

# UPDATE

Bi-monthly Membership Newsletter Reporting on US - Vietnamese Current Events and Culture  
 Issue 6 November/December 1999



**Mission Statement:** GSWA is committed to promoting positive relationships and mutual understanding between the people of Greater Seattle and the people of Viet Nam. We will accomplish this by promoting contact and cooperation in the areas of education, humanitarian work, trade and the arts.

**THE GREATER SEATTLE  
 VIET NAM ASSOCIATION**

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## A CHILD'S DREAM... that came true!

By Son Michael Pham

On October 7, 1999, two board members from the Greater Seattle Viet Nam Association traveled to Hai Phong for the ribbon cutting ceremony of a new playground at the Hoa Phuong Orphanage. We were honored to have United States Ambassador and Mrs. Pete Peterson with us at the event. In a speech he



*Pictured (left to right): Son Michael Pham, Al De Matteis, Beth Whitman, Madam Dai, Mrs. & Mr. Peterson, Dr. Hung, and the Deputy Director of Education of Hai Phong*

made at the ceremony, Ambassador Peterson spoke of the importance of projects, such as this, serving as a link to friendship between the peoples of our two countries.

Our relationship with the Hoa Phuong Orphan Village began in the mid 90's, when numerous GSWA members (including Sue Donaldson, President of the Seattle City Council) visited

the Village. Since then, each subsequent trip to the orphanage has made us more attached to these wonderful, yet unfortunate, children.

The uniqueness of this orphanage is what captured the attention and hearts of many of our members. Fifty children live at the orphanage, ranging in age from three to 17 years old. Each child is placed with a 'family' in which they instantly have nine siblings and one mother. They take on one family name and treat each other as brother and sister. Although they live together in close quarters, it is a supportive family situation in which these dedicated mothers instill family values and hard work into the children.

Funds for the playground were raised in June of 1998, when GSWA held its annual benefit and auction dinner, under the theme of 'A Child's Dream.' We felt this project would make an immediate and lasting impact on the children's lives. The project progressed in February 1999, when we began working with the Director of Foreign Affairs of Hai Phong City. Our collaboration led to a

*Continued on page 6*

## On the Board

We hope this section of The Update has helped you get to know GSVAs Board of Directors. We look forward to having the opportunity to better know you, our membership, in the upcoming year. Volunteering to participate on a committee, sharing your ideas, attending GSVAs functions, and your attendance at board meetings are just a few of the ways we can work together to promote positive relationships within our community, and with the people of Viet Nam.

In closing this section, I'd like to introduce you to Betty Tisdale, and Sally Schultz, our two newest Board members:

### Sally Schultz



Sally has been interested in Viet Nam since her first trip to Asia in 1984, when she visited China, then British ruled Hong Kong, and Singapore. After reading several books about Viet Nam, she developed a desire to explore the country. Sally felt certain this would be her next destination. In 1989, she discovered that Betty Tisdale (now her fellow board member!), was living in Seattle. Although her endeavor was unsuccessful, at the time, Sally attempted to search for Betty, hoping to connect and contribute.

In 1996, while attending an International District Rotary, Sally heard about PeaceTrees Vietnam, a landmine

removal and tree-planting project scheduled to take place in Quang Tri Province that fall. It took 12 years from her first visit to Asia to find the right trip, and this was it. According to Sally, it was worth the wait.

A month after returning to Seattle from Dong Ha, Sally was volunteering with her Rotary's Giraffe Project in a third grade classroom at Bailey Gatzert School and met Nga Nguyen, who was born in Sai Gon. They became fast friends and Sally has been her Big Sister for three years. Sally has become a member of the family, according to Nga's mother Chi, and is learning to cook and expand her Vietnamese vocabulary beyond ten words.

Sally is a commercial mortgage broker by profession, and specializes in working with the immigrant community. She loves play of all kinds, and is ready to throw a ball, a Tarot card, do a handstand, or sport with her Corgi dog Tasha, at a moment's notice.

### Betty Tisdale



Betty Tisdale is recognized internationally for her humanitarian work on behalf of Asian children. A native of Pittsburgh, PA, Betty was working for US Steel Corporation in New York when she met Dr. Tom Dooley, renowned for his compassionate care of the sick and homeless in Southeast Asia.

Inspired by Dr. Dooley's work, Betty helped to establish and maintain refugee camps in Thailand and India, as well as the An Lac Orphanage in Sai Gon, South Viet Nam. In 1961, she made the first of fourteen trips to Southeast Asia.

As the war escalated in Viet Nam, she continued her annual trips to work at the orphanage, teaching English and assisting in the care of 400 children and babies. At home, in the United States, Betty established An Lac Orphanage, Inc., a fundraising organization. She worked tirelessly to raise money through lectures, articles, television and radio appearances, including interviews on NBC's Today Show and in Time Magazine.

In April 1975, when the communists were twelve miles from Sai Gon, Betty evacuated 219 orphans from An Lac. The story of her dramatic rescue of the children has been told in an ABC television movie starring Shirley Jones.

Following the evacuation, Betty worked to establish homes for the children in the United States. She has been awarded numerous honors, including a Presidential Commendation in recognition of exceptional service to others, the Medal of Honor from the Daughters of the American Revolution, and a special award by the government of South Viet Nam for humanitarianism. Betty was GSVAs own guest of honor at our recent fundraiser.

Betty has served on several boards, including the Tom Dooley Memorial Heritage, Inc. of New York, and was instrumental in establishing a home for the mentally retarded in Columbus GA. She has been a Seattle resident since 1982.

Betty currently lectures on a variety of topics, including "The Art of Goal Setting," and "Building Networks." In her spare time, she loves to ballroom dance.

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

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Ideas for articles may be submitted to Teri Conti at P.O. Box 27545, Seattle, WA 98125 or at: angelheart2@earthlink.net

**Deadlines for article submission:**

- January 17, 2000
- March 17, 2000
- May 17, 2000
- July 14, 2000
- September 15, 2000
- November 16, 2000

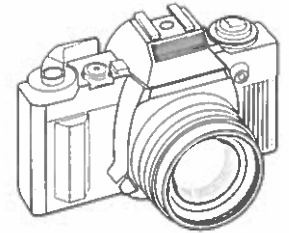
# ME AND MY CAMERA

*By Beth Whitman*

This year I had the opportunity to travel to Viet Nam. Not once, not twice, but on three occasions. For those of you who have traveled to the Land of the Dragon, you know that the country itself is enough to draw you back again and again. But it was something more than this country's beauty that pulled me back in October.

For the last year, The Greater Seattle Viet Nam Association has worked to raise funds for the Hoa Phuong Orphanage in Hai Phong in order to build a playground for the 50 children who live there. With each visit, I got to know these children a little better, and with each visit I became more attached. It was these kids who, unbeknownst to them, drew me back to participate in the ribbon cutting ceremony for the completion of the playground. GSVa was lucky to have a crew from KING 5's Evening Magazine commit to attend and film the ceremony as part of a special program on Viet Nam that aired on November 22.

Fellow GSVa board member, Son Michael Pham, traveled with John Curley, Mimi Gan and Tom Voelk of Evening Magazine for the entire trip as the in country expert and they were kind enough to let me and my well-worn, world-traveled camera equipment tag along for some of the trip. This gave me the opportunity to not only revisit the orphanage, but to also experience some very special moments in other parts of the country.



The ribbon cutting ceremony took place on October 7. The children enthusiastically played on their new equipment and with the many soccer balls and toys we distributed. Even US Ambassador Pete Peterson who attended the ceremony, joined in by sliding down the plastic slide on this new setup!

My time at the orphanage was enriching, as always. As the Evening Magazine crew spent some time filming around the orphanage and around Hai Phong, I took the opportunity to sit with some of the children, play with them on their new playground equipment and even taught them how to thumb wrestle. Though the language barrier was vast, it afforded me the opportunity to connect with these children in a non-verbal way. At the Son Ca family's household, one of the girls put some music on and encouraged me to dance with her. It is these precious moments that remain indelible in my mind.

The crew from Evening Magazine traveled through nine different cities in 11 days (expertly arranged by Vietnam Tourism in Virginia), hauling over 500 pounds of luggage and equipment including 140 pounds of donated goods from Seattle area businesses for the children in Viet Nam. Even though each stop was brief, it gave us just enough opportunity to connect with the people, listen to their stories, and learn about their daily lives. From the kids in a remote village who were wounded by explosives that are still found buried from years before they were born, to witnessing the adoption of a five-month old girl as she joined her mother for a new and promising life in Seattle.

With my camera, not only was I able to capture the essence of the people, but I also brought back beautiful images of Viet Nam itself. From the limestone rock formations in Ha Long Bay to the famous drive across the Hai Van Pass between Hue and Da Nang (recently ranked as one of the top 50 must-see places in the world) to the white sand beaches of China Beach. Sadly, this area in Central Viet Nam is currently recovering from damage caused by one of the heaviest floods this area has encountered this century.

Fun and adventure aside, Son and I also had the opportunity to meet with Dr. David Hipgrave, Director of the Viet Nam

*Continued on page 7*

**ADVERTISING RATES:**

NUMBER OF ISSUES	RATE
1	\$ 60
2	\$ 120
3	\$ 171
4	\$ 219
5	\$ 259
6	\$ 287

**DEADLINES FOR ARTWORK ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

Jan/Feb	January 17
Mar/Apr	March 17
May/June	May 17
July/Aug	July 14
Sept/Oct	September 16
Nov/Dec	November 16

Artwork must be black and white and camera ready. Original artwork, laser copies, a diskette or business card can be submitted, and must be received by the deadline for inclusion in the forthcoming issue.

Questions: Call Teri at (206) 525-3650 or email her at: [angelheart2@earthlink.net](mailto:angelheart2@earthlink.net)

**UP & COMING EVENTS****\* December 2:**

Join the University of Washington's Center for Adoption Medicine for a lecture series on adoption. This week's topic is 'Lifebooks.'

7:30pm to 9:00pm. \$20 per family.

(See \* for additional classes)

To register call Nancy Kaplan at 425-836-4458.

**\* December 9th:**

The Older Adopted Child

# Central Viet Nam Devastated by the Worst Flood of the Century

by Teri Conti

**E**arly November spelled disaster for residents of central Viet Nam, when torrential rains wreaked havoc in seven provinces. According to some news sources, with waters rising as high as seven feet in some areas, November's flood was the worst Viet Nam has experienced in the last 100 years. Preliminary reports estimate \$215 million in damages alone.

According to The American Red Cross, waters submerged an area stretching 300 miles, affecting some seven million people, and destroying 205,000 tons of food, 120,000 tons of rice seed and killing more than 25,000 cows and water buffaloes.

To date, 622 people have been reported dead and many more missing. Thua Thien Hue, the most devastated province, has experienced the greatest loss, with 328 deaths reported. The following facts have been cited in a November 14th report compiled by The Disaster Management Unit of Viet Nam: among other statistics, 41,846 homes have been destroyed and 870,000 houses have been damaged; 94,000 classrooms have been damaged or destroyed; 1,470 bridges have been washed out; and 1,162 boats and ships have been damaged and sunk.

Uplift International (UI), a humanitarian aid organization located in Alexandria, VA, estimates that 1.4 million people are homeless, and tens of thousands injured and sick. According to the same source, disease has become rampant: intestinal illness, diarrhea, dengue fever, flu, eye infections and respiratory ailments have broken out in five of the seven flood ravaged provinces. In addition, Viet Nam Television, according to the American Red Cross, states that measles have become prevalent in Quang Tri Province, and that without clean drinking water, the situation could become even worse.

The deluge has put an already compromised medical system, which suffers chronic shortages of equipment and supplies, into a state of crisis. According to a Reuters article, dated November 11, approximately 500 hospitals and medical clinics have been destroyed, leaving flood victims without adequate medical care. Sources within Viet Nam report that health related issues are among the most important to address at this time.

International efforts to address the needs of flood victims include: donations of bedding, food, mosquito nets, soap, and home construction kits by the International Federation of Red Cross and the Red Crescent Societies; and 2,727 storm-resistant houses, and 5,000 household kits, comprising essential household products, such as soap and cooking utensils donated by the U. S.

*Continued on next page*

Agency for International Development's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance.

Here at home, GSVa has formed a coalition with three local non-profit organizations: Kids First (whose committee sits under the umbrella of GSVa) PeaceTrees Vietnam, and Prosthetics Outreach Foundation. The focal point of our fundraising efforts is Quang Tri Province, location of the old DMZ and one of the poorest regions in the country, and The Hue Central Hospital, regional facility for central Viet Nam. Our vision is to raise \$60,000 by January 1st, which will go towards the purchase of necessary medicines and supplies, such as antibiotics, bandages and IV equipment, food, and other items essential to the health and well-being of the people who reside in the area. Two thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight dollars has been sent at the time of this writing.

After much consideration, the coalition unanimously decided to choose Uplift International as the medical relief agency with whom we will work. Their success record includes supplying medicines to hospitals and orphanages in Indonesia, and more importantly, they have a proven track record working in Viet Nam. In 1997, after Typhoon Linda struck southern Viet Nam, UI was the first foreign relief organization to tour the devastated area. Together with Project Hope, an international non-profit health education foundation, they brought 6.5 tons of medicine and medical supplies, valued at \$347,000 wholesale, to the area; (the Eli Lilly Co. donated the medicines). GSVa contributed funds to support this effort. And in 1998, UI donated medicine to hospitals in Ho Chi Minh City and Quang Tri Provincial Hospital in Dong Ha Town; the later being one the hospitals we will support in our current fundraising campaign.

UI now has the opportunity to purchase \$350,000 worth of medicines (wholesale value) at the incredibly reduced price of \$5600. Forty percent of funds raised by the coalition will go towards this endeavor. The medicines must be purchased immediately, however, as an airlift is scheduled for December 2nd. Korean Air has generously donated cargo space to ship the supplies. The remaining 60% of raised funds will go directly to the Peoples Committee of Quang Tri Province, who will use the money to purchase food and materials according to the needs of the local people.

These relief efforts are just the beginning. While we, and other organizations, are stepping in to address immediate needs, such as supplying food and medicines, long-term efforts will be needed. Roads will need repairing, irrigation systems will need to be replaced, livestock will need to be regrown and homes and schools will need to be built.

I find it interesting to reflect on how a time of crisis draws us together, and motivates us to act on another's behalf, when we would otherwise be engaged in our own personal endeavors. Perhaps we share a common bond, often unspoken, yet felt in times of misfortune, that we are all in this together. We, at GSVa, will keep you informed about future projects and ways you can get involved.

If you would like to contribute, checks can be made out to: The Vietnam Recovery Fund, and sent in care of Key Bank, 700 fifth Ave., Seattle, WA 98104; Attention Louie Floresca. All contributions are tax deductible.

We would like to welcome and acknowledge our most recent members. Your support and interest in GSVa is what keeps us growing strong, and enables us to expand the depth, and breadth, of projects in Viet Nam.

#### Americans Adopting Orphans

Steve Behrens

Nancy & Reid Bullock

John & Donna Doney

Elaine Ethier

Ellen Ferguson

Joseph Giordano

Leslie Grace

Larry Gueck

Bill Hardin

Lea Ann Kaplan

Bob Linz

Julie Olson

Joni Panciera

Mark Plunkett

Russell Porterfield

Karen Sheridan

Mike Shimizu & Alex Hubbard

Coburn Smith

Betty Tisdale

Sean & Michelle Tisdale

Peggy Whitman

Wendy Wisdom

We apologize if we missed your name. Please let us know so we can be sure to acknowledge you in a future issue!

# Child's Dream

*Continued from page 1*

groundbreaking ceremony at the Village in March. Five representatives of the GSVa board attended this event.

During a subsequent trip in July, Ambassador Peterson introduced GSVa board members to Delta Equipment and Construction, based in Ha Noi and owned by Al Dematteis (please see related article). An agreement was soon in place to have the playground completed in early October.

Delta Equipment worked closely with our group in completing the project just days before a KING 5 Evening Magazine crew arrived in Hai Phong to film the crowning of this project. Images of the children at the orphanage were captured as they played on their new equipment. We hope you saw the half hour program which aired on November 22. It included stories about many northwest-based organizations involved in projects in Viet Nam (check-out the KING5.com website for more information). In addition to the playground, the children were delighted when, with the help of Mimi Gan of Evening Magazine, we handed out goodie gift bags.

This project taught us how to work effectively with the local government in Hai Phong and how to successfully complete a project 10,000 miles away. We are grateful for all we have learned, and look forward to applying our knowledge to future projects.

We would like to thank all of our donors and supporters for making this Child's Dream possible. Our special thanks to the Boeing Company, the Seattle Sounders, the Detlef Schrempf Foundation, KJR Sports Radio, the Seattle Mariners, Drugstore.com, the University District Rotary Club, EVA Airlines, Delta Equipment & Construction Company in Ha Noi, and KING 5 Evening Magazine for their contributions to the ribbon cutting ceremony.

If you wish to learn how to support the children at the Hoa Phuong Orphanage, please contact us via email at [gsvawausa@aol.com](mailto:gsvawausa@aol.com) or at (206) 322-1178.



*Children using new playground equipment at the An Lac Orphanage in Hai Phong.*

*"Today, in the cheerful spirit of the opening ceremony of the playground, on behalf of my 50 friends in the Village, I would like to express my sincere thanks for your gift to us. We, the orphan children, who had no roof, were lucky to be brought to the Village in the sincere love of uncles, mothers and aunts. Given this life is our great consolation. But the consolation has also been increased by your kind-hearted attention.*

*"Waiting for a long time, today the playground, assisted by the Seattle-Hai Phong City Association, has been completed and we received a valuable spiritual present. It will bring us much joy and some relaxing moments after stressful learning hours. We will have healthy entertainment and so learn better, become good children and pupils and useful persons to the society.*

*"We would like to sincerely thank you for your assistance and hope that we will receive continued support, in order to make the landscape of the Village more and more green, clean and beautiful. We wish to have more and more facilities and entertainment places which are appropriate to our age for making our spiritual and material life better and better."*

**- Speech delivered on October 7, 1999 by one of the children who reside at the orphanage**

## Me & My Camera

*Continued from page 1*

Health Alliance in Ha Noi; an organization that does work for the well-known Seattle based Program for Appropriate Health Technologies (PATH). It was through this meeting that we learned about the worm infestation problem that effects nearly 90 percent of the population in Viet Nam, especially the children. A ten-cent pill administered twice a year is all that it takes to help cure this problem. GSVa is currently seeking funding and support for this project.

What next? The trip allowed us to not only further our understanding of the people and the needs of one of the poorest countries in Asia, it also allowed us to witness how far a little money from the U.S. can go. GSVa is committed to improving the ties and understanding between the two countries through projects and programs that help the people directly without costly government involvement. Trips, such as this, have provided us with invaluable experience, which we are already applying to projects for the year 2000.

As I ponder and dream about my next trip to Viet Nam, I realize that the Hoa Phuong children might be my initial motivation to return, but my experiences always exceed the expectations awaiting me and my camera.

For more information on future Viet Nam projects by GSVa or for speaking arrangements at your organizations' functions, please contact Son Michael Pham at 206-322-1178 or by email at [gsvawausa@aol.com](mailto:gsvawausa@aol.com) (we do have a variety of speakers on our board).

\* For travel and visa arrangements through VietnamTourism, contact Doug Reese in Virginia at [dreese@erols.com](mailto:dreese@erols.com) or (703) 641-7738.

# LANGUAGE BANK SEEKS VIETNAMESE SPEAKERS

*"I was once a refugee needing volunteer assistance. I would like to have an opportunity to give whatever I can to the community."*

*-- LeAnh, Vietnamese Language Bank Volunteer*

*By Seema Bharwani*

Imagine how it feels to move to a new country and not be able to communicate. What do you do when your child's teacher wants to talk to you about your son's or daughter's progress in school? To whom do you turn when a house fire ravages through your house and destroys all of your possessions? How do you get in contact with social service organizations that could help you meet your basic needs?

One in four families in Seattle-King County speaks a language other than English in the home. Imagine how many people are not getting services because of a language barrier. The American Red Cross Language Bank is here to bridge that gap. We provide interpretation and translation services to non-profit organizations, as well as individual refugees and immigrants. Two hundred fifty volunteers, who speak about 60 different languages and dialects, provide services. Our clients include homeless or domestic violence shelters, food banks, schools, and other non-profit organizations. The main function of the Language Bank is to ensure that non-English speakers can meet their basic needs and avoid preventable emergency situations.

Because there are large numbers of refugees and immigrants living in the Seattle-King County area, the demand of interpreters and translators is high. Last month alone, the Language Bank hit a record high, as we provided services in more than 60 cases. Right now, Vietnamese is the second most requested language. Unfortunately, we do not have enough Vietnamese-speaking volunteers to keep up with the demands of the community. We are in desperate need of Vietnamese-speakers who are willing to give of their time and special language ability to help others.

What can you do to help? If you are bilingual, become a volunteer interpreter/translator. We provide training, and professional experience is not necessary. The Language Bank offers a great deal of flexibility for its volunteers; our interpreters and translators volunteer as much or as little as they want to, based on their schedules and availability.

If you are interested in becoming a Language Bank volunteer and getting involved with this very special community service, please contact Language Bank Coordinator Seema Bharwani at (206) 726-3554 or via email at [languagebank@seattleredcross.org](mailto:languagebank@seattleredcross.org).



**Membership Benefits**

- Receive our bimonthly newsletter to stay informed about happenings here, and abroad, regarding issues pertaining to Viet Nam.
- Attend our popular Business Breakfast Series, where guest speakers share their experiences of working with, and in, Viet Nam.
- Attend events like barbecues with people interested in Viet Nam.
- Learn how you can contribute and participate in GSVA projects.

**MEMBERSHIP DUES:**

**Individual member:** Student/low income...\$10  
 Friend of the Association...\$25 Philanthropist...\$100  
**Corporate member:** Associate partner...\$100  
 Senior Partner...\$500 Executive partner...\$1,000

**MEMBERSHIP FORM**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Type of Membership \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

*Your membership contributes to GSVA projects AND is tax deductible.*

Seattle, WA 98102  
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