

Viet refugees are adapting to their new home in town

By PAUL DORSEY
Herald staff writer

With the five members of Halton Hills' first "boat people" family quickly adapting to their new homes, word has come from Immigration Canada that four more sponsored refugees - all of whom are related to the original family - should arrive here Friday.

After weeks of questioning the slow immigration process, local sponsors are praising officials for their careful planning, which has enabled nine

members of the same Saigon area family to re-unite in a new homeland thanks to the efforts of two different sponsoring groups.

According to Operation Lifeline spokesmen, this Friday's arrivals at Toronto International Airport will include the daughter of Senh Thong Tean, 66, and Nhit Chan Vong, 61, who were greeted by local sponsors last Friday and the sister of Nghiep Cun Tsan, who, with his young wife Thu Von Tieu, were the first Asian

refugees to arrive in Georgetown October 13.

Details about Cun's sister, who will be accompanied by her husband and two young nephews, are being temporarily withheld at the sponsors' request pending their arrival.

Georgetown's newest residents, meanwhile, have accepted European-style first names as suggested by their sponsors and explained by visiting interpreters. Rev. and Mrs. John De Jong of the Christian Reformed Church, whose congregation sponsored

the immigration of the first refugee family, told the Herald this week that Cun (Ken), Thu (Sue), Ken's father Senh (Sen) and Mother Chan (Sharon) and 29-year-old relation Ai Anh Tang (Ann) all appear pleased with their new names, designed to help them adapt to life in the West.

It was a tearfully joyous reunion for Ken's family at the airport last Friday when Sen, Sharon and Ann arrived from Malaysia after the routine two-day stop-over in Montreal. Although only briefly separ-

ed, the family which had endured so much together was clearly delighted to be back together. Rev. De Jong noted that most of the time since the parents' arrival has been spent happily chatting together at their Georgetown home.

Through translators, the sponsors have thus far learned that Ken and his family encountered no physical violence during their journey from their hometown near Saigon, where they had been "disfranchised" by the Hanoi government and forced to pay officials six ounces of gold, now worth about \$3,000 for their freedom.

Although they met no hostile pirates during the days spent crossing the sea to Malaysia in a tiny, crowded boat, Rev. De Jong reported, storms slowed their journey and merciless thieves awaited them on the Malaysian coast. They were robbed of everything they still possessed.

CAMP CANADA

Ken's father, Sen, told the De Jongs that he witnessed horrors of the "boat people" phenomenon equalling the most terrifying accounts found in any newspaper. The family's landing in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, was followed quickly by their interment in Camp Canada, the nearby quarters for Vietnamese refugees.

Local sponsors are now seeking jobs for all members of Ken's family. Ken, who had banking and auto mechanics experience in Viet Nam, obtained a job locally the day after his arrival, but there are indications it may only be for a temporary period. His father, Sen, was a fisherman and chicken farmer in the family's homeland, while Ann has experience as a clerk and can type using Western characters.

Asked to comment on the negative reactions of some Halton Hills residents to the arrival here of Viet refugees, Rev. De Jong admitted that he has received several verbal complaints about the efforts of his church's congregation in sponsoring the "boat people". He described them as "a type of crank call".

Invariably, Rev. De Jong said, the callers do not want to discuss the pros and cons of sponsoring refugees, but simply challenge the sponsors' wisdom in offering homes, jobs and clothing to what one angry resident allegedly called the "yellow bastards".

PAY TAXES

Informed that the Herald has also received negative verbal comments about sponsorship efforts from readers, who are then invited to submit letters to the editor, Rev. De Jong said he would be "glad" to respond in writing to such letters in much the same way as he has been defending his actions on the phone.

"I tell (the callers) there are two different viewpoints and that I don't believe theirs is the majority view," he explained. "I think it's wonderful that Canadians like to, and do, bring these people here and help them. They won't be a charge on the public purse; since there is opportunity for employment here, they'll soon be paying taxes like the rest of us and we all stand to benefit."

"They aren't going to steal all our soft jobs from us; because of the language barrier, they'll have to pick up all kinds of menial work. I really think we're ahead in the long run."



EVEN THE KITCHEN SINK (Herald photo by Paul Dorsey)

The Georgetown Kinettes had everything - yes, even the kitchen sink - at their big fund-raising rummage sale Saturday. The sink, in fact, was already sold by the time the Herald

photographer arrived and asked Kinettes Colleen Armstrong (left) and Marry Malcolmson to pose for a picture. The sale, held at Sinclair and Guelph Streets, raised \$575 for cystic fibrosis.

'Ball's in Focal's court' Coun. Serjeantson told

By PAUL DORSEY
Herald staff writer

Coun. Marilyn Serjeantson encountered mostly blank faces when she asked last week about the current status of the much-publicized land development dispute between Focal Properties Ltd. and the town of Halton Hills.

"The ball is still in the court of Focal Properties," planning board chairman Mike Armstrong volunteered, pointing out that there have been no meetings or discussions on the

matter since early this year.

Expressing disillusionment over the "disappearance" of the Focal issue which was raised so often during the last election campaign, Coun. Serjeantson suggested that the board should try to revive discussions and resolve the issue.

"We started all those studies and everything, and now there's nothing," she complained. "Despite all the election talk, this council has never

really sat down and discussed the problem. I think we should devote at least one planning board meeting to it."

RECENT REVIEWS

Coun. Serjeantson's suggestion that recent reviews of the sewage treatment situation could help the board shed new light on the Focal issue, which centres upon the lack of treatment capacity for the firm's development, prompted Coun. Armstrong to comment that little has changed in recent months.

Armstrong added, Halton Hills still owns no vacant, industrially-zoned land to which it could allocate some of the treatment capacity.

"Mr. Marshall's doing everything he can," he said, "and I think we should leave it to him."

RE-OPEN TALKS

Coun. Serjeantson maintained that discussions should be re-opened about the allocation of sewer services in general and the Focal issue specifically.

"So far this has been just another term (of council) with no added industry," she said.

"The town-Focal controversy dates back to the late 1950s, when land was annexed by the former town of Georgetown to Delrex Holdings Ltd., now Focal. The town has repeatedly defended its "right" to deny servicing to the huge Foca holdings south of Georgetown, where the firm proposes to build 1,740 homes.

Town's banner delayed at region

An apparent error on the part of municipal officials has left Halton Hills temporarily "unrepresented" at meetings of Halton regional council, at least aesthetically.

An unexpected delay in the preparation of a large, embroidered coat of arms representing Halton Hills has created a slightly embarrassing stretch of open wall space behind the council chair of Mayor Pete Pomeroy, while elsewhere, the walls are emblazoned with the efforts of Burlington, Oakville and Milton artists.

When the overdue presentation of Burlington's coat of arms banner at last Wednesday's meeting made the situation all the more obvious, chairman Jack Rattis turned with a grin to Mayor Pomeroy for an anticipated explanation.

The mayor had to exclaim

amid the chuckles of his colleagues that Halton Hills' crest is not yet ready because of an unidentified staff member's error.

"Somebody in our organization gave the wrong crest to the embroiderer," he laughed, declining to predict a completion date. "It's a small problem that's no fault of the artists."

The Halton Hills banner made a brief appearance in its preliminary form at the opening of the new regional headquarters last June. Burlington's and Halton Hills' crests soon disappeared for finalization, however. From an original design by local artisan Dorothy Stone, embroidery artists Marjorie Nazer and Maria Jennings created the original initial banner during more than 450 hours of work.

More fund-raising for old town hall

The Acton town hall restoration committee decided Monday night to make the attempt to raise \$56,000 to restore the old building on the corner of Willow and Bower Streets.

The money represents the citizen's share of the estimated \$286,000 needed to complete the work. The remainder of the cost will be borne by the town of Halton Hills and Wintario grants, if the Acton townspeople can raise their part.

Alma Sweetman, Kay Dills and Stella Brunelle have volunteered to form the nucleus of the fund raising committee. They are looking for more

helpers and plan to meet again in the near future.

The restoration committee held a pledge drive in December which netted \$10,000 in pledges, leaving \$46,000 to go.

The new fund raising campaign must move quickly. By the end of November the committee must know where it is headed because it must report to council by December.

The town hall was built from 1881-84 and some local townspeople have been trying to save it as a visible symbol of Acton's past. Until its condition began to deteriorate it was the scene of many dances and social events.

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