



# THE DWC World

Spring 2005

## Up Close and Personal: *The Class of 2005*

Each year, we bid farewell to our graduates. During their time here, these young men establish their own identities and discern vocations all while pursuing a degree. The Class of 2005 is, in many ways, typical of DWC graduating classes. Yet each person is unique. Here they are, briefly commenting on their experience at DWC.



### **Thang Minh Cao**

Born in Vietnam; Came to the U.S. in 1994      Major area of study: Philosophy  
Entered DWC in 2000      Future plans: SVD Novitiate

*Biggest adjustment when coming to DWC?* The weather. The first year I was excited with the snow. I went sledding three times a day. I still like the snow but I'm used to year-round sunshine.

*Favorite class?* Removing Mysteries from Music Making -- This is the only class that I asked my teacher, Sr. Joyce Brogan, for more homework!

*What will you miss the most about DWC?* The Holy Week and Lunar New Year celebrations. I always participate in the music of these celebrations.



### **Peter Ai Dang**

Born in Vietnam; Came to the U.S. in 1998      Major area of study: Philosophy  
Entered DWC in 1998      Future plans: Work for one year, then apply to a diocesan formation program

*Has anyone at DWC had an impact on your life?* Many people really. I've learned a lot here from the way they taught and the way people acted. I'm really thankful for my time here.

*What was your best workstudy job?* Being the sacristan. I really liked working in the chapel.

*What will you miss most about DWC?* The cultural events and Lunar New Year celebrations. These are times to meet people from the community and just enjoy ourselves.



### **Anh The Dinh**

Born in Vietnam; Came to the U.S. in 1993  
Entered DWC in the spring of 2002

Major area of study: Philosophy  
Future plans: SVD Novitiate

*Most memorable experience at DWC?* Seeing the SVD, teachers and staff who are dedicated to their work. They are always available to help, and that nurtured a sense of giving in me.

*Best thing to do in free time?* Socialize with the other students. We play chess and talk.

*What will you miss most about DWC?* Community life. I found it enriching and helpful. Because the community is so diverse in age and background there are always people to go to for help.



### **Toan Bao Huynh**

Born in San Jose, California  
Entered DWC in 2002

Major area of study: Cross-cultural studies  
Future plans: SVD Brother formation  
Pursue a degree in art

*What's the best thing to do in Epworth?* I would say to build a 7 ft. snowman. I usually pray for snow and I have been satisfied this year.

*Is there one person at DWC who has had an impact on you?* Mrs. Dona Schlesier—she helped me discover my love for ceramics and explore my creativity.

*What will you miss most about DWC?* Community life and being a part of this group.

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### **Kien Trung Kieu**

Born in Vietnam; Came to the U.S. in 1988  
Entered DWC in 2000

Major area of study: Philosophy  
Future plans: SVD Novitiate

*What is special about DWC?* We have a lot to learn from each other. There are many other cultures here. We can learn about their beliefs and at the same time study their philosophy.  
*What was your favorite work study job?* Hanging the flags in front of the building.  
*What was the worst work study job?* Cleaning the bathrooms.

*What will you miss most about DWC?* Talking and joking with the people here. We are like brothers and can tease each other.



### **Dominic Savio Huynh Pham**

Born in Vietnam; Came to the U.S. in 1993  
Entered DWC in 2001

Major area of study: Philosophy  
Future plans: SVD Novitiate

*How have you changed in your time at DWC?* I've experienced change in many ways—both spiritual and social. When I came here I could understand only limited English. Through great teaching, today I am a senior!

*Is there a person at DWC who's had a great impact on you?* Each person here has touched me in different ways. Their prayers and works of care and love have helped me have a more clear picture of God's presence in myself.

*What will you miss most about DWC?* The spirit of all the people. Even though we have differences, through God's love I have a chance to get along with them and to share good times with them.



### **Dominic Tho Tran**

Born in Vietnam; Came to U.S. in 1997  
Entered DWC in 2000

Major area of study: Philosophy  
Future plans: Study for the priesthood with the Diocese of Atlanta, Georgia

*What has been the most memorable thing about DWC?* The friendship and caring for one another. The liturgies are very good and memorable.

*What is the best thing to do when you're not in class?* Practice my music. I play the piano, organ, accordion, guitar, bass, flute and the harmonica.

*Is there any one person at DWC who has had an impact on you?* Fr. Bill Shea, SVD—he's very friendly and very generous. He helped me with pronunciation for a long time.

*What will you miss most about DWC?* I will miss the people here.



### **Nam Quoc Vu**

Born in Vietnam; Came to U.S. in 1991  
Entered DWC in 2000

Major area of study: Philosophy  
Future plans: SVD Novitiate

*What has been your most valuable experience at DWC?* To be able to use my gifts to help the community—through sharing music and the Vietnamese culture. I've also been able to serve in several leadership roles during my five years at DWC.

*What was the biggest adjustment for you?* Living with people of other cultures. I went to an all-boys Catholic high school. I'd never lived or gone to school with non-Americans.

*What will you miss most about DWC?* Seeing the Dean of Students for one-hour meetings every Thursday afternoon.

Memorial and tribute gifts offer an opportunity to honor a relative, a friend, a business associate for any special occasion – birthday, anniversary, promotion or some particular accomplishment. The memorial gift also provides a thoughtful and appropriate way to express sympathy at the moment and remembrance in the future. You may send memorial gifts to Divine Word College, P.O. Box 380, Epworth, Iowa 52045-0380.

Memorials have recently been received in honor of:

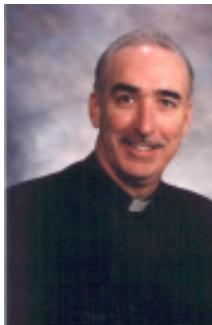
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Msgr. Robert Spaight  
Cyril Woerdehoff

## A Word from the President



**Rev. Michael Hutchins, SVD**

Fr. Ken Anich, SVD, long-time DWC faculty member, is a faithful correspondent. He maintains contact with our far-flung DWC graduates better than anyone else I know. Just this week he shared with the College community e-mail messages he'd received from Tam Nguyen, SVD, and An Cong Nguyen, SVD, two DWC graduates enrolled at Catholic Theological Union and presently in Africa completing their required two-year cross-cultural training program. Tam is caught in the middle of the political crisis in Togo; An Cong is immersed in challenging pastoral ministries in Botswana.

As I read the e-mail messages of these two young missionaries-in-training, I was moved by their descriptions of the social and political situations affecting the people they are now called to serve. They write with strong pastoral concern about the negative effects of social injustice, political indifference, unrelieved poverty, and the AIDS epidemic. At the same time, they write with deep affection for the ordinary people of Togo and Botswana whom they are coming to know, for the children who are helping them learn new languages, and for those local leaders who are trying to make a positive difference in their people's lives.

As I read the e-mail messages of Tam and An Cong, I felt grateful for my association with these young missionaries through Divine Word College and our Society. They exemplify what we hope to achieve through our graduates: a compassionate outreach to God's people across diverse cultures and situations, an intelligent outreach conscious of the complex social forces affecting their people's lives, and a faith-filled outreach rooted in a personal experience of the goodness of God.

This issue of *DWC World* features the most recent graduates of Divine Word College. As we celebrate our newest graduates, we do so with a confidence that one day soon they will put their lives at God's service as other graduates are doing even now. We do so with a keen appreciation for the support we have received from our many friends and benefactors.

*Rev. Paul LaForge, SVD*, has received a "Citation of Excellence" from the Emerald Management Reviews Independent Review Board for his article "Cultivating Moral Imagination through Meditation," which appeared in THE JOURNAL OF BUSINESS ETHICS in 2004.

On Tuesday, April 5, the college held a special farewell luncheon in honor of *Rev. John Tra, SVD*, who was a member of the Divine Word College community for many years, beginning in 1975. He was the second College Librarian and has maintained a strong interest in the college and its progress over the years. On April 12, Fr. Tra returned to the Netherlands, his native land, to enjoy retirement nearer to his family.

DWC students *Nam Vu, Khang Vu, Lam Tran, & Tai Nguyen* represented DWC at the conference of the National Association of Catholic Seminarians in St. Meinrad, Ind.—a gathering of seminarians from all over the country.

The college community recognized *Donna Puccio* for her 30 years of service with a Mass and luncheon on April 16. Puccio has worked in several areas of the college over the years and currently serves as Secretary to the President.

*Rev. Michael Hutchins, SVD*, has been invited to join the Board of Directors of the Center for Global Theologies at Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa.

DWC students *Kien Trung Kieu, John Khang Duy Vu, Thomas Gia Hoang, and Tran The Tran* became U.S. citizens on April 29, 2005.

Student senate elections were held recently. Newly elected officers are: President - *Giang Nguyen*; Vice President - *Paul Tien Minh Pham*; Secretary - *Kaschka Watson*; Treasurer - *Tran the Tran*.

The Spring Brunch was held on April 3. The event, which is supported by the Community Relations Council, raised over \$25,000. The proceeds are used to endow cultural events and programs at the college.

ESL faculty member *Mark Garton* received The Charles Malin Excellence in Teaching Award during the 2005 commencement exercises. Recipients of this award are nominated by the student body.

Five members of the 2005 graduating class will continue their formation as Divine Word Missionaries in the fall. They are embarking on a journey that will take them through a year of prayer and discernment in the Novitiate, theology studies and a period training in a cross-cultural setting.

Recently two DWC graduates, who are serving in the CTP (Cross-Cultural Training Program), sent e-mail messages to their college formator Rev. Ken Anich, SVD, with updates on their experience of ministry in Africa. Portions of their messages are shared below.



Rev. Ken Anich, SVD

## DWC grads participate in on the job training

Cross-cultural training is an important element of missionary formation

Dear Father Ken,

As for me, life has been up and down yet I am still here to write to you!!! The reason I could not reply to you earlier is because from January to March of this year, I was in a village called Bonwapitse which means "horse drinks." There is no electricity, T.V. or computer to communicate with the outside world in the village. The living conditions where I am living right now are not that bad but most people still use wood for cooking and paraffin for lamps at night. Their houses are built out of mud and grasses. You can see stars at night through roofs of many houses. They are basically very poor and their way of living is very simple and primitive. Some of them have farms and they do planting of watermelon or corn. Most of them have no job. Many depend on the government for food and water. Though they are poor, they are very friendly and hospitable. I used to walk from house to house practicing my Setswana (local language). My Village Experience (part of the CTP program) ended in March. It was a very nice experience. I love the people very much and they love me too. When I informed them that I would move to Garborone, they were very sad and wanted me to stay with them, especially the children. It was a great joy for me to be with the children. Almost all children in the village know me by name. Boys and girls would follow me wherever I went. I found that playing with the children was one of the best ways for me to learn how to speak Setswana. They were more patient in teaching me Setswana than the elders.

Though I stayed with the people in this village only two months, it was difficult for me to say good bye to the people and children when I left the village last month.

Looking back on those eight weeks that I spent at the village, I surprised myself. I could not believe that I could build a great friendship with the people, even the Chief, the police and primary school teachers. Most amazing was that I went through all the difficult circumstances smoothly. How would you handle it if the electric power would shut down for a week? How would you manage to survive without watching television, talking on the phone, checking email or listening to music? It probably would not be easy or even bearable—right? I found it was very difficult for me too, but after two weeks I got used to it. It is hard to go back to live the primitive lifestyle but it frees you from worrying about getting all the bills paid.

Yours truly,

*An Cong*

Dear Ken and the community,

Greetings! For the past two weeks, the political situation here in Togo has gotten more and more tense each day. Last week after the elections, there were riots and violence in every corner of Lome. Despair prevails in the life of the poor. Where will the future lead them and the country to?

Today is more than one week already that I cannot get out of the house. It is like being under house arrest. All the means of communication like Internet, phone, and radio have been cut off. They have destroyed radio stations (including radio religious) that air messages of the opposition. Gosh, I feel so violated. The most basic human rights are being taken away, even from those who would do no harm.

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Tam Nguyen, SVD, is serving in Togo, West Africa for his CTP. He will spend one year learning French and one of the local languages, and two years of ministry before returning to the States to complete his studies for the priesthood. He plans to profess Perpetual Vows and be ordained in June 2009.



Dr. Bob Morrissey  
VP for Development

This is my final column for the *DWC World* as my wife Maggie and I leave the Dubuque area to return to southeast Iowa to be closer to our two daughters, their husbands, and our eight grandchildren. The past six and one-half years that I have served as Vice President for Development here at Divine Word College have been among the best years of my life.

This is such a special college, with the very special mission of preparing tomorrow's missionaries. I am truly blessed to have been a part of the dedicated religious and lay members of the DWC College Community. I am also a better person for having had the opportunity to work with and for the dedicated seminarians who study here. It is truly inspiring to see them each day as they pursue their goal of a lifetime of service to others in Christ's name.

I am leaving Divine Word College, but the college will not leave me. I will always carry DWC and the wonderful memories of serving here with me.

I want to close by thanking all of you for the caring support and friendship you provide to this beautiful place that is Divine Word College. None of the good work that is done here could be possible were it not for your thoughtfulness and generosity. I am happy to report that my position will be filled by Mark Singsank of Dyersville, Iowa, who will begin his work in June. You will read about him and the good preparation and experience he brings to his work here in the article below.

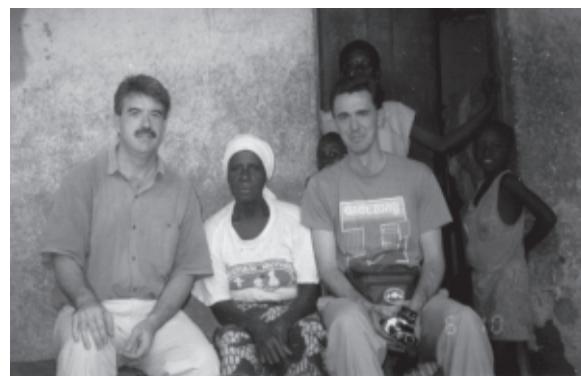
Thanks again for all you do for Divine Word College—and may God bless you always.

## **Singsank joins DWC as VP for Development**

Mark Singsank is no stranger to the mission and ministry of the SVD. In fact, he's experienced it first hand in the villages of Ghana. During the summer of 1993, Singsank spent one month in the country traveling and working with Divine Word Missionary Rev. Mark Schramm, SVD.

Both Marks are originally from Dyersville, Iowa. When Schramm came through the area on home leave, he would celebrate Mass in his home parish. Singsank would occasionally serve as lector at those Masses and had the opportunity to talk to Schramm about his missionary work. "Fr. Mark always said that anytime I wanted to visit, I would be welcome. I finally took him up on the offer in 1993."

The African experience has had a lasting effect. "The trip gave me the chance to see the good works of the Divine Word Missionaries in action and to see the deep affection the people of Ghana had for their faith. It also gave me an opportunity to learn about another culture and to learn a lot about myself and what was important in my life," said Singsank.



Mark Singsank (right) spent a month in Ghana assisting with the ministry of Rev. Mark Schramm, SVD (right). Both men are originally from Dyersville, Iowa.

education, direct experience in institutional advancement, and a solid grounding in our local community. These assets, supported by Mark's congenial personality and team approach to meeting challenges, give us every reason to be optimistic about the future of our Development efforts," said President Rev. Michael Hutchins, SVD.

Singsank and his wife, Shirley, live in Dyersville with their children, Kristin, age 17, and Jennifer, age 14. He brings valuable experience to the development position. In the past, he has served as Director of Development at Beckman High School in Dyersville; as Assistant Director of Development for the Regina Foundation in Iowa City; and as Executive Director of the Dyersville Area Chamber of Commerce. Singsank currently serves as President of the Dyersville, Iowa, Area Chamber of Commerce.



Mark Singsank  
VP for Development

Singsank has been named Vice President for Development at Divine Word College. Beginning in mid-June he joins in the worldwide SVD mission he first experienced in 1993. Singsank succeeds Dr. Bob Morrissey, who is leaving the position to locate closer to his children and grandchildren. Singsank said, "I am honored that the search committee has selected me to fill the shoes of Dr. Morrissey. He has established a strong development program at Divine Word and I will do my best to follow in his footsteps. I am looking forward to getting to know the many wonderful members of the Divine Word family."

The college community also looks forward to welcoming Singsank aboard. "Mark Singsank brings to Divine Word College an enthusiasm for our missionary objectives, a developed appreciation for Catholic



## Divine Word College

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Anti-foreigner sentiment is another thing that endangers us. There is a strong resentment toward foreigners everywhere. If people see foreigners walking or driving by on the streets, they would stone them or burn their car. For them, foreigners are of three categories: the white are French, the brown are Chinese, and others are Lebanese or Indian, by whom they have been oppressed and exploited for centuries. There is no distinction for us religious missionaries, either. Maybe there is an exception if we go out wearing the cassock all the time. But that is not safe either. For example, our SVD confreres working at our parishes are being physically and verbally threatened. One confrere, whose name appeared in the newspaper last week as a target for doing his work of peace and justice, had to leave the parish and migrate to Ghana.

People are leaving their homes, villages, belongings, and loved ones behind to flee from threat and danger. In less than two weeks, the number of immigrants has been counted up to 18,000 in the neighboring countries like Ghana, Benin and Burkina Faso. Bang and I were talking the other day about how sad it is to see people have to go through what we went through before.

We hope we don't have to leave the country like emigrants again. But I am afraid the immigration part of our life is not finished yet.

As of today I still don't know how long the situation will be like this. But now, at least, the Internet and phone are working. Other than the political situation, I am doing fine. Please continue to keep us in your prayers.

Thank you very much, and God bless!

Tam



*Tam Nguyen, SVD  
1999 DWC  
Graduate*

DWC grads  
participate  
in on the job  
training  
*continued*