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Vietnam to Canada: a very tough ordeal

By SHAARON HAY
Liberal Staff Writer

The price of gold is skyrocketing these days and many are aware of its value.

To Tuget Hao and Boi Chi Tang, Richmond Hill's first Vietnamese refugee family, gold had a very special meaning — freedom.

The price for the young family to join 370 others aboard a small boat bound for Malaysia, was 16 ounces of gold.

Tuget, who speaks English haltingly, told The Liberal the story of five difficult years of saving to accumulate the gold which could be bought illicitly in South Vietnam.

Once the correct amount had been amassed the Tangs and their three-year old son, Chi Hung, left South Vietnam heading for Malaysia, usually a two day trip.

Tuget, who prefers to be called Wai, said there was not even enough room on the boat for food or water.

The second day out to sea, the boat was attacked by Thai pirates who took all jewelry, rings and valuables from the frightened refugees.

Five days later, lost at sea, a Thai fishing boat offered assistance in the way of fresh drinking water and fish to eat. This same boat guided them into Malaysia, where they were turned away by a Malaysian police boat.

The second attempt, a total of seven days at sea later, they were allowed to beach the boat.

Wai said that while on the beach they ate leaves and fish until the Red Cross found them and took them to a Malaysian refugee camp with 8,000 others.

Huts described as being about ten feet by fifteen feet kept the hot sun off, but in rain Wai said they just had to hunch down, the huts were just roofs on poles, without walls.

She said they were well fed in the camp with three meals a day — canned sardines and peas.

The family of three lived five months under these conditions before a delegation came to choose families who would be sent to Canada, United States, Australia or Switzerland.

The Liberal interview was conducted the day after Richmond Hill's first snowfall and when asked of differences between the two countries, Wai laughed, remarking emphatically, "We not know snow".

She said the people they had met so far in Canada were more friendly than the people in Vietnam.

"They really welcome us," she said.

Only here one and one-half weeks, the family find the food quite different.

In Vietnam the government sold

flour and barley, "cheap", but other commodities, even rice, were expensive.

Poor people seldom eat meat, she said, as even a chicken costs almost one month's wages.

The Vietnamese family eat both with chopsticks and a fork.

When asked to compare homes in Vietnam and Canada, Wai said only rich people in Vietnam have homes like she had seen in Canada. She said her family was "not rich and not poor".

She and her husband had originally carried on a machine shop business from their home in South Vietnam, employing about eight people, but under communist rule had been forced to work on a farm in the war zone which "wouldn't grow anything".

Three-year old Chi Hung was looking through a Simpson's Christmas catalogue with great glee during the interview, and Wai pointed out there were no toys like that for children in Vietnam.

Boi Chi, Wai's husband, who prefers to be called Kai, is happy to be working in this country said Wai, and they are both very grateful for the accommodation and clothing.

Last Wednesday they began English classes and Wai is pleased to report on her husband's progress.



Vi Clark of Dunlop Street, Richmond Hill holds one of the many dolls on sale at the

Richmond Hill Senior Citizens Club 35 bazaar, which was held last Saturday.

HELPMATE INFORMATION COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>Your community needs you</p> <p>to answer Telephones for HELPMATE INFORMATION. Helpmate Information is a free, confidential information and referral service.</p> <p>A staff of trained volunteers and paid help direct callers to the appropriate service or information.</p> <p>Requests for information on legal aid, health services, family and personal counselling, recreation, transportation citizenship, government services, day care, etc., are among the types of calls that come into the Helpmate office.</p> <p>As a new volunteer, you would receive training as to the kinds of services available in the area, where information can be located, how to respond to telephone inquiries, and other services offered by the centre.</p> <p>This volunteer opportunity provides you with a unique way of becoming familiar with Richmond Hill, the surrounding area and the services available to our residents.</p> <p>You will be able to meet new people and to attend monthly volunteer activities.</p>	<p>If you decide to volunteer, you would be needed for either one morning or afternoon a week. Volunteers who are willing to do driving or visiting are also needed by Helpmate Information.</p> <p>For further information, call the Richmond Hill Volunteer Bureau at 883-2235.</p> <p>883-2234</p> <p>October - November</p>	<p>31</p> <p>Nicol Borwn Trio with Irene King and Billy Meek at Hillcrest Mall, 5.30-8 p.m.</p> <p>Canadian Progress Club, York Central, 7 p.m. Info: 884-3888.</p> <p>Richmond Hill United Church Women Evening Unit meet in the church parlour, 8 p.m.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>"Say Yes For York" Blitz.</p> <p>Langstaff Secondary School, parents' night, 7 p.m.</p> <p>YCAMP adult coffee house, St. Mary Immaculate, 8 p.m.</p> <p>Richmond Hill Lions meeting, Lions Hall, 6.30 p.m.</p> <p>Energy Action Richmond Hill and the Richmond Hill Historical Society at Hillcrest Mall, through Saturday.</p> <p>Richmond Hill Badminton Club round robin at Langstaff Secondary School, 8.30 p.m.</p> <p>YCAMP Adult Coffee House, St. Mary Immaculate Church, 10295 Yonge, 8-10 p.m.</p> <p>"Puerto Rico" — Free travel program at Gallanough Library 8 p.m. Info: 881-2828.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>"Say Yes for York" blitz.</p> <p>Richmond Hill United Church "Nostalgia Night" 8 p.m. Info: 884-3611.</p> <p>YCAMP teen drop-in, Thornhill Baptist Church, 7.30 p.m. 889-0536.</p> <p>Richmond Hill Library displays and special book marks for the "Annual Celebration of Canadian Children's Books". All month.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>"Say Yes for York" blitz.</p> <p>YCAMP bowling, Newkirk Bowl, Juniors & Seniors 2-4 p.m.</p> <p>Richmond Hill United Church "Nostalgia Night" 8 p.m. Info: 884-3611</p> <p>Animal aid and adoption Christmas Bazaar, Emmanuel Anglican Church, Richvale, 10.30 a.m.-3.30 p.m.</p> <p>R. Hill Presbyterian Church Christmas Carousal Bazaar & luncheon, 11 a.m.-2.30 p.m.</p> <p>YCAMP Women's Auxiliary bazaar at Hillcrest Mall, 9.30 a.m.-4 p.m.</p> <p>R. Hill Library opening of facilities for handicapped. Children's program: Abra the Magician & Laurie Knight, ventriloquist.</p>	
<p>4</p> <p>"The Aging Process" at York Central Hospital, 7.30 p.m. Speaker: Carol Cober, YCH staff member.</p> <p>Richvale Lions Bingo, 31 Spruce Avenue, Richvale, 7.30 p.m.</p> <p>Group run for York Region "Y", 9 a.m. Info: 884-0961.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Richmond Hill Group of Artists workshop, Crosby School, 7.30 p.m. For further information, call 889-1362.</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Scone Tea, Burr House, Carrville Road, 1.30-3.30 p.m. Info: 884-0327.</p> <p>Our Lady's Guild meeting at Our Lady of the Annunciation School, Bond Crescent, Oak Ridges, 7.45 p.m.</p> <p>"Making a Will" (Part 1), Maple Public Library, 8-10 p.m. Pre-registration required. 832-1432.</p> <p>Creative recreation program, ages 5-10, Walter Scott, Oak Ridges & St. Mary Immaculate schools, 6.30-8.45 p.m.</p> <p>One Parent Family Assn. "Volleyball-Volleyball", Crosby Hts. School, 8 p.m.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>St. John Ambulance Training Session for members, Richvale Community Centre, 8 p.m. 884-4204.</p> <p>Chamber of Commerce General meeting, noon, Pagoda Court.</p> <p>St. Mary Immaculate Church, craft night, bazaar preparation, 8 p.m.</p> <p>"Making a Will" (Part II) 8-10 p.m. Maple Library, 832-1432.</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Widows & Widowers meeting, Victoria and Grey building, Yonge and Crosby, 8 p.m.</p> <p>Medical Forum "Medical Emergencies in the House", Thornlea Secondary School, 889-4382.</p> <p>R. Hill Rotary Travelogue "Alaska Wilderness", 8 p.m. Bayview Secondary School.</p> <p>Christmas shopping bazaar, Richmond Hill United Church "Come and Go Luncheon" 11.15 a.m., 12.15 p.m., 1.15 p.m. Info: 884-1301 or 884-3611. Bazaar opens at 10.30 a.m.</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Richmond Hill Public Library during November, The First Exhibition of Art by a group of Richmond Hill Senior Citizens. In the auditorium.</p> <p>St. Mathew's Church Christmas Bazaar, 7-9 p.m. For further information, call 884-5014.</p>	<p>10</p> <p>St. Mary's Anglican Christmas Bazaar, noon to 3 p.m. Luncheon at 12.30 p.m. For further information, call 883-3901.</p> <p>York Philharmonic Choir garage sale, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Old fire hall on Wright Street, Richmond Hill.</p>
<p>11</p> <p>"Our Parents, Our Feelings", St. Mathews United Church, Crosby Ave., R. Hill, 7.30 p.m.</p> <p>Group run for York Regional "Y", 9 a.m. Info: 884-0961.</p> <p>One Parent Family Assn. 11.30 a.m. Ponderosa brunch; 1.30 p.m. ABC Bowling.</p> <p>Richvale Lions Bingo, 31 Spruce Avenue, Richvale, 7.30 p.m.</p>	<p>12</p> <p>York Regional Camera Club meets at Richmond Hill High School, 7.30 p.m. "Fall Field Trip".</p> <p>Richmond Hill Community Schools meeting, Crosby School library, 7.30 p.m.</p> <p>Richmond Hill Group of Artists Workshop, 7.30 p.m. Crosby School, 889-1962.</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Concord Golden Era Club euchre, Concord Community Hall, 8 p.m. 669-1851.</p> <p>Scone Tea, Burr House, Carrville Road, 1.30 p.m. 884-0327.</p> <p>Creative recreation: Walter Scott, Oak Ridges, St. Mary Immaculate schools, 6.30 p.m.</p> <p>One Parent Family Assn. general meeting, Crosby Hts. School, 8 p.m. Bingo.</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Canadian Progress Club, York Central, 7 p.m. Info: 884-3888.</p> <p>Treasures of Tut lecture, R. Hill Library, 7.30. Limited space.</p> <p>Book Sale & events at Bayview Fairways School, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. & 7-9 p.m.</p> <p>St. Mary Immaculate Church craft night & bazaar preparation, 8 p.m.</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Richmond Hill Lions meeting, 6.30 p.m. Centre St.</p> <p>Book Sale & Events at Bayview Fairways School, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. & 7-9 p.m.</p> <p>Thornhill Newcomers Club coffee party, 881-8094 or 881-0457.</p> <p>Creative Recreation at Chas. Howitt, Beverley Acres schools, Info: 884-4811.</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Rotary TV Auction in honor of the year of the Child, TV auction first week of December to raise money for the Centre for Learning Disabilities. 884-1868 or 884-6274. Cable 10.</p> <p>Richmond Hill Naturalist Club, 8 p.m. Natural Gas bldg. 8 p.m.</p> <p>Benefit Dance for Vietnamese Refugees, St. Mary Immaculate Church, 8 p.m. 884-3009.</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Hollyberry Bazaar, St. Gabriels Anglican Church, Bayview and Crosby, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Info: 884-5443 or 884-3697.</p> <p>"Holly Bazaar" St. Paul's United Church, Oak Ridges, 1-4 p.m.</p> <p>One Parent Family Assn. "York District Council-Semi Annual Conference" Holiday Inn, Yorkdale.</p>

REGULAR EVENTS

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>Thornhill Barbershoppers, Highland Jr. Hi School, Don Mills & Cliffwood, 8 p.m.</p> <p>Cantabile Chorale, Thornhill Baptist, 8 p.m. 884-1105.</p> <p>Lions Bingo, Centre St. 7.40 p.m. R. Hill.</p> <p>Bridge, 12125 Yonge, 8 p.m. 884-1689.</p> <p>York Philharmonic practice, R.H. Baptist, 7.30 p.m.</p> <p>York Solars bingo, York Farmers' Market, 7.30 p.m.</p> <p>St. Paul's United Church crafts, 1.30 and 7.30 p.m. 773-5603.</p> <p>Thornhill Lodge, B'nai B'rith</p>	<p>Bingo, Thornhill Comm. Ctr. 7.30 p.m.</p> <p>RCSCC Patriot Sea Cadets, St. Mary's Anglican, 7.30 p.m. 884-3630.</p> <p>R. Hill Aquatic Club practice, Centennial Pool, 5.30 p.m. Monday-Friday, 884-8003.</p> <p>YCAMP Crafts instruction, Richvale Comm. Ctr. 7.30 p.m., Orff Music, 12 & under 7 p.m., over 12, 7.30 p.m.</p> <p>Navy League, R. Hill United Church, 6.30 p.m.</p> <p>R. Hill Library, pre-school story hour, 10-10.45 a.m. Pre-registration.</p>	<p>Thornhill Comm. Ctr. Library story hour, children 3-5, 1.30 p.m. Pre-registration, 881-5668.</p> <p>Legal Aid Clinic, 7-10 p.m. 884-9148.</p> <p>Mothers' Break, 9.30-11.15 a.m. R. Hill United, 884-4294.</p> <p>Yoga, R. Hill United: 7.15 p.m., beginners; 8.30 p.m. intermediates, 884-2671.</p> <p>Thornhill Community Band practice, Thornlea Sec. School, 7 p.m., beginners; 8 p.m. concert band, 889-9620.</p> <p>CGIT, R. Hill United, 7 p.m. 883-5971.</p> <p>York Choral Society rehearsal, Our Lady Help of Christians School, 8 p.m. 884-4532.</p>	<p>York Floor Hockey League, Crosby Hts. Public School, 6.30 p.m.</p> <p>Hilltop Operetta Society, St. Mary's Anglican Church, 7.30 p.m. 884-4831.</p> <p>Thornhill Community Centre Library story hour, 3-5 years, 10.30 a.m. Pre-registration, 881-5668.</p> <p>Thornhill Lions Bingo, Thornhill Comm. Ctr. 7.30 p.m.</p> <p>Parent Concern Meeting, 8 p.m. Call Joyce, 884-3503.</p> <p>Counterweight at R. Hill Library, 7.30 p.m. 255-4421.</p> <p>A.M.O. at R. Hill United, 9.30 - 11.15 a.m., 884-9722.</p> <p>Seniors euchre, 1.30 p.m., 10149 Yonge.</p> <p>Bridge, 12125 Yonge 1 p.m. 884-1689.</p> <p>Richmond Hill Legion bingo, Legion Hall, 7.35 p.m.</p> <p>Pre-school story hour, R. Hill Library, 2 p.m., Pre-school French classes, 2 p.m.</p> <p>Thornhill Village Artists, Gallanough Library, 7 p.m. 889-6320.</p> <p>Richmond Hill Lions majorettes & drum corps practice, Lions Hall, 7 p.m. 884-6745.</p>	<p>Thornhill Recycling Depot, Bayview & Green Lane, 7-8.30 p.m.</p> <p>Air Cadets, male & female, 13-19 yrs, Legion Hall, Ohio Rd., R. Hill, 7 p.m. 884-4521.</p> <p>R. Hill Youth Concert rehearsals, 7 p.m. St. Joseph's School, 884-8873.</p> <p>Maple Leaf Accordion Band, MacKillop School, 7-9 p.m. 884-8390.</p> <p>Weight Watchers, Concord Community Centre, 7.30 p.m. 669-2173.</p> <p>Duplicate Bridge, 12125 Yonge St. 8 p.m. 884-1689.</p>	<p>YCAMP Teen Drop-In, Thornhill Baptist Church, 7.30 p.m. 889-0536.</p> <p>R. Hill Recycling Depot, Elgin Mills & Leslie, 10 a.m.-noon.</p> <p>Thornhill Recycling Depot, Bayview & Green Lane, 10 a.m.-noon.</p> <p>Seniors euchre, 10149 Yonge St. 1.30 p.m.</p> <p>R. Hill Minor Hockey skate & equipment resale, 1-3 p.m. new arena.</p> <p>YCAMP bowling league, Newkirk Bowl, 2-4 p.m.</p> <p>Crest Club, Centennial Pool, 1-2 p.m.</p>