

Elephant Day in Kanchanaburi

13 March 2011

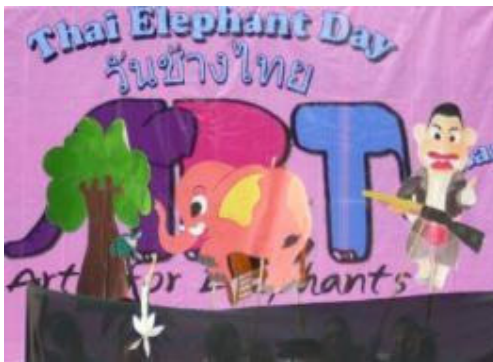


Following the successful debut of our Arts for Elephants project on Elephant Day 2010, the Elephant Conservation Network (ECN) organised another painting competition and associated activities for Thai Elephant Day, 13 March. for a species that is so closely held in the historic part of the public green beside the carnival atmosphere all day to win prizes in each age heat, snacking on ice-cream, entertainment. Participants were asked to illustrate the story of Porn Peemai, a tusker who inspired a 12-year old girl called Toyting to help protect wild elephants.



students aged 7-17 on This special celebration linked to Thailand was Kanchanaburi town on old city wall. It was a long, as children vied category, ignoring the and enjoying the varied

Before the competition began, a group of students from a local secondary school held a lively and provocative mini-drama, complete with sound-effects, in which the death of



a rare pink elephant, shot while raiding crops, prompts a heated debate between villagers who must protect their livelihoods, and tourists who want to protect wildlife. The problem is solved by an energetic conservationist who suggests that the villagers work together to protect their crops, helped by the tourists who offer to pay to see the elephants and other wildlife that the villagers help conserve. A satisfactory outcome for everyone, except for the poor pink elephant!



From 10 am to 4 pm, young artists focused on their creations, some doing two or more paintings to illustrate the tale of Toyting and her giant friend, Porn Peemai.



The heat was intense, the effort admirable, the lively use of colour an inspiration. Most of the parents took it seriously too, providing water, snacks and plenty of encouragement.



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approached



Every age group
had such talent!



While the young artists painted, activities around them created a festival atmosphere of fun where elephants were guests of honour, meeting the press in costume, or greeting young participants to cheer them on (but melting the poor person inside!)



In the proper Thai way, there were things to buy. ECN sold piles of t-shirts and bags, but ice cream and smiles were free



Clockwise from left, ECN's Ton, Noktu (with Ele-Blu), Mon & Gip



Two groups took turns to make merry with music, the ranger band from Salakpra Wildlife Sanctuary



A huge cardboard cut-out collected messages in support of wild elephant conservation in Kanchanaburi



... and the student band from Mahidol University's Bai Mai conservation group.



Nearby, many people sat for two local artists who drew portraits that were marvellous likenesses



Meanwhile, other people met in NGO information booths. Here ECN's director Belinda chats to Khun Surin, founder of the WRECOM Foundation





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Some of the winners on stage with Khun Kanchit Srinopawan, the chief of Salakpra, Mr Daniel Pruce, UK Chargé D'Affaires, Ms Belinda Stewart-Cox and Jittin Ritthirat, director and manager of ECN with Camilla Mitchell, research volunteer, Oh Promart-Meuangwong with Ele-Blu who represents the wild elephants of Kanchanaburi province for whom this event was a celebration.



Left: On behalf of Salakpra's Human-Elephant Conflict Prevention Team, forest ranger Veera Maneewong accepts a donation of nine sets of uniform and other equipment from ECN. Khun Veera worked for three years as an ECN village monitor, recording all cases of crop-raiding around Tha Manao village.



Right: ECN made three awards to local students from its Friends of Elephants Education Fund. Here, Khun Kanchit gives an award to Khun Surin, a ranger from Tham Thanlod NP, for his daughter.



Current ECN team minus Nin (Oranuch Suk-in) who is on maternity leave. Top left: Ms Saravane (Nok) Namsupak), Ms Ratchaneekorn (Dieo) Jamkad, Ms Wilaiwan (Tik1) Kalyakool), Ms Belinda Stewart-Cox Ms. Anchalee (Joy) Subhantupong), Ms. Hataichanok (Ton) Klebkajorn, and Ms. Jittin (Pu) Ritthirat). Bottom left: Ms. Nattakarn (Tiktu) Suttanond, Ms. Kanokwan (Noktu) Tongbai, Ms. Camilla Mitchell, Ms. Sasithorn (Gip) Thampitak, Mr. Sathit (Mon) Khoncharoen, currently ECN's only man!