

# Sticky Rice

The Peace Corps Thailand Newsletter

## May 2011

### Welcome!

Here we are again, a long way from where we started, but not quite back to what we were. That'll come, that'll come. The important thing is to keep walking. In this issue, we've got some interviews, some fiction, some food, and some fun. You will also find, used as illustrations throughout, the winners of the MSC-122 Penultimate Photography Pageant (not actual name).

As the world has entered the age of electronic publishing, this will be the first issue of Sticky Rice to be available in ebook format as well. Consider that a beta feature for now while we work out the bugs and test the process. Any feedback from those of you who try it on your ereaders would be most helpful.

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### **Content Submissions!**

The next issue will arrive on July 4, so we need lots of great stuff from you, our loyal readers, before then. Seeing as it's the Fourth of July, patriotic verve and discourse on American culture would be quite welcome, whether in the form of fiction, art, photography, or Stuffing Your Face articles for crafting a simulacrum of a July 4 meal. For general content, we're always looking for more "Better Know a Province" articles, culture notes, funny stories, comics and other mischief.

Specific to Group 123, we'd like to do a "Get to Know 123" superlative feature in the same vein as the one for Group 122 included in this issue, and we'd also like to do some volunteer interviews, especially an interview with a 122 and a 123 together. Put yourself forward or nominate another, as you please.

Onward!



Interview with Paula Miller

# Quick Facts:

- -You can call her Paula, and she doesn't have a nickname... yet.
- -She came with her husband, Albert the professional chef
- -Paula holds a BA in Psychology, and MA in Counseling and a Masters of Public Health
- -She served as a PCV in Poland from 1997 to 1999
- -Previously she was working for the American Red Cross in the tsunami affected areas of Thailand.
- -She's been in Southeast Asia for six years now, and has been to Poland, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Indonesia and Thailand.
- -She's from Maryland back in the States.
- -Her title is the Director of Programming and Training, at least until PC Washington changes it again

**SR**: Have you eaten rice yet?

Paula: Yes

**SR**: What'd you eat?

Paula: Well, today I didn't. I actually lied.

**SR**: You must be so hungry.

Paula: I ate a sandwich! I'm a sandwich girl.

**SR**: Oh, that's okay. You had bread, *khanom bang*, that's alright. I'm a little worried, we might go get you some food later, but we'll finish the interview first. Okay, not about why did you join Peace Corps a second time, but why did you become a volunteer?

**Paula**: Why did I become a volunteer? I wanted to see the world, I wanted to learn a new language, a new culture, and I was really drawn to this add about service and the toughest job you'll ever love, and I just really wanted to do service in a challenging way.

**SR**: So you were a volunteer, you've worked with international aid organizations. How'd you come back to Peace Corps after all that time?

**Paula**: I love Peace Corps, it's my dream job! I've wanted to work for Peace Corps for a very long time, and so I just finally applied and finally got hired. I was trying to get some work experience with other organizations, but Peace Corps has been one of my favorite organizations and I love working with and talking to Peace Corps volunteers, so I'm excited. That's what I need to be doing.

**SR**: What's one of your favorite memories as a Peace Corps Volunteer?

Paula: Hm, favorite memories? I have a lot of them, but—

**SR**: We can do up three.

**Paula**: Okay, in Poland they have an *ognieszko*, which is like a big bonfire where you cook your polish sausage on a stick over a bonfire, so on the weekends having *ognieszko* with my friends and eating polish sausages, that's a very fond memory. And I guess the others were working at my school and talking to my students and working with my students and seeing their progress. Very fond memories of that.

**SR**: So you were a teacher?

**Paula**: I was a teacher, TEFL.

**SR**: How do you think the schools in Thailand are like the schools in Poland?

**Paula**: Yeah, they're pretty different. And I taught at a high school, so from the beginning our programs are really quite different. We also didn't have the community outreach part, although I did some community outreach stuff. The whole program was kind of shaped a little bit differently. I had my own classroom, I wasn't a co-teacher, so I like that about the Thailand program. That they have this capacity building of teachers built in.

**SR**: What were some of your biggest challenges as a volunteer?

**Paula**: Cold! And in fact you can see I don't have my Air conditioner on, I always have scarves on, because the air conditioner blowing on me makes me cold. So I froze. The whole time.

**SR**: So you know this is really weird weather. I hope it warms up for Songkran, I do not want to be covered in ice water in this weather.

Paula: Me too!

**SR**: Were you here for Songkran last year?

Paula: I was, in the south. In Phuket. Rowdy Songrkan.

**SR**: In the interest of maintaining your reputation, I will not ask you what you did in Phuket. I'm going to assume it was fabulous. What were some mistakes or learning experiences that you had? Where you thought, "oh, I wish I hadn't done that?"

Paula: In this job?

**SR**: As a volunteer. We could do this job, too.

**Paula**: That might be too much information.

**SR**: Oh, no, we want to know.

Paula: As a volunteer, "oops, I wish I hadn't done that?" Can I come back to that one?

**SR**: Yes. Moving on, what was your worst medical problem as a volunteer?

**Paula**: I had ring worm on my face. And they treat it in the same way that you probably have seen dogs here, with that purple on their skin. That's what they gave me. So I had this purple thing on my face. For a long time, from where I put the medicine on. But it went away eventually.

**SR**: What was the best part of your job as a volunteer?

**Paula**: Working with my students, talking with them and getting to know them. I worked at a high school, so they were older and could have real conversations. They were really smart and hardworking. They knew English was the ticket to their future, so they wanted to spend time with me, and they wanted to improve their English. They were always trying to talk. I mean, we had English Club and it was always packed and busy.

**SR**: I know you haven't been in this job long, but what's so far the best part of your current job? **Paula**: Since PST started, I've been in training. So we did all of PST and then right into the Counterpart Conference and right into Mid-Service, it's been a big whirlwind, and I feel like it's just kind of skipping along really fast. So what's the best part been? I think getting to know the people, getting to know the staff. I mean, boy are they just like a well-oiled machine. So that's also been a really good part.

**SR**: What's been the hardest part of this job so far?

**Paula**: The pace. I can't tell you how many six o'clock in the morning meetings we've had. And I was telling my husband, I like forget now that it's not normal to propose to someone, "do you want

to meet at six in the morning?" My language teacher said, "when do you want to have a lesson?" I looked at my calendar and said, "we could do it at six." And she said, "in the morning?" And I said, "yeah!" And she said, "no." I mean it's just, yeah.

**SR**: So you're taking Thai language lessons?

Paula: I am taking language lessons.

SR: Puut dai mai?

Paula: Well, I'm starting. I'm up to beverages section.

**SR**: Are you doing the green book?

Paula: I'm doing your book, yes.

SR: Good luck.

**Paula**: Thank you. I have a good teacher, though, and so all of my poor speaking I do is not a reflection of my teacher. It's all me.

**SR**: I'm pretty sure if you ask the staff to help you, they'd be happy to get in on the action.

**Paula**: They are. I was doing my homework so I go and I ask them what they are and things. So they're really good. They're great, and they want me to learn, and I'm the one that's my own barrier, because its awkward and time...

**SR**: And you never know when you're saying a dirty word.

Paula: Right!

**SR**: When you were a volunteer, what was the moment you said, "I want to go home?"

Paula: You know what, I never had that.

**SR**: Really?

**Paula**: Really. The whole time I was in, I never did.

**SR**: I don't believe you. I think you're lying.

Paula: I never did. I went into the Peace Corps older. I had already gotten one of my masters, and I had worked for a little while and somehow, when I graduated undergrad it was in the 80's and this whole climb the corporate ladder and dress for success and I kinda thought, "oh I have to do this?" I decided that's not me, that's not what I'm about, and I decided my dream was the Peace Corps, and I somehow lost that. So I was living my dream. And I knew I stepped out of a job and making money, and I went into the Peace Corp to fulfill my dream. And something really, really bad would have had to happen for me to not want to finish doing it. I was so into being wanting to do that. So that's why that was, I guess.

**SR**: So I'm going to go back to that challenges one you asked me to skip, let's try that again.

Paula: What was that again?

**SR**: Mistakes and challenges.

**Paula**: Mistakes, I made many mistakes. Most of them were around language. You know saying things and getting laughed at. You get laughed at every day. Polish is a difficult language, and Thai is difficult as well, so you can appreciate this. So it's a difficult language and they love that they have a difficult language. So a lot of mistakes were around language. Also, I think people thought I was serious a lot. One fellow teacher asked me if I was always like this or if I was always like a machine. And I didn't know what that meant. And I said, "like a machine, what does that mean?" So I think sometimes not taking time to be a little more playful with my colleges was a mistake.

**SR**: So, your husband is a professional chef. Is he going to open up a restaurant here, and can we get a discount as volunteers? Like, can we eat free?

**Paula**: Well, if he opens a restaurant, you can have a discount, but I don't think he's going to open a restaurant, so don't get your hopes up.

**SR**: That's a shame. Alright, last quick question, if you could pick any one place to travel, just to go, where would it be?

**Paula**: I have lots of places on my list, but if I had to pick one, I would go to Komodo Island in Indonesia and see the Komodo Dragons.

SR: That is an excellent answer. Komodo Dragons are worth the trip. Thank you for the interview.

Paula: Thank you.



**Interview with Suthanya** 

# Quick Facts:

Name: Suthanya Sukphaisal

- -You can call her Pi-Aoey
- -She has a BA in Italian with a minor in English and an MA in International Relations
- -Previously she worked at a German Company, Jirisat, for 10 years as a personal assistant to a German Expat
- -She hails from Bangkok but has been all over Europe, backpacking with girl gangs (not an actual gang, we checked). She's also been to China, Korea, Malaysia and Laos, making me feel horribly lazy.
- -She's never been to the US, however, and probably won't go as Americans tend to smother most things with cheese, which she doesn't care for.

SR: Gin khao leeo ru yung, ka?

Suth: Gin khao leeo, ka. Wan-nii gin khanom jin, geeng gai.

SR: A-roi mai?

Suth: A-roi, ka. Gin gab Khun Samalee, Khun Jaree, Khun Suvimon.

SR: Sanook mai?

Suth: Sanook. We just chat and eat.

**SR**: Okay, now we're done with Thai, because that's my limit. To the interview; why did you join Peace Corps?

**Suth**: My last project with Jirisat was finished in November, and Khun Jaree recommended me because we were at Jirisat together before. I met her about seven or eight years ago. And then she recommended to me that there is a place here and "would you like to apply?" So I tried.

**SR**: Well, congratulations.

Suth: Thank you.

**SR**: How do you like it?

**Suth**: Oh, I very much enjoy working here. I feel like it's a family, not the office. The staff here are great and are very helpful.

**SR**: So you've worked with business men and... us, how's that different.

**Suth**: Actually, Jirisat is also non-profit organization. It is funded by German government. Similar to here.

**SR**: It's a lot of the same thing, then?

Suth: That's right.

**SR**: So you're used to working with crazy people. Excellent. Completely switching tracks now, I'm sorry, what is your favorite place in Thailand?

**Suth**: I love the beach.

**SR**: Anywhere in the south?

**Suth**: I love Krabi.

**SR**: And I promise we won't use this information to find you, but what's your favorite hang out in Bangkok?

**Suth**: In Bangkok? Actually, I'm not a night life girl. But I like shopping.

**SR**: Where you get the best deals?

**Suth**: Siam Square, the teenager's area.

**SR**: Don't worry, a lot of people will want to know what. Very helpful. What's the best part of this job?

**Suth**: My favorite part is that I feel very honored to work with you volunteers, because you came here full of energy, full of motivation, and inspiration to help and I feel that I'm around some good people.

**SR**: What's the worst part of the job? Don't worry, no one reads Sticky Rice.

**Suth**: I came here actually last year in December and in January the new group of volunteers arrived and it was very, very busy time. January through March, and I did not know so much about my job. And it's quite difficult for me to plan in advance what I should do next. So I have to learn a lot.

**SR**: What are some of your biggest challenges in dealing with volunteers or foreigners?

Suth: Perhaps I'm quite sensitive, and farangs can speak right forwardly, more than Thai people.

**SR**: You've studied a lot, are you still working towards another degree right now?

Suth: I finished. All set seven years ago.

**SR**: If you had to pick a place, anywhere in the world, where would you go?

**Suth**: I would like to see Bhutan.

**SR**: Where is that?

**Suth**: It's near Tibet. Bhutan is a very small country, and they don't care about GDP, but they care about GHP, Gross Happiness...Something. Yeah, they don't care about GDP, and the prince of Bhutan came here to Thailand, and I was impressed.

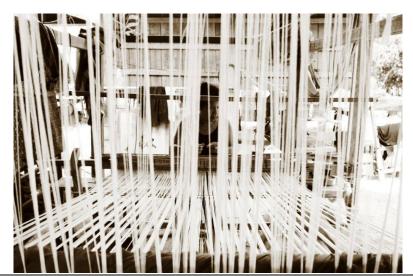
**SR**: Is there anything you'd like from volunteers to support you?

**Suth**: No, I'm here to support you.

**SR**: Well, thank you so much and good luck.

**Suth**: Thank you.

Note: Pi-Aoey is nice, kind and knows where they keep the Peace Corps Office ghost. Our interview took place in a conference room with a stairway that led up to its room. She said it was just storage, that she was joking about the ghost, but I'm not so sure. So be nice to Khun Suthanya, or the ghost might just come after you.





**Looking at Venus** 

by T.D. Nguyen

To Tri, Thucy, and Julia Tien

It had been around this time three years ago that I left my brother's chicken farm. Yes, I was a chicken farmer for seven long years in a small town on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

I had arrived there at the turn of the century from another small town in Nevada. 'Two years, right?' I'd told my brother on the phone upon agreeing to quit my job to come help him out. But you know how life is. When two-year time came around, the farm was still a force to be reckoned with. My brother still couldn't afford hired help despite the saving from my free of charge labor since. What would a brother do but to stay on.

You have guessed it. Two years turned to three, four, then seven. Lucky seven, right? On that seventh year on the farm, as if it was scripted, hired help was readily available and there was a budget for it too. 'Finally,' I had thought to myself. The image of Martin Luther King on that podium, his voice full of emotion, "free at last..."

In that October of three years ago, for unknown reasons, I had wandered around the farm quite a bit at night. The chill fall air of those nights chased off the mosquitoes back to who knew where and the sky had been so clear. I'd looked at Venus a lot during those October nights. It had been the brightest star then, the closest to Earth than it'd ever been in a long time. I remember being so scared when I'd noticed it for the first time. A UFO? It seemed to have moved up and down, dimmer and brighter. I'd even checked the internet the day after for reports of Unidentified Flying Object in the area.

I'd talked my brother's kids into watching Venus with me that October of three years ago too. The two boys, Thucy and Tri, and my niece Julia were my pride and joy. And for several nights, the four of us lied on the floor of the unfinished treehouse that I had promised to put up walls and a roof as soon as time permitted but never did, with Venus above us, dangling brighter and dimmer as though she was listening.

Venus was out again. I had noticed her on the walk back to my rented place. She wasn't as bright nor as animated as she had been three years ago but I stopped and gazed at her anyway, for a moment. My niece and nephews, back on the Eastern Shore of Maryland-thousands of miles and a Pacific ocean away-would they be looking at Venus too, out on that unfinished treehouse? I had no way of knowing of course. But then, all I needed to know was that they would always be closest to my heart even if Venus was no longer closest to Earth.

Venus was out again and I missed them kids terribly.



**Stuffing Your Face: Mango** 

by Kari Greenswag

Oh, mango season. For those of us who love the fruit and found it terribly expensive back in the States, this is a fabulous, wondrous time of the year in Thailand. Schools are out, it's horribly hot, and there are mangoes everywhere. At the height of the season, people can't even give the things away. I mean, sure, *khao neiow mamuang* is pretty freaking awesome, but a little variety never hurts.

Neither does pie.

Now you're thinking, Sticky Rice, last issue didn't you say no recipe should ever involve ovens? Well, dear friends, as long as you have a working refrigerator you haven't broken apart for its cooling mechanisms, you can make this pie. We are proud to present!

# No Bake Mango Pie

Servings: You can't have just one slice!

Crust Ingredients:

1 and 2/3 cups graham crackers

1/4 cup sugar

6 Tablespoons butter

½ teaspoon of cinnamon, nutmeg or allspice if you feel like being awesome

Pie Ingredients:

8oz cream cheese

8oz Cool Whip (sugarless if you can find it)

½ cup milk

1 teaspoon cinnamon

4 large, ripe mangoes from your neighbor

Making the crust: Crumble up those graham crackers good until you have the right amount. If you have to have a friend or family member send you graham crackers, this is a bonus as they might come to you pre-crumbled. Small children will also be able to see to this task. Melt the butter. This can be done in wok or small pot, or just by leaving the butter out on the counter for a bit, just watch for flies. Mix everything together until well combined. Then press the crust firmly into a pie pan, or the closest thing you can fashion, trying to keep it even. Stick this in the fridge while you make the filling.

Making the pie: Before we begin, so you know 8oz is about 230 grams, since we live in the land of metric at the moment. Now, let's make pie! First peel those mangoes and cut them up into small bits to make future mixing less awful, throw that cinnamon over them and set them aside. Beat the cream cheese and milk together until it's all smooth, then add the Cool Whip. Again, keep mixing like a demon. Finally, add the mangoes until it all becomes a tempting, delicious goo. Pour all of that into the crust you have in your fridge, then, this is the hard part. Wait! Depending on the raw cooling power of your fridge, times may vary, so just poke it until the goo is firm but not brick like.

If you feel like, you can buy some extra Cool Whip and slather that on top, include some slices of fresh mango, or whatever else you think would make this even more delicious. If you have pretensions towards class, that is.

You may wish to share this amazing concoction, or keep it all to yourself, either way we will judge you.



Rasayana Retreat Café Review

by Shelby Laubhan

Tucked away in a rather dank, dark typical Bangkok Soi under construction, one can discover a most untypical infusion of brightly colored and constructed entrees, desserts and drinks at the Rasayana Retreat Café. The enticing fresh greens, nuts, seeds, herbs and fruits that mesh and mold into a most delectable vegan, gluten-free, sugar-free and raw cuisine, will surely leave you saying "aroy."

And hey, no worries to those that co-notate "raw" with fleshy meat, disease infected sushi and/or blood soup, it's not that kind of joint. Vegan ensures no animal products whatsoever, while "gluten-free" doesn't make the food anything less, it simply means there's no wheat, rye or barely grains interfering in tastes and textures of the unprocessed, whole foods.

Upon Rasayana's terrace, serenaded with yogi-like music, far removed from the city's husslebussle, three of us volunteers expanded our taste-bud repertoire by feasting on over half-a-dozen entrees and eight desserts, which when added up wasn't too terribly pricey. Our binge totaled just about 650B each, which averages out to around 150 per dish or so – and FYI, in the states one would EASILY pay thrice this much for such goodness.

Noodles made of coconut and zucchini – marinated in sweet ginger and zesty marinara sauces, eggplant lasagna with a rich avocado sauce, Hawaiian pizza and Mexican tortillas with drizzles of a cheese made from the ever capricious cashew nut, and a "sun burger" consisting of an almond-celery-sage patty, filled our stomachs in a most satisfying way. (Though I'm still regretting not ordering the Avocado Cream soup with lime, onion, cilantro and coriander spice!)

Our sweet teeth were satisfied, too. We simply ordered every dessert on the menu since we couldn't decide what to get. Everything was equally beckoning with their healthful charm and lack of sugar and palm oil and rice (and oh, did I mention? This could be one of the only restaurants in all of Thailand were kao will not be ginned because it's not even on the menu – one wouldn't want to eat raw rice, eh?). Desserts are prepared with a fine and artistic mix of honey, nuts, dried, fresh and creamed fruits, veggies and more combined to create sorbets, key lime pie, banana carob pie, strawberry mousse pie, carrot cake and my personal favorites a rosemary ice cream made from macadamia nut cream and vanilla.

Indeed, stop salivating and go and indulge at Rasayana's – where you can stuff yourself silly with so many good for you and good to you foods. Yum!

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Get to Know 122

As compiled in good fun by a cross-section of 122. Not general statements of character.

Alexander - Most sarcastic

**Cho** - Most likely to be found dancing alone in a corner

**Andrew** - Best Movie Expert

**Anita** - Best Social Butterfly

Blanka - Most likely to surprise you in more ways than one

**Brooke** - Best Dancer

David - Most likely to stay in Thailand post Peace Corps

**Eleanor** - Most likely to prefer the company of animals

Elizabeth - Most changed

Emily - Most likely to work for Peace Corps Thailand

**Gyann** - Most likely to wear a dress to Sports Day

**Henok** - Most likely to show you a magic trick

Jeff K - Most Isaan

Jeff S - Most likely to win a Pulitzer

Joel G - Most accident prone

Joel S - Most likely to be a Thai gangster

**Josh B** - Most likely to be the first to know (or in other words, best gossip)

Josh K - Most likely to have his guitar or borrow yours

Josh L - Most likely to be named [insert superlative]



Juges - Most likely to know where the party is

Julia - Most likely to tell you like it is or at least how she sees it

Kale - Most likely to write a tell all about Peace Corps Thailand

Kari - Most likely to give sex advice

Kat - Most likely to open a creperie in Thailand

**Keith** - Most likely to be found at the club

Laura - Most inspirational

Leanne - Most Disney

Lindsey - Best accent

Lisa - Most likely to be too busy

Loreen - Most sass

Maggie - Best swagger (too soon?)

Megan - Quietest

Meghan - Most likely to tell you what to do

Melissa - Best smile

Nicole - Most likely to be in charge

**Sue** - Most likely to survive the Apocalypse

**Rebekah** - Most likely to laugh

Robina - Most likely to respond to everyone's email

**Ryan** - Most likely to disappear into the woods

Sarah - Most likely to have already read it

**Shelby** - Most retro

**Stephen** - Most sarcastic

**Steven** - Most likely to be your Computer Guy

**Sue H** - Most likely to secretly draw you

**Tara** - Most likely to be at the party

**TD** - Most likely to say inappropriate things in the most serious conversations

Wagner - Most likely to not say anything

Will - Best Joker

Zach - Most articulate

**Zerina** - Biggest Flirt



# An Accurate Horoscope That Is True

Underwire Faustus, H.E., B.C. and Byt. Maj. Gen. of the Dance Celestial



Did you know that Dread Cthulhu himself is in the public domain? This seems ill-advised until you realize it cuts down on the tikilili-tigation.



Thinking to escape the explosion, you fling yourself from the balcony toward the sea party from Breakfast at far below. In this you succeed only in making apartment. Why should the second person tense.



#### Capricorn

Whom the dread gods wish to curse, they shall first drive mad. Usually with inartful puns. A groaning death is a cruel thing, even when compared to tentacles.



# Sagittarius

Every party you've ever attended has been the Tiffany's in a different this one be any different?



# Aguarius

You are the reason Firefly got cancelled. Way to go.



There was once a kingdom beyond the sea, peopled by a people most fair of mind and culture. Lo, did they make pyramids and hammer idols of gold. Lo, did they make war and take child captives to raise in gentility. And was it not said of their last princess, that she was he most fair of all? That kingdom is your birthright, fair maidens, you the last scion of this great people. GO! You must needs find a prince.



# Leo

Hey! Gemini! Perhaps some kind of...noble soothsayer? Just sayin': Sayers of sooth need layers of sooth. By which I mean-Aww...



## Virgo

worth and your self-worth.

# libra

Alas, you are undone.



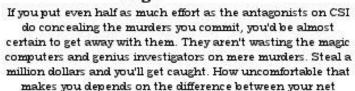
# Pisces

What is the deal with airline peanuts? And why don't they make the plane a flotation device? Air travel is so zany!



### Scorpio

Today you'll pick the pocket (as you often do) of a wizened old man and find a monkey's paw which will promise you three wishes. The best course of action would be to wish for ninety-nine more wishes. Nobody has ever gone wrong who's had a tower of thirty-four monkey naws



Cancer

(Layers of sooth?)



# **Editor's Note**

**David Barron**, Layout Editor

Content Editor, **Kari Greenswag**May 5, 2011



Another fancy issue come and gone, and us the more downhearted for it. If you're offended, write an angry letter and we'll publish it in these pages. If you liked it, send beer. We hope you enjoyed it half so much as we enjoyed making it, and we're confident you'll enjoy the next issue even more. New depths of ribaldry will be plumbed. Possibly.

Moving forward, we'll be wanting two editors from group 123. If you've read all the way to the end of the Editor's Note, you're probably qualified, so throw your hat in and we'll draw names out of it to see who gets to wear it.

See you on the Fourth of July!



Sticky Rice 🌣 May 2011