

The News-Journal

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Program underway to raise Hoke CAT scores

By Ed Miller

Administrators of the Hoke County School system realize California Achievement Test (CAT) scores of Hoke County students were low last year and have adopted a plan to raise the quality of classroom instruction for students.

Last year in Hoke County, reading scores were well below the national norm at all grade levels tested and mathematics scores were below the national percentage in grades three, six and nine, according to the statewide statistics.

CAT scores are reported in two ways. Tests reflect the grade level a

student is working on during the test. As an example, a first grader who scores 2.1 is working on the level of a first month second grader.

Scores also reflect how well a student performs compared to his competitors nationwide.

A student who scored in the 75th percentile did as well or better than 75% of the students his age and on his grade level.

The national norm is 50%, according to CAT calculations.

The average reading scores for first graders in the county was in the 49th percentile, for second graders 46%, third grade 43%,

sixth grade 41%, and ninth grade 42%, results say.

All are below the national average.

Mathematics scores were a bit better for students of the county.

First and second grades were above the national average with average scores being in the 65th percentile for both grade levels.

Third, sixth and ninth grade were again below the national norm at 49%, 48% and 45% respectively.

While Hoke County students appear to be below the national average in some areas, grade equivalencies, or where the

students should be at the time of testing are higher.

Most scores reflect students to be on or slightly above grade level; however, many of the state's school systems consistently have student scores well above grade level, sometimes even performing a grade ahead of where they should be.

Hoke County has just adopted a plan for the entire school system that is expected to raise the level of teacher awareness to the problem here as well as improve CAT scores through improved instruction, school Director of Instruction Marilyn Semones said.

The attitude in Hoke County, about student and teacher abilities, is one of the first things that must be changed to improve performance of the schools, Semones said.

"For years, residents in the county thought that local students could not learn, and the teachers could not teach," she said.

Such assumptions are not true, and they must be done away with, Semones said.

The new plan will start at the "leadership" level, which are principals and their assistants, and will train them to be positive in both action and attitude.

The leadership training combined with a push to raise attitudes are the first steps in the new policy.

The next step is to create a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning, that is caring and "loving" with firm assertive discipline incorporating positive reinforcement for students, Semones said.

Further, the plan puts an emphasis on basic skills of reading and math especially in the early education years.

Phonics, or learning to look at a word that one has never seen and sounding it out thus pronouncing (See CAT, page 13A)

State witnesses miss court, new trial date set for Hunt

By Ed Miller

A new trial date was set Tuesday in Red Springs District Court for Hoke County Commission Vice Chairman James Albert Hunt, who is accused of trying to outrun a Robeson County deputy sheriff during an early morning chase.

The case, which was delayed Tuesday after prosecution witnesses failed to appear in court, will be heard on September 25.

The Tuesday's trial was continued after a motion by Assistant District Attorney Bill Hough because witnesses for the state failed to show up to court.

Hunt and his attorney Phil Diehl were prepared to go ahead with the trial and had two Hoke County deputy sheriffs under subpoena to testify on behalf of the commissioner.

Hunt has been charged with speeding in excess of 100 miles per hour in a 55 zone, careless and

reckless driving, failure to stop for a blue light and siren, a stop sign violation and driving left of center in Robeson County.

The charges, which were filed by Robeson Deputy Sheriff Mitchell Norris, have been denied by Hunt and a plea of not guilty has been entered by the commissioner in the case, Diehl said after Tuesday's continuance was granted.

Judge Adelaide G. Behan granted state's motion to continue amid protests from Diehl.

"We were ready to try the case," Hunt said.

In his argument against a continuance, Diehl said: "It looks as if they (the state) are looking for witnesses. We have ours."

Diehl contended that the trial should go ahead as scheduled because of publicity received from the case, and the fact that Norris had talked to newspapers telling them of it.

Judge Behan set the new trial

date, but ordered witnesses for the state to be subpoenaed and be in Robeson County Criminal District Court on September 25.

In an earlier statement Hunt said the Robeson deputy did not have the right car, and had chased a different make, model and color vehicle than the one the commissioner owns.

Hunt, who has stayed clear of difficulties with the law for almost a year, said Monday he hoped to win the case in Robeson County to prove he was "heading in the right direction."

"I'm innocent," the commissioner said. "The facts will come out in the trial."

During 1983, Hunt was plagued with financial woes and was arrested and jailed in at least four counties for writing "bad" checks totalling more than \$30,000.

Charges were dropped in those cases after the commissioner paid off the debts.

Hoke resident set on fire after failing to find hat

By Ed Miller

A squabble over a hat has caused a 44-year-old Hoke County man to be placed in Cape Fear Medical Center with second and third degree burns over his neck and back after his cousin allegedly poured gasoline on him and set him afire, sheriff's reports say.

Herman L. Brown was admitted to the hospital on Sunday, August 19.

Brown had been arguing with a cousin, Lawrence Campbell, who was living with him before the incident occurred.

The victim said that Campbell had threatened to burn down the house, reports say.

The argument started when Campbell asked Brown the location of a hat, and Brown could not answer him, reports say.

Campbell, 53, became violent and he exclaimed that he could never find anything in the house, the reports say.

According to reports, Campbell proceeded to the rear of the building where he came back with some burned oil and a can of gasoline and diesel fuel mixed.

Campbell then allegedly poured the mixture on Brown and apparently set him on fire, reports say.

Brown ran from the house and rolled in some dirt to put out the fire, according to reports.

A local magistrate found probable cause to issue a warrant for the arrest of Campbell. The suspect turned himself in and paid his \$5,000 bond on the spot.

Campbell, 53, is charged with assault with a deadly weapon with

intent to kill, inflicting serious injury, reports say.

Campbell had been drinking just before the incident occurred, reports say.

In other unrelated matters, five break-ins plagued Hoke residents last week.

The Hungry Jack Restaurant fell victim to apparent thieves last Monday night.

Reports were sketchy as to how the building was entered, but 35 cases of beer, 40 cartons of cigarettes, five cases of soft drinks, 15 pounds of bar-b-que, a case of wine, and some food was taken in the robbery, reports say.

There was a total of over \$2,070 in merchandise taken, reports say. Sheriff's deputies had no (See MAN, page 11A)

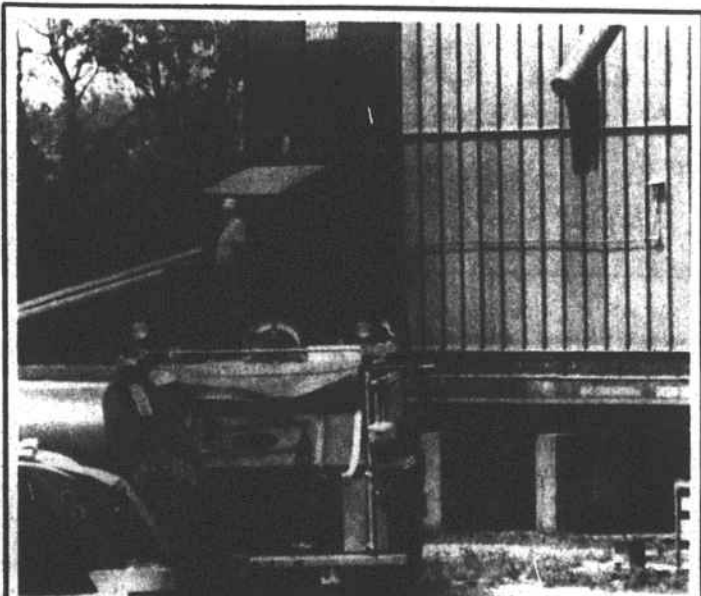
Around Town

By Sam Morris

The fall weather for the past week has been what most folks like to put up with in August. In talking to Robert Gatlin of the National Weather Service he commented on the difference from a year ago. The third week in August last year had the temperatures in the day time from 100° to 110°. So the 70 and 80° weather of this year is much better. I don't believe it will stay this way, so look for warmer days ahead.

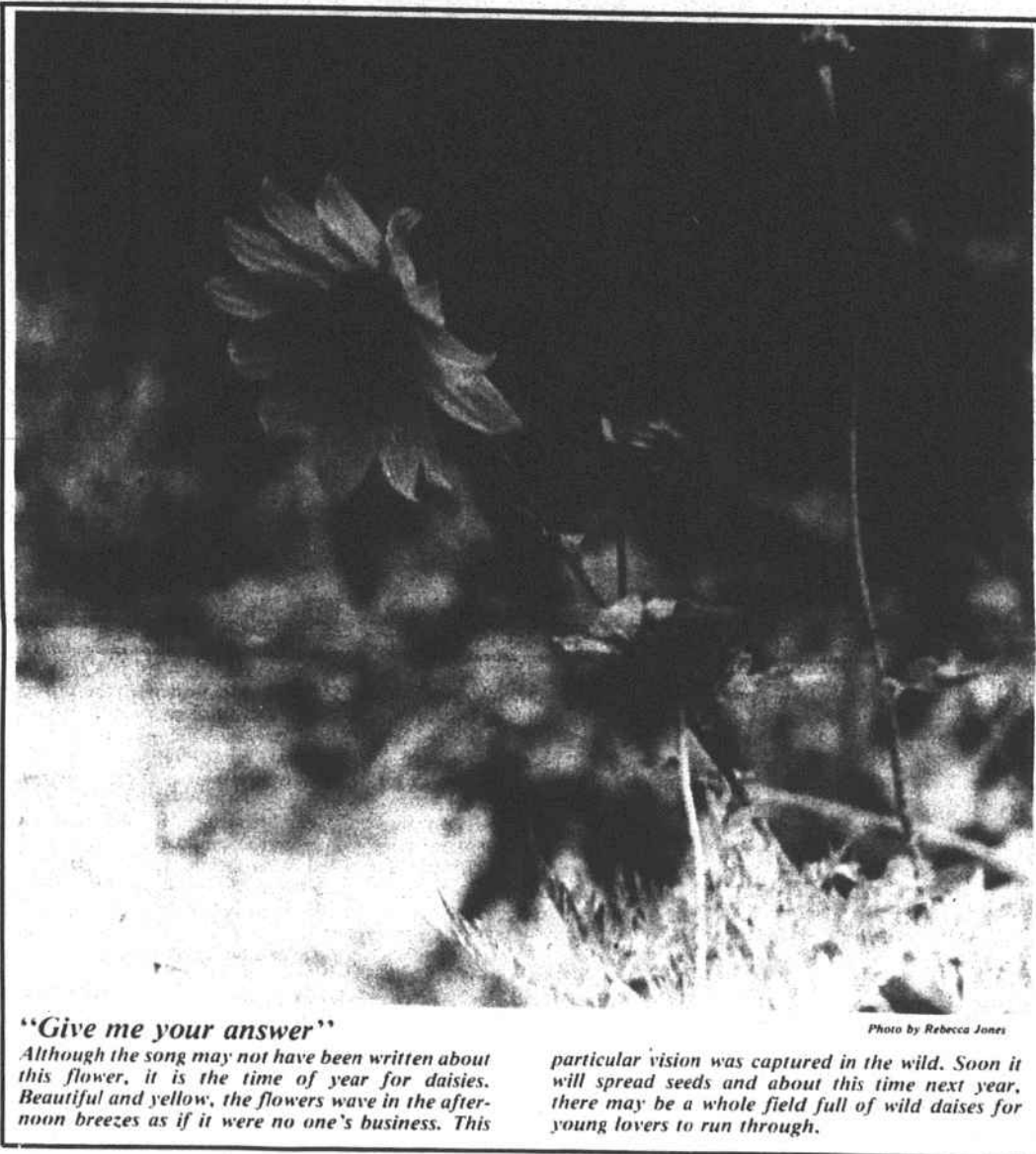
A reporter of the weather on a state TV station stated Sunday that July was the second wettest month for July on record and that August 1984 was the second driest for an August. I don't think this would hold true in Hoke County for August. I believe we had two inches of rain last week. Maybe Gatlin can give me some figures for next week.

(See AROUND, page 11A)



Near miss

When a spark ignited the dust in the top of this grain dryer at Farm Chemical, Inc. just outside of Dundarrach on Monday, there was fear of a major disaster but quick reactions on the parts of workers and Stonewall Fire Department saved the firm from losing a valuable plant. The fire was out just minutes after it started, witnesses said.



"Give me your answer"

Although the song may not have been written about this flower, it is the time of year for daisies. Beautiful and yellow, the flowers wave in the afternoon breezes as if it were no one's business. This

particular vision was captured in the wild. Soon it will spread seeds and about this time next year, there may be a whole field full of wild daisies for young lovers to run through.

Photo by Rebecca Jones

Fall college classes unhampered by county's delay on space use

By Ed Miller

The delay by Hoke County Commissioners to approve the use of vacated space in the old County Office Building by Sandhills Community College will not jeopardize this fall's courses; however, if the commission chooses to give the space to the college, it will alleviate previous problems with cramped classes, a spokesperson for the school said Tuesday.

The college is asking to be able to use an office recently vacated by the Hoke County Literacy Council.

"If we get the space, students will be able to go in and out of the classroom area without having to walk through classes," said Betty High, Coordinator of classes in Hoke and Moore counties.

As the situation stands now, students have to enter and exit through a classroom, or they must disrupt a class to find a teacher in another part of the building, High said.

The office has a door right onto the street, she said.

"The use of the office will cut down on traffic in the rooms especially since we have expanded both day and evening classes," High said.

Hoke County is presently working to get a satellite branch of the college established in Raeford.

About \$1,500 in grant money has been spent researching two

possible locations of the college satellite.

From architectural studies, by a Southern Pines firm, it has been determined that the old National Guard Armory will need about \$150,000 worth of renovations initially to make the structure suitable for classroom occupancy.

The old Bank of Raeford building will probably need about \$180,000 in repair and renovations before it can be used for classes by the college.

There is little doubt that a college satellite would be put to good use in Hoke County.

In a survey last spring asking county residents if they would be interested in having a satellite locally, about 1,300 residents responded with about 70% of the responses favorable.

The survey also showed that about 100 high school students had an interest in attending a community college with over 70% of them saying they would rather attend classes locally.

Still, college officials say that enrollment in classes now being offered will determine whether or not a full satellite may be down the road.

In classrooms that are located all over Raeford, Sandhills is now offering over 25 classes dealing in subject matter from accounting to waiter-waitress training.

Some of the classes are in the old

County Office Building, others are in classrooms at Hoke County High School, Wayside Community Building, Open Arms Rest Home and the Hoke County Public Library.

Inside Today



Returning home

Cheyanna Wright returns home after a week at 4-H camp. The camp provided Hoke County youngsters with more than just summer fun. We take a look at the activities on page 1 of section B in today's News-Journal.