

## A Reunion of a Separated Family

by Matthew Harris

When one thinks of reunion, the thought of a family having a picnic on a sunny day with all of the relatives present in one place for the first time in ages usually comes to mind. Yet on September 20, 1985, a reunion of different circumstances took place at Philadelphia International Airport. For the first time in six years, Quan Phan, a student of the Penn State Hazleton Campus, saw his mother, three of his sisters, and one of his brothers; all of whom were given Visas to leave Vietnam.

In 1979, Quan escaped from Vietnam and since then has worked in getting the rest of his family out of there as well. Leaving the country is very difficult and dangerous, since it is under Communistic rule; anyone who is caught trying to flee the country or planning an escape is automatically shot by the Communist government with no questions asked.

A year before his departure, his family had been forced to separate. His mother had been taken out into the farm country so she could do farm work. By doing this, it broke off communication between Quan and his mother, since it was extremely difficult getting transportation out to that region. The Vietnamese government was, and still is, only concerned with labor and making sure that all of the people are productive. While his mother was being taken out to the country, the rest of his family, consisting of three sisters and one brother, were taken twenty-five miles north of Saigon, which is now called Ho Chi Minh City.

In order to understand how frustrating it is for a person to leave Vietnam, ponder this thought for a moment. Quan's mother received her Visa to leave the country a long time ago. However, the political system in Vietnam is extremely corrupt, and in order for her to get her papers processed, she needed a lot of money to bribe the officials into completing her documents. The "red tape" was overwhelming and was a major factor in the delay of her departure. According to Quan, "it is truly a miracle to get out of Vietnam."

Quan's father, one of the many people who was fighting for political reform, was also forced to escape. By opposing the standards set by the government, he was imprisoned and brainwashed into changing his beliefs and ideals, and to make his children show their loyalty to the government. Sometime later he was released, but remained under the watchful eyes of the police and government officials. Realizing that permanent imprisonment was probable and almost inevitable, he fled the country.

For Quan, his ordeal was truly horrendous. By being captured while trying to escape three times, he had put himself between a rock and a hard place. The army decided that they wanted him, and the government felt that it would prevent him from escaping. During this time, the war between Vietnam and Cambodia was escalating. Quan thought of many ways to escape, yet he was unable to carry out any of them.

Then his luck changed for the better. He was introduced to a man who knew a

lot about smuggling and who had a lot of connections. By getting Quan a fake identification card, he then proceeded to smuggle him to the vicinity of the Vietnam-Cambodia border. Since smuggling took place on a regular basis due to the shortage of goods, it wasn't very difficult in transferring him to the dropoff point. The only factor that concerned them was if they were to be stopped by the army, who constantly patrolled the roads, especially those leading to the borders. After he was dropped off, he had to walk for three days and two nights until he reached the Cambodian border, where he proceeded to cross into Cambodia untouched. He then paid three men to get him to the Thailand border. By reaching this point, he was free of the treacherous rule of Communist Vietnam.

One of Quan's sisters, who came to the United States in 1972, sponsored the rest of the family. Under immigration laws set by the government of this country, people entering the United States must be sponsored by someone who is living in this country and is legally a United States citizen.

Currently residing in Souderton, Pennsylvania, the entire family is once again together and very happy. It will be five years until his mother, his brother, and his sisters receive United States citizenship. But that is irrelevant to them now. The only thing that concerns them is the fact that they are all together and that they are happy. The ordeal is finally over.

On behalf of the staff of the Highacres Collegian, I would like to welcome the Phans to America and may all their dreams come true!



## EARTHSET

by Monica Shah

The sun descends  
over the misty valley  
a giant orb hung in the  
sky.  
Soft muted colors  
of pink, orange, violet  
and gold,  
blend into lavender blue.  
The giant red sphere  
hides in the clouds,  
surrounded by an aura of  
mystic yellow.  
The horizon brightens  
as clouds drift away,  
but the gold ball of fire  
has disappeared.  
Bright pink ribbons  
Swirling amongst blue  
clouds,  
streaked by gold and red,  
are all that can be seen  
of the awesome lifeforce.  
Twilight approaches,  
lights twinkle in the  
valley  
as clouds envelop  
the mountain with fog.  
The stars have yet to  
shine,  
and the moon to glow,  
before the sun  
brightens the dawn of  
tomorrow.

## Health Services

by Daniel Kane  
as told by Mrs. Gaffney

Just a friendly reminder: if you're sick, or you just don't feel as good as you used to, Mrs. Gaffney would like to see you. She knows what she's doing! Don't put your health in jeopardy; get some advice from a professional. Home remedies don't cut it. She is in P-105 from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. If you can't walk, wheelchairs are available for a small fee.

If you have a burning desire to know about some health-related issue, such as drug addiction, alcoholism, or sexually transmitted disease, or even the stress of everyday living, contact Mrs. Gaffney (R.N., B.S.N.) about arranging health programs for the students and faculty. Any ideas are welcome and will be helpful when she plans these programs.