



Bridges

Lessons of Vietnam



Time to “Walk the Walk”

By Chelsea Tucker



mtv.com

In past elections, America’s youth has never really come out in strong numbers to vote. After the turnout in the 2000 election, many political commentators believed that our generation would be the last to make a difference in politics. Several groups, such as Sean “P. Diddy” Combs’ “Vote or Die,” MTV’s “Choose or Lose,” BET’s “Speak Now,” and others, wanted to change the

view of these politicians to show them that America’s youth really cares about their future. These groups did everything they could to capture the young voters’ attention, using clothing, informative commercials, and teen-friendly information on the election.

I asked MHS senior Chris Rohrbach, a first time voter, why he was voting. He responded, “I believe that if you support a candidate and are old enough to vote, go out and make that sup-

port count.” Chad Tucker, 22, voting for the second time, commented, “I voted because it is a civic duty; I feel there’s a need for change in the administration ... Voting is important to me at my age, because of my future in this country and the relevance of the many vital issues in the election season.”

Surprisingly only 10% of youth between the ages of 18 and 24 voiced their opinions at the polls—a percentage actually lower than in the 2000 election! What does this mean? Are young people today just not interested in politics? Are the candidates not touching on their interests? Does America’s youth not care about their future? Our generation seemed so fired up and ready to make a change in politics, but what happened to those who wanted a change?

We will now have to wait until the next election to see if our young people will again decide just to “talk the talk,” or will commit to “walk the walk” as well, by exercising their right to vote.



Point of View: The New Patriot Act

By Daniel Wade

The Patriot Act was passed shortly after September 11th, 2001. U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft introduced legislative changes to Congress that would better enable law enforcement to deal with the terrorist threat against America. The Senate quickly

passed the *USA Patriot Act*, hoping to provide America with new tools to conquer terrorism. In reality, the *USA Patriot Act* has diminished our Constitutional rights, e.g., making it easier for the government to search our homes.

Now, our government is proposing new changes to the *Patriot Act*, re-naming it, “The Domestic Security Enhancement Act,” or “Patriot II.” Researchers for the American Civil Liberties Union have looked at these proposed changes, and they have raised a number of concerns. The ACLU worries the changes will allow the government not to disclose the identity of anyone detained in connection with a terrorist investigation, even an American citizen, until criminal charges are filed. Additionally, this new version of Patriot II puts no time limit on how long one can be detained.

Early this fall, a federal appeals judge agreed with the ACLU’s concerns. U.S. District Judge Victor Marrero ruled that a component of the Patriot Act was unconstitutional because the government could look at Internet records without court review. This ruling is awaiting possible appeal.

In the 1970’s, restrictions were put on local police so they would not spy on religious and political activities. Those restrictions would be dropped if this bill becomes law. The government would be allowed to obtain credit records and library records with-



Drawing by Julia Nilsen

out a warrant—and citizens would have no idea government investigators requested the records. Wiretaps, without any court order for up to fifteen days after a terrorist attack, would be permissible.

The definition of terrorism would be expanded: *Individuals engaged in civil disobedience could risk losing their citizenship; their organization could be subject to wiretapping, as well as their money and possessions taken.* Americans could be extradited, searched, and wiretapped at the request of foreign nations, whether or not treaties allow this. Lawful immigrants would be stripped of the right to a fair deportation hearing, and federal courts would not be allowed to review immigration rulings.

I believe adopting these changes will play directly into the hands of terrorists. If many of our freedoms are taken away, then *what do people fight and die for?* We should *not* support this act; for its passage will be a victory for terrorists who, through fear and paranoia, will have succeeded in placing a crack in America’s Constitutional foundation.



Where are the Soldiers?

By Monique Oliveira



Drawing by Alex Domingo

When America sends her soldiers off to war, the assumption is they will return home, either safely or for burial. But other wars have taught us such is not always the case. As of July 20th, 2004, 1,855 Americans remain missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War, while 88,000 Americans are still missing from WWII.

On September 8th, 2004, there was an observance at Randolph Air Force Base by the Department of Defense/Missing Personnel Office. More than 600 people are working tirelessly to bring these POW/MIA soldiers back to American soil. They are responsible for managing the Air Force POW/MIA program responsible for locating the 1,600 Airmen missing from the Korean War, Cold War, and Vietnam War, working with over 3,000 family members in the process. Once a month, at regional meetings held around the United States, the Air Force Missing Persons Branch provides in-person updates to families. The meetings provide general information about

current recovery operations, as well as case-specific details about each missing relative.

POW/MIA Recognition Day in September is another way to help families cope. James Russell, the Missing Persons Branch Chief stated, "First, it is a day of reverence and reflection for the people who never came home in making the ultimate sacrifice for their nation. It's also a time to thank the POWs and MIAs who did return...It sends a message to our current day Airmen, Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines that we are not going to forget them. We, as a nation, will do everything in our power to bring them home." Legislation has also been passed requiring that the POW/MIA flag be flown on federal holidays.

Each year the missing persons program provides closure for several families. So far this year, 12 Air Force members have been identified. In the past three years, the remains of 31 members were identified and returned home. U.S. government personnel are now actively working on trying to resolve two recent POW/MIA cases relating to missing soldiers taken captive in Iraq.

While we can hope and pray that final closure is quickly achieved for the families of all our POW/MIA service members, we can take comfort in knowing a dedicated group of searchers is committed to achieving that end.

Day of Remembrance

By Claudia Ortiz and Bryant Lewis

Veterans Day was initially called "Armistice Day." The 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month was the time, day and month that World War I officially ended. LOV students recently had the opportunity to express their own opinions regarding what Veterans Day means to them. Many of us feel this course has greatly changed our views on what Veterans Day truly represents. After compiling many of our classmates' thoughts, we decided to compose a Veterans Day letter to our links and speakers:

Dear Veterans,

"To be completely honest, I never used to even know what war the veterans from Veterans Day represented. Now, after taking the LOV course, I'm ashamed to know that there are still so many people in America that are just like I used to be."

"We've come face-to-face with numerous heroes who fought to keep our country safe. Now I have a completely different level of admiration and respect for all of them."

"It's a time to honor and remember those who gave of themselves... and gave us the freedom we enjoy today."

"It is a time to remember those who sacrificed for our country and to reflect on the lessons of the past."

"Veterans Day means that we should respect and uphold those soldiers who aren't heard of every day."

"This day is deserved for those who fought in battle, for those who were afraid, for those who died, and for those who fought and gave faith to AMERICA."

"Lessons of Vietnam has given me so much knowledge and joy about my own country. I feel like a true patriot now, and I can truly honor veterans on Veterans Day."

Sincerely,

The Lessons of Vietnam Class

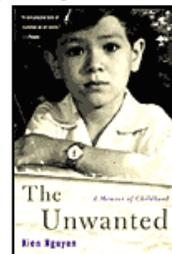
Book Review: *The Unwanted*

By Cham Nguyen

A brilliantly written memoir by Kien Nguyen, *The Unwanted* depicts the nightmares of growing up in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. Kien reminisces about the triumphs and tragedies of his family falling from wealth to poverty. His once high status and mixture of Vietnamese and American blood made him an easy target of hatred.

Kien Nguyen was born on May 12, 1967 in Nhatrang, Vietnam. He resided in the Nguyen Mansion with his extended family. The story opens up with his fondest memory—his fifth birthday. During the next three years, he remains ignorant to the hardships that engulf everyone around him. On March 25, 1975, Kien was awakened by the terrors of war. Days went on, but the horror never ceased. As his family waited to escape, Vietnam faced her biggest fear. She was claimed at 11:30 AM on April 30, 1975 by the North Vietnamese Communist Government. In an instant, reality hit Kien head on, while his dreams began to fade away. As the years passed on, the joy the Nguyen family once felt was replaced by bitterness. In the midst of this personal "war," any hope left slowly deteriorated, as did the desire for life. Kien lamented, "Hope became a destructive force that held lives in a prolonged limbo of future expectancy. Instead of relishing life, people merely existed." Through all the trials and tribulations he endured, he still managed to find just enough courage to keep going. In 1975, Kien left Vietnam for 'his heaven' in America.

As I read Kien's autobiography, my body cringed. For the first time, I witnessed Vietnam the way my mother, an Amerasian, had lived it. I could never imagine being ashamed of myself around my own loved ones. I am extremely proud of everything my family has endured and overcome. We have finally found contentment. As Kien's father advised, "If you ever want to achieve happiness, don't dwell on the past. Instead, start living."



Update on Afghanistan

By Kathryn Stell



www.blythe.org

With the presidential election and the war in Iraq dominating the news, it has been easy to forget about the other major front in the *War on Terror*, Afghanistan. The quality of life in Afghanistan has greatly improved in the last three years, even though there are still difficult issues facing the country, such as terrorist threats, malnutrition, and inconsistent electricity. Afghanistan is looking more like a democracy, and the greatest proof of this was the election on October 9th, 2004.

Afghans had a choice between 18 candidates. Hamid Karzai, the Interim President, was officially elected. The ballot included one woman running for president and two women running for vice president. About 41% of Afghanistan's registered voters for the election were women, but unfortunately, many women were threatened to stay away from the polls, especially in the more conservative areas.

According to Jennifer Barrett Ozols, a *Newsweek* reporter, "A lot of women appreciate the human-rights initiatives of the past few years but they need to continue."

Even since the election, the security and economy in Afghanistan have improved. Overall, the election has been viewed as successful. According to Jed Babbin, author of *Inside the Asylum*: "In just three years, Afghanistan went from a nation that had never in its history allowed its people self-determination, to one in which—despite the strictness of Islamic law that still dominates much of its people—millions voted. The picture on the front page of Sunday's *Washington Post* said it all: a woman, garbed head to toe in a burqa, only her hands visible, pushing her paper ballot into a ballot box. According to one report, pollsters weren't able to get good exit polls because the Afghans were reveling in their ability to keep their votes secret."

With the election in the past, President Karzai and the Afghan people look forward to confronting numerous challenging problems as they build their new democracy.



The Tree and the Trailer

By Ashley Poling

In a place very far away from Millbrook High School, Dinka children in the village of Akot in Southern Sudan must go to school under a tree (Fig. 1)—and they are the lucky ones, according to Mamer Maku Aew Ngong. During our recent interview, I learned that Mamer is the first person in his family and the village of Akot to receive any kind of formal education. To have a chance for an education himself, he knew that he would have to leave Southern Sudan where Christian missionaries had worked for many years to establish schools and churches – including a primary school in his village. But in February 1964, the Islamic Government in Khartoum ordered the expulsion of all missionaries in Southern Sudan. Not long after this decree, a terrible 20-year civil war broke out that resulted in government attacks on his village and the destruction of virtually all churches, schools, and hospitals across Rumbek (his county) and Southern Sudan.

I asked Mamer, "What does it mean for you to be in America at this time?" He responded, "My being here in America is very important for the future of my country. My people are really counting on their sons in America to help them establish schools for the children of Southern Sudan...We have not had any schools in my area of Southern Sudan for more than two decades."

Mamer is currently working with a new and exciting movement in

the United States, the Southern Sudan Fellowship (SSF). The SSF is based in Raleigh and is committed to re-building primary schools in the area of Rumbek County, where thousands of children are still being denied any opportunity for education. The SSF and local churches in Raleigh have already raised enough money to sponsor one new primary school in the village of Maleng-Agok which was completed in 2003 (Fig. 3). I learned that the success of the new Maleng-Agok Primary School has triggered so much interest that families from other villages, including Mamer's village, Akot, which is 60 miles away, are now moving to Maleng-Agok so their children can have an opportunity for an education. In Maleng-Agok, over 650 children are now attending classes in a "real school" where they are given formal instruction in math, English, and Peace Education, which emphasizes values like equality, freedom, responsibility, and tolerance. In Mamer's words, "We hope to make this a model school for the whole region."

Mamer is an incredibly upbeat person, and this interview helped me realize how much we take our education for granted in the United States. The idea of having to take some of my classes at Millbrook in a trailer (Fig. 2) doesn't seem so terrible, when I think about the hundreds of thousands of children across Southern Sudan who go to school under a tree.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Results: Presidential Election 2004

By Sarah Edwards and Mollie Jones

On November 2nd, our country chose George W. Bush to serve his second and final term as the 43rd President of the United States. It was a close race, but even before all votes were counted, Senator John Kerry conceded, as he could not win the popular vote in Ohio—the deciding state in this election.

Throughout their campaigns, both the President and Senator Kerry rallied support for their parties. The total voter turnout of nearly 120 million Americans was the highest since 1968. Due to this high number of voters, both candidates wanted to make sure that every vote was counted. Accordingly, a tight race delayed us in knowing the outcome of the election until the afternoon of November 3rd. President Bush claimed 59,834,725 votes; Senator Kerry earned 56,373,528 allowing Mr. Bush to win the popular vote 51% to 48%. President Bush won 279 electoral votes and 30 states to Senator Kerry's 19 states and Washington D.C., which yielded him 252 electoral votes.

President Bush gave his victory speech Wednesday, November 3, 2004 at the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington D.C., in which he discussed his plans for next term. The Republicans hold the majority in both the Senate and House, which gives the President an advantage in fulfilling his agenda. While planning to broaden tax reforms and implement a new Social Security plan, Bush's top priority remains the *War on Terror*.



LOV Teacher Receives National Award

By Claudia Ortiz

USA Today recently honored our very own Ms. Lindy Poling as one of 20 teachers from across the nation on its 2004 All-USA Teacher Team. This well-deserved award was presented to Ms. Poling for her "vision, creativity, and ability to inspire the best in her students." *USA Today* submitted, "Teachers named to our First Team have the ability to transform students into lifelong learners. In educating students, these teachers ultimately improve their communities."

Ms. Poling has earned respect throughout the nation for her *Community-in-the-Classroom* Program. This program gives students the opportunity to learn history through the eyes of those who experienced it. Informed "guest teachers" like the Zumwalt family, Vice Admiral and Mrs. Emmett Tidd, Mr. Loc Duong, Veteran/TV Journalist Larry Stogner, and General George Price visit Ms. Poling's classroom each semester. *LOV* student James Bawden commented, "When school ends, she doesn't stop. Her commitment to the students and the speakers really makes a difference. Every aspect of her class is really amazing."



I know that Ms. Poling's lessons will follow me to college and throughout my life. Wake County Superintendent Bill McNeal also congratulated Ms. Poling. He said, "[She] has brought people of great honor into her classroom and earned respect for her teaching style, devotion to her students and her lessons on the Vietnam War."

Congratulations, Ms. Poling! We are all extremely proud of you.



Females Forgotten

By Emily Reass

"The reign of Saddam Hussein is gone forever." This statement from President Bush meant the end of the rule of a cruel and dangerous dictator. Unfortunately, Iraq is now mired in instability, corruption, and a clash of traditionalist religious beliefs. The Bush administration hoped that American soldiers would be seen as liberators for Iraqi citizens. Utilities and the transportation system were damaged and are in the process of being rebuilt, but no one suspected women's rights would also suffer.

In Saddam's era, Iraqi women were once distinguished for being the most educated and advanced in the Middle East, enjoying a tradition of higher education and skilled jobs. Demanding to be treated as equals as early as the 1920's, Iraqi women worked hard to not be known as "barefoot and pregnant." They broke new ground by asserting their independence as women and citizens and by not wearing veils in public. By promoting equal rights and better education, they began joining men in the work force by the 1930's. The Iraqi constitution was changed to make women more equal to men by giving them the opportunity to vote and run for political office.



Drawing by Margaret Gomes

Ironically, social and political conditions for women have worsened since Saddam's fall due to the temporary government's inability to establish law and order to protect its citizens. Facing sexual abuse and kidnappings, many women are afraid to leave their homes unless they have an armed male protector. They are pressured to quit their jobs so there are more jobs for men. Girls are sacrificing their education because of family poverty and fear of violence. Females are falling into an educational decline as the literacy rate has dropped to approximately 40%.

Females make up about 60% of the Iraqi population. The United States-supported Iraqi Governing Council includes only three women. How are women to avoid discrimination if they do not have a representative voice in their new "democratic" country? Ironically, while Saddam Hussein certainly was not known as a protector of women, female rights have suffered a devastating blow since his fall from power.



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