

SANDHILLS
SCENE

SECTION D

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2007

BRIDGE: **D3**
PUZZLES: **D3**
WEDDINGS: **D4**

THE PILOT

The Burden of Christmas Abundance

As inevitably as eggnog, sometime each Christmas morn comes a moment, amidst opened presents spread around the room and a big bag of discarded paper and ribbons, when

I am moved to recite a Wordsworth sonnet our English teacher made us memorize in our junior year of high school.

The pertinent lines are these:
*The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid*

boon!
*The sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;*

it moves us not. Great God...
In the wake of weeks of preparation and outpoured energy and ingenuity trying to do the right kind of sharing follows a post-opening pause, a fleeting instant of let-down, when each of us thinks, "No. It wasn't quite right. The gifts didn't quite say what they were meant to say. The love and the memories and the gratitude for each other, and all the other great meanings of the day, are still unwrapped, somewhere in this room."

Christmas is a time when the generation gap is most apparent. Our elders were better at Christmas than we are. We have a long way to go yet before we can match them for milking human kindness from the holidays.

We had a grandmother who saved the wrappings from her Christmas gifts. She had a bureau drawer filled with wrapping papers she had painstakingly folded and pressed from Christmases past. During one of her moves in her widowhood days, her daughters once threw the collection away. She retrieved it from the backyard trash-can. We loved getting gifts from her, usually things she had sewn herself, wrapped in paper we recognized from bygone Christmases.

Similarly, yearlong she kept a pot of soup simmering on the back burner of her stove. Leftovers wound up in it. Nothing was ever wasted. If we ate her red gelatin salad and left the lettuce it nestled on, she would rinse off the lettuce and put it back in the refrigerator. She knew a lot about the importance of continuity.

We miss finding her particles of the past popping up in our present. She practiced recycling long before today's activists dreamt up the word for it.

The birthday of our grandfather on our dad's side of the family fell on Christmas Day. He never liked to celebrate either. His Scotch blood made him a stoic. Over the years after his wife died, he gave away almost everything they owned, feather beds and all. By the time he died, he could get all of his worldly possessions into one old leather valise next to his borrowed bed in a grandson's home. The legacy he left us was the example of giving oneself away while one is still alive.

His son, our father, inherited the habit. In our last visit before he died, my dad rubbed the bare spot on the crown of my head and said he wished he could leave me something except middle-age baldness. This from a man who had given me hours of his time playing baseball and fishing and a college education he hadn't had. This pat on the head was better than a papal blessing.

He did give me one thing he had left, the gold pocket watch his father had given him when he graduated from high school, telling me to keep it a while and then pass it on to his only grandson, my nephew, when the boy grew old enough to appreciate it. Time marches on, but stays in the family.

Christmas has gotten bigger, but is diminished in the process because the great givers, our giants of Christmases past, are gone.

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Larry McGehee
Columnist

Gen Y Guru



GLENN M. SIDES/The Pilot

Bea Fields

Consultant Bea Fields Writes Book on Younger Generation

BY JENNY FITTER
Staff Writer

In May 2006, Bea Fields got a call from an out-of-state company president who wondered why his younger workers were showing up in flip-flops and T-shirts.

Because Fields is an executive coach, he wanted her to come to come work with them. They were good, smart workers, he said. But they looked sloppy. They were narcissistic and indifferent toward their work.

They had a much more carefree attitude, which affected their work and interaction with fellow employees.

"I didn't really want to do it at first," says Fields, who runs her own business, Bea Fields Companies Inc., in Southern Pines. "The whole idea just sounded like something that wasn't yet in my area of expertise."

But she had received calls from other executives, all expressing the same concern

about their younger workers. She knew the problem with "Generation Y," adults between ages 18 and 29, wasn't going away. She soon found herself wanting to learn more about the way Gen Y thinks and processes information so differently from any previous age group.

And now she has literally written the book on the subject.

The company president who called in 2006 was worried that a division was being created among his older and younger workers. Himself a Baby Boomer, he was hoping Fields could provide insights in helping him understand the way younger members of the work force think.

After thinking it over and overcoming her initial reluctance to get involved, Fields began to understand that the problem sounded more like a "generational misunderstanding" than an image-consulting

issue. So she agreed to meet with the younger employees and discuss their interests and ways of thinking. What she encountered was a revelation.

"It felt like I was talking to two entirely different cultures," she says. "I really began to feel that I had an obligation to educate people on what Gen Y is and what they're all about."

Fields began to think that what that particular company was going through might be something that many other businesses were facing. Soon after, she met with three colleagues from other regions to begin discussing just how members of Gen Y differed from others.

"I began to feel that this is where my work was taking me," she says, "but I knew I couldn't do it alone. The team came together from a need."

see GEN Y, page D5

Woodlake's Gingerbread Project Celebrates 10th Year

CONTRIBUTED

The year was 1998 when the residents of the Woodlake Community, under the sponsorship of the Woodlake Women's Club and the direction of Jeanne Hunkele as chairperson, decided to make Christmas special for some needy children at the Vass-Lakeview School. Thus came about the Gingerbread Project.

The school administrators and teaching staff agreed to identify those children in need and to obtain the permission of parents or guardians to have their children participate in the project.

Some residents preferred to participate in the Gingerbread Project by providing a monetary donation in lieu of gifting a child. It was decided not to use these donations toward the purchase of gifts and as a result, the Gingerbread Fund was established. Donna McClary, the current principal, has full authority to use the fund within the guidelines of the Gingerbread Fund. The guidelines permit the use of this fund for the benefit of all the children who attend the Vass-Lakeview School as a need arises. After 10 years, the project and the community participa-

tion continue to grow.

Each year two main goals are set: to make Christmas special for 60 children and to raise donations for the Gingerbread Fund. The project begins with a meeting with the school principal to select a date in December to host a party for the children selected.

After this meeting, 10 Gingerbread volunteers go to the school to interview the children one-on-one. At this time the interviewers ask the children about their favorite colors, books they like to read, games they like to play, what they like to do after school, measure their feet for shoe sizes, estimate the sizes of pants, shirts and sweaters, check to see if they have a winter coat and asking if they were given three wishes, what they would be and record this information on the interview sheet. When a Woodlake resident selects a child, this interview sheet is provided to help them in choosing the child's gifts. At the same time, donations for the Gingerbread Fund are being solicited.

On the day of the school Christmas party, after



CONTRIBUTED

Gingerbread Project co-chairs, Jim and Jeanne Hunkele

see GINGERBREAD, page D5

Gingerbread

From Page D1

the Woodlake "elves" have delivered all the gifts to the school, the scene is set for the children's arrival. Each child has three gifts that are to be opened then and several other gifts to take home for Christmas morning.

"This party is a joyful time for not only the children, but for all the adults who attend," says a spokesman. "Watching the various reactions of the children and listening to the sounds of their laughter and seeing the expressions of their joy, bring home to all of us the true Christmas spirit."

"The net result of the volunteers' afternoon experience is the satisfaction of having pro-

vided a child with a special memory. Due to the word of mouth back in the community, the core of volunteers continues to grow. The success of this project is due to the dedication of the volunteers."

Volunteers often wonder if they make a lasting impression on any of the Gingerbread children, and are happy to discover that they do.

For example, on Wednesday, Nov. 14, the local southern rock band of ShortNotice hosted an event to raise money for the Gingerbread Fund. The band played at Valenti's Italian Restaurant in Vass, and donated all proceeds toward the local fund.

What began as keyboardist Ryan Doby's senior project was made possible by the restaurant's owner, Steve Valenti, who provided the band with an ideal

place to perform at no charge. The rest of the members, including Zeb Cox, Shane Dees, Dustin Fowler and Daniel Taylor, donated their time and equipment to the cause. They were able to raise just over \$500 for the Gingerbread Fund.

"One of the members of this band had been a Gingerbread child when his family was experiencing financial difficulties, and he remembered and decided to give back to the project," says the spokesman. "The band would like to thank everyone who came out to show their support."

In the first year of the Gingerbread Project \$510 was donated to the Gingerbread Fund, and this year the total so far is \$3,389.

"Our grand total for 10 years is \$19,523," says the spokesman. "The people of Woodlake can be proud of their efforts."



Children enjoy the newest Southern Pines playground.

CONTRIBUTED

Gen Y

From Page D1

Fields and her colleagues — Jim Bunch, Rob Newbold and Scott Wilder — began contacting successful Gen Y leaders, getting personal accounts of how they achieved their successes at such an early age.

"Before we knew it, we had the ball rolling," she says. "We were looking for successful people who were getting positive results in the work force and were creating change. We wanted to hear their stories."

'Millennial Leaders'

Fields and her colleagues ended up contacting about 500 people, setting up interviews to learn about their accomplishments. She also began contacting people featured in USA Today and Business Week articles about Gen Y leadership.

"After we finished," she says, "we had a lot of information from telephone interviews, e-mails, podcasts, and video footage."

With 45 hours of video clips and 2,500 pages of transcribed material, Fields knew that the team needed to put its information into a more concise format.

Within months of that first phone call, they were talking about writing a book.

"It was sort of an afterthought, really," Fields says.

Last July, Fields traveled to meet with her publisher at Morgan James, with whom she had already been working for a narrative nonfiction book. At the end of their meeting, she casually mentioned the Gen Y project that she and her team had been working on. As soon as he heard the topic, the publisher told Fields that he wanted to publish the book, sight unseen.

In October, "Millennial Leaders: Success Stories from Today's Most Brilliant Generation Y Leaders," came out. The book features interviews with 25 of the nation's most successful and influential young adult leaders and how their stories can affect other Gen Y-ers.

She is pleased with the publication. But with all that she has going on her life, she says, "writing a book is the last thing on my list."

'I'll Go Anywhere'

Fields, a wife and mother of three children, has been working since 1999 with corporate leaders, most of whom are male CEOs, and are either members of the Baby Boomer generation (ages 43 to 61) or Generation X (ages 31 to 42).

"I know people want to be better leaders," Fields says. "With old leaders exiting the work force and Baby Boomers headed in that direction, I've found that they are extremely concerned with their successors."

As a Baby Boomer herself, Fields works with corporate executives around the world, helping them better educate their employees in the areas of leadership development and strategic planning.

"Leadership is my big thing," Fields says. "I feel that people don't get the leadership development and training that they want, and I want to help them."

Members of each generation have a different mindset of what is going on around them, she says — a result of better technology, media improvement and higher education levels.

After completing a full-needs

Which Are You?

Traditionalists: The Schwarzkopf Generation — Born 1925-1945

Baby Boomers: The Joneses Generation — Born 1946-1964

Generation X: The Latch Key Generation — Born 1965-1977

Generation Y/Millennials/Generation Net/The Thumb Generation — Born 1978-2002

assessment, Fields works with a company for a year or longer.

"My job is to come in and, over time, increase strategic planning and income productivity," she says. "You can have the most wonderful organization and the most beautiful facility, but if the people in your organization aren't working together and working for the company's vision, you will get nowhere."

During her time with a company, she often works with people individually or as a team, depending on the need.

Because Moore County doesn't have the client base, Fields is used to working with corporate leaders on the national and international levels.

She spends much of her time traveling, working with companies in Los Angeles, New York, London and New Zealand.

"If someone wants me to work with them and if I feel we are a good fit, I'll go anywhere," she says.

Alabama Native

Fields grew up in Gadsden, Ala. After receiving a bachelor's degree in food and nutrition from the University of Alabama in 1982, she began working at a hospital, consulting positions.

Later, the job transitioned into a private practice, in which she began giving advice to physicians and nursing home residents.

In 2004, she enrolled at Georgetown University, where she received a certificate degree in executive coaching.

"In a way, it [executive coaching] was similar, but with consulting I was able to tell people what they needed to do," Fields says.

"Now, as an executive coach, I have to urge my clients with questions so they will come up with their own answers."

In 1982, she moved to Aberdeen after taking a job with Araserve. The company had asked her to come to Moore Regional Hospital and fill in for someone who was going to be on maternity leave.

"I came here," she says, "and I was like, 'OK, where are all the young people and what have I gotten myself into?'"

But it was during a church singles event at Southern Pines Methodist Church that she met her future husband, Mike, who would later become a two-term mayor of Southern Pines.

"It took me a while to get used to the area," she says. "But I have really grown to appreciate it so much. When I come home from a trip, I can really enjoy the weather this area has to offer."

And while she enjoys her job, Fields says that at some point she would like to cut down on the amount of international travel she does.

"I enjoy traveling, but it's not my thing to do all the time," she says. "Living out of a suitcase can wear thin sometimes."

'I Enjoy My Life'

Since her daughters are away at college, she would like to spend more time visiting them. Fields and her husband, Mike, have three children — Ann and Katie, 19-year-old twins, and Jack, 18.

Ann is a sophomore and club soccer member at Duke University, while Katie is on the cross-country team and in her second year at Wofford College, in Spartanburg, S.C. Jack is a senior at Pinecrest High School and is ranked the No. 1 high school golfer in the state.

During his junior year, he made a verbal commitment to attend the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and begin playing golf there next fall.

Fields and her husband enjoy watching their son compete at some of the most prestigious golf courses in the Southeast.

"He's been playing the game since he was in diapers," Fields says. "We're very proud of all of our children."

These days, Fields enjoys cooking, gardening, reading and spending time with her dogs. A fan of nonfiction, she has just finished reading "Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking," by Malcolm Gladwell.

She also likes reading magazines to keep up with what companies are doing and what's going on in the economic world.

"I really enjoy my life," she says.

"My leadership knowledge and my ability to work with corporate leaders is something that propels me to get out of bed every day."

Jenny Fitter can be contacted at 693-2480 or by e-mail at jfitter@thepilot.com.

Southern Pines Recreation Announces New Playground

The Campbell House Grounds plays host to Southern Pines Recreation and Parks Department's newest playground.

"A swirling slide, short climbing wall, spider web, and plenty of climbing things are sure to elicit giggles on the way down the slide, grunts while climbing up the wall, and screams of excitement as you twirl around on the hanging wheels," says Sue Gillis, program coordinator. "With all of the press on childhood obesity and lack of

physical activity by our youth, we wanted to provide a playground that kept the kids moving. Let your kids play on this playground, or any of our playgrounds for that matter, for at least 30 minutes a day, and childhood inactivity and obesity should not be an issue."

This playground was actually chosen by participants of the Southern Pines Recreation and Parks Department's After School Program and Year Round Day Camp.

"The children were shown

pictures of six different playgrounds, and then they voted by paper ballots for the playground they wanted," says Gillis. "Each of our parks' playgrounds is unique, and so is the Campbell House Playground."

The playground is designed for children ages 5-12.

For more information on this facility or any others, contact the Southern Pines Recreation & Parks Department at 692-2463 or check us out at www.southernpines.net/recreation.

Grants Help UNCG Shape Economic Future

Three faculty members at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro have won more than \$850,000 in grants from the University of North Carolina system for research projects with the potential to create jobs and promote economic development.

UNCG's winners and their projects are:

■ Dr. Nadja Cech, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, \$363,846 for "Production of Echinacea with Optimal Bioactivity: Improving Market Value of an NC Crop."

Researchers will identify anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties in echinacea and then develop growing strategies to optimize those properties. Collaborating partners are UNC-Asheville and NC State University.

■ Dr. Yousef Haik, Center of Research Excellence in Nanobiosciences, \$200,000 for "Rapid Assessment of Food Allergens and Allergy Biomarkers." Researchers will develop a medical device to

detect human allergens using saliva samples and identify allergens in consumable food products. Collaborating partners are N.C. A&T and LeBauer Health Care.

■ Dr. Parke Rublee, Department of Biology, \$292,010 for "Integration of Novel Technologies for Safeguarding Potable Water." This project will integrate two water-monitoring capabilities for municipal water supplies and provide early warning systems related to water quality. Collaborating partner is NC State.

The awards allocate \$3 million appropriated by the N.C. General Assembly earlier this year for university-based research on North Carolina's economic future, along with other University funds, to a series of proposals that will create new ideas and jobs in biotechnology, nanotechnology, optics, health care, natural products, environmental science and marine science.

"The university [system] is committed to playing a critical

role in helping to imagine and shape the state's economy," said Steve Leath, UNC vice president for research. "These grants will help us, in collaboration with local and state agencies and private businesses, to do the kind of research that will improve existing products and processes and create new innovations that will fuel our future."

The nine "lead" campuses receiving grants include UNCG, Appalachian State, East Carolina, N.C. A&T, N.C. Central, N.C. State, UNC-Chapel Hill, UNC Charlotte, and UNC Wilmington. Faculty at UNC Asheville and Western Carolina.

The awards coincide with the completion of a months-long series of forums asking people across the state what they believe they need from the university system over the next 20 years. Earlier this month, the UNC Tomorrow Commission released draft recommendations, including strong support for more direct university involvement in shaping the state's economic future.

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Who we are...

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For more information about volunteer opportunities with FirstHealth Hospice & Palliative Care, please call (910) 715-6000.

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