

## Runoffs For 2 Board Seats Possible

# Balfour, Sheriff Win Primaries

### Around Town

BY SAM C. MORRIS

Have you ever seen a season that was as perfect for the people who plant gardens? It seems that it rains just enough to keep everything growing and it hasn't been hard enough to drown out any of the plants.

I can't remember when corn has produced as it has this year. It seems that everyone has plenty of corn, squash, cucumbers, etc. to eat from their garden.

The forecast for the remainder of the week is for rain about every day but just thundershowers. Also the predicted temperature is for the 80s and this isn't too hot.

When you read this the election will be over and if a runoff is not necessary, we can close down until November.

My prediction is that we will have approximately 6500 people to vote in Hoke County. There are at the present time 8733 registered voters and this is saying that over 2000 will not vote. I hope that this prediction is wrong and that over 3000 will turn out Tuesday.

I will not make any prediction on the races, because someone would take it that this was the way I cast my votes.

The main thing is that everyone should always vote and if you don't vote, then don't go around and talk about how things are being run.

While on the subject of elections I would like to toss a bouquet to Rose Sturgeon, Supervisor to the Board of Elections on the fine job she has done and is doing in Hoke County. She has been asked many questions during the past months and had to give out registration numbers to many people. So far I haven't heard any complaints on the job that she is doing.

Of course this is being written before Election Day and I know that she will have many headaches before the votes are counted Tuesday night.

Thanks Rose, for a job well done!

Also on this election, we have had a large number of candidates for county commissioner and the state house, but we haven't heard any dirty digs come from any candidate against another. This is to commend all candidates on the ballot for their clean campaigns and the way they have conducted their races.

We hope that when the dust of the battles have settled, that it will remain this way.

The summer recreation program must be running smoothly because we haven't heard of any complaints so far.

Living next to the ballfield I must say that everything is quiet at night.

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### Prank Goes Wrong

## Off-duty Officer Killed

One shot of a burst from an automatic rifle fired reportedly as a prank to scare some campers killed George Ernest Baker, Jr., of Rt. 3, Raeford, a Raeford policeman off duty, early Saturday, Hoke County Sheriff David M. Barrington reported. Baker would have been 29 next August 13.

The sheriff said Baker's cousin, one of the campers, Charles Ronald Wilson, Jr., 26, of Jackson Street, Raeford, was charged with involuntary manslaughter and freed under \$2,000 bond for appearance Thursday in Hoke County District Court for a preliminary hearing of the charge.

The sheriff said Wilson, a former Hoke County deputy sheriff, and Baker were cousins.

He said when Wilson learned that Baker had been killed by one of the bullets Wilson smashed the rifle, an AR 15, against a tree, breaking the stock. The sheriff said Wilson, accompanied by his parents, came to the sheriff's Department almost immediately after the shooting.

Raeford Police Chief Leonard Wiggins said Baker had turned in his resignation from the police department June 21 effective July 5. He said Baker told him he was leaving to become a Hoke County deputy sheriff.

Baker was on his annual leave from the police department when he was killed. It started June 21 and was to have ended July 5.

The sheriff said that in view of the fact that Wilson had been one of his officers and that Baker was to have become one, starting July 7,

he had turned the investigation of the death over to the State Bureau of Investigation. He said the rifle had been sent to the SBI laboratory in Raleigh for examination and that the SBI investigation of the shooting was continuing.

The sheriff gave these details which he said were obtained by his officers immediately after the shooting.

Baker and Wilson were camping out with several other relatives off Vass Road about a mile north of the Raeford city limits. The site was in an open field bordered by woods and was on property part of which is owned by the Baker family and the rest by the Wilson family, who are related by marriage. A tent had been pitched at the edge of the woods.

The sheriff's department received a telephone call at about 1:30 a.m. Saturday. Officers were told that Baker had been shot and was dead.

Wilson had been at the camp site earlier in the night with his younger brother and the others. Wilson left the area after telling one of the campers he was going to scare the campers. Wilson got his rifle and rode to a clay pit. From there he walked to the camp site, coming up behind the tent. Wilson asked one of the campers where George Baker was. Then he threw a smoke bomb on the ground, fired a burst from his rifle, then another burst, both at trees. It was a bullet from the second burst that killed Baker. The bullet went through Baker's right arm and into his chest. Over 10 or 12 shots had been fired altogether

in the two bursts 50 to 65 feet from Baker.

Wilson said at the sheriff's department he had drunk an alcoholic beverage before the shooting.

Wilson started serving as a deputy August 2, 1976, and resigned effective last April 15 to enter business with Graham's Service Station.

Before joining the sheriff's department Wilson worked for Hoke Texaco. He also was serving in the National Guard when he became a deputy and completed his military obligation through the guard before resigning from the sheriff's department.

Baker joined the city staff May 22, 1977, as a heavy equipment operator for the city-county landfill and transferred to the police department from this job April 23, 1981.

He completed the requirements for his high school diploma the following June 5 through the Sandhills Community College adult education courses at Hoke County High School. Baker started the studies after Wiggins told him that, besides meeting the other requirements, he had to be a high school graduate before he could be appointed a policeman.

The flags at Raeford City Hall and the Courthouse were flown at half mast Monday in mourning for the death of the young policeman.

The funeral was conducted Monday morning in Pittman Grove Baptist Church by the Rev. Mack Musselwhite. Burial was in Raeford Cemetery.

Members of the Raeford Police Department served as active pallbearers.

The other officers of the Police Department, and the officers of the Hoke County Sheriff's Department and the State Highway Patrol force in Hoke County, and members of the North Raeford Volunteer Fire Department were honorary pallbearers. Many others -- relatives and other friends of the family --

Complete

Unofficial

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George E. Baker, Jr.

came to the funeral. Baker was a member of the North Raeford Volunteer Fire Department. His father is assistant fire chief.

Baker is survived by his wife, Mrs. Rebecca Baker; his son, Kenny Baker of the home; his father, George Baker of Raeford; his brothers, Jerry, James and George Baker of Raeford, and Roger Baker of Morehead City; and his grandmothers, Mrs. Louise Long and Mrs. Maggie Baker of Raeford.

Crumpler Funeral Home was in charge of the arrangements.

## Annual Sidewalk Sale Slated

The 10th annual Fourth of July Sidewalk Sale will be held Thursday, Friday and Saturday in downtown Raeford, including streets branching off North and South Main Street.

The Raeford Merchants Association, the sponsor of the annual sale, said this week this sale will be the "biggest ever," since lots of interest has been shown in the coming event.

As the title says, the merchandise offered will be displayed on the sidewalks.

## Government Offices Closed July 5

Federal, state, city and county offices will be closed Monday in observance of the Independence Day holiday.

The exception will be the Raeford-Hoke County landfill, which will be open that day for business as usual.

The Raeford Post Office will be on its regular holiday schedule -- no window service or deliveries except special deliveries.

### 1979 Accident At Lake

## Jimbo's Mother Sues In Near Drowning

James D. "Jimbo" Hughes's mother has filed suit in Cumberland County Superior Court asking \$17 million from the owners of Permastone Lake.

The boy, then 5, nearly drowned in the lake July 1, 1979, after he wandered away from the lake's shallow part for children while his family was picnicking nearby in the park and went into deep water. Some time later, he was found

floating face down about 30 feet from shore. The child's life was saved at Cape Fear Valley Hospital but he remained in a coma. The suit filed by his mother, Mrs. Spring Hughes Spears of Rt. 2, Raeford, says her son has suffered permanent brain damage and alleges the near-drowning was caused by negligence on the part of the owners of the lake. Cecil S. Dunn and his wife Molly J., are named

defendants. The suit was filed June 23.

Mrs. Spears is asking \$15 million for her son, \$2 million for herself, and payment of the court costs by the defendants. The suit asks for a jury trial.

Mrs. Spears alleges the operators were negligent by allowing swimming in hazardous conditions, maintaining an insufficient number of life guards, and not providing

adequate safety measures for young children in recreation areas.

She also says she has paid \$25,000 in medical bills for Jimbo, and expects to have paid over \$500,000 by the time he is 18.

Churches and other groups, ministers and private citizens throughout Hoke County gave money to help pay Jimbo's medical expenses and helped his mother in other ways.

## Schools Get \$38,815 Extra

# 70¢ Tax Rate, \$3.7 Million Budget Set

Hoke County's real-property tax rate for fiscal 1982-83 is 70 cents per \$100 evaluation, and the county school system is getting \$38,815 more than the county budget originally proposed, and the budget for the new year is \$3.7 million.

The county commissioners set the tax rate, adopted the budget, adding to the school funds in two consecutive night meetings held last week.

The addition gives the school system \$874,227 in current operating expenses. The school board has asked the commissioners to

boost the recommended operating budget by \$100,000.

The commissioners provided the extra money to the schools by deciding against giving some county employees 4 per cent pay raises in the next fiscal year.

County Schools Supt. Raz Autry at an emergency school board meeting the night of June 23 called for an appeal to the clerk of Hoke County Superior Court to try to get the full \$100,000 extra but the school board voted to accept the commissioners' appropriation of \$874,227 for the new fiscal year.

This is 11.2 per cent greater than the past year's appropriation.

However, the board will ask the commissioners for \$20,230 additional in school fees. The school budget will be adopted by the school board after the board gets the commissioners' decision on this request.

A successful appeal to the clerk of Superior Court could have gotten an order to the commissioners to provide extra funds. Last year, such an appeal to the clerk of Moore County Superior Court got the Moore County Board of Edu-

cation \$600,000 extra, but a similar appeal for extra funds by the Moore board this year was turned down by the court clerk.

The 1982-83 school operating budget includes \$92,000 from court fines and forfeitures, and \$4,000 for interest on deposits.

The vote to ask for \$20,230 extra was 3-2, with Bobby Wright, Ruth McNair and Walter Coley voting in favor, and Mina Townsend and Bill Cameron, the board chairman, voting against it. Autry had told the board that he thought the request

would be turned down.

The operating expenses of \$69,858 for energy was termed by school board members insufficient and said they'd have to go back to the commissioners next winter and ask for more money. The board's proposed budget had sought \$90,000 for energy.

The school current expense budget originally proposed amounted to \$1,058,242, and this was reduced to \$970,227.

The new tax rate is 31 cents lower than the current rate, but the

Hoke County Sheriff David M. Barrington and County Commissioner John Balfour won renomination in Tuesday's Democratic primaries but no majorities were obtained by any of the other candidates for nomination for the two other seats on the Board of County Commissioners, according to unofficial, complete returns from the county's 13 precincts.

The Hoke Board of Elections will make its official canvass of the votes at 11 a.m. Thursday.

In the commissioner's races, Commissioner Mabel Riley, who ran fourth in the voting, has the right to call for a runoff for one of the seats. If she does, then Tom Howell, who finished fifth, could call for a runoff for the other.

A runoff primary would be held July 27.

Mrs. Riley told *The News-Journal* Wednesday morning, in replying to a question, that she hadn't decided yet whether to call for a runoff, that she wants to talk to Howell before she decides.

A majority in the tallies in the contests in which 10 candidates participated amounted to 2,033 votes.

Cleo Bratcher, Jr., running for the first time, missed by a single vote of getting a majority in placing second. Balfour received 2,215 votes. He is the current chairman of the board.

Commissioner James A. Hunt was third with 1,725.

The other candidates were Edward G. Lumbley, Wesley G. Miller, James (Jimmy) Plummer, Julius Vanner and Wendell S. Young. Of these only Plummer received at least 1,000 votes. His tally was 1,339.

The unofficial totals for the candidates and for the proposed amendments to the State Constitution are listed at the end of this article.

Balfour and the winners of the nominations for the two other seats will join Republican Evelyn Manning on the November 2 general election ballot in the contests for the three seats. Mrs. Manning was unopposed for the Republican nomination.

Barrington's victory assured the sheriff of reelection to his sixth four-year term. He has no opposition in the general election.

Barrington received 2,601 votes to opponent James Peterkin, Jr.'s 1,717. Peterkin is a former deputy sheriff of Barrington's staff.

In district contests involving Hoke County people, District Court Judge Joseph E. Dupree of Raeford won reelection with his Democratic primary victory in Hoke and Cumberland counties over William R. Davis, a Hope Mills lawyer, on the basis of unofficial returns. In Hoke, Dupree received 2,667 votes to Davis's 1,542. The exact Cumberland vote report could not be obtained before press time. Sol G. Cherry and Beth Keever, both of Fayetteville, were reported the winners of the two other District judge positions.

County Commissioner Danny DeVane of Raeford, finished possibly eligible for a runoff in the contests for one of the three State House seats for Hoke, Scotland and Robeson counties. Hoke gave him 3,084 votes, nearly twice as many as his nearest competitor in the field of nine candidates.

None of the candidates, according to reports, received a

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re-evaluation made under state law in the past year increased the taxable value of most private real estate, with the result that most property owners will pay more or the same amount they paid last year. The new rate is 2 cents lower than was proposed before the public hearing held June 14 on the proposed budget and rate.

The commissioners met in their mid-month session June 21, then recessed till the next night primarily to decide what the new tax rate would be.