

# The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

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## This week

Upcoming school  
calendars provided  
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Barnhill retires,  
makes way  
for Bryant  
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Crimestoppers  
reward offered for  
trailer vandalism  
page 4A

## World Day of Prayer

The annual community  
World Day of Prayer  
observance will be held this  
Friday for 30 minutes at  
Raeford Presbyterian  
Church beginning at  
noon. All are invited.

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## Around Town



By SAM C. MORRIS  
Contributing Editor

Last Thursday I had a doctor's appointment in Southern Pines and there was ice hanging from trees and power lines. The roads were wet but there wasn't any ice on them. Then the temperatures began to rise and the thermometer registered 70 degrees on Saturday and Sunday. As I write this Monday morning the sun is shining and most people are walking around in their short sleeves. Maybe the weather will make up its mind when the six weeks about the ground hog has come and gone. We have had some rain but not enough for the dry soil.

The forecast for the remainder of the week, Wednesday through Saturday, calls for the high Wednesday to be in the 50s and the low in the 40s. Thursday the high will be in the 50s and the low in the 30s. Friday and Saturday the highs will be in the 60s or 50s and the lows in the 40s or 30s. There could be rain every day.

Last Saturday night I received a phone call from Mary Helen Senter telling me of the death of Ruth Warner Riddle of Anderson, SC. Mary Helen said that Ruth had died after about an hour after her sister-in-law, Marie Williamson Warner passed away. Usually you expect to hear of an accident when two from the same family die.

(See AROUND, page 8A)

## Demos ponder commission choices

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

Almost 13 days have elapsed since the death of Commission Chairman L.E. McLaughlin Jr., but Hoke commissioners have yet to discuss replacing someone in his seat. Former commis-

sioner Cleo Bratcher Jr. said he sent a letter to Democrat Party Chairwoman Charlotte Kelly confirming he would like to be considered.

According to Kelly, Walter Blue, a lifelong resident of Hoke serving on numerous boards, has also applied, as well as former

Raeford city councilman Clyde Thomas. She has not officially notified commissioners of these candidates yet.

"We want due process of the law," Wright said. "We will wait until we see who the Democratic Party may recommend before we make a decision."

"That is common courtesy because we would like to see what they have to say."

With only 47 days remaining under state statutes for county commissioners to pick a replacement, the Democrat Party is pondering who will be its choice as a successor to McLaughlin.

Kelly has called a meeting of the party's executive committee today at 6 p.m. at the Hoke County Public Library to decide on a candidate. In spite of the organization being private, Kelly said the meeting is open to the public. She also invited the 13 Democrat (See COMMISSION, page 6A)



## Horses of different colors

They call it Racehorsemania — cutouts of steeplechase competitors designed to promote the Stoneybrook Steeplechase coming to Five Points Horse Park April 7. Top: Lindsay Smith of Aberdeen views one of the 37 signs gathered Sunday at West Hoke Middle School. See related article on page 5A.

## Raeford finalizes plans for once-a-century event

By PAT ALLEN WILSON  
Editor

"We want everybody to plan to set those three to four days aside and be active participants. After all, this happens only once every 100 years," says Grace McDonald, chairman of the Raeford Centennial Celebration Com-

mittee.

Plans have been finalized and brochures announcing Raeford's 100-year birthday celebration schedule, are back from the printers. Events are set for May 17, 18 and 19.

The town's name was taken from the last letters in John McRae and (See CENTENNIAL, page 6A)

## State may prosecute Hoke pyramid scam

DA: case involves 'large number of local people'

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

District Attorney Kristy McMillan Newton has concluded her review of the SBI's criminal probe concerning an illegal gifting scheme that swept across Hoke last April and May. The findings concerning the "pyramid scam" were turned over to her by retired D.A. Jean Powell last December. Newton recently determined "far-reaching" results may warrant the N.C. State Attorney General's office to consider prosecution.

"There are allegations against a large number of local people," Newton said on Tuesday. "Based on the SBI findings, there was a lot of money involved. People lost money and others profited by this. Any type of

participation is considered a crime."

Sheriff Jim Davis called for an SBI and FBI investigation on May 19, 1999 to expose the gifting operation. The scam, considered under statutes as a form of a lottery, was first brought to the attention of *The News-Journal* in mid-April. An anonymous caller told the newspaper the scam was primarily preying upon African American senior citizens. People were being duped into thinking it was a legitimate "get-rich" quick scheme, the caller added. Others alleged pyramid meetings were being conducted in churches, homes and corporate board rooms around Hoke.

According to Powell, at least 14 deputies were interviewed by the SBI regarding alleged participation in the gifting scheme last (See PYRAMID SCAM, page 7A)

## Two Raeford men die in collision with truck

By PAT ALLEN WILSON  
Editor

Two men died and a third man was critically injured in a crash in western Hoke County last Thursday evening.

The dead are Anthony Baldwin, 25, and Freddie L. McLaughlin, 24, of Scott Currie Road. Bobby Antonio "Tony" Allen, 23, of Azalea Street, is in FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital, where he was recently released from the intensive care unit.

Baldwin and McLaughlin were passengers in the rear seat and Allen was a front seat passenger in a 1992 Mitsubishi that collided

with an 18-wheeler on a "blind curve" on Calloway Road two miles west of Aberdeen Road. All three were thrown from the vehicle upon impact.

N.C. Highway Patrol Trooper J.D. Hoover said the driver, Rickie Covington, 28, of West 5th Avenue, lost control of the east bound car, and it slid into the path of the west bound tractor trailer. Witnesses and Covington reported another west bound tractor trailer truck had drifted into the east bound lane and continued on after the accident.

Both wrecked vehicles came to rest on the (See FATAL WRECK, page 7A)

## Goode pleads guilty to killing Nations, evades death penalty

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

Convicted felon Aaron Albert Goode, charged with the slaying of former Hoke High School student Armando "Tito" Nations, pleaded guilty to second degree murder during his first day of trial on Monday. Though he evaded the death penalty, Goode was sentenced to 14.9 to 17.5 years in the N.C. Department of Correction without a possibility of parole until after 14 years of time served, said District Attorney Kristy McMillan Newton, prosecutor in the capital case.

"I am relieved that he has been convicted, and that he will be punished for his actions," Newton said. "Based on the criminal investigation and the trial preparation, it was clear to me he is dangerous and he needed to be confined so that he could not hurt anyone else."

"I have kept my promise that murder cases will be a top priority for me."

According to Newton, ensuring Goode will remain behind bars has also preventing some witnesses from being "put in jeopardy" by testifying against the felon. Newton said Nations' mother, Ethel Nations, may have (See PLEADS GUILTY, page 7A)



Brittney Bowman sits between her father, SFC Julius Bowman, and mother, E-6 Venus Bowman. On the right is her baby-sitter Ola Mosley.

Scurlock Elementary student Brittney Bowman is a heroine to her family, especially her mother, who learned just how savvy and caring her daughter was on a recent trip down I-95.

On Sunday, February 11, E-6 Venus Bowman and seven-year-old Brittney were returning to Raeford from a trip to Fort Lee, Virginia, where they were visiting a family friend. "I was hurting before we even left Virginia but it was mild," Mrs. Bowman said.

The pain got worse as she drove down the interstate, Mrs. Bowman said. She pulled over several times and threw up. Brittney rubbed her mother's back and encouraged her. "It's OK, Mommy. Just close the door and drive. We're almost home."

By PAT ALLEN WILSON  
Editor

Finally the pain was so intense that Mrs. Bowman realized she could not continue to drive, that she would have to get off the road. "I saw an exit that said 'hospital' and pulled in to a gas station." Mrs. Bowman said when she pulled into a parking area, Brittney jumped out of the car and went into the station. "I told them to call the ambulance because my mother was hurting and in pain. I wanted them to hurry because I didn't want her to die," Brittney said.

"They took my mom in the ambulance," Brittney continued. "I spelled her name for them, told them my father (U.S. Army SFC Julius Bowman) was in the field." Brittney instructed personnel at Wilson Medical Center to call her after-school baby-sitter, Ola Mosley, who lives near the school.

She gave them additional information they needed before her mother could be treated for an (See FAMILY HEROINE, page 6A)