

The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

50¢

No. 4 Vol. 97

RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, April 14, 2004

Brittany's mom to be on Montel Williams Show

Connie Chavis will talk to psychic about kidnap, murder of her five-year-old

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

"Mama says she is twelve now," Brianna Chavis, sister of slain five-year-old Brittany Lynn Locklear, said sadly. "I miss my sister a lot. I have no one to play with now."

For Connie and Charles Chavis, mother and stepfather of Brittany, her murder on January 8, 1998 has never quite sunk into their consciousness. They constantly speak of her in the present tense to their seven-year-old daughter, Brianna, but flashbacks and nightmares have taken a toll on the couple. Mrs. Chavis has trouble holding down a job, unaware she is gazing off in a hypnotic-like state to ponder her daughter's violent death.

In the unsolved homicide case — the only one of its kind to occur in Hoke — that has been publicized nationally, Brittany, a kindergarten pupil at West Hoke Elementary, is remembered for her friendliness. She was only three feet tall and weighed 35 pounds. Of Lumbee Indian heritage, Brittany was always bestowing hugs and smiles to family and friends, according to Mrs. Chavis.

Now Connie Chavis wants the world to hear what happened to Brittany. She hopes someone will help Hoke Sheriff Hubert Peterkin and the State Bureau of Investigation unravel the six-year mystery of who killed her daughter.

Chavis has been invited as a guest to appear on the internationally televised Montel Williams Show. She recently signed a contract with the show's producer to appear on an upcoming episode. As yet unscheduled with a specific airdate, Chavis will be interviewed by the show's producer via telephone prior to her being flown to New York for the TV show.

"I am going to be on the show with the famous psychic Sylvia Brown," Chavis said. "She tells people how a family member died and offers leads to find who did it. Montel's producer has already

had Airborne Express pick up a photograph of Brittany for the psychic.

"I hope Sylvia Brown can help solve the case, or someone may come forward who know who did kill my daughter. I hope to God the person may be found so we can have some closure. It won't bring Brittany back, but at least we can find some peace.

"I am afraid that the killer might try to do something to me because I am going on this show," she said.

"It is a fear I have, but I think the person is basically a coward to have lived with what he did to my daughter all this time."

Brittany was abducted, sexually molested and drowned in a drainage ditch in a field off Ryan McBryde Road near U.S. 401 in South Hoke. She was swooped away by an unidentified man in a

(See BRITTANY, page 5A)



Brianna Chavis, sister of Brittany, and grandmother Essie Mae Stevens show the pony swing Brittany, above, enjoyed before her death.



This Week



Applications accepted for Jordan scholarships page 3A

Civic leader shot, recovering page 5A

Pharmacist explains Medicare drug benefits page 2A

Parks & Rec interim director named page 7A

Index

Births 3B
Business/Farm 6A
Calendar 4B
Classifieds 7B
Deaths 7A
Editorials 2A
Engagements 3B
Legals 4-5B
Public Record 5A
Religion 8A
Schools 1B
Socials 2-3B
Sports 5A
Weddings 2-3B

Hoke's top stories are on the web; send us stories, subscribe

www.thenews-journal.com

Shooting leads to tri-county chase ending in Hoke

Victim injured, allegedly kidnapped by shooter who was also shot in the scuffle

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

An apparently overwrought Pembroke man confronted his stepdaughter on Wednesday afternoon in the Kmart parking lot off N.C. 211 in Robeson County, allegedly shooting her in the chest and kidnapping her at gunpoint in her vehicle, a 1997 Chrysler.

After their argument, a high-speed chase ensued through Robeson, Scotland and Hoke counties. The pursuit continued all the way into the Raeford city limit at West Palmer Street as troopers tried to stop the vehicle, according to N.C. Highway Patrol Trooper B.J. Walters of the Lumberton Highway Patrol.

An Aberdeen Highway Patrol spokesman said the beginning of the altercation between the two people actually began in Fayetteville, and ended when kidnapping suspect William Eugene Ransom, wrecked the car south of Raeford.

A passenger in the vehicle at Kmart was able to escape prior to Ransom allegedly shooting stepdaughter Patrice Locklear Chavis. He fled with her trapped in the vehicle she was forced to drive.

"There were so many law agencies involved in the chase that I am not even sure how many participated," Walters said. "We were the lead agency so the Highway Patrol led the pursuit.

"I think there may be some more charges that will be pending also from the Hoke Highway Patrol division. It is luck she survived after being shot."

After being rescued seven miles outside of Raeford by the Highway Patrol, Red Springs resident Chavis, 27, was transported to Southeastern Regional Medical Center in Lumberton. She was treated at the hospital for a small caliber wound and later released.

The out-of-control dispute began after Chavis had taken out a restraining order

on her stepfather, William Eugene Ransom, the previous day. She resided with her mother and Ransom.

"Ms. Chavis was talking when we got her out of the car, but she was very terrified," Walters said. "We calmed her down."

Ransom was arrested by the Highway Patrol after being apprehended in the

vehicle on N.C. 211 south near the South Antioch Fire Department. Hoke Highway Patrol trooper Perry Marshall was instrumental in stopping the vehicle after throwing out stop sticks that punctured one tire.

Robeson Trooper H. D. Smith charged Ransom with DWI. The Lumberton Police Department also later charged Ransom.

(See CHASE, page 7A)

Ground is broken in Hoke for sports center complex

Youth, adults in Sandhills region to be served

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Indoor hockey and soccer are on the way to Hoke County as the county's first sports complex is ready to be constructed on N.C. 211 between McCain and Aberdeen. In also the first known venture of its kind in the Sandhills region, the future Sandhills Sports Center, a multi-million dollar project, will be erected starting in June.

Touted as a sports facility for all seasons, the mega athletic and recreation center will offer an indoor climate-controlled environment for sports whether it rains or shines.

With a groundbreaking already held, the first building of two phases will be completed in the fall, according to George Fredericks, co-owner of the sports facility with his wife, Kristine. Owner of an automobile restoration business in western Hoke and an Internet business in Pinehurst, Fredericks said a sports facility for Hoke and the surrounding Sandhills was long overdue.

"It is an ambitious undertaking, but we have a wonderful feeling about it," Fredericks said. "We knew a sports center was needed, and we are happy to be



Work on a multi-million dollar sports center will begin in June.

able to provide it.

"The location in Hoke was ideal because it was 15 to 20 minutes away from the other counties, and we feel certain Highway 211 will be widened in the future to four lanes for easy access.

"I think it will have an absolutely positive impact on the Hoke community."

Fredericks said the proximity to the Carolina Horse Park at Five Points was also a favorable inducement to relocate to

(See SPORTS COMPLEX, page 7A)



Military funeral training

Veterans learned how to conduct military funerals recently. See the story on page 3A.