



*'Diver', Chantal, and Brad celebrated their birthdays with a party on the beach at Divers in Surin.*



*Bill OLeary (on guitar) brings out the karaoke in everyone at the same party*

**WE CARE!!** You may remember several issues ago we mentioned a Phuket regular flying with Philippines Airlines to Manila only to find his return ticket invalidated by the 'We Care' airline because they thought it was stolen. Not that problems do arise sometimes, but the treatment he received, according to him, was a bit on the shabby side. Luckily he had the US\$452 the airline demanded for him to return to Phuket, but it did leave a sour taste in his mouth regarding ever using them again. Six months after the debacle it seems Philippine Airlines has finally come good with the refund. Mind you it took lots of phone calls and many emails for this to happen, but at least something has turned up. I would have asked for interest.

Same same only different, an incident happened several years ago when Thai International was affordable, with a delayed flight from Phuket to Australia. After keeping us at the airport for several hours it was decided that the flight wouldn't lift off that night and we were transported into Phuket Town for the night. Several on board had connecting flights to the many mining camps dotted around Australia for the next morning and missed these in spectacular style, costing them at least a days pay.

When we arrived in Oz, we went to the Thai International offices and asked for some sort of compensation for our out of pocket expenses. This was duly dismissed by the Australian sales manager, despite the request being genuine. We then approached the head office in Bangkok, they agreed with our request and the money was quickly sent down to Australia. The best bit

was when we went to pick up the cheques, they were presented to our group by the same, now even surlier, sales manager who had previously rejected our initial request. He obviously didn't put as much emphasis on service as the management at Thai HQ in Bangkok.

Speaking of connecting flights being missed, one needs to be careful when using the current crop of low cost airlines flying



*A rock icon for Thailand, Carabao and his band turned up on Patong shores for a free concert recently.*

in and out of Phuket. If you don't have an onward flight with these carriers, they couldn't care less whether you arrive on time or not. One complaint we received here was against a carrier delaying a flight for five hours until it had filled up. If you need to be somewhere, maybe the extra money paid to get on a guaranteed flight will save you more in the long run.

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**It seems nowadays** everybody wants to get

in the Guinness Book Of Records. We've had the largest bowl of Tom Yum soup a couple of years back and can even boast a Guinness Book entrant right here in Phuket, Big big Bill, for heaving a washing machine (the accreditation is hanging on the wall at Legends Bar in Patong) further than anyone else has. But then the Guinness people haven't seen my Ex in full flight. They like to see controlled conditions, something that was never happening around my house when records were achieved.

Another record that you probably won't see in the Guinness book is the recent catch of catfish recently pulled out of the Mekong River up near the Golden Triangle in Chiang Khong district. Villagers captured a 2.7 metre long Mekong giant catfish (*Pangasianodon gigas*) that tipped the scales at 293 kilograms.

This was the same length as our marlin in the last issue but about 210 kilograms heavier. It must be all that river sludge they eat up that way.

Realising that the fish could be a freshwater record, the Guinness people were apparently notified, but before they could verify the record the local villagers had carved it all up and eaten it. Luckily the World Wildlife Fund and National Geographic Society were in the area and managed to record the event and if you want to see some pics go to <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2005/06/photogalleries/giantcatfish.html>

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*Continued Page 15*