong cracks down on street touts*; January 7, 2003: *Mayor clears out the touts*.

I'll believe it when you can actually walk around Patong without being harassed by tailor and restaurant touts.

Terry Emerson
Perth, Western Australia

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

Letters

Time to clamp down on motorbike rentals

I read your editorial about the jet-ski accident, but what about all the daily motorbike accidents? People who rent motorbikes to tourists don't even ask for their driving license.

As long they submit their passport they can rent one, even a racing bike.

Many people die every year because of motorbike accidents – people don't bother with helmets, ride three to a bike, and even take their babies on the bike with them.

The government should enforce a rule that bikes should be rented out only to people who can show a real driving license.

I wish all tourists a safe holiday, and drive safe!

Ray
By email

It's time to end the carnage on the roads

Every month around 20 people are killed on Phuket's roads. The lives of 20 fathers, mothers, brothers or lovers end pointlessly.

Every month more than 1,000 people are injured in traffic accidents, many so seriously that they will never walk again.

Most residents know someone who has been killed or seriously injured on the roads. Despite this fact, people still drive far too fast and regularly take unnecessary risks.

In many countries the police play an important role in reducing traffic accidents, enforcing traffic rules and speed limits, but here this does not seem to be the case.

I have seen police in front of schools allowing underage children to leave the school premises, often three to a motorcycle and none wearing helmets; or watching motorcycles race in and out of traffic on both sides of vehicles without doing anything.

It seems to me that at least part of the solution to reducing this carnage would be through a massive public relations campaign, which should include:

- Large posters on all the main roads updated every month with the numbers of dead and injured.

- Just before all the major danger spots, such as Kata Hill, large warning posters listing the numbers of accidents, deaths and injuries should be erected.

- Every hour every public radio station serving Phuket should broadcast road safety messages, and every time someone dies in an accident they should announce who it was, with the slogan "Speed kills. Slow down, don't let the next death be you."

These measures should be taken immediately; each day wasted is another life wasted.

Nicholas Bennett
Kata

The TAT has not ignored Khao Lak

FIRST PERSON

Criticisms of the seemingly indifferent attitude of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) toward battered Khao Lak, including that it was doing little or nothing to help the area recover, came soon after the tsunami.

Many people felt that an added insult to the injury was the TAT decision to remove – until just two months ago – all mention of the battered resort from its website, effectively the official portal for those considering Thailand as a holiday destination.

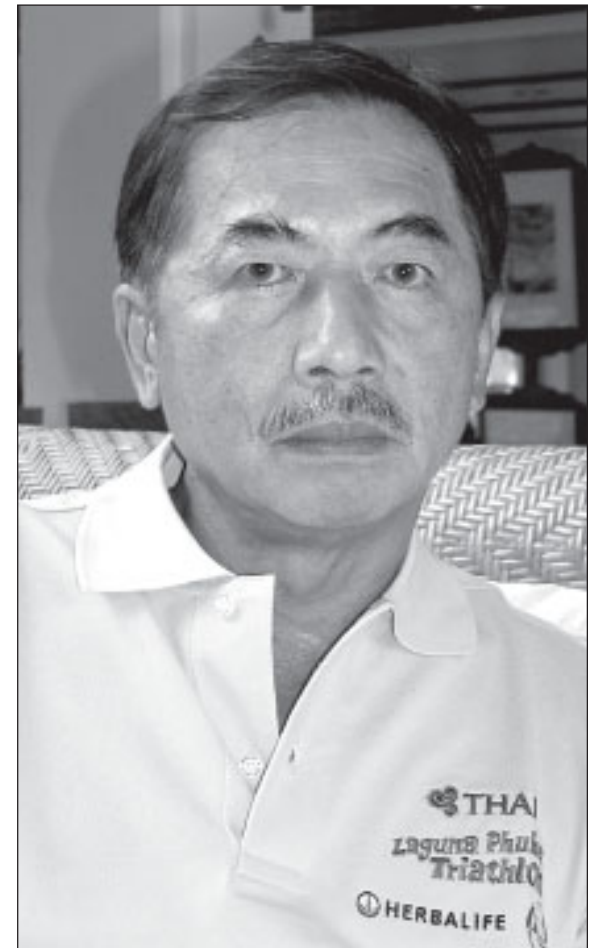
The *Gazette* has long questioned this action, and the perceived general inaction of the TAT regarding the region. Businesspeople in the

devastated area and expatriates who love Khao Lak have also sought answers and explanations from the TAT. None, apart from fudged responses, came.

Phang Nga Province itself features in the "Destinations" section of the TAT website, yet only the briefest of mentions is made of Khao Lak. Just eight resorts and guesthouses, and only four restaurants are listed for the entire province.

The TAT, it appears, has more power at its disposal than Mother Nature, for while the tsunami failed to wipe Khao Lak off the map, the area is not even named on the TAT's website map of Phang Nga – despite the province being one of the so-called "Happiness Destinations".

Vunsadej Thavarasukha, Executive Director, Advertising and Public Relations Department of the TAT in Bangkok, addresses the criticism.



It is a fact that the hotel- and tourism-related businesses in Khao Lak were severely damaged by the tsunami, and damaged to such an extent that they were not in an operable condition.

[The TAT] removed Khao Lak from its website – temporarily – because the product, Khao Lak, had not recovered from the tsunami and was not therefore ready to sell.

Had we, the TAT, kept Khao Lak on the website, then people might have tried to book into hotels that were no longer in operation.

Putting anything other than up-to-date information on our website would have wasted the time and energy of tourists [looking for holiday information].

ASSISTANCE

However, we tried and still try hard to promote every area in country, especially those affected by the tsunami – when and only when those areas have enough facilities for customers.

You may ask why I said that the TAT has tried hard to assist and promote areas, and want examples of what we have instigated.

Well, the TAT has achieved a great deal, including sending staff to assist in the evacuation of tourists from the affected areas.

We also organized training

in tourism-related subjects for people – and not only those previously employed in the tourism sector – who lost their jobs because of the tsunami to improve their opportunities for employment.

In addition to this, the TAT provided representatives of business operators in the Andaman area with air tickets and space to present their businesses at the ITB (Internationale Tourismus-burse Berlin).

FEES WAIVED

The TAT also waived the fees for private-sector business from the six affected Andaman provinces that participated in [our] tourism promotion events, both internationally and domestically.

The TAT has organized various other campaigns aimed at encouraging Thais to travel within their own country.

These campaigns were bolstered by offering holidays at discount prices, and with the added incentive of duty-free shopping for Thais, a scheme initiated by the Ministry of Finance.

[The duty-free scheme was branded a flop by businesses involved in it. See *Phuket Gazette*, issue of December 3, 2005.]

The TAT was instrumental in organizing and co-ordinating events to commemorate 50 days after the tsunami, and we are currently assisting in the organi-

zation of the first anniversary events.

We have provided assistance and information to media organizations, students, researchers and travel agencies on visiting the area. Khao Lak also hosted a regional Cabinet meeting. This assistance, these events, have [helped] and will help the area to recover, and many people have visited the area as a direct result of our promotions and activities.

So, you see, the TAT has been helping all the tsunami-affected areas in terms of international marketing and public relations to restore the confidence of tourists. [As proof of this] hotel bookings for the Christmas period are reportedly averaging around 70-80%.

If you look at the TAT website, then you will see that Khao Lak is listed, and has been since October. We will add more details, more hotel and other listings, as and when the businesses begin to reopen – and when they inform us of this.

We know what we are doing. It is not true that the TAT is focusing its efforts on the areas of Thailand unaffected by the tsunami; we have a duty to promote all of Thailand and have succeeded in bringing people to, for example, Phang Nga, as explained earlier.

That said, if an area of the Kingdom experiences a problem of some kind and is not suitable

for tourists, then we must adjust our efforts to ensure that vacationers continue to visit [other parts of] Thailand.

The TAT has been given the task of redeveloping the infrastructure of Kamala and Patong – with extraordinary budgets of 96.74 million and 194.74 million baht respectively – but not Khao Lak.

DUTY

That responsibility, and for the redevelopment of the Phi Phi Islands, falls to DASTA, the Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration agency, and the redevelopment of Khao Lak is now nearly 70% complete.

The TAT also has many other recovery projects in progress [in the affected areas] at the moment and has not yet summarized the total budget.

The redevelopment plans cannot yet be implemented in all of the affected areas because there are many organizations involved in the projects, [so people should not] focus only on the TAT; redevelopment of, and sustainable tourism for, the affected areas requires the cooperation of [central and local] government and the private sector.

To repeat, the TAT has not ignored Khao Lak or other areas, but our duty is to promote tourism in Thailand as a whole.

Compiled by Anongnat Sartpisut

ON THE MOVE



Andrew Anurin Swatpakdi, 51, who is half-Thai but holds Australian nationality, has been appointed General Manager of Kata Beach Resort. Before moving to Phuket he was Manager of the Royal Princess Ranong Hotel in Ranong Province. Previously he was Rooms Division Manager of the Dusit Rayawadee Premier Resort in Krabi, and held the same position in the Santiburi Resort in Samui before that.



Theeradej Sombuntham, 41, from Bangkok, has been appointed Store General Manager of Central Department Store, Phuket Branch (Central Festival Phuket). He has a degree in business management from Assumption University of Thailand. He joined the Central Group in 1989. Previously he was Group Categories Manager of Power Buy in Bangkok for three years.



Boonchita Surinpa, 33, from Bangkok has been appointed Sales & Marketing Manager of Anuphas Pirom Resort's Baan Cocoon project. She has a master's degree in organization management and a degree in management, both from Sri Pratum University. Previously she worked in marketing at Laguna Phuket and was Executive Secretary of the Student Center Service in Kuwait.

IT ISSUES

By John Seebach

What do others consider to be good broadband?

Recently I attended the Phuket & Samui Property Show in Hong Kong where I had the chance to meet several prospective home-buyers. I was quite impressed with the selection of villas, apartments, condominiums and land available.

The level of quality services being touted was also impressive, as were many of the Western amenities being offered. Some included lighting control, central audio and electric garage door openers, while others included home security systems and broadband Internet connections.

This week I'd like to share my observations about what people from the "real world" expect when it comes to broadband Internet, and how it compares with what you can get here in Phuket.

The first is price. I discovered that there are basically two choices for broadband in Hong Kong; the first is ADSL, and the second is Corporate Leased Line. This is very much as it is in Phuket, except for the fact that a 1Mbps (megabytes per second) ADSL connection over there delivers about 800Kbps (kilobytes per second) speed, while here it delivers about 180Kbps speed.

The price works out at pretty much the same, but when you look at what you actually get, for example trying to get the same

speed as in Hong Kong, it would translate to about 30,000 baht per month, which for most mortals is far over-budget. When it comes to corporate leased lines, the speeds are similar, but again the costs are more than 400% higher in Phuket.

In addition, Hong Kong and many other parts of Asia enjoy online gaming, pay-per-view movies, streaming video and online conferencing that eclipse any Internet call you can make here in Thailand – and all for the monthly price of an average bottle of wine.

I went to see a demonstration of such services at one of the major suppliers' retail centers, and I was both impressed and envious, to say the least. They have such reliable, dedicated speed that they are able to play an online movie, stream music from my favorite radio station in San Francisco, carry on a Skype international telephone call, chat on MSN and download the latest Microsoft Windows update – and all at blazing speed on a 2,500-baht-per-month ADSL connection. Wow!

So you can imagine some of the responses of would-be home



Internet users in Hong Kong are used to high quality high speed broadband services.

buyers in Hong Kong when they find out about broadband pricing and performance in Phuket. This is actually a very big deal, and does affect their decision whether to buy a home in Phuket or Samui.

I spoke to several prospects, and they all pretty much said the same: it is going to be difficult to justify high costs just to stay connected to the outside world.

Let's face it; many people looking to buy a home in Phuket are doing so as a second property away from home; they will still need to be connected to their business and personal interests when they are on the island.

We often install Internet systems for these people that allow them to connect directly to

their home office while staying here. The challenges we face are not so much technological but arise from Internet speed, reliability and price. The average connection for this sort of use is around 10,000 baht a month, while in Hong Kong it costs about 1,500 baht a month for the same performance.

The next question is where we go from here. The Thai government has initiated subsidized ADSL at a very affordable price, but its performance is only slightly better than a good dial-up connection. Other Internet Service Providers (ISPs) such as Loxinfo and Ji-Net are doing their best to compete, but if you need real performance, the price is still quite high.

There is one shining light at the end of the tunnel, however. A new ISP from Singapore has just opened shop in Phuket – Pacific Internet. Its service is potentially much better because it has a direct link to Singapore

which does not go through the CAT Telecom system in Bangkok.

Hopefully, this is the beginning of the end for high-priced, low-performing broadband in Phuket. At present, the price is still the same as other ISPs, because the government controls the costs, but performance and reliability are far better and, with time, the costs will become more in line with the rest of the world.

In a future article, I will explore the ins and outs of this new service from Singapore, and what it really means to us broadband wannabes in Phuket.

John Seebach has 25 years' consulting experience in information systems and business process re-engineering. His company, Island Technology, offers IT solutions and broadband services throughout Southeast Asia. For more information send an email to john@islandtechnology.com

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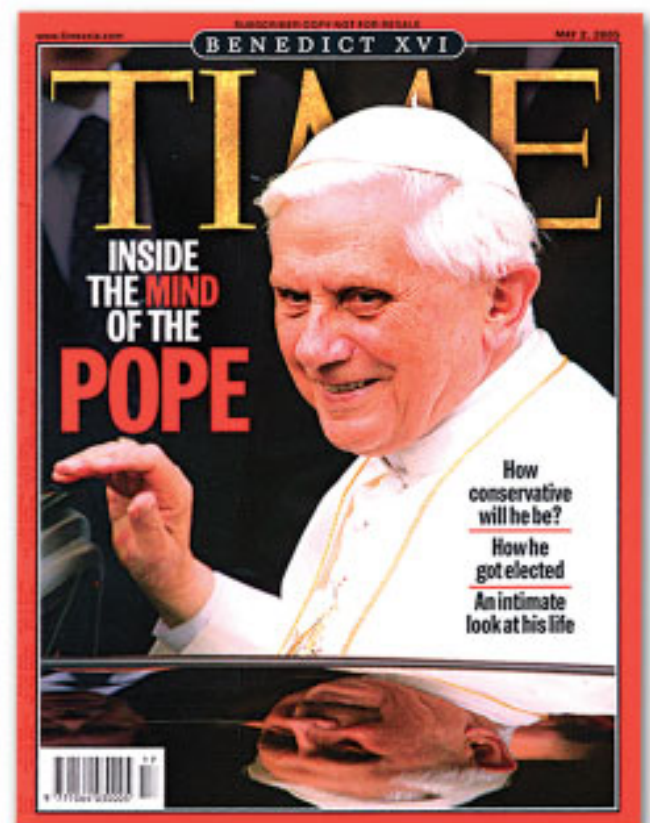
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Property sector leads post-tsunami recovery

Tourist arrivals dropped 52% in the nine-month period following the December 26, 2004 tsunami. However, while tourism-based businesses suffered in the ensuing months, investment in the real estate sector continued to grow.

Phuket Governor Udomsak Uswarangkura, giving an overview of the post-tsunami economic recovery, based on figures for the third quarter of 2005, said that Phuket's economy experienced "somewhat

of a contraction" during the first nine months after the disaster.

Figures released by the Phuket Provincial Immigration Office recorded the number of people entering the country through immigration checkpoints in Phuket as 479,174, about half the figure recorded for the first three quarters of 2004, he said.

Some segments of the tourism industry are recovering better than others. Those experiencing a good recovery include the golf tourism industry and two segments of

the marine tourism industry, yachting and pleasure boating, he said.

Gov Udomsak said that investor confidence in the province remained strong, especially in the property and real estate sector, which has been growing continuously since the beginning of the year despite the tsunami.

Although many fishing boats were damaged or destroyed by the tsunami, the Governor noted that the value of the total recorded catch over the first nine months

of 2005 was higher than in the same period in 2004.

Rubber production also increased over the period, with high demand for raw rubber mats raising prices to current levels of about 51.5 baht a kilogram.

Government spending in the province over the period was running at a deficit. Total government spending for the period was recorded at 3.82 billion baht, higher than the 3.39 billion baht total in taxes collected. *Source: Kom Chad Luek*

Predicting the future means avoiding bandwagons

Investors always have to look to the future, and predicting the future is seldom an easy task. The only way to have any reasonable chance of success without relying on intuition is to assemble the present and move it forward.

This entails, from a global perspective, continually absorbing economic data and making projections of how it will impact on future events.

The director of one UK fund management group once said to me, "You know where a party is going to start, the biggest difficulty is knowing when."

He was referring to future events that would lead to a major rally in any asset class.

Investors must always avoid "jumping on bandwagons". It is easy to join in investing in an asset class that is very popular and in which everybody seems to be making gains.

The "Tech" bubble of the 1990s is a perfect example of this situation. The old stockmarket adage of "always leave some profit for the next guy" is sound thinking.

However, human beings are a social species; we virtually all follow trends – habitually. The fashion industry could hardly exist if it were otherwise.

Trends exist throughout our lifetime, but they change and so does the thinking of society.

In the situation facing the investor, it can be expensive to follow current views.

The global situation for 2006 is looking attractive from an overall perspective.

Certainly, there will be problems and challenges, but notwith-



MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson

standing any major natural disaster or man-made event, the situation is good.

Global economic growth is set to continue for 2006. China may slow somewhat, from its current expansion of 9.5% to the Chinese government's prediction of 8.5%.

The biggest threats are probably to be found in some emerging markets where gains have been excessive and where a substantial correction appears imminent.

Many fund managers, especially hedge fund managers, are aggressively pursuing various markets, not only stockmarkets but also currency and bond markets.

Various currencies tipped to be danger zones for 2006 are the Brazilian real, Turkish lira and Hungarian florint.

For hedge fund managers, it is very tempting to borrow cheaply in Japanese yen and invest their own investors' cash, plus the borrowed money, and leverage the returns in the process.

Their expertise, where it exists, is in identifying investment

Currencies tipped to be danger zones during 2006 include the Brazilian real, Turkish lira and Hungarian florint

areas and exiting at or near the peak. The types of hedge funds that indulge in these activities watch each others' strategies like hawks.

Nobody wants to be the last to exit.

The Japanese Central Bank, the Bank of Japan and the Japanese Ministry of Finance, in separate statements on December 5, made their attitude to the value of the yen abundantly clear. These statements were made after the expiry of huge option and derivate positions on December 2.

Until that time, it was virtually impossible for the yen to fall below 120 to the US dollar. Now they are perfectly content to let the yen drop in value; it can find its own level. Perhaps they will change their stance if it becomes excessive. Even this is by no means certain.

A cheaper yen means a more competitive yen for Japan's

exporters, and that means corporate profits in Japan when converted back into yen are going to be impressive.

The Bank of Japan spent around US\$500 billion (in yen) in the first four months of 2004 to try to arrest the yen breaking upwards of 104 to the US dollar.

The Bank of Japan is not just allowing its currency to depreciate against the US dollar but, for example, the Chinese yuan is also still effectively tied to the US unit, and it favorably impacts on their trading situation with Asia and many other countries.

Japanese exporters have a history of repatriating cash back into Japan during March, as they approach their financial year end. Exporters want to be able to book profits and currency gains back onto their balance sheets.

Figures released in early December reveal that Japanese companies increased capital spending by 9.6% in the third quarter of 2005 – well above expectations. This is a vital sign of real confidence.

There may well be some turbulence in the Japanese stockmarket and currency, but they are most likely buying opportunities, not a time to sell.

Investment houses with a good track record in Japanese investment include GAM, a unit of UBS which was recently sold to fellow Swiss banking group Julius Baer; Schroder's; and JPMorgan Chase's unit JF Asset Manage-

ment, previously known as Jardine Fleming.

My personal favorite remains Orbis Japan Equity. There are no entry or exit costs, and the investor can choose between the US dollar or yen as the base currency, allowing the separation of investment and currency if desired.

Switches between the currency classes of the fund are free of charge, and Orbis will allow direct investment by the public with a minimum of US\$50,000 or equivalent.

Returning to hedge funds, especially the US variety, the hedge funds that performed the best in 2005 were those that specialize in distressed securities. Well, somebody had to make a profit with Ford, GM and other companies that "fell off a cliff".

For 2006, mergers and acquisitions appear very attractive in the US and elsewhere. Many companies are holding huge amounts of cash on their balance sheets.

Personally, I will stick to Japan and place most of my money in ground rents and student accommodation Funds. Sleeping soundly is always good.

Richard Watson runs Global Portfolios Co Ltd, a Phuket-based financial planning service. He can be contacted at Tel: and Fax: 076-381997, Mobile 01-0814611. Email imm@loxinfo.co.th

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Drumstick beat rules the regatta

By Chris Husted

PHUKET: In a King's Cup Regatta dominated by strong winds, Ray Roberts' *Drumstick Quantum Racing* proved too quick, beating Neil Pryde's *Hi Fi* by nearly three minutes to win the final race of the Racing class to take top honors in this year's regatta, from December 3 to 10.

Drumstick's consistent good sailing allowed it to amass 7 points – four first and three second places – in the series, two points clear of *Hi Fi*.

Nick Burns' *Mandrake*, despite finishing sixth in the final race, came third in the class.

Some short-spell doldrums hampered racing in the first two days, but winds picked up to a healthy 14 knots on most of the remaining days. On Day 4, the danger factor went up a notch for the 85 competing boats as gusts blew more than 20 knots, and there were two collisions.

Yachtpro 106 was forced to retire from Race 4 after it sustained a broken boom and a hole in the deck and hull in a collision with *Master Blaster*, and 100-year-old *Eveline* had her stern clipped by 104-foot superyacht *Lady M*.

Happily, no one was injured in either incident.

With everything to win in IRC 1 class, *Octopussy* staved off persistent pressure in the fi-

nal race to finish just 12 seconds ahead of *Switchblade*, with *Ruby Tuesday* coming third.

The win saw *Octopussy* leap-frog into first place for the series, testament to the tight competition throughout the regatta. Although *Octopussy* and *Ruby Tuesday* wrapped up the series on 12 points apiece, top honors went to *Octopussy* as she had finished first in three races. Despite a hearty effort, *Switchblade* ranked third overall with 14 points.

La Samudra's win in the final IRC 2 race was not enough to stop *Royal Thai Navy 1* from winning the class with an impressive tally of just 5 points for the series. *La Samudra* placed second overall in the class with 6 points, with *Royal Thai Navy 2* coming third on 14 points.

The final race in IRC 3 belonged to *Sumatra*, with *Patrice III* coming second and *Minx* finishing third.

Patrice III took top honors in the series with six points, while *Minx* (8 points) ranked second and *Sumatra* (9) came third.

In the Sports Boats class, Morten Jakobsen on *Emma Mathilde XX* amassed an unbeatable 13 points before the final race, and allowed the Finnish crew of *Yachtpro 106* to complete the series using his boat.

Scott Duncanson on *Somtarn Express*, happy with his crew's performance against the quick



Drumstick in action on Day 4, when the wind was gusting more than 20 knots. Photo: www.shufen.net



Closing party time at Kata Beach Resort with Kilimanjaro Connection providing live music.

Platus, finished second overall, just ahead of Jonathan Mahony's *Happy Endings* on 20.4 points.

Brian Haydon's crew on *Vida* proved dominant in the Premier class, finishing first in four of six races. *Strewh*, scoring 9 points with a first and four second places, and *Moonblue* on 16 points finished second and third, respectively.

Moto Inzi, which was reported to have hit a blistering top speed of 24.9 knots during the Andaman Sea Race, was simply too quick in the Multihull 1

class, and won the series with a tally of just 5 points. *Cedar Swan* (9) came placed second overall, while *Coco Blues* (10) was third.

Top honors in Multihull 2 class went to *Chimera* with a perfect score of 4 points, followed by *Charro* on 10 points, and *Raimon Land Chameleon* (11 points) placing third.

Overall series results for the remaining classes were:

Sunsail One Design: 1. *Princess Anna* (5 points), 2. *Princess Christina* (9), 3. *Princess Sharada* (11)

Bareboat Charter: 1. *Bintang* (7), 2. *Team Camel Toe (Tompa)* (8), 3. *Fidgi* (9)

Classic: 1. *Sanook* (6), 2. *Silvia* (9), 3. *Lady M* (13)

Ocean Rover: 1. *Jemini Jo* (9), 2. *Aquavit III* (11), 3. *Amadeus* (12)

This year also saw hot competition off the water, as venues competed to host the best post-race party, for which the King's

Cup is gaining a well-deserved reputation.

Arguably the best of the events was the closing party held by major sponsor Raimon Land at Kata Beach Resort, complete with fireworks, and Kilimanjaro Connection providing live music, while a follow-on party ensued until the wee hours at Q Bar just a stroll down the sand.

That said, many would argue that Raimon Land were obliged to pull out all the stops following the show staged for the grand opening of Royal Phuket Marina, which included an energetic dance performance by a troupe specially brought down from Bangkok.

All fun aside, and as always, the King's Cup Regatta raised funds for a project patronized by HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej. This year the money raised went towards the Rajprathankros Foundation, which provides tsunami relief, including helping children in Takuapa District in Phang Nga Province.



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Darts winner nigh at last

By Stephen Fein

PATONG: A meeting of the owners of all the bars with teams in the Patong Darts League was held at Shakers on the afternoon of December 6 in order to try to sort out the fiasco that resulted from 14 unplayed matches accumulating over the 22-week league – some unplayed matches dating from as long ago as July.

At first, it was suggested that this league simply be declared “null and void”. Another suggestion was that a four-way knockout tournament be played among the four teams still in contention.

These ideas were rejected, however, as unfair to the few

teams still in contention for the title. It was therefore agreed that all matches that still have a possible impact on the title will be played, and all others scratched. It was left to the captains of the teams involved to schedule and play all makeup matches by Friday, December 16.

Another meeting will be held at Winchester Bar on Soi Sea Dragon at 4 pm on Saturday, December 17.

Then, the winning team will be declared and their venue will host the awards party the following Tuesday.

In a related issue, many bar owners pointed out the obvious inequity of one team sending its

guys to another venue, spending a lot of money there, and then having the other team simply cancel and not return the favor – in some cases after the home bar had already prepared a big spread of food.

Terry of Amigos, who chaired the meeting, asked all bar owners to give serious thought as to whether they would have enough players to field a team for the entire season. If not, they should consider dropping out before the next schedule is drawn up, he said.

To keep the same situation from arising in the next league, it was agreed that:

– All cancellations must be

made by advance notice, at the latest by Sunday or Monday before the scheduled match.

– All makeup matches must be played by the following Tuesday or be declared a “walkover”. Given some of the events of the past year, however, it was decided to allow some extra leeway here, but only in the event of natural disasters or great personal tragedy – not if a team simply has trouble finding enough players.

– Bar owners canceling matches which cannot be rescheduled by mutual agreement within a week will deliver a “lost business” payment to the home venue of 3,000 baht. This payment will be 4,500

baht in the event of a last-minute cancellation or unannounced no-show, defined as a match for which food has already been arranged.

– The organizer will try to incorporate Buddhist holidays, when the bars must close, and other big holidays that are a source of cancellations, such as New Year’s and Songkran, into the schedule.

– It was unanimously agreed that, for the next league, the final week of play will be the final week of play. Period.

– It was also agreed to write a proposal seeking sponsorship from a major brewery, such as Boonrawd or Thai Asia Pacific Brewery.

The company of the long-distance runner

By Anongnat Sartpisut

Some do it in the privacy of their own homes, while others venture to the gym. Some do it in public parks or in full view of everyone on the beach – and Forrest Gump did it for years. Read on, this story will run and run...

According to Noël Coward, only mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun. However, early in the morning and as the sun goes down, a veritable stream of runners – long-distance and middle-distance, middle-aged, young and old alike – can be seen pounding the beaches and hills, avenues and alleyways of the island, come rain or shine.

One such runner is German Karsten Schiemann, who won the Phuket Beach Mountain Marathon 2005, which was held in and around Kata.

Mr Schiemann told the *Gazette* that he is a fervent “ironman competitor” who takes part in many competitions throughout Thailand, but especially in Bangkok, Pattaya and Songkhla.

Speaking of the routes through Kata-Karon, he said,

“It’s a tough run with hills up and down, but the views from the stretches on the beach make it the best place to run on the island.”

He explained, however, that when he is not running up hill and down dale in Phuket, he is often to be found on the streets or in the gyms of Chon Buri, where he lives. “You feel so good if you do sport,” he concluded.

Sunthon Maiperk, 30, from Nakhon Sri Thammarat, said, “I love to exercise, whether it be playing football or running.”

“I think Phuket is a good environment, especially the beaches, in which to run, although I often run in public parks. I like to run all the time for my health.”

Families that run together have fun together, it would seem. Arunee Un-chaleorn, her husband Richard Dewis, and three daughters, Lena, 13, and twins, Narinda and Nataly, 9, run in competitions and as part of their daily lives, she said.

“I love to run at Suan Luang Park in the morning. In fact it is probably my favorite place – safe and not too sunny,” she said.

She also enjoys a quick jog around Bang Wad Reservoir because there are very few cars there.

“Everyone can run [but for different reasons]. I began running because I need to win for myself, to set myself targets.”

Chalerm Chankorn, 42, likes to run 10 to 21 kilometers a day. “I normally run in the morning at Suan Luang Park. It’s convenient because of where I live, and my friends run there, too. But if you ask me, it is too busy there,” he said. “Too many bicycles and walkers, which get in my way and slow me down.”

K. Chalerm sometimes runs at Surakul Stadium and Saphan Hin “...because it is quieter.” He also give the inside track on a ploy to encourage yourself to go faster. “Run in a group,” he advised. “If one member tires, then they are less likely to stop if there are others with them.”

“Running solo or doing it with others doesn’t matter, nor does whether one runs on the beach, the roads or on a machine in a gym. The important thing is to keep on running for your health.”

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Home of the Week

Surin Beach

This luxurious new four-bedroom detached house has excellent sea views to the west coast overlooking Surin and Bang Tao Beaches. It is set in a small but exclusive estate of 18 Thai-style villas, on a plot of 2,254 square meters with 1,300sqm of living space – 878sqm internal.

Great care has been taken by the owner to ensure excellent interior design, with furnishings fitted to the highest standards. Power throughout the house is provided via a Vantage electrical system.

The 40-sqm lounge boasts a 60-inch TV screen, and the 32-sqm dining room can easily accommodate a dinner party for 12 people.

There are two kitchens (25sqm and 15sqm) fitted with Black Africa granite and Teka furnishings.

Both the lounge and dining room look down onto the infinity-edge pool (15m x 5m), which also has changing room facilities.

There is a separate 33-sqm bedroom by the swimming pool, which could be used as guest quarters. It has an en-suite bathroom with tropical shower, sunken bath and jets.

On the lower level of the main house is another bedroom with study overlooking the outside terrace and a beautiful waterfall in the garden. It has an en-suite bathroom with tropical shower.

The third bedroom, measuring 25sqm, has an en-suite bathroom with tropical shower and sunken bath, as well as a tropical garden and balcony.

The fourth bedroom is the largest, measuring 33sqm. It includes a walk-in dressing room. Again, en-suite facilities include a tropical shower and sunken bath in tropical gardens.

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A stunning hillside retreat



with tennis court and gymnasium will be completed by March next year. There is also a shuttle service provided to the beach.

Surin Beach was not directly affected by the tsunami and has some wonderful local seafood restaurants, fine shopping in The Plaza, for example, and fine hotels such as Twin Palms, The Chedi and Amanpuri.

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Decor

by Ananya Hongsa-ngiam

Christmas crackers

So this is Christmas, and what have we done? Never mind that for now, because it's time to deck the halls with boughs of holly, fa la la la la, la la la la and to don we now our gay apparel, fa la la la ad infinitum.

Gay apparel may be easy to find in Phuket, but what of holly, mistletoe and all the trimmings required for a typically tropical poolside Yuletide?

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WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Some names mystify me. Not just in the plant world, but elsewhere too. For example, why would anyone want to call a motorcycle a "Smash"? Did a group of Suzuki marketing types get together in a 63rd-floor office at Suzuki headquarters and dream this one up?

You can picture the scene, brainstorming an appropriate design name for their newest basket bike. "The Suzuki Imagine," says one of them. "That Honda lot have got the 'Dream', after all." "No," say the others, "they'll think we're copying." "How about the 'Bobcat'?" asks another. "Isn't that already a bulldozer thing?" one of them retorts.

By now, they're getting a bit tired – this naming bikes job is seriously hard work. They're reaching the stage when they're ready to put down their clipboards and head for the nearest bar for a well-earned beer. "Can't you lot think of anything, then?" asks the boss in desperation, also gagging for a pint.

"I know," says the newest member of the team, eager to impress. "How about something which encapsulates the bike; a name which will inevitably apply to whoever drives it?" "This had better be good," growls the boss. "The Suzuki Smash," he says, beaming. "Fantastic!" comes the response. Within minutes, they're in the pub getting "Smashed".

There are a number of plant

names around that are equally mysterious. Moses-in-a-boat and mother-in-law's tongue are a couple whose origins escape me. One that I really have a hard time fathoming, though, is the Madagascar periwinkle. Its geographical derivation is self-explanatory, but "periwinkle"? Please.

The Madagascar periwinkle (*pung puay* in Thai) commonly resides in sand, even if it isn't quite as conspicuous as other sand-dwellers such as the sea bean, or our old friend, the casuarina.

The shrubby little plant is seen just about everywhere on the island, and is particularly well-suited to the Phuket climate. If left to grow wild, it will propagate effortlessly, and will reach about half a meter in height.

In just about every Phuket garden and beach resort, you're bound to see these small, five-lobed flowers all over the place. They're about three centimeters wide on the end of green shiny-leaved stalks. They seem to re-



The Madagascar periwinkle

produce effortlessly and, once planted outside the confines of a garden, it's often difficult to stop their spread without uprooting swathes of them. So much so that you rarely see a lone plant – they're social little things.

The Madagascar periwinkle, like many of the flowers we see every day, is in fact poisonous. I can't say that I've tested the poison theory myself, but apparently the taste is extremely bitter, and even cattle won't eat it. It's a member of Frangipani family. You know the Frangipani [featured in the *Gazette* of December 3] – it's a

decorative, sweet-smelling tree found all over Thailand. Not one to eat, though.

Anyway, back to the focus of this, the Madagascar periwinkle. That name really is hard work – surely there must be a more user-friendly moniker? It has fairly thick leaves with a glossy, almost polished appearance. It would seem that any plant that has these shiny leaves is probably harmful in some way, and there are

plenty of them once you start looking.

Unlike many other plants that produce flowers at selected times of the day, or only at certain times of the year, the flowers on the Madagascar periwinkle appear almost non-stop. They only come in two colors – white and purple. No other choices, and no shades in between. That's your lot.

Some think that as its name suggests, that it is in fact a native of Madagascar, while others believe it originates from the Caribbean. Wherever it's from, as long as it gets plenty of sun, it will tolerate fairly harsh conditions and will be perfectly content in the sandiest soil.

But there's a downside to this one. Unlike most of the plants that thrive on the island, despite

my best efforts, Madagascar periwinkles seem, on occasion, to enjoy teasing me by giving up their will to live.

I don't get it. I try to look after my plants and do my best for them, I really do. But this one seems to have somewhat vindictive tendencies – I'm beginning to get the feeling it's personal. For no particular reason, some plants spontaneously decide that their time has come.

Firstly, the leaves wither up and generally look pathetic, almost as if it hasn't been watered or attended to. Despite my protestations and reassurances that I have actually been looking after it, its next move is for the flowers to reduce in size and then curl up, and for the whole plant to depart quietly.

Why? Maybe it's just had a bad day or is feeling depressed. Perhaps it has "guilt issues" as the Americans would say, over its poisonous tendencies. In any case, everything else next to the departed one is quite content. In fact I rather think that they're a bit miffed that their neighbor has decided on suicide. So much so that they respond by blooming and spreading as vigorously as they ever have.

The Madagascar periwinkle is an enigma. It has one of the more inexplicable names in the plant world, and it's one of the few that spreads like rabbits on speed at the same time as committing selective *hara-kiri*.

I wonder if it was a team of "experts" that came up with the original name? If so, at least they got something right about the process – I'm off to the pub.

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The unit is 13.25 x 23.50m on an area of 14 x 25m. Usage area is 415sqm with swimming pool included. Each unit comprises : 3 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms, living room, reception room, dining room, kitchen, maid's room, storage room, 2 parking spaces with storage facilities. 4 x 10m swimming pool includes pump room.

Situated on New Kata Bypass Road

Financed by Siam Commercial Bank (PCL) Co., Ltd.

Construction Update by Anongnat Sartpisut



HILLSIDE RETREAT

PA KHLOK: Krissana Parkland, on the east side of Phuket covers 58 rai of land on a hillside overlooking the sea.

The estate is not far from the Jack Nicklaus-designed Mission Hills Phuket Golf Club Resort & Spa. In addition, there is easy access to Boat Lagoon, the Royal Phuket Marina, the British Curriculum International School and Phuket International Airport.

Joe S. Kasisopa, Managing Director of Singhara Global Estate (SGE), which is the project developer, told the *Gazette* that construction started in November 2004 and should be completed by the end of 2006.

Krissana Parkland represents an investment of 650 million baht. The 55 detached houses – all fully furnished and with a patio and deck area, swimming pool, steam room, Jacuzzi, sala, parking and storage space – are split into three types:

Baan Bayan. Twenty four of these two-story homes are being built. Each has a living area of 207 square meters, with three bedrooms and five bathrooms. Prices, plot and villa inclusive,

range from 17.1 million baht to 18.9 million baht.

Baan Panan. There are 13 of these single-story houses, each with two bedrooms and four bathrooms and a total living area of 156sqm. Prices range from 13.1 million to 15.2 million baht.

Baan Pandewi. Four of these single-story homes are available, featuring four bedrooms, six bathrooms and a spacious living area of 375sqm. The prices, plot and villa inclusive, range from 28.7 million baht to 46.1 million baht.

The remaining 14 units are built-to-order houses. K. Joe explained that if customers reserve a plot and request a particular style of house, his team will design and build it.

Krissana Parkland homes are being built of top-quality materials including teak, slate, sandstone and granite.

Each home will have an electronic access door control. Water is supplied from the project's own well and by the local mains supply. The common areas are to be managed by SGE.

K. Joe said, "We are mar-

keting the project to Russian and European buyers. These houses are designed specifically as comfortable second homes for them. Forty percent of the construction is complete and four houses have already been sold: three *Bayan* and one *Panan*."

The architect is Home One Design Co, while the interior design is by Be Gray Co, and the contractor is E-24 Co.

For more information, contact Singhara Global Estate Co at Tel: 01-6963539, 01-5389869, or email: info@theglobalestate.com The project website is at: www.krissanaparkland.com

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Property Gazette

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Property Gazette



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300 meters of "stream frontage", facing a 600ft limestone cliff. Presently has a small 10-room guest-house on the property but the large property is essentially undeveloped and pristine, with old trees and wildlife. Price: 35 million baht. Contact: mschadron@hotmail.com



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Properties For Rent
STUNNING SEA VIEW

A villa with 3 bedrooms and bathrooms, plus a maid's room. Location: Cape Yamu, elevated, east coast, providing some of the prettiest views on Phuket. Furnished, with a pool and gardens in a very quiet, exclusive estate, 15 minutes to BCIS/Laguna. Asking only 80,000 baht per month. Please call for more info. Tel: 06-2796283.

BEAUTIFUL RAWAI VILLAS

On Soi Suksan 2, villas with pool and garden views; villas and rooms for rent, 220sqm with: terrace, 3 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, 4 toilets, air conditioning, TV, ADSL, hot water, security, and parking. Located 5 minutes from the beach. For rent in high season. Tel: 07-2678389. Email: info@christianesblue.com Please see our website at: www.christianesblue.com

DIRECT FROM OWNER
Nice 2-story house, approximately 140sqm, fully decorated + 5 air conditioners. Located in safe area in Kata. Company and financing available. Asking 4.5 million baht (90,000 euros). Tel: 01-7888280. Email: mauram7@hotmail.com

LAND FOR SALE LAYAN

Plots of 5 rai to 10 rai with sea view. Main road access and high potential for development. Email: wanphum@yahoo.com

POOL VILLAS NEAR LAGUNA
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EXCLUSIVE PLOT
in Nai Ham. Owner is selling a 3-rai plot with Chanote, with a 450sqm home and separate guest house, enclosed pool, well-maintained garden, garage and 2 phone lines. Ideal for a private housing project. Only 5 minutes to beach. Price: 20 million baht. Please contact for info. Tel: 01-8942733. Email: jasminconsulting@gmx.net

HOUSE FOR RENT
3 bedrooms, 2 toilets, air conditioner, hot shower, kitchen, dining room, landscaping, quiet, for long-term rent. Please call for more details. Tel: 01-5693768.

PLAZA DEL MAR UNIT
Ground-floor unit. 40sqm, aircon, two phone lines, fire and security systems, and a safe. Minimum rental: 12 months at 21,500 baht a month. Includes service and maintenance. Please contact for more information. Tel: 076-281327, 01-8954480. Email: guardian@loxinfo.co.th

BEACH PLOTS
Beautiful half-rai (800sqm) plot with 15m white sand beach frontage. Located on Nakha Island, only 2 minutes from Phuket's east coast (Ao Por Pier), 25 minutes to airport and major shopping centers. For sale direct from owner. 3.5 million baht. Please call for more information. Tel: 01-3430777.

NEW VILLA WITH POOL
Thai style, 395sqm. Superb, quiet location with best view atop a hill. One-rai plot overlooking Loch Palm Golf Course and Kathu Valley. Within minutes of major shopping centers, boat/yacht clubs and hospitals, yet just 15 minutes to the beach and 3km to international school. Asking 20 million baht. Please call Noi. Tel: 07-2698492.

HOUSE + COMMERCIAL
In Rawai: 2 bedrooms + commercial space. Price: 1.3 million baht. Please call for more information. Tel: 04-8504559.

BAAN NAI-TROK
Chalong. Wanphum Villas. Modern-themed courtyard villas, using only the finest materials, each offering a private swimming pool, 3 bedrooms, open-air living room, fully fitted kitchen and modern bathroom appliances, and covered parking. Priced from 7.7 million baht. Email: wanphum@yahoo.com

STUNNING SEA VIEW
New house overlooking Karon beach, in a quiet location. Furnished, UBC, big pool, nice garden-terrace. Living room: 24sqm; bedroom 24sqm; with air conditioning and a big bathroom. Long-term rent 18,000 baht per month. In German, English or French, call Tel: 07-9344247. In Thai, call Tel: 07-8100150.

CHALONG HOUSE
3 bedrooms, furnished from mid-January. Asking 15,000 baht per month. Please call Tel: 076-283211 or 04-848-4344 for details.

SINGLE HOUSES
Last three houses of 204sqm each for sale, located on Chao Fa East Rd. Each has 3 bedrooms, 2 restrooms, 1 kitchen, 1 living room. Asking 2.05 million baht per house. Please call for more information. Tel: 01-5973398. For further details, please see our website at: www.phuketkthome.com

BEACHFRONT
for sale. Beachfront land for sale. 160m long. 4 rai on the west coast at Mai Khao beach. Chanote title, public road access. Price: 12 million baht/rai. Email: wanphum@yahoo.com

BEAUTIFUL HOUSE
in Rawai. 5 minutes from the beach, in a nice resort. Includes 3 bedrooms, a living room, Western kitchen, 4 bathrooms, 5 air conditioners, DSL, a pool, Jacuzzi and tropical garden. Chanote title. Asking 7 million baht. Please contact for more information. Tel: 07-8929145. Email: lilianasolunac@hotmail.com

SEA VIEW
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RAWAI, 2-STORY
Brand-new house for long-term rent. 2 bedrooms, fully furnished, 400m from beach. Asking 12,000 baht a month. Please call for more details. Tel: 01-4763623.

APARTMENT IN PATONG
Near Wat Patong, Soi Khuan-yang 2/56. Small kitchen, refrigerator, fully furnished, European-style balcony, aircon, cable TV, fan and hot-water bathroom, for long-term rent, 8,300 baht per month. Please contact for more information. Tel: 04-8450541, 01-891-4561.

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KAMALA
house & land. 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms; a 350sqm plot: 950,000 baht; and 1,000sqm plot: 2.5 million baht. Tel: 076-2925960, 06-2678477. Email: tourniechristian@hotmail.com

SMALL TOWNHOUSE
1-year-old townhouse with 2 bedrooms in Kathu. Chanote title. Only 780,000 baht. Tel: 09-2908854. Please contact Tom for further information. Email: verhaeghefranc@hotmail.com

1-2 RAI OCEAN VIEW
plots. One development in Bang Tao and one near Mission Hills. Both complete with infrastructure. Prices start at 1.65 million baht. Tel: 076-270376, 09-8733564. Fax: 076-271-193. Email: lagunaphuket@exotiqrealestate.com Please see our website at: www.exotiqrealestate.com

LONG-TERM LEASE
New, fully-furnished house in Palai Green, with 2 air-conditioned bedrooms, hot shower, kitchen, living room, garage and beautiful garden. Located in a quiet area near Chalong Bay. Please call for more details. Tel: 01-8924311.

HOUSE FOR RENT
in Chalong. 36sqm., 1 bedroom, 1 bathroom, quiet, car parking, unfurnished. 3,000 baht per month with 1 month's deposit. Tel: 09-7264498.

NAI HARN LAND
2-rai plot ready to build. It has electricity, water and a wall around the land. Can be sold with a company title. Asking price: 7.3 million baht. No agent. Please call for more information. Tel: 09-594-4017.

3 PLOTS FOR SALE
1 rai each, Chanote, located in Palai, Chalong, 5 minutes walk to the beach. Price: 3.6 million baht/rai. Please call for more info. Tel: 09-7298365.

HOUSE: 2 YEARS OLD,
599,000 baht. 18 square wah, 2 bedrooms, 1 toilet, kitchen, living room, parking space. Please contact for more information. Tel: 076-214794, 06-6837162. Email: yosompetch@hotmail.com

3 MINUTES TO LAGUNA
A 12-rai, hill-view plot with power, access road and a gentle slope. No agents. Tel: 01-0895924.

KAMALA SHOPHOUSE
Located only 200m from the beach. Asking price 15,000 baht per month; no key money. For details, please contact K. Thomas. Tel: 01-5385285. Email: bbq@loxinfo.co.th

NEW HOUSE CHALONG
Appealing villa near Chalong circle. Has 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, comfortable living area, western kitchen, air conditioner, telephone and carport. For long term. Please call Tel: 076-280466 for more information.

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Property Gazette

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PATONG SKY INN

Seaview apartment for two, for rent in central Patong near The Chalet Suisse restaurant. Comes with swimming pool, air conditioner, TV and fridge. Asking 25,000 baht a month or 1,000 baht a day. Tel: 07-2678389. Email: myprojob@hotmail.fr

RAWAI CONDO SEAVIEW

Beautiful, new, fully furnished apartment near Rawai Beach for rent for 2 people, with air conditioner and TV. Asking 25,000 baht per month or 1,000 baht per day. Tel: 07-2678389. Email: myprojob@hotmail.fr

PATONG APARTMENT

Clean and comfortable, with air conditioner, TV, a big fridge, double bed, pool and parking. Please contact. Tel: 01-0825707. Email: ask@phuket-accommodaon.info

3-BEDROOM ABODE

in Phuket City. Fully furnished and comes with 2 bathrooms, telephone line, and air conditioner. For long-term rent at 25,000 baht per month. Tel: 09-9724158.

BIG SHOPHOUSE

Located in Soi Patong Resort, off Soi Bangla, Patong – the commercial hub of Patong Beach. Nearly 170 square meters on two open floors. Not suitable for residential use. Tel: 076-340290. Email: paciugo89@yahoo.com

GREAT LOCATION

Great location in Kata for a bar or shop, 5 meters x 15 meters. Rent of 300,000 baht a year over a 5-year contract, not paid monthly. Tel: 076-333-140, 06-9081270.

KARON H₂O FRONT

condo. 103sqm, 1 bedroom, all brand-new Western appliances and 2 balconies with 180-degree sea view. Long-term rent only. Tel: 07-924-3155. Email: wawrx999@yahoo.com

HOUSE FOR RENT

Fully furnished, with 2 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, air conditioner, phone line and a very nice garden. Asking 15,000 baht per month. Please call for more information. Tel: 04-6268105.

HOUSE FOR RENT

A 2-story, Thai-style, fully furnished, 3-bedroom, air-conditioned house with a beautiful view and a large pool with garden. Rent: 35,000 baht per month. From January 12 until March 28. Please contact Mr Wolfgang for more details. Tel: 09-9725378. Email: woha@loxinfo.co.th

NEW HOUSE

at Thalang. Located in Vongchalem Villa, near the airport. With 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms and 1 kitchen. Please call for more info. Tel: 09-8718327.

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On the ground floor, with your own hot shower. Located only 10 minutes on foot to the beach. Please call for pictures and information. Tel: 076-342280, 01-978-1956. Email: palm@phuket.ksc.co.th

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Fully furnished 1- or 2-bedroom bungalows in a quiet, hillside location in Kata-Karon, walking distance from shops and white sand beaches. Full cooking facilities, air conditioning, satellite/cable TV, DVD player, hot-water shower, laundry service, free maid service, free drinking water, mini bar, private balcony with seating area, and tropical gardens. Free resort facilities within walking distance, including 5 swimming pools, tennis, sauna, health/fitness center, and motorbike & jeep rental. Free car parking. Best prices – daily or monthly. Please contact us for more information. Tel: 07-1055561. Email: hillsidebungalows@hotmail.com

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Property Gazette



14 RAI

13 rai 3 ngan 98 talang wah (5.598 acres). Very quiet place, hill and sea views from second floor, just a few minutes' walk to the beach and 3 minutes' drive to the ferry for Phi Phi Islands and surrounding islands. Very cheap price for Phuket: 20 million baht. Tel: 09-871 5192.



2.6 RAI WITH SEA VIEW

The size of the plot is 2 rai 2 ngan and 53 talang wah – 4,212sqm – and all the land is under the 80-meter height restriction. This plot is very interesting for a small villa project. Great spot with many opportunities. Price: 30 million baht. Tel: 09-8715192.



1,500 SQM SEAVIEW PLOT IN PATONG

This great seaview plot is located in Kalim (north of Patong). It has road access, and water and electricity supply are available. The land is 3 ngan 75 talang wah (1,500sqm) with Chanote title. Price: 13.5 million baht. Tel: 09-871 5192.



3-BEDROOM THAI-STYLE VILLA

Besides the nice landscaped garden, you can enjoy a common pool. There is also space to park at least 3 cars. The living space is 440sqm and the land size 468sqm with Chanote title. Value for money. 6.7 million baht. Tel: 06-2726508.



3-BEDROOM VILLA WITH POOL

Villa comprises 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, guest toilet, kitchen, living and dining room, maid's room, outdoor shower, terrace around the house, pool and a garden.

Price: 14 million baht. Tel: 06-2726508.



2-BEDROOM VILLA WITH POOL

The villa is located in the south of Patong with amazing hill and valley views. It comprises 2 bedrooms, 2 en-suite bathrooms, living-dining room, kitchen, guest toilet, and a pool with sala where you can enjoy great views. Price: 12 million baht. Tel: 06-2726508.



6 RAI WITH SEA VIEW

Only 5 minutes from Mai Khao Beach, 10 minutes from the airport, 10 minutes from the Blue Canyon Country Club and 20 minutes from Phuket City and Lotus. It has electricity supply and access road. Price: 12 million baht. Tel: 09-8715192.



3-BEDROOM VILLA

Beautiful sea view. Located in the southern hills of Patong. Comprises 3 bedrooms, 2 en-suite bathrooms, 1 guest bathroom, Western kitchen, living room, dining room, a terrace where you can enjoy the sunset; storeroom and a carport. Price: 13.5 million baht. Tel: 06-2726508.



4-BEDROOM HOUSE

This spacious house is located in Karon and 2 minutes from the beach. The house comprises 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, living room, dining room, relaxing room, kitchen room, Thai kitchen, maids' rooms and car park. Price: 6.5 million baht. Tel: 06-2726508.



6 RAI

Includes 200 meters of unspoiled beachfront. This beautiful land is located on the east coast of Koh Naka Yai, all covered with tropical and coconut trees. You can reach the plot by boat from Ao Por in 20 minutes.

Price: 20 million baht. Tel: 09-8715192.



3-BEDROOM VILLA WITH SEA VIEW

The villa is surrounded by a tropical garden and has 24-hour security. Comprises 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, a Western kitchen, living-dining room and 2 terraces where you can relax and see the sunset. It is fully furnished. Price: 15 million baht. Tel: 06-2726508.



1 RAI

The land, with underground infrastructure, is ready to build on, and the area boasts some of the most expensive housing on the island. A very good investment; a beautiful area with nice, quiet beaches.

Price: 8 million baht. Tel: 09-8715192.



2 RAI SEA VIEW

Chanote title, public road access, water and electricity. Only 2 minutes to Rawai Beach.

Price: 8 million baht. Tel: 09-8715192.



ISLANDS FOR SALE

We have many island properties on our books. Current: 2 complete islands and many land plots of different sizes on islands close to Phuket, such as: Koh Yao Yai, Koh Yao Noi and Koh Racha. Prices from 1 million baht. Tel: 09-8715192.



9 RAI WITH SEA VIEW

This 9-rai plot is located in Chalong and has a slight slope with a sea view. It is a nice square plot and has water and electricity supply. Ideal for a villa project.

Price: 36 million baht. Tel: 09-8715192.



56-BEDROOM HOTEL

This mansion is located in the heart of Patong and comprises 56 rooms and a pool. All rooms have cable TV, mini-bar, hot water. There is an office and reception with safety deposit boxes for customers. The hotel is built on 2 rai. Value for money. Price: 5.6 million baht. Tel: 06-2726508.



2-BEDROOM VILLA

with sea view. It comprises a master bedroom with en-suite bathroom and Jacuzzi, guest bedroom with en-suite bathroom, kitchen, living room, dining room, study, guest toilet, 2-car carport, nice garden, solar-heated hot-water system, UBC, phone with Internet. Price: 7.5 million baht. Tel: 06-2726508.



3-BEDROOM, 2-BATHROOM HOUSE

1-year-old, beautiful 3-bedroom house with 2 bathrooms, large living area and kitchen. Open-plan with loft upstairs overlooking the living area. Phone line and own water supply. Located in a central, quiet, European-style estate. Price: 3.7 million baht. Tel: 06-2726508.



3-BEDROOM THAI-STYLE VILLA

It comprises 3 bedrooms, 2 en-suite bathrooms, guest bathroom, Western-style kitchen and a spacious living-dining room. Besides the nice landscaped garden, you can enjoy a common pool. Price: 6.7 million baht. Tel: 06-2726508.

16 x 2-BEDROOM APARTMENT

This 16-unit apartment building is located in a quiet area in Chalong, 5 minutes' drive to Big C and Central, 10 minutes to Phuket City and 15 minutes to Nai Harn, Karon and Kata Beaches. All apartments have 2 bedrooms, a bathroom, kitchen, living and dining room, and are fully furnished. It has an office, manicured gardens and the property is very well maintained. Price: 20 million baht. Tel: 06-2726508.



10 RAI BEACH FRONT

The land has a great shape and is ideal for a resort or high-end villa development.

Price: 80 million baht. Tel: 09-8715192.



3-BEDROOM VILLA

Beautiful sea view. Located in the southern hills of Patong. Comprises 3 bedrooms, 2 en-suite bathrooms, 1 guest bathroom, Western kitchen, living room, dining room, a terrace where you can enjoy the sunset; storeroom and a carport. Price: 13.5 million baht. Tel: 06-2726508.



3-BEDROOM VILLA

This spacious villa is located in a quiet area near Chalong. The villa comprises 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, guest toilet, kitchen, dining room, living room, office, laundry room and maids room. There is as well a car park and a big garden where there is room for a pool. Price: 15 million baht. Tel: 06-2726508.



2-BEDROOM VILLA

Has a nice sea view. Villa comprises 2 bedrooms, 2 en-suite bathrooms, balcony with sala, a kitchen, living room, dining room, laundry room, guest toilet, a car park for 2 cars; surrounded by a garden. All wood features throughout the house are made from teak. Price 9.5 million baht. Tel: 06-2726508.

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Comfortably accommodates for max 35 guests.
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Steel Sloop
US\$90,000
40ft, 1991 Yanmar 50hp.



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67ft, 1987 3 x Diesel, Hino.



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US\$ 4,000,000
121ft, 1999 Rebuilt 2004 Hino x 3 Engines.



Azimut 62
Euro 1,300,000
62ft, 2002 2 x 914hp MTU.

Selected Brokerage Listings

Power		Sail	
63ft 1977 Thai Design 2 X 280hp 4 cabins	THB 8,600,000	63ft 1993 Wooden Perini Ketch Isuzu, 115hp	Euro65,000
54ft 1995 Bayliner 4788 Hino 2 x 310hp game fishing	US\$ 299,000	61ft 1991 Custom sloop Perkins 120hp for charter business	Euro430,000
39ft NEW Stepps, Built to order Engine options, 70-250hp	US\$ 66,000	43ft 1994 Beneteau Oceanis 430, 50hp Perkins	THB4,500,000
36ft 2003 Marlin 36 2 x 250hp Mercury, Cruising speed 28 knots	THB2,500,000	40ft 1991 Steel Sloop, 50hp Yanmar	US\$90,000
31ft 1997 Fountain 31, 2 x 225hp Mercury	THB2,960,000	37ft 1988 Gibsea 37 racing, 24hp Yanmar	US\$85,000
18ft 2000 Skip Jack 18, 2 x 65hp Yamaha	THB750,000	36ft 1990 Sundance 36, 27hp Yanmar	Euro56,000
		30ft 1975 JonMar 30' cutter sloop Yanmar 3GM30F	US\$35,000
		26ft 1975 Marholm 26 Johnson, 8hp	THB1,650,000

Please contact Tel: 076-239111 Email: broker@thaimarine.com

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YACHTIES AHOY!
Rum guzzling, beer swiggin' shore-shaggers needed to fill positions around my bar and lounge. Apply in person at Home Bar off Soi Bangla.

WANTED: BANANA
and parasail. Wanted for export to the Middle East: secondhand or new 3-person banana (yes, to tow behind a boat) and parasail. Please provide all info and contacts by email. Email: daveonthenet@mac.com

BEACH CATAMARAN
Nacra 5.5, imported from Australia with spinnaker kit and carbon righting pole imported from US. White hull and sails, spinnaker shiny red. Good condition. Marine insurance until 2006. 175,000 baht or ono. Tel: 01-8349647 or 01-9135627 (K. Pop), or Email: jdhardt@csloxinfo.com

WANTED: LIVEBOARD
to lease. We are an established dive company operating on Phi Phi. We are interested in leasing a smallish liveboard boat on monthly terms. Please contact me, should you have a boat for lease. Tel: 07-2661850. Email: goff_diving@hotmail.com

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Boats & Marine



The Walkaround 33

Arrived Nov 28, 2005!

An excellent walk-around day cruiser with forward cabin berth, enclosed head and shower, galley equipped with sink and a cooler, as well as spacious foredeck with seat and ice box, large cockpit area with a built-in stainless-steel sink, fully upholstered GRS seat and storage lockers.

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www.goboatingthailand.com

24FT SWISSCAT



Has 2 Honda 4-stroke outboards, 50hp each; 24kts; 160 hours; SemiCat; Thai flag; built 2004; fully equipped at Boat Lagoon. Asking price just 1.24 million baht. Tel: 076-289-250, 01-2734000. Email: grosse-oetringhaus@web.de

19FT FISHING BOAT



Strong fiberglass hull. Steel trailer. Only 1 month old! Boat + trailer = 250,000 baht. Boat with new 85hp engine = 550,000 baht. 28kts. Tel: 06-9724805 or 04-6535863. Email: gpboats@hotmail.com

STEEL KETCH

for sale. Big & strong, Dutch designed, can sail around the world. 50ft long, 15ft beam, 7ft draft. 6-cylinder Perkins main engine uses 6 liters of fuel per hour. Hand-start Yanmar/Denyo genset with stainless steel wet exhaust. VHF & CB radios, GPS, video sounder. New mizzen sail. 900 liters fuel and 1,500 liters water plus 120 liters drinking water in proper tanks. Beautiful hardwood interior, new carpet and paint. Nice galley and head. Lying at Phuket Yacht Haven marina. Price Only US\$82,000. Illness forces quick sale. Please contact for more information. Tel: 01-8969319, 09-4661130. Email: starfishscuba@starfishscuba.com

LONGBOARD

wanted. Secondhand, any brand, around 8ft-9ft. Price around 7,000 baht. Please provide all details and contact information. Tel: 01-0817163. Email: hiphopdec@gmail.com

20FT SPEEDBOAT

Fiberglass over wood, center console, new hull 3 years ago for 150,000 baht. 60hp Evinrude with electric starter, power trim and tilt. Bracket for extra engine + old 3.5hp Mercury engine. New battery, 1,500gpm bilge pump, new Quicksilver gas can, stainless-steel anchor, outriggers for trolling. Wood trailer. Boat is Thai-registered for private use, and located in Ao Yon, Phuket. Everything functions very well. Asking 185,000 baht. Email for more pics. Tel: 076-200950, 01-8208307. Fax: 076-200950. Email: arottes@frisurf.no

BOSTON-WHALER

style. 21ft fiberglass Boston Whaler-style boat: central console, twin 4-stroke Honda 50hp engines. Trailer, Thai registration. As new, made in 2004. For sale in Pattaya at 420,000 baht only. Please contact for more details. Tel: 01-8626954. Email: carlossecretgarden@yahoo.com

Island Job Mart



Laguna Holiday Club, part of Laguna Resorts and Hotels, which includes Asia's first integrated resort, situated in Phuket, is currently seeking energetic and dynamic individuals to join our team in Phuket, Thailand. We invite highly driven professionals to apply for the positions of:

SALES MANAGER (T.O.)
SALES REPRESENTATIVE

3 positions
15 positions

Qualifications:

- Energetic expatriate/Thai national
- Male/female, over 30 years old
- 2-5 years of work experience in similar position in **Vacation Ownership Industry** is preferred
- Positive attitude, outgoing personality
- Fluent in English and at least one other Asian language, preferably Madarin, Cantonese or others
- Excellent communication and presentation skills
- Able to work under pressure

The remuneration package and benefits will be commensurate with the qualifications and experience of selected candidates. Interested applicants are invited to fax/email a full resumé, detailing qualifications and experience with recent photo to:

Laguna Holiday Club Ltd. Human Resources Department
390/1 Moo 1, Srisoontorn Road, Cherngtalay, Phuket 83110 Thailand
Fax: 076-271765. Email: jutimaw@lagunaphuket.com



www.lagunaphuket.com

The largest hotel and resorts group in Phuket and the finest integrated resort in Asia, Laguna Phuket comprises Dusit Laguna Resort, Laguna Beach Resort, Sheraton Grande Laguna Phuket, Banyan Tree Phuket and the Allamanda Laguna Phuket. We are currently seeking highly efficient staff to fill the following position based in Phuket:

COMPUTER TRAINING-OFFICER URGENT

- ✓ Bachelor's degree in computer or related field
- ✓ Excellent communication skills, creative, serviceminded and inspired to teach
- ✓ Outgoing personality, well organized, motivated, positive attitude
- ✓ Knowledge of Microsoft Office, html, php, and other office applications will be advantage
- ✓ Experience in computer training
- ✓ Willing to learn new things and keep up with new technology
- ✓ Excellent command of English will be advantage

The successful candidate will be offered an attractive salary and fringe benefits. Please apply in person or send application, resumé and recent photo to:

Human Resource Manager Laguna Service Co., Ltd.
57 Moo 4 Cherng Talay, Thalang, Phuket, 83110.
Tel: 076-324444, 076-324 370-1 Fax: 076-324418
Email: nitrat@lagunaphuket.com

SECRETARY WANTED

Marine electronics company based in the Boat Lagoon needs a Thai lady to run the office. Must have good English and be good with computers. Good salary package offered. Please contact for more details. Tel: 076-239112, 01-892-0534. Fax: 076-239058. Email: damian@electrical-marine.com For further details, please see our website at: www.electrical-marine.com

3 STAFF WANTED

2 staff for sandwich and baguette restaurant in Karon and 1 staff for driving motorbike with sidecar. Tel: 04-845-9510. Email: alexanderkbh@mail.com

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Needed immediately! Rapidly expanding online clothing company needs a dependable person to work full time. Must be fluent in English, type 45 words per minute, be Internet/computer literate and detail-oriented. Good salary. Please contact K. Robert. Tel: 04-7230575.

REAL ESTATE SALES

persons. Siam Real Estate require further salespersons due to expansion plans. Must have sales experience and speak good English with own transport. Good basic and commission. Tel: 076-288-908. For further details, please see our website at: www.siamrealestate.com

CUSTOMER SUPPORT

Asia Debit – Asia's leading internet payments provider – is seeking a Customer Support person with the following qualifications:

- Thai nationality, male or female, not over 30 years old
- Degree in any field
- Computer literacy with major office applications, Internet, Email
- Good command of written and spoken English
- Fast learner with positive, open-minded attitude
- Ability to work shifts if required.

Interested candidates should send a resumé with full details of work experience, expected salary, and a recent photograph via email to Email: oil@asiadebit.com Tel: 076-282211. Fax: 076-283251.

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Need one
Experienced Grill Chef
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Tel. 01-892-4337

HOTEL MANAGER

A lovely and small boutique resort in Patong has a vacancy for an ambitious and committed Hotel Manager to strengthen our team.

Qualifications:

- Male or female over 30 years old, preferably Thai but could be foreigner - Hotel hospitality or other education with bachelor's degree - Modern hospitality industry knowledge, particularly with Rooms Division/Sales & Marketing experience (preferably more than 5 years) - Excellent command of both spoken and written English; other foreign languages would be a plus - Excellent computer and organizational skills and ability to work independently - Pro-active, entrepreneurial, leader, team player - Strong sense of responsibility and hands-on approach - Reliable and motivated, with good interpersonal skills. Please submit your CV with salary expectation and current photo to agm@clubbamboo.com. Tel: 076-345345/7. Fax: 076-345099.

SITE SUPERVISOR

Leading development company seeks Site Supervisor for a prestigious project in Patong area, Phuket.

Qualifications:

- Male, over 28 years old, preferably Thai - Construction engineering and architecture degree - 2-3 years working experience in residence construction. - Experienced in at least one of the following: interior finishing, architecture, structural and M & E work. Quality assurance and compliance with project quality. - Authorized to direct all approved contract work. Please submit your CV with salary expectation and current photo to Email: info@leisureclubasia.com, or see our website at www.leisureclubasia.com Tel: 076-344380, 076-344697. Fax: 076-345099.

DIVESHOP STAFF

Staff wanted. Diving license and high school qualification not necessary, but must speak English. Please call Tel: 09-8749147.

EUROPEAN MANAGER

Looking for a Thai or Chinese girl to share my weekend. Please contact by Email: herephuket@yahoo.com

Island Job Mart



MEDIA OPERATOR MANAGERS

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- ☑ Work closely with media supervisors to ensure product's timely delivery
- ☑ Communicate with overseas clients via email
- ☑ Training and developing people skills in various functions

REQUIREMENTS:

- ☑ Thai female/male aged 30-40 years
- ☑ Bachelor's degree or higher in Computer Science or related field
- ☑ At least 2 years of IT or computer-related working experience
- ☑ Strong development skills in People Management will be an advantage
- ☑ Ability to work in a team and good communication skills and interpersonal relations
- ☑ Willing to work overtime and shifts
- ☑ Excellent command of spoken and written English

Interested candidates are requested to submit their application together with resumé, expected salary and recent photograph, or apply in person to the address below.

Digital Media Technology Co., Ltd
9/17 Tepkasatree Road, Muang Mai Building, 2nd Floor,
Phuket, Thailand 83000
Tel: 076-219310. Fax: 076-219309.
Email: hr@digital-media-tech.com

HOLIDAY OWNERSHIP CONSULTANTS REQUIRED BY *ROYAL GROUP OF COMPANIES*

Asia's largest Holiday Ownership Developer, with operations in Indonesia, India, Australia and Thailand, urgently requires English-speaking Holiday Ownership **Sales/Trainee staff** for Patong (Phuket, Thailand) Operations. All nationalities, English, Deutsch, Svensk are welcome to apply. We offer:

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Interested applicants may call Tel: 076-294341 between 10 am - 5 pm (Closed Fridays) or send resumé by email: hr-phuket@royalperspective.com

START NOW



MAID/HOUSEKEEPER
wanted. Maid required for full day job. Good salary offered. Needs to speak a little English. Tel: 04-8373870. Email: domtaylor@mac.com

VANCANCIES
Full- or part-time waiter/waitress for city cafe-restaurant wanted. Must be experienced and speak some English. Tel: 01-9798258.

PROJECT BAAK COCOON

Anuphas Pirom Resort Co., Ltd., a real estate company developing luxury houses in Phuket Country Club Golf Course, currently seeks qualified candidates to fill the following positions:

1. Client/Sales Liaison Executive 3 Positions

- Female, age between 23 - 29 years
- Min. 1 year experience in sales/marketing in the real estate projects
- Good command of both spoken and written English

2. General Clerk 1 Position

- Female, age between 23 - 29 years
- Min. 1 years experience in this segment

All positions require

- Bachelor's degree or higher in the related fields
- Salary - Negotiable

Please send your CV and recent photo to:
Ms. Kantheera Rungsang-anotai
97/4 Moo 7 Vichitsongkram Rd, Kathu District,
Phuket, 83120
☎ 076-202189, 076-321815 ☎ 076-321811
✉ info@anuphaspiromresort.com
<http://www.anuphaspiromresort.com>

ANDARA the exclusive luxury villa and spa, company located at The Plaza Surin, Phuket is seeking for a qualify & energetic persons to fulfill in the following positions:

ACCOUNTANT

- Bachelor's degree in Accounting Management
- Minimum 5 years' experience in leasehold property
- Positive attitude, pleasant personality, attentive to detail, service-minded, energetic & hard working
- Ability to communicate effectively in English, computer skills and knowledge in Quick Books
- Able to work in Phuket, own transportation

SALES & MARKETING MANAGER

- Bachelor's degree in Marketing, Business Administration or any related field
- Solid Sales & Marketing experience & skills, especially with leasehold property
- Proven record for success
- Be a good team leader with excellent communications, presentation & computer skills
- Self-motivated, creative with the ability to think out of the box
- Excellent in both written & spoken English

Interested candidates are invited to apply with full resumé, stating present and expected salary with a recent photo to:
Paradise Group: The Plaza Surin, 5/50 Moo 3,
Cherng Thalay, Thalang, Phuket 83110
Tel: 076-271241 Fax: 076-271242.
E-Mail: onn@paradisepuket.com

Life Home Project Foundation Looking for secretary and Scholarship

- ◆ Thai, male or female, aged 25-35 years old.
- ◆ Good written and spoken English.
- ◆ Good Microsoft Word, Excel, Power Point and Internet skills.
- ◆ The candidate must be diligent, friendly and responsible.
- ◆ Own transport.
- ◆ Coordinating, negotiating and administration work.
- ◆ Salary commensurate with qualifications CDM.

Contact Mrs. Sao Tel: 076-242632



Island Technology Co., Ltd., the leader in Innovative Digital Solutions, has the following opportunities in our Phuket office.

Our products & services include Broadband Internet, Communications and IT Solutions Infrastructure Design and Consulting.

Marketing & Sales Representatives

These positions require a degree or relevant experience and English-language skills. Training and commissions are available.

Come and join our dynamic team of professionals in Phuket. Please email your resumé in English to: jobs@islandtechnology.com
Tel: 076-322095-7 Fax: 076-322098

- Site Manager (3)**
- Site Inspector (11)**
- Site Secretary (3)**
- CAD Draftsman (3)**
- Receptionist/Operator (1)**

Interested candidates, please send resumé & recent photo to the Project Secretary.

Cape Yamu Site Office:

No 222 Moo 7, Bangsai-Yamu Road, T. Pakhlok,
A. Thalang, Phuket, 83110.
Tel: 01-4190450-52 Fax: 01-4190453.
Email: nichakan@capeyamu.com

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Island Job Mart

CHEF + WAITER

Fast food chef and 1 waiter needed for a busy bar/bistro at Karon Beach. Previous experience essential and must speak good English. Good rates of pay. Please call Tel: 04-7049302, 01-8919461.

THAI STAFF NEEDED

Muay Thai & MMA Training camp is looking for Thai staff.

1) Assistant Manager: able to speak English. 2) Bookkeeper: must know QuickBooks. 3) Housekeeper. Tel: 09-163-8166. Email: vjnonng04@yahoo.com

LOOKING FOR MAID

We are looking for a full-time maid to stay with us. She should be able to cook, clean, do laundry and ride a motor-bike. Tel: 01-9795624. Email: tom@bootlegonline.com

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

wanted. Female, with an excellent command of English, both spoken and written. A positive attitude, excellent interpersonal skills and strong organization skills. Proficient in Microsoft Office. Email a short letter of application, CV and a recent photograph to Email: astec99@yahoo.com

Employment Wanted

MARKETER & GENERAL MANAGER

General Manager of 500 staff in Phuket for a property services company, my main background is as a fully qualified Marketer with 8 years' experience. I am now looking for new opportunities. Tel: 06-1755881. Email: stephen260175@hotmail.com

ENGLISH TEACHER

available. Private tuition for children and adults. Tel: 06-2833945. Email: bridainecv@venustas.freemove.co.uk

FRENCH CHEF

Professional, based in Phuket, with 20 years of cooking experience. Seeking chef position! Please contact K. Raphael. Tel: 04-7450801. Email: kirikan@hotmail.com

INTERNET MARKETING

I have my own web server, over 9 years' experience with software for e-commerce, tourism-related sites, online education and eBay. I would like to hear from business-minded people who would need my knowledge in their business. Email: mkewer@coastlineweb.net

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Excellent new CD player, 3 months old with remote, stacker. Must sell: 8,900 baht or first reasonable offer. Please contact for details. Tel: 076-279481, 09-9093178. Email: kalsulfertilizers@yahoo.com.au

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Bike, "Trek 1,000", has only 900 km. Asking 16,000 baht. Tel: 04-9928016.

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Now available: 100% Arabica coffee from Thailand. Purchased directly from the coffee growers by a Fair Trade company. Restaurant packs and souvenir packs available. Tel: 076-296527, 09-587-4368. Fax: 076-296527. Email: priced@loxinfo.co.th

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30,000 baht/month. PT/FT. Free info. Positions limited. For more details see: www.hop.clickbank.net/?ukthai/1free

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GUESTHOUSE

for sale/lease. 10 rooms, a kitchen, and an office, located a 10-minute walk to the beach. Please contact for more details. Tel: 076-342-280, 01-9781956. Email: palm@phuket.ksc.co.th

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on Soi Bangla, Patong. New bar with a long lease, all new equipment, such as hi-fi system, fridge, TVs, etc. Price: 2 million baht. Please contact Yan. Tel: 01-0909698.

NEW HOME OFFICE IN PATONG FOR SALE

Located next to Phuket Palace Hotel. Contact for details. Tel: 076-345670, 01-5976195, 09-724-1505. Fax: 076-345251. Email: unique_property@hotmail.com or see our website at: www.phuket-info.com/house

Lips Bar & Bistro

BAR & BISTRO FOR RENT

A unique atmosphere with a good style in a prime location in Rawai. The bar has 40 seats; the fully equipped bistro has 35 seats.

Please contact.
Tel: 01-8940570
Email: hsiegner@royal-beerhouse.com

CHINESE JUNK BOAT

for sale. Traditional, but new, wooden junk from Vietnam. 22.8 meters long, 5.4 meters wide. Ideal for day, overnight or dive charters. Thai owning company with charter license. Boat is ready for delivery. Asking US\$200,000 (includes company). Tel: 076-345710, 07-2827727. Fax: 076-345710. Email: litzaco@hotmail.com for specifications and pictures.

BAR FOR SALE

Long lease for New Lips Bar, Soi Gonzo, off Soi Bangla. Lock, stock, equipment, inc. 1.2 million baht, neg. Please call Nigel at Tel: 04-6895043 for details.

BUSINESSES

for sale. Great businesses in one of the best locations in Patong are for sale, including:
- a 15-room guesthouse
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- an Internet shop

Asking 6 million baht. Tel: 01-0820039, 01-0911662. Email: ilan_75@hotmail.com

WANTED: SALON

Wanted to buy: Beauty salon with Thai massage shop in Patong area. Up to 1 million baht. Tel: 61-418997446. Email: tonyll@bigpond.net.au

Business Products & Services

ATTENTION FOREIGNERS!

Help your lady learn English quickly with professional teachers at Text-And-Talk Academy, Patong. Also learn Thai quickly in fun courses. Contact K. Amado. Location: Junction of Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd joins Prachanukroh Rd, opposite Coconut Hotel and next to Phuket Directory. Become a professional English teacher through our world-famous TEFL course and learn survival Thai for free. Contact Paul or James, for the TEFL course only, at Tel: 06-9520088, Email: paul@langserv.com

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Charity

PEOPLE AND PLACES IN PHUKET

Each September, I visit Phuket for biking around in the island and meet people and find new places. I live in Sweden but my bike remains in Phuket. On my home site I report from these trips and I also try to help tsunami victims. Email: knut.angstrom@telia.com For further details, please see our website at: www.web.telia.com/~u26400624/Eindex.html

Club Memberships Available

GOLF MEMBERSHIP

Loch Palm Golf Club membership for sale at 300,000 baht plus transfer fee. Please call for more information. Tel: 07-2707452.

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English computer technician, new or used. GPRS, ADSL, WLAN and Internet access without a phone. Tel: 09-4735080.

HP COMPUTER

Brand new – used only once! Hewlett Packard computer: Pentium 4 (3.06GHz), 512MB RAM, 120GB HDD, DVD-RW combo drive. 17" monitor with speakers and HP printer. Only 20,000 baht. Tel: 01-258-4565, 01-6862096. Email: yingchaisiri@yahoo.com or lbcmcsmike@yahoo.com

USED CANON PRINTER

Canon BJC-210 SP compact inkjet printer. Used only once with one ink cartridge. 700 baht. Tel: 076-225215. Fax: 076-234832. Email: eric@insurance-in-thailand.com

17-INCH MONITOR

For sale: Socos monitor, 17 inch. Only 2,000 baht. Tel: 076-281034. Email: peter@phuketinternet.co.th

Miscellaneous for Sale

INTERNATIONAL DRIVERS LICENSE

- < 5,000 baht, valid up to 10 years
- < 6,000 baht, valid up to 20 years
- < 100% legal
- < Sole agent in Thailand
- Internationally recognized & accredited.

Address: Baan Suan Place, 38/3 Moo 5, Soi Bang Yai, Phuket.
Tel: 04-0068736 or 04-6906612.
Email: iaa@intllicense.com
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MOVING SALE

Pots, pans, crockery, cutlery, blinds, kettle, toaster, shelving unit, desk fans, and more! All need to go - make us an offer! Email: a.c.vaughan@gmail.com

NEW TV

23" TV, new and still under warranty. Asking for 4,200 baht ono. For more info. Tel: 076-255232, 04-6259065. Email: ammarasoithong@yahoo.com

Miscellaneous Wanted

ELECTRIC GOLF CART

Running or not. Call K. Clint. Tel: 07-2793577.

Mobile Phones

NOKIA 6610

6 month old, in perfect condition. Comes with headset for radio and an extra cover in black. Only 4,500 baht. Tel: 09-8683617. Email: patrick.jehle@gmail.com

Personal Services

PHOTOCOPY REPAIRS

Friendly farang fixes copiers, faxes + laser toner refills. Please call George. Tel: 06-9724805.

LEARN THAI

at home. Charming Thai lady teacher gives Thai lessons at your home. Full course with conversation practise and home study material. Beginners or more advanced. Tel: 01-7971497. Email: churee77@hotmail.com

MAID AVAILABLE

From Feb 1, I will relocate to northern Thailand and wish to assist my maid in finding other employment. She's been with us for 2 years, always very honest and reliable. She speaks a little English, has her own transport and is very good with small children (can babysit at night). She works 6 days from 8 am to 4 pm, with public holidays off. Tel: 01-7192458. Email: phuketmark@yahoo.co.uk

KIDS' PARTY?

Hire a bouncing castle for great fun. For rates and information. Tel: 01-8918689.

ENGLISH & GRAPHICS

teacher. Girl from Europe is teaching basic English for children and adults. I also teach graphic programs on computer – Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, Quark. Tel: 66-06053233. Email: katka.svobodova@volny.cz

Personals

BACKGAMMON

Retired businessman looking for backgammon players on Phuket Island. Please call if interested. Tel: 076-386113, 01-5778443.

LOOKING FOR

female friend. I'm a 30-year-old American looking for an English-speaking female friend to show me around Phuket. If available please email me. Will be in Phuket December 15-19. Email: rastebob50@hotmail.com

Pets

DOG NEEDS HOME

Puke needs a home. She is 3 years old, a lovely dog, sterilized 2 years ago, and has all the required injections and medicine. She is a big dog with a great need to give and receive love. If someone can take care of Puke, we will be happy to provide one year of food. Tel: 07-2825008. Email: katafrog@hotmail.com

Saloon Cars

GAZETTE MIRA FOR SALE



Daihatsu Mira 1997

We have one Mira for sale: 1997 model, gray, manual, well maintained by Daihatsu. The car has never been driven outside Phuket province and is in good condition. Price: 115,000 baht. To inspect/test drive, contact Khun Sudjai or Khun Fon.

Tel: 076-236555. Email: sudjai@phuketgazette.net

4 x 4s



TOYOTA D4D 3000

In best condition, Nov 2003; 41,000km; has a Carryboy with air conditioner. Original guarantee Nov 2006 or 100,000km. Includes an airbag, adjustable steering wheel, automatic, and soft leather seats. Selling for 595,000 baht.

Tel: 04-8374429.

FORD RANGER

4WD Ford Ranger 2.5 XLT Hurricane, registered September 2001. Low mileage (56,000km), double airbag, CD player, remote key/alarm, roll bar, 1st-class insurance. The car drives very well and is for sale at only 420,000 baht. Tel: 09-8669406. Email: danex01@gmail.com

MITSUBISHI 4WD

2-5 turbo, Oct 2002, 2 doors, blue-silver color, 62,000km, with tinted windows, carryboy and insurance service history. Asking 450,000 baht. Tel: 01-087-9983.

Pickups

ISUZU ADVENTURER

4/2-wheel drive, seats 7, immaculate, less than 2 years old. 750,000 baht ono (price new is over 1.2 million baht). All options. Please call K. Wana for more info. Tel: 076-279-450 or 01-8957359.

ISUZU D-MAX 2004

Isuzu D-Max Highlander, 3.0 diesel, 25,000km, July 2004. Has side steps, alloy wheels, a Pioneer CD-player, custom grille; first-class insurance paid in August. For sale at 575,000 baht. Tel: 06-2775298.

Motorbikes

HONDA CB SUPER FOUR

400cc, black color, 42,000 km, great sound, perfect ride. All paperwork ok. Asking 57,000 baht. Tel: 04-9928016.

KAWASAKI BOSS 175

New, 300km, bought new for 100,000 baht. Selling for 80,000 baht. Please call for more information. Tel: 01-6078000.

KAWASAKI BOSS 175

"Night fire red", in immaculate condition. Price: 60,000 baht. Please contact Paul. Tel: 06-2833227.

KAWASAKI BOSS 175

In good condition, blue, 12 months old. 56,000km. Asking 28,000 baht. Tel: 09-4706104.

SUZUKI INTRUDER

VS 750. Intruder 750cc, 50hp, mint condition, complete engine overhaul in 2004. Custom made stainless steel exhaust system, new custom leg rests, new clutch, new cables, new bearings, new seat – too much to list. All parts genuine Suzuki from Europe. Only 7,000km since overhaul, this is a very reliable chopper. Green book and Phuket registration. Tax and 1st-class insurance. 195,000 baht, including transfer. Tel: 076-296621, 09-0216803. Fax: 076-344689. Email: info@baansuanvilla.de

HONDA PHANTOM

5,000km, black, many extras and no accidents. Price: 69,500 baht. Tel: 01-081-2838. Email: ob1267@freenet.de

Van

1994 MINIBUS

Nissan Urvan for sale. Gray, 11 seats, CD player, in good condition. Price: 240,000 baht. Tel: 04-8516115. Email: suksavat@hotmail.com

Rentals

A1 CAR RENTAL



Cars, trucks, jeeps – fully insured for rental. Best prices for long-term rental: 12,000-20,000 baht per month. Please call. Tel: 076-200900, 09-8314703.

LOW PRICE

Low price for long-term rent. Many types of new cars, with CD player and insurance, and well maintained. Please contact for info. Tel: 01-607-8567. Email: suksavat@hotmail.com

Wanted

RANGE ROVER WANTED

Wanted: Range Rover, year 95/96. Suspension or other mechanical problems not a problem, but price must reflect. Tel: 01-5523966. Email: maitland998@hotmail.com

WANTED: 4WD TRUCK

Any make, but must be 4 door, 4 wheel drive, and in good condition. Please state age, mileage and price wanted. A photo by e-mail would be helpful. Tel: 01-9785181. Email: anongb@gmail.com

Others

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