

Phuket Gazette

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Happy New Year!
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Phuket Gazette

Police furious over 'stolen' aid claims

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The Nation

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By Gazette Staff

PHUKET CITY: Deputy Commissioner General of the Royal Thai Police Pol Gen Achilawit Subarnbhesaj blasted a front page story in the December 25 edition of *The Nation* newspaper that quoted allegations by "informed sources" that money donated from abroad to the Thailand Tsunami Victim Identification (TTVI) project had been wasted and stolen.

Speaking at the Phuket City Police Station on the same day the story was published, Gen Achilawit admitted that the Royal Thai Police had indeed received a letter from diplomats representing Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, the UK, the US and France. The letter requested an investigation into how more than 61 million baht donated by a total of 11 countries had been spent.

However, Gen Achilawit insisted that control of the money had always been under foreign supervision and Thai police had nothing to hide.

According to a police press release dated December 25, all withdrawals of over 50,000 baht from the TTVI account had to be approved by the TTVI administrative committee, which comprised 12 members representing both Thailand and donor countries. Withdrawal amounts greater than 10,000 baht required approval by at least two out of the four TTVI Joint Chiefs of Staff. These controls were in place from May 1, 2005, when the money was pledged, until June 1, 2006.

From June 1, 2006 onwards, control of the TTVI's



A woman reflects during the tsunami memorial service held on the Patong beachfront on the morning of December 26.

Hundreds remember

PATONG: More than 700 mourners joined local dignitaries for the tsunami memorial ceremony held at Loma Park on the morning of December 26, two years after the tsunami struck the beach there.

The ceremony, led by 99 monks from nearby Laem Petch Temple, was mostly conducted in silence, with only the sounds of the monks praying and the waves on the beach to be heard.

Memorial services continued in the evening on Patong Beach, as well as at Kamala and Khao Lak.

operational fund was transferred to a team of high-ranking Thai police officers comprising Pol Lt Gen Ammarin Neimsakul, Pol Maj Gen Sangchai Suwuttana-

pakdee and Pol Col Khemmarin Hassiri. During this period, all withdrawals also had to be approved by a foreign Financial Officer, Gen Achilawit explained.

At the time the handover of financial control was made, about 31 million baht remained. Any funds left after the project is finished will be handed back to the donors, he explained.

"For the accounts from June, 1, 2006, I can say that we are ready to be investigated. We still have 24 million baht left, and we still have a representative from the international community controlling the accounts.

"Therefore the investigation that the diplomats requested, which asks 'Where did our tsunami cash go?', is not just an investigation of the money given to Thailand to use. It is also requires an investigation of their people, the ones who came and spent money in Thailand.

"*The Nation* should be fair, considering that news like this will be broadcast abroad. If they were aware of all the facts, they would have known that before June 1 foreigners controlled everything. Thais didn't just take the money and manage things themselves...therefore for matters before [June 1] we are the ones calling for an investigation," Gen Achilawit said angrily.

"The technical terms used in the meeting may be misreported, therefore I'd like to say the *farang* controlled all the money, not us. I want the people to understand that we weren't the people in charge of the money, the *farang* controlled it all themselves," Gen Achilawit reiterated.

The Royal Thai Police have already appointed members to an investigation panel and are coordinating with the US Embassy to send representatives to join the probe, he added.

Continued on page 2

Woman hires teen to kill ex-lover

CHERNG TALAY: A woman has been charged with conspiracy to murder after allegedly hiring a 16-year-old boy to kill her ex-lover for 3,000 baht.

Krietiphum Saotan, 41, was blasted with a shotgun December 16 near the construction site where he worked, Pol Col Jessada Sangsuee, Investigating Inspector at Cherng Talay Police Station, told the *Gazette*.

K. Krietiphum was rushed to Thalang Hospital, but died of his injuries en route.

Before he died, K. Krietiphum told his wife that he suspected that his ex-lover Somyong Kaew-art was behind the attack, Col Jessada explained.

Police later arrested Somyong, he said, adding that she had confessed to hiring K. Krietiphum's killer.

K. Krietiphum had been seeing Somyong for several years, by her account, but had refused to separate from his wife, although, she alleged, she already had his unborn child aborted.

Angry, she hired a 16-year-old construction worker at another site to shoot him.

"We have issued a warrant for the boy's arrest. We believe he is from Suphan Buri province. Our officers are now looking for him," said Col Jessada.

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Nivit transfers out of Phuket

PHUKET: Phuket Provincial Chief Administrative Officer (Palad) Nivit Aroonrat left Phuket on December 22 to take the position of Palad of Samut Sakhon Province. His new duties officially began on December 25.

Palad Nivit told the *Gazette* that he had applied for a transfer from Phuket after a stay of little more than a year because he is very tired of the hard work the job in Phuket entails.

"I'm not moving from Phuket to avoid problems here, I'm moving to be closer to my family in Bangkok as I don't want my family to have to relocate here," he added.

Palad Nivit was in charge of many fractious disputes on the island.

He bore responsibility for



Palad Nivit Aroonrat.

the ongoing eviction of squatters from Soi Phra Barami 8 in Patong and the eviction of the vendors in front of Laguna on Bang Tao Beach.

He also led the investigation into Narin Dangtakote's orphanage for tsunami victims, and was heavily involved in the introduction of the currently stalled new regulations for dive businesses.

"I'm proud that the work I did was understood by the people and the press. I'm particularly proud of the work I did in resolving the [airport] limousine problem, which was a very difficult situation before my involvement," Palad Nivit said.

"I have transferred my current duties to Vice-Governor Tri Augkaradacha to continue," he added.

K. Nivit's replacement as Provincial Palad is Piya Phartasinlapin, who was Muang District Chief in Nakhon Sri Thammarat.

Stolen aid allegations

Continued from page 1

"The *farang* will have to investigate the *farang* as well. It won't be just the Thai side under investigation. It was the *farang* who used most of the money, so they'll have to be investigated, too," Gen Achilawit explained.

He said that the ambassadors' letter had asked for the investigation to be conducted as quickly as possible.

The scandal is not the first involving misappropriation of tsunami aid funds in Phuket. A police investigation into 2.04 million baht in funds stolen at Phuket Provincial Hall in February 2005 appears to have stalled in the criminal justice system.

In another case, Phuket provincial government is investigating allegations of financial impropriety at the Thai-Swedish Children's Foundation in Thalang, which was set up to help tsunami orphans and other needy children.

Too early to gauge impact of 'Black Tuesday', say experts

By Sangkhae Leelanapaporn & Suganya Semacote

PHUKET: While the stock market took the brunt of the "Black Tuesday" sell-off triggered by the capital controls to stem speculation against the rising Thai baht, experts say that it is too early to gauge the long-term impact on Phuket's property market.

Although the 30% withholding requirement on foreign capital inflows was quickly rescinded for certain transactions, including direct foreign investment and stock market transactions, at press time the rule still applied to other forms of foreign investment, including property funds.

The measures, adopted by the Bank of Thailand (BOT) on December 18, initially affected all capital inflows of US\$20,000 (about 700,000 baht) or greater.

Foreigners were required to

make a 30% withholding deposit with the BOT. Where it still applies, the measure effectively freezes up investment capital without earning interest for at least a year, after which the depositor can apply for a refund.

Phummisak Hongsyok, Phuket's representative to the National Legislative Assembly, said that the BOT's methods were strong but effective in stemming the baht's rise against the American currency.

He agreed with the BOT's decision to relax the measure for stock market investment, saying it was too strict.

The long-term fallout on direct investment and the real estate market can be assessed only after January 4, when the holiday period has ended and further BOT adjustments may be announced, he added.

The currency control mea-

asures were the second government announcement to have a major impact on foreign investment in the property sector this year.

The first was a Ministry of Interior order issued last May instructing provincial governors to crack down on foreigners using Thais as "nominees" to set up real estate investment firms, he noted.

Investor confidence would improve if the BOT had issued an advance statement of how the currency control measures were intended to affect foreign property investment, he said.

"The government has to make a clear-cut decision as to what extent they want to open up Phuket, and Thailand, to foreigners wishing to stay and invest here. This would include revising visa regulations to support long-stay tourism as well as currency controls," he said.

Graham Bibby, Managing Director of the Richmond Group and also an experienced currency analyst, views the BOT's latest actions as misdirected.

"The whole problem is not about the Thai baht going up. It's about the US dollar going down. The BOT is focusing on the wrong thing ... The BOT needs to educate its exporters.

"They worry about the exporters, but in most countries exporters know how to hedge the the currency - to lock in the currency rate..."

"This is not a Thai baht problem, it is a US dollar problem. In my view, the Thai baht is going to go to 30 to the US dollar in the next six to eight months," he predicted.

"For property investment, in some respects it is not so bad. The only problem is that it was on the front page of every newspaper, which portrays Thailand in a negative way.

"What I have been telling clients is that this proves my point that Thailand is too international now. In the old days, 15 or 20 years ago, they could do this.

But now they can't do this even they want to because the international community will not accept it," he said.

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Jungceylon opens with That's Siam

By Sangkhae Leelanaporn

PATONG: The Jungceylon complex officially kicked its doors open with the grand launch of That's Siam, the largest of the shopping zones in the complex.

Early-bird shoppers were treated to performances by traditional Thai dancers, street performers, a giant indoor Christmas display and a light and water show.

That's Siam comprises 10,000 square meters of floor space, of which about 50% is occupied by businesses that are now open.

Among the shops now trading are outlets of major chains, including Starbucks and Carrefour, as well as branches of Siam Commercial Bank and Kasikorn-Bank. The zone is divided into five sections: Thai fabrics, Thai art

and handicrafts, beauty and spa, Thai food, and a Thai art exhibition and craft demonstration area.

Other zones in the complex are slated to open next year.

Prawich Janyasittikul, Vice-CEO of Jungceylon Phuket, said that 90% of floor space in That's Siam is devoted to shops selling Thai handicrafts.

The remaining 10% is occupied by shops selling imported items such as carpets, cashmere, metalwork and household goods.

About 40,000 people a day were expected to visit the complex in the week after it opened, rising to about 50,000 a day in early 2007, K. Prawich said.

The opening of That's Siam also marks another milestone for the beach resort town – underneath the center is parking space for some 2,000 cars that is now available to shoppers.

Blue Canyon to host Johnnie Walker Classic

PHUKET (The Nation): The US\$2.4-million Johnnie Walker Classic will return to Phuket in March, silencing rumors it could be moved to another country due to the government's attempt to ban alcohol advertising and sponsorship.

Organizers Riche Monde, distributor of the drink, insisted on keeping the tournament at Phuket's Blue Canyon Country Club from March 1 to 4.

"There will be no problem if we have to refrain from advertising," said Riche Monde President Voratthep Rangchaikul.

Earlier this year, the company considered relocating the event to another Asian nation if it was not allowed to use its logo and the brand name.

The government's proposed legislation to ban liquor advertising and sponsorship has been indefinitely postponed as the Ministry of Health failed to introduce it in the National Legislative Assembly.

Tri-sanctioned by the European, Asian and Australian Tours, the 16th Johnnie Walker Classic will be staged in Thailand for the sixth time since the tournament started in 1990.

This year three top 10 marquee names – Adam Scott of Australia, and Retief Goosen and Ernie Els of South Africa – have confirmed their participation.

Goosen will make his second visit to the Blue Canyon where he shared the Tiger Skins title with Thomas Bjorn in 2005.

Former Kathu Deputy killed in accident

BANGKOK (Kom Chad Luek, Gazette): Pol Lt Col Yuthathawee Nakhonkhorn, a former Deputy Superintendent of Kathu District Police Station, was killed in a traffic accident in Bangkok early on December 19.

As Col Yuthathawee was on his way home from a business meeting, his black Ford Escape sports utility vehicle was involved in a collision with a 10-wheel truck.

The accident occurred about 2 am on the Rachawipha Bridge. By the time police arrived at the scene, the driver of the truck had already fled.

Col Yuthathawee, originally from Bangkok, was Deputy Superintendent responsible for criminal investigations at Kathu District Police Station from 2001 to 2003.

After resigning from the police force he started his own travel company, Global Imex.

He leaves behind a wife and two sons.



SANTARINA TURTLE: Locals and tourists with the giant leatherback turtle on Karon Beach, where sea turtles have not been spotted laying eggs for more than 10 years. Photo: The Nation

Leatherback nest marks turtle return

By Sangkhae Leelanaporn

KARON: A giant leatherback turtle on December 25 laid a nest of 103 eggs on Karon Beach, where a sea turtle has not been sighted laying eggs for more than 10 years.

Karon Municipality officials had the task of recovering the eggs as local villagers had taken them all in hopes of selling them as a delicacy. All but two broken eggs were recovered and taken

to incubate at the Phuket Marine Biology Center (PMBC).

Karon Deputy Mayor Ittipol Sangkaew explained that the eggs sell for about 60 baht each. "But after we explained to the villagers that we should let the eggs hatch so that the next generation can see real, live sea turtles – not just pictures of them – they agreed to give them back," he said.

"I haven't seen this kind of turtle for 10 years," K. Ittipol said. "The turtle will likely return

within the next 10 days to lay another clutch of eggs.

"Female turtles lay 500 to 600 eggs at different times over the breeding season, so we have posted security guards along the beachfront to protect the eggs and the turtle, and to allow people to watch from a safe distance as she lays her eggs," he added.

PMBC Biologist Kanjana Adulyanukosol said that the eggs should hatch in about 60 days.

"After the eggs hatch we will take care of the hatchlings for about a month before we release them back to sea, which should be at Karon Beach because it is near the open sea," she said.

"I'm not sure if all of these eggs are healthy, however, because they were moved by people and may not hatch," she added. K. Kanjana said that turtles are known to lay eggs at only three beaches in Phuket: Mai Khao Beach, Nai Harn Beach and Karon Beach.

Sek Loso stars at Red Cross Fair

PHUKET CITY: The annual fund-raising fair of the Phuket branch of the Thai Red Cross Society this year includes live entertainment by a host of celebrities, including Thai rock stars Sek Loso and Clash as well as Thai country music (*look thung*) stars Duangjun Suwannee, Jeab Benjaporn and Luang Kai.

The fair, at Saphan Hin until January 6, aims to raise funds

for Red Cross charity work and to celebrate the new year.

Each night free live entertainment will be on stage from 7 pm, starting with Loso on December 30, *look thung* stars Duangjun Suwannee (Dec 31); Jeab Benjaporn (Jan 1), and Thai rock-pop band Clash (Jan 4).

A lucky draw with a Toyota Yaris as the top prize will be held January 5.

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Death in childbirth rife in South

The rate of women dying during childbirth in the three southernmost provinces is the highest in Thailand – and even higher than in Ethiopia, a top doctor from the Red Cross has said.

Dr Manoj Mukati, Assistant Director of the Relief and Community Health Bureau at the Thai Red Cross Society, said one of the critical unnoticed crises in Thailand was the ratio of women dying in childbirth in the Deep South.

Speaking at the launch of the *World Disasters Report 2006 – Focus on neglected crises*, Dr Manoj said that at present nine in every 100 women giving birth in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat provinces die during or as a result of the delivery – a much higher percentage than in other regions of Thailand.

The ratio was similar to that in Nepal and even higher than that of famine-plagued Ethiopia, one of the least-developed countries in the world, he said.

Dr Manop said that a major factor was that many Muslim women in the region use midwives because they do not want to be treated by male doctors – and there are few female doctors working at hospitals in those provinces.

Telewise: The Superintendent at Tha Sala District Police Station, Nakhon Sri Thammarat, Pol Col Wisit Reutthiplaeng, has been charged with corruption after allegedly receiving a television for his involvement in keeping a shooting from going to court while he was Superintendent of nearby Phibun District Police Station.

The charges were brought by Phibun District Chief Somphot Sotichuchuang, who said that he had received a complaint that Col Wisit had accepted a Samsung television for his part in negotiat-



GUTTED: A two-story wooden building at Ban Yang Daeng School in Pattani's Kokphoe District was razed in an arson attack on December 18, another act of violence in the province.

ing a deal to clear a shooting incident at Phibun market.

According to the complaint filed by K. Somphot, 90,000 baht changed hands between the parties involved in the incident.

Col Wisit denied the charges, saying that the duty officer had dealt with the shooting case and told him that the injured party would not press charges.

He then had to go to a meeting at Police Region 8 headquarters and did not return to Phibun for two to three days, Col Wisit said. When he returned, the television in question was sitting in his office, he added.

A senior sergeant-major at the station then told him that the television had been given to him as a present by a local *kamnan* (subdistrict chief) who had recently profited well on some contracting deals, Col Wisit said.

The *kamnan* did not expect anything in return for the gift, he added.

Tambon terror: A member of a Tambon Administration Organization (*OrBorTor*) in Thung Song District, Nakhon Sri Thammarat, was shot dead in his pickup truck as he went to photocopy documents in a shop outside Thung Song Technical College on December 22.

The crime was reported to Thung Song District Police Station at 9:15 am. Officers rushed to the scene to find the body of Manee Siriphaphong, 47, the Khuan Krod *OrBorTor* council member for Village 3, slumped in the driver's seat of his Toyota pickup. He had been shot eight times – in the head, neck and back.

Students from the technical

college who witnessed the attack told police that the gunman was male and appeared to be in his early twenties.

The man waited outside the photocopy shop for Manee to arrive. After Manee had parked his truck, the gunman walked up and opened fire before escaping on a 110cc Honda Wave motorcycle driven by an accomplice, the students reported.

Pol Lt Col Bunmee Siripalaka, Deputy Superintendent at Thung Song District Police Station, said that on December 3 Manee had an argument with a local man named Prasert (last name not given) and had beaten him over the head with a piece of wood.

Prasert had filed charges about the incident and the case was being investigated at the time of Manee's death. After the inci-

dent, Manee went to Prasert's house and ordered him not to extract sand to sell in the village, Col Bunmee said.

Manee's son, Piyawat, told police that Prasert was the only person his father was in dispute with, Col Bunmee added.

At the time of going to press police were in the process of questioning witnesses and preparing sketches of the killer and his accomplice.

Two days earlier in neighboring Trang province, the Deputy President of Natham Neua *OrBorTor* was shot dead in his pickup on the way back from taking local children to school.

Police reported that Manop Khongkaew, 33, was shot three times. He was hit in the throat, shoulder and chest.

Witnesses reported seeing two men on a motorcycle pull up alongside Manop's car and the masked pillion passenger open fire. Police said they believe the motive for the killing to be a personal dispute.

Col Yutapong Phromkhwanthong, President of Natham Neua *OrBorTor*, said that he had no idea why his deputy was killed, as there had never been politically-motivated violence in the tambon before.

Manop worked as a freelance woodcutter and drove local children to school, and did not have any disputes over business, he said.

Surly surf: Raging surf stirred up by a typhoon in the Gulf of Thailand destroyed 30 coastal homes in Songkhla's Ranot District and 15 houses in Surat Thani's Tha Chana District on December 21.

The impact of the rough seas was felt all the way up the southern gulf coast. Nakhon Sri Thammarat declared a 54-kilometer coastal stretch from Hua Sai to Pak Phanang District a disaster zone. Ferry services were suspended and residents were forced to move to higher ground.

Tambon Bor Thru Mayor Kamol Pinyo said that 30 houses in Bor Thru, in Songkhla's Ranot District, were flooded. District Chief Thane Kamolchino urged coastal residents to be cautious and to erect sandbag barriers.

Songkhla disaster relief chief Wichit Chanthornpan warned parts of Chana and Ranot Districts of strong winds and high waves. He urged small craft to stay off the water and beachfront residents to move inland as a precaution.

In Surat Thani's Tha Chana district, four-meter waves flooded 15 homes along beaches in Tha Krajai, prompting local officials to issue a warning and transfer residents, especially children and the elderly, to higher ground.

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

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MERRY CHRISTMAS
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HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM WATERMARK

The Justice Ministry is pushing for traffic law amendments that would force drivers suspected of being drunk to take a blood-alcohol test. The law would also empower police to detain those who refuse to be tested.

At the launch of the "Young People Against Drink Driving" campaign, Justice Ministry Permanent Secretary Charan Phakdithanakul said the ministry had drafted two amendments to the Land Transportation Act of 1979.

The first would force suspected drunk drivers to take a breath or a blood-alcohol test. Anyone who refused could be automatically regarded as drunk by officers and would face punishment of up to three months in jail and a fine of up to 10,000 baht.

Currently, refusal to take a sobriety test draws the lighter penalty of obstructing police, punishable by a fine of 1,000 baht.

The second amendment would make it mandatory for anyone involved in motor vehicle accidents to submit to sobriety tests, instead of leaving the matter up to an individual police officer's assessment, Charan said.

The proposals should be approved and in effect for the Songkran Festival in April, he said.

Migrants' health: The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) plans to make health care for foreign

Drive against drunks



Schoolchildren point to what remains of a building at Ban Sakadnak Wittaya School in Nakhon Ratchasima's Soeng Sang District, the latest target in a series of unsolved arson attacks in the North and Northeast.

migrant workers a bigger priority in a bid to prevent the spread of diseases, including Aids and tuberculosis (TB).

The ministry estimates that more than one million legal and illegal migrants living in Thailand do not undergo formal or regular health checks, mainly because they have not registered with relevant authorities.

The number of registered foreign workers stands at 668,576. Of those, 419,428 have had health check-ups, according

to recent figures released by the MoPH.

In a related story, the Cabinet has given the green light for registered migrant workers to stay and work in the country for one more year.

The government's Deputy Spokesperson, Natpreeya Chumchaiyo, said immigrant workers with permits due to expire on February 28 and June 30 next year will be allowed to stay one year longer in the Kingdom.

Foreign workers must pay 600 baht for a medical check-up and 1,300 baht for health insurance, she added.

Casualties of war: The Department of Special Investigation (DSI) is going to establish four teams to investigate four cases of murder and the disappearance of a woman during the Thaksin government's notorious "War on Drugs".

DSI Deputy Director General Tharit Pengdit said the teams would comprise from six to 10 members, mainly made up of civil servants or military officers.

This was due to public suspicion that police might have been involved in these cases.

Tharit said ousted premier Thaksin Shinawatra's speeches about his policy to launch a war on drugs would also be included in the investigative report.

Human-rights activists have blamed Thaksin for spurring the spate of killings during the war on drugs.

Ministry targets website: The Ministry of Culture sought the blocking of the overseas-based website Camfrog.com for allegedly showing live lewd acts by

webcam users that are being widely accessed in Thailand.

The site has been available in Thailand for three years through AsiaNet Thailand, which holds an ICT Ministry concession.

Culture Ministry Permanent Secretary Weera Rojphojjanarat said his ministry would seek police and ICT Ministry help to have the site blocked.

The showing of a lewd act in public carries a maximum punishment of three years in jail and a 3,000 baht fine, he said.

Poramet Minsiri, Director of the White Internet for Thai Youths and Thai Webmasters Association, revealed that users in Thailand were the site's third most frequent visitors, behind the United States and China.

While many used the site in constructive ways, some broadcast lewd acts, he said.

These include young people and students who undress for web cameras, unaware that recordings of their actions can be sold and distributed.

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



JUNGCEYLON

SHOPPING DESTINATION

PATONG - PHUKET

Fab Fun this Festive Season

20 Dec 2006

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- ❖ Snowy Delight Enjoy soft snow on Christmas Day and have fun as Santa's Gang brings you happiness, entertainment and a present for everyone. (22 - 24 December 2006)
- ❖ Jungceylon Countdown Get together for the exciting and unique Jungceylon New Year Countdown!
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Queer News

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Living life as a “woman of the second kind” is bound to hone a man’s skills of impersonation. To make the act convincing, many effeminate men walk, talk and act like a lady to fill their preferred gender role.

After being fired from his job as an assistant nurse at Khon Kaen Central Hospital for pilfering medical equipment, aging ladyboy Somsap Buraphat, 58, decided to put his impersonation skills to the test... by deceiving monks, drugging them and then making off with their possessions.

Somsap’s story came to light after the 68-year-old Deputy Abbot of Wat Wae-luwan Forest in Udon Thani province reported to police December 18 that he had been robbed by a such a “woman”, who claimed to be a doctor.

The crafty *katoey*, as such “women” are called in the Kingdom, struck up a conversation with the abbot. When he had won the Deputy Abbot’s trust, the fake doc offered to give him a health-boosting injection.

However, he injected the hapless clergyman with a tranquilizer, waited for him to lose consciousness and then made

off with 4,000 baht the Deputy Abbot had in his shoulder bag.

By noon the following day, police had identified the suspect and arrested Somsap in his house in Phon Thon District, Roi-Et.

They also seized tranquilizer, high blood pressure medicine, antiseptic, vitamin tablets and medical equipment as evidence.

Somsap later confessed to police, telling them how after he was fired from the hospital he used his medical experience to trick monks throughout Isarn.

He would go to a *wat* and start a conversation, and, after a little while, would say to the monk that he looked a little sickly.

He would then reveal that he was actually a doctor and, luckily for the monk, Somsap had just the miracle cure the monk needed to get him back to full health.

He would then persuade his victim to take him back to his cell where he would tranquilize him before making off with his possessions.

Why Somsap chose to target only monks was not revealed.

Source: *KomChadLuek*

TRASHING
Phuket 


This dirty dead end is right in front of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives Phuket office, located in a soi off Rattanakosin 200 Pi Rd, in Saphan Hin.

What is difficult to understand is why so much waste has been dumped there despite the Saphan Hin incinerator – the only incinerator on the island – being just a few hundred meters away.

More baffling is why it has not been cleaned up.

Perhaps it is a bold statement by the local government office about the current condition of the agricultural cooperatives on Phuket...







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FLUSHED WITH PRIDE

By Noolek Karaket & Tanisa Bunyasiwa

Although a trip to the toilet of a Thai fresh market usually requires a biohazard suit and shots, that is certainly not the case at Banzaan market in Patong.

As part of the World Toilet Expo and Forum 2006, held last November at Muang Thong Thani Impact Arena in Nonthaburi Province, Banzaan won for best toilet in the "market" category for the entire southern region.

At a ceremony held at the Thavorn Grand Plaza on November 29, Phuket Governor Niran Kalayanimit awarded a representative of Banzaan market 3,000 baht.

There was also a 2,000-baht prize for Baan Yai Marketing, the contractor responsible for daily lavatory upkeep at Banzaan, a tourist-oriented market located next to the newly-opened Jungceylon shopping center.

The award for Baan Yai is perhaps unique, given that marketing companies are more often noted for creating effluent rather than cleaning it up.

The Phuket-based company employs 25 cleaning staff, who work diligently from 6 am until 9 pm daily.

One member of the staff is charged with the all-important task of inspecting the state of the

toilets. This is done every five minutes, thus ensuring that any hygiene threats are dealt with swiftly – before they degenerate into the kind of woeful mess that all-too-often characterizes the state of public restrooms in this country.

Award-winning hygiene comes at a price, however. Wattana Silapawutikul, assistant accountant of Banzaan market, told the *Gazette* that janitorial and maintenance fees paid to Baan Yai reach as high as 250,000 baht per month.

"We have to take special care of the toilets, because our customers have to use them, and that is where we have to be very careful with the smell," K. Wattana explained.

Somsaing Boonma, supervisor of Baan Yai Marketing, said, "We service many big sites, including Jungceylon and Prince of Songkla University... We train our staff for three months before they start work, then we babysit them for their first three days on the job.

"The workers have to take turns, learning how to clean up in a variety of different situations."

Just what those situations might include will be left to the imagination of the reader.

But rest assured that if you are shopping at Banzaan when you hear the call of nature, your experience in the bathroom is more likely to one of pleasure than peril.



Bathroom attendants at the Banzaan market in Patong conduct spot-checks of the lavatory facilities every five minutes.

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2006: The year of

From post-tsunami rebuilding, the coup and southern violence to tailor touts baffling Immigration rules – here **Somchai Huasaikul** looks back over the past year and reflects on the issues that have affected Phuket.

Despite being a year marked with intense political turmoil and almost daily acts of violence in the Deep South, 2006 marked the resurgence of Phuket's all-important tourism industry, with the number of tourist arrivals reaching pre-tsunami levels – about 4.7 million visitors were expected by year's end.

By far the year's top story was the bloodless military coup in Bangkok on September 19. Combined with the six coordinated bombings of tourist destinations in Haad Yai just three days earlier, this appeared to be a double-whammy for tourism in Phuket. With just six weeks to go before the start of the tourist high season, industry leaders were left thinking, "Oh no, here we go again!"

As it turned out, neither the coup, continuing violence in the Deep South nor travel alerts issued by some foreign governments seemed to have any impact on tourism here. In fact, there was little discernible difference to life in post-coup Phuket, apart from gas stations and shopping centers being allowed to stay open later.

While the words "military coup" might conjure up images of deserted streets after dark, that certainly wasn't the case this time around, especially in Phuket. Police on the island actually

seemed to lighten up on the early closing times imposed on bars during the previous government's "better social order" campaign.

In fact, despite the official imposition of martial law in the province after the coup, the only place in Phuket with any discernible military presence was at the airport, where some soldiers were briefly stationed immediately after the coup.

But now at the airport, the only disturbance seems to be from the hordes of irritable foreign tourists, who on arrival are forced to queue up and suffer lengthy delays waiting to clear Immigration.

The near-complete recovery was due in part to successful efforts by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), Phuket Tourist Association (PTA) and Phuket Provincial Administration Organization in tapping new markets, most notably "green season" arrivals from the Middle East.

Tourists from that arid part of the world find nothing more exotic than a torrential downpour or pushing a stroller up Soi Bangla, dodging flamboyant ladyboys festooned in fake peacock feathers and high heels. And why not? You don't get that in Dubai or Damascus.

Another important factor was that it became easier for tourists to get here as 2006 progressed. The year began with



Soldiers were stationed at Phuket International Airport to boost security just days after the September 19 coup. Their presence was short-lived, however, and there was some conjecture that the troops were posted there in response to the Haad Yai bombings three days earlier.

tourism industry representatives begging the TAT to do something about the lack of direct flights to Phuket, many of which were canceled due to lack of demand after the tsunami.

Also cut back during those dark days were the number of flights from Bangkok by national carrier Thai Airways International (THAI). But by the end of 2006, the number of carriers using Phuket Airport had increased to a new high of 39. These included newcomers such as Australia's Jetstar as well as a resumption of direct flights from Hong Kong by DragonAir. With the arrival of high season, so many charter flights began to ar-

rive that finding parking for them all became a problem.

To ensure this year's high season got off with a bang, the PTA dumped some three million baht into this year's Phuket Carnival, which was better than ever with a "bikini runway" featuring more than 100 slinky models traipsing along the beach road and great entertainment, including a concert by Modern Dog.

Other high-profile events in 2006 included jet-ski racing in Patong, an FIVB women's beach volleyball tournament in Karon and the Rubson Raid Turquoise, as well as the usual big annual events, such as the King's Cup Regatta and the Laguna Triathlon,

which was unfortunately marred this year by the death of one competitor from a heart attack.

In Patong, a 195-million-baht project overseen by the TAT to redevelop the beachfront was finally finished, as was a similar project in Kamala, where a tsunami memorial sculpture was dedicated. In another tsunami-related development, the island's system of warning towers was completed and the first tsunami detection buoy was deployed in the Indian Ocean, courtesy of the US government.

Entering 2007, the Patong beachfront looks better than it did before the tsunami, with lots of smart new establishments along

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bouncing back

the beach road north of Sawatdirak Rd.

But all of these shopping facilities put together are still dwarfed by Jungceylon, which finally opened in full on December 20, after lengthy delays and legal battles.

Jungceylon is expected to finally transform central Patong, between Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd and Nanai Rd, into a family-friendly tourist attraction rather than the muddy, garbage strewn wasteland much of the project has replaced.

Other positive developments in Patong included the continued success of Soi Bangla's nightly transformation into a pedestrian's thoroughfare.

The idea started on a trial basis in 2005 out of concerns that Bangla might be a nice target for terrorists, especially when the US Navy is in town.

But the result has been that with a much wider walking space on Soi Bangla, all the annoying touts operating there are easier to avoid.

Unfortunately, 2006 marked yet another year of no discernible progress on ridding the island of foreign touts. While almost all the touts work illegally, their in-your-face antics somehow continue to go unnoticed by local police, immigration and the labor department – though not by annoyed tourists, who consistently name them as one of the main reasons they won't be returning to Phuket.

However, 2006 was a miserable year for their low-income earning brethren: foreign laborers working in Phuket, registered and otherwise.



Adding to the list of Patong's attractions this year was Jungceylon, though the island's most popular beachside resort has aggressive tailor touts and violent tuk-tuk drivers to contend with.

After a year full of news stories chronicling the fate of poor Burmese eking out a living here, a tell-tale report came out near year's end; when the province announced its intention to impose an 8 pm curfew on their movements and restrict them from such activities as riding motorbikes and visiting shopping malls.

Another major development for Patong came in November, with the announcement that a one-way traffic system will go into effect on a three-month trial basis, starting January 15.

Proponents of the one-way system say it will bring some order to the traffic chaos that pre-

vails in the area. Opponents say it will transform the town's streets into impossible-to-cross drag strips, forcing all northbound traffic into an unenviable choice between Nanai Rd or the beach road.

Meanwhile, the new Phang Muang Rd, intended to serve as a new north-south artery, remains unfinished.

Unfortunately, there has also been no progress in cleaning up the huge, illegal dump site in the wasteland at the end of Patong's Soi Nanai 2. In fact, 2006 marked the year when the *Gazette* began inviting readers to send in photos of illegal garbage

dumping in a section of the paper known as "Trashing Phuket".

While there has been no lack of contributions, not many of the sites have been cleaned up as a result of the exposure. Unfortunately, plans to add a second burner at the island's only incinerator at Saphan Hin remain on hold, although a glimmer of hope emerged with the opening of a small factory in Tambon Thepkasatti to transform organic waste into fertilizer.

Also on a positive environmental note, Patong saw the the opening in October of a new 13-million-baht "natural" wastewater treatment plant. Officials hope

the facility, which relies on terrestrial plant life to absorb organic waste, will help keep Patong free of the seaweed that has plagued it the past few high seasons.

Buoyed by its resurgent tourism economy, fears that post-tsunami Phuket would fall off the global tourism map began to fade in 2006. As such, all the post-tsunami "lure-them-back-at-all-cost" promotions have faded into memory; it is back to business as usual, which in Phuket sometimes means price gouging.

No part of the Phuket economy is better at it than the transport sector. In late November, a Welshman ended up in the hospital after he refused to pay 200 baht for a ride in a tuk-tuk from Soi Bangla to a hotel on Nanai Rd, just a few kilometers distance. The tuk-tuk driver stabbed him before heading back to Soi Bangla to look for another fare.

Despite altercations between tuk-tuk drivers and passengers being common in Patong, the local municipality has continued to pass over the chance to introduce a public transport system of any kind in 2006, thus demonstrating its continued commitment to the needs of local taxi syndicates over those of visiting tourists.

Among many government officers departed in 2006 was former Phuket Governor Udomsak Uswarangkura, who must still be scratching his head about the fate of over 2 million baht in tsunami aid money stolen by persons unknown from Phuket Provincial Hall back in February 2005 – a matter over which he is still being held nominally responsible, at **continued on page 9**





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The St Agnes Catholic Church in the Klong Haang area of Ao Nang opened its Tsunami Relief Centre on November 25.

Four buildings were constructed which will incorporate a vocational training center and separate boarding facilities for boys and girls.

The programs will include vocational training in English, computers, traditional Thai massage, sewing and clothes-making.

Father Philip Pornchai Techapitakham has spearheaded the efforts to build these facilities and provide long-term programs to not only help tsunami victims, but the community as a whole.

Sponsors and benefactors of the project include Caritas International, the Archdiocese of Meath (Ireland), and Archbishop Salvatore Pennacchio, who presided over the dedication and blessing.

Father Philip hopes to expand the programs, and ultimately transform the project into an international school, something everyone in Krabi agrees is needed.

Church center offers long-term solutions



Above: Dedication ceremony for the St Agnes Tsunami Relief Centre. Right: Gary Gates (center) jams at the Encore Café.

STARGOOD: Representatives of the Starwood Group, which owns the Sheraton, Westin and Four Seasons hotel chains, made a recent trip to Krabi to consider a proposal to sponsor 22 tsunami children through the Tsunami Child Sponsorship Program being run by the Sriphong Phukaoluan Foundation (www.krabirelief.com).

The Sheraton Krabi Beach Resort had already made generous donations to the foundation, and the corporate group was looking to expand their commit-

ment. Eric Czech, Vice-President and General Counsel of Singapore-based Starwood Asia Pacific, brought his staff to listen to the foundation's presentation.

Also representing Starwood were Sheraton Beach Resort General Manager Chatchawan Pankudrua and Head of Human Resources Witoon Pinpimai.

The presentation was led by Lah Lahloongsa, the Field Operations Manager of the Foundation, who introduced each child and recounted their tragic stories.

The executives were im-

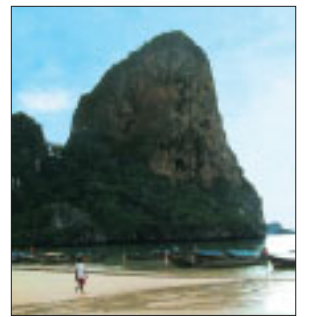
pressed, and have made a long-term commitment to support all 22 children until the age of 18.

At the conclusion of the day's activities, Eric Czech presented Foundation President Chuan Phukaoluan with a check for US\$110,000.

THAT'S THE SPIRIT:

This New Year will again find the Greenspirit Krabi Festival in full swing, starting December 30. This three-day dance and music fest,

featuring 25 Thai and international DJs, will be held at the same scenic hillside location as



ACROSS THE BAY

By Gus Reynolds

last year, in the Na Thai area of Ao Nang.

The facilities will include a free camping area near the party zone, which is open for seven days beginning December 28.

The party itself will run for 52 consecutive hours. The organizers have provided facilities for food, shops, showers, toilets and first aid. The theme is "Love, Dance and Happiness," so if you are looking for

any one or all three of the above, you can head over to the festival by catching the shuttle from Wanna's Place on Ao Nang's beachfront road. For more information, visit the website at www.greenspiritkrabi.com.

CALIFORNIA CRU-ZIN':

Ao Nang has been lucky to be visited

this month by Gary Gates, a Santa Cruz, California, musician who regularly visits Thailand.

Gary has just released his third studio album, *A Better World*. The anti-war song on the album, *Red, White and Blue*, made the Top 10 for six weeks on Neil Young's Living With War web page (www.neilyoung.com/lwtoday/index); which includes such notables as Kris Kristofferson, Pink and Bruce Springsteen.

Gary recently jammed with some local musicians at the Encore Café in Ao Nang, to the delight of tourists and residents alike.

He has a new CD in the works, and you can check out his music at www.garygatesband.com.

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TALES OF A TRAVELER

By Ed Peters

The Indian Ocean's far-flung and best-known holiday archipelago is no farther than supper-time. Nip down to Singapore, change planes, and you can be sitting down to a late evening meal in Malé, the capital of the Maldives, a tad north of the Equator, or – better still – at a resort on one of the atolls.

Even so, why go all that way? The Maldives are renowned for their pristine beaches, dive spots and resorts, but Phuket residents can find similar attractions closer to home. The answer lies in the islands' approach to tourism, which has been to develop upscale facilities to keep the hoi polloi at arms' length.

This makes sound ecological as well as economic sense. Send an armada of glass-bottomed boats out over the coral reefs, and very soon there won't be anything left to look at.

And there is no point in encouraging backpacking island-hoppers when just about everything they are going to need, from food to furniture, has to be imported.

So what's known as the "Robinson Crusoe factor" remains one of the Maldives' prime lures, even if the legendary castaway needs to pack a credit card or two in his back pocket.

MALDIVES MAGIC: Pristine, unpolluted beaches with 'Jeeves in the jungle' serving G&Ts – as the ultimate beachside getaway, the Maldives still seem to have the edge on Phuket.



Equally important, the Maldives remain stunningly pristine, with scarcely anything washed up on the beaches other than driftwood, and water that's as clear as gin and equally enticing.

There are some 1,200 islands in the archipelago, but only 200 are inhabited; tourist resorts occupy around half of these, most of which feature swish spas and

top dining to go with superlative design. Wherever you stay, at least part of your vacation should be spent underwater, whether you are a fully-qualified diver or first-time snorkeler.

There are myriad recognized and named dive sites, many of which are a short hop from resorts, while the rest can be reached by boat on diving trips.

Anyone who can don a mask and snorkel will see butterfly fish, angel fish, parrot fish, rock cod, unicorn fish, trumpet fish, blue-stripe snapper, Moorish idols, oriental sweet-lips and more.

Scuba divers will encounter larger life forms, such as sharks, stingrays, manta rays, turtles, moray eels, whales and dolphins, while just off Hulule International Airport, the remains of the *Maldivian Victory* is rated as one of the best wreck dives in the world.

While it's very easy to sequester yourself away for the whole of your stay, the capital, Malé, makes for a good day's exploration. The National Museum, Islamic Center and accompanying Grand Mosque are all worth seeing, if not exactly worth

going to see, and the museum – three floors of dusty artifacts contained in the only surviving portion of the deposed sultan's palace – is endearingly quaint.

The real attraction of the capital is the maze of small streets and the odd shops and boutiques, selling an assortment of handicrafts and general merchandise for locals. Anyone in search of pulsating nightlife in this Muslim stronghold is a couple of thousand miles off course.

Bearing in mind the old music hall song *What did Robinson Crusoe do with Friday on Saturday night?*, the Maldives are a tropical island getaway for couples rather than singles on the prowl, ideally couples with something to celebrate. Book accordingly.

The Maldives' approach to tourism has set the benchmark for the 'Robinson Crusoe factor' – it's as natural as possible or it's not there.



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Nussara and Thanaree knew their journey to Ireland would be a long series of firsts, even starting before they left Thailand, with their flight to Bangkok. "On the way to Bangkok, Thanaree and I felt pain in our ears," said Nussara, adding that it was the first time either girl had flown in an airplane.

However, they were quick to learn. "Later, when we flew from Bangkok to Ireland, we learned that chewing gum helps a lot," Nussara giggled.

The next surprise came when they arrived in Dublin, where the outside temperature was 5°C. It was the first time Nussara and Thanaree had experienced daytime temperature below 20°C.

Not to see the girls catch a cold on their first day, their chaperon from Thailand, Barry Cager, who co-founded the Coco de Mer Foundation with his wife, had organized for them to be whisked away to their new homes as quickly as possible.

During her stay in Ireland, Nussara, originally from Nakhon Sri Thammarat, lived with Shane and Vanessa O'Laughlin and their two children, aged six and one. "At first, I couldn't communicate very well because I didn't know much English, so it was difficult for me to understand them.

"I had learned some English here [in Thailand], and I have tried to learn more by teaching myself. Fortunately for me, they gave me a lot of support, asking me to look words up in the dictionary when I didn't understand something," she said.

However, one thing Nussara had in common with her new family was a love of Thai food. "They provided all the ingredients and seasonings and even bought a new rice cooker. They liked my fried rice very much and asked me to make it

Earlier this year, the *Gazette* interviewed Phuket Vocational College students Thanaree Jooprasert, 18, and Nussara Lem, 20, before they left to spend a few months in Ireland as part of an education scholarship provided by the Coco de Mer tsunami relief fund.

Now the girls have returned. Here they share and reflect on their experiences on the Emerald Isle with the *Gazette's* Janyaporn Morel.



Thanaree (back) and Nussara (front) had some time to travel around Dublin, giving them the opportunity to practice their English.

very often.

"I also made other meals, but their favorites were grilled chicken and fried rice. Their daughter really liked the noodles I made. Sometimes she didn't want anything else, she just wanted to eat my noodles," she laughed.

Thanaree lived with Jim and Karen Wood and their five children. Her time in Ireland, she said, was a pleasure and an experience that she will never forget. "When I arrived I was very excited, because everything was new and I had never been abroad before," she said.

However, she soon felt homesick, missing her close connection with her family.

"I felt lonely and afraid because it was the first time in my life that I had stayed far from

home and my family," she said.

"They were very good to me. At first I told only K. Barry about it, but later when they knew what was worrying me they told me to tell them every problem I had. They said that because I was living with them, it was their responsibility," she said.

While in Dublin, the girls studied English at the Linguaviva Center. The language course started a week after they arrived. Thanaree was selected for the intermediate class while Nussara was in the pre-intermediate class. However, Thanaree had difficulty keeping pace with the intermediate class. "I think maybe because I was so stressed and nervous I couldn't keep up in the intermediate class," she explained.

"So I attended the intermediate classes for a month, then I



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education



The girls got a taste of a different climate and a different part of the world. 'It expanded my horizons. It gave me a different perspective; I can see other people's points of view now,' said Thanaree (right).

joined the pre-intermediate classes. In my class, there were many foreigners, including people from Spain, Portugal, Korea and Italy," Thanaree said.

But it was the learning experiences outside the classroom that Thanaree says she will never forget. "The first thing I learned from traveling to Ireland was that it expanded my horizons. It gave me a different perspective; I can see other people's points of view now.

"I learned much about English, too," she said. "I learned to speak better English, but I also discovered that there are many different dialects of English. Be-

fore I thought that people who spoke English all spoke the same dialect."

After they returned to Phuket, Thanaree and Nussara related their experiences to other students at Phuket Vocational College. "I would like to tell the next scholarship students that they don't have to worry about homesickness or feel overwhelmed by the prospect of living in a foreign country," Thanaree said. "They should learn as much as they can from their time abroad, because when they get back, they will see that it's a very good experience.

"I keep in contact with the

Wood family. They said that they will visit Thailand, and they keep telling me to go back and visit them again. And if I have a chance to work in Ireland, I will take it," she said.

Nussara has also benefited well from the experience. Since her return, Nussara was invited to be a presenter for a tourism promotion video in which she introduced tourist places in English.

"In Ireland, we studied about five to six hours a day, all in English. And we went on short trips in our free time," she said.

Her only regret, she said, was not being able to travel more and to visit England while she was there.

"I feel that I was very lucky to get this chance. In my classes now my English is improving very quickly. I know a lot more than my friends, so I help to teach them," she said.

"Many students ask me how they could get the same chance I had. I suggest to them that they have to study hard and be good students," she added.

Happily Ever After

Recent weddings in Phuket



Khwanta Limsomboon and Pattaphon Siriwat were married at The Royal Phuket City Hotel on December 11.

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This week



REMINISCING ROMMANEE: Phuket Governor Niran Kalayanamit (2nd from right) and Dr Prasit Koysiripong (3rd from right), President of the Old Phuket Town Foundation, enjoy the live entertainment and local foods at the Local Life Fair on Soi Rommanee on December 17.



GOLLY-G: Kenny G surprises Ramada Resort General Manager Florian Hallermann (right) and guest Kerrie Hall by dropping in at the grand opening of Joe Kool's, the resort's rock 'n' roll restaurant with a twist.



BEAR ESSENTIALS: (Above) Burasari Hotel in Patong lights up its Tree of Hope and launches its teddybear fundraiser for Phuket Special School children, with help from (from left) Patong Deputy Mayor Chairat Sukkaban, Phuket International Women's Club President Cindy Ratcliff and guest Um-pien Teuntin.



UND NOW, VEE DANCE! (Right) A dancer entertains guests at the one-year anniversary party for La Baia Restaurant & Club in Patong.



TASTE OF LITERATURE: Author Jim Newport reads an excerpt from his book *The Reckoning, Tales of the Vampire of Siam* at his recent book launch at the Watermark at Boat Lagoon Marina.



L'ORCHIDEE SOIREE: Owner of the L'Orchidee Residences Jean-Claude Guillet (center) welcomes villa owners Steve Roder (left) and Paul Barton to the grand opening party of L'Orchidee Residences in Patong.

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Yeeeeee-hah!

AFTER RAGING BULL DARK

By Zach Fridell



Men clinging on to their bucking rides amid a sea of cushions with one hand in the air and shouting at the top of their lungs is probably not new on Soi Bangla, but at the Raging Bull Bar the ride is a little different.

A mechanical bull dominates the center of the bar at the end of Soi Seadragon, where wannabe cowboys and cowgirls can pay 100 baht to test their wrangling prowess.

If they can stay on the jerking, bucking faux-buffalo for a minute, they will receive 1,000-baht credit at the bar.

Dennis Morgan and David Nicholson opened the bar a month ago. David designed the Thai-style building himself, using bamboo from Chiang Mai for the awning and bar coving.

The bar was built on an empty plot of land near the reg-



gae bar at the end of the soi, and Dave and Dennis have avoided the typical bar decorations in favor of a more rustic "Thai" ambiance.


"It can be a place for families in the afternoon, too," said Dennis, adding that the bar opens at 4 pm. The owners are easy-going with the rides as well, and if it's not busy you're likely to get several rides for your money.

They also have a promotion to introduce the bull to Patong: buy two beers, get a free ride.


It's unclear how many times that offer is valid in one evening or if the bull can be hosed off in cases of motion or beer sickness.

A Heineken costs 80 baht, a gin and tonic 120 baht. Cowboy hats to wear while riding the bull, however, are free.


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New year? It must be NEW BIKINI TIME



Browns and natural colors (far left) are said to be this season's most popular colors but that doesn't mean you can't go for brighter hues.

Just make sure that, whether daring or demure, you choose a suit that fits well and that you are comfortable in, so that you can be confident playing in the waves or on the beach.

Model: Charinrat Pohprakot. All bikinis from Wild Wave, opposite the Kata Beach Resort. Tel: 076-284019.

This time of year, Phuket's beaches are packed with skin-baring sun worshippers and swimmers, attracted by the gleaming white sand and warm sun. Many bathers, too, are attractions in their own right, in this season's popular styles and colors.

Chanita "Mod" Semrat, Manager of Wild Wave swimwear shop at Kata, says that the most popular design this season is the midriff-baring, two-piece suit, with earthy tones of brown

being the most popular colors to be caught catching rays in this year.

But colorful suits with a flowers or jazzy pattern are still popular, especially with teens, she says.

K. Mod points out that your swimwear should look good to whoever you want to be checking you out, and should make you feel comfortable and confident while you are playing on the beach.

So, when choosing a swimsuit, think carefully about your

By Natcha Yuttaworawit

body shape and what design works with it.

She suggests that ladies of largesse show off their backs because showing more skin makes them look slimmer, though they should be sure to find a suit that fits correctly and isn't too tight, especially around the thighs.

Her advice for slender girls is to wear swimsuits with a lot of pattern and color to help them look as if they have fuller figures. K. Mod said that girls with large chests should stick to one-piece suits, but in modern styles to avoid looking old-fashioned.

Choose a suit that you like and are comfortable in, she says, and you will wear it well.

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A post-Christmas pub crawl

High season is here, and Patong is getting busier and busier. The downside is that traffic is heavier and pavements are slower to walk along. In an attempt to alleviate the traffic congestion, Patong is to try and have a one-way system starting in January.

The long-awaited opening of Jungceylon will be a reality by the time this edition hits the newsstands. This venture – complete with cinema, bars and restaurants – will be a boon to tourists with young families, as it will give them somewhere to take the kids before bedtime. The complex also boasts a 2,000-space car park, so perhaps central Patong's chronic parking problems will become a dark and distant memory – at least for those willing to part with the princely sum of 20 or 40 baht.

The local police seem to be taking a rather tolerant line on closing times these days, with clubs along Soi Bangla able to remain open until 4 am.

Last month I briefly mentioned two new venues that had just opened. I revisited them recently to see how they were getting on.

Club Erotica, on Soi Seadragon, has quickly put its mark on the Patong a-go-go scene. The large main room is done out in modernistic, light-colored decor with strategic lighting – and no wall mirrors.

The dance platform is in the center, but only has room for three dancers at a time. As there are no chrome poles, the dancers actually do move. There are plenty of seats for punters set at

two different levels and you don't get the feeling of being crammed in or confined. The dancers do quick sets and are changed over often.

These sets are interspersed with set-piece dance routines, performed by seductive lasses in various states of sexy attire. The music was good and not ear-splitting. The staff were attentive and very friendly.

My only comment would be that the stage could have been made a little longer as there is plenty of room at both ends.

Now that all the dust has settled from the grand opening of Seduction disco, I decided to call in late one night to see how things were getting on.

Admission is now 250 baht, which earns you two drink coupons – not a bad

deal. Downstairs the large area had swallowed up what customers there were – and there was still plenty of room. I went upstairs to the huge gallery area and parked my weary bones. I found the music less noisy up there and

I had the choice of two fully stocked bars to choose from. Also, the gents toilets are on this level. As I looked around, the thing that struck me most was the lack of customers and most importantly – the lack of Thai ladies. I believe that the club will have to come up with some enticement to convince the girls that this is the place to be.

The people who were in there during my visit were enjoying themselves, but at the end of the day it is bums on seats that pay the bills.

Rock Hard, on Soi Bangla is now doing a special offer on tequila shooters, dispensing them day and night at only 40 baht a pop. It was definitely drawing people in, I could not see an empty chair upstairs at all.

Happy Night Bar, at the entrance to Soi Crocodile (where the tall lads in fancy dresses prance), now has a second level.

This upstairs lounge is a great spot to watch the antics of the "lads" and their interactions with tourists. I found it quite strange that downstairs was packed but the upper level was almost empty.

To replace the fire-gutted Crocodile, the owners of the club have put up a large sign stating their intention to open under a new name by the time this issue comes out. I reckon "The Phoenix" would be apt, but we will have to wait and see.

Shock and horror! The staff of Hard Rock on Soi Seadragon have redecorated their bar, papering all the walls and ceilings with posters of rock groups – and in the process covering over the years of hand-scrawled signatures and messages that gave this little oasis of good music its distinctive ambiance.

I can only take comfort in the fact that I know that they are still there under the posters and have not been painted over.

Email details of any upcoming events for possible inclusion in this monthly column to: ab_prowler@yahoo.co.uk

PATONG PATROL

By Prowler

PHUKET DIARY

Events on the island



MOMENTS OF COLOR art exhibition, from January 4 to 30 at The Watermark Bar & Restaurant in the Boat Lagoon, shows the work of local artist Varaporn "Map" Ponrit. Daily from 10 am until the bar closes. Entry free. To contact the artist call Tel: 081-6963901 or email: art@phuketlifestyle.com

Until December 30: Art sale at Keimandrian 26 Café Gallery, Kathu

Art sale by local artists Sam Fruin, Cindy Shaw, Claire Lester and Kathy Manthei.

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For more information contact K. Rin at Tel: 084-1935124 or by sending email to: info@keimandrian26.com

Until December 31: Test drive Windows Vista and Office 2007.

Test the next versions of Microsoft Windows and Office today. If you're curious about Windows Vista and Office 2007 – both due in January – you can take final beta test versions for a whirl through the end of December.

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build 5744 (a.k.a. "Release Candidate 2") and Office 2007 Beta 2 Technical Refresh available on a test computer at the Sandwich Shoppe in Patong - hooked up to the fastest wireless connection in Phuket.

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January 1 and 2: New Year.

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Is it just my imagination, or would some people out there agree with me when I sometimes feel as if everyone's in charge of me except myself? Family, boss, friends, partner... the list goes on. So what can we do about it?

The past few months have had me rushing around like a lunatic trying to juggle a thousand and one things at the same time, but then I have thrived on that kind of multi-tasking behavior all my life, and I usually work well under pressure. But there comes a time in your life, as I have recently discovered, when you have to slow down and give yourself some "me" time.

The other day, for example, I did half dozen things I didn't want to: taking my mum shopping; collecting my friend's kids from school because she was working overtime (I, being freelance, am apparently never working); hosting three of my son's friends for a sleepover; accepting a commission for work I don't really want to do; not getting angry with my friend who rearranged our night out at the last minute (for the third time); and sitting on the sofa watching a ridiculous sci-fi movie with my eldest son when I really wanted to watch a DVD instead.

None of these was a particularly big deal on its own, but combined they gave me a feeling I've had many times before – of

Whose life is it anyway?

feeling put out, taken for granted and borderline resentful. I could have said "no" to any of them, but I didn't. Was I some kind of mug?

According to Dr Petra Boynton, a psychologist at University College, London, my situation is "typical of many – maybe most – women".

"Being aware of other people's needs and responding to them is something women do. We're good at it. We do it at the expense of our own needs and without even noticing much of the time, until we are hit by the feeling of anger and resentment or just not knowing how we got ourselves into this situation."

So how do we get ourselves into this state? There has long been a debate about the role of nature versus nurture, and according to psychologist Anne Dickson – author of *A Woman in Your Own Right* – "it's probably a bit of both. What it adds up to is that most women see the world differently to most men: they are more co-operative, empathetic, and flexible."

"The result is that women tend to see things in the longer term, and aren't focused on only short-term goals. They're more aware of consequences and feelings, less inclined to confrontation



and more inclined to consensus."

I suppose that flexibility and compromise are essential tools in any relationship or situation. But they also make us vulnerable to taking on too much responsibility for other people.

The "good" compromise too easily mutates into the "bad" surrender. In our relationships we make more compromises and still do more of the domestic work – and according to recent research, women still do 75% of domestic chores and childcare.

In our jobs we try endlessly to please, when that's not really how the system works. "The world of work is still largely based on traditional male values of competition, long hours, networking

and single-minded self-interest," says Ms Dickson. "We never feel entirely comfortable in that culture, which contributes to our sense of feeling out of control, and at the mercy of someone else's rules in general."

The typical female response is to avoid the politics and work extra hard, hoping that someone will notice, which in turn makes us feel resentful. Or we go all out to be as tough and self-serving as possible – and then end up feeling guilty about it.

Oh yes, the Big G. Guilt. I'd rather not get started on the reasons for guilt. But I think it's enough to say that most women have too much of it. I have only ever met a few men in my lifetime who fit into this category.

Take my friend Chrissie, who complained that she spent half her life desperately taking on extra projects and staying on at the office in an effort to please her boss.

"[The boss is] one of those cool women who don't say much," explained Chrissie. "I was convinced that she was disappointed in me."

Finally her appraisal came up – and it went well. Although her boss had never complained about her work, she hadn't praised her either – so into the

vacuum of her silence Chrissie now poured disapproval and disappointment.

"As a rule, if your boss isn't complaining, you can take it you're doing fine. If you are concerned, ask for an appraisal, and have proper meetings to clarify what your responsibilities are and discuss your performance. Second-guessing what someone else wants often backfires," writes Dr Boynton.

A while ago I wrote a column that poked fun at my obsession with self-help books, but joking aside, there really are some good books out there that will help you regain control and make your life your own again if you feel you're starting to lose it.

There will always be obligations to fulfill, and wanting to make those we love happy is not a failing. But as the experts point out, life should be a balance between what we owe to others and what we owe to ourselves.

Ambrosia Sakkadas, a UK-born Greek Cypriot and graduate of Central St Martins College of Art & Design in London, is an artist, designer and newspaper columnist. Her new novel, Greek Girls Don't Cry, is now available from amazon.com and amazon.co.uk

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The Cryptic Crossword

Hidden Words

Hidden in the grid below are the family names of at least 25 Grands Couturiers. The words 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. Solution on the next page.

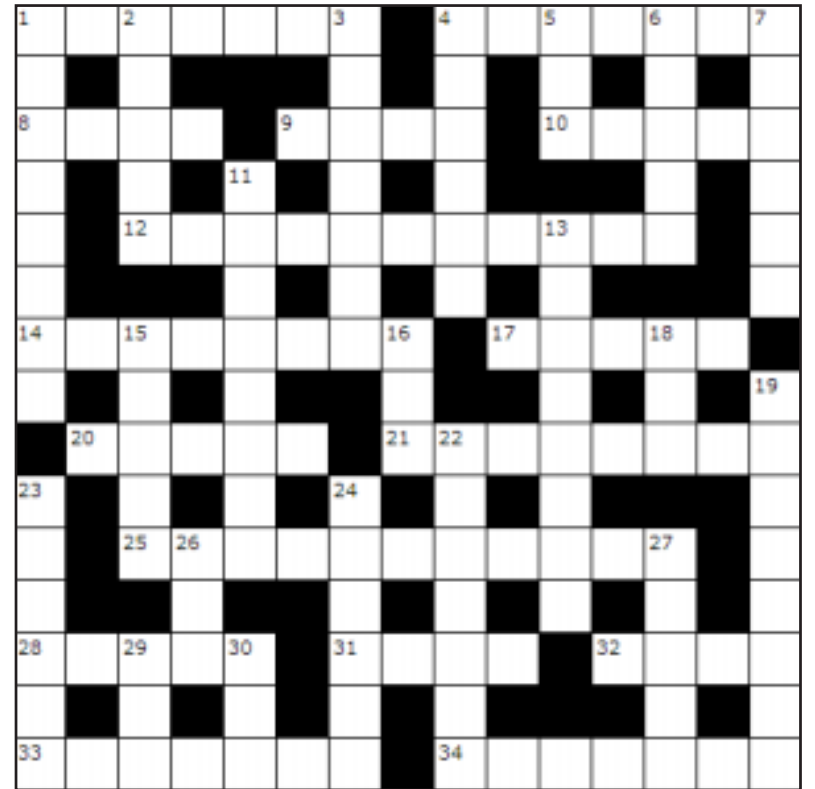
I	H	U	T	S	C	A	A	P	F	N	G	K	H	B
Z	J	E	X	A	H	W	Y	N	V	I	Z	D	X	D
I	R	N	R	P	A	C	A	I	D	D	E	E	B	W
S	I	B	Q	R	N	D	K	L	L	R	K	K	S	S
D	L	E	F	R	E	G	A	L	Y	A	E	U	B	L
U	L	S	Z	S	L	R	A	R	Y	C	G	I	O	D
R	L	X	M	S	C	Y	A	I	P	K	W	J	L	Y
G	E	I	F	C	P	H	M	T	A	J	V	D	E	R
K	Z	O	F	H	D	Q	E	R	N	I	E	L	K	O
C	Y	R	L	I	U	O	A	R	N	J	O	N	B	I
B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

ACROSS

- Lacking depth, show all in. (7)
- River honk? Gem recut. (4)
- Flower surrounds pupil. (4)
- Take a loan against chess piece. (4)
- Banal rite after tea, so they say. (5)
- Cheer once in muddled lack of sense. (11)
- Not one follows 500. Bend tone to eminent person. (8)
- Eccentric may almost free a thousand. (5)
- Box in regular army for a cleaner. (5)
- Postmen I direct to give family power. (8)
- Organize size? Yes, stem at interior. (11)
- Bites worries. (5)
- Burden on ourselves. (4)
- Island fee with G, we hear. (4)
- Stimulate Shore Patrol outside, in anger. (7)
- Expound previously flat ground. (7)

DOWN

- Comedian cut down after sign, they say. (8)



Compiled by Tortuus. © 2006

- Does champ purchase defense? (5)
- Erode around the conditions outside. (7)
- Manchester United, with reference to fertilizer. (6)
- Marlowe's gear. (3)
- Love live Martini fruit. (5)
- Avaricious: almost agree? Yes. (6)
- 100 in footwear cause disgraceful incidents. (8)
- Drug mix on Arctic. (8)
- Makes fast open land. (5)
- Yes, in female half. (3)
- Ms MacGraw, prizefighter. (3)
- Internet assignment makes pollution. (8)
- Eva takes hint: point to someone led to safety. (7)
- Explosion you and I take for African city. (6)
- Remove speck and punish soldier. (6)
- Swerve? Ya! To the west! (3)
- Ms Doolittle gives direction to Ms Minelli. (5)
- Eras of commercials. (3)
- Polish ending to play in snow. (3)

Solution on next page

Scribble Space



EZ TRIVIA QUIZ

- In which country are the Dardanelles?
- Who sat on a wall, then had a great fall?
- Which actor played Inspector Clouseau in the original *Pink Panther* movies?
- Which is the highest-capacity office building in the world?
- Where is it?
- How many stars are there on the New Zealand flag?
- How many sides does a pentagon have?
- What is the old name for Sri Lanka?
- What is Beef Wellington wrapped in?
- Rattlesnakes are members of which family of snakes?

Answers on next page

Rhyme Time

The words described below all rhyme with 'droop'. What are they?

- Chicken house.
- Cavalry unit.
- Respiratory disease in children.
- Rear portion of a ship.
- Small porch.
- Contemporaries of the same status.
- Helping of ice cream.
- Single-mast sailing vessel.
- Vertical 360-degree turn.
- Almond, peach or plum, for example.

Answers on next page

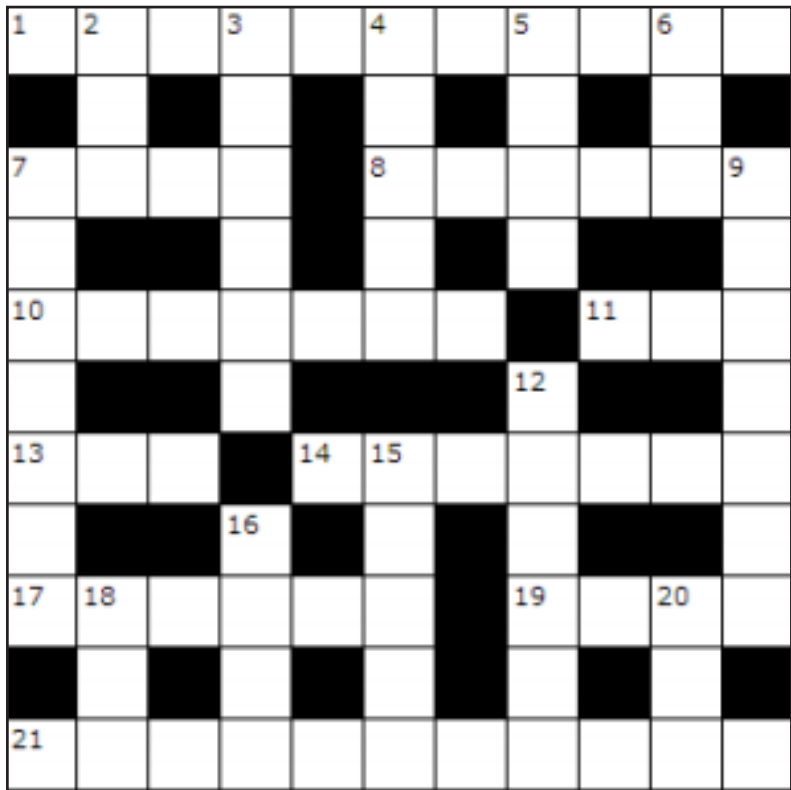
su | do | ku

© Puzzles by Pappocom

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

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

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



Quick Crossword

- | ACROSS | DOWN |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Holland. | 2. Flightless bird. |
| 7. Lacking feeling. | 3. Small Tolkein character. |
| 8. Plan. | 4. Red-brown-colored. |
| 10. Ms Monroe. | 5. Persistent dull pain. |
| 11. Space. | 6. Reservoir wall. |
| 13. Canine animal. | 7. Having no fixed address. |
| 14. Goods brought in from abroad. | 9. Not sheltered. |
| 17. Art movement of early 20th century. | 12. Miniature tree technique. |
| 19. Dispatch. | 15. Ape. |
| 21. Museum sections, perhaps. | 16. She went up the hill with Jack. |
| | 18. Alien craft? |
| | 20. Monk's counterpart. |

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. How many clocks are there in the Pentagon? | 9. Which country lost the Battle of the Saints in 1782? | 15. Who is the leader of SPECTRE? |
| 2. How long ago was construction of the Pentagon completed? | 10. Between which islands was the battle fought? | 16. Where were his mother and father from? |
| 3. How many pecks are there in a bushel? | 11. What causes St Anthony's Fire? | 17. Roughly how many Huguenots were killed in the Massacre of St Bartholemew in 1572? |
| 4. Who starred in the 1920s movies <i>The Navigator</i> and <i>The General</i> ? | 12. By what name is an electroluminescent coronal discharge caused by the ionization of the air during thunderstorms known? | 18. Who said, "The great nations have always acted like gangsters, and the small nations like prostitutes"? |
| 5. Which is the largest and deadliest rattlesnake? | 13. What word can mean a graffiti artist, a word game and an enemy in Pacman? | 19. In 1334, Cremona fell under the control of which other Italian city? |
| 6. What is the rattlesnake's rattle formed from? | 14. Which SPECTRE agent appears in the James Bond movies <i>Thunderball</i> and <i>Never Say Never Again</i> ? | 20. In which year was Crédit Suisse bank founded? |

Answers below, left

Puzzle Solutions

Monster Quiz Answers

1. 4,200; 2. 64 years; 3. Four; 4. Buster Keaton; 5. The diamondback; 6. Dried, hollow segments of skin; 7. Friedrich Ratzel; 8. A shark; 9. France; 10. Guadeloupe and Dominica; 11. Consumption of the fungus ergot; 12. St Elmo's Fire; 13. Ghost; 14. Count Lippe; 15. Ernst Stavro Blofeld; 16. Greece and Poland, respectively; 17. 50,000; 18. Stanley Kubrick; 19. Milan; 20. 1856.

Rhyme Time Answers

1. Coop; 2. Troop; 3. Croup; 4. Poop; 5. Stoop; 6. Peer group; 7. Scoop; 8. Sloop; 9. Loop; 10. Drupe.

EZ Trivia Answers

1. Turkey; 2. Humpty Dumpty; 3. Peter Sellers; 4. The Pentagon; 5. Arlington, Virginia, USA; 6. Four; 7. Five; 8. Ceylon; 9. Pastry; 10. Pit vipers.

Hidden Words SOLUTION

A grid of letters with words hidden in various directions. The words are: HOLLAND, EIGHT, RAZEL, PLAN, MONROE, SPACE, CANINE, GOODS, ART, DISPATCH, MUSEUM, FLIGHTLESS, TOLKIN, RED-BROWN, PAIN, WALL, ADDRESS, SHUTTER, APE, SHE, ALIEN, MONK, KEATON, DIAMONDBACK, FRIEDRICH, SHARK, FRANCE, GUADELOUPE, CONSUMPTION, ST ELMO'S FIRE, GHOST, COUNT, ERNST, BLOFELD, GREECE, POLAND, STANLEY, MILAN, 1856, COOP, TROOP, CROUP, POOP, STOOP, PEER, SCOOPE, SLOOP, LOOP, DRUPE, TURKEY, HUMPTY, PETER, THE, ARRLINGTON, FOUR, FIVE, CEYLON, PASTRY, PIT.

Solution to this week's Cryptic Crossword



Solution to this week's Quick Crossword



Solution to this week's Sudoku puzzle

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

As a backpacker more than 30 years ago, Australian John Borthwick arrived in Bangkok from Calcutta to find that the diamonds he had brought with him were worthless zircons.

"That was my auspicious introduction to the Land of Smiles – and of wats, guns, coups, tolerance, *somtam*, *song-taews*, ravishing beauty, ravished beauty (think Koh Samui), long-tails, short-times, order, anarchy, Buddhist austerity, shameless avarice, 14 million annual visitors, heat and lust, and still more smiles."

Borthwick turned travel writer and his *Summer in Siam* (Bangkok Books, Bangkok, 2006, 231pp) is a collection of his Asian travel pieces: 17 in Thailand and 18 in the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Pakistan, Laos, India, Nepal, Sikkim and China. He combines an offbeat itinerary with shrewd observations and laid-back Australian humor. *Summer in Siam* is a hoot.

In Thailand he attends a three-day Yao wedding in a tiny village in Chiang Mai, catches the fire boats on the Mekong in Nakhon Phanom, watches a spirit possession ceremony among the Hmong in Lampang, and strokes the tame tigers at a wat in Kanchanaburi. This is followed by two hilarious tales of fiction set in the bars of Pattaya.

Then he's off on a tour of the grand old hotels of Southeast Asia: Bangkok's Oriental, Penang's E&O, Singapore's

A laid-back tour of Asia

Raffles, and Saigon's Majestic. Next he's a traveling guest on the Eastern & Oriental Express train. These stories are slick airline-magazine type, though enlivened by irreverent humor.

He hits the jumbo jackpot with elephant stories: one about learning to ride one, another about elephant polo. A trio of Andaman Sea stories follow: Similan and Surin islands, the rise of Phuket from the 2004 tsunami, and a Star Flyer luxury sailing trip from Patong to Georgetown. Travel writing of this type is always happy, happy, happy, but he manages to sound a sour note on modern Koh Samui: a million visitors, 9,000 aircraft arrivals, 40 7-Eleven stores.

"Self-driving around Samui is a breeze, but the taxis are pure banditry," he writes. "All taxis have a meter, though none work . . . If you rent a motorcycle, helmets are mandatory. So, of course, no one wears one. Young tourists ride barefoot and bare-



Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt



brained, confident that on cool Samui nothing could ever include them or the boxes they sometimes go home in among the island's road statistics. In fact, Samui has one of the worst accident records in Thailand."

Next he's off on a walkabout in the Philippines: to the coral island of Dimakya with its collection of African animals, the Banaue rice terraces, the old Spanish town of Vigan, the long island of Palawan.

Of Vietnam he observes: "The French left Peugeotts, berets, bread and good coffee. The Americans left junked F-111s, old Dodges and a craving for Ca-Li-Pho-Nia Ham-Bu-Go culture. The Russians left a language that everyone learned and no one can

use, plus a school of architecture characterized as Early Soviet Misunderstanding Treaty. . . half-finished ergonomic disasters that ask, 'Is this building falling up or down?'"

He paints a lyrical portrait of Sarawak and a historical one of Kuching and its line of White Rajahs. In Kuta, on Bali, he swings back in time to a funny tale of his backpacking days in the late 1970s. Of Laos he writes: "Laos is a calligraphy of rivers. The Mekong and its monsoonal permutations doodle across a ground of forest chaos and paddy geometry."

The highlight of this book – travel writing of the highest order, right up there with old masters – is a long, stirring account of a camel trip he and a group of 10 hardy idiots take across Rajasthan's Great Thar Desert. After an arduous trek of 10 days, they reach their destination of Jaisalmer.

"In the midday heat miasma, the golden stones of its 12th century castle wobble like a fairytale trapped in aspic," he concludes. "No doubt it's full of mustache-tusked 20th century rug hustlers – but who cares? For us, Jaisalmer's spired, desert Camelot beckons like a mirage. It whispers across the wastes, 'Water. Hot water.'"

There are more epic trips: by truck on the Karokoram Highway, by bicycle in Xinjiang. You'll be glad you went along.

Continued from page 9

least by some accounts.

The investigation into that case joins the long list of murder investigations that seem to have been consigned to the "cold case files" in 2006.

The onset of the high season saw the cost of renting a plastic beach chair and umbrella at most island beaches double, from 50 baht to 100 baht. The government has also been jacking up prices, doubling entrance fees at national parks.

For Thais, this entails an increase from 20 baht to 40 baht, but for foreigners the jump is from 200 baht to 400 baht.

While the TAT still hopes to attract 20 million foreign tourists to Thailand by 2008, doubling the 2003 figure, foreigners already living here found 2006 to be yet another year of baffling changes to immigration policy, work permit application procedures and the overall business investment climate.

Resident expats who had been making monthly runs learned that as of October 1 Immigration would begin limiting to 90 days over any 180-day period the length of time foreigners could spend in the country on free "visas-on-arrival".

After fears that families would be broken up and the Earth

2006: bouncing back again

would stop spinning as a result of the new policy, it was later clarified that once one's 180 days were up, all that was needed was to make a trip to a Thai consulate or embassy abroad to apply for a regular tourist visa, for which a fee is charged.

At about the same time, however, most Thai embassies and consulates in the region stopped issuing multiple-entry non-immigrant visas to most applicants.

This made life yet a bit more difficult for foreign residents who want to live here long-term, but can't afford to become members of the Thailand Elite Card, which offers a five-year, multiple-entry visa and other privileges for bargain price of one million baht.

Also introduced in 2006 at some consulates were new requirements that non-immigrant visa applicants submit WP-3 forms from the Labor Department and letters from the Royal Thai Police confirming they are free of any Thai criminal charges.

Foreigners seeking a lucrative career in the teaching industry also faced increased obstacles in 2006 with the announcement by the Education Ministry that all foreign teachers would be required to hold a minimum bachelor's degree and undergo strict background checks before they are allowed to enter the classroom.

2006 saw a dramatic decrease in the amount of forest

cover in Phuket, much of it replaced with concrete. Work on two new "icons" is still underway.

The first is the 45-meter-high Mingkongkol Buddha image atop the Nakkerd Hills in Karon, funded by charitable donations under the "Enhance your merit value in your mind" slogan.

Work on the second project, the *OrBorJor's* controversial 46.7 million baht "Gateway", at the island's northern tip, is scheduled to open sometime in the first half of 2007.

Other fanciful projects, such as a massive sports complex and a monorail from Phuket City to the airport, remain in the theoretical realm, as does the Phuket Bay Development

project and the decades-old plan to build a large international convention center somewhere on the island.

Going into 2007, the island continues to grapple with keeping infrastructure apace with development and the rising population, of both humans and cars.

A desalination plant is almost finished in Karon to turn seawater into potable water, but its operation will likely be delayed for lack of a permit to release the briny wastewater it produces back into the sea.

Along with ever-rising demand for water and slow progress on building two new reservoirs in the province, this increases the likelihood of widespread water shortages in 2007.

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Maintaining the momentum

With tourism by far Phuket's most important industry, people here are understandably happy – and relieved – that this high season has gone off without a hitch, at least so far.

Among the smiling faces must be Patong Beach Hoteliers' Club President Krisada Tansakul, who was recently quoted on the state-run Thai News Agency website as saying that rooms in Patong and Kata-Karon were fully booked through mid-January, with more than 1 billion baht in tourism expected to flow into the province during the New Year's celebration period alone.

With the island's 35,000 hotel rooms now mostly filled, however, now is also a good time to keep in mind the stresses that can result from having to support such a large number of visitors.

For decades, "sustainability" was the buzzword in the global tourism industry. While various definitions exist, most people would agree that "sustainable tourism" entails conserving a destination's economic, environmental and socio-cultural balances.

Given that general definition, a quick look at Phuket's demographics indicates that the era of sustainable tourism has long since passed in Phuket, quite possibly even before the term "sustainability" became common currency.

Phuket's registered population is somewhere around 250,000, while the number of tourists that arrived in 2006 is expected to top out around 5 million – that's about 20 tourists for every person with a legitimate claim to be a true son or daughter of the land. In socio-cultural terms, this is hardly sustainable.

Every day the island produces some 450 tonnes of garbage, far exceeding the sole incinerator's capacity of 250 tonnes a day. This, coupled with an ever-increasing demand on Phuket's dwindling water supplies, will likely prove to be among the greatest challenges to face local and provincial governmental bodies in 2007.

Remarkably, the government seems oblivious to the challenges facing Phuket and the rest of Thailand. In an official release earlier this year, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) trumpeted a report by an international consulting firm that named Thailand "Best Country Brand" for tourism in terms of value for money.

A later report posted on the TAT website after the coup announced that Thai tourism would adopt a philosophy of "self-sufficiency economy" tourism, favoring "quality over quantity". However there was no mention of revising down TAT's tourist arrival targets, which plan to see 20 million foreign visitors annually by 2008 – double the number that visited the country in 2003.

If Phuket is to do its part, that will mean hosting about 7 million visitors annually. If we are to do that successfully, we need to start getting our house in order – and fast.

– The Editor

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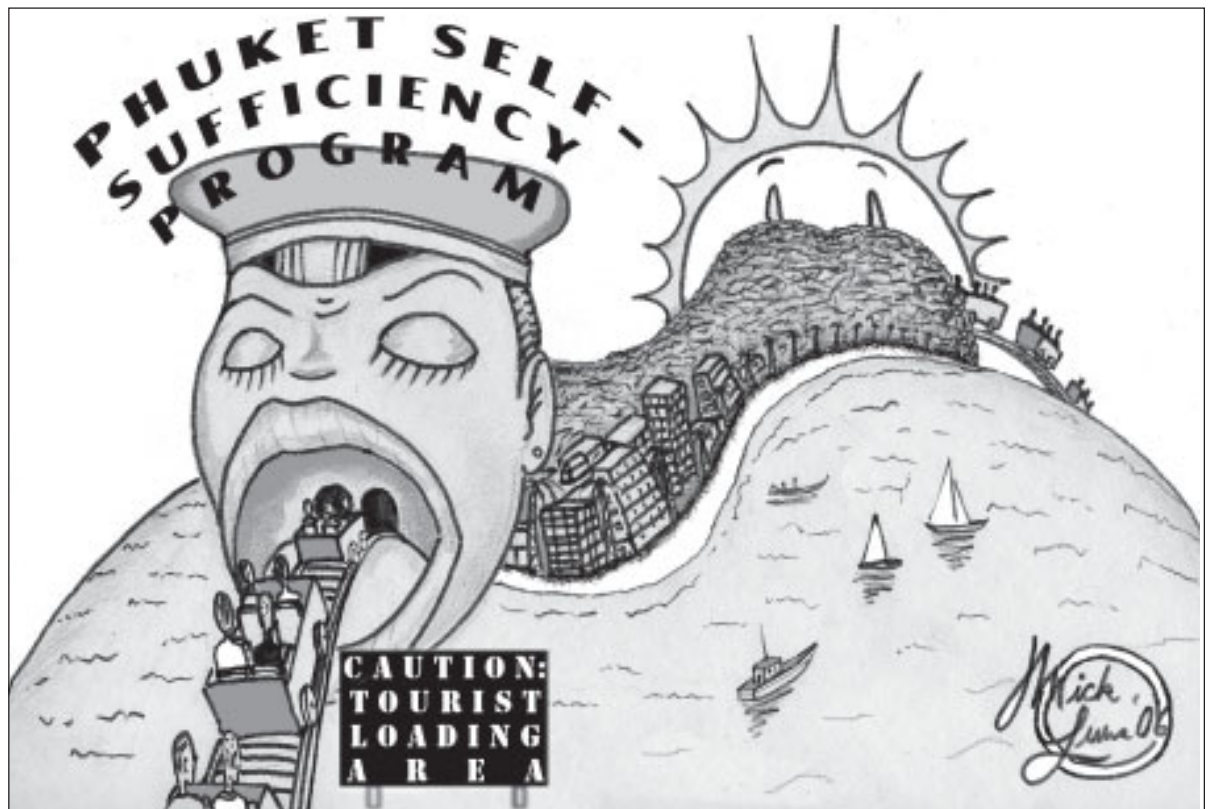
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Letters

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.

Follow that madman

Why on earth was the deranged Dane, Lars Persson, let out on bail after causing so much havoc (and potential murder) on the already dangerous Phuket roads?

Surely this was the perfect opportunity to eject someone who is obviously not the "quality tourist" that the Thai authorities persistently declare they want to have here.

Could the *Phuket Gazette* please follow this case and let us know what happens to this madman?

Confused in Chalong

Trashing Trashing Phuket

I opened the latest edition of the *Gazette* and on page four was again treated to a fabulous shot of garbage.

Questions began to surface such as: What is the purpose? Does the *Gazette* think its readers enjoy shots of garbage dumps? Is the *Gazette* promoting these spots to direct all new home builders where to dump? Are they trying to embarrass those of us who live here, by showing our friends/families abroad that we live in filth? Where/what is the benefit here?

I would understand the usefulness if included in the article was "we reported this to Khun So-and-so of the *OrBorJor* [Provincial Administration Organization], and he/she said it would be cleaned up by such-and-such date" and then have a follow-up reminder to the *OrBorJor*. Then the article would be productive.

But overall why don't we switch to "Beautiful Phuket" and have a picture of a sunset at Laem Promthep, or a lovely day

on the beach at Kata, or a shot of one of the many gorgeous possibilities abound here.

I would be willing to help with a "Beautiful Phuket" weekly photo contest by providing the winner chosen with a complimentary bottle of sparkling.

Paul Clark
Phuket

Franky, is that Noah on Nang Thong?

In spite of the attractions of Khao Lak being a complete anathema to me, I do find Franky Gun's monthly submission makes for very entertaining reading.

Roll on Franky to your 600th edition.

By the way is it true that Noah's landing stage for his ark was just off Nang Thong beach?

David Kirk
By email

Playground pandemonium

During my recent holiday to Phuket with my wife and young daughter, I spent time at Patong Beach. The playground there is attractive, well-kept and a god-send for families such as ours, who found the lack of anywhere else for children to play safely – a real burden during our stay.

Unfortunately, an incident occurred while my daughter was running around the playground that could well have cost her life, and likely will take the life of some other poor child if police action is not taken to rectify the situation immediately.

I am referring to the young hooligan who drives a motorcycle with a sidecar contraption to deliver beverages to beachside vendors in the area.

This demented young jack-ass sped his bike, laden with glass bottles, straight through the playground with no concern whatsoever for the safety of the children playing there.

It was only by chance that none of the many children playing there that Sunday afternoon were not run over.

Astonishingly enough, this whole thing transpired right near a police box, where officers stood by idly, doing nothing. Meanwhile, another policeman in uniform sat happily nearby with a group on the grass drinking whiskey, right next to a municipal sign that read: keep off the grass.

It is sad enough that it is too dangerous for children to swim in the water at Patong, given the presence of so many jet-skis there, but it is really too much when they can't even be safe in a children's playground. Why does Patong even have police if they can't follow the law, let alone enforce it?

Reginald Parker
London, England

Simple solution

There is a simple, fast and cheap solution to the traffic jam in Patong: complete the road between the exit of town to Karon (Sirirat Rd) and Phra Barami Rd (exit to Kathu).

That road, which passes between Jungceylon and the Baanzan market, is already used by many motorcycles and some cars, but is in terrible condition. If it were improved and widened to four lanes, the traffic could flow much more easily. Then the problem of the road above the hill to Kathu would still remain, but that's another issue...

MdL
Patong

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.

Stopping encroachment is a public responsibility

Our biggest problem is that our office does not have enough money, which makes it difficult for us to do our job. Because of this, forest land in Phuket is decreasing every year, and it's fair to say that Phuket has failed to protect its forested areas properly.

There are 12 officers in my team. We are in charge of taking care of all the forested area in Phuket. That's an impossible task with so few workers, but we continue to try. Our duties are to protect the forest and suppress illegal developments.

We also try to remind every villager to value their forests. We explain to them that forests are not for private use, but are there for everyone to use, so we must stop people from using it for themselves.

Now we are joining forces with villagers and using their numbers to help us take care of the forests. If anyone is building illegally, the villagers should tell us quickly because they should understand it is their duty to protect forest land, too. Our team can suppress deforestation, but we cannot protect the forest all the time.

To define our terms: to protect means that we keep forested areas safe before development happens; to suppress means that we arrest anyone who uses the land illegally after development has begun. To do this and to find problem areas, we have volunteers who live around the protected forest and who know what buildings are legal and illegal.

FIRST PERSON

Land encroachment by developers onto Phuket's protected forest land has been an on-going problem for decades, despite the work of forest officers from Phuket Provincial Office Of Natural Resources and Environment.

Here **Vichat Punkong**, Head of the Phuket's Interdepartmental Forest Conservation and Protection Unit, explains that the problem is bigger than his office can handle, and that he wants people to realize that the disappearing forests on Phuket are everyone's problem.



They are good lookouts, but we do not have enough of them because they are afraid it is dangerous. That doesn't mean that it's the villagers fault every time someone builds on public land, however, because it's very difficult for them to check to see if the builders have the right permits.

Another problem that we have is that land in Phuket is very expensive, making it attractive for rich investors. Sometimes when I check to see whether they have the correct documents, I can't tell whether the documents are genuine or not, and it takes a long time for land officials to check.

Often, when we go to suppress development, we don't

meet the owner of the land and we end up arresting only the lower workers. Arresting only the lower-level workers makes it a perpetual problem, and very difficult for us to stop a project completely, so we have changed tactics and now focus more on protecting the land from encroachment.

We also have problems with the alien laborers who live in the forested areas. They are poor so they are willing to work for any employers. What little money they make is very important to them, and they don't care about the forests. Almost all of the people who employ them are Thai. It's very hard for the lower officers like me to warn them

because the higher levels of government need to be serious about the problem first. Otherwise, in the near future, we won't have any forests at all.

Many government officers in Phuket are very busy because Phuket is such a popular tourism destination. They are more concerned about improving infrastructure such as the roads, but don't care much about the hill areas, and this is to be expected.

If we protect our forests first, this will in turn attract tourism from around the world because the tourists want to see our natural beauty, they don't want to see a new road.

Some top-level officials don't understand why lower of-

ficers like us have problems. They want us to use the laws to stop development projects, which we do, but once we look away for a minute they are building it again. We try to make them understand that it is our Thai duty to protect the forest and remember that we should stop illegal development for the public good, not for the private sector.

The former government allowed some building in forested areas and now everyone else wants to build there, too. Sometimes we have to explain to new developers that we don't know how these people were allowed to build there when they aren't. Where did their documents come from? We don't really know.

Is it safe to be a Good Samaritan in Phuket?

I am a first aid instructor and former fire-rescue worker now living in Phuket. I often see people injured in road accidents when driving around Phuket, but I am hesitant to stop and give help for fear of possible consequences.

I have heard that as a foreigner who is not in any way involved in the accident but who stops to give medical aid, I could actually be liable to pay the medical bills of the victim I aid. Or that the police may try to involve me in the actual accident.

In Western countries, lay persons giving aid are legally covered by the "Good Samaritan Law", which prevents any legal or financial responsibility resulting from the aid you give provided it is within the scope of your qualifications.

Does Thailand has such a law? Where would I stand legally in giving help?

It pains me to not help a person in need but if it will result in legal problems for me I fear I cannot help.

Pol Maj Teerawat Liamsurwan, Inspector, Chief of Phuket City Traffic Police, replies:

In Thailand there is no law against helping victims of road accidents. On the contrary, we really appreciate this kind of aid.

However, police or medical staff will ask you questions, such as whether you saw the crash.

You won't be arrested or given any legal problems if you are a good person and not a wrongdoer.

Issues & ANSWERS

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

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

Can my girlfriend sell street meat?

Does my Thai girlfriend need a license to sell hot food from a street cart in Patong?

David Washbourn
Patong

Sompong Jeamtuo, an officer at Patong Municipality, replies:

I'm sorry but Patong Municipality will not issue any new licenses for street cart vendors.

This has been government policy since the tsunami.

We have made a few exceptions but only for a few villagers to sell food in front of Baan Kalim School.

If your girlfriend would like to sell hot food, I recommend that she sells it from a privately-owned plot and not in a public area such as on the street or on the beach.

Sports clubs for kids

I am a Phuket resident and would like to know where I could find information on various athletic programs, teams or lessons available for 13-year-old girls on Phuket?

Is there any one agency that could steer me to soccer, swimming and tennis lessons or teams that my child could join?

Brad Kenny
Phuket

Prakit Kabkeaw, of Phuket Municipal Youth Center, replies:

Any child can join the Phuket Municipal Youth Center at Tel: 076-250163 or come visit us in Saphan Hin, opposite the Saphan Hin swimming pool.

There is a bulletin board here, or they can speak to one of our staff about joining a team.

Winging it with the Master

My old Chinese guru, Master Chang Shou, recently came down from his hermitage deep in the Tien Shan mountains in China. He and his fellow hermits are out of touch with developments in the modern world, so he was full of questions.

Master: Our hermitage recently got a radio, my son. We keep hearing names of things and people that we never even knew existed. So I've got a long list of names I need to ask you about.

Me: OK. I'm an expert on current events, so you've come to the right guy.

Master: Good. Who or what is Paris Hilton?

Me: Ah, that's easy. Paris Hilton is the name of a hotel. We also have a London Hilton and a New York Hilton. I think there's even a Bangkok Hilton.

Master: Really? But we keep hearing about how beautiful the Paris Hilton is. I think it also appears in movies.

Me: Well, the Paris Hilton is probably a beautiful hotel that has appeared in the many movies. Next question.

Master: OK. Wayne Rooney.

Me: I believe that is the name of a Canadian hockey star. He may be related to Mickey Rooney, a famous child movie star of the 1920s.

Master: You certainly are a treasure trove of knowledge, my son. Now, what is a Brangelina?

Me: Err... that sounds like the name of a breakfast cereal. Possibly something that Kellogg's would manufacture. Maybe it contains BRAN flakes, GELatin, and semoLINA.

Master: You are even smarter than I thought, my son. iPod. Who or what is an iPod?

Me: It sounds like a kind of egg that aliens emerge from, Master. But it may be the same as an IPO.

Master: And what is an IPO?

Me: I'm not sure. Probably International Post Office.

Master: Excellent, my son. The boys in the hermitage will certainly be excited to hear all this valuable information. Now, what is a boutique airline?

Me: Ah, I know where you got that one, Master. Bangkok Airways advertises itself as a boutique airline, and some hotels call themselves boutique hotels. Hmm. Well, a boutique is an artsy-craftsy upmarket shop that sells fashions and pricey

knickknacks. I suppose a boutique airline has a shop like that on board. A boutique hotel would have a whole arcade full of them.

Master: Splendid, my son. How wonderful to have such a knowledgeable disciple.

Me: (modestly) It's easy, Master. I just read the fluff pages of the newspapers. What appears to be shallow gossip about celebrities is actually vital knowledge without which one cannot possibly function in our modern world.

Master: Wonderful. Now, who is this new Iranian president? The one who looks like a plumber.

Me: Nobody knows how to pronounce his name, Master. Mahmoud

Somethingajad.

Master: I liked the old one better. Khatami. He had a kind face. This new one does not have a kind face.

Me: Well, he sure could use a shave. But how do you know what he looks like from the radio?

Master: We read old newspapers that visitors leave behind. Now, we know that the Palestinians are always fighting

with the Israelis. But now it seems they're also fighting among themselves. Can't they get along with anybody?

Me: You'd have to ask a psychologist about that, Master. Every time I see them on TV they're always arguing – either with the anchorperson or with each other.

Master: Very sad. We could send some of our hermits down to teach them compassion and loving kindness. Now, what is hip-hop?

Me: That's the sound a frog makes when it jumps. Hip-hop! Hip-hop! Sometimes, if the frog is unusually nimble, you get a sound like hippety-hop! Hippety-hop!

Master: But the context usually suggests a kind of music.

Me: Well, if a frog has a rhythmic jumping pattern, it might sound like music, I suppose.

Master: I guess so. Well, thank you for all this information. We hermits are dedicated to cultivating our inner being, but it doesn't do any harm to have some knowledge of the outer world as well.

Me: Just so long as it doesn't mess up your inner being.

S. Tsow can be flamed at stsow@yahoo.com, except when he's trying to clean up his inner being.



Ever since the now-deposed government led by Fearless Leader inexplicably relaxed its campaign to introduce early closing times and covered flesh to the chrome pole palaces of Pattaya, the number of such establishments has expanded rapidly and now there are about 70 across the length and breadth of Fun Town.

The one constant and consistent complaint made by owners of go-go bars is they can never get enough girls to cavort about the place staring at their reflections in the multitude of mirrors that give these dens of shuffle their distinctive character.

The struggle to get and keep enough female flesh to entice more punters through the door is reaching the stage where very soon the owners with pockets

TALK TO MY AGENT

deeper than their rivals will start offering crazy inducements to entice the best young lasses to change locker rooms.

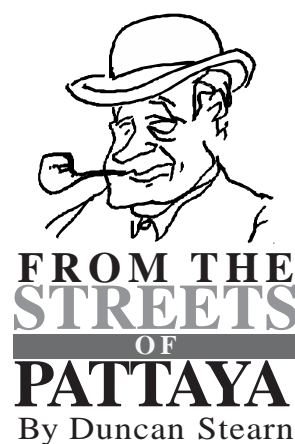
I can see the time is coming when girls will be signing contracts, and it won't be long before the best of them will be raking in the baht with endorsements. Some will become superstars, à la Serena Williams (without the tennis racket) or Naomi Campbell (with the alleged "attitude").

Boot manufacturers will see this as an opportunity to cash in. All it will take is for a brand name – Hike, let's say – to offer Miss Lek (Number 69 at the No Holes Barred A-Go-Go) a three-year contract to endorse their boots.

Imagine the advertising:

"Hi, I'm Lek, winner of my last three a-go-go dancing contests. I only ever wear Hike when I'm on stage. Sometimes, when I'm entertaining foreign friends, they ask even me to leave my Hikes on."

A bikini manufacturer – maybe the Aussie icon Speedo – could be induced into splashing some cash for advertising, and a unique chance to snare a large slice of market share in the "just-for-dancing-never-to-be-used-for-



swimming" garment range.

"When I'm wearing the ultra-tight fitting Speedo Climax range of on-stage bikini wear, I never wake up alone," could be the tag line of a Speedo TV commercial, featuring Miss Yai, the Speedo gear enhancing her already prominent silicon chest

enhancements.

"The Speedo Climax, longer lasting than most of my customers, and far more attractive," could be the sultry refrain of Miss

Porn, the *chanteuse extraordinaire* of the Balding Beaver A-Go-Go.

This will give the owners of chrome pole palaces a new business venture to consider: that of the Entertainment Agent. It could prove more lucrative than running a den and may even rival the real estate caper for commission returns.

In the initial stages transfer fees will be small change. One operator will offer to buy up a contract for three buffaloes, a used moped and a bowl of *som-tam*.

However, as in football, basketball, baseball or any game ending in or involving balls, the transfer fees and contracts will start to get out of hand. Soon, nothing less than a BMW, a 10-baht gold chain, a top-of-the-range Suzuki Smash motorbike and a dozen buffaloes will become the norm.

In order to pay for this extravagance, bar fines will jump to 10,000 baht and a draft beer will retail at 500 baht during happy hour and 1,000 baht in normal trading hours.

Just think, these prices will turn Pattaya into a shining example of quality tourism as only the incredibly financially well-heeled and canny embezzlers will be able to afford to come here.

Pattaya will finally achieve the respectability so desperately desired by the elected representatives warming swivel chairs in the vast expanse of City Hall.

Anyone interested in engaging the services of Pattaya's first, and so far only, reputable Entertainment Agent need only inquire at 181/69 Soi Sukmedry; knock three times and wait 30 seconds.

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In The Stars

by Isla Star

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): You can expect energy levels to be at an all-time high this year. Family members would like to see single goats settle down and will make a point of introducing you to potential mates. It seems likely that you will commit by the end of 2007. There will be strong connections between communication and finance, so maintain healthy contact with influential friends. Your interest in deeper spiritual matters will be sparked by meeting new people. The color jungle green encourages harmony in love and sky blue promotes earning power.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): Creativity is the key to making more money for you this year. Where affairs of the heart are concerned, quality should be your focus. If you are still intent on playing the field, you will gradually tire of these games and start searching for something more meaningful. Guard against emotional imbalance as this could cause ill-health. If you are in a relationship, you will have more control over domestic situations; putting your foot down gently, but firmly, last year has made others realize that you're not so easily taken for a trek through the jungle. The color gold promotes luck in love and aquamarine helps cash to flow toward you.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): You are predicted to dig deeper in the sand in 2007, determined to seek spiritual satisfaction. Having moved your career goals last year, a nomadic existence becomes a thing of the past as you are now on the verge of finding the oasis you've been dreaming of. Personal relationships are tested to their limits, but you can look forward to a sense of relief when the outcome is known. If you have your own business, you are set to reach new heights – you will become more content with prestige and not so focused on material gains. Earth tones can balance emotions and scarlet encourages wealth.

ARIES (March 21-April 20): Last year should have been good, but 2007 promises to be even better. Your main path this year will lead to fulfilling group activities and expanding intellectual horizons. Foreign travel is strongly indicated and this will probably revolve around education; spiritual retreats and seminars are likely destinations. There is a slight danger that you will ignore family responsibilities while all this is going on, but you will have to be blind and deaf not to be aware of warning signals. If you are single, you will not be making serious romance a priority. Turquoise is your color to encourage healthy relationships and moss green to keep money on your side.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): Preparing for success later in 2007 will occupy you during the first

WHAT THE HEAVENS HOLD IN STORE FOR THE COMING YEAR

few months of this year. The past year has been a powerful social time and that trend is forecast to continue. Your ambitions grow more realistic. Prosperity is due to come from outside, not so much from your own efforts, so lie back in your hammock and enjoy. Golden romantic opportunities will occur for those who are single, but you probably won't feel like giving up your freedom too easily. Learning to cope with change is the most important lesson. The color violet helps you to open your heart and marigold orange boosts finances.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): You can look forward to one of the happiest social years you've experienced for some time. Business partnerships flourish and you discover that it is possible to find the right balance between work and play. It will be more of a challenge to satisfy the needs of family, but keeping the lines of communication clear is easier than it was in 2006. You should be satisfied with the financial rewards of achievements last year and ready to take a few risks. Altruistic feelings surface, and giving back to the community takes on new importance. Royal blue supports love and silver gray helps your money tree to flourish.

CANCER (June 22-July 23): Fulfillment comes from work in

2007. You start the year off realizing that your lack of productivity last year was simply due to too much partying. A dream job is forecast to land in your lap before not too long. Romantic trends remain low-key, but your love life spices up toward the end of the year. You will certainly put more emphasis on hooking up with someone who has similar intellectual interests. If you are committed, more freedom in domestic situations is available. You could still be recovering from financial shocks in 2006, but money matters are set to gradually improve. Indigo blue encourages a smoother path romantically and gold promotes earning power.

LEO (July 24-August 22): Many of you needed to take a more serious grip on life in 2006. This humbling process will stand you in good stead to reap rewards during the months ahead. There will also be more space to satisfy the fun-loving side of your character. Prosperity picks up, particularly later in the year, and you will be motivated to take better care of your mental and physical health. Changes are due in the domestic sphere; the size of your family will increase and there will be more satisfaction gained from entertainment at home. Financial assets will increase due to your liaisons with more trustworthy people. The color pearl pink helps

love to flow and lemon yellow sparks better finances.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): Stability is a major goal for you this year. If you are seriously determined to put down roots you will be rewarded by the contentment that has been elusive during 2006. Emotional support comes easily from friends when you need it. If you have a partner you will need to compromise in order for your relationship to settle down. The later part of 2007 will see more action regarding finances; money should flow your way from partnerships formed earlier in the year. Finally, you will be able to trust your intuition. Spirituality becomes more important than ever before, and many of you could find yourselves embarking on a meaningful inner journey. Aqua blue brings more joy in love and jade green promotes wealth.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): More financial security allows you to concentrate on other areas of life. Further education becomes an attractive proposition as you realize it's time to think outside the box. Your original ideas respond well to more nurturing and those with families will find new ways of enjoying time with children. Partners appreciate your efforts on the domestic front, so this is a positive year in

that respect. You who are single are likely to meet the soul mate of your dreams away from home. You develop a more scientific approach to spiritual matters as the year progresses. The color scarlet livens up your love life and lavender blue enhances your earning ability.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): This is a career- and finances-oriented year for you. You will also be concentrating on home improvements, and relocation is a strong possibility. Friendships take on more importance than affairs of the heart, but a romantic meeting comes as a bolt from the blue when you're least expecting it. Expect to make great progress toward personal goals and be in the right place at the right time to make the most of lucky breaks. This is a year to do your own thing and discover that you're much more competent than you thought. It is also a time of spiritual healing. The color peach enhances love and powder blue eases money problems.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): You will find it necessary to polish up your managerial skills in 2007. Whether this applies to your career or personal finances, there should be ample opportunity to learn from others who have been more successful and put these lessons into practice. Some drama in your personal life is forecast to continue, but this will gradually fade away and peace will prevail. Refrain from making any long-term plans until the dust has settled. If you are single, you will be attracted to independent thinkers. You prefer to have a comfortable lifestyle, but should start to prioritize how you spend your money. The color rose pink sweetens your approach to love and turquoise encourages a more practical approach to finances.

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Phuket software companies receive TQS certification

PHUKET: Four software companies in Phuket – Blue Design Co Ltd, Open Source Technology Co Ltd, International Medical Software Co Ltd and Phuket Programmers Co Ltd – have received Thai Quality Software (TQS) Level 1 certification.

The TQS ratification is the result of a project by the Phuket branch of the Software Industry Promotion Agency (Sipa) and the Association of Thai Software Industry (ATSI), which administers and regulates TQS certification.

Consultants and assessors were brought in to help prepare the local companies for TQS evaluation, with Sipa Phuket paying for half of the consultants and assessors' fees.

Each of the local companies met with the consultants three times over a five month period. During the meetings the consultants would assess the company and identify points to improve. At the following meeting the company must have had those improvements made.

TQS complies with the software engineering international standard ISO/IEC 12207. It focuses on ensuring appropriate

policies and procedures are in place, and a mechanism to check traceability of documents, to ensure that specific quality standards are adhered to.

TQS was developed with the objectives of raising the quality and capability Of software developed in the public sector, creating more opportunities in government software development projects and increasing Thai software manufacturers' capability to compete in foreign markets.

The four Phuket software houses were certified as TQS Level 1 compliant, meaning that basic procedures were in place. There are five levels of TQS compliance, with Level 5 the most comprehensive in continuous improvement.

Sipa Phuket branch manager Dr Ratana Wetprasit said, "This project is successful in helping to develop the software industry in Phuket to be standards compliant and to compete in the international software market. I'm very pleased that all four software companies passed the TQS assessment. This is an important step for the companies and it helps raise the standard of soft-

ware produced in Thailand."

ATSI President Anukul Tamprasert said that TQS aims to make software companies more aware of the quality standards in the software industry. "Software companies should emphasize quality and process, not just circulation," K. Anukul said.

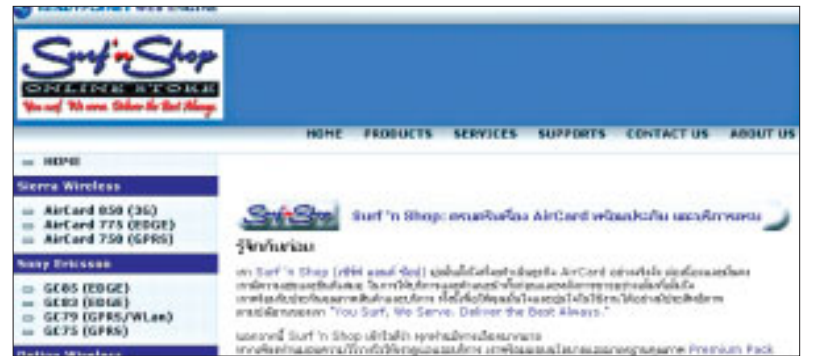
Patima Khunpromkessara, Assistant Managing Director of Blue Design Co Ltd, said that before learning the TQS procedures her company went back and forth with a customer several times and did not keep detailed records of the meetings or work procedure.

Now, K. Patima said, the company keep better records of meetings with customers so that they can keep track of customers' requirements and to show customers the work procedure to ensure quality.

"The TQS procedures focus on developing software company quality. Because we export work abroad we have to develop quality standards that can compete with foreign companies. So one benefit that we will get from TQS certification that is we can use TQS to improve our products," she said.

Rungsuri Thirawittayanon, developer at Phuket Medical Software Co Ltd, said, "Our company already used these processes but we wanted to be verified by TQS to assure our company standard.

"The benefits that we will get from TQS are the TQS standard stamp, which we can show to potential clients. This will make it easier to get new customers, and more income. Another benefit is that we now have a more open work process."



Finally, a place to buy a PCMCIA adapter so you can use CAT's EV-DO service on your desktop PC – Surf 'n' Shop in Bangkok.

Playing the right cards – EV-DO for desktops

KHUN WOODY'S COMPUTER Q&A

Q Woody, thanks for all your good work with the Gazette. I have been impressed by what I have been hearing about the CAT's EV-DO wireless Internet service and would like to install it at my home.

I have a desktop computer and the aircard required is available only as a PCMCIA card. Where can I buy a PCMCIA card adapter for my home PC?

SJ
Phuket

A The saga of connecting a 3G card to a desktop continues. You can find nothing in Phuket. Even in Bangkok or Singapore it is not easy.

A Thai computer engineer I know went to Bangkok and could find nothing there, then a foreign computer engineer was going to Singapore. He assured me that he could buy one there.

He returned saying that "they had these things at one time, but the technology was so old that nobody stocked them any more."

Then I found a CAT website, it was all in Thai, but I could understand enough to see that they were advertising a PCMCIA card reader that fitted into a slot at the rear of a desktop.

I took a copy of this to the CAT shop in Patong and asked for one.

After calls to Bangkok it transpired that they had had 1,000 of them but had sold them all and were awaiting more stock.

Finally I found on the Internet a supplier in Bangkok. I went there and I am now the proud owner of a PCMCIA adapter.

I bought the adapter at Surf 'n' Shop at 36/25-26 Rama III Rd (www.surfnshop.biz), Tel: 081-8255885.

It is not really a shop, but more of an office and storeroom. The Manager, Vicrom Trongkamoltham, is very helpful and speaks English well. I bought two cards at 1,100 baht each.

I also had to move my computer tower from under the desk to on top. Under the desk I was getting less than 200 kbps, on top it is more than double that.

I must say that the staff at CAT have always been very helpful so do contact them for any information.

Woody Leonhard
Woody@KhunWoody.com

ARE YOU HOT?

Here are just some of the absolutely free Wi-Fi access hotspots on the island.

• Dusit Laguna Resort. Free Wi-Fi in all public areas. TOT leased-line broadband. 24/7.

• Cape Panwa Hotel. Free Wi-Fi in all public areas. ADSL speed. 24/7

• Watermark Bar Restaurant, at Boat Lagoon. Leased-line broadband. 10am-10pm daily.

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ON THE MOVE

Wallop "Joe" Viraphol, 42, from Bangkok, is the new Resort Manager of Thavorn Beach Village & Spa. He has a business degree from St James College in Southampton, England, and 17 years' hotel experience, including working at the Shangri-La Hotel and the Radisson Hotel in Bangkok. Before moving to Phuket he was Executive Assistant Manager at Amari Emerald Cove Resort & Spa in Trat.



Sirina "Joy" Veerakit, 25, from Phuket, has been appointed Director of Baan Veerakit Boutique Resort on Nanai Rd, Patong. K. Joy has a degree in tourism and hotel studies from the faculty of Humanities at Bangkok University, and her work experience includes working as Purchasing Agent of Panthep Properties and as Assistant Manager of Wine Connection in Chalong.



Kromphon Sukkaew, 26, from Phuket, has been appointed Assistant Graphic Design Manager at Club Andaman Beach Resort. He has an arts degree from Silpakorn University. K. Kromphon worked as Product Junior Designer of Apprentice at Srithai Superware and as Product Designer for Sanyo in Bangkok. Before moving back to Phuket he was a Graphic Designer at the Diamond Cliff Resort & Spa.



GHB opens second branch in Phuket

PHUKET CITY: The Government Housing Bank (GHB) opened its second branch in Phuket at Central Festival Phuket on December 21.

Phuket Branch Manager Withaya Saenphakdee said that having only one branch in Phuket, on Bangkok Rd in in Phuket City, was no longer sufficient to serve the needs of GHB customers.

K. Withaya said that the new branch is open daily from 11 am to 7:30 pm, and offers a complete range of services, including home and equipment loans, financial services such as deposit and withdraw facilities and bill-payment processing.

In addition, an ATM has been installed at the branch.

The new branch can be contacted by calling Tel: 076-221533 or 076-221737. The Bangkok Rd branch can be contacted at Tel: 076-218191-3.

Demand for Jetstar Oz-Phuket flights exceeds predictions

By Janyaporn Morel

PHUKET: Demand for Jetstar's direct Sydney-Phuket flights is exceeding initial predictions and the company is already looking to boost its number of passengers on the return flights in the near future, Jetstar Group General Manager of Commercial Operations Bruce Buchanan has told the *Gazette*.

"Our inaugural services into Phuket from Sydney had 250 passengers...The existing and forward bookings on Phuket from Australia are meeting, and in fact beating our expectations," he said.

The initial Sydney-Phuket flight on November 24 was also the airline's inaugural international flight.

Mr Buchanan told the *Gazette* that the company is excited by the response, and this is reflected by the strong introductory schedule. "Jetstar is most satis-

fied with the existing market response. We are also keen to attract a greater number of international travelers out of Phuket to fly direct to Sydney and we are enhancing our promotions for our three-times-weekly direct services to Australia over the coming weeks and months.

"Any future [expansion] for the route is subject to market performance," he said.

At the time of going to press, the Sydney-Phuket service was to be joined by other new services from Sydney to Ho Chi Minh City and Bali, and subject to regulatory approval to Honolulu from December 27 and direct to Osaka from March 25, 2007.

The Sydney-Phuket flights depart Sydney each Monday, Wednesday and Friday, with return flights the same day. The route is served by Airbus A330-200 aircraft with a seating configuration to carry 303 passengers



'The existing and forward bookings on Phuket from Australia are meeting, and in fact beating our expectations' - Bruce Buchanan, Jetstar Group General Manager of Commercial Operations.

in two classes: 38 Star Class seats and 265 economy class.

Fares start from 8,400 baht for a one-way trip in either direction. With all the relevant fees and

taxes, it works out at just under 25,000 baht for a return Phuket to Sydney trip if the cheapest seats are available.

Base ticket prices do not include food and drink, blanket and pillow or in-flight entertainment, which are available for an extra 700, 200 and 300 baht, respectively, on each flight.

Mr Buchanan explained that Thai Airways is viewed as Jetstar's main competitor on direct services between Thailand and Australia, and the company will offer periodical promotional fares to entice travelers to use their service.

Jetstar currently has no intention to follow its Singapore-based rival Tiger Airways in serving other local destinations, such as Krabi, and will instead concentrate on the existing level of services and growth in international services to their two existing destinations, Bangkok and Phuket, said Mr Buchanan.

Jetstar Airways' Australian operations are wholly owned by Qantas, but its Asian operations, based in Singapore, which serves the Phuket-Singapore leg, are 51% Singaporean owned.

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BoT receives crash course in handling foreign investment

Currency markets are on the move, creating both concern and opportunity. The central Bank of Thailand has been issuing almost daily statements regarding the ever-appreciating baht. Thai exporters are finding the strength of the currency is impeding their competitiveness in world markets and reducing, in Thai baht terms, the value of their exports.

Unfortunately, on December 19, the Bank of Thailand instituted capital controls to stop the rise of the currency. This sent an entirely wrong message to financial markets; governments that interfere with the value of their currency do so at their own peril. The currency fell 1.5% after the news – the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET) index fell 14.84%. It is worthwhile to remember that most of the funds invested in the Thai stock market are from domestic capital, including local pension funds.

A strong currency may present problems for exporters, but for importers it is a very different situation; Thai consumers also benefit from the lower cost of imported items, such as oil and gasoline.

Currency speculators are always moving vast sums around the world seeking profits, and the weakening US dollar has increased such speculation; regardless of the future movement of the dollar, there will always be movement through currency markets.

The list of participants is almost endless – of course it includes hedge funds, but also many major financial institutions, currency funds, proprietary traders for global banks, absolute return funds, even insurance companies and pension funds are involved.

The Bank of Thailand complains that the nation's foreign exchange reserves, around US\$ 64 billion, are too small to strongly counter the prevailing market trends. However, there is a simple solution – encourage more foreign investment. Thailand is a lucky country in that it can easily attract more long-term outside investment.

Ireland is a perfect example of what can be achieved by throwing out the welcome mat to foreign investment. It took only a few decades to transform the country from Poor Paddy to Celtic Tiger. Long-term fixed foreign investment also causes a significant increase in foreign

exchange reserves; which in Thailand would translate into millions of Thais seeing their standard of living rise significantly.

The US dollar is still a cause for concern, as the massive deficit the US is running is too large not to have consequences. With the US economy slowing; already many institutions are warning that short-term interest rates are likely to fall in the first half of 2007. Stephen Roach, chief economist for Morgan Stanley, has predicted that the US Federal Reserve will start to reduce rates from March 2007, while others think it could be as late as June. Falling interest rates make it less attractive to invest in the dollar, and foreign exchange markets have already anticipated future trends.

Alan Greenspan, former

Chairman of the US Federal Reserve, recently made a speech predicting that the dollar would weaken over the next four years. He also correctly said that to assess the value of a currency over the short term, the most reliable indicator is to toss a coin.

In any bear market, as in this case with the dollar, there are likely to be sharp rebounds, or counter-trends, referred to as "bear traps". The US dollar may well continue its decline, but it is worth bearing in mind that when the consensus expects a certain outcome, markets frequently do the opposite.

A slowing US economy is not necessarily bad news for stock markets. What is important is where the economy is ultimately heading in this cycle. There are two basic scenarios – the hard landing, namely recession; and the soft landing, where the economy slows, the central bank reduces interest rates, and economic growth rebounds. Needless to say, stock markets prefer the latter. And the fact that global growth is likely to remain at healthy rates in 2007 will certainly contribute to the buoyancy of the US economy as well.

There are investments that are tailor-made for this type of scenario. Orbis Investment Management of Bermuda has been very successful with an "absolute return fund", the Optimal Fund.

The concept of this fund is extremely simple; it invests primarily in the company's Global Equity Fund, but also continually

buys "put" options, which make profits in a falling market.

The overall effect is that the fund generally makes money in a rising market but actually prefers (in terms of returns) for a market to move downward. Orbis refers to this fund as the lowest risk fund in their range; unfortunately, they are closed to new investment, although existing clients are able to switch internally or inject new capital.

This category of fund is often known as "long/short funds", although there are so many varieties in this sector that comparison is difficult.

The Fidelity Group launched a similar product, a long/short fund with low management fees,

earlier this year, but limits its distribution to UK-based investors.

The basic attraction of this type of fund is that it enables investors to make hay whether the sun shines or it rains. It is definitely the route that many investment funds are going to use in coming years, as history shows the folly of putting one's faith in the rise of a particular asset without hedging one's bets. Pension funds around the globe are increasingly of this view and are allocating assets accordingly.

To use another analogy, the sun may be shining upon embarkation, but it is the unhappy captain who expects it to last for the duration of the voyage and is unprepared for storms.

MONEY TALKS



By Richard Watson

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

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By Scott Mallon

It is the domain of gladiators, the site of countless battles between some of the best Muay Thai fighters in the world.

Much like the Roman Colosseum, Bangkok's Lumpinee Stadium is filled with ghosts from the past – the prowling spirits of gloved warriors who fought for fame and fortune in the dimly lit arena in days gone by.

Only Rajdamnern Stadium, also in Bangkok, rivals the prestige of Lumpinee. Achieving the title of Muay Thai Champion of one of these stadiums is the apex of achievement for the sport in Thailand; simply fighting in Lumpinee is an honor in itself.

The blood of decades of fighters and the heat and roar of the four-thousand strong crowd combine to nourish the old stadium and propel its fighters; one can feel the thrum of a perpetual energy in the stands.

“O-way! O-way!” chants the crowd, as each punishing blow hits home. The Thais sing in unison, a brotherhood of blood lust, and it isn't long before foreigners join in as well.

Farangs normally fill the pricey ringside seats; prices for all the seats have nearly doubled over the past 10 years, due to shrewd marketing and increased international interest in the sport. Most Thai fans are content to sit in the outer region of the stadium — behind a chain link fence.

While gambling in Thailand is technically illegal, it isn't in Lumpinee Stadium. Any visitor stepping in to the circular arena will immediately notice the frenzied betting around the ring — for Thais, the gambling is one of the main attractions of going to the stadium.

Muay Thai fights take place at Lumpinee Stadium four times per week. Occasionally there are Western-style boxing matches as well, but the vast majority of the bouts allow not only punches, but



A perpetual meat grinder – and a national icon: Lumpinee Stadium.

Lumpinee ring hits 50 years

also kicks, knees and elbows. Those who enter the ring are generally most fearful of the elbow because one well-placed blow can end a fight and scar a fighter forever.

The stadium is a perpetual meat grinder, sucking in and churning out fighter and spectator alike, and it rarely sleeps. During the downtimes, food vendors, equipment merchants, ticket scalpers and a host of other colorful characters surround the dingy building, preparing for the night's vigorous activities, or recuperating from the previous evening.

Lumpinee Stadium opened for action on December 8, 1956. Operated by Thailand's Army Welfare Department of the Royal Thai Army, all proceeds from the fights go toward supporting the Thai Army. The initial reason for opening the venue was to promote Thai boxing throughout Thailand and the world, and it has been very successful, achieving

world-renowned status as a tourism magnet. More than just a stadium to fans, it is, along with Rajdamnern, the home of muay Thai.

There are approximately a dozen promoters with the responsibility of supplying fighters for the stadium. Women, however, are not allowed to fight or even enter the ring. Boxers must be male, over 15, weigh more than 100 pounds, and have no more than a five-pound weight difference with their opponent.

Earlier this year, there was talk of moving the fabled stadium to the Suan Plu area of Bangkok in order to make way for a proposed tower, meant to be the world's tallest building. But the plan to build the skyscraper, at least for now, has been scrapped and the stadium will stay put.

Fights are on Tuesdays and Fridays at 6:30 pm and Saturdays at 4:30 pm and 8:30 pm. Tickets are 2000 baht, 1500 baht or 1000 baht.

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Vagabonds 14, PSU 10 in rugby

KOH KAEW: The Phuket Vagabonds hung onto a narrow lead to win their inaugural match against Prince of Songkla University (PSU) at British International School (BIS) December 10.

In the frantic opening stanza, the game started in earnest when Vagabonds flanker Ben Hennessy inadvertently tackled his opposite number without the ball, resulting in a penalty to PSU.

However, the Vagabonds, with some help from BIS lads on their squad, scored the first try after a well-worked back row move and quick hands by backs saw prop forward Joel De Silva score in the corner.

BIS star player Gavin converted the try from the touchline to give the Vagabonds a 7-0 lead.

As the second quarter kicked off it was evident that the fitter and faster PSU boys were starting to come into their own. PSU scored a try after some sustained pressure and despite solid defense by the Vagabonds. The conversion was unsuccessful, leaving the score 7-5.

In the second half Gavin converted another try to put the Vagabonds 14-5 in front. As the final quarter began, PSU took advantage of the Vagabonds squad tiring and eventually a PSU back line move saw their left winger score under the posts. The conversion failed, though, leaving the final score 14-10.

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PATONG DARTS LEAGUE

December 19 results: Didi's* 6 Beach House 3; Valhalla* 1 Piccadilly 8; Offshore* 4 Coyote Bar 5; Shakers* 4 Queen Mary 5; Funky Monkey 3 Dogs Bollocks* 6 (* = winner of beer leg).

Bollocks (10); 6. Shakers (9); 7.= Offshore, Valhalla (7); 9. Beach House (5); 10. Funky Monkey (3);

Standings: 1. Coyote Bar (16 pts.); 2. Piccadilly (12); 3. Didi's (11); 4.= Queen Mary, Dog's

January 2 matchups: Offshore v Didi's; Coyote Bar v Piccadilly; Dog's Bollocks v Beach House; Funky Monkey v Queen Mary; Shakers v Valhalla (home team first).



SHEER WINNER: Meechai Choocheep, from Phatthalung, displays his first-place medal won in the 10 kilometer Satee Phuket School Mini-Marathon on December 23. Meechai won the event with a time of about 40 minutes. Second place went to Chai Pudchuyay from Songkhla and third to Jakrit Lanthai from Trang. All three top runners were competing in the 30-39 age category. More than 500 runners took part in the early-morning 1.5km fun walk and mini-marathon.

Blue takes Gold in City Cup

PHUKET CITY: Blue Marina Pub were crowned champions in the Royal Phuket City Cup soccer tournament held December 17 to 21 following a tight 1-0 victory over cup sponsors Royal Phuket City Hotel.

The Blue Marina team were rewarded with 5,000 baht for their effort while Royal Phuket City walked away with 3,000 baht for their second-place finish.

Oasis beat Jammin' Pub 5-4 in the third-place play-off, earning 2,000 baht. Oasis received 1,000 baht.

The award for top scorer went to Oasis' Jirayu Sangworn, who took home a trophy and a gift certificate for a dinner for two at the Red Onion restaurant for his goalmouth heroics.

In total, seven teams competed in the tournament.

Volleyball, soccer and... sausages?

KAMALA: Beach volleyball, soccer and an eating competition were all part of Kamala Festival 2006, held December 17 to 20.

On December 17, Cocktails on the Beach team placed first in the soccer competition, followed by SC Suwit Bar second and Ka-

mala Police Station third.

In the volleyball competition on December 19, Beach Restaurant won first place, while Ko May Restaurant came second and Crazy Bar finished third.

The eating competition comprised teams of three members

eating as many sausages as possible as fast as possible.

Ko May Restaurant ate their way to a win with four sausages apiece in three minutes, while second place went to Oliver Pepmit team, who managed to eat four sausages as well.

New Courts Phuket

Take a look at The New Look Courts Phuket and you will be surprised! They have completely re-invented themselves.

The ground floor has now a bright and exciting display of Electrical and IT products.

As I have just moved into my new home I was looking for a 32" LCD television

ELECTRICAL



and Courts now has over 30 models to chose from. Being an LCD novice I was confused by the many different specifications, so it was time to get educated. I had many questions. What's the difference between Plasma and LCD? I asked the salesman. What's the difference between that Samsung model priced at 49,000 Baht and that one at 89,000 Baht? The salesman was very patient as he guided me through this technological maze.

What adds to the excitement of the store is the concept displays that showcase the latest products from leading brands such as Sony, Panasonic, Samsung, Pioneer & LG. And if you want a special order just ask, they can get it for you.

The IT section also has a large range of computers and notebooks to chose from; probably one of the largest displays on the island!



IT



After my LCD lesson I headed upstairs to the furniture floors. All the products in Courts are guaranteed to be exclusive. This is due to their huge regional buying power (sister companies in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia). Khun Jom, the buyer explained that the company sources and buys products from all over Asia in order to get the best price and designs for their customers.

FURNITURE



To go with my new LCD TV I decided on buying a full leather sofa set the Aeya and I only paid 29,990 Baht for something that looks like its just come off an Italian designer cat walk!

They also have a full range of bedroom suites to chose from. There are the essential "must have" bedroom furniture options through to the designer styles. Literally, something for everyone. If your budget is tight I would recommend the Samantha range. It also comes with a free mattress and is fully flexible. Want just the wardrobe and bedside table? No problem, can do!

I particularly fell in love with the New Monaco bedroom suite which makes the most of the wardrobe space with built in central dressing unit. What a great use of space and what's more it looks stunning!

So my recommendation is take a fresh look at the New Courts Phuket. You will be both surprised & inspired!

Happy shopping ☺

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Construction Update

by Janyaporn Morel

The owners of Deevana Patong Resort & Spa are building their second hotel, which will become the first hotel in Southern Thailand to be managed by international chain Accor Hotels, under its Mercure brand.

The 249-room hotel, being built on six rai on the southern side of the OTO market on Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd, will be named Mercure Patong Phuket.

Construction has been underway since May, 2006, and is expected to be finished by July of 2007. The soft opening is scheduled for August.

Jariyawadee Suvunditkul, Managing Director of Mercure Patong Phuket, told the *Gazette*, "Our existing hotel, Deevana Patong Resort & Spa, is now overbooked and tourism in Phuket is continuing to grow, so we decided to expand our capacity.

"We brought in Mercure Accor as the hotel business is very competitive now and we felt that we could benefit from the assistance of an internationally-known chain," she said.

The exterior of the hotel will be modern but the interior will incorporate aspects of traditional Thai design.

The complex will comprise four buildings. The first will be a facilities building five stories high, while the other three buildings will have six floors and will house the guest rooms.

The first floor of the facilities building will include the lobby and reception area as well as Thai and fusion-food restaurants,



Computer-generated impression of how the Mercure Patong Phuket will look when completed in July 2007.

a kids' club and a mini-mart.

Above, a mezzanine level will house the hotel's administration offices and leave the lobby with an airy, high ceiling. The third floor will have a 545-square-meter grand ballroom, a pantry and a storage room.

The third floor will have a

high ceiling, leaving no room for a fourth floor, K. Jariyawadee explained.

The fifth floor will house three 100-sqm meeting rooms and a fitness center. On the roof deck there will be a pool with bar and sun deck.

"The lobby building will also

have some guest accommodation too. We will have 10 family suites in a wing on the third floor. In the three guest buildings we will have four suites, each with an area of 70sqm, and 235 superior rooms of 35sqm each. One of the guest buildings will have a spa attached," K. Jariyawadee said.

In the courtyard between the buildings will be a large pool terrace. parking will be around the outside of the buildings.

"Patong Beach is the most famous resort area in Phuket and we think that the Mercure brand will help us to market the resort, especially in the international market. Most of our guests at

Deevana Resort & Spa are European, mainly Scandinavian.

"We will be focusing on the Japanese and Korean markets, and the wider Asian market, as well as Europeans. We will also target the MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions) market," said K. Jariyawadee.

"We intend to have soft opening in the low season so that we have time to prepare our service staff as we don't want to have any problems when high season arrives," she concluded.

The contractor for the project is Phuket Design Construction Co Ltd.

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Design

By Suganya Semacote



The interior of one of the homes at Samsara, for which Original Vision recently won an award.

Award-winning vision

Original Vision opened a Phuket office in 2000 specifically to service the 14-villa Samsara project in Kamala, for which it was recently awarded Best Architect 2006 at the Thailand Property Awards in Bangkok.

Prasert Chanhom, Associate Director of Original Vision's Phuket office, explained that the company's inspiration for designs, simply characterized as contemporary Asian tropical, comes from many sources: adaptation to the environment in which the villas are to be built, working with the interplay of shade and shelter, seamlessly merging the interiors and exteriors; the wishes of the client and market forces driving the financial aspect of the development.

"The design and construction at Samsara have set benchmarks in terms of innovative juxtapositions of materials for other developments to follow, most notably the expansive use of glass and roofs that seem to float," said Stephen Gorton, Director of Original Vision in Phuket.

He explained that a diverse palette of materials was selected to create a combination of natural textures and finishes, such as rough cedar shakes used on the roofs and Phang Nga limestone for the external walls, built to contrast with cleaner contemporary lines of glass, steel and concrete. Original Vision then completed each villa to meet the individual owners' requirements.

"Some innovative features that have turned Samsara into an icon are the use of glass floors in the swimming pools to light spaces below and the glass pyramid above the master bedroom, which acts as a beacon at night and a heat funnel during the day.

"All glass walls open up so that breezes can flow through the villas during the day," said K. Prasert.

Mr Gorton added, "The combination produces a cool contemporary ambiance that nestles in the landscape. It is neither brash nor subservient."

It's this combination of aspects that have made Samsara

special, explained K. Prasert. Combining unusual materials, making the villas part of the landscape and the use of space and light are elements Original Vision uses in all their projects.

However, he warned, not all Original Vision projects are the same. By understanding the site and the client, Original Vision is able to design a range of different appearances, K. Prasert assured, citing Rawai Villas and Bang Tao Beach Gardens as examples.

"Original Vision takes a 'team' approach to all their projects. Within the office all levels of expertise and skills are used to create the designs together with the client, coordinate with the other design consultants, and then oversee the project construction on site to ensure that the design intentions are being properly executed.

"This is not an easy process and requires many hours of dedication, but projects such as Samsara show the worthwhile results for all concerned," K. Prasert said.

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Gardening

with Bloomin' Bert

GARDENING IN TONGUES

My Latin isn't exactly fluent. In fact, the only Latin terms with which I'm even vaguely familiar are NB (*nota bene*) and AD (*anno domini*). Do abbreviations count as Latin phrases? I don't have a clue, to be honest, and I'm not even sure why we use them.

Why Latin is used today is rather odd. It seems to exist for no other reason than to let people try to sound a lot more intelligent than they really are. What possible alternative rationale could there be for someone to say "ergo" instead of "therefore"? As far as I'm concerned the only thing these people succeed in doing is making themselves sound like total prats.

It does have its uses though. Pub fights can be averted with a bit of Latin thrown in. A book called *Latin for All Occasions (Lingua Latina Occasionibus Omnibus)* by a gentleman by the name of Henry Beard suggests that fighting words are a lot safer in Latin:

Quid me appellavisti? (What did you call me?)

Ita, te adloquor. (Yes, I'm talking to you.)

Visne illud iterare? (You want to repeat that?)

Visne aliquid de illo facere? (You want to make something of it?)

Foras gradiamur. (Let's step outside.)

I don't know why inane violence is amusing in Latin, but it is. Even threats carry more weight in Latin, somehow: *In tempore praeterito plus quam perfecto de te mox dicent.* (People will soon be referring to you in

the past pluperfect tense.) Or the classic Latin curse: *Utinam modo subiunctivo semper male utaris!* (May you always misuse the subjunctive!)

You might want to be careful with these though. Walk into a pub in Yorkshire and start ranting in Latin, and they'll soon bring you back down to earth. You'll deserve a slap purely because you sound like a complete pillock.

Latin has no good reason to be uttered anywhere in Northern England, or elsewhere for that matter. What's the point?

Even universities try to milk the Latin thing, for no particular reason. What are they on about, with their *magna cum laude* and *summa cum laude* nonsense? Are the words "honors" and "distinction" just too easy? It worked just fine in my day.

Apparently, one American university came up with one of their own: *egregia cum laude*.

It wasn't until some academic type actually looked it up in his big Latin dictionary and realized that it translated as "with hysterical praise", that the university decided that it probably wasn't a particularly good idea after all.

The world of botany is awash with Latin. As I mentioned, my Latin skills are limited



Sonasi Latine loqueris (Honk if you speak Latin): the *pandanus pygmaeus*, dwarfish cousin of the screw pine.

to say the least, but it doesn't take a mastermind to figure out what a *pandanus pygmaeus* looks like. It's called *bai toey* in Thai, whatever that means. Even though my knowledge of Thai slightly exceeds my Latin, I still haven't a clue.

Predictably, it's a small pandanus. I'm actually surprised that some politically correct do-gooder hasn't petitioned various agencies

to have the name changed, citing the stereotypical generalization of a group of vertically-challenged African people.

Anyway, the *pandanus pygmaeus* it is. Some books say that it's also known as the screw pine, but I would say that epithet should be reserved for the bigger pandanus trees that line many of Phuket's beaches; the ones with the weird, 45-degree roots.

The *pandanus pygmaeus* is one of the more popular landscape plants in this part of the world. It grows to about 30 centimeters tall, and spreads by sending out runners from the base of the plant.

It's variegated (has more than one color on its leaves), with a bright margin of cream or yellow with yellow stripes in the center of the leaf. There are soft spines along the edges of the leaves, but not soft enough to avoid scratches if you scrape against them.

It's perfect for a border that you just can't be bothered with, as it doesn't need that much attention and will grow to a specific height. Put a row of these at the front, about 20cm apart, and you can put the bigger plants behind, using the *pandanus pygmaeus* to cover the lower spindly bits of its neighbor. They're also quite happy in a rock garden.

The flowers are a complete letdown, if you can spot them. They're tiny and petal-less – I'm not even sure why they bother. The whole point of flowers is to attract insects to help the reproductive process along. It would seem that this plant decided to go down the celibate path; probably why it mostly reproduces itself via suckers. Enough said.

Anyway, propagating them is easily done – just cut a bit of it off and stick your new cutting in some moist compost. Hardly rocket science.

It likes light, so try to give it a home in one of the sunnier parts of the garden. The *pandanus pygmaeus* is perfect as a house plant, as long as it gets at least four hours of direct sunlight a day.

Be fairly generous with water, too, but if it's in a pot and not in the ground, don't let it stand in water as it will complain bitterly. Allow the soil to dry slightly between waterings.

It will never be the biggest plant in the world, and it's not in any particular rush to reach its maximum size – it will quietly take its time. At least it grows mostly upright and won't droop. It may not be the F-16 of the plant world, but it behaves itself.

Like most plants, the *pandanus pygmaeus* will benefit from a bit of pruning every now and then, to make it a bit stronger. It's weird how cutting bits of plants off increases their Charles Atlas tendencies.

If I were one of those academic types, I would be able to come up with a neat, intelligent-sounding Latin link from Charles Atlas to the botanical world. But I'm not. So I won't.

Ergo, Latin speakers should *fac ut vivas* (get a life). Sorry for sounding like a total prat. What's "beer" in Latin?

[It's *cervisia*. – Ed]

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Home of the Week

Kamala

When one thinks of large residences perched atop a cliff, with the ocean sounding below, visions of the Mediterranean usually come to mind, but in Phuket there is just such a property in Kamala.

More like a resort than a private residence, this mansion sits within more than 2,000 square meters of manicured gardens; blending into the surroundings, but with a style of its own.

Construction materials are of the highest quality, using solid masonry and attractive hardwood to create huge ceilings and impressive wooden roofing.

Gardens have been divided into sections, with different levels providing various areas that can be used for garden parties, pool parties or just relaxing in private.

All-local foliage creates a tropical ambiance, with walkways winding through the maze of plants and ponds.

Magnificent views are to be had while swimming in the 60sqm swimming pool. Maybe just sipping a cool drink while relaxing in the adjacent sala would come close, after a thorough workout in the private gym, of course.

Most of the rooms have been designed to take advantage of the uninterrupted ocean views. Waking in the four-post-



boards and black granite counter tops.

For the accommodation of live-in help, the maid's quarters comes with two bedrooms and a private bathroom, which should please most hired help.

For entertainment, the property boasts many facilities, including a games room with pool table as well as large plasma-screen TVs that are at the end of each bed.

The internal living areas are spacious, with large sofas and tables designed with a touch of Thai. The dining area features a bench table that seats as many as 18 guests.

The list of features included in this property is extensive, and little has been omitted for the provision of comfort.

However, there is always a price to pay for this height of luxury. The owners are asking 240 million baht,

putting this property in the upper echelon of residences in Phuket.

Tropical opulence

er bed, draped in white, and looking through windows soaring up two-stories high would make every morning a fantastic experience.

Each of the five bedrooms has a private en-suite bathroom befitting the luxury of this property, and the rest of the house is serviced by two other bathrooms.

The Western kitchen is one of the biggest private kitchens one could imagine, and is fully fitted and equipped with stainless-steel appliances, hardwood cup-

For more information or for a private inspection of the property, contact Richard Lusted at Siam Real Estate at Tel: 076-288908 or Email: info@siamrealestate.com, or visit www.siamrealestate.com.



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Property Gazette

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Rawai. New 3-bedroom, 2-bathroom house with pool in Rawai. 5.5 million baht. Tel: 076-388-685, 086-595-1499. Fax: 076-388684. Email: info@andamanthai-property.com Please visit at: www.andamanthai-property.com/atp_property_395.htm

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Bungalows for rent at 15,000 baht a month + utilities (6 months minimum) or 22,000 baht a month, or 7,000 baht a week. 2 bedrooms, 1 bathroom with hot water, telephone line. Car park, gated, quiet, 3km from Surin. Call K. Tee at Tel: 06-2786465 or Betty at Tel: 076-270377.

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Property Gazette

Property Wanted

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WANTED TO RENT
A house in Nai Harn or Rawai long term from January onward. 2 bedrooms, preferably unfurnished, and with a pool but anything considered. Please contact for more information. Tel: 087-0429482. Email: happimax@hotmail.com

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Wanted, take-over or participation (long lease). Guesthouse should have a minimum of 5 rooms and be in/around Patong, Karon, Kata, Nai Harn or Rawai. Budget: 2 million baht. Please email friendly offers or recommendations. Please contact for more information. Tel: 085-7813814. Email: jochensgallery@yahoo.com

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1 RAI+ SEA VIEW
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1-5 RAI WANTED
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| Sin & Lee
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Fax: 076-211230 |
| Taurus Travel
Aroonsom Plaza Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd, Patong | Tel: 076-344521/2
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- Minimum 1 year of Web programming experience (HTML, CSS).
- Minimum 1 year of JavaScript programming experience.
- Minimum 1 year of PHP programming experience.
- Minimum 1 year of XML programming experience.
- Minimum 1 year of MySQL programming experience.

In addition, the following mandatory and optional requirements will be considered:

- Fluent English (both written and spoken) is mandatory.
- A logical and methodical individual is the ideal candidate.
- The ability to work within rigid programming standards.
- High aptitude to learn and adapt to a new and expanding environment is vital.
- C and/or C++ programming experience is a definite advantage.
- Unix experience is a definite advantage.
- Familiarity with Apple OS/X and XCode is a bonus.
- Knowledge of Apple scripting is a bonus.

Work Permit is available for this position.
Please send your CV to: IT@HolyClothing.com
or call 085-7955393

ONLINE JOB APPLICATION

HOTEL - ACCTING - SALES - IT - WEB DESIGN - F&B

www.KARON-PHUKET-HOTELS.com /JOB.htm

Island Job Mart

KMD Management Group



Personal Assistant

Our client is a Western individual based in Asia with worldwide offices and operations. Due to significant time spent in the private villa estate in Phuket, we require a highly competent PA to enhance to global team.

The role will require interaction with a wide variety of people in the business as well as service providers and a diverse range of VIP's, family members and senior executives. The role will require taking responsibility for all elements of the family's Thailand operations and also some elements of corporate life.

The following are examples of the background of a successful candidate, though it is noted that personality fit with the organization is the most important requirement to fulfill.

- Bachelors/Masters Degree from a Western university.
- Experience in diary/travel planning of senior Western executive.
- Highly confident communicating in English.
- High level of IT skills including MS Office.
- Experience in dealing with our businesses and senior executives in planning and executing overseas meetings and corporate events.
- Experience working or studying in Europe or America.

This role is an excellent opportunity for someone seeking to use all of their talents working in an unparalleled organization on a worldwide stage with an excellent salary.

Please send your CV with photo to
KMD Management Group
57/10 Moo 1, T. Thepkasatri A. Talang, Phuket 83110
Email: RT@KMDMGMT.COM



SilkAir (a subsidiary of Singapore Airlines) invites applications for the positions of

1. RESERVATIONS & TICKETING ASSISTANT

Requirements :

- Possess Bachelors Degree in any discipline
- Good command of spoken and written English
- Customer services oriented & comfortable with meeting passengers
- Basic knowledge of airline reservations & ticketing
- Experience in travel industry or airline would be an added advantage

2. ACCOUNTS & ADMIN OFFICER

Requirements :

- Possess Bachelors degree in Accounting
- Good command of spoken and written English
- Meticulous with knowledge of bookkeeping & accounting
- Competent and experienced with Microsoft Office & SAP system
- Two years working experience in accounting position

Employee Benefits

As an employee of SilkAir, you will be entitled to a comprehensive range of attractive benefits, including free travel on SilkAir, discounted travel on Singapore Airlines, 12 days annual leave, uniform and laundry allowance, training opportunities and employee share option scheme.

Please send a full resume including work experience, educational qualifications, salary expectation and a passport-sized photograph by 06 January 2007 to Manager Thailand, SilkAir, 101/17 Bypass Square, Chalemprakiet Ror 9 Road, Kathu District, Phuket 83120.

Please indicate the position you are applying for on the top left-hand corner of the envelope. We regret that only shortlisted candidates will be notified.

British International School, Phuket.

Required due to maternity leave: Temporary Part-time Teacher of Physical Education (Girls) to begin in March/April 2007

The British International School, Phuket requires a dedicated and innovative, temporary part-time Teacher of Physical Education (Girls) to join an enthusiastic team of PE specialists. This is a part-time teaching position involving mainly KS3 and KS4 classes including activity lessons. Knowledge of GCSE Physical Education will be an advantage.

At KS3/4 we broadly follow the National Curriculum of England and Wales.

Application by letter and CV including a recent photograph to nbotting@bcis.ac.th

An attractive package is offered with details available on application. Further information about the school may be obtained from our website: www.bcis.ac.th

British International School, Phuket (BIS)
59 Moo 2, Thepkasatri Rd, Koh Kaew, Muang, Phuket 83000 Thailand
Tel: 076 238 711-20 Fax: 076 238 750 Bangkok Tel: 02 636 8991-2 Fax: 02 636 8992

www.savills.co.th



Sale officers

Position:

Sale Officer (Pattaya) 3 positions

Job Description:

To sell units at residential project represented by Savills Agency (Thailand) in Pattaya

Qualification:

- Thai nationality good command of writing and spoken in English
- Computer literate (MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint)
- Residing in Pattaya will be advantage
- Minimum 2 years experience in Real Estate or relates fields

Interested applicants are invited to send application with full resume indicating qualifications and experience, transcript, expected salary and recent photo

Savills (Thailand) Limited

26/F 990 Rama IV Road, Bangkok 10500, Thailand
Tel 662 636 0300, Fax: 662 636 0339, email: benjawan@savills.co.th

PHUKET FREE PLUS MARKETING

We are looking for sales and marketing staff (female) Thai nationals. All customers will be Thai but some English will help. Top salary and excellent commission. Please contact K.Nutthanun. Tel: 076-245971, 085-888-0636.

LOOKING FOR MAID

Foreign couple is looking for a long-term maid with basic English. Working location: Kamala, in a new house. Must be honest and self-motivated. Maid has to stay at our place for cleaning and cooking. Good salary for the right candidate. We offer private maid room with bathroom, TV, etc. Please contact for more information. Tel: 086-172-7974. Email: rene.koller@bluewin.ch

RESORT IN BANG TAO

Looking for staff. Good English speakers for restaurant/kitchen/bar/cleaning/more. Please call K. Cim. Tel: 087-1887518.

RESTAURANT

Manager & chef. Sunset Beach Resort is looking for a restaurant manager & European chef. Tel: 076-342482-5. Fax: 076-342500.

MIDDLE MANAGEMENT OFFICER

- Thai female, aged 26-45 years.
 - B.A. or Master's degree
 - Very good English (esp. listening and speaking)
 - Good communication and computer skills.
- Tel: 076-264770-2. Email: info@kajonkiet.com

SALES MANAGER

- And sales executive.
- 25 to 40 years old
 - Sales Supervisor experience
 - Can speak, read and write in English
 - Sales background in advertising, insurance, investment, etc
 - Own transport advantageous
- Please contact for more information. Tel: 076-203365, 02-3324600-5. Email: ajapply@yahoo.com

OFFICE SECRETARY

Real estate agency's Chalong branch requires female for office. Good written and spoken English, computer skills and results oriented. Duties will be property scouting, telemarketing and following up listings for our properties. Salary up to 15,000 baht + incentives scheme. Please send CV by email or contact for more information. Tel: 084-0535780. Email: info@ayudhya.net

SALES ADMIN

Female, 25-35 years with good written and spoken English. A year's experience in sales would be greatly appreciated. Tel: 076-215 710. Fax: 076-224368. Email: phuketsales@somerville-siam.com

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Fluent in English, MS Office is a must, good in reporting. Drivers license is a plus. Please contact for more details. Tel: 076-239111, 081-9583095. Fax: 076-238974. Email: suporn@asia-marine.net

RESERVATION

Officer: 3 positions. Urgently need online reservations agent for airline booking system. Male/female Thai national with English-communication and computer skills. Energetic & hard working, own transport and able to work on shift. Tel: 076-328598. Email: bee@destinationair.com

ABSOLUTE SALES CO

Absolute Sales corporation urgently needs staff to work in the office on Phuket. People with good communication skills needed for the post of manager to work with Russian clients. Contact K. Svetlanas for more information. Tel: 081-3976200.

Island Job Mart



**Sheraton
Krabi
BEACH RESORT**

Sheraton Krabi Beach Resort, a member of the renowned and fast growing Starwood Hotels & Resorts, is nestled discreetly next to the unspoiled Klong Muong Beach in the exotic Krabi province.

A host of five star facilities and activities, the resort features 246 well appointed guest rooms, an eclectic selection of bars and restaurants, spa, fitness center, and a variety of water sports facilities. We are inviting suitably qualified local candidates to join our team.

Kitchen

Chef De Partie
(Cold kitchen & European Kitchen)
Demi Chef De Partie (Thai Kitchen)
Commis I (Pastry and European Kitchen)
Stewarding

Qualifications

Required:

- Thai nationality
- Fluent in spoken and written English (depends on position applied for)
- Computer skills (depends on position applied for)
- Minimum 3 years experience (depends on position applied for)

Interested persons are invited to send detailed resume and qualifications to:
Sheraton Krabi Beach Resort

155 Moo 2, Baan Klong Muong, Nong Thale, Muang, Krabi 81000
Telephone: 075 - 628 000 ext. 1500, Fax: 075 - 628 038

Email: witoon.pinpimai@sheraton.com

Le Meridien Khao Lak Job Opportunities

Le MERIDIEN
KHAO LAK BEACH
& SPA RESORT

We are currently seeking for dynamic and innovative people to join Le Meridien Khao Lak Beach & Spa Resort. Applicants who feel they would excel in a motivated and challenging environment are invited to apply for the following positions by sending you resume (in English) with a recent photo to the address below:

Room Division

- Japanese Guest Relation Mgr./Officer (Japanese National Only)
- Assistant Front Office Manager
- Guest Relations Officer
- Reservation Officer
- Assistant Housekeeper

Food & Beverage Division

- Assistant F&B Manager
- Restaurant Manager
- Waiter/Waitress/Bartender
- Chef de Partie
- Demi Chef de Partie
- Executive Sous Chef
- Bakery Chef

A & G Department

- Executive Secretary to GM

Finance

- Financial Controller

Sales & Marketing

- Convention Operation Manager (Experience in Banqueting & Convention/Event Organizing Field)

Sport & Leisure Department

- Sport & Leisure Manager
- Babysitter (Good English)

Attractive salaries, fringe benefits and career opportunities are offered to successful candidates.

Human Resources Department

Le Meridien Khao Lak Beach & Spa Resort
9/9 Moo 1, Tambon Kuk-kak, Amphur Takuapa, Phang-Nga 82190
Tel. (076) 427509, Direct Fax. (076) 427559
n.waiwong@khaolak.lemeridien.com

COMPANY FINANCIAL GUIDANCE

Can you assist our growing local manufacturing company put in place useful management financial systems and help us plan future growth? Part-time to suit you will suit us. Call Graeme.

Tel: 084-1845162.

O'MALLEYS PHUKET

The new management of O'Malleys Irish Pub in Phuket is looking for an experienced cook for its new Irish menu! We are also looking for musicians: solo performers, small jazz or blues bands, acoustic guitarists and so on, for Tuesday open mic nights. Please send CV by email or contact for more information. Tel: 085-7840608. Send email: derek@omalleyphuket.com

ADMINISTRATION

Assistant required by one of Phuket's leading yacht charter companies. Duties include liaison with government departments & clients and general administration tasks. Based in Boat Lagoon. Please send CV by email or contact for more information. Tel: 076-273476, 081-9684188. Fax: 076-273-476. Email: Peter@phuket-yachts.com

Tout, Trader & Trumpet

Articles For Sale

FITNESS EQUIPMENT

Mint cond. Cardio stepper or cardio bike, both have computers. Smooth, quiet, like new. Paid 12,000 baht each. Price: 6,500 each. Tel: 081-0882179.

MOVING SALE

Denon AVR2805 surround with JBL E90 speakers, Samsung 30" widescreen, mountain bike, 4-burner golden gas grill. Call for details, all 1 year old. Tel: 084-5078966.

MASSAGE CHAIRS

In good condition. Equipped with system timer. For sale: 8,000 baht. Negotiable with quantity. Tel: 087-272-4330.

ARTICLES FOR SALE

Windsure board beginner sail rig, still packed new. 50% price. Kawasaki KSR 110, Mongoose aluminium mountain bike. Near new. Tel: 087-8888244.

ROAD RACING BIKE

Giant OCR3 Compact Road Racing Bike (medium frame, 19.5"). Sella Italia saddle, Cane Creek headset, Shimano SORA shifters & derailleurs, FSA 3-ring crank (52, 42, 30), Shimano cassette -1225 Wheels w/ A2Z hubs, Alex DA13 rims, Continental tires. Just serviced, excellent condition. 14,000 baht ono. Tel: 076-350020, 089-5902014. Fax: 076-350022. Email: shaunboulter@aegiasia.net

BIG NEW 3-DOOR

Fridges. Two big 3-glass-door fridges for sale. Only 4 months old, like new. EVEREST COOL-MCD-30TM. 2m high x 1.8m wide. Good for food and beverages. Only 25,000 baht each. (New: 35,000 baht each.) Tel: 076-388-621, 084-8519072.

SCUBA CONSOLE

Has depth gauge, pressure gauge and compass. 12,000 baht. Tel: 085-7855365.

SCUBA BCD

Sequest raider, 9 months old. 12,000 baht. Tel: 085-7855365.

MUSIC EQUIPMENT

Guitars, amps, drums for sale. Leaving Phuket. Call for details. Tel: 081-5379196.

Bulletins

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Is holding meetings in English at the following places in Phuket:

**Mission Hospital
Phuket City**
Wed and Sun 7 pm
**Bangkok Phuket Hospital
Phuket City**
Fri 7 pm

Patong Hospital Patong
Mon, Tue, Wed, Sat, Sun
at 7 pm and Fri at 8 pm
For Phuket info (English)
call 081-9564031,
081-8912895

**Scandinavian speaking Group
Wat Karon School-Karon**
Tue and Sat 7 pm
Tel 081-2732053 (Nor)
087-2795636 (Nor)
086-7458910 (Swe)

For info on other Thailand AA meetings inquire at Tel: 02-2318300 (for Thai language press 3) www.aathailand.org or email info@aathailand.org

Business Opportunities

GUESTHOUSE LEASE

No rent. 5-year lease remaining, no rent until May 2007, close to beach, will sell with land. Tel: 076-342280, 081-9781956. Email: palm@phuket.ksc.co.th

RESTAURANT

For sale. 50 seats with modern kitchen. Good corner location with low rent. Please contact for more information at Tel: 089-7291113, or Email: richard_melen@hotmail.com

WOW! PAY LESS MONEY

Get big return of your investment. K's Car Clinic is available for a serious and creative entrepreneur. Land lease 3 years. Property is sustainable build and special design for a high performance. Easy to manage. Tel: 081-5698649 (Thai), 086-2828213 (English, German, French, Dutch)

INVESTMENT

Boutique hotel opening December 2007, only 9 shares available. Great return and yearly holiday. Contact. Email: resortinvestment@hotmail.com

RESTAURANT

For lease. Located at Kata beach. 2 floors (live in), Fully furnished, ready to move in. Tel: 081-9206054.

BEAUTY SALON

Beauty salon for sale in Kathu 150,000 baht, or rent for 8,000 baht a month. You can live inside. Please contact for more information. Tel: 084-8448589. Email: bb-anaiya@hotmail.com

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World's Largest Business Advisor

Speed Boat Company
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TAT license, great opportunity.

Over 100 other businesses for sale
Free Professional service

Restaurants & Bars Patong -
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154 Phang-Nga Rd., Muang, PHUKET TOWN
The best way to Buy & Sell a business

Call us: Michael 08-6010 6988

GYM FOR SALE

Three-story building, Kamala beach. Excellent shape. Tel: 084-3059606.

OWN A BUSINESS

For expert advice on buying a business in Phuket contact Kevin at TSBA. Tel: 084-730-0190. Email: kevin@tsba.info

RESTAURANT FOR SALE

Prime location at Kamala beach. Well established with seating for 100 pax. Owner retiring. Tel: 081-6777185. Email: resortinvestment@hotmail.com

RESTAURANT/BAR/Cafe/Internet. Good location Nanai road. Sale/rent. Tel: 086-2720113. Email: casse55@hotmail.com

GUESTHOUSE LEASE PATONG

22 spacious, clean rooms, cable TV, minibar, aircon.
- Elevator, wireless Internet
- Restaurant, bar area
- No maintenance needed
- Very qualified staff
- 4-min. walk to the beach
- Unbelievable potential
- Rent for Jan-Feb paid
Key money:
2.6 million baht.
Email:
poul_66@hotmail.com

PATONG BAR

For sale. The Office bar, Soi Gym. Low monthly payments. 100,000 baht key money for one year. Tel: 089-8171060.

INVESTOR/PARTNER

Wanted. For real estate project with excellent return! Tel: 084-0572743. Email: admin@no1phuket.com


FOR SALE

Guesthouse and restaurant. Located opposite the main entrance from Royal Paradise Hotel. 6 guest rooms with shower, aircon, TV. Luxury, beautiful restaurant with kitchen, high standard. 14 million baht. Tel: 081-895-6587. Email: rudolfoan2@hotmail.com

Tout, Trader & Trumpet

Office/Showroom Space for Rent
The Plaza Del Mar -
Entrance to Laguna, Phuket.

Last two superb, 40/80 square-meter, ground floor office/showrooms in the recently completed Plaza Del Mar.



Fully fitted, with concealed air-con security system, kitchenette, floors, 1 telephone lines with broadband capability, etc.

Please email Khun Nong at plazadelmar@gmail.com for more information

PARTY OR WEDDING

Kois Bar has 2 bars/restaurants in Kamala and can provide an excellent location for your function's buffet for 20+. From 2,000 baht. Please contact for more information.

Tel: 087-9037933 (Eng/Thai)



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 school. Seasons greetings! Teacher training Wed Jan 3. Tel: 076-219241/251. Email: tefl@loxinfo.co.th

OSTEOPATH
 practice. Garnett B Symonds Do Hom Hmd. Tel: 076-388-524, 081-6072343.

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 Entertainment. Booking female singers, dancers, musicians, bands. Call Ricky. Tel: 081-0884965. Email: ricky@rickyzen.com
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 services. We provide reliable, affordable web hosting services. Professional 24/7 technical support. Free setup. All web hosting plans are features packed, including an easy-to-use control panel. Email: office@gasserweb.com For further details, please see our website at www.gasserweb.com

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 PC devices. Phuket-based online computer store. Cheapest toners in Phuket. HP toners (remanufactured) for A4 printers: 730 baht! HP toners (remanufact.) for A3 printers: 995 baht! Second-hand computers for 3,000-5,000 baht. To-your-door delivery. Credit cards accepted. Email: info@phuket-computers.com Please see our website at: www.phuket-computers.com


VISA RUN TO PENANG MALAYSIA

Every Sunday for tourist/ non imm O/B visa. Leave Sunday night return Tuesday night.

4,800 baht
 book 7 days in advance discount
200 baht.
 Price includes transport/Hotel/Food on route.

Phone for more info 085-7954768. European mangement

VISA & LEGAL SERVICES



Company registration 2,229 baht; one-year visa 5,999 baht; retirement visa 5,999 baht; work permit 5,999 baht; UK & US visa 16,999 baht. No more visa runs - get a one-year visa for only 5,999 baht. Establish your Thai company today, buy land or start your business for only 2,229 baht! Property title search, sales contract and land registration. Thailand's largest legal service network. Always low prices by our licensed Thai lawyers. Please contact for more information. Tel: 076-345-277. Email: info@siam-legal.com www.siam-legal.com

HOTEL FOR SALE



In Karon beach, 1-minute walk to the beach. With coffee bar, freehold Chanote title, 6 aircon rooms with bathroom inside, TV, fridge. plus 70sqm big apartment on the top floor. Price: only 9.2 million baht. Tel: 081-1719705. Email: atetayap@yahoo.com

BAR FOR SALE
 Great opportunity in a busy area near the beach. Call Kevin. Tel: 084-7300190.

CLUB FOR SALE
 JBL, lighting and fully furnished. Nevly remodeled. Asking 4 million baht, willing to negotiate. Please contact. Tel: 089-7240927.

KATA BEACH
 Resort & Spa, 12-year leasehold for sale. Cafe, restaurant and subleases included. Zero rent, no key money: 12 million baht. Next to beach and city center too! House included & can get 1-year visa and work permit. Tel: 086-5413629. www.phuket-massage.com

VISA

VISA RUN TO ANDAMAN CLUB (Only EVE)

1,500 BAHT

RENEW VISA FROM PENANG

4,900 BAHT

CALL... EVE

081 535 2637, 076 289 201

BEST SERVICE

BOOK SHOP FOR SALE
 Patong OTOP book shop & Nanai book shop. 2 shops for 980,000 baht. Tel: 084-1705552.

BEAUTIFUL GUESTHOUSE
 For sale. 5-minute walk from Kata beach, new building. Has bar/restaurant, WiFi Internet, massage, laundry, seven beautiful rooms. The best-equipped guesthouse in Thailand. Buy the company, start business now in fully-booked high season. Tel: 081-8948446. Please see our website www.southernfriedrice.com

RESTAURANT
 Patong. Prime location. Excellent lease terms. Call Kevin. Tel: 084-7300190.

BASIC FOOD & BAR
 Specializing in retail & wholesale home-made pies. We supply throughout Phuket and in Pattaya. Western and Thai food, burgers, fish and chips, etc. Located in Chalong shop with 5 accom. rooms. 2 + 2 years lease cheap rent huge growth potential price includes all stock, training, recipes and loyal staff. Genuine reason for sale 995,000 baht. Please call us at Tel: 087-024- 5036.

KAMALA
 Restaurant & bar. Famous for pizza & Tex-mex. 40 seats, air conditioning, equipment, stock and furniture. For sale at 500,000 baht + rent 6,000 baht per month. Contact Tel: 086-2878966. Email: boomerkamala@hotmail.com

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 prices in Thailand! With guarantee! Tel: 081-0808557. Email: info@no1visa.com

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RANONG VISA RUN Leaves everyday. Big and spacious air-con bus. Only 1500 baht!!! Everything incl. With Personal DVD Player for just 100 baht extra!!!	PENANG VISA TRIP Weekly 3-day trip to Penang departs every Sunday night. Air-con bus, excellent hotel, food and snacks incl. Only 4800 baht!!!
---	---

ENGLISH STAFF: 083-1057-398 or 085-7855-389

Penang Visa Run

4,900 baht

Non-immigrant B and O visas (90-day stay, multiple entry)
60-day tourist visas (1, 2 or 3 entries)
4,900 baht - includes hotel, food and drink (NOT INCL VISA FEE)

Travel by 9-seat VIP minivan - movies, music, etc
 Departs from Tesco-Lotus on Sundays, 11:30 pm

Tel/Fax: 076-263475, 076-264476
Mobile: 081-892 9960

Month	September 2006	October 2006	November 2006	December 2006	January 2007
Date	3,10,17,24	1,8,15,29	5,12,19,26	17	7,14,21,28

VISA RUN TO RANONG
 Now every day. Tour bus or new minibus. Fully inclusive: boat, Myanmar visa fee, lunch, water, DVD, movies, music. Only 1,500 baht. Tel: 084-7457024.

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 8 models.
 For children's parties.
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 www.phuketjumpingcastles.com

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Let Subway cater to you with giant subs & party platters. Free Pepsi till Jan 30 '07. Tel: 076-349009, 081-5388314.

Miscellaneous for Sale

INTERNATIONAL TRANSLATION OF FOREIGN DRIVERS LICENSE

- < 5,000 baht, valid up to 10 years
- < 6,000 baht, valid up to 20 years
- < 100% legal
- < Sole agent in Thailand Internationally recognized & accredited.

Address: Baan Suan Place, 38/3 Moo 5, Soi Bang Yai, Phuket. Tel: 084-6068736 Fax: 076-209058. Email: iaa@intllicense.com www.intlicense.com

Personal Services

WE WILL TEACH YOU
 English, guaranteed! 5 lessons for the price of 4, will travel. Private/group lessons, 3 qualified ESL teachers. Tel: 084-9584255.

Personals

BACKGAMMON
 Retired businessman looking for backgammon players on Phuket Island. Please call for more information. Tel: 076-386113, 081-5778443.

Pets

ENGLISH BULLDOG
 Female English bulldog for sale. We have beautiful AKC English bulldog companions. Home-raised, vet examined, shots and dewormings current to age. Health guarantee. Shipping and delivery available. Contact. Tel: 415-415775303. Email: petbreed11@yahoo.com

Wheels & Motors

Saloon Cars



Mazda Tribute 3.0 V6

2004 model. White + two tone. Full options in top condition. Only 45,000km. Full insurance.

Price 850,000 baht.

Please contact
Tel: 087-2709093, 081-9562406. Email: s_oranut@hotmail.com

OPEL ASTRA

Hatchback. GL 5-door, auto, 1.6i, year 1995, green, good condition. 120,000 baht. Please contact for more information. Tel: 081-8920618.

TOYOTA CAMRY

2003 special edition. 30,000km only, mint condition, every extra, garaged. 950,000 baht. Tel: 081-5975091.

NISSAN CEFIRO 1992

For sale Nissan Cefiro 1992. In mint condition for sale at 150,000 baht. Power steering and windows. Leather seats. If interested, please contact me on my cellphone. Cheers!! Tel: 076-215829, 089-7764200.

LANCIA 1800 BETA

1975 Coupe. 1,800cc, 5-speed manual, original parts, good condition. 125,000 baht. Tel: 076-345018, 081-903-9862. Email: yourplace_06@yahoo.com

BMW FOR SALE

BMW 530i. 6,000km, like new inside and out. Excellent condition, have always used car cover. Has had 3 oil changes. Price: 2.7 million baht or best offer. Call for more details. Tel: 076-280709, 085-7950779.

TOYOTA COROLLA

DX, running condition, one-hand drive, very good looking, dark green, new cassette player. Only 54,000 baht. Call Sam for more information. Tel: 081-7375909, 086-687-4308.

NISSAN WINGROAD

Aussie owned, 2002, carry-boy, 5 speed, electric tinted windows, excellent condition, 65,000km. 230,000 baht. Tel: 084-8462978.

MERCEDES 280SE

LPG GAS! 2jz, automatic, full options, perfect condition. 215,000 baht. Tel: 086-9488139. Email: jefdejong@gmail.com

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1996 very good condition. Professional maintenance. 157,000km. 110,000 baht. Sale directly from owner. Tel: 087-2715780. Email: Peter.Czasch@t-online.de

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Fully-restored engine, paint, stainless bars, etc. Great island car. 150,000 baht firm. PX or trades. Please contact for more information. Tel: 087-8914882. Email: mail@SeftonHanley.com

SAAB 900 4-DOOR

195,000 baht. Model '93. Nice condition, 5 speed, aircon, 140,000km. Foreign owned for three years, very reliable. Best offer! Tel: 077-826355, 087-0403007. Email: tomcox100@hotmail.com

TOYOTA AVANZA

End of 2004, auto, full options, 62,000km. 445,000 baht. Please contact for more information. Tel: 084-8411438. Email: happyone@ji-net.com

SALE MAZDA 323

1993 model, blue color, 126,000km, 4 doors, auto gear, aircon, CD-radio player. Fixed price: 140,000 baht. Call after 6 pm. Please contact for more information. Tel: 084-8491037. Email: tomDEXTER2001@yahoo.de

TOYOTA COROLLA

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92 TOYOTA CORONA

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4 x 4s

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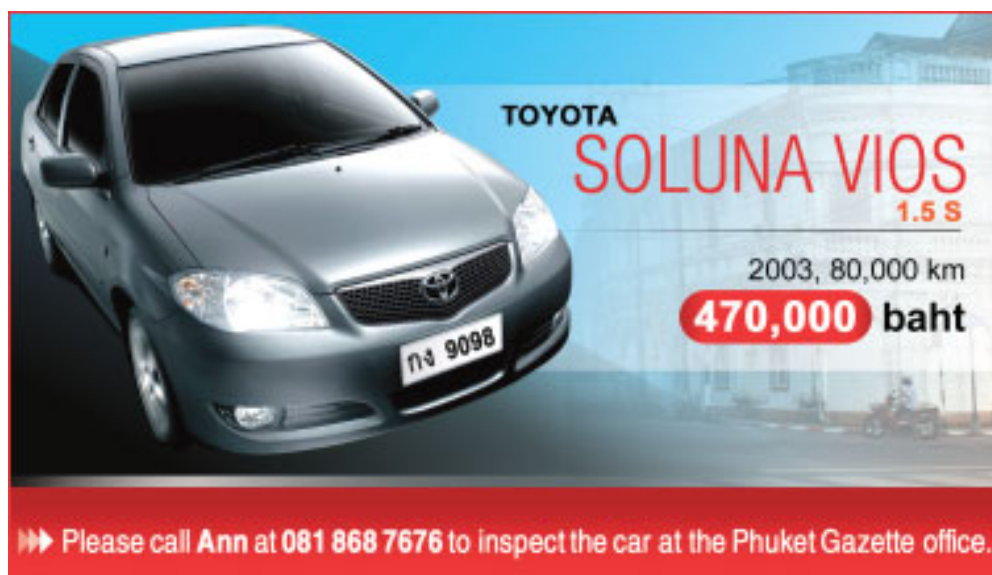
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