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HUGE REEF DISCOVERED

Four square kilometers of coral 'unique in Thailand'

By Sylvie Yaffe

PHANG NGA: Marine scientists inspecting coral reefs along the Andaman coast have discovered an uncharted reef off Tai Muang covering, they say, at least four square kilometers – larger than any known reef in the region.

The discovery, made in the first week of January, was documented by Songpol Tippayawong, Head of the Thailand Marine and Coastal Conservation Unit (MCCU) of the WWF (formerly known as the World Wildlife Fund). The MCCU were surveying a reef nearby when they were tipped off by local fishermen.

"We never thought the reef would be so large," said K. Songpol, a Phang Nga native.

"I have never even seen a reef that is one kilometer wide by one kilometer long in Thailand, and so far we have surveyed only four square kilometers of this new reef. It is actually bigger, we have yet to survey the exact boundaries."

The discovery follows a report in January this year that about 13% of reefs inspected along the Andaman coast in the weeks after the tsunami had 50% or more of their coral destroyed by the waves.

Describing the reef, K. Songpol told the *Gazette*, "It was great – very big and healthy. It is in good condition and only about 1% of it was damaged by the tsunami.

"It is completely different



Untouched by humans – indeed, unseen by all but a handful of people – the coral of the newly-discovered reef is truly spectacular. – Photo by Songpol Tippayawong

from the [reefs at] the Similans, Surin or Richelieu – it is not sloping, and it is home to species never before seen in Thai waters as well as species [that before were] only seen in the Similans, such as a rare type of sweet lips.

"We also found one rock formation with over 20 lobsters in it. We named that site 'lobster condo'," he said.

Although the MCCU has yet to complete its assessment of the reef, the team has so far recorded more than 30 genera of

hard corals, 112 species of fish from 56 families, including the parrot fish *Chlorurus rakaura*, which has never been seen in Thai waters before.

K. Songpol, who has worked at the Phuket Marine Biological Center at Cape Panwa for the past eight years, explained that tin mining in the area was the likely reason that the reef remained undiscovered for so long.

"I think that because of the tin mining many years ago, people assumed that coral this area

would have been degraded [because of the run-off from the mining]," he said.

For now, K. Songpol is keeping the location of the reef a secret in order to protect it. "Right now I'm not telling anyone exactly where it is," he said, adding that the reef must first be surveyed, the coral's condition assessed and the boundaries of the reef established.

"We believe it will have the capability to boost tourism in the

Continued on page 2



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Suwat pushes for fast action on Phi Phi

By Anongnat Sartpisut

PHUKET: In an abrupt government about-face after more than a year of blocking rehabilitation of Koh Phi Phi Don following the tsunami, Deputy Prime Minister Suwat Liptapanlop has urged redevelopment be pushed ahead to hasten the island's return to its former status as a tourism hotspot.

At a meeting held at the Royal Phuket City Hotel, government representatives from Phuket, Phang Nga and Krabi discussed redevelopment progress in the three provinces.

'DISGRACEFUL'

Krabi Vice-Governor Chai Panichpornpan complained that construction has been started on only three of the planned 50 houses for tsunami victims on Koh Phi Phi Don.

V/Gov Chai said, "Can you imagine this – that tourists can approach to within sight of Koh Phi Phi Don, yet they cannot disembark due to boat congestion in the bay? It's disgraceful that redevelopment plans still have not been approved."

He also commented on two key problems the island faces: supplies of water and power.

Thailand's Provincial Waterworks Authority has agreed to produce water using reverse osmosis technology to sell to Phi Phi Don residents, depending on government funding for the project.

Despite a 620-million-baht budget approved on September 6 last year by the Provincial Electricity Authority to link the island to the mainland power grid via



Suwat Liptapanlop: Swept aside objections about coral damage.

underwater cables, the Environmental Office (EO) – under the the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment – has not authorized this project, claiming that the necessary construction work would destroy or damage surrounding coral reefs.

Currently, people on the island use generators to produce electricity.

Deputy PM Suwat asked,

"Why doesn't the EO care about the noise pollution caused by the generators?"

Officials from the EO agreed to reconsider allowing cables to be laid underwater if Krabi Province sends them a revised Initial Environmental Examination (IEE).

The project IEE is now undergoing a review, for resubmission to the EO.

Finally, V/Gov Chai said that although locals agree to a 20-meter-wide strip of shoreline to be designated a no-construction zone in order to preserve the beachfront, the Land Department and the EO have already approved a 30m-wide zone, causing anger among some island residents.

He added that, with the tourism season in full swing, hotels and other tourism businesses were irked because no development of land by the beach can start until the dispute is resolved.

Deputy PM Suwat ordered the Vice-Governor, the Land Department and the EO to discuss the issue further and reach a final decision. However, no deadline was set.

Phuket gears up for polls

PHUKET: Voters in Phuket and across the country will be busy in April with two national elections: the Parliamentary election slated for April 2 and the Senatorial election on April 19.

Dr Sriyada Palimapan will be the Thai Rak Thai (TRT) party

candidate for Phuket's Parliamentary District 1 while Wisut Santikul stand for District 2.

Whether the Democrats – who held both seats in Phuket until Parliament was dissolved – will field candidates is not clear.

The Democrats, the Mahachon Party and the Chart Thai Party have decided to boycott the April 2 election as part of the growing drive to force Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra to resign.

Candidates for election to Parliament must register between March 4 and 8.

Candidates for the Senatorial race must register between March 24 and 28.

The unofficial list of senatorial candidates for Phuket now includes: Dr Prasit Koeksiripong, Thanyarat Acharyachai, Prawat Suwannadithakul and Uthai Suksirisamphan.



The reef teems with marine life. – Photo by Songpol Tippayawong

Huge reef discovered

From page 1

area [but only] when there is a good management plan. We are doing a field survey and we are collecting scientific data in order to zone the area and put down some mooring buoys."

K. Songpol expressed concern that enforcement of environmental conservation laws was lacking, which might jeopardize the reef. "There are a lot of good laws in Thailand, but enforcement needs to be more effective."

He explained that a management strategy was crucial to protecting the reef. The strategy should include: raising awareness among local people; zoning and the reintroduction of some rare species of marine life; promoting tourism, with participation from local villagers; and continual coral restoration. "We have already introduced 100 giant clams [at the new reef]," he said.

With a good management strategy in place, K. Songpol did not see see tourism and diving as a threat to the reef, "...not if we have regulations like the United Nations Environment Program's (UNEP) Green Fins [guidelines] and a code of conduct. We can control the carrying capacity [the number of divers diving on the reef] and set some regulations," he said.

"Dive operators love nature and are willing to help in all kinds of conservation activities," he added. "I also understand they have to make a profit. But we need to get all interested parties involved in managing natural resources.

"We cannot do it ourselves

or with just one or two government bodies. Without participation from local people, dive operators and tour operators, we won't have an effective management strategy," he said.

For the dive communities in Phuket and Khao Lak, the discovery came as both a bombshell and a cause for joy. Jeroen Deknatel, managing Director of Fantasea Divers, told the *Gazette*, "I'm absolutely delighted. Any new dive site means that it takes the pressure off existing dive sites. It's also great news for the Khao Lak diving community, who have been hard-hit. It's a special gift for them."

However, like K. Songpol, he also made a plea for the newly-discovered reef to be treated with due care to ensure that it is not damaged. The greatest amount of damage done to reefs these days, he said, was by inexperienced divers.

"Let's do what they do in Malaysia and keep inexperienced divers away from all that brittle coral until they have developed the underwater skills that ensure that they don't accidentally bump into things and break things off." This would have to be policed by the dive companies themselves, he added.

In Khao Lak, initial reaction has also been excited. "We know only what we have seen from the announcement by the WWF," said Wolly Woermer of Subaqua Club. "So far there have been no details about the location and depth of the coral.

"But we are excited about the new reef, as it may offer new options for diving daytrips from









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Plan to relax license rules for yacht skippers

BANGKOK: The Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MoTS) is planning to put before Cabinet a proposal to allow people with foreign captain's licenses to skipper Thai-registered sailing yachts.

The proposal, intended to give a boost to the marine tourism industry, would do away with an existing regulation that requires foreign skippers wanting to sail boats in local waters to obtain Thai licenses from the Marine Department.

It would also open up the market for bareboat charters. At present, any foreigner who charters a boat in Thailand, and who does not have a Thai license himself, must also hire a skipper with a Thai license.

The new regulation, if approved, would apply only to Thai-registered sailboats that

are under 16 meters (52 feet) in length. The boats must also have motors of a limited size.

The move follows a joint declaration entitled "The Plan of Action of Franco-Thai Tourism Cooperation", signed on February 18 by Thai Tourism and Sports Minister Pracha Maleenont and his French counterpart, Leon Bertrand.

The declaration was one of a number of initiatives agreed to during a three-day state visit by French President Jacques Chirac.

According to a press release by the MoTS, those who stand to benefit most from the relaxed restrictions would be international-standard marinas, of which, it said, there are four in Thailand – two in Phuket and two in Chon Buri. The agreement would also help the marine industry to grow further by using

French expertise in marina management, it added.

Bunjird Sonsuwan, Section Manager of the Tourism and Sports Ministry's Public Relations office, told the *Gazette* that if there are no political changes and if the proposal is approved by Cabinet, it would go into effect on October 1.

Not everyone is happy with the proposed rule change. Surin Tirakulpisut, Head of the Phuket Marine Office, questioned how Thailand would benefit from a relaxation in regulations that he believes are already fair.

"How many people sail in here on big yachts and don't stay in our hotels? These people are rich – they're millionaires. But I don't see how Thai people benefit from them coming here," he said.

Employers threaten strike over labor crackdown

PHUKET CITY: Some 200 angry employers descended on Phuket Provincial Meeting Hall on February 27, threatening to go on strike if their demands for an easing of rules on foreign laborers are not met.

Key representatives of the Phuket Provincial Fisheries Association, the Phuket Provincial Construction Association and other Phuket businesses handed Phuket Governor Udomsak Usvarangkura a petition urging him to reduce the fines imposed on employers caught hiring illegal laborers from Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia.

They made three demands:

- An amnesty allowing employers not to register laborers until a new government has been installed.

- A freeze on the compulsory 1,000-baht-per-laborer good behavior bond until Memoranda of Understanding that the Thaksin administration was in the process of completing with Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia have been signed.

- An end to arrests of employers and illegal laborers in cases where an extension to pay the registration fee has been granted by the Phuket Provincial Employment Services Office (PESO).

If these demands were not met, the petition stated, all employers who have signed the petition would suspend all work.

The following day, at a meeting chaired by the Governor, it was decided to accede to the employers' third point, though K. Boonchock warned afterwards, "If [unregistered] laborers are found wandering at large, the police can [still] arrest them."

As for the first two points, he said that these had been relayed to the Ministry of Labor in Bangkok, which is considering them.

Seaweed causes a stink in Patong

PATONG: Nipawan Bussarawit, a marine biologist at the Phuket Marine Biological Center (PMBC), has confirmed that the rising level of "organic contaminants" in Patong Bay has contributed to the explosive growth of stinking brown seaweed that has been washing up on Patong Beach for the past month.

K. Nipawan said that the water quality in Patong Bay was still at acceptable levels, but the rise in its organic content may have spurred the growth of the seaweed, which she identified as being *Cladophora*.

"*Cladophora* grows naturally, but the factors that cause this seaweed to bloom so much like this are high levels of nutrients and high temperatures.

"The high organic content comes from wastewater. If we had a good wastewater treatment system, the water going into the bay shouldn't have organic waste – or inorganic waste – that would cause the seaweed to grow." K. Nipawan added that the weed is not harmful to people.

Patong Deputy Mayor Chairat Sukkabaan defended Municipality efforts to deal with the problem. "We send workers to clean up the weed every day, and test the water quality every week.

"The water quality is not that bad, and even the PMBC has told us that the seaweed grows not just because of the organic material but also from the weak current and the amount of sunshine – and it's not harmful."

Tsunami tower test causes consternation

By Ananya Hongsa-ngiam

PHUKET: Officials declared a test of 12 tsunami warning towers on February 22 a success, but residents of some parts of the island said they were terrified as they had received no warning of the trial, during which full emergency messages were broadcast.

One woman living in Chalong said, "The warning tower kept broadcasting a message telling us to get out and run for higher ground. Cars were roaring up the hill past our house. It was very frightening."

"In the end, I called my husband and he told me that it was just a drill," she said.

The *Gazette* was at Saphan Hin for the test there, during which the broadcast message, in English, was, "Attention please! Attention please! There are tidal waves from storm winds. Please leave the beach as far as possible for higher ground urgently."

The Mandarin version mentioned a "typhoon".

Arun Keodsom, Chief of the Phuket Office for Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (ODPM), apologized to those who were frightened by the test.

"I want to apologize to people [who were panicked]. We informed the tambon administration organizations, the district offices, the Phuket Provincial Public Relations Office, and the press



The ODPM's Arun Keodsom: apologies.

and TV stations about the test," he said.

"I told the NDWC [the National Disaster Warning Center in Nonthaburi] to broadcast 'This is a drill' at the beginning of each warning. But they didn't do that. They broadcast that message just once, right at the beginning of the test," he added.

That apart, he said, the test was a success. "We tested all 12 warning towers. The trial was satisfactory."

In addition to the 12 tested on February 22, four more warning towers are in various stages of construction.

Vice-Governor Worapot Ratthasima told the *Gazette* that the tower on Koh Lone, off Chalong, is ready, but has not yet been linked to the NDWC.

Two more towers are to be built at Nai Harn and Kata Noi, funded by donations from Thai TV channel iTV. They are expected to be completed in March.

"Recently, Governor Udomsak Usvarangkura went to Koh Racha," V/Gov Worapot said. "He observed that this is a tsunami danger area and assigned me to contact iTV to request funding for one more tower."

K. Arun said that the budget has already been approved by iTV and the tower will be completed in April.

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At a February 22 meeting chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Suwat Liptapanlop at the Royal Phuket City Hotel, only about half of the Patong Bay Development committee's 36 members – all appointed by embattled Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra – bothered to attend.

The poor attendance may have been related to the fact that Saphan Hin had served as the site of an anti-Thaksin rally just days before. But despite the poor turnout at the meeting, the idea of siting a mega-project in Phuket Bay seems to enjoy strong support in province, even from the Democrat Party-controlled Provincial Administration Organization (*OrBorJor*).

Among those in attendance was Phuket Governor Udomsak Uswarangkura, who briefed DPM Suwat on the project's history, which dates back 17 years to 1989, when it was first conceived by the *OrBorJor* of that time.

After 13 years in the conceptual realm, the project took a small step toward becoming reality in 2002, when the Interior Ministry's Department of Public Works and Town & Country Planning commissioned consulting firm BBMT (Thailand) to conduct an 11-million-baht feasibility study on the project.

That study, completed in 2003, was incorporated into the updated plan put before the committee members. It calls for Thailand's largest Meetings, Incentives, Convention and Exhibition (MICE) center, a 37-billion-baht facility with seating for 30,000 delegates; and a 26.5-billion-baht marina complex. The marina would be on such a scale as to dwarf existing marinas on the island and immediately propel Phuket into a premier position in Asia's marine leisure industry. The entire project would cover some 3,200 rai of mostly reclaimed land.

Other facilities would include restaurants, hotels, apartments, office buildings and retail areas, an information technology center, leisure and entertainment center, sports center and a hospital.

The feasibility study puts the

Just days before the dissolution of Thailand's lower house, Deputy Prime Minister Suwat Liptapanlop chaired a meeting on the long-discussed Phuket Bay (Ao Phuket) Development mega-project, which would transform the city's drab seafront into the gateway for a futuristic international convention hall and marina complex, which, its proponents say, would serve as an icon for Thailand. The *Gazette's* Anongnat Sarpisut and Stephen Fein report.

total project cost at a staggering 63.5 billion baht, with the government making an initial 4.9-billion-baht investment in infrastructure.

According to the 2003 study, the break-even point would be three years and the pay-back period as short as 13 years, assuming optimal conditions. The basic internal rate on return would be 8.64% a year; 10.77% under optimal conditions. The net present value over 30 years would increase more than 10-fold, from 2.8 billion baht to over 24.5 billion baht. The offshore complex would require 14,300 cubic meters of water per day, while daily producing 5,805 cubic meters of wastewater and 45 tonnes of trash and garbage, the study said.

Gov Udomsak said the state-owned waterfront land required for the project is currently tied up in a tin-mining concession held by Tongkah Harbour Pcl, but that will expire at the end of this year.

Gov Udomsak revealed the names of four groups interested in investing in the project: Tongkah Harbour; an investment company controlled by Thai investor Premchai Kannasut; an unnamed Canadian firm and a Japanese

AO PHUKET:

firm understood to be that of renowned University of Tokyo Professor Tadao Umezawa and his firm Umezawa and Partners.

This Umezawa group has already produced a detailed manual and CD overview describing its vision of a project, which would start with a resort called "Anabasis", to be "based on the supposition that a spaceship has traveled through space and time and landed in Phuket Bay".

When finished the project would also include a "media wall"; the world's largest video display screen, measuring 90 x 180 square meters, which would dominate the skyline like a scene out of *Bladerunner* with images visible from Phuket City.

Conspicuously absent from the February 22 proceedings was *OrBorJor* President Anchalee Vanich-Thepabutr, whose agency was represented by her deputy, Sutin Uthaitamrong. He told the committee that the project stood to benefit the country and province as well as bring jobs to local people.

"However, Phuket residents do not want the project to consist of gambling and entertainment venues, such as bars and pubs," he said.

Phuket City Mayor Somjai Suwannasuppana said that the project was a good idea – as long as it did not have a negative impact on local people's way of life. Saphan Hin has long served as a sports and recreational area for local people; this continued role for the area should not be compromised, she said.



She also expressed concerns about the project's effect on traffic and its environmental impacts; according to the feasibility study, all of the garbage generated would need to be burned by the municipal incinerator at Saphan Hin that is already working well over its capacity, she concluded.

Although there have never been any public hearings about the project – nor are any planned – DPM Suwat concluded that the viewpoints of those committee members who bothered to attend seemed to constitute public support for the project, which he described as being still "at the groundwork stage".

"We have a lot of experience," he said. "If local people don't agree with the project, then

we will shelve it. If we enjoy public support, however, then we can take the next step and begin to look at the legal and environmental issues involved, as well as finance," he said.

The DPM downplayed the possibility of adverse environmental effects from the project, such as damage to the remaining tracts of mangrove forest that once flourished in the area, and damage to marine life through sedimentation.

"Environmentally, there isn't much to worry about. It can be designed to ensure that water circulation is not impeded.

"We are taking an ugly piece of land and beautifying it and, at the same time, turning a useless area into one that will

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From eyesore to icon?



The marina complex currently envisioned by the Public Works and Town and Country Planning Office includes an observation tower far higher than anything its own building codes would ever allow – if it were to be built by the private sector.

build 300 man-made islands which, combined, will take on the shape of a world map.

According to DPM Suwat, Thai tourism needs a similar focal point – and it should be located in the muddy waters of Phuket Bay, into which

flows much of the untreated wastewater from Phuket City and its environs, including parts of Kathu.

“Phuket can do it, but we will need to improve our infrastructure, such as by expanding the airport to accommodate more and larger aircraft as well as in improving the waste management system,” he said.

DPM Suwat summed up the way forward for transforming Phuket Bay from eyesore to icon as follows:

- Overcoming legal hurdles,

such as by getting special approval for the work despite existing regulations that forbid backfilling of the sea. Such permission can be granted if the work is viewed as being “in the public interest”, he said.

- Guiding the course of the development in such a way as to ensure that appropriate facilities are provided, while still allowing enough flexibility to investors. MICE facilities (with seating for a minimum 10,000 delegates) and a marina would need to be part of any development plan, he said.

- Clear investment guidelines and incentives would have to be put in place, such as by allowing investment on land concession for an appropriate length of time, such as 30 or 60 years. This would require further study, he said.

“This project is suitable and the local people agree with it,” he said, adding that no project can succeed without the support of locals.

To this end, a 12-member panel, headed by Gov Udomsak, was formed to handle public relations, which will include informing the public about the project through local government bodies and relaying public concerns to the main committee. Again, there was no specific call to arrange local public hearings listed in the sub-committee’s mandate.

Another progress meeting on the issue would be held in two weeks’ time, said DPM Suwat, “but I think it’s better if we hold it in Bangkok,” he added.

Thanan Tanpaibul, whose company holds a 30-year concession to operate Rassada Harbor at the north end of Phuket Bay near the mouth to Klong Tha Chin, attended an earlier meeting on the project organized by BBMT Consultants. He said he is in favor of the project, as it could help develop the entire Phuket City waterfront.

“If a huge project such as

this can help organize housing and environmental control systems, it will improve the area,” he said.

However, he stressed that the development would have to be carried out in strict accordance with the terms of the project’s Environmental Impact Assessment.

He added that the government’s limited budget and limited experience of projects of this scale and nature made seeking private investment and expertise the preferred option.

But that might not be easy. “In my opinion, it’s going to be difficult because investors want a clear idea of when they will see a return on investment, and that’s not so easy to provide,” he said.

Also in favor of the project is Phuket Chamber of Commerce President Eam Thavornwongwongse, who is a member of both the main Phuket Bay Development committee and the public relations sub-committee.

He sees the project as having the potential to give a new direction to tourism development on the island – one that could help change the seasonal nature of the Phuket tourism industry by attracting visitors year-round.

K. Eam said the only scenario under which the project is likely to happen in the foreseeable future is through massive private sector investment. Like K. Thanan, he thinks that, to make this possible, the government must make the investment terms clear and attractive.

Like most of the people the *Gazette* spoke to, K. Eam sees the environmental impact of the project as a secondary concern.

“If we get investment in this area it might even help conserve the environment...there is no need to worry about the effects of backfilling the sea floor as this type of thing has already been done in Penang and Singapore,” he noted.

generate income through tourism,” he said.

In what was seen as a reference to the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur, DPM Suwat decried Thailand’s lack of a modern, world-class icon to promote tourism.

“Thailand doesn’t have any tourism landmarks. Apart from structures built by our ancestors, most of our tourist attractions are natural, not man-made. Malaysia doesn’t compare with Thailand in terms of natural beauty, but now they have become our big com-

petitors by using innovative ideas to make their country interesting,” he said.

DPM Suwat was also clearly impressed during his visit to the United Arab Emirates city of Dubai, where an internationally acclaimed resort and a huge property development have been built on reclaimed land in the shape of a palm tree. This project is so huge that it is clearly visible in satellite images taken.

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Suspect shampoos come up clean

Tests by the Food and Drug Administration found nothing wrong with samples of a leading anti-dandruff shampoo that two people claimed made them go bald.

FDA director Dr Paijit Varachit said the FDA's Medical Sciences Department tested two samples and found the ingredients used were in accordance with what was on the labels and that there was no contamination.

One of the two samples tested was taken from a bottle bought in Samut Prakan by Samran Saipromyat, who complained that he lost most of his hair within weeks after using the shampoo. The other was from a bottle bought from a convenience store in Kamphaeng Phet Province by Ploy Sampao, aunt of well-known singer Netchanok Panpure, who claimed the shampoo had an odd smell and that there was a condom inside its container.

In the case of K. Ploy, who said she went bald after using the same shampoo three times, doctors found she suffered from a skin disease called alopecia areata, which causes hair loss.

FDA Secretary-General Pakdee Pothisiri said he would advise doctors to check if Samran's hair loss had been caused by a skin disease.

K. Pakdee has asked provincial health offices countrywide to inspect shampoos sold at cheap prices at fairs.

If sellers were found carrying fake shampoos or failed to identify where they were made,



An old man from Lampang demonstrates his own invention, a bamboo violin, at Chiang Mai's Sunday Walking Street. His offer to teach violin free of charge attracted many people.

they would face charges. The FDA plans a public campaign to educate people about shampoo allergies, he said.

Blaze of gory: Chon Buri fireworks manufacturer Phithak Yajanthra suffered severe burns and died at a local hospital after two packages of fireworks he was lifting onto a pickup truck exploded.

The blast threw him 10 meters from the vehicle. Debris from his home, which housed the fireworks plant and also ignited, was found 100 meters away.

Phithak's wife Chanida said her husband had been in the business for 10 years and had spent all of that day making fireworks for an international conference in Chon Buri Province.

Wild accusations: Supoj Methapiwat, the director of the Chiang Mai Night Safari's Animal Management Office, defended the park in the face of allegations by foreign animal-rights activists that many animals had died there because its staff was inadequately trained to care for the animals.

K. Supoj said the activists

had failed to mention that dozens of animals had been born at the night safari, including lions and a number of species of deer.

"Is this a result of good care, then?" he asked sarcastically.

Smackdown: Lin Po Ching of Taiwan and Malaysian Yang Chien Ting were arrested by anti-narcotics officers at the departure terminal of Bangkok's Don Muang Airport while checking in to board a flight to Taiwan with heroin packs attached to their legs and bodies. Police earlier arrested Choe Wan Hoi, of Ma-

laysia, who allegedly supplied the drug to both "mules".

Choe lived in a Bangkok apartment, where he supplied the heroin and "dressed" the two other suspects with the drug before they flew to Taiwan. The three have been charged with possessing heroin and attempting to traffic it.

Police Maj Gen Suwat Janithikul, a deputy chief of the Royal Thai Police's Narcotics Suppression Bureau (NSB), said the arrests resulted from intelligence cooperation with Taiwanese police. The suspects had smuggled heroin from Thailand to Taiwan before, he said.

Water policy runs uphill: The former Director-General of the Royal Irrigation Department said he thought experts from abroad lack the necessary geographical, climatic or social understanding to be able to allocate Thai water resources appropriately.

Speaking at a public forum organized by the National Economic and Social Development Advisory Council, Senator Pramote Maiklad said he feared the previous Thaksin administration's policy of inviting foreign companies to play a crucial role in water management would waste time and money.

Sen Pramote suggested the government should embark on a national study of all the factors relating to water and its supply.

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

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*When the taste is perfect,
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Queer News

The crack of doom

PATHUM THANI: Readers living in Thailand may occasionally experience the frustration of having to deal with a sudden infestation of red ants, roaches, or termites. What can be more annoying than discovering that savory breast of barbecued chicken you left on the table moments ago is swarming with feisty red ants?

Discovering your house swarming with glistening, newly hatched cobras, that's what!

Residents of Baan Suan Laem Tong, a suburb to the north of Bangkok in Pathum Thani's Tambon Klong Neung, have been confronted with that rather frightening situation, and, finding themselves at a loss how to deal with the problem, called on the government for help. Government experts, however, told them merely to put on knee boots and get out their brooms.

As is well-known, cobras are an especially dangerous family of snakes: their poison acts not on the blood, but on the central nervous system – so is more swiftly mortal unless a large shot of antivenin is given immediately.

The denizens of Baan Suan Laem Tong probably never guessed they would have to worry about the proximity of antivenins when purchasing their homes.

"For the first three months I lived here, life was normal," said Tanongsak Jantsaneh, 28, "but on February 20 baby cobras about the thickness of my thumb emerged from a crack in the road beside by house. I called the neighbors and together we beat them to death. But the cobras kept coming out of the crack in the road. We killed nearly 20, and had to take turns sitting up at night on the look-out for more.

"The next morning, we broke into an old fish-farm tank next to our homes and found it seething with baby cobras. We killed at least another 20. After that I sealed up the crack in the road outside my house – but the snakes found another crack in the house next door, and started coming out of it. So residents have had to seal every crack in and around their houses."

Another resident, Jom Nualjant, explained that the crack in the street runs about the length of three houses: "We've been hitting at snakes that emerge all along the crack. I found a spot next to one house where the concrete opened up to about the length of your hand – from the earth subsiding – and bent down to look inside: I saw a pile of snake eggs.

"So I reached in and scraped up a handful; but suddenly the mother cobra showed herself. She reared up and spread her hood, which was about the width of an adult's palm. It was pretty scary. I called the neighbors and we closed the crack with cement. But no matter how many cracks

we seal up, the snakes always find new ones from which to escape."

The night of February 22, K. Jom and his neighbors caught and killed another seven cobras.

"It's dangerous," he said, "we have to carry sticks around all the time. I'm afraid one of the children, or even an adult, will get hurt. In just three nights we've killed at least 50 snakes."

K. Jom said he thinks earth beneath the housing estate is honeycombed with hollows: "That makes the cobras want to go in and lay their eggs."

Residents say they have complained to officials that the situation is "a threat to life and limb," which is true, and asked for help. They probably find the methods suggested so far somewhat disappointing.

According to government veterinarian Dr Alongkorn Mahannop, they should spread kerosene or other strong smelling chemicals around their homes: "They need to pour it out all over the place; it'll drive the snakes into the forest or other place where there are no people, because they don't like the smell."

Alternatively, he suggested they might want to catch the snakes "and then release them in the national park."

A snake expert with the Thai Red Cross Council said the cobras were indeed attracted to moist hollows beneath the earth, and explained they typically lay seven to 30 eggs at a time: "After that they abandon their nests, leaving the eggs to hatch about two months later.

"Residents needn't fear the mother snake will guard the nest. Cobras don't care about their offspring." That statement, however, is not in consonance with the experience of Baan Suan Laem Tong resident K. Jom, as related above, and also diverges from the opinion of some Western snake experts.

Be that as it may, the Red Cross herpetologist's advice to worried residents was to "wear knee-high boots and use a broom to sweep the creatures into a dustpan. After that, pour them into a gunny sack. Anyone who doesn't want to kill them is welcome to bring them to the Red Cross' Saowapa Institute for safekeeping."

Cobra venom is used in making antivenins. It was not reported that the Red Cross offered to send their own personnel out to collect the cobras.

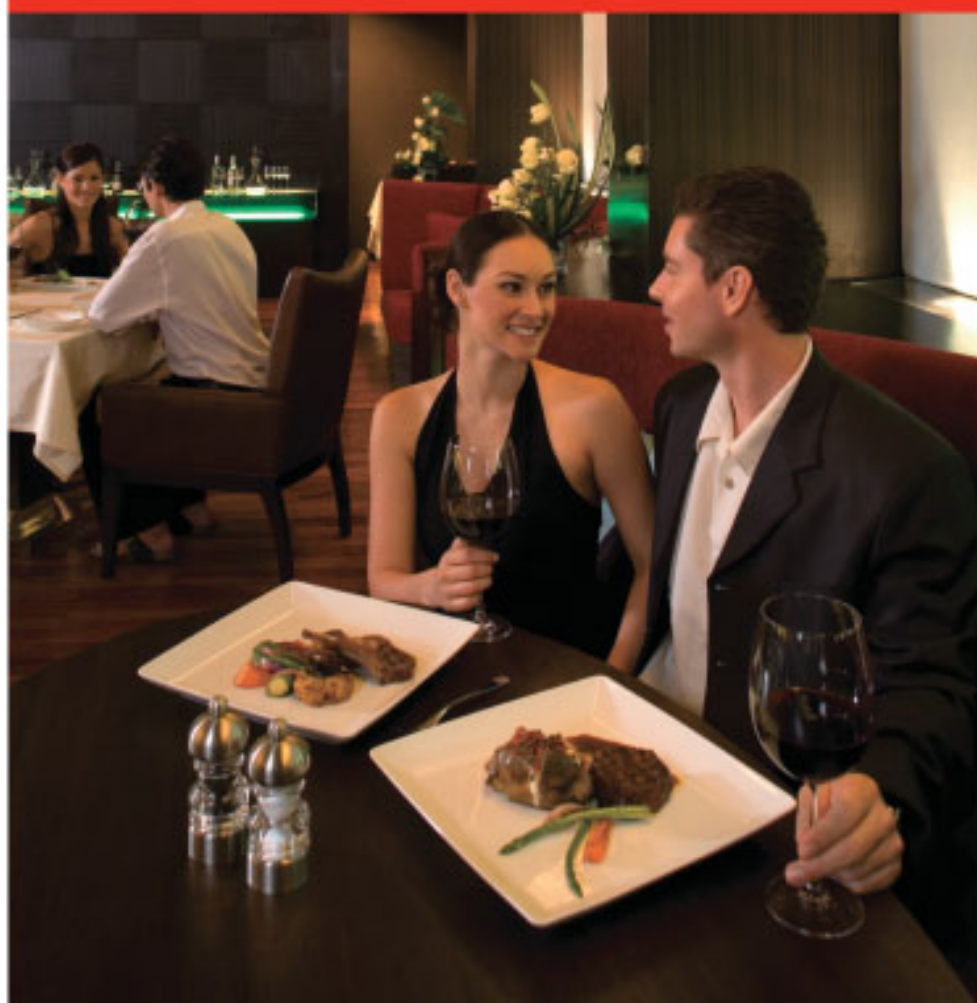
Perhaps the ultimate solution to the problem will be commercially based; when news of the infestation got out, merchants began turning up to buy adult cobras caught by the villagers, paying about 300 baht each for snakes in the five-to-seven-kilogram range.

Source: Kom Chad Luek



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FROM THE GULF OF THAILAND

By Barry Singleton

Anger follows inaction on Samui's roads

The Governor of Surat Thani Province, Vichit Vijaisarn, has reacted angrily to questions from the media about the state of Samui's flood-scarred roads and the fact that few repairs or improvements are in progress.

Widespread flooding in November caused serious damage to the island's main thoroughfares, and months later this still leads to traffic chaos.

To further add to the problem, since the New Year the island's main ring road has flooded again on several occasions in various locations, even after relatively light showers.

TRANSFER

In response to questions regarding the budget promised for much-needed repairs, the Governor chose to criticize both the Samui Municipality and the island's Highway Department for their lack of response to the situation.

Later, unconfirmed reports suggested that Gov Vichit even went so far as to transfer one of the senior officials responsible for road maintenance.

An emergency meeting was scheduled for February 24, with representatives from all the island's main public departments requested to attend.

Meanwhile, Gov Vichit instructed Buramee Patanasiri, the head of the construction and maintenance section of the Highway Department on Koh Samui to prepare a budget and action plan before the meeting.

"I would need a budget of around 1 billion baht to fully deal with the damage to Samui's roads," K. Buramee told local



ROAD TO RUIN: People on Samui are angry at the lack of action to repair flood-damaged roads.

media. "Unfortunately, as we have said before, this kind of funding can only come directly from the provincial governor."

Improving the quality of the roads is now one of the biggest issues facing the island, and will require cooperation between a number of public departments as well as assistance from the driving public.

However, the Governor's reaction was seen by certain locals as an attempt to divert attention from his own lack of response to the island's growing transport woes.

Police force to expand: Following the appointment of three senior officers on Koh Samui earlier this year, the police force now

plans to expand and improve its services by increasing the number of officers on the island and installing electronic equipment and new facilities, including a new police station.

The island's recently-appointed Chief Superintendent, Pol Col. Chakkrit Srisuwan recently announced the location of a new 100-million-baht police station,

which will be funded through the Municipality Office and built directly behind the island's main tourist strip in Chaweng.

Officers will be drafted in from other parts of the country to man the new station, including a second Chief Superintendent, and construction is expected to start within the next month.

In addition to these new facilities, the Samui Police Department also has been granted a budget of around 6 million baht to install CCTV cameras in seventeen locations around the island to facilitate more efficient crime prevention and detection.

The new Chief will also spend around 800,000 baht fitting special electronic checkpoints in 160 different places on Samui. Officers, using swipe cards, will document their presence at each of these checkpoints.

The new equipment is expected to be in place by the end of March 2006.

Fake passports and stolen checks: A man who tried to cash traveler's checks with a fake passport may lead the Samui police to a larger crime ring.

Filipino Alexander Soriano Rodriguez, 32, was apprehended when the teller at a branch of the Bank of Ayudhya in Chaweng noticed he was having difficulty signing his name in Japanese.

SOURCE

The teller called the police, who arrested the man and later discovered he was in possession of two Japanese passports with his photo inside. Rodriguez claimed to have bought them in Japan.

It later transpired that he had also bought US\$1,000 (39,381 baht) of American Express travelers checks for just 10,000 baht (US\$254) from a man in Soi Green Mango, in the heart of Samui's entertainment zone.

Police are continuing the investigation and will try to establish the source of the traveler's checks.

DVD crackdown: On February 17 a police team comprising officers from the Koh Samui Police Department, the Tourist Police and officers from Bangkok, arrested a man for smuggling and selling illegal DVDs on Koh Samui.

A police informer notified officers that Saesan Somsuk, 24, was selling copied DVDs of current movies from a side road off the main tourist strip in Chaweng. When they arrived at the scene, they found only a catalog of titles and a number of empty DVD sleeves.

Further investigation revealed that the man was renting a small shop nearby, and collecting the discs as customers ordered them. Inside the shop, police found more than 30,000 DVDs some 300 of which contained obscene material around 10,000 computer games and almost nearly 2,000 music CDs.

The total street value of the merchandise was estimated to be just under 1.5 million baht.

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By Nattamon Ratcharak

Tanyalak Pirrera has a passion for fashion. Barbie fashion, that is. K. Tanyalak owns EQ Kids at Big C, where you can find Barbies, Barbie accessories and dresses and even have your Barbie's hair done.

She explains, "When I was young I dreamed of running a business like this and now I'm able to fulfill that dream."

"I graduated with an MBA from Khon Khaen University 10 years ago and at first I had to ask myself what I really wanted to do and what I was familiar with. When it came down to it I had to admit that I really liked dolls and toys, so here I am."

"It's part of my character to express myself flamboyantly so my dolls and their clothes are like an extension of myself."

"I've been running this business for six years now. At first I had another company import the Barbies but then I realized that there was more potential in managing the whole thing myself."

"Sometimes I ask friends to bring Barbies back with them when they go abroad, too."

SKILLS

EQ Kids' shelves also feature remote control airplanes and toys expressly aimed at improving children's manual and learning skills, but the shops mainstay is good old Barbie.

"I focus on Barbies and even make clothes for them. Each Barbie is different - their faces, the different editions through the years - and yes, I love them. They're a big part of my life."

"It's important to me to use the best fabric and that it's soft so it fits just right, because I want to see each one look her best and to see each 'come alive'."

K. Tanyalak loves different dress styles. "I also design regional costumes, such as southern-style outfits and other traditional styles and this takes a lot of patience and elaborate work. I also set the dolls' hair in a bun or a coil on request."

EQ Kids sells Barbies at prices ranging from 850 to 1,100 baht.

EQ Kids is on the 2nd floor of Big C Supercenter. Open daily from 10 am to 9 pm.



THE DOLLS IN THE MALL



Main picture: Tanyalak Pirrera with some of her dolls. 'My dolls and their clothes are like an extension of myself,' she says. The other pictures give an idea of the care she lavishes on her Barbies.

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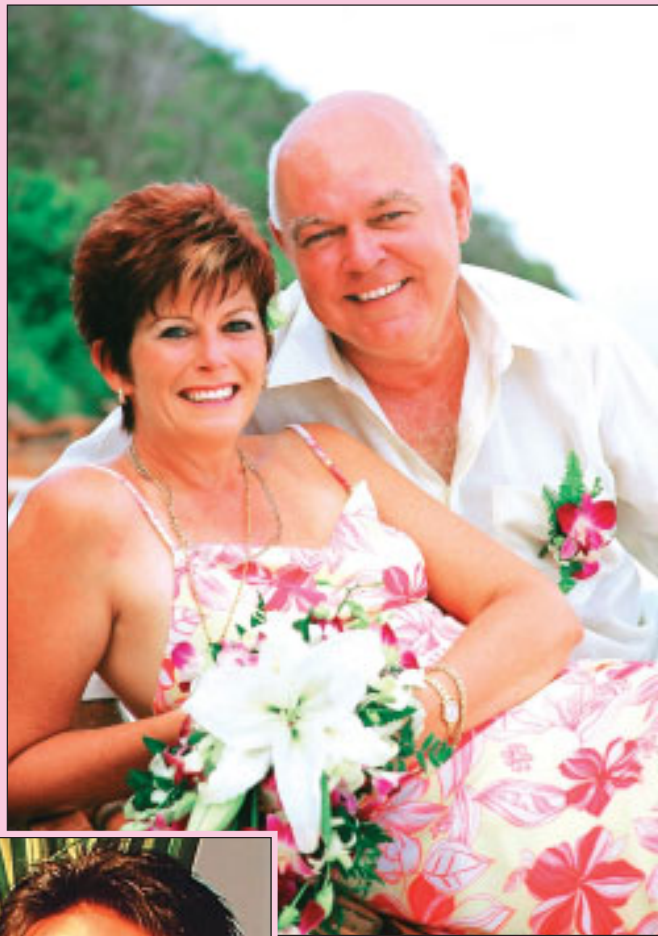
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Happily Ever After

Recent weddings in Phuket



Above, Leanne Riddock and Kerry Taylor were married on Koh Bon on that most romantic of days, Valentine's Day, in a ceremony organized by the Evason Phuket Resort and Six Senses Spa.



Left, Ninlakate Poothong and Sanit Limjanon were married in the Phrapitak Grand Ballroom at The Metropole hotel, Phuket City, on January 8.

Life's a vibe for

Two MTV Thailand video jockeys, or veejays, Janesuda 'Jane' Parnto, 24, and Rowena 'Ro' Kennett, 26, enjoyed three days of rest and relaxation at the Sri Panwa estate recently. There, they shared a few of their favorite things with the *Gazette's* Nattamon Ratcharak.

Jane Parnto has been working as a VJ for MTV Thailand since she was 19, and it's still a dream job, she says.

"Listening to music makes me feel happy," she says. "I love my job because it allows me to exchange ideas with teenagers. I feel close to them and really understand our audience."

"My favorite Thai bands are Pru and Modern Dog. I have been lucky enough to interview members of the Thai band named Flure; I respect them because they think out of the box."

"Jeff Buckley and Tori Amos are my favorite foreign musicians. I would like to interview Scarlet Johanson some day."

She keeps busy. In addition to her veejaying, she is studying English at Bangkok University, and she also loves traveling.

"I'd like to travel around the world. I frequently visit London, where I have been to some wonderful parties. Other things I have enjoyed doing are bungee jumping in Turkey and going the Glastonbury music festival in England."

"I wish I had more time for snowboarding. Although my job keeps me busy - I take it seriously and do my best - I still need some free time to relax in order



to sustain my enthusiasm and energy.

Jane has been to Phuket a number of times to enjoy scuba diving and sunbathing. "I love to get a tan because it looks healthier than pale skin," she explains.

"I admire Phuket City's charming Sino-Portuguese architecture and I love all Phuket cuisine; it's so delicious. I would like to see Phuket's traditional culture and old buildings preserved."

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non-stop veejays



Rowena (left) and Jane, relaxing at Sri Panwa. Both are frequent visitors to Phuket

City. I hope the people of Phuket will continue caring for one another to enhance the spirit of unity in the region," she added.

Ro has a degree in film production from the London College of Communication (formerly the London College of Printing). She was an MTV Thailand veejay for two years, until the end of last year. Now, she is a director at St George's International School – her family's business in Bangkok.

"I would like to take an interior design course at the Alliance Française and a ballet course at Bangkok Dance Academy so that I

pore-born colleague, Ro – also a frequent visitor to Phuket – are impressed by the natural beauty of the region.

"I would like to see the Andaman Sea area, including Phuket, sustain its fascinating environment forever," Ro says.

"I love scuba diving at the Similan Islands with their beautiful coral and vibrant environment.

"This time I am here especially to relax and I have been enjoying dining out a lot in Phuket

have more skills and knowledge to pass on to the students at St George's," Ro says.

"I am focusing all my energy on the school, so I don't have time for acting at the moment. I did recently finish a role in a film called *Ta Wan Ching Plob*, but it is not out yet.

"I am not sure if I will continue to develop my acting career for a while. But I won't give up performing until my fans don't want me any more."

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In The Stars

by Isla Star

PISCES (February 20-March 20): Remember that your wish is not necessarily someone else's command. As March begins, your confidence is high – but this could cause you to be uncharacteristically bossy. You begin to see a long-standing difficulty in a more positive light, and a solution will be revealed before the week is out. Scorpio would like to get to know you better, but you will need to stay alert and keep your eyes wide open.

ARIES (March 21-April 20): Many Arians are so caught up in the drama of their own lives that they fail to see the bigger picture. Using physical distance to gain a clearer perspective should help lighten your mood this weekend. Your good deeds of last year are about to be repaid, and finances should look much healthier by the middle of the month. Wear the color ruby red to encourage more wealth to flow your way.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): If you feel you are in danger of burning out from life's pressures, take a break this weekend. Other people are far more capable than you give them credit for, but as long as you continue to shoulder all the burdens they will happily let you do so. Where romance is concerned, don't let the grass grow under your hooves. This is an auspicious time to take the buffalo by the horns and lay your feelings on the line.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): The stars are encouraging you to aim for the sky now. There is no reason to listen to anyone who advises you to keep your feet on the ground. You have done a lot of that lately, and it's high time you chased some dreams. The spotlight shines on personal relationships mid-week – those who haven't been taking their partners into consideration recently will receive a wake-up call.

CANCER (June 22-July 23): Someone you've been trying subtly to impress will finally notice. If you aren't sure which way this relationship should progress, you are advised to scuttle back into your hole and let the other person take the initiative instead. Work matters are subject to ups and downs mid-week, when Aries will not be as accommodating as you might hope. Wear the color copper brown to encourage a mellow mood.

LEO (July 24-August 22): A business matter reaches boiling point early this week. If you aren't sure how much commitment you are prepared to give, it may be time to stop back-pedaling; you won't be able to prolong a decision any later than Wednesday. Foreign travel could be on the agenda before the middle of the month when a surprise invitation is too tempting to resist. The number 3 holds promise on Thursday.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): Continue the

trend you embarked on at the end of February by putting yourself first. Those closest to you have already noticed that they can't count on your support whenever they demand it, and this will enable personal relationships to be better-balanced. If you're still searching for a suitable soulmate, a brief encounter with Aquarius on Saturday looks promising. Wear olive green to promote the feel-good factor.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): It's not usually easy for Librans to get to the point, but you will need to set work-related matters straight this weekend. The most auspicious day for this is Sunday, when the stars will support success in tricky tasks. Next week, traveling out of your usual environment provides proof that things could be worse. This revelation will encourage you to be more generous toward those close to you.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): Your plate appears to be full this week, so resist taking second helpings. If you agree to do a friend a favor on Sunday, it is sure to necessitate giving up more time than you can afford. A rocky relationship benefits from celestial assistance, but the course of true love isn't predicted to run as smoothly as you would like this month. The number 4 is lucky on Monday.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): If you are determined to give up a bad habit, you will receive support from an unlikely source. As the temperature soars you feel inclined to take a break in cooler climes, and planning a trip will take your mind off problems at home. Those who have been waiting for an answer to an important question will hear good news on Tuesday. If you're single and don't want to be, the color rose pink enhances your appeal.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): A social outing this weekend will be more enjoyable than you expected. You will have the urge to get out more after this, but curtailing your expenses remains high on the list of priorities during March. A way to earn extra cash is revealed on Monday, but don't sell your talents short. Pisces can offer helpful tips if you're interested in a complete change of career. Expect an overdue package in the post on Wednesday.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): Your thirst for adventure is activated this weekend when a friend suggests going on a trip. But before you agree, make sure you know exactly what you're letting yourself in for, as there could be hidden dangers. Where finances are concerned, one door opens after another has closed. However, this is not the right time to agree the loan that a Sagittarius friend is about to request. The color purple brings luck on Wednesday.

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That Iggy Pop – James Jewel Osterberg Jr to his family, the Godfather of Punk to some – is still alive is little short of a miracle.

Whether stagediving (a practice many credit him with inventing) onto broken bottles or “beating his brains with the liquor and drugs” – the lyric from *Lust for Life* is *No more beating my brains...* – he has survived. He will – good Lord willing and the creek don’t rise – be 60 next year.

Virgin Records has recently released *A Million in Prizes: The Anthology* a two-CD, 38-track retrospective of his career from 1969, the album of the same year by The Stooges, full circle to *Skull Ring* from 2003, which saw Herr Pop recording again with The Stooges, with the almost-famous Mike Watt taking the late Dave Alexander’s place on bass.

Watt, who founded indie-punk bands The Minutemen and FIREHOSE, and features the Red Hot Chili Peppers as just one band among many who cite him as an influence, recorded *The Angel’s Gate* as a tribute to Alexander.

Iggy’s influence is legendary: The Ramones, The Damned, The Sex Pistols, Ian Curtis, Plastic Bertrand, REM, Henry Rollins, Rage Against The Machine, Guns N’ Roses, Nirvana, Green Day (also to be found on *Skull Ring*) and current darlings, The White Stripes, have all taken cues from him. Actually, I was joking about Plastic Bertrand.

The album also, naturally enough, features nine tracks from Iggy’s two “Berlin” albums, *The Idiot* and *Lust For Life*, which also provides the compilation’s title. More on those albums later.

The raucous opener 1969 gives way to *No Fun* with John Cale – then recently ex-of The Velvet Underground producing and playing viola on a track lauded as being one of the proto-punk songs.

Blistering Fender riffs and manic vocals on *I Got A Right*,

IGGY BIGGIE: a retrospective

EAR CANDY with Andy Johnstone

Gimme Some Skin, I’m Sick Of You and *Raw Power* from the critically acclaimed but commercially unsuccessful album of the same name are perhaps for die-hard fans only. The latter tracks do, however, mark the beginning of the fruitful collaboration between Iggy and David Bowie.

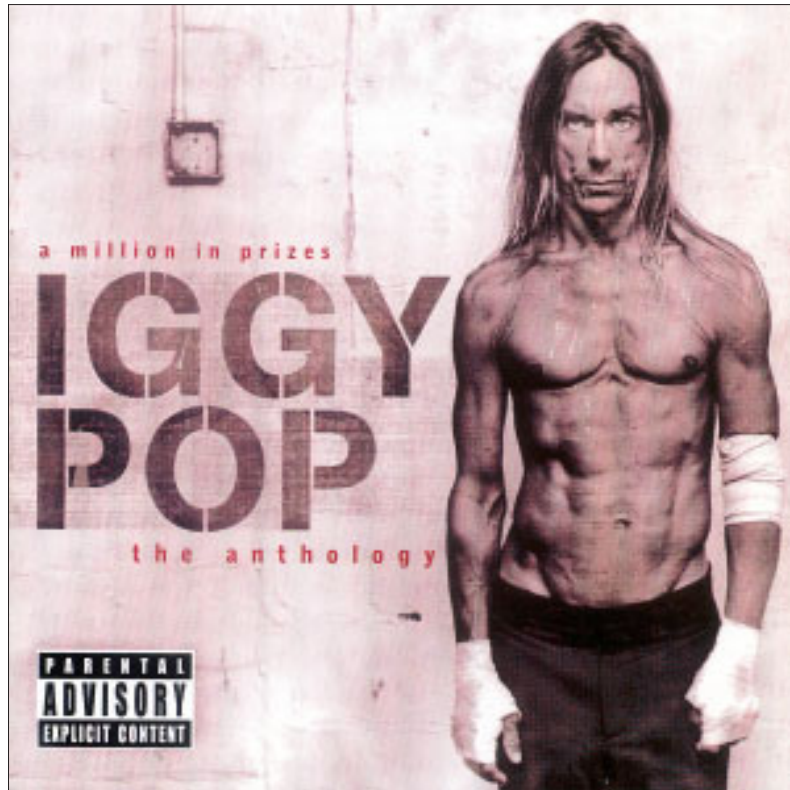
Skipping a few tracks and years takes the listener to perhaps the golden years of Iggy’s career, and the albums *The Idiot* and *Lust For Life*. Bowie produced and co-wrote both of these albums – they were released in 1977 – some five years after producing Lou Reed’s seminal *Transformer*. Again, that Bowie collaboration marked what many see as Reed’s most proficient release, and the period of Bowie’s greatest creativity.

The years 1976-1978 saw Iggy trying to control his multitudinous drug habits. His attempts didn’t succeed, and he booked himself into a psychiatric hospital, where Bowie was reportedly one of his few visitors.

Bowie went beyond this, however, and invited Iggy along on the his *Station to Station* tour, giving Iggy his first exposure to large audiences.

The two then relocated to Berlin, ostensibly to wean themselves off drugs, but ended up writing and producing Iggy’s *The Idiot* and *Lust For Life*.

Songs from those albums that appear on this compilation – recorded mostly at Hansa Studios – include *China Girl*, *Tonight* and *Neighbourhood Threat*, all



of which Bowie performed on his own albums later. The other classic songs featured are *Nightclubbing*, *Some Weird Sin*, *The Passenger* and *Lust for Life*.

The Passenger, a song widely taken to be about the quasi-nomadic existence of a ripped-to-the-t*ts rock star, has almost become a parody among advertising agencies.

A quick search on www.commercialbreaksandbeats.com, which lists nigh on every UK TV advert and accompanying music, reveals that *The Passenger* was used to advertise – oh the originality of it all – cars; three differ-

ent marques in the space of six years.

That’s not to denigrate it. The chiming four-chord guitar leitmotif, courtesy of Carlos Alomar and Tony Sales’ ripping basslines, still excite today. To be played at maximum volume, particularly in – of course – the car.

If *The Passenger* excites, then *Lust for Life* shocks. Hunt Sales’ (Tony’s brother; the two worked some years later on Bowie’s Tin Machine project) drumming opens the song like a vein, trashing and crashing the senses.

Again, this track has been used in many TV ads, everything from “branding” – God help us – *The Sunday People* to promoting the lowly Ford Fiesta.

Imagine the scene: a group of coked-up sniffing advertising types telling *The People* and Ford that a song with the lines:

“Here comes Johnny Yen again/With the liquor and drugs/And a flesh machine/He’s gonna do another strip tease...”

and
“I’m worth a million in prizes/With my torture film/Drive a G.T.O./Wear a uniform/All on government loan...”

will help to sell their respective products. The G.T.O., by the way, was produced by Pontiac...

Lust for Life was used famously as the theme song to the 1996 film *Trainspotting*, which led to Iggy being “discovered” by a new generation. It also led him to appear on the final edition of the UK’s Channel 4 show *The White Room* wearing naught but a pair of see-through PVC jeans.

Broadcast live, Iggy’s er, ... excitement on the raised stage was clear for all to see, except when he appeared to be getting up close and personal to a woman in the audience whose head was level with his crotch – and for some time.

The 90s found Iggy embarking on a sideline film career that began almost by accident in the 80s with minor roles in *Sid And Nancy* and the Scorcese-Newman-Cruise film *The Color Of Money*.

Iggy could be seen in the post-apocalyptic *Hardware*, John Waters’ *Cry-Baby* with Johnny Depp, *Tank Girl*, Jim Jarmusch’s surrealistic cowboy, *Dead Man* (again with Depp), the Spanish sci-fi spaghetti western *Atolladero*, *The Crow: City Of Angels*, Depp’s American Indian thriller *The Brave* (with Marlon Brando), the Chris Elliott comedy *Snow Day* and opposite Tom Waits in Jarmusch’s all-star collection of vignettes *Coffee & Cigarettes*.

In their short, *Somewhere in California*, Iggy and Waits pretend to play themselves, smoke cigarettes to celebrate that they quit smoking, drink some coffee and have an awkward conversation. Lunatic brilliance from the auteur Jarmusch (a founding member of the secret society *The Sons of Lee Marvin*, to which Iggy, Nick Cave, Neil Young and Waits also belong, allegedly).

Iggy’s musical career during this period consisted more of misses than hits, although his cover of *Real Wild Child* from 1986’s *Blah Blah Blah*, produced again by Bowie and with ex-Pistols’ guitarist Steve Jones playing lead, charted globally.

For many, the years after this are Iggy’s lean years, until *Skull Ring* with The Stooges came along. The title track, which is on this compilation, boasts The Stooges’ trademark loud and proud sound, with the chorus,

“Skull rings/Fast cars/Hot chicks/Money/Skull rings/Fast cars/Hot chicks/Fancy things,”

It sounds as if they have never been away.

A Million In Prizes Iggy Pop: The Anthology. Virgin Records 09463-30898-2-2

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A RUM DO AT CHALONG

Arriving at Chalong Pier late in the afternoon, just before sunset, I feel instantly relaxed gazing out at the boats bobbing in the bay. It's high time for a frozen Piña Colada, and the Tamarind Bar & Restaurant, near Jimmy's Lighthouse, is just the place to plan an escape.

SUNDOWNER with Anongnat Sartpisut



Sisters Sodsai "Fahsai" and Lakkana "Moo" Chanaphat, owners of the Tamarind, started up their business four years ago, naming the place in honor of the tamarind tree out front. Although they serve a variety of Thai, European and Vietnamese dishes, their cheese burgers and Thai-style fried pork are the most popular dishes among their repeat customers.

"Aside from the good location and good food, the main thing that makes our customers come back time and again is our friendly service," K. Fahsai says.

Following the success of their original Tamarind Bar & Restaurant, the sisters have since branched out: Tamarind Junior can be found near Wat Sawang-arom in Rawai and Tamarind Bar Fahsai is located in Chalong Plaza. But the original venue has the ambience I'm looking for.

K. Moo says, "Ours is a friendly bar where families and friends come to talk and have a drink. And twice a month, we offer live music."

Cocktails are served from 5 pm – the ideal time to enjoy the sea breezes and the romantic nautical view.

Minutes after placing my order, I savor the sweet flavor of chilled coconut milk and a telltale warming splash of rum. Yum...

INGREDIENTS

- White rum (Malibu/Bacardi) 1½ oz;
- Dark rum (Captain Morgan) ½ oz;
- Lemon juice ½ oz;
- Coconut milk 1 oz;
- Sugar syrup ½ oz;
- Coconut flesh 1 oz;
- Crushed ice cubes 4-5.

METHOD

Blend all the ingredients at high speed and pour into a tall, stemmed glass. Garnish with slice of pineapple or lemon, cherry and an orchid blossom on a cocktail stick.

Tamarind Bar & Restaurant is open daily from 9 am to 1 am. For more information, call Tel: 076-383543 or 01-657-1319.



A warm welcome and a cold drink are both on offer at Tamarind Bar. Inset, K. Fahsai and K. Moo.

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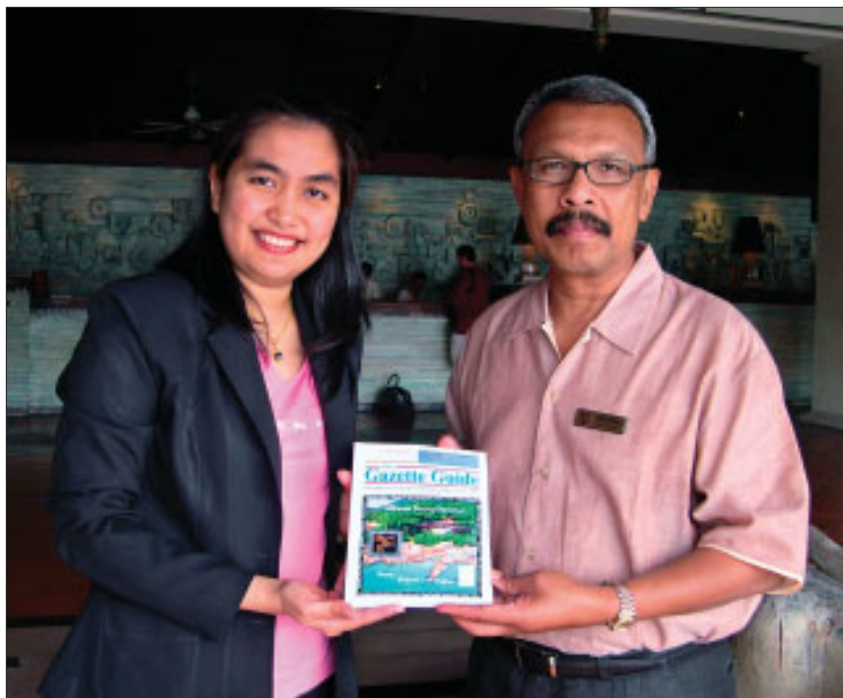
http://www.bavarian-entertainment.com

This week

HRH Princess Ubol Ratana Rajakanya (right) takes part in a prayer ceremony at the Mingmongkol Buddha being built atop the Nakkerd Hills in Chalong. As part of the ceremony, Princess Ubol Ratana placed lotus pollen on nine lotus leaves encircling the base of the monument. The nine leaves symbolize the peace and mindfulness of the reign of HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej, Rama IX.



RESEARCH RETURNED: Phuket Vice-Governor Pongsak Praivet (left) hands a 2,500-baht scholarship to one of the 78 Pa Khlok students who recently received a scholarship donated by RADI Medical Systems.



Following the latest release of the 2006 *Gazette Guide*, Gazette Distribution Manager Phatsara "Yui" Raktammakit (left) delivered 350 copies for the guest rooms at the JW Marriott Phuket Resort & Spa. She is seen here with the resort's Resident Manager, Theera Kanjana.



CITY ART: Phuket City Mayor Somjai Suwannasuppana (left) and guests tour the Phuket Art Gallery's "We Are Not Alone" art exhibition after the official opening.



HEI HEI! Baan Paradise and Priority Village staffers and guests enjoy a family beach party on Koh Hei.



FIT TO PARTY: Club Asia Fitness members enjoy a belated New Year "Red & White" party at the Royal Phuket City Hotel.

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BEHIND THE WHEEL

By Jeff Heselwood

HOME ON THE RANGER



Still going strong after 18 years: the Ford Ranger leads its class in the US and is making giant strides in Thailand too.

A little more than 10 years ago, Ford Thailand called a news conference at a hotel in Bangkok to announce its ambitious plans for the Thai market. Although Japanese pickup makers dominate the market, with Isuzu and Toyota accounting for more than 70% with their combined sales of one-tonne pickups, Ford's Ranger has by no means disgraced itself in the past decade.

Ford set up a new plant at Rayong and initially produced around 135,000 pickups a year, exporting more than half of these. The firm also set up an impressive research and development center in Thailand, and has plans to introduce more new models.

The 2006 Ford Ranger, while visually little changed from the previous model, has a whole host of improvements. Some of the features mentioned below may not yet be available on the Thai-built Rangers, but the Minnesota-produced vehicles that will kick off the line will inevitably filter down to the Kingdom.

The Ranger has been Am-

erica's best-selling compact pickup for the past 18 years, and according to Ford, it also has the highest ownership loyalty. The company says many Ranger owners simply visit their local dealer and order a new one every few years – without even checking out the opposition.

In Thailand, Ranger buyers have the choice of a four-door double-cab model or the open-cab version, which has rear-hinged back doors for ease of access and a feeling of airiness. The doors on the open-cab model are

20% thicker than on most pickups for increased protection. They open from the inside, but only after the front doors have already been opened.

Both models are equipped with a sturdy 2.5-liter turbo inter-cooler diesel motor, producing an impressive 277Nm of torque at the modest engine speed of just 2,000rpm. Power is inevitably a little tame at 114bhp (84kW) at 3,500rpm, but in Phuket, with its occasional steep inclines, it is the torque that counts. Ford claims the turbo engine offers the high-

est power output compared with its competitors in the same range, while at the same time offering excellent fuel economy.

The Ranger has a full safety structure that can absorb frontal impact energy in the event of a crash, protecting occupants and preventing injury.

The Thai Ranger also matches the highest safety standards applied in Europe, the US and Australia. In the double-cab model, the center B-pillar increases rigidity of the passenger compartment by as much as

20%, and both Ranger models have side-impact beams fitted to their doors.

Dual front airbags are fitted, while the braking system – front discs, rear drums – incorporates ABS and EBD (electronic brake-force distribution) to compensate for heavy or light loads. The double-cab is also fitted with an immobilizer key.

New US-built Rangers will this year have two-tone paint jobs, something Thailand might consider. The fenders are also color-matched to the main body paint.

Ford sold 19,258 Rangers in Thailand in 2005 – 445 of them in Phuket – and it seems the Ranger will continue its sales success. The 2006 model is definitely worth a close look: it is a stylish, solid and reliable pickup.

Prices start at 400,000 baht for the standard, base "WL" model. The top-of-the-range model, the double cab 4x4 with automatic transmission, will set you back 753,000 baht.

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

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By Adrian Byzant

In a variety of episodes of the Johnny Hart comic strip, *BC*, the main character struggles up a mountain to consult the Great Guru on a question of sublime importance — only to receive a corny send-off.

At Jay Ujjin's Ratri Jazztaur-ant in Kata, the results are rather more promising.

Nevertheless, there remains that mountain to be scaled.

The buzz has been on about Ratri since the middle of last year. A first-rate jazz club was under construction, those interested in such things murmured, with top talent from Bangkok on their way. We've heard similar promises before, only to be disappointed. Since Ratri opened, however, on December 29, the general impression is that the dramatic and spacious new club — which was fully 10 months in gestation — exceeds expectations.

"Jay has put Kata Beach on the map," said one devotee during a visit in January, and then enthusiastically reiterated the asser-tion. While some may feel Kata always had attractions enough for any "map", Ratri no doubt adds to them.

To behold it is to love it — architecture and taste are impec-cable; no anachronistic kitsch, no Disney-derived wonders, obtrude on the eye. Design is Thai-Chi-nese throughout, yet modern too.

It is bold. The two-level cantilevered structure sits high on a hill above Kata: its steep driveway, hillside parking lot and twisting concrete stairway are ultra-intimidating. One must be wary making the approach. Proper attire is "smart casual", but with designer hiking boots.

Once at the summit, the ef-fect is of understated and wel-come luxury, along with (pant, pant) cold drinks. Downstairs is the main restaurant; up another small flight of stairs is a large loft.

There the impressive bar is



Spectacular music in a spectacular setting: Ratri Jazztaur-ant is worth the climb.

GETTING HIGH

accented by blond wood flooring; broad sofas; and black lacquered tables. The electric jazz band plays on a special extension sus-pended above the dining room — and visible therefrom.

White dominates the color scheme; the place is well-lit. No external walls, save at the rear, support Ratri's huge concrete shell. Despite having space for several hundred persons, there are no windows. The view is dra-matic, to say the least.

But much more can be said, not least about Eddie Autobahn, the guitarist, and his band. Dis-criminating diners might also deepen their enjoyment by con-templating the restaurant's ap-

pealing menu. Penniless hunger-ing scribes and similar riff-raff must beware, however, of the temptation to blow all their sav-ings in one delicious night of ex-travagance.

Owner Jay Ujjin, 38, a former investment banker, says he opened Ratri because he saw Phuket as "a rich man's play-ground with no place for the rich to play."

A passionate yachtsman, and secretary of the Ao Chalong Yacht Club, Jay retired to Phuket five years ago, leaving the cut and thrust of banking to indulge his love of yacht racing.

"I asked my girlfriend," he recalled, "what can we do to make money while still staying free enough to enjoy life?" After giving the matter some thought, he reasoned: "People with 60-million-baht vacation homes don't feel like tourists when they come

to Phuket. They feel really part of it and they need something dif-ferent than the tourist scene."

Ratri, he thinks, is the an-swer — and crowds of guests agree.

The venue's open exterior hides a less visible concept — no more long boring waits. Dining at Ratri is civilized. One enters and ascends to the bar; has cocktails; peruses the menu, orders dinner; enjoys the frankly astonishing musical performance, then de-scends to one's repast when it is ready.

That, folks, is living.

The proprietor is keen on letting people know that his res-taurant serves mostly "home-style" cooking "as they eat in good Thai houses." He makes the point that most of what's palmed off on tourists as "royal Thai cuisine" is only distantly related to what aristocrats eat at home. It is the latter that Ratri aims at.

But, in fact, nothing more tempting than the Eddie Autobahn Faction, Ratri's fusion jazz band, is needed to pull one up the hill. They are, in the language of phys-

ics, the venue's "sufficient rea-son".

Other establishments can boast of good food or appealing décor; but only Ratri has a band such as this. All members are first-class musicians with long ex-perience in the fusion genre, as typified by artists such as Stanley Jordan, Keith Jarrett and David Sanborn.

It is high-energy music, up-beat and danceable (unlike, say, bebop). Leader Eddie "Auto-bahn" Makaranond led a popular touring jazz group in Europe (named "Autobahn" — thus the name) for 15 years before return-ing to Thailand, where he put to-gether his "Faction." They be-came one of Bangkok's premier bands, and as such attracted Jay's notice.

"I love jazz," he said, and explained that after seeing Eddie and the boys he realized they were the only band for him. "It took me two years to get this band."

They were worth the wait. Eddie is a consummate guitarist and vocalist, and his fellows are no less impressive.

Pianist Robert Paggao is simply dazzling; multi-woodwinds virtuoso Yongyuth Piusuwan is a brilliant soloist and showman; and bassist Pol Chalanon drives the band's irrepressible rhythms along with the constantly shimmering sounds of drummer Su-khum Liupichart.

Ballads occupy the dinner hour; but the band fairly erupts in fully fused panoply after 10 pm. On a recent warm night in Janu-ary, they played tunes by Grover Washington Jr and Tower of Power, among others. But as Ed-die himself observed, "It doesn't really matter what the song is, because we play it our way, and never play anything the same way twice."

Now that's jazz in my book.

In Phuket, where the earth's surface ferments in con-stant change, landmarks come and go; but Ratri Jazztaur-ant will remain memorable for its el-evated approach — both up the mountain, and as an aesthetic.

Ratri Jazztaur-ant, at 74/1 Patak Rd in Tambon Karon, is open from 2 pm to 1am daily. For more information call Tel: 09-8745286 or visit the website: www.ratrijazztaur-ant.com, or Email: spicythaijazz@yahoo.com.

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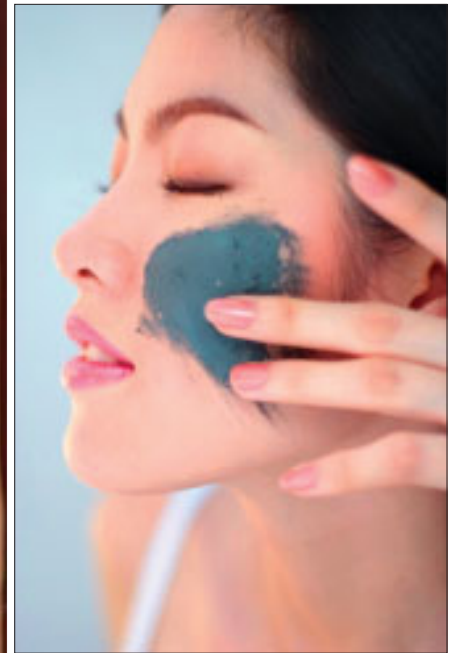
Spa MAGIC



By Nattamon Ratcharak

Royal Spa & Health Club

Following the bliss



Serious pampering at the Royal Spa, from massage and body scrub (main picture) to facials (above).

Below, left: idyllic garden surroundings set the mood as soon as one walks in.

Journalism can be confusing, stressful work – so stressful in fact that sometimes removing oneself from the crazy world of deadlines and surly editors is just about the only way to preserve one’s sanity.

Fortuitously located just a few steps from the Gazette offices on a lush hillside is a perfect hideaway, The Royal Spa and Health Club. Time to take a break.

Through the grand entranceway and past large earthen vessels, I notice the warm scent of the spa’s aromatherapy oil slowly burning amidst tropical greenery. Although just steps from our editorial offices, I feel I have passed through a portal to a new world of relaxing tranquility.

I am welcomed with a cup of hot herbal tea and the warm smile of Wichien Juthamongkol, the Royal Spa’s Financial Controller. He explains that the spa has 40 therapists, all certified by the spa’s own Phuket Spa Academy, who take great care to create a sense of luxury and exclusivity for each guest through the time-honored Thai traditions of grace and refined manners.

Explaining that the spa uses a holistic approach on all the senses as a way to soothe mind, body and soul, K. Wichien encourages me to sniff samples of the specially blended oil used in the Royal Spa’s signature treatment, the Royal Experience massage.

Called the Royal Spa Blend, the oil is a heady mixture of pure essences from ylang ylang, frangipani and jasmine flowers balanced with citric aromas of pomelo and Mandarin orange.

As every guest is unique – and has unique treatment needs – the spa offers a wide variety of services and treatments: Thai massage, aromatherapy, facials, lymphatic drainage massage, body cleansing scrubs, aloe vera wrap, royal creamy bath, lomi



lomi Hawaiian massage, green tea scrub, to name just a few.

Many are offered as part of packages that range in duration from two to five hours.

The 4,500-baht Men’s Secret package, for example, starts out with an herbal steam or sauna for the circulation, followed by a “floral foot bath”, “Andaman salt scrub”, “gentleman’s delight facial”, “Oriental dream massage” and, like all the packages, ends with a “sweet herbal tea and relaxation” period. That particular course takes three hours.

As happiness is always a worthwhile pursuit, I decide to try the three-hour, 4,500 baht “Bliss” course, one of two “Relaxing Treatment Packages” offered at the spa.

Crossing a quintessentially Asian wooden footbridge, I am led by a receptionist to the steam room, where my journey to bliss begins with 20 minutes luxuriating in warming vapors scented with lemongrass, camphor laurel

and kaffir lime.

After the soporific effect of the steam, I am invigorated and refreshed by a cold shower and I walk with lifted spirits along a path with carefully laid out stones to the privacy of my sala-shaped treatment room, the interior of which is simple yet elegant – and full of traditional charm.

K. Nam, my therapist, greets me with a gracious wai and a cup of herbal tea. I lay back on the massage bed, and the bliss begins, starting with a full-body green tea scrub skin treatment.

The skilled K. Nam gently massages the green tea and aromatic oil mixture into my lower back, shoulders and legs.

When that’s finished 45 minutes later, my entire body feels softer, more relaxed, radiant.

As I caress myself luxuriously and take in the scent and sounds, K. Nam explains that the Green Tea Scrub detoxifies as it relaxes. I then shower off the rejuvenating oil surrounded by nature in the open-air bathroom.

Now that my skin is aglow and I feel like a princess, it is time for the Royal Experience Massage.

Starting with the neck and shoulders, K. Nam uses her palms and bodyweight over my

entire body to gently work away any remaining vestiges of unwanted stress and tension.

My mind drifts amid the sounds of trickling water and soft bird calls.

When it’s all over, my face is aglow and I feel relaxed, yet energized. After savoring my final cup of sweet herbal tea, I leave my private kingdom feeling brand new.

The Royal Spa & Health Club, on Yaowarat Rd in Phuket City, is open daily from 8 am to 10 pm. For more information visit the website www.theroyalspa.com or call Tel: 076-236663.

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Above, the chubby Merry Fisher 655 Marlin belies its looks with speed and stability, and every amenity the serious fisherman could wish for.

Right, hard a'starboard in the Leader 545, with its flowing lines.

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

By Andy Johnstone

All At Sea took to the water this month in a duo of vessels from Jeanneau, both supplied by Lee Marine.

The boats in question – the Merry Fisher 655 Marlin and the Leader 545 – may not be in the multi-million-baht category, but precisely the same attention to detail is put into their design and build as goes into Jeanneau's bigger boats, and they have a wealth of creature comforts crammed into them.

The undoubted value that these crafts offer makes them ideal entry-level vessels, while

their size, ease of handling and agility also makes them suitable as day boats, perfect for zipping from one island to the next, or, as the name of the 655 suggests, for a day gone fishing.

The new Merry Fisher 655 Marlin (2.7 million baht) incorporates all the essentials of a boat designed specifically for fishermen. The experience of the Jeanneau design team has provided a fast and stable hull with good water deflection and excellent lateral stability. Coupled with the hull, the Merry Fisher Marlin's inboard diesel offers exceptional performance.

On the deck, everything is designed with the experienced

fisherman in mind – spaciousness, ease of movement, and safety in all conditions – so the large open area aft, with its removable bench seats, high combings, lockers and rod holders all correspond to these desires.

The deckhouse, with its two-person steering bench, double sliding doors aft and to starboard, handrails, rod storage and forward glass windscreen emphasize comfort, mobility and safety.

The sliding windows also allow good ventilation.

The foredeck with the large anchor locker and electric windlass, the exterior bench and the deep side deck all afford a safe, insulated and comfortable space.

At a devilishly compact 6.66 meters (21' 10") overall length and beam of 2.62m (8' 7") – more than a third of its length – this boat is a remarkably stable platform.

Factor in the weight of the 110hp Volvo Penta D3 diesel unit mounted squarely amidships and it takes most conditions in its stride.

Underlying the Merry Fisher's practical qualities is the inclusion of a trolling valve. Bait the hooks, set the rods up in the holders, engage the trolling valve and one can happily putter around all day at just a few knots.

Attractively rugged, and most certainly dependable, the Merry Fisher 655 Marlin is top of its class.

The new Leader 545 (1.5 million baht) comes from the same renowned Jeanneau tradition.

It is conceived, above all, to provide full enjoyment of the pleasures of fast cruising speeds, while at the same time offering exceptional comfort under way or at anchor.

By design a vessel of many uses and applications, the Leader 545 has extended flowing lines that make it not only attractive but also ideal for those who appreciate water skiing, fishing or

just chilling out on the water around Phuket.

Bucket seats, tinted windshield, wide aft bench seat or luxurious sun deck, Bimini, optional cockpit table, comfortable and airy interior, large storage lockers with deep shelving, practical anchor locker ... the list goes on.

The 545 is 5.43m (17' 1") in length overall and has a beam of 2.33m (7' 8"). Remarkably, for a boat that draws just 30 centimeters (1') – which affords occupants the luxury of being able to get into places others cannot reach – the boat is also stable and comfortable.

Great fun, and practical – the boat has a two-person berth – the Garroni-designed Leader 545 is an excellent choice for Phuket.

Lee Marine are also offering the delightful Cap Camarat 755 WA for sale at 4 million baht.

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PUZZLES

The Cryptic Crossword

Spot the Difference



Can you find the seven differences between the two cartoons below? And can you find them faster than the rest of the family?

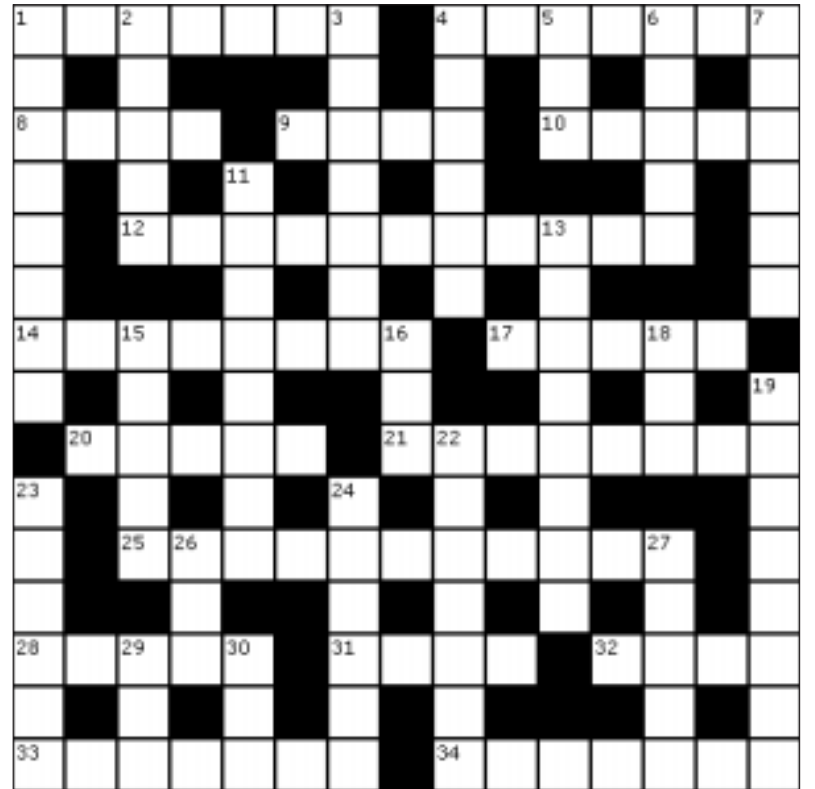


ACROSS

1. After market's in, I drink. (7)
4. Re rib, by corruption. (7)
8. Spring vegetable? Sounds like it. (4)
9. Djiboutian of old, a long way away. (4)
10. Bruise chap with electronic mother. (5)
12. Wastrel may hand over cash with care. (11)
14. They're in the bowels of English paths. (8)
17. Way to get a penalty, way to run. (5)
20. A note, either way. (5)
21. Disturbed, bite a cad to step down. (8)
25. Cleverness at study, and its reward. (11)
28. I breathe heavily around color. (5)
31. Sea animal close up. (4)
32. Male, or a female? (4)
33. Resistance in queen with Maria's accompanist. (7)
34. Landmark of a thousand Merlin reshaped.

DOWN

1. Maurice and the girls – sticky stuff! (8)
2. Staggers dances. (5)
3. He doesn't believe in



Compiled by Tortuus. © 2006

4. Cuban leader. (7)
5. Kill coldly. (3)
6. Electronic exhaust – it happens! (5)
7. Pines for and – yes – gets money. (6)
11. I'm the lag reshaped the big stone. (8)
13. When aloft, a little information is easy to
15. Sets off and falls over. (5)
16. Resort in Cyprus part. (3)
18. A single girl from Rome. (3)
19. Renegade on chap from Cardiff, maybe. (8)
22. Jeer soldier's place. (7)
23. Islands double letterman's letter. (3, 3)
24. A thousand pavilion back in northerly state. (6)
26. Container is able. (3)
27. Maybe sell cycle. (5)
29. Anger reduced fire. (3)
30. Pharaoh's expression of annoyance. (3)

Scribble Space



EZ TRIVIA QUIZ

1. Charon is a moon of what planet?
2. What do we call a solid object with six equal square sides?
3. What did USSR stand for?
4. What does the word "diablo" mean and from what language does it come?
5. What synthetic material, produced by the DuPont Company, is best known for its use in bulletproof vests?
6. If two identical aircraft left the same airport, one flying east and one west, at the same speed, which would arrive back at the airport first?
7. For what genre of literature is author Stephen King famous?
8. Which cartoon dog is famous for being red and really big?
9. What university did Isaac Newton graduate from?
10. How did Felix the cat always get out of a fix?

Answers on next page

Brain Buster!

Use all 26 letters of the alphabet to complete the following 11 words, but use each letter only once in the course of this puzzle.

1. _ a _ z
2. _ u i e _
3. _ u _ c a
4. e _ t r _
5. _ i o _ _ n
6. _ a _ _ f u l
7. _ r o _ _
8. _ e _ _ a t
9. _ _ a l a
10. _ o l a _
11. _ o r c _ p i n e

Answers on next page

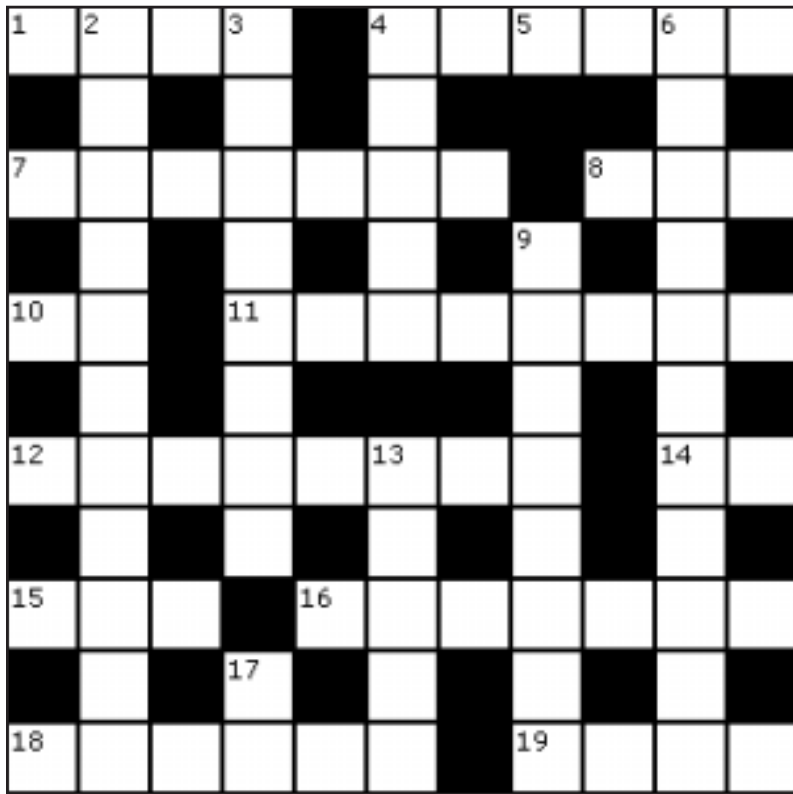
su | do | ku

© Puzzles by Pappocom

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

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

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 the next page.



Quick Crossword

- ACROSS**
1. Declaim violently.
 4. Much of the Middle East.
 7. "Camelot" family name.
 8. Measure of electrical current.
 10. 3.1415 etc.
 11. Locks up.
 12. Went fast on horseback.
 14. Morning.
 15. Five after May.
 16. Quick looks.
 18. Greenflies.
- DOWN**
19. Periods of light.
 2. Premier sailing competition.
 3. Capable of being touched.
 4. Total.
 6. Right now!
 9. Weighed down.
 13. Typically tropical trees.
 17. Six, to a Roman.
- 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. Which alleged war criminal was the leader of the Army of the Republika Srpska (VRS) during the 1992-95 war in Bosnia?
 2. Detective Roderick Alleyn is a creation of which author?
 3. Which Norwegian saxophonist was born March 3, 1947?
 4. Who wears the Number 10 jersey for Bundesliga team FC Köln?
 5. What is the nickname of FC Köln?
 6. Who created the cartoon strip *Monty*?
 7. Which artist's most recent album is titled *Late Registration*?
 8. Which country has bob as a national dish?
 9. In which country is the town of Fray Bentos?
 10. Which Sokolnicheskaya Line station in Moscow was called Kirovskaya from 1935 until being renamed 1990?
 11. Which famous Duke was the son of a White House butler?
 12. What was the name of Sherlock Holmes's smarter brother?
 13. What World War 1 battle saw 60,000 troops killed on the first day?
 14. Who was called Kal-El on Krypton?
 15. What's the official animal of Canada?
 16. What does a phobophobe fear?
 17. Where did the Rolling Stones recently play to a reported crowd of 1.2 million people?
 18. What kind of people are listed in *Crockford's*?
 19. Who wrote *Voyage au bout de la nuit*?
 20. What was the first man-made insecticide?
- Answers below, left*

Puzzle Solutions

Brain Buster Solution

1. jazz; 2. quiet; 3. yucca; 4. extra; 5. violin; 6. bashful; 7. grown; 8. defeat; 9. koala; 10. molar; 11. porcupine.

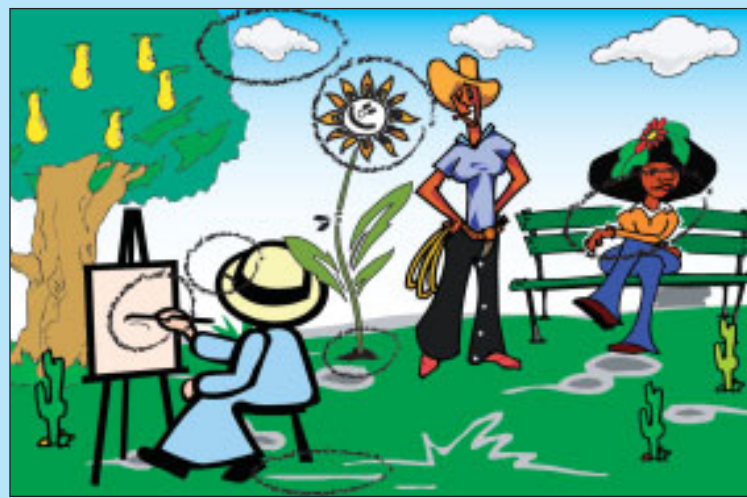
EZ Trivia Answers

1. Pluto; 2. A cube; 3. Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; 4. Devil, from Spanish; 5. Kevlar; 6. Because the rotation of the Earth is toward the east, the plane going against that rotation, to the west, would return to the airport sooner; 7. Horror novels; 8. Clifford; 9. Trinity College, Cambridge; 10. By reaching into his bag of tricks.

Monster Quiz Answers

1. General Ratko Mladic; 2. Dame Ngaio Marsh; 3. Jan Garbarek; 4. Lukas "Poldi" Podolski; 5. Die Geißböcke (The Billy Goats); 6. Jim Meddick; 7. Kanye West; 8. Bulgaria; 9. Uruguay; 10. Chistye Prudy. 11. Duke Ellington; 12. Mycroft; 13. The Battle of the Somme; 14. Superman; 15. The beaver; 16. Fear; 17. Copacabana Beach; 18. The clergy; 19. Louis Ferdinand Celine; 20. DDT.

Solution to Cartoon Puzzle



Solution to this week's Cryptic Crossword



Solution to this week's Quick Crossword



Solution to this week's Sudoku puzzle

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

Accomplished voice of Western Australia

At 46, Tim Winton is probably the most accomplished Australian writer of his generation – two of his seven novels have been shortlisted for the Booker Prize. *The Turning* (Picador, Sydney, 2005, 317pp) is his third book of short stories.

Like William Faulkner's fictional Yoknapatawpha County, Winton works his own literary patch: the little coastal towns of Angelus and White Point south of Perth in Western Australia, a fertile land of great scenic beauty squeezed between the Indian Ocean and the outback desert. There are miles of deserted white sand beaches, and the young people of his tales spend much of their time fishing and surfing. They are also a lonely and tormented lot.

The Turning is not so much a collection of short stories as a severely fragmented novel. As is true of all small towns, the people in these stories know each other and interact constantly, so you wind up with a multifaceted narrative of many perspectives – high-school students, cops, fishermen and abused wives.

At the narrative center of these 17 stories is miserable teenager Vic Lang. He has moved from "the city" (Perth) to White Point, where his father has been posted as a police constable. In high school, he has no friends and is tormented by his love for a girl in the class ahead of him, a beauty marred by a strawberry birthmark that covers half her face.

His father is falling apart. As heroin filters into high school circles in the 1970s, he suspects a quartet of police detectives are behind it. Tormented and sleepless, he develops a drinking problem and finally deserts his family. Vic moves back to Perth with his mother, who manages to put him through law school by cleaning houses. Twenty-six years later, as his mother is dying of cancer, Vic tracks down his father in the outback.

That is one narrative trunk in this book of stories, but there are many branches that shoot from it.

There is the life-long friendship of the brilliant high school student Jackie with the town misfit, Boner McPharlin, who winds up abandoned on a beach with both legs broken – somehow involved in drugs. Vic Lang's father enters the picture here.

After his wife's suicide in Perth, another character, Peter Dyson, returns to Angelus with his six-year-old son, Ricky. He

renovates his mother's abandoned house and rekindles a friendship with his old football coach and the coach's wife, only to be confronted with the return of their daughter, his high-school sweetheart and recovering heroin addict. He soon finds himself trapped in a vicious game of emotional blackmail.

Then there is the rivalry between two brothers, Jack and Max, from their childhood to adulthood. Jack ends up becoming a Perth football star nicknamed Leaper. Max stays behind in White Point, a drunken, wife-beating fisherman. The two have a bitter reunion years later while surfing on a deserted beach.

When it comes to describing nature and action, Tim Winton rivals Ernest Hemingway. Here he describes Jack on his surfboard as he watches Max being attacked by a shark:

"A surge of turbulence passed between Max and him, a sudden fattening of the water that caused Leaper to blink. His brother had his back to him, was still paddling away, when a bronze flash jerked him sideways on the board and drove him high in the water, spinning him round so that Leaper saw his open mouth within the streaming beard and the shark moiling beneath him. A second later he was all flailing arms that went under a moment until he surfaced in a pink smear."

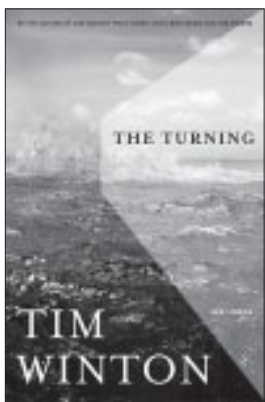
There are plenty of lyrical passages about the stunning natural beauty of the coast, and also great flashes of humor between the characters, but the overall mood is glum. Winton's heroes are invariably lonely and tortured souls. For a country supposedly awash in mateship and beer, they never darken the door of a pub.

In middle age, Vic follows his father into brooding introspection, hauled back into the world only by his irrepressible wife Gail. Two of the stories in *The Turning* are told from her comical point of view. The final story, when Vic is 46, ends on a note of hope.



Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt



OUTSIDE

IN

By Lis Kinswoman

Hello once again, boys and girls. This is Lis with her weekly look from the outside in at Phuket's quirks, urban myths and funny facts. Actually, not strictly Phuket's – but all around the region from a-go-go bars to the common cold, men with no necks and those squeezable bar girls. It's all here.

A long, long time... "Ago Go Bars are alive and well in Patong Beach. You will find many of them located within a very small radius of each other.

"Many of you who have not traveled to Thailand before might well be wondering exactly what is an Ago Go Bar. An AGO Go Bar is a bar where you watch young Girls, clad in G-Strings, Gyrate around a shiny steel poles to the beat of modern music. An Ago Go Bar is not a massage parlour or whore house...

"Anyway if you have a broad mind then visiting an Ago Go Bar is really quite an enjoyable experience. If, however, you subscribe to very strict code of moral behaviour then this little outing is probably one that you should skip...

"There is a wide variety of bar sports to play with any of your new found friends. Games such as bang the nail into the lump of tree stump are popular." (1)

Phuket – not to be sniffed at: "It's almost axiomatic that airline travel promotes colds and other maladies, but we'd both managed to avoid this drawback since starting our adventure two years ago.

"However, a trip to Phuket (silent 'h'), a tropical island off the west coast of Thailand, is a long haul, even from Europe. From Istanbul, it was 3 plane segments and nearly 24 hours climaxed by 30 minutes in a slow-moving immigration line at Phu-

Colds, men with no necks and squeezable girls

ket's airport and a 40 minute taxi ride to our hotel. Somewhere along the way, a bug got through my formidable defenses and symptoms began to appear. But, if you gotta have a cold, Phuket is a great spot!" (2)

More truisms, same site: "They have huge speakers pumping out American urban black hip hop music complete with objectionable lyrics.

"As far as I am concerned this is the final nail in the Thailand coffin. I do not save my money and wait to fly half way around the world to Thailand to hear American urban hip hop black music.

"Good bye the Thai experience. It used to be that when you went into a bar in Thailand that there were about 6 signature Thai songs that told you that you were back in Thailand. Now I do not hear even that anymore. Now the music in the bars is mostly or completely American rock music.

"What happened to the bragging nationalistic jingoistic Thais so convinced that Thailand was special? More empty talk. Thailand is not special when they do not even play their own excellent pop music in the bars. Too bad." (3)

Double or quadruple standards? "A quirk of self-dignity is their possession: in Thailand a man is licensed to have one and only one female friend, in any capacity. Bargirls as acquaintances often feel humiliation and anger, and will vent it, if a man is seen as much as walking up the street with another women.

"The ownership may arise from a casual conversation on the street and the bargirl may have slept with umpteen men in that time. The hypocrisy and convic-

tion never ceases to amaze me. Something that entirely infuriates bargirls is any kind of platonic, wholesome or intellectual relationship with somebody else.

"Lack of education means bargirls are in no position to compete, if the one thing they do offer *doesn't* work. Bonking somebody else is far more acceptable to a bargirl than talking about world affairs over coffee." (4)

Phuket's loss is Samui's gain: "I have just returned from boom island. A few months ago I was bemoaning the massive development of one small tropical island.

"But now I find myself in a tenuous position because whilst all that development looked horribly overdone it now almost looks like 'not enough.' It is a very long time since I have been anywhere and only met businessmen who are happy with their lot. Koh Samui is thriving with bar, hotel and restaurant owners barely believing their luck. After so many years of no real high season, Samui's peak season is only now just beginning to turn into a high season.

"Of course most will point to the tsunami sending people from Phuket. Needless to say that has been a contributing factor, but I am told things were pretty good in the run up to Christmas and it was not just the events of December 26th that created the boom." (5)

- (1) http://www.phuket-tourism.com/where_to_go/nightlife.htm
- (2) <http://www.trv.net/trv98/nightlife/foxagogo1.htm>
- (3) <http://www.stickmanbangkok.com/Weekly/weekly192.htm>
- (4) <http://www.thaicconnections.co.uk/site/thai-experiences/an-account-of-a-mans-stay-in-bangkok.html>
- (5) http://samui.baronbonk.com/business_boom_in_koh_samui_chaweng_beach.shtml

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Back to bedlam in Patong

After the *Gazette* published the online version of the story about the stinking seaweed on Patong Beach (see News, this issue), we received an email from a Scandinavian engineer specializing in water and wastewater technology.

"The problem is directly linked to excessive nutrients being discharged into the bay because of faulty or non-existent wastewater treatment," he wrote.

In May 2004, there was a similar incident with green seaweed suddenly appearing. On that occasion, the experts declared the seaweed harmless. Indeed, one could even suggest a seaweed eating festival.

The most recent seaweed incident is rather less pleasant than the last one. The reek from the rotting seaweed is unlikely to compel anyone that they should scoop it up and serve it in restaurants.

What a sad indictment this is of the authorities in Patong. The town has a long history of greed distorting decision making. Not so long ago, a mayor was fired by the then-Interior Minister after trying to extort 2 million baht from a contractor building the town's wastewater system.

The ex-mayor is still serving a five-year exile from politics for "conduct likely to bring the Patong Municipality into disrepute".

When the tsunami arrived, it apparently scoured the bay; many people said afterwards that they had not seen the water so clear for a long time. On the reverse side of the coin, the tsunami also did serious damage to the town's infrastructure, including the wastewater treatment system.

Any delight over the clear water was short-lived. Now Patong is back where it was two years ago, with untreated sewage contaminating the bay, as evidenced by the invasion of stinking seaweed.

The wastewater system took years and years to install – far longer than it should have – and at least some of the blame lies with those who put private gain ahead of the public good; those who take the view that contractors who pay the most under the table should get the contracts, regardless of whether they have sufficient experience, know-how and funding to complete the job without running out of money.

Surely it is time for a more farsighted view, one that sees the bigger picture: if Patong is clean and pleasant, then the tourists will come. If it is not – as a result of people trying to pocket 2 million baht in bribes – then the tourists will go elsewhere.

Everyone will lose, including those who think they can make a quick baht or two.

– 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.

A negative idea

I have often read in the *Phuket Gazette* that local hospitals are in urgent need of A-negative type blood. Why don't the hospitals start to pay money to donors? Maybe even the Immigration Department could give A-negative donors some visa benefits.

In any event, something should be done to build up the blood bank. In Thailand this blood type is worth more than gold.

I know many farangs who are worried about visiting Thailand because of the lack of A-negative blood. Is it possible to store one's own A-negative blood in any of the hospitals in Phuket, and how much would they charge?

Just think of the reaction if there was a big accident involving lots of farangs and many of them dying because of inadequate supplies of this type of blood. This would not be good for the tourist business.

Tom Berg
By email

Grilled guides

I would have expected Panomphol Thummachartniyom, the president of the Phuket Professional Guide Association, to have been vehemently against allowing just anyone to be a guide [*Gazette* February 25]. In the following I will refer only to nature guides.

Even the best Thai nature guides do not match global standards. This situation is not merely a product of the Thai educational system nor the culture of this great land; it goes much deeper.

There is more to being a top-notch guide than simply regurgitating learned names. A true high-

quality guide knows about the interrelationship of all living beings and can relate the facts to tourists. Furthermore, a guide should be knowledgeable about the global struggle to gain protection of fragile ecosystems, as well as the environmental politics involved in the conflict.

In the more than 13 years that I have lived in southern Thailand, I have yet to find a Thai guide who could debate environmental politics, describe relationships between different environmental systems, or chat about some of the champions of the fight to preserve nature, both in Thailand and abroad.

The reality of the situation is that there is a need for foreign guides in certain branches of tourism. Truly great nature guides are rare, even in the West. Having the hurdle of a complicated language like English is more than most Thais will be able to clear, but – even if the language barrier is defeated – there are cultural traits and behaviors in the West that are foreign to native Thais.

To say across the board that foreigners should not be allowed to be guides is racist and, more importantly, the highest end of the tourism industry simply cannot proceed without foreign guides.

I bet if K. Panomphol went on vacation to the US, he'd search out a Thai guide to tell him all about it.

Dave
Kata

The harms race

In supporting the province's decision to host the Asian Jet-Ski Championships here, the editorial of the *Gazette* of February 25 argues that this event will

somehow have no connection to the dire situation along Phuket beaches, where hardly a week passes without a jet-ski accident – the latest death from which reportedly came at the end of January.

The *Gazette* should take a close look at the sponsors of this event to see if they are not the jet-ski manufacturers themselves, who have every interest in promoting their products on Phuket – an island that claims to be trying to phase out jet-skis.

The primary target of jet-ski manufacturers remains the more attention-seeking individuals among the idle rich, but in a place like Phuket, where influential figures enjoy the upper hand, they also enjoy an important secondary market: the "jet-ski rental" industry.

Jet-ski manufacturers and this rental industry will both no doubt see the provincial go-ahead for this event as good news. I wonder how the family and friends of jet-ski victims will feel about it.

As for how far this event will go to promote tourism, don't expect much. Jet-ski racing is the very epitome of a "trash sport", created by the manufacturers and cable television broadcasters to fill late-night air time on secondary sports networks like ESPN2. To the extent that this event exposes Phuket to a foreign viewing audience, which won't be much, expect it to turn off more potential tourists than it attracts.

When will our government realize that the key to a sustainable tourism industry lies in environmental protection and not shameless spectacle?

Somchai Huasaikul
Samkong

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Editor: Rungtip Hongjakpet

Managing Editor: Alasdair Forbes

Deputy Editor: Chris Husted

Chief Reporter: Sangkhae Leelanapaporn

Editorial Team: Stephen Fein, Andy Johnstone, Anongnat Sartpisut, Sam Wilkinson, Ananya Hongsa-ngiam, Shiona Mackenzie

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Events & Public Relations Manager: Athipa Bunnak

Publisher: The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd

Contact us

Advertising Sales: adsales@phuketgazette.net

Classified Advertising: classads@phuketgazette.net

Website Services: koy@phuketgazette.net

Gazette Guide inquiries: guide@phuketgazette.net

Telephone: 076-236555 (10 lines) **Fax:** 076-213971

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

Not driving recklessly

FIRST PERSON



Each case must be examined individually, and people should realize that our drivers don't want an accident to happen as it costs [the drivers] money. It means a loss of income if the car needs repairing and sometimes it takes up to a month to fix a car if a lot of repairs are required.

Crashes are an occupational hazard because we use the roads frequently. The roads in Phuket are not good and there is much too much construction going on, as well as too much other traffic. The roads are also too narrow and this creates traffic jams, which waste a lot of time.

So when our drivers are not hindered by these factors, they drive faster; This does not mean that they are negligent, but sometimes accidents will happen.

Our drivers are always careful and especially so after picking passengers up. [Accidents] are not always our fault – sometimes other drivers pull out without even looking.

I have noticed that the behavior of drivers in Phuket is not so good. Some people insist on driving slowly in the outside lane when they should be keeping to the left lane.

However, I accept that some of our drivers do go faster than 90kmh [the supposed national speed limit] but only when the road is empty and conditions are safe. But we cannot really be accused of going too fast because there are so many traffic

Over the past six weeks alone, three people have been killed in three separate crashes involving limousine drivers on Sathienthanakij Rd (also known as the airport road). On January 22, an airport limousine driver died in a high-speed smash on the outskirts of Phuket City. On January 26, a pedestrian was struck and killed by a limousine on the airport road, and on February 2 a limousine smashed at high speed into the rear of a water truck on the airport road, killing the car's driver.

Not surprisingly, many people have started to wonder just how safe this service really is, and why the drivers feel the need to endanger other road users by hurtling along the island's highways, pedal to the metal. Road users on Thepkrasatri Rd and elsewhere often report being passed at unnecessarily high speeds, sometimes recklessly, by limousines. The Secretary of the Phuket Limousine and Business Service Cooperative, **Nipon Piromrit**, a Phuket native, pleads the limousine drivers' case.

jams here, which do slow us down.

Let me explain the three accidents that happened recently: As regards the first case on January 22, in which the driver was killed because he was driving too fast, well, he was not even a member of our cooperative, yet people automatically assumed he was when they saw that his car had green [taxi] license plates.

The second death, on January 26, was because the person was drunk and jaywalking. What can we do about people like that?

The accident with the water truck happened because the truck was in the right-hand lane watering the grass in the median strip and did not have properly functioning rear lights. Our driver could not tell if it was moving or not (*K. Nipon did not explain*

how he learned this, bearing in mind that the driver died. – Ed.).

We always remind our members – verbally and in writing – to be careful while driving, to respect traffic laws and to keep to the speed limits. If we get complaints from tourists about certain drivers going too fast, then we ask [the tourists] to tell us more. We then issue a warning letter and

the worst punishment we mete out is a three- to- five-day ban from driving for the company. Realistically speaking we cannot be stricter than this because even one day off work means a lot of income lost.

Today, we have 135 members and most of them own their own car. On an average day they will make six- to- seven round trips to the airport. A one-way trip from Patong usually takes about an hour; a trip from the Tesco-Lotus superstore about 30 minutes.

We always tell our passengers to fasten their safety belts and each car has first-class insurance, but I must repeat that we do not wish for any accident to happen, either for us or for our passengers.

If passengers are not happy with the driver then they are free to contact our office. Conversely, passengers sometimes specifically ask for a driver to go faster than normal as they may be late for a plane or an appointment. In this case, what can we do?

At the moment we're looking into installing a Global Positioning System receiver in each of our cars to find out exactly where they are and how fast they are traveling. In addition, we plan to introduce "better driving courses" so that our employees will appreciate their work more. We made merit at the beginning of this year to make sure that this, the Chinese Year of the Dog, will be a good one.

Letters

The immorality of a monumental waste

I recently read that a tsunami memorial is slated for completion in December 2007 and will cost 1.5 billion baht (US\$36.75 million).

I could hardly believe my eyes! 1.5 billion baht for a monument? Can anyone explain where such a large amount of funding is coming from?

I have been coming to Phuket for the last 12 years and my friends and I in Belgium have helped with the building of fishing boats for fishermen whose vessels had been destroyed in the tsunami.

We were able to help a dozen families from a total of 500,000 baht that was raised; some of these funds were collected by schoolchildren in my home country.

To think that 1.5 billion baht is going to be spent on a monument rather than helping people who are alive, and this in a place where there is not even a decent garbage collection/disposal system.

I love Phuket and its people, and they certainly deserve a better deal than this.

Guido Joret
Belgium

Bypass operations

Now that work is coming to an end on the bypass road, with well-laid out and clearly marked U-turns, will the "unofficial" ones, like the one in front of Courts Megastore be removed? It is dangerous to have vehicles suddenly braking from 80kmh to zero in the outside lane, and I have already had two near misses with cars taking last-minute evasive action.

As very little north-south traffic appears to turn right (west) at the Central Festival Phuket traffic lights, has thought been given to having "ahead only" green lights operating for longer periods, and then "right-turn only" lights operating together for a much shorter period of time? This will speed up the traffic flow at this junction and reduce congestion.

John
Regular bypass road user

Special visas for pregnant foreigners?

My sister plans to study in Thailand under a postdoctoral fellowship. She is, however, pregnant. What is the procedure with regards to pregnant women entering Thailand (from India) for studies?

Kurrinji Koman
By email

Pol Col Witawat Buranansompop, the Superintendent of Phuket Immigration, replied:

There are no special procedures for pregnant women. Your sister can follow the normal entry procedure. Students from India can ask for a "Non-immigration ED visa" at the Thai Embassy in India.

Please be aware that airlines will not allow women who are more than seven months pregnant to fly.

Incidentally, babies born to foreign parents in Thailand do not get Thai nationality. The birth should be registered at the appropriate embassy of the parents' nationality.

Issues & ANSWERS

Want to know how to get something done? Want to pitch an idea to Phuket's authorities? Submit your queries or suggestions to us and we'll ask the appropriate people to respond.

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

Are boats barred from Kata?

Why do the authorities in Kata-Karon not allow guests – even those from charter companies – joining a tour boat to be picked up directly from the beach?

John Hook
Kata

Tawatchai Tongmang, Chief of Karon Municipality, replied: The policy for many years has been to keep the beach and the bay clear of tour boats because if we allow tour companies to transfer tourists direct between tour boats and hotels, it would create a mess.

The potentially hundreds of tour companies anchoring their boats off the beach and transferring guests to and from the shore all day would cause too much disturbance to the other tourists who want to enjoy their time on the beach.

This policy will stay, and tourists who want to join a tour boat must board at Chalong Pier or Rassada Pier.

We have had no complaints about this policy because all the tour companies know about it, and they want to keep the beach clean, too.

Eek! 5:37 pm: Ella receives a reminder from the *Gazette* editor that the deadline for her article is, believe it or not, *today!*

5:38 pm: Ella opens a new Word document. She stares at the blinking cursor for a few seconds, then gets distracted by the rerun of a sitcom on TV.

9:25 pm: Ella checks her email for the 564,238th time, then decides to take another stab at the article. She rewards herself with a half-hour break for coming up with a headline.

10 pm: Perhaps another half hour...

11:46 pm: She obsessively checks the word count and decides to reward herself again for having written 10 more words. Another "half"-hour break.

1:57 am: Ella ponders ways of stopping time. She gets out her physics textbook and finds that the easiest way to stop time would be to approach the event horizon of a black hole. She chucks the physics textbook at the wall, and her head soon follows.

1:58 am: Head protests at being banged against a wall.

2:01 am: She deletes the 34 words she's written so far, and decides instead to write about what she knows best – procrastination.

Paul Ringenbach publicized his work-in-progress *Procrastination Through the Ages: A Definitive History*, in 1971. Of course, being an expert procrastinator, he never finished it. The first real historical analysis came in 1992, with *Procrastination: A Malady of Modern Time* by Noach Milgram, which addressed this question: have humans been lazy since the dawn of time, or is it an ailment of more recent generations?

I can imagine Neanderthals playing tic-tac-toe on cave walls and putting off the hunt for another few days. But we have something they never even thought of – deadlines.

The late Douglas Adams once said, "I love deadlines. I love the whooshing sound they make as they fly by." In most cases, however, this lovely whooshing noise develops into a 12 on the Beaufort Wind Scale – a hurricane.

Nowadays, with increased competition and a fervent desire for efficiency in business, there are deadlines for everything.

THE TEETH OF TIME

Being a born procrastinator, by the way, I missed the deadline for my birth by two weeks.

In the past few decades, there has been an increase in the numbers of people admitting to being procrastinators. A study in the US showed that in 1978, it was 15%. The figure rose to 60% in 2002. Of course, this also raises the question of whether we're becoming more honest, or simply lazier.

The earliest reference to procrastination I've managed to find was by a Greek poet in 800BC, who said, "A man who puts off work is always at hands-grip with ruin".

The Hindus went further and in 500BC described the most evil kind of person, those they called Taamasika agents, "undisciplined, vulgar, stubborn, wicked, malicious, lazy, depressed, and procrastinating". Taamasika were denied rebirth and sent to hell, which must have had a long waiting line because of all the procrastinators.

"To procrastinate" basically means putting off work that you could be doing now. This actually means that everyone is procrastinating all the time, because there are always hundreds of things you could



Youth 'n ASIA

By Ella Micheler

be doing now, but you have to prioritize and choose only one or two things to do.

Instead of writing this article, for example, I could be learning how to belly dance, write a best-selling novel, or run off to the big city to find myself a sugar daddy.

If psychologists have the time to study the phenomenon of why songs get stuck in your head, then they certainly have the time to study procrastination, and, more importantly, how to cure someone of it. All of them would more or less

agree on 10 basic tips, which include thinking positively, being organized, and starting with the easiest task.

All of this may be very nice in theory, but it rarely works in practise. Teenagers who have turned procrastination into an art are motivated by something completely different – the threat of consequences.

If there is no danger to life or limb, a job is put off indefinitely. Also, many tasks, if postponed for long enough, will take care of themselves, which means that you don't really have to write that letter to your great uncle because he'll die soon enough anyway.

Being in my final year of high school, I am a keen practitioner and observer of

procrastination. The air around me is heavy and stifling with it. Caffeine is the ambrosia of today's teenagers, and I've known one or two who would even eat dry instant coffee to get them through the all-nighters. If we weren't so lazy, we would probably organize an award for the greatest procrastinator.

There is another solution to the problem of procrastination – find a scapegoat. We are simply weak-willed primates held in thrall by the real culprit: the computer and its minions Minesweeper, Pacman and Tetris. Then came the Internet, bringing with it MSN Messenger, and online games in which you can beat up penguins. I'm late? It's all the computer's fault.

One benefit of procrastination is that it has spurred companies into exploiting huge market opportunities – after all, everyone procrastinates.

A vicious cycle is created: the more products there are available for procrastination, the more procrastination occurs, which makes the market larger, creating demand for new products.

One product still missing is an unmessy way of injecting caffeine straight into the vein to keep you running during all-nighters. And much evil has also been born from this vicious cycle – sitcoms and Tamagochi being prime examples.

For the absolutely desperate procrastinator, there is another way of stopping time. As Einstein's Theory of Relativity explains, because of the dilation of time, it is theoretically possible to slow time almost to a stop if you travel quickly enough. Even if you zipped along at 7.7 kilometers a second, however, you'd still slow down time by only three nanoseconds.

Yet there is still hope – Albert Einstein himself was a procrastinator. Some day, our saviour will come and provide us with a way to halt that pesky thing called Time. In the meantime, I'll stick to playing online games and day-dreaming.

Payback time for a 'friend'

The following is an example of what can happen when financial help is rewarded with absolutely nothing by way of appreciation, despite there being an agreement between the parties.

Mr R, a long-time resident of Phuket, aided a "friend" – not for the first time – by setting him up in business and drawing up a proper business plan for him. He

also loaned him seed money to get the business going.

From having nothing at all, the recipient soon found himself with four different successful businesses – and as many private cars. But he neglected to show his appreciation; he failed to pay back the initial loan he had received to kickstart these successful ventures.

The "friend" made Mr R many promises, all the while complaining about how bad business was, and about how much pressure was on him to make other payments he owed.

Mr R was, therefore, forced into finding another way of communicating with him, and decided to appoint a law firm to demand payment officially. This went unanswered, so he filed a case through the courts in an effort to retrieve his money.



LAYING DOWN THE LAW

With Friedrich 'Sam' Fauma

This move appeared to work. After being contacted through the court, the "friend" finally telephoned Mr R to talk about repayment.

Subsequently, however, he unwilling or unable to honor the final payment schedule he had himself drawn up.

A Court Arbitrator was then appointed to negotiate a repayment schedule for the loan – plus accrued interest.

A totally different attitude emerged during arbitration, with the "friend" demonstrating that he was willing to make payments, but

saying that the prevailing business climate did not permit him to make a one-off settlement of the total amount. He was willing to pay installments over a period of two years instead.

Both parties, therefore, were able to reach agreement using court arbitration, and the case was closed.

The advantage Mr R gained by using arbitration was that he saved himself having to go through a full court procedure potentially lasting one or two years – or even longer if the "friend" decided to contest a decision against him through the appeals system.

Arbitration also meant that, if the debt remained unpaid, the court ruling could be used for immediate enforcement; as long as the "friend" had enough assets, Mr R could get his money back.

In Mr R's case the court even ordered that he receive a refund of a large proportion of the legal fees he had paid, as the case was settled before any witnesses had to be heard.

This case shows that court arbitration can lead the parties in a dispute to talk to each other and to reach a settlement, without either too much time or money being wasted.

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Do non-Buddhists have to convert on marriage?

Dear Momma Duck,

What is the procedure in Thailand for a foreigner marrying a Thai girl? Does the ceremony have to be held at a Buddhist temple? What happens if the man is of a different religion? Is he expected to convert?

Akgun Kiciman
Istanbul

Dear Akgun,

The legal procedure for a foreigner who wishes to marry a Thai is as follows:

- You will need a certificate of "non-impediment" issued by your home country's embassy in Bangkok (this means that as far as the embassy is aware, you are not already married).

- You will also need your passport, and your fiancée will need her national ID card and house registration document (*tabien baan*).

- With this paperwork and on paying a small fee, a marriage may be registered at the District Office.

It is probably wise to bring along a friend to the wedding who is able translate from Thai to English and vice versa, as well as to be there as an official witness.

Now we can turn to the interesting and complex cultural aspects of such a marriage.

Traditionally, it is normal for the man to give a dowry to the bride's family, which can be anything from US\$50 to US\$2,000. However, this practice, although still common in rural areas and with girls whose families have strong rural roots, is dying out among the more educated urban middle and upper classes.

Divorced women with chil-

dren in tow may be considered outside traditional dowry requirements, especially if the groom agrees to take responsibility for the children, although each case is subject to negotiation.

Legally, a wedding ceremony is not a requirement, but culturally, it is nearly always considered necessary. Normally, the ceremony is held either at the bride's home or at a public facility such as a hotel, communal hall or restaurant. The location is up to the families of the bride and groom.

In rural areas, most weddings are held at the home of the bride, and may take some days to prepare. Thais who live in cities usually prefer to have wedding ceremonies at hotels.

A full ceremony in an urban area often consists of two parts. First, there is a morning ceremony at the bride's house during which alms are given to monks. This is essentially to bring luck and an auspicious start to the union, but there is no Buddhist ceremony directly related to the act of marriage. This ceremony is usually restricted to the couple's relatives.

In the late afternoon or evening is the traditional "marriage" reception for everyone. This usually starts with a water-pouring - or a *bai-si* or string-tying - ceremony when people older than the couple give their blessings to the marriage.

This is usually followed by a sit-down dinner, with hundreds of guests, complete with master of ceremonies and speeches.

Nowadays, gifts are usually in the form of cash inserted in the envelope the original wedding invitation came in. With hundreds of guests attending, this may seem like a lot of money for the couple, but the reception dinner is a major expense that may "eat up" most of the cash gifts.

Finally, Buddhists do not "convert" others to their beliefs, and, therefore, do not expect non-Buddhists to change their religion upon marriage. Buddhism recognizes all other faiths, so do not worry about your own religion if you want to marry a Thai.



Momma DUCK

By Wanida Hongyok
momma@phuketgazette.net

Patong lobbying for promotion to 'town'

From the Phuket Gazette, issue of March 1-14, 2001.

PATONG: Patong Municipality is lobbying for an upgrade from *tessabaan tambon* (village) to *tessabaan muang* (town) status as a way to cope with the town's rapid growth over the past few years.

According to Mayor Pian Keesin, the tourism boom in Phuket has posed problems for the local municipality because the resources available at *tambon* level have not been enough to enable the local municipality to manage Patong's development.

On February 12 at the Royal Paradise Hotel, Mayor Pian chaired a public forum attended by 200 people, including politicians, business owners and Patong residents, at which the impact of the proposed upgrade was explained.

"It wasn't necessary to have the forum but I wanted people to understand clearly that we will have to change," K. Pian said.

"The extra resources and the streamlining of procedures direct to the Governor's Office [as opposed to going through Kathu District Office] will facilitate foreign investment in Patong," he added.

Apart from being able to present projects direct to the Governor's Office, Patong Municipality would also get an extra municipal councillor and expanded powers for administering the town.

Patong Municipality has already submitted its request to the Governor of Phuket. If approved, the request will be passed to the Ministry of Interior for consideration by the Cabinet. The process is expected to take a year.

A door-to-door survey conducted at the end of January found that Patong has 12,701 Thai residents, 8,110 houses and 2,149 families. The population density is 775 people per square kilometer.

THE TIME machine

News from the past



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Patong loses a fine entertainer

I bring sad news this week: the island has lost one of its great characters with the death on February 10 of local legend and singer at Tai Pan, Robbie Rae, from alcohol-dependency-related complications.

I first met Welshman Robbie shortly after his arrival on the island and have enjoyed many jams with this powerful entertainer, normally with him behind my shoulder on stage pulling faces or generally acting up. He was a very funny man and a very talented musician.

As you'll be able to tell from the bio below, compiled by a close friend of Robbie, his achievements were not insubstantial.

"Robbie found infamy early in his singing career in his home, Wales where he recorded a version of The Lord's Prayer



By Konrad Stalin
(Konradstalin@hotmail.com)

in Welsh and subsequently was banned by the BBC because it was deemed blasphemous.

"While in England, he met Cherrill Yates, a member of the Comic Soap Opera, from St Thomas, Ontario. After moving to Canada, he and Cherrill married and moved to her hometown, and after hearing a version of Doris Day's 1956 hit *Que Sera Sera* they decided to pursue the disco phenomenon that was blossoming in Canada.

"The duo were signed to A&M Records and charted with three successive singles in the Top-10 including *Que Sera Sera* and 1979's *A Little Lovin' (Keeps The Doctor Away)*. The latter song narrowly missed hit status in the US after a typographical error in *Billboard*

magazine showed the record sliding down the charts after a promising start and A&M US pulled all promotion on the record.

"In the 1970s The Raes were nominated for two Juno Awards and became hosts of CTV's popular *Circus* show and were offered a chance at a firm five-year TV contract of their own – which they turned down because the record company felt it would effect sales.

"Cherrill and Robbie divorced in the early 1980s. Following the demise of the disco act, Robbie tried to make a go of it on Quality Records in 1983 with a song *Finger On It*, which the label hailed as a new direction for him – the B-side, *Rachel*, was written by future Refugee exponent Myles Hunter.

However, the following year he found himself on Mel Shaw's Music World Creation touting another Hunter tune, *Hold On To The Night*, also to no effect.

"In 1989 he teamed up with Saga members Jim Gilmour and Steve Negus in GNP, under the pseudonym Robert Bevan. They released one album for Virgin Records. In October 1999, Rae moved to Thailand (Kamala Beach – Phuket) and invested in his own outdoor bar as well as singing at Tai Pan with his band. The bar itself was destroyed and Robbie Rae's whereabouts were briefly a mystery following the devastation of the tsunami on December 26, 2004, but he turned up safe and sound.

"He began to have some serious problems with drinking a few years back and everyone rallied to try to get him off this path of self-destruction. To their credit, his employers at Tai Pan, Bob and Darren, and Tai Pan's other singer, Harry K, went the distance with him and never gave up. They checked him into several detox clinics at their expense but in the end his demon got the better of him.

"In rock 'n' roll there is saying, 'Live fast, die young and leave a beautiful corpse,' and this is reflection of the inherent hedonism in the industry. Robbie was a true rock 'n' roll guy who lived life to the full, was always the center of any crowd, was quick to smile and even quicker to make you smile. And I never spent a bad minute in his company."

As a tribute to Robbie and to support his family during this difficult time – he was the sole breadwinner – a fund-raising night featuring many of the island's top musicians, along with Harry K, and Johnnie and Steve from the UK performing sax and percussion, will be staged at Tai Pan on March 4.

I sincerely hope that we, as a community, get behind this event to show our support and to remember a man who has become part of the history, if not of the island, then at least of Patong.

If there is any justice God's great jam session the sky now reads, Hendrix on lead, Bonham on drums, Pastourias on bass, Kossof on rhythm, Ray Charles on keys, Coltrane and Davis on Brass and the special guest tonight on lead vocals – Robbie Rae ... So long, rock 'n' roller.

The Lion roars: Soi Lion off Bangla seems to be going from strength to strength, I think it must be something to do with the size of the place. An attempt to wander down to the bottom of Soi Easy or Soi Eric often peters out about half way with closed or barren bars deterring further venture, but Soi Lion is half the size and is typically packed to the end.

David Brooke led the charge away from the now almost dead Soi Seadragon and his Phuket Island Lager Bar is rocking every night. The music is not your typical rubbish, either, and the toilets at the end of the soi are worth the five baht.

Back to work: So pleased to see that Jungceylon's problems are nearly over. Construction should be back underway by the time this goes to press. *Woohoooo!*

PHUKET DIARY

of coming events

March 4-13: Tao Thepkrasatri & Tao Sri Soonthorn Cultural Fair. Held every year to commemorate the role Phuket's heroines played in the victory over a Burmese incursion in 1785, the fair this year will be bigger and better than ever.

Pattama Rujeewong, of the Phuket Provincial Cultural Office (PPCO), said that the celebrations this year would be the biggest yet, to mark HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej's 60 years on the throne.

Festival activities will take place between 8 am and 10 pm each day, at Thalang Chanasuk Memorial Field, in Baan Kian, where the battle took place.

The battlefield covers 96 rai, one kilometer west of the main intersection in Thalang Town, on the road to Cherng Talay.

The fair will start with a

head-shaving ceremony at 1 pm on March 4 for men entering monkhood, followed by ordainment at 8 am on March 5.

On March 11, 12 and 13, starting at 7 pm, actors will reenact the battle.

On March 13, remembered as the day of the battle, a wreath-laying ceremony will be held at the Heroines' Monument at 8 am.

Sport competitions, including *takraw*, *Muay Thai*, *Muay Thai talay* (boxing while sitting on a horizontal pole over a pool of water or mud) and greasy pole climbing, will be held as part of the festival.

The main sporting event, on March 12, will be a mountain bike race, with off-road sections, taking in historical sites en-route.

Riders in Category A of the race will cover the full 35-kilometer course, with riders start-

ing at 1:30 pm, while riders in Category B will race over a 25km course, starting at 11:30 am.

Category C, for children under 13 years of age, will cover 10km, starting at 10 am.

March 10: Miss Lily Super Model Muay Thai Championships 2006. Five professional women kickboxers from the US will show off their prowess at a female fight night at the Saphan Hin Gymnasium, starting at 3pm. Admission is free. See sports pages for more details.

Until March 31: Art Exhibition. YArt! is presenting an exhibition of paintings exploring themes of self, inner spirituality and man's relationship with the outside world, by Thai and Burmese artists, at the Crowne Plaza Karon Beach.

A "Mind Raft" meditation workshop will be led by Michael Stephens on March 10 and 11. Call 076-286359 to register.

April 6: Chakri Day (Public Holiday). Chakri Day commemorates the origins of the Chakri dynasty, founded by Rama I, who established Bangkok as the nation's capital.

April 13-15: Songkran (Thai

New Year – Public Holiday). Also known as the Water Festival, and held during the driest months in Thailand, Songkran is celebrated by Thais throughout the country by pouring – traditionally only a little, but these days more playfully a lot – of water on other people to bring them good luck through the coming Thai Year.

April 11: Mawlid al-Nabi. This is the day when Muslims mark the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad. Not an official holiday, but expect activities in Muslim communities.

April 12-16: Phuket Bike Week. Phuket Bike Week 2006 will be held from April 12-16, 2006.

The Grand Dinner by Ride Thailand and Phuket Riders Club will be on April 14 at Thainaan restaurant, opposite Central Festival Phuket.

Tickets are for sale at 300 baht each and include dinner, a show and competitions. Seating is limited and early bookings are recommended.

There will be an "OTOP Market Party" on April 14-15.

Visit www.ridethailand.com or www.phuketbikeweek.com for more information.

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ON THE MOVE



Stanley HC Pao, 56, from Bangkok, has been appointed General Manager of Arahmas Resort & Spa at Nai Yang Beach. He graduated with a degree in business administration and hotel and restaurant management from the University of Hawaii and the Hawaii Entrepreneurship Training and Development Institute. He was previously Managing Director of Rawi Warin Resort & Spa at Koh Lanta, Krabi, and also spent time as General Manager of the Dusit Thani Hotel in Bangkok.



Pichai Tangnavarad, from Bangkok, is the new General Manager of the Pavillion Queen's Bay hotel in Krabi. He graduated from the Tailor Business Institute in New York and has worked in the hotel business for more than 20 years, both in America and Thailand. K. Pichai worked at the Hilton in Bangkok for five years and for 10 years was the Marketing Director of Dusit Thani Group, in Bangkok. He recently spent one year at Rawi Warin Resort & Spa at Koh Lanta, Krabi, as Group Director of Marketing.



Londoner **Ben Daniel**, 38, previously of the European office of Lighthouse International in Spain, has been appointed General Manager of the Tamarind Hills Development, another Lighthouse project in Phuket. Mr Daniel will coordinate sales and business development in Phuket, working with strategic partners and agents.

How do I see Clipboard in XP?

Q Is the Clipboard Viewer still available in Windows XP? I can't find any reference to it in your *Windows XP All-in-One Desk Reference for Dummies*.

If it is, how can I access it, please?

Susan & John Crawford
UK

A Microsoft screwed up the old Clipboard Viewer, and now, for instance, you can't "stockpile" multiple clips or swap clips with networked computers. Oddly enough, though, the Help menu still says you can do these things...

That said, if you just want to see what's on your Clipboard, the new, stripped-down Clipbook Viewer works fine.

Windows XP's Clipboard Viewer is called the "ClipBook Viewer" and although it's flawed, it lets you see what's on your Clipboard. Here's how to put Windows XP's Clipbook Viewer onto your Start menu.

KHUN WOODY'S COMPUTER

1. Click the Start menu button and open My Computer.

2. Open your "C:" drive listed in the Hard Disk Drives section.

3. Double-click on the Windows folder. You might have to tell it to let you see what's inside.

4. Double-click on the System32 folder. Again, you might have to tell it to let you see what's inside.

5. Scroll down the page until you locate a file named Clipbrd (Clipbrd.exe in full).

6. Drag and drop the Clipbrd file onto your Start button.

Just let go of your mouse button when it's pointing at the Start button; that drops a shortcut to the Clipbook Viewer onto your Start menu. When you next open your Start menu, the Clipbrd

program's icon will appear near the top.

Whenever you want to see exactly what's being stored on your Clipboard, click Start | Clipbrd. The ClipBook Viewer will appear, allowing you to see its contents.

The new Office Clipboard Viewer, in the latest version of Office XP, works much better.

For a non-Microsoft solution, Karen's Clipboard Viewer works well.

Download a version at: <http://www.karenware.com/powertools/ptclpvue.asp>

Q I just bought a Dell E310 with Windows XP Home Media Center pre-installed. It also has Word Perfect 12 pre-installed.

When using Outlook Express I cannot activate the spell-check - it is grayed out. What can I do that won't cost me a fortune (like buying Microsoft Word for US\$219)?

I hope you can answer this for me as it seems that Dell has changed its policy.

I paid for a four-year home warranty, but Dell now tells me that the warranty covers only hardware. If I want to get their software support, it will cost on a call fee basis.

I called Microsoft and they wouldn't help me either. They said that Dell probably tweaks MS software and only Dell can an-

swer my question - of course, for the required fee.

It makes me wish I never got into computers. And this is my third Dell PC...

Warren Seeke

A You are not going to like the answer. The spell checker in Outlook Express uses the dictionary installed with Microsoft Office.

You can install almost any version of Office - Office 97, 2000, XP or 2003 - or any of the Office applications - Word, Excel or PowerPoint - and you'll get the dictionary. But you have to buy it and install it.

Microsoft should have made this plain, up front.

In future, if you have questions like this, get to my website (www.askwoody.com) and click the tab to "Ask a Question".

We have hundreds of volunteers ready to help. And it's all free.

Q I recently lost my Mozilla Firefox Bookmarks using a clean-up utility. I have found the old ones by using Windows Search, but now my dilemma is how to get Firefox to recognize them.

I have checked Mozilla-Zine's Lost Bookmarks webpage for directions on how to do this, but I am finding the actual practical procedure somewhat confusing, to say the least.

Also, how do I back up my Bookmarks in Firefox to safeguard against losing them again?

On a different note, how do I do run Scan Disk in Windows XP Pro?

David

A It's easier than it looks. Firefox bookmarks are saved in an HTML file. To import bookmarks from a file, here's how:

Start Firefox. Click Bookmarks | Manage Bookmarks. Click File | Import... Click the button marked "From File", then click "Next". Choose the file, click Open. When Firefox is done, click OK.

To create a backup of your Bookmarks in Firefox:

Start Firefox. Click Bookmarks | Manage Bookmarks. Click File | Export... Select where you want the backup file saved, enter the name you want to call your backup file, and click Save.

You can still run Scan Disk in Windows XP Pro. Click Start | My Computer, right-click on the drive you want to check, and choose Properties. Click the Tools tab, then under Error-Checking, click Check Now.

You will probably need to re-start your computer, but when you do, Windows will run a full Check Disk.

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One of the greatest risks to continuing global economic expansion is the supply of oil. Western industry analysts estimate that around 42% of total oil production is in countries that are considered either politically hostile or unstable.

The reason alternatives have not been developed is quite simple – until recently the price of oil was low, and therefore the economic incentive to diversify was absent. The situation has obviously changed now, and it is reassuring to note that not everybody has simply been relying on traditional sources.

There are two interesting examples of solving the supply problem that are already operating and that, when compared with current oil prices, offer cheaper alternatives.

The first, which has been in commercial use for around 35 years, is of South African origin and is managed by a company called Sasol. This was a South African government initiative in the late 1960s. At that time, from a South African perspective, the world was a hostile environment with an ever-increasing tendency to levy economic sanctions.

Pretoria was concerned that the United Nations would pass resolutions restricting the flow of oil to South Africa, in an effort to inflict economic paralysis and thereby force political change. It therefore became an imperative to pre-empt such a situation by developing a cost-effective alternative.

South Africa is extremely rich in a vast array of mineral resources, but in the 1960s it was totally dependent on imports for oil.

The country developed, through Sasol, a method of extracting oil from coal, and found that it was comparatively simple and cheap to produce. And coal is a mineral that South Africa has in abundance.

To distribute Sasol output was also simple; the government made it a legal requirement that every gas station in South Africa, regardless of which oil company

As oil prices rise, alternatives look more attractive

had its stamp on the business, also had to include one Sasol pump on its forecourt. And this was not some low-grade product; the octane figure for Sasol is given as 100+.

South Africa is now accepted as being a “politically correct” country, but Sasol still exists. It is a publicly quoted company on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, and – helped by rising oil prices globally – its profit jumped 80% in 2005. There is even a small city called Sasolburg about 60 kilometers south of Johannesburg.

One of the guest speakers at the recent World Economic Forum, at Davos in Switzerland, was the CEO of Sasol, Pat Davies. He gave a very revealing interview to the media.

Today, Sasol sources its gasoline from different resources – coal and natural gas. The company is not just looking at South Africa, its traditional market, but is also in advanced negotiations with Nigeria – as that country’s Foreign Minister, Oluyemi Adeniji, readily admitted.

However, it is in Qatar that Sasol is making its first global production shift. Later this year the Gulf state will start production in a joint venture with Sasol, at a facility that will immediately begin producing 250,000 barrels of oil a day (bpd).

Two further Qatari plants, in a joint venture with Sasol and China, will each start producing 80,000 bpd from 2009.

When one considers the high amount of coal and natural gas reserves in the world, the

Car manufacturers in Brazil have long been aware of the situation, and now incorporate dual technologies in many of their vehicles to handle both gasoline and ethanol.



MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson

potential for this method of extracting oil quickly becomes apparent.

The second example of diversification involves Brazil, which approached the oil supply problem from a completely different tack – making fuel from

sugar cane. This can be refined to produce ethanol, and has become extremely popular. Almost every gas station in Brazil now offers two choices to its customers: gasoline or ethanol.

Car manufacturers have long been aware of the situation, and now incorporate dual technologies in many of their vehicles. Ford in Brazil, for example, makes more than 80% of its cars with dual technology, while Volkswagen’s production is even higher, at 95%.

Every time the world oil price exceeds US\$38 a barrel, Brazilians simply switch to ethanol, since it is at this point that ethanol becomes cheaper.

The US Dollar hangs on: Anyone who pays attention to the fi-

nancial media can hardly have failed to notice recent predictions that the US dollar will collapse in value against other currencies.

The reasons cited for this include the large US current account deficit, budget deficit, consumer indebtedness and a fall in the domestic housing market.

There are two major reasons why the US dollar maintains its poise, however.

First, economic growth in the US is robust and interest rates continue to rise, so the rewards of holding US dollars remain attractive.

Second, as Stephen Jen, head of foreign currency research at Morgan Stanley, states, many countries, mostly Asian, are excellent at producing manufactured goods, but their financial institutions and markets are much less well developed and are unable to absorb the enormous cash surplus.

Faced with vast amounts of cash to invest, they are naturally attracted to the largest and most liquid of all financial markets – the US.

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

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Rainbow Warriors return to defend rugby tens title

KARON: The Rainbow Warriors from South Africa have confirmed they will be back to defend their title as reigning champions in the 8th Phuket International Rugby 10s, to be played at Karon Stadium on May 27 and 28.

The Warriors are one of the 20 teams from at least nine countries that have confirmed they will take part in this year's Rugby 10s.

In addition to the home side, the Phuket Vagabonds, former champs the Moorabbin Rams (formerly the Melbourne Cruiser Rams), and the 2003 champions, British Club Bangkok (which this year will field two squads), will be competing for glory.

Other teams also confirmed are, from Thailand, Bangkok Japanese, Southerners Bangkok and Thai Babarians; Selangor Dog and Penang All Blues from Malaysia; Asian French Baba's from Vietnam; Bucks RFC, Wanderers RFC and Bedock Kings from Singapore; Pot Bellied Pigs from Hong Kong; Flying Kukris from Brunei; Al Ain Amblers RFU from the UAE; Tulsa USA,

and two multinational sides, the Flying Elvises and Magnum RFC.

Key organizer Patrick Cotter explained to the *Gazette* that the tournament will go ahead without a major sponsor. "Air-Asia, due to budget constraints, were not in a position to sponsor this year's event," he said.

HIGH LEVEL

"It will have no effect on the competition, but if sponsors want to step forward they will benefit from the tournament being shown around the world on ESPN Star Sports, which covered the event last year. It was on the Rugby Show, Sports Center and even on CNN Sports," he added.

He said that he expected a high level of rugby to be on show as reigning champions Rainbow Warriors are expected to return with former Springbok players in their team. In addition, the Thai Babarians team is fielding mostly Thai national squad members.

However, Mr Cotter said that the program still has room for four more teams, though he urged teams thinking about joining to get

a move on. "There are a couple of teams that are interested but have yet to confirm," he said.

Entry fee is US\$400 per team, and teams must register by April 30. "Don't forget we need a team pic and team 'bio' for the program," Mr Cotter added.

Money raised at the Phuket Rugby 10s will be donated to the Ronda Butler Memorial Fund to support continuing education for children orphaned by the tsunami in Phuket and Khao Lak.

Four teams have signed up for the "Blooming Old Codgers Comp", for players over 40 years old: Phuket's own Viagrabonds, HKFC (Hong Kong Football Club), Bangkok Bangers and The Old Bill from Hong Kong.

They will compete for the inaugural Weasel Trophy, in honor of long-time Phuket resident Peter Froadsham, from Canada – also known by his Phuket Hash House Harriers moniker "Lord Weasel Tits" – who died last year.

For more information about sponsoring or entering the Phuket Rugby 10s, email Mr Cotter at: phuketvagabondsrfc@yahoo.co.uk



There was no mistaking how much these two competitors were enjoying themselves.

Fun at Surakul for Down's athletes

PHUKET CITY: The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, in conjunction with the Special Olympics, Thailand, arranged a "Unified Sports" meeting at Phuket City's Surakul Stadium on February 22 and 23.

The event aimed to improve athletic skills in Down's syndrome people and attracted 310 such people, aged between 12 and 22, from all over the country.

Soccer and badminton teams, made up of a mixture of Down's people and celebrities, competed in an event characterized by its lighthearted atmosphere.

In a fun-filled highlight on the second day, the RS Stars soc-

cer team, led by singer Johny Unwa, and including Mathew Dean, Doe and Sayan Doksadoa, beat a Ministry of Social Development and Human Security team 4-2.

In the Division A soccer tournament Phuket Panyanukul School beat Ranong Special Education Center (SEC), while in Division B, Phuket SEC beat Pattani SEC.

In the Badminton doubles competition, Phuket Panyanukul School prevailed over Satun.

The event drew a big crowd of spectators, many of whom were hoping to snap pictures of the entertainment stars.

Amigos extend lead

PATONG: Amigos stretched out their lead with a three-point win at home against OffShore in the Patong Darts League. The only other side to take all three points was Shakers.

All games involving the now-defunct Winchester team from now on will be counted as three-point walkovers. Teams with matches against Winchester in the original schedule get an automatic bye, and there will be no further mention of these results in this column.

February 21 results: Dog's Bollocks 8 Valhalla* 1; Amigos* 6 OffShore 3; Shakers* 6 Two Black Sheep 3; Piccadilly 5 Queen Mary* 4; Coyote Bar 5 Didi's* 4. (* = Winner of beer leg)

Standings: 1. Amigos (22 points.); 2.= Piccadilly, Didi's (19); 4. Queen Mary (17); 5.= Dog's Bollocks, Valhalla (16); 7. Shakers (14); 8.= Coyote, OffShore (13); 10.= Two Black Sheep, The Boss Bar (6).

March 7 fixtures: Dog's Bollocks v Queen Mary; Valhalla v Amigos; Didi's v Shakers; Coyote Bar v The Boss Bar; OffShore v Piccadilly. (Home teams first.)



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Cricket Sixes to be bigger than ever

By Andy Johnstone

KARON: The surging interest in cricket on the island will reach its zenith between April 12 and 16 with the third Phuket International Cricket Sixes tournament, to be played for the third year at Karon Stadium.

The tournament has expanded hugely. This year 28 teams are expected to play, compared with 18 last year and 10 in 2004, the event's inaugural year.

The teams set to play will again demonstrate the popularity of the game, which, arguably, comes joint second with rugby behind soccer as the world's most popular team game.

Twenty-four of the teams will fly into Phuket from the UK,

Australia, Singapore, Bahrain, India, Pakistan, Taiwan, Macau, mainland China, Hong Kong and Malaysia – with the remainder coming from Thailand, including local Phuket teams.

Michael "Cat" Maher, Chairman of the Asian Cricket Sixes Tour, noted, "Cricket is one of the highest-profile sports in the world, and the Phuket International Cricket Sixes really showcases the island to millions of cricket lovers across the globe as a wonderful destination."

Tournament Director Brad Tarr said, "We're delighted that in only the third year of the tournament, we're expecting 28 teams to compete at this year's Phuket Sixes," adding, "The response has been tremendous."

Event Director Poonpun 'Nui' Jangrugsa of The Green Man said, "The Phuket Sixes is growing ever more popular and we are looking forward to welcoming a record number of [players] to Phuket this year."

Spectators will be welcome to come and enjoy this year's tournament, which will include a number of nighttime matches. Hours of play will be from 2 pm to 6 pm on the opening day of the tournament while play will be between 10 am and 10 pm on the remaining days. Entry is free.

For further information about the Phuket International Cricket Sixes 2006, see the event website at www.phuketsixes.com

Boonsak dominates badminton tourney

SAPHAN HIN: Chiang Mai native Boonsak Polsana won the men's singles in the first round of the Master Thailand Badminton Professional 2006 series held at the Saphan Hin Sports Complex from February 23 to 26.

K. Boonsak, 24, also paired up with his sister Salakjit to take the mixed doubles.

Phuket was the venue for the first round of the competition, organized jointly by the Badminton Association of Thailand and Sports Authority of Thailand to "discover" the best badminton players in the country, region by region.

Three more venues are slated to host the talent search: Khon Kaen (March 16-19), Rayong (May 18-21) and Chiang Mai (July 13-16). The final round will be held in Bangkok in September.

Boonsak, currently ranked 15th in the world, told the *Gazette* that the match had gone better than he expected.

Maybe, he said, his opponent in the final, Chaipong Laemkhaothong, had played too much

the previous day and, as a result, was tired.

As to the champion's background, he explained, "I started to play badminton when I was nine years old and come from a sporting family. My parents support and encourage us. If things go on like I hope they will, I hope to break into the top 10 in the world this year."

"I would like to see badminton better known and for more people to take part in the sport, both professionally and in amateur circles."

"As for me, I have a week in which to relax and then I'm playing in the Chinese Masters in Chendu. This year I have about 20 tournaments lined up. One thing I can say about Phuket is that it's very hot here."

Results: Men's singles: Boonsak Polsana; Woman's singles: Sorajja Jansrisukod; Men's doubles: Thitipong Lapoh & Jakkaphan Thanathiraphan; Women's doubles: Saisamorn Chattanupakorn & Wathu Wangthiraamnuay; Mixed doubles: Boonsak Polsana & Salakjit Polsana.

BCIS hosts Norwegian swim camp

PHUKET: Eleven swimmers from the Norwegian national team recently visited Phuket for an intensive training camp held at the British Curriculum International School (BCIS) February 10 to 28.

Petter Lovberg, coach of Norway's national swim team, explained to the *Gazette* that the team enjoyed training six to eight hours a day amid Phuket's beautiful scenery and warm weather, which is in sharp contrast to the February climate in Scandinavia.

The camp was organized to prepare the athletes for the Norwegian National Swimming Championships.

Six of them – Alexander Hetland, Aleksander Dale Oen, Yard Kvale, Anne-Mari Yulbrandsen, Lise Fadnes and Elisabeth Farland – will also train for three weeks in their home country before going to Shanghai to compete in the Federation Internationale de Natation (FINA) World Championships from April 5 to 9.



Lisa 'The Black Widow' King, one of the boxers coming to Phuket, has a record of five wins, one draw and one loss. She has been described as being 'armed with a killer smile and good right cross'.

WHAT A KNOCKOUT!

SAPHAN HIN: NS Sport and online flower delivery service Misslily.com will jointly host the Miss Lily Super Model Muay Thai Championships 2006 on March 10, featuring five female kick-boxers from the US.

The event will be held at the Saphan Hin Sports Complex, starting at 3 pm.

Organizers Surasak Mookpradap of NS Sport (Thailand) and Rawat Chindapol, Managing Director of Miss Lily (Thailand), said the aim of the female fight night will be to promote Phuket's continuing post-tsunami recovery.

Also at the event will be a Hollywood production crew who were involved in the in the *Charlie's Angels* movies, shooting scenes for an upcoming movie.

The boxers, who will arrive in Thailand on March 2, are Ardra Hernandez, Gina Carano, Lisa "The Black Widow" King, Christine Toledo and super-model Ariana Ramirez.

The match will be broadcast live by Thai TV Channel 5 and by NS Sport to 170 countries, the organizers say. Admission is free of charge.

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Construction

by Anongnat Sartpisut

BANG TAO: Surin Hill Development Co's eight new villas, planned for a location convenient for both Bang Tao Bay and Surin Beach, will offer contemporary Thai-style elegance and privacy.

Sales Director Wanwipa Horbut explained to the *Gazette* that Baan Thai Surin Garden's freehold villas cover four rai.

Construction started in April last year and all units should be complete by June next year. She said that the show house is now ready to be viewed and that three villas are already under construction. Prices start at 19 million baht.

After the success of Baan Thai Surin Hill, the company wished to develop another similar project in simple, white, black and brown tones to complement all styles of furnishings, she said.

Each three-bedroom villa is to provide living space of 450 square meters on plots ranging from 740sqm to 996sqm. The villas will include built-in furniture, a sala, a 40-sqm infinity edge swimming pool and two car parking spaces.

K. Wanwipa said that the single-story L-shaped villas will highlight openness. The front door will open to an open-plan living,

Surin Hill goes for the double



The show home at Baan Thai Surin Garden is now ready for viewing, and three more of the eight villas are under construction.



dining and kitchen area; another wing will comprise three en-suite bedrooms, each with a "full-moon balcony" – a deck made from reclaimed railway sleepers. "It will be an ideal spot to enjoy clear views of the night sky," K. Wanwipa explained.

The master bedroom will feature a handmade terrazzo

sunken bathtub, and all bathrooms will have garden views while sliding doors on two sides will open from the bathroom to the bedroom to, as K. Wanwipa commented, "... heighten the sense of spaciousness."

American Standard sanitaryware will be used for bathroom fittings.

The kitchen will sport black granite countertops, imported Teka brand appliances, such as refrigerator and oven, and a double sink.

All internal floors will be laid with premium-grade tiles, and the built-in cupboards are to be constructed of solid wood and plywood with teak veneer.

Sliding doors and windows will be made from black aluminum with tinted glass, and come with sliding insect screens.

The project will have its own underground well, and each villa will have an additional 3,000-cubic-meter reserve water tank with pump.

Management services, such as 24-hour security, garbage collection and a gardening service, are to be provided at a monthly

rate of 13 baht per square meter of the respective lot.

K. Wanwipa said, "From the Baan Thai Surin Garden location, there is easy access to the neighborhood's five-star facilities, such as restaurants and sport centers."

"Our target customers are people who look for a holiday home with the convenience of a rental management service."

Baan Thai Surin Garden, which represents an investment of 120-million baht, will be managed by Surinhill Regent Co Ltd.

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MIRROR MIRROR



Who's the fairest of them all? Wherever a mirror is placed, it will catch the eye.

Ever since Narcissus fell in love with a beautiful nymph he glimpsed in a fountain – a nymph that turned out to be his own reflection – mirrors have played a big role in the history of self-esteem, décor and the razor industry.

Believe it or not, pocket mirrors also figure in the banking world: When asked by a clerk to produce ID in order to cash a check one lady reportedly pulled out a hand mirror and confirmed, "Yes, that's me."

The Eagles sang about another unorthodox use for mirrors but I'll be blown if I shall waste lines over that subject on this page.

For this week's décor section the *Gazette* went along to Loong Chai at Big C and Phuket Golden in Kathu to reflect on their goods.

Loong Chai specializes in teak frames and can make mirrors to order; prices vary according to size and design.

Phuket Golden also retails

teak-framed mirrors for 3,200 baht, as well as carved framed mirrors fashioned in the north of Thailand.

Designs range from flowers to elephants and they cost 3,400 baht.

For more information: Loong Chai, in front of Big C. Call Sopottha Anuchart at Tel: 05-8857199 or 06-9492261. Phuket Golden, 46/42 Moo 6, Phra Barami Rd, Kathu. Tel: 076-323861. Fax: 076-323860.



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Home of the Week

Laguna

A great feeling of space pervades this property at Laguna. Aside from the attraction of its location in a secure and peaceful estate, the sense of roominess is this villa's outstanding feature, making it both an ideal family residence and a great home for entertaining.

The grand entrance opens onto more than 550 square meters of internal living space, which includes four bedrooms and three bathrooms.

Upon entering, you cannot help but feel a sense of solidity and permanence. The builders' attention to detail is evidenced by the impressive staircase, marble flooring and timber doors.

Set on a plot of 3,340sqm, the property also boasts double parking and a spacious back yard.

Security is provided by Group 4 Securicor, whose guards patrol the perimeter of the estate, roads and golf course.

The villa offers all the attractions of the Laguna lifestyle and is also a good investment opportunity, according to agents Knight Frank. Location is everything, and nestling between the picturesque fairway of the 5th hole and the 6th tee box of the Laguna golf course, this home has it in abundance.

Built by the current owners, the villa was designed to allow as much natural light as possible into the living areas without compromising the privacy of those inside.

Large upstairs balconies off the master bedroom and second bedroom offer panoramic views of the fairways, and constant cool

breezes mean that the air-conditioning is needed only rarely.

Each of the four bedrooms is designed with space and comfort in mind, allowing the cross-flow of light and ventilation.

The master bedroom ensuite bathroom also incorporates a whirlpool bath – the perfect way to unwind after a stressful day with the golf clubs.

Downstairs, the living and formal dining areas are positioned to enjoy views of the pool and yard, while the kitchen and breakfast area were designed for less formal entertainment.

Each of the rooms opens onto the pool deck, and the sala is the perfect place to enjoy a cocktail before a night out.

A separate maid's quarters and storage room can double up as a secure room or perhaps to house a wine cellar, depending on preference.

Demand for properties in the Laguna development is exceptional, and with such a shortage of supply, this villa should certainly rent well – both short- and long-term.

The villa is available for immediate occupancy for 32 million baht. The land title is Chanote.

For further information, contact Stephen O'Brien of Knight Frank Phuket Co Ltd at Tel: 01-8255126, or Email him at: stephen.obrien@th.knightfrank.com

Living to the fore

The imposing front of the home (right) gives way to light, airy rooms inside (below).

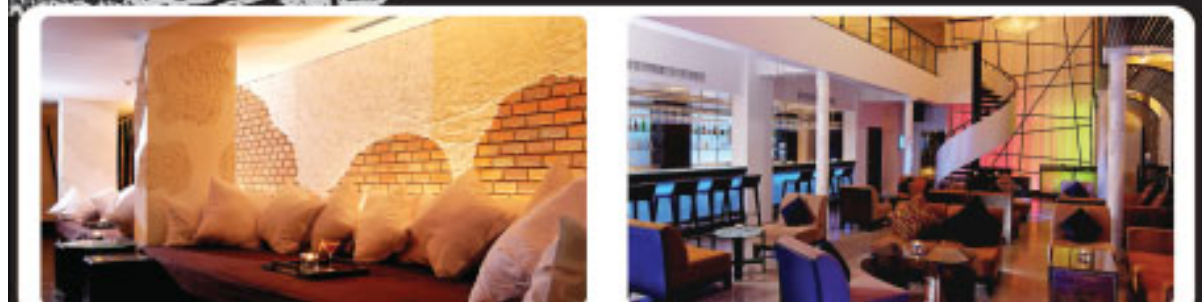


Right: the pool and sala in the spacious gardens.

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Gardening

with Bloomin' Bert

FAWLTY FLOWERS

Is there anyone from the Western world who doesn't like *Fawlty Towers*? What does that possibly have to do with gardening? To be frank, nothing. I just like *Fawlty Towers*, that's all.

For the uninitiated, it's a British sitcom from the 1970s that is probably one of the most hilarious shows ever to appear on television. Sadly, they only made 12 episodes.

I don't suppose mentioning Spanish waiter Manuel saying "Ees not rat! Ees filigree Siberian hamster" will mean anything if you have not seen the show.

Or how about hotel-owner Basil shouting the following at an elderly lady with hearing difficulties who wouldn't turn on her hearing aid because it drains the batteries...

"Might I ask what you expected to see out of a Torquay hotel bedroom window? Sydney Opera House, perhaps? The Hanging Gardens of Babylon? Herds of wildebeest sweeping majestically..."

In one episode, the parents of a particularly obnoxious child apologized to Basil by saying, "He's highly strung," to which Basil replied under his breath, "He certainly should be."

Or his immortal lines, after a contretemps with some German guests, "Don't mention the war. I mentioned it once, but I think I got away with it." Classic stuff.

I could write about *Fawlty Towers* all day, but I ought to get to the inevitable tenuous link to something green that grows. I remember one episode in which Basil was chatting to the Major, and they were complaining about women. Basil remarked, "They have minds like Swiss cheese".

The Major responded with, "What, you mean hard?"

"No, full of holes," Basil replied.

Swiss cheese, surprisingly, is a plant that is abundant in Phuket. It doesn't take a master's degree in botany to figure out where its name came from. It's also known as the Mexican



Holier than thou: the Swiss Cheese Plant's leaves are unmistakable.

breadfruit, ceriman or *monstera deliciosa* ("delicious monster"). In Thai, it's a *hoo chang*, or elephant's ear.

Let us start with what it is not. One of this plant's alternative names is the "split-leaved philodendron". But though it looks similar to a philodendron, it is actually a separate genus, so is not a philodendron at all. More on what a philodendron really is in the coming weeks.

The Swiss cheese plant has a thick stem that can grow up to 20 meters in height, and large, leathery, glossy, heart-shaped leaves that can be anything be-

tween 25 and 90 centimeters long by 25cm to 75cm broad.

On young plants the leaves start smaller and entire, with no lobes or holes, but older plants soon produce lobed and holed leaves. Those characteristic split edges and holes appear between the main lateral veins of the leaves.

The fruit is up to 25cm long and 3cm to 4cm in diameter, looking rather like a green ear of corn lined with hexagonal scales. Initially, the fruit contains so much oxalic acid that it is poisonous, and can cause immediate and painful blistering and irritation, swelling,

itching and even loss of voice. This makes the "delicious monster" epithet somewhat bizarre.

It takes a full year for the fruit to ripen, at which point it is safe to eat. Me, I'd rather not.

This plant abhors bright light. In fact, the young seedlings grow towards the darkest area they can find until they find a tree to latch onto, at which point they start to grow towards the light, creeping up the trunk.

There are 22 species in the genus, native to tropical rainforests from southern Mexico to Panama, and all are robust, strong-growing climbers, with thick, sparingly branched stems.

As the plant climbs, which it is eager to do, it puts out long pencil-thick aerial roots, many of which never reach the ground. Even though these vertically-challenged roots may look daft, don't cut them off, as they take in nutrients.

The plant is happiest in humus-rich soil, moist but well drained. Compost made from coconut husks that you see in white sacks outside every Phuket garden center is ideal. Propagation is easy – pinch a cutting from a neighbor (wear gloves, or those nasty oxalic acid crystals will get

you) or use the air-layering method of a plastic bag of soil on the side of the stem.

If you decide to grow the Swiss cheese plant in a pot, the container needs adequate drainage holes, as it does require a lot of water and feeding. Before you put any soil in the pot, place a few shards of broken pot above the holes to allow the water to drain.

Monstera deliciosa is a popular houseplant in cooler parts of the world, typically in hotels, restaurants and offices, as well as in private homes. Even my mum has one of these things in her living room in the UK.

All it needs is a temperature between 20°C and 30°C (not really a problem in Phuket), high humidity and some shade. Flowering is rare when it is grown indoors, though.

How would Basil Fawlty have described this plant? He might well have reacted to it in the same way as he did to Sybil, his domineering wife, when she shouted, "Basil!"

"Yes, my little nest of vipers?"

I'm more than willing to bet that there were Swiss cheese plants lurking somewhere in *Fawlty Towers*.

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Property Gazette

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Nice location. 1,200sqm. 2.3 million baht. Chanote title. Please call for more details. Tel: 06-2670898.

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SALE OR RENT

4 bungalows, 1 restaurant at Bang Tao Beach. Tel: 01-894-6686.

LAND FOR SALE

Natai Beach. Last piece on the beach with Chanote title. Urgent sale. Tel: 01-9561077.

1 RAI - CHALONG

500m from beach. 4.5 million baht. Nice for houses, Chanote title. Tel: 01-5376866.

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Near beach, perfect spot. 2.5 million baht. Tel: 07-8938747.

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Telephone 06 277 6698

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2 new, connected shop-houses in Rawai, on Wiset Rd are for sale. Ground floor: sales office, staff room, kitchen, dining room and toilet. Second floor: master bedroom with separate bath and 2 separate bedrooms with connecting bath. Third floor: living room and en-suite bedroom. Living area 200sqm, freehold land: 100sqm. Price 4.5 million baht. (US\$113,000). Please contact K. Peter for more information at Tel: 01-8928526 or visit our website at: www.phuketbesthomes.com

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Property Gazette

VILLA FOR RENT



275sqm living space, 3 bedrooms, 10m pool, 1,200 sqm of land. Fully furnished, Nai Harn. 70,000 baht per month. Please call for details. Tel: 07-8896074.

LAKEVIEW APARTMENT/LOFT

3 floors, 2 bedrooms, near Tesco-Lotus, aircon, phone, table, TV. 20,000 baht per month. Tel: 01-8928208.

SEAVIEW APARTMENT

Located in Kata. Includes air conditioner, furniture, ADSL, cable TV. Rent: 10,000 baht per month. Tel: 06-6916525.

LAGUNA RENTAL

Resort design, furnished, with 3 bedrooms, air conditioning, a pool, spa and garden on 1 rai. Asking 40,000 baht per month. Tel: 09-5944061.

BEACHFRONT CONDO

Kalim, Patong. Pool, kitchen, 2 bedrooms, many facilities, short- or long-term. High standard. Please call for more details. Tel: 01-8920038.

9 RAI

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BIG SHOPHOUSE

located in Soi Patong Resort, off Soi Bangla, the commercial hub of Patong Beach. Nearly 170 square meters on two open floors. Not suitable, as it is, for residential use. Please contact for further details. Tel: 076-340290. Email: paciugo89@yahoo.com

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APARTMENT

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w/Internet. Modern studio apartment off Nanai Rd. Newly renovated, fully furnished incl. TV, fridge, hot shower, fan and kitchenette; 6,500 baht/month for long-term rent; ADSL Internet available. Tel: 07-2650652. Email: gisbert1@gmx.net

Property Wanted

RENTAL VILLA

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LAND WANTED

I'm ready to buy small plots of land in Chalong, Rawai or Nai Harn for up to 1 million baht for land only, or 2-4 million baht for land with a house. I'm not an agent. Tel: 01-7930862 (English) or 06-8928108 (Thai).

WANT TO BUY

a house. either in the Rawai-Nai Harn or Chalong area. Price range is 3 to 5 million baht. Viewing should be within the next 2 days. Email: cfmcap@phuket.ksc.co.th

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PATONG CONDO

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The Mangosteen Resort & Spa, the luxury 5-star boutique resort in Rawai, is looking for an Operations Manager for our young and motivated team. Enjoy working in a successful resort, setting the highest service standards. Thai nationals preferred. Please send CV by email or call for interview. Tel: 076-289223. Fax: 076-289389. Email: hajo@mangosteen-phuket.com

URGENTLY required. Operations/Reservation staff work in office (8hrs/day, 2 days off/week). Good English, able to use PC, Word, Excel, Internet, and to communicate with foreigners. Please contact for more information. Tel: 076-246468, 09-8734589. Fax: 076-246469. Email: rai@dto.co.th

MANAGER
We are looking for a foreigner to take care of our customers and staff. Please call for more information. Tel: 04-8478352.

SECRETARY
to Manager. Female Thai national. Competent in English. Computer literate. Smart. Office organization skills. Service-minded. Valid car driving license is an advantage. Tel: 076-239111. Fax: 076-238-974. Email: suporn@thaimarine.com

ACCOUNTING
Thai national. Core tasks are to Input Hotel rates from contracts and work with IT. Requirements: good with numbers and happy to learn. Please send your CV or contact for more information. Tel: 076-236616, 01-8952206. Fax: 076-236617. Email: jobs@globalonlinereservations.com

F/O MANAGER
The Mangosteen Resort & Spa, the 5-star luxury boutique resort in Rawai, is looking for a Front Office manager. Enjoy working with our motivated team, setting the highest service standards. Please send CV by email or call for interview. Tel: 076-289223. Fax: 076-289389. Email: hajo@mangosteen-phuket.com

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Role: airport customer service staff
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Interested persons should contact. Tel: 09-9266115. Email: baekjb@koreanair.co.kr

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MANAGER (Foreigner) 1 position

Remarks:
Salary can be negotiated base on experiences

Please send resume to:
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48 Ruamjai Rd, Patong Beach,
Phuket Tel: 076-340210-2
Email: personnel@grandtropicana-phuket.com

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A fast-growing Internet garment retailer needs a native English-speaker who is highly computer literate, a perfectionist, a leader, and experienced. Salary 40k-80k. Email: holyjob@gmail.com

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CHIEF ENGINEER
The Mangosteen Resort & Spa, the 5-star boutique resort in Rawai, is looking for a talented young Chief Engineer. The resort has been built to very high Western-quality standards and there are several expansion plans. Thai nationals only. Please send CV by email or call. Tel: 076-289223. Fax: 076-289389. Email: hajo@mangosteen-phuket.com

INTERNET STAFF
in Rawai. Looking for Thai women, 18-35 years of age, with fair English skills & computer knowledge: 1 full-time, 1 part-time. Please call for more information. Tel: 076-288808, 01-8924282.

SECRETARY
for project & land business. Very busy, good future, good salary. Must have perfect English, accounting, computer skills, sales experience and have a car license. Please call for more information. Tel: 09-6525664.

GENERAL MANAGER
a Phuket-based hotel. Please contact for more information. Tel: 076-239820, 01-737-3720. Fax: 076-239828. Email: hr@jivaresort.com

WANTED: STORE MANAGER, BAKER
Khun Woody's Bakery and the Sandwich Shoppe in Patong are growing fast, with a new production facility and another shop coming on-stream next month. We need experienced Thai nationals who are committed to outstanding service and great food. We're looking for a baker, preferably with high-quality bread experience. We're also looking for an experienced store manager - a customer-oriented leader with good English skills. We offer excellent pay, good bonus, solid training, and a chance to grow professionally with the "Khun Woody" family.
Tel: 076-340066.
Email: woody@khunwoody.com

Island Job Mart

The Phuket Gazette

The Phuket Gazette seeks to fill the following positions:

I. SENIOR ARTIST

II. ARTIST

- ▶ Graphic-design skills and knowledge of Adobe Illustrator, PageMaker, Photoshop and Dreamweaver required
- ▶ Freehand drawing and web-design skills a plus
- ▶ Responsible, hard working, attentive to detail
- ▶ Able to work in a fast-paced environment and meet deadlines
- ▶ Good communication skills, team player
- ▶ English speaker

III. ASSISTANT ACCOUNTANT

- ▶ Thai, age 23 or up
- ▶ Bachelor's degree or higher (in any field)
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- ▶ Must have a car driver's license
- ▶ Accounting experience would be an advantage, but the Gazette is willing to provide training for a novice with good interpersonal skills and unquestioned honesty

IV. DISTRIBUTION MARKETING PERSON

- ▶ Thai national
- ▶ Reasonable command of written and spoken English
- ▶ PC experience in Word, Excel & Internet
- ▶ Good administrator
- ▶ Must have own car and driver's license

V. SENIOR REPORTER

The successful candidate will be a Thai national, aged 27-plus, with initiative, an outgoing personality, and plenty of experience about the world and how it works. Also essential are the ability to communicate in English, both spoken and written, and a car. Good salary for the right candidate.

Qualified candidates are invited to send a CV to Wipa Putkeaw, Human Resources, by email, fax or post to:

The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd

367/2 Yaowarat Rd, T. Taladyai, A. Muang, Phuket 83000
Fax: 076-213971 Email: fon@phuketgazette.net

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- Bachelor's degree
- Min. 5 years work experience
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TECHNICIAN FOR ARCHITECT

- Male/Female Thai Nationality
- Able to prepare the documents for construction permit
- Computer ability in AutoCad
- Diploma in related field

Contact for more info. Tel: 076-273490-1

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Colona Diving & Tours Co Ltd is seeking a Survival Expert to play a crucial role in a new adventure holiday that we will be adding to our current range of trips available. Tel: 076-398364. Email: james@liveboard-thailand.com For further details, please see our website at: www.diving-thailand-phuket.com/survival.htm

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The region's most widely distributed lifestyle magazine, is produced from Phuket. It is looking for an Editorial Researcher with strong Internet skills. Thai national with good English. Please send your CV to Email: newjob@aapress.net For further details, please see our website at: www.aapress.net

CARTOONIST/ARTIST

We need a cartoonist to produce some illustrations for a book project. Good pay. 3-5 days work. Please send your CV or contact for more information. Tel: 09-7308566. Email: meteve@meteve-phuket.com

SPA MANAGER

Spa Manager - with 3-5 years' experience - urgently required. Must be confident and able to manage and motivate staff. Good earning potential. Please send your CV or contact for more information. Tel: 076-396205. Email: gm@islandiagroup.com

OFFICE ASSISTANT

wanted for property agent in Cherng Talay. Must have good command of written and spoken English, good computer skills. Please call for more information. Tel: 07-8813521.

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Personal Assistant/Office Manager (1 position)

- * Female, over 25 years of age
- * Good written & spoken English
- * Computer and bookkeeping skills

Architectural Inspectors (4 positions)

- * Male/female, over 25 years of age
- * Graduate in relevant field
- * minimum of 3 years' project experience
- * Relevant computer skills
- * Own transport

Mechanical and/or Electrical Inspectors (4 positions)

- * Male/female, over 25 years of age
- * Graduate in relevant field
- * 5 years of project experience
- * Relevant computer skills
- * Own transport

Please contact. Tel: 076-325401. Fax: 076-325403. Email: bee@dmg-thailand.com

HOAGEN-DAZS

Sales Manager
-Male/female, aged 25-35 years old.
-BA in any related field.
-Experience in sales & marketing, hospitality, hotel, restaurant or related field.
-Good English communication skills.
-Pleasant personality.
-Own car or car drivers' license is preferable.
Please contact for more information. Tel: 076-292-801. Fax: 076-292808. Email: sales@avantika-phuket.com

PHOTOGRAPHER

required. Opportunity for a Thai with a genuine interest in photography to work with real estate company. Use of English preferred. Good starting salary with potential for more. Tel: 076-264460, 01-8337836. Email: T.Ross@baansiamrealty.com

STAFF URGENTLY

required. Distribution Manager, female, age 28-35, Thai national, good written and spoken English, PC experience in Word, Excel & Internet, good administrator, car driver with license. Contact Khun Nit, Image Asia Events. Tel: 076-264491-2 for further details.

JUNIOR SECRETARY

We are looking for female w/ fair English skills, bright personality. Salary 8,000-10,000 baht. Please contact for more information. Tel: 076-264442, 01-5354108. Fax: 076-264-443. Email: recruitment@bowentraining.com



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will be Koh Lanta leading's resort. With the unique setting at the foot of Lanta Yai's hill, Rawi Warin will offer the very finest in luxury and the best in famed Thai hospitality. We are currently looking for professionals for the following positions:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Human Resource Manager ▶ Chief Engineer ▶ Executive Housekeeper ▶ Chief Accountant ▶ Income Auditor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Front Office Manager ▶ Recreation Manager ▶ Housekeeping Supervisor ▶ Reservation Officer ▶ PR (Public Relations)
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Requirements:

- ▶ Willing to reside on Koh Lanta Yai, Krabi
- ▶ Good command of written and spoken English
- ▶ Enthusiasm, able to learn and grow in the organization

Human Resources Department
Rawi Warin Resort & Spa
139 Moo 8, Klong Tob, Lanta Yai Island, Krabi
81150, Thailand
Tel: +6675 607 400 Fax: +6675 607 499
Email: hr@rawiwarin.com
www.rawiwarin.com

THAI PROGRAM leader needed. International Student Volunteers (ISV) seeks qualified candidates to lead groups on our 4-week volunteer and outdoor adventure programs in Thailand. Must have experience in tour leading and community development, Masters or PhD preferred. Commences with a few weeks training in Australia in May 2006, followed by the program season in Thailand from June to the end of August 2006. Interested persons should email Kieran Dowling (ISV Thailand Program Manager). Tel: 66-293-695556. Email: kieran@isvonline.com

MANGOSTEEN TEAM Due to high occupancy, we are seeking to fill the following positions. Only qualified, experienced staff wanted.

- Office**
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 - Storekeeper
 - Cost Controller
 - Income
- F&B**
- Chef de Partie
 - Waitresses
 - Pool Attendant
 - Stewards

Housekeeping

- Room maids

Tel: 076-289223. Fax: 076-289389. Email: myfuture@mangosteen-phuket.com

Employment Wanted

GERMAN WOMAN/MANAGEMENT

German woman, 33, is looking for a job on Phuket. 11 years' experience in fashion/textile industry, HR management and training of sales staff, and motivating/managing branch managers. I speak German and English. Email: muenchen1@gmx.net

CIVIL ENGINEER

Thai, 48, experienced as Project Manager in condominium, housing projects for project owner-contractor, seeks position as Project or Construction Manager (permanent or contract basis). Languages: Thai, English, German (fluent). Please call Tel: 01-8031780 for details.

MANAGER

Six years in Patong. Will manage your bar/restaurant while you have holiday or are overseas. Call Bob now! Tel: 01-3672366.

HOUSEKEEPER

Work experience in a luxury villa, now seeking a job. I can speak English and have computer skills. Email: bijoraken@yahoo.com

SECRETARIES

wanted. Calypso Divers at Kata Beach is looking for 2 secretaries (Thai). Applicants must speak English, be able to handle basic accounting, and have basic computer skills. Driving license for car is a bonus. We offer a warm working environment and good salaries. Please send your CV to Steffen or contact for more information. Tel: 076-330869, 06-6827818. Fax: 076-330544. Email: steffen@calypsophuket.com

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GOLF GLUBS
Driver, new condition, graphite shaft: 3,000 baht. 5 wood, graphite shaft: 2,000 baht. Wilson irons, new grips: 3,000 baht. Putter, new condition: 1,000 baht. Tel: 076-288491. Email: diverdongould@aol.com

METAL SHELVING
units. One-year-old convenience-shop-type metal shelving units. 4 double-sided and 3 single-side units. All are blue with multiple, white, adjustable shelves and in new condition. Must sell within a month for the best offer. Can be viewed at Nanai Whisky, opposite the Nanai market, or call K. Nuch at Tel: 076-341-079, 01-0822968. Email: brad_mooney@hotmail.com

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in good condition. Comes with 2 controllers, 1 memory card and 10-12 games. Price: 6,000 baht. Tel: 06-1206934. Email: go2spoon@yahoo.com

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golf clubs. Titleist steel-shaft lob wedge, 60° as new, 3,500 baht. IS 300 driver, 3,500 baht. Please contact for more information. Tel: 09-909-1917. Email: porter20022@yahoo.com

BOSE STEREO
system. Lifestyle 3 (1 base speaker with amp) and 2 cubes with CD/tuner. Bought 4 years ago for 66,000 baht; will sell for 20,000. Great for bar – big sound. Please contact for more details. Tel: 09-909-1917. Email: porter20022@yahoo.com

BABY COT
and car seat. Baby cot made of wood for baby up to 5 years old and Maxi Cosi car seat for child up to 13kg. Good condition and safe. 8,500 baht. Tel: 076-323486, 09-9710550. Fax: 076-323486. Email: vcu_a11@yahoo.com

BODY BOARD
New body board, used 3-4 times. Paid 4,500 baht; will sell for 2,500. Tel: 06-120-6934. Email: go2spoon@yahoo.com

Bulletins

Alcoholics Anonymous
is holding meetings in English at the following places:

Phuket City
Mission Hospital
on Wed and Sun at 7 pm

Bangkok Phuket Hospital
on Fri at 7 pm

Patong
Patong Hospital
on Mon, Tue, Wed, Sat, Sun
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for sale. Guesthouse and restaurant, located opposite the main entrance to the Royal Paradise Hotel, for sale. Six luxury guest rooms with shower, aircon and TV. Beautiful restaurant with kitchen. High standards. 14 million baht. Tel: 01-5385322, 01-8956587. Email: rudolfpanz@hotmail.com

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MASSAGE SALON
Established 3-story massage salon for sale in the heart of Patong. Excellent furnishings, fully equipped; has long-term staff. For more information, call Khun Arunee. Tel: 07-8947985.

O'MALLEYS IRISH PUB
Small business, big opportunity! Recently refurbished pub & restaurant, located in Phuket City. Package includes all paperwork, visas, 2 work permits and all licenses for a smooth takeover. 400sqm, live music stage, sound and light system, UBC TV, 3 new pool tables (including pool room), 15 tables, 40 bar stools, 5 fridges and freezers, new kitchen equipment and over 300 taxi-bikes with O'Malleys vests driving around the city! All offers considered. Please contact. Tel: 09-7292846. Email: scottshaw77@lycos.co.uk

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Separate pool room, 2-room guesthouse, all fully air-conditioned, well established, with long-term lease. Located on Nanai Road. Asking 1.35 million baht. All genuine offers considered. Tel: 01-747-7520. Email: phuketpete@yahoo.co.uk

BUSINESSES
for sale. 3 businesses – beauty salon, Thai massage and Internet cafe – priced for quick sale at 2.8 million baht or nearest offer. Tel: 076-281078, 64-021667215. Fax: 076-383674. Email: tim.s@actrix.co.nz

SHOP OR EQUIPMENT
for sale. Beauty, skincare and slimming center in Krabi Town has closed. We have salon, facial, body slimming and sports equipment all in very good condition for sale. Products also for sale. Please contact Erin. Tel: 075-623839, 06-6820069.

LARGE SUCCESSFUL
established bar in Soi Bangla for sale. Pool table, darts, own sound system. 5-year lease. Please call for more details. Tel: 09-8677969.

FISH RESTAURANT
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RESTAURANT
for sale. Restaurant for sale in Rawai, includes everything. Please contact. Tel: 01-456-0868. Email: mou_oasis@yahoo.com

TAILOR SHOP
for immediate sale. 8m x 25m fully furnished, located on Patong Beach road, near Thara Patong Hotel. A 5-year lease. Tel: 09-6656195.

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UNDERWATER
photography. For sale: Sea & Sea DX-5000G housing, Sea & Sea YS25 auto strobe plus fiber-optic sync cord and flexible light arm set. Hardly used, still under warranty. Tel: 04-9928016.

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Club Memberships Wanted

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Looking to buy an individual membership in Blue Canyon ASAP. Tel: 01-9249935. Email: zabai@loxinfo.co.th

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COMPUTER REPAIRS
English technician, new or used computers. GPRS, ADSL, WLAN and Internet access without a phone. Tel: 09-4735080.

APPLE POWERMAC
desktop. Dual processors, 450MHz with OS 9 (OS X not installed yet) (180GB hard disk, 1.25GB RAM). All programs for image and video editing as well as web design and Microsoft Office. Sold with 17-inch Acer monitor, Apple keyboard and Apple mouse. 30,000 baht or best offer. Tel: 076-282311, 06-7423437. Email: marcduncan@hotmail.com

LAPTOP
BTO H01. Intel Centrino Mobile Technology, Intel 855 GME Chipset, Intel Pentium M Processor (1.6GHz). Inter Pro wireless 2200 BG network connection. 512MB Kingston RAM. 12.1 1280x800x WXGA TFT LCD display, 16M colors. DVD Combo optical drive. 40 GB Seagate HDD. Small and light design - only 1.95 kgs. 35,000 baht. Tel: 076-263926. Email: info@lisaconstruction.com

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Miscellaneous Wanted

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Personal Services

HOME SCHOOLING
Any families interested in sharing cost of small professional home schooling classes? All subjects taught in English. Ages 8-14, Chalong area, 1-5 days a week. Tel: 01-5362069. Email: pat@projecttrang.org

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Tailor-made physical training at all levels. Scheduled sessions at home or outside area. First lesson free. Please call for more information. Tel: 07-3808077.

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SAILING CREW
wanted. For a trip to the Andamans and Chagos. Mid-to late March for about 3 months. Single male, female or a couple. Experience desirable. Owners are a couple with baby. Please contact. Tel: 01-2729355, 01-2737326. Email: keithmarshall747@yahoo.co.uk

ESCORT, COMPANION,
tour guide. Looking for a Thai lady, pretty, 20-30 years old, English-speaking, to share my vacation in Phuket beginning in April for about 10 days. I am 50 years old, slim, sportive, generous. Please mail with photo via email to Email: golfo1@freenet.de

SPECIAL LADY
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3-door blue saloon, in very good condition, 65,000km. I've owned it for the past 3 years; regularly serviced, no problems. Cheap, economical town car. 110,000 baht. Please contact for details. Tel: 09-9091917 or Email: porter20022@yahoo.com

2002 HONDA ACCORD
2002 Honda Accord Limited Edition VTEC, fully loaded, corporate car. Service record available. 800,000 baht. Tel: 076-296881/4, 09-667-3687. Fax 076-296885. Email: phuket@legalthai.com

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HONDA WAVE 125 I
Honda Wave 125 i (injection), two years old, 25,000km, first owner. Price new: 53,500 baht; will sell for 30,000 baht. Can be seen in Khao Lak. Tel: 076-443149, 06-2811945. Email: mike@ethailand.com

HONDA WAVES
125cc, silver color, 6,950km, electric starter, disc brake, helmet compartment under seat, 4 years old but used only 4 months per year. Accident free! In excellent condition. 28,000 baht. Tel: 076-281-034, 07-2807451. Email: peter@phuketinternet.co.th

HONDA PHANTOM
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HONDA PHANTOM
200cc. With customized accessories (side box, crash guard, etc) for urgent sale at 70,000 baht. Bought new in July 2005; less than 7,000km on it. No accidents, driven within Phuket and well-maintained by foreign owner. Can send pictures if needed. Leaving Thailand third week of March. Please contact for details. Tel: 66-4847 8009, 01-9563683 or Email: edslumanog@yahoo.com

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BP RENTALS

Honda Dreams for 2,500 baht per month. Good condition. Tel: 09-4727304.

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Wanted

WANTED TO BUY

Honda Dream & Phantom motorbikes. Tel: 076-388-191, 09-6486849.

WANTED

87-04 Ford Mustang with registration. Must be a V-8 engine, and prefer standard transmission. Body and interior condition not important as I want the mechanicals only as a project donor car. Tel: 04-8096610. Email: rgstraghan@yahoo.ca

Agents for Classified Advertising

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| Sin & Lee
Thalang Rd, Phuket City | Tel: 076-258369
Fax: 076-211230 |
| Taurus Travel
Aroonsom Plaza Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd, Patong | Tel: 076-344521/2
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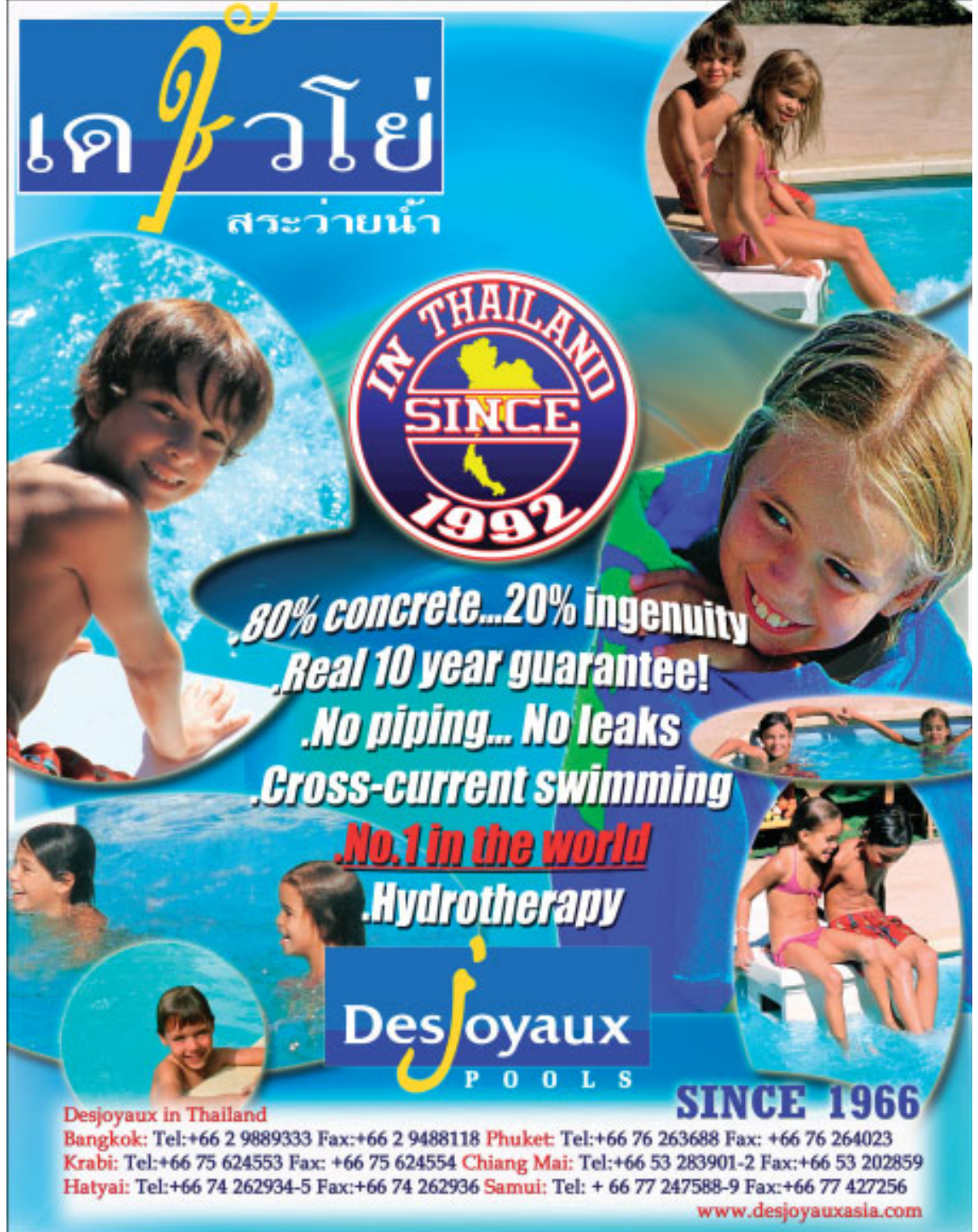

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