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KINGS MOUNTAIN, NORTH CAROLINA

THURSDAY, JULY 5, 1984

FREEDOM

Kamphone Sonvichit Gets American Citizenship

America's birthday celebration this Fourth of July was a big day for Laotian-born Kamphone Sonvichit, 37.

"Kam", as he is affectionately called by the Kings Mountain friends he has learned to love in the past nine years in this community, celebrated his first Independence Day Wednesday as an American citizen.

He received his American citizenship papers in U.S. District Court Friday in Charlotte.

This week he received his own U.S. flag from the Colonel Frederick Hambright Chapter DAR and the Stars and Stripes fly proudly today over the home of Kam and Somchanh Sonvichit and their son, Sompot.

Adding to his pride in his country this week, Kam also registered to vote as an American citizen and says he will cast his very first vote in the U.S. presidential race this November.

Bethware Registrar Hilda Goforth registered Kam, who will vote in the West Kings Mountain precinct. Mrs. W.T. Weire made the flag presentation on behalf of the DAR. Mrs. Weire, Mrs. Goforth, Mrs. Eugene Roberts and Mrs. John Morgan attended the special Naturalization ceremonies in Charlotte where 95 people became first time citizens of the U.S.A. and took their oaths in impressive swearing-in ceremonies before a U.S. District Judge and then stood together and proudly sang "America The Beautiful."

Kam said that members of the Colonel Frederick Hambright Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, had supported him in his efforts to become a U.S. citizen. According to Kam, there was a lot of paper work and two pages full of test questions, testing him on oral questions.

What does his American citizenship mean to Kam, a refugee from Laos?

The versatile young man, who speaks five languages fluently, can tell you in one word: freedom. Kam fled his country during the communist-takeover through the aid of an American friend at the U.S. Embassy, where Kam worked as a translator. He then repaid that friend's help by saving his life when the communists tried to kill him. He identified his good friend as Frank Welsh, son of Nena Putnam Nebel of Charlotte, formerly of Kings Mountain. It was through the support of the First Presbyterian Church that Kam came to Kings Mountain and in the last nine years Kam has helped many more Laotians to settle in Kings Mountain and other parts of North Carolina. Highly respected by the Laotian community on the Eastern coast of America, Kam helped at least eight families to locate here as well as other immigrants to other sections of the state. He speaks, French, English, Laos, Thai, Burmese, Vietnamese and Cambodian languages but likes English best of all. After his escape from the communists, he also worked at the U.S. Embassy as a translator before immigrating to this country.

Freedom of worship is another freedom Kam enjoys and on Dec. 22, 1975 he came to Kings Mountain and joined the First Presbyterian Church July 11, 1978. His wife and son are also members of the church. Kam's sister was married in the First Presbyterian church in both a Christian and Laotian ceremony.

The Biblical Story of Ruth was recounted by officials of the Court of Naturalization Friday as Kam and other immigrants from as far away as Pakistan, China, Laos, Mexico, Canada and other countries stood to receive their U.S. citizenship papers. Kam said the service was most impressive and said he could identify with Ruth, the Moabitess, who said, "Entreat me not to leave thee, nor to return from following thee, for whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou

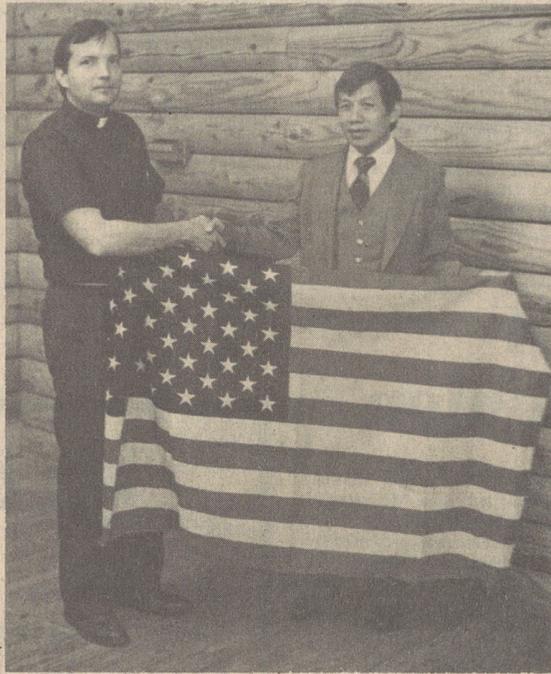


Photo by Gary Stewart
CELEBRATES CITIZENSHIP-Kamphone Sonvichit, right, is presented his own American flag from his pastor, Rev. Eric Faust, minister of First Presbyterian Church, from Colonel Frederick Hambright Chapter DAR. Kam celebrates his first Independence Day this July 4th as an American citizen.

lodgest, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people and your God my God."

Kam probably can tell you more about our U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights than most citizens of government today. He has worked hard to earn his citizenship but he says he will work even harder now in celebrating his freedom and his love of God and country.

Call it flag waving if you will, but at least once a year we have every right to wave the red, white and blue and be proud of what we have accomplished here in just over 200 years.

Our annual July 4th celebration and holiday is a good thing in many ways. It's a time for all of us to reflect on our many blessings and what our forefathers achieved in the revolution against the British monarchy.

In a time beset with wars and rumors of wars in many places throughout a troubled world, we are blessed with the fact that the last time our national capitol was attacked by a foreign power was in 1814.

America is the greatest, so states Kamphone Sonvichit, one of the America's Proudest citizens this Fourth of July.

Board Backs Lake Authority

The city board of commissioners at a special meeting Friday at noon unanimously backed the KM Lake Authority in rules and regulations governing the city-owned John Henry Moss Lake.

Burford Cline, a lake front property owner who sold the lake front property to the city March 10, 1971, representing a dozen residents of Clinestead Sub-Division, protested strongly what he called "threatening and strong arm tactics" on the part of Philip Witherspoon, Lake Authority officer.

Cline says letters received by the 12 property owners last week state that the Lake Authority will tear down piers on John Henry Moss Lake "without further warning" if the property owners fail to pay a land leasing fee. According to Cline, he and the other residents of Clinestead Sub-Division already have an easement for the city's approximately eight foot strip of land along the lake front. The easement was included, according to Cline, in a deed restriction made at the time Cline transferred the lake front property to the city.

According to Cline, his interpretation of a court judgment handed down a month ago by Judge Kenneth A. Griffin gives him and other property owners water rights, meaning they may have piers without paying annual lease fees for an easement, Cline said. He said he is willing to pay the annual ramp fee but that he does not feel that he and other Clinestead residents should have to pay the annual leasing fee. Cline said he had asked about those rights at the time of the property deals but couldn't get a direct answer from the mayor.

Controversy has continued over the rights which were guaranteed to Cline and to the property owners he had sold property on Clinestead. "A deal is a deal", Cline maintains.

However, according to Assistant City Attorney Mickey Corry, the recent court judgment did not address the question of piers. The judgment states that the city cannot obstruct the property owners in Clinestead from going to and from the water's edge. They have the right just to cross the eight foot strip to city owned land, according to the attorney. Corry says the property owners have no right to build on the land or even to cut grass there.

After about 45 minutes of discussion, the board voted to reaffirm the court's decision.

This action means that the Authority will continue to demand the leasing fee and will tear down the piers belonging to

property owners who do not comply. About 12 of the Clinestead Sub-Division owners own piers and some have already paid the \$125 annual leasing fee.

The city has never torn down a pier at Moss Lake.

In other actions: Mayor John Moss announced that the city is in process of collecting information from dredging contractors for dredging at Moss Lake.

The board authorized E.O. Studios to film at Moss Lake for two or three nights between July 16-28.

The board set July 9 and Aug. 13 as the meeting dates for the summer and dispensed with the special fourth Monday night meetings so that members of the various recently-appointed special committees can meet and formulate plans.

Members of the Board and Mayor received a letter from Charles T. Carpenter, Jr., Real Estate Broker, inviting them to

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Problem Should Be Solved

City officials were flushing 65 water hydrants and calling on citizens to drain their hot water tanks and throw out old ice cubes from the refrigerators this week in an effort to eliminate the "swampy" taste in the water supply.

By today, the taste of the water should be much improved.

That's the promise of city water department official Walt Ollis and Mayor John Henry Moss.

According to the Mayor and Ollis, Kings Mountain is not the only municipality experiencing the odor and bad taste in the water this summer. At least 12 locations in the state have had considerable problems.

Since the city is not pumping as much water this week, since most industry is shut down for the week of the Fourth, Ollis thinks that by week end Moss Lake should be "settled down" and if good weather continues Kings Mountain water should be about back to normal.

"What makes it so inconvenient to citizens is that we have always had such good drinking water here and all of a sudden this problem occurs," said Ollis, who said that city and state officials have worked diligently with the health department to remedy the situation.

Expansion Discussed

An addition to the present Town Hall was projected at Monday's Town Board meeting in Grover and estimates on costs are to be presented at the next board meeting of commissioners.

The building of a new Town Hall came up again when members pointed out the need for a storage room to house water and sewer pipes and supplies once the city sewer project is completed a year from now.

Commissioner Grady Ross said a community room is needed also for senior citizens to hold

meetings and for any other non-denominational get-togethers of citizens. "Kings Mountain has the Depot Center and Shelby has provided a place for meetings but we don't have a thing for them in Grover," he said.

The town also needs a place to store Christmas decorations and the Board approved purchase of 10 more hanging decorations and a garland and lights for the front of City Hall at a cost of \$1500.

Mayor Bill McCarter pointed out that the present Town Hall,

built as a fire station, has a meeting room of only 28x14 feet with a small storage area off the main meeting room which serves also as the mayor's office.

Five years ago the board drew up plans for a facility which would have cost then about \$40,000, said McCarter. Commissioners estimate the same construction today will amount to over \$100,000.

"The Board got scared off somehow," said McCarter, "But we still need the building."

Comm. Roland Queen made

the motion that estimates be given for both a complete building as well as an addition to the present town hall for a storage building.

Comm. Grady Ross seconded and reiterated his desire to see Grover have a Town Meeting Room which all its citizens could use for various functions. McCarter said a building with a small warehouse, office space, and a meeting room would be ideal.

In other actions, the board approved the purchase of the additional Christmas decorations, bringing to 39 the number of decorations the city will install on Carolina Avenue for this year's Christmas parade and festivities, and voted to pay \$6,592.66 for engineering contracts to John Edwards for the sewer project. A total of \$14,000 is allotted for engineering services for the project, said McCarter.

The monthly police report was given and included a number of what city policemen called "domestic" incidents, blamed they said on "hot weather when tempers flare more," and heard a number of citizen complaints about water drainage problems.

After an executive session, the board accepted the resignation of Jerry Kates, who has served as Grover's second policeman since Sept. 1982. Kates is joining the Kings Mountain Police Department as a patrolman.

Orangrel Jolly

Outstanding Senior Citizen

Volunteering is a labor of love for Orangrel B. (Mrs. Clarence L.) Jolly, who will be honored by Governor Hunt as an outstanding senior citizen volunteer from Cleveland County September 13th at 8 p.m. in Asheville's First Baptist Church.

Mrs. Jolly has been a volunteer all her life in church and community-related activities, but she is being honored on nomination by the Senior Citizens Center for her service as a senior citizen volunteer at the Senior Center and at KM Convalescent Center where Mrs. Jolly went back to work parttime after her retirement from Margrace Mills office. She worked parttime eight years at KM Convalescent Center and volunteered there for eight years.



ORANGREL B. JOLLY

Mrs. Teresa Melton, director of the KM Senior Citizen Center, wrote in her nomination to the Governor: "Mrs. Jolly shares her many talents in all areas of the community. With Kings Mountain Aging she has and is presently volunteering to help coordinate commodity foods programs, assists the newsletter staff and works as an office assistant, class leader and coordinator, and helps with special events such as health fairs, Christmas floats and parties for holidays. She also volunteers many hours as a friendly visitor.

"In addition to time shared at Kings Mountain Aging, she also is very active in the American Legion Auxiliary volunteer pro-

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Pediatrician Begins Practice Here Aug. 1

Dr. Martin Stallings will open a practice in general pediatrics on August 1, at 108 Edgemont Drive. Dr. Stallings comes to Kings Mountain from Raleigh, where he has been in practice for 10 years.

He received his B.S. Degree from the University of Alabama and his Medical Degree from the University of Alabama Medical Center at Birmingham. His residency in pediatric training was done at the Children's Hospital at Birmingham. He was the chief resident his senior year. He served in the United States Air Force for a period of two years and obtained the rank of Major. Dr. Stallings is certified by the American Board of Pediatrics.

Beginning July 9, advance appointments may be made with Dr. Stallings, until his office opens August 1, by calling Kings Mountain Hospital, 739-3601,



DR. MARTIN STALLINGS

Extension 424, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 9:30-11:30 a.m. and 2:30-4:30 p.m.