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Teen gunned down in petty argument

By Pathomporn Kaenkrachang

PHUKET: A birthday party at a restaurant near Soi Pisanu in Tambon Wichit's Village 1 turned deadly in the early hours of August 5, when an 18-year-old girl was killed following a petty squabble.

Phuket Deputy Police Commander Col Chalit Tinthane told reporters that Jutarat Naksri, a student at Phuket Technology College, had been out drinking at the restaurant to celebrate a birthday with a group of about 10 friends.

About 3:30 am, four youths on two motorcycles pulled up outside the restaurant and approached the group.

One of the youths, Natee Kosonsorawit, 21, approached his girlfriend, who was among the group, asking her return home with him.

The girlfriend, 17-year-old Siriwan Chaichana, refused to leave with boyfriend Natee. When Natee began pulling on her arm, Jutarat and another girl stepped in to break up the altercation, said Col Chalit.

One of the four youths, Tawat Worrarat, 20, produced a homemade "pen-gun" and threatened the three girls, at which point several other friends stood up and tried to pull the girls back, he added.

An argument then developed between the four youths and the people at the party, during which Tawat fired a shot from the pen-gun into the group. The shot hit Jutarat in the back, causing her to collapse, said Col Chalit.

Retreating from the scene, Tawat ran to a black Suzuki Step motorcycle and sat behind Than-



Main photo: Twenty-year-old Tawat Worrarat (white T-shirt) was arrested on August 5 for the shooting death of local student Jutarat Naksri, 18. Above: The homemade pen-gun used.

— Photos by Yongyot Preuksarak

wa Pirompak, 19. Natee and the other youth climbed on another bike and all four raced away, said Col Chalit.

Jutarat was driven on a motorbike by two girls to Vachira Phuket Hospital, where she died about 4 am, Phuket City Police Deputy Superintendent Lt Col Sompong Boonrat told the *Gazette*.

An autopsy revealed that a .38-caliber bullet had passed through her heart and embedded itself in the left side of her chest, added Col Chalit.

Col Sompong said that a Phuket City Police investigation team was called at 4:30 am to Vachira Phuket Hospital, where Siriwan and a number of Jaturat's friends were questioned.

Siriwan told police that Thanwa lived in an apartment for

employees of Keehin Electricity Company at Soi Budsabok, Rassada.

Police found the four youths at 9:30 am hiding at Thanwa's apartment.

A .38-mm pen-gun, two .38mm bullets and a black Suzuki Step motorcycle were discovered at the scene, said Col Chalit.

All four youths were taken to Phuket City Police Station for questioning. Tawat confessed to killing Jutarat Naksri, possession of an unlicensed firearm and carrying an unlicensed firearm in public.

Thanwa confessed to aiding Tawat's escape; both were released pending an investigation, said Col Sompong. The two other youths were released without charge, he added.

Gazette launches new archives

PHUKET: As Phuket's primary English-language newspaper since 1993, the *Phuket Gazette* is pleased to announce that issues of the weekly hard-copy edition are available through its website www.phuketgazette.net

The *Gazette's* on-line archives previously comprised only news stories on the website, along with two other popular on-line sections: Queer News and Issues & Answers. Other features from the hardcopy were posted online, but remained there for only four weeks.

Starting with the June 23, 2007 edition, all hardcopy issues are now available in their entirety in PDF format.

Do you want to know what Bloomin' Bert said about petunias in a past issue; or how about checking out a hot feature that you missed in the hard copy? The *Gazette's* archives have it all.

This new feature will benefit not only readers and researchers, but also the *Gazette's* esteemed advertisers, as website addresses appearing with their ads will remain "live" in the .pdf archives, allowing potential buyers to access advertisers' websites for years to come.

For added convenience, the *Gazette* has retained its previous archives for Internet news, Queer News and Issues & Answers, along with all other pre-existing features.

New issues of the hard-copy *Phuket Gazette* will be available on-line in .pdf format for readers outside of Thailand at noon, Phuket time, on the date of publication (every Saturday).

For readers in Thailand, new issues will be available at noon every Thursday following the publication date.

Red Cross calls for more donors

PHUKET: Senior figures of the Phuket chapter of the Thai Red Cross Society and Patong Hospital on August 3 called for more people to sign up as organ donors.

The announcement was made at a blood donation drive at Jungceylon, where in five hours 94 people donated blood that will be stored at Vachira Phuket Hospital's blood bank.

Only donations from people with type B or O blood were collected at the drive, with 194 people with other blood groups registering with the hospital to donate at a later date.

However, organ and eye donors were also sought in a bid to help some of the thousands of patients in need of transplants in Thailand.

Patients requiring corneal transplants in Thailand are having to wait up to four years due to a lack of donors.

In 2005, just 1,865 people registered to meet the needs of some 4,000 people requiring corneal implants.

Sixty-five eye donors and 41 organ donors registered with Bangkok Hospital Phuket at the event, with 65 organ donors signing up with Vachira Phuket Hospital.

Chalermprakiet organ-donation center at Vachira Phuket Hospital opened in April, and the Thai Red Cross Eye Bank at Bangkok Hospital Phuket opened in May.

Dr Wiwat Sritamanod of the Phuket Provincial Health Office said that he hopes the donation centers will encourage people in Phuket to sign up as donors.

For further information contact Chalermprakiet donation center (Tel: 076-361234-1285) or the Thai Red Cross Eye Bank, Bangkok Hospital Phuket (Tel: 076-254425-1281).

— Pathomporn Kaenkrachang

'Nong Red' recovering, but baby whale dead

By Janyaporn Morel

AO MAKHAM: The spinner dolphin that washed ashore at Karon Beach on July 1 is recovering slowly after a full month at the Phuket Marine Biological Center (PMBC), where she was taken for treatment of a severe respiratory infection and other ailments.

PMBC Biologist Kongkiat Kittiwattawong told the *Gazette* this afternoon that the dolphin, nicknamed Nong Red, has faced numerous health problems, including respiratory and circulatory difficulties, a stomach infection and an inflamed muscle.

While her breathing has improved and the swelling in the muscle has subsided, her stomach infection has worsened, he said.

"We are relieved that her lung infection

is healing, but we still expect it to take many more months for her to fully recover," he added.

Also slowly recovering at the PMBC's Endangered Species Unit is a 5.7-kilogram green turtle that was found washed ashore at Le Phang Beach on July 10, he said.

PMBC researchers are also examining the remains of 3.5-meter, 700-kilogram sperm whale that died on Sunday after becoming stranded in a mangrove forest near Haad Chaomai National Park in Trang's Kantang district, despite a heroic effort by local fisherman to tow the animal to the safety of deeper water.



An initial examination revealed that the whale, a newborn female, suffered several broken bones.

Experts fear Jatukham fever may be endangering dugong

By Pathomporn Kaenkrachang

PHUKET (*Gazette/Kom Chad Luek*): Conservation experts fear that fierce competition in the promotion of Jatukham Ramathap amulets may have sparked renewed interest in the hunting of dugong, teardrops of which are believed by some to have magical powers.

Phuket Marine Biological Center (PMBC) biologist Kanjana Adulyankosol told the *Gazette* that fears stemmed from promotional material used by one Jatukham seller coupled with the discovery on February 14 of a dead baby dugong with unexplained trauma to the eyes.

"There is a traditional belief that dugong teardrops possess special powers because mother dugong are known to become obsessed when searching for their lost young," she said.

"Dugong are easy for people to hunt down. The method used to extract the teardrops is cruelty in the extreme, as it involves removing the animal from the water, waiting for the eyes to dry up and then hitting the tear ducts to induce tears," she said.

The amount of tear liquid that can be extracted in this way

is very limited, she added.

K. Kanjana said that the carcass of the baby dugong was found in Phang Nga Bay.

"It had a wound from a sharp object on its left eye and the cornea in right eye was missing, but we don't know for sure what the cause was," she said.

"I don't know whether the sales pitch used to promote the amulets is true or not, but if it is, it is absolutely illegal," she added.

"There are only about 250 dugong left in Thai waters. Sale of their body parts, including tusks or other tissues, is completely prohibited," said K. Kanjana, who has undertaken several estimates of the population from a two-seat microflight aircraft.

Southern students tour Phuket

PHUKET: Eighty students from the violence-plagued Deep South were given a holiday in Phuket as Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Southern Region Offices 1, 3 and 4 joined forces to bring students from Songkhla, Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat to see Phuket's tourist attractions.

The students, aged 7 to 9, traveled through Phuket on a tour

K. Kanjana estimated said the annual death rate in the population is relatively stable at around 10 animals annually, but that even a small rise in that rate could quickly push the local population toward extinction because of the dugong's slow replacement rate.

Natural Resources and Environment Minister Kasem Sanitwong na Ayuthaya said anyone caught hunting dugong or whales for use in amulet production would face prosecution to the fullest extent possible under the law.

Whale blubber is another material that has been advertised in promotions for some series of the Jatukham talisman.

bus on July 28 to 31 as part of an initiative to teach them about the province.

Benjamard Kudmondtee, a student from Natavee Wittayakom School, Songkhla, said that she was glad to make friends with students from the Deep South.

"They told us they are a bit scared of the situation in the South, but they stay safe by going to bed early at 6 pm and help by keeping an eye out for anything strange they see.

"We like this program because it helps our friends from the South relax," she added.

Drug crime arrests rise

PHUKET: There were 46 *ya bah* (methamphetamine) arrests in July with a total of 1,119 pills seized. Drug-related crimes accounted for 107 arrests over the month, almost double the number recorded in July 2006, according to figures released by Phuket Provincial Police.

Twenty-five people were arrested for the use of cannabis, with 106 kilograms confiscated. There were 18 arrests for inhalant abuse and eight for possession of krathom (an indigenous Thai plant that acts as a mild stimulant), with 2,463 leaves seized by police.

Seven people were arrested for possession of "ice" (crystal methamphetamine) with 11.7 grams seized; one person for possession of *ya E* (Ecstasy) with 70 pills confiscated; and two people for possession of *ya K* (ketamine) with 4.3 grams appropriated.

Gambling was once again Phuket's most popular crime, with 297 arrests made in July, up 116 from last year.

There were 110 cases of theft reported on the island – including 14 motorcycles and one car.

Five murders and four attempted murders were reported in July, with 15 reports of assault and 12 arrests made.

Forty-six people were arrested for prostitution and 25 for possession of unlicensed firearms.

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Taiwanese businessman shot in broad daylight

By Semacote Suganya

WICHIT: The Taiwanese owner of a fish export business was admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU) at Phuket International Hospital after being shot by unknown assailants on Chao Fa West Rd on the morning of August 1.

Phuket City Police Duty Inspector Pol Lt Sathid Noorid identified the victim as 48-year-old Hsueh Hsu Sheng, a resident of Baan Suan Thai housing estate off Chao Fa West Rd.

Mr Sheng and his wife, also Taiwanese, were pulling their car out of the housing estate onto the main road when two men on a motorbike pulled alongside. The man riding pillion pulled out a 9mm pistol and fired once, the slug passing through Mr Sheng's arm and lodging inside his upper torso, Lt Sathid said.

The couple has lived in Phuket for about five years, during which time Mr Sheng has operated the Tai-Ping Timbee Industry Co Ltd at Phuket Fishing Port on Srisutat Rd in Rassada, Lt Sathid said.

"We can't say at this point whether the attack was carried out by a gunman for hire or what the motive might have been. However, it seems clear that they were trying to kill, not just intimidate. It also appears that Mr Sheng was the assailants' sole target," he said.

"Mr Sheng said that he was unaware of anyone who wanted to kill him. He confirmed that there is no adultery in the matter as he is a good man and faithful to his wife. However, we still need to investigate.

"He is now gradually getting better and has been released from the ICU. He has been unable to give a description of the assailants because the incident happened so quickly. The only thing he recalls is that the gunmen were both wearing hats," Lt Sathid added.

The wife, whose name was not disclosed, was not harmed in the attack.

Tourism Minister sets ICEC decision deadline

By Sompratch Saowakhon

PHUKET CITY: Tourism and Sports Minister Dr Suwit Yodmanee announced on August 1 that August 24 will be the deadline for Phuket Governor Niran Kalayanamit to decide on a location for the long-awaited International Convention and Exhibition Center (ICEC).

Dr Suwit set the deadline at a meeting at the Phuket Merlin Hotel - one of several meetings held by the minister to gather feedback from government officers during his recent tour of Phuket, Phang Nga and Krabi.

Speaking to Gov Niran, Dr Suwit said, "Phuket attracts more than 80 international meetings each year. It's important for the Ministry of Tourism to support Phuket in having a convention center. I need Phuket to quickly decide on a location by itself, and if you have any problems, please ask us."

However, Dr Suwit said that any budget from the central



TDA Vice-President Pragon Gategun explains to Tourism and Sports Minister Suwit Yodmanee (left) how sea gypsy Niran Yangpan (right) survived decompression sickness after resurfacing from a dive.

government must wait until the next fiscal year, which begins October 1.

"I know that deciding on a location is difficult for the province because three private investors have submitted good propos-

als. Phuket must now consider which location will best match the government's interests," he said.

Dr Suwit also said that he had received positive feedback from many countries about the tsunami evacuation drill on July

25, and he called for tsunami evacuation drills to be held twice a year to boost tourists' confidence.

"Next year the Asian Disaster Prevention Center will have about 23 countries, including seven African countries, that will be connected to a central tsunami warning system. Every country affected by the tsunami has placed being part of the warning system as a high priority," he said.

While in Phuket, K. Suwit opened a five-day dive course in Rawai, where 20 sea gypsies were being trained safe diving practices, including how to avoid decompression sickness, and being prepared for work as instructors in the local dive industry.

The course is the first of three. The second course will also be held in Rawai, while the third will be offered to the Laem Tukkae and Tah Chat Chai sea gypsy communities.

The program is based on the Thai Dive Association's TDA/CMAS "One Star Diver" training, which could lead to the sea gypsies entering the workforce with jobs as dive master assistants.

Dr Suwit, explained that some 400 million baht annually is sent to organizations overseas so that divers in Thailand could be certified by PADI. "But now we can certify divers by ourselves. This course will help expand career opportunities for sea gypsies beyond fishing," he said.

Welcome Gate to officially open

TAH CHAT CHAI: More than three years after it was initially conceived, the Phuket Welcome Gate will have its grand opening ceremony on the auspicious date of September 9.

The gate, proposed and championed by Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (OrBorJor) President Anchalee Vanich-Thepabutra, will welcome tourists onto the island with a history of the province and a rest stop area.

The grand opening event, to begin at 2 pm, will include an exhibition of photos from HM The King's visit to Phuket in 1966, a painting competition and a sale of local food and goods.

Prime Minister General Surayud Chulanont has been invited to chair the event.

The ceremony will follow the Welcome Gate's soft opening on April 11, when elderly residents of Phuket were invited to

the site. Since then the electrical systems have been completed and landscaping put in place.

The entire project is built on 25 rai of government land near the island's northernmost tip, where the Thepkrasattri Bridge crosses onto Phuket. The project, initially funded with 46.7 million baht in tax revenue collected by the OrBorJor, ended up costing 50 million baht.

K. Anchalee said the welcome gate will be the "first living room" for visitors to Phuket.

Facilities will include a service and information center, 60-seat meeting room, library with six Internet-enabled computers, restaurant and One Tambon One Product (OTOP) shop.

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The project has come under fire, with some critics calling it environmentally irresponsible and a waste of taxpayer money.

Some hotel owners have cited the Welcome Gate as a reason for not paying the 1% room tax imposed on hotels by the OrBorJor.

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Things that go BUMP

With their shiny wheels and impressive sound systems, the youth of Phuket have been holding large car shows every Saturday night for years. The coordinated displays of sound, power and light ingenuity are also becoming more common on the streets of Phuket. *Gazette* reporter Somprach Saowakhon went to find out what all the noise is about.

Bump! Bump! Bump!... the bass throbs from a car stereo down the street, straight into your bones. The eardrum-rattling cacophony isn't coming from a rock concert, but a car driving down the road. With ever-increasing sophistication and money, many youths in Phuket are turning to building souped-up audio systems as a hobby. With the support of car-audio shops, they meet weekly in the parking lot in Saphan Hin to show off the best designs, coolest looks and, of course – the loudest cars.

Somyos Laitoh, owner of Sapam Sound Shop, said that it began seven or eight years ago when he and a few other shops needed a place to test out stereo systems. Anything louder than 140 decibels cannot be tested inside a shop, he said, and so he came to Saphan Hin.

Since then the gathering has grown to about 60 cars and hundreds of people every Saturday night, all coming together to show off their cars, meet with friends and, inevitably, listen to loud music.

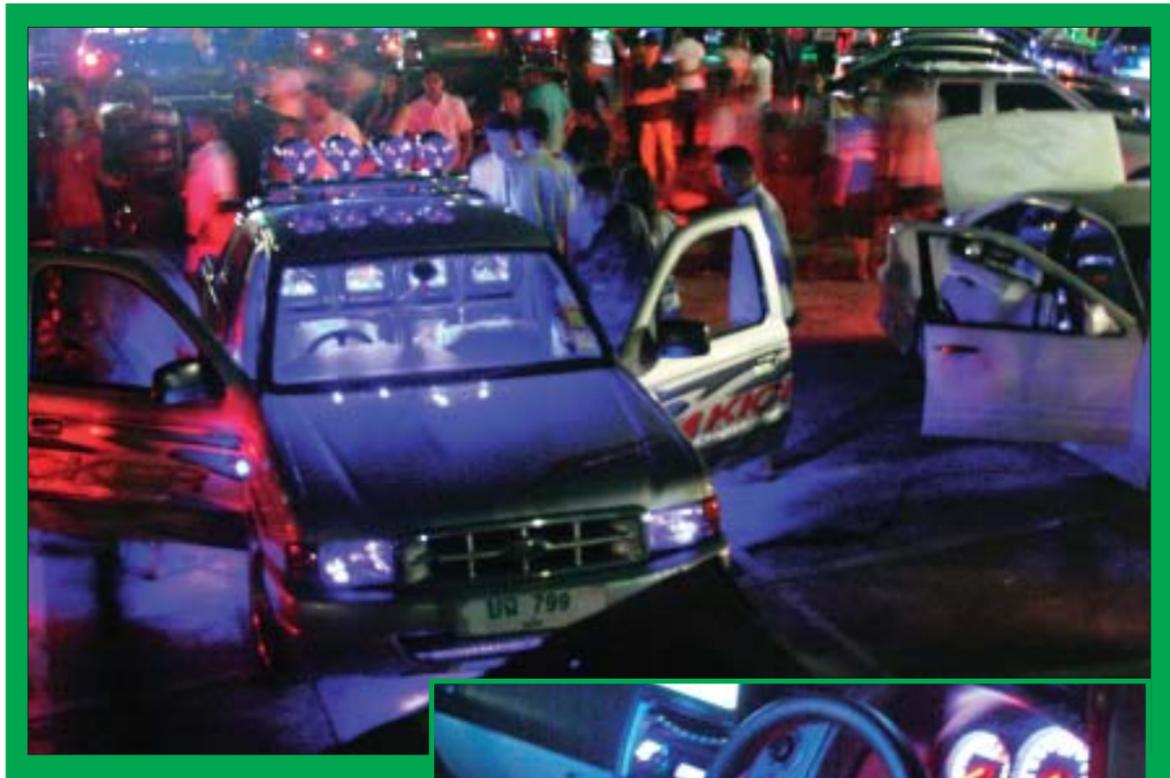
"There are now about 20 shops that come out here to show

their cars," K. Somyos said. Mercifully, his shop brings about 10 cars and trucks every week and hooks them all up to a central laptop that acts like an orchestra conductor, allowing each system to belt out the same music simultaneously.

Each crew has its own area of the parking lot, marked with logos like "Neverdie", with sound-shop names plastered across car windows. Naturally, vendors set up stalls around the show, selling items like cans of beer and snacks to spectators out for some Saturday night action.

The fun kicks off around 9 pm. In the early stages of the evening it is not uncommon to see families walking around admiring the cars and talking to the owners. With modified Lamborghini-style doors on the Volkswagens and glowing lights on nearly everything, it's easy to mistake these expensive machines for grown-up toys.

One truck K. Somyos' customer wanted to show off had its bed completely filled with more than two dozen speakers bathed in a green haze. The air around the truck moved with such force that it made vision blurry for a



couple meters in every direction. The song playing was irrelevant as thinking about the lyrics wasn't possible. Thinking about anything, really, is difficult when your brain is rattling inside your skull.

The cars on show at the weekly meet-up are about more than just booming sound, however. They are also a showcase for the latest and greatest sound technology available. One car had a laser display system mounted in the rear that sent jets of green light shooting over the windshield and windows, first making the glass appear broken, then tracing geometric shapes.

The lights under another car lit up the ground with green fluorescence, while another car had its trunk filled with large speakers and an LCD display showing music videos. Later in the evening, one of the pickup trucks had some live entertainment when a few freelance "coyote girls" climbed atop to provide some dancing entertainment.

The time and expense that goes into the cars is considerable, said K. Somyos.



SENSURROUND: An overview of the crowd at the weekly show (above), held in the parking lot near the Saphan Hin gymnasium. Car enthusiasts gladly show any passers-by the interior workings of their impressive cars.

Car owners are requesting ever more expensive equipment, preferring the Kicker brand for their cars – despite the added expense required to import it from America.

"Kickers are very popular in Thailand and Phuket, despite the high price. That shows how much they really love their sound systems," he said.

Prices range from 10,000 baht for an entry-level system to several hundred thousand baht for a complete high-end rig.

One car owner, who gave his name as "Piek", said, "It's challenging and exciting when I come here. I love talking to the other enthusiasts."

He said that he came from Bangkok, where there is no suit-

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BUMP in the night



NOT QUITE A SPACESHIP: The neon lights and thumping stereos draw car enthusiasts and dancing "coyote girls" to the party-like atmosphere.

SOUND AND VISION: This car's trunk is filled with candy-colored speakers and lights, along with an LCD display and scrolling LED marque.

able place for car owners to meet like they can at Saphan Hin.

K. Somyos agreed that the chance to play loud music and meet weekly was unique in the region and drivers regularly came from Phang Nga and Krabi to take part.

But not everyone is happy that the car-owners are allowed to play in Phuket at all. One 75-year-old woman, who lives near the popular Pink Lady nightclub, about one kilometer from the parking lot at Saphan Hin, said the cars driving to and from the meet-up can be dangerous nuisances.

"I always hear their loud cars pass by my house on the way to Saphan Hin. I'm afraid of them because sometimes it looks like they are drunk and about to get in an accident. The most dangerous part is that they drive through here at very fast

speeds, even though this is a small road," she said, asking that her name not be printed.

"I used to sleep in the front room, near the road. Now I have had to move to another room at the back of my house so I can sleep. I want the police to come and do something," she said.

She emphasized that her complaint was not about the youths themselves, or their hobby, but the way they act on the road.

"I don't mind that they meet together at Saphan Hin. But please turn off those loud sounds on the road," she pleaded.

Although police can charge anyone for having a loud engine or horn, they cannot arrest or fine people for loud stereos alone, said Lt Col Theerawat Leamsuwan, traffic inspector for Phuket City Police Station.

For police to cite someone

for playing their stereo too loud, a resident must first call in a complaint to the police. From that point, the police can charge the driver with creating a nuisance.

Col Theerawat said he has known about the meeting at Saphan Hin for a long time, but since they are not breaking the law when they are in the parking lot, the government has no intention of shutting them down.

Tavicha Chaitong, chief of the Administration and Justice Enhancement Group, was not so forgiving. He said that he will again ask the government and police if students should be allowed to meet there.

"More than the modified cars, I care about the image Phuket is projecting if the shows have teenage girls, not even 18, dancing with skimpy clothes on the cars," he added.

K. Somyos disagreed, saying that the image the shows foster is one of a progressive, technologically-savvy island.

As a demonstration that Phuket really is on the cutting edge, at least in this one area, K. Somyos set the world record for the loudest car in a touring competition of car sound systems in 1995. To this day, the feat – an earth-pounding 174.3db output – remains the fifth loudest of all time in its vehicle-size category, according to the records of the International Auto Sound Challenge Association.

Putting 174.3db into perspective, consider that hearing damage starts at around 85db. The average car stereo can reach up to 110db, while those in the front row of a rock concert are routinely subjected to a mere 120 to 130db. At 141db, people begin

to feel nauseous. All the way up at 174db, the air around speakers begins to heat up from compression, creating a force powerful enough to blow a woman's long hair right out the car window.

K. Somyos said that the award-winning truck stays safely at his shop and the shows at Saphan Hin never reach that type of noise level. At most, he said, they reach up to 140db.

"Every shop here at the show has professionals in sound-system design. We can design something for every vehicle and style," K. Somyos said. "But we ask that our customers please respect the rules for our show and do not play it so loud on the roads, especially at night. While you may be a lover of sound systems, you could disturb another kind of lover too."






Layan Gardens, Rental / Resale / New Unit
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(Layan Beach)

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Blue Canyon Country Club, Rental / Resale
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Queer News

A severed engagement

PHUKET: On August 1 a man was admitted to Phuket International Hospital with an unusual injury: his penis was almost completely severed after his fiancée, suspicious that he was still seeing an ex-girlfriend, attempted to cut it off.

The incident was reported to Capt Sathit Noorit, Duty Officer at Phuket City Police Station, who led an investigation team to the hospital. When they arrived, the officers were told that the victim, Somrak Mansit, 31, was being treated in the ICU ward and was unable to make a statement.

The officers then went to K. Somrak's home in Village 6, in Wichit, where witnesses there told them that the perpetrator was most likely K. Somrak's fiancée "Somphon" (not her real name), a Thai traditional massage therapist aged "about 45".

The couple, together about six months, were due to be married August 11. They recently began to argue often after Somphon found out that K. Somrak was still in contact with a former girlfriend, which was likely to be the root cause of K. Somrak's loss, witnesses said.

Neighbors reported hearing K. Somrak scream, but said they thought nothing of it as they assumed he was just having another argument with Somphon. Moments later, Somphon rushed out of the house, telling neighbors she was going to buy a telephone refill card.

K. Somrak soon emerged from the house, calling for help. His trousers covered in blood, he told neighbors that his betrothed had used a knife to sever his penis and asked to be taken to the hospital.

In K. Somrak's bedroom, police found the mattress soaked in blood but no other signs of struggle. They also were unable to find the weapon used to slice K. Somrak's genitals.

Officers hypothesized that Somphon seized the opportunity to cut her sleeping partner's penis while he had a morning erection. Police would need K. Somrak's statement before they could come to any firm conclusions, police said.

Police are now hunting for Somphon and are likely to charge her with grievous bodily harm causing the loss of an organ.

The report did not say whether doctors would be able to reattach K. Somrak's member. *Source: Kom Chad Luek*

Super-sized surprise

BANGKOK: Following a report by a 30-year-old woman on July 25, Buppharam police thought they had a rapist at large. Upon more detailed questioning of the suspect, it turned out that the large problem was actually the size of the man's member.

A woman, who police named only as "K. Phen", 30, told police that a taxi driver had taken her to a "drawing curtain" motel – the type with the concealed car parking spot usually used for illicit trysts or planning crimes – and raped her.

Officers quickly tracked down the suspect, Somchai Saema, 32, and pulled him in for

questioning. K. Somchai admitted that he had had sex with K. Phen, but she had consented. The problem was that she had wanted him to wear a condom, but as he had an "inhumanly large" penis, he could not get any to fit him.

K. Somchai was not, apparently, born with such a magnificent member but had vastly increased its size by injecting it with silicone while he was in prison.

Police decided the best solution was for the two to sort it out between themselves. After a suitable amount of compensation for the unprotected insertion was agreed on, the pair were released.



This eyesore is located at the end of Soi Prayoon 2 in Samkong, not far from the *Gazette's* offices. Although there are plenty of trash cans in the area to dump refuse in, and the municipality collects trash regularly, some people just feel the need to spoil a perfectly good neighborhood.

Among the discarded items, dumped right beside a residential building, are an old mattress, polystyrene food containers, bottles, papers and other general rubbish, giving the rest of the neighborhood a pretty good idea what these locals might be getting up to.

TRASHING Phuket

Students' projects all rubbish

By Pathomporn Kaenkrachang

PHUKET: Students from Phuket Wittayalai School were among the victors at the Recycle Handmade Project contest organized by the Phuket Provincial Office of Natural Resources and Environment.

The results of the contest were announced at the Phuket Natural Resources and Environment office in a ceremony attended by students and representatives from the Phuket Regional Environment Office and Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (*OrBorJor*) July 12.

The aim of the contest was to help raise students' awareness of the importance of protecting the environment by getting them to come up with creative ways to reuse garbage.

Students had been working on projects for about a month in two categories: "inventing using recycled materials" (high school



With this bench made from recycled motorcycle wheels, some clever students from Kathu Wittaya School took first place in the high school division "Inventor" category.

and primary levels) and "costume design using recycled materials" (high school only).

First place in the primary division (nine to 11 years old) for "inventing" went to students from Kajornrangsang School, who walked away with 4,000 baht for their "purse made from old lot-

tery tickets". Bangneaw School and Kathuwittaya School students took second and third places respectively.

A group of students from Kathuwittaya School who made a bench made from old motorcycle wheels won first place in the high school division (16 to 18 years old), while another group from Kathuwittaya School took second place, with Bangneaw School coming in third.

In the "costume" competition, Phuket Wittayalai School students won the first prize of 6,000 baht for their dress made out of beer cans. A second group from Phuket Wittayalai School was runner-up, while Phuket Vocational College finished third.

The winners from each category will compete against schools from other provinces for the HRH Princess Srirasmi trophy at the national finals to be held in Bangkok later this month, date and venue to be announced.



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Dengue rages across Southeast Asia

Dengue fever is spreading throughout Southeast Asia, prompting the World Health Organization (WHO) to warn that the region could face the worst outbreak of the mosquito-borne virus in nearly a decade. The disease, which has no cure or vaccine, has flared across the region from Singapore to Vietnam.

The previous major dengue outbreak in Southeast Asia was in 1998, when about 350,000 cases were reported, including nearly 1,500 deaths. Indonesia and Thailand were not included in that tally.

John Ehrenberg, WHO's regional adviser on vector-borne diseases, said it could potentially reach that level again this year.

"I think we're in the building-up stage, but it could very well peak by August or September," he said.

The Thai Public Health Ministry said that 9,245 people were reported to have contracted dengue fever between January and May this year and that 10 had died from the disease.

The ministry's permanent secretary, Prat Bunyawongvirot, said on August 2 that he had instructed all public health offices and hospitals to step up implementation of preventive measures against a possible outbreak of dengue fever during the remaining months of the rainy season.

Post-abortion pass test: The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will approve the use of anti-hemorrhaging drugs to prevent blood loss following abortions.

FDA Secretary-General Dr Siriwat Tiptaradol said that a working committee comprising representatives of the FDA and the Royal Thai College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists will approve the use of the drugs at Medical Council of Thailand-registered obstetrics clinics and at public hospitals.

The drugs could come into use as early as next month, but will not be available over the counter and will not be used in all terminations. Their application will be approved in cases where there is risk of hemorrhage.

Meanwhile, a long-running Public Health Ministry survey of pregnant women attending public hospitals revealed that more than one quarter had abortions while in the hospital.

Factories under scrutiny: The Industry Ministry has ordered the Department of Provincial Industrial Works to closely monitor factories in 10 provinces to determine whether they are in financial trouble.

The plants under scrutiny are in Suphanburi, Chonburi, Samut Prakan, Nakhon Ratchasima, Nonthaburi, Pathum Thani, Nakhon Pathom, Samut Sakhon, Chachoengsao and Rayong.

Assistance for financially



Workers clean in front of the Royal Pavilion, one of the main attractions at the Royal Flora Ratchaphruek 2006 expo in Chiang Mai, ahead of the venue's unofficial opening for tourists on August 1.

troubled companies will come from the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Bank – a 1.2-billion-baht fund from the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion – and five billion baht from the Bank of Thailand and commercial banks.

Thai Silp South East Asia Import Export announced its closure late last month and Union Footwear and Rangsit Footwear announced plans to discontinue business at the end of this year. The companies cited the strong baht as a reason for closure.

Snack attack: It is time for Thailand to control snack advertising aimed at children, which are being shown on TV 42 times an hour, four times more than in the US and England, according to health advocates and academics.

At a seminar hosted by the Thai Health Promotion Foundation, Itthaboon Onwongsa from the Foundation for Consumers said ad controls were necessary as they were the major factor in kids indulging in unhealthy snacks.

Citing a survey by the "Thai Kids Don't Eat Sweets" network, he said children in Thailand spend 135 million baht a day on snacks and beverages – calculated from 900,000 children aged three to 12 years old spending eight to 10 baht a day on snacks and another five baht a day on beverages.

Dr Parichart Sthapitanonda, from Chulalongkorn University's Faculty of Communication Arts,

cited a study on advertising during children's television programs in 13 developed countries.

Australia aired such ads at the rate of 12 times per hour, America at 11 times and England at 10 times, compared with Thailand's 42 times per hour.

School scare: Five schools in the Bang Mod area of Bangkok received hoax bomb threats on August 1, causing panic among students and parents.

At Wat Srisook School, a teacher received a phone call and heard a male caller saying, "Is that Wat Srisook School? We have planted a bomb there. If you

don't want to see casualties, alert parents so that they can come to pick up their children."

The school alerted police and parents and gradually released each student to his or her parent one by one to prevent kidnapping cases.

Anti-animal-cruelty campaign: The Department of Livestock Development has called for public comment on the draft of an animal cruelty prevention bill posted on its website, www.dld.go.th, in both Thai and English.

"I think it's time for Thailand to show the world that we

are now civilized and concerned about animal welfare," said Nirundorn Uantrakulsuk, director of the Animal Disease Prevention Division.

K. Nirundorn called on people to think about what should be the first law in the country to protect all fauna from activities that could cause pain, suffering or injury.

Under the bill, violators could face a maximum of two years imprisonment or a 200,000-baht fine, or both.

People have until the end of August to post their remarks, which will be used to amend the draft for forwarding to the Agriculture Ministry next month.

One-minute robbery: In a one-minute heist, two gunmen on August 2 stole 500,000 baht from a Thai Military Bank branch in Samut Prakan's Muang district.

The hooded robbers entered the TMB building around 3 pm. One of them told the bank's tellers to lie face down on the floor at gunpoint while the other jumped over the counter and grabbed the money from a drawer. The staff told police that it took the two robbers just one minute to complete the raid.

The two men then fled on a motorcycle driven by a third man, who was waiting for them. Police have yet to announce an arrest in the case.

Movies regulated: The Cabinet has approved a bill to regulate video and movie production on August 1, Culture Minister Khunying Kaisai Saengaroon has announced.

She said the National Movie and Video Bill was approved at a weekly meeting that lasted only one and a half hours. The bill would set up the National Movie and Video Committee to be headed by the prime minister.

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

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Nine killed as insurgents regroup

At least four people, including two soldiers and one police officer, were killed and more than a dozen wounded in explosions and gun attacks throughout the Deep South on August 1. Police and army officers also killed five suspected militants.

A bomb went off at a police outpost in front of a market in Songkhla's Nathawee district as at about 6 pm. A police officer was killed at the scene and five others wounded, including another police officer who was in serious condition.

Six bombs went off in six locations in four districts of Narathiwat Province between 7 am and 9 am. One person was killed, police said.

In neighboring Yala, an ambush in Raman district killed two soldiers and wounded two others at about 6 am. The unit had been on patrol, guarding railway facilities.

The militants stole the soldiers' three M-16 assault rifles and 11mm pistols as they retreated from the scene, said Raman police chief Pol Col Wisit Aksornkaew.

In Pattani's Yarang district, a roadside bomb slightly wounded an Army corporal as he joined five others on patrol at about 9:30 am.

Colonel Shinawat Mandej, the Yala taskforce commander, said the attacks were a reaction to the authorities' massive security sweep.

"They want to show that they still have the potential to attack us, but we know they are not in a good position to handle the situation since our campaign began," the commander said.

The operation that has brought hundreds of suspects into detention over the past month has heavily shaken the militants.

The offensive was a major achievement in containing the violence that has raged for three years, he said.

Local residents, however, did not agree with the officer's claim. Siraporn Chutikarn, assistant manager of Kasikornbank's Narathiwat branch, said local people believe the violence would continue.

"Authorities try to say the situation is improving, but we believe the violence will go on. We



Farmers in Nakhon Sri Thammarat dump mangosteens in front of the provincial governor's residence to protest what they claim are the lowest prices for the fruit in many years.

don't know when they will strike or who will be the next victim," she said.

In Yala's Bannang Sata district the same day, combined police and military forces killed at least five militants during a raid on a village, the district chief said.

The insurgents opened fire on armed government troops as they were searching Ban Kasod village at about 4:30 pm, District Chief Metha Kanchanapuwa said.

The five dead insurgents could not be immediately identified, he added.

Customs ecstatic: Customs officers working with Narcotics Suppression police seized 199 *ya*

E (ecstasy) pills and arrested a Malaysian man attempting to smuggle them into Thailand through the Sadao border post in Songkhla Province on July 30. Another Malaysian man was arrested later the same day in connection with the seizure.

The arrests were announced the following day by the Custom's Office Region 4 Director Rakhop Srisuphautha, who named the two suspects as Lee Song Yong, 32, and Lee Cho Yeow, 33. Officers also seized 20,000 baht and 2,000 Malaysian ringgit in cash, a Proton car and a Ford Ranger pickup truck.

At 5:20 pm on July 30, customs officers searched the car of Lee Song Yong as he was trying

to cross into Thailand. They found the 199 *ya E* pills, with an estimated street value of about 160,000 baht, hidden in a leather boot, K. Rakhop said.

From further investigation, officers learned that the drugs were to be sent to Lee Cho Yeow, who was staying in a well-known hotel in Sadao. Customs and Narcotics Suppression officers arrested him at the hotel at 10:30 pm the same day and seized his pickup truck.

Both men have been charged with drug smuggling offenses and are being held at Sadao District Police Station.

K. Rakhop said Police Region 9 Narcotics Suppression Bureau recently established a

special unit to crack down on drug smuggling across the Thai-Malaysian border, he added.

Fish turf war: A teacher was shot dead in Phatthalung August 1 in an attack police believe to be motivated by a dispute over renting out fishmonger stands lined up along the Asia highway.

Phijit Senin, 50, was ambushed as he was driving home from his grilled fish restaurant through Village 7, Tambon Pabon, Pabon District. A car pulled up alongside his Isuzu pickup and a passenger sprayed him with bullets from an assault rifle. He died at the scene.

K. Phijit was a level C-7 math teacher at Tha Mot School in the district of the same name. People who knew him said that he was a good person, always willing to help others and well-liked among students and fellow teachers.

As well as being a teacher and owning a restaurant, K. Phijit also rented out stalls selling barbecued fish along the Asia highway between Phatthalung and Haad Yai. Police believe a dispute with another stall owner to be the most likely motive for the killing.

Repellent drug: Trang Police on August 1 arrested 13 people caught using "four times a hundred", a dangerous-yet-popular concoction made from boiled *krathom* leaves, cough medicine and cola – often spiked with mosquito repellent.

Police led by Sub Lt Thinkon Maneerat, Duty Officer at Trang Muang District Police, raided a house in Trang Municipality and found a group of young men and women sitting chatting and drinking.

In the middle of the group was a stainless steel pot containing boiled *krathom* leaves, a bottle of cough medicine and a bottle of the finished product.

Korring Suyong, 40, from Pattani, admitted that the drugs belonged to him.

The other 12 suspects, all students aged from 19 to 23 years old at Suan Dusit Rajabhat University's Trang Center, denied using the drugs.

All 13 suspects were sent to Trang Muang District Police Station and charged with drugs offenses.

A day earlier, a youth from Satun was admitted to hospital after taking the drug.

Suffering from convulsions, 18-year-old Abdullahsid Hawang was taken by relatives to Langu Hospital at 3 pm on July 30. He later fell into a coma.

The doctor treating Abdullahsid said that his condition was likely to have been caused by mosquito repellent poisoning.

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

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BRIGHT IDEA: Tony Pope of Thaitanics shows just one item for sale at the newly-opened charity store in Rawai.

Open for opportunity

By Nick Davies

Englishman Tony Pope, retired and living in Rawai, and well known for his charitable crusades under the name Thaitanics, has been doing good deeds on the island since 1999. In that year he and his wife, K. Mical, first started helping young women who wanted to break free from working as bar girls by giving them a place to stay before they returned to their families.

As the couple helped more and more women who wanted to flee abusive relationships or similarly dangerous situations, they built the extra rooms needed for what they called the "Halfway House" by stacking two shipping containers and converting them into temporary rooms where females of any nationality can stay while they get back on their feet.

Tony and Mical can recount numerous stories of women who have found a new lease of life, including a young destitute mother and her fatherless baby triplets who faced difficulties in getting the proper medical treatment that they required.

When the tsunami hit in 2004, Tony and Mical extended their efforts to helping survivors of the disaster. After the waves struck, they took turns diving into the sea, rescuing three victims and taking them to hospital.

In the aftermath, Tony and Mical volunteered their services for several projects; including delivering supplies to tsunami victims and helping relatives locate injured survivors.

When Tony was asked to help out with a boat-building project that would help neglected fishermen back onto the sea in rebuilt boats, the charity Thaitanics was born.

Using his own money at first, Tony paid for boats to be made seaworthy again and eventually enlisted the help of American mechanics to rebuild diesel engines for the boats.

Running a charitable orga-

nization in Phuket doesn't require just time and compassion though; patience and persistence are also essential qualities in what is sometimes a thankless job.

"In the past, it was fairly easy to obtain the necessary permission from the authorities to carry out the tasks at hand, but changes in the chain of command have meant having to re-establish relationships and a lot more frustrations with seemingly unnecessary red tape, which has almost stonewalled some of the projects," Tony explained.

So far, Tony has contributed a lot of his own money to helping others to keep Thaitanics afloat, and now they have opened a small charity shop stocked with a plethora of secondhand clothes, appliances and ornaments.

All of the shop's stock is "nearly new" and definitely worth a look as there are some real bargains. Most of the items have a fair amount of history behind them, too. The collection of books, for example, have all been well looked after with some even dating back to the 1940s.

There are some lovely watercolor paintings, lots of funky jewelry, a large collection of nice ties, clothes that will fit farang and a few pieces of useful hardware for the home, including a fully functional chainsaw, which Tony once used as a prop for his cowboy costume at a fancy dress party, causing several guests to make a hasty retreat when he actually started it up.

Funds raised from the shop go towards the upkeep of the Halfway House, providing food, shelter, job placement, documentation and sometimes education that will give them the chance of a better future to women in need.

Thaitanics charity shop is 28/34 Saiyuan Rd, Rawai, on the right as you head towards Nai Harn. Open Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 11 am to 3 pm. For more information visit www.thaitanics.org or call Tony at 081-0849093.

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False alarms cause panic on Phi Phi

On the morning of July 25, the National Disaster Warning Center (NDWC) tsunami warning systems were tested along the Andaman coast, including those in Ao Nang. There were no major difficulties reported in the exercise, but three days later, when 12 warning towers throughout Krabi sounded a false alarm, was a different story.

I received a call from a friend in Phuket asking if the tsunami alarm was sounding in Ao Nang. I went to the beachfront and found that all was quiet and it was business as usual.

I returned home and checked the website of the United States Geological Survey (USGS) at www.earthquake.usgs.gov, where earthquakes around the world are monitored in real time and you can sign up to have alerts delivered via email.

There was nothing of note on the website; no earthquakes round here. Meanwhile, panicked residents on Phi Phi Don Island were calling to the mainland as their tsunami alarm was still sounding.

It was only after confirmation from the mainland and Bangkok that it was declared a false alarm.

Other parts of Krabi were unaware of the false alarm, and a friend of mine at Phra Ae Beach (also called Long Beach)



ACROSS THE BAY
By Gus Reynolds

on Koh Lanta was not aware that there had been drill on July 25 or a false alarm.

Tidbits. Several hotels in Krabi have closed for renovations to build additional rooms in anticipation of a strong high season next year.

The Thai Village is under renovation; the Krabi Seaview is closed after its sale; and of course the Phra Nang Inn is closed for renovations after the old section was razed by fire.

In Klong Muang, the Andaman Holiday Resort has been sold and will be closed for two years. This has helped the occupancy rates at other nearby hotels, but at the same time it has hurt the trade of restaurants and shops nearby.

Low-season promotional



Chuan Phukaoluan (3rd row, 4th from right), president of the SripHong Phukaoluan Foundation, joins students, volunteers, members of the Keightley family and the *Gazette's* own Robert 'Gus' Reynolds (3rd row, 2nd from left) at the opening of the Krabi Community Center.

airfares have helped to keep guests arriving during the quiet period. Probably the biggest impact was made by Nok Air's three-baht fare from Bangkok to Krabi.

Although you had to pay 600 baht in taxes and fuel surcharges, it was still a great deal and the headlines kept the airline's phones busy and their website swamped with traffic.

One-Two-Go is currently offering a 1,300-baht, all-inclusive fare that includes a one-night stay

at the Krabi Maritime Resort in Krabi Town.

In addition, Air Asia is starting direct flights from Kuala Lumpur to Krabi on August 21, adding to the roster of international flights that service Krabi Airport.

Communal sense. Krabi Community Center, a center being administered by the SripHong Phukaoluan Foundation, opened July 28.

This 950-square-meter center on three rai in Krabi Town will be the new home for the foundation to run its Tsunami Child Sponsorship program, which supports 101 children and their families.

At the new facility, the foundation will run its medical clinic, library and learning center, computer center, food and clothes distribution, occupational training, and children's and elders' lounge. Although privately owned, the center will be open to all organi-

zations for programs beneficial to the community.

The conference hall can accommodate up to 200 people and the library contains both English and Thai books.

At the center's opening, members of the Keightley family from Ireland donated more than 659,000 baht to the SripHong Phukaoluan Foundation in the name of Connor Keightley, who died at Koh Phi Phi Don in the tsunami.

The family sponsors 13 children and has donated two million baht to the foundation since the disaster.

Chuan Phukaoluan, the foundation president and former Krabi Mayor, explained, "With this new facility we plan to expand our programs to benefit all residents of Krabi and make this a truly public community center."

For more information about the SripHong Phukaoluan Foundation, visit www.krabirelief.com



The Keightley family from Ireland donate more than 659,000 baht to the SripHong Phukaoluan Foundation in the name of Connor Keightley, who died at Koh Phi Phi Don in the tsunami.

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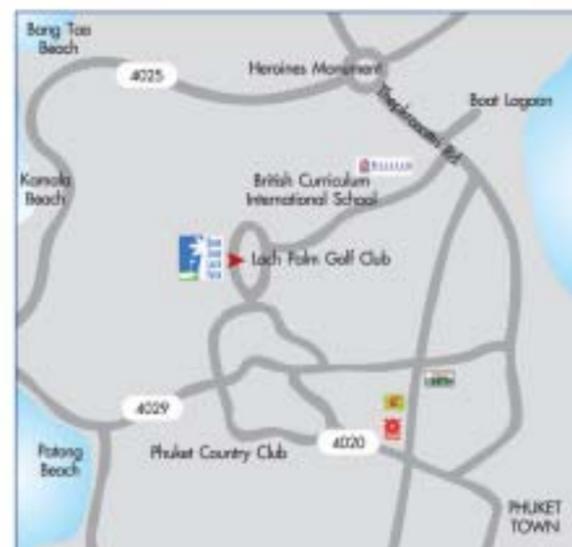


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Swedish swooshing in

The Swedish invasion of Koh Lanta continues. With no fewer than two Swedish schools slated to operate this season and several Swedish-targeted property developments already selling on the island, it's not a surprise to see Nordic movie-makers moving in.

Academy Award-nominated filmmaker Colin Nutley is currently on the island shooting a feature film to be titled *Angel*. The movie is a story of a rock star who fakes her own death in Sweden and escapes to Koh Lanta to hide out and start a new life.

The Swedish runaway befriends a Thai girl, played by local beauty Queenie Sundai, (who was raised in Sweden), and the two embark on a journey of self-discovery.

Nutley fell in love with the island last December while on vacation and was happy to find a Swedish infrastructure already existing on the island.



Both awards are in recognition of the resort's ongoing environmentally-sound policies.

Pimalai's policy includes protecting natural vegetation (including cashew trees and wild banana trees), using advanced water and waste-water treatment processes; minimizing the use of motorized vehicles; running an intensive recycling program; and applying a series of initiatives to protect the local seashore and coral dive sites.

"We're particularly proud of these new awards," said General Manager Franck de Lestapis. "It is the direct result of the ongoing commitment, since the very beginning – from the owners through to the public area cleaners – to ensure that Pimalai is setting a good example of how a resort should be integrated into an untouched natural environment, and that it can complete rather compete with its surrounding environments."

For the record: Luxembourg native Marco Reinard has "semi-relocated" to Lanta Old Town to train for his world-record attempt to traverse 5,000 miles in 100 days on a 16-foot Hobie catamaran from Myanmar to Taiwan.

The long-time Phuket resident plans to leave on his epic world-record setting journey next February to raise awareness about environmental issues and to showcase the impact of encroaching development on indigenous people.

Two years ago Reinard landed on Koh Lanta when he was windsurfing from Myanmar to Malaysia on a journey that nearly landed him in deep waters on several occasions.

"Once you've been rescued on the open seas by a Sea

Gypsy," comments Reinard, "you never forget it." He said his plan is not only to highlight the plight of indigenous groups for survival in Asia, but also to take on a sea gypsy as a second mate.

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of the marathon is Reinhard's plan to document the day-to-day life of indigenous people in the region for a documentary series he plans to make when he returns.

Wolf cries: Spooked local expats and English-speaking tourists present for last Saturday's false tsunami alarms must have been chuckling a little as they scrambled to higher ground.

Apparently, the recorded English-language warning message was urging "fish" to evacuate the beaches. True, we may not smell as good as Thai people all the time...but calling us fish?

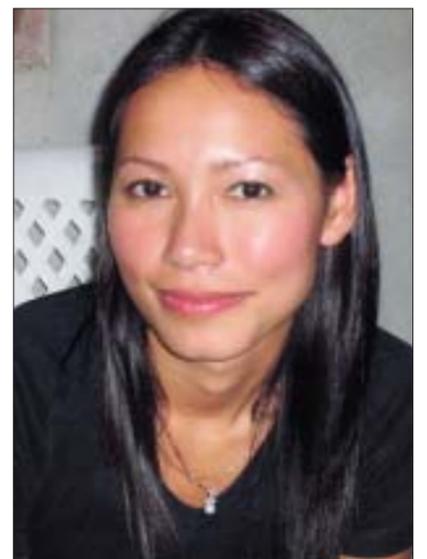
The usual investigation took place the day after the false sounding, with government officials and the private contractor hired to build the warning towers touring the island. They've already said that the mistake was local in origin and not linked to the central warning system.

While the official cause of the false alarm has not been released (as of press time) two plausible explanations could be, "Sorry, we thought that big red button turn on the coffee machine", and, "Sorry, Homer was working with us for the day to help promote his new Simpson's movie and accidentally tripped the switch". D'oh!

Duane Lennie is an international marketing consultant based in Lanta who owns www.bestofkolanta.com, www.kolanta-realestate.com and the Mango House Boutique Resort. You can contact him at info@bestofkolanta.com



Lanta's top resort, Pimalai Resort & Spa, has just been awarded a "Green Gold Class" certificate by Thailand's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment for their environmentally sound practices, which include regular beach clean-ups and initiatives to protect coral at local dive sites.



Right: Swedish-raised, Thai national Queenie will star in the new film *Angel*, which will be shot on Koh Lanta.

LETTER FROM KOH LANTA

By Duane Lennie

At the top: Lanta was recently named by TripAdvisor in their top 10 "emerging holiday destinations" in the world. Listed behind number one Las Terrenas in the Dominican Republic and other Southeast Asian hot spots of Bali, Indonesia and Can Tho, Vietnam, the island was praised for its chilled-out atmosphere and great selection of beaches.

TripAdvisor.com, a free travel guide and research website that offers opinions written by travelers to help others plan holidays, claims to have the largest travel community in the world. The site claims to have more than 20 million monthly visitors, 6 million registered members and 10 million reviews and opinions.

Paved paradise: Road construction now underway at the far south of the island will provide the final paved link between Kan Tiang Bay and the national park, which is located on the southernmost tip.

Scheduled for completion by the start of high season in October, this cement patch completes a road system that covers the island from top to bottom and effectively rids Lanta of the dusty-red laterite roads of just a few years back.

Follow the leader: Pimalai Resort & Spa (www.pimalai.com) continues to set the standards for all others on the rapidly developing island. The 5-star hotel has been awarded a "Green Gold Class" certificate by Thailand's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and a "Green Planet" award by leading Swiss Tour Operator Kuoni Travel.

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Happily Ever After

Recent weddings in Phuket



Jani and Gategaeo Itkonen celebrated their wedding on July 1 on Kata Noi Beach.

Darisa Vechakul and Thawat Jansila were married at the Pra Pitak Grand Ballroom of The Metropole hotel on July 27.



In today's fast-paced world many people hold down demanding, time-consuming jobs that leave them little time to focus on a vitally important aspect of their lives: physical health. The steady rise in the number of fitness centers in Phuket may well be evidence that more people are becoming health conscious and recognizing the need to stay fit.

Fitness requires dedication and people are known to spend widely varying amounts of time on exercise – from the couch potato who views getting up for another beer as an act of extreme exertion to those who spend every free minute keeping in tip-top shape.

Into this latter group fall Phuket's small but growing number of bodybuilders, whose bulging muscles draw attention wherever they go.

The concept of bodybuilding is not new to Thai culture. The steroid-enhanced stars of professional wrestling, always popular with young boys, have been on television here for decades.

Likewise, Western comic books and Hollywood films have always depicted superheroes with incredibly well-defined, huge physiques. The bodybuilder look has always been associated with heroic power in cultures across the globe, not just in modern times but dating back in time to the Romans, Greeks and beyond into prehistory.

Although bodybuilding has been known in Thailand for a long time, it is still quite rare to come across a Thai bodybuilder. Chainarong "Peter" Ruangjirasagian, 31, is one of the very few true Thai bodybuilders here in Phuket. Although born in Phuket, Peter spent his childhood on Koh Samui before moved back here seven years ago to take a position as a bartender at the Hilton Arcadia Resort and Spa.

He has been involved in bodybuilding for five years and

Phuket's

In a land where image is nearly everything, Anand Singh gets to grips with 31-year-old, Phuket-born bodybuilder Chainarong "Peter" Ruangjirasagian, who doesn't mind breaking a sweat to look good – and feel even better.

Here Peter tells what forms his inspiration for perspiration, and the tips and tricks he has learned in building the perfect body.

continues to maintain the delicate balance between a full-time job and full-time weight training.

"I started bodybuilding seriously when I came to work in Phuket. My main purpose for coming to Phuket was not so much to secure a job, but, rather, to find a gym that offered the necessary equipment for me to pursue my passion.

"I was aware that Phuket has a large population of Western expatriates and since most serious bodybuilders tend to be Caucasian, I knew there was bound to be good gym facilities in Phuket."

If you visit Chalong Gym, opposite Land and Houses Park, there is a good chance you will find Peter there. When he is not at the Hilton, Peter spends almost all his time in this sanctuary of lead and chromium-plated steel, either pumping iron on his own or offering training advice to his clients in the evenings.

He told the *Gazette* that there are few bodybuilders in Phuket, with most of them being Caucasian foreigners.

Peter's interest in bodybuilding started as a child. "Everyone has their own childhood

heroes. For me, I enjoyed reading comic books with characters such as Marvel Comics superhero The Incredible Hulk with exceptionally big muscles and super-human strength. The impression I got was that all heroes, or superheroes, needed to look massive and have well-defined muscles unlike those of the average person.

"This impression gave rise to my interest in bodybuilding. I wondered what it would take to build such an impressive body and I wanted to try doing it. Since then, I have been very ambitious about bodybuilding."

Peter said that bodybuilding as a sport has been around for thousands of years, ever since men learned that lifting heavy stones over and over can build muscle.

While the technology has come a long way since then, the biggest obstacle facing many would-be bodybuilders these day is the amount of time, patience and financial commitment needed to work one's physique to its limit.

Most successful bodybuilders owe their success and massive physiques to the simple fact that they love The Pump, or as Arnold Schwarzenegger put it: Blood is rushing into your muscles and that's what we call The Pump. You muscles get a really tight feeling, like your skin is going to explode any minute, and it's really tight – it's like somebody blowing air into it, into your muscle. It just blows up, and it feels really different. It feels fantastic.

Despite the benefits of bodybuilding, its popularity in Thailand still lags far behind what it has become in Europe and America. Remarkably, the only bodybuilding association in Southern Thailand is based here in Phuket, which now has several gyms that offer all the equipment and services needed for those on a quest for lean, hard body mass.

One reason bodybuilding is so hard is that it requires complete dedication – and weight training is only one of many elements needed for shirt-ripping success. Bodybuilding is far more than a sport, it is a complete way of life that requires a proper diet, sleep regimen and positive mental outlook.

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own incredible hulk



Chainarong "Peter" Ruangjirassagian works on building his biceps. However, weight training is just one of the many elements needed for shirt-ripping success. Bodybuilding requires complete dedication – a proper diet, sleep regimen and positive mental outlook.

Like many bodybuilders, the hardest part for Peter is maintaining a proper diet – one that optimizes gains in muscle mass while keeping off fat.

"I eat about five to seven small meals per day. Proper diet is essential to successful bodybuilding, but it is also very demanding. I have a full-time job that is my main priority, yet, when working daily, I still have to make sure that I stick to my dietary requirements.

"This has become really difficult at times, sometimes even discouraging, because it is hard to be choosy about food. The hotel provides lunch for their staff and I cannot expect them to cater to my personal requirements."

Peter, who has taken part in a few bodybuilding competitions, recalls competing in the regional Ford "Chom Palang" (Mr Powerful) competition.

He explained that while Asian bodybuilders tend to have smaller frames than their Caucasian counterparts, bodybuilding competitions are fair because they are classed into different weight categories. What matters most is a participants' muscle definition and on-stage posing skills.

Peter said that some bodybuilders are absolutely ripped, but they don't know how to pose well on stage. When posing on stage, you must be able to entertain the spectators while making sure to smile, relax, look good and refrain

from having a "serious" demeanor – always a liability in the Land of Smiles.

For most competitive bodybuilders there are two seasons; the off-season and the pre-contest season. During the off season, most bodybuilders try to gain as much mass as possible. They eat a lot during this period, with few restrictions except for intoxicants such as alcohol.

They pay extra attention to eating a balanced, healthy diet and also take supplements. Bodybuilders will often appear quite chubby and not very well defined during this period, Peter explained.

During the pre-contest season, which starts about four months before the actual contest, contestants have to change their food intake to six or seven small meals per day. The first thing they do every morning is cardiovascular exercise on an empty stomach to burn off excess fat. However, to prevent the body from using up muscle mass as energy during cardiovascular activity most bodybuilders will take amino acid supplements before exercise.

After their morning exercise they eat a breakfast containing mostly protein-rich food and carbohydrates.

"My typical pre-contest breakfast consists of about six to ten egg whites, oatmeal with warm milk and multi-vitamin supplements. I also eat brunch

everyday before noon. With each meal, adequate protein intake is essential as proteins are the building blocks of human muscle.

"I also eat a lot of vegetables and a certain amount of brown rice, which is a good source of complex carbohydrates," said Peter.

"Sugar intake is extremely limited during this period. In the

pre-contest stage, every bodybuilder has to strictly follow such a diet. Many of them become very frustrated and moody because it limits numerous things for them," he added.

For beginners who wish to start bodybuilding, it is important to learn about the different exercises that work different muscles in the body.

In bodybuilding terms, muscles can be grouped into two main categories; large muscles and small muscles.

Large muscles are usually referred to as white-grouped muscles, while small muscles are referred to as red-grouped muscles. White-grouped muscles such as the pectoral muscles, back muscles and quadriceps grow faster than red-grouped muscles when trained.

K. Peter advises beginners to emphasize on training these muscles first. This will increase their size, since white-grouped muscles can pack on more mass. The details and definitions achieved by training the red-grouped muscles can come later as the bodybuilder becomes more experienced.

"Bodybuilding takes a long time and requires a lot of patience. Three years in this sport is considered very little. It will take 10 years of training before one can really start competing.

"If an injury occurs during training, you must stop training that body part for the time being and give it time to recover while training other muscles during the healing process," Peter advises.

Fortunately, bodybuilding is easier practiced in Phuket than in many other parts of Thailand. Proper, well-equipped gyms are

not hard to find here, nor are they very expensive.

The downside, however, is that the availability and variety of bodybuilding supplements is still very limited.

Most people here who are interested in bodybuilding do not know enough about the different supplements and their benefits, Peter said.

Those who do know find that supplement prices here are not just expensive, they are extremely expensive compared with Europe and America markets.

What is most important for bodybuilders is that they must care for their body and health and maintain a strong mind. It's a demanding sport, the positive results of which cannot be seen in the short run.

Peter advises those interested in taking up bodybuilding to talk to experienced bodybuilders that train in the same gym in order to gain more insight and information.

"I learned quite a bit about bodybuilding from going to different gyms and talking to experienced trainers. Most gyms will be staffed with experts who would be happy to give valuable advice," said Peter.

Bodybuilding magazines are also a useful source of information on diet, supplements and exercise programs – not to mention a source of inspiration when willpower is low. Read them and learn as much as you can about bodybuilding, Peter suggests.

With good information and strong determination, Phuket is the perfect place to begin the quest for physical perfection – just ask Peter.



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This week



WATERFRONT FEAST: Hilton Arcadia Resort & Spa Executive Chef Hans J Kahrs (right) is presented with a Certificate of Appreciation from Howard Digby-Johns, Bailli Regional de Phuket of the Chaine des Rotisseurs, during a recent meeting of the island's top gastronomes at the Hilton Arcadia Phuket Resort & Spa.



ORIENTAL PEARL: Khun Wichit Na-Ranong (3rd from left), Managing Director of Pearl Group of Hotels, hosts a lunch at Rivet Grill restaurant for Secretary General of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade Shanghai Sub-Council Yu Chen (2nd from left) and his colleague (left), along with Vice-President of Shanghai Kinghill Ltd Anant Sawastananont (far right), Consul General of Thailand in Shanghai Chalit Manitayakul (3rd from right) and his wife, Jittima Manitayakul.



WELCOMED GUESTS: The marketing team from Central Festival Phuket including (from right) Senior Marketing & Promotion Specialist Kritsada Korsantivichai, Marketing and Promotions Administrator Kanthida Khawthong, and General Manager Kankanok Chanprasartporn pay a visit to *Phuket Gazette* Managing Editor Chris Husted (left) and *Gazette* General Manager Niladaa Mastanawattanakul.



FULL OF SPIRIT: Prince of Songkla University (PSU), Phuket campus, cheerleaders (from left) Jutarat Chintab, Cha-lermkwan Tongchern, Pat Pattanapupan, Wipawadee Tongkhaw and Phitchaya Charmtong celebrate their gold-medal win at the 6th PSU All-Campus Sports competition. The victory allows them to advance to the 'Universiade' games in Bangkok, to be held August 8 to 18.



JOVIAL FESTIVITIES: Director of the General Administration Division of Phuket International Airport Chartchai Sungnuch (back row, 2nd from right) celebrates his birthday at The Metropole with Pol Col Sorarak Choosanit (back row, right), Mediator of the Phuket Provincial Juvenile and Family Section Thamawat Wongjarernyot, and Phuket Provincial Court judges Atikom Jumpa (front row, 2nd from right), Manas Ratanatrisri (front row, 3rd from right), and Somporn Kerdsup (front row, 2nd from left), along with other friends.



HELPING HANDS: Mith Srisajjakul (front row, 2nd from left), from Siri Guru Sigh Sibha, and his wife (seated, far right) join with representatives of The Rural Development Club from Prince of Songkla University, Phuket campus, to offer their collected donations to the children of Life Home Project.

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Audi's new TT comes alive

The Audi TT was launched back in 1998 and immediately made an impact: in some cases in Germany rather too literally; they were going off the road at high speed due to an inherent instability in the vehicle's dynamics.

Audi quickly issued a recall and all TTs were retro-fitted with a small rear spoiler and electronic stability program (ESP).

No such problems exist with its successor, the marginally larger and somewhat sleeker model that still retains the values originally found in the pioneering TT of the late '90s. One of the new models has been spotted at Chalong Circle a couple of times, so the new TT is now most definitely available in Thailand.

The new model features a fuel-efficient two-liter engine producing 200-bhp (147kW) and a combined total of 183g/km of carbon dioxide. The torque output is particularly impressive with 280Nm on tap over a wide engine speed range, between 1,800 and 5,000 rpm.

The lightweight engine is mated to a standard six-speed manual gearbox or the optional paddle-shift S-tronic, dual-clutch transmission. Sound fancy? More on this in a future column.

The transversely-mounted, four-cylinder gasoline engine was voted engine of the year for two consecutive years, while the TT was voted 2007 World Car Design of the Year from 28 entries by a panel of renowned motoring journalists from 22 countries. The *World Car* jurors particularly praised the TT's flared wheel arches and its sleek silhouette.

Performance from the two-liter engine is impressive: with the S-tronic transmission the TT will accelerate from a standstill to 100kmh in just 6.4 seconds and

on to an electronically-limited top speed of 250kmh.

The stressed bodyshell of the new TT is constructed from a mix of aluminum and steel, with doors and trunk lid all made of steel; were the shell built entirely from steel it would be 48% heavier. The low weight of the TT – 1,260 kilograms – is one of the key factors behind the impressive road behavior of this new coupe.

As mentioned, it is slightly larger than the outgoing model; longer and wider, although barely higher, the latest TT conveys a dynamic impression thanks to its better proportions. The interior, though, still only caters to two, despite Audi's assertion that it is in fact a 2+2.

The original TT was one of the few coupes to offer genuine sports car design for its interior. Subtle design cues came from rounded air vents that resembled the external fuel filler, while drilled aluminum pedals added to the overall impression.

With the new model, the fluid dynamism of the exterior is carried through inside. A sweeping visual line connects the door trim with the dashboard, while three circular air vents mounted in the center continue the theme.

A new sports steering wheel trimmed in high-grade Nappa leather is flattened at the bottom of the rim, as in a number of other Audi high-performance models. The driver and the passenger seats are slightly lower than on the previous model.

Standard equipment is fairly comprehensive in the new car with automatic air conditioning, a "driver information" system and a high-end audio system. While the standard four-cylinder comes with cloth seats, the V6 (available only in certain markets) can come with leather and Alcantara



By Jeff Heselwood



The long lines and sporty design drive the popularity of Audi's TT.

versions. Leather is optional on both models.

The original Audi TT was a spectacular success, despite its widely reported teething troubles, but it recovered its quality image – and Audi's reputation – and went on to become one of the world's best-selling two-seat sports cars.

The introduction of its successor will no doubt continue this momentum. It sells for a not unreasonable 4,698,000 baht. For more information visit www.audi.co.th

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CZECH-MATE POLITICS

By Katerina Zachovalova, dpa

More than anything, Czech politics resemble a soap opera these days. The prime minister leaves his wife for a younger fellow politician.

The mistress is pregnant by him. His kids condemn him. The wife does not want a divorce and unsuccessfully runs for a Senate seat in what is seen as an act of revenge.

His political rival, caught having a fling, rushes to announce a divorce. His son leaves a girlfriend shortly after she bears the couple's baby. Then the premier's fourth child is born out of wedlock.

This is not a bad script of an endless television saga, it is what is really happening right now in Czech politics.

But what cheating Czech politicians get in this teen-aged democracy is a hybrid between an unrelenting British-style tabloid press frenzy and generous forgiveness, à la the French.

What it all means is that the nosy coverage may have caused the cheaters to lose their temper, but not their offices.

Czechs tend to be tolerant of infidelity and divorce, sociologists say.

"Moral judgments are not big here. People say 'it's normal. What's the big deal?'" says Jan Hartl, a director of polling agency Stem.

In any case, he adds, Czechs do not think much of their politicians.

"They are convinced that they don't hold much of a moral high ground anyway," Hartl says. "It is expected of them to be amoral."

What matters most to the voters is how their leaders take care of the problem. "If he man-



Lucie Talmanova, 39, a deputy speaker of the Czech parliament, with her newborn son Nicolas Topolaneck.

The father of the child is none other than Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolaneck, 51, who cheated on his wife Pavla Topolankova, 52.

The prime minister has since left his wife to be with Talmanova, a fellow conservative politician.

— Photo courtesy of the Office of the Czech Prime Minister.

ages it well, people are willing to forgive him," the pollster adds.

Prime Minister Mirek Topolaneck's start was bad. For months the premier, 51, angrily bounced away speculation about his extramarital affair with fellow conservative politician Lucie

Talmanova, who is 11 years his junior.

After it was revealed that Talmanova was pregnant, he finally confessed publicly in January and left Pavla, his wife of many years. It took still another round of evasion before he admitted to being the father of the child.

It was his leftist archrival Jiri Paroubek, 54, who changed the strategy.

When another gossip sheet recently caught him with a 20-year-younger blonde translator en route to a seaside vacation, the social democratic leader was praised for rushing to shed light on his private life.

And so, still a bit vitriolic, Topolaneck recently found himself holding a press briefing focused solely on the birth of his illegitimate son, Nicolas.

"Good afternoon. This is to give you something to write about before the government vacation starts," he begins with a hint of contempt for the men and women of the media.

However, Topolaneck elaborates on news so joyful that for a moment he puts aside his animosities towards the press.

"We were talking for so long that I ended up staying there," he said, describing with a happy smile how he was in the delivery room for the birth.

When asked what property arrangements could follow a divorce, which he wants but his wife does not, he billed himself "an old fool".

"Of course I would leave her the apartment and pay the mortgage," he said, without bashing the reporter for asking an obtrusive question.

Before reporters scatter to their respective newsrooms, his office even hands out CDs with photos of the happy mother and son.

Former lawmaker and sexologist Jaroslav Zverina says that only the next election will show whether the new strategy of openness will allow Czech politicians to cheat on their wives and hold on to power at the same time.

"It would have been a scandal abroad. They would have been asked to resign. But here it almost seems to be an act of heroism," says 58-year-old retired shopkeeper Eva Orsakova in disbelief.

A band of middle-aged taxi drivers standing near the news conference are far from offended.

"Who hasn't cheated?" says one with a telling wink. Like others, he would not disclose his name. However, the cabbies had nothing but invective for their elected leaders.

"They are trash!" jeers another dressed in a white shirt and jeans. "They don't care about ordinary people. They have the cash to keep their mistresses."

But would extramarital adventures stop them from voting for unfaithful politicians?

"No. Definitely not," they shake their heads.



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How many watch brands can you think of? Well, there's at least one brand for virtually every letter of the alphabet, from Aigner, Breitling and Casio to Tag Heuer, Ulysse Nardin and Victorinox Swiss Army.

If you want an expert opinion on watches that do more than just tell the time, ask Mr. Bond; James Bond. In *Dr No* Bond wears a Rolex Submariner. Then, in *Live and Let Die*, he sported the latest Hamilton Pulsar P2 2900 LED digital watch – a revolution in watch wear at the time, but with no extra gadgets.

Then, in the same movie, 'Q' kitted Bond out with a Rolex Buzzsaw Submariner, which he subsequently used to cut himself free when tied up in the villain Kananga's shark pool.

The same watch also had a powerful electromagnet that could deflect bullets and was also used by Bond to conveniently unzip the dress of beautiful Italian agent Miss Caruso.

In *Moonraker*, *The Spy Who Loved Me*, *Octopussy* and *For Your Eyes Only*, Bond wore Seiko watches with built-in gadgets including an explosive coil, a dart gun, a scrolling LED message display and a liquid crystal TV. Since *Goldeneye*, the simple and elegant Omega has been Bond's choice of wristwatch.

Of course, it's easy enough to find most of these brands in Phuket. But as we all know, a cheap knock-off version of a James Bond product placement might look good for a few weeks, but after that it's going to start getting tarnished.

Before long, the imitation gold or silver will start flaking. If you're lucky, it will still be ticking before the year is out.

With so many questionable copies of famous watch brands on our streets, it's little surprise that the first gift many expats ask for when a friend goes to Europe is a good quality watch – one that comes from the makers and is guaranteed to last a while.

Parents of teenagers will know from experience that watches on the arms of the young and carefree are seldom



Buying Time

By Semacote Suganya

used for telling the time – that role has been taken over by the mobile phone. Wristwatches nevertheless remain an important part of their attire.

Thankfully for parents, the wristwatch is one accessory that doesn't have to cost the earth to ensure that kids feel they fit in with their easily influenced, brand-totting peers.

If a watch is bright, bold, dynamic or sporty in appearance, it doesn't really matter how well

it keeps time, as long as it looks cool and will last until next weekend's shopping trip.

Just right for the young and young at heart, who care more about the passage of time rather than time itself, the latest range of space-age looking ODM wristwatches have brightly-colored numberless faces and flexible polymer straps.

"These wristwatches are very popular with young watch hunters at the moment; some even coming from Haad Yai just to buy one," said Ornanong

Pejthong, who works in the Marketing Department in the Central Department Store at Central Festival Phuket.

"Stylish gray and black digital watches are still some of the most popular among trendy adolescents," said K. Ornanong.

Office worker and frequent fashion watch buyer Nuchanard, 36, was examining one of the oversized watches for females. "I like a big wristwatch to show off. It's fashionable, makes me look younger and the price is very reasonable for such a striking

design," she told the *Gazette*.

University student Surasit, 23, prefers something a bit more sporty.

"I always look for a large sports watch, something around five centimeters in diameter. They look cool," he said.

So if you are on a secret mission to buy a trendy timepiece, visit Central Department Store at Central Festival Phuket until August 26, the last day of the current promotion featuring every wristwatch imaginable from manufacturers from A to Z.

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Sipping chic at Sri Panwa

Beautiful people, fine food, exotic cocktails... it ain't Beverly Hills, but it's about as close as you're likely to find in Phuket. Sri Panwa, located on Cape Panwa, is a community of residences overlooking the Andaman Sea, surrounded by foliage and lush scenery.

Baba Dining Lounge, nestled in the heart of Sri Panwa, is a refined, three-story socialites' restaurant that doubles as a bar – it's a playground for people who enjoy the finer things in life.

Forty meters above the sea, Baba affords spectacular views of the cape, making it ideal for catching the sun setting on the Andaman.

Sunday July 29 saw Baba's grand opening party unveil the new establishment to a varied selection of guests.

The venue looked fab, with earthy, wooden tones defining the entrance, where guests were whisked in by attentive staff offering a welcoming massage and a glass of wine.

There were high expectations for the party, with a DJ from Bed Supperclub in Bangkok slated to spin the tunes accompanied by Singha (no relation to the beer) from Sqweez Animal on guitar.

Two-piece Sqweez Animal are one of the hippest pop groups around at the moment, with songs "Let's Cry" and "Krueng Sai Ta" receiving major radio airtime.

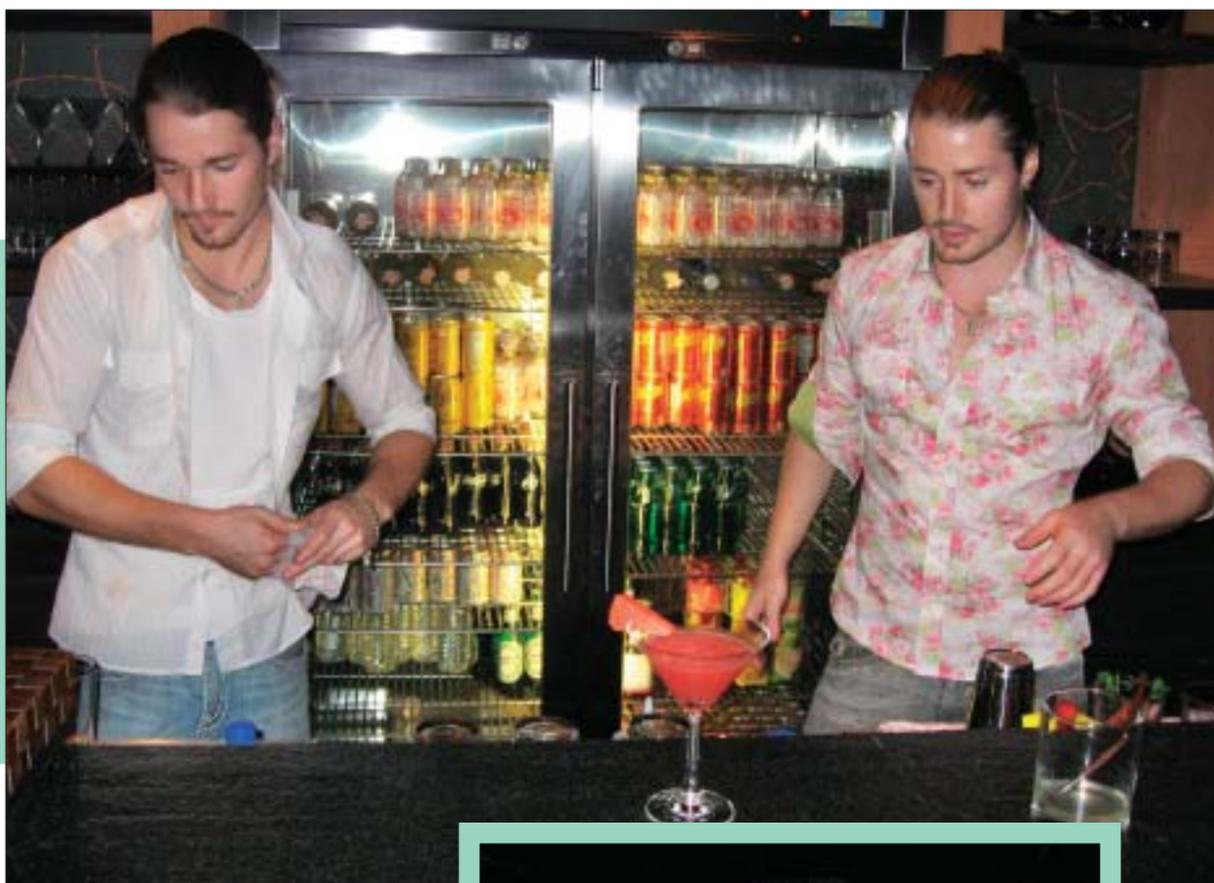
How Singha would perform on his own was a point of interest at this party.

The mood was casual down on the restaurant level, with Phuket's playful out to meet and greet each other with the usual levels of emphatic enthusiasm. Rather than dancing, guests pre-

AFTER DARK

By Matt Crook

COCKTEAU TWINS:
Benny and Danny Sorum mix it up at the opening to lend four helping hands to Baba's regular bar crew.



ferred to mingle while taking time to admire the view and sampling cocktails, including fresh coconut milk spiked with rum.

The cocktail list provided enough treats to keep the busy socialites happy. The apple-tinged Sri Panwa cocktail proved to be a firm favorite.

The bar staff were quick and efficient, but it wasn't until twin barmen Benny and Danny Sorum stepped up that the party took an interesting twist.

The Swedish duo made light work of wow-ing partygoers with their bottle-flinging showmanship, working side by side with Baba's own Kaiping and Marilyn.

Although Baba is technically a restaurant, the party was limited to finger foods and snacks, no doubt to complement the copious amount of alcohol being consumed. What food there was proved tasty, with most people

BABA BABE: MTV VJ and swimsuit model Janesuda Panto was one of the many beautiful people on hand to mark Baba's opening.



scooting back and forth three or four times to fill their plates before they were satisfied.

Lychee-soy duck, passion fruit-sake shrimp, fresh watermelon salad and the lemongrass infused chicken wings were all thrown into the mix along with the usual vol-au-vent selection.

As the night wore on and more drinks were sampled, people started to loosen up and conversation soon began to flow.

The second-story lounging area provided a relaxing retreat from the hustle and bustle of the restaurant level, and sure enough there was Singha playing his guitar to the tunes of the DJ.

A talented musician, Singha heavily used his FX pedal to create some interesting accompaniment without exerting himself.

Three hours passed before the party started to quieten down. The party's success was testament to the reasons to visit Baba, and no doubt many of the guests will return another time.

Baba is open for breakfast, lunch, dinner and, of course, cocktails. It can't classify itself as a lively nightclub, but for drinks with friends, a romantic meal at sunset or just a place to hang out, Baba will appeal to islanders who enjoy low-key, casual evenings.

The lunch menu features a range of light snacks, soups, noodle dishes, traditional Thai fare and the obligatory steaks and burgers, as well as a range of

sandwiches served in ciabatta.

German chef Jimmy Karl has created an intriguing selection of main courses for the dinner menu, including tiger prawns with green-peppercorn sauce and lamb chops with truffle sauce, with the option of ginger-infused mashed potato or mixed vegetables in oyster sauce as an accompaniment.

A five-course dinner at Baba will set you back 2,000 baht

per person – good value for such a distinguished venue.

The drinks menu boasts the usual suspects, from Sangsom to Johnnie Walker Blue Label, joined by a tasty range of cocktails.

Baba. Open 7 am till late. For more information or reservations call 076-371006 or K. Jay at 085-9181969. Website: www.sripanwa.com

<p>* Price for July - October</p> <p>Thermage Face only 40,000 B. Face & neck 60,000 B.</p> <p>BOTOX start at 5,000 B.</p> <p>Restylane 10,000+ B.</p>	<p>Phuket Laser Center</p> <p>LASIK Laser Vision Correction for both eyes 66,000 B.</p>
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Shopping for men made simple with Taoism's New Master

None of the traditional religions have anything good to say about shopping, which shows how out of touch they are with the needs of today's trendy, switched-on world.

But there's good news for the pious, for a new school of Taoism is promoting an entire moral code devoted to that esteemed activity.

Traditional Taoism says nothing about shopping. But if it did, it would probably say something like this: "Best shopping is no shopping." Whatever you may be thinking of buying, you don't really need it. If you did, you'd already have it. The fact that you've lived this long without it proves that you don't need it.

So put that shopping cart back where you got it from, tear up your credit card, and retire to a hermitage in the mountains.

There you will enjoy the spiritual bliss of going weeks without a bath, developing an intimate acquaintance with lice and vermin, subsisting entirely on cold water and boiled nettles, and contemplating the Great Oneness.

You can see from this example that traditional Taoism was no fun at all. No wonder its founder, Lao Tzu (meaning the Old Master), has been relegated to the ranks of philosophical has-been.

But a new school of Taoism views shopping more positively. Founded by a graduate of

the Harvard Business School who calls himself Hsin Tzu (meaning the New Master), New Taoism offers wise advice to contemporary shoppers.

It focuses on male shoppers, on the premise that women don't need to be told how to shop. Women have a gender-specific chromosome that programs them to follow three principles at all times: 1. If it's for sale, buy it; 2. If two identical items have different prices, go for the expensive one; 3. When in doubt, buy both.

Men are genetically challenged, shopping-wise, so they need guidance. Often they are trapped into shopping with a woman, usually their sidekick.

(Scholarly digression: I have chosen the term "sidekick" to replace the cold and unfeeling term "partner", on the grounds that "partner" implies a business relationship.

A sidekick can be any woman with whom one enjoys an



intimate relationship, ranging from the merely chummy to the utterly carnal. A British friend has suggested that such a woman should be called "me woman wot does". While charmed by such an earthy phrase, I believe "sidekick" to be more concise.)

New Taoism gives men the following advice:

1. Do not go shopping with your sidekick. It will only give you ulcers.

2. If you are forced to go shopping with your sidekick, remember that the answer to any

question she may ask must always be, "Yes, dear."

If it's an "either-or" type of question, never answer, "Which one is cheaper?"

The correct answer is, "Why don't you buy them both, dear?"

3. If at all possible, contrive to run into one of her girlfriends. This will enable you to suggest, "Why don't you girls continue shopping? I'll just shuffle off to Soi Bangla to look up me mates."

4. If you see something you like, buy it. Do not browse. Do not shop around. Do not compare prices. That is what women do, and it is extremely unhealthy for the male disposition.

It is also a huge waste of time. Immediately upon completing your purchase, speed quickly to Soi Bangla for a drink with your mates.

Tarrying in the shopping area can be hazardous to your peace of mind. It may lead you to discover a better product of the

same type, at a cheaper price. And that will ruin your day.

5. Remember the aphorism, "A Corvette always looks better in the showroom." Any product always looks bright and shiny before you buy it, but suddenly looks shabby and worn immediately afterwards. To apply this insight, follow the Pretense Principle.

Imagine that you've already bought the product. See how it has lost its magical allure, how its luster has suddenly dimmed, how it has morphed into a despicable reject, odious and foul! Who would want such a wretched thing?

You can save a lot of money by following the Pretense Principle.

6. Never try to explain the Pretense Principle to your sidekick. Women are genetically programmed to reject it instantly, without discussion, and may throw violent temper tantrums if you persist.

New Taoism gives us hapless blokes a handy insight into the weird and wonderful world of women's shopping. Who said religion never gave us anything useful?

S. Tsow can be flamed at stsow@yahoo.com, except while he's trying to figure out a way to persuade women shoppers to accept the Pretense Principle, which will take a very long time indeed.

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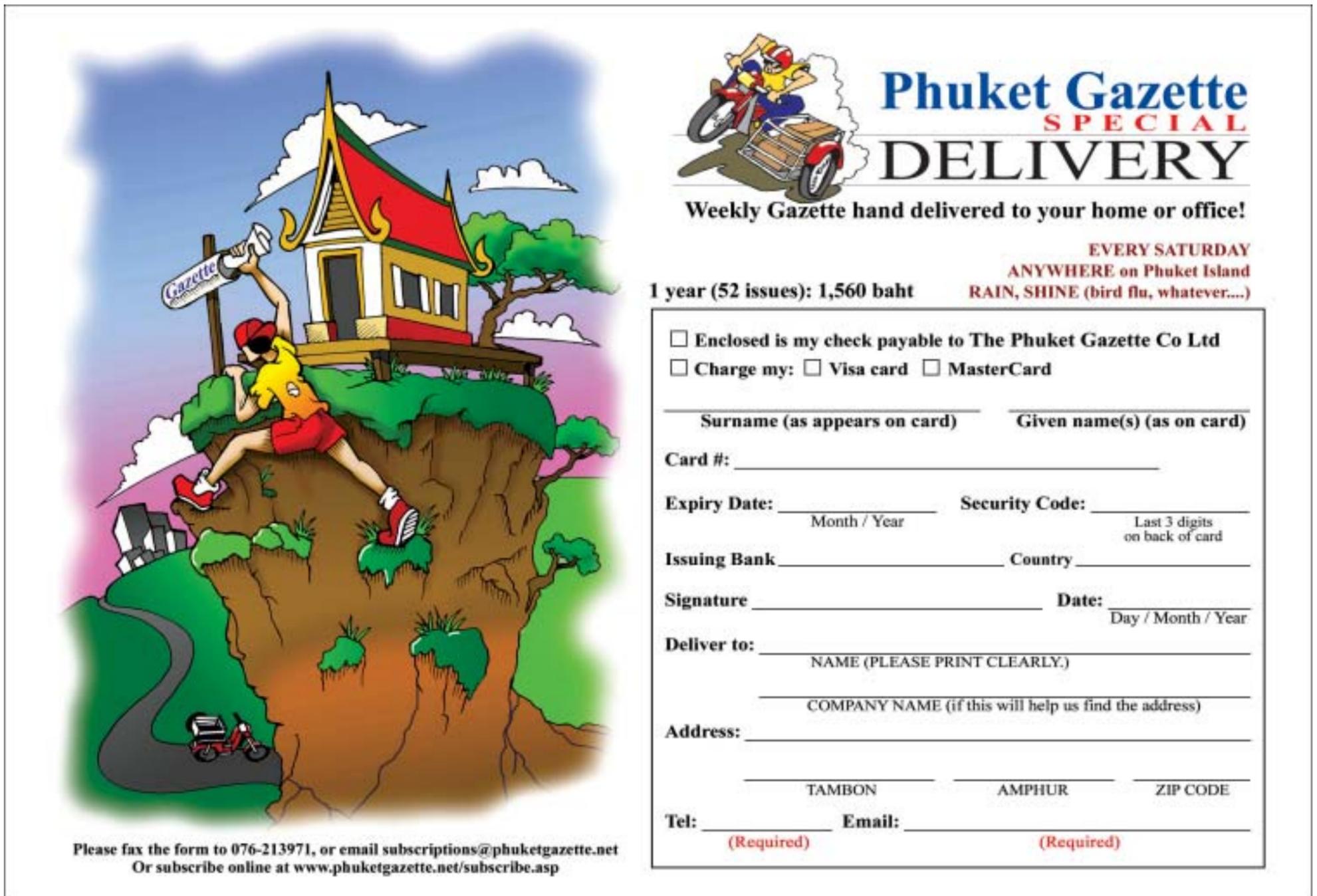


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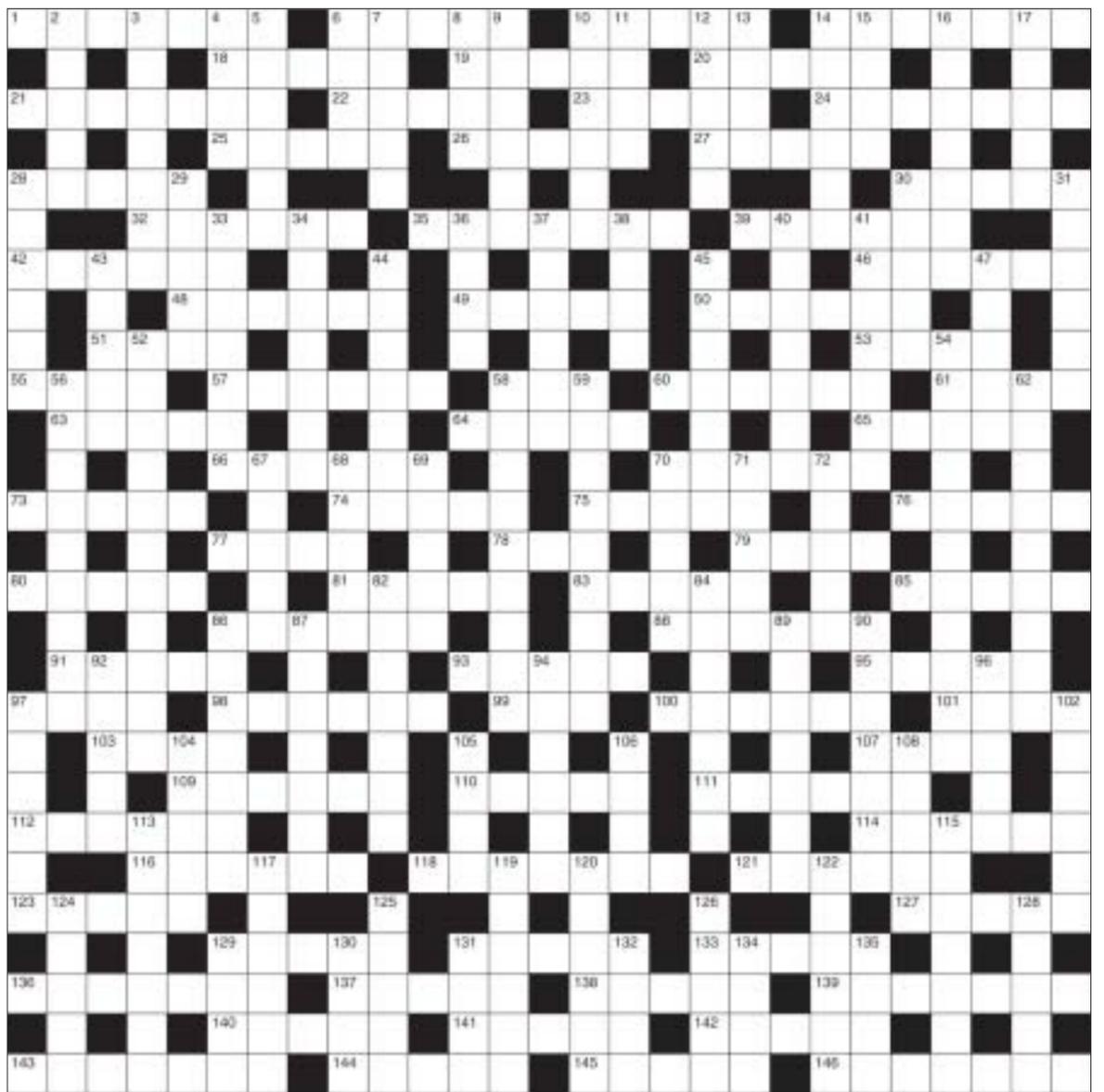
PUZZLES

The BIG Crossword

Hidden Words

Hidden in the grid below are the names of at least 25 hotels and resorts on Phuket. The words may read vertically, horizontally or diagonally. They may also read right-to-left or down-to-up. Score: 15 or more, good; 20 or more, very good; 25 or more, excellent. Solution on the next page.

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



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Across

- 1. Love story
- 6. Proclamation
- 10. Pen name
- 14. Garden tier
- 18. Foot joint
- 19. Speed
- 20. Drinking aid
- 21. Scapegoats
- 22. Purloin
- 23. Curt
- 24. Leftover piece
- 25. Pulped fruit
- 26. Arctic
- 27. Radiates
- 28. Renovate (ship)
- 30. Skewered meat dish
- 32. Trickery
- 35. Intrinsic nature
- 39. Ballerina
- 42. Attraction
- 46. Oust
- 48. Speak softly
- 49. Irritated
- 50. Unnecessarily
- 51. Try-out
- 53. One-time
- 55. Horse restraint
- 57. Rental occupant
- 58. Mongrel
- 60. Weather map line
- 61. Platter
- 63. Popular style
- 64. Fragrant flowers
- 65. Perfect
- 66. Regretful
- 70. Beat
- 73. Porcupine quill
- 74. Accumulate
- 75. Give out
- 76. Graph
- 77. Movie actor
- 78. Moray fish

- 79. Flog
- 80. Cooks in oil
- 81. Creator
- 83. Liquid unit
- 85. Savoury jelly
- 86. Prestigious
- 88. Belgrade is there
- 91. Ordeal
- 93. Maidenhair plants
- 95. Ermine
- 97. Visited
- 98. Gave green light to
- 99. Harden
- 100. Funeral tribute
- 101. Thrust
- 103. Becomes mature
- 107. Overwhelmed
- 109. Gender-biased
- 110. External
- 111. Spicy Italian sausage
- 112. Greatest
- 114. News chief
- 116. Kidney-shaped nut
- 118. Wound dressing
- 121. Sinew
- 123. Hollow
- 127. Teary
- 129. River growth, blue-green ...
- 131. Horrify
- 133. Extreme
- 136. Libya's capital
- 137. Clay block
- 138. Human trunk
- 139. Grazed
- 140. Toothpaste
- 141. Nile or Amazon
- 142. Nominal
- 143. Bloom
- 144. Removed
- 145. Storehouse
- 146. Fate

Down

- 2. Yellowish-green
- 3. Straddling
- 4. Sleep under canvas
- 5. Guarantee
- 6. Different
- 7. Discourage
- 8. Fellow
- 9. Claws
- 10. Reach
- 11. Suggestive grin
- 12. Valuable quality
- 13. Stalk
- 14. Scottish fabric
- 15. Lambs' mums
- 16. Forest caretakers
- 17. Snaking dance
- 28. Harvester
- 29. Sports sides
- 30. East African republic
- 31. Double-cross
- 33. Mess
- 34. Vast
- 36. Ill
- 37. Large migration
- 38. Snug
- 40. Able to be heard
- 41. Guilty party
- 43. Courtyard
- 44. Reactor fuel
- 45. Estimated
- 47. Additional
- 52. Construction science
- 54. Doctor's listening tool
- 56. Disappear into thin air
- 58. Saves
- 59. Repulsive
- 62. Panic merchants
- 67. Up to the time of
- 68. Agricultural holdings
- 69. Tall & skinny
- 70. Brushes (off)
- 71. Not as many
- 72. Elsewhere defence
- 82. Facets
- 84. Rejuvenate
- 86. Clothes cupboards
- 87. Greed
- 89. Writing for the blind
- 90. Mortified
- 92. Kingdom
- 94. Relaxed
- 96. Check (accounts)
- 97. Shirt
- 102. Every 60 minutes
- 104. University composition
- 105. Cleaning agent, caustic ...
- 106. Adult tadpole
- 108. Bereaved wife
- 113. Eight-armed creature
- 115. Imprecise
- 117. Balloon gas
- 119. Table linen item
- 120. Died down
- 122. Tended
- 124. Wall painting
- 125. Other way, vice ...
- 126. Enthusiasm
- 128. Primp
- 129. Singing pitch
- 130. Assist (criminal)
- 131. Land measure
- 132. Traditional wisdom
- 134. Booty
- 135. Pimple rash

su | do | ku

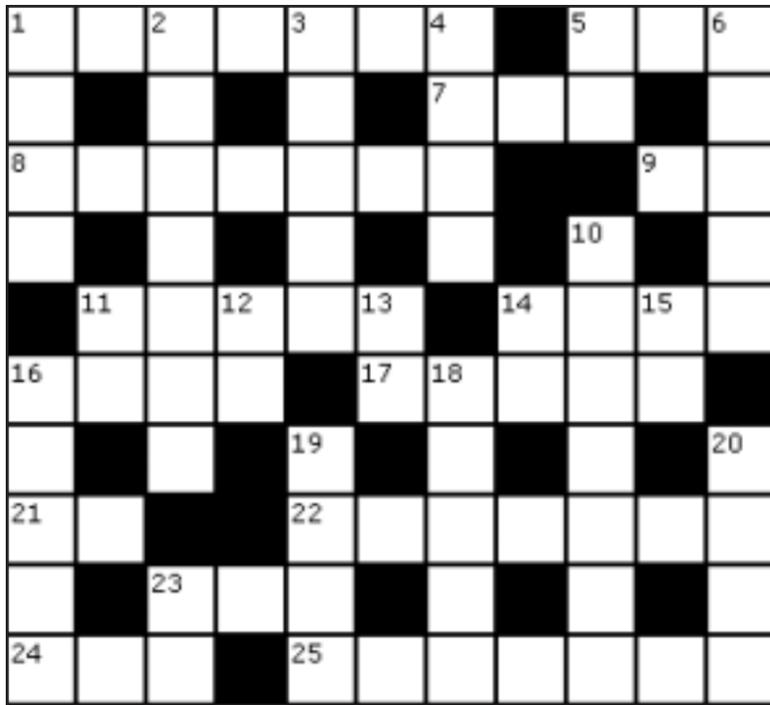
© Puzzles by Pappocom

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

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

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

Solution on the next page



Quick Crossword

- | ACROSS | DOWN |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Changes | 1. Airy transgression |
| 5. Angered | 2. Large holes |
| 7. Modern music | 3. Mediterranean isle |
| 8. Go around | 4. Raced |
| 9. It's short for gold | 5. Main politician |
| 11. Strawberries' accompaniment | 6. Sotted |
| 14. Skating ring | 10. 1,000 thousands |
| 16. Italian volcano | 11. Connecticut on a postcard |
| 17. In a weird way | 12. Medal of Honor game creator |
| 21. Wet season monsoon direction | 13. <i>Modus operandi</i> |
| 22. Pisa's famed tower | 14. The short road |
| 23. Golf stand | 15. 9/11 site |
| 24. I am... | 16. Slips into |
| 25. Makes the heart grow fonder | 18. Sketches |
| | 19. Court appeal |
| | 20. Shrek is one |
| | 23. Trademark mark |

Solution below, right

Get your brain in gear with The Monster Quiz



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

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1. In which movie did Jonny Depp make his big screen debut? | 7. What was the name of the character Jamie Kennedy played in the <i>Scream</i> trilogy? | 13. In what year was the Judy Garland version of <i>The Wizard of Oz</i> released? |
| 2. What movie gave him his first role as a voice actor? | 8. Jamie Kennedy's <i>Malibu's Most Wanted</i> co-star Anthony Anderson starred in which teen sitcom? | 14. Was it in color, or black and white? |
| 3. Which former Happy Days star was also the director of <i>The Da Vinci Code</i> ? | 9. Reggie Theus, who appeared in the same sitcom, is now head coach for which sports team? | 15. The <i>Wizard of Oz</i> won how many Oscars? |
| 4. Who is the only person to appear on screen in both an episode of Happy Days and <i>The Da Vinci Code</i> ? | 10. Which <i>Reservoir Dogs</i> actor was in the Spike Lee movie <i>Clockers</i> ? | 16. What were they for? |
| 5. With which movie did Wes Craven make his directorial debut? | 11. Which Reservoir Dog was played by famed director Quentin Tarantino? | 17. How old was Judy Garland when she sang <i>Over the Rainbow</i> ? |
| 6. In which year was Wes Craven's <i>Scream</i> released? | 12. What was the real name of Toto, the dog in <i>The Wizard of Oz</i> ? | 18. Which other musical did Judy Garland make famous? |
| | | 19. When and where did she die? |
| | | 20. What was given as the cause of her death? |

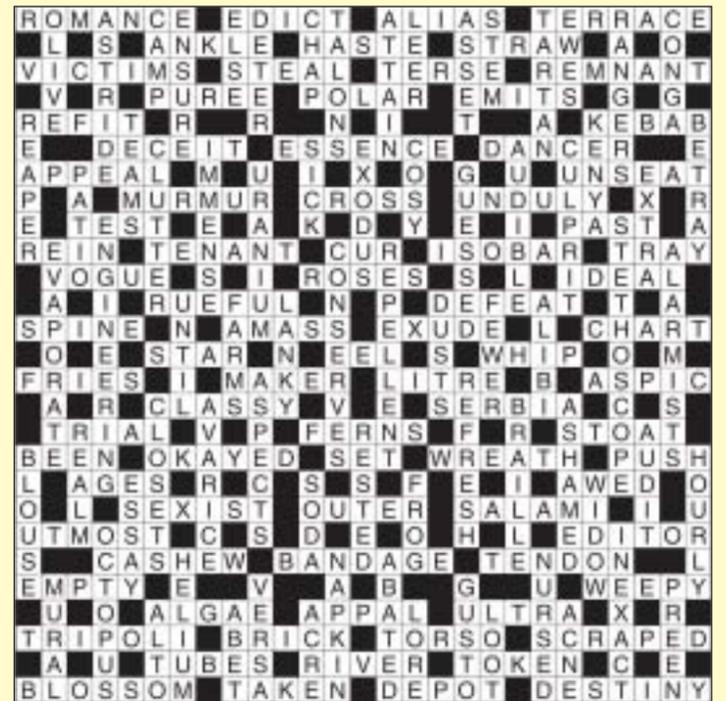
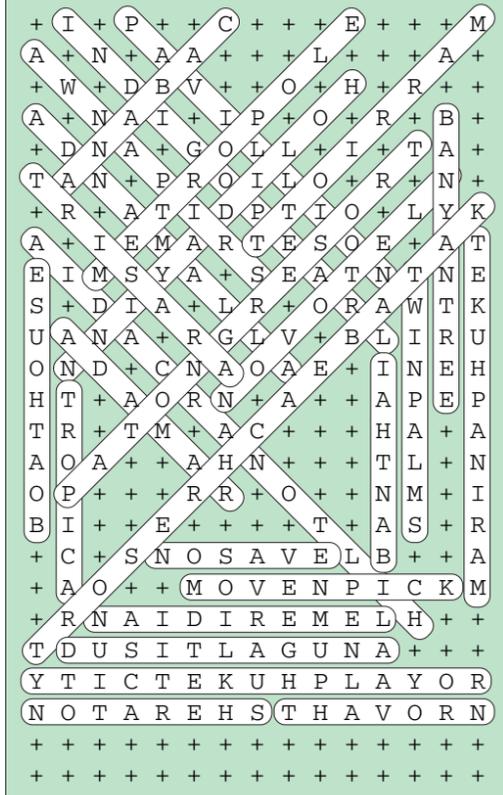
Answers below, right

Puzzle Solutions

Solution to this week's Quick Crossword



Hidden Words SOLUTION



Solution to this week's BIG Crossword

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

Solution to this week's Sudoku puzzle

Monster Quiz Answers

1. A Nightmare on Elm Street; 2. Corpse Bride; 3. Ron Howard; 4. Tom Hanks; 5. The Last House on the Left; 6. 1996; 7. Randy Meeks; 8. Hang Time; 9. Sacramento Kings; 10. Harvey Keitel; 11. Mr Brown; 12. Terry, the Cairn Terrier; 13. 1939; 14. Color; 15. Two; 16. Best Music, Original Score and Best Music, Original Song (for Over the Rainbow); 17. 17; 18. A Star is Born; 19. 22 June, 1969 in Chelsea, London; 20. Accidental barbiturate overdose.

EZ Trivia Answers

1. Combinations of meats and vegetables; 2. Joints; 3. A newton; 4. 3,500; 5. Michael Jackson; 6. Jack Nicklaus; 7. Barney T. Dinosaur; 8. Belgrade; 9. Karnataka; 10. Carbon.

Wheezing veteran shows his age

Joseph Wambaugh is a classic multi-tasker. An ex-Marine, he joined the Los Angeles police department in 1960 and spent 14 years on the force. While still a cop, he earned a bachelor's and a master's degree in English and in 1971 wrote his first novel, *The New Centurions*, a gritty and very funny account of daily life in the LAPD.

He followed with five more novels on the same subject and an acclaimed non-fiction account of the murder of two police officers, *The Onion Field*.

Wambaugh has since moved on to other things, another five novels and a lot of screenwriting. Now, for the first time since 1985, he returns to the scene of his first triumph: the LAPD.

This was a mistake. His new novel, *Hollywood Station* (Little, Brown and Company, New York, 2006, 340pp), shows little of the cynical humor of his early work.

The police force he once knew – marked by male camaraderie, bar hopping and woman chasing – is no more. Ever since the Rodney King beating and subsequent race riots, the LAPD has been ruled by outside “reformers” who ruthlessly enforce political correctness, riddle the ranks with informers and spies, and inflict tons of paperwork. Morale is shot.

“And thus, the beleaguered rank and file of the formerly proud LAPD, lamenting the unjustified loss of reputation as the



Off the SHELF

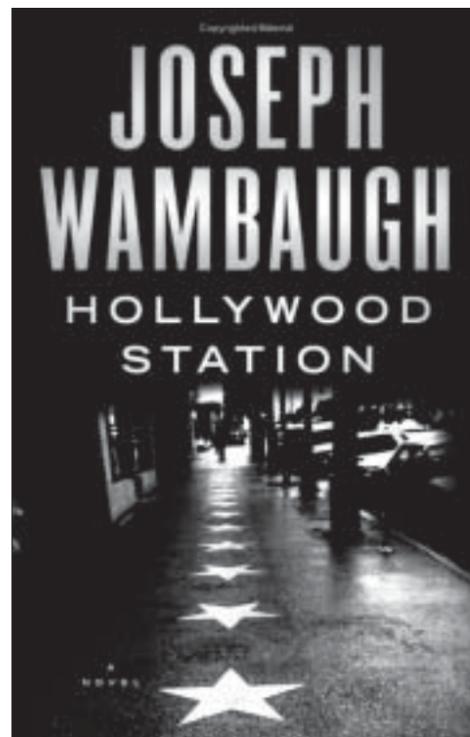
By James Eckardt

most competent and corruption-free, and certainly most famous, big-city police department in the country, finds itself faced with the humiliation of performing under outside overseers.

“Mandated auditors can simply walk into a police station, and figuratively speaking, ransack desks, turn pockets inside out, threaten careers, and generally make cops afraid to do proactive police work that had always been the coin of the realm with the LAPD during the glory days before Rodney King.”

And the cops aren't funny anymore. In his acknowledgments, Wambaugh cites 50 police officers for “the terrific anecdotes and wonderful cop talk”. His new novel is little more than a string of wacky stories.

The scene is Hollywood and the police station that covers a sleazy neighbor-



hood. Amid all the spiraling subplots, the main trunk of the stories features a pair of tweakers (crystal meth addicts), Farley Ramsdale and the skinny, toothless, witless girlfriend he calls Olive Oyl.

At night they slink around with various contraptions to steal what they can from mailboxes.

Farley fences credit cards and other swag to an Armenian immigrant named Cosmo Betrossian and his girlfriend Ilya

Roskova, a Russian masseuse and occasional hooker.

Armed with information from a stolen letter, they rob at gunpoint Somchai “Sammy” Tanampai, a small-time Thai jeweler who has just received a massive shipment of diamonds.

Showing the diamonds in turn to Russian gangster Dmitri, owner of The Gulag nightclub, the couple are put onto another score: a two-man security detail collecting nearly \$100,000 from ATMs. Cosmo manages to kill them both and now is in big trouble.

Yet another Russian, Victor Cherenko, a former Red Army officer now a LAPD detective, is in charge of the case and works his way backward to Farley and Olive Oyl. The ATM money goes missing, and this is the only mystery that the plot offers until the denouement.

One source of humor is how all these Russians mangle the English language, but the joke gets old quick.

The rest of the book is about the vagaries of the men and woman of Hollywood Station: surfer buddies Flotsam and Jetsam, veterans Fausto Gamboa and The Oracle, aspiring movie star Hollywood Nate, and tiny Meg Takara and tall Budgie Polk, who team up to pose as hookers on Santa Monica Boulevard. This last stunt goes horribly wrong and is one of the few affecting scenes in the book.

But mostly it's a botch.

EVENTS CALENDAR

Until August 11. YRock Summer Music Camp at Laguna.

Don't miss final-day live performances at the Laguna Holiday Club Resort on August 11, from 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm, by talent involved in the workshops and YRock Pop winners Ghost Souljah and Dani & Maren from Hong Kong. For details email: belmike@netvigator.com

August 12. HM The Queen's birthday – Public Holiday.

HM The Queen's birthday is also celebrated as Thailand's “Mother's Day”.

August 12. Fashion Show Extraordinaire.

To celebrate Mothers Day, bring your family and join us at Central Festival Phuket where many local Phuket mothers and children will strut down the catwalk with professional models and TV stars from Bangkok, such as Joy (Rinlane Sripin), Pang (Ornjira Lamwilai), Tuk (Chanokwanun Rakcheep) and Pong (Nawat Kulrattanak).

It's going to be fun. We hope to see you there, from 4 pm to 6:30 pm, in the Grand Hall at Central Festival Phuket.

For more information contact K. Kritsada at Tel: 076-249000. Email: marketingpf@central.co.th Website: www.centralfestivalphuket.com

August 12. Seafood Brunch at the Mangosteen.

Specialty brunches every

Sunday from 11 am to 3 pm, with a seafood brunch on August 12. Only 499 baht net, with the first 20 bookings each week paying just 399 baht net. With a half-bottle of wine, the charge is 950 baht net. For more information call Christophe Lopez at 076-289399 or email: info@mangosteen-phuket.com

August 13. Substitution Day for HM The Queen's birthday.

Public holiday the day after HM The Queen's actual birthday.

August 17. Australian Winery at Wine Connection Chalong.

The exceptional Rutherglen Winery from Victoria, Australia will be at Wine Connection Chalong for a special evening of high-quality wines, an appetizer buffet and a live band at just 500 baht net per person from 7 pm to 9 pm.

For further information contact Pascal at 087-8896074 or send an email to fb.phuket@wineconnection.co.th

August 19. Meditation retreat.

Free monthly meditation retreats on the third Sunday of every month from 1:30 pm to 3 pm at Wang Kung restaurant, located behind Suan Luang Park in Phuket City.

The sessions will include an introduction to meditation, relaxation exercises and meditation practice, as well as a question and answer period.

Instruction is provided by English-speaking Thai monks and people of all nationalities and religions are welcome to attend.

For more information call 081-3704005, 089-6476424 or 087-2838185; email: mananya@hotmail.com or poolsuk@asianpremier.com; or visit www.meditationthai.org

September 5-7. KTO Junior Golf Challenge Golf Tournament 2007.

The inaugural KTO Junior Challenge Golf Tournament will be held at the Laguna Phuket Golf Club. This international tournament is open to children 6 to 17 years of age who hold a current handicap card from a recognized golf club.

Registration is US\$285 (approx 9,975 baht) per player, including welcome reception, three-day greens fees and caddy fees, awards luncheon and more.

Registration closing date is July 31. Special events, discounted greens fees and special hotel rates at Laguna Beach Resort have also been arranged. For further information visit www.kids-tee-off.com

September 22. The 8th Phuket International Beer Fest.

A celebration of probably the best beers and most ardent beer drinkers in the world at the Watermark bar and restaurant.

This is your chance to show to the world, or at least Phuket, your favorite beer. Yes! YOU

supply the beer – in the hope that it wins the prestigious accolade of “Winner of The 8th Phuket International Beer Fest”.

Each competitor must supply 12 bottles or cans of their nominated international beer. All entries are required to register for the competition in advance.

Entry fee: 800 baht.

Tip: bring back the best beer from overseas while you're traveling this summer! For more information call Stuart Bird at 081-7376184.

October 11-19. Phuket Vegetarian Festival.

This festival is an annual event held during the ninth lunar month of the Chinese calendar, which normally falls in late September or early October. Sacred rituals are performed at all Chinese temples in Phuket.

October 21-27. Phuket Film Festival.

Phuket will see this festival realized with the Gala Opening on October 21. On that day, the festival will present the newly restored Thai film *The King of the White Elephant* (1941). For details please log on to www.phuketfilmfestival.com

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Saphan Hin is perfect for sounding off

The booming sound systems in the flashy cereal-box cars around Phuket are just as much of a nuisance as sound trucks as they thump down the street, interrupting conversations and causing flatware to dance, but a closer look at this outlet for youthful energy – especially the weekly shows at Saphan Hin [see Inside Story, pp 4-5] – reveal that the cars may be exactly what the youngsters need.

The vehicles are not merely transportation, but have evolved into a hobby – and in many cases an obsession with creating the best sound system around. At Saphan Hin, the creativity and dedication of the youth is apparent and appreciable. The fancy lighting systems, intricate display boxes etched with company names and booming, massive speakers are works of art.

It may not be high art, but it is something that students can pour their hearts into. While other groups of youth the same age may be sitting around drinking and shooting each other, as police reports have shown, these kids are learning useful life skills as they constantly refine their machines. On top of that, the atmosphere at Saphan Hin in the early evening is family-friendly, with fathers taking their children to see the shiny, exciting cars.

It is also a less harmful way for youths to modify their cars than many other methods. Instead of racing-modified cars with nitrous oxide injection, racing tires and light frames, these cars are not meant for speed. In fact, the chance that they would risk their investments by tearing through town is fairly low.

Far enough away from the neighbors to keep the sound at a dull roar, the parking lot at Saphan Hin is a good staging area for their shows. After investing so much time and money into cars capable of playing ear-shattering sounds, of course they would want to test it out – so let them have their fun.

That said, an agreement should be reached with provincial officials so that the youngsters will not be bothered for playing loud music at Saphan Hin – as long as their music is not played on the street. The volume knob is not just an accessory, and unlike Choppers and modified racing cars, they can control when and how loud they play their music.

The police are well aware that they can fine anyone at any time for playing music too loud; thus far they have made a great decision to allow the shows at Saphan Hin to continue – as long as the shows stay there.

– The Editor

Do you have an opinion you want to share?
Email editor@phuketgazette.net

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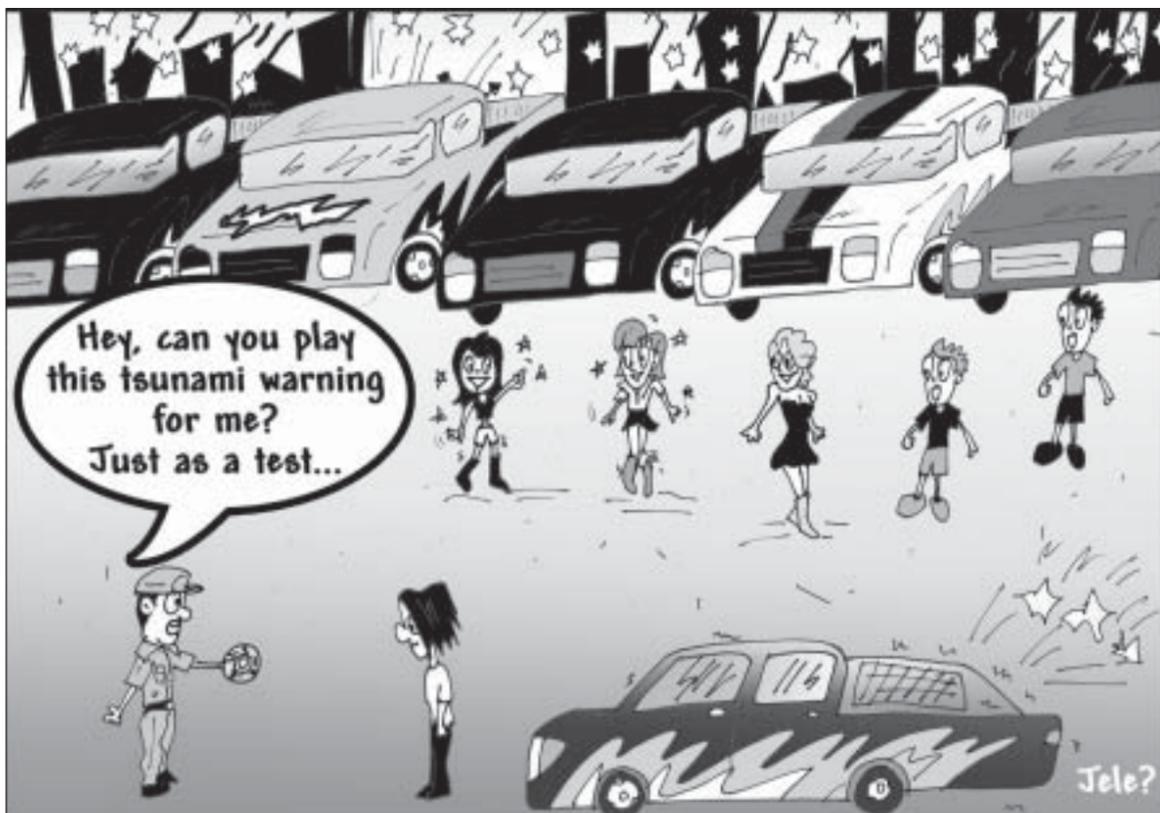
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Letters

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

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

Bait and switch, by the sea

The Phuket official who lamented in last week's *Gazette* that the hotels and tour operators do not adequately warn their clients and customers that swimming in the Andaman Sea this time of year is extremely dangerous is very naive.

Of course the hotels and tour operators know about the rip currents and numerous drownings that take place here every year, but let's get real: does he really think this information would be made available to potential tourists?

How many of these tourists would come to Phuket if it were widely advertised that swimming on Phuket's beautiful beaches between May and November is to be avoided?

I often wonder how many tourists come here during the low season expecting to enjoy swimming in the Andaman Sea only to discover after they arrive that such swimming constitutes a very real danger to them and their families.

Steve Rubenstein
By email

Dog poisonings beg serious questions

Last Saturday night [August 4] five defenseless dogs were poisoned on Kamala Beach and another five in their own backyards. Some of these dogs survived the tsunami, only to be murdered on a beach they loved and played on every day.

This callous, disgusting act is not unusual in Phuket or Kamala Beach – in fact it has been

happening for many years. Whether one or more people were involved in this latest mass murder is not clear. One report is that the dogs were "packed" together and poisoned. Of course the question is why – is it the act of lunatics, madmen?

Perhaps the biggest question is why are such acts ignored by the police. There is a large, new police station in Kamala, presumably well staffed – but obviously not by policemen who care about the murder of defenseless dogs. What happens when the killers run out of dogs to poison? Will they then start on a section of the community they do not like?

In Australia, these acts are punishable by law and can carry a jail term – but what about Thailand? What about a community that does nothing to prevent cruelty to animals, and in doing nothing is condoning these barbarous acts. What is it about a community that they do not consider animals' lives worth anything?

The world believes that Thai people are kind, gentle, and peace-loving. Of course this is quite true about many Thai people. But what concerns me is what is going to be done about that element of the Thai community who are cruel, violent and clearly insane? If one cares enough it is possible to bring about change – it all depends on the level of care.

Phuket, and in particular Kamala, has been a little slice of heaven for me. Discovering this part of the world was better than winning a lottery. Sadly, my beautiful Paradise is turning into a Hell.

Rhonda
Australia

Thanking the messenger

Thank you *Phuket Gazette* for laying on the table the topic of the Soi Dog Foundation's lack of government support and their desperate need for it.

I think that this discussion needed to happen (again) and hope that we can now continually push to ameliorate the condition of the animals here in Phuket.

Your article was factual and to the point. Truth hurts.

Tiffany Ladebat
By email

Tuk-tuk prices need to be metered

I flew in to Phuket from Bangkok this week and it was very good to see a metered-taxi desk at the airport for transport to our hotel instead of the previous monopoly held by the limousine service.

The next step should be to have metered taxis available in Patong and not the rip-off prices of the tuk-tuk drivers who want 300 baht for a two-kilometer trip to a hotel.

Is price fixing a problem in Phuket and is competition to find customers not encouraged? Who regulates the tuk-tuks, or are the owners a law unto themselves?

Stuart
Cullen Bay NT
Australia

Eventful appreciation

Much appreciated your weekly Events Calendar. It's on my fridge door.

Michael G Finn
Phuket

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

Taxi drivers mull new bus station

For some people Phuket is like heaven, but if you want to live here it can be very competitive in terms of work. For taxi drivers it is especially so, as we face many challenges. A lot of places in Phuket have been reserved by other transport companies, which means that we cannot pick up customers there.

There are 44 metered taxis in Phuket, all of them ready to service tourists arriving at Phuket Airport. There is a counter inside the airport, near the entrance to the terminal building.

We have an agreement with Phuket Airport to charge a 100-baht service fee to all customers. Each time we pick up a customer from the airport, we have to pay a 40-baht fee to the Private Taxi Meter Phuket Association [which covers fees paid to the airport], so we are happy to work there because we can still make money; we end up with 60 baht extra per trip.

I only just found out from the news about plans made by the Phuket Provincial Transport Office (PPTO) to build a new bus terminal in Phuket opposite Supercheap. There are already taxis working that area, so the government is going to have to clear it with them whether we can work there or not.

I asked other taxi drivers in the association and they told me that they don't want to start working at the new bus station because they are happy with the income they get working from the airport. PPTO hasn't even formally asked us if we want to expand there yet. They should let us

FIRST PERSON

Limits on where Phuket's metered taxi drivers are allowed to work have been a sour point on the island ever since their introduction here in April 2002.

With the recent news of the new bus station planned to open on Thepkrasattri Rd in Rassada, many island taxi drivers are skeptical about moving their services to the new transport hub.

Here **Suwan Tamchoo**, president of the Phuket Private Taxi Meter Association, talks about the development and how it will affect taxi drivers.



know if our services are required.

However, many taxi drivers are already reluctant to service the new station because most of the customers there will be Thais, not tourists. That will probably mean that we cannot earn as much money because the journey distances won't be very far – and foreigners tend to tip more than locals.

Even in the low season we can still make a good income from the airport. It will be difficult for us to work at the new bus station, but it would be possible if we were allowed to set up a counter there and limit the number of taxis on standby to about four or five.

One of the problems we face is that many areas in Phuket are privately owned, which means

that we cannot stop to pick customers up in those places. It's not like that in other provinces in Thailand, where people can hail a cab anywhere they want.

The government must crack down on illegal groups in every area in Phuket who affect our work. This problem has been around for a long time and everybody knows about it, but nobody can do anything because the people controlling those areas will become angry.

We want the government to stop lobbying with individuals, such as the heads of groups of tuk-tuk drivers, and stop giving them privileges to service certain areas.

I remember one time in Patong when a foreign customer

called me over while I was in my taxi to ask me to take him into town.

A tuk-tuk driver then came over and told my customer that I was only allowed to take people from the airport and the customer had to go to town in a tuk-tuk.

This sort of thing is not fair, because the customer wanted to go in a metered taxi and not in a tuk-tuk. He was not free to make his own choice.

The government should hold a hearing into the activities of all the groups who illegally control the areas taxis can work in. The government has to be strong with them.

The present bus terminal has had motorcycle taxis, tuk-tuks, *songtaew* buses and unreg-

istered metered taxis servicing tourists for a long time. If the new bus terminal is to open, then all of those people must move to work there also. The PPTO needs to look into setting up counters for taxis there.

Before the new bus station is formally opened, zoning must be clearly set up for every taxi service; this would include setting up a metered-taxi counter inside the new terminal.

A service charge would need to be agreed upon, like at the airport, although the price will probably be lower because the distances of journeys will be much shorter. A trip from Phuket City to Patong is no more than 15 kilometers. That means that if we don't have a service charge then we cannot make enough profit.

Another issue is that if we step up and demand that zoning be implemented in the province by setting up taxi counters in other areas, then it will make us many enemies and I feel it will put our homes and families in danger. This is a very delicate case for Phuket province, and it's one that I think everyone knows about.

The people who are directly affected by these problems are the tourists. Until they are given reasonable choices, the situation will continue to tarnish Phuket's reputation as a "tropical paradise".

As taxi drivers, we are happy here because Phuket is our home. We don't want to live anywhere else, but sometimes life can be very difficult.

Compiled by Sompratch Saowakhon

Retirement visa roundabout

I am a holder of a Dutch passport and am currently living in Cairo.

I retired on August 1 and am planning to move back to Phuket.

I went to apply for a non-immigrant "O" visa at the Thai Embassy in Cairo, but I was told that the Thai Embassy there stopped issuing retirement visas a few months ago.

I now seem to have no alternative other than to enter Thailand on a 30-day visa exemption on arrival, given automatically to Dutch passport holders.

Will Immigration issue me a retirement visa even though I will have entered Thailand on this type of tourist visa?

In need of a break
Cairo

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

As a Dutch citizen, when you get to Thailand and are given

a 30-day visa exemption on arrival you will then be able to request a non-immigrant "O" visa for retirement, but only if you are able to satisfy the retirement visa requirements. (See <http://www.phuketgazette.net/issuesanswers/details.asp?id=972>)

Your visa can be changed from a tourist exemption visa to a non-immigrant "O" visa for retirees, which will then give you a three-month period to stay in Thailand after you have applied.

When you get the non-immigrant "O" visa, you can then ask to extend your permit to stay for one year with a retirement visa using the same documents.

As an essential part of the application procedure, you will need to ask the Dutch Embassy in Bangkok for a pension certificate certifying that you are receiving pension income of at least 80,000 baht per month, or 800,000 baht per year.

Issues & ANSWERS

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

Where can I get some really good grass?

I would like to buy grass seed to fill in the bare patches of my lawn. I have tried numerous gardening centers, but all trips have ended without success. Where I can buy grass seed?

David Brook
Patong

Somchai Hengwacharapai-boon, Chief of Phuket Provincial Agricultural Extension Office, replies:

Thai gardeners don't normally propagate grass using seed because of the many weeds that also grow here. Therefore, grass seed is rarely sold. I would recommend you ask at Kowit Agricultural Store on Mae Luan Rd

about obtaining the grass seed that you want.

Khun Kowit from Kowit Agricultural Store on Mae Luan Rd in Phuket City, replies:

We don't stock grass seed, and it is unlikely that any other shops in Phuket sell grass seed. Most gardening centers here order sod from Bangkok for sale to customers in Phuket.

Thailand's grass market works in the manner that the producers sell two-thirds of their grass field, retaining one third for the next cultivation. There may be some shops in Bangkok that sell grass seed, but they are likely to be very difficult to find.

Where are the secondhand stores in Phuket?

Are there any secondhand stores in Phuket City that have quality gear but do not rip people off?

Patrick Simpson
Rawai

The Phuket Gazette replies:

The two secondhand stores closest to Phuket City are:

- Lumpoon's Second Hand Store on Chao Fa East Rd, near Soi Palai. Tel: 081-6932250. Email: lumpoon@loxinfo.co.th

- Wongpanit secondhand store on Phra Phuket Kaew Rd, between the Tesco-Lotus intersection and Kathu. Tel: 076-203271 or 089-4717101.

In Rawai:

- Thaitanics, 28/34 Saiyuan Rd, Rawai. Open Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 11 am to 3 pm. Tel: 081-0849093. Website: www.thaitanics.org

For more information see Around the Island on page 10.

Trading on thickness

The *Pattaya Trader* is one of those magazines that seemed to materialize at just the right time in the development of the city. From humble beginnings it has blossomed into the sort of magazine you can use as a door-stop, to repel burglars, as boat ballast or as landfill – that is apart from reading the articles and perusing the adverts and classifieds, of course.

The advertising is what keeps it alive and the advertisers are a reflection of modern Pattaya. For example, there's Ursula's Antiques.

I've seen a lot of antiques wandering around on two legs in the city, but the kind of items Ursula flogs are of the sort you might find gathering dust in a corner of the Louvre, with little tags mentioning deeds of derring-do in far-flung outposts of the French Empire in the late 19th century.

The rapid and massive expansion of Pattaya in building terms has also borne witness to a concomitant growth in the number of foreign persons taking up permanent residence in the city.

If the pace of the building boom here over the past two to three years continues, there won't be a blade of grass, ba-

nana tree or tapioca farm untouched by a slab of concrete. At one stage it looked as though there would be more real estate agencies than beer bars in the main areas of town.

Even with a downturn, at last count there were more than 100 "agencies", albeit some just an address with a couple of rentals to their name while they indulge in their real business of selling *somtam* to passing itinerants.

At one point, before the coup last year unseated the government and much was being made of a potential for legalized gambling to take root in the nation, there was an advert flogging Internet domain names. Intriguingly, most of these featured the word "casino" in the title.

"For Sale. Great Dane Puppies" is one small advert that caught my eye. Pattaya, as with the rest of Thailand, has enough stray K-9s to give rabies a bad name, but there is a growing market for "real" dogs: four-legged mutts with lengthy

pedigrees. But Great Danes? In this climate? Doesn't anybody realize how big these monsters get?

The average Isarn farm girl could probably throw a saddle on its back and ride off to work in the paddy fields aboard one of these. I'm almost certain they use them disguised as racehorses in Saigon. Those that fail to live up to "equine" expectations more than likely find a final home in a backstreet cooking pot.

For a short period there was an advert in the Personals section that read, "I am looking for contact with an ASIAN women (sic). No matter what age, size or whatever. A serious email will always be replied..." Talk about keeping your options wide open.

There is already a Staff Wanted section and maybe a few government offices will start offering some interesting positions.

To jog the idea along, what about taking one advertised position and calling it



FROM THE STREETS OF PATTAYA

By Duncan Stearn

In The Stars

by Isla Star

Know your stars, know your life

LEO (July 24-August 22): If you don't feel ready to roar, you should try to ease your work load. People expect you to take on extra responsibilities this week, so be prepared to put your foot down. On the home front, a family member has surprising news this weekend. Tuesday is best for attending to a financial matter; the stars will encourage a discrepancy to be in your favor.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): Romance is subject to ups and downs during the middle of August. If your heart's not set on a relationship, then call it a day.

A Scorpio would like to resolve a business misunderstanding from earlier this year. Bargains are tempting this weekend, but your bank balance needs to be checked carefully before splashing out. Wear the color turquoise to encourage wisdom.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): You could be disappointed this weekend to receive the cold shoulder from someone you considered a friend. It's worth asking a third party what's really going on; a Gemini friend would be the ideal person to assist. Love is well-starred with Pisces, and planning a romantic

getaway for later this month will encourage this relationship to blossom.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): If you are frustrated by your inability to get ahead you will receive an astral boost this week. A business matter that was left hanging last month can easily be revived. Spring a romantic surprise on Sunday; the person you want to impress has been waiting for you to show more interest. Pay extra attention to financial transactions on Monday as mistakes could be costly.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): The chance of a lifetime is forecast for mid-August. This should involve important ties being strengthened with people who can help you with work. Someone who you thought had forgotten your existence makes contact, but you may need to make it clear that romance is no longer an option. The number 8 is lucky, but only on this Tuesday.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): Your earthy good sense is useful this weekend, when there is a chance that someone wants to take you for a ride. Capricorns who can't resist flirting should take care that they don't upset someone's partner. The coast is clear for those thinking of a change of job; a word in the right ear early next week could land you a per-

fect opportunity. Wear ruby red to ensure that your presence is noticed.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): Time flies when you're having fun. Aquarians who can balance business with pleasure will coast smoothly through the week. However, trouble lies ahead if you are inclined to forget important appointments when the social scene is sparkling. Romance with a Leo will involve playing with fire; get to know a Libra better and love will blossom. The number 6 is lucky on Wednesday.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): A good business prospect will slip through the net if you don't keep your ears to the ground. Consult Aries for sensible advice regarding money matters; Scorpio will not understand your concerns. Love is well highlighted for the rest of the month – a relationship that faltered recently will take on new life. Wear the color aubergine to encourage a more down-to-earth outlook.

ARIES (March 21-April 20): The atmosphere at work is unsettled this week due to a colleague being as snappy as a crocodile. Cultivate patience and understanding to avoid adding fuel to the fire. You should be able to achieve more after Thursday when a Cancer makes a tempting offer. Affairs of the heart are well-starred for most of the week; Tuesday is best for a first

date with that special someone.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): If you have been searching for a change of career you will be inspired by an unlikely source this week. Someone is about to reveal their hidden talents, which gives you food for thought. Romance is certain to provide some enjoyable moments; even if you are determined to remain single, an attractive Arian is intent on making a serious impression. The number 4 is can bring fortune on Monday.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): Light-hearted Geminis will drift happily through the flotsam and jetsam that this week may bring. However, take a business matter seriously on Thursday, especially if it has been hanging in the balance for too long. Capricorn would like to get to know you better but is still working out the right approach. Sunday is best for bargain hunting.

CANCER (June 22-July 23): You should walk on eggshells when dealing with an impatient Scorpio this weekend, particularly if this person is your superior. Life becomes easier after Monday when the stars are ready to support your efforts to break away from the usual daily routine. Crossed wires are likely to complicate affairs of the heart; wait until after Thursday to instigate serious talks. Wear the color slate gray to encourage confidence.

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Experiencing backpain? Do the twist

Hands up if you or someone you know has ever suffered from lower back pain. Often described as the “flu” of the musculoskeletal system, lumbar spinal pain can have an extremely adverse effect on our daily lives.

In many cases, people injure themselves while twisting to lift something. The human body loves to travel in straight lines, but when a simple twist or rotation is thrown in, problems can occur.

Our body is designed to move in three dimensions, therefore, we must have the strength and stability in our torso and mid-section to be able to turn, bend and stabilize.

Take a moment and think of all the movements that you do every day that involve bending and twisting. Getting in and out of your car, putting the shopping bags into the boot, putting on your shoes, playing golf...the list goes on. When these movements are performed under load, such as placing heavy bags into the car, pain can strike indicating muscle or joint damage.

So how do we minimize the risk of injury to our back? We do the twist!

A user-friendly torso conditioning program can be performed daily at home, taking about 15 minutes to complete. The program should include an element of stretching, some balancing exercises on an unstable platform and some specific strengthening of the muscles that twist, bend and stabilize the torso.

Two purchases would make such a program more effective, a big round fit ball and a smaller “bosu ball” or balance board. The unstable nature of this type of

FIT FOR LIFE

By Nick Dobyn

equipment ensures that the stabilizer muscles are activated and strengthened. This will ensure that when your spine is placed in a potentially dangerous position, these muscles will activate and contract, providing needed support for the lumbar vertebrae and surrounding joints.

To get a feel for these exercises, first sit on the fit ball with both feet on the ground and hold a weight in each hand. Slowly raise the weights above your head. You will begin to feel all those seldom-used muscles contracting as your body subtly adjusts to keep your balance.

There are two other types of training that will assist in strengthening our twisting muscles. The first being basic movements such as hip and torso rotations and oblique and core exercises such as the “bridge” or “plank” exercise.

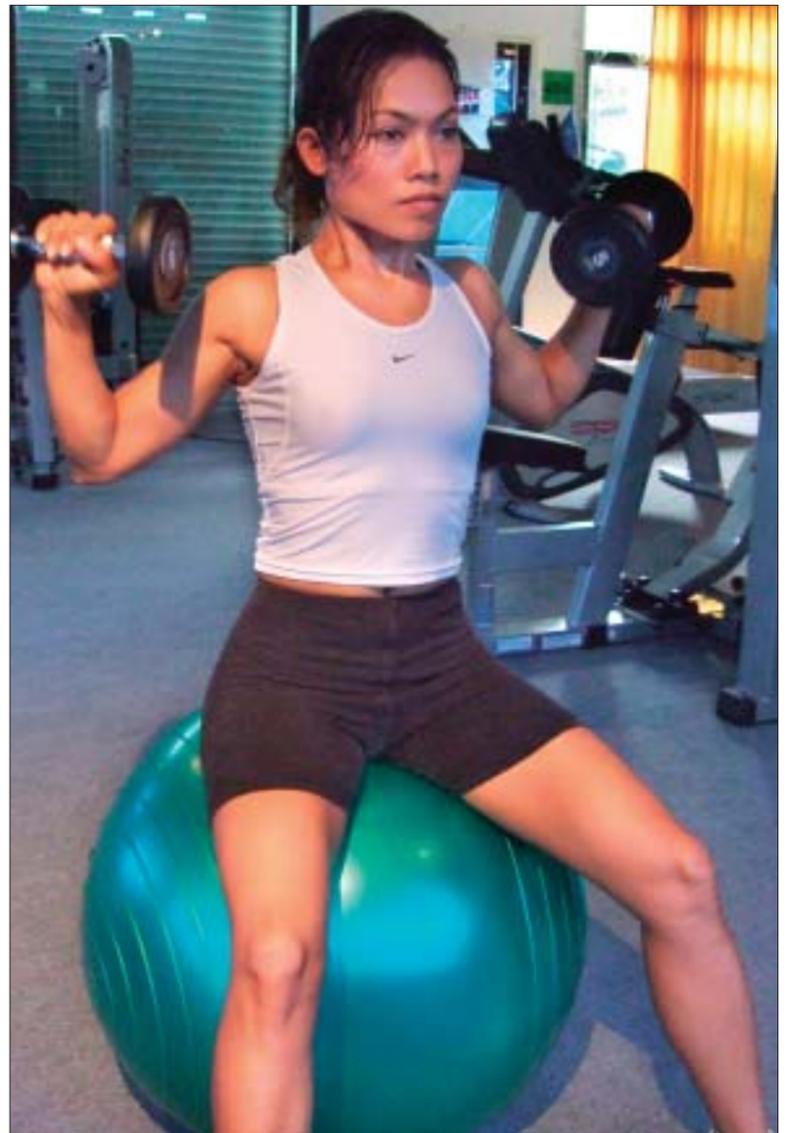
The “bridge” is one exercise that can be completed with no more than a mat on the ground. Place your body in a push-up position, but place both elbows on the ground under you. Now keep your back straight and hold the position for up to one minute. Relax and repeat.

The second type of back exercise includes any movement that makes the body fight against rotation. For example, hold a weight in one hand only and perform a leg squat: From a standing position pretend that you are sitting down into a chair. Keep your feet shoulders width apart and stick your backside out as you

sit down. Brace your stomach and lower down, keeping your back straight. Instead of actually sitting into a chair stand up again.

Because you have an unevenly distributed load by holding only one weight, the rotational muscles have to stabilize and contract to ensure that the spine is maintained in a secure straight line while the squatting movement is performed.

Start out easy, with light weights. The last thing you want to do is damage the muscles that you want to strengthen. As with any exercise program, always consult fitness professionals on the best program for your specific targets and fitness levels.



Exercising on the unstable platform of a fit ball activates the torso stabilizer muscles.

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Nick Dobyn is the manager of Phuket Personal Trainers Co Ltd, a Rawai-based personal fitness consultancy specializing in personal fitness training. For more information call 086-2514801, or email nick@phuketfitness.net or visit www.phuketfitness.net

CORRECTION



Stool Pigeon in the July 28 issue of the *Phuket Gazette* included an incorrect contact number for Terry of El Tel's speedboat charter service operating out of Ao Yon. The correct number is 081-0868041. Terry can also be reached by email at eltelsboat@yahoo.com

PC Therapy brings DO alive

The Sunday morning PC Group Therapy sessions in Patong continue to bring important news and unexpected quirks to light. This week was particularly enlightening.

Group Therapist "L" reported that he finally got his Linksys WRT54G3G-ST working. Permit me to translate that into English. "L" set up a wireless network in his home that uses CAT's AirCard 580 to connect to the Internet.

The method he used can bring very fast wireless Internet access to groups of computers at almost any location in Phuket – no wires necessary. A real milestone. It's something many of you have been trying to accomplish ever since CAT started selling the EV-DO card.

To look at it another way, until recently it's been relatively easy – but expensive – to get a fast wireless Internet connection for a single computer. You paid CAT 12,000 baht for an AirCard 580, plugged it into your computer's PCMCIA slot, ran a bit of software and you could get respectably fast Internet access almost anywhere in Phuket, for a single computer.

It's also been possible but not easy to get a fast wired Internet connection, providing CAT would/could string an ADSL line to your premises. You could stick a wireless access point on the end of the CAT line and have fast wireless Internet all through a house or small office.

The sticking point's the phone line: if CAT can't or won't install a line for you (and it can take months), you're left with options that range from not very good to absolutely horrid.

Enter the Linksys

WRT54G3G-ST, which acts like any other wireless access point, except it will use the AirCard 580 for its Internet connection, no telephone line necessary.

"L" had a Linksys WRT54G3G-ST shipped in from the US: they're widely available all over the world, although I have yet to see one in Thailand. He set it up, plugged in his AirCard 580... and it didn't work.

Several days later he wrote to say, "I upgraded the Linksys router, installing the WRT_OpenSys program, and the system works like a charm. The new upgrade is a total replacement of the Linksys factory firmware, and is a considerable improvement in

other functional areas. Of course the biggest improvement is that the router +

AirCard 580 now works (as evidenced by this email). Also, the speed seems very fast but I have not done any quantitative test."

To get the WR54G3G-ST working with the AirCard 580, "go to www.evdoforums.com/thread6209.html. The very first post in that thread is by Heavily-ArmdPokey, who is the dude who wrote the program. Very interesting demo of a good hacker far outdoing the corporate might of perhaps the most respected network equipment company in the world, Cisco. Linux rules."

Although I have yet to confirm whether the WRT54G3G-ST has been approved for use in Thailand, if you drop by a PC Group Therapy session on Sunday morning, you'll have a chance to meet da man and shake his hand – and find out how to order and install your own.

Sold out. An important note on the Sierra Wireless AirCard 580: as best I can tell, CAT doesn't

If you use the AirCard 580 from CAT for wireless Internet, this cable-attached antenna can improve your reception appreciably.

have any left. They've been extremely popular, for very good reason – they're losing millions of baht in Phuket alone.

I expect that CAT will get a new supply of AirCards soon, though I'm not sure which model, but for now you can't get an AirCard in Phuket for love nor money. And you can't bring one in from the outside world and get it to work in Thailand. Only the CAT card will do.

Aerial antics. For those of you who have an AirCard 580 already, there's an ad for the ARC Wireless Freedom external antenna at 3gstore.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=5&products_id=18.

The antenna has drawn good reviews, and it looks like it'll solve the marginal reception problems several of you AirCard 580 owners have reported.

The antenna will set you

back 1,700 baht plus shipping – but 3GStore does not ship to Thailand: you have to send the external antenna to someone in the US, and have it forwarded from there.

I'm still looking for a supplier of the ARC Wireless Freedom Antenna (www.antennas.com/products.php?id=116&rcat=39) that will ship to Thailand, but have yet to find one.

Let me know if you bump into a company that will.

Mixed bag. There was lots of additional news at last Sunday's Group Therapy, including extensive details on getting your mobile phone hooked into your computer, so you can get an Internet connection even when you're out at sea.

There are "Edge Cards" and other USB-attached telephone reception devices that eliminate the need for the mobile

phone, but the connection goes through the mobile phone network anyway.

Internet over the traditional mobile phone network may not be fast, but it's solid. AIS (1-2-Call), DTAC and Orange all have so-called "GPRS" options. Watch out for mobile phone Internet plans that charge by the byte.

Several people brought their ailing laptops. The assembled helpers managed to solve quite a few problems – but not all, I'm sorry to say.

Tottering TOT: I continue to be, uh, amazed at the news coming out of Bangkok these days. For example, on August 1, Thailand's Minister of Information and Communications Technology declared resolutely that the government's telephone monopoly, TOT, will never go public.

K. Sithichai was quoted as saying, "My intention is to confirm my decision that I do not want TOT to list on the market. If the next elected government dares to proceed with a listing policy, then do it and be ready to answer questions from society."

This in the face of rapidly declining sales and profits (down 36% last year), and Byzantine regulatory restrictions that would tie your brain in Gordian knots.

The company changed its name five years ago to "TOT Public Company Limited" in anticipation of imminent listing on the Stock Exchange of Thailand.

Five years later, and TOT hasn't made it. K. Sithichai insisted that TOT revert to "TOT Co Ltd" even though Thai law requires that publicly traded companies be "public company limited" companies.

On August 3, on page 3 of *The Nation*, TOT ran a half-page ad trumpeting the accomplishments and vision of "TOT Public Company Limited". Go figure.

Want to know more about Thailand's computer laws? Or do you just want to get your %\$#@! Internet connection to work? Join Woody's PC Group Therapy session this Sunday morning, 10 am to noon, at his Sandwich Shoppe in Patong. Email Khun Woody at woody@khunwoody.com for directions.

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Concerns raised over US 'cool off'

Even a few weeks can be enough to change the outlook of an economy. The US economy is currently a perfect example of the "Goldilocks" scenario of "not too hot and not too cold". Perhaps it is heading toward a cooling period, although second quarter Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at an annualized rate of 3.4% was excellent.

The big issues are the US residential housing market and the subprime. "Subprime" means that the quality of the borrowers and their ability to repay are below standard, and can be referred to as "second chance lending".

When house prices start fall, repossession of the property results in losses. Every lender for, say, motor cars realizes that it is lending to an individual with only a depreciating asset as security. Naturally, the lender looks for a substantial deposit and a credit-worthy customer.

The US residential housing market has enjoyed a long boom. Private investors scorning the stock market after the losses of the early 2000s thought that this was a safe place to make money. Prices of housing rose dramatically and the boom became heavily dependent on cheap, borrowed money.

The lenders of this money should have known better. Lenders often find themselves caught in the moment as head offices push them to increase market share in a very competitive environment.

Mortgage brokers are continually scouring the lending market to see who can offer the best terms, accept deals with low deposits, accept buyers with less-than-impressive credit histories and so on. Their story is always the same: if one business will not lend the money, another one will.

In highly competitive lending markets, credit standards in boom periods tend to fall. Loans are made to families that otherwise would never have qualified.



US Treasury Secretary Henry "Hank" Paulson previously stated that lenders and borrowers ought to return to more disciplined practices.

Suffice to say that some lending criteria inevitably came to reflect irresponsibility. As a result, housing loans were not only granted, often for 100% of the value of the property, but also covered legal fees and taxes. This resulted in lending sometimes reaching 104% of the actual purchase price of a property.

The lender then became reliant on two factors: the borrower's ability to pay and, if the borrower could not, the rising value of the property to cover a bad loan.

The loans at risk in the housing subprime market in the US are estimated to be worth in the region of US\$400 billion (over 12 trillion baht). This is a substantial sum, although to be fair the US is an economy with a GDP of US\$13.5 trillion. Ben Bernanke, chairman of the US Federal Reserve, however, has estimated that the effect of the problem could reduce GDP as much as 0.9%.

When lending woes come to the surface, people start to wonder what else might be at risk. The spotlight has now fallen on another area: private equity. A number of private equity groups have been making headlines with global takeovers,

often of substantial, publicly-traded companies.

The rationale of these deals is normally that the company is profitable and has an excellent balance sheet. This type of company is attractive to private-equity groups; they raise money from a number of sources – banks, pension funds, and so on – and make a takeover bid for a company. The bid usually overvalues the company and there is often more than one bidder for the target company.

Private equity is also of note because as a public company traded on a stock market, the management of the company is always looking at the short term instead of the bigger picture.

MONEY TALKS



By Richard G. Watson

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To keep shareholders happy, public companies are judged by their quarterly profits and this leads to strategies that are judged "for the moment", rather than on what would be best in the long run.

When private-equity groups take over public companies, they pay out to shareholders, who are normally rubbing their hands with glee at the profit they have made, and convert the company to a private, non-listed entity. Thereafter, the private-equity group can remove overpaid management who often place their personal interests above shareholders' and generally rationalize the business. The group can then take a better look at strategy and ideally create a better company in general.

The new management, however, is not always better than the previous one, and the huge amounts borrowed to finance the takeovers means that the company has a mountain of debt and investment payments to service. Basically, after a takeover like this, the balance sheet takes a dramatic downward shift.

When the spotlight eventually fell on subprime borrowing, it meant that lenders became very aware of the quality of lending and even of lenders who had no exposure to subprime at all. The appetite for risk diminished. A number of highly publicized deals that were in the pipeline stages have become questionable and lenders are now becoming less complacent.

A new term that has become popular is "contagion", which means that all economies are dependent on sentiment.

In the last days of July, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) raised its estimate of global growth for 2007 and 2008 from 4.9% to 5.2% for both years because of increased growth in many economies, such as Russia, China and India.

The world is becoming increasingly less dependent on the US economy, and a moderate slowdown in the US is not necessarily bad news. What nobody wants to hear from the US is the word recession – so far so good.

The effect of activity in the subprime market is already being felt on corporate bond yields, which have risen.

Risk should always be priced into a market.

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



Despite some 150 people registering to take part in the PLED auction, only 12 actually made bids for properties.

Little action at PLED auction

By Semacote Suganya

PHUKET CITY: Properties with a total value of 34 million baht went under the hammer at the Phuket Legal Execution Department (PLED) public auction at the Phuket Merlin Hotel on July 26.

The auction, the first of four to sell off properties seized by banks and the Phuket Provincial Land Office (PPLO), attracted a crowd of about 300, with just 12 of the 150 registered bidders actually making bids for the land plots, commercial buildings and residential properties.

Although 64 properties, including 100 rai with a combined estimated value of 420 million baht were originally listed for auction in July and August, many of them were not included in the day's bidding due to last-minute debt-restructuring agreements between property owners and creditors, and the sale of other plots postponed for re-evaluation by the PPLO.

One such lot is 80 rai of land on Kuktanod Rd in Chalong, the value of which is being re-estimated by the PLED committee, who will assess criteria such as property status, quality of land, location and options for commercial use.

The plot is expected to go under the hammer by September.

The auction of six rai in Cherng Talay with a starting price of 50 million baht has also been delayed as land title deed issuance and condition of the land are being reconsidered.

Despite the small turnout of active bidders, PLED Director Santhad Prasanwan said, "We are pleased with progress so far. Although some properties will not be auctioned off, the restructuring of debts by creditors also helps money flow into the market."

"The number of properties actually sold and their total value will be announced following the final auction on August 16," he added.

Phuket construction company owner Karoon Nuansakul made the final bid of 10.6 million baht for a five-rai plot in Rawai, which had an estimated price of 7.47 million baht.

"I ended up paying 600,000 baht more than I expected. The land will be used to store construction materials, including stone and sand," said K. Karoon.

The August 16 auction will be held at the PLED offices at 74/168-169 Phun Pol Rd, Phuket City, from 10 am.

Government fund takes 49% share of Holiday Inn Patong

PHUKET: The Government Pension Fund (GPF) boosted their stake in shares of LC Thai, owner and operator of the Holiday Inn Resort Phuket, to 49% in an agreement that aims to give both organizations more influence in the local tourism market.

The sale, completed July 20, generated 230 million baht for the LC Development Group and 155 million for LC Thai, with GPF shares in the company increasing by 24%.

Commenting on the deal, General Manager of the Holiday Inn Phuket Wolfgang Meusburger told the *Gazette*, "It is a great pleasure to have a strong strategic partner like GPF as a

shareholder, which should help us to grow further in Thailand."

According to Mr. Meusburger, the increase of GPF shares in LC Thai will not affect operations at the resort.

"There are no changes in operations as we are running the resort under a management agreement.

"Our main objective is to satisfy the various partners and our guests," he said.

Money raised from the sale has been earmarked for potential developments in Thailand. The final share transfers took place on the Singapore Stock Exchange.

- Anand Singh

ON THE MOVE

Theeranuch "Botan" Limbos has been appointed secretary to the director of food and beverage at Dusit Laguna Phuket. K. Theeranuch, who holds a degree in hotel and tourism management from Khon Kaen University, was formerly a receptionist at Reuters Software Thailand Ltd in Bangkok, a telephone operator at Sofitel Silom Bangkok and guest relations officer at Sofitel Central Hua Hin Resort.



Wasant Pornsipak has been appointed food and beverage manager at Dusit Laguna Phuket. He has more than 20 years of experience in the field, having held the same position at both the Amari Boulevard Hotel in Bangkok and the Royal Garden Harbour View Hotel in Haiphong, Vietnam before joining Dusit Laguna Phuket.



Phuket native **Pakornporn "Baby" Phuphirom**, 24, has been appointed property consultant for Sub Som Nam Properties Co Ltd. Pakornporn graduated in business English from Assumption University. Her experience includes work as a senior sales executive for The Erawan Group Public Co Ltd in Phuket and in the international public relations department at the Airports Authority of Thailand in Bangkok.

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Bantoon Thongton (sitting, right) and Saksorn Saengsuk (sitting, left) officially present K. Jian with a new home and appliances.

F&B brigade shine in charity rally

By Janyaporn Morel

PHUKET, PHANG NGA: In a fun ride from Phuket to Khao Lak on August 4, Krissada Tantrakul won first place in the Phuket F&B Club Charity Rally.

The rally, organized by the Phuket Food & Beverage Managers Club, raised money to donate a new house to an elderly resident of tambon Songpraek, in Phang Nga's Muang District.

Jian Khongparn, a-78-year-old blind woman, formally took possession of the house

from the rally drivers during a stopover on their trip. Construction of the home was completed in July.

The charity act was suggested by Phuket Food & Beverage Club President Saksorn Sangsuk, who met K. Jian last year.

Rather than being a sheer quest of speed, drivers in the rally competed for points in many fun activities held during stops along the way.

Co-organized by the Phuket Off-Road company, the rally set

on its way after an opening ceremony chaired by Phuket Vice-Governor Smith Palawatvichai at the entrance to Central Festival Phuket.

About 150 people in 48 cars set out for Khao Lak, stopping long enough to hand over the house and needed appliances to K. Jian, with Chief of Phuket Provincial Public Prosecution Bantoon Thongton chairing the ceremony at her new home.

The Phuket F&B Club also donated 8,000 baht and other goods to the kindergarten at Wat Inthaphum in Kapong district, home to about 60 orphans.

Once in Khao Lak, an awards ceremony was held at Khao Lak Seaview Resort & Spa.

A team led by driver Prakarn Sripirommit of Sampro Co Ltd won second place.

Alisa Fuangfutakul, food and beverage manager of The Aquamarine Resort & Villa at Kamala, finished third.

Call for entries for Karon marathon

KARON: The third Phuket International Marathon, hosted by Karon Municipality and the Kata-Karon Hotels Association, will take place on October 21, starting at Karon Park.

The longer courses will pass by Kata and Kata Noi beaches and the Kata viewpoint, before finishing at Laem Promthep.

Race categories include a 42-km full marathon, a 21-km half marathon, a 10.5-km mini-marathon and a 5-km fun run.

Runners can register by filling out an entry form at the Karon Municipality offices during normal business hours or at the Kata-Karon Hotels Association office at Karon Stadium on October 20 from 10 am to 8 pm.

Entry fees are 500 baht for the full marathon, 300 baht for the half marathon, 200 baht for the mini-marathon and 200 baht for the fun run. The fun-run price can be discounted to 100 baht if the participant does not wish to have a t-shirt.

Trophies and cash prizes will be awarded to the winners in each category and all participants will receive a souvenir gift.

For more information call the Karon Municipality office at 076-330478; the Kata-Karon Hotels Association at 076-333362-3; or Monthon Deebuk at 086-9512407.

Souped-up small cars to thrill Saphan Hin

PHUKET CITY: On the first weekend in September, Saphan Hin will be filled with racing Toyota Vios and Yaris as part of the Toyota Motor Sport 2007 "Vigo Trophy" series. The races, including a Yaris race, a Vios race and a Lady's Cup (with Vios), will be the third in a circuit of Thailand.

Twenty-five racers are now entered in the racing, which is not open to the general public.

After five races are completed, the overall winner will receive a Toyota Hilux Vigo as the grand prize. Second place will receive 100,000 baht and third

place 50,000 baht, with other prizes going to the individual classes.

Kit Mahajuntakarn, director of the public relations office at Toyota Motors Thailand Co Ltd, said the first two races in this year's series were held in Chiang Mai and Udon Thani. After the stop in Phuket, the professional drivers will continue on to Ubon Ratchathani and Chonburi.

Other events held at Saphan Hin associated with the event will include a safe-driving course, a "motor sports zone" and a "Yaris Your Style Car Contest" for modified Yaris cars.

Free Muay Thai course

PHUKET: The Prince of Songkla University, Phuket campus, will offer a free Muay Thai course on August 25 and 26.

All are welcome to attend the *muay chaiya* (traditional style) short course, but places are limited to the first 50 people who register.

The training will be held from 9 am to 4 pm both days.

Registration is open until August 22. For more information or to register call Kriengsak at 087-3891713, or Prince of Songkla University (Phuket campus) at 076-276012, from 8 am to 4 pm on Monday to Friday.

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Kendo team does Phuket proud



Thai students from Phuket and Bangkok flew to Tokyo to compete in a prestigious kendo tournament at Nippon Budokan arena, an event normally only open to Japanese competitors.

By Pathomporn Kaenkrachang

PHUKET: Fifteen Phuket youths aged between 7 and 15 years were in Tokyo July 20 to 28 to participate in the 42nd Zennippon Shonen Kendo Rensei Taikai tournament at Nippon Budokan arena.

Ten thousand youths competed in the event, which took place July 25 and 26.

Jitrapanu Kongthum, president of Phuket Young Kendo Federation, said, "This is the second time we have participated in this competition. The children were able to meet Kendo professionals from around Japan, which was a good experience to help them develop their skills."

Rawiwan Peumpoon, 14, of Satee Phuket School, was one of five competitors awarded a good spirit medal for showing fearlessness and a range of abili-

ties in the kendo singles competition.

"I didn't expect any of the children to win a medal at this event, but Rawiwan did so well in the singles division," said K. Jitrapanu, who accompanied the children to Japan.

"In the junior competition our team made it to the third round. I'm much more satisfied with the results this time than I was three years ago," he added.

Zennippon is held every three years in Japan and only Japanese kendo schools are usually invited to attend.

K. Jitrapanu said, "To celebrate 120 years of Thai-Japanese relations, we were given the honor of being invited to participate in this event."

All 15 students were awarded honor medals for taking part in the competition.



Cinders, with her all-Thai crew on board, storms off to win the Racing class in the Ao Chalong Yacht Club (ACYC) regatta on August 5.

- Photo by Leslie Hand for Image Asia Events

Cinders has a ball in blustery ACYC regatta

By Chris Husted

CHALONG: Competitors in Race 8 of the Ao Chalong Yacht Club (ACYC) Keelboat and Multihull Race Series regatta had a blustery battle on August 5 with strong winds blowing light showers off the start line, giving the local crews the chance they have been waiting for with winds of 20-plus knots on the bay.

Cinders, with an all-Thai crew and skippered by Ket Mangklaseranee, sailed well to win the Racing class and the Image Asia Encouragement award for the day.

Robert Warnes on *Tua Lek*, from Ao Yon, finished second, ahead of Ben Copley's *Asia Spirit*, which finished third in the class.

Tim Milner and his crew on *See Krung Huk* sailed well in the Multihull class to beat Roger Kingdon's *Moto Inzi*, which blazed around the course to win line honors in the class, reaching a top speed of 21.5 knots.

Nigel Beard, instead of racing on his own yacht *Fidgi*, finished third in the class on *Charro*.

John Fenn and his reconditioned "bustling budgie" *Four Winds* also had a good day on the

bay, taking line honors and first place in the class. "They had a couple of ring-ins, but they sailed out of their skins," said Tony Knight of ACYC.

Harry "Man Pie" Usher finished second in the class on *Eos*, followed by Tony Kipps on *Wild Orchard* third.

Hopes are high for equally good conditions for the seven races left in the series.

The next ACYC race day will be on August 19. All are welcome to join regardless of sailing experience. For more information call Tony Knight at 081-7470074 or visit: www.acycphuket.com

PATONG DARTS LEAGUE

Dogs Bollocks, who have already clinched the league title for this season, chalked up another three-point win at Beach House on July 31. As victors, Dogs Bollocks will host the league party at their pub on the night of August 14, it has been confirmed.

In other matches played on July 31, Valhalla playing at home sprang one surprise by beating Shakers, then another by losing the beer leg. Word is that Johnni was not amused.

Queen Mary beat Simply Red as expected, but it wasn't easy. They fell behind 2-4 after the singles but scraped back to make the last doubles the decider. It ended up in a 25-minute "trying to hit double 1" marathon, with Queen Mary finally coming out on top.

There has been talk around the league of some players wanting to change the singles pairings to a best two-out-of-three, but the sticking point there is the time it might take to finish matches with such "double one" marathons still so common. This and other matters were to be discussed at the league meeting held August 7, the results of which will be carried in the next report.

Time is running out for teams to join the next league, tentatively scheduled to begin August 21. Those interested should attend the league party at Dogs Bollocks or email: darts@phuketgazette.net

July 31 results: Beach House 2 Dogs Bollocks* 7; Queen Mary* 5 Simply Red 4; Valhalla 5 Shakers* 4 (*=winner of beer leg).

Standings: 1. Dogs Bollocks (33 points.); 2. Queen Mary (24); 3.= Shakers, Offshore (23); 5. Beach House (21); 6. Piccadilly (18); 7. Valhalla (10); 8. Simply Red (4).

Breakthrough Technology

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Construction Update

by Janyaporn Morel

Construction of the show unit of The Crest residential development, located on the road from Phuket City to Patong, will be completed by the end of September, the project's developer has announced, with the remainder of the development to be finished within a year.

The show unit, the first of 30 to be built overlooking Patong from the hillside behind the town, will provide a model for prospective buyers, as well as a working model for the construction crews.

Charn Pirapokin, chairman of Aranya & Charn Co Ltd, the developer, said, "We want to have the perfect model unit that requires no alterations, so the show unit will help us in building the later units quicker."

The units, built on 6.5 rai, will comprise eight two-bedroom condominiums – four poolside and four rooftop, all contained in the one building next to the pool – and 22 two-bedroom units in duplex or quadruplex blocks. Each unit will have its own plunge pool.

The quadruplex and duplex units will have an average living area of 220 square meters. On the first floor there will be two bedrooms with en-suite bathrooms, and the master bathroom will include a large walk-in closet. There will also be an area to use as a family den and an interior garden area on the same level.

The living room, dining room and kitchen will be on the second level. Windows 7.5m wide will open onto the balcony, while views from the garden courtyard

The Crest rises above Patong



The Crest's quadruplex and duplex units will be lined up on the hill overlooking Patong to give each property the best view possible, while the poolside and rooftop residences will be situated around a common swimming pool.

will overlook the town. The quadruplex and duplex residences will also offer a private rooftop terrace of 82sqm for hosting a barbecue or sunbathing.

The two-bedroom poolside condos will offer 122sqm of living space on a single level. The condos will include a kitchen, second bedroom and bathroom off the entrance hallway, with the master bedroom with en-suite bathroom on the far side of the living area.

The rooftop condos, located above the poolside condos, will have 110sqm of indoor space.

The two-bedroom units will include a dining room, living room, en-suite bathroom for the master bedroom and a second bathroom.

The 103sqm of rooftop space will be a garden and out-

door relaxation area.

Prices for the units start at 10.16 million baht, with freehold title. A 5% discount is available until August 31, 2007.

"We expect to finish everything, including the construction and infrastructure, by the end of September 2008, so residents can move in during the final quarter of next year. The site management should be in place about six months after that," said K. Charn.

He explained that the name The Crest was chosen to convey the sense of being at the top of Patong. "I think both Thais and

foreigners will be very excited about these properties because they will be reasonably priced," he said.

The Crest was designed by Tomaryk Design (Thailand) Co Ltd and the construction contractor is Chulap Construction Ltd Partnership.

For more information contact Andrew Park Co Ltd at 100/18 Chalermprakiat Ror 9 Rd, Ras-sada, Muang, Phuket 83000. Tel: 076-354016. Fax: 076-354019. Email: phuketsales@andrewpark.com Website: www.thecrestphuket.com

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SAFE AND SOUND AT HOME

As Phuket offers some of the world's most desirable and luxurious residences, the island is also a proving ground for the world's high-end home and lifestyle technologies.

That's why leading Italian design and technology manufacturer Bticino recently opened its first Asia Pacific sub-branch on the island and has released its latest range of home security and environment control products, named Axolute.

Axolute, under the banner "My Home", is a high-tech integrated security- and comfort-control system for the home with a range of wall panels that control and display a variety of functions. These panels can provide automated home security, communications, and climate-control.

The products range from simple wall switches with built-in safety features, such as glow-in-the-dark panels and internal breakers as well as cut off power in an emergency, to advanced audio-visual security panels with intercoms and digital screens and cameras that allow people inside a house to see, hear and talk to visitors waiting outside.

It also allows you to check what's happening in your home while you're away. The inte-



Axolute convenience starts at the door. The entrance panel allows you to see and talk to visitors before letting them in.

grated Axolute system can also be used as CCTV for anywhere in the house and can be adjusted via remote control if you are in the house, or via the company's dedicated website if you're away.

Advanced Axolute's secu-

rity features act as an answering machines for your front door, recording the voice and image of anyone who calls at your house while you're away and notifying you by e-mail or SMS if you've had a visitor.

For keeping away unwanted

visitors, Bticino's latest burglar alarm comes with a four year guarantee and has a full range of professional security features and functions, giving you full control of sensors and alarms.

Axolute wall panels allow you to control the environment for

individual rooms, including the lighting, air conditioning and even the sound system. Using the system is also said to reduce electricity bills by up to 30%.

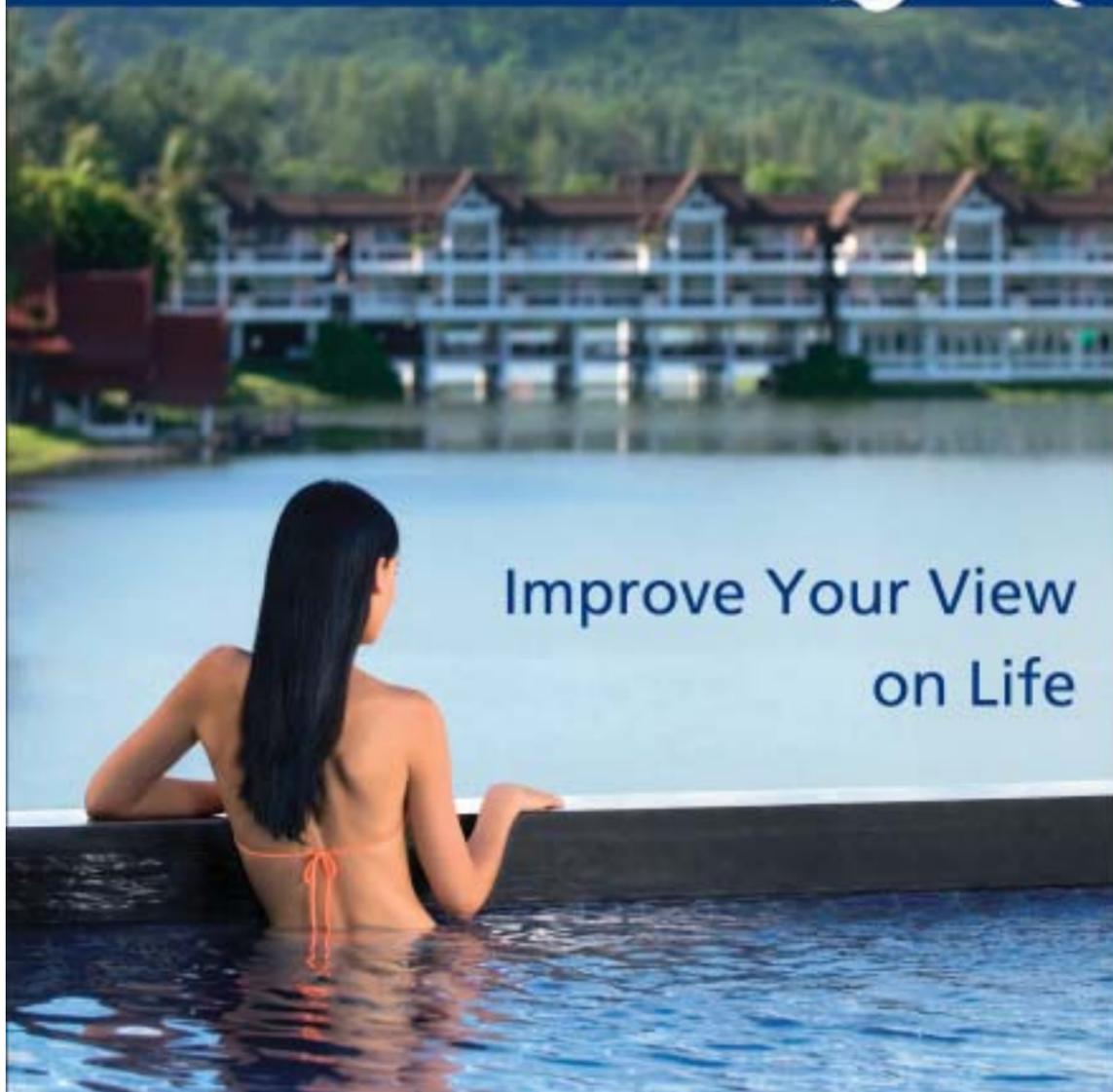
Most of Bticino's customers are luxury villa and resort developers, who are always on the lookout for innovations that will improve comfort and convenience for their residents and guests.

"These developers, most of whom are foreigners, appreciate the value of the stylish designs of stainless steel, marble, leather and wood, backed by state-of-the-art technology," said Kanit Jintabubpha, Bticino branch manager for Phuket.

"Each product has a two-year guarantee and is installed by our trained agents. We will happily replace a product that isn't working properly, even if it has already been used for a year," he added.

Check out Bticino's technology for the home from Monday to Saturday, 8 am to 5 pm at unit 16 the Court Yard, 90/5 moo 2, Chao Fa West Rd, Tel: 076-264477, or visit www.bticino.co.th You can also contact K. Kanit directly at Tel: 081-5596966 or via email: kanit.jintabubpha@bticino.com

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Gardening

by Bloomin' Bert

What's cool and what's not? I'm not talking about the air conditioning or iced tea type of cool, but more like "what's cool, man". I somehow think I've given the game away already – is using the word "man" without referring to the male of the species a bit old hat now? Somehow no longer cool?

Plenty of people around seem to be convinced that they are the coolest beings that ever walked the planet. Funny how many of them have exactly the opposite effect.

Number one on the list, one that transcends all national boundaries, has got to be anyone who chooses to wear sunglasses indoors. It just isn't right – there should be a law against it.

Teenagers make me giggle, too. Do they really think that jeans 14 sizes too big with six inches of underwear showing at the back does anything for their street cred? Or do they feel that replacing their 110cc Honda Wave muffler and horn with a piece of drainpipe and computer game noise generator makes people turn around and say, "Gosh, I wish I had a bike like that"?

To be honest, I have been



a victim of the quest to be cool. When I was a young whipper-snapper, we all had to have the latest style of those canvas basketball boots with that daft rubber on the ankles, or the latest

version of Dunlop Green Flash tennis shoes. They were "in". Perhaps my most ludicrous clothing choice ever was those ridiculous trousers we all wore in the early '70s – Birmingham

bags. These things were like two tall circus tents joined at the top, with four or five buttons vertically spaced in the waistband.

They weren't even comfortable. Although you had enough space in each leg to house an army battalion, you definitely did not have enough ballroom to dance in, so to speak.

As I have a rear end half the size of Belgium, you can imagine not a single region of my lower torso was having much fun. But was I cool as I "trucked" down the street wearing what from a distance looked like a rather elegant evening dress.

I suppose as you get older you stop caring. I'm certainly past the point at which I give a flying frog about what I wear or how I'm viewed. Cool? Who cares. There's a plant around that I reckon would have exactly the same attitude if it could speak. It just doesn't care.

The banyan tree (*ni-khrot* or *kraang* in Thai) has got to be the old man of the garden. If this tree were human, it would be wearing slippers, smoking a pipe and whining about and how life "isn't like it used to be".

For a banyan to become in any way impressive it has to be several generations old. If you want to plant a tree that your grandchildren can enjoy when they're complaining about the youth of their autumn years, then the banyan tree is perfect.

The banyan, which can refer to any number of species within the fig tree family, is unusual in that once a banyan tree has established itself and spread out a few branches in the usual upwards-and-sideways directions, it feels the need to spread elsewhere – downwards.

It sprouts aerial roots from its branches, which reach down until they hit some kind of medium in which they can grow. At that point they burrow down and establish themselves as roots in

the traditional sense, and grow underground. In time, these become thicker and thicker, and slowly become additional trunks for the same tree.

These tendrils are called "accessory" trunks. The largest banyan tree known, in Sri Lanka, has 350 major trunks and several thousand smaller ones.

As the tree ages, the original trunk decays, and the tree often breaks up into several sections, the props becoming separate trunks for the various sections.

The name of the tree originally comes from its ancestral home – India. It's from a Hindu word for trader, because in many areas in that part of the world where banyans are found, traders and merchants use the tree's shade while displaying their wares.

The banyan tree, also known as the East Indian Fig, has heart-shaped leaves about 15 centimeters long. The fruit, when it appears, is scarlet, not much bigger than a cherry and grows in pairs from the axils of the leaves.

If you want one of these in your garden, then pick the location carefully. Over time, the tree will spread over a huge area. It can grow up to about 30 meters tall, and many meters in circumference.

The safest way to avoid this insidious invasion of your back garden is to grow the banyan tree indoors. This isn't as daft as it sounds, as many people in even more temperate regions grow this in their living rooms as a relatively large bonsai tree.

Limiting its growth in a pot restrains its tyrannical tendencies. They are quite content in pots, but like a grumpy old man, they'll complain bitterly if they have to move. They'll often show their displeasure by dropping their leaves, especially if they're shifted from a spot with high light levels to a more shaded part of the house.

The banyan is quite content to be neglected for long periods, and won't even complain in air-conditioning.

Banyans benefit from regular pruning, and can be cut to whatever shape you want if the pruning is regular. Like all fig trees, it will weep a milky sap when the branch is cut. This stuff is a bit nasty, so you should probably wear gloves.

A banyan tree in my garden planted by my grandfather would be the perfect tree for me when I'm in my dotage. Difficult to imagine, but I could even be an even more grumpy old man by then. I wonder if Birmingham bags and Dunlop Green Flash shoes will have made a comeback...

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Enigmatic Kamala

For some reason Kamala remains an enigma in the Phuket property market. Despite being home to arguably the most multi-million-dollar villas on the island, Kamala is rarely mentioned in the same breath as its higher-profile neighbors Surin and Bang Tao.

Historically, the area pioneered two of the first high-end developments with Kamala Estate and Laem Son Villas, while at the other end of the pricing spectrum The Club and Kamala Hills showed there was a growing market for more affordable apartments.

Over the years the area has been extremely popular with certain segments of the tourist demographic, with Germans and other Europeans returning year after year to a number of locally-operated resorts and guesthouses.

Larger-scale, internationally run resorts such as the Kamala Bay Terrace Resort never quite established themselves. One exception is the Kamala Garden Resort, which has drawn a large Scandinavian base of longer-staying guests, attracted by large, suite-type rooms.

With tourism being a mainstay of the local Kamala economy, the arrival of Phuket FantaSea and its establishment as one of Phuket's prime attractions increased the tourist traffic in the area by leaps and bounds.

With the start of the property boom, projects such as The Plantation and Jomchang were early entrants and the much-vaunted "Millionaires' Mile" on the headland became a sought-after location, with stunning oceanfront developments such as Ayara Kamala, Waterfall Bay and Cape Sol.



Kamala Bay Terrace was renovated into the Alila Phuket, an upscale managed property that truly exemplifies Kamala's makeover.

While the tsunami had its impact on local businesses, at the forefront of the recovery was the Aqua development as it was sold to Allan Zeman's group, which has redeveloped the project into its current Andara incarnation.

Next came the sale of the Kamala Bay Terrace Resort to Gary Murray's Destination Properties, which will renovate and expand the hotel as an upper-tier property managed by the Alila chain. The same group recently acquired the Kamala Garden Resort, which is being

refurbished and reportedly will be managed by an international brand.

Zeman's Paradise group continues to invest heavily in the

area with the expansion of the Andara residential estate and the development of a high-end boutique hotel to be integrated into the project.

While some projects such as The Coolwater and Kamala Hills Naka have been slow in developing, there are continued new offerings to the market such as

the mid-range Kamala Regent, which is creating quite some interest.

Looking at the future developments in the area, there are certain barriers to entry that will dictate the changing landscape.

For tourism, there are only a limited number of sites available for large-scale hotel and

mixed use developments. One such site is at the northern end of Kamala Bay and extends back into the hills; while other sites are on the Kamala headland.

Given the geography and price of land in these areas, future developments would be upper-tier hotels or residential estate developments. It's doubtful that mass tourism will ever be a factor in the area, which certainly maintains a unique quality and character.

As future developments in the area are most likely to be high-end, once there is critical mass of upscale hotels and residential units, great commercial redevelopment in the beach area is almost a certainty.

From its humble beginning as a small seaside resort area and community, Kamala and its Millionaires' Mile seems poised to be at the top end of the property market for a very long time.

It will be interesting to see how the area continues to refine itself with a large local population base, growing full-time expatriate population and high-end, jet-set visitors.



PROPERTY WATCH

By Bill Barnett

Bill Barnett is managing director of C9 Hotelworks (c9hotelworks.com), a Phuket-based hotel and residential property consulting firm. With more than 20 years' experience in the region, he has played an active role in some of the island's biggest developments.

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Property Gazette

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LAND FOR SALE



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Property Gazette

NEW SEAVIEW CONDO



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150rai, Chanote, panoramic sea view. From 2.3 million baht per rai. Contact for more information. Tel: 081-5597456. Email: se_rim@hotmail.com

LAND IN KAMALA

All with Chanote. 5.5 rai in the most exclusive area near Kamala center on flat land: 8.5 million baht per rai. Also, 6 rai with good sea view: 6 million baht per rai. 20 rai with best sea view in Kamala: 6 million baht per rai. Tel: 086-2742308. Email: kim@kamalafalls.com

HOUSE FOR SALE

Located on 1 rai of land in Kamala. 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, very quiet residential area, 110sqm. Price: 8.9 million baht. Tel: 081-6697814, 086-9426699.

LAND FOR SALE
Makham bay view. Beautiful plot, 518 sqw.
Email: sooklapa@yahoo.com Tel: 081-5994422

NEW 3-BEDROOM

home quiet, lovely outlook, 2 bathrooms, pool, kitchen, carport with storage. Land: 450sqm. 5.5 million baht. Tel: 086-2817605. Email: nigelnpixie@yahoo.com.au

LAND WITH VIEWS

Quiet, green area. 970sqm plot: 2.5 million baht. 732sqm plot: 2 million baht ono. Please Tel: 086-2817605. Email: nigelnpixie@yahoo.com.au

SPACIOUS HOME

Beautiful view, 4 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, pool, aircon. Land: 804sqm. Price: 9 million baht. Tel: 086-2817605. Email: nigelnpixie@yahoo.com.au

ABSOLUTE BEST BEACHFRONT

Land and villas for sale at the best prices in Thailand. Email: admin@ideacon.biz For info, please visit our website: http://www.thaisunshinedevelopments.com

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2 bedrooms, located directly on the beach. Bargain price, last available direct from owner. Tel: 085-7839062.

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Condos, apartments, and townhouses. From 3.7 million baht. Tel: 087-2650118. For more information and photos, email: ant_p_clark@yahoo.co.uk, or visit our website at http://housesforsalephuket.blogspot.com/

HOUSES FOR SALE

Rawai's No. 1 agent for selling and renting houses. Tel: 084-8486139. For more information, please visit our website: www.rawai-real-estate.com

HOUSE FOR QUICK SALE OR RENT

Sell: 2.9 million baht. Nai Ham, Soi Naya, 66 talang wah in quiet area. Contact for rent pricing. Tel: 087-9261381. Email: pakadog@gmail.com

LUXURY VILLA AT KATA HILL

Set in the exclusive gated estate of Beverly Hills, this villa comes with a pool, 3-5 bedrooms, modern Western-style kitchen, etc. Show house is now open. Only one villa left with completion due in September. Price: 15 million baht. Contact Tel: 084-0639223, 081-7888280.

Chalong Bay View CONDOMINIUMS
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WWW.CHALONGBAYVIEW.COM MOBILE: 087 898 7062

1 RAI ON KAMALA BEACH ROAD



Good for hotel, apartment or resort. Chanote title on 76% of the land. Thai owner. Price: 36 million baht. Contact Sakorn at Tel: 087-6050365. Email: tim.kamalaparadise@hotmail.com

LARGE THAI HOUSE

Expression of interest in removing large Thai concrete-framed house (700sqm interior) with pool, located at Yamu village. To be removed and site leveled and left tidy. House complete with tiled roof, teak floors, windows and grand ballroom staircase, chandelier, 6 Yorke aircon units, 2 pool pumps and ancillary electrical and plumbing fittings. Interested parties should call Harry Usher. Tel: 081-2731740. Email: harry@baanyamu.com

INEXPENSIVE LAND

1/2 rai to 2 rai near Mission Hills golf course. 10% commission. Please contact Tel: 081-2704291.

APT IN BANG TAO FOR SALE

2 bedrooms, fully furnished, aircon, Western-style kitchen and pool. Asking 5.5 million baht. Tel: 089-8749080. Email: mlcarpenter@hotmail.com

6 RAI IN KAMALA



Nice land with sea view and good road access. Chanote title. Thai owner. 6 million baht per rai. For more info, please contact Sakorn at Tel: 087-6050365. Email: tim.kamalaparadise@hotmail.com

HOUSE FOR URGENT SALE

Rawai area. 2 bedrooms, 150sqm, swimming pool. Only 4.3 million baht. Call now at Tel: 085-7839062.

KATHU HOUSE NOW ONLY 3.2 MILLION

Nice 2-story house with open ground floor, European kitchen with ceramic cooking plate, dining, living, bathroom, storeroom, terrace and balcony. The upper floor has 2 bedrooms with balcony, 1 aircon, bathroom. Garden around the house, carport. Fully furnished. 4 mins to Big C and Lotus. Big house, small price. Only 3.2 million baht or best offer. Email: shd1@planet.nl For additional details, please visit our website: http://homeplanet.nl/~duang000/house.htm

SEAVIEW LAND

Close to Blue Canyon Golf Course. 2.8 million baht per rai. Tel: 083-3888076.

REPOSSESSION SALE-APARTMENT

Beautiful new 1-bedroom apartment on 5th floor overlooking Kata Beach. 5-star hotel service, including pool, gym and international bistro. Was 5.9 million baht, now reduced to 4.9 million baht. Tel: 084-0639223, 081-7888280.

CHANOTE SEAVIEW

land plots. 10rai, 20rai, 60rai. Please call for more details. Tel: 081-5395454. Email: mk@phuket-no1.com

VILLA TOP LOCATION

4 bedrooms, big garden, furnished, ready to move in. Located between Phuket City and Patong. 15.7 million baht. Call Tel: 087-2849541.

FOR SALE OR LEASE

3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, 1-story, fully furnished, new modern house on private road in Kathu. Electric gate, nice walled garden, large terrace, private parking, telephone and Internet. Price: 6.2 million baht or nearest offer. Must sell due to move to Bangkok. Call Tel: 087-3865200.

LAND FOR SALE

61 rai. 3 million baht per rai on Thepkrasattri Rd. Tah Chat Chai area, next to new check point. 1km to JW Marriott. 15 minutes to Phuket airport. Tel: 089-0927697. Email: matklang@hotmail.com

BLUE CANYON CONDO RESALE

Freehold ownership, 3 bedrooms, fully furnished. Includes one club membership. Urgent sale. Email: nitayaoki@yahoo.co.th

PATONG SHOPHOUSE

Soi Rico Bangla road area, 4 floors, 6m x 14m per floor. Price: 12 million plus. Tel: 087-8817600.

KATHU SMALL LAND

3 separate land plots. 57sq wah, 184sq wah and 194sq wah. Good views. Call Tel: 076-381755, 083-3888076. Fax: 076-381755. Email: preeyapong@hotmail.com

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Surin Beach - Modern Seaview Apartments for sale

Within 100 metres of the beach, no sqm. of living space. One bedroom, living room, European-style kitchen, fully furnished, air conditioning, hot water system, home security system, internet connection, television and satellite TV. The price starts from 6.5 million baht for the first-floor apartment. Please contact Ann 66 81 868 7676

Property Gazette

PATONG TOWER SEA VIEW



Offered at 6.5 million baht. Furnished, 1-bedroom, 1-bathroom condo on the 15th floor with full-length balcony, ready to move in, great condition. Quiet location in the heart of town. Elevated, unobstructed panoramic sea view, 100 meters from Patong Beach, shops, dining and banking just steps away. Pool, indoor parking and 24-hr security and reception. A rare chance to secure a one-of-a-kind location. Tel: 087-2761225. Email: patong15@gmail.com

LUXURY HOUSE WITH GREAT VIEW



House with the most amazing view of Patong bay for sale or lease. 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, living room. This property, if improved slightly by adding an infinity pool, extending the living area and doing some general upgrading would resell for minimum US\$2 million. Very sound investment. Tel: 081-8921108. Fax: 081-345821. Email: giulio@phuketrealstate.com Visit our website: www.phuketrealstatesolutions.com

2 BEDROOM DELUXE APT



Private sale. Bang Tao Beach area, 2 bedrooms, 1 bathroom at Club Lersuang. 120sqm including 10sqm balcony. Second floor, secluded, secure lease structure. 7,500 baht per month management fee includes gym membership, ADSL connection, 24-hour security, fully furnished & much more. Very good rental returns. Price: 6.5 million baht. Tel: 076-270750, 081-7370722. Fax: 076-270751. For further details, please visit our website at http://www.phuketvillarentals.com/clublersuang_d54/index.php

HOUSE FOR SALE IN SAI YUAN



Single house built in modern style and designed with European convenience, features 2 spacious bedrooms with air conditioning, 2 en-suite bathrooms, living room furniture, well-equipped kitchen, large garden and surrounded by wall and gate. Parking space for car is available. Ideal for those seeking privacy and solitude lifestyle.

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 - Oven
 - Electric hot plates
 - Water storage tank
 - Garden
 - 80sq wah parking space
- Price: 5.5 million baht
Contact Miss Kob. Tel: 081-2733303. Email: info@sariyahouse.com

Properties For Rent

APARTMENT FOR RENT

New apartment with swimming pool and security guard. From 18,000 baht per month. Call for more info. Tel: 081-9685963. Email: m@bayproject.com

MODERN HOUSES, QUIET LOCATION

2 houses in Nai Harn for long-term rent only. 2 bedrooms, ensuite bathroom, UBC, ADSL, alarm, full aircon, ceiling fans, big terrace, tropical garden, fenced in, small pets allowed, garage + 100sqm storage. 5 minutes to the beach, beautiful view. Only 25,000 baht per month. Tel: 089-8744050. Email: happyjo@procom.in.th

KARON WATERFRONT

Sea view from everywhere. 102sqm. Minimum 6-month lease: 40,000 baht per month. Tel: 081-8928208. Please visit our website: www.phuketfurnishedapartments.com

SHANTI LODGE

Do you need a place to live in Thailand? Secure, furnished with Wi-Fi, pool & maid service. Low season rates from 5,000-8,000 baht per month or with equipped kitchen at 12,000 baht per month. Tel: 076-280233, 081-5363134.

CHALONG SHOPHOUSE

This new 3-story shophouse is available for long-term lease. Ideal for home office/shop accommodation. Please inquire for more information at Tel: 089-6521473.

BIG HOUSE IN KAMALA

3 bedrooms, 1 living room. Veranda + garden. Big outside area. Furniture plus TV. ADSL possible. Call, come and look! Not directly on the beach. 15,000 baht per month Aug-Oct, and 25,000 Nov-May, or 20,000 if you rent at least 1 year. Tel: 076-385448, 086-9418593. Email: tiber@balcab.ch

HOUSE FOR RENT OR FOR SALE

We currently have 2 houses available. For more details, call Tel: 089-4740222. Email: mammos56@yahoo.com Website: <http://www.thehoteldeals.com/photos/>

SEAVIEW COTTAGE

Only 10 mins from BIS, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms. Large lounge, dining room, swimming pool, sala, lawn, furnished, exclusive development on the coast in Cape Yamu. Price: 40,000 baht per month. Tel: 086-2796283.

RAWAI/NAI HARN



New, large, luxury house for rent. Large swimming pool, garden, 5 bedrooms, 6 bathrooms, big sala. Minimum 1-year lease: 75,000 baht per month. 30-year lease: 18 million baht. Contact Tel: 081-3971835.

PALAI, GREENHOUSE AND BIG GARDEN

Fully furnished, 2 aircons, 2 bedrooms, hot shower, living room, kitchen, garage. Price: 11,000 baht per month. Palai area. Contact for more information. Tel: 081-8924311.

NEW CHALONG HOME

Furnished, 2-bedroom home for rent with telephone, UBC, and aircon. Please contact for details and pricing information. Tel: 089-6521473.

BEACHFRONT CONDO

Kalim Patong, high standard. fully furnished, 2 bedrooms, kitchen, pool, many facilities. For more details, please call Tel: 081-8920038.

CHALONG HOUSE

for rent in Land & Houses. 3 bedrooms, fully furnished, aircon, TV, UBC. Tel: 081-9560241, 089-4740645.

RAWAI BEACH STUDIO

Furnished, kitchen, ADSL, UBC, aircon. Price: 4,500 baht per month. Contact Khun Noki at Tel: 086-6865567.

HOUSE FOR RENT

Fully furnished, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, aircon, cable TV, ADSL. 18,000 baht per month. Please contact for more information. Tel: 089-9732917. Email: brunuiviv@hotmail.com

BEACHFRONT HOUSE

for rent. 1-4 bedrooms. Contact for specific details. Tel: 076-381181, 076-381189.

BUILDING FOR RENT

3-story shophouse for rent on Soi Bangla in Patong. Contact for more info. Tel: 081-7875121, 089-5929908.

PATONG APARTMENT

300m to the beach, clean, modern decor, aircon, pool, fridge, double bed, parking. Tel: 081-0825707. Visit our website: www.phuketaccommodation.info

URGENT SALE

Khao Lak. Bang Niang bungalow-apartment resort. 8 bungalows with 2 rooms and 2 bungalows with 3 rooms. 6m x 12m swimming pool. Sauna, Jacuzzi, restaurant. All rooms with aircon, color TV, DVD player and ADSL. Parking available. 9 million baht. Tel: 076-346065, 081-8914844. Email: joerg@phuket.ksc.co.th

KATHU HOUSE

for sale. 2 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, lounge, dining room, big kitchen, corner house. Firm price: 1.55 million baht. Tel: 085-4733409.

BEACHFRONT HOUSE

at Kamala. 2 bedrooms, 2 stories, last one. Only 15 million baht. Please call Tel: 085-7839062.

LAND FOR SALE

8 rai coconut farm near Tapee River in Surat Thani. 80m wide. Electricity and water. Price: 4.5 million baht. Contact for more information. Tel: 089-0927697. Email: matklang@hotmail.com

RAWAI POOL VILLA

New resort of 6 villas for sale. 4.5 million baht each. Tel: 086-9408914. Email: freeholdprop@yahoo.com

RAWAI POOL VILLA

2 bedrooms, 150sqm, furnished, ready to move in. Price: 4.3 million baht. Please contact for more information. Tel: 085-7839062.

ANDAMAN BEACH CONDOMINIUM

1-bedroom unit for sale. 86sqm. 10th floor, sea view, fully furnished. Freehold. No brokers please. Contact Songpan at Tel: 081-7378662.

Would you like to keep up on what's happening in Phuket - the good, the bad and the bizarre? Let us share it with you - every week!

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Property Gazette

ANDAMAN HILLS

Andaman Hills, Patong. 300 sqm house with amazing views. 3 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms + separate condo. 1-year lease: 45,000 baht per month. Tel: 087-688-0620. Email: bkkjedi@gmail.com For additional information and photos, please visit our website: http://rent66.com/patong_house/index.html

KATHU



3-bedrooms (2 w/aircon), den/study, 2.5 bathrooms, storage room, washing machine, UBC, DSL, 15 minutes to BIS and Patong, 2 minutes to Central. Fully furnished. 18,000 baht per month. Contact for more information. Tel: 076-321-062, 086-8194373. Email: cswift1@swift-mail.com

HOUSE FOR RENT



From Heroines Monument, 1km to Paklok. New single house, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, furnished, 60sq wah. 16,000 baht per month. Tel: 086-6900626. Email: suksavat@hotmail.com

HOUSE FOR RENT



2-story furnished house, 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, 2km from Lotus on the way to Patong. Located in safe ville. Tel: 089-6458463.

KARON 5-STAR

waterfront living. Stunning sea view from every window & 2 balconies on 18th floor. Pool, spa, sauna, tennis, squash. Tastefully furnished, 1 bedroom, 1 bathroom, living/dining room, equipped Western-style kitchen with granite tops, breakfast bar. Living area: 102sqm. Rent: 4,000 baht per month. Minimum 6-month lease. Sell: 9.5 million baht. Tel: 085-7902464, 081-8928208. Website: www.phuketfurnishedapartments.com

HOUSE FOR RENT IN CHALONG



Fully-furnished house for rent in Chalong. 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms and 2 aircons. The house is 2 years old, set in the quiet and beautiful Baan Maneekram Estate. The home comes with its own private garden, TV, DVD, fridge, microwave, washing machine, telephone line & internet access, etc. Rent is 15,000 baht per month, with a minimum 6-month contract. For more details, please email Marc Husted or call Chris after 7 pm. Tel: 087-887-4659. Email: marc_husted@yahoo.com

KARON STUDIO APARTMENT

New luxury rooms, good price, 5 mins to Karon Beach, 5 rooms, ADSL. From 550 baht per day, 9,000 baht per month. Tel: 076-398436-7, 086-5945121, 089-7247148. www.karonstudio.com

KATA HILL HOUSE FOR RENT

My village has 2 houses available. First: 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 18,000 baht per month. Second: 1 bedroom, 1 bathroom, 9,500 baht per month. Both houses: living and dining areas, kitchen and fully furnished. Located on Soi Patak 4. 5 mins to Kata Beach. Call Tel: 076-216036, 081-6062827. Email: nij017@hotmail.com

STUDIO APARTMENT W/ INTERNET

Modern apartment off Nanai Rd. Fully furnished including TV, DVD, large fridge, hot water, fan, aircon and kitchenette. From 7,500 baht per month. Internet an option. Tel: 087-2650652. Email: gisbert1@gmx.net

HOUSE FOR RENT

Private, relaxed, 2 bedrooms w/ aircon, large living and dining area, large balcony overlooking bay. Furnished, 24" TV, cooker, refrigerator, microwave, grill, rice cooker, utensils. Long-term rent: 14,700 baht per month. Please contact Tel: 076-200-440, 083-5046565. Email: rogersolidgold@yahoo.com

THE ONE AND ONLY

Beachfront house directly on Kamala Beach. Available now. Newly decorated, 2 bedrooms w/ aircon, 2 bathrooms, open plan, fully furnished, ceiling fans throughout & ocean breezes offer a fresh-air alternative. Dining sala, huge upper sundeck. Western kitchen w/ amenities. 200sqm of privacy. Aug-Nov: 50,000 baht per month; Dec-Feb: 85,000 baht per month; 6 months: 55,000; 12 months: 50,000 baht per month. Price excludes utilities, UBC, ADSL. Includes cleaner, gardener. 3-month minimum booking. Tel: 081-8943839. Email: donandinge@csloxinfo.com

PATONG 2-BEDROOM APARTMENT

Large, fully furnished, close to Bangla Rd, aircon. 25,000 baht per month. Contact Tel: 087-8817600.

BAN SUAN KAMNUN

In a very nice, green, clean, quiet area. Just outside Patong. On hill overlooking Patong Beach, available for long-term only. 1- and 2-bedroom apartments. Furnished, ADSL, aircon, UBC. Call Edwin. Tel: 086-7866350.

BIG HOUSE FOR RENT

3 big aircons, fully furnished bedrooms, beautiful garden but no fence, near Chalong Bay. Price: 30,000 baht per month. Includes electric and water. For more details, call Tel: 081-8924311.

RAWAI FLAT

for rent. 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, Internet, cable TV, fully furnished. Tel: 081-6067410.

RAWAI/NAI HARN

New large, luxury house for rent. Large swimming pool, garden, 5 bedrooms, 6 bathrooms, big sala. Minimum 1-year lease: 75,000 baht per month. 30-year lease: 18 million baht. Tel: 081-3971835.

HOUSE AND CONDO

Rawai location, 2 stories, 8 rooms, aircons, 170sqm, ideal for 2 families. Long-term rent: 2,800 baht per month. Condo with aircon. Rent: 5,000 baht per month. Tel: 084-4454614.

PATONG RENTALS AVAILABLE

A number of listings that may appeal to you. Prices starting from 15,000 baht per month. Contact Tel: 081-7196088 (English) or 089-6498703 (Thai). Website: www.gardenislandphuket.com

CHALONG HOUSE

for rent. Land and Houses, 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, garden and carport for 2 cars, Western-style kitchen, hardwood floors. 30,000 baht per month. Tel: 076-378179, 086-0109782. Email: info@timberway.net

OFFICE ROOMS FOR RENT

3 office rooms on the 3rd and 4th floor. 4.2m x 5m. Opposite Simon Cabaret. Good location, parking, bathroom. 2Mbs ADSL line available to share. Each 7,000 baht per month. Contact Tel: 086-2825107, 086-2825107. Email: info@ozvisual.com

SECLUDED VILLA

One of three sharing a beautiful swimming pool and tropical garden near Rawai Beach. 2 bedrooms, full aircon, furnished, UBC, TV, telephone. Minimum 6-month lease. Price: 25,000 baht per month. Tel: 087-2810452, 087-8931180.

SHOPHOUSE BLOCK

5 terraced houses for rent on the bypass road. 35,000 baht per month. Please contact K. Vachira for more information. Tel: 081-3269495.

SHOPHOUSE FOR RENT

Good location at Chalong Circle. 10,000 baht per month. Tel: 085-7850074.

BRAND NEW PATONG CONDO

Beautiful 1-bedroom condo in best location, quiet. Sea and hill views, all amenities. Long-term rent. Call for details. Tel: 081-9701479. Email: caltirol@hotmail.com

CHALONG COUNTRY HOMES

Single house for lease: 2 floors, 4 airconditioned bedrooms with bathrooms w/ hot water, living and dining areas, European kitchen. Fully furnished, phone/fax. Please make an offer. Available immediately. Email: mpiaget@fedex.com

4-STORY BUILDING

for rent. 6 bedrooms, opposite Tesco Lotus. Please contact for more details at Tel: 089-4743575, 085-9095191, 089-4744839.

HOME FOR RENT/SALE

Located on quiet, private estate by Central Phuket. 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, hot/cold shower, 5 aircons, Western kitchen, fully equipped and furnished, laundry, office, ADSL, UBC, 24-hr security, 2 car parks. Tel: 085-3449976. Email: kurtzhod@yahoo.co.uk

VILLA FOR RENT

Beautiful boutique villas with private pool, 2 or 3 bedrooms available on daily, weekly, or monthly basis. Contact Tel: 076-282394, 086-0043008. Email: info@ayudhya.net

CHALONG ROOM

Hot water, aircon, TV, DVD, Wi-Fi, fridge. 5,500 baht per month. Tel: 089-4727304.

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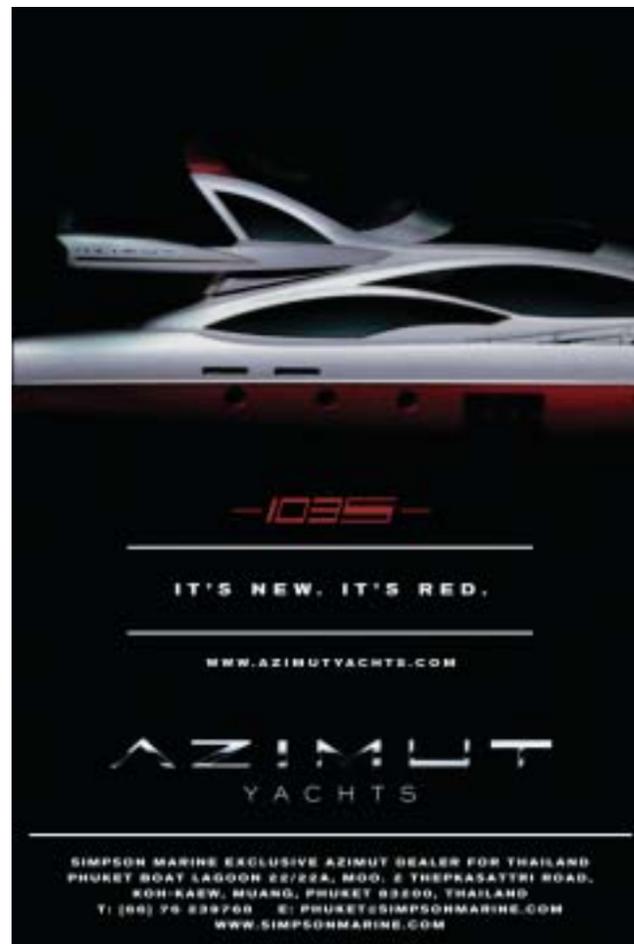


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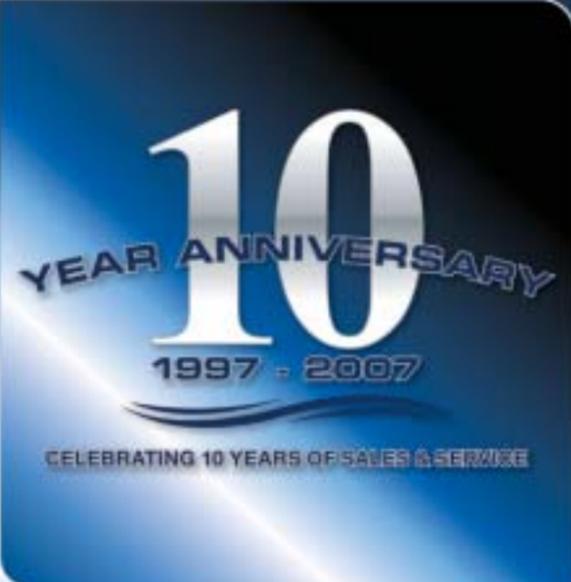
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email: info@leemarine.com

Brokerage Office
The Boat Lagoon Marina Phuket
Contact: Andrew de Bruin / Marcus Overman
Mobile: 081 894 1530 / 01 968 1437
tel/fax: 076 239 729
email: brokerage@leemarine.com

Yacht Haven Marina Office
The Yacht Haven Marina Phuket
Contact: Jim Posten
Mobile: 081 891 3237
tel/fax: 076 206 260
email: yachthaven@leemarine.com

Pattaya Office
Ocean Marina Jomtien Beach
Contact: Mark Heath
Mobile: 0817879408
tel: 038 235 061 fax: 038 235 062
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Island Job Mart



Opening September 2007

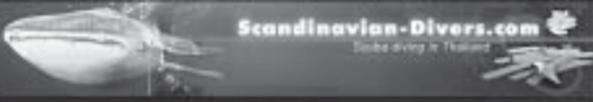
Skipper's Sports Bar & Restaurant located at Royal Phuket Marina requires the following staff:

Kitchen / Bar / Restaurant

A good command of English is necessary. Previous experience in the hotel & restaurant industry would be beneficial.

For further information please contact
Khun Rung, Telephone: 076 360 893 or, e-mail your CV and a recent photograph to jobs@skippersphuket.com

Interviews will be held between 14th - 24th August
 Open to Thai nationals only



One of Phuket's biggest Dive Centers has free positions in the following departments in Phuket and Khaolak.

PHUKET:
 1 Accountant Patong office
 1 Asst. Accountant Chalong office
 2 Booking staff Patong office
 1 Shop Manager Karon/Kata
 1 Driver with license for minibus
 1 Driver

Khaolak:
 1 Manager
 2 Booking staff
 1 Driver
 Instructors (Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, German, English)

The driver must have good knowledge of hotel locations, and spoken English is an advantage. For the booking position we require a person with the following qualifications:

- Excellent skills in spoken and written Thai
- Good skills in spoken and written English
- Knowledge of the dive business - persons with a dive certification will have an advantage
- Good knowledge in working with a computer
- Presentable and flexible

Employment start due to agreement.
 Interested candidates, who fit the above profile, please Email your resume immediately and then call our office to make an appointment for an interview.
 Phone: 076-294 225. Email: info@scandinavian-divers.com

CHIEF ACCOUNTANT

for property and restaurant business.

- Female, Thai National
- Bachelor's degree in Accounting
- Minimum 5 years direct experience
- Good command of spoken and written English and computer literate.

Qualified candidates are invited to send a CV by email to patak-villa@hotmail.com or contact Khun Piyanuch at Tel: 081-3377262.

MANAGER NEEDED

Post Cafe requires a Thai manager, male or female. Must have experience and effective English language skills. Tel: 076-381779, 087-026 1362. Fax: 076-281293. Email: pektpostcafe@yahoo.com

BUNGALOW RESORT ALL POSITIONS

- * Restaurant manager
- * Receptionist
- * Cook
- * Waiter/waitress
- * Cashier
- * Maid
- * Beach boy/girl
- * Trainees and more...

You should be motivated, service-minded, with pleasant personality, an energetic individual, have minimum of 2 years' experience and good command of English. Please email your resume, expected salary and recent photo to: pia@phuket-bangtaolagoon.com

ABSOLUTE TELEMARKETERS!

Absolute is currently recruiting Thai nationals for new telemarketing department based in Patong. Successful applicants must speak fluent English. Salary and commission. Email: thailandjobs@clubabsolute.com

HOTEL POSITIONS

We are looking for

- Restaurant manager
- Captain
- Sales & marketing

You should be motivated, service-minded, pleasant personality, some English language skills. Email your resume and recent photo to: sinhavee@hotmail.com

SIAM ADVENTURE

club manager. Looking for a dynamic and creative individual to manage guest relations, tour and kids club in a fun family-focused resort. Foreigners welcome. Contact for details. Tel: 076-396666, 076-396667. Email: hr@ramadaphuket.com

SALES/RESERVATIONS/OPERATIONS

Destination Air is seeking ten new team players for sales, operations, and reservations at Phuket International Airport. Applicants should be male/female, Thai nationality, with previous experience, excellent interpersonal skills and service-minded. Fluent English communication and proficient computers skills are a must for these positions. Salary based on experience. Interested persons, please send CV to Tel: 076-328638. Fax: 076-328598. Email: hrda@destinationair.com For further details, please see our website at <http://www.destinationair.com>



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We would like to introduce you to Albar Construction Management Co., Ltd. We have a very strong team working on projects in Phuket.

Now we are looking for additional qualified personal to join our company in Phuket as follows:

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2 PROJECT MANAGER	1 POSITION	REF/PM-02
3 ASSISTANT PROJECT MANAGER	1 POSITION	REF/APM-03
4 SITE MANAGER	1 POSITION	REF/SM-04
5 SITE ENGINEER	2 POSITIONS	REF/SE-05
6 QC-SUPERVISOR	2 POSITIONS	REF/QC-06
7 SITE MANAGER M&E	1 POSITION	REF/SM/ME-01
8 SITE ENGINEER M&E	2 POSITIONS	REF/SE/ME-02
9 QC-SUPERVISOR M&E	1 POSITION	REF/QC/ME-03
10 SENIOR QUANTITY SURVEYOR	1 POSITION	REF/SQS-01
11 QUANTITY SURVEYOR	2 POSITIONS	REF/QS-02
12 JUNIOR QUANTITY SURVEYOR	2 POSITIONS	REF/JQS-03
13 SECRETARY	1 POSITION	REF/S-01
14 ASSISTANT SECRETARY	1 POSITION	REF/AS-02
15 SENIOR ACCOUNT	1 POSITION	REF/SA-01
16 JUNIOR ACCOUNT	1 POSITION	REF/JA-02

Please send your detailed in English resume stating current and expected salary together with a recent photo to:
 Note: Include the reference number which position you are applying for, top right hand corner.

ALBAR CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT CO., LTD.
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 E-MAIL: albar@acm2004.com



We are an international property consultant having 200 offices worldwide providing property agency services, asset valuation, property and facilities management, research and consultancy, due to rapid expansion, we are looking for qualified personnel to join our company as follows:

1. Zone Manager (2 positions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male or female, age over 28 yrs • BA in Real Estate/Property Management or related fields • At least 3 yrs experience in building/estate management • Knowledge of Land Development Act, Condominium Juristic Person Acts an advantage 	2. Estate Manager / Assistant Estate Manager (4 positions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male or female, age over 28 yrs • BA in Real Estate/Property Management or related fields • At least 1 yr experience in building/estate management or 3 years in management level • Knowledge of Land Development Act, Condominium Juristic Person Acts an advantage
3. HR Officer (2 positions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male or female, age over 28 yrs • BA in HR or related fields • At least 2 yrs experience in HR function • Knowledge of Thai Labor Law 	4. Receptionist (2 positions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female, age over 22 yrs • Vocational or higher in related fields • At least 1 yr experience in receptionist front office • Familiarity with office automation
5. Department Secretary (2 positions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female, age over 28 yrs • BA in Secretarial or related fields • At least 3 yrs experience in secretarial work 	6. Accountant (2 positions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male or female, age over 25 yrs • BA in Accounting or Finance • At least 2 yrs experience in accounting • Familiar with accounting software with knowledge of MS-office especially Ms-Excel and Thailand taxation systems

Interested candidates are invited to write in with full resume, stating present and expected salaries, and enclosing a recent photo to Human Resource Department at the address below:

Knight Frank Phuket Co., Ltd.
 1 Plaza Del Mar Building Room no.109-111 & 201-202, Pasak-Koktanod Road, T.Cherngtalay, A.Thalang, Phuket 83110
 Tel: 0-7631 8151-8 Fax: 0-7631 8159
 Email: chutima.ninlawan@th.knightfrank.com

Remark:
 Thai Nationality only
 Good command of spoken and written English and computer literacy is essential
 Male applicants must complete or exempt from military service
 Knowledge of Real Estate an advantage

CONSULATE SECRETARY

wanted. Thai university graduate with excellent written and spoken English. Computer literate. Able to start immediately. Contact for interview. Tel: 076-281084.

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Asia Pacific's marine-equipment and insurance leader has many positions available. Thais and foreigners! Contact Tel: 076-377542, 089-6711162. Email: j@phuketsail.com. For more details, see our website: <http://www.phuketsail.com/careers.htm>

KINDERGARTEN / G 1 TEACHER

Small international school needs qualified kindergarten/grade 1 teacher for one-year position starting Aug 22, 2007. Curriculum planning experience and PYP training preferred. ESL teachers need not apply. Tel: 081-8942560. Email: pamela@horizons-phuket.com

NANNY WANTED

We are looking for an English-speaking nanny in Patong. Please contact Nicole. Please call for information at Tel: 084-6470468.

HOUSEKEEPER

Required full time for retired businessman in Chalong. Must have own transport and speak English. Duties include general running of house, bill paying, cleaning, ironing, some cooking, etc. Excellent wages given to the right person. Email: verhar@yahoo.com

PERSONAL ASSISTANT

Thai lady required part time with very flexible hours. Must have good English and computer skills. Please contact Tel: 086-2790837.



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HotelTravel.com is a leading international online travel information and hotel reservations service. We are a multi-cultural company, employing experienced and knowledgeable staff from six continents. We pride ourselves in our ability to provide unparalleled Customer Service in multiple languages.

We are currently accepting applications for the following positions:

Content Department Officer (Full time)

Requirements:

- Female, Thai Nationality
- University Degree
- Good command of spoken English
- Excellent English creative writing and reading comprehension skills
- Good organizational and computer skills (Excel, Word, Outlook, Internet search)
- Having prior experience in Marketing or Journalism would be an advantage

Only motivated, positive individuals should apply for this exciting opportunity to work in HotelTravel.com's professional and dynamic environment.

Interested applicants should submit an application, including CV, to Careers@HotelTravel.com or call +66 76 282 828 Mr. Arunab Sookorn for further information.

Island Job Mart

White Box Restaurant is the new fine dining venue in Patong - Kalim. Our restaurant has a unique beachfront location and modern design.

White Box Restaurant is currently seeking motivated professionals, who like to work as a team, who are willing to learn, who enjoy service way of life, and who are looking for a long term relation with our company.

White Box Restaurant invites candidates to apply for the following positions:

1) **Administration Department**
 - Secretary/Bookkeeper: position available immediately!!!
 - Sales & Marketing

2) **F&B Department**

Dining Department	Kitchen Department
- Floor Manager / Maître D'	- Chef de Cuisine (European - Thai)
- Supervisor/Captain	- Second Chef (Royal Thai)
- Waiter/Waitress	- Chef de Partie
- Food Runner	- Commis hot/cold
- Cashier	- Steward
Bar Department	Other Positions
- Bar Manager	- Driver/Valet Parking
- Bartender/Bartendy	- Maid/Cleaner
- Cocktail Waitress	
- Cashier	

Thai nationals only, **excepting the following position:**
 Floor Manager / Maître D' and Chef de Cuisine.

Excellent salary and benefits including Service Charge.

Required in all positions:
 At least 2 years experience in hospitality and service industry; good communication skills in both English and Thai; positive attitude, service minded, excellent grooming & presentation.

Please send your resume:
Email: info@whiteboxrestaurant.com
Or call to: 076-385275, 08-97-637-837
Fax: 076-385489

White Box Restaurant
 347/5 Pataramanee Rd., Patong, Kathu, Phuket



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HolyClothing.com is a foreign owned, Phuket based, fast growing internet fashion retailer looking for dynamic individuals who want to further their career whilst living in the tropical paradise of Phuket.

Send your CV to: job@holyclothing.com
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New private villa in Layan seeking for.

Position: 1 Excellent Chef Required.
 Qualification: Specialist in Thai and Italian food.

- : Experience in hotel or restaurant.
- : English speaking is required.
- : Self-motivated and team player.
- : Thai national preferred.
- : Basic salary THB 35,000

Applicant to: please send CV to phuket@generalrecruit.com
 Tel: 089 8730177, Fax: 076 310226

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



AVANTIKA PHUKET

Avantika Boutique Hotel, a small boutique beachfront luxury hotel with 31 rooms at the end of Patong Beach, is looking for suitable candidates for the following positions:

- Secretary	1 position
- Reservation	1 position
- Reception	1 position
- Housekeeping	1 position
- Waiter/Waitress	1 position
- Engineer	1 position

Contact: Please send your recent photo, resume, reference & expected salary to:



Human Resources Department
 Avantika Boutique Hotel
 4/1 Thaveewong Rd., Patong,
 Kathu, Phuket 83150
 Tel: (076)292 801-5, Fax: (076) 292 808-9
 E-mail: info@avantika-phuket.com

CUSTOMER SERVICE OFFICER
 Good in English with PC literacy. Customer service oriented. Strong organization skills for back office. Self confident with an eye for detail. Based at Yacht Haven Marina. Contact for more information. Tel: 076-239111. Fax: 076-238974. Email: suporn@asia-marine.net

CRUISE SHIP JOB
 Art auctioneer working onboard the world's largest cruise ships seeking female assistant. 35,000 baht per month. 21-35 years old, attractive, outgoing, some computer skills helpful, able to travel 4-5 months at a time. Tel: 086-0937558. Email: takiniteasy007@hotmail.com

GREAT OPPORTUNITY
 Seara Int. Looking for admin./ sales assist. Thai female, 22-25 yrs old, good command of written/spoken English, computer skills. Join our successful team! Send CV & photo to Tel: 076-355040, 089-6469278. Fax: 076-355039. Email: boom@searaspots.com

ABSOLUTE TELEMARKETERS!
 Absolute are currently recruiting Thai nationals for new telemarketing department in Patong. Successful applicants must speak fluent English. Salary and commission. Email: thailandjobs@clubabsolute.com

TEACHER NEEDED
 We need motivated and friendly teachers for public schools in Phuket. Please email your CV to eccpkt@ecc.ac.th

HOTEL JOBS
 We currently require 1 cook, 1 English-speaking receptionist and 2 waitresses. Email: info@club-coconut-resort.info



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Director of Sales

- Preferable Thai National who is fluent in English (written and spoken)
- Outgoing personality, good leadership and managerial skills
- Minimum 2 years experience within a 5 stars resort/hotel
- Proven track record in handling MICE and Tour Operators

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Apply in person or send your resume to: **Director of Human Resources**
 Indigo Pearl, 116 M1 T. Sakoo, A. Talang, Phuket 83110
 Tel: **076-327006**, Fax: **076-327338-9**
 E-mail: samran@indigo-pearl.com, Web: www.indigo-pearl.com

- Chomlay Resort & Spa -
 Thasala, Nakorn Si Thammarat

Chomlay resort is a private-beach resort located in Thasala, Nakorn Si Thammarat and we are recruiting the following positions in September 2007 with **immediate start:**

- 1. Resort Manager (1 position)**
 - Must have extensive experience with start-up resort
 - Marketing, leadership, and managerial skills essential
 - Excellent salary and other benefits available
- 2. Cook (2 positions)**
 - Experience in International and Thai cuisine essential
- 3. Receptionist (3 positions)**
- 4. Restaurant captain (2 positions)**
- 5. Bartender (2 positions)**

All candidates should contact K. Udomdech on **0812732173**, or K. Aree on **0817824123**, or send their CV to chomlay@gmail.com to arrange for an interview.

Employment Wanted

DIVEMASTER
 39-year-old male, non-smoking/drinking, lives in Phuket. Similar and Phuket tour-leading experience. Speaks fluent English, German, Swedish, Finish, adequate Thai. Mechanically talented, flexible, presentable. Seeking fair conditions, reasonable salary and work permit. Holding non-immigrant B visa (one-year multiple entry). Available to start anytime. Tel: 089-9087350
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081-8912895

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Business for sale at 650,000 baht with ten-year lease. Rent: 30,000 baht per month. Please contact for details. Tel: 087-0261362. Fax: 076-281293. Email: cjtisomboon@hotmail.com

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Kata area. Furnished, full counter, office equipment. Great layout. Price: 550,000 baht. Contact Khun Nida at Tel: 081-6590439.

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Good office area with a big bedroom and private bathroom. Inventory includes:

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- 2 printers
- big tour counter in front of the shop
- big refrigerator
- 2 air conditioners in the office and 1 in the bedroom
- 29" TV in office and 21" TV in bedroom
- 1 book case, big counter inside the office, big cabinet
- 1 Internet line, 1 office line, 1 fax line

- electricity monitor with bill directly from the government

- 1 small storeroom, 1 closet.

All contracts are good to go, just need to transfer name. Price: 2.5 million baht. Contract for another 4 years and 5 months. All included, it comes up to 14,000 baht per month rent. Free water contact. Tel: 076-512037, 081-272 9714. For more details, please email: cheeranant@hotmail.com

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Fully furnished beauty salon for quick sale. Good location on Nanai Rd in Patong. 8-month lease remaining, new 3-year lease available. Fair price: 390,000 baht. Please contact for more information. Tel: 087-0916382. Email: princessfisher538@hotmail.com

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KAMALA BAR AND RESTAURANT

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