

**The original documents are located in Box 44, folder “Ford, Susan - Events - 6/20/76 - Walt Disney World” of the Sheila Weidenfeld Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

### **Copyright Notice**

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

## THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 11, 1976

MEMORANDUM TO: RED CAVANEY

FROM: SUSAN PORTER

SUBJECT: Action Memo

Susan Ford has accepted the following out-of-town invitation:

EVENT: Opening of new recreation area called "River Country"

GROUP: Walt Disney World

DATE: Sunday, June 20, 1976

TIME: 12:30 noon

PLACE: Walt Disney World, Orlando, Florida

CONTACT: Charles Richards, Publicity Office  
O: 305-824-4531

Susie O'Hara  
O: 305-824-2222, ext. 4466  
H: 305-422-3804

COMMENTS: Susan Ford will visit her aunt, Mrs. Janet Ford, at Charleston, South Carolina, beginning Thursday, June 17, and on Sunday, June 20, will fly to Orlando, Florida, to participate in the opening of the new Disney World recreation area called "River Country." "River Country" is "a unique new water-oriented 'land'" at Walt Disney World's "Fort Wilderness." The plans for the day include a brief ribbon cutting ceremony followed by a big family picnic attended by press, families, and invited guests. "The Ol' Swimmin' Hole" is capable of holding about 1,500 people. Susan met Susie O'Hara about one year ago when Susie was Disney World's 1975 Ambassadors and they became good friends. Susan will stay overnight at Disney

June 11, 1976

World and will return to Washington on Monday.  
Susan has asked that Mike Scanlon (O: 755-0416;  
H: 546-9810) do the advance; he is available and  
I have sent the file to him. Accompanying Susan  
on this trip is her summer house guest, Kim Nardi.  
Thank you.

c: BF Staff  
Jerry Jones  
William Nicholson  
Warren Hendriks  
Terry O'Donnell  
Rex Scouten  
Staircase



MEMORANDUM  
OF CALL

TO: *(Leave Grow is live cast.)*

☐ YOU WERE CALLED BY— ☐ YOU WERE VISITED BY—

*Charles Ridgway*  
OF (Organization) *Walt Disneyworld*

☒ PLEASE CALL → PHONE NO. CODE/EXT. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ WILL CALL AGAIN ☐ IS WAITING TO SEE YOU

☐ RETURNED YOUR CALL ☐ WISHES AN APPOINTMENT

MESSAGE

*(305) 824-4531*

*Flight: Sun, 9/20*  
*Lv. Charleston*  
*8:10 (Del. #210)*  
*Ar. Atlanta*  
*8:55*

*Lv. Atlanta*  
*10:31 (Del. #1127)*  
*Ar. Orlando*  
*11:44*

RECEIVED BY	DATE	TIME

STANDARD FORM 63  
REVISED AUGUST 1967  
GSA FPMR (41 CFR) 101-11.6

GPO : 1969-048-16-80241-1 322-890 63-108

MEMORANDUM  
OF CALL

TO: *SF*  
*June 20*  
*for Charlie Ridgway, in Publicity office*

☒ YOU WERE CALLED BY— ☐ YOU WERE VISITED BY—

*Jusie O'Hara*  
OF (Organization) *Walt Disney World*

☐ PLEASE CALL → PHONE NO. CODE/EXT. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ WILL CALL AGAIN ☐ IS WAITING TO SEE YOU

☐ RETURNED YOUR CALL ☐ WISHES AN APPOINTMENT

MESSAGE

*Hi (305) 422-3804*  
*(305) 824-2222*  
*ext. 4531*  
*or 4466*

*- new attraction opening*  
*- swimming hole for 1500 people*  
*- big picnic opening*  
*- bird ribbon cutting*  
*- the mile*  
*- thank you speech*  
*- picnic*  
*- luncheon*

RECEIVED BY	DATE	TIME

STANDARD FORM 63  
REVISED AUGUST 1967  
GSA FPMR (41 CFR) 101-11.6

GPO : 1969-048-16-80241-1 322-890 63-108





ok. in  
Susan  
Office



SE Δα. JUNE 20

Susan Ford

KIN NARDI

Susan,

Please accept this  
invite. I will probably  
take a friend. When  
writing address the  
letter to Suzy O'Hara.

Thanks.

Susan

Indict



Susan - Since I do not get over to Marketing  
and Publicity every day, will you please send  
your reply to me at -

Pineloch Lake Condos  
2893 S. Osceola - Apt. E-8  
Orlando, Florida 32806

Thanks.  
Suzy



April 26, 1976

Dear Susan,

It was so good to hear your voice the other day and catch up on some of the things that have been happening in your life. So many times I've thought of you and as soon as I heard about "River Country" opening in June I just had to call. I really think it would be something you would enjoy being a part of.

This letter should contain all the necessary information you need to help you understand what "River Country" is all about.

I guess the reason I'm so excited about this new recreation area is because it's entirely different from anything else we at Walt Disney World have ever built. For someone who enjoys skiing and water sports as much as you do I think that you will find it to be really super.

It's rather hard to describe though. I was just over there this morning. It's being

Walt Disney World.

-2-

built in the Ft. Wilderness area ... over near the area you were water skiing when you and Barbara were here. It covers about three or four acres and is almost like picking up a piece of the Colorado Mts. and putting them down here. As you know, this part of Florida doesn't have any real hills or any rocks at all. But our "engineers" from California must have gotten homesick because they ~~describe~~ decided to build a whole rocky ridge filled with rippling streams and "slippery rock" for sliding and plunging into the Ole Swimmer's Hole.

The two biggest slides called Whoop'n Holler Hallow, look like timber flumes with water pouring down them. The longest one twists and turns for about 260 feet. You just jump in and let the water push you down to the bottom. I can't wait till they finish and turn on the water. There are about eight or ten other slides. Some for little children and others for adults.

There's also White Water Rapids ... like a mountain stream, you get on a rubber raft near the top of raft kids ridge, go through a water fall and then ride down the twisting stream till it reaches the main pool, called the Ole Swimm'n' Hole.

There's also a large swimming pool, the Upstream Plunge, with two steep slides that dump you off about seven feet above the water. Now that will make quite a big splash!

another part will be a large picnic area shaded by willow trees, sandy beaches, ropes to swing out over the water and so on. Now that they are starting to haul in the big trees, it's really beginning to look beautiful. When I was over there today I had one of our photographers snap a few pictures so you could get an idea of what it looks like, although it will look much better when it is completed. The area is so picturesque, you'll have to take some photos of your own if you can come down.

For the Grand Opening on June 20, we're planning to have our annual picnic for

a lot of the reporters and editors from  
newspapers, television and radio stations plus  
many government officials and community  
leaders in the Orlando area. The newsmen  
will be coming from all over Florida  
plus about 30 of them and their wives  
will be coming from such places as  
New York, Chicago, Atlanta, and a lot of  
other major cities (many of these will be  
travel writers).

Since it will be on Father's Day, we're  
going to have a real Old fashioned family  
picnic with fried chicken, corn-on-the-cob  
and the whole bit. We have had similar  
picnics in the past years both here and  
at Disneyland and they have really been  
a big success. Very informal and all that  
but a really All-American kind of thing.  
This time, of course, we will ask everybody  
to wear their beach clothes and swimwear  
so they can all have fun in the water.

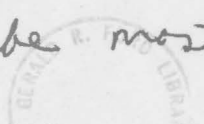
Actually, we'll invite about 700 news  
people and community leaders, so by the





time you add all their families we will have nearly 2,000 people there. The general public won't be allowed in during the time of the Grand Opening and picnic which will begin around noon on Sunday June 2. Only the invited guests will be allowed in the area.

We would love to have you be the first official guest to come down Whoopin' Holler Hollow, although the news people will be there mainly to have fun with the rest of us. I am sure some of them will have their cameras with them and would want to get some pictures of that first ride if you don't mind. Because it is such an informal place we aren't planning any formal ceremony, so that could be kind of our grand opening. Of course we would be highly honored if you could be the first one. Naturally if you want to have one of your brothers or a friend come along, it is a family kind of thing and they would be most welcome.




We would of course like to have you come down for the week-end and if you do we could just have some fun in the sun on Saturday and have kind of a preview of the whole thing and maybe do a little water skiing out on Bay Lake as well.

Charlie Ridgway in our publicity department gave me a story which may help you understand what River Country is because it is kind of hard for me to describe since there has never really been anything like it anywhere before.

anyhow I would love to be the one to show it to you and hope that you can fit it into your schedule. If you like the idea, please let me know and I'll have our travel company make the necessary arrangements for you to get here.

I'm looking forward to hearing from you and hopefully seeing you again in June. Have a happy day.  
Sincerely, Susan







from  
**Walt Disney World**

PUBLICITY DEPARTMENT, P. O. BOX 40, LAKE BUENA VISTA, FLORIDA 32830 • TELEPHONE (305) 824-2222

RIVER COUNTRY TO UNVEIL  
/GREATEST WATER ADVENTURE/  
AT FORT WILDERNESS CAMPGROUND

LAKE BUENA VISTA, FL -- Down the White Water Rapids or floating lazily in The Ol' Swimmin' Hole are just two of many adventures in store for guests at River Country, a unique new water-oriented /land/ opening in summer, 1976 at Walt Disney World's Fort Wilderness.

/It's everything kids ever wanted to do at the old swimming hole down by the river in the good old days, plus all the comforts for Mom and Dad so they can participate too./ says Bob Allen, vice president of Resorts. /River Country is sort of the same idea Walt Disney had for Disneyland and Walt Disney World -- a place where children can play while their parents join in the fun, too./

The centerpiece of River Country, located at the edge of the Fort Wilderness Campground and Bay Lake, is The Ol' Swimmin' Hole -- a private lagoon surrounded by sculptured rock, fast-moving water slides, and white sand beaches. Here the circulating water for River Country rushes down the slopes and plunges over natural rock falls and man-made adventures into the lagoon below.

Excitement lies in store at Whoop-N'-Holler Hollow where guests roar through giant trough-shaped water slides on two separate twisting journeys. One is 260 feet and the second 160 feet from top to bottom, and both end with a plunge into The Ol' Swimmin' Hole.

-more-

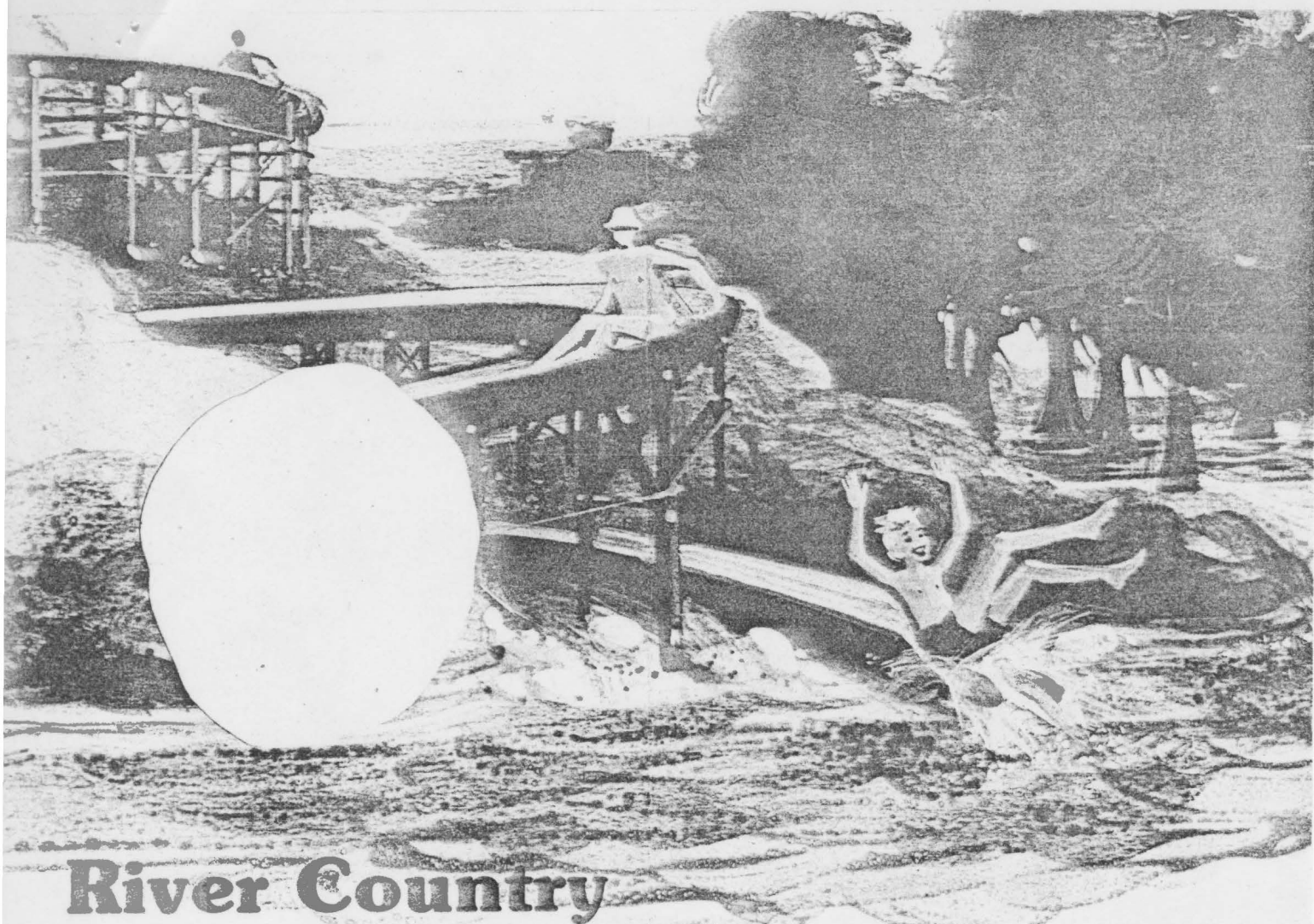
On the other side of the rocky hill lies Raft Rider Ridge, highest point in River Country, where the White Water Rapids begin their swift-moving plunge. Aboard rubber rafts, riders race 240 feet down the slopes into the water far below. Beginning at a slower pace, the ride picks up speed as it descends toward a splashy ending in The Ol' Swimmin' Hole.

There's a water adventure for everyone in this unique river world. Visitors to River Country can sun on the beach of Bay Cove, just a dog paddle away from Bay Lake. Or they can take a refreshing dip in the big Upstream Plunge. And for youngsters, there are three special splash and play adventures -- Slippery Slide Falls, The Play Pond and The Ol' Wading Pool.

River Country shares the rustic theme of nearby Ft. Wilderness Campground. The natural surroundings of boulders, tall trees and waterways, with rough hand-hewn logs and river rock emphasized in the construction, provide a feeling of the wild old west.

Scheduled to open in summer, 1976, River Country admission will include the all-day use of all attractions. Guests are welcome to spend the whole day and may bring their own lunch and use the tables and benches at Pop's Picnic Willow, or enjoy the snacks and refreshments available at Pop's Place. Locker and shower facilities are also available.

Walt Disney World resorts' guests can take boat or bus transportation to River Country, while other visitors can drive directly to the Fort Wilderness parking area and board the Ft. Wilderness Line for a railroad trip to River Country aboard the bright red steam train. The train excursion through the Campgrounds is included in admission to River Country.



## River Country

You'll find a new country waiting for you inside Walt Disney World this summer. River Country. A re-creation of summertime shenanigans in the water. And more old-fashioned, good, clean, wet American fun than you've ever had before.

Splash, ride and slide your way into an old swimmin' hole like the one where Huck Finn used to swim. Take a rib-ticklin' glide down a spiraling 260-foot slide. Sail through the air from a rope-swing. Navigate a raft on a winding journey down the rapids. Jump from a rock diving platform. Or just soak up some sun along the white-sand beach. Then, relax around a picnic table.

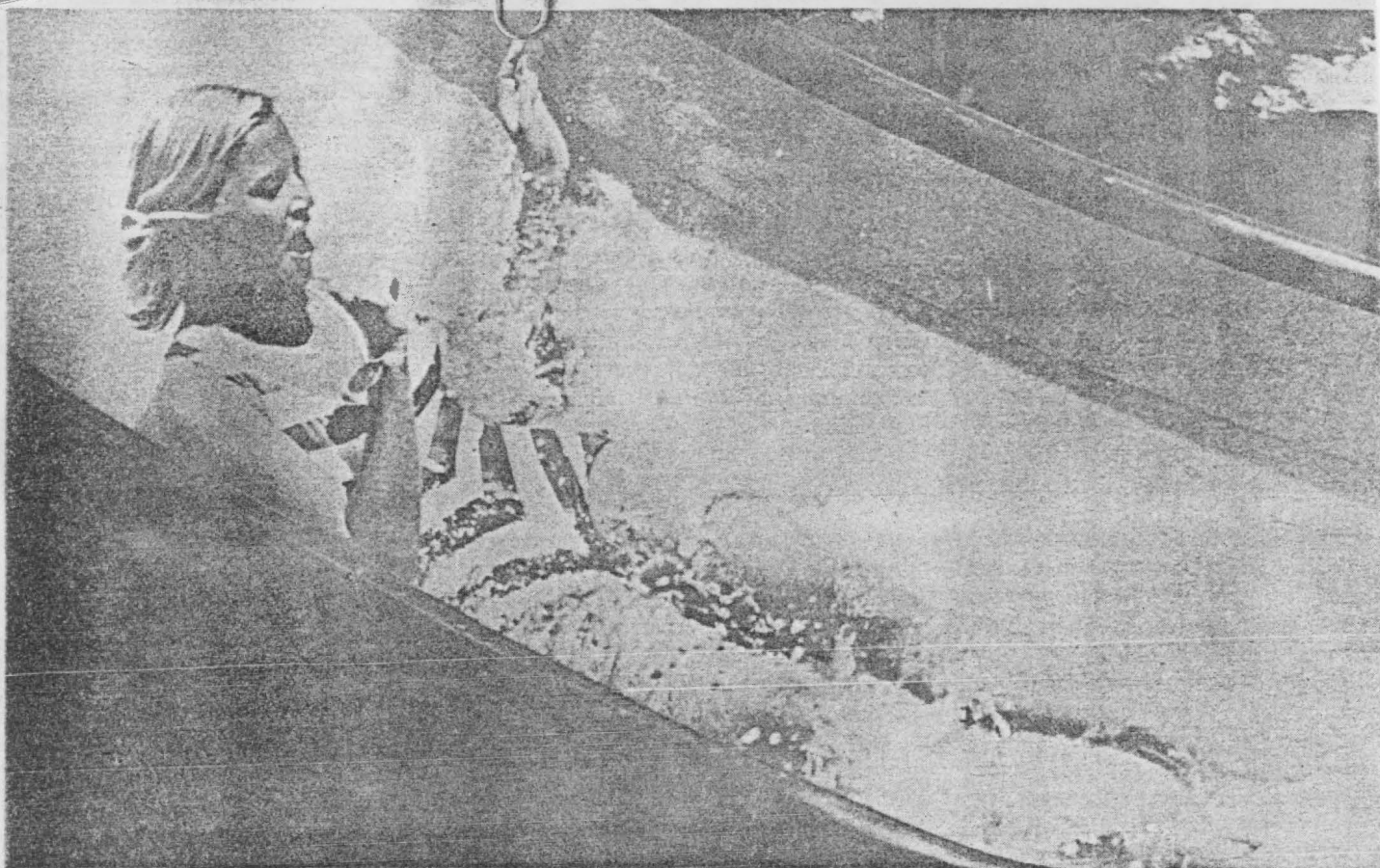
You can enjoy a whole day of water adventures at River Country, located in the Fort Wilderness Campground. All for one River Country admission ticket.

With so many new things to do at Walt Disney World, you'll want to plan now to stay long enough to try them all.

Visit Walt Disney World's new country this summer. For the most fun you'll ever have in the water.

**Walt**  **Disney World®**

# STAR TRACKS



## Susan flumes^

"It was a little scary, but super—just super!" declared Susan Ford as she emerged dripping wet after whooshing down the 260-foot flume at Florida's Disney World. Susan and Kim Nardi, a girlfriend and classmate at Mount Vernon College who is visiting this summer at the White House, had been invited to pack their swimsuits and come on down to inaugurate the new River Country addition to Disney World. The young women ended up trying all three water slides. Would she miss the White House, reporters asked, if her father was not elected? "Not at all," said Susan. "I miss being a private citizen."



## Encore Yves<

Yves Montand can have it any way. In a trench coat, he is a Gallic Bogart crossed with Joe DiMaggio. Onstage, as a singer and dancer he inspires the adulation of a Maurice Chevalier. And in whatever guise, he plays his role to the hilt (he starved away 25 lbs. for the role of the Czech martyr in *Confession*). Right now it's time for comedy—and again it is clear that Yves can hardly fail. Just watching him haggle with fellow actor Claude Brasseur (right) over the script was worth the price of admission. And never mind that Yves's midriff is back again. Title of the new film is *Le Grand Escogriffe*—The Great Lump of a Man.

CONTINUED



THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary to Mrs. Ford

---

FIRST FAMILY SCHEDULE

Mrs. Ford

Tuesday, June 22: Mrs. Ford will travel to New York City:

4:00 P.M. Mrs. Ford will participate in the dedication of the Martin Steinberg Center of the Stephen Wise Congress House (headquarters of the American Jewish Congress) at 15 East 84th Street, New York City.

7:00 P.M. Mrs. Ford will attend the Jewish National Fund Gala National Bicentennial Dinner at the New York Hilton Hotel.

CREDENTIALLING: Michael Ashenbrand, 212/TR9-9300  
Closes Noon Monday

Thursday, June 24:  
@ 3:00 P.M. Mrs. Ford will present a ball gown to the Smithsonian Institution's First Ladies' Gown Collection. The presentation will take place on the second floor of the History and Technology Museum at the site of the collection.

Friday, June 25: Mrs. Ford will travel to St. Paul Minnesota to represent the President at the Minnesota Republican State Convention.

Tuesday, June 29: Mrs. Ford will travel to Plymouth, Massachusetts for the opening of the Special Bicentennial Exhibition "Remember the Ladies: Women in America 1750-1815"

---

Susan Ford

Sunday, June 20: Susan Ford will travel to Orlando, Florida, to participate in the opening of the new Disney World recreation area called "River Country."

Steven Ford

July 8-10: Steve Ford will represent the President at the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede in Alberta, Canada. The occasion will salute the U.S. Bicentennial. Steve will serve as Grand Marshall of the opening parade.





## A Ford Rides Better on Tires

The President may be running neck and neck with Ronald Reagan, but at least one Ford is pulling ahead of the opposition. Susan Ford (r.), the President's daughter, rides inner tube past girl friends Kim Nardi (top) and Susie O'Hara at opening of new water ride in Disney World, Fla. See →

UPI Telephotos



Susan (in front) and friends appear to be learning—rapidly.





Post 6/21/76

## Personalities

Bruce didn't slip off to Davey Jones' locker after all, "Jaws" fans. He's alive and well and scaring the seaweed out of sightseers and studio workmen in Hollywood. And last week, he almost got a live one.

His "act," in a Universal Studio guided tour of old movie sets, is to attack a man in a row boat, all but destroy a section of the "Amityville" pier, crash out of the water and, in grand finale, snap his jaws barely two feet from the crowd.

Painter Barry Alkira, 30, was minding his own business Friday while giving Bruce's tail fin a touch-up, when the mechanical shark was "inadvertently activated." Alkira was knocked into the water, gurgled in horror as a wide-jawed Bruce began charging. Alkira was bruised but, blessedly, not consumed.

"He wasn't bitten. No one would believe that," insisted a studio official, who must not have seen the movie.

And down off Key West, Fla., Walter Poenisch, 62, is paddling his own shark cage in a 100-mile "Bicentennial swim" to Miami "because 'I'm just a patriotic son of a gun.'"

On the back of Poenisch's cage, made of pipe and chicken wire, is a picture of Bruce's real-life look-alike, a great white shark.

"I trust in the man upstairs. I have faith," Poenisch said before casting off yesterday. He's been that route before, four years ago he was knocked out of the water by one of Bruce's real-life relatives.

Thirty-six hours after she gave birth



*Susan Ford in Florida, left, and Bruce, the mechanical shark.*

to 6-pound 10-ounce Katrina, Dr. Leslie Barnett took her national neurological board exams literally lying down. That was in April at the University of Maryland hospital where at "halftime" in the four-hour exam, she also managed to provide Katrina with lunch. Last week, the NIH researcher in multiple sclerosis and her physicist-husband, Bruce, had reason to celebrate. Word came that she passed.

A pride of Finks, more per acre actually than anywhere else in the coun-

try, celebrated National Fink Week Sunday at Fink, Tex., vowing to "purge out" unflattering connotations the name implies. . . 101-year-old Ora Bennette of Miami mows lawns five days a week, for \$5 a customer. "Most are widow ladies and can't afford much," says Bennette, who probably can't either. He and his wife live on \$335 a month from combined Social Security checks. . . Baltimore's S.O.B. of the year is Edward A. Mooney, assistant administrator of city courts, so

dubbed by the Society of Bailiffs (SOB) for lending the most help to the group's 31 law clerks. . . Susan Ford bussed Mickey Mouse in Lake Buena Vista, Fla., then officially opened a new Disney World attraction, Open River Country. For openers yesterday, she poured some of that sparkling Potomac River water into the million-gallon "swimming hole" before jumping in to splash two pals.

—Donnie Radcliffe

*Susan Ford*  
*6/21/76*

## Fast Moving News From Florida



Associated Press

**Susan Ford slithers along on a water slide at Walt Disney World.**

A dispatch from Florida reveals. Susan Ford, the President's daughter, plummeted down a 260-foot water flume to officially open something called "River Country," a new attraction at Walt Disney World. Said Susan: "It is super. A little scary, but super." It was also reported that Mickey Mouse brought her a picnic lunch and she kissed Mickey on the nose. Also plummeting down the flume was Tony Kubek, former New York Yankee infielder and now a baseball announcer. No reason for his being there is given. Oh, one more thing. Susan wore a green and white-striped, one piece bathing suit either before or after she went down the slide. Oh, one more thing. United Press reports Susan brought with her, for dedication purposes, a bottle of Potomac River water. She apparently poured it into the million-gallon "ol' swimming hole" without knowing any better. The month of June is often strange.





Newsmakers----

*L.A. Times 6/21/74*

# Sailors Go 'Down to the Seas' in Slips

—The first three women ever to be graduated from the California Maritime Academy received their diplomas; thus launching their careers at sea as licensed merchant marines. **Susan Anne Buller**, 23, of Alamo, **Lynn Fivey**, 23, of San Francisco, and **Jean Arnold**, 20, of Kentfield, received bachelor of science degrees at commencement



File

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

FYI *First Lady's Press Office*

FROM: NEWS SUMMARY

X 2702 7100

*Melanie Berney*



(Sentinel Star Photo by Red Huber)

**WILD, WET LANDING FOR PRESIDENT'S DAUGHTER**  
... With friends Suzy O'Hara, middle, Kim Nardi

## *Susan Ford Takes Plunge At Disney*

By DOROTHY MADLEE

Sentinel Star Staff

Susan Ford slid happily down a 260-foot water flume, plunged into Walt Disney World's new River

"What would I have that I don't have?" she hesitated, wiping melon juice from her hands, then dabbing lotion on her slightly

UP-121

R B

(SUSAN)

WASHINGTON (UPI) -- SUSAN FORD WILL CUT THE RIBBON SUNDAY OPENING A NEW SECTION OF DISNEY WORLD AT ORLANDO, FLA., THE WHITE HOUSE ANNOUNCED TODAY.

SUSAN, 19, WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE DEDICATION OF THE "RIVER COUNTRY" AREA OF DISNEY WORLD AND ALSO WILL ATTEND A PICNIC AFTERWARDS.

THE PRESIDENT'S DAUGHTER IS OUT OF SCHOOL FOR THE SUMMER AND LOOKING FOR FREE LANCE PHOTOGRAPHIC JOBS.

UPI 06-16 04:33 PED

