

Staying Connected

PCC Retirees Association

April 2018

Dona Mitoma Visits Twin Sons Living in Japan She Shares Information on Cultural and Family History

By Dona Mitoma

Our twin boys, Makoto and Rikio Inouye, recently graduated college (UC Berkeley) in May, 2017, and were off to live and work in Japan. They had applied to work for the Japanese Ministry of Education six months before graduation, and to our pleasant surprise, they were both accepted. They flew to Tokyo for orientation at the end of July.

The JET (Japan English Teaching) program accepts young people, mostly 22 years to 27 years of age, to assist native Japanese English teachers in teaching English to elementary, middle, and high school students throughout Japan. Applicants cannot have any preference in where they want to live, and knowledge of Japanese is not a requirement. Their assignments are for a minimum of one year.

My husband, Marvin Inouye, and I were off to visit the boys for three weeks in mid-November. This was our first opportunity to see the Fall colors in Japan, and we were not disappointed. The weather was cold, though it hadn't started snowing yet. Our 21-day Japan Rail Passes at \$536 were a real bargain. We were able to travel all over the country for a fraction of what it would have cost us if we were to buy individual tickets.

Rikio, a political science major specializing in Japan, was placed at Toyama International University High School. Toyama is on the far west coast of Honshu, not far from Korea and Russia.

The population of the city is about 500,000. Having been 95 percent destroyed during WWII bombings, the city is robust and now the center of Japan's pharmaceutical industry. His high school is private, and their strength is in the students they attract. Many of the children study abroad in high school, most come to the United States. One of Rikio's strongest English-speaking students just returned from a year in Detroit. She lived with an African American family. He said her insight into race relations in the U.S. was very sophisticated, more nuanced than most Americans.

Having never taken a speech or debate class in high school or university, Rikio was immediately immersed in guiding students preparing for the prefectural debates. (A prefecture in Japan is like our states. There are 47 in Japan.) The debate topic for the year was, "Should Japan change its immigration policy?" Japan has been very reluctant to allow immigration into the country. He was immediately engrossed in helping his supervisor work with the students, working most days at school until 7 p.m. or later.

The team debates in English, and though not all students are fluent in English, we were stunned by their proficiency and their research skills when we sat in on a debate prep session. It was also the time for the senior students to be applying for college, so he was thoroughly involved in strengthening his students' college personal essays.

Makoto's experience is completely different. His major at Cal was history with an emphasis on Japanese history. He is living in a small town of 7,000 at the end of a train line. Yoshino is south of Kyoto, in the Nara prefecture, about 2 hours away from Kyoto by train. His neighborhood is surrounded by forests, and the cedar lumber industry is the main employer in the area. The population is shrinking, as young people are moving to cities for a university education and then jobs.

He teaches in two different elementary schools on Mondays and Fridays, and Tuesday through Thursday he is in a middle school. He drives (on the wrong side of the road), and purchased his car from his predecessor in the JET program. He paid \$100 for it. Mako's passion is kendo, a Japanese martial art where participants wear heavy protective covering and whack each other with bamboo swords. He began practicing kendo when he was a junior at Berkeley. The first time Marvin and I saw him compete at UCLA for a national tournament, we looked at each other in amazement because Mako was our sweet, gentle, quiet boy.

He was a different person in the competition, very aggressive and whacking away. We were stunned when he placed third nationally in his division having started learning just nine months before. Mako is in heaven as he has joined the Yoshino Dojo and practices kendo three or four nights a week.

The boys live about 46 hours from each other by train and had not seen each other since the JET orientation in Tokyo. It was fun for us all to be together again and check out each of the boys' apartments and schools.

Thanksgiving took place while we were there. There was no turkey to be had. Japanese kitchens do not have ovens. There are small cooktops, usually with only 2 burners. Microwave ovens have an oven feature on them but they are not any bigger than our microwaves. One cannot bake anything too big, and a good microwave can cost over a \$1000. Because Mako had one of the bigger apartments, he hosted a potluck "Gungiving" (pronounced goon) for his JET friends. They were a diverse bunch hailing from Ireland, Australia, Canada and the USA.

One of the best parts of our trip was connecting with our relatives in Japan. I had dinner with a second cousin in Tokyo I hadn't seen in 45 years. Though my Japanese and her English left much to be desired, we had a lovely visit at her home with her 92-year-old mother, one of my favorite aunties.

On the train to Ueda in central Japan, I was a little late in getting ready to get off the bullet train. As I approached the door, I saw it close, and waved goodbye to my family as the train moved forward. The conductor on the platform made it clear to Marvin that

these trains stop for no one. I went to the next station and returned by the train travelling in the opposite direction. I learned my lesson.

In Ueda (near Nagano, where the Winter Olympics were held in 1998,) we connected with Marvin's cousins. The three siblings took us sightseeing. One came from the northern-most island, Hokkaido, to see us. We were taken to a Japanese onsen in the Japanese Alps.

An onsen is a Japanese resort/hotel that has natural hot spring baths. Japan is a volcanic country, and onsens are a treasured way of relaxing and regaining one's health. You haven't lived until you've soaked in 105-degree water outdoors when the outside temperature is about 40 degrees. The food is to die for. It was a highlight for our whole family.

On our way back to Tokyo, we stopped in Yokohama, and visited with two of Marvin's cousins who live there. Their father was Marvin's father's brother.

On a trip to Japan when his father was a child (1930) two of his brothers (there were four boys in the family at that time) were given away and adopted by two different family relatives. One family was from his grandfather's side in Hiroshima, and one family from his grandmother's side in Tokyo. This was not an uncommon custom in Japanese families, because if there is no male heir to carry the family name, there is no one to inherit property.

Marvin's uncles both were drafted in the Japanese army during WWII, as was Marvin's father, who was drafted in the U.S. army while he was living at Heart Mountain, Wyoming Internment Center.

His father's greatest fear was that he would fight against his brothers on the battlefield. He was on his way to the Philippines when the war ended, and instead was stationed in Japan with the U.S. occupation forces in order to help rebuild Japan.

While there, he was reunited with his brothers, one of whom was in Hiroshima during the atomic blast. The end of his nose was sheared off from flying glass. He survived and lived a long and prosperous life in Hiroshima. The other brother was to report for duty on August 20, 1945, after VJ Day.

Marvin's cousin and his wife took us to another onsen in the Mount Fuji area of Hakone, a new destination for us. This onsen was much smaller and very Japanese. Breakfast and dinner were served on about 20 small plates. It is known as a "kaiseki" meal and is an extraordinary experience. What a cultural joy! We hadn't been to Japan in 12 years, and every day we were surprised. It is a country where it is easy to travel; the trains are very efficient, and they are always on time.

Americans would be wonderfully surprised at its safety and cleanliness. I encourage you to put it on your bucket list! Marvin and I will return to Japan in April to enjoy cherry blossoms and see the boys again.

Scholarship Winner Served in Afghanistan

By Alan Lamson

Our PCC Retirees Association awards its annual scholarships to older students who have overcome many obstacles in continuing their education. Some have been working at dead-end jobs, some have been in abusive relationships, some have struggled with drug and alcohol addiction, some have been homeless for a time. Some are veterans who have served in Afghanistan, a few with injuries, mental and physical.

Norma Alvarez, one of our scholarship winners last spring, is a veteran who served in Afghanistan. Norma grew up in a small town in Mexico, a place where “all the roads are dirt roads” and people rode horses to get where they wanted to go. She loved growing up in this small town surrounded by family and friends.

But at 17, she realized that she needed more out of life. She moved to the U.S. to work and to get a higher education. She struggled to learn a new language and work two part time jobs to pay rent and go to school. But she realized that she needed something else: she needed structure in her life and she wanted to be part of something bigger.

So at age 20, she joined the U.S. Air Force and ended up serving six years in the service, part of the time in Afghanistan.

It was in Afghanistan that Norma experienced an epiphany. One night, while serving as a member of the security forces, she was thrust into an emergency situation. She had to provide protection for three soldiers who were seriously wounded. She felt helpless in being unable to provide any medical assistance to the soldiers. She watched with admiration as the doctors and nurses sprang into action to care for the wounded soldiers. It was that experience that motivated her to become a nurse.

And that is what she has done at PCC. She graduated last year at the head of her class and was in charge of organizing the graduation activities for her class. Her inspiration in life, she says, is to be “compassionate, kind, and dedicated” and to some day be “an inspiration to any person struggling to strive for a higher level of education.” She was one of four veterans to whom we awarded scholarships. Their stories are also compelling.

At our awards luncheon last May, Norma spoke about how the nursing division had enabled her to become part of something bigger and helped her fulfill the goal that she set for herself in Afghanistan. She is now enrolled in a Bachelor’s of Science program for nurses and will receive her degree this coming May.

When the Retirees Association ask you to donate to our scholarship fund, it is to help students like Norma.

The Permanent Record

Those of us who taught at PCC have vivid memories of certain students. I particularly remember one Vietnam vet, Jim Bell. He wrote movingly in his journal about his experience in Vietnam. After he read one of his entries in class, some of the younger students looked at each other as if to say, "wow." —Alan Lamson

By Elvio Angeloni, president of the PCC Retirees Association and Dr. Lauren Arenson, Professor of Anthropology

This is how Alan began a very moving letter about one of our recent PCC Retirees scholarship recipients (also a veteran) Norma Alvarez—which in turn evoked our own memories of Jim Bell.

As Alan pointed out, Jim had been a remarkable student. With a major in anthropology, he received a B.A. at Cal State L.A. and a Ph.D. in 1988 at UC Santa Barbara. His fieldwork and thesis dealt with Kenya, East Africa. Jim returned to Cal State, L.A. to become a tenured professor and a producer/director of documentary films. Meanwhile, because he loved teaching introductory courses, he was also an adjunct professor of anthropology at PCC. Just as a runner passes the baton to the next in line, Jim believed that imparting wisdom, compassion and enthusiasm to others was an essential component of a life well lived.

Jim worked with countless students who went on to have successful careers of their own. After being admitted to Huntington Hospital for a heart valve replacement (a recurring problem), Jim told stories of the excellent care he received from some of his former students working in the cardiac ward.

As my (Lauren's) first professor of anthropology at CSULA, Jim provided the mentoring that enabled me to become a successful professor and, more important, to be an active global citizen.

We both cherish our memories of Jim as a student, teacher, colleague and, most importantly, wonderful friend. He personified everything that Pasadena City College aspires to represent to the community.

Jim seemed to be the least likely person to become a teacher. He was shy and unassertive and had a distinct distaste for public speaking. Yet, word soon got around the Cal State campus as well as PCC that he was an excellent teacher, a "stage performer" and "a really funny guy;" "students loved him...so friendly, fun and so socially shy." His children had to wonder, "Who was the person the students raved about... Dad was a totally different guy at home."

If you knew Jim Bell 40 years ago, you would see a young African-American with an imposing frame and a huge Afro, complete with pick. At times, his appearance created problems. For example, a motorcycle officer often stopped him for a series of “minor violations” as he drove to work. When Jim decided that he had had enough, he notified law enforcement, an official tail was put on the cop, and the officer was caught in the act. As an African-American father, Jim counseled his son, Joel, about how to behave when stopped by the police.

When Jim and I (Elvio) were making a film about an Indian Center on Skid Row in Los Angeles (dedicated to feeding, sheltering and counseling alcohol-dependent Native Americans), he was frequently harassed by street thugs looking to knock off the “black alpha male.”

Even in the upper reaches of Catalina Island, where we made another film, Jim saw the wildlife, especially the boar and buffalo, as a threat. One morning, I crawled out of my tent to find him standing atop a brick barbecue, staring at buffalo in the distance. When I expressed my amusement that those animals were probably more afraid of him than he was of them, he pointedly reminded me that, “They don’t read the textbooks!”

As gentle and unassuming as he was, Jim was also a professional maverick. Whereas most anthropologists claimed that, as scientists doing fieldwork in other cultures, they must be coldly objective and stick to observable facts, Jim believed that subjective experiences, such as matters of the heart, were just as worthy of study, albeit difficult to quantify.

It was this kind of thinking that led him to document, for instance, the existence of “romantic love” in his research and publications.

Apropos of his views on love, Jim met the girl of his dreams at a family gathering when he was 15 and she, a distant relative, 14. When he saw her again four years later, he was totally smitten. By then, Jim had joined the U.S. Navy, they corresponded, he proposed and, within a year—even though he was still serving—they were married.

Jim and Sylvia had three children: Jamiko, Joel and Sarah. Sylvia passed away prematurely in 2003 and, six months later, so did Jim, at age 60.

Shortly after Jim’s death, Joel was going through his belongings and found, tucked away in a protected part of his wallet, a small picture of Sylvia as that 14-year-old he had first met. He apparently carried this photo everywhere, for the rest of his life.

A close friend and colleague, Geri-Ann Galanti recounts that . . . Not long after Sylvia’s death, I asked him what he thought he would be doing in five years. I was trying to get him to look ahead and see a future for himself. He answered without hesitation, “Oh, I won’t be alive then.” A few months later, he died in his sleep. He and Sylvia had been together since they were teenagers; I guess he couldn’t live a life without her.

Jim, say the children, had died of a broken heart.

As much as Jim worshipped Sylvia, he did not attend her funeral just as he had not gone to his mother's funeral— or, for that matter, anyone else's. Jim's only comment: "I've been to enough funerals." He explained to his children that he had seen so much death in Vietnam that he just could not take it anymore.

Jim was a highly ethical human being whose guiding moral principle was that one should not just avoid doing harm; rather, every person has an obligation to do the right thing. He attributed this heightened sense of morality to his Catholic education at St. Francis High School in La Canada, where one particular nun warned him regularly that all behavior, good and bad, would ultimately become part of the permanent record.

Jim's best friend in Kenya happened to be a Taita man we only know today as "Bobson," a key informant to whom Jim felt greatly indebted. Bobson had several wives and many children. In Taita culture, sons were favored. They were more likely to get at least a modicum of schooling, inherit land and/or livestock and, at the very least, get jobs.

His daughters' prospects, on the other hand, were very limited. Even though Jim thought Bobson should treat his four daughters the same way he did his sons, it was obvious that his friend would never have the resources to do anything more than marry them off.

Gender inequality among the Taita was a real test for Jim. He knew what the power of education could do for girls. So, should he allow the precepts of his discipline (observe, don't interfere) take precedence over his sense of morality? In the end, he decided to do what he knew was right: send money for Bobson's girls to go to school, including college.

When Sylvia protested that they had their own three children to worry about, Jim could only say, "But I promised"...and that was that.

After Jim's passing, Jamiko discovered one unresolved matter: Bobson's youngest daughter had not yet received support to finish school. So, the kids sent some of Jim's life insurance money to that child, an act that would fulfill their father's promise and become part of his permanent record.

Contributing to this article:

Dr. Jamiko Bell, Joel and Sarah Bell, Dr. Geri-Ann Galanti, Phil Gries, Dr. William Jankowiak, Alan Lamson, and Dr. Gil Ramos.

Pasadena's Virtual Village Six Years Later

By Lisa Davis

"What in the world is a virtual village?" people ask when I tell them about our community.

"It's not real?" We are real enough, but not an actual village; in other words, we don't live next door to each other. But we took the idea of being good neighbors and friends, and we made it fit with today's reality. My own fantasy was to organize some condo units and fill them with retired friends from the college, and form PCC

- the Sequel (sorry, it's just my sense of humor). Alas, I am neither that good of a businesswoman, nor is that concept practical in built-up Pasadena and its astronomical real estate prices. But the Pasadena Village proved to be a great alternative for me. I had no family in town since my husband Elton Davis died two years previously. (Some of you might remember him; he taught at PCC for 36 years).

Six years ago, Harry Kawahara, another board member, wrote an article The Village Movement in this newsletter. He told us that the first such group started with Boston's Beacon Hill Village, where like-minded neighbors formed an "intentional" community. Stay in your own home, and meet others for social, recreational and other needs.

So when, also about six years ago, my friend Billie told me about an organizational meeting to form such a group here in Pasadena, I attended the introductory meeting. About 100 people showed up. The small group of original founders told us about their ideas and plans, and they served us homemade lasagna. It sounded great, and I became a charter member of the virtual village.

Since then the Pasadena Village has gone from strength to strength. We now have 140 members, a suite of rooms in an office complex, and two hard working staff members. Every third Friday of each month, a member hosts a get-together we call "Meet me at the Village," and we invite potential new members.

Like to read? Join our book group. Like to walk? Join the weekly "Urban Walkers," the "EZ Walkers," or the once-a-month hiking group. There are three different women's groups, each small enough to form close relationships.

The men, however, like to meet once a month in one large group. Are we talking gender differences here? Do you like potlucks or would you rather dine out with friends? You can do one or the other or both.

Among my favorites are lectures on topics like health care, trust and wills, or unusual topics like "Food in the Times of Dickens." The showings of documentaries always bring a full house. Ping pong anyone? Or bridge? I'm always waiting eagerly for the monthly calendar to sign up for things that sound interesting.

Monthly trips with the "Travel Buddies" have an unusual premise: the participants use the Metro and local buses to go to museums and other venues and to have lunch some place nice.

Our leader Bill took a special course offered by the Metro system, and he now teaches us to use public transportation with some confidence.

Maybe some of you own a “tap” card, that lets the owner ride the Metro or buses for about 35 cents. That sure beats driving a car, let’s say, to LACMA.

We couldn’t do without our volunteers, some of whom are members, and others come from the larger Pasadena area. They offer rides to our events, or provide transportation to doctors’ appointments. Volunteers also do minor home repair, such as fixing a curtain rod or replacing a smoke alarm. We are there for each other, We help out with rides, visits and meals when someone is ill or needs help.

We make new friends. We learn. We have fun. To quote our brochure: “stay active, stay connected,” Check us out at info@pasadenavillage.org.

Join us for the Spring Mixer on May 22

The Retirees Association Spring Mixer will be held on May 22 at the home of Elvio Angeloni. Please put the date on your calendar and plan to join your friends and colleagues from 2-5 pm. at 3502 Giddings Ranch Road in Altadena. If you haven’t attended a mixer recently, remember that it is a casual event that allows you to nibble on hors d’oeuvres, enjoy a beverage and chat with friends. (Feel free to bring wine or munchies to share.) Make sure you RSVP by calling Sherry Hassan at (323) 403-8421 or Patsy Perry (626) 791-4810. Elvio lives in a gated community, so your name has to be on the list at the guard station for entrance.

Bruce Carter Starts A New Career

A dense grove of towering redwood trees was the venue for a special ceremony held in northern California last June. This is where Carter’s daughter, Amanda, got married among beautiful trees adjacent to the Van Duzen River. It was a moving service officiated by Bruce Carter, Amanda’s dad.

“I wasn’t sure how I would use my new credentials, but this occasion provided my first opportunity to act in my newly ordained status of minister in the Universal Life Church.” Bruce stated.

A small group of family and friends were in attendance, and were happy to have a big bonfire to stave off the chill of the cloudy day as they enjoyed the tasty food prepared by the bride and her friends.

Many people commented on the moving ceremony that was written by Bruce in consultation with the bride and groom.

Bruce is not sure how his new career will develop, but states that he is now available to officiate at future marriage ceremonies. He will write and officiate at future weddings when requested, but admits that he is unlikely to provide much in the way of premarital counseling, wedding planning or religious instruction.

He still has one other unmarried kid, so there is some chance that he might be called on to officiate at another wedding.

Or perhaps this will just end up as another dead-end late-life career change.

Lancer Pantry Feeds Students Who Often Go Hungry

It is a pretty safe bet to assume that when you're hungry, you go to the kitchen or pantry to grab something to eat. If you can't find what you want, you might head for the store or have something delivered. However, struggling students often go into the kitchen when they are hungry only to find there is nothing to eat. More often than not, they go to class hungry. A recent survey showed that 30 percent of community college students nationwide are "food insecure."

That is a nice way of saying they are hungry, and that hunger has a direct effect on their ability to do well in their classes. This food insecurity not only affects the students, but many of them have children who need food too.

Luckily, PCC has responded to the crisis and opened the Lancer Pantry, which provides food for those in need.

The pantry, which recently celebrated its first anniversary, is operated by the Office of Special Services and is supported by donations from the staff and faculty of Pasadena City College, community partners, PCC alumni and private individuals.

In that first year of operation, the pantry had 8,460 visits by 2,973 students. However, there are plenty of students on campus who still don't know that help is available. In addition to the pantry, PCC has paired up with the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank. Its mobile truck will be visiting the college five times in 2018.

Groceries at the pantry are free to students with a current PCC ID.

The pantry, located in CC211, is open Mondays from 10 a.m. to 2 p. m., Tuesdays from 2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m., Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Thursdays from 12:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

So we are hoping you are asking yourself—how do I help? Please consider donating food or making a cash donation. The pantry is always in need of protein foods like canned tuna, chicken or turkey. They can always use things like canned chili, dry or canned beans, peanut butter, soups, eggs, cheese grains, rice pasta noodles and cereals.

If you find yourself heading to campus during the pantry's hours of operation, feel free to drop off a bag of non-perishable food items.

Another way to help is to write a check to the PCC foundation, and on the memo line designate the donation for the PCC Lancer Pantry. The foundation also accepts checks and credit cards.

An Adventure Turns into A Life Experience

By Jane Hallinger

Laura Davis, a retired history professor, one day suggested that we do paired classes on the Vietnam war period. I agreed, but felt I had to visit the country before building a class around that controversial time period. She had visited several times in dire post war conditions and now was taking students, so I signed up. Even though there was not a relationship yet between Vietnam and the United States, I had no hesitation.

We had to go on a group visa, and upon arrival, one member said, "I served here in Danang, please stamp my passport. The official kept refusing until he grew fatigued, and finally he stamped the passport. Of course, I placed mine before the official and said, "Do me too." He did, so I had a memento of what I considered would be my only excursion into this part of the world. I was so wrong.

I expected to be shunned because I was American, but I had a lot to learn. In Hanoi, a one-armed cyclo-driver waited my exit from the hotel each day. I felt embarrassed making him haul me around until someone said, "Don't you understand, this is his livelihood." I relaxed and we exchanged stories of our lives as he spoke perfect English, which I did not expect in a "foreign backward location."

Having been indoctrinated into American guilt because of my anti-war stance, I asked, "Why is everyone so accepting and friendly to us when we were enemies for so long?" His reply was "That was the third war back; we have to move forward. How can we change the past? It has already left us."

Those simple words created a rush of understanding. I was now able to absorb the environment of the Vietnam countryside through a new lens.

The next year, Laura and I went again with students. We had decided to each support a child at an orphanage in Danang.

When we arrived, the girls had been sent back to their villages. So we decided we would go find them and headed with our group into the countryside. When we arrived at the grandparents' home where I was to meet the child I would help support through high school, it was one room of only three sides meant for shelter, sleeping and eating.

The family had not been told the girl had a sponsor who was arriving with a bag of toys and clothing, so it was quite a tearful meeting.

One year a storm demolished the one room home, and they were living under blankets thrown upon branches. I now was a part of this world and could help finance reconstructing their one room home. And the ties with my second family grew stronger.

However, I had some lessons that just as in all environments we have the good, the bad, and the indifferent. When I came back into the country after that stamp on my passport, customs looked at it and motioned me to come with them into an office where three sullen uniformed officers sat. "You are stamped for coming into the country. There is no stamp for leaving. Where did you go?" I answered "Oh. That was just to show I'd been here." They insisted that it was impossible to enter and leave without an exit stamp. This went on for 40 minutes as my group waited at luggage pickup not knowing what was happening.

It was a long game, but I kept smiling and looking rather dumb and making the same excuse again and again. Irritated and never returning my smile, they finally said, "go away." I did and had an awakening that as a smiling (dumb) American, I just wasn't worth their trouble. Surely they weren't going to jail me, but a bribe would have gotten me out faster.

Leaving the county was another "bribe event," but I wasn't going to play the game. I had purchased a bong for a dollar in the countryside where many were made. At the airport, I was stopped and told that I had a historical piece and had to pay a fine to which I answered that it was not, and I walked away. I got to the gate and was paged back. After the second exchange, the guard took my passport for safekeeping. I think not. The last time, I hurried back to my passport to grab it because it was time to board the plane. Once on board, I watched out the window for customs, but nobody came. The game was finished.

The next year, the college said we didn't have enough students for the trip, so I decided we would go anyway. And each trip after, I became more involved with the beauty of the country, which is about the same size as California. Over the years, more friends joined Laura and me on trips, donating funds, and sponsoring children. One man, who had just retired as a teacher, helped two young girls. This year he went to the wedding of one, and he was already grandfather to the other girl's child. He said these girls saved his life by giving him a family he never had.

Another man who had served in Vietnam also supported two girls because he wanted his children at home to gain an understanding of conditions other children in the world have to live under.

You may wonder why so many are females? In third world countries males were considered more productive in the fields and rice paddies. Now that the economy is thriving in Vietnam, the orphanage is not needed for the children as relatives can now bring the abandoned children into their homes.

Today Laura Davis is still close to her sponsored child. She has visited her and her relatives in Vietnam and gone to see her in Japan where as an adult woman she now lives and has founded a non-profit organization to help young people.

She is charming, has a college education and is so poised that it is hard to realize her difficult youth. The young woman has come to visit Laura several times in Altadena, and she said she will always view Laura as a mother. These are just a few reasons why these friends whom I have found there and those who travel with me have become an indelible part of my life. After a lapse of quite a few years, I went back again last year with a group that included Jan Sutherland, Pat and Preston Rose. Pat and Preston and other PCC friends will travel there with me this year as there are always places never seen that will open a new view to us.

I value still the quality of our friendships. And I always recall the nights sharing good food and events with the friends who have joined us: Lisa and Elton Davis, Judith Branzberg, Pat Savoie and others always enjoying the tempo of cities, the green of the countryside, the rice paddies that give many a living, the boats on Hailong Bay, one of the most relaxing and beautiful environments I have experienced.

Now they have boats where you can spend a night in the luxury of soft breezes and star filled sky. Then as you traverse the countryside and mountains, you move into a pristine world that has avoided the imprint of our modern times and where the air really is pure. And this long strip of land squeezes against Cambodia. And one can easily move into its amazement of Angkor Wat where one can sit on the grass and watch the sun rise over ruins of an early civilization. And one can always face the frightening reality of memorials to the slaughter of so many in these "pristine" lands we move through and admire today.

In Cambodia visitors see the continuance of conserving beauty and a new generation moving forward. In Vietnam we can travel the fields and mountains where we fought for so many years and remember those who served and lost so much.

So now I will move toward my eighth visit in a world that has suffered but one that has survived. It has become a vital economy and also has allowed me to absorb its beauty and the embrace of so many who have offered friendships and smiles through several decades and taught me the indelible lesson of forgiveness and endurance.

In Memoriam

Chris Rose, PCC's Graphic Artist

Christina Rose, who worked for decades as PCC's graphic artist, passed away on Oct 22. Chris came to PCC as a graphic artist in the late 70s to work with Ken Harris. She became the college's sole graphic artist in the early 80s until illness forced her to retire early.

Before computers, thousands of awards and certificates passed through Chris' hands. She was the go-to person for anything that needed calligraphy. She also created hundreds of flyers for clubs and campus departments over the years. If you ever had reason to visit Chris in her office, you would be astonished to see a huge stack of work that she always had waiting for her.

Chris was an alumna of PCC, and she loved collecting memorabilia about the college. Right before she passed away, she had purchased a collection of old photos of the campus on e-bay. She was always hunting for items about PCC, and when she found them, she turned them over to the college archives in the library.

The last several years, Chris had been in an assisted living facility.

Mary Alice Cervera Spent 35 Years in Kinesiology Division

Mary Alice Cervera, Mac, passed away last October in Arcadia at the age of 74. She retired from Pasadena City College, Kinesiology Division (formerly the Physical Education department) in 2005 after 35 years of service. Her colleagues remember her as always being cheerful and wearing a big smile.

Mac may have had bad days, but people stopping by her department office never knew it because they were always greeted by a special lady whose happy demeanor and positive attitude were contagious. Her colleagues all specifically remembered the butterfly brooches she always wore on her shoulder, which made everyone smile.

If you needed to find out what was going on in the Physical Education Department or with any sport, all you had to do was ask MAC. She knew it all. She was an avid tennis fan and would take her little chair out to the tennis courts and watch every game as often as she could.

Make a Donation; Make a Difference

Each year the Retirees Association's goal is to award 10 \$1,000 scholarships to deserving students. However, without more of our members donating to the scholarship fund, we can't reach that goal.

Each time the scholarship committee members reads the students' stories on applications, we wish we could award 20 because there are so many students who need help to continue their education.

Some people feel they have to contribute a large amount to make a difference, but small amounts add up, and we are happy to get whatever you want to send. You can mail a check to PCC foundation at 1324 E. Green Street, Pasadena, CA 91106. Be sure to put Retirees Association Scholarship on the memo line.

You can also donate online at by going to the college's website at Pasadena.edu/foundation. When the website comes up, there will be a donate-now button on the right side under the large photo. If you would prefer to talk to a person, you can call the Foundation Office at (626) 585-7065.