

December 2013

The Scandinavian

Bulletin



Skandinavisk Samfund Siam
Scandinavian Society Siam





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Chairman's Message



Robert Kronberg
Chairman
Scandinavian Society Siam

Dear members of Scandinavian Society Siam

It is said that Thailand encounters one problem every single year, but as I am writing this, it seems like the problem of this year has been solved (at least for the next 60 days). Now, we are hoping for a peaceful Christmas. Even though it is cold in Thailand for the time being, a white Christmas is not very likely.

Christmas is coming and as usual Church of Sweden and SSS are celebrating a Christmas Service at Christ Church with a "juleskål" afterwards. This is a great opportunity to experience a bit of Scandinavia and to meet other fellow Scandinavians. Finnish members should be aware that the "juleskål" will be before their service.

Besides that, we have already had several events since the last Bulletin, and I particularly enjoyed the visit to the Thai-Danish Farm, because my son, soon to be 4 years old, is trying to explain this visit to other children, but they do not understand. They think that milk is coming from a machine.

This event was organized by the Heritage Section, which, by the way, needs volunteers from other countries than Denmark.

The greatest event of the recent past was the annual Crayfish Party at Rembrandt Hotel, where Beer Chang showed up as beer sponsor with a draft beer stand that was very popular with the late snack.- Beer Chang would not miss the chance to support the Vikings. Thanks to Beer Chang, as well as to the main sponsor, ScandMedia, and all the other sponsors, which are mentioned in this Bulletin.

Moreover, we had a wine tasting at Mermaid Hotel, but the participants were hungrier in the beginning than interested in the wine. However, the wines were good – and the food as well. You can read more about this and other events in this Bulletin.

The next event, besides the Christmas Service, is the Garden Party in the garden of the Norwegian ambassador, which will take place on 25th January 2014. We are looking forward to this party.

We will know shortly whether it is possible to establish a Danish Church in Bangkok or somewhere else in Thailand. If this becomes a reality, the plan is that all Scandinavian Churches should co-operate in order to service the Scandinavian community even better. You can follow SSS at www.sss.or.th and www.facebook.com/scandinaviansocietysiam.

Robert Kronberg

Next event

Garden Party

In the Norwegian Ambassador's Garden
Saturday 25 January from 6 pm until midnight.



Golf Workshop

On a beautiful sunny Sunday afternoon, 8th December 2013, eight members met at Thana City Golf Club to get an introduction to golf from the club's pro, the Australian Mr. Glenn Barry. For two hours, Glenn taught us as much about golf as the time permitted - the names of different parts of the golf club, the handle, the shaft, and the foot, and how to hold and swing a golf club, how to tee off on a practice field, and how to chip and putt.

We all shot a large number of balls into the practice field, careful not to hit the many aircraft flying at low altitude directly above us on their approach to land at the neighbouring Suvarnabhumi airport. A few shots went as far as 50 – 100 metres, but luckily none came anywhere near the aircraft.

After having scattered the field with a vast number of golf balls, which we luckily didn't



have to pick up ourselves afterwards, we went over to the nearby practice green where the golf clubs were replaced with chippers used to chip the balls from just outside the green and onto the green. After chipping a number of balls onto the green, the chippers were replaced with putters, and we practiced how to roll the balls into the cup, which is the

hole with a flag in it. The practice green had several cups so that we could all putt at the same time. After some practice, two players managed to put the ball into the cup with two putts, but most of us needed four or five putts.

After two hours of golf practice, which seemed far too short, we all went to the 19th hole, the veranda at the club house, for drinks. Well deserved I might add, as two hours in the sun had made us all rather thirsty. The veranda is beautifully located with a view of part of the golf course with an idyllic lake, so we moved the tables around so all could enjoy the view while enjoying a well deserved drink.

When all glasses were empty, we took a taxi to the new Admiral's restaurant on Soi 24 where we enjoyed a sumptuous Christmas dinner with all the trimmings. All in all, a very enjoyable Sunday afternoon.



Golf Report

By Lars Andersson

Christmas is almost here and we are half way through this season. The final event this year was Admiral's Christmas Scramble which hopefully should become a new annual tradition. As an important part of this event we also, on requests from members at the annual meeting, invited non-golfers to get an introduction to golf - but this you can read more about in another article.

It's been quite a few tournaments since the last issue. August 31 we played the Sherwin Williams Masters at Bang Phra Golf Club. This golf course offered not only the usual dogs on the fairways and tee boxes but also monkeys. Especially at the last hole it was a challenge to hit the fairway without also hitting a monkey. But not only was it monkeys making this golf course a challenge for many of us, it was also the fact that many holes were long and all of the fairways were uphill and against the wind. Only one player, Marko Unhola, managed to play under his handicap. It was still a great day.

The results were completely different when we played Wissen Cup, September 28, at Thana City Golf Club. Here many players scored very well with, once again, a Finn winning the A group - Jari Turunen with 43 points - followed by Kristian Wensell, also with 43 points. Not bad for two guys playing on handicap 7 and 8! Pelle Pettersson managed to put the ball 1 cm from the pin on his first shot at hole 3, as close as you can get to a hole-in-one without actually making one! On a hot day with occasionally strong winds and rain we played the SSS Cup at Bangkok Golf Club, sponsored by our mother organization. Many struggled with



the greens which were unusually slow for this golf course. Personally I had only one put that went beyond the hole, and that wasn't because all the others went in. The seasoned player Bo Palmqvist kindly told me that less than 20% of the short puts goes in the hole. As usual a popular event, with 19 players in the guest group, and despite the slow greens and an unusually high amount of puts the scores were generally very good. Christian Stenhammar, the winner of the B-group, had the highest amount of puts (39) in his group (actually the 3rd highest amount of all players) but managed to win thanks to only 50 shots with the other clubs!

On popular request from our members we held a 2 day tournament over the weekend November 9-10, at Buraphra Golf Club sponsored by one of our most dedicated sup-

porters - DZ Wine. Considering how many that actually registered and showed up it was unfortunately not as popular as anticipated. As a lot of work goes into planning and arranging the competitions we welcome feedback from our members regarding this kind of events - but of course also regarding our tournaments in general. Those playing however, had to great days on a nice and challenging golf course.

The last "normal" tournament before the new year was generously sponsored by Kvik Kökken, and was played November 30, at Subhapruet Golf Club on a day substantially less hot than the average day in Bangkok. The course was in very good conditions with fast greens so the expectations on the scores were high. For some reason though the scores were not as good as expected and it took a mere 35 points to win the A-group (Bjarne Kjersner), which was quite a lot more than the 29 points needed to win the B-group (Kenneth Hovmoller). Helena Ahola took the victory in the C-group with 32 points.

Entering into the second half of the season it's tight both at the top of the "Race to Six Senses Yao Noi" and in the putting competition sponsored by Lux. With some extra practice over the weekends we are looking forward to an exciting spring with the first tee-off at the Swedish Golf Day at Vintage Golf Club January 18.



Best Crayfish Ever

The annual crayfish party was held at Rembrandt Hotel on 5th October 2013, and all agreed that the crayfish, which were imported from Sweden, were the best ever. And not only were the crayfish superb, but also the accompaniments like shrimps and smoked salmon were delicious.

The crayfish had to be ordered well in advance of the party, so we had to estimate the number of participants and order the crayfish accordingly. We estimated the number at 150, and this number of tickets was sold out one week before the party.

As a new initiative, the party started with drinks and canapés in front of the dining room while waiting for everybody to arrive. This was a good chance to mingle and have a chat with those who were not going to sit at your table.

When everybody was seated, the chairman went up on stage and directed the participants to call in the crayfish, which were then carried in by the waiters to enthusiastic applause by the participants.

Although the ticket price is quite high, it is still not enough to cover the actual cost of the party with free flow of akvavit and beer plus a night snack, so we secured several sponsorships. The organizing committee wishes to thank all sponsors.

The following seven companies provided sponsorships in cash:
ScandMedia Co., Ltd.
Spica Co., Ltd.
Bumrungrad International Hospital
Transpo International Ltd.
Finnair PLC

Black Mountain Group of Companies
Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken S.A.

The following companies provided prizes for the lucky draw:

St. Regis Hotel
SKF
Oriflame
SAAB
Bangkok by Bike
Rembrandt Hotel
Oakwood Hotel
Mermaid Hotel
Krusell
Stable Lodge
Texica

And finally Chang Beer, who provided the beer.

The Swedish crayfish party - the origins

Crayfish have been eaten in Sweden since the 1500s. For a long while, only the aristocracy enjoyed these delicacies, as popular suspicion of shellfish was widespread. Originally, crayfish meat was used for sausage, ragout, patties or puddings.

In the mid-1800s, people started eating crayfish as they are eaten today. The crayfish feast or crayfish supper in the month of August spread through the middle classes. In the 1900s, crayfish became a national delicacy and people in all sectors of society began celebrating the occasion. The price of crayfish fell as a result of imports from Turkey and elsewhere. The crayfish feast, at which people gather to eat, drink and be merry, is a typically Swedish festivity marking the end of the summer.



Sought-after delicacy

Due to the risk of over-fishing, restrictions on river crayfishing were introduced back in the early 1900s. The season was limited

Member of the Year



The photo shows the Chairman handing the certificate to Wichien.

Every year SSS honours a member who has made an extraordinary contribution to the society during the past year by appointing him or her Member of the Year. The nominee for Member of the Year is proposed by the board and approved by the members present at the Annual General Meeting.

It was decided to honour Mr. Wichien Harnpraween as Member of the Year for 2012-13 for his untiring work to register SSS with the authorities as a registered association. But why all the fuss of registration? Why not just leave it as an informal club of Scandinavians as it has been for over 90 years already?

The main reason is that banking regulations no longer permit banks to hold accounts for informal entities without a clear ownership. These regulations are to prevent money laundering, and they actually make sense. So in order to maintain a bank account in the name of SSS, the registration was necessary.

The award ceremony took place during the crayfish party on 5th October, at which the Chairman of SSS, Mr. Robert Kronberg, invited Wichien to the stage and handed him a certificate and a small gift of two bottles of wine.



to a couple of months from August. Crayfish thus became an exclusive and much sought-after delicacy. The crayfish population in rivers and lakes has also been decimated on a number of occasions by a dreaded parasitic mould.

Today, imported crayfish are on sale all year round, but few Swedes are prepared to abandon the seasonal tradition. In early August, the media set the scene for the feast with detailed tests of the current year's offerings, tips from celebrities and lists ranking the various brands.

In some years, Chinese crayfish are deemed best, in others those imported from the US. But Swedish crayfish – needless to say – always win. The trouble is, they are very expensive. Whatever their origin, crayfish in Sweden are cooked as the Swedes like them – in a brine of salt water, with plenty of fresh crown dill, harvested after the plant has flowered, then served cold and eaten with one's fingers. Bread, mushroom pies, surströmming, strong Västerbotten cheese, salads and other



dishes are served as accompaniments.

The very few who have private access, of course, catch their own crayfish. The little creatures are night animals, so fishing has to be done after dark. They are caught in wire traps and the bait is often rotten or raw fish. Dining is traditionally outdoors, but in practice the party is often driven indoors by bad weather or aggressive mosquitoes. Customary party accessories are comical paper hats, paper tablecloths, paper lanterns (often

depicting the Man in the Moon), and bibs. A rowdy atmosphere prevails amid noisy eating and traditional drinking songs (snapsvisa). The alcohol consumption is often high, especially when compared to the amount of food actually eaten. It is considered customary to suck the juice out of the crayfish before shelling it.

The crayfish is normally eaten with lots of Akvavit and other kinds of snaps, as well as beer.

Excursion to Thai-Danish Dairy Farm

Saturday 23rd November at 10 am, a large bus left Rembrandt Hotel with a small group of people eagerly looking forward to finding out where Thai milk comes from. The group did not stay small for long, as more people were picked up at Laksi on the way out of town.

We were 15 adults and 6 children, all eager to visit the Thai-Danish dairy farm, but as we approached the farm after about three hours, we all agreed that our first priority should be finding some lunch. Unfortunately Flemming, the chief organizer of the excursion, had fallen ill and couldn't join us, so we didn't know where he had planned to take us for lunch. However there are plenty of roadside eateries, so it didn't take us long to find something to eat, which turned out to be very delicious as well.

With our stomachs full, we continued the short distance to the dairy farm, where we were received by a Thai "cowgirl" – a female tour guide dressed in boots, blue jeans and a cowboy hat. The farm is supposed to be modeled on a Danish farm, but the American cowboy style is a lot more spectacular, so if it attracts a few more visitors, then why not? The farm experience started with a lesson in milking a cow, first on a plastic udder mounted on a metal frame and filled with water, before going for the real thing. Everybody got the chance to try to pull a few squirts of milk out of a cow, which showed exemplary patience.

We then saw a film showing the history of the farm. Highlights of the history are summarized below.

The children also had the opportunity to ride calves and horses, and to feed the calves which were very greedy when a bottle of milk was put into their mouth. And as if that was not enough, there were also ostriches and camels, but no explanation of how they fit into a typical Danish farm.

After completing the farm work, we continued to Eco Valley Lodge for a well deserved sundowner and dinner. The children baked twistbread (snobrød) and decorated the Christmas tree.

The following morning some of us went on a bicycle trip before heading back towards Bangkok. On the way back, we visited Muak Lek railway station where the grave of Knud Lyne Rahbek is located. Knud Lyne Rahbek was the son of a Danish land surveyor working on the railway to Korat, and he died when visiting his parents in 1897, only 19 years old.



His grave was renovated in 2012, funded partly by SSS and partly by a grant from the EAC Foundation.

After having inspected that, most of us dozed off on the way back to Bangkok, which we reached at about 3 pm.

The Thai-Danish Dairy Farm

At the end of the 1950s, the Danish agronomist Mr. Gunnar Søndergaard worked for FAO in Bangkok, and he noticed that cow milk was not available in Thailand. There was no commercial Thai milk production, and therefore he pursued the idea of establishing a farm and a dairy as well as an agricultural school in the country.



At the same time King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand visited Europe in 1960. During the visit he personally witnessed how the Danish agribusiness worked and learned about the agrarian history of Denmark, and the King was very impressed with the Danish agricultural production.

King Bhumibol and Queen Sirikit visited Denmark in 1960

Mr. Gunnar Søndergaard persuaded the Danish Farmer's Association (Landbrugsrådet's Afsætningsudvalg) to grant a complex of stables housing more than 160 cattle to the people of Thailand. The Thai Government and the Danish Farmer's Association exchanged contracts for technical and financial support, and the Danish Farmer's Association assisted by setting up the Thai-Danish Dairy Farm (TDDF), a dairy, and an agricultural training centre in the Muak Lek district 150 kilometres north of Bangkok.

The TDDF was inaugurated on 16 January 1962 by King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand and King Frederik IX of Denmark. It was initially financed through the Danish

Farmer's Association, and later the Danish International Development Assistance (Danida) provided assistance.

The activities of the TDDF included the purchase of cattle, construction of farm buildings, training of farmers, development of a dairy colony, provision of extension services and development of a small dairy plant as well as a marketing system for pasteurized milk products. Mr. Gunnar Søndergaard was appointed general manager.

An initial core of livestock consisting of 39 heads of red dairy cattle was shipped from Denmark in the spring of 1962, and a further 50 heads were imported in 1963.

However, the Danish dairy cattle could not adjust to the climatic conditions of Thailand, and they caught many diseases and suffered from insect pests. As a result, a lot of cattle died, and the staff on the farm began to interbreed both local and Pakistani cattle with the Danish cattle. The result was a new breed able to live in Thailand while maintaining a satisfactory milk production capacity. The original red dairy cattle is the reason why there is still red cows on the milk cartons.

Søndergaard visited the agricultural schools in Thailand and picked out students for the one year training programmes at the new agricultural school in Muak Lek. Many of the students achieved scholarships in Denmark and some of them even decided to stay in Denmark after their scholarships ended. However, most of the students returned to Thailand where they were offered to buy cheap farmland around the dairy farm. Hereby the new farmers could start their own milk production. The farmers were still allowed to deliver milk to the dairy farm and to receive guidance, courses and veterinary treatment. Today, many of the students from the 1960's are managing directors in the Thai dairy sector.

In 1971, the Thai government took over the responsibilities, and the project was organized under the management of a newly established enterprise named "The Dairy Farming Promotion Organization of Thailand" (DPO).

This project in Thailand was a huge success, and there is a general agreement that "The Danish Farm" has been fundamental for the development of the Thai dairy sector. Furthermore, "The Danish Farm" has affected the everyday life for the thousands of families who increased their income and wellbeing due to increase in milk production and sales.

Wine Tasting

One of many splendid suggestions brought up at the AGM in April was to introduce wine tasting within SSS. Therefore on the 19th of September SSS arranged a wine tasting in the wine cellar at Mermaid Hotel. The event was in cooperation with Mermaid Hotel and Mr Jim Paulsson, a wine lover and connoisseur. We tried four red Italian wines from four different grapes provided by Matt Milotich from Texica.



SSS Library

The Scandinavian Library at Mermaid Hotel, Sukhumvit Soi 29, is open every weekday between 2 until 4 pm. Come, browse and borrow a book or two. Do you have spare books, books you have already read and don't want to keep – please contact SSS on members@sss.or.th and we are happy to include them in our library.

Food Academy in Bangkok

Food Academy Bangkok, F.A.B., is a project run by Susanna Asklöf. Susanna has lived in Thailand for almost 13 years. She is Thai but was adopted by a Swedish family in the early sixties and grew up in Stockholm, Sweden.

Susanna is advertising photographer by trade. Two years ago she participated in a huge art project in Bangkok and was assigned the area of Klong Toey. Klong Toey is the largest slum in Bangkok. Youngsters from Klong Toey often end up in drug abuse, crime and prostitution.

During this project Susanna learned to know many young people in Klong Toey and by the end of the project she had a wish to find a way to help these youngsters.

With her passion for cooking Susanna had an idea about starting a cooking school in the middle of Klong Toey slum. In the '70 rai' she found an old printing shop. With help from her friends the worn down shop has been transformed into a modern kitchen and seating area. In April 2013 she opened up her school. Now she teaches young Thai basic cooking, baking and waiting at tables. But also important topics like health and nutrition as well as accounting and English. Susanna does this for free. On the contrary, she even pays her students a monthly salary. After finishing the course the students will receive a diploma from F.A.B. and Susanna will also try to help them find a job.

Since April 2013, Susanna and her team have baked an uncountable amount of cinnamon buns. Every Friday a delivery by motorbike is made to SAAB for their weekly treat; a proper Swedish 'fika' i.e. a break



Susanna Asklöf

with coffee, cinnamon bun and a nice chat with your colleagues.

F.A.B. also offers home delivery made by motorbike messengers of their bakeries. Not only cinnamon buns are transported all over Bangkok but also sourdough bread and Princess cake.

F.A.B. organizes both private and business events. The restaurant next to the kitchen can seat up to 40 people. In August, Susanna hosted two Cray fish parties, both of them sold out. In December a traditional Christmas party will take place.

F.A.B cook, deliver and serve more or less anywhere in Bangkok. Susanna has catered at the recent Swedish Christmas Bazaar with traditional Christmas influenced sandwiches at the residence of the Swedish ambassador and with canapés when Lars, the new Swedish priest, was installed in Christ Church. But they have also arranged corporate events. Their list of clients is extensive and includes amongst other the Embassy of Sweden, United Nations, Diakrit and international schools in Bangkok.

For weekly income – and training – F.A.B. are cooking, selling and delivering food boxes with traditional Swedish and Scandinavian meals ready to heat up to the Scandinavian community in Bangkok.

A project like F.A.B costs money to run. Without financial help from friends and relatives in Sweden and Thailand, F.A.B. would still only be a dream. After a private fund fundraising event in Sweden, the first monthly rent was possible to pay. Since then both private and corporate donations have been made to Susanna and F.A.B.. Rotary in Bangkok is considering helping Susanna, maybe with refurbishing the kitchen. But the monthly rent is still mainly out of her own pocket.

- Together with my team and the Swedish community we want to give the youngster from Klong Toey a chance to learn a trade. This is my dream!

You can find more information about F.A.B. and Susanna on <http://foodacademybangkok.com/> and <http://bangkok-life-susanna.blogspot.com>



Klong Toey slum

The Klong Toey is located next to the Port Authority of Thailand. It is one of the oldest and largest slum communities in Bangkok and has existed for almost 50 years. It is approximately 2 kilometers from east to west. The Klong Toey slum community is home to about 100.000 people, mostly rural migrants from North East Thailand who came to Bangkok looking for job opportunities. Residents receive limited recognition from public authorities and therefore always face the possibility of eviction. In the beginning there was no electricity or water in the area, and while today there are a number of facilities – even small schools, it remains home to many of Bangkok's poorest residents.



First Sunday of Advent celebrated in Bangkok

On the 1st December 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 Swedish Christmas bread flavored with wort, mulled wine and saffron bread. Traditional Scandinavian Christmas decorations were available.

The children enjoyed making their own Christmas crackers and Christmas tree decorations. Santa Claus came by, and was seen sitting in a big arm chair telling his own story to all children, young and old.



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 Tuesday 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 North Sathorn Road and Convent Road (next to BNH Hospital)

Blue fox Relocation

1/1