

# harvest



Fire boat



## Flood, Rivers and Such Things

October was a bad month for water—too much of it. **Cyclone Giri** caused much damage with 140 mph winds and heavy rain, soaking much of South and Central Myanmar. Once again the Christians are scrambling to bring relief to those affected. The storm brought an 18 foot storm surge that has left about 80,000 homeless and many dead.

In Thailand, **heavy rains also raised rivers** to record levels in many districts of NE and Southern Thailand. It seems like nature is indeed raging against man.

I had a very pleasant (full but not overflowing) river experience that actually coincided with the flooding in NE Thailand. I went to **Nakhon Phanom**, (also in NE Thailand and not that far from the flooded districts,) to hold a three-day vision conference during the Buddhist “Prathat Phanom Festival.” [See the text box on page 2] On the last day of this festival more than 100,000 people invaded the usually sleepy little Mekong River front to watch the “Fire Boats.” The pastor and I went down to join the throngs and the festivities. It was really quite amazing.

Years ago this festival was marked by people releasing thousands of little bamboo boats in the river with candles (picture next page) in them to mark the (supposed) return of the Lord Buddha to earth after having spent the Rains Retreat in Heaven. They still do this, but now several enterprising people build “Fire Boats,” which are “boat floats” (as in floats in a fourth of July parade). They produce intricately designed pictures and wording by using hundreds of small diesel lamps

that are fastened on bamboo scaffolding erected on barges. The resulting fiery images are probably about 30 feet high by 60 feet long that glow spectacularly in the blackness of the night. Every so often they would also set off some very large, very beautiful and very loud fireworks. All in all it was an extreme and memorable sensory experience.

The river I'm referring to is the **Mekong River**. At this point it is more than 1/2 mile wide and divides Thailand from Laos. We could see in the far distance that the Laotians also had their own flotilla of Fire Boats parading up and down their shoreline.

[\(Click here for more pictures of the Fire Boats.\)](#)



*We had a wonderful conference in Nakhon Phanom with about ten churches and sixty people.*

[\(Click here for more pictures of the conference.\)](#)



## Pratthat Phanom Festival

Mekong River, Nakhon Phanom  
 "The most important festival for the people of Nakhon Phanom, takes place around October 31 - November 4, during the period of the full moon, and marks the end of the Buddhist Rains Retreat. This festival celebrates the time when the Lord Buddha returned to Earth, after spending the Buddhist Rains Retreat in Heaven. This day is called as "Wan Chao Lok" which means "The day the Buddha blessed

the World". The people marked their showing of respect by illuminating their boats. This then became a local custom. During this week, there are Dragon Boat racing on the Maekhong River, and the end of the festival is marked by Illuminated Boats being paraded down river for all the people to see. These boats are made from bamboo and decorated with hundreds of lights."



# Myanmar

We sent you our last newsletter from Myanmar. After that time we still had several events. I went to Mandalay for several days to be with Muana, leaving the girls (Susie and Chelsea) to teach those days at the Bethany Theological Institute. They did a fantastic job, of course.

After I returned to Yangon, the three of us spent a day teaching in Joseph's Bible school

he holds in his home. Finally we taught three days for the MBC CSSDD (the community development division of the Myanmar Baptist Conference) for 1-½ hours immediately followed each day by three hours with the Karen Baptist group. You would have to come visit us in Myanmar to get all of these tribal group divisions figured out. (You are invited, by the way!)



[Click here to view more pictures from Myanmar](#)



*Pictures from our last couple of weeks in Myanmar*



*Nov 5, we had the privilege of a visit with Coleen Rishovd (a family member) who was passing through Bangkok!*

## Thailand

### Susie's In The Boat!

When people want to know where Susie is, my frequent answer is, "She's in the boat." (Boat is Thai for church) Between women's group, teaching a ladies class and teaching two small groups of ladies dance, she keeps happily occupied.

### Tickets

We have our tickets in our pockets and we're ready to go see Kristin and finally meet Justin in Germany over Christmas!

# Scary, Huh?

What do missionaries do to have fun, meet people and stay in shape? Well this missionary likes to ride his bike and play tennis. Susie and I used to play tennis together, but since she fractured her foot I've had to find other partners. (BTW, this picture was at my first and until now only tennis tournament where I lost twice at the beginners level (smile.))



## Year End

The economic crisis is affecting all of us; as it strikes those who regularly donate to us it affects us. Our income level is substantially down this year. If you make your donations at year's end, please consider making a sizeable donation to us. There are important ministry activities we need to do but we need the funding to be able to do them. Thank you for joining

with us as you are able.

*With all of our love and appreciation!*

*Robin and Susie Steen*

You can click on this link to make donations for us directly on the Harvest website or you can send a check directly to the following address.

<http://www.harvestfoundation.org>

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## Prayer Points:

- Myanmar: Cyclone Giri Victims
- Thailand: thousands who were affected by October flooding
- Confirmation of the wholistic vision in the pastors in and around Nakhon Phanom
- That the Holy Spirit would confirm what great things he is doing in Myanmar