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FEB. 1970 Vol. 1

MEETING MEETING MEETING MEETING MEETING MEETING MEETING MEETING

There will be a meeting of the PCV service organization Feb. 14 at 9 am in the Bangkok PC office library (behind the mailroom downstairs). Members of the group, who were elected in a poll of volunteers in October, will be reimbursed for travel and one day's Bangkok allowance. Sixty-four volunteers responded to that poll.

Members elected are: Nancy Cooke (TEFL/sec 51), Tom Frisbie (TEFL/sec 30), Mimi Gray (TEFL/sec 51), Kathy Haglund (TEFL/ttc 43), Carol Leviton (TEFL/ttc 43), James Mazzacco (TEFL/voc ed 49), Chris McArthur (TEFL/sec 47), Nancy Nepravnik (TEFL/ciel 51), Mary Claire Peceny (TEFL/sec 51), Larry Rose (DOLA 2^o), Howard Stateman (IP/AV 51), Doyle Danman (Wildlife 54), David Jackson (DLD 54) and Jeri Kersten (Wildlife 54).

Members who cannot attend should appoint a proxy to come instead. All volunteers are invited to attend, but only members and proxies can be reimbursed. Peace Corps staff is also invited.

On the agenda will be: 1. obtaining a budget for the group, 2. newsletter and travel guides, 3. Evacuation plans, 4. Longer saturday hours at PC/Bangkok, 5. Report on Malaysia PCV council, 6. Anything else submitted by volunteers for discussion. If you would like information from the staff on anything which concerns volunteers in general, write to the group at the above address.

***** THIS 'N THAT *****

Chaz McCormick, Pua, says that the best place in town for pancakes is the Little Home Bakery, near the President hotel. Prices, however, could be lower.

The Asia Bookstore, 221 Sukumvit, has a wide selection of science fiction, US bestsellers, classics, gothic novels, etc. It's worth the sidetrip and is a change from the Siam Square bookstores.

Kelsey Paulus, Chumphon, Khon Kaen, tells us, "The best pizza in Thailand, outside Bangkok, is in Nakorn Panom at the Tropicana, a sleazy but nice joint. It's never crowded and looks over the Mekong river into darkened Laos." Kelsey also likes their lasagna. Pizza is \$50 and lasagna \$20. The best hotel in town is only \$20 a night, and has a nice night club downstairs with hamburgers, even. That's the NKP hotel, where the tour bus stops.

Have a favorite place to eat, or go? write us a short blurb and we'll put it in this column so other PCVs can check it out.

***** GROUP 56 DUE IN THAILAND SOON *****

Peace Corps/Thailand Group 56 is due to arrive for training in early March. They will train in Kanchanaburi and then Chaya-thum.

About 29 persons are expected, in fields such as livestock extension agent, Ag development, fisheries extension agent, water resources and rural public works. TEFL/sec is also represented.

***** A travel file will be opening in the TEFL office reading room, PC Bangkok.

***** CLASSIFIEDS *****

TERMINATING VOLUNTEERS: IF YOU HAVE ANY clothes, blankets, towels, etc. which you aren't taking back with you, please leave them at the Peace Corps medical office anytime. This coming year I will be making several trips accompanied by students, a doctor and a nurse to villages near the border. Some of these places are really poor, and the weather gets pretty cold. So any contributions will be well-used and greatly appreciated.

--Nancy Tabor, Suwannaram School, Bangkok

Volunteers in and around Khon Kaen are interested in vacations in Nepal. Anyone with information on hiking, costs, equipment, lodgings, etc. should write c/o this newsletter or Jeri Kersten, Animal Center, Khon Kaen University.

Mary Claire Peceny would like to invest in a camper oven to compliment her gas burner. If anybody has one they'd like to sell, write to her at Satri Nonthaburi in Nonthaburi.

Classifieds is free- if you have something to buy or sell, a message to give or a place you'd like to go, write care of "hey you" and we'll put it in the next issue.

POETRY CORNER

Slowly the house lights fell,
Slowly, slowly the single spot shone
brighter,
Bathing all in eerie splendor.

It was a white night,
Pig sheds bathed in silver light,
A whole-moon night. -Mimi Gray, Chumphon

REPORT ON PEACE CORPS/MALAY-SIA VOLUNTEER ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING (KUALA LUMPUR)

by Howard Stateman

January 23-25 the Volunteer Advisory Council (VAC) of Peace Corps/Malaysia met at the Kuala Lumpur home of PC/M Director Bob Graulich. I attended the meeting at my own expense as a part of my annual leave.

The purpose of the VAC is to act as a liaison between staff and volunteers and as a watchdog group to look out for volunteer interests. The VAC also prints a magazine which aids in the liaison function and keeps PCVs in touch with each other.

The VAC is composed of about 12 volunteers, elected once a year by district. The group meets four times a year, but a secretariat (Chairman, vice ch. and secretary) meets once a month.

Subjects discussed during the 15 working hours of the meeting included:

- * Vehicle ownership
- * Vehicle training programs
- * In-service training
- * Summer projects (not mandatory in Malaysia)
- * Re-adjustment allowance
- * Housing & living \$\$
- * Evacuation plans
- * Policy changes in Wash. DC
- * PCV ID cards
- * Magazine content & \$\$\$
- * VAC budget & future

The meeting was well-attended by both staff members (who gave reports on their programs) and volunteers not on the VAC.

VAC members aired gripes, kudos and suggestions from their constituents. Most members hold regional meetings with their local volunteers. Participation in these meetings showed an interest in VAC by a majority of the Malaysia volunteers. There were, however, reports stating some PCVs didn't care at all about the group and felt they could handle their own problems individually. Many felt the VAC was a Kuala Lumpur group which couldn't properly represent volunteers in other places.

WASHINGTON POLICIES

One area of discussion which applies to Thailand centered on recent changes in PC/Washington policies. Basically, it is a return to the original PC goals of peace through understanding.

Graulich listed the criterion for determining whether PC will continue its programs in a country. To rate the value of a PC program, rate each factor on a scale of 1 to 6, then multiply by the number in ().

1. Cross-cultural opportunities (4)
2. Ability to use available skilled volunteers (4)
3. Level of host country development, poor country = 6 (4)
4. Program efficiency (3)
5. Program relevance to host country needs (3)
6. Program quality (3)
7. Volunteer satisfaction (2)
8. Host country support (2)

The trend, Graulich said, was to move out of urban and developed countries and into poorer nations. Also, there will be a shift from using technicians to using generalists. PC, he added, is considering moving into some Pacific islands and out of countries like Iran, India and Venezuela.

On the re-adjustment allowance, he said the bill to increase the dole from \$75 to \$125 a month was passed by Congress and signed by the President, "but don't hold your breath." It carried the stipulation that the bill would be enacted only when funds were available. He said it was past the point where writing letters to Congress would help.

NEWSLETTER

The VAC took a lot of time exploring the issue of their magazine, which might be called a glorified newsletter.

Pokok2, the magazine, has been published twice, the Dec. 75 issue is the latest, and has 40 pages. It is in magazine form, professionally printed, and the 300 or so copies cost the VAC \$1200 (Bt9600). The VAC approved a budget of \$600 an issue for 6 issues during 1976.

Though there was much criticism of the magazine being "too ambitious" the VAC stipulated the 1976 issues were to be printed rather than mimeographed.

The money all comes from Peace Corps, and I will be looking into the possibility of having PC/T fund an 8 or 10-page monthly printed magazine written by and for volunteers.

VAC travel expenses also are paid by Peace Corps, and having travel to the PC/T service group meetings funded will be explored at the Feb. 14 meeting in Bangkok. Mick Zenick has tentatively approved it for 4 meetings a year.

I will give a more detailed report on the meeting at the Feb. 14 Bangkok meeting. Anyone unable to attend can write me c/o PC Bangkok for details.

Have something to sell? Want to buy something? Need a place to crash or a travel companion? Write to "Hey You" Classifieds, c/o Howard Stateman, PC Bangkok. It's free!

WHERE YOU GO
a regular feature ICE SKATING IN BANGKOK by T.O. Boy

Whether you're looking for high adventure or low humor, on your next trip to Bangkok I've got a good "thiaw" for you. You have to be prepared to take a few lumps, but I think it's worth it. I took mine alright. My "tawhook" is still sore, but at least it has thawed out. How long has it been since you took a series of pratfalls on ice that left the seat of your pants as wet and cold as the iced towels in the Thai Room? I did that sort of thing just last week right here in Bangkok--at the new Ice Skating Rink.

Honest. There **really** IS an ice skating rink, located on Petchburi Rd. near the Oscar theater (but across the street).

It's where the Crown Bowl used to be. Buses 38, 52, 60 and 72 can take you there - it's about a kilometer east of Soi Somprassong 2.

The rink is well-maintained, and the fee of ₧30 an hour includes skates. A shoe locker can be rented for an additional 2 baht if you want. If you didn't think to bring your skates to Thailand, that's OK - they have skates as large as farang-size 12.

So what are you waiting for? Get your tawhook over to the Ice Skating Rink and glide (or wobble) around for an hour or two. You have to be a little careful about the other customers (mostly Thai) who will be careening into you and falling in front of you occasionally. The Thais are surprisingly good skaters, considering the rink has only been open about a month or two. When I was there I saw lots of them skating backwards-- some of them were even doing it on purpose.

The traffic on the ice is at least as hectic as that around Victory Monument, and I have to admit I got a kick out of zooming around the ice as the Thais did. Maybe more. And if you don't want to risk frostbite on your nether regions, you can have almost as much fun watching, and food and drink is available.

The rink is open from 10 am to 11 pm M-F and 9 am-11 pm on Sat., Sun & holidays. Get there early when the crowds are thinner and the ice is in the best condition.

It's definitely a switch from the circuit of beer, pizza and movies that PCVs usually indulge in while in Bangkok.

DANCE WORKSHOPS

Bangkok Community Theater is holding free dance workshops (tap, etc) every Sun & Wed 7:30 p.m. at the Villa Nine ballet studio, soi Buam Rudee, next to the Imperial Hotel (off Ploenchit Rd.)

CHAO PHYA PHASES OUT COFFEE SHOP

Now that the US has passed up the option on their lease of the Chao Phya hotel in Bangkok, word is that the coffee shop there much patronized by PCVs is closing the end of March. Anyone want to organize a memorial service for the Boomburger?

Postal rates have gone up in Thailand along with everywhere else. Aerogrammes are ₧5, so is the fee for registered mail. Postcards are ₧1 to Asia, 5 to Europe, 6 to N. America, 6.50 to S. Am. and 5.50 to Africa. Parcels are unchanged.

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Whether you're looking for high adventure or low humor, on your next trip to Bangkok I've got a good "thiaw" for you. You have to be prepared to take a few lumps, but I think it's worth it. I took mine alright. My "tawhook" is still sore, but at least it has thawed out. How long has it been since you took a series of pratfalls on ice that left the seat of your pants as wet and cold as the iced towels in the Thai Room? I did that sort of thing just last week right here in Bangkok--at the new Ice Skating Rink.

RAP SESSIONS

"Boy do I ever need those monthly trips to Bangkok- suddenly that noisy, polluted, crowded city of arrival has turned into a beautiful wandering place where I can finally get lost in the crowd. I'm farang female- am actually anonymous and unnoticed. What Bliss!"

"I hate Bangkok- it's such an expensive hassle- but it is really my only way to meet other volunteers. The raps and friendships are worth it."

Most PCVs agree it really helps to get together sometimes and rap. One of the functions of the volunteer council could be to co-ordinate these rap sessions- or to facilitate them. Some people have already expressed interest in organizing things for outside Bangkok.

If you're interested in participating in and/or organizing rap sessions, send your name, mailing address, where it would be convenient for you to attend, and any special topics to discuss to RAP c/o Howard Stateman, PC Bangkok, and we'll try to get things together.

YOGA yogaYOGA

When one thinks of the richness of the east, one often thinks of yoga. Yoga is not only a technique used with many religions, it is also a scientifically proven way of self-development and health. Many volunteers study yoga for a variety of reasons, but all involve improving the quality of their lives in some way. Whatever your reasons, you may enjoy yoga with other volunteers. If you are interested, clip the coupon below & send it to YOGA, c/o Patti O'Brien PCV, Buddha Chinera Hospital, Phitsanuloke.

YOGA INTEREST QUESTIONNAIRE

Name _____
Address _____

Please send me info on yoga and a bibliography of further reading material

Please send me info on a weekend yoga retreats (3 excercise periods a day, time for introspective talks on the philosophy of yoga, its relationship to some of your health problems, vegetarian dinners and a chance to look over books and exchange bibliographies)

Best place for me is:

Bangkok _____ Pitsanuloke _____ other _____

I'm not up for a whole weekend, but am interested in yoga.

by MARY CLAIRE PEGGY

In talking to volunteers both before and after I got on the committee, I learned of a serious interest among many of them in Transcendental Meditation (TM). Some knew the price; others, the location; some, the why; others, the wherefore. I decided to go over and see if I could put it all together for those who would be interested in taking advantage of the course during the summer. The following information was provided by Khun Praphai, a student-teacher at the center, as well as by center handouts.

Every Friday night there is an introductory lecture in English at 7:30. It usually lasts an hour and a half. After the lecture there is time for interviews during which one can set up an appointment for the next day. Saturday is personal, one-to-one instruction, and Sunday, Monday and Tuesday involve group meetings which usually last one to 1½ hours.

It is necessary that the personal instruction and the group meetings be held on four consecutive days. The introductory lecture, however, is not necessary immediately before the Saturday-through-Tuesday meetings. For instance, one can attend the meeting this Friday but begin the Saturday session a month from now. (making prior arrangements with a teacher either the night of the lecture or by mail) The introductory lecture could be given in someone's home, or, more pertinent to PCVs, in a hotel room for a group of people. Khun Praphai said that at least five people would have to participate, and an instructor would have to be available. Similarly, the body of the course could be arranged on different days (say, Tuesday through Friday), again, with a minimum of 5 people and an available teacher.

Now, the most important part--the cost. For working adults the price is 10% of one month's salary, about ₧250-300 for PCVs. The minimum is ₧200 with a maximum of ₧1200. Student rate is ₧60. This is paid once and gives the meditator a lifetime membership in the TM program.

The membership allows one to go to any TM center in the world for further instruction or extra help.

The address: Michael Marchese, Dir. 566 Soi Somprongsong 5, Petchburi Rd., Bangkok. Phone: 217346, 219770. If you are really "geng" you can attend the introductory lecture every Friday at 6 p.m. It's in Thai.

PERSONAL REACTIONS

It's a short walk off Petchburi Rd. down Soi 5 to the compound which housed the Meditation Academy of Thailand. The compound is relatively free of street noises--almost serene, with well-kept gardens surrounding the homes. As I approached to the Academy house, second on the right, Khun Praphai asked if she could help me. Did I have an appointment? I didn't, and asked if someone there could answer some questions for me. She went to find a teacher, but they were all busy with their personal instructions. She was a student learning to be a TM instructor. Perhaps she could help me. She offered me a seat, and as I sat down, the other 4 people on the porch wandered off.

She answered my questions directly and succinctly (excellent English, U of Illinois graduate), without a hint of the em-

otional hysteria which infects Jesus Freaks and Cub fans. TM teaches you to achieve a state of wakeful relaxation that is different from waking, dreaming, sleeping or hypnotic trances. The benefits of the relaxation tend to linger on through the day. These include increased perceptive ability, reaction time and motor performance; decrease in oxygen consumption and a slowing of the heartbeat; and intensification of Alpha waves.

All of this produces people who are healthier mentally and physically, positively influence their environment and, ultimately, world peace. The individuals have more creativity, increased self-confidence and increased job and family life satisfaction.

The handouts were as even-tempered as Khun Praphai. Two of them were reprints from Industry Week, the Magazine for Managers, and the U of Maryland Law Forum, rather staid and conservative publications from the titles. Others quoted generously from a number of studies made by MDs, psychologists and criminologists. All favorable, of course, but all stated in the flat and deadpan prose befitting scientific inquiries. I was impressed.

The whole deal seems to be on the up and up. There are no wild and fantastic claims made and the claims which are made are documented by scientific evidence. Even the goal of world peace is implied rather than stated. Persons free of anxiety won't need wars to vent their accumulated stress. It sounds plausible. Maybe that's what I'll do with that extra ₧300 in March...

MORE THIS 'N THAT

At the Feb. 14 meeting we will be looking for a name for the committee. Any and all (printable) suggestions are welcome.

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We'd also like to have any contributions of articles for this newsletter which volunteers can give. Future editions might even contain a gossip column if there's enough gossip to fill it with.

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Contributions for the upcoming Bangkok Guide can be sent to Tom Frisbie at PG.

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Nick will have additional details on the GTL issue at the Feb. 14 meeting.

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Anyone want to buy a 3-speed bicycle? Howard Stateman has one for sale. New: ₧1200. Now: ₧ 700 or offer. c/o PG Bangkok.

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