

The News-Journal

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25 CENTS

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Parents' petition with 210 names asks board to protect students

Ann Hardin said her 18-year-old boy was walking to class at Hoke High School recently when another student stuck a gun to his chest.

The other boy was suspended, but Hardin fears he may try revenge for being reported.

So with a 210-signature-strong petition in hand, Hardin asked the Hoke Board of Education to provide more protection during school hours.

"I do want to see security in the school before

something happens," she told The News-Journal Friday. "I just hope he doesn't have any more problems for the rest of the year."

Hardin said school officials told her Hoke High's problems pale beside other systems, but she said the problems with weapons in school still exists to an alarming degree.

"I'm a volunteer on campus and I see," she said. "It is bad out there and they just don't want you to know

it." Hardin said she, like other parents, hesitated to take a stand on weapons in school until an incident happened to her child.

Now she hopes to unite parents in an effort to keep schools safe.

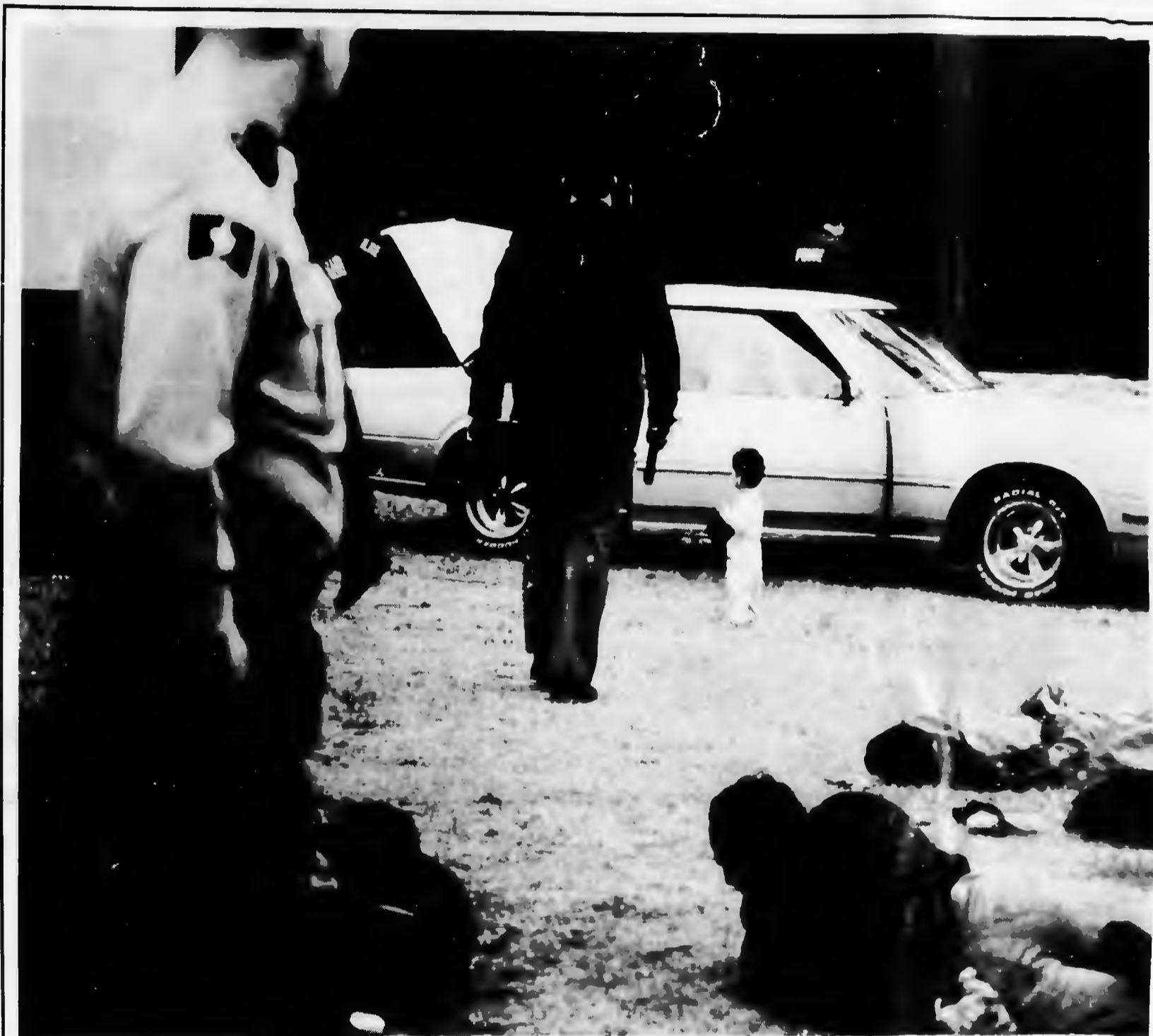
"Nobody wants to go to the trouble and get involved until it's your child," she said. "I don't want to see us get into the problems other schools have."

Another parent, who would only go by the name

"Betty" said her learning disabled daughter was attacked several times by other students at one Hoke school, and that the teacher did nothing.

The mother also said her daughter was stabbed with pencils, and she had to remove lead from her child's legs.

Hardin made many suggestions to the Board, including fencing in the campus, providing full-time (See PETITION, page 14)



A child wanders in the midst of five handcuffed men arrested on drug charges, and the Hoke deputies who arrested them Friday in the South Hoke area. The child was handed over to family members after the raid.

Five arrested as deputies raid home, club

Thirteen officers from the Hoke Sheriff's Department, along with Cumberland County Alcohol Law Enforcement (ALE) officers, descended on a drug operation in Antioch Friday.

Around 4:30 p.m., officers moved in on a trailer owned by Leverne Dial and a club

owned by Elisha Dial. In a relatively short time, officers were confiscating from the mobile home drugs, weapons, moonshine and stolen property in an on-going investigation of Hoke crime.

Det. Greg Beard with the Hoke Sheriff's Department said officials had received tips

indicating that stolen property and drugs were in the club and armed persons were awaiting law enforcement officers on Friday. Deputies found neither.

"The majority of the operation was in the trailer, but it was flowing into the club," (See RAID, page 9)

Year-round school gets enough interest to fly

So far more than 180 parents said "yes" to year-round school in Hoke County.

As of Monday, school officials reported 189 applications for the newly-approved year-round program, scheduled to kick-off this July at Upchurch Elementary School. Of those, 52 applications came from Upchurch students.

Superintendent Bill Harrison said applications poured in from all over the county, and they keep coming with two weeks left to apply.

Last month the school board unanimously approved a school-within-a-school program at Upchurch, and carved a new school attendance

district from Rockfish-Hoke and Scurlock elementary districts. South Hoke's principal, Hank Richards, won the new principalship for the innovative program.

During the two-week intercessions, one week of remedial tutoring will be offered free of charge while enrichment classes will be offered for a \$50 fee.

In a recent survey, 415 families replied they were "definitely interested" in registering their children for the year-round program, and 71 teachers said they were interested in teaching at the school.

The school board gave Upchurch parents the first opportunity to apply to the program, then others were eligible. Parents outside Upchurch attendance lines must provide their own transportation for their children.

One Upchurch parent, Karen Boahn, said she would sign up her daughter for the year-round program no matter where they lived.

"It's better for her, and you don't lose as much during the summer," she said of the scattered terms. "I'd still sign her up for year-round, even if we lived out of the (Upchurch) (See YEAR-ROUND, page 14)

Around Town

By Sam C. Morris

The rain that was predicted for last week came in Wednesday afternoon and before it ended Thursday we had over an inch and a half. Since the ground was wet it ran off in a hurry. Many places in the state had flooded streets and some entire housing developments were affected. I didn't read of anyone losing their life during the heavy rains.

We have had some cold weather this winter and many mornings have brought forth heavy frosts. But so far it has been mild compared to some winters we have had. The temperatures Sunday and Monday were near the 70-degree mark during the daytime hours. The lows were in the low 40s.

The forecast calls for the highs Wednesday through Saturday to be in the 50s and the lows for this time period will be in the 30s. No freezing temperatures are forecast. There is a chance of

rain Friday night and into Saturday morning.

If you talk to Raz Autry and other peach growers, they would tell you that they would like to see cool weather until the second week in April. If the peach blossoms will hold back until then, they will have a chance to survive this year. Last year the warm weather in March caused the trees to bloom and the late cold snap destroyed about 90 percent of the crop. Let's all hope we have peaches this year!

I attended two more graveside services this past week. On Saturday Mary Alice and I went to Wadesboro to attend the service for Louis H. Fogleman's mother. Louis is publisher of The News-Journal and lives in Fayetteville. His mother was 90 years of age.

(See AROUND, page 16)

Ross given 30 days to pay off debts or lose radio station

The Rev. James Ross and supporters anxiously waited in the WHIL offices last Wednesday as an attorney began foreclosure proceedings on Hoke's only radio station.

The court will give Ross 30 days to pay back defaulted debts or permanently shut the doors on the station.

Proceedings against 1400 AM station came after Ross and his organization, Gospel Tabernacle Enterprises, Inc. amassed over \$93,000 in debts.

Ross told The News-Journal he has no plans for a last-minute rescue of the doomed gospel station and refused to comment on how long he will stay in the area.

Confiscated equipment from the

station is slated for the auction block on March 13 to offset an \$8,000 debt to William Coleman Jr. in 1991.

Sgt. David Smith with the Hoke Sheriff's Department said a station employee went off the air so deputies could remove equipment from the site on Central Avenue.

Then Smith said Ross borrowed equipment from friends to pump life into the station after temporary permission from foreclosers to stay on the air.

Where Ross and his followers will go remains a question to officials.

Ross told The News-Journal in a September interview he would move to a church in Georgia and eventually start a TV ministry there. At (See ROSS, page 8)

Four hundred address issues during forum

In what organizers described as one of the largest forums of its kind in North Carolina, 400 Hoke citizens cited schools, jobs and infrastructure as key issues facing Hoke.

The citizens turned out to help leaders construct a plan for the area's future.

"You are here to give us the internal environment of your county," Pembroke State University's Dr. Bruce Mattox said.

Community leaders enlisted the help of Mattox and his staff to develop a strategic plan for Hoke's growth.

Participants separated into seven groups at East Hoke Middle School and brainstormed to compose a list of positives and negatives of the county.

Uncontrolled growth topped the list of concerns, with lack of mass transit, too much crime, problems in schools, lack of recreational opportunities and lack of shopping rounding out the list.

Groups unanimously noted Hoke's friendly character and small-town flavor as major pluses.

"I think everybody agrees Hoke County's ready for change, ready for economic development," Mattox said. "Most groups recognize the opportunity to cooperate with other counties for regional solutions," he said. "There's a great concern for people and the quality of life."

Many expressed specific concerns in the individual meetings, and some residents complained about the format of the meetings.

"I was disappointed," Ruth Green said. "It wasn't what I thought it was going to be. I was expecting to ask and answer questions. I felt it was sort of haphazard."

Green and her husband said they came because they wanted to discuss how they feel western Hoke Countians receive fewer services than other areas.

"In western Hoke County, nothing is ever done. There's no water, no cable," she said.

Western resident Dorothy Monroe said she also wanted to see the west acknowledged as a viable area by local leaders.

"I just wanted to find out what they were going to do to get the county to work more together," Marie Fowler said. "If we all work together we can clean the county up."

Resident Jennifer Imperial said the level of interest impressed her. "It's pretty much what I was expecting," she said of the sessions.

Jim Dougherty, chief planner with the North Carolina Department of Natural Resources and Community Development Fayetteville office, said turnout was encouraging. "This is the largest (forum) I've seen. We usually have about 100 people. I (See FORUM, page 8)



Vicki Jones offers ideas in a small group session at Monday's public forum.