



TIMES

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Volume 25 Number 7

Seven Lakes, North Carolina 27376

February 5, 2010

Westsidiers speak out on dues increase

by Greg Hankins
Times Editor

"Standing room only" is a tired cliché — but an accurate one when applied to the turnout for the Tuesday, January 26 Seven Lakes West Landowners Association [SLWLA] Board meeting.

A crowd that appeared to exceed 200 filled the Great Room of the West Side Park Community Center to meet Board can-

didates, hear the Board's budget presentation, and offer input on the budget and proposed dues increase.

Budget Presentation

The centerpiece of the meeting was President Ron Shepard's presentation of the proposed Fiscal Year 2010-2011 budget, already approved by the Board and subject to a vote of the membership at the Annu-

al Meeting the third Sunday of March.

Shepard's talk included a Powerpoint presentation which is available for download on the Association's website.

Because a number of different developers were involved in the creation of Seven Lakes West, Shepard said, investment in infrastructure suffered, leaving the Association the responsibility of caring for the "common ele-

ments" owned by the membership. Those include the lake, the dam, the roads, West Side Park and its Community cen-

discovered problems with the corrugated steel culverts that carry rainwater under Longleaf drive and other community roadways. The latter have deteriorated significantly, and, in some areas, may threaten the integrity of the roadway. The Board has identified at least 14 that are significantly deteriorated and must

West Side Landowners Meeting
1/26

ter, four ponds and their dams, the Johnson Point complex, and the front and rear entrance ways.

Shepard walked through those common elements in some detail, noting the recent remediation of Lake Auman dam, including the installation of a weighted dam filter, the on-going work on the pond dams, and recently-

be replaced at a cost of \$15,000 each — or potentially more than \$200,000 in total.

The Board began assembling the Fiscal Year 2010-2011 budget in August, Shepard said, doing its work in work sessions open to the membership. The goals for the budget included limiting oper- (See "Westside," p. 20)

Darr resigns, withdraws

by Laura Douglass
Times Reporter

Neither rain, nor hail, nor sleet, nor snow prevented Talis Management Group, the Raleigh-based firm selected to operate and manage the Seven Lakes Landowners Association [SLLA], from commencing work on schedule. Hitting the ground running, new Community Manager Alina Cochran and Talis President Vince Matal met with the SLLA Board of Directors

and staff during the final weeks of January to begin transition activities.

Cochran and Matal also attended the Open Meeting on Wednesday, January 27 — an unusually brisk and routine affair

Bob Darr, the SLLA Maintenance Supervisor and a candidate for the Board, had resigned his position and withdrawn his (See "SLLA," p. 31)

Seven Lakes Landowners Association Meeting
1/27

with little discussion and few reports, save the surprising but no fanfare announcement that

Pine Forest hits a snag

by Greg Hankins
Times Editor

The 1,800-acre Pine Forest PUD that would stretch from West Pine Middle School to West End hit a snag at the Monday, February 1 Moore County Board of Commissioners meeting.

The Commissioners were expected to set February 15 as the date for a public hearing on rezoning requests developer MHK Ventures has requested. But, when Call to Public Hearing came around on the agenda, Chairman Tim Lea sought input from County Attorney Misty

Leland, who reported that the county had received a water system development agreement from MHK but asked for additional time so that she and County Manager Cary McSwain could "firm up the agreement."

The Board then voted unanimously to table the Call to Public Hearing, a move likely to delay the rezoning approval by at least a month.

The water agreement in question is necessary because Moore County ordinances require developers who plan to tap onto the county water system to secure a certification from Moore Coun-

ty Public Utilities that the county has enough water to meet the needs of the development. Public Utilities Director Dennis Brobst has more than once told the Commissioners that he will not use revenues derived from current water system customers to provide water to a new development. Instead, Brobst looks to developers to fund new sources of water. Making sure that funding is in place requires a water system development agreement between the developer and the county.

MHK Ventures' Bob Hansen (See "Commissioners," p. 32)

Election Time

This issue of The Times offers interviews with Westside Board candidates, and plenty of letters to the editor on the Westside budget. That means we're light on photos, club news, and feature stories. Never fear, they will all return shortly, once we've honored our responsibility to try to keep the voters informed. — GH

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Moore OnStage presents Oklahoma!

After holding open auditions in October, Moore OnStage has been able to assemble an incredible cast that will make you feel like you're watching a Broadway production.

Patrick Wickham, the director, who has been living in New

York for the past 10 years, has cast some of his favorite actors that he has either worked with or taught in his vocal studio.

Moore OnStage is excited to have the two lead characters, Laurey and Curly making their Moore OnStage debut coming all the way from the Big Apple. Jill Ginsberg and Corey Wright both have many professional credits to their names, with their favorite being the international tour of Ivan Jacob's "Phantom of the Opera." Also, both have starred in productions at the famous Fireside Theatre. Wright played in "The Full Monty" at the Papermill Playhouse in New Jersey.

Wickham has also cast Lynda Clark, who played Maria Callas in last year's Moore OnStage in "Master Class."

Another lead character is Michael Jones, who will be step-

ping out of his usual comedic roles to tackle the sinister farmhand, Jud Fry.

All of these actors are supported by an ensemble cast of 30. The 16 piece orchestra will be conducted by Steve Menendez, whose unwavering ear and sense of perfection will make it sound like there are 50 instruments in the pit. And what is a production without fabulous costumes? The costumier is Greg Poplyk, also from New York who has worked on Broadway and across the country and in film as well. He has envisioned this production as it should be in Oklahoma at the turn of the century.

At that time, there weren't gingham dresses or satin ribbons, so you won't want to miss this visual interpretation of this show, if you think this is like the

old movie.

Don't miss this show no matter how many times you've seen the movie or high school or community theater productions. Moore OnStage Oklahoma production will run February 10-14,

at Robert E. Lee Auditorium, Pinecrest High School. Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$15 for students 18 and under and may be reserved (yes all seats are reserved) with a Visa or Mastercard by calling 910-692-7118.

CONTRIBUTORS AND ADVERTISERS

Articles or advertisements submitted to *The Times* should include the name and telephone number of the author. Articles may be dropped off at the *Seven Lakes Times* offices at 4307 Seven Lakes Plaza, mailed to P.O. Box 602, West End, NC 27376, faxed to 888-806-2572, or e-mailed to mail@sevenlaketimes.net.

Our voice telephone number is 910-673-0111.

PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

Issue	Deadline
Feb. 19	Feb. 12
Mar. 5	Feb. 26
Mar. 19	Mar. 12
Apr. 2	Mar. 26
Apr. 16	Apr. 9
Apr. 30	Apr. 23
May 14	May 7
May 28	May 21
June 11	June 4
June 25	June 18
July 9*	July 1*
July 23	July 16
Aug. 6	July 30
Aug. 20	Aug. 13
Sept. 3	Aug. 27
Sept. 17	Sept. 10
Oct. 1	Sept. 24
Oct. 15	Oct. 8
Oct. 29	Oct. 22
Nov. 12	Nov. 5
Nov. 23*	Nov. 18*
Dec. 10	Dec. 3
Dec. 22*	Dec. 16*

*Early publication or deadline due to holiday.

Correction

In the January 22 issue of The Seven Lakes Times, the name of the Lions Club Peace Poster winner from West Pine Middle School was misspelled. The winner is Elijah Cole, and he is in the 8th grade at West Pine Middle School. The Times regrets the error.

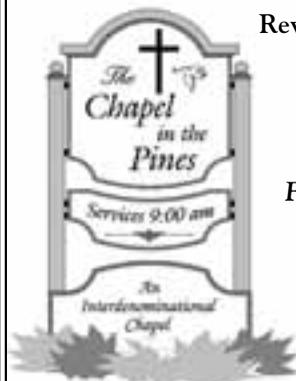


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Seven Lakes Forum: Retirement Communities

The next Seven Lakes Forum is scheduled Thursday, February 18, 4 pm, on the upper level of the West Side Park Community Center. There is no doubt that some day, most if not all human beings on earth will reach a point in their lives when either physically, mentally, socially, or emotionally, they are unable to perform those associated tasks...in a competent manner. Considerable contemplation and planning appear to be necessary in order to make decisions relat-

ed to later-life, which are individualized and personally appropriate.

Ellen McFarland, from St. Joseph of the Pines, will examine the changing profile of today's 'consumer' and provide an overview of Continuing Care Retirement Communities: Industry Trends for the New Generation of Consumers. All women and men from Seven Lakes, and their guests, are invited to attend. For further information, please contact Bill Mamel (673-8970).

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Commissioners look to cut taxes next year

by Laura Douglass
Times Reporter

Moore County's Board of Commissioners are looking to cut county spending two-to-five percent and county taxes by a penny or two. That was the consensus reached at the end of a two-day planning retreat held on January 27 and 28 at the county's Senior Enrichment Center.

The Commissioners heard presentations on everything from macroeconomics to tourism; most of the presentations delivered by county staff and outside experts are available for download in the Board of Commissioners area on the county website.

At the January 28 meeting, Commissioner Jimmy Melton recommended striving for the maximum suggested reduction — five percent with a two cent tax cut.

"The way the economy is right now and what we are dealing with, the county is in good financial shape," said Melton. "We owe it to taxpayers to slow our pace and get in line with times."

Commissioner Nick Picerno agreed that setting goals was important but said he did not want to reach the point of hurting [county] employee morale

or the system.

"The majority of the budget are schools and salaries, so it's something we have to look real hard at," said Picerno.

Commissioners Larry Caddell and Cindy Morgan also expressed concern that the proposed tax cut, along with spending reductions, would be difficult with additional anticipated state budget cuts.

"That five percent cut could actually equal about a fifteen percent cut," warned County Manager Cary McSwain. "We are mandated by the state to do some things. We have little control over the budget but have the responsibility to do it."

McSwain estimated that discretionary spending accounts for thirty-five to forty percent of a Fiscal Year 2011 budget expected to total more than \$110,000.

However, Moore County has a distinct financial advantage over almost every other county in the state.

"We have been proactive and are financially sound," said Chairman Tim Lea. "We're moving projects forward — the schools are opening two new buildings, Sandhills Community College [SCC] is opening a new building, and the county is in the process of three new buildings."

Lea continued, "This is a testament of this Board that we have this kind of money to move forward; that said, this is not going to be a good year and potentially the next will be no better."

FY2011 Budget

Less sales tax and interest earned, along with state revenues withheld will combine for an estimated revenue loss of \$1.3 million, estimated Lisa Hughes, the Moore County Director of Financial Services.

"Expenditures will be monitored and limited to revenues realized — we will make sure we don't spend more than we bring in," said Hughes.

The draft Fiscal Year 2011 Budget stands at \$111,635,956 including both governmental and enterprise funds.

Reporting on the FY2010 budget, Hughes said anticipated revenue losses stand at \$203,637 with an estimated expenditure gain of \$409,770 for a net impact this year of minus \$613,407.

"The bottom line is to keep everything level — we already have a hole so we will have to cut the budget just to fill [anticipated losses]," said McSwain.

Selling Methane Gas

It seems the old Moore County landfill could actually turn out to be a money-maker — at least for the next few years. Closed in 1993, the landfill was recently found in non-compliance during a routine inspection of air and groundwater. Tests showed a release of approximately 214 scfm [standard cubic feet per minute] of methane — a potentially harvestable product.

During a presentation to the Moore County Board of Commissioners during their planning retreat, Public Works Engineer Lex Kelly estimated the landfill's emitted gas is fifty percent methane along with carbon dioxide and other minor gases. He explained that methane gas naturally deteriorates and that there is only a ten year window left when the gas could be harvested — with the highest spike already passed.

"Methane could be a significant source of revenue and goes a long way towards non-compliance [remediation]."

Kelly said to harvest the methane, wells must be installed on each acre of landfill. Once the gas is piped to a central collection point, the county could opt to burn it off for carbon credits or

to generate electricity. Kelly presented options for both alternatives.

Presently carbon credits are worth \$6 each; however, that price is anticipated to increase. Kelly estimated at 214 scfm, the landfill could produce 19,121 credits per year.

Progress Energy has expressed interest in purchasing methane-generated electricity, Kelly told the Board. At 214 scfm, the landfill could potentially generate 5 million KWH per year, for an anticipated income the first year of \$199,911.

Kelly recommended the carbon credit option and the North Carolina-based firm, Green Energy Partners. At no cost to the county, Green Energy would install the well system. First year income was estimated at \$95,000, with the county receiving fifty percent of the carbon credit purchases.

"When you show me a system that generates funds for the county and can be set up with no liability to county, I say why not? It's a no brainer," said Commissioner Nick Picerno.

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County Listings



Master Beekeeper sets Kiwanians a-buzz

by Frank Krohn
Seven Lakes Kiwanis

Ellis Hardison is a Beekeeper, something he has had almost a lifelong association with. Hardison spoke to the Seven Lakes Kiwanis on Tuesday, January 5 about his work with bees, a most interesting subject.

Hardison lives in Carthage, and although retired, is still involved with the study and keeping of bees. He has worked in fifteen countries around the world, studying and developing bee populations.

Bees are an absolute necessity to the growth of virtually any

food crop. Without the cross-pollination they provide, plants would not produce fruit. To this end, migrant beekeepers in the USA move their colonies of bees all around the country in order to properly pollinate crops as the season is appropriate.

This is not an easy job as the life of a worker bee is only about 30 days, and the existence of the colony is dependent upon those bees keeping the Queen happy and fertilized. The Queen lays about 2,000 eggs per day, so keeping her happy is a full time job.

A Queen bee lives 3-4 years,

and during that time will lay many eggs destined to be Queens and take her place. The Queen, however, kills off all of those bees as they hatch until she, herself, is about to die. Somehow, she allows one of the newly hatched "Queens" to survive and take her place in the hive,

Interestingly, the NC Bee Association is the largest in the United States.

The Seven Lakes Kiwanis meets every Tuesday at noon at the Seven Lakes Country Club, and cordially invites any visitor to its meetings.



Beekeeper Ellis Hardison

In memory of . . .

Elizabeth (Beth/Liz) Lynn McCain, daughter of Bud and Do Shaver of Seven Lakes North died at St. Francis Hospital, Columbus, GA Saturday, January 16.

She was born in Blaine, Minnesota, the youngest of Bud and Carroll Shaver's five children. She had served in the US Army; graduated from Sandhills Community College as an LPN, she had worked at Womack Army Hospital, in North Caroli-

na and was currently employed at Fort Benning's Martin Army Community Hospital.

She is survived by her three sons Wade Schuette, Sgt Mike McCain and Spc4 Joe McCain, and three grandchildren. Her surviving siblings include Kathy Amrom, Philadelphia, PA; Susan Davis, Carlisle, IA; Bud Shaver III, Hudson, WI; and Claudia Colleran, Burnsville, MN.

A memorial service was held at North-Highland Church

Assembly of God on Sunday, January 17.

Anyone wishing to see Beth's Memorial Service may do so by going on line to her church's website: www.North-Highland.org click on Sunday services for Elizabeth McCain's Memorial Service.

Memorial donations may be directed to North-Highland Church, 7300 Whittlesey Blvd, Columbus, GA 31909.

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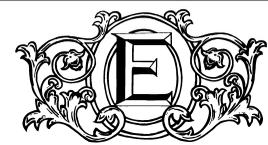
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Winery's a winner! Entrepreneur of the Year

A first for a Seven Lakes-based business, Sandhills Winery was presented the 'Entrepreneur of the Year' award by the Moore County Chamber of Commerce at its 43rd Annual Banquet.

Owners Bob and Leslie Rose of Seven Lakes South said they were thrilled to win and put Seven Lakes on the map.

"We are so proud and we couldn't have done it without all of our great customers — they helped make it happen. With-

out the community's support we wouldn't be where we are today," said Leslie.

The announcement was made at the Chambers forty-third annual Awards Banquet.

Aging Outreach Services, which is headquartered in Southern Pines but maintains an office in Peachtree Plaza on Seven Lakes Drive, was given the 2009 Small Business Award.

The awards were made possible through a partnership with Muirfield Broadcasting, Quail

Haven Village, and Hicks & Associates, a financial advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc.

"The Chamber is proud to announce the winners of these two awards," said Holly Bell, 2010 Chairman of the Chamber Board. According to Bell, "Both of these companies clearly demonstrated that despite facing tremendous adversity would do it all over again, and whose fervor for running a busi-

ness is rivaled only by their willingness to serve the community."

The criteria for both awards included innovation, response to adversity and community involvement.

For innovation, the businesses needed to cite examples as to marketing ideas, overcoming significant challenges, employee relations, customer development, technology, distribution and competitive advantages.

In the category of adversity, the business needed to show how they addressed significant challenges, overcoming one or more of the following: Employee relations, growth, training, retention, management and technology.

In the Community Involvement category, the business needed to indicate their involvement in the community, not including industry related organizations or affiliations. The steering committee that reviewed the applications received were Chamber executives from outside of Moore County.

Sandhills Winery is located in the Seven Lakes Plaza Shopping Center.

The store offers a wide range of wines for every budget and forty varieties of beer, along with gifts and treats for any party or special occasion.

The phone number is (910) 673-2949 and the website is www.sandhillswinery.com.

Aging Outreach Services is located at 676 West Broad Street in Southern Pines. Their phone number is (910) 692-0683, and their website is www.agin-goutreachservices.com

Dean's List



Kendall Downer, daughter of Greg and Jean Downer of Seven Lakes has been named to the dean's list in the University of Notre Dame's College of Science for outstanding scholarship during the Fall 2009 semester.

Students who achieve dean's honors at Notre Dame represent the top 30 percent of students in their college.

Kendall is a 2007 graduate of Acton Boxborough Regional High School in Acton, Massachusetts.

Women of 7 Lakes Events

The Community Social & BYOB Mixer hosted by the Women of Seven Lakes has been rescheduled due to inclement weather. The Social will be held Saturday, February 6, from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm, at the North Clubhouse. All tickets were presold and will be honored. No tickets will be sold at the door.

Taste of the Town is back! This popular fundraising event will be held Monday, March 22 from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm, at the Westside Park Community Center with all proceeds to benefit the WEUMC Food

Pantry in West End. Tickets for Taste of the Town are \$20 per person.

Also back by popular demand, the Taste of the Town Wine Tasting will be held on Monday, March 22 from 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm, downstairs at WSPCC. Featuring hardy hors d'oeuvres and wines presented by the award-winning Sandhills Winery, tickets are \$10 per person. Proceeds will benefit local charities.

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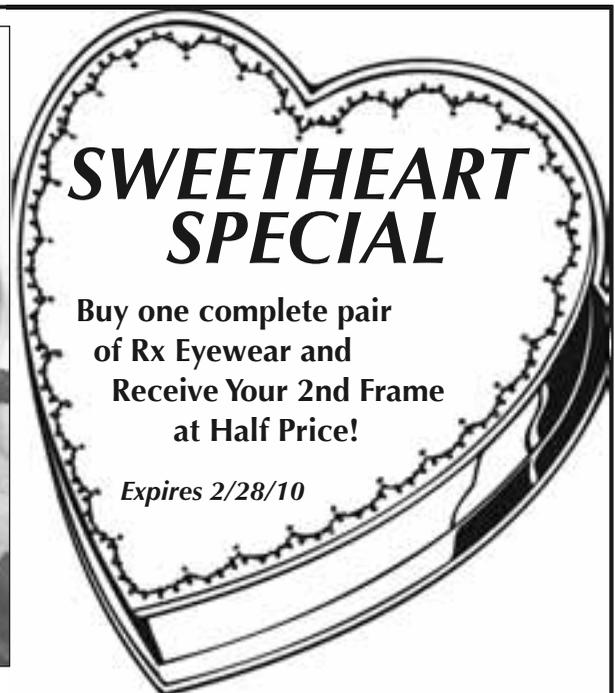
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The Times interviews Westside candidates

by Greg Hankins
Times Editor

Four candidates are in the running for three open seats on the Seven Lakes West Landowners Association [SLWLA] Board of Directors in an election that will wrap up at the Annual Meeting in March.

Don Freiert, Jane Sessler, Joe Sikes, and incumbent Mick Herdrich each met with *The Times* for one-on-one interviews last week.

Biographies of the candidates have been published in the SLWLA newsletter, on the website, and in the annual meeting packet. So we won't repeat that background information here.

Our goal in these interviews was not to bombard candidates with a laundry list of questions, but rather to have a conversation about their priorities for Seven Lakes West and their interest in serving on the Board. In short, our goal was to have the same sort of conversation the candidates will likely have with individual landowners a dozen times between now and "election day."

The highlights of those conversations can be found on the next few pages of this edition.

Don Freiert

Don Freiert, Jr., is a CPA who served as VP - Corporate Real Estate for Nationwide Insurance, and held similar positions with Cardinal Health and Bank One.

Freiert has lived in Seven Lakes for less than a year. So what would he bring to the SLWLA Board of Directors?

A fresh perspective. "I think I can bring a fresh perspective," Freiert told *The Times*. "and it's an inquisitive perspective."

"I come in with a fresh set of eyes and can take a new look at things at a time when a lot of questions are being raised about what's going on with the community. Questions about how do we protect our property values — and how do we improve our property values."

Those questions often come about, Freiert told *The Times*, "because the landowners don't have a clear picture of what the future is — financially as well as obligation-wise." Reflecting on the conversation and public comment at a recent SLWLA

Board meeting, Freiert said "You heard the Board members say things like 'Three years ago the Board committed to doing this over a three-to-five year period.' Well, those things don't show up anywhere."

There's not an easily-accessible plan that landowners can reference to understand those sorts of commitments, Freiert said, "and there should be."

The problem is not that there is no plan, he hastened to add, noting the amount of work done by Long Range Planning and other committees. "It's the communication part of it, which the Board acknowledges they are just getting into. Because, in the past, people haven't really cared to know about it in depth." The

remediation of the Lake Auman Dam was "a wake-up call" for many landowners, Freiert said. "People have realized, 'Hey, we really have some responsibilities and obligations here!' I feel there's a strong fiduciary responsibility of the Board to communicate about that with the community and I believe I can add real value there."

SLWLA Treasurer Kathy Kirst is retiring from the Board in March, and Freiert said his skills, training, and experience were a natural fit with the Treasurer's job. "I don't know that I would end up being the Treasurer," he added, "but my financial capabilities would be a plus for the Board."

"Looking at the numbers, even

I have questions about the way things are viewed and presented. It's a complex issue. The way the Association is accounted for and tracked is like a big checkbook — it's what goes in and what goes out. Now that's a pretty safe way of living -- and there are safeguards against doing something crazy and putting burdens on the future. But if you listened to people the other night [at the Board Meeting] some people have trouble understanding it."

"I think clarity is something that I could help bring," Freiert said. "It gets back to my freshness to the thing. I've not been looking at these budgets year in and year out . . . It's something that in my past background I tried

to do: Make things understandable to people."

The other area for me where I could add value is in the long range planning or strategic planning aspect. I only have enough information to be dangerous at this stage — and nothing against the folks that are there. I hear we have a long range committee and a roads committee, and an entrances committee — all doing real good work. But I don't see an overall plan."

"It's like somebody said, 'If we approve [a] 36 percent [dues increase] this year, what's to keep it from being 36% next year?'"

The Board's objective, Freiert said, is to hold operational
(See "Freiert," p. 8)



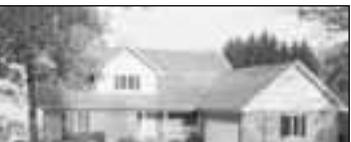
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Freiert: Make the numbers understandable

(Continued from page 7)

expenses level with last year, so all the dues increase goes to rebuilding reserves. If that happens next year, "you get another \$400,000 to put in reserves, and the next year you get another \$400,000. But you don't see that [in the budget]. You get a one-year view."

"As someone said the other night, 'Where is a five to ten year view of what we expect?' If we bite this bullet right now, will we be good to go and revert back to a five percent increase or less in the future?"

"My two areas of value that I bring are the financial angle and that ability to develop a big picture view in a way that everyone else can have a good understanding. They don't have to be financial analysts, they don't have to be planners, they don't have to be CPAs. But they have a right to understand what's going on. It's their money. It's my money."

Freiert told *The Times* he supports the proposed budget and dues increase, "but even myself, I was shocked at the budget . . . I didn't have a clue that was coming . . . I knew about some of the issues, but I hadn't converted them into into dollars and sense."

"All of that work the Board did over four months to to arrive at this solution was not well understood as it was taking place," Friert told *The Times*. "There probably was a away to start to lay out some things before it hit."

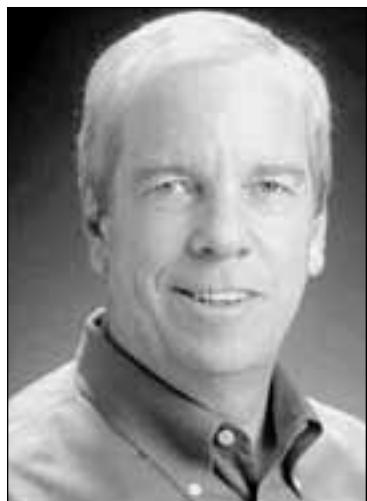
Even the openness of the Board's process backfired on it to some extent, he noted, because landowners read about the proposed dues increase in *The Times* before hearing the Board's presentation. "That a double-edged sword," he noted. "Now you have people getting emotional of it, but they don't have the detail. Now you are in defensive mode. I think we could do a better job of that."

Asked about key issues he thinks the community faces over the next few years, Friert said, the front entrance and mailhouse have to be at the top of the list. "That's the front door to our community . . . Talk about the impression you create of the community . . . I can't wait to

get past the mailhouse, because what they have done with Lakeway Drive is great.

"The issue of roads is key," Friert said. "Not that they are falling apart, but you're back to an impression issue."

"One of those things I learned from being in real estate over the years: you have to maintain the appearance. You need to keep it



Don Friert

up."

"It seems like the mail delivery thing is is dead,' Friert added. "You can't win arguments with the government. I think we need to get on with it and say 'We need mailhouses, how do we do it?' I know there is a group studying that."

"The other thing to look at: Is there value in other amenities? I was surprised when on the website, there are 90 people on the waiting list for the boat slips at the marina. Is there another place to put them in -- a second marina? That might be in the long range plan. Can that fund itself? That's just one example that I came across. We have a demand, a need, can we find a way to fulfill it?"

Freiert noted that it is in the best interest of the community for those who own unimproved lots to come and build homes in Seven Lakes West. "But, if they did that, the current facilities

would be overwhelmed. So you do in fact have to provide for them."

Freiert said his newness to the community gives him another advantage as a prospective Board member: he's not yet playing golf three days a week, shooting with the Sports Club, and so on. I don't have all those patterns established. And I didn't come down because I have relatives here. So I need to get engaged to meet people to devel-

op friendships and relationships."

"I can add value and I am willing to give back," Friert told *The Times*.

Emphasizing that he understand election to the Board carries with it a time commitment, Friert said, "I recognize that serving on the Board is not an honorary role. Community matters to me."

(See "Sessler," p. 10)

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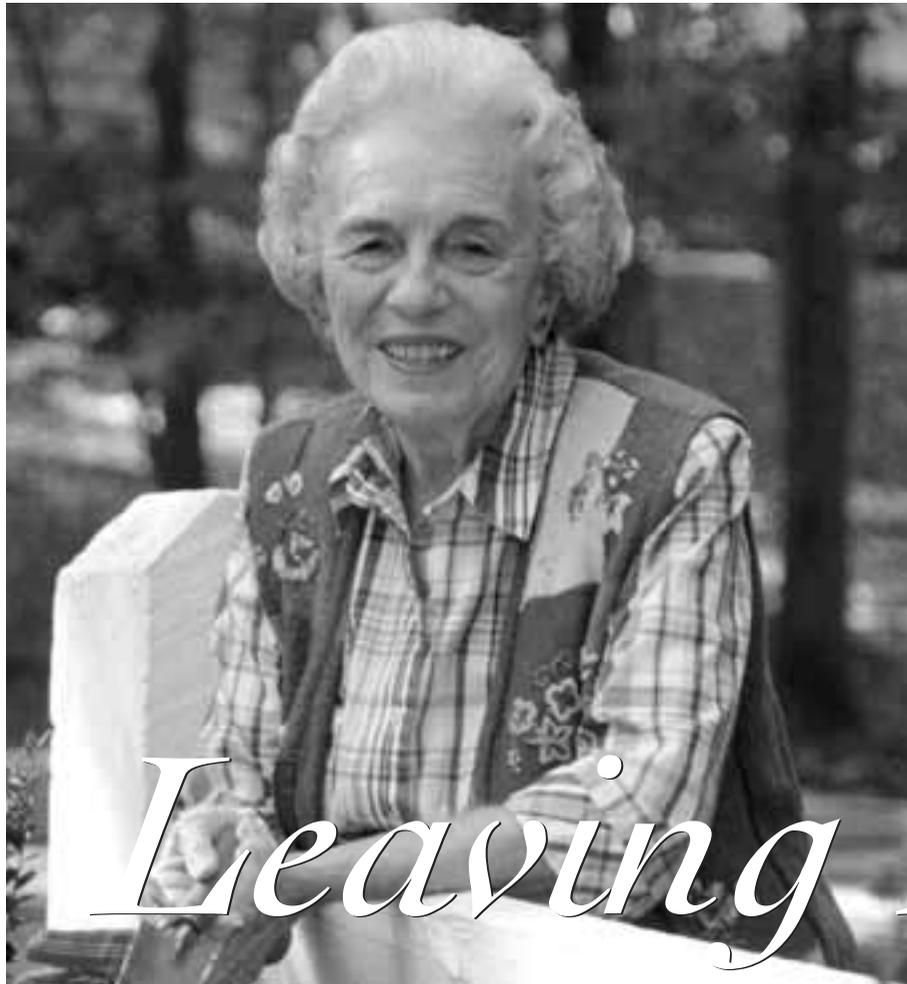
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The soul cannot thrive in the absence of a garden.

I will touch a hundred flowers and not pick one.

Every spring, when Mary Jane Knight was a little girl growing up in rural Guilford County, her mother would insist she put on a dress with pockets before they went shopping for plants and flowers for their garden. Before they stepped into the greenhouse, her mother would remind her, "Put your hands in your pockets and don't take them out."

At the end of the day, the store owner would present Mary Jane with a plant of her very own. From the first moment she took her hands out of her pockets and put them in the dirt, Mary Jane knew, deep down, she was a gardener. Almost 80 years later, gardening still gives her a feeling of being close to nature and, she says, close to God.

Since moving to the Sandhills almost 40 years ago, Mary Jane has never missed an opportunity to share the beauty of nature, whether working in the gardens at Weymouth Center, supporting the Horticultural Gardens at Sandhills Community College or tending plantings at her current residence in Southern Pines. Now she is ready to begin a new project—the gardens at FirstHealth's new Hospice House. "I've got my shovel ready," she says.

Leaving A Legacy

Mary Jane Knight has always known she was a gardener. She loves to share the beauty of nature and will with her new project – the gardens at FirstHealth's new Hospice House.

Mary Jane's relationship with Hospice goes back three decades, when she became the first treasurer of the all-volunteer Sandhills Hospice. Through the years, as she saw what Hospice could do to help patients and their families as they faced life-limiting illness, Mary Jane kept the idea of a Hospice House in the back of her mind. As in a garden, she sowed the seeds of philanthropy with her charitable gift annuities and bequests to the Hospice Foundation. Along with the financial support of other generous donors, FirstHealth Hospice House is now about to bloom.

**The gardens that make us happiest
feed our souls and fill a special place in our lives.**

After growing up in the old Quaker community of Deep River north of High Point in Guilford County and graduating from Colfax School, Mary Jane Venable entered the Woman's College of UNC (now UNC-Greensboro) majoring in commercial business. By Thanksgiving, she was so homesick and discouraged that she was determined to quit, but her aunt convinced her to move in with her while she was going to school.

"When my uncle died suddenly in his mid-50s, Aunt Lillian ran their business, the only producing dairy farm in Guilford County," says Mary Jane. "She was a sharp business person, and I admired her stamina and her determination. Being with her really changed my life."

Immediately after graduation, Mary Jane began working with the largest textile company in the world at that time, Burlington Industries with headquarters in Greensboro, as a statistical secretary in the engineering department. In 1949, she joined the staff of UNC-G as secretary to the public relations director. She later became assistant to the dean of student services. "I've put the skills I learned in those jobs—record-keeping, writing press releases and dealing with the media—to good use in every organization I've joined since then," she says.

Moving to Southern Pines in late 1971 with her husband, Numa E. Knight Jr., and young son, David, was quite a

transition from the red clay soil of the Piedmont to the sandy soil of the Sandhills, especially when it came to growing flowers, shrubs, trees, etc. "I didn't come kicking and screaming, but I cried for three months when we came here," she says. "I told David not to tell his daddy. I just blamed it on fumes from the new carpet."

Where flowers bloom so does hope.

Mary Jane had begun taking extension courses in horticulture, landscaping and flower arranging even before moving to the Sandhills. Course studies were offered through UNC-State College courtesy of the National and State Councils of Garden Clubs, where she earned a Master's Certificate.

She was determined to make a go of her new situation. She joined the PTA and worked for two years as volunteer coordinator with Moore County Schools. She pursued her love of gardening by becoming a member and officer of the Garden Club of the Sandhills, the Sandhills Horticultural Society, the Sandhills Council of Garden Clubs, and the Gardens and Grounds Committee at Weymouth Center. She also fulfilled her great love of history and preservation by joining the Moore County Historical Association.

Still, that wasn't enough for Mary Jane. In 1975, she became program director for the American Lung Association of North Carolina. Five years later, she was made regional director overseeing 10 counties, a position she held until her retirement in 1994. "For 13 years, our region was first in fundraising," she says. Her contributions to the ALA were recognized with the organization's National Award of Excellence for Financial Development.

In joy or sadness, flowers are our constant friends.

In March of 1995, as Mary Jane was waiting for the daffodils to proclaim new life, she learned that her 32-year-old son had been diagnosed with "cancer of unknown origin." Eight weeks later, just before Mother's Day, he died suddenly of a pulmonary embolism.

"That was a devastating loss for me," Mary Jane says. "He was my only child. He inherited his love of flowers and gardens from me and his grandmother. When he was an infant, I put him in his carriage and took him to flower shows. As he grew up he became interested in horticulture and landscaping."

David graduated from the Landscape Gardening Program at Sandhills Community College in 1983, and started his own business, Knightscape Grading and Hauling of Southern Pines. To honor his memory, Mary Jane established both a charitable gift annuity with the Foundation of FirstHealth and the David L. Knight Landscape Gardening Memorial Scholarship at SCC.

Every flower is a soul blossoming in Nature.

Mary Jane's awareness of the need for a Hospice program here, especially a Hospice House, began in 1979, when she attended an organizational meeting of Sandhills Hospice as a representative of the American Lung Association.

"Working with community health departments and social services, I saw first hand the need for Hospice services," she says. "At that time, only two counties in the state had Hospice home facilities available for patients." She immediately became involved as a volunteer. "I was elected treasurer at the very beginning," she says. "We were so pleased when someone gave us \$100."

Throughout her 30-year association with FirstHealth as a member of the Hospice Foundation Board and the Foundation's Scroll Society and Legacy Circle, Mary Jane has taken every opportunity to encourage others to support FirstHealth through bequests, charitable gift annuities or special donations.

"Each gift is like a stone that represents your special interest—whether it be cancer, heart or Hospice—in a pathway to improving health care for the days, months and years ahead," she says. "Pick a stone of your choice for this pathway and help lead our community into a future of better health for everyone. God will bless you in ways you don't expect."

For more information on Leaving a Legacy, contact the Foundation of FirstHealth at (910) 695-7500

Sessler: Volunteerism is heart of Westside

(Continued from page 8)

Jane Sessler

Jane Sessler is a doctor of dentistry who managed her own practice for 26 years, taught at the Columbia School of Dental and Oral Surgery, and currently works with FirstHealth's Children's Dental Centers.

From the Sports Club to CERT, Sessler has been very involved with the various volunteer organizations that make Seven Lakes West tick. And now, she told *The Times*, it might be time to "get with the big kids."

"There's a lot of work in this community that needs to be done by volunteers," Sessler said, "and I think it's important for me to step up to work. I have some ideas, I have the enthusiasm, and I certainly have some time right now . . . I have done a lot of behind the scenes work. . . and I am absolutely amazed at what people do around here, and I want to be more of a part of that."

"There was a need for Board candidates, and I had some people come to me and I said 'Would you run?' and I said 'No!' And eventually I said, 'Well, maybe I do have something to offer.'"

Sessler described volunteerism as the heart and soul of the community. "There's a need, and all of these people come out of the woodwork. That spirit of volunteerism has to continue. We have to reach out to some different folk to get them to do that. I'd like to widen the net a little bit."

Community Priorities

Asked what three or four big things the Board needs to be working on, Sessler told *The Times* those were "some of the things the Board is already working on" — for example, evaluating the quality of the community's infrastructure.

Alluding to Infrastructure Director John Goodmans' recent discovery that many of the corrugated steel pipes that carry water under Longleaf Drive have rusted through and could ultimately threaten the integrity of the roadway, Sessler said, "John Goodman is looking under things and finding all these nasty things and he's got to be the bad guy and come and tell us all those

things. Mary Anne Fewkes and her crew had to come and tell us that the dam was leaking. . . and everybody was angry, because they had to take action. Those are the kind of things I am so used to doing: telling people they've got a problem."

Harkening back to her dental practice, Sessler added "The most awful thing to have to tell a patient is 'You have a problem,' and they don't have any clue that they had a problem."

"We don't want this community to have pain," Sessler said, "We don't want something to cave in, we don't want something to be completely destroyed, so that we are stuck building it tomorrow — we can't have the time to plan, we can't have the time to send out bids, it's an emergency. We do not want that to happen."

The Board has a plan for dealing with the need for road

repaving — and it should, Sessler said. "Roads are coming up — maybe not tomorrow — but if we don't plan to do it it won't get done. My experience: If I don't plan for something, it's not going to happen."

Another challenge on the horizon is the competition for home-



Jane Sessler

buyers posed by new, nearby subdivisions in the works — and the impact of that competition on property values.

"You're going to have so many new communities in this area," Sessler told *The Times*, "that are going to be bigger, better, newer, probably better planned. If we don't keep our side clean, neat, and attractive, it's not going to be anything that anybody is going to want to move into. Yes we have a lake, and they won't, but we really have to protect that lake."

Role on the Board

Asked which of the various positions on the Board best suited her talents, Sessler said, "I think I'm not equipped to do the Treasurers' position, I am not going to kid anyone and say that I am. I would probably like

to get involved with the Secretary position and the communications part of that."

Sessler said there has been talk of creating a volunteer coordinating position on the Board. "I would love to get that organized and coordinated and reach out to different groups of volunteers for different projects. Some of them would be recreational, some of them could be working on other things with the men and women who are heading up the major committees — making it more public so that people understand that they can come on board. That's one of the things that I could see."

"There are always things that come up at those meetings that they need someone to take," Sessler added, "and, if I'm equipped to do that, I'll step up

(See "The Times," p. 12)

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The Times interviews Westside candidates

(Continued from page 10)

... My expertise is coordination, communication, sending out information."

Budget and Dues

"I think the dues increase is necessary," Sessler told *The Times*, when asked whether she supported SLWLA's proposed budget and dues increase.

"I think if you look at what it should have been anyway, if it had been on that steady five percent all these years, it would be exactly where it is. In fact, it would have been a little bit more. You're talking about all those years of Boards whose hands were tied behind their backs. They really couldn't have increases until there was parity among all the groups."

"Yes it hurts to say it has to be a lump sum right now, but that's it."

Recruiting candidates?

Asked why the Westside Board has such a hard time scaring out prospective Board members,

Sessler said the tenor of community debate can be a problem.

"It does become a bit of a lynch mob mentality when hard decisions have to be made," she told *The Times*. "I was very happy being behind the scenes doing things, getting to know the community, and lending a hand. It's very hard to put your name and your face out there. People get angry and they start to take it out on Board members."

"Nobody wants to have an adversarial situation with their neighbors. That's a problem."

"There are so many extremely intelligent and talented people on both sides of each issue," Sessler added. "Instead of coming to the Board with a complaint, it would so much nicer of them to come with a suggestion and an idea and the willingness to join in on a committee to get there ... That would be a nice way to do things."

Other thoughts

Asked what other issues or concerns she had about Seven

Lakes West, Sessler mentioned boat safety, the need to involve younger residents, and implementing the long range plan.

On boat safety, Sessler told *The Times*, "there are a lot of people who just don't want to acknowledge the rules. And again, they have to remember that it's their neighbors and friends patrolling and asking them to cooperate. Because it's our lake, our responsibility, our liability if something happens."

Noting the growing number of young families making their home on the West Side, Sessler, a younger retiree, said it would be nice to find a way to reach out to those families, and, despite their busy schedules, offer them a greater opportunity to become involved in the life and governance of the community.

"I would like to be able to see that Long Range Planning committee's work be used," Sessler said, "but we haven't been able to use any of it because we have just been trying to patch things. We need to implement it"

"We have to build that into the board's work. The LRP has been out there for years, and years, and years coming up with this great idea, but if we don't give them the opportunity to implement that, then this community is never going to get anywhere. We need to be able to take a five-year range of their work and put it into the Board's work."

Joe Sikes

Joe Sikes is a retired Foreign Service Officer with the US State Department, who served in Ivory Coast, Rwanda, England, Senegal, and Sudan.

In introducing himself to the community as a Board candidate during the January 26 SLWLA Board Meeting, Sikes spent a good bit of time, in a humorous and self-deprecating vein, persuading landowners to not vote for him.

When *The Times* asked Sikes why, in fact, voters might want to cast their ballot for him rather than one of the other candidates, he

said:

"What I said at that meeting was not entirely meant to elicit giggles. I am quite ambivalent about this."

"I do not have an agenda. I am not looking for a job. But I think that people do need to be prepared to participate in the running of a self-governing community."

"I don't know that I bring anything to the table that the other three candidates don't bring," Sikes added.

"And I don't suppose I am any less qualified either. If think, if I were elected, I could do a reasonable job."

"I don't think, unless you have actually participated in the [Board's] process, that you can really understand what it's all about. If it's anything like any of the other organizations I have dealt with, the interplay of the personalities on that Board has to be key to what actually happens, what actually transpires, what actually comes out of the other end of the pipe. And, unless

(See "Sikes," p. 13)

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Sikes: Communication is key Board task

(Continued from page 12)

you have been there, you can't actually know what that is

"I think what's important is the process." Noting that he was deeply impressed by the civility of public comment on the budget during a recent Board Meeting, Sikes said "I think that in part goes back to a pretty good job done by the current board to be prepared for the meeting and also to prepare the electorate for the meeting."

Key Issues

Asked about the key issues facing Seven Lakes West, Sikes told *The Times*: "I think that most of the priorities are pretty much agreed upon, in broad terms. What you do in any specific sense is where you will have disagreements. As long as you can keep the membership informed, then it's very hard to take umbrage at a rational decision . . . This Board has done a pretty damn good job of that."

Sikes noted that many of the key issues are "quite technical."

"For example, the issue of road maintenance is quite technical. The data may be there, but there are not that many people who are going to plow through it. And even if they do plow through it they may not understand the implications of it."

The reopening of the road across the dam is another highly technical issue, Sikes said. "I personally am in favor of opening that dam. But that's said in a vacuum. That's just an opinion. When the state says yea or nay on the dam, that will come into greater focus, and there will have to be a great deal of activity trying educate people about highly technical issues that most people might not want to be educated about."

The need for reserves is another area where communication is essential, but difficult, Sikes told *The Times*. "I think it's a challenge to explain to people why you want to have reserve funds or sinking funds for anticipated problems. It's a hard sell, I think, to suggest to people that having nice roads increases their property values."

"The reality is not so much that nice roads are going to increase your property values — though they will — but that real-

ly poor roads will demolish your property values."

"This is an area that the board is going to have to keep working on," Sikes said, "because other things will come up and burn those reserves the board is putting together. I think that is an ongoing issue."

Security is another ongoing issue, Sikes told *The Times*. He noted that the issue often tends to be framed in terms of crime, but that safety is equally, if not more important. Noting the dangerous mix of pedestrians and often fast-moving vehicles on Longleaf, Sikes noted, "People tend to await until something catastrophic happens before there's any reason to deal with it. You don't want somebody run over before someone says 'Gee, we ought to think about that.'"

Improving communication from the Board to the membership and vice versa is "A process that has been on-going and needs to be kept going." Sikes said the Board needs to continue to enhance that process as it discovers specific groups that may not be reached by current communications.

"The new Board needs to be finding those gaps and trying to fill them," he told *The Times*. "I'm not persuaded that there is sufficient understanding amongst the generations in Seven Lakes West. Everyone gives lip service to the fact that there are younger people coming in . . . but I am not convinced that there has been sufficient effort to actually probe into that and say, 'What does that really mean?' How does that affect the governance of the Association and the application of the resources of the Association?" I think that's an important thing to look at.

Budget & Dues

"I've been non-committal about that," Sikes said when asked whether he supported the proposed budget and dues increase. "I think that the dues here are not excessive. And while I think that a 36 percent increase is a shock . . . the amount of money that we are talking about is not out of line, in my judgement, with the amenities provided to the residents.

"Would I have liked that to have gotten there are different way. Yes. Do I believe that you

could arrive there a different way? That's one where I am not sure I have enough information.



Joe Sikes

I think the Board did a very good job in presenting its rationale, and I find that rationale to be powerful.

"Am I in favor of the budget? Emotionally, you say, 'Well hell no, I don't want to pay any more.' But rationally, I saw nothing in that budget that on the face of it,

you could throw off the sled."

"The key issue is, 'What do you think about reserves?' And that's where I say that I don't know that I know enough about it to take a hard and fast stand. It sounds rational to build

(See "*The Times*," p. 14)

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The Times interviews Westside candidates

(Continued from page 13)
reserves.”

That doesn't make absorbing the dues increase any easier for some families, Sikes acknowledged: "There are people who have lost a great deal of what they expected to have for their retirement in this market downturn and we have to be sensitive to that. . . . Notwithstanding that the dues increase is something you might spend going out and having McDonald's hamburgers, some people aren't going out and having McDonald's hamburgers and they are not having a glass of wine, and they are wondering how they are going to get through. They are watching the stock market with considerable anxiety and you have to be sensitive to that."

Finding nominees

Asked why it is so difficult to find folks to serve on the Board, Sikes said the time commitment is often cited, but the real problem may be the abuse Board members often suffer when making hard decisions.

"People do not want to be abused," Sikes told *The Times*, "they don't want to be perceived as bad guys. Many of them have not had experience doing things that are not popular. They don't want that stress."

No job preference

Sikes said he had no particular preference for chairing one committee or doing one job on the Board over another. "I'll be the new kid on the block — so I guess that means I'll get to do whatever no one else wants to do!"

"The only one I would resist

with energy would be the Community Activities committee. I cannot imagine I would be any good at that. I'm very private."

He noted that some of the positions on the Board are quite technical and would likely benefit from the leadership of a Board member with particular experience or history in that area. Preserving "institutional memory in those areas is critical, Sikes said, adding that that memory can be preserved, in part, from Board to Board by "by devolving some of that on standing subcommittees — Like the British government, where you have permanent undersecretaries. They are the institutional memory. Something like that can be very useful in this kind of governance."

"That way you're not reinventing the wheel every year," Sikes said. "If you do it well, it will reduce the amount of time each board member must spend, for example, running meetings. If you can couple that with an increasing confidence in the management company, then you go a long way toward making the board a policy-making forum and not an executive forum."

Noting that Board members are inevitably involved in hands-on execution of policy, Sikes said that, nevertheless, "I suspect that in order to be most effective you have to believe you are a policy-maker, not a mechanic. I am not going out and patching the roads myself. My job is to persuade the community that they do want the roads fixed."

Mick Herdrich

Incumbent Director Mick Herdrich is a former Navy helicopter pilot with substantial career experience in Human Resources management, including stints with Pfizer and Fidelity Investments.

It was unfinished business that convinced Herdrich to change his mind and run for a full term on the SLWLA Board. Herdrich was appointed to his seat to serve out the unexpired term of a director who resigned. In the year-and-a-half he's served, the remediation of the Lake Auman Dam has been the largest, though by no means the only, task on his agenda.

And, while the dam repairs are finished, there remains the controversial issue of what to do about the roadway across the dam.

"It's a big issue that is going to be facing the community in the next six months," Herdrich told *The Times*. And it's an issue that would benefit from having someone on point "who's been dealing with these issues all along."

"People ask all the time about the road," he explained, highlighting some of the complexities surrounding the future of the dam and dam roadway. "It's a very, very contentious issue with a lot of facets." Herdrich said he sympathizes with both those

who are inconvenienced by a longer commute and those who have turned the top of the dam into a de facto walking trail.

"But it's a very difficult issue. We did the remediation last June, and, when they did the work, it was a lot worse than dam engineer Dan Marks thought it was going to be — especially on the far west side. It cost us significantly more money to fix it. He was shocked, Hayward Baker [the remediation contractor] was shocked."

"I think that changed people's opinion a little bit about just what some of the issues were as far as the stability of the dam and the condition of the dam."

(See "Herdrich," p. 16)

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Herdrich: Tough decisions on the horizon

(Continued from page 14)

Herdrich explained that the repair that was done to the dam created a barrier that prevents water from passing through the upper portions of the dam, but that "slurry wall" "basically provides no structural integrity to the dam whatsoever. . . it does nothing so far as structural integrity is concerned."

"I have no idea what the state is going to say. They could come back and say nothing about the road. They could come back and say you can have a road, that's fine everything's okay, you can reopen your road. They could come back and say, no you can't have a road, or they could come back and say you can have a road, but only under certain specifications."

"I think that's going to be a big issue facing the community. It's certainly going to be contentious, and I'm just waiting for the state. If they're not happy with the dam, the state can tell you to drain the lake."

"I've got an engineering background, education-wise," Herdrich said. "I have an excellent dam committee coming from wide backgrounds. We've got a very good committee that's been

dealing with a lot of these things; we've got a very cohesive group. I certainly think it would be helpful to have someone who's been dealing with this all along to be in there when these decisions have to be made."

Noting that hours commuting to and from Manhattan had left him little time for community involvement while pursuing his career, Herdrich said retirement in Seven Lakes West had given him an opportunity to get involved. "I've really enjoyed my time on the board. It's a hard working group, it's a fun group. Yes we have our arguments, but I think the entire group is willing to give and take and listen to each other and come to a resolution. . . It's been a very positive experience. And with my background and my experience I think I can still provide a lot of valuable contributions to the Board."

Community challenges

Asked about the big challenges facing the community, Herdrich said the biggest is infrastructure. "Infrastructure is like anything else: If you don't maintain something, when it falls apart, it costs you a lot more."

"I don't think any of us were expecting the problem with the culverts," he said, referring to the recently-discovered need to replace the corrugated steel pipes that carry water under Longleaf Drive and other road-



Mick Herdrich

ways — a project that could cost \$200,00 or more. "I was astounded at the potential cost of that, but it's not something you can ignore. I think that people would be very upset if the roads started falling in and they couldn't get out of the development."

The roads, the culverts, the big issue with the front gate; we still have the issue with the railroad crossing; what are we going to do with the mailhouse. — I think these are things that are all going to come about in the next year, year-and-a-half," Herdrich said.

"Infrastructure is the biggest thing on the Board's plate. And, unfortunately, it all costs money. And I don't like that any better than anybody else does . . . but, unfortunately, to fix things, you have to pay up."

Security is another key issue

facing the Association. Herdrich said. "Security is one of those things that 'It's fine,' until you start to have a problem. We've had a few things, nothing real significant. But if you talk to people, you find that's one of the top two or three things on their list."

Budget and Dues

"I fully support the budget," Herdrich told *The Times*. "I'm on a fixed income. Am I happy about paying more money? No."

Noting that one letter writer had labelled the Board's approach, he said he saw it as the exact opposite. "The Board is trying to say these are the costs and expenditures that we are facing and we need to start saving now. If we were big government we'd start spending now and worry about where to

(See "Herdrich," p. 17)

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Herdrich

(Continued from page 16)
get the money later.”

“Nobody on that Board wanted to raise dues 36 percent. Our reserves have been taken down . . . To be fiscally responsible you have to build those reserves back up.”

“It’s not like we’re building a lot of amenities. Most of these things are for infrastructure.”

Liaison with CAS

In addition to his time spent chairing the Dam Committee and overseeing the remediation of Lake Auman Dam, Herdrich has also, as Chair of the Human Resources Committee, been the community’s primary liaison with Community Association Services, Inc. [CAS], the company that manages Seven Lakes West.

“I continue to be the liaison with CAS. My committee will be doing the evaluation on them, the recommendation for contracts with them. If there are any issues that come up with CAS, I am the one that is the interface between [CAS President] John Stone and the Board. “And that’s been going very smoothly. But if there is a CAS issue, I’m the one who deals with that.”

“We brought CAS in to do a lot of the operational things that Board members were doing,” Herdrich said. “I have probably been the most successful at turning that stuff over.”

“I have a lot of responsibilities for landscaping Johnson Point for the dam, for managing the marina. I have turned all of that over to CAS. I still have oversight of it, but the day-to-day operations of it, they handle. That has dramatically changed my workload. If there’s an issue at Johnson Point, [Community Manager] Joan [Frost] deals with it and lets me know . . . Other Board members have been doing it also. And I have encouraged them, ‘anywhere you can, let that stuff go.’ Because that frees the Board up for more strategic time. I don’t like it if I hear a Board member say they have to work 40 hours a week.”

Lake Committee

Herdrich also chairs the Lake Committee. He told *The Times* that he has worked to streamline the boat registration process
(See “Interview,” p. 20)



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- **American Red Cross Blood Donation** – 11 am - 3:30 pm, Belk Department Store (On bus), Pinecrest Plaza, Southern Pines. Call 692-6088.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6

- **Standard First Aid + Adult CPR/AED** – 8:00 am - 2:00 pm. American Red Cross Introductory Certification Course. Certification fee \$60. American Red Cross Moore County, 115 E. Pennsylvania Ave., Southern Pines. 910-692-8571

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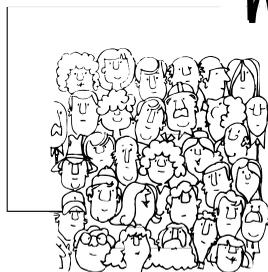
- **Eddie Barrett** – with the Goodman Legacy Orchestra. 3:30 to 6 pm. At Mr. P's, 155 Hall Avenue, Southern Pines.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8

- **National Active & Retired Federal Employees** – (NARFE) Sandhills Chapter 1895, monthly meeting, 10:30 am, Community Congregational Church, 141 N. Bennett St., Southern Pines. Guest speaker, Emily Tobias, Attorney

and Public Administrator for Moore County will speak on legal matters affecting senior citizens. Chapter 1895 welcomes all Federal active employees, retirees, spouses and surviving spouses to monthly meetings. Contact Vilma Geisert (910) 215-5898 or George Sandoval (910) 246-9881.

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- **Seven Lakes West Landowners Association Work Ses-**

ion – 9 am, West Side Park Community Center.

- **Computer Club of Seven Lakes** – 3 pm, at the Seven Lakes North Game room. The topic will be “Back to Basics” presented by Craig Castrogiovanni of G&D Computer, Seven Lakes. Castrogiovanni has 15 years experience with computers and data engineering. Presentation

will include a guided tour of a computer's hardware and software. He will also show how to find and use the tools required to keep your computer running at its maximum potential, along with securing your computer and network from malware and hackers. Please bring along your questions as well as any suggestions for upcoming meetings.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10

- **American Red Cross Blood Donation** – 1:00 pm - 6:00

pm. Seven Lakes Community, SL North Clubhouse, Seven Lakes. Appt. call 673-4931.

- **Infant/Child CPR/AED** – 6:00 - 9:30 pm, ARC Introductory Certification Course. Certification Fee \$40. American Red Cross Moore County, 115 E. Pennsylvania Ave., Southern Pines. 910-692-8571

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11

- **Moore County Republican Men's Club** – 12 pm (noon), at the Country Club of North Carolina. The guest speaker will be John Hood, Chairman and President of the John Locke Foundation, a North Carolina

think tank. Interested persons can contact Miles Baldwin at 295-1577.

- **Wells Fargo Advisors** – 4 pm to 4:50 pm, Smart investment strategy can help you make the most of market advances and limit your risk during market declines. This is a Free seminar – Weathering Market Volatility – At Seven Lakes West Community Center, Longleaf Dr., Seven Lakes. Presented by Robert J. Wagler, CPA, CRPC, Financial Advisor. Snack served. Seating is limited. To R.S.V.P., call Carolyn Crider at 800.727.5221 or carolyn.crider@wfadvisors.com
- **Information Session and Tour** – Theater in the O'Neal School Activities Center. Families who are interested in learning more about The O'Neal School are invited to an Information Session and Tour of The O'Neal School 6 pm to 7:30 pm. The headmaster, division directors, teachers, admissions staff and volunteer parents will be available to give information and answer questions. Call Admissions Director, Alice Droppers for

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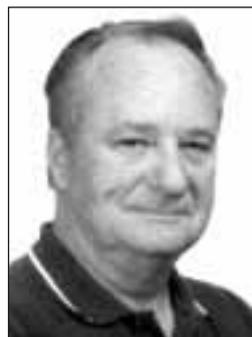
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- **Republican Precinct Meeting** – 7:30 pm, at the Seven Lakes Fire Station. Any registered Republican is welcome to join the group. The subject of the meeting will be to line up the delegates to attend the County convention.
- **Seven Lakes Garden Club** – 7:30 pm. "Getting Your Garden Ready for Spring Planting" Held at Seven Lakes North Clubhouse. Guest speaker will be Pete Gulley, Co-owner of Gulley's & Son Garden Center, Southern Pines. Unlike other garden centers, Gulley's is a unique place, on the grounds you will find a Christmas cottage, a country store, and even, a military museum! Gulley will advise everyone on how they can get their gardens ready for Spring planting. Everyone is welcome.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12

- **Outreach Valentine's Party** – 12 pm (noon), The Chapel in the Pines will host their annual Outreach Valentine's Party. The Chapel invites everyone to come, especially anyone living in the community that are alone or shut-in. The event includes special entertain-

ment. If you would like to attend, but need transportation or information, contact Fran Stark at 673-5493.

- **American Red Cross Blood Donation** – 2:30 - 7:00 pm, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 9880 US Hwy 15-50, Pinehurst. Appt. call Nancy 603-0846

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13

- **Carolina Philharmonic Concert** – 5:30 pm, at Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church, 300 Dundee Road, Pinehurst. Chamber Music "In the Name of Valentine" includes a Champagne & Chocolates Reception Concert at 6 pm, Strauss - Beethoven - Kreutzer - Rachmaninoff - Piazzolla presented. Ticket Prices: General Admission \$25, Senior/Military \$20, Students Free. Ticket Sales & Sponsorship 910-400-.5070 or CarolinaPhil.org

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 14

- **Valentine's Day**
- **Carolina Philharmonic Concert** – at 4 pm, Reception at 5:30 pm. Held at Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church, 300 Dundee Road, Pinehurst. Chamber Music – "In the Name of Valentine" includes a Champagne & Chocolates Reception. Strauss -

Beethoven - Kreutzer - Rachmaninoff - Piazzolla presented. Ticket Prices: General Admission \$25, Senior/Military \$20, Students Free. Ticket Sales & Sponsorship 910-400-5070 or CarolinaPhil.org

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15

- **President's Day**
- **Seven Lakes Landowners Association Work Session** – 8:30 am, Conference Room.
- **American Red Cross Blood Donation** – 1:30 pm - 6:00 pm, Our Saviour Lutheran, 1517 Luther Way, Southern Pines. Appt. call 692-8571

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16

- **League Luncheon and Anniversary Celebration** – check in time is 11:30, meeting at 11:45 am. The title of the program is 'We've Come a Long Way, Baby.' The speakers are Maureen Krueger, the Moore County District Attorney and Glenda Clendenin, the Director of the Moore County Board of Elections. Luncheon at the Table on the Green Restaurant, Midland Country Club. Public welcome. Reserve your seat by calling Charlotte Gallagher at 910-244-9611. Cost for lunch is \$12.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17

- **Professional Rescuer CPR/AED Review** – 6:30 - 8:30 pm. American Red Cross Review/Recertification Course: Prerequisite: Participant should hold current or recently expired certification in the review subject. (For Healthcare Providers & Lifeguards). Fee \$25. American Red Cross Moore County, 115 E. Pennsylvania Ave., Southern Pines. 910-692-8571

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18

- **Seven Lakes Forum** – 4 pm, Ellen McFarland, from St. Joseph of the Pines, will speak on the changing profile of today's 'consumer' of continuing care. She will provide an overview of *Continuing Care Retirement Communities: Industry Trends for the New Generation of Consumers*. Considerable contemplation and planning appear to be necessary in order to make decisions related to later-life, which are individualized and personally appropriate. Meeting will be held on the upper level of the West Side Park Community Center. All women and men from Seven Lakes, and their guests, are invited to attend. Information: Bill Mamel (673-8970).

- **Adult/Infant/Child CPR/AED Review** – . 6:00 - 8:30 pm. American Red Cross Review/Recertification Course: Prerequisite: Participant should hold current or recently expired certification in the review subject. Fee \$25. American Red Cross Moore County, 115 E. Pennsylvania Ave., Southern Pines. 910-692-8571.
- **Rufus Barringer Civil War Round Table** – 7 pm. The guest speaker will be, Mr. Clint Johnson of Ashe County. Mr. Johnson is a proud Southerner whose Scot-Irish ancestors settled in North Carolina in the 1730s. He will present "The Pursuit: The Chase. Capture, Persecution and Surprising Release of Jefferson Davis." Held at the Southern Pines Civic Club, across from the tennis courts, at the Corner of Ashe Street & Pennsylvania Ave, Southern Pines. New members & visitors are welcome. Refreshments are served. Info: 910-315-1213.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20

- **CPR/AED for the Healthcare Provider** – 9:00 am - 4:00 pm. AR Intro. Cert. Course., Fee \$60. American Red Cross Moore County, 115 E. Pennsylvania Ave., Southern Pines. 910-692-8571.



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Westside meeting

(Continued from front page)

ating expenses to no more than a three percent year-to-year increase, while rebuilding reserve accounts depleted by the dam repairs to meet the current and future needs of the community.

The result of four months of budget planning is a proposed FY 2011 budget that includes a small 2.5 percent, \$26,000 increase in

operational expenses, but increases the Associations spending on capital maintenance and investment in reserves by \$442,000 when compared to the current fiscal year's budget.

"There is nothing frivolous or extravagant in this budget," Shepard told landowners.

The FY2011 budget includes \$137,000 for capital maintenance

projects — things like repairs to the culverts and pond dams, as well as road drainage and erosion control. It includes \$97,000 for capital projects: including perimeter fencing, a plan for the front and back entrances, new security gate cameras, and, possibly, an electronic card entry system for the swimming pool.

Finally, the proposed budget includes a \$424,000 contribution to reserves, with \$250,000 of that going toward road repaving. Shepard said a road repaving plan prepared by former director Ray Mackay and currently under review, projects that the Association will need over \$2.5 million in today's dollars for paving through 2021.

If the Association had raised dues five percent per year beginning in 2001, the 36 percent increase sought in the FY 2011 budget would not have been necessary. On behalf of the Board, Shepard asked SLWLA members to support and approve the proposed budget.

express their support for or opposition to the budget and proposed dues increase.

Jim Balleu asked the Board to explain why the dues increase was substantially greater for unimproved lots. Treasurer Kathy Kirst said she had done an analysis of the expense budget an pro-rated expenditures to reflect their importance to owners of unimproved versus vacant lots. She found that about seventy-two percent of Association expenditures are applicable to owners of vacant lots. For example, security may not be quite as important to owners of vacant lots as to those who actually live in the community, but the fact that the Association provides security enhances the value of undeveloped lots.

Jim Barrett asked to meet with the Board to discuss an (See "Westside meeting," p. 21)

Interview

(Continued from page 17)

— and would like to find a way to "make it a little more painless."

He noted that sometimes trivial violations of the lake rules can waste a lot of time for a number of people. For example, boat owners often register their boat but then neglect to apply the new decal to the vessel. The lake patrol spots and reports the violation, the office staff goes to work, only to find the boat is in fact registered."

"That waste's a lot of people's time," Herdrich said, noting that a new fine system that goes into effect this year should help alleviate the problem.

Recruiting Board members

"It is hard to get people to run," Herdrich said when asked about the difficulty of recruiting Board members. "We have a lot of people in the community now who work. And serving on the Board does take time. Board members now, and in the past,

work very very hard."

"But if I, as a volunteer, have to work 40 hours a week, then I need to work a little smarter . . . I see CAS as a valuable tool to help me not do those things."

Herdrich mentioned a recent restructuring by some Board members to have their committees include a deputy chairman who can run the committee and take some of the workload. "You have to run it almost like a business after a while."

Some folks shy away from serving on the Board, he added, "because we'll lose all our friends. I have not found that to be the case with anyone. As a Board member, you have to make some tough decisions, but hopefully that's why people asked you to take the job."

Other thoughts

Asked for any other thoughts, Herdrich described his approach to decision making — one that he said most folks on the current

Board share.

"I'm very commonsense, keep things simple, let's not make mountains out of things if we can break it down and fix it. I am really very direct. I don't like to beat around the bush. If something makes sense, that's what we should be doing. If it doesn't make sense, we shouldn't be doing it."

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Westside meeting

(Continued from page 20)

alternate approach that he said would make the dues increase unnecessary. Among other things, he said, his plan involved an alternate plan for refinancing the mortgage on West Side Park. Kirst agreed to meet with Barrett, but explained that the NC Planned Community Act limits the Board's options for refinancing.

Ronnie Milligan said he was pleased when the Board eliminated \$14,000 from the expense budget to pay for Fourth of July fireworks — and dismayed to learn the Board had reinstated up to \$7,000 of that budget to match contributions from landowners. But others, including **Charlie Flinchum** and **Jim Embler**, pledged \$100 toward the fireworks fund-raising effort.

Tom Sneed questioned the wisdom of building road-paving reserves and investing that money at a less than five percent return, when the cost of paving is escalating fifteen percent per year. The smarter option would be to debt-finance the needed road repairs, Sneed said. Treasurer Kirst explained that the Planned Community Act allows the Association to pledge its assets in order to secure a loan only with the approval of eighty percent of all landowners — an impossibly high bar. The options for obtaining an unsecured loan are very limited, she said.

Paul Werkmeister said the idea of using debt financing is attractive, since the expenses for infrastructure appear to increase rapidly and then fall off. "The flip on that would be," Werkmeister said, "if we pay as we go, could we anticipate the budget dropping in 2022. My guess is, once it's in, it will stay in."

Given the escalating cost of paving, **Frank Land** said, the Board might want to accelerate its repaving schedule. President Shepard noted that a committee is already working on revisiting the plan.

Mike Foreman asked for those in favor of the proposed budget and dues increase to stand, and then for those opposed to stand. Though there was no way to accurately judge the response, it appeared the room split 60-40 against.

Another resident asked what happens if the budget is not

approved by the membership. Legal Director Ed Silberhorn explained that, if more than half of all members — roughly 860 lots — vote to turn down the proposed budget, it is returned to the Treasurer, who decides what to do, bringing a proposal back the board. The typical Westside election does not attract 860 voters, let alone 860 on one or another side of an issue.

Max Foley suggested that, instead of buying new security cameras for the gates, the Association should purchase stronger gates that could stop vehicles.

James Eilert, noting the budg-

et for perimeter fencing, asked whether the goal was "to make us a big prison with a fence around it." Security Director John Hoffmann said the Association has been fencing areas of strategic importance, where intrusion has been a problem in the past. Hoffmann said he felt "fencing that doesn't hook up to anything is illogical. However, a lot of people don't agree with that. A lot of people think that placing fencing in strategic places helps keep-outsiders from coming in here."

Mary Price thanked the Board for putting together a budget that looks to the future of the

community.

Ruth Caldera worried that increasing dues thirty-six percent on one year might set a precedent.

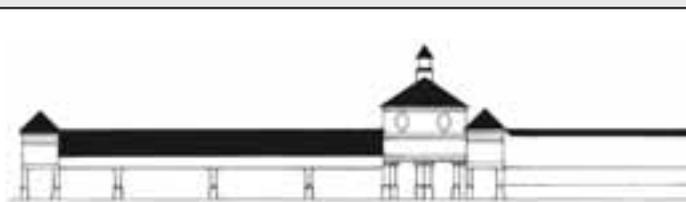
Patty Cleary pointed out that her county taxes had increased 117 percent since 2001, while SLWLA dues had increased only 21 percent.

Tina Darby asked whether the capital projects included the cost of repaving the dam road. President Shepard said that cost was not included in the FY2011 budget because it is not yet clear that the road can be rebuilt.

Other business

During the business portion of the January 26 meeting, the Board approved an expenditure not to exceed \$6,000 for the clearing of trees and shrubs from the pond dams. A proposal to ask homeowners along the affected streets to pay for water line upgrades so that fire hydrants can be installed was also approved.

Director Silberhorn reported that the community will be asked to vote this spring on the \$45,000 purchase of two lots in Colton's Corners near the back gate, for use as common areas.



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Doing one's civic duty is no picnic

I have something in common with Christine Lahti, the Academy award-winning actress — and no, it's not a little gold statue. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

You see, this week I was selected for that most heinous of civic obligations, jury duty.

The first hour: I dutifully park in the recommended lot and brave three blocks of melting snow and ice to reach the courthouse doors. Somebody's grandfather, who happens to sport a 9mm Glock, sweetly inquires if I have any weapons as I trip the metal detector. Satisfied that

it's my choice of fashion accessories and not cold steel setting off the alarms, he cheerfully waves me in.



Laura's Learning Curve

Laura Douglass

The second hour: My posterior is comfortably numb after sitting through a riveting educational video of the court system

and what it means to be a juror. Yawn, didn't Schoolhouse Rock cover this in sixth grade?

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The third hour: A break, a

break! The judge takes mercy on the jury pool. Spilling into a few anterooms built for twelve with a single one-seater restroom, the

ladies line grows exponentially.

This is when I have my Lahti-moment. You may recall she's the one who missed her stage call at the Golden Globes because she was attending to the call of nature.

So this was it: my turn, finally. I slipped into the claustrophobic water closet and, taking care of business, I couldn't help but notice how profoundly sound-proofed the tiny space was. I was impressed that the otherwise hideous 1970s era construction didn't allow for any noise to escape the jury room.

Uh-huh, that's because they all

left . . . me alone.

The fourth hour: Beet-red and embarrassed, I'm forced to return to my seat under the unblinking consternation of one judge, two clerks, and three lawyers. My day has not improved.

The fifth hour: Isn't it 5:00 o'clock somewhere? Captive without my cell phone and laptop, I feel adrift and helpless. Come on, come on, just say it — you're dismissed!

Yes!

We'll see you all back here tomorrow at 9:30 am so we may continue jury selection.

No!

Management co. = no savings? No surprise.

Dear Editor:

Well, the Seven Lakes Landowners Association Board of Directors had their way and now all the property owners shall pay the bill.

The good news for most of us, is that the current staff shall be allowed to keep their jobs. The bad news is the management cost will now increase by an "estimated" \$21,952 per year. Combine that with the \$75,000 consultation fee and for this year SLLA property owners incur additional cost of \$96,952.

President Zielsdorf states, he'll be "shocked" if the management company doesn't find

enough cost savings to "pay for themselves."

If anyone actually believes that, I've got some oceanfront property in Arizona and a couple of bridges in the NY area I'd be interested in selling them.

Treasurer Galford stated he did not anticipate any dues increase. Has anyone forgotten we already have a dues increase for 2010? It was voted in during the last dues increase. I don't know what majority of property owners Director Droppers spoke to about "agreeing" we needed a management company.

Certainly, the majority of property owners I spoke with during the charade of interviewing Chad

Beane along with management companies did not agree that we needed a management company.

But, we now have a management company, and no one should be fooled, the Board does run the community.

So, lets see, we now have one less person to handle, help and answer complaints with the assistant community managers position being removed, and our new community manager will be on hand 4 days out of the week, and our cost increase including the consultants fee is \$96,952.

But for this we're going to "polish" the community, add some

innovation and planning.

And lets not forget, at all the cocktail parties, bridge parties and get togethers, we'll all be able to state that our Seven Lakes Community is now run by a management company.

Unfortunately, the elitist will still have to face the fact that Seven Lakes is a rural, country, gated community that's located in West End, NC, has no sidewalks and street lamps and will never be like Cannon Drive in Beverly Hills or The Hamptons, no matter how much "polish" is applied.

In my opinion, the management company will not change the color of the grass, the foliage on the tress, the view of the lake, the vandalism by some of

our young people, the speeding cars inside the gate, the bottles, cans and litter thrown on the side of the roads, or the overcrowding and noise coming from Sequoia Point this Summer.

What you can be sure the management company will change, is our cost, and that the dues will be increased.

Interesting that President Zielsdorf expects that the management company will have to be in place a year before we see "significant" changes.

I guess that will negate the option to cancel the contract within 60 days.

Jordan Rhodes
Seven Lakes North

SEVEN
SLAKES
TIMES

Published every other Friday for residents & landowners of Seven Lakes, Foxfire, & McLendon Hills, NC by Seven Lakes Times, LLC, P.O. Box 468, West End, NC 27376 910-673-0111 • 888-806-2572 (fax) • mail@sevenlakestimes.net

Publishers — Greg Hankins & Tom Hankins
Editor — Greg Hankins • Layout & Design — Marcy Hankins
Reporter — Laura Douglass

Founded in 1985 by Seven Lakes Times, Inc.
J. Sherwood Dunham, Alfred C. Gent, William C. Kerchof,
Ruth H. Sullivan, and Thomas J. Tucker

Letters to the
Editor



Your letters
welcome!

The Times welcomes letters from our readers, and we print most all we receive. You will need to sign your letter, and give us a phone number where you can be reached. We prefer letters delivered by e-mail, but accept letters delivered by fax, or the US Postal Service. Or you can drop your letter off in the drop box at our office at 4307 Seven Lakes Plaza.

The opinions expressed by our letters writers are theirs, not ours, as are any errors of fact they might make in expressing those opinions.

State mental health decision a crying shame

Dear Editor:

What a sad and unrelenting sorry state of affairs for those with a brain illness!

Your local National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) – Moore County purchased 3.5 acres for a residential adult care home for those with a brain illness in September 2008. NAMI-MC went outside their normal advocacy mission, their comfort zone, and their financial means to purchase this property because it was quite apparent to the organization that not the State or Sandhills Center Organization, the public health mental health system, was going “to step up to the plate” and assist in providing additional housing in Moore County.

While reading through old NAMI-MC minutes from 1991, I read where Sandhills Center with some support from NAMI-MC opened a group home for what has been the only State endorsed group home in Moore County – that was 19 years ago! Since that time, not one dime has been spent on additional housing situations for those with a mental illness that are not able to live independently except to place them in nursing homes or assisted living facilities.

Yes, 20 year olds with a mental illness are now housed with the elderly and aged. Having had many discussions with Sandhills Center over the past four years, I was assured several times during that period that something would be done to rectify the lack of housing – well, to date that still has not occurred.

It was becoming abundantly clear that neither the local governments, County or State, were going to do anything to alleviate this housing shortage – so NAMI-MC stepped in to try and assist in filling the gap. After working vigorously to purchase the property with no government funds whatsoever, and while still working tirelessly to pay off the debt on the property, the NC DHHS severe budget cuts began for those with mental health issues – and they were not minor cuts.

After purchasing the property, NAMI-MC arranged for a local endorsed organization to operate the home according to State

Statutes – only to have them give notice to NAMI-MC last week that they can no longer afford to run the group home due to the budget cuts, thereby causing the possible displacement of the three current residents and the three residents that were to live in the new addition that was about to be built – all from Moore County, I might add. So – the State in its wisdom will now possibly contribute to having six more individuals without a home and possibly on the streets, the possibility of paying additional moneys for more frequent hospitalizations, or even worse – have to pay for them while they are in jail (most likely for some minor infractions due to lack of medication supervision).

I have personally, as President of NAMI-MC, made office calls on U.S. Rep. Coble, NC Sen. Blake and Rep. Boles and contacted County Commissioner Cindy Morgan who represents Mental Health on the Sandhills Center Area Board – the only

legislator that has maintained any contact is Rep. Coble who will call to find out how things are going and if there is anything that he can do to assist.

What will it take to get our legislators and community attention – mental illness is a human condition and this is inhumane treatment for an entire population that does not deserve this kind of neglect. It’s a sorry state of affairs when a service organization cannot provide the services for which they are licensed due to no money in the Sandhills Center and State coffers allowing them to provide the required services. For shame on our sys-

tem of care (or frankly, lack of care) for those individuals suffering with a brain disorder. Go to www.nami-moorecounty.org for information about NAMI-MC.

Marianne Kernan
President, NAMI-MC

League Luncheon

Two Moore County women who are involved in politics will speak at the The Tuesday, February 16 luncheon meeting of the League of Women Voters of Moore County: thus the title of the program is ‘We’ve Come a Long Way, Baby.’ The speakers are Maureen Krueger, the Moore County District Attorney and Glenda Clendenin, the Director of the Moore County Board of Elections.

The luncheon will be held at the Table on the Green Restaurant, in Midland Country Club. The public is welcome, with a reservation. Lunch may be reserved by calling Charlotte Gallagher at 910-244-9611, by February 12. Total cost for the lunch is \$12. A check, payable to LWVMC, is the preferred method of payment.

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SLLA needs more financial transparency

Dear Editor:

Ron Erskine wrote a letter to the editor that was published in the January 22 edition of *The Seven Lakes Times* that everyone should read. If you have not read it, you need to go to the back editions of *The Times* that can be found at www.sevenlakes-times.net and read it.

Seven Lakes Landowners Association [SLLA] President Randy Zielsdorf has done a terrific job with his leadership as he consistently pushed toward professional management. There is one more step that must be taken. According to published remarks, Zielsdorf is going to leave the degree of openness up to the chairperson of each committee. One committee chair, Denny Galford of the finance committee, has consistently shown a reluctance to provide members complete financial information. To be brief, North Carolina Law in N.C.G.S 55A, which is the Non Profit Corpo-

ration Act, provides for membership to have access to all accounting records. Quoting from the Statute: "a member is entitled to inspect and copy, at a reasonable time and location specified by the corporation, any of the records of the corporation. . ."

Many of our prior problems lasted as long as they did because all financial information was not available for inspection. Had the community at large had access to complete financial information, our manager and previous Boards would have been held to a higher standard. An example of this is the cost of our former manager. If members had known that he cost the SLLA around \$95,000 annually, they would have demanded change. Mr. Galford, it is time we learn from our mistakes rather than repeat them.

*D. Alan Shaw
Seven Lakes South*

The Games that unite us

Every time there's a World Olympics, I can see the tiny potential for a peaceful universe emerge. Does that sound silly?

Just seeing those competi-

In my own heart, this event always brings a yearning to magnify such a heartwarming communion many fold and in many other ways throughout the world.

Yes, you can feel that there is more than just the quest for medals. More than showcasing your nationality.

It is the brief sowing of seeds of friendship.

A spark that millions of people

worldwide witnessed, seemingly transforming us into a partnership with that opening flame that bespoke a hope for closer understanding between governments as well as individual citizens of this vast world of ours.

We surely need much more of this kind of international brotherhood. No matter where human hearts are located, they all have the potential for mutual understanding.



Mason's Musings

Mason Gould

tors from so many corners of the world marching in the opening ceremonies, with sheer happiness caressing their faces, you can sense their feeling of togetherness, of sharing a common and exhilarating slice of their lives with their counterparts, all with beating hearts that you have to believe were spurring each and every athlete to look across the way and feel a commonality of uplifting spirit.

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Residents' concerns deserve attention, response

Dear Editor:

Frequently, we hear residents express their frustration over concerns that they have raised and they do not know if any action was taken by manage-

ment/Board to address their concerns.

It is respectfully submitted that with the new management team assuming their responsibilities, they should be able to deliver a

monthly report of all concerns brought to their attention and the action taken. The report should be open to the public – except for confidential matters – and the Board should exercise its oversight powers to assure that all concerns are timely addressed and resolved.

An example:

Geese. As recently reported in *The Times*, resident John Allen presented his concerns regarding the proliferation of geese to the Board. His Letter to the Editor shows the indifference his concerns received. The work session minutes of September 14 show the matter was acknowledged and was delegated to an individual to be investigated. To this date, there is no record of any action taken. He was basically ignored, as have the concerns of other Seven Lakes' residents. Under my proposal, Mr. Allen would have received a response within thirty days. He would then be updated each additional thirty days until the matter was

addressed and resolved.

We owe our thanks to Mr. Allen for the tremendous amount of research he did on this matter

at Seven Lakes can contribute a great deal to our community, if only given the opportunity, and the belief that their efforts will not be ignored.

Management and the Board must stop and listen to opinions of the residents, and seek and welcome their opinions. The residents are the ones the Board and management serve. Real communication and accountability are essential to the continued success of this terrific community. The residents have a right to give their input on matters and the right to know what is happening.

These are a couple of my views as a candidate for the [SLLA] Board of Directors. Although I live in Seven Lakes North, I am signing this as North/South for I believe that every Board member must always remember that they represent both sides of the community.

Bob Racine

Seven Lakes North/South

Support board by voting for budget

Dear Editor:

Seven Lakes West is a beautiful gated community with first class amenities that everyone in the community can enjoy.

We are proud of Seven Lakes West and support recent efforts to further enhance its stature as a first class residential community. As landowners since 2002, and homeowners since 2007, we feel that the annual dues that we pay have always

been a great bargain for the amenities provided and will continue to be with the proposed increase.

Let's support our Board with the proposed budget, build up some reserves, move toward the future, assured that Seven Lakes West will continue to be the beautiful community that we enjoy and are proud of.

Parks and Kitty Cobb
Seven Lakes West



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Westside budget based on long range plan

Letter to the Editor:

On January 26th, the SLWLA Board presented a clear, reasoned and understandable rationale for the pending dues increase.

Yes, it is a large increase, but unfortunately this step has become necessary. The facts

Reality check

Dear Editor:

In 2001, we purchased our home in Seven Lakes West. The following example is based on actual numbers for our home.

Moore County Property Taxes	
2001	\$1,308
2009	\$2,840
Increase	\$1,532
Percent increase	117%

SLWLA Dues

2001	\$582
2009	\$705
Increase	\$123
Percent increase	21%

This \$123 dues increase over a nine year period equals \$1.14 per month. Every dime spent in this community comes from this measly amount.

Of the 117 percent increase paid to the county not a dime comes back into this community for road repair, dam repair, upkeep of West Side Park or Johnson Point, mowing, landscaping or security. The only taxpayer money used to improve Seven Lakes West was the installation of seventeen fire hydrants and those hydrants were paid for by the community.

We've been living on the cheap for years and the time has come to wake up and take a reality check.

*Patti Cleary
Seven Lakes West*

are based on a long range, strategic financial plan to insure that our membership will not be faced with huge future assessments for the continuing long term needs of the community. This strategy has three components:

First: Our Board separated the operating budget from the reserve components projecting a modest 2.5% increase in operational costs for the coming fiscal year. The increase is certainly reasonable. The separation is fundamental to good planning and protection of our reserves.

Second: Our Board needed to restore and fund, not just the dam reserve and the contingency (emergency) fund, which had both been depleted by our recent expenditures for dam remediation, but the maintenance reserves for the future repaving of our roads, replacement of the dam valve and depreciation to our community center, swimming complex, Johnson Point and other amenities. These

requirements total several millions of dollars. To suggest this shouldn't be done now, but years down the road, feels short sighted. There is little logic in thinking



the membership will approve large individual assessments for these future needs.

Third: Our Board has to begin building reserves for necessary future capital projects which will insure that we will move forward and be competitive with other existing and new residential communities so our real estate values will be maintained. A failure to do this will cost us significantly more in loss of property value than these annual dollars. Not going to sell? Let our children

worry about that? Is that really how we feel?

Should we have been gradually raising dues over the past years to meet these needs? Absolutely, but we didn't. We all know these are difficult economic times and I respect those who are concerned about the magnitude of the increase. I share that concern. Nevertheless, we have already delayed building our reserves for most of a

decade. Exacerbating the delay of insuring the future of our community, and just deferring the problems further, doesn't make sense. That course only makes our current situation worse. These future maintenance costs and funds for necessary capital improvements are a reality for which we need to begin setting funds aside now.

*Bud Sales
Seven Lakes West*

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IRA0408

Bad time for big increase. Be sure to vote!

Dear Editor:
Attention All Seven Lakes West Landowners!

In light of the proposed 36 percent increase in dues on improved lots and unimproved lots going up to \$720, it is very important that you return your ballot and make your vote count. A group of concerned citizens are trying to reach out to all resident and nonresident landowners to be sure to vote. Your vote is needed to help secure a fair

democratic process.

We are all aware of the present economic crisis our country is facing and this community is not immune to this situation. One source has said that only 9 lots sold in the year 2009 and there are 109 currently listed for sale. There are some homes that are in foreclosure and many homes listed as short sales. This affects all property values. Is this a reasonable time for such a large increase considering our

struggling economy? Some residents are facing job losses if not trying to find a new job in a time of high unemployment rates. A large number of residents had significant losses in the stock market. Pay raises have not kept up with inflation in years.

What will we gain with a huge increase in dues if this pushes people to their limit and makes them consider moving? Why are we doing this to our friends and neighbors? Our market values have already gone down significantly and many homes that are for sale have been on the market for eighteen months or more. Seven Lakes West is still

a wonderful place to live and we know we must have reasonable increases to keep improving roads and maintain other amenities. Some concerned citizens of Seven Lakes

West don't want a free ride — just a fair one. Please be sensitive to what people are going through when you vote.

Sherry & Tim Niewald
Seven Lakes West

Too much, too soon.

Dear Editor:

I have been a property owner and dues payer in Seven Lakes West since 1989. I have voted for every budget proposal throughout these 20 years. But not this time.

I continue to support the continuing maintenance and support of my community, but believe the current proposal overreaches.

Too much too soon. Like many of our senior residents, my finances are constrained by a fixed income stream and must be managed carefully. The proposed large budget increases are designed to rapidly build up reserves against future expenses. These reserves will earn low CD rates of return until they're accessed.

In the meanwhile, to cover these dues increases, many of

our members' personal budgets will be distressed and they will need to resort to borrowing at rate much higher than the Association will realize on these banked funds. Is this sound economics?

I also take issue with the argument that we need to "keep up with the Joneses" by raising our dues to a level similar to "other comparable communities." This is nuts.

We should take pride in our past good management and continue to set an example of . . . not follow the herd mentality. I respectfully call on our incoming Board to rework this budget into something more inline with current economic conditions.

Theodore Atwood
Seven Lakes West

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Budget deserves support of all landowners

Dear Editor:

An Open Letter to the Non-Resident Friends and Future Neighbors of Seven Lakes West

Like most of us here in Seven Lakes West, you are no doubt surprised by the sizable increase in your annual dues as proposed by the Board in the FY 2011 budget.

I too, was surprised by the proposal. However, though no one appreciates an increase in taxes, fees, dues, or any other increases which affect one's personal finances and eventual quality of living, I was pleasantly surprised by the Board in being resolute and well-informed, in order to make the difficult decisions related to the long range financial well being of this community. And doing so when they were fully aware that their personal relationships with neighbors and friends might be compromised.

To me, the efforts and resulting action necessary to develop the proposed budget was an example of timely and competent leadership when it was required. That is why we, as association members, need to place our trust in the members of the Board, either individually or collectively.

The key word is that the Board and the Finance Committee were 'informed' and as members of the association, it is all but impossible for members of our association to have all the information and statistics which are available to the Board. We all like the term democracy . . . "of the people, by the people and for the people." But in essence, although we like the concept of a democracy, James Madison (1732-1801) probably stated it correctly in that, like the United States, the governance of Seven Lakes West really functions as 'representative democracy' or for want of a better term, a republic. In other words, we elect representatives to act appropriately on our behalf and in a fiduciary manner.

Our representatives, as Board members are now facing what could be described as a 'Perfect Financial Storm.'

If you have not maintained a continuous liaison with the financial picture over the last fifteen or so years, it is difficult to under-

stand or comprehend this 'storm.' Let me cite a few situations which the community had/has to deal with which will severely affect, or have already affected, the financial resources of the community and have inhibited the development of adequate reserves to fund future projects and unforeseen events:

- Developmental shortcomings in the planning, construction and installation of the infrastructure e.g. drainage, waterlines, fire hydrants, roads and dam.
- Purchase of the lake and removal of the causeway.
- Construction of the Westside Park Community Center and the ongoing mortgage obligation.
- Restrictions on levying small dues increases since 2003

due to the mergers with Beacon Ridge and the Pinnacle.

- Repair of the unforeseen deterioration of the dam.
- Eventual construction of a new gatehouse and responsibility for its staffing.
- Construction of new postal facility/facilities.
- Maintenance and service of the existing roadways due to normal wear.

Financial details on these few items are available from either the appropriate Board member or the community management services. You will again be surprised by the enormity of these expenditures which total in the millions of dollars.

Looking at the financial effect of addressing these items and others like them, and the Board's mission to insure that property values are maintained, our Board

had no choice but to take bold, decisive action. There may be some budget line items which are personally not as appealing as others, such as decorations, fireworks and the like. But personal tastes of individual members are not issues which the Board can patronize. Hence, the budget as proposed.

If you are inclined to vote against the proposed budget I, as a former president of the Association and current Seven

Lakes West resident, respectfully request that you commit some time, at your convenience, to review the long term needs of the community, looking carefully at the capital/reserve portion of the proposed budget. I believe that you will find that it is in our mutual best interest to support the Board and approve the budget as proposed.

Bill Mamel
Seven Lakes West

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The 2010 Seven Lakes EMS Telephone Directory is now available.

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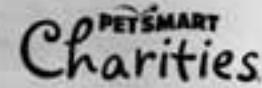
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Adoptions

Westside dues are long-range investment

Dear Editor,

In regards to the current 'budget battle' (the latest skirmish taking place this past Tuesday evening) I would like to add my strong support to the passage of the proposed budget!

My wife and I have owned a home here for eleven years and have recently moved here full-time. We plan to spend the rest of our natural lives here and consider the modest dues increase (if one looks at the minimal yearly upticks from 2001 on) to be reasonable. We understand that for some of us the \$20/month additional expense on a fixed income might be a burden, but one has to look at the monies as a long range investment.

Backed into a corner, most residents (lot owners, too) would say their number one concern is the value of their home. The only way that home values will be maintained is if more people buy existing or build new homes here. That will only happen if, when those prospective buyers first visit, they are not put off by the unpaved roads and crumbling culverts. One look at those and

they will turn around and look elsewhere. They won't get to see the long list of wonderful, free amenities that we enjoy because most people decide on a property in the first moments of their visit.

The current board of directors has the proper long range goals in mind to keep the community desirable. The board works many more hours than most realize all 'gratis' and have only the best interest of the landowners in mind.

Forget the fireworks controversy, for goodness sakes, they will be privately funded. All of us need to stop 'jumping over dollars to get to dimes' and pass the proposed budget. We cannot afford to see our dreams begin to fade because of a few extra dollars. Did we think that cost of living here would not go up?

For us, the price, when compared to other local communities, is still the best bargain in town (except the \$1.00 iced teas at McDonald's.)

Cathy & Phil Menendian
Seven Lakes West

Why charge dues on septic lot?

Dear Editor:

[An open letter to SLWLA President Ron Shepard]

The dues increase and the mention by another member of the dues on her lot caught my attention. We own a septic lot because our building lot would not perk.

The response to her question was "it would be good for the landowner but not for the Association." My question is if a decision is made between what is good for a member versus what is good for the Association, is the winner always the Association?

Why do we pay dues on our lot? Is it to pay for the services and amenities available to each member? If so, it seems we make the same use of these as someone who owns one lot. The Association can always find ways to collect more money

from us, but the guiding principle should be is this fee fair and just.

If our septic lot adjoined our home lot we could apply to have the two lots turned into one since the septic lot would have no value as a separate lot. Then we would pay dues on only one lot. A number of landowners have already done this. Certainly we should not pay dues on our septic lot just because it doesn't adjoin our home lot.

Owners of septic lots suffer a negative value on their home. When we want to sell, it is definitely a negative factor on the marketability of our home, and even more so if there are extra dues to pay. Moore County recognizes the no value of a septic lot. We would ask the Board to make the same recognition.

Lois and Bruce Ashley
Seven Lakes West

Seven Lakes Dance Group

The 7 Lakes Dance Group meets every Sunday from 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm at the Seven Lakes North Clubhouse. Come out to enjoy social dancing for fun and fitness. Singles and couples are welcome -- whether you've never danced, want to practice, or are looking to learn a new step.

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Fireworks funds could be better spent

Dear Editor:

Attending the recent Seven Lakes West Board meeting on January 26 was an eye-opener for many, including myself!

The \$14,000 for fire works was brought down to zero in the budget. Someone challenged the Board to meet it halfway and the balance would be paid by private donations. Many, many were against the Association

paying \$7,000. I agree.

Several spoke for it, two men said they would give \$100 each for it. One homeowner said the fireworks were a way to celebrate the birthday of our nation.

Fireworks were a man-made addition – years later for the celebration. There were no fireworks at the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. On that day there was

prayer, thanking God, praising God and rejoicing all across the nation. This great country was founded by our forefathers, "One nation under God."

On July 4th, I urge everyone to gather with their family or friends to celebrate the fourth with a cookout, prayer, praise, thanking God and rejoicing for the many blessings that God has so graciously given to us all. Why not

reach out to those less fortunate and invite them to celebrate with us?

Open our churches for the best light display of 'Praise, Music & Prayer' and have some worship. Come one, come all with open hearts.

So take the \$14,000 in all donations and help the less fortunate here in Moore County. West End Elementary and all of our schools can assist in giving those of you involved in the fireworks a list to give them food, clothing, shoes or help pay CP&L, a bed, a chair, a sofa, take a family out to eat – there is so much more this community can do with \$14,000 than to blow it

up in a matter of minutes.

That goes for Seven Lakes North/South as well. We want to be a better community then let's make a difference and start now.

And for the Board, absolutely no increase – our roads are in better condition than most states. Cut that budget back, we can do without. We do not need to spend \$11,000 on photo ID for the pool, for one example. The regular ID cards work fine. Two bonuses and out of area work conference expenses are not necessary – use our building for that conference, etc, etc, etc.

Diane Evans
Seven Lakes West

Meet Teddy Roosevelt!

On Wednesday, February 10 at Country Club of North Carolina, Gib Young will bring President Roosevelt to life for the English Speaking Union. Young is the foremost Theodore Roosevelt interpreter in the United States.

You will feel as though you are in the company of President Roosevelt, it will be 1915 again. The 26th President will be discussing his Presidency including: trust busting activities, relationships with European and Caribbean neighbors, conservation and wild life protection,

international influence around the globe, child labor laws and the great white fleet. He will welcome questions about his life, his Presidency and his times, and always enjoys spirited discussions.

President Roosevelt was a complex man. He was born an asthmatic aristocrat and became the hardiest of cowboys. He was a passionate conservationist but he was also a big game hunter. Roosevelt won the Nobel Peace Prize and as a Cavalry Colonel he fearlessly battled the Spaniards in Cuba.

It will be a great evening for ESU members and guests. The event will be held at the Country Club of North Carolina. Cocktails served at 6 pm, followed by dinner at 7 pm. The program follows. Anyone interested in attending the event and information regarding membership in the English Speaking Union, contact Mrs. Martha O'Connor, Membership Chair at 235-0635, or email Dr. Phil Hinsley at p.hinsley@gmail.com.

Global Warming - or Not?

During all this cold weather we endured recently did you laugh and wonder what happened to global warming? Well, more and more scientists are debunking the theory that man, cars and even cattle are causing the Arctic to thaw and the seas to rise.

If you would like to learn more about our fluctuations of weather cycles come to the West Side Community Center Thursday, February 25 at 7

pm and learn some facts about the atmosphere.

Come and view the showing of the documentary titled "Not Evil, Just Wrong" that was produced by an Irishman whom you may have seen on TV. He was the one who asked Al Gore why there were more polar bears in the Arctic than ever before.

Al Gore had no answer, but the producer was escorted to the door.



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SLLA Meeting

(Continued from front page)

name, respectively. This was actually the second time in as many months that Darr's resignation was announced. Originally hired as a six-month contract employee, Darr's employment had been twice extended this year.

Despite Darr's withdrawal, the slate of candidates will include six members running for the three open seats with the late inclusion of petition candidate and incumbent, Bud Shaver. Following a significant improvement to his health, Shaver announced last month his intention to run for a second term.

As unanimously approved on Wednesday, January 27, the candidates for the 2010-2011 Board of Directors are Shaver, Charlie Hannel, Chuck Mims, Bob Racine, Melinda Scott, and Don Truesdell. The Board also approved the members of the Election Committee; serving this year are Dennis Roberts, Wayne Burris, Lone Katz, and Al Anderson. Longtime committee member Ray Pardue has offered to advise as needed.

Rescheduled Work Session

President Randy Zielsdorf recommended that the February work session be postponed until Monday, February 15.

"The Bylaws say we must schedule the work session ten days before the meeting. We're going to have to break that Bylaw — it'll be nine days. The problem is if we stick with February 8, Alina [Cochran] will only have been in place for a week," said Zielsdorf.

After brief discussion, the Board unanimously approved the schedule change.

Curbing Project

The curbing project at the main parking lot in Seven Lakes North is nearly complete; however, Director Sally Kindsvatter raised concerns about the original bid specifications and whether clean-up work was included.

Treasurer Denny Galford said that specifications were included in the contract and that the three bids received were for different solutions to the problem.

"We had three bids with alternative ways to approach curbing. The Board voted for the middle

of the road bid," said Galford.

Shaver recommended that final payment to the contractor should be withheld until the Board is satisfied with their work; however, Debbie Caulk responded that clean-up — that is, the backfilling work — was not included in the contract.

Director Bruce Keyser, Jr. reminded the Board that once new pavement is laid, the parking lot level will rise approximately two inches and offset the higher curb.

Maintenance

Rain and cold weather has delayed the road crack sealing project, reported Shaver. In addition, the heavy rains have caused some drainage problems — particularly along the ditches at Seven Lakes Drive. These conditions were reported to the NC Department of Transportation.

Shaver reported the Streets and Grounds budget, through December 2009, at 89 percent, and 114 percent for Clubhouse and Grounds — combining to

come in at 99.1 percent of the budgeted amount.

"What does that mean to live here?" Shaver asked. "Our maintenance costs 73 cents a day. I think we've accomplished a lot that should have been done years earlier."

Finance

Galford reported the Finance Committee had reviewed all reports, bank statements and reconciliations, and that a transition inventory would be conducted on January 28 with the assistance of Dalton Fulcher, the former community manager.

He reported no problems with revenue collections and said the Association attorney had notified delinquent accounts and filed liens where appropriate. Galford said actual expenses were over the budgeted figure because there was an extra payroll period that had not been included in projections.

Galford also reported the recreation budget was running high due to preapproved vacation

pay owed to Chad Beane, the former Assistant Community Manager, and a new horse and a number of saddles that were purchased.

"It was just the timing of the situation. The stables have not exceeded their allowance for the year," said Galford.

Security

Director Gary Caulk distributed a standard weekly security report to illustrate the types of calls and services Roving Patrol routinely provides. He reported that there has been an uptick in vandalism recently.

"If you see anything going on or suspicious, call security. If you see someone breaking the law, call 911," advised Caulk.

Other Business

In other business on Wednes-

day, January 27, the SLLA Board:

- Thanked Alina Cochran, Debbie Caulk, Brenda Massimo, and Alice McPhetters for the smooth operation of the SLLA office during the January transition period.
- Thanked member Andy Lowe for his assistance in working with the PA system at the North Clubhouse.
- Heard from Director Sally Kindsvatter that ARB approved a roof and a sunroom addition. Regular meetings of the ARB are held the first and third Thursday of the month.
- Heard from Director Kent Dropers that the Community Standards Committee meets the first Friday of the month. New members are welcome, for more information call the SLLA office.

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Commissioners

(Continued from front page)

has indicated in public meetings that the water for Pine Forest would come from Montgomery County, via a \$3 million extension of the Moore County water system that would run a pipe from Seven Lakes to Candor along NC Highway 211.

Speaking with reporters after Monday's meeting, Chairman Lea said the agreement MHK presented to the county indicated that the firm would pay "up to \$3 million" for the water system improvements.

"You've all reported that this is going to cost \$3 million and that MHK was going to pay \$3 million," Lea said. "But 'up to \$3 million' could mean anything from zero dollars to \$3 million."

The plan for Pine Forest includes two gated communities, three golf courses, a resort hotel, two shopping areas, and a wastewater treatment plant. The county's Planning Board unanimously recommended approval of the developer's rezoning request, sending the matter up to the commissioners for final approval. That approval would take care of what is likely the highest hurdle for the developer, but detailed development plans would later have to be approved under the county's subdivision ordinance.

Local conservationists, including Save our Sandhills, have opposed the development, noting that the tract on which it sits is likely the last, best natural longleaf pine forest in the Sandhills. The state's Natural Heritage Program has identified it as an area of national significance. Some have opposed the development based on concerns about traffic on NC Highway 211, while others have said Pine Forest, when combined with the nearby Dormie Club and Stonehill Pines developments, violate the priority the County's Land Use Plan places on preserving the rural character of Moore County.

Compensation Review Committee Reports

Moore County offers competitive employee benefits pretty much across the board, according to an analysis prepared by the Human Resources Advisory Committee and presented during Monday afternoon's Board of

Commissioners meeting.

The three-member Committee includes HR managers from Pinehurst Surgical, Pinehurst Resort, and Murray Fabrics. The Commissioners decided while debating the Fiscal Year 2009-2010 budget to seek a top-to-bottom review of benefits.

The group compared Moore County's employee benefits to those offered by surrounding counties, as well as those offered by private employers in the county. Pinehurst Surgical's Emi Allen walked the Board through the group's findings, which included:

- The county is paying more for medical insurance than other counties, while its employees are paying less. Deductibles are low, but so are the lifetime coverage limits. Pinehurst Resort's Carla Williams told Commissioners the trend in the private sector is toward higher deductibles, while Allen reported that Pinehurst Surgical has

adopted a health care reimbursement account system that aims to cut costs by encouraging "consumer-driven" health care decisions.

- Only two other counties cover 100 percent of dental coverage premiums — but, Allen noted, dental insurance is a relatively inexpensive perk for employees.

- The county's three percent match of employee 401K contributions is in line with other counties, but, Allen said, it would be good to investigate offering the Roth option and moving to automatic enrollment in the program to increase participation.

- Vacation, sick pay, and holiday pay are "very generous" in Moore County, particularly compared to private sector employers, the Committee found.

- The County's longevity pay system — which provides an annual bonus calculated as a percentage of salary that increas-

es with the number of years of service — is a benefit uncommon in the private sector, and generous compared to surrounding counties.

Noting that the county has a solid performance improvement plan, the committee suggested opportunities for collecting data from both continuing and exiting employees that could be used to fine-tune both benefits and strategies for improving performance. Allen said Pinehurst Surgical has broken down each job in the practice into finite measurable components and then defined what constitutes "competence" and what constitutes "excellence" for each position.

The Commissioners are like-

ly to take up the committee's recommendations as they begin work on the Fiscal Year 2010-2011 county budget. Allen encouraged the Board to ask "What is the goal?" when evaluating changes to the benefits package.

For example, if the county needs to reduce its outlays for health insurance claims, it may want to raise premiums or increase deductibles. If the goal is to be more competitive in attracting top-quality employees, then the county may want to raise its current lifetime cap on medical benefit payouts.

"A million dollar lifetime limit, maybe one day that was good in health care," Allen said, "but if

(See "Commissioners," p. 32)



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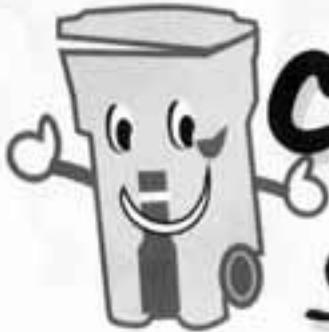


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Commissioners

(Continued from page 32)

someone had cancer or something like that, it would not take any time at all to go through that lifetime benefit."

School bond interest allocated to debt service

Taking a second step in a process they began during their January 19 meeting, the Commissioners decided Monday night to reserve any interest derived from the investment of school bond proceeds to debt service, instead of using it to fund school projects.

When the voters approve a bond referendum, they authorize the county to sell a set dollar amount of bonds — say, \$50 million — for use to build new schools and fund other capital projects. Typically, the county sells all the bonds at once, but the schools may not need to use all the proceeds at once. The excess cash is invested and generates interest. Additionally, some investors, seeking tax advantages, may pay more than the face value of the bonds, creating a "bond premium" which the county receives but must ultimately repay.

Last month, in response to a funding request from Moore County Schools [MCS] that sought to draw on both bond premium and bond interest, the Board decided to reserve the bond premium for repayment of the bonds. In Monday's meeting, the Board, on a motion by Commissioner Nick Picerno, voted unanimously to allocate the bond interest as well only to the repayment of the bonds, rather than to the funding of school projects.

Last June, when both the county and MCS were negotiating their FY 2009-2010 budgets, the county declined \$400,000 in capital funding sought by the schools, pledging to make up that amount by allowing MCS to use \$400,000 in bond interest. The Commissioners in January approved the use of \$387,000 in bond interest to fund smart boards and other IT initiatives, and will give MCS the remaining \$13,000 promised as it becomes available. After that, all bond interest will be used to pay down debt. The same procedure will be used for interest that accrues on bonds sold to benefit Sand-

hills Community College.

When the voters approve a \$50 million bond issue for the schools, Picerno told *The Times*, they are approving \$50 million in expenditures, not \$50 million plus whatever interest happens to accrue on that amount.

Hobbs Upchurch selected for Sewer Plant Upgrade

The Commissioners voted unanimously Monday to authorize the County Manager and Public Works Director to negotiate a contract with Hobbs Upchurch and Associates for a \$32 million upgrade to the county's wastewater treatment plant in Addor. Engineering fees are expected to exceed \$2 million.

Public Utilities Director Brobst told the Commissioners that Hobbs Upchurch was selected from among seven firms that had responded to a Request for Qualifications issued by the county. In North Carolina, certain professional contracts, including engineering services, are not competitively bid on the basis of cost. Instead, a firm is selected based on its qualifications to complete the target project, and

then a contract is negotiated. Brobst, County Engineer Lex Kelley, and Addor Plant Manager Brandt Sykes formed the team that unanimously recommended Hobbs Upchurch for the Addor upgrade.

Brobst told the Board that the Addor expansion had been on the drawing Board since 1998 and is necessary because 98.7 percent of the existing plant capacity has been committed to various municipalities and subdivisions. Not all of that capacity is currently being used, but state regulations will not allow the county to commit more than one hundred percent of existing capacity to future users. Failing to expand the plant could ultimately hamper development in the county.

The county has raised the rates it charges for wastewater treatment at the plant in anticipation of the expansion. Brobst said he expects to have \$7.7 million in capital reserves when construction begins and to be able to borrow up to \$26 million from the state's revolving fund at a very favorable 2.5 percent interest rate over 20 years.

World Series budgeted

Also during the Monday, February 1 meeting, the Commissioners approved a \$217,000 budget for the Dixie Youth Baseball World Series, to be played in Moore County in August 2011. Commissioner Larry Caddell explained that potential sponsors are already asking to contribute to the funding of the series, but sponsorships cannot be sold until a budget is established. The entire budget is

expected to be covered by the sale of sponsorships and other fundraising activities.

The Board approved the use of NC Education lottery funds for two MCS projects: a \$60,000 energy management control system at Pinecrest High School and a \$30,000 grease interceptor at Southern Pines Primary.

The Commissioners appointed Robert Hayter to the Planning Board and Douglas Hyler to the Subdivision Review Board.

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