



Jeff & Diane Brown working to lengthen the list of tribes, peoples, and languages that worship God

MORE SNAPSHOTS FROM THAILAND

In this issue, we continue to share some experiences we have had during this year in Thailand. We head to the United Arab Emirates at the end of July. So, more about our life in Thailand...

☺ One of Daniel and Alyssa's favorite recreations in Chiang Mai is climbing "The Peak", a 75-foot high rock-climbing wall in the heart of the city, with some negative slopes thrown in for good measure. Jeff made it up once, but the kids scramble up and ring the bell several times each visit. ☺

☺ Well, we have two more cats – Tiger and Cuddles. Having left our three Venezuelan cats alive and well on a farm for troubled youth outside Caracas, we got two Thai cats, brothers that are nearly identical to each other. The main difference between them is their tails. Thai cats have a very high incidence of tail deformities. Tiger has the typical Thai cat tail, which sort of doubles back on itself instead of extending straight. Guess what? We love 'em.

We will try to take them with us on to the UAE this summer. We have actual undoc-tored photos of them sleeping together in the bathroom sink. Too cute! ☺



☺ Daniel went out for track this year. He did shotput, discuss, and high jump. They had one big inter-school meet, where Daniel took second place in the shotput! He also went out for basketball. He played on the A team most of the season, then switched to the B team (which he appreciated because he got more playing time) when some of that team's players moved away. They won most of their games, and finished the Chiang Mai Athletic Conference tournament as champions! Daniel scored 6 points in one tournament game, which his team won 27 to 24. ☺

☺ Alyssa has been taking horse riding lessons twice weekly most of the year. She canters now with the best of them – without holding on to anything with her hands. When she arrives she grooms the horse for half an hour before riding for an hour. This may be a once in a lifetime opportunity, because it is so close to home and very inexpensive. She rides at a veterinary extension of Chiang Mai university, and likes the Thai university students who teach her. ☺

☺ We got an American football a few months ago. Jeff and Daniel enjoy playing with it, with their baseball gloves/ball, and with their Frisbees in the open soccer area in our neighborhood. When they play Frisbee, the Thai people stop their motorcycles or bicycles and stare! They seem to have never seen anything like it, and to wonder what that strange object is flying around. ☺



☺ Okay, we rode donkeys, horses, and elephants. What's left to ride? Water buffaloes. Last month, at the Water Buffalo Centre, not too far from Chiang Mai, we rode water buffaloes. First, we were treated to a demonstration of the many uses for water buffaloes in Thai rural life, complete with an enactment of a drunk Thai farmer being faithfully carried home on the back of a buffalo, and several techniques for sober people to mount the buffalo. Then we rode them ourselves, two per animal. We see water buffaloes near our home most days, but we hadn't gotten within arm's reach of them, let alone ridden one. The Centre is also a rice farm, the buffalo used in various capacities, such as to till the mucky soil before planting. We threshed some rice, we separated grain from chaff by swinging a huge bamboo fan, and we planted rice seedlings, wading (sinking) into the muck almost up to our knees. They also show us through and described for us their traditional rural Thai house on stilts. Everybody's got a water buffalo... ☺



☺ Diane and Jeff took a couple months of Thai classes. We're almost up to a 3-year-old level! It did help a lot though. Our first few months here we couldn't even count to one, let alone tell a non-English speaker what we want or ask a question. We got such a kick out of one of our teachers writing her name for us "in English": it was a question mark followed by two backward "c"s. That is how her name is spelled phonetically using our script adapted for Thai language sounds, but to call it "English", showed us how very different our language is from theirs, that even writing it "in English" looks like gibberish. ☺

☺ You want a good, clean, world-class party? Songkran, the three-day Thai New Year in April, is it! We thought New Years Eve in Caracas was something (and it was!) – this might just top it as a great holiday. Typically reserved Thais "let loose" in a city-wide free-for-all water fight, with buckets of all sizes, sprayers, squirt guns, pots & pans – anything that will hold and dispense water. Not many foreigners brave it, but we loved it! We spent three hours down along the moat (water-fight ground zero) dousing and being doused. It's the heights of hot-dry season (100+F) and it feels great! One article says, "Some set up stations beside the road where children (of all ages) douse passing motorists [and motorcyclists] while roving pick-up trucks with barrels of water packed with water warriors ply the streets dousing pedestrians and fellow water road warriors." We were among the roving, plying, pick-up truck, water warriors. Jeff and Daniel enjoyed it so much they went back the next day for six hours on foot at the moat, buying blocks of ice to make their paint bucket of moat water frigid before hitting others with high-power water guns. You have to see this one to believe it. ☺

☺ Daniel has been in a Boy Scout troop this year. It has been a wonderful experience - archery, hiking, learning to work on cars and use axes. They have taken trips to such places as the River Kwai and its infamous bridge, one of only a handful of trails in the world recognized by Boy Scouts as Historic Trails. Last month, they did their required "50-miler" in the north Thailand forests, except that this troop did it partly on foot, partly in small riverboats, partly in river innertubes, and partly, yes, by elephant. (That's not one of the options in Nebraska, by the way.) At their Court of Honor, Daniel received the Horsemanship, Fingerprinting, Cooking, Computer, and Dentistry merit badges, and the Historic Trails medal (so did Dad) and patch. ☺



Ready to kayak the River Kwai.



It took all the boys to hold this snake! Daniel is the one in the white floppy hat.

News from Jeff & Diane

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