AWOL

ABSENT WITHOUT LEAVE FOR THE EXPAT IN ALL OF US
What's happening, and might be happening, in Hua Hin

☞ BUMPER XMAS ISSUE
☞ 36 PAGES OF CHEER
☞ XMAS CROSSWORD
☞ FESTIVE FIXTURES
☞ STAR SIGNS

19 Dec 08 - 2 Jan 09
FREE WEEKLY

A Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from AWOL

Welcome to our bumper festive issue

■HUA HIN, THAILAND
Christmas in Paradise City is often a muted affair compared to the season in most expats home countries, and many expats enjoy that fact; however anyone who has family back home or kids here will normally make the effort to recreate some of the traditional Christmas spirit from their own country, with various traditions from all over the world being enjoyed in our home away from home.

AWOL is a very English publication, so we will be sitting down and tucking into a roast turkey with all the trimmings, followed by Christmas pudding and mince pies with lashings of thick cream and brandy butter, pulling crackers,telling bad jokes and collapsing, stuffed full in front of the television, hopefully in time to imagine the British Queen's Christmas message.

Wherever you are from, whatever race, creed, colour or religion you are, please join us in wishing everyone a wonderful time over the Christmas season and a New Year which will see a world in more harmony and prosperity than this one has been. And we hope Father Christmas brings you whatever you hoped for.

See you in 2009!

I'd Love a Bacon Sandwich
032 513 144

JUST WHO WAS THIS JESUS GUY?

As it is Christmas, the AWOL team thought it might be a good idea to try and explain to our Thai hosts, who are mostly Buddhists, just who Jesus was meant to be and where he came from originally. Hopefully this will help clear up any confusion they may have about Jesus and his birthday, Christmas Day.

Firstly, there are three good arguments that Jesus could have been black:

'Hey man, whassup, bro? Gimme some skin!'

(1) He called everyone 'Brother"; (2) He liked Gospel; and (3) He couldn't get a fair trial.

But then there are three equally good arguments that Jesus was Jewish: (1) He went into his Father's business; (2) He lived at home until he was 33. (3) He was sure that his Mother was a virgin and his mother was sure that he was God.

But then there are three equally good arguments that Jesus might have been Italian: (1) He talked with his hands; (2) He had wine with every meal; and (3) He used olive oil.

But now there are three good arguments that Jesus could have been a Californian: (1) He never cut his hair; (2) He walked around barefoot all the time; and (3) He started a new religion.

There are also three good arguments that Jesus might have been Irish. (1) He never got married; (2) He was always telling stories; and (3) He loved green pastures.

But the most compelling evidence of all is three proofs that Jesus could have been a woman: (1) He fed a crowd at a moment's notice when there was no food around; (2) He kept trying to get a message across to a bunch of men who just didn't get it. (3) And even when he was dead, He had to get up because there was more work to do.

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TALKING ALCOHOL

SOME WISE and interesting people have commented on the human habit of drinking alcohol.
"A woman drove me to drink and I didn't have the decency to thank her!" (WC Fields).
"He was a wise man who invented beer" (Plato)
"I feel sorry for people who don't drink. They wake up in the morning and find out that that is the best that they are going to feel all day." (Dean Martin)
"You're not really drunk if you can lie on the floor without holding on." (Joe E Lewis)
"The problem with some people is that when they aren't drunk, they are sober." (William Butler Yeates)
"Reality is an illusion that occurs due to lack of alcohol." (Anonymous)
"A tavern is a place where madness is sold by the bottle." (Jonathan Swift)
"The answer to life's problems are not at the bottom of a beer bottle, they're on TV." (Homer Simpson)
"The difference between a drunk and an alcoholic is that a drunk does not have to attend all those boring meetings." (Arthur Lewis)
"Beer is the proof that God loves us and wants us to be happy." (Benjamin Franklin)
"Always do sober what you said that you would do whilst drunk. That will teach you to keep your mouth shut." (Ernest Hemingway)
"The problem with the world is that everyone else is a few drinks behind you." (Humphrey Bogart)
"When I read about the evils of drinking, I gave up reading." (Henny Youngman)
"Work is the curse of the drinking classes." (Oscar Wilde)
"I am a drinker with writing problems." (Brendan Behan)
"I drink to make other people interesting." (George Jean Nathan)
"I know that I'm drinking myself to a slow death, but then I'm in no hurry." (Robert Benchley)
"They who drink beer will think beer." (Washington Irving)
"I once spent five million dollars in three years – I spent some of it on women, gambling and drinking. The rest of it I wasted." (Dean Martin)
"Little is known about the human conscience, except that it is soluble in alcohol" (John Mortimer)
"God invented whiskey to prevent the Irish from ruling the world." (Oscar Wilde)

Is this Mrs Claus?

By the looks of it Santa has got his hands full this year with some presents of his own...
Mind you, it looks as though he has unwrapped his present early, so he is straight onto the 'Naughty' list for next year (well, he's probably going to be naughty for the next year by the looks of things!)
For you AWOL page 3 addicts its a bit of a wait until your next fix as our next issue isn't until 9th January due to the holidays, but to make up for it turn to page 15 for our Christmas bonus babe!

Santa gives 'Mrs Claus' a goose for Christmas

or Pie & Mash with Mushy Peas

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Local Weather

Hua Hin weather forecast next 7 days

Day	Conditions	Temp °C Low	High
Sat	Sunny and pleasant	19	28
Sun	Mostly sunny	20	30
Mon	Sun / high clouds	21	30
Tues	Clouds and sun	21	30
Xmas Eve	Partly sunny	20	27
Xmas Day	Sunny	21	28
Boxing Day	Partly sunny	22	29

World Weather

Forecast for Friday 19th December 2008

City	Min °C	Max	Conditions
Amsterdam	-2	4	Rain
Athens	13	20	Rain
Auckland	12	19	Showers
Beijing	-1	5	Fine
Berlin	0	3	Drizzle
Buenos Aires	22	31	Cloudy
Chicago	-7	-5	Snow
Copenhagen	3	5	Rain
Dubai	15	20	Clear
Dublin	4	9	Showers
Geneva	-1	2	Rain
Helsinki	1	2	Rain
Ho Chi Minh	20	31	Bright
Hong Kong	17	21	Overcast
Islamabad	8	17	Rain
Jakarta	23	31	Rain
Jerusalem	13	22	Overcast
Johannesburg	16	27	Thunderstorms
Kuala Lumpur	24	32	Thunderstorms
London	5	7	Fine
Madrid		3	10 Cloudy
Manila	24	30	Cloudy
Mexico City	4	25	Cloudy
Moscow	-5	-2	Fine
New Delhi	11	25	Cloudy
New York	2	6	Snow
Oslo	0	1	Scattered Clouds
Paris	0	5	Rain
Perth	17	28	Scattered Clouds
Phnom-Penh	20	30	Clear
Rio De Janeiro	19	25	Rain
Riyadh	0	16	Scattered Clouds
Roma	10	14	Rain
San Francisco	2	9	Showers
Singapore	23	30	Showers
Stockholm	0	5	Rain
Sydney	17	26	Thunderstorms
Tokyo	6	10	Rain
Vientiane	9	27	Clear
Yangon	22	31	Clear
Zurich	-1	0	Snow

Currency Exchange Rates

At 16th December 2008 (mid-market rates)

Code	Currency	Value (Baht)
USD	United States Dollar	34.7488
GBP	Pound Sterling	53.0054
EUR	Euro	47.5715
JPY	Japanese Yen	0.383967
MYR	Malaysian Ringgit	9.81701
SGD	Singapore Dollar	23.6894
BND	Brunei Dollar	23.6894
CNY	Chinese Yuan	5.11705
IDR	Indonesian Rupiah	0.00315514
INR	Indian Rupee	0.730538
KRW	Korean Won	0.0257628
AUD	Australian Dollar	23.4544
NZD	New Zealand Dollar	19.1011
CHF	Swiss Franc	29.8695
DKK	Danish Krone	6.35078
NOK	Norwegian Krone	5.0756
SEK	Swedish Krona	4.39839
CAD	Canadian Dollar	28.3535
AED	UAE Dirham	9.53625
BHD	Bahrain Dinar	93.1446
KWD	Kuwaiti Dinar	127.129
OMR	Omani Rial	90.3751
QAR	Qatar Riyal	9.6214

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Emergency & Useful Numbers

Emergency Calls

Police 191
Crime 195
Fire 199
Traffic Control Centre 197
Highway Police 1193
Tourist Police 1699
Tourist Service Centre 1155
Missing Persons Bureau 02 282 1815
Police Station at Hua Hin District 032 511 027
Cha-Am Police Station 032 471 321
Hua Hin Hospital 032 511 743
San Paulo Hospital 032 532 576 to 585
Hua Hin Red Cross 032 512 567

Useful numbers

Hua Hin Tessabahn : 032 511 047
Hua Hin Immigration Office 032 513 574
Hua Hin Bus Terminal (non air-con) 032 511 230
(air-con) 032 511 651, 512 543
Hua Hin Railway Station 032 511 073
Tourist Information Centre 032 512 120
Hua Hin Electricity 032 512 215
Hua Hin Water 032 511 677
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Tradition-seeking Germany faces Santa shortage

■ BERLIN, GERMANY

Wanted: Cheerful, chubby men, preferably with fluffy white beards and no criminal record, ready to work hard for one month.

Germany is running out of qualified Santa Clauses and needs to recruit and train them fast, a leading job agency says.

Germans are trying to shut out the financial crisis by taking comfort in traditional festivities, and there is an acute shortage of Santas to entertain children at shopping centres, Christmas markets and private parties.

"Being Santa is not an easy job," Jens Wittenberger, in charge of Santa Claus recruitment at the Jobcafe Munich, told Reuters on Monday. "To be honest, not many people have what it takes to be a good Father Christmas."

The job centre wants its Santas to be child-friendly, good organizers, reliable and have acting skills. They also need a clean police record.

Germany's tough standards cause disappointment for these would be Santas - "What do we want?" "SLEIGHS!" "When do we want them?" "NOW!"

"You can't have your Santa drive up in a car," said Wittenberger. "Every child knows that Santa travels in a sleigh pulled by reindeer so we don't want to disappoint anybody." Santas are told to park their car a few streets away and walk.

"People are turning to traditions to protect their children from the 'evils of the real world', especially in the wake of this financial turmoil," Wittenberger said.

Recruitment sessions are being held in cities across the country, and while the job may be stressful, it's better than being jobless, Wittenberger said. "Santas can make up to 60 Euros (2500 baht) an hour," he said. "That's not bad, is it?"

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English corner

Have you ever wondered where a certain word or phrase comes from, or what it really means? Every week we will expand your knowledge of English and its etymology with a different word or saying. This week it is...

Scapegoat

"The Scapegoat" by William Holman Hunt painted in 1854

The word 'scapegoat' is Biblical in origin and is recorded by 1530 in Tyndale's Bible. In the Mosaic ritual of the Day of Atonement, one of two goats was sent alive into the wilderness, the sins of the people having been symbolically laid upon it, while the other was sacrificed.

These verses are from Leviticus XVI (King James Version):

And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat.

Since this goat, carrying the sins of the people placed on it, is sent away to perish, the word "scapegoat" has come to mean a person, often innocent, who is blamed and punished for the sins, crimes, or sufferings of others, generally as a way of distracting attention from the real causes.

The word "Scapegoat" is a mistranslation of the word Azazel originated by William Tyndale in his 1530 Bible, and appropriated in the King James Version of the Bible (Leviticus chapter 16) in 1611. Confounded by the word, Tyndale had interpreted Azazel as ez ozel - literally, "the goat that departs"; hence "(e)scape goat."

In actuality, Azazel is an enigmatic name for a fallen angel from the Hebrew Scriptures and Apocrypha, where the name is used interchangeably with Rameel and Gadriel. Thus Azazel can be understood as the evil demon in the desert to whom the goat was sent, though Rashi interpreted Azazel to be the name of a specific mountain or cliff over which the goat was driven, called so for its reputation as the holding place of the fallen angel of the same name. Modern scholars generally reject Tyndale's interpretation in favour of one related to the fallen angel/evil demon interpretation; in fact, today in Modern Hebrew Azazel is used derogatorily, as in lekh la-Azazel ("go to Azazel"), as in "go to hell".

Area 555

GOD AND THE BIKER

A biker was riding along a California beach when suddenly the sky clouded above his head and in a booming voice.....

The Lord said, "Because you have TRIED to be faithful to me in all ways, I will grant you one wish."

The biker pulled over and said, "Build a bridge to Hawaii so I can ride over anytime I want."

The Lord said, "Your request is materialistic. Think of the enormous challenges for that kind of undertaking. The supports required to reach the bottom of the Pacific! The concrete and steel it would take! I will nearly exhaust several natural resources. I can do it, but it is hard for me to justify your desire for worldly things. Take a little more time and think of something that would honour and glorify me."

The biker thought about it for a long time. Finally he said, "Lord, I wish that I could understand my wife. I want to know how she feels inside, what she's thinking when she gives me the silent treatment, why she cries, what she means when she says nothing is wrong, and how I can make a woman truly happy."

The Lord replied, "You want two lanes or four on that bridge?

GOD'S KIDS

Whenever your kids are out of control, you can take comfort from the thought that even God's omnipotence did not extend to God's kids. After creating Heaven and earth, God created Adam and Eve. And the first thing He said to them was: "Don't."

"Don't what?" Adam replied.

"Don't eat the forbidden fruit," God said.

"Forbidden fruit? We got forbidden fruit? Hey, Eve...we got Forbidden Fruit!"

"No way!"

"Yes WAY!"

"Don't eat that fruit!" said God.

"Why?"

"Because I'm your Creator and I said so!" said God, wondering why he hadn't stopped after making the elephants.

A few minutes later God saw the kids having an apple break and was angry.

"Didn't I tell you not to eat that fruit?" God asked.

"Uh huh," Adam replied.

"Then why did you?"

"I dunno," Eve answered.

"She started it!" Adam said.

"Did Not!"

"DID so!"

"DID NOT!!"

Having had it with the two of them, God's punishment was that Adam and Eve should have children of their own.

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Churches cross over chocolate Jesus

■ DUISBURG, GERMANY

Germany's churches criticised a businessman on Tuesday for selling thousands of Jesus chocolates.

Frank Oynhausen set up his 'Sweet Lord' chocolate Jesus-making business saying he wanted to restore some traditional religious values to Christmas in Germany.

But the German Protestant Church criticised the idea as 'tasteless' and the Roman Catholic Church was not amused.

'I started thinking about how I could reintroduce traditional religious values into this commercial world,' said Oynhausen, who had been unemployed since losing a recycling business two years ago.

Together with a friend, a local chocolatier, Oynhausen, 54, developed the concept of 'Sweet Lord'.

It is growing fast in his home town of Duisburg and on the internet, at www.goldjesus.com.

Oynhausen said thousands of people have put in orders for the figures wrapped in gold foil. But church associations expressed dismay.

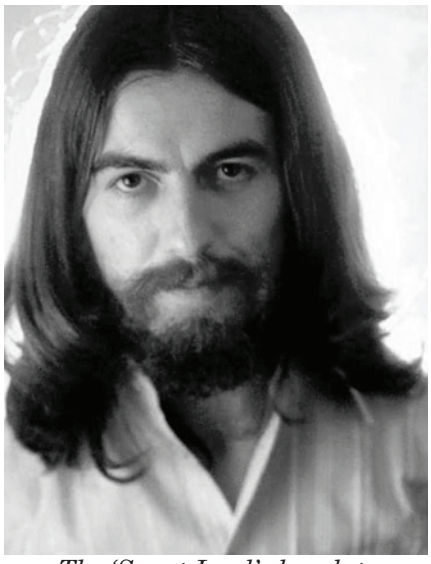
'It is terrible that Jesus is being wrapped up in gold foil and sold along with chocolate bunnies, edible penguins and lollipops,' said Aegidius Engel, a spokesman for the archbishopric of nearby Paderborn.

'This is ruining the symbol of Jesus himself,' he added.

Oynhausen is now custom-producing the chocolate Jesus figures, at a cost of 15 euros for 100 grams, but by Easter he hopes to have a partnership with a mass producer.

'We're hoping to be able to export them around the world one day,' Oynhausen said. He reckons there are parts of the United States where they will be especially popular.

In 2007, a life-size chocolate sculpture of a naked Jesus - similarly named My Sweet Lord - caused an outcry from Roman Catholics when an art gallery in New York wanted to exhibit it in a window.



The 'Sweet Lord' chocolate George Harrisons have an amazing likeness to Jesus

Do you want to go

AWOL

with us?

Send news, ideas, jokes, stories, pictures, letters and anything else to us and we will print them whenever possible. You can also tell us what you think of Hua Hin's first weekly English language publication, so send your email now to:

awol@observergroup.net

ON ON

Hua Hin Hash House Harriers

The H2H3 is a group of international fools who get a lot of enjoyment out of running or walking around in jungles, mountains, beaches and sometimes highways in search of the end of the run and some cold beer and camaraderie. Boys and girls, eight to eighty are welcome to join in on the fun.

To learn more about the Hash House Harriers go to **www.gthhh.com** or **www.huahin-hhh.com**. For information about the next run, e-mail Slackbladder (**partt@hotmail.com, 087-852 2565**) or Ballbanger, **donaltetley@yahoo.com or 085-088 7181**. In Cha Am, get the scoop at the Chicken Coop from Noi. Get a cold beer and the hot hash gossip from Dave at the California Mining Cantina near the Sofitel.

If you have half a mind the join the hash, that's all you need.

New Zealand beer ad billboard causes Christian Christmas fury

■ HAMILTON, NEW ZEALAND

A beer billboard that offended many Christian groups in Hamilton is coming down almost as quickly as it went up.

The Tui billboards, situated all over the country, reads: "Let's take a moment this Christmas to think about Christ. Yeah right."

Its message has received mixed reviews from Christians across the country. In Christchurch, one Catholic bishop said the ad was "great" and helped remind people about the meaning of Christmas, and a Methodist Church of New Zealand spokesman said the billboard made a good point.

The offending advert that the beer company claimed 'was to highlight that Christmas has lost its true meaning'. Yeah, right.

But, in Hamilton, the joke was lost on Father Frank Eggleton, parish priest of the Cathedral of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who labelled the provocative billboard "appalling" and said it demeaned the holiness and meaning of Christmas.

DB Breweries communications manager Gina Williams said that was the point of the billboards - that nobody took Christmas seriously any more.

"Our stance on this from the start was to highlight that Christmas has lost its true meaning," she said.

"But it's obviously been taken the wrong way by some people so we will be taking them down. We don't do it very often but we see that this has touched a nerve."

Ms Williams said the billboards were intended to be funny, a bit cheeky, but topical as well.

"This was meant to be more topical than cheeky. Our message was that people aren't really thinking about family and friends any more, they're thinking about shopping and the credit crunch and how it's been turned into a cash cow by retailers."

Tui brand manager Jared Bear said it was not a case of the company getting it wrong with the billboard, but wanting to move on.

"I don't think we got it wrong," he said. "What we've done is generated some debate about Christianity, and Christmas isn't as focused around Christ as it should be. Why we've taken it down is we've had a really strong response from a lot of people and out of respect we're thinking it's time to keep moving."

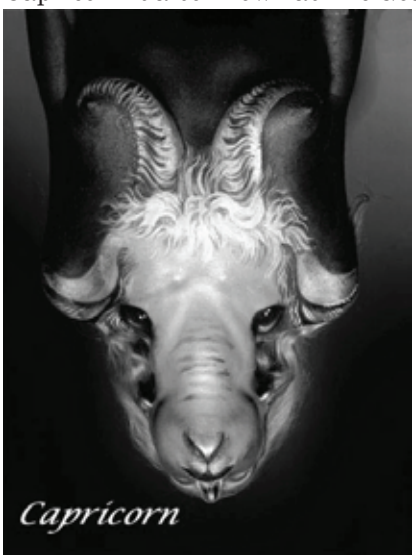
The billboards were yesterday being removed and replaced with one of two signs which read: "Grandma has a real knack for buying Christmas presents. Yeah right." and "It's okay, we were under the mistletoe. Yeah right."

Your STARS with Destiny Dan

What Your Star Sign Really Says About You: Destiny Dan's Festive Special!

Capricorn Dec 22 - Jan 19

Capricorn is also known as The Goat. You have a great sense of humour, which is just as well because you stink, can be really pissy and can be milked.



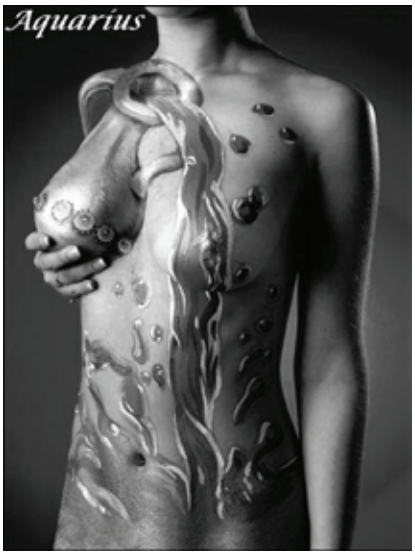
You are one of those people who have great ideas for making the world a better place and will stop at nothing (including flattening bunny rabbits and squirrels with your four by four) to get what you think the world wants.

You can be relied upon to carry out a task; unfortunately this can also include carrying out orders to the extreme, possibly in heavy boots and pointy hats.

You can be a completely vicious, tight-fisted, Scrooge, and, at your worst, can de-motivate people with a simple look over your eyeglasses.

You have a horribly ruthless and rigid streak to your personality and are actually the wrong star sign to join the police force, unless you are German in which case it is an excellent choice.

Aquarius Jan 20 - Feb 17



Aquarius are the great eccentrics of the universe and love to rebel against everything. Unfortunately, such free thinkers can sometimes come across as mindlessly tactless, brain numbingly stubborn, perverted, emotionally obtuse. On the positive side you like to wear flip-flops with suits.

Aquarius are the great unpredictable star sign, capable of being both unhelpful and helpful at the same time.

Logic means something different to Aquarians and you can sometimes surprise even yourself with your changes of mind. You are generally isolated in polite society by a perverse nature, however as the world becomes ever more perverted you are likely to fit right in. You are forever being surprised by the number of court actions and stories in the local paper about you.

On the bright side, you are always enjoying a hearty laugh at your own jokes and it's only a matter of time until the world laughs along if only out of frustration, or so that you will leave them alone.

Ask an Aquarian to do something and they will do it, perhaps with raised eyebrows, a small huff and possibly a shrug of their shoulders, but they will do what they say they will but only in their own good time. Show them a deadline and they will show you more than just their furrowed brow!

Remember: Aquarius' detached attention is merely them plotting world domination, they are not ignoring just you!

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Pisces Feb 18 - Mar 19
Pisces, the Fish, are the true arty farty, idealistic, poet types. They love nothing better than to wallow in their own poetic muses and will probably feel peeved that this text is not rhyming.
Pisces are the pretentious cravat wearing creatives of the star system who love nothing better than the splash of oil on canvas, crunch of quill to parchment or the watery splashy-trickle of watercolour paintbrush in jam jar water.
Pisces are kind, make excellent carer's, although, unfortunately, they tend to take on the symptoms of the ailment of anyone around them, or of people they see on the television or read about in newspapers.

On the positive side Pisceans can make a handy side income from work as a medium or mystic. Give a Piscean a crystal ball and the results are quite stunning - in tests about 20% more accurate than newspaper horoscopes.
Pisceans have moments of great inspiration, which, if they weren't so smiley, could lead to mobs trying to burn them at the stake as a witch.
On the further downside, Pisces exhibits a multiple personality type characteristic, including one or all of the following: the victim, the martyr, the hostage, the in-shower-Opera-singer-not-in-the-shower.
All Pisces exhibit multiple personality disorders. They can be very manipulative, they like to suffer and inflict suffering, and they can be spiteful. On the positive side they can be very forgetful and so can be half way through being spiteful and suddenly go off to do the shopping or something else. Warning: If they aren't forgetful, they can be racked with guilt. Insanity is a clear trait of this star sign.

Aries Mar 20 - Apr 19
If you are Aries then you clearly resemble a Ram. The best position for you in any crowd is right at the front lest your annoyingly proddy horns poke those in front of you in the back.
Your star sign exudes extrovertedness, you are a fun loving party goer and giver. You are the most likely star sign to have the ginger wig and fake breasts.
Trouble is you tend to have very creased worry lines on your forehead and can be especially pissy with others when you are in love. Critics may liken your face to a walnut or prune, or a Date especially at Christmas time.
The Aries nature is that of an explorer, a pioneer. You love freedom, can assert yourself but you can be very rude and violent especially when driving large cars and busses.

Your very violent temper in fact can lead to all sorts of bother; you have difficulty differentiating between arguments over small inconsequential things, and things which have the ability to change world events.
Whilst you are a very active person, your main fault is that you are indecisive over what you are to be active over. This can lead to all sorts of confusion; including accidental riot and food past it's sell by date in the fridge.

Taurus Apr 20 - May 19
Taurus, also known as The Bull, is an earth sign. You are very boring and can get over-emotional over small things. You are petty, resentful and you never allow anyone else to watch the television when there is something on that you want to watch.
Taurus is a very practical star sign; you are trustworthy, persistent, and solid. Unfortunately you can also be very very overweight as you enjoy the good things in life.
You can be warm hearted when not stuffing your fat red bloated face. Because you tend to be a blobby ass, you are very lazy - in any lying-in-bed marathons you would win above all other star signs, although ironically your bladder demands you make irregular trips to the toilet throughout the night.

You love routine and just being greedy. You are inflexible, stubborn and unimaginative.
Strong and silent you may be, but most find you obstinate and ignorant especially when in front of them in queues.

Gemini, Cancer Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio and Sagittarius are on the next two pages.

Gemini May 20 - Jun 20

Gemini, the twins, is a multiple personality star sign.

The term schism is very apt to describe your various moods that you can switch back and forth in an instant.

On the bright side this means you are never boring or dull, on the downside you can spend too much time talking to yourself, sometimes in high pitched voices.

You have a quick wit, are spontaneous and can adapt to any kind of retort especially from lippy young kids on the street. Arguing is a real strength and, if chosen as your sport, will give you hours and hours of phrase twisting pleasure.

Downside: You can be inconsistent, which some take to mean you are a two faced schemer.

On the plus side you are very fidgety which, to those who study body language, know, is a sign that at least your body is trying to be honest even when your mouth and tongue are not.

Cancer Jun 21 - Jul 21

Cancer, the crab, is naturally defensive, frightened of being hurt. Trouble is this causes a sinister inferiority complex that can lead to misunderstandings, scheming and, ultimately, stabbings.

Intuitive, shrewd and resourceful, Cancerians can also be kind, sympathetic and sensitive.

Cancer are the first to fly the flag at times of war and crisis, especially if they have made the flag themselves out of loose rags or pieces of tissue.

You tend to be overemotional, highly sensitive, unstable and gullible. This is a classic Bunny Boiler star sign.

During the occasional moments of emotional downtime, you know instinctively when to help others and when to withdraw into your protective shell. However, you can be worried needlessly by the motives of those who do the shopping in your house and can take some of their decisions personally, such as 'what are they trying to tell me by buying watercress or ready to cook carrots?'

Leo Jul 22 - Aug 22

Leo is the Lion of the star sign firmament. You are a natural leader, passionate, a show off. You like vibrant colours and are flamboyant to the point of excess. You are charming and self assured, but very noisy especially on the piano.

If you can be bothered you are hard working but you tend for the over dramatic and big hats.

But others must watch out if they chose to ignore you! Ignore a Leo and watch those lips pucker up in to a world-class sulk! If you are a dictator you might even invade somewhere, or at least take over the only bathroom in your apartment.

You spend most of your time being the centre of attention and, when not in the limelight for even the barest of moments, become bullying, pompous, stubborn, patronizing and snobbish, especially on Tuesdays.

When slighted you can become cold and like nothing better than repeatedly storming out of a room when you feel maligned.

Virgo Aug 23 - Sept 21

Virgo is the sign of the critic in astrology. On the surface Virgo are shy, retiring, perhaps even spotty. Beneath the surface you are violently passionate!

You are very brainy, methodical, a bit like Mr Spock in Star Trek, and you might even have the pointy ears if you were born with Uranus and Mars in conjunction.

You are very cautious, which can be very annoying to others behind you in queues of traffic or in the post office or public toilets. The trouble is you tend to be over-critical to the point of making people, even dock workers, cry. You have a need to pigeonhole people and will not accept people that cannot be categorized and put into a definable sub class or species.

You are a fussy individual, finicky, self-conscious, and cynical. You would be a great satire writer. Send your submissions in.

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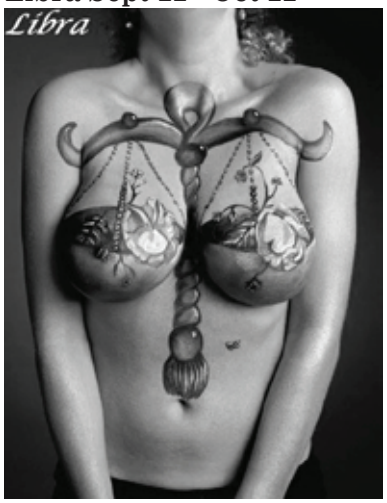
Libra Sept 22 - Oct 22



Libra is the sign of the diplomat. You are also easy going, so if you can find a job as an ambassador to a beach based surfing country you will be particularly happy.
You need to be needed. A romantic at heart. Barbra Streisand is singing to you when she sings 'People who need people'.
You are a good resolver of disputes, and are in love with love with love etc...
If you could you would make your life into a living musical and would never speak again, singing everything including your tax returns.
You are, unfortunately, the most indecisive, flirtatious frivolous tease!
You are gullible to even the most incompetent of flatterers and are easily led.

Scorpio Oct 23 - Nov 21

Scorpio is the Scorpion, you have big pinchy claws. You are very secretive and are terribly misunderstood.

You are compassionate, however, but as people distrust your secrecy this isn't much use when being pilloried in the press!
You are not afraid of the dark, and are perfectly happy to just follow blindly your feelings.
Unfortunately you are a very cruel person, vindictive and brooding. You are never happy just swatting a housefly; you must remove all of its legs before flushing it down the toilet.
You tend to burst into tears at the strangest of moments, seem to be (and are to a certain extent) unstable, and are untidy. Not someone you would like to share an apartment or house with.
You are also particularly vicious in arguments and sometimes cannot forgive the smallest of faux pas...

Sagittarius Nov 22 - Dec 21

Sagittarius is The Archer, the roamer; there is something defiantly pikey about you.
You have an uncanny ability to put up tents in the wilderness with only the minimum of instruction and pegs.

Footloose and fancy free you can come across as slovenly to those who do not appreciate tactile people who like to wear loose fitting clothing that falls off to the slightest touch.
You are optimistic and adaptable. You are a bit of a joker, but sometimes laugh at your own jokes a bit too loudly and for too long. You are also one of life's philosophers, ready with worn out old clichés that make even 7 year olds groan when you repeat them endlessly.
Unfortunately all of these positives are nothing compared to your bad characteristics. You are tactless, careless and your stories are world class for their unbelievability.
Many consider that you are a lazy fat baldicoot who has poor health and moralizes about things that you know nothing about. People learn to never take your criticism at face value.
Win critics over by inviting them to intimate one on one parties, to share left over, cold, 3 day old, pizza and possibly challenge them to a scratching competition..

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Christmas Eve and Christmas dinner see Balloon Chasers Guide

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Top tips

SUPERMARKETS. Help promote healthy living by putting your cakes, ice creams, pies etc. in aisles that are too narrow for fatties to fit through.

PUBLIC toilet users. When you realise the person in the next cubicle is holding fire until you leave, simply open and close the toilet door without leaving. Their first plop can then be greeted with a huge cheer.

SHOE BOMBERS. Increase your payload by becoming a clown.

TO MAKE a pot of supermarket coleslaw go further, simply grate a carrot, some cabbage and an onion into the tub, then add some mayonnaise.

SUDOKU LOVERS. Solve your puzzles in seconds by logging on to sudoku.sourceforge.net, typing the clues into the grid and clicking the 'solve' button. This will save hours, leaving you plenty of time to do something worthwhile.

AMERICANS. Wipe out the Iraqi insurgency by simply joining their side. With your 'friendly fire' tactics, the war should be over in days

OLD people. Ensure a good fight at your wake by leaving a valuable antique in your will to a distant relative, whilst promising it to a closer relative verbally before you die.

RAPPERS. Avoid having to say 'know what I'm sayin' all the time by actually speaking clearly in the first place.

WORRIED that your teeth will be stained after a heavy night drinking red wine? Simply drink a bottle of white wine before going to bed to remove the stains.

MURDERERS Need to dispose of a body? Simply parcel it up and post it to yourself via DHL. You will never see it again.

CINEMA goers. Please have consideration for pirate DVD viewers by having a pee before the film starts.

BURGLARS. When fleeing from the police, run with your right arm sticking out at 90 degrees, wrapped in a baby mattress in case they set one of their dogs on you.

CHRISTMAS COMES BUT ONCE A YEAR...

...but the AWOL Babe comes every week!

Jennifer Lamiraqui - a gift wrapped present that all men would be happy to receive on Christmas morning

'Twas the Night before Christmas

'Twas the night before Christmas,
when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;

The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;
And mamma in her kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap,

When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.

The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow
Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below,
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer,

With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted,
and called them by name:

"Now, _Dasher!_ now, _Dancer!_
now, _Prancer_ and _Vixen!_
On, _Comet!_ on, _Cupid!_ on, _Don-
der_ and _Blitzen!_
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"

As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky;
So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,
With the sleigh full of Toys, and St. Nicholas too.

And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.

He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tar-
nished with ashes and soot;
A bundle of Toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.

His eyes--how they twinkled!
his dimples how merry!
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow;

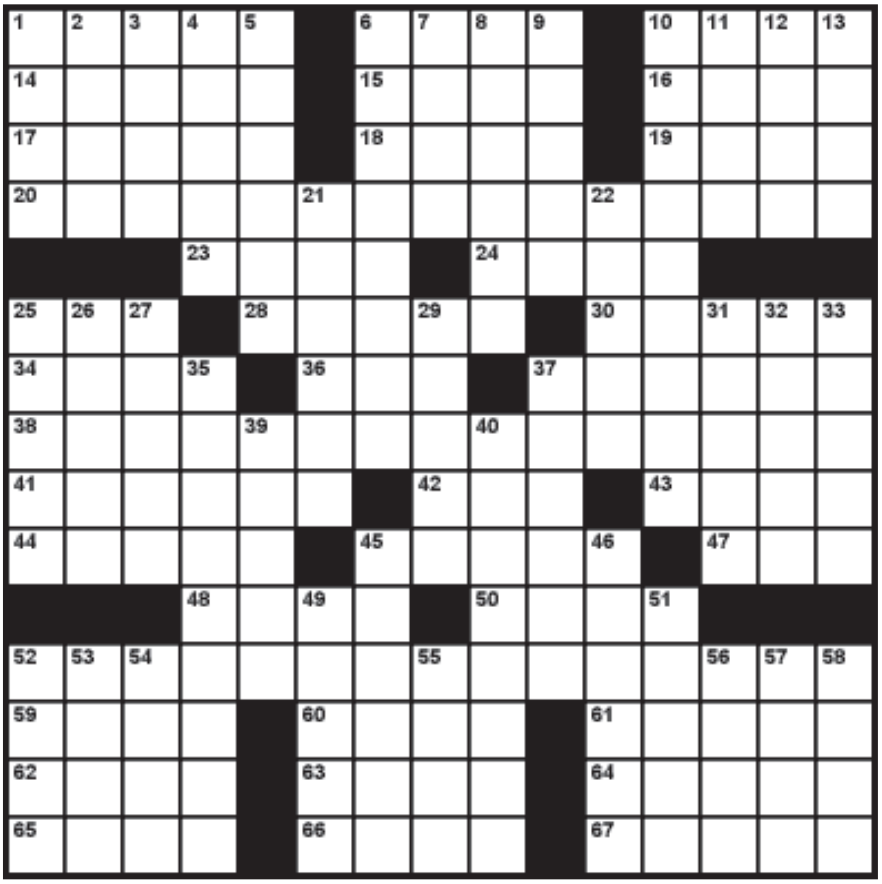
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath;
He had a broad face and a little round belly,
That shook when he laughed, like a bowlful of jelly.

He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;

He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose;

He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night."

AWOL's Christmas Crossword

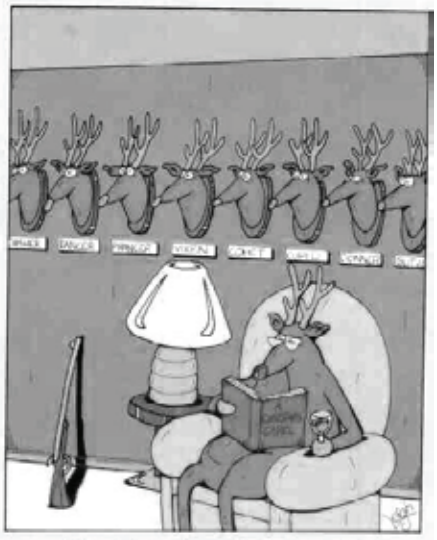


Across
1. Holiday pie
6. Santa's load
10. With 'the', syndrome causing missed putts
14. Key or corner
15. "Holiday In Harlem" singer
16. Young land?
17. Paper money
18. It may be found in 25 down
19. Blue-collar name?
20. Creche figures
23. Longest division of geological time (var.)
24. No ice
25. Dot's follower, often
28. Homeless ones
30. Panorama
34. West Point, i.e. (abbr.)
36. Big __ (Cal.)
37. Lots
38. Holiday decoration
41. Holdups
42. Rangers' org.
43. Dam's opposite
44. Wipe out
45. Time before life
47. Indian bread
48. Organic compound
50. Anthem opener
52. Holiday song, "Oh, little..."
59. Go over a manuscript
60. Big name in detergent
61. Mountain ridge
62. Penny __
63. Tech. grad.
64. Girders
65. One who ogles
66. Negatives
67. Fills

Down
1. Attention getter
2. Engrave
3. Heart
4. With 53 down, singer from Chicago
5. Sibling's son
6. Element found in photocells
7. Succulent plant
8. Performers with a lot of makeup
9. "Dawson Creek" actor, Holmes
10. Holiday seasons
11. Detail
12. Coat
13. Tibia locale
21. Good natured teasing sessions
22. Enjoy
25. Place for 18 across
26. Earthy color
27. West Side Story gal
29. __ Kafka
31. Killed
32. Aquarium fish
33. Very pale
35. Objector
37. Wise-looking (like Harry Potter, perhaps)
39. Office worker
40. Quick drinks
45. White elephant, for instance
46. Chunnel town
49. Many times
51. __ Buena (evergreen plant)
52. Distant prefix
53. See 4 down
54. Kir ingredient
55. Slight advantage
56. Miami hoopsters
57. French 101 verb
58. GI's chow

Solution to the Christmas crossword is on page 20 of this issue

Don't forget to pick up your copy of AWOL, available from a host of bars and other outlets every Friday; NEXT ISSUE OUT ON 9TH JANUARY



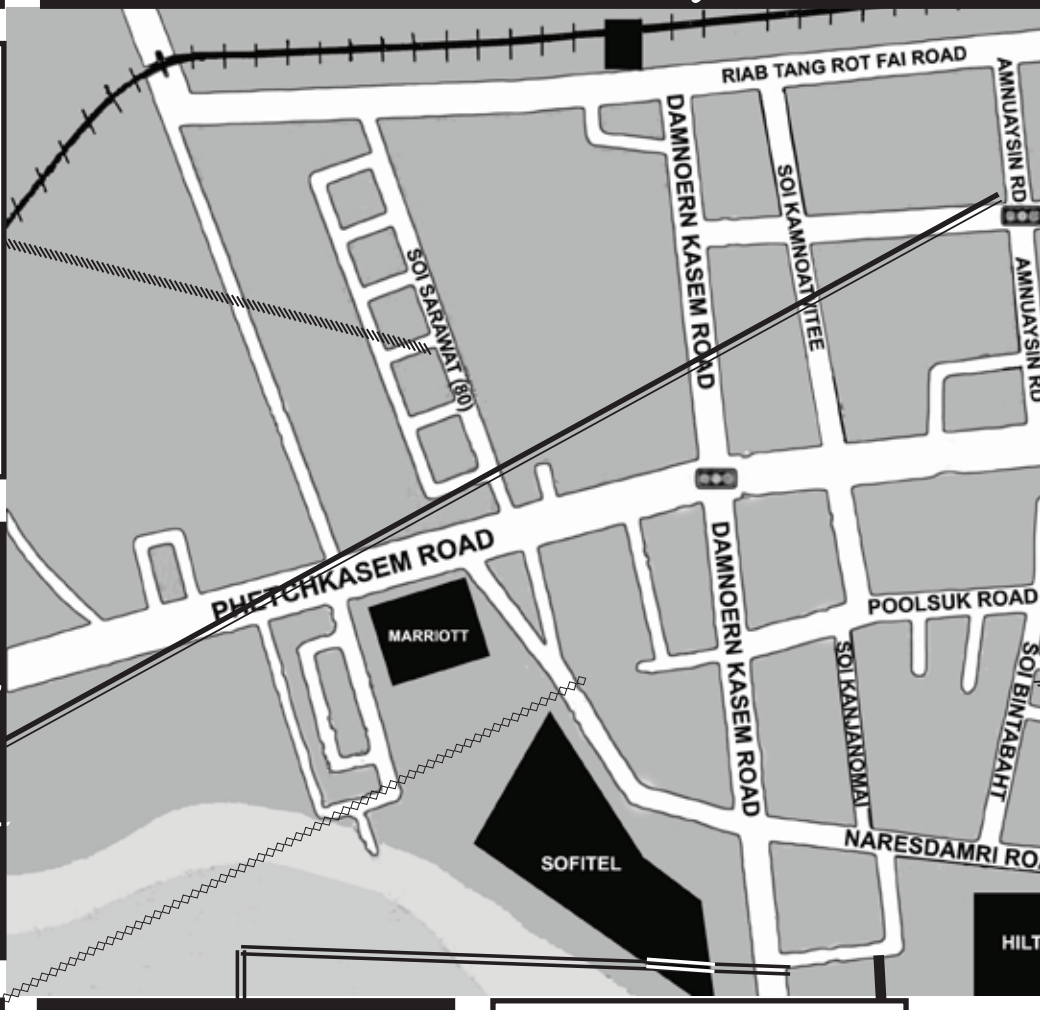
All of the other reindeer *used* to laugh and call him names.

Green Lotus Bar and Restaurant
Soi 88 (not on map)

THE AWOL G
PUB C

No T-shirts, no prizes, just some recomm
Plus a map to help you on
Merry Christmas an

Dick's Office



Mr Dan Guesthouse and Restaurant

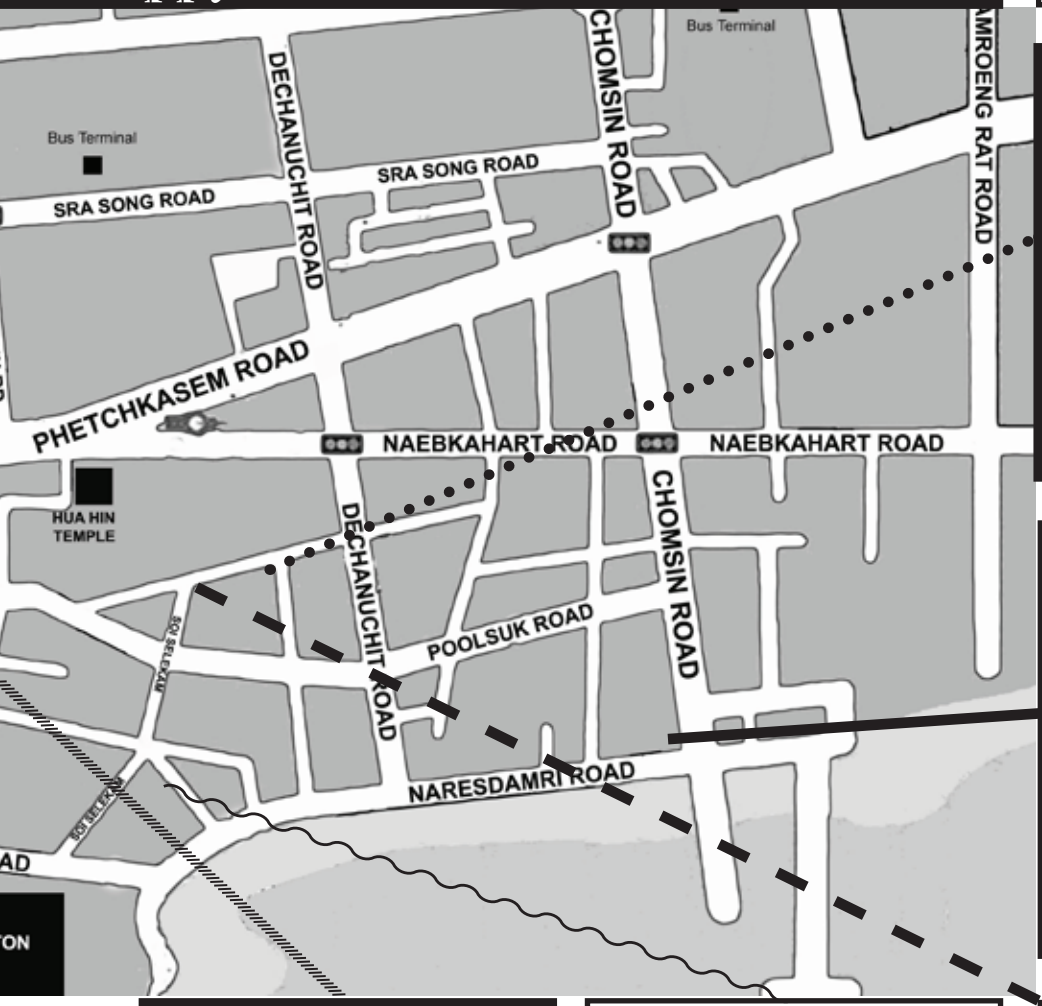
California Steak House and Cantina

BILLY'S BAR

BERNY'S INN

CHRISTMAS
RAWL

endations by AWOL for a bit of festive fun.
your way there and home!
d a Happy New Year!



Sunset Boulevard Bar and Cafe
Khao Takiab (not on map)

LUCKY SHOT
Party to celebrate 3 years open on 27th December
Free food - 50 baht shots

Ye Olde Buffalo Tavern

HAPPY BAR

Sabai Bar

J.Ws Pub & Restaurant

Christmas Top Tips

TIRED of eating Turkey leftovers for a week after Christmas? Simply buy a smaller turkey, or better still a chicken instead.

Recreate the traditional British Christmas shopping experience in Thailand by turning the air conditioning as cold as it will go, turn on some garden sprinklers inside the house and play the 'Best Christmas Album In The World…Ever' non stop, and then invite the surliest friends you have round for a week.

PARENTS - want to hide Christmas presents from the kids? They never look under the bed or in the bottom of the wardrobes so these are the ideal places.

Having problems setting fire to the brandy on the Christmas pudding? Simply mix some lighter fluid in as well for a guaranteed flame.

SANTAS – having trouble with your worker elves? Replace them with RoboElves© from Sony™ Corporation.
Brussel sprouts with the turkey causing the family to fart? Give them baked beans instead.

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Christmas cracker makers – people will buy your crackers again next year if you put £5 in each cracker rather than a crap joke, paper hat and a stupid toy.

Missing the UK festive TV programming in Thailand? Simply buy the Morecanbe and Wise Christmas Special, the Wallace and Gromit box set, The Sound of Music, The Great Escape and the Star Wars box set on DVD and you won't miss a thing.

KIDS – want to find the presents Mum and Dad have bought you this Christmas? Whatever you do, never look under the bed or the bottom of the wardrobe, as they never hide them there.

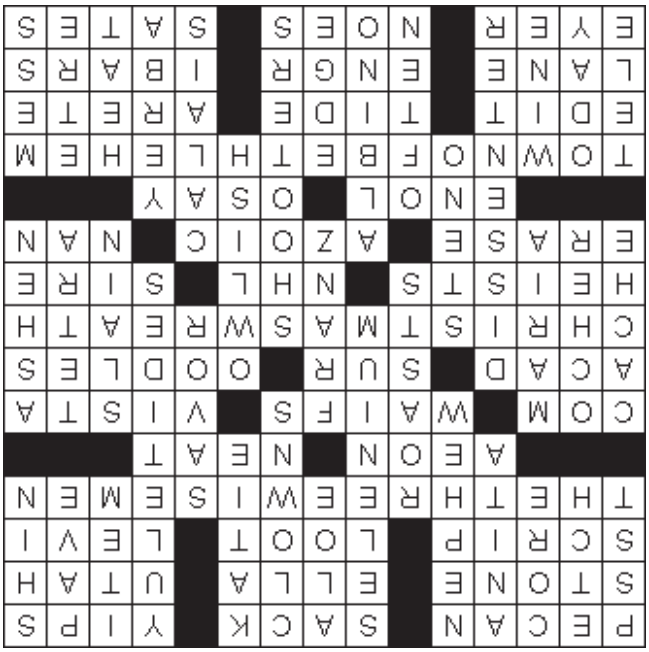
Romantics – 'Last Christmas' by George Michael does NOT set the right tone for an evening in with your loved one, unless you bat for the other side.

BAR OWNERS – want to clear out your bar over Christmas? Simply play Cliff Richard's Greatest Christmas Hits. Failing that any Johnny Mathis CD will do.

MUMS. Out of Christmas wrapping paper? Simply convert birthday wrapping paper by adding "Jesus" after "Happy Birthday."

AWOL's Christmas crossword solution

(please turn page upside down!)



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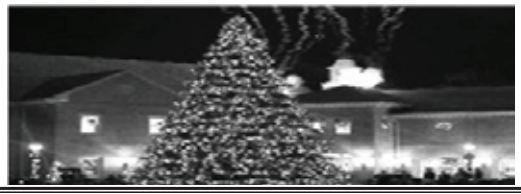

THE HASH REVIEW 2008

Cha Am Hash House Harriers is an informal group of runners/walkers who meet fortnightly to partake of the joys of Hashing, a pastime based on the old 'Hare and Hounds' model, involving following a trail through the delightful Thai countryside in the cool of an early Saturday evening with like-minded individuals of all ages and either gender, with a view to arriving for drinks and the barmy ritual of the Hash Circle in a pre-determined spot before enjoying the On On in convivial company at a local restaurant. All are most welcome to join us.

Activities in 2007/8: We have staged 25 Hashes and with membership of well over 100 we regularly manage to pull a turnout varying from less than 20 to over 40, of all nationalities, ages and types, all with the common intent to enjoy one another's company, the open air and the natural environment, and the comical rituals that make hashing uniquely memorable and fun – all this for only100 Baht per Hash. We have hashed in many locations, all within striking distance of Cha Am and Hua Hin, amid the changing seasons, in a wide variety of conditions. Full accounts of our Hashes are published promptly on our website and appear in shortened form in AWOL. Our Hashes take up to an hour and a half and cover 4 to 5 km for walkers and slightly longer for runners. Each Hash is given clear briefings regarding the trail by the Hares prior to setting out and all are welcomed home with refreshing drinks, after which the Circle is called by the GM (Grand Master) who presides over proceedings. These follow a similar format, including welcomes, farewells, christenings (regular members are given Hash names) and entertainment. There is much fun to be had in the Circle and all can make their contribution. We continue to enjoy good relations with Hua Hin Hash House Harriers and other groups, including the local Hash Pedallers and share overlapping membership and various events with them.

Topical Issues: This year we have looked carefully at health and safety issues and produced our own guidelines to ensure minimum risk to members. We are open to other initiatives from members. Several of our number attended the world-wide Interhash in Perth, Western Australia in March 2008 and greatly enjoyed meeting Hashers from all over the world, undertaking a Red Dress Run through the city and completing several other Hashes in various exotic locations, as well as enjoying the Hash concerts. Some members have also attended other Hashes in Vietnam and Macao and Phuket. We continue to promote our activities as resources permit and continue to expand our membership list. 2007/8 was a very good year and we expect even better things in 2008/9. Come and join us! On, on!

Website is:- www.cha-am-hhh.com. Contact: David djvincent@yahoo.co.uk tel. 087932 332 7

Festive 555

BLONDE CHRISTMAS STORY

There were two blondes who went deep into the frozen woods searching for a Christmas tree.
After hours of subzero temperatures and a few close calls with hungry wolves, one blonde turned to the other and said, "I'm chopping down the next tree I see. I don't care whether it's decorated or not!"

CHRISTMAS ANGEL

One Christmas, a long time ago, Santa Claus was getting ready for his annual trip; but there were problems ..... everywhere.
Four of his elves were away sick and the trainee elves did not produce the toys as fast as the regular ones. So, Santa was beginning to feel the pressure of being behind schedule.
Then, Mrs. Claus popped in to tell Santa that her mother was coming to stay for Christmas; which stressed him even more.
After a while, he went to harness the reindeer, he found that three of them were about to give birth and two had jumped the fence and run away, heaven knows where to.
Then, when he began to load the sleigh one of the boards broke and several large toy-bags fell to the ground, scattering their contents all over the place. Needless to say, Santa was not in the best of moods.
Suddenly, the doorbell rang and he went to the door expecting another problem. But when he opened it, there was a little angel with a great big Christmas tree that she had brought especially to cheer him up.
The angel greeted him very cheerfully, "Merry Christmas Santa Claus. Isn't it just a wonderful day? I have a beautiful tree for you. See, isn't it just the loveliest Christmas tree you've ever seen? Where would you like me to put it?"
Thus began the tradition of the little angel on top of the Christmas tree.

THE WEATHER MAN

A long time ago, in Communist Russia, there was a famous weatherman named Rudolf.
He's always had a 100% accuracy rate for his forecasts of the Russian weather conditions. His people loved him and respected him for his faultless foresight. He was particularly good at predicting rain. One night, despite clear skies, he made the prediction on the 6:00pm news broadcast that a violent storm was approaching. It would flood the town in which he and his wife lived. He warned the people to take proper precautions and prepare for the worst.
After he arrived home later that evening, his wife met him at the door and started arguing with him that his weather prediction was the most ridiculous thing she had ever heard. This time, she said, he had made a terrible mistake. There wasn't a cloud anywhere within 10 miles of the village. As a matter of fact, that day had been the most beautiful day that the town had ever had and it was quite obvious to everyone it simply wasn't going to rain.
He told her she was to be quiet and listen to him. If he said it was going to rain, IT WAS GOING TO RAIN. He had all of his Russian heritage behind him and he knew what he was talking about. She argued that although he came from a proud heritage, IT STILL WASN'T GOING TO RAIN.
They argued back and forth for hours, so much that they went to bed mad at each other.
During the night, sure enough one of the worst rainstorms hit the village the likes of which they had never seen. That morning when Rudolf and his wife arose, they looked out the window and saw all the water that had fallen that night.
"See," said Rudolf, "I told you it was going to rain."
His wife admitted: "Once again your prediction came true. But just how were you so accurate, Rudolf?"
To which he replied, "You see, Rudolf the Red knows rain dear!"

HEAVENLY CHRISTMAS

Three men die in a car accident Christmas Eve. They all find themselves at the pearly gates waiting to enter Heaven. On entering they must present something "Christmassy".
The first man searches his pocket, and finds some Mistletoe, so he is allowed in.
The second man presents a cracker, so he is also allowed in.
The third man pulls out a pair of panties.
Confused at this last gesture, St. Peter asks, "How do these represent Christmas?"
The third man answered "They're Carol's."

THAI BOXING

Look out for details of the regular fight nights held at the Thai Boxing Garden. These are not exhibition matches, but the real thing. Anyone interested in the art of Muay Thai should call into the Boxing Garden and talk to Khun Chop, Hua Hin's own champion. Positioned in Poolsuk Road, behind the temple, turn left beside Willi's. Tel: 032 515 269

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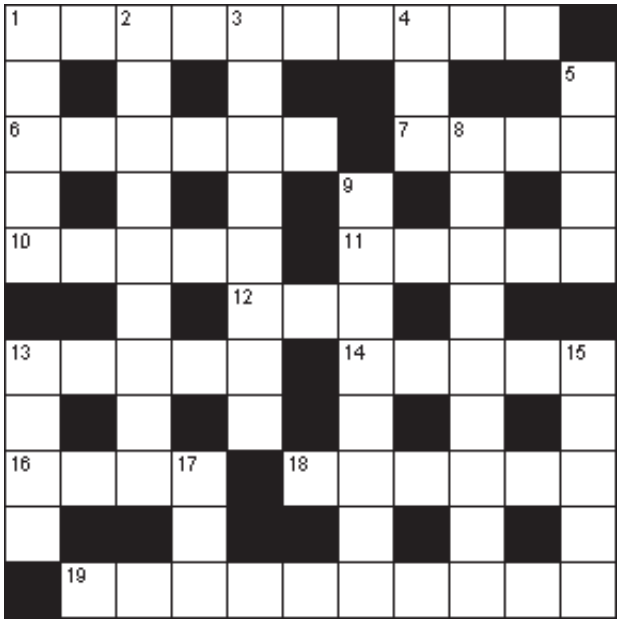
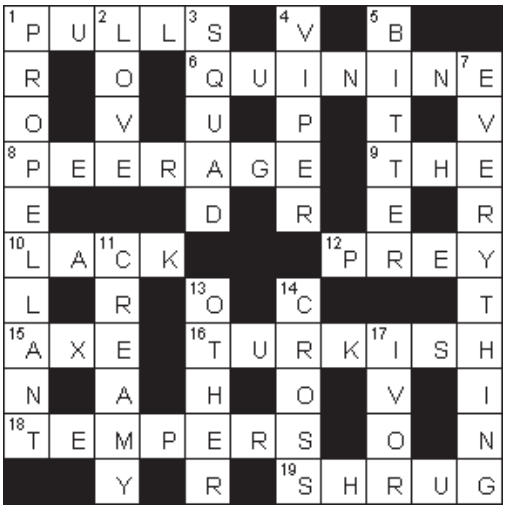
Quick XWord

Across
1. Recurring at regular intervals (10)
6. Practitioner in lechery (6)
7. Cry (4)
10. Squander (5)
11. Abounding in rocks (5)
12. Terminal digit of the foot (3)
13. Constructed (5)
14. Poles for sails (5)
16. Chinese secret society (4)
18. Previous to (6)
19. Welsh valleys village (10)



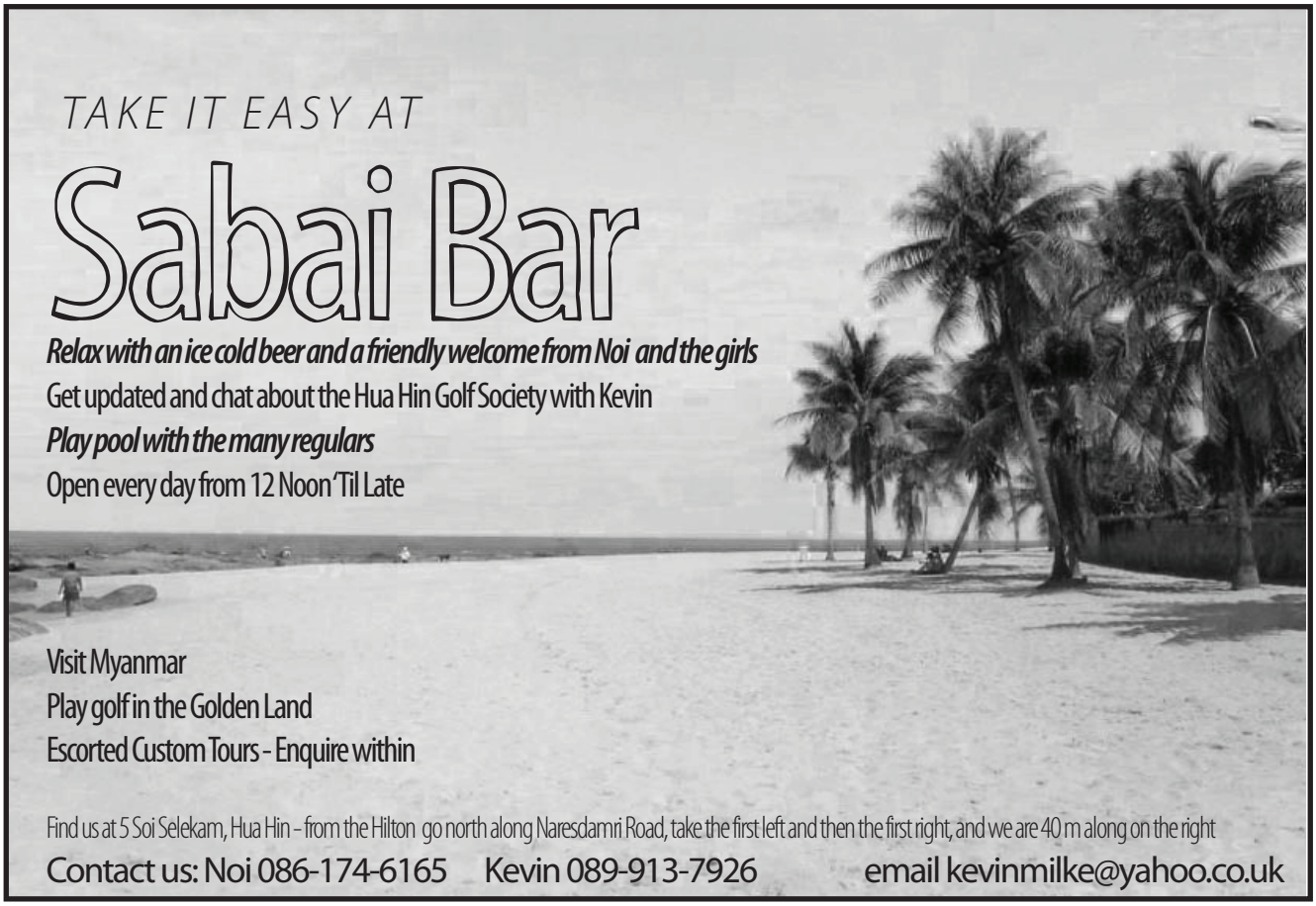
Down
1. Newcastle suburb (5)
2. Economic decline (9)
3. Beaten egg dish (8)
4. Taxicab (3)
5. Kill (4)
8. Secondary piece of equipment (9)
9. First public performance (8)
13. Immersion in water (4)
15. Consume (5)
17. Alcoholic liquor (3)

Solution in next week's issue.
Last week's solution below



TAKE IT EASY AT

Sabai Bar



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It's plonk, but not as we know it!

■ TAMWORTH, ENGLAND

An entrepreneur claims to have invented a machine that turns a cheap bottle of plonk into a vintage-tasting wine in a matter of minutes.

Inventor Casey Jones says the £350 gadget uses ultrasound technology to recreate the effects of decades of ageing by colliding alcohol molecules inside the bottle.

The Ultrasonic Wine Ager, which looks like an ordinary ice bucket, takes 30 minutes to work and has already been given the thumbs up by an English winemaker.

Mr Jones, 53, said: "This machine can take your run-of-the-mill £3.99 bottle of plonk and turn it into a finest bottle of vintage tasting like it costs hundreds.

"It works on any alcohol that tastes better aged, even a bottle of paintstripper whisky can taste like an 8-year-aged single malt.

"The look and bouquet of the drink is improved and because of the chemical changes, the alcohol is easier to absorb by the kidneys and therefore, hangovers are virtually eliminated.

"I have even tried it with orange juice after I saw a similar device being used in the US. It didn't just make the juice taste fresher, it made it look brighter too."

He added: "I see thousands of inventions every year and there are a lot of crazy ones, but in every ton of coal there is a diamond.

"Of all the inventions I deal with, this one has amazed me the most in the effects it has on alcohol."

Andre Jones, no relation, a winemaker who produces 40,000 bottles-a-year at his family-owned Buzzard Valley Vineyard, near Tamworth, Staffs, said he was impressed by the gadget.

He said: "Casey took one of our bottles and brought it back for us to try after it had been in the machine. I was amazed, it had definitely aged.

"Obviously it can't change the grape variety used, but it does mean a relatively poor variety can be made to taste a lot higher market.

Ultrasound machine 'turns cheap plonk into fine wine in 30 minutes'

"I would like to see it used on some of the Mediterranean varieties like a Rioja or a Shiraz.

"This could definitely have some applications for those restaurants who are buying wine for £10,000 a case.

"Technically I suppose you could buy a good wine at two or three years old and age it so it tastes like a 20-year-old vintage.

"Wine is at it's best five or so years after it's made, so this could help homebrewers taste aged wine more easily."

However, he warned restaurants and bars against trying to pass off a cheaper bottle of wine as a more expensive one just because it had been through the machine.

"You would have to tell customers it wasn't quite the real thing," he said.

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If you wish to place a classified advert in AWOL, please fill in the details below. Rates are 20 baht for the first 10 words, and 15 baht for every 10 words after that (example; 40 words will cost 65 baht for one week). Cut out the coupon and deliver it with payment to either the Observer offices at 27/59 Bo Fai, Phetkasem Road, Hua Hin (opposite Hua Hin hospital), or to Noi at Sabai Bar, Soi Selekam by 6 pm on the Tuesday before the issue you want to be included in.
PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM IN BLOCK CAPITALS (continue on separate sheet if necessary)

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7.	8.	9.	**10.**	11.	12.
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Your Problems SOLVED

Relationship hanging by a thread? Money troubles? Can't get on with your neighbours? Ask Mary Ann Cotton, AWOL's very own agony aunt.

■ DEAR MARY,
My 'Santa Sacks' have been feeling rather painful recently because I have had no opportunity to make any 'deliveries' for nearly a year, if you know what I mean. Full to the brim, and it has caused me no end of tossing and turning but to no avail. I have heard that the female 'elves' in Thailand are very good at helping with 'deliveries', but I am worried that the size of the sacks might scare them off. On my previous visits to the exotic East to make deliveries I have always had problems finding my preferred 'entrance' and have had to resort to the back door, which I find most unsatisfying, so I am looking to you to find out if you can recommend a lasting solution to my problem - my sacks are so full that I think they are going to explode!
Pressured, Lapland.

Mary says: Dear Pressured,
What a load of bollocks! If you seriously expect me to believe that you have not made a delivery for a year then I might as well start believing in Father Christmas! Why don't you just come out and say it straight - the missus has not been cleaning the pipes for me so I need to know the best place to get plunged. assuming that is the question you are asking then have no fear with your idea of Thailand; there are experts there in the field you require, and you should fly to Bang kok as soon as possible before there is a nasty accident, and my recommendation would be to go to find some local 'plumbers' in the Nana Hotel, a traditional place where professional workers like to relax and pick up extra jobs. You will find that in time your pipes will be clean, deliveries frequent and you might even have a new partner for whenever you are in Thailand. Have you ever considered using buffalo instead of reindeer by the way?

DEAR MARY,
I have recently been elected into a very high political office, one which the last few incumbents have misused very badly. I want to put the troubles and mistakes of the past behind, and change things, but there are a number of issues troubling me. While the office is very nicely decorated and equipped there is some nasty graffiti engraved into the oak panelling referencing 'KKK' and 'Illuminati' which I assume must be some sort of gang names, while there is some sort of glue or creamy white residue stuck in the rugs and carpets all over the place. I would use public funds to pay to get these things fixed but I have recently discovered that there are none, despite the previous assurances of my predecessor. I am most concerned that people will think that I have damaged the office, as I have already had visits from some very unpleasant people wearing white hoods saying this. My question then is this - should I stage a terrorist attack on the office and then claim on the insurance, or do HomePro sell the necessary items to fix it myself?
Blackballed, Chicago.

Mary says: Dear Blackballed,
My what a pickle! Personally I wouldn't go near HomePro but that is mainly because my sleazy ex-husband works there, so the terrorist option would be my pick. There's no better way in my experience of dealing with those hard to remove stains in carpets, or ingrained scratches in wood furniture. Just make sure your insurance cover is both up to date and that you pay the extra premium for terrorist attacks. If you really feel that you need to go the DIY route then to keep the cost down I'd suggest brown shoe polish for the scratches and vinegar for the stains, but this should only be a last resort; its only 4 years though so why worry?

BLUE MOON HOTEL
164 Chomsin Road (soi 70) - Hua Hin

Reservations: 032 511 913
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Rooms at 690, 950, 1150, 1350 and 1900 Baht

A SLOB'S GUIDE TO HEALTH AND FITNESS

As it is that time of year when we indulge in an orgy of rich foods,alcohol and chocolates, followed by obscenely healthy New Year resolutions, AWOL felt honour bound to bring you this guide!

Question: I've heard that cardiovascular exercise can prolong life. Is this true?

Answer: Your heart is only good for so many beats, and that's it; don't waste them on exercise. Everything wears out eventually. Speeding up your heart will not make you live longer. That's like saying that you can extend the life of your car by driving it faster. Want to live longer? Then take a nap.

Q: Should I cut down on meat and eat more fruits and vegetables?

A: You must grasp logistical efficiencies. What does a cow eat? Hay and corn. And what are these? Vegetables. So a steak is nothing more than an efficient mechanism of delivering vegetables to your system. Need grain? Then eat chicken. Beef is also a good source of field grass (green leafy vegetable). And a pork chop can give you 100 per cent of your recommended daily allowance of vegetable products.

Q: Should I reduce my alcohol intake?

A: No, not at all. Wine is made from fruit. Brandy is a distilled wine; that means they take the water out of the fruity bit so you get even more goodness that way. Beer is also made from grain. So get plenty of it down your neck whenever you can. Bottoms up; chin-chin!

Q: How can I calculate my body/fat ratio?

A: Well, if you have a body and you have fat, your ratio is one to one. If you have two bodies, your ratio is two to one, etc.

Q: What are the advantages of participating in a regular exercise programme?

A: Can't think of a single one; sorry. My philosophy is – no pain…good!

Q: Aren't fried foods bad for you?

A: You are not listening! Foods these days are fried in vegetable oil. In fact they are permeated in it. How could getting more vegetables be bad for you?

Q: Will sit-ups help prevent me from getting a little soft around the middle?

A: Definitely not! When you exercise a muscle, it gets bigger. You should only be doing sit-ups if you want a bigger stomach.

Q: Is chocolate bad for me?

A: Are you crazy? HELLO Cocoa beans! Another vegetable! Chocolate is the best feel-good food around!

Q: If I exercised by swimming every day, would that be good for my figure?

A: If swimming is good for your figure, please explain whales to me.

Q: Is getting in shape important for my lifestyle?

A: Hey! 'Round' is a shape, pal!

I hope this has cleared up any misconceptions you may have had about food and diets. And remember: Life should NOT be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving at death's door in an attractive and well-preserved body. No, it is much better to skid in sideways (Chardonnay in one hand; chocolate bar in the other) with your body thoroughly used up, totally worn out and screaming, "Woo hoo! That was a great life! What a ride!"

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Hua Hin's only pool bar with 9' tables
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Tequila, Sambuca & Sour Apple only 50 baht
B-52's only 100 baht
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27/3 Poolsuk Road, Hua Hin

Hua Hin Pool Leagues

Hua Hin Pool Billiard League
League Table (from last week)

Team	P	W	D	L	Diff	Racks	Pts
Eagle Bar	13	9	3	1	44	69	21
Queens Flower Bar	13	9	2	2	44	89	20
Lucky Shot Student's	13	9	2	2	28	40	20
Johnie Walker Black	13	9	1	3	16	48	19
Lucky Shot B	13	8	3	2	22	37	19
Octopussy Bar	13	8	2	3	18	29	18
Lucky Shot Ladies	13	6	3	4	10	19	15
Lucky Shot A	13	5	4	4	4	18	14
Silverrock Bar	13	5	4	4	-4	-10	14
Sugar Cane Bar	12	6	0	6	8	22	12
Dick's Office B	12	3	2	7	-22	-42	8
Johnie Walker Red	12	1	3	8	-24	-49	5
Diamond Bar	12	1	3	8	-32	-62	5
Thaiwaii	12	1	2	9	-30	-51	4
Captain's Inn	12	1	2	9	-34	-63	4
Dick's Office A	13	1	2	10	-48	-94	4

Next Fixtures
Matchday 15 19/12/2008
JW Red v LSA
Captain's Inn v Queens Flower
Eagle v Thaiwaii
Sugar Cane v JW Black
Silverrock v Dick's Office A
LSB v Diamond
LSS v Octopussy
Dick's Office B v LSL

Matchday 16 26/12/2008
LSA v LSS
LSB v LSL
Dick's Office B v Dick's Office A
Sugar Cane v Octopussy
Diamond v Thaiwaii
Captain's Inn v Silverrock
JW Black v JW Red
Queens Flower v Eagle

Matchday 17 2/1/2009
LSB v LSA
Dick's Office A v LSS
LSL v Sugar Cane
Thaiwaii v Dick's Office B
Octopussy v Captain's Inn
JW Red v Diamond
Silverrock v Queens Flower
Eagle v JW Black

Results
Matchday 14 12th December 2008
Results not available at press time

The Hash Report

Cha Am Hash House Harriers: Hash 88 Saturday 13th December 2008; hared by Mickey Mou and Penny Lame.

A dazzling summer late afternoon greeted the thirty or so Hashers who rolled up for this Hash, making their hearts glad, their mouths eager in anticipation of the refreshments to come and their purses a tad lighter once hash cash had been surrendered to the all pervasive prehensile grasp of Piste Again. The carefree banter was silenced by the brave attempts of both Hares to rescue their faltering Misdirections which had had the Hashers in something of a tizzy on the route in. For some reason known only to Mickey Mou, false trails and wellingtons became indissolubly linked and the Hashers dribbled off with more than the normal look of total bewilderment and perplexity, pondering no doubt that Mickey was revisiting some old obsession from his exotic (and clearly also eccentric) native heath, namely Jersey.

The Circle was called in failing light by Cannonballs who proceeded to down both Hares honourably for a good, if somewhat idiosyncratic and disconnected trail. Mickey Mou insisted on a continuation of his famous ice shows by deliberately delaying his beer consumption and, as usual displayed no ill effects or even symptoms of frigidity from sitting on the ice block – only his gleeful delight in leaving a distinct two-way impression on proceedings. There was a show of hands on likely attendees at the Christmas Eve Hash to be held on 24th December with the usual excellent celebratory activities thereafter at the Chicken Coop and with the promise of a generous subsidy from Hash funds. Cannonballs wished to get Hashers singing the correct traditional version of the Down Down song and conducted an impromptu rehearsal to prove that nostalgia is not just a thing of the past, evoking tears of joy from Pinky and Steakhouse. GM Hollowlegs came into the Circle to down Pussy Galore for a misdemeanour, christen Cheeky Bum and to transfer the odious Order of the Thunderbox, known also as the yolk that is no yoke, the plastic collar of opprobrium and the talisman of total turpitude, from a duly relieved Topcat to Penny Lame for utterly confusing Misdirections,

Hua Hin Pool Leagues

Hua Hin and Khao Takiab Pool League

League Table

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Diff	Pts
Bob and Noks	4	3	1	0	47	25	22	7
Eagle Bar	4	3	1	0	45	27	18	7
Free Time Bar	4	3	1	0	44	28	16	7
Oasis Bar	4	2	2	0	39	33	6	6
Deja Vu	4	1	2	1	36	36	0	4
Dizzy Dolphin	4	2	0	2	36	36	0	4
Sunset Boulevard	4	2	0	2	33	39	-6	4
Thaiwaii	4	2	0	2	33	39	-6	4
Kun Koom	4	1	1	2	36	36	0	3
Harleys Bar	4	1	0	3	36	36	0	2
Railway Tavern	4	0	0	4	25	47	-22	0
Dara Bar	4	0	0	4	22	50	-28	0

Results Wed 17th December 2008

Deja Vu v Dara Bar
Dizzy Dolphin v Bobbys Good Friends
Eagle Bar v Bob and Noks
Free Time Bar v Sunset Boulevard
Harleys Bar v Railway Tavern
Oasis Bar v Thaiwaii
Results not available at press time

Next Fixtures

Wed 7th January 2009
Bob and Noks v Free Time Bar
Bobbys Good Friends v Eagle Bar
Dara Bar v Dizzy Dolphin
Railway Tavern v Oasis Bar
Sunset Boulevard v Harleys Bar
Thaiwaii v Deja Vu

Hua Hin Social Pool League

Results

Week 17 17th December 2008
Billys Babes v Butterfly Rock
JW Red v Jungle Juice B
Sabai v U Turn
Red Bar v Limelight
PP v Headrock
Lazy Daze v JW Black
Jungle Juice A v Billys
Results not available at press time

Next Fixtures:

Please note the 2 week break!
Week 18 – 7th January 2009
Butterfly Rock v Jungle Juice A
Billys v Lazy Daze
JW Black v PP
Headrock v Red Bar
Limelight v Sabai
U Turn v JW Red
Jungle Juice B v Billys Babes

League Table

Team	P	W	L	F-A	Pts
Billys Babes	8	7	1	90-62	14
PP	8	7	1	87-65	14
J Juice A	8	7	1	85-67	14
J.W. Black	8	5	3	85-67	10
J Juice B	8	5	3	84-66	10
Lazy Daze	8	5	3	83-67	10
Sabai	7	5	2	69-64	10
Red Bar	8	4	4	79-69	8
Billys	8	2	6	66-88	4
Headrock	8	2	6	66-86	4
Limelight	7	1	6	46-68	2
U Turn	6	1	5	45-66	2
J.W. Red	6	1	5	39-62	2
B'fly Rock	6	0	6	48-67	0

Hua Hin 8-Ball League

League Table

Team	P	W	D	L	Diff	Pts
SilverRock	17	13	1	3	58	27
Harley	17	12	3	2	50	27
Komhom	18	11	2	5	38	24
BenTho	17	10	3	4	46	23
SportCtre	18	8	5	5	28	21
MrDanA	17	9	2	6	24	20
Dolphin	18	7	3	8	-20	17
Phoenix	16	6	2	8	-12	14
DicksA	16	4	5	7	-12	13
B'fly Rock	12	6	0	6	8	12
MrDanB	17	4	3	10	-48	11
DicksB	16	2	3	11	-46	7
LilleMan	17	2	2	13	-76	6
BambooGr	10	1	2	7	-38	4

Results Week 19 17th December 2008

BambooGrove v BenTho
DicksA v LilleMan
Dolphin v DicksB
Harley v Komhom
MrDanA v MrDanB
SilverRock v Phoenix
SportCentre v Butterfly Rock
Results not available at press time

Next Fixtures

Week 20 7th January 2009
Dicks B v MrDan A
MrDan B v BambooGrove
Pheonix v LilleMan
Dolphin v Komhom
SportCentre v Dicks A
BenTho v SilverRock
ButterflyRock v Harley

Hua Hin 9-Ball League

League Table

Team	P	W	D	L	Diff	Pts
Mr Dan A	10	7	0	3	13	14
LilleMan	10	6	0	4	-15	12
Red Bar	8	5	0	3	11	10
Plas Place	9	5	0	4	10	10
Dicks B	9	5	0	4	2	10
B'fly Rock	6	4	1	1	8	9
Dolphin	9	4	0	5	11	8
BenTho	10	4	0	6	-17	8
Mr Dan B	10	2	1	7	-11	5
Dicks A	9	2	0	7	-12	4

Results Week 10 15th December 2008

BenTho 16 - 9 Dicks A
Dicks B 10 - 16 Red Bar
Dolphin 9 - 17 Mr Dan A
Mr Dan B 12 - 13 Butterfly Rock
Plas Place 16 - 8 LilleMan

Next Fixtures

Week 11 5th January 2009
BenTho v Dicks B
Dicks A v Butterfly Rock
Dolphin v Mr Dan B
Mr Dan A v LilleMan
Red Bar v Plas Place

Hua Hin Golf Society

The Annual Newsletter is available at Bernys, ask Berny for your copy.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Existing memberships come up for renewal at the end of this year (31st December 2008). Any member wanting to renew their membership with the Hua Hin Golf Society can do so now. Application forms can be obtained from Berny's Bar or the Sabai Bar.

Latest results:

Friday 12th Banyan - Stableford Competition

Group 'A' - 0-18 hcp - 21 Entrants

1st Rod Wooler (Mucker) (g) 35 pts 12 hcp, 2nd Kuki Paulini 34 pts 5 hcp, 3rd Kari Matti 33 pts 7 hcp, 4th Bob Holm (g) 32 pts 15 hcp, 5th Steve Aristodemou 31 pts 15 hcp.

Group 'B' - 19-36 hcp - 22 Entrants

1st Patrick Hillier 36 pts 22 hcp, 2nd Ann Buasri 35 pts 30 hcp, 3rd Sheila Bird 32 pts 21 hcp, 4th Chris Davidson 31 pts 19 hcp, 5th Paul Moran 31 pts 23 hcp.

Nearest the Pin No. 2 Bob Holm (g), No. 15 Roger Menaldino

Tuesday 16th Banyan - 4 Ball Texas Scramble Charity Event

Results not available at press time

Upcoming fixtures:

Tuesday 23rd December Royal Ratchaburi
Friday 26th December Lake View
Tuesday 30th December Panurangsi

2009
Friday 2nd January Public Holiday
Tuesday 6th January Kaeng Krachan
Friday 9th January Lake View - 1st Tee 11.00

Butterfly Rock Golf

Latest results:

Dec 12th - Palm Hills 15 players.

Front 9 - 20 points - Nid Byrne.
Back 9 - 20 points - Tan Thomson.
Overall - 37 points - Nid Byrne

Dec 15th - Lakeview A & B 23 Players

1st Craig Miller 35
2nd Peter Tucker 33
3rd Mike Ford 33
4th Jill Leonard (guest) 32

Forthcoming Fixtures

Monday 22nd December Lake View
Friday 26th December Palm Hills
Monday 29th December Lake View
2009
Friday 2nd January 2009 Palm Hills
Monday 5th January 2009 Lake View
Friday 9th January 2009 Palm Hills
Wednesday matches not known at press time - please contact the organisers via http://www.brgc.biz/

Hua Hin Darts Leagues

Next Fixtures:
Please note the 2 week break!
Week 20 - 6/1/2009
Cup Semi Finals

Fixtures not available at press time

Top 16 standings:

Top 10 -Div 1

Name	Bar	Pts
Stuart	P	104
Golf	SB	90
Jason	CAT	83
Mark	O	73
Tao	JWB	72
Dicky	JWB	70
Bon	DOB	67
Noi	CAT	64
Martin	LD	61
Rune	SB	60

Top 6 - Div 2

Name	Bar	Pts
Tao	CAT	105
Eero	BR	103
Don	CAT	74
Howard	M	60
Muay	JB	59
Mojo	M	50

Results Week 8
Week 17 16th December
Division 1

Results not available at press time

Division 1 Table

Team	P	W	D	L	PF-PA	Pts
Scandic	6	4	1	1	43-17	9
JW Blk	5	4	0	1	35-15	8
P'dise	5	4	0	1	32-18	8
CAT	4	3	1	0	25-15	7
Oasis	5	2	0	3	20-30	4
Lazy D	5	1	1	3	19-31	3
Dicks B	5	1	0	4	19-31	2
JW Red	5	1	0	4	17-33	2
Pink Fl	4	0	1	3	10-30	1

Division 2

Results not available at press time

Division 2 Table

Team	P	W	D	L	PF-PA	Pts
CAT B	6	6	0	0	49-11	12
B Rock	5	3	1	1	28-22	7
Mojo	5	3	0	2	29-21	6
L Shot	6	3	0	3	27-33	6
Dicks A	5	3	0	2	27-23	6
Jaew	5	3	0	2	26-24	6
B Grve	5	1	1	3	22-28	3
Good F	6	1	0	5	19-41	2
Love	5	0	0	5	13-37	0

Balloon Chasers Guide

Welcome to the most vital guide around! All the parties, celebrations and balloons you could want (along with some booze and food of course!) Tell AWOL about your event by the Thursday before and we will include it here...send us some photos afterwards and we will do our utmost to publish them; email anything to awol@observergroup.net or contact our representative Noi at Sabai Bar (Tel: 086-174+6165).

Saturday 27th December - Lucky Shot Bar 3rd birthday party; free food and 50 baht shots

Christmas Lunch/Dinner

A number of places in town are offering special menus for Christmas, and listed below are the ones that we know about. Please check with each venue about availability and pricing.

Ye Olde Buffalo Tavern (see advert page 6) - Christmas Dinner & Entertainment - Come down to the pub to make a booking and pay a small deposit

Starters: Fresh Cream of Pumpkin Soup/ Jumbo Cocktail of Fresh Sea Prawns/Brandied Chicken Liver Pate on a bed of Rocket Salad & Shaved Parmesan

Mains: Honey Glazed Roast Ham with a rich Red Currant & Port Reduction Sauce Or Slow Roasted Turkey Breast with Chestnut Sage & Onion Stuffing, Chipolata Sausage wrapped in Bacon & Cranberry sauce. Vegetables: Carrot & Pumpkin Mash, Roast Potatoes, Green Beans, Roast Parsnips, Fresh Buttered Brussel sprouts & Gravy

Desserts: Traditional English Christmas Pudding & Brandy Sauce, Homemade Mince Pies & Double Cream, our famous Chocolate Brownies & Cream, Coffee or English Tea. All served with a half Carafe of South African Red or White wine.

Dug up by popular demand, back again from the grave ELVIS and his side kick TOM Bloody JONES

California Steak House and Cantina (see advert page 14)- Christmas Day and Eve Dinner Special from 6pm Adults 525 Baht Children under 12 300 Baht plus Vat. No service charge Reservations Required 50% Down

Starters: Caesar Salad, Pumpkin Soup, Spring Rolls

Main Course: Tom Turkey, Pork Loin Roast, Mashed Potatoes with Gravy, Candied Sweet Potatoes, Stuffing (Dressing) Mothers Recipe, Cranberries, Vegetables, Dinner Roll with Butter

Desserts: Pumpkin Pie Or Ice Cream

Jungle Juice (see advert page 21)- Xmas Dinner with One complimentary Drink starts 12.00 pm. Numbers Limited book early - Price 600 baht.

Starters: Salmon Mousse Pate Or Prawn Salad Or Fresh Fruit Salad

Traditional Turkey Dinner with all trimmings, Xmas Pudding with Rum Sauce.

O'Neills - 2 sittings, advance bookings only.

El Murphys - 3 sittings, bookings preferred.

Regular Events

Tuesdays - Darts League
(various venues, see previous page, free food for players)

Wednesdays - Pool Leagues
(various venues, see previous page, free food for players)

Fridays - Pool League
(various venues, see previous page, free food for players);

- Bar-B-Q party every week at Le Velo Rouge, Khao Takiab
- Green Lotus Bar & Restaurant, Soi 88 (Bonkai) 169 baht Seafood BBQ every fortnight from 24th October

Scoreboard

(EPL unless stated)

Saturday, 13 December 2008

Aston Villa 4-2 Bolton
Liverpool 2-2 Hull
Man City 0-1 Everton
Middlesbrough 1-1 Arsenal
Stoke 0-0 Fulham
Sunderland 4-0 West Brom
Tottenham 0-0 Man Utd
Wigan 3-0 Blackburn

Sunday, 14 December 2008

Chelsea 1-1 West Ham
Portsmouth 0-3 Newcastle

DON'T FORGET!
The next issue of AWOL comes out on Friday 9th January 2009.
Don't miss it!

AWOL is now available online! Download a PDF version from www.observergroup.net and never miss it!

All back issues available For the geek in all of us!

Can't see your local sports league in AWOL? Contact us with your details and we will try to make space for it. Just email to: awol@observergroup.net

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

EPL Fixtures Preview

(All times Thailand)

Saturday, 20 December 2008
Blackburn v Stoke, 22:00
Bolton v Portsmouth, 22:00
Fulham v Middlesbrough, 22:00
Hull v Sunderland, 22:00
West Ham v Aston Villa, 00:30

Sunday, 21 December 2008
Arsenal v Liverpool, 23:00
Newcastle v Tottenham, 22:00
West Brom v Man City, 20:30

Tuesday, 23 December 2008
Everton v Chelsea, 03:00

Friday, 26 December 2008
Aston Villa v Arsenal, 00:15
Chelsea v West Brom, 20:00
Liverpool v Bolton, 22:00
Man City v Hull, 22:00
Middlesbrough v Everton, 22:00
Portsmouth v West Ham, 20:00
Stoke v Man Utd, 19:45
Sunderland v Blackburn, 22:00
Tottenham v Fulham, 20:00
Wigan v Newcastle, 22:00

Sunday, 28 December 2008
Arsenal v Portsmouth, 21:00
Blackburn v Man City, 23:15
Bolton v Wigan, 21:00
Everton v Sunderland, 21:00
Fulham v Chelsea, 21:00
Newcastle v Liverpool, 19:00
West Brom v Tottenham, 21:00
West Ham v Stoke, 21:00

Tuesday, 30 December 2008
Man Utd v Middlesbrough, 03:00

Wednesday, 31 December 2008
Hull v Aston Villa, 03:00

Barclays Premier League Table (at 19th December 2008)

			Home					Away						
	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1	Liverpool	17	5	4	0	13	6	6	1	1	13	5	15	38
2	Chelsea	17	3	4	2	15	6	8	0	0	21	1	29	37
3	Man Utd	16	6	1	0	19	4	3	4	2	8	6	17	32
4	Aston Villa	17	4	4	1	14	9	5	0	3	15	11	9	31
5	Arsenal	17	5	1	2	15	10	4	2	3	14	10	9	30
6	Hull	17	3	2	3	9	15	4	4	1	17	12	-1	27
7	Everton	17	1	3	4	9	15	6	1	2	14	10	-2	25
8	Portsmouth	17	4	2	3	13	13	2	3	3	6	13	-7	23
9	Wigan	17	4	2	3	9	9	2	2	4	12	11	1	22
10	Fulham	16	5	2	1	11	6	0	4	4	2	6	1	21
11	Bolton	17	2	2	4	6	9	4	0	5	14	14	-3	20
12	M'brough	17	3	3	3	9	13	2	2	4	8	11	-7	20
13	Stoke	17	5	2	2	12	10	0	3	5	5	17	-10	20
14	Newcastle	17	3	3	2	13	11	1	4	4	9	13	-2	19
15	Tottenham	17	3	2	4	7	7	2	2	4	12	14	-2	19
16	West Ham	17	3	1	4	11	13	2	3	4	7	12	-7	19
17	Man City	17	4	0	5	19	10	1	3	4	11	15	5	18
18	Sunderland	17	3	1	5	11	13	2	2	4	6	12	-8	18
19	Blackburn	17	1	2	5	5	15	2	2	5	12	19	-17	13
20	West Brom	17	2	2	4	9	15	1	1	7	3	17	-20	12

In this special issue of AWOL we are going to look at the festive fixtures team by team rather than match by match and give a 'half term report' and a possible finish prediction.

So, in alphabetical order...

ARSENAL

Quite an inconsistent season so far for the Gunners, and all hasn't been happy in the dressing room, something that Wenger has addressed by changing captains. Their second half of the season should improve but they have three tough games over this period which we think they will only take a maximum of 4 points from. (Liverpool (h), Villa (a), Portsmouth (h)). Predicted finish - 4th.

ASTON VILLA

Martin O'Neill has got a decent squad and his team are difficult to beat; they will challenge the top 4 but are likely to fall just short of a Champions League spot. Games against West Ham (a), Arsenal (h) and Hull (a) are tricky but they will be looking for at least 5 points from them. Predicted finish - 5th.

BLACKBURN ROVERS

We think Mark Hughes realised he had gone as far as he could with Rovers and that this is why Paul ince struggled with them. However there are some good players there and their three matches could easily see them shoot up the table - Stoke (h), Sunderland (a) and Man City (h) is one of the easier sets, and we think 6 or 7 points is realistic. Predicted finish - 14th.

BOLTON WANDERERS

The Trotters have been a bit of an enigma this season so far; but manager Megson must be pleased to see his team in a comfortable position. In theory all three of their games (Portsmouth (h), Liverpool (a) and Wigan (h)) yields the possibility of points, but their home record is sketchy and they could easily end up with none. Predicted finish - 16th.

CHELSEA

Scolari has not been flashy and has shown exactly why he is so highly rated. His side have coped with a number of injuries that a lesser squad would have struggled with, and sit in prime position to push on with their title challenge. A pretty easy set of fixtures (Everton (a), West Brom (h) and Fulham (a)) as well over this period which they will expect to get maximum points from. Predicted finish - 2nd.

EVERTON

David Moyes must be getting somewhat frustrated with his team whose home record is letting them down. They have tough start to their Christmas games but will hope to pick up points in the others (Chelsea (h), Middlesbrough (a), Sunderland (h)), but we think they might struggle to get anything. Predicted finish - 12th.

FULHAM
Roy Hodgson has done a remarkable job and their home record is incredible. If the away from was as good they would be top of the league. However we don't think they have the squad to maintain this and may flirt with the relegation battle. Playing Middlesborough (h), Tottenham (a) and Chelsea (h) they will be lucky to get 3 points. Predicted finish - 15th.

HULL CITY
The story of the season so far, but will not be able to sustain their performances because of the size of the squad. A mixed bag of fixtures - Sunderland (h), Man City (a) and Aston Villa (h) an depending how injury free they are could muster maybe 4 points from those. Predicted finish - 13th.

LIVERPOOL
Finally it seems as if Benitez has got a genuine title chance, although a few injuries have started cropping up to possibly derail that. Not an easy fixture list, with Arsenal (a), Bolton (h) and Newcastle (a) but we think they will win at least two of those and definitely not lose. Predicted finish - 1st.

MANCHESTER CITY
The Citizens have had an exciting if slightly disappointing season so far. A lot will hinge on who Mark Hughes buys in January as to how the rest of the season pans out. The fixture list has been kind to them - West Brom (a), Hull (h) and Blackburn (a), although their away form is poor. We think they'll be unbeaten and garner 5 or more points. Predicted finish - 9th.

MANCHESTER UNITED
Sir Alex will be disappointed with results so far, but they are notoriously strong in the second half of the season. Wigan (h) has been called off at press time so United only play Stoke (a) and Middlesbrough (h), both of which they should win. Predicted finish - 3rd.

MIDDLESBROUGH
'Boro have surprised us this season so far but they have recently shown signs of slipping. However two of the fixtures they have (Fulham (a), Everton (h), Man Utd (a)) are winnable. We think they will slide into the relegation battle though. Predicted finish - 17th.

NEWCASTLE UNITED
Despite all the mockery the Barcodes have slowly started turning things around, and credit must go to Joe Kinnear for that. A shame then that their Christmas fixtures could undo all that good work, as they face Spurs (h), Wigan (a) and Liverpool (h). Maybe 3 points, optimistically. Predicted finish - 11th.

PORTSMOUTH
Tony Adams seems to have taken well to management and was left a good team by 'Arry. Games are Bolton (a),West Ham (h) and Arsenal (a) and we anticipate 4 points for them. Predicted finish - 8th.

STOKE CITY
Stoke surprised a few teams early on, but we believe have now been found out; they will still pick up the odd win but not enough to see them survive. Blackburn (a), Man Utd (h) and West Ham (a) is likely to yield a maximum of 2 points at best. Predicted finish - 19th.

SUNDERLAND
Sunderland have suffered'second season syndrome' and after spending heavily Roy Keane obviously felt the pressure. Games against Hull (a), Blackburn (h) and Everton (a) are the kind they need to win, but we don't think they will. Predicted finish - 18th.

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR
All hail 'Arry is the cry emenating from White Hart Lane, and games with Newcastle (a), Fulham (h) and West Brom (a) should suit them nicely. At least 6 points and a possible maximum. Predicted finish - 6th

WEST BROMWICH ALBION
Despite playing good football, West Brom have neither the squad nor the luck to survive. Their 3 fixtures are Man City (h), Chelsea (a) and Tottenham (h) and we see zero points. Predicted finish - 20th

WEST HAM UNITED
With everything else going on around the club it is not too surprising that rookie Zola went through a sticky patch, but they seem to have come through it. Fixtures are Aston Villa (h), Portsmouth (a) and Stoke (h) which they will want at least 5 points from. Predicted finish - 7th

WIGAN ATHLETIC
They don't score enough goals but the 'Latics have done well so far. Only two games, Newcastle (h) and Bolton (a) but a probable 4 points, and this solid team deserve a safe mid-table finish. Predicted finish - 10th

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AWOL'S 12 Football Predictions of Christmas

■ ON THE FIRST DAY of Christmas our prediction came to be...

A striker who cannot score goals... Emile Heskey will leave Wigan in the January transfer window.

On the second day of Christmas our prediction came to be...
Two refs demoted... Rob Styles and Mike Dean being favourites.

On the third day of Christmas our prediction came to be...
Three teams heartbroken... Sunderland, West Brom and Stoke relegated.

On the fourth day of Christmas our prediction came to be...
Four managers leaving...during or at the end of this season - Joe Kinnear, David Moyes, Phil Brown and Paul Ince.

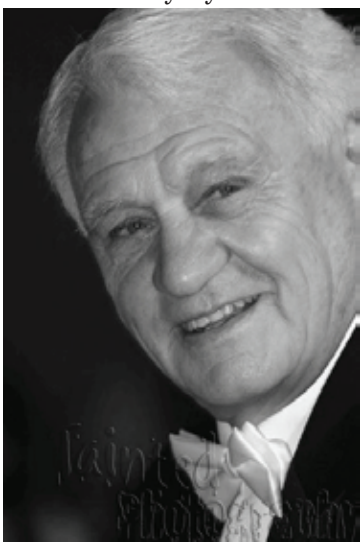
On the fifth day of Christmas our prediction came to be...
Five goals for Ronaldo...in one match.

On the sixth day of Christmas our prediction came to be...
Six million pounds...the amount of 'compensation' the tribunal will award Sheffield United to be paid by West Ham over their relegation.

On the seventh day of Christmas our prediction came to be...
Seven months of wrangling...by West Ham as they refuse to pay and contest it in the courts.

On the eighth day of Christmas our prediction came to be...
Eight FA Cup upsets...in the third round with that many Premier League teams crashing out.

On the ninth day of Christmas our prediction came to be...
Nine teams in trouble...financially by the end of the season and selling players off.



On the tenth day of Christmas our prediction came to be...
Ten consecutive unbeaten...games for England from the start of 2009.

On the eleventh day of Christmas our prediction came to be...
Eleven on each side crying...along with all the fans in the land as Sir Bobby Robson loses his final game.

On the twelfth day of Christmas our prediction came to be...
Twelve million pounds...bid by Tottenham for Robert Green in the January transfer window.

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