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Volume 23 Number 6

Seven Lakes, North Carolina 27376

January 23, 2009

Crossing project '99.99% assured'

by Greg Hankins
Times Editor

99.99%. That's the odds the Lakeway Drive railroad crossing at the entrance to Seven Lakes West will be upgraded using federal funds, according to North Carolina Department of Transportation [NCDOT] Division 8 Engineer Tim Johnson.

"There is a 99.99% chance that the Board of Transportation will move forward with this project because of the safety issue," Johnson told the Moore County Board of Commissioners during a Work Session on Thursday night, January 15. "I think it is going to be difficult for anyone to impede this project."

The project in question will convert the railroad crossing at the entrance of Seven Lakes West to state ownership, install gate arms and coordinated traffic signals, and change the traf-

fic lanes at the intersection. A similar upgrade will be made to the intersection of NC Highway 211 and NC Highway 73 near West End Fire and Rescue. Crossings at Mode Road and Edgewood Terrace will be closed.

Johnson, along with NCDOT Railway Division Engineer Nancy Horne and District Engineer Chuck Dumas, found themselves invited to a Work Session of the Board of Commissioners because Horne had told *The Times*, the Seven Lakes West Landowners Association [SLWLA], and a number of Seven Lakes residents that County approval of the crossing project was critical to Division 8 approval, which was in turn critical to approval by the state Board of Transportation.

Scores of Seven Lakes West and West End residents turned

(See "Crossing" p. 33)

Snow Day!



Taylor St. Onge and her Mom, Ashley, of Seven Lakes West, make the most of the four inches of snow that coated the area on Inauguration Day. [Michelle Bolton photo]

Westside Elections Underway

The process of finding new directors to fill the seats of three retiring Westside Board Directors gets underway next week, with a Candidates' Night sponsored by the League of Women Voters on Monday, January 26, at 7:30 pm in the Great Room of the West Side Park Community Center.

The Times has interviewed the four candidates — John Goodman, John Hoffman, Jim Johnson, and Adam Wimberly — seeking to replace Mary Ann Fewkes, Ray MacKay and Blaine Rowland; a report on those interviews begins on page 10.

The Board elections will be finalized at the Annual Meeting, scheduled for March 15. Annual meeting packets — including election ballots — are expected to be mailed before January 31.

Board ponders dues hike

by Laura Douglass
Times Reporter

Recommending a dues increase during a recession is not the best way to get elected, admitted Treasurer Denny Galford. However, he explained, the Finance Committee strongly feels it is a necessary step for the community. Meeting in a Work Session on Thursday, Jan-

uary 15, the Seven Lakes Landowners Association [SLLA] Board reviewed Galford's draft budget and a ten-year projection of capital projects and finances.

"It is alarming and amazing when you look out ten years," Galford said. "The capital items needed total is a big cost. Over the last three years the budget has been looked into very close-

ly. A lot of cuts were made two years ago and some last year, so to jump on the bandwagon that we have to cut because the economy is down is a mistake."

As presented, the 2010 Budget proposal includes a \$50 per year dues increase for improved lots with the recommendation of an additional dues increase of

(See "SLLA," p. 31)

The Times, PO Box 602, West End, NC 27376
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open to all residents of Seven Lakes.

Classes will be held Monday mornings, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm, starting February 2, and will last for four weeks.

The cost is \$25 per student and class size will be limited to the first ten registered students. Classes will be held at the West Side Park Community Center

[WSPCC] activity room- lower level.

Student's supply list includes small and large sheets, 140# acid free watercolor paper, masking tape, your own palette with assorted colors including warms and cools, paper towels, watercolor brushes, water container, journal for note taking, and any other personal supplies for painting.

ing.

To register for the class, visit the Seven Lakes West Landown-er Association offices, or call Andrea Schmidt with any questions at 673-1210.

Nick Picerno to speak at Civic Group's Annual Meeting

Nick Picerno, recently elected chairman of the Moore County Board of Commissioners, will speak at the Seven Lakes Civic Group's annual meeting in February.

He plans to focus his remarks on issues of interest and concern to Seven Lakers and our neighbors and on the commissioners' goals for 2009.

The annual meeting will be held at the West Side Community Center on Tuesday, February 17 at 7:30 pm.

The meeting is open to everyone in Seven Lakes and our friends and neighbors in the surrounding area.

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 910-673-0210, or e-mailed to mail@sevenlakes-times.net.

Our voice telephone number is 910-673-0111.

PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

Issue	Deadline
February 6	January 30
February 20	February 13
March 6	February 27
March 20	March 13
April 3	March 27
April 17	April 10
May 1	April 24
May 15	May 8
May 29	May 22
June 12	June 5
June 26	June 19
July 10	July 3
July 24	July 17
August 7	July 31
August 21	August 14
Sept. 4	August 28
Sept. 18	Sept. 11
October 2	Sept. 25
October 16	October 9
October 30	October 23
Nov. 13	Nov. 6
Nov. 24*	Nov. 19*
Dec. 11	Dec. 4
Dec. 22*	Dec. 17*

*Early publication or deadline due to holiday.

Our Lady hosts Valentine Party

Our Lady of the Americas hosts the Second Annual Adult Wine and Cheese Valentine's Day Party fundraiser on Saturday, February 14 from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm, at the Social Hall, 298 Farmers Market Road, off Hwy 211 at Candor.

Tickets are \$20.00 per person, which includes wine and cheese and entertainment by Barron Maness, James Brown on the saxophone, with guest singer Anna Morgan. Please support this fun evening by bringing your sweetheart and friends.

Advance ticket sales only. The last day for ticket sales will be February 8. For tickets call the Church office at 910 974-3051, Laura Rolls at 673-4077, or visit Jack's Place in the Seven Lakes Business Village.



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Foxfire General Store bandit gets ten years

by Laura Douglass,
Times Reporter

A Southern Pines man, Loren Robert Ellis, 29, was convicted of the 2006 armed robbery at the Foxfire General Store and was sentenced to ten years in prison, reported Foxfire Councilwoman Page Coker during the Village Council Meeting on Tuesday, January 13. Ellis was indicted by the Moore County Grand Jury as a habitual felon and faces additional charges.

Coker thanked Police Chief Mike Campbell and former chief Rick Rhyne for their outstanding work which resulted in the successful conviction.

Kivett named Village Clerk

Lisa Kivett was promoted to Village Clerk from her former position as Deputy Clerk, following Janice Thomas' retirement in December.

Mayor Erickson said with the proposed multi-million dollar Stonehill Pines project on the near horizon, Village Council members agreed the Deputy Clerk position required someone with a strong background in finance and ability to work with others.

Sharon Sanchez was awarded the position and formally introduced to the community by Erickson during the meeting. She has a Bachelor's degree in business administration and experience in financial accounting, auditing, budgets, and billing.

Water

On Thursday, January 15, the Village closed on property for a new well site reported Councilman Ed Lauer.

An irrigation well, installed in violation of the ordinance, will be abandoned as part of a resolution with the property owners, Lauer said, with a final decision by the Village attorney still expected.

A water line for Condo Buildings A & C was also being used to irrigate Country Club property. The problem has been corrected, explained Lauer, and the Village waived the standard tap fee for a new meter which will provide a distinct and separate water meter for each building.

Finance

Councilwoman Leslie Frusco

reported the General Fund at \$271,208 which includes \$40,000 in restricted funds for Village streets; \$322,943 in the Water Fund with \$320,000 from loan proceeds; \$135,000 in escrow restricted for a new well; for a total cash balance of \$729,000.

Funds advanced for Woodland Circle currently total \$235,209.

Frusco presented several budget amendments which were approved unanimously.

Zoning

For sale real estate in Foxfire Village totals approximately \$10 million, reported Zoning Administrator Mimi Ainsworth. The current highest price listing is \$995,000 for a single family home, and \$89,000 for the lowest priced condo.

Planning

Planning Director Craig Ramey presented several proposed text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance.

and Subdivision Ordinance. The amendments were approved by the Planning Board and unanimously approved by vote of the Council.

A revision to the Subdivision Ordinance requires a sketch plan with a soils report including pavement design for both minor and major projects; a storm management plan; performance bond; insurance certificates; and a construction schedule.

Major subdivision projects are also required to participate in a pre-submission conference with a Village consultant team. In addition, a text change was added for street right-of-way and pavement widths to twenty-four feet with one foot of asphalt curbing on each side.

Streets

Councilman Vic Koos reported several road signs had been knocked down during the previous month. He encouraged residents to contact him if they saw suspicious activity or disturbed signs.

Koos commended Gilbert Brown, who is under contract for landscape services to the Village.

"The man is amazing – what a job!" exclaimed Koos. "He has Foxfire in his heart, so to speak."

Woodland Circle Extension

Mayor Erickson reported a second round of letters was sent to property owners affected by the Woodland Circle Extension project. Owners have until the end

(See "Foxfire" p. 30)



Wally Peckitt was honored for his twenty-three years of dedicated service to the Foxfire Village Council by Mayor George Erickson on Tuesday, January 13. "During his tenure, Mr. Peckitt diligently supported the interests of the citizens of Foxfire and at all times exhibited a deep sense of responsibility and concern for the welfare of his constituents," Erickson said.

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Commissioners set the agenda for 2009

by Laura Douglass
Times Reporter

Capping off a two-day retreat held January 8 and 9, the Moore County Board of Commissioners identified their top goals for 2009 including holding taxes, while striking a congenial tone which incoming Chair Nick Picerno said is a priority.

"There are 83,000 people trusting us to lead this County and I want to do everything I can to ensure we have the best of relationships that we can possibly have with each other," read Picerno in a prepared opening statement.

In no particular order, the Board prioritized four main goals for 2009; to hold taxes, to move forward in the design phases for the three proposed government buildings; to move forward with resolving long term water and waste water solutions; and to upgrade the County's electronic infrastructure.

Capital Improvement Plan

On Thursday, January 8, Jim Westbrook of the Moore County Government Efficiency Committee presented a ten-year Capital Improvement Plan [CIP] to the Commissioners.

Representing project requests expected to cost more than \$100,000 and lasting more than a year in scope, Westbrook said the \$291 million draft budget includes sixty-seven projects over the next eleven years.

Over half, that is fifty-one percent of the projects, were educational needs. Public safety and utilities projects followed accounting for twenty-four and eighteen percent of the budget.

Westbrook explained that the budget figures were actual costs and did not include interest if any of the funds were borrowed, and reminded the County Commissioners the plan represented requested rather than approved projects.

Ted Cole of Davenport & Company presented a preliminary capital funding report on Friday, January 9, that included a detailed analysis of the County's existing debt profile and future debt capacity – with an eye towards establishing a comprehensive plan to finance all identified CIP projects.

Moore County's existing debt

of \$75 million includes \$4.5 million in general obligations; Moore County Schools at \$54 million; and Sandhills Community College at \$16 million. The current tax-supported outstanding debt will retire sixty-three percent of the principal in ten years, which is below the fifty-five percent floor indicated to prevent back-loading debt.

Cole reported Moore County's debt per capita is within average levels for North Carolina benchmarks.

He provided the Board of Commissioners with five funding scenarios, with increasing impact of CIP requests.

The ultimate scenario, which included all major CIP projects [schools, community college, three new government facilities, ERP], took Moore County to the upper limits of its debt capacity, explained Cole.

Budget

County Finance Director Lisa Hughes presented an update of the Fiscal Year 2009 Budget to the Commissioners on Friday, January 9.

Hughes said year-to-date expenditures of \$56,794,240 represent 58.5% of the \$97 million budget, and that in response to the struggling economy, operating budgets and capital projects had been frozen or deferred as possible.

She reported the Moore County general property tax rate was nineteenth lowest in the State at 47.9¢, and also lower in comparison to neighboring counties including Montgomery [58¢], Scotland [\$1.02], Harnett [73.5¢], Lee [75¢], and Richmond [81¢].

"We are very fortunate," said County Manager Cary McSwain. "Part of it is planning and part of it is good luck."

Countywide Water Issues

Frustration at the lack of progress towards resolving future water concerns bogged down a review of recommendations presented by McGill Associates during the Commissioners retreat.

Completed in July 2008, the McGill Study included several recommendations that have been or are currently being implemented by the County. However, water demand projections show the need for additional

water sources.

Their top three recommendations were to purchase water and extend service from Montgomery County along Rt. 211 from Candor; partner with the Town of Robbins to return its 1.5 MGD Water Treatment Plant to service; and, in conjunction with the Robbins plant, extend water service along Rt. 705 to the Seven Lakes area.

Commissioner Tim Lea, in particular, has championed the Robbins options noting the increased control over ownership and amount of available water. He expressed concern that establishing a water line connection with Montgomery County, along Rt. 211, would prevent the other recommendations, including the Robbins options, from coming to fruition.

Progress with decision-making remains stalled while the Board of Commissioners waits for McGill Associates to complete a secondary study, which includes an in-depth analysis of costs to restore the Robbins plant versus construction of a new facility.

After a lengthy discussion during the retreat, the Board agreed to reconvene with representatives of McGill Associates during a special Work Session to be held Thursday, February 12.

Wastewater Treatment

Built in 1977, the Moore County Water Pollution Control Plant

located in Addor has a capacity of 6.7 MGD, with a proposed expansion to 10.0 MGD. It was designed to treat wastewater to secondary standards, and has had modifications and upgrades in 1991 and again in 2007.

Anticipated population growth necessitates the proposed \$378 million expansion project, which includes \$24.5 million in new components and \$6.3 million in upgrades to the existing facility. State revolving funds may be used to finance the project – the current interest rate is 2.48% for at twenty-year term.

Enterprise Resource Planning System

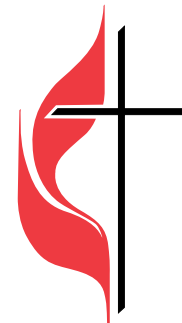
An Enterprise Resource Planning [ERP] system provides functional and technological needs for integrated applications in a

consolidated system. A database that all processes feed into, several county directors including Lisa Hughes, Joey Raczowski, and Darlene Yudell all highly recommended the system to the Board of Commissioners during their annual retreat.

"It increases productivity and reduces fragmentation of information technology [IT] investments," explained Yudell, who heads the County's IT department. "If the foundation is weak, even the most beautiful structure will be unstable and at risk!"

She said the existing core computer system has not been updated and the County has outgrown its capabilities. Purchasing a new ERP would improve operational efficiencies

(See "Commissioners," p. 30)



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Moore County Schools return \$500K to state

by Laura Douglass
Times Reporter

In response to a request by the Department of Public Instruction [DPI], Superintendent Dr. Susan Purser reported \$500,000 in funding has been returned to the State.

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction implements the State's public school laws and the State Board of Education's policies and procedures governing pre-kindergarten through 12th grade public education and develops the Standard Course of Study. The DPI admin-

isters annual public school funds totaling approximately \$7 billion in state and federal funds and licenses the approximately 100,000 teachers and administrators serving in public schools.

"These adjustments were difficult because, coming at midyear, we have committed our resources. However we tried to minimize impact," Purser told the Moore County Board of Education during its monthly meeting on Monday, January 12.

Approximately \$90,000 came from a balance fund, with the remainder taken from several

sources including personnel funds allocated toward lapsed positions, textbooks, career and technology, and \$40,000 collectively contributed from schools.

Certified Teachers Recognized

Seven Lakes North resident Ann Spong, a teacher at Robbins Elementary, was among twelve Moore County teachers to receive National Board Certification last year. In addition, Pinecrest High School Teacher Fran Gertz successfully completed the certificate renewal process.

North Carolina leads the nation in the number of teachers who have earned National Board Certification, the highest credential in the teaching profession. A voluntary process, certification is achieved through a rigorous performance-based assessment that takes between one and three years to complete and measures accomplished teachers' instructional and professional practices. Teachers who successfully complete this rigorous process earn a twelve percent salary increase from the State for the ten-year life of

the renewable certificate plus a one-time one percent salary bonus from Moore county Schools.

With the addition of the most recent certifications, Moore County Schools now has a total of 109 Nationally Board Certified teachers.

School Board Recognition

Handmade greeting cards crafted by students at West End Elementary School were distributed to members of the Board of Education during a special

(See "MCS," p. 29)



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In memory of . . .

Jessie Maye Moore Greene, 78, of Jackson Springs, died Thursday, January 8, at her residence.

Mrs. Greene was born in Moore County, the daughter of Everett and Grace Bailey Moore. She was a homemaker and was preceded in death by her husband.

She is survived by two sons, Michael and Wayne Greene, both of Jackson Springs; three grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Funeral services were held Wednesday, January 14 at the Eagle Springs United Methodist Church Cemetery.

The family was assisted by Briggs-Candor Funeral Home.

William Gregory "Bill" Gorenflo, Sr., 73, of Seven Lakes died Friday, January 9, at Pinelake Health & Rehabilitation Center in Carthage.

Gorenflo was born in Buffalo, NY. He served in the US Air Force and attended the New York State Police Academy. Mr. Gorenflo served as a New York State Trooper and Investigator for nearly 20 years, in a career that included VIP security for the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, NY, and the 1980 PGA Championship at Oak Hill Country Club in Rochester, NY.

In 1980, Gorenflo was shot, and his partner, Robert Van Hall Jr., was killed, in the line of duty in Corning, NY. For his bravery and heroism, Gorenflo was awarded the Brummer Award, the New York State Police's highest honor.

Mr. Gorenflo and his wife Lynn moved to Seven Lakes in 1982. He worked in various capacities for both Seven Lakes Country Club and Beacon Ridge Country Club, and served as director of security for Seven Lakes West for many years. He was a member of Our Saviour Lutheran Church in Southern Pines.

Gorenflo was preceded in death by his wife, Lynn; his son, William Gregory Gorenflo, Jr.; and his sisters, Lucile Pincus and Carol Olszewski.

A service of remembrance was held on January 18 at Our Saviour Lutheran Church at 1517 Luther Way, Southern Pines. A special flag ceremony took place

afterwards.

Survivors include his son, Michael and his wife, Lisa of Seven Lakes; his grandchildren, Greg and Mandi, and their mother, Judi of Rochester, NY; a brother, Henry Gorenflo of Depew, NY; his brothers-in-law, Lee Ring and wife, Sandy of Seven Lakes, and Chester Olszewski of Darien, NY; and many nieces and nephews.

Memorial donations be made in Gorenflo's name to: The New York State Trooper Foundation, 3 Airport Park Boulevard, Latham, New York 12110-1441.

Alice Josephine Van Buskirk, 94, of Seven Lakes South, died Sunday, January 11, at St. Joseph of the Pines Nursing Home, Southern Pines.

Mrs. Van Buskirk was the daughter of the late Arthur Shackford and Clara Essig Shackford in Niagara Falls, NY.

Mrs. Van Buskirk moved to Seven Lakes in 1991. She retired

from Key Bank in Syracuse, NY, in 1979. She was a swimming instructor during WWII, and a long time member of the Porsche Club of America. She was a member of Our Lady of the Americas Catholic Church in Candor.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Harold Van Buskirk.

Survivors include a son, J. Patrick Van Buskirk of Barnveld, NY; a daughter, Sharon Lea Russell, of Seven Lakes South; three grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren and three great-great-grandchildren.

A private family funeral mass and rite of committal will be held at a later date.

Arrangements are being handled by Boles Funeral Home of Seven Lakes.

Sophia Bauer Smith, 95, of Southern Pines, died Monday, January 12, at Pinehurst Healthcare & Rehab Center, Aberdeen.

Mrs. Smith was born in New

York City, daughter of the late John Bauer and Louise Landwehr. She was the wife of Dana Humphrey Smith. They moved to Moore County in 1968. Mrs. Smith was in the public healing practice of Christian Science for over thirty years.

She was preceded in death by husband, Dana Humphrey Smith.

Survivors include her daughter, Carolyn and husband Ken Mealing, of Seven Lakes West, a son John Dana Smith of Woodbury, GA; nine grandchildren; seventeen great-grandchildren and three great great-grandchildren.

A private family memorial service is planned. The family is being assisted by Boles Funeral Home of Seven Lakes.

Walter Quinten Lambert, 72, of Eagle Springs, died Tuesday, January 13, at FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital.

Mr. Lambert was a native of Moore County. He was a former employee of Perdue Inc. and Mansion Homes.

He is survived by his wife, Sally Frye Lambert; daughter, Sheila Faye Wallace, of Carthage; three brothers, Oscar Lambert,

(Continued on page 9)

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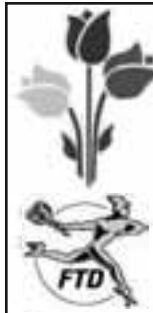
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In memory of . . .

(Continued from page 8)

of Robbins, James Lambert, of Carthage, and John Lambert, of Star; two sisters, Merlene Jones, of Pennsylvania, and Shirley Williams, of Asheboro; two grandchildren and three step-grandchildren.

No services are planned at this time.

Kennedy Funeral Home is assisting the family.

June Southworth Montgomery, 91, formerly of Seven Lakes, died Tuesday, January 13, after a short illness.

She was the daughter of Atherton and Florence Southworth in Washington, DC.

She graduated from Duke University in 1939 and was a member of the Zeta Tau Alpha Sorority. She worked as a secretary to several generals during WWII. She and her husband moved Ridgewood, NJ in 1964, there she practiced real estate for eighteen years. They retired to Seven Lakes in 1984.

Mrs. Montgomery moved to Carolina Meadows in 2001 and participated actively in PEO, and was a weekly volunteer at the University Presbyterian Church.

She was preceded in death by her husband of fifty-five years, Alexander Galloway Montgomery.

She is survived by her daughter June Montgomery LaBarre, San Francisco, CA; sons, Alexander Galloway Montgomery, Jr. of Seattle, WA; John David Montgomery, of Raleigh, NC; and seven grandchildren.

Memorial services and a celebration of her life were held at Carolina Meadows on Saturday, January 17, conducted by Rev. Robert Dunham.

Memorial donations may be made to PEO Educational Loan Fund c/o Marlene Conner [919] 545-9115, or Carolina Meadows - Nursing Scholarship Fund, Carolina Meadows 100, Chapel Hill, NC 27517.

Beatrice Gina Piper, 66, of Seven Lakes West, died on Sunday, January 18, at FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital.

She was the daughter of the late Edward Metzler and Beatrice Savastani Metzler in Philadelphia, PA.

Mrs. Piper was active in the

Seven Lakes community, a member of the Red Hat Society, and a talented participant in many quilting circles.

She is survived by her husband of thirty-two years Joseph J. Piper of Seven Lakes; a son

Michael Wenerd of Seven Lakes West; two brothers William Metzler and Edward Metzler; sister Elizabeth Schaffer; and three granddaughters.

Visitation will be held Saturday January 24, from 10:00 am to

12:00 pm at Boles Funeral Home in Seven Lakes. A funeral service will follow at St. Mary Magdalene Episcopal Church in Seven Lakes on Saturday January 24, at 12:30 pm with the Rev. Robert H. Brown, and The

Rev. Carol J. Burgess officiating.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorials be made to the American Cancer Society at 8300 Health Park, Ste. 10, Raleigh, NC 27615.

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Four candidates compete for Westside Seats

by Greg Hankins,
Times Editor

The Times spoke individually with each of the candidates running for a seat on the Seven Lakes West Landowners Association [SLWLA] Board of Directors, and asked each the same questions.

Our Questions

Here are the questions we asked; they were not given to candidates in advance of the interviews:

1. What, specifically, caused you to run for the Board this year?
2. What, specifically, do you hope to accomplish?
3. It looks as though the remediation of the Lake Auman dam may be underway by summer. The Board has said that, nine months to a year after the repairs are complete, they will examine data collected on the stability of the dam, consult with their engineer, and come to some decision about reopening the roadway across the dam. What do you think about reopening the road across the dam?
4. The West Side Board and its long range planning committee have been fighting with the US Postal Service for years, trying to get the USPS to agree to curbside mail delivery rather than mailhouse delivery. It's been suggested that the Board spend \$5,000 to hire an attorney to evaluate the Association's options. What do you think the Board should be doing about this right now?
5. Just before Christmas, an accidentally unlocked Westside home was burglarized and a couple of vehicles parked nearby were broken into. Over Halloween there were a bunch of non-Seven Lakes young people — not in costume — aggressively challenging vehicles trying to make their way through one neighborhood. These are just the latest examples of mostly petty crime and vandalism. Does the West Side have a security problem? What can be done to fix

it? What about boundary fencing — or a manned back gate?

6. Last year the LRP suggested a covenant change that would make it possible to convert association-owned land to non-residential use — for example, to create a small park or playground, or perhaps to build a mail house. Are you in favor of that idea? Does the Association need more public spaces, more parks?
7. Residents of Beacon Ridge and the Pinnacles have seen their dues rise by twelve percent every year since 2002. This year, if the budget passes, those who would have been members of the old WSLA will see a six percent hike. How much is too much? Are SLWLA dues too high, too low, or just right?
8. Over the past half-dozen years, the Westside Board has made real progress in making its

expect serving on the Board to take? Do you have that time to give?

The Board candidates' answers follow. Because our interviews were more conversational than interrogatory, we have presented our conversation with each candidate in turn, rather than breaking things up question-by-question.

Biographical information on each candidate is available in the Association's January newsletter, which can be downloaded at sevenlakeswest.org, so we have not duplicated that information here.

Adam Wimberly

Adam Wimberly is an eleven-year resident of Seven Lakes who owns his own executive recruiting firm, located in the Seven Lakes Business Village.

Why Run? Asked why he decided to run for the SLWLA Board of Directors, Adam Wim-

berly told *The Times* that he had been asked by folks who know him to run for the Board. "Doing nothing would have been more convenient," Wimberly said, "but knowing other Board members and what they have been able to accomplish, the fact that it is a volunteer organization, all those things appeal to me greatly."

Wimberly said his eleven years in the community — three on the North Side and nine in Seven Lakes West make him want to be involved in the growth of the community.



Adam Wimberly

Accomplish what? "One of the luxuries the candidates have this go 'round is that a lot of the larger controversial issues will have been resolved by the time that we hit the floor," Wimberly said, when asked what he hoped to accomplish if elected to the Board.

"Going forward, one of the things that I see with Board — particularly with the new management company coming in — is that it becomes more strategic-oriented than day-to-day task oriented. That speaks to my skill set. I'm a pretty non-controversial person. I can't think of a platform or an issue or a problem that I see, that I want to see changed. The community is on a really strong footing, and it needs, aggressive, willing and eager volunteers."

"Personally, the things that I am interested in are the long term health and vitality of the community."

Reopening the Dam Road.

"First and foremost," Wimberly said, "any decision about that needs to be based on fact. If there are legitimate engineering reasons to keep the road closed, to prevent degradation of the dam, that is just prudent — unless the community as a whole

is willing to make the commitment financially to continue to repair the dam."

"The Dam Committee has done a great job of coming up with solutions. The lake is our biggest asset in the community. Whatever we need to do to protect it, we have to do that."

"I know a lot of people who were tremendously affected by the closure," Wimberly said. "Adding ten minutes to a commute doesn't sound like a lot unless you are already commuting forty-five minutes to work. But the anticipation of the closure was worse than actual closure in some ways. Still, there will always be people who remember what it was like when it was open."

"Over time, I think it will become less and less of an issue," he added. "If there is a practical, sensible way to open it that won't cause problems, then absolutely." But the decision is unlikely to be so simple, he said, and will likely involve some cost to the community. "There will have to be things done to limit size and speed — and all that is going to cost money." Deciding whether to bear that cost is a decision the Board — and the community — will have to work through," Wimberly said.

Mail delivery. "Clearly it's something that the community is passionate about," Wimberly said when asked about curbside mail delivery in Seven Lakes West. For that reason alone the Board ought to be involved in trying to find ways to make it happen or not make it happen."

However, the decision to have an attorney look into the options "is kind of like you open up Pandora's Box," he added, noting that bringing legal counsel into the mix is likely to cost far more than \$5,000 in the long run.

Wimberly noted that his parents lived in Pinewild during the time that the transition from mail houses to curbside delivery was made in that community. Based on that experience, he said "you are going to have people on both sides of the issue. There will be people who are going to have reasons that they don't want it. They need to be heard."

Dave Carter drops out

Seven Lakes West Landowners Association [SLWLA] Secretary Ed Tuton on Tuesday alerted the community that Dave Carter had withdrawn his name from the list of candidates for the Westside Board of Directors.

Carter, who has served as Director of Regional EMS Systems for FirstHealth told *The Times* that, "because of changes in my work responsibility, I can no longer guarantee I will have time to serve on the Board."

Carter's departure from the race leaves four candidates vying for three open seats.

Because the annual meeting packets have already been assembled, Tuton told *The Times*, Carter's name will appear on the ballot despite his withdrawal from the race.

operations more open to the membership. They created a newsletter and a website. They opened their work sessions to the public and included a public comment segment in those meetings. They just approved a by-law amendment that creates a public hearing mechanism for big decisions. Do you see anything missing from this array of public information and input options? What else can or should the Board do to enhance openness and community input?

9. How much time — say in hours per week — do you

berly told *The Times* that he had been asked by folks who know him to run for the Board. "Doing nothing would have been more convenient," Wimberly said, "but knowing other Board members and what they have been able to accomplish, the fact that it is a volunteer organization, all those things appeal to me greatly."

Wimberly said his eleven years in the community — three on the North Side and nine in Seven Lakes West make him want to be involved in the growth of the community.

"I have no intention of leaving the area," he said. "It makes sense for me to try to give back

(Continued on page 12)

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Wimberly: Westside dues are a bargain

(Continued from page 10)

Security. "I don't think the West Side has any security problems unique to the West Side," Wimberly said when asked whether Seven Lakes West has a security problem. "Every community is going to have petty larcenies and people doing damage to public and private property. It ultimately becomes a financial type of question."

As an example, he mentioned installing security cameras at Johnson Point. "Some people want to install cameras, but, then, what is that going to cost?"

"On our street everyone does a very good job of watching out for each other," Wimberly said, "But when homes are being broken into, that's a very different thing than someone's kayak being set adrift."

"It's easy to get lulled into a false sense of security because we live in a gated community. That's not a license to not lock your doors. . . . It's incumbent on residents to be responsible, to watch out for one another, to do smart things like lock our doors. We could do all kinds of things that we aren't currently doing to protect the community, spend a lot of money, and people are still going to do silly, stupid things."

"A lot of stuff that happens on the West Side that people get really upset about — it wouldn't matter how high the fence is or

whether we have a manned gate or not. Because a lot are things done by residents or people visiting residents."

Wimberly said he felt a manned back gate is likely a better long-term investment than sections of perimeter fencing, though "there are some key penetration points that may need some fencing."

"Unfortunately, it comes down to dollars. How much are you willing to spend and what kind of benefit do you get for spending X number of dollars?" Those kind of strategic decisions, Wimberly said, are what he hopes the Board will have more time to do going forward now that a management company is in place to help manage the day-to-day operations of the community.

Converting lots to public use. "Having the covenant to be able to do it is a probably a good idea, so that you have options available," Wimberly said, when asked about an LRP-recommended change that would allow residential lots to be converted to Association use for pocket parks or infrastructure needs.

"But if my property was adjacent to a lot to be converted, I would immediately have some curiosity about it."

Unfortunately, that can become a sort of us versus them kind of thing and people can begin to

have some question about whether the people making the decision have their best interests at heart. But, clearly, no one wants a boat storage yard next to their lot, and clearly that's not something the people on the Board are going to want to do either."

Any conversion of a lot to public use would require a lot of thought, planning, and input, Wimberly said, but "if there is land that is not being used and constructive ways to use it, it would be silly not to explore that."

"Sometimes, it's the way ideas are presented more than anything that can cause big problems," he added.

Dues. Having moved from Seven Lakes North to Seven Lakes West gives Wimberly something of a unique perspective on the question of whether SLWLA dues are too high, too low, or just right. He said he remembers vividly his surprise that Westside dues were substantially lower.

"We are very fortunate not to have city taxes," he said. "What we are paying in Association dues is far less than we would expect to be paying in city taxes.

From the Wimberly family's perspective, it's really a bargain what we spend to live where we do and have access to the amenities here."

He noted that "any kind of increase right now is unwanted," but "it is a reality that, if we want to protect our community and the investments we have made in it, it is only realistic to expect that dues are going to increase over time."

"Is there a magic number of what's too much? I don't know. But I can honestly say that what

we are paying right now is a deal given the amenities and what we are getting for that money."

Openness. "I personally think the board has done about as much as they can do," Wimberly said, when asked whether anything is missing from the array of efforts the Board has made to be open to the community. "There is a responsibility of the homeowner — who has a vested interest in what is

(Continued on page 13)

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Four candidates compete for Westside Seats

(Continued from page 12)

going on, and is curious about what is going on — the nice thing is that you have access to that information now.”

“There’s a sort of a flip side to it,” he added, “that, if everything goes through a public forum, you start to erode the need for a Board.”

“I think the openness and the way the Board has been sharing information is fantastic. If you want the information, it is there. It has done a lot to alleviate miscommunication, exaggeration, and gloom and doom.”

“If there are other ways of doing it, I would be open to it, but I really don’t know what else you could do beyond what is being done.”

Time required. “I have been told to expect a part-time job,” Wimberly said when asked how much time he expected service on the Board to take. “It’s going to take a great deal of time.”

“Frankly, it was my number one reservation. Owning my own business, having a young family, it can be hard finding time to do things you want and need to do. But, you find time to do the things that need to be done. I’m fortunate to have flexibility with my schedule so that I think I can manage that more easily than most.”

“Having the management company is kind of new to everybody. Nobody is sure how that is

going to affect the time commitment. Being a fluent user of technology, myself, I think there are things I can do to streamline the time required to do things.”

“Because I have a full-time job, I don’t travel a whole lot. Those times when you are gone for 2, 3, 4 weeks vacationing — that’s a non-issue. But that is the biggest unknown for me right now: exactly how much time will be required.”

Wimberly said that his perception was that each of the jobs on the Board has its own pattern of activity — some requiring more time seasonally and some requiring a more even expenditure of effort throughout the year.

Jim Johnson

Jim Johnson is a retired engineer who moved to Seven Lakes West in 2006.

Why run? “I’m still interested in being involved,” Johnson, who ran unsuccessfully for the SLWLA Board last year, told *The Times*. Since last year’s elections, he added, “I have been going to most of the Board work sessions and the public meetings — and I have tried to pitch in when people have asked.” Johnson noted that he had been asked by former SLWLA President Jim Haggard and Director

Ray MacKay, among others, to assist with various projects. He noted that several landowners had encouraged him to run for the Board because of his background in Engineering.

Accomplish what? Asked what specifically he hoped to accomplish if elected to the SLWLA Board, Johnson answered, “To help keep it running smoothly and address the issues that affect this community.” He specifically mentioned the Lakeway Drive railroad crossing, the mail delivery issue, and the dam remediation as key short-term concerns.

“Longer term, we need to put some money in the reserve budget,” Johnson said. “I don’t think we have enough. We don’t have to have the entire \$3.5 million that will be required to cover projects already identified, but we do need enough to deal with any problem or emergency that might arise.” Johnson specifically mentioned road repaving as something that must be included in the long-term financial plan, thought he noted the Board has a good plan in place for that.

“We want Seven Lakes West to remain a premiere communi-

ty as it builds out,” Johnson said. There will be problems from time to time and we need to stay on top of them.”



Jim Johnson

Reopening the dam road. “I firmly believe we ought to reopen the road,” Johnson said when asked about the roadway atop the Lake Auman Dam. “The prudent thing to do is get it fixed, evaluate it, and then see about reopening the road.”

Johnson recalled that Dam Engineer Dr. Dan Marks had said, during a presentation to the SLWLA membership, that he would not have designed his remediation plan any differently whether the road would be reopened or left closed.

“I think, when we get done and do an analysis, that we will find out there is not a technical reason to keep the road closed,” Johnson said. He noted that, should the road be reopened, it will be important to keep large

(Continued on page 14)

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Johnson: Dam road can likely be reopened

(Continued from page 13)

trucks off the dam — through construction of a height barrier, if necessary.

"Keeping that road closed has an adverse effect on at least twenty-five percent of the community," Johnson said, adding that he is confident the Board can work through the issues and reach a generally accepted solution to the problem.

Mail delivery. "The mail house is in a terrible location," Johnson said, when asked what the Board should be doing about mail delivery. "When there were 100 residents it was probably okay. Now it is not in very good repair."

"The first thing is to see whether the post office will ever consider curbside delivery," Johnson continued, "which I doubt. I don't think they will step up to that."

"The most straightforward thing would be to build a mail house on the back of the community center parking lot," he said. "We could build one for \$200,000 or

so that would serve the community as it is now. Maybe later we would need to build one or two more: one at the back gate, and maybe one up near Beacon Ridge."

Johnson said he didn't think anything would happen until the dispute with the Postal Service concerning home delivery is resolved, "and I don't know when that will be."

Johnson mentioned that he is not in favor of cluster mailboxes, both because of traffic safety issues and because "cluster mailboxes don't add much to the beauty of the community."

Security. Johnson told *The Times* that he was not particularly well informed about what strategies had been tried in the past to deal with the sort of petty crime and vandalism that seems more and more common in Seven Lakes West. "I do think we have a problem with teenagers and twenty-somethings who don't have enough to do," he told *The Times*. "So they look

for some trouble to get into — like drinking beer on the island."

"It's mostly kids with too much time on their hands, and we do need to do something about it. We need to find out who did it and make an example out of one or another of them."

Johnson said it is impossible to make the community completely impenetrable to those who want to walk — or even drive — in, noting that even a fenced community like the Country Club of North Carolina likely has some unauthorized entry.

"Basically, you are responsible for your own security, no matter where you live," he said. "But we need to make sure there are some more eyes and ears in the community — perhaps by putting security cameras at Johnson Point and elsewhere. Johnson Point is a great attraction for young people — particularly those who have had a few beers."

Johnson was dubious about the effectiveness of boundary fencing: "It won't hurt, but you can't build enough of it to make

a difference." A manned back gate, he said, "is probably a pretty big expense, but probably not a bad idea."

Ultimately, "gates and locks and fences only keep out the honest people," Johnson said. "Criminals don't care. If some one wants to get in here, they are going to get in."

Converting lots to public use. "I don't see anything wrong with the concept that you ought to be able to use some private lots and convert them to public use," Johnson said when asked about a covenant change proposed by the LRP a few months ago. "But I do have a concern that someone buys a piece of property and then they find out later that they are going to have a

children's play yard next door."

"If we needed to buy a lot for a mail house — with the proper community residents' approval — I don't have a problem with it, Johnson said. "We would need some kind of a vetting process to make sure it's done properly."

Dues. Asked about Westside dues levels, Johnson said, "I think any tax is too high. But I also think the \$600 to \$700 a year for association membership in a community such as this is not unreasonable. I think you could check with many communities with half-million dollar houses and find that they pay dues at least as high. I don't think it's unreasonable — particularly if it's spent wisely."

(Continued on page 15)





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Four candidates compete for Westside Seats

(Continued from page 14)

"I have no quarrel with how our money is being spent now, but you have to make sure you're smart about how you spend your money because we need to be putting some in the bank for reserves."

Johnson said he was glad to see the new budget will bring all Westsiders to dues parity. "Then, if we need something, we are free to ask everyone to contribute."

Openness. Johnson praised the Board's recent approval of a bylaw amendment that provides for a public hearing process on major decisions. "I do believe the Board is making a good effort to communicate," he added, though he noted one worrisome point. "They keep having a lot of executive sessions, and nothing ever comes out about what happened or what was done." Johnson said he understood the need for executive sessions to handle legal and personnel issues but was wary of their overuse. He said, if elected, he would strive for openness in both sharing information with members and gathering input from the community.

"I would do my best to represent every one one of the 1700-plus landowners, and reach the best consensus we can on decisions for the good of the community," he said.

John Hoffman

John Hoffman, a resident of Seven Lakes West since 2001 is a Retired Air Force Lieutenant Colonel, whose second career was spent handling assignments for defense contractors. He retired at the end of 2008.

Why Run? "I'm a doer, always have been," John Hoffman told *The Times* when asked why he was running for the SLWLA Board of Directors. Noting that the resume he submitted to the Nominating Committee listed a number of organizations and efforts he has been involved in — among them serving other homeowners associations, Hoffman said he found working with volunteer organizations "interesting and challenging" and "a wonderful team building opportunity." All involve the question "How do we get things done collegially?"

"I like to plant and see things come to fruition, in nature or in organizations or operations," Hoffman said. "I've been the director of several projects and I find tremendous satisfaction in seeing the end product: a new church, new church hall, a new house for Habitat for Humanity . . . something coming from nothing for the benefit of our community."

Hoffman said a second reason for running for the board is "that

I enjoy team-building. My entire career has been as part of a team or as a team leader trying to build a team."



John Hoffman

What accomplish? Asked what he hoped to accomplish if elected, Hoffman said there were three primary things "that I personally am interested in, in no particular order: long range planning, security, and communications. He noted that these were not priorities, so much as areas in which he felt he could contribute to the work of the Board.

On long range planning, Hoff-

man said: "We have to look a bit further out in the future and spend time deciding what we want our community to become. The best time to do that is fairly soon." That would involve a survey of the SLWLA membership, Hoffman said, but should be done "in conjunction with other organizations, with the Business Guild and Seven Lakes North and South, West End, and the other small communities around us. We can't live in isolation."

"Enlarging the scope of long range planning as we know it today would be one goal," Hoffman said.

Turning to security, Hoffman said Seven Lakes West has "the same challenge as our country. We don't want to give up any freedoms but we want to feel secure. We are a gated community by design, by desire." Residents wouldn't move into a gated community if they didn't see any advantage in it. The advantage they see is security."

"As we grow and the community around us grows, we are seen as somewhat exclusive. Sometimes exclusivity can make you seem like a target. The challenge is the right balance between security and not giving

(Continued on page 16)



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Hoffman: Board should 'pulse the community'

(Continued from page 15)

up certain conveniences.

"As an example, some people have said we need a fence around our community. There is a cost with that. Others have suggested 24-hour guards. There's a cost with that. We've even discussed in the past not allowing outsiders in, even our North Side and South Side friends — without a telephone call to the gates. That's giving up a freedom."

"These are all options," Hoffman said. "The community needs to weigh in and help the Board make the call — give us enough input to analyze, that we can be confident that we are doing what the community wishes."

"We have to strike the right balance, but security is a high priority of mine. I have a background in it. If elected I would like the opportunity to continue with that effort."

The third area in which Hoffman said he could contribute is communications. "I have used a term in the past: 'pulsing the community.' We are doing a far better job than we used to, but there's always room for improvement, so we can more overtly solicit input from our residents. We can encourage them to send us emails . . . We can encourage them to contact their Area Reps. We as a Board could meet more frequently with the Area Reps. I don't think you can have too much communication."

Openness: *The Times* asked Hoffman to flesh out his idea of 'pulsing the community' and explain the opportunities he sees for enhanced openness on the part of the SLWLA Board.

"It's been approximately five years since the last community survey that generated a wish list which was then refined . . . and prioritized. Five years is a long time," Hoffman noted that there were roughly 350 families in the community when he arrived in 2001 — a number that has since grown to over 900. "We have a new community; I think we need a new survey." He suggested taking a formal survey every three years or so and updating it annually, tying the responses into the ongoing long range planning process.

Asked whether there needs to be additional communication flowing from the Board to the community, Hoffman said face-to-face conversation is the most powerful form of communication and recommended the Area Reps as a channel for fostering that information channel. "If the Area Reps feel like they are part of the governing process — part of the information-gathering process — and their opinions are seen by the Board as important, they will pass that importance on to the other people in the neighborhood" and become a more powerful communications pathway "with the

human touch rather than the email touch." A side benefit is that folks get to know their neighbors, he added.

Hoffman called a bylaw amendment recently passed by the Board that will allow for public hearings on key matters "a tremendous step forward." Hoffman proposed the idea of "a clear majority" — which he defined as two-thirds of landowners — as a useful one for the Board to use when it weighs public opinion. "When we can sense in a large sampling of the population that two-thirds is in favor of something, then the Board has a fairly clear signal that they should be moving in that direction. What I want to avoid is the board acting uni-

laterally or on the 'loudest' voice syndrome."

Mail Delivery. "I personally have no preference," Hoffman said of the mail delivery issue. "I am more than willing to drive to a mail house, but I would prefer not to have to drive to the West End Post Office — which is a possible outcome." If curbside delivery were permitted, Hoffman said he would prefer to see individual homeowners bear the cost of their own mailboxes, built to a standard set by the Association.

Asked how the Association should move forward to secure curbside delivery — or whether the Board should give up and quit trying," Hoffman said the cur-

rent situation is a clear case of the USPS "using a 15-year-old precedent to justify not granting one community what over ten other gated communities enjoy. That is the core argument that I am not sure has been expressed adequately by a high enough authority."

Noting that the SLWLA had been successful in enlisting former U.S. Senator Elizabeth Dole's office as an advocate, Hoffman said the Board would now have to turn to Senators Richard Burr or Kay Hagan, because "the Greensboro District Manager seems to be intransigent on this issue."

Asked whether the Association should hire an administrative

(Continued on page 17)

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(Continued from page 16)

law attorney to help evaluate the communities options, Hoffman advocated using the political channel. "It could be that we have some residents with some political knowledge and experience that could better present our issue to Kay Hagan and ask her to look into this."

Reopening the Dam Road.

Hoffman praised the "prudent" actions of the Board in responding to the problems with the dam by relying on qualified engineering opinion.

"Here again, I don't have a personal opinion," Hoffman said, "but I have a belief that we should allow reasonable expertise to guide our actions. I think that [Dam Engineer] Dr. Marks is a reasonable expert."

"The subject of a second opinion has come up. The Board took the position that, if the state of NC approves Dr. Marks plan, that would constitute a second opinion. I tend to agree with that. However, if for any reason we

believed that there was any reasonable doubt, then I think we owe to ourselves to seek another opinion on the situation of the road — and what the traffic going over the road's effect would be on dam as a whole and on the remediation which we have just spent \$300,000 replacing. Jeopardizing the remediation would not seem to make any sense."

Converting residential lots.

The idea that the Board should be able to convert Association-owned residential property to public use is reasonable on the surface, Hoffman, said, but it depends on where the property is located. Property adjacent to a common area might make sense as a site for public use, he said, but, a lot sandwiched between to existing homes "and planned for a generator, a skateboard rink, a basketball court, or a boat storage area, I would be solidly against it. I wouldn't want it next to me and I don't think anyone would want it next to them. So the circumstances sur-

rounding the property would have to be carefully looked at."

"Should we change the covenant in advance of such a possibility? I would consider a covenant change, if the restriction on the Board to declare a lot be usable for anything other than a residence would be extremely difficult . . . I think it would have to be unanimous for the Board and with the consent of all residents within a reasonable distance . . . I would be willing to talk about that sort of thing, not that I am absolutely in favor."

Dues. Hoffman said a useful approach to answering the question of whether SLWLA dues are reasonable would be to collect data on similar communities

and do a cost comparison.

Another approach is to use the long range planning process — including community input — to develop cost projections and revenue needs. "Without that kind of information we are making blind estimates and living annually as opposed to working from a longer range picture of revenue requirements."

Hoffman noted that the expense associated with the construction of West Side park is covered by a separate \$100 annual dues payment, giving residents a concrete understanding of the cost of the facility. He suggested that breaking out the annual, per member, cost of maintaining other major assets — the roads, the dam, the spillway, and the marina — would

provide landowners with valuable information about the cost of those assets and the financial requirements of maintaining them.

Time. "I retired on December 31, 2008," Hoffman said, when asked about the level of time commitment he expected if elected to the Board. "So I think I will have adequate time. I estimate that to be not less than 20 hours a week."

Additional thoughts. Asked if had other comments, Hoffman said he and other residents who have retired to the West Side have invested a significant portion of their life savings in order to live in the community.

(Continued on page 20)

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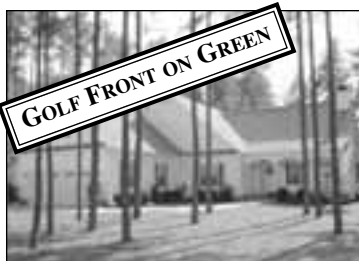
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- **Cooking with Carmela and Marjorie: Classic Italian Dishes** – 1 pm, West Side Park Community Center. Featuring popular, classic Italian dishes, such as Osso Bucco with creamy polenta and mushrooms, chicken Piccata, prosciutto and basil roulade with the mozzarella, and a demonstration on making fresh mozzarella. Recipe packets are available, and everyone will partake in the tasting of all the dishes. Registration begins Thursday, January 15, call 673-5314. The cost of the program is \$12.50 per person.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 25

- **The O'Neal School Enrollment Open House** – 2 pm – 4 pm, Bradshaw Hall, The O'Neal School, Southern Pines. Tour the campus, meet faculty, and learn more about The O'Neal School. Information, Alice Droppers at 692-6920 ext 103, or adropers@onealschool.org
- **Jazzy Strings with Mountain Marionettes** – 3 pm, Weymouth Center for the Arts

and Humanities, Southern Pines. A marionette show with broad appeal to adults and children, featuring puppetry and jazz music. The event is free and open to the public. Information, 692-6261.



What's When Calendar

MONDAY, JANUARY 26

- **Sandhills Natural History Society Meeting** – 7 pm, Weymouth Woods Auditorium, 1024 Ft. Bragg Rd, Southern Pines. Presentation about the diverse aquatic life found within Sandhills streams, rivers, and watersheds with staff from the Fort Bragg Endangered Species Branch. Visitors are welcome! Information, 692-2167 or visit www.sandhill-snature.org
- **Seven Lakes West Landowners Association Candidates Night** – 7:30 pm, West Side Park Community Center. Sponsored by the League of Women Voters. Moderated by Greg Hankins of the *Seven Lakes Times*. Four candidates

are running for three open slots on the Westside Board of Directors.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 27

- **Foxfire Village Council Special Open Meeting** – 7:30 pm, Foxfire Country Club. An open meeting to gather input from the public concerning the PARTF grant proposal.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28

- **Dog & Cat First Aid** – 5 pm – 9 pm, Moore County American Red Cross, Southern Pines. Fee \$25. 692-8571.
- **Seven Lakes Landowners Association Open Meeting** – 7:30 pm, Seven Lakes North Clubhouse.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 29

- **Adult/Infant/Child CPR /AED Review** – 6 pm - 8:30 pm, Moore County American Red Cross, Southern Pines. Prerequisite required. Certification fee \$30. 692-8571.

- **SOS Meeting: Preservation of the Sandhills** – 7 pm, Southern Pines Civic Center, corner of Ashe and Pennsylvania Ave. Save Our Sandhills host guest lecturer Ray Owen, Past President of Moore County Historical Assoc, for a presentation on the Boyd family's longstanding vision for the Sandhills. The event is free and open to the public.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31

- **Babysitter Training** – 9 am – 4 pm, Moore County American Red Cross, Southern Pines. For ages eleven to fifteen years. Fee \$30. Registration, 692-8571.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2

- **Groundhog Day**
- **Moore County Board of Commissioners Meeting** – 4 pm, Historic Courthouse, Carthage.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3

- **College Club Meeting & Luncheon** – 11:30 am, Pinewild Country Club. Featured guest speaker Nan Leaptrott will present "The twists and turns of difficult conversations: When and what you

say and how you say it matters." Tickets are \$15.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4

- **Project Linus Craft and Fleece Workshop** – 10 am – 3 pm, Seven Lakes North Clubhouse. Join us to make fleece blankets for children in need in the Sandhills/Moore County area. Bring sharp scissors, pack a snack or lunch, and join us for a fun day. Pat Weber at 673-1457.

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- **John Locke Foundation: Gov. Bobby Jindal** – 6:30 pm, Marriott Crabtree Valley, Raleigh. The Honorable Bobby Jindal, Governor of Louisiana, will present America: An Agenda for the Future. Reception with cash bar, followed by dinner at the Marriott Crabtree Valley in Raleigh. Cost is \$77.50, includes transportation, reception, and dinner. Information, Walter B. Bull, Jr. at wbbulljr@nc.rr.com or 295-4569.
- **Ruth Pauley Lecture Series: Frank Deford** – 7:30 pm, Owens Auditorium, SCC. Sportswriter, commentator, and novelist Frank Deford will discuss "The Hype and the Hoopla: The Good and Bad of Sports." Admission is free and open to the public with no tickets required. Information, 245-3132.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5

- **Women of Seven Lakes Meeting** – 1 pm, West Side Park Community Center. A Divine Valentine's Day for One, Two, or More. SLCC Chef Jacki Scotti will provide some new and exciting ideas to spice up your Valentine's table.
- **Moore County Planning Board** – 6 pm, Historic Courthouse, Carthage.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7

- **Southern Gifts & Crafts Bazaar** – 10 am – 3 pm, West Side Park Community Center. Come support your local business women. Gifts and crafts for everyone, door prizes, and free food! Information, Sabrina Whitaker 295-5128.
- **Kids Valentine's Craft Class** – 3 pm, West Side Park Community Center. Paint and decorate a Valentine Treat Holder filled with treats for someone special! The Kids Valentine Craft Class with Linda Rosskamp fee is \$10 and all supplies are included. Class repeats on Monday, Feb 9 3:30 – 5pm, and Tuesday, Feb 10 3:30 – 5 pm at SLLA Community Activity Center. Class size is limited. Advance registration only at SLWLA or SLLA offices.
- **The O'Neal School 'Curtains to Net' Auction** – The Fair Barn, Pinehurst. A silent and live auction event catered by Elliott's on Linden. A raffle for \$10,000 will also take place. Proceeds for the O'Neal arts and athletics programs. For an invitation, raffle ticket, or more information, Lynn Melton at 692-6920 ext 104 lmelton@onealsc6920 hool.org

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8

- **Eddie Barrett & Goodman Legacy Orchestra** – 4 pm – 6:30 pm, Mr. P's, 155 Hall Avenue, Southern Pines. Eddie's Big Band sound will thrill dancers at Mr. P's, formerly Mint Juleps Club.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9

- **Moore County Board of Education Meeting** – 7 pm, Central Schools Building, Carthage.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10

- **Seven Lakes West Landowners Association Work Session** – 8 am, West Side Park Community Center.
- **Computer Club of Seven Lakes Meeting** - 3pm, Game Room at Seven Lakes North. Program to be announced.
- **Foxfire Village Council Meeting** – 7:30 pm, Town Hall.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12

- **Lincoln's Birthday**
- **Seven Lakes Landowners Association Work Session** – 8:30 am, SLLA Conference Room.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14

- **St. Valentine's Day**
- **Wine & Cheese Valentine's Day Party** – 7 pm – 10 pm, Our Lady of the Americas

Church, Candor. Tickets are \$20.00 per person, includes wine and cheese and entertainment by Barron Maness, James Brown on the saxophone, and guest singer Anna Morgan. Advance ticket sales only. Call the Church office at 974-3051, Laura Rolls at 673-4077, or Jack's Place restaurant in the Seven Lakes Business Village.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16

- **President's Day**

- **Moore County Board of Commissioners Meeting** – 6 pm, Historic Courthouse, Carthage.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19

- **Women of Seven Lakes Card Party & Luncheon** – 11:30 am, Seven Lakes Country Club. Lunch at noon, cards & games follow at 1 pm. Cost is \$15 per person in advance. Please call Lee Connelly at 673-2521 or Mary Farley at 673-2310.



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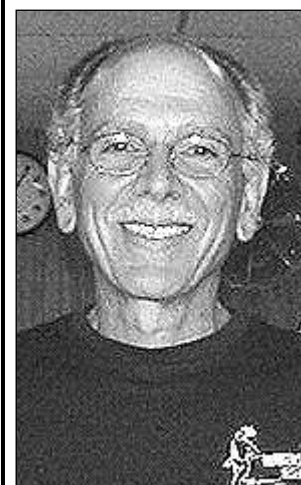
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Feeling Good is the Fun of It!

Four candidates compete for Westside Seats

(Continued from page 17)

"As the community grows, and demographics change, there will be a tendency for younger families to desire and perhaps demand different kinds of amenities than currently exist," he said. "As understandable as that is, it is important for every resident to keep in mind that, when they buy into a community, they either have to get some level of consensus for the change they wish, or they have to accept things the way they bought them."

"Some of the original residents can remember all dirt roads. Everyone wanted paved roads, so we have paved roads. But when you start talking about skateboard rinks, a teen center, or other things that would accommodate youth and teenagers in general, those are things that everyone won't want, and that has to be understood."

"When the clear majority is in favor of those kinds of expenditures, I fully support them"

Hoffman praised the efforts of Betty and Ronnie Milligan in leading beautification efforts in the community. Beautification. "Our Board and our community, in my opinion, need to decide what level of beautification they desire and get behind it with a budget," he said.

"We cannot expect volunteers to do the work of the community. I would fully support a comprehensive beautification plan as part of the long range plan and budgeted appropriately."

In the meantime, Hoffman said, he supported asking home and lot owners to voluntarily work together to improve the 15-foot public easement across the front of their property. Another useful volunteer effort would be for neighbors to cooperate on beautifying the corners near their homes.

John Goodman

Why run? "During my career, I was just too busy to get that involved in the community," John Goodman told *The Times* when asked why he had decided to run for the Board of Directors.

"One of my goals in retirement is to get more involved in the community. We intend to live here for a long time. I want to participate in the betterment and welfare and maintenance of the community I live in . . . Because of my construction background I felt I could be of service on the committee in some capacity."

Accomplish what? "I haven't been here a long time, so I need to listen a lot before I could answer that effectively," Goodman replied when asked what he hoped to accomplish if elected

to the Board. "To begin with, I have got to listen and be as fair as possible."

Goodman said listening to his neighbors talk about different issues often acquaints him with surprising — and valid — concerns.



John Goodman

"Take something as simple as mail delivery to the home," he said. "I read that one of the gentleman leaving the Board was concerned about safety on Longleaf. Before I read that, I thought 'I can't understand why anyone would have a problem [with mail delivery]. But I read it and recognized he had a legitimate concern."

"These issues are not as simple and straightforward as you might think, and you need to keep an open mind." I would do my best to listen to everybody's point of view and accommodate to the best of my ability any reasonable concern."

"Anything that would preserve the amenities of our community and better them is what we all want. The question is: 'What's the best way to do that?' I think there are some things — like

(Continued on page 21)



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Goodman: Begin with careful listening

(Continued from page 20)

the railroad crossing — that's a straightforward safety issue. You just need to do it because of public safety. But most things are not going to be black or white.

Mail delivery. Curbside delivery of mail in Seven Lakes West "Makes a lot of sense," Goodman said. "From an economic perspective, it makes no sense for 200 cars to travel a mile or more every day, when you could have one car going around the neighborhood. From a green perspective, it makes no sense."

"Plus this community has a lot of retirees — and some older residents don't want to drive to the mail house on cold days. So there's a convenience factor as well."

Goodman noted that the concerns about traffic safety would need to be addressed — and perhaps could be addressed by clustering mailboxes in some locations.

"There is really no explanation for why this neighborhood has been discriminated against," he told *The Times*. "All these other communities have it that are similar to ours . . . it is unreasonable for the post office to deny us service."

Reopening the Dam Road.

"The downside potential of a dam failure is so enormous, that a reasonable amount of caution is the right course," Goodman told *The Times* when asked about reopening the roadway across Lake Auman dam. "The downside potential is too great. So we have to be cautious."

"If we become more confident in the integrity of the dam, and if a lot of people want the dam to be reopened to traffic of some kind, then that has to be studied to see if that can be accommodated. We might have to re-engineer the road. One comment was that it wasn't built for a great deal of traffic — and definitely not heavy construction traffic or trucks. We would have to study it carefully."

"The truth is I want to listen to everybody," Goodman said. "Until you get around folks who have been discussing it for a long time . . . I have a lot to learn."

Security. "I think that security is important for the folks who live here — because they all chose to live in a gated community," Goodman said when asked whether Seven Lakes West has a security problem. "Most folks probably bought in here because it is a gated community."

"If the environment is changing so that security is an issue, then it needs to be addressed. One of the things that is nice about this community is to know you can leave your house for a month and not worry about a break in."

Asked about perimeter fencing and a manned back gate, Goodman said he needed to hear more about both before taking any position. "If I answer now and haven't discussed it with those who have been thinking about the issue, I will say something that doesn't address their concerns. It has been very gratifying to see how thoughtful people have been about these issues when I talk to them. I have

learned in every conversation I have had about these issues."

"The most important thing is to listen. Once all the ideas are in, you keep the emotion out of it, and then you can take a position of some kind. I am very respectful of other people's opinions. Almost everybody I talk to has legitimate concerns."

Dues. Goodman told *The Times* that he didn't "have a feel" for whether current dues levels are too high or too low. "Living here, I tend to think they are not unreasonable at current levels."

"I need to review the budget more carefully, talk to people, and listen to them. There are obviously people who have thought more carefully about that than I have. I just need to listen to people."

"I'm sure people on fixed incomes have a strong perspective to keep them as low as possible, and yet there is the need to maintain the quality of what we have. You've got to respect everybody's position."

Openness. "You can't have everything be a referendum and be efficient," Goodman said when asked whether there were additional measures the SLWLA Board could take to increase openness.

"There is a balance between openness and the need to be decisive and efficient. You do want to optimize that balance. Give everyone the opportunity to be informed of what is happening and have input. The decision-making process — from a practical point of view — you have to be pragmatic about these things."

"I'm all for openness to a degree that doesn't detract from a reasonable ability to do the right thing at the right time. Otherwise you're going to make mistakes that are unnecessary."

"I have been very happy to see so many thoughtful comments on anything I bring up. Why would you not listen when you could learn something that could benefit the whole community?"

Time. "I don't know," Goodman said when asked how much

(See "Candidates, p. 22")



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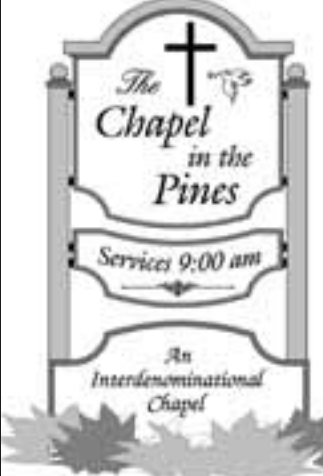
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Board plans review of county sign ordinances

by Laura Douglass
Times Reporter

A Public Hearing to consider allowing signs in rural equestrian [RE] districts consistent with existing restrictions imposed on rural agricultural [RA] districts, prompted the Moore County Planning Board to recommend a complete review of all sign ordinances.

"These are big signs. Is that consistent with how we want

our county to look?" queried Alternate Member Carl Munro during the Thursday, January 8 monthly meeting.

Current restrictions imposed in the RA district for subdivisions, manufactured home parks, and home occupations limit signs to twenty to thirty-two square feet, and four to eight feet in height, depending on usage.

Munro made the unanimously approved motion to adopt the

revised guidelines as presented for the RE district with the understanding that a total review of Moore County sign ordinances will be forthcoming.

The Board unanimously approved a text amendment to the Moore County Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance limiting encroachment and new manufactured housing in flood plains. However, discussion of a proposed text amendment to the Zoning Ordinance regarding placement of accessory buildings again proved to be a controversial agenda item. The goal of the amendment is to limit intrusive structures in rural agricultural areas — representing approximately ninety-four percent of Moore County land. After considerable discussion periods during several meetings, and no resolution on the table, the Board approved the staff recommendation to form a committee to provide a text amendment that is consistent with the Land Use Plan.

Other Items

The Seven Lakes Snack, a sandwich shop and restaurant currently under construction in the Seven Lakes Business Village, received a commercial project permit in December.

A project permit for Accelerated Technologies Laboratories [ATL] was also completed in Decem-

ber. ATL is located on Holly Grove School Road in West End.

Candidates

(Continued from page 21)

time he expected serving on the Board would consume." I do know it takes some time. I do know it's a substantial commitment."

"I certainly don't want it to consume me. I have been told that, with the new management

company, that some of the pressures on previous boards have been mitigated."

"Hats off to those board members before the management company was involved. I think it's a real good thing they made that decision."

Project Linus Winter Workshops

On Wednesday, January 28 from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm, join the Project Linus Blanketeers in the Seven Lakes North Clubhouse. New fleece is available, and there are blankets to inspect and label. A brief business meeting will be held at 12:30 pm to review 2008 results and make plans for the New Year. Drop by or pack a lunch and plan to spend the day.

A Project Linus Craft and Fleece Workshop will be held Wednesday, February 4 from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm, at the North Clubhouse. Please bring your own sharp scissors, pack a snack or lunch, and plan for a fun day.

For more information, call Pat Weber at 673-1457.

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9 Navy Bean Soup ♥ Baked Spaghetti Dinner	10 Chicken & Dumpling Soup Beef Enchiladas Dinner ♥	11 Split Pea with Ham Soup ♥ Herb-Roasted Turkey Dinner	12 Crab & Shrimp Bisque Tilapia Florentine Dinner ♥	13 New England Clam Chowder Beef Stroganoff Dinner
16 Beef Barley Soup ♥ Italian Meatloaf Dinner	17 Creamy Chicken Vegetable Soup Chicken Pot Pie Dinner	18 Corn Chowder Pot Roast Dinner	19 Potato & Leek Soup Herb-Crusted Salmon Dinner ♥	20 Shrimp & Sausage Gumbo Chicken Enchiladas Dinner ♥
23 Split Pea with Ham Soup Shepherd's Pie Dinner	24 Minestrone Soup ♥ Chicken with Artichokes Dinner ♥	25 Mushroom Bisque Soup Broccoli Manicotti Dinner ♥	26 Mexican Meatball Soup Pecan-Crusted Tilapia Dinner	27 Corn & Shrimp Soup Ginger Beef Stir-Fry Dinner ♥

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It's the time of year for one of America's favorite treats! Girl Scouts are taking orders for cookies through Sunday, March 15. Cookies will also be available Super Bowl Weekend exclusively through Cookie Booth sales. Local Brownie and Girl Scouts troops will host booths at the Seven Lakes Food Lion on Saturday, January 31 from 11:00 am – 7:00 pm, and at the Seven Lakes Mac's Breakfast Restaurant on Sunday, February 1 from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm.

Get ready to savor all your favorites including, Thin Mints, Caramel deLites®, Shortbread, Peanut Butter Sandwich, Thanks-A-Lot™, Lemonades™, and Peanut Butter Patties®, and new calorie-counted single serve Daisy Go Rounds™. The price per box is \$3.50, and all proceeds generated from the Cookie Sale Program stay within the girls' local area.

For more information about Girl Scouts or to join a local troop, visit www.nccoastal.pines.org

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Coble, co-workers honor Nancy Boroughs

Congressman Howard Coble was among the guests honoring retiring Jackson Springs Postmaster Nancy Boroughs at a Saturday, January 10 retirement dinner at The Inn at Eagle Springs.

Postal officials from Raleigh and Greensboro, representatives of the Rural Carriers Association, area postmasters, Jackson Springs carriers and staff, along with friends and family gathered to celebrate Boroughs service to the community and wish her well in her new life in retirement.

West End Postmaster Harold Jones recounted Boroughs career with the U.S. Postal Service, which began in 1983 when she took a job as a relief carrier on an Eagle Springs rural route.

She began serving as the Jackson Springs postmaster's relief in 1985 and took over the

job of postmaster in that facility in 2002.

Jackson Springs' next postmaster "can just go in and sit down," Jones said, because Nancy has already done everything that can be done" to make the facility a clean, well-organized, and smoothly-functioning facility.

A Jackson Springs native, Boroughs has outfitted her lobby office with historical displays telling the story of the post office and the community it serves.

"Nancy Boroughs cared for her community, she served her community, and she is one of the most dedicated individuals I've ever met," Jones said.

"Nancy Boroughs, you will be missed."

"I am truly honored to see so many of you come out tonight," Boroughs told those in attendance.

"When you first begin, you

don't think of retirement — but how soon it comes!"

"All my customers in the Jackson Springs Post Office — that

is what I will truly miss."

Boroughs husband Otis thanked those who attended the dinner, and said "We're real

happy that we have got her home again — even if that means I may have to do a few more chores around the place."



Postmasters — and pals — Jayne Cagle of Eagle Springs, Charlotte Garner of Candor, Nancy Boroughs of Jackson Springs, and Angela Mabe of Star.

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Ray Owen to share local history with S.O.S

Save Our Sandhills will host a historical presentation by guest lecturer Ray Owen entitled "Preservation of the Sandhills" at its regular meeting on January 29. Preservation is not a new

concept in the Sandhills. However, Ray Owen will describe aspects of the long-range vision that the Boyd family used to guide them in the development of this area of the Sandhills.

They grasped the charm and beauty of the unique longleaf pine ecosystem and its piney woods, and sought to enhance its tourist and agricultural aspects.

Owen will focus attention on the work of preservationist Helen Boyd Dull, the elder James Boyd's daughter, and her role in saving the Boyd Round Timber Tract with its pines dating back as much as 460 years. According to Owen's research, this tract is the largest surviving vestige of original longleaf pine forest in the United States. Of the original 92 million acres of longleaf pine forest, experts estimate that less than three million acres remain – and this acreage is fragmented among thousands of square miles. The longleaf pine forest's decline of nearly 98% dwarfs the Amazon rain forest's losses of somewhere up to twenty-five percent.

Helen Boyd Dull's arrival in Southern Pines marked the time when the town became a world of nature lovers and environmentalists eager to line streets and train tracks with native plants. The town gave homage to the nearby grove of longleaf giants that crowned the town's eastern ridge. This was an exciting time for the Southern Pines and Sandhills area. But it also has lessons for us today if we are to retain the charm and ambiance in the Sandhills.

Ray Owen, a Sandhills native who was born and raised in Hamlet, has called Southern Pines home for more than thirty years. He is past president of the Moore County Historical Association, having been an active member for twenty years, and has served as guest lec-

turer and curator for both local and statewide museums. He currently serves on the Advisory Committee for the Southern Pines Comprehensive Long-Range Plan, and is a regular contributor for PineStraw Magazine.

The Save Our Sandhills quarterly meeting will be held Thursday, January 29 at 7:00 pm in the Southern Pines Civic Center at the corner of Ashe Street and Pennsylvania Avenue.

In addition to Ray Owen's pres-

entation, two resolutions will be under consideration – one on Environmental Impact Statements, the other on wells and water supply. Suggested changes to the Bylaws will also be reviewed.

Members who not paid their dues are urged to do so. SOS dues are \$30 for an individual or a family.

Make checks payable to Save Our Sandhills and send to Save Our Sandhills, P.O. 893, Pinehurst, NC 28370.

Celebrating 50 years



Barbara and Ron Sickenberger of Seven Lakes West celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary in December with family and friends at a reception and dinner at Beacon Ridge Country Club.

The couple was married in Youngstown, Ohio, on December 20, 1958, following their graduation from Kent State University. Their family includes Nancy Donnell and her husband Eddie of Greensboro; Karen Sickenberger of Asheville; David Sickenberger of Hendersonville; Lance Fleming of Greensboro; John and Deanne O'Conner of Greensboro; and grandchildren Jessica and Dustin Donnell, and Jack and Rosa Sickenberger.

The Sickenberger's have lived in Seven Lakes West for eleven years.

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O'Neal School hosts Open House Sunday

The O'Neal School is now taking enrollment applications for 2009-2010. An open house for families will be held on Sunday, January 25 from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm. Families can meet at Bradshaw Hall and guides will provide a tour of the campus. Teachers, staff members, and volunteer parents will be on hand to answer questions. All new students are tested as a part of the admissions process. The admissions testing date is February 28.

Located in Southern Pines, O'Neal is an independent college preparatory school that, over a span of thirty-seven years, has grown from serving thirty-five 4th through 6th graders in four mobile units to a forty-acre campus of five state-of-the-art buildings serving almost 450 students from Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade.

O'Neal is a member of the National Association for Independent Schools and is also a

Core Knowledge National Visitation Site, following the Core Knowledge curriculum for students Pre-K through 8th grade. The school has dual accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools [SACS] and the Southern Association of Independent Schools [SAIS]. O'Neal adheres to an honor code that is governed by an honor council comprised of students.

In 2008, O'Neal was proud to announce its second Morehead-Cain Scholar, Jessica Gregory. All of its seniors graduate and are accepted to colleges and universities throughout the nation. The thirty-eight seniors in the class of 2008 amassed over \$1 million in college scholarships.

With the retirement of Headmaster, John Neiswender, O'Neal will welcome Alan Barr as Headmaster in July 2009. Barr has been Head of School at Trinity School of Midland, in Midland, Texas for the past three years.

Previously, he spent thirteen years at Kenston Forest School in Blackstone, Virginia where he served as teacher, Upper School Director and eventually as Headmaster. Barr has demonstrated great passion and success in creating an academically challenging environment, preparing well rounded students for the demands of the future. He holds a masters degree in Educational Leadership. He and his wife, Kelly, have a son, Spencer [9], and daughter, Carter [6].

McMurray Hall Lower School celebrates its first anniversary in

January 2009. Housing students from Pre-K to 4th grade, the new building has well-equipped classrooms, in addition to a science laboratory outfitted with learning tools for younger students. Scheduled to open in March 2009, students are looking forward to the new Activities Center with a theater, second gymnasium, fitness center, and classrooms.

O'Neal draws students from all over the Sandhills area. Transportation services to and from campus are available to most students residing in and outside

of Moore County.

Currently, twenty-two percent of the student body receives financial aid. In addition to financial aid, there are three different competitive scholarships awarded to rising 9th graders each year. Two of the scholarships require applicants who are not current O'Neal students.

For more information about enrollment to The O'Neal School, please call Alice Droppers, Director of Admissions at 910-692-6920 or hop onto www.oneal.school.org.

Richard S. Pasko, D.C., D.A.C.B.R.

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A day for snow and sleds and history

With bright red noses and chapped pink cheeks, the princess and the pirate set off on epic sledding adventures along the precipitous cliffs: or at least down our neighbor's mildly sloped yard.

Snow and lots of it at that — what a wonderful present!

Darling Hubby has often fretted that our Southern-born offspring would grow up warm, yet deprived of the joys of tobogganing and snowman construction.

And after six years in the Sand-

hills with only a few icy days, I too worried our kids wouldn't know a snowball from a snow cone.

Not to mention in a house more accustomed to Jack Sparrow than Jack Frost, we were ill-prepared for this unexpected Winter Wonderland.

Wearing odd ensembles of knitted gloves and rain galoshes, the kids eventually returned cold, wet, and exhausted.

Luckily television had temporarily abandoned its endless rotisserie of reality programming for this frozen yet momentous

week in American politics.

I carefully wrapped my snow-weary tots in blankets and tried to express the magnitude of what they were witnessing.

Perhaps they'll remember — probably more their cold hands and feet than the warm tears Mommy spilled while watching flickering, forty-five-year old black and white newsreel footage of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial running alongside a continuous HDTV live feed of the Inauguration.

Disadvantaged by their limited life experiences and the sheltered embrace of life among our peaceful Seven Lakes, they patiently watched for a few minutes before skipping off to play

unimpressed and unencumbered.

I try not to worry, for today was well-spent.

If they forget, I will remember for them: a day when childish things were not yet set aside but so many promises were finally fulfilled.



Laura's Learning Curve

Laura Douglass

Dalton Fulcher: Critics have it all wrong

Dear Editor:

This is my first and last letter to *The Seven Lakes Times*, but I believe a few of Alan Shaw's and his partner, Steve Hudson's statements need to be addressed.

First, let's talk about my salary. When I came to work at Seven Lakes, my starting salary was the same as the previous manager's, who started four years earlier. Although I was promised a \$2,500 increase in six months, which I received, I have never received a raise over five percent, and in my twenty-two years of

employment, I have not received the average cost of living increases. Also, over the time I have been employed at Seven Lakes, for seven years I did not receive an increase in pay.

In the SLLA blog, Hudson stated he taught math to eleven and twelve year olds. Now I know why he is not teaching math: he always came up with the wrong answers.

Speaking of Alan Shaw, he has not been in this office but two times in the last twenty-two years, so how does he know how the office works or what

jobs we are doing?

The number of employees in our office is three full-time and two part-time. In 1983, there were three full-time and two part-time employees. Over the years we have had some decreases in duties, but the increases way out number the decreases. The only reason Alan Shaw is requesting I be fired is that in 2003, when our Chief of Police signed a warrant for his arrest by the Sheriff's Department, Mr. Shaw stated to me, "If you do not fire the Chief, I will come after you also, and you

don't want me after you!"

Just so you know, Alan Shaw is not a member of the Seven Lakes Landowners' Association and does not pay dues on the house he lives in or any other lots he owns, although he does use our gates and roads.

Mr. Hudson has no rights putting information in *The Seven Lakes Times* about any health problems my wife may or may not have, as he did a month or so ago, when writing about the Association's health insurance policy.

He also stated on the SLLA blog that Debbie Caulk should be fired. Debbie has been a loyal employee of the Association for over twenty years and has done a great job in finance since Vicky Strider left. Debbie had to train the two new ladies in the office

while setting up a completely new financial software program. She did one great job and does not deserve these types of statements.

One more item, we have had very good Boards of Directors over the past twenty-two years and we have a super Board this year. I hate to see a few of them not running for the Board next year.

When the Budget is approved next month, and I hope they request three dues increases over the next five years, so the Association will be in great shape for years to come.

Dalton Fulcher
Community Manager,
Seven Lakes Landowners
Association

Clouds

Have you ever been fascinated with the gradual changes that take place as the massive clumping of huge, white clouds slowly yields to the foreboding dark gray mass that can precede a thunderstorm?

That's when the message is loud and clear: Look for cover. But not before concentrating a bit on those fascinating skylscapes, slowly but

surely undergoing a grudging exit. It's something you can witness that few artists have been able to truly capture, but your own eyes can if you take the time to let them.

Many times, I've allowed myself to be intrigued by the subtle changes in the elements of such cloud formations, like those revealing varying reflections of light from a fast receding sun, or the vertical spikes that form on disintegrating billows as high altitude updrafts cause distinctive carvings in what were, moments before, calm cumulus clouds.

More than once, I've brought my car to a halt, sat on a fence at the edge of a field, and marveled at yet another of those irresistible products of creation.

Yes, it's a free but humbling show. A tiny, fleeting part of your life. But still a part. And a wondrous one.



Mason's Musings

Mason Gould

SEVEN LAKES TIMES

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More facts needed before any dues increase

Dear Editor:

Is it fair?

The recent questionnaire sent to all North and South side residents is a start in the development of a Long Range Plan that a number of residents have requested for the past five years. Such plans are used by corporations, communities, universities, and the military, to name just a few.

However, the emphasis in this questionnaire is to reduce our long standing amenities. Before we eliminate any amenity we strongly feel the Board should study, in depth, ways to reduce our expenses.

For example:

We spend over \$310,000 for our maintenance program. Could we do this more economically? An article in *The Times* a year or so ago stated the West Side contracted out their maintenance at a cost of \$250,000. That side

has limited or no maintenance equipment. We have perhaps \$200,000 or more in equipment and it is old. In fact the Board is considering buying another vehicle for maintenance and perhaps another for security. Could we study contracting out our maintenance program?

We spend over \$220,000 for our administrative staff, that is the office staff. Again *The Times* last year reported the West Side was studying contracting out their management program. I believe *The Times* reported that this has been done. Could we study this option?

Through the efforts of a committee, the Board agreed to let the landowners vote for or against a Company Police. The residents voted to disband the police at a savings of \$80,000 - \$100,000 per year. The Board had voted at least twice 5-2 to keep the police. Why?

In any event after serving on three Seven Lakes Committees over the past five years, I am convinced we can cut costs and even improve our management.

Further, I believe we residents should vote 'no' to any dues increase or special assessment until we are presented with a

Long Range Plan, starting with a five-year financial plan.

It seems to me that to be fair to we landowners, the Board be required to give us the facts on our financial future.

If anyone agrees these comments please let the Board and *The Times* know your thoughts.

If you disagree with me also let the Board and *Times* know your thoughts.

My wife and I have been residents of Seven Lakes North since July 1991.

Charles W. Oliver
Seven Lakes North

Thanks from SARL

Dear Editor:

Sandhills Animal Rescue League [SARL] would like to thank Goody's for allowing our volunteers to wrap gifts for their customers during the Holiday Season.

The management and staff of the store in Pinecrest Plaza could not have been more helpful on the days we were there wrapping gifts for donations to pay food, vet, and other bills for

the rescued pets we help.

Management allowed SARL to hold a puppy adopt-a-thon on two of the days. The last pups were adopted from PetsMart. One of those pups was adopted by Pinecrest High School football coach Chris Metzger and his family: they named her Victory.

Of course, the gift-wrapping

fundraiser nor the adopt-a-thons could not happen without lots of help from great dedicated volunteers.

SARL thanks all our volunteers for their help throughout the year.

Lou Atkins
SARL, President/Founder

Dancing and Dining are on tap for Women of Seven Lakes in February

Ballroom dancing and divine dining tips for a very special St. Valentine's Day are the featured topics for the Women of Seven Lakes on Thursday, February 5.

The meeting begins at 1:00 pm at the West Side Park Community Center. Join Chef Jacki Scotti from the Seven Lakes Country Club and Trevor and Lynn Bourne, founders of the Seven Lakes Dance Group, for a fun and informative afternoon. All are welcome to attend.

Earlier in January, the Women heard from Kathy Byron, a former pediatric and adolescent psychiatric nurse, and a Master Gardener. She combined her personal and professional associations to create First School Gardens. Children work in school-based gardens and

then eat the fruits of their labor. Exercise and learning about healthy eating combine alongside science lessons on enriching the soil, math lessons in discussion of the size of the gardens, and ratios and measurements in terms of cooking.

The Women of Seven Lakes invite all community women and their guests to join in fun and philanthropy.

The WSL Annual Card Party & Luncheon will be held Thursday, February 19, at 11:30 am at Seven Lakes Country Club.

Cost is \$15 per person in advance.

Please call Lee Connelly at 673-2521 or Mary Farley at 673-2310.

Thank you

Dear Editor:

The family of Edward McCardle wishes to thank all of our friends for the great support we received during a difficult time.

The cards, Mass cards, and food were all greatly appreciated.

ed.

What a wonderful place to live. We are fortunate to have such caring friends and neighbors.

Muriel McCardle
Seven Lakes West

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Holidays done; time to think gardening!

The holiday season is over and a New Year is here, with resolutions, plans, and hopefully favorable weather and other conditions which will be conducive to gardening.

The weekend prior to this article going to press was the coldest of this season which might benefit by suppressing some of the insect disease, nematode, and soil

problems, although other methods should be considered to control these pests: namely, rotation of your garden spot and by turning out the old stalks, roots, and residue from last year's crops.

If a problem occurs during the growing season, collect some of the infested area soil, roots, and damaged plant parts, and take them to the Moore County Agricultural Extension Office in Carthage for identification. If your vegetable garden space is limited or small, move or rotate the vegetables in a new area from which the vegetable was previously planted and grown in the garden.

Before next year's vegetable planting time be sure to add limestone to your soil if it has not been applied within the past two to four years. The amount should be determined by a soil test

analysis. Information and supplies can be obtained from the Agricultural Extension Office. It is a free service.

In the absence of a soil test, add two pounds of dolomitic pulverized or granular limestone

Gardening in the Sandhills

Jim Caudill



per 100 square feet soil surface. It takes approximately ninety days to get the optimum effect from applied limestone pH or acidity. Add organic matter such as decomposed or rotten leaves, dried cow manure, cottonseed meal, bone meal, or super phosphate along with the limestone and incorporate it in the soil as early as possible.

If you have put off planting or transplanting desired trees and shrubs in your landscape, now is the time to do it – while most plants are dormant. Do not plant while the ground is frozen. Water well when planting and if rainfall does not occur, weekly watering will be needed.

Prune transplanted or moved plants to bring the tops in line or in balance with the damaged root system. This will enhance the chance of surviving and promote early root growth.

Other January reminders:

Now is the time to control Winter insects on your shrubs and other garden plants, as needed. Have your insect identified and use only the recommended insecticide for control.

Get ready for the season by controlling pesky weeds and broad leaves in your vegetable garden, lawn, and flower beds, such as oxalis, dandelions, chick weed, and wild onions.

Get the last of the Spring flowering bulbs planted as soon as possible. Plant them in vole-protected places.

Finish cleaning out your flower beds. Rake up your leaves and compost them.

If you haven't done so, Winterize your shrubs and other

cold-susceptible plants with two inches [not more than three inches] of pine straw or pine bark

If you desire to prune all deciduous non-blooming Spring plants, such as crepe myrtle, now is a good time.

Fertilize your pansies now and again when needed with liquid or granular fertilizers.

Vegetables that can be planted during January include asparagus crowns, garden and edible podded peas, and onions.

Kids' Valentine Craft Class

Paint and decorate a Valentine Treat Holder filled with treats for someone special! The Kids Valentine Craft Class with Linda Roskamp is \$10 and all supplies are included.

Class will be held Saturday, February 7 from 3:00 - 4:30 pm, and again on Monday, February 9 from 3:30 pm to 5:00 pm at the West Side Park Community Center. Class size is limited. Students must register at WSPCC office at least two days in advance. The Valentine's Treat Holder class will also be held Tuesday, February 10 from 3:30 - 5:00 pm at the Seven Lakes North Community Activity Center [CAC]. Please register at the SLLA office at least two days in advance.

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Jindal is speaker at John Locke Dinner

The Honorable Bobby Jindal, Governor of Louisiana, on of the rising young leaders in the Republican Party, is the featured speaker at the Nineteenth Annual Anniversary Dinner of The John Locke Foundation.

Jindal's presentation, "America: An Agenda for the Future," will be held Wednesday, February 4, at 6:30 pm, featuring a general reception with cash bar, followed by dinner at the Marriott Crabtree Valley, 4500 Marriott Drive in

Raleigh. Moore County residents may attend for the special price of \$77.50 which includes round trip transportation, reception, and dinner.

Bobby Jindal was sworn in as Governor of Louisiana in January 2008, the youngest governor in the nation. Shortly after taking office, Governor Jindal called a special session to address comprehensive ethics reform, the cornerstone of his election platform.

Louisiana's new ethics laws are now among the best in the nation. He called a second special session and eliminated burdensome taxes that were hurting Louisiana's businesses. His plans include reforming the state's health care, education, and transportation systems, encouraging workforce development, and continuing hurricane recovery

efforts.

Jindal was born in Baton Rouge on June 10, 1971. He graduated from Brown University with honors in biology and public policy. He attended Oxford University in England as a Rhodes Scholar. In 1996, he was appointed Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, the state's largest agency. He rescued Louisiana's Medicaid program from bankruptcy, childhood immunizations increased, and Louisiana ranked third best nationally in health care screenings for children. Jindal was successful in turning the agency's \$400 million budget deficit he inherited into a surplus of \$220 million.

In 1998, Jindal was appointed Executive Director of the National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare, the driv-

ing force behind Medicare reform. At the conclusion of the commission's work, Jindal was appointed President of the University of Louisiana System, the sixteenth largest higher education system in the country.

He served under President George W. Bush as the principal policy adviser to the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

In 2004, he was elected to the United States Congress and

was chosen Freshman Class President and Assistant Majority Whip. Jindal was re-elected to Congress in 2006 with eighty-eight percent of the vote. In October 2007, Jindal received fifty-four percent of the vote for governor of Louisiana winning sixty of sixty-four parishes.

For more information and reservations, contact Walter B. Bull, Jr. at wbbulljr@nc.rr.com or 910-295-4569.

MCS

(Continued from page 6)

ceremony in recognition of their service. Members were also presented with fruit baskets and accolades from Dr. Purser.

Pinecrest Soccer Coach Controversy

During the Public Comment period, current and former members of the Pinecrest High School men's and women's soccer teams, and many of their parents, rallied behind Coach Larry Martin, who was fired from his position in November.

Parent Jim Goulden expressed concern that decision-making at Pinecrest had created a second major contentious controversy that was dividing the community.

"We need to make sure decisions are made in a proper manner to benefit the whole community," said Goulden.

Several speakers questioned the timing of the decision. The Lady Patriots women's team has no coach and is only weeks away from what was anticipated to be an excellent season.

Another felt that Martin's dismissal, based in part on field issues, was unfair.


"This is a multi-use facility that has no clearly defined operating policies, no management plan, no maintenance plan, and no process to coordinate the many groups who use it," he argued.

Annual Audit

Mike Griffin, Chief Financial Officer for Moore County Schools, reported the annual audit completed by Dixon Hughes presented no findings, problems, or issues.

Frank Deford is Pauley guest

Sportswriter, commentator, and novelist Frank Deford will discuss "The Hype and the Hoopla: The Good and Bad of Sports" on February 4 as part of the Ruth Pauley Lecture Series. The lecture will be at 7:30 pm in the Owens Auditorium on the Sandhills Community College campus in Pinehurst. Admission is free and open to the public with no tickets required. For additional information, call 245-3132.



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Commissioners

(Continued from page 5)

and effectiveness, be more accurate and up-to-date, and more user friendly, Yudell reported.

Three year costs for the recommended ERP are projected at \$2.01 million, which includes software \$1.71 million; hardware \$177,466; additional county personnel \$214,818; and contract

\$104,328.

Commissioners Caddell and Lea both recommended committing to the preferred vendor and moving forward with renegotiating fees, rather than engaging in a rebidding process.

Citizen's One-Stop Call Center

Beginning in January, all telephone calls to Moore County offices will be routed through a live operator at the Citizen's One-Stop Call Center, at 910-947-INFO [4636].

"Our primary goal is the ability to answer questions, provide information, and direct citizen's concerns to the appropriate

department," explained Wayne Vest during a presentation to the Board of Commissioners during their annual retreat. "The long term goal will be to transition incoming calls from other departments to the Call Center – and be a fully- functioning contact center for all County services."

Transportation Planning

North Carolina Department of Transportation [NC-DOT] will provide an update to the Comprehensive Transportation Plan [CTP] for Moore County and its municipalities in 2009, reported Planning Director Joey Raczkowski during the Board of Commissioners retreat.

A State-derived planning tool that is critical to developing the Strategic Transportation Improvement Plan [STIP], the CTP is a multi-modal plan that looks at roads, bike and pedestrian trails, and railway lines.

Raczkowski reported the Moore County Transportation Services [MCTS] office applied for grant funding to host a two-day workshop to explore broader transportation options within the County. In addition, abandon-

ed railway lines are under consideration for potential Rail-to-Trail projects, however, the County will need to develop a partnership with a private group to provide deed research and promote recreational use.

Convention & Visitors Bureau

Moore County ranks eleventh in the state for tourism with \$349 million in revenue in 2007, reported Caleb Miles, of the Moore County Convention & Visitors Bureau. However, Moore County lodging occupancy levels are down three percent, and seven percent over the last fiscal year, Miles told the Commissioners during their retreat.

"Lodging is a key indicator because it impacts all sectors – restaurants, attraction ticket sales, recreational spending, retail purchases, and fuel. It creates a ripple effect," said Miles. "Spring bookings have just begun and that is what is very important."

Miles explained that in a downturned economy, consumers focus on friends and family. The Convention & Visitors Bureau

(See "Retreat," p. 31)

Foxfire

(Continued from page 4)

of January to respond.

The Village Council is also exploring whether Federal funding may be available for infra-

structure projects. Letters of inquiry have been sent to several legislative representatives.

"I have heard of others around the State asking similar ques-

tions. We'll have to wait and see," Erickson said.

PARTF Grant Application

A 300-name petition was presented to the Council, representing residents in favor of resubmitting the North Carolina Parks and Recreation Fund [PARTF] application. This is the third time the Village has submitted the proposal – with the addition of a petition by recommendation from the reviewing committee and professional grant writer David Hartigan.

A Special Open Meeting to gather input from the public on the PARTF grant will be held on Tuesday, January 27 at 7:30 pm. All are encouraged to participate.



Foxfire Village Clerk Lisa Kivett with new Deputy Clerk Sharon Sanchez

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SLLA Work Session

(Continued from front page)

\$50 for the next two years as well.

"A fifty dollar increase is one dollar a week," Galford said. "It would provide \$62,000 additional income annually, which would preserve the Seven Lakes lifestyle and community. The economy is bad, but we can't afford to wait. We've got to start now to build up a fund for capital items."

President Randy Zielsdorf strongly agreed that funding infrastructure was a priority but said he hoped the recent survey sent to landowners would provide some relief from a large dues increase. So far, over 450 surveys

have been returned and Zielsdorf hoped that number would climb.

"The reason for the survey — my only reason — was to channel funds to roads, not to cut dues. I'm trying to prevent a major dues increase, because we are not many years away when we will have to break down and do a major repaving of roads," said Zielsdorf.

Called a planning tool rather than a binding vote, the survey was distributed early in January and included a section asking detailed questions about several areas under consideration for cost cutting measures. Those areas included the stables,

gates, roadside mowing, and yard debris site.

Budget aims to avoid cutting services

According to Community Manager Dalton Fulcher, conservative budgeting by past Boards effectively maintained the dues level but did not allow for investment in the future. If continued, Fulcher said static budgets will mean cutting services.

The Finance Committee's ten-year capital plan was developed to reverse this culture of deferred maintenance and includes \$168,000 in funding toward structures, equipment replacement at \$95,000, a one-time expenditure of \$1.4 million for roads, and an additional \$100,000 in annual funding for road maintenance.

If approved as presented, the three-year sequence of dues increases would provide a cash reserve balance at the end of ten years, appropriately maintained dams and roads, and dues at \$1,000 per property, explained Galford. However, the repaving project would still require a short-term loan.

Director Don Welch said he expects the immediate response to a dues increase will be negative, but he offered his support for the recommended increase and the ten-year plan.

"I think this shows a very optimistic future for the Association at a cost people can bear," said Welch. "I don't think a million dollars a year is too much to pay to run a community of this size. We are not over extended in expenses — though they may not be rightly distributed. This community is still a bargain for a million."

Director Gary Caulk also supported the proposed dues increase. He said, when he compared Seven Lakes to similarly-sized, incorporated cities, he found police department budgets as high as \$700,000-\$800,000 per year.

Director Sally Kindsvatter said she was concerned about asking for a dues increase without showing the community that the

Board has made a conscientious effort to cut back on expenses. "There's always a place to save \$5,000 here or there. I just ask everyone to look at the budget and look for little cuts."

Director Bud Shaver also reluctantly approved the proposed increase. "The bottom line is that people want this place to look good and protect their investment." (See "SLLA," p. 32)

Retreat

(Continued from page 30)

is responding with a new advertising campaign that plays to nostalgic themes and rational buying decisions.

"Value is vital," said Miles.

Economic development

Ray Ogden of Partners in Progress reported the Moore County unemployment rate was 7.2% in November 2008.

"January may be pretty ugly as it is the historic highpoint in unemployment each year," Ogden told Commissioners.

In comparison, Scotland County's unemployment rate is 13.1%, Richmond County 11.1%, Montgomery County 10.0%, Lee County 9.8%, and Harnett 8.2%.

The Moore County workforce of 38,235 individuals earn an average weekly wage of \$612, with the cost of living [for a family of four] estimated at \$40,965.

Ogden said new Moore County businesses added last year, including Caratoke, an expansion of SE Tool & Die, Sunpak Foods, BRS Fabrication, Marion Precision, MetChem, and McGill Associates, created ninety to 100 jobs.

"We're going in the right direction. These are the kind of businesses we want," Ogden said.

MCS: Master Facilities Plan

Deputy Superintendent Dr. Larry Upchurch and John Hawthorne of Moore County Schools presented an update of Phase I of the Facilities Master Plan during the Board of Commissioners annual retreat.

Upchurch reported site-clearing and foundation work was underway for a new middle school in Vass, and land was purchased for a new elementary school for the West End — Pinehurst school districts. Located behind West Pine Middle School, the new campus will draw 300 students from Pinehurst Elementary, and 125 from West End Elementary.

Reducing overcrowded schools is a priority of Phase I, however, Phase III of the Facilities Master Plan includes updates and renovation to existing schools.

"When you lose half your students [to new schools], it opens up a lot of opportunities for retrofits," said Hawthorne. "We are certainly looking at what needs to be done to make [existing schools] a welcoming and positive learning environment."

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SLLA Work Session

(Continued from page 31)

ment in their homes. We cannot continue to maintain the amenities we have without an increase. I don't like to do this any more than anyone else."

State will require spending on dams

One big financial planning unknown has been whether Seven Lakes must install emergency relief drain valves on the community's High Hazard Dams. The SLLA had hoped to remain exempt through a grandfathering process, but a letter recently received from the North Carolina Division of Land Resources states that the Association must, in fact, comply.

Director Don Truesdell said engineering firm S&ME will present a cost estimate, within the next forty-five days, for installation of valves in Lake Echo and Lake Sequoia. The other High Hazard Dams within the community have the option to use a less costly siphon system for emergency drainage because those lakes are less than thirty feet deep.

"This may mean substantial costs, but I don't want to create panic over the issue," said Truesdell. "There are needs to be explored, and the letter does not set a time limit or time table to comply."

Draft budget includes capital items

The proposed 2010 Budget includes \$100,000 in reserves for the dam, allocating nearly half of that amount toward the valves project, and the rest for test wells and repairs to Sequoia, Timber, and Little Juniper Dams. Other substantial capital expenditures included in the draft budget include upgraded software; a computer for the maintenance department; \$50,000 toward the road reserve; and \$55,000 towards the parks to include a new piece of playground equipment at Northside Park, replacement of the basketball goals, a new diving board, repairs or replacement of a lifeguard stand, and purchase of benches, tables, and trash containers for Sequoia Point. That amounts to a total capital expenditure budget of \$294,000 for 2010.

"Our original requests totaled \$335,000 for capital items," said

Galford. "We cut down requests substantially and were also able to move some from one year to another year."

Merit increases in Christmas Bonuses out

The draft budget also includes a fund for half-year merit increases of 2.5% for deserving employees. Rather than an across-the-board salary increase for all staff, the fund would allow Fulcher to distribute different amounts to employees as appropriate. He himself is excluded from the merit increase line item as presented. The Board expressed particular concern that base wages in the maintenance department do not reflect increases in the minimum wage from \$5.75 to \$6.25, with another anticipated raise to \$7.25 this year.

Christmas bonuses were included in the draft budget; however, the Board expressed strong opposition and instead agreed to review maintenance wages and potentially redirect that fund towards salary increases.

"I oppose the bonus. This may have been nice in past, but giving a bonus at the end of the year is not appropriate anymore," said Zielsdorf. "It's not a large dollar amount, but it might be better spent in salary."

Welch agreed. "Symbolically it sends out a wrong signal. Three-quarters of the people in this community will live on less income this year than last. I am concerned about paying poverty wages to those on maintenance and agree that [increases for maintenance employees] may be better use of that money."

Truck purchase approved in Special Meeting

Immediately following the Work Session, the Board convened a Special Meeting to approve the purchase of three new trucks:

one for security and two for the maintenance department.

"If you need trucks, now is the time to do it," said Zielsdorf, explaining the sudden decision to approve the purchase of three vehicles. "We had money in this year's budget [to make the purchase], which will help us next year."

The current maintenance trucks are eleven years old and will continue to be used and maintained by the department. The current security patrol car has ongoing maintenance problems.

After a discussion of cost comparison of mileage reimbursement versus maintaining the vehicle for use by the administrative staff, the Board agreed to sell the patrol vehicle. The decision to purchase a truck for security rather than another patrol car was based, in part, on the large volume of dog calls.

Fulcher reported proposals were sent to four distributors. The best offer was three 2009 F-150 trucks at an average price of \$15,404. The dealership refused to hold the vehicles beyond Friday, January 9, prompting Fulcher to secure a verbal commitment of approval from a majority of the Board prior to the actual vote, which was held during the Special Meeting five days later.

The purchase was unanimously approved.

Other Items

The Seven Lakes Fire Department received an improved safety rating last year. A reduced home/fire insurance rate can be expected because of the improved safety rating, but is not an automatic deduction. Residents are encouraged to check with their home insurance provider for a comprehensive review of their rates.

At the Open Meeting in Jan-

uary, the Board will vote to amend the Bylaws to reflect the deed restrictions placed on several common recreational areas in the community, including the stables, Northside Park, soccer field, and Sequoia Point.

Also up for vote at the January Open Meeting will be changing the Personnel Committee from a Standing Committee to an Ad Hoc Committee. "During the upcoming transition process and looking for a new Community Manager later this year, I think the entire Board should be involved. Having just the one committee is not in the best interest of the community," said Zielsdorf.

Caulk asked the Board to review the current policy of towing illegally parked cars past curfew. He recommended following the more accepted forty-

eight tow policy and tagging the vehicles to notify the owners or guest pass holders.

Caulk also recommended that all barcoded vehicles be required to also display a Seven Lakes windshield sticker. "We're seeing a few vehicles with a barcode but they don't have stickers on the windshield. We're wondering where their stickers are going," said Caulk.

"This change would sew up a little bit of abuse and make sure those coming in our gates are supposed to be coming in."

Shaver agreed with updating the policy. "The purpose of the barcodes was to increase ready access to the community. Those without barcodes are slowing down the gates and, with congestion, there is potential for an accident on Seven Lakes Drive."

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Crossing

(Continued from front page)

out for the Work Session, prompting a spat early in the meeting, with Commissioners Tim Lea and Cindy Morgan asking Chairman Nick Picerno to open the session for public comment, typically not a feature of Board work sessions. Though the crowd was not quite standing room only, the Historic Courthouse was near ninety percent of capacity.

Picerno, who had apparently been informed of Johnson's support for the crossing project prior to the meeting, insisted on hearing from NCDOT representatives rather than opening the floor for comments from the public.

After Horne provided a brief description of the project, Commissioners Jimmy Melton, Larry Caddell, and Tim Lea in turn pressed the engineer on whether the decision to move forward rested with the County or NCDOT.

Melton said he had received 357 emails in support of the project, petitions bearing 500 or 600 signatures opposing it, and 57 phone calls from constituents on one side or the other of the issue.

"You still have the ultimately authority on this?" Commissioner Lea asked Project Engineer Horne.

"We will have a staff recommendation that will go to the Board of Transportation," she replied.

"So, regardless of the recommendation or action taken by this Board . . ." Lea began, prompting Division Engineer Johnson to take the podium, remarking that Horne was trying hard to be diplomatic, and stating that the project was 99.99% likely to move forward.

"So there's a 99.99% likelihood that this decision has already been made?" Lea asked.

"Yes sir," Johnson replied. The intent is to close those crossings and move forward with the project."

"I appreciate more than you understand your candor," Lea told Johnson. "I wish somebody had come forward before and been more candid before we got this far."

No agreement in place

Several new pieces of information were revealed in Nancy Horne's presentation before Division

Engineer Johnson made it clear that the project was going to move forward.

First, Horne said that NCDOT research had revealed that there is no current valid private crossing agreement between the Aberdeen Carolina & Western Railway and the Seven Lakes West Landowners Association, the developer of Seven Lakes West, or the businesses that depend on the crossing to bring customers to their doors.

The original crossing agreement, she said, was non-transferable from the original developer and thus is no longer valid. In the railroad business, that makes the crossing "an orphan project."

Because there is no agreement, Horne said, the railroad company could close the crossing at anytime. But they chose to allow it to remain open because of the crossing upgrade project.

"If this were Norfolk & Southern, they would have posted the crossing for thirty days and shut it down," Horne told the Commissioners.

Horne's presentation also revealed that the crossing at Edgewood Terrace — one of two that will be closed if the NCDOT project moves forward — was already on the chopping block as a result of the widening of NC Highway 211 from West End to the Pinehurst traffic circle.

Speaking with *The Times* after the meeting, District Engineer

Chuck Dumas said the 211 Widening project will move the roadway closer to the railroad in that location, and will not leave enough room for a workable intersection at Edgewood Terrace. Horne said, when the Highway Division asked that Edgewood Terrace be placed on the schedule to be closed, she suggested waiting until the Railway Division could hold public hearings on the larger Seven Lakes-West End crossing safety project.

On the hot seat

Questions directed at Horne by individual commissioners made it clear that they were unhappy about being put on the hot seat by NCDOT on the crossing issue.

An exchange with Commissioner Melton went like this:

Melton: "Can you legally close a railroad crossing without the permission of the county commissioners?"

Horne: "Yes. I can close a crossing on a state route."

Melton: "Can you go forward on this [Seven Lakes-West End project] without my permission?"

Nancy: "Yes, I can."

Melton: "I want the general public to know that I have read in the newspaper that the commissioners have to be on record as supporting this project for it to go forward. But that is not cut in stone. It is not mandatory, as it has been stated."

Horne had told *The Times* and

many individuals in Seven Lakes that the project would not be approved by the Board of Transportation — which has ultimately authority over the project — unless it had the support of the Division 8 engineer — that is, Tim Johnson. Further, she had said that Division 8 would not support the project without the support of the Moore County Board of Commissioners.

When Chairman Picerno called Horne's attention to those statements, she explained that at the time she made them "The Division Engineer didn't know which way he was going to go. Since then Tim [Johnson] has come to understand the safety issues."

After the meeting Horne told *The Times* that Johnson was swayed by the strong turnout at the public meeting on the project held at West End Ele-

mentary in January, as well as by the voluminous public comment on the matter.

No action likely

The Times spoke with Picerno on Friday, January 16, the morning after the work session in which the Board learned of Johnson's decision to support the project. He said he had asked his fellow Commissioners individually whether they felt further action on the issue was necessary.

At that time, two of the four had said the felt nothing else was needed.

Picerno said he planned to ask the County Attorney to draft a letter to Congressman Howard Coble asking for help in identifying federal funds that could be used to upgrade the Seven Lakes crossing without the need to close other crossings.



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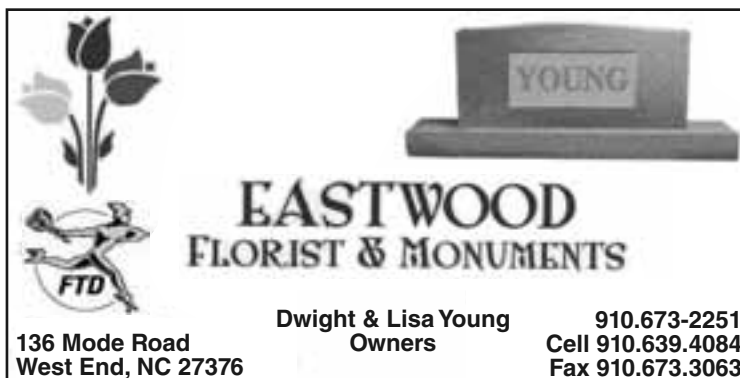
TURN YOUR USED BOAT INTO CASH — People are looking to purchase good condition used boats. Let us connect you to the prospective buyers. Call Jeff at 910-673-1440 or Lynn at 910-690-8695.

DONATE YOUR BOAT TO THE NONPROFIT MATTAMUSKEET

FOUNDATION – Tax deduction for fair market value. No middleman. Call Lewis Forrest at 252-746-4221.

BOATS FOR SALE – Need a boat? Choplin’s Got It! Ski–Wakeboard–Deck–Pontoon–Bass and Saltwater Boats. Full service to Seven Lakes area only a few minutes away. Choplin Marine in Sanford. Call 919-776-1004 or www.choplinboats.com

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235 LINEBERRY ROAD, ROBBINS, \$179,000

Super sharp and clean modular home on 14 acres of land. Plenty of privacy with remote controlled gate in driveway. 3Bd/2Ba home with maple hardwood floors, living room/dining room combo, split bedroom plan and large two car garage.



122 SMATHERS DR, SEVEN LAKES WEST, \$317,900

Super floor plan on this 3Bd/3.5Ba home. Vacant and move in ready! Bonus room has its own full bath. Complete with solid surface counter tops, hardwoods, eat in kitchen, and large master suite with sitting area. Located only a short walk from Lake Auman. Don't miss this great buy!



1092 ESTHER RD, WEST END, \$164,900

Secluded 6 acres with one bedroom, one bath farm house. Home needs some TLC but offers small barn and several other out buildings. Large workshop attached to house could be additional living space.



165 WEDGEWOOD DR, 7 LAKES WEST, \$234,900

Three bedroom, two bath located in The Pinnacle. This glorious home is "up to date" and offers hardwood flooring, split bedroom plan, fireplace, heated garage and cement terrace. A real beauty!



6 GREEN VALLEY • FOXFIRE • \$299,000

New Golf Front Construction! 4 Bd/3 Ba with appr. 2600 sq ft & full walk out basement. Brick & shingle craftsman cottage with open floor plan, island kitchen & breakfast bar, granite, wide pine flooring & custom cabinetry.



188 PAULA COURT, SL WEST, \$399,900

Better Than New! All brick, golf front home, meticulously maintained with upgrades galore. 3 Bd, 2.5 Ba, with finished bonus rm. Situated on 10th fairway, high ceilings, crown mouldings, custom cabinetry, hardwood & tile floors, large master, split BR plan.



220 FIRETREE LN, SEVEN LAKES NORTH, \$159,000

3 Bd, 2 Ba, 1.5 story home with attractive new aluminum roofing. Freshly painted interior and new carpeting! Vaulted ceiling in living room offers large windows for plenty of natural lighting. Motivated sellers want your offer!



4915 BEULAH HILL CHURCH RD, WEST END, \$225,000

Charming cottage style home on 2 acres. All new; tile floors, kitchen countertops & appliances, and carpet. New heat pump in 2006. Fresh interior paint. Move in ready!

OUTSTANDING HOMESITES

TBD Beulah Hill Church Rd

Over ten acres of land with pond. Topography is level and has plenty of trees. Recent survey on file. **\$132,000**

TBD Richmond Rd • Foxfire

Over 31 acres of prime property zoned for multi-family. Site plans available for 120+ unit build plan. Within walking distance to all community amenities. **\$896,000**

121 Harwich, 7 Lakes South

1.25 acre golf front lot **\$69,900**

46 South Shamrock • Foxfire

.7 acre level lot with golf view of 2nd & 3rd holes of west course. **\$55,000**

110 Otter Ct, 7 Lakes West

Cul-de-sac, water view lot with past perk for 4Bd home. Short walk to community center and pool. **\$137,000**

138 Andrews Drive • 7 Lakes West

Water-View building lot. Great Value! **\$65,000**

TBD Ridge Rd, Foxfire

Over 11 acres ready for development. Electric and water accessible. 4 lots at the end of 2 planned cul-de-sacs. **\$336,000**

138 Andrews Drive • 7 Lakes West

Water-View building lot. Great Value! **\$65,000**

78 N. Shamrock, Foxfire

Desirable .78 acre building lot on desirable street. Front of lot has plenty of pines, rear of lot partially cleared for home site. **\$33,900**

TBD Carriage Park Dr, Seven Lakes West

Choice 1 acre lot in newly developing area of Seven Lakes West. Nice pond view. Suitable for single level or walk out basement floorplan! **\$75,900**



105 TEAGUE DR, 7 LAKES WEST, \$299,000

Fabulous Value! 4BR, 2.5 BA home within walking distance of Johnson Point. 22 foot ceilings in living room, master bedroom with private sitting room on main level and three bedroom upstairs. Hardwoods, solid surface counter tops, formal dining and plenty of storage. A must see!



86 N. SHAMROCK DR, FOXFIRE, \$239,900

Near Foxfire Country Club on .82ac lot with golf view. Vaulted ceilings, living room/dining room combo, oversized master. Neutral décor, Anderson storm doors and windows, HVAC less than 2 yrs old. Immaculately maintained.

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