

**Hey, Hey, LBJ, How Many Books Did You Ship Today? Barry Wellman, September 22, 2007**

I moved up to Toronto in the summer of 1967, at the height of the Vietnam War protests. Although not an official draft dodger, I certainly was a draft avoider -- like Bill Clinton, W, Dan Quayle, et al.

Those of you old enough may remember the rally refrain: "Hey Hey LBJ, How Many Kids Did You Kill Today?" (If there is a similar slogan for Bush/Cheney/Rumsfeld, I haven't heard it.)

Now, for complex and sad reasons, our NetLab is moving to the Sociology Dept and away from the Centre for Urban & Community Studies -- where it's been for 37 years.

This -- plus house painting -- was the occasion for me to give away many books and journals that it was clear I was not likely to ever use -- at least in print format. A sad moment, especially when the University of Toronto library made it clear that they had no use for my books or journals, because of space limits and the growing use of e-journals. Where would my puppies find a home?

So I was delighted when through Prof. Hy Van Luong in the Anthropology Dept here, National University of Ho Chi Minh City (ex-Saigon) said they'd be delighted to take the books/journals -- with the Vietnamese paying for shipping.

I shipped 55 boxes today, which at 20 books/box = 1,100 books. The Vietnamese student who helped me pack was incredulous: "You've read all of those?"

The Vietnamese student struggled loading the books, in part because he was wearing orange flip-flops. "Did the victorious Vietnamese army wear these?" I teased. "That was my father's generation," he shrugged.

I don't get a tax deduction from donating the books, but I get the space, and more importantly, I get the naches of knowing that they will be in wanted hands.

"Naches" is a Yiddish word that means in part, getting pleasure from doing good. This is not a totally good thing, as the rebbes have told me that the greatest good deed is one where you don't feel pleasure in doing it. Well, I've never bucked for sainthood, and to mix a religious metaphor: Yom Kippur is Saturday, and I will atone for my naches, my hubris, and a few other things.

I'm so relieved. The books were picked up by DHL September 19 (2007), after huge amount of work all summer by our NetLab team (led by Jackie D'sa) in packing them, and some last minute emergency adventures in shipping them out.

And from sadness, I have gone to liberation. Anyway, I have another 1,000 books to read.

The books will take a circuitous route. Toronto to Halifax by land. Loaded on the cargo ship "Britain" on October 4, which is a slow boat to East Asia, arriving in Vietnam November 4.

Yet they're out of my hands now and are other people's responsibility.

It's a kind of full-circle closure, 40 years after we moved to Toronto.

I couldn't help singing the Tom Lehrer verse from his 1965 song: "Werner Von Braun".

'Once the rockets are up, who cares where they come down  
That's not my department,' says Wernher von Braun

However, I may get a commemorative plaque at the National University of Ho Chi Min City. (I wonder if their team cheer is: "Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh?") It will be my second forest-products award, as a mythical forest was planted in my name in Israel when I was bar mitzvahed in 1955.

In case you've forgotten, or are too young (or foreign) to remember, here's Tom Lehrer singing the "Werner von Braun" song:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QEJ9HrZq7Ro> (One friend was surprised that they had YouTube back in 1965;-))

Happy New Year to You All!!