

10-AUG-A-1

LAUNCH TEAM RUBICON MISSION TO THE KAREN REFUGEE PEOPLES OF THE THAI/BURMA BORDER

10-AUG-A-1 Index to the Aug-A-Series of the launch of the Thai/Burma Team Rubicon mission

2 Takeoff for the Thai/Burma border mission for the training of Karen refugee health care workers: “Gifts from the Poor” production schedule set; I tour guests from Werkok, South Sudan around the DC Mall on my last DC/Derwood day; and an irreverent sendoff for “the most interesting man in the world”

Takeoff for the Thai/Burma border mission for the training of Karen refugee health care workers as I begin from IAD through LAX and PAL for Thailand via MNL and Air Bangkok for Chengmai with our team collected at LAX

3 Arrival at destination travel with limited connectivity along the way

4 Chengmai to Maesarieng by bus for our launch near Thai-Burma border for our final staging stop

5 A full day of the paramilitary “hurry up and wait” as we finally pack out to the road trip to the Salawin River to go out “under cover” to take the boat ride across the border into Burma to see the inpatients and see one emergency newborn with abdominal distention

6 Pre-dawn up and out, and down the steep river bank in the rain to board the long-tailed boat upriver to arrive in Oo Dhatha to hold whole class lectures, a breakout “advanced” group eager, but not at all ready to operate, and our first clinic

7 Our full didactic presentations to the intact medic training group in monsoon rain on the bamboo long house as we try to communicate through variable translators to teach basic clinical skills

8 Our surgical day in the US Army operating tent with a “theatre drill” followed by a “viva” using a pig for surgical techniques, before the pig turns into dinner

9 A slower final full day at the Oo Dhatha village after yesterday’s full course and “pig lab” with the celebration over a fresh pork dinner from the “patient” that each had worked on in

our practicum; the afternoon spectacular rainforest trek through the Burmese jungle toward headwaters of our stream

10 A long day and an early start as we pack out pre-dawn from Oo Dhatha and go downriver to Oo Whaklo at an IDP village of 500 people who are playing a wild head and foot game of “ cane ball” as we await the start of clinic before our decamping again

11 A full day in Maiseirenge Thailand after last night’s border crossing the Salawin River in the rain, as we regroup at “Northwest” riverside guesthouse and repack for after action reports: i spend the morning attempting to send a single message, glitched for hours by address book malfunctions

12 A day in transit from Maseirenge back to Chengmai by bus for a final re-grouping prior to departure via Bangkok for the following day

13 The launch of a long day with two names and the same number as we leave from Chengmai through Bangkok and Manila for the transPacific trek on PALI

10-AUG-A-2

**TAKEOFF FOR THE THAI/BURMA BORDER MISSION FOR THE
TRAINING OF KAREN REFUGEE HEALTH CARE WORKERS:**

“GIFTS FROM THE POOR” PRODUCTION SCHEDULE SET;

**I TOUR GUESTS FROM WERKOK, SOUTH SUDAN AROUND THE DC
MALL ON MY LAST DC/DERWOOD DAY;**

**AND AN IRREVERENT SENDOFF FOR
“THE MOST INTERESTING MAN IN THE WORLD”**

**AS I BEGIN FROM IAD THROUGH LAX AND PAL FOR THAILAND
VIA MNL AND AIR BANGKOK FOR CHENGMAI WITH OUR TEAM
COLLECTED AT LAX**

July 31—August (1)-2, 2010

And, now, the next adventure begins---a whole world away from the hot winds blowing through the Derwood woods!

“GIFTS FROM THE POOR:”

THE PRODUCTION SCHEDULE IS SET FOR YEAR-END RELEASE!

Good news preceded departure, with a conference call from Bryan at GBG (GBG= ”Greenleaf Book Group”—which is, of course, pre-destined as my publisher since it is “GWG at GBG!”) with the Publication Project Schedule. The dates of most of the heavy lifting are already met and done, still in July. There is an attempt to get the ARC (=”Advance Reader Copies” for publicists and the marketing “Buzz” before the “Pub Date”) completed five months before the “Retail Pub Date.” The good news, due to the early completion of the Manuscript which is going directly into the final proofread and page proof copy which will be underway as I am in the air on return from the Far East, is that the Retail Pub Date is now fixed as January 5, 2011, which means my overall target date of being ready for book signing at the official release at the Calvin January Series lecture of January 13 is likely to be hit!

I note on the Calvin January Series Web Page that I am between Krista Tippet and Cal Ripken, each of whom are my “neighboring celebrities” who are going to be signing their new

books at the same series, so I am glad we will not just be issuing a “promissory note.” Patty Edmonds has gone to quickly finish off the Preface from the University of Toledo’s MMHOFF which is the beneficiary of all proceeds, and in my final pre-departure email with Patty and Jim Heynen, I am going to finalize some elements of the Acknowledgements and Dedication, as Patty has sent our excerpted copy for the notables who have already agreed to Endorsement as dust jacket cover “Blurbs.” I had forwarded to Bryan at GBG a short series of twenty three photos which are “at work” informal portraits, and suggested that “there are many more where these have come from!”

Seriously! The efforts I had invested in the last two weeks into bring the photo and video image collection up to date has paid off in the completing it just before departure (and when the next wave of experiences in photojournalism are expected to return from this Thai/Burma Karen refugee mission) with all of the Tanzanian mission’s four component parts. They edited images and videos of the six months of 2010 are posted to Flickr and the complete series including the unexpurgated series are now added in to York Photo on-line access, not only for these past six months but for the last several years. The selected images of the Tanzanian four parts of the mission were printed and are now stuffed into album pages on the eve of my Burma departure, and the print photo albums are the single repository of my entire “life in pictures”—that which is spilling over the library and upstairs guest room, and destined to be archived in the Center for Creative Learning at University of Toledo, seat of the MMHOFF, the beneficiary of the book “Gifts from the Poor.” I have sent to GBG just the most recent six months of the on-line York Photo albums, with promises of many more if requested, with good organization of these albums but the complete annotated photojournalism record still remains with the photo albums, which for 2010 will number 30?

THE GRAND TOUR OF THE WASHINGTON DC MALL IN FAST FORWARD TO HIT THE HIGHLIGHTS FOR SPECIAL GUESTS

I had a last minute opportunity to tour guests through the high points of Washington DC from a place that has figured prominently in my plans for the third to next mission—a return to Werkok in South Sudan, it is hoped, on February 8, 2011. I received a call from Dave Bowman as I was trying to wrap up details before signing out for my trip. He was driving to Annapolis to visit with Jim Hiskey, a golf pro who has a special house for Lost Boys of Sudan there, where I had met him and several of his Sudanese whom he is helping. Sitting next to him is Jacob Gai, the site manager of Memorial Christian Hospital in Werkok, and a former Lost Boy from Sudan who was brought to Grand Rapids, Michigan. He was not one of the four Sudanese boys hosted by Dave Bowman, but that is how he met him, and he is now the manager of the project at Werkok with the objective of getting the entire project transferred to Sudanese leadership and management control within the next five years. Which is why I am pushing on fast forward to get the standards of care enhanced to make Werkok the focus of a continuing medical education effort as well as the site I had hoped to have the container shipped, warehoused and a controlled

distribution along with the personnel who come to be trained under Sudanese leadership which I have promised to support. Jacob had written his own book, which he was carrying in both hard cover and soft cover versions but I have not read it nor did I get a copy. But, both Dave and Jacob had no appointments on Friday, and they would be available for a “first-ever” chance to visit WASHINGTON.

I had come in early to get as many of the details as possible completed before the call came from Dave Bowman whom I had recommended drive to New Carrollton and taking the Orange Line to the Smithsonian Metro exit where I would meet them. Warning them, that I would probably march them around the town to see as much as possible in the half day we would maximize. I met them, and went directly across the Mall, as Jacob was very interested in seeing the capital building and discussing with them the structure of the US check and balance governmental system. In the course of the day he got a chance to see each of the three branches of the government, none of which can reign in supremacy over the will of the people expressed in democratic elections, and I used as an example that an Arizona legislature had passed a law restricting illegal immigration since they did not consider that the federal government was capable of protecting their state’s interest—and then showed him the Supreme Court where this controversial law will undoubtedly be brought for consideration ---about twenty meters from a sign posted right now in front of the headquarters of the Methodist Church Council of the USA which states “God loves all people regardless of their legal immigration status”--a major declaration confronting the US Supreme Court. Jacob was especially interested in the restraints that were placed on the executive, and I used the example of President Obama, however his will might have led him, has to have such laws enacted by two legislative bodies, who may or may not support them, but that should he exceed his constitutional authority, or even if he is perceived to be acting in any way that is imperious, then the process of impeachment may constrain or remove him from office—witness Bill Clinton or Richard Nixon. He was fascinated in these checks and balances as the process of constitution development is going on in this fledgling state of GOSS not yet come to be, as meetings in Juba are trying to hammer out the process—culminating in the January 11 plebiscite which may create a newly seceded state in Africa by this referendum which has the potential to disrupt my pending visit in February. I told them I am making overtures for an alternate mission through Chad to CAR and a hoped-for rescue into the area of what once was Assa, not destroyed. But Werkok and the “network” I have been attempting to develop has the right of first refusal.

We went through the Natural History Museum starting at the Fekovi Elephant and through the Hall of Mammals, and then took the both of them through the new “Hall of Human Origins” which had a lot to do with my colleagues at the GWU Anthropology Department. I was curious as both Jacob and Dave Bowman viewed the video displays of the fossil evidence and the story of “We are all one species” and the origin of hominids in the Rift Valley of Africa, close to Jacob, but, rather far, I suspect, from David’s Grand Rapids origins. We made it all the way around the Deep Sea and the fossils of the Great Irish Elk and the Giant Ground Sloth and

other now-extinct “Rhino-like” creatures on the North American Great Plains. We then finished up in the dinosaur exhibits, and there, back at the Fekovi Elephant, I outlined the plans for them for this accelerated visit if they were up to it. We would use our time out on the Mall, as we walked under the clear sky and hot sun to make the phone calls to those whom I had hoped to connect with them, and a long walk around the Capital to see if I could get them into something very special which would ordinarily not be on anyone’s tour—the Library of Congress; then we would walk back through the Sculpture Garden to the East Wing of the Art Gallery and have lunch next to the waterfall between the East Wing and the Art Gallery of the Mellons’ donations. I had promised him I would have Jacob “touch the moon” and see the African Art Museum and a number of other spots along the course of our Mall walk as I phoned the people I had wanted him to reach.

We called Patty so she could get the follow-up on Ajak; the negotiations from his Jonglei Dinka potential in-laws have been concluded, at an extortionary price of well over 200 cattle, but he still has not had his wedding, since they are holding out as long as possible to see if they can extract anymore wealth out of their windfall of a suitor with Western friends. So, Ajak is a man of great patience, and solid purpose. He is the pivot of the program I envision as a link not only among the competing Dinka clans but also to the Murle and Nuer. On that subject, NONE of the paramount chiefs who agreed when asked to foreswear violence upon their brothers when I visited PiBor had gone back on their promise, NO CASUALTIES have come from any encounters between Dinka of the Bor or Jonglei clans and any of the prefecture chiefs who had sworn to cooperate to get their dreamed of medical care facility and expertise.

There have been a few casualties that have come from maverick outliers, some isolated men chasing down cattle and brides and had been in the bush for months to years without restraining contact with any of the chiefs who control the majority of the population and would like to hunt down the outliers themselves. There have also been casualties from the conflict between Nuer and Dinka as there was immediately upon my departure from Old Fangak. Since they have kept their promise, I must keep mine regardless of the threat which they are worried will intimidate all others who are being frightened off by the likelihood of violence around the referendum date. Since none of the others are making plans due to the uncertainty (with the threat of instability, I can only ask “compared to what?”) all others have been advised to make no plans, which means that all support and promises are suspended, and postponement here is equivalent to abandonment.

We had a very lucky spectacular event after looping around the very photogenic capital bedecked with red crepe myrtle. I went through the guarded door and security check of the “Researchers’ entrance” and waved my ID card over both Jacob and Dave, and swept in to the stacks in the researchers’ area. I again waved my card as we went by three other guard stations and without spending a lot of time or many words, I got both Jacob and David into the spectacular Main Reading Room, and whispered to them the details I could remember as we were watched by some suspicious congressional aides at the reading tables. I surreptitiously

took a couple of no-flash photos, which is an official no-no, but will give Jacob quite a souvenir to take back to Werkok!

We then went back around to the tourists' entrance from inside, and we showed the spectacular architecture and painted facades of the "American Versailles" and then even got in to look over the Thomas Jefferson collection. Jacob was interested in my description of "Jeffersonian democracy" which requires an educated population, a problem in many African countries. As we walked back along the Supreme Court and the offices of Congress and the Capitol, we passed a family trying to get a picture, and I shot a photo of all of them. I asked where they were from, and they said Fort Meyers Florida. I said we had one of us from South Sudan and the other from Grand Rapids, Michigan, with each of us having some connection to Grand Rapids. The family could hardly believe it. They were all born there and had only recently moved to Florida but are on their way to vacation with the rest of their family who still lives in Michigan. I shot a photo of their daughter Rachel in a red sun dress under a frame of red crepe myrtle, with the Capitol as a backdrop.

We called John Dau, whom Jacob talked to in Dinka, and all three of the documentary crew who had come with me to Werkok and stayed on for another week. Michael Skinner is out but returning on Monday and will reach Jacob when he comes back; we talked with Jon Michael and left a message with Glen the Sound Man.

We had a good lunch break as I helped them through the Art Gallery café, and we could talk about plans for Sudan and further development of Werkok as a hub for the network. We will be in touch about the further plans which at present will probably not include having the container I had hoped to get delivered there by the time of my next visit if it is still to happen at all. We then went through all of the further stops I had planned—and especially the Sachler and the African Art Museum. Jacob was intrigued by the Haupt Garden under which all this is built downward, and he wanted a photo taken so he can take this kind of design back to Werkok for the hospital grounds. He reported to me that the whole area is flooded right now in the depth of the rainy season, so that the road in front of the hospital is now a river where they are actually fishing! I told them that I would return to run again each dawn, and this time when I see herds of topi in the first light of the day, I want to fetch one up as a trophy for our breakfast to substitute for at least one of the goats on our menu. I had already been promised a white-eared Kob an endemic species unique to South Sudan and Jonglei Province specifically.

I brought them through the NASM so I could shoot multiple photos of Jacob touching the moon, and also in front of each of the major landmarks in flight in air and in space. We especially spent time at the Hubble telescope's spectacular photos of the birth and death of galaxies. This, in combination with the exhibit on Human Origins, might be interesting grist for Jacob to carry back to Memorial Christian Hospital. I left them to drive back after taking the Orange Line back to their car at New Carrollton after they got tickets to see both the IMAX original movie "To Fly" (which I believe Michael and I have the record number of viewings as

we have hosted many visitors through the NASM) and then the Hubble Telescope IMAX which I have NOT seen. But, I had a final flurry of last minute activities, including the pick up of the prints of the Tanzanian pictures and my final Needwood run before zipping shut the big SCI blue bag packed with the supplies for Burma. So, we bid farewell, until I can rejoin Jacob in Werkok—whenever!

AN “IRREVERENT SENDOFF” FOR THE “MOST INTERESTING MAN IN THE WORLD”

Dr. Geelhoed,

Hope everything is going well in Burma.

Here are some of the Dos Equis beer commercials I was telling you about.

I was speaking with Candy and Colleen about how this guy reminded us of you. Anyways, let me know when you have a little free time here in DC. I would love to bounce some ideas off of you.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Ym2Jma04qo&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRaTekm9Ak8&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QI58wj4b4g0&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zX6M7-rAFJE&feature=related>

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AND, NOW, IT IS “WHEEL’S UP!” FOR BURMA!

The flights are, of course, ong and wearisome—nearly forever. I have just dropped Monday off into the middle of the Pacific so no August 2 has appeared in my life this year. I have been sitting in on4e place for nearly twelve hours now as I am in a packed 747 heading to Manila on the familiar carrier PAL. Just how lucky we can be is apparent when I pulled my Mabuhay Elite

card out of my travel wallet—but that is a story that will become more clear after I tell you about the five of us who are enroute, scattered around three rows nearby in this endless night, as we are coursing the same direction as the already set sun, never merging form a protracted night.

My big blue SCI bag may have vanished at IAD if I was not aware and if one of the Amharic speaking Ethiopian attendants had not been eager to help after he heard my story. A family of very large Mexicans who had luggage as overstuffed as they were was in the final stages of check in when it was announced that their bags were overweight. They had one more huge bag which they pulled back and the items were pulled out one at a time and distributed among them to carry on board the plane to lighten the suitcase. As this happened, the attendant of American Airlines beckoned to me to come over and I put the big bag which contains my Osprey Porter 65 backpack inside it as well as spinal anesthesia kits and extra stuff for the mission. She go to talking about me and what I was doing and said she had just watched Rambo the night before and believes that this is the context into which I am going, so she wished me luck. As that was happening, one of the Ethiopian attendants in an American Airlines uniform pulled the tag spit out by the machine and slapped it on my bag, which he dropped on the conveyor belt. It went down through the chute to the baggage handling. I pointed this out to her after she had entered all the information in the tickets so that I would be able to retrieve my bag in LAX, having at first tried to ticket it all the way through Bangkok, I said my bag had just left. The errant Ethiopian who had been bantering with me about the Lalibella from which he came and which I had visited, and he volunteered to go down the chute and came back running UP the down conveyor ramp with my bag to have the Guadalajara tag taken off and the LAX tag replacing it. That would have been an inauspicious start!

I traveled through DFW and then on across the southwest US which alternated mountains and deserts each looking baking hot under the sun. I called Zack Smith when I arrived and he came to fetch me in a VW van to carry me to his father's house on Suva in Downy, California, home of the Space Shuttle and Rockwell International. We also passed the "Skunk Works" where the SR-71 Blackbird was made, that I told him I had seen as it made its last flight after decommissioning, and for the pure joy of it kicked the afterburners over the Pacific coast and set the all-time speed record for coast to coast travel, which it had done frequently before, but since its flights were all classified, no one could talk about it. It landed as I had once taxied into Dulles form a Middle East trip, and went to be housed in the Udvar-Hazy NASM annex at Dulles.

Jim Smith, Zack's Dad is interesting since he is working to support an orphanage in Mozambique and was interested in talking with me about what I knew of Mozambique as well as a quick Google search he had done on me, I gave him the name and contact for "His Excellency" (now) Ivo Paulo Garrido, my colleague who is now Minister of Health of all of Mozambique. I met Zack who is a lifeguard on the LA Beaches, which has carried out as many as forty rescues on a busy August day in LA, and he works two days on and four days off at the fire department as a paramedic, although at age 31 he was secretly hoping to be laid off in the recent downsizing

in order to try to apply to medical school. He has three year old twin girls, and a photographer sister named Brittany who also was there to see us off.

Jake Wood, Team Rubicon President, was here also to see us off with his girlfriend Indira, with whom he had just returned from a vacation trip to Jordan and Petra. Two others who are Team Rubicon members and hopefuls to join a future mission were here to see us off. Jeff Lane, a paramedical from Milwaukee, is the biggest of us, and is as gung ho as Zack, who showed us the B-Con unit for use as an uplink with a fold out solar panel for charging and a satellite Iridium phone for emergencies, as well as an EPERB for evacuation. He has several water bags for river crossings. We sorted out some medical gear and I pooled my stuff, leaving the big blue bag intact, probably to store things in Thailand as we carry the Osprey pack across the river.

Bob Thomann, his bag is stenciled “Trauma Bob” is the team leader and a PA leading his first ever mission and asking me to be helpful on the basis of my many multiple missions in the kinds of logistics he is working on. He had made the internet search and finding of the group called the Fourth Wall which is the NGO with whom we will be working, as well as carrying with us the Karen Chief Medical Officer for the north of this area, who had said they are all eager to learn from me. We have a thoughtful fellow whom I have not yet broken of the habit of referring to me as Doctor Geelhoed, which he said was far more respectful than Glenn.

Zack’s best friend dropped in to see him off and he did so just after we had pizza and beer for a sendoff with the family. During that time I told them of my usual habit of holding nightly tutorials and they would view this as an “after action” report and they like the idea of traveling light and fast with no drag. They asked for a short description of the anthropology of the Karen people and the difference between an IDP and a Refugee and he agencies which might be able to care for each, and the warning about cultural taboos such as showing the soles of the feet or touching any Buddhist holy object with the left hand or even turning the left side, the unclean aspect of humans. I told them it is “Red Right Returning” for walking around holy objects in Buddhism to keep the unclean side away, and told them of the Mongol heritage of the Karen and how it differs from the Lowland Lao and the Hmong. We will go through much more of that as well as distributing the Internet printouts of the Karen people and the political differences that had led to their continuing persecution by the military junta in power since the British had decolonized Burma.

**A LAST MINUTE RECEIPT OF THE “ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS”
COMPLETING THE “FRONT MATERIAL” OF THE NOW FINISHED
BOOK FORWARDED FROM JIM HEYNEN’S BRILLIANT PRECIS
THROUGH PATTY EDMONDS LATE EMAIL**

Zack's friend then helped me with the thing I could simply not get around. I had used their wireless laptop to try to get logged on the GWUMC server to finally get the message I had

been waiting for from Jim Heynen and Patty Edmonds which had not been posted by the time I had left the library for which I had made the special trip yesterday to sign on in the further particulars on the book, and Patty had told me that Jim was preparing a special entry for me in the “Acknowledgements” the one part of the “Front Material” still lacking along with a Dedication. I simply could not get any icon which allowed me to log into my email account. His friend finally showed me that this was not “Google Chrome coded” which meant that the icon would not show up, but did so on a desktop of Jim Smith so I could log in finally to my emails to catch the comments by Patty and Jim just minutes before my LAX departure.

It is a good thing that I did. It showed that my emails had a good deal of ribald responses to the Dos Equis ads about the “most interesting man on earth” and his resemblance to me. I finally found two messages from Patty, one of which thanked me for the additional endorsements recommendations and asking how well I knew Vern Ehlers, Michigan Congressman now retiring. I had to search to find the important email message which she sent reporting how embarrassed she was to send it along with such a glowing description of her superb efforts in the writing of the book, without which excellent précis writing and careful listening and editing out the tender spots the book would never have come to be. I read Jim’s “Acknowledgements” and it was the work of an expert who knew me well and summarized it superbly. I had two immediate responses, since the first line made mention of a nearly universal error of “Doing Surgery” which is a particular hobby horse fetish of mine—reducing the term Surgery, the profession to be equated with a single operative act, making a technical procedure of the entire art form and its cognitive components discounted

The rest of the piece I read with interest bordering upon awe. He had the “Dedication” part down, to nearly the exact wording as well as the specific people to whom I had proposed the dedication much as I had the thesis published in the on-line graduate thesis web. He even had the Flower in the Crannied Wall references I had recently made in reviewing some of the smaller details of the Serengeti Safari, which would have meant that he read these chapters of the recent Tanzania piece, except I do not remember sending them to him.

Then I stumbled once again at the end of the acknowledgements: Tennyson.

Had I not made a trip to Montreux Switzerland four decades ago, in one of the earliest of the international meetings of the International Association of Endocrine Surgeons of which I am founding member? Did I not make a visit to Chateau Chillon, in the stone castle’s peninsula into the Lac Lemman (Lake Geneva to the English speaking world) and seen the very “donjon” in which Lord Byron had been imprisoned? Here he was, a mystic and an impaired body, with his club foot, a lover and a poet, and now wasting away his life and creativity in the imprisonment of the donjon of Chateau Chillon. I had seen a small ray of light penetrating from an overhead barred window and it illumined the “Crannied Wall.” I could image in the tenacity of the small flowering plant in inserting its roots after the seedling fell into these damp cracks and the temerity with which it even pushed up a flower to try to get its head into the light. And the same

might be said of Byron himself. Even then, I had an aversion to his “plucking” this only other stubborn life form sending out some extrusion of hope, but he more than made up for that in his lines, which tell the interconnected intricacies of all things in this wonderful world, to be appreciated, whatever our circumstances, imprisoned or free, intact or maimed. I had waxed over-eloquent on the fine points of hippo scat and a few other analytic details of the life web on the Serengeti down to the level that perhaps only the dung beetles might appreciate, as I have on each mission, on each pick up sticks walkabout Derwood, on each hunting trip onto the alpine highlands of Colorado, or the Eastern Shore’s piedmont of Maryland. And Jim had figured that out, so at least the communication was clear to him even if he had not read those same words I had just sent out, which perhaps have been read by very few, at least less than have seen or scanned the photos. He had ‘Got It.’”

So, as the team Rubicon foursome plus one was gathering the bags outside at the VW van for the drive to LAX, I was still trying to acknowledge the acknowledgements, and had a chance only to say “YES!” with these later qualifiers to follow. I had tried to print it to look at it enroute, and the only way to do that was for the desktop to send the attachment as a message to Jim Smith’s laptop from which he might print out the single page of micrographia, in type point so tiny that I cannot read it now without some kind of magnification not on board, but at least I have it for when the bright light of the Southeast Asian sun might strike it later. I sent a quick note and then made a last call on the cell phone energy I am going to try to save by turning it off until I return to Dulles to try the rendezvous with Michael. Judy and the twins on my second August 14 reversing this long haul here in the direction such that I will have two sunrises and a sunset on a single flight across the same date line that just stole a Monday, giving it back as a later second Saturday.

MY “MABUHAY ELITE PREMIER” MEMBERSHIP IN PAL RESCUES OUR TEAM RUBICON FROM AN ARDUOUS FOUR HOURS IN A QUEUE WRAPPED AROUND THE TOM BRADLEY TERMINAL OUTSIDE ON THE STREET AWAITING CHECK-IN

And, now, as “luck would have it” we have come to LAX to the International Terminal of the Tom Bradley Airport. We went to the place where I had first gone to the PAL desks fourteen years ago in LAX as I was told to return to Washington since my pilot and his wife had just been taken hostage by Abu Sayef on their eight anniversary vacation on Palawan, Martin and Gracia Burnham which resulted in his death and her wounding in a firefight with the Philippine Regular Army when they happened upon the hostage camp a year later. But in every year since that time I have been returning to the very same area that each Philippino in America would say is far too dangerous for them to visit, since all they here about are the skirmishes that continue with the Moslem separatists with a bone to pick with the Philippine government over the mistreatment of each by each. We came in to the terminal and went to the thronged gates where a sign was held up PAL:113. We tried to worm our way in to the queue, but an agent came and asked us which

flight we were on and we told him PAL: 103. “Oh, for that one, you will all have to go outside and wait out there in that queue!

We went outside and saw a queue we could not see to the end of, and marched all the way back to the domestic terminal to get into the end of the line over five hundred people and overstuffed bags long. “It is good that we are early since this is a four hour line” remarked Bob. “Just a minute” I said. I pulled out the magic ticket wallet I had been holding behind my passport and went over to the fellow with the PAL 103 sign who was trying to string the line back and avoid the cutting into the queue that was going on among an increasingly hostile group of Philipinos. I showed him my “Mabuhay Elite Premier” card, and he said come with me. “Come along Team!” I said as they pushed the trolley around the queue. “Are they also all Mabuhay Elite?” asked the agent. “Of course! They are all with me and we are traveling together!” I answered.

We wheeled onto the red carpet at the special agent and he took my card and searched for my records as I gave him the four other passports as well. “Oh,” he said, “You are Mabuhay Elite Premier” so he proceeded to make up a first class upgrade which I said would need to cover all of us. For that he came back to me and said that level of the Elite had expired on July 15, just two weeks ago today. But we would still have the special check-in and the additional baggage allowance and our choice of seats. So, we have just cut our four hour in-line time down to ten minutes and used the balance in the lounge where I had once got the “go back home” call fourteen years ago, after which I met “by accident” Allan Mellicor coming out of the ACS Initiation rehearsal at the Chicago McCormack Place and finally met Vivien Forsburgh and started the long sequence of “goiteramas” and hypothyroidism prevention programs in Mindanao. All of the rest, as we might have said in the “Acknowledgments” of the “Front Material “ now completed, is “becoming history.”

10-AUG-A-3

ARRIVAL AT DESTINATION TRAVEL WITH LIMITED CONNECTIVITY ALONG THE WAY

August 3, 2010

It never rains but what it pours. I believe that is a statement that applies in several instances, but right now it means we have arrived in Manila and are currently awaiting boarding for our flight to Bangkok, sleep deprived and out of whack in time and space warps. As we are here trying to get an email connections so that I can send a note regarding the “Acknowledgements” a series of text messages comes through that there are requests to Team Rubicon to come to Pakistan to help with the disasters subsequent to the worst flooding in their recent history with a breakout of cholera, dysentery and a lot of deaths following on the heavy flooding. There was a momentary flurry of diversion of our group from the Burma mission where we are expected and going up to Pakistan to “recon” that disaster, and even more strongly to do a straight ahead continuation of this Thai/Burma Karen mission as planned. The latter is winning out now with the idea that there can be a second “B Team” to get under way, and the second team could bring to attention the fact that the Team Rubicon with now about two hundred members can field a request of a second team to deploy to the field. It means we are supposed to be straight ahead in our mission and not stumble around distracted by the other events in the world which may happen from time to time.

This means that the equipment which is mobilized for this mission like the B-Gan and Satellite Iridium phone, which is here and not available for the moment to be deployed elsewhere but it may be able to duplicate some of the kits we are carrying. We have had a long layover which started very promising when I presented my card to the PAL officials and we were whisked directly to the Mabuhay Lounge for first class treatment for each of the four of us. It was then discovered that I was a Mabuhay member, all right, but that I was no longer an “Elite” which gets an immediate first class upgrade as I had frequently on PAL before and which I had given to the member of the team who had performed outstandingly well. But this time the rabbit did not hop out of the hat and we had to settle for a laptop station where we could get the batteries charged but could get no access to emails or to any internet service providers. That did not prevent those with SIM cards that could make texts or calls abroad from finding out that our services were desired in multiple locations around the world, and it may be time for the organization to consider what it can and cannot do rather than promise all things to all men everywhere.

After our long delay we are weary but have finally boarded the Bangkok bound PAL 739 flight for the three hours plus we will be in transit to get to the nation of our first destination. I am hearing more stories about other kinds of “secret ops” kinds of methods for transfer across the river into the Burmese sovereign state, invited or not. We are still not certain as to the role once we are there, but that has been true before and each of the team including our photographer Kevin is eager to learn as much as possible and to do everything that they can. Firemen paramedics are trained to “scoop and run” but that pre-supposes a place to run TO, and it is not apparent that there is some such after care when we are going into an already suppressed in any development and subject to the trauma of hostile actions. We will see what organization we are joining into and learn what the limits and potentials are, as always, but that is what I had also done on the just completed Tanzanian mission which had turned out so highly successful by seeing an opportunity and moving into it vigorously as soon as it was recognized.

I am going to settle in drowsily into a dinner and drinks service in mid morning here as we are going internationally to Thailand, where we will land for an afternoon of being again in an airport before connecting with the Air Bangkok, for which I now have a new frequent flyer member number to allow us extra baggage capacity, much as my Mabuhay nu number allows more capacity in the luggage I can carry into the Philippines. I have only one objective in Bangkok’s airport otherwise, and that is to get stamps and post the postcards I have been writing all along that I had made from the prints of my just completed Tanzanian trip!

**OVER THE SOUTH CHINA SEA: REMEMBERING THE CIRCUMNAVIGATIONS OF 1977—
TWICE IN A MONTH, ONE EASTWARD AND ONE WESTWARD, BEFORE THE FOUR ANNUAL
RECENT CIRCUMNAVIGATIONS THREE EASTWARD AND ONE WESTWARD, WITH THE NEXT
SCHEDULED WESTWARD FROM PHILIPPINES TO AFRICA IN 2011**

I am looking down into the South China Sea remembering once before having been awestruck that I was over Indochina and one of the only ones of my generation not dropping ordinance on the Vietnam coastline below. I had made a trip from Nigeria in 1977 to Kenya with an interim stop in Kinshasa, and was heading to a meeting in San Francisco where I was presenting a paper so I got a chance to use the advantage of the dateline to catch up. This was during the final year of my Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Clinical Scholar program at GWU. Within the month, I found myself back again in this area of the world, this time going westward to arrive with Wilson Steitler and Dale De Haan as the “CoDel” Congressional delegation of then Senator Edward M Kennedy, chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee in the matter of the “Boat People” of the area along the coast of Vietnam and Laos, with stops in Singapore and Bangkok. It seems that those two months in the summer of 1977 (when the Washingtonian Magazine had identified me in 1977 as one of the “Men to Watch” I had been first involved in the long distance travel to their area of the world, and had made Bangkok a pivotal spot for my travels.

I had subsequently come here to help celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the Rockefeller Foundation’s support to the medical school of Thailand here at Bangkok, and had learned about the use of Praziquantel as a drug for schistosomiasis. I had also brought with me a special traveling companion, named Michael Allan Geelhoed and we toured the Royal Palaces and the Wat Arun and other parts of the “Floating Market” and the Talay Thong, where Michael especially appreciated the floor show of costumed dancing girls and the Thai cuisine, until the very same cuisine had knocked us both out flat as we went on from here to Hong Kong. I saw the carousel of the baggage claim area in LAX and thought of the same style baggage claim into which Michael had fallen as he

was awaiting our bags. I held out a little longer, but I also was knocked out by the same virulent GI bug that had caused both of us to succumb.

I was quite impressed with the idea that I had gone 'round the globe, not once, but twice in only two months, without any idea of the second trip as I had completed the first one, and having proven the round earth hypothesis as I believe was to my own and others' satisfaction, and learned a lot about the seasons along the tropics and the time zones and date lines as I had spun around the earth in each direction. I little suspected then that almost four decades later, I would be doing the circumnavigations again, in alternate directions and using those time zones and seasons to advantage in combining the African and Asian missions. This has happened three times eastward and once westward in the last four years, and a plan is now being ticketed to do the same this January for a Philippine Mission January 22 to February 5 with the first week in Northern Luzon and the second week in Mindanao, and then on to the African connections of either the Southern Sudan return or, if that is disrupted by the referendum of January, a special plan to come down from Chad through CAR into Congo to see if we can help relieve our old friends from Assa who have been oppressed by the random violence of the LRA= The Lord's Resistance Army, a spillover from the Moslem/Christian conflict of the north/South divisions of Uganda locked in its own civil war that just keeps on going under the devilry of the mutilations of the child soldiers recruited by Joseph Kony of the Northern Uganda contingent, the takeover chief of the LRA since the mystical magic Princess died, despite here magic oil anointing that presented any bullets from killing her or those of her followers who were very careful in the application of this amulet charm.

So, I am looking down at the "Far Side" of the Globe. If I needed any further proof of it, Kevin said he had not changed his watch since he left Tampa and it was exactly the same time in Manila as it was in Florida, even though the AM sign was here and the PM sign was there and the dates had jumped forward to August 3. It is now an hour earlier still as we have flown a thousand miles westward to Bangkok, to spend a few more hours in an airport, this time to connect with the domestic carrier, "a boutique airline" to fly to the north at Chengmai. We will be in a hotel there tonight, but all the excitement and plans are made around tomorrow's further departure, crossing the River by night in dark clothes exposing no white skin in order to make a clandestine entrance into the Burmese sovereign state without their invitation except from a group the military junta considers subversive. I am not into the cloak and dagger aspect as much as the ability to do something positive for the Karen people who have been oppressed for some long time. As we enter this one area of the troubled world we hear that the even more troubled Khyber province of Pakistan, through which I had once made a very troubled pass after the Khyber rifles outpost, into the no-man's land of the warlords of the region in the Khyber Pass. It is likely we will keep our focus on the task at hand in exploring how it develops here, but there is the news that now over 1,100 people have been swept away by the worst flooding in over eighty years, and that is the kind of rescue and relief that a group of paramedics might work well in as opposed to further developing definitive care for those who are victims of the everyday patterns of illness such as incarcerated hernias, C-sections for obstructed labors, or deformities following unattended trauma. But they we really keen on seeing the slides I had shown them from edited batches of both Old Fangak and Werkok in Sudan and then both Leyte and Mindanao in the Philippines during our long layover in Manila without email access to send out our messages, we reviewed the pictorial lessons of the last missions in these environments into which they are eager to penetrate.

I have cleared the border of Vietnam below, and am on a glide slope in the amphibian city of Bangkok, for our "Destination Country" at least for official consumption, and on our way beyond as it develop tomorrow when we have met with our fellow travelers with whom we will be making a supportive mission for the Karen.

We have arrived at our northern Thai second largest city, Chengmai, along verdant rice paddies, amid clouds and towering thunderheads and were already treated to our first heavy tropical rainstorm which turns the roads to rivers. We have moved into a nice small Hotel called the Charcoa Hotel, which is where we met one of our guides, an ex-Hollywood image maker named Rob Swain who formed Fourth Wall Relief, and an evangelical MK who works here crossing the border consistently named Dave Eubanks representing "Free Burma Rangers" a self-designated name of a number of small NGOs of a few persons collaborating to help the Karen people who are said to be lovable and oppressed. I will fill in the rest as we go!

10-AUG-A-4

**CHENGMAI TO MAESARIENG BY BUS FOR OUR LAUNCH NEAR
THAI-BURMA BORDER FOR OUR FINAL STAGING STOP**

August 4, 2010

We are parked at the Chengmai bus rank, and I have taken to the bus a half hour before our takeoff with all our gear on the roof. I have done so in order to use the time of our wait to limber out the laptop to extract some use from this time in relative luxury of the Toyota van since I presume my further journalism “Facilities” will be somewhat limited. We had a briefing last night from a remarkable fellow with whom I can relate well. His name is Dave Eubanks, and he is the “Director” of the “FBR” = “Free Burma Rangers.” He is an MK and his eighty year old father has still not retired from the “field “ and continues to walk the jungles in this area of the world. Dave is one of those who go back and forth across the border, with a number of activities to support the Karen peoples whom he says he loves since they first loved him and he cannot get away from this loyalty. He outlined his reason for staying after a stint as Special Forces US Army, as 1) spiritual, 2) physical, and 3) emotional, and 4) medical, as he has been involved for some time, under the radar if at all possible, since he does not want to give offense to the Thai border patrol, and certainly is not a big time supporter of the Burmese army that has been doing what it can to suppress the Karen in their jungle hideouts. They are very hardy people handing out in the forest they know well and are very resilient and quite grateful for the presence of the handful of people who are supporting them, Dave being one of these unique individuals.

Another is our host, Rob Swain, a former Hollywood special effects guy who feels a calling to be here, since the work is an unmitigated good, with a very high yield from small and unmonitored people of good will. He had burned out in the Hollywood scene early after some success in, for example, Benjamin Button, for which an Academy Award was won. Among other things that motivated him to leave the pressures of the more comfortable California environment was a nasty divorce, and he came here at first to see what could be done, and now opines that he may never move back. I can relate to his activities in supporting a cadre of 37 “medics” undergoing a total of six months training in the various clinics and villages and IDP camps in which this training mission is a culmination for a total net outlay of about \$6,000 from his 401K account—which he deems a superb investment. He has called his foundation “Fourth Wall Relief” and has a web site with that name.

How to keep this going is a question he has raised since he was supported by a family foundation to a small extent which then underwent a divorce, and he is going to shift to a new

support base, in financing a restaurant run by his girlfriend Tukkie, in Maesarieng, to which we are headed and where we will have dinner tonight. So, with these two folk giving us a briefing on how to conduct an “under the radar” mission of our kind, and with a decisions to not blatantly broadcast that we are conducting live interviews from “Inside Burma” but only sending back messages that we are active now “along the Thai/Burma border” then the Thai government would not get in trouble for acknowledging our presence here and condoning it, and the deniability of the location in which we are operating allows us to do this without endangering any of the present or future preparations of our own or the good works being done by folk like Dave Eubank. He and his entire family, including small children, were arrested by the Thai government at one time due to an unfortunate publicity about a continuing activity in which he is sponsoring support, that include not just medical and “KDHW” (=Karen Department of Health and Welfare” under its Director Gigi who is going with us on the “inside”) How to help without giving offense that might bring adverse publicity to get both Dave and Robert kicked out of the access to help the Karen is a delicate balancing act for an organization dependent upon donor participation which is somewhat dependent on publicity and media attention.

We have Kevin Whitcomb with us who is very good at “viral marketing” and had advised me to reconsider the use of some such outlet as “Face book” to make know my own activities in medial missions. This would have the same delicate balancing act in such environments as the South Sudan activities around the time of election, or the sensitivities of officials to a fellow who—as Patty Edmonds had written—has a “signature MO of coloring outside the lines.”

We adjourned after our briefing from both Dave and Rob to take a walk through the markets and get the stuff we might need for later—rapid drying pants for wading streams after river crossings, a dark scarf to be used as a head covering that would make no white skin exposed during our border river crossing at night along the Salawin River, now somewhat swollen by the rainy season runoff of which we have had our first example during the briefing at our Charcoa Hotel, which resulted in the paved street out in front filling with ankle deep water. We have made a few stops today to collect a few additional items such as Doxycycline since the Mallarone many of us started on is not as effective here. We also got Bhat at 31 B= \$1.00 US exchange rate for the bus trip and the purchase of fuel and boat costs along with the generator fuel and the few items for which we might need cash, and that cash is in terms of Bhat rather than the TR funds which are not in the usual US \$100 bills as they are in Africa but in Thai Bhat.

10-AUG-A-5

A FULL DAY OF THE PARAMILITARY “HURRY UP AND WAIT” AS WE FINALLY PACK OUT TO THE ROAD TRIP TO THE SALAWIN RIVER TO GO OUT “UNDER COVER’ TO TAKE THE BOAT RIDE ACROSS THE BORDER INTO BURMA TO SEE THE INPATIENTS AND SEE ONE EMERGENCY NEWBORN WITH ABDOMINAL DISTENTION

August 5, 2010

I got up early on the banks of the Monel River in the Riverside Guest House and walked the still wet streets from the continuing rains in Maserenge (18* 47.71 N, 98* 59.53 E). I admired the carved wooden “deer mounts” on the walls of almost every establishment I had been in including this damp lobbied Riverside guest House and the Northwest—a better spot across the street where we were supposed to be staying but they were filled when the reservations were attempted. We had a good breakfast there and spent a good deal of the day just sitting in their floor space with shoes off on cushions. There is wireless internet connectivity and a wide screen TV set with BBC and an assortment of satellite movies. I was no hooked on the movies, and saw only in passing the large flood plain of the Indus River expanding in the tragedy of only 1600 deaths in a swath of up to ten million or more affected in Pakistan. I had a very good breakfast of a Mango Lassi, coffee, and a fresh fruit and yoghurt Muesli. I liked hanging out in the Northwest and watching the rain fall in the narrow street out in front between us and the river. An occasional saffron-robed young monk would pass in front under an umbrella covering his begging bowl. I had explained to the team the rituals and restrictions of the young men who are monks for a period before they marry, enter a business or continue on in school, or the far fewer Buddhist nuns who have but seven restrictions and do not necessarily have to perform this period in their lives as is expected of all young Thai men. But, I would have preferred being on the way “in” for which we waited almost all day.

The two features that are immediately apparent on entering the Northwest are the carved deer heads on the wall and the large fish tank with the seats above it. The wooden heads are not ALL wood, and in fact are surmounted by real horns, and in the case of the smaller deer, an extension of hide that grows up the antler beams. These are trophies of the “barking deer”. I understand that they are plentiful in the jungle and are very good eating, and anyone who has been in and around the Burma jungles has eaten well. The hunters listen for them as they bark, “Just like a dog” and then close in on them and shoot them with a rifle. They do not run them with dogs, as some other species are hunted, although the hunters do seem to have small dogs around them. Another species is instantly recognizable as the Sika stag, which we have on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, an import from the Far East, and for which I have hunted and even

have a good video of a Sika stag in full “proinking” run when it was off season. I am put in for a possible muzzle loading Sika deer hunt this fall in Backwater reserve, and am ordering a new muzzle loader from CVA (Connecticut Valley Arms) to have a newer 50 cal. Muzzle loader with a scope mount for such occasion if I am drawn for the hunt. These Sika stags are far bigger than any I have seen in Maryland, but their antler growth is exactly similar. They are a relative of the elk we have in the Rockies and bellow and bugle at each other in challenge during the rut. They are very vocal all through the year, especially at night, and are at home in the swamps—so this is their kind of place. Again, these are mounted with a stylized carving almost of a “Christmas-time reindeer face” but then have a forehead strip of the Sika hide and a crown including the antlers from a skull cap. I thought that this must be a clever adaptation to the tropics in which any full mount of head and hide might be chewed up almost immediately by burrowing insects, but that strip of hide tells me that there may be some other reason that they are so stylized. Later I learn that these are standard trophies for doing something well—like winning a golf tournament or doing good works as we are about to attempt to do. I would like an addition of one of these Sika stags particularly to the Game Room and have been trying for a decade to get one. If I cannot score in Maryland, perhaps it will be here in Burma/Thai corridor of the Salawin River! And the “barking deer” is a particular unique trophy since it is also vocal and is stalked by skill and is a tusked deer. I have also heard that this is the last place that one of the primitive UhrOx of the world called the gaur is located, and they call it the forest bison. I had seen some establishments up higher in the market with a similar trophy bison mount on a wooden carving. So much for the dead heads of the Riverside Guest House and the Northwest (and others nearby.) Now I can tell you about the tropical river fish both living and dead along this watershed!

Now, back to that large fish tank. This is for “Fish foot massage!” You put your naked feet in there and the fish nibble on the excess skin and calluses and trim off the dead skin as they tickle whatever is submerged. That is a big thing out here—presumably for anyone who has already had all the other benefits of the “Thai Massage” which comes with or without a continuing escort. There are signs in many places for the fish massage, and although I did not do it (for this reason the Northwest owner came out and actually had to throw in a handful of fish food pellets into the tank, presumably for lack of edible customers!) I saw the little fish that are supposed to do the job.

But, in the lobby of the Riverside Guest House is a photograph of a couple dozen US marines in the era of the Vietnam War. They are all holding up a long ribbon-like body of a fish, with a rather typically fin-fish scaly head, but a long eel like body. This, I believe, is called the Arrawan, and is a large prehistoric looking resident of the tropical rivers nearby. The one the marines are holding up in a triumph of their otherwise not so happy stay in Vietnam is from the Mekong River and is 7.8 meters long! I took pictures of the photo to make sure I was not called a prevaricator upon return. I would like to see this unusual fish and learn more about it. I thought I had encountered a number of highly unusual tropical fishes in the Amazon such as the Piraracu, the largest of the fin fish with scales (and huge scales at that which are on display in my

“curio cabinet” at home). The piraracu I snow endangered since it is a surface fish that comes up to suck air and the rite of passage among the young Brazilian Amazonian swains is to harpoon the big fish and bring it home in the tippy dugout canoe as a mark of manhood. The population explosion of the bottom heavy population pyramid along the Amazon means a population reduction in the piraracu. I do not believe any such legends are attached to the Arrawan, but on my next trip out into these tropical rainforests, I need to pursue barking deer, Sika stags and an Arrawan!

As we sipped coffee and Mango Lassis in the Northwest, Kevin Whitcomb encouraged me to tap into the “viral marketing potential” of Face Book, for the promotion of the book “Gifts from the Poor.” I had an account without knowing it, and there were about two dozen wannabe potentials “friends” on the contact listing, most of whom I did not know. Their names were Arabic and may have heard me in Sudan or other places where the techno-savvy audience members in lectures have tried to keep contact through this social marketing means. He opened my facebook account and suggested I link the other means I should have running, like MissionToHeal and the Flickr and York photo libraries, as well as my home page and then “causes” of friends I should link to. We did not have time to pursue this since he was supposed to be editing and getting censorship approval of the accounts to be uplinked for the Team Rubicon at home, to be posted in live action from the field as the home team is following our progress “inside” which still cannot be referred to as such. We are on “The Thai/Burma border” caring for un-named and unidentified Karen refugees at places undisclosed with no recognizable photos of persons or place.

At this moment, this is true, but we are sitting around impatiently trying to get in to do what it is that we can only vaguely hint at, and not specifically state—we are operation inside the Burma jungle, not with “refugees” (Karen who have managed to get out and cross a border into a neighboring state where they have political protection and UNHCR representation) but with “IDP’s” (Internally displaced persons, who are inside the sovereign state of jurisdiction that may be inimical to both their interests and ours in helping them, and which makes our aiding a abetting their revolutionary activities illegal, or at least an operation that might be interdicted if carried out openly. That is why Dave Eubank (FBR= Free Burma Rangers) and Rob Swain (Fourth Wall Relief) have wanted to keep a lid on the kinds of information that is posted. My information is complete and as accurate as I can learn and typed in as observations are anywhere in the world in a journal of photojournalism, but has not been sent out, and especially not publically posted.

Even the minimum message that I tried to link into my GWUMC home server got tripped up since every time I put an address into the “CC” it would fill in the name but fail to populate the address and there was no going back from that point when it froze. So, the first technoglitich is that I could not get connected via the wireless to say I have arrived at the staging area from which we would proceed this evening; letter I got a one line message sent to two people which said only that. But that is not the worst of the tchnoglitiches that befell me at

Northwest as it turns out. I was going to transfer a message I typed into my brand new purpose bought SeaGate 500 gig external hard drive, and then send it out as an attachment since Kevin Whitcomb was on-line and offered to send the message for me. I did not realize until much later, that the end of my typing into my new external hard drive into which I had uploaded my text, images and movies, came the moment that my new Sea gate was plugged into his USB port on his MAC, and I am a PC user. So for the third time and the second time this year, all the organized text and photos I have been editing is locked up irretrievably from this point on in the toasted external hard drive that I use as my primary means of transferring information back and forth from laptop to desktop servers.

It is Kevin's Fiftieth birthday today! He was quiet about it, but I had learned about it and we had to sing at the most unusual points in our day—we are getting to one that is quite unique later---and he said he could not imagine a more special way to celebrate a milestone day. Zach celebrate in a misty rainy morning by riding Rob's motorbike all around the town and up into the Salawin national Forest. There is a large golden reclining Buddha I had glimpsed along the bus ride here to Maiserenge but it was seen in a rainstorm, and the team on motorbikes saw it close up later.

So, in the gentle soothing rain of the monsoon, we had taken a brief sortie out for the gang to want to buy—of all things—a big knife for each so that they would not be unarmed in the event of encounter with hostile forces. Right. I did not buy one, but they each did with a fancy sheath bought separately, and then it was stuffed in the sides of the purpose bought Osprey 65 liter uniform back packs we should all be packing. I divvied my stuff into that which needed to go and that which could stay, and the extra was left inside the SCI blue bag stashed in the KDHW---Karen Department of health and Welfare, which is Gigi's department. We had strolled the streets and had seen a village market, but picked up that pace as the rain did also, and scurried back to wait some more, having lunch in Northwest as we waited for the later arrival of the pickup truck that would take us to KDHW for the start up of our three and a half hour ride through the riverine tropical rainforest to the Salwin river (Thai/Burma border) arriving about sunset.

LAUNCH!

SUCCESSFUL CROSSING “UNDER COVER” INTO BURMA TO CROSS OVER FROM MAKOTA (THAILAND) TO EE THU THA (BURMA) TO THE LARGEST OF THE IDP CAMPS AND MATERNAL HEALTH CENTER OF THE KAREN PEOPLE

We are in! It was dramatic, but uneventful. While on a stroll through Chengmai's markets at night after our arrival there, we had each bought “Pashmina” (so says the label on the bag) scarves in black or brown and dark hooded covers which we were asked to wear when on

the river or approaching it to cover up any whit skin. We did. It did not seem to make much difference, since we had no encounter that was apparent from either Thai border patrol, or SPDC (Burmese army “State Peace and Development Council” the euphemism of the oppressor) and only Karen “friendlies” who seemed to know who we were and what we were about despite our rather ludicrous terrorist sapper costumes.

We drove through the spectacular “real deal” tropical rainforest with its myriad of species and lianas connecting the canopy in a florid display of lush vegetation. We slurred through the muddy road washouts to turn after a couple of hours of switchbacks in the mountains to approach the Salwin, and could look from high on its banks across the river into identical rainforest of a different country—Burma, as we still call it, or Myanmar, as the SLORC (State Law and Order Restoration Council, mercifully re-named but not re-formed SPDC (as the dictators of the Burmese Military Junta in Rangoon now want to call it. In between are resistant opposition groups, the largest minority group being the Karen peoples.

As gentle as these forest dwellers seem, they have put up a continuing resistance to their persecution, and very much like the cattle cultures of South Sudan, if and when the official state suppression of them is relieved for any period of “peace” they turn to fighting each other in internecine civil war. The Karen language should be a unifier, but there are red Karen and white Karen and a total of seven recognized sub-groups of the Karen peoples, whose single distinguishing feature is that they are NOT “Burmese.” They may be the descendents of the Mogul who came down from the Indian subcontinent, and a very few are still Islamic. The larger part of the Burmese population is Buddhist, and that is true for the Karen as well, but they were long associated with the British colonizers so that a majority now (at least those seen around IDP camps) are Christian, with a sizable Catholic population. The British had used their Karen trusted allies to help put down Burmese rebellions, so there is still no love lost for that historic reason, among others. Atrocities were carried out against the Karen much as they were against the still gentler Khmer people in the “Killing Fields” of Cambodia, for which I was wearing my “Khmer Red Cross” cap from the occasion I was a blood donor in Phnom Penh for the Khmer peoples I had operated among.

As soon as we touched the banks of Burma on the far side of the Salwin River we scrambled up the muddy banks in the dark almost requiring a hand-holding leader since it was not just dark but we were heavily veiled. Just how do those Burkha clad women navigate at night? As soon as we had climbed the hills away from the river and into a stream valley beyond, we could take off the head cover, and look around at the stilt platform bamboo huts along the stream and a large cluster of such huts were gathered “inland” –welcome to Ee Thu Tha, largest of the IDP Karen camps!

**SETTLE IN ON OUR BAMBOO PLATFORM, SING A QUIET
HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO KEVIN, AND THN MAKE ROUNDS ON THE**

FIVE INPATIENT BEDS BEFORE AN IMPROMPTU LECTURE, AND A MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT INFANT DISTENDED ABDOMEN EVALUATION REFERRED BY THE MIDWIVES OF THE MCH CENTER

I had just dropped the pack on the bamboo floor after unlacing my running shoes—a real pain since I have to get in and out of shoes on every crossing of every threshold in the elevated living space of each bamboo hut—it would be easier to have flip flops that could be kicked off quickly. Since it was Kevin's birthday and not an insignificant one at that, I led off a sotto voce happy birthday chorus to which he responded by saying he could not imagine a better way to celebrate. I would concur. I was standing at the frozen Potomac Great Falls on my fiftieth birthday, on my way to IAD to return to Assa Zaire (as it was then) as a good way to celebrate a Golden Jubilee, and almost all of my more recent birthdays are celebrated either in the air over the Pacific or in some isolate corner of the Philippines—as for example, this year, again, in Hilongos, Leyte.

Almost immediately, the best of the Karen medics Sokhet, came to take me on rounds and show the pharmacy and the refrigerator for the vaccine cold chain. I believe he had been at “Dr Cynthia's clinic” a long distance from here, but the one run by the awardee of the Global Health Council who has continued to work among the Karen despite a virtual house arrest by the Burmese which prevented her from coming to receive the award in Alexandria VA in person. We attempted a (faulty) satellite hook-up, a very big deal said to be the first live transmission in real time at this earlier and innocent time in satellite communication. Now we can have any number of equally faulty global connections at any time! [As we were about to prove many times over during this trip, in obsession with the “COM” on a faulty B-Gann uplink.]

With Sokhet in the lead, he showed the simple stock of the pharmacy which treats about 60—100 OPD visits daily in this IDP camp of well over five thousand potential patients, and the center of the MCH (Maternal and Child Health). He toured us around the raised bamboo platform where the five “bed spaces” would be, one with a hanging hammock. He presented each of the patients to me, and each was already well managed. One child had a fever and was found to be Para check Negative (The Para check only detects the antigens of Plasmodium Falciparum, the most lethal strain of malaria) and thick blood film positive. Therefore, the patient had through the process of this simple pair of studies Plasmodium vivax malaria—a distinction worth making, since the treatment and prognosis is different. The lesser morbidity and almost no mortality of the fevers of P. vivax are treated with chloroquin; P. falciparum is insensitive here to chloroquin and is treated by Artesanate and quinine, and if not successfully treated is likely to be lethal.

Next patient was the most interesting. She had right lower quadrant pain. Because of the occasional visits of Western trained health care workers, there is a plague of mis-diagnosis here which Sokhet had asked me about—“How do you diagnose appendicitis?” My answer: “You

don't!" That is a disease that simply does not exist here and is a problem for exclusion by people who come from someplace else who are worried about being sued if they miss it. Right lower quadrant pain here is called by an old-fashioned name "Amebic typhlitis" for the older term for inflammation of the cecum. I went through a mini-tropical medicine lecture on request, speaking about the three stages of amebiasis, the simple diarrhea from the colitis, the invasive form only possible with a few of the twenty three "zymogenes" to give "Pylephlebitis" = inflammation of the portal vein, which can lead to what this patient had—an amebic abscess of the liver, confirmed by ultrasound which was done borrowing the portable unit used by the midwives.

The treatment for this disease is a long course of metronidazole which the patient is almost always reluctant to take since it is not a pleasant nor short treatment, and they often abandon the pills, and the abscess continues to grow and may migrate or penetrate into the pleura, the abdomen, or in one memorable case which occurred before our eyes in Malawi, a patient scheduled to have the drainage of the "anchovy paste" of an amebic abscess of the liver perforated into the pericardium and got an immediate pericardial tamponade and died before we got him to theatre in Embangweni. Sure enough, this patient was only a week into her metronidazole therapy and Sokhet reported she was sick of taking the medicine and wanted to know if there were any other way she could be treated as by operation. I went through the dangers of this procedure if it contaminated other areas of the body and also had to remind them to isolate her fecal debris as it is apparent that this is an invasive zymogene of the Amebiasis, and could spread in the camp if it contaminates the water supply.

Our mini-lecture went on for a while since the TR group had me talking earlier during our long layover in the afternoon awaiting transfer here on subjects such as DAMM, NTD< GOBI, PHC and the whole litany of tropical medicine that Sokhet and the staff including midwives was eager to hear repeated. At least they got the first lecture on tropical rainforest ecology to include the strangler fig story and the wildly prolific speciation which made their three and a half hour road trip over to Makota more interesting.

The other patients were a woman with a honey crusted skin rash being treated with cloxacillin to prevent it from going further into the skin and soft tissue. One woman had a pilonidal abscess, now drained, most of that happening spontaneously, with the suggestion that the pilonidal cyst be marsupialized after it cools down after packing for drainage. I described to him how this could be done and he seemed to pick it up quickly. The others were all clambering to hear more and we talked about the simple treatments of a number of common illnesses to be encountered in this setting and a few tips for the midwives about identifying high risk pregnancy and how to run an antenatal clinic. They were out to get me just a little later when they found a problem they were eager to refer.

We had come over a border mountain range just before the Salawin River at its highest point about 1350 feet, and now my altimeter measures 88 meters here. I marked Ee Thu Tha at 18° 04. 27 N and 097° 40.10 E.

With a “light supper” with which we would all become quite familiar as we went along: steamed rice and Raman noodles, we spread out—I directly and immediately on the bamboo floor and was weary enough to turn in after a final check through the mosquito netting to be the final one to wish Kevin another good half century. I was ready to sleep on the flat surface, when there was a call for me from the space down below.

NIGHT CALL FOR A DISTENDED ABDOMEN IN A NEONATE

It was a four day old male infant. I had asked each of the others including Sokhet to evaluate and tell me what they found. The infant was nursing, passing stool and had a distended but non-tender belly. He did not appear to be in distress, but they were worried about the belly more than anything else. After each had speculated widely about the cause and were interested in combinations of antibiotics and other unsupported guesses, an evaluation that I had guided them through showed NO peritoneal signs whatever, and a remarkable finding that I am surprised they missed. There was a right inguinal hernia. Even at four days and his tiny size the aperture was two finger breadths and the loop of bowel was very easily reduced from the hernia which had extended to the scrotum. It was NOT an incarceration and certainly NOT a strangulation, so I showed them how to reduce it with ease and be sure at the large size of the opening it would be less likely to incarcerate than a smaller one; but in the event it did “get stuck” I suggested three ways in which they could still reduce it, including warm water to relax the abdominal muscles, suspension to give gravity an advantage and steady pressure so long as the transluminated bowel was pink and not black or congested or tender. They all were relieved since operating on a four day old in the jungle with a head lamp is not so much the trick, as the pediatric anesthesia is not going to be easy—there or here.

I went to bed, and rising early in the morning went to check on the infant and reported back that he was fine, with the distension gone and he was passing gas and meconium still—no evidence of a neonatal meconium ileus. The TR team was eager to report this by censored B-Gann uplink as our first patient encounter and the first life saved. Right.

At least I agree with Kevin: we are here where we had wanted to be, doing what we came to do.

10-AUG-A-6

**PRE-DAWN UP AND OUT, AND DOWN THE STEEP RIVER BANK IN
THE RAIN TO BOARD THE LONG-TAILED BOAT UPRIVER TO
ARRIVE IN OO DHATHA TO HOLD WHOLE CLASS LECTURES, A
BREAKOUT “ADVANCED” GROUP EAGER, BUT NOT AT ALL READY
TO OPERATE, AND OUR FIRST CLINIC**

August 6, 2010

I was up and out before dawn, first checking on the infant whose abdominal distension had gone down and his hernia had not recurred. Second, I spoke with two of the medics who would be going from here in Ee Thu Tha with us to Oo Dha Tha to participate in the training mission and listen to me for the sessions. One was 19 and one was 23. We were at a bamboo bridge over the small stream near the OPD clinic. They expressed their hope to get an education from someone who knew how to manage problems, for which they felt at this moment they were very vulnerable and not much help. One was wearing a tee shirt that announced proudly “We Are Karen.” The third reason for the early up and out is that we were to have come down to the Salwin River before dawn to launch “under cover” a boat ride upstream to the “training camp” of Oo Dha Tha where we would be for the next several days doing the training program for 32 of the medics brought in for this event plus the five already there, leaving only Sokhet here at Ee Thu Tha to cover the clinic and MCH (Maternal and Child Health center.)

We filed out passing the huts shingled with the brad pandanus leaves, in overlapping layers and secured in place with twisted vines. It was eerie as we walked through the dark in silent single file with packs and carrying head covers which were put on before we got to the hill overlooking the river. We were going to try to make a walk along a hillside upriver to give a wide berth to the SPDC checkpoint on the river bank which we could bypass by walking inland, awaiting the arrival of the river boat which would put in at the bank up river from where we had arrived last evening. In so doing our upriver trip would be shorter. It also gave us a chance to see the rainforest riverine ecosystem in which many of the Karen live year round as we skirted the Salawin River in the dawn mists.

We stopped in silence at the muddy slippery bank downslope as two scouts went forward to scope out the river and await the sound of the riverboat before we would go in head cover when they signaled it was clear for us to do so. The TR folk were enjoying this throw back to the Vietnam era of “Black Ops” in crawling up in ambush on an unsuspecting enemy, but I believe almost all of this “OpSec” (“Operation Security” in the paramilitary lingo) was overdone, and we might have aroused less suspicion by proceeding normally and not trying stealth

maneuvers which aroused a bit of curiosity even among our Karen “friendlies.” Nonetheless, we went through the drill as good troopers, and sat low in the riverboat with covers until we nosed into the bank at a fairly nondescript exit point which had a sandy beach of a riverbend sandbar ahead of the spectacular hill of liana vines hang from towering hardwoods and a few ficus trees. We edged on up and scrambled to get across the sand and into the jungle cover as quickly as possible, and found a stream bed that was the inlet into the river which caused the sandbar to be there. As we walked up the hill over the stream bed we could see one, and then two bamboo huts on stilt platforms over the steep bank of the stream. As we walked in further we saw a cluster of such huts, and then a bamboo outer structure over a US Army field operating room tent—we had arrived at Oo Dha Tha, the training center village for the IDP camps.

Oo Dha Tha= 18° 19.05 N, and 097° 36.59 E at 161 meters elevation.

We dropped our bags in a clinic which had a second floor of which the bamboo floor would be our sleeping quarters. We interrupted a few folk who were trying to use the Snellen chart in the clinic where we were dropping our bags, so the chart was moved outside at a somewhat more variable distance from the multiple people who were lined up covering, more or less, their opposite eye with spread fingers as they motioned to show which way the legs or tines of the “E” were pointing. Others emerged from the cooking facility which had a bamboo platform around which a number of the Karen medic trainees were gathered looking furtively at the team who were alleged to be coming to instruct them, as they also awaited breakfast—of the same steamed rice and Ramon noodles that constituted our supper last night, and would be our lunch later today. Like the other village from which we had come, the smaller village here has a cluster of huts spread along one of the upper banks of the stream and elevated on bamboo stilts. On the porches were all the sandals or clogs that were the footwear discarded upon entry. From the slats in the bamboo siding, we could see curious children staring at these new people on the block. One of the huts was explained to be the house/store of a woman who kept some supplies, such as cookies, sodas, and –to the great relief of our “Army on the March” seeking out Happy Hour—Chang beer.

We had brought extra fuel both for the boat and the generator which was explained is here for turning on about a couple of hours each evening, but it had had some problems, so as Bob Thoman had spent some time before going to PA School as tinkering in construction, he would look over later what was keeping the generator from working well.

With almost no further delay, we walked up stream passing the large roofed over US Army OR tent, and came to a common meeting house—two levels of bamboo flooring on stilts where all the medics were assembling. One of them was a young man who had a below-the-knee prosthesis, a presumed land mine injury. Another was wearing elastic gauntlets on each arm, a presumed treatment to prevent burn contractures. Half were women, although the “seniors” who were approaching their six month of training were all but two of them males. The two others were a woman we called “Mickey Mouse” despite her quiet and concerned demeanor, simply

because she was wearing a Mickey Mouse tee shirt. She was later described as Monel, the one who had also been at Dr. Cynthia's for training and she was quite competent.

Our tee shirts had Team Rubicon on the front, and on the back in six different languages "Medic"—but that would likely be false advertising, since the only one with a license is I. Bob had a scrub suit top with "Trauma Bob" written on it, and is the PA who works in Chicago area emergency rooms. Zach Smith is a fire fighter in the Los Angeles system but works principally as a life guard on the LA beaches. Big Jeff Lang, who was Jake Wood's classmate in the University of Wisconsin where they played football, is a fireman in the Milwaukee fire department and has never taken the paramedic course, but is interested in trying to. Kevin Whitcomb has a first name of "Glen" which is never used, and he is the photographer who is recording this trip after having taken several mission trips to Peru with Cardio Start, and is a former "Jar Head" Marine. He is quieter than the rest and said he is eager to learn and to participate in this and any other mission I might be running. That is us—TR—on a Medic Training Mission to the Karen people, with two others with us here—Rob Swain, ex-Hollywood now in an organization he calls "Fourth Wall Relief" and Gigi, Head of the KDHW.

The group started up with introductions, and the Karen medics produced a guitar and started with a song that they sang—half patriotic and half religious, as Gigi interpreted it for us. In introduction, Zach said he had two little girls named Victoria and Constance, and that they were twins in Los Angeles, and offered to show them photos. Gigi will only be here for today, but we put him through his paces, as he translated every word I said. I started with an overview of what we hoped to accomplish here with them, from the PHC rules of GOBI, and the Clinic rules of treatment of common tropical diseases and the third level of hospital care which required a facility with five bed inpatient capacity as well as refrigeration beyond the EPI cold chain for potential blood banking and transfusion, and anesthesia supervised by an advanced degree such as a nurse practitioner, and capable of doing just five emergency operations. They could do NO elective operations and three of the emergencies related to "Safe Motherhood., starting with C-Section.

I gave a review of the ABC's of trauma care and life support, blunt and penetrating injury, and the mechanics of a chest tube, since each would insert one before the course was finished. I promised I would later talk about suturing and wound care, sterile technique, open and closed gloving, and surgical technique, hand signals and "how to" fix common problems all of it done first in this dry lab setting and then in tissue with an anesthetized pig. After a break by their request, I reviewed the tropical illnesses dealing with parasites and their management, pointing out that the only reason for me to distinguish one entity over another is if it makes an immediate difference in treatment. I had hoped to spread around the instruction and introduced the other TR members, but everything in the core of this curriculum was also all new to them, so they were doing their best to learn it all at the same time as the Karen medics who had actually already had some clinical experience.

We went through all the paces, and had Gigi translating all of it for a busy day for him. We could already identify the higher performers in the group, and could separate a few of them into force multiplier teachers. We did that in smaller break out groups and had them going over physical exam techniques with the “seniors” teaching the “juniors”—going through the drill on vital signs and quick assessment. For the break out sessions I had tried to have the other team members be instructors, but they are still more in learning than teaching mode. As firemen, the objective is “scoop and run” to an area of higher level of care. But there is No “running “to” anywhere here so this is going to have to be that “higher level of care.” For treating, and even more for “teaching to treat” perhaps firemen +/- paramedics are not qualified for that. For the paramilitary types it seems that “going in” is the objective, and then that is the end of it rather than what is to be done once “in.” We got in, and what we are now going to have to do seemed an anticlimax to all but one of our team. A couple were even speaking wistfully of trying to “go in” to Pakistan and its flood victims, while we were here at “destination travel!” I asked about typhoid and cholera treatment, and drew a blank.

I can see that it is a good thing I am along here, for the rescue of this mission, and perhaps, the continuing jokes about the “most interesting man in the world” —now substituting Chang beer for Dos Equis—is not just sloganeering, as the team is quite dependent on the anthropologic, medical, ecologic, and other information such as the Buddhist traditions and the historic origins of the peoples and conflicts in post-colonial Indochina.

Our big distraction is the logistics of the “Com.” Most of the time is spent getting brief messages or photos up, censored and approved, and then uplinked through the satellite. Whoever thought this was a simple jungle proof technique is more enamored of technology than I. It seems that most of the rainy season days it is too overcast to get a signal to the satellite. In addition, the battery life on the B-Gann is short. And it has to be positioned, such as on the top of the muddy hill overlooking our bamboo hut, so there are frequent trips up the hill under the hope of a sunny patch of sky to arrive there in the rain for another uplink failure. This is a larger burden than anything else we are doing, and we do not even have anything urgent to report.

A fundamental mis-match is going on here, among eager participants all of whom have to learn quickly. The medic trainees of the Karen are reticent about doing anything aggressive and invasive and yet will be called upon to do so in circumstances we are identifying for them—like insertion of an airway, IV or chest tube. The wannabe paramedics are eager to be seen doing something that they can report they have done—such as chest tube insertion—yet will never be allowed or authorized to do so in the world in which they will be functioning. I have to encourage both and dampen the invasive aggressiveness of one group and enhance the other. And each are a bit foggy about what constitutes an emergency for which an early aggressive intervention is needed, and what is a chronic condition that should be managed conservatively and not in a meddlesome way. The distinction is NOT academic, and is the reason that wisdom from some longer experience pays off and we cannot accumulate a lot of experience in a week of tutorials.

There are quite a few contradictions in this Medic Training Mission in which we are allegedly training a Karen group through inexperienced firemen who have to learn more quickly than the others and at the same time. There was quite a bit of “English to English” translation, often with inaccuracy popping in to interfere with the message. The medics were already more clinical than the instructors. There is every good reason to be simple, but not simplistic; for example in explaining why breast feeding is a good idea because it conveys passive immunity, in contrast to the active immunity of the immunization shots of the EPI—this went through an English-to-English translation to be expressed as “You know, just the sam3 way as antibiotics make you immune to infections....” If I stopped to correct this misinformation, it would undermine the confidence of the medics in the team and would discourage the participants further from having to “Go back to the drawing board” because of an inadequate fund of knowledge to be in a position to teach a second level order of health care.

The one who got the most of out of this full lecture day was Gigi from translating all of it, having some of it taped, and understanding it to give another session with the curriculum he just learned will be a real “force multiplier.” With some patience, I continued on when I had intended to turn over much of it to the others such as in the techniques of airway, or IV, sterile technique, etc. It was a long day for some, but our own TR team was astounded at how much they had learned so concisely, having had essentially no exposure to tropical medicine or efficient high volume patient flow screening.

At the same time there are some things that with another expertise which I do not share I can learn a lot as well—for example, Kevin’s’ using his MAC laptop to sharpen images before getting them approved to be uplinked to the TR donors back home. We got along well here in a very mixed group and could tell stories and hear about the experiences of working lives in everything from the firehouse routines to old army war stories.

For one purpose, I hope that the B-Gann which is once again getting carried to the muddy hilltop might work this time, since I have a simple two word message as the only one I am intending to send out—it is to Kacie in Gainesville for tomorrow morning: “Happy Birthday!”

10-AUG-A-7

**OUR FULL DIDACTIC PRESENTATIONS TO THE INTACT MEDIC
TRAINING GROUP IN MONSOON RAIN ON THE BAMBOO LONG
HOUSE AS WE TRY TO COMMUNICATE THROUGH VARIABLE
TRANSLATORS TO TEACH BASIC CLINICAL SKILLS**

August 8, 2010

We have done the full Monty today to complete the course I had in mind when we started as far as the lecture format would allow as we now move into the more practical component parts. After discussing wound healing and all the major parts of the curriculum of what they are likely to see each day in the “Clinic” level of development, as compared to the PHCC level (Primary Health Care Center) which is the GOBI parts of primary care_ Growth charting, Oral Rehydration, Breast Feeding and Expanded Program in Immunizations.) The Clinic is supposed to diagnose and treat the most common causes of mortality—DAMMM---and Morbidity which is the NTD review. The mortality is that of Diarrhea, Acute Respiratory, Malaria, Measles, Malnutrition, and the morbidity is of Neglected Tropical Diseases ---Schistosomiasis, Soil transmitted Helminths, Filariasis, and Trachoma.

We moved into the kinds of illnesses that any Clinic attendant would be seeing in a standard tropical health care centers and how to manage them, such as the joint pains of arthritis, the abscesses and cellulitis, the URI’s and ear infections, and the ones they already know how to differentiate, such as malaria. They have “Paracheck” here so that it is specific for Plasmodium falciparum, and if it is negative in someone with the fever and signs of malaria, and a thick blood film is positive, that is a P. Vivax. They seemed to understand the concepts, but it would often be spoken as clearly as I can make it with few modifiers and simple sentences, and then one of the firemen of our team would “get it” and re-utter it, inserting a “translation error” the translation in this case going from English to English, placing a bigger burden on the communication than that of the English to Karen.

An example came when I had said that the three reasons for breast feeding that should be remembered are that the 1) nutrient is balanced, sterile and available as needed, 2) that the colostrums in breast milk confers passive immunity for the first months of life; and 3) the ovulation inhibition from nipple stimulation contributes to birth spacing and may help prevent Kwashiorkor. I pointed out that that term Kwashiorkor meant “second child” and it is not the second child that is the one who suffers from protein calorie malnutrition but the first, since the arrival of a second child displaces the first one from the breast and now the first child is at risk for the malnutrition that is characterized by the blondish discolored hair, skin rash and edema.

That was all fine until a misunderstanding was intruded by a re-translation by Zack in answer to a question. What is “passive immunity”? I tried to explain that immunity was a relative resistance to environmental illnesses and that it was made possible by an exposure to antigens and then the antibody production made by a mature immune system. The active immunity requires an immune processing system which occurs later in child hood after the period in which the infant would typically be nursing. Until that time, the antibodies are already made by the mother and secreted into breast milk. SO that the early “immune cover” of the infant is borrowed from the mother through the colostrum obtained through nursing. It was going well until Zack explained Immunity---“You know, like antibiotics make you immune to infections.” It would be very confusing to them to “Correct” the English to English “translation” before the further process of translation into Karen over which we have no control since we do not understand what it is that is being said in Karen. This is why the better control I have in teaching across this large a gulf in understanding between the paramedics and Karen medics and me is to engage them in some practical exercise, such as the processes we will put them through tomorrow in gloving by open and closed technique, and starting iv’s and the tying of knots and the passing of instruments and the management of sharps.

“WEARING THE COLORS” TEE SHIRT POLEMICS AND POLITICS

I have made a brief review of the tee shirts I see among the more traditional Karen costumes I see in front of me. Almost all the participants are carrying a fringed over-the-shoulder cloth bag with a braided strap. The women as well as some of the men have a wrap around sarong, and may also have a wide cloth belt cinched. I see above that either the brocaded cloth blouse that at least one of the women had handmade, or a tee shirt, which are the western clothing toss offs used here. Many of these are specifically made by groups supporting the Karen. One of these is a blouse that says on the back of it. “For a Million Villagers in Burma, Running is Not a Choice.” One worn by several of the males announces proudly “I am Karen” and on the back has a bilingual series of aphorisms.

One is a uniform of light blue which has a group training and development program that has apparently come and gone. Another is a statement in French, that 60 years of murder, ethnic cleansing, child soldiers and political prisoners is enough. Another is a shirt that no doubt came from Dave Eubanks which says “FBR”= “Free Burma Rangers” on the front and on the back it says a series of slogans essentially:” Love one another, love and not hate. The one young woman who seems most competent and involved I have had to resort to calling “<Mickey Mouse” since that is what her tee shirt says and portrays.

The men and women (who are all about the size of pre-teens and resemble them in occasional fits of giggles) are easy to consider juveniles, and most of our medics are selected form about the early twenties from nineteen up. They sit in groups, and the groups are mixed, with a lot of “body contact” in same sex touching and holding. When they come to any structure such as the bamboo hut in which the lectures are held, they MUST remove their sandals, and no

“inside” foot gear seems permitted. Then they assemble in sitting on the floor and touching each other. If nothing is going on during our “breaks” the young women had “tiled” in a row of fallen dominos, each resting the head on the hip or thigh of the one ahead, and in at least one example I had photographed, making a complete circle. I was at first doing a double take when I saw two individuals cuddling in the class and realized they were both male, and then saw that several others were doing so as well, more among the males than the females. They seem to be a gentle people and enjoy making a ritual of starting each of our sessions with a song they sing accompanied by an omnipresent guitar. It is often preceded by a good deal of “Oh, not me, you do it, and about six false starts before they settle on a song in which all join.” It is explained to me later (on our first day by GiGi) that the song is usually a mixture of a religious and a nationalistic patriotic song. I then heard two that were part of the repertoire of the MMI “song sheet” from the Philippine group missions.

One of the medics in the class had a flesh colored below the knee prosthesis. It is from a landmine injury and no one seems in need to explain anything about it, since he is quite ambulatory as all of them, but this is not a skill needed at the sessions in which everyone sits for long periods of time on bamboo flooring which has a notable “give to it.” At the head of the class there is a weak spot in the floor with a dip that goes down about twenty centimeters under the thin split bamboo. It would hold me, but it is good that Jeff Lang has never stood up in front of the group since he would go thought he floor tipping the scales at exactly twice my weight and mine is exactly twice that of the smallest of the group. There is another one of the young men who has long sleeve gauntlets of the kind that are typically used to exert pressure on burn wounds to prevent contractures. I am rather sure that no one would voluntarily use these gauntlets in the hot humidity of this region without a therapeutic need since as a fashion statement their discomfort level would exceed even the precariousness of high heels for a presumed lesser beauty benefit.

10-AUG-A-8

**OUR SURGICAL DAY IN THE US ARMY OPERATING TENT WITH A
“THEATRE DRILL” FOLLOWED BY A “VIVA” USING A PIG FOR
SURGICAL TECHNIQUES, BEFORE THE PIG TURNS INTO DINNER**

August 9, 2010

The birds in the rainforest canopy awakened me this morning even before any of the stirrings around me which later included chopping of wood and crowing of roosters. A few pig-type oinks were heard, but they were from the doomed pig that will be our “Viva” demo today, and the post-op procedure of a far more practical type, the castration of a shoat that had been done as I passed along the bridge over the stream and heard the squealing of an unhappy pig about to become neutered. The birds had a pure flute-like sound, but the canopy is so rich and the dark of dawn in this steep valley was enough to prevent our seeing them.

I hiked over to our bamboo platform classroom after Kevin had taken a couple of “iconic” portraits of me. This portraiture he called iconic and was going to do for each of our Tem Rubicon members. As I arrived, the gentle rains did also, so I was with the whole group of medic trainees who clustered on the floor in barefoot leisure, the young women graceful and very reticent. The young men are soft-spoken as well but the only ones who ask, questions or are in any way assertive/ One of them is wearing a homemade prosthesis from a below the knee amputation, landmine induced. Another has elastic gauntlets on both arms which are presumably burn dressings. Two have been active Free Burma Rangers and are wearing the tee shirts that announce proudly “We Are Karen” and showing a portrait of one of several interchangeable heroes who are all portrayed posthumously. On the bamboo wall divider behind my “white board” on which I have been diagramming and outlining the topics, is a “Free Burma Ranger Heroes’ wall with pictures of Dave Eubanks and his wife and two daughters who are surrounded by pictures of young men and women in makeshift uniforms who are the early medics in this Karen program. It is noteworthy that those who are portrayed are all pictured posthumously.

**TRANSCULTURAL OPERATING ROOM MIMETIC COMMUNICATION
USING HAND SIGNALS AND PATIENT-DIRECTED “COMMAND AND
CONTROL” IN AN ENVIRONMENT OF IMPERFECT CONSTRAINTS**

Intensive collaboration in an operating room in which none of a half dozen people has been born into a language common to any other one is a communication problem I regularly deal with in action. I do this/ I operate worldwide in a context of two hundred or more languages, in

which it is critical to be understood, through a mask or across a barrier of more than just language. It is for that reason that I have a mime system of how to request particular operating instruments and to pass the appropriate technique along for the benefit of the patient. I pointed out that the only important person in the operating room is the one lying down so any conflicts of contentions are going to be resolved from the perspective of what it is in the best interests of that supine and supreme interest. They seem to understand that, and I point out that as the ranking professor of surgery here, I am the most expendable since they will be here next month when I am not and they will have to continue these technique in the interests of those patients and the ones we can only imagine right now and cannot see because of limits in our imagination or in the barriers of the rainforest and environment around us. For a poor substitute, we will bring forward a pig. The pig at least has a pulse, and breathes and even squeals and will require anesthesia. And so after a full morning press on how to operate in a crisis situation through hand signals that are clearly understood, we can go to conjoined effort toward the benefit of the patients who is the single interest who brings us together.

I used the hand signals to show the priorities' we had to concentrate on in helping the patients and Bob Thomann was my assistant, Then we had Bob "operating" using the hand signals and the suturing of sponges to be assisted by one of the A Team medics and each was rotated in turn until every one of the 32 had served as operator and as assistant with a tutorial grilling them on the "Why" of the "What" they were doing "How." It seemed to be the hit of the didactic tutorials so far and is the kind of pre-clinical exercise that they seemed to think would be most helpful. It is now break time for our afternoon session which is forthcoming, and then the pig is brought to us, for his first role as a patient, and a later role as dinner.

FROM CLOUDED THEORY TO IMMEDIATE APPLICATION OF TECHNIQUES FOR WHICH DIRECT CONNECTION WITH LOCAL ILLNESS CAN BE SEEN

They really got into it as we opened it up more and more to small group participation. We had each of them doing closed and open gloving technique to maintain sterility; we did the AMBU bag ventilation of someone who needed breathing after securing their airway. We used the IV's and Ringer's lactate to infuse through the IV line we started in Rob as a volunteer. We did the suturing of gauze and then distributed the instruments to have them used for each to give each other the hand signals and then alternate as surgeon and assistants. We had them practice each part of the patient care techniques that I had said were important for operating before we even got to the OR—such as BP, IV, and Padding Pressure Points. Monitoring—such as pulse oximetry, and grounding for any electrical shock potential from any cautery or monitoring machinery. They are now into it since I believe the quick and simple and well-outlined compendia I have been giving in redundant simplicity may have got mis-translated into the confusions of such a topic as PHC vision checks on the Snellen visual acuity chart with decreased acuity due to :1 Squint (divergent or convergent strabismus and the cortical blindness

that comes about before age five to extinguish diplopia, 2) Trachoma, and the five f's and how entropion can be repaired, but the end stage requiring corneal transplants are well beyond any salvage even with corneal transplantation which is a low success operation even where I come from. 4) Glaucoma, a rock hard eye often associated with headache and should be checked for on general exam if decreased visual acuity is mentioned; 4) Cataract, the clouding of the lens at an advanced age due to sun exposure if it did not happen congenitally or for other reasons such as traumatic cataract, 5) rare causes here, such as river blindness in Africa or Diabetes mellitus in urban environments, and even more rarely hypertensive episodes or macular degeneration in those who are elderly. They have all taken it in, and a few have written it down, some even in rudimentary English. They also had in mind that Appendicitis is a frequent problem here requiring that a patient must be shipped out to a higher level of care center for appendectomy.

AN 'INFLICTION' OF A FIRST WORLD DIAGNOSIS ON A DEVELOPING WORLD SCENE, WHERE THE SETTING HAS NOT DEVELOPED AS FAR AS TO ACHIEVE THE FREQUENT AFFLICTION OF APPENDICITIS

This is a classic transcultural aberration. There is NO appendicitis here. Those who have come to teach them about critical emergency situations have been Americans or Brits who are relating to their own emergency rooms when they caution them about right lower quadrant pain which "may well be appendicitis"---Yeah, maybe, back where you come from, but here, for God's sake! The diet and demography is not remarkably different than it would be in an African village in which appendicitis is simply unknown. But the template of the "if this, then that" primer on common emergencies comes from another world in which appendicitis is a disease of constipated, over fed populations who have a diet high in energy and low in fiber and have a large number of sociocultural differences. So, the paradigm of "RLQ Pain=Appendicitis" has been passed from one world to this one as a knee jerk which is in no way translated in reality. Therefore, they were curious for me to explain appendicitis, since the last five people who were evacuated from here to a higher level of care (except for the four day old baby boy they sent to the Reproductive Health Care Center where we had stopped the first night and the child I had seen for what was an easily reducible hernia which resolved almost immediately his abdominal distension and he continued lively and drinking formula all the while) ---each of these five patients spent four days in transfer to the higher centers of care. Each of these five patients was diagnostic mis-placed persons. They were here in the wrong place with the right signs. In the USA they may actually have had reasons to be suspected, but that would be by people attuned to finding a disease that is not present here. The diagnosis of Appendicitis may have taken place in Burma a time or two over the past centuries, but most likely by the ex-pats who had lived most of their lives in London or Los Angeles and certainly at least in their urban centers such as Rangoon. Different life and different lifestyle---wrong place on the map, even if right spot on the body.

So, if any of these faux appendicitis patients really had the disease, the appendix would have burst long before they got through the multiple boat transfers and cross mountain walks to get to the care centers where such disease is not unknown. Of course, they did not, and when they got there the problems of the “amebic typhlitis” –to use the classic term for the invasive form of amebiasis that effects a cecal colitis from invasive amoebae. One of such patients was actually seen in our first evening’s inpatient rounds who had an amebic abscess in the liver. That was seen by ultrasound (erroneously called an “X-Ray” by Satu, and he knew about the disease entity. But he also had asked about appendicitis since several patients had been referred out through him, none of which, so far as he knew, had any appendicitis proof after all the hassles and troubled expenses of getting them evacuated.

So this is an “infliction”—a diagnosis, inflicted on the developing world by the first. Not that a number of areas are not doing their best to get to the point of development in which they, too, can develop the unnecessary diseases of the self-inflicted. But it means that the medics in training have been encumbered with a first world diagnosis to be urgently ruled out and emergently treated when it exists only back where the instructors came from and not indigenous to the culture being “helped” by such instructions. I had checked with Gigi about the evacuees, and he agreed none of them ever were operated and one of them ever had appendicitis, and each got better after the passage of the long referral distance. SO, perhaps we can use this arduous evacuation as a standard form of “Minimally invasive/maximally disruptive treatment” of acute appendicitis. This disease epidemiologic patter may change over time and with development, but right now I advised them to consider appendicitis as a name and entity they can drop from their notebooks, memories and lists of “Rule Outs” until that glorious day of development dawns back in the rainforest here which is less than easy to get to—by both development and appendicitis. It is also a good chance for the first world to learn a bit about this other world of tropical illness and its more consistent patterns and amebiasis which they might otherwise not see in places with plumbing.

**EVEN THE RETICENT WOMEN OF THE MEDIC GROUP NOW ARE
“INTO IT” USING THEIR SUPERIOR SEWING TECHNIQUES AND
FINESSE IN GLOVING TECHNIQUE AND MORE CAREFUL TISSUE
HANDLING, NOW HOLDING THEIR OWN WITH THE MORE VOCAL
MALE MEDICS**

But, after this theoretic discussion of possibilities in diagnosis and variations in technique, we are now showing that the immediacy of the techniques of operating under sterile technique and suturing incisions and wounds and using our IV’s and other patient support materials for safe surgery, they are all interested in participating on the final lap of our training program as we do the “in vivo” lab course. At least it has been graduated from the theoretic through the applied with a chance to practice in this Burmese training program on how to do certain techniques even if it takes a very much longer time to know when and why and whether

to do them. It is a rule of thumb that “If you do not know what to do, Do what you KNOW how to do!” which is why there were patients in Haiti who came in with amputation stumps who had the ablative operations that were known---an amputation is an “overadequate” operation for the treatment of most open fractures, notwithstanding. The restraints needed, however, it might be noted, are less required for the indigenous medics who may eventually be called upon to perform them, than for the “visiting firemen” who will be specifically excluded from ever doing them in any other setting, most particularly in the home front.

Right now, there is a scene that is photogenic enough for a scene to be re-played as the pig is being brought down to the stream to get washed in preparation for his several operations— or, in the alternative, a pre-terminal operation, his baptismal last rites.

THE PIG LAB IN THE US ARMY SURGICAL TENT: ANESTHESIA, PATIENT MONITORING, INCISION AND SUTURING, CLOSURE, LAPARATOMY AND CHEST TUBE INSERTION—ALL PRECEDE DINNER TO WHICH THE PIG IS INVITED TO JOIN IN WITH US

This is the highlight of the course as far as most of the participants which includes all 32 of them. The pictures and video should show it. The excitement as the medic trainees were actually tying their first knots and suturing their first stitches and passing instruments as the assistant or giving incremental anesthesia in Ketamine as the pig was monitored. It took altogether too long to get the pig down and out. It required the first steps, securing an IV line, and after multiple failures of the attempts that included Intraperitoneal anesthesia injection, it was only after the medic trainee we have been calling Mickey Mouse because of her tee shirt got an ear vein inserted with an iv cannula and it was just then we got everyone to do an abdominal incision and the closure of it. I then helped them do a laparotomy and did as little as possible myself, except to protect the bowel so it was not opened to contaminate our dinner potential. I stood by as the numbered off teams came forward in turns to do the assistant, scrub nurse, anesthesia monitoring and all other functions in turn, so everyone of the 32 was involved as surgeon and assistant as well as all other roles.

At the conclusion, we gave a stab pneumothorax to the right chest and inserted a chest tube after needle aspirating the tension pneumothorax we had demonstrated previously on the white board. The whole of the day into the evening was spent making sure that every one of the trainees had all the hands on experience that they might want and could profitably use. So, as each did, we opened the right chest for the terminal event to the pig, itself a useful observation, that one could live with a pneumothorax on one side, but that bilateral pneumothorax or a tension pneumothorax on one side (which is the same thing) is lethal.

We concluded our practicum, and the team went down to the stream to clean out the pig, using its viscera as a special treat for tem, although I advised that they no eat the liver as we had given a series of Ketamine injections it was metabolizing. We got the animal parceled out, and

in the absence of refrigeration in a tropical rainforest it was already parceled out into “baby back ribs” and cutlets, with the chitlin’s saved for those who favor them more highly than our team. Our breakfast for the following morning was the usual rice and noodles with a fried egg usually topping it off—that is the staple for us morning noon and night. But, now we had a special pork cutlets gracing the tops of our rice piles which is a good change—and everyone looked to see if I partook. As they saw me relishing it, they gave up their reticence worrying that they would fall asleep form a Ketamine overdose and we all enjoyed the pig yet another time around!

10-AUG-A-9

**A SLOWER FINAL FULL DAY AT THE OO DHATHA VILLAGE AFTER
YESTERDAY'S FULL COURSE AND "PIG LAB" WITH THE
CELEBRATION OVER A FRESH PORK DINNER FROM THE
"PATIENT" THAT EACH HAD WORKED ON IN OUR PRACTICUM;
THE AFTERNOON SPECTACULAR RAINFOREST TREK THROUGH
THE BURMESE JUNGLE TOWARD HEADWATERS OF OUR STREAM**

August 9, 2010

We are in slow motion this morning after the bird song of dawn had awakened us along with the chopping of wood to build the fire under the remnants of our "patient" from yesterday's serial operations in which every one of the medics participated. Bob is concerned that we have "blown our wad" and clearly will have nothing more to say or teach now, having done the pig experimental OR techniques. I doubt anyone who knows me would consider that we have run dry on any of the lessons still in the reservoir, so I am not pushing forward as they are making many alternate plans for what to do with this day as the 32 medics would be put on hold if this were the case. But this gives me a chance to fill in a bit of the blank spaces which are not capable of being typed up on a daily basis since I am a pivot around which much of this is happening so if it looks like I am "taking ten" things all around would come to a stop.

We are telling stories of a series of past missions, such as the first one that got the Team Rubicon started which was only a few months ago in Haiti. I asked if they would not mind adding a few more items in this one, which certainly does not lack for exotic locale, and hardly needs the re-hashing of the early start up missions as we have 32 live candidates to be dealing with the daily problems which might intensify at any moment. It is said that the first camp we had visited on arrival right after crossing the river into Burma is the most likely thorn in the side of the SPDC and is so large as to be nearly "inviting" attack. As a consequence, many of the more experienced Medics are there, including Satu the one who took us around on the first night to show us his five inpatients and described to us the usual run of fifty to a hundred outpatients for the camp of 5,000 IDP potential patient populations.

The names are hardly poetic but have a lot of irony laden upon them. The Burmese Army Security forces through which checkpoints we have passed "under cover" looking like sappers in a saboteur ring with babushkas are named SPDC. State Preservation and Development Council, of the military junta is the new name of the Burmese thugs who are here to suppress the Karen. It formerly was SLORC =State Law and Order Restoration Council. The names must be made by a PR firm and the quality of their message perhaps reflects the huge

expenditure warranted by the ultimate sensitivities of military juntas generally to world and public opinion.

THE FINAL CLINICAL SESSIONS OF OUR WRAP-UP TRAINEE PROGRAM

I went to review our whole course for the didactics, the pig lab and the patients for all 32 of the medic trainees at the bamboo hut where we have been holding our training. I went over the cardinal signs of inflammation and distinguished some of the inflammations from the sub group which are infections. I then outlined the differences people are seen in clinic for disorders that are 1) Congenital, 2) Acquired, e.g. traumatic; 3) Inflammatory; 4) neoplastic and 5) Other, and said that almost all of these could be distinguished by two questions, duration in time and presenting symptoms. In going over the cardinal signs of inflammation I even gave them in Latin the 1) Rubor (redness); 2) Dolor (pain); 3) Calor (heat) 4) Tumor (swelling) and then went through the time course, such as the Rule of Sevens for a Cervical Mass: 1) Seven Days =Inflammatory; 2) Seven Months= Neoplastic' 3) Seven Years= Congenital

I pleaded with them to be very CONSERVATIVE with anything that is chronic and manageable by means that are medical, and to be very AGGRESSIVE for any critical life-threatening event that has a surgical management that is CRITICAL and life-saving---and I went through the details in role play about the DIFFERENCE. I emphasized that it requires JUDGEMENT and that comes from some degree of EXPERIENCE and a few mistakes that perhaps we can help them avoid repeating. We broke into smaller teams of the beginning trainees led by the senior medics and had them go through the complete evaluations of a mock patient and then determine whether they fit in the urgent critical type that required immediate intervention here, or whether they had something chronic or manageable that could be treated medically or referred for further rehabilitation type of management at a higher level of care.

THE SPECTACULAR RAINFOREST CLIMB UP THE MOUNTAIN BEHIND OUR CLINIC HIKING UP THE STREAM AND WATERFALLS THROUGH THE MYRIAD OF SPECIES IN THE GREEN JUNGLE OF LIFE'S ORIGINS IN BURMA

With no more than the notepad and now-wounded Nikon camera in my pocket and the tape recorder I had carried to the last session, Bob and Rob came over from having worked on the generator and the others had gone up the mountain for the compulsory "Com" though the B-Gann which they found had been on all night and therefore had a dead battery at the time they got to the top of the muddy hill. So, the one cumbersome burden of this mission which is heavy on the SOP to make continuing contacts for PR and fund raising and awareness; with the rainy season and the mountain terrain and faulty gear or balky energy sources, this has been tripped up and is upsetting the home staff who want to keep close tabs on us. Every effort and more has been made by staff here to not only make reports but to get them edited, photos stitched into them and the upload ready for the B-Gann transmission which has rarely happened or on the first pass, and certainly not on a schedule.

The whole team was going to follow a fellow carrying a basket over his back and had a machete in his hand looking like the classic forest hunter gatherer. You can already tell I am going to love this. The alleged reasons were two, and neither turned out to be successful: we were going to hike up to where a sniper's outpost was where the protection for this post was stationed; second was the hope to get to the top of the mountain and send out a signal from the B-Gann when we could see the sky after clearing the canopy of the dense vegetation and the B-Gann was carried in a backpack to make the transmission that was planned for earlier this morning now that the battery was recharged from the solar panel. Neither happened.

I was already loving it as we cleared the top of the last bamboo hut as Zach passed me and asked where we were going and how close to it were we. I said "I am not at all interested in our destination, whatever it is, but I know that the destination is not going to be nearly as good as the journey." We passed the hut that had been the headquarters of the FBR, but it was destroyed by the SPDC in 2005. There were old large hardwood trees on which there were diamond shaped boards nailed with holes punched into them, and green shoots sticking out of them. They are targets for the KNLA Karen National Liberation Army. We passed out of the village perimeter and started out into the "forest primeval". We had our guide for a reason. Stepping off onto any trail that is someone's idea of a shortcut is sure to be mined. We were not planning on bushwhacking into the unknown and followed a guide we were calling Thrall. I learned later that Thrall means teacher, which I got called, and Thrall simply meant male or Guy. He was a small guy and had no trouble staying well ahead of us, particularly Jeff who is tipping in at 296 pounds, twice my weight and I was twice the weight of our guide. HE was interested in harvesting a couple of forest products as he went and he found them.

I had given a short "mini-Lecture" on tropical ecology when we were waiting all day at the other side of the border when still in Thailand. I had spoken of the "Ficus" or "Strangler Fig" and its pattern of survival and ghost trees inside the coalesced pattern of banyans. I had also spoken of "'nurse logs" fallen giants which were rotting and served as fertile soil for a linear array of seedlings. The magnificent flora of some of the canopy showed an almost pornographic pattern of insect genitalia with the aroma to match that would attract pollinators. They were all out here—and it was a spectacular display. Huge strangler figs wrapped in embraces around kapoks and banyans. Large flowers had dropped to the stream bed, and were delivered close to us by the stream of water coursing through the carved rock and gnarled composite rock of quartz and granite. There were steep sided canyons and dark moss covered fern grottos, We climbed straight up waterfalls, and the running shoes I had been careful to jump back and forth across the stream, then finally walked right up the middle of the stream through the water, which gathered stones and gravel into my shoes. At first I said I was "panning for gold" in my shoes, but after two of them blistered spots along the arch and I was less happy about the return trip at the level of my feet.

We were under the canopy all the way. At several points, Thrall would take a single swing at the palm trunk and drop it with a slash. He would harvest the flower and shuck off the outer layer. He put those in the basket. HE then had knocked down a palm and I went to the cut trunk and popped out the heart of palm. It is rather refreshing since it is wet and we had carried no water. It is a "heart of palm salad" We ate a couple of inner palm edibles and also nibbled on a couple of flowers. He had harvested a couple of these and then pointed out toward two of the bamboo knees from the stream undercut base of a bamboo thicket. The telescoped shoots are all compressed in what looks like an almost explosive growth

about to happen—like corn in a cornfield of Kansas that can be heard to explode into an altitude “as high as an elephant’s eye.” When we had returned I had seen a slashed base of these bamboo “knees” and his basket on his back was overbrimming. At this point the team was bedraggled and the others asked how much farther we were going to get to the destination. There really was none so we turned and trekked on back down the waterfalls and the stream bed at which point the bottom of the running shoes were about ready to stay behind. It was a good hike even if we had no destination in mind and none reached--the rainforest itself was the reason for the walk and it was wonderful. So the team had a small series of “basins” which were ideal for lying down in as a private tub and the gang hung close for a while as we watched our guide chip and disassemble the bamboo knees and past around the melons segments he had found as it grew in the understory. While the group was luxuriating in the private baths on the tiers of the stream in the burls of the rocks “Tabul” (= Thrall) had peeled and sliced the melon which was like a cucumber in the texture and we had our first moisture since starting the climb in addition to that which we had got earlier in the moistness of eh hearts of palm.

As we got back we saw a few of the patients who had come to clinic and who then stood on the bamboo bridge to have our first group picture taken as we were lined up in our TR shirts. Our guide had wanted to celebrate our final night by killing the fatted chicken, and so he bought by his prize chicken for our acquaintance and our “bonding “ before he became dinner, This was just after a rack of baby back ribs had been sent in along with the skewers on which it had been roasted. SO we have the “fruits” of yesterday's experimental animal and the guide's own chicken for our dinner tonight. Life is good.

10-AUG-A-10

A LONG DAY AND AN EARLY START AS WE PACK OUT PRE-DAWN FROM OO DHATHA AND GO DOWNRIVER TO OO WHAKLO AT AN IDP VILLAGE OF 500 PEOPLE WHO ARE PLAYING A WILD HEAD AND FOOT GAME OF “CANE BALL” AS WE AWAIT THE START OF CLINIC BEFORE OUR DECAMPING AGAIN

August 10, 2010

Oo Whaklo = 18° 17.00N and 097° 48.29 E at 196 meters altitude

We are here in OO Whaklo where we are set up to see patients and do our penultimate stop in Burma after a full session of the training program is completed in OO Dhatha. We have carried the whole medic training team with us. We have sat and waited for altogether too long, a period I had said was the kind that only ex-Army guys or firemen would consider life's standard—and not on my usual life style. But, we were entertained for a while by the kids who would peak out at us from bamboo framed windows. And a vigorous game of Kimball broke out since it is a skill they seem to have defying gravity. It is a hollow bamboo sphere that is kicked over volleyball net and the use of soccer rules—no hands, only heads and feet can touch the ball. Some of these young guys can kick higher than our tallest fellow could reach with his hands outstretched. They can spike and can do “kills” even with their feet twisted far over their heads and angle down to the other side of the net.

Four little kids are lined up watching the game with white face paint. Last night the young women who had come in with the other medic trainees came to watch the DVD on the desk computer and were wearing a white paste on their face. It is apparently a beauty statement appearing very much more like white people. They were laughing uproariously and we found out the movie they were watching is “Mister Bean”—the rubber faced mime in: England who is an import here.

I have waited for about an hour after we had unpacked and made a brief village tour, and then decided it was time to take out the laptop even though the humidity has apparently affected it as well as doing in the LED screen of the Nikon camera. The external hard drive no longer is recognized, so I cannot upload the images that I had been doing every evening as long as we have been on this and prior trips. I seem to have attracted several folk who are clustered behind me to look over my shoulder to see what I am doing on this screen since the screens they have seen are

usually for the purposes of showing movies. One set of those movies were Rambo movies and they were set in this same environment.

After waiting for no purpose that I could see for the patients to start coming, I walked up to the school, which is a number of bamboo huts on stilts, and inside the team of students were standing at attention with their arms folded in front of their chests and were asked to recite. The teacher went from one to the other and had them recite some memorized lines. I saw some of them wore face paints and had tiger whiskers and other markings on their faces. They were aware that I was there taking their photos. I also saw some more advanced students doing workbook exercises in a chalkboard exercise in algebra. They were taught by mostly young women, with a few men who were also wearing sarongs. It is a school named after some donor in Italy, and seems to be a Catholic affiliate.

When we returned to the clinic as the first patients trickled in, we were assigned names. The names were arbitrary, with no apparent useful meaning, such as I was called a tall animal with a long neck, which we tried to translate, but they did not know the term giraffe. It is not important that there may be half of the team taller than I but it seems they were doing the names on the basis of some other qualities that they saw, and anything other than a term of utmost respect would be a faux pas. I heard Zach going nuts since his name was translated “rat.” Kevin was called “Catfish” and Bob “Rabbit.” I did not hear what they named Jeff which ought to be the easiest name to assign.

Under the stilt platforms of each bamboo hut are a ménage of animal life, a lot of chickens with small chicks, and a couple of ducks. Almost every house has at least one pig beneath the sleeping quarters. There is a PVC pipeline that goes through the village and is upstream in the creek with a screen filter over the multiply perforated last segment of the pipe. The bright blue pipe comes down from the hills with a couple of spots where it is leaking under the gravitational pressure of the waterhead and it is then leaking like a soaker hose. It is led to four large blue plastic carboys which are the water reservoir, probably more important in the dry season than they are now. There is a latrine down near the stream. It is adjacent to a shower area as the “squatty potty” is in a cement slab with a water tank next to it.

A TALE OF TWO FRIENDSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THEM AND THE TEAM AND ALL THE WAY ACROSS THE WORLD

I will give two stories of the “pets” of each of the last two camps. Tablu was the Thrall of the last camp at Oo Dhatha who had been our hunter-gatherer guide up the mountain into the rainforest. When we had returned, he announced that he was going to feed us a chicken dinner from his prize chicken and did so. We invited him to join, and he was “boding” particularly to Jeff who is only four times his size. Each is involved in puerile games such as trying to pick each other up or throw each other off balance. It would be like the twins in San Antonio playing

with each other in continuous contact sports if one were four times the other's size. Jeff off-loaded much of the stuff he had intended to leave, giving it to Tablu who is now the best equipped fellow in the village. He had got excited as he was also offered a beer. He quaffed the Chang Thai beer just like the rest of us, but with no lipid stores to absorb it so he must have been a bit woozy at the next one and the one after that.

Zach had been intrigued by my resemblance to the TV ads of “the most interesting man on earth” doing dos Equis commercials, so he asked me on the spur of the moment: “What can you tell me as the most interesting man on earth?” Without missing a beat and not noticing that he had the same style camera as my Nikon in his hand at the time, I turned and said, “Well, ordinarily I do not drink beer’ but when I do, I prefer (dramatic flourish of Chang beer can) ...Chang!” “Stay thirsty, my friend!” This seems to be able to crack up each of the team when it has been called up, perhaps a possible sponsor for all such future TR Missions!

By midnight, Tabul was still wandering around and getting more things to share—one of which was a rat he had shot with a .22 he was wearing over his shoulder at midnight when he came in to look around to see who might still be awake. He was the one whom Jeff went to awaken at four o'clock this morning, and the one that was awakened first was his wife who was not at all happy that he had been really buzzed after sharing both dinner and drinks with the team and came home tipsy as well as giving away things for which she may have had other plans, chicken included. But the bonding story that is going on line by B-Gann uplink will be the one for the “human touch” on the TR Site.

Now, in the Oo Waklo site, we were sitting in clinic monitoring the pharmacy and the patients being treated when the star of the Kimball high kicks was being asked questions by Zach. He was wearing a heavy impermeable coat he had borrowed despite the fact that he had just played several hours of Kimball and that it is very hot. It is also his only shirt right now so he declined to part with it, as a fashion statement with some designer label on the synthetic material. He is a dude with red hair and a fast smile at age nineteen.

When asked whether he had any family, he has an older brother twenty one and a sister four years older than that. What village are they from?

It turns out that village is Iowa City! His older brother and sister were taken in to the Sobla Kee in Karen State an hour north of here. They were processed in May la which is an IDP camp and were resettled by a church group in Iowa City as he is unaware of an address or phone number which we had offered to communicate through the B-Gann. Bob Thomann is from an Iowa farm about an hour from Iowa City and the first thing he will do on return from this trip is go to a family reunion back on the farm and he might carry a letter which we encouraged him to write right now. If he can be found through the Karen resettlement agencies at Masiernge in

Thailand on our return there tomorrow, we can have the photos of his spectacular high kicks at the Kimball and the letter he may write hand delivered by Bob who may drive on over.

This is the kind of connection that often precedes advice that soon followed. “You know, you should try to go to school here and study chemistry and biology since those will be requirements when you try to get to the USA to go to medical school there.” I have not been a participant in such discussions, of course, since I know how futile these semi-promises are, and it would be especially likely that a fellow being trained to be a medic here to help in the IDP camps here is likely to use that springboard as a “sky hook” to pull him out of this environment and into the USA for a better life—especially since he already has his two older siblings already there to get him acculturated –to Iowa City, of all places.

I had mentioned the fashion statement of a yellow face paint that was seen on the faces of several of the children in the school we visited and a couple of the young women. It was too much to bear, to have all this pulchritude around us, and not share in it. SO the members of the team having been bored by the slow pace of clinic has sought out and had face paint applied in a pattern that most closely represents “War Paint” among the Cheyenne.

We took a walk up the hill after the big metal drum had been beaten to signal the eight thirty start to clinic. As a few patients trickled in we walked up to the Italian School which is named for some Italian donor and seems to be a Catholic school. In the elevated bamboo huts, the classes are separated, grades 1-2 in one room, etc. up to junior high. There are mainly young women teachers wearing sarongs and using a blackboard and chalk to do the lessons. In the lower grades, it is a cute sight since the small children are standing on their school benches with their arms crossed in front of their chests and at semi-attention as the teacher asks them to recite some previously memorized recitation. They stare off into neutral space and recite by rote. In the senior classes the students were immersed in workbooks and were doing the algebra equations that had been sketched on the chalkboard.

We completed clinic earlier than expected, and then the big guys were involved in the kinds of adolescent games that got the girls squealing as they saw Jeff arm wrestling with the Burmese at one quarter his size. It is a bit like the movie “Four Christmases” in which each is brought to the separated family members of the mother and father, and the bone head brother tackles him from behind to show the kinds of puerile games he had started early in life and had never got over them. So as we were simply waiting, in came Gigi who arrived in a small boat with the intent of leaving at 2:30, after the Karen vs. USA volleyball game.

He brings news that there was some serious fighting up the river at a site some place out of range of us, with four deaths and a dozen casualties. If anyone is searching the net, they might be alarmed to think we could be in the thick of the action, but there is no connection between where we are and where this firefight is developing.

Meanwhile, I have got enough technoglitches to terminate several programs including eh photojournalism. The humidity has got to the laptop and the external hard drive is no longer recognized in any of the three USB ports. So, I can no longer upload pictures after editing nor send out the messages I have typed into the laptop. The Nikon camera had a fuzzy screen LED on the first day at the second camp and it shortly developed a screen white out, which means I cannot turn off the flash nor make a movie nor a macro with it nor see what it is that I am trying to photograph. SO, it is toast. I have my back up Olympus and started taking pictures with it, but then when I put it into the card reader to have it orient the photos correctly and store them, it commands me to pt a disc into the reader--where it most certainly is . SO, I have used up most of the machinery and it is proabaly good that we are getting near the end of the mission after eh there IDP camps in Burma. We are heading back to Thailand which this group views a bit like a military R & R on shore leave and to see just how wasted it is possible to get in as short a time as possible—spending like drunken sailors.

CLOSING CEREMONY AND COMMEMORATIVE GIFT TO EACH OF US FOR THE FINAL NUMBERS AS WE ADJURN TO A VOLLWYBALL GAME—WHICH THEY WIN BY EMBARRASING MARGINS

We were called into a bamboo hut and all sat on the floor, the young women predominantly from the junior medic group along one side, and the senior mostly male medics on the other side. They came together to sing two choruses of a song which I videotaped. Then the junior woman had selected a volunteer to give a speech which Gigi translated for us saying how grateful she and all the rest were for our coming here and giving them so much and allowing us into their lives had enriched them and given hope. Much the same was said as Kevin videotaped the proceedings by the senior male medic and he added God's blessings to us. Then it was time for one of us to give a return speech. I rose and Kevin videotaped it as well. I essentially thanked them for their hospitality in accepting us and allowing us to learn from them, congratulating them for the heroes they were in carrying on as we leave. I implored them in a repetition of the two C's and two A's: be conservative in chronic illness and be aggressive in acute life-threatening illness and emergencies. Use what we have taught and the techniques described that you have now practiced to help your people and we will continue to help you, and we hope it is in peace that you flourish.

I ended by a sentence I was sure he would not translate, and said I wanted to thank Gigi for his pulling the group together and continuing to encourage them. They all applauded and he did NOT translate the part that gave him credit. Next Bob Thomann said a few of the same things of appreciation and then Kevin stood up in an emotional tribute saying that they would not be forgotten. He said he hoped that all they learned would be used in peace. Then they had another part of their closing ceremony, and came forward n song and hung around the necks of each of us a colorful yarn over the shoulder bag they have all been carrying. They got each of us

a special shoulder bag which are carried by both genders and are necessary for their medical kit as well.

We then adjourned to play a vigorous game of volleyball, which we promised them they would lose if it is the USA against the Karen—and they handily beat us bad on both matches. SO we were then fed the usual dinner—rice and noodles a with a fried egg—which had also been breakfast on the same table that then served as the clinic desk on which a small boy peed right after we cleared off from it.

It is an incredible tale for any faint hearted who did not recognize the silliness of it. We sat around at the bamboo hut as we said our goodbyes to the team who were back into playing Kimball (or "cane ball") with the high kicking expertise that had so devastated our plans of beating them in volleyball. We picked up our packs at five o'clock and got ready to leave, walking down the little stream until we reached the big log one mountain ridge before we could see the river, There we got into full "cover" looking like commando sappers from Delta Company as we approached the boat we would ride downstream. We had up front many of the first timers of the medic program many of them women. We were behind them in full cover so that no white skin was exposed as we went down stream toward the major camp here which is the first one we had visited on the first night we had spent in Burma where there are over a five thousand population of IDP's and a reproductive health center where most of the women come to have their babies with a midwifery service. Here the medics offloaded and we said goodbye as they said thank you shaking our hands in the Burmese fashion with the left hand grasping the elbow of the right hand as we shook hands with a friendliness that belied the savage appearance of our head dresses, black face masks and hooded jackets pulled over head and down below the eyes

As we pulled away from the sand, the next bit occurred; I had turned from guest visiting professor to unclaimed freight. We were distributed on the floor of the river boat with the seats removed. This meant that baggage was reassembled under a tarp in front of the boat and the large tarp was drawn up over the top of us so our heads were down and not seeming to look like knobs protruding. This is because we have to go through the SPDC checkpoint on the river bank which we had avoided before by taking the mountain climb up and over the hills to get to the river beyond a bend on our pre-dawn departure on our second day in Burma and going in "cover" upriver to get to the training center at oo Dhatha. This time we could not hike overland to avoid the SPDC checkpoint and we would have to go through it under the tarp. It was a cause of abject fear on the part of some and hilarity on others' and I thought the whole exercise in clandestine overkill was just a funny aberration. It involved the heads of the persons in front, meaning me, Kevin and Zack, were stuffed between the legs of the row behind us on the floor of the boat, which were Rob Swain, Jeff Lang and Bob Thomann. This caused quite a lot of ribald joking as

long as the sound of the swivel mounted engine drowned out the comments. We made it through the SPDC checkpoint in silence. Unknown to us, the Karen had signaled when the two patrol boats, one belonging to the Burmese forest service, and one to the SPDC had passed; and then we were once again just in our “cover” when we came to the Thai border patrol village and had to go back under the tarp again to mimic unclaimed freight making its way down river which was not challenged.

When finally we got to the takeout point, the team had to remain under masks at the river in the boat as the group of Burmese and Thai went up the river banks to establish links with the “friendlies” and get us up the bank, one at a time still under cover. We rendezvoused with the trucks that would bring us back to Maseringe, and the bags were put in the back of the pickup trucks. We took the very rough and muddy road that had been scraped out again from the rainy season avalanches that had plugged it as I bounced back and forth trying to avoid collisions inside the Toyota four wheel drive by holding onto the unused seatbelts. It was a very long and tedious drive of three and a half hours and the monsoon rain had started. It was uncomfortable and nauseating (at least I cured them of saying “Nauseous \” and “Surgeries” incorrectly) and we were all very weary when we pulled in front of the Northwest –the inn where we had emailed and had the small fish nibble on the feet of some of the group before the crossing into Burma. Immediately we went through the rain to Tukkie’s for a spicy hot soup and a river fish fried plate along with Leo Beers before coming to enjoy our first shower in over a week even if I never got the water hot. It has been a long day ending around One AM, but it has had its adventuresome side today!

10-AUG-A-11

**A FULL DAY IN MAISERENGE THAILAND AFTER LAST NIGHT'S
BORDER CROSSING THE SALAWIN RIVER IN THE RAIN, AS WE
REGROUP AT "NORTHWEST" RIVERSIDE GUESTHOUSE AND
REPACK FOR AFTER ACTION REPORTS: I SPEND THE MORNING
ATTEMPTING TO SEND A SINGLE MESSAGE, GLITCHED FOR
HOURS BY ADDRESS BOOK MALFUNCTIONS**

August 11, 2010

I am sitting on a floor pillow in the elevated bamboo platform of the Northwest, the guesthouse we had tried to stay last time on our way through Maiserenge and where we had spent a full day awaiting our transit into the Salawin River National Forest, since this place has good breakfast and email access. I cannot use it since my laptop no longer recognizes my external hard drive in any of the three USB ports, and I have been unable to upload items to the net. The others are in constant hassles getting to upload messages to Team Rubicon net so that supporters and donors are tuned in on what is happening, and I have not sent out any messages at all as they have to be edited and pass through our own internal censorship. I am freshly showered and have a full day of cleaning up the aberrations that seem to have crept into my catch-as-catch can typing into the laptop when I had power in the battery or when I can finally get a chance to edit and spell check the quick notes that are incomplete as I was in the Burma jungle.

The setting is the Monel (spelling?) river bank, as motor scooters are zipping by along the street. We may rent a group of the scooters to go to see the area later today. We must remember that the traffic is left-side drive. It is overcast in the rainy season here and looks like it could rain any time. It is a rental for 150 Bhat. The Thai Bhat is 32. B= %1.00 US. I had gone out of my way to get the Burmese currency which is the Khat (pronounced "Chat") which is not as strong as 100 Khat= 1.00 Bhat, so that I have rather big denominations of the two currencies but without much more than souvenir value. The cost of living is very low here. That may be why Rob Swain is a refugee here of his own making.

Rob was in Hollywood imaging, and had made several movies including Benjamin Button for which he received an academy award. It was at that time he also was going through a nasty divorce and he decided to come here, for almost random reasons, and found, as many GI's from the Vietnam era, that the southeast Asia was a nearly idyllic place to kick back and enjoy the ambience of the exotic food and spicy life of compliant young women and a year round tropical climate. He met Dave Eubanks who was the Missionary Kid whose father still is

trekking through the jungle rainforest. They had fallen in love with the peoples here and have done what can be done to assuage their oppression. Rob founded his own “Fourth Wall Relief Foundation and got connected to Gigi, the Director of the Karen State Department of Health and Welfare. Rob supported the development of the 32 medic trainees that I have been teaching over the past week who have just layered on us their gratitude for coming to help them and given us the cloth shoulder bag souvenir as a token of their appreciation and a reminder for us to return. It is these layers through the KDHW and Fourth Wall and FBR (Free Burma Rangers==Dave Eubanks) that we are having our communiqués monitored, so that no one on the Thai government border patrol side is offended about our running through their border to assist the revolutionaries of a neighboring sovereign state, nor the SPDC, the Burmese military, is unaware of our actions, and the KNLA (Karen National Liberation Army, the political branch of which is the KNU= Karen National Union) whose oppressed peoples we have come to help. We will meet with a fellow named Roger, who is on the Board of the Karen group above Gigi on the KDHW, to give an after-action report with recommendations. This may be a bit late in the game to give this outline, but it has only slowly become clear to us as we have gone through the various security and secrecy agencies in order to get into the Burmese jungle to help the Karen through this clandestine backdoor porous border.

A FULL DAY OF FULL TIME TECHNOGLITCHES—THE FRUSTRATION OF DEPENDING UPON TECHNOLOGY OF INSTANT GLOBAL COMMUNICATION

In this comfortable situation as the rest of the team went off on the motor scooter rental ride around the area to see the sights I had intended to check out with them, I have been locked into an interminable technoglyph series from which even experts have been unable to rescue me. It began with the discovery at Zach’s house when I was trying so hard to get access to my email account and could not since it seems the new GWUMC web page is not compatible with something called Google-Chrome—another rank order of access connection. Then it seems my address book could not populate the address after it had recognize3d the full name and I would have to type I all over in the exact same fashion as was on display. Then I made a spelling error, and when I tried to send something to Bill Barrett and added only one “r” in Baret, it froze and lost the message. Kevin has been very patient and tried to rescue me from the repeated glitches, but his best shot has been to send from his account the un-spellchecked and un-sent message, the first I can do since the trip began, since all access through my laptop or through the other machines seems polluted by some technodemons that have frustrated everything I have attempted to send out. So the real time reporting of this adventure had been a subject of some concern regarding censorship and access to the ability to send it and that was the purpose of the B-Gann satellite. Trekking up and down the muddy rainforest hillside to the mosquito infested summit to try to see if there was 1) a clear enough sky to transmit through the satellite, 2) battery power enough to have the B-Gann and the laptop send the message, and all of this in time for the US readers to upload the messages and photos which are supposed to be uplinked in real time to

the Team Rubicon site, after passing through three levels of censorship as to where we are, what we are doing , and who it is that we are dealing with. It has been difficult. I had one message only to send out, and that was from the B-Gann via satellite—"Happy Birthday to Kacie!" from the Burmese rainforest. I now realize that the aol.com address for Donald and family is "invalid" according to the laptop here at Maiserenge, and so no message has been sent out—not just to Kacie or to Donald, but to ANYONE. All the efforts which were expended to get messages, videos and photos out of the jungle are now compounded here in what should be access heaven—but there is a diabolical series of glitches that have totally blocked a full day's efforts to transmit a message. I just want to ride this wheel, not to invent, develop and perfect it, and the frustrations of spending more time doctoring the system of communication than the patients is absurd. So, I have attempted to do a rough outline to be edited and spellchecked later, since it seems I am doomed to NEVER send out any real-time messages despite all the time and equipment invested in this effort, even with a team of wire-heads helping me and finding the same blocks to communication that I have come hard against. I had been uploading my pictures into a brand new external hard drive brought along for this trip which is also the unit in which I have been organizing the texts herein. It turns out that the perfectly functional external hard drive can no longer be recognized by any of the USB ports so that is out for any help. The devil lies in wait in each and every one of these micro-chips and it all needs a good exorcism.

10-AUG-A-12

**A DAY IN TRANSIT FROM MASEIRENGE BACK TO CHENGMAI BY
BUS FOR A FINAL RE-GROUPING AND A NIGHT OUT IN CHENGMAI
TO SEE THAT BOXING PRIOR TO DEPARTURE VIA BANGKOK FOR
THE FOLLOWING DAY**

August 12, 2010

I got up early and loaded the titles of the dozen chapters into the Index chapter of 10-AUG-A-1 to be ready if and when I finally get access which I have not been able to do to date. On Kacie's birthday we had lugged the B-Gann satellite uplink up the muddy mountain top to get to a clear patch of sky in the perpetual rains and cloudy overcast of the rainy season. It had been frustrated for the twenty four hours before, either because of the cloudy inability to penetrate to the satellite, or because the B-Gann itself was turned on and exhausted its batteries. Like all technology, it is supposed to make your life easier. But it has seemed that the most annoying part of this trip has been catering to failing systems of communications to send out mandatory reports that are still to be censored so that no specific information can be transmitted that might reveal the specific person, place or activity other than "somewhere along the Thai Burma border some folk from Team Rubicon are performing some kind of training to help prepare Karen medics for some unspecified eventuality which might confront them from some unknown cause." SO, my rather specific chapters of my own journal are not uplinked nor should they be posted for attribution of quoting. But I also figured that this should be like every other one of my medical missions, open to the reality of clear truth and no figments of any imaginations let loose in imagining us to be involved in clandestine cloak and dagger cold war operations with counter espionage intent or gun running or smuggling or CIA Intel of the Hum Intel variety I had reviewed when I was in the "Close" for the DNI (Director of National Intelligence.) I am a very "open source" and I tell each side everything I might about one or the other, so long as all are using this for peaceful; purposes and not to seek advantage over any "other." That is what "education" is—and especially the most ideal of all bridges to be built across differences among men and women that can be artificially drawn to promote misunderstandings. Secrecy at best and disinformation at worst are anything but conducive to trust and open appreciation for the human condition and what we might be able to contribute to mitigating the burden of life's inevitabilities at best, and the contrived hostilities at worst.

One of the tee shirts worn by a young woman here looked like a runner's tee shirt. On the back of it is said, "For over a million Burmese Villagers, Running is Not a Choice". I had

seen the piles of rotting clothing with interspersed skulls and bones in the killing fields of Cambodia, Rwanda, Congo and Somalia, and now I have seen the photographs of similar mass executions of dissident folk who are ethnic or religious separatists, or political oppositions'. It seems only right that the helpers who are coming in to assist those who are going to have to remain inside to fix these problems should be open and not get involved themselves in trying to get an edge in superior force for similar armed defenses—I had cited the Pulitzer prize winning Philipp Caputo and “Acts of Faith” on the story patterned after Emma McCune on the do-gooder humanitarians who seem to slip down the slippery slope from giving aid, to running guns and escalating the violence of one side over the other.

So, the unvarnished observations I have been making and recording here are as I see them, and not edited or censored from my photojournalism nor slanted since I am not looking for something I want to find. Some folks have an agenda and search for evidence of some theme and if it is not apparent, that rarely stops them, since they just simply make it up anyway. I am not an untutored Tabula Rasa, but as a genuine “Hunter Gatherer” I am foraging and collecting these observations, not cultivating them for a polemical purpose. There has been suffering among an otherwise gentle people here, and it seems a disservice to make them into something worse in order to defend them. It was like the Murder of Gentle Land—a book that had come out during my visits to Cambodia during the era of the Killing Fields. I am not looking for Stinger Missiles to even the playing fields—although I must confess if I were under siege and being strafed by the Antonovs of the GOS, I might like to do what I could to bring these warplanes out of their higher ground platforms from which they were inflicting greater damage with a machine that might have done greater good

For official notice of what has been going on, in what may be the first major training mission of Team Rubicon coincident with this third ever mission in the six months the organization has been called into existence, consult the web site, on which are regularly uploaded video clips and photos as well as self-censored comments about the mission and as nonspecific as needed to let others know at whatever “need-to-know” level has been appropriate. I have collected a few spellchecked and edited chapters of the thirteen I have written along the course of the mission and attempted once again to send out a few emails attaching some of these chapters along with the caveat that it not be posted or general released. So, for example, I have forwarded the comments I have collected so far through an email I finally successfully completed this morning at the Northwest oriental sitting room, as I was parked on the floor as Forrest Gump was being re-played on the screen. I sent such a message to John Sutter who had first got me interested in Team Rubicon and his interest in possibly going on the next similar mission after he accompanies me to Ecuador in September. He may even possibly .lead a return trip, for which reason he has a need to know all about the details of the border crossing and the “under cover” penetration across national lines through the seventeen different Thai intelligence services, and perhaps even more that the SPDC and Karen maintain to monitor traffic into or across borders. As long as my interests and activities are for humanitarian purposes, I am not worried about who

knows what, but for the sake of avoiding embarrassment on any of the several sides of the contention, we will not be specific in public commentary on the observation I have made.

We have had a high level debriefing at the highest levels of the Karen “shadow government” at the home of Roger, not only the superior of Gigi of the KDHW but a man on the Central Council of the Karen people on all matters including Health and Security , the subjects of our off the record discussions. We shared coffee and I admired the carved barking deer head trophies and the giant Gaur (the forest bison—the closest to the original “Ur Ox—a wild bovid in the Burmese rainforest. In contrast to its rarity, I understand that the barking deer are plentiful and an added bonus—delicious. There were also many carved heads surmounted by the real antlers of Sika stags, which I hope to see during the season as this exotic US import is plentiful but secretive in Blackwater Wildlife Refuge swamps where I will be licensed this fall to hunt them.

We had a good meeting with Roger and team who then presented our team with a souvenir Karen flag with which we posed for portraits with Roger and his cabinet as well as all five members of our Team Rubicon participants. We returned in a monsoon rain and sat at the restaurant across the street the Riverside where Bang and her fellow workers were taught the “Shimi Shimi” coquettish flirtation first seen by Moet, Tukkier’s junior partner who had come from the same village and now works with her at Tukkier’s Restaurant, also over the same Monel River I showed the team the York Photo access site, even though I could not pull up the Flickr account and uploaded all of my photos from the Thai Burma experience to share with all the rest. It is a good thing I had also saved them on the external hard drive that Rob had given me to upload them to since Zach had “moved” rather than “copied” all his pictures and would have lost them all if it had not been for my salvage of them on Rob’s computer external hard drive.

As a couple of the team went out for their usual nighttime trolling expedition at a place that they had said was repugnant to them called the Cowboy Dream, they went back there anyway, and staggered in late, about the time I had completed the photo uploads and re-packing for tomorrow’s early departure to Chengmai by the same bus route that had got us here last week. It seems a good time for a wrap up evaluation of our experience here, and we may get some part of that done and posted on the publically available web site before our departure on the long return trip, even as several suggestions have been made about an early return trip in response to the repeated invitations to come on back and continue the training and push up to the next level the plateau I had set between clinic and hospital defining five operations, many of which involve “Safe Motherhood” and the capability of doing anesthesia as well as urgent operations. Once again, I had emphasized that the medics be “Conservative in Chronic conditions, and Aggressive in Acute emergency situations of threat to life in which they must be active even if they feel inadequate without someone with advanced expertise guiding them on site. It may take a couple of visits to bring them up to that level of confidence, and I will assist,

even if it is through “training the trainers.” Team Rubicon was started with the idea of small, fast, no drag teams to respond to natural disasters by getting in early for relief operations. That can never be adequate, especially with a small team of basic skills which may be surpassed by local practitioners who are already acculturated and have the language skills and local supply chain knowledge. This mission has made the morphing into a training mission, and there may not be enough expertise to bring them above the basic “scoop and run” methodology of emergency care, since there may not be any “higher level of care” to which to run. In the absence of “intensive care” into which to transfer the ill or injured, the medics will have to know the CC/AA I had taught them and the wisdom to differentiate the two. We have made a start.

10-AUG-A-13

**THE LAUNCH OF A LONG DAY WITH TWO NAMES AND THE SAME
NUMBER AS WE LEAVE FROM CHENGMAI THROUGH BANGKOK
AND MANILA FOR THE TRANSPACIFIC TREK ON PAL**

AUGUST 13, 2010

It is a long way to Tiperrary—or to Derwood, for that matter, as I leave from the puddles and rain clouds of Chengmai and wing along Air Bangkok, for some reason subtitled “Asia’s Boutique Airway” to leave Thailand for Manila and the long trip homeward. I am sitting next to a Dutch family as I did last night also, seeing an eight year old boy looking almost identical to the way I did as I can remember my photos from that age, and his sisters—me a generation ago and a world away.

**THAI BOXING, VIEWED FROM THE RINGSIDE EYES OF A SMALL
BOY OR AN OLDER ONE, BOTH OF THEM DUTCH, AS A MODEL OF A
STRUGGLE TO ADAPT TO INEVITABLE HARSH REALITIES IN LIFE**

We happened to be sitting in a Thai Boxing ring with special seats near the ringside watching young fighters pummeling and kicking each other into unconsciousness, a gladiator sport of a primitive yet highly stylized ritual. The fighters enter the ring with the knotted reed laurels on their head and then prance around in a dance and frequent bows to each of four cardinal directions and stopping at the corners of the ring in what seems to be a prayer. A ballyhooed French champion entered the ring and made an especially theatric deal of stamping and strutting and making like a stylized ballerino diva, and I am happy to say he was making large charges aggressively at his much smaller and more common sense Thai rival, who dodged his mighty swings and kicks, and then came inside to win on points since he continued to connect. So, theirs was the championship fight among a series of very young boys and a pair of even younger girls. But the highlight seemed to be when four of the Thai boxers entered the ring and were blindfolded and pummeled the air and anything close to them. It seemed the heaviest hits were taken by the referee, to much laughter. Ok it was a stylized deal almost as much as the WWF, except that one of the young Thai boxers was knocked out cold, and no one seemed to be particularly concerned about it, noting only that he “got his bell rung.” In anywhere in reach of a US emergency room, he would be rushed to a CT Scanner and be hospitalized for frequent observations at least overnight.

THE HEAVY RAIN OF THE RAINY SEASON FLOOD THE CHENGMAI STREETS AND MY SHOES AND SOCKS

While this was going on, a monsoon rain had pelted down. I had carried an umbrella all along but had not used it until now, and had brought it out for the trek on over to the Thai Boxing Ring. But, on the return, it was so heavy in the deluge that it was of little use, especially since I had to wade through puddles of standing water that were over my ankles, soaking the running shoes and socks that I am wearing now for the long days' journeys back home. We had also got into a Tuk Tuk for a covered motorized rickshaw ride which was of no value to protect us from the downpour which was thrown up high from passing vehicles and the wind carried not the rickshaw as well. It was actually a relief from the drenching humid heat of the afternoon, which quickly cured me of the idea that I would use the afternoon to run in the Chengmai stop.

POSTCARDS FROM 'ROUND THE GLOBE WITH SCENS OF DERWOOD WINTER OR SERENGETI WILDLIFE AND A THAI DINOSAUR STAMP FROM "GRANDPA GLENN" OR EVEN FROM "UNCLE GLENN" AS EACH RECIPIENT IS HEADED "BACK TO SCHOOL" FOR A NEW YEAR OF LEARNING NEW THINGS

Instead, I addressed and sent the postcards I had intended to mail to my five grandkids and the nieces and nephews who might be eager to see the African animals from the photos I had taken in the Serengeti and the Thai "Dinosaur" stamp that would carry them back to them as they are in the Back TO School mode starting up a new year on the arrival of the card. It is a mix since I also sent a few of the photos I had taken when Derwood was under 59 inches of snow, a different universe than the humid oppressive heat of the tropics here—and that was only six months ago in the same allegedly familiar parts of the world. So, there is a great variety on this planet, not all of it designed for our convenience, but each interesting in a way that can be adapted to--- a lesson worth learning in any environment, anywhere, from the Serengeti to the Thai/Burma border to the Piedmont of the Atlantic Seaboard at Montgomery County Maryland. Back to school is the right time of year to re-consider the limits and potentials of what this world holds for us, as I gaze over at the small Dutch boy who I once was as he is introduced to another world on a family holiday from Amsterdam as he sees Thai boxing, and may perhaps realize his life is a bit more convenient for the day to day ways of making a living and learning that life is not all put together for our convenience but requires some active accommodation in adaptation to reality—here, or in the Netherlands, or in the USA.

FLYING OUT OF CHENGMAI ON AIR BANGKOK AND THEN ON TO MANILA ON PAL

I got on this Air Bangkok flight with wet shoes and socks, and they will probably stay that way across Southeast Asia and also the Pacific, dropping a named day into the date line to hold on to the same date. I had arrived in Bangkok and had collected the bags and then checked in at the International departure level four in Suranambhumi International Airport, a large new complex with the expanded white vinyl tent-like covers like the Denver International terminal of the Jeddah Haj terminus in Saudi Arabia. It is a “tented” Quonset style airport with a downpour everywhere obscuring some of the features of the landscape, a problem probably not often encountered in the Saudi Peninsula. It was only a short interval for the connection, and we had to go to the Mabuhay Elite desk for my special card’s privileges, and I had asked that they check my 20 kg bag through to IAD on USAir even though I have to claim it in LAX customs, since if I ticket it only to LAX, the domestic terminal is a long schlep away for a hauling of the bags. At first I had been told it could not be done, and that they had no code sharing with the airlines but after I had bantered with the chief of the station who was a woman from the Philippines, but had never been to a third of the destinations I had been in the: Philippines, she made it possible to tag my bags through to IAD and Kevin’s through to Tampa by way of a transfer in IAH in Houston.

MAKING PLANS TO READ THE SECOND BOOK OF THE AUTHOR OF MY OWN BOOK’S INTRODUCTION: “FROM STONES TO SCHOOLS”

I was still packing about fifty dollars in Thai Bhat, and had intended to either buy something or convert the currency back to dollars. But, I saw the new book “from Stones to Schools” by Greg Mortenson, and as he is the author who has the forward to my own book, I bought it and will try to read it as I cross the Pacific as it will not be possible for me to hold enough energy in the laptop’s batteries.

PETA PROTESTS SURGICAL TRAINING IN AN ANESTHETIZED PIG—SO WHAT ELSE WOULD YOU EXPECT?

In the brief transfer over, the cell phone traffic was all about the Team Rubicon web page getting hits from PETA representatives protesting the use of an anesthetized pig in the surgical training course. John Sutter had texted “Pissing PETA off? We must be doing something good!” I was of the opinion that this automated response from the crazies of PETA would be self-extinguishing, and had got on the Air Bangkok flight to see a photo of the “Caged Models” all nude and locked in a cage to protest a new zoo on display in Chengmai, all a benefit for --- you guessed it---PETA—People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. I told them of my being on Larry King Live, and debating Ingrid Newkirk and her ilk. That brought us to the Ronald Reagan story of my being there at the time of his shooting and the follow-up on that and they continue to refer to me as the “Most Interesting Man in the World” which may not increase my beer commercial face value any more than its present limited market value.

ON THE PAL 731 FLIGHT TO MANILA, RE-CONSIDER THE MISSION AND ITS VALUE, AND EVEN CONSIDER RESPONDING TO THE PLEAS FOR A RETURN ENGAGEMENT—COMPLETE WITH PROMISED TROPHIES FROM THE RAINFOREST AND THE RIVERS!

I ran to the PAL flight 731 for the three hour flight to Manila and looked down as we took off from Thailand along the klongs and rice paddies once we cleared the sprawling Suranmbhumi Airport. The heavy cumulonimbus clouds of the tropical thunderheads interrupted the food service a couple of times and then I looked out my window and saw a sight that was startling in its significance for a fellow of my vintage. I was right over Vietnam, a place many of my generation had been often, and a break in the clouds showed the braided skeins of the Mekong River. I saw the whole of the Mekong Delta beneath me, and got a chance to shoot several photos of it. In the Riverside Guesthouse where we had stayed in Maeseringe before “going over” into Burma crossing the Salawin River, I saw and photographed a picture on the wall of a team of US marines from the Vietnam War era who were all struggling to hold up the large Arrawan, a finned fish of elongated ribbon like eel shaped body, and a standard toothy fish head, taken from the Mekong River, and measuring 7.8 meters in length. It was an immediate reaction as similar to the “barking deer” carved wooden trophies mounted with the antlers of the tusked barking deer which are a plentiful and delicious staple of those who are substituting on “the inside.” The carved trophies make good sense since the insects will not eat the wooden model and still the antlers and a forehead strip of hide are mounted on them. I was told by the “other Robert” I had met as we were checking out of Northwest on departure from Maseringe that they are often awarded here for excellence in something like a golf tournament or good deeds—and I determined that for my next trip I need a barking deer carved trophy mounted head. Even better, I want to go with the hunters who listen for the barking of the deer which sounds like a dog and track it down with them and get it.

The other trophy is seen in most places such as Northwest ‘lobby and Roger’s house—the KNU committee member who is the Karen boss here located in Maeseringe, are two other trophies of the same wooden carving and surmounted with the horns or antlers of the appropriate species---the forest bison I know as the rare ox, the wild "gaur;" the second is the trophy size sika stag. I am going to hunt the sika stag in Blackwater Eagle Refuge this fall as I went in with Dale Kramer to make the application for that hunt. The topic of such indigenous trophies here in Burma has been brought up by the large Arrawan I had seen portrayed from the Mekong River caught by the Marines stationed here during the Vietnam War. So, down there are still more of these eel-like Arrawan, the ribbon like river fish, and I would like to see one close up or get one myself. As we came down the Salawin River, I had seen coves and inlets or bayous from the river across which were nylon fishing line strung to a float of the plastic jug. I am told now, that these are the overnight “set lines” for the fishermen who set out baited hooks to try to retrieve hooked ribbon fish in the morning, and either the arrawan or a catfish may be caught by this

overnight set line fishing technique. So, with the amount of arms and jungle expertise that are in the hands of my Karen friends now in the rainforest, I want to hunt the Sika stag or the barking deer (or only just. Possibly the bison, the Gaur) and also set out to catch the large arrawan in the rivers of the Thai /Burma border. I will have a very unique trophy to bring back with me to the Derwood trophy room! As a substitute now, I took photos of the trophies I had seen in the public places in Maeseringe and also photographed each of the trophies in Roger's house when we went there to discuss our "after Action" report from our experience in the training mission of the medics for the Karen peoples in the IDP's and refugee camps. I had learned that the outstanding performers of our group of 37 had been assigned to and supported by the Gigi's KDHW for six months working in Dr. Cynthia' camp further form this are. I was in the Global Health Council annual convention in Alexandria when we attempted a global hook up to speak with her on video as she was under some form of house arrest by the Burmese junta so she was awarded the GHC's highest award for service *in absentia*. We are discussing a return mission here, either under Team Rubicon or as a self-sponsored mission, and if so, I would like to view Dr. Cynthia's camp and support her work, Just as always in the Congo, in Tanzania, and in Congo, I am always promised a hunt "le prochain frois" which has been the next time after the next time and that never seems to arrive. SO, now I can open up another hunting possibility a world away in Southeast Asia for further promises of le prochain frois in an areas every bit as dicey and sensitive to prowling about with guns with no one understanding that this is for the purposes of a hunt to supply the allegedly delicious barking deer for food and a souvenir for the Derwood trophy room. I do NOT believe I will be catching, preserving, and displaying a 7.8 meter long ribbonlike eel shaped Arrawan!

I have now crossed over the coast line south of Haiphong along the Vietnamese Coast—once again evoking memories of highlights of a war that none of my traveling companions are aware, since each was born after I had started doing far flung missions in such parts as Nigeria, or the early trips to Southeast Asia which were occasioned by refugee "boat people" from that war which none of them remember, but which disrupted college for many of my peers and the lives of many more.

**I AM LOOKING DOWN AT THE VIETNAMESE JUNGLES AND
MEKONG DELTA THAT MANY OF MY VINTAGE HAVE WASTED A
GOOD DEAL OF THEIR YOUNG LIVES DELIVERING ORDINANCE,
WHILE I HAVE BEEN PRIVILEGED TO HAVE DONE HUMANITARIAN
MISSOINS INSTEAD**

I am three hours from Bangkok as the PAL airbus is now approaching a much more familiar airport—the NAIA—Nino Aquino International Airport. I will be here again in January immediatly after the January Series lecture at Calvin for which the book project is pre-programmed to produce the book for that target audience. I had hoped to proceed form the MMI

in Philippines January 20—Feb. 5 and then continue westward to Sudan but the worries everyone has expressed about “instability” (I always follow with “compared to what?” of the plebiscite that will occur as mandated by the CPA—comprehensive peace agreement) may disrupt such plans for a return to South Sudan as promised to the Dinka or Werkok, the Nuer of Old Fangak and the Murle of PiBor.

I had considered alternate African plans and had sent a letter to Scott Downing about mounting a relief mission out of Chad to go down to CAR to see our friends from Assa who have been refugeed by the LRA (Lord’s Resistance Army” of Joseph Kony’s savage fighters of Ugandan rebels) including the group led by my former hunting buddy Jean Marco. As I had mentioned this to Zach, he points out that a family friend has a mission in Irian Jaya in the Indonesian area I had hoped to go to when I had discussed this with Janice Walker, but I was rebuffed by the missionary there saying that short termers are discouraged, and they consider a short term mission nothing less than six months of full time residence there to remain in essence as career missionaries instead of accepting volunteers. They had also said, in essence similar to that which I heard at Kauda in Northern Sudan by the German Emergency Doctors—“We do not want people to be expecting these services, and if we never do any operating, then they will not being us patients who require operations we are incapable of doing and caring for.” I believe both of these nihilistic positions are the epitome of self-fulfilling prophecies.

REFLECTING BACK AND MAKING FORWARD PLANS FOR THE SECOND PHASE OF MY WINTER CIRCUMNAVIGATION FOLLOWING THE CALVIN JANUARY SEREIS LECTURE THAT WILL BE THE LAUNCH OF “GIFTS FROM THE POOR”

Considering my next pass through Southeast Ailsa based out of the NAIA into which I am now heading, I will do the Northern Luzon Apayao mission for the first Philippine week in late January and then return to a favorite, the Mindanao mission of the Tiboli people. I will then either go to Africa for either the pre-planned South Sudan mission, or the possible relief mission for my Assa refugee friends in coming down from Chad through the CAR toward the conflict zones of eh LRA which is displacing the Azande from the prior areas of our many missions to Assa, Congo; OR, I will make alternate plans to do a second Southeast Asian mission into Irian Jaya of PNG (Papua New Guinea) or a return to the Thai/Burma border among the Karen. Now I have a better “cover story!” I am in hot pursuit of the “barking deer” the rainforest bison (the “Gaur”) and the Arrawan---sort of like I had been promised a “white eared Kob, an endemic species near Duk Payuel in Jonglei Province, or the many Topi I had seen on morning runs outside of Werkok. But I had been familiar with the promises of the “chase” since I am still on hold for my Bongo from the Congo!

I am approaching the Philippine Sea as the first of a couple of sunsets will be happening on my long return flights. I will return to base in the third of these nights that will be shortened by my flying into the direction of the rising sun—as I am on the overnight “red eye” I was just now at such pains to have my single bag tagged through to final destination. When I finally arrive on whatever internal clock time in the earth’s opposite time zone, I will immediately fetch up Michael, Judy and the twins to fetch them all along in Judy’s father’s van to Derwood for a picnic at home, before I continue on in later afternoon to BWI to deliver them to their flight to SAT, where I will be joining them only two weeks later to celebrate Labor Day together. My trip to San Antonio, of course, will be something less than direct and easy---I will be going by way of Goose Masters in northern Alberta Canada to hunt with Hal Simmons as promised so he can exercise his retrieving Labrador Tom on the early migration of the waterfowl flyway of the great flocks of migrating ducks and geese. But the pre-planning of the return trip via Edmonton and on to San Antonio will also include the potential visit to Blanco Texas to meet with the Betzer family with whom I had run the Kilimanjaro Marathon last month and our Safari-mates on the Serengeti and Ngorongoro Crater circuit I had so hoped to introduce to my grandkids as well. The Betzers are feeling rather “empty in the nest” since their son Chase has now gone to Colorado State to start college as Drew has entered his junior year at Auburn and they are alone in Blanco and at their Longhorn cattle ranch an hour away, which might be fun to show the twins. Another appointment during the post-Labor Day week as the twins are in school is to travel to Austin and see the further production plans of “Gifts from the Poor” as the cover design and other items being worked on in my absence as the “Front Material “ had been vetted and forwarded as the last thing done on departure from LAX—as seen in 10-AUG-A-2.

So, it may seem, things come full circle, as, of course, is the pattern as this world turns, and I am emerging from the “Dark Side” into another day of the same number but into the light, and dark, and light again. There must be a further lesson in there somewhere—perhaps you might let me know when you figure it out!

Update from the Thai/Burma border in helping train Karen Medics in three IDP camps in the Burmese rainforest August 11, 2010

We are just concluding our training mission into the Internally Displaced Peoples camps of the Karen people in the Burmese rainforest along the Thai/Burma border which is marked by the Salawin River. We crossed the Salawin River by night “under cover” to enter the first and largest of the Karen Camps at Ei Thu Tha= 18° 04.27 N and 097° 40.10 E, on a muddy climb over an 88 meter hill, a cluster of bamboo huts on stilts along a steep mountain ravine with a central stream running through it with picturesque bamboo bridge crossings. This camp has over 5,000 Karen peoples in it and it had a five bed Inpatient facility as well as a burgeoning OPD and a Reproductive Health Center where most of the Karen who can get to it deliver their babies with the help of OJT midwives. As soon as we arrived and were put up in the bamboo platform house where all take off any footwear to access the all purpose space, we went on rounds to see the inpatients. Satu, the most experienced medic of the trip presented to me a woman with *Plasmodium vivax* malaria (Paracheck negative fever with thick blood film positive) and another with a pilonidal abscess which had been drained, most of it spontaneously. Another woman had an amebic hepatic abscess seen on ultrasound scanning and was under appropriate metronidazole treatment which, of course, she was reluctant to continue for as long as needed. Another was getting antibiotics for a severe cellulitis; and all of us, patients and our five man team, were under the pandanus thatched bamboo roofs in the gentle rains.

We came and went under cover of darkness and our head coverings and boarded the riverboats we took upriver to a second landing and an approach to the training center at Oo Dhatha, at 18° 19.05 N and 097° 36.59 E and 161 meters. All thirty two medic trainees were brought to the bamboo council house for the training sessions I had presented along with tutorials and practical exercises, culminating in the drill in which each learned to incise and drain and suture closed wounds and insert chest tubes in an anesthetized pig we had purchased; afterwards the pig performed second duty as dinner for all involved. We had long hike up the stream and waterfall climbing into the rain forest with a local hunter/gatherer Tabul who had gone to harvest bamboo knees and hearts of palm in the basket he packed back

After four days of intensive training, we packed out and under cover to evade the SPDC checkpoints, climbed out of the riverboat at Oo Whaklo, our third clinic site at 18° 17.00 N and 097° 38.29 E at 196 meters in a secluded stream side village of five hundred Karen. We had an emotional farewell ceremony in which the participants stood to make small testimonial speeches on their gratitude for our help and they presented us with the woven cloth shoulder bags each of them carry for their clinical equipment as medics. There followed a vigorous volleyball match, with the experienced Americans going to show them how—as they did not just beat, but demolished us. They then demonstrated their skills at Cane ball, in which they can play volleyball like net game with soccer rules, spiking the bamboo sphere with higher kicks than we can reach with an overhead hand slam. We came across the Salawin River “under wraps” passing the checkpoints by night to re-enter Thailand and re-group here at Maiserenge. I had

recorded observations of this experience which have been prevented by technoglitches and by power shortages to be uploaded via the B-Gann which was our SOP to report our whereabouts in vague terms and our well being in specific terms. Interference in this redundant ritual were the heavy rainy season cloud cover, muddy mountain slopes to climb to send out a signal at times compatible with reception a half world away, and power shortage. In my instance the access interference of “-internet-chrome” links and address book glitches have caused failures of excessive amounts of efforts invested in attempting this communiqué, but you will receive a full “show and tell” photojournalism report upon return to better access environments.