



A "VICTDURIAN" WONDERLAND

# Sticky Rice

December 2012

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*“Have a glorious holiday season!”*

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# My Mini High School Reunion With Hillary

by Carol Thornell

*Editor's note: Ten lucky Peace Corps Thailand volunteers were chosen by lottery to see U.S. President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at Chulalongkorn University during their visit to Bangkok Nov. 18.*

Do you remember when ...

President John F. Kennedy was shot?  
Where were you?

Martin Luther King, Jr. was shot? Who were you with?

Planes flew into the Twin Towers? What were you doing?

Peace Corps Thailand celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in July with Thai Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn? How did you feel to be part of that memorable event?

The Navy beat the Army for the 11<sup>th</sup> year in a row? Why weren't you watching that football game?

President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton made a trip to Bangkok? How did you get to see them?

Well, I did the culturally appropriate thing and told people in my community that my counterpart teachers had done such wonderful things this year teaching their students that President Obama wanted to thank personally a select few PCVs. Honestly, that wasn't too much of a stretch!

I was waiting for a ride to Bangkok when my buddy Pat Walker called me to let me know I had made the first cut (in the lottery selection process) to see Obama and Clinton. She's great about keeping me updated as my Internet is slow and infrequent. Paula Miller, Peace Corps Thailand director of programming and training, promised to send some good



karma my way for the raffle; that woman has the power!

When this old lady started jumping and whooping it up, the teachers wanted to know what had happened. As you know, Thais love to be part of anything happy. That's when I said the culturally appropriate thing. Well, maybe praise for quality work is a culturally appropriate thing in America, but remember, we have three goals!

I was already taking to Bangkok two gorgeous silk outfits my Thai friend had given me. I'd get them altered a bit, then I'd be ready to strut my stuff! But, boy, did the protocol stuff keep changing during the days before and the day of the ceremony! I had to buy new flats because we weren't supposed to wear high heels on the floor of the Sports Center at Chulalongkorn University. I wonder if we can put this "buying extra stuff" in the financial survey. We 123ers have had to fork a lot out of our own pockets this year for all these special events, but OMG we were there!

Nine of us PCVs went to dinner as volunteer Greg Patterson was unable to make it to the event. Then we walked to the Sports Center just in time to make it through security.

Now the truth of it is, while the PCVs and staff gathered and visited, I made the necessary bathroom visit to prepare myself for the two-hour-and-forty-five minute wait for the event to start. Oh, yes, I also went to the far corner of the U-shaped barrier where it appeared the dignitaries might enter.

I met a fascinating young woman who works with the U.S. Embassy, one of the several hundred people there. We had good chats with security and one security hunk in particular. Have you ever seen a security guy with a sense of humor? Good looking, too. Oh, yeah, miracles!

Just before the main event, people moved bleachers around the back of the crowd near the U-shaped podium area and climbed aboard for a good view. Then a security woman asked the children to gather in the roped-off open area on the other side of the podium area. She managed to herd the little "cats" into height-appropriate rows and keep the stanchions from crashing over as little ones draped themselves around the ropes. Helpers moved the red-white-and-blue balloon arch behind the kids.

***Reunion Continued on p. 3***

**Reunion Cont. from p. 2**

Here they come! Obama, Clinton, and U.S. Ambassador to Thailand Kristie Kenney strode out waving and smiling as the crowd cheered and called their names. Our hearts were pounding; we were the few, the proud, the lucky ones! Kenney welcomed us, Clinton said hello and presented the president. I was on the other side of the world and I got to see my U.S. president and secretary of state. This wouldn't have happened in the States.

I was six feet from them when they walked in and 30 feet from the podium. Can't tell you much about the speech except the praise we PCVs got for being "on the front lines of peaceful relationships with other countries." About that time, I was getting a bit teary-eyed.

Military brats get that way on these formal government occasions.

However, the best part of the evening for most folks there was when President Obama walked to the ropes to meet the children. The parents went crazy! Then President Obama squatted down (don't misconstrue this as a Thai action) and the flashes went off. The professional photographers and the parents were all taking pictures. So 20 years from now, Mom will say, "Now, bride-to-be, this is when little Johnny got his picture taken with the president."

Ambassador Kenney and Secretary of State Clinton were making their rounds, shaking the hands of all those who could reach them. I was studiously rehearsing what I would say to the president when a thought flashed through the old brain about what I could say to Hillary. Yeah, now it's Hillary because we went to the same high school!



Here she comes! She was smiling and clasping hands and I was about the last one, so I gripped her hand and blurted out, "Maine Township High School East class of '64!" Hillary looked right at me, raised her eyebrows, smiled and said, "We're the dreamers!"

Naturally, I offered my camera to her staff and asked for my picture to be taken with Hillary and my new friend from the U.S. Embassy. "God, please let the picture be clear, not fuzzy!" I thought. Hillary's staff did a fine job! I can hardly wait for my family back home to see my pictures, even if they all didn't vote for the right people earlier in the month.

No, Hillary and I were not BFFs in high school. She was one year behind me in a Park Ridge, Ill. high school with 4,000 students. I focused on academics and riding horses while she was doing the political track. Now guess which one is in

the news!

Back to the main event, meeting the president. Focus, focus, focus. The Man was working his way around now. Security was tight and telling us to take all the pictures we wanted until he was near, then down with the cameras so no flashes would be in his face. Also, no kissing ... shucks!

He was coming closer and I was getting crushed against the barrier as people were reaching to take pictures and shake his hand. It sure is a good thing the Prez has long arms! I realized he was a *kon jing*, a real person; he was right here!

I stretched my hand out and he was reaching for those behind and above me. What had I rehearsed to say to him?! I just had to shake his hand! Hey, folks, don't crush me!

Then President Barack Hussein Obama, the President of my United States of America, looked right at me and clasped my hand. I smiled and clearly said, "I'm a Peace Corps volunteer in Thailand!" Obama's eyes opened wide (yes, they did!), he grinned and said, "Keep up the good work!"

As he turned to wave goodbye, the tears came to my eyes and I waved and cheered like crazy with the rest of the crowd. There went the leader of our nation. He was going forth to other Asian countries to talk about peace instead of war. He recognized those of us Peace Corps volunteers at the forefront of this initiative. What we do is very important to us, to the president of the United States and to other countries.

In the words of the hippies of my day, "Make peace, not war!" We Peace Corps volunteers are here in Thailand to make that possible in this part of the world. So in the words of our Prez, "Keep up the good work!"

# May We Take Tea and Talk Naga, Mr. President?

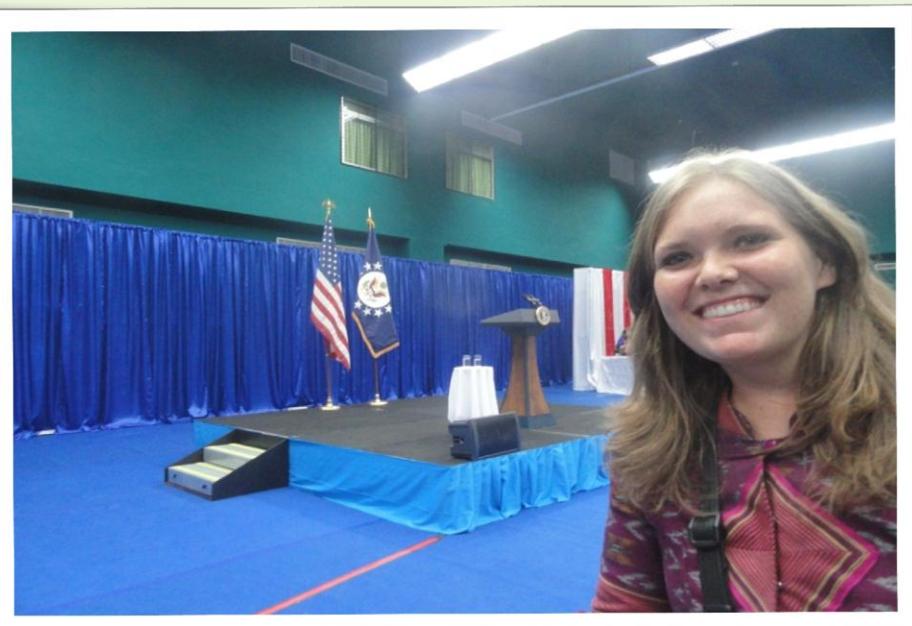
by Faith Eakin

*Editor's note: Ten lucky Peace Corps Thailand volunteers were chosen by lottery to see U.S. President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at Chulalongkorn University during their visit to Bangkok Nov. 18.*

It didn't feel like reality, walking slowly through security while identifying all of the Secret Service agents with their tiny headsets and serious expressions. Somehow, by the luck of the draw, I was standing in a red, white and blue room waiting to see the president of the United States stride out and begin his speech.

Standing around me were other Peace Corps volunteers, some PC staff, employees of the U.S. Embassy and their children. We each stood our ground, saving our spots, places we all believed were the best seats in the house.

Close enough to the barricade to touch him, if he came around, and close enough to be spotted for my dream photo op with the president. As I looked around at all the faces around me, the children, the parents, the diversity filling the room, all I could think was that if I had a chance to speak to the president, I



should probably let him know that he was in the presence of Naga's daughter. (I discovered this information while in a clothing shop the day before. The owner of the store was being possessed by the soul of Naga, a Thai serpent deity. He gave me a free shirt and said, "Faith, I am your father." *Jing!*)

For sure, he'd invite me to have tea and discuss hobbies with him then. We would talk about the Peace Corps and Thai cultural norms while casually laughing about a funny joke he had heard last week.

That's when I realized that this place, Thailand, is my home. Why else would I think that mentioning the legend of the Naga to the president of the United States would be a good idea?

It made me happy to realize this, though, and to realize how lucky, blessed, and grateful I was to be standing where I was, surrounded by Americans working in Thailand, proud of their country and yet immensely proud of Thailand. Proud of the place that has accepted them, comforted them, and given them a home, when our home is so far away.

As cute as those embassy kids were, they utterly and completely crushed my hopes of having tea and talking Naga with Mr. Obama. Five minutes before his speech, an embassy employee came on the microphone and asked all kids ages 5 to 15 to come up to the front of the room. The children squealed with joy, their parents, too, but my friends and I watched in horror and shock as they completely blocked our view, instantly demoting us from the best to the worst seats in the house.

Luckily, I'm tall. (Thanks to my real Dad for that one.) By standing on my tippy toes, I was able to watch and listen to the current United States president giving a speech in Thailand, where I am currently serving as a United States Peace Corps volunteer. A moment I'll never forget.



# The Day I Went to Jail: Visiting My Nayoke in Prison

by Amy Williams

On Oct. 4, my *nayoke* went to prison. Six years ago, during his initial election, he engaged in illegal political activity with another town. From what I can understand, the case had been on trial for four years, and appealed twice. It went all the way to the equivalent of the state Supreme Court, and they ruled him guilty. Since he could appeal it no further, he went to jail. The *nayoke* will spend one year in the equivalent of state prison, and cannot run for a public office for another 10 years.

Not your normal Peace Corps Thailand situation, wouldn't you say? It gets better ...

The next week, I joined the entire *tessaban* staff (40-plus people) to visit him in jail. I did have an initial freak-out when I was told the news, such as "What the heck is happening?!" and "Peace Corps didn't teach us about this in pre-service training!" But after I had regained logic and calmed down, my thoughts on the visitation were: "Prisons are probably the safest place to see criminals, much better than dark alleys," and "When am I going to have another opportunity to visit a Thai prison?! Better take advantage of this!"

The prison building was once white, but now covered with many years of rain

stains, reminding me of an old exhibit at a zoo that needed to be redone. I would guess it was built in the late '70s. A courtyard surrounded the building. The waiting area was all outdoors, complete with a soccer field and a rusty playground. And, of course, there were many food vendors with their little carts. You could buy your *café yen*, or any other *kanome* Thailand offers! I have never been to a working American prison, but things here seemed a little odd to me. From the outside waiting area, you could enter a small room surrounded on the outside by bars for a closer look through the clear window. (Only four people were let into this room at a time.) Then you could enter the room where you sat down and spoke on the '80s style telephones to the inmates in the jail. (I did not enter this room.) All inmates wore blue shirts instead of orange.

When it was time to see the *nayoke*, all of the *tessaban* workers pressed against the bars on the outside that were keeping them from getting closer to him. They placed their hands on the bars so that it looked like they were hopelessly hanging from them. I don't think the *tessaban* workers are used to people going to jail.

I was particularly surprised that he acted

like he was still the superstar of the *amphur*! He would stand up and *wai* everyone during his talks to the head *tessaban* workers. He would stand up and give his trademark "vote for me" hand sign. He had his usual huge grin and acted like his jolly old self. The *tessaban* workers ate it up. Even in jail, the *nayoke* could really raise spirits. I don't know if the *nayoke* was just putting on an act, or if he was genuinely happy that all the *tessaban* workers had come to see him.

The visitation raised many questions that, if I weren't a girl, could speak better Thai and it would not have been "weird," I would have asked. Do prisons have Buddha's teachings just lying around? How much do they feed the inmates? And a question for the *nayoke*, "Are you enjoying life?" as he would occasionally ask me in the *tessaban*, "You enjoy?" And I would say yes and ask the question back. His response always was "Yes! Every day, enjoy!"

Being a Peace Corps volunteer means facing head-on whatever life and the community throws at you—like a visit to a Thai prison. I hope everyone has a Merry Christmas and embraces the New Year's extraordinary, unplanned, unimaginable opportunities! Happy holidays!

## Classroom Game Corner

We hope this will be a regular feature in which volunteers will share their ideas for English games and lesson plans. CBOD-ers, that includes you, too! Have fun trying them in your community, and if you have a great new idea, please share it with Sticky Rice at [stickyrice.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:stickyrice.newsletter@gmail.com)

### Freeze

by Hannah Gallez

**Time:** 15 minutes

**Materials:** music

Teacher will have all the students dance around the middle of the room. Teacher will play music and students will dance while the music is playing. When teacher stops the music, all students must freeze in position. Teacher will look for the person who is still moving or the last to move. Last student to freeze has to ask another student a question. After the Q&A, teacher will play music again. Teacher can try to make sure all students get a chance to ask a question. In case of a lesson where it is the same question, but many different answers (ex. "How are you?"), the rest of the class will ask the question and the student who was last will answer.

# Bang Fai Phaya Nak: The Naga Fireball Festival

by Faith Eakin

In late October, I saw 77 fireballs magically burst out of the Mekong River. *Jing jing!*

I live in a country that is home to a fine-tuned fusion of Buddhist beliefs, rituals and superstitions that sprinkle every aspect of life in some way or another. The Naga Fireball is part of that. Legend says that the Naga serpent lives in the Mekong River to protect a Buddha statue that fell in years ago. Once a year, at the end of Buddhist Lent (which coincides with the full moon), the mystical serpent shoots fireballs up into the sky. It is said to be a natural phenomenon that science cannot explain.

Ever since it was captured in a Thai movie a little over a decade ago, it has become a famous annual event in Phon Phisai, Nong Khai province. People say that they cannot describe what the fireballs look like, that you have to see them for yourself. Most people say, "If you believe, you will see them. If you don't, you won't."

Needless to say, excitement had been in the air for months. Hundreds of people flooded to our small village for this special night, including some fellow PCVs. The village leader made announcements on the intercom system multiple times a day. He urged everyone to prepare food, set up decorations and earn merit. A shop was built overnight to sell fireworks and snacks.

The night was off to a good start when someone spotted the mark of the Naga on a car. What I saw were dried water spots that formed the shape of a wavy line. What the villagers saw was an apparition in the shape of a snake. The Naga had left his mark.



As the excitement heightened, my friends and I made the agreement that we would believe. We embraced the culture we are living in and decided to play along. As the sun set, more families arrived and we realized how much this event brought people together. My village defined community. Working together, each person had a different responsibility -- events were happening at each of the three temples during the day. Music was playing, children were laughing, and people were just really, really happy. So my friends and I got into it. We got into the spirit of Bang Fai Phaya Nak.

For me, it only took one soaring fireball. Next thing I knew, I was screaming, cheering and keeping count right alongside my Thai and PCV friends. "The *farang* are good luck," my neighbor said. My co-teacher's husband repeated the same sentiment the next day. We saw 77 difficult-to-describe balls of dim red light shoot up from the river. Do I have a picture? Well, it was hard to capture it on film ...

The excitement and actions of the evening equate to our Fourth of July celebrations in the States. But the belief in their eyes and their urgency to know if we believed, too, was something that I had never experienced before. This is such a unique culture. It's deeply intertwined with individual beliefs, strong superstitions and rituals (this village being so different from the next one over), making it hard to distinguish what is Buddhism and what is just another way of providing something extra to believe in -- something that goes beyond daily trips to the temple.

So, do I believe that a Naga Serpent lives in the depths of the Mekong River and spits flaming balls of fire into the sky every year at the full moon? After another year-and-a-half of living here, I might just answer yes.

Do I believe that for one night the Naga did something special? Yes. It brought people together. It brought unity and joy to our village. And these days, that's worth a lot.

# PC Thailand Christmas Carols!

by Shellie Branco

*PCVs in Thailand can only dream of a snowy "White Christmas," obviously. The un-Christmas-like tropical heat aside, with just a few minor edits, your favorite holiday songs now reflect the real PCV experience in the Land of Smiles!*

## Silent Night

Silent night  
Holy night  
Party stopped  
At midnight  
No more blasting upcountry songs  
No karaoke from guys who are bombed  
Sleep in heavenly peace  
Sleep in heavenly peace

## O Jackfruit Tree

O jackfruit tree  
O jackfruit tree  
How lovely are your *ging-gaan* (branches)  
But jackfruit tree, O jackfruit tree  
This plan will never catch on

When I put ornaments on thee  
My village thinks that I'm crazy  
So jackfruit tree, Mom will send me,  
Pine scents that I can spray on

## Away in the Anuban

Away in the *anuban*  
No crib for a bed  
So little Thai babies  
Use reed mats instead  
The *kruu* in the classroom  
Teach them "How are you?"  
The standard reply:  
"I-am-fine-thank-you-and-you?"

## Walking in a Dengue Wonderland

IVs drip, are you listening?  
In the ponds, larvae glistening  
A beautiful sight, we're sweating tonight  
Walking in a dengue wonderland

Gone away is the bluebird,  
Here to stay is the flu bird  
He sings a sick song,  
As we puke along,

Walking in a dengue wonderland.  
In the field we can spray some poison,  
Then pretend that all the larvae drown  
But they'll actually get immune to  
poison,  
And mosquitos will now kill entire towns

Later on, they'll conspire,  
As they breed in a tire  
They face unafraid,  
The traps that we've made,  
Walking in a dengue wonderland.

In the swampland we can take some surveys,  
Just to see if larvae counts are down  
But in the same way Thailand likes to  
treat strays,  
Now every home's a perfect breeding ground.

Got the runs, ain't it thrilling,  
and the fever gets you chilling  
We'll vomit and pray, the tropical way,  
Walking in a dengue wonderland.



## Paw-aws We Have Heard on High

Paw-aws we have heard on high,  
Telling us to teach the test  
Volunteers say in reply,  
Whoever wrote this was possessed

O-OOO-OOO-ONET!  
In excessive idioms  
O-OOO-OOO-ONET!  
In excessive idioms

## The Friendly Thai Beasts

Jesus our brother, kind and good  
Was humbly born in a stable rude  
And the friendly beasts in Thailand stood  
With Jesus our brother, kind and good.

"I," said the *soi* dog, shaggy and brown,  
"I chased the Three Kings as they left  
town;  
But they gave me chicken, so I calmed  
down."  
"I," said the *soi* dog, shaggy and brown.

"I," said the *gai*, all white and red  
"I gave Him a century egg colored red;  
The smell of that egg could wake up the  
dead."  
"I," said the *gai*, all white and red.

"I," said the *chaang* with curly horn,  
"I thought I would sit close to keep Him  
warm;  
But He wanted a ride on Christmas  
morn."  
"I," said the *chaang* with curly horn.

"I," said the gecko from the rafters high,  
"I chirped Him to sleep that He should  
not cry;  
We chirped Him to sleep, my friends and  
I."  
"I," said the gecko from the rafters high.

"I," said the scorpion, thin and black,  
"I stayed away, so cut me some slack;  
It's tough being me, you all give me flak."  
"I," said the scorpion, thin and black.

Thus every beast by some good spell  
In faraway Thailand was glad to tell  
Of the gift he gave Emmanuel,  
The gift he gave Emmanuel.

## The Twelve Thai Days of Christmas

*Thank you to everyone who gave  
suggestions for this one on the Thailand  
PCV Facebook page!*  
On the \_\_\_ day of Christmas my true  
love gave to me:

12 *dek-deks* "len"-ing  
11 weeks of sports days  
10 ASEAN countries  
9 *songthaew* swerving  
8 *soi* dogs chasing  
7-Eleven reward stamps  
6 pack of Singha  
5 English camps  
4 bowls of rice  
3 *moto-cy*  
2 married farang  
and a *tokay* in a mango tree

## THAI CATHOLIC CHRISTMAS



By Shellie Branco

I live in the *amphur muang* of Chanthaburi province, home to a small Roman Catholic community founded by immigrants from formerly French-controlled Vietnam. I'm Roman Catholic, and so is my host mother, whom I still live with. Earlier this month, she told me Baby Jesus would be visiting. I replied amusedly that I wasn't sure that was possible, as Jesus had died 2,000 years ago. She answered mysteriously, "Yes, 2,000 years ago..."



Then, on a Tuesday evening, worshippers walked down the street to our house. They sang "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" as they carried a statue of Baby Jesus. They settled inside our house, then the priest said prayers and sprinkled holy water on us. Afterward, they lined up to kiss the statue's feet, which really surprised me given the Thai taboo about touching feet. When the ceremony ended, they carried Baby Jesus back outside.

One of the parishioners, nicknamed Bang, told me worshippers would take the Baby Jesus statue to visit Catholic households in the area throughout the Christmas season. When I asked Bang about the feet-kissing, he replied, "Good question! I think that's because this tradition comes from Europe." I can attest to that. I am Portuguese-American, and at Christmas, the Portuguese in my hometown often visit the local church's Nativity scene to kiss the feet of Baby Jesus and leave cash in the manger as a donation. Great traditions!



Ginger and lime drink, which can be served hot or iced. A tropical twist on holiday ginger flavor!

## MacGyver's Holiday Beverages

by The Sticky Rice Team

*MacGyver, that mulleted '80s action star, could make anything with a little ingenuity. In that spirit, volunteers share recipes from home that can be recreated in Thailand. Send us your rigged recipe: stickyrice.newsletter@gmail.com*

It's hard to find large ovens here in Thailand, leaving many of us feeling homesick for all those wonderful baked holiday goodies that fill the house with the aromas of ginger and cinnamon. Instead of baking, how about sipping your favorite holiday treats? Here are a few easy-to-make drinks that will bring you holiday cheer.

### Candy Bar Cinnamon Hot Cocoa

1 1/2 cups of chopped chocolate candy bars (hit up 7-11 for Hershey's!)  
3 cups milk  
1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon or cinnamon stick  
sugar to taste, if desired

Combine candy with milk and ground cinnamon (or steep a cinnamon stick) in a small saucepan. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, stirring constantly until candy is completely melted. If you used a semi-sweet chocolate bar and want it a bit sweeter, add sugar to taste. Pour into mugs. Add a cinnamon stick for garnish, if you like, and/or dust with a sprinkling of cinnamon. You can also try adding a bit of Chinese five spice while simmering the milk – it adds an exotic kick.

### Ginger and Lime Drink (hot or cold)

2 cups water  
2 TB freshly grated ginger  
3 cloves, optional  
3-4 tsp. soft light brown sugar  
juice from 2 freshly squeezed limes  
thin slices of lime for garnish

Add water, ginger and cloves to a pan and bring to a boil. Add sugar to taste and simmer on low heat for 5 minutes. Remove from heat and add lime juice. Taste and adjust sweetness if you need to. Strain and add thin slices of lime before serving. Can be served hot or iced. For extra ginger zing, add more grated ginger, boil a little longer, and steep overnight.

### Holiday Apple Cardamom Ginger Drink (hot or cold)

16 green cardamom pods  
1/2 inch ginger root (finely grated)  
1/3 cup honey  
1/4 cup water  
2 TB apple juice (or 1 TB lemon juice)  
Plus 1 1/3 cups sparkling water (for cold drink) or regular water (for hot drink)

Crush cardamom pods in a mortar, grate ginger. Simmer crushed cardamom with honey and ginger in 1/4 cup water to make syrup. Cool, then add lemon or apple juice. Strain, then mix with sparkling water and pour over ice cubes. For hot drink, heat ginger-cardamom syrup with apple juice and 1 1/3 cup regular water for the final drink, then strain and serve.

# Starstruck! Your Peace Corps Thailand Horoscope

by Shellie Branco



ARIES: (21 March – 20 April) Your Type A personality will make you the first to jump at the chance to play

Santa for the *tessaban* (wait, you're the ONLY person who would volunteer to play Santa for the *tessaban*). Don't worry, your co-workers might take pity on all of your strange cultural displays this month and buy a meal or two for their resident homesick American.

TAURUS: (21 April – 21 May) Sturdy and true, you and your kind heart will make a less fortunate person's dream come true this season. It might be as simple as giving some attention to another soul, or you might have an inspirational idea that sets the ball rolling for positive change, putting a smile on the faces of those who'll benefit from your help.



GEMINI: (22 May – 21 June) You can be a bit scatterbrained, so you're all over the place this month. Try to stop and smell the *dok-mai*.

A yoga class or any form of meditation could be the answer, and could only do you good for the challenges ahead.

CANCER: (22 June – 22 July) You crave security, so, naturally, you're worried about your finances as you consider holiday purchases. Luckily, you can find ways to *greeng-jai* without breaking the



bank. Look for someone bearing a very generous gift of food...



LEO: (23 July - 22 August) You'll want to roar with frustration at some unforeseen glitches at work or communication

problems with family and friends. You'll ride it out, but be careful not to bite back and cause further damage.

VIRGO: (23 August - 23 Sept.) A little downtime is coming your way, after all your hard work in the community. Explore another side of Thailand and dazzling surprises will await you...



LIBRA: (24 Sept. - 23 Oct.) You'll wow your community this month with your holiday decorating skills. You love to get crafty, so round up folks, especially the kids, and create some holiday cheer with art projects.

SCORPIO: (24 Oct. - 22 Nov.) New opportunities lie ahead, and will make the rough patches almost feel worth it. The New Year will bring a fresh start, so face 2013 (or 2556) with hope and faith!



SAGITTARIUS: (23 Nov. - 21 Dec.) As your birthday month winds down, it's time to reflect on the accomplishments

you've made in this particular year of your life. Even the smallest contributions matter, so keep it up! In the years to come, you will see exactly what your service truly meant, but for now, the work continues...

CAPRICORN: (22 Dec. - 20 Jan.)

It's birthday time for Capricorn, and sometimes it seems your special day gets overshadowed by all the holiday festivities. But your loved ones certainly won't forget you, especially considering you're so far from home, so plenty of joy, warm wishes and care package goodies are likely on their way!



AQUARIUS: (21 Jan. - 19 Feb.) You live for the future and never dwell long in the past, unless you're learning from it. You love the New

Year and all the promise it brings, and you're the most likely of all the zodiac characters to make a resolution and keep it! Whatever you choose to work on, 2013 will be the year of tackling your most important goals so far.

PISCES: (20 Feb. - 20 March) Oh, my, Pisces! Who's that handsome or beautiful stranger headed your way in the near future?

Looks like Valentine's Day is arriving early, with suitors lining up to win you over this month. New Year's Eve will be an auspicious time for you.



Sticky Rice editor Shellie Branco has been toying with astrology since she was a Seventeen magazine subscriber in high school. Does she really take it seriously? (Only when she's bored...)

# Resolve PCV Woes of Cheese Cravings and Sunburns

by Sima Pirooz

Here are some tips to make your life a little bit easier, healthier, and a few *baht* cheaper!

## Magical Aloe Vera

Aloe vera is a magical plant, especially for skin, and I think everybody should have a pot of this plant at home. When my daughter came to Thailand to visit me and she went to Phuket, I flew there to spend some time with her. When I got there, she'd already had a whole day of scuba diving and was suffering from a sunburn. When I saw her, she was in pain, because even though she had used a lot of sunscreen lotion, her skin was burned so badly that putting on her clothes was painful.



I went to the hotel's big garden and looked for aloe vera. Finally, in the back of a very hidden corner of the garden, I found a couple of plants and took some leaves, cut them lengthwise, took their jelly-like juice and rubbed it on her skin. The smell wasn't so pleasant, but its magic power of healing after two applications made it all worthwhile. Her skin was totally normal the second day. Aloe vera is very refreshing for the skin if you apply it at night for a few minutes before going to bed -- if you can stand the smell for the whole night!

## Homemade Gatorade

Here in Thailand, we sweat a lot, and because of the limited use of salt in local food, drinking plain water doesn't keep us as healthy as it does in America. For those of you who exercise a lot, if

you get muscle cramps, orthostatic hypotension (a dizzy spell from low blood pressure, often due to dehydration), or feel tired for no reason, here is an easy way to keep your chemical balance in order.

1 liter water  
1 TB sugar  
1 tsp. salt  
juice of 1 fresh lime

Simply mix the ingredients and drink all day.

According to a researcher, Thailand's mountain tribespeople are healthier in this regard because they can't afford *nam bpla* and use salt in their food.

## Homemade Yogurt, Yogurt Cheese

This homemade yogurt that is similar to Greek yogurt in America can be used with different jams, cereals, and as a substitute for cream on pancakes and waffles in the morning. It can be used as a healthy substitute for sour cream in many dishes, dips, desserts, and in salad dressings. If you drain it in a cheesecloth, you can make yogurt cheese. You can also shape it like small balls of yogurt cheese and keep them in olive oil with garlic and branches of oregano and use it as a spread on your bread.

1 gallon milk  
1 TB plain nonfat yogurt (cultured)

In a very clean steel pot, bring the milk to a boil, then take it from the heat. Let cool. When it is a little bit hotter than lukewarm, add yogurt and stir completely. Put the lid on and cover with towels. Leave it overnight at room temperature without moving it. In the morning, put the pan of yogurt in the refrigerator without the lid until nighttime to allow it to harden more. Put a clean towel on top of the yogurt to absorb the water and make the yogurt thicker. Drain the yogurt in a cheesecloth in a colander to make yogurt cheese. Add salt to taste.



## Cheese Pinwheel (an Oklahoman afternoon snack)

1 block of cream cheese (or very well-drained yogurt cheese)  
3 spring onions, chopped into small pieces  
tortillas

Mix cheese and onion and spread it over tortilla. Roll tortilla and put it in the refrigerator. Cut the roll in  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch slices and serve with salsa. Easy flour tortilla recipes using a stove or a countertop oven can be found in the last issue of Sticky Rice and on the Internet.

## Homemade Cereal

Most of you like the crispy rice patties (*kao tan*) that Thais have as a snack. They are very cheap and delicious. Black sesame seeds are good for preventing breast cancer, so it would be much healthier if you used black sesame seed milk instead of cow's milk.

a few *kao tan*

1 banana or any fruit you like  
nuts (most likely peanuts in Thailand, but any kind of nut available)  
raisins  
black sesame seeds

Mix in a bowl and pour milk over it.

I thank God for each one of you and I hope you all have a wonderful and blessed holiday season!

More about Sima's cuisine at her website:  
[www.simamacafe.com](http://www.simamacafe.com)