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# UPDATE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE GREATER SEATTLE VIETNAM ASSOCIATION

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## Free Trade Zone In S.E. Asia Is Subject For Talks

The promise of a free trade zone in Southeast Asia will be discussed in a conference October 5, 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., at the Metropolitan Room of the Sheraton Seattle, 1400 Sixth Avenue, Seattle.

The program, organized by the U.S. ASEAN Council in Washington, D.C., is sponsored by the Washington Council on International Trade in cooperation with 13 other Seattle area organizations including the Greater Seattle Vietnam Association.

Creators of the ASEAN Free Trade Area, which they call AFTA, say the plan will encompass a market of more than 400 million people. By the year 2003 it is expected that AFTA would create a free trade region in which tariffs on almost all goods will be lowered to zero to 5%.

The keynote speaker for the conference will be Dato' Ajit Singh, Secretary General of ASEAN. His topic will be "AFTA: The ASEAN Free Trade Area - A Look at the Future of Asia's Most Promising Market."

A policy outlook for the market will be given by Joan Spero, Under Secretary of the U.S. Department of State. Stanley Gault, Chairman and CEO of Goodyear Tire and

Rubber Co., will offer a perspective of the private sector.

The program also will include panel discussions on:

- What does AFTA mean for U.S. manufacturers in Asia;
- How does AFTA work? Legal and regulatory issues;
- How will AFTA create an ASEAN market? Customs, borderless trade, investment incentives;
- AFTA: the impact on trade in services, and
- Intellectual property rights: incorporating IPR into AFTA.

The conference will end with a period set aside for networking.

Registration fee for the conference is \$45 for U.S.-ASEAN Council Associate Members and WCIT members, and \$75 for non-members.

People with questions may call Pat Davis of the Washington Council on International Trade, 206 443-3826; or John Goyer at the U.S.-ASEAN Council at 202 289-1911.

## Seattle Library Extends Helping Hand To Business

The Pacific Rim Business Information Service (PRBIS) of the Seattle Public Library reports it has just received the very important 2nd Edition of Vietnam Opportunities, "The official Vietnamese business guide," published by Longmans.

Other new books, pamphlets and reports arrive frequently, and people who know say the PRBIS is the best source in Seattle for information about doing business in Vietnam.

The material may be seen at the Main Branch of the Public Library, 1000 Fourth Ave., Seattle, 98104-1193, or people may go to a Branch Library linked to PRBIS. Call 1-800 348-5669 to learn the locations. Also, library staff may be able to help you over the phone with specific business information. Use the same number.

Questions may be sent by FAX: 206 386-4634, or by Internet: [btonglao@spl.lib.wa.us](mailto:btonglao@spl.lib.wa.us).

Librarian Betty Tonglao said PRBIS is so popular among local business people that many of them make contributions of publications or money.

## State Trade Mission Takes Their Message To Three Countries

Gov. Mike Lowry's historic trade mission will board the aircraft at Seatac Airport early Saturday morning, September 23, the mission first visits Hanoi, September 24 to 27, then the group will fly down to Ho Chi Minh City for two days.

After the Vietnam program, the Governor will return to Seattle while the trade delegation with all its exhibits goes on to Cambodia and then to Bangkok.

The trip was conceived as an opportunity for small business people, including women and minorities, to compete for markets usually dominated by larger exporters.

It was the first trip of a state governor to Vietnam since

"normalization," and the first trip of any official trade delegation to Cambodia.

One side trip was planned. A group of Seattle people will travel to Haiphong during the Hanoi segment of the trip. They are City Council President Jim Street, Professor Hy Resnick of the University of Washington, Bharat Soli, President of ABKJ, Corp., and Norma Mohr, president of the Greater Seattle Vietnam Association.

That short trip was planned as a friendship mission to reciprocate for the visit to Seattle last June by the Mayor of Haiphong, Dr. Dao An. Mohr also plans to talk to several people in Haiphong about the possibility of new Sister Cities relationship between the two cities, Seattle and Haiphong.

## The Time Is Now -- New Members Sought

The Greater Seattle Vietnam Association needs everyone's support for fulfilling the goal of long-lasting important and diverse links between the people of the Seattle area and the people of Vietnam.

Please join the ranks of dues-paying members by returning the attached membership application with a check. Our initiative to be a Sister City with Haiphong is currently our principal project. But it is not our only interest. Our mandate includes the establishment of links with other communities throughout Vietnam. And our policy is to help members create programs to satisfy their own personal goals. The more active members we have, the more links we can make.

## Haiphong Designated For Development

Reports from Hanoi said the Vietnamese Prime Minister's office has given approval in principle for a \$556 million industrial zone in Haiphong.

A dispatch from Reuters says partners in the project are American International Group (AIG), Thailand's Ban Chang Regional Development Company, Belgium's International Port Engineering Company and the

External Economic Committee of the Haiphong Administration.

If the project wins final approval, it will be one of the biggest foreign investments in Vietnam, with plans to build 11 industrial zones as part of a long-term economic strategy.

## Annual Election Took Place August 28

The Greater Seattle Vietnam Association held its annual meeting August 28. As provided in the bylaws, members elected a new Board of Governors, who then elected officers for the year beginning September 1.

Norma Mohr was re-elected President. John Sutherland was re-elected Vice President. Ned Kurabi was elected Treasurer.

Kurabi is a new member to the executive team. He is Vice President of Key Bank for international affairs.

At the board meeting on September 18, Judith Henchy was elected Secretary.

## Sept. 26th Potluck and Film!!!

Please join us in celebrating "normalization" with a buffet dinner party on September 26, 6 p.m., at the Burke Museum at the University of Washington. Family members and friends are welcomed. For questions and/or additional information, please call Beth Whitman at 547-1016.

Highlight of the evening will be a special viewing of the film "Kontum Diary," presented by Seattle producer Steve Smith.

## Poet Backs Seattle-Haiphong Link

One of Vietnam's most popular contemporary poets visited Seattle recently. Du Tu Le, reportedly was blacklisted by the Hanoi government. Nevertheless, according to an acquaintance, he had encouraging words

for the plans to create a Sister City relationship between Seattle and Haiphong. He said: "If it helps my people in Haiphong, then it is a good thing. We can't tell the earth to stop turning." -- From the Seattle Weekly, 6 Sept.

## Items On GSVB Bulletin Board

Several new items are appearing on the GSVB Bulletin Board in its "News Forum." These include an article on the Mekong River Commission's plans for new hydro-electric plants.

For people interested in the Internet there are several articles about attempts by the Vietnamese government to control access to the service.

To learn more about the GSVB Bulletin Board call John Sutherland, 946 6336.

## Questions And Answers About The Seafood Industry

Sara Hemphill's talk was entitled "Taking the Pulse of the Seafood Industry in Vietnam." Her conclusion: the prognosis for the patient is unclear.

Hemphill, a well known fisheries specialist who has done extensive work for the seafood industry in Alaska, spoke at a breakfast meeting of the Greater Seattle Vietnam Association on September 14 at the Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce.

For the last year and a half she has been dividing her time between Vietnam and Seattle.

She predicted that territorial disputes among Vietnam and her neighbors in Southeast Asia probably will take many years to sort out. And she said there had not been a definitive survey of how many fish were still left in the waters accessible to Vietnam.

One growing, prosperous region she mentioned was the area around Rach Gia on the Gulf of Siam in the south, close to Vietnam's border with Cambodia.

Huge factory ships are not suitable for waters around

Vietnam, and the speaker said the days of "hunting" fish, were on the wane. The big success stories, she believed, will be the operations for "farming" fish.

A largely untapped resource is fish farming on the fresh waters of the two big deltas, the Mekong Delta in the south and the Red River Delta in the north.

These areas have always fished on a small scale. Large scale fishing of these waters demands technology and close monitoring. According to Hemphill, the real potential has not yet been realized.

She said the potential for comparatively small fishing operations were excellent all along the coast line of the country.

But one issue that had not been solved was marketing. The Vietnamese fishing people still need and seek help from other countries in selling their catch.

Formal joint ventures have been established with several countries, and Japanese interests appear intermittently for buying out large supplies, mainly shrimp.

**Greater Seattle Vietnam Association**  
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I walk on thorns, but firmly, as among flowers  
I keep my head high  
Rimes bloom among the sounds of bombs and mortars  
The tears I shed yesterday have become rain  
I feel calm hearing its sound on the thatched roof  
Childhood (o my birthland!) is calling me  
And the rain melts my despair.

“Message”, by Thich Nhat Hanh

<b>Greater Seattle Vietnam Association</b>	
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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