

DECEMBER 2014

The Scandinavian

Bulletin

Welcome
to our
Juleskål



Skandinavisk Samfund Siam
Scandinavian Society Siam



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Chairman's Message

Christer Holmvall
Chairman
Scandinavian Society Siam



Dear Members of Scandinavian Society Siam,

Fall has almost passed, thanksgiving has come and gone and next on the cards is Christmas and New Year.

We haven't been able to hold any events unfortunately since the Crayfish Party.

We tried to get a get together event organized for November but due to very little interest we had to cancel the event last minute which is too bad. Please do visit the planned event site – a great café/restaurant called DEXTERS.

I would personally like to ask you as a member for help on activities going forward.

We will of course continue with the golf section events throughout the season and several other events. However – I would greatly appreciate your help with suggestions on future events. What would you like to see? What would you like to do? Please feel free to email us at board@sss.or.th or visit our Facebook page and we will be more than happy to take suggestions.

Remember – we are here for you – the members – so please help us make your membership as positive as possible.

With Christmas around the corner there are tons of events. I am sure that you are all looking forward to this. There is a Christmas Eve Mingle at Christ Church on the 24th of December. Service is from 13.00-14.00 followed by a mingle 14.00-15.00.

There is also one more golf tournament this year which is the Christmas Scramble to be held at Thana City on the 20th of December. You can sign up at www.zabaigolf.com

There are of course many other Scandinavian events. I suggest visiting the ScandAsia web site and downloading the ScandAsia November edition which lists many of the events including ones at The Admirals @24, Stable Lodge and of course you can check out the various Scandinavian Chambers' websites for their individual lunches including the Swedish Chambers which is on December 13th.

We are also planning ahead for 2015. The first major event will be the Garden Party which will be end January – beginning February. We will update you as soon as we have more details. We are also planning a walk in the historical streets of Bangkok, the Viking Party and much more

We thank you for being members of the society. We have already welcomed a few new members this year.

Please also feel free to contact us in case you would like for us to help in an event or if you have desires for specific types of events.

Please don't forget to visit www.sss.or.th and also www.facebook.com/scandinaviansocietysiam for further updates.

Have a great holiday season.

Christer Holmvall

God Jul, Every One!



The first rector of Christ Church held a special prayer on Christmas Eve to the benefit of the Scandinavians in Bangkok. After the service, a glass of wine was shared before everyone went back to their everyday life.

More than a hundred years later we are upholding the tradition, only now in our own languages.

Welcome to celebrate the traditional Scandinavian Christmas Service on Wednesday December 24 at 1300 pm.

We will be singing the old songs and listening to the beautiful texts read to us in our different mother tongues. After the service we mingle on the church square and enjoy the treats presented to us by the Scandinavian Society Siam, SSS. This year Susanna Askelöf and her friends from F.A.B., Food Academy Bangkok, will cater for the mingle food.

Warmly Welcome!

Wishes Lars Ryderstad, The Church of Sweden Priest in Bangkok

Christ Church, - on the corner of Sathorn Road and Convent Road (next to BNH Hospital)



Please come and join us for our traditional Juleskål

It is with great pleasure we invite you to Scandinavian Society Siam's traditional 'juleskål', which will be served directly after the Scandinavian Christmas service and before the Finnish Christmas service.

The annual Christmas service at Christ Church in the afternoon before Christmas Eve has been a tradition in Bangkok for many years, and the annual "juleskål" where SSS is host for a refreshment and a snack after the church service has been a tradition for almost as many years, and SSS aims to keep it that way. This is also a good opportunity to mingle and have a chat with people you may not see very often, and it's a great opportunity for newcomers to meet new friends.



Therefore we will as usual serve a glass of wine or soft drink and some finger food to the congregation immediately after the church service.

**The Scandinavian Christmas Service is
on Christmas Eve,
24 December, at 1-2 pm. Mingle at 2 pm
at Christ Church.**

The Finnish Christmas Service is after the 'juleskål' at 2.30 pm.

Welcome!

Christ Church is located at the intersection of Sathorn Road and Convent Road.

Food Academy Bangkok, F.A.B., is catering for the snack and drink

The Tsunami

Scandinavian Society Siam will provide members a free copy of the book that was published by SSS to record some of the efforts done by the members and other fellow Scandinavians to help when the Tsunami disaster struck 10 years ago. The book will be distributed as long as stock remains.

By Gregers Møller

When the Tsunami hit the Andaman coast of Thailand on that terrifying day of December 26, 2004, it took most of that day to realize, what had actually happened. The first news out of Phuket talked about a "big wave" which it was feared had swept several people out to sea.

Later during that day, the size of the disaster slowly emerged.

ScandAsia had two reporters in the area. Our Danish trainee Lars Pinnerup was on vacation further north. A Finnish trainee, Allan, was in Krabi with his mother. Lars realized something unusual had happened when his

room suddenly filled up with water. Allan saw the wave coming, people running towards him, jumped on his motorcycle and kept going until he was up on the hill behind the resort. When he turned around and looked down, the pavilion where he had just had breakfast was demolished.

In Bangkok, staff reporter Teerapong and Will Dtangpaibool came rushing in to work. We decided that Will should travel down to meet Lars who was trying to get to Phang-na although the transportation got more and more difficult as he approached the hardest hit area. Our close associate Christer Nilsson, Swedish freelance journalist and editor of the member magazine of Thai-Swedish Chamber of commerce, also went to Phuket and kept in touch with us. Teerapong and myself went into a 24/7 job to report on scandasia.com any news we thought useful for fellow Scandinavians at home or in Thailand of what had happened and what was being done to help.

On the second and third day of the disaster, one of our key functions became to identify Scandinavians on the many lists from hospitals and clinics in the area. The names were entered in the books when they were admitted by a Thai who had written as best they could what they believed the person



- ten years later



said that their name was. Our phones were ringing constantly. It was relatives looking for who someone. Sometimes we could locate the person and a warm feeling of usefulness swelled up inside.

One of the most fascinating things we witnessed, was how the Scandinavian com-

munity came to life and started acting. These people were our silent readers, our purpose for doing what we were doing, and now all of a sudden they started a range of different activities wherever they were. Many who lived along the Andaman coast simply helped people in need. One by one. Others with management skills started organizing

help for groups of people. For example Johnny Axelsson, the president of the Thai-Swedish Chamber of Commerce, organized cooling containers for the many dead bodies that were literally piling up at the temples only with dried ice blocks placed on top.

My wife Disraporn cancelled her trip home to her parents. Instead she took a military transport plane down to help search the mangrove forest coastline for dead bodies. The bushes were hung with the clothes swept out of the rooms of the victims. She would send me an SMS with a name whenever she found a Nordic passport and we would see if we could find the person on the hospital lists. Often they found the victims simply by following the stench. Sadly, she also witnessed some who had come looking for valuables.

In Bangkok, the Scandinavian community found themselves needed in a range of capacities. Many helped out in the reception centers near the Donmuang airport, where the survivors were accommodated when they were evacuated out of the coastal area. Others went around to the hospitals, trying to help evacuated people who were admitted with injuries that were never only physical. At each of the Nordic embassies, teams of staff and volunteers were trying to get order into the chaotic stream of names and information.



ScandAsia reporter Lars Pinnerup with volunteer Disraporn Yatprom.



Amazingly, today we can laugh at some of the silly things, that also happened in the process. Like the expert that arrived from Norway to help with the registration process who immediately upon her arrival in her arrogance dismissed all the work done by the Norwegian volunteers so far and tried to implement a new system. A day later she humbly come back and ask the locals to be part of their efforts, which they had carried on irrespective of the "expert" because they knew that people needed them to do what they did.

When dust settled, one of the actively involved local Scandinavians, the Swedish businessman Kenneth Radencrantz, who was also on the board of the Scandinavian Society Siam, suggested that the Scandinavian Society Siam published a book about the involvement of the local, often anonymous Scandinavians who had sprung to action when called for, and often faded back into the ranks and file, when their tasks were done. Not asking for any recognition, they had just done what anyone should.

"If we don't publish this book, history will conclude that all the humanitarian work was done by the institutions, the embassies, the red cross. There will be no record of what



hundreds of Scandinavian residents in Thailand did to alleviate the pains of their fellow countrymen," he said.

I was given the task of putting the book together and when it was eventually published, the Scandinavian Society Siam gave one copy to each member for free. Excess copies have since been sold to interested individuals who contacted either the Scandinavian

Society Siam or www.ScandShop.in.th.

Commemorating the disaster today, ten years later, Scandinavian Society Siam has decided to offer all members a copy of the book as long as stock is available.

Members should send an email to me – gregers@scandmedia.com - with their request and the address they want the book shipped to and I will organize the mailing.



First Sunday of Advent Celebrated in BANGKOK

Photographer Eva Lindvall



Once more the Swedish community celebrated the first Sunday of Advent at the residence of the Swedish Ambassador on Ekamai, in Bangkok.

More than 250 Scandinavians turned up to participate in the Advent Worship. After the service the traditional Christmas Bazaar was open in the garden. Amongst other, the Swedish Church sold traditional mulled wine and saffron bread.

Santa Claus came by, and was seen sitting in a big arm chair telling his own story to all children, young and old.





Golf REPORT

By Lars Andersson

The new year holiday break is soon here and quite a few of our members are flying to Scandinavia to enjoy the holiday season with friends and food. For us that are remaining in the sun it will be a good opportunity to practice our skills. Especially now when the weather is starting to be more friendly, with lower temperatures and less humidity. Depending on when you get this issue of our magazine you might either be looking forward to our new tradition, the Christmas Scramble, or looking back at it with fond memories. Anyway, it will be or was a great event!

Since the last issue of the Bulletin we've actually only had one competition - the Kvik Cup, which we played at Bangkok Golf Club. The course was in very good condition and one of the best things with this course is that they serve Leo beer, the perfect beer to drink with lots of ice to avoid being dehydrated. With greens being record fast many of us were struggling with the putter. Actually, only two player managed to get around with less than 30 puts, and that was Staffan Lyrestam with 29 and Juha Saarinen with 28. In Juha's case it was probably because he had booked "my" caddy. I on the other hand, with an unfamiliar caddie, ended up with 40 puts. To be more accurate, there were actually 8 of us having 40 or more puts. It's of course a theoretical discussion but if I've had only 28 puts I would actually have one the B group.

In the A group our sponsor Carsten Andersen played very good golf, and took the first spot with 4 birdies and 38 points. A few points behind was our captain Kristian Wensell with 35 points and second runner up was Juha Saarinen. John Andersson is continuing to play good golf and he took the big trophy in the B group with 41 points, followed by Sverre Haug with 36 points and Henrik Langer with 33. It's always nice to see some new names at the top. The winner of the C group, Chonlada Chankaew, did also manage to get 41 points.

We are still early in the season and the game is open both for MVP and the putting competition. We can just note that we have two people sharing the top spot of MVP, both with a total of 20 points - Johan Andersson and Kenneth Hovmoller. We've only played 3 tournaments so far as we had to cancel one competition so it will be a tight schedule in the spring and there are many more points to fight about and for sure many more putts to be made. Happy holidays and happy golfing!







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