

Member Spotlight

Billy & Boonmee (Tim) Laue

I grew up on a farm in central Illinois and attended Southern Illinois University for 5 years (to avoid the draft!). When I graduated in 1966, I had earned a BS in Agriculture. I enlisted in the Air Force in 1967 and spent two years at Eglin AFB, FL. Then I received orders to report to Ubon Thailand—I had no idea where in the world Thailand was located. Shortly after my arrival at Ubon Air Force Base, I met Tim.

Tim grew up in a small village in Northeast Thailand. She was raised with her two sisters and a brother. “We were poor and grew rice to subsist on. I met Billy in 1969 when I was 21. He moved in with me and never left. Ha-Ha!”

I separated from the Air Force upon my return to the states in 1971. Tim and I moved in with my parents back in Illinois, but there wasn't any Thai food or job opportunities so I re-enlisted in the USAF in 1971 and received orders for Hurlburt Field (part of Eglin, FL). Tim learned to drive and got her first job as a maid at a motel. We enjoyed the beaches and Tim loved to fish in the Gulf.

We purchased our first house in 1976 in Mary Esther, FL. Two years later, I received orders to Bergstrom AFB in Austin. We sold the house in Florida and bought one in south Austin. Naturally, two years later we were transferred to Turkey for a NATO assignment in Izmir. It wasn't too bad in Turkey, the weather was mild on the Aegean Sea, but it was akin to living back in the 1940's. Working for NATO also proved to be a real challenge. I had a Turkish civilian for a boss and my co-workers were from the US Army/Air Force, Italian army, and Turkish civilians. We spent two years there and were ordered back to Bergstrom AFB in 1982, where we stayed until I retired in 1987 (20 years, 6 days).

I went back to school at SWT in San Marcos and graduated with a BA in Accounting in 1990. Meanwhile, Tim worked at two cafeterias before landing a job at Motorola. She liked the work, transferred two times in 21 years, and retired in 2005. I worked at IRS for 13 years, retiring again in 2001. Along the way, we got in the rental house business by buying 3 houses.

I've always liked driving machines. The first one I drove (at about 6 years old) was a tractor. My first two-wheeler was an Allstate moped, which I rode to school (about 4 miles away) when I was in 6th grade. Luckily, it had petals so when engine failure frequently struck I was able to



make it back home. Next came a Cushman Eagle scooter—BSA single 500—and then a Triumph twin 500. Remember Lucas electric (prince of darkness) and amal carbs - not to mention constant oil leaks?

I bought my first real motorcycle in 1974, a Kawasaki 903 cc Z1, to ride to work. I kept that Z1 for 25 years. My first Goldwing, a 96 GL 1500, came in 1998—that one didn't last too long. Within a few months I crashed it and burned my knee in the process. Since then, more wings, a 97, a 95 trike, an 01 1800 (rode that one 157,000 miles), an 05 trike, an 04 Kaw 2000, and an 09 Stallion (sic). Today, we ride an 07 GL 1800 and an 09 1800 Champion trike.

We joined GWRRA in 1998. We enjoy participating in activities with our Chapter O family—the group rides, camping and good friends. I served as the ride coordinator for six years and am presently the Camping Coordinator.

Today, we live in Manchaca where Tim enjoys gardening and raising flowers. We have one daughter, Linda, who lives in Austin, and plans to be married in Oct 2010. We both love to travel to see the US, including the Colorado mountains, Utah canyons, Blue Ridge Parkway and everything in between. Canada is also a great place to ride.