

The Greater Seattle Viet Nam Association



UPDATE UPDATE

Third Quarter 2003

IN BETWEEN WORLDS

Meredith Smith

Winner of
2000
Seattle's Sister Cities
Award

Seattle - Hai Phong Sister City

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It's Tuesday, my second Tuesday this week and I'm still four hours from arriving in Chicago, the official end of my trip to Vietnam. For the moment, I feel as if I'm in a vacuum, where time and space are warped, and I'm without a reality, literally, up in the air between two worlds so distinctly different and separate from one another, that it is sometimes hard to fathom. On Monday, I left Vietnam, that green lush land that had been my home for the last four months. It was hot and wet out and just trying to get packed and get my errands done around town was a battle, as I wanted to do nothing more at that point than find a spot in front of a fan somewhere and lie perfectly still. But the day was a wasting and I had a plane to catch. As I rode a "xe om" here and there around town I tried to drink in all the sights and sounds of Hanoi, a city I've grown to love, in all it's ordered chaos and soothing rhythms. Hoping, I guess, that when I left it behind, I'd still retain the feeling of it, even from the other side of the planet.

When I left for Vietnam four months ago, I had certain ideas in my head about how it would be. I'd spent sometime in Thailand a few years before and I was basing my imaginings loosely on that experience. It only took my landing at the airport for me to realize that, not only was Vietnam not going to fulfill the expectations I had, but that it was going to be an entirely different ball of wax. The police inside the airport holding rifles, sent chills up my spine, and for a moment I had visions of spending the next four months in a police state. These fears quickly proved to be unfounded; more a product of 12 years of schooling and indoctrination against communism, as an evil system of government, than of a sight that has become normal in every airport in the world.

Traveling into Hanoi, it was dark and so I could see little of the green fields of rice and cash crops that line the road into the city. It was an hour long ride, in which I still entertained my anxieties and longed for people I'd left back in the states. But on the other side of my mind I thought of all the exciting things that I hoped would await me in this foreign land, that all my life I'd only associated with one three letter word. War.

Fast forward two or three weeks. I settled into my life in Hanoi with relative ease, giving up my car and cell phone, washing machine, and other conveniences without much thought... they seemed so out of place in Hanoi. In my first few weeks, I learned about bargaining with xe om drivers, and well... everyone else. I ate pho and drank caphe sua every morning. I studied Vietnamese 15 hours a week officially, and every other minute I spent out in the city. If I wanted a good day of practice, I'd simply head for Ho Tay or Ho Guom and sit down on a bench and wait for a book boy or a bunch a giggling little girls to come up to me, at which point I gained an instant Vietnamese lesson.

Being in Vietnam, was like having my world instantly turned on it's head. Everything seemed so opposite. Some days it felt antagonistic too. I'd walk down the street and feel people staring at me. I'd feel unwanted in this foreign land, except, maybe for my money. But like everything, these things are really a matter of how you choose to look at them. The days I was in a good mood, which luckily, was most days, those looks quickly turned to smiles when I would smile. The desire to know me was always more about curiosity than money. Though foreign influence in Vietnam goes back many many years, the relative lack of fear of foreigners, and the feeling that we are not there to impose some political will on the population is still relatively new. Definitely, that could be seen on a generational scale. The young people, about 50% of the population, wanted to find out more about me, where I came from, and practice their english with me, the war little more than textbook history. The people my parents age, cautiously friendly, always hospitable and loved it when I spoke Vietnamese with them, and the oldest generation, always a mixed bag. Some openly suspicious and unwilling to talk with me, others very curious and thrilled to get to know me. On the whole, in Vietnam I experienced a culture that, while it is far more conformist than my own, was also, far more outgoing than my own. Most of the time life just seemed unthreatening, more vivid, and more real.

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IN THE NEWS

Vietnamese Living Overseas Send Money Back By The Truckload

The total sum of money remitted to Ho Chi Minh City by Vietnamese living overseas reached US\$1.24 billion as of September 15, up 77.4% from last year, according to the State Bank of Vietnam's HCM City branch.

The figure included US\$631.3 million sent through banks, US\$340.3 million through other economic establishments, and US\$273.4 million by individuals.

The money remitted to Vietnamese students abroad was also on the rise, with 2,215 permits for a total remittance of US\$19.5 million, issued by the HCM City branch of the State Bank in the first nine months of the year.

JC Penny Eyes Up Domestic Textile Sector

(VIR) - US retail giant JC Penny, one of the world's biggest textile and apparel importers, is looking to make Vietnam its largest supplier.

JC Penny Purchasing Corporation vice president and director of sourcing, Rodney Birkins, said last week his company was working with the Vietnamese government to make Vietnam the firm's largest production base for textile and apparel products to feed its US department store chain.

"Our company's policy is to concentrate our production in a few countries which are efficient and effective," Birkins said. "If successful, our company will be able to import US\$500 million or textile and garment products to the US market by the year 2005."

"We are working with the Ministries of Planning and Investment, Industry, Trade, and Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs on the plan, and signs seem to be positive since they are very supportive," Birkins said.

At least 10 senior executives from JC Penny supply companies will arrive in Vietnam this week to meet with central and local government officials to discuss the project. Rural provinces in the north of Vietnam, including Thai Binh and Nam Dinh, together with the port city of Hai Phong, are being considered by JC Penny sourcing companies as places to set up shop.

Trade Agreement Pushes Up VN's Farm Produce Exports To US

(VDCmedia) - A sharp increase has been seen in the exports of Vietnamese agro-forestry products to the U.S. market since the Vietnam-U.S. Bilateral Trade Agreement came into force, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD).

The country's farm produce exports to the U.S. made a turnover of only US\$155 million in 2001, increased to US\$194 million in 2002 and reached US\$170 million in the first nine months of 2003, a 30% year-on-year increase. The key

export items include coffee, cashew nut, fruit & vegetable, rubber, tea, honey....

However, both the volume and value of Vietnam's agro-forestry exports to the American market are still modest compared with the great potential of the U.S., who spends nearly US\$40 billion on import farm produce annually.

Many products Vietnam has export advantages such as fine-arts and outdoor furniture, fresh fruit & vegetable... have not yet penetrated deeply enough in the U.S. market. The main reason for this, according to MARD, is that American partners often make big order that local exporters do not have enough capabilities to meet the demand. Besides, Vietnam's exporters are weak in promotion and advertisement, lack of experience and information on this market.

The U.S. farm produce exports to Vietnam have also experienced a strong increase from US\$58 million in 2002 to US\$69 million in the first seven months of this year. Especially, in the coming time, the U.S. will export more pork, beef, milk, grape... to Vietnam.

Vietnam Airlines Carries 2.8mil Passengers in 9 Months

(VNA) - In the first nine months of this year, Vietnam Airlines transported 2.8 million passengers, an increase of 1.7% from the same period last year. The airline also carried 53,630 tonnes of cargo. The seat occupancy rate averaged 71.58%.

The good result was attributed to the airline's recovered performance in the third quarter after being hit by SARS in the first and second quarters.

Starting from July, the airline resumed services on some air routes that had been cancelled earlier and increased the frequency of flights on a number of other routes. Thanks to its promotion efforts, such as giving discounts off air fares and creating promotion programmes with the tourism sector, the number of passengers began rising in mid-August. Foreigners accounted for 41% of total travellers.

CONNECTING PEOPLE

☞ Lost sister - Nguyen Thi Kim-Oanh. From: Steve Tull : Mars540@aol.com. I am looking for my wife's sister. Her Vietnamese name is Nguyen Thi Kim-Oanh and she was born on 8 Jun 1967 in the City of Vung-Tau. She left Vietnam during operation Babylift from an Orphanage in Saigon. Her mother's name is Nguyen Thi Hong. Her father was African-American. Any information regarding the whereabouts of Nguyen Thi Kim-Oanh would be greatly appreciated.

☞ Looking for Half Brother or Sister. From:

Danielle Cote daniellecote@msn.com. My name is Danielle Cote, I am looking for an Amerasian half brother or sister who would have been born in 1964. Our father would have been John J. Cochran, born 1943, he lived in California, was a Vietnam Veteran for four years and he would have been between the age of 19-23 when he served. In 1966 when I was born he told my mother he had a child back in Vietnam, she doesn't remember much else. I am now 36. Please feel free to email me at: daniellecote@msn.com if you have any info that would be helpful.

☞ Hjort/Kochanek. Please let the person searching - Louis J. Kochanek. Search File: VNS2001/14 in this case email me. Sincerely Brian Hjort brihj@mail.danbbs.dk.

☞ Mother Searching for Larry Eiseman/Ngo Van Hung. Care of: Stephen Littlejohn sglj@swbell.net. I am searching for an adopted Vietnamese orphan named Larry Eiseman. Vietnamese name is Ngo Van Hung ? His mother (who wants no money) is looking for him and wants to hear his voice. How do I find him?

☞ Ngo Minh Viet parents looking for son from Go Vap, Vietnam Adoption (Go Vap Orphanage) - Dao Van Thanh, he lived with her mother until the age of three. Unable to care for him, his mother brought him to Go Vap Orphanage, and was adopted by American around June to Dec 1972. He was brought to the United States when he was 3 years old (wasborn 1970). His name was as Dao Van Thanh when he lived in Go Vap Orphanage. Hewas brought to The United States for adoption between June to Dec. 1972. The paper work was made by a member of Thong Thien Hoc Christian Church named Lan(The Church located at Phu Nhuan area in Sai Gon). Then, we received a picture of him on December 1972 with a sign on the back of the picture named Quang, which different from his real name Dao Van Thanh. Please contact us at NgoMinh000@cs.com.

☞ Nguyen Hue Thi, Vietnamese Mother searching for two children. C/o Shem-Min Chow KHOU TV/CBS Houston. Channel 11 800 - 280- news SChow@khou.com.

☞ Do Phi Bang, boy Oct 16, 1968. Do Phi Yen, girl Dec. 28, 1969. Left at Caritas Catholic Charities in Saigon. After giving up her children, the birth mother escaped Vietnam as one of the boat refugees and eventually ended up in the US. (Father MIA soldier - presumed dead. He was by the way, half French, half Vietnamese. She remarried in the US and had 2 adult children born here. Despite a wonderful family and 3 decades, she still hopes to locate her Vietnam born children. she delivered them to Caritas Catholic Charities

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EMS Training for Viet Nam Doctors

It was rather late at night on a day in the mid of July. The cool wind swept the deserted streets of Seattle. A group of Vietnamese visitors stopped at a dark street corner and tried to locate on the map a shop where they could buy a phone card. They had just come in Seattle, a place that is thousands of miles far from their home. They wanted to call their family right away to inform that they had arrived here safe and sound.

Then, to their surprise, a woman crossed over from the other side of the road to the street corner where they were and offered her help. All the three visitors were so impressed and moved by the way she meticulously guided them to the right place where they needed. This was somewhat a kind of "shock" for them when a passer-by on the street came to help them even when they did not ask for.

The time passed by so fast since that first day. The whole group of Vietnamese doctors who came to Seattle for a short-term training on Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in have returned home and settled down with their routine work. Sweet memories of Seattle and of its particularly friendly people were part of what they brought home, along with professional knowledge and skills learned...



Visiting Doctors from Viet Nam aboard the Seattle Fire Rescue Boat.

As a program officer of Counterpart International, a US-based non-governmental organization having office in Vietnam, I came to Seattle as the interpreter/coordinator of an EMS training of trainer course for Vietnamese doctors. This is part of a larger program in Vietnam supported by the organization to improve the capacity of the nascent EMS system in big cities of the country. The objectives and core activities of the program were replicated from and built on the success of a pilot one year project conducted by Counterpart two years ago in the capital city of Ha Noi.

One of the first and major activities of the program is to send qualified Vietnamese doctors to Seattle to study its renowned EMS system and update themselves with

standardized and systemized EMS knowledge and skills. These doctors, upon their return, will roll out the training for EMS staff in the system of the city where they are living. Apart from that, Counterpart International will provide technical assistance and finance support to upgrade the fleet services, the emergency rooms in key hospitals and the EMS information monitoring system in each city under the program. A campaign to raise the awareness of the public of the importance to invest in and improve quality of pre-hospital care will also be conducted.

The well-organized EMS system of Seattle and the competent and dedicated people working in it are perhaps the most impressive thing to the Vietnamese doctors in this study tour. The involvement of fire department in EMS is very much different from Vietnam where pre-hospital service is the job of the health sector only. When it is hard to adopt the same model to Vietnam, considering the cost, the government's policy and so on, it at least helps the trained doctors to come up with various initiatives and suggestions to improve their own system. One noted suggestion is the provision of first-aid training for policemen who often came first at the scene of an accident.

The need to spread the ambulance stations throughout the city is reiterated. The close collaboration between pre-hospital service and hospitals, the effective communication between doctors at hospital and rescuers at the scene is also worthwhile learning....

One-month stay in Seattle is a very valuable experience for me. I feel so thankful to work and meet with cordial people, both in and outside training place at Harborview Medical Center. The staff of the Harborview Injury Prevention Center, the paramedics at Medic One, the doctors and nurses at Harborview Medical Center and all other friends are what I missed most about the city when coming back.

A person I would like, on behalf of the whole group, to express my special thanks to is Son Michael Pham, the Co-President of the Greater Seattle Vietnam Association. We thank him for his enthusiasm to take time out of his tight schedule to bring us to various places in Seattle and help us to have a better understanding of the city. Personally, I am so very impressed by his dedication to the community work that at certain points in my conversations with him, I wondered why he could have so much energy to work tirelessly for the disadvantaged as such. In our busy life, there are some people that one will remember for long though just seeing for a short period of time. I know, Son is one person like that...

Ha Noi, a Sunday in September, 2003

Nguyen Hoai Thu

Latest on Adoption from Viet Nam

Ha Noi, August 19 (VNA) - Control over child adoption will get further tightened with more bilateral agreements on this matter to be signed with foreign countries in the coming time, said an official of the Ministry of Justice (MOJ). Viet Nam is about to enter the second round of negotiations in this regard with Canada and Sweden, said Deputy Director of MOJ's Department for Notary and Verification of Civil Status, Nationality and Juridical Individual Background.

Such agreements have been reached with France, Italy and Denmark. Since the provision of child adoption services was made possible in Viet Nam, three French agencies dealing in this area have opened their representative offices in Viet Nam.

The MOJ has formed the International Child Adoption Department which is tasked to exercise stricter control over child adoption activities in localities. The department is committed to simplifying child adoption procedures.

A new procedure for child adoption has been introduced, by which, applications for adopting Vietnamese children are to be sent to the department, which will pass them on to local agencies concerned. The recommendation and verification of target children will then be made by the local agencies concerned with the results being sent to the department, which will then inform the adoptive parent of the decision. With the new procedure, foreigners now need go to Viet Nam once only to process procedures, instead of many times previously.

So far, most of the adopted children have come from patron centres. Child adoption is now charged 1,500-2,000 USD/case and the money is used for childcare at these institutions.

France is the country having adopted the largest number of Vietnamese children. Since the two countries signed an agreement on child adoption in January of 2000, 200 out of the 500 applications have been successful.

Support The Language Bank

The Language Bank Program by the American Red Cross King & Kitsap Counties is the only program in the region that provides FREE language services in over 70 different languages for thousands of immigrants each year. Top languages requested for service are: Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, Somali, and Chinese (Cantonese & Mandarin). You can become a volunteer for the Language Bank, or make a donation to keep the program alive. For more information, contact Toni Higgs 206-726-3553, or write languagebank@seattleredcross.org.

IN BETWEEN WORLDS

(continued from page 1)

Walking down the street in Hanoi, life was teeming all around me. Outside the door of my dorm, the street was lined with basket ladies selling anything from pineapple and sugarcane to bras and underwear. Around the corner sat the old man and his disabled son, ready to patch a flat tire or fix a broken bicycle at moments notice. Out on the road, people, young and old flying down the street on their motorbikes. The occasional white SUV, usually denoting an embassy worker, or the sleek black Mercedes that I always associated with corrupt government officials would plow through the throng, demanding right of way by virtue of it's size. Lining the streets, the cafes and bia hoi's filled with young men whiling away the day drinking coffee and beer, discussing who-knows-what. On the sidewalks, old men playing chinese checkers, street kids begging for money, shop owners and their families perched on plastic stools outside the door, chickens pecking at the sidewalk, toothless old women begging for money, and some beautiful women haphazardly backing her motorbike out into traffic.

Traveling around Vietnam, I found that, like America, different regions of the country, fostered different types of people, with different attitudes. Up north in Sapa, I met lots of ethnic minorities who've suffered years of repression, but now exist fairly freely in the north, perhaps because the government now understands their economic value. Both friendly and hospitable, but with an absolute urgency to sell their wares, still existing at a level of poverty we can scarcely comprehend in America. Most girls I spoke with, young and old, were both shocked and saddened to find that I was 27 without a boyfriend, husband, or family. Here, like in all of Vietnam, people place the utmost importance on family, but unlike in the cities, starting a family here begins much earlier, and is part of a natural progression. Down south in Saigon, I found the more liberal edge of Vietnam, where women wear less clothing and the jobs are less gender specific than Hanoi, from those on the street selling books, massage boys, women bike mechanics, and women xe om drivers. People were even more willing to talk and speak about their lives, but also more likely to speak in English. In Hoi An, a place I went to twice, I found some of the best food in the country, and ladies on the beach who would sit and talk the day away with me.

In the time I was in Vietnam, the world experienced two major events. The SARS epidemic, the initial Hanoi outbreak happening just a half mile from my dorm, and the same week, the US attacking Iraq. On the whole, neither had a major impact on my life, and I felt safer living in Vietnam than anywhere else I could've been in the world. But the war with Iraq brought echoes from the past for many Vietnamese, and when we spoke, and they

found I was American, they nearly always expressed their disappointment at the US aggression towards Iraq, and it's overall political and economic policies around the world. The government even allowed and organized public demonstrations against the war, a rarity in Vietnam. Some would tell me a little about Vietnam's war with America, how they remembered seeing bombs drop out of the sky, Agent Orange and the bare ghostly looking jungle, the brother, husband, father, mother, sister, and/or friend that they lost to the war. It is not forgotten, as some Americans would like to believe, but people do not seem to want to dig up the past. For the most part, they seem to prefer to live in the present, peaceful Vietnam, and leave the heinous acts of the past behind them. I was told over and over again, you are just a person, you are not your government. I do not blame you for the war, and your soldiers were just young boys, also a victim of a bigger and more powerful machine. The past is the past.

And now, for me, Vietnam is in my past. In my own mind, it is no longer a name synonymous with "war." It is a beautiful place of unending complexity. Lush green rice paddies, mountains that reach to the sky, beautiful beaches, delicious food, and traffic that would scare a formula one race car driver! But the thing that I will most remember Vietnam for, the thing that will keep me coming back, is the people. From the woman in Hoi An who pulled me into her house (a roughly 6 foot by 10 ft room that she shared with her son and daughter) to give me tea and just to talk, to my Vietnamese tutor Hoa, who taught me so much about Vietnam and the way it is today, to the xe om drivers, and the old toothless ladies on the street who would smile and laugh as they chewed their betelnut. The old men in pajamas who would do their exercises on the street at 5:00 am every morning, the boys who would shout HELLO! as I walked by, the man with the twisted up legs, sitting on the street in Saigon who told me all about his life and how he come to be in this predicament, who smiled and wished me and my family all the best as I walked away. The street kids in the park playing silly simple games with me with smiles that could light up the world, and the girls at my favorite che stand who always wanted to gossip about the American boys in our group. It is those people who truly made Vietnam what it is to me today. For everything that Vietnam is and was I thank it for what it's taught me about life, and about appreciating what I've been given. I thank it for showing me a different side of life, no less right than my own, and giving me the opportunity to see the world from a different angle. Though every experience has it's ups and downs, it's conveniences and inconveniences, my time in Vietnam was a blessing and a learning experience, that I will not soon forget, and will call me back for years to come.

THANK YOU CÁM ƠN

YOUR MEMBERSHIP:

Your annual membership dues pay for the expenses to produce and get this newsletter to you. Without paid staff, our association relies 100% on financial support from individuals and businesses through membership dues and donations.

Your membership invoice was included in the last Update issue. Please accept our sincere thanks if you have renewed your membership. If you did not receive your dues invoice, please contact us at (206) 322-1178 or email info@seattlevietnam.org.

TEACHING ENGLISH PROGRAM:

We would like to express our gratitude to the individuals, businesses, service organizations and groups who support our 'Teach Me To Fish' Benefit Dinner Event in September. Proceed from this event will help to expand our program at the Go Vap Orphanage.

- ♥ Uwajimaya Asian Food & Gift.
- ♥ Denise Moriguchi.
- ♥ The Port of Seattle.
- ♥ Andre & Noel Nguyen.

100% of your contributions go toward the program. Each class costs US\$2,000 per year. We hope to expand our program at the Go Vap Orphanage in Saigon, and to bring this program to other orphanages in different cities in Viet Nam. Next Benefit Dinner events are on October 14, 2003 and November 11, 2003. More information is in this issue.

Making A Difference

YOU CAN HELP US Making A Difference ... Support our projects in Viet Nam

- ♥ Contribute to our Teaching English program at orphanages in Viet Nam.
- ♥ 'Helmets for Kids' program by Kids Without Borders. Email info@kidswithnoborders.org for additional information.
- ♥ Contribute to our scholarship program for disadvantaged students.
- ♥ Donate school supplies for children at the Nang Ren Hamlet in Bac Lieu.
- ♥ Donate computer or electronic equipment (in good condition) to our orphanages.
- ♥ Donate airline mileage.
- ♥ Become a member of GSVA.

Upcoming Events

☑ Special Screening of 'REGRET TO INFORM', a film by Barbara Sonneborn with Xuan Nguyen. Nippon Kan Theater (International District) 628 S. Washington Street. A benefit for The New Day Project. Xuan Nguyen will be available for a Q&A following the show. Co-sponsored by the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum Seattle. More information, please contact: Cindy Domingo or Lika Smith 206-772-2842.

☑ "Teach Me To Fish" Benefit Dinner to support GSVa Teaching English Program at orphanages in Viet Nam, sponsored by Clear Path International and Tran Law Firm Seattle. Tuesday, October 14, 2003 6-8pm at Andre's Eurasian Bistro. Reservation: (206) 322-1178 or email info@seattlevietnam.org.

☑ The staff at the Vietnamese Adoptee Network (VAN) would like to invite you to our Second National Gathering to be held in Portland, OR from Friday, October 24th, to Sunday, October 26th, 2003. The event will offer opportunity for Vietnamese adoptees, our friends and families to meet and share experiences through our scheduled panels, forums, and presentations.

The VAN Gathering in Portland will join forces with several other communities, notably the Portland Chapter of FCV (Friends of Children from Vietnam), Portland State University's Vietnamese Student Association (VSA), and the Oregon Vietnamese Community Association (OVCA). Over the course of the weekend we will be celebrating our common heritage, but also exploring current concerns and interests that adoptees face today. We will also feature presentations from other groups and resources that are currently available to our community as well as highlight volunteer, mentoring, and educational opportunities related to Vietnam and Vietnamese adoptee issues.

Please follow this link for registration information:
<http://www.van-online.org/events/portland/>

☑ The 2003 Asia Pacific Cities Summit, will take place from 20-22 October 2003, at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre. Visit www.apcsummit.org for more information and to register online. Visit www.apcsummit.org for more information.

☑ Beyond Borders: Trends in Contemporary Asian Art. October 11-November 4, 2003, at the Azuma Gallery 530 1st Avenue South, Seattle. Featured are works on paper and canvas of four extraordinary artists representing unique and exciting new trends in contemporary Asian art: Lin RongSheng and Zhang Jingru (China), Le Thiet Cuong (Viet

Nam), and Chang-Ae Song (Korea. More information: 206-622 5599 or visit www.azumagallery.com.

☑ PhotoTech 2003: the 1st International Imaging Technology Exhibition & Conference in Viet Nam, October 24-28, 2003 in Hanoi. More information, please email smp@usasiagateway.com.

☑ HumanITour Viet Nam: November 3-16, 2003. More information, info@humanitours.org. A project in partnership with the GSVa, Kids Without Borders, and the Rotary Club of the University District Seattle.

☑ NIGHT of a 1,000 Dinners November 6, 2003: A United Nations Association Event held world-wide to support demining efforts and victims of landmines. Dinner events held by Clear Path International info@clearpathinternational.org, and Rotary Clubs, www.rotary5030.org.

☑ "Teach Me To Fish" Benefit Dinner to support GSVa Teaching English Program at orphanages in Viet Nam. Tuesday, November 11, 2003 6-8pm at Andre's Eurasian Bistro. Reservation: (206) 322-1178 or email info@seattlevietnam.org. Sponsorship is still available, please contact us.

☑ The 18th Seattle International Children's Festival: May 10-17, 2004 in Seattle and Tacoma. More information and tickets: www.seattleinternational.org.

CONNECTING PEOPLE

(continued from page 2)

in Saigon April 20th, 1975 amid many other parents leaving their children there. She returned a week later and the facility was empty and closed.

☑ Nguyen - Van Thi, Vietnamese mother looking for her two sons. Vai Thi Nguyen (c/o teh krajan at teh.jan@comcast.net) 704 Fairview Ave Lancaster, PA 17603. Tel. (717) 872-3480. Searching for TWO sons:

- Anh Quoc Nguyen (DOB 08/18/1966)

- Dong Quoc Nguyen (1970)

These two children were adopted by one American family and left Viet Nam before Christmas of 1974. It is my recollection that their English names were Ben and John but I am uncertain of the family name of the adopted parents. While I was in Vietnam their adopted parents had been sending me some financial support for a while. I had kept their address tightly only to lose it some time in the late 1980's. As a matter of fact, in 1983 I gave a copy of the document showing the name and address of the adopted parents to the US immigration official who reviewed my

immigration application in Saigon. At that time, the officer told me to leave the children undisturbed for completing their education. He promised to keep the information in my file. Immediately upon my entry to the US port, I showed the same document to an immigrant officer who also made a copy of it to place in my file. I believe this information can be retrieved from my file at the INS. I am very hopeful that you are willing to help me locate my two children, perhaps by locating them in your system. As you can see they are now adult in their thirties and we have been separated for almost 30 years. As mother I have been praying day and night to one day seeing my children again, to meeting their adopted parents once more. I plead to your understanding of my aspiration and ask for your willingness to help locate my long lost children. How desperately I long for a reunion with them!

☑ Sprague, Thomas, US Soldier Father looking for his child, popeye@mainline.net. Searching for my child. Hi, my name is Thomas Sprague. I was in Viet Nam in 66. I may have a son or daughter looking for me. I was at the Third Field Hospital, and stationed just outside the air field in Tahn Son Nhut. I was well know by the locals as "T-T" I would appreciate any help you could give me. Thomas Sprague popeye@mainline.net.

☑ Tien Trinh, Vietnamese brother looking for brother on babylift. Tien Trinh littlesweetpea2000@yahoo.com. I'm looking for my brother who was part of the Operation Babylift in 1975. I have some information on him Birthname : Ngo Minh Tuan. Born in Bien Hoa, Vietnam on May 12, 1968. Birthmother's name is Ngo Thi Khang. His VN number is #0601 and US number is 06249. He was left at Ho Nhi Tran Chau in Saigon. He has a scar on or around one of his feet.

☑ Tran Thi Hong, searching Father searching for son. Searching for: Tran Thi Hong Contact Phone: (972) 480-7891. I am looking for my son, born to Tran Thi Hong in South Vietnam sometime around June of 1971. I was serving with the 173rd Airborne at Phu Tai and shipped out in March 1971. Her family lived in An Khe. I had sent her the necessary paperwork to migrate, but lost touch after the fall of South Vietnam. I have no way of knowing whether she or my son got out. Any information or assistance is greatly appreciated. Edgar Marsh: edmarsh@li.com

☑ Truong Thi Dao from Cu Chi. Searching for daughter. I have information re: the missing father of a daughter born 1971 to Truong Thi Dao. Dao was from Cu Chi and was a resident of Ho Chi Minh City in 1970-71. Replies may be sent to TC57421@aol.com.

Read the story behind the face of this young Vietnamese girl in the next issue of Update.



HAI VAN PASS

North and South of Vietnam will finally be connected when the new tunnel through the famous Hai Van Pass - just to the north of Danang - officially opens in March 2005. Engineers working from both ends of the 6.3 km long tunnel broke through to meet in the middle on the morning of October 29, 2003. A ceremony attended by senior government officials to mark this landmark occasion was held on November 7th 2003.

For the past 700 years, since it first appeared on maps, travellers have had to cross the Hai Van Pass by a challenging 21km, winding, mist-shrouded road carved through the scenic mountains of Vietnam's central region. The opening of the US\$250 million Hai Van Tunnel, which is the longest in Southeast Asia, is part of the government's ambitious development of the country's infrastructure.

For visitors to Danang, the new Hai Van Tunnel connects conveniently to Hue, the country's ancient cultural capital, giving travellers the choice to bypass the traditional Hai Van Pass and cut their journey to Hue by one hour through the new tunnel.

MORE FLIGHTS TO DANANG

On October 26th Taiwan's leading domestic carrier, Far Eastern Airlines launched the latest international link to Danang with commencement of a twice-weekly flight from Taipei on Wednesdays and Sundays. The inauguration flight ceremony was attended by senior government officials, Civil Aviation Authorities, Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT), Vietnam Airlines, Pacific Airlines and tourism trade representatives.

The flight establishes a stopover link between USA (Los Angeles and New York), Taipei (Taiwan) and Danang (Vietnam).

HUMANITOURS® Destination Viet Nam

A Project in Partnership With the Greater Seattle Viet Nam Association, Kids Without Borders, and the Rotary Club of the University District Seattle

On November 3, sixteen travelers will depart Seattle for a 14-day mission to Viet Nam known as the HumaniTour. A project in partnership with the Greater Seattle Viet Nam Association, the Rotary Club of the University District Seattle, and Kids Without Borders, the HumaniTour is a unique concept combining tourism and humanitarianism.

Members of the Rotary Clubs of the University District Seattle, Mt. Vernon, Arlington, Stanwood/Camano Island, and Sedro Woolley, recently raised over \$70,000 to purchase new wheelchairs for people in several developing countries around the world. The Wheelchair Foundation, a nonprofit organization based in California, provides matching fund doubling the total donation from these Rotary Clubs.

Team will have representatives from the four Rotary Clubs and the Pro Sports Club of Bellevue. Pro Sports Club of Bellevue, one of the largest health clubs in North America, is the major donor to the total fund raised by Rotary. In Viet Nam, the HumaniTour Team will join the Wheelchair Foundation and VNHelp, another California-based nonprofit organization, to distribute 1,500 wheelchairs to disabled people throughout the country.

The team will visit several orphanages, a rehabilitation village for disabled children victimized by Agent Orange (a chemical defoliant used during the war), and other projects in Viet Nam served by U.S.-based nonprofit organizations. Team members will purchase bicycles and cribs for orphans, award school scholarship funds for poor children. Each will carry from the U.S. donated new children's clothes, dental care products, toys, sports equipment, and school supplies.

For more information on the HumaniTour and schedule of future trips, please write to info@humanitours.org.



Photos of HumaniTours March 2002, and November 2002.

Vay Village Water Project

In the mountainous area of Huong Hoa, 60 km west of Dong Ha in Quang Tri Province (Central Region of Viet Nam), Lang (means Village) Vay is home for a small group of the indigenous Van Kieu people.

GSVA Board member Dick Hunter and his



wife Saunie have visited this village regularly for the last few years. They recently developed a project providing clean water to the 87 people from 16 families of the Vay Village. On behalf of GSVA, Dick worked with the Community Development Center (CDC) of Central Viet Nam and construction of this project will begin in October 2003. The total cost for this water project is 124,504,000 Viet Nam Dong (US\$8,032) with 35% of the fund contributed by the local organization in Viet Nam. The remaining fund will be raised by Dick and Saunie Hunter (also the major donors to the project).

To learn more about this project and how you can make contribution, please contact GSVA Board Member Dick Hunter res032m@gte.net, or info@seattlevietnam.org.

Teach Me To Fish

Benefit Dinner by the Greater Seattle Viet Nam Association
to Support Children in Viet Nam Orphanages

"If you give me a fish, I will eat it today;
If you teach me to fish, I will eat my whole life long". *Asian Proverb*

You are invited to join us at one of the Benefit Dinner series to raise funds for the "Teaching English Program" of the Greater Seattle Viet Nam Association. Join Chef André Nguyen for a four-course dinner featuring food unique to different regions of Viet Nam. Chef André will discuss the special traditions and foods of the featured region. Guests will learn cooking techniques and tips, and get complete recipes and information on where to shop locally for ingredients.

- Tuesday, October 14, 2003
- Tuesday, November 11, 2003

Reception at 6pm. Dinner at 6:30-8 p.m.

Andre's Eurasian Bistro

14125 NE 20th Street, Bellevue WA

\$50.00 per person for member of the GSVA;

\$60.00 per person for non-member.

(Proceeds will support program of the GSVA, portion of cost is tax-deductible charity contribution.) Advance reservations required. Each event is limited to a maximum of 30 persons.

About the 'Teaching English Program':

Currently, GSVA is supporting an English class for the orphans at the Go Vap Orphanage located in Saigon. In a developing country such as Viet Nam where the local economy depends heavily on tourism, children and young people need to speak French or English to compete for the very few decent paying jobs in over crowded cities. As orphans, these children are usually behind in their education and have no possibility of learning English. Our program helps them to better compete for themselves when they leave the orphanage at the age of 17 or 18 years old. GSVA plans to expand the current program at the Go Vap Orphanage in Saigon, as well as start new programs at the Hoa Phuong Orphanage in Hai Phong. Future programs will be considered for orphanages in Hue, Danang, Dalat, and Bac Lieu.

About André

André Nguyen was born in Saigon, Vietnam. He grew up, as many great chefs do, watching and assisting his mother as she prepared the family meals. The French influence on his homeland encouraged a young André to spend

time in France gaining first-hand knowledge of its people, food and traditions. He then arrived in Seattle with dreams of a cooking career, and enrolled in Seattle Central's four-year Culinary Arts and Restaurant Management Program.

After graduation he spent the next seven years working in the kitchens of many of Seattle's major hotels. During this time he met and married Noël Tu and together, in 1987, they opened André's Eurasian Bistro in Bellevue. This highly acclaimed Vietnamese restaurant has earned many awards and much recognition over the years. André's active involvement within the local community has led to numerous cooking classes and demonstrations. His participation in many local and national fundraisers has brought him much satisfaction and visibility. His desire to share his knowledge of the cuisine of Vietnam came from his mother, Huong Ding.

Some of our Sponsors:



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For additional information on the events, sponsorships, or how to contribute to our projects, visit us at www.seattlevietnam.org, or contact us at 206-322-1178, email: info@seattlevietnam.org.



Go Vap Orphans and their English text books



Studying Hard



Picasso Orphans and Uncle Son

Teach Me To Fish Menu

Chef Andre

Starter:

Vietnamese Salad Rolls

Salad:

Young Jack Fruit with Chicken
and Shrimp Crackers

Main Course:

Broiled Tilapia and Prawns
Garlic Fried Rice
Baby Bok Choy

Dessert:

Banana Pudding Cake

The Greater Seattle Viet Nam Association
P.O Box 23282
Seattle, WA 98102 USA
(206) 322-1178 Fax (206) 374-2944
www.seattlevietnam.org
Email info@seattlevietnam.org

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***** REMEMBER TO SEND IN
YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES *****

A Nonprofit Volunteer Organization

JOIN US !

Become a member of the Greater Seattle Viet Nam Association. Your membership helps support our events, programs, projects and services of the Association.

Membership Benefits:

- ✓ Receive our newsletter to stay informed about happenings pertaining to Viet Nam.
- ✓ Contribute and participate in GSVN projects in the U.S and in Viet Nam.
- ✓ Excellent opportunities to network with community and business leaders in the U.S and Viet Nam through our business events.
- ✓ Opportunity to increase your international business contacts.

- ✓ Viet Nam related resources in the areas of education, the arts, trade, and humanitarian work.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

- () \$25 Individual / Friend of the Association
- () \$50 Family Membership
- () \$100 Organizational / Company Membership
- () \$500 Corporate Partner
- () \$1,000 Executive Partner

GSVA is a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) organization. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by the law.

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