

The News-Journal

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School salutes
industries
7A

Store still
helping Hoke's needy
8A

In



Costume Contest
Winners
1B

Reminder: Cast
your vote Nov. 6

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Around Town



BY SAM MORRIS
Contributing Editor

Someone told me last week that people shouldn't plan any event when the N.C. State Fair is in progress. She said that it seems to rain, especially during the weekends. This was certainly true this year. It rained last weekend and again this weekend. I was told that over three inches of rain fell in Hoke County. It might have hindered the picking of cotton, but most folks were glad to see it rain. The temperatures were not as low as the previous weekend.

The forecast for the remainder of the week, Wednesday through Saturday, calls for the highs to be in the 70s and the lows in the 40s. This is about the normal for this time of year. The cooler temperatures will hold off the rain for awhile.

Don't forget that the election for Mayor and three seats on the City Council will be held on Tuesday November 4, 1997. The polls will be open from 6:30 a.m. until 7:30 p.m. As the city continues to grow, See (AROUND, page 3A)

Crime follow-up

Body that of missing man

By NICOLE GABRIEL
Staff writer

Officials confirmed the identity of the remains of a body found a week ago near West Hoke Elementary as that of a 27-year-old Raeford man missing since July.

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner confirmed the bones found across the street from the school last Tuesday afternoon belonged to Sherman Lee Purcell of 5995 Turnpike Rd., Sheriff's Det. David Newton said.

Officials located some of Purcell's x-ray records at Moore Regional Hospital in Pinehurst and turned over the remains to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner to identify the body,

Newton said.

It appears at this time, Newton said, that Purcell died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound, but the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner continues to investigate the actual cause of death.

Last week Purcell's mother reported to sheriff's deputies one of her dogs brought two bones to her home. A preliminary investigation led detectives to believe the bones belonged to Purcell, the woman's missing son.

Purcell's mother reported her son missing in July after Purcell left the house with a shotgun and left a note behind, Newton said.

Investigators found no leads at the time of Purcell's disappearance.

About a month after Purcell's disappearance, Newton said,

sheriff's investigators conducted an aerial search of the area, but found no clues as to Purcell's whereabouts — until last week.

During an initial investigation, a medical examination of the bones revealed they were human, so detectives initiated a search, Sheriff Wayne Byrd said.

Detectives called for assistance from rescue and fire workers to search the woods and a field across from the school, Newton said. Officials used a Department of Corrections cadaver search dog to track down the rest of the remains. The dog found the remainder of the body within seven minutes about 350 yards away from Purcell's home, Newton said.

"It was just a skeleton," Newton said. (See BODY, page 6A)



Woman killed in car accident
Raeford woman Ella Mae Futrell, 54, of 715 Mockingbird Hill Rd., was killed Friday when the driver of a tractor trailer ran into her Honda Accord at approximately 6:30 a.m. on Mockingbird Hill Road. Kristin Guthrie/News-Journal



Bob Gentry



Milton Williams

Eight prepare for Council elections

Candidates answer questions from The News-Journal

Bob Gentry Mayor Candidate

Q: Why are you running for office?

A: I feel that I have played a part in Raeford becoming a great city. I have served as your mayor for eight years and as a city councilman for 12 years. We're in a sound financial situation and have our water and sewer systems prepared for growth into the next century. The services we provide — water, sewer, garbage pick up, fire protection, police protection — are excellent and the rates are equal or below other cities. We have surrounded ourselves with an outstanding staff and group of employees. I would like the opportunity to continue this effort and to celebrate our 100th anniversary in 2001.

Q: What are your top five goals to accomplish?

A: Continue to provide excellent service at reasonable rates.

Continue to keep the tax rate as low as possible, but not to jeopardize our current programs.

Continue to sell Raeford as an excellent community to live in and raise your family.

Continue to support economic development by searching for good potential industries, businesses and individuals to locate in Raeford.

Continue to prepare for the next century and our 100th anniversary. (See GENTRY, page 14A)

Milton Williams Mayor Candidate

Q: Why are you running for office?

A: I feel that the experiences I have gained in my years of church and school administration have prepared me to have much to offer to the citizens of Raeford as their mayor.

Q: What are your top five goals to accomplish?

A: • To improve the quality of life for all citizens by encouraging their involvement in city government as well as providing progressive leadership for the city;

• To reduce the overall rate of crime and maintain a high level of safety for all of our citizens by working with and supporting our Police Department;

• Work to bring new businesses to Raeford;

• Work with the Chamber (of Commerce), city maintenance and citizens to develop more pride in our city;

• Encourage open communications between city government, county government and citizens that lead to effective decision-making.

Q: What do you envision for Raeford's future?

A: I see Raeford moving into the 21st century as a city that has been totally revitalized. I see cleanliness, beauty and new businesses. I see people feeling prideful about our city. I see city and county government sitting down with citizens on committees and task forces working together for (See WILLIAMS, page 13A)

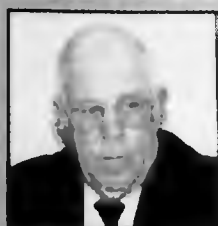
Council Candidates



Martha Beatty
12A



Mark Jernigan
11A



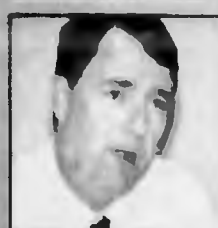
Charles Daniels
11A



John Jordan
12A



James "Benny" McLeod
11A



Eddie McNeill
12A

Candidates stump at Chamber forum

By NICOLE GABRIEL
Staff writer

This year's candidates for mayor and City Council agreed on many issues, treaded lightly on others and even exchanged laughs instead of personal attacks during the "Meet the Candidates" forum Oct. 22 at the Hoke County Public Library.

Not unlike this year's election, last week's forum, sponsored by the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce, evoked little controversy among the two candidates running for the mayor's seat and six running for three Council seats.

Less than a week from today Mayor Bob Gentry and Milton Williams will face off for the mayor's seat, while six candidates will try to claim three city council seats up for election this year.

Local businessman Charles Daniels, local attorney, Mark Jernigan, and Fidelity Bank manager, John Jordan, compete for a 2-year unexpired seat. Also new to the political scene, Martha Beatty hopes to unseat one of the incumbents — Eddie McNeill or James B. McLeod — for one of the 4-year seats up for election this year.

Ferguson trial to start on Thursday in Bladen

By NICOLE GABRIEL
Staff writer

The prosecution and defense will begin opening statements and presenting evidence tomorrow for the Rodriguez Ferguson murder trial.

Attorneys agreed on the last alternate juror yesterday and expect to use today to prepare for tomorrow's court proceedings.

Defense and prosecution attorneys questioned more than 90 jurors since the jury selection process began three weeks ago in Elizabethtown in Bladen County, District Attorney Jean Powell said.

As of a week ago, defense and prosecution attorneys agreed upon 10 of the 12 primary jurors

to sit for the trial. More than 300 jurors were summoned, but about one-third were eliminated immediately for medical or other reasons, Powell said.

The trial started Oct. 6 and since then, Superior Court Judge D. Jack Hooks Jr. heard several pretrial motions and other administrative issues, in addition to the jury selection.

The Hoke County Sheriff's Department charged Ferguson with five counts of first-degree murder and one count of assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill Jan. 2, 1995. Ferguson allegedly shot and killed Jamie Hunter, 39, his wife, Deborah Hunter, Tim Powell, 20, Steve (See TRIAL, page 6A)

Voters head to polls

Less than a week from today voters will head to the polls to determine who will serve as Raeford's mayor and will determine the outcome of three city council seats.

Voters can mark their ballots Nov. 4 at one of three voting booths in the city:

• Raeford No. 1 — Hoke County Public Library, 334 N. Main St.

• Raeford No. 2 — Sandhills Community College, 127 W. Elwood. (See VOTE, page 6A)