

## UPDATE

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE GREATER SEATTLE VIETNAM ASSOCIATION

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### Seattle Opens its Doors Wide For Guest from Haiphong City

The friendship began in July 1995, with Hoang Van Dinh's first FAX to the Greater Seattle Vietnam Association. In his capacity as Haiphong's Director of Foreign Relations, he was announcing that his city was indeed interested in being a Sister to Seattle.

The interest turned to commitment and Mr. Dinh confirmed his city's commitment on his first ever visit to Seattle over the past Labor Day weekend.

Mr. Dinh's first communication with Seattle came after the Haiphong Mayor Dao An visited this city, apparently approving of what he saw.

GSVA had just made its own decision, based on consultations with several influential persons in Seattle, to seek a Sister City alliance with Haiphong. It was becoming clear that both cities wanted it. The rest would seem easy.

What followed for the next 16 months was a long, long chain of faxes between the two cities and trips to Haiphong by five GSVA members to consult the persistently patient and faithful Mr. Dinh about projects our cities would implement jointly.

Mr. Dinh arranged for the creation of an organization to coordinate activities — the Vietnam-USA Society of Haiphong City. Then the Peoples Committee of Haiphong voted unanimously to authorize our Sistership.

On the Seattle side of the ocean, the city's Office of International Relations accepted the GSVA petition for Sisterhood April 18, then presented it to

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### New Development and Investment Opportunities Reported.

The Vietnamese government has authorized creation of a special economic zone in the northeast. The location is at Mong Cai bordering China's Guangxi province on the Gulf of Tonkin. The Wall Street Journal reports that domestic and foreign investors will be offered tax breaks and low rents.

This news follows earlier reports that Vietnam was giving high priority to long range development of the entire area north from Haiphong, past Ha Long Bay and on to the border with China.

In addition Vietnam was earmarked 150 enterprises for equitization to create conditions for a stock market and funnel savings toward investment. Ten companies owned by Ho Chi Minh City will be equitized, or given a shareholding structure and partly sold off this year, says the Wall Street Journal.

### Four New Members Elected To GSVA Board of Directors

At their annual meeting on September 12th, the members of the GSVA elected four new members of the Board of Directors, and reelected officers for a second term.

The event, given at the University Friends Meeting, also included a buffet dinner and talks by Karl Hutterer, a specialist in human history of Southeast Asia and Director of the Burke Museum at the University of Washington; and Peace Trees Vietnam director Jerilyn Brusseau.

New members of the Board of Directors are: Minh Khue Dang, Credit Manager, Orca Food; Corporate member of GSVA.

Dwight Davis, Community Relations Specialist, Environmental Protection Agency; Editor, GSVA's *UPDATE* newsletter.

Karl Hutterer

James Kern, President of International Market Brands, an export-import business specializing in trade with Asia; Chair of the GSVA Fund Raising Committee.

Reelected officers were Norma Mohr, President; Gary Johnson, Vice President and Judith Henchy, Secretary. Khan Tran was elected Treasurer, a post he has filled on a temporary basis for several months.

## History Shelf

### Visitor Recalls Saga of the Famous Trung Sisters

When Hoang Van Dinh and his companions were introduced recently to Seattle Councilmember Sue Donaldson, he mentioned that he had already met the former Council President Jim Street in Haiphong last year. Mr. Dinh was informed that Jan Drago was now President of the Council.

That's something else Seattle has in common with Vietnam, he said. Powerful women. Then he offered a capsule summary of the saga of the Trung sisters, an episode in history books as famous in Vietnam as George Washington crossing the Delaware is here.

The Trung sisters led a revolt against the Chinese of the Han Dynasty who ruled Vietnam for about a thousand years starting in 111 B.C. The Chinese rule was regarded as harsh and unfair. The incident that ignited the insurrection led by the Trung sisters was in 39 A.D. when the Chinese executed Trung Thac's husband, a noble Lord. Her sister joined her to lead the Vietnamese forces against the occupiers, and the next year 68 Chinese citadels were over-run and the occupiers evicted.

The Trung sisters ruled for three years, reducing taxes and introducing reforms. But when the Chinese returned in 43 A.D. with reinforcements, they reconquered the Vietnamese. The Trung sisters committed suicide, drowning in the Day River and the Chinese ruled until 939, interrupted by several intermittent revolts. The theme of brave patriotic women leaders defeating superior forces remained popular.

It is said some vestiges of old citadels from the days of the Trung sisters remain in Me Linh 40 miles northwest of Hanoi. Fragments of old walls 11 yards thick may be seen. The memory of the triumph of the Trung sisters is observed on the 6th day of the 7th moon, usually in late February or early March.

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## Haiphong Official Hosted by GSVa

Mayor Rice, who accepted it in May and moved it forward for final consideration by the Seattle City Council.

Finally, after 17 months of being a sister-in-waiting, Mr. Dinh came to Seattle on the Thursday afternoon before the Labor Day weekend. He was one of three Vietnamese officials on a theme tour sponsored by the U.S. Information Agency. The theme was urban planning.

The other two travelers were from Hanoi — Vuong Anh Dzung, Head of the Second Planning Department of Inter-urban and Rural Planning in Hanoi, and Dotu Chung, Expert Architect and Manager of the Planning Department, Minister of Construction. Earlier in August they had visited Washington, D.C., New York City, Chicago, St. Louis and Los Angeles.

The group was entertained Thursday at dinner by Charles and Jo Hirschman. He is the head of the Sociology Department at the University of Washington, and his wife is Chair of the GSVa Committee for Teaching English. The other guests were several of the Vietnamese faculty and students at the University.

The next day the city was starting to close down for the long holiday weekend, but the visitors were able to have several meetings and meals with GSVa members and friends.

Mr. Dinh gave GSVa President Norma Mohr a detailed briefing on economic developments in Haiphong. Then the group met with Seattle City Councilmember Sue Donaldson, who had traveled to Vietnam on a mission sponsored by Seattle's Trade Development Alliance (TDA). They attended a luncheon hosted by TDA Deputy Director Joyce Noonan, before their tour of Boeing Field in Everett.

Mr. Dinh was also entertained by GSVa Vice President Gary Johnson and Treasurer Khan Tran and members of the GSVa Health and Humanitarian Aid Committee. The entire group of visitors were guests at a final dinner hosted by Judith Henchy, GSVa Secretary and Library and Culture Committee Chair.

# Seattle City Council Votes To Authorize Sister City Relationship With Haiphong

On Monday, September 30, the Seattle City Council voted unanimously to authorize a Sister City relationship between Seattle and Haiphong, the large port city in northern Vietnam.

The Greater Seattle Vietnam Association (GSVA) worked for almost four years for this goal. First it tried for a Sister City relationship with Ho Chi Minh City. But that city chose instead to link with San Francisco.

The campaign to link with Haiphong was begun in June 1995 and was accomplished finally under the authority of GSVA's Seattle Haiphong Sister City Committee, working in collaboration with counterpart individuals and organizations in Haiphong.

The final action was taken with Council President Jan Drago presiding. She commended GSVA for its perseverance and predicted that the new alliance would be an influence for strong relationships in the future between the City of Seattle and the State of Washington and the country of Vietnam.

Councilmember Sue Donaldson, a long term supporter for links between Seattle and Vietnam, also spoke at the meeting. Following her own participation in an early mission to Vietnam sponsored by the Greater Seattle Trade Development Alliance, she became committed to school exchanges between children. She described a visit she had to a Vietnamese school. She was invited to a second grade classroom where the students rose and sang "Oh, Susanna."

The President of GSVA Norma Mohr thanked the City Council for their trust, saying she was humbled by the support the organization had received from the Council and many individuals and institutions.

She pledged that GSVA would do everything in its power to be worthy of the trust.

Gary Johnson, Chairman of the Seattle Haiphong Sister City Committee, also thanked the City Council for its endorsement and acknowledged the good help GSVA has had from the City's Office of International Relations.

In addition, several others spoke before the Council to express their gratitude for the new authorization and to express their gratitude to GSVA for providing a chance to work together to help the people of Seattle promote the economic and social recovery of the people of Vietnam. The speakers were, Khan Tran, GSVA Treasurer and member of the Board of Directors; Board members Beth Whitman, Jessica Nguyen, Dwight Davis, Minh Khue Dang, and longtime friend of the organization, Tina Vuong.

## 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.

### GSVA Officers:

Norma Mohr.....President  
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 Judith Henchy.....Secretary  
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### **On A Common Front**

Each night, watching my own shadow,  
I feel solitude deep in my soul  
And hate the strangeness of my bed.  
Each morning, I wait for the bird's early song and first cock's crow  
And remember I have got too much time  
To spend in too little space.  
Footsteps are confined in a two-meter cell,  
In which I make one step foward and stop after the next.  
Imagine the vast expanses of my country  
And long for my freedom like a tiger for his jungle.

by Hoang Lien