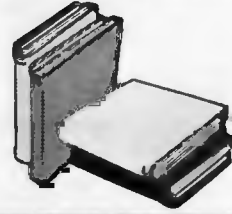


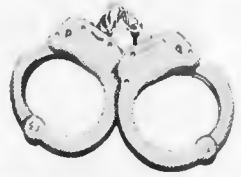
Police seek missing man  
See page 8A



Hoke Library remains  
without needed staff  
See page 5A



Fort Bragg soldier  
arrested for abuse  
See page 10A



# The News-Journal

'If it happened, it's news to us'

No. 48 Vol. 87

HOKE COUNTY 50 CENTS

Wednesday, March 6, 1996

## Hoke heroes to carry Olympic torch

By Jen Osborn  
Staff writer

When the Olympic flame for the 1996 Olympic Games makes its way from Olympia, Greece to Atlanta, Georgia, it will travel nearly 15,000 miles by runner, bicycle, horseback, boat, plane and a 19-car train. It will make its way via three Hoke County residents and one former citizen.

To help transport the flame, the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games

(ACOG) has notified 5,500 people nationwide — including three local men — of their selection to represent America's "Community Heroes" as torchbearers in the 1996 Olympic Torch Relay.

Bob Conerly, Jim Curtis and Hunter Birkhead, all Hoke County residents, each were selected by one of 147 citizen evaluation panels to represent Hoke County, North Carolina and their country by carrying the torch as Community Heroes. Jennifer Morris, who used to

live and work in Hoke County and who is now Command Operations Chief for the Torch Relay, also will be able to carry the Olympic Flame as a member of the Torch Relay Team.

The four were chosen when the ACOG and local United Way organizations conducted a nationwide search for people who make significant contributions to others through volunteer work and community leadership, by performing acts of generosity and kindness and other feats.

By writing a 100-word description about the qualities of the person, Community Heroes were nominated in a national ratio of seven entries for every one torchbearer spot awarded.

"The quality of all the people who were nominated as heroes is ever so impressive," said Billy Payne, president and CEO of ACOG. "These torchbearers represent what is best about America and are exemplary models of the many heroes who everyday make significant sacrifices in serving others

in society."

### Forester chosen

Birkhead, the assistant regional forester in Hoke County, said being selected as a torchbearer is one of the most exciting things to ever happen to him.

"What an honor," he said. "I'm thrilled. To think that all the world's greatest athletes will compete under that flame and I got to help carry it..."

Birkhead, who grew up in the ath-  
(See HEROES, page 10A)



House fire

Firefighters spray the remains of a building on Sunset Drive that caught on fire Monday afternoon. The fire completely destroyed the structure. See page 9A for other fires in the county this week.

Photo by Kristin Guthrie

## Petition drive half complete

By Jen Osborn  
Staff writer

Supporters of putting a mixed drink referendum on the ballot say they're about half-way to gathering the nearly 4,000 signatures they'll need to force a county-wide vote.

Bob Vaughn, a member of the Citizens for the Right to Vote For or Against Liquor By the Drink, said a pig picking and sign-up event on Saturday brought approximately 400 to 500 more signatures from Hoke residents who want a chance to vote on the issue. Several more citizens also registered to vote at the same time.

Other events, like having supporters stand with petitions in front of Bo's and Food Lion, as

well as posting petitions in other local businesses have brought in numerous signatures, Vaughn said.

As of Monday, only one sign-up sheet had been turned into the election office, according to Caroline Shook, clerk to the board of elections. The nearly 800 signatures on the sheet haven't been verified yet, she said.

Vaughn explained that although several more sign-up sheets have been filled, they aren't being turned in until new voters can be registered with the county. That way, he said, there's less chance of names being rejected when the signatures are verified.

"What we've been doing is  
(See LIQUOR, page 7A)

## City tables annexation

### Council plans to study damage to Northwest Water Company

By Kristin Guthrie  
Staff writer

Raeford City Council members voted unanimously to postpone the decision of annexing more property into the city limits at their regular meeting Monday night. Council member Earl

McDuffie led this decision with a motion to "delay any annexation action until we (the council) look into the Northwest Water System."

The water system is presently servicing the area currently being considered for annexing as well as the Silver Hill area.

"The cost may be too excessive for the city to begin servicing the proposed annexation area," said Phillips. "Taking the business away from this small company may cause financial trouble."

Council members plan to investigate these cost issues before going forth with the annexation issue.

The city plans to annex sev-  
(See CITY, page 12A)

### Around Town

By Sam C. Morris  
Contributing editor

The colder weather came in over the weekend. It was not as cold as the snowy weekend, but the wind seemed to be of ice. It warmed up the first of the week with the highs in the 70s and the lows in the 40s.

The forecast calls for cooler weather this coming weekend. Wednesday the high will be in the 70s and low in the 50s. Thursday the high will be in the 60s and the low in the 50s. On Friday the high will be in the 50s and the low in the 40s. Saturday we will

see the high in the 40s and 50s and the low in the 30s or 40s. There is a chance of rain on Wednesday and Thursday.

It is only a couple of weeks until spring, so we can look for both cool and warm temperatures for awhile.

More and more posters are being put up by candidates running for office. It won't be long before you will be getting all types of mail from the office seekers. I just hope that what the candidates promise will come to pass after they are elected.  
(See AROUND, page 12A)



Photos by Jen Osborn

### Spring's first blossoms

While the cold weather is set to begin again in earnest tomorrow, with temperatures in the 30's, this Bradford pear tree burst into bloom with the warmer temperatures last week. The brief glimpse of spring won't last, but in a few weeks, the cold weather will be gone for good



### THIS WEEK

- Accent ..... 1B
- Calendar ..... 2B
- Classifieds ..... 8B
- Deaths ..... 8A
- Editorials ..... 2A
- Legals ..... 7B
- School News ... 6A
- Social News .... 3B