

The News-Journal

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Wednesday, December 3, 1997

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for Mentally Ill
to meet Dec. 11

8A

Scott to play
softball at UNC-C

7A

New fire chief
named

5A

In

Hoke Extension
honored

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Around Town



By SAM MORRIS
Contributing Editor

Maybe the cotton farmers will get the cotton out of the fields by Christmas. It rained again over the weekend and into Monday morning. There are very few leaves left on the trees after the wind and rain. The weather has been anything but normal for the past few weeks.

The forecast for the remainder of the week, Wednesday through Saturday, calls for about the same kind of weather. Wednesday through Friday the highs will be in the 50s and the lows in the low 40s or high 30s. Saturday the high will be in the 40s and the lows in the 20s. There is a chance of rain Wednesday night until early Friday morning.

There was thunder and lightning Monday morning and according to the old saying, we could have snow in nine days. I hope the saying is wrong!

Don't forget that the annual Pancake Supper sponsored by the Raeford Kiwanis Club is (See AROUND, page 9A)



Rescuers work to remove Lillie Frances McNeill from her 1994 Nissan pickup truck on U.S. 401 following a two-vehicle accident Monday morning near Raeford.

Accident kills 1, injures 2

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Staff writer

A woman was killed and two people were injured in a two-car accident that occurred on rain-slick U.S. 401 northeast of Raeford Monday morning, according to the state Highway Patrol.

Carma L. Currie died after her northeast-bound 1991 Hyundai

ran off the right shoulder then went back onto the highway out of control.

The vehicle slid sideways and crossed the center line, colliding with a southwest-bound 1994 Nissan pickup driven by Lillie Frances McNeill.

McNeill, 49, and her passenger, husband Alexander McNeill, 46, of Patrick Drive, Fayetteville, were injured.

Both were transported to Cape Fear Valley Center, where they were listed in stable condition Tuesday.

Currie, a resident of Rex Currie Rd. of Red Springs, would have been 24 years old this month.

The accident happened at approximately 7:45 a.m. near Frye Automotive & Camping Inc. Both vehicles were declared total losses.

Hoke resident confesses to murder, tells authorities where to find body

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Staff writer

Dean Sheets has lost his best friend. Billy Joe Melton worked for him at Montrose Motocross 10 years or more and now he is dead, the 68-year-old man's bloody body found in a field.

Charged with his murder and held in Hoke County Jail under no bond is Bobby Hunt, 20, who lived in a trailer he rented near Mr. Melton's tidy white trailer with blue trim.

According to Chief Deputy David Newton, on Sunday deputies were called to Hunters Run, an unpaved road which horse-shoes off Poole Rd, which intersects with N.C. 211 in western Hoke County. They checked out a white Toyota pickup with a window rolled down and found blood inside it. Deputies Chris Fee and Russell Walters called the N.C. Dept. of Corrections and asked that a tracking canine

be sent out. The dog took them to a trailer about 350 yards from the road where Hunt lived. Inside the trailer they found Hunt and also clothing with blood on it.

Hoke County Chief Detective David Newton and Lt. Joey Blackburn were called in as well as State Bureau of Investigation Agent Erroll Jarmin. They interviewed Hunt, who gave officers the bloody clothing but claimed he knew nothing about it.

Behind the trailer investigators found hidden in the woods a 1988 Chevrolet Beretta. The vehicle had been reported stolen the Saturday before Thanksgiving, and its owner, Carlos DeLeon, 36, a resident of Main St. in Raeford, had been stabbed with a knife. That incident had happened on Wallace McLean Rd.

Officers drew up a warrant for possession of stolen property. Hunt requested to speak with Agent Jarmin and allegedly ad-

mitted he had killed Melton. He told them they could find his body in a field off Blue Springs Rd. — 12 miles away.

Melton's body was sent to Chapel Hill for an autopsy, and Hunt was charged with murder.

Officers believe Melton was killed around midnight Saturday. His pickup was found not far from his home on Hunters Run. Melton had been alone this weekend. His wife had gone to visit her folks in the Philippines.

Sheets said Melton, who was Hunt's landlord, had gone to meet him to collect rent. Sheets said Melton had befriended Hunt. "He helped that boy, took him places, helped him with the water. He would have let the rent slide."

A next door neighbor said about Melton, "He was a nice person. I couldn't have asked for a better neighbor."

"What can I say?" said Sheets, "Honesty, loyalty, integrity — Bill was all of those."

News-Journal names editor, reporter

The News-Journal is pleased to announce the addition of a new editor and a staff writer to its editorial staff.

Knight Chamberlain, currently of Lumberton, and Pat Allen Wilson of Five Points, are the News-Journal's editor and staff writer, respectively.

Chamberlain, 41, is a Brevard, N.C. native who graduated from St. Andrews Presbyterian College in 1978 with a degree in Political Science. He began his journalism career with The Robesonian that same year as a county reporter before moving on to The Laurinburg Exchange as its sports editor.

After a five-year absence, Chamberlain returned to journalism in 1984, working for a variety of newspapers in Southeastern North Carolina before returning to The Robesonian as News Editor in 1990. In April 1995 he left The Robesonian to help News-Journal publisher Robert Dickson start The Fort Bragg POST in Fayetteville before leaving to try his hand at freelance journalism, corresponding for The Raleigh News & Observer, Atlanta Journal-Constitution, New York Times, Washington Post, Reuters America and Associated Press. (See EDITOR, page 9A)



Chamberlain

Hoke County: A most giving place to live

KNIGHT CHAMBERLAIN
Editor

On November 19 *The News-Journal* made an appeal for individuals and businesses to support Nettie McDuffie's efforts to feed the less fortunate for Thanksgiving.

We are pleased to report that you, our readers, came through in a big way, and helped make Thanksgiving dinner a reality for more than 250 people last Thursday.

Members of the Hoke Emergency Liaison Program (H.E.L.P.) were kind enough to collect the donations. Nettie's church, Freedom Chapel AME Zion, offered the use of its kitchen and dining room facilities as a base of operations.

Nettie, who started cooking on the Monday before Thanksgiving, said a core of 10 volunteers helped her prepare the feast of turkey, ham,

string beans, candied yams, sweet peas, dressing, gravy, hot rolls and several kinds of cake. Many more volunteers came from across the county to pick up and deliver the plates of food.

Because there were so many people involved in the effort, Nettie was afraid to name individual volunteers for fear of leaving someone out.

This is the message she asked us to convey for her:

"We, the willing workers of Hoke County, want to thank everyone for our most successful Thanksgiving dinner project ever for the sick and shut-ins, senior citizens, and the needy.

"We went into the back woods, homes, and any place where people were hungry and served them a delicious meal.

"Hoke County is a most giving place to live."

We couldn't have said it better ourselves.

Ferguson awaits sentence

KNIGHT CHAMBERLAIN
Editor

ELIZABETHTOWN — A Bladen County jury is preparing to decide if Rodriguez Ferguson should be sentenced to death, or life in prison without parole. Jurors are hearing closing arguments today and may begin their deliberations this afternoon or Thursday morning.

Ferguson, 20, was found guilty of first-degree murder on Thursday, Nov. 20, in the shooting deaths of five Hoke County residents, and the wounding of a sixth almost three years ago.

During the sentencing phase of the trial a psychologist and a social scientist testified that Ferguson has suffered from post-

traumatic stress disorder and a borderline personality disorder, and has abused alcohol and marijuana.



Ferguson

On Monday, Dr. Richard Dudley Jr., a psychiatrist who examined Ferguson, told jurors how those problems affected

Ferguson, particularly on the night he shot five people to death and left another paralyzed.

It took the nine-woman, three-man jury six-and-a-half hours spread over two days to find that Ferguson caused the deaths of Jamie Hunter, 38, his wife, (See FERGUSON, page 9A)



Kristin Guthrie/News-Journal

Hospice Tree decorated

Last Tuesday, Hospice of Hoke County volunteers and Raeford City employees decorated a Christmas tree on Main Street in preparation for the Love Light Ceremony that took place Monday. The lights were placed on the tree by donations from members of the community in memory or in honor of a loved one. The tree was planted seven years ago by Betsy Ann McNeill in memory of her late husband Ken who died of cancer. George Balch topped the tree with the traditional star.