

Exchange students write nome...

Life in Thailand, simpler and unmaterialistic

Editor's Note: Jason Thomson of Elderslie Township is currently involved in a Canada World Youth Exchange in Thailand. The following is a letter he sent to The Enterprise, dated December 1, 1990

Sawatdee - Hello from Thailand! Perhaps as you read this letter, there is a blanket of early winter snow on the ground and a frosty bite to the air. Well, that is definitely not the scenario here in sunny, hot equatorial Asia. The rare precipitation that we do receive is a welcome respite from the constant humidity and 30 degree Celsius temperatures. For me, it seems as though winter just didn't arrive this year and instead the following three months will be one long, never-ending July!

It was November 5th when we flew out of Toronto to begin our three month adventure. Refuelling stops in Seattle and Tokyo included, the flight had a total duration of 25 hours! A long time for those who find it virtually impossible to sleep on airplanes - like me! To further complicate matters we "lost" twelve hours in the air, which meant that by leaving Monday morning, we arrived in Bangkok at nearly midnight, Tuesday night.

Our first ten days in Asia were spent at a government camp situated on the Gulf of Thailand. Many high-ranking officials came and delivered lengthy and largely repetitive speeches, which mostly consisted of information that we already knew, or else facts that were irrelevant anyway. Despite this, it would have been unthinkable for anyone to be openly critical, or even to offer suggestions for topics. This was our first exposure to the Thais' vastly different concept of authority - one never directly questions an elder, or any "knowledgable" government representative. While Canada World Youth is an independent, non-political organization, its Thai equivalent is the Community Development Department. This

translates into a seemingly endless array of hierarchical official involvement, and many very formal functions to attend.

The opening welcome was in Bangkok, and we spent three days in that city. It's definitely the most polluted place I've ever been. I'll remember it as a jumbled mass of poverty, interspersed with new skyscrapers and polluting industries. We ate in outdoor sidewalk restaurants, for under \$1.00 CDN per meal. I wasn't sorry to leave this noisy, congested area, but I felt sad for the many people who will spend their entire life there, with no hope of escape or improvement.

Although physically my village is only six hours north of Bangkok by bus, in reality it's an entirely different world. From Petchaboon provincial capital, we were transported to our new homes in open trucks, decorated with banana leaves. The lead truck held a five-man band, loudly proclaiming our arrival to all. As we bumped down the "road" through the rice fields, majestic, forest-covered mountains loomed high in the distance. Almost surrounding our destination, I would guess that a substantial percentage of the two thousand population had lined the street in hopes of catching a glimpse of these strange "faran" (foreigners). Several hundred more crowded into the monastery. We were guided inside and given flowers and whole coconuts to drink from. The village youth proceeded to perform traditional dances in our honour. With such a tremendous display of friendship. It was impossible for us not to feel welcome!

I am now learning the routines and customs of family and village life. My host family's house is in a small clearing surrounded by coconuts, bananas, and other exotic vegetation, and just off the "main drag".

Our living area is basically one large room, with walls on the ends and open sides. The television sits on a chair in

the middle of an otherwise bare "living room" and we also possess the luxuries of a refrigerator and washing machine - the only one in the entire village! Furniture is mostly unnecessary. We simply sit on the floor for everything, meals included. This can be quite a challenge since pointing feet is very rude, and for me, sitting cross-legged ceases to be comfortable after approximately five minutes!

The main work at present is harvesting the rice, which is grown in small fields on all sides of the village. Cutting is done completely by hand, and often in large communal-type groups, which makes it seem more akin to a social outing than a subsistence occupation. Fair-skinned Canadians are given frequent shade breaks, and plenty of boiled water, to counteract the draining effects of manual labour in the tropical sun. Other crops in the area include beans, tamarinds, tobacco and corn.

To some, this might seem like a terrible place, with no opportunity for advancement, and few western "conveniences". But to me, it's a simpler, unmaterialistic lifestyle, with friendly, giving people who seem content. There's no unemployment, traffic jams, or office stress - just familiar neighbours and an unhurried existence that's far more in touch with the natural environment than our own. I'm sure I'll gradually understand much more over the following two months. It's amazing what one can observe when speaking much less - while attempting to decipher a little of what others are saying!

For everyone in Chesley - Have a great Christmas and a super new year of 1991!

Jason Thomson
Canada World Youth Thailand Exchange
Ban Pun, Tambon Pa Lao, Amphor Muang
Changwat Petchaboon
67000, Thailand

Bradshaw gave advice on gardening

TORONTO (CP) — John Bradshaw, a broadcaster and columnist who dispensed advice on gardening for more than 40 years, died Saturday. He was 75.

Bradshaw had been ill for more than two weeks with heart trouble.

Bradshaw, an air force veteran, began his broadcasting career after the Second World War, when he devised a simple gardening plan for the Veteran's Land Act.

By 1950 he was the garden and farm director of CFRB Radio in Toronto. Your Home and Garden Show drew audiences of up to 204,000 for 32 years until Bradshaw retired in 1982.

He was also garden editor of the defunct Toronto Telegram, the Toronto Star, the Chicago American and the Toronto Sun.

In 1960, he published the 16-volume encyclopedia series John Bradshaw's Complete Guide to Better Gardening.

Bradshaw is survived by his wife Marian and four children from an earlier marriage.

A private funeral service will be held Tuesday.

McCULLOCH—Mary Alice (Sherk) of Chesley passed away at her late residence Thursday, November 22nd, 1990 in her 66th year. Dear daughter of Mrs. Hazel Sherk and the late Bert Sherk. Beloved wife of Joseph B. McCulloch. Dear mother of M. Catherine and her husband Alan Blue of Calgary, William H. and his wife Wyonna of Chesley, Nancy Jean and her husband Paul Harlton of Toronto, Josephine Anne of Calgary, Frances Harriet McCulloch and her husband Mark Winn of Florida, Dr. Janet Ruth McCulloch and her husband Tony Legnini, James S. and his wife Carol of Chesley, John Mark McCulloch of Toronto. Predeceased by two infant children. Sadly missed by thirteen grandchildren and sisters Viola (Mrs. Earl Winger) of Ridgeway, Phyllis (Mrs. Arthur Pye) of Fonthill, Betty (Mrs. Fraser McCulloch) of Paisley, sisters-in-law Helen Sherk and Jo Ann Sherk both of Ridgeway, brothers Joseph and his wife Edna of Ridgeway, Bill and his wife Betty of Ridgeway, Claude and his wife Louise of Welland. Predeceased by sisters Kathryn, Sider and brother Lewis. Loved by many nieces, nephews and friends. Visiting at the Emke-McFadden Funeral Chapel, Chesley, Saturday from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. and Sunday from 2:00 to 4:00 and 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. until noon Monday and thence to Immanuel Missionary Church, Paisley for service of Celebration of Life, Monday at 2:00 p.m. Interment St. Andrew's Cemetery, Elderslie Township. Donations to the Chesley Baptist Church or Immanuel Missionary Church Building Funds would be appreciated as expressions of sympathy.

Herb McGilveary honored for 25 years of service to Elderslie

The council of the Township of Elderslie met on December 17, with all members present.

FWIO

The Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario will look after the country craft section at the Royal Winter Fair. The FWIO is also hosting Women's Day at the fair.

All WIs in Ontario have been asked to plant a tree.

The FWIO also set a goal to create new WI branches. The goal is to establish 14 new branches within the year.

Beatrice Violet Cumming passed away suddenly at the Chesley and District Memorial Hospital on Friday, November 30, 1990.

The former Beatrice Mitchell, she was the wife of the late Rodger Cumming and the late John Kennedy and was the dear sister of Alice Ringle of Owen Sound.

Predeceased by four brothers, Hugh, Sam, William and David and seven sisters, Margaret, Sarah, Isabelle, Mamie, Lillian and Susan.

Mrs. Cumming once operated restaurants at Rockford and Springmount. In the past few years, she has

lived in Owen Sound, Hanover and Chesley.

The family of the late Beatrice Cumming received friends at the James L. Currie Funeral Home in Chatsworth where the funeral service was held on Monday, December 3, 1990 at 2 p.m. Reverend William Lennips of Geneva Presbyterian Church in Chesley officiated.

Serving as pallbearers were Alvin Webb, Ernie Whitehead, Art Middleton, Elmer Brown, Allan MacDougall and Jim Currie.

Interment in Hillcrest Cemetery, Tara.