

The Phuket Gazette

Volume 11 Issue 30

News Desk - Tel: 076-236555

July 24 - 30, 2004

Daily news at www.phuketgazette.net

20 Baht

The Gazette is published in association with

The Nation

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TAT boss raps Phuket failings

By Dhirarat Boonkongsan

BANGKOK: Suwalai Pinpradab, Director of the local office of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) said that the goal of Phuket becoming a truly "world-class" destination is a pipe dream unless a variety of problems are dealt with.

These, she said, include high-volume, low-paying tourists; poor service in all sectors of the hospitality industry; and a crumbling natural environment.

Speaking with the *Gazette* during a Market & Product Briefing for TAT directors, government officials, and industry representatives at the Queen Sirikit National Convention Center in Bangkok, she said, "Phuket is a place to enjoy sun, sand and sea but no one is taking sufficient care of the environment [to maintain this reputation]."

Referring to the recent placing of two Phuket hotels – the JW Marriott Phuket Resort & Spa and The Racha Resort and Spa – in the *Condé Nast Traveler* (USA) Magazine's 2004 top 100 hotels, K. Suwalai said, "This reinforces Phuket's reputation worldwide.

"But all hotel staff [on the island] should be trained to provide a 'world-class' service.

"We must get to work on these problems immediately," she warned.

Other problems to be addressed, she said, include poor service from tuk-tuk and other local transportation providers, and tourists being cheated.

K. Suwalai said that the niche markets the TAT in Phuket would focus on include indepen-



Suwalai Pinpradab: 'How much tourists pay is how the TAT defines their quality.'

dent women travelers, Japanese tourists, and students on cultural exchange visits – again with Japan as the main focus.

She said she also foresees continuing growth in the golf and diving markets in Phuket.

The TAT is also concerned at so-called "zero-cost tourists" and the companies behind these tours, K. Suwalai noted.

One overseas TAT office director – who asked not to be named – characterized zero-cost

tourists as those from the lower end of the market who prefer cheap shops and typically patronize only restaurants and hotels owned or run by their fellow countrymen.

K. Suwalai said that the TAT Phuket office will meet with travel agencies in Beijing later this year to try to negotiate minimum prices for package tourists.

"How much tourists pay is how the TAT defines their quality," she concluded.

Mystery over death of Yakuza gangster

By Anongnat Sartpisut

KARON: Six months on, the January 6 drowning death of known Yakuza gangster, Kenji Maehama, 30, is being investigated by Japanese crime fighters to determine whether he was murdered.

Mr Kenji arrived on Phuket with his stepfather and two friends on January 5. The following day Mr Kenji reportedly got into difficulty while swimming off Karon Beach. He died on the way to hospital.

Pol Col Chalit Kaewyarat, Superintendent of Chalong Police Station, told the *Gazette* that a team of eight investigators, led by Yoshio Shimizu, Assistant Director of International Investigative Operations of the National Police Agency in Osaka, had come to Phuket to investigate whether Mr Kenji was murdered.

The visiting investigators explained that, just a few weeks before his death, Mr Kenji had taken out a 150-million-yen (56 million baht) life-insurance policy that named his stepfather, Kaoru Maehama, as beneficiary.

Japanese documents also showed that Mr Kaoru was registered as Mr Kenji's stepfather just a few weeks before the fatal holiday.

The Japanese investigators had traced the movements of Mr Kenji's companions and discovered that, after his death, the three went to Bangkok where they were involved in drunken brawls with bar girls.

The Japanese team included officers of the insurance company, which will declare Mr Kenji's policy invalid if it is found that he was murdered.



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American found dead in Patong hotel

PATONG: Police are investigating the death of 43-year-old American Chris John Beyer, who was found dead at the Expat Hotel on July 15 with his hands bound and a black garbage bag over his head.

Housekeepers discovered the body about two days after noting a rank odor in room 120, where Mr Beyer had been staying since July 9.

Expat Hotel General Manager Ploenjit James told the *Gazette* she believed Mr Beyer had taken his own life.

The corpse was found lying face-up dressed only in a pair of purple shorts. One arm was handcuffed to the bed and the other was tied with power cable to a table. There was a black plastic bag over Mr Beyer's head and three lengths of rubber tubing around his neck to prevent air from entering the bag.

According to the hotel, nobody had visited the Mr Beyer during his stay.

"We believe that he killed himself. He always wanted to stay alone. A letter that was found in the room may explain his reasons for wanting to end his life," K. Ploenjit said.

Kathu Police Inspector Pol Lt Padungpong Duksukaew said Mr Beyer had probably died at least two days before his body was discovered.

"We found a letter near the door [apparently written by the deceased] that described his misfortune at having been cheated by friends and having his business fail. It was probably suicide, though we are not ruling out the possibility of murder," said Lt Padungpong.

- Anongnat Sartpisut

Teenage thugs stab British teacher

PHUKET CITY: A young British man is recovering in Wachira Phuket Hospital intensive care unit after being stabbed late on July 16.

A motorcycle taxi driver found Aden Simpson, 21, who is an English teacher at Satee Phuket School, lying bloodied

and unconscious at the side of the road near the Mission Hospital at about 5 am the following day, hours after the attack.

The motorbike taxi driver rushed him to Wachira Hospital. After emergency treatment Mr Simpson was able to tell police that he had seen a group of teen-

agers trying to steal parts from his motorbike. When he remonstrated with them, one of them stabbed him in the abdomen.

A nurse at the hospital, speaking on condition of anonymity, told the *Gazette* that Mr Simpson had lost a great deal of blood from a 1.5-cm-wide wound

in his liver, but was out of danger.

Pol Capt Sathit Noorit told the *Gazette*, "We have made no progress in this case because the victim has been too ill to tell us very much, and we could find no clues in the area where he was found." - Siripansa Somboon

'Cyber Paradise' training begins

By Gategaeo Phetsawang

PATONG: The Software Industry Promotion Agency (Sipa) launched a two-week seminar on July 19 with the aim of training software programmers in Thailand to develop open source software for Thai small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Forty programmers from Phuket, Chiang Mai and Khon Kaen met at the Patong Merlin Hotel, where software developer David Jones explained how to develop the open-source software, OFBiz.

Mr Jones is one of the founders of OFBiz, an open-source suite of business software that includes features such as accounting software; production, inventory and order management; and online marketing and e-commerce tools. Much of the software is free.

Hans Bakker, Managing Director of Ant Web systems, which promotes open-source software in Thailand and introduced the concept of OFBiz to Sipa, also addressed the participants. He explained the emerging role of open-source software



At the opening of the seminar were, from left, Hans Bakker of Ant Web, David Jones of OFBiz and Phuket Governor Udomsak Usawarangkura.

in commerce, notably the travel-industry-focused OpenTravel software suite.

Sipa President Manoo Ordeedolchest, said, "When [the programmers] have finished the training, they can start creating software suitable for Thailand. Initially, there will be software for developing SMEs to be more competitive and to expand their markets."

K. Manoo also introduced a new catchphrase for attracting IT investment to Phuket: Phuket technotourism. He explained that the idea of the phrase was to conjure up an attractive image to

entice IT investors from Bangkok and elsewhere.

"We are also trying to attract foreign investors to Phuket to work with local people in establishing ICT businesses, particularly in software.

"We hope that by initiating 'technotourism' we can quickly [establish] a software industry in Phuket," he said.

Flower show at Saphan Hin

PHUKET CITY: Phuket Agriculture and Cooperatives Office (PACO) is organizing a show of flowers and plants from July 26 to August 4 at Saphan Hin.

Somchai Wongsriwivat, an official with the PACO, explained that Phuket had been selected by the Prime Minister's Office and the Department of

Agricultural Extension to hold the fair, called "Flowers and Plants to Celebrate the 72th Birthday of HM Queen Sirikit".

In addition to flower and plant displays and competitions, the show will feature food, agricultural materials, OTOP products, and music and recreation on stage every night.

IN BRIEF

Kathu Pattana wins municipal election

KATHU: Prasert Kaokijpaisarn and his 12-member Kathu Pattana (Development) Party won all seats in the Kathu municipal election, including the key position of Mayor.

It would have been a surprise if they hadn't - Kathu Pattana was the only party to stand in the election, on July 18.

Like all elections in Thailand, the Kathu walk-over will still need to be checked by the Central Election Commission (CEC).

"I believe this election will be approved," said Kittipong Thiengkunagrit, Director of the Phuket Election Commission (PEC). "We received no complaints. That may be because there was only one party."

Dogs get chips

CHALONG: Around 80 dogs belonging to householders at Land & Houses Park were the first on the island to be tagged with microchips implanted under the skin on July 18 and 19.

The chips - only a few millimeters long - contain a unique, 15-digit ID number that can be read using a scanner. Canine passports will soon be issued to all dogs registered in Phuket.

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Avian 'flu measures reinstated

PHUKET: The Phuket Provincial Livestock office (PPLO) has re-introduced strict measures to protect the island from avian influenza, following new outbreaks in Northern and Central Thailand. The regulations went into effect on July 13.

Dr Weerapab Termkiatpaisarn, Deputy Chief of the PPLO, said that the new regulations are in line with the central government's bird 'flu containment policy, which restricts the movement of all live poultry from the eight provinces across provincial lines.

"It is our duty to inspect the papers that authorize the transport of chickens and ducks into Phuket.

No poultry from the [infected] provinces can enter Phuket. We have also checked every poultry farm in Phuket to make sure the province is free of the disease," said Dr Weerapab.

The PPLO has also recommended that poultry farmers monitor their stock closely and report any signs of respiratory or digestive illness.

The deaths of more than 10% of chicken or duck stocks in a single day, or 40% over three days, must also be reported, he explained.

Residents may give relevant information to the PPLO during work hours at Tel: 076-216934 (x14) or 076-218596. Reports outside office hours can be made to Tel: 06-5841742, 09-7297941 or 01-8943069.

- Kamol Pirat

Green light at last for giant Buddha image

By Kamol Pirat

KARON: Construction of the controversial Mingmongkol Buddha image atop Nakkerd Hill will resume next month, now that the Royal Forestry Department (RFD) has issued a paper authorizing work on the project to continue.

The authorization stipulates that the project remain in compliance with the original plan and that steps be taken to minimize further erosion at the project site.

Work on the project was halted nine months ago after it was deemed to have exceeded its original scope and for violating the ban on the construction of permanent structures above 80 meters. The ban went into effect in 1994 in an effort to halt precisely the kind of erosion that the project has caused.

Originally authorized to consist of no more than a single brass Buddha and some bathrooms, the project quickly mushroomed to include a large sala and several other structures designed to accommodate the needs of "pilgrims" and those making donations to fund construction.

Under a new design the image will be 45 meters high by 25 meters across at its base. It will be made of reinforced concrete rather than brass, and covered with gold leaf.

The image is expected to be particularly spectacular around dusk, when it will reflect the dying rays of the sun. Promoted as



At the site, a model gives some idea of what the Mingmongkol Buddha will look like when completed.

the world's largest gold-leaf-covered Buddha image, it is expected to become a major religious icon and tourist attraction for Phuket.

At a ceremony at the project site on July 17, Phuket Prison Chief Panya Panatnachee presented the permit on behalf of the RFD to Suporn Wanichkul, head of the Mingmongkol Buddha project committee.

The RFD permit stipulates that construction now be limited to the Buddha image itself. Additional structures, including the temporary sala, must be removed from the site once the Buddha image is completed. The RFD

paper also stipulates that trees be planted in the area to prevent further soil erosion.

K. Suporn said his committee was satisfied with the state's decision and said that full-time work will resume in August. He said that herbs and native trees would be planted in the area.

It was not reported if these will be of the same species as the stands of virgin forest that were felled to make way for the project and the access road leading to it.

However, K. Suporn said his committee intends to continue lobbying the government for permission to build additional permanent structures at the site, "should they be required to meet the needs of tourist who visit the site". These would include accommodation for monks and a permanent sala, he said.

In fact, a brochure soliciting donations for the project, which is still being widely distributed in Phuket, reads, "There will be a meditation center when the development is completed."

K. Suporn said the project will be completed in two years. "Money collected [from donations by pilgrims and tourists] will pay for the upkeep of the image," he said.

Free HIV treatment launched

By Anongnat Sartpisut

PHUKET: The Phuket Provincial Social Insurance Office announced on July 15 its part in the first publicly-funded scheme to make medicine available free to HIV-positive people following the scheme's launch at the XV International Aids Conference in Bangkok.

As of August 1, Thais registered as resident in a province or foreigners registered for social security will be able to get anti-HIV therapy worth up to 73,500 baht a year in that province.

The treatment will be provided free at the point of service, with the hospital being responsible for reclaiming money from the local Social Insurance Office.

Everyone requiring therapy will automatically qualify to receive treatment worth 12,500 baht a year. Should the treatment fail to arrest the spread of the virus, additional treatment worth up to 60,000 baht a year can be prescribed by a doctor.

Each person will also be entitled to two 500-baht tests a year to establish his or her CD4 count which, in simple terms, indicates how severely the virus has affected the immune system.

For further information, contact the Phuket Provincial Social Insurance Office at Tel: 076-240418; 076-222837; 076-355325. Fax: 076-222836, 076-240419.

THAI extends discount period

BANGKOK: Thai Airways (THAI) has announced that it is extending its "Smile around Thailand" discount fares campaign until September 30 due to keen interest from the travelers.

Viset Sontichai, THAI's District Sales Manager for Upper Southern Thailand, said that the price of the tickets is at least 20% cheaper than regular fares.

There are, however, conditions attached. Passengers must confirm journey dates and not change their flight plans. They must also pay for their tickets within 48 hours of booking the seats.

Journeys must be completed on or before September 30.

The routes and discounted fares are as follows:

- Phuket-Bangkok: One-way 1,800 baht, return 3,600 baht.
- Phuket-Chiang Mai: One-way 3,130 baht, return 6,260 baht.
- Phuket-Chiang Rai: One-way 3,315 baht, return 6,630 baht.
- Phuket-Khon Kaen: One-way 2,670 baht, return 5,340 baht.
- Phuket-Phitsanulok: One-way 2,670 baht, return 5,340 baht.
- Phuket-Ubon Ratchathani: One-way 2,855 baht, return 5,710 baht.

• Phuket-Udon Thani: One-way 2,855 baht, return 5,710 baht.

Prices do not include airport tax or insurance.

K. Viset said, "Our target group for this promotion is people who have never flown with us before, and people who would generally go between these destinations by bus."

For more information or to book tickets, call Tel: 076-212946.

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Queer News

Death by aromatherapy

BANGKOK: A woman in Bangwa District died of asphyxiation after turning her bathroom into a sauna and aromatherapy chamber in an attempt to shed flab.

Tanakrit Kianthong, a grilled pork vendor, told police he returned home on July 3 to find his wife Pattaporn, 43, lying dead on the floor of the second-story bathroom of the couple's three-story townhouse.

Arriving at the scene, police found her body face down on the floor wearing only a yellow sarong. Beside her was a pot of weight-loss herbs that had been boiling on a stove the deceased had moved into the bathroom.

Police concluded that the woman had become dehydrated and passed out from the combination of heat, smoke and fumes from the boiling herbs and stove. Once unconscious, she died from lack of oxygen. Police said there was no evidence of foul play and estimated the time of death at four hours before their arrival.

K. Tanakrit told police that he and his wife normally went to sell pork at Bangkae Market, but on that day his wife said that she wanted to visit a friend.

But apparently she had other plans.

"After I came back in the early evening I couldn't find her, so I thought she was still at her friend's house. But when I went to the upstairs bathroom to take a shower, I found the door locked. I could smell the scent of the herbs, so I looked through the ventilation hole above the door and saw her body on the floor. I broke down the door, but it was too late," K. Tanakrit explained sadly.

Source: Daily News

EX-MAYOR'S

By Sangkhae Leelanapaporn

Phuket's rapid development has wrought many changes on the island's landscape and on the quality of life of many Phuket residents.

Traffic jams are becoming more common, as are dust haze from building sites, dump trucks spilling dirt over the roads. Rows of shophouses are beginning to dominate the urban sprawl emanating from Phuket City's center.

Much of the development in progress is unplanned or poorly planned in terms of how it fits into the island's infrastructure, with projects of all sorts underway all over the island.

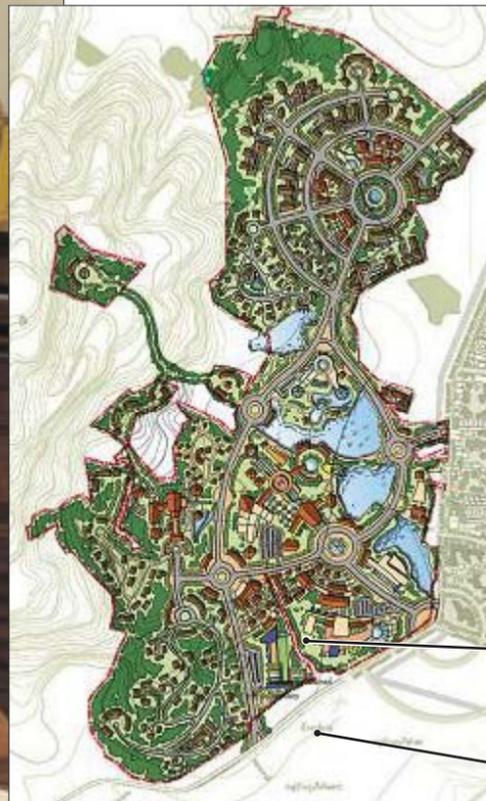
Looking to avoid the ad hoc jumble of buildings, former Phuket City Mayor Phummisak Hongsyok recently announced plans to build Chao Fah City, a 1,510-rai development comprising residential housing, commercial centers, five-star resorts and other accommodation.

He also recently announced that 200 of the 1,510 rai had been earmarked for other private investors to come forward and help create an international convention and exhibition center.

The huge development will cover the expanse from the southern side of the Prince of Songkhla University's Phuket campus, on Wichit Songkram Rd, in Kathu, to south of the junction of Thap Anusorn Rd and Chao Fa West Rd.

The large site was once occupied by tin mines belonging to K. Phummisak's grandfather, Luang Anuphas Bhuketkarn.

"We stopped mining tin just 15 years ago because the tin was poor quality. But we thought that Phuket was developing well, es-



Left: 'We thought we should be able to develop the [tin] land into something more useful', says Phummisak Hongsyok.

Above: concept drawing of the project.

Right: The development will start along the west side of Chao Fa West Rd, beyond the line of power poles in the photograph.

pecially with respect to land, and we thought we should be able to develop the land into something more useful," K. Phummisak explained.

The idea of creating a large, well-planned development came to him during his time as Phuket City Mayor. "I really wanted to see land in Phuket better developed, not only for my benefit but for the benefit all Phuket people.

"I want to use the examples of town planning from the many places I have visited, such as the

US, Hong Kong, Singapore and China, and adapt them to be used in Chao Fah City," he said.

The main roads throughout the township will be six lanes wide, with three lanes a side divided by a median strip, bordered by 2.5-meter-wide sidewalks on either side. Electrical cables in some parts of the project will be installed underground, and park areas will be set aside for residents to enjoy.

Water will be supplied from the 200 rai of old tin mine la-

goons dotted through the development. These are currently used to supplement Phuket City supply - the city gets the water free. However, the volume of water donated to Phuket City Municipality will be revised as Chao Fah City develops.

"I plan to have the whole project finished within 10 years and it will be bigger than Laguna. However, the plans have yet to be finalized and some elements may change," he said.

The master plan is split into

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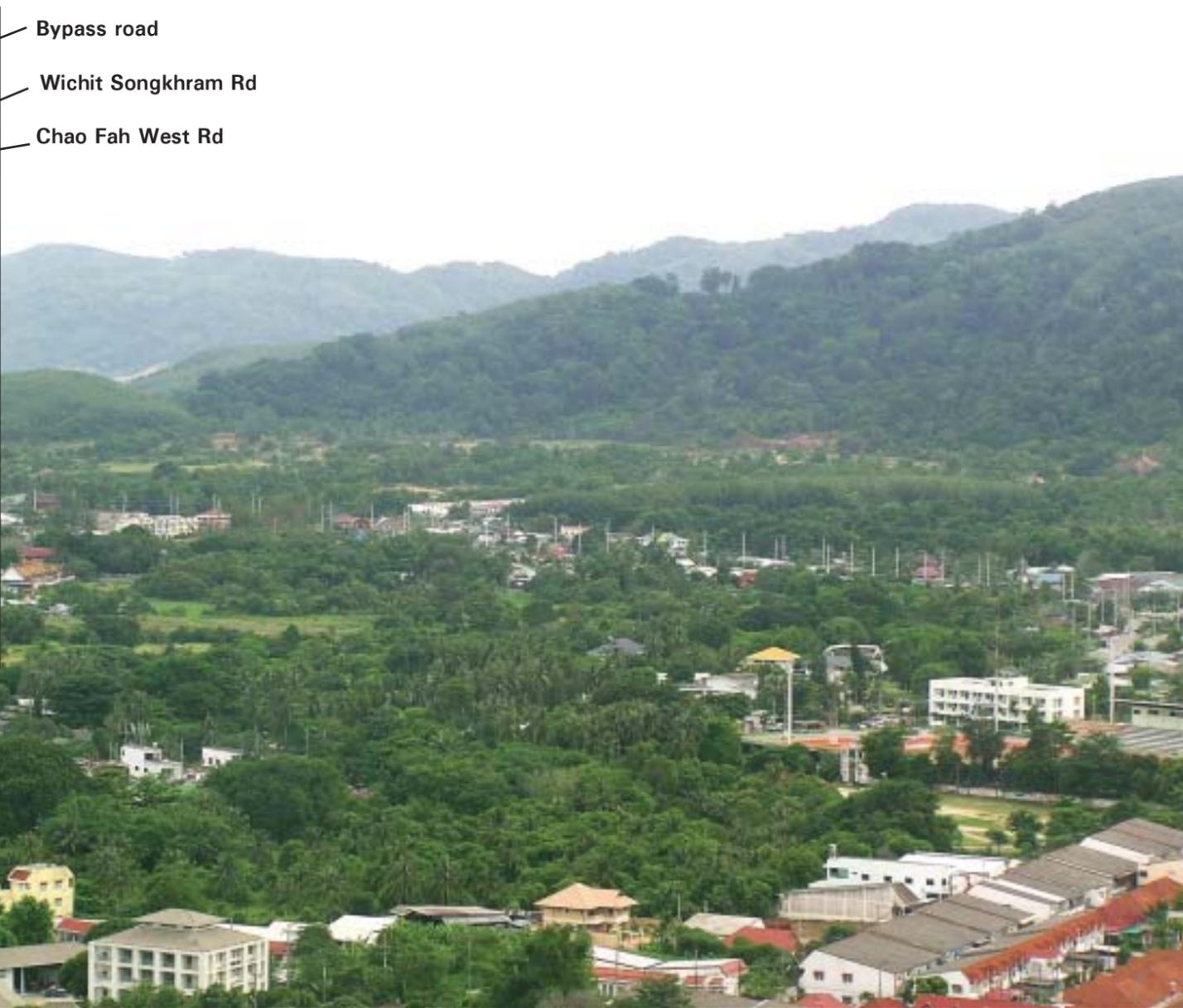
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URBAN DREAM



tacted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to invite ambassadors to look into the investment opportunities here.

“We will provide four stall units for countries to use free to display their national products, because we want to see a wide variety of items for sale here,” Dr Chintana added.

Also slated for construction next year is the 50-rai “Auto Land” zone, where Honda, Mazda and Ford dealerships (owned by K. Phummisak’s family company, Anuphas and Sons) will open.

“We plan to build new showrooms and customer service centers for Honda, Mazda and Ford cars. The Honda showroom will be built first, and we plan to start construction by the end of next year,” K. Phummisak said.

He explained that investors will be able to take out long-term leases on the land, but not own it, and that all buildings in the development must be built to certain general specifications.

“We plan not to sell the land, but instead to lease it to investors. We have also drawn up a ‘town plan’ because we want to ensure that all aspects of Chao Fah City meet our specifications,” he said.

“The Chao Fah City land near the main roads is valued at 4 million baht a rai, but I don’t want to sell it. Once money has been spent, it is gone, but if we develop the land we can generate a greater income over a longer period of time,” he added.

Though these are early days, K. Phummisak said that response so far has been positive. “Even though I haven’t done any marketing yet, people have already contacted me,” he said.

Apart from the PINB and Auto Land, other zones in the new town are earmarked for residential use; education; resorts, restaurants and a water theme park; and a camping area in the hills above everything.

nine zones for different activities, including an education center with an international school, a child care center and housing for the elderly, as well as condominiums, first-class resorts, an entertainment complex and a night bazaar.

The first zone to undergo construction will be the Phuket International Night Bazaar (PINB) and its 14 “activity centers”, which will cover 170 rai and is expected to cost more than 3 billion baht to build.

Dr Chintana Daengdej, Managing Director of Phuket Night Bazaar Co Ltd, which will create and run the night bazaar, told the *Gazette* that she spent more than a year researching whether to invest before she fi-

nally decided to take the plunge.

A major factor in her decision, she said, was the project’s close proximity to the major shopping centers on the bypass road.

“Phuket has potential for shopping, but it doesn’t have activities that make shopping at night attractive. Our main focus will be the night bazaar, but there will also be 13 other ‘activity centers’ in the same zone,” she said.

In addition to the night bazaar, which will occupy most of the zone, shoppers will have access to an “Electronics Square” with up to 50 brands of electronics goods for sale; brand-name clothing stores, and a gold and jewelry plaza.

The zone will also include an entertainment complex, including cinemas, bowling alleys and karaoke venues; nightlife venues and a show pavillion, as well as an “Adventure Land” section and an Education Mall for kids.

Other facilities slated for the zone include a health and beauty center, including spas and massage, fitness center and even cosmetic surgery facilities; a food pavilion and restaurant, a health supermarket, a boutique resort and a youth hostel.

Dr Chintana explained that the night bazaar alone will cost about 300 million baht to build, providing 10,000 stall units for an expected 3,000 vendors.

“The night bazaar will take about six months to build and is expected to open in November 2005,” she said, adding that traders have already approached her about setting up stalls at the site.

“We have also invited investors to become major tenants [to run the other activity centers] in the zone, and we have con-

Riding a motorcycle?
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By Chris Husted

A new kind of cubist art

Few would argue that digital cameras have not been a godsend for amateur and professional photographers alike, doing away with the need to buy the right film for the right occasion as well as the costly burden of having to pay for developing and printing.

The drawback has been that while digital photos are conveniently viewed on a computer and easily emailed to friends and family, photo-quality printers for digital cameras are too expensive for most people. So even with all the new technology, making prints still involves a trip to the digital photo lab.

In the basement of the Big C supercenter, however, is a digital box of tricks that may just be what we have all been waiting for.

The DigiCube photo kiosk at the Channel Technology counter, just beyond the maze of mobile phone and computer vendors' booths, can produce a photo-lab quality print of a digital image in seconds.

Chayut "Pete" Chirayus of Channel Technology explained that by following simple instructions on the DigiCube's LCD touch-screen, people can look at the images on their camera, choose the photos they wish to print, add effects, and select how many images to print per page.

The machine also gives audible instructions in English, but K. Pete admits they are difficult to hear over the shopping mall din. That is why, he said, either himself or staff are on hand to help operate the machine.

The DigiCube can print images stored in all the major portable digital data storage for-



The DigiCube allows happy snappers to add stars, hearts and color washes to pictures before printing them out. Images can also be printed onto a variety of items, including coffee mugs, T-shirts, keychain fobs, plaques or even a clock face.

ats, including CompactFlash (types I and II), Microdrive, Secure Digital (SD) Cards, SD-Mini, Memory Stick, Memory Stick PRO, Memory Stick DUO, MultiMedia Cards (MMC), Smart Media (SM), and XD, or even a simple CD-ROM.

It can also download pictures from most new-generation mobile phones via infrared or Bluetooth data transfer, and can save images onto a CD.

"People can use functions such as brightness and contrast adjustment to enhance their pic-

tures and add special effects," said K. Pete. These effects include printing pictures in sepia or black and white, as well as adding text, frames, cute stars, bubbles and hearts.

All prints are on 4x6-inch postcard-size paper and take just 30 seconds to print. The integrated printer is a dye-sublimation thermal printer which, instead of printing individual dots, prints a single layer of varying intensity, thus creating a print virtually identical to that of a photo lab.

"It costs 20 baht to print a single full-size image and up to 40 baht for an image using a combination of functions and effects," said K. Pete, who is also looking at introducing Thai-language audio instructions so that users will be able to add Thai text to pictures.

The DigiCube at Big C is the only one in commercial use in Thailand, and its introduction there is no coincidence – it has a true Phuket connection. K. Pete first met Frenchman Thomas Gires of Impress Graphics, the

company responsible for bringing the DigiCube to Thailand, at school when they were about 10 years old.

Mr Gires explained, "We chose to showcase it in Phuket first for many reasons. First, a lot of us at Impress Graphics are from Phuket, including me. I may be French, but I have considered Phuket my home since 1991. We strongly believe that Phuket is an excellent location, with its constant flow of tourists and its young, fun, local population."

Since the Phuket launch, the DigiCube has been displayed in Chiang Mai and at the Central Bang Na SME trade show in Bangkok in June.

While it seems that the rest of the country is slow in coming to grips with the DigiCube, Mr Gires says that three more units are lined up to go in Central Festival Phuket when it opens later this year.

He explained that DigiCube's growing popularity is due to digital camera sales more than doubling over the past few years, and mobile phones with cameras becoming cheaper and more widespread.

"This creates an amazingly large market for a versatile machine such as the DigiCube. From young people with the latest gadgets, to snap-happy tourists, or just the average family, the DigiCube can be a lot of fun," he said.

For more information about the DigiCube call K. Pete at 09-1957383 or email Mr Gires at: thomas@impressgraphics.net.

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Govt not heeding Royal messages

Social critic Dr Prawes Wasi charged that the government of Thaksin Shinawatra has failed to heed messages from the Royal Palace when implementing its economic policies.

"This government is probably driven only by greed, so it has failed to notice the signals that His Majesty might be trying to send across," said Dr Prawes, once a vocal supporter of Prime Minister Thaksin.

Dr Prawes said farming activities inside the Chitrlada Palace could have been meant as a message advocating self-sufficiency, but the government failed to take note.

The social commentator accused PM Thaksin of undermining the political system through his financial influence and wielding of absolute power.

"Politicians are using tens of billions of baht to win elections, so how can we expect them to solve the problem of corruption? State and money powers are combining to be the biggest cause of corruption in this country," Dr Prawes said.

No heads to roll: Acting National Police Chief Gen Sunthorn Saikwan said he would not transfer the commander of the Crime Suppression Division unless a fact-finding panel could prove he broke the law when leading a July 7 raid on a home in Ayudhaya that left its elderly owner injured and the dwelling damaged by 200 rounds of gunfire.

The police were allegedly acting on complaints left in the local PM's suggestion box that accused the homeowners of producing *ya bah* (methamphetamine). No evidence of such activity was found, and the search warrant authorizing the raid was improperly issued.

The House Committee on Justice and Human Rights and the Senate Committee on Local Administration jointly called for the transfer of Pol Maj General Kosin Hinthao, who led the raid, accusing him of distorting facts and reacting arrogantly when the panels questioned him.

Sathit Pitutecha, secretary of the House Committee on Justice and Human Rights, said police who took part in the raid could also be charged with destroying evidence because they had removed all bullets and spent cartridges from the house afterward.

K. Sathit called on the media to help bring those responsible to justice. "Don't let the case become silent like the cases of the 2,500 people who died during the drug crackdown," he said.

Power tax: In an effort to reduce Thailand's fuel consumption, the Finance Ministry is considering a new tax structure that would reduce taxes levied on small cars by 5% and increase taxes on



GIANT PANDA: Children climb on a three-meter-tall fluffy panda on show at the Central Plaza Rama II shopping center in Bangkok. The event was organized as part of the Zoological Park Organization of Thailand's Panda Road Show. Organizers claimed that the doll, created by Apex Toys, is the biggest toy panda in the world.

larger cars, a ministry source said.

Under the proposed new structure of excise tax, cars with an engine capacity of less than 2,000cc would be charged at 30%, while those between 2,000cc and 2,500cc would be charged at 35%. Cars between 2,500cc and 3,000cc would be taxed at 40% and those above 3,000cc at 50%.

No more slums: Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said he intends to rid the country of slums within six years.

"I'll get rid of all slum areas in Thailand within six years. I want to see people regard their houses as homes with happiness and warmth rather than just some kind of shelter," he said.

The PM made his comments as he presided over the launch of the *Baan Man Kong* (Stability) housing project at the Bon Gai community in Bangkok's Klong Toey District.

The government has said it will build one million housing units via the low-cost *Ua Athorn* (We Pity You) and *Baan Man Kong* projects to help the 1.5 million Thais currently without homes.

Some members of the private sector, mostly landlords in the areas where Bon Gai had encroached, sold their plots at discounts of up to 80% from the estimated market price.

PM Thaksin said these and others who sell land cheaply to the two government housing schemes could be nominated for royal decorations.

Stateless strongman: The Bodybuilding Association of Thailand (BBAT) has called on the authorities to grant citizenship to stateless bodybuilder Boontham Srithong, whom it believes will win a gold medal for the country in the 70kg class at the Mr Asia Championships in Bahrain this September.

K. Boontham, who was born into a hilltribe family, has been selected as a candidate to compete in international events many times, but has been unable to take part because of his lack of citizenship.

The BBAT contacted law lecturer Phanthip Kanjanajitra to help in K. Boontham's case. K. Phanthip said that the Provincial Administration Department recently promised to expedite K. Boontham's request for citizenship.

Suicide slum blaze: A 66-year-old man committed suicide by setting his rented house on fire, burning down 14 other shanties in Bangkok's Klong San District in the process.

A boy in the neighborhood told police that his friend saw

Suthat Pengpipat pour oil over a pile of leaves inside the house and set the oil on fire. The blaze quickly engulfed the man and the house.

Ten fire engines took about 30 minutes to put the blaze out. K. Suthat's charred body was found alongside that of his beloved pet cat.

The man's stepdaughter said K. Suthat once told her that he would kill himself by setting the house on fire if she abandoned him. She said that she didn't think the threat was serious. She moved out of the house at the end of June, leaving the man to live alone with his cat.

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

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TAT gets B21m for improvements

The Tourism Authority of Thailand Southern Region 5 office in Surat Thani has received a budget of 21 million baht to carry out a number of projects on and around Koh Samui in coming months. The following eight projects have been approved by the central government:

- A 6-million-baht survey of water quality off Nathon Port. Since it has served as a dumping ground for fuel and waste for several years, it will almost certainly be found to be "dirty".

- The construction of access roads to a number of popular tourist attractions – so that coachloads of tourists can swarm all over them like ants.

- The installation of touch-screen information terminals on Koh Tao and Koh Tan, at a cost of 2.4 million baht. Let's hope they run on batteries because neither island has a 24-hour electricity supply.

- A budget of 1.6 million baht has been earmarked for further standardization of spa services offered on the islands. Presumably this will involve a great deal of "hands on" testing.

- A 5-million-baht government office building on Koh Tao. Very nice.

- Accommodation for government officials, also on Koh Tao, costing 2 million baht. Even nicer.

- A new access road to Koh Tao power plant, which seems a reasonable expense if it cuts down on the number of hours islanders have to spend in the dark.

- A million-baht waterworks project on Koh Tao, which experiences a drought every year. That seems like a bargain, given that Koh Samui has already spent more than 200 million baht on its water supply system.

In addition to the above initiatives, two large-scale construction projects are also planned to

FROM THE GULF OF THAILAND



By Commander Sammy Swan



Elwood Smith, the first child to be born at Samui's Thai International Hospital, arrived at 9:55 am on July 2. After all other plans failed, parents Aaron Smith (in mask) and Myrasol Diola traveled from their home in Bophut to the hospital on a moped, even stopping for gas on the way. The birth was relatively quick and without any hitches, with Elwood weighing in at 3.45kg.

further support tourism in the region.

The first is the construction of a new 290-million-baht ferry port in Donsak, which must mean that the two existing terminals are doing very well indeed.

The second project is a new road from Haad Rin Beach to Tong Sala, the capital of Koh Pha-ngan. Once completed, the thoroughfare may well earn the status of "world's most danger-

ous highway to travel on a full-moon night".

Top cops: The Samui police recently underwent special self-defense training, which will help them deal with violent crime and subdue those who resist arrest.

A contest was held as part of the training, with police teams from various southern provinces aggressively competing against each other. The Samui team came

first in the Region 8 contest, which included squads from Ranong, Chumphon and Phuket.

The training course also involved sea-rescue techniques.

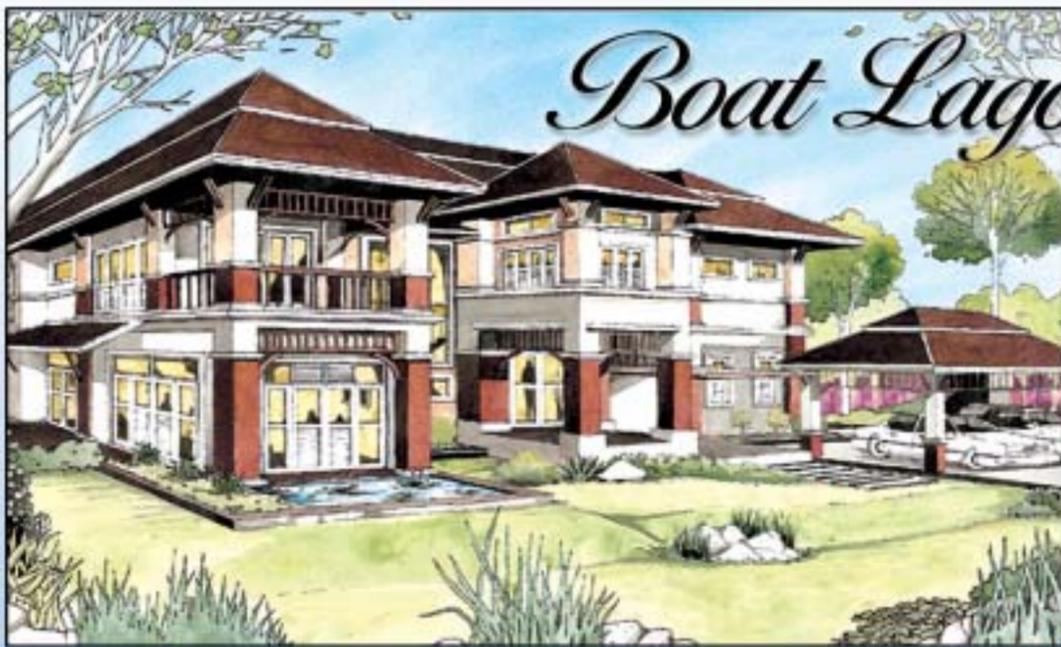
The new skills learned will certainly help the local police in their daily duties around the island, particularly when breaking up bar brawls and dragging drunk tourists out of the sea.

Rescue boat: The Koh Samui Hospital recently took delivery of its first fully-equipped medical rescue boat. The vessel will be stationed at Chaweng Beach to help tourists who get into trouble in the water.

Every year, several people drown off the beaches around Samui, so the boat has been equipped with a range of life-saving devices. The vessel was bought as part of an upgrade to onshore sea-rescue facilities.

Hopefully, even more boats, equipment and training will be provided in the future. In the meantime, tourists are advised to think twice before they decide to drink three buckets of Sangsom and then try to swim to Koh Pha-ngan in their fisherman's pants.

Cdr Swan is a writer with Koh Samui's community magazine.



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This week



CONSULAR CONGRATULATIONS: Consul General of the Royal Thai Consulate in Los Angeles, Isinthorn Sornvai (back row, white jacket), and Laguna Resorts and Hotels Vice-President Niyom Tassaneetipakorn (2nd from right) congratulate students of the Thai-American Youth Heritage Program as part of the celebrations for HM Queen Sirikit's birthday.



FISHY FELICITATIONS: Tom and Porn Quigley (front row, 3rd and 4th from right), owners of Phuket Fish & Chips, celebrated their 27th wedding anniversary recently with son Patrick (behind K. Porn) and wellwishers old and young.



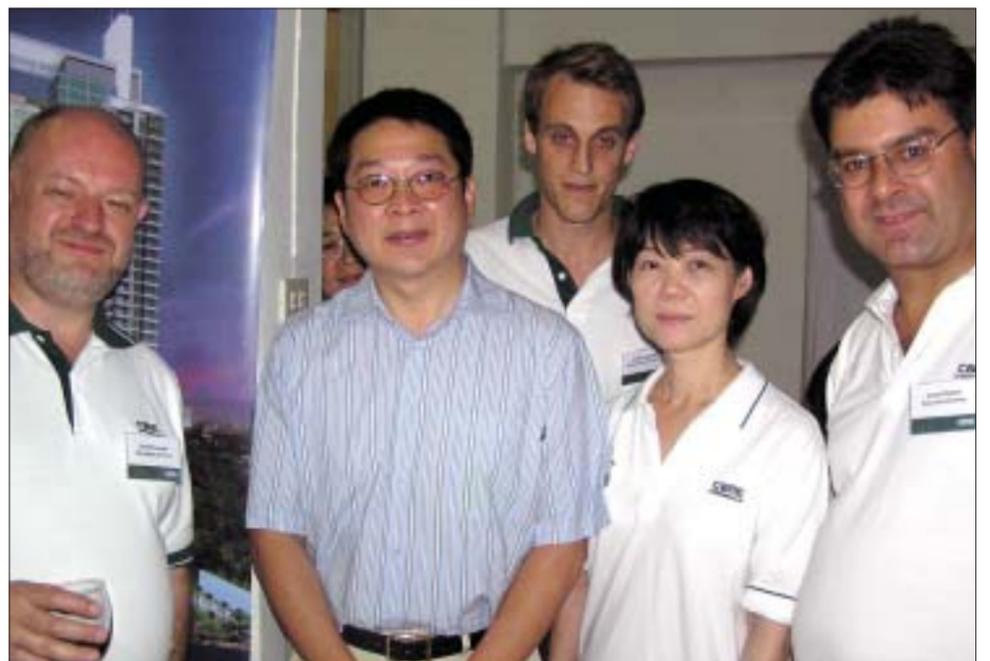
THE BEAUTY BUSINESS: Celebrating the opening of the Wongsada Skin & Cosmetic Clinic in Phuket are (from left) Business Developer Supakorn Boonyakajorn, Managing Director Dr Puttipong Poomsuwan and Product Manager Dr Piyawat Poomsuwan.



SURF RESCUE: Youngsters practice rescue techniques during a water safety training event hosted by Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort. More than 30 youngsters – local residents and resort guests – took part in the day-long exercise, held at the resort earlier this month.



HIGH DAYS AND HOLIDAYS: Supornpan Te-Pin (2nd from left), Manager of Phuket Holidays Co Ltd, and Duangnata Charoendee (3rd from left), Customer Services Manager of Galileo Thailand, at the opening of the travel agency's office at the Paradise Complex, Patong, this month.



David Simister (left), MD of CB Richard Ellis (Thailand), with (from right) Executive Director James R. Pitchon, Asset Services Executive Director Sumalee Tavoradolok and Phuket office General Manager James Saunders, along with Sitt Polcharoen, GM of the Royal Phuket Marina, at the opening of CBRE's Phuket office.

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In The Stars

by Isla Star

LEO (July 24-August 22): Leos with a birthday this week should prepare for major changes in their lives. Chances are you're more than ready to embrace a new direction where work is concerned, but there could be some unexpected hindrances to deal with. Your cool, calm way of solving problems will allow you to smooth the path of progress. Scorpio can give useful advice.



VIRGO (August 23-September 23): Virgoans who recently entered a new relationship will discover that what appeared to be sweet has distinctly sour undertones. Do not bury your head in the sand when the obvious is right in front of you; there are other exotic pleasures just waiting to be discovered. Regarding business or career areas, expect to reap a fruitful harvest from any seeds that you sow this week.



LIBRA (September 24-October 23): Librans normally manage to run peaceful, harmonious lives, but the last week of July could see some uncharacteristically hot-headed behavior.



Don't be surprised if your ideas receive a frosty reception – others will be more receptive when you have cooled down. Put some energy into cultivating your spiritual garden to encourage more tranquility and wear silver to purify your thoughts.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): There will be no harm in wishing upon the first star that catches your eye on Saturday night. Something that your heart has been yearning for could easily happen during the coming week. Your ability to philosophize is called upon by a friend who is uncertain which direction to move in. It would be wise to refrain from making specific suggestions.



SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): Inspiration is bubbling over for Sagittarians, but it may not be easy to see where to direct all that creative energy. Try meditating on the wild sea to help clear the mist that is blocking your vision. Early in the week your umbrella of confidence is put to the test when someone releases a sudden shower of envy. This is your wake-up call to consider who your friends really are.



CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): Your actions this week will have far-reaching consequences. Capricorns who are prepared to move on and leave their past behind should dispose of emotional baggage. After Wednesday, cash will start to flow in and you will be considering taking a spur-of-the-moment vacation. This is one trip that you should make alone.



AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): This week Aquarians will experience the calm before the storm that next month will bring. Your world is about to become shaken, but you will not be stirred; there is no zodiac sign better equipped to deal with change than yours.



You already have an inkling of the events that are about to unfold. Use the coming days to tie up loose ends so that you will be ready to move on.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): Pisceans can look forward to a productive week. A business matter you thought was never going to take off suddenly bursts into frantic activity. If this demands more time and attention than you can give, you will need to consider delegating some of the more mundane tasks involved. The number 8 has special meaning on Tuesday.



ARIES (March 21-April 20): Accepting the cards that life deals this week could prove difficult for some Arians. A few rocky patches on Tuesday or Wednesday will see you losing your footing on some slippery stones; the secret to steadfast progress is to keep your emotions in check. In a more optimistic vein, if you are prepared to take a business gamble, there is good chance of success. Wear the color turquoise to tap into hidden talents.



TAURUS (April 21-May 21): The stars will shower positive energy on Taureans this weekend with promises of long-awaited action. It's likely that you've been tethered for too many weeks now as a result of financial insecurity. Good news is about to soar over the sea to break this pattern. At least one good friend is ready to share in the celebrations.



GEMINI (May 22-June 21): A relationship will come full circle for many Geminis this week, so stop dwelling on weak links and concentrate on what is good and strong. Early next week, it will be hard to resist jumping off a high cliff straight into a new adventure and Leo would love to join in the fun. It's safe to leave work-related matters simmering, but you will need to spice up your enthusiasm early next month.



CANCER (June 22-July 23): Cancerians will have to attend to some boring but necessary bureaucratic issues mid-week. Wear kid gloves when dealing with authority; the less information you offer, the better. The desert of your romantic life is about to reveal a lush oasis of sensual possibilities. Consider indulging in a soothing spa treatment to prepare for the pleasure to come. The number 5 will bring you luck before the month ends.



After a wait of nearly three months since the Phuket City Municipality elections, Somjai Suwannasuppana of the *Khon Noom* (Young Turks) Party was finally confirmed, on July 2, as Phuket City's first directly-elected Mayor.

Here Mayor Somjai explains to the *Gazette's Kamol Pirat* the agenda of issues she plans to target during her four-year term, and what role she sees herself playing in Phuket's local politics.

Gazette: How do you feel about being the first directly-elected Mayor of Phuket City?

Somjai: I am happy be elected and it inspires me to stand firm in doing my best. In performing my duties, however, I cannot achieve anything just by myself; the government and the private sector must cooperate and support my work.

Gazette: What was your background before you became involved in local politics?

Somjai: I am 52 and single, and I was born on Phuket. I completed my primary education at Thai-Hua School and finished secondary school at Satee Phuket School.

I graduated in business administration from Wittayalai Krungthep – as Bangkok University was called then – and I have a master's degree in social development from the Prince of Songkla University.

I first started working in local administration in 1980. Viroj Bumroongwong invited me to work with the *Khon Noom* Party, and in 1990 the then-Mayor, Phummasak Hongsyok, made me responsible for public finance, social welfare and education.

After the elections in 1999, I stayed on the local administration team, but this time working in education, public health and environment.

In 2003, the central government decided to have mayors

elected directly and I was honored to be the *Khon Noom* candidate.

Gazette: What inspired you to become mayor?

Somjai: I have worked in the administration of Phuket City for about 24 years. My inspiration to become Mayor came from the former leaders of the *Khon Noom* Party, and their devotion to solving local problems and developing Phuket into a better place to live.

I understand the issues that affect local people from the cradle to the grave. I think that this is the fundamental factor in making society strong and in making Phuket better.

Gazette: Do you have ambitions to enter national politics, perhaps becoming a Member of Parliament?

Somjai: In the past I was invited to run for parliament, but I declined because I am satisfied with doing my best in local administration.

I am happy to work in the municipality because we have our own budget to solve local problems and an emergency fund to offer immediate help to people.

Gazette: What are the main issues that people want the Phuket Municipality to address?

Somjai: What people want most is to feel safe in their community, have a reliable water supply, a clean city, and good public

'Through good governance, Phuket Municipality is well-placed to achieve [its aims]'

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Mayor picks out her targets



Phuket City Mayor Somjai: No wish to run for national office.

health care and education. People want them all.

I talk to people, and the problems that I can solve, I will. But some problems need more money to address, so I raise such issues with the municipality so we can plan to solve them in the future.

Other current problems challenging the Phuket Municipality concern the environment. We are also focusing on education and safer communities. But most people ask the municipality to provide a reliable water supply because they suffer from shortages during the dry season.

Gazette: How do you propose to tackle the shortage of water?

Somjai: I want to thank local businesspeople for helping the municipality deal with the problem. They have given water from old tin mines to the city.

They have given the water free, but that may change in the future. Some of them have chosen to develop their land and will need that water to supply their own developments, such as a housing estate or a golf club, and others have informed me that they would now prefer to sell the water to the municipality.

As a long-term solution, the municipality will contact the Royal Irrigation Department (RID) and ask to get additional supply from Bang Wad reservoir.

However, providing a long-term solution requires cooperation from other state officials, not just the support of the municipality. Currently, state agencies are working together to build a new reservoir at Bang Niew Dum. It will be the largest reservoir in Thailand. I will ask the RID for pipes to be laid so the dam can also supply Phuket City.

Gazette: What projects initiated by former Mayor Phummisak will the new administration carry on with?

Somjai: K. Phummisak's policies were those of the *Khon Noom* Party, and will continue to be carried out. But some policies I will attend to more urgently, such as making sure contractors finish the city's roads on time, and building a public park opposite the Phuket Provincial Electricity Authority offices on Thalang Rd.

Gazette: What other issues are you focusing on?

Somjai: I aim to improve Phuket, with particular focus on improving quality of life, protecting the environment, and better management of garbage disposal and treatment of wastewater.

I also believe that better education is an important foundation for improving people's lives; more people will have jobs, they will be free from danger and they will live in good conditions.

Through good governance, Phuket Municipality is well-

placed to achieve this. We have received awards for good governance from many institutions, including King Prajadhipok's Institute.

In addition, all five municipal primary schools in the city have received awards for education management from the Ministry of Education. Phuket Municipality has also been certified to the ISO 9002 management standard.

Gazette: Would you say that Phuket City is now safe from flooding?

Somjai: To protect the city from flooding, Klong Bang Yai has been made deeper and wider so water can flow quickly to the sea. However, I would suggest that state officials investigate the root of the problem, especially where houses are on hills.

Water flows down to Phuket City from Kathu District, from the bypass road and from housing estates on hills, and causes flooding.

The problem is keeping the canal clear of debris so the water can flow quickly.

Gazette: How do you feel about the rate of Phuket's development?

Somjai: Phuket is changing very fast, in social and economic terms. As Mayor, I will be thinking of how to look after people so they can live in good conditions and adjust to the changing times.

Gazette: Have you decided when you will retire from local administration?

Somjai: Not yet. When I do retire, I will explain the workings of the *Khon Noom* Party, which has matured throughout its 30 years. It has had many leaders, with fresh young faces replacing the older members and those wanting to retire.

[Smiling] I don't know how long I'll be Mayor, but I can say that I won't be Mayor for life...

Gazette: What are your plans for after you retire from local administration?

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Good, bad and ugly

For many years, two Singaporean friends pondered the question of stability at anchor. Both had owned a succession of large yachts and had sailed them around the globe, loving nothing more than to head to some remote, idyllic location and drop anchor.

The problem that dogged them, as it does all owners of large yachts, was how to stop the vessel rolling in the swells heading to shore.

They fitted stabilizers but these proved ineffective, so both owners

set about building vessels designed to ride out the swells. Two yachts of radical design were the results of their labors.

First in water, as of January 2004, was the 88-meter Yantai Raffles yacht *Asean Lady*. Yacht lovers will be familiar with the original *Asean Lady*, built by Stirling Yachts of Japan, and a frequent visitor to Phuket.

But the new yacht bears no resemblance to anything seen in the world of superyachts before. Based on the outriggers of the South Pacific, *Asean Lady* – although twin-hulled – is not strictly a catamaran, but a *proa* design, with an outrigger hull that is half the length of her main hull.

In addition to solving the problem of stability at anchor, the *proa* design vastly increases the amount of usable deck space, because the whole superstructure spans both hulls. *Asean Lady* might not be the sleekest of yachts, but that was not the owners' brief.

Comfort at sea and increased living space were.

It is worth noting that some very progressive designs for cruise liners are now on the drawing board, featuring similar hull configurations.

The second of the Singaporean-owned yachts, still in build, will be the fourth in the series of *White Rabbit* yachts.



Singapore's *Asean Lady* underway: she may not be the prettiest of yachts but her outrigger hull gives her vastly more deck space.

This, too, will be a radical leap forward in yacht design.

At 58.5 meters, *White Rabbit IV* will be a trimaran, with a stunning, futuristic-looking main hull and two blade-like, wave-piercing subsidiary hulls extending from her superstructure and arcing down into the water.

Rumor has it that *White*

Rabbit IV should be launched within the year. With luck, Phuketians will get to see both yachts as their owners are frequent visitors to Phuket.

Good design gone bad: My passions in life are superyachts, architecture and interior design and I have often wondered why these worlds do not meet on most large yachts.

No matter what the exterior suggests, many have a gloomy, gentlemen's-club atmosphere inside, as if there is an unwritten rule that dark wood paneling, chintzy chairs, card tables and bars are a must in all superyachts.

More yachts are now breaking this rule and feature contemporary interior designs but it was inevitable that the sublime would become the ridiculous.

One recent example of expensive tackiness is the Heesen-built, 44m *Sweet Doll*. The interior designer credits retro-rock star Lenny Kravitz's house in Miami as being the inspiration.

I only wish it had been, for Lenny, the product of an upper-middle-class New York family, actually has rather good taste. Granted, his house may be very *Barbarella* meets *2001: A Space Odyssey* meets "I'm a rock god who loves a shag (pile) carpet" but it is carried off with a certain panache.

Sweet Doll, on the other

hand, looks like an interior-design standoff between Austin Powers and Dame Edna Everage.

More unnerving still is the fact that this is the "toned-down" version. The owner's wife was restrained by the designer and her husband from taking things further. Colors include red, purple, lilac, mango and mint green. She was also keen on psychedelic effects. Yeah, baby.

Saucy design accessories: Continuing on with what to drape over the furniture, Russians are now building – as well as buying – superyachts. Moscow Yachts' recent launch of the 38m yacht *Smile* was a very glitzy affair. As the 700 guests at the launch gawped, *Smile* appeared on the river through a bank of artificial fog, lasers and blaring music.

As well as Champagne and caviar, guests were treated to some eye candy shown on 12 plasma-screen TVs dotted around the party: a live broadcast of a photo shoot aboard the yacht – for an upcoming issue of Russian *Playboy*. Yeah, baby.

Aristotle Onassis lavished mega-drachmas on his famous yacht *Christina O*. As well as the mosaic-tiled swimming pool with the logo of a bull (how Mediterranean macho can you get?), gold taps, hair salon and cocktail bar. Onassis loved to brag to his guests that the bar stools that they were sitting on were covered in whale foreskin. No, baby!

Flicking through an Italian yacht magazine recently, I found myself staring at a full-page picture of a number of men – all handsome, muscle-bound, tanned and wearing very tasteful uniforms, but they all looked – how should I put this – a little too well-manicured for swabbing decks?

The editorial explained perfectly: they were the hand-picked crew of Giorgio Armani's latest superyacht. Yeah, baby.

Have you spotted a superyacht in Phuket waters? Want to share the poop on a super sloop? Send an email to Dominic Stroud at: superyachts@phuketgazette.net

Superyacht

WATCH

By Dominic Stroud



The Plantation, Kamala Bay, Phuket.

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The Sony Walkman, devised by the late Akio Morita and launched in 1979, revolutionized listening to music away from, or in, the home.

Before, tiny – and tinny-sounding – transistor radios were the only option. But with the Walkman, an audiophile could listen to as many cassettes as he or she could carry. Portable CD players, and then MiniDisc players and recorders, came next.

The problem with all of these gizmos is that – obviously – they must be slightly larger than the size of the medium they play. There are also constraints on the amount of music any of these formats can hold.

But now, carrying music, and much more of it than Mr Morita could possibly have envisioned, is easier than ever.

MP3 players, weighing as little as two CDs, can slip in your pocket or even be worn around your neck.

Each type of MP3 player varies in specification and price, but look to spend between 3,000 and 20,000 baht.

Wired for sound

Gizmos & Gadgets

by Gategaeo Phetsawang



Cheap and cheerful: the Apacer from Acer

One item from electronics giant Acer is the Apacer Audio Steno BP-300s, a stylish and ultra-compact design.

The BP-300s has three functions in one: MP3 player; voice recorder; and USB flash drive.

Record up to eight hours of speech, or download 35 to 40 music tracks on the 125MB model – and double these capacities with the slightly

more expensive 256MB version.

It features a simple, one-button function to access the menu. Downloading a music library in MP3 or WMA (Windows Media Audio) format from your PC or laptop via a standard USB port is simplicity itself. No

drivers are needed for Windows 2000/ME/XP although a software CD is included in the package for Windows 98 and 98SE users. A firmware update tool can be downloaded from www.apacer.com.

Output is via a 3.5mm mini-jack and a built-in equalizer has separate jazz, classical, rock, pop and normal settings.

A standard AAA battery should provide power for around four hours non-stop play. An alkaline battery should give around eight hours.

The package includes headphones, USB cable, AAA battery, software CD and two additional colored covers.

At the top end of the range is Apple Computer's amazing minimalist iPod. The 40GB version of this can hold at least 10,000 music tracks – enough for non-stop play for four weeks, or one song every day for the next 27 years.

The built-in rechargeable lithium ion battery gives eight hours of playback. It is just 16

millimeters thick and weighs in at 158 grams.

The more popular audio formats are supported by iPod, including MP3, MP3 Variable Rate (VBR) and WAV files, and the Apple Lossless format allows downloads straight from CD, taking up around half the space of uncompressed audio. All downloads are via USB 2.0 or FireWire through a four-to-six pin connector.

iPod has three ports: one, for the iPod Dock, which allows simple charging and connecting to your Apple computer; a remote control connector; and a stereo

mini-jack. Other accessories in the package are the iPod Dock, headphones, remote control, carrying case, AC adapter, iTunes for MAC and iTunes for Windows, and the manual.

There are 20 music equalizer settings and information can be displayed in 15 languages on the LCD with LED backlight.

A nifty accessory for the iPod is the iTrip, which allows you to broadcast, or perhaps narrowcast – authorities permitting – via FM to your car radio. Check login.co.th for details. Plug in, tune in and rock on...

Secondhand items and online buying are another choice when considering MP3 players. Different sites offer different payment conditions, and with a greater variety of products available from companies in Bangkok.

Good deals can be found at pantipmarket.com, ec-mall.com and ThaiClickShop.com. The usual caveats regarding online buying apply.

Apple's iPod has huge capacity – up to 10,000 music tracks.



Apacer Audio Steno BP300s are available at Bus Computer and Service Co Ltd, Big C Supercenter, at 3,250 baht for the 128 MB model and 5,350 baht for the 256MB version.

The Apple iPod can be bought from Phuket Alpha Engineering Co Ltd, 261 Thalang Rd, Muang, Phuket, 83000. Tel: 076-215796. Fax: 076-218603. The 15GB version costs 15,500 baht, the 20GB model costs 19,000 baht, while the price for the 40 GB version is 25,460 baht.

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You thought the Cold War was over? Think again. Thousands of heavily-armed troops wait poised to spring at each other's throats along the 250-kilometer-long demilitarized zone, or DMZ, that separates North and South Korea, a legacy of the war that raged on the peninsula in the early 1950s.

And – this is the sort of irony that everyone should cherish – because the four-kilometer-wide DMZ has been deserted by humans for much of the last half century, it's turned into one of Asia's most successful nature reserves.

More bizarre yet, the opposing nations, with some hefty input from the US, meet from time to time at the truce village of Pan Mun Jeom, glowering and snarling at each other from either side of a table with the international border running straight down the middle.

It gets even better. Tour groups are conducted around these wacky sights as part of an elaborate propaganda exercise. Motor out from the South Korean capital, Seoul, and you'll be given chapter and verse on the perfidy of the communist North, which has dug invasion tunnels and indulged in all sorts of terror tactics, from despatching guerrillas to bombarding sentries with brainwashing broadcasts from loudspeakers set to top volume.

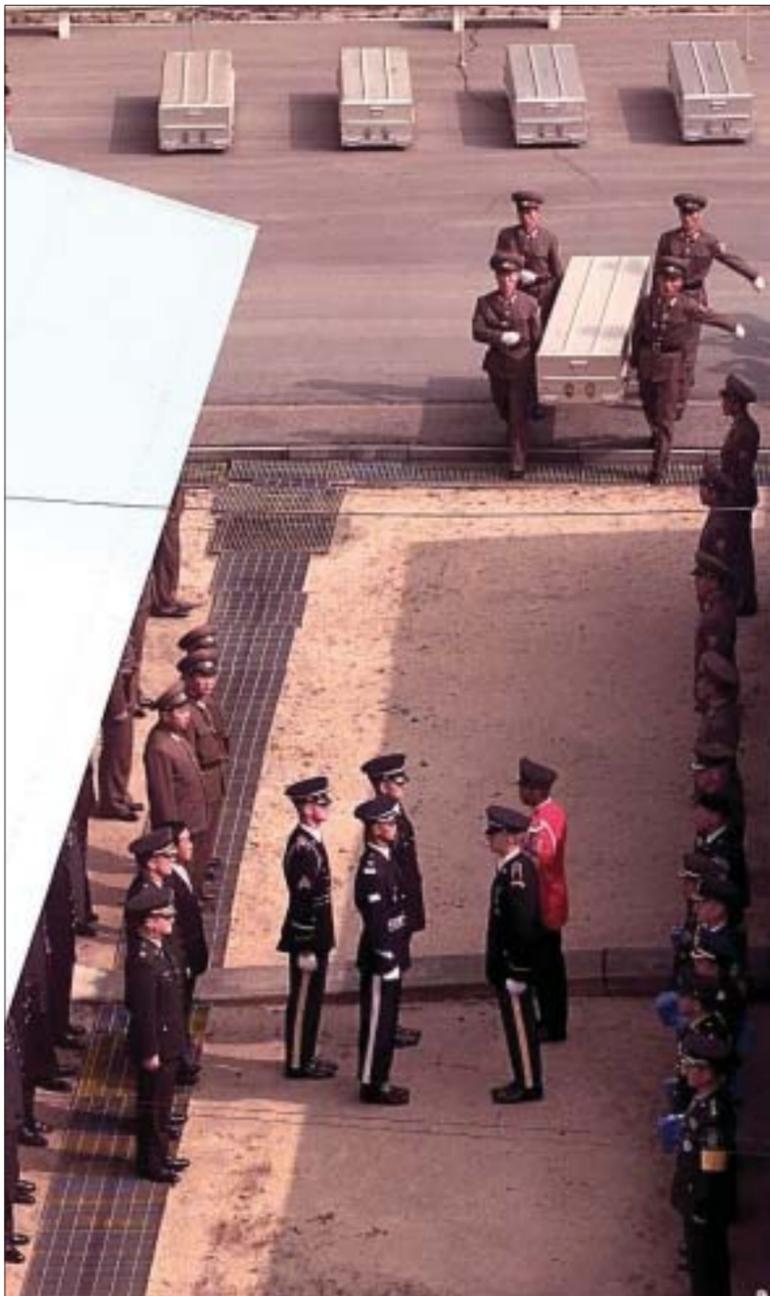
To get to the other side of the border, which is maybe 20 meters from the viewing stand, you have to retrace your steps to Incheon International Airport, fly to Beijing and then to the North Korean capital, Pyongyang, and then board a bus all the way back to Pan Mun Jeom.

There, North Korean guides will expound endlessly on just how evil the folk are down south, even (would you credit it?) spreading black propaganda to make it appear as if the North is digging invasion tunnels.

Convuluted? Ridiculous? Welcome to the no-man's land twilight zone where the chilling winds of the Cold War blow as chilly as ever.

Or at least they did until very recently, when North and South agreed to open two new roads which have just been completed through the buffer zone. There's talk of a rail link and increased trade. All of which spells the beginning of the end for one

Where the Cold War keeps on simmering



Left: North Korean troops return casualties of the Cold War to the South at Pan Mun Jeom. Above: The DMZ is a haven for wildlife while, below, a farmer harvests his crop near the border.



TALES OF A TRAVELER

By Ed Peters

of the weirdest corners of the planet, which – given its uniqueness – is a bit of a pity. Much of the earth is getting blander, with Starbucks and Internet cafés on

every corner. Pan Mun Jeom at least offers an edge with a capital E.

And you can't help but wonder what's going to happen to the nature reserve which came about by accident. The DMZ is an important haven for some of the world's most endangered birds, including the white-naped and red-crowned cranes.

Egrets, crested shelducks and swan geese flock here by the

hundreds, and Asiatic black bears and the goat-like Chinese goral have also been spotted. Korean tigers – a subspecies of the Siberian tiger – are also believed to be present, somehow avoiding setting off landmines or getting entangled in barbed wire.

Right next to the fences, farmers plough and sow and reap,

the rhythm of their lives dictated by the seasons rather than the ebb and flow of geopolitics.

It's some of the most beautiful countryside anywhere on the Korean peninsula. Let's just hope it stays that way, even if the head honchos in Seoul and Pyongyang decided it's time to become buddies.

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Get your brain in gear with The Monster Quiz



- Two Steves formed Apple Computer Co. One was Steve Jobs. Who was the other?
- Where would you find the Shwedagon Paya?
- Which element did Henry Cavendish discover?
- Which movie star was born Richard Jenkins?
- Which country's flag consists of vertical bars of black, yellow and red?
- What was President Gerald Ford's middle name?
- Which US state takes its name from the Spanish for "snow-clad"?
- By what name is Kalaallit Nunaat better known?
- In which year was the first Space Shuttle flight?
- Thomas J. Watson headed which corporation from 1924 to 1929?
- Which country lies between Kirgizstan and Turkmenistan?
- What did Babe Ruth do for a living before becoming a professional baseball player?
- If a Dyson Sphere is ever built, what will it enclose?
- Which of the following composers was *not* born in 1685 – Bach, Handel, Scarlatti, Telemann?
- Who wrote the tune *The Entertainer*?
- Name the ship on which Charles Darwin first formulated his ideas about evolution.
- What makes the platypus and the echidna different from all other mammals?
- What would you use a nocturnal for?
- William Jansz is believed to have been the first European to see what?
- The mythical creature, the mantichora, had the head of a man and the body of a what?

Answers next week

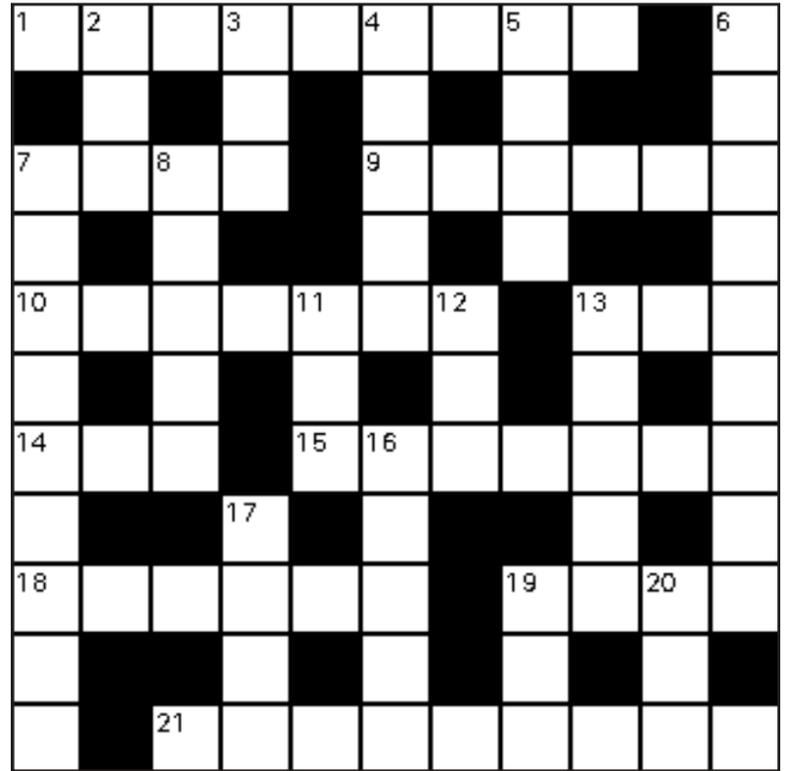
Never a Cross Word!

Across

- Fellow worker.
- Thin cut.
- Not the youngest.
- Carrion-eating bird.
- A knight's honorific.
- Fisherman's equipment.
- A pariah.
- It cancels acid.
- Movie with a cast of thousands.
- Indecipherable.

Down

- Night bird.
- Item for auction.
- Love of Paris.
- Pull to bits.



- From the southernmost continent.
- A week.
- Little island.
- Martian transport?
- Ingest.
- Bog.
- Come together.
- Mr Gauguin.
- Record label.
- Not well.

Solution next week.

Brain Buster!!

Manufacturer Jim Wicker is always grumbling to his friends, "If middle-aged people told the truth more often I would sell more of my products." What does he make?

He makes birthday cake candles.

Answers to last week's Monster Quiz

- Chair legs; 2. Maastricht; 3. R L Stevenson; 4. And; 5. As a barber; 6. Woodrow Wilson; 7. Tommy gun; 8. Alan Shepard; 9. Ice hockey; 10. New Mexico; 11. Folkstone; 12. Albania; 13. Lennox Lewis; 14. Green; 15. Louisiana; 16. Danny DeVito; 17. James Callaghan; 18. Catalan; 19. Spirit of America; 20. Joan of Arc.

Solution to last week's Crossword



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My darling, tell me true

In the timeless war between the sexes, there is no doubt that males and females operate under different rules of engagement. And in Pattaya, truth is the first casualty of bars.

"You have my wife?" asks Miss Buriram.

"No," lies Mr Burgeoning Beer Belly, with a straight face. "Do you have a boyfriend?"

"No," lies Miss Buriram, with an equally straight face. "I not marry, I not have baby. No one like me I not beautiful."

Such are the conversations taking place a thousand times a day in hundreds of bars across Fun Town.

The stretched truths spouting forth from the mouths of babes (dressed in low-cut tops and tight-fitting jeans) are matched by the amount of guano emanating from the jowls of bar hoppers (dressed in clammy shirts, ill-fitting trousers and black or white socks and sandals).

If it were possible to har-

ness the amount of energy expended in maintaining the mountain of lies making up just one enchanted evening in the environs of Pattaya, nuclear power might just become redundant.

After all, it is the aim of every girl sitting behind or in front of a beer bar, or hugging a chrome pole in a go-go, to ascertain the credentials (read: monetary potential) of all those with whom she comes into contact.

If a man asks, "Do you have a boyfriend?" and she says no, the truth may be that she has several boyfriends, not just "a boyfriend". So she is not actually telling a lie when she demurs, just bending the truth somewhat.

Equally, when a man denies having a girlfriend it may well be because he has a wife, and few people who've sauntered down the marital aisle would ever think of classifying their nearest and dearest as a "girlfriend".

If he doesn't have a wife, then he probably has a number



FROM THE STREETS OF PATTAYA

By Duncan Stearn

of "girlfriends". Time to bend and stretch again.

Of course, all this liberality with the truth is something your garden-variety bar girl has learned from close observation of the average politician.

For example, back in 1999 the then-Minister of Tourism came to Pattaya, conducted an investigation and upon her return to Bangkok stated that she had

found no evidence of prostitution.

Part of her research involved going into one go-go bar and asking two pertinent and searching questions. The first was, "Are any of you girls under the age of 18?" They all answered in the negative.

Then she cut to the chase by asking, "Do any of you girls make love with men in exchange for money?"

Again, being law-abiding model citizens, they all answered in the negative, no doubt affronted by such a preposterous suggestion.

Knowing that a golden orb of truth resides in the heart of every dancing maiden, the Tourism Minister was happy with the verbal somersaults of answers she received and returned with heart a-gladdened to the smog-filled streets of Bangkok.

Unfortunately, the reality is that it can sometimes get worse, rather than better, when members

of the opposite sex decide to live together. Not only are they from differing cultures but also, more than likely, they are from different generations and so their social mores reside at opposite ends of a very cloudy spectrum.

One man, who had "saved" a go-go dancer from the drudgery of caressing chrome poles, discovered his sweetheart had been somewhat liberal with the truth.

"But you lied to me," he exclaimed, all injured pride and pouting lips.

"That's my job," she replied matter-of-factly.

According to the TV series *The X-Files*, the truth is out there, somewhere.

However, agents Mulder and Scully would have more chance of discovering that Mars is inhabited by little green men than they would of finding a single bar girl or regular foreign visitor to Pattaya who could pass a lie detector test.

The magic weight-loss formula

The following six-step weight loss formula is magic, resulting in losses of five or six kilos within two or three weeks if you stick to it. Combined with sensible eating habits and regular exercise, this regimen can also help keep you fit for life.

1. Commitment: Before you even lace up your workout shoes, the first thing you have to do is to commit to your program every day. No matter what else is going on in your life, remind yourself of your fitness goals and give your workout the priority it deserves.

Write it down in your day planner and treat it just as you would any other appointment that you wouldn't miss. If you occasionally find yourself falling off the fitness wagon, don't give up.

2. Set short-term goals only: Set only short-term weight loss goals of a few kilos over a three-week period. Weigh yourself only once a week, and always just after you wake up.

3. Measurements: Weigh and measure yourself before embarking on a program. Take measurements of your waist, hips, neck, as well as your thighs, and record the information. If you can, get a body fat percentage check too. Fat loss is more important than weight loss.

4. Nutrition: Follow a low-carbohydrate diet like the Atkins diet for two to three weeks, depending on how much you want to lose. That means no fruits, breads, sugar, candy, alcohol, rice, noodles or milk. Drink copious amounts of water. Eat four or five times a day at three-hour intervals, but consume only small quantities.

Breakfast is a must. Also, try to eat your last meal before 7pm. Eat more carbs during the day than in the evening. It's essential to plan meals and snacks in advance, even if it means preparing food at home and taking it with you when you have to go out.

When you reduce the carbohydrates in your diet, you put your body into a condition called ketosis. This word is derived from the ketones, the fat fragments that are excreted during fat metabolism to maintain the body's acid-base balance.

Ketones have about five

calories per gram, and since large numbers of them can be excreted when the body is deprived of carbs, very rapid weight loss is possible.



Fitness FANATIC

By Joe and Pensri Lewis

The Atkins Diet may not be for everyone, but by sensibly incorporating some of its elements, such as lowering your carbohydrate intake and by eating more natural-state foods, you may find that you can achieve great results without ever having to completely restrict yourself.

It may take a little longer, but the results will be more permanent. Consider it more of a lifestyle change than a diet.

One of the major misconceptions about the Atkins Diet is that you can – or should – eat unhealthy, fatty foods all the time.

This is not true. Dr Atkins recommended that you limit your intake of foods such as butter, sausage, and bacon and instead focus on healthy fats such as nuts, olive oil and fish oil.

5. Cardio Training: Get your heart pumping five or six times a week on a treadmill or by brisk walking, cycling, running, swim-

ming or any combo of these. Increase intensity throughout the program.

Use interval training intermittently while maintaining your pulse at the target rate for your age group.

If you're out of shape, however, start slowly and try to build up to 20 minutes at the target heart rate.

Don't take risks with your heart. If you are an early bird, do your cardio before breakfast.

Walk everywhere and, if possible, take a walk at night, an hour before bed. Even if it's only for 15 minutes it will burn calories, aid digestion and induce drowsiness.

6. Weight Training: Train two or three times a week, with at least three days' rest between workouts. Work big muscle groups – chest, back, legs. Use compound exercises such as

Drink copious amounts of water. Eat four or five times a day at three-hour intervals, but consume only small quantities.

squats, overhead squats, deadlifts, push-press, and power cleans.

The rest period between exercises should be no more than two minutes, although this can be longer if you are just starting out. Full body workouts build a strong foundation of lean muscle.

It is important to weight-train because muscle burns fat even when you are not exercising. A single pound of added muscle burns an extra 60-100 calories per day. If you do not

weight-train, a higher percentage of your weight loss will be muscle. That's not what you want to lose.

Timing of workouts is crucial, as growth hormone peaks when blood glucose is low. If possible, train in the morning. If not, the best training time is two to three hours after a meal, when your body has burned off the blood glucose from the food.

You need to completely dedicate yourself to this program only for the next two to three weeks, after which you should review your progress. Do not exceed three weeks on a strict Atkins program.

If you have any medical problems, especially diabetes, high blood pressure or heart ailments, consult your doctor before embarking on any program.

Pensri & Joe Lewis are fitness and equipment consultants at Fitness R Us. Tel: 09-8663736 Email: jlewis@loxinfo.co.th.

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How to spot a simple sponge

Sponges are the most primitive and least specialized of all multicellular animals. They are so different from other animals that for centuries people believed they were plants.

When you are relaxing in your bath rubbing your body with a soapy sponge, you are actually using spongin, the soft skeleton of the animal.

Sponges are found in all the world's oceans, shallow and deep, tropical and polar. They range in size from nearly microscopic to giant barrel sponges and from single individuals to loosely organized colonies.

Thailand has a wide assortment of species, ranging from the multitude of colorful encrusting sponges to the inverted cones of Verongida and giant pink barrel sponges with diameters of up to 50 centimeters.

Despite this variety, sponges have remained basically unchanged since the Devonian period, some 450 million years ago. During those ancient times sponges were among the dominant life forms of the oceans.

About 15,000 species are known, but many more probably remain unidentified. This is because sponges of single species may have very different appearances depending on the environment where they are found, which makes the task of identifying new species difficult.

Sponges, incidentally, are the only animals that are completely "sessile", with no free-swimming stage. They are also one of nature's vacuum cleaners. Sponges are very efficient filter feeders.

Basically, sponges are thin-walled sacks with many perforations called ostia. Nutrient-filled water is drawn into the center of the sponge by choanocytes - cells containing flagella in the sponge walls, which create the water currents that pass through the walls.

Nutrients are extracted and the water and wastes are expelled through the single large opening, the osculum. Food is digested by



EARTH WATCH

By Robert Cogen

structures called amoebocytes. Because sponges have a preference for bacteria and organic debris, they are often found in abundance close to the mouths of rivers or harbor entrances.

Besides spongin, most sponges have spicules, which are hard rods or branched structures that form a skeletal system. Some of these are interlocking and quite beautiful, as in the Venus' flower basket.

The Calcareo have spicules that are calcareous - made of calcium or lime. These sponges are among the most primitive. They are found in shallow waters, some even between the high and low tide marks, and

surround every major land mass. Most are dull-colored and inconspicuous. They most often form small, 10-cm-long cylinders in caves and under ledges.

The Hexactinellida have six-pointed spicules. This class is known as the glass sponges, be-

cause when dried they look as if they are made of spun glass. They are mostly found in deep water, usually 500-1,000 meters deep. Some have even been dredged up from 5,000 meters. They are usually pale without bright colors.

The third class of sponges is the Demospongiae. This class contains most of the world's sponges. Some have spicules, though not hexactinal ones. They also have spongin fibers.

Some completely lack spicules; these are called horny sponges. Demospongiae include the familiar bath sponge.

Sponges are hosts for many invertebrates. Some crabs and shrimp live on or in them. Worms and sea cucumbers also live commensally with various sponges. The sea cucumbers eat the larger organic debris that accumulates on the outside of the sponge-host.

Various fish, from little gobies to large stonefish, hide out in barrel sponges. Stonefish use the barrel as a trap in which to capture and eat smaller prey. Be careful when exploring these structures that you don't put your hand or bare foot in a barrel sponge occupied by a serious stinger.

I have also seen frogfish, also called anglerfish, sitting on or next to a sponge disguised to look just like part of the sponge while waiting for prey to come along and be eaten.

In shallow water, algae, particularly the blue-green algae living on coral reefs, may infiltrate a sponge and set up house in its tissue. The sponge may take on the bluish color of the algae. The algae will continue to undergo photosynthesis, but will pay rent by leaking a significant amount of the sugars it metabolizes into the sponge.

Whether you are diving, snorkeling or wading in the shallows along the beach take time to look at these creatures and observe the variety of interactions they have with other marine animals.

Robert Cogen is a well-known California lawyer and a broadly experienced naturalist with a degree in zoology. Email: indepth@asis.com.

Help is at hand for your pet

Top Dog is always happy to receive readers' queries. Recently I was asked, "Is there an emergency veterinarian service on the island? Can you recommend a particular vet?"

The answer is that there is no emergency service in Phuket but some vets are prepared to give their mobile telephone number to regular clients for use in an emergency.

Other vets have indicated that, as they actually live on site at their clinics, they don't mind being woken to treat an animal. Speak with your vet and ask for his or her policy.

There are many practices on the island, but not all of them are run by qualified veterinarians. I have compiled a list (in roughly north-south order) of all the clinics I know of. All of these are run by fully-qualified vets.

Standards and services offered vary from quite basic to a level rivaling surgeries found in the West. Visit some, and use your own judgement.

Thalang Veterinary Clinic, run by Dr Trethep, is on the road between Thalang and Laguna. Coming from Laguna, turn left just after the Thalang fresh market and the clinic is 100 meters further along on the right-hand side. Opening hours are 5 pm-9 pm Monday to Friday and 9 am-5 pm at weekends. Tel: 06-6822557 or 076-274353.

Matta Vet Clinic, 242/3 Yaowarat Rd (between Wachira Phuket Hospital and Bangkok Phuket Hospital, on the opposite side of the road). The clinic is closed on Wednesdays but is open from 9 am to 8 pm on all other days. Call Dr Sujitra at Tel: 076-237385 for more details.

Marnosh Vet Clinic. When traveling into Phuket City along Thepkrasattri Rd, turn right into Komarapat Rd at the set of traffic lights where the road crosses Klong Bang Yai. Opening hours are 10 am-8 pm every day. Contact Dr Marnosh at Tel: 076-236078 or 076-236341.

Tanut Clinic. Coming from Tesco Lotus toward town, turn left at the end of the wide part of the road, into Pracha Uthit Rd. The clinic is in the small parade of shops just after the turning. Opening hours are 9 am-8 pm Monday to Saturday and 5 pm-8 pm on Sunday. Call Dr Tanut on Tel: 01-8099010.

Raksat Small Animal Hospital at 14/4 Mae Luan Rd in Phuket City has five vets led by Dr Boonchit. Opening hours are 9 am-midnight, seven days a week. Tel: 076-211549 or 01-8911582.

Phuket Animal Hospital is right next door to Charoen Phromphan supermarket on Chao Fa West Rd. Opening hours are 9 am-7:30 pm Monday to Saturday and 9 am-midday on Sunday. Call Dr Suchon at Tel: 076-222362.

Ao Chalong Animal Clinic is approximately 100m south of Chalong Circle, on the right-hand side of Wiset Rd. Opening hours are 9:30 am-8 pm Monday to Saturday. Drs Anucha and Raphipan can be reached at Tel: 076-280740.

Another veterinary clinic is scheduled to open shortly at Rawai, but details were not available at the time of going to press.

Top Dog is always pleased to receive comments and news about animals. Email him at: topdog9@myway.com



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No need to reinvent the wheel

National pride is a double-edged sword. On the positive side, it promotes a sense of identity, getting people to work together toward common goals. It helps preserve culture and history which might otherwise disappear under the assault of political, cultural and business pressures from other, more powerful nations.

Under the current government, particularly during its early days, Thailand saw a drive to boost national pride and "self-reliance". Partly this was due to what some observers saw as cynical political manipulation: create an enemy at the gates and the whole population will stand behind the leaders.

But a majority, disturbed at having Western "culture" rammed down their throats by international corporations, and hankering after a past that seemed increasingly remote, applauded this revival of national pride. Some took the call for greater national pride a step further, turning it into a program of xenophobia. For them, "We love Thailand" meant "We hate everyone else."

This can result in the rejection not only of what is bad but also of what is good. "We are a great country. We don't need your technology. We can come up with our own," may be fine as a rallying call, but it is a poor basis for practical solutions.

What results from this attitude is a constant reinventing of the wheel. All too frequently, the reinvented wheel turns out to be square. Even when the "wheel" is a usable shape, a great deal of time and money has usually been wasted.

The key to all of this is common sense. Should the Thai government spend fortunes inventing Thai methods for making burgers? Or should it opt instead to import burger-making expertise? Common sense would indicate that it does not need to do either; Thai burgers are not something Thailand needs.

Does Thailand need foreign expertise to help the country make Thai food? Obviously not.

Should Thailand try to invent its own software and hardware to create a "Cyber Paradise" in Phuket, or should it import the technology and expertise it lacks? Common sense, in this case, would seem to indicate that the latter is the more practical path.

That is why this week's launch of a 98-million-baht joint project between the state-owned semi-monopoly TOT and South Korean telecoms giant KT to set up and run high-speed telecoms networks in Thailand was so encouraging. (See page 21.)

The launch is not just good news for those who have been waiting so long for high-speed connections. It is also a cheering indication of a change in thinking.

- The Editor



Letters

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

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

Parking space chair becomes a hot seat

During a recent shopping trip, I had to circle Robinson's Department Store a number of times before I could find a parking space. I eventually spotted a space, but someone had put a chair in it as if to show it was reserved.

I have always disliked this kind of behavior, so I stopped, moved the chair and parked in the space.

A shopkeeper then came out from his shop and watched me park. As I got out of the car he asked me why I had moved his chair. I replied, "Why not?"

"Because I reserved that space for my car," he replied.

I answered, "This is a public parking place. You have no right to reserve it." To which he replied, "Go home, *farang*."

Should I follow his advice and go home? Or should he learn to respect his fellow men and live with the rules of society?

Kurt Boysen
Rawai

Health check was not a health check

I had a complete health checkup at the Bangkok Phuket Hospital five weeks before I went to the Phuket Provincial Immigration Office (PPIO) to renew my annual retirement visa.

I was told, however, that this was not acceptable and I had to go to another clinic down the road from the PPIO.

There I waited 10 minutes before being taken into the doctor's room, where a stetho-

scope was held to the front of my shirt and I was told, "Thank you. Please pick up your certificate and pay the bill."

As I had walked in unaided I assume that they could see I was well. Rather strange.

Derek Priest
Kathu

Getting real results with the Thai post

During the time I have lived in Phuket I have read countless letters and articles in the *Phuket Gazette* about lost or delayed mail.

Six months ago, I set up an experiment with my son in the UK. Every three weeks we would each post a letter, and then confirm the posting and delivery dates to each other by email.

Of the 10 I sent to him, all were delivered to my son. The time between posting and delivery ranged between five and eight days.

Of the 10 he posted to me, seven were delivered to my house anywhere between 15 and 22 days after posting, and three never arrived.

I think this demonstrates the efficiency, or otherwise, of the Thai postal service.

Miffed Mailer
Phuket

Minibus driver but maximum kindness

I ran out of petrol in the middle of Phuket City during a recent morning rush hour and prepared myself to face an onslaught from the driver of the minibus that pulled up behind me.

I would not even have dared to get out of my car in England, where I used to live.

However, he was extremely polite, kind and patient as I blabbered my apologies.

Both the driver and a passing policeman helped me to push my car out of the way before the driver - Noi from Noi Adventures - drove me to the nearest petrol station, organized a can of petrol and even put it in my car for me.

I really appreciated the assistance given and would like to say a big thank you to Noi and the police officer.

Ita
Rawai

Dog pound is a real dog's breakfast

Reading the *Gazette's* lead story in the July 17 issue ("Govt refuses to close dog pound"), it appears that the authorities have embarked upon another project without thinking it through.

I travel between Mai Khao and Phuket City daily, and on virtually every journey I see at least one dead dog on the road near the pound and others wandering aimlessly close by. How long will it be before a major accident occurs?

Anyone can see that the pound will do nothing to solve the island's stray dog problem, and the only sane ideas appear to come from Margot Homburg Park of the Soi Dog Foundation.

The government should learn from what has happened in other countries, support her work, and sterilize Phuket's dogs.

Paul Thomas
Mai Khao

Phuket Gazette

In association with The Nation Multimedia Group PCL

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The views expressed in the *Phuket Gazette* are those of the writers and contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher, the editor, the shareholders, or the directors of The *Phuket Gazette* Co Ltd.

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

Time to look after tourists

It's normal for politicians to work for the benefit of the voters, but I think local politicians have gone too far in this direction and have ignored the needs of the tourists on whom all of us in Patong depend.

Patong is a major money-earner for Phuket and provides employment for many different kinds of people. But every time there is an election, the candidates say only, "I am Patong-born and I will help other Patong-born people if I am elected."

The need to win over [a small number of] voters is what has caused elections in Patong to become so competitive and divisive.

Of course, the politicians need to develop their voter base and develop trust; it's natural for voters to believe that whoever leads Patong will cater to their needs – or risk losing in the next election.

But we shouldn't forget that the name Patong Beach is known all over the world. Phuket has about three million tourists a year and about 70% of these stay in Patong. Given these numbers, Patong shouldn't be administered solely for the benefit of local people, but should also consider the needs and wants of the tourists who visit.

At the moment, because Patong has no [elected] government, leadership has fallen into the hands of bureaucrats who are neither authorized nor brave enough to make large [budget] decisions. They can carry out routine procedures, but are unable to tackle pressing problems, such as the need to finish Phase I of the sewage treatment project or begin Phase II. [The project contractor accused former mayor Surasak Maneesri and his deputy mayor of extortion and the work has been stopped until the case is resolved by the courts.]

Patong needs leadership, somebody [from the central Government] who can step in right now and order that the project be finished. We can't afford to wait until election results are confirmed.

Wastewater is currently flowing right into the sea, untreated. The problem we had with all the seaweed on the beach



FIRST PERSON

On June 20, Patong held its fourth municipal elections in less than two years. As in previous polls, complaints of electoral fraud from both sides have resulted in yet another lengthy investigation being launched by Thailand's Central Election Commission.

Until the results are confirmed – and that is by no means a certainty – Patong will continue to function without a city council or mayor, as it has done since former Mayor Chalernsak Maneesri was ordered out of office for corruption last November.

Patong has 9,213 eligible voters, only a small fraction of the town's actual population. One man who feels that Patong's tourism industry suffers at the hands of local political machinations is Panu Maswongsa, Vice President of the Phuket Tourist Association and Marketing Director of Patong Resort.

Originally from Yala province, he has worked in Patong for 19 years. Yet, like most people with a stake in Patong's success, he has no say in how the town is governed or how municipal budgets are spent. Here he expresses his views on how the situation could be improved.

this year is related to the delay in finishing the sewage treatment plant.

A government official has said that Phase II of the sewage treatment can't begin until Phase I has been completed, so the whole thing has been delayed and the [environmental] problems just keep getting worse.

The Governor should step in and order the work [to start on Phase II] even if the Phase I work is bogged down in the legal system.

Right now, politicians in Patong do everything for [native] Patong people only, but don't provide enough facilities for tourists. We lack public toilets, car parks or even a stretch of empty sand where

beachgoers can lie down. The entire beach is taken up by rows of beach chairs.

We also still get floods in the streets. I have seen tourists holding umbrellas and having their pictures taken [while standing knee-deep] in flooded streets. That's because this type of thing doesn't happen in their own countries.

The number of tourists coming to Patong is falling because people are getting fed up with so many things. They are going to places like Khao Lak and Krabi instead. Tourists to Patong are increasingly independent tourists who come here to enjoy the nightlife. That's because we have failed to develop attractions or entertainment for families and children, such as

an amusement park or an aquarium.

I would like to see the new mayor of Patong starting to think about the tourists on whom the entire community depends.

I believe that, in the coming 10 years, tourism in Phuket will die if we don't make improvements now. Everyone knows what the problems are in Patong. But so far nobody has been brave enough to take action.

Personally, I would like to see the entire island designated as a special administrative area like Bangkok and Pattaya. That way we could better integrate development, rather than having everything done piecemeal [and being at the mercy of local politics].

Confused over visas

I telephoned the Thai Embassy in Los Angeles, California, and spoke with them about visas.

They assured me that there is no such thing as a 90-day non-immigrant visa, and told me that what I was after was a 60-day tourist visa.

My ultimate goal is to apply for permanent residence in Thailand and work for a local wireless Internet firm in Phuket.

I guess I must take things one step at a time, but I would like to get started as soon as possible.

Could you suggest which visa I should obtain first, and then explain the next step of applying for a one-year non-immigrant visa after I arrive in Thailand? That would be most helpful.

John Michael Kiser
GCI Network Solutions
Alaska

Pol Capt Krissarat Nuesen, Deputy Superintendent of the Phuket Provincial Immigration Office, replies:

You can enter Thailand two ways:

1. With a tourist visa issued by a Thai consulate. This will

allow you to stay in Thailand for 60 days. Do not enter Thailand on a 30-day transit visa issued on arrival.

Once you are here you can begin the process of obtaining a permit to stay in Thailand from the Immigration Office. If you cannot complete the process within 60 days, you can return to Thailand whenever you like until you get your permit to stay.

2. You can arrive on a non-immigrant B visa ("B" for business reasons) obtained from a Thai consulate.

To get a non-immigrant B visa, you will need to prove to the consulate staff that you are going to work in Thailand, by showing them a letter from a company in Thailand stating that it plans to hire you, along with the company's registration documents and other personal documents or, if you are buying a business, the registration papers of the company you plan to buy.

The consulate will not issue a non-immigrant B visa without evidence that you are to be employed or that you really want to have a business.

If you just want to stay for

a while to check out investment possibilities or research how to open a new business, you should explain all this to the consulate and provide as much documentation as possible.

If the consular staff do not have enough information, they cannot determine what kind of visa to issue to you.

Once you arrive in Thailand with a non-immigrant B visa, Immigration at the airport will consider how many days you can stay in Thailand. Normally it is 90 days, but in some cases it can be less, or more.

At the end of that period, and assuming you have a multiple-entry visa, you must leave Thailand, then return and repeat the process.

If, during the 90 days, you can organize the work permit, company registration or whatever you need in order to work or do business, then you will be able to apply at the Immigration Office for an extension of permit of stay (provided that you qualify for an extension).

As for permanent resident status, this is difficult to get and takes years.

Issues & ANSWERS

Want to know how to get something done? Can't understand some of the dafter things that seem to go on in Phuket? Want to pitch an idea to Phuket's authorities or institutions? Then this is the forum for you. Submit your queries or suggestions to us and we'll ask the appropriate people to respond to them.

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

Motorbike license plates

It seems that motorcycles in Bangkok are being issued a new style of license plates. They are square, bigger and do not have a red line across the middle.

I recently moved to Phuket, and I have three motobikes to re-register. I'd like to have the new-style number plates. When will they be available in Phuket?

Also, what has motivated the government to change the style of motorbike licence plates?

John Hamilton
Australia

Teerayuth Prasertphol, Chief of the Phuket Provincial Transportation Office, responds:

Initially, only motorbikes registered in Bangkok were issued the new-style licence plates, but now they are available in the provinces, including Phuket.

The new licence plates are indeed square and bigger. They are white with black characters showing the full name of the province where the bike is registered. This makes it much easier to see where a bike is registered.

A new master of the short story

I had assumed *A Few Short Notes on Tropical Butterflies* (Viking, New York, 2003, 274pp) was a light-hearted travel book written by a feckless Brit in the mode of *A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush* by Eric Newby.

It turns out that author John Murray is a medical doctor from Australia and this, his first book, is a collection of masterful short stories worthy of the young Hemingway. The sentences are short, the words simple and there is a heavy use of the conjunction "and".

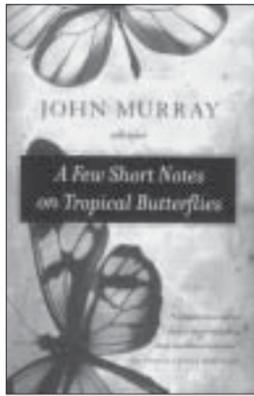
There the similarities end. The eight stories in this volume are delicately toned – no macho posturing here – and involve a sweeping range of characters in wildly diverse settings: Bombay, Key West, New York, Raleigh, Rwanda, Australia, the Himalayas and Iowa City.

In the first story, *The Hill Station*, Elizabeth Dinkar, a 40-year-old bacteriologist and second-generation American from India, comes to her parents' country for the first time to conduct a workshop on cholera.

Horrified by what she sees in the slums of Bombay, she flees in a panic aboard a wheezing old bus for the refuge of a British hill station. An accident in the rain strands her on the road. Shortly afterward, Elizabeth experiences an epiphany in the mountains and winds up marrying an young Indian man she has just met on the bus.

All the Rivers in the World is the best of an excellent bunch. Vitek Kerolak travels from his Maine hardware store to bring back his fisherman father who has run away to Key West and is living with Chika Portini, a nurse 20 years his junior but a veteran of Afghanistan and various African hellholes through service with Medecins Sans Frontières (MSF).

Vitek's two fisherman brothers had died at sea when he was a child and he is deathly afraid of water, yet he agrees to go out with his father and Chika for a dawn run in the old man's new fishing boat. Vitek's sudden, reckless act of self-abnegation ends the story on a note of transcendence and reconciliation.



In the title story, the narrator is a middle-aged New York surgeon who marries Maya, an American-born Indian brain surgeon 20 years his junior. The complexities of their relationship are symbolized by their violently opposing attitudes toward his grandfather's legendary butterfly collection.

We're in a similar nexus in *White Flour*. An American doctor working with lepers in India marries an Indian paleontologist, takes her back to his family mansion in Raleigh, North Carolina, leaves her with three children 10 years later and disappears to work in the slums of Bombay. Fifteen years after that – during a time of riots between Hindus and Muslims in Bombay – his 26-year-old son Joseph comes to find him.

Watson and the Shark is a real-life horror story about a refugee camp in Rwanda, a meticulous description of how a small team of MSF doctors struggle to make order out of chaos as a marauding Congolese army swarms over the border.

The Carpenter Who Looked Like a Boxer may be one of Murray's early stories, set in Australia and derivative of Tim

Winton: ugly carpenter left with daughter by his upper-class psychiatrist wife who has fled to Hong Kong.

Blue opens with one of the strangest opening scenes in modern fiction: a pair of mountaineers reach a summit in the Himalayas and wait for the estranged father of one of them to catch up. The tale is narrated with Murray's usual fierce attention to detail but is spoiled by a contrived ending.

The concluding story *Acts of Memory, Wisdom of Man*, is the longest at 63 pages, and the most warm-hearted and expansive, taking in 40 years of the lives of an eccentric Indian family living in Iowa City. The story keeps circling back to the summer of 1968 when the actions of two teenage brothers will determine the course of the rest of their lives. This is storytelling in a grand way, switching in mood from humor to nostalgia to high drama to elegy.

These are some of the best stories I've read in years, right up there with giants like Alice Munro and John Updike.



Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt

New WiMP is no longer wimpish

Microsoft has released a beta test version of Windows Media Player 10 (WiMP 10), the new generation of the Windows default media player.

I have never been much of a WiMP fan, but this version just might convert me.

Much is unchanged from WiMP 9 – the interface and functions are similar – but WiMP 10 looks sleeker, is simpler and easier to use, and behind the scenes it offers a whole lot more.

A word of caution to those not familiar with beta versions of programs: they are not for the faint-hearted. When you install the WiMP 10 beta, the installer automatically creates a system restore point, just in case you want to get rid of the program.

During the installation, WiMP 10 asks some questions that WiMP 9 should have, notably whether you would like to

create "licenses" for copyright media files added to your library.

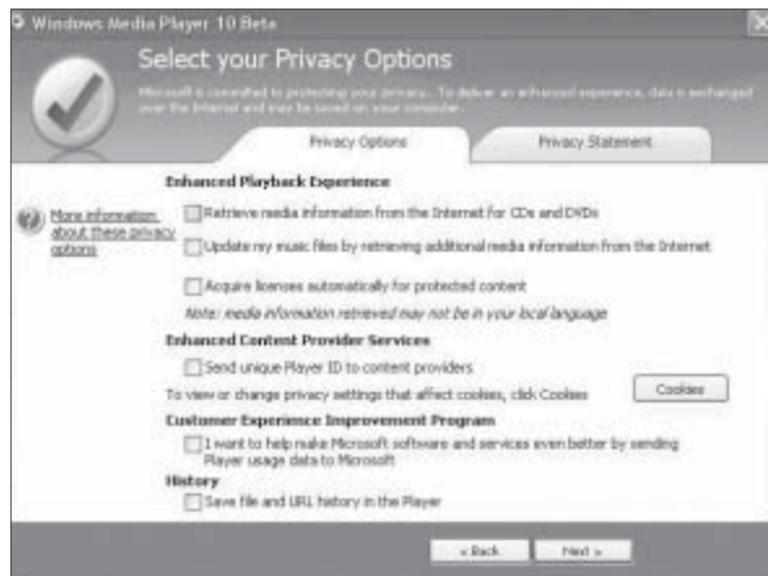
WiMP 9 by default limited the number of times you could copy such files regardless of whether the files were obtained legitimately or not, a function Microsoft calls Digital Rights Management (DRM). This was the one single "function" that put me off WiMP entirely.

Depending on who you talk to, unlocking WiMP 9's DRM restrictions requires serious rummaging around in the player's settings, or buying a third-party codec so you can rip your audio CDs into MP3 format (something I still heartily recommend because MP3s can't have restrictions placed on them) and/or using other software altogether.

I saw no reason to become an expert in WiMP just to use it, so I simply used a combination of other free media players that did the job just as well. Having DRM switched off by default makes WiMP 10 a much more attractive option.

When the WiMP 10 finally launches, the first things regular WiMP users will notice is the sleeker skin, with the menu bar set to Autohide by default, and with the left-hand taskbar now on top – all moves for the better.

The new layout provides more lateral space for scanning through the media library and the ridiculous number of information columns found to the right of the main screen in WiMP 9 has been replaced with the Playlist. All



Having DRM switched off by default (third item on the list) is a big improvement in WMP10.

simple but effective layout changes.

There are fewer buttons and with simpler names – "Rip" instead of "Copy from CD" and "Burn" instead of "Copy to CD" – akin to other popular media players, making WiMP 10 easier for newcomers to use.

The sillier – sorry, "power-user preferred" – buttons (Skin chooser, Media Guide and Premium Services) are no longer in your face. They have been buried beneath the main screen, where they belong, but still only one or two clicks away.

Ripping and Burning are one-click simple, but some of the second-level buttons look confusingly similar to each other. (There's a rumor that these but-

tons will get a makeover before WiMP 10's final release.)

One of the major attractions of WiMP 10 is the drop-down menus under the Library button that provide easy access to the Library with files presorted by, for example, artist, album and genre, making it very easy to launch any media file in the library quickly.

The new library layout offers quick, easy access to all forms of media files, including recorded TV shows and other online content. Sadly, it will be some time before these functions will be needed by the common user on Phuket, especially if the current Internet connection rates aren't improved soon.

It will be even longer before we in Thailand get the ability to record TV shows directly, the "Personal Digital Recorder" feature that Americans and Europe-

ans know as TiVO. I won't even mention Windows Media Center Edition (MCE), which makes all of this one-click simple – it may be years before MCE lands on our fair shores.

But the big upgrades touted by Microsoft are the ability to synchronize files, playlists and the like with a greater range of portable devices, and the integration of access to online media providers, mainly directed at online music stores.

These features are not just another integrated shopping experience; together, they open the door to services online media providers are looking to offer.

CinemaNow, MusicNow and Napster are gearing themselves up to test the waters with plug-ins that load directly into WiMP 10, so there will be no need to load a separate program to buy music or rent digital movies. It's a whole new way of buying and playing music.

Napster is considering a monthly subscription service that would allow people offline access to any of its 700,000 songs, allowing them to download music (and videos) to a portable device. The songs will be "locked" if the subscription is not renewed.

Imagine never again regretting that you have bought the modern equivalent of Wham!'s *Make it Big*. Yes indeed, WiMP 10 is looking good.

Woody Leonhard has written a number of books in the "...for Dummies" series on computing. Readers can contact him at: woody@kahunwoody.com

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Korean giant enters Phuket IT market

By Gategeo Phetsawang

PHUKET: South Korea's largest fixed-line telecommunications provider, KT Corp, has entered the Thai IT market with a 98-million-baht deal to install 5,000 ADSL ports, providing broadband Internet access, in Phuket.

The contract is part of TOT's expansion of Internet services, a key component of the

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Ministry's push to make Phuket an "ICT City".

Speaking at the official launch on July 14, Aran Permpiboon, Senior Executive Vice-President and Acting President of TOT, said, "We will be installing 5,000 ADSL ports and an additional 19,530 telephone numbers. With Phuket as a tourist destination and the variety of businesses here, this project will boost the local economy by at least 15%."

He said that the improved ADSL services will also aid the development of services that are not directly dependent on Internet services, such as medical treatment and e-education.

Yong-Kyung Lee, President & CEO of KT Corp, said, "It's important to have the participation of the private sector in this kind of project."

"In Korea, the government's contribution is mainly [in the form of] the promotion of broadband uses and access to the Internet backbone, but we need participation from the private sector as well."

Mr Lee explained that KT's entry into the Thai IT market is part of the company's push into other markets abroad. "We have incorporated companies in Russia, China, Japan and the US and have also contacted officers [to set up operations] in India and Vietnam," Mr Lee explained.

"We have just started work-

ing with Thailand, and if it's successful, we expect to work together more in the future."

Jetsak Bunsuya, Vice-President of the TOT's Southern Region Operations Department, said that the TOT plans to have 200,000 ADSL ports around the country by the end of the year, with Phuket being the first province to be upgraded.

"The ICT Ministry plans to have a million ADSL ports installed in Thailand by the end of 2005," he said, adding that it is expected that half of the ports will be provided by TOT and the other half by the Communications Authority of Thailand (CAT), though the deal has yet to be confirmed.

"Although there is a large

demand for ADSL in Phuket, it's not that easy to provide because it needs a large amount of funding," he said.

K. Jetsak also said that KT's involvement will initially be restricted to installing and operating broadband services. Whether it will join the ranks of Loxinfo, KSC and CAT as an Internet Service Provider (ISP) is still under negotiation.

"We expect them to be an ISP for broadband Internet access in Thailand because they have a lot of experience and are experts in this technology," he said. "KT offers solutions and applications for broadband access. However, we are still discussing whether they will be [able to go into business as] an ISP or not."

On the Move

Kunthari Sangchat, from Bangkok, is the new Director of Events at the JW Marriott Phuket Resort & Spa. She graduated from the University of Houston with a master's degree in hospitality management. Before joining JW Marriott, K. Kunthari was Project Manager at Creative Destination Management in Bangkok for three years. She has also worked as Assistant Director of MICE Sales and Services at the Intercontinental Hotel Bangkok, formerly Le Royal Meridien Bangkok.



Panya Thosaunchit, 43, from Nakhon Phanom, has been appointed Executive Corporate Thai Chef at The Aspasia Phuket, at Kata Beach. K. Panya has more than 10 years' experience in the hospitality industry, including working at the Mai Ton Island Resort and the Cape Panwa Hotel. Before joining The Aspasia Phuket he was Corporate Thai Chef at the Banyan Tree Phuket.

Briton **Stephen Richards**, 29, has joined Property Care Services (Thailand) Ltd as Branch Manager. Mr Richards graduated from Bournemouth University with a degree in business and marketing. Before moving to Phuket, he worked for Yellow Pages in the UK as a Product Manager.



Top of the class in equity funds

Does the name Orbis Investment Management Ltd mean any thing to you? Probably not, but if you are an investor maybe you should spend a little time acquainting yourself with what this firm offers and the investment returns they have achieved in the past.

Orbis have an outstanding track record, not just during the bull market of the 1990s but also in the current bear market, which began in 2000.

Orbis is an equity house that also has two equity-based "absolute return" funds. The available fund selection menu is small, consisting of just five funds, although some of these funds are available in different currency classes. They have one important thing in common - superior investment performance. And that's what really counts.

First for some history. The founder and chairman of Orbis is Allan Gray. He started his investment career with US investment giant Fidelity in Boston in 1965. By the end of his time with Fidelity, in 1973, he was responsible for the Fidelity Capital Fund, which had over US\$500 million under management at the time he left.

Gray then emigrated to South Africa and, in 1974, formed Allan Gray Ltd. In South Africa, Gray has become an investment legend. There is no other asset management house that en-

joys the same reputation among investment professionals.

In 1988, he and his son William - now President of the Orbis Group - opened a global investment advisory firm in London. This was followed in 1989 by the formation of Bermuda-based Orbis Investment Management, which launched its first three funds on January 1, 1990.

These funds are: the Orbis Global Equity Fund, which from inception has produced an annualized return of 14.2% in US Dollars, more than double the *Financial Times* (FTSE) World Index return of 6.3% over the same period; the Orbis Optimal Fund; and the Orbis Leveraged Fund.

The Optimal and Leveraged Funds have returned 12.7% and 17.2% respectively from January 1990 to July 2004, far outperforming the average global equity fund (5.1%), US\$ bank deposits (4.8%) and the average US Bond Fund (5.9%).

Global rating agency Standard & Poor's (S&P) has awarded the Orbis Global Equity Fund a "AAA" rating, its highest.

I noted a "snapshot" of Orbis investment performance during the recent bear market, covered a three-year period from May 1, 2001 to May 3, 2004. Of 489 funds in S&P's Offshore Equity Funds, the Orbis Optimal Fund was third and the Orbis Global Equity Fund was 13th.

Orbis' two new funds have not been laggards either. The Orbis Japan Equity Yen Fund has returned 12.8% a year on an annualized basis from its inception in 1998, compared with the TOPIX total return index of 0.4%.

The Orbis Africa Equity Fund, denominated in South African Rand, has produced a return of 34.3% a year compared with the FTSE/JSE Africa all-share index return of 9.8%.



MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson

Apart from an annual management fee there are no charges. The funds all deal weekly on Thursdays.

The bad news is that the minimum investment is US\$ 50,000, or foreign currency equivalent (around 2 million baht). However, by using offshore insurance companies that already have large investments with Orbis, this amount can be reduced substantially.

The "core" fund in the global range, the Orbis Global Equity Fund, has a distinctive investment approach. It is invested in shares of companies that trade at a significant discount compared with the assessed "intrinsic value" of the business.

Orbis believes the share prices of such companies will eventually appreciate to reflect their real intrinsic business value.

Also, Orbis are patient investors, prepared to wait three to five years.

They are well aware of the difficulties that can be experienced investing in stock markets when substantial declines occur. This is the reason for the Orbis Optimal Fund. This fund invests in the Orbis Global Equity, Africa Equity and Japan Equity

Funds but, while the underlying equity funds may outperform their respective benchmark indices, they may still lose money in an absolute sense.

The Orbis Optimal Fund seeks an absolute return using two strategies. First, it sells stock market index futures and buys stock market index put options.

The performance that was referred to earlier in this article, the fund achieving a third-place rating out of 489 funds, was also accompanied by a lower volatility factor than the two higher-placed funds.

The top-rated fund, in fact, was ahead of Orbis' by less than four percentage points over a three-year period and that was accompanied by 160% more volatility - that's the difference between a good night's sleep and chewing the blankets.

The Orbis Optimal Fund returned 75.7% compared with a loss in the S&P Global 1200 Index of 2.8% during this period. The average fund lost 3.9%.

The Orbis Leveraged Fund is identical to the Orbis Optimal Fund, in which it solely invests, except that for each dollar of investors' capital it borrows and invests another dollar. These funds are also available in euros.

For investors who want some exposure to equities in their portfolio it is going to be difficult, if not impossible, to find an investment house that can beat Orbis.

VITAL STATISTICS: AIRPORT THROUGHPUT LEAPS

	May 2003	May 2004	% increase
Passengers			
International	31,806	129,449	307
Domestic	120,140	185,466	54
Total	151,946	314,915	107
Cargo (tons)			
International	488	789	62
Domestic	664	684	3
Total	1,152	1,473	28

Source: Phuket International Airport



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Loch Palm's new holes: what you see and what you don't

Loch Palm's three new holes are my third golf-design project that I have seen completed to grass. Altogether my experience adds up to a total of 26 holes; hardly anything to worry Jack Nicklaus or R T Jones.

This brief journey has allowed me to learn some valuable lessons in golf-course design and construction. With all three holes there were a million things going on that affect the holes that the golfer will never know about.

Darry Koster, the first Superintendent at Blue Canyon – and one of the world's best golf course construction and "grow-in" specialists – sent me a message when he heard I was taking a new turn in my career. "Don't let the ****-ups get to you," he said. "They happen on every project."

"Well, they won't happen with my projects," I thought. So, did we have ****-ups? You bet we did.

But the only thing that matters is the final product. So, as Loch Palm prepares to "open" the new holes, I'd like to offer a description of them. Hopefully it will be more interesting for golfers to know the thoughts behind the planning and some of the behind-the-scenes construction issues they would otherwise never know about.

Hole 11. What you see: A par-5 of 520 yards from the pro tee, but with shorter tees spaced at closer intervals than standard. The hole was redesigned to reduce the number of sliced drives landing in the creek or out of bounds on the road, which will soon be hidden behind newly planted trees.

The narrow golf corridor was based on a plan that included sites for housing. The longer the

player drives, the more the fairway is pinched between bunkers and creek. This was to allow short-hitters the chance to get over the cross hazard in two shots while enticing long-hitters to risk getting on the green in two.

What you don't see: Most modern golf courses are the result of landowners wanting to profit from property sales. This idea may be criticized, but the reality is that if Phuket's golf courses were built purely for "stand alone" profit, there would be only one or two courses on the island.

The low-lying land on which the new 11th has been built has far less real estate value than the land used on the "old" 11th hole, which offered great views of Crystal Lake.

The new hole also creates a better balance to the course and a second genuine par 5 on the back nine holes, while the 459-yard "pseudo-par 5" 14th now reverts to the long par 4 its yardage suggests.

Green 11: What you see: A difficult three-level green.

What you don't see: An even more difficult two-level green. Yes, we made a major surveying mistake here. Laugh your socks off, Koster! The green was eventually re-worked as it probably would have putted as difficultly as any green on the island.

Hole 14. What you see: A "drop shot" par 3 of 170 yards played from tees as much as 18 meters above what is virtually an island green surrounded by lake, steep-sided mounds and deep bunkers.

What you don't see: A green site that was previously almost a dead flat swamp, at an elevation a little lower than the existing green level.

Although a lot of earth was moved here, it was necessary to

create contours that would allow us eventually to screen off the road and surrounding land, and also allow us to focus golfers' attention back toward the course center rather than out of the property, as would have been the case with the existing contours.

Hole 15. What you see: A 385-yard par 4 that turns gently from right to left. This is a difficult hole that helps build a testing finish to the course. Again, this improves the general balance of the course. Previously, Loch Palm's first nine par 4s all dog-legged to the right.

What you don't see: This is the third version of this hole. The original par-5 7th green was formerly in almost exactly the same location. This hole was a Dr Sukitti-signature-drivable, double dog-leg par 5 reminiscent of Phuket Country Club's 10th hole, except that most shots on the Loch Palm hole were blind.

Holes 11 and 15. What you see: Fairways generally higher than necessary above the surrounding roughs, with the 11th fairway dropping in a series of hollows and ridges.

On both holes the creek edge is sometimes a little too high, so some features are not ideally visible. Some bunkers are also not as deep as we would like.

What you don't see: A layer of groundwater underlying the entire site. As soon as we excavated as little as 70-80 centimeters, we encountered consistent, high volumes of running ground water.

Golf can be played above this ground water, but a layer of not less than one meter is required for drainage and irrigation pipes, as well as a sand layer to ensure well-drained turf.

Jon Morrow is a golf course design and construction consultant. Tel: 01-7284492. Email: jonmorrow63@hotmail.com

TEE TO GREEN
Jon Morrow



Moo 10 A try once again to get past Island Safari keeper Narupon Saetan (in red). This header went over the bar.

Safari hold tough opponents to draw

CHALONG: Island Safari held Group B rivals Moo 10 A to a scoreless draw in a July 18 match-up in 7th Chalong Samphan seven-a-side soccer tournament, which runs from July 11 to August 1. All matches are played at the makeshift soccer pitch next to the Chalong Water Supply Office in Village 6.

The tourney has a total of

40 teams competing in four divisions: under-11s; under-13s; under-19s; and an open category.

In the open category, which features 18 sides in four groups, Island Safari and Moo 10 A have both been vying for supremacy in Group B, a tough quartet that also includes former champions Moo 1 and the Chalong Sanitation side.

In previous Group B play, Island Safari upset Moo 1 by a score of 2-1 and swept past Chalong Sanitation 3-0. In its only previous match, Moo 10 A also brushed aside Chalong Sanitation, 5-0.

In its confrontation with Island Safari, Moo 10 A went on the offensive early. Just two minutes into play, Wichit Boonchua narrowly missed with a shot that sailed over the crossbar.

Despite repeated attacks, Moo 10 A were unable to get past the solid goalkeeping of Safari's Narupon Saetan, who successfully kept Moo 10 A scoreless despite being awarded five corners in the first half and six more in the second.

In the end, both sides walked away with one point apiece from the 0-0 draw, enough to secure both of them a place in the semifinals.

Other July 18 first round results: Group A: Moo 6 A 2, Moo 7 A 1; Group C: OrBorTor Moo 5 Nakok 1, OrBorJor Phuket 0; Group D: Moo 9 4, Tamrauj B

Happy Days tipped for title

PATONG: Happy Days seemed headed for its first-ever championship in the Patong Darts League as players flexed their elbows in preparation for the July 20 final round.

On July 13 the boys from Soi Patong Resort took over first place by winning all three points in a 7-2 match at home against Shakers.

Meanwhile, In-Between – level with Happy Days after the July 6 matches – failed to keep the pace, losing all three points to a resurgent Amigos side.

Theoretically, in matches due on Tuesday, after this issue of the *Gazette* went to press, In Between had the chance of drawing level again provided it won all three points against Shakers, and provided Happy Days were blitzed 3-0 by Piccadilly. Any other result, and the players of Happy Days are champions.

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WBC champ Pongsaklek may punch in Phuket

By Anongnat Sartpisut

PHUKET: World Boxing Council flyweight champion Pongsaklek Wonjongkam may feature in an exciting week of international boxing this October – if Phuket province can come up with the 3 million baht needed to host the 42nd annual WBC Championships.

Phuket is being considered to host the tourney, which will feature over 500 pugilists representing 16 different countries and 10 sanctioning bodies that come together under the WBC umbrella.

If the plan goes through, Phuket Arcadia Beach Resort will host the boxers, and fights would take place at a ring set up on the soccer pitch at Karon Municipal Stadium on October 3-9.

It is not yet known who

would compete for Pongsaklek's belt in the flyweight class, where the maximum weight is just 50.8 kilograms. Pongsaklek, a hard-punching southpaw, goes by the Thai fighting name Pongsaklek Kratingdaenggym to indicate his sponsorship by the popular caffeine drink. He won the title in March 2001 and his last defense was in January this year.

Pol Gen Kovid Bhakdibhumi, President of the Asian Boxing Council, said that the tournament will cost 6-8 million baht. If Phuket can come up with 3 million baht, it could host the event and thereby raise its international stature.

According to the plan, the WBC Championships would be held in conjunction with the Asian Boxing Championship and World Youth Championships, scheduled for October 8.

Somtarn Express wins inaugural race week

AO CHALONG: Winds gusting up to 15 knots on July 17 ensured an exciting finish to the first Phuket Race Week, with *Somtarn Express* taking victory in the racing class of the inaugural regatta.

After putting in a near-perfect sail, Scott Duncanson's crew sped away to cross the line in front of racing class rivals Stuart Harrison's *Panic!*, which started the final race on equal points with *Express*, and Keith Moore's *Plala Loma* coming third.

Mick Kealy's *Minx* took top honors in the IRC class, with John Vause's *Ruby Tuesday* finishing second. Viroj Nualkhair on *Octopussy* came third, ahead

of Richard Grimes on *Yendys*. Stuart Crow and his crew on *Cinders* won Club class, ahead of fellow Ao Chalong Yacht Club regular Al Boone on *Blue Moon*. John Fenn on *Four Winds* came third, relegating Bobby Golding on *Forest* to fourth.

In the Multihulls class, *Cerberus*, skippered by Mark Prescott, had amassed enough points to claim first before the final race. Chris Sieber on *Kilo* came second, while "Matthew and Kids" on *Chimera* came third.

Sponsor Fosters has already announced its support for next year's Phuket Race Week.

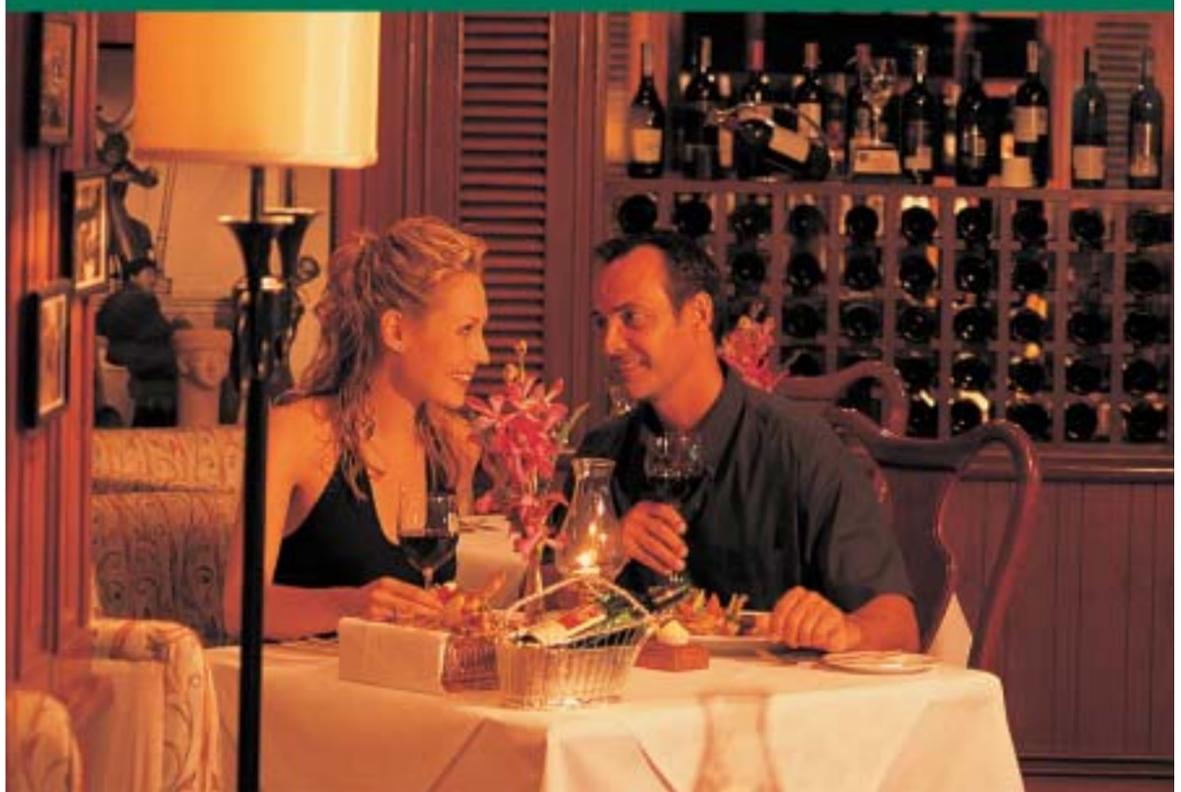
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Honda Jazz – a model of efficiency

A neat little runabout that is finding popularity in the Thai market is Honda's compact Jazz i-DSI. An example of the Japanese love of initials, i-DSI refers to the twin-plug set-up, or Dual Sequential Ignition.

What this means in real terms is greater fuel economy and more lively performance from a modest 1.4-liter motor. It is also one of the least-polluting engines in its class, conforming fully with European emissions standards that will take effect this year.

The Jazz has already taken its own domestic market by storm, winning the Japanese Car of the Year award and consistently coming in as the No 1 seller, ahead even of the ubiquitous Toyota Corolla.

The Jazz is also one of the safest cars of its size, and is expected to achieve a remarkable four stars in the stringent Euro NCAP crash tests. This is according to Honda, of course, as the Jazz has yet to appear on the Euro NCAP listings.

Uniquely, the fuel tank of the Jazz is located beneath the front seats, where it is fully protected in the event of an accident. This arrangement also offers much more flexible packaging of the passenger and load areas. In addition, a torsion-bar rear suspension allows for a lower rear floor.

The 1.4-liter engine is all new and whereas the i-VTEC engines in the larger Stream and Civic models have been designed to achieve a balance between performance and fuel efficiency, the single overhead cam i-DSI unit in the Jazz pursues the ultimate in fuel economy and compact size.

Low emissions and amazing efficiency are achieved by providing each cylinder with a pair of spark plugs mounted op-



The Honda Jazz i-DSI is already the best-selling car in Japan. With rising oil prices, expect to see more of these cute compacts on Phuket roads, as they achieve an impressive balance between performance and fuel efficiency.

posite one another. Honda claims outstanding fuel economy of 5.7 liters per 100 kilometers, yet the power produced reaches a very respectable 82bhp (60kW) at 5,700rpm, with 119Nm of torque produced at just 2,800rpm.

The power plant is mated to a five-speed manual gearbox, though in some markets a seven-speed semi-automatic transmission will be introduced.

Among the standard equipment is electric, speed-sensitive

power steering, which does not sap engine power as a hydraulic system would. Electric power steering (EPS) arrived on European and Japanese cars in the early 1990s, dispensing with the need for engine-driven hydraulic assistance.

It is claimed that EPS can offer a fuel consumption saving of up to 0.2 liters per kilometer, which is the equivalent of reducing the vehicle's overall weight by up to 100 kilos.

It is also eco-friendly as there are no toxic fluids to dispose of at the end of the vehicle's life.

Unfortunately, the current range of EPS systems does not

produce sufficient power for larger cars, SUVs or commercial applications.

Honda waxes lyrical in its sales blurb about how the styling is based on a design concept called *zenshin*, meaning new, progressive and integrated.

In reality, what it means is that the Jazz is a cleverly packaged compact sedan with great fuel economy. Already, there are plenty of

In addition there is a host of safety features rarely found on cars in this segment, including a number of innovative protection items such as an unobstructed area beneath the hood to allow it to progressively deform, and mounting brackets and hinges that compress under impact. The windshield wipers too are cleverly mounted on energy-absorbing pivots.

There are dual front airbags, side bags on the sport model and front seatbelt pretensioners across the range. In the rear, all three belts are three-point and a center headrest is available as an option.

In all, the Jazz i-DSI is a great little motor car. No wonder it is finding favor in the Thai market.

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



By Jeff Heselwood

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Magnetic attraction

Guest chef

By Jenna Wise

After spending most of his working life cooking at his family's restaurant in Milan, as well as six years working as a chef in Cuba, Walter Fallini was ready for a change.

Like many others in business here, he had already visited Phuket on vacation and liked it so much he wanted to live here.

"I was tired of Milan," he explains. "Mediterranean-style cooking is popular with many people, so I thought I would bring my skills here. Although our family restaurant is in Milan, my mother comes from Sicily and I learned a lot from her.

"The name of my restaurant is La Calamita, which is Italian for "magnet", and I hope people are drawn here by the good food and atmosphere."

Walter does most of the food preparation at La Calamita, aided by Nitirat "Saw" Pongsit. One of his specialties is lasagna. The method is a little more time-consuming than most, but the results are well worth the effort.

"The lasagna should be firm when cooked," Walter advises. "Mine is made with eight layers and I don't add the sauces until the fourth layer. If you put sauce in further down, there will be too much liquid in the lasagna."

100 gm total weight of Gorgonzola, Pecorino, Parmesan and Emmental cheeses;
6 small gherkins;
1 tablespoon pickled aubergines;
6 anchovies.

Method:

Arrange the ingredients on a large plate and serve. Walter suggests experimenting with different selections of cold meats, cheeses and pickles. At La Calamita, guests can choose from three servings sizes. The largest plate, for three people, costs 850 baht and comes with a half-liter of house wine.



Above, Walter Fallini with waitress Kessuda "Ning" Nawee (left) and cook Nitirat "Saw" Pongsit. Left, lasagna; right, antipasto.



**Antipasto
For 2 people**

Ingredients:
200 gm total weight of Parma ham, Raw beef, *coppa* (cured pork shoulder);

**Lasagna
For 2 people (generous portions)**

Ingredients:
About 20-25 pieces of lasagna pasta;
200 gm minced beef;
¼ large carrot, chopped fine;
¼ small onion, chopped fine;

5-cm piece of celery stalk, chopped fine;
1 garlic clove, crushed;
50 gm fresh tomatoes, chopped;
1 fresh basil leaf;
1 fresh sage leaf;
1 teaspoon fresh oregano;
1 teaspoon fresh thyme;
10 ml red wine;
A pinch of sugar;
Salt and pepper to taste;
1 cup grated Parmesan cheese;
10 gm diced cooked ham;
10 gm diced mozzarella cheese.

To make the béchamel sauce:

20 gm flour;
200 ml milk;
20 gm butter;
10 gm ground walnuts.
The recipe requires a baking dish 20cm x 10cm, and at least 10cm deep.

Method:

Fry the chopped onion and garlic for about a minute. Add the celery and carrot, stirring well. After another minute, add the meat. When the meat has brown-

ed, add the tomatoes, herbs, red wine, a pinch of sugar, and salt and pepper to taste. Simmer the ragout for about 1½ hours.

While this is cooking, prepare the pasta and béchamel sauce. Boil the pasta for about 5 minutes then remove from the water. Dip the sheets into cold water for a few seconds, then cover to dry.

To make the béchamel sauce, heat the butter gently in a pan and gradually stir in the milk and flour. As the sauce begins to simmer, add the ground walnuts. Stir the sauce for another minute or so and remove from the heat.

To assemble the lasagna, oil the baking dish, then cover the base a layer of pasta sheets. Add a thin layer of mixed cooked ham, mozzarella and grated Parmesan. Another layer of pasta goes on top of these and

this is covered with béchamel sauce. Put a layer of ragout sauce on top of this and cover with pasta. Spread béchamel sauce over and cover this with ragout. Sprinkle with grated Parmesan to finish.

Preheat an oven to 200°C and bake the lasagna for 40 minutes. This dish is so filling that a small side salad and good red wine will be enough to accompany it.

La Calamita Restaurant and Pub, 26/1 Wiset Rd, Rawai. Tel: 07-2805323. Open daily, except Wednesdays, for lunch from noon to 2 pm and for dinner from 5:30 pm to 10:30 pm.

If you have a recipe you would like to share with our readers, please email chef@phuketgazette.net.

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Lakeview homes set for March 2005 completion

The 100-million-baht Puerksachart Lakeview project at Land & Houses Park is 40% built and is on schedule for completion by March next year.

Ruksapong Khumkhuang-jum, General Manager of Land & Houses Park said, "We recognized that there is a boom in demand for homes with water or mountain views, in the 10-15-million-baht price range. So we launched Puerksachart Lakeview, with the lake as one of its main selling points."

Prices for homes at the new development range from 10.5 million baht to 16 million baht per unit, K. Ruksapong said, and four units have already been sold.

Puerksachart Lakeview will eventually have 27 two-story units of modern design, but also incorporating the southern Thai design concept of good ventilation to keep the house cool, all set by a lake and offering a resort-like atmosphere. Each will stand on a quarter-rai plot of land.

The most basic design, Puerk Pirom, with prices starting from 10.5 million baht, features three bedrooms, three bathrooms and 298 square meters of floor space, with a double garage.

The Puerk Lawan design, starting at 11.85 million baht, has an extra bathroom and offers 348sqm of floor space.

The top-of-the-range design, Puerk Umpai, starting from 13.69 million baht, has 382sqm of floor space, with four bedrooms, four bathrooms and a double garage.

K. Ruksapong said, "Our primary target market is foreigners and upper-income-bracket Phuket residents. Each house will



Above, the four-bedroom Puerk Umpai design, selling at 13.69 million baht upward. Left, the 10.5-million-plkus Puerk Pirom design, with three bedrooms.



be furnished in the "Baan Sabai" concept, which has the following main themes: nature, leisure, and privacy and security."

He also said that built-in features add to the quality of the homes.

"For example, thermal-reflection sheeting under the roof helps keep the house cool, and underground pipes have been installed so termite protection can continue without having to drill holes in the floor."

Another quality aspect included in the homes, he said, is

the use of Q-Con blocks to build the walls.

"They provide thermal insulation to keep the house cool, and also act as an acoustic barrier, blocking sound of up to 38 decibels. They can also contain

fire for as long as four hours," said K. Ruksapong.

For more information contact Land and Houses Park at Tel: 076-381150-2 or send email to: ruksapong@lh.co.th.

Better not hide

Visiting a friend at his new house just outside Pattaya, I was witness to a conversation between him and the developer, a pleasant lady with lots of make-up, a puffy hairdo and wearing enough gold to pay for half a dozen of the houses that she was building.

After minutes of studying the wall and the floor, the lady said, "The wall's not straight."

"I told you that before," my friend said to her flatly. "I could see that when they started building the wall."

The reason for his irritation was that the bedroom floorboards had clearly been laid straight, but when the workers had reached the far side of the room, they found that there was a two-inch gap between the last board and the wall.

"I know," she announced triumphantly. "We can start laying the wood from the wall that is not straight, and also from the side where the wall is straight, then the problem will come when the two sides meet in the middle, which will be - under the bed!"

It seemed that my friend

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Home of the Week

Chalong

Space and light in Chalong



Available for sale with freehold Chanote title is a brand-new residence facing the hills around Chalong. This attractive property has been built to high standards to provide spacious, light, well-thought-out accommodation.

A wall encloses the 800sqm of landscaped grounds, which include a large terrace and a 10-meter swimming pool. The house covers over 450sqm yet there is still ample outdoor space around it.

The front terrace leads to the main entrance and hallway of the house, which has wooden floors. The open-plan living and dining areas are extensive, and there is a separate fitted kitchen with all the necessary appliances.

The wooden staircase leads to the master bedroom, with en-suite bathroom and Jacuzzi and a balcony overlooking the front of the house. There are two other double bedrooms, each with en-suite bathrooms. All bedrooms enjoy views of the hills. The property is priced at 14 million baht.

For more information, call Rudi at Tel: 076-345081 or 01-9241447 or send email to him at info@houseandvillasalesphuket.com

mistakes under the bed

didn't have a lot of options. He had already paid half the money for the house and stood no chance of getting it back. Apart from the crooked wall, the new windows wouldn't close properly. There was a yawning gap at the top of the front door, and the cupboards above the kitchen counter were so low that you hit your head if the door was open.

These were just a few of the reasons my friend would have liked to get his money back. That, of course, was not about to happen. So hiding the problem under the bed was preferable to rebuilding the front wall of the house, which also wasn't going to happen – not at the lady

developer's expense, anyway.

This kind of problem is not uncommon. Unfortunately, many developers with experience in building houses for the local market are not prepared to hire a project manager with experience in international markets to oversee the design and construction of houses intended for foreign owners.

This is probably okay for the lower end of the market – though even there, a reasonable kitchen is still necessary. Many Thais do not use kitchens, preferring instead to cook outside, so most older Thai houses simply do not have kitchens.

Just as many foreigners

have difficulty with some aspects of Thai culture, so do some Thais, too, have difficulty understanding Western thinking. But when millions of baht are at stake, it is wise to use a consultant who understands what the potential customer or homebuyer needs. Unfortunately this rarely happens. Often, the result is a disaster for either the developer or the buyer.

It is critical that a potential buyer in a new project check whether there is someone with experience in building high-quality homes for the international market overseeing the construction process from beginning to end. This is especially true when overseeing the finishes.

Otherwise, you might have to buy a wider bed.

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By Graham Doven

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Gardening

with Bloomin' Bert

Six of the best

As some of you may well be aware, my schooldays were spent in Yorkshire, England, in the dim and distant days of the '70s. I was a bit of a bad lad furtively inhaling tobacco smoke with my equally rebellious mates.

I didn't exactly walk down the school corridors with a lit cigarette in hand, but perhaps I might have done had it not been for one very effective deterrent – the cane. It was a standard three strokes on each hand for the crime of smoking in school. The deterrent worked – I somehow never actually got caned.

In all those years of avoiding corporal punishment by whatever means possible, I never thought about where the implement itself actually came from. Canes of all varieties come originally from the bamboo tree.

Apart from producing instruments to inflict physical pain on the pre-'90s youth of the UK, the bamboo tree has an incredible number of other uses. No gardener would survive without a supply of bamboo canes to support young saplings, and how else would pandas survive?

Also, how else would the outside of large Phuket buildings



The very versatile bamboo comes in many different colors, shapes and sizes.

Photo by Alasdair Forbes

get repainted without those huge bamboo poles that are literally just tied together? Bamboo, bearing in mind its relatively low weight, has to be one of the strongest woods in existence.

There are hundreds of varieties of bamboo. There are a few *genera* (a technical name for a large family), but ultimately, they are all officially types of grass. There are types with green and yellow stripes, but most are green or golden-colored. There's even

a low-growing variety called Buddha's belly, with swollen parts between the sections that look like – you've guessed it – the midriff on a Chinese Buddha image.

Some of the common bamboo varieties that grow in Thailand tend to be massive, so in an average-size garden, they're not a particularly good idea. Even in a huge garden, they can be a bit of a pain, as they continually drop their leaves. Being in the vicinity of these things is like living autumn every day.

I suppose that if you have a garden that big you'd probably be able to afford to pay somebody to pick up the leaves anyway. Believe it or not, the taller members of the bamboo family can reach heights of up to 35 meters.

There are a few smaller types of bamboo that are a little more sensible. These are daintier than their over-sized cousins, and while they have the same hollow, woody stems, they're nowhere near as in-your-face, and are much less likely to try to take over the garden. There's even a miniature type that you can grow in a pot.

All bamboo needs to grow is a bit of shade, reasonably rich soil, and plenty of humidity. In other words, as long as you don't plant it in sand with no respite from the sun, it will be quite content to get on with the business of growing.

You probably wouldn't be aware of this, but bamboo does intermittently produce flowers. They're somewhat insignificant, half-hidden among the foliage. They're probably produced out of boredom – how interesting can it be being a bamboo plant?

Now that political correctness has taken firm hold in British schools, the traditional cane is no longer required. Never mind – there are hundreds more uses for bamboo that haven't even been thought of yet.

Construction Update

Bali style about to come to Bang Tao



The perfect place for a rubber duck: Every villa will have a pool.

BANG TAO: Hong Kong entrepreneur Gordon Oldham, owner of the Bali Pavilions resort in Bali, is developing a similar villa-style hotel in Phuket, at a cost of 250 million baht.

The project, the Phuket Pavilions Hotel, will comprise 30 contemporary Balinese-style villas offering impressive views of Bang Tao Bay.

Bill Barnett, Managing Director of C9 Hotelworks, which has been hired to assist, told the *Gazette*, "The concept of Phuket Pavilions is to combine hotel and residential villas together in a single resort.

"There will be a total of 30 villas. Twenty-one of these will be one-bedroom hotel pool villas. The other nine will be three-bedroom residential villas."

The project started in May and is scheduled for completion by May next year.

"The key selling point is the location. We recognize that Bang Tao and Laguna are the premier resort and residential areas of the island. The Bang Tao property market, and in particular the Layan area, is booming," said Mr Barnett.

Six of the nine three-bedroom villas have already been

sold, he said. These pool villas, each 665 square meters in area, are offered at 17.5 million baht.

The one-bedroom pool villas, which will comprise the project's hotel, will be offered to guests at US\$250 to US\$350 a night.

Mr Barnett explained that Phuket Pavilions would differ from other hotels in the Bang Tao area in that it won't offer many restaurants or other such guest facilities, but will focus on highly personalized services in the villa and private swimming pools, which remain one of the most desirable items for hotel guests.

The project's target markets are Hong Kong, where interest in the Phuket property market remains very strong, along with Singapore, Bangkok and Europe.

Mr Oldham is also planning projects in Koh Samui and Krabi and is expected to build the Pavilions Private Villas concept into a boutique chain.

– Anongnat Sartpisut

For further information about Phuket Pavilions Hotel, visit the Website at: www.phuketpavilions.com or send an email to: sales@phuketpavilions.com.

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Property Gazette

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Executive. Leading property developer located near Laguna requires a Client Support Executive. Must have excellent English, great computer and organizational skills. Good salary for the right person. Please email resumé to apply or call for more info. Tel: 076-271188, 01-3700230. Fax: 076-271191. Email: info@

PHUKET LAW FIRM

Phuket law firm seeks secretary and accountant. Please contact for more information or send resumé to apply. Email: scphuket@yahoo.com



**Mom Tri's
Boathouse**
Phuket Island
Thailand

Mom Tri's Boathouse, Phuket

Mom Tri's Boathouse, a boutique hotel with 36 superior rooms and seafront studios, located on Kata Beach, Phuket, is looking for candidates to fill the following positions.

Reservation Officer / Night Receptionist

Qualifications:

- Male/female, minimum age of 25
- 2-3 years' experience in the field
- Good command of written and spoken English
- Computer literate in Fidelio, MS Excel & Word

Please contact: HR department,
182 Kuktanod Road, Kata beach, Phuket 83100
Tel: 076 330 015 Fax: 076 330 561
e-mail: hr@boathousephuket.com



Hilton Phuket Arcadia Resort & Spa

Hilton Phuket Arcadia Resort & Spa will arrive in Phuket in October 2004. Following 6 months of exciting refurbishments and renovations, the Phuket Arcadia Beach Resort will be transformed into a luxurious world-famous Hilton resort. A great opportunity for people in the tourism industry awaits applicants who are interested in a rewarding hospitality career.

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| ☞ Chief Engineer | ☞ Asst. Front Desk Manager |
| ☞ Duty Manager | ☞ Airport Guest Service Supervisor |
| ☞ Airport Guest Service Agent | ☞ Airport Representative |
| ☞ Executive Lounge Manager | ☞ Executive Lounge GSA |
| ☞ Front Desk Shift Leader | ☞ Front Desk GSA |
| ☞ Guest Service Center Assistant Manager | ☞ Guest Service Officer |
| ☞ Chief Concierge | ☞ Manager of Thai Thai Restaurant |
| ☞ Thai Restaurant Chef d'Cuisine | ☞ Assistant Pastry Chef |
| ☞ Guest Service Centre Supervisor | ☞ Waiter/Waitress |

Qualifications:

- ☞ Good command of the English language.
- ☞ Experience in the hospitality industry.
- ☞ Opportunity for growth with the organization.
- ☞ Pleasant personality.
- ☞ Computer skills required.

Interested applicants can apply in person or send a resumé with photo by August 10, 2004 to the following address:

Human Resources Department
Phuket Arcadia Beach Resort

333 Patak Road, Karon Beach, Phuket 83100

Tel: 076 396 433-41 Fax: 076 396-136 E-mail: Supramarth.Pankamhang@hilton.com



PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL PHUKET - RESORT & SPA

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| • RESTAURANT SUPERVISOR | • SALES COORDINATOR |
| • GUEST SERVICE SUPERVISOR | • GUEST SERVICE |
| • RESERVATIONS SUPERVISOR | • CHIEF ENGINEER |
| • CHEF (THAI - CHINESE) | • PA / PR |
| • SPA RECEPTION | |

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Tel: 66 (076) 275002-14 Fax: 66 (076) 275016



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DirectRooms is an Internet hotel reservation company, providing services throughout Asia. We are expanding fast and need staff to join our friendly and highly motivated team. **Full-** and **part-time** vacancies exist for people with the following:

- **Good spoken and written English**
- **Basic computer knowledge and experience**
- **Enjoy being part of a team and are diligent**
- **Able to work within our 24-hour, 7-day rota**

Staff with a positive and enthusiastic attitude are very important to us and full training will be provided. Applicants are invited to submit a resumé in English to:

8/51 Moo 3 Rasadanusorn Road, Rassada,
Muang, Phuket 83000
Email: recruit@directrooms.com
Tel: 076 241 145 Fax: 076 241 021

Island Job Mart

COCOON DESIGN (PHUKET) CO LTD

We are a fast-growing retailer of Asian contemporary homeware and we are looking for dynamic individuals to join our team.

Retail sales

Location: Central Festival Phuket
The Plaza at Surin beach

Requirements:

- Diploma or bachelor's degree
- Male/female, age 22-32
- Good command of spoken English
- 1-3 years' experience in retail or service industry
- Knowledge of POS (express program) is an advantage
- Good computer skills (Word, Excel)
- Self-motivated and energetic

Accountant

Requirements:

- Diploma, bachelor's degree in accounting or related field
- Female, age 25-35
- 1-3 years' Accounting experience with handling of local tax issues
- Knowledge of POS (express program)
- Good command of spoken and written English
- Good computer skills (Word, Excel, e-mail)
- Good interpersonal skills

We offer an attractive salary and benefits

Interested persons, please send application letter with resumé of career to date and one recent photo to:

Duangtip Chaturachinda
118/1 Moo 3, Srisoonthorn Rd, Chermg Talay,
Thalang, Phuket 83110
e-mail: cocoon_lisa@hotmail.com

"LandSearch"

A Member of Phuket Land Group

Phuket LandSearch Ltd, the leading property agency in Phuket, is expanding. We are therefore urgently looking for Sales Representatives with the following qualifications:

- Male or female
- Fluent in English and Thai
- A minimum of 2 years' experience in sales
- Good presentation skills
- Good interpersonal skills and good team spirit
- Good computer and email skills
- Highly self-motivated, as will work on site as well as in the office

Basic salary and commission dependent on experience.

Please send your CV to:
Bob Andrews, bob@phuketland.com
Phuket LandSearch

247/2 Prabaramee Road, Kalim beach, Patong, Phuket 83150 Thailand
Tel: 076-290509 Fax: 076-340426

MANAGER OFFICER

Male/female, age 30-45, able to speak and write fluent English. Import experience will be an advantage. Available to work in BKK or Mahachai/ located in same area. For details and to apply: Tel: 07-239112. Fax: 076-239058. Email: damian@

ACCOUNTANT

wanted. Thai female, age 20-35, with BA or vocational diploma in accounting, good written and spoken English skills, and a driving license. Please contact us if this opportunity interests you. Tel: 076-239112, 01-8920534. Fax: 076-239058.

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for sale. 2 teak main entrance doors; 4 ceiling fans; 20 windows; 8 interior doors; 3 main gates; free mirror screens; bath fixtures. Tel: 01-5270527 (Thai), 07-2640101

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Set 1: Double bed, wardrobe, TV and bookcase. Set 2: Double bed, wardrobe, 30 rattan chairs. Please call Tel: 07-

MOBILE PHONE

New Sony Ericsson T105 in box. 4,500 baht. Email: lasse55@hotmail.com

SHARP FAX MACHINE

Sharp GQ-101 fax machine for sale, including paper roll and owner's manual in English and Thai. Price: 1,000 baht. Email:

DIVE KNIVES

Large, used, 7-inch blade Seaman Sub with a holster that wraps around the leg. Some rust. 10,000 baht. Also have almost-new Akona, blunt tip. No holster or sheath. About a 5-inch blade. Excellent condition. 600 baht. Email: phuketna@hotmail.com

29" TV AND DVD

JVC 29" Flatscreen TV and JVC XV-NK38SL DVD player. Both items bought from Big C 4 months ago for 20,000 baht. I will sell both for 16,000. Both items come with original boxes, manuals, remotes and warranties that expire in March 2005 for the DVD and April 2005 for the TV. Tel: 01-7874261. Email:

WEIGHT TRAINING

Powerzone benchpress/incline/leg extension bench. A selection of 12x dumbbells, 2x 142kg barbells and 135kg plates. Punching bag + gloves. Set of dumbbell stands and barbell stands. Sold as a complete set: 15,000 baht. Tel: 07-2753614. Email:

Articles Wanted

FRIDGE+POOL TABLE wanted. Must be in good condition. Tel: 07-911-8244. Email: archerdesign@blueyonder.co.uk

OFFICE FURNITURE

Secondhand sofa set, chairs, table, desks, lamps, fridge, silk and plastic plants, and an aircon unit. Email: admin@

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29-ft fiberglass motor yacht with Thai registration. 2 x 280hp Mercruiser engines. Price: 3.5 million baht ono. Tel: 076-239-864. Email: hktmkt@ksc.

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to invest. Do you need US\$100,000 from an expat to invest in your business, spa, guesthouse, charter-boat, pub, sports bar or other profitable business in Phuket, Bangkok or on Koh Samui? Call Vincent at Tel: 06-0778037. Email: vincentinniger@yahoo.

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partner required for development project in Patong. Good investment. For more information, please call 09-2911112, 076-349050 or 01-8957159.

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Business Opportunities

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1. Restaurant: 2 units. Living accommodation. Includes pool table.

Price: 2.8 million baht.

2. Beauty salon: 2 units. The upper floor is for massage.

Price: 1.7 million baht.

3. Internet cafe and tour operator: 1 unit. Includes 7 computers, ADSL, phone line, and tour license.

Price: 1 million baht.

Tel: 076-263478.

For further details, please visit our website at www.thaichanote.com



LIGHTHOUSE FOR SALE

The famous Lighthouse restaurant at Ao Chalong, with five waterfront luxury rooms and three offices, is for sale. Potential to develop residential units on unused property. Please email for further information. Email: maipenrai@hushmail.com

BUSINESS IN THAILAND

A 9-bungalow resort – including swimming pool, restaurant/bar and satellite TV – on Koh Lanta (Lanta Island) is for sale with a 10-year lease offered at 4.5 million baht. Annual rent only 65,000 baht. Very good high-season business. Owner must go back to Europe 1 November, 2004 and take care of his business and family there. Price for quick sale: 3.5 million baht. Buy now and be ready for the Koh Lanta high-season 2004/2005. Serious enquiries only please. For further details, please call Tel: 09-6403432 or Email: mail@papillonlanta.com or see our website at: www.papillonlanta.com

SHOP FOR LEASE

near Rawai. Located on the way to Nai Harn Beach, PSS Wood Carving is a 12x17m shop selling carved teak artifacts and quality souvenirs. The building comprises 2 bedrooms, 1 kitchen, 1 store room, 1 bathroom/toilet, 1 covered parking space. The owner, K. Yop offers an 8-year lease. Prices are as follows: 2.8 million baht to buy the shop with all stock; 1.8 million baht to buy the shop without stock. Tel: 076-236550, 07-2651171. For further details, please see our website at <http://www.art-phuket.com/real-estate/index.htm#pss>

MLM LEADERS

US\$4 billion healthcare company seeks quality distributors. Unlimited income potential. Contact for more details. Tel: 02-7269918, 06-341-8781. Fax: 02-7269917. Email: makelifegood@aol.com

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Good area in Soi Watana, Patong. Ready with full office equipment. For full details, call Tel: 01-7371901.

PRIVATE SHAREHOLDER

Wanted to invest in a successful nightclub in Phuket City. Please call Tel: 076-321278 during office hours for more details.

STOCK SALE DUE TO

eviction. Good Earth Books of Kata Center is selling its all stock of secondhand books in one lump sum due to loss of premises. After 12 years we are being evicted from our popular location, and would like to sell the stock to anyone interested in taking over this small and very fun business. It is with great sadness that I have made this decision, being once known as "the doyenne of secondhand books" in Phuket, but serious family matters and other business concerns have left us no extra time or option but to pass the business onto any interested persons who love books as I do, and has the time to dedicate to that passion. Tel: 076-288643, 09-8682639. Fax 076-218-540. Email: pjp@loxinfo.co.th

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on 2.5 rai with 70m beach-front on the west coast. Comprises 27 bungalows, restaurant, beach shop, speedboat and company. Call for full details. Tel: 06-9511366.

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1,299 baht. Includes visa stamp fee, insurance, trip by boat and minibus (both in good condition), and lunch with soft drinks. Daily trip starts at 7 am at KFC at Tesco-Lotus supercenter. Please contact us for reservation. Tel: 076-289201 or 01-5352637. For further information, please visit our website: www.phuketdir.com/expressvisaextension

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10- to 20-year international driving license available. 100% legal. 10 years: 5,000 baht. 20 years: 6,000 baht. 50% deposit required. Tel: 04-0068736. Email: leondisley@yahoo.com

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Laguna golf membership – inclusive of Laguna hotels' privileges – for sale at 240,000 baht. Please call evenings. Tel: 076-271046.

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English. The career woman advances her career with a positive image and English. "The Tools of HER Trade" is a success guide for women that men read too. Tel: 972-9884963, 06-897115. Fax: 972-9884963. Email: carbeengruncle@yahoo.co.uk For further details, please see our website at <http://carbeengruncle.com>

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a sweetheart. Nice looking, educated and successful farang man, living in Phuket, would like to meet a smart, cute Thai woman. Please email me at: jaiyai2547@hotmail.com

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Companion. 30-year-old Dutchman seeks a nice, attractive, slim and open-minded Thai female to be my holiday travel companion. Interested? Then please email me at: doeidoeiduizend@hotmail.com

MAN WANTING TALL

Thai woman. I am a mature American man, educated, financially stable, tall and athletic, looking for a tall, attractive Thai woman for long-term relationship. I will be in Bangkok and Phuket next month. Please email photo and mobile phone number. Email: ctc_ccc@yahoo.com

Public Notice

Public Notice

This is to announce that Mr Helge Saatvedt resigned from Baan Kamala Co., Ltd., on June 19th, 2003, and also to state categorically that Mr Helge Saatvedt, Mrs Pimprapa Sriwongchan and Ms Supawan Khageerum and their associates and family members have no power or authority to manage or take any legal act for or incur any liability of any kind whatsoever on behalf of Baan Kamala Co., Ltd. Baan Kamala Co., Ltd., assumes no responsibility for any action taken by the individuals mentioned above.

ประกาศ

โปรดทราบ! ตั้งแต่วันที่ 19 มิถุนายน พ.ศ. 2546 เป็นต้นไป นายเฮลเก้ ซาทเวดท์ และ นางปิมประภา ศรีวงศ์จันทร์ และ นางสาวศุภวรรณ ชวีรัมย์ไม่มีอำนาจจัดการและกระทำการนิติกรรม หรือกระทำการใด ๆ ที่ก่อให้เกิดผลผูกพัน บริษัท บ้านกมลา จำกัด โดยบริษัท บ้านกมลา จำกัด ไม่รับผิดชอบในการกระทำใด ๆ ของบุคคลดังกล่าวข้างต้นทั้งสิ้น

In the event that any person contacts you concerning Baan Kamala Co., Ltd., and/or the land parcels under Nor. Sor. 3 Kor. Nos. 1724, 1805 and 1806 on the Kamala Peninsula in Kamala, Kathu District, Phuket, please notify Baan Kamala Co., Ltd. at Tel No 0-2654-0355 or Fax No. 0-2654-0357 or Email: admin@baankamala.com

หากมีผู้ใดติดต่อสอบถามท่านเกี่ยวกับบริษัท บ้านกมลา จำกัด หรือเกี่ยวกับที่ดิน น.ส. 3 ก. เลขที่ 1724 1805 และ 1806 ตั้งอยู่ที่ตำบลกมลา อำเภอกระบุรี จังหวัดภูเก็ต ขอความกรุณาท่านแจ้งมายังบริษัท บ้านกมลา จำกัด และสอบถามขอเท็จจริงได้ที่เบอร์ โทร.0-2654-0355 หรือโทรสาร 0-2654-0357 และ อีเมลที่ admin@baankamala.com

OBITUARY

JOAN ELIZABETH GROAT 1937-2004

Joan Elizabeth Groat was a lady of many talents and skills. Born in the USA of Danish and American Indian descent, she grew up as the only girl in a family of boys so, as she herself put it, she was a bit of a "wild spirit".

After high school she married her first boyfriend with whom she had two daughters and a son. That marriage eventually ended and she remarried, this time to John, with whom she remained happily wed until his death. Through this marriage Joan was entitled to use the title "Baroness" though she seldom did, and only her closest friends knew.

Joan arrived in Phuket over 20 years ago and her first port of call was Nai Harn Beach. She became a writer and correspondent for *Phuket Magazine*, where she worked for five years before becoming editor of Phuket's first English-language newspaper, the *Phuket Visitor*. After three years in the hot seat, she left to become secretary to the Marketing Director of the Kata Group until her retirement.

Joan was a founder member of the Phuket International Women's Club and served as its secretary for a number of years. In her will she left funds for a scholarship to be offered by the PIWC. She patronized many of the arts and enjoyed painting. Joan started but unfortunately never completed a children's book, which she was also illustrating.

In the last few years her health deteriorated and she was diagnosed with cancer. Just months before she passed on she discovered she also had a peptic ulcer. These diseases she battled with until pain eventually defeated her spirit.

Those of us who knew Joan will always remember her as a lady of charm and sophistication, with a loving nature not only toward her fellow humans but also to all animals great and small. Joan will be greatly missed but she will always be in the hearts and memories of those who knew her. She is at rest now. Her suffering is over and she is with the one she loved most – her late husband John.

With fondest memories,
James Scott-Dunsmore

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HONDA CIVIC COUPE
 September 2000. V-tec engine, in blue, only 43,000km. 6-pack CD system, leather interior, immaculate condition. First class insurance. Reason for selling: need pick-up truck for business purposes. Selling price: 530,000 baht. Contact for more info. Tel: 076-396414, 01-8919461. Email: daveskylight@hotmail.com

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 Red, Recaro seats, harness, turbo bodykit, RUF wheels, big stereo, big brakes, electric sunroof, lucky license plate number. Price: 1.29 million baht. Please call Oi. Tel: 01-8957908. Email: rungtiwap@asianwind.biz

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 2000cc, red, 180,000km. King Cab. 220,000 baht. Tel: 076-280590. Email: eric@insurance-in-thailand.com

4 x 4s

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4.0L, year 1998, blue, automatic gears and seats. CD player, always serviced at Ford center. 107,000km covered. Price: 550,000 baht. Finance: 350,000 baht. Please contact K. Wit. Tel: 09-4740952.

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SUZUKI CARIBIAN
 Dark green Suzuki Caribbean jeep in good condition. 1995 model, looks new, runs well. Insured. 180,000 baht. Tel: 09-4880955.

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Motorbikes

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Harley Heritage Classic in black with more than 150,000 baht of extra chrome, whitewalls, in showroom condition. Forced to sell. 650,000 baht. Tel: 076-381648. Email: frankvisakay@hotmail.com

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HONDA 900 CBR 95
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4WD PICKUP
 Looking for a 4x4 pickup, preferably 4-door, recent model Toyota, Ford, Isuzu or Mitsubishi. Tel: 09-4724904. Email: shadows_and_light@yahoo.com

Others

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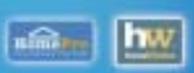
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