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Koh Yao to get ferry service



The new ferry will serve Koh Yao Yai and Koh Yao Noi from the new pier at Ao Por (pictured).

By Sangkhae Leelanapaporn

KOH YAO: Sea Canoe Thailand Co is to launch a new ferry service between Phuket, Koh Yao Noi and Koh Yao Yai next month, with two round-trip crossings a day, beginning August 13.

The company has invested 6.5 million baht in the project, to be served by a 200-seat ferryboat, the *Pachcharat One*.

The ferry will leave Mah Noh Pier on Koh Yao Noi at 8 am and 2 pm, with return legs from Ao Por Pier in Phuket at 10 am and 4 pm daily. All crossings will also call in at Khlong Hia Pier on Koh Yao Yai.

Pachcharat One, which has an air-conditioned passenger lounge, a Muslim prayer room and a cold-storage room to transport food, was previously used

by Sea Canoe on the Phuket-Phi Phi route.

The Managing Director of Sea Canoe, Koh Yao Noi native Soonthorn Sakulsan, said the service would improve safety standards on the crossing for locals and tourists alike. In the past, passengers were forced to board poorly-equipped longtail boats for lack of a better option.

Ten people died when one longtail, the *Rungroj*, sank in a squall on the way from Bang Rong Pier to Koh Yao Noi in March last year.

The boat was licensed to carry only 22 people but had at least 70 passengers aboard when it sank.

The new service will cost 120 baht per person, one way, with a 120-baht transport fee for motorbikes. This is considerably

more expensive than the current longtail price of about 70 baht per person but, K. Soonthorn said, "We discussed transport needs with local people before deciding to launch this service. They said they need safe, reliable transport year-round. Our ferry will be able to run throughout the year, including the rainy season," he said.

"It will take *Pachcharat One* about 40 minutes to make the 25-kilometer crossing. That is around 15 minutes faster than going by longtail boat," he added.

K. Soonthorn said the company plans to introduce a larger ferry next year, with capacity for cars and pickup trucks.

Sea Canoe also wants to establish a new route linking Phuket, Koh Yao and Krabi Town, he added.

Banker warns of boom in fake cards

By Sompratch Saowakhon

PHUKET: A senior banker has warned that there has been a dramatic rise in the number of counterfeit credit cards and ATM cards in Phuket and other tourism centers, such as Chiang Mai and Haad Yai.

Prayootd Tansrisuwarn, Senior Vice President of KasikornBank's Retail and SME E-Business Department, told the *Gazette* that gangs of con artists are using "skimmer" devices to harvest information from magnetic strips on the back of cards used by unsuspecting victims.

The skimmers are used in two ways. Either they are inserted into the slot of an ATM machine, or they are used by accomplices working in jobs that involve handling credit cards, such as hotel cashiers and supermarket check-out staff.

The information skimmed from a card is then used to make a fake credit card or ATM card.

K. Prayootd said the rise in counterfeiting may be the result of Thailand's neighbors switching from cards with magnetic memory strips to "smart" cards with computer chips embedded in them. As "smart" cards cannot be read by the skimmers, K. Prayootd is urging card users in Thailand to switch to smart cards as soon as they find a bank that can issue them.

Counterfeiting gangs have been using "cloned" credit cards to buy goods from retail outlets, especially supermarkets such as Tesco-Lotus and Big C, he said.

Those responsible for handling credit cards should therefore examine them very carefully, he added.

Continued on page 2



Your Piece of Paradise

PTA elects Hilton's Maitree as president

By Janyaporn Morel

PHUKET: The Phuket Tourist Association (PTA) has elected Maitree Narukatpichai as its new president, replacing Pattanapong Aekwanich, and has at the same time announced its policy agenda for 2006-2008.

K. Maitree, Owners' Representative of the Hilton Phuket Arcadia Resort & Spa, was elected, along with 17 other committee members, at a July 14 meeting at the Phuket Merlin Hotel. The PTA elects a new board every three years.

The election results were made public at a press conference on July 24.

Panu Maswongsa, Krisada Tansakul, Kittipattanachinda, Somboon Jirayus and lawyer Sarayuth Mullum were elected as vice-presidents.

K. Maitree said that the PTA will promote domestic tourism in collaboration with the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), the Ministry of Tourism and Sports and airlines.

International tourism, to be promoted in collaboration with the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization and the TAT, will target tourists abroad through road shows and trade shows. The PTA will also continue to push for more international scheduled and charter flights direct to Phuket.

K. Panu, who has long served as a PTA spokesman, explained that the PTA will target airlines in Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

"[In addition] we are pushing to get more tourists during off-peak periods. We already have tourists from Russia due to come in August. Chinese and South Korean groups have been coming in July and are booked for August.

"We are also looking to boost the number of visitors from southern Europe," he said.

Again, a priority is direct flights, he noted. "We will take

Istanbul in Turkey as the hub for southern Europe. If we can get direct flights from Istanbul to Phuket, we should get tourists from [such countries as] Portugal and Greece.

"We will start working on this project soon. If it's successful we will have tourists from this region to fill our hotels in the low season," K. Panu said.

Other new PTA committee members elected are: Chanadda Atiset, Sathaporn Wongpaisan, Dr Jirachai Amornpairoj, Rattana Choobal, Chernporn Karnchanasaya, Wichai Ruangjaruwattana, Jinnidapa Cheunsakulthitichote, Duangrawee Sirirak, Mongkol Boonporn, Surasak Tharapattana, Sirikul Amaramorn and Wissut Kasayanant.

The PTA also appointed outgoing president K. Pattanapong as a consultant, along with Marina Cottage owner Somchai Limpanont and Methee Tanmanatragul, a representative of the Conrad Phuket Resort and Spa.



Maitree Narukatpichai.



Jitt Jakawan, Kamala's tsunami memorial sculpture, towers over visitors.

Kamala tsunami memorial unveiled

KAMALA, PHUKET: Caretaker Deputy Prime Minister Suwat Liptapanlop officially unveiled the tsunami memorial in Kamala on July 22.

The memorial, which forms the centerpiece of a new park in the town, is a 10-meter-high metal sculpture called *Jitt Jakawan (Heart of the Universe)*, designed and built by Thai sculptor Udon Jiraksa.

In a speech to mark the occasion, CDPM Suwat said, "This tsunami memorial will become

an icon for the Andaman Sea region, and is certain to become a tourism attraction in the near future.

"We need to establish more cultural sites to promote tourism. The Cabinet has already approved a budget of about 600 million baht to build the biggest tsunami memorial in the area [in Khao Lak]. That will be completed in two years," he said.

Kamala was one of the two towns in Phuket worst hit by the December 26, 2004, tsunami, the other being Patong.

16 die on roads in June

PHUKET: Sixteen people died in traffic accidents in Phuket in June, according to official figures obtained from Vachira Phuket, Thalang and Patong government hospitals.

This was slightly less than the monthly average of 18 deaths for the year to date.

Of the 16 dead, 15 died in motorcycle accidents. The remaining death came in an accident involving a bicycle.

During the same period 1,068 people were injured in road accidents. Of these, 995 were on motorbikes, 42 were in cars, 31 were on bicycles, and one was a pedestrian.

Statistics for the first six months of the year show that 108 people have died in road accidents; 98 were on motorcycles.

A chance for young chessmasters to shine

PHUKET: A major tournament to decide the best young chess players in southern Thailand will be held at Phuket Rajabhat University (PRU) on August 3.

The tournament, which will start at 9 am in the university's meeting hall, will be open to all nationalities, and will be divided into four age groups: under 12, under 15, under 18 and under 25.

Winners will go on to take part in the national championships. No date or venue has yet been set for these, but they are expected to take place this year.

Competitors should register at PRU by July 31. On the day of the contest they should arrive early in order to complete registration.

They should bring with them a copy of any government-issued document that identifies them, such as an ID card, passport, house registration document (*tabien baan*) or birth certificate, as well as three one-inch-high photographs.

For more information contact PRU at Tel: 076-211959, 076-240474-7 or 01-7190467.

Boom in fake credit, ATM cards

From page 1

There are ways to detect the fakes, he explained.

"The logo of the issuing company, such as Visa or Mastercard, should be printed very clearly and the credit card number should be sharply and clearly embossed – you should not be able to erase it or scratch it out.

"On the back of the card, the signature area should be sharply defined and impossible to

scratch off. In addition, examine the credit card number on the back. If it is in italicized numerals that are leaning to the right, it's fake," he said.

Banks advise users of ATM cards to change their personal identification number (PIN) regularly in order to stop counterfeiters from drawing cash from their accounts. In addition, anyone suspecting his or her credit card has been cloned should contact the issuing bank immediately.

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TAT opens new office in Phuket

By Jenjira Ruengjarus

PHUKET CITY: The Tourism Authority of Thailand opened its new Region 4 branch office on July 22 with an opening ceremony presided over by caretaker Tourism and Sports Minister Pracha Maleenont.

The 14-million-baht office is a bright orange, two-story edifice built in the Sino-Portuguese style and located on one rai of government land next to Queen Sirikit Park on Thalang Rd. It replaces the old TAT office on Phuket Rd, which was built some 30 years ago and was deemed too small to cater to the 60 to 100 tourists who visit every day during the high season.

K. Pracha spoke after the opening ceremony of the TAT's efforts to increase tourism in Phuket, Krabi and Phang Nga, the three provinces which make up Region 4, and declared that

recent TAT-organized roadshows to Korea, China and Japan had been a success in luring low-season tourists back to the region.

"Tourists are not only returning to Phuket, but are arriving in larger numbers than ever. In the near future we plan to have roadshows to Russia, Britain and India, but we have other duties we must perform first," he said.

A number of airlines have added flights to Phuket to meet growing demand, including 10 weekly charter flights from Finland scheduled to begin in November, he added.

The TAT would continue to encourage Thai International Airways (THAI) to add more direct flights to Phuket, he said

"THAI is studying each market carefully so that they can gradually increase the number of flights to meet this demand," he said.

Island leads country in e-government

KARON: An Internet website offering one-stop service from 15 private-sector and government bodies will be launched in Phuket in September, making the province the first in Thailand to offer such a service.

The initiative, known as "One Click Finish All: One Stop Services", is being designed by the Software Industry Promotion Agency (SIPA).

When operational the website will give access to a number of public services. People should be able to pay utility bills and get information about health and education services, including details about the region's universities.

Patients' medical histories will also be included, allowing

doctors speedy access to their files.

The Immigration Department is taking part in the project, allowing tourists and expatriates to contact the department through the Internet.

The Phuket site will be the first of many such projects as the government intends to expand the service to cover the whole country as part of its aim to "enter the era of e-government".

Details of the project were announced and agreements between departments signed at a conference chaired by Caretaker Deputy Prime Minister and acting ICT Minister Prof Suchai Charoenratanakul at the Hilton Phuket Arcadia Resort & Spa, Karon, on July 21.

American held on drug charges

PATONG: Kathu Police arrested American Michael Feldstein, 64, on July 22 for possession of illegal drugs, after a search of the man's apartment uncovered a variety of "recreational" drugs - including *ya bah* (methamphetamine).

Kathu Police Deputy Inspector Pol Lt Patak Khwunna told the *Gazette* that Feldstein, an engineer, had been under suspicion for about a month before his arrest.

At around 7 am on July 22, police obtained a court warrant to search the man's condominium, located at S-1401 Patong Tower on Soi Patong Resort.

There they allegedly found five *ya bah* pills, 31 tablets of *ya E* (ecstasy) and two grams

of *ya Ice* (crystal methamphetamine).

Also arrested was 24-year-old bar boy Trakul Seesaeng, who admitted to taking drugs but denied having sold the narcotics to Feldstein.

Under police questioning, Feldstein flatly denied all charges against him and said he would speak further only in front of the court.

He is currently being held in a cell at the Kathu Police Station in Patong, where his request to police for bail was turned down.

Charges against Feldstein will soon be filed with the Phuket Provincial Court, where he will again be able to apply for release on bail.



Spectators can be assured of some real thrills, as the F1 boats reach speeds of more than 240kmh across the water. - Photo copyright © 2006 Philippe Stiernon

F1 boat racing set for Phuket in 2008

PHUKET: The Formula 1 boat racing that was due to come to Phuket in March 2005, but was canceled following the tsunami, will come in 2008 instead, the *Gazette* has learned.

Bangkok-based organizers Paragon Events announced that the Phuket race will take place from March 14 to 16, 2008, at the Deep Sea Port in Ao Makham.

"The F1 UIM World Championship Phuket Grand Prix 2008 will be the biggest international sporting event held in Thailand in 2008," Paragon added.

"From March 14 to 16, 2008, Phuket will provide the ideal location for the F1 Powerboat Grand Prix, the first

World Championship level event in Thailand.

"F1 Powerboats provide the world's most exciting watersport race, the ultimate test of man and machine - 24 drivers competing in 13 races [at different places] around the globe for the right to be called the F1 UIM Powerboat Champion, 2008."

Now in its 25th year, the F1 Powerboat racing circuit is comparable with Formula 1 car racing and has similar rules.

The Grand Prix is regulated by the Union Internationale Motonautique (International Powerboating Association, UIM for short).

Qualifying on the Saturday

of the race weekend decides which boat is on pole position and the formation of the grid for the race on Sunday, when drivers compete for a breathtaking 45 minutes at speeds exceeding 240 kilometers an hour.

The drivers are amongst the fittest athletes in the world, having to be able to handle 6G turns no fewer than 120 times per race, and acceleration from 0 to 100 kmh in just 3.5 seconds.

Paragon Events, backed by marketing consultancy Paul Poole (Southeast Asia) Co, is currently seeking sponsors and partners for the event. For more information see the event website at www.f1boat.com.


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THE POWER OF PROTEST VERSUS THE POWER OF THE LAW

In any country, frustrated citizens resort from time to time to group action to get their voices heard by unresponsive governments. In most countries, however, there is a line between peaceful protest and violence or disruption.

The Thai Penal Code has a number of provisions that might be applied to mob situations. It is up to the authorities to decide whether to apply these laws. In Phuket, they rarely do, preferring negotiation and, often, placation.

Section 215: Whenever ten persons upwards being assembled together do or threaten to do an act of violence, or do anything to cause a breach of the peace, every such person shall be punished with imprisonment not exceeding six months or fine not exceeding one thousand baht or both.

... If the offender be the manager or person having the duty to give orders for the commission of the offence, such offender shall be punished with imprisonment not exceeding five years or fine not exceeding ten thousand baht, or both.

Section 310: Whoever detains or confines the other person, or by any other means whatever, deprives such person of the liberty of a person, shall be punished with imprisonment not exceeding three years or fine nor exceeding six thousand baht, or both.

Section 358: Whoever damages, destroys, causes depreciation in value, or renders useless a property belonging to the other person, or of which the other person is a co-owner, is said to commit mischief, and shall be punished with imprisonment not exceeding three years or fine not exceeding six thousand baht, or both.

Section 359: If the offence under Section 358 be committed against ... an engine or a machinery used for agricultural or industrial pursuits ... a conveyance or a beast of burden used for public transport ... the offender shall be punished with imprisonment not exceeding five years or fine not exceeding ten thousand baht, or both.

Section 372: Whoever quarrels noisily in a public way or place, or causes by any other means disturbance in a public way or place, shall be punished with a fine not exceeding five hundred baht.

Section 385: Whoever, without lawful permission, unnecessarily obstructs a public way by placing or leaving thereon any thing, or by acting by any other means so that it may interfere with the safety or convenience of traffic, shall be punished with a fine not exceeding five hundred baht.

MOB RULE

When might makes right

Friday, July 29, 2005: A hundred or more airport limousine drivers, angry that Phuket International Airport authorities were allowing metered-taxi drivers to set up a ticketing queue in the arrivals hall, demonstrated at Phuket Provincial Hall.

That protest followed an earlier one at the airport, in which the parking lot was blocked. But Governor Udomsak Uswarangkura was among those in favor of encouraging transition to a transport fleet of metered taxis.

The taxi fleet has been for decades dominated by un-metered "limousines", whose drivers react in unison at attempts to dislodge them.

In this case the drivers' cop was especially angry, insisting they had paid a considerable sum for the taxi concession, and that allowing metered taxi drivers into the airport violated their contract with the airport.

Three hours of discussions, from 8:30 am to 11:30 am, failed to calm them and, when the Governor emerged to go for lunch, the crowd blocked his car.

Security staff had to protect him from drivers hurling insults and plastic water bottles. Using a megaphone, Governor Udomsak, whose name means "perfect dignity" was reduced to pleading for two hours before the crowd finally dispersed at about 1:30 pm.

Tuesday, February 21, 2005: More than 200 people blocked Thepkasattri Rd in Sapam for half an hour in the evening, protesting plans to make them pay rent on land they had occupied for 15 years.

Tambon Koh Keaw city officers had earlier told the residents of Moo 3 they must rent the site – a former tin mine – or leave. The illegal protest was headed by Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (*OrBorJor*) Vice-President Dilok Thongton.

Angry villagers blocked the

Those surprised at the mild response of authorities to Baan Kor En villagers' hot-headed behavior in closing Thepkasattri Rd earlier in the month may not know that, in Phuket, this is part of the norm. The *Gazette's* own news archives list no fewer than 25 such episodes since 1999 – though in fact 'mobs' date right back into the island's tin mining days. The bottom line is: protests are quick to erupt here, and often do. And although they are frequently illegal, they are often effective in achieving the mobs' aims. Tang Rob looks back on the history of mob action.

road until the arrival of some 50 police. The Chief Administrator of Muang District Office, Tawicha Chaithong, said the rent demand was in line with Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's policy to ease the plight of the nation's poor.

The protest broke up after the group chose 10 representatives to discuss the issue at a later date.

Protests over land are a frequent cause for demonstration: sardine dryers camped out in front of Provincial Hall for a month last year after being evicted from their rented property near Phuket's commercial fishing port. After months of

noisy wrangling they ended up in virtually the same place.

Monday, February 16, 2004: About 1,000 entertainment workers and business owners gathered outside Phuket Provincial Hall to protest a Cabinet resolution on opening hours, which they asserted hurt tourism and cost them money.

Banners and placards criticized 1 am closing time; protesters insisted it remain 2 am. Three years earlier they had insisted it be 3 am, and five years previously they wanted it 4 am.

About 200 convoyed from Patong in tuk-tuks to join in demanding that Gov Udomsak ask the Cabinet to reconsider. The

Cabinet never did, and although the new closing times are less than strictly enforced, the issue still simmers.

Saturday, April 2, 2004: Some 100 teenagers blocked the intersection in front of Cherng Talay police station from 8 pm to 3 am after the latest flare-up in an ongoing gang war between youths from Bang Tao and neighboring Baan Don. The group threw bottles and damaged property at the station.

The arrests of two Bang Tao teenagers during a brawl the previous afternoon in Thalang sparked the incident. Protesters castigated police for failing to apprehend a leader of the Baan Don gang, and demanded a progress report on investigation into the January 21 shooting of an 18-year-old from Bang Tao, who suffered a leg wound.

The mob demanded the transfer of the Thalang officers who arrested the two teenagers.

They did not disperse until after then-Vice-Governor Pongpow Kettong and then-Provincial Police Chief Pol Maj Gen Veerayuth Sittimalic arrived to negotiate. The gangs had previously battled during a military service lottery drawing.

Thursday, March 3, 2004: Arguments between locals and security guards at the Banyan Tree Phuket resort led to about 100 villagers protesting outside Cherng Talay Police station.

For six hours, the crowd called for police to remove the guards from their jobs.

The victim [of the mob] was fined for reckless driving and forced to apologize to the people who had beaten him up.

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Left, December 2000: Villagers blocked the road to the end of Cape Panwa in protest after a teenager was shot dead by a sailor from the navy base.

Saturday, December 16, 2000: A mob of 500 blocked the road to the airport in front of Thalang Police Station for 2½ hours in the afternoon, demanding the transfer of a police captain and seven other officers they accused of repeatedly planting drugs on people and stealing large sums of money.

Amnuay Sanguannam, then Vice-Governor of Phuket, arrived to negotiate and finally promised to have the policemen transferred.

Wednesday, December 13, 2000: Gov Pongpayome and a number of senior police and navy officers were detained for nearly six hours at Cape Panwa by a mob angry over the killing of a 16-year-old boy.

The mob also blocked the road, trapping tourists inside the Cape Panwa and Panwaburi resorts.

Five seamen from the Royal Thai Navy Third Fleet base at Cape Panwa quarreled with a group of teenagers over road manners.

One of the teens, Madat Hasap, 16, allegedly threatened murder – and was shot in the head with an M16. The governor went to investigate after 200 villagers, carrying the youth’s corpse, demanded his killer be handed over.

When they threatened to invade the base, they were confronted with automatic rifles at the gates, but paid no attention and marched into the compound, laying the boy’s body at the door of the main building.

They said that if the killer was not delivered up they would burn down the base.

Officials were allowed to depart after the five sailors were arrested and the governor agreed to oversee questioning at police headquarters. The sailor responsible for the shooting confessed and is still serving time in jail.

September 15, 2000: Nearly 100 villagers protested heatedly at Chalong Police station after a villager was stabbed to death a week earlier in a Karon karaoke bar owned by a police officer.

September 14, 2000: A crowd of 50 Cape Panwa villagers besieged Phuket Town police station demanding action against officers who, they alleged, beat a local illegal taxi driver after stopping him for drunk-driving.

Below: February 2004: Bar owners, managers and employees gather on the Loma field in Patong to protest at earlier closing times imposed by the Thai Rak Thai government.



The dispute began at 10 am when a group of villagers argued with two guards over access. The group then went to police and filed a complaint. They also alleged weapons violations.

At about 6 pm, locals began to gather outside the station; at least 100 arrived. They dispersed peacefully at midnight.

Laguna Phuket, where Banyan Tree is located, has been a target of many protests by villagers and tuk-tuk drivers over the years.

During one protest on March 19, 2002, guests arriving or departing were forced to carry their luggage in or out when 300 angry villagers refused to allow vehicles to pass.

They were protesting erection of a fence, which they said illegally blocked access to public land.

Tuesday, August 26, 2003: Roughly 300 Phuket tour guides gathered in the morning at Lan Nawamin Square on Phuket Rd to protest a Cabinet resolution allowing tour agencies bringing in more than 5,000 tourists yearly to hire 10 foreign workers.

The Cabinet also said it would consider reducing the threshold to 1,000 tourists a year. The protest was organized by the Phuket Professional Guide Association (PGA).

After assembling, the mob marched to Phuket Provincial Hall where then-governor Pongpayome Vasaputi told them diplomatically he would “raise this issue with Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra.”

Tuesday, December 10, 2002: Some 200 tuk-tuk and taxi drivers blocked Kaktanode Rd near its junction with Patak Rd in Karon to demand that four safari companies – Siam Safari, Island Safari, Southern Eco and Amazing Bhukit – honor a verbal agreement to use tuk-tuks and taxis in lieu of their own vehicles for shuttling customers between hotels and safari companies.

Police in response said they would advise hotels in Kata-Karon to bar safari company vehicles from picking up guests.

The protest disbanded after a meeting was arranged between the Kata-Karon Tuk-Tuk and Taxi Drivers’ Association and the tour companies.

Two weeks later, on December 23, about 100 staff from four safari tour companies demonstrated in their turn against tuk-tuk and taxi drivers, parking 30 vehicles outside the Phang Nga offices of Suwit Sa-Ngiamkul, one of Phuket’s two MPs at that time.

They complained of “bullying behavior” by the tuk-tuk drivers, and cited “contracts with foreign companies” that were “impossible to change.”

“If we give in to them, they will continue to do it over and over again,” said a spokesman.

They gave in anyway.

Tuesday, April 30, 2002: Two protests were held. The first was at the *OrBorJor* offices and in-

involved a crowd of 300 from Tambon Sakoo Moo 1 who wanted a road built.

The other involved 40 Koh Maphrao villagers assembling at Provincial Hall to demand that the governor reverse his order closing three privately-owned floating restaurants off Koh Maphrao.

Tuesday, December 11, 2001: An angry mob beat up a crew member of superyacht *Yanneke Too* and trashed his pick-up after he sped through their village on the way to Yacht Haven marina. The victim said he was hurrying to douse a fire aboard the yacht.

After brushing aside marina security staff, the mob of about 100 Baan Khor En villagers “punched him a few times in the face”, then attacked the pick-up, causing damage estimated at 200,000 baht.

It was also alleged they stole cameras and other valuables.

The target of their anger jumped in the water to escape.

Villagers then threw rocks at him.

The yacht’s skipper said villagers “came down to the dock and threatened people in the boats....”

The victim was fined for reckless driving and forced to apologize to the people who had beaten him up.

A subsequent police investigation went nowhere.

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Queer News

Progress for pilgrims

CHIANG MAI: Chiang Mai's famous Phrasingha Temple has unveiled its new 1.6-million-baht public bathroom, which the temple clergy hope will claim this year's coveted "Toilet of the Year" award.

Monks at the temple, which receives hundreds of Thai and foreign tourists a day and as many as 3,000 on Buddhist holidays, saw the need for improvements to its restroom several years ago.

So, back in April 2004, a collection box was set up with signs in Thai, English and Japanese explaining that contributions would be used to pay the bathroom attendants' wages, with any remaining funds to be earmarked for maintenance and future improvements.

Some 1.6 million baht later, the bathroom boasts appurtenances more commonly associated with swanky hotels than provincial Thai temples.

There are liquid soap dispensers, electric hand dryers, and flowers and small potted plants to provide freshness, plus clearly marked separate stalls for monks and disabled people.

The temple also plans to install automatic air fresheners, revealed Assistant Abbot Phra Khru Withi Sasanathorn.

Bathroom attendant Sri-thong Intharat, 52, is proud to work in the facility. "Some people who come here have said it is the cleanest bathroom that they have



Devotees can do their duty – without getting dirty.

ever seen. Others say it is just like a bathroom in a five-star hotel and that it is so clean one could lie down and sleep on the floor," he said.

Thai tourist Kannitha Ouanfer did not take a nap on the bathroom tiles, but after using the toilet she remarked that it was the cleanest, most spacious and aesthetically appealing one she had ever seen at a temple.

"It is even cleaner than my bathroom at home," she conceded.

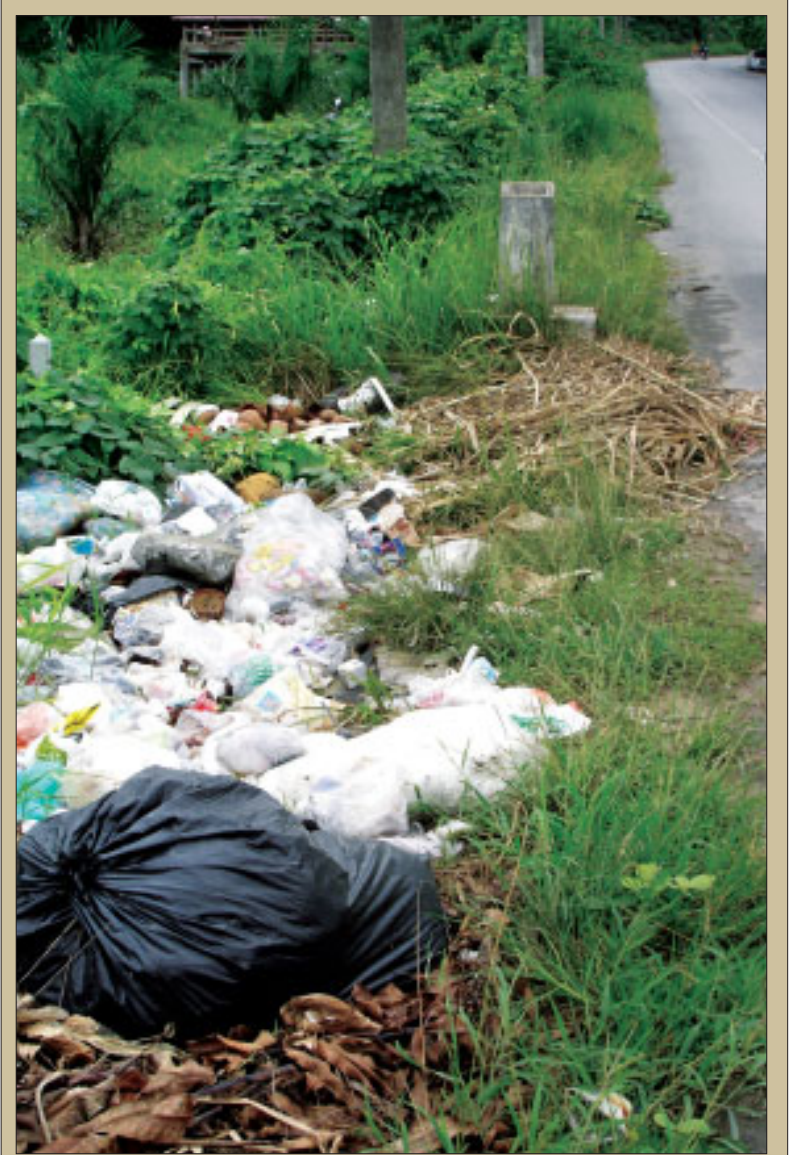
"Before, I never enjoyed visiting temples because, as a woman, I was uncomfortable answering the call of nature in a dirty bathroom. And at some

temples the bathrooms are so filthy I am afraid to even go in.

"So I have to say that I am extremely impressed with the bathroom here at Wat Prasingha Temple. I wish all temple bathrooms were as clean as this."

Phra Khru Withi said that the temple conducted a study of bathroom facilities in airport lounges and fancy hotels before coming up with its final design. He plans to enter the bathroom in the Ministry of Health's "Toilet of the Year" competition. The contest, organized by the Hygiene Department, has a separate category for toilets in places of religious worship.


Source: Kom Chad Luek



TRASHING Phuket



Rassadanusorn Rd, in Tambon Rassada, on the northeast outskirts of Phuket City, is not the most beautiful road in Phuket, making it the perfect place to dump unwanted pineapples and lots of other rotting garbage. Got a place where you dump your garbage at midnight (or midday)? Don't be greedy; share it with the rest of us. Email a picture of it to dump@phuketgazette.net





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Thai children's IQs below par, says deputy minister

The average intelligence quotient (IQ) of Thai children remains in the "low average" category when ranked internationally, Deputy Minister for Education Watchara Phanchet told a seminar organized by the Mental Health Department's Rajanukul Institute in Bangkok.

Citing a survey conducted in 2002, he told the seminar that only 80% of children under five years of age had normal visual, muscular and touch-perception development.

The survey also found the average IQ of children aged between six and 12 was 87 points, while the average IQ for children between 13 and 18 was 88.

In a 2001 survey, children aged from six to 12 were found to be deficient in patience, discipline, concentration and self-reliance, while those between 13 and 18 had insufficient creativity, analytical ability, conscience, problem-solving skills and emotional control, he said.

Dep Min Watchara said these problems were the result of parents leaving teachers in charge of their children's development. Teachers are not trained to maximise children's potential at the right age, he said.

"We plan to raise Thai children's [average] IQ to at least 100 by 2008," he said.



A boy looks at a peacock, one of 999 animals released into the wild at the Sap Langka Wildlife Sanctuary in Lop Buri to mark the 10th anniversary of the death of HRH Princess Sri Nagarindra, the Princess Mother.

A wildlife expert said the project would only "increase the fertilizer" in the sanctuary. Other critics charged that the release violated international guidelines because the number of creatures released was based on a superstition rather than circumstances relating to the animals' welfare.

Public works: Two foreign tourists were killed when they were run over by a government construction tractor at a pedestrian crossing on Larnluang Rd in Bangkok's Pom Prab District, even though they were holding flags used by pedestrians to signal motorists to stop.

The driver of the tractor, Saichol Innork, remained on his vehicle after running over the men, identified as Hanne Karlsen, a Norwegian, and Garry Thomas of Britain, both 28 years old.

Saichol, 34, who works for the city's public works department, was arrested and charged with causing death through reckless driving. He told police he was not speeding when he approached the crossing and that he failed to see either of the victims.

A spokeswoman said that the city would compensate the victims' families and request Saichol's release on bail on the grounds that he did not flee the scene. However, it was reported that the only reason he did not flee was that he feared a mob of angry bystanders would attack him.

Disaster area: Suphan Buri, one of the provinces worst hit by avian 'flu outbreaks, has been declared an "emergency disaster area" by livestock officials, who fear the province is at risk of becoming a center for the spread of the epidemic.

Songphol Thimasart of the Suphan Buri Provincial Livestock Office said his agency had been monitoring an unusual rise in the number of farm-raised chickens dying in different areas around the province and suspected the deaths - including 200 chickens

that died en masse in Muang District - were caused by bird 'flu.

Laboratory confirmation of the cause of the deaths was not available at the time of the announcement, but local farmers said the deaths resembled past bird 'flu outbreaks.

K. Songphol said that under disaster-area status the province would be eligible for advance emergency funding to cover compensation payments to farmers to mitigate the impact of their birds dying or being culled, he said.

I have a fission: The Office of Atomic Energy for Peace (OAEP) has suggested the government dust off the proposal to construct a nuclear power plant, after leaving it on the shelf for decades.

Speaking at a regional meeting on nuclear energy organised by OAEP and the International Atomic Energy Agency, OAEP Secretary-General Manoon Aramrat said Thailand needed an alternative source of energy to cope with the oil crisis.

He added that many developing countries, including Thailand's near-neighbours Indonesia and Vietnam, were building 1-gigawatt nuclear power plants.

"The government has to make a decision right now whether to use nuclear energy because it would take 15 years to complete the construction and all of the facilities," he said.

K. Manoon recommended the construction of four 1-GW reactors at a total cost of between 80 and 90 billion baht.

It was not reported what the OAEP planned to do with spent uranium from the plants if the project gets the go-ahead.

Slave wages: The Ministry of Labour (MoL) announced a rise in the minimum wage for blue-collar workers.

The minimum daily wage as applied in 35 provinces will go up by between 1 baht and 7 baht with effect from August 1, said MoL Permanent Secretary Somchai Wongsawas.

The wage hike would not apply to other provinces, which might be considered for a rise in October, he said.

The reason for the wage hike was the rise in fuel prices that have raised the cost of living of workers in certain areas, K. Somchai said.

The province to receive the highest wage hike is Ratchaburi, where the minimum daily wage will rise from 147 baht to 154 baht.

Critics have charged that

the hikes, along with other recent government handouts benefitting the poor, are aimed at shoring up the popularity of the Thai Rak Thai Party in the run-up to the next election.

Dam difficult: The government must reinforce Srinakharin Dam in Kanchanaburi Province to prevent it from collapsing during an earthquake, said Dr Samphan Singharachawaraphan, head of the National Center for Earthquake Research in Chiang Mai.

If a quake with a magnitude of more than 6 on the Richter scale occurs within a 10-kilometer radius of the dam, it could collapse, said Dr Samphan.

"The government must do it - even if it means huge expenditure," he said.

He also urged public works officials to inspect high-rise buildings in Tak, Chiang Mai, Kanchanaburi and Mae Hong Son Provinces stringently because they were in areas likely to be affected by earthquakes triggered by local fault lines.

His warning came after a powerful quake shook the Indonesian island of Java, resulting in at least 500 deaths.

The fault line in Java is linked to Sakaeng fault line in Myanmar, which also divides into three sub-fault lines in Kanchanaburi and Tak Provinces.

"If the main fault line shakes, the secondary fault lines will see severe impacts," he said.

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

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ANDAMAN COASTING
By Franky Gun

Heavy rainfall caused flooding in several parts of Khao Lak during the past few weeks. The Bang Niang beach road, which connects the beach with Petchkasem Rd (Route 4) appeared more like a big pond most of the time, demonstrating that – as predicted – the newly installed drainage system does not work at all.

Only Lord Buddha knows how much money has been wasted here – again – for something that was bound to fail from the outset. All in all, everything that has been done to make the road more attractive and safer has been a waste of resources.

One would think that we had already been through enough with the tsunami, but it appears that the powers-that-be are now trying to create the potential for man-made disasters as well.

DRAIN BRAIN



The new Sea Dragons dive shop, with inviting instruction pool out front.

First, trees have been planted right in the middle of sidewalk, where they will eventually grow straight up into the power lines suspended above. When they do,

every time it rains there will be the constant threat of pedestrians being electrocuted.

Second, the trees will be obstacles for any tourists brave

enough to walk the pavement while pushing a baby stroller or a wheelchair.

Rumor has it, in fact, that *Jackass, The Movie* will be shot on Bang Niang Beach. One of Johnny Knoxville's tasks will be a full-speed run on the sidewalk from the beach all the way up to the main road.

Sounds like nothing? Sounds like a piece of cake? Try it then, but don't forget to pre-book a room at the Bangkok Hospital Phuket, and check the Internet for a good rehabilitation clinic while you are at it.

While heavy reconstruction is underway all over the southern part of Bang Niang Beach, nothing at all has happened in Bang Niang's northern end.

With land prices there skyrocketing to ridiculous heights, none of the land-owners seems to have the inclination or the money to kick in and do some construction work to get a business going.

It would be a great addition for Bang Niang if one or two new resorts could be built around there to give the whole area a fresh boost of "we can do it" energy.

However, all the land owners at the north end of Bang Niang seem to be sticking to a wait-and-see agenda.

Sadly, for Bang Niang Beach residents, this is steadily pushing the competing Nang Thong Beach back into first place; reconstruction efforts there have totally outstripped those in Bang Niang.

It is simply unbelievable how many big resorts have been rebuilt there – or are under con-

struction with a good chance of being ready for the coming high season.

New digs for dive pioneers: Khao Lak's scuba diving pioneer, the Sea Dragon Dive Center, has moved to a new location. The dive center was the first one to open in Khao Lak, back in 1993. Until recently it was opposite the Nang Thong supermarket on Petchkasem Rd.

When the company's rental contract expired, it was hit with a request for a ridiculous amount of key money, so the owners decided to invest in the construction of a new dive center, just a few hundred meters down the main road.

The new dive center, with a sparkling instruction pool right in front, is opposite the entrance to the Andaburi Resort.

From the look of the new center, it is plain that the team does not regret its decision to move. The new center is bigger, better, more functional – due to the pool right in front of it – and has a more professional appearance than the old one.

Sea Dragon is one of the few dive shops that are open all year round. Live-aboard trips to the Similan Islands depart weekly, even during the rainy season. The Sea Dragon live-aboard fleet consists of three boats.

For more information, visit their website at www.seadragondivecenter.com

Vox pop: Another positive message rounds out this installment of Andaman Coasting: A local Thai radio broadcast announced that government and national park officials will soon have a round-table discussion on whether the proposed extension of Route 4 all along the Khao Lak Lamru National Park is such a good idea after all.

It appears that local protests along with negative comments by some officials in Bangkok about rain forest destruction in the area close to where the tsunami memorial is to be sited have sparked this recent and very positive display of common sense.

Miracles can happen in regards to environmental preservation, even in Southern Thailand. Let's keep our fingers crossed and hope that the round-table will dismiss the road plan, just as the foolish scheme to build a massive oil pipeline across the province was canned a couple of years ago.

Trees have been planted right in the middle of sidewalk, where they will eventually grow straight up into the power lines suspended above.



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Hooked on a pastime

By Natcha Yuttaworawit

If there is one concept that all Thai ladies love, it is “cute”. Embody that cuteness in a girl’s best friend – a doll – and you have a sure-fire bestseller in Thailand. That’s what 28-year-old Kitima “Ann” Charonpakdeekul recently discovered with her handmade crocheted dolls.

K. Ann, originally from Haad Yai, simply loves to crochet, a pastime she discovered when she was in her mid-teens but has spent the past decade perfecting.

“I just love to make crochet dolls,” K. Ann told the *Gazette*. “I taught myself how to crochet, which confused many people who know me because I graduated from Sripatum University [in Bangkok] with a degree in finance and banking.”

Over the years she has amassed a large collection of dolls, all made in her spare time as a way to relax after her more serious work; during the day she is an administrator at the Patong office of engine components manufacturer SAIA Services Co Ltd.

“A friend said that I should try to sell them because I had a large collection of dolls in many different styles. At first I ignored her advice, but then more and more friends urged me to sell them.

“So I had a website made and put them on the Internet,” she said.



The website – at www.doll2u.com (Thai language only) – offers dolls in a variety of prices, sizes and styles. Small dolls about two inches tall and attached to key rings are 89 baht, while larger dolls about five inches tall, better suited to decorating one’s desk, bedroom or car, are available for about 450 baht. They are available in a multitude of colors, some equipped with suckers on “hands” and “feet” so they can be stuck to windows, much like the classic Garfield toy.

“Most of the dolls sold so far were bought by shops in Bangkok, with some sold to shops in Haad Yai,” she said. “I don’t have a lot of customers. I do this because I enjoy it, so I am not hoping to make a lot of money from it. We’ll see how it goes. But it would be good if many people liked my dolls and wanted to learn how to crochet.”

Earlier this month K. Ann started offering weekend courses on how to make crochet dolls. These are already proving popular. “Many people have called and some people have already completed the course,” she said.

The courses, held from 10 am to 4 pm on Saturdays and Sundays, cost 890 baht per person, including materials used.

For more information about K. Ann’s crochet dolls or to sign up for a course, contact K. Ann at Tel: 076-209416 or 01-3452829, or Email: pucca_anna@yahoo.com



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Temple looters finally caught

Police in Nakhon Sri Thammarat finally arrested four members of a gang who had stolen ancient Buddha images from more than 40 temples all around the South.

Wuti Sodrung, 32, a village headman and also leader of the gang, was detained by police on the morning of July 16 along with accomplice Sanan Roojairngone, 35.

Police also arrested Thanes Inthra, 23, and Pramote Bumphlab, 32, and recovered many stolen artifacts, including four images taken from Samao Temple that were abandoned by the side of a road near a police checkpoint. Police are still seeking two more suspects.

All four men confessed that they had been robbing temples in provinces across the South and sending the spoils to agents in Bangkok. Wuti told police "My role was to investigate temples to try to find ancient Buddha images. When I had found a target, I would take photographs and send them to agents in Bangkok and try to arrange a sale.

"If I was satisfied with the price they offered, I would gather up the gang and break into the temple at night. After getting the images I drove them to Bangkok myself. I have sold more than 100 artifacts."

The gang confessed that they were preparing for another raid at the time of their arrest.

The press conference to announce the arrests was attended by around 1,000 local people, including monks from the temples that the gang had robbed. When police presented the images that had been recovered, the crowd broke into applause and cheering. More than 50 officers



Doves are hung in their cages at a traditional dove-singing contest in Pattani on July 18.

— Photo by *The Nation*

were on hand to protect the suspects from the crowd who hurled curses at the men as they were brought out.

Pol Lt Col Surisak Wichaidist, Deputy Superintendent of Police Region 8 Investigations

Division, said police were trying to track down agents who traded in stolen artifacts and were closely watching suspects and searching for clues from Buddha image dealers in Surat Thani.

A new season of Survivor: A decorated tambon chief (*kamnan*) was left in intensive care after being shot in Patthalung on July 19.

Chaow Ramduang, 48, who this year was named outstanding *kamnan* for crime suppression in Khuan Khanun District, was ambushed by at least three men as he returned home from a drinking session with friends.

His assailants, in a Nissan pickup truck, shot K. Chaow three times with an M16 assault rifle. K. Chaow was able to run into his house and shout for assistance from neighbors, however, and the assailants fled the scene.

Neighbors took K. Chaow to Patthalung Hospital, where he underwent emergency surgery to remove the bullets.

Police suspect the motive for the assassination attempt was a personal dispute.

Infostructure: A new information technology (IT) center with a budget of 64 million baht is to be built in Songkhla Province.

Funded from the provincial governor's discretionary "CEO budget", it will be the biggest center of its kind in the South.

The center will be on the grounds of Rajamangala University of Technology, Songkhla Town Campus.

Pracheep Choophan, an assistant professor at the school, said that the five-story building was designed by lecturers and students from the university's architecture faculty and will have full access for the disabled.

The center, due to open in 2008, will allow local people access to information technology and will provide long-term benefits for local education, he said.

Speaking of potential problems, Professor Pracheep said he was worried about whether the hardware budget would be sufficient to buy all the up-to-date equipment required.

If necessary, he said the budget would be reallocated to ensure that the project organizers are able to develop a modern IT system capable of fulfilling the needs of the center's target users.

Payback? Police in Surat Thani have arrested a police sergeant-major in connection with the murder of a sister of the managing director of a local palm oil company.

Pol Sgt Maj Phongsak Bumphat, 34, was arrested on July 19, more than two months after the charred remains of Jirapha Nuamnuan were found in Phatthalung Province.

Pol Maj Gen Winai Thongsong said his investigation had revealed that Phongsak was an old friend of K. Jirapha, but that the two had fallen out after Phongsak was unable to repay a long-outstanding loan of 100,000 baht.

On the day of the killing, Phongsak agreed to meet K. Jirapha at a Bangkok Bank branch to repay the money, investigators found.

Witnesses reported seeing the two leave together in Phongsak's car. Police also have witnesses who claim to have seen Phongsak's car close to where the body was found.

Investigators suspect that, rather than repay the loan, Phongsak in fact stole an additional 1 million baht that K. Jirapha had withdrawn to pay staff wages, before shooting her and burning the body in a bid to dispose of the evidence.

Phongsak has denied all the accusations, which include robbery and murder.

Around the South news roundup is sourced from the pages of Kom Chad Luek

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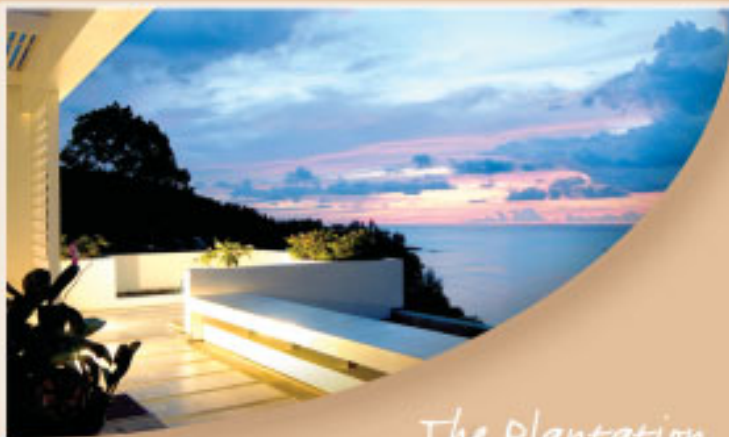
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**TALES
OF A
TRAVELER**

By Ed Peters

GRAND LADIES among the hotels

Nöel Coward always claimed that he put the finishing touches to his most famous lyric, *Mad Dogs and Englishmen*, while on a leisurely, pre-war sweep through what were then called Indo-China, Siam and Malaya.

He might well have penned "the stately hotels of Asia, how wonderful they stand" at the same time, for he stayed in what are now routinely referred to as grandes dames, but which were then quite simply the only reasonable places to pause between lengthy train journeys.

Retrace the steps of "The Master", and you'll find the architecture at the Metropole in Hanoi, The Oriental in Bangkok, the E&O in Penang and Raffles in Singapore contains more than a few echoes of the 1930s.

Owners have renovated and restored and rejuvenated and generally rifted their statuesque hotels over the years. Rooms are now cooled by air-con, the label "wireless" indicates instant laptop connectivity rather than an ornate box whose knobs needed constant twiddling to improve radio reception.

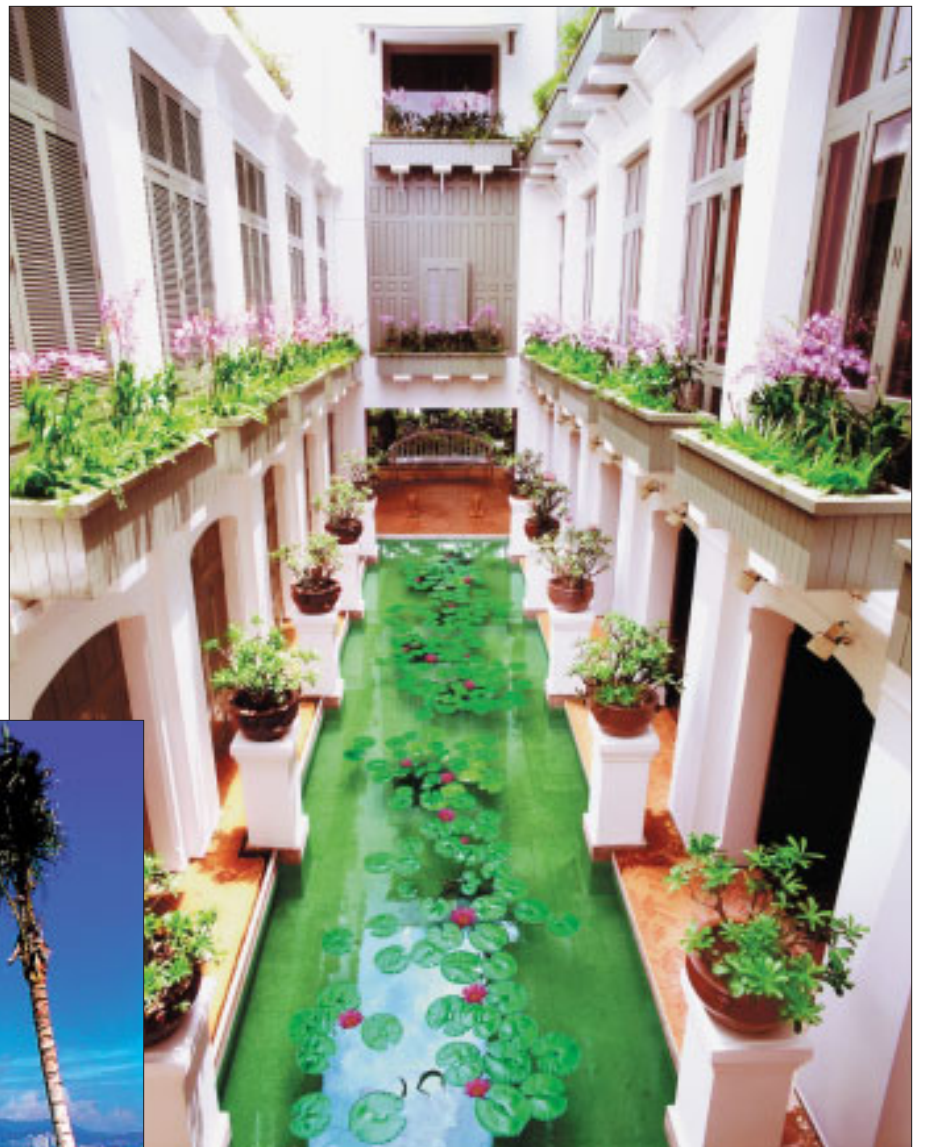
But here's the rub; glorious though these piles may be, they are – what's the phrase? – competitively priced. This means that the average guest either has very well padded pockets or a similarly upholstered expense account.

But you don't have to stay in one to enjoy it.

The Metropole in Hanoi is divided into two distinct parts; a modern block at the back which can be pretty much ignored, and the old wing whose imposing entrance is usually guarded by a posse of cyclo drivers who clus-



The opulence of the Oriental in Bangkok (above) and the Eastern & Oriental in Penang (left) echo a long-gone era of colonial luxury.



ter about the hotel's signature limo – a 75-year-old Citroën Traction.

Spare a glance for the carpeted, banistered staircase, and make your way to the Met Pub, where you get all the atmosphere of the old hotel plus a cold pint and wide-screen sports to boot.

The writer Edgar Snow, visiting the Metropole in 1931, wrote, "It is all very gay and on Saturday nights, when dancing lasts until two o'clock, it even partakes of a breathless abandon". He didn't mean gay like N Coward, of course.

There are few who don't know the Oriental in Bangkok – which, let it be known, was once a seamen's hostel – but afternoon tea in the Authors' Wing is an event in itself. This part of the hotel is named after Joseph Conrad, Somerset Maugham, James Michener and the ubiquitous Mr Coward, and it's fun to chow down on the gargantuan scones, finger sandwiches, raspberry and anis cakes, and ice cream coupes while imagining the scribes upstairs pounding away on their typewriters.

Or maybe they thought "the hell with it" and came down to scoff too.

Where would Asian hotels be without the Sarkies Bros, who were responsible for – among others – the Galle Face in Colombo and the Eastern & Oriental in Penang? The latter went through a sad few years in the 1990s, but has now been brought back to its former glory and justly occupies a distinguished point on the city's Heritage Trail.

Some (unregistered) visitors – and of course neither editor nor

writer endorse this sort of behaviour – have been known to confidently head straight for the poolside sun deck...

Perhaps the grandest dame of all is Singapore's Raffles, where the staff are quite used to some discreet rubbernecking, serving up Singapore Slings and letting patrons indulge in the novel experience of chucking peanut shells on the floor of the Long Bar.

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Most major hotels in Phuket strive to preserve the environment. One that takes this responsibility particularly seriously is the Evason Phuket & Six Senses Spa Phuket, in Rawai, which recently appointed Arnfinn Øinnes, 28, from Bodø in Nordland, Norway, to the fulltime post of Environment Coordinator.

The *Gazette's* Andy Johnstone caught up with the well-traveled Scandinavian for an insight into his life and the environment he grew up in...

THINKING



Arnfinn Øinnes: In the past, his job would have been just another responsibility for an existing member of staff, he says.

Bodø is a city of almost 45,000 people, just inside the Arctic Circle and most certainly in the Land of the Midnight Sun, says Arnfinn Øinnes.

Yet despite its remoteness, the city has taken a few knocks from history. The most devastating was on May 27, 1940, when the town – which then had just 6,000 inhabitants – was attacked by aircraft from Germany's Luftwaffe, resulting in the destruction of the homes of 3,500 people and the deaths of 15.

"Our friends from Sweden were moved by the plight of the homeless and built accommodation for the town. It remains there to this day, and is called Svenskebyen, the Swedish town," he says.

The city is also home these days to a major NATO airbase, and achieved international attention in 1960 when the American pilot Gary Powers, flying a U2

spy plane on a mission for the CIA, was shot down over the Sverdløvsok in the Soviet Union while en route to Bodø.

Arnfinn graduated from Bodø High School in 1998 having also completed the American High School Diploma at Farson-Eden High School in Wyoming in 1997.

His graduation from the Norwegian school system included the phenomenon of the *Russ*, where, to celebrate leaving 13 years of compulsory education, the graduates let their collective hair down by *russefeiring* from May 1 to May 17, Norway's constitution day.

"It can be a pretty wild time," recalls Arnfinn with a smile, "but it also gave me additional valuable work experience because I worked as a journalist for the *Russeavis*, the Russ newspaper. I had already worked as a sports and then general journalist for the *Nordlandsposten* newspaper during school vaca-

'The average temperature [in Cambodia], and most places I have visited in Asia, is just slightly higher than in my home town...'

tions and continued this up until 2001."

Arnfinn decided to embark upon a course of study from February to June 1999 with the International Tourism Institute (ITO).

"It was a very intensive period of education and travel," says Arnfinn. "It took in Beijing, Melbourne, Australia and Nadi, in Fiji, and was excellent grounding for my career. I received my certificate in International Tourism Management at the end of it.

"My dissertation was actually on Vietnam's potential for mass tourism. In fact, I have spent quite a lot of time traveling – and now working – in Asia, and my travels have taken in Hong Kong, Macau, Laos and even North Korea."

His travels also took him to England to study at the University of Birmingham, a city he is quick to defend against allegations that it is dull.

"Between 1999 and 2001 I studied Adventure Tourism Management – my ITO qualification was accepted as the 'first year' of the degree course.

"This, combined with my pretty extensive travel experience in Asia helped me to secure my first hotel management position, opening the Earthwalkers Hotel in Siam Reap, Cambodia.

"It's predominantly a Norwegian-led operation there," he says, adding "the average temperature there, and most places I have visited in Asia, is just slightly higher than in my home town..."

Arnfinn took a sabbatical from work after this, spending time travelling around South and Central America, as well as other areas, before returning to Europe and the ITO in 2003 to begin work as Course Director of its study facility in Cadiz.

Keen to expand his educational experience and to base him-

self in Asia, Arnfinn began an MBA in Hospitality and Tourism Management at the Prince of Songkhla University Phuket Campus in 2005, graduating in May this year.

Part of the course brought him and the Evason Phuket & Six Senses Spa Phuket together, and upon completion of the course, he took up his current position.

"Environmental and social management is quite a new concept in the hotel industry really," he says, "especially having one person dedicated solely to that role. In the past, it would have been just another responsibility for an existing member of staff, so this is quite a leap forwards," he says.

The Evason and Six Senses chain is, he insists, not just going through the motions of following a trend in "being aware", but holds these responsibilities as fundamental to its core principles.

"For example, it is policy

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GREEN

[within the company] to source as many of the items within the hotels – whether furniture, furnishings or food – from local suppliers.

“The benefits of this policy are two-fold: first, it provides the local population with greater opportunities for employment – essentially, they make the things we use – and secondly, we have far greater control over the items’ fabrication.

“The furniture we and the guests use is made from either reclaimed wood or wood from managed forests.”

Arnfinn’s skills and enthusiasm were not taught or instilled through “traditional” education. “In Norway,” he explains, “the ‘green’ movement, recycling and being careful with and for the environment is such a natural part of life that it is second nature to almost all Norwegians.

“Recycling of glass, plastics, batteries and so much besides has been around for decades there, and the policies are under constant review.

“It seems that, even if I am away from Norway for only a few months, I return to find yet another recycling bin at the supermarket or municipal garbage dump. But this is good; it is, after all, done for a reason and not just for the current generation, but for those to come.”

He explains that Norway does have advantages over Thailand in terms of the source of its power to generate electricity.

“Norway, obviously, has a massively long coastline – about 83,000 kilometers – and a small population with huge areas of land that are uninhabited.

“Hydro-electric power comes from power stations sunk beneath lakes, tidal power is generated offshore and there are windfarms. All of this clean energy is made with little disruption to either the landscape or the enjoyment of the land that people there have.”

At the Evason, says, Arnfinn, moves are afoot to improve further the company’s environmental standing.

“We will soon receive recognition from Green Globe, which is the worldwide benchmarking and certification program for the travel, tourism and hospitality industries, with an emphasis on the sustainable side of the industry.

“We cannot expect, for example, all of our guests to stay with us purely on the basis of our environmental concerns and awareness, but even if they are not aware, then just by holidaying with us, they are helping anyway,” says Arnfinn.

He acknowledges that existing Six Senses resorts experience more problems in becoming “green” than the new resorts, but adds, “That doesn’t mean we do not adapt and do as much as we can.

“For example, a few years ago, the grounds at the Evason Phuket were quite bare. Yes, the coconut plantation was still there from [before the resort was built], but grass, flowers and other bushes were in short supply. The reason for this was the massive amount of water it would have taken to irrigate the land.

“But a waste-water management plant was developed by the resort, and the gray water that results is used to water the grounds. The technology is quite simple and the benefits it brings just add to the naturalness of the resort.

“We are looking at other ways to improve things, too. One thing we have done is to build our own rainwater reservoir, and we are considering how and when to switch from diesel-powered guest buses to electric ones.”

Arnfinn explains that although it might seem a simple decision to go from burning fossil fuels to employing rechargeable electric vehicles, there is more to it than meets the eye.

“Sure, you use diesel engines and they are noisy and smelly immediately, but rechargeable electric vehicles use batteries. Can you be sure that when the battery finally reaches the end of its life it will be disposed of in an environmentally-safe manner?”

“Also, the power to recharge the batteries [in Thailand] will come from power stations that themselves are burning fossil fuels, so the pollution is simply shifted from here, by the beach, to somewhere up-country.”

Difficult questions require intelligent and thoughtful people to answer them, and in this respect, the Evason Phuket & Six Senses Spa Phuket seems to have the right man for the job.

‘We cannot expect all of our guests to stay with us purely on the basis of our environmental concerns, but ... just by holidaying with us, they are helping anyway.’

Happily Ever After

Recent weddings in Phuket



Rattikarn Phlapruk and Ananda Noh, were married in the Phra Pitak Grand Ballroom in The Metropole hotel on May 14.



Ayako Nishimura from Japan married Kevin Wong from Germany at the Dusit Laguna Resort on July 8. – Photo by PMEDIA Studio.

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This week



READY TO ROAR: Helmut Gorgen (with bouquet) is welcomed as the new President of the Lions Club of Andaman Sea at the installation meeting of the club's new board of directors at the Deevana Patong Resort & Spa, Patong on July 11.



JUNIOR! Peter Notley, Sales Director of Green Heritage Holdings Ltd, and his wife Kanya show off their firstborn, Peter Jessada Notley, at Bangkok Hospital Phuket on July 10.



SUSTAINED SMILE: Mom Tri's Boathouse guest Jeanette Whiteside, recovering from a fall shortly after her arrival in Phuket, receives a surprise birthday present from Alisa 'Pu' Ihantharak of Siam Safari.



HOUSING BOOM: Sompong Vivattrachata (front), owner of Baan Rungravee 2 housing development near Phuket International Airport in Mai Khao, celebrates the July 9 grand opening of the development with colleagues and guests.



HEARTS OF GLASS: Kwansiri Ongsuparom (2nd from right) pipped Ponkrit Thawinkarn (2nd from left) to win the Ocean Glass glass painting contest at the Royal Phuket City Hotel on July 15. Kannika Wongwiwattana (left) and Kanokporn Theeropas placed third and fourth, respectively, in the contest.



GROUP THANKS: Thanaseth Kulveera-aree (back row, center), Managing Director of The Andaman Group, poses with management and staff from the Andaman Group of companies, which includes Oishi restaurants on Phuket and the Naraya store at Central Festival Phuket, at the "Fantasea Andaman Colorful" staff party held at the Phuket Merlin Hotel on June 19.

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Cool culture contamination

CAPITAL Letter

By Stiffy Rectangle

I was eating a hamburger in Siam Square with a quintessential Bangkok girl; well educated and stylish yet refreshingly good natured and charming to boot.

We chatted briefly about the nourishment to be gained from eating McDonald's and before her brand-new Nokia 6682 cut our conversation short we agreed that we didn't really know why we were eating it when there were plenty of fast food alternatives.

Her name, she had told me, in a slightly irritating American twang, was Anna. But it was nice of her to start a conversation with me, though I got the impression she just wanted to show off how good her spoken American was.

But I had to wonder why someone who should be proud to be Thai would want to show off quite so plainly just how Westernized she was, speaking and eating American and sporting a *farang* name.

ARROGANCE

At least she seemed free of the aura of icy arrogance adopted by so many, an attitude that is killing youth culture worldwide. Britney Spears, *Sex And The City*, MTV and all the other imported US rubbish that dictates how we should live, what we should look like and who we should associate with is in large part responsible.

Never mind Thai culture, it has done huge damage to our own culture, causing confidence to become a rarer commodity and sending a huge ripple of culture contamination to Asia and any other place where a simple way of life has been eclipsed by economic growth.

The gospel of cool is being preached louder than ever and romance seems almost old hat. Fewer and fewer people are feeling loved.

They compensate by belonging to a clique, where at least they can feel accepted.

Romance simply isn't fashionable any more because it's immaterial. There is little warmth in a world of cool but there is an obscene amount of profit to be made.

Youth culture has become dominated by the marketing campaigns of the corporate fat cats who know that kids and young adults will pay the costs of fitting into the clique.

Whether it means wearing the latest pair of Nike trainers or driving around in a brand new car, it is all about status and paying as much as one can afford to gain the highest rank.

This is one reason Bangkok's spanking new subway sys-

The *Gazette's* Man in the Capital was having a burger when he was approached by a pleasant young Thai woman who sat and chatted with him in English. Was he happy? No. In this month's rant he explains why not.



...silly clothes that show as much flesh as possible and which 'normal' people would never dream of wearing, even if they were able to afford them...

tem has done little to alleviate Bangkok's chronic traffic sclerosis; those who own cars (more and more each year) would rather sit and bake in them in a jam than demote their status by using public transport like those who are poorer than themselves, those who are "below them".

Gangsta rap is becoming more popular with kids, aggressive albums and videos peppered with endless references to status, money, cars and "bitches" - which incredibly is accepted, for even young women have been

brainwashed into believing that it's far more cool to be a bitch than a nice person.

There are songs with girls singing about how nasty they are. T-Shirt slogans advertising a "Lovely Heart" or "Cute Girl" are gradually being eclipsed by others emblazoned with "I Don't Do Commitment" or "Mega Bitch" or, to make your opinion really obvious, the classic "F**** You You F****ing F****."

On a child who couldn't have been more than seven years old I saw a T-shirt that read, 'Fin-

Youth culture has become dominated by the marketing campaigns of the corporate fat cats who know that kids and young adults will pay the costs of fitting into the clique

ish Your P****y - There Are Horny Kids In Ethiopia."

I assume this was not understood by either the child or her mother but it was no less shocking for that. Thai pop singer Tata Young (actually, to be accurate, she is half Laotian, half American) proclaimed the ultimate message of cool to young Thais a few years back with her single, *Sexy Naughty Bitchy* in which she concluded each chorus with, "Can't change the way I am - sexy, naughty, bitchy me."

Now was this an admission that things have gone wrong somewhere and that her attitude (or that the attitude she had been paid to portray) was as screwed up and wrong as the culture that spawned it?

Shortly after the song's release, Tata was grilled on television, live, about the message she was sending out to children.

Angry parents had Tata in tears. What was she crying for?

Perhaps she was not really all that sexy, naughty and bitchy but was in fact an ambitious yet pleasant and possibly slightly naive girl with a good voice and attractive enough to be offered a recording contract and a song to sing. Now she was on a sofa in front of a camera with tears running down her cheeks. Meanwhile the record execs were probably in Milan choosing a new Lamborghini.

Elsewhere, supposedly gorgeous girls pose nude for magazines and model silly clothes that show as much flesh as possible and which "normal" people would never dream of wearing, even if they were able to afford them.

Bangkok has leaped on the fashion bandwagon and tries to promote itself as the next fashion capital. Trying to make themselves look more like the Western-looking role models they so admire, otherwise healthy looking Thai women pay the price of a hundred meals for skin whitening creams.

You may say I am a cynic. But I'm not. I'll prove it: There is an antidote to all of this. Love. Only love can kill the bullshit and it is out there to be found.

PRIDE

It is no easier to find in Thailand than it is anywhere else in the world. But if you are too cool to look, then there is no way you'll find it.

The culture contamination of Thailand started in Bangkok and is mostly, I hear, still confined to the capital. Hopefully it will end in Bangkok too. Thailand has too much national pride to allow itself to adopt too many Western traits, but it is up to Bangkok's youth to see the light and know where to draw the line.

The ultimate winners will be the ones (Thais or otherwise) who can see through the BS and be real people. They will have found happiness within themselves and will not need anyone else to tell them that they are special.

And if anyone comes along to share that happiness with them, that will be a bonus, a bonus far bigger than any marketing man's salary.

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Nothing slim about Norman's eclectic talent

What does the name Quentin Leo Cook mean to you? The answer is, probably, not a great deal.

Swap "Norman" for "Quentin" removing the "Leo" in the process, throw in the band names and pseudonyms The Housemartins, Beats International, Freakpower, Pizzaman, The Mighty Dub Kats, Yum Yum Head Food, Sunny Side Up, Chemistry, The Feelgood Factor, Sensataria, Son Of A Cheeky Boy and Fatboy Slim, however, and things become a great deal clearer.

Quentin – I mean Norman – from quaint Reigate in Surrey, joined jangly-guitar band The Housemartins with university friend Paul Heaton in 1985.

Happy Hour, *Caravan of Love* and *Think for a Minute* were big hits for The Housemartins, who described themselves as "the fourth best band in Hull". No prizes will be awarded, but the first person to email the three "better bands" to andy@phuketgazette.net will receive a mention in the next Ear Candy. Promise.

The band split in 1988, and Norman returned to Surrey, DJ-ing here and there, before resurfacing in 1990 with his loose confederation of musicians – including vocalist Lindy Layton – and the No 1 single *Dub Be Good To Me*, a reworking of the S.O.S. Band's *Just Be Good To Me*.

The track's killer bassline was lifted, allegedly, lock, stock and barrel from The Clash's *Guns of Brixton*.

The collaboration fell apart, and, in 1994, Norman once again reinvented himself, this time as the acid-jazz, funk, soul and trip-hop ensemble Freakpower, scoring a massive hit with *Turn On, Tune In, Cop Out*, which was chosen as the track for a Levi's jeans commercial.

Another year (1995), another pseudonym: Pizzaman. Highlighting again Norman's



Ear Candy
By Andy Johnstone

knack for creating memorable and innovative – and accessible – dance music, one track, *Happiness*, became used in another commercial, this time for Del Monte fruit juices.

The following summer saw a second Freakpower album, but, more importantly, the birth of another incarnation: Fatboy Slim.

Fatboy Slim began DJing at Brighton's The Big Beat Boutique



club, where Brit dance duo The Chemical Brothers suggested to him that he return to recording – under the Fatboy Slim moniker – instead of playing tracks by other artists.

The Fatboy Slim album *Better Living Through Chemistry* marked his emergence into the big time.

Filled with retro samples – à la Moby – and funk-laden grooves, the album was among the first in the then-new "big beat" sound.

It also spawned a Top-40 UK hit, *Everybody Needs a 303*, which, bizarrely, does not feature on his greatest hits album, *Why Try Harder*.

Following Fatboy Slim's remix of Cornershop's *Brimful of Asha* – used for a GAP jeans ad – which topped the charts, such musical heavy hitters as Madonna and U2 asked him to produce for them.

Fatboy Slim's next work was the single *The Rockafeller Skank* which was released before the album *You've Come a Long Way, Baby*, both of which came out in 1998 to rave reviews.

This album also produced the single *Praise You*, which became a major dance hit, giving Fatboy Slim his first UK solo No 1. The video, directed by Spike Jonze (*Jackass*, *Being John*

Malkovich, *Three Kings*, *Coffee & Cigarettes*) – won numerous awards.

Further Fatboy Slim works have appeared in movies, television series, and more ads, and started a trend whereby Norman appeared in each video in some shape or form – a cameo in the style of Alfred Hitchcock, for example, or a claymation model.

Halfway Between the Gutter and the Stars was released in 2000 and featured two collaborations with Macy Gray.

It also included *Sunset (Bird of Prey)*, a slower-tempo piece based around a sample of Jim Morrison of The Doors, and *Weapon of Choice*, which also boasted an award-winning video starring Christopher Walken hoofing his way around a hotel lobby.

Also on the compilation is Fatboy Slim's big-beat remix of Groove Armada's *I See You Baby* with the oft-repeated refrain "...shakin' that ass" and basslines as likely to hurt one's head as swimming through a pool

of amyl nitrate would. This track, too, featured in a UK advert, this time for Renault.

In fact, a quick trawl through the website www.commercialbreaksandbeats.com reveals that 10 tracks by Norman under his various guises have been used by no less than 29 different companies for their TV or cinema ads in the UK alone.

This 18-track compilation, which covers the years 1996 to 2006, is a testament to one of the dance scene's more interesting characters, musicians and arrangers.

It also features two new tracks, the standout one being the mesmerizing *That Old Pair Of Jeans* (I feel another ad coming on), a big, rolling gospel-style anthem. All danceable, yes, but with some surprisingly tender, introspective lyrics – a nod in the direction of Bristol's Trip-hop scene band Faithless:

*All you used to do was put me down
But I found a way to pick myself up off the ground
And all you used to do was criticise me
But now I found the good and I emphasise ya see.*

*You would always get so sensitive
And try to turn your transgressions into my guiltiness
But now I'm certain of the way I live
And what I'm responsible for in this twisted game.*

*Maybe I was just too strong to let go
Maybe I was just too weak to let it show
Maybe I was just too stubborn to say "No"
But whatever the case I can't take it no more.*

Sometimes I think maybe we'll patch it all up

Like a favourite pair of jeans that you won't give up on

Or maybe one of these arguments we'll make up

And start again like when we started this up

Back when everything was fresh

And every moment a blessing

I'd laugh at all of your jokes

You'd listen to my suggestions

One mind, one soul, With common decision

Now we can't help but fight over the direction.

His most recent collaboration – a musical about Imelda Marcos – was with Talking Heads frontman David Byrne, and premiered in Adelaide, Australia, a few months ago to rave reviews.

By whichever name one knows him, Quentin has most certainly come a long way. Baby.

Following Fatboy Slim's remix of Cornershop's *Brimful of Asha*, which topped the charts, such musical heavy hitters as Madonna and U2 asked him to produce for them.

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We have all heard the joke about women and moving parts. If you haven't, don't worry about it. Gadgets have never been a woman's strongest suit – give me or most of my friends a nice pair of shoes any day.

Another one of those “oh-so-fascinating” UK surveys I read in a magazine recently claimed that the average British woman now spends £200 a year on techno accessories – which is only £30 less than the average man.

Okay, so the iPod can be blamed for some of that, but the rest?

I'm willing to bet that what the figures actually reveal is that women have simply found a new way of exercising their well-honed shopping skills. And once purchased, the new gizmo will lie abandoned in a bottom drawer, nestling on top of an instruction booklet that suffered serious physical damage during a frustrating attempt to decipher the meaning of its contents.

So here comes a list of the gadgets in my home that I do not know how to work properly. And no, I am not blonde.

There's one digital camera (can someone please explain why it won't take the blasted memory card?); one integrated dishwasher that seems to depend on a totally random sequence of button-pushing to make it work; and one electronic organizer – after a solid week of transferring data from phone, computer, address book and diary, it crashed and wiped the lot.

I also have a power drill that I am too scared to use (I gave the manual to one of my kids); an iPod Shuffle that, for some reason, plays for only 30 minutes; a DVD player that supposedly also records onto disks, although God knows how; and an all-in-one remote control that I lost six months ago and still can't find. Where is it? I haven't the remotest idea.

In fact, the only gadgets I do know how to work are my hair straighteners – there's an on/off button, and that's it – but only God knows why I bought them since

There are boys and then there are the toys...

Insert a couple of women in a department store they have never entered before, and they will find the most direct route to the Clinique nude lip liner and the 15-denier stockings by sheer instinct.

my hair is naturally straight to begin with.

Oh, and I also have a thingy called a Nova that is pretty simple, except when it breaks down. In that case you phone a helpline, and the operators are tremendously helpful. Apparently, you have to turn it on and off again. I'm still not sure what it's for, though.

What's weird is that, gadgets aside, women are very good at operating things. After all, most of us can pull together a decent dinner – and that's at least seven different parts, all brought together in a miraculous climax.

Insert a couple of women in a department store they have never entered before, and they will find the most direct route to the Clinique nude lip liner and the 15-denier stockings by sheer instinct.

As for turning things on, most girls are able to convince an irate officer of the law that their

dangerous driving is a merely temporary and a quite unique aberration in the life of an otherwise perfectly charming woman. It also helps if you pretend to be an innocent tourist and smile sweetly.

But gadgets? Uh-uh. Forget it. Not that this has had much effect on the world of fast-moving consumer goods.

Marketing types continue to bombard us with electrical appliances, safe in the knowledge that when we see them on the shelves, we'll realize that we cannot do without.

The latest gadget to catch my eye is a “bikini” hair-trimmer, and it comes in a delightful shade of pink.

Presumably hoping to cash in on the obsession for Brazilian waxes, the electronics firm plugging this gadget seems to think we will want to part with lots of baht just so we can take a pair of painful-looking clippers to our nether regions to fashion “a heart,

a star or the name of your loved one”.

Hmm. I wonder how thick the instruction book is, and if all the letters will fit?

A man's man: We are not short of male icons these days, but too often they are the wrong ones. This is not surprising, given that they are normally selected by the entertainment and fashion industries – neither of which is high in testosterone.

A random trawl of the heroes of the past two decades proves how hard it is to find red-blooded guys. In Britain, for example, think of the narcissistic Bryan Ferry, Boy George – who admitted to preferring a nice cup of tea to sex – or actor Jude Law, a skinny schoolboy too pretty for his own good.

None of these is seen as a man of strength.

What we all need is a new man of action – like Steve



McQueen. McQueen, who lived his life at full gallop, was a man's man in a way that few male heroes of today can hope to emulate. He drank, he smoked, he raced cars and he played hard through a life that was exactly what most men secretly fantasize about.

In these days of men getting in touch with their female sides and fears over political correctness, the out-and-out male chauvinism of a man such as Steve McQueen is a thing of the past.

Yet I have a sneaking feeling that despite all the social criticism leveled at the attitude of McQueen Man, we still hanker after heroes who are real men's men.

Who would most of you girls choose? A caring, sharing guy who always does the dishes before he goes to bed? Or a roistering cocktail of hormones, like the new James Bond Daniel Craig, who can't wait to get you behind a locked bedroom door, no matter what state the kitchen's in?

After all, there's action and then there's action.

Ambrosia Sakkadas, a London-born Greek Cypriot and graduate of Central St Martin's College of Art & Design in London, is an artist, designer and newspaper columnist.

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Khao Mok Gai set (left) and Khao Mun Nua Daeng.

Living in Phuket means we can also enjoy the delights of Muslim cuisine

By Natcha Yuttaworawit

Khao Mok Gai in Thalang

One big bonus that comes from living in the South of Thailand is that we get to enjoy not just one, but two local cuisines – Thai and Muslim.

Considering the low cost of dining in most restaurants here and adding in the plethora of other cuisines available, Phuket really is a diner's paradise.

This week's Cheap Eats venue is Kah Kung's Muslim Food shop, conveniently located next to the outbound lane of Thepkrasattri Rd in Thalang Town, near the main crossroads.

Just look for the green sign with the crescent moon and follow your nose to scents of clove, curry powder, nutmeg and fennel that give Muslim cuisine its distinct, pungent odor.

Billing itself as an *ahaan tam sung* (food cooked to order) restaurant, the small shop's biggest attractions are its selections of *khao mok* dishes, which are made in traditional Muslim style, with the yellow curry-flavored rice and chicken cooked together

rather than separately – as is the case in most restaurants on the island serving *khao mok* nowadays.

Another nice touch is that the yellow rice served with the *khao mok gai* at Kah Kung comes with a generous sprinkling of the delicious deep-fried shallots.

These are another trademark of Muslim cuisine throughout Southeast Asia.

The restaurant's name comes from its owner, Dara "Kah Kung" Lertbungan, who took over from her mother about six years ago and is keeping alive the family tradition of providing fresh, tasty Muslim fare at very reasonable prices.

A plate of filling and delicious *khao mok gai*, served with

aromatic soup, a sweet sauce and vegetables including lettuce, chili, cucumber and garlic, is just 25 baht.

For really hungry diners, the *phiset* portion comes with extra chicken and costs just 10 baht more.

Other popular dishes at the restaurant, all similarly priced, are *khao mun gai* (steamed chicken with garlic rice), *khao yum* (steamed rice mixed together with a variety of vegetable and spices) and *khao mun nua daeng*, a hard-to-find dish that is the same as *khao mok gai*, except that beef is used instead of chicken.

Open daily, except Friday, from noon until midnight. For more information call Tel: 06-279-7005.



The restaurant's owner, Dara 'Kah Kung' Lertbungan.

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Gentle water buffalo facing a bleak future

MAKING TRACKS

By Top Dog

As the property boom continues unabated, one wonders what effect it is having on Phuket's flora and fauna, both wild and domesticated.

One species that is certainly suffering is the good old water buffalo.

I cannot remember how many times I have had to slam my brakes on, not for the buffalo themselves, but for a car or coach stopping suddenly, for its occupants to get a photo of these beasts as they wallow in the mud or graze.

Such photo opportunities, which offer a sight of traditional rural Thai life, may well soon be a thing of the past. The days of the water buffalo are certainly numbered.

One can't put all the blame for that on property developers, of course. Wild water buffalo have been hunted virtually to extinction. Only one herd, about 50 strong, remains protected in Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary on the borders of Uthai Thani and Tak Provinces. The much smaller domesticated variety is however also under serious threat.

As they do for the elephant, Thais have a reverence for water buffalo.

A lot of folklore surrounds them, which is not surprising considering how much Thai agriculture has relied on these gentle creatures over the centuries.

The traditional role of the domesticated water buffalo was very much a working one. It has been used for everything from plowing and trampling rice husks to taking the finished crop to market. Its dung was used for fertilizer as well as rendering for storage silos.

It was very much a valued part of the family. Often given a name, it would generally live in a pen under the main dwelling, which would be built on stilts.

Water buffalo were a valued possession and all were registered, just as cars are these days.

To our eyes they may all look alike, but the little spirals of fur that grow on their hide, known as *khwan*, are unique to each animal – just as human fingerprints are unique to us.

When a buffalo died, its skin



Finding grazing is getting more difficult as land is stripped for development.

serve the working buffalo on small farms and a pilot project has been set up in Isarn, but only time will tell whether the buffalo can stage a comeback.

In Phuket, the buffalo's demise could be even more rapid. With the fields where they graze being increasingly taken over by developers, farmers are struggling to find places for them to feed, and large herds are disappearing overnight, dispatched to the slaughterhouse.

There is nothing new in this, of course. The great shire horses of England, which were the English equivalent of the water buffalo, are now seen only at horse shows or drawing the drays used by breweries to deliver beer in city centers – mainly for publicity purposes.

The water buffalo's European cousin can generally only be found in zoos.

This situation is a sad but inevitable result of the burgeoning human population, which needs ever-greater amounts of food and land to sustain its growth.

I, for one, will miss these wonderful creatures that we are displacing.

would be used to make cord for tethering boats or tying things together, and its horns would serve as decorative objects, such as carvings – a sort of poor man's ivory.

Because its meat is far tougher than regular beef, it was never seen as a source of food, so a dead animal's carcass would generally be left for the vultures – which have already vanished from Thailand.

The UN estimates that the average Thai meat consumption will double in the next decade, so

perhaps one day you will see water buffalo on your dinner plate in a local beef curry, rather than toiling in the fields.

The demise of the buffalo has been quite dramatic. In 1981 there were an estimated 6.1 million of them in Thailand.

By the turn of the century the number had dropped to just over a million. If that rate continues, then they could well disappear altogether in the next few years.

One problem is that once the animals die, farmers often re-

placing them with other breeds of cattle. An effort is being made by the Ministry of Agriculture to pre-

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PUZZLES

The Cryptic Crossword

Hidden Words

Hidden in the grid below are the names of at least 20 gardening implements. The names may read vertically, horizontally or diagonally. They may also read right-to-left or down-to-up. Score: 15 or more, good; 20 or more, very good; 25 or more, excellent.

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

Solution on next page

ACROSS

- The end of the decision. (10)
- Pit belongs to me. (4)
- When Ian becomes Easterner. (5)
- This month in the street. (4)
- Colors note. Affirmative! (4)
- Little Christopher's gear. (5)
- The ones here for the quarter. (5)
- Staleness of deer and French city. (8)
- Half of old Djibouti is a long way away. (4)
- Duck-billed cliché? (5)
- Thingamajig may perform no love bite. (5)
- Trash 500 difficulty. (4)
- Correct, then improvise political view. (5-4)
- Al's got a brief moment in a place to remember. (5)
- Memory of sheep. (3)
- Sir, I back into part of 37. (4)
- Try confusing no beginner. (4)
- She's part-Canadian-Italian. (5)
- Looks and sounds like affirmatives. (4)
- Take command? Broadly speaking, perhaps. (10)

Down

- Applaud transport? Rubbish! (5)
- I break appendage to make a row. (5)
- Student wrote "Connected". (5)
- Is appropriate for city types. (5)

1														
9														
15														
18														
26														
28														
33														
37														

Compiled by Tortuus. © 2006

- Catch ten in return. (3)
- Poison league? (3)
- Three cardinals about, say, writings. (6)
- Begin the French aftershock. (7)
- Booger? In short, it is not. (4)
- Lowest part of twisted drain. (5)
- Oddly, no gal as a companion. (5)
- Fortuitously, Lily takes you and Calvin Klein. (7)
- Do away with bad boat (5)
- gear. (8)
- Hospital consumed bad blood. (4)
- Cook support? I have quarter. (6)
- 1,000 – am in front of Alabama town. (6)
- Fumble for gravity cord. (5)
- Ali, bravo! I make excuse. (5)
- Drug? I see the point, so to speak. (3)
- Jerk back intestine. (3)

Solution on next page

Scribble Space



su | do | ku

© Puzzles by Pappocom

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

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

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.

Rhyme Time

The words described below all rhyme with "grit". What are they?

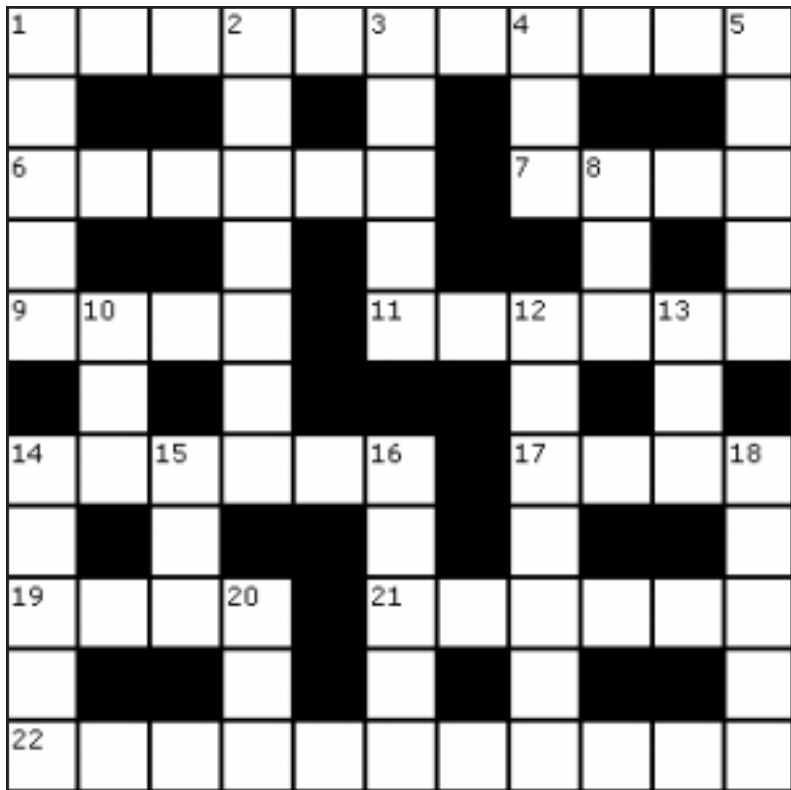
- Small bird.
- Share.
- Seizure.
- Top 10 achiever.
- Landed.
- Glove.
- Unite.
- Parasite egg.
- Give up.
- Legal document.

Answers on next page

EZ TRIVIA QUIZ

- What animal is depicted in the Ferrari logo?
- Which country is larger in area – Thailand or Italy?
- What is currency of Greece?
- Which modern city is nearest to Angkor Wat?
- What was the old name of Yangon?
- Who is the leader of North Korea?
- Which country is immediately to the north of Namibia?
- Which country has the maple leaf as its symbol?
- Which band originally performed *Hotel California*?
- What is the name of the lion in *The Chronicles of Narnia*?

Answers on next page



Quick Crossword

- | | |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| ACROSS | DOWN |
| 1. Technique to protect against disease. | 1. Planet |
| 6. Approached. | 2. Small crown. |
| 7. In the distance. | 3. Lowest point. |
| 9. Not long from now. | 4. Beverage. |
| 11. Say no. | 5. Hospital worker. |
| 14. Having to do with teeth. | 8. Viral disease. |
| 17. One on a list. | 10. Metal-bearing rock. |
| 19. Running limbs. | 12. Pals. |
| 21. Ass. | 13. Understand. |
| 22. Cheap. | 14. Indian capital. |
| | 15. Old horse. |
| | 16. Large spoon. |
| | 18. Perhaps. |
| | 20. Half a dozen. |

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. What was the tune whistled by the prisoners in the movie <i>Bridge on the River Kwai</i> ? | 7. Where would you find the Sun River? | 14. If a surgeon performed a lipectomy on you, what would he remove? |
| 2. Where was the movie filmed? | 8. Who said, "Politics is war without bloodshed." | 15. How many quarts are there in a peck? |
| 3. Saccharin is roughly how many times sweeter than cane sugar? | 9. Where is Fair Isle, famed for its knitted garments? | 16. Which gunmaker devised the revolver? |
| 4. Which two anarchists were put to death the US on August 22, 1927? | 10. How many emirates are there in the United Arab Emirates? | 17. How did playwright and poet Christopher Marlowe die? |
| 5. Who was the first American to win the men's title at Wimbledon? | 11. What word begins and ends with the letters "und"? | 18. How old was he when he died? |
| 6. <i>Summertime</i> is a song from which opera? | 12. Who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1954? | 19. In which country would you pay your bills in markka? |
| | 13. Who said about whom, "He has no sense of humor, particularly about himself." | 20. What does "e.g." stand for? |

Answers below, left

Puzzle Solutions

Monster Quiz Answers

1. *The Colonel Bogey March*; 2. Sri Lanka; 3. 500; 4. Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti; 5. Pete Sampras; 6. *Porgy & Bess*; 7. Northwest Montana, USA; 8. Mao Tzedong; 9. Between the Orkney and Shetland Islands; 10. Seven; 11. Underground; 12. Ernest Hemingway; 13. Lita Grey Chaplin, about her husband, Charlie Chaplin; 14. Fatty tissue; 15. Eight; 16. Samuel Colt; 17. He was stabbed in the eye; 18. 29; 19. Finland; 20. *Exempli gratia*.

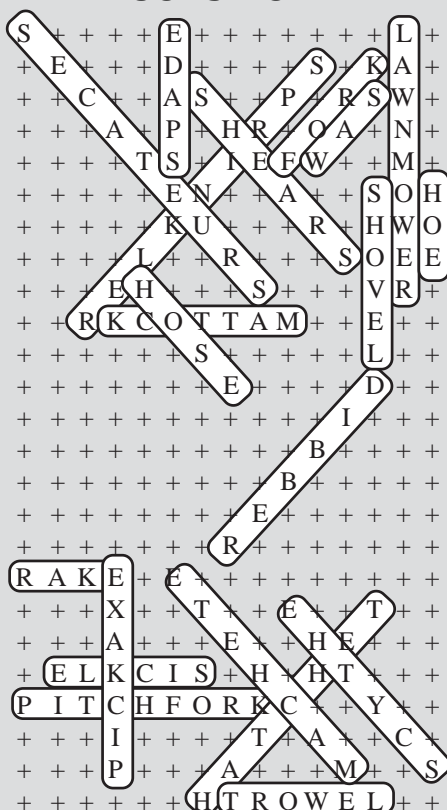
EZ Trivia Answers

1. A prancing horse; 2. Thailand; 3. The Euro; 4. Siem Reap; 5. Rangoon; 6. Kim Jong Il; 7. Angola; 8. Canada; 9. The Eagles; 10. Aslan.

Rhyme Time Answers

1. Tit; 2. Split; 3. Fit; 4. Hit; 5. Lit; 6. Mitt; 7. Knit; 8. Nit; 9. Quit; 10. Writ.

Hidden Words SOLUTION



Solution to this week's Cryptic Crossword



Solution to this week's Quick Crossword



Solution to this week's Sudoku puzzle



Mr A, a foreigner, lived with his long-term Thai partner – and for the sake of originality, let's call her Miss B. They were not married.



LAYING DOWN THE LAW
With Friedrich 'Sam' Fauma

The perils of not following the law to the letter

Landing in deep trouble

BOTH PARTIES RISKED BEING FINED AND JAILED

Mr A bought land and had the title registered in her name. Later, Miss B applied for a mortgage using the land as collateral, but the Land Office refused to allow this because she did not submit the original land title deed with her application.

Miss B claimed that Mr A had the land title deed in his possession, and applied for a replacement land deed to be issued to replace the original deed. Mr A requested the Land Office not to issue the replacement deed.

The Land Department considered both applications and delivered the following response:

Mr A's application for the Land Office to deny the issue to Miss B of a replacement title deed is believed to express his intention to prevent her from distributing, selling or transferring the land, or using it to borrow money or as collateral for debt repayment.

In this case it must be deemed that Miss B has acquired

the land under Section 96 of the Land Code, but as the owner in place of an alien, which contravenes Section 113 of the code. In doing so she has provided false information to government officers, which contravenes Section 137 of the Penal Code, making her liable, if found guilty, to a term

of up to six months in jail or a fine of 1,000 baht, or both.

She has also contravened Section 267 of the Penal Code, which carries a penalty of up to three years in jail and/or a fine of 6,000 baht.

Mr A has acquired land by means that contravene Section 86

of the Land Code, and so has committed an offense of aiding and abetting the commission of an offense, under Section 111 of the Land Code, which carries a penalty of two-thirds of that of the offense itself.

The Land Department ordered the local Land Office to file

a complaint with the Inquiry Officer [the relevant legal authority] and take legal steps against both Mr A and Miss B.

The Land Office was also ordered to inform Mr A that he must dispose of the land within one year of receiving official notice to do so.

If Mr A fails to dispose of the land within the time given, the Director-General of the Land Department is authorized to dispose of the land and retain a fee equivalent to 5% of the sale price before any deductions or taxes.

The Land Office must inform Mr A and Miss B of the following:

- The person who is to be registered as the new owner of the land – including any person Mr A consents to selling the land to – must be a person who can lawfully possess the land;

- The sale price of land must be fixed by Mr A, and Mr A must be the recipient of the money;

- As the person in whose name the land is registered, Miss B's duty will be to manage the disposal of the land. But she will not be involved in selecting the recipient.

Whole sections of American libraries are filled with books on the black-white racial divide. *The Color of Water* (Riverhead Books, New York, 1996, 291) by James McBride manages a new approach, as indicated by its subtitle: *A Black Man's Tribute to his White Mother*.



Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt

This is part biography written by the son, part memoir dictated by the mother.

What it's not is a hagiography. It's a fully fledged warts-and-all portrait of a remarkable woman who boldly crossed the color line and spent her life on the other side, living in all-black New York neighborhoods, twice married to black husbands, giving birth to 12 black children.

An indifferent cook and housekeeper, she made sure all her kids gained college and postgraduate degrees.

Three became doctors. James McBride tells his family's story with rollicking good humor and eloquent emotion.

"Mommy's house was orchestrated chaos and as the eighth of twelve children, I was lost in the sauce, so to speak," he writes.

"In a house where there was little money and little food, your power was derived from who you could order around. I was what Mommy called a 'Little Kid', one of five young'uns, microscopic dots on the power grid of the family, thus fit to be tied, tortured, tickled, tormented, ig-

nored, and commanded to suffer all sorts of indignities at the hands of the 'Big Kids' who didn't have to go to bed early, didn't believe in the tooth fairy, and were appointed denizens of power by Mommy, who of course wielded ultimate power."

Ruth McBride Jordan was born Rachel Deborah Shilsky in Poland in 1921. Her family immigrated to New York when she was two. Her father was a wandering rabbi and a complete monster who abused his wife, flaunted his infidelities and jealously hoarded his wealth gained from a general store in Suffolk, Virginia.

He also raped his daughter. Ruth fled to New York as soon as she graduated from high school and married Andrew McBride, a black lay preacher with whom she founded a church that grew from their Brooklyn

UNDIVIDED

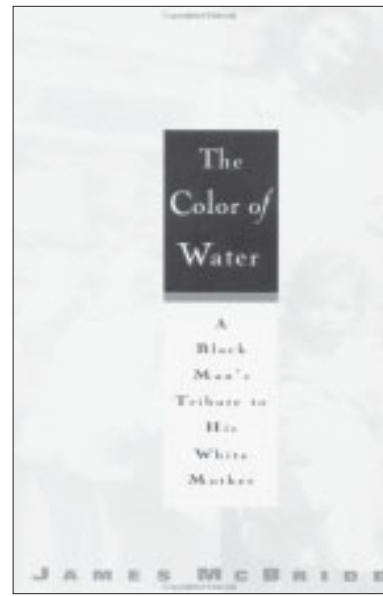
apartment to have a congregation of thousands. She credited the exuberant Christianity of the black church with saving her life. Her Jewish family disowned her.

When she began living in Harlem with her husband – lay preacher, violinist, leather worker – the year was 1942.

"Some black folks never did accept me," she recalls. "Most did, but there were always a few running around saying 'Nubian this' and 'Nubian that' and always talking about Africa and all this. Well, I'm the mother of black children, and nobody will ever deny me my children, and they can put that in their Nubian pipe and smoke it..."

"There was no turning back after my mother died. I stayed on the black side because that was the only place I could stay. The few problems I had with black folks were nothing compared to the grief white folks dished out. With whites it was no question. You weren't accepted to be with a black man and that was that. They'd say forget it. Are you crazy? A nigger and you? No way. They called you white trash."

Through the death of her



different. "I'm light-skinned," she would say when he asked.

Later, when he asked her if he was black or white, she snapped, "You're a human being. Educate yourself or you'll be nobody."

Finally, he asked her what color God was; she answered, "God is the color of water."

Hence the title.

At the age of 65, Ruth McBride Jordan graduated from Temple University in Philadelphia with a degree in social work.

She lives with a daughter in New Jersey, and works at a center for homeless teenage mothers. She has 20 grandchildren.

Her life story is eloquent testimony that race is really no divide.

first husband, remarriage and the death of her second, Ruth McBride Jordan shepherded her brood of 12 kids through all the turmoil of race-divided America.

As a boy in the all-black Red Hook housing project, James McBride knew his mother was

This is a fully fledged warts-and-all portrait of a remarkable woman who boldly crossed the color line and spent her life on the other side

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Mobs rule?

Although Phuket brands itself as a peaceful paradise, the island actually has a history of angry protests dating all the way back to its tin mining days [see Inside Story, pages 4-5].

Feeling they have no other recourse, groups, sometimes with deeply entrenched vested interests, tend to seek justice through protest whenever they feel their rights have been ignored by the government.

Ironically, the agency charged with maintaining the public peace, the police, is among the most common targets of protests.

Fortunately, the nature of demonstrations here is usually peaceful, sometimes even taking on a carnival-like atmosphere – with food, drink and musical entertainment laid on.

Unfortunately, however, the potential for violence is always present when large crowds form – especially when two opposing sides are present.

While Phuket has been lucky in this regard, it could all change – and with deadly effect – as anyone who remembers Bangkok in May, 1992 or Tak Bai on October 26, 2004, will recall.

In almost all protests here, government officials have tried to placate the protesters; often giving in to their demands in order that a road be reopened or some other illegal action be reversed.

Apart from recent political protests staged by the opposition and the People's Alliance for Democracy, very few – if any – of the protests here have fallen strictly under the constitutionally-mandated right to demonstrate.

Despite this, seldom, if ever, are criminal charges filed against protesters who break the law – even when government officials are detained by a mob. The inevitable result of so many “successful” protests is that they encourage ever more people to take to the streets when they want something – rather than by pursuing their objectives through legal means.

This trend to protest is hardly limited to Phuket. It got its first big boost nationally during the reign of the Thai Rak Thai (TRT) party when unionized workers at the Electrical Generating Authority of Thailand successfully stopped TRT's efforts to privatize the nation's power grid. Before that, the TRT had been the first government in years to take serious steps to bring street protests to an end, such as when it banished from central Bangkok a group of poor, rural protesters, who had been there since the mid-1990s.

As a tourism province, the last thing Phuket needs is a growing number of street protests – and the associated risk of a tragedy. If and when we get a new government, let's hope they have the wisdom to know when street protests are legal and justified – and the courage to crack down when they are not.

– 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.

Samkong not safe

I agree with your recent editorial [Falling though the cracks, *Gazette* issue of July 8 – 14] about the sad state of the island as far as pedestrians are concerned, especially along Yaowarat Rd in Samkong.

There is a huge population center on one side of the road there, with numerous restaurants and other businesses catering to them on the other – and no safe way to cross. I wonder how much these businesses lose in trade every month just because people would prefer not to risk their lives by crossing the road to get to them. One furniture shop in the area even has retail buildings on both sides of the road, with its staff running back and forth across the road all day, adding to the mayhem.

Saddest of all is the newly-engineered entrance to Bangkok Hospital Phuket, where cars and ambulances can now race in without having to reduce speed significantly. I have seen many pedestrians almost run over there. There have already been several vehicular accidents in front of the hospital, as you can see from all the white spray paint marks indicating the position of the crashed vehicles there. The hospital's new high-tech sign and a new branch of Kbank right across the street make the inoperable pedestrian traffic light there more conspicuous than ever. I can say for a fact that it has not worked for the past five years. Why would someone invest in a traffic light and then allow it to stay broken for so long?

Even the traffic light in front of Vachira Phuket Hospital works, which in this case means that people on the government's 30-baht medical care plan are

getting better hospital access than those paying one hundred or one thousand times more for what, in many cases, is the same treatment.

Then again, maybe the hospital is hoping to generate free business. If that is the case, I couldn't think of a better way for them to do it.

Fortunately, given the increasing traffic problem in that area (and the fact that nothing at all is being done to solve it), it won't be too long before the traffic will reach Bangkok-like gridlock proportions. Then, and only then, will pedestrians be able to get across the road with some measure of safety.

Scared in Samkong

Not so ship-shape and Bristol fashion?

Over the centuries, British seafarers have used a very specific English maritime vocabulary, one aim of which is that each term should have one meaning, and refer to one thing, and one thing only.

The very valid reason for this is that it avoids the confusion caused by having several names for the same thing, which is especially important in emergencies. There is a regrettable tendency to be slipshod in the use of such language.

An example was in Andy Johnstone's July 22 All At Sea piece "You've come a long way, baby", about the SV (Sailing Vessel) *Seraph*.

Careful scrutiny of the accompanying picture shows no sign of the funnel which one would expect on a Steam Yacht (SY, as used by Lloyds and noted in "General Abbreviations" in the

Concise Oxford Dictionary). A wonderful old lady like SV *Seraph* really deserves to be addressed by her correct title, Ms Johnstone!

Bill Brown

Tom Howard of Seraph Cruises points out that the terms SY and SV tend to refer to, respectively, a pleasure boat and a commercial boat, acknowledging the argument that Seraph, which is designated as a pleasure boat, does take passengers – not fish as in her previous incarnation – for commercial return. Also, Seraph is referred to as SY Seraph on the company website.

The writer of the article assures me that it is only Ms Johnstone on a dull Saturday night when the navy's in town.

– Editor.

Carnage on roads needs addressing

Sixteen deaths again on the roads [News, this issue]. That's 16 too many. It appears the Thai public and the Thai police are not that concerned. If I were cynical, I wouldn't care either, as long as they can live with it. But I am not, so let's start a campaign through your paper to stop this carnage.

"I love Phuket"? How about "I love to live," or "Your helmet is for your head, not for your basket." Let's have a full interview with the chief of police. Let's know the laws of the road.

Stories about rubbish dumps are great, but rubbish dumps did not cause 16 deaths in June.

The *Gazette* has the power of the Pen and the backing of the majority. Please give it a try.

Bullseye Patong

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

100 years of history – and decades of strife

We have still not had a response from the NCCP since they came and gathered information from us. We are waiting for their help. All the villagers are hoping to have an opportunity for a better life soon.

We [Sea Gypsies] have been living here for more than 100 years. In the village we have 242 houses with 1,042 people, of whom about 300 are children and about 50 are elderly.

The village is on about 20 rai of land which is registered in the names of four owners. We live there free and we pay no rent to the landowners.

The occupants of the four houses the province has marked for demolition have nowhere else to go; our village is very crowded now, so we don't have enough space to build new houses.

Even if we could find room we are still unable to build because the landowners will not allow it.

Whenever we build any new structures the landowners call the police and have us tear them down – they do not want the village to expand any further.

Once, a villager built a house and the landowner sued him. As a result, he now has to pay 1,500 baht a month rent. It's the only plot in this village for which rent is paid.

Most of our income comes from fishing, though we also sometimes take laboring jobs. We don't have enough education to get well-paid jobs.

Each family earns about 3,000 to 4,000 baht a month, but the income is not stable; in the monsoon season we can't go out in boats to fish, so we have no money to support our families.

The low income has caused many other problems for us. Our children who study at Wat Sawang-arom school often struggle to concentrate in lessons because they are worrying about problems at home, especially when the men

FIRST PERSON

The Rawai road-widening project has been halted for more than two months now by a protest from a group of Sea Gypsies who object to the proposed destruction of four houses on Viset Rd.

The complaint is now being handled by Gen Surin Pikoolthong, Director of the Land Poverty Problem Solving Subcommittee of the National Command Center for Combating Poverty (NCCP).

Gen Surin, who was due to revisit the community on July 28, has assured the Sea Gypsies that he will personally see that the problem is solved satisfactorily. Meanwhile, the occupants of the four houses are staying put, and the contractor on the road-widening project is working around them.

The road widening is, however, only the latest in a long line of problems for the Sea Gypsies. Here, Niran Yangpan, a representative of the village, talks about the difficulties faced by his community.



Villagers who have ID cards can get a gold card that entitles them to treatment under the 30-baht scheme, but those who still do not have ID cards have difficulty getting access to medical services because an ID card must be presented at the hospital. If it's not a serious illness they just buy medicine from a pharmacy and try to treat themselves. But if it's serious...

We want the same rights as the Sea Gypsy villagers in Koh Sireh and Baan Sapam. They can have their own houses and have the right to do everything legally. They can build new houses and register them in their own name.

The province told us to go and register as impoverished people. Some of us have already done so. The problem is that, on the form you have to fill in, when it comes to describing your living arrangements, there are only two options to tick: renting land or encroaching.

So the villagers are scared to register because we are not paying rent but are living on land that has been registered by other people. We are scared that the government will decide we are encroaching on that land and will evict us. We want to go on living here. We don't want to move.

I want the NCCP to help us. General Surin instructed the Human Rights Committee to talk to us. This gave us hope that maybe our lives could improve.

I want General Surin to come back as soon as possible because we don't have anyone else who can help us.

I don't want him to help only the four houses that are marked for demolition. I want him to look at all the problems we face in our village.

We've been living here together for many years, we don't want to be separated from each other and we don't want to leave our homes. We have our culture and we want to protect it.

Compiled by Janyaporn Morel

cannot go out to the sea and are unable to earn enough money to support their families.

Sometimes the children have to quit school early, which leads to more problems in the future because when they are grown up they won't be able to get a good job – and the cycle of poverty will continue.

Most of us have a *tabien baan* [house registration] and a national ID card, but there are still some of us waiting for ID card registration. The village chief and the provincial authorities are helping us with the registration process.

Although we have been living here for a long time, we have no rights to the land. This is because previous generations of our people had no education. They were just trying to survive. They understood that the land belonged

to the Crown, and that they could live wherever they wanted, so they never filed a claim for ownership of the land.

When the authorities started to accept land registrations, our people were unaware of the process. They spent their days fishing so, when officials came to register the land, only the women and children were at home. They were scared and hid from the officials.

Now we don't know how to solve this problem, we are just waiting for help from the human rights authorities.

The current landowners registered the land and received *chanote* title deeds only about 40 years ago, but our village has been here for more than 100 years.

But we can't fight it now because the government demands as proof documents that

we don't have. Many organizations have come to try and help us, but when they found out that we have no title deeds and no proof of residence, they gave up.

Even though we have ID cards and *tabien baan*, we still face many difficulties. Not all the houses in the village are registered and each *tabien baan* shows 30 to 40 residents in each house.

Some houses don't have their own electricity supply, so they have to tap into a neighbor's supply. We have to buy water from the owner of a private underground source as we have no public supply in our village.

The sewage system is also inadequate. Some houses don't have their own toilet and we have just five public toilets in the village. In some cases, the effluent goes into the sea or into land nearby.

Issues & ANSWERS

Want to know how to get something done? Can't understand some of the dafter things that seem to go on in Phuket? Want to pitch an idea to Phuket's authorities or institutions? Then this is the forum for you.

Submit your queries or suggestions to us and we'll ask the appropriate people to respond to them.

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

What are the regulations about taking Buddhist images out of Thailand?

I would like to know if it is legal for a non-Buddhist tourist to take out any Buddha image or statue from Thailand.

I know that it is illegal to export antique Buddha images and statues without first obtaining a license from the Department of Fine Arts.

But what about new items and paintings, such as the oil-on-canvas paintings that you can buy in Patong?

Christer Stockholm

Wudthichai Eakidsara, an officer at the Phuket Provincial Customs House replies:

The export of Buddha images and statues is regulated by the Department of Fine Arts. A new piece can be exported by requesting a certificate from the Phuket branch of the department at the National Museum in Thalang.

If they hold a certificate stating that a Buddhist image is new, tourists can pass through customs without a problem.

For more information, contact the National Museum in Thalang at Tel: 076-311426.

Brewing up an argument against Darwin

Recently scientists deciphered the DNA of chimpanzees and found that it is 98% identical to the DNA of humans. One scientist expressed amazement that chimps and humans are so similar, genetically speaking.

Well, scientists, you should not be surprised. All you have to do is look at a chimp to tell that it is a smaller, hairier, uglier and stupider version of a human. I see people who might easily be mistaken for chimpanzees all the time on my frequent pilgrimages to the Bangkok's Nana Entertainment Plaza. Indeed, I myself have often been a victim of this misperception.

Scientists say that among the genes that make us different from chimps are those that enable us to walk upright and speak. This suggests an answer to a question that has haunted great thinkers since the dawn of time: What makes us human?

Evidently it's our genes that make us human. But that's the kind of shallow answer you'd expect from scientists who cannot see beyond their microscopes. I believe that there is a far deeper answer to this question than that provided by mere genetics – an answer that will gladden the hearts of philosophers and humanists around the globe.

The thing that distinguishes us most prominently from the other primates – the thing that *really* makes us human – is that we drink beer.

Yes! You will never see a chimpanzee drinking beer, unless



a human is feeding it to him. You will never see other primates drinking beer – not the monkeys, nor the gibbons, nor the orangutans, nor the gorillas. Mighty Joe Young did not drink beer. King Kong did not drink beer, although I bet he could have used a cold one when he was up on the Empire State Building being strafed by fighter planes. Even Tarzan of the Apes didn't drink beer – and he wasn't even an ape.

You will never see a chimpanzee popping his head into the many fine entertainment venues that grace the Nana Plaza in quest of beer. You might see somebody who looks like one, though. (*It could be the author – Editor*)

Note, please, that one of the genes that distinguishes us from apes is the one that enables us to walk upright. Why do we walk upright? To navigate more efficiently to the fridge for a beer.

There is also the gene that gives us speech. Why do we speak? In order to request the wife, on occasions when we are feeling slothful, to go to the fridge and get us a beer.

In fact, almost all the higher functions of man have evolved in response to his thirst for beer. This truth was immortalized by the French philosopher Rene Descartes in his famous aphorism “*Bibulo ergo sum: I drink, therefore I am.*”

The quest for beer has inspired our greatest technological breakthroughs. Why did we invent the automobile? So that we could drive to the liquor store and buy beer. Why the airplane? So that we could fly to other countries and sample foreign beers. Why the computer? So that we could access all those great beer-oriented websites and laugh at beer jokes.

Without beer, we would not have even our simplest inventions. Why did we invent chairs? So that we can sit down while drinking beer. Why tables? To have something to rest our beer on. Why money? To pay for beer. The toilet would never have been invented if Inebriated Man had not required a vessel to throw up into after a night of beery excess. Even trousers were invented specifically to muffle the noise of beer farts.

Yes, dear reader, it is drinking beer that distinguishes us from apes. And yet, certain misguided misanthropes in this once-happy land wish to impose restrictions on this noble tradition. Fie upon them! Are these feckless foes of fun and frolic totally un-Thai? Would they make Thailand an eastern outpost of teetotalitarianism? Would they turn back the evolutionary clock, deny our uniqueness as human beings, and reduce us to the level of chimpanzees?

Let us pray that they may soon perceive the error of their ways, repent their folly, pop open a beer and join us in the joyous celebration of our common humanity. *Chaiyo!*

S. Tsow can be flamed at stsow@yahoo.com, except when he's drinking beer in joyous celebration of our common humanity.

In The Stars

by Isla Star

LEO (July 24-August 22): August will be a month when you shine in a more positive light. If you are celebrating a birthday this week, expect to be presented with countless opportunities for success this year. The only thing to guard against is being taken advantage of. Fair-weather friends will certainly fall by the wayside when you realize what they are.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): Begin the new month with your feet firmly on the ground. You begin to see that there is a feasible way of combining fantasy with reality and your partner won't take much convincing to go along for the ride. The winds of change blow your way this weekend; on Sunday a chance meeting gives food for thought regarding a new career. The color slate gray encourages the right mood for decision making.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): July may have been the most trying month of the year for you. You can look forward to brighter skies in August and, as long as you put your best foot forward, it should be possible to lay firm foundations for success during the coming months. Personal relationships remain an area of difficulty and you need to remove those rose-tinted spectacles.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): Money matters are subject to more benevolent astral conditions. Make some temporary sacrifices to be assured of a more positive permanent situation. However, if you throw too much caution to the wind, expect to feel the pinch in your purse for some time to come. Tuesday is the best day for having a meeting with your bank manager.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): Streamlining your energy is important this week. To make the most of what August offers, you must do some slashing and burning. Where one lukewarm work project is concerned, you should call it a day if you really can't see light at the end of the tunnel. Aquarius can be of assistance regarding a bureaucratic disagreement, but Leo will only add fuel to the fire. Number 5 is lucky on Monday.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): The future becomes clearer as a longstanding business problem is solved. Breathe a sigh of relief and start to consider which way you want to go. You will have more control in other areas too; a personal relationship will benefit from stronger boundaries. Even if you aren't thinking of moving house, a golden opportunity will be tempting early next week. The color turquoise can help to attract healthier finances.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): Your mood picks up as the week progresses. If you have been suffering from cash-flow problems, you will chance upon a way to make more money. However, this will probably involve burning more midnight oil than you would like. If needs must, you must knuckle down and make the most of the opportunity. A social happening this weekend is the perfect time to practice your flirtation skills.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): Juggling spare time could be tiring this week, and you will start to resent demands put upon you by others. Scorpio, in particular, appears to believe that your energy has no limits. If this relates to a working relationship, take care to handle the situation with tact. On a personal level, your partner needs to know how you feel; keeping feelings bottled up can only lead to resentment brewing.

ARIES (March 21-April 20): Share opinions carefully during the coming days. You may put someone's back up, so if you see hackles rising, back down and allow the person in question to have the final word. An old flame makes their presence felt mid-week; their present partner has a short fuse, so take care not to spark it off. Socializing is enjoyable this weekend; an attractive Libran sets your pulse racing.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): Keeping your mind focused on work is hard this week. Romance continues to occupy most of your waking thoughts, but a dream you have this weekend could hold the key to a work-related dilemma. Chew this matter over before making a decision, though, as there will be no turning back afterwards. The color pearl pink helps you to feel calmer.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): You are in two minds about whether to accept an offer this week. If this involves mixing business with pleasure, there could be a hidden catch. Joint finances come under scrutiny at home; your partner's recent tendency to splash out the cash needs immediate attention. On Wednesday, a friend's assistance is worth its weight in gold. Go to the gym more frequently to help reduce stress levels. Number 4 could be lucky this Saturday.

CANCER (June 22-July 23): August will put some excitement back into your life. This should involve overseas travel, so make plans now. A work colleague who has been a thorn in your side lately is not to be trusted; Tuesday will offer the right setting to have a probing discussion. Wear the color apple green to encourage positive energy.

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VILE VOTE endangers whales

We started kayaking from Hana, Maui, in calm waters, but an hour out the swells rose to five meters – good fun in a kayak when far offshore.

Then my paddling partner and Waimea Bay surfer, Dr Gene Kawaguchi, started freaking. “There’s a humpback off our starboard stern,” he shouted. “It’s headed straight for us!”

Sure enough, 100 meters off our stern quarter a huge form was on a collision course with our tiny kayak. In under a minute, the “monster” was beside us – and Gene wasn’t happy.

“Gene, don’t worry,” I said. “The whale already knows your height, weight, eye color, birthday, and occupation. The whale is at greater risk from humans than we are from it.”

Soon the Doc was staring through a half-meter-diameter eye straight into the whale’s brain, from a meter away. Gene is a brilliant mind, smart enough to know he was rivaled or even surpassed by this creature’s intelligence.

We were awestruck.

Then I looked down. In that meter of ocean separating whale and kayak was a calf. Mama was showing off her six-meter baby as a human mother strolls her infant through the mall!

“Gene, get out of that eye and look down. I don’t think we’re in danger.”

That five minute experience was the treat of a lifetime. Mama dropped back to offer a look down her glottal-shaped blowhole. A whale’s only crime is bad breath.

She pulled forward, offering those enormous arm-like pectoral fins, and that huge yet well controlled tail. She knew her flukes better than we knew our paddles.

She was all peaceful, silent power, gliding effortlessly in perfect harmony with her domain. Can humans claim the same? Her next generation will continue that balance – if allowed to survive.

Harpooning this gentle, intelligent, peaceful mother and allowing her baby to drift until it starves in the open sea is a cruel and heartless act no different from armed robbery, wartime atrocities or a terrorist bombing.

For some inexplicable reason, the only species that threatens widespread planetary destruction is so deranged that it hunts these gentle giants.

They do nothing to harm us, have a vocabulary that is almost double ours, and that was created eons ago, and maintain an environmental balance.

Yet we humans continue to disgrace ourselves with the mindless slaughter of nature that is every bit as bloody as the Rape of Nanking.

Despite worldwide respect for the intelligence and sheer majesty of all cetaceans – whales, dolphin, and porpoises – Japan, Norway and Iceland persist in whaling.

Anytime you see a Japanese “research vessel”, watch out.

THE GRAY AREA



By John ‘Caveman’ Gray

In June, the International Whaling Commission voted 33-32 to end a moratorium on commercial whaling that had been in force since 1982. The vote does not end the moratorium – that requires a 75% vote in favor – but many conservationists fear it brings a resumption of commercial whaling a step closer. Here the *Gazette* environment columnist argues against whaling and some of Japan’s other dubious fishing techniques.



Researched to death: A whale is harpooned by the Japanese “research ship” Yushin Maru in January this year.

– Photo EPA/Jeremy Sutton-Hibbert

It’s a Death Ship hiding behind science to plunder the seas. I remember watching a “Japanese Fisheries Research” ship unloading tons of frozen tuna along with an occasional sunfish.

Two people stood dockside with calculators tallying up their profits, but I saw no marine biologists dissecting tuna before it was packed into trucks.

What were they “researching” in Thai waters – drift netting?

Remember the Japanese “training” ship that was sunk five years ago by a surfacing US submarine outside Pearl Harbor? It played the news for almost a week. I cry at movies, but I shed no tears for that ship. Was it training drift netting or long-lining? And why was it allowed to port in Honolulu anyway? “Training” and “research” are very convenient terms to cloak what is really the rape of the seas.

Despite the International Whaling Commission (IWC) moratorium, Japan’s whaling fleet still takes almost 1,000 whales a year “for research purposes”,

stocking their carcasses in freezers because they can’t sell them – 77% of all Japanese oppose whaling and, of the remainder, few actually eat whale meat.

The market is so dried up that five whaling companies recently gave their shares to the Japanese Institute for Cetacean Research.

Yet last month’s IWC meeting at St Kitts & Nevis in the Caribbean produced a shocking vote – a simple majority of the countries at the meeting voted to allow a resumption of whaling.

Using the absurd argument that whales threaten fisheries – along with, one suspects, “economic incentives” – Japan, Norway and Iceland managed to get on their side such major world powers as Antigua/Barbuda, Benin, Cambodia, Cote d’Ivoire, Denmark, Dominica, Gabon, Gambia, Grenada, Guinea, Kiribati, Mali, Marshalls, Mongolia, Nauru, St. Kitts & Nevis, St Vincent & the Grenadines, Senegal, the Solomons, Suriname, Togo and Tuvalu.

All the EU members apart from Denmark voted against, along with Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the UK and the US – it’s difficult to buy their votes. China abstained.

One St Kitts citizen wondered afterward, “Why would [our government] vote to resume whaling? Whale watching is one of our primary industries.”

The biggest problem with the “whales eat fish” argument is that whales don’t deplete world fisheries – people do. And the leader in destructive fishing practices is... Japan!

Outlawed almost everywhere, including in Japanese waters, drift nets are up to 60 kilometers long, made from monofilament line and held near the surface with floats.

Designed to take “high” predators such as tuna and swordfish, 50-60,000 non-biodegradable drift nets are set each year, catching one marine mammal – whale, porpoise or dolphin – for every 10 tuna.

Hot spots for drift net fishing include the North Atlantic, the Pacific Basin and the Indian Ocean. Drift nets take all surface swimmers, including cetaceans and sea turtles. Half of these unwanted animals are already dead when they are thrown back into the sea.

It gets worse. In the North Pacific alone, over 1,000 kilometers of nets are lost every year.

These “ghost nets” go on working until they finally sink from the weight of their own victims.

Put all the “ghost nets” end to end and they would reach half-

way round the world. Many of them are to be found in the Indian Ocean.

And remember, Japan’s 500 drift net ships are barred from working Japanese waters.

Long-lines are so efficient they cleaned out North Atlantic and Mediterranean fisheries in a decade. They endanger the albatross and kill thousands of sea turtles and millions of sharks each year.

Again, half the haul is “by-catch”, unsellable but dead when thrown back into the sea.

So much for Japan’s argument that whales must be hunted in order to protect fisheries.

It’s up to progressive Japanese to control their government and national image. The 77% who are opposed to whaling form a significant majority.

SHAME

It’s obvious that small, outdated vested interests shame Japan by controlling the obscure Fisheries Agency of Japan, defender of whaling, drift-netting and long-lining – as long as it’s not in Japanese waters.

Japanese must protest whaling and destructive fishing practices. I’m American, but I’m not afraid to say at every introduction “... but I hate George Bush for disgracing my country!” Japanese can do the same.

In 1953-54 I lived in a traditional Japanese house in a village near Sendai. Only eight years after the atomic bomb was dropped, I watched Japan grow, and foresaw its eventual achievements.

Japan’s post-war economic recovery and cultural migration is a heartwarming success story – it’s a shame to taint all of that hard work just to hunt whales that nobody eats anyway.

If three out of four Japanese agree it’s time to move into the 21st century with honor, why are Japanese whalers being allowed to start all over again?

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Windows Genuine Spyware

At the end of last year I wrote about Microsoft's Windows Genuine Advantage effort, which was supposed to reduce pirating of Windows and Office.

Over the past eight months, Windows Genuine Advantage first morphed into Windows Genuine Nagware, and then became Windows Genuine Spyware. Here's what's happening.

Microsoft originally offered Windows Genuine Advantage (WGA) as a curiosity: when you went to Microsoft's website and found software you wanted to download, you

could click a button and have the WGA program look up your Windows registration number, and see if you were running a pirate copy.

As time went on, the curiosity became a carrot: if you wanted a new, free piece of Microsoft software, you had to pass the WGA test before you could download the new application.

The WGA requirement persists today. For example, if you want Windows Defender, the new Microsoft anti-spyware program, you have to run WGA and verify to Microsoft that your copy of Windows isn't pirated or counterfeit, before you can install Windows Defender.

Recently, the carrot has started to look more like a stick, and therein lies the story.

Microsoft's "Patch Tuesday" patches in April were worse

than usual – which is saying something. One of the critical security patches crashed a bunch of PCs.

Some people who allow Windows to update itself automatically woke up one morning to a fried computer – Microsoft had silently pushed a security patch onto their machines, and the machines fell over and died.

Usually Microsoft waits until the second Tuesday of every month to unleash the latest batch of patches. The April patches were so bad that Microsoft re-issued one of the patches

a couple of weeks later, and sent it down the Automatic Update chute, with no forewarning.

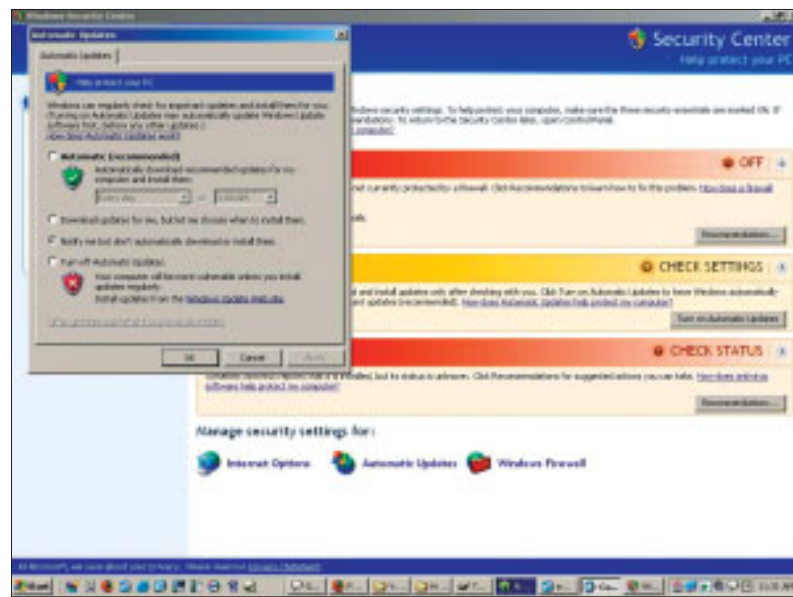
The 'Softies didn't wait until Tuesday. They just updated everybody automatically – more accurately, Microsoft "pushed" the update onto all Windows XP PCs that had Automatic Update enabled.

I was astounded to discover that, in mid-April, in addition to the fix for the botched security patch, Microsoft took advantage of this extraordinary out-of-sequence security update to install a new version of the WGA program on tens of millions of PCs.

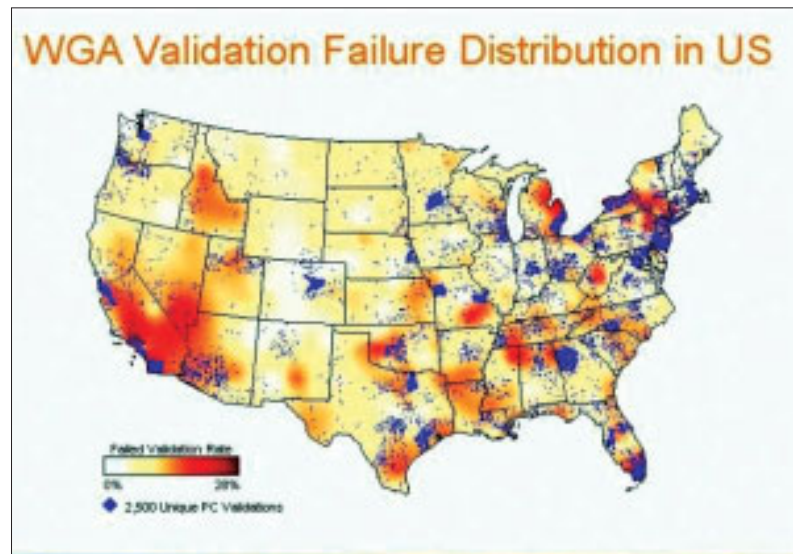
WGA isn't a security patch. It isn't "critical" by any reasonable definition of the term. But Microsoft sent it down the Automatic Update chute, marked as a "critical" update.

Over the following month several shoes dropped.

KHUN WOODY'S COMPUTER



Switch off auto: To stop Microsoft stuffing your computer with spyware, make it ask you each time it wants to install a piece of software.



WGA Failures: Microsoft's Windows Genuine Advantage program keeps pinpoint records of all the failed attempts to validate copies of Windows.

First, we found out that the new, improved WGA scans your PC and if the computer fails the "genuine" test, WGA periodically posts a yellow dialog balloon in the notification area, near the clock, saying, "You may be a victim of software counterfeiting / This copy of Windows is not genuine."

I called it Windows Genuine Nagware.

It didn't take long before the world discovered that the genuine test was all wet. I know one guy who was in the middle of a business presentation, running his PowerPoint slides, when that balloon appeared. All his potential customers could talk about, after the presentation, was his "not genuine" copy of Windows.

Of course, his copy of Windows was genuine – he was using a Dell portable that came with Windows pre-installed. Microsoft's own forum is packed with people complaining about false accusations.

But it gets worse. A couple of weeks after this new, improved version of Windows Genuine Nagware, er, Advantage was forced onto tens of millions of PCs, somebody discovered that it phoned home: every time you re-booted your PC, WGA sniffed out your Windows product ID number, gathered other information about your PC (nobody knows exactly what), then checked in with Microsoft's computers.

In the process of phoning home, WGA also sent your computer's IP address – a number that uniquely identifies Inter-

net connections for anyone who has a broadband connection. If you don't think that's scary, look at the screen shot here from a Microsoft employee's presentation about WGA. It pinpoints the precise geographic location of "un-genuine" copies of Windows.

The stink hit the fan. As well it should. I started calling the product Windows Genuine Spyware. Some other industry observers disagree with me, but as far as I'm concerned if it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck...

Then, David Berlind at ZDNet posted a blog entry (blogs.zdnet.com/BTL/?p=3175) that shows, without any doubt, that Microsoft installs this new version of WGA without any notification or consent.

Instead of withdrawing WGA immediately, Microsoft started to backpedal, and I went ballistic.

At various times we heard that the product was a "pre-release version" – a "beta" – and "still under development." Hogwash. If Microsoft pushes a piece of stinking spyware onto tens of millions of PCs, it is NOT an experimental version, no matter what the spin doctors say.

A good friend and co-author, Ed Bott, then blogged that Microsoft could be on the verge of implementing a "kill switch."

Apparently, a Microsoft technician told a customer, "In the fall, having the latest WGA will become mandatory and, if it's not installed, Windows will give a 30-day warning and when the 30-

days is up and WGA still isn't installed, Windows will stop working, so you might as well install WGA now."

At first Microsoft didn't comment. Several days later they vehemently denied that any such plan existed. Ed then posted an article saying that WGA misidentified "un-genuine" (er, disingenuous?) versions of Windows XP 20% of the time (blogs.zdnet.com/Bott/?p=89).

Five weeks after pushing the original version of Windows Genuine Spyware, Microsoft backed off a little bit. They released an updated version. This kinder, gentler WGA phones home only once every couple of weeks. It also drops some of the nag elements.

But it still installs with no notification, and the only request for consent is so obfuscated it's completely unintelligible (blogs.zdnet.com/Bott/?p=97).

As I write, two class action suits have been filed against Microsoft, both in the US. I assume more are on the way.

It looks like the most virulent version of WGA was only "pushed" onto PCs in North America, Britain, New Zealand, Australia, and Malaysia. If you have Windows Automatic Update enabled, and your computer is connected to the Internet through a connection in Thailand, you didn't get the really bad version of WGA. At least, not yet!

PATCHES

What can you do? Turn off automatic updates. I've been writing about this for years.

Microsoft has no business reaching into your computer and changing things without your knowledge or consent. Yes, you need to apply security patches, but you should do so only after the unwashed masses have beta-tested Microsoft's mistakes.

Simply put, Automatic Update is for chumps.

If you haven't yet turned off Automatic Updates – or if you have installed a piece of software such as Norton Internet Security, which turns on Automatic Updates for you – click Start, Control Panel, Security Center. (If you don't see Security Center, you don't have Windows XP Service Pack 2 – and, believe me, you need SP2.) At the bottom, click Automatic Updates. Then click the button that says "Notify me but don't automatically download or install them." Click OK, "X" out of the Security Center, and feel happy you've done something good for your computer.

Then watch my site, www.AskWoody.com, for ongoing advice about how to handle specific patches as they arrive.

Currently, Woody Leonhard (woody@khunwoody.com, www.askwoody.com) spends all of his waking hours slaving away on two new Windows books, Windows Vista All-In-One Desk Reference For Dummies, and Windows Vista Time-saving Techniques For Dummies. They should be available worldwide in January.

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ON THE MOVE

Alasdair Junor has been promoted from General Manager of Evason Phuket to Area General Manager of Six Senses Resorts & Spas, responsible for overseeing new development in the area, including the Evason Hideaway at Yao Noi, which is scheduled to open early next year.

Scotsman Mr Junor was appointed General Manager of Evason Phuket in October 2002. He had previously worked with Six Senses as General Manager of Soneva Fushi in the Maldives. Under his stewardship that resort was awarded "Best of the Best in the World" and "Best Leisure Property" by *Condé Nasté Traveller UK*.



Raimon Land has announced that Australian **Steve Brajak** has been appointed General Manager, Phuket. Mr Brajak has been living in Thailand for more than eight years and has 10 years' experience in hospitality/hotel, resorts & property management. He has worked with Mirvac, All Season & Rydges Hotel Groups in Australia. In 2001 he joined CB Richard Ellis in Bangkok as General Manager of The President Park Complex and Somkid Gardens. He moved to Phuket in 2003 and has worked with Andrew Park, Noppawong Group and Crystal Lakes.



Paranyoo Ban-chen, 25, from Phuket, has been appointed Manager of House and Home Phuket Co. He holds a degree in commerce, with a major in information systems, from Otago University in New Zealand. Before taking up his current post he worked in systems analysis with giant trading house Loxley in Bangkok.



Chao Fa City gets back on track

By Sangkhae Leelanapaporn

PHUKET: Phummisak Hongyok has confirmed that his pet project, the 1,600-rai Chao Fah City, is back on track, starting with the construction of a huge Honda showroom that will open next year and which will stand as an "icon" to prove that the rest of the project is going ahead.

K. Phummisak is Managing Director of Anuphas & Sons, which owns the land where Chao Fah City will be built, a site stretching from the Prince of Songkhla University campus in Kathu at one end to the Kwang Rd intersection at the other.

Cutting through it, and already under construction, will be Chao Fah Tinmine Rd, a four-lane road connecting Chao Fa West Rd to Wichit Songkram Rd and bypassing the Darasamut School intersection (next to Central Festival).

"The road should be finished by the end of this year. Governor Udomsak Usawarangkura had the idea that it would be easier for people living in Rawai or Chalong to travel to Patong. We supported this, and donated about 50 rai of land to the government for the road.

"Right now we are building



Computer-generated perspective of the massive Honda showroom being built at the southern end of the Chao Fah City site.

the new Honda showroom and service center, on 14 rai [at the intersection of Chao Fa West Rd and the new road], at a cost of 200 million baht. When it is complete in September next year, it will have the capacity to service up to 100 cars a day.

"The showroom will be on two floors and the interior will have Sino-Portuguese elements. We are currently training staff who will work there."

Asked whether he was not concerned about the effect of rising fuel prices on the new giant showroom, he said that he was

not. As long as the government fails to introduce public transport into Phuket, cars will continue to sell well, he said, because people see a vehicle as essential to their lives.

"In 2004, our showroom sold more cars than any other Honda showroom in the country. Last year, even with the effect of the tsunami, we were still No 1 outside of Bangkok," he pointed out.

"At the end of this year or the beginning of next we will open a Shell gas station next to the showroom. Once the Honda

showroom is complete we will start on construction of one for Mazda cars, in line with our plan to create what we call Auto Land.

"The existing showrooms on Phang Nga Rd will remain open and will be able to carry out minor servicing on cars," K. Phummisak added.

Looking to the future, he said that the bypass road and Chao Fa West Rd are the "backbone" of current development in the Phuket City area.

"Undeveloped land at the Tesco-Lotus intersection is now worth about 15 million baht a rai," he noted. "We want to make Chao Fah City a model for town planning and development. We are going step by step," he said.

Apart from developing Auto Land, K. Phummisak also plans to push ahead with the Chao Fah City Business Park, that would see offices moving to the area. In this case, however, Anuphas' involvement will not be so heavy.

"Mostly, we would be the landlord, although we might invest in some of the businesses that want to set up there. We have an investment consultant who will examine would-be investors and help us to select the right businesses for Chao Fah City.

"Already we have many investors and different kinds of businesses that want to invest in Chao Fah City, but I cannot give you the names now.

"We have also had interest

expressed by some government departments interested in leasing land in Chao Fah City.

"We think that it will take about 15 years for Chao Fa City to look like a real city."

K. Phummisak said that one year of the 15 has already passed. Meanwhile, the Phuket International Night Bazaar on 170 rai of the site, which was first proposed about two years ago, has still not lifted off the drawing board.

"They are still adjusting their plans, which I believe are too ambitious, so we are not sure of anything just yet," he added.

Another facet of the city that is still up in the air is the International Convention and Exhibition Center (ICEC). In mid-2004 K. Phummisak offered to set aside 200 rai for construction of an ICEC.

However, he said, "Right now, the central government has plans to develop Ao Phuket, and these plans include an ICEC. I don't think private companies want to compete with the government.

"If the private sector were to decide to go ahead, then we could have an ICEC within three years, which would support tourism. But right now everything is still not clear, and investors who might have been interested in putting money into an ICEC don't want to take the risk, and are putting their money into projects they consider to be more solid."

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The Middle East crisis could create a 'perfect storm' in the financial world

The Middle East situation has the potential to create the "perfect storm" in the financial world. Problems have been brewing for some time, but recent developments raise the potential for this to cause a true global crisis with effects that few will escape.

The vulnerability of oil price in this situation can change the global economic outlook very rapidly. Financial markets are not the only ones susceptible to uncertainty. If the Middle East situation escalates we have only to look back three years to the war in Iraq to remember the effect that had on tourism in Phuket, for example.

The antagonism involving Israel, Hamas and Hezbollah has been in existence for decades but recent developments that have the potential to make the current situation much more serious.

Added into the equation is the recent election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as Iran's president, marking a distinct shift in that country's political position.

Iran does not want just nuclear power; it wants nuclear weapons. The new president is a firebrand and research into his background reveals that there is little common ground between him and his predecessor who was far more moderate.

Ahmadinejad controls Iran's Revolutionary Guard, a force unto themselves. The Guard are not merely an armed organization; they are an economic power within Iran with a distinct share of oil revenues, their own port and other infrastructure. They are, in effect, a separate economic and military force operating inside Iran.

The new Iranian president made a speech earlier this year that, although it was quoted by the world media, seems not to have been taken as seriously as it deserved.

He was quite blunt: If the Western World wanted to have a Jewish state – Israel – it would have to be located in Europe or North America, not where it is at present, the Middle East.

The situation in Iran is made even more opaque by the fact that the country's supreme leader is not the President but a cleric, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and his agenda is basically unknown.

Shimon Peres, the Vice-Premier of Israel, in an interview with CNN, claimed 200 Iranian Revolutionary Guards are working with Hezbollah in Lebanon.

This claim is plausible; Israel's Mossad intelligence service has always been regarded as one of the most effective networks in the world, possibly the most effective.

Hezbollah, in addition to being the organization that Israel



Israeli artillery shells Lebanon from Zura, in the west of the Golan Heights near the border.

—EPA/Atef Safadi

blames for sparking the current violence, is also part of the Lebanese government – it has two members in the Cabinet.

Iran has also been developing its missile technology and the latest tests reveal it has the ability to deliver medium-range missiles with impressive accuracy.

Globally, it is accepted that North Korea is more than willing to sell nuclear weapons to anyone including Iran.

There have been attempts by Europe and the US to muster global support for sanctions against Iran but this has been met with a lukewarm response from Russia and China, two permanent members of the UN Security Council.

In any event, what would sanctions against Iran mean in reality? Stopping the oil supply reaching world markets?



MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson

Half a world away, there is another major oil supplier that would relish the chance to reduce the flow of oil to the world: Venezuela. Its President, Hugo Chavez, openly detests the US and if sanctions were applied, would instantly support Iran.

Where would oil prices go in that situation? US\$150 to

news for bond markets. Large financial institutions have limited places to invest their assets. In difficult times they have to resort to bonds, cash or Put Options.

However, for individual investors there are other possibilities that are far superior to bonds, being both far less volatile and more profitable.

Indeed, the only volatility they experience is a rising price and I have yet to meet an investor who disdains making a profit. In reality, all sensible investors should have these alternatives in their portfolios.

I may have been banging this drum for years but the reality is simply that they keep on making money consistently and they can be sold at a week's notice or less. To give readers an indication of returns over the last year, the latest figures reveal Sterling +10.26%; US Dollar +9.65% and Euro +8.77%

We all know of hedge funds that have made these returns look pathetic. There is a lot of truth in Alan Greenspan's recent remark that hedge funds have made markets more efficient, but that "most of the low-hanging fruit of readily available profits" has already been picked.

The reality is that many hedge funds were making excellent profits earlier this year on rising commodity prices. When commodity prices fell, so did the majority of hedge funds. Many had forgotten that they were hedge funds and had moved aggressively into long positions.

Steve Forbes, of *Forbes* magazine, recently observed that it takes a lot of brains to manage a successful hedge fund. With 8,500 hedge funds operating in America alone, he wondered whether there were enough clever people to manage them all.

For investors with a longer-term view, who are already invested in stock markets, this is a time to hold on to assets. There will always be periods of turbulence.

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

US\$200 a barrel are distinct possibilities.

Where does this all leave investors? In a very uncertain position – and financial markets detest uncertainty.

Everyone who reads financial newspapers or who watches television business news will be aware that whatever is bad news for stock markets is often good

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Winners of the Open Cup, Bangkok Cosmos, go for goal in their semi-final defeat of Tokyo Hibernians in last year's event, played at the British Curriculum International School.

Soccer 7s return in November

PHUKET: The Phuket International Soccer 7s tournament will return to the island this November. The tournament draws seven-a-side teams from around the world and is, the organizers say, the largest 7s competition in Asia.

Last year 38 teams competed in the tournament, including teams of former Bundesliga and Australian National League

players. No prize money is on offer; teams compete purely for the glory of winning and the love of the game.

This year the tournament will be named the "HotelTravel Phuket Soccer 7s" and will be played on November 25 and 26, at a venue yet to be set.

There will be two categories; Masters, for players aged 35 and up, and Open. All teams will

get to play a minimum of four 14-minute matches.

Squads may have up to 12 players and there are still some places available for new teams. The entry fee is US\$450 for 10-player squads and US\$500 for 12 players.

More information and details of how to enter a team can be found at www.thai7s.com.

- Dominic Earnshaw

Eight teams set to vie for Thai Cup provincial title

KATHU: In the last day of district-level play in the Thai Cup soccer tournament, eight teams advanced to the provincial finals of the national competition.

Among the most exciting games was a Kathu District grudge match pitting Kathu Municipality against their over-the-hill adversaries from Patong Municipality.

The match, played at Baan Kathu School on July 21, ended in a scoreless draw, with Kathu going on to win 4-3 on penalty kicks.

Both teams played well enough to advance to the final eight, however, joining six other squads who will battle it out in the provincial finals - three from

Thalang District and three from Muang District.

The provincial finals will be played between August 10 and 20 at Surakul Stadium, with the top team qualifying for the Upper South Regional Finals in Surat Thani in September.

Other provinces in the regional finals will be Chumphon, Ranong, Phang Nga, Surat Thani, Krabi, and Nakhon Sri Thammarat.

The national finals will be held in Nakhon Sawan next February as part of the 5th Annual Thai Sports Festival organized jointly by the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, Department of Local Administration, and the Sports Authority of Thailand.

A Kathu player (in white) lofts the ball at the Patong goal. It failed to find the mark.



PATONG DARTS LEAGUE

Amigos move ahead

PATONG: Amigos moved into first place with a two-point win at home against Dog's Bollocks.

Big John from Dog's Bollocks always goes for 19, so when he made three triple 19's in that match, it is only fair that we count it as a "180" for John. Congratulations, big guy.

Other notable results included TaiLife winning for the first time, against Shakers; and Coyote's three-point win over Footrot Flats.

On a less jovial note, the Didi's v Dog's Bollocks game originally scheduled for July 11 had still not been played as this went to press.

This is in clear breach of the rules put in place last year to prevent a slew of unplayed games distorting the league table.

The Gazette will report the decision of the league management on this matter in the next edition.

July 18 results: TaiLife 5 Shakers* 4; Amigos* 6 Dog's Bollocks 3; Piccadilly 6 Valhalla* 3; Jungle Juice* 3 Didi's 6; Coyote Bar* 7 Footrot Flats 2; OffShore 6 Queen Mary* 3. (*Winner of beer leg.)

Standings: 1. Amigos (16 pts.); 2.= Piccadilly, Didi's (15); 4. Coyote Bar (14); 5.= OffShore, Jungle Juice, Valhalla (11); 8. Queen Mary (10); 9. Dog's Bollocks (9); 10. Shakers (6); 11. Tailife (3); 12. Footrot Flats (2). (Didi's and Dog's Bollocks =1 game in hand, Grrr...)

August 1 fixtures: Dog's Bollocks v Valhalla; Amigos v Offshore; Shakers v Footrot Flats; Piccadilly v Queen Mary; Jungle Juice v TaiLife; Coyote Bar v Didi's. (home team first)



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Phuket set to host world sailing event



Tasars on the water in Australia, where the class has an avid following. – Photo courtesy of Ric Noble, Ethelink Multimedia

AO MAKHAM: Phuket has been chosen to host the 13th Tasar World Championships from July 2 to 11 next year, with a fleet of at least 60 boats expected to take part, the first time that the one-design championship for the 4.5-meter, two-person craft has been held in Phuket.

The boats and approximately 200 crew and family members are expected to come from as far afield as North America, Australia, Europe and Japan for the regatta.

The Cape Panwa Hotel will be the regatta headquarters for the race and the place where most of the crews will be staying.

The organizers of Tasar World Championships said in a media release, "...the regatta

will provide a considerable boost to the profile of yachting in Thailand and Phuket in particular and it is anticipated [that] a successful event will provide the model for similar events to occur in Phuket in the future on a regular basis."

The organizing authority for the regatta will be the Australian Tasar Council, which will run the event under the auspices and guidelines of the World Tasar Class Association, Yacht Racing Authority of Thailand, Asian Sailing Federation and the International Sailing Federation.

The competition organizers said on their website – www.tasarworlds.com – that charter Tasars will be made available if there is sufficient demand from competitors.



Ready to give *Moto Inzi* a run for her money: *Chi Machine* takes to the water on July 24.

Cat fight at Race Week

By Chris Husted

AO CHALONG: As captains and crews prepared for Phuket Race Week, local boatbuilders Latitude 8 launched their latest Firefly catamaran *Chi Machine* just in time for the event.

Australian Olympic sailor Warwick Downes is flying in to trim the sails and local catamaran guru Mark Pescott is taking the helm for the owner, Hong Kong-based Frenchman Marc Cudenec.

Chi Machine, at 8.53 meters long, 5.4 meters across and weighing in at just 960 kilograms, was pulled off the slipway on July 24, just three days before the first race, with minimal time for fine tuning before taking on Roger Kingdon's *Moto Inzi*, the only other Firefly in the regatta.

The two cats are expected to provide a spectacle of speedy racing, as *Chi Machine* represents the latest generation of

blisteringly fast Fireflies and Roger Kingdon's crew have consistently proven they know how to get maximum speed out of *Moto Inzi*, as when they screamed across the bay from the Phi Phi Islands in record time during the last race of the Phang Nga Bay Regatta earlier this year.

The late launch is reminiscent of last year when *Voodoo Child*, another Firefly catamaran, was dropped into the water for the first time on the first day of Phuket Race Week.

Voodoo Child won her first two races before retiring for fine tuning. She eventually returned to win the last race and placed second overall – an impressive achievement after entering only three races in the regatta.

Not only is Cudenec looking to win Race Week on *Chi Machine*, he has also thrown down the gauntlet to other catamarans hoping to win the King's Cup in December.

His incentive, however, is not just trophies and accolades. His aim is to raise as much money as he can, through sponsorship, for the Tsunami Relief Fund for the Children of Takuapa.

To help his efforts to win the King's Cup, fellow Frenchman and Figaro Solo Race winner Kito de Pavant will be flown in to take the helm.

By that time, says Phil Bender of Latitude 8, there should be one more Firefly in the water, giving the owners of Sports Racing-class boats a chance to race in a class all their own.

Phuket Race Week, organized by Image Asia, started July 27 and concludes July 30 in the waters off the Evason Phuket & Six Senses Resort in Rawai.

For more information about the Tsunami Relief Fund for the Children of Takuapa, email Marc Cudenec at: marccudenec@ellelicensing.com or visit www.tsunamirelieffundthai.org

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Home of the Week

Nai Harn

The Nai Harn area has long been known for its tropical surroundings and its close proximity to some of Phuket's premier beaches. More recently it has also gained a reputation for having some of the more attractive properties on the island.

This home in particular impresses as you drive up to the sliding wooden gate. The quality of construction starts there, with easy access for vehicles and double wooden doors that form a separate entrance.

PILLARS

Tropical plants line the outside of the high security wall, which features glass blocks framed by colored stones matching those used to form the pillars either side of the separate front entrance.

Just inside the main entrance to the property are two bedrooms, both with en-suite bathrooms.

Opposite the bedrooms is the spacious main living area, which on one side spills into a courtyard decorated with a variety of plants, and on another side, opens onto the wooden pool deck through glass sliding doors.

The end of the main hallway

Home with family living in mind



leads outside and back onto the pool deck with its tropical garden and water spout arching into the pool.

Off the main hallway, and with views of the pool area, is the master bedroom, with en-suite bathroom and large built-in wardrobe.

On the other side of the home is the dining room and the large Western kitchen, which has been fitted out with all the modern appliances a home chef could want.

For convenience, the dining area comes with an adjoining bathroom.

The layout of the property has been well thought-out and tastefully decorated, making it a home for a family to enjoy.

The design incorporates air conditioning ducted into the ceil-

ings, and the quality fixtures include a hardwood walkway throughout the property, Cotto bathroom fittings and aluminum-framed glass sliding doors and windows throughout.

Utilities include a telephone line and a broadband Internet connection, well water and three-phase electricity.

This new property has Chanote title and is available with a furnishing package for 10 million baht.

For more information contact Richard Lusted at Siam Real Estate at Tel: 076-288908, www.siamrealestate.com, info@siamrealestate.com

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Decor

by Natcha Yuttaworawit



For 99,000 baht you can make radio waves in this bath with its FM stereo.

THE JET SET

While showers may be the best way to bathe quickly and keep pace with modern-day life, there is no substitute for relaxing at the end of a long, hard day than taking time out in the tub. And if the tub's equipped with jets, so much the better.

Of course, any tub that one chooses must be strong and safe – let's face it, there are few things more embarrassing than finding yourself naked in a dry bath as the water pours through the living room ceiling below – but beyond that factor, the variety of shapes and sizes to choose from is limited only by the bath manufacturer's imagination.

Other considerations include whether you prefer to bathe alone or with a bubble buddy or two, and whether you would like special features built into the tub, such as headrests, grip bars or even a stereo, to add to your bathing pleasure.

House & Home Phuket on Chao Fa West Rd stocks a large range of jet tubs, also called whirlpool baths, with much of its extensive range being made in China by Auykas.

Prices range from 44,000 baht for a corner tub to 99,000 baht for a four-seater with lights and FM stereo built in.

House & Home Phuket is open daily from 8:30 am to 7 pm. Free delivery for any purchase over 3,000 baht. For more information call Tel: 076-209309-10.




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Gardening

with Bloomin' Bert

Cucumber tree is no joke

In 1977, the British newspaper *The Guardian* ran a special supplement to mark the 10th anniversary of the foundation of the tiny republic of San Serriffe, located in the Indian Ocean and consisting of several islands, the two main ones looking remarkably like a semi-colon.

The supplement lovingly described the geography and culture of this obscure nation. Its two main islands were named Upper Caisse and Lower Caisse. Its capital was Bodoni, and its leader General Pica.

The newspaper's phones rang all day as readers sought more information about this idyllic holiday spot.

In the early '90s a US radio station announced that Richard Nixon, in a surprise move, was running for President again. His new campaign slogan was, "I didn't do anything wrong, and I won't do it again." Accompanying this announcement were audio clips of Nixon delivering the speech announcing his candidacy.

OUTRAGE

Listeners responded dramatically to the announcement, flooding the radio station with calls, most expressing shock and outrage.

Back in 1970, there was only one TV station in Sweden. Its technical expert, evidently with some extra time on his hands, appeared on the news program to tell viewers that they could convert their black-and-white TV sets to color. All they had to do was to stretch a nylon stocking over the screen. To prove the point, the process was demonstrated in the studio with the expert remarking on the amazing color he achieved. Since the program was broadcast in black and white, viewers just had to take his word for it. And they did.

Then there was the "The Left-Handed Whopper". In 1998, Burger King announced the introduction of this new item to their menu, designed especially for the 32 million left-handed Americans. According to the advertisement,



The *ta-ling pling* tree, as it is called in Thailand, produces a fruit that is almost unbelievably sour.

the new Whopper included the same ingredients as the original Whopper (lettuce, tomato, hamburger patty, etc.), but all the condiments were rotated 180 degrees for the benefit of their left-handed customers.

Apparently, a number of right-handed customers complained of discrimination.

The all-time classic has to be the Swiss spaghetti harvest. In 1957, the respected BBC current affairs program *Panorama* announced that thanks to a very mild winter, and the virtual elimination of the dreaded spaghetti weevil, Swiss farmers were enjoying a bumper spaghetti crop.

Footage showed Swiss peasants pulling strands of spaghetti down from trees.

Huge numbers of viewers were taken in, with many of them calling up wanting to know how

they could grow their own spaghetti trees. To this question, the BBC diplomatically replied that they should "place a string of spaghetti in a tin of tomato sauce and hope for the best." Good advice.

The first time I saw a cucumber tree I was, to be honest, convinced that it was just some Thai bloke's attempt at his own hoax – it sounded about as real as a spaghetti tree.

Otherwise known as the bilimbi, or pickle fruit tree, Thais know it as the *ta-ling pling*. It's quite an attractive tree.

It is around five to 10 meters in height with a fairly short trunk which divides low down into a number of upright branches. The small leaves, which appear in twos opposite one other, are mainly clustered at the branch tips.

The usual place for flowers

to appear on trees is on the branches, nestled within the leaves. The weird thing about the cucumber tree is that you're far more likely to find them elsewhere.

Small, fragrant, five-petaled flowers, yellowish-green or purplish marked with dark-purple, appear in small, hairy panicles, which emerge directly from the trunk and oldest, thickest branches and some twigs, as do the clusters of bizarre fruits.

It's these fruits, hanging down in bunches from the trunk of the tree, that make this thing look like one big practical joke. Very odd.

The cucumber tree will grow just about anywhere in Phuket, and it is cultivated all over Southeast Asia. In terms of sun exposure, it's happiest in the sunniest position in the garden.

Just about its only demand is plenty of water, but having said that it's not very good at coping with waterlogged soil. You can propagate the cucumber tree either from the seeds in the fruit or by layering. The seed option is certainly the easiest.

The other day I was at the Phuket City Customs Office, where there is a mature cucumber tree just next to the main building. I got talking to one of the Customs officers, who became quite animated when she realized that this strange *farang* was more interested in the contents of the garden than in the official matters at hand.

She was insistent that the fruit was in fact particularly *aroy*. Having heard this assurance regarding local delicacies a number of times in the past, I was a little hesitant, and was right to be. Once it hit my mouth, it made a lemony taste like a boiled sweet with extra sugar. The acidic oxalic crystals in the crisp, watery fruit had the effect of making my cheeks almost implode.

VIRTUES

Imagine a star fruit with none of the flavor and you're close. She, of course, loved this reaction.

Before long I was surrounded by customs officers, all extolling the virtues of this amazing fruit and trying to convince me that their recipe was the best one. The consensus seemed to be that the best thing to do with the fruit was to make it the main ingredient in a soup, along with lemon, coconut milk and fish known as *pla thu*, the small mackerel you often see sold in small, round bamboo containers. The result is a very sour *tom-yam*, I'm told.

You can also use the fruit in place of mango to make chutney. To reduce the acidity, prick and soak the fruits in water overnight, then boil the bejeezus out of them with several kilos of sugar to make a jam or jelly kind of thing.

The fruit also has medicinal uses. According to Wikipedia, in some parts of Asia it is used in the form of a paste to alleviate itching, rheumatic pain and the bites of poisonous creatures. A tea made from the leaves is supposedly an effective tonic for women who have just given birth, while tea made from the flowers is prescribed for coughs and colds. In Malaysia, apparently, fermented or fresh cucumber tree leaves are used to cure venereal diseases.

Wiki also notes that, in Malaysia "very acid bilimbis are employed to clean the *kris* blade."

And if Wikipedia says it, then it must be true, right? They couldn't possibly be trying to fool us.

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An artist's impression of how the project will look, and one of the homes nears completion (right).



A dash of style and color from the Med

RAWAI: Jee Teng Saiyuan Co Ltd is well on with the first of seven phases of a housing project on 63 rai of land on Saiyuan Rd.

Peeraphathana Chairoon, Director of exclusive agent Forliving Co, said that the first phase, featuring 76 two-story Mediterranean-style homes began in February and is expected to be complete by the end of next year.

The homes, on a total of 11 rai of land, will all have the same interior design, with 160 square meters of living space, but there will be four exterior-design options for buyers to choose from.

"We will have 20 units of type A, 19 each of types B and C, and 18 units of type D. Each will have two bedrooms and three bathrooms.

"The color and appearance of each will be different, however. For example, type A will be pink, type B yellow, type C white and type D will be orange," K. Peeraphathana said.

The 76 units will be built on land areas ranging from 160sqm to 336sqm. Layout and styles are fixed, with the aim of making the overall project visually pleasing. All homes will front directly onto the street, with gardens at the rear. The smallest gardens will be 6m x 8m for homes built on 160sqm. There will be no walls between neighbors.

"The reason for building in a 'Mediterranean' style is that this style is not common in Phuket. There are many homes in Sino-Portuguese style and we wanted to do something different. We have taken the concept from European houses that have the front entrance facing onto the road with a space at the back of the house for the garden.

"The main difference is that in Europe they park the car on the road whereas we have added space at the front of the houses for car parking," he said.

K. Peeraphathana added that he is confident the project will sell without diffi-

culty, "Since we opened our pre-sales office in April, we have already sold more than 10 units, even though our show houses are still not finished.

"Our target customers are retired foreigners who want to lead a quiet life here, as well as small Thai families who want to live in a pleasant community with a mixed culture," he said.

The houses will have one bedroom on each floor. The upper floor, in addition, will have a bathroom and a large balcony. Owners may specify that the balcony be enclosed to make another room.

"We have designed the homes with two sets of stairs – a spiral staircase inside and straight stairs at the back. That way, the owner can live on the upper floor and rent out the lower floor.

"We settled on this design because we wanted to give owners an investment option," he added.

Phase 1 will also include a clubhouse with fitness center and swimming pools.

Prices start at 3.9 million baht for the minimum plot area of 160sqm, depending on location. Homes on larger plots will be sold at prices based on a formula of 10,000 baht per sqm.

However, K. Peeraphathana warned that once the show homes are complete, prices are likely to rise.

"We will have to increase the price; there is no project nearby offering the quality of homes that we have, at such low prices. However, the price will not go higher than 4.5 million baht [for homes on 160sqm]," he said.

"We will start the second phase when Phase 1 is about 40% sold," he added. "The style will be very similar to this one, but we may offer bigger homes on larger plots."

For more information contact the Saiyuan Jee Teng sales office at the project site, or call Tel: 076-289377 or visit www.saiyuan-jeeteng.com

SOLD 80%

The Beach Boulevard. A smart move in Paradise
These luxury boutique hotel-style guesthouses are designed specifically for sale to discerning investors looking for a property with potential in the Kata Beach area. The project is being developed and managed by a professional team with more than 10 years' experience.
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Each three-story hotel compound has 12 bedrooms and 13 bathrooms. Facilities include air conditioning and water heaters.
The suites in each boutique hotel all come fully equipped with a kitchen, dining room, living room and luxurious office area. High-quality materials have been used throughout.

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All this combines to make The Beach Pool Villa one of the best-designed two-story homes with a pool in the Kata area.

The unit is 13.25 x 23.50m on an area of 34 x 23m. Usage area is 411sqm with swimming pool included.

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Property Gazette

Properties For Sale

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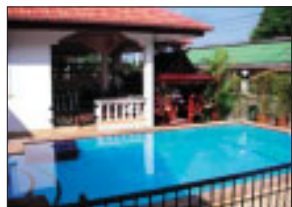
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Property Gazette

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KATA APARTMENTS
3.5 million baht. Sea view, pool, gym, fully serviced. 90% sold, building now. Be fast. Tel: 09-6525664.

BEACH RESORT
For sale, 400sqm with 24 bungalows, beach bar, beach shop and restaurant. Going concern on the best beach on Koh Yao Yai. For more information, email to: han@yaoyairesort.com Website: www.yaoyairesort.com

BEACHFRONT 4-BEDROOM HOME

This beautiful, fully furnished 4-bedroom, 2-bathroom home has everything you want: swimming pool, gardens and a great view of the Sarasin Bridge, on a secluded, unspoiled beach. Modern kitchen and baths - all for only 5 million baht. Located at Tah Chat Chai at the northern end of Phuket. Must be Thai-owned or on long-term lease for a foreigner. Please call K. Noi at 01-8167875 or K. Somporn at 07-2849676 for more information. Email: tammyb@nustyle.net

PRIVATE BUNGALOW
Koh Lanta, Klong Dao Beach. Wooden bungalow 50m from the beach. Quiet and shady, 32sqm, car park, cable TV. Tel: 01-9680571.

BIG HOUSE FOR SALE
5 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms, 5 aircons, big garden, car park area about 1 rai. Asking 15 million baht. Tel: 01-569-8345. Email: julie_phuket@hotmail.com

ECO-COOL THAI HOME IN RAWAI



The open-air design of this award-winning home affords a true tropical lifestyle. Traditional Thai design and modern materials are combined to beat Phuket's tropical heat without aircon. A large, naturally-cool patio surrounded by a pool and a cooling lotus/fish pond. Priced at only 11.9 million baht, this large 3-bedroom, 3-bathroom plus office area (240sqm) home sits on a 400sqm lot and features designer kitchen & bathrooms, hardwood floors & underground water tank for rainwater collection and storage. Call Gary at Tel: 07-8987062.

CASUARINA SHORES
Spacious off-plan, Phase II beachside apartments for sale from 9 million baht. Full facilities, excellent capital appreciation and rental income expected. Located beside Laguna at central Bang Tao Beach. Award-winning international architects. Experienced and credible developers. New release already 50% sold. Tel: 01-6064809. please see our website: www.casuarina-shores.com

SMALL PLOT, 300M
from beach. Very quiet, very nice location in Rawai and only 2 minutes walk to Chalong Bay. 350sqm, Chanote, with plans already completed for a beautiful pool villa. Build your own villa and keep the developer's profit! (I can even supervise the building if required.) Includes Thai company which can be transferred to your name so you don't need to transfer the land or pay tax. 1.4 million baht. Tel: 06-684-5368. Email: bisop5@yahoo.co.uk

KAMALA
townhouse for sale. 2.9 million baht. Tel: 04-6252989. Email: thaiclassicmac@hotmail.com

NEW HOUSE @
Nai Harn. Hill view, just a few minutes to the beach, Chanote title. Over 1,600 sqm including the house. Full landscaping/garden. Tel: 01-7371688. Fax: 076-273083. Email: info@phutawanresidence.com

NICE & CHEAP: 1 RAI
Mai Khao. Access to Bankduk Hill, Chanote, flat land, quiet area, electricity supply. 1.1 rai for 1.8 million baht. Email: ek_phuket@hotmail.com

FOR SALE: 1-STORY HOUSE



In Kathu hills, near waterfalls, 200 sqm, land 390 sqm. Fully furnished. Comes with registered company. Price: 6.9 million baht. For more details call Tel: 01-4945423.

3-BEDROOM HOUSE IN KATHU

Detached 3-bedroom, 2-bathroom house in quiet village close to Patong and major shopping areas. Master bedroom has en-suite and hot water. ADSL phone line, own water well. UBC TV, fitted curtains, 3 aircons. 72 sq wah, Chanote title. Offers in region of 3.6 million baht. Please contact for full details. Tel: 076-203064, 01-0876702. Email: davestacey16@hotmail.com

5-BEDROOM
seaview home for sale. Located in Baan Suan Kamnan, the most exclusive residential area in Phuket. Quiet, safe and offers easy access to the rest of the island and its beaches. Email: pococonnor@hotmail.com

LAND FOR SALE
Point East project. Chanote title. 1 rai, 179 talang wah. 4km from Heroines' monument. Tel: 09-8718327, 01-8953649.

NICE HOUSE
Nice house at Sai Yuan, on the way to Nai Harn Beach. Price: 15 million baht. Tel: 076-239444, 09-7276672. Email: utohom@hotmail.com

BEACH APARTMENTS
Spacious, modern, 2-bedroom apartments, some with a sea view, a 2-minute walk to the beach, gardens, pools, clubhouse, gym, sauna. Prices start from 10 million baht. On-site sales office. Tel: 01-6064809. For further details, please see our website at: www.bangtaobeachgardens.com

1 RAI IN RAWAI
Chanote title. 2.2 million baht. Good location, perfect for house. Be quick! Tel: 01-537-6866.

FOR SALE - PATONG
Studio-condo, 32sqm, sea view, 150m from beach & Soi Bangla. 2 aircons, fully furnished, swimming pool. Foreign freehold. Price: 1.5 million baht. Tel: 076-340792.

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- Custom 4 b/r villas
- On the east coast of Phuket
- 20 min. to the airport
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From Baht 16.8 Million



- Contemp. detached 3 b/r villas
- 145-260 sq.m., 1 or 2 storeys
- Sold freehold or leasehold
- 2 min. from Nai Yang Beach

From Baht 4.08 Million



- 87 rai + 1 rai waterfront land
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Property Gazette

BANG TAO BEACH
Priced to sell at 6.5 million baht (135,000 euros). Walk to the beach from this 2-bedroom penthouse apartment. Fully-furnished, European kitchen, 105sqm, shared pool. Investors, this unit rents for 35,000 baht per month. Tel: 01-894-3839, 01-0867003. Email: donandinge@csloxinfo.com

5 RAI, CHALONG
Value! All utilities. 2.8 million baht per rai. Agents welcome. Call the owner at Tel: 06-6831964.

KATA, 900M TO BEACH
Land plot with building permit or off-plan from 1.5-12.5 million baht. Please contact for full details. Tel: 07-8852969. Email: junekata@hotmail.com

HOUSE FOR SALE
New house, 1,496 sqm, 4 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms, located close to by-pass road with Lagoon views. Close to Lotus & Central department stores. Price 20 million baht. Tel: 01-5375284, 09-729-1066.

HALF RAI RAWAI
2.2 million baht. Electricity, road. Chanote title, quiet area. Tel: 09-6525664.

KATA SEAVIEW
380 sqm square plot. Easy to build. Chanote title. Tel: 06-2670898.

BEAUTIFUL LAND
Plots from 0.5 rai in luxury project between Rawai & Nai Harn with underground electric & water, nice road access. 3.8 million baht. Tel: 07-8938747.

LAND PLOTS
in Bang Tao. 885sqm 1.65 million baht. 1,095sqm 3 million baht. Sea view, infrastructure complete, gated community. Tel: 06-2670157. Email: bannuaton@yahoo.com

KATA SEAVIEW
556 sqm chanote title. Road, electricity. 3.7 million baht. Tel: 01-5376866.

SMALL PLOT
in Rawai. 210 sqm square plot. 790,000 baht. Second-floor seaview. Tel: 07-8938747.

NEW HOUSE
for sale. in Kathu, near BCIS. Call Lynn at Tel: 07-2799500. For more information please visit: www.baan-phuttharat-phuket.com

CHALONG, 1 RAI
Top spot: sea view, 200m from beach, great for boat owners, all facilities. Tel: 01-5376866.

300-METER BEACH
land for sale. Koh Yao. 18 rai or subdivide into 1-rai plots. 2.9 million a rai. Nor Sor 3 Gor, beautiful view, road, 24hr electricity, water, landscaped. Ready to build on, next to Teawson Bungalow. Call Mr Si at Tel: 01-956-7582, Charlie 07-2670714 for map and photo. Email: charlesaraines@hotmail.com

SEA VIEW LAND
Gated community. Nearly 2 rai, Bang Tao, infrastructure complete, ready to build, 7.9 million baht. Tel: 06-267-0157. Email: bannuaton@yahoo.com

HOUSE FOR SALE
in Chalong. Close to Land & Houses Park, in gated community, 3 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, kitchen and living space on 240sqm plot. All bedrooms with aircon. Priced for quick sale at 3.4 million baht. Tel: 01-9700134.

3 RAI, KATA SEAVIEW
Top spot, unbelievable view, Chanote, road, electricity, easy to build on - in "yellow" zone. 5.9 million baht per rai. Transfer no problem. Tel: 09-6525664.

HOUSE FOR SALE 15 MILLION BAHT



Land 720 sqm, house area 350 sqm, near British school, BKK hospital, Lotus. 4 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, 4 terraces, garden, fountains, Jacuzzi, pool, sala, furniture. Quiet, little traffic. 4 car parking spots. 2 entrances. Tel: 01-272-3055.

DELUXY HOME SALE
Land & House Park Chalong residential area. Land 700 sqm, big garden, private pool house. 2 living rooms, 3 bedrooms + bathrooms. Fully-equipped kitchen with top appliances. Fully furnished, big balcony + patio veranda, auto gate. Alarm system, UBC, phone/fax ADSL. Very quiet, total privacy. Price 12 million baht negotiable. Owner is an expat must go home, no time to lose. Call direct to owner. Tel: 076-282542. Email: pattachano07@hotmail.com

KATA SEAVIEW
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plot located in central Rawai. 790,000 baht. 220sqm, road, electricity, water. Tel: 01-5376866.

HOUSE IN PATONG
House 4.8 million baht. 23 sq wah, 1 km from Patong Beach, 3 bedrooms-aircon, bathroom-hot water, kitchenette, cooker hood, living room, 2 cable TV, 2 fridges, washing machine and more. Tel: 076-341724, 01-5690664. Fax: 076-344485.

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Located in Patong. 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, spacious living room, fully equipped kitchen and ocean view private swimming pool. For long/short term rental. Please contact for more details. Tel: 06-0043008. Email: info@ayudhya.net For further details, please see our website at: www.ayudhya.net

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RAWAI RENTAL HOUSE
160sqm, 2-story house central Rawai Beach for rent at 5,000 baht a month or lease for 10 years at 200,000 baht. Tel: 06-6865567. Email: chotip36@hotmail.com

VILLA FOR RENT



275sqm living space, 1,200sqm of land, 10m pool, 3 bedrooms. Fully furnished. Nai Harn. 70,000 baht per month. Tel: 07-8896074. Email: info@sea-property-phuket.com

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or by year. Luxury apartments: 35-75 sqm, with pool, at Residence Edouard in Soi Veerakit in Patong. Tel: 076-296800. www.residence-edouard.com

LUXURY APARTMENTS
One-bedroom apartments for up to 4 persons in Patong. Nicely furnished, TV/DVD, aircon, pool only for vacationers and short-term lets. Email: phuket-apartments@hotmail.com

APARTMENTS
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