



Bridges

Lessons of Vietnam



Bridges/NHC Advisor Presents at National Conference

By Claudia Ortiz

Extremely proud of her *LOV/RIR* program and our *Bridges* publication, Ms. Lindy Poling was invited by Mr. Bob Nasson, Director of the National History Club (NHC), to co-present at the November, 2004 National Social Studies Conference in Baltimore, MD. Ms. Poling included power point slides to encourage teachers from around the country to start a NHC chapter in their schools.

In her presentation, she made it clear that a history club provides multiple benefits to students. Millbrook students feel that our *Bridges* Newsletter Club provides an opportunity to improve writing skills, showcase artistic talents, stay informed regarding current world issues, and serve as academic role models to younger students.

Our club especially allows members of diverse interests and backgrounds to come together to write and do design work relating to important subjects. Ms. Poling commented, "The National History Club is great for students with an interest in history, current affairs, and global issues!"

We are excited that Ms. Poling had the opportunity to share our National History Club program and *Bridges* publication with a national audience. The NCSS Conference was a huge success!



NHC Director, Bob Nasson, with NHC Advisors, Lindy Poling and Karen Green



Wave of Terror Felt 'Round the World

By Emily Abbott

After such a brutal presidential election campaign, it was a surprise to see former President George H.W. Bush and President Clinton appear in a TV commercial together. But, the two were clearly united in their efforts to raise funds for the natural disaster that devastated Asia several weeks ago. As each day passes, the world learns more about the full impact of the devastation that has been wrought.

On December 26, 2004, a 9.0 magnitude earthquake triggered a tsunami that brought death and destruction to over ten countries in Asia. A *tsunami*, Japanese for "harbor wave," can be caused by disturbances in the ocean, such as earthquakes, landslides, or volcanic eruptions. The cause of this recent giant tsunami was what scientists are calling a "giant jolt" of the Indian and Burma plates. Typically the Indian plate moves about 2.4 inches in a year; however, this quake was caused by two plates in India and Burma sliding about 50 feet into each other at the same time. The giant tsunami was powerful enough to be felt 3,000 miles away on the African coast, where dozens more lives were claimed. When most natural disasters approach, there are often warning signs that allow meteorologists and scientists to anticipate what might happen. However, a tsunami gives few warning signs in sufficient time to save lives.



Drawing by Katherine Lloyd

Indonesia was the hardest hit, suffering a death toll over 173,000, out of 220,000, with millions more left homeless by the devastation. If the health concerns of these victims are not addressed soon, they could die. Accordingly, the first priority for the American Red Cross is to provide food, clean water, sanitation, relief items such as tents, hygiene kits, cooking utensils, etc. American Red Cross teams have already been deployed to many affected areas, where they are working hard to provide support to the ever-growing relief effort. The cost of emergency supplies has been quite high, but 100% of every donation made goes to the tsunami relief and recovery efforts.

Only in the months ahead after relief efforts have been completed, will we fully understand the impact of this catastrophe. For not only will the countries whose shores were flooded by the tsunami then know the human toll, the global economic impact will also be better understood as the *ripple effect* hits the shores of countries untouched by the wave itself in the form of decreased sales of consumer goods to those states hardest hit by the death and destruction. Even the U.S. economy will feel its impact. The startling reality that may well come to light as we assess the catastrophe's global impact is that this was "the tsunami felt 'round the world."



Madame President?

By Emily Reass



Drawing by Jamie Hicks

With the election of 2004 over, the question is, “Who will be running for president in 2008?” Many candidates come to mind, but American women seem to fall in the shadows of this somewhat exclusive “Boy’s Club.” Approximately twenty women have run for the Office of President of the United States, but none have done so as part of a major ticket. Why aren’t women more motivated to run for this office?

Women have made great advances in all fields, including education, business, and to a certain extent, politics. Many women, such as Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison and former Secretary of State Madeline Albright, have demonstrated noteworthy leadership skills. Numerous women are CEO’s of successful corporations. Women’s values and voices are important in this country, as they make up about half of the U.S. population.

A major reason why women are not considered for president is cultural—they are not seen as political leaders on the international scene. In countries like India, Pakistan, and Indonesia, women have had the support to run and win because of family dynasties, which seem to empower the characteristics of

potency in their female leaders. American women possess the same capabilities that have made these global female leaders successful!

Diplomacy, good judgment, and respect are not skills exclusive to men. As Governor of Texas, President George W. Bush had little prior experience in international politics before running for president, nor did former Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton. Newly confirmed Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has had more experience in this area than many of our past Presidents. In today’s America, a woman is not envisioned as being capable of leading the fight against terrorism. Yet, during the 2000 Palestinian/Israeli Peace Talks at Camp David, President Clinton inferred that if more women had been involved in the negotiations, a solution could have been found.

So, who is our best female candidate for president? The challenge goes to many female governors, senators, and political administrators, because their leadership is in the public eye. Hillary Clinton and Condoleezza Rice are two possible candidates who could be “electable.” Culture and media are constantly changing the shape and vision of the world, and as females attain leadership positions, the American public will be more inclined to recognize their political attributes. Major political parties must *believe* that a woman is electable, as well as capable of withstanding the intense media scrutiny that is so engrained in the election process today.

Have You Heard about Darfur?

By Chelsea Tucker and Arrien Davison

Sudan’s government and southern rebels signed a peace pact on January 9, 2005, ending Africa’s longest civil war. Unfortunately, Darfur, located in western Sudan, was not part of the treaty.

The two conflicting groups in Darfur are fair-skinned Arabs and dark-skinned Africans. Tension between them has been increasing since the 1970’s. This tension escalated during the 1980s, mainly due to the arming of the Arab tribesman, known as the “Janjaweed.” The Africans began moving south in search of water, better pastures, and a long desire for peace. Over 1.2 million moved from their homes, fleeing to Sudan’s neighbor, Chad. Crops and other prized possessions are being looted each and every day. Women and girls are being maliciously raped by the Janjaweed, and villages burned. About 500,000 people have died—just because their skin was a little darker.

While the U.S. appropriately calls such conduct by the Janjaweed as “genocide,” the U.N. calls them “war crimes.” The U.S. has pressed the U.N. to establish a special court to deal with these “war crimes.”

As this situation continues to escalate, the people of Darfur are struggling to survive. The World Food Program set a goal of \$252 million (U.S. dollars) for its Darfur operation in 2004. To date, only \$211 million has been collected. This money will aid in relief work and in feeding those who are starving. Safety and security for the civilian population remains nonexistent, due to the continuing presence of the Janjaweed. The police are too poorly armed, trained, or equipped to defend the people. Despite the cease-fire of April 2004 and the recent peace treaty, violence continues; there is no guarantee of safety for the civilians, whether they remain in camps or return to their villages. One citizen of Darfur stated, “If the U.S. does not step in soon, we will no longer be here.”

Hope in Iraq?

By Kathryn Stell

Since U.S. troops entered Iraq in 2002, the situation has become dramatically more difficult. Now, insurgents hide in the towns, setting off improvised explosive devices by remote control as our armored trucks drive by. The sight of Iraqi citizens going into hiding just before an attack occurs is somewhat discouraging to American soldiers. However, the benefits of U.S. involvement in Iraq counterbalance the disappointments. In a television interview, one soldier stated we need “patience, presence, persistence” to win the war. Patience is especially key as “U.S. commanders in Iraq reckon that, based on historical evidence, it takes about nine years to defeat the average insurgency,” according to David Ignatius of *The Washington Post*. In this type of guerilla warfare situation, we should not expect to remove the insurgency threat in Iraq within months.

One reason many U.S. citizens and soldiers cite for staying the course is the 1,457 soldiers who have already sacrificed their lives there. As another soldier stated in a television interview, we have “too much invested to turn our backs... to do so would disrespect [those who died].” David Ignatius wrote, “for all of the difficulties in the war, much of northern and southern Iraq is stable today.” Other milestones in the last year include Iraqis taking control of their government in June 2004 and the 40-50% expansion of Iraq’s economy. On January 30th, over 8 million eligible Iraqi voters went to the polls. This turnout was far better than expected.

The U.S. has accomplished a lot in three years, but there is still more to be done. If we pulled out of Iraq today, many people would be left without hope and a voice. We have the resources to accomplish our goals. In President Bush’s Inaugural speech, he emphasized ridding the world of tyranny and winning liberty for all. Iraq is important in the fight, as President Bush declared, “The difficulty of the task is no excuse for avoiding it.”

Spotlight on a Marine: Thomas Patterson

By Sarah Edwards and Mollie Jones

As the United States continues to fight the *War on Terror*, our country is forced to send more troops overseas. 2002 MHS *LOV* class graduate, Lance Corporal Thomas Patterson, is currently a Marine serving in Afghanistan and will soon be deployed to Iraq. Thomas took time out of his hectic schedule to answer some questions regarding what it is like to be a young soldier serving his country today:

1. What is the situation like in Afghanistan?

"Afghanistan has pretty much made 100% progress since the Taliban left. The normal rights of the Afghan people have been restored once again, and this time they are here to stay. The country here has been the most stable it has ever been in half a century."

2. How do the people of Afghanistan react to the U.S. military presence there?

"Every time I go out on patrol, I am greeted with smiles and hands waving...I have never felt so welcome... The children love us more than anything—especially the little girls. Because females [have been] treated horribly in this country, whenever we get the chance, we give the girls more candy than the boys. Just to see the smile on their face is a great feeling."



Lance Corporal Thomas Patterson

3. I heard you were going to Iraq soon. How do you feel about that?
"I am actually excited about having the chance to go to Iraq. The people of Iraq need help, too; and that is what the Marines are here to do. Iraqis deserve freedom like [us], and I would be honored to be a part of the force that gives it to them."

4. How has being in the Marines changed your life?
"There are a few key life changes I have gone through...The one thing that sticks out the most is being appreciative of EVERYTHING that I have in the U.S. I have been to many Third World countries and have seen what the people go through. America is definitely the greatest and most free place on earth!!! I have learned a lot about life and to never take anything for granted."

5. What kinds of missions do you do?
"I am in an infantry platoon whose mission is to establish security and stability in our area of operations. Our mission here is mostly humanitarian. We have definitely won the hearts and minds of the people in this country."

6. Do you believe you made the right decision by going straight into the Marines after high school?
"Going into the Marines has been the greatest decision of my life!"



The Fear Factor

By Monique Oliveira

On November 3, 2004, Sgt. Charles Robert Jenkins, a 64-year-old American soldier who pleaded guilty to desertion after spending 39 years in communist North Korea, received a 30-day sentence and dishonorable discharge. He also admitted to aiding the enemy by teaching English to their military cadets in the 1980s. While desertion is punishable by life in prison, as part of a plea bargain, Jenkins received a greatly reduced sentence, imposed at a court-martial held at a U.S. Army camp just outside Tokyo.

Jenkins' story hits close to home. The North Carolinian deserted after leaving his post on the South Korean side of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separating North and South Korea. He reportedly left his post on January 5, 1965 out of fear he was about to be transferred to dangerous daytime patrols in the DMZ, or worse, to Vietnam.

Allowed to leave Pyongyang to go to Japan for medical treatment, he turned himself in to U.S. military authorities two months later. Tokyo requested leniency by the U.S. to allow Jenkins to live in Japan with his Japanese wife—a victim years earlier of North Korean kidnappers—and their two daughters. Having served his 30-day sentence, Jenkins now resides in Sado, a small island in the Sea of Japan about 180 miles northwest of Tokyo, with his family.

Jenkins' story is unique, but he is not the only soldier to desert the U.S. military. Research indicates there were 500,000 cases of desertion between 1965 and 1973; 93,250 of these were for time periods greater than thirty days. During the Korean War, there was an annual "desertion" rate of about three percent; during the

Vietnam War, this more than doubled to seven percent. But these numbers, alone, are somewhat misleading, for they include absent without leave (AWOL) cases—cases that are not necessarily indicative of a soldier's intent to desert.

While cases such as that of Robert Jenkins are unique, even cases of desertion are not the norm. So many American servicemen risked or gave their lives to defend freedom for those both at home and abroad during the Korean and Vietnam conflicts. Their continuing commitment to so serve was evidenced by a poll taken in the 1980s in which 66% of Vietnam vets said they would serve again if so called upon. As for those who deserted, many reported they did so simply out of momentary *fear*.

Ironically, fear is probably an emotion shared both by one who chooses to stay on the battlefield to fight and one who chooses not to; for it is doubtful even the former does not also experience the *fear factor*. But it is how one responds to that moment of fear that will define one's true mettle. And, running from fear, as did Sgt. Jenkins, does not always guarantee one will escape it—for he would go on to spend four decades of his life in constant fear of his North Korean captors.

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt cautioned Americans, at a point in time long ago as many feared for their survival, that "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself." There is nothing shameful about fear. We must remember that it is really what we do in the throes of fear that will define our lives—and whether we reap the rewards or suffer the consequences of our actions in doing so.



