

Widow tells of journey to Heppner



Sen Vinh and infant son Nha Bao

Sen Vinh, 24, arrived in the United States July 24, 1980. Her former home was Vinh Long, a city about the size of Hermiston located in South Vietnam.

She recalls that when she was three years old, her family moved to Long Khanh where her parents had a printing business which they ran until 1975 when the government changed and everything was taken from the family.

After losing everything to the new government, they returned to Vinh Long where the family acquired one acre to farm sugar cane and rice. They sold some of the sugar cane, but did not make much money. The rice was used for food.

She graduated from high school in Long Khanh where she went to school six days each week instead of five as in the United States. She studied English among her other studies.

She recalls that she wanted to come to the United States because it was a land with more freedom and opportunities. She and her cousin, Lai Dang, who is now in California, left South Vietnam together.

The government in power, she said could not know that they were going to escape. They contacted the owner of a boat who had promised to smuggle them out of the country. Cost of the passage was 30 oz. of gold, which Sen's mother gave her.

One hundred ten people were crowded below the deck of the wooden boat. The trip from Vietnam to Thailand, which she said would normally take two to three days took them about six days because they were lost at sea. There was no food on the boat, but because she was sea sick, she was not hungry during the voyage.

Before they could land in Thailand, pirates boarded their boat and threatened to throw those who did not turn over all of their money overboard. Sen says that she was so scared at this point that she gave them all of the money and jewelry she had brought with her to sell in order to have money in Thailand and to buy her passage to the United States.

In Thailand, she and cousin Lai Dang stayed with some other cousins in bamboo huts and tents at a refugee camp. Everybody shared, she said. Those who did not have money stayed with relatives or others who did. While at the refugee camp, she learned that her cousins who "had been smarter" had hidden their money from the pirates. When she left Vietnam, she did not expect pirates or "no house" in Thailand.

She stayed in Thailand for six months before arranging for a cousin who had immigrated to Seattle in 1978 to sponsor her passage to the United States and getting clearance from the U.S. Government for immigration. After arrival in Seattle, Sen and Lai Dang stayed with their cousin for a couple of days before renting their own apartment. They paid their rent with money from a welfare program that also allowed them to attend school. Sen attended Central Community College where she studied English as a second language and typing and other secretarial skills.

Not until after her arrival in Seattle was Sen able to write to her mother and let her know that she had arrived safely in the United States. Her father died two months after she left Vietnam. She said that she hopes that her mother will one day be able to join her and her brother in the United States.

While in Seattle, Sen wrote to Son Vinh whom she had seen at her home village in Vietnam and who was on the same boat from Vietnam to Thailand. He remained at the refugee camp because it took longer for him to arrange sponsorship and passage to the United States. He had no relatives here, but found a sponsor in Minnesota and arrived there in October, 1980. He made his way to Seattle where they were married in a Vietnamese ceremony. The couple was later married again in a civil ceremony in Heppner.

Eighteen months after arriving at Seattle, Sen left with her husband for Houston, Texas, where Son, who was looking for a job, had a friend. He got a job as a cashier at a convenience food store and later became the maintenance manager. Sen worked in the inventory department of the same company.

The couple then moved to Hermiston where Sen's brother had a job at

Simplot. Sen had arrived in the United States before her brother left Vietnam.

Son Vinh found a job at Simplot company and when he was laid off, was hired at Lamb-Weston. She also was hired at Lamb-Weston. After Son was called back to work at Simplot, she said he worked both jobs for awhile until they bought the Chevron station in Heppner, November 27, 1984. She continued to work for Lamb-Weston and Son drove back and forth until they moved to Heppner in December. Sen said that she had decided to continue working for Lamb-Weston until they were established. "We knew that if we worked hard enough we could make our money by ourselves and support our family."

Sen Vinh, pregnant with the couple's first child, was on medical leave from Lamb-Weston when Son was shot while working in the service bay of the Heppner service station November 30, 1985. Larry Roice Westerling, 24, Heppner has been arrested and arraigned for the alleged murder.

The couple's son, Nha Bao was born December 14 at Good Shepherd Hospital in Hermiston. He weighed 6 lbs. 13 oz.

A long time ago Son's ancestors were kings in Vietnam. One of the monarchs made a list of the last names that each descendant of the family would have for many generations to come, Sen explained. The first child of each generation has the same last name and the second children of the generation have the same last name, but different from the name of the first child. For example, if Son had had a brother though his last name would not have been Vinh, the brother's first son would share the last name Bao with Son Vinh's son, Nha.

Sen stayed with her brother in Umatilla for a couple of months after her husband's alleged murder and now she and her son have their own apartment in Hermiston. She receives social security now and said that she will stay in Hermiston for awhile and next month plans to go to Stockton, California, where her cousin Lai Dang, lives with her husband.

After Nha is six months old, Sen said that she plans to return to school to learn some more skills so that she will be able to get another job.

Lexington woman learns office skills while working at Courthouse



Shirley McCarl

After Shirley McCarl suffered an injury as a result of her former job

Widow thanks community for support

by JUSTINE WEATHERFORD
Sen Vinh, the widow of Son Vinh, came back to Heppner on March 4 and March 6 to express her sincere thanks and appreciation to the people of this community who generously gave money and other gifts to her during the difficult weeks after her husband's death. Vinh operated the Chevron Station here during much of 1985.

On Tuesday noon, March 4, Mrs. Vinh and her infant son attended the Chamber of Commerce meeting to thank that group for its helpful gift. She came from Hermiston with Anne Doherty and they were accompanied at the chamber luncheon by Kitty Bredemeier.

On Thursday evening, March 6, Shanna Paulus, Janet Greenup and Kitty Bredemeier arranged a gathering of Sen's friends and supporters in the Recreation Hall of St. Patrick's Church. Sen came from Hermiston with her small son and with her niece and grandniece to again express her gratitude and appreciation to the helpful people here.

To show further support for the petite Vietnamese widow, some of her Heppner friends plan to attend the March 18 trial at the Morrow County Courthouse of Larry Westerling who allegedly murdered Son Vinh.

as a stacker, or "sticker person" she was unable to return to her job or the other types of manual labor which she had worked at previously. As a result, workman's compensation is paying her salary as she goes through a re-training program at the Morrow County Courthouse. She has not had any office training or done any office type work before.

The skills training program is under the direction of Eastern Oregon State College and is set up in three month terms the same as the

university's schedule, says a courthouse spokesperson. McCarl's current supervisor is Morrow County Clerk Barbara Bloodworth while McCarl is answering phones and learning the private board exchange and typing. At the end of three months, she will be transferred to other departments where she will also learn receptionist duties. Some non-police dispatching, how to docket justice court cases, some micro-filing and word processing. The county receives \$100 per month from

EOSC for administering the program. McCarl receives no grade report for the work, but the county files a report of her progress each month.

McCarl and her husband Morris who works for Kinzua Corp. have three grown children. She says that office work is much easier physically and is an interesting change. At the end of the one-year program, McCarl will be on her own, but will have gained necessary skills to work.

At first state tournament game

Mustangs square off vs. Spartans

By Ashley Conklin

Heppner's boys basketball team opens the OSAA U. S. Bank Class "A" state tournament at 8:45 p.m. Thursday, March 13 against the Sheridan Spartans. The tournament runs from Wednesday, March 12 to Saturday, March 15.

The Mustangs compete in the Columbia Basin Conference and sport a 14-7 record after wins in the district and regional tournaments.

Heppner, from the Eastern Division of the CBC, defeated Western Division regular season champion Riverside 70-61 in the district championship game.

The following week the Mustangs beat the Grant Union Prospectors 55-54 in the championship game of the Region D tournament.

The Spartans, who compete in the West Valley Conference in District 2, faced a rocky road to reach the state tournament.

Sheridan finished third in its respective division with a 9-5 league record. But the Spartans finished second at their district tournament to advance to the regional tournament.

In the Regional A tournament last weekend, Sheridan topped highly-regarded Portland Christian 58-52 and then squeaked by Lutheran 38-36 to advance to the state tournament in the Pendleton Armory.

Fourth-year coach Brent Eggers leads the Mustangs to the state tournament for the first time since 1971. An assistant coach now, John Boyer was a freshman guard on the 1971 team that lost two straight games and made an early exit.

This will be the fourth time since 1982 that Larry Samples will lead the Spartans into the Armory. Sheridan captured the state crown in 1982 with a 91-71 bombing of LaPine.

Heppner is led by the outside artillery of 6'3" senior Todd Lindsay and 6'0" junior Wayne Wilgers. Each was a first team all-league choice as well as being in the league's top five in scoring.

Lindsay has come alive as of late and has been on fire, averaging 25 points per game over the last four games.

A pair of 6'2" seniors, Tony Clement and Keith Kenison, give the Mustangs added muscle under the boards. Junior Trent Harrison

comes off the bench to back up the big men.

Sophomore Duane Ball runs the team and broke the school record in

assists this season. Freshman Bryan Padberg has also given Heppner sturdy play off the bench.

Sheridan is led by 6'2" junior Mike Wise and 6'0" senior Jay Cook, who were both West Valley Conference all-stars. Wise plays underneath the basket while Cook is the team's outside threat. Another fine player is junior point guard Jon Martinez, who Eggers describes as "an excellent floor leader."

Other starters for the Spartans are Jon Linscheid, a 6'5" senior and Kevin Hutchins, a 5'9" senior. Coming off the bench is 6'0" junior Rob Schmidt, who is also capable of lighting up the scoreboard.

Fillies again face Amity Warriors

By DANA REID

Only three basketball games stand in the way of the dream that's been dancing in the Heppner Fillies' heads for three years, the class A state championship.

In 1984, the Fillies advanced to the district tournament, but their season ended there after being defeated first by the Sherman County Huskies and then by the Wahtonka Eagles.

In 1985, the Fillies made history at Heppner. Once again they advanced to the district tournament, only this time the lables were turned around.

The Fillies won their first-ever district championship by defeating the Sherman County Huskies, 40-36. The win over the Huskies wasn't just any win, it was the first time in six years that Heppner beat Sherman County.

The Fillies weren't expected to beat the Huskies and they weren't given much of a chance against the much taller Imbler team at the class A regional tournament but they did win, 47-42.

The win over the Panthers led to Heppner's first appearance ever in the state tournament. The Fillies knocked down the Amity Warriors, to be able to play the semi-finals against the Regis Rams.

Regis was a much better team against the Fillies than when they

watched them play the preceding night. As a dream built on grit and hustle came to an end, the Fillies went on to play Corbett for a third-place finish, bringing home Heppner's first-ever state trophy.

In 1986, the Heppner Fillies ended the season with a 19-1 record, only being beaten by a AA Mac-Hi school.

The Fillies headed to the district tournament as the Columbia Basin District 7A first-place team. After shutting down the Sherman County Huskies, Heppner moved on to the regional tournament. By beating the Pine-Eagle Spartans 54-46 in the Class A Regional basketball tournament, March 7, the Fillies earned a chance to prove themselves and to make that dream become reality.

Just under a year ago, the Heppner Fillies were also facing the Amity Warriors in the state tournament.

The Fillies stomped the Warriors 45-29 to advance to the semi-finals. Amity returns all but three players including five seniors, two juniors and two sophomores.

The Fillies and the Warriors will be pretty evenly matched as far as height is concerned. Both teams average 5'5" players.

Out of the nine Warriors returning some are very capable according to Rover.

Extension would suffer under proposed '87 budget

Under President Reagan's proposed 1987 budget, funds for extension service would be cut by 59 percent, according to figures from the Oregon State University in Corvallis.

Local impact of the cuts is unclear, but the extension service would lose 30 profession positions state-wide, according to Fred Lundin, Morrow County Extension Agent.

Lundin said extension services that are not related to agriculture production are in the most jeopardy

of being cut, and "these needs (production) will be taken care of before Home economics, 4-H, etc.," he said.

Oregon Extension has a total budget of \$16 million, and under the proposed budget would lose about \$2 million.

About 25 percent of the Oregon extension budget is federal, said Lundin, and the rest is state and county funding.

The president's budget is not final however, and will need to be passed by the Congress, said Lundin.

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