



GORDON MOLITOR

Molitor resigns as WCCAO head for post in Africa

By TONY KNEIDEK
Of the Argus

Greg Molitor was in a relaxed mood last Friday.

After seven years as executive director of the Washington County Community Action Organization—the umbrella organization for a variety of social service agencies—Molitor was stepping down to face new challenges.

But Molitor will not be abandoning his long-term commitment to help the disadvantaged. He simply will be transferring his skills to Sierra Leone, Africa, where he will work for CARE, a worldwide social service agency that provides food and teaches self-help skills to people.

This will not be Molitor's first experience working in Africa. He returned in March 1983 from a year-

long leave of absence from WCCAO in which he worked for the United Nations in Somalia.

UPON HIS RETURN, Molitor told the Argus that his experiences in the Third World African nation had left a lasting impression on him.

"What do you have in common with a man who herds camels for a living? You have life and death and food . . . You become appreciative of this country," he said then.

So why is Molitor leaving the comforts of Washington County, Hillsboro and the United States for a two-year contract to work in an African nation?

It is, he says, a commitment to work in a foreign country to carry on the work he already has done here. "It's one of those things I felt I had to do before I felt grown up," he said.

"So at 34, I'm going to grow up."

Molitor's specific job as a staff person with CARE has not been clearly defined.

"IT SOUNDS like I have to figure out what needs to be done, go over there and then do it," said Molitor.

Such challenges are not new to the Minnesota native. He was hired as executive director of the WCCAO in 1977 and has guided the organization through financial crunches and expanding needs.

"We're four times the size we were (in 1977)," Molitor said during an interview on his last day of work. "We own three buildings. We're running more and larger programs. And our funding now comes (primarily) from local sources."

WCCAO was financed by federal grants when Molitor was hired. But

the federal government consistently reduced its funding.

Molitor said the financial scramble has been more difficult because it increased administrative time spent on fund raising. "But it means the organization has to stay more in tune with local concerns and that has been good for us," he added.

THE WCCAO'S budget has grown from \$500,000 in 1977 to \$2 million today, Molitor said. In addition, there are more volunteers to operate several programs, among them the Washington County Wood Co-op, the volunteer center, emergency hot meals and others.

"I think the organization is in good shape and in a good position in the community . . . to play a vital role," he said.

The difficulties of leaving after

seven years mostly revolve around the people Molitor has worked with.

But Molitor says he is comfortable with his decision. "It feels pretty good," he said. "It's time for me to go do things I need to do for myself."

AS A FAREWELL GIFT to the staff at WCCAO, Molitor presented them with a plaque and a poem.

"I sought my soul, but my soul failed to see.

"I sought my God, but my God alluded me.

"I sought my brother, and I found all three."

Molitor said the poem, an East Indian verse, symbolizes the spirit and commitment of the staff at WCCAO. "Working with people is the way you find satisfaction," he said.

"It really fits the people here. They're a hard-working bunch."