



Happy New Year

THE PILOT



Good Luck



WHISPERING PINES SUNSET — The setting sun casts a golden path across Spring Valley Lake at Whispering Pines, and the late evening scene is captured by Photographer Glenn M. Sides.

Demand Is Good For Real Estate

It looks like 1977 will be a banner year for the real estate industry in the Sandhills. So says Mark C. Liddell, newly-elected president of the Moore County Board of Realtors. "Moore County properties are always in demand," he said yesterday, "but there is an increasing demand for housing of all kinds - single and multiple." The brighter economic picture with more prosperity is generating more investment, the new president says.

Much of the investment is going into commercial building. Many investors have become disenchanted with the stock market and will turn to real estate as a safer place to put their dollars and a better hedge against inflation, Liddell says.

The decline in new housing which started during the recession of the past two years has resulted in the lowering of the overall supply of available housing, according to the new head of the Realtors.

"More prosperity, resulting from overall better business in the year ahead, will generate more investment dollars," he feels. New prosperity is already being seen.

Liddell says that most properties in this area have appreciated from 10 to 14 percent per year over the last few years. Liddell was recently installed president of the local Realtors by William A. Seawell, President of the North Carolina Association of Realtors.

Robert Calhoun of Caulk, Calhoun and Bertrand of Pinehurst is the new Secretary-Treasurer and Walker (Continued on Page 12A)

Ford Tells Local Girl Where Dreams Come True

There's a treasured letter framed and hanging on the wall at the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. Edgar Lillard of 310 Becky Branch Road in Southern Pines. It's a letter signed by President Gerald R. Ford to young Leslie Lillard, who will be nine in January, and it's the latest in a correspondence with the President going back to the time she was in the first grade.

Her mother, Anita M. Lillard, wrote The Pilot, saying, "It is so thought-provoking and youth-inspiring that I thought you might like to print it for all the young people of Southern Pines." Mrs. Lillard continues:

"It all started with an essay on the President written and illustrated by my daughter when she was in the first grade. It was so charming that I mailed it to the White House. She received a warm and gracious response. The next year she had a question about the flag and I suggested she write to the President again and clear up the matter. Once again she received an interesting and personal response. Leslie developed quite an admiration for the Ford Administration since they always had time to answer the letters of a young person."

"When the election was over and Leslie heard that President Ford had lost, she decided to write once again and convey her disappointment. The enclosed

letter was received. I only wish every young person in the Nation could have the opportunity of reading it."

The letter from President Ford is as follows:

"Thank you for your thoughtful letter following the election. I will always remember the generous encouragement and goodwill which were extended to me and my entire family by our fellow Americans. It has been a tremendous honor to serve the

(Continued on Page 12A)



CLAUS AND TOT — Santa Claus (represented by Voigt Proctor) holds a Christmas stocking containing Lonnie Joe Lassiter, who is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Danny Lassiter of Troy. Santa visited all Moore Memorial patients on Christmas morning.—(Photo by Derry Walker).

Restaurant Denied Rezoning But Plans, Appeal Go Ahead

As his attorney sent off an appeal from the Planning Board to the County Commissioners today, Jimmy Melton of Pine Bay Seafood continued plans for a new fishhouse in Eastwood. The zoning board had voted not to change the intersection of US 15-501 and Highway 73 from residential and agricultural to

commercial on December 22, but Melton says even if the action is upheld, he will move the restaurant back 500 feet from the highway and build it anyway. He says this is legal.

There are visions of a 7,000 square foot restaurant employing 40 people by Pine Bay, which includes Melton and Mack

Mills, who has been in the restaurant business for twenty years. Pine Bay already has a restaurant and bakery in Southern Pines.

The appeal was made by attorney James Van Camp for Pine Bay to the County Commissioners.

Melton said the new restaurant, accessible from every part of the county, would feature a steak and lobster room as well as a Sunday buffet. He added that land is available for moving the site of the restaurant.

At the zoning meeting, Phillip Nardo asked that six acres be owned by him to take care of group housing near Sandhills Community College and southwest of the airport, but the board wished to hear from his real (Continued on Page 12A)

\$5.9 Million State Funds Spent On Moore Schools

Expenditures from the State Public School Fund totaled over \$736 million during the 1975-76 school year, according to figures compiled for the annual audit report of the State Public School Fund.

The total represented a 2.7 percent increase in spending over the 1974-75 school year. Total State funds spent in Moore County schools were \$5,899,736.23.

The largest expenditure from the State Public School Fund, a total of \$523,407,433.00, paid for instructional services, which included salaries of teachers, principals, supervisors and clerical assistants in schools as well as instructional supplies. Moore County Schools spent

\$4,178,232.48 from the State Public School Fund for instructional services.

An additional \$88,811,561.00 was spent for employe benefits, the second largest expenditure from the Fund.

Moore Schools spend \$700,223.05 for employe benefits, which included hospitalization insurance, social security, retirement and pupil reimbursement for injuries. Retirement and social security costs amounted to over \$79 million of the total State expenditure.

The cost of transporting children to and from school amounted to \$40,128,809.00 statewide. (Continued on Page 12A)

Little Sees Park Lands Tops In Accomplishment

North Carolina more than doubled the size of the State Parks System during the past four years, entering on the biggest expansion program ever.

Nearly 50,000 acres of land were acquired—much of it through direct purchase from state funds rather than the historical practice of waiting for somebody to donate property.

The result will be 12 new state parks, or recreation areas, and expansions at several existing parks.

The need now is to develop the property for use. "Acquisition was the emphasis in the area of parks and recreation the previous four years. Development should be for the

next four," says George W. Little of Southern Pines, Secretary of the State Department of Natural and Economic Resources.

Within Reach "Many more North Carolinians now have state parks within easy reach of their homes. But many of those parks have hardly any facilities or they have worn-out facilities.

"A major commitment to the continued development of the state zoo will also be needed during the next four years," Little said in a recap of the activities in his department during the administration of Republican Gov. James E. Holshouser, Jr.

Dismal Swamp and Jockey's (Continued on Page 12A)

Sales Set New Record At Center

Retail sales in 1976 exceeded \$13,100,000 at Town & Country Shopping Center, a new record for the Sandhills area trading center.

Among the major stores setting business volume records at Town & Country were Winn-Dixie, Collins, Sears, Macks and Mann Drugs.

"Town & Country now has 50 places of business, with a total of 376 persons employed and a payroll in excess of \$2,500,000," reports John Jordan, president of the Town & Country Merchants Association.

New businesses opened at the center during 1976 included Morrell's Collector Gallery, Piedmont Printing and Office (Continued on Page 12A)

Finalist

Diana Moon of Aberdeen is one of 18 finalists in the 1977 Maid of Cotton pageant in Memphis, Tenn., and the winner of the title will be chosen tonight (Wednesday).

Miss Moon is a former Miss Aberdeen and was first runner-up for the Miss North Carolina crown in 1975.

Court Facility Plans Are Nearly Complete

The new Hall of Justice building to house Moore County courts is expected to get under construction early in the new year.

Architect E. J. Austin said this week that his firm is nearly finished with all drawings and specifications.

The county commissioners are expected to seek bids on the new building at an early date.

Application for a federal public works grant to help finance the cost of the building, estimated at approximately \$1.5 million, has

not been successful. The commissioners, however, have been considering alternative ways of financing, and are expected to proceed with plans.

The demand for new court facilities goes back some years and the Moore County Bar Association has been actively pushing for the new courthouse. Architect Austin said that he has been working closely with Moore County attorneys in drawing up the plans and specifications.

THE PILOT LIGHT

HODGKINS — Sara Hodgkins, whose appointment by Governor-elect Jim Hunt as Secretary of the Department of Cultural Resources was announced last week, could continue to serve on the Southern Pines Town Council.

However, she does plan to resign from the council and may submit her resignation at the next regular meeting of the council on Tuesday, Jan. 11.

The council itself will select her replacement and supporters of Mrs. Hodgkins, who was the top vote-getter in last year's town election, are of the strong opinion that another woman should be appointed.

HUNT — Governor-elect Hunt

already is at work on his "State of the State" message even though his days, and some nights, still are filled with talking with people about other Cabinet positions to be filled.

The General Assembly will convene on January 12, four days after Hunt is inaugurated as Governor, and Hunt plans to present not only his overall goals but many specifics in his address to the legislators.

In other words, he will hit the ground running when he takes office and has no intention of waiting for several months for legislative action on his program.

LIQUOR — Some members of (Continued on Page 12A)

Saunders Is Killed By Truck

Robert Lee Saunders Jr., 55, former managing editor of Golf World here and more recently editor of the Pinehurst Outlook, was killed instantly early Monday evening when he was struck by a tractor-trailer truck on Interstate 95, 19 miles north of Fayetteville.

State Highway Patrolman C.W. Conkling said in Fayetteville that Saunders may have been struck by two other vehicles after being hit by the truck driven by Patrick George Gleason, 26.

The patrolman said that Saunders was apparently walking for help after parking his car in a median about a half mile away. The car had a flat tire.

The patrolman said that Saunders was attempting to cross from the median to the southbound shoulder of the highway and apparently stepped in front of the big truck.

Saunders had been editor of the Pinehurst Outlook until two or three weeks ago. Prior to that he had worked on Golf World and as assistant news editor of the Charlotte News.

Saunders attended Rockingham High School and was a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He was a fighter pilot and gunnery instructor with the Navy during World War II, and began his newspaper career with the Concord Tribune in 1947.

He was married to the former Dorothy Oates of Kannapolis. He was with the Charlotte News for 19 years, serving as sports and political writer in addition to duties on the state and news desks.

New Year Observances Planned In Sandhills

The celebration of the New Year this weekend will include the closing of many offices and business establishments, giving employes a long weekend to celebrate and-or recover.

Local office closings for the holiday include:

The area banks will close on Monday, Jan. 3, in observance of the holiday, as will the County offices and the Southern Pines Town Offices.

The Post Office will close only on Saturday, Jan. 1. The Pilot offices will observe Friday, Dec. 31, for the New

Year's Eve holiday, as will the Driver's License office in Aberdeen.

Many businesses and stores in the Sandhills will close on New Year's Day, but most grocery stores and convenient food stores have indicated they will remain open.

Many churches in the Sandhills area are planning special Watch Night or other New Year services. Many parties are planned for New Year's Eve.

Informal Talk Session Held By Town Council

The Town Council of Southern Pines had an unofficial meeting last week, with the public and the press not present, and talked about a number of things, but with no action being taken.

It was a late supper meeting at the Sheraton Inn and was for the purpose of informal discussion, Mayor E.J. Austin said.

As the mayor explained it, "We come together for meetings but there is little time to discuss matters which may be on our minds, whether or not they ever come up for action," and, "As a matter of fact," "we haven't had too much chance this year even to get acquainted."

So, relaxing over a good meal and coffee cups, the five council members "let down their hair." Whenever they reached the point of proposing some action, though, Austin would head it off for "some other time."

"They plunged into the area of 'downtown'--the two traffic studies the council has had 'on the table' for over two years, filled with proposals which now appear controversial but which, the members agreed, they might have to resort to, as time goes by and traffic problems in the business district mount.

The whole matter of redevelopment of the district was discussed, with the possibility of bringing some new business there rather than let it all go to outlying shopping centers; the problem posed by the fact that, where other towns can develop a "mall," Southern Pines has to cope with a railroad track; angle vs. parallel parking. (Continued on Page 12A)

Annexation

Mayor E. J. Austin said this week that legal problems still exist in respect to withdrawal of the appeal against annexation by the town by a group of "Concerned Citizens."

Those involved in the court action are being asked to vote by mail on whether or not to drop the appeal to the North Carolina Court of Appeals.

Austin said that Town Attorney W. Lamont Brown and Attorney James Van Camp, representing the citizens group, have conferred, but until the legal problems are resolved he said the town would not be able to begin services to the area in question.

Here's What Made Headlines In Moore County In 1976

BY VALERIE NICHOLSON While this hasn't been one of Moore County's most eventful years, there has been a steady run of happenings large and small, and constant increase in the kind of things—the arts, drama, music, planned recreation for old and young—which have steadily enhanced the quality of life.

Much of this has been due to the Sandhills Arts Council, also to the Bicentennial year, providing a constant run of interesting and colorful events, by themselves and in cooperation

with many local agencies. As a correlation—and we wouldn't deny there is some connection—violent crime seems to have greatly diminished, though this may be due to the belated beefing up of law enforcement in the sheriff's department, and police departments in the towns. Whereas a couple of years ago our headlines too often concerned armed robberies, murder and rape, these have lessened—though drug investigations and arrests have picked up, and teen-agers arrested for

breaking, entering and larceny, and lesser offenses, have loaded the court dockets.

Town and county governments have increased their scope, their meetings and their state-federal relationships, with growing complexity, and with improved service to the people as the elected officials have had to buckle down and really learn their jobs.

Below are headline highlights, week by week and month by month, of the year 1976: JANUARY County commissioners by 3-2

vote approve Leaverne Maness' petition for Midland Road rezoning to enlarge Neighborhood Shopping district, despite strong protest of Midland Road residents at public hearing held October 16...Telephoned bomb threats, which turned out to be hoaxes, cause evacuation and closing of several Aberdeen stores...West End bank robbery by three white males...Sheriff C.G. Wimberly calls for citizen cooperation in curbing crime wave which made

headlines during 1975...Bynum George Patterson, killed in bomb explosion at New York's LaGuardia Airport, buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery.

Large crowd protesting action of commissioners in Midland Road re-zoning organizes at Moore County Citizens for Better Zoning, employ attorney...Stolen car used by West End bank robbers found in Jackson Springs area...Southern Pines mobile home park owners protest zoning ordinance affecting them, declaring it would put them out of business...Supporters of Jim

Hunt for Governor, in campaign as yet unannounced, hold first meeting at home of Dr. H. David Bruton.

Moore County Citizens for Better Zoning authorize attorney to file suit in Midland Road rezoning controversy...W.E. Parfitt re-elected president of Pinehurst Village Council...Town of Robbins will receive \$301,250 grant for water supply improvement, under N.C. Clean Water Bond Act of 1971...Snow flurries in Sandhills, temperature hits seven degrees...Earl Hubbard, Taft

Williams head Moore County Ford for President committee. Southern Pines Town Council starts housing renovation program, under Community Development block grant of \$248,500 approved last year...Bob Helms, Moore County administrator, resigns effective March 1 when commissioners, after offering promotion to county manager one day, rescind this action the next...Dr. Vida McLeod, still practicing medicine at nearly 80, honored by ADK sorority of women educators...Southern Pines Pilot

receives N.C. Press association's top award for news coverage among weeklies.

FEBRUARY D. Parker Lynch employed as Moore County's first director of public works, to handle fiscal affairs relating to regional water system now under construction...Eddie Gaines, 77, of Jackson Hamlet charged in fatal shooting of Clayton Walters, 31, of Midway...Commissioners honor Dr. Clement R. Monroe and W.P. Saunders for services to county, including long service (Continued on Page 16A)