



REFLECTIONS FROM NCCU
BY MARY BOHANON

INTRODUCTION

Many places, many scenes we would all like to see. Thought you might be interested in Linda McGloin's experiences. Mrs. McGloin is originally from the Philippines.

Mary Bohanon
EXCERPTS FROM "ST. MARY'S MISSION, THAILAND"

The fact is - St. Mary's Mission is just a blue gate. That is what any stranger would see from the street without bothering to look inside. It is of a bright blue. That kind of blue you would not expect on a gate.

But so is the Mission. It's that kind of a place you would not expect to exist there - there on that street, there in Korat.

The street, Mukhamontree (the nearest spelling I could get from the sound) is not exactly a pretty one, but is undoubtedly inviting to the senses. Korat's train station bluffs off oo-oo-wee's followed by choo-choos and chug-chugs every now and then; overhead zoom airplanes taking off around five in the morning and jilling you off to sleep late in the evening; sudden screeching of brakes or the agonizing sounds of overused motors on taxis and buses whiz by; the tinkling of mellow bells from the nearby Buddhist temples complete the mixture of sounds. Meanwhile "samlois" (human-powered vehicles for two) roll under the noon-day sun patiently, almost lazily. A change of mood can easily turn the meek ride into a race for the grand prix - on either speed you can feel on top of the world, depending on your taste.

Over all these, the lively chatter of Thai men and women, girls and boys, children - floats, ripples and flows, boisterous now shy, proud now timid, producing a language that is a musical monotone, intricately easy and confusingly simple.

Mukhamontree Street branches out right of Thanon Mitthraphap, better known as Friendship Highway. Judging from the way it goes, this street has probably broken many laws of engineering. From a narrow, hole-filled, curvy start, it breathes out in relief to a wider and smoother run in front of the train station adjacent to the blue gate, later branching out in three ways to get to the town proper.

A mingling of everything lines both sides - from temples, schools, government and private service centers, to housing units, repairs, snack-ins, "snack-outs" (side-walk vendors), endless stream of noodle shops, dumping areas, bars and clubs, and "klongs", the native version of an all-purpose swimming pool. Appetizing smell of foods wafts freely with incense and candle-sticks that burn on Buddhist altars inside eateries.

Of course most of the faces you see are Asian. Thais in particular, with Sino-Thais following a close second. Nearby India has contributed to the increasing city population. Indian saris and turbans are as attractive as Chinese cheongsams and loose pants. However, the tight-fitting Thai costumes matched with glittering diadems, necklaces and bracelets are always top in local fashion; and the bright saffron robes of Buddhist monks that pass in quiet procession at early morning when they go "begging" lend color to what might be a drab scenery.

The Europeans, then the Americans found their way in - so Mukhamontree Street is international enough.

Korat is equally interesting. If you have a penchant for tongue twisters you will be satisfied, for example, if the word "Korat" is too simple to utter, you can shift to the difficult one - "Nakomrajsima" or Nakhon Ratchasima. And if you want to get into minor trouble, just start a Thai conversation with a native using Thai words you have mentioned in a day without bothering about intonations. Even if you are careful, the more mistakes you make.

This blue gate really stands out. You can't miss it. It is in front of the railway station, to make it more appealing, there is a small white cross at the top of the arch. Passersby urged by curiosity usually pause in front of the drive-way leading to some group of buildings in the compound screened by branches and leaves of trees that grow abundantly

side. Some are bold enough and find themselves in. Others hesitate, look for signs to finally locate an unobtrusive blue signboard which announces the schedule of services at St. Mary's Church, in English and Thai.

Left of the gate is St. Mary's Clinic and adjacent to that is St. Mary's Information Center. Well, there is more to that blue gate than meets the eye. You step inside and follow the drive, look to the left to see a garage where a blue 15-sitter Ford is parked beside a blue Mazda pick-up, then to the right, a reception room. Since nobody seems to notice your coming, you move farther on, stop by the steps of a paint-peeling building next to the reception room. You're almost tempted to climb those steps but the uninviting, forboding, almost haunting silence upstairs changes your mind, therefore you take a few more steps ahead. Looking far off to the right you behold a contrasting sight - a beautiful school built along modern lines painted in delicate hues, prominently blue (but of course!) facing a mounted flagpole in the middle of the grounds. Tall green shrubs screen off the unpleasant rears of buildings that face the street. The grounds are swept and dry, the atmosphere clean.

You become aware of a choir singing and you guess there must be a chapel nearby; of children's laughter and romping and you know there are many around; of a relax busy-ness of the Mission's residents you see from a distance going about their chores and you begin to realize that you are in a place that must be "home."

You are amazed. While still wondering what to do or where to go next, you chance to turn left to see a figure in white coming out from the one and only completely blue building in the area. A brisk walk and a big warm smile! Before you know it you find yourself pumping hands with him like old friends do, telling him your name.

Welcome. Sharp-tinkling-eyes, powerful-voice-heavily accented, and humor-plus guide you around the campus. An hour after (if the guided tour includes the gardens and playgrounds behind) you will have gathered the general information about the place - St. Mary's Mission of Korat, Thailand.

Your're in.

It was not love at first sight Hardy.

I had my first glimpse of Korat on a rainy Tuesday afternoon, the 22nd of May, 1967. The long taxi-ride from Bangkok (the capital), the new drive-to-the-left highway experience and an unfriendly headache under a gloomy weather were enough to dampen my spirits, washing out all missionary fervor to replace it with homesickness. Visions of mystic palaces and temples were totally shattered to pieces, and I could not even cry at my stupidity - as I thought then.

The taxi stopped in front of the blue gate. If the rain was a promise of a fruitful couple of years then I am now glad it rained. Even glad that I had had that terrible headache.

The meeting and singing, yes, singing to and with the orphans and student boarders that very night after a wonderful (that VIP feeling) but queer (starving and longing for a good bite, my stomach churned at the unexpected soft-oh-so-soft grounded rice pudding topped with raw egg and spicy trimmings) dinner with the six Sisters of St. Paul de Chartres, were more than an aspirin and tears could do to my headache and homesickness. The kids did me and my hunger wonders. Language barrier rose for the first time, but we leapt over it by means of songs - and I became 'Miss Rose' to the children.

Of course, I could not sleep on my first night, and neither did I unpack. The airplanes roared by endlessly. They could not be bombing Thailand! Keeping myself occupied, I surveyed my room. A bed, dress lockers, a table and a chair, a writing desk, a couple of shelves, three windows curtained, barred and screened. Before I could say 'a real safe hole' a terrible blast rocked the wooden-as-old-as-the-Mission building. The wood squeaked, and I could put my little finger between



Karen Smith

Battle Creek Girl Who's 'Up On People' Interviewed in Jul. '17'

NEW YORK - Karen Smith, of Battle Creek, Mich., interviewed in the July issue of Seventeen Magazine, recalls making fry-bread on an Indian reservation, exploring the sights of Bermuda and riding a motorcycle in Italy as part of her experiences traveling with one of the "Up With People" groups, composed of young entertainers who perform throughout the world.

Karen, of 139 Ann Ave., featured in Seventeen's "Face to Face" has traveled over 50,000 miles here and abroad performing in hundreds of concerts since joining this well known group two years ago. A graduate of Central High School, she is now assistant director and featured singer with "Up With People," a non-profit organization

gaps. Then a gecko or "lookquae" (barking lizard) called out. I looked up, found him plastered against the top of the corner post that held up the building. Well, I had a room-mate, a rather unpleasant one. I could not drive him away. I guess he was as scared as I was. Since, I never stopped hoping he would get tired of me and transfer residence.

The next day, the first of my seven hundreds days and more in Thailand was painstakingly crossed out and recorded in my diary. Then the days came one after the other. I could no longer keep up with the crossing outs and recordings.

Life in Thailand had begun.

originated five years ago. A typical day for Karen might consist of three shows at a local auditoriums, prisons, schools, or hospitals; a question-and-answer session with audiences and then two hours spent rehearsing, followed by several hours traveling. "Sometimes, I'm too tired to move," she admits. She eventually plans to study music composition in college but for now, she's content to tour with the show.

"Through awareness comes understanding," she asserts. "The lyrics of the songs which the group uses deal with themes of concern, commitment and communication." As Karen points out, "we're saying get involved with what's around you, reach out to others."

Karen, the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Daniel Smith, enjoys dancing, needlepoint and playing the guitar in her leisure time.

Thousands of medical workers are trained each year by the Veterans Administration to staff its own hospitals and to serve in the private sector.

New York became the first state to enact a comprehensive fair employment practices act applying to general private employment in 1945, setting the pattern for similar legislation in several other states, according to the U. S. Department of Labor.

PREGNANCY PLANNING AND HEALTH
by Mrs. Gloria Riggsbee

Dear Mrs. Riggsbee: I have just started with the birth control pills, which were prescribed for me at the Health Department. I must say it is great not to have to worry every night when I go to bed that I might wake up pregnant. We have a baby six months old and know that we can't afford any more kids for at least two years.

When I was told how to take the pills, at the Health Department, the nurse said, "As long as you take your pills exactly according to directions, you are protected from pregnancy at all times." Does this mean protection against diseases too - like syphilis and gonorrhea?

egg present to be fertilized by the man's sperm, there can be no baby.

The only method of birth control which also guards against venereal disease is the condom (rubber) worn by the man during intercourse. The condom, while a pretty good method of birth control, does not offer as much protection against pregnancy as do the pills. The condom is about 80% effective, while the pills are 99% effective (WHEN TAKEN AS DIRECTED).

Dear Gloria: Is it true that birth control kills your "nature" of desire for sex?

S.C.

Dear S.C.: No, it is not true. The only thing birth control "kills" is your fear of an unwanted pregnancy.

Dear Mrs. Riggsbee: I am 17. A boy I had a date with wanted me to have sex

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with him and gave me a pill to take that he said would keep me from getting pregnant. I did not give in to him, but I am curious about that pill. Is there really a birth control pill that you need to take only one time right before intercourse to protect you from getting pregnant?

T.D.

Dear T.D.: NO, THERE IS NO SUCH PILL. Give your date credit for a good imagination, but not for honesty. One birth control pill taken before intercourse is not protection against pregnancy. Even if such a pill existed, it would have to be prescribed by a doctor, not by an over-anxious date!

Dear Mrs. Riggsbee: I am a boy of 12. You will think this is a dumb question. Can a person have nocturnal emissions in the daytime? I read something that explained about how this happens during sleep, but what if it happens during the day, at school or something?

D.S.

Dear D.S.:

No, I don't think it is a dumb question, but don't worry. Such an emission does not occur except during sleep. That is why it is known by the slang expression "wet dream". However, such a release of seminal fluid could be brought about by masturbation.

For a free booklet on birth control, write: Mrs. Gloria Riggsbee, 214 Cameron Avenue, Chapel Hill, NC 27514.

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