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Beaches hit by ugly 'red tide'

By Sompratch Saowakhon

PHUKET: Many of the island's beaches are experiencing algal blooms that are causing murky conditions commonly called "red tides", but marine biologists say the situation is not dangerous and sea conditions are expected to return to normal soon.

Suree Satapoomin, a researcher at the Phuket Marine Biological Center, told the *Gazette* that the blooms were first detected on west coast beaches, with the most common microbe detected being *Ceratium furca*, one of the 2,000 known species of *Dinoflagellata*.

Usually considered plants, *Dinoflagellata* are unique in that they also assume some animal characteristics, such as preying on smaller organisms for food.

Water samples containing *Ceratium furca* were taken from Koh Hei in mid-February. The microbe was subsequently found in samples taken at Kata, Kalim, Patong, Nai Yang and Kata Noi beaches, where poor water quality led researchers to suspect its presence.

K. Suree said that although algal blooms are common in Phuket this time of year, they usually dissipate in about a week. The blooms this year have already lasted longer than normal.

Samples taken have not revealed any dangerous accumulations of toxins sometimes associated with red tide, but K. Suree warned people with sensitive skin or allergies to take precautions as exposure can cause itchiness or a rash.

The blooms are the result of strong sunshine and relatively



BLOOMING BAY: Red algae has been seen at many beaches in Phuket, including Patong (above), but scientists report that it is normal growth and does not contain harmful toxins. Swimmers with sensitive skin, however, should be careful as rashes can develop.

calm sea conditions, coupled with high levels of phosphorus and nitrogen in the water, both the result of "human activities", she said.

Divers descending greater than 10 meters are advised to wear insulating wet suits, as water temperatures at depth are unusually low at the moment, she said.

As cold water tends to harbor more nutrients, this factor might be fueling the algal bloom in shallow areas, she suggested.

The algal blooms are expected to dissipate soon, with conditions at Nai Yang and Koh Hei already back to normal, she said.

Blooms of *Ceratium furca*

along Thailand's gulf coast are common because beaches there are flushed only by one tide daily, compared with two tides on Phuket beaches, she said.

Results released by the PMBC also revealed the return of the bright *Enteromorpha* in Patong Bay in January and February, along with concentrations of the diatom *Chaetoceros* of about 5 million cells per liter of water.

Enteromorpha is the bright green seaweed that has been found in Patong in years past. Its growth in the bay was partly attributed to Patong Bay containing high levels of nitrogen and phosphorous, two main constituents of human waste.

Patong one-way is here to stay

By Supanun Supawong

PHUKET: The one-way traffic system in Patong will stay after the 90-day trial period is over, the Superintendent of Kathu District Police Station told the *Gazette*.

Col Teeraphol Thipjareon said the system would definitely remain in place, though with improvements to meet the demands of people in Patong. To this end, a survey will be carried out to gauge public opinion and collect suggestions, he added.

The survey will be organized by the Phuket Tourist Association with the help of staff and students from Prince of Songkla University, Phuket Campus (PSU).

PTA Deputy Chairman Sarayuth Mallam told the *Gazette*, "We have recruited academics from PSU to create the survey questions and produce 1,000 copies of the forms. Students will then distribute the forms to people in Patong, including Kathu District Police, Patong Municipality officers, hotels, drivers, local businessmen in Patong as well as some people in Phuket City."

As the forms will be in Thai language, PSU students will interview foreign tourists in English to get their views on the issue.

"We will ask if people think the new system has increased or decreased road safety. There will be a space on the form where people can submit their own ideas and suggestions," he said.

"When all the forms have been collected, the academics will analyze the results and write conclusions. We expect this to be ready by the end of the month. A meeting will then be held by Kathu District Police to announce and discuss the results," K. Sarayuth said.

Arrests for illegal firearms on the rise

PHUKET: Twenty-five people were arrested for possession of unlicensed firearms from February 1 to 28, compared with 10 arrests during the same period in January, according to the latest crime statistics released by Phuket Provincial Police.

Gambling again drew the most arrests with 260 people charged.

Fifty-seven people were arrested for drug-related cases. Cases involving *ya bah* (methamphetamine) totaled 31, with 25 arrests made and 593.5 pills seized.

Fifteen people were arrested for sniffing glue or paint thinners, 11 for possession of marijuana with 737.46 grams seized, and three for possession of Ecstasy.

Four arrests involved *krathom*, with 102 leaves and one bottle of *krathom*-based intoxicant confiscated by police.

Eighty-six cases of theft were reported, including 12 stolen motorcycles and three cars. Arrests were made in 39 cases.

Four murders were reported, with arrests made for three of them. Eight arrests were made in the five cases of attempted murder reported.

There were 12 reports of assault with arrests made in eight of those cases.

Two rapes were reported with arrests made in both cases.

Koh Sireh blackout

PHUKET: The Phuket Provincial Electricity Authority (PPEA) has announced a scheduled blackout in order to continue its work on high-voltage power lines east of Phuket City to Koh Sireh on March 23.

The blackout, which will occur from 9 am to 5 pm, will affect the following locations:

Sri Suthat Rd, from Soi Kheha Chumchon to Pleumsuk Beach, including Wanich Rd, Soi Honsaithong, Baan Laem Nga and Baan Laem Tokkae.

ESPN stars to play charity golf tourney



Andy Penders will be Phuket to raise money for the Life Home Project.

CHERNG TALAY: A host of ESPN STAR Sports football broadcasters will visit Phuket March 23 to 25 in a fundraising drive for the Life Home Project.

The lineup of familiar faces includes Andy Penders, PJ Roberts and Sharkee Tan of *Football Crazy*; John Dykes of *Football Focus*; Andrew Leci of *Here We Go*; former Birmingham City player Paul Masefield; former player and commentator Shebby Sing; former Hong Kong Rangers footballer Derek Currie; pundit Jamie Reeves; and live English Premier League match commentator Charlie Webster.

On March 24 the celebrities will join donors in a golf tournament, and each celebrity will join a different team for the quiz game in the evening.

Golf and dinner packages are available to Laguna Phuket Golf Club members at 5,000 baht per person, or 6,500 baht for non-members.

The charity dinner and quiz night will be limited to 100 guests with dinner-only tickets inclusive of wine and beer available at 2,500 baht per person.

Proceeds from the golf tourney and dinner will go to the Life Home Project, which provides support for HIV-positive mothers and their children by providing a place to live and training them with skills so they can make a living.

Tickets are available at the Laguna Phuket Golf Club pro-shop.

For more information or to book tickets call 076-324374.

'Ko Noi' gunman nabbed at wedding

By Gazette Staff

PHUKET: Almost a year after well-known Phuket businessman Preecha "Ko Noi" Kraitas was gunned down in Rawai, police in Petchaburi arrested the alleged gunman at a wedding reception on March 9.

Lt Col Somyot Chimplee of Petchaburi Provincial Police told the *Gazette* that Petchaburi native Samrerng Klaising was arrested as he stood in a wedding reception line waiting to wish good luck to the newlyweds.

The bride was an ex-girlfriend of the suspect, he said.

"We got a phone call from Crime Suppression Division informing us that Samrerng was at the wedding, which was held behind Wat Khao Takrao in Petchaburi's Baan Laem District.

"In undercover clothing, myself and other officers rushed to the wedding. There we found the suspect, who was looking nervous as he stood in the reception line.

"Pretending to be guests, we walked up to him. When he

sensed something was wrong, he went for his gun, but it was too late, because another officer had locked up his arms from behind just in the nick of time.

"All this happened with over a hundred wedding guests watching," said Col Somyot.

A search of the suspect found a 9mm pistol and 15 rounds of ammunition.

"We arrested him about 11:30 am and drove him down to Chalong Police Station that evening. I heard that his bail request to Phuket Provincial Court was denied," said Col Somyot.

"However, we have already notified Phuket Police and Phuket Provincial Court asking for him to be transferred back to Baan Laem Police Station if he is granted bail in the future.

"He is still wanted by police there for carrying a gun in public," he added.

Samrerng denied charges of conspiracy to murder and carrying an unlicensed firearm, though he did admit that he had driven to Phuket and was in the province at the time of the murder.

"He has never before been charged with murder, though he was arrested in Petchaburi about a year ago for carrying a firearm without having a license on his person.

"He was later released after he paid the fine," Col Somyot added.

Samrerng was named by Phuket Police as the man who opened fire on K. Preecha as he was driving his Jeep Cherokee along Wiset Rd with his wife and nine-year-old son.

K. Preecha, who owned Fisherman's Way housing estate and Phuket Shooting Range in Rawai, was hit twice in the head with 9mm bullets and later died in hospital.

His wife and son survived the attack.

Two other suspects, Pol Capt Wanchana Polpalangkul and Pol Sgt Pongsak Kosiratanapibal, both formerly attached to the Phuket's elite Special Operations Unit, were suspended from duty because of their alleged involvement in the murder and were released on bail pending trial.

Wanchana is accused of organizing the killing, while Pongsak is accused of identifying K. Preecha for Samrerng. A fourth man, alleged to be Samrerng's driver, remains at large.

Govt dedicates 238 rai for sports complex

MAI KHAO: The Treasury Department has signed an agreement with the Phuket Sports and Recreation Development (SRD) Office allowing 238 rai of government land in Mai Khao to be used for a sports training complex costing 1.4 billion baht.

The first phase of the project includes an administration building, a sport science center, a dormitory and a car park.

Work is expected to begin next year under a 15-million-baht budget from the Ministry of Tourism and Sports.

The Phuket office of the Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT) is currently drawing up a budget proposal. Other sports facilities, including gymnasiums and outdoor sports fields, will be built with funding from the SAT.

Additional funding is expected to come from the private sector.

In a proposal submitted January 2006, the Phuket SRD Office intended the sports complex to include an indoor stadium for basketball, volleyball, badminton and martial arts; outdoor tennis and basketball courts; outdoor pool with spectator seating; shooting range; facilities for "extreme sports"; and a boathouse for sailing and water sports.

- Janyaporn Morel

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Phuket suffering water shortages – ODPM Chief

By Supanun Supawong

PHUKET: The Phuket Provincial Office of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (ODPM) has identified 43 areas in Phuket that are expected to suffer water shortages in upcoming weeks with some areas already trucking in emergency water supplies.

Some areas in Thalang are expected to run dry within days, said Phuket ODPM Chief Aroon Kerdsom.

“We know from previous years where the trouble spots will be, so we are monitoring these areas closely and have arranged with local administrative bodies to provide both potable and non-potable water to people in those areas,” he said.

The ODPM has already distributed some 180,000 liters of water free of charge.

People who run out of water should contact their local administration organization or district office to arrange for water to be supplied to their homes, he added.

K. Aroon told the *Gazette* that Pa Khlok in Thalang is the area of greatest concern to offi-

cial. “Thalang District has the greatest risk. Thirty-three of the risk areas we identified are located there. Many trouble spots are in coastal areas with limited groundwater resources,” said K. Aroon.

He added that shortages were expected to begin in some of these areas within days.

Shortages are expected to be less severe in Kathu and Muang Districts, both of which have large areas supplied by municipal water piped from Bang Wad Reservoir in Kathu as well from tin mine lagoons.

The desalination plant in Karon is expected to solve chronic water shortages in Kata-Karon and boost supplies to water-hungry Patong, which suffers shortages for much of the year.

Koh Sireh was also identified as a risk area. Rassada Tambon Administration Organization is preparing to deal with shortages there, K. Aroon said.

In order to establish a municipal supply in Thalang, the Royal Irrigation Department is building a dam and reservoir at Bang Niew Dum in Thalang. Work on the project, designed to

hold 7.2 million cubic meters of water, is expected to be completed in May, he added.

Although Thalang is the only district in Phuket that does not have provincial government supply, last year the provincial government spent 66 million baht on piping water from private tin mine ponds in Thalang six kilometers south to a tin mine in Kathu to supplement a Phuket Provincial Waterworks Office reserves.

However, there has been no public outcry from residents who rely on groundwater supplies there.

In a typical year, Phuket has about 2,500 millimeters of rain. Rainfall is lightest from December to March, which coincides with the high season for tourism when demand for water is highest.

So far Phuket has been able to avoid a major drought. In 2005 the downturn in tourism lowered demand enough to prevent Bang Wad reservoir from running dry, while 2006 had an unusually large amount of rain.

“There is currently enough water in Bang Wad dam to last until June,” said K. Aroon.



GORGEOUS: Saowakhon Saetia stuffs in another hamburger during the Eat-A-Thon final.

Guts and glory

PATONG: The champion of Jungceylon’s first Charity Eat-A-Thon, held from March 9 to 11, is Brazilian Moises Huerta. He downed two large hamburgers, a personal-size pizza, three donuts, a pitcher of beer and a bottle of water. The massive meal earned him 10,000 baht in winnings.

The Eat-A-Thon collected about 20,000 baht in donations to help buy lunches for poor children at Baan Sai Nam Yen School.

The final round had seven competitors. Phuket local Jirawat Musikkarat was the first to finish, but he was disqualified after being sick on stage, making room for Mr Huerta to win by finishing next – and keeping the meal down.

Chalong policeman’s wife arrested for hiring assassins

CHALONG: Col Chalit Kaewyarat, Superintendent of Chalong Police Station, on March 13 confirmed that the wife of a Chalong police officer has been arrested for allegedly hiring four men to kill 44-year-old construction contractor Phichai Wanlayapetch, who was gunned down after dropping his child off at a Chalong day care center on February 26.

Col Chalit declined to name the officer, but confirmed that the officer is still on active duty.

“Yes, the person arrested is the wife of a police officer stationed at Chalong Police Station, but I cannot tell you his name

because he is not involved in the murder [investigation].

“He has therefore not been reprimanded and he is still an active officer here,” Col Chalit said.

Chalong Police Station Duty Inspector Lt Col Chokchai Sutthimak told the *Gazette* that the woman charged is Yupphadee Thongnin, 45.

“[We believe] the motive for the killing is that K. Phichai took an illegal loan from K. Yupphadee and probably didn’t pay her back.”

The four men were arrested within three hours after the killing, but refused to identify the person who had hired them to kill

K. Phichai, Col Chokchai said.

A relative of K. Phichai later informed the police of the illegal loan from K. Yupphadee, he added.

“K. Yupphadee denies she had anything to do with the killing, but we have charged her with hiring the suspects to kill K. Phichai.

“Her case is now with the Phuket Provincial Court,” said Col Chokchai.

Gov moves to evict Chalong encroachers

CHALONG: The province is taking steps to evict encroachers from government land off Soi Songkul, where three homes were badly damaged last November in a bombing believed to have been motivated by a land rights dispute.

Tawicha Chaithong, who heads the Phuket Administrative and Justice Enhancement Group, said there are three areas of greatest concern: Klong Mudong Moo 1 Chalong and Moo 1 Vichit; the area near Soi Songkul where the November bombings took place; and a third area that was part of a tin mining concession.

The three areas combined cover about 90 rai.

A new committee chaired by Phuket Governor Niran Ka-

layanamit will be formed to oversee the matter.

The panel will issue letters to 121 houses in those areas, informing residents that they have just 60 days from the date of the announcement to submit title deeds and other documents to prove their land rights.

After the evidence has been reviewed, the committee will decide what to do about homes on government land, K. Tawicha said.

The process will be made clearer later on a date yet to be set, he added.

Residents confident they can prove land ownership can submit their documents before the official announcement, he said. – *Semacote Suganya*



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Few people have given more thought to the seasonal nature of Phuket's tourism trade than Phuket Tourist Association (PTA) Vice-President Panu Maswongsa, who says that the growing number of resorts and guesthouses on the island is shortening the "high season" for most hotel owners.

Despite never-ending campaigns to develop new markets and offer incentives to entice more visitors during the low season, European tourists remain Phuket's bread-and-butter market – and the bulk of them visit when it is winter in Europe.

Strenuous efforts to promote Phuket as a low season destination in other markets have not done much to change this, K. Panu told the *Gazette*. "In fact, the high season in Phuket has become shorter in recent years. It now lasts only from December until March. We never see 100% occupancy island-wide now, because the number of rooms has increased while arrival figures remain the same," he said.

Phuket also faces increasing competition during the high season from other destinations in the region, including Vietnam and other destinations here in Thailand, he said.

Given existing transport links, it would be impossible to keep all of the island's hotel rooms full during the low season even if the demand was there, he noted.

"We need new source markets for the low season, which is much longer than the high season and often sees occupancy rates drop to as low as 20% to 30%," he said.

The ability of hotels to attract tourists during low season depends to a large degree on a hotel's marketing strategy – especially its ability to identify niche markets and attract tour groups, he said.

Phuket Governor Niran Kalayanamit told the *Gazette* that this year's high season has been

Hotels barely surviving the low season slump

Phuket's high season for tourism opens, with much fanfare, on November 1 each year. However, there is no firm date for when the high season ends and the long low season takes over.

Here the *Gazette* interviews tourism industry experts and hotel operators about strategies for dealing with the low season downturn in business.

a good one, with top-notch events such as the Johnnie Walker Classic golf tournament pulling in players as well as their families, friends and support teams – and golf fans.

A group of executives from Hong Kong's Dragonair who visited the island in January told Gov Niran that demand for direct flights and charters to Phuket was high, especially during peak periods such as Chinese New Year.

"Signs indicate that all is well in the hotel industry, with some hotels reporting advance booking throughout the year. However, we still need to develop new markets, which is why I will be attending the International Tourism Bourse (ITB) in Berlin," Gov Niran told the *Gazette* before his departure for the world's largest tourism trade show, which this year was held from March 7 to 11.

ITB will be followed by "roadshows" later in the year promoting Phuket tourism in locations the province is hoping to develop as new sources of low season tourists, including Romania, the Czech Republic, Russia and the Middle East, he added.

However, Gov Niran noted that the province would never "take for granted" countries such as Korea, Sweden, Australia and

Britain, which are, in order, the greatest source nations of tourists to Phuket.

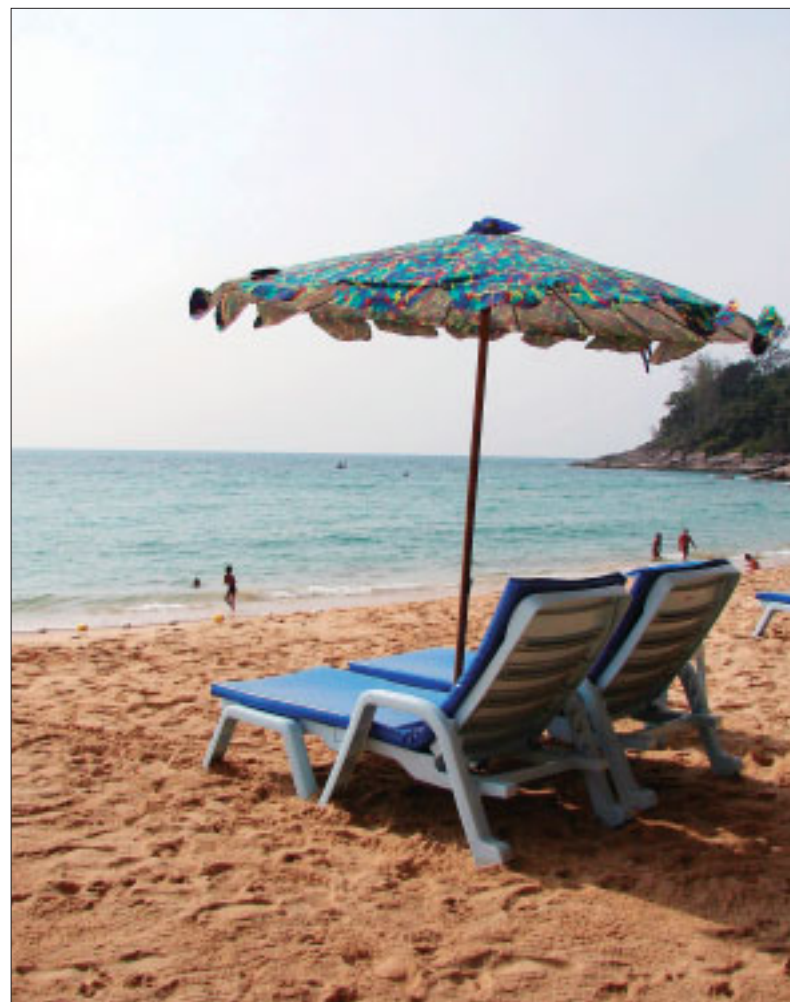
To see if hotel operators shared the Governor's rosy outlook, the *Gazette* spoke with Somsirinart Tungkulpanich, a Bangkok native who manages the Kasalong Phuket Resort at Nai Yang beach.

The 16-room resort, now in its second year, like most Phuket hotels offers steep discounts to keep its rooms filled during the low season. Rooms advertised at 5,400 baht nightly during high season peak periods are discounted to just 2,500 baht during the low season, K. Somsirinart said.

A road widening project that spoiled the beach view near the resort had cost the hotel about 20% of its customers during the low season, with many guests moving to resorts in Nai Thon, she said.

Some guests sent emails asking about the project when trying to plan out their next trip to Thailand, she added. "However, I think the next low season [2008] will be better than this year," she said optimistically.

During this high season, the hotel reached 100% occupancy only during the two-week holiday



WELL, IT IS PRIVATE... Hotels near beaches like this in Nai Thon are finding it hard to fill their rooms in the low season.

period straddling Christmas and New Year, she said.

"But high season occupancy rates are gradually improving as more people get to know Nai Yang," she said.


"We have only 11 employees, so we cannot ask them to go on leave during the low season because we still have some guests. Being located at Nai Yang beach, we have to accept low season occupancy of 30% to 40%

because there aren't many activities going on in the area. For the most part it is just a place to relax," she said.

"The best thing about Nai Yang is that tourists can swim at the beach here year round, but this fact is not enough to attract many guests during our quietest months – September and October – when it rains all day," she said.

Another entrepreneur who thought it out during the low season in Nai Yang is 45-year-old Malee Petcharat, owner of the Batik Seafood Restaurant, named as such because it was built to replace a batik shop she once ran at the same location until it was destroyed by the tsunami.



Business is so slow at Nai Yang in the low season that many businesses choose to close down, waiting until November to re-



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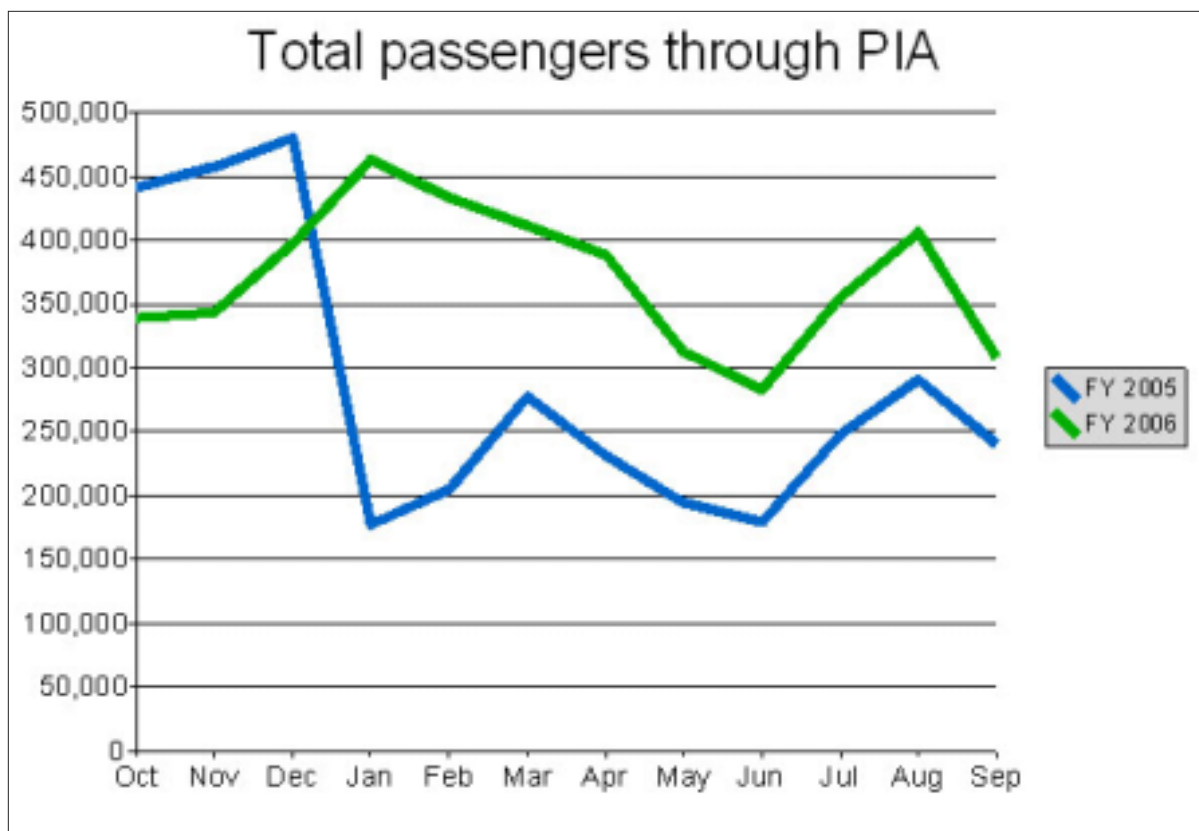
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SPOT THE TREND: The total number of tourists passing through Phuket International Airport (PIA) for fiscal year 2005 and 2006 shows a repeated slump in June and July. The figures for October 2004 to September 2005 also include the post-tsunami slowdown in tourists. The number of tourists passing through is determined by adding the departures and embarkments at the airport.

open, she said.

“But we never close in the low season, even though the number of customers is halved. Most of them are European tourists who want something to do while they wait for a connecting flight. That’s because this beach is near the airport.

“We don’t see a lot of Asian tourists here. Our income in the low season period is just barely enough to cover expenses, but we never lay off our staff. We also keep our prices the same, never increasing them during the high season,” she added.

“I think this coming low season will not be too bad for beaches better known than Nai Yang, but it will be bad for us. We really suffer here during the low season and would like the government to do something to promote the area, but we don’t know who to ask,” she said.

At Nai Thon beach, just a

few kilometers south of Nai Yang, the low season situation is not much better, hotel owners say.

Choosak Jeasakul, who owns a “no name” guesthouse on the beach there, told the *Gazette* that December and January were the only months his nine-room establishment can turn a good profit.

With just two employees, the hotel has rooms available year-round at rates ranging from 1,000 baht to 2,000 baht a night. Most of his guests are repeat customers from Austria, Switzerland, Germany and other European countries.

“The main problem is that it is too dangerous to swim here except for those two months... Nai Thon is such a beautiful beach, but its tourism potential is limited by this. If you try to swim here in the monsoon season, it’s very easy to drown, and this directly effects our occupancy.”

Like many other guesthouses in Nai Thon, occupancy is virtually nil during the low season, yet the guesthouse remains open.

“During low season we maintain the rooms. However, it is a good thing that this is not my primary business and that I have owned the land from the beginning and don’t need to pay rent on it,” he said.

“I heard that the government is trying to push low season tourism to Phuket in places like Dubai, where the people like rain. If we can grab this group it might help Phuket, because there sure is plenty of rain here for them to enjoy during our monsoon season,” he said.

Unlike the sleepy coastline to the north, Patong draws tourists all year long. Not many resorts there close down completely for the low season, so with more than 10,000 guest rooms in

more than 210 registered accommodation establishments, competition for guests is fierce.

Apiyapatara Pimboonyathikarn, receptionist at the 20-unit Patong Village Suites, said that throughout most of the low season only about five rooms are filled at the resort, with most business coming from walk-in guests taking advantage of special low-season rates starting at just 800 baht. Rates advertised on their website are 1,800 baht a night during the “normal” high season – and 2,300 baht a night during the peak holiday period.

“It’s a family business that has been open for about five or six years. Sometimes our staff take leave during the low season, but we can take care of everything by ourselves,” she said.

In Karon, CS Guest House Manager Nusara Julapong said business at the 13-room establishment was so slow last year that they decided to close. “Room rates are 700 to 800 baht on average, which includes air conditioning, hot water and television. It’s a family business that can be run by just two people.

“But during low season we think it’s a waste of time to stay open if just one or two rooms are occupied. Most of the guests are FIT [‘free independent tourists’, not on group or package tours] from Scandinavia and England. If we get no advance bookings this year we will close again. We will know by May. Some low season tourists try to get us to lower rates to 500 baht a night, but we find it just isn’t worth the effort at that price,” she said.

At Anan House in Karon, where prices for an air-conditioned room drop to 800 baht a night in the low season from 1,000 baht a night in the high season, a security guard told the *Gazette* that he wasn’t sure if the 53-room establishment would remain open during the low season.

In an effort to get a handle on just how many businesses were closing for the low season,

the *Gazette* contacted the Phuket Provincial Business Development Office. Veerachai Tantiwathana-vallop, director of the office, said that his agency did not keep figures for how many small- and medium-sized businesses closed down for the low season.

K. Veerachai said that his office only registers business openings and permanent closures – not seasonal ones. However, he doesn’t see a significant rise in the number of business closings on the island during low season. “From what I can see, we don’t really have a low season. There are still many tourists coming here year round,” he said.

Jan Jacobs, who runs the 18-room Kamala Dreams resort, told the *Gazette* about his strategy for pulling in guests during the low season involves crafty use of on-line booking services.

“In the off season – or the green season as the Tourism Authority of Thailand likes to call it – we small operators really depend on the publicity made by our big brothers, as our budgets do not allow for big campaigns.

“But as most of us depend on Internet booking companies, such as Asia Web Direct [Phuket.com and Latestays.com] and Sawadee.com, we can come up with special offers anytime we want. Once we have a direct contact with the client, we can start giving discounts to counteract the “two weeks for the price of one” approach used by [some larger hotel groups].

“Thus, while the big brothers draw attention to Phuket, we sit and wait, discounting when needed, and making special offers for late bookers,” he explained.

Like many hotel operators, Mr Jacobs tries to find good use for the extra time he finds himself with during the low season doldrums. “There’s not much else to do, which gives us plenty of time to work on our golf handicaps,” he said.

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Queer News

Fists of fury

Not used to being on the receiving end of beatings, officers in Lop Buri's Baan Pong District Police Station were given a nasty shock when a speed-crazed former World Boxing Association (WBA) flyweight world champion contender stormed into the station in frenzy in the morning of March 5.

Police told reporters that Sgt Maj Ithipol Sawatdee was sitting at the station's front desk as normal when Somchai "Sin Sor Phlenjit" Sanguanwong burst in in an agitated state.

When asked what he wanted, Somchai shouted at the unfortunate Sergeant Major, comparing him to a male sexual organ before suddenly rushing forward and punching him so hard in the face that he fell off his chair.

Still not satisfied, Somchai laid into Sgt Maj Ithipol until he was left with a fractured arm and a broken finger. At that point Lt Col Surin Saengprethum came in to see what the kerfuffle was all about.

Somchai quickly turned his wrath toward the colonel and began punching him in the face until he went down.

Recovering from the initial

shock of anyone daring to enter the lions' den, 10 officers charged Somchai and managed to subdue him and throw him in a cell.

When Somchai had calmed down a little, police got a urine sample from him to test for the presence of drugs.

Sure enough, the sample turned purple, showing a positive result. Police believe that Somchai had been taking *ya bah* (methamphetamine).

Police said that earlier in the day, Somchai had beaten up Yupha Sanguanwong, 61, his own mother, until she had blood coming out of her ears and her face was covered in bruises.

From their investigations, police learned that Somchai had previously been a professional Thai and Queensbury rules boxer but had to stop fighting after becoming addicted to *ya bah*.

After leaving the ring, he became an air conditioner mechanic.

Police charged Somchai with grievous bodily harm on a government officer carrying out his duty.

Baan Pong Police did not reveal why they thought Somchai had decided to launch his single-handed raid on their station.

Source: Khao Sod

STAMPS

Thailand Post to launch 2007 Red Cross stamp

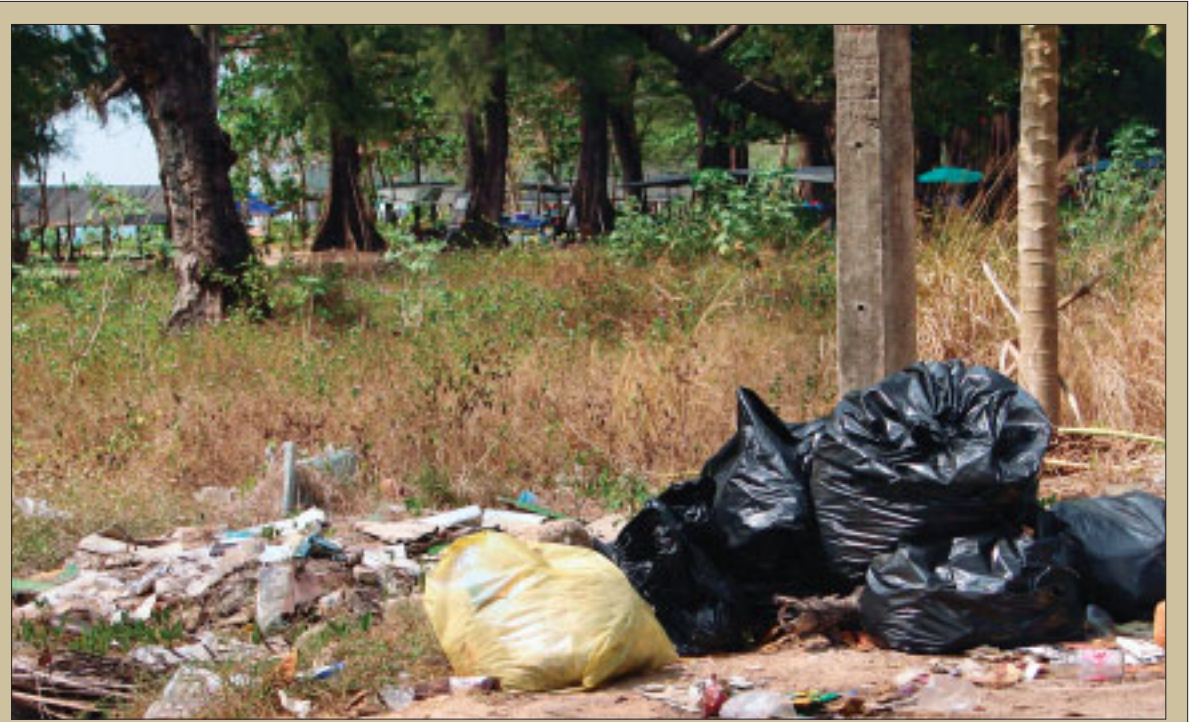
Thailand Post will launch its Red Cross 2007 stamp on March 29. One million copies of the three-baht, 45-by-27-millimeter stamp will be printed.

The stamp depicts the Mahidol Memorial Building. In 1950, HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej dedicated the Mahidol Memorial Building for research and production of the BCG vaccine to protect against tuberculosis.

The chapter of the Thai Red Cross at the Mahidol Memorial Building also receives support



from the World Health Organization and the Danish government for planning, training and production equipment.



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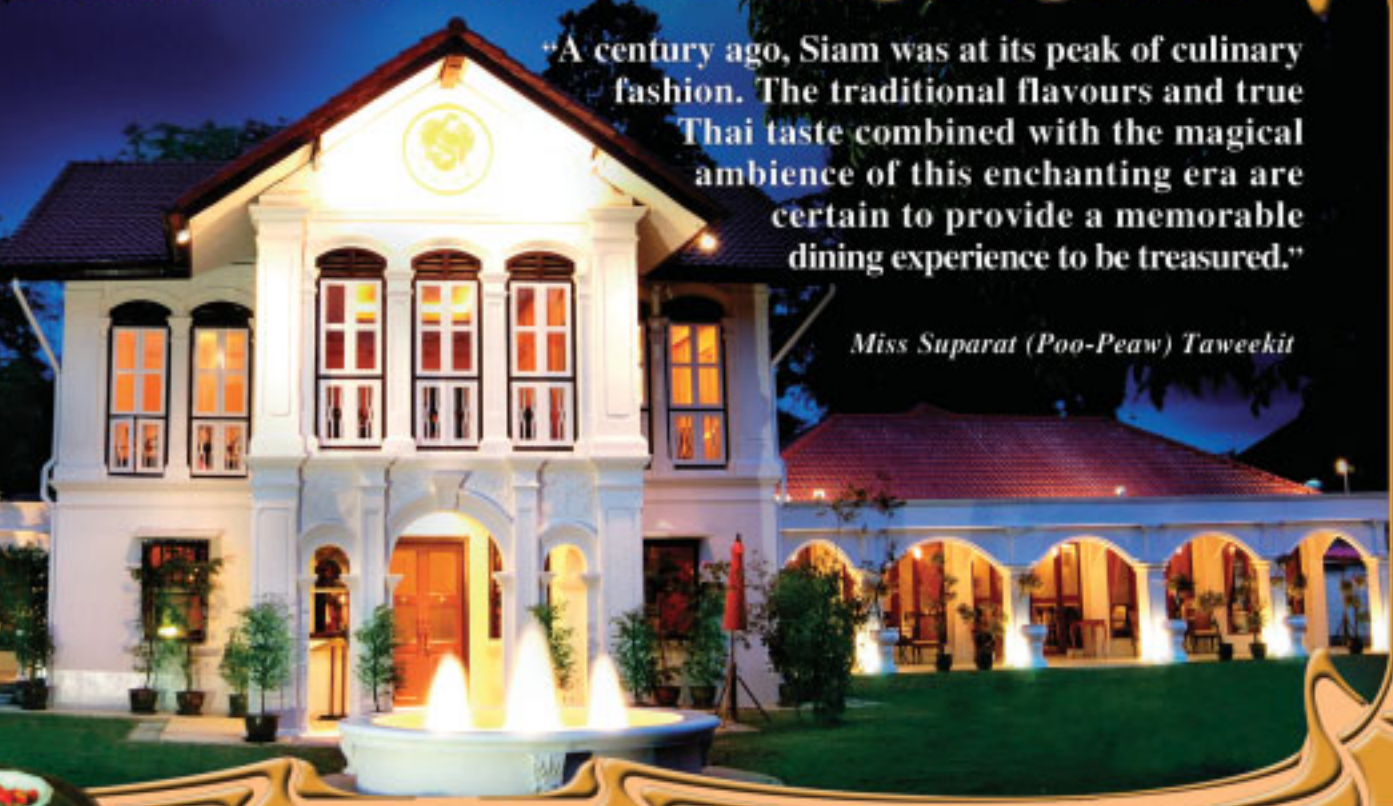
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FROM THE GULF OF THAILAND

By Barry Singleton

Call for more volunteers to join police on Samui

The Tourist Police hope to increase the number of foreign volunteer officers on Koh Samui following the success of the initial volunteer program.

Foreign police volunteers on Samui are checked through their embassy before embarking on a four-day training program. Even though they work for no pay and must buy their own equipment, the response from the local expatriate community has been strong and there are now both men and women volunteers helping police in all the busy tourist centers.

A special Tourist Police box in Chaweng recently extended its opening hours due to high demand. The volunteers working there are mainly called upon to help with minor problems, such as disputes with taxi drivers and car hire firms or cases of petty theft.

Tourists on Samui have reacted positively to the scheme, and seem happy to have foreign security personnel who can speak their language and understand the local system. Some people, however, feel the police are using volunteers to improve their image instead of investing the necessary resources to train more Thai police officers.

Effective cleanup: The Koh Samui authorities are planning to combat pollution on the island by producing Effective Micro-Organisms (EM) using organic waste such as branches, leaves, crop waste, fruit and food scraps.

EM are microbial populations known to counteract the damaging bacteria found in wastewater and other pollution produced by private houses, busi-



FOREIGNERS WELCOME: Tourist police box in Chaweng.

nesses and local industries. EM can be applied in a range of settings to treat dirty water, deodorize bad smells emanating from drains, clean toilet tanks and even remove dirt from swimming pools.

Pimporn Thongsuk, the Deputy Mayor of Koh Samui Municipality, recently accepted a donation of 100 special water tanks for EM production on the island. The tanks have a capacity of 120 liters each and were provided by the local Tesco-Lotus supermarket.

It is hoped that the new policy will have a positive effect on the island's rapidly depreciating environment. Samui burns about 140 tons of waste per day in an incinerator, but as the amount of trash increases, new methods of dealing with pollution are desperately needed.

The new project will also involve passing knowledge and

equipment for EM production to island residents and businesses, thereby encouraging local people to become involved and to apply EM to their own waste.

Dane 'escapes assault': Koh Samui's District Court is to hear the case of a 22-year-old Danish woman who claims she narrowly escaped sexual assault when a Thai man she met in Chaweng followed her home.

The woman told police that she met and chatted with a young Thai man in a Chaweng bar on March 3. In the early hours of the morning the man offered to take her back to the hotel in a taxi, but when she tried to say goodbye, he refused to leave and attempted to rape her, she claimed.

The woman said that she managed to escape and went straight to the Tourist Police to report the incident. They took her into protective custody and later

arrested the man, who according to police admitted "trying it on" with her but insisted there was no sexual contact.

The Samui court says it will make a decision after hearing both parties' description of the events.

Koh Tao tip-off: Police on Koh Tao uncovered a major drug-dealing operation when they raided Hampy Dash Bungalow resort February 13 following a tip off.

Officers seized 20 kilograms of raw opium, five packs of pressed marijuana totaling 3.2 kilograms, as well as five plastic bags of hashish, 4.3kg of magic mushrooms and two sets of weighing scales during the raid.

They also arrested Amarin Changkong, 23, and Dararat Sangrit, 30, both from Surat Thani province, on charges of possessing controlled drugs with the intent to sell.

According to police, the couple later admitted to selling drugs to foreign tourists on Koh Tao and said the hashish generally earned them 38,000 baht per kilogram.

Thai Gulf closure: Annual fishing restrictions in the Gulf of Thailand have now come into effect and will last until May 15.

The period between February and May is egg-laying season for many commercial sea creatures such as Mackerel in the Gulf of Thailand. For this reason, fishing restrictions are imposed in the waters off Prachuap Khiri Khan, Chumphon and Surat Thani during this period every year.

This "Close the Gulf" policy bans the use of trawl nets and other bulk fishing methods so as to allow fish stocks to replenish.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries says the policy means fishermen can double their total annual catch, which means an overall increase of 48,000 tons worth about one billion baht.

The fishing ban is monitored by the Marine Police as every year there are reports of large commercial fishing boats ignoring the restrictions and trawling around fish breeding grounds, which kills off the juvenile population and can eventually lead to low yields for local fishermen.

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Five fishermen died and two were hospitalized after inhaling poisonous gases produced by rotting fish while they were cleaning the fish hold of their boat off Satun on March 6.

The five dead, all crew on fishing boat *PSF 1858*, were identified by police as Chachirin Chusri, 29; Chaiya Raksamoe-wong, 35; Keng Changyao, 31; and two men identified only as "Panya" and "Mai".

Maj Jakraphan Khongkaow, an Investigating Officer from Satun Muang District Police Station, said *PSF 1858* set out from Satun on March 5 to fish around Koh Tarutao and Koh Klang. Still at sea the following day, the five men went below to clean out the fish hold but were overcome by noxious gases.

They lost consciousness, collapsed in the knee-deep water and died, Maj Jakraphan said.

Kongthai Singasai, 32, and Sanlai Singasai, 41, who went into the hold to see what had happened to the other crewmen, managed to get out before being overcome by the fumes. They were later taken to Satun Hospital and treated for breathing difficulties.

Thongthaen Letlatthaphon, a consultant of the Thai Fishermen's Association, said that gas from rotting fish includes ammonia and hydrogen sulphide, the result of proteins breaking down. The gas has an unpleasant smell and if inhaled can lead to breathing problems. Found in all fishing boats, concentrations of the gas can build up to dangerous levels if the boat's waste disposal system is inefficient, K. Thongthaen said.

Prof Saming Kaojareon, Head of Ramathibodi Hospital's Poison Center, said fishermen dying from inhaling toxic gases produced by rotting fish is a fairly common occurrence.

When first encountering the gas, fishermen detect a bad smell, but quickly get used to it. After a



SMILE! YOU'VE KILLED ANOTHER ONE: Villagers on March 6 show an Irrawaddy dolphin caught in a net set for Mekong giant catfish in Songkhla Lake – one of five lakes in the world that are home to Irrawaddy dolphins. Researchers are worried about the dolphins' future there as six of the animals have been caught in nets in the lake in the past five months.

Five killed by fumes from rotting fish

while dizziness sets in and death can follow in just a few minutes, he said.

Songkhla assault: A 30-year-old woman on her way to tap rubber was sexually assaulted by two masked men in Songkhla's Chana District early on March 5. Police believe the woman knows her attackers and that they aimed for her to be disgraced by the act.

The victim, who police identified only by the pseudonym "Noi", said that she was driving her motorbike to a rubber plantation before dawn when she noticed two men wearing balaclavas trailing her on a motorcycle.

Thinking they were other villagers on their way to work, she was not alarmed.

When she reached a quiet spot the two men overtook her and then pulled their motorbike in front of her, forcing her to stop. The men ordered her onto their bike, and then drove to a deserted spot.

Along the way her abductors threatened to kill her if she dared to shout for help, she reported.

The men then bound her hands and feet and ordered her to perform oral sex on both of them. When they had both finished, the men ran back to their motorcycle and fled, leaving her tied up, she said.

"After my attackers had fled, I wriggled around until the ties came off and then went to find help. Eventually a villager drove past and took me to Chana Hospital," Noi said.

Police believe that the perpetrators knew the victim well as they knew what time she would leave home to go rubber tapping. Police are now questioning the

victim to try and find out if she had any disputes with anyone or if she knew of anyone who had a grudge against her.

Ransom man: A 15-year-old girl in a karaoke bar in Pattani was taken hostage at gunpoint by a security guard who had fallen in love with her.

The man, claiming that he had paid the girl's mother 50,000 baht for permission to be with the girl, claimed that the mother had reneged on the deal by refusing to allow him to see her.

About 11:30 am on March 5, Col Somjit Nasomyon, Superintendent of Pattani Muang District Police Station, received a report that a girl had been taken hostage at gunpoint at Luk Mo Karaoke.

At the scene, Col Somjit learned that the hostage was called Mo, the daughter of the bar owner. The man holding her was Kittiphong Sinlaparatsamee, 40, a security guard at a local car showroom.

Col Somjit tried to negotiate the girl's release, but Kittiphong demonstrated his refusal by walking out of the bar and firing a 9mm pistol once into the air.

During negotiations, Col Somjit learned that Kittiphong was angry because, he claimed, he had been conned by Mo's mother, 37-year-old Kwanreudee Asajao. Kittiphong said he had given Kwanreudee 50,000 baht – leaving him heavily in debt – on the understanding that she would allow him to see Mo. After he handed over the money, however, Kwanreudee still refused to let him see her.

Col Somjit offered to loan Kittiphong 50,000 baht if he would release his hostage. A friend took the money to Kittiphong, who then walked out of the restaurant and released Mo to Col Somjit. He then embraced the colonel and agreed to accompany him to the police station.

Kwanreudee refused to comment on the 50,000 baht that Kittiphong claimed he had given her, saying it was a private matter that Kittiphong and her would have to discuss further.

Mayor killed: The Mayor of Tambon Naseethong in Songkhla's Rattaphum District was shot dead as he was leaving a funeral in the evening of March 7. His father and a passer-by were also injured in the attack.

Maj Phichet Jannoo, Duty Inspector at Rattaphum District Police Station, said that as Mayor Anon Wankaew, 47, was walking toward his car two men pulled up on a motorcycle and opened fire.

K. Anon was hit, as was his 70-year-old father, Bunnam, who was sitting in the front passenger seat, and Iam Insaro, who happened to be riding past on a motorbike. The gunmen then fled.

All three victims were taken to Haad Yai Hospital, but K. Anon died early on March 8. He had been hit in the thigh, where the bullet severed a major artery.

Doctors reported that K. Bunnam was not in critical condition, but that K. Iam, who had been shot in the chest, was.

"From our investigations, we believe K. Anon was the target of the attack," said Maj Phichet. "The motive for the killing is still not clear, though we believe it is likely to have come from a political or personal dispute," he added.

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

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Unelected PM clause has critics up in arms

A proposal by the Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC) to leave open the option of having an unelected prime minister caused an uproar among political observers, who warned that such a clause could spell doom for the draft constitution when it is voted on in a public referendum.

The proposal was made during the brainstorming session of the CDC in Petchaburi on March 9. Panel Chairman Prasong Soonsiri gave a thumbs-up to the idea, but Constitution Drafting Assembly member Noranit Sethabutr warned of adverse consequences.

Somchai Srisuthiyakorn, a Thammasat University lecturer who is worried that such a clause would make many people vote against the draft charter in the referendum, said, "We have to be careful on this point, because it could make all parties oppose this constitution, even though the other parts of it are good."

Caretaker Thai Rak Thai Party leader Chaturon Chaisang said it had been clear to him from the beginning that there would be a constitutional clause allowing an unelected person to become prime minister. "This is a common feature in a constitution written after a coup. They [coup-makers] often allow people they favor to become prime minister," he said. He predicted that if the draft was passed containing that controversial clause it could lead to violence, as a similar measure did in 1992.

Democrat Party Secretary-General Suthep Thaugsuban, said: "I disagree with the option because it is not democratic. This point is a step backwards. If it happens, I will be in the front line saying 'no' to this constitution."

Lazarus bird: The large-billed reed warbler, a bird that has eluded scientists since its discovery in India in 1867, was re-discovered in Petchaburi Province in March 2006, DNA evidence has confirmed. Mahidol University ornithologist Philip Round told



A BRAVE NEW WORLD: Thailand's first baby elephant produced by artificial insemination was born on the night of March 6 at Lampang Elephant Hospital. The birth, the first of its kind in Asia, is seen an important step for Thailand in its attempt to save its iconic animals from an alarming decline. The baby, a male and as yet unnamed, weighed 100 kilograms and was 90 centimeters tall at birth.

a press conference that the discovery of the wetland bird last March by a group of local ornithologists confirms that the species is not extinct. DNA analysis from the bird confirmed it was a large-billed reed warbler, the only other specimen of which was collected 140 years ago in northwest India and is stored at the Natural History Museum in London.

Two feathers from the bird were sent for DNA analysis at Lund University, Sweden, with the results showing a perfect match with the DNA from the London museum's specimen.

The bird was ringed with a tag and released back into the wetland area. Only one specimen was discovered, but Mr Round said he thought the population of large-billed reed warblers at Laem Phak Bia wetland might be more than 40.

Flush with success: Once a notorious drug-dealing community targeted by narcotics police, Kud Pladuk village in Amnat Charoen's Muang District is now more well-known for its mobile cesspool pumping services.

More than 50 of the village's 100 households have taken up the occupation, in which their trucks suction the waste out of toilets for a fee. Each truck generates an average annual income of around 100,000 baht, enough for the villagers to be encouraged to quit the illicit drug trade.

A caravan of 60 trucks leaves the village each morning to service customers in the surrounding northeastern provinces. Daily income for the three or four young men who work each truck is 300 baht, while owners can earn up to 1,000 baht.

Kud Pladuk resident Udom Srising said he paid around 3,000

baht in concession fees to a tambon administrative organization and makes about 200,000 baht a year.

K. Udorn acknowledged the villagers used to deal in amphetamines and had been targeted for "drastic suppression" until they began the cesspool service a few years ago.

Elevator music 101: In response to growing demand, Mahidol University is expected to open Thailand's first master's program in music therapy in the coming semester.

The program curriculum, now being considered for final approval by the university's council, is expected to be finished in time to open for admissions by the next semester, said program director Dr. Panya Kaimuk of Mahidol's College of Music.

After having been initially

rejected by the university's council, the new graduate program recently underwent a minor adjustment to its curriculum and was resubmitted for consideration, he said.

Over the past few years, music therapy has become increasingly popular in private hospitals, rehabilitation centers, holistic health care facilities, spas and hotels, he said.

As a result, the demand for qualified therapists has risen dramatically, he added.

Many large state hospitals now offer music therapy to patients with certain ailments including those with chronic diseases and persistent pain.

E-commerce push: To help the e-commerce industry move forward, the Information and Communications Technology (ITC) Ministry will set up a new agency responsible for direct oversight over the development of electronic commerce and electronic transactions.

The new agency, called the Electronic Transaction Agency (ETA), is expected to be up and running in September. The act to set up the new agency is now in the approval process.

As the development of electronic commerce is necessary, there should be a new organization to oversee policy development and lay down infrastructure, said Thaweesak Koanantakool, Vice President of the National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA) and a member of the Electronic Transaction Committee.

"The development of e-commerce has been at a standstill as it has lacked a specific body to take a full-time role in the matter.

"We hope that having the new agency will make all the development work run better," he said.

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

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By Semacote Suganya

Vacation fun for school kids

There is no excuse for kids to sit around idly during the upcoming school break. The Phuket Municipality Youth Center at Saphan Hin is offering a wide variety of affordable summer courses from March 28 to April 27.

Kids aged six and up can sign up for classes in soccer, basketball, taekwondo, karate, kendo and Thai boxing. Easier on the body will be lessons in tennis, swimming, gymnastics, volleyball, badminton, "slow" dancing, table tennis, traditional Thai dancing and "swing" dance.

Thai musical instruments and art classes are on offer for the more refined prodigies on the island, and let's not forget something for the more technically-inclined with computer training, building model aircraft, remote-controlled toys and robot projects.

For kids heading to medical school later on, a "herbs for health" course is offered.

There will room for 1,360 participants in the program and everyone can afford the courses as the fees are only 50 baht per person. A few courses, such as swimming, computers and music will have an additional fee, ranging from 25 baht to 400 baht, to help cover costs.

Sign up from March 7 to 15 at the Phuket Municipality Youth Center, opposite the swimming pool at Saphan Hin, or for more information call the center 076-250163 or 076-216866 between 8 am and 8 pm. Participants must provide a copy of their house registration form to be admitted.

Adults can join in the fun with the youngsters with free lessons by the Phuket City Youth Center. A program has been running there since last October and offers Muay Thai, judo and pétanque. Foreigners can join in; Thai-English translators are provided if needed.

Jump into the action at Saphan Hin Sports Complex Monday to Friday between 5:30 pm and 7:30 pm. Muay Thai and judo classes are restricted to those aged 10 and up, and judo students will have to provide their own uniform.

For session times or more information contact the center at Tel: 076-250163, 076-216866, or visit the website www.youthcentre.th.edu (Thai only).



Activities on offer from the municipality include (clockwise from above) *khim* lessons, gymnastics, tennis, guitar lessons, kendo and classical Thai dancing.



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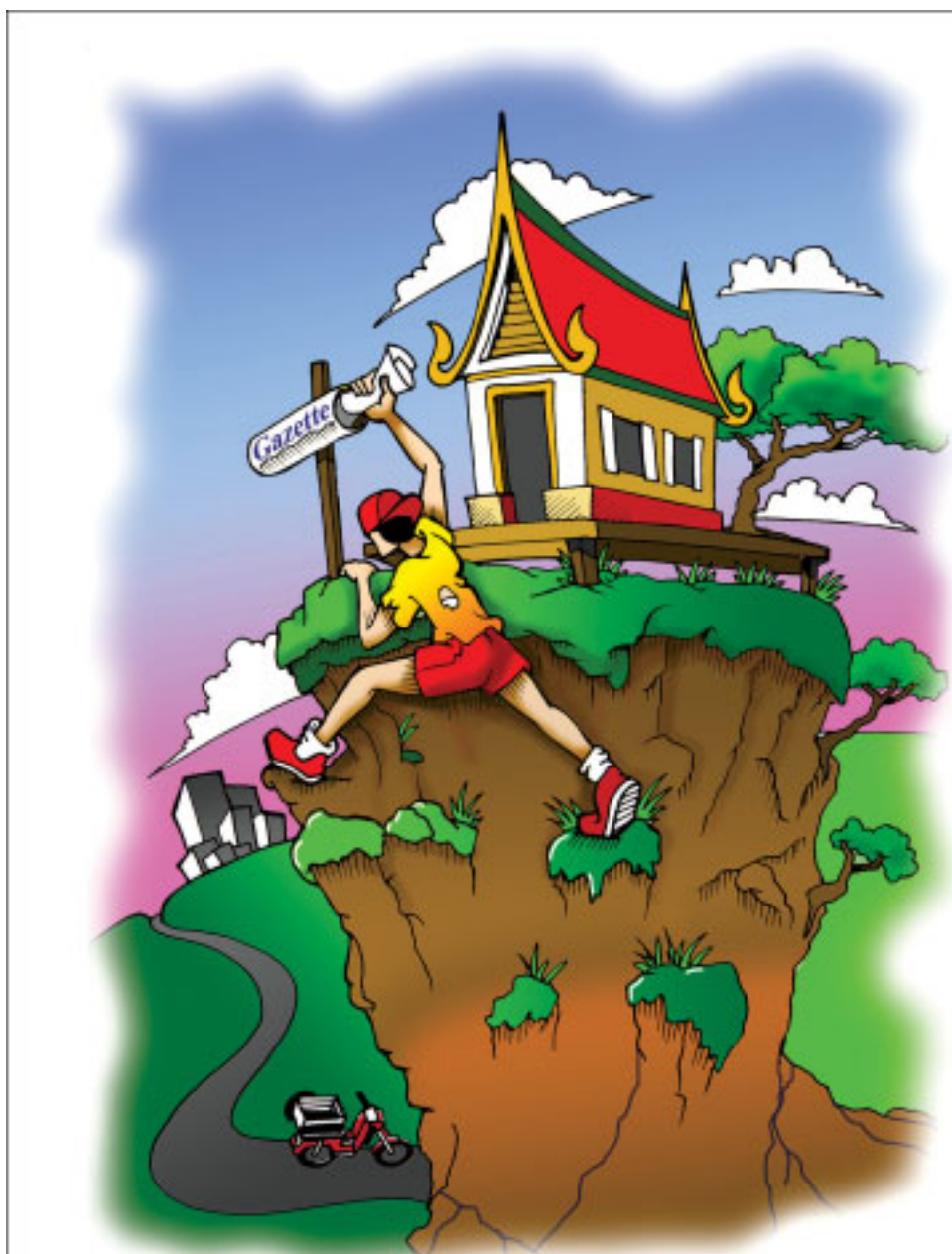




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Akim the Dalmatian helps the boss sort out a tricky software problem.

DESK JOB? DESK DOG

In Phuket, dogs are seen lazing or strutting about most places – in restaurants, bars and shops. They seem to be allowed everywhere – except in offices.

But that might be about to change, as small, well-trained dogs become more popular in Phuket town. Dogs may not only be welcome at the office but may even be taken there by their owners.

In the northern German port city of Hamburg, insurance expert Christian Weltz regularly takes his fox terrier-sized dog Freddy to the office where the dog spends most of the day sleeping or chewing a bone.

The three colleagues with whom Weltz shares the office have no problem with Freddy because the dog knows that barking is taboo and good manners are essential.

As with Phuket dog lovers, Germans are passionate about dogs, and see nothing odd about taking them on public transport or into restaurants. If other guests don't like it, too bad. So why not take them to the office as well?

Margund Mrozek, a spokeswoman for the Federal German Chamber of Vets in Bonn, has three dogs at her office, but she points out that certain rules apply when taking a pet to work.

"All colleagues, not just the boss, have to give their okay. There should not be a colleague around who is afraid of dogs or is allergic to animal hair," Ms Mrozek says.

The dog also needs to obey rules and an animal in need of plenty of exercise is not suited to an office. "A Jack Russell terrier, for instance, is constantly on the move and wants to do something," says Udo Kopernik, from the German Dog Keeping Asso-

ciation VDH. Sheepdogs are also unsuitable for the office.

Apart from the breed, every dog has an individual character that may or may not be suited to the office. Mr Kopernik is a graphic artist who takes his two Pyrenees shepherd dogs to work. While the one dog has a restless nature and is unsuitable for a bigger office, the other dog is exemplary. "Visitors to the office often don't even realize that there is a dog around," he says.

A dog should be trained well before it is taken to the office, Ms Mrozek advises. "The dog always needs to know where its place is. The owner can train it to lie down on a blanket and reward it with a biscuit. In this way the dog can be trained to remain on one spot and prevented from straying around and annoying even the most tolerant colleague," she says.

For the first few days, a blanket can be taken to the office so that the dog gets used to the place where it is meant to stay. "The dog must not necessarily lie down on one spot the whole day, but it must also learn that it is not allowed to empty the bins," Ms Mrozek says.

When a dog is trained for the office, it should not be too young as all the impressions could be too much of a strain. A young dog also needs to go outside about every two hours.

Care should be taken that colleagues don't spoil your pet and make all the training obsolete. "One often finds that colleagues secretly give the dog something to eat in between [meals] after much effort has gone into training the dog not to go begging," Mr Kopernik says. His advice is one meal in the morning and one in the evening.

Christian Weltz needs to take his dog Freddy for a walk only once a day during the lunch break. Other walks are taken before work and in the evening. "In the evening Freddy needs more exercise," he says.

Dog expert Mr Kopernik also says that after a whole day in the office, a short walk around the block is just not enough. "The dog needs some mental challenges like fetching a ball or a stick," he says.

But the dog owner should make provision for those days when the dog just cannot be taken to the office, such as when

important business meetings have to be held or when there is an appointment outside the office.

"I normally then take Fred-

dy to a dog crèche in the morning and fetch him again in the evening," says Mr Weltz.

- Florian Oertel, dpa

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TECHNOLOGY AND SUPPLY PARTNERS

Badass music with **BIG ASS**

Big Ass are one of the biggest names on the Thai rock music scene. Over the past 10 years they have released five studio albums with the most recent two – *Seven* (2004) and *Begins* (2006) – being the most successful.

On February 23 Big Ass played a charity concert at Bavarian Oktoberfest beer hall. The *Gazette's* Somprach Saowakhon and Dominic Earnshaw caught up with them as they prepared to go on stage.

The origins of one of Thailand's most successful domestic rock bands, Big Ass, begin some 16 years ago. The five-piece band currently comprises lead vocalist Ekarat "Dax" Wongchalat; rhythm and lead guitarists Poonsak "Op" Jaturaboon and Apichart "Mu" Phromraksa; bass player Pongpan "Oak" Pollasit; and drummer Kachorndej "Kob" Promraksa.

All those years ago, Op and Mu were studying together at Satee Wittaya 2 school in Bangkok. "Mu and I have played the guitar together since we were about 13 or 14 years old, when we were in junior high school in Bangkok," said Op.

Even their moniker Big Ass

dates back to those early days. "We started using the name Big Ass to reserve practice rooms at school. We kept the name as we became older and eventually felt attached to it so couldn't change it," Op explained, though without hinting at what their 13-year-old selves liked about the name.

After graduating junior high school at age 15, Op continued his education at Wittayalai Kor Sang Dusit, a vocational college, and Mu went to Bunditpatanasilp Institute, an art school. They kept playing guitar together and each found new musical partners to join them.

Op invited fellow pupil Dax to join them in their practice sessions and Mu met with Ekarat



Lead singer Dax in full cry on the stage of Phuket's Bavarian Oktoberfest beer hall.

"Ton" Rattanapinta, the band's original bassist. He was later replaced by Oak, another of Mu's college mates. Mu then invited his younger brother Kob to join

as the band's drummer to complete the line up.

The young Big Ass cut their teeth in "battle of the bands" competitions. "We used to enter band

competitions as that was one of the only ways we could play on stage to an audience," said Dax.

"The songs that we would play in the competitions were always fairly heavy like Metallica. These competitions taught us about the difference between playing in a practice room and performing on stage," he added.

Asked what the secret to the band's longevity was, Mu replied without hesitation "friendship" – a theme the band spoke about throughout the interview. "The band has been together for about 16 years now. The reason we've been able to achieve what we have and stay together is the friendship.

"We may not be the best looking band and our musical talent may not be the greatest, but we've managed to stick around this long because we are friends," he said.

Ever modest, the band denied spending their youth dreaming of being rock stars. "We never dared think that we would be famous," said Kob. "Just getting our first album was more than we'd expected. We were five kids who just wanted to play music. When our album came out and people liked it, that was a bonus."

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THE AIM: 'We might not be flawless or perfect role models, but we aren't bad people...'

The band, from left, are bass player Oak, lead singer Dax, guitarist Op, drummer Kob and guitarist Mu.

The band's popularity has grown continuously over the decade since the release of their first album, *Not Bad* (1997) and it is with the two most recent albums that they have achieved the most commercial success. "We've got older and more experienced," Op explained.

"We produced our own music from the beginning, so over the five albums our skills have improved and our experience has got much wider.

"With this last album, we've even got into the promoting and managing side of the business. We take care of nearly everything ourselves.

"At first we were not used to being on stage, playing concerts like this. We had to build up our experience. We use our experience from playing concerts to help us make music. We can now adjust our style," he said.

The band's early musical influences came from international heavy rock and punk, which can be seen from the band's

dress. "When we started playing, it was all about Metallica. We based ourselves on them and were always listening to their songs," said Op.

Ideas for their songs come from their own experiences and observations. "We're collecting our experiences and stories from all of us to go into the next album," said Dax. "When we've released an album and go on tour, we look at that as a source of inspiration. Meeting the fans and things that happen on tour, everything."

Big Ass have been well received by critics and the press, and scooped a number of awards. Their album *My World* won them Duo or Group Artist of the Year in the Fat Awards #2 in 2004, *Seven* won them Best Rock Band and Best Rock Album in the 17th Season Awards the following year, and *Len Khong Soong* won Best Song and they were voted Most Popular Artist by other artists in the Fat Awards #3 in 2005.

Last year, however, the band landed in trouble in the press over allegations about lead singer Dax's relationship with a 17-year-old men's magazine model "Fai".

Fai alleged that Dax was the father of her son. Dax denied it and DNA tests were carried out. The first showed that the child was not his and a retest performed by Khunying Dr Pornthip Rojanasunand confirmed the result.

Despite the test results, Dax was still charged with having consensual sex with a minor over 15 but younger than 18 as Fai was only 16 at the time of their alleged relationship. The trial got underway last month with Dax pleading not guilty.

"We might be a bad example in some ways, but with music we take it very seriously," Dax said.

"We just lead our lives normally, because we aren't the kind of people who take drugs or are into gambling. We might not be flawless or perfect role models,

but we aren't bad people and we have a clear aim of what we want to achieve.

"I think that if young people have an aim that is good then that's enough. If you are a good person but don't have an aim in life then that's useless. We want people to have something they want," Op said.

"If you have an aim in life, your life will have substance. We aim to release an album, but if we are drunkards and don't live our lives well then it won't happen," he added.

There is a big difference between the image of Thai rock

stars and the Western drug-guzzling, groupie-shagging, hotel room-smashing stereotype. Oak, however, said the band had no desire to go down that road.

"They [rock stars in the West] can do whatever they want. Most people in Thailand would not accept the behavior of Western rock stars. I think it's good for us, it keeps us on the straight and narrow and allows us to do our best," he said.

Just before they took to the stage, Mu spoke up to emphasize the band's favorite theme; friendship. "Being in a band can build friendship. The thing that's kept us together and allowed us to overcome problems is friendship. If we used reason to make our decisions, we would probably not still be together as a band today. But we used friendship to make decisions."

Big Ass are due to return to Phuket March 31 to perform in the M-150 Power concert to be held behind the Mazda showroom on Phang Nga Rd, Phuket City. Tickets will be 50 baht, including one bottle of M-150.

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Knight Frank

This week



SEVEN UP: Direct Rooms Managing Director Alex Lotz (center), Technical Director Chokechai Prasertcharoensuk (right) and Operations Director Graham Dewe blow out the candles at a celebration of the company's seventh anniversary.



WELL-ROUNDED: Some 120 Rotarians and guests from around the world celebrated the launch of the Rotary Club of Laguna Phuket, the island's seventh Rotary organization, at a lavish dinner and Charter Presentation Ceremony at the Dusit Laguna Resort March 10. Pictured are some of the members of the new club, who, in addition to their Charter, received their Rotary pins from Rotary District Governor Vichai Naneewacharakiet (8th from right).



FAMILY FUN: Commissioner of Provincial Police Region 8 Pol Lt Gen Thaneer Thawichsee (right) enjoys a day at FantaSea with his wife K. Chalinee (left), son-in-law Pol Lt Col Sathit Polpinit (2nd from left), daughter Ticha Polpinit and his grandchildren.



JUST OPEN: Managing Director of Jarken + Home Co Ltd Dr Kuldej Sinthawanarong PhD (left) and Managing Director of Decawin Co Ltd Sirikwan Artikit (2nd from left) celebrate the joint opening of their businesses with Justice Minister Chanchai Likhitjitta and his wife (2nd and 3rd from right) and K. Sirikwan's father, Shusid Artikit.



GOOD PLAN: Plan Estate Co Ltd Assistant Marketing Director Yutthakarn Khlaiophas (right) hosts the launch of Baan Suan Loch Palm with an open house party for the company's clients and property brokers.



HIGH NOTE: Thai singing sensation Nicole Terio Panpum autographs her photo for GSM Assistant Vice-President of Regional Operations – South, Peravate Kijburana, amid her fan club members and GSM officials to help launch the new 'Your GSM, Your ID' advertising campaign.

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Trading in journalistic integrity

Writing a column for a newspaper is not always straightforward. It is totally different from writing a news story, where such factors as integrity, journalistic ethics and the need to be objective and unbiased come into play.

In my view, a feature column need not be subject to such strictures, sentiments and predictable subject matter. That is why this column has in the past covered topics ranging from multi-million-dollar resort developments to important issues affecting life on the island – such as disappearing concrete pigs, grumpy old men and telephone poles.

This column actually started as a column about property development and real estate. When writing about somebody's property development, however, one has to say a lot of nice things. You can't bag the stuffing out the place, because if you do the owner is going to get shitty. He will likely cancel his advertising contract. In the worst-case scenario he might even sue the newspaper. Who benefits from that?

Given this reality, property columnists tend to get stuck writing complimentary stories about



NO STRINGS ATTACHED: Graham Doven took this photograph in a bid to convince the editors at the *Gazette* of the dreadful burdens a columnist must take on in pursuit of a good tale. Not only that, but he also had to climb into the Jacuzzi afterwards.

how wonderful this million-dollar project is, or how visionary that property development firm is. This is hard to do week in and week out. In truth, it is incredibly boring. This is why I have had to diversify, writing nice stories about little things like barbecue shops, cricket fields and massage parlors.

Of course there is nothing wrong with stories about million-dollar villas. Some people spend a lot of money buying magazines about the rich and shameless and their houses. In fact, that's still partly what this column is about. Writing about villas is one thing, but actually enjoying the odd benefit, such as watching the sunset

LARGER THAN LIFE

By Graham Doven

while sitting in a Jacuzzi at my friend's penthouse at Layan Gardens, now that's another thing entirely.

I am quite prepared to extol the benefits of a penthouse Jacuzzi, especially when it comes with pleasant company, fine wine and a breathtakingly beautiful sunset. To be honest, I am fully prepared at any time to trade in my journalistic integrity for the chance to luxuriate in the warmth of a penthouse Jacuzzi. Remember Al Pacino's famous line from movie *Scarface*, "Is this what it's all about, Manny?" For me the answer is a resounding, "Yes!"

I'm also prepared to extend this outlook at the use of luxury boats, fine hotels, spas, private jets and up-scale massage establishments.

I guess my main point here – if in fact I have one – is that most people are here in Phuket because they like it. Why not try to enjoy life as much as possible? Since we are all in the same boat, so to speak, one sometimes feels

obliged to help other people with their own ideas on the pursuit of happiness.

Of course it also means that one is obliged to comment on things that are spoiling life on the island, such as the outrageous proliferation of concrete telephone poles and the blasting of otherwise tranquil villages with radio news through tinny loudspeakers every morning and evening.

This newspaper reported that Patong Municipality applied to have its power cables installed underground but had the idea rejected by the electricity authority. There's a story worth having a closer look at, unless of course it gets too dangerously close to offending the "concrete pole" mafia.

Whatever the justification for the status quo on the ground far below, I have some fine bottles of wine from my friend's wine shop in the Plaza Del Mar, which I have tried often at my friend's Italian restaurant in Cherg Talay. Now I am going to relax in the Jacuzzi in my friend's penthouse, enjoying the wine and the sunset with my friends, who happen to work in my friend's massage establishment. Work that lot out.



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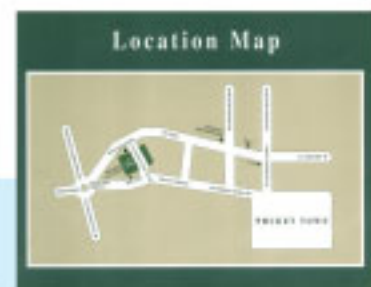
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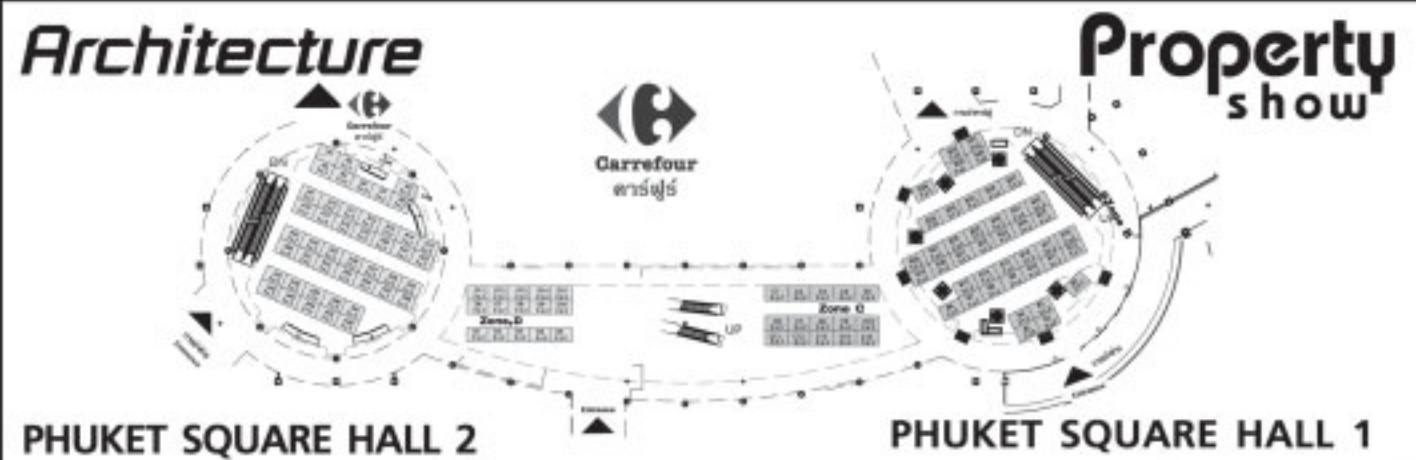
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START YOUR ENGINES

Eleven teams, 22 drivers, 17 races. Yes, Formula 1 is back, with the new season starting on March 18 in Melbourne. All the top teams apart from Toyota and Honda have undergone significant changes, with new driver pairings and, in some cases, new engine suppliers.

Adding another dimension to Grand Prix racing, all the cars will this year be on Bridgestone tires, which may benefit Ferrari since that team has been on Bridgestones for years. Toyota also has enjoyed some success on Bridgestone rubber.

Reigning constructors' champions Renault has given rookie Finnish driver Heiki Kovalainen a race seat alongside Giancarlo Fisichella, while World Champion Fernando Alonso has joined McLaren-Mercedes for an alleged US\$40 million a year.

Alonso's teammate is another rookie: the impressive Lewis Hamilton. With Alonso just 25 years old and Hamilton 21, the McLaren lineup is the youngest in the field.

Meanwhile, Ferrari has Kimi Räikkönen filling the vacated Michael Schumacher seat. Räikkönen, winner of just nine Grands Prix with McLaren – and none last year – will be hoping for Ferrari's reliability to allow him to take the 2007 title. Felipe Massa is staying a second year with the team following his two Grand Prix wins in 2006.

They seem to be a formidable pairing, but it will take Räikkönen time to settle in, whereas Massa already has his feet under the Prancing Horse's table.

Another variable is that master tactician and technical director Ross Brawn has taken a sabbatical and is somewhere in South America fishing.

Phuket resident Rory Byrne stays on as a consultant, but is no longer directly responsible for the design of the car – that's now the job of Aldo Costa, who designed last year's F1 car.



SHAKEUP: World Champion Fernando Alonso has joined the McLaren-Mercedes Formula 1 team for a rumored US\$40 million a year.

One of the most interesting teams this year has to be Red Bull. The team originally started out as Stewart Grand Prix with Sir Jackie and his son Paul. It then morphed into Jaguar, before Ford pulled the plug and the outfit was sold to Austrian billionaire Dietrich Mateschitz and renamed Red Bull.

For the 2007 F1 season, Red Bull will have an Adrian Newey-designed car, the RB3, complete with Renault engine. Drivers are David Coulthard, at 35 the oldest Grand Prix driver racing, and Australian Mark Webber.

With a championship-winning engine, Newey's talents – Coulthard won all 13 of his Grand Prix victories at the wheel of Newey's cars, at Williams and McLaren – and Mateschitz's money there should be no excuses.

Williams has a new Toyota

engine for 2007. Retaining 2006 rookie Nico Rosberg, the team has paired him with former test driver Alex Wurz and should be one of the strongest driver lineups. Toyota also has new, much-needed sponsorship from computer maker Lenovo and telecoms company AT&T.

Last year was one of the worst in Williams's recent history, with unreliability and aerodynamic issues causing far too many retirements and a lack of outright speed. Mark Webber left in disgust, even before he had a deal with Red Bull.

The adoption of the Toyota V8 means that for the first time for four decades Cosworth will not be represented on the grid. Cosworth entered Grand Prix racing with the legendary DFV engine in the back of the Lotuses of Jim Clark and Graham Hill in 1967. Last season Cosworth supplied units to Williams and Scuderia Toro Rosso.

Ferrari engines will be used by both Scuderia Toro Rosso and Spyker in 2007 but it should be

noted that no Ferrari customer team has ever won a race.

Finally, Honda, which helped Jenson Button win his first Formula 1 victory at the Hungarian Grand Prix last August, retains both Button and Rubens Barrichello, while Toyota also retains its drivers Ralf Schumacher and Jarno Trulli.

Toyota has been in Formula

1 since 2002 and is reputed to have the largest budget of any team, yet has still to win a race.

With the retirement of Michael Schumacher and an all-change situation at so many teams, the 2007 season could be one of the best for years.

Jeff Heselwood can be reached by email to jhc@netvigato.com

BEHIND THE WHEEL

By Jeff Heselwood

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Pineapple Punch



Yacht Club Classic



Coconut Cooler

Punch drunk

Some classics never go out of style. Le Royal Meridien Phuket Yacht Club Public Relations Manager Athipa "Pam" Bunnak says that three cocktails have been regulars at the club for years: Pineapple Punch, Yacht Club Classic and Coconut Cooler.

Bartender Winai Vimolsong, who has been there for two years, mixes up these classic concoctions.

Two of the cocktails use a fruit punch base made with one part each of pineapple juice, orange juice and lime juice.

- Semacote Suganya

Pineapple Punch

Gin 1 oz
Orange liquor ¾ oz
Triple sec ½ oz
Fruit punch to top off shaker
Ice 3 to 4 cubes
Add ingredients to shaker.
Shake then pour into hollowed-out pineapple.

Served in a pineapple, it's like an entire basket of fruit compressed into a single glass, err, pineapple. It has a sweet bite and a solid punch. A perfect sundowner.

Yacht Club Classic

Dark rum 1½ oz
Peach brandy ¾ oz
Gin ½ oz
Fruit punch to top off
Add ingredients to shaker.
Shake then pour into glass.

A classic drink that will never go out of style. It's as smooth as silk, as slick as an Italian suit, but with a kick like mule. Pour in a small ceramic jar, garnish with a small, round piece of pineapple to "close" the jar.

Coconut Cooler

Dark Rum 1½ oz
Triple Sec ½ oz
Pineapple juice 2 oz
Lemon ½ oz
Grenadine 3 drops
Cream dash
Ice 3 to 4 cubes
Add ingredients to shaker.
Shake then pour into coconut.

Hard on the outside but sweet with a slightly bitter aftertaste inside, this mix is the perfect for the Phuket sipper club.

GETTING

By Andy Johnstone

To hell with Bruce Firstein, for I am a real man (Alpha Male, in fact) and do eat quiche, and, more than this, I am so masculine that even my sentences don't have periods

See? Even though I am the quintessential Englishman abroad, I am prepared to toss in an Americanism in the desperate search for a quick joke.

Manly I have been, and manly shall I be, although... well, how can I put it? I suppose I may be prey to bouts of foppishness, but only in a strictly non-girlie sort of way. I am prepared to endure the vast amounts of agony experienced - generally - by women only in the name of self-beautification, or men who end up in a Palace of Pain, so I am told...

Yet what is it that can both enhance the physique - and, so some say the physical - but causes a modicum of discomfort in the process? Piercings? Nah. Tattoos? Oh please, have a look at the photo. This is about removal - not addition. The good news is that it is neither a manicure nor a pedicure. There remains something decidedly affected about men indulging in that practice.

Still no closer to guessing? Try these phrases for size: Full Brazilian (Should the male equivalent be the Boyzilian?) sometimes referred to as the BSC, Bikini (not that I wear one), the ahem Playboy and the inscrutably-named Sphinx.

Waxing, of course, is the lyrical answer.

Now, for readers of a gentle or nervous disposition - and those in the latter category outnumber the former - the waxing carried out was not my back, nor my shoulders, nor, with a nod to *The 40-Year-Old Virgin* (the main character in that splendid comedy was called Andy), was it my chest. It was in a rather delicate spot elsewhere.

The staff at Perfection Spa Beauty Salon on Chao Fa East Rd, including K. Off, who attends to me, have not had the trauma of dealing with a chap before. Brave girls to a er... woman, they are game enough to allow Lady Penelope and my quaking

self in for the purposes of this article.

But first some background. Waxing of the genital areas has been prevalent in many societies around the world for centuries - Ancient Greece, Rome and Egypt. The practice is especially common in arid or desert areas - geographical areas, I should emphasize - predominantly among and within Muslim and Arab cultures and countries. Admittedly, few men took up the practice, although, to be fair, so did few women in the West until the beginning of the '90s.

Another point to make is that, as with so many other things, the male gay community blazed the way for body waxing within the male straight community.

Full-body waxing has become particularly popular among the bodybuilding and sporting fraternity, with many men depilating for aesthetic and practical reasons. Zero body hair streamlines one through the water, so argue swimmers, and reduces drag through the air, suggest cyclists.

Some also state that the removal of hair in such an intimate area, either male or female, allows greater tactile sensations therefore heightening sexual pleasure. So there.

Back to the chase, and yours truly and company position themselves in the double treatment room for their depilations. In the dusky light, K. Off applies a gentle antiseptic solution just inside my right thigh followed by the first spread of purple wax. It has begun.

My body tenses up - and why shouldn't it? It's not just anyone I'd allow to do this - as she recites the mantra I am to hear often over the course of the next 60 minutes or so: "One, two, three...", which I hear as "This might bring tears to your eyes."

She pulls. It hurts. Through tears, I make the vaguest of suggestions that K. Off must be a reincarnation of Torquemada.

Actually, it is not nearly as bad as I had imagined. There is a similar degree of pain - and, dare I say it, the all-important endorphin rush immediately thereafter - to being tattooed, which begins to make the experience rather

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OFF TO GET IT ALL OFF



adoring public, be they on the beach at Rio or in the showers at Her Majesty's Prison in Gloucester.

On a point of etiquette, it is rampantly obvious that genital waxing requires one to be rather exposed. Just because it is carried out in relaxing conditions and as gently as possible, it is not an excuse for a cheap thrill, despite how intimate it is.

K. Off continues her gentle work, offering me the occasional sip of wine from the glasses we ordered beforehand. The minutes slip by and all is fine with the world, although I do now notice the icy blast from the aircon unit around my nethers.

Some recommend avoiding the following for two days afterward: heat, friction, hot baths, showers, sunbathing, saunas, hot tubs, steam rooms, exercise, sex (whether solo or with another or others is not clear), tight clothing, swimming and the use of fragranced body lotions or sprays.

Got all that? Splendid.

One may still experience some slight soreness, small bumps and redness. These are common temporary reactions, particularly for a first waxing. These tend to subside within a few hours, and many people find that regular waxing results in less irritation. Although this was my first waxing, I am happy to report no such reactions. I hope you are, too.

Was the pain, more accurately, the fear of pain, worth it? That is between me and Lady P...

Perfection Spa Beauty Salon 1/10 Moo 1, Chao Fa East Rd, Chalong, Phuket. Tel: 076-264295. Discounts apply for Perfection Spa Beauty Salon members.

OOOOOH: It's amazing what some people will do to themselves in order to get their picture in the newspaper...

pleasant. Waxing, however, is not without its caveats.

The first, showering immediately beforehand, is for the therapist's benefit. The second is to gently exfoliate the skin a few times in the days preceding the waxing. This helps to remove any dead skin cells and lift the hair, allowing the therapist to get as many of the little blighters as possible.

Oh, and if you are currently

into shaving, be it down below around the holy of holies, or any part of the anatomy, then halt and desist: to be waxed effectively, the hair needs to be at least half a centimeter long.

Some doctors do not recommend waxing for persons suffering from diabetes or those who have varicose veins or poor circulation as they may be more susceptible to infection.

Users of certain medications – Retin-A, Renova, Differin

or Isotretinoin – are advised not to have waxing performed; these medications tend to weaken the skin and tearing of the skin may occur when the wax is removed.

Waxing should not be done on areas of skin affected by warts, pimples, moles or rashes or on skin that is irritated, chapped or suffering from sunburn. Wax should not be applied to peeling, broken skin or varicose veins.

Contagious skin conditions will also see the therapist shak-

ing her head and saying "Come back when the condition has completely cleared."

I would suggest that your first BSC, Brazilian, or Hollywood waxing is not carried out immediately before a special occasion or holiday. Sod's Law dictates that this will be the one time your skin reacts unfavorably.

Better to play it safe and allow a few days for things to settle down before surprising your unsuspecting partner or your

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Spa MAGIC



By Janyaporn Morel

Mandara at JW Marriott

Thanks to my long work-week and other sources of stress, sometimes I can feel the tension in my body growing. I long to go somewhere quiet, as far away as possible from grouchy desk editors barking about deadlines and arguing over apostrophes.

Fortunately, today is my lucky day – the day I have been waiting for. I jump in my car and head north to the Mandara Spa at the JW Marriott Phuket Resort & Spa in Mai Khao.

Upon arrival, I am welcomed by Assistant Spa Manager Jirawan “Ann” Prueksachat.

As we make our acquaintance, one of the many charming staff members serves me with a cool hand towel and a refreshing cup of lemongrass and pandanus drink.

My eyes take in the classic elegance of the spa’s traditional Thai design as my sense of smell luxuriates in the pleasant fragrance of citronella.

I sip my drink as K. Ann introduces me to the spa, which has 32 therapists serving guests in 16 double-treatment suites. Built in 2001 with just five treatment rooms and a beauty salon, 11 treatment rooms were added later to meet demand for Man-



SO MANY HANDS SO LITTLE TIME

dara’s many relaxing therapies.

Leading me around the spa, K. Ann shows me a typical suite comprising an en-suite bathroom and two treatment beds, both facing a large window. Through the glass we see a *sala* right outside for outdoor massages amidst the tropical garden, which also features a private steam room beyond a small fountain and stone wall.

Behind a pair of enormous copper doors are another five

treatment rooms, each with terracotta walls decorated with copper lattice panels and fitted with a large mirror. Each of these five treatment room have outdoor shower areas, while the other six rooms have outdoor garden bathtubs. There are also shared steam rooms, one for men and one for women.

K. Ann shows me the spa menu, which includes Mandara spa packages, Mandara Signature Ritual, massage therapies, body treatments, Mandara Facial Elixir and Time for Men.

There is also an impressive option of baths, scrubs and herbal steam baths to choose from with names like Splendors of Mandara and Mandara Spa Elements.

One thing on the menu that catches my eye is Spa Cuisine. K. Ann explains that Spa Cuisine is included in the long-period

treatment packages, and customers can request to have healthy meals during their stay. The meals are classified into three categories: detoxify, rejuvenate and relax. Unfortunately for me, I am not intending to get a long treatment.

Back in my treatment room, K. Ann introduces me to two therapists, Oyjai “Eve” Saisaeng and Kusuma “Mod” Jongpakdee, who will give me the four-hand Mandara Signature Massage.

After a quick shower, I dry off, wrap up in a bathing gown and then beat a small gong to signal to the therapists that I am ready for my next treatment. K. Eve and K. Mod enter, and K. Mod prepares a warm bath for my feet. As she scrubs my feet with spa salt I can feel them becoming cleaner and softer.

I lie down on my stomach on the bed, and the two therapists

start the massage. They expertly remove my gown and cover me with a *sarong* so quickly that I remain unexposed.

K. Eve and K. Mod start working on my body; they work together in rhythmic harmony so in tune to one another that I don’t know which hand is whose or where they are standing. The scent of aromatic oil with the tactile therapy makes me really relax, relieving me from all tension.

K. Eve explains that the Mandara Signature Massage is a blend of Japanese Shiatsu, Thai, Hawaiian Lomi Lomi, Swedish and Balinese massage techniques. The combination delivers total relief for my body and mind.

For about 50 minutes the two therapists work on my back side, from head to toe. I request a firm massage, especially on my shoulders, back and legs. I roll over and they work for 40 more minutes on my front side.

The massage ends with K. Mod massaging my head, which she says is supplementary to the full treatment and helps relieve headaches.

This 90-minute, four-hand massage costs 6,600 baht.

I leave the spa with my full appreciation, and don’t forget to mention it in the assessment form, “Great ambiance, great treatment and great welcome”.

Treatment at Mandara Spa at JW Marriott Phuket Resort and Spa can be reserved at Tel: 076-338000, Fax: 076-348349, Email: jwmp@mandaraspaspa.com or visit www.mandaraspaspa.com

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A lady on the tramp

By Ted Tucker

It was after midnight on a quiet night just off the coast of Yemen, where the Red Sea meets the Arabian Sea, when the Turk on watch went downstairs to grab a cigarette.

By the time he came back up, the pirates had already boarded – an amazing feat that they could approach without being heard on such a quiet night.

The Turk ran back downstairs, grabbed a shotgun, came up to the deck and started shooting in the air. The pirates, who hadn't counted on serious resistance, quickly jumped back to their boat and fled.

There had been a serious discussion about whether to hire a European crew or a Turkish crew, and the decision to go with Turks had paid off.

With a European crew the keys would probably have been handed over, but with a Turkish crew – the fight was on. And so the story begins as to how the *Lady Anita* came to be one of the first upscale charters operating out of Phuket.

The 89-foot ketch was designed in 1999 by a naval architect in Bodrum, Turkey. But after laying out a rugged mahogany hull, he ran out of money to finish the job – and the deck and cabins came to be built of surplus wood from fruit crates.

This was all happening about the same time that Izzy Ben Natan, present-day Managing Director of the *Lady Anita*, was visiting Phuket and saw the need for a first-class charter service. His search for an appropriate ship took him to Turkey, where he found the *Eden 1*.

The vessel was bought for its current owners, the Serenity Group, and rechristened as the *Lady Anita*.

Preparing the vessel for the long cruise through the rough seas on the way to Phuket took three



YO HO HO: Pirates tried to board the *Lady Anita* off Yemen. Life is a little less adventurous these days in the waters off Phuket.

months. It was during that time the fateful decision to select a Turkish crew was made.

Other than the boarding incident, the 58-day voyage from the Mediterranean, across the Indian Ocean to the Andaman Sea, was relatively quiet.

Finally reaching Phuket's shores, *Lady Anita* tucked into Yacht Haven for a thorough refit. The fruit crate superstructure was removed and the entire vessel was rebuilt to a first-class standard.

Not all has been quiet since she came to Phuket, however. The December 2004 tsunami caught the *Lady Anita* at anchor in Chalong Bay. Dragging anchor for some 150 meters, she was

about to be lost when her captain cut the anchor chain and headed out into Phang Nga Bay.

As with everything else in post-tsunami in Phuket, the charter business fell off to almost nothing the following year. But business brightened in 2006 and bookings are now continuing at a breakneck speed.

Lady Anita actually lives a dual life: part-time as a charter cruiser and part-time as personal cruiser for the owners of the apartments and villas at Serenity Terraces in Rawai, also *Lady Anita*'s proud owners.

As a charter yacht, *Lady Anita* comfortably accommodates 10 guests in her five air-conditioned cabins, all with en

suite bathing facilities. A crew of seven look after all guests' needs and there is even a certified masseuse aboard to massage away the worries of the working world.

Everything needed for snorkeling, wakeboarding, kayaking and scuba diving is kept on board.

For all this luxury high-sea-son charter rates start at 130,000 baht per day, plus fuel and food. A typical cruising day, if there is such a thing, entails about four hours sailing or motoring – though *Lady Anita*'s movements are entirely up to the customer.

Lady Anita regularly cruises Phang Nga Bay and often heads down the coast toward

Langkawi, exploring remote coastlines and uninhabited islands along the way. A complement of guests and crew consume as many as 300 eggs and use up to 3,500 liters of diesel in just one week.

So who partakes of these all these wonderful cruises? *Lady Anita* isn't telling. From celebrities who value their privacy to guests who demand to be picked up at the airport by armored car, *Lady Anita* keeps mum about who is on board.

For chartering or more information about the *Lady Anita* contact Asia Marine at 076-239111 or Charter@Asia-Marine.net



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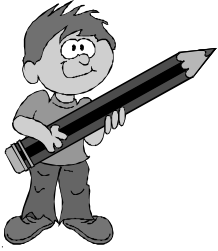
** This special promotion is available through March 2007 and applies only to ads placed in the hard-copy Phuket Gazette. It does not apply to ads run solely in the Gazette Online.*



Puzzles

The Cryptic Crossword

Spot the Difference



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

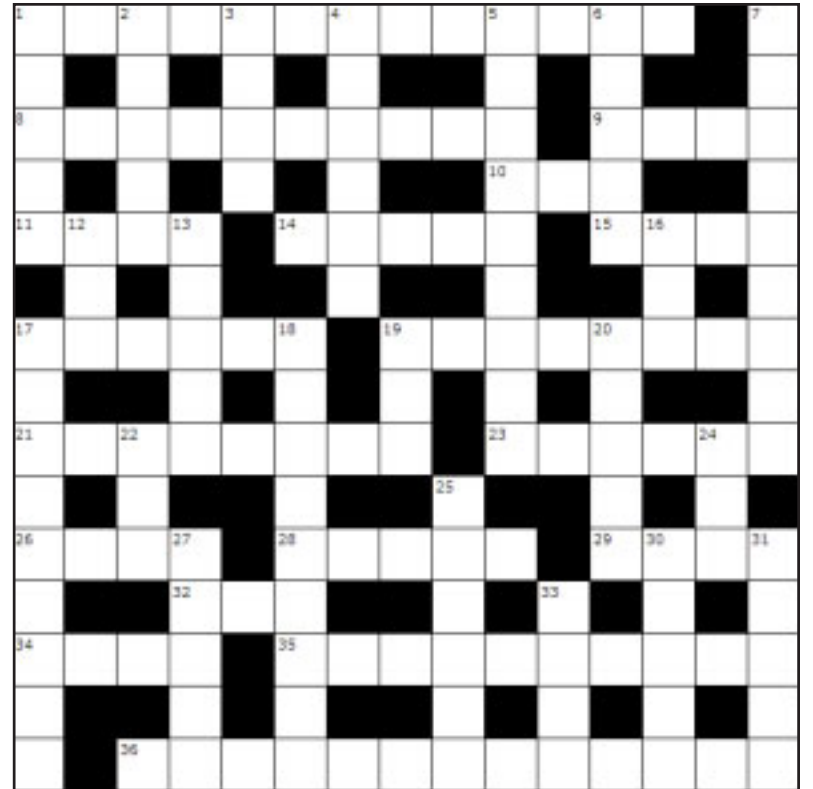


ACROSS

1. Spreading Diana's half-country. (13)
8. Gather prisoner Gregory consumed. (10)
9. I've a similarity to him. (4)
10. Born? "Nay!" they say. (3)
11. Assist a wager. (4)
14. Saint with nothing in charge of Zeno's follower. (5)
15. Remainder of silent bit of music. (4)
17. Catch points, with part returned. (6)
19. Stalemate passed on to key partner. (8)
21. Clothing for wash about rip off. (8)
23. Gentle nurse. (6)
26. Decay, and 100 make military group. (1,1,1,1)
28. Around the world - or part. (5)
29. Capital point by learner in love twice. (4)
32. Right in, as Roman art. (3)
34. Zero quiet? Point to 100 in crude group. (4)
35. Sing monotonously with a back rub? I find province. (10)

DOWN

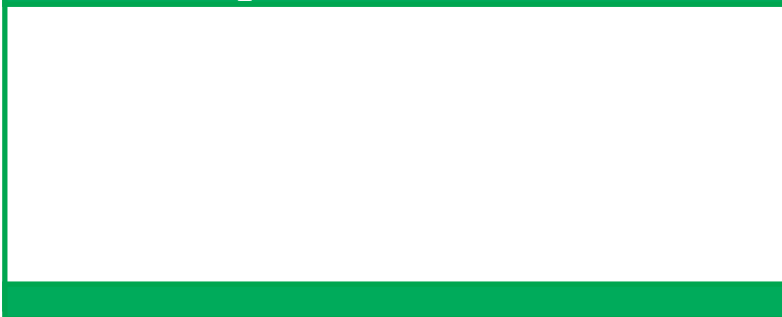
1. Note a part of dance in Russian lodge. (5)



Compiled by Tortuus. © 2007

2. Reveal secret note and burn. (5)
3. Hearer left to peer. (4)
4. At home, got second metal bars. (6)
5. Vigorous ditch worker... (9)
6. ... or round point, that is, basket material. (5)
7. Car and French rake messed up janitor. (9)
12. Forbid half a banana. (3)
13. Light church after rock. (5)
16. For example, no self-esteem. (3)
17. Bans publication as little Emily goes after bar. (9)
18. In favor, thus sob up to snout. (9)
19. Homer sound for deer. (3)
20. Nothing back to leave language. (5)
22. Child's drink. (3)
24. Slippery chap points left. (3)
25. Wren, in confusion, is Victor. (6)
27. State, twice: zero source of chocolate. (5)
30. Arab may point to German car. (5)
31. I take hash cry about vegetable. (5)
33. Mother's double noodles. (4)

Scribble Space



su | do | ku
© Puzzles by Pappocom

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

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

MEDIUM

The principle of 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. Guess if you will, but each Sudoku puzzle can be solved using logic alone. Beware: this puzzle has only one solution, which is on the next page.

EZ Trivia Quiz

1. The Mad Hatter, the Dormouse and the ...? and star on a red background?
2. Which craftsman uses an anvil?
3. Which famous passenger liner sank in 1912?
4. What is Batman's real name?
5. What is the capital of Ethiopia?
6. Which country's flag has a white crescent?
7. Where would you find Causeway Bay and North Point next to each other?
8. Who played bass guitar in the Beatles?
9. Which Russian city has a soccer team called Dynamo?
10. Which is the third planet from the Sun?

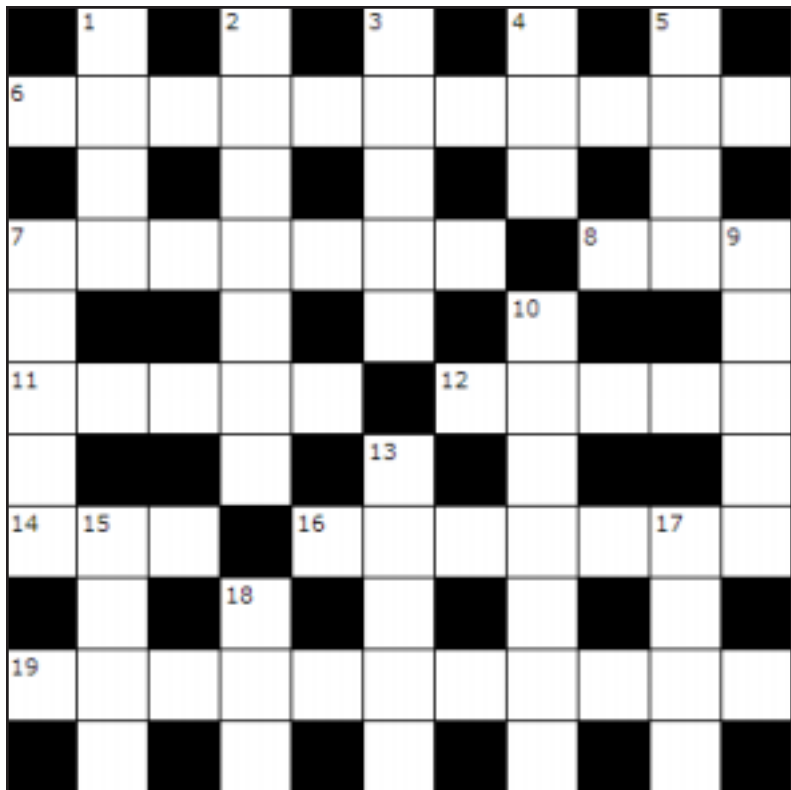
Answers on next page

Rhyme Time

The words or phrases described below all rhyme with "dump". What are they?

1. Gullible person.
2. Use a parachute.
3. Oil reservoir.
4. Announce with fanfare.
5. Intentional road obstruction.
6. Half a leg.
7. Chubby.
8. Awkward, stupid person.
9. Forrest.
10. Dull, unattractive woman.

Answers on next page



Quick Crossword

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ACROSS | DOWN |
| 6. Science and study of mapmaking. | 1. Fabricated. |
| 7. Devilish. | 2. Totally obedient accomplices. |
| 8. Twitch. | 3. Once more. |
| 11. Grass cutter. | 4. Himalayan bovine. |
| 12. One third of one third of 27. | 5. Local language. |
| 14. Be in debt. | 7. Cartoon elephant. |
| 16. Leather factory. | 9. Chevrolet, in short. |
| 19. Duties given to selected people. | 10. Storm noise. |
| | 13. Child-minder. |
| | 15. Stinging insect. |
| | 17. Duty list. |
| | 18. US spy organization. |

Solution below, right

Get your brain in gear with The Monster Quiz



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

- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|--|--|---|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|----------------------------------|--|--|---|--|--|--|---|---|
| 1. Which cartoon superhero's real name was, at various times, Hal Jordan, John Stewart, Guy Gardner and Kyle Rayner? | 2. Who created <i>Spiderman</i> ? | 3. Who is Captain America's sidekick? | 4. Frank Castle is the secret identity of which psychotically vengeful "superhero"? | 5. Whom did Dick Tracy marry on Christmas Day, 1949? | 6. Who currently draws the Dick Tracy comic strip? | 7. Which cartoon character was a mascot for a now defunct chain of miniature golf courses in Florida? | 8. What is Andy Capp's wife called? | 9. What is the Capps' house number? In which street do they live? | 10. Which superheroine wields a weapon call the Lasso of Truth? | 11. Name the school bully in <i>Calvin and Hobbes</i> . | 12. After whom was Hobbes named? | 13. What did Calvin sell to beings from outer space in return for 50 alien leaves for his science project? | 14. What does Calvin's father do for a living? | 15. Who was the first superhero to wear a "unitard" – a one-piece skin-tight costume? | 16. Who killed Spiderman's girlfriend, Gwen Stacy? | 17. On what date did the cartoon strip <i>Garfield</i> first appear? | 18. What is the one thing Garfield does not like to eat? | 19. The <i>Yellow Kid</i> , the first cartoon strip in color, appeared in which year? | 20. What pejorative term did it give rise to? |
|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|--|--|---|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|----------------------------------|--|--|---|--|--|--|---|---|

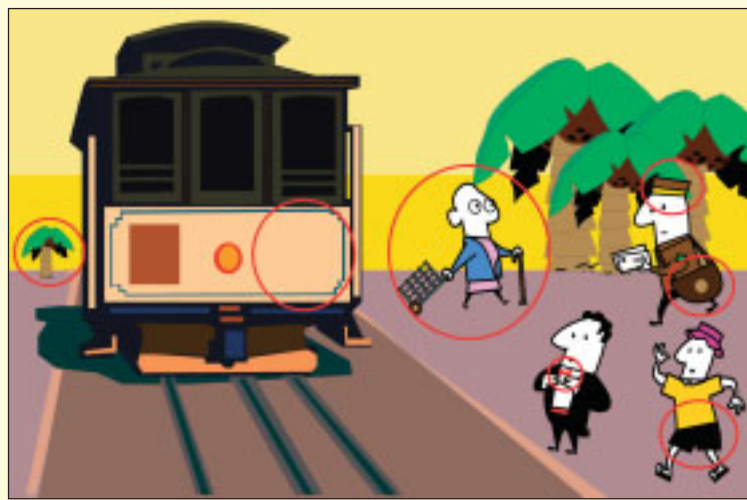
Answers below, left

Puzzle Solutions

Monster Quiz Answers

- Green Lantern;
- Stan Lee and Steve Ditko;
- Bucky;
- Punisher;
- Tess Truehart;
- Dick Locher;
- Andy Capp;
- Florrie;
- 37 Durham Street;
- Wonder Woman;
- Moe;
- Philosopher Thomas Hobbes;
- The Earth;
- He is a patent attorney;
- The Phantom;
- The Green Goblin;
- June 19, 1978;
- Raisins;
- 1897;
- Yellow journalism.

Solution to Cartoon Puzzle



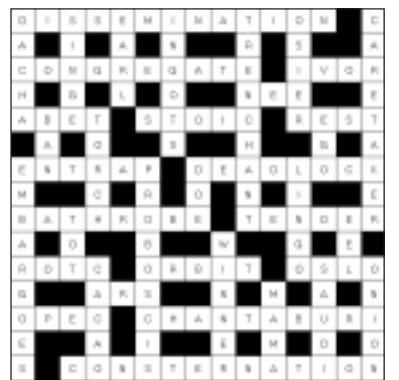
EZ Trivia Answers:

- March Hare;
- Blacksmith;
- RMS Titanic;
- Bruce Wayne;
- Addis Ababa;
- Turkey;
- Hong Kong;
- Paul McCartney;
- Moscow;
- Earth.

Rhyme Time Answers:

- Chump;
- Jump;
- Sump;
- Trump;
- Speed bump;
- Stump;
- Plump;
- Lump;
- Gump;
- Frump.

Cryptic Crossword Solution



Quick Crossword Solution



Sudoku solution

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

A smart adventure story

I've been reading a series of heavy books lately so I decided to treat myself to something light, the kind of book I'd read on the beach if Bangkok had a beach.

I struck gold with *The Last Sunrise* (Headline Book Publishing, London, 2006, 312pp). I'd never heard of Robert Ryan, author of seven previous novels, but I was interested in the historical setting for *The Last Sunrise*: the Burma-India-China theater of World War II.

Ryan turns out to be an accomplished craftsman who did a huge amount of research to bring his raffish characters to life. The story opens in Singapore in 1948 with pilot Lee Crane joining friends at the Long Bar of the Raffles Hotel. After eight years in Asia, he's flying his C-47 Myra Belle Star II to Germany to take part in the relief of the Berlin Blockade. Then he is headed back to Virginia to finally settle down.

Then who walks into the bar but someone he hasn't seen in five years and who he has long thought dead. Elsa Cross – "the woman in the black pencil skirt and white blouse, her head a cascade of red curls, her mouth as big and scarlet as I remembered it" – reacts to the sight of him by tossing her martini in his face and slugging him: "Not a girlie kind of slap, but a full-bore fist that sent me sprawling over

a rattan chair. I bet it hurt her hand, because it sure as hell made my chin smart."

And now you're hooked. Who is Elsa Cross? And who is Kitten, the woman Crane is always talking about, the one he's been searching for since the end of the war?

The scene then switches to Burma in 1941. Crane has just joined the Flying Tigers and is undergoing P-40 fighter training at the northern British base of

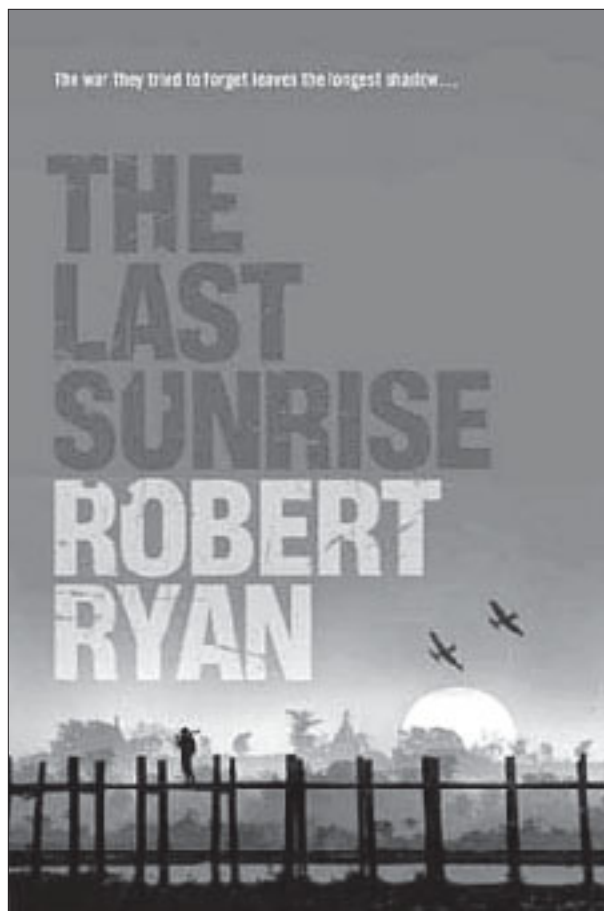


Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt

Toungoo. Next stop will be Kunming in Yunnan and a chance to shoot down Japanese planes for bonus pay. Elsa Cross is a nurse, wife of a Flying Tigers admin officer. Kitten Mahindra is in her 30s, the beautiful Anglo-Indian widow of local teak tycoon. Crane meets Kitten at a dinner she throws in support of a new hospital she is building. They soon become lovers. In fact, Kitten is the first love of Crane's life. Then a farcical act of inadvertent violence separates them and Crane is quickly shipped to China. When the Japanese invade Burma, Kitten fails to get on the last train out to Lashio. Crane flies back to Toungoo only to find her house burned and her servants murdered.

He shoots down his fifth Japanese bomber on his way back to China but, in trouble with the military for his dash back to Burma, Crane will fly C-47 cargo flights



over the Hump from India to China for the rest of the war.

Then we're back in Singapore in 1948. Crane finds the tires of his plane have been slashed and when he's running through a thorough check-up who should

amble up but Cowboy, his old co-pilot on the Hump run. He and Elsa are lovers now and want to enlist Crane's help in recovering two million dollars in abandoned gold bars in southern China. How they went astray we'll learn later. As bait, Cowboy tells Crane that he knows where Kitten is.

These elements of the plot are neatly stitched together and the reader is constantly demanding to know more. The dialog is fast and funny and the descriptive scenes harrowing.

The scene moves back to Calcutta in 1943 and a flight through a monster storm over the Himalayas to Kunming.

"It was the usual weather trying to kill them... to lure them to a lonely, forgotten death, just another plane never seen or heard from again."

This is the first ordeal for British spy Laura McGill who is guarding a suitcase of secrets and two American marines who are guarding a shipment of gold bars meant for Chiang Kai-Shek. The marines vomit, Laura waits till she lands. It's the beginning of a romance between her and Crane.

How events come together till their resolution in 1948 is a thrill ride for you to discover.

PHUKET DIARY

March 1 to April 15. Phuket Perfect Video Competition.

Phuket-based property developer C9 Hotelworks has launched a website and worldwide video competition, which is sponsored by the *Gazette*, urging the global community to show their interpretation of the perfect lifestyle on Phuket Island, with the chance to win fantastic prizes in the process.

In association with the Movenpick Residence Karon Beach, the PhuketPerfect.com website guides viewers to a dedicated page on the YouTube website where they can upload their idea of the perfect Phuket day or lifestyle.

The PhuketPerfect.com website was launched on the back of a hugely successful television advertisement campaign, broadcast right around the region on CNN.

Participants can commence uploading their videos illustrating the perfect Phuket lifestyle on March 1 with the competition closing on April 15.

Winners will be announced on PhuketPerfect.com on April 30 with the grand prize being a week-long stay at the Movenpick Residence.

All details of the program and uploading instructions can be found on PhuketPerfect.com

March 17. High Season Live Music Series at Wine Connection.

Wine, Food and Good Music. All you can imagine for a great Saturday evening.

All-you-can-eat BBQ Buffet and Live Band from 7 pm to midnight. For reservations please call 076-282411, or for more information contact Pascal Laigle, Tel: 087-8896074, email: FB.Phuket@wineconnection.com

March 27. Chess on the beach, Patong.

The 7th Bangkok Chess Club Open will be held at Phuket Graceland Resort & Spa from March 27 to April 1, 2007.

The international tournament, which is expected to attract about 100 chess players from Thailand and abroad, will be held with the theme "Chess on the Beach".

Group A of the tournament is open to all players, rated and unrated. Group B is open only to players rated under 2000 and unrated players.

The ratings are based on International Chess Federation

(Federation Internationale des Echecs, or FIDE) or Thai ELO ratings – other national ratings will be validated by the organizer.

Up to six players from the same country may enter as a team. The total score of best five players will be used for determining the best team. Prizes in Group A will be given to the top six players, the best two Thai players and certificates will be awarded to the best female player and the best junior player. First prize will be approximately US\$1,000, and the team prize will be US\$500. Other prizes will be announced after the

first round.

In Group B, prizes will be given to the top six players and certificates awarded to the two best junior players. Entry to Group A costs 1,000 baht per player for Bangkok Chess Club (BCC) and Thailand Chess Association (TCA) members, and 2,200 baht per non-member. After March 10 the entry fees will be 1,200 baht per member and 2,500 baht per non-member.

Entry to Group B is 500 baht per player. After March 10 the fee will be 600 baht. For more information please visit www.bangkokchess.com

[bangkokchess.com](http://www.bangkokchess.com)

April 13 to 15. Songkran (Thai New Year).

Also known as the Water Festival. Held during the driest months in Thailand, Songkran is celebrated by Thais throughout the country by pouring – traditionally only a little, but these days a lot – of water on other people to wish them good luck for the New Year.

During the three-day public holiday, government offices, banks and most businesses will be closed.

Upcoming events on the island

The Phuket Gazette
- Since 1994 -

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Wasted opportunity

As pointed out by Phuket Tourist Association Vice-President Panu Maswongsa in this week's Inside Story, for many hotel operators, Phuket's high season for tourism has effectively shrunk to just two months due to oversupply in just about every segment (see pages 4-5).

It makes sense to attract more tourists during the low season to redress the imbalance, but the extent to which we can expect to see healthy occupancy rates in July and August will remain limited by factors over which we have little control, such as the timing of the seasons in the mid-northern hemisphere.

However, where we do have some collective ability to control the attractiveness of the island to potential tourists, we tend to fail – often miserably.

The declining state of the environment that sustains our tourism industry remains the primary example, with the worst-yet incidence of “red tide” algae blooms along many west coast beaches being the latest warning bell that has been almost completely ignored by the authorities.

This is poor decision making at its worst, as here in Phuket the environment is the crux of our appeal – sun, sea, sand and sky, as our tourism talking heads are so quick to point out, are what make Phuket attractive.

With the right leadership, Phuket could become “the next Singapore”, and much more.

It has now been demonstrated that we can expect little help from the current interim Cabinet, so we are left to hope that the next elected government will finally show initiative and take real steps to help ensure that the island's 32,000-plus hotel rooms do more than sit empty for most of the year.

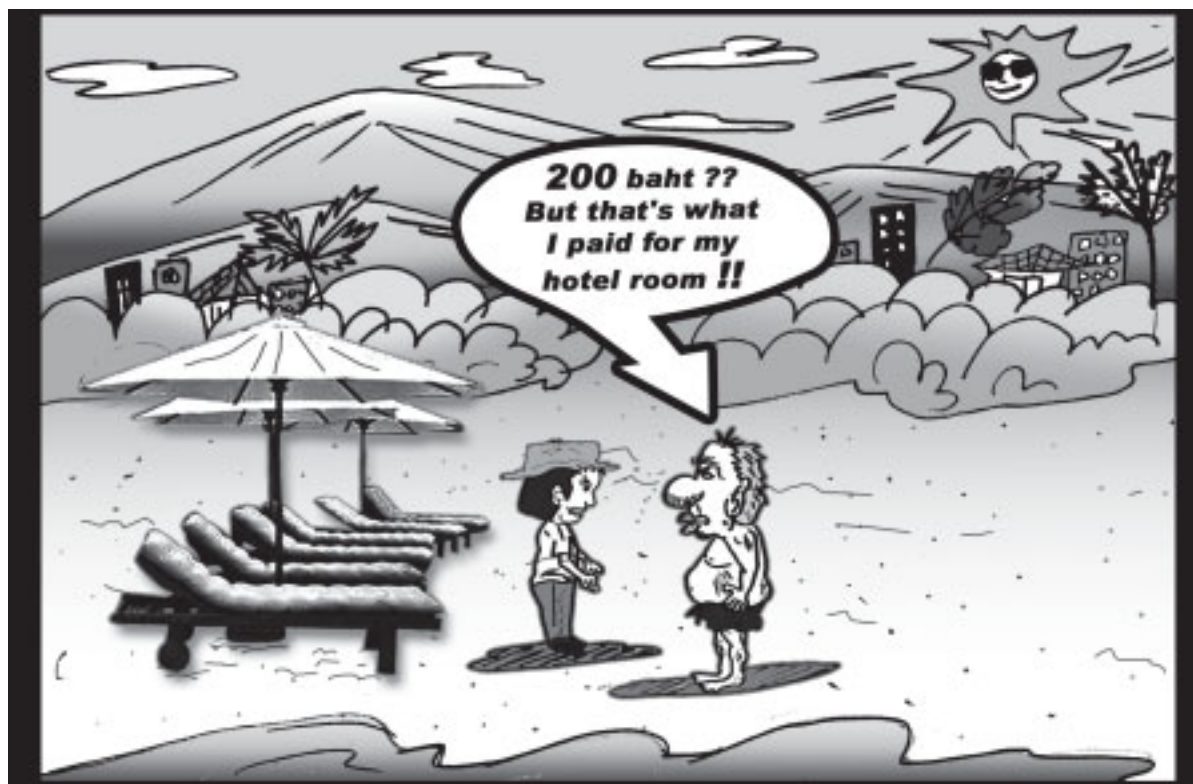
Part of this would involve continuing decentralization, as mandated under the now-abrogated 1997 constitution, to allow decisions about the island's future to be made by residents of Phuket, not bureaucrats in Bangkok.

In this way, our tax money could be channeled directly into areas where it is badly needed – such as education, environmental protection and better law enforcement – and not squandered on corruption-ridden mega-projects elsewhere in the country.

With the right measure of self-governance, Phuket residents could then decide for themselves how to take measures to ensure that our island develops a year-round tourism market.

Whether this means eliminating or re-regulating bar-closing times or allowing casinos to operate, it would become our prerogative, and our chance.

– The Editor



Letters

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

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

Phuket is not the paradise it once was

I read with a sinking heart the naive sentiments expressed by Waranya Nawaluck (*Phuket Gazette*, March 3-9). Yes, many people showed kindness, sympathy and love after the tsunami struck in 2004. Sadly, many people also used it as an excuse to be corrupt.

Yes, there is a tsunami warning system in place; whether it works when needed is another matter. It would be a pretty futile scramble for people on Patong Beach to escape as the beach road is once more being used to park scores of motorbikes. Greed is definitely thriving in Phuket these days.

Shortly after the tsunami an unusually forward-thinking Thai official dared to say that the tsunami should be regarded as an auspicious opportunity to take a break from the relentless development of the island and to consider whether things could be done in a better way – to preserve nature and ensure that Phuket remained a beautiful place for people to live in and to visit.

This clearly didn't happen; excavators and cement trucks were busy destroying the environment again very soon afterward.

Many of us are now planning to leave, convinced that Phuket is destined to become just another suburb.

As trees disappear, the chances of floods and landslides increase, not to mention droughts in dry season as conserving water has not been made a priority.

Crime is rising, particularly violent crime, and to drive on the

now “better” roads of Phuket too often means flirting with death.

Helen Browne
Rawai

A snip in time...

I began to read, with hope that faded quickly, the new Governor's Letter in the March 3 *Gazette*, in which he talked about the stray dog problem in Phuket.

Not once did the Governor mention the word “sterilization”, which is surely the key to keeping the stray dog population under control.

Of course, this would require “responsibility”, which seems to be a rare concept here. I don't understand why the authorities don't launch a campaign to inform people that they must ensure that their dogs are sterilized, as this would have a positive effect on the environment.

To not feed stray dogs other than at the dog pound – while this facility is not ready to accept any more animals – is inhumane as this would result in a plethora of starved, sick animals all over the island.

This is exactly what the scene in Phuket was – before various volunteer organizations started to take the matter in hand – when I first came on holiday 15 years ago and, apart from the suffering of the innocent animals, it also caused much distress among foreign visitors.

Jemima Stone
Chalong

Beach chair discrimination

We spend our vacation (about 30 to 40 days) every year in Phuket. We have always enjoyed our stay very much.

Last year at Kata Beach we rented beach chairs at 100 baht a day and had them every morning on the beach. This year, not only was the price 200 baht a day, but we were not able to rent any chairs for all of February.

Every morning when all the chairs were still available, two beach chair renters at Kata refused to rent them to us, telling us they were already booked. When we said we also would like to book them, their reply was, “We don't take any reservations.”

We suspect that travel agencies have an agreement with the renters to reserve the beach chairs for their clients.

I spoke to some German and Italian people about this and they have had the same problem we've had. If our suspicions are correct it would be not such a democratic way to behave and very discriminating.

Gianna
Milano, Italy

Immigration express?

I read an article in the March 3-9 edition of the *Gazette* and chuckled at the statement, “The usual 30-40 seconds it usually takes per person processing time.” It's more like four to five minutes!

I regularly travel from Hong Kong to Phuket and the queues at immigration are awful. I waited one and a half hours on one occasion. I now try to fly via Bangkok, where they no longer use cameras for immigration, as this is so much faster.

Perhaps Phuket should look at Singapore, where it takes about 10 seconds to clear through immigration.

Frustrated traveler
Phuket

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

What's in a name? Fear

I've had this name since I was born and I never knew that other people had the same name. On February 21 I received a phone call from someone asking me if I was Ram Yangyuen and if I was at home. It was as if someone was checking up on me.

About 6 pm that evening, I was standing in front of my home and three policemen from the Phuket City Police Station drove up, got out of their car and asked me the same question, "Are you Ram Yangyuen?" I said "Yes", and they asked me to show them my identification card.

When I showed it to them, one of the policemen put handcuffs on me and showed me a warrant for my arrest issued in Bangkok. The charge was murder.

I was confused and frightened. I asked them, "Are you sure? Did you check to see if it was correct? Are you sure nobody else has the same name?" I told them I had not murdered anyone.

The police said the warrant was correct and they were confident I was the person the Bangkok police wanted, that they had checked the name and ID number. They said they must do their duty.

I read the arrest warrant and it said that I was a suspect in the killing of a man 10 years ago at a factory in Bangkok.

The police took me to the Phuket City Police Station and left me in a cell. The next day at 2 pm, police from Wat Prayakrai Police Station in Bangkok came and drove me to Bangkok. While I was in the car a policeman told me, "We are not sure if you killed

FIRST PERSON

Arrested and held for murder – and later released, Ram Yangyuen is one of four people in Thailand with that name, one of them is a murder suspect. K. Ram feels he was an easy target for police officers trying to close the case. He speaks out about his ordeal, the collapse of his confidence in the abilities of the Thai police and his concern that his reputation may have been irreparably damaged.



the victim or not, but we must do our duty."

We arrived in Bangkok about 3 am and they left me in cell at Wat Prayakrai Police Station.

My mother came to Bangkok and found a lawyer to help me. They came to the police station to bail me out with a two-million-baht bail bond, but the police refused to release me. The next morning I went to court, as police can't hold anyone for more than 48 hours without a hearing.

In court I denied the charges, but the judge gave the police permission to hold me for five days and refused bail for my release as I had been charged with

a capital offense. After that, the police took me back to the station and put me in a cell.

The next morning, February 23, a witness of the murder came and looked at me and told the police, "He's not the one, the murderer was shorter and looked different from this man." Finally, the police released me. They told me, "Police follow the law and their duty." That's all they said to me.

Later though, they called my mother and said they were sorry, and again that "police have to follow the law and their responsibility."

I don't know who or which organization made this mistake, but I have lost my confidence in

police and police work.

If this problem had happened with someone who had nothing and didn't know anything about the law, they could still be in jail. These days I am not so sure that people who are arrested are the real suspects. Are the police really sure?

One thing I remember the police saying was "Maybe the day you killed that man you were drunk and you did it without even knowing it." How can they say that? I am a Phuket person, I was born here. I have never lived in Bangkok, I couldn't even drive to Bangkok if I wanted to. I don't know the way. Sometimes I go to Bangkok to buy materials for

my business, but a friend drives me there.

I was very surprised to find out later that the police had a photograph of the real suspect before they came to arrest me. So why did they come to arrest me? Even worse, a policeman who followed up on this case came to talk to me after I was released and told me "the real suspect is from Petchaboon, police went there to arrest him, but couldn't find him."

My mother told me police do this, arrest someone with the same name, then they can close the case. I am 32 years old and the real suspect is 30, I think that's why they chose to arrest me – I am about the same age.

At the moment I don't know how much impact this will have on my life. Can the police give me my three days back, can they make people trust me again?

My mother cried and was so worried and the rest of my family was very upset too. My mother had to spend 30,000 to 40,000 baht to help me.

I don't want money or anything, I just want this type of case to never happen again to anyone. I don't want anyone to be a scapegoat.

The police should not only want to close a case. Police should behave like normal people and have honor. They should not be able to just say that they "have to do their duty". How can people trust the police are their friends? Deep in people's hearts, they know they can't trust them.

I will not change my name because I do things the right way – so I have no reason to change it.

– Compiled by
Supanun Supawong

Where is Rawai's water?

I have been "supplied" by the Phuket Provincial Water Supply (PPWS) for nearly a year, and it seems they deliberately turn off the water supply after four or five days to prevent their customers from starting to rely on it.

After all, if their customers started to believe that they had any kind of "right" to receive municipal water, they would start to complain when they didn't get it and the phone at the PPWS would be ringing off the hook.

Also, what would all the shops that sell those huge blue plastic water tanks do? Not to mention the water pump suppliers, well diggers, water tanker operators and so on.

I used to call the PPWS and complain every time the water stopped flowing, and I was consistently told it was because of the roadworks in Phuket.

But where I live in Rawai the roadworks were finished months ago, so it can no longer be blamed on the backhoe opera-

tors constantly digging up the water main.

I have kept log of when I have and have not received water. Between January 16 and February 28 there was no municipal water at all for 22 out of 44 days. I wonder what the situation will be like at the end of the dry season?

I am very pleased to report that the municipal water supply was restored this morning.

I suppose it is just a coincidence, perhaps one of the engineers popped over to the pumping station and noticed that the big valve labeled "Rawai" was in the "Off" position.

Roger
Rawai

Issues & ANSWERS

Want to know how to get something done? Can't understand some of the dafter things that seem to go on in Phuket?

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

Sayan Wareearoonroj, Manager of Phuket Provincial Water Supply (PPWS), replies:

This problem still occurs because roadworks are still being carried out on Chao Fa West Rd on the way to Rawai. Many water-supply pipes are broken because the pipes are next to the road. When the contractor uses heavy machinery for digging, they frequently break the pipes.

Sometimes when we stop the water supply to repair a broken pipe and then we return pressure again, we find that the pipes are broken elsewhere.

If you want to have enough water, you should save some in tanks until the roadworks are complete in about two months.

Are red plate restrictions still in force?

I have heard conflicting reports about whether restrictions on vehicles with red license plates have been lifted or at least changed.

May I drive at night? May I leave the province it is registered in? I was stopped on Silom Rd last night. I really need my car, so what are the rules?

Bo Melin
Bangkok

Charot Klinmanee, Chief of the Registration Department at the Phuket Provincial Transport Office, replies:

Cars with red license plates may be freely driven on public roads from sunrise to sunset. They may not be driven on the road from sunset to sunrise unless the registered owner of the car has been issued a permit by the PPTO specifying the date and

time the car is allowed to be driven at night.

For a car that has red license plates that were issued directly to the owner by the local Provincial Transport Office, the owner can apply to the Provincial Transport Office where the car was registered for a permit to travel out of that province.

For a car that has red license plates fitted by a private company, say a dealership, the owner must ask the company that sold the car to apply to the local Provincial Transport Office for the permit to allow the car to be driven in other provinces.

To drive a car with red plates out of the province it was registered in *and* at night, the registered owner must first be issued a separate permit to do each.

In my opening article I'd like to look at a recent "health scare" that has raised its ugly head on the island – the incidence of Legionnaires' disease in Patong.

The six tourists from two hotels on Phuket who were reported as having contracted Legionnaires' disease have, on the whole, been thoroughly unlucky to have fallen ill.

The bacterium that causes it is ubiquitous. It is everywhere. In fact, many of you reading this article will have come into contact with it and have been just fine.

Legionellosis is caused by a rod-shaped bacterium of which there are at least 46 species and 70 serogroups (minor differences between species). The vast majority of illnesses are caused by *Legionella pneumophila*.

The bacterium was so named after the 1976 convention of the American Legion in Philadelphia. Many staying in the hotel fell ill with the disease and, of the eventual 182 cases, there were 29 deaths.

This was followed by one of the most frustrating investigations that the Centers for Disease Control had experienced as they tracked down this strange, apparently new, killer.

It was terribly difficult to isolate, but was eventually found

LEGIONELLA: Lurking menace

in biofilm "scum" along the edges of the hotel's cooling tower, actively pumping *Legionella* organisms into the rooms.

As time went on, it became clear that there were two forms of the disease. Pontiac fever is a milder form and has an incubation of up to 48 hours. Flu-like symptoms, but no deaths are associated with it.

Legionnaires' disease (LD), on the other hand, has an incubation period of anywhere from two to 16 days before loss of appetite, fever, headache and lethargy kick in.

Myalgia (muscle pain), diarrhea and confusion may then occur along with a frequently productive cough containing blood-streaked phlegm in about 30% of patients.

If you're unfortunate, you'll

progress rapidly to steadily worsening pneumonia, respiratory failure, shock and multi-organ failure.

Depending on a number of factors – such as if you are immuno-suppressed (organ transplant or HIV), a smoker, a heavy drinker, over 50 or not diagnosed sufficiently quickly – death rate can be as high as 40% to 80%. If things are working out for you, that drops down to 5% to 30%, which is still a pretty significant problem. Either way, antibiotic treatment is essential. There is no vaccine available.

So how does *Legionella* manage this? As it turns out, completely by accident. The natural host for the causative agent, *L. pneumophila*, is several species of amoeba, those single cell pro-

teins you might remember from biology lessons at school.

Amoebas are found everywhere conditions are damp and between 20°C and 50°C, such as: wells, humidifiers, hot and cold water systems, taps, large air-conditioning systems, cooling towers, whirlpool spas, showers, sediment and soil. Even carbon-based water purification systems are not free from risk.

All you have to do as the unsuspecting host is inhale some of these bacteria-containing amoeba or the bacteria themselves via aerosol droplets, and this can happen just by drinking a glass of water.

Once in your lungs, *L. pneumophila* invades your macrophages. These are the immune cells that normally engulf and destroy foreign material. Unfortunately for us, these bacteria think the macrophage is just another amoeba.

In the words of Professor Bill Keevil of Southampton University in the UK, "We've got videos showing infected [macrophage] cells. They look like balloons full of worms. One bacterium can go into a host cell and then replicate into several hundred. The whole host cell becomes a seething mass and explodes." This is why you get ill.

While cases do crop up, they tend to be from three to 20 people per million of population, depending on what country you're in, which is amazingly low considering how widely spread the bacteria are.

Regular cleaning of air-conditioning systems and spas with antiseptics and other measures such as the use of UV to destroy the bacteria are all it really takes to make a difference.

That said, considering that the amoeba and thus the bacteria are everywhere, you still have to be pretty unlucky to catch Legionnaires' disease.

George Robbie holds a Master's and Diploma from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. A UK-qualified teacher, he provides science home schooling in Phuket. You can email him at homescience@gmail.com

HEALTH MATTERS

By George Robbie

In The Stars

PISCES (February 20-March 20): If you are celebrating a birthday this week you can look forward to the dream of a lifetime coming true during the year ahead. Profit you make between now and the end of March may seem like a drop in the ocean, but it is a positive sign of gains to come. You are on the right track toward financial success. Wear the color cucumber green to avoid losing your cool.

ARIES (March 21-April 20): You are about to discover that what goes around comes around. If you behaved in an honest, altruistic way last month, rewards are in store. If you are still waiting for your soul mate to breeze into

your life, you should be pleasantly surprised this week. If you're already in a serious relationship, prepare to discover new horizons with your partner. Positive visualization can help to improve your situation at work.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): There appears to be much change in your life. If you are having last minute doubts regarding a decision you made last month, you will be reassured by results this week. Hard work lies ahead during the coming weeks, but you can look forward to rest and relaxation when that's behind you. Remember your New Year's resolutions when someone tries to put pressure on you to do extra work.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): As long as you can avoid feeling responsible for a problem of someone else's making, smooth sailing is indicated until the end of the month. Family matters will require delicate handling, particularly this weekend when a relation turns up out of the blue. Your tactful charm should dissolve any tension. Romance becomes bittersweet when you learn something midweek. The number 7 can bring luck on Thursday.

CANCER (June 22-July 23): Being content with what you have remains a challenge, but you will become alert to the fact that the grass on the other side is actually browner. If you are going through

a period of drought in the area of romance, try focusing on other areas of life that can bring satisfaction. A Scorpio is about to present a business proposition that could tickle your fancy. Wearing the color lime green will encourage sharper zest for life.

LEO (July 24-August 22): A business venture might not be proving to be the roaring success that you'd imagined, but will certainly bring more riches later in the year. In the meantime, you should set your sights a little lower in order not to suffer further disappointment. Love is in the air if you're single; a Libra could turn out to be the partner of your dreams. The number 4 can bring luck on Monday.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): As long as a certain Taurean is blowing hot and cold, you are advised to forget any chance of

setting sail on the sea of romance. You are advised to direct your energy toward work-related issues or risk missing the boat. A Libra is poised to take advantage of business opportunities that you are missing. A dream you have this weekend can provide clues regarding a financial problem. The color sandstone will encourage more practical thinking.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): Your money-making skills are particularly sharp from now until the end of the month, so use them wisely. An investment opportunity you learn of early next week is not as golden as a Pisces would have you believe, but a Leo is about to come up with a profitable offer. Where romance is concerned, flirtation could lead you up the jungle path this Sunday. Keep things light-hearted and all will be well.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): Renewed energy means that you are able to achieve more than usual this week. Don't expect that those close to you will be on the same wavelength, how-

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Life on this planet is going downhill fast. We're getting more and more lethal diseases – AIDS, SARS and bird flu [and Legionella – see facing page. Ed].

We've got earthquakes, hurricanes and typhoons. We've got global warming and climate change. And of course there are always the wars, ethnic cleansings and terrorist attacks.

What can the average helpless human do to improve this situation? As individuals, we can't do much.

But there's one thing we can do. We can name hurricanes.

Yes! A few years ago, they ran through all the names on the alphabetical list for hurricanes and had to revert to the Greek alphabet. That was bad news for those of us who don't read Greek.

A UN organization called the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) is in charge of naming hurricanes. They make up a new list for each year, and recycle them every six years. The lists are in alphabetical order, skipping Q, U, X, Y and Z. That gives us 21 names available each year. For instance, one year the name of the first hurricane was Arlene. The next year it was Alberto.

There are two problems here. One: not enough names. Two: many of the names are

Name that hurricane



dorky. We may not be able to save the planet, but it is incumbent upon every human being to join a world-wide campaign to give every hurricane a non-dorky name.

One year we had hurricanes with names like Dennis, Emily and Ophelia. We can do better than that. If I were a hurricane, and they named me Ophelia, I'd be so mad I'd wipe out everything south of Kansas City.

There is also the matter of omitting names beginning with Q, U, X, Y and Z. The WMO could have used names like Quasimodo (the hunchback of Notre Dame), Ulysses, Xantippe (the shrewish wife of Socrates), Yorick and Zorro. Or they could have made up names like Querulosa, Uga-

booga, Xenophobia, Yadayadaya-da and Zygote.

The WMO also names typhoons. Since typhoons occur in Asia, they give them Asian names. But here I'm talking only about hurricanes.

I believe that hurricanes (and maybe also typhoons) should be named after the bad guys 'n' gals of history and mythology. Hurricanes are bad, right? So they should be named after eminent villains and villainesses. If we grant them this token of respect, that may mollify their wrath. They might reciprocate by politely veering back out to sea.

Here's an alphabetical list of hurricane names I recommend to the WMO. I add explanatory notes for names that may be obscure, and also alternatives for names that may be politically incorrect. I have no names for U, W, X and Y – maybe readers can offer suggestions.

Attila, the famous Hun; alternately, **Ayman** [al-Zawahiri], al-Qaeda's No 2 nasty; or **Ahri-man**, the Zoroastrian name for the devil.

Beelzebub, or **Belial**, both names for the devil; alternately,

Bill O'Reilly, an obnoxious anchorman on Fox News who might also be the devil.

Caiaphas, who presided at Jesus's trial; **Circe**, the witch in the Odyssey who turned men into pigs; **Cheney** – as in Dick.

Dracula, alternately, **Delilah**, who betrayed Samson; **Devadatta**, who opposed the Buddha; **Duryodhana**, the villain of the Mahabharata.

Eichmann. **Frankenstein**. **Genghis Khan**.

Herod, who tried to kill the infant Jesus; **Herodias**, his wicked wife; **Hades**, the Greek god of the underworld; **Hitler**.

Ivan the Terrible, a Russian tsar; **Iscariot**, surname of Jesus's betrayer; **Iblis**, an evil spirit in Islam; **Imtiaz**.

Judas, Jesus's betrayer; or **Jezebel**, the foe of Elijah.

Kamsa, who tried to kill the infant Krishna.

Loki, the Norse god of mischief; **Lilith**, a demoness.

Moloch, ancient Semitic deity to whom children were sacrificed.

Nero, the Roman emperor who persecuted the Christians.

Osama. Alternately, **Onan**, the inventor of masturbation – see Genesis 38:7-10.

Note: Onan's status as a bad guy has been seriously questioned, especially by teenage boys.

Pilate, who sentenced Jesus to death; **Pol Pot**.

Ravana, villain of the Ramayana; **Rudra**, the Vedic storm god; **Rasputin**; **Rumsfeld**.

Satan. Alternately, **Stalin**; **Saddam**; **Salome**, who demanded, and got, the head of John the Baptist on a plate; **Surpanakha**, demon sister of Ravana in the Ramayana.

Torquemada, of the Spanish Inquisition.

Vader, after Darth, of *Star Wars* fame.

And finally, one of the major monsters of contemporary times and a one-man human horror show: **Zarqawi** (as in Abu Musab al-).

S. Tsow can be flamed at stwow@yahoo.com, except when he's trying to convince the WMO that "S" and "Tsow" are not good names for bad hurricanes.

by Isla Star

ever. The slower pace of an Aquarian in particular could cause you to become irritated on Monday and Tuesday. Bargain hunting this weekend pays off, but will probably mean that you have to cut back on spending until the end of the month.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): The stars are shining on your attempts to rekindle a recently-ended relationship, but you will need to lose a bad habit in order for it to work the second time around. If you are prepared to admit that you're not perfect, it will help you to succeed in all areas of life. A swings and roundabouts scenario in the world of business causes frustration on Wednesday, but intervention by a tactful Leo calms the situation.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): Trying to fit into

someone else's world too much can only bring heartache. Capricorns who know deep down that a liaison isn't bringing you the happiness you seek are advised to take a realistic look at this relationship. The heat builds up in an ongoing business dispute and matters should come to a head by the end of the month. The number 6 can bring good fortune on Tuesday.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): A change of career is forecast for many of you brave enough to jump in feet first. Financial success is highlighted for you to undertake new endeavors within the coming days. A family disagreement can only be dissolved by your honest approach; if you've made a mistake, now is the time to face up to it. Sunday is the most auspicious day for instigating discussions. Wear a piece of jade to cultivate wisdom.

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UPSs: Saving grace

Reader Leon dropped me a line the other day, with a cautionary tale that bears repeating: "Several days ago my Phillips 42-inch plasma TV video went out. Dead. The power light came on, audio worked fine, but the video was totally black.

"I talked to the local Phillips factory rep, who said that it was due to failure of a video power supply component, which in turn is due to the poor power supply we have here on Phuket.

"Low voltages (brown-outs), fluctuations, spikes and unexpected power cuts take their toll. He said an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) would have been very good insurance. Pity the dealer never mentioned that. Of course this happened exactly nine days after the one-year warranty expired.

"The factory repair shop fixed the TV, but the repairs cost 13,000 baht. Moral of the story: if you have expensive electronics of any kind, spend the extra money and always use a UPS."

Leon, I feel your pain. I survived an unexpected power outage at the shop the other day – a construction company cut the

power and didn't bother to warn anybody. When the electricity finally came back on, my cheap, locally-made UPS turned belly-up. Fortunately, the computers weren't damaged, but the six-month-old UPS just kept squealing.

TOO MUCH HASSLE

The UPS was still under warranty but the company that sold me the UPS wasn't much help. After a lot of time and effort, they finally said they'd fix the box, but I had to pay to ship it to Bangkok and back.

In the end, it wasn't worth the hassle.

When you go to buy a UPS in Phuket, here's what you need to know.

The kind of UPS you commonly see contain sealed, lead-acid batteries that charge when they're plugged into the wall and the power is working.

When the power turns dicey – too high, too low or completely nonexistent – the UPS kicks in and provides a smooth, steady current.

A UPS's battery wears out in three to five years, and the conditions in Phuket (heat, humidity, unpredictable power) dramatically shorten battery life.

You should use a UPS for all of your expensive, sensitive electronics: computers, modems, routers, TVs, stereos, game consoles and the like.

On the other hand, there's no need to plug a power "brick" into a UPS unless you need to supply power continuously to the brick. So, for example, you shouldn't plan on plugging your laptop or camera battery charger into a UPS.

You should never plug a printer into a UPS: printers draw too much power, shorten the life of the UPS, and they aren't that critical anyway.

UPSs have Volt-Amp (VA) and wattage ratings, and you have to pick a UPS that's powerful enough to handle both the VA and the wattage draw of whatever you're trying to run.

If you're protecting a TV, home-theater system or Nintendo, the lowest-power UPS available will work fine.

But if you're working with a good-sized computer, you have to make sure the UPS you buy can stand the load. It's almost impossible to look at a computer system these days and tell for sure what VA rating it requires.

For help on sizing a UPS for computer systems, there's a calculator (that consistently over-estimates) available at www.apcc.com/template/size/apc/index.cfm.

CHEAPO

I've learned the hard way that cheap UPSs, particularly in Thailand, are just that – cheap. Anybody with a soldering iron, battery and a rag-tag collection of parts can throw together something and call it a UPS. It might even work for a few months.

I'm sure there are excellent, consistently reliable locally-produced UPSs out there somewhere, but for the life of me, I haven't bumped into any of them.

Personally, I stick with APC brand UPSs. I used to schlep them all the way from Bangkok, but recently discovered two places in Phuket that sell APC.

These are Data Business Computer & Communication on Hongyok Utis Rd (Tel: 076-356191; expressphuket@yahoo.com) and Super Cheap on Thepkasattri Rd (Tel: 076-216791, 076-216287, info@supercheapphuket.com).

When he isn't writing computer books and magazine and newsletter articles, Woody Leonhard (woody@khunwoody.com, www.askwoody.com) runs Khun Woody's Bakery and the Sandwich Shoppe in Patong.

ARE YOU HOT?

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

Valhalla V-Plaza, Soi Sunset, Patong. 256/512 kbps. Available 24/7.

Aqua Restaurant and Bar, Paradise Complex, Patong. 512K ADSL, 8:30 am to 4 am.

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

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

Sandwich Shoppe, off Rat-U-thit 200 Pi Rd, Patong. ADSL speed. 24/7.

Lady Pie, 120/6 Srisoonthon Rd, Cherg Talay. 250kbps via TOT. Monday to Saturday, 8.30 am-6.30pm; Sunday, 10am-6.30pm.

Are you hot and free? Let readers know. Email Woody an invitation at woody@khunwoody.com



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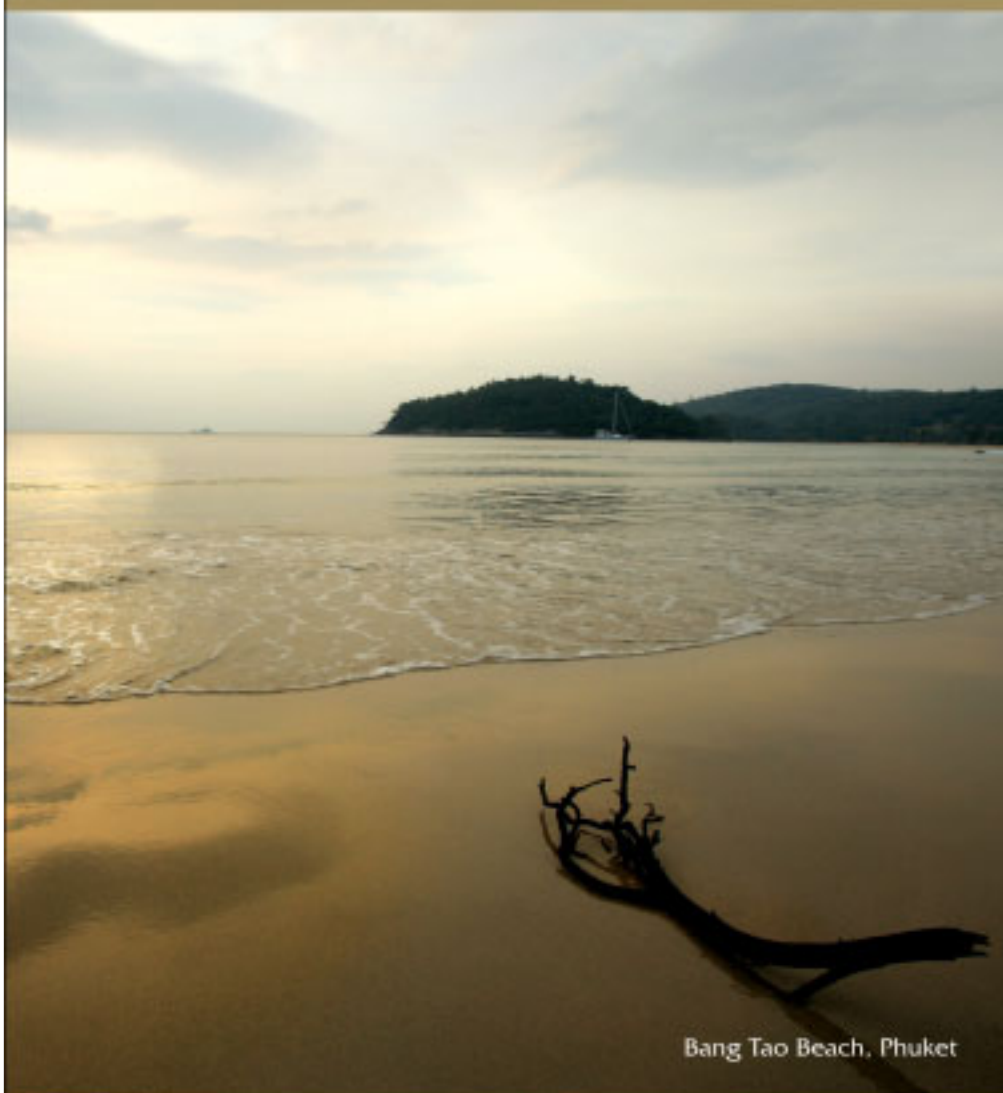


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ON THE MOVE

Devie Eviandhin, from Indonesia, has been appointed Spa Manager of Le Royal Meridien Phuket Yacht Club. She has a degree in Hotel and Tourism from the Academy Pariwisata in Indonesia and five years of spa experience. Ms Eviandhin worked as the Director of Asian Wind Spas; Consultant for Le Meridien Angkor, Cambodia; Leisure Manager for Conrad Phuket Resort & Spa; Assistant Leisure Manager for Hilton Phuket Arcadia Resort & Spa; and Spa Manager of The Royal Coco Palm Resort in Khao Lak.



Jirasak Plisadangbutr, from Bangkok, has been appointed Director of Food and Beverage of Club Andaman Group. He graduated with a master's degree from the faculty of Marketing Management and a degree from the faculty of Liberal Arts from Phuket Rajabhat University. He has worked as the restaurant manager of Dusit Laguna Resort, Phuket, and general manager at the It's Alive Seafood and Restaurant in Patong.



Pisarn Techajindawong, from Bangkok, has been appointed Public Relations Manager at Club Andaman Beach Resort. He has a degree from the faculty of Science from King Mongkut's University of Technology, Thonburi. K. Pisarn worked as the Marketing Manager at T. Charoen Recycle Import and Export Co Ltd in Bangkok, and as the Sales and Marketing Manager at Rocky Trading Group Co Ltd in Bangkok.



Surin Beach Resort quietly sold

By Chris Husted

SURIN BEACH: Through a deal financed by international finance powerhouse Lehman Brothers, Destination Properties has bought the Surin Beach Resort for an undisclosed amount.

Although the deal has been branded a "confidential transaction", Destination Properties have confirmed that 150 million baht will be spent on renovating all the resort's 256 deluxe studios and suites as well as the public areas, lobby and restaurant facilities.

The resort will be rebranded with an international hotel operator to be named in the coming months.

Amante C. Amante Jr, Destination Properties' Director of Corporate Communications, told the *Gazette*, "Destination Properties is currently in talks with an international hotel management chain. This will be announced soon. Surin Beach Resort will be the only internationally-branded, four-star resort in the area of Surin."



NEW DESTINATION: Surin Beach Resort is to be renovated and rebranded.

He confirmed that, as with sister property Ramada Resort Karon Beach, also owned by Destination Properties, the Surin Beach Resort will take on a strong family focus.

In addition to a supervised children's club with playground and organized children's activities,

the resort will have a children's pool and water slides.

The resort will also feature a minimart, a business center, a foreign exchange center, a gift shop, a laundry and dry cleaning

service and 24-hour security.

Gary Murray, CEO of Destination Properties, said, "Surin Beach Resort has great potential to be renovated and repositioned as one of the nicest four-star in-

ternationally-branded hotels in Phuket.

"Surin Beach Resort is ideally located directly fronting Surin Beach and adjacent to the Twin Palms Resort and only five minutes away from Amanpuri and the Chedi Phuket.

"We are in the company of some of Phuket's finest five-star properties. The renovated and rebranded Surin Beach Resort will provide guests with great four-star accommodation."

Surin Beach Resort will stay open during the renovations, which are expected to be completed before the end of the year.

In addition to the ALiLA Phuket Resort, Destination Properties owns the Hilton Hua Hin Resort and Spa and the Shambala Villas Samui, and is developing the Doubletree by Hilton Golf Resort & Spa near Sriracha, to be managed by Hilton International and opening early next year.

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Limited partnerships restructured	38	31	30	-3
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Partnerships deregistered	9	10	9	-10

Source: Phuket Provincial Business Development Office.

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Anatomy of a 'correction'

The turmoil in financial markets started on February 27 in China with the stock market, as measured by the Shanghai Composite Index, falling by almost its daily regulatory limit of 10%.

Many other markets followed suit; Asia then Europe and the US as the day continued.

The Chinese fall was widely ascribed to rumors that the government was about to implement substantial capital tax gains on stock market profits.

This was certainly the trigger point, but as Qing Wing, a senior currency analyst with Bank of America, correctly stated, the Chinese Market was substantially "over bought".

It is worth remembering that the Shanghai Composite Stock Index rose by 130% in 2006 and was continuing its surge into 2007.

Certainly, the Chinese economy is growing rapidly, and official figures for Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth for 2006 are stated as 10.7%, which is "boom" territory.

There is a dichotomy between stock market performance and real economic growth, and when financial markets overreach themselves there is always a day of reckoning.

It is not simply a matter of what goes up must come down, but rather that asset prices that reach irrational levels will return to reality.

This can be a painful process as often the pendulum

swings too far in the opposite direction before reaching an approximation of fair value.

The comment on CNBC's *Europe Today* by Bob Parker, the deputy Chairman of Credit Suisse Asset Management, that they believe that China's GDP growth in 2007 will still be in the region of 8% to 10% reflects an economy growing at an blistering pace.

By coincidence, I had a discussion six days before the Chinese correction with a reader who is heavily invested in that

market. My advice was caution. Unfortunately, investors who have made substantial profits in these areas are reluctant to sell. It is an old human emotion and greed overwhelms fear even though markets often change 180 degrees in a very short period of time.

The drop in the Chinese market has only one factor that provoked the wider sell-off. Initially, it appeared that the tail was wagging the dog with China setting the world stock pace instead of Europe and the US, which would have been a historical first.

Other factors included a speech made by Alan Greenspan, the recently retired Chairman of the US Federal Reserve, in which he said the US could move into a recession later this year.

Also on February 26, the report on durable goods orders for the US economy for January 2007 were announced, reflecting a drop of 9%, much worse than expected.



MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson



The Chinese 'correction' rattled around the world. Philippine share prices were among those that plunged in recent weeks.

- EPA/Rolax dela Pena

This was also accompanied by gloomy residential housing market data and a downward revision of US GDP for the last quarter of 2006 from an annualized rate of 3.5% to 2.2%.

Greenspan realized the market had overreacted to his comments and by midweek issued a statement of a recession for the US late in 2007 to "possible" from "probable". Other district governors of the US Federal Reserve also issued statements frequently citing only a 20% chance of recession in 2007.

Ben Benanke, the current Chairman of the US Federal Reserve, weighed in with more reassuring comments, even foreseeing an increase in US economic growth by mid 2007.

Greenspan also stated that

it was impossible to be certain about anything in the economy so many months into the future. Economics is only an exact science with the benefit of hindsight.

Globally stock markets had, almost without exception, recorded substantial gains from mid-2006 almost to the end of February 2007, with many reaching record highs.

The cost of "put options", which is basically portfolio insurance against a reversal in prices, had reached extremely low levels. Markets were simply overly-confident, which is always a dangerous sign.

During the same week, announcements were made on US January personnel data showing a 0.6% rise in the number of new jobs, which was better than expected.

This was followed by better-than-anticipated Institute of Supply Management (ISM) data figures that showed higher manufacturing output. Both of these numbers helped to partially stabilize the US market.

However, complacency and confidence has been shaken, which, although unpleasant, was overdue. Markets are at their best when there is a healthy balance between greed and fear.

The first reversals in the carry trade, an area that was recently covered in this column, came sharply to the foreground.

The "sell off" resulted in the Japanese yen rising from 121/122 to the US dollar to 115, as leveraged debt, funded in borrowed yen, was swiftly repaid.

Qing Wing pondered that it might soon be time to sell yen "short" as markets recover.


That will all depend on a fairly rapid stabilization becoming a reality, the vast majority of Yen "carry trades" are still in evidence. At some stage this will, presumably, be reversed.

However, Japanese inflation appears to be heading back toward deflation. The chief economist of French banking group BNP Paribas estimates that, by Western economic accounting measures, Japan is already experiencing deflation at a rate of 0.4%.

The Japanese government, unfortunately, as usual is far too reluctant to make the necessary adjustments to the economy. It is a case of a well-managed corporate sector being impeded by a poorly-managed government that basically is out of touch with reality, but the Japanese are not unique in this area.

UPDATE: With reference to a recent article on Close Private Bank, the regional manager for Asia will be available for meetings at our office in Phuket on March 23. His schedule is already rather full but we can possibly manage one or two more appointments. Anyone interested, please contact me by telephone.

Richard Watson runs Global Portfolios Co Ltd, a Phuket-based personal financial-planning service. He can be reached at Tel: 076-381997, Fax: 076-383185, Mobile: 081-0814611. Email: imm@loxinfo.co.th



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TOO TOUGH: The PCU players were outclassed in Bangkok.

Cup is dry for Phuket sloggers

BANGKOK: Cricketers from the Phuket Cricket Union (PCU) came home empty-handed after the inaugural Inter-Regional Cricket Cup held March 5 to 7 in Bangkok. They have, however, announced that they will return more skilled and prepared for next year's event.

The event featured teams representing the South, North, Central and Northeastern regions of the Kingdom. In the end, the winner's trophy was taken by the Central team with runners-up spot going to the Northeast.

Twelve players from PCU made up the squad led by Captain Raju Seemant and Vice-Captain Nifty Catts with Hardeep Kapoor taking on the added role of Team Manager.

The players were selected from the four local clubs on the island who are currently competing in the second season of the Island Furniture Cricket League, which plays every Sunday in Cherng Talay.

Play commenced on the morning of March 3 and continued through to March 5 with each region playing the other regions once. Phuket started the competition with a win over the North with some good batting by Sameer who made an unbeaten 49 including six fours. Hardeep also chipped in with 47 including one six and six fours while Catts

proved useful in the bowling department. Chasing a total of 176 made by the North, Phuket reached the target with the loss of only four wickets.

On the second day, Phuket faced tournament favorites Central and made 181 runs after batting first. The Central batting lineup, however, was too good for the Southern bowlers and took only 22.2 overs to reach their target.

Phuket managed to restrict the Northeast to 140 for 9 on the third and final day of the tournament with some good bowling performances by Rajiv (2 for 17) and Roddy Meyer (3 for 27). Despite determined batting by Sameer and Catts, Phuket managed only 129 runs and the Northeast won the game to take the runners-up award.

Next year the tournament will be held in Chiang Mai by which time, according to the PCU, Phuket should have a talented pool of players to choose from. Until then, it is back to the local Island Furniture League, which is well into Round 2 of the season.

Anyone interested in participating in cricket on the island in any form can contact Mark Whetton at scarfy@loxinfo.co.th. For further information visit: www.phuketcricket.com

A showcase for local sports

THALANG: Flying fists, soggy suits and fast bicycles marked the first day of this year's Thepkrasattri Festival at the Khok Chana Pama area in Thalang as the annual event opened with a selection of sports such as mountain bike racing, *takraw*, sack races and *muay talay*.

A crowd favorite March 11 was *muay talay* (pictured), a boxing competition in which two boxers face each other on a pole over a pool of muddy water. The rules allow boxers, ranging in age from about 6 to 12 years old, to punch each other with gloved fists, but not kick. The first boxer to fall into the water loses.

Thirty-two festival goers competed in the soggy boxing matches, with prizes for winners of each round growing from 100 baht to the final match prize of 1,000 baht.

The mountain bike race was broken up into different classes for males, females, age groups and distances, and the winner of each group received 1,000 baht, with 800 baht and 500 baht going to the second and third place racers.



Warnes wins ACYC opener

CHALONG: Robert Warnes on his *Platu Tua Lek* won the Racing class in the first race of the Ao Chalong Yacht Club (ACYC) Keelboat and Multihull Race Series 2007 on March 11.

Warnes, better known for organizing sailing across the bay at Phuket Yacht Club at Ao Yon, was also awarded the Image Asia Encouragement Award for his continuing support in youth sailing development.

Niels Dgenkopf and his crew on *Phoenix* came second in the class.

Bill Phelps on his Firefly 850 catamaran *Twin Sharks* won the Multihulls class.

Although *Twin Sharks* is a relative newcomer to the annual ACYC race series, Tony Knight of the ACYC explained that *Twin Sharks*, which placed

second overall in the Firefly 850 class in the King's Cup Regatta in December, is expected to contest every ACYC race this year.

"Although Phelps will return to the UK within three weeks, Mark Pescott, who designed the Firefly 850, will skipper *Twin Sharks* for the rest of the season. She's tipped to be the hot favorite to win the class," he said.

Regular ACYC racer Roger Kingdon placed second in the class on *Moto Inzi*, followed by Chris Jongerious on his new Firefly *The Frog*.

Knight explained that due to the exceptional speed of the Firefly catamarans, a performance handicap will be determined and will applied to the quick cats for the rest of the season.

Mark Horwood of local boat builders Latitude 8, which sponsored the day's racing, finished fourth on *Charro*, followed by *See Krong Huk* skippered by Brent McInnes, who was ironically not sailing his own boat *No Fixed Address*.

Nigel Beare and his crew, half of whom were Thai, won the Cruising class on *Lanta Concept*, ahead of Gordon Williams from River Rovers on *Aries* in second place and Tony Dudman on *Onyx* third.

This year's ACYC race series is sponsored by Image Asia. The next race will be on March 25, with skippers' briefing at 8 am followed by a 9 am race start.

For more information call Tony Knight at 081-7470047.

Extreme race comes to Patong

PATONG: The Adventure Race Thailand Championship 2007 will take off in Patong March 31. The seven-hour, multi-event race, with more than a million baht in prize money, will cover 48 kilometers, including a 10-km run, a 30-km bicycle race, a 500-m swim, a 1-km uphill jungle run, a 7-km sea canoe route and a rock climbing section.

Entry costs 2,000 baht per three-person team, but there will also be a free 6km fun-run course on the same day. For more information or to register see www.thaiticketmaster.com/arace/index_eng.htm

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Piccadilly celebrate

PATONG: This year's league party will be held at Piccadilly Bar on Soi Kepsup March 20, starting at 8 pm. Lots of good food and prizes will be on offer.

Any bar owners wishing to enter a team in the next league should come to the party or contact darts@phuketgazette.net for more information.

March 6 results: Didi's* 6 Offshore 3; Piccadilly* 5 Coyote Bar 4; Beach House 2 Dogs Bollocks* 7. (* = winner of beer leg)

Standings: 1. Piccadilly (32 pts.); 2. Queen Mary (25); 3. Didi's (24); 4. Dogs Bollocks (23); 5. Offshore (19); 6. Coyote Bar (17); 7. Valhalla (10); 8. Beach House (9).

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Vagabonds guzzle their way to glory

BANGKOK: The Phuket Vagabonds, after their successful tour to Cambodia, were back on the road recently for the Annual Bangkok Rugby 10s Tournament.

Drawn in a difficult group, the first game was against the Violet Offenders, an invitational team who ran in three quick tries to leave the Vagabonds in search of some inspiration in the second half.

After a quick break from Angus Kerr ably supported by John Gold, Pat Cotter, Ben Hennessey and Steve Hatchett, the local lads finally managed to get a score but lost the game by three tries to one.

By the time of the second game the local lads ran out four tries to one, winning over the Flying Elvises, which put them into a do or die game against their old adversaries The Bangkok Bangers on day two.

To celebrate their unexpected success the local lads went on to party most of the night away and a weary looking bunch took to the field the next morning.

They consequently took a battering at the hands of the Bangers, despite man of the match Steve Wainwright's arrival to bolster the team. This left them condemned to play in the Plate final against the Flying Elvises.

Due to injury, old age and apathy on both sides it was decided to determine the winner by a boat race drinking competition. The Vagabonds, in their element, won easily.

The Vagabonds' next tournament is the Coffin Dodgers competition on home turf during the Phuket International Rugby 10s on May 26 and 27.

New Muay Thai stadium opens with three KOs

THALANG: The Sunday night Muay Thai boxing card at Phuket's newest Muay Thai Stadium, on the road to the airport in Sakoo, featured three knockouts and some close decisions - one of them highly questionable.

The stadium, which opened last month, was built at a cost of about 4 million baht by Chirdchu Sae-Aew, a former Muay Thai man who has operated a Muay Thai camp at the six-rai site for two years.

Beside being the stadium's owner, promoter and *nai sanam* ("ringmaster" would be a good approximate translation), his other businesses include prawn farming and a car rental company at the airport.

Phuket Airport Boxing Stadium got its grand opening on February 18, when its 2,000-seat capacity was stretched to the limit as some of Thailand's top Muay Thai fighters came down for a number of bouts that were televised on Thai TV Channel 7.

Arriving early on March 11, the venue still had the smell of fresh paint and there were still plastic covers on the ringside and VIP seats, which more closely resembled those coin-operated massage chairs you expect to see in an airport departure lounge than in row one of a Thai boxing stadium - though perhaps that was no coincidence given the stadium's name.

Although the stadium does not practice "double-pricing", charging foreigners more than Thais for entry, a night's entertainment there is not cheap, with stadium seats at 1,000 baht, cushioned "ringside seats" at 1,500 baht and aforementioned luxury



Suntuss Sor Weerachai of Phang Nga celebrates moments after his fourth down KO of opponent Yudtakan of Krabi.

recliners at 2,000 baht a head.

Once inside prices are reasonable indeed: just 50 baht for a small can of Heineken and 45 baht for Singha. The stadium itself is comfortable and cool, and they have real Muay Thai musicians, not canned cacophony, playing along to the action.

Last Sunday the stadium was less than half full, with most of the cheers coming from the "gambling corner" section. The crowd was treated to a few exceptional bouts, including a surprise Round 2 punching knockout by Pandin Por Arisara of Krabi over hometown boy Chernrob Sor Lerdphan of Phuket.

The fourth fight on the eight-bout card, at 44 kilos, got off to a desperately slow start in Round 1, before Jombolek from the Sanam Para Camp seemed to take over and control the fight over opponent Petchtadan of Sor Chaida Camp in Phang Nga. Sur-

prisingly, Petchadan was given the decision.

In the seventh bout, at 53 kilos, Suntuss Sor Sirachasi of Phang Nga stopped Krabi showman Yudtakan Luk Tham Seu with a devastating knee in the fourth round. The blow wiped the smile off the face of Yudtakan, who appeared cocky until he was knocked unconscious by his young opponent.

The 56-kilogram main bout was a letdown, with highly favored Singthonglek winning when

Singkeeree of Krabi's Yak Andaman camp suffered what appeared to be a pulled muscle or cracked rib in his upper chest in Round 2 and couldn't continue. Whatever the cause of the injury, which came as the two fighters were grappling in the corner, it left Phromkeeree in obvious pain as he made his way out off the ring.

It will be interesting to see how the new stadium fares, especially given its rather remote location. It is interesting to note that the Muay Thai Stadium at Saphan Hin, close to Phuket City's large population center, seems to have had trouble attracting big crowds and is now closed down.

Having invested in at least one sound truck, it appears that the Airport Stadium is looking for foreign tourists to fill the seats, but they will have a lot of competition in this regard from the fleet of soundtrucks already cruising the streets of Patong, courtesy of the two stadiums there.

Other Results: 48kg: Faseethong def Medngern (KO, round 3); 42kg: Yousanan def Pachnoy (by decision); 51kg: Onnuch def Singkeeree (by decision). - by Stephen Fein.

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Construction Update

by Semacote Suganya

The Waterscape Group has announced that its Andarina project near Yacht Haven Marina is nearing completion.

Five four-story villas hug the hillside that drops down to Phang Nga Bay 100 meters south of the marina and offer a 180-degree view of the bay, mainland, islands and marina.

The villas sit on a five-rai plot with 72m of absolute bay frontage. The four levels of the villas step down the side of a 45-degree slope and offer views from every room. The project started construction in early 2006 and two of the five units have been completed.

With a starting price of 27.5 million baht, the large 587-square-meter villas come unfurnished and interior design is left to the purchasers. "We think that each purchaser has their own ideas about design and furnishings though we also offer design plans for them," project owner Chantana Karnsuwan told the *Gazette*.

"The Waterscape Group designed the villas on four levels with many windows and terraces, creating the feeling of space and open air with good Feng Shui," she added.

The top floor of each villa is at street level and features gated and covered parking space for two vehicles and two large balconies, one in a pond setting to the side of the structure and the other facing the sea as an extension of an open-plan living space.

Down the stairs to the next level, is the maid's quarters; kitchen, pantry and dining areas; a room that can serve as an office, study or fourth bedroom; and a large sea-facing terrace that serves as a continuation of the dining area.

The third level has two bedrooms with en-suite bathrooms and large walk-in closets. The

Right: The view across Chong Pak Phra Channel from one of the infinity-edge pools at Andarina.

Below, right: The homes climb up the hillside, giving just about every room a fine outlook.



Seaview development nearing completion

larger of the bedrooms also has a Jacuzzi and a large terrace facing the sea.

On the fourth level is a large bedroom with double en-suite facilities that is faced on two sides by an infinity swimming pool and sala/balcony oriented toward the sea and marina. Down the stairs again is a garden and small beachfront area with enough room to beach a boat.

Located near Baan Khor En, Mai Khao, along the northeastern coast of Phuket, the project is a short walk from the Yacht Haven Marina.

The Andarina offers purchasers a 30-year leasehold own-

ership structure with options to renew. "We have had good feedback from customers from the very beginning. But customers now have to consider the government's new policies [on property ownership by foreign-controlled companies] and for now they wait and see," said K. Chantana.

The architects were Process Co and Orakarn Co is the contractor. The Waterscape Group has invested in land in Phuket and Phang Nga and has plans for a 200-unit home-office project on 76 rai on the bypass road in Phuket City and a beachfront resort project on 20 rai on Phang Nga Bay.



Additional information about the Andarina Villas can be obtained by calling CB Richard Ellis Phuket at 076-239967, or at the website: www.andarina.com

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Design

by Semacote Suganya

Specifically for the island

With the rich diversity of landscapes in Phuket, it seems almost naïve to believe that one type of house design is suited for every type of locale. For that very reason, Jarken + Home has studied the Phuket geography and has designed five homes to best fit the style and environments of the island.

The design company says it has designed homes for both the beaches and hills of Phuket. Managing Director of Jarken + Home Dr Kuldej Sinthawanarong predicts that the most popular style here will continue to be modern with international influences blended with Thai stylings.

“We are keen on modern contemporary and modern tropical style, which we think are suitable for the Phuket area. The architect’s first thought is to look at the environment and location. Then they will decide what the design concept should be,” said Dr Kuldej.

The models designed for Phuket are Odyssey, an open-design beach house; Vistas, built to take in the views of the sea and hills; Vespas, an open design surrounding a courtyard pool; the Sino-Portuguese inspired Chimjes, updated with modern touches; and Molavissi style, fitted with large windows. Customer favorites so far have been the Molavissi and Chimjes styles.

Dr Kuldej said that people are fond of Sino-Portuguese style so he attempts to mix that with modern designs to create a balance replicating the Phuket lifestyle.

“If we do not design for Phuket’s lifestyle, the styles will look odd. Phuket island will look too high tech, too modern. We have a contemporary mix with Phuket and have studied what Phuket people need, what kind of house they want to live in, and what the Phuket lifestyle is. This will make the design work more interesting. The architecture is like artwork, drawing work, not only copy and design.”

Dr Kuldej added that residential design and construction is their main business in Phuket.

“Customers in Phuket are mainly B-plus level (above middle class), both foreigners and developers. Normally the architects, who are very capable, will use foreign designers. But here we are all Thai architects who have studied and have experience abroad, therefore the customers are very satisfied,” said Dr Kuldej.

“We build homes in a strong



The most popular designs so far have been the Sino-Portuguese-inspired Chimjes (top) and the modern Molavissi.

modern style. Our architects design the house and also find the contractor. We’re basically like a one-stop home builder service. Our core area is design and architecture, but we have three areas of business: home building,

contracting, and design and architecture.”

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Masochistic mastication

Why do we torture ourselves? I don't mean that we prise secret information from ourselves Jack Bauer-style to prevent total nuclear devastation in the next 120 seconds. I'm thinking more about the things we do to our own bodies because we "enjoy" them.

By the way, anyone not familiar with Mr Bauer obviously doesn't watch the TV series *24*, in which this Jack Bauer bloke goes around shouting at people either before or after he tortures or shoots them in the name of saving the world. Cracking stuff.

Back to this self torture thing – tattoos are a case in point. Why would any rational person want some dodgy, long-bearded hippie-type to jab a needle into his skin several hundred times per second? Even worse, this torturous procedure is etched forever into their epidermis. Not for me, thanks.

They do that bizarre, body-piercing thing, too. I don't really understand why anyone would feel the need to have large chunks of metalwork inserted into various body protrusions. I understand that a gentleman's most treasured possession isn't immune from this process. I'm fairly sure I'm not the only chap whose eyes water at the thought of body modification down there.

What about that weird thing we do in front of the TV? We stare blankly at it, despite the inanity level of whatever happens to be on it. We even complain about how "this program is complete rubbish", but somehow the effort of reaching for the remote and pressing that red button in the

corner is just a little too much. We would rather put ourselves through the anguish of watching this nonsense, then whine about it afterward.

Most readers of this publication have probably been in a plane at some stage in their lives. I would bet that the vast majority have spent well over half a day stuck in the same seat flying from elsewhere on the globe. We get bored stiff sitting there for so long.

That's probably why we consume the contents of those silly little foil tray without batting an eyelid. The stuff in them is usually totally unidentifiable; I'm convinced the only reason they hand out those menus after you get in the air is so that you at least have a vague idea of what's sliding down your throat.

More often than not, you wouldn't touch this so-called "food" with a 10-foot bargepole; it's nasty. We nevertheless commit senseless acts of cruelty on our taste buds every time we fly – yet another way we find to torture ourselves. You've probably guessed that I don't fly business class particularly often.

There's one form of food prevalent in this part of the world that's probably more responsible for acts of self torture than any other – the chili. This one I rather enjoy, in a perverse sort of way. Why is it that I can have tears rolling down my cheeks and still want to shovel another spoonful of the stuff into my mouth? Utter madness.

The chili plant, or *phrik* in Thai, I presume, is ludicrously easy to grow. In fact I reckon that the average Thai home has more



BRUTAL BITES: *Barleria cristata* can take a lot of abuse.

chili plants in it that have started by accident than ones they've deliberately planted – they appear without warning.

There are probably only a couple of things you need to remember in order to keep them alive: Water them regularly and keep them in a well-lit place. Chili plants are fairly robust and can take plenty of abuse – in fact given what they do to us, they probably deserve it – but if you look after them well, they'll grow even better.

The first step to growing a chili plant is obviously the germination of the seed. Shallow plastic containers are perfect. Put a soggy mass of paper towels about a dozen thick in the bottom, put the seeds on this about a couple of centimeters apart, then lay another paper towel over the top, sandwiching the seeds between them. The towels should be wet, but not quite so everything is underwater; just enough to be sog-

gy. After a few days to two weeks, the seeds will inevitably start to do their thing.

Once they've germinated, transfer the seedlings to either compost-filled seedling trays (a bit like plastic egg containers) or small black plastic bags with holes in them, half a centimeter below the surface. Make sure the root points downward, by the way.

After a few more days the seedlings will slowly appear from the soil and start to develop leaves. You can keep letting these grow, but if you're not careful you will get tall, leggy plants that will give you limited fruit output.

That's where pinching comes in, which is done to make the plants grow bushy. When a stem gets a few sets of leaves on it, you should pinch off the tips of the sets. Don't just remove the leaves at the ends – you need to get the stem too.

The theory behind pinching is survival. If a plant has lost the

end of a stem, presumably something ate it or something else got in the way. If it just keeps growing in that direction, then whatever cut off the stem is likely to do it again, so the plant starts growing stems from the leaf joints along the stem; developing sideways to hopefully avoid the danger that chopped off the original. Who said plants were thick.

Eventually, if you do this every couple of weeks, the whole plant will grow fairly bushy and end up with lots of spots for fruit to grow from. And yes, a chili is a fruit. Initially you'll probably be a bit worried that you're slowing down the plant growth, but you will end up with a more productive plant – honestly.

As we don't exactly live in the most temperate of climates, they'll probably need watering every day for most of the year if they end up in a pot. Water the soil until damp, rather than wet.

Once your plant is up and running, wait for the little white flowers to appear. After a week or two, the flowers will wilt and die off and a chili will gradually take its place. They'll take another couple of weeks to grow and can be left on the plant for as long as you like; they're even good when they start to shrivel a bit.

Chili plants, or more specifically the fruit they produce, are insane things. And we're probably the only creatures on the planet daft enough to actually want to eat them. Actually, this could be an added bonus for a tattoo-lover. Long-bearded hippie-types with needles and Tabasco sauce would be even more painful than daytime TV. But only just.

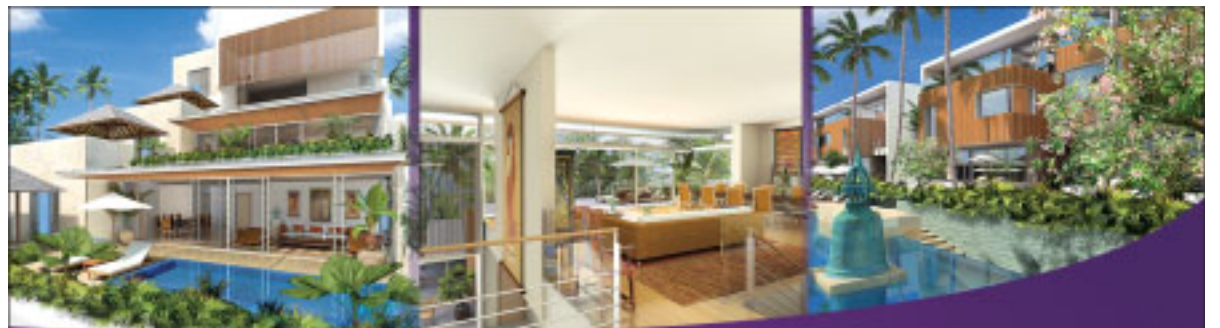
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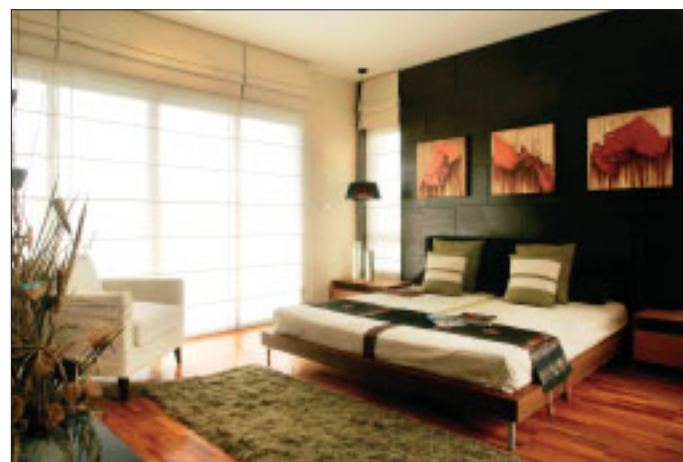
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Home of the Week

Kathu



Left: the terrace and raised infinity-edge pool. Above: the spacious living room. Right: the master bedroom.



LIFE ON THE FAIRWAY

This week's Home of the Week is a contemporary-design, two-story house sitting on a 592-square-meter plot in Baan Suan Loch Palm, beside the Loch Palm Golf Club in Kathu.

The home has 327sqm of living space, including three bedrooms each with an en-suite bathroom, all fully furnished with stylish fixtures and modern appliances.

The spacious ground floor living and dining areas are well proportioned, and the kitchen and bathrooms are fully fitted. There is also a maid's quarters and two storage areas separate from the private living quarters.

Outside is a terrace and swimming pool with a wooden

sala and outdoor shower, all surrounded by landscaped gardens bordered by a fence providing privacy. At the front of the home is off-road parking for two cars.

The three large bedrooms on the upper level each have a walk-in closet and a private balcony that opens to cool breezes and views of the golf course. Completing the outdoor living is the roof terrace with decorated garden.

This home is available freehold with Chanote title at 17.99 million baht.

For more information or to view, call Baan Suan Loch Palm at Tel: 076-202792 or 076-202794 or Email: planphuket@planestate.co.th.

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Property Gazette

Properties For Sale

TROPICAL VILLA FOR SALE



Living area: 600sqm + garden area 6,400sqm (4 rai). Large 250sqm terrace. 3 bedrooms & 1 master bedroom with ensuite. Open-plan kitchen, living room, Jacuzzi, swimming pool, 100sqm of artificial river & charming island, 3-car garage & exterior parking. Completely furnished, snooker, baby foot. Price: 49 million baht. Located at Paklok, 5 min from Ao Po, Marine Golf, etc. No sea view. Company formed since 2002. Chanote title. Project by international architects. Please contact. Tel: 081-8935270. Email: mrdupouy@yahoo.fr www.tropical-house.net

HOMES FOR SALE PATONG

Buy properties direct from owners (no middleman). Tel: 087-2650118. Email: ant_p_clark@yahoo.co.uk For further details, please see our website at: housesfor salephuket.blogspot.com

MAIN ROAD KAMALA

3-story commercial building. Approximate total floor area 500sqm. Suitable for bank, insurance offices, etc. Tel: 081-8111067.

TO RENOVATE

9 rooms, 70 sqm garden. Sell 2.6 million baht. Or rent long term. Area: Nai Harn. Can make 2 apartments of 90sqm. Call for more details. Tel: 084-4454614.

House For Sale At Phuket Country Club Kathu



New luxury home for sale near Club House. 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms. Fully fitted kitchen including hob oven dishwasher. Aircon throughout. Land area 175 Sq.wa with chanote title. Pool & Jacuzzi fully landscaped gardens. Panoramic views must be see to be appreciated

Price: 17 Million Baht.

Part finance available or long term lease.

Please contact: Mr. Geoff Curry

Mobile: (08) -18540061

Tel: Office contact K. Ning (076) - 323214-5 (08) -10803414

Fax: (076) 323215

Email: mrgeoffcurry@yahoo.com

APARTMENT IN PATONG



New freehold apartment (85sqm) located near Simon Cabaret. On a hillside in a green and quiet environment. Overlooking Patong with sea view, on the fourth floor. Low monthly maintenance.



2 bedrooms, 2 balconies, 2 bathrooms, luxurious, modern- European standard, fully furnished, ready to move in. Price: 5.9 million baht.

Tel: 086-2771204.

Email: alfred.keller@isofa.ch

CHALONG SHOPHOUSE

with ocean view. 3 stories, perfect for small business. Very close to Chalong pier. 2.5 million baht. Please call K. Supachai. Tel: 081-554-4140.

KATA BEACH

bargain. 2 minutes to beach. Quick sale due to moving. 2.9 million baht. Please call for further information at Tel: 084-8405834.

HOUSE FOR SALE

5.5 million baht. Tel: 086-6833964. For further details please see our website at www.chalonghouse.4t.com

RAWAI 2-STORY

new house. 160sqm. Price: 1.3 million. Close to beach. Please contact for more information. Tel: 086-9408914. Or contact via email at: freeholdprop@yahoo.com

NAI HARN/RAWAI SEA VIEW



2 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms. Tel: 081-9583513. Email: raytim6@hotmail.com For further details, please see our website at: www.houseforsaleinphuket.com

KRABI LAND

4 rai in Krabi, 7km to Krabi Town and Ao-nang. Mountain views. 1.2 million baht per rai. Tel: 081-7475293. Email: chillhouse@hotmail.com

SEAVIEW HOUSE

2-bedroom house with large swimming pool and European kitchen in the best area in Patong "Baan Suan Kamnan". 17.5 million baht. Tel: 086-2706454, + 44778-999 5522, 089-4727588. Send email: djudges@hotmail.com

SEAVIEW LAND

in Nai Harn. 640sqm with Chanote, views to Phi Phi. 2.9 million baht. Tel: 076-288-047, 081-8941660. Email: cottrell@loxinfo.co.th

28 RAI ON KOH LONE

Located on Koh Lone island. Has 120m of beachfront, opposite Phuket Aquarium. Call K. Tum. Tel: 084-0002083.

4-BEDROOM VILLA

with pool. Directly on the beach in Sichon in the mainland opposite Koh Samui. 11 houses and only 8 left! Priced at 9 million baht. Please contact for more details. Please call tel: 084-0572743. Email: admin@thaisunshine developments.com

PATONG

guesthouse. Freehold guesthouse with everything, in Paradise Complex, Patong Beach. 5-minute walk from the beach. Priced to sell quickly. Tel: 076-290393, 086-588-8383. Email: sumalee1955@yahoo.com

HOUSE FOR SALE



3 million baht. Must sell, discounted price. 2 bedrooms, includes all furniture and appliances. Quiet, gated community, pool, sauna, gym. 1 minute from Nai Yang Beach. Custom floors, cabinets, tiles, lighting. Euro/US standards. Contact for more details. Tel: 089-8742607. Email: jintananong@yahoo.com, loverofasia72@yahoo.com

RAWAI BEACH

condo. Sea view, foreign freehold. 450,000 baht. Tel: 086-9408914. For more info email: freeholdprop@yahoo.com

ATRIUM HOUSE IN

Ao-Nang. A 4-bedroom, 4-bathroom house with internal swimming pool, on 1,200 sqm. 3.5 kms from the beach. 10 million baht. Please contact for more information. Tel: 081-6213432. Email: will@hoefsmid26.nl

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1 to 3 rai for sale, Chanote title, 5-minute drive to Ao Nang Beach. Ideal for residential use. Water and electricity on site, public road access. 1.7 million baht per rai. Tel: 075-661108, 081-5374925. Fax: 075-661108. Email: dutchkev@loxinfo.co.th

APARTMENT

for sale. in Phuket City. 18 rooms, 4 floors with Chanote. Call for more information. Tel: 084-0541447.

HOUSE AT LOCH PALM



Fully furnished, full golf view. 4 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms, pool & Jacuzzi, big garden. Sell at: 15.8 million baht. Tel: 076-288908.

NAI HARN BEACH

Townhouse, 184sqm, fully furnished, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 280m to beach. Great location and views. 12 million baht, a must see. Tel: 076-202201, 081-7974068. Fax: 076-202820. Email: tum@phuketlifestyle.com

SEA VIEW

in Patong. 15 rai, 2.6 rai, 1.2 rai. Big house (villa). Please contact via email at: Email: make@thaicard.net

LUXURY KATA

Beach. Seafront, Aspasia, 5-star, 1-bedroom apartment with pool, spa, leasehold, furnished. Price to sell at 8.4 million baht. Tel: 089-9726017, 089-9171161. Email: asiasail@yahoo.com For further details, please see our website at www.koumbele.com/kata1

HOUSE FOR SALE

Patong. 4 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms. Please contact for more details. Tel: 089-662 0804. Email: renoothailand@gmx.net

5-UNIT PROJECT,

Andaman Hill. Purchase & complete permitted. 5-home project overlooking Patong. 9 million baht. Contact for more details. Tel: +916-471 8950. Fax: +916-4045671.

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KATA CENTER

shophouse for sale/rent. Tel: 081-2730080. For further details, please see www.land andshopforsale.phuket.net

RARE OPPORTUNITY

Luxury, freehold condominium, 103 sqm. High floor, 1 bedroom. Full sea view of Karon Beach. 8 million baht for sale by owner. Tel: 084-851-7725.

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1 RAI NAI HARN

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Property Gazette

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HOUSE FOR SALE, PATONG



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for sale. 1,300sqm with pond. 3.2 million baht. Tel: 081-2732409.

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2-story house in Chalong. 376sqm, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, maid's room, kitchen, living room, 2 aircons, good area. 4.2 million baht. Tel: 081-0790688.

4.5 RAI IN RAWAI

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Property Gazette

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CHALONG LUXURY

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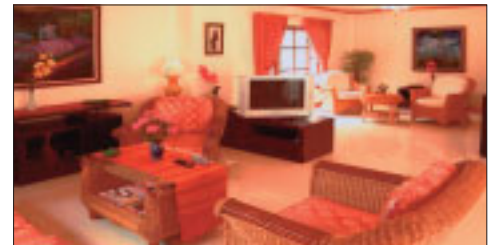
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1 Position

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Tel: (076) 527548-9 Fax: Ext. 12
Email: marketing_phuket@sunparadise.com



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The successful candidate should be in possession of these qualifications:

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- Strong experience in hotel set up.
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3.0iteq, 4x4, Jan '05, 4 doors, ABS, airbags, wide alloy wheels, MP3. Only: 595,000 baht. Tel: 089-9662994. Email: nengrich@gmail.com

FORD ESCAPE 3.0

XLT, black, full service history. 62,000km, auto, 2004. 650,000 baht ono. Surin. Tel: 081-5372018, 081-0779365.

SUZUKI JEEP 4WD



1999, 1300cc, 70,000km, manual gears, fun-to-drive jeep. Price: 240,000 baht. Tel: 087-2709093. Email: s.anut@hotmail.com

KIA SPORTAGE 4WD

1997. Full service in December. Owner for 5 years, going back to Europe. 295,000 baht to include full comprehensive insurance. Please contact for more information. Tel: 089-9723861, 081-7378662. Email: ba@kivibrian.com

MAZDA TRIBUTE 3.0 V6



2004, full options in top condition. White + two tone. Only 45,000km. Full insurance. Price 730,000 baht ono. Please contact for more details. Tel: 087-2709093, 081-9562406. More info email: s.anut@hotmail.com

ISUZU CAB4, 4WD



2001, 56,000km, manual gears, 3.0, good condition. Price: 470,000 baht. Tel: 087-2709093. Email: s.anut@hotmail.com

MITSUBISHI TRITON SALE

3.2 GLS, auto, 4wd, top condition, 22,000km, 1 year old. Sale due to departure. 730,000 baht. Tel: 081-8940580.

TOYOTA FORTUNER

2005. 3.0D. Trade for auto gear or for sale. Call for more details. Tel: 089-0219504, 086-2791602.

CHEVY COLORADO

4x4, low miles, 4-door, black. 650,000 baht. Please contact for more information. Tel: 087-8821963.

PROBABLY BEST WILLY IN TOWN

Willy MUTT M151A1 military jeep. US original (arrived in Thailand in 1982). Engine: Ford Keiser (probably a 1.8l engine). Engine and gearbox reconditioned. Stereo: Panasonic with CD changer located in ammo box. Color: Dark gray with fawn sunbrella, fabric hood and seat covers. Spares: original hood and other parts. Roll bar and seat belts fitted. Tires new for on and off road. Owner is relocating. Call for appointment to see the car. Tel: 076-377713, 086-9456433. Fax: 076-377713. Email: khuntik@myway.com

RANGE ROVER 4.6 HSE

Superb Range Rover, 4.6 V8 engine, air suspension, all new leather, electric memory seats, HID lights, climate control, 3-screen DVD with Dolby 12 speaker surround, reversing camera. The best 4x4. Only 850,000 baht for quick sale. Tel: 087-8867360. Email: paul@nebbs.com

SELL DOUBLE CAB

Triton Mitsubishi, 4WD, black, 2.5. All options, 7 months old, 12,000km. Tel: 085-7972231.

ISUZU D-MAX 3.0

DTI. 2006, auto, black, 14,000km, full insurance, 4 doors, ABS, airbags. 665,000 baht. For more information Tel: 084-9025810. Email: hhimmelroos@l.uukku.com

TOYOTA SPORT RIDER

Registered in May 2000. Only 18,600km. One owner, full music system, CD, subwoofer, amp, etc. 420,000 baht for quick sale. Contact for more details. Tel: 081-8930272. Email: hakan@derani-yachts.com

FORD RANGER 4X4

for sale. Ford Ranger. 4-wheel drive, 2002. 4 doors. Blue color. Big front bumper, big wheels, good stereo, many extras. 9x,xxxkm. No accidents. 385,000 baht. Contact for more information. Tel: 081-2721123. Email: ganokitty@hotmail.com

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1000cc. Model 2001 34,000km, green book, 2-month guarantee, good condition. 380,000 baht. Tel: 086-0207205. Email: blackyriders@yahoo.com

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KAWASAKI 175 BOSS

with 12,000km. Greenbook, 5 years old. Top case "Givi" rack side boxes, side rack, windshield, bumper. Price: 55,000 baht. Tel: 086-2692038.

YAMAHA FOR SALE

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HONDA STEED 400 CC

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MOTO GUZZI V11

Sport built. 2001, silver, cross pipe, carbon fiber exhaust, original spare parts, import papers are good but no registration. 250,000 baht. More details or photo at Tel: 081-6255300. Email: joneuhaus@hotmail.com

JRD CHOPPER

Great condition. One careful owner. 1 year old, extras, taxes and insurance included. 32,000 baht. Tel: 083-3913525.

SCOOTERS: NOUVO AND CLICK

2006, low km, looks new, no accidents. Sell Nouvo: 42,000 baht; Click: 39,000 baht. Tel: 081-3670991.

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Ninja. Year 2004, with 16,000km, green book, Phuket registered. Upgrading to K1200S. Will consider serious offers around 300,000 baht. Call for viewing appointment. Call Tel: 076-264692, 081-0862112.

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