

Dr. Pat Smith's NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER, 1973

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KONTUM CENTER HOURS: 9 TO 5 MONDAY-FRIDAY (206) 622-8341

By PATRICIA M. SMITH, M.D.

I left Kontum last July 31 with mixed feelings: happy to be rejoining my two sons, Det and Wir, but very sorry to be leaving all my friends in Kontum. Linda Jani, the friend who had been caring for the boys in Illinois, had a new baby in June, and was finding it difficult to continue the care of my two children as well. And I was finding it more and more difficult to remain apart from my children. I could not consider having the boys with me in Viet Nam until such time as they would be United States citizens, given the unstable political situation in that country. So, the only solution to the problem seemed to be for me to live with the children in the United States for a time.

This solution was made possible by the presence of two physicians at the hospital in Kontum: Dr. Edric Baker, from New Zealand, and Dr. George Pradhan, from India. Both have promised a year's service to the hospital, and both are dedicated men and fine doctors. In addition, we have Bill Rose, an extremely able person, with some six years' experience in social work in Kontum Province, as our hospital administrator; John Havican, an ex-Seabee, in charge of construction and repair work; and Marion Brown, a New Zealand nurse with two years experience in Quinhon, Viet Nam, in charge of nursing service. With this array of talent, the hospital remains functioning to full capacity in my absence.

With the return of the hospital to its original site, last July 5, new projects to further improve patient care have become feasible, if we can find the funds for them. Security is good in the neighborhood of the hospital now, and we have adequate terrain to accomplish needed construction and development. We were able to accomplish the bulk of the repairs made necessary to the hospital by last year's offensive at a cost which was a fraction of the U.S. engineer's estimate, thanks to the direction of John Havican and Bill Rose, plus the hiring of labor from the large refugee population of Kontum.

However, further essential things remain to be done.

Our previous workshop building is still a shambles, and requires extensive repair before it can be used at all. Our water system is still unusable, due to the theft of fixtures and pipe, plus the contamination of our wells. This is our highest priority item at the moment, although five years of bucketing all our water from the river at the schoolhouse in Kontum

City have made us more tolerant of that inconvenience than any U.S. hospital would find possible.

Also on the agenda, as soon as funds can be found, are: new hospital wards (the patients are literally packed into the available space at present); employe housing near the hospital; a rehabilitation center to make prostheses and braces for amputees and paraplegics; and a scholarship program to aid talented young Montagnards from the area to continue their education, with the hope of getting fully qualified nurses and even doctors from this group in the future.

During my time in the States, I plan to spend as much time as possible in fund-raising activities for the hospital. The desperate need of the people in Kontum is made even more real to me when I am here in Seattle—the contrast is almost unbelievable.

Rising food prices are termed a crisis in the United States. In spite of fantastic increases in meat prices, for how many people here is meat such a luxury that any kind can only be enjoyed four or five times a year? This is the norm for the Montagnards of Kontum. And other high protein foods, such as eggs or fish, are in the same category. Nearly 100% of the family income, for those families lucky enough to have an income, is used to provide a subsistence diet of rice, salt, and a few greens. For the majority of the people of Kontum Province, displaced because of the war, and with no land, possessions, or income, subsistence is an inadequate rice ration doled out by the government.

Not all of my time can be spent on fund-raising activities, however. The boys, now nearly seven and four and a half years old, occupy a considerable amount of my time. They are thriving here in the United States—have both grown amazingly taller and heavier, are speaking excellent English, and have become thoroughly Americanized. Also, I will soon have to find some gainful employment, since the children and I must continue to eat!

I expect to be in the United States until next June. As of June 1, 1974, the boys automatically become eligible for citizenship, and, as soon as the formalities are completed, we shall be on our way back to Kontum. I hope during the next nine months to be able to renew old acquaintances, and to be able to thank all of you who have continued to support the work in Kontum.

Dr. Pat Smith, wearing Montagnard dress and surrounded by Montagnard children, outside Minh-Quy Hospital at her going-away party in late July.



Dr. Pat Smith is ready for speaking engagements. They may be arranged by phoning the office, 622-8341.

MINH-QUY HOSPITAL: *Still on the Move*

By THE HOSPITAL STAFF

Minh-Quy Hospital passed two important milestones this year. The hospital held its tenth anniversary celebration May 31, commemorating its inauguration on Ascension Thursday of May 1963. A rice-wine festival was staged which was without doubt one of the most cosmopolitan social events ever held in Kontum Province. Guests included the Province Chief and the Commanding Officer of the 23rd ARVN Division, the Kontum detachment of the International Commission for Control and Supervision, USAID staff from Kontum and Nha Trang, local Vietnamese and French priests, and a number of dignitaries from nearby Montagnard villages.

Counting the Minh Quy foreign staff and the ICCS team there were representatives from Vietnam and the United States, France, New Zealand, Canada, Indonesia, Poland and Hungary. Ceremonies began with the arrival of the Province Chief and Dr. Pat Smith; after a brief address in Bahar and English by Dr. Smith (translated into Vietnamese by Dr. Edric Baker), the first of the wine-jugs were opened and there was a program of Montagnard music and dancing. Rice-wine flowed freely and there were mounds of food provided by the Sisters of the Miraculous Medal, and as the afternoon progressed there was a fine mingling of races, nationalities, and language groups.

Successful as the anniversary celebration may have been as a commemoration of the past, it had an even deeper significance in terms of Minh-Quy's present and future. Hundreds attended, and a remarkable degree of community support was demonstrated. Relations were strengthened with provincial officials as well as with the local Montagnard community—in fact our neighbors from Kon Monay Xolam village made a volunteer project of sprucing up the hospital grounds for an event they considered to be a welcome-home party as much as an anniversary.

Even more impressive was the enthusiasm of our own Montagnard staff. They showed themselves eager for the day when the Kon Monay hospital compound could be permanently re-occupied—whereas several months earlier there had been apprehension about leaving the cramped and cluttered downtown site which, inefficient as it was as a treatment

center, was securely located within the Kontum city limits. (Fortunately the Kon Monay area has been relatively quiet and peaceful of late, although fighting between government and anti-government forces continues less than ten miles to the west of Kontum City.)

Preparations for the return to Kon Monay Xolam had begun back in February, shortly after the arrival of John Havican, a former Seabee who took charge of reconstruction and restoration at the old hospital site. Progress for the first few months was slow but steady—in the interests of economy we relied to the maximum extent on our own Montagnard workers. An additional crew of carpenters was engaged in April; this group consisted of Montagnards from a village fifteen miles north of Kontum, who had managed to escape after their entire district fell to the NVA/VC during the 1972 offensive.

The date for beginning the transfer to Kon Monay had to be carefully chosen: we wanted to make the move at the earliest opportunity, hopefully before the summer monsoons, yet not before the necessary minimum of shelter and utilities for staff and patients had been established. There was a last-minute flurry of activity to get the essential wiring installed and generators set up, and on the morning of July 5 the operation began.

Three heavy-duty trucks were borrowed to supplement our own pair of 3/4-ton ambulances; essential medical supplies were sent out on the morning of the first day, followed by bed-bound patients and later the "walking wounded".

In the days that followed a tremendous volume of food, medicines, furniture and equipment—an accumulation from five years' residence at the downtown hospital site—was convoyed along the two-mile road to Kon Monay Xolam, and those at the receiving-and-sorting end were hard-pressed to keep abreast of the incoming truckloads.

A number of anticipated and unanticipated problems arose during the operation. There were flaws in the electric system during the first few days which were barely corrected in time to enable emergency surgery (Minh Quy still receives a number of civilian war casualties, many of whom are victims of mines and accidents with loose ammunition). Heavy rains

The annual Pennies for Pat drive is under way and will continue through January. Cans are available at the KHF office and volunteers are needed to place them before the public. Please call Mrs. Badders at 622-8341.



Seated among the Montagnards were William Rose, left, the hospital administrator, and John Havican, ex-Seabee, who is in charge of hospital construction and maintenance. In front of Rose is his stepson, Wang.

occurred during the initial week of the move, leaving the hospital compound a quagmire and rendering the dirt road to Kon Monay impassable except for trucks and jeeps. For a period it seemed manpower and warehousing resources would be inadequate to the task of sorting and stocking the huge piles of equipment deposited about the grounds. But by working long hours without regard to inclement weather the hospital staff was able to cope, and despite some hectic moments the long-awaited transfer to Kon Monay Xolam was successfully accomplished.

Several considerable benefits have resulted from the transfer: cleaner and more spacious wards and grounds, better natural illumination (but our electric system is still only partly operational as we lack an adequate generator), vastly improved storage and sanitary facilities, a notable uplift in staff morale despite the extra burdens that were laid upon workers at all levels at the height of the transition period.

There have been drawbacks, too. An additional hardship is imposed on outpatients who must reach the hospital on their own devices. The added distance also makes the hospital less accessible to the population at Marilou refugee camp south of Kontum City, and we therefore plan regular mobile clinics.

Another factor of crucial importance is the rise in operating costs: a larger staff is required to maintain the complex of buildings and facilities at our new location, also our fuel consumption has skyrocketed due to the added demand for electricity and transportation.

But we are confident of our ability to find resources to cope with the additional costs. The Montagnard community of Kontum needs help more than ever in these troublous times; despite the uncertain political outlook for the Central Highlands we feel duty-bound to pursue a policy of improvement and development rather than reducing our scale of operations, and are hopeful of increased support from our backers in the United States and elsewhere during the coming months.

The hospital transfer having been accomplished, with staff and patients being fairly well settled into the new environment, Dr. Pat Smith left Kontum for a furlough in the United States at the beginning of August. In a series of staff meetings

before Dr. Smith's departure future prospects and policies were discussed. There was an over-riding consensus among the international staff that training of Montagnard employees should be re-emphasized, to enable them eventually to assume top-level medical and administrative responsibilities at Minh Quy. Physical development of the hospital will continue as well, and we have outlined an agenda of projects for the remainder of 1973 and 1974. (Details, page 4.)

During Dr. Smith's absence the acting Medical Director will be Dr. Edric Baker, 31, a former member of the New Zealand Surgical Team in Quinhon who has worked at Minh Quy since last November, after a previous term that was interrupted by the 1972 offensive.

Dr. George Pradhan, a native of India who has served at various hospitals in Vietnam since 1968 under the auspices of Asia Christian Service, joined the Minh Quy staff in July and will share medical responsibilities with Dr. Baker.

Miss Marion Brown, another former member of the New Zealand Surgical Team, came to Minh Quy as nursing supervisor in May after completing a tour of duty in Quinhon.

John Havican, 23, who served previously in Vietnam with the Seabees and later worked as a volunteer at the Evangelical Clinic in Nha Trang, has been in charge of construction and maintenance since January.

Administration is being handled by William Rose, 40, who joined the Minh Quy staff in April after six years as a social worker with Vietnam Christian Service.

Invaluable assistance has been given during our transition period by three American medical workers who came to Minh Quy as short-term volunteers: Barbara Svitlik, a nurse employed by the International Rescue Committee in Saigon, who spent her furlough period at Minh Quy; and Jim Parker and Loren Cummons, pre-medical students from Seattle University and University of Oregon respectively, who came to the hospital on their own resources for a working vacation in Kontum.

Without the help of local agencies such as Catholic Relief Services, CARE, and the Kontum Catholic Mission to supplement the efforts of our own staff, the relocation to Kon Monay Xolam would have been well-nigh impossible; but Minh Quy Hospital is back home now, and we look forward to the future with confidence.



"Drinking the jar" of rice wine at the hospital staff party. From left: Jim Parker, Seattle University pre-medical student, and Loren Cummons of the University of Oregon, who both worked all summer as volunteers; Dr. George Pradhan, physician from India, and Barbara Svitlik, nurse, another volunteer.

Development News

By Tim Harn, President KHF

In Philadelphia . . .

Several years ago Frank Kearns was transferred by the Boeing Company to its Vertol plant in Philadelphia. Frank had been a regular supporter of Dr. Pat's and continued his giving to KHF from his new address. When one of his fellow employees left Vertol, Frank inherited his small coffee biz which operates on the honor system. Frank added hot soup and a couple of other items to the little "serve yourself" business and after costs sends all profits to KHF—over \$400 a year. Thanks to Frank and all his patrons for their generous support.

In Milwaukee . . .

Jim Doyle and his crew (family and friends) have been meeting every Sunday p.m. for over a decade now counting all the dollars which come from the hearts and pocketbooks of Milwaukeeans who support the hospital through the Joan Blonien Club in that city. Joan was one of the two original RN's at Kontum who gave seven years' service to the Montagnard patients. The Milwaukee club has been the major contributor to the hospital for over ten years. We are grateful for the dedication of the Doyle volunteers and all they have given over the years. May the Sunday evenings continue to fill their homes and hearts with rewards of satisfaction and happiness.

In Seattle . . .

A recent communique from Kontum from Hospital Administrator Bill Rose spells out the \$ needs for hospital operations and repairs and maintenance. The KHF Board is moving quickly to increase donor support. The 30% increase predicted earlier over last year has not materialized. Board plans are to step up the direct mail campaign to all former donors asking every reader to submit the name of one new prospect for the fund.

A new self-addressed return envelope has been designed to encourage giving. Please put it to good use or pass it along to a new contributor.

In Kontum . . .

Hospital Administrator Bill Rose also outlines several projects for the coming year and/or as funds permit. One of them may strike your fancy . . .

| | |
|---|-------------|
| • Repair of the workshop area vandalized during 1972 military occupation | \$ 500.00 |
| • Construction of staff housing on hospital grounds | 15,000.00 |
| • Purification of hospital well polluted during military occupation in 1972 and development of a water purification plant | 4,000.00 |
| • Construction of a (1) tuberculosis and a (2) pediatric ward | 20,000.00 |
| • Extend power supply from Kontum City to hospital | 7,500.00 |
| | <hr/> |
| | \$47,000.00 |

In short . . . we need your help, a Montagnard child is depending on it.

MEMORIALS

The following gave in memory of Cora Allen: Julia and Elmer Johnson, Jack A. Cameron, Emma Tanner

Rosa Francois gave in memory of the following: Her mother, Elizabeth Temple, Sister St. Eugene Francois

The following gave in memory of Carol Christenson: Florence Schenk, Margaret Impett, Mildred McDermott, Mrs. Hallie Anderson, Mrs. V. H. Johnson

The Tim Sullivan family gave in memory of Kathleen MacGregor and Willis C. McAbee

Miriam McDonald gave in memory of William Denton

Seattle WOSL gave in memory of Hanna Hanson

Martin and Clara Schnuriger gave in memory of Mrs. Matilda Best Bryson

Rita Chudecke gave in memory of Arvi A. Rahkonen

Mr. and Mrs. George S. Franchini gave in memory of Jane Ernest

Mrs. C. Ruffner gave in memory of her parents

Mrs. Jean Pemerl gave in memory of her mother, Mary Kresling

Kenneth Pavlick gave in memory of Tom Houser

Herbert Hayward, Jr., gave in memory of Della Moore

Mrs. Erval J. Brisson gave in memory of Bill Sommers

Beth Stuart gave in memory of Trevor Lewis

Miss Terry Londos gave in memory of her grandmother, Mrs. John Lindner

Mr. and Mrs. Alvin H. Nilson gave in memory of their son, Alvin "Geri" Nilson

Mrs. Margaret Graham gave in memory of her husband, Robert Louis Graham

Mrs. Joseph Colarossi gave in memory of her husband

Kathleen Dougherty gave in memory of the Most Rev. Joseph P. Dougherty

Mrs. Roy Wood gave in memory of her aunt, Ruby Branstetter

Mrs. Meg Sullivan gave in memory of Paul Pugachoff

Sister Barbara Ann Muttra gave in memory of her mother

OTHER GIFTS

Kenneth Pavlick and Mrs. Frank Pavlick gave in honor of 50th anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Louie Van Ooleham

Mrs. Louis E. Braile gave in honor of her father, Mr. Durham, on Father's Day



Front of Charm



Back of Charm

Please clip and mail the coupon to: Sacajawea Jr. Woman's Club, c/o Mrs. Karet Ellett, 1915 Meridian St., Pasco, Wash. 99301.

I would like to order _____ Dr. Pat Smith charms for charm bracelet at \$4.50 each.

Check one: Gold Silver

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