

# UPDATE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE GREATER SEATTLE VIETNAM ASSOCIATION

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## Hai Phong Mayor Visits Seattle

The Mayor of Hai Phong was in Seattle during the week of June 12 to meet several local leaders and look at some of the main features that make Seattle such a success. While here, he repeated his interest in becoming a Sister to our city.

Mayor Dr. Dao An, came at the invitation of Seattle Mayor Norm Rice, following visits of a Seattle engineer to Hai Phong last December and March, when the Sister City idea was first broached.

The engineer, Harris Falkin, had traveled to Hai Phong to assess the needs of that old port city in the north to upgrade its infrastructure.

The Vietnamese contingent this June was comprised of the Mayor, who is also Governor of Hai Phong Province and a member of Parliament; Dr. Nguyen Dinh Quan, Director of the Hai Phong Office for External Economic Relations; Bui Manh Tuong, director of the People's Committee Office of Hai Phong City, and Phung Duy Minh, an expert with the Hai Phong Office for External Economic Relations.

The group toured the Ports of Seattle and Bremerton, observed loading, trucking and storage facilities, inspected the bridges to West Seattle, inspected facilities at Seatac Airport and took a public tour of the Boeing Plant at Everett, which included a look at the new 777.

Members of the public on the Boeing tour were all asked to tell where they came from. Everyone was friendly and enthusiastic, said Falkin later, when the Vietnamese men identified themselves.

The group also went to Denver, where they met the Mayor and the Governor, and had a tour of the new airport. The architect of the airport had also been part of the group that went to Hai Phong earlier with Falkin.

Falkin explained that the firm of which he is vice president, Andersen Bjornstad Kane Jacobs, Inc., was interested in helping Hai Phong modernize its port facility and helping build and repair bridges. He said officials there wanted the improvements to increase the shipping and industrial potential in that northern area, close to Hanoi and close to China. He said the harbor channels needed dredging. But that, he said, was not a big problem.

Falkin said he discussed with the officials the need also to include safeguards to protect the environment during the modernization process. He reported that Hai Phong hoped to get assistance from Seattle for this. He hoped also that the two cities could be linked in the Sister City Program.

## Boeing Executive Talks About Vietnam

At a meeting of the Greater Seattle Vietnam Association, the Director of Boeing's Asia Pacific Sales Office, Robert Laird, described the history of Vietnam Airlines and his experiences promoting sales there.

The meeting took place June 6 at the Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce. Laird said doing business in Vietnam is like doing business in many other Asian countries. That is, relationships are the most important issue.

Vietnam's future, including its transformation to a market economy, was also discussed. Laird is convinced that Vietnam has a great potential with its 75 million plus population. More than three million overseas Vietnamese have become successful in their new homelands, with many of them returning to Vietnam on a regular basis. This, said Laird, will help fuel the need for more airline services there.

# Seattle Group Drafts Plan for Language Training

English language training is becoming a booming business in the big cities of Vietnam, the way it has been in Japan for several generations.

Any country that moves from a long history of isolation to the arena of international activity needs the "international language." Observers predict that a strong need for intensive English language training in Vietnam will last a long time.

GSVA is developing a project to help satisfy the need. The new program in EFL, or English as a Foreign Language, is being designed by a professional language teacher in Seattle.

She is Jo Hirschman, a former Peace Corps volunteer who is a faculty member at Seattle Central Community College as well as a student of Vietnamese at the University of Washington. The current plan is being created in consultation with several experts, including Jessica Nguyen, another Peace Corps alumna who taught English as a foreign language in Africa, and Sinh Nguyen, former Vice President of GSVA.

It would be a run not as a business but as a non-profit, educational program managed jointly by appropriate authorities in the host city and by the Seattle team. The host city would help the Seattle developers select the groups to receive instruction in the first year. These may be high school teachers, business people, people in the health sector, or others.

Then a Vietnamese group would be selected in the second year to travel to Seattle for advanced training to serve in Vietnam as new instructors in the program.

In the third year, the Seattle teachers in the host city would help supervise the new Vietnamese EFL teachers.

A possible route for expansion would be to invite the host city to take part in an exchange of language instruction, giving Vietnamese language instruction while receiving English instruction.

## Coming Events

GSVA plans a buffet and art show August 13 at Vietnam Pearl Restaurant.

Check for details in the next issue of UPDATE.

## Breakfast Speakers Resume in Fall

The GSVA Breakfast Series will take a summer recess in July and August and resume in September. We plan a fall series of four programs and a winter-spring series in 1996 of five programs. Watch for details in the August edition of UPDATE.

Our goal is to give members the kind of speaker and information that they want. What's important to you? Learning more about Vietnam and the People? Understanding SE Asians political tensions? Hearing from folks just back from Vietnam? Keeping up with public trade policy?

## Greater Seattle Vietnam Association

A grassroots, non-profit, duly incorporated and registered organization dedicated to helping the people of Seattle create and maintain links with the people of Vietnam

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# New Discussions About Sister Cities

At its first general meeting of the year on May 24, members of the Greater Seattle Vietnam Association (GSVA) affirmed their interest in initiating a Sister City relationship between Seattle and a Vietnamese city.

According to guidelines, the Sister link must be initiated by a grassroots organization with a diversity of interests.

Members assessed the comparative advantages of linking with Da Nang or with Hai Phong, both of which have been discussed by various people in Seattle. It was decided that either city would be suitable for GSVA and would offer multiple possibilities for opportunities for establishing relationships of several kinds.

Meanwhile, it was learned from the Vietnam office at the United Nations that other U.S. cities were also interested in Da Nang and Hai Phong. Pittsburgh was talking with Da Nang about possible links and New Orleans was talking with Hai Phong for the same purpose.

## New Electronic Bulletin Board Service (BBS)

In order to provide the latest information on Vietnam and GSVA's activities, we are offering a new service to our members. It is an electronic bulletin board that can be accessed via computer modem. Currently the BBS is not connected to the Internet, but may be in the future.

The bulletin board is available 24 hours a day at 941-9650. Services offered are, E-mail, Public Forums for discussion, and hundreds of programs and files relating to Vietnam. Some of the Forums include a newsroom where latest information on Vietnam is updated regularly, an employment room for users who are either seeking or offering employment relating to Vietnam, and current status of GSVA projects.

Also a CD-ROM was connected to the system making various sharewares available for downloading. Some of these allow users access to Vietnamese fonts that can be used in any Windows program.

If you have any questions call the System Operator, John Sutherland at 946-6336.

## American Writer Tells the Stories of Village Women

It has been said that Americans who fought in Vietnam never really knew their enemy. Now Lady Borton shows us at last who they are.

After Sorrow is a memoir of Borton's repeated visits to three villages: a former Viet Cong base in the Mekong Delta, a rice farming commune in the Red River Valley and the place that is often called the largest village of all, Hanoi.

Borton, a Quaker who divides her time between her farm in the Appalachian region of Ohio and Vietnam, relates stories of Vietnamese women she lived and worked with. She describes their heroism, their suffering, and the deeply rooted heritage and culture that sustained them.

Reviewers say it is doubtful that any outsider before her reached such an intimate bond with the people of Vietnam. (After Sorrow, by Lady Borton, Viking, N.Y. 1995. Available in Seattle bookstores.)

## The Kontum Diary

GSVA is pleased to announce that Steve Smith of Echo Productions, Kent, WA, has offered to show his widely acclaimed TV documentary, The Kontum Diary, to Association members this fall. [The film was originally shown on Public Television earlier this year.]

Kontum Diary deals with the aftermath of the Vietnam War. A former American soldier, David Reed, and a former Vietnamese soldier, Nguyen Van Nghia, are brought together by a diary that Nguyen lost on the battlefield near Kontum. Through the diary, the American comes to understand the emotional challenges that his enemy encountered, and recognized the similarities between them. Viewers will get to witness the blossoming of the new friendship between these two former combatants, as they attempt to break down cultural barriers.

Now Reed is raising money to help pay for an operation in the U.S. to correct wartime injuries received by Nguyen.

Check future issues of UPDATE for details about the fall meeting featuring of the film and, in addition, a discussion by Producer Smith.