

# The News-Journal

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RAEFORD, NORTH CAROLINA

25 CENTS

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## Plant worker charged with murder

Police last night arrested a House of Raeford worker and charged him with the murder of a co-worker whose body was discovered behind the turkey plant over the weekend.

Police charged John Quinton Richardson, 23, of Route 1, Raeford, with first degree murder in the death of Alfredo Cruz Alvarez, 21, of 208 Lamont Street, Police Chief J.E. Murdock said.

Alvarez was found dead in a lot near the turkey plant's pump house around 10:30 Saturday morning.

Police made an arrest about 10:45 last night, the chief said. Alvarez had worked for House of Raeford since July; Richardson was at the plant during the time Alvarez was found, Murdock said.

Police ruled out work-related injury early on. "Where he was, there was not any equipment that could have caused the injury," the chief said Monday.

"Through the investigation leads started pointing him (Richardson) out," Murdock said.

Police found that Alvarez, originally from Vera Cruz, Mexico, suffered lacerations to his head that "could have been from a blunt instrument," Murdock said.

His autopsy was completed Sunday in Chapel Hill, and Murdock said he expects results back within two weeks.

## Domestic dispute ends in slash wounds

A domestic argument came to a violent close Saturday night as a woman apparently slashed a man with a butcher knife in the neck and chest.

Sheriff's deputies found Johnnie McMillan, 412 Ben Austin Road, on his sister's kitchen floor in a pool of blood from slash wounds apparently inflicted during a fight at his home next door, Sheriff's Detective Bob Conerly said. McMillan was treated and released at Cape Fear Valley Medical Center.

No charges have been filed in the incident.

## Break-in thwarted by phone call

Calling the Sheriff's Department paid off last Wednesday for one Raeford family.

Brenda Kershaw of Lot 3, Park Place Mobile Home Park, told her son to call the department when she saw two suspicious young men approaching her home for the second time that day. The young men, allegedly Claude and Melvin Miles, 16 and 17 respectively, pulled her locked door until it came open, according to reports on file at the (See CRIME, page 3)



A Raeford fireman braves cold, damp weather Wednesday at a South Main Street fire that apparently was set.

## Rash of vacant buildings fires suspicious, firefighters say

A recent string of fires in vacant buildings may or may not be related, area firefighters say, but in either case, the fires are suspicious.

Last Wednesday Raeford firefighters responded to a fire at a vacant house on Main Street about 8:15 p.m. No one was injured in the fire, and City Fire Marshal Terry Tapp suspects arson.

"It's pretty cut and dried," Tapp said of the fire at 337 S. Main Street. "The house was abandoned, no power, no utilities at all. The back door was pried open. . . . Someone entered the home and whoever entered the home tried to

set it (the fire)," he said.

Mike McNeill, chief of the Hillcrest Fire Department, said suspicious fires have been no stranger to his district lately, either.

"We've had a total of four fires that I can find no cause for," he said. Two of those were grass fires, McNeill said.

McNeill's department responded to a fire week before last at the old 401 Hunt Club, a vacant building that had no electricity running to it.

Hillcrest firefighters sent evidence to the State Bureau of Investigation laboratories to determine

whether the fire was set with some flammable liquid, as suspected.

Also that week, Tylertown fire department responded to a blaze in an abandoned church off of Doc Brown Road, which also had no electricity running to it.

The suspicious fires, Tapp said, have been in or near Raeford.

"I haven't heard of any in the outskirts (of Hoke County)," he said. No one has been injured in any of the fires.

Hoke Arson Task Force Commander Bobby Strother said his committee has not yet determined (See FIRE, page 3)

## Election office quieter now

### Only three follow last week's rush

Hoke Elections Supervisor Caroline Shook has had a relatively quiet week — as far as elections filing is concerned. After the bustle of first-day filing, only three other people on have filed for office in Hoke County. One Senatorial candidate filed in Robeson County. In Hoke County, incumbent Commissioner Cleo Bratcher filed Tuesday to hold his seat on the Hoke County board. Bratcher, a commissioner for 11 years, filed for his fourth term. A barber at Elwood Barber Shop, Bratcher is married and has a daughter and two sons.

Newcomer James Priggemeier of the Quewhiffle Township also filed for the county commissioners' race. Priggemeier works at Moore Regional Hospital.

In another race, Incumbent Andy Gibson has filed for another term as Soil and Water Conservation Supervisor. Gibson, an area farmer, has served in this office for about six years. He was appointed to fill out a former supervisor's term and has been elected once before.

The state Board of Elections and other offices, however, have seen several filings for Hoke's district.

Incumbent state Sen. David Parnell of Parkton filed for his seventh term. Parnell, a merchant and oil jobber, has served more than 20 years in the N.C. General Assembly, including the four terms in the N.C. House.

Incumbent Judge Craig Ellis has filed to retain his seat as Superior Court judge. Ellis, who lives in Robeson County, was voted in for a two-year term in 1984 to fill out Sam Britt's unexpired term. In 1986, he won an eight-year term.

Judges Warren Pate and William McIlwain have both filed to hold their posts as District Court judge for District 16A. Pate won a four-year seat in District 12, which included Hoke County at the time, in 1986. In 1990, Pate was voted back into his office in the newly formed District 16A. McIlwain, who lives in Scotland County, has been a District Court judge for four and a half years.

Several people filed for offices week before last:

- Incumbents Aaron Plyler and Richard Conder for the 17th District in the N.C. Senate. For a seat in the N.C. House of Representatives, Incumbent Frances Cummings of Lumberton filed to represent District 87.

- Incumbent Sheriff Wayne Byrd, David Barrington Jr. and James "Jimmy" Riley filed for Hoke County sheriff.

- Incumbent L.E. McLaughlin, James Albert Hunt and Jean Hodges filed for seats on the Hoke County Board of Commissioners.

- Incumbent Charlotte Kelly filed to retain her seat on the Hoke Board of Education.

- Incumbent Betty Cook and Nancy Smith filed for clerk of court.

- State Rep. Danny DeVane announced last week that he will resign his post to become legislative liaison for the state Department of Transportation. A board made up of two Democrats from each of the five counties DeVane represents will nominate a replacement for the office and Gov. Jim Hunt will appoint a new Representative.

Offices open for election are:

- Superior Court judge — seat in District 16A currently held by Ellis.

- District Court judge — offices currently held by Pate and McIlwain.

- Member of the N.C. General Assembly — seats in the House of Representatives currently held by DeVane, by Ronnie Sutton in the 85th District and by Cummings; seats in the state Senate currently held in the 30th District by Parnell and seats held by Plyler and Conder.

- Clerk of Superior Court — currently held by Cook.

- Sheriff — currently held by Byrd.

- County commissioners — offices held by Cleo Bratcher, Tom Howell and McLaughlin.

- Board of Education — non-partisan seats held by Robert Conoly, Kelly and Dwight Oxendine.

- Soil and Water Conservation Supervisors — non-partisan offices currently held by Jimmy Maxwell and Gibson.

- Coroner — currently held by Frank Crumpler.

Because the offices of school board member and soil and water conservation supervisor are non-partisan, those seats will not be on the ballot for the May primary election, but candidates should file for the seats now. Candidates for Superior and District Court judge file at the state Elections office in Raleigh. Filing in that office, 133 Fayetteville Street Mall, Suite 100, and in Hoke County, lasts until noon Feb. 7.

## Leadership-Hoke still strong, expanding ideas after 3 years

Even for folks born and raised in Hoke County, there's always something new to learn about the area they call home.

That's the philosophy of Leadership-Hoke, an eight-month-long course designed to familiarize people in the business community, as well as other citizens, with the workings of the county, its municipalities and businesses.

In its third year, Leadership-Hoke has not changed radically, organizers say. The Sandhills Community College-Hoke campus Small Business Center and the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce organizes the program. A committee of former students produces ideas and names of speakers for the next year.

But, leaders and students say, there's room for

new ideas. One of this year's students would like to see an alumni program where students could reconvene after the class is over.

"None of us want it to end," Hoke Parks and Recreation Director Donna Foy said after Thursday's classes about county, city and state government. Leadership-Hoke, a \$200 program that meets one day per month and for a two-day kick-off retreat in August, covers businesses, governments and personal growth.

"One of the biggest things that comes out of these (classes) is brainstorming. We need to keep that energy up, keep that brainstorming going," Foy said.

Even though she works with many of her class- (See LEADERSHIP, page 6)

## Hoke schools' report card news good, bad

Hoke County school board members Tuesday reviewed a report card of the school system's 1993 performance and considered adding in-house vocational rehabilitation services.

The report card, drawn up by the state Department of Public Instruction, garnered a mixed reaction from the schools' superintendent.

"I was very pleased with some of our performance," (See SCHOOL S, page 8)

## Around Town

By Sam C. Morris

The weather has turned cold again after the summer temperature of around 70 degrees on Friday. Monday morning the low was under 20 and it didn't get above 40 all during the day. With the wind out of the north, the wind chill felt as if it was in the 20s. It will warm up somewhat for a few days and then the forecast calls for cold weather over the weekend. There was a chance of rain Tuesday night.

The forecast calls for the high temperatures to be in the 50s on Wednesday and Thursday and the lows in the 30s. Friday the high will be in the 40s and the lows in the 20s. Saturday the high will be in the 30s and the lows in the teens. Maybe it will warm up by Sunday.

The political season started with a bang in Hoke County. It seems there are plenty of candidates for the offices that

are in this year's primary election. Already three have filed for sheriff and I have heard rumors that more may file before the end of the filing period.

I have been associated with political races all my life; I have been on the winning side and I have also been on the losing side. One thing I like about the political season is that you have calls and people drop by to see you, who don't show at other times of the year. This is fine with me because I like people. Another thing that happens during the political season is you see people at places and functions just during this time.

The hard thing about a small county and politics is you know about everyone on the ballot. Most of them are your friends and when they drop by and ask for your support, you must try to be non-committal, or you may hurt someone's feelings. You try to help everyone in any (See AROUND, page 8)