



A HISTORY OF THE PATTAYA CITY EXPATS CLUB 2001 to 2010

The story of the Pattaya City Expats Club began in early 2001 with three Expat residents of Pattaya - Pete Mills, Preben Hansen and Max Rommel – felt that there should be a way they and other members of the Pattaya Expatriate community could meet to share advice and information about the best way to live and enjoy life in Pattaya. Pete, Preben and Max, not realizing the strong response they would get, invited some Expat friends living in Pattaya to meet with them at the Sportsman Inn. Their small group, meeting at the Sportsman Inn, grew very rapidly, and it became clear that a larger venue and a more structured meeting format were needed because the number of expats attending the meetings was growing so quickly. This small, but growing group called themselves the Pattaya Expats Club. Very soon, due to the rapidly increasing club membership the brand new Pattaya Expats Club moved its meetings to Shenanigan's Restaurant - then at the Marriott Hotel - on April 1, 2001.

The change in venue and the improved facilities for the meetings was very successful - so much so that it was apparent that an even larger meeting place had to be sought. The new Cafe New Orleans in Pattayaland Soi 2 had recently opened its doors and was willing to provide a very good and reasonably priced breakfast prior to the meetings. With the addition of breakfast the club grew even more quickly, and another larger location was found at the Astoria Hotel in Naklua.

By this time it was clear that the need the three Founders of the Club had felt was shared by many other Expat residents and frequent visitors to Pattaya. The original concept of "Expats helping Expats" the founders had intended was something that many Expats, part timers and visitors, were looking for. Thus, the concept of "Expats helping Expats" became the theme and motto of the new Pattaya Expats Club.

Meanwhile, the Club had grown to more than one hundred members – who sensed a common desire to share what they had learned with others – fulfilling the need felt by the three founders to share knowledge and experiences. The willingness to share, the interest in helping each other, and the friendliness shown by the club members, has been the source of the continuing rapid growth of the club, and the motto "Expats helping Expats" has been and still is, the guiding theme of the club.

At the Astoria the club's gatherings continued to grow, with meetings first in the dining room, then outdoors on a terrace, and finally in their large garden restaurant. It was at the Astoria the club developed a structure of inviting speakers who could talk about issues of importance and interest to club members.

In early 2002, while meeting at the Astoria, substantial concern arose as to the structure of the club. It was a question of using the club as a commercial for-profit venture, or preserving its original non-profit concept of "Expats helping Expats". A group was formed, including Neils Colov, the three founders, Drew Noyes, and Bruno Keller to consider the direction the club

should take. Pete Mills, Dave Watson and Preben Hanson, the then current leaders of the club, met at Neils Colov's Pattaya People Office with Drew Noyes, Neils, Bruno Keller, and other interested members to discuss the way forward for the Club. The decision of the group was that the club should remain a non-profit organization. After considerable discussion, Preben Hansen accepted a position as Chairman of the Pattaya Expats Club. Drew Noyes agreed to be the MC, and to chair the meetings of the Governing Board of the club.

With Drew acting as MC the attendance at Sunday meetings grew even more rapidly. In order to cope with the growing membership and responsibility of establishing guidance for the club, the Governing Board was working on a document intended to provide clearer guidance and a more defined structure for the club. Richard Ravensdale was assigned the task, and in consultation with the Board, developed the first Governing Document, which was approved in January 2002.

Drew Noyes was asked to become Chairman of the club for the term beginning July 1, 2002 taking over from Preben Hanson. The major officers of the club then were Drew Noyes, Chairman, Dave Watson, Co-Chairman, Inga Dohlon, Secretary, and Max Rommel, Treasurer. In early 2003, the Astoria Hotel decided to close in order to do major remodeling. After a search, the Amari Orchard Resort agreed to host the Pattaya Expats Club meetings without charge at their main building, and to provide a selection of reasonably priced buffet breakfasts prior to each Sunday morning meeting. Wirth the continued growth of the club, the meeting rooms in the main building quickly became too small for the still rapidly growing Club – and the Amari Orchard Resort offered their Henry J. Beans Restaurant, at no charge, and an even better selection of foods at the buffet breakfast. Since that change, the Club has held its meetings at Henry J. Beans (now the Tavern by the Sea) every Sunday morning, and is justifiably proud that it has done so without fail, for more than seven years.

Soon after the club moved to Henry J. Beans, it became clear that Founder Preben Hanson was not satisfied with the non-profit stance the club had adopted, and he had a Thai company created called the Pattaya Expats Club Co., Inc., with himself the owner. The officers of the Pattaya Expats Club were concerned about the company Mr. Hanson had formed using the Clubs' name – no one except Mr. Hanson knew what the Pattaya Expats Club Company, Inc. was doing – paying taxes, filing required government reports, and paying the ongoing costs of the company (if they were being paid). And there was additional concern about the confusion created by the differing aims of the non-profit Pattaya Expats Club, and the Pattaya Expats Club Company, Inc., operating in the same city with an existing company with the same name. After a lot of discussion, some rather heated, it was decided that the club's name should be changed to the Pattaya City Expats Club. So in July 2003 a revised Governing Document was approved, incorporating the new name, and making several structural changes to emphasize the non-profit character of the Club - and to certify in its Governing Document the Club's desire to work for the benefit of both Expats and the Thai people.

The Club also adopted an Open Door policy – there would be no charge by the Pattaya City Expats Club to attend its meetings. The club would, for a small fee, issue a unique membership card, designed by founding member Max Rommel, which entitled those who were members to

special discounts and benefits from businesses and hospitals in the area. The Open Door policy is still in effect, and the unique Pattaya City Expats card has become very popular.

David Ferguson (fondly remembered as “David in Pattaya”) had been a member of the Club since the Shenanigan days, and in 2003 was invited to become a Board member, and became very popular at the clubs’ meetings as the leader of the newly created Open Forum. Sadly, David died several months later due to throat cancer – but he is still fondly remembered in the hearts of his friends on the Board and Club members.

The Pattaya City Expats Club has continued to grow in numbers after its move to the Amari’s Henry J. Beans Restaurant. In 2010 The Restaurant took on a new name as the “Tavern by the Sea” and a new character as a Sports Bar and Restaurant. The new more open, attractively decorated room has added well to the informal, friendly atmosphere the club wishes to maintain. Happily, the remodeled venue has been large enough to cope with the growing popularity of the Club. With the available network of TV’s at the Tavern, and the cooperation of the staff of the restaurant, it is possible to sit anywhere in the attractive serving area and still feel in touch with the speakers. This has been especially helpful when we have larger groups of one hundred twenty or more members and visitors.

The Club has published a weekly Newsletter since 2002 which is sent by email each week to more than 1,800 members and subscribers. The Club also has its own website at www.pattayacityexpatsclub.com – at which anyone can access and read or download copies of the club’s Newsletter, plus articles on virtually every aspect of life and living in Pattaya and Thailand. Especially important are articles and information with details about getting a Visa, local medical services, buying homes and condominiums, getting a Thai driving license, Thai culture, Wills, Travel in Thailand, and more. We also list those businesses that provide members with discounts (and sometimes describe their specials) – for which there is no charge or fee to the businesses or members, nor is neither any benefit received by neither the Club nor any member of the Governing Board for providing this information.

The Club is open to all nationalities - the front door at Henry J. Beans is open to anyone who wishes to attend our meetings - membership is not required. Our unique membership card entitles the bearer to a 10% or more discounts on meals at many restaurants, shops and services. The Club’s charge for the photo embossed membership card is 400 baht per year.

ACTIVITIES

The Pattaya City Expats Club has become an established part of Pattaya life. It is recognized as such by Thai authorities - because it has been of special help with many local events. The Club has participated in Pattaya’s Loy Krathong Festival, several parades, one Guinness World Record Event, many charity bazaars, and provided support for both the Father Ray Foundation for orphan children and the Pattaya Orphanage. The club has provided members for 11 sessions of the Banglamung Cross Culture Group which provides free English Conversation Classes available to Thai working people. We assisted the Governor of Chonburi Province in a special event requested by the Prime Minister when he sought foreigner involvement to promote

the consumption of chicken. Members of the Pattaya City Expats Club also participated in the anti tobacco, anti alcohol event in honor of Queen Sirikit's 6th cycle Birthday, and were among the VIP's pledging support for her project. Local administration dignitaries and prominent members of local Thai society have attended the clubs' Sunday morning meetings with talks about the city and its future.

The intent of the Pattaya City Expats Club as stated in its Governing Document, is to help foreigners live and enjoy life in Thailand, and to help them to do so legally – by helping them become aware of the differences in Thai law and culture so they can understand and live cooperatively with the Thai people, as its motto “Expats Helping Expats” meaningfully expresses.

The club's speakers have talked on a wide range of subjects - from Thai history to global warming, the newest medical technology, members personal experiences, engineering, dental care and Thai Culture. We have arranged for our members to attend the Thai Macha Bucha celebration at the very impressive Wat Dhammakaya Temple in Bangkok, visits to the local Navy bases, visits to Phuket, Bangkok & Chiang Mai, plus trips to Cambodia, Vietnam & Laos. For the last four years the club has celebrated the important Thai New Year's Songkran celebration in the traditional style at our Sunday meeting, with the Banglamung District Chief or a monk from the Dhammakaya Temple leading the colorful and impressive celebration. Travel with a familiar group to local and nearby countries has been fun, and is very important to the members.

The Pattaya City Expats Club also offers its member's opportunities to organize interest groups which the Club helps with weekly notices and announcements at our meetings. The groups are self-forming - usually the result of a request of suggestion by a member, and currently include a discussion group, computer information group, a Frugal Freddy dinner group, photography group, a breakfast talk group, a Spanish speaking group, and more. We also facilitate the trips throughout Thailand and nearby countries when members are interested.

We, the members of the Pattaya City Expats Club, are truly devoted to helping “Expats helping Expats” – our members, our local and national Thai governments and our Thai friends. Everyone is welcome – please join us – at the Tavern by the Sea on Pattaya's Beach Road every Sunday morning at 9:30 AM for an American and Thai buffet breakfast, and our Meeting at 10:30 AM!