

## Things We Hear And See

### Lets See The Birdy

Customs inspectors at California's Los Angeles International Airport asked to look in Robert John Cusack's suitcase when he arrived from Thailand. When an inspector opened the luggage, a bird flew out. Inspectors found four endangered birds and 50 protected orchids. "Do you have anything else you should tell us about?" they asked Cusack, 45. "Yes," he replied, "I've got monkeys in my pants."

They found two pigmy monkeys "in a little pouch in his pants," said a special agent for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "This was the only time where somebody's stuck monkeys down his pants." (Los Angeles Times)

### More Warnings?

In 2001, a woman filed a federal lawsuit in Minnesota (Engleson vs. Little Falls Area Chamber of Commerce), seeking to recover for injuries she suffered when she tripped over an orange traffic cone.

The lawsuit was dismissed in November 2002 by Judge Donovan Frank, who said the law does not expect anyone to warn people that there's a warning cone up ahead.

### Worth A Shot

Police in Urbana, Ohio, said they would soon file fraud charges against Teresa Milbrandt, 35, for tricking local people and businesses into giving her more than \$10,000 on behalf of her 7-year-old daughter, who she falsely said had leukemia.

Milbrandt apparently never even told her daughter why she had to have her head shaved (to simulate the effects of chemotherapy), but that touch of realism ultimately caused the scheme to collapse when someone noticed the hair had been cut and was not falling out. (Associated Press)

# Jockularity

W elcome to my world. A world far removed from the cold and bleak grey days of central Scotland.

It was 7 years ago on the anniversary that I came to Thailand to stay as a permanent resident.

Over the years I have witnessed many, many changes in the Phuket that I have grown to love and call home. However, it should be said that not all that glitters is in fact gold. The tourist perspective of this most beautiful island is sadly masked in some respects by false smiles and an underlying desire to relieve tourists of the very last baht of their hard earned money.

As the popularity of the island has grown over the years, so to has the incidence of less desirable individuals arriving on the streets.

It is sadly the case that now one can take but two or three steps before being accosted by an Indian/Thai tailor attempting to convince you that you really require a new 3 piece suit before you take yourself off down to the beach. The hammock seller and lady selling colourful sarongs follow in hot pursuit. So you dust yourself down. Thinking that you have scored a win by fending them off, when "bang", out of a shop doorway outside Patong Tower jumps a young gentleman dressed in shorts and a sweaty t-shirt who tells you, you have just won a luxury

holiday for 2 absolutely free, if you spend "90 minutes" with him back at the office. You guessed it "TIME SHARE".

It is such a sin that the vagaries of western type traits have been able to invade the southern Asian culture.

The constant harassment of pedestrians by tuk-tuk drivers and the shark practices they indulge in once they get you on board have also upset the scales to a greater or lesser extent. Patong in particular has suffered greatly from such practices and resultantly is in my opinion suffering a downturn in tourism. We have been assured, time and time again; by local government that steps to address these problems are in hand. I have to say that sadly I am yet to be convinced of their sincerity as little or nothing is being seen to be done to improve things.

By the way, try and park your car or bike for that matter on the beach road. Impossible, as all the demarked parking is taken up by car and bike renters, who take up virtually all the road from Sea Pearl hotel to and beyond McDonald's restaurant.

Come on "the powers that be", you rely on foreign tourists to keep the island's economy solvent. Make some strident moves to improve the place. For everyone's sake, both tourists, expats and locals alike.

## Dumb And Dumber

Police in Surrey, B.C., Canada, responded to a house after someone there called 911 and hung up.

Officers discovered that an unnamed 60-year-old woman in the house heard that if she dialed 911, she'd get a recording that would tell her if the police were tapping the phone. The story is an urban legend and is, of course, false.

When officers arrived, they found "a reasonably sized marijuana growing operation" in the house, a police spokesman said. The woman and three men in the house were arrested on drug charges. (From the Vancouver Sun) **...If you're stupid, press 1. If you're really stupid, press 2. If you're incredibly stupid and are currently committing a crime, press 911**