

Local Flagmaker To Be Among Crafters Displaying Handiwork

BY SUSAN USHER

Hummingbirds, lighthouses, pumpkins and Santas are just a few of the designs that have made their way onto Fay Sikes' flags since she took up the craft this January.

Friday and Saturday her handiwork will be flying high at Seaside as she joins approximately 150 other exhibitors in the arts and crafts show at the N.C. Oyster Festival.

Artists and crafters will come from several states to offer almost anything a festival-goer could imagine, from one-of-a-kind clothing, jewelry, accessories and metalcraft to handmade home furnishing, holiday decorations, photographs, paintings, stained glass, toys, ceramics and pottery.

Anyone who's shopped for flags recently will notice almost immediately that Sikes' colorful, sturdy nylon flags are bigger than average—a whopping 28 inches by 50 inches, but are priced to sell. She'll also have poles and mounting brackets available.

Sikes took up flagmaking by

popular demand.

"The children were begging me to do one for them, so I did," she said. That first flag, for her daughter-in-law Sharon Sikes, was a colorful parrot. She hasn't done another like it, but with Sharon's encouragement, Fay has turned out flags in many more designs, including the one-of-a-kind banner flying outside her own home, which features the five lighthouses along the North Carolina coast. She has designs for every season and most holidays.

She gives some flags to friends and family and sells others through a friend's craft shop at Holden Beach. This weekend will be the first time Fay's shown them at a festival. "Sharon talked me into it and she's going to help me," said Fay.

Sometimes the designs are of her own creation, but more often are commercial patterns.

Each flag requires at least six hours of work, she said. Fay first cuts and sews the basic flag. Then she traces the design patterns on

colored pieces of nylon that are then stitched carefully to one side of the flag, using heavy thread in a contrasting color. Trimming out is painstaking. Extra fabric is first cut away from the design elements on the back side. Then, on the front, the basic flag must be trimmed from within the outlines to reveal the design. Most are sewn twice, sometimes three times, to secure the design on the flag.

She and her husband, Tom Morphet, live in Sea Village, just up N.C. 904 from the festival grounds. Their home is filled with evidence of Sikes' handiwork. The flags are just the latest of her craft creations.

"I've always enjoyed crafts," said Sikes, a homemaker first in the Lake Norman area near Denver, N.C., and then here for the past 2½ years. "I started out doing things for the children."

Her hands are always occupied with one project or another, if not flags, then designer Christmas sweatshirts or handmade dolls or some other craft that she enjoys sharing with family and friends.

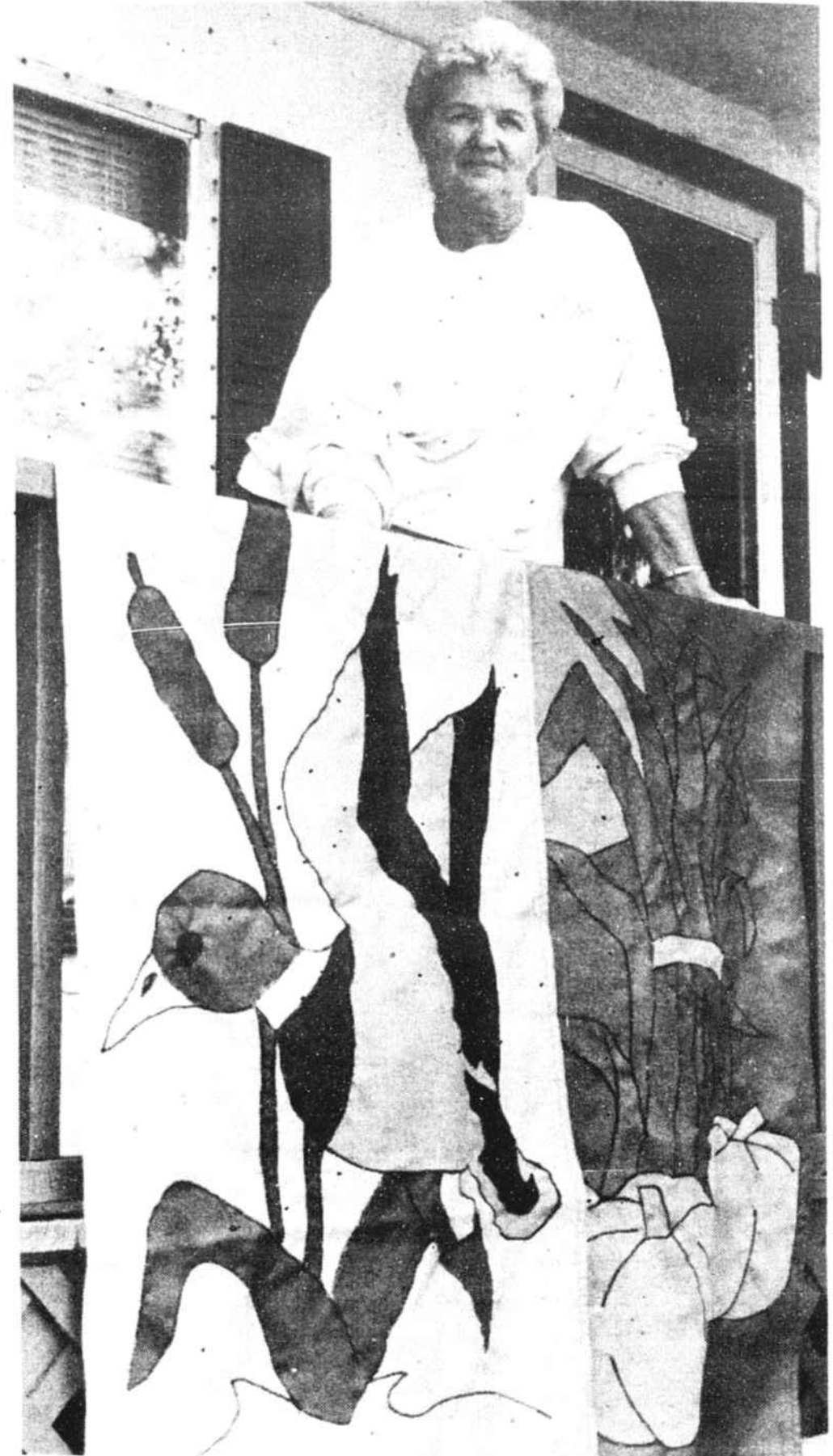
"If I see something I'll have a fit until I get one made," she said. The work not only gives her pleasure but is also a way to make "a little extra money."

Handiwork is therapeutic, too, as she was reminded not long ago.

"Three years ago I had a real bad heart attack and after that I gave up smoking," she said. "I need to keep my hands busy."

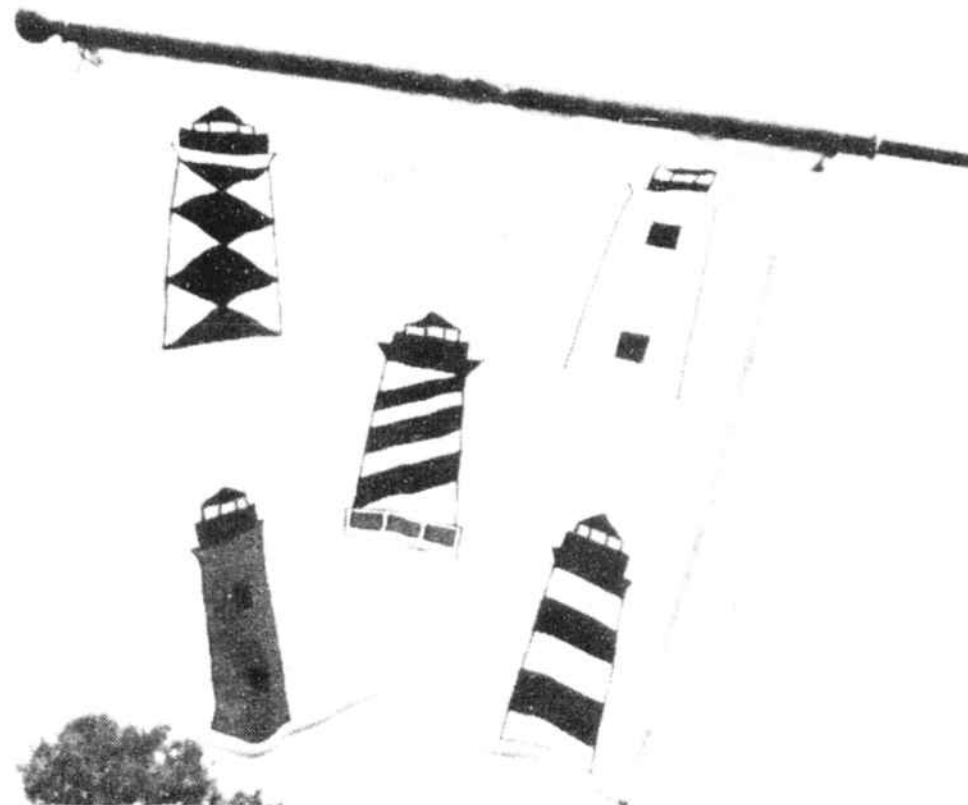
Artists and craftspeople participating in this year's show again have the option of entering a juried competition with cash purchase awards sponsored by Southern National Bank of \$300 for best in show, \$100 each for first place in the fine arts and the crafts divisions, and \$50 purchase awards for second place in each division. Winners will be announced Saturday afternoon.

Revamping of the festival site at N.C. 904 and N.C. 179 at Seaside has created separate areas for food



STAFF PHOTOS BY SUSAN USHER

FAY SIKES' booth at the N.C. Oyster Festival Arts & Crafts Show will feature handmade flags such as these.



THIS FLAG depicts the North Carolina coast's distinctive lighthouses.

service, entertainment, rides, and arts and crafts. It has also allowed festival sponsors to expand the show's display area.

The show area can accommodate 200 exhibitors, with approximately

150 expected this weekend. Festival Co-Chairman Sally Nord, who is also coordinating the arts and crafts show, says she thinks the redesign will "open up" the area and provide better traffic flow.

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