

# The Greater Seattle Viet Nam Association



## UPDATE

January/February 2001

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## Chúc Mừng Năm Mới

Happy New Year. Vietnamese around the world will celebrate The Vietnamese Lunar New Year Festival, or Tet Nguyen Dan, during the fourth week of January 2001. The first day on the lunar calendar of the Year of the Snake will be on Wednesday, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Known as Tet, this is the most important holiday of the year for Vietnamese.

The Vietnamese Tet is an occasion for people to celebrate family, love and peace. Preparation for Tet begins weeks before the first day of the new year. One must get rid of the old and start with the new: houses are painted and cleaned, debts are paid off, family and friends show forgiveness for each other, and market and shops are open day and night to accommodate shoppers.

One of the Tet symbols is a yellow blossom flower (with up to 8 petals) called Hoa Mai, which represents prosperity and health in the coming year. As the family-oriented seven-day celebration carries into the week, it is time for family reunions, exchanging gifts and wishes. Families visit church or temple to pray for prosperity, good health and happiness.

Joss sticks (incense) are lit on family altars and offering of food, drinks, and flowers are made in remembrance of late relatives and ancestors.

For children, the most cheerful and exciting time is the tradition of 'Mung Tuoi' or New Year Congratulation. Younger family members offer gifts of wine, fruit, cake, to elders with wishes of good health, longevity, and happiness. In turn, children receive congratulation gifts called 'Li Xi', which is money inside of a small red envelope with wishes of good behavior, good study and growth.

On New Year's Day, the Vietnamese people are very careful about their activities. Everyone will wear the newest clothes and shoes, families exchange visit. The first visitor(s) to one's home on New Year's Day is most important and is often arranged in advance to assure that prosperity and wealth are represented. Everything and everyone you are in touch with on the first day of the year must symbolize good fortune.

From our families to yours, 'CHUC MUNG NAM MOI', the Year of the Snake, our best wishes to you for good health and prosperity.

**NOTE:** Our Congratulations to the Organizing Committee of 'Tet in Seattle' for the '25 Years in Retrospect' festival at the Seattle Center on January 20 & 21, 2001 celebrating the Vietnamese Lunar New Year festival. Information of the organization is available at [www.tetinseattle.org](http://www.tetinseattle.org).

## LOOKING IN

Globalization is bringing the world to Vietnam and also bringing Vietnam to the world. Films about life in Vietnam, from "The Scent of the Green Papaya" to "The Three Seasons" are winning awards all over the globe. The paintings of the Vietnamese artist, Do Quang Em, command fortunes at international art shows. The 200-year-old poems of Ho Xuan Huong are published in America - in English, in Vietnamese, and even in the original Nam, the first time ancient Vietnamese script has come off a printing press. Fashion designers like Armani and Calvin Klein base new collections on the traditional Vietnamese dress, the Ao Dai. Americans are tasting lemon grass, garlic chives and even bitter melon, all of which, by the way, grow on a Vietnamese farm in our state of Virginia, just a 20-minute drive from the White House.

*President Bill Clinton,  
State Dinner at the Viet Nam  
Presidential Palace in Ha Noi  
November 2000*

You may get into annoyance during contract negotiation or encounter regulatory or institutional obstacles, but please remember the situation of 10 years ago and be patient with your investment.

*Senator John Kerry, traveled to Viet Nam numerous times over the past many years, told U.S. businesses during President Clinton's visit to Hanoi*

### HA LONG BAY - A World Heritage Site

At the 24<sup>th</sup> World Heritage Conference held in Queensland, Australia, Ha Long Bay has been re-recognized by the World Heritage Commission for its historical and geographical importance. Ha Long Bay was originally recognized by the World Heritage Commission in 1994 for its aesthetic values, its limestone islets and caves and mountains as evidence of the earth's development.

Vertical Summer, recently released by Vietnam Film Company and directed by Tran Anh Hung, has been nominated in the best foreign language film category for this year's Oscar awards. The movie is the second Viet Nam film to be nominated for an Oscar. 'Three Seasons' (Ba Mua) was nominated last year. Director Tran Anh Hung is known international for his previous works - Scent of the Green Papaya in 1993 and Cyclo in 1995.

Another Viet Nam film, Sandy Lives (Doi Cat) directed by Nguyen Thanh Van, is expected to win several international awards this year. For the very first time, the Asia Pacific Film Festival was held in Hanoi in December 2000. Viet Nam submitted a total of ten entries: five feature films, three short documentaries, and two animated films. Beside 'Vertical Summer' and 'Sandy Lives', the other three feature films are 'Wharf of Unmarried Women' (Ben Khong Chong), 'Guava Season' (Mua Oi), and 'Down South, Up North' (Vao Nam, Ra Bac).

Prudential Life Insurance recently awarded scholarships worth VND2.75 million each to the top nine students in the insurance and corporate finance faculties of the HCMC College of Economics. In addition, nine other scholarships worth VND2.2 million each were provided to poor students with good academic performances, and a VND3 million scholarship was awarded to the top graduate. In 2000, the company has awarded numerous scholarships to poor Chinese-Vietnamese students, and 60 scholarships worth VND500,000 each to poor students in Danang. Prudential Life has more than 4,000 agents in Viet Nam and has sold 90,000 policies in the previous 12 months, with the annual premium revenue expected to reach VND150 billion for this year.

*US\$1.00 = VND14,500*

## Calendar of Events

January 20 - 21, 2001

'Tet in Seattle' at the Seattle Center

January 31, 2001

World Trade Center Tacoma Annual Awards Dinner, Tacoma Convention Center

February 15, 2001

World Trade Club Seattle luncheon: 'International Trade Agreements'

February 27, 2001

Luncheon at the Seattle World Trade Center co-sponsored by the Washington Council on International Trade and the Greater Seattle Viet Nam Association: featuring Dennis Harter, Deputy Chief of Mission to the U.S Embassy in Viet Nam.

April 10 - 14, 2001

The 11<sup>th</sup> Viet Nam International Trade Fair 'Viet Nam Expo 2001' Hanoi

May 6 - 8, 2001

Third Biennial Asia Pacific Cities Summit, Seattle, WA

May 14 - 22, 2001

Seattle International Children's Festival at the Seattle Center, May 14 - 19; 21 - 22 in Tacoma

October 28 - November 10,

2001 Viet Nam will host the first Southeast Asian Club Championship, known as ASEAN C I Cup.

For more information on any of the above events, please write info@seattlevietnam.org or call (206) 322-1178.



# CELEBRATE VIET NAM

The Greater Seattle Viet Nam Association

Fourth Annual Benefit Dinner Auction

**W**ish you were there. If you missed our recent Fourth Annual Benefit Dinner & Auction, you missed out the opportunity to experience the culture and ambience of Viet Nam without leaving Seattle.

The Bell Harbor International Conference Center banquet hall was magically transformed into a setting of a typical small village somewhere in Viet Nam. The professional work by the crew from the BambooHardwoods in less than two hours filled the banquet hall with furniture and decorations made with bamboo from Viet Nam.

Once again, a capacity crowd of friends, supporters, and special guests joined us at our important major event of the year. The theme of the evening 'CELEBRATE VIET NAM' was selected by the organizing committee to reflect the positive present relationship between the United States and Viet Nam. The year marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ending of the war in Viet Nam and the beginning of the rebuilding of Viet Nam. Some of the year highlights were the return to Viet Nam by Senator John McCain, and the 'tours of Viet Nam' made by Secretary of State Albright, Secretary of Defense Cohen and U.S President Bill Clinton.

Our guests were treated to a display of Viet Nam artworks, traditional wears and decorations, and children activities. The event sponsor was the Boeing Company, joining our Corporate Sponsors KING5 Television, Northwest International Bank, and Clear Path International.

Also on display were Viet Nam projects by GSVN that were funded by contributions at our previous events: 'A Child's Dream' and 'The Children's Angel'.

Our honoree for this year was Mimi Gan from KING5 Television. Mimi has been a great friend and supporter of our association, and she served as the Mistress of Ceremonies for our previous two annual gala events. In October 1999, Mimi Gan traveled to Viet Nam with Photographer Tom Voelk and Evening Magazine host John Curley to produce two KING5-TV special programs: 'Vietnam Revealed' and 'Vietnam: 25 Years of Healing'. These two programs brought to viewers throughout the Pacific Northwest the real images of Viet Nam through the people and the beauty of the country and culture, instead of Viet Nam the war as perceived by still many Americans. Also featured in these programs were the numerous charity and nonprofit organizations based in the Greater Seattle area and work in Viet Nam, including the Greater Seattle Viet Nam Association.

Both of these special documentary television programs created a better understanding and strengthened the current relationship between the people of the United States and the people of Viet Nam. For her outstanding works, Mimi Gan received the Northwest Regional Emmy Awards for Best Reporter of the non-news category. And the KING5-TV crew of Mimi Gan, Tom Voelk and Lynn Hyde received the award for Best Cultural Affairs Special.

The Greater Seattle Viet Nam Association honored Mimi Gan and awarded Mimi the 2000 Special Award. Joining Mimi at the event were her two daughters Chloe and Grace as well as many of her television colleagues.

Funds raised at this evening from the silent auction and the raffle ticket sale will go toward new 2001 projects in Viet Nam.

The Greater Seattle Viet Nam Association wishes to THANK our event sponsors and volunteers. Their effort, time and contributions made this annual event possible. Their generosity and caring spirit are greatly appreciated.

- The Boeing Company
- Clear Path International
- KING5 Television
- Northwest International Bank
- Almatech Resource Institute
- Asia Travel
- Asiana Airlines
- BambooHardwoods
- Bell Harbor Intl Conference Center
- Cathay Pacific Airlines
- Clear Path International
- Directsource Global Purchasing
- Drugstore.com
- Innovations in Green Unlimited, Inc.
- Jade King Wholesale SE Asia Food & Food Products
- Mimi's Bakeries West Seattle
- Minh Tri Fashion & Jewelers
- Thai Airways
- Volunteers from Directsource.com
- Alma Kern
- Artist Lee Lee
- Sindy Nguyen
- Van Lang Vietnamese Cultural Assn
- Saigon Bistro Restaurant
- Vietnamese Catholic Community Church of Seattle, Washington
- Beth Whitman
- Decorations provided by the BambooHardwoods



## The Greater Seattle Viet Nam Association

*Hereby Recognizes and Honors*

### MIMI GAN KING5 Television Seattle

In appreciation of significant contribution for the furtherance of better understanding and friendly relations among peoples of Viet Nam and the United States of America.

November 15, 2000  
Seattle, Washington USA

*Thank You ...*

*Cam On ...*

- ❖ Without your help, our Annual Event would not be possible. THANKS a million Viet Nam Dong ☺ to Khue Dang for the long days and nights that she put in getting the event planned; our Master of Ceremonies Gary Johnson; Tyler DuLam who spent the entire evening behind the registration table ... counting the \$\$; Lea Ann Kaplan taking care of all the children activities; Jim and Alma Kern getting us many of the auction items; Teri Conti, our photographer for the evening; and the rest of the crew Betty Tisdale, Khan Tran and Trang Tu. Sorry that you were away and could not join us: Sally Schultz, and Judith Henchy (in Viet Nam).
- ❖ THANK YOU to The Boeing Company for being our Event Sponsor, especially to Christopher Flint and Tom Hoang. Christopher Flint has recently joined our Advisory Council.

❖ THANK YOU to KING5-TV, especially Jay Cascio and Mark Erskine.

❖ THANK YOU, Tom Voelk from KING5-TV for the video of the programs.

❖ THANK YOU, all of our volunteers. Special recognition to our friends from the Vietnamese Catholic Community Church of Seattle for the wonderful musical presentation and the traditional Viet Nam wedding scene. And our special THANKS to our friends from the Van Lang Vietnamese Language School for the most popular performance of music and martial arts by the children of the school.

❖ Doug Lewis and his crew from Bamboohardwoods went out of their way in decorating for the Annual Event. You can visit Doug's company show room and warehouse in Seattle, look up their website [www.bamboohardwoods.com](http://www.bamboohardwoods.com).

❖ THANK YOU to our 'travel' friends: Charlene Gerlach with Asiana Airlines; Julie Olson with Cathay Pacific Airlines; Steve Ha from Asia Travel; Thai Airways.

❖ THANK YOU Mimi's Bakery in West Seattle (and also Beacon Hill) for the beautiful and delicious cake.

❖ Our sincere appreciation to Teri Conti, who has been the editor of our newsletter for over a year. Teri is taking a leave from our board due to her relocating from our area. Our best wishes to you, Teri and THANK YOU for the work you have done with the UPDATE newsletter.

If you wish to learn more about any of the businesses that supported our association, please contact us at (206) 322-1178 or via email [info@seattlevietnam.org](mailto:info@seattlevietnam.org).



**MIMI GAN**  
*Reporter/Producer*  
KING5 Television

Mimi Gan is a reporter for KING5's "Evening Magazine", and co-host and co-creator of "Watch This!", KING5's fastpaced weekly show for teens and children. Mimi is also a science reporter for the Discovery Channel's "Beyond2000" show.

"Watch This!" was recently named the nation's best local youth program by both the National Association of Television Programming Executives. And Mimi has received four Emmy Awards and an IRIS Award for her work on "Evening Magazine".

Prior to joining KING5 in November 1988, Mimi was a national field producer for the "PM Magazine" National Office in San Francisco. She has held positions as public affairs host at KNBR/NBC Radio, San Francisco and as a public information officer of the Los Angeles Olympics Organizing Committee.

Mimi is quite active in the community, and volunteers her time to organizations such as the Asian American Journalists Association (and served as President in 1992), the "I Have A Dream Foundation" as a tutor, the Seattle Group Theater, Mothers Against Violence (as a trustee), and the Greater Seattle Viet Nam Association.

Mimi resides in Seattle with her husband, Everett, and daughters Grace, and Chloe.

# Clearing the Way for a Better Future

By Imbert Matthee

While in Vietnam last year (2000), President Clinton stepped out of the diplomatic spotlight in Hanoi to shake hands with some of the latest and youngest victims of the war in Vietnam. He met with a group of children who have been injured during the past several years by landmines or unexploded ordnance in Quang Tri Province near the former DMZ.

Just before leaving office, Clinton drew attention to an important issue. More than a quarter century after the war ended, millions of remaining pieces of lethal ordnance continue to kill or maim innocent children all over Vietnam and other parts of Southeast Asia.

We formed Clear Path International to help end this needless suffering and we are grateful the Greater Seattle Viet Nam Association has agreed to accommodate our work as one of its projects. Aside from feeling drawn to the association's humanitarian spirit, it will be personally exciting to work with Son, Gary, Jim and others whom most of us have known for years. Our goal is to sponsor the removal of deadly ordnance and to assist survivors of accidental explosions, particularly children.

But before saying more about our activities, here's an introduction to our team. James and Martha Hathaway founded Clear Path International in September. They have both had a passion for Vietnam for some time. Martha, former program affairs assistant for the Japan-America Society of Washington State, was Executive Director of PeaceTrees Vietnam and James helped the organization as a volunteer and board member. They were instrumental in getting support from major donors to do ordnance clearance projects in Dong Ha, Quang Tri Province. At Clear Path International, Martha serves as Vietnam Project Director and James, a technical support specialist for ByteStudio, Inc., on Bainbridge Island, is Development Chair.

Kristen Leadem joined us in December after a year as In-country Representative for PeaceTrees Vietnam. A former pre-Kindergarten and English conversation teacher who has done humanitarian work in Nepal, Thailand and Vietnam, Kristen has a special interest and ability to work with the injured children, some of whom she escorted to Hanoi for the President's visit. She returns to Vietnam in February as Clear Path International's In-country Representative.

Karen and Imbert Matthee joined Clear Path International shortly after it was launched. Imbert, former Pacific Rim Correspondent for the Seattle Post-Intelligencer and spokesman for the Port of Seattle, was Managing Director for PeaceTrees Vietnam during much of 2000. He will be Executive Director for Clear Path International. Karen, regional editor for Northwest Parent Publishing, will support the organization as volunteer Special Events Coordinator.

UXB International is Clear Path International's technical contractor. Based in Ashburn, Virginia, UXB International conducts and supports clearance operations all over the world, including Southeast Asia. UXB International, which has an impeccable safety record, will train, equip and technically supervise the in-country clearance teams for Clear Path International.

Preparations for Clear Path International's first clearance effort are already underway in Dong Ha, where we are sponsoring the removal of unexploded ordnance on 125 acres of land on a former U.S. combat base. This area has been the site of several accidents involving young children. Clear Path International, which coordinates closely with the Quang Tri Foreign Relations Department, has received special funding from the Freeman Foundation in Stowe, Vermont, to conduct this 19-month project. Once cleared, local authorities plan to build much-needed housing on the land.

Our first medical support work will come in the form of a comprehensive victim assistance effort in coordination with the Quang Tri Committee for the Protection and Care of Children. Supported in part by a grant from the Francis Finlay Foundation in New York, the program will include emergency medical care, hospitalization, surgery, nutritional support and special scholarships for accident survivors.

Our long-term goal -- with support from individual donors, foundations and grant makers -- is to expand our clearance and victim assistance work in Vietnam and do similar work in Cambodia. Working side by side with other Seattle-area NGOs, such as KidsFirst and PeaceTrees Vietnam, we hope our efforts will bring the war that ended for most Americans 25 years ago to a close for the children in Vietnam and Cambodia.

*For more information about Clear Path International, visit the web at [www.clearpathinternational.org](http://www.clearpathinternational.org), or contact us via email at [info@clearpathinternational.org](mailto:info@clearpathinternational.org), phone 206-780-5964. Our address is 920 Grow Avenue, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110.*