

BARNHEM MUANG MAI

Thursday, June 4 through Tuesday, June 30



It's the last day of June and in other words almost an entire month has passed since our last newsletter – where does the time go? We've filled our days with everything from regular chores and routines to parties and fun. During these past several weeks a few of our volunteers left for home, but an even greater number came to work for us, and the kids are ecstatic that three of their "old" volunteers returned to Barnhem.

Annelie arrived on June 6 and Mary left on June 7. Our "old" Sanna returned on June 11 for her second volunteer term and on June 14 it was terrific Troels' turn to say goodbye. And June 23 brought another encore with the arrival of Ulla, who's made it her tradition to spend her vacations with us. We couldn't be happier – this is her third volunteer term with us. And last but not least; Karin arrived on June 29 for her second round of volunteering.

Thus, our team now has strength in numbers as well as in experience. We house seven volunteers, of which three have been here before and the other four have been here long enough to qualify as veterans...it's all wonderful!

Time has flown by so quickly that we almost missed Midsummer Eve – but because our volunteers reminded us and in particular because our Thai colleagues don't need any time at all to prepare for large parties, we decided on Tuesday, June 16, to celebrate Midsummer on Saturday, June 20.

And what a fabulous party it was! As usual ours was the most beautiful Midsummer pole ever. We were treated to a lovely Midsummer buffet with incredibly delicious Thai food and the obligatory meatballs representing Sweden.

Lunch was followed by the traditional Midsummer games. At first, we sang and danced around the Midsummer pole – we sang of our little frogs, the priest's crows that tumbled, the sleeping bears, and so on.

And once we'd caught our breath from all the songs, we had some relays to compete in. Weo was this year's hero – first she found a coin buried in lots of flour, then someone who was wearing blindfolds fed her a banana, and finally she had to eat lots of cookies and drink soda with her hands tied behind her back. Managing all of this with grace and calm was quite an accomplishment. She won over Eak, who made a great effort, but who perhaps lacked Weo's grace and calm.

This first competition was followed by all kinds of crazy relays that everyone participated in. And then the day's activities ended with a soccer game between the boys and the girls. The boys won even though they had their hands tied behind their backs and even though Wow was our goal keeper, cleverly coming up with entirely novel ways of keeping the boys from scoring. What do you think about her rotating the entire goal to the right or to the left upon seeing the approaching ball? But, as stated, not even that helped. This year we celebrated on our own – we had invited the Soccer Youth Home, but they were unable to come and in a way we enjoyed having some time to ourselves.

In the afternoon we took a break from the partying to give everyone the chance to shower and change before dinner – but not everyone wanted a break. Wow took the opportunity to show off her previously hidden karaoke talents. The kids' excitement was undeniable as she sang with gusto and rounded off her performance by singing a duet with Taohoo.

As usual, the kitchen treated us to dinner in the form of a fabulous buffet, followed by karaoke, music videos, and dancing. Midsummer in Thailand beats Midsummer in Sweden – just so you know!

Since the Soccer Youth Home had been unable to visit us on Saturday, we were invited to visit them on Sunday instead, and consequently the entire weekend turned into one big party.

After lunch on Sunday we left for the Soccer Youth Home, where we played soccer, threw darts, and jumped on the trampoline. We returned to Barnhem around 4 p.m., at which point we were all rather tired from two full days of playing. All the playing, and especially all the soccer, inspired Anna, who is a soccer coach in Sweden, and Cartoon, who is a real soccer champ, to organize a soccer clinic with any kids who might be interested. As we've pointed out before, Cartoon is a very, very good soccer player and if Anna can teach him to coach soccer during her stay, then he can continue coaching the other children even after Anna's departure. Cartoon is

excited that Anna has brought this up and Anna couldn't be more pleased with her assistant coach.

Midsummer and the fun and games at the Soccer Youth Home were followed by a week of calm before it was time for some fun again.

On Saturday, June 27, we got to experience our promised encore when crew members of USS New Orleans arrived together with some Rotarians to apply a second layer of paint to our wall.

This time they also showed up loaded with lots of fun and useful presents. We received many inline skates, skateboards, and helmets; and we were also fortunate to receive lots of band-aids, wound cleansers, etc.

And the encore was just as successful and as much fun as the original visit. This time there was no Thai dancing, however, since our dancers wanted to help with the painting and since Lang, Barnhem's choreographer, was ill. But it actually didn't matter – once we'd finished, we and the crew spent our time playing soccer and volleyball, skateboarding, inline skating, and doing other fun things before we had a fabulous lunch. A very, very successful day!

Before ending this newsletter, we must tell you about something fantastic that happened in Sweden. The Granit shops, which were already supporting us and Happy Child by selling the silver pendant in their shops in Stockholm, have now started a project called "Omtanke" (Compassion).

In this project, Granit is collaborating with a Swedish company called redQ. As the owner of the entire chain of the production process, redQ ensures that the production is carried out with the utmost compassion and consideration of humans and the environment. For each product labeled "Granit Omtanke" that is sold, 5 SEK (approx. 0.60 USD) go directly to Happy Child, and in other words to us.

Granit, which has several stores throughout Sweden and one store in Norway, now sells the Barnhem pendant in all of its stores. For a closer look at the Granit products, go to www.granit.com. Please note that although the web page is in both Swedish and English, the Omtanke project is currently described in Swedish only. By going to the Swedish page labeled Omtanke, you will be able to see Barnhem's pendant and the other products included in this important project. Many thanks to all of the fantastic people at Granit! Words cannot describe our deep gratitude.

We can only encourage our readers to purchase an Omtanke product online or in one of the Granit stores. Not only are these products filled with compassion, they are also as esthetically pleasing as they are environmentally sound.

Fondly,

Sussi and Hans



Weo very calmly and methodically worked her way through the first relay - and won...



...whereas Eak lacked her calm and patience - and lost.



The relays go on...



....an on. The boys look a bit worried. Perhaps this is because...



....the girls, led by Wow, seem to own this race.



Here the challenge is to move forward on your behind while trying to keep the team intact...not easy.



And here the trick is to pop someone else's balloon.



This is what you look like after a full day of relays. Perhaps a shower would be in order?



Wow is not only the world's best Head of our Barnhem - she is also a karaoke champ. Here she's singing a duet with...



...one of the other stars at Barnhem - Taohoo.



Disco time!



Soccer party at the Soccer Youth Home. Our team is all set.



Nun is flying high, what a thrill!



George and his assistants are prepping the paint.



US Navy on site and ready to get started.



Paint, paint, paint!



A fully loaded ship!



After all the painting, everyone got to enjoy some soccer, volleyball, and other fun stuff.



The kitchen served a fantastic buffet - as always.



Some of what we found in the boxes. Two tough skateboarders pose for the camera.