

SF Examiner

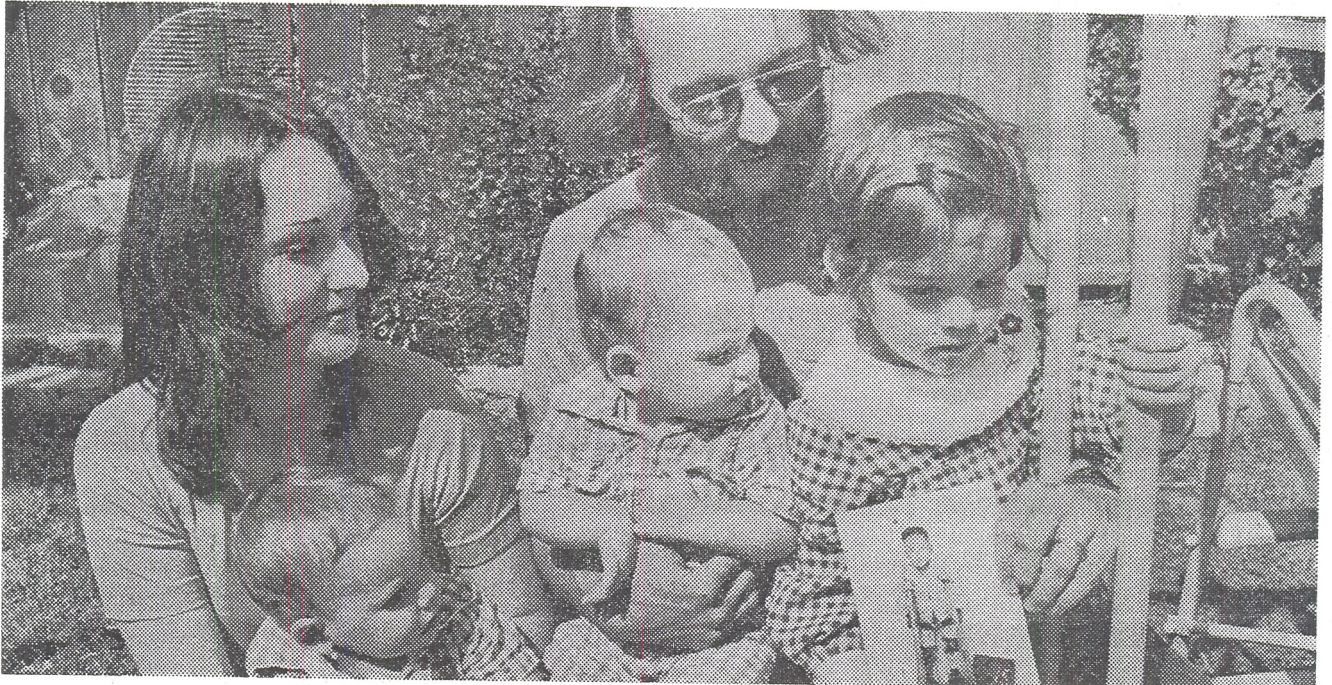
MAY 18 1975

Lost orphans

**Crippled
Vietnamese
boy should
be with
his new
parents in
Fremont now,
but he's
missing
somewhere
in the U.S.**



Nguyen van Phong



Mr. and Mrs. James Jones with twins, Sarah and Katy, and Emilee

—Examiner photo by Seymour Snaer

By Alan Cline

Had the Communists delayed their move into Saigon a few days, chances are Nguyen Van Phong, a black Vietnamese crippled by polio, would be one of the Jones boys, big brother to three little girls in Fremont.

An 8-year-old would have joined a Hayward family with four children and another child without disability would have joined a second Hayward family that already has six adopted children.

The three were among 14 boys set for adoption early in the year through the Kuan Yin Foundation of Burlington, Canada, a Toronto suburb.

But the chaos of an ending war disrupted everything. Canadian surgeon Dr. Robert Ferrie flew into Saigon in April to pick up the 14, but he arrived too late.

He now says he learned the children were taken from an orphanage and flown to the United States aboard an Air Force plane. Their departure was supervised, he says he has

learned, by the Catholic Relief Service.

And now neither Ferrie nor the parents can find out where the children are. One priest verifies they left Saigon. Another says he is certain they were flown to the East Coast.

CRS officials refuse to divulge any information. A New York attorney has been hired by the parents and the foundation.

(Calls by The Examiner to CRS in New York and its parent organization, Catholic Social Services in Washington, drew a blank. Officials were reported visiting refugee camps in the South.)

"We have unconfirmed reports that the Catholic agency has placed the children," attorney Leon Rosen said in a telephone interview. "But every inquiry has met with resistance. A veil of secrecy has been dropped over the affair."

Most of the 14 had black fathers. Seven are polio victims. All are abandoned children in the hard-to-place older category.

But Dr. Ferrie had arranged for adoptions, working through a U.S.-recognized children's adoption agency based in Denver.

The adopting parents had been investigated by the proper agencies. They had been sent pictures and background information on the youngsters.

Mrs. Marilyn Jones calls Nguyen Van Phong her son, and has spent more than \$500 in telephone calls trying to find the 5-year-old.

"We worry about him," she said. "Somebody, someplace has to know where he is."

Mrs. Jones and her husband, James, had been planning to adopt several years ago when she became pregnant. Now she has twins Sarah and Katie, 14½ months, along with Emilee, 3½. She feels she can raise a boy whose one leg is about 4 inches shorter than the other.

Jones is a \$14,000 machine tender who also attends college full time.

Les Marquis teaches Latin at Hayward High School. He and his wife, Carol, have four children (one adopted), and they figured they could handle another. They had signed up for an 8-year-old, also a polio victim.

Marquis said attempts to obtain information through government and private agencies failed and it depressed him to think that so few people cared.

"I'm not out to get anyone," he added.

He feels that he and the other families were forced into legal action to find the children they had been seeking for at least two months.

Mr. and Mrs. Pedro Castillo of Hayward already have six adopted children and felt they could handle a seventh. They signed up for a non-handicapped 6 year old.

She says that if the Catholic Relief Service has placed the children, it was a spur of the moment action, something not in the best interest of the children.