



PATTAYA CITY EXPATS CLUB

Chairman's Annual Report of the Pattaya City Expats Club for the period July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009.

Despite a global economic downturn in the world, and varied expressions of political discontent in the course of the year in Thailand, the expat community has continued to prosper and develop in our adopted country.

Our Club continues to be an important focal point of the expat community living in the area of Pattaya. Through the Club, our members have been able not only to share interests, information and concerns but also to develop many activities which enhance their quality of life as well as bring benefits to others in Thailand.

On the occasion of our eighth anniversary, the Governor of Chonburi Province and the Mayor of Pattaya expressed their warm appreciation for the positive contribution our Club has made to the local community in Pattaya.

The Governing Board.

Your Board has met regularly, approximately once a month, to oversee all the activities of the Club and to bring, as appropriate, improvements and correctives to our actions.

This year the Board created a Visa committee with a view to advise and assist members who need to obtain or renew their visa. This Committee includes John Fishback, Richard Smith and Darrel Vaught who can be contacted for assistance.

A special committee has been set up under the leadership of Darrel Vaught and Al Serrato to overhaul the present website of the Club and create a new and much improved Website. An enormous amount of work has been devoted to this task which is now nearing completion and which will be explained further by Darrel Vaught at the Annual General Meeting, this Sunday.

In addition to the task and responsibilities of the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary which are defined in our By Laws, each member of the Board contributes in various ways to the work of the Club as determined at our Board meetings.

Sunday Meetings

The regular Sunday meetings at the Henry J. Bean Restaurant are the mainstay of the Club's activities.

The Programme Committee of the Board, led by Lawrie McLoughlin, is responsible for providing speakers, MC's and hosts for the Open Forum. With a monthly quota of one reserved for hospitals and medical issues, the committee tries to provide as wide a variety of speakers as possible to speak about matters of interest to members. On some occasions no outside speakers were invited such as the pre-Christmas meeting and the celebration of our eighth anniversary, where the members present were asked to participate to provide the substance of the meeting.

The Open Forum is an important element of the Sunday meeting when individual members can share their experiences and, as appropriate, seek information and assistance.

Special thanks are conveyed to all those who contribute to make the Sunday meetings a success, the speakers themselves, the MC's, the leaders of the open forum - and from the Board - Lawrie McLoughlin for the selection and coordination of speakers, our Secretary David Meador who provides important guidance and support to MC's in preparation for our meetings, and to Marjorie Blissett who greets members and visitors alike upon their arrival.

The open and informal character of our meetings has been particularly facilitated by its locale, the Henry J. Bean Restaurant. The Club has benefited from excellent support from the local staff of the restaurant. In addition the Club has received special recognition by the higher management of the Amari Hotel. As a result a plaque will be affixed at the entrance of the restaurant to mark the presence of the Pattaya City Expats Club. On behalf of the Club, I wish to express our appreciation and gratitude to the Amari Hotel management and staff for the help they have given us.

Newsletter

A separate mention should be made of the Newsletter which week after week gives a preview of the Sunday meeting, a list of the special group meetings, featured restaurants and an overview of forthcoming events of interest in Pattaya. Our newsletter is sent to a wide email distribution list inside and outside Thailand. Darrel Vaught is responsible for the production of the Newsletter and the preparation of many reports on the Club activities for publication in the local media. He deserves our special thanks for this important contribution to the life of the Club.

Special groups

Over the years a wide range of special groups have been created at the initiative of members which meet weekly or at greater intervals. For example five years ago a Discussion Group was created for the simple purpose of exchanging views on any subject which may occur to participants without any fixed agenda. Later a Touchy Topics group was created, this time with a fixed agenda and controlled deliberations. Both are still going strong.

There are groups to cover subject as varied as photography, computer, investment, golf, boating, and creative writing.

Recently Al Serrato proposed the creation of a Spanish speaking group which is of interest to members who have an ability or interest in this important language and culture.

The Board encourages the creation of all special groups which contribute to further the objectives of the Club as outlined in our Constitution.

The English conversation group led by Richard Smith, which is designed to help Thai speakers develop a greater proficiency in English deserves a special mention as it contributes to develop mutual appreciation between our club and Thai people.

Other activities.

Members are well aware of the Club dinners which take place every month in a different restaurant of Pattaya and are organized by Al Serrato and myself, often at the suggestion and recommendation of members.

Recently, a weekly Frugal Freddy dinner has been organized by Hawaii Bob and Roger Fox for those who seek to eat good food at the most modest prices in Pattaya.

The Board is well aware that trips both inside and outside Thailand meet very much with the support of members. In July of last year there was a successful trip to Cambodia and more recently a trip to Krabi. These longer trips are more difficult to organize as we need the collaboration of travel agents as well as the initiative of individual members to set them up. Short one day trips are easier to organize such as we have had to Bang Saen, Nong Nooch Gardens, and recently to the fruit orchards of Rayong.

Through the Club, but separate from us, a group called Friends of the PDA (Population and Community Development Association) has been formed to assist Khun Mechai, the President and Founder of this organization, in developing projects. Club member David Garmaise is the Chairman of this group.

A service much appreciated by members is the assistance they get from us in obtaining or renewing their driver's license. Hans Stroosnyder deserves special thanks from all us for organizing regular trips to the relevant office of the Thai Department of Transport.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that the Club has more than fulfilled the objectives outlined in our Constitution which is to facilitate contacts and exchange of information among members of the expatriate community. The Club has gone beyond that by facilitating the development of common interests and activities among its members as well as by fostering a better understanding and appreciation of the expat community by Thai authorities and society.

We can thus look forward to another fruitful year thanks to the interest and participation of all of us members of the Pattaya City Expats Club.

Michel de Goumois, Chairman
2008-2009
The Pattaya City Expats Club