
UPDATE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE GREATER SEATTLE VIETNAM ASSOCIATION

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Editor, Tyler L. DuLam

Governor Likes Vietnam and Pledges Help

Governor Mike Lowry came home from the trade mission to Vietnam sounding even more optimistic than he was before he left. He told a breakfast meeting on October 12 that U.S. businesses were "way behind" other countries in trading with Vietnam, but that the future was "nothing but great."

Speaking at a meeting sponsored by the Washington Council on International Trade and co-sponsored by the Greater Seattle Vietnam Association, Mr. Lowry said the government of Vietnam was heading for a totally free market society. "There is no turning back," he said.

The Washington State Trade Fair opened in Hanoi on September 24 and then moved down to Ho Chi Minh City. Mr. Lowry said he told government leaders in Hanoi that 30% of U.S. goods go through the Port of Seattle. The Trade Minister replied, according to Mr. Lowry: "Let's make it 100 percent."

The Governor said the Vietnamese people were impressed by the Washington State products on display, much of it supplied by women and minority business people.

The big excitement, he said, was the signing of an agreement between Washington State and the Government of Vietnam to cooperate on a wide range of trade and business activities.

Seattle Group Meets Haiphong Mayor

Seattle City Council President Jim Street, a member of the Washington State Trade Mission to Vietnam, took time out to make an official visit to Haiphong, the northern port city close to Hanoi.

On September 25 and 26 Mr. Street was the guest of the Mayor of Haiphong, Dao An.

The two had met last June when Mayor An and three other Haiphong officials came to Seattle to visit City Hall, tour the Port and talk about a Sister City link.

Mr. Street said his visit to Haiphong was official and reciprocal.

Council President Street was accompanied by Dr. Hy Resnick, a professor of Social Work from the University of Washington; Quan Le, Vietnamese Director of Wittler-Brochier and Associates of Seattle, and Norma Mohr, president of the Greater Seattle Vietnam Association.

Mr. Street and Mayor An signed a memorandum pledging cooperation between their two cities in trade, health, education, and cultural activities.

The Seattle group toured the port and heard presentations about the plans to renovate the port with a combination of dredging, land reclamation and other projects. These included the proposal by combined interests in the U.S., Belgium and Thailand to create a deepwater port at Dinh Vu, a peninsula downstream from the old harbor in Haiphong.

Haiphong officials said vitalizing their harbor was a very high priority for the government of Vietnam to help develop the north to bring it closer to parity with the south, to provide an outlet to the sea for southern China and expand Vietnam's trade potential.

The group toured the old French resort area south of Haiphong at the town of Do San, where new hotels were being built and old hotels were being renovated.

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After the three men in the Seattle delegation rejoined Governor Lowry's trade mission, Mrs. Mohr spent an additional four days in Haiphong exploring opportunities for others in Seattle to establish people to people links with the people of Haiphong in a variety of fields.

The facilitator of the activities was the director of

Haiphong's office of Foreign Relations, Hoang Van Dinh. He reported that a committee had been created to work with GSVA to coordinate various projects between the two cities.

Mr. Dinh and Mrs. Mohr signed an agreement pledging cooperation in several areas, including instruction in English by teachers from Seattle.

Volunteer Surgeons to Treat Vietnamese Children

A team of nine medical specialists from Seattle leaves for Vietnam November 6 to perform surgery on children with facial birth defects.

The team is part of the Washington State chapter of Operation Smile International, which sends volunteers to communities all over the world to perform plastic surgery correcting a variety of disfiguring defects.

Most of the operations are performed on children to correct cleft lips or cleft palates, defects that often interfere with eating and often cause the children to grow up feeling ostracized because of their appearance.

Operation Smile was created in 1982 by an American husband and wife medical team in the Philippines who said they were overwhelmed by the number of children there with the facial birth defects. The founders established their base in Norfolk, Va., and began sending missions overseas.

Besides the routine one-hour operation to correct facial birth defects, the medical teams correct club foot deformities, perform plastic surgery on scars from severe burns and conduct other reconstructive surgical procedures.

Operation Smile has already treated 500 Vietnamese children. The first team set up a surgical program in Hanoi in 1989. In subsequent years Operation Smile worked in Haiphong, Hue, and then last year in Ho Chi Minh City.

The new contingent from Seattle will work in Danang and Thai Nguyen in Bac Thai Province, north of Hanoi. As in previous years, local physicians and other citizens will assist the American medical teams and receive training.

The team leader is one of six volunteer plastic surgeons from the Seattle area. He is Dr. Thomas Gant of Edmonds, who was on the team that went to Ho Chi Minh City last year. An anesthesiologist at Virginia Mason Medical Center in Seattle, Dr. Brian Owens, also will be making a return trip to Vietnam. His first trip was a long time ago. He was a reconnaissance platoon leader in the American forces in Vietnam in 1970. A Seattle financial adviser, George Pierce, has volunteered to travel with the group to give organizational and administrative support. Mr. Pierce, treasurer of the Washington Chapter of Operation Smile, was drafted near the end of the Vietnam War.

GSVA readers wanting more information about Operation Smile may call Dr. Thomas Gant, 775-2200, or Jennifer Phillips, 583-6090.

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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GSVA Seeks Projects in South and North

As new members, Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese, join the Greater Seattle Vietnam Association, committees are being formed to address a variety of interests in the north and the south. Committees and their chairpersons:

Business and Trade Committee. John Sutherland. The committee sponsors information programs to help new and experienced business people; it offers an electronic bulletin with information about Vietnam.

Sister City Committee. Gary Johnson. The committee oversees the selection of a Sister City for Seattle, in compliance with guidelines established by the Seattle City Council and in compliance with the regulations and philosophy of the national Sister City organization.

English as a Foreign Language Committee. Jo Hirschman. The committee develops projects to send Seattle teachers to Vietnam and bring Vietnamese teachers to Seattle for special training.

Education Committee. Beth Whitman. The committee is exploring friendship opportunities and opportunities for cultural and educational exchanges between students in Seattle and students in Vietnam.

Health and Welfare Committee. Dr. Hjordis Foy. The committee seeks links between health professionals in Seattle who already have or would like to have links with institutions or communities in Vietnam for joint programs.

In addition, UPDATE Editor, Tyler DuLam, would like to hear from anyone willing to help write, edit or proofread the publication.

Interested persons may leave a message on the GSVA answering machine, 322-1178.

Persons who want to start a new project for GSVA may meet with our Board of Directors. Call the president, Norma Mohr.

Professor Gets Advice While Touring Vietnam

Dr. Hy Resnick, a professor of Social Work at the University of Washington in Seattle, said he learned some lessons on his trip with Governor Lowry's mission to Vietnam.

Dr. Resnick was part of Council President Jim Street's brief trip to Haiphong. The professor spent much of his time there and then most of his time in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City interviewing social workers, educators and government authorities. Dr. Resnick was exploring the possibility of creating programs to help his university set up training for Vietnamese social workers.

His conclusion was that it was feasible to train Vietnamese students in Seattle on three levels, undergraduate, graduate and post doctoral work. He also planned to examine the possibility of helping faculty from Seattle set up social work courses in Vietnamese universities.

He said he learned a lot from Vietnamese people he talked with, especially one widely experienced woman in Ho Chi Minh City whom he called "Mme. Social Work."

She told him, social workers in Vietnam should be careful in trying to apply lessons from other countries in the Vietnamese setting. She said Vietnamese people probably can learn more from their own specialists who have been doing social work for many, many years, but perhaps calling it something else.

Dr. Resnick said he was surprised that Vietnamese people didn't seem to bear any resentment toward Americans for the war in the '60's and '70's.

A group of university law students in Ho Chi Minh City tried to explain it. They told him that Vietnamese people had been through so many wars through history they had learned to put the past behind them.

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Old members please renew your membership. New members most welcome!!



...
just lie still
and listen to the night ceaselessly rustling
the confession of a guitar by an unseen window
the fossil mollusks that cling to the slippery projecting
rocks
and the shawl forgotten on the evening beach
that will never be found

just lie still
and do not ask
why
do not ask why
the flies inebriated with the sun
lost their wings
to die
in the warm hands of summer.

...
Excerpts from "When O When", by Kiet Tan