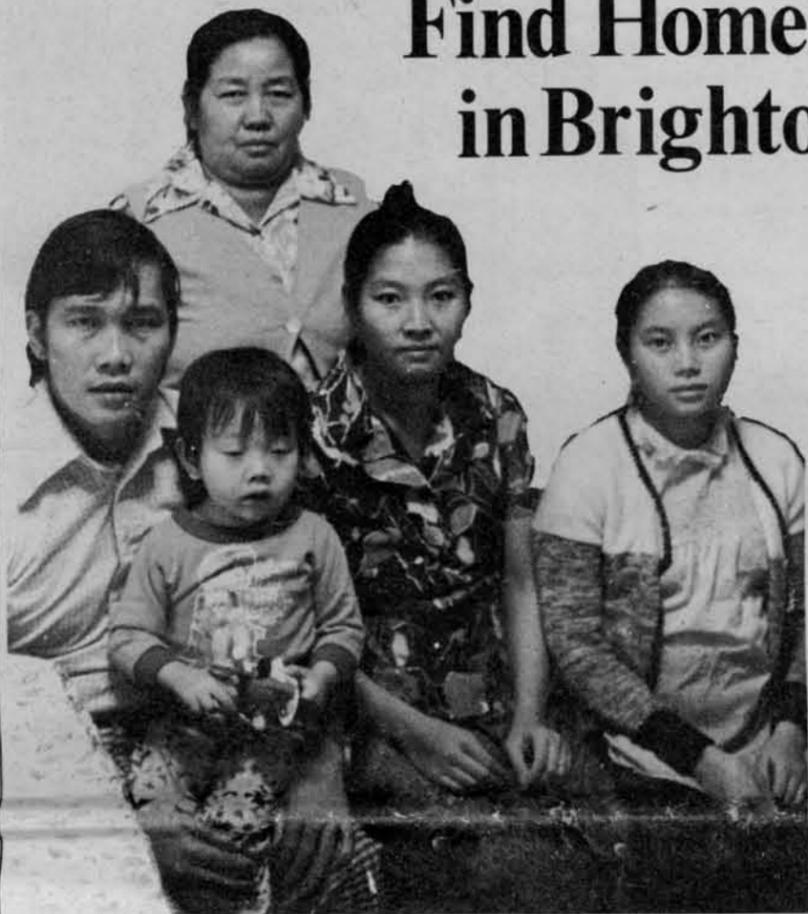


Community News

Indochina Refugees Find Home in Brighton



Laurie Covens

The war in Southeast Asia, which ended in 1975, left many conflicts unresolved. Since then, thousands of refugees have fled from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. While their increasing numbers have focused world attention on them, relatively little is known about who they are and why they have chosen their uncertain, hazardous paths of escape.

Most of the refugees from Southeast Asia have personal histories very different from the majority of people in their countries. By and large, the refugees have come from the better-off or more Westernized parts of Asian society. To a greater or lesser extent, they became identified with Asian governments backed by foreign intervention—at first, the French, and then, the American armed forces. When the war ended and the U.S.-backed governments finally fell, these people had become aliens in their native lands. Now, as refugees, they have come to the country which fostered their alienation and brought unparalleled devastation to much of Southeast Asia.

In Boston, the majority of refugee arrivals have settled in Allston-Brighton. Ter and Ia Yang, refugees from Laos (pictured above with their family), are members of the growing Indochinese community in Allston-Brighton. The reasons for their flight, their escape experiences, and their experiences adjusting to life in America are the subject of this month's *Allston Brighton Community News* story by Laurie Covens, on page 6.

There's a Future for Fidelis

by Tom Huth

The Boston Housing Authority (BHA) is currently conducting a \$50,000 feasibility study on the possibility of revitalizing the fast-decaying Fidelis Way. E. Denis Walsh Associates, Boston developers, have been given the first part of the study—to identify possible sources of money for the rehabilitation.

Walsh Associates did not want to talk about the nearly complete work until the *Community News* spoke to the BHA. Deborah Fawcett, a BHA planner working on the

study, said they are looking at a lot of different sources, including the chance of federal aid for the state-owned project.

The Selling of Fidelis Way

Asked if the BHA would be willing to sell all or part of the project to private developers, Fawcett said, "There are a wide range of possibilities." She added, "We have an absolute commitment to the people now living at the Commonwealth Development. This is going to be a

(continued on page 8)

Brighton Leans on BC

by Michael Morgan

Boston College has received a delay in its attempt to win a zoning variance to build an 803-student dormitory on St. Thomas More Road in Brighton. Scheduled to address the Boston Zoning Board of Appeals on January 23, the college requested the postponement in order to refine what is termed its "Master Plan for Physical Facilities."

The site of the proposed dorm is zoned as residential property, which means that no building in the area can exceed 35 feet and/or 2½ stories. The dormitory, however, would be eight stories and 80 feet at its highest point.

Concessions to the Community

When BC requested the zoning variance at a Board of Appeals hearing on December 19, it met with strong resistance from the Allston-Brighton community.

Community residents and the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) asked for several concessions from BC in return for the variance, including a Master Plan for future BC development (in which the community would have substantial input), a timetable for BC's divestment of its seven buildings on South Street, and payments to the City of Boston in lieu of taxes (for city services).

Much of the December hearing focussed on problems community residents have had with the large student population in these South Street buildings. State representa-

tive William Galvin labelled the area an "eyesore" and said that the students were a "disruptive influence."

Local BRA planner David Trietsch did produce what BC termed its Master Plan. "It took me months to find it," he said, and he added that it including nothing about "getting rid of South Street, and nothing about a new dormitory."

Trietsch said a new Master Plan was necessary "so that there would be formidable community input" and a structure for BC to meet regularly with Allston-Brighton residents.

A Letter to BC

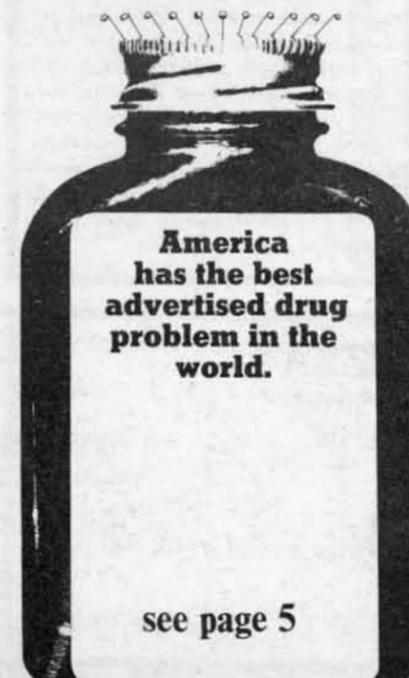
In January Trietsch presented a letter to Boston College based on community suggestions made at the meeting. He has since met twice with Kevin Duffy, BC's vice president of student affairs.

Calling his last meeting with Duffy "the most positive" he has had with BC, Trietsch said that he feels the university now understands that the community is "serious and united" in its negotiating posture with BC. He said he was confident that the Board of

Appeals might well continue to delay granting BC's zoning variance until community residents are satisfied with the college's response to their demands.

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ABCNews

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Foster Homes

"I never felt I had a home where people trusted me until I came to stay with a foster parent."

Like many teenagers, Donna had a rough time at home. After running away several times, she was brought to court by her parents and referred to a foster home. After a temporary stay of two months, Donna got the kind of support and love she needed to face some of her problems at home.

Donna's story is not unusual. Many teenagers in Allston-Brighton are having a hard time at home. So some run away like Donna. Some are truant from school and have serious behavioral problems. Others are mistreated by their families and taken out of the home. All of these kids are looking for a person or whole family who has the extra care and support to take them in.

The Advocacy Center in Boston is looking for families in our community who are willing to share their homes with a kid. The Center has worked with over 100 12-18 year old girls in the Boston area. It provides 24-hour support and training for foster families as well as financial reimbursement for the cost of caring for an adolescent. Kids are carefully and suitably matched with

Reservoir Towers

(To Louise Moore, lover of trees and gardens, now settled in N.H.)

Dear soul, visit with us and note nearby
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Gone is the long-standing patch of woodland
Next the scented grassy lot,
Where the seasons fervently disported
Till assailed by deadly blot.

In short months the place will teem with tenants
Full of loneliness all new;
In huge corridors old folks will argue
Elevator risks in view.

Ah, but some here raised both greens and roses
Many a summer into fall;
Golden sunflowers were in a glory
When the monster swallowed all.

Is there no place under spanning heavens
Where venality's express
Is derailed, and winsomest of candor
Pairs with pristine loveliness?!

Fair-named Brighton, wantonly invaded—
May greed's horrors herewith cease.
Meanwhile we, like you, Louise, dream centers
Of both lustiness and ease.

November 1978

—Isidore

interested foster parents for temporary placement.

Both the kid and the natural parent(s) receive counseling throughout the time a kid is in placement. The goal of the program is to resolve some of the adolescents' problems so that they can feel better about themselves and in some cases return to their homes. Without foster families who are willing to open their homes, this would not be possible.

Couples and single women who are sensitive to what it feels like to be a teenager in crisis and can show a girl or boy another view of family life, please call 482-6806 or write for more information: The Advocacy Center, 530 Atlantic Avenue, Boston, MA 02210.

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Sharon Hamer

McMahon's Fights Back

by Gloria Leipzig

The licensing battle over McMahon's Lounge in Brighton Center entered its second phase last month. Andrew Petitti, owner of McMahon's, obtained preliminary injunction in Superior Court blocking the Boston Licensing Board's earlier decision to modify the lounge's entertainment permit.

The Licensing Board had issued a ruling in early January prohibiting the use of amplifiers, live instrumental and vocal music, and dancing in McMahon's Lounge. This decision came in the wake of numerous complaints by police and residents over the high incidence of vandalism and nighttime disturbances in the vicinity of the lounge. Neighbors and police argued that these problems had started less than a year ago when McMahon's began featuring live entertainment and drawing large crowds.

Petitti contested the board's decision in Superior Court on three

points: lack of proper notice, unlawful procedure by the board, and lack of knowledge that his entertainment license was in jeopardy. When asked to comment on Petitti's charges, John Tobin, executive secretary of the Licensing Board, said, "I don't know what he's talking about."

Petitti is also planning to challenge the second part of the board's decision which concerns his liquor license at McMahon's. The board ruled that no mugs, refills, or drinks at discount price can be sold; that beer can no longer be sold in bottles; and that only one 12 oz. drink can be purchased at a time.

Petitti plans to make an administrative appeal on this decision to the Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission on March 1 at 9:30 a.m. A second hearing in Superior Court for a permanent injunction on the board's decision regarding the entertainment license is expected soon.

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Merchants and Residents Clash

Comm. Ave. Plans Draw Fire

by Susan Bregman

Commonwealth Avenue will be getting a new look between Brighton Avenue and Warren Street, but not everyone is pleased about it.

Plans call for relocating the streetcar tracks to the center of the avenue, upgrading the intersections at Warren Street, Harvard Avenue, and Brighton Avenue, and planting more trees.

On January 22, representatives from the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA), the state Department of Public Works (DPW), and the design firm Tippetts-Abbett-McCarthy-Stratton (TAMS) met with some 35 local residents and business people to answer questions raised by the community at a November 14 meeting.

Not everyone was satisfied with those answers.

Tearing Up the Tracks

Members of the Allston Board of Trade are "constructively opposed" to moving the streetcar tracks, said past president Arnie Ginsberg.

Max Lefkowitz, current president, said, "They're spending millions that will accomplish nothing. This just doesn't make sense." Tearing up the tracks will cause "traffic turmoil," he said, and ultimately will make no difference in traffic flow or safety. "What is being proposed would be contrary to the best interests of the community," he added.

Moreover, claims Lefkowitz, some 15 years ago he was instrumental in getting the very same tracks moved from the center of Commonwealth Avenue to their present location on the north side. (Oddly enough, no one seems to remember exactly when and where this took place. And David Trietsch, local BRA planner, said he had found no evidence that the tracks had been moved at all.)

Moving the tracks will undoubtedly disrupt traffic. While MBTA



Sharon Hamer

service will continue uninterrupted during the five or six months when the new tracks are laid down, outbound automobile traffic will be diverted to the narrow service road. Still, said Gultekin Sultan, of TAMS, "We're lucky that we have two roads so we can use the service road."

The reconstruction will take about two years altogether, and merchants are concerned about the accompanying disruption—noise, blasting, possible interruption in utilities, and traffic jams.

"Comm. Ave. could be beautified this spring without moving the tracks," said Ginsberg. "We think we're being railroaded into accepting this just so we can get more trees."

But the planners pointed out that improving traffic, trolley, and pedestrian safety is the goal of the project and the reason for moving the tracks. Trees seem almost to be an afterthought.

What About the Trees

And, in many ways, the promise of trees has been used to seal this whole project to occasionally skeptical residents and business people alike. Who, after all, can object to trees?

But what some people fail to realize is that the proposed new trees

are not quite the stately ones currently lining the avenue. Instead they are only five inches in diameter.

And these young trees come with only a one-year guarantee, which many people feel is not much for so inhospitable an area. Said Ginsberg, "I hate to see them plant these shrubs and lose them." The highly touted trees, by the way, will account for only \$100,000 of this \$4 million project.

Closing Off Linden Street

Another point of contention was closing off the left turn onto Linden Street from the inbound traffic lane. Sultan said that cars waiting to turn would block traffic and could interfere with the trolleys.

A Little City Hall survey found Linden Street residents delighted with the prospect. Said Trietsch, "They all thought that traffic was a severe problem, and they would love to see it lessened."

But less traffic on Linden means more cars on Harvard Avenue, and the merchants were not pleased. One member of the Allston Board of Trade said, "We're dealing with the heart of Allston. Increased traffic on Harvard Avenue doesn't mean more shopping. In fact, it could hurt it. The business community is as important as the residents."

"Business and residents are equally important," agreed Joe Smith, of the Allston Civic Association. "But the most important factor is safety. We're talking about the safety, peace and quiet, and property values of the people who live in this neighborhood day and night."

Community Involvement?

Burton Miller, of Classic Wines, on Commonwealth Avenue, said the proposed changes would make it difficult for 40-foot trailers to reach his store and the other stores and warehouses in the area. Trietsch insisted that there was no problem, either on paper or in fact. In exasperation, he said, "This is not the time or place to redesign the project. We've got our project."

Apparently, then, the community input phase of the project ended with the November meeting. While audience comments were solicited this time, the decisions had already been made.

So what's next? More detailed plans will be submitted for review by the DPW and the Federal Highway Administration (who are funding the work), the project will be advertised and contracts awarded, and construction will begin in spring 1980.

And almost everyone is satisfied—except the Allston Board of Trade. Right now they plan a letter-writing campaign to the BRA, the MBTA, and to their elected officials.

Joe Smith, on the other hand, sees the issue differently. "My reading of what people think is important is the image, the upgrading, and the safety. I think the most important thing is to bring back Commonwealth Avenue to somewhere near the area we used to know."

But when the people spoke for themselves, their support was less than overwhelming. David Trietsch called for a "show of confidence" to end the meeting. About nine people voted in favor of the plan and four were opposed. Most everyone else didn't know what to say.

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Local 880 Gets Another Chance at St. E's

by Tom Gallagher

There will be yet another union election at St. Elizabeth's Hospital. In a December 27 decision, Robert Garner, Acting Regional Director of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) overturned last October's elections. In those elections the Massachusetts Hospital Workers Union (Local 880 of the Service Employees Union) was defeated by votes of 293-235 among service workers and 77-62 among technical workers.

Garner threw out the elections because a St. E's supervisor interrogated employees in a manner which Garner found to be "unlawful," "coercive" and interfering "with the exercise of a free and untrammelled choice in an election." The *Community News* sought the reaction of St. Elizabeth's administrator, William Skerry, to the NLRB's findings. Skerry was not available for comment, but the hospital's Public Relations Director, Helen Evans said, "We have appealed the local ruling and are seeking to have it overturned pending a disposition of a full hearing which is set for February 20, where both sides can be represented. I think we'll hold on any further comment until the hearing."

Local 880 organizer Nancy Mills was pleased with the decision: "We've run campaigns in Boston area hospitals for five or six years. Anti-union campaigns are always run by Three M (Three M, or Modern Management Methods, is a Chicago based 'management consulting' or 'union busting' firm—depending on whose side of the story you believe), but this was the most vicious anti-union campaign. The NLRB decision was a testament to how close we came to winning and the organization among St. E's workers."

38 Alleged Violations

In an earlier ruling on December 21, Garner listed 38 separate charges of violations of the National Labor Relations Act by the St. Elizabeth's administration. The violations included firing three employees and suspending two others for



New Unity/LNS/cpf

union activities; threatening loss of benefits and firing for attending union meetings; illegal surveillance of union activity at the Stockyard Restaurant; threatening loss of raises if the union won; transferring pro-union employees to isolate them from other employees; and changing sick leave, holiday and merit raise programs in order to discourage union activity.

It was as a result of these charges that Garner scheduled the February 20 NLRB meeting referred to by Ms. Evans. But it was not until the supervisor of St. E's X-Ray department, John Stanton, spoke with an NLRB investigator that a new election was ordered.

The NLRB decision reports Stanton as saying that "over the course of the organizing campaign, he had spoken, individually, to most of the 19 technical unit employees under his supervision and had asked each one of them 'why St. Elizabeth's needed a union' and 'what they thought a union could do for them that was not being done now.'

"Stanton stated that he also told each of these employees that 'the

union thought it could come in and have a say in hospital matters including pay scales and the job freeze and that this was ridiculous.'"

The NLRB found Stanton's actions "inherently coercive" and interfering with employee rights. It also stated that Stanton's actions "communicated to employees that voting for the Petitioner (the union) would represent a futile effort on their part to have an impact on their working conditions. Such a statement restrains employees' adherence to a union..."

The NLRB judged that Stanton's actions were sufficient to have affected the outcome directly in the technical unit and indirectly in the service unit. (The next election at St. E's will be the fourth in recent years. This was the second to be overturned partially as a result of Stanton's activities.)

What Next?

"The organizing committee has decided that they want another election," Mills told us, "but not until there is a remedy to the prob-

lem. We want the hospital to publicly acknowledge the seriousness of the law and its agreement not to violate it."

The NLRB wanted to set up a new election in late January or early February. The union, however, chose to have the election postponed until after the February 20 hearing so that they could better assess their chances for victory.

The *Community News* asked Mills for her outlook on a future election. She replied that it was "too early to say. It was very close in the technical unit—15 votes. If people understand that the misunderstandings they had about the union were illegally perpetrated—we can win.

Steve Mazur, another staff member of Local 880 and a resident of Easton Street in Allston, said "The St. E's organizing committee has impressed us as perhaps the most committed, independent, imaginative organizing committee we've ever worked with.

"This was a case where the organizing committee came to us with a great deal of work in place. They knew where they were going and what they wanted and we were just there to help them."

Meanwhile St. Elizabeth's is drawing attention in other quarters. The Massachusetts State Labor Council has already called upon Cardinal Medeiros, as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of St. E's to get the hospital to obey the law and discharge the Three M company. Local 880 has also initiated a letter writing campaign to the Cardinal for this purpose.

Recently, the national office of the AFL-CIO in Washington has taken an interest in the activities of Three M. They will be holding hearings in Boston on the company's actions at St. E's early this month.

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Generic Drug Law Helps Consumers

by Jerry Feuer

Over the last few decades, physicians have been writing prescriptions with increasing frequency to the point where in 1978 \$9 billion was spent on prescription drugs. Since federal and state governments are paying a large portion of the bills through Medicare and Medicaid they have been looking more closely at the pharmaceutical industry. What they have discovered is that most brand-name drugs are chemically identical to the less expensive generic equivalent.

Consumers are often not aware that drugs go under two different names. The first is the generic, or chemical, name and the other is the brand name, which is established by the individual drug companies. Brand names are usually catchy and easy to say whereas the generic name is hard to remember and more difficult to say (see box).

Even though brand-name drugs are much more expensive, physicians are writing prescriptions for them eight times more frequently than for generics. This is primarily due to the extensive advertising of brand name products done by the drug companies.

A similar situation applies to drugs we can purchase over the counter. For instance, most of us are convinced that Bayer is better than the generic aspirin (acetyl salicylic acid). We have simply been brainwashed that one product is superior to another and the more we pay for a product the better it must be. In fact, your headache will go away with two generic aspirins at a cost of .5¢ each or with Bayer for 3¢ each (6 times the generic price).

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has released the names of some 5,000 generic drugs that they consider to be equivalent to the brand-name drugs. Generic drugs are produced by a variety of different companies from the smallest to the largest. But one thing is constant, and that is the price—generic drugs are always cheaper than the brand-name, sometimes by as much as 75 percent.

Generic Drug Law

Recently, the state of Massachusetts joined several other states in enacting the Generic Drug Law, which was passed by the legislature in the fall of 1976. For consumers this could amount to a sizable savings on prescription drugs. This law will be especially useful to the elder-

Commonly Prescribed Drugs
Brand Name and Generic Equivalents
(Based on List of Interchangeable Drugs)

BRAND NAME	GENERIC
Achfed	Triprolidine Hydrochloride (HCl)/ Pseudoephedrine HCl
Benadril	Diphenhydramine HCl
Cafergot	Ergotamine Tartrate with Caffeine
Chlor-Trimeton	Chlorpheniramine Maleate
Darvon	Propoxyphene HCl
Demerol	Meperidine HCl
Dimetane	Bromphenadramine Maleate
Dianil	Chlorthalidide
Dramamine	Dimenhydrinate
Elavil	Amitriptyline HCl
Gantrisin	Sulfasoyazole
Hydradivril	Hydrochlorothiazide
Lanoxin	Digoxin
Lomoril	Diphenoxylate HCl with Atropine Sulphate
Miltown & Equanil	Meprobamate
Mycostatin	Nystatin
Tylenol	Acetaminophen

ly, who account for 10 percent of the population, but who receive 25 percent of the prescription drugs sold in the U.S.

As of October, 1978, all physicians in the commonwealth are required to have two lines at the bottom of their prescription blanks. One line says Dispense as Written (DW), which requires the pharmacist to dispense only the particular brand name written down. If the doctor signs on the Interchange Permitted (IP) line, then the pharmacist is required to use the generic equivalent.

For example, a prescription for Darvon 65 (a commonly prescribed painkiller) would cost the consumer \$6.10. If the prescription called for Propoxyphene (the generic equivalent) or was signed on the IP line, then it would cost only \$3.75. Since physicians are in the habit of writing prescriptions for the easy-to-remember brand name drugs, it is often necessary for patients/consumers to ask their physician to sign on the IP line when and if a prescription drug is necessary.

Charles Kelly, a pharmacist and owner of Kelly's Pharmacy in Brighton Center, is very much in favor of the new law.

It was Kelly's impression that on the average \$1-3 was being saved on a generic prescription. "In general, it's the younger doctors who are using the generics more frequently. The old-time doctors are sticking to what they are used to. I think in the next five years it may all go generic

saving consumers more and more money," he said.

One interesting fact that Kelly told the *Community News* is that the pharmacist generally charges a standard fee (averaging \$2.70) per prescription regardless of the cost. Kelly says "the pharmacist isn't making the money, it's the drug companies who are raking it in."

Drug Industry—Big Business

In 1939, drug sales in the U.S. amounted to only \$300 million. In 1957 that figure jumped to \$2 billion and by 1980 Americans will be spending a whopping \$10 billion a year on prescription drugs. With the highest profit margin (13.5 percent) of any large industry, drug companies have a vested interest in preserving the status quo.

They lobbied very hard against the Massachusetts Generic Drug Law, and can be expected to oppose similar legislation which is being proposed on a national level. This national law could save as much as \$400 million off the nation's prescription drug bill.

In order to encourage research into the discovery of new drugs the Federal government granted 17-year patents to the drug industry. In other words if a drug company invented a new drug they are given exclusive rights on it for 17 years. The number one selling drug in the U.S. today is Valium (generic-diazepam). It was patented by Hoffman-LaRoche in the mid-1960s. They are the only company which can

produce diazepam till 1982.

Even when the Valium patent has expired there will be an enormous amount of pressure on the nation's physicians to continue prescribing the "original" Valium and not diazepam. More often than not, doctors will give in to the pharmaceutical industry pressure to prescribe by brand name and not generic.

This is largely because nearly all of a physician's post-graduate education comes directly from the drug companies themselves. They spend nearly \$2 billion annually on advertising to convince physicians to prescribe their drug. Doctors are wined and dined, given free trips and all kinds of useful office gadgets to reinforce this commitment.

It has been estimated that each of the nation's 250,000 doctors receive over 4,000 direct mail promos every year from drug companies. In addition they are visited frequently by salespeople known as "detail men." In two recent surveys it was shown that detail men are the important source of information for doctors in regard to new drug products. These surveys also revealed that only 4 percent of doctors refused to meet with detail men.

With the introduction of Generic Drug Law physicians are being forced to make a decision as to whether to prescribe by brand name or generically. The Commonwealth has distributed a book entitled the "List of Interchangeable Drugs" to every physician to encourage the widespread use of generically equivalent drugs. The hope is that competition will be more keen in the pharmaceutical industry which will drive the price of drugs way down. In countries where there is less brand name protection drug prices are 50-75 percent lower than here in the U.S.

Consumers are being raked over the coals by an industry that in the past has had very few restrictions. Unfortunately, the nature of medicine is such that a consumer has little or no knowledge to differentiate one drug from another. We all like to believe that the doctor know what's best for his/her patients. But more often than many of us would like to think, doctors prescribe inappropriately. This is certainly an area that the federal and state governments could regulate more closely. The Generic Drug Law is one step in the right direction.

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Indochinese Refugees Call Brighton Home

by Laurie Covens

Almost daily there is news of the "boat people"—groups of Vietnamese people who flee their country in small fishing vessels ill-equipped to face long, uncertain voyages of escape. We hear, too, of the Malaysian and Thai refugee camps teeming with desperate, homeless people. These situations may seem remote, but the troubled aftermath of the war in Southeast Asia reaches even to Brighton.

Brighton has the second largest Chinese community in Boston, outside of Chinatown. What is less known, however, is that among Brighton's Asian faces are those of a growing number of recent refugees from Indochina. There are between 800 and 900 refugees in the Boston area, most of whom have settled in Brighton.

Whether they are from Vietnam, or, as many of the recent are, from Laos, the refugees all have one thing in common: they were on the wrong side of the war—either by virtue of their family wealth, their religious affiliations, or their association with Americans and the governments that fell.

Fleeing from Laos

Ter Yang and his wife, Ia, have recently moved into a house on Chiswick Road. When they fled Laos three years ago it was out of necessity, not choice. Ter Yang and Ia are not Laotian, but Hmong. A large minority group in Laos, the Hmong were trained and led by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in its secret war operations in Laos. Ter Yang, like many of his friends and relatives, worked in a special guerilla unit of the CIA. As Ter explains, "Once the Americans, and with them the high Hmong officers, had left, we Hmong people had no choice but to escape. The Laotian people resented us because we had worked with the CIA.

But we could no longer fight. We had to flee."

By far the majority of people fleeing Laos today are Hmong people.

According to Cath Cam, of Brainerd Road, the Thai Dam people constitute another large group of those fleeing Laos. Cam, who came to the States about five months ago and who is a member of the Thai Dam ethnic group, was born in North Vietnam. His father fought for the French against the Vietnamese. After World War II, the family fled from Hanoi to the South Vietnamese capital, Saigon. But the South Vietnamese weren't any more receptive to former French soldiers than were the North Vietnamese, and in 1956, the family again fled—this time, to Laos. They lived in the capital, Vientiane, and eventually Cath became a civilian employee of the United States government. He worked for the United States Information Service.

Like Ter Yang, Cath Cam had no home among his countrymen once the war ended and the Americans had left. His past connections with the Americans now left him vulnerable. Realizing there was no future for him in Vientiane, he and his family went to live in the countryside where he worked in the rice fields. But, as Cath relates, he could not outlive his past. "My neighbors distrusted me and circulated rumors about me. Finally, my younger brother, Kheung, and I were arrested and told we would be sent away for 're-education.' Fearing that we would actually be shipped away to be tortured and killed, we managed to escape."

Escape meant a furtive night swim across the Mekong River under the bullets of Laotian soldiers. The next eight months were spent in a Thai refugee camp. Cath's pregnant wife, Muan, their two children, and his younger brother, Kheung, eventually joined him in Thailand after similar es-



capas. When asked about his hopes for life in the U.S., Cath replied, "I want to continue studying English so that I can get a job. Right now, it feels like our lives are in a state of crisis. But I hope someday that we can build a better life. And I want this to be our home so that we never need to flee again."

The Vietnamese in Brighton

As these examples suggest, many people fleeing Laos do so because their position has been rendered untenable by their aid to Americans in furthering the foreign policy interests of the U.S. The refugees now look to this country to replace the home they have given up. Kim Lan Bloom, bilingual counselor with the Indochinese Program at the International Institute in Boston, says that there are actually three distinguishable groups among the Vietnamese now arriving here. "Many of those coming are from the Chinese merchant community in Saigon. Others are professional people who resent the current restrictions on their once-affluent Saigon lives. The third group are primarily fishermen from the coastal areas of southern Vietnam."

Mrs. Hong Hoa Thi Do, of Cypress Street, once owned a house in Vietnam with four floors and nearly 20 servants. French-educated, both she and her husband were prospering pharmacists in Saigon. Their lives, she says, were unaffected by the war. The new Communist government that followed brought changes, however. Many of their pharmaceuticals and much of their money were seized. Still, Mrs. Hoa managed to hide a substantial sum of money. Eventually, her family of eight escaped

with seven other people on a small fishing boat Mrs. Hoa's husband had purchased. Unlike most refugee families who live on welfare until they can get jobs, Mrs. Hoa's family now lives on the money she took with her from Vietnam. Her hopes for the future center on her children. If not for them, she says, she would have remained in Vietnam. Now, she hopes, they will one day study in American universities.

Ky Minh Chieu calls himself Vietnamese but his first language is Chinese. Like most of the Chinese people in Vietnam, Ky's family were thriving business people in Saigon. Ky, a karate instructor who had worked for the South Vietnamese army, disliked the controls established by the new government. With 33 other people, he fled on a small fishing boat in 1977. The boatload of escapees, each of whom had paid the boatowner between 10 to 20 ounces of gold (Ky estimates one ounce costs about \$100 U.S.), were accepted into a refugee camp in Malaysia where Ky remained for nine months.

Now he shares an apartment on Chestnut Hill Avenue with his cousin, Trieu Can Chieu, and two Vietnamese friends, Tuan Anh Le and Cuong Tu Le. Like Ky, they were of wealthy families, and their wealth enabled them to leave Vietnam. Trieu, who had been studying at a university in Japan when Saigon fell in 1975, applied for a refugee visa in Japan and flew directly to the U.S. at his own cost. Tuan and Cuong, whose family had many close American friends, flew out of Vietnam in 1975 as guests of the United States Air Force.

The coastal fishermen flee South Vietnam for other reasons. Tuan explained that most of them come from isolated villages which, as a result of the 100-year long French domination, are Catholic and anti-Communist.

When questioned about the rice farmers, who make up approximately 80 percent of the Vietnamese population, Tuan replied, "No, I don't know of any refugees who were rice farmers in Vietnam. There isn't any reason for the farmers to want to leave...they don't experience Communism as any change in their lives. That is, one of the main principles of Communism is labor, and they've already been laboring all their lives. There hasn't been much change in their lives as a result of the war." In fact, those who have arrived in the United States since the fall of Saigon in 1975 did not come from the main-



Members of the Yang-Khang family are pictured above. Paula Verdet (sitting third from left) is one of their sponsors.

Laurie Covens

Community Asks BC for Master Plan

(continued from page 1)

The Master Plan

Duffy told the *Community News* that the Master Plan would encompass not only the proposed dorm, but also plans for a garage, library, and theater. (Construction of the garage and theater will require zoning variances as well.) According to executive vice president Frank Campanella, the plan will include no other physical improvements beyond renovations to existing buildings.

Duffy said that the five-year plan will be presented to the residents of Allston-Brighton "at least two weeks in advance" of the new hearing date, currently rescheduled for March 27.

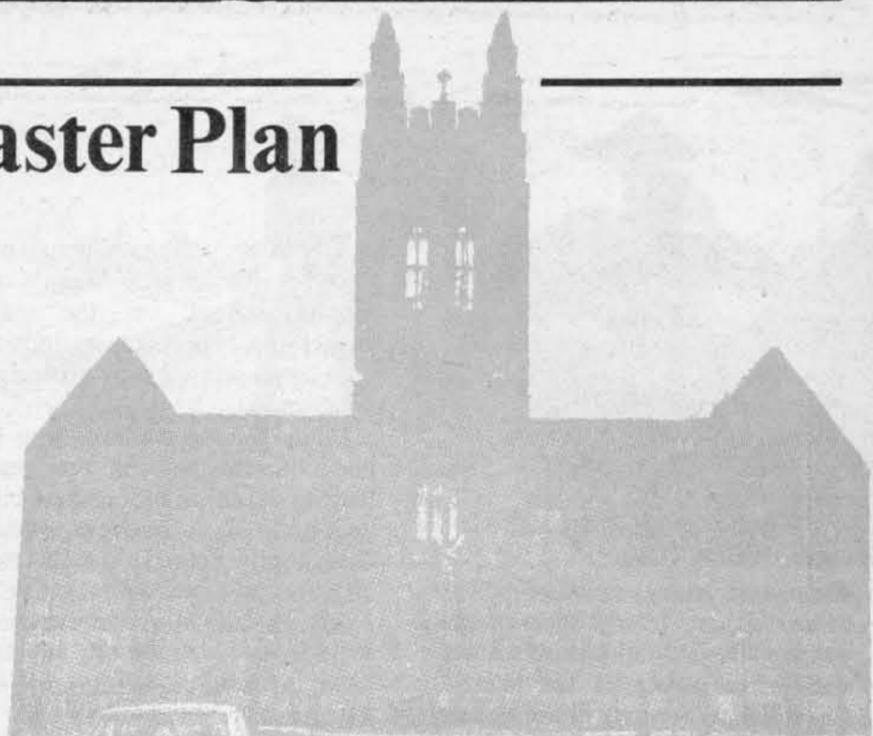
The Dormitory Delays

But the dorm is the first priority.

For the dorm to open by September 1980, said Duffy, "It is clear that there must be groundbreaking by the end of April or May of this year." Though he would not speculate on what would happen if construction did not start by spring, he did indicate that if the dorm were not ready in time, BC would not use hotels as temporary housing.

Campanella, on the other hand, said that if BC cannot get a hearing date and a variance by March 27, it would be a "pretty risky business" to begin building the dorm at such a late date. If there were a really significant delay in construction he noted that "it might make sense to defer the project until later." Further, he said that leasing hotel space would be a possibility if the dorm is not completed in time.

In the meantime, Ann Muenster, manager of the Allston-Brighton



Little City Hall, has been working with Trietsch and Duffy in selecting members for Boston College-Brighton Community Council. The liaison committee will probably meet six times a year, but Muenster said she would like to see it meet more often. Still, she said, "the

committee is a step in the right direction."

A hearing is scheduled before the Zoning Board of Appeals on March 27 at 9:45 a.m. in City Hall. For more information, call Little City Hall.

Plans for Fidelis

(continued from page 1)

considered decision. Walsh Associates have only one part of a three-part study. The two other phases deal with the actual redesign of the project and the provision of better tenant services."

Asked what the BHA was going to do for Fidelis in the meantime, she said, "A good way to describe other plans is stabilization rather than revitalization."

Stabilization

Tenants at Fidelis Way recently endured a week of record rains in badly leaking buildings where the heat doesn't work. An alarming vacancy rate, now at 250 apartments, has dramatically increased the incidence of vandalism. One half of a building is now shut down, and Fawcett concedes that another half building will soon be closed.

Fawcett said that work on the plumbing and heating systems cannot begin until the spring, when the engineering specifications are completed. She is looking into the possibility of getting money from the department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for making needed repairs in already occupied apartments. But that funding would not be available until the fall. "I've lost sleep over this," she concluded.



Sharon Hamer

Other Plans

"I know Debbie Fawcett is committed to the people at Fidelis Way," said Joe Smith, president of the Allston Civic Association, "but the BHA isn't. If it were, Fidelis wouldn't be in the condition it's in now."

Smith, who would like to see Fidelis Way taken out of the BHA's hands, calls the authority's study "a band-aid approach."

"The problems at Fidelis aren't that complicated. They require common-sense planning, something the BHA lacks. What's needed is more comprehensive—a first class renovation to provide decent hous-

ing for those now living at Fidelis Way," he said.

The way things are now, it's hard to imagine "a first class renovation at the Commonwealth Development. But Smith sees it as part of a larger-scale redevelopment of the surrounding neighborhood. At the moment, St. Gabriel's Monastery, adjacent to the project, is on the market. There's a possibility that part of the land owned by the archdiocese and leased to the city of Boston for the Peter Meade School will also soon be for sale.

Take these two pieces of land, include perhaps, the "underutilized" public service hospital, and part, if

not all, of Fidelis Way, and you have what Smith calls "the most attractive piece of development property in Boston."

Master Plan

Fawcett admitted that in the fall, when it became known that the St. Gabriel's property would be sold, there was a "flurry of inquiries" from developers about plans for Fidelis Way. She said, however, that the BHA had not been in touch with the monastery since the fall, and that the monastery was being "very close to the vest" about their plans.

Smith, on the other hand, stresses the need for a master plan of the neighborhood, one in which the community would have a say. "Somebody has to step in and see that it's done right. The whole area is up for grabs."

A master plan would be possible only if the archdiocese, the monastery, and the BHA were more open about their own plans. Both Fawcett and Smith concede that nothing will get started in the community until something happens at Fidelis Way.

Right now the problems plaguing the project are increasingly affecting the neighborhood. The process will be turned around only when the BHA, or the community comes up with a plan to provide decent housing for everyone in Allston-Brighton.

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Crafty Seniors Show Their Stuff

By Susan Compornolle

If you did any of your Christmas shopping at Faneuil Hall Marketplace this year, it's most likely you ran into the Project Homespun cart. The cart sold items handmade by Boston's senior citizens, many of them from the Allston-Brighton area.

The tiny pine cone wreaths, for example, were made by Louis DeRocco, one of the few men who participated in the project. "Each wreath took eleven pine cones," DeRocco explained. "First I made 50, then they asked for another 50, and then another. Altogether, I made 215 wreaths." That's over 2,000 pine cones that he and his wife gathered. "And it was fun," he added.

Another Allston-Brighton senior who participated was Bridget Kelly. Originally from Galway, Ireland, she knitted Aran Isle hats and mittens. She explained the significance of the patterns. "The diamonds represent the fishermen's nets, and the cables are their ropes. Each family had its own pattern."

Brighton resident Mary Doran, who knitted mittens and disco bags, said she enjoyed working on the project "very much indeed. I thought it was most enlightening. I met some lovely people, and I also learned a lot about other advantages for seniors that the city offers." Asked if she would like to see the project continued, she replied, "I think it certainly would be money spent in the right direction."

Plans for Next Christmas

Plans for continuing the project through to next Christmas are in the making. If the Mayor's Commission on Affairs for the Elderly approves funding, work will start sometime this spring, said Kathy Kelzer, the director of Project Homespun. She would like to see training sessions start as soon as possible and continue into the sum-

mer, with the cart starting to sell items sometime in October.

In addition, she would like to see seniors learn more about marketing and selling. And she hopes that eventually a storefront will be opened on a permanent basis. Kelzer believes that projects such as Homespun "bring out the positive side of seniors, and boost their self-esteem and pride."

A Unique Project

Although there are a number of crafts stores selling handmade items in the Boston area, the Project Homespun cart was unique and especially geared toward the needs of seniors. The project went out to them, encouraging them to use skills that they already had. In addition, wherever it was possible, seniors were paid the full selling price of the items they made, and they were paid when the item was completed, not when it was sold.

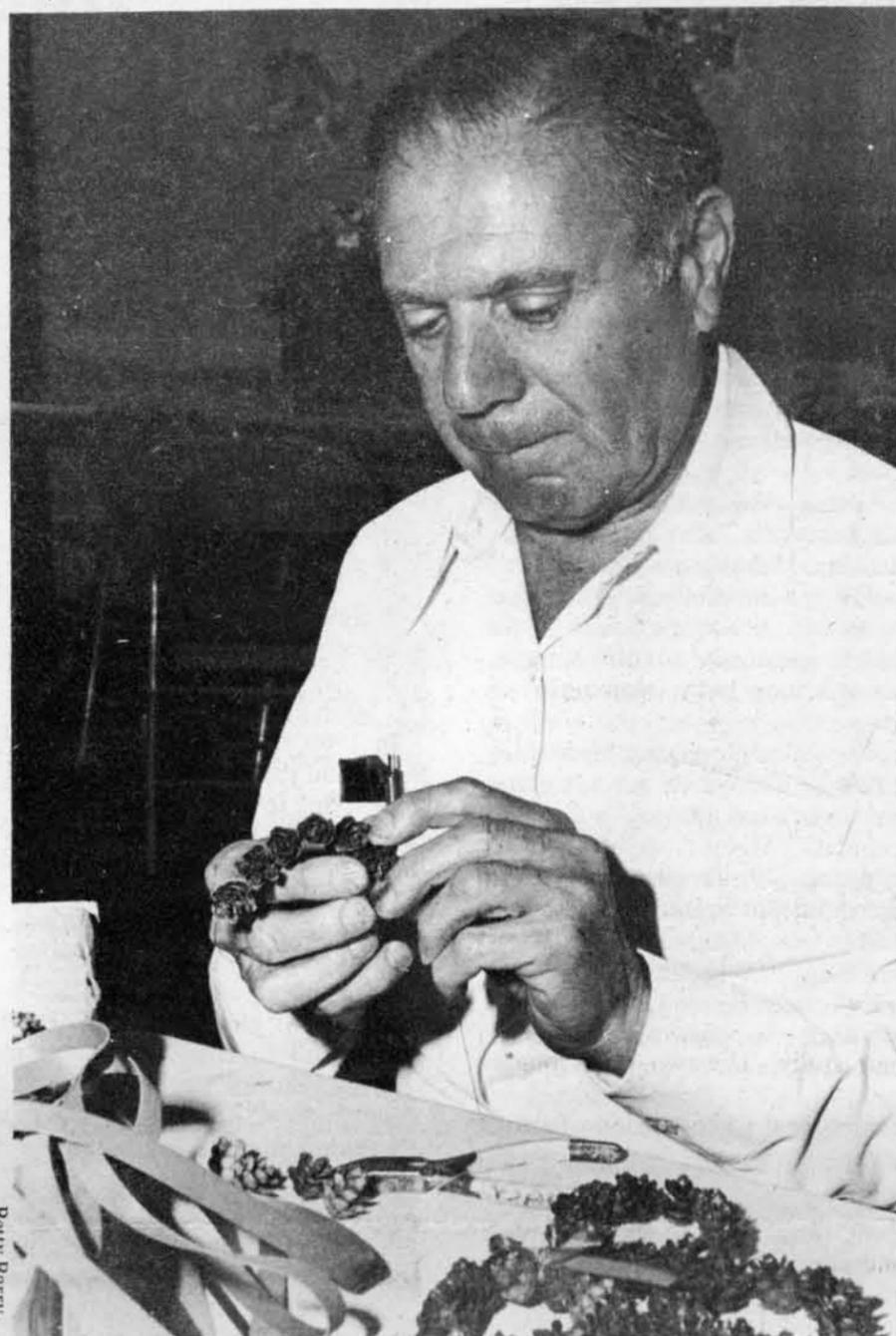
A total of 91 seniors throughout the Boston area participated. The Allston-Brighton participants met every week at the Municipal Building in Brighton Center, where they socialized and compared notes on the different items they were making. Their work was picked up here, and they were paid for each item as it was completed and approved.

Each senior who participated earned an average of \$85, a significant amount to those who live on a fixed income, and handy even to those who don't. "It was money I never expected to have," one senior said. "I used it to buy myself a few things I otherwise would have done without."

The project also gave Boston seniors something to do during the days, which can be very long for those who have retired. "I enjoyed it very much," said Brighton participant Lorna Doherty, who crocheted metallic disco bags. "I haven't worked for years. I could do this at home, while I was watching TV. It was great."

Doherty also emphasized the social aspect of Project Homespun. "I got to know people I didn't know. I made some new friends. Everyone was very friendly."

Alice Shields, who crocheted hats



Betty Barry

Louis DeRocco working on pine cone wreaths.

and muffs, was the only Allston-Brighton resident on the advisory board. "It was quite a learning process," she said. "I learned what there is and is not a market for. We're all inclined to think only about those things we like to make ourselves." She termed Project Homespun "a success from every standpoint."

Shields also encouraged other seniors to participate, "whatever small inclination toward a craft you have. One doesn't have to be an expert to participate. You learn from other people."

Kelzer hopes for a bigger response for next year if the project is funded, which seems likely. She emphasized the need for greater preparation time, since the cart ran

out of many items during the busy weeks before Christmas. Also, more time would enable more seniors to get involved, and encourage them to develop their own ideas.

Judging from the enthusiastic public response, it would seem that Boston's seniors have quite a bit of untapped talent. And considering the boost Project Homespun gave them in terms of extra cash, socializing, and feelings of worth, it would be most unfortunate if the project were not continued in some form. All those who participated, those who would like to participate, and those who support Homespun, are encouraged to write to Elaine Guiney, the Commissioner on Elderly Affairs, at City Hall, to express their support.

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Vietnam - We Were All There

by Tom Gallagher

Dispatches, by Michael Herr. Avon Publishers. 260 pp. \$3.95.

Michael Herr was once accompanying a mission of 40 South Vietnamese government and five American soldiers wading through a rice paddy when National Liberation Front soldiers opened fire. Two Vietnamese were killed instantly and the rest of the party made it to a paddy wall and crouched there for cover.

As they awaited rescue by American helicopter, Herr hunched over thinking, "So this is a rice paddy." Suddenly a new noise burst out next to his ear. It was the sound of an electric guitar and a voice singing, "Now c'mon baby, stop actin' so crazy."

When Herr finally got his wits together he turned to see a smiling black corporal playing a cassette recorder. "Might 's well," said the corporal. "We ain goin nowhere till them gunships come."

This was Michael Herr's introduction to the music of Jimi Hendrix. This is the kind of story Herr tells about Vietnam. His stories are long overdue.

Talking to the Soldiers

When Herr covered Vietnam from 1966 to 1968 for *Esquire*, he spent most of his reporting time talking to "grunts"—the soldiers in the field, on the front lines. He was one of the few reporters over there who thought that the men fighting the war might have something interesting to say about it.

Most of the rest of our press corps were worried about filing their stories before their deadlines, so they went to Military Command briefings where they thought they could get the story. And stories they got—soap opera war stories. And most reporters swallowed



them whole. As a result, you and I heard all about how we were winning the war right up until the day we left. And then we read about how well our allies were doing until Thieu grabbed his gold, hopped a helicopter, and Saigon fell—or Ho Chi Minh City rose.

In 1968 Herr came back to the States and joined the rest of us who were trying to figure out what Vietnam meant. He read the worthless newspaper reports like the rest of us. He watched the war end on TV like the rest of us. But when America turned the channel off on Vietnam, without having ever really figured out the plot, Herr decided to try to pull together what he had seen ten years earlier.

An Illuminating Book

A book as good as *Dispatches* would be worth reading in any case, but right now it stands almost alone. It is an illumination of a savage chapter in American history that not too many people want to touch.

Herr does not write about "body counts," "pacification programs," "strategic hamlets," or any of the other abstract, bloodless words that helped to keep Americans from coming to grips with the reality of Vietnam.

He describes the people he met—like the 24-year-old Special Forces

captain who told him, "I went out and killed one V.C. and liberated a prisoner. Next day the major called me in and told me that I'd killed 14 V.C. and liberated six prisoners. You want to see the medal?"

Dispatches is not a nice book, but it's one that a lot more people should read. It describes sides of the war that many people would rather not know about.

...Like the photo albums soldiers carried around with them. "There were hundreds of these albums in Vietnam, thousands, and they all seemed to contain the same pictures...the severed head shot, the head often resting on the chest of the dead man or being held up by a smiling Marine, or a lot of heads, arranged in a row, with a burning cigarette in each of the mouths, the eyes open..."

...Like the week when the Army took a higher casualty ratio than the Marines. Herr describes the glee which Army officers could barely disguise at the weekly briefing—it wasn't often that the Army beat the Marine Corps.

...Like the rivalry and bad feelings between the Marines who were usually in the heaviest combat and the cavalry (helicopter crews) who often had to bail them out. Like the time the Marines called in a helicopter to get them out of an area where they were taking heavy fire. The

fire was so heavy that the pilot at first refused to come down. When the helicopter finally did come down, a soldier in it was hit and fell from an open hatch 200 feet to the ground—at which point the waiting Marines started to cheer.

...Like the joke making its way around the Marines: What's the difference between the Marine Corps and the Boy Scouts? The Boy Scouts have adult leadership.

What was unusual about Vietnam was not that it was hell. Vietnam was hell with no explanation. Herr offers no explanation himself. What he does offer is a description of a time and place crazed almost beyond belief. He brings back the madness of that time more vividly than you probably thought you'd ever experience it again.

Vietnam opened the eyes of millions of Americans who previously thought that their government did no wrong. But this awakening came at the cost of thousands of Americans and hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese who would never open their eyes again.

Herr closes with the words, "Vietnam Vietnam Vietnam, we've all been there." Too great a price was paid for us to forget where we've been. You're unlikely to find anything else around that will refresh your memory quite as well as this book.

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A New Health Plan Looks at the Alternatives

by Tom Cohan

The Massachusetts Statewide Health Coordinating Council (SHCC) has, for the first time, put together a five year plan to better coordinate health care resources in order to trim costs and provide more effective service to consumers.

The 700-page plan, developed by SHCC, a group made up of health care providers and consumers, is currently being reviewed at a series of public hearings across the state.

David Gaynor, executive director of the Allston Brighton Neighborhood Health Center, said, "There isn't anything really new in the plan. Much has been bantered around for years."

But now that it has been pulled together into a particular plan, Gaynor predicted that it would act as guidelines in the determination of need process. Future proposals, he said, will probably be judged as to how closely they comply with this plan.

The lack of any coordinated plan in the past has led to a high concentration of services in some areas at the expense of others.

"Hospitals, in particular, have consumed the largest share of the health care dollar while primary care and prevention have received short shrift," said SHCC chairman Charles F. Mahoney.

Mahoney, who was recently named Human Services Secretary for the Commonwealth by Govern-

or King, stated that the emphasis on sophisticated technology had "produced only marginal improvements in the health and well being of the people."

He suggested that shifting resources from the hospital base to permit the expansion of prevention and outpatient services would be a more effective and equitable method of providing care.

The plan places strong emphasis on developing alternatives to institutionalization to provide a less costly and more humane option for the chronically ill and elderly who would prefer to remain at home or within their community. Authors of the plan felt that a significant number of elderly have been placed in institutionalized settings, not for medical reasons, but simply because there were no community support services available.

The plan recommends that the state increase its expenditures for such things as home health care, homemaker services, adult day care and congregate housing.

To offset these expenditures, SHCC recommends coordinating services on a regional basis, and reducing the number of hospital beds in the state by 5000. "Suggested methods to accomplish this goal," stated the SHCC, "include conversion to alternative uses, closing underused hospital beds and services and merging services where appropriate among two or more nearby hospitals."

Other major recommendations of the plan are as follows:



- development of additional health maintenance organizations.
- increasing use of non-physician personnel, such as nurse practitioners, physician assistants and nurse midwives.
- establishing programs where the majority of patient's health care needs are taken care of on an ongoing basis by one health care provider or a team of health care professionals.
- increased emphasis on disease prevention, consumer health education, and general health promotion, such as by encouraging proper diet and exercise.

Most of those who testified at a day-long public hearing held in Boston last month applauded the plan for its commitment to control costs and its focus on prevention and consumer education.

In addition, Dr. David Rosen-

bloom, Commissioner of Health and Hospitals for the City of Boston, and Dr. David Ozonoff, a public health professor at Boston University, both urged the SHCC to become a strong advocate for environmental protection.

Calling for more emphasis on health protection, Ozonoff said "personal behavior is not the cause of mortality, but unsafe workplaces and the fouling of the environment are a form a manslaughter, and in some cases murder."

The SHCC report itself stated that "medical care has relatively little impact on health," adding that a widespread acceptance of the "belief that individuals and communities must retain primary responsibility for their own health" is necessary to reap the benefits that disease prevention and health promotion can offer.

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