

UPDATE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE GREATER SEATTLE VIETNAM ASSOCIATION

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Editor, Dwight Davis

Food, Speeches, and Prizes!

Come celebrate Seattle's new sister city link with Haiphong--Sunday, February 16, 5:30-8:30 pm at the Burke Museum, UofW. Admission is \$25.00. Former Governor Mike Lowry and Seattle City Council member Sue Donaldson will speak. A silent auction will offer prizes that include a Puget Sound cruise. For details call Gary Johnson at 632-4959, Khue Dang at 630-9460, or Beth Whitman at 547-1016.

SPECIAL EVENTS

SEAFAIR INTERNATIONAL YOUTH SUMMIT

March 22 & 23, Seattle University. International high school students will meet with Seattle students for a two-day symposium on the theme "Common Ground in a World of Differences." This is part of the SEAFAIR Ambassador Program developed in 1989 by SEAFAIR volunteers. Seattle civic leaders and King County educators to give students a chance to focus on global economic and cultural awareness. GSVa members may volunteer for home hospitality for participants or other activities. Call 325-4673.

INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL

May 12-17 Seattle Center. Performers this year are from Kenya, Tibet, Russia, Argentina, Wales, Japan, Zimbabwe, Canada and the U.S. School groups may reserve now; call 684 7336. Sales to the general public start in April; call 684-7346.

PACIFIC RIM SISTER CITIES FORUM

July 29 - 30, San Diego, Ca. Sister Cities International will feature Sister City relationships in the Pacific Rim at the annual convention in San Diego. A special focus will be given to U.S.-Japan relationships in honor of the 40th anniversary of the San Diego-Yokohama sister city relationship. The program includes workshops, panel discussions and a keynote speech by the Mayor of Yokohama. Get a detailed program and registration information from Sister Cities International, 120 S. Payne St., Alexandria, Va. 22324. Phone: (703) 836-3535; fax: (703) 836-4815.

Seattle Sisters Get Close

The Sisters City movement in Seattle has undergone a new experience in bonding. A coordinating committee has been created to link all the separate organizations here that have a sister overseas. There are 21 Sister Cities in Seattle, including the new one sponsored by GSVa.

Looking at the rationale and goals of the new Coordinating Committee, one may wonder why it took so long to emerge. It is destined to be important.

Each Sister organization is a diverse group of private citizens seeking links of various kinds with the people of a foreign city.

Each followed the guidelines of the the City of Seattle for qualifying as a Sister organization. And each followed the proclamation of President Eisenhower that created Sister Cities International in 1956. He said: "The Sister Cities program is an important resource to the negotiations of governments in letting the people themselves give expression of their common desire for friendship, goodwill and cooperation for a better world for all."

The new coordinating committee was created by Tsering Yuthok, Coordinator of International Community Programs of the Office of Intergovernmental Relations at the Mayor's office. She was assisted by several representatives of active Sister alliances.

At the first meeting of the year on January 8 in the Mayor's conference room, each representative described some of the highlights of 1996. These included exchanges of artifacts for display, girl's soccer teams, gifts of marching band uniforms and more. The Seattle
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NEWS BRIEFS

It is hard to pick the winner in the competition in Vietnam between Coca-Cola and Pepsi Cola. Both are growing quickly in popularity, and added together they dominate the soft-drink market.

Coke's sales grew 123 percent in the year ended September 1996 and are expected to rise 121 percent in the current fiscal year. Coke producers estimate per capita consumption of all carbonated soft drinks last year was about 12 eight-ounce servings per year. The Pepsi suppliers says it can't keep up with demand.

The rival companies are concentrating on expanding their distribution networks, and TV advertising. Coca-cola is now the No. 2 television advertiser in the nation, behind an anti-influenza drug.) This was bad news for Festi, a popular carbonated soft drink manufactured by a local concern, Meko Food Co. Meko's general director Nguyen Huu Phuong told the Wall Street Journal his sales grew "a little bit" last year and may hold steady this year. But he said "I dare not be optimistic.

Coal Production Up

Vietnam produced 10.9 tons of coal last year, reaching its target for year 2000 three years ahead of schedule.

Steel Production Increases

Sources in Hanoi report that Vietnam steel production last year increased 226 percent over 1995. This allowed the country to reduce its import of steel to 300,000 tons.

New Foreign Investments

A total of 162 foreign direct investment projects were received by Vietnam's industrial sector last year, according to news reports, with a total registered capital of \$2.19 billion. Heavy industry accounted for 63 of the projects, with a total investment capital of more than \$1 billion. Light industry received \$470 million for 67 projects, and the food industry received \$612 million for 29 projects.

Tourism Up

The Vietnam tourist department says the number of foreign visitors to Vietnam rose by 18 percent to 1.6 million in 1996. The growth was 33 percent in 1995.

History shelf

During the late 13th Century, Dai Viet (as Vietnam was called during the Tran Dynasty) won one of the greatest military victories in Asia. The Mongolian Empire led by Ghengis Khan and later Kublai Khan had swept across Asia from the Caspian Sea to Japan and from Siberia to Quang Dong Province in southern China. The invaders were regarded as invincible and unstoppable, and the destruction of the small country of Dai Viet was regarded as an easy assignment for the battle-tested generals and massive forces of Toghon, heir to the throne of the Mongolian empire. The invading forces were stopped, however, not once or twice but three times — in 1281, 1285 and 1287. Before the first Mongolian invasion of Dai Viet, the Emperor called for a nation-wide conference, or Hoi Nghi Dien Hong, to discuss the question of whether to surrender or resist. The entire nation called for resisting. The Emperor also consulted General Tran Hung Dao. According to recorded history, he responded that as long as his head was still above his shoulders, the Emperor should not even think about surrendering. General Tran, who was in charge of the Vietnamese defense, was the author of two books called Binh Thu Yeu Luoc (Essentials of Military Strategy) and Hich Tuong Si. (Appeal to Officers). All officers including the generals had copies of these books, which reportedly had a significant influence on the Vietnamese soldiers' morale and confidence. Their morale was so high that many soldiers had their arms tattooed with the words "sat that," which literally means "kill Mongolian." Vietnamese nationalism was also exemplified by General Tran Binh Trong. He was captured by Toghon, who asked him to surrender, but the general replied that he would prefer to be a ghost of Dai Viet than to be a king in the north (implying China or Mongolia.) The successful repulsion of the Mongols by Dai Viet resulted not only in the military and political defeat of the once mighty Mongolian Empire, but also enabled Vietnam to be independant and autonomous for hundreds of years.

By Do Chi Trong

Scientists Keep Finding "New" Animal Life

Survey teams from the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Vietnamese naturalists have been looking for "new" species of animals. These are rare species living in places where their existence had never been recorded. They include rare monkeys, pheasants, butterflies and an animal like a giant barking deer.

Biological Richness

In a recent report the WWF president Kathryn S. Fuller said, "we continue to be reminded in dramatic fashion how little scientists really know about Vietnam's biological richness." Much of the plant and animal life in Vietnam have taken on distinctive, local forms and characteristics. Scientists are eager to discover and record as much as they can as the country experiences rapid development throughout remote regions. One of the recent finds is a species of bird called Edwards' pheasant, formerly thought to be extinct in the wild. The last known collection of a live specimen of this bird was made in 1928. Two of the rare pheasants were found by local villagers in Bach Ma, south of Hue - much to the delight of the scientists. WWF specialists believe the exceptionally wet and lush forests there may be the only protected area in the world where an Edwards' pheasant population could exist.

Hope for rare birds

Fuller, said "Rediscovering the Edwards pheasant after 70 years means mankind has a second chance to save this exquisite bird and its habitat." At Bach Ma National Park other specialists have identified 176 species of butterflies, including several

believed to be new to science. Earlier, several very rare mammals have been recorded in Vietnam. These include a black, slender long-tailed monkey called the Ha Tinh langur found in the central highland forests of western Quang Binh Province. Scientists report that this monkey, or langur, has developed distinct behavioral and social characteristics due to its fragmented and relatively isolated limestone forest habitat. Other treasures for the naturalists included the saola or Vu Quang ox, a shy nocturnal animal found in Vu Quang nature reserve in north central Vietnam. This was only the sixth large mammal species found throughout the world by scientists this century.

Respect for natural wealth

Vu Quang also was the location of another new find, a giant muntjac, which is related to but twice the size of the common barking deer. WWF thinks more surprises await the naturalists. Praise was given to the people of Vietnam for their enthusiasm for protecting their environment. One WWF official said the country is introducing new environmental legislation to ensure that economic development is not at the expense of its natural wealth.

(Sisters-Continued)

Gdynia Sister city president described the benefit Polish film festival his organization sponsored, and the Seattle Christchurch Sister City president reported that the replacement kea had arrived from New Zealand and was almost ready to be released out of quarantine. It will replace the kea, a big parrot with a long heavy beak, brought to the Woodland Park Zoo earlier, but killed by a wild soccer ball.

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
 Gary Johnson.....Vice President
 Judith Henchy.....Secretary
 Khan Tran.....Treasurer

Address:

P.O. Box 23282
 Seattle, WA 98102

Telephone:

(206) 322-1178

FAX:

(206) 325-0336

Greater Seattle Vietnam Association
P.O. Box 23282
Seattle, Washington 98102