

SPRING "SA-WA- DEE"

APRIL 2017

CHIANG MAI,
THAILAND

The grass withers,
the flower fades,
but the word of our God
will stand forever.

Isaiah 40:8

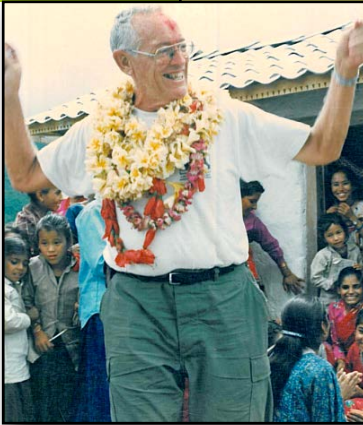


Thank you all...

Many thanks to those who have sent messages of comfort and condolence over the past few months as we have mourned the loss of Ellen's father, Dr. Dick Harding. We briefly returned to the USA to celebrate his life with family and friends on February 4 in Greensboro, NC. Plans are underway for another memorial ceremony in July in Nepal, where he served as a missionary since 1970.

Nepal is where Ellen grew up, and where our family lived from 1994 - 2005. So it will be a very special occasion. Please keep us in your prayers.

Andy, Ellen, Christopher & Jonathan Collins



Dancing Doctor Takes a Bow

My father loved to work, play, sing, act and, yes, dance.

Hiking the hills of Nepal, he would often join in celebrations -- the opening of a new school, the completion of a literacy training program, or the construction of a nutrition center. More often than not, this meant lots of dancing. Years ago, as a child growing up in Nepal, I was somewhat embarrassed by my dad's apparent lack of restraint. After all, he was a DOCTOR, not a DANCER!

But later, over the years he and I worked together in the Community Development & Health Project, I came to appreciate -- and sometimes even envy -- his pure delight in dancing. As a colleague and friend recently wrote, "He lived so full of love/life/joy." To Dad, there was always so much to celebrate . . . so many reasons to dance.



*"Dance, dance,
wherever you may be!
I am the Lord of the
Dance," said he.*

Speaking of dancing - and drama -
that's what CCI does best!

We send greetings from our Thai colleagues who have just completed the 6-month "likay" season at churches, and are preparing skits, songs and dances for the "fuenfoo" season at schools.

"Julie," the CCI dancer we mentioned last time, completed her chemotherapy this month. She is doing amazingly well, and thanks you for your prayers.





illuminating “Likay Lights”

Huay Kaew Church has out-grown its old, one-room building. The plan is to knock it down and build a new one. So a fund-raiser was in the works. The pastor wanted to invite CCI, knowing that a *likay* performance would draw large crowds to the outdoor event.

But, like many small churches in Thailand, Huay Kaew had no budget for transporting, feeding and housing CCI’s troupe of 14 performers. Since CCI runs on a limited budget, we rely upon this minimal support from our hosts.

Speaking of hosts, this is where gifts from US churches came into play. Last Spring, when we led the CCI troupe on a stateside tour of the east coast, we received gifts over and above the amount we needed to cover the expenses of the tour itself. The CCI leadership decided to start a fund to enable CCI to perform at small churches that otherwise could not afford to invite us.



Thanks to this fund, Huay Kaew Church got its wish. Members built a makeshift stage, hung up the lights, and announced the news:

“The CCI players are coming! Welcome one and all!”

Church members and non-Christian neighbors alike enjoyed the two nights of *likay*, traditional Thai folk drama -- with a Christian message.

Thanks to our supporters back home who helped a small church get a big blessing, by turning on the “*likay* lights!”

There will be more too!

Jonathan’s Jottings

In February we joined CCI on a trip to Chiang Rai, where my mom had taught from 1987-1990 while she was a volunteer with PCUSA. We went for a Thanksgiving service at Farm Sapantakit Church. It’s a small rural church. They had decorated it with all kinds of fruits and vegetables, inside and out.



We met a lady who was my mom’s old friend. Thai people are awesome hosts! She and the church fed us sticky rice, goose soup and water buffalo curry.



New Places, New Faces...

Since the new year, we’ve been in our “new” house. It’s just 3 minutes’ walk to CCI and to Jonathan’s school. It is located on the campus of Payap University’s Colleges of Divinity and Music. Our neighbors include a Thai theology professor and two missionaries -- an American and a Korean who both teach music.

For Ellen, an added blessing has been the chance to teach a group of students who live in the dorm. They come over to our place for a weekly English class (and often a treat from our kitchen!)

We thank God for the opportunity to build new relationships as we share time with our new neighbors.