



ISB

NETWORK NEWS

Volume #13

News for International School Bangkok Alumni

Issue # 392

What's Inside

> What happens to Network dues? Look at the expense report inside.

> A letter on the ISB reunion in Bangkok.

> Information on Reunion '92. Don't miss out on the fun in Seattle.

> In Appreciation - a letter from the last Network Reunion.

> Fine dinning Thai style - a write up on an excellent Thai restaurant in Seattle.

> Airfares to Seattle to help you plan for the trip.

IN APPRECIATION -

A PERSPECTIVE ON ISB REUNION 1990

Appreciation: a gesture, word or act has shone forth and like a warm wave of light has moved our heart.

I remember sitting by the pool on Friday, watching the stream of new arrivals. I've always been an observer and I was observing you guys way back. (I never went to the teen club to dance, went to watch.) So it was a natural position for me to take that day, sitting by a pool, in the humidity, watching "BKK kids."

What a reunion it was. The comparison that came to my mind was, "this is what a real family reunion should be like." People came from all geographical areas, socio-economic conditions, fields of employment and the lack of. Lifestyles, philosophies, religions, and on and on. The differences were vast, yet each one was received with open arms, warmly enfolded and rejoiced over. "You" were there. Acceptance, respect and tolerance ran at a high for all, by all.

A magical few days. It sparkled so with warmth that our guards began to drop. We were wooed into a trust that sprang from roots in foreign soil. A family of strangers in a strange land. Loyal and protective. Bound by a bond that is

experienced; felt rather than explained.

Like all "real" families, when the sparkle fades, the facade drops back, you are faced with "real" people. Individuals with their individual baggage; woes, failings, disappointments, shame, mistakes, intentional wrong-doings, weaknesses, flaws. Real people who wallow in their humanity and triumph over it.

I think that's the challenge that calls out over the laughter of the party. Like family, you didn't choose these people to be yours....but they are. They are nowhere near to perfect, but they will make you laugh, cry, think, argue, turn away and here's the beauty...you will turn back again. You have to, they are family. And when you do, you will be, once again, and forever, enfolded in warm embraces. Welcome home.... good people...good friends...family.

Thanks, you guys. See you in Seattle.

Lorraine



"Thank you " go to Lorraine Brilliant Gersch '72 for sharing the above letter with us. We hope to see her in Seattle this year.along with the rest of the class of '72, this is their 20th anniversary and a reunion is a great place to celebrate.

ISB NETWORK INC.

2611 Lochwood Dr.
Valdosta, Georgia 31601
Phone: (912)244-2615
Fax: (912)241-0333

Purpose: ISB Network is a not for profit organization dedicated to bring news about fellow alumni and network events to members. To support, maintain and create contacts between people that shared similar times and experiences in Bangkok, Thailand.

Published three times a year, mailed to membership in the USA and abroad. Rates are \$25.00 for two years, which includes a mailing list on odd numbered years. Individual newsletters are \$2.00 each and the mailing list is \$10.00.

Board of Directors:

Mimi Drake Parks, Jim Hanlon,
John Dammon, Robert bridges
Faith Mercurio



REUNION '92 -

WHERE, WHEN and HOW MUCH

Where: Seattle, Wa. **When:** July 31 thru August 2, 1992

How much: \$80.00 if paid before June 10, 1992 and \$90.00 up to reunion time. If paid at the reunion cost will be \$100.00. Costs are per person and for Network members in good standing. If you pay on or before May 1st, you will get a network dividend packet, after May 1st you'll receive a standard reunion packet.

Hotel: Red Lion SEATAC - Offers free shuttle service from the airport, 2 night clubs, 2 excellent restaurants, a coffee shop and an outdoor pool. The room rates are \$82.00 per night, single, double, triple or quad. Make reservations by calling 800/547-8010 and tell them your with the ISB Network Reunion.

ISB Network

Income and expenses for 1991



NETWORK EXPENSES FOR 1991

Money? What happens to the dues sent in by the membership? Once a year we print a statement to help clear up this question. We are going to include a graphic description in the form of pie charts.

The Income:

There are four categories: Gift Shop Sales, Donations, Dues and Misc. The first two items are self explanatory. Dues are self explanatory but it should be noted that this is the life blood of the Network, so the less we get the less we can offer. Misc. is a catch all which includes bank interest, refunds and rebates.

The expenses:

Expenses have been grouped to make the pie easier to read. The items in the pie break down as follows:

Publications: this category covers all expenses incurred to produce and deliver publications to members, so as materials, printing and postage. Publications includes newsletters, mailing lists and postcards.

Member Fund: this was set up to enhance the network's presence. *Examples:* \$1000 to ISB for chairs in the new Gym. Flowers to the spouse of a member who passed away.

Operating: Includes all costs to maintain network functions at the home of the network, i.e. utilities, repairs, supplies, postage not included in publications, reimbursement to class reps., rents and telephone. Note: telephone expense was \$855 last year, this was due to the "800" line that was installed for the first six months. Average cost per month for the "800" line is \$100.

Administration: These expenses cover legal fees, training, meetings and reunion expenses.

The bottom line balance: \$411.62. This is the amount that the network starts 1992 with.

AUTHENTIC THAI -

BAI TONG MAKES THE DRIVE TO THE AIRPORT INVITING.....

In the blur of Thai restaurants sprouting up across the region like mushrooms after a summer rain, the Bai Tong remains distinctive, unspoiled and focused.

It got its start three years ago in a somewhat uncommon manner: There was, near Seattle/Tacoma International Airport, a steady stream of unhappy pilots, officers and flight attendants. They would arrive on Thai Airlines from Bangkok, book into a nearby or downtown hotel and look around for Thai food.

They found some. But not enough.

They found some that was good. But not good enough.

The hotel rooms they found themselves in didn't have kitchens, the Thai Air crews didn't even have the option of feeding themselves.

In 1988, the problem progressed to an unusual solution. Chanpen Lapangkura, a diminutive woman with huge reserves of charm, arrived with three cooks from Thailand. Thai Air took over a small motel near the airport (formerly the Budget Motel), installed a workable Asian kitchen, renamed the motel the Orchid Inn, and began to billet and feed its layover crews in true Thai style.

Thai Air did not actually own the Orchid Inn, an airlines official told me. But there was an "affiliation."

At first, the restaurant, the Bai Tong (it means banana leaf) served on Thai Air crews and officials. But shortly afterward, the doors were opened in a limited way to the general public. It was a small place, seating about 40,

and there wasn't a lot of leftover room.

Piles of Thai magazines, uniformed flight crews and a constant level of Asian accents gave the place a distinctly exotic atmosphere. As one friend told me: "Eating at the Bai Tong is like an afternoon in Bangkok. You may not hear a word of English."

Except, of course, one's own. Which was always widely understood. Eventually, the Bai Tong was "discovered," an event I, alas, played no small part in, and the crowds began to line up at what was undeniably Seattle's most authentic Thai outpost.

But all was not coming up rose water for Chanpen Lapangkura. About a year ago the "affiliation" broke down.

The owners saw how well we were doing," she told me a couple of weeks ago, "and when it came time to renew the lease, they decided not to.

She was going to go back to Thailand, she said, but her husband urged her to stay. If she could build up one great Thai restaurant, he said, she might as well try to do another.

So Lapangkura moved. Not far. She found a vacant old drive-in on Highway 99, perhaps 200 yards from the Orchid Inn, and moved in. It had been a typical 1950s roadside burger, beer and root-beer stand, with car-side service and strip parking and a massive depiction of a root-beer cask above the roof.

They painted the outside a sedate gray and jungle green and fitted the interior with a few pictures, some hanging wicker lamps and greenery.

But more significantly, she moved her menu and her kitchen crew with her.

And something else: her clientele.

"They all came with me," she said, "including the flight crews."

As a result, the Bai Tong is now larger than it once was, the menu is somewhat more extensive, and the customers-- especially at late hours--are still mostly Thai.

On my last visit, I noticed that racks of carefully wrapped chopsticks were on all the tables. I asked the night manager why. Thais, by tradition, do not eat with chopsticks.

"In the old times, we ate with fingers," he said. "But now we use forks and spoons. But no knives. The chopsticks are for the Americans. They are used to eating in Chinese restaurants. They ask for them. So we put them out."

The menu is, in a word, exquisite. Color photos of individual dishes were taken and flown to Bangkok for printing. Of the 73 items on the menu, 35 are illustrated. It may seem like a minor point, but when ordering an unfamiliar foreign entree, pictures help (ask any sushi-bar owner.)

For example, how do you feel about Gai Hor Bai Toey? And what do you do with the Toey leaf? And is a Toey Leaf anything like a Pandanus leaf? It certainly is. Anyway you will find the color photos useful.

As for the dish itself, Gai Hor Bai Toey (\$6.25 for a half dozen) is one of the best, most fragrant appetizers in creation. Chunks of boneless chicken are marinated in light soy, sesame oil and Thai whiskey, along with pounded garlic and ground black pepper. They are then molded into a triangular meatball shape and wrapped in the pandanus leaves (a kind of Southeast Asian palm) and deep-fried in hot oil.

"The leaves are what gives it the aroma," Lapangkura said. "They are very expensive - \$4 a pound! That's more than the chicken! - but I don't care. I have them flown in. You must have them for the real Thai dish.

Don not eat the leaves, regardless of the expense. They are merely a fragrant wrapper.

Other appetizers of note: The Tod Mun Pla (fish cakes; \$4.95 for eight pieces) are superb, and served with the usual sweet-tart cucumber salad. Incidentally, the Thai Palace, 2224 8th Ave., at the Quality Inn City Center, makes some of the most outstanding Tod Mun Pla in Seattle. I first reviewed the Thai Palace six years ago and was favorably impressed with a check-back recently.

The chicken satays at the Bai Tong (six for \$4.95) are served with a velvety, but assertive peanut sauce.

Tom Kah Gai (\$5.95), the hot-and-sour chicken soup, deserves attention. The straw mushrooms and chicken breast meat are poached with lemon grass, galanga root, spices, pepper, lime juice and mellowed out with coconut milk. It is one of the world's great soups. If you don't want to travel all the way to Sea-Tac to sample a bowl, try the Thai Heaven, 352 Roy Street (285-1596), across from the Seattle Center parking garages, which makes a even richer version.

If you'd rather have a finger-food salad for a starter, try the Larb (\$4.95.) Hot and spicy ground beef, pork or chicken is mixed with Jasmine rice (also ground), onion mint and lime juice. You roll up small balls of it, wrap it in the tender inner leaves of cabbage or lettuce and eat it like a crepe.

One of the most unusual salmon dishes in the area, Hormok (\$6), has become a Bai Tong standout. Chunks of flaked King salmon are combined with a curry paste, placed over a nest of basil, mint and cabbage leaves and baked in a tureen, almost like a quiche. It is then topped with sour cream and cilantro. The results are stunning, especially to those of us who long ago assumed that we had consumed salmon in all of its possibilities.

"Salmon - and we use only quality King salmon - is not a fish native to Thailand," Lapangkura said. "But it is similar in taste to the fish we usually make the Hormok with. And we can get it fresh. It has become our favorite dish."

The several Thai curries on the menu are all intriguing: Kang Pa, Massaman, Pan-Nang; red curries, green curries, and sour curries.

The Phad Thai (considered a rice-noodle street snack in Thailand) is exemplary, with the hot-pepper flakes served discreetly to the side.

To drink with it, Singha, the Thai beer, is excellent, as is Siam Ale. Covey Run is the house wine. But you might try the excellent Thai iced tea made rich and silky with condensed milk.

Three years after its arrival and discovery, the Bai Tong remains the choice Thai restaurant in the Greater Seattle area.

Seattle Times



This restaurant is only eight blocks from where the reunion is being held. It is going to be a fine place for dinning and have an enjoyable time. Hope we can all get together over a plate of Khao Phat.

ISB Reunion

40 years of memories

I went back to Bangkok for the 40th anniversary of ISB. This was the first time I had been back to Bangkok since my family moved away from there in 1974. What a lot of changes in 17 years.

First of all, the weather was unbelievably hot and humid. I sure don't remember it being that bad when I lived there. In fact, I remember it got rather cool during Christmas, so I made sure I packed a sweater. I was complaining to Michael Nebeker about how hot I was and he couldn't believe it. He commented on how pleasant the weather was and how pleased he was that it was so nice for the reunion. In fact, he said that it was too cool for his kids; they don't go swimming during that time of year. It's amazing what you get used to.

Another thing that struck me was all the American fast food places. McDonald's is everywhere. Across Sukhumvit from Soi 15 is a Shakey's Pizza and a TCBY. What a culture shock to see beggars on the street using a TCBY styrofoam cup.) In Siam Square there is a Dunkin' Donuts, Shakey's Pizza, and Burger King. Across the street from that is Siam Center (a huge shopping complex) complete with McDonald's and Pizza Hut. Bangkok has also been invaded by Baskin-Robbins, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Mr. Donut, and Swenson's.

There are a few other changes around Bangkok. The American Army Hospital by Soi 63 is now a Thai Hospital. Sukhumvit Theater on Soi 49 burned down several years ago and was replaced by Miracle Mall.

Around Soi 17 is Robinson's Dept. Store and a McDonald's. Central Dept. Store is still on Silom Road, but now there's a Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza across the street from it. Used to buy 45 rpm records at Central that contained four singles for 15 Baht. Now all they sell are cassettes and CDs (440 Baht.) I remember that the Chokchai Building used to be one of the tallest, if not the tallest, buildings around. Now it's dwarfed by all the other high rises. Traffic is much worse now. They have pedestrian walkways that go up and over the traffic in order to cross the streets. On the corner of Ploenchit and Rajdamri (kitty-corner from the Erawan Hotel) is the Zen World Trade Center. It has eight levels of shops with an open atrium (it reminded me of Water Tower Place in Chicago.) Speaking of the Erawan Hotel, that has really changed. It's been completely rebuilt; now it's all concrete and glass and called the Hyatt Erawan Hotel.

Taxi fares were a bit of a shock. We lived on Soi 71 and as I recall, we used to pay between 10 and 15 Baht to take a samlor from Soi 15 to our apartment. This time it cost me 80 Baht. I still remember a few words of Thai, especially numbers so I tried to barter. They don't really barter anymore. It was 80 Baht--take it or leave it. Nighttime is even more expensive. To go from our hotel on Soi 7 to the Siam Society on Soi 21 cost us 80 Baht. The excuse being that there is so much more traffic at night. To go from our hotel to the Dusit Zoo cost 100 Baht and from the Grand Palace back to Soi 7 was 120 Baht. Bus fares have also gone up a little bit. I remember when they increased from 50 Satang to 75 Satang and how upset everyone was then. Now the bus ride costs 2 Baht for the regular buses and 6 Baht for the air-conditioned (yes, air-conditioned) ones.

Another surprise was the color TV in our hotel room. I remember we used

to have a black and white TV and had to turn on the shortwave radio to listen to the English soundtrack. Now, they have cable. Some channels are in English and some are in Thai. The English channels had CNN, Remington Steele, and a couple of American soap operas. Roseanne, however, was on one of the Thai channels (boy, I wonder how that translated.) The hotel also provided two movie channels of English speaking movies.

The reunion itself was a lot of fun. Michael Nebeker, Cass Schuck and Margaret Maciolek did a wonderful job arranging everything. They took us out to the Samakee Campus and gave us a tour of the new school. There are separate sections for the Elementary, Middle School, and High School. Each section has several quads; each quad is three stories around an open garden. There will be several tennis courts, soccer fields, a track, baseball diamonds, a 25-meter swimming pool, two indoor gyms, a weight room, aerobics area, outdoor gyms, etc., plus a separate auditorium with computerized lighting. What a beautiful campus. However, I think the old Soi 15 campus will always be ISB in my mind. Seeing the old school was really the highlight of the trip for me. Not too much has changed, except there are lights all around the field and another outdoor gym. On our way out to the new campus, we passed by the old Bangsue campus. When I went to junior high there, there was nothing around it except a khlong. On the athletic field next to Bangsue is now another high rise. In fact, now there are high rises all along the highway from Sukhumvit to the airport.

Most of the alumni at the reunion were from the classes of '88 through '90. Esther Williams ('75), Fred Al-Jibouri ('75), Dan Dawkins ('81), Konrad Weigl ('78) and Mary Naby ('87) represented some of the other graduating classes. There were only two

teachers there: Mrs. Maynard, who taught French in the 60's and Mrs. Dumeier, who was an elementary teacher in the 60's (she was Mrs. Johnson back then.)

It was really wonderful seeing everything again. Going to the reunion gave me an excuse to finally go back to Bangkok once again.

Kate Johnson
Class of '76



Thank you Kate for the letter on the ISB reunion. It sounds like Bangkok has changed, can't wait till I get a chance to go back. If anyone else has letters or articles please send them in so we can share them with other ISB'ers.

Thank to all of you who have paid dues. Your dues help to give all of us a chance to share memories, renew friendships and help the network grow.



We have dedicated volunteers who try very diligently to keep accurate records, but mistakes may occur -- please let us know if you find an error in your membership. We can't serve you if you don't keep us informed.

Any suggestions, and/or articles that you wish to share with us would be greatly appreciated.

Thank You.

ROBERT BRIDGES
3943 SO. ANGELINE
SEATTLE, WA. 98118

Airfares To Reunion '92

Information is what the news letter is all about. What we include here are the cities and fares to help you get the best price for your airfare to the ISB Network reunion in Seattle.

Prices are published round-trip fares to Seattle on scheduled airlines. As usual these fares can change at anytime and are subject to availability. Lower fares are sometimes possible by having a travel agent book the fare or booking through a consolidator, rebate agent or charter firm.

Airline travel can be made thru Travel Concepts Inc. Call at 800/777-0907, and ask for Dan or Molly, tell them you are with ISB Network and they will get you some excellent airfares.

CITY	FARES	CITY	FARES	CITY	FARES
ANCHORAGE	\$198 *	HOUSTON	\$324 *	PORTLAND	\$58 *
ATLANTA	\$288	LAS VEGAS	\$208 *	RENO	\$188
BOSTON	\$398 *	LOS ANGELES	\$198	SALT LAKE CITY	\$238
CHICAGO	\$298	MIAMI	\$549	SAN FRANCISCO	\$218
DALLAS	\$284	MINNEAPOLIS	\$278	SPOKANE	\$222
DENVER	\$298	NEW YORK	\$338	ST. LOUIS	\$258
DETROIT	\$488	ORLANDO	\$348	WASH. D.C.	\$358
HONOLULU	\$339	PHOENIX	\$198		

* INDICATES A NON-STOP FLIGHT. ALL OTHERS MAY REQUIRE 1 STOP OVER AND/OR A PLANE CHANGE.