

The Adventures of Steve & Amie

CHRISTMAS 2008



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SOKSABBAY!

Seasons greetings from the Kingdom of Cambodia!

Right now, we're sitting in our dining room listening to Michael Bublé belt out Let It Snow, and looking at our orange tree, complete with lights and decorations for the season, and our stockings that are hanging from the front window. It's a little surreal that it's that time of year. Even though we usually associate Christmas with snow, we're finding ways to feel that Christmas is right around the corner.

We haven't stepped into a mall once—just local markets and mini marts to find Christmas decorations and gifts, and there are only a few places around Phnom

Penh that have put up artificial trees or other decorations. It's been a good experience to peel back the layers of tradition and consumerism and really internalize the deeper meaning for the season.

SPECIAL GUESTS!

We're really excited about Amie's parents and sister visiting us for Christmas this year. They arrive just in time—on Christmas Eve and we're looking forward to four full days in Phnom Penh before heading off to Thailand for New Years.



*Christmastime in Phnom Penh—
an orange tree and stockings!*

a small house church, have been digging into our work, meeting new friends, and playing ultimate frisbee! Yes, there is ultimate in Cambodia—a reality that made the both of us very happy campers.

We've bought bicycles and have joined the ranks of Phnom Penh's cyclists who deal with harrowing traffic on a daily basis! We've learned the pattern—don't stay too close to the curb because moto drivers who are too impatient to wait the corner for their turn will simply drive in the wrong lane towards oncoming traffic until there's a break—then move to the other side of the road.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR TIME IN CAMBODIA THUS FAR:

(SEE OUR WEBSITE FOR THE STORIES):

- Trekking to Prasat Preah Vihear on the Thai-Cambodia border.
- Discovering an Ultimate Frisbee team in Phnom Penh!
- Discovering what you can and can't make in a frying pan. (Yes, you CAN make brownies for that chocolate fix! No, shortbread does not work!)
- Renting motorbikes and touring Cambodia's southern coast.
- Cycling in Phnom Penh and dealing with all sorts of obstacles—from Lexus' to motorbikes, to food vendors crossing the road at a snail's pace!
- Iced Coffees. Rich espresso, poured over sweetened condensed milk, cooled off with copious amounts of ice. Take that Starbucks!
- Our completely Cambodian neighbourhood. You get to our house via a long concrete alley, surrounded by small Khmer apartments where at least 10 people will cram into the small space. There are plenty of kids who make a point of shrieking "HELLO" and shaking our hands every time they see us.



Learning to make all sorts of foods in a frying pan. Yes, pizza IS possible!

THE PAST FEW MONTHS

It's hard to believe that we've been in Cambodia for three months. Slowly but surely we're getting our bearings straight and learning how to live in this truly amazing country!

We've connected with

SUN AND WIND

I (Steve) have been working to help start up a small renewable energy company called Clean Energy Group.

Right now, Cambodia is powered by diesel generators. We pay five times as much for electricity in Phnom Penh than we did in Canada and it's even more expensive than that in rural areas. It's exciting to be a part of an organization that will help electrify the country in a sustainable way.

Like any new initiative, though, Clean Energy Group is taking time to gain momentum. We've been networking with NGOs and other like-minded businesses and are hopeful for the future.

To date, we have done one small project in the city, and are starting to make contacts that will ensure 2009 is even more promising.

In the future, I am going to be involved mostly in developing and managing rural electrification projects. I'm also excited about being involved in a medium-sized wind turbine installation that we are doing on Cambodia's coast.

My days start and end with a half hour bike ride through the crazy streets of Phnom Penh to the peaceful outskirts where we have our office. I really look forward to spending more time in Cam-



Steve in a village in Takeo province checking out potential project sites.

bodia's rural areas as our rural electrification projects take off.

The place where God calls you is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet.

Friedrich Buechner

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

I (Amie) spent the first couple of months in Cambodia working part time with Samaritan's Purse Australia.

It was definitely an exciting experience. The contract is still continuing through into the new year, and I'm thankful for the opportunities to see the country, meet remarkable people, write and take pictures, and somehow communicate the things I see to an audience that can help

make a difference in the life of countless Cambodians.

I started my work researching water-related stories for a film crew that visited in the first week of December. Access to water—especially clean water in Cambodia is a big need, and SP like many other NGOs, has been drilling wells, providing water filters and installing pumps for whole communities.

I went to various communities and interviewed people who have access to clean water and those who don't, then passed those stories onto communications staff in Australia who determined which stories they wanted covered in the video.

December 1-8 was exciting as the two videographers and I gallivanted around the Cambodian countryside with a host of camera equipment, and literally invaded small villages in order to get on camera interviews with Cambodian villagers. It was a remarkable experience and I spent the next couple of days winding down from the week.

I'm still covering a variety of stories for SPA—including stories about prison min-



A woman crushes rice out of the husk with her bare-

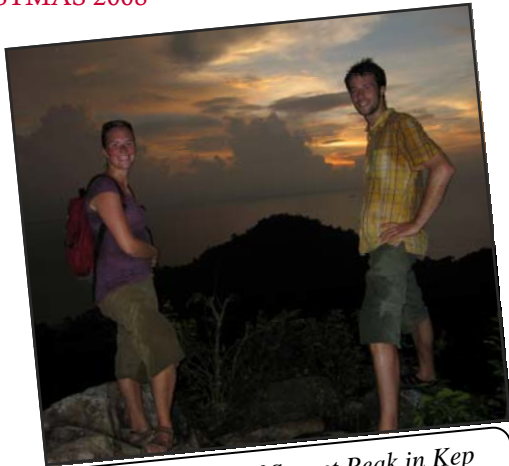
istries, schools, water filters, youth programs, and Operation Christmas Child. That will be my focus in the New Year—attending Operation Christmas Child distributions, taking pictures and writing up what I experience.

So far I've been to about 10 of Cambodia's 30 provinces—which is probably where I picked up Typhoid in November. Sicknesses aside, it's a real honor to see how most of Cambodia lives—rural life, subsistence agriculture, desperate poverty, and even greater hope.



Amie standing with Marcus and David from Australia and Nget V and her family. Nget V's village just received a well and

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Standing on top of Sunset Peak in Kep province near the coast.



On top of Phnom Udong—a hill-top temple near Phnom Penh.



Dirtier than every after our trip to Prasat Preah Vihear.



Amie snagging a disk at our weekly ultimate game.



Steve on our rented 250cc dirt bike.

WHAT YOU CAN MAKE IN A FRYING PAN

Our apartment in Phnom Penh only has a small stove top burner. That's great for stirfries and curries, but what about when you get that chocolate craving (which for Amie happens everyday)?

We've had to get creative in order to make some of our favourite comfort foods until we move to an apartment that has an oven. Here's a list of some of the very yummy things we've managed to concoct using a frying pan, our burner, and our wooden cutting board (conveniently large enough to act as a lid for the pan).



Steve chowing down on our newest frying pan recipe—pizza pops.

- Brownies—they looked a bit more like a brownie pancake, but tasted fabulous nonetheless.
- Chocolate chip cookies.
- Baking powder biscuits.
- Pizza



Amie sitting with a fresh batch of biscuits—right out of the frying pan!

We've got a whole host of ideas for the future and get better at it every day.