

September 30, 2012

Dear Friend of Thailand,

I hope this message finds you enjoying the start to Fall. As for San Francisco, the weather here remains foggy and chilly most days, though they say we may have a couple days of summer...finally. One bright spot, however, has been that baseball team of ours. Though I don't want to jinx anything, I will say we are all hoping they will continue to provide us with more "sunshine" right through the end of the *complete* season.

But enough about fog and baseball. In today's message, you will read about

- **BECOMING A FRIENDS OF THAILAND MENTOR**
- **MORE TRAINING TALES**
- **BIG FROG IN LITTLE KALASIN...COMING SOON!**

Enjoy,
Carolyn

BECOMING A FRIENDS OF THAILAND MENTOR

Friends of Thailand will now offer an additional service to Thailand PCVs, particularly those preparing to leave after their two years of service. The mentoring program will offer information about

- locating to a community in the United States or elsewhere in the world
- housing in that community
- job opportunities in that community
- Etcetera

If you are interested in becoming a mentor to a PCV about to complete service, and would like to learn more, please contact FoT Board member Rachel Isaacson Cooke (Thai 101) at rli@alumni.indiana.edu

MORE TRAINING TALES

In response to the FoT Update on September 3, others have written about their various, and esoteric experiences during training. It would appear that most of the really interesting tales come from those in earlier groups, when Peace Corps Washington was trying to figure out how to prepare young people to become volunteers. If you have any stories of "unusual" training experiences, send them along and I will feature them in future FoT Updates.

More on the "Lost" Trainees of Thai X

Jacqueline Butler-Diaz, Thai 24: I wanted to confirm that there *were* Peace Corps trainees at Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona when I was a freshman there in

1964-65. I remember little but the memory that they were there because by then, I was already planning on applying for the Peace Corps myself, so I looked at them with admiration and envy! They were segregated from us as they were busy training. I think we only saw them in the cafeteria for meals.

Arturo Pacheco, Thai X TEFL

I am a member of the lost Thai X group that started out with "training" in the hills outside of Tucson in early 1965 for a week, and then went on to Hilo for the 3 months of real Peace Corps training. Here is what happened. Keep in mind that in early 1965, the PC was still doing a lot of experimenting with the assessment process. In early 1965, someone in the PC came up with an "experimental assessment." Could you take a group of new PC recruits and put them through a rigorous and intensive experimental training process, and learn which of the recruits would likely be successful, and which would likely washout?

So we were sent to a YMCA camp in the hills outside of Tucson, to be put through a variety of experiments, including killing rabbits (survival training?), learning Spanish, and also being bused to the University of Arizona campus for lessons in Russian (inclination to learn a language quickly?), and a variety of other psychological and physical tests. The entire experiment was run by psychology graduate students from the University of Colorado, who observed everything we did and took lots of notes on clipboards. We were never told that the week outside of Tucson was an experiment and that our real PC training was to begin a week later in Hilo.

Needless to say it was a stressful week for all of us. At the end of the week, the PC bought us a keg of beer and informed us that our actual PC training would begin the following week in Hilo, and that our first week in Tucson didn't count. This type of experiment would never be allowed today with requirements of "informed consent," and university IRB boards that monitor experiments with human subjects.

Needless to say, when we arrived at Hilo, the wonderful training staff there couldn't understand why many of us seemed to be so suspicious of the staff, and why we seemed to drink so much beer every night. All in all, Thai X (TEFL) was a great group that bonded well, and, in spite of whatever notes were on those psychology student clipboards in the hills of Tucson, we went on to Thailand and both survived and served well.

By the way, although from California, and despite the Tucson experiment, I have chosen to live in the hills of the desert in El Paso, where the jack rabbits that I see on my morning hikes always run when I come along. I also teach a course on the Ethics of research.

Arturo Pacheco

El Paso Electric Professor of Educational Research

University of Texas at El Paso

Thai XII and Training Challenges *Following is a series of messages I have received from members of that group over the past couple days. They are presented in the order of their arrival.*

Bill Shaw: Some notable training memories include

Drownproofing: The basic idea is to be able to save yourself in the event of a water accident and no life preserver available. (Life preservers are still in short supply in Thailand). We were trained to essentially to float limply in the pool and to breath by raising our head above water briefly. Then our feet were tied and we had to do the same thing followed by tying our hands. I can't remember whether they tied both our hands and feet.

Rapelling: There were limestone bluffs outside of Columbia, Missouri. We were given a lesson in rapelling and then proceeded to one of these bluffs where we had to rapell down. They really weren't all that high.

Community Drop Off: Since we were destined for community development, the trainers thought it would be worthwhile to find our way around as a stranger in a community. As I remember, we all boarded a bus in Columbia; then, the bus proceeded along a rural route. We were dropped off in pairs on a Friday and instructed to be at an old hotel in Jefferson City, Missouri by Sunday afternoon. We had no money. Our goal was to find a place to stay, meals and gain an understanding of the community. To this day I remember the name of the village, Holt Summit. After two days, we hitchhiked into Jefferson City and went to the hotel for follow up meetings.

The value in all this was self sufficiency in meeting challenges. Even though we were paired with Thai CD workers who did the community organizing, it helped to understand the process.

George Mills: Yes in drown-proofing. An optional exercise - if we agreed our hands & feet were tied together and then we were "tossed" into the pool to retrieve a soda can from the bottom of the pool (that was fun). Several people were also in the pool during this exercise to "rescue" those who may not come back up. Another exercise was to swim 2 to 3 lengths of the pool underwater without coming up for air (what was the length of the pool? 60 yards?).

Repelling? - didn't do that since I was on crutches during those exercises - another short story for another time

Doug Raymond: I thoroughly enjoyed the Thai 12 PC training program in Columbia MO, which started in Oct 1965, I believe. Thanks to Bill Shaw for describing some of these 'extracurricular' experiences. I think their purpose was to promote group bonding, and also to apply some stress to see how trainees would deal with it. Better to drop out here than in-country.

Drownproofing: I am forever grateful for this experience, which makes long-term survival in open water possible. The technique was to conserve heat and energy, by

bobbing passively up and down, taking one breath each time you break the surface, then allowing yourself to drop down underwater again. The cycle becomes peaceful, dreamlike. The final exam was to be bound, hands and feet, and dropped in the pool for I think 2 hours, and then to swim 2 laps while still bound. Sounds extreme, but I think almost everyone did it. I enjoyed it even at the time, and it still gives me confidence in open water.

Rapelling: Another great experience, in group bonding and overcoming fears. I think the cliffs were 120 feet high, plenty of excitement there. Everyone had a sense of accomplishment, and learned to trust comrades.

Community Dropoff: Also unforgettable, challenging. A real gutsy thing to do, probably impossible in these days of legal liabilities and horror stories about criminal elements.

Language training: I can't say enough good things about the excellent language program and teachers.

George Mills: Forgot important detail (about Drowsproofing). Hands were tied together behind you. Hands were tied together and feet were tied together, and both tied together behind you. Had to turn over and grab the can blindly.

Doug Raymond: It was more fun than it may sound.

Kay Orsini: Good job, Bill and others. Just one small addition: after Peace Corps service ended in 1967, my then husband and I (Jan Orsini) moved to Hat Yai in southern Thailand to the UN/FAO project on rubber development where he worked in small farmer marketing. I taught English, did some writing for English language newspapers in Bangkok and started raising our family.

We spent a lot of time in the ocean at Songkhla beach--almost every weekend for awhile. I remember using drownproofing as a kind of meditation in the clear water as I let the gentle swells push me ever-so-slowly toward shore.

Happy memories of southern Thailand and drownproofing! It probably helped that I grew up in a San Diego beach town swimming a lot.

Doug Raymond: Correction: contrary to what I said about swimming two lengths underwater at the end of the test, I believe the requirement was just to swim the 2 laps any way we wanted, while tied up. It just turned out more convenient to swim a lot of it underwater.

Kay, I'm glad to hear that others found this technique enjoyable and useful.

[BIG FROG IN LITTLE KALASIN...COMING SOON!](#)

Yes, the Friends of Thailand book on 50 years of Peace Corps Thailand is just about

ready to take to the printer to determine the cost of both color and black and white printing. A few additional written pieces and photos have arrived in the past month or so, and are now part of the volume. Once I know how much a copy will cost to print and ship, I will send notice and post ordering information on the FoT web site.

One notable addition to the book is a collection of stories and photos submitted by various Thailand RPCVs, and one Brazil RPCV, who served in refugee camps and with resettlement programs post-1975. Their stories are a profound testimony to the enduring dedication and heart of Peace Corps Volunteers worldwide.

Many thanks to all those who sent stories and photos to make this entire effort possible.

And if you have not sent something for this volume, I am working on providing annual supplements to include written pieces and photos from anyone who wants to contribute in the future.