

St. Sometimes

SUMMER 2008

THE LIFE OF AN INTERNATIONAL TEACHER

VOLUME 82



The party didn't stop. I had a month of diving in Thailand then spent July in the USA.

A Summer of Fun in the U.S.A.

Recharging My Batteries

I spent the month of July visiting family and friends in the states. This wasn't an easy task! A month is just enough time to say hello to a few friends, catch up on three years' worth of nieces and nephews growing up, and spending time with mom and dad.

Mom and dad let me use their house as a hotel. Usually, they don't like to do that. I guess this was a time for an exception!

I used their house, and extra bed above the garage, as a home base to reach out across Wisconsin and

Minnesota. Believe it or not, even though I have stolen two past garage door openers (one as a gag), dad gave me their last opener to get in and out of the house. They are busy people.

Inside this Issue, you will see pictures and writings going back to June of 2008 in Thailand. However, the most important parts have to do with family and friends. This is a tribute newsletter to those family and friends that I had the pleasure to spend time with throughout July! All of you deserve kudos for putting up with my intrusion on your lives. It must not be easy to have a man with no real responsibilities crash in on your busy lives!

Back at home in Cambodia: Yes, I made it. I am writing this issue from the comfort of a little "American"

style bar in Phnom Penh, Cambodia called Free Bird. This was my last big meal before the "weigh in" period begins. Joey and I have a "weigh in" on his

A big thank you goes out to Kappy for picking me up in Chicago at the airport! We had three hours to "catch up".

bathroom scale next July. Everything is the same here. School starts tomorrow. The new teachers are here. I have moved into a new apartment. So, enjoy this issue and look for a story that relates to you!

My total flight time was: 5 hours from Phnom Penh to Seoul, Korea; 12 hours from Seoul to Chicago; then a car ride with Kappy to GB.



Keys, NO! Garage Door Opener

Dad was foolish enough to give me their last garage door opener. I gave it back this time.



“Camp Alpaca”

Jason and Erin have outdone themselves once again. Their new ranch style house overlooking the bay (and Mom/Dad’s house) is the capital of busy. Four kids, 30 alpacas, three dogs, a twenty-something live-in pseudo daughter, a rabbit, and three dogs is the epitome of a busy life. On top of that, Jason is one of the area’s finest doctors (following in the footsteps of Dr. Lemoine senior).

<http://www.greenbayalpacas.com/>



I have to plug their business because it is so awesome. They are winning awards all over the country with their alpacas and their Fleece. If you want to know more about alpacas and the Lemoine “Camp Alpaca” just log onto their website. I included their address up above in blue.

Jason and Erin allowed me to crash into their busy time. I got to witness TJ’s soccer during a practice (on the mini field in their front yard), pack for Boy Scout Camp with Colin, get yelled at by Ella for leaving her door open (one night after I read a story to her), and went with Morgan to watch Samantha play an excellent game of soccer across town.

Time at the Lemoine Cottage

Jason and Erin have a cottage on a little lake in Wisconsin. I spent the July 4th weekend with their family. It was the absolute best July 4th in my lifetime. No kidding. The kids and I bicycled around the lake to get ice cream. Colin tried his hardest to beat me, to no avail. Jason fired up the pontoon boat and floated the entire family across the lake to see a spectacular fireworks display, which was choreographed to music.

What a load of fun! I won’t forget watching the kids ski, tube, wakeboard, and kneeboard. All of them are getting really good at their choice.

Getting to Know Jason and Erin’s Family Again



*Jason, Erin, TJ, Colin, Samantha, and Ella!
So little time, so much to do!*

Enjoying the Lemoines

Why is it that I cannot win a good game of Halo 3 against TJ? I guess it means practicing for the next few years! He is really competent at the game. Even when Colin and I teamed up against him (and teaming up is against the rules). Next time we meet, I will trounce him like I did in mini-golf. He may have a quiet disposition, but he is laughing and ruthless during the game.

Colin is my spitting image in many ways. He has endless energy when I am around him. How tiring! This fifth-grader is going to challenge any teacher with his imagination, vigor, and chick magnetism.

Samantha has grown up so much. I love it when she focuses on something for a little while. She cares a lot for her brothers and sisters. It will be exciting to hear stories about her next school year. Hopefully, she will start to clean up with one activity before she gets excited about the next. Otherwise, Samantha, you will drive your mom and teachers absolutely NUTS.

Did you know I am now known as Uncle Gas? No, not because I smell, but due to the fact that my talkative littlest niece cannot pronounce the “g” together with the “r”. What a ball of energy. I love watching her play with Samantha. Just ask Ella, and she will take you to see the new rabbit. Ella has only “rabbit” on the mind so much, that she actually calls her grandpa Lemoine “rabbit”. What a doll.

Spending a little time with Jason was enlightening. I always learn something new from my little brother. How does he do it? More than once this summer I heard about what a fantastic doctor my little brother is. The Lemoine name lives on through Jason as dad gets closer to the Florida beach age. Admiration is the best word to describe how I feel about Jason.

The gel that keeps the family going is Erin. No one really knows how she does it. Service league, Alpacas, four kids? And not only that, running a business that includes awards from Kansas, Florida, Wisconsin, and Ohio. Congratulations Erin! Everything seems to turn golden when you are leading!

Three Young Ladies “las Rubias”

The final full week of July found me in Crystal, Minnesota with my other family. It is hard to believe my nieces are going into 2nd, 6th, and 9th grades! It wasn't long ago, or was it?, that I held little Katrina in my arms. Now that is impossible, since she is a teenager. I had a great time with each of the three girls alone and all together.

Jeff will probably keep a baseball bat by the front door starting this year. Katrina is a high school freshman. And she is ready for it. Homecoming, football games, swim team or diving, and a whole lot more are awaiting Katrina's proud parents. She is a great role model for all six of the younger Lemoines. I hope she is top of the class. I will think of her that way no matter what.

Mariah is now dubbed “Tie Dyed”. She marches to her own beat, just like me. She IS the middle child. We all do. I was impressed with what a great thinker she is. Look out all of you engineers! Mariah is in da' house! We had a great time driving from Minnesota to Wisconsin, just the two of us. Good luck with this year, Mariah. You will do awesome!

What a joy! My youngest Minnesota niece is the Spanish speaking Lydia. I just melt when she smiles! This little spitfire knows exactly what she wants. She takes after her sisters in a very important way - she has an advanced maturity. It must be something in the water! Lydia will probably be a mix between Lynn and Erin, with one difference: Lydia can ride the Extreme Swing twice without Freaking Out! Hah. Keep up the español.

The Minnesota Lemoines



One of the best experiences was seeing what my brother Jeff actually does for a living. I met Jeff at the World Headquarters of General Mills, signed in, and received a visitor's pass to get me through all of the security. Now, I don't usually feel important, but damn it! I am the brother of a **HEAD OF SECURITY**. The guard at the front desk wrote my name as “Gerg Lemoine”. Luckily, Jeff has a highly observant second in command that noticed the mistake. He tracked me down during the tour and brought me a corrected name tag. But, this one said “Greg Lemione” or something like that. Is it because I happen to teach language skills everyday? Jeff should enroll the guard (the one from the front desk that day) into some remedial spelling courses.

All joking aside, I did feel special walking around with the head of security. Jeff introduced me around and showed me the complex responsible for so many things in our lives that we take for granted. My favorite part was the marketing area. I hope Jeff shows this newsletter to the ladies that have the monopoly board on their wall. My message to them is: **MAKE ANOTHER DEAL WITH the PEZ Company!!!** (and if you don't, then send me that large monopoly game board - you ladies haven't played it yet - my students would love it!!) Hah hah.

What a great time! Thank you Jeff. That was a highlight!



*Above: Jeff mentors TJ in the fine art of cooking enough Bacon and Eggs to feed a small army.
Below: The “campinator” decorated.*

Happy 40th Lynn

Everyone was in on it but Lynn and her girls; Jeff was planning for months. Camping with family. What a great way to start her 40th year on the planet.

I had to return to Cambodia, but here is what I heard. Mom and dad rented an RV. Jeff reserved half of the campground for the weekend. Over a hundred people were planning on showing up. Everyone was going to surprise poor little Lynn as she was putting up her camper.

Supposedly, there was even a parade! Cool. According to my sources,

Lynn was continually surprised throughout the day by more and more family arriving. Mom, Jeff, and a few other people had planned some array of games to play.

The weather was fantastic. The party was fantastic. Everything seems to have been fantastic.

What about the Turtles? Here I am across the world recruiting new turtles. So far, no word has come to my ears about turtles at Lynn's party. Perhaps that was the plan: focus on Lynn. But I have such fond memories of becoming a turtle while Camping with Brunners!

Familia del Kappy

The Boys

Once again, it's hard to believe what happens to children over three years time. Kappy's youngest boy looks exactly like his oldest boy looked the last time I was home. Hayden (the oldest) grew like a weed! I commend Dana and Kappy for their "my three sons" kind of family.

Getting Ready for the Concert



The tickets were purchased online back in March when they were on sale for 10 minutes. (Thanks Kappy!) Then he scanned them and sent me the images via email!

The Amazing Buffett Tailgate

We had a blender for margaritas! What more could you want? Maybe a fire engine. Some parrot heads from Chicago rented a retired red fire truck and rolled into the tailgating area with their lights blazing. I saw a man dressed as a banana, a man in a diaper, and a fat viking's fan wearing nothing but tighty-whities and a viking hat. (of course he was wearing a Lei and had a juice box - jungle juice - in front of his crotch for the ladies to take a sip). We saw lots of bean bag games, tiki bars, inflatable beach toys, swimming pools,

The Little, 2-Man Tent!

"You're NOT sleeping in some tent Greg! We have plenty of room in our Camper!"

Those were the words that came out of Dana's mouth while I set up my little tent. She couldn't believe that I didn't want to sleep in the same camper with four other people and one smelly, snoring Kappy!

Actually, it has been years since I had last slept under the Wisconsin stars. Sleeping on the hard ground, with a cheap sleeping bag, allowed me to prove to myself that I am still a hardened camper. No need for an inflatable mattress or foam padding! TENTS RULE!

"The Year of Still Here"

With Buffett and Kappy



"Let's fly to St. Somewhere and get out of this cold weather!" - Jimmy Buffett

What do you get if you mix alcohol, camping, six foolish parrot heads (actually 5) and a blow up swimming pool - oh, and a Buffett Concert? Easy, the summer concert of 2008.

The gods in the "Church de Buffett" must have been smiling on us. No one pissed on Kappy's leg. No one got punched out (as far as you know). I almost drowned two drunk, obnoxious, intruding HS students, but figured it was a bad reflection on me as a teacher. We didn't run out of beer. We all made it home instead of jail.



Crying With Beer in Hand

Did you know there is a radio station, a website, and a newsletter? All three are geared towards parrot heads.

Kappy had been telling me, for months, that he was going to notify Buffett. Kappy wanted EVERYONE to know that I had traveled over 6,000 miles to get to this concert. I didn't believe him at first. Then, came the fourth song of the set!

Buffett introduced the fifth song by explaining this was the first day of his summer stateside. He had been traveling.

Next thing I know, the large video screens flashed CAMBODIA and showed footage of Buffett going to Angkor Wat!

I started crying. The entire 4 minutes of *Cowboy in the Jungle* found me crying. Kappy grinned at me and put a big beer in my other hand. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. Was anyone else in the 35,000 parrot-head crowd directly from Cambodia? I doubt it! The world works in mysterious ways. Here I am at a concert of my all-time favorite singer - first time home in three years - and Buffett shows videos of my recent home country for an entire song! Strange.

A Funny Ending to the Tale: At the end of the song, I turned to Kappy with tears in my eyes and thanked him. He had somehow contacted Buffett. How else could this have happened?

Kappy looked right at me, grinned, and said "I have nothing to do with it." Who cares. I kept telling everyone around me that my buddy had arranged the whole thing. Hah. No matter. Thanks for being my friend Kappy! Fins UP!

A Short Time With Friends

There just wasn't enough time to find all of my close friends. I planned a month in the states to mainly spend time with family. But, I did get a chance to go and see Alison's family in Milwaukee and the Mackeys in Minneapolis.

The Sidners

I drove to Milwaukee and spent time with Alison, Dan, and Shea. They live in one of those small older Milwaukee homes right where Jason and Erin used to live. I felt "at home" the minute I arrived.

Alison, Shea and I caught up on old times over lunch. We took Shea to day camp. Then Alison and I spent a few quality hours chatting away like the old days. Later, we went to their Restaurant -

The Guru

Joey Kiedinger



He has done so much! He is so busy! However, when I come home, all he can do is complain that he gets 20% of my total vacation time. Joe Kiedinger is the mastermind behind Prophit Marketing, the Ad Guru (an online, weekly advice column, and a brand new book coming out soon. I won't spoil it and tell you about the book. I was privileged enough to read a draft copy on my flight back to Cambodia. It's great.

Prophit Marketing's Colorful Office



Professional, Creative, Original



My reply to Joey about time was: "Joey, it's the percentage of FUN time, rather than the percentage of the overall vacation time." A large part of Prophit Marketing is helping individuals find their "Driving Force". Trying to put it into words will not give the idea justice. You will have to read his book or interview with Prophit Marketing. All I can say is: **"knowest thyself before ye knowest others"**. The entire company is based around teamwork so they are clear about themselves, about their team, and about their clients.

Joe introduced me to his vibrant staff, showed me around the company, and shared some of their fresh ideas. My short stay was full of laughter, "oohs" and "aahs". Keep an eye out for the Prophit logo. It's going to be linked to a host of world-wide companies in the near future. I wish you the best Joey. I will be distributing my "About Me" cards to a select group of superintendents when I begin my next job search. Thank you for the 50% of FUN that we enjoyed this past July.

Maxie's Southern Comfort

Next time you are in the Milwaukee Area, you HAVE to go to Maxie's Southern Comfort. Dan and Alison own this restaurant! That's not the reason. The restaurant is easy to get to from the highway, the atmosphere is relaxed, the staff is professional, and most of all - **Maxie's food is from scratch!**

Spread the fish! Dan has given me a global assignment. I accepted it with open arms. The assignment: take a large number of Maxie's Fish Stickers and deploy them around the world, especially at well known locations. Dan, I will do my very best.

I had the oysters! You cannot beat a relaxed local restaurant that puts out such a grand menu. Dan and Ali treated me to a taste of fresh oysters, steak, chicken, and a well chosen list of wines. I shared desert with their daughter, Shea. I wouldn't have shared, but there just wasn't much room left for dessert. (try to leave room for dessert when you stop in to see Dan and Ali). Thank you Ali and Dan. The restaurant is impressive!

Check out their Website!

www.maxies.com/milwaukee



Sorry Dan, I didn't have a picture of you. Where was my camera? What's wrong with me? So, here is a picture of Ali, two dogs, and your daughter Shea (bottom) and Maxie's Logo Fish (above).

The Return to Cambodia

Jumping Back In

As soon as I returned on July 30th, I had to finish packing my apartment and move. My new apartment is on the riverside. Two flights of tiny stairs. Darren still hadn't moved out. (he is renovating an apartment and had no place to store his stuff or to sleep).

A maid, a driver, two paid helpers, and two friends helped me move what little stuff I owned. (it wasn't that I had a lot of stuff - no boxes to put the little stuff in) It took two trips with the tuk tuk to get everything up the two flights of tiny, steep stairs. We stuffed everything into the apartment with Darren's stuff and I spent a final night in my old apartment.

Good Bye Mario and Kathleen: they are moving again. M and K are going back to Kuwait to make some money. I wish them luck in Kuwait. They know how I feel about that place! Yuck.

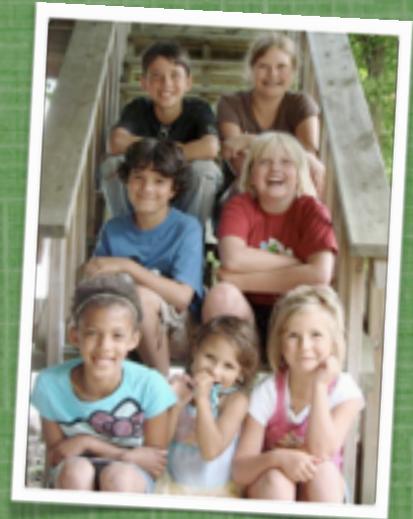
Angkor Wat was great the second time! Since Kathleen had never been to Siem Reap (the city near the temples of Angkor Wat) she and Mario decided to make a last visit before heading back to Kuwait. Both of them

had been to Phnom Penh so we didn't spend any time here. We took the speed boat ride up to Siem Reap and re-enacted the previous summer experience.

Upon writing this, I haven't posted the new pictures yet. It will be done soon. We knew what to expect in the ruins this time. I only spent one day going to Ta Prahm (the jungle scene) and Bayon (the place with the faces). BUT, I took a load of great pictures again.

No Special Needs, Only Technology this year! I struck it rich. My superintendent and principal agreed to hire a full-time special needs teacher. That gives me a shorter teaching schedule and more time to devote to improving the overall technology of the school.

I have spent the first three weeks setting up Macbooks, clearing out computers, making schedules, setting up internet, and providing help with all sorts of problems teachers face with new technology. We doubled our laptops, and added four interactive whiteboards. Along with all of that comes a need for training teachers, parents, and students.



So here is the crew!

Top: Tj and Katrina

Mid: Colin and Mariah

Bot: Sam, Ella, and Lydia

The older ones have promised to keep in touch via Email with me. That should be fun!



Meet Sam Bo. He is the elephant the makes his daily stop into the restaurant just below my apartment for some snacks and touristy photos.

Keep informed, keep in touch!

Visit my website for an archive of newsletters:

www.itre.us/sts somewhere

or email me at

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