



Bridges

Lessons of Vietnam



An Evening Aboard the *LOV* Train

By Stephanie Wakeford

Everyone was quiet as we all gathered under the bright yellow banner anxiously awaiting Mrs. Lindy Poling's arrival. When the signal was given, the group greeted Mrs. Poling with open arms and capacious smiles. She understood the event to be a small gathering in honor of Lt. Col. Zumwalt's son, James, as he prepared for deployment to Iraq. But as my teacher entered the room, she quickly realized she had been fooled.

"Thank you, Lindy, for 10 years of *LOV*!" echoed throughout North Ridge Country Club, as Mrs. Poling was greeted by the smiling faces of more than sixty people who had come from all over the country. Tears delicately rolled down her cheeks as

she began hugging each of her former and current students, as well as the Veteran links and speakers who attended the surprise dinner.

Lt. Col. Jim Zumwalt, who planned the gathering with his sister, Mrs. Mouzetta Zumwalt-Weathers, and 2008 *LOV* grad, Lisa Huynh, welcomed the group. His words were articulate and charismatic when describing our extraordinary teacher. Our host announced that throughout the four-hour evening, there would be a delicious dinner, interspersed with the words of a dozen speakers who have been involved with her *LOV* Program over the years. Then he advised everyone to "come aboard the *LOV* train; sit back, and enjoy the ride!"

Nada Milkovich and I served as the first speakers. I happily recounted the moment in Mrs. Poling's Honors U.S. History class last year, when I realized that I was enjoying history for the first time! Dan Ya, a current *LOV* student, shared his family's harrowing escape from Vietnam's Central Highlands to a refugee camp in Cambodia many years ago. Thanks to the Global Missions Committee of Hudson Memorial Church, chaired by Dr. Barclay Poling, Dan and his family arrived safely in Raleigh, NC in 2003. Dan generated much laughter by addressing the group as "ya'll." Lt. Col. Zumwalt wasn't the least bit hesitant, adding, "He is from *South Vietnam*!" Yet, perhaps one of the most memorable moments was provided by former Millbrook High School graduate (1992) and now U.S. Marine Captain, Sean Keenan. While sharing humorous anecdotes about his notorious high school escapades, he captivated the audience with his moving trib-

ute to Mrs. Poling. He shared the moment back in his U.S. History class in which he first came to realize Mrs. Poling was a *true teacher*. In his closing, he said with great emotion, "You're *still* my teacher."

Several poignant presentations occurred throughout the evening. Mr. Lee Wahler awarded Mrs. Poling a PBR-FVA *Lifetime Membership*, which included a lovely plaque and several mementos. Mrs. Mouzetta Zumwalt Weathers presented the tribute honoree with

a *Lone Sailor* golden pin. This gift served as a stark reminder of the difference *one person* can make. Mr. Zumwalt presented Mrs. Poling with a "Book of *LOV* Letters"—tributes from links and classroom speakers thanking her for her hard work and sacrifice over the past



Photo by Ron Weathers

Former and current *LOV* students, *LOV* links, speakers, and advisors gather together at the "10 Year *LOV* Salute" to Mrs. Poling.

decade in helping students understand a difficult era in our history.

Nada and I had the honor of conversing with Veteran links, Mr. Jim Nesmith, Dr. Robert Ordenez, and Mr. Dan Sheehan, all of whom had traveled from New Mexico, Texas, and Pennsylvania respectively! Making such a long journey served as a true testimonial as to how much Mrs. Poling and her students have meant to each of them.

Mrs. Poling's daughter, Ashley, who recently graduated from the College of William and Mary, delivered a loving tribute which immeasurably moved the audience. Ashley concluded by saying, "I am a lifetime student in my mom's *LOV* class."

Some of my favorite words came from the distinguished General George B. Price. He remarked, "Thank you for helping our country get out of denial about this era. Much obliged to you, Mrs. Poling, for being one in a million!" He couldn't have said it any better.

Thank you, Mrs. Poling, for all that you do. Thank you for your high expectations and for helping your students reach their potential. Thank you, Mrs. Poling, for not only spreading the *LOV*, but inspiring the minds of many and enabling our dreams to come true.



Editors' Note: Respected Veteran link and frequent guest speaker, Mr. Larry Stogner, wrote and produced a wonderful segment about this special event which aired on WTVD-ABC News Oct. 19, 2009

Here is the link: <http://abclocal.go.com/wtvd/video?id=7072630>





Two Perspectives: President Obama's Report Card

Grade: "H" for Hope

By Rashaad Toney

Former President Franklin Roosevelt's first year in office was tumultuous, similar to President Barack Obama's. On January 20, 2009, President Obama inherited at least four, and possibly eight, years of horrific challenges pertaining to our nation's economy and international reputation. But now, the presidential honeymoon is over. The right wing, and even some members of the Democratic Party, are pouncing on the President. It is much too early in his term to pull out the "promises made, but not kept" checklist, as the problems he faces could take eight years to remedy.

Mr. Obama's popularity generated a high level of anticipation when he took office. Some expected a miracle worker, although he gave fair warning he was not. During the course of his presidential campaign, he greatly emphasized the enormity of our nation's challenges.

In President Obama's September speech at the United Nations, he asked world leaders, who once accused the United States of acting alone, to now join us in solving global crises. He stressed that in order to find solutions, we must have a global response--not just an American response. Polls taken both nationally and internationally have shown that most countries, including our own, are operating on their own agendas. President Obama is working diligently with other countries to identify common interests and address common threats. But, this task is not easy when dealing with nations whose ideas are diametrically opposed to America's. Surveys around the world have indicated that our President's popularity is growing based on his new approach to foreign affairs. This approach did not go unnoticed by the Nobel Peace Prize Committee which honored him for his "extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples."



President Obama's ideas have great merit, as was recognized by his Nobel Peace Prize award. It is too early to expect all of his campaign goals to be met. He has great promise and tremendous ability. While too early to award a passing or failing grade, for the moment, he has earned a grade "H"-- for "Hope."

Grade: "U" for Unrealistic

By Emily Bower

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, or Stimulus Plan, has matured into a \$787 billion law that will plague future generations for decades. The United States' debt has risen astronomically to about \$1.75 trillion this year alone. The Obama administration has also been handling the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP), known as the Wall Street bailout, poorly. Some members of Congress are unhappy, and speak for the general public when they say, "The plan will leave U.S. taxpayers with too much of the risk." This is something no one can afford, as these initial months of Barack Obama's presidency have given rise to the greatest increase in unemployment for a generation (*msnbc.msn.com*).



The President's inability to deliver on his visions of foreign policy also has critics worried. Many are saying his attempts to bridge gaps with other allies are gambles that have failed to pay off. Iran and Cuba have yet to change their behavior towards the United States, suggesting that the policy of contrition is not working. In truth, violence has risen since his visits to Mexico, Pakistan, and Iraq (*news.bbc.co.uk*).

Regarding Iraq and Afghanistan, the growing opinion is our troops should come home. If we simply provided weapons and resources to the Iraqis, other countries might be more likely to pitch in, since the United States would no longer be an occupying force. We also need to pay attention to the military threats coming from North Korea, Russia, and China. However, we are unable to do this until we have more military resources at home. Perhaps President Obama has not heard the adage "hindsight is twenty-twenty." Both the British and Soviet occupations of Afghanistan which took place in the previous two centuries have spelled out the futility of getting involved in that country. European public support for this war is declining. As the cost of the war waxes, the President's report card grade wanes. He just can't seem to make his idealistic aspirations a reality.

Artwork by Bridgette Williamson



The Future of United States-Cuban Relations

By Rose Wilhelmy

With hopes that President Raul Castro will bring economic and agricultural reforms to Cuba, the United States hopes to improve diplomatic relations with its communist foe. However, it is unclear whether relations will improve between the two countries.

When President Castro met with President Obama this past April, he said that he was willing to talk about the countries' differences and try to begin working through them. He wanted to discuss transitioning to an economy structured similar to China's, as well as civil reform. The latter would include human rights initiatives, such as lifting travel restrictions and improving basic rights, removing the wage limit restrictions, and allowing civilians to purchase state-owned housing. President Obama conditioned U.S. cooperation on Havana first releasing political prisoners imprisoned simply for advocating human rights. The Cuban leader also would have to reduce the tax rate for money entering Cuba sent to citizens by fam-

ily members residing outside Cuba. This dialogue between the two leaders initially suggested progress might be made in the near future.

Yet, in recent months, President Castro has been "robbing Peter to pay Paul" by making budget cuts from education and health care in order to keep his country's communist system alive. He says that he still wants to work with the U.S., but he is refusing to change his ways. "I was elected to defend, build, and perfect socialism, not destroy it," he stated at a press conference with *Fox News* in early August.

It seems that the two presidents would like to work out their differences; however, they would each prefer to resume relations only after initial demands are met. President Obama attempted to resume diplomatic relations by inviting Cuba to join the Organization of American States, but the Cuban leader refused the offer. Therefore, it seems until Raul Castro indicates a willingness to make some changes, relations between Cuba and America will be on hold.



