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Phuket Gazette

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Holidays hijacked by tuk-tuks

By Atchaa Khamlo and Stephen Fein

THE latest taxi and tuk-tuk blockade at the Phuket Deep Sea Port on Wednesday led to a victory for the drivers, who were granted a "50-50 share" of access to disembarking cruise ship passengers.

Vice Governor Nivit Aroonrat, Phuket City Police chief Chote Chitchai and local Marine Police brokered the agreement about four hours after the blockade was set up.

Many of the 472 passengers aboard the cruise liner *Silver Spirit* that day had planned to take half-day minivan tours of Phuket, returning to the vessel before its scheduled departure at 1pm.

Their Phuket experience will not be a fond one, however, as they were not allowed past the blockade of some 200 angry taxi and tuk-tuk drivers.

The drivers were protesting the fact that local tour agents pick up most of the passengers who disembark from cruise ships at the port, leaving them with no work



The drivers send a clear message.

and no income.

"We have discussed this with the tour agencies and local authorities 10 times already over the past year, but still nothing has been done," Taweesak Jumpada, a local taxi driver at Ao Makham for the past 12 years, told the *Phuket Gazette*.

Japanese tour operator Osaki Takumi during the blockade said, "We had four Japanese guests who booked a half-day round-trip tour, but now they cannot enjoy that as the ship is scheduled to leave at 1pm."

The passengers were on a cruise from the Malaysian island of Penang to Colombo, Sri Lanka.

One of the tourists, 50-year-old



A handful of tourists return to the luxury cruise liner 'Silver Spirit' after seeing no more than the Deep Sea Port quay and the taxi and tuk-tuk driver blockade. Photos: Atchaa Khamlo

Brazilian Marlove Arauj, said she and her husband were disappointed that their half-day tour had to be canceled.

"I have been to Phuket once before and I was very much looking forward to having another look around," she said.

Another tourist, 66-year-old Schettle Roland of Luxembourg, said, "This is bad. I came here 10 years ago. I didn't plan to go inland, but I am not sure tourists will want to come to Phuket if they are greeted like this."

One of the taxi drivers who helped reach the agreement, 50-year-old Narin Kepsup, said he was part of a 160-member collective of local taxi and tuk-tuk

drivers.

Drivers wait all day for fares at the port, only to find that their time has been wasted when tour operators send their own vehicles to collect passengers, said the 20-year veteran driver.

As part of the agreement worked out on Wednesday, tour operators will now have to inform the taxi and tuk-tuk co-op when they plan to use their own vehicles, he said.

The blockade was aimed at the management of the Sea Tour travel agency, but the Ao Panwa taxi co-op has shown in the past that they are ready to take on all comers when they feel their interests are at stake.

Songkran takes to the sky



PHUKET is in for a treat this Songkran with the island's first "sky high" celebrations being marked by a breathtaking, light aircraft aerobatics show over Patong Beach by world renowned stunt pilot Les Vorosmarthy.

Weather permitting – and let's face it, Songkran is usually hot – Les will perform spins, barrel rolls, snap rolls, wing-overs, loops, waterfalls and "Immelmanns" for 15 minutes between 2pm and 4pm on April 12 and 13.

There will also be a fly-by along Patong Beach each day before the aerobatics show.

In the evening and into the night of April 13, there will be a hot air balloon "Night Glow", with a gas-filled balloon tethered to Patong Beach, hovering about 30 meters (about the height of a 10-storey building) above the sand.

Making Phuket's first "Sky high Songkran" possible are the Phuket Governor's Office, Patong Municipality, Phuket Airpark, and sponsors the *Phuket Gazette*, the Tourism Authority of Thailand, and Aero Pro.

Thai evidence keeping Lee Aldhouse behind bars

By Nicholas Altstadt

BRITISH kickbox murder suspect Lee Aldhouse has been remanded in custody to HM Prison Wandsworth in London based on evidence submitted by the Thai authorities seeking his extradition.

Aldhouse is wanted in Thailand for the stabbing murder of American Dashawn Longfellow following a bar fight in Rawai last August.

Court official Russel Sykes told the *Phuket Gazette* that Aldhouse was remanded in custody on the basis of the UK Extradition Act of 2003, section 73(3).

The section states that a justice may issue a provisional arrest warrant if the offence of which the person is accused is an extraditable offence and that there is sufficient written evidence justifying it.

The Act identifies Thailand as a "Category 2" territory, which comprises

territories with which the UK has extradition agreements.

Aldhouse is scheduled to appear in Westminster Magistrates' Court on Wednesday at 10am for "review", Mr Sykes said.

HM Prison Wandsworth, where Aldhouse is being held, is the largest prison in the UK and one of the largest in Western Europe, according to the HM Prison Service website.

The website said the prison is "currently

able to hold 1665 prisoners".

Wandsworth, built in 1851, has periodically been criticized for overcrowding and mismanagement.

In 2009, prison managers were slammed for "swapping vulnerable inmates" with another UK prison in order to "manipulate inspections", the BBC reported.

Observers suggested this was a result of budgetary pressures, the report said.

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Phuket's Dylan Young is focused on taking charge at Sepang this weekend.

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Blaze engulfs tailor shop

FIRE ravaged a two-storey tailor shop and damaged other units in a row of shophouses on the Patong beach road, on Phuket's west coast, early on Monday.

Motorbike taxi driver Wirote Thongthep alerted the Disaster Prevention and Mitigation division of Patong Municipality of the blaze at about 3:45am.

Eight fire trucks and 18 officials from the division rushed to the fire, which they extinguished in about 30 minutes.

Patong Deputy Mayor Chairat Sukhaban and Kathu Police Superintendent Arayapan Pukbuakao also arrived at the scene to observe the proceedings.

The tailor shop, Euro Boutique, is located on Soi Post Office off Thaweewong Road (the beach road) in Patong.

The Vayo Massage & Beauty Salon next door was also damaged



One of the neighboring shops also damaged by the fire. Photo: Atchaa Khamlo in the blaze.

Taimoor Shahzad, owner of Euro Boutique, estimated the damage to be around six million baht.

As he surveyed its charred re-

mains, Mr Shahzad, who lives in Phuket with his Thai wife and one child, told the *Phuket Gazette* that the shop was uninsured.

- Atchaa Khamlo

Caddy's jealous husband resorts to murder-suicide

A MOTORBIKE taxi driver shot his wife while she was sleeping and then turned the gun on himself - while the couple's two children were sitting in the next room.

Thung Thong Police led by Superintendent Kraithong Junthongbai were notified of the tragedy at 8:30am last Thursday.

At the scene, a home in the Ketho residential estate, off Wichit Songkram Road in Kathu, police found the body of 37-year-old Winanthana Phutawach lying face up on a floor mattress.

She had died instantly of a single bullet wound to the center of the skull that entered under her chin.

Lying next to her corpse on a cot was the body of her husband, 44-year-old motorcycle taxi driver Soonthorn Thepsut.

Witnesses said Mr Soonthorn shot his wife in her sleep before turning the Thai-style homemade pistol on himself.

He died of a single bullet wound that entered through his right ear and exited through the left.

A politely-worded suicide note left behind by Mr Soonthorn asked his parents and friends for forgiveness.



The bodies of Mr Soonthorn and his wife together.

He had tried every way possible to resolve his problem and was left with no other option, read the letter.

The letter, dated March 26, five days before the shootings, asked relatives to take care of the two children, an 11-year old boy and his sister, age 10.

Police believe the murder was motivated by romantic jealousy.

Mr Soonthorn was suspicious that his wife was having an affair with a guest at a nearby country club, where she had been working as a caddy.

He spied on her and they fought often, witnesses said.

The couple had lived together for over a decade before Mr Soonthorn took both their lives.

- Yodsak Jarana

Burmese denied basic human rights: poll

MOST *Gazette* readers think unregistered migrant workers from Burma are denied basic human rights in Phuket, according to the newspaper's latest poll.

Overall, 56.5% of respondents answered "yes" to the question, "Do you think unregistered migrants workers from Burma are denied basic human rights in Phuket?"

This was more than twice the number who answered "no" (20.4%). The remainder, 23%, said they didn't know.

Local foreign residents were far more likely to think unregistered Burmese workers were denied basic human rights (70%) than their Thai counterparts (34%).

In fact, the most common answer among Thais taking part, at 42%, was that these rights were not denied.

Tourists who held an opinion on the issue were far more likely, at 45%, to think these rights were denied, compared to just 14% who thought they were not.

However, 41% of those identifying themselves as tourists said they did not know.

- *Phuket Gazette*

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Expat seeks support for B900mn aquarium

CANADIAN expat Daniel McDaniel this week sought support from the Phuket governor to develop a 900-million-baht aquarium in Rawai.

Accompanied by Rawai Mayor Aroon Solos, Mr McDaniel pitched his proposal to Governor Tri Augkaradacha on Tuesday.

As managing director of Phuket Ocean Front Co Ltd, Mr McDaniel said has rented a 50-rai plot along Patak Road for 30 years with the intention of building an aquarium and a marine petting zoo, as well as a hotel in the project's proposed second stage.

Under the master plan, the entire project would take five years to complete.

The first phase aquarium and petting zoo could be completed by the beginning of the high season for tourism in late 2012, he said.

"Located on a five-rai plot, [the aquarium] would also house a marine zoo with performing animals. This would serve local and foreign tourists all year round.

"We're seeking licenses from related agencies. Once this is completed, the construction would take one year and the aquarium should open its doors in 2012. Hotel construction would start in the next two years," he said.

Among the performing animals would be seals, sea lions and dolphins, he added. - *The Nation*

Serial rapist confesses

Man admits to abducting and repeatedly raping at least six women

By Atchaa Khamlo

A SERIAL rapist who preyed on young female members of Phuket's ethnic Nepali community is behind bars after confessing to multiple charges of sexual assault, robbery and impersonating a policeman.

The accused, 30-year-old Phakphum Maneerat, was presented to the media at a press conference at Patong Police Station last Sunday.

The gravity of the case was evidenced by the fact that the gathering was presided over by Phuket Provincial Police Superintendent Pekad Tantipong.

At the press conference, Mr Phakphum admitted to abducting and raping six ethnic Nepalese women working in Patong, but police fear the number of victims may be higher.

Police are calling for any other victims to contact them and file charges.

Mr Phakphum confessed to impersonating a police officer to abduct the women, all employed in the tourist-oriented retail sales industry in Patong.

Some of the victims were taken to locations in Krabi and Nakhon Sri Thammarat, where they were confined and raped repeatedly for days.

He also robbed them of any valuables, police said.

Mr Phakphum was an unemployed resident of Phuket Town.



Phakphum Maneerat with head bowed at Patong Police Station.



Maj Gen Pekad talks (left) speaks with the recent victim, age 25.

Married with two children, Mr Phakphum said his wife operated an unspecified private business in town, police said.

Some 100 members of the lo-

10:30am on March 28 along Phang Muang Sai Kor Road, behind the Jungceylon shopping complex, when a Toyota Vigo pickup cut them off.

The accused emerged from the vehicle, asking all in the group to produce identification papers, she said.

When she was unable to do so, he ordered her into the vehicle and then took her to an unspecified location in Krabi, where she was held in captivity and raped repeatedly until she was returned to Patong by the accused on April 1.

Head held low throughout the press conference, Mr Phakphum admitted he did the same in each case, identifying himself as an officer of the law to abduct and then rape and rob his victims.

He always approached women in the same area, near Jungceylon or the nearby JJ Plaza, he confessed.

He declined to reply to questioning from Maj Gen Pekad as to why he preyed solely on ethnic Nepali women, when woman of so many other ethnicities, races and nationalities could be found in Patong.

He simply confirmed that all of the victims were young, Nepali woman.

Police are to continue their investigation to try to find other victims and to determine whether Mr Phakphum acted alone, Maj Gen Pekad said.

Additional reporting by Stephen Fein

Phuket sends medi kits, officers for flood relief

THE Phuket Provincial Health Office (PPHO) has shipped 1,000 medical kits to hard-hit Nakhon Sri Thammarat province as part of its efforts to provide assistance to flood and landslide victims throughout Southern Thailand.

The shipment, dispatched last Friday, followed the PPHO delivering 1,050 first-aid kits to flood-stricken areas the day before.

PPHO Chief Dr Sak Tanchaikul told the *Gazette* that the Phuket Health Office on Wednesday last

week dispatched a total of 29 medical personnel and a field hospital tent to Khao Phanom District in Krabi province to provide emergency medical treatment for disaster victims there.

The team included two doctors and several nurses from government hospitals as well as Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT) emergency response workers and Kusoldharm Foundation rescue volunteers, he said.

See pages 5 and 10 for more on impact of floods



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Ayutthaya 'sex lottery' exposed, cops get tough on getting lucky

YouTube 'dead girl' not dead

AN UNDERGROUND lottery in Ayutthaya province has given new meaning to the expression "getting lucky".

Top prize in the draw, which was becoming increasingly popular with male factory workers in the central Thai province before the authorities got wind of it, was a night in bed with a young woman.

Last weekend Ayutthaya Police made several arrests connected with the case after it became a sensation in the Thai press.

The so-called *huai siao* ("pleasure lottery") involved betting on the last two digits of the winning number in Thailand's government lottery.

Players could buy as many 30-baht tickets as they wanted. Whoever picked the winning number – there were usually several winners – could go to one of two hotels to claim their "prize".

At the hotels, winners were reportedly given a booklet containing photographs of at least 10 pretty women aged 18-25 to choose from. Police said some of the women were factory workers themselves.

QUEER news

"Each time, I buy five or six tickets," said one anonymous punter. "I think if I win it'll be good value, as I'll have only spent a bit more than 100 baht but I'll be able to sleep with a young woman. But I haven't won yet."

Players could also reportedly buy "VIP" tickets that cost 100 baht each. Winners with VIP tickets were given the chance to sleep with attractive women who were claimed to be university students.

Dr Jiraphan Phimphan, chairman of the Ayutthaya Provincial Cultural Council, described the sex lottery as "disgusting" and said it dishonored women by valuing them at just 30 baht.

It was also damaging the image of the province, he added.

Under pressure following ex-



Winning "players" chose girls from a photo album. Photo: Kom Chad Luek

tensive press coverage of the sex lottery, Ayutthaya Police Deputy Commander Col Wutthiphong Phetkammert ordered a thorough investigation into the practice.

On April 1, police raided the two hotels, arresting four young women and a man who was involved in the lottery.

Ayutthaya City Police Superintendent Col Narinat Phutthaisong said the suspects would be charged with soliciting and selling sex.

Police were expanding the investigation in an effort to arrest the sellers of tickets for the sex lottery, he added.

- Kom Chad Luek

PHUKET authorities have dismissed as inaccurate a video clip posted on YouTube this week showing a woman lying beside a road in Rawai.

The video is labelled "Body of a young girl found in Rawai/Phuket on 4th of April".

"The woman certainly was not dead when our officers arrived," Thada Supawat, an officer at the Phuket Tourist Rescue Center in Chalong, told the *Phuket Gazette*.

The woman was later identified as Bangorn Srisod, 27.

"She was on the ground with a cut on her wrist," Mr Thada said. The cut looked self-inflicted, and not as if it were sustained in an accident, he added.

She was taken to Vachira Phuket Hospital in Phuket Town.

"People our officers spoke to said she had a fight with her boyfriend, with whom she lives nearby," said Mr Thada.

"She was conscious at the time and she climbed into the ambulance by herself," he said.

Snatch thief suspect packing heat, defiant

PHUKET Police last week arrested a man for a snatch-and-ride robbery in Patong on March 29.

They identified the suspect as 21-year-old Manop Rakharp.

The arrest followed a complaint by Teerawat Pansopa, 23, that a man on a Yamaha Fino motorbike snatched his bag as he walked along Sirirat Road in Patong at about midnight on Wednesday.

The white bag contained an iPhone 4, two ATM cards and 2,500 baht in cash, Mr Teerawat said.

Investigation revealed that the motorbike used in the robbery belonged to Wimonrat Wangsuri.

Officers went to question her on March 30, just as she and Manop were returning home.

Police searched the suspect's body and found an unregistered Thai-style handgun tucked inside his trousers at the waist.

An iPhone matching the description of that reported stolen was found in the house, while a white bag was found behind the building.

Despite the evidence, Manop denied robbery charges.

The gun belonged to a friend who gave it to him as collateral for a loan made two months ago, he claimed.

Manop told the *Phuket Gazette* he had been arrested before on robbery charges and was currently working in the fishing industry.

Ms Wimonrat told police that Mr Manop returned home on the motorbike at about 1am on Thursday.

He told her he lent the motorbike to a friend who gave him the iPhone in return.

Mr Manop now faces charges of armed robbery and illegal possession of a firearm.

- Atchaa Khamlo

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Asean meet rescheduled for Phuket

THE Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit with dialogue partner countries, delayed following anti-government protests in April last year, has been tentatively rescheduled to take place in Phuket in June this year, Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva said.

PM Abhisit said Thailand would first consult with the countries involved to confirm whether their leaders would be free to attend.

Thailand would organize the meetings to ensure the highest level of confidence among attendees, he said.

“ASEAN Secretary-General Surin Pitsuwan suggested that Thailand host the summit as soon as possible for the benefit of the Asean grouping as a whole,” he said.

Efforts to schedule the summit in May this year failed because Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh would have been unable to attend, PM Abhisit revealed.

Bangkok was forced to cancel the Pattaya summit after red-shirt protesters from the pro-Thaksin United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship stormed into the meeting venue minutes before the leaders were scheduled to meet.

It was not reported whether the government would impose an emergency decree for Phuket to ensure security.

Such a decree was imposed during the 42nd Asean Foreign Ministers Meeting, hosted at the Laguna Phuket resort complex in July 2009.



Management of the Sheraton Grande Laguna Phuket greet Hillary Clinton at the 42nd Asean Foreign Ministers Meeting in July 2009. Photo: Gazette file

Despite a few security scares, that event went off without incident.

Wichai Phraisa-ngop, the governor at the time, was shown on local television handing out 1,000-

baht notes to the head of the local red-shirt movement as many of his members boarded a tour bus bound off-island.

– *The Nation*

Chinese celebrate traditional festival

PHUKET families of ethnic Chinese descent were busy this week tending to the graves of their departed ancestors as part of the traditional Qingming Festival.

This year's Qingming festivities is taking place at Chinese burial grounds around the island, where believers tidy up and make offerings they believe will bring them prosperity and good fortune, while helping to ward off the evil spirits that tend to wander this time of year.

In Phuket, Qingming activities last five days, with this year's offering ceremonies starting with the arrival of the fifth *ming* (solar term) in the Chinese calendar on April 5.

The *Phuket Gazette* would like to wish all of our esteemed readers of Chinese descent the best of health and happiness in this Year of the Rabbit.

– *Wichai Wittawat*

Landslide warnings discredited

VICE Governor Nivit Aroonrat and Phuket Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Chief San Jantha-rawong last week dispelled landslide warnings for areas in the north of Phuket.

The government Disaster Relief Committee included two areas in Mai Khao on its long list of areas at risk of landslides in the South. The warning advised the areas may have to be evacuated.

After surveying the areas surrounding both villages, Vice Gov Nivit told local residents not to worry about landslides because there were no dams or weirs in the hills above the villages that could cause flooding.

There were “smaller” hills in the area planted with rubber trees, but no big hills, he said. The water



V/Gov Nivit (right) inspects the area.

running in canals down them was clear, not red, which would indicate there is no threat of flash-flooding, he added.

V/Gov Nivit explained that community leaders and local authorities for both villages were notified of the warning immedi-

ately and closely monitored the situation around the clock in case evacuations became necessary.

The unnecessary anxiety caused by the warning and its potential impact on Phuket's tourism industry angered Mr Nivit.

“Visitors might go somewhere else if they hear about flooding in Phuket,” he said.

Wirote Manajit, chief of tambon Mai Khao, said villagers were in a state of panic after hearing about the landslide warnings.

“Especially on Thursday night, when the village public address system warned people to evacuate the area immediately. Nobody slept well that night. We all had to keep a close watch on the situation,” he added.



At “Into the Sea”, the signature restaurant at the Evason Phuket & Bon Island, chef Thomas Jakobi's Modern Logical Cuisine showcases his latest innovations in the form of new, creative interpretations of a cuisine that has both visual and textural appeal. The taste and focus on fresh, wholesome and local ingredients are paramount.

The wine program, created by our sommelier, Harry Haan, has been granted the Wine Spectator Award of Excellence for the second year in a row.



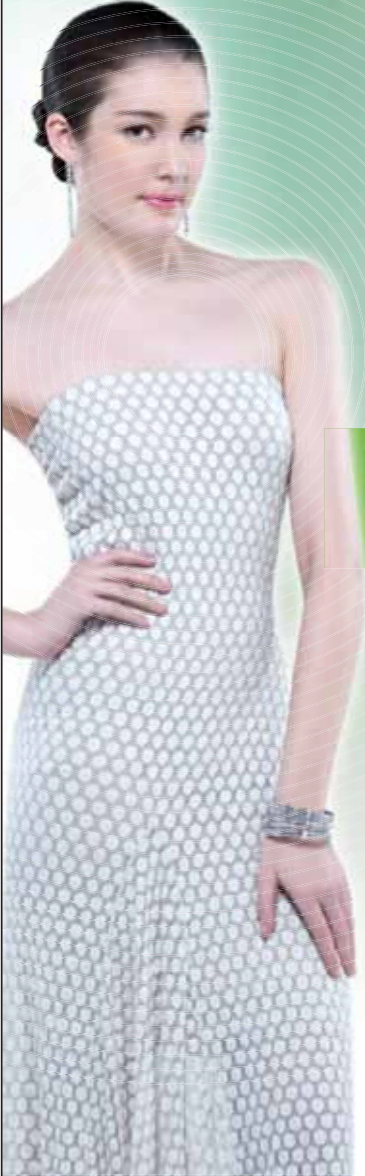
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Patong goes traditional for Thai New Year

OFFICIAL celebrations in Patong for Songkran (Thai New Year) on April 13 will take a more traditional approach than in years past, with all official activities focusing on age-old Thai customs and ceremonies rather than the modern zeal often associated with the island's biggest tourist town.

The Patong festivities, dubbed "Songkran on the Beach", are scheduled as follows:

April 12

5:30pm Parade with Buddha image and floats covered with flowers starting from the southern end of Phang Muang Sai Gor Rd, turning right onto Prachanukroh Rd, right onto Thaweewong Rd (the beach road) and stopping at the main stage on the beach next to the police box at the end of Soi Bangla.

On main stage:

6pm Opening ceremony, fireworks and merit making with ceremonial pouring of water onto Buddha image

7pm-11pm Southern Thai contemporary dance shows, Ponglang (Isarn) music performance, Miss Nong Songkran contest for kids (ages 6 to 8) and Miss Songkran beauty contest (age 16 or higher)

April 13

At Suwankirivong Temple (Wat Patong):

7:30am Merit making and alms giving to Buddhist monks
1pm Traditional pouring of water onto Buddhist monks and elderly
2pm Water "throwing"

On main stage, Soi Bangla:

6:30pm-11pm Thai traditional dance

Stars set for Songkran fun

THAI artists Parn Thanaporn and Thanachai "Pod" Ujjin from Modern Dog will be headlining the entertainment at this year's official celebrations to ring in the Thai New Year at the Sarasin Bridge Songkran Festival on April 11-13.

The event will be held literally on the Sarasin Bridge, which is closed to traffic while a new replacement span is under construction beside it.

The main stage for the festival will be set up on land, at the Phuket end of the old bridge.

Among the activities being organized for the event are an 84-kilometer bike race, 10.5km mini-marathon and a swim race across the Ao Bpark Phra channel from Tah Chat Chai to Kok Kloy.

The festival is a collaboration by authorities on both sides of the bridge, with Provincial Administration Organizations (*OrBorJor*) for Phuket and Phang Nga joining forces, along with the Tambon Administration Organizations (*OrBorTor*) for Mai Khao in Phuket and Kok Kloy in Phang Nga.

Highlights of the schedule for the festival are as follows:

April 11

Sports:

6:30am-8:30am Registration for



'Pod' Ujjin from Modern Dog will perform on April 13. Photo: Atchaa Khamlo

the 84km bike race

9:30am Bike race start

2pm Swim across the channel from Tah Chat Chai to Kok Kloy

2:30pm "Reua jao" rowing races

3:30pm Longboat races (akin to Chinese dragon boats)

On stage:

6:30pm-6:50pm "Beat Box" performance

6:50pm-7pm Traditional *Li-kae* Hulu performance (traditional

Southern Thai Muslim acapella singing and clapping) by troupe from Narathiwat

7pm-7:30pm Opening ceremony

7:30-8pm Pantomime performance by Babymime

8pm-8:30pm Ukulele concert by Ukucafe

8:30pm-9pm Concert by hip hop Denlen Thai Ska band

9pm-10pm Concert by Parn Thanaporn

April 12

Sports:

4am-5:30am Mini-marathon race registration

6am Race start

2pm Canoe races

2:30pm Kayak races

3pm Longboat races

On stage:

7pm-7:30pm Acoustic performance by Denlen music band

7:30-7:50pm Babymime Pantomime

7:50-8pm *Li-kae* Hulu

8pm-8:30pm Ukucafe concert

8:30pm-10:30pm Miss Songkran Beauty Pageants (girls and adults)

April 13

Sports:

2pm "Oily pole" climbing

2:30pm Muay Talay ("sea boxing") and boat races for blind and deaf rowers

3pm Longboat race finals

On stage:

1pm-1:20pm Babymime show

1:20-1:30pm *Li-Kae* Hulu

1:30pm-2pm Ukucafe concert

2pm-3pm Concert by Pod of Thai Indy band Modern Dog

See PhuketGazette.net for full program of events.

TAT paves way for Phuket Town 'Icy Road'

THE Phuket office of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) will celebrate Songkran (Thai New Year) with a host of activities and stage performances in front of the TAT office at Queen Sirikit Park in Phuket Town.

The celebrations, from April 13-15, are part of an island-wide program of events that are expected to draw an estimated 60,000 tourists to Phuket, together

generating about 800 million baht, said the office's director, Bangonrat Shinaprayoon.

"The event will be held under the theme 'Icy Road'. There will be ice chairs for people to try sitting on and have their photograph taken as well as ice-carving demonstrations," she said.

"Water tanks will be set up near the TAT office so people can refill their water-throwing equipment," Director Bangonrat said.

However, she stipulated that water throwing will be restricted to the road.

"The park will be a designated safe zone," she added.

Phuket Town Program of Events

April 13

6:30pm Opening ceremony
6:45pm Water pouring ceremony
7pm Concert by Thai band Taksila (main stage in Queen Sirikit Park)
7:45pm Games with prizes (minor stage in front of TAT office)
8pm Concert by Black Room (main stage)
8:45pm Games with prizes (minor stage)
9pm DJ concert (main stage)
10pm End of night's entertainment

April 14

6:30pm Concert by M&M (main stage)
7:15pm Games with prizes (minor stage)
7:30pm Dance performance by Danz

Step Studio (main stage)
7:50pm Games with prizes (minor stage)
8:15pm Concert by Black Room (main stage)
9pm DJ concert (main stage)
10pm End of night's entertainment

April 15

6:30pm Concert by Bank Nonthawat (main stage)
7:15pm Games with prizes (minor stage)
7:30pm Concert by Apple Ranger (main stage)
8pm Games with prizes (minor stage)
8:15pm Concert by Black Room (main stage)
9pm DJ concert (main stage)
10pm End of event

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Indian men drugged, robbed by prostitute

FIVE Indian men who brought a Thai prostitute back to their Pattaya hotel room for group sex complained to police after the woman drugged and robbed them of all their valuables.

The men told Pattaya City Police they had gone out on the resort town's infamous Walking Street on the night of April 1 and met the girl standing beside the road.

She agreed to go back to their hotel room for sex for the price of 1,000 baht.

When they got back, the woman encouraged them to drink alcohol with a bottle of Fanta she had with her. The men had sex with her before falling asleep.

When they woke the next morning, the men felt very groggy and a document holder in which they were keeping their valuables was missing. Inside the bag was at least 6,000 baht and US\$1,000 in cash.

One of the men, who failed to recover quickly from the effects of the drug, was sent to Pattaya Hospital for observation.

Despite the embarrassing nature of the incident, the men decided to inform the police, explaining the whole story, including the reason they went back to the hotel with the woman.

- *Nation Breaking News*

'One million at risk' of landslides, scores dead

AROUND THE nation

THE death toll from last week's southern floods has risen to 53 as officials warn that more than one million people are at risk from landslides due to deforestation.

Ten provinces were hit by flooding, with more than 40,000 people evacuated from their homes after an average year's worth of rain fell in a single day in some areas.

Public Health Minister Jurin Laksanavisit said 22 people had died in Nakhon Sri Thammarat, 10 in Krabi, 10 in Surat Thani, six in Phatthalung, two in Trang, two in Chumphon and one in Phang Nga.

The unseasonal rains have now eased, though the rainy season is expected to begin in some places next month.

Following the devastating landslide that flattened a village in Khao Phanom district in Krabi, the Mineral Resources Department on Tuesday warned of increasing risk of landslides due to deforestation.

According to *The Nation*, Thailand's North is the highest risk area with more than 3,965 villages



DUTY CALLS: Rescue workers from around the region assisted in the aftermath of the mudslides. Photo: The Nation

located near slopes of hills, followed by the South with 1,628 villages, the Northeast (Isarn) with 366 villages, the central and western regions with 317 villages, and the eastern region with 179.

"The department will keep an eye on landslide activity likely to cause damage in these areas," the department's director-general

Adisak Thongkhaimuk said.

Department spokesman Adichart Surinkham said wide areas of corn farming had destroyed land surfaces that could absorb flash floods and prevent slides.

"The department's mobile team will train people living in landslide risk areas to evacuate and handle serious incidents," he said.

Mr Adisak said the department had asked the government to tighten measures to control large plantations on low, flat land - especially rubber and corn - in a bid to prevent landslides.

"Illegal rubber plantations on low, flat land must be removed from reserved forest or landslide risk areas," he added.

Military insists again: 'There will be no coup'

AS RUMORS of an imminent coup continue to make headlines, the leaders of Thailand's armed forces appeared together at a press conference Tuesday to insist "there will be no coup".

Supreme commander of the armed forces Songkitti Jakkabat made the announcement flanked by Army chief Prayuth Chan-ocha, Navy chief Kamthorn Phumhiran and Air Force chief Intaporn Supawong.

Gen Songkitti said there would be no coup either before or after the election, insisting that people should not listen to such rumors.

"The military will not put pressure on any political parties or agencies and every party can campaign anywhere, including the military zones," he said, as quoted by *The Nation*.

Army chief Gen Prayuth, as well as Deputy Prime Minister

Suthep Thaugsuban and Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva, have all denied the existence of coup plots in recent weeks.

While many observers are skeptical the Army would dare stage a traditional coup - noting promises of violent resistance by leaders of the red shirt movement - speculation has grown over preparations for a "quiet coup".

There have been rumors that the Army is pressuring members of Thailand's Election Commission (EC) to step down after Mr Abhisit dissolves parliament, thus leaving the country without the means to organize an election.

In such a case, it has been speculated that HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej would directly appoint a prime minister to run the country.

Late last month, EC commissioner Sodsri Sattayatham was

forced to allay fears by publicly vowing to stay in office. "I'll stay and go on holding the next election. They have set our destiny this way," she told *The Nation*.

Adding his voice to the chorus on Tuesday was Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, chairman of the opposition Pheu Thai Party. Gen Chavalit said he didn't expect a coup because Gen Prayuth "has come out every day to say there

won't be one," he said, according to *The Nation Channel*.

Coups - and rumors of them - have long been a feature of political life in Thailand.

The most recent, on September 19, 2006, saw then prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra ousted by the army, led by Gen Sonthi Boonyaratglin. The previous May, Gen Sonthi had insisted there would be no coup.



Gen Songkitti (center) promised 'no coup'. Photo: The Nation

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Marine 'petting zoo' a waste of baht

Re: *Gazette online, Canadian seeks support for B900mn Phuket aquarium project, April 5*

Is this really the best idea for almost a billion baht?

As someone who cares about animal welfare, I find the concept appalling to start with.

A petting zoo and performing non-indigenous animals don't belong in Phuket.

Who is going to oversee the welfare of the animals? Or should I say, who is going to look the other way while they're being trained?

We've got enough problems without adding more animal cruelty to the mix.

*Bill the Fish
Gazette forum*

Dreamers: Time to wake up

Re: *Gazette online, Canadian seeks support for B900mn Phuket aquarium project, April 5*

We are living on a tourist island. People who want to leave Rawai as it was are dreamers. It is changing rapidly.

I have an interest in having many "quality" tourist attractions here in our area.

We are happy to market water parks and entertainment venues at the other end of the island.

*Hajo
Gazette forum*

Staying beautiful is in the bag

While in Phuket I was expecting the island to be free of plastic bags in order to protect the environment, but I found it

Tuk-tuks holding tourism to ransom

Phuket Gazette

THE latest fiasco at the Deep Sea Port once again underscores the need for an immediate overhaul of the island's public transport system, but the results of the talks that ended this latest blockade reveal that one will not come any time soon.

After the *Gazette* reported the events of April 6, there was a deluge of comments in our online readers' forum. Words like "corruption" and "shameful" were among the most popular to describe the situation.

One statement that neither the taxi drivers nor their detractors would argue about is this: it's all about money. Drivers want to maximize profits, while tourists want reasonably priced, courteous service. Knowing this, the tour agency in question did its best to provide its clients with guided half-day tours of the island. This was with good reason, because in the internet age the future success of such businesses is more dependent on positive customer feedback than ever.

Most of those present at the negotiations felt that Marine Police chief Phuripat Theerakulpisut did a good job working out an agreement and ending this latest impasse – by getting the tour agency to agree to give the drivers access to half of its customers. Sadly, nobody present raised the important point that the drivers had no legal basis to make such demands – or the fact that their blockade at a government installation was clearly illegal. Although some readers might be surprised to

was just the opposite.

During my visit many vendors seemed surprised when I opted to skip the plastic bag.

Many island communities elsewhere in the world are encouraging customers to bring their own cloth or recycled bags with them for shopping, or the shops themselves levy a surcharge, or a tax, on plastic bags.

It is sad to see plastic bags blowing into the ocean, floating

then sinking, knowing that turtles mistake them for jellyfish, which they eat.

While in Bangkok, touring the floating market, we watched a longtail boat driver try to get a large plastic bag off his propeller by lifting the prop in and out of the water to free the bag back into the canal.

Also it seemed garbage cans were few and far between and we didn't see any containers for

recycling water bottles.

As a tourist, I think a meal served on a banana leaf on a wicker plate holder is great and efficient, making for much less garbage and dish washing.

Thailand is a beautiful place and I hope garbage won't ruin it.

P.S. Loved the food, the beaches and will miss eating fresh mangoes every day.

*Lyn MacDonald
Canada*

Tuk-tuk drivers: Arrest the lot

Re: *Gazette online, Taxis blockade Phuket cruise passengers – again, April 6*

The tuk-tuk and taxi drivers are at it again.

Why don't the police arrest the lot of them, take their licences away and be done with it?

These ship passengers had only a few hours in port.

All sightseeing is pre-organised and transport laid on, so why should they pay scandalous prices and not be 100 per cent sure where they are going?

What next? A blockade of Bangla Road as people are walking by and are not using their services?

What a joke.

*Jon Patong
Gazette forum*

Free-market Economics 101

Re: *Gazette online, Taxis blockade Phuket cruise passengers – again, April 6*

"Drivers wait all day for fares at the port, only to find that their time has been wasted when tour operators send their own vehicles to collect passengers, said the 20-year veteran driver [Narin Kepsup]."

Then compete Mr Narin! Provide a better and cheaper service and no one will be able to win over your customers.

These drivers wanted 1,500 baht for a one-way trip to Patong.

You can fly to Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur or Singapore for that price.

*LinVLOS
Gazette forum*

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Issues & Answers...

Where can I get my English ciggies?

Is it possible to buy English cigarettes in Thailand anymore? On my most recent visit to Thailand I found it was no longer possible to get English brands such as Benson & Hedges. I am wondering if this has changed and if they are now available or not.

I did not like the only brand that was on sale which was Marlboro.

If English brands are not available, why is this so, as I can buy them in every other country I visit around the world. I am planning an extended stay and not having my regular ciggy is a concern.

*William
London*

Sutthisak Sonthisophon, an officer at the Bureau of Tax Administration Standard and Development of the Excise Department in Bangkok, replies:

The only company that imported cigarettes from the UK into Thailand was British American

Send us your queries and we'll ask the right people to respond to them.

Submit your issue at

[www.PhuketGazette.net/
IssuesAnswers](http://www.PhuketGazette.net/IssuesAnswers)

Tobacco (Thailand) Co Ltd.

That company has since canceled importing any of their products, including cigarettes, into the country.

Specifically, Benson & Hedges brand cigarettes have not been imported to Thailand for the the past two years.

Onanong Pratakphiriya, Communication Manager of Philip Morris (Thailand) Ltd, replies:

Philip Morris imports and sells the Marlboro and L&M brands in Thailand. While Marlboro is sold in the UK, we suspect that your reader is likely referring to cigarette brands manufactured by and traditionally associated with Brit-

ish tobacco companies. We do not sell those types of brands and we are aware some of those companies no longer operate in Thailand, thus their brands may not be available for sale in Phuket.

The Phuket Gazette notes:

When the *Gazette* called the British American Tobacco (BAT) office in Bangkok, we were told no one appropriate was available to answer the query and that the office was being closed by the company.

BAT headquarters in London have failed to reply to emails asking for comment.

Slow down Chalong Pier traffic

When will the dangerous situation for pedestrians on the Chalong pier be rectified?

Minibuses, dive operators' trucks and pier buses hurtle down this 800-meter "runway" at speeds of up to 80kmh, plowing past strollers, runners and kids.

Fisherman's life at the mercy of the sea

FIRST PERSON

THE storm that day started at about 5am, while our 20 fishing boats were still anchored offshore. The boats were tossed around by two to three-meter waves for about 12 hours.

We couldn't do anything as it was too dangerous to try to save them.

That was the worst storm I have seen. In terms of the worst things to happen in my life, it is second only to the tsunami.

Now we must keep listening for any warnings from the National Disaster Warning Center, even though we think disasters like this will be less frequent.

In all, 20 fishing boats and one ferry boat were damaged. Mine was the worst. My boat was sunk by the storm and many people had to help bring it ashore. The waves had broken the hull.

About 10 of the boats have been fixed now, but I don't know what to do with my boat – I don't have any money.

We asked Pa Khlok Tambon Administration Organization (*OrBorTor*) for money to fix our boats, but we haven't got a response yet.

To fix my boat will probably cost 20,000 to 30,000 baht.

I didn't graduate from high school, and at my age I don't know what to do. I think I'll have to borrow money in an "unofficial" way to fix the boat, and that will take months.



Suriya Dujpayak, 41, of Baan Laemluk in Pa Khlok has been a fisherman all his life. He knows no other lifestyle. Here he recounts how a storm last week left him without a boat, and the dire straits he is now in.



SWAMPED: The fishermen worked to save the boats from the storm.

Right now I have to borrow my younger brother's boat as he can support his family with another job. His boat was damaged only a little and it's been fixed already.

I have a wife and five children. Two are getting married and they can look after themselves, but there's just myself to earn money to feed the rest of the family and one of my children is still at school.

Our boats fish for horse crabs. Each boat can catch different amounts, depending on the fishing gear on board.

I can land only a couple of kilos a day, which makes me from 300 to 500 baht.

Before we could find crabs easily, just 10 kilometers offshore, but now we have to go about 16 kilometers into Phang Nga Bay, usually around Koh Yao, and fish from about 5am to 9am. Going further out means it costs more for petrol.

We have to go out every day we can, even if the weather is rough. Any help we can get would be much appreciated.



Canadian Glen Dunkley and his Thai wife Wanida Hongyok (above in 2009) have been happily married since their 1976 wedding in Bangkok (below).

Cambodian law a cultural intrusion

Island View

By W Hongyok and G Dunkley

Do you have an opinion to voice? Email Editor@PhuketGazette.net

THE proposed Cambodian law to ban marriages between older foreign men and young adult Cambodians seems laughable but also quite disturbing.

It's rather humorous when a government feels it can intervene in the courtship and marriage rituals of its society.

These rituals have developed over hundreds of years and, in most Southeast Asian cultures, relationships between older males and younger females have long been accepted and even encouraged, whether based upon love or the desire for security.

There are also undoubtedly many cases of younger wives and mistresses among the ruling male elite of Cambodia.

If the law passes, are we going to see "relationship police" on the streets?

On a more serious and disturbing note, there's the issue of human rights.

How can a state think to intervene in relationships between



consenting adults based upon the nationality of the parties?

On a lighter note, we have been happily engaged in a close cross-cultural relationship for the past 35 years. Needless to say, we are rather in favor of such cultural exchanges.

We hope that the Cambodian government will see the ridiculous side of the proposal. There are better ways to discourage human trafficking.

...asking the questions that affect you...

It's just a matter of time before someone gets killed.

I have seen many near-accidents with kids, and the drivers don't seem to care.

How about some speed bumps every 50 meters or so?

I would love to take my four year old for walks on the pier, but I don't dare to.

*Father of a toddler
Chalong*

An officer at Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (*OrBorJor*), replies:

Pier buses such as *po thong* [pink buses] and shuttle buses [vehicles without side doors] are under our responsibility.

If anybody sees a PPAO bus driver being rude or driving too fast, they can report the incident to us by calling 1555.

We will then issue a warning for them to change their driving behavior.

Apart from our buses, there are also vehicles from private and government sectors such as vehicles carrying materials to and from the



CAUTION: Pedestrians share the road with automobiles on Chalong Pier.

Chalong Marina construction site.

Chalong Pier is under our responsibility, but we cannot continually monitor drivers from other organizations.

The best we can do at this point is to suggest and warn drivers to be careful when driving past pedestrians on the pier.

Tourists should be aware when walking along the pier. Large tour

groups that return from boat trips tend to scatter about the pier, making it difficult for drivers to navigate safely.

Tour guides should warn the tourists under their responsibility to walk inside the line showing the pedestrian path boundary.

This will offer drivers enough space to pass by and pedestrians will be a safe distance from the traffic.

Where's Thailand?

I attended the Perth Holiday & Travel Expo recently and I was very disappointed that Thailand was not represented.

Local crafts from Bali were a big hit, so were cheap holidays and there was lots of information about Bali and Malaysia.

I wish I could push Thailand tourism. Someone needs to before tourists intending to go to Phuket end up going to Penang.

*Graham Woolley
Perth, Australia*

Bangornrat Shinaprayoon, director of the southern regional office of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) office Phuket, replies:

TAT Phuket, along with the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (*OrBorJor*) and the Phuket Tourism Association, hold road shows in Australia every year.

The shows take the form of "table-top sales", in which we meet directly with Australian tour

operators rather than with prospective tourists.

We usually get more business deals from this kind of meeting than we do setting up booths at travel shows or consumer fairs in Australia.

The reason for this is that Thailand and Phuket are already well known among Australian tourists.

We are focusing less on building tourism awareness by taking part in each and every travel show.

Instead, we only attend the big events.

Last year we held road shows in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane.

We are planning to return to Melbourne and Sydney in July this year because there are direct flights connecting Phuket with those two cities.

However, Perth is not in our plans this year.

It is possible that we will go to Perth next year as we rotate which cities we hold our road shows in.

Flood damage to top B10bn

LAST week's floods in the South were even more devastating than flooding last year, with damage estimated at more than 10 billion baht, according to the Flood Victim Help and Compensation Coordination Center.

The agricultural sector has been worst hit. The Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives estimates the flooding has damaged around 700,000 rai of farmland.

Tourism has also been affected, with the disaster coming at the end of high season. The flooding will cost an estimated 10 billion baht, or 0.1 per cent of Thailand's GDP, the center said.

"The flooding in the South has affected the overall economic picture somewhat, but not a lot because it will probably only be short term," said Pornthep Chuphan, an economic analyst at Siam Commercial Bank.

"It has not made us revise our estimates for growth of the Thai economy. The figure this year will probably expand 4-5 per cent. The businesses that have been affected are tourism and agriculture."

Phakhon Thiphayathondecha, an analyst at Kasikornthai Bank, said shrimp farming had been worst hit. He said the South's other major agricultural activities – palm oil and rubber farming – had not been seriously disrupted.

Nevertheless, the Bank of Thailand (BoT) is in the process of gathering

information on the destruction and its effects on the economy. On April 20, the bank's monetary policy committee will meet and decide how to revise its economic forecasts for the year.

Methee Supamong, director of the Bank of Thailand's domestic economy department said he expected to see effects on tourism, as well as the fishing and transportation industries.

If the floods dissipate soon, it is believed the effects on agriculture will not be serious since the rubber tapping season is almost over.

Still, Theera Wongsamut, the minister of agriculture, said figures as of March 29 showed 732,655 rai of agricultural land had been damaged. Of these, 248,899 rai were rice fields, 38,245 were crop fields and 445,511 were gardens or other types of farm.

A total of 6,082 fish farmers were hit, with 7,409 shrimp ponds damaged covering 10,018 rai. In addition, 48,759 livestock farmers with almost 2 million animals were affected.

Meanwhile, the Southern office of the Department of Export Promotion, based in Surat Thani, said it had received damage reports from seven Southern provinces of Krabi, Chumphon, Nakhon Sri Thammarat, Ranong, Phuket, Phang Nga and Surat Thani.

It said farmers and factories had been seriously affected as transport links had



STORMS WRATH: Many roads in the south of Thailand were flooded during the rains, blocking vital transport routes. Photo: Apinun Saithong

been cut off – by air, sea and land – meaning they were unable to send products from farms to factories or from factories to retailers. Of 195 roads that were affected by the floods, 85 were rendered impassable.

Shrimp farms in Surat Thani, Chumphon and Nakhon Sri Thammarat have been badly hit as they are unable to send shrimp to factories during what is usually the busiest period of the year.

Supot Saplom, permanent secretary of the Transport Ministry, has ordered a team to survey the damage and report to Cabinet.

Among the affected routes are highways, country roads, railways, airports and bus stations.

There are an estimated 413,000 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the South. Most of them are seafood processing factories, rubber processing plants, as well as tourism agents, hotels and restaurants. Of the most seriously affected provinces, there are 56,300 SMEs in Surat Thani, 49,300 in Nakhon Sri Thammarat and 33,500 in Trang.

– Kom Chad Luek

Phuket tourism feels the wet weather pinch

THE effects of the ongoing wet weather on the Phuket tourism industry are starting to emerge.

The first to feel the pinch was nightlife venues in Patong, which suffered an immediate 30 per cent downturn in business.

"Because of the hard rain, most tourists are staying in their hotels. They don't want to go out at night," said Weerawit Kurasombat, President of the Patong Entertainment Business Association.

"After four straight days of hard rain this week, the number of tourists going out to enjoy the nightlife

in Patong has fallen by 30 per cent," he added.

In response, entertainment venue operators are turning to drastic measures just to keep trade turning over, Mr Weerawit said.

"Some bars and restaurants have to give promotions, such as buy one get one free, or whatever it takes, to make sure they can survive," he explained.

The entertainment industry was not alone in feeling the immediate effects.

"Not only were entertainment business affected, but every tour-



Soaked tourists on Bangla Road ism-related business," said Mr Weerawit.

"Boats canceled trips to islands. All water activities had to stop services," he added.

Phuket Tour Boat Association President Kissada Pichetpongsonon confirmed the foul weather had an instant negative impact on tours.

"For three days, speedboats and other small-sized boats had to stop running. Only big tour boats from Rassada Pier to Phi Phi Island ran three times a day during the heaviest seas, but the number of tourists aboard those vessels was much less than normal," he said.

Yet Bangonrat Shinaprayoon, director of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) southern regional office in Phuket Town, had a much brighter perspective on the impact of the unseasonal weather.

"The several days of heavy rains had only a slight effect on Phuket tourism. The rain didn't flood any local tourist attractions," she said.

"Tourists just changed from

doing outdoor activities, such as taking trips to islands, to indoor activities like shopping, having spa treatments, visiting museums and dining instead."

According to TAT statistics, hotel room occupancy remained at 70 to 80 per cent during the period, said Ms Bangonrat.

"There were no reports of international flights to Phuket being canceled. Only direct flights from Samui stopped for few days," she explained.

April is expected to be a much better month for the industry, she said.

"Foreign tourists are still coming to Phuket. In April, the situation will improve as there will be more direct flights from Hong Kong, Rangoon and India," she said.

– Pimwara Choksakulpan

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In brief...

Tawan cruises to manage Phuket's Sunseeker fleet

PHUKET'S role as the boating capital of the Asian Riviera is being enhanced by the partnership of two of the island's most respected and successful companies.

Tawan Cruises has been awarded the contract to manage the resort island's ever-growing fleet of Sunseeker yachts, distributed exclusively by Max Marine Asia.

"People are far more confident about having their boats here now with our efficient infrastructure, and this partnership with Tawan Cruises takes it that step further," Max Marine's Iain Davie, who has eight years of experience working for Sunseeker in the Europe, said recently.

Sunseeker has 18 boats in its Thai fleet, including a 40-meter super yacht.

At least six motor yachts are to arrive this year, with at least four owners wanting full yacht management.

Tony Henthorne of Tawan Cruises said the partnership added credibility to the marine market and Phuket was a solid base for keeping a boat.

- The Nation

THAI renews contract with Transaero Airlines

THAI Airways International has renewed its ground handling services contract with Transaero Airlines.

THAI commenced its ground handling services partnership with Transaero in 1993.

Transaero currently operates return flights to Bangkok and Phuket. THAI is Transaero's ground handling agent at both stations, handling passengers, cargo and mail, ramp and technical services.

Welfare 'gift' to help 24 million nationwide

THE government is preparing to expand its Pracha Wiwat program of welfare measures and support for workers in the "informal sector" out from Bangkok and into Phuket and other provincial centers.

The policy package will extend social welfare to millions of workers in the "informal sector", provide financial help for taxi drivers and street vendors and aim to reduce the cost of living for many for Thailand's poorest.

Last week, *Khao Sod* newspaper reported that Finance Minister Korn Chatikavanich said the program would be in place in 10 key provinces including Phuket, Chiang Mai, Ubon Ratchathani and Songkhla by the end of May.

The move comes ahead of national elections, expected to take place in early July after Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva announced plans to dissolve parliament.

The scheme, which was officially launched in early January as the Vejjajiva administration's "gift" to the people, comprises nine measures: extending social welfare for 24 million Thais in the "informal sector"; providing access to credit for taxi drivers and street vendors;



Finance Minister Korn Chatikavanich said the new welfare measures for the informal sector will extend to 10 new provinces, including Phuket.

registering motorcycle taxi drivers to protect them from mafia; allocating 20,000 new spaces for street vendors in Bangkok; con-

trolling the cost of oil; providing free electricity for nine million households; cutting the cost of animal feed; increasing transpar-

ency in the agricultural trade; and cracking down on crime.

Last week *Kom Chad Luek* newspaper quoted Ansathai Rattanadilok Na Phuket, deputy chair of the Land Transport Department, as saying he had ordered Transport Offices across the country to begin registering motorcycle taxi drivers in their areas.

Critics have said Pracha Wiwat is a populist policy that apes those of former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra and is aimed at securing votes.

The government has denied such accusations. In a letter to a Bangkok newspaper in December, Finance Minister Korn said the policy had been drafted through a consultation process that involved the government listening carefully to the needs of the people.

Mr Korn also pointed out that it would be state-owned banks such as Government Savings Bank that would be offering credit, and that the money would not be coming directly from the public purse.

He denied the policy was "populism" in the style of Mr Thaksin.

- Phuket Gazette

CRC Power plan 60 Watsadu stores in 15 years

CRC POWER Retail has set out a 15-year plan to open 60 Thai Watsadu home and construction material stores in the country to make its presence felt in all provinces.

President Suthisarn Chirathivat said during the grand opening of the

third store in Bangkok that the company would open standard format stores in all major provinces, focusing on locations on the outskirts of cities, in the next three years.

Each store will occupy average retail space of about 30,000 square meters and require 900 million

baht of investment. He said that in small provinces, the company would apply the mini-store or compact format to fit locations and traffic density in respective areas.

"We plan to open three to five Thai Watsadu stores every year," Mr Suthisarn said.

He said that beside Thai Watsadu, CRC Power Retail would continue the expansion of HomeWorks stores for home and decorative products, focusing on major cities such as Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Phuket and Pattaya.

- The Nation

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Where did all that capital flow to?

Some seemingly safe strategies can become illiquid and keep you from getting your money

CAPITAL flows are probably the most important thing to understand in investing, and yet they are one of the least understood things to most people not working in finance.

In simple terms, capital flows are either money flowing into a single investment, such as shares of a company, or flowing out of an investment or asset class, such as commercial property funds.

The common misunderstanding is that the risk of investing in an entire asset class is just as low as investing in the single asset itself.

Many money market funds went bust during the financial crisis, and these short-term debt securities are just about as safe as an asset class can be.

Most people think stock performance is an indicator of how well a company is doing and what kind of profits it is making. I will

most likely write an entire article about this later, but for now all one needs to realize is that many companies' stock prices decline over periods when the business is growing, profits are going up faster than expected, and the future looks bright.

This happens because, despite the individual businesses doing well, large amounts of capital are flowing out of global equities as an entire asset class because the whole asset class is becoming less attractive to invest in overall.

This may seem a bit technical, but it is very important to understand and can help you avoid making a huge mistake in investing in something which blows up at some point.

Retirement Years

By David Mayes

If you haven't fallen asleep or skipped ahead to the cartoons yet, I promise this will get much easier to read in a moment. A simple example ought to illustrate the concept.

Let's say five friends put their money together and buy two houses because they can't afford one each individually but they all believe the values of these two houses will rise.

This is essentially what property funds do on a large scale, and what all funds do in a sense, only varying in what it is they are actually investing in.

Since real estate markets drift up pretty steadily in the long run, and are actual physical objects, it is a safe bet that in time these houses are going to make a nice return for the friends.

Unfortunately for the friends, two years later the economy isn't too hot, and while house prices haven't dropped, there isn't an abundance of buyers around.

Then one of the friends gets cancer, and needs every penny to get treatment. Two of them having been living in Phuket, their wives find out what they have been up to and file for divorce back in their home countries.

To meet these obligations the three of them demand their share of their investment money back.

In a fund, investors aren't sym-

In a fund, investors aren't sympathetic friends who may give you some slack; they force redemption...

pathetic friends who may give you some slack; they force redemption as per terms of the offering memorandum (contract). The two investors who aren't in a pickle have no choice but to liquidate the houses, and since there are no buyers, they can only get a fire sale price.

The market may not have gone down, but this "fund" has just suffered a big loss due to liquidity problems.

The big difference in risk between the fund and the assets themselves is the forced sale aspect. If one person owned a property on their own and was not forced to sell, that person could wait a few years until buyers returned in large enough numbers to give them a nice profit instead of a loss.

The example is of course oversimplified and a tad unrealistic, but this is what happens on an incredibly large scale to entire asset classes all the time.



ON THE MOVE: Investors need to realize that a company's stock price declines when its business is growing. Photo: AFP

pathetic friends who may give you some slack; they force redemption as per terms of the offering memorandum (contract). The two investors who aren't in a pickle have no choice but to liquidate the houses, and since there are no buyers, they can only get a fire sale price.

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The example is of course oversimplified and a tad unrealistic, but this is what happens on an incredibly large scale to entire asset classes all the time.

The week after next I'll explain further with gold, and how gold overall is appreciating all the time, but by jumping out at certain times you can still end up with a loss. Curious? Catch my next column on April 23.

David Mayes MBA lives in Phuket and provides wealth management services to expatriates throughout South East Asia, specializing in UK pension transfers. He can be reached at david.m@faramond.com

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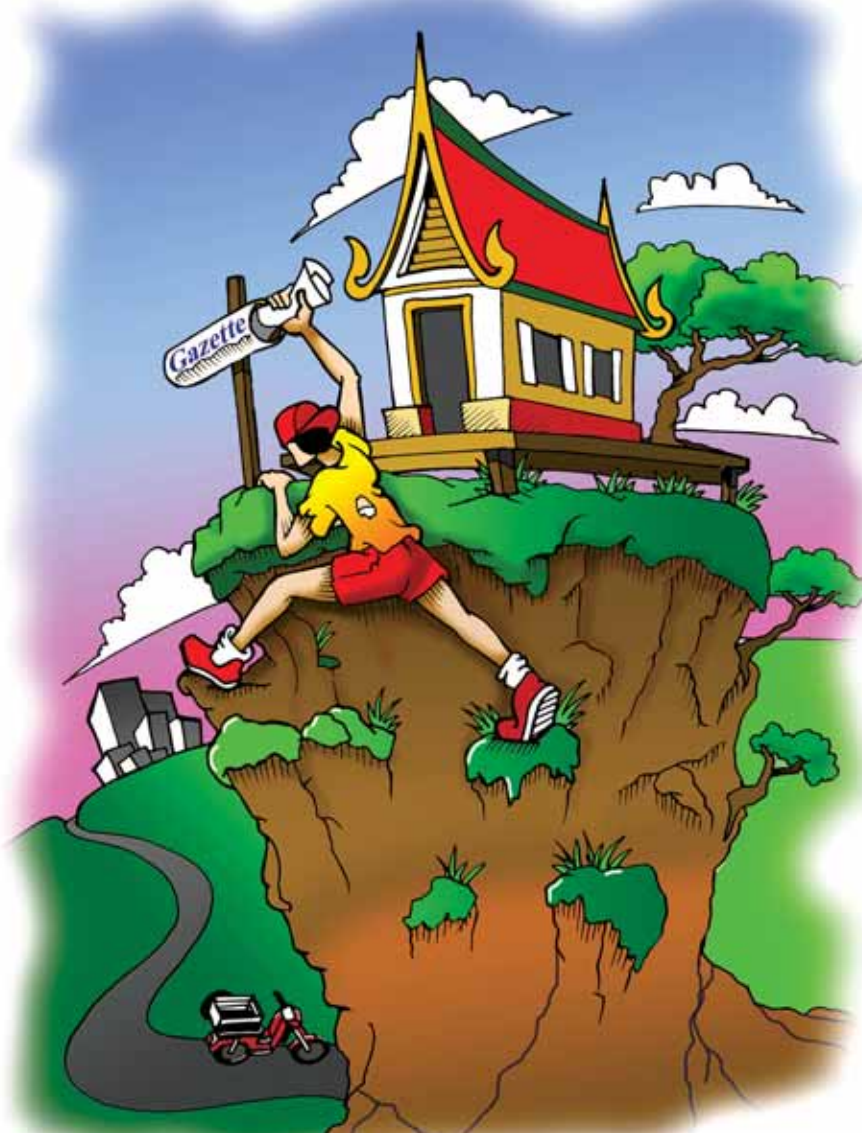
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CAT can't handle Kamala contention, that's the truth

Live Wire
By Woody Leonhard

PHUKET Live Wire reader "RT" recently compiled a one-day profile of international Internet download speeds in Kamala from CAT's wireless network. The raw data is posted on PhuketInternetSpeed.com (see graph).

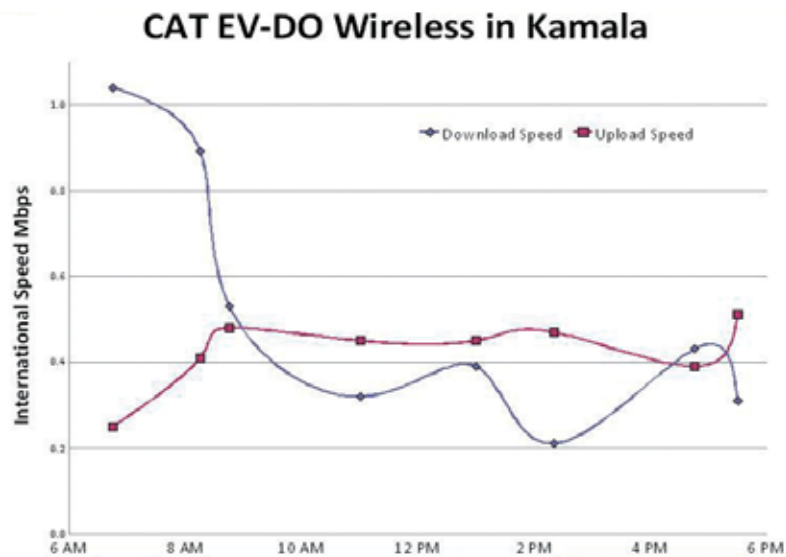
I've heard of problems with CAT's CDMA/EV-DO network in Kamala for years. People who try to connect from different parts of Kamala get very different speeds, depending on where they're located.

In general, CAT wireless international speeds vary greatly depending on where you're sitting in Phuket: Some people can get 2 Mbps – fast enough to view YouTube videos, for example.

Others rarely get more than 0.5 Mbps, which can be painfully slow for anything but the most rudimentary email.

RT's data, though, tells us something more. It shows that CAT isn't keeping up with demand.

Early in the morning, RT's CAT network downloads are usable, but not particularly good: 1 Mbps is fast enough for reasonably fast web surfing, playing music directly from the Internet, or running Skype. It isn't fast enough



UP AND DOWN: What does this graph tell you about CAT's wireless Internet service? Probably more than you think.

to play videos without considerable jerks, even at low resolution.

As the day wears on, though, the network's download speed slows way down. By mid-morning it's less than half as fast, and in the afternoon it's one-fifth as fast as early morning.

At that point, CAT's fancy CDMA EV-DO isn't considerably better than old-fashioned EDGE speeds – the kind of speed you can get by hooking up almost any mobile phone to your computer.

Contrast that with the upload speed. RT's international uploads are faster than many land-line up-

loads, almost all day long – they don't vary much during the day. That means he's getting consistent results. His antenna isn't moving much, the network isn't fading in and out, all is well with the network itself. But even though the network's fine, his download speeds are dropping considerably as the day wears on.

The only possible conclusion is that the signal is fine through the day, but download speeds crater, no doubt because of contention – the cumulative effect of many users trying to download through the same data straw at the same time.

CAT's network is reasonably good, but there isn't enough capacity for all of its customers during the day. That's what the graph proves.

As I explained in Live Wire online three weeks ago, CAT has run out of EV-DO wireless Internet cards. At least, CAT isn't selling any more of them. If you go to the CAT office, they'll tell you, "We'll have them next week." They've been telling me that for months. CAT



CAT CDMA EV-DO: RIP. Some have suggested that the plug-in modem label reads more like 'COMA' than 'CDMA'. Photo: Sutharat Husted

recently advised that it has the EV-DO modem, the EC-150, back in stock. Be sure to check the speed reporting site to see how well their service is doing in your area before you buy a card.

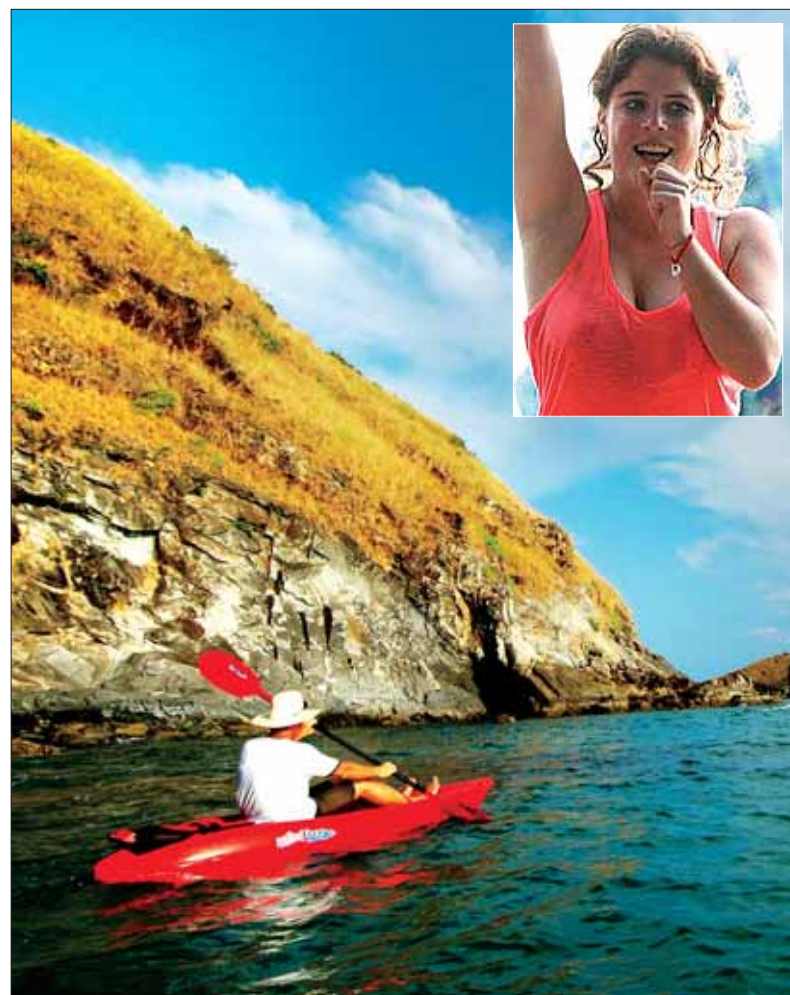
Clearly, CAT doesn't have the hardware to keep up with demand, at least in Kamala. But there are other forces at play, which may render the entire CAT CDMA/EV-DO network obsolete in the next few months.

More about that in the online version of this column, which you can see at W:PhuketGazette.com/LiveWire

Live Wire is IT guru and *Phuket Gazette* columnist Woody Leonhard's weekly snapshot of all things internet in Phuket. Follow Woody on Twitter: @PhuketPC.

To see what Woody's up to in the international press, and to keep abreast the latest Windows and Office issues, see W:AskWoody.com.

Royal reminder: Phuket still a top destination



IN PLACE: Phuket recently topped a list of favorite destinations for British Royals. The young British Princess Eugenie (inset) was here last year. Photos: Jim Welch and Duncan Larcombe

By Neil Quail

PRINCE William of Wales and his fiancée Catherine Middleton will command the world's attention on April 29, when they are to be wed at a lavish ceremony at Westminster Abbey in London.

As their honeymoon destination has not yet been revealed, speculation has raged throughout the British media as to possible locations that include spots in Thailand, Australia or the Philippines. An April Fool's jest even suggested a trip to Nepal for the spiritual couple.

The travel website HotelsCombined.com has compiled a list of holiday locations where members of the British monarchy are known to have stayed and, occasionally, even let their hair down a little.

Thailand has secured two places on the list proving its worth as a top destination for the British Royal family, even if sometimes it's not quite the publicity either desire.

1. Phuket, Thailand – Princess Eugenie, daughter of Prince Andrew and Sarah "Fergie" Ferguson, is said to be a fan of the Pearl of the Andaman. Spotted at the trendy Lizard Lounge club, Eugenie was seen dancing on tables after she downed beer with ketchup for a bet during a wild night out last year.

2. Cape Town, South Africa – On the back of her New Year's party, Prince Harry's ex, Chelsy Davy, is enjoying the single life and has been spotted mingling with high society at a party in Cape Town. Chelsy recently attended a pool soiree at the Cape Royal Hotel, where she reportedly partied until 7am – the little minx.

3. Sardinia, Italy – Prince Andrew has recently been spotted holidaying with a 24-year-old model aboard a luxury yacht off the coast of Sardinia. Not much conversation at the breakfast table between Andrew and Eugenie we would suggest.

4. Lewa Conservancy, Kenya – Prince William picked the Lewa Safari game park on the Lewa Conservancy, for his proposal to Kate Middleton with the big blue rock.

5. Bohol, Philippines – Eskaya Beach Resort and Spa in Bohol, Philippines is another Royal Family favorite and has been reported as a destination contender for the monarchy's new pin-up couple.

6. Stornoway, Scotland – Queen Elizabeth II used to adore her annual cruises around the Western Isles of Scotland aboard the Royal Yacht Britannia, with stop offs at Stornoway. She reportedly even wept when the ship was decommissioned in 1997.

7. Barbuda K Club, Barbuda – One of the Caribbean's hidden gems, Barbuda, certainly has the royal seal of approval. It was a favorite holiday escape of the late Princess Diana, who visited the island with the young Princes William and Harry.

8. Rabat, Morocco – Prince Charles and his wife Camilla are set to travel to the Moroccan capital of Rabat, where they will be the guests of King Mohammed VI. Additionally, the couple will visit Fez for some "interfaith dialogue and cultural events" – as you do.

9. Koh Samui, Thailand – It's all work for the Duchess of York on holidays these days. Fergie recently filmed a meditation segment at the Kamalaya Wellness Sanctuary on Koh Samui for her new reality series *Finding Sarah*, made for Oprah Winfrey's OWN network.

10. London, England – There's nothing quite like the jewel of Blighty for high tea at the finest London hotels. Goring Hotel in London, a favorite with the Queen Mother, is also rumored to be booked for Kate Middleton on the eve of the Royal Wedding.

List Adapted with kind permission from HotelsCombined.com

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A comprehensive review of the Phuket Gazette's policy with regard to the use of SPAM as a marketing tool

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Music needs stewards of history not 'idol' hands



GRENADE CATCHER: Singer Bruno Mars claims he will catch a grenade for love in one of his songs. Yet to be proven.

By Blair Christopher

WE should all be worried, very worried about the music our children are listening to – maybe listening to right now.

The musical stewards of the 60s, 70s, 80s and even 90s no longer shine a beacon of hope for us, having been knocked off their perch by younger, better-looking and talentless versions of themselves.

Jagger's looking more haggard each day. McCartney is still trying, but it's kind of sad now, and even the talismans of the 90s, Noel and Liam Gallagher, went their separate ways and occupy the pages of yesterday's news.

The rock 'n' roll band of old is dead. The rock star is dead. Electro-indie and arty-farty mod bands now blot the "alternative" scenes in the US and UK. Most have nothing to say, none are stadium-fit performers. Even the pop scene needs a kick up the arse. We are living in the "Pop Idol" era of teenage lyrical lotharios who churn out haphazard, nonsensical tripe and release polished studio albums that mask their vocal

failings. Yes, it is truly a terrible time for music. So who will step up to shine a light on this pathetic second decade of 21st century music history?

In the first of a regular and unabated assault on the lyrical inadequacies of moronic – and on occasion, a few mediocre – music writers' and singers working in the music industry right now, our music critic peels back the shiny and confused veneer of American singer-songwriter Bruno Mars.

In his second single, *Grenade*, released in January this year, the 25-year-old reveals his true genius as a writer with the following:

"Gave you all I had and you tossed it in the trash. You tossed it in the trash, you did. To give me all your love is all I ever asked, 'cause what you don't understand is I'd catch a grenade for ya (yeah, yeah, yeah). I'd jump in front of a

train for ya (yeah, yeah, yeah). You know I'd do anything for ya (yeah, yeah, yeah). I'd go through all this pain. Take a bullet through my brain. Yes, I would die for ya baby; but you won't do the same."

Can you blame her Bruno? This gibberish has been bleating from radios all over

Phuket for the past few months. We can't escape it. All the radio stations seem to love it, but the fact that young Bruno (who grew up in the peace-loving strands of Hawaii) is singing about catching a grenade as a gesture of love seems to be escaping most DJs sensibilities.

By playing this rubbish we tacitly condone it. By giving it air time we accept it has a place in our – and our childrens' – lives. It doesn't and it shouldn't. Bruno, please find something better to sing about, or shut up for a while.

Tune in next time for more music musings.



BOMBS AWAY: Duck for cover if you see this single.

Don't forget the Punchline



EXCITING, eccentric and experienced describe the three acts appearing on April 20 at the Holiday Inn Resort, Patong for the second Phuket Punchline Comedy Club show of 2011.

Three very different acts from the UK comedy circuit are set to entertain with their own inimitable comedy styles.

Compere for the evening is the high energy, high camp David Morgan. Erupting on to the comedy scene, Morgan compered the critically acclaimed and very first lunchtime club at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2009. A born presenter, Morgan's friendly style and ability to involve the entire audience are fast-establishing him as one of Britain's brightest comedic talents.

Also on the card is the unique and imaginative David Evans. Over the past decade his hilarious brand of twisted logic has delighted the British public during times of crisis. Described by *The Scotsman* as "skilful and surreal", Evans has also written for smash-hit TV shows in the UK.

Vladimir McTavish completes the line-up. A showman of the highest degree, he has vast comedic pedigree which includes 12 Edinburgh Fringe festivals and numerous television credits. McTavish was a regular performer on the BAFTA nominated "Live Floor Show".

Sponsored by the *Phuket Gazette* – doors open at 8pm with the show due to begin at 8.30pm. Ticket price is 960 baht now or 1,200 baht on the night. For more information visit www.phuketcomedy.com

– Neil Quail

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Home for life

By Alexandra Andersson

THERE aren't many places turn to in Thailand for destitute, HIV-positive women who have been cast out of their home communities due to ignorance, but the Life Home Project (LHP) on Koh Sireh accepts such women come from all over Thailand, warmly welcoming them into their family.

Last month LHP took in four new cases, all from Songkhla province. The women joined the 17 women and 20 children, aged 3 to 16, already residing at the LHP.

Project director Daoroong "Joojee" Rodsomnam said: "Here they receive shelter, food, water, electricity, clothes and everything they need free of charge, as well as some vocational training."

Daoroong Rodsomnam

It's an unprejudiced environment that lets the women and children have a better life, she explained.

The LHP is a non-governmental organization set up as a foundation under Thai law.

"Our project does not have a main sponsor. We just run on donations and apply for government funding. We don't have a regular source of funding from month to month," she said.

But this is a special month for the LHP and the women it cares for. The St Patrick's Ball, which was held in Karon late last month, raised over 1 million baht from ticket sales and an auction. On top of that, the Irish government donated an additional 300,000 baht.

"The people were very generous and it was a wonderful event. It means a lot to the women at the LHP and myself. We are very excited about what we can do and the people we can help with this money," Joojee said.

The 300,000 baht donation from the Irish Government will go towards repairing and maintaining the five-year-old home and its problematic water supply system.

The remainder will help the LHP continue to provide for its residents, fund its scholarship program for 170 AIDS affected children, and buy materials the women need



A PLACE TO CALL HOME: One of the Life Home Project's residences in Koh Sireh.

to learn new vocational like sewing, painting and handicraft production.

"We will try and make this money last," Joojee explains.

Although they do a good job alleviating the physical and social trauma that comes with HIV/Aids, the LHP is well aware that prevention and education are the best ways to mitigate spread of the disease.

The reason the women end up at the home are all too often the same, she explained.

"When her family and community find out she has HIV, they don't want to take care of her because they are afraid. She also often loses her job," she said.

"But we discuss the situation with the family and inform them about Aids. We tell them that they can have contact with the

infected person without catching it themselves, and that it is not dangerous because HIV does not spread by touch. They did not know that."

"Someone who gets infected with HIV is still the same person. That's what they need to realize," Joojee says.

The LHP also runs an Aids awareness program in schools throughout Phuket.

According to Phuket Public Health Office data, in March there were 7,162 registered HIV patients in Phuket. This represents an increase of 212 cases over the past seven months.

If you would like to help LHP, contact T:076 614060 E:info@lifehomeproject.org or visit W:lifehomeproject.org



Singapore MediaCorp Artiste, Joanne Peh

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Another ball, another great chance to help



PARTY WITH A PURPOSE: Revelers at last year's ball had a blast.

Phuket Has Been Good To Us Foundation will host its second-annual fundraising ball, Into the Big Blue, on May 7 at the Sheraton Grande Laguna.

Tickets are 3,500 baht and include free-flow drinks, canapes, a four-course gala dinner and a night of great entertainment.

All money raised will go to the Foundation, which provides English-language education to more than 760 students in two government schools in Phuket. The Foundation also runs Coconut Club, an after school and weekend program for 150 students who live at Kamala School who are

orphans or whose families are not able to look after them. Last year's gala ball was a huge success, raising more than 2 million baht. This year's ball promises to be even better, but you have to hurry, there are only three tables left!

Now is the time to get involved in this worthy event and help change the lives of Phuket children.

Contact E:kathyphuket@gmail.com or E:chantal.fernandes@gmail.com. For information about the work, history and children cared for by the Foundation, or how you can become a volunteer see W:phukethasbeengoodtous.org.

Ocean's apart

Renowned fitness expert Ocean Bloom speaks exclusively to the *Phuket Gazette* about her career and how being on the island has given her a new outlook on life and her future.

By Neil Quail

OCEAN Bloom was nine years old when she performed a dance routine before a Royal audience of Prince Charles and the now late Princess Diana.

Within 10 years she won her first bodybuilding competition in her home province of British Columbia, Canada, and has since gone on to become a leading personality in the North American fitness industry, and a media star.

Many athletes who compete in individual sports are committed to a solitary lifestyle, dedicated to pushing the body's physical capabilities. The combination of this isolation and constant awareness of nutrition and vein-popping resistance training is as tiring on the mind as it is on the body.

"To get to the top of your game, whatever that is, you have to be very tough mentally. In the West, it's all about success: The car you drive, where you live, salary and how you look," says Ocean.

"I was fortunate. Where I'm from [Vancouver] is a popular location for TV and film shoots and because of my success in fitness it seemed a natural progression into the entertainment industry," she adds.

Ocean has trained with stars such as Jean Claude Van Damme and Dolph Lundgren, and has been involved with films such as *X-Men 2* and *I Robot*.

"Preparing for fitness competitions, training others and developing skills for TV and movie roles is a hectic schedule and doesn't leave much personal time. I was always doing something, always criticizing or making aggressive demands on myself," she said.

This is partly why Ocean is in Phuket. Physical training dominated her life and though she enjoyed yoga and meditation there was a gnawing feeling something was missing.

Ocean emotionally recounts the moment when she realized she



Ocean fronts Impact Magazine



Dolph Lundgren and Ocean

was taking her life for granted: "My best friend had been diagnosed with lung cancer and I saw her physical deterioration. It struck me that this girl had so much to offer, but would not be able to do the things she always wanted to.

"We discussed a 'bucket list' and a trip to Thailand was our first choice - for its culture and our desire to learn more in the ways of meditation, yoga and massage," Ocean says.

"I began my 'journey' in Chiang Mai and experienced the Thai yoga massage teachings of Asokananda. From there I traveled to another retreat in Phang Nga, but without a plan as to where I would go next.

"I made some friends who invited me to Railey Beach [Krabi] for a few days, and while relaxing there a friend [MMA star Roger Huerta] contacted me and said he was training at Tiger Muay Thai Camp in Phuket.

"Once I arrived and saw the set up at Tiger Camp, I knew Phuket was the place for me. Seeing a fantastic mix of men and women of all fitness standards working together was like walking in on a little piece of heaven," she recalls.

"After weeks of indulging my spiritual body, I needed to strike a balance with my physical side and letting go at a punch bag. Hitting the gym was exactly what I needed."

This is where Ocean's new-found philosophies come to bear in relation to modern lifestyles.

"Many people want to train at an aggressive 'boot-camp' level. After a stressful day's work I would be asked to really push my clients in an attempt to rid them of anxieties and flush the aggression from their systems," Ocean explains.

"I would even apply this attitude to myself, internally putting myself down - the 'no pain, no gain' mentality. Spending time in Thailand has taught me that this may work on occasion, but we should be more adaptable.

"Rather than beating hell out of a bag, it may be more beneficial to enjoy a Thai yoga massage or meditation session to better help deal with personal issues," Ocean advises.

"My goal is to offer a range of wellness training and to change at-



FITNESS FIRST: Bodybuilder, fitness expert and friend to the stars, Ocean Bloom is currently training in Phuket. Photo: Rodney Jang

titudes. Instead of adhering to a regimented schedule, people should understand that caring for the mind and body can vary on a daily basis and we should rely more on our instincts - what our bodies are telling us it needs," she says.

Looking to the future, Ocean is adamant that she has found in Phuket a place where she feels at peace. Like many who now call Phuket home, she recognizes that there's more on offer than a tropical island lifestyle.

"I must go back to Canada soon, but I've already discussed some business opportunities with

a fitness nutrition company I represent to introduce their products into South Asia...Right now I'm savoring the experience," she said.

Ocean trains at Tiger Camp daily and can always be approached for exercise and lifestyle advice. She is a wonderfully amiable lady, but be warned; just speaking to this blonde-haired, blue-eyed charismatic poster girl of the fitness world will encourage the sucking in of bellies, unwarranted flexing of biceps and a desire to renew gym memberships.

For more information visit [Ocean Bloom.com](http://OceanBloom.com)

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Man of faith on life's path

World-renowned Buddhist scholar Dr Robert Thurman, the first American ever ordained by The Dalai Lama as a Tibetan Buddhist monk, was recently in Phuket to lead two days of discussion at the Thanyapura Mind Center at Phuket International Academy. Here he talks to *Phuket Gazette* News Editor Stephen Fein about his visit, his own upbringing, faith issues, parenting and how social media is creating a new form of global consciousness.

Stephen Fein: Tell me a little bit about your visit here. Is it part of a tour?

Dr Robert Thurman: Well, yes. Klaus is an old friend. I have known him since the early 80s, maybe the late 70s, so that is going on 30 years.

Who is Klaus?

Well, Klaus Hebben is the founder of this whole institution here. He lives over in Mai Thon. He's German. I have visited here two or three times. When I was last at the Mind Center they were just laying the foundation and I did a Tibetan *Puja* here, to bless the thing and get permission from the dragons, the *nagas*, to build the thing. That was one of the more official rituals that I did. There was a lightning storm the day I did it.

So I am just down visiting Klaus, then I am on my way to New Delhi to visit the Dalai Lama who will be there in early April, and then I will take a group of pilgrims to Bhutan for 12 days. Then I will go back to home to Manhattan, where I was born and grew up.

Were your parents religious at all, and if so what faith?

My father was a translator for the Associated Press, the Latin American desk. And then when he semi-retired from there he worked at the UN as a simultaneous translator, something he always wanted to do, in the late 50s and early 60s. He died rather young, in his early 60s. My father was very spiritual, but he wasn't religious. We didn't go to church and stuff like that, but they

did send me to some Sunday school, where I used to play basketball – and argue with the pastor. I never believed in God. I didn't like God much. I liked Jesus, I thought he was nice, but I thought God gave him a raw deal. And I refused to believe in things that didn't make sense. But I used to play basketball and sing in the choir and so on.

My mother was an off-Broadway actress. She loved Shakespeare. Shakespeare was Buddha to her. Shakespeare was the bible to her.

I was raised as a strict, Boston Irish Catholic. I still remember the day when I was told Santa Claus didn't exist.

When someone told you God didn't exist? **No, somebody told me Santa Claus didn't exist.**

Oh, I see, *Santa Claus* didn't exist, oh dear! **But after that, just by extension. It was just a house of cards me.**

Everything went down the drain?

Did you raise your children as Buddhists?

Not really. We raised them to have good thinking and common sense – to think for themselves and not be intimidated by authority, but we didn't do any sort of "card carrying" thing. But then they knew the Dalai Lama and all these things, so I think the reincarnation and other Buddhist ideas are kind of common sense to them. But we really didn't raise them to be card-carrying religious types, no.



MEET THE THURMANS: Robert Thurman and his wife at Phuket International Academy's Mind Centre. Among the couple's four children is Hollywood actress Uma Thurman.

My daughter recently lost her first tooth, and someone told her about the tooth fairy so she got very excited. But given my own experience, I wonder as a parent if I am doing the right thing by going along with this type of thing, by not snuffing it out from the beginning. No, I wouldn't. I would let it gradually happen. I don't think that is a big issue. Let them have their fairies. The key is that they can have fun, but they should have common sense too... Anyway, you never know. There could be some fairies around after all. (laughs)

How technically savvy are you. Do you use Facebook and Twitter and all that?

I try. I am not really super-savvy, but I try. I try to Twitter, but I have been lazy about it. I am on Facebook and Twitter, but then I wasn't answering my different friends and I was friending people and then not communicating with them. My son scolded me, so I have tried to do better. But I am a little overwhelmed with my email, my Facebook and my Twit-

ter. I think it's very fun; I like the social media, but I am not too savvy about it.

The recent earthquakes and tsunami in Japan, Haiti. Every disaster that happens now everybody knows about it in real time. Do you think it's creating some kind of 'global consciousness'?

Yes. There is a global consciousness. Even without the electronic hook-up there always was global consciousness, but it was more subliminal, I guess. Now the electronics are creating a kind of global brain or something. It's marvelous actually; people are caring about each other more. It is part of the good side of some of these technological things. I like them; I am all for them. And you know dictators and oppressive rulers hate them. They don't want people to know everything that is going on. They want them to be oppressed, without knowing what's going on. There is a danger that they can use them like they did at the Basij in Iran, tracking down dissidents through their cellphones. So it is true that it can be used negatively too, but I think it is basically good.

See future issues for more with Dr Thurman



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Marc Mulloy

MARC Mulloy may have the most recognizable voice on Phuket. As Executive Producer for PGTV since its beginnings in 2005, he has interviewed hundreds of political, entertainment and hospitality personalities for broadcast on local cable channels and in the guestrooms of Phuket's leading hotels.

EXPAT
gallery
By Bruce Stanley

He is a popular Master of Ceremonies, most recently sharing the MC duties at Phuket's Blues Rock Festival, and an important member of the island's esteemed theater group, The Andaman Players, where he played Dr Hu Man Pu in the recent Christmas pantomime, *The Pirates of Phuket*.

Marc was born in London, but by the time he was ready for primary school his family moved to Hong Kong where his father followed his career in the civil service.

"I am a true expat. My father was Irish and my mother was French, and we lived in Hong Kong from the time I was five, in 1967, until I left in 1991. I loved the cosmopolitan atmosphere of Hong Kong. It's a reason I feel so comfortable living on Phuket."

Following a family tradition which continues today with his 15 year old son Paul, Marc had an early interest in being on the stage.

At just age 10, he joined the Hong Kong Stage Club and performed in a pantomime, *Aladdin*.

It was the start of a career entertaining the public.

Marc returned to the UK and studied graphic design in Wales but soon returned to Hong Kong as he missed the dynamic Asian culture.

"The 1970s and 1980s were a fantastic time to be in Hong Kong as there was a very lively art and music scene. I lived on Cheung Chau Island, where all the creative people lived, and commuted by ferry to the city for work in the entertainment industry."

He freelanced in Hong Kong for many years as an actor and specialized as a voice talent dubbing Asian films into English and French.

"This was a boom time for Hong Kong cinema and I would be the voice for two or three different characters per film. Most films were shot without sound and later dubbed in Cantonese and English. I was able to work with John Woo, Jackie Chan, Alan Tang and many others who later became very famous."

He also worked in television for ETV, using his distinctive voice to

teach English, and in radio. He joined the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts where he served as an actor reading student screenplays.

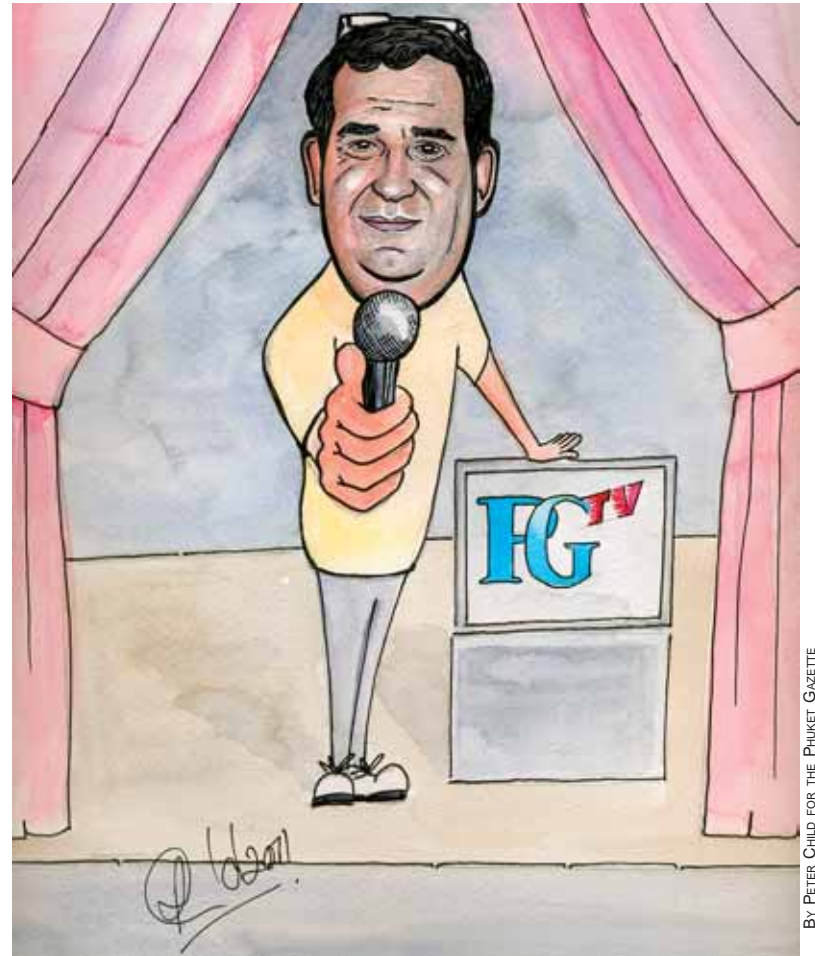
"It was a great life. I made good money and hung out in a great music scene at Rick's Cafe and The Wanch folk club, but by 1991 I was married and looking to start a family.

"Influenced by the negative outlook for the 1997 handover of Hong Kong to China, we rather impulsively headed to Southwest France where my parents had retired. I was intrigued with the thought of living a quiet life in the countryside."

Marc bought a small printing company and spent 10 years working in graphic design while refurbishing a local farmhouse. He also visited Thailand as often as he could, partly due to the family ties of his Thai wife.

"By 2004 I realized that my heart was in Asia, and though I loved my life in France my family would be happier in Thailand. So I sold up and moved to Phuket."

He arrived just after the tsunami and was soon invited to become Executive Producer of the island's first independent English language television news program. He has spent the past six years there, presenting an interesting mix of news, interviews and entertainment.



By PETER CHILD FOR THE PHUKET GAZETTE

About Expat Gallery

The individuals profiled in "Expat Gallery" are chosen on the basis of their contributions to Phuket, and for having made those contributions in successful partnerships with Thais. For many, the contributions have entailed significant investment, often in the mid-80s and 90s when the rules of business were, ahh, not always clear. Some are not in business at all, but all have one thing in common: if there were a *Who's Who in Phuket*, they'd be in it.

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When loyalty grew on trees

Gifts of 'Bunga Mas' gold and silver trees in the 14th century were a sign of loyalty to the monarch

THE kingdom of Ayutthaya was established in the early 14th century. From then on the city became the seat of power for a long line of Siamese monarchs who would rule an extensive and prosperous empire that lasted over four centuries.

When Ayutthaya overthrew the hegemony of its overlord Sukhothai, it inherited its vast empire, which included the Malay states in the southern peninsula.

The different tributary states of Ayutthaya were mentioned in the Siamese "Palatine Law", which was drawn up during the 15th century. The document mentioned the different states that paid homage to Ayutthaya and their significance to the empire.

During that period Ayutthaya had eight tributary kingdoms that were ruled by princes who sent regular tribute to the capital. They were given the noble title of *Phraya Mahanakhon*.

The city of Ligor, modern day Nakhon Sri Thammarat, was one of the most powerful tributary kingdoms in the South. Further south on the Malay Peninsula, the Palatine Law mentioned four other petty states that accepted Siamese suzerainty. These were Johor,

Looking Back

By Anand Singh

Malacca, Malayu and Worawari.

Because many of these states were so far from the capital, keeping them directly under Ayutthaya's control proved difficult.

To deal with this problem, Ayutthaya vested control of many of these lesser states to one of its tributary kingdoms. The tributary prince was allowed to rule over

these petty states and was allowed to collect tributes on behalf of Ayutthaya. In the South, most of the Malay states came under direct control of Ligor.

The Malay states adopted the custom of sending the *Bunga Mas* – trees made of gold and silver – directly to the King of Siam in Ayutthaya as a sign of loyalty and submission along with other costly gifts, such as weapons and slaves.

Little is known about the origins of the *Bunga Mas* being used as a sign of submission. The gold and silver trees were crafted meticulously and resembled the real plant in every detail.

The necessary funds for the *Bunga Mas* were raised, often through heavy taxation, by local

rulers in their own kingdoms and this caused much resentment for Ayutthaya's domination.

But it was clear that Ayutthaya saw the *Bunga Mas* as a sign of loyalty and states that failed to submit the tribute were often dealt with severely.

According to Palatine Law, each tributary state in the south had to send the *Bunga Mas* to Ayutthaya twice a year to demonstrate their loyalty to the king. Because of the arduous journey that had to be undertaken each time the tribute was due, it was later mandated that the rulers of petty states would have to present their *Bunga Mas* to Ligor instead.

The governor of Ligor would then collect the *Bunga Mas* on behalf of Ayutthaya. Every three years, Ligor assembled them all along with other tributes and transported them to Ayutthaya.

In time Ligor grew more powerful and was becoming unruly towards Ayutthaya. To prevent it from open rebellion, Ayutthaya severed three states from its control and downsized Ligor's regional power. On this occasion, Singora (modern day Songkhla), Phatthalung and Phang Nga became independent from Ligor.

Among the tributary states under Ligor's control, Phang Nga was one of the most important. The state incorporated Takuapa and Phuket Island within its defined territory. Phang Nga was held by Ayutthaya as an important



GOOD AS GOLD: The Bunga Mas are trees made of silver and gold.

state because it was the western frontier of the realm.

At times some of its rulers even received the rank of *Chaophraya*.

Because it was situated on the western frontier of Siam, it became necessary for the state to be under the command of a high-ranking official, who would be able to defend it against foreign attacks and raids from Malay pirates that infested the seas during that period.

However not long after its break from Ligor, the territories of Phang Nga were split up.

Takuapa and Phuket Island were made tributary states in their own right. The governors of Takuapa and Phuket were also required to send the *Bunga Mas* to Ayutthaya as mandated in the Palatine Law.

After Phuket and Takuapa were detached from it, Phang Nga became so insignificant that it was

relieved of its duty to send the *Bunga Mas*.

The reason why Phuket and Takuapa were made tributary states so early in the Ayutthaya period had much to do with the arrival of European traders in the Far East.

Tin was one of their most wanted resources and soon Ayutthaya's rulers came to realize that they were in possession of the only tin yielding territories then known in the Far East.

These were Takuapa, Perak and Phuket, or what the Europeans called Junk Ceylon Island. Among them Junk Ceylon had the richest tin reserves and the island soon became one of the most prized of Ayutthaya's possessions in the south of the realm.

If you have a history story you would like featured, contact Anand Singh at E:as.pkt@hotmail.com

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Stephen King pens JFK novel

THE date 11/22/63 signifies a defining moment for 20th century America. It was the day three shots rang out in Dallas as President John F Kennedy was brutally and publicly murdered.

But only time will tell whether horror guru Stephen King can enter literary history with his forthcoming 1000-page 11/22/63 novel, due out in November.

In a nutshell, the story follows time-traveling teacher Jake Epping, who attempts to stop the assassination of the president. Jake is a 35-year-old high school English teacher in Lisbon Falls, Maine.

His friend Al, who runs the local diner, one day shares a secret: His storeroom is a portal to 1958. He enlists Jake on a mission to try to prevent the presidential assassination.

This starts off Jake's new life as George Amberson and his world of Elvis and JFK, of a troubled loner Lee Harvey Oswald and beautiful high school librarian Sadie Dunhill, who becomes the love of Jake's life – a life that transcends the normal rules of time.

Will 11/22/63 be a resounding success for the wordsmith of shock?

With an estimated 350 million books sold worldwide from his 49 published titles and a career spanning more than 40 years, a safe bet would be on Stephen King having a best-seller come Christmas.

– Fraser Morton

Good bones a bad read

I PICKED up Margaret Atwood's book *Good Bones* (Virago Press, London, 2007 153pp) because every time I see a Margaret Atwood book I pick it up. Author of 20 novels, she is, along with the short story writer Alice Munro, Canada's leading writer.

Alas, this is a travesty of a book. Large margins, double spaced lines, blank pages between stories, all the cheap publishing tricks have been used to pad out the meager 153 pages. The volume contains 27 very short stories, but they are not short stories in the classic Alice Munro sense, but semantic doodles.

The piece "There Was Once" opens with this sentence: "There was once a poor girl, as beautiful as she was good, who lived with her wicked stepmother in a house in the forest."

An opposing editor's voice then begins criticizing the setting of the forest rather than an more relevant urban one, then the words "poor" and "beautiful" on politically correct grounds of racism and sexism, then the moral judgment of "wicked", then the feminist question of why is the villain a stepmother, why not a stepfather?

All right, this is clever and mildly amusing, but it is about as good as the book gets. The others are little pedantic ideas that Atwood takes and runs with as far as she can: a new version of *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Hamlet* as retold by a hectoring Queen Gertrude, a view of earthlings from the point of view of extraterrestrial moths, a previous life as a bat.

Still, even in the slightest, most trivial pieces, Atwood is capable of lyricism and euphony. Here is her opening to "In love with Raymond Chandler":

"An affair with Raymond Chandler, what joy! Not because of the mangled bodies and

the marinated cops and hints of eccentric sex, but because of his interest in furniture. He knew that furniture could breathe, could feel, not as we do but in a way more muffled, like the word upholstery, with its overtones of mustiness and dust. I think of his sofas, stuffed to roundness, satincovered, pale-blue like the eyes of his cold, blond, unbodied, murderous women, beating very slowly, like the hearts of hibernating crocodiles; of his chaise longues, with their malicious pillows."

There are traces of the dire environmental future that is predicted in the science fiction trilogy she has two thirds completed. There are no more fish in the sea, cows take up too much room and New York is underwater.

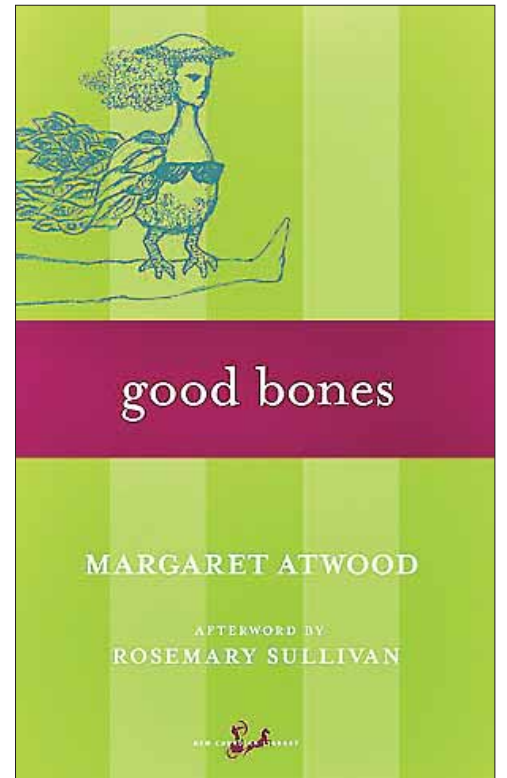
"Think of the earth as a nineteenth-century lifeboat, adrift in the open sea, with castaways but no rescuers. After a while you run out of food, you run out of water. You run out of everything but your fellow passengers."

There's always cannibalism. Or as Atwood tartly observes: "Let's just say we've learned the hard way about waste. Or let's just say we all make our little contribution to the general welfare, in the end."

The book offers a wide range of such tart observations but for all the dazzling wordplay there is not much to offer in terms of character development or emotional attachment.

Only in the final title story "Good Bones" does Atwood descend from lofty wordplay to quotidian humanity. It's a meditation of the phrase "good bones" which the narrator says she was blessed with, according to her family.

And then we go on a tour of bones, from singing "Dry Bones" around a girl scout



A bone of contention for Atwood fans.

campfire to the bones of a friend at a cemetery. And finally there are the frail bones of her own old age. She speaks to her bones as she would to a dog as she labors up a flight of stairs.

"Good bones, good bones, I coax, wondering how to reward them; if they will sit up for me, beg, roll over, do one more trick, once more. There. We're at the top. Good bones. Good bones! Keep on going."

It would have been nice to read an entire book containing this kind of story. But it seems that Atwood was determined to clear her desk of all her literary detritus before taking up another novel. I feel misused.

Books

By James Eckardt

Thai firm aims to be e-book center for Southeast Asia

DEDICATED readers of English-language books can now enjoy carrying a well-stocked bookstore with them wherever they go, following the launch of Asia Books e-bookstore.

The 42-year-old bookstore chain and distributor of English-language books in Thailand has opened the e-bookstore service for its 150,000 existing members and newcomers.

It aims to become the e-book center for Thailand and Southeast Asia, since its e-book store, www.asiabooks.com, is already the biggest repository of digital content in Thailand and neighboring countries.

Readers wishing to buy e-books must first register as members of www.asiabooks.com, where there are currently 500,000 titles available for



Meeting demand for e-books

download. The company plans to double that number of titles to one million by the end of this year.

The online bookstore has been redesigned over the past six months. Following its relaunch, it has attracted more readers. At present the website receives about 2,000 visitors per hour, and about 95 per cent of them make a purchase.

Asia Books managing director Sirote Jiraprayon said the redesigned store aimed to give readers the convenience of not having to carry heavy books with them. The launch of the e-book store is part of a strategy to cope with a global trend in reading behavior.

– The Nation

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WHAT'S ON in Phuket

April 8-10. Alan Wallace: Transforming Felicity and Adversity
During this retreat, Alan Wallace will explain his teachings, and lead guided meditations for putting them into practice. Time: Friday 7pm to 9pm, Saturday 9am to 5pm, Sunday 9am to 12pm. For non-residents the price is 1,175 baht per person. For residents it is 2,795 baht per person (single) and 2,495 baht per person (double), including accommodation for two nights and meals. Contact Alex or Nantawan at T:076-336030 E:mtc@thanyapura.co.th or visit W:thanyapura.com

April 8-10. Triathlon Retreat with Ironman Legend

Ironman champion Jrgen Zck will offer two innovative sports weekends for athletes of all levels at Thanyamundra Organic Resort in Khao Sok. These weekends are unlike anything held before in the region. Swim, run and bike alongside the legend, who will offer inspiring coaching and insightful tips personalized to each individual. April 8-10 and April 15-17. Retreat costs: Triathlon retreat for beginners (two days), starts at 15,800 baht. Triathlon retreat for advanced (two days), starts at 16,200 baht. Contact: Giles Leonard at T:076-336000 E:tslc@thanyapura.co.th or visit W:thanyapura.co.th.

April 9, 16 and 23. Facebook 101 – free seminar, Group 2

Back by popular demand. This is the second free Facebook 101 seminar, with an all-new group of participants. Three sessions on three consecutive Saturdays cover everything



April 9-15. TSLC Songkran Sports Splash Camp

Kids, come celebrate Songkran at Thanyapura Sports & Leisure Club (TSLC). Enjoy the water festival with lots of fun activities, including football, basketball, tennis, Thai boxing, judo and visiting Jungle Splash! Half day: 600 baht (either 9am to 12:30pm or 1:30 to 5pm), full day: 1,000 baht, five days: 4,000 baht, nine days: 7,000 baht. Parents can provide a packed lunch, or lunch is available for 200 baht per day. Contact: Giles at T:076-336000 E:tslc@thanyapura.co.th or visit W:thanyapura.com for some more information.

you need to know about setting up a Facebook page for your company, charity, club or organization. No experience necessary. To sign up, please go to facebook.com/Sandwich Shoppe and submit the form. Limited to 20, and the first group filled up quickly. If places run, there will be a waiting list for the next round. Sponsored by Woody's Sandwich Shoppes and *Phuket Gazette*. Contact: Woody at T:076-290468 or visit W:facebook.com/SandwichShoppe.

April 13-15. Songkran Festival
Aso known as the water festival, Songkran is held during one of the driest months (not this year) in

Thailand. The new year 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.

April 14-17. Oilfield Golf Classic

The 3rd Annual Phuket Oilfield Classic is back. Last year's event saw the Black Mountain resident professional Simon Yates shoot the course record of 63 at Loch Palm. This year Blue Canyon and Red Mountain will be played. Why not come along and join in this fun-filled event and stand a chance to win a car or US\$20,000 in cash for the hole-in-one prize. Contact: Mark Cameron at T:081 7-882843 E:mark@phuketoilfieldclassic.com or visit W:phuketoilfieldclassic.com

April 15. Curry Fridays

Come on down to Curry Fridays on alternate Fridays, from 7pm to 11:30pm, at the Navrang Mahal, Karon Sea Sands Resort & Spa. Here is your chance to enjoy an authentic and lavish Indian curry buffet. Selections include all-time favorites chicken tikka masala, very hot mutton vindaloo, juicy kebabs, Goan fish curry, chickpea curry and more served with nan bread and basmati rice. All you can

eat for only 449 baht nett. Draught beer by the glass, 50 baht nett. Special discount on beverages. Contact: Seemant Raju at T: 076-286464 ext 4 or 081-6295063 E:sm@karonseasand.com or visit W:karonseasand.com.

April 18-22. TSLC IronKids Camp with Jrgen Zck

The TSLC IronKids Camp is designed to be fun, focusing on essential triathlon skills. It is short so as not to tire the children before the TSLC IronKids Race on April 23. Ironman Legend Jrgen Zck will run the camps, along with professional support staff. Mondays-Fridays, for kids aged 6-15 years. Monday-Thursday daily sessions: 300 baht. Friday two-hour session: 450 baht. One-week camp: 1,500 baht. Private

session: 1,500 baht. Contact Giles at T:076-336000 E:tslc@thanyapura.co.th or visit W:thanyapura.com.

April 20. Live International Stand Up Comedy

The Phuket Punchline Comedy April show is sure to be a corker. Three very different acts, all from the breeding ground of sublime comedy talent that is the UK comedy circuit, will be at the Holiday Inn Resort in Patong on April 20 from 2pm to 11pm. David Morgan has recently burst onto the comedy scene with his own brand of high energy, high camp compering. He'll introduce two stalwarts of the comedy circuit: Scottish comedian Vladimir McTavish and the hilarious eccentric Dan Evans. The entertainment features all the ingredients for another top night of comedy. Contact Boom at T:089-6469278 E:info@phuketcomedy.com or visit W:phuketcomedy.com.

April 21. PIWC Monthly Lunch

The April lunch of the Phuket International Women's Club (PIWC) will be held on April 21 from 11:30am - 2pm at Watermark Restaurant, Boat Lagoon. All are welcome and prior booking is essential. Price:500 baht for PIWC members and 650 baht for non-members. Contact: Carole Dux at T:076-200730 E:info@phuketiwcc.com or visit W:phuketiwcc.com.

April 23. TSLC IronKids

The TSLC IronKids Phuket Triathlon, for children from 6 to 15, offers age-appropriate races and training with an emphasis on fitness, fun and safety. Swim, bike and run: ages 6-8 yrs old; 50m, 3km, 500m: ages 9-11 yrs old; 150m, 6km, 1.5km: ages 12-15 yrs old; 300m, 12km, 3km. Sponsored by *Phuket Gazette*. Contact: Claire Ratcliffe at T:076-336000 E:claire@ironkidsphuket.com

Free Computer Clinics

Is Windows driving you nuts? Want to know about the best internet connections in Phuket? Need help finding a repair shop or a dealer that knows what they're doing? Join *For Dummies...* author and local Windows guru Woody Leonhard in his free weekly seminars. Sponsored by Woody's Sandwich Shoppes and the *Phuket Gazette*.

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MODEL POSE: Thai model 'Pancake' at the Dorothy Perkins opening.

Dorothy Perkins, the popular UK brand, now have a Phuket store at Central Festival much to the delight of women shopaholics. The store's grand opening drew big crowds last week, with one of Thailand's top models "Pancake" getting the opening off to a glittering start. This ceremony was presided over by Somjitt Suthangkul, and Dorothy Perkins Thailand Brand Manager Sunisa Akaradechavut. The management team from Central Festival also joined in the opening celebrations with Marketing Director Wilaiporn Pitimanaaree, and General Manager Panat Pookpho, toasting the new store's success.

YOUR Phuket

The Dog Whisperer: 'Tug-o-truck still on'



DAMN RAIN: Russell D Russell had to postpone his 'tug-o-truck' due to rain.

DESPITE heavy rains forcing Russell D Russell to postpone his charity truck pull at the Quest Family Fun Day last month, he's determined the challenge will go ahead soon.

The Quest Family Fun Day was held in support of the Phuket Animal Welfare Society (PAWS).

Unfortunately, two focal points of the event had to be canceled due to the heavy rains.

Event organizer and Thailand Canine Academy proprietor Russell was unable to demonstrate the benefits of his obedience training and the skills of search and rescue with his dogs Kay and Sassy.

Another "pull" for the event, that was regrettably rained off, was Russell's attempt to drag his PAWS truck 100 meters, loaded with children.

"However, once it dries up, I'll be out there with a truck strapped to my back! Our thanks to Quest Laguna and the other kind sponsors who contributed to a wonderful day for all," said Russell.

As the rains lashed down at the family day, children enjoyed water sliding, a bouncy castle, music from DJ Jay Le Shark, several food concessions and even giant "pick-up stick" games.

"We wanted to try something new and a bit different. Despite the awful weather everyone still managed to have a great time. We will definitely organize more 'fun days'," said Russell.

- Neil Quail

For more on Russell's charity truck pull attempt, see PhuketGazette.net or coming issues of our newspaper.



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Luxury pit stop

Car enthusiasts raced down to the opening of Autoexpress on the bypass road on March 31 to soak in the selection of imported luxury cars on show. The grand opening celebration was a show of true motoring marvel with the all-new 2011 Rolls-Royce Ghost V12, priced at a cool US\$250,000 on show as well as a number of big foreign names including Mercedes, Porsche, Audi, Lexus and many more. Autoexpress General Manager Saksri Kerdphol (far right) has high hopes the Phuket venture will gain a firm stance in the marketplace and has already been inundated with interest from Thai and foreign car buyers.

Photos: Christian Mouchet



FOR THE LOVE OF CARS: Autoexpress General Manager Saksri Kerdphol



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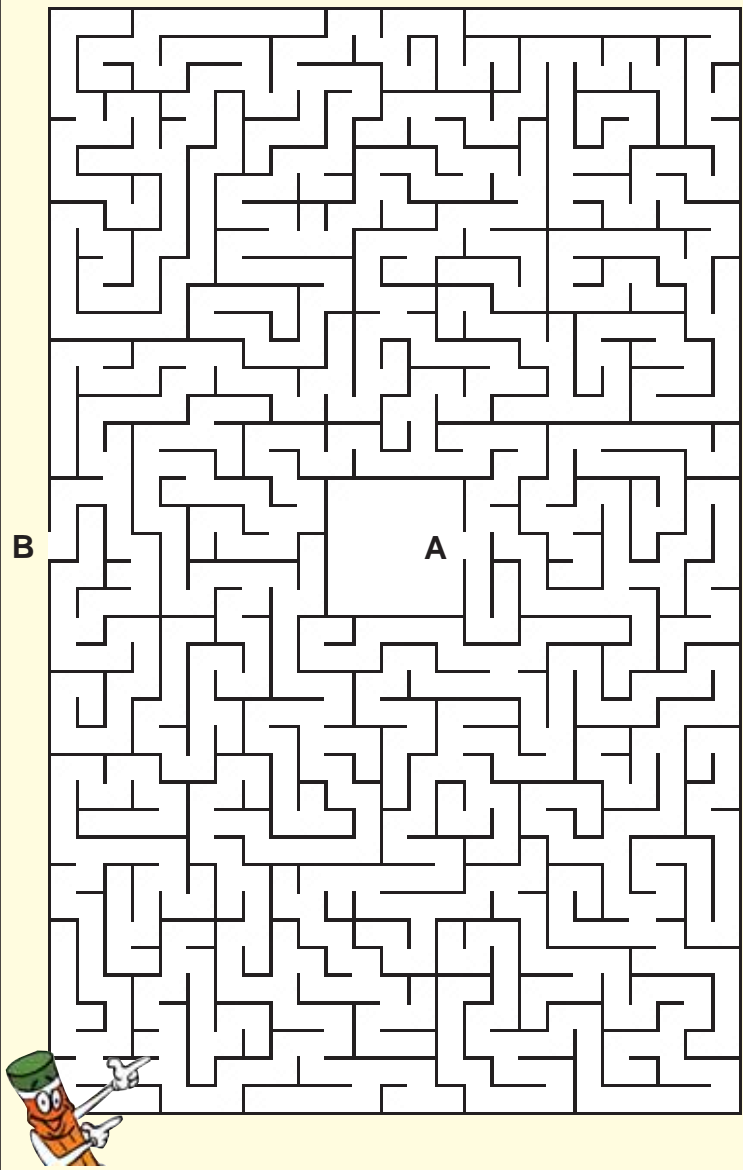
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Volvo. for life



A *Gazette* staff member completed this maze in one minute. Can you beat their time? Make your way out of the maze.

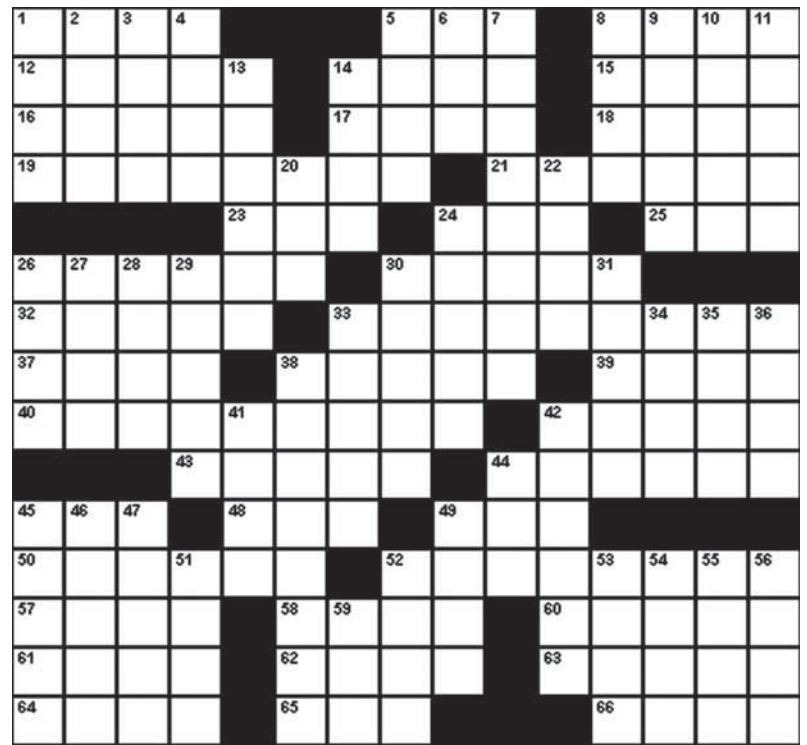


Across

1. First name in jazz
5. Rocky hilltop
8. Grounded fleet
12. Coarse
14. Caucus state
15. Yorkshire river
16. Awry
17. Filmmaker Riefenstahl
18. Depilatory brand
19. Grouchy person
21. Gold lump
23. Heston's organization
24. Commercials
25. Conductor de Waart
26. Dark brownish red color
30. Made a mistake
32. Hydrogen, carbon, oxygen e.g.
33. Sanguinaria
37. Dies_ _
38. Chaplin persona
39. High hair style
40. Cocktail
42. Broadcasting
43. Dress style
44. Small auk
45. Paris possessive
48. Cask wood
49. Thunder Bay's prov.
50. Cavalryman
52. Visionary
57. Aha!
58. Atlantic mackerel
60. Viscid
61. _ _ or alive
62. Bristles
63. Aromatic compound
64. Sommer of film
65. Decade dividers
66. _ _ shanter (Scottish cap)

Down

1. Ages
2. Nike's swoosh, e.g.
3. Corker
4. Antiquing agent
5. Digits of the foot
6. Have
7. They keep falling on our heads (singular)
8. Blood in French



9. Prolonged attack
10. Cornered
11. Brief brawl
13. Greek god of sleep
14. Ingrid's *Casablanca* role
20. Coffee container
22. Not new
24. Fragrance
26. Disfigure
27. Gillette brand
28. Crowd sound
29. Last letter of the Greek alphabet
30. Delight
31. Intoxicated
33. Verge

34. Fall birthstone
35. Comics canine
36. Civil wrong
38. Government by three persons
41. Burn soother
42. Interruption
44. Hydrocarbon suffix
45. Slip
46. Art supporter
47. Move stealthily
49. Scent
51. Give up
52. Coloured part of the eye
53. Couldn't find
54. Bit
55. Appear
56. Neophyte
59. Used for hearing

Provided by BestCrosswords.com. Used with permission.

Puzzle solutions on page 39

ARIES (March 21-April 20):

Those born under the sign of Aries should guard against passing on information to people they don't know very well. The stars indicate that gossip spreading like wildfire will not reflect well on you. Where business is concerned, an air sign is evasive this week, but this doesn't mean that results will be delayed. Arians with a birthday in the week ahead should see an upturn in their financial luck during the coming year.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21):

Many Taureans will be busy employing a new strategy concerning their working lives. The stars give support to your determination to spend less time worrying about what may happen. Joining in holiday celebrations is recommended for those who need to blow away cobwebs. Your romantic appeal is about to be appreciated by a water sign.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21):

A fire sign's lack of cooperation could come at a time when Geminis were hoping to rely on this person more. Working with other air signs is your best option during the remainder of April. Where romance is concerned, the stars sug-

gest that disagreements over money will threaten to cause ripples in domestic harmony this weekend. Discussing a more practical budget will pave the way to better understanding.

CANCER (June 22-July 23):

Cancerians have more advantages than they know at the moment. A series of pleasant surprises should ensure that your mood becomes positive by the middle of this month. A work dilemma is best resolved by a calm approach. Those who are considering making romantic overtures to another water sign should receive encouragement. Lucky days for money matters are Monday and Tuesday. The number nine can bring good fortune later next week.

LEO (July 24-August 22):

Trying to please others too much may cause Leos some stress this week. The stars recommend that you tactfully inform friends and family that your own agenda is just as important as theirs. Sunday is the most auspicious day for a heart to heart talk. In the realm of romance, an earth sign could be slow to notice your discreet flirtation. Wear the color sky blue to smooth your energy flow.



VIRGO (August 23-September 23):

Errors at work are highlighted midweek. This could result from Virgoans' inability to concentrate as the stars suggest that a personal problem is uppermost in your mind. A water sign friend can help you find a fresh perspective and answers should come by the middle of the month. Your financial outlook is affected by more benevolent astral conditions and it should become easier to drive a hard bargain.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23):

Librans' financial situation is set to improve as the middle of April approaches. Your attitude towards savings is about to become more sensible, which should result in a long-term dream becoming reality by the end of the year. In the realm of romance, those caught up in a love triangle are advised to keep a low profile for the time being.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22):

Some Scorpios will need to make serious choices this week if they are keen to eliminate unwanted responsibilities. Not everyone close to you will be happy with the outcome, but you should not give in to pressure. Wednesday is the most auspicious day to talk to those concerned. Enjoying some holiday fun could lead to a romantic meeting with another water sign.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21):

Bringing your emotions to work is not recommended as this could interfere with an important decision. Sagittarians' ability to see what others need is heightened this week, but not everyone will appreciate your input. The stars suggest that you refrain from giving advice to other fire signs in particular. Your romantic luck is strong, with emphasis on a recent storm dissolving.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20):

Dropping subtle hints may not be enough to get results this week. Those born under the sign of Capricorn who are unhappy with an ongoing work situation should say what's on their mind plainly - Tuesday and

Wednesday are lucky days for communication. Where personal relationships are concerned, it would be wisest not to pass too many judgments. Those who are single could be captivated by another earth sign this weekend.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19):

The results of a business related enquiry may be less than you had hoped for, but negotiations are highlighted to be productive midweek. Aquarians' flexibility should ensure that a satisfactory position can be achieved. Where romance is concerned, the stars hint that interest from more than one person may put you in a predicament this weekend. Tuesday is the most auspicious day to decide where your heart really lies.

PISCES (February 20-March 20):

Telling others what you think they want to hear could backfire badly. The stars advise those born under the sign of Pisces to stay true to themselves this week. Where romance is concerned, it's possible that distraction could lead you on a risky journey - those who are single and seeking may be impressed by a fire sign with ulterior motives.

PROPERTY Gazette

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Govt giving free green design advice

By Janpen Upatising

PROJECT developers in Phuket can now get a free assessment of a proposed building's energy efficiency thanks to collaboration between Phuket City Municipality (PCM) and the Department of Alternative Energy Development and Efficiency (DEDE) in Bangkok.

Phuket City Deputy Mayor Tavorn Jirapattanasopon late last month signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with DEDE Director General Krairit Nilkuha.

Under the agreement, the municipality will provide services for the DEDE's Energy Efficient

Building Design program, Mr Krairit said.

"We will collect building plans submitted from owners seeking construction permits and forward them to our co-ordination center for evaluation," he said.

The center provides building plan evaluation and consulting services aimed at increasing energy standards in line with new Ministry of Energy regulations from 2009.

The center's architects and engineers will examine plans and make cost-saving recommendations, such as changing window glass to cut down on cooling costs, Mr Krairit explained.



Director-general of DEDE Krairit Nilkuha (2nd left) hands Deputy Mayor of Phuket City Tavorn Jirapattanasopon the MoU. Photo: Janpen Upatising

Documents required for evaluation:

1. Application form (W:2e-building.com)
2. Architectural plans: site plan, floor/roof plan, elevation, etc.
3. Structural sketch, framing plan
4. Lighting plan
5. Air conditioning system plan
6. Hot water system plan (if any)
7. Related architectural plan and engineering system
8. Estimated construction cost or Bill of Quantities (if any)

"The evaluation process will take about one month to complete and we will be very satisfied if 10 building plans are submitted regularly from Phuket," Mr Krairit said.

Savings in overall energy costs would be about 10 per cent if all

the suggested recommendations are implemented, he said.

Ministerial regulations state that nine building types require energy efficient design reviews: Educational institutions, offices, theaters, large retail centers, entertainment venues, convention centers, hotels, hospitals and apartments.

Any buildings, existing or new, with a total floor area of 2,000sqm or more, should be designed or modified to be more energy efficient, Mr Krairit explained.

However, no laws are yet in place to force project owners into compliance. "We want to encourage everyone to be aware of the effectiveness of efficient design," he said.

Most of the suggestions don't cause an increase in building costs and in some cases actually lower them, he said.

Strong baht slows foreign property sales

THE top end of Phuket's property market has slowed down as the spending power of foreign buyers has fallen 20 to 30 per cent due to the strong baht and their sluggish home economies.

Thanan Tanpaiboon, president of Phuket Real Estate Association (PREA), said that since the start of the year the market had levelled off. Most buyers have been Russians, who are moving their investments from Pattaya to Phuket.

As for other buyers, whether from Australia or Europe, there has been hardly any movement due to their reduced spending power.

Nevertheless, the market for townhouses and semi-detached houses costing 1-2 million baht remains strong. They continue to be popular with Thai buyers. For houses starting at 4-5mn baht, business is fair, but not as strong as the low-end market, he said.

Right now, real-estate investment is increasingly spreading to the outskirts of Phuket, he said. the North of the island in particular, has had a lot of interest.

Mr Thanan said land was being snapped up to build hotels, homes and condominiums to take advantage of the forthcoming Phuket National Convention and Exhibition Centre.

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Laguna Village. Phuket.

Tourism issues up in the air across the region



Property Watch

By Bill Barnett

CASTING an eye to the sky, I find it odd that no one seems to be looking for birds or Superman these days, despite the fact that airplanes dominate Phuket's up-town tourism shuffle.

As I write this, sitting in an idyllic corner of nearby Laos – well, actually smack in the middle of Luang Prabang – I can hear the whine of a twin-engine ATR-72 climbing heavenward.

Laos sits midstream on Indochina's cultural tourism circuit. The place remains a backwater of sorts. Bicycles outnumber motorized versions and cars. Orange-clad monks dominate sidewalk traffic. It's a place where even "The Dude" from *The Big Lebowski* would abide with his laid-back charm.

Taking to the streets in crispy 18 degree weather, I can't resist a meal at what is arguably a French restaurant, called Elephant. I quietly sip a Pomerol in the corner of the bustling eatery while picking out Americans, English and French by their voices, dress and mannerisms.

Then I realize the average age of the dining contingent is somewhere north of 50, probably closer to the magical 60. These are highly mannered folk, gentle, well dressed and with little doubt all financially secure.

It's just all so pleasant that I nearly fall asleep in my bowl of bouillabaisse. Later, after finishing off the bottle of wine on my own, I zigzag down the gentrified



QUALITY VS QUANTITY: A development conundrum. Photo:Joaquin Uy

lanes to my hotel. As I pass small cafes, I see the cast of characters in this passion play comes in only two types: backpackers who crowd low-rent guesthouses and the chic moneyed set.

I can't help but chuckle. It's as if the mainstream travelers were routinely rounded up at the airport as they landed and taken somewhere else. Where I don't know, but sinister thoughts invade my wine-soaked dreams far into the night.

Truth be known Luang Prabang is sitting on a time bomb. A new airport is underway which will be completed in 2013, and allow wide-body jet aircraft to land. While 2010 registered 77,978 arrivals, the forecast multiplies this by double digits. A new Korean-funded golf course is about to open, and a buzz surrounds mixed-use real estate.

In a destination where most in-

ternational hotels range from 15 to 25 rooms and there are less than 500 rooms in operation, rates remain high, averaging US\$100-250 a night.

The writing is already on the wall with bigger properties being planned, and a railroad link into China expected by 2014.

As the debate of quality versus quantity tourism rises from the mist in Phuket, what is clear is that we are not alone with our dilemma.

Cultural tourism remains attractive due to its limited size, reduced footprint on the landscape and economic benefits. But there remains the argument that sustaining an endless flow of the high-spending elite "been there, done that" crowd is not realistic. Tastes change, and luxury travel junkies collect destinations like stamps.

This year the Indochina triangle

of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia is top of the list, next up is Rajasthan in India and then of course the race to Antarctica before the ice melts. Well, baby, the ice is melting fast, so you'd better hurry.

Like it or not, Phuket's primary industry is tourism and the sheer numbers involved are mighty. It's a beast that must be fed daily, and we all know what happens when hungry lions take to the streets looking for their next meal.

Yes, the island seems to be bursting at the middle from regional tourists and those from emerging countries – as well as Thais. Even these fine people are entitled to go out and explore the world, taking to the skies on low-cost airlines, checking into budget hotels and shopping on a shoestring.

Mass tourism is not as black and white as everyone believes. The world changed in 2007, and greater Asia is now flexing its new-found consumer spending power.

While the desire to turn back the clock on development to the good ole days is recounted endlessly, the truth remains:our starting point is today, not yesterday.

Keeping the hungry lions at bay is going to be no mean feat, but Phuket is not alone in this debate – almost every established and emerging destination in Asia is facing the very same problem.

Finding the door to my quiet room, I fall back into a deep sleep, slumbering to the sounds of the roars of waking lions, which somehow remains oddly comforting.

Bill Barnett is Managing Director of C9 Hotelworks and can be contacted through www.c9hotelworks.com.

In brief...

Phuket barely present at luxury property show

AT THE Siam Paragon Luxury Property Showcase in Bangkok, the island's upscale projects were conspicuously missing in action.

On display were 40 projects from throughout Thailand with only one Phuket based development among them.

Both Hua Hin and Pattaya were well represented at the show, which ran from March 3-13.

There is always next year, but for now the Phuket property scene in broad terms seems to have gone undercover.

Two resorts to close for upgrades

PHUKET'S well-known 108-room The Surin resort (formerly The Chedi) will be closing for upgrades.

A six month hiatus will take place from May to the end of October.

Leading designer Ed Tuttle is on board. He is most famous for his work at the adjacent iconic Amanpuri.

The Napasai in Samui will also be closed from May to June for work to be done on the rocky underwater areas at the beach front, which are to be turned into a more useable lagoon. Work is being supervised by the local marine authorities.

Leading online source for Thailand construction

FOR THOSE who's interest touches on construction, design, project management and quantity surveying, a bright spot for information is the Thailand Construction News (TCN) website.

Free of charge, the resource offers regular news updates about large projects, listings of workshops and seminars, and is a good job resource for both employers and those seeking work.

Aside from Thailand some items cover all of the Asian region.

Those interested can visit W:thailand-construction.com

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Low-down on offshore vehicles

Property Legal

By International Law Office

IT HAS become popular for property investors to acquire interest in land or property in Thailand under the name of an offshore company.

Oddly, many people do not know exactly what an offshore company actually is.

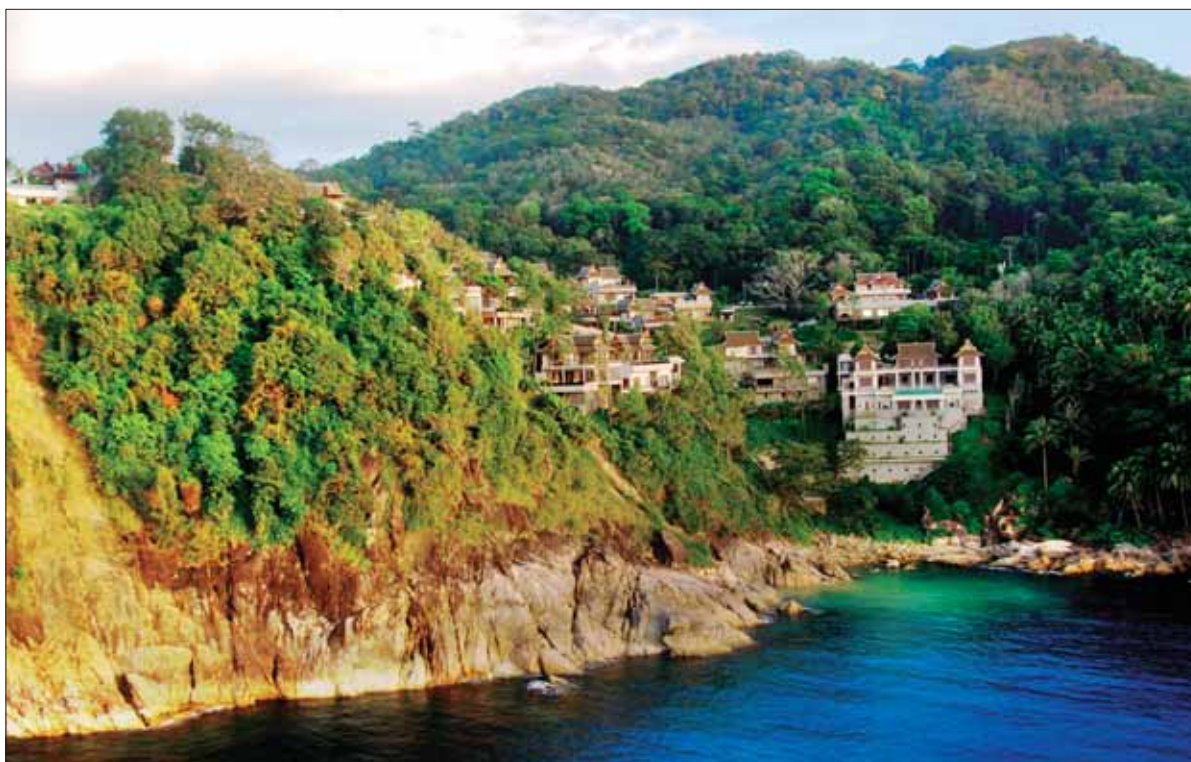
In general, an offshore company could be described as a business entity that has been incorporated outside the jurisdiction of its primary operations.

In practice, the term offshore company is often used when talking about a business entity which has been incorporated in a jurisdiction that offers specific tax, regulatory and/or confidentiality benefits.

Any property investor considering using an offshore holding vehicle should discuss with legal and tax advisers any potential advantages and drawbacks.

Each investment is different, including property, and should be carefully examined to determine whether the advantages when using an offshore holding vehicle outweigh the disadvantages for that particular buyer.

An advantage of using an offshore company when acquiring



LAND AHOY: Investing in Phuket property through an off-shore company is a popular trend. Photo: Jim Welch

interest in land or property in Thailand is that it may help investors protect and simplify the succession of their interests.

First, if an investor has entered into a lease, the landlord may argue that the lease expired upon the lessee's death. This can constitute a serious threat to an investment, particularly a pre-paid, long-term lease.

This issue can be addressed

and resolved by entering into a lease under the name of a corporate body, as properly maintained companies do not die. The shares in such a company holding the rights to its assets in Thailand can be passed on through inheritance.

Second, a transfer of shares in an off-shore company upon the death of the shareholder(s) is usually a straightforward process that is subject to clear requirements as

opposed to a transfer of the assets themselves with the authorities in Thailand, which can be troublesome.

Another potential advantage is flexibility when it comes to resale. In such an event, the seller could offer and facilitate both an off-shore transaction by sale of the holding company (owning the target property) or sale and transfer of the property itself in Thailand.

In case that both seller and buyer agree that the holding vehicle shall be sold to the buyer, a registration of the transfer of the property to the buyer in Thailand would become redundant.

However, on the other side of the coin, acquiring interest in land or property in Thailand through an offshore company also has drawbacks, such as additional costs payable for the formation of the company and ongoing company maintenance.

Also, a buyer should certainly investigate whether acquiring and holding a property investment under an offshore company rather than personal name may affect potential property tax liabilities and exemptions thereof.

If a property investment is held under an offshore company and rented out, then a wary investor should consult with legal and tax adviser regarding potential restrictions that may apply to a foreign company conducting business in Thailand and tax liabilities that may occur in connection with rental income collected in or from Thailand, including, but not limited to, income taxes.

This article was written by the International Law Office Patong Beach Co Ltd. Email Michael Greth, Consultant, at michael@ilophuket.com.

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Saving the trees is easier than it seems

Grand trees may be on the demise here in Thailand, but there are some things Phuket gardeners can do to help...



THERE has been a lot of public concern voiced recently about Thailand's giant trees and the equally giant problems they face.

Not so long ago even a metropolis such as Bangkok had verdant avenues of rain and mahogany trees. Nowadays you would probably have to visit a city park to find such specimens.

Even in the rural areas of Thailand, most of the prized trees such as teak and ironwood have vanished, victims of illegal logging and unscrupulous development.

Here in Phuket, even fruiting trees such as mangos, cashews, *sataw* or tamarinds which get in the way of a new shophouse or condominium, are remorselessly felled.

As gardeners, we cannot grow forest giants such as *Diptocarpus*, but we can, in our own small way, help to counter their demise by cultivating other large shrubs and small trees.

If you have a mature tree already in your newly acquired plot, make every effort to preserve it. A tree not only looks beautiful and often covers up man-made eyesores, it also helps to neutralize ever-rising levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

New trees will need initial care and attention. It is always better to plant them in the monsoon when the ground is soft and moist.

If planted during the dry season, all the roots should be hidden below ground, and daily watering will be a must.



FALLEN FLOWER: The fiery blossom of the African Tulip Tree.

You should try to water liberally and deeply, so that the roots seek moisture at lower levels, and thereby anchor the plant better.

Sprinkling or spraying will simply encourage shallow rooting near the surface, which may cause newly established shrubs and trees to "cook" in very hot weather.

If the plant is given this attention during the first two years of growth, it will repay the gardener by growing strongly and requiring little attention later on.

Enough about care. What about the choice of trees and large shrubs for the new garden? Some small flowering trees have already been mentioned in the Top 20 Series.

So have a look at those back articles for more information about Yellow Jasmine (*Thevetia*), Peacock Flower (*Caesalpinia*) and Yellow Bells (*Tecoma Stans*).

All are highly recommended on account of their good looks, long flowering period, and general hardiness.

One tree not mentioned in the series was the African Tulip Tree.

It is not a common sight in Phuket. There is one, currently in full flower near a favorite spa of mine, and its scarceness prompted my Thai partner to ask what it was.

African Tulip, or *Spathodea campanulata*, to give the plant its tongue-twisting botanical name, has the more manageable Thai name of *Khae-saed*.

Although it belongs to the vast Bignonia family, like the aforementioned Yellow Bells, oddly there is only one species.

But it is as spectacular as it is singular, with large, reddish-orange tulip-shaped flowers.

Since they appear as upright blooms at the end of branches, they put on a fine display when set above the shiny, lush foliage. The buds, which retain rain, are very popular with small birds.

The tulip tree has several advantages for the gardener too. It is relatively slender with a domed crown, so there is room for smaller plants to grow beneath its branches.

More importantly, it will put up



The African Tulip tree can be grown in Phuket. Photos: Mauro Guanandi

with poor soil and, once established, is happy in full sun.

Two small considerations may deter the enthusiast. First, it can grow up to 10 meters or more, but gardeners can limit its size by pruning and clipping.

Second, like that of Brug-

mansia, the wood is soft and brittle – good for drilling nesting holes for woodpeckers and barbets, but not a tree for exposure to high winds.

But the tulip tree is definitely one for your Phuket garden, and definitely one for the birds.

Tip of the week

Making critical cuts

PRUNING is the selective removal of specific plant parts for the (assumed) benefit of the whole plant.

It usually involves the excision of branches, but may include the removal of new shoots (pinching), seed pods (dead-heading), flower buds or even roots (as with bonsais).

Pruning applies mainly to woody shrubs, or trees. Leave soft-tissued plants such as succulents alone.

Annuals only need to be dead-headed. And remember, bad pruning will do far more

harm than good.

So do not wait until the shrub is already too big. And do not assume that pruning is a necessary annual ritual.

One correct reason for pruning is to remove dead, dying or diseased wood.

Make a clean, slanting cut a few centimeters below the affected part.

A sharp, preferably-sterilized knife should suffice, but secateurs for smaller stems and pruning shears for branches over a few centimeters thick should do the trick.

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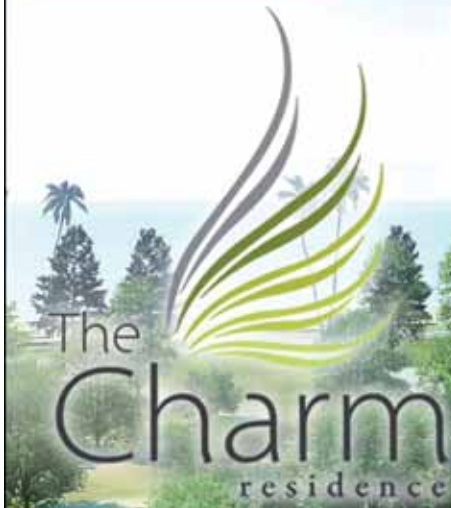
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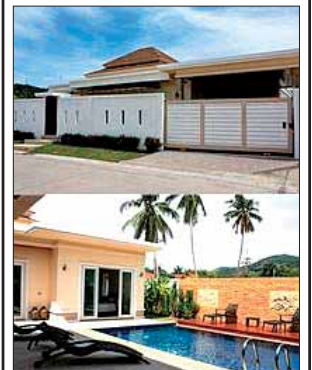
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Two condos – exclusive listing at the hottest property address in Patong. 58 and 73sqm. Prices 9.5 and 14.5 million baht. Great R.O.I. Call. Frank for more information. Tel: 076-345238, 084-078 2753 (Thai). Email: info.realpro@gmail.com For further details, please see our website at www.realproreal-estatephuket.com

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Single house for sale or rent located at Phanason 3 (Thalang). Land area 63.3 sq wah, 3 bed, 2 bath, large living area, furnished, ADSL, tel, landscaped garden and 24hr security. Sale price: 2.85 million baht. For more info, call Phing. Tel: 087-278 0067. Email: sweetpinkylive@live.co.uk

SEAVIEW LAND IN AO MAKHAM

For sale. Chanote title, easy access in and out with concrete road. Price: 12 million baht per rai. No agents! Tel: 087-270 9093.

PATONG GUESTHOUSE

Patong furnished guesthouse. For sale freehold, and for a good price. Email for more information. Tel: 081-920 2309, 086-595 4362 (English & Thai). Email: sumalee1955@yahoo.com

POOL VILLA NEAR BIS

Very private 4-bedroom, 3.5-bathroom, modern pool villa for sale. Land rai. Villa 250sqm. High ceilings and open plan al fresco living. 4x12m pool and large 150sqm deck. Nicely landscaped. I am wanting to sell and lease back for 2-3 years creating a 5-6% ROI for the buyer. Price: 14 million baht. Tel: 081-893 2833. Email: mwekim@gmail.com

RAI NEAR LAGUNA AREA

In Bang Jo near Layan Hill estate & 4 Villas, easy access, quiet. Price: 2.3 million baht. Tel: 081-078 0014. Email: homeinphuket@live.com

VERY LOW PRICE: 9.9 MILLION

In Chiang Mai, 181sq wah, 4 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms. The interior is spacious, bright, impeccably maintained. Urgent sale below its real value only 9.9 million baht (Ref. HS1173). Tel: 081-806 3946 (English & Thai). Email: pinginformation@gmail.com For further details, please see our website at www.ping-property.com

KATHU SHOPHOUSE

Next to waterski at a good location. Lock Palm Golf is just 1km away. Many possibilities for business. Tel: 086-689 3411.

SEAVIEW LAND FOR SALE

Near Supalai Resort on the east coast of Phuket slope. A 3-rai plot with road and electricity access. Price: 3.6 million baht per rai. No agents please. Tel: 080-520 2989. Email: pakaporns@yahoo.com

HOUSE IN KAMALA

For sale. 2 houses on land. 1 ngan 89sq wah. Chanote title, near mountain, peace and safe, 10 minutes from the beach. 7.5 million baht direct from owner. Tel: 083-180 2143. Email: yaris.vios@gmail.com

TOWNHOUSE IN PATONG

On Nanai Road. 2 stories, 112.5sqm, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, bathtub, built-in cabinets, kitchen, aircon and car park. 1km to Patong beach, near Bangla Road and Jungceylon. Price 5.5 million baht or nearest offer. No agents! Tel: 087-270 9093.

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Mail: AdPower@PhuketGazette.Net

Looking for land to buy?

See more classified ads at www.phuketgazette.net

Property Wanted

ISS PEST CONTROL

Complete pest control solutions for residential, retail and industrial properties. Tel: 081-958 6879 (Eng), 083-505 6667 (Thai). Email: scott.d@th.issworld.com

Property Wanted

POOL VILLA WANTED

We are looking for investors from Sweden for pool villas with 2-3 bedrooms in Rawai. Price: from 5 to 10 million baht. Please send email to offers. Email: sales@chokechairperty.com

DOG WITH FAMILY

Looking for a walled house for rent, near Kata beach. For 1 year. Not more than 15,000 baht per month. Tel: 082-282 9280.

HOUSE IN RAWAI / NAI HARN

Looking for a house/villa in this area on plot of 400+ sqm, ideally 600. Paying up to 7.5 million baht. If it needs renovation, that is okay, depending on size and location. Needs to be close to a concrete road. Email: patrick@mancity.net

50-100 RAI, 50 YEAR LEASE

For horse business, Phuket, Krabi, Phang Nga. Qualifies under the new zoning restrictions as recreation and/or agriculture. Bi-annual payment ONLY. Commercial 50 year lease. Developers: Add Incentive with first class horse riding facility. Tel: 084-842 4581. Email: christyKSweet@gmail.com

Accommodation Available

VILLA FOR RENT

6 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms, swimming pool, mountain view. Low season: 80,000 baht per month. One year contract: 100,000 per month. Tel: 087-078 6379, 082-286 5171 (English & Thai). Email: nanaisauna@yahoo.com

LARGE BEAUTIFUL APARTMENTS

Large beautiful apartments for 3-4 people, available for short and long term rentals with low prices. Tel: 076-342800, 081-810 4900 (English & Thai). Fax: 076-342800. Email: lucianofash@yahoo.com For further details, please see our website at www.evergreenlodge.com

CONDO FOR SALE/ RENT RAWAI

Very good price for low season long-term lease. Quiet and clean. Tel: 080-078 0931 (English), 086-112 1477 (Thai). Email: rawaireservation@yahoo.com

PATONG TOWNHOUSE

Nanai Road soi 9 hillside. 2 bedrooms fully furnished with WiFi and cable TV. Price: 20,000 baht/month long term. Tel: 081-270 5374 (English & Thai). Email: alex@alexmalcolm.com

PATONG SEAVIEW

With kitchen and DVD/cable. Rent: 800 baht per day, or 15,000 baht per month. Tel: 089-532 7708.

SHARE RENTAL 2-STOREY HOUSE

Very secure home, pool, covered parking, all utilities included 10,000 baht monthly. Tel: 085-578 2114. Email: barglen@hotmail.com

KATA LUXURY VILLA RENTAL

3-bedroom villa located on the southern headland of Kata Beach. Built up area, 3400sqft, with spectacular Andaman sea views. 6x15 meter infinity pool situated on the edge of rocks overlooking sea. The villa is surrounded by dense foliage, has spacious balconies, outdoor showers in natural settings and is very private. Thai, Japanese, & Balinese design influences. Excellent Thai cook provided. Email: seavest@signet.com.sg

HOUSE FOR RENT 8,500 BAHT

Furnished 2 bedroom house with living room, kitchen, garden, car park, internet. Price for rent: 8,500 baht/month, and 3 bedroom at 12,000 baht/month. Tel: 080-521 9888 (English & Thai). Email: sornin_s@yahoo.com

LUXURY KATA APARTMENT

Central location, pool, Internet, etc. One bedroom. For rent weekly or monthly. Tel: 084-063 9223, 086-941 7733 (English). Contact for more detail at email: eburneday@gmail.com

APARTMENT & ROOM IN PATONG

Apartment for long term rent. 8,000-20,000 baht per month. Room from 600-1,500 baht per night. Tel: 076-512151, 089-290 9567. Email: info@brommathaihouse.com For further details, please see our website at www.brommathaihouse.com

APPARTMENT LONG TERM

apartment for French speaking people. 60 square meters, big garden, swimming pool, very quiet, near Jungceylon. 16,000 baht per month for long term. Tel: 076-296312, 080-880 5086 (English). Email: bialaspatrik@yahoo.com

HOUSE NEAR CHALONG

Fully furnished house with 2-bed, 2 bath. Long-term rent (min 1 year): 15,000 baht per month. Tel: 087-026 1362. Email: cjtisomboon@hotmail.com

LOFT STYLE - KATHU

Suitable for a home or office, secure, 11,500 baht/month. Tel: 086-664 5575. Email: hkmsn@yahoo.com

PATONG CONDO

Fully furnished - 700 meters from Patong Beach. Email: wintin2007@yahoo.com

4-BEDROOM VILLA WITH LARG POOL

in Land & Houses Park available for long or short-term resident, or for daily holiday rental. Email: william.amo noo@gmail.com

APARTMENT PATONG

140sqm, fully furnished. 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, plus storage room. Spacious living/ dining area with full western kitchen and large balcony. Full aircon. Includes free WiFi. UBC ready. Tel: 084-185 8536.

ROOMS IN KATHU: 6,000 BAHT

Large modern rooms with their own bathroom, satellite TV and Internet connection. At a great location with mountain views, near Loch Palm Golf Club. Email: cssmyth@hotmail.com

FREEDOM APARTMENT

Small kitchen, fridge, cooker, fully furnished, aircon, high-speed internet, cable TV, bathroom with hot and cold water. 400 baht per day. Tel: 084-845 0541.

KARON CONDO FOR SALE OR RENT

2 bedroom, 2 bath condo overlooking Karon Beach. Short or long term. Condo also for sale. Reasonable rent to mature persons. Email: rj1111@yahoo.com

HOUSE NEAR CHALONG

Fully furnished house with 2-bedrooms, 2 bathrooms. Long-term rent (min 1 year): 15,000 baht per month. Email: cjtisomboon@hotmail.com

LUXURY APARTMENT IN PATONG

Room for rent with swimming pool. Daily and monthly. Email: mori@phuket.ksc.co.th Website: www.nanaivilla.com

1 OR 2 BEDROOM HOUSE/ APARTMENT

Looking for a 1 or 2 bedroom house or apartment. Need the following: Internet, aircon, kitchen. Long-term rental. Price about 15,000 baht a month. Email: khun.ab@hotmail.com

Accommodation Wanted

ACCOMMODATION IN PATONG

I am looking for either a 1 bedroom apartment, villa or condo in Patong for the months of August and September 2011. This is low season so we are looking for the best price. Email: dianz_p@hotmail.com

1 BED VILLA, HOUSE, CONDO

We're looking to rent some accommodation next month, preferably a 1 bedroom villa, house, or condo with private pool. Email: leprechaun27@hotmail.co.uk

AO YON OR NEARBY

Looking for long term rent of a modern, furnished 2 BR house with western kitchen and AC, ADSL and UBC. Minimum of 12 months, starting end of April or later as per agreement. Please email photo/info. Email: homeinphuket@live.com

PHUKET CITY OR NEARBY

I will be studying with my partner at ECC in Muang, Phuket City, and I am looking for a comfortable apartment/house that is close by or commutable. Dates: May 7- June 7 2011. For more details, please send email: patrickoldfield@yahoo.co.uk

Holiday Homes & Villa Rentals

KATA LUXURY VILLA RENTAL

3-bedroom villa located on the southern headland of Kata Beach. Built up area, 3400 sqft, with spectacular Andaman sea views. 6x15 meter infinity pool situated on the edge of rocks overlooking sea. The villa is surrounded by dense foliage, has spacious balconies, outdoor showers in natural settings and is very private. Thai, Japanese, & Balinese design influences. Excellent Thai cook provided. Tel: +65-09 621 0254. (English). Email: seavest@signet.com.sg www.housephuket.com

RENOVATIONS, REFURBISHMENTS

Renovations, refurbishments, painting, repairs and maintenance. High quality services for a reasonable price. English, Swedish and Thai speaking personnel. Welcome to contact us for a quote. Tel: 083-394 8337, 080-141 4577 (Eng & Thai). Email: mattias@zionpropty.com

Household Items

CHEAP LAMPS & COFFEE TABLES

We have the lamps and coffee tables in the picture as shown. The lamp is 6,500 baht and the coffee table is the same price. Buy them together for 11,000 baht. Call for details. Tel: 087-881 8075 (English & Thai). Email: harrison@windowsslive.com

IT ALL MUST GO - MOVING SALE!

Open house sale in Nai Harn - everything must go on 2-3 April from 10am to 7pm! Furniture, appliances... even a motorbike and car. For more info. Email: fishytravel@gmail.com For prices, details, photos and directions, please see the following webpage: <http://pyim.free.fr/home/sale.htm>

TWO-DOOR REFRIGERATOR

Samsung RT22 two-door refrigerator with real freezer. Has air filtration system and separate controls for each section. 6,000 baht. Tel: 089-896 5609. Email: elliot@saenyim.com

DINING TABLE & CHAIRS

Attractive dining table & 4 chairs, 90cm x 90cm, dark wood & black colour. 4,000 baht for quick sale. Buyer to collect. Tel: 087-897 3497, 089-646 8144. Email: catch22phuket@gmail.com

DOUBLE BED FRAME

Leather look, king size double bed frame. New, from England. Not needed. 7,000 baht. Tel: 083-833 9950. Or send email: diving.dreams@hotmail.com

WALL MIRRORS

Two rattan-framed, black mirrors, 140cm x 100cm in good condition. Photo available on request. Price: 2,000 baht each. Tel: 089-150 2909. Email: artandpaula@gmail.com

SELLING FURNITURE

Moving sale of complete furniture set. Please contact for photos and details. Tel: 087-270 2334.

Household Services

BUILT TO BUILT

Construction, renovation, electrics, awnings, shopfitting. Tel: 088-584 2535.

DWF HOME SERVICES

Built-in bars, counters, pools, kitchens, ponds, etc. Tel: 081-606 5746. Email: DWF_homeservices@hotmail.com

Classified Advertisements

Please use this form to write your classified advertisement. Then hand it to any of our agents.

_____ (heading)

Classified ads are charged per line. Each line is 120 baht, with a minimum of 4 lines (heading included) per ad. All advertising must be paid for in advance.

Deadline for April 16 issue is on Thursday 7 April before 3pm.

Deadline for April 23 issue is on Tuesday 12 April before 6pm.

Looking for land to buy?

See more classified ads at www.phuketgazette.net

THAILAND'S LEADING BROKERAGE & NEW YACHT DEALERSHIP



Please visit our website for more listings

- Taswell 43 (1989)**
 - Yanmar 55hp diesel
 - Onan genset
 - Full AC throughout
 - Raymarine electronics
 - Furuno radar
 - Full cruising inventory
 - Recent full refit
 - 2 large cabin layout
- Trintella 49 (1989)**

340,000 Euro
- Valiant 40 (1977)**

MINT CONDITION
\$115,000 USD
- Azimut 55 (2004)**

\$650,000 USD
- Pershing 46 (2010)**

24,000,000 THB

leemarine.com

Dealership Office
 The Boat Lagoon Marina Phuket
 Contact: Martin Holmes
 Tel: 076 238 803
 Fax: 076 273 319
 Email: info@leemarine.com

Brokerage Office
 The Boat Lagoon Marina Phuket
 Contact: Andrew de Bruin / Marcus Overman
 Mobile: 081 894 1530 / 081 968 1437
 Tel/Fax: 076 239 729
 Email: andrew@leemarine.com

Yacht Haven Marina Office
 The Yacht Haven Marina Phuket
 Contact: Jim Poulsen
 Mobile: 081 891 3237
 Tel/Fax: 076 206 260
 Email: jim@leemarine.com

Pattaya Office
 Ocean Marina Jomtien Beach
 Contact: Mark Heath
 Mobile: 081 787 9408
 Tel: 038 235 061 Fax: 038 235 062
 Email: mark@leemarine.com

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We can meet you on board, take up to 80 photos and full details. We will accompany all viewings and provide non exclusive brokerage on a "no sale, no fee" basis.

Boat of the moment



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Lagoon 440 (2005)
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NEW 2011 BAYLINER 175



NEW 2011 Bayliner 175. 3.0L Mercruiser. 42 MPH+. Comes with trailer and full warranty by dealer. Price: only 970,000 baht. Tel: 081-754 7599. Email: csutivas@gmail.com For further details, please see our website at: www.mfjetski.com

16M KETCH SAILING YACHT

Cutter Ketch rigged, center cockpit, fully equipped VanderStad sailing yacht for sale. Tel: 081-8423961, 087-276 7997. Email: gj.bijlsma@gmail.com For further details, please see our website at: www.phuketbutler.com/node/1238

NEW YAMAHA JETSKI 1800CC



New 2009 Yamaha FZR, in crate, 1,800cc 220Hp 70MPH++. Last unit. Price dropped from 510,000 baht to 460,000 baht, non-negotiable. Tel: 081-754 7599. Email: csutivas@hotmail.com For further details, please see our website at: www.mfjetski.com

MUST SALE: BAYLINER SPEEDBOAT



18.5ft, 130Hp, in/out board. New price: 1.1 million baht. Now: 595,000 baht. Tel: 081-788 8280.

THE INCREDIBLE PERSHING 46



Price: 28 million baht. Tel: 081-958 4421. Email: pkislandbroker@hotmail.com

URGENT: BOAT FOR SALE



American speedboat. Year: 2005. Donzi-38-ZSF (Florida-Miami), 3 Verado 275CV. Slightly used. Maximum speed: 5 knots. Full options. TUNA power. Better than the original, lots of improvement made by owner. Ready to navigate. Available at Ao Po Grand Marina, berth no. S13. Free tackles. Original price on arrival in Phuket: more than US\$ 400,000. Special price now: \$ 198,000, or 5.99 million baht. Sold directly by owner. Call Alain. Tel: 089-970 2121 (French, English & Thai). Email: mrdupouy@yahoo.fr

65-FOOT VINTAGE CRUISER

Owned by Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort, the historic Margaret Lee was built in 1935 by the British Royal Air Force as a rescue and backup vessel. She came to Phuket in 1970 as a sea-mining vessel. Fitted with two NISSAN PE6 engines with a ISUZU C240 generator. Pleasant and efficient cruising speed of 12-15 knots, perfect craft for a day trip around the island, to outlying islands, or a sunset cocktail cruise. Air-conditioned and fully equipped galley and bar. Undergoes maintenance and sea-worthy inspections annually. Current condition requires major repairs. Tel: 076-370100, 089-723 4303 (English & Thai). Email: kittikorn.poolsin@lemeridien.com

46FT OFFSHORE CRUISER-RACER

This boat is for sale. For more information, contact Gerrit. Tel: 081-842 3961, 087-276 7997. Email: gj.bijlsma@gmail.com Website at: www.phuketbutler.com/node/1544

YAMAHA JET SKI

Cruiser VX. Safe and new, with only 14 months of use. Has warranty. In excellent condition: only owner has used it. 90 hours reels. Price: 350,000 baht. Tel: 089-819 9650. Email: pierrekojfer@yahoo.fr

VAN DE STADT 38' YACHT

Ashore at Langkawi Port, due for inspection in March. Photos and spec on request. Price: US\$ 45,000. Tel: +60-125-531 4030 (English). Email: brianralphgoodwin@yahoo.com

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Place your **GAZETTE CLASSIFIEDS** at **Taurus Travel**




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GAZETTE CLASSADS - they work because they're PAID!
Hundreds of new ads in print every week, all published simultaneously - and FREE - in the Gazette Online!

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SOLUTIONS TO THIS WEEK'S PUZZLES

Crossword puzzle:



1	E	L	L	A	5	T	O	R	8	S	S	10	11					
12	R	O	U	G	H	14	I	O	W	A	15	A	I	R	E			
16	A	G	L	E	Y	17	L	E	N	I	18	N	E	E	T			
19	S	O	U	R	P	U	S	20	S	21	N	U	G	G	E	T		
26	M	A	R	O	O	N	30	E	R	R	E	31						
32	A	T	O	M	S		33	B	L	O	O	D	R	O	O	T		
37	I	R	A	E			38	T	R	A	M	P		39	U	P	D	O
40	M	A	R	G	A	R	I	T	A		42	O	N	A	I	R		
45	S						46	O	A	K		47	O	N	T			
50	L	A	N	C	E	R		52	I	D	E	A	L	I	S	T		
57	I	S	E	E			58	C	E	R	O		60	G	O	O	E	Y
61	D	E	A	D			62	H	A	I	R		63	E	S	T	E	R
64	E	L	K	E			65	Y	R	S		66	T	A	M	O		

LIVEBOARD

Liveboard 6x20 meter. 8 private cabins. Renovated October 2010. Price: 2.8 million baht. Email: info@aidcdiver.com For further details, please see our website at: www.aidcdiver.com

ANGLER 2,600 CC SPORTFISHING

Nice 26ft American sportfishing boat 2x225 4-stroke outboards. Tel: 085-691 1837 (English). Email: mangelsson@hotmail.com

BARGAIN CUDDY

2007 built 25ft cuddy cruiser with 175 Suzuki o'brd (approx 200 hours only). Forward berth with toilet and sink. Ideal for day trips and occasional overnight. This boat will not be bettered for price and includes a Thai built trailer. Price: 650,000 baht. Tel: 076-621200, 080-141 8292 (English), 085-789 5092 (English & Thai). Email: clavestacey16@hotmail.com

Phuket Gazette

The Phuket Gazette seeks to fill the following position:

SUB-EDITOR

- ▶ Fluent in English
- ▶ Able to work to strict deadlines
- ▶ A team player
- ▶ Naturally curious about the world, especially Phuket and what affects its residents
- ▶ Newspaper experience and/or layout skills, especially in PageMaker or InDesign, required.

Qualified candidates are invited to send a CV and writing sample by email to editor@phuketgazette.net

The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd
79/94 Moo 4, Thepkrasattri Rd, Koh Kaew
A. Muang, Phuket 83000
Tel: 076-273555 Fax: 076-615240



WEST SANDS VACATION CLUB

Be a part of something fantastic! West Sands Vacation Club is seeking additional outgoing, motivated individuals to join our growing fun-filled family. Fantastic compensation plan with unlimited deal bonuses.

OPC'S 7 Positions

Send resume with recent photo to
james@west-sands.com
or call 086-690 6977

British International School, Phuket

British International School, Phuket is looking for candidates to fill positions in the following areas:

- **Asst. to Head of Refectory [F&B and Kitchen Product]**
 - Male or Female / Thai national / aged 28-42 yrs
 - Bachelor's Degree in a related field
 - 5 years experience in the hotel industry
 - Outstanding personality and service minded
 - Hard working, diligent, enthusiastic, honest person
 - Willing to work as a team, has a positive attitude
 - Has supervisory and leadership skills
 - Ability to communicate in English, computer literacy and good people skills
 - Able to coordinate with other departments
- **Teacher's Assistant**
 - Thai National
 - Bachelor's Degree in a related field
 - Teaching qualifications and experience in child care / teaching preferable
 - Good command of spoken and written English
 - Strong interpersonal and organizational skills
 - Loves to take care of children

Benefits: uniform, group insurance, provident fund, etc.



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BE **W**. WE'RE INTERESTED IN YOU.

POSITION: Property Sales Manager

RESPONSIBILITIES: Manage all aspects of the on-site property sales operation and customer service. Report directly to the Managing Director.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Successful track record of selling residential property or luxury products.
- Very good presentation, negotiation and communications skills.
- Highly motivated and able to work under pressure.
- Excellent command of the English language.

Interested candidates are invited to submit their resume, a covering letter; (including details of current and expected salary and commission, and reasons for applying) and recent photograph before 15 March 2011.

W RESIDENCES - KOH SAMUI
4/1 Moo 1, Tambol Maenam, Koh Samui, Surat Thani 84330 Thailand
T +66 (0) 77 915999 F +66 (0) 77 915998 Email auditions@whotels.com
www.kohsamuireidences.com

NATIVE ENGLISH TEACHER

Female Caucasian to teach class of 10-12 children, 3-7 years old. Located in Chalong. Work hours: Mon-Fri (8am-4pm). Start immediate. Tel: 080-624 7060. Please sent email to: phuketpreschool@yahoo.com

PHP PROGRAMMER

Wanted for full-time position in Chalong. Good salary. Tel: 084-628 2629. Send resume to gianni@ictned.eu

ADMIN CHERNG TALAY

Young Thai female, good English. Must be able to do with-hold fax forms & use Microsoft Office. 3-month trial period. Salary 12,500 baht per month. Send CV & pic by email. Email: patsypalm@hotmail.com

ADMIN STAFF WANTED

Admin staff required by real estate agent in the Laguna area. Must be Thai national, female and have some experience in admin and accounts. Must also live locally. Good salary and immediate start. Tel: 076-271315, 081-895 6267 (English). Email: info@phuket-landandhomes.com

SALE EXECUTIVE NEEDED

Sale Executive needed urgently in Phuket Town. Qualifications: Aged between 25-45 years, male or female. Good command of English in writing and speaking skills. Minimum 2 years of experience as sales officer, any construction experience will be considered favorably. Salary: 8,500-12,000 baht not including commission. Email: phuketimperial@yahoo.com www.phuket-stainless-service.com

ADMIN + LITTLE ACCOUNTS

Young Thai female, good at English. Must be able to with-hold fax forms and use Microsoft office. Three months trial period. Salary 12,000 baht per month. Tel: 076-271315, 081-895 6267. Fax: 076-271316. Send a CV and picture to Email: joinourcompany@gmail.com

HEADSTART INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

We are seeking qualified, dedicated and caring teachers to fill the following positions by August 1st, 2011: Foundation, Primary, PE, English, ICT, Business Studies, French and Thai. Tel: 076-612876. Fax: 076-612877. Email: school@headstartphuket.com

DETOX WELLNESS MANAGER

Seeked by Samui detox resort. el: 088-491 1462 (English). Please send CV via email: fasthealing@yahoo.com

STAFF REQUIRED TO MARKET

The Village-Coconut Island. If you have experience promoting tours around quality resorts in either Europe or Asia, please contact us. We are seeking staff that can work well with cold prospects making bookings for sales presentations on Coconut Island. Contact Khun Kurt for further information. Tel: 082-806 5739.

MANAGER GUESTHOUSE PATONG

We need a manager and tour seller. Thai, English speaking with experience. Salary: 15,000 baht + commission. Tel: 089-932 5175. Email: wojidkowbengt@hotmail.com

RUSSIAN SPEAKER WANTED

Food supply company is looking for a Thai national with good Russian language skills to be manager. Tel: 089-054 4176.

HOTEL POSITIONS AVAILABLE

- **Engineer**
Salary 9,000 to 10,000 baht per month plus service charge. Working hours from 8am to 8pm - Work 5 days with 2 days off - Must be skilled in electrical, plumbing systems & wood work - Position available now. Must be a Thai national, fluent in English.
- **Bartender/Receptionist**
Salary 8,000 to 9,000 baht per month plus service charge & commission. Must have front desk experience - Shifts alter from morning, afternoon and evening. Must have knowledge in making drinks & bar beverages, and be friendly and outgoing with guests. Must speak and understand English. Position available now.
Tel: 076-333222. Email: sales@cbbloomshotel.com



The Bell Pool Villa Resort, your true boutique experience. At The Bell Pool Villa Resort, we are here to take care of your every need and have incorporated this by giving each villa its very own butler to take all the weight off your shoulders, allowing you to completely relax and enjoy your holiday without any hassle. Our quiet and peaceful resort has 16 luxurious pool villas all completely private from one another. Our villas range between 1 to 4 bedrooms, which means our resort is perfect for couples, families, or larger groups of guests who really just want to get away from it all and relax in total privacy

We are looking for the following professionals:

Management team

We are open for all people to join us, preferably people with boutique or 5 star resort or villa experience

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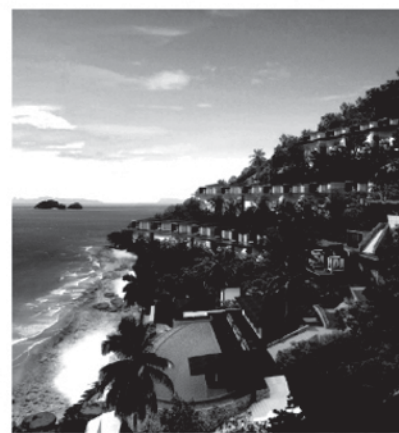
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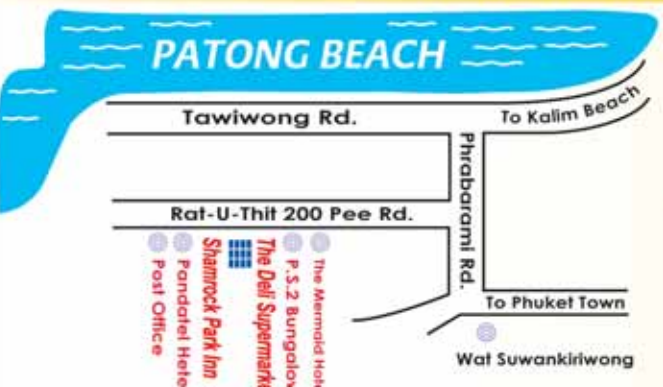
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FC Phuket slump to fourth

By Stephen Fein

FC PHUKET now sit in fourth place of Thai Football Division 1, following a tough 2-1 loss on the road to Bangkok United.

The Southern Sea Kirin went into the match tied for first place on 11 points, coming off a 2-0 home win against RBAC FC.

Bangkok United went into the match in third place.

Bangkok United got off to a good start, but FC Phuket gradually found their rhythm and began to take control about 10 minutes into play. The Southern Sea Kirin attack force – striker Kone Adama and forwards Thawin Bootsombut and Sarach Yooyen – narrowly missed some good scoring chances in the 12th, 18th, 25th and 31st minutes.

Despite this they were unable to find the back of the net and the first half ended 0-0.

Efforts by FC Phuket to speed up the tempo in the second half finally paid off at 53 minutes, when Niran Phanthong worked the ball into the center of the penalty area and the defender covering Thawin Bootsombat lost his footing.

Thawin made no mistake, beautifully working the ball between the recovering defender's legs and past Bangkok Angels

Team	P	Pts
BBCU	6	14
BUFC	6	13
Buriram	6	12
Phuket	6	11
Saraburi	6	10
CCFC	6	10
AFUTD	6	9
Songkhla	6	9
Rajapracha	6	9
Chainat	6	8

goalkeeper Adisak Duangsri into the left corner.

Bangkok United scored the equalizer at 62 minutes, when FC Phuket reserve defender Ibrahim Khulibali tried to head a free kick from midfield by Bangkok United's Phonawat Peekong.

Rather than go harmlessly out of play, the ball ricocheted high into the air and into the top corner, over the outstretched arms of FC Phuket keeper Theerawat Pinpradup.

Coming just moments after

Other match results

April 3:

PTT Rayong 1-1 Chainat
RBAC 0-1 BBCU
Buriram 2-0 Bangkok FC
Thai Honda 1-0 CCFC
Samutprakarn Customs 1-1 Saraburi

April 2:

JW Rangsit 2-1 Rajapracha
Chiang Mai 1-1 Air Force United
Songkhla 1-0 Suphanburi

Ibrahim stepped onto the pitch, the own-goal stunned FC Phuket and seemed to turn the momentum of the game in the Fighting Angel's favor.

At 82 minutes, French forward Romar Gusmee blasted the game winner, a beautiful shot from 35 yards out that seemed to take goalkeeper Theerawat almost completely by surprise, the ball sailing high into the left side of the net just as he began to react.

FC Phuket pressed for an equalizer, but were unable to find the back of the net before the end of penalty time. The win moved Bangkok United past FC Phuket in the standing, temporarily taking over first place in Division 1.

They would later relinquish that

lead the following day when BBCU narrowly beat a hard luck RBAC FC side on the road to go one point clear.

Romar was named "man of the match". The game was shown live across much of Thailand on the SiamSports Channel and TRUE Visions, which is also Bangkok United's corporate sponsor.

The coaches of Division 1 including those from Chanthaburi FC and Samutprakarn Customs were on hand to scout the match.

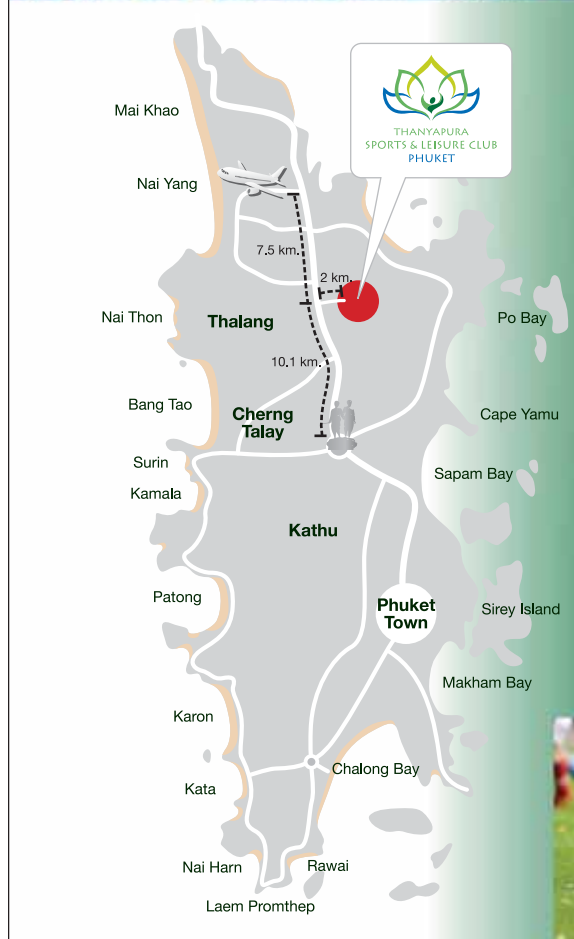
FC Phuket's next match is an away fixture at PTT Rayong on April 10. The match, originally scheduled for April 23, was moved forward by the league.

FC Phuket's mid-week home fixture with Songkhla, originally scheduled for last Wednesday night, April 6, was postponed indefinitely by the league, presumably due flooding.

A huge contingent were expected to be on hand for the match, as tens of thousands of Phuket residents hail from Songkhla and a number of supporters were planning to travel to Phuket for the match, according to the Songkhla FC Fan Club blogsite.



DEFEATED: FC Phuket manager Surachai Jirasirichote
Photo: Nicholas Altstadt



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Hitting the Sixes

By Neil Quail

THE Phuket International Cricket Sixes will take place this week at Karon Stadium starting on Tuesday, April 12, with finals being played on Sunday, April 17. Cricket fans on Phuket have been treated to a fantastic year. An English Ashes victory, an Irish win against the "old foe" at the recent International Cricket Council (ICC) World Cup, India taking the title at that same competition, and just prior to the end of Phuket's domestic cricket season, the international sixes will help draw the curtains on a magical year.

Now in its eighth year, this year's tournament has attracted 24 teams from eight countries. The thrills and spills of this shortened version of the game attract many who otherwise lament and criticize the game's normal duration. One game lasts approximately 45 minutes and this is viewed as a real crowd-pleaser in terms of the "slash and slog" batting antics which keep the spectators attention riveted to the crease.

The 2010 Phuket Sixes champions, Gauhati Town Maroon from India, will return to defend their crown while teams from Australia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore and Thailand will flash blades of willow in attempts to become the "Sultans of the Sixes".

"The Sixes is now one of the largest international sports tournaments staged in Phuket, attracting



SIX-PACK PLUS ONE: The Phuket boys at last year's tournament. Photo Wayne Morrison

hundreds of visitors to the island each year, and we are very grateful for the support of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) for the event," said Asian Cricket Sixes Tour organizer, Michael Maher.

Players and spectators will enjoy not only a feast of cricket, but also delicious food from the Navarang Mahal Indian restaurant and home-made snacks from Tookta Supattra will be available within the stadium. A beach cricket tournament, a floodlit 20/20 match, and of course the ever-

popular Gala Awards Dinner, have also been added to the sporting festivities.

Funds raised from the event will help support and develop cricket in Phuket, especially junior cricket and facilities in preparation for the 2012 National Youth Games, to be held in Phuket next year.

For further information about the Phuket International Cricket Sixes 2011 see www.phuketsixes.com or www.cricketsixes.com

PHUKET CRICKET

Laguna vs Patong final showdown

COMPETITORS for the Island Furniture T20 cricket league final on April 24 have been decided. Having beaten Island CC two weeks ago, Patong CC faced a determined Laguna CC last Sunday, knowing that a victory would place one hand on the trophy and gain a psychological boost going into the final.

Laguna CC chose to bat after winning the coin toss and captain Stuart Reading (16 runs) smashed several boundaries before succumbing to a well-disguised slower delivery. Patong CC's captain Raju Seemant rearranged the bowling order with reigning "player of the year" Anil Rawat coming on first to reduce the run rate. He was partnered from the opposite end of the crease by Rishi Sadarangani, who finished his spell with three wickets and scored just 21 from four overs with his clinical and varied display of spin bowling.

With overs dwindling away, it looked as though Patong CC would restrict Laguna CC to under 100. But complacency reared its ugly head in the form of fielding mistakes and missed opportunities to take wickets.

One over in particular went for 25 runs as a result of some thumping shots from Mario Piazza from Laguna CC, who

finished with the team's top score.

The Laguna CC innings finally ended when Patong CC's wicketkeeper Van Blerk, in a moment of unintended comedy, ran out the last wicket. Failing twice to connect, he eventually managed success at the third attempt.

A lively start from openers Dave Watson and Richard Desmond put 38 on the board after just five overs. Desmond was dismissed by "Joji" for 20 runs and the forlorn figure of Van Blerk (0 runs) was returned after a brief inspection of the wicket, followed soon after by Seemant (3 runs) whose performance was no doubt influenced by the celebration of India winning the cricket world cup the previous evening. Watson (40 runs) played a vital anchor role and on his departure Patong CC were beginning to cruise at 81 for four.

Sadrangani entered the fray and added a rapid 22 runs to the score, including two sixes. Rawat was next to the crease and with four balls to spare, put the game to rest.

Next Sunday, April 10, sees both Laguna and Patong again face off in the final of the 35-over competition at Cherg Talay school in Thalang.

- Neil Quail

Sprint starts early to race in Laguna Marathon

LAGUNA Phuket International Marathon is on its mark, and is once again set to provide long-distance running enthusiasts the opportunity to participate in Asia's largest and fastest-growing marathon event.

The sixth edition of this internationally acclaimed event has already reeled in thousands of entrants and with a wealth of well-known personalities on the card, one to look out for is Thai-German model-actor Mario Maurer who played "Tong" in the film *The Love of Siam*.

Maurer will double as the marathon charity ambassador along with five contestants from the latest season of "The Biggest Loser Asia", who will lend their celebrity status to raise funds for the Laguna Phuket Developing Sustainable Schools program, a collaborative effort between Laguna Beach Resort and the Population and Community Development Association.

Following the massive success of the 2010 marathon, which drew 5,329 participants from 34 countries, race organizer Go

Adventure Asia will delight runners of all ages with five separate events set on a course certified by the Association of International Marathons and Road Races (AIMS).

Experienced runners and marathon veterans can look forward to the full 42.195 kilometer course as well as a 21.097km half marathon and a 10.5km run. Families can enjoy the non-competitive 5km walk, and kids can compete in a 2km race, accompanied by charity ambassador Maurer.

"By participating in this year

marathon, runners can give themselves a healthy physical challenge and also help improve the lives of children. This makes the Laguna Phuket International Marathon an event you just cannot miss," Maurer said.

The influx of spectators and participants for the 2011 Laguna Phuket International Marathon is expected to give the province an instant boost for tourism and the economy. The annual event has proven itself to be a major international attraction since its inception in 2006, and the Tour-

ism Authority of Thailand expects this edition to generate even greater exuberance on the island.

"We want to offer every participant a truly rewarding experience amid Phuket's fantastic surroundings," said co-race director Songkram Kraisonthi.

"While the marathon does include competitive events, the key element here is not competition. We simply want to see runners or even entire families come have fun under the Phuket sun while giving themselves a healthy fitness boost as well," he added.

Charity donations from the 2011 edition will be used to support the development of Baan Klong Mai Daeng School in Surat Thani, Chaiya district. Runners can make their contributions simply by signing up. Additionally, a donation box will be available within the pre-race expo on June 10 and 11.

All five events in the marathon will kick off in the morning of June 12 at the Laguna Beach Resort. Interested runners can register for the marathon online at www.phuketmarathon.com.

- Neil Quail

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Starting Young in Sepang race

Phuket resident and race car driver Dylan Young will face his biggest challenge yet at the JK Racing Asia series in Malaysia this weekend.

By Neil Quail

PHUKET resident-racer Dylan Young will be driving for the Atlantic Racing Team at the opening event of the JK Racing Asia Series this weekend. The race is a curtain raiser for the Petronas Malaysian Formula One (F1) Grand Prix at the Sepang International Circuit, Kuala Lumpur.

Fueled by his desire to compete in F1, the 22-year-old Australian intends to see off challenges from the sport's most exceptional talents under the gaze of F1 team managers.

Having awed the Atlantic Racing Team in a recent one-day test session at the Sepang circuit, Dylan was offered a seat, and now has the opportunity to showcase his abilities and accelerate his fledgling career.

"I'm relieved to have confirmed this deal even at such late notice. Having only one test day in the car as a lead up to the season is not ideal. I just hope to represent my sponsor [EMCT Romania] and all my private backers as best I can," said Dylan.

Greg Young, Dylan's father and manager voiced both pride and concern with regard to his son's efforts.

"Dylan has worked so hard to find corporate sponsorship support from Phuket and get himself onto the grid in Malaysia. He

genuinely wants to represent Phuket on the international stage, but he has been unable to secure a major corporate backer. However, he still intends to adorn the available advertising space on the car with logos promoting Phuket," said Greg.

The pressure of having to qualify for his two races on Saturday and Sunday rests on Dylan between the F1 practice and qualifying sessions prior to the Grand Prix.

"Every driver in the sport wants to make F1. It's a tough journey, but I hope to make it in 3 to 4 years. It is vital to have a good weekend when racing in front

of the F1 team bosses, so I'll try to avoid any accidents and bring the car home in a strong position," Dylan said.

Unfortunately, Dylan has been confirmed for this opening event only.

Further sponsorship is necessary to compete for the entire series, where wins are expected nearing the season's end.

ESPN Star Sports will broadcast the full series of races which includes six events and 18 races across five countries.

For more information on Dylan and sponsorship opportunities contact E:info@dylanyoung racing.com or visit W:dylanyoung racing.com.



Dylan has his sights set on a career in Formula One.



DREAM WITHIN REACH: Dylan Young will be representing Phuket this weekend.



DAYS OF THUNDER: Dylan Young leads the pack at the Singapore F1 GP event last year. Photos: Dylanyoung racing.com

Phuket takes turn for 28th National Youth Games

SPORT fans on the island will welcome the news that Phuket will host the 28th National Youth Games from March 18-28 next year.

With a total of 28 sporting disciplines, including volleyball, swimming, tai kwon do and football, thousands of athletes and spectators are expected to flock to the island for the event.

This year's National Youth Games culminated in spectacular fashion late last month in Uttaradit Province.

A number of Phuket officials, including Phuket Governor Tri Augkaradacha, and even Phuket's Sea Dragon mascot, travelled to the games to receive a flag signifying Phuket as next year's host destination.

- Pimwara Choksakulpan

More information about the Games is available through the official website www.phuketgames.com



Phuket's mascot for the National Youth Games next year - the smiley Sea Dragon.

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...with direct flights to the Northeast Region of Thailand to discover exhilarating attractions in Ubon Ratchathani and South of Laos.

So many places I've travelled and there is no other city that has captivated my heart like Ubon Ratchathani (fondly known as Ubon) and the Southern Laos. The life here is steeped in the most exquisite culture that has can be traced back to a most colorful history; the food, the sights and the people there is nothing like it anywhere else in the world.

I only had 4 days in this wonderful city, and it's safe to say that I will be coming back soon. Here's the tale of my journey.

Day 1
The flight lasted less than 2 hours from Phuket to Ubon Ratchathani, the flight was very pleasant but I just couldn't wait to dive into my trip. My first stop in Ubon was the Ubon Ratchathani National Museum; with a history that stretches all the way back to the 1700s the museum was filled with incredible displays of arts, crafts and various historical relics from across the province. Coincidentally this museum is located within Tung Sri Muang Park. One of the local hot spots for meet-ups, exercising and even socializing. I even struck up a conversation with a local who told me interesting tid-bits about the city's history.

Day 2
I rose early eager to visit Sam Pan Bok (3,000 Holes) and what greeted me did not disappoint. I really enjoyed walking here as it made me feel like I was on an alien planet. After witnessing that I took another nature based trip to Pha Taem National Park where the hiking route is about 3km and at the end of it a cliff awaits you and gifts you the sight of pre-historic drawings. Later in the day I was at the Huai Luang Waterfall this waterfall is just the place to unwind after the many steps you've encountered in getting there.

I was told I shouldn't miss this delicious Nam-Neung, a famous Vietnamese food in Northern Isaan region, meatballs wrapped in rice paper along with a generous array of customizable fresh herbs and vegetables. It was amazing!

Day 3
For my 3rd day here, I decided to go on a more tranquil journey. This day Pakse was my destination of choice as I visited its most beautiful temple - Wat Luang, as well as Wat Phabad which is the oldest and largest temple of Pakse that derives its name from the belief that it holds Buddha's footprint. This district is also home to Ban Keosamphanh which is the most beautiful green rice field as well as a former French Army Camp.

From here I moved on to two fabulous waterfalls, both magnificent in its own way. Firstly was Khong Pha Peng Waterfalls also dubbed as 'The Niagara of the East', one look at it and no explanations were necessary. Though the second waterfall I visited in the day Li Phi Waterfall in Champasak Province, had the same raging force as Khong Pha Peng, but with an extraordinary surprise. A calmer section of Li Phi Waterfall is actually a natural habitat for endangered fresh water dolphins. Seeing the dolphins swimming freely made my heart soar and definitely was the highlight of my day.

Now thanks to AirAsia, getting there is no longer a dream as flights from Phuket to Ubon Ratchathani now flies 3 times a week, every Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday. Wait for me Ubon, I'll be back and AirAsia will bring me back to your arms.

With lots of love & fond memories, Diana

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