

August 31, 2004

All of a sudden, vacation is over and it's back to the grind, as it were. I hope you all had a wonderful summer!

There's a lot to write about where Friends of Thailand is concerned, and I guess I will start with the first great thing that happened over the summer.

In May, Jane Barnes Victor of Thai 39 joined Friends of Thailand. After leaving Peace Corps in 1975, Jane got a library degree and has worked as a librarian ever since. In a letter she sent with her membership form, Jane said that because of her background, she would like to donate \$500 for a PCV library project. It did not take long for Peace Corps Thailand staff to get the word out. By late June, a proposal for a Moving Library in Nasan, Surathani from Michael and Aleca Durocher of Thai 116 arrived. Jane decided the project was the right one for her. Therefore, when I visited Thailand in July and early August, I delivered the funds for the Moving Library to the Country Director, Dr. John Williams.

Jane's generosity will help make it possible for people in Nasan to have extended access to the existing community library materials, and is appreciated very much. To read the proposal, go to <http://www.friendsofthailand.org/projectsponsorship/projects2004/menu/menu.html> and click on Moving Library.

Thank you very much, Jane.

A second PCV project, Grass Mats for Understanding, was also underwritten by an FoT member this summer. The project was designed by Alicia Irwin of Thai 114 and her Thai colleagues and involves the development of a cottage industry by members of the combined PHA (**People Living with HIV and AIDS**) group in Buayai, Sida, and Bualai districts in Nakhonratchasima. The proposal for this project is also found on the FoT web page listed above. Thanks to the anonymous FoT member who contributed the \$203.

(Because of the increasing number of Friends of Thailand who donate funds for PCV projects in Thailand, FoT made application for Recognition of Exemption under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code earlier this year. This process generally takes several months, which means we should hear soon whether or not the application has been approved. When FoT receives word, which I am hoping will be positive, it will be forwarded to members of the FoT community with further information. Not only will we be able to issue receipts to donors, but will also allow FoT to expand its mission)

In addition to meeting with PC staff while in Thailand, I also had the

opportunity to visit Caleb Stewart of Thai 114 at his site in Nong Khai Province. Caleb is the volunteer who wrote a project proposal for an Organic Vegetable Garden at NaCoke School earlier this year. Two FoT members, Ted Chase and Heather Oden, underwrote the project, which was for \$220.75. What a great project it is! Members of the school community have already constructed the garden boxes, planted them, installed a watering system and hung the protective netting that will alleviate the need for pesticides. I will be adding photos I took of the school and garden to the web site shortly and will send another message when they are up. Caleb has also written that he will send photos when the plants are full-grown and the students are busy preparing their lunches with the vegetables. Everyone at the school thanks Ted and Heather! Because of their generosity, students at NaCoke will soon be able to eat fresh food that is pesticide free!

In my travels about Thailand and in spite of the daily monsoon deluge, I also investigated a number of possible locations for next summer's FoT Reunion. The place that won out was the first one recommended by FoT member, Bob Bidwell, the Tamarind Village in Chiang Mai. Not only is everything about the Tamarind perfect, but it is located in the center of the old city and offers many activities, both organized and informal. Based upon projected availability, the reunion will take place in mid-July, 2005. At the present time, I am awaiting more specific information about dates and rates from the Chief de Village, Khun Amaradist. Nevertheless, I have loaded a page onto the FoT site featuring the reunion and hotel. It is at <http://www.friendsofthailand.org/friendsofthailand/reunion2005/reunion2005.html> and featured links to various parts of the Tamarind Village web site. Have a look. I will send additional information in the near future and add it to the site. If any of you who have not written to express interest in attending the reunion and would like to, please let me know and I will add you to the list.

In closing, I thank all the new and renewing members of Friends of Thailand. They are included on the web site's Fall FoT News at <http://www.friendsofthailand.org/friendsofthailand/FoTNews/fotnews.html>.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Nickels-Cox
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