



Tech hosts Relay for Life

By Lauren Townsend
Contributing Writer

Every year, almost two million people are diagnosed with cancer, and over 11 million people continue the struggle with the disease.

In 1985, the American Cancer Society started the Relay for Life and the event has grown in popularity ever since. Students, teachers and anyone who is interested can devote 24 hours to walk in honor of a cancer patient. As of today, Relay for Life has over 3.5 million people participating in the event in the United States and some countries abroad. Tech made its own contribution to the cause by hosting Relay for Life on Friday, April 15.

"We were very proud to have over 940 participants at this year's Relay for Life," said Joey Slater, a second-year CM major. "We had a board of approximately 16 people organizing the entire event [all of which were students]."

Slater went on to talk about the efforts of all those participating in the event.

"The event was supposed to take place at the CRC field, but rain forced us inside. But cancer doesn't quit on rain, so we didn't either," Slater said. "We had different performances [from] Ramblin' Raas, The Beat Geeks [and] Under the Couch Bands. Many relayers walked the CRC track in order to pay respects for those lost and fighting cancer."

This year, over 70 different teams worked together to raise a total sum close to \$50,000.

Some of the students participating in the event reflected on the survival of loved ones, and others walked in respect of those

who had passed on.

Adrianna Carter, a third-year BME major talked about her participation in the event and her strong support of cancer victims.

"I want every student to understand the importance in participating in events such as these. Many times, because we are in college, and young we think that we are immune to horrible diseases such as cancer. I am here because I want to support those who have gone before me fighting the disease, and raise awareness to those who have never faced the sadness of losing a loved one to cancer," Carter said.

For Carter, who recently lost a friend to brain cancer, the walk, like many, was personal.

"He was only 21 years old when he passed away, and it was very sudden," Carter said. "I know that all of his friends and family were shocked to find out that he had this terrible disease. It was really hard to face the reality of his situation, but I know that if his family can make it through such a disaster then other families can face the same situations. I come to Relay for Life because I want people to know that cancer is not something to be taken lightly. It can affect everyone, and we all need to support those who fight the battle, as well as those who have survived."

This was Carter's fifth year participating in the event, both at Tech and back home at her high school.

Torey Poole, a first-year STaC major, participated in the event to celebrate the life of her cousin, Eli, a surviving cancer patient.

Eli had to undergo a series of

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Photos by Virginia Lin / Student Publications

Besides walking, Relay for Life participants were provided with numerous activities on Friday night. Walkers were treated to a series of free concerts and other forms of entertainment during the event.

VSA requests change in flag representation

By Gaines Halstead
Contributing Writer

In 1975, an estimated 1.5 million people fled South Vietnam. Leaving everything and headed anywhere, many set out in small fishing vessels to escape the retaliation and persecution of the North Vietnam communist regime. At the mercy of the open ocean, seafaring pirates and dissident governments sympathetic to the North Vietnam cause, these small and overcrowded boats were the only chance for salvation for the population.

For those fortunate enough to survive the insurmountable journey across the sea, the task of starting anew in a foreign country only provided further tribulations. In the United States alone, some 800,000 displaced South Vietnamese citizens found themselves with nothing but their freedom. What these refugees lacked in possessions and material goods, they made up for with pride and spirit for themselves and their heritage.

Thirty-six years later, those who risked their lives to escape the evils of tyranny have successfully gone on to establish new generations of Vietnamese-Americans. Never forgetting the

country and people they left behind long ago, these new generations have continued to carry on their native South Vietnam traditions here in the U.S.

These customs have continued throughout the years due in large part to a particular sheet of cloth. What may seem to be an ordinary flag to some represents an entire culture to many. In cities throughout the country, this flag, the Vietnamese Freedom Flag, flies high alongside the American flag.

While the days of the flag representing the South Vietnam nation have come and gone, the three red bold bars running across the vivid yellow background have come to represent more than just a fallen country. Across the world, the flag has become a unanimous symbol of pride and hope for the Vietnamese heritage. Although the Freedom Flag can be seen flying above homes, gleaming in windows or draped from university ceilings throughout the nation, it cannot be seen here on campus.

Many Tech students have crossed under the numerous flags representing the world's nations within the Flag Building. To the untrained eye

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Photo by Basheer Tome / Student Publications

The Smithgall Student Services Building, better known to Tech students as the Flag Building, houses flags from numerous countries across the globe.

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Walk

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six radiation treatments and 25 weeks of chemotherapy, and he was recently declared cancer-free.

Relay for Life is an annual event, and each year the participants help to encourage more students to come out and join the activity.



Photo by Thien Huynh / Student Publications

Students dance the night away in support of the American Cancer Society's annual Relay for Life, held annually on campus.

Flag

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the flags are unassuming and may go unnoticed, but for students of Vietnamese descent, one flag in particular creates quite a stir.

Hanging from the rafters of the Flag Building is the official symbol of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. This solid red flag with a single yellow star in center represents the Northern Vietnam communist party and the current government in power over Vietnam today. For the majority of Vietnamese-Americans here at Tech, this flag hanging in the student services building represents the oppression, suffering and death of their forefathers who stood against the fascist regime during the Vietnam War.

In response, the Vietnamese Student Association (VSA) has proposed the replacement of the current communist flag with the Freedom Flag of Vietnam to the executive board here at Tech.

"I hope that the current flag of Vietnam will be removed completely because of the pain and suffering it brings to Vietnamese-Americans. I hope that the

Vietnamese-American students will be represented at Tech. It is not a matter of political differences because the Freedom/Heritage flag represents more than just the Republic of Vietnam. The flag represents the people," said Le Hein Phan, VSA president and a third-year BME major.

"[The flag] stands for the sacrifices that were made along the journey of the Vietnamese to all corners of the world to escape the communist flag as they searched for freedom after the war. The Vietnam War led to the largest migratory of people from one country to the rest of the free world. I am the result of their sacrifices, and I certainly don't want their sacrifices to be forgotten," said Ahn Tran, Southeast Regional Director of the Vietnamese-American Heritage Foundation and a fourth-year ISyE major.

Though some members call for the complete removal of the current communist flag, other members in the organization feel that both flags should fly in order to represent the two cultures.

"While deep down I want only the Freedom Flag to fly, it is irrational to remove the current flag

of Vietnam. While the communist flag is disliked greatly among the Vietnamese-American population, it still represents our people and our country today. Removing it is the same as cutting ties with our people at home. We must learn to forgive and accept. It is the only way to move forward. That being said, I would not mind seeing both flags fly together," said Tam Van, a first-year BME major and future VSA treasurer.

Social issues such as the current one has even elicited the support of students who were not born into the Vietnamese-American community but who have become sympathetic to the ideas for which they stand. Students like first-year CE major Kiersten Chalhoub, who is of German and Lebanese descent, yet is the newest secretary of the VSA. While no decision has been made as of now, other VSA student organizations in the state have been successful in flying the Freedom Flag within the halls of their respective universities.

The VSA holds events on campus throughout the year to help provide Vietnamese-Americans with the opportunity to socialize and promote social awareness.

APRIL 25

Undergraduate
Research
Kaleidoscope
[6 p.m., Library
East Commons]

monday

APRIL 26

Pro. Helen
Blackwell Lecture
[3 p.m. - 4 p.m.
MoSE G011]

tuesday

APRIL 27

MBA
Information
Session
[5:30 p.m. -
8 p.m. College of
Management]

wednesday

APRIL 28

Mechanical
Engineering
Capstone
Expo [6 p.m. - 8
p.m. Nano Tech
Building]

thursday

APRIL 29

Ramblin' on
Party
[6 p.m. - 8 p.m.
Tech Tower
Lawn]

friday



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