

To research, document, and promote Vietnamese Culture A country stays alive when its culture is alive

SACEI NEWSLETTER updates you on the latest news about Vietnamese-America.

It serves as a LINK between SACEI members and those who are interested in the Vietnamese or Vietnamese-American culture.

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I. SACEI FORUM #8: THE FALL OF SAIGON

These are the proceedings of the Second Annual SACEI Conference on the FALL OF SAIGON. Through this small series of papers, diverse ideas, such as identity of the Vietnamese-Americans, April 30, diaspora, causes of the Fall of Saigon, have been explored. Through them, one could feel the vibrant livelihood of Vietnamese America, the exile faction of the South Vietnamese, a glimpse of what South Vietnam could have become--a vibrant Tiger in the heart of Southeast Asia--had it not lost the war.

And no, Vietnam was not a waste of resources for various reasons. Had the U.S. and South Vietnam won the war, Vietnam would not have been a land of reeducation camps, a land of boat people with tens of thousands of them dying at sea to escape their beloved country, and a land of millions of people mired in poverty and suffering under a totalitarian regime.

The Fall of Saigon represents the demise of the South Vietnamese Nationalist faction with the majority ending up in reeducation camps after being stripped of their rights, belongings, and properties. A small faction (10%) escaped overseas to form the vibrant exile Viet Kieu community.

**THE FALL
OF SAIGON**
SACEI FORUM # 8

SACEI

II. LE THANH AN: U.S. CONSUL TO SAIGON



Le Thanh An left Saigon in 1965 at the age of ten to follow his relatives to the U.S. Originally from Go Cong, South Vietnam, he was the seventh of a family of nine children. He returned to Saigon in August 2010, forty five years later, to become its U.S. Consul.

"It is an honor and a challenge to be the first Vietnamese-American Consul to the city," An said in February 2011 on the occasion of the lunar New Year.

This was the first time that he had been able to celebrate a traditional New Year in the country. When Saigon fell in 1975, he was an engineering student at Georgetown University. After serving in the Navy for fifteen years, he joined the Foreign Office in 1991 and had stationed in Peking, Tokyo, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Seoul, Paris, and now Saigon.

III. DR. NGUYEN XUAN NAM: PEDIATRIC SURGEON

Born in Ba Ha, Khanh Hoa province, central Vietnam, he had a rough childhood. His mother passed away when he was four. His father was shot by the Viet Cong and required a long hospitalization when he was ten. He was forced to sell sweet rice and cakes prior to going to school to help his step-mother raise eight other siblings. When Saigon fell, his father, a village chief, was sent to a reeducation camp forcing him to leave school to become a fisherman to help feed his family.

In 1978, at the age of 19 he and his family escaped as boat people and landed in the Philippines. Transferred to Nebraska, he went back to high school and learned English while working after hours. He got a BS in Chemistry in 1987, graduated from Creighton School of Medicine in 1991, and completed his residency in Pediatric Surgery at Creighton, Nebraska and Albuquerque, New Mexico. After finishing a fellowship in Surgical Endoscopy at the University of Pittsburgh, he joined the staff of the University of California at Irvine.

Dr. Nam has recently been chosen by Harvard as one of the best U.S. Pediatric Surgeons.





IV. DRS. BA NGU VO AND BA TUONG VO: 2010 EUREKA PRIZE

In 1982, the Vo family arrived as refugees in Perth, Australia. The father was a military personnel and the mother a teacher. The eldest and youngest sons Ba Ngu and Ba Tuong graduated from the School of Engineering in Melbourne and are now Professors at the University of Melbourne, Australia.

They are the Winners of the 2010 Eureka Prize given for "Outstanding Science in Support for Defense or National Security" and sponsored by the Defense Science and Technology Defense Organization (DSTO).

The innovative work of Prof Vo and his team could have many benefits in defense. This includes an improved identification capability at longer ranges, including in hazardous urban environments and for the protection of ships, aircraft and vehicles.

<http://eureka.australianmuseum.net.au/BBC20E60-4B78-11DF-A1BD005056B06558?DISPLAYENTRY=true>



V. VIETNAMESE "BANH MI" or SANDWICH

Ingredients are mixed and matched at the whim of the kitchen, but there's a common denominator to all banh mi—a bright, crunchy vegetable slaw made with daikon radish, shredded carrot and fish sauce (nuoc mam), accompanied by sliced jalapeño pepper and fresh cilantro. While these sandwiches, usually found in bakeries and delis in Vietnamese neighborhoods, are endlessly customizable, they should always be inexpensive — beware the banh mi over \$6.

They are found in major cities around the country where there is a large community of Vietnamese.

The word banh mi **was added to the Oxford English Dictionary on March 24, 2011**



Seattle: *Saigon Deli* (1237 South Jackson Street), *Sun Bakery & Cafe* (658 South Jackson Street)

Portland: *Best Baguette* (8303 SE Powell Boulevard)

New York: *Baguette* (61 Lexington Ave, multiple Manhattan locations), *Momofuku Ssäm Bar* (207 Second Ave, Manhattan), *Ba Xuyen* (4222 Eighth Avenue, Brooklyn), *Tan Thanh* (5818 Seventh Avenue, Brooklyn)

New Orleans: *Dong Phuong Oriental Bakery* (14207 Chef Menteur Highway)

Atlanta: *Lee's Bakery* (4005 Buford Highway NE), *Quoc Huong* (5150 Buford Highway NE)

San Jose: *Lee's Sandwiches* (260 East Santa Clara Street)

Los Angeles: *Nom Nom Truck*

San Francisco: *Saigon Sandwich* (560 Larkin Street)

Fairfax, VA at Eden Center

<http://tmagazine.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/02/07/the-vietnamese-sandwich-banh-mi-in-america/?hp>

http://www.timeout.com/london/restaurants/features/10293/London-s_best_banh_mi.html

VI. VIETNAM'S HOLD ON THAI TASTEBUDS

The country's cuisine has gone from meals made in isolated communities of refugees to a place of pride on menus throughout the country.

<http://www.bangkokpost.com/lifestyle/family/227618/vietnam-s-hold-on-thai-tastebuds/>

In Bangkok, of course, there are many Vietnamese restaurants, with at least one in most neighbourhoods. One that I recommend is located on Ratchadaphisek Soi 19 a little past the Ratchadaphisek MRT station.

Go into the soi until you reach the three-way intersection, then turn left and continue for about 10m. The shop is called Nook Ahan Vietnam. There are many Vietnamese dishes on the menu and the prices are low.

The path that the delicious cuisine of an enclosed and restricted community of refugees has found its way into the kitchens of popular restaurants throughout the country has not been smooth. But the cuisine has certainly successfully completed the journey. Today, Vietnamese food is a favourite in Thailand _ a mealtime choice that is both healthy and delicious.

VII. LITTLE SAIGON, SAN JOSE, CA



After four years of struggle, on Saturday March 3, 2011, the Little Saigon San Jose Foundation has ceremoniously unveiled the Little Saigon Welcome Stone Sign on Story Street close to McLaughlin. It is perhaps ironic to see the Vietnamese fighting hard against their own delegate Madison Nguyen who has from the beginning opposed the name "Little Saigon." The fight led to demonstrations, lawsuits, hunger strike, and even a recall "Madison Nguyen" vote. Although Madison has won the recall vote, this time she has not opposed the naming of Little Saigon for the enclave.

The sign is a tribute to the Vietnamese who had fought hard against the communists in Vietnam and have since 1975 resettled to the U.S.

San Jose is one of the many cities (Sacramento, San Francisco, Westminster...) outside Southern California that have named their enclaves "Little Saigons." The largest enclave remains the Little Saigon in Westminster, CA.

"Built on the lands of orange groves and strawberry farms, Little Saigon, Westminster, CA has become a vibrant ethnic community with its restaurants, shopping malls, stores, and offices catering to the needs of the refugees. The best Vietnamese food outside Saigon is served there. It is also the economic and cultural center of the Viet Kieu, with its own political voice; it is a free city, a vibrant echo of the old Saigon."

Nghia Vo: *The Viet Kieu in America*, McFarland, 2009.

