

The Herald, Rock Hill, S.C., Sula Pettibon Column

Sula Pettibon

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BUSINESSES, MILLS CARRY OUT FOURTH OF JULY TRADITIONS EVERY YEAR: There can't be anyone else who loves the Fourth of July more than Pam Morrell, a real estate agent with Coldwell Banker/Stepp Tuttle.

"I love politics, and I'm big patriotic person," she said. "This is what we're all about."

That's why for the past couple of years she has spent her own money to buy flags for yards in as many neighborhoods as she can. This year she purchased 1,500.

"It's my gift to everybody," she said. "It's real important to do."

Morrell starts several days in advance, sharpening the ends so they will stick in the ground and attaching a card. She and her husband, Bill, spend days placing the flags. "He could kill me."

Other real estate agents in her office also have purchased flags, thus providing more coverage. "Every year I try to add another neighborhood or two," she said.

For the most part, people are very appreciative. "I just get fabulous feedback. They'll e-mail me or call or I'll get a note."

Every once in awhile someone will complain that she has trespassed but that's rare.

The flags stay in yards several days or at least until homeowners have to cut the grass. She saves her own to display on Election Day or Flag Day.

"It's a little symbol for the Fourth of July," she said. "God bless America."

BACK TO WORK: Speaking of the Fourth, today typically marks the end of a weeklong vacation for most textile workers who take vacation during the company's annual shutdown the week of the Fourth.

The custom helped companies manage vacation, perform maintenance and got workers out of steamy mills, according to old-timers.

"They would just close everything down and everybody would take their vacation at the same time," said James McDaniel, who turns age 65 today.

His dad worked at Rex Mills in Randle, N.C. During shutdowns, the company would buy watermelons for employees and their families and conduct games and activities. "Most of us couldn't go out of town because we didn't have automobiles."

Back then the company also sponsored baseball teams and summer camps.

Rex Mills later replaced watermelons with bonuses and more people were able to drive to the beach during the vacation week.

McDaniel worked at J.P. Stevens and then for Randolph Yarns, where he retired from in 1998 as spinning room technician.

While plants for Springs Industries in York, Chester and Lancaster counties generally were closed last week, the company did not make a habit of it in the old days, said Ted Matthews, spokesman.

Customers always came first for Col. Elliott Springs, who ran the mills from 1931 to 1959. He also created Springmaid Beach so employees would have an affordable place to go.

"It would have been havoc if it all stopped and everybody went to the beach," Matthews said. "That's why it made sense from our standpoint not to shut down across the board."

Celanese Acetate has never shut down because it's too costly to restart, said Rebecca Humelsine, plant manager. The company schedules maintenance on equipment throughout the year.

So does Bowater Inc., said Kenny Sawyer, director of human resources, who added at one time they had companywide holiday shutdowns.

"We have a continuous operation," he said. "The machines run 24-seven."

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE: Community bankers realize that their success and growth is directly tied to the progress and expansion of the community they serve, said Vachelle A. Poole of Rock Hill.

A marketing exec leading a special campaign? Not this time.

Poole, a 2001 graduate of Rock Hill High School, is one of two local students awarded a \$1,000 scholarship by National Bank of York County based on an essay about community banking. Reed Rogers of Northwestern High School also won.

Poole, daughter of Melvin and Brenda Poole, plans to major in business administration at the College of Charleston. She was a student ambassador, a member of the Pep Club, the National Honor Society and the varsity basketball team.

She wrote that community banks have a vested interest in working for community improvements and providing support so other businesses can succeed.

"Profits from community banks stay in the community and are often reinvested to bring about additional improvements," she wrote. "More jobs are created and the quality of life within the community overall is improved."

Reed, son of Marilyn and Johnny Rogers, plans to major in business administration at Clemson University. He played baseball all four years, was a member of the Beta Club, the National Honor Society and the Junior Civitans. He also was Junior Marshall and attended S.C. Boys State.

He wrote that customers and community banks can create trusting relationships. Unlike the larger banks, he wrote, community banks give people individual attention.

"It is a good feeling to walk into the bank, be spoken to by name and know that you will get the personal attention you deserve," he said.

Community banks give back to the community by supporting Come-See-Me, youth and high school athletics and other events.

"The bankers are usually our neighbors, our fans, or part of our church family," he wrote. "The community banks of Rock Hill give the whole city a sense of pride."

GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY: Barre Mitchell, director of technology at Bowater Inc. thinks there is an opportunity on Dave Lyle Extension to finally create some attractive bridges.

"It's already beautiful land," he said at a recent meeting of the Rock Hill Economic Development Corp. "Let's keep it that way."

Mitchell didn't hide his feelings about bridges in the state. They're ugly, he said, adding there's no need to build structures based on design 101.

Instead, we need to copy Europeans, who design bridges that have become landmarks and attract visitors.

Mitchell encouraged RHEDC members to insist new construction protects the area's appearance. "I think we need to have that one on our radar screen."

Etc.

Congratulations to Doug Mackey of Rock Hill, who won four US Airways tickets and \$2,000 through the Bi-Lo Vacation-A-Day Giveaway. Mackey and his family can go anywhere in the contiguous United States or Canada. ... Those big sandwiches sometimes called grinders got their name from the workers at the dock yards on the East Coast in the 1920s. The riveters and grinders working on ships would stop at Italian restaurants and order food they could wrap up and take with them, according to Phil Brown, owner of Bellacino's Pizza and Grinders, which is coming to Chandler Commons off India Hook in Rock Hill next year. ... Betsy Rock of The Overhead Station Gift Shop will barely be moved into her new location in the McFadden Building on Main Street before she heads to Atlanta for market week. It will seem like a vacation this year, she said, considering she's moving and then entertaining grandchildren when she gets back. Still she can't wait to set up her new shop. "It's going to be a wonderful, wonderful change for me," she said, adding she plans to celebrate with champagne and strawberries. "There will be dancing in the streets."

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