

sexual relations) compared to 20 years ago, but the responsi-

the young woman to continue to live in the dormitory throughout

"They have already made their basic moral decisions be-

Potter and the Rev. Sp... look optimistically at today's

an apartm...

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Former Teacher Now Has Tree Farm

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is National Businesswomen's Week and The Sentinel salutes all business women. Business and Professional Women's clubs in Santa Cruz County are observing the occasion and this is the first of three features on outstanding BPW members. Honor O'Connor is a member of Socaptos BPW Club.

By **BARBARA BURKLO**
Sentinel Staff Writer

Energetic isn't the word for Honor O'Connor. It is too mild an adjective. Bubbly, effervescent, vigorous, spirited—these might do. And this twinkly-eyed woman, a charter member and charter member and past president of the Socaptos BPW Club, simply snaps, crackles and pops with enthusiasm about what women can do—to make life a little more interesting—to earn a little money—to build a little dignity.

This is what Honor, a former teacher and administrator, does. She manages a Christmas tree farm on the family property up Rodeo Gulch Road. By herself, except at harvest time when her husband, Ed, or another worker helps her, she handles about 1,200 trees.

Honor plants Douglas fir seeds every season in a seed bed near the house. A year later, she places the little plants in gallon cans, and a year after that, she transfers the seedling trees to the ground.

It takes six years for a tree to reach maturity. She sells her trees on a cut-it-yourself basis. "When families bring their children out to choose trees, the littler the children, the bigger the trees they want," she says.

And when the Christmas season comes along, do customers find Honor standing around in the little shed by the tree lot, blowing on her hands to keep them warm? No. They will likely find her



HONOR O'CONNOR and her Christmas Trees

carding or spinning wool. This is a project she likes to save for this season while she waits for customers. The O'Connors have three sheep and it pleases Honor to choose a specific need, such as a pair of socks—select the wool, card and spin it, then knit the socks.

Honor's tree farm is a result of a trip she took in 1956 to the Middle East. While in Israel, she noted how they had planted pine trees, and as the needles dropped, they enriched the topsoil. Eucalyptus trees were cut down to be used for wood pulp.

This lesson in conservation appealed to Honor, and she

vowed to begin a conservation project of her own.

"I do a little bit each day," she says, and that is how she takes care of her tree business, which pays for the taxes on the land.

Honor was born in Toronto, Canada, and moved to Soquel as a child. There were six children in her family and their farm was on the site where Alimur Park is located today.

"Both my parents believed in education and worked hard to see that we got it," she says. All of the children went on to some type of college.

"I decided on the first day of first grade that I wanted to become a teacher. We had

double seats, fastened to the floor, and I had to sit with my brother. I remember just sitting there, watching the teacher. She was so pretty and considerate, I knew I wanted to be a teacher, too."

Honor's youthful ambition led to the general administrative credential from Stanford University which she holds today. Until five years ago, she was, for 13 years, director of educational material for the Santa Cruz Office of Education. She graduated from the eighth grade in Soquel School in 1923 (the first year the school was used), Santa Cruz High School and San Jose State College. After she earned her

AB degree in education, she taught in a San Mateo County elementary school.

Then she married, and the couple came here to live in 1933. They have lived here ever since. Ed O'Connor is in the investment business and they have one son and four grandchildren.

What does Honor think about our schools today? "I think we should worry more about what is being taught the children than about how much money is being spent." She believes the two important attributes of a teacher are "to explain well and to be kind."

Honor has been a member of the Soquel Congregational Church for 45 years. Last summer, she helped the young people of the church and they helped her. Work crews from the group poured cement for a swimming pool on her property. She paid them and they put the money in their "Mission to Mexico" fund.

Honor is a firm believer in what she calls "extended family life," where grandparents, aunts and uncles contribute to the family unit. Her own mother, Mrs. Maggie Hunt, lives with the O'Connors. "A grandparent is a valuable person," she says.

On working women, Honor says, "I always encourage women to work; not only is it financially helpful, but it gives them a little dignity. But home comes first, and women with children should be home when their children come home. I've seen too many children deprived and too many women upset because the women have taken on too much.

"Women can make little jobs at home. There's always a little business you can manage at home to make pin money."

Honor thinks BPW is a wonderful organization. "It helps a woman build a leadership role and helps give her confidence."