



# Bridges

## Lessons of Vietnam



### What is *Tết Trung Thu*?

By Tommy Huynh

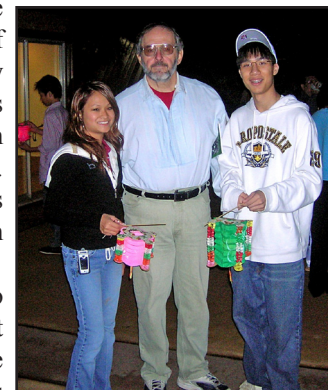
Food, games, shows, and kids... what do all these mean? They are associated with one of the most popular family holidays in Vietnam, known as *Tết Trung Thu*, or the Mid-Autumn Festival. It is held on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 8<sup>th</sup> lunar month. In Vietnam, parents work so hard that they often have limited time to be with their children. So, they use this festival as an opportunity to make up for lost time to demonstrate their love for them. Even here in America, Vietnamese parents continue to show their appreciation to their children on this holiday.

After struggling for their freedom, Vietnamese Americans were left with a new battle—adapting to a new life. They had to adjust to new customs, careers, homes, language, and friends. Today, *Tết Trung Thu* is still celebrated in Vietnamese-American communities such as San Jose, Houston, Washington, D.C, and even Raleigh. This event not only brings the family together, but the community as well.

On October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2006, the Raleigh-Cary Vietnamese community hosted the *Tết Trung Thu* festival. There were a lot of activities, including games, dances, and contests—and, most significantly, *food*! During the festival, people hurried to eat what are called *bánh trung thu*, or mooncakes. These treats are only

made once a year. They can be compared to the weight and size of a hockey puck, but are incredibly delicious! There are also lanterns for the children's participation in a lantern procession at dawn. Myth says the lantern represents *brightness*, while the procession symbolizes *success* in school.

I had an opportunity to ask a parent why he feels this event is so important in the Vietnamese community. He replied, "This is an important festival because we would like these kids to keep this important tradition going on. As years go by, the Vietnamese culture is fading away in the Vietnamese-American communities. Our job [older generations] is to teach these Vietnamese Americans [younger generations] more about the culture and most importantly, our country, Vietnam."



Jen and Tommy celebrate *Tết Trung Thu* with Lessons of Vietnam speaker, Mr. R.J. Del Vecchio.



### A Tribute to a Very Special Lady

By Lindy and Barclay Poling

For the past ten years, Millbrook HS *Lessons of Vietnam* students have been honored to have General George B. Price and his lovely wife, Georgianna, visit our classroom. Sadly, Mrs. Price passed away from congestive heart failure on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2006. She was an important contributor to our *LOV* program, often sharing the challenges and highlights of a military wife traveling across the globe, while fully supporting her husband's demanding career.

Mrs. Price served as a tremendous supporter of military families throughout her life. She especially loved helping young women and families adapt to military life. She received commendations for her volunteer work in the Army Community Service and the American

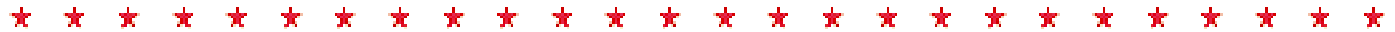


Mrs. Georgianna Price teaching MHS *Lessons of Vietnam* students.

Red Cross. This amazing lady had a passion for reading, and she passed this passion on to her children and grandchildren! After finally settling down in Columbia, MD, she went on to work in the Howard County Central Library for 22 years. She had great faith; and as her daughter, Kathy, pointed out, she always presented the positive side of things. Amazingly, she raised four wonderful children while moving over 18 times.

Mrs. Georgianna Price was interred at Arlington National Cemetery, following a very meaningful funeral service at the Ft. Myers Old Post Chapel. Chaplain Charles Hamlin delivered a poignant eulogy, which he ended with these words, "It was wonderful to experience God's love through her. Thanks for loving us. Thanks for allowing us to love God through you."





# Hurricane Katrina--One Year Later

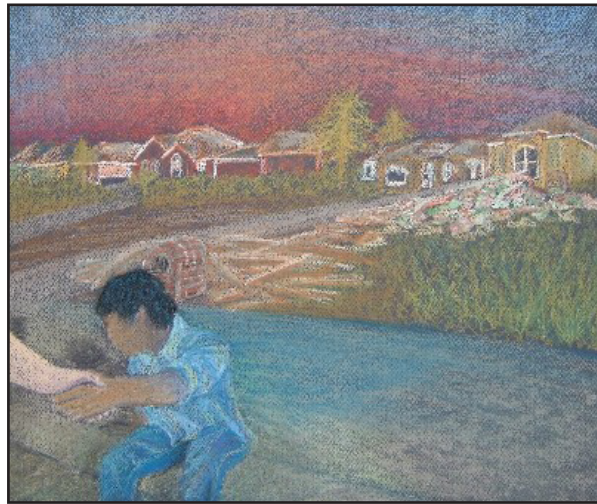
By Alexis Credle

Although the time has come for many of the people of New Orleans to return home, living conditions are just not the same one year later...

Everyone remembers the tragedy that occurred on Aug 29, 2005. Hurricane Katrina put 80% of the city underwater, leaving 160,000 homes in metro New Orleans damaged or destroyed. It littered the city and suburbs with 12 million tons of debris, or about seven times the amount produced when the World Trade Center collapsed. One year later, approximately 171,000 of the 450,000 pre-Katrina residents of New Orleans have returned. Close to 100,000 of the survivors of Hurricane Katrina are living in two bedroom trailers provided by FEMA.

One year later, the victims of Hurricane Katrina have been overwhelmed with support from all parts of the world. For example, a Bangladesh student offered jackets to Katrina victims. He toured the U.S. as a participant in the State Department leadership program bringing these jackets, made in his father's garment factory, to help

the victims of this tragedy. The Pakistani American Association of Greater Houston is situating families in various apartments, serving meals on a daily basis and providing basic needs as well as logistical support, including jobs, food stamps, and FEMA assistance. With the medical attention needed for these victims, several countries, including Cuba, have pledged aid. A Mexican army convoy of nearly 200 people even crossed the border into the United States to bring aid to Katrina victims, becoming the first Mexican military unit to operate on U.S. soil since 1846.



Artwork by Jessica Carrick

Many people believe from hearing only the negative side of the news that Hurricane Katrina victims are not being helped. This is not true, as many of these victims are not only

receiving American aid, but international assistance, as well. This aid has made New Orleans, the surrounding areas, and especially the victims, move one step closer to getting their lives back to normal.



# 9/11: A Scar in the Heart of America

By Tyler Roberts



The wind blew hard against my back as I exited Grand Central Station in New York City. It was my first time visiting this wonderful city, and I find it sadly ironic that my trip would be met with tremendous grief and pain. As I walked through the streets of skyscrapers and high rises, I found myself standing in front of *Ground Zero*. It was amazing to me that five years after 9/11, *Ground Zero* was still only a hole in the middle of this great city.

I made my way toward the site, approaching it with a solemnity that could scarcely be found at a funeral. Around me were others who had come to pay reverence to these venerated grounds. There was an elderly couple placing flowers by the surrounding fence, a single woman and child holding hands as they silently mourned for their beloved, and a nervous man who paced the sidewalks just outside of Ground Zero. I stood for a moment, lost in thought over how 9/11 has shaped our world today.

As I slowly walked away, I could hear a man on the street playing *Amazing Grace* on his flute. There are no words to describe the sorrow that has been felt, no tears to recount the losses, nothing to be written except the lamenting and mourning for the deceased. Five years after 9/11, *Ground Zero* still scars the city of New York. I truly believe that 9/11 has left a scar in the hearts of Americans, and it will remain with us for the duration of our lives.

# Bottle of Reality

By Antony Burton

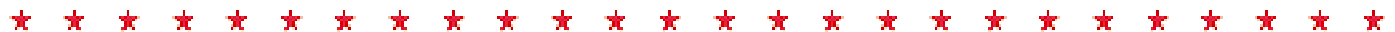
Terrorists do not limit themselves to one country or continent. Their motives are clear, but their rationale often times is not. This is very clear in regards to our closest ally, Great Britain.

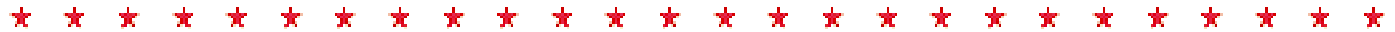
On August 10th, 2006, fear spread over the island nation as an alleged terrorist plot to set off liquid bombs on several flights destined for the United States was uncovered. This incident resulted in increased security in both countries. Britain also felt terrorism's wrath on July 7th, 2005 when three simultaneous attacks took place at British tube stations, killing 52. The country has been severely shaken by terrorists who claim to be retaliating for British involvement in the Middle East.

One of the terrorists in the July 7 attacks, Mohammad Sidique Khan, recorded a video of himself before the attacks in which he tried to justify what he did. In this video he stated, "We are at war and I am a soldier. Now you, too, will taste the reality of this situation." The British people did taste the reality of the situation--and if history repeats itself, they may once again soon.

The increase of terror in Great Britain has resulted in even more resentment towards Prime Minister Tony Blair's decision to support the United States in the *War on Terror* in the Middle East. His approval rating dipped to 26% in May, 2006. This escalating pressure on Mr. Blair by British citizens has resulted in his announced departure. But, will this action cause a halt to terrorist attacks in England?

As Mr. Blair's replacement takes office, he will have to make the decision as to whether this is, indeed, Britain's war as well.





# 21st Century Genocide Continues

By Emma Mazur

Last spring brought a whole new hype to the situation in Darfur, Sudan. The genocide dominated newspaper headlines and even found a spot on Oprah's television program. Supporters had high hopes this would be the break Darfur needed to end hostilities. MHS Junior, Brandi Wilburn was among thousands who attended a rally for Darfur in Washington, DC in late April. Although this event raised awareness, the extreme publicity about Darfur soon came to a halt, while the murder, rape, starvation, and displacement of men, women, and children continue daily. The few organizations in Darfur, such as the African Union, plan to pack up and leave since fighting has increased significantly. A United Nations peacekeeping force remains the only hope to bring peace to the region—BUT the Sudanese government will not agree to allow it into the area.

This situation leaves many people in doubt as to how they can help. The nightly news and media portray a region far out of reach for any immediate relief. Moving into the area of Darfur is a very dangerous and life threatening task, thus making aid access over safe delivery routes impossible. Student members of the Darfur Awareness Club at Millbrook High School are striving to make a difference regarding this tragedy. The club's potential to help the people of Darfur has recently taken on promise.

On October 14th, club members participated in packaging meals for refugees through a program called *Operation Sharehouse*. This organization, part of *Stop Hunger Now*, uses its relationships with global relief agencies and partnerships within established local groups to allow the distribution of enormous amounts of life saving aid. We are working with *Operation Sharehouse* to create a relationship within a refugee camp in Chad to provide meals for displaced Darfurians. Although it may seem difficult to provide direct assistance to the people in Darfur, we hope a portion of the 8,400 meals our club has packaged will soon be sent to a refugee camp in Chad to help the displaced men, women, and children of Darfur.



The MHS Darfur Awareness Club at Operation Sharehouse in North Raleigh.

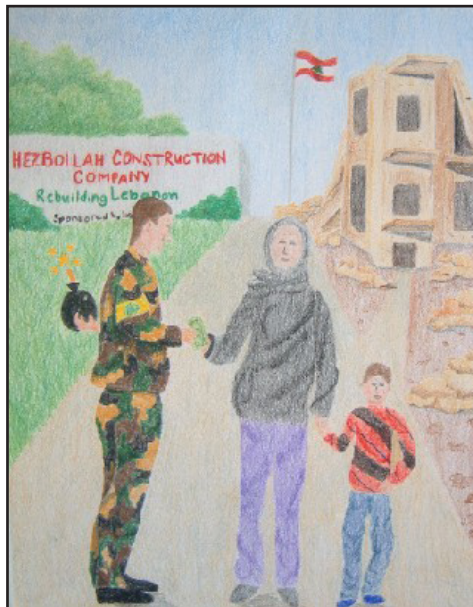


# Point of View: Heeding a Cry for Help

By Eric Carstens

In Lebanon and Israel, the guns are silent. UN forces monitor an uneasy ceasefire agreement. But UN Security Council Resolution 1701 states the disarming of Hezbollah "is not written in the mandate," raising concerns among Israelis who find such a resolution fragile and dangerous.

The fighting between Hezbollah and Israel broke out July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2006 when Hezbollah conducted a cross-border raid into Israel, killing three of its soldiers and taking two others captive. Israel responded with its air force, conducting surgical strikes on 7,000 military targets in Lebanon, many of which Hezbollah had intentionally co-located among the civilian population. These included unguided missiles, almost 4,000 of which Hezbollah randomly launched into Israel. The war left 1,100 Lebanese civilians dead and 4,000 wounded, while Israeli civilian casualties were 44 dead and 1,350 wounded. In the ground fighting in southern Lebanon, Hezbollah surprised the Israelis by maintaining a determined defense in the face of much stronger Israeli forces.



Artwork by Lauren Blake

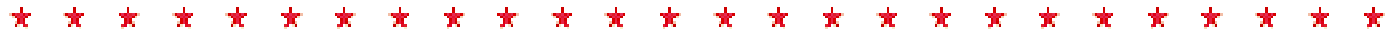
A U.N. source estimates rebuilding from the war will cost at least \$15 billion. Many residents in southern Lebanon are receiving initial compensation of up to \$12,000 from Hezbollah as the group's construction gangs work to rebuild homes. This

generosity has won the hearts of many Lebanese. This technique to gain local support has been used before. In the summer of 1945, much of Vietnam's cultivated land was lost to flooding and a severe drought in which most the harvest was lost. Widespread starvation caused Vietnam's president Ho Chi Minh to write repeatedly to President Truman and the UN seeking foreign aid. When none was offered, only the Viet Minh did anything to help—thus gaining support by providing food and other assistance.

During the 35-day war in Lebanon, half a million residents, mostly Shia, lost their homes. In southern Lebanon quite a few residents have received money in crisp, new \$100 bills, provided by Hezbollah's funding source--Iran. But like the Viet Minh, Hezbollah, created by Iran in the early 1980's, gains support in Lebanon, as it alone has been most responsive to local needs in the aftermath of the war. And, unlike foreign aid given to Lebanon previously but siphoned off by corrupt officials, Hezbollah's aid goes directly to the people and into the economy.

While the U.S. failed to hear Vietnam's cry for help 61 years ago and paid a very high price for doing so, I believe we should listen intently to Lebanon's cry, lest we leave the country to terrorist influence.





## Reflections on the Vietnam Era

By Myles Rogers

One of the first assignments we did in our *Lessons of Vietnam* course was to host an interview with someone who was alive during the Vietnam Era. As you can imagine, these interviewees reflected a vast array of opinions. For some students, this was the first time they had spoken to a relative about the war. Most of the interviewees had vivid memories of the era and could describe their feelings as if they happened yesterday. Here are a few of the questions and responses that I found to be most intriguing:

### What is your most vivid memory of War?

*"I saw a chopper crash and fall. It was the first time I had experienced or seen someone die in front of my own two eyes."*

~ Vietnam Veteran

*"When the POW's came home and everyone sat around their televisions watching them, I noticed one of my high school classmates on there."* ~ MHS Teacher

### What lessons has it taught us?

*"The Vietnam War has taught me to appreciate life a lot more... Knowing that all those soldiers died for a cause makes me want to take pride in the fact that I was with them, and I feel as if I have to honor their deaths."* ~ Vietnam Veteran

*"It has not taught this country anything... It shows how naïve our country is about international relations, and how we are not aware of when to meddle into foreign policies..."* ~ MHS Teacher

### What should we teach our kids about the War?

*"To fight for what is right no matter what happens."*

~ MHS Grandparent

*"To present all the sides, not just the opinions."*

~ MHS Grandparent

*"Freedom does not come free, you have to shed blood for it."*

~ MHS Family Friend

## LOV Teacher Receives National Honor

By Eric Carstens

Millbrook HS *U.S. History* and *LOV/RIR* teacher, Ms. Lindy Poling, was recently honored as the 2006 *North Carolina History Teacher of the Year* by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American



Ms. Lindy Poling receives the NC History Teacher of the Year award.

History and Preserve America. This organization, based in New York City, honors one exceptional history teacher from each state and U.S. territory each year. Several criteria are used to select the honoree. The teacher must demonstrate experience and a commitment to teaching American History, show creativity and imagination in the classroom, incorporating documentation, historic sites, artifacts, and other materials of history into classroom teaching. As the recipient of this prestigious award, Ms. Poling not only demonstrates these traits, but her students feel that she takes her teaching to *another level*. This teacher shows leadership and dedication every time she enters her classroom.

*LOV* student and former *U.S. History* student, Myles Rogers, observed, "It is not everyday that a student gets to be taught by a teacher of Ms. Poling's caliber two years in a row. I really feel honored and privileged that I got to be that student." Lesley Herrmann, Executive Director of the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American stated, "This award gives us the chance to recognize great history teachers across the country. It puts exceptional educators front and center." And LCOL. Jim Zumwalt, a *LOV* class participant for many years, commented, "Ms. Poling brings history to life and life to history, using an innovative teaching style that should be a model for all educators."

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



## Welcome to Bridges!

This year's *LOV/RIR* classes are proud to present to you our 2006-07 *Bridges* newsletter. On behalf of our staff, I would like to welcome and thank you for taking the time to read our publication. Our staff has a record number of 28 members contributing to this first issue! While continuing to focus on the lessons of Vietnam, we also plan to share with everyone news and updates relating to global hot spots and world events. With our talented team of writers, poets, artists, and graphic designers, we look forward to a great year and hope to produce the best *Bridges* ever! ~ Eric Carstens, Editor

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