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July 28, 2006

#### FAREWELL LETTER TO THE HMONG COMMUNITY FROM MARK E. PFEIFER, PHD., HMONG RESOURCE CENTER LIBRARY DIRECTOR, HMONG CULTURAL CENTER

By Mark E. Pfeifer

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I am very grateful that the editors of Hmong Today have given me this opportunity to write a farewell letter to the Hmong community of Minnesota. I have worked directly with the Hmong community as Hmong Resource Center Library Director at the Hmong Cultural Center in Saint Paul since April 2000. I have been offered a position as a Tenure-Track Faculty Librarian at Texas A and M University. I will start this job at the end of July 2006.

I would like to begin this letter by outlining some of the accomplishments I am most proud of over the past 6 years and then briefly talk about my plans to stay very active in Hmong Studies scholarship. Major projects I have worked on and completed the past several years at Hmong Cultural Center include the following:

-Development of the only comprehensive online research bibliographies in Hmong Studies extending from the early twentieth century to the present day. Over several years, I combined the references in 3 older bibliographies published by the University of Minnesota with a constantly updated list of Hmong Studies works authored since 1996 to build the first comprehensive and longitudinal bibliography of Hmong Studies works which may be viewed at [www.hmongstudies.org](http://www.hmongstudies.org). The online Hmong Studies bibliographies are also organized into 30 subject classifications which are updated every few months. I believe this online bibliography (as a one-of-a-kind and highly centralized centralized information resource about research in Hmong Studies) has served hundreds of students and scholars worldwide and has brought a greater level of awareness of the depth of Hmong Studies research among undergraduates, graduate students and professors.

-Compilation and authorship of the only annotated Hmong Studies bibliography published since 1996. First printed in 2001, my annotated Hmong Studies bibliography has been updated annually and is now in the reference collections of more than 60 public and academic library systems. Over the past year, I have added the frequently updated annotated Hmong Studies bibliography to [www.hmongstudies.org](http://www.hmongstudies.org)

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-Coordination and lead authorship of the most comprehensive census study of Hmong-Americans ever published. The 2000 Hmong Census Publication was jointly produced in 2004 by Hmong Cultural Center and Hmong National Development. Data compilation for the project took almost a year following the release of the more detailed Hmong census data tables by the U.S. census bureau in 2003. Several scholars contributed analysis articles to this important work including Dr. Zha Blong Xiong, Dr. Kou Yang, and Dr. Serge Lee.

-Since early 2003, editorship of the Hmong Studies Journal, the sole peer-reviewed scholarly publication in Hmong Studies. The Hmong Studies Journal has existed since 1996. Since I took over in 2003, the journal has been very active, publishing 3 volumes with another one on the way in the Fall of 2006. The journal has also published print editions of its last 3 issues along with its ongoing internet version at [www.hmongstudies.org](http://www.hmongstudies.org). In the past 3 volumes, I have implemented a much more formal system of scholarly peer review at the journal and the publication has printed articles on key topics in Hmong Studies from scholars including Dr. Dia Cha, Dr. Jacques Lemoine, Dr. Gary Yia Lee, Dr. Kou Yang, Dr. Zha Blong Xiong and Dr. Daniel Detzner. The Hmong Studies Journal is today the central regularly publishing academic publication of the burgeoning interdisciplinary field of Hmong Studies. It is widely accessible to readers as an open source academic journal on the internet and is now also being distributed digitally to academic libraries as part of the Ethnic NewsWatch database hosted by scholarly content provider ProQuest.

-Editorship of the only Hmong Studies research newsletter for the past 6 years. With annotative descriptions of newly published books, articles and graduate research studies, the bi-monthly Hmong Studies research newsletter has served as a key information source for scholars and students looking to learn about new works in Hmong Studies. The past 6 years of issues of the Hmong Studies newsletter may be viewed at [www.hmongstudies.org](http://www.hmongstudies.org)

-From 2000 to 2006, as Librarian at the Hmong Resource Center Library at the Hmong Cultural Center I developed what is very likely the most comprehensive research collection of Hmong Studies materials including 800 scholarly journal articles and 275 theses and dissertations. This unique library is visited by more than 1,000 scholars, students, and community members each year. I leave the library in very good hands as Ray Murray, a former Century College Librarian with more than 40 years of academic library experience will provide library service to patrons while also working to maintain the collection.

Working at the Hmong Cultural Center in the heart of the Hmong community (as opposed to on a college campus) the past several years has also allowed me to work closely with the Hmong community (in particular folk artists and elders) on a couple of community-focused projects of which I am particularly proud.

-In 2004 through the present time, I helped create the LearnaboutHmong.com website which features multicultural education powerpoints about Hmong culture and history along with numerous videos related to Hmong folk art forms and Hmong community life. I have worked closely with 76 year old cultural specialist Tougeu Leepalao of the Hmong Cultural Center staff on this project. The purpose of this unique and heavily utilized website has been to help non-Hmong learn about Hmong culture and arts with the end goal of promoting cross-cultural understanding. Several additional videos of Hmong folk arts and multicultural education presentations will soon be added to enhance to the LearnaboutHmong.com website.

-Beginning in 2004 through 2006, I worked with Txongpao Lee, Executive Director of Hmong Cultural Center to develop the Hmong 101 curriculum which we have

presented to perhaps 5,000 persons over the past 2 ½ years. Most of our audiences have been service providers (education, health care, social services etc.). We have not only presented in the Twin Cities but across Greater Minnesota and Wisconsin and even further afield. The Hmong Cultural Center will continue to offer this very successful program after my departure and we are currently working to put video of our presentations up on our websites at [www.hmongcenter.org](http://www.hmongcenter.org) and [www.learnabouthmong.com](http://www.learnabouthmong.com) while also producing a DVD so that the Hmong 101 presentation can be more easily accessed by service providers outside of Minnesota.

While not formally involving academic work or projects visible to public through the internet, I am also very grateful to have had the opportunity to work closely as an ESL Teacher with many recent arrivals from Wat Tham Krabok at Hmong Cultural Center the past 2 years. In particular, over the past year I have run a small Advanced ESL group with several adult English students from the Wat. Working with them has added greatly to my personal familiarity with the adjustment process new Hmong refugees experience in the United States. I personally think they have taught me more than I have taught them.

I would like to thank the Hmong Cultural Center and the broader Hmong community of Minnesota for allowing me to be a part of it for so many years. From my new academic Librarian position at Texas A and M University I plan to stay very active in Hmong Studies scholarship as editor of the Hmong Studies Journal and my Hmong Studies research website (featuring updated bibliographies and bi-monthly Hmong Studies research newsletters) at [www.hmongstudies.org](http://www.hmongstudies.org) and [www.hmongstudies.com](http://www.hmongstudies.com). I look forward to interacting closely with scholars, students and community members with Hmong Studies and Southeast Asian American-related research questions and needs in the years to come!

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