

The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

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Wednesday, December 10, 1997

In

West Hoke
Middle Tigers
are champs again

8A

Folk-Arks
and Primitives
in biz spotlight

6A

Highwaymen strike
in Hoke

10A

In

Hoke native forms
cancer group

1B

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Around Town



It is still a couple of weeks before winter officially starts, but on Sunday and Monday mornings it felt like it had already arrived. The temperature was below freezing both mornings. There was a heavy frost and this should have made all the green grass disappear. I am glad that the snow and ice have escaped us so far.

The forecast for the remainder of the week, Wednesday through Saturday, calls for the temperatures to rise. The highs will be in the 50s and the lows in the low 40s or high 30s. There is a chance of rain on Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday.

There is still time for you to make a donation to the "Share Your Christmas" project sponsored by the staff and volunteers of H.E.L.P. If you would like to help, mail your donation to "Share Your Christmas", P.O. Box 1038, Raeford, NC 28376, or take it by the H.E.L.P. office on Main Street.

John Jordan, chairman of the Hoke County United Way drive called me Monday and gave me some information on (See AROUND, page 9A)



Knight Chamberlain/News-Journal

Ferguson's attorneys Lisa Dubs and Henderson Hill review court documents with Rodriguez Ferguson prior to sentencing.

Ferguson gets life

KNIGHT CHAMBERLAIN
Editor

ELIZABETHTOWN — Rodriguez Ferguson, convicted of multiple murders three weeks ago, was spared the death penalty by a hopelessly deadlocked Bladen County jury Saturday after three days of deliberation.

Judge D. Jack Hooks imposed five life sentences and an additional nine to 12 years upon Ferguson, to be served concurrently, for murdering five people and wounding a sixth three years ago this month. Ferguson's attorneys immediately filed notice of appeal.

Ferguson, 20, stood expressionless as the sentences were imposed, then offered a casual wave and faint smile to family members as he was led from the courtroom.

Family members and friends

of the victims were stunned that the nine-woman, three-man jury spared the person it found guilty of first-degree murder on November 20 of the shooting deaths of Jamie Hunter, 38, his wife, Debbie, 37, Tim Powell, 20, and Steve Locklear, 18, at the Puppy Creek Family Fun Center in Hoke County on New Year's Eve 1994, and James Morrison Jr., 31, at the Zodiac Lounge near Raeford two hours later on New Year's Day.

"It's a mockery of justice," said Charles Stanton, the great uncle of Mary Ann Hunter who was paralyzed from the chest down by a bullet that struck her neck as her mother attempted to shield her from gunfire. "As hard as the prosecution worked and to have a spur like this thrown in ... it's just not right."

"I wish those jurors (who held

(See FERGUSON, page 10A)

Sheriff: Hicks violated no policy in shooting

BY PAT ALLEN WILSON
Staff writer

Hoke County Sheriff Wayne Byrd will not reprimand Deputy Frank E. Hicks following an administrative inquiry into the shooting of a Hoke County man on Aug. 29.

Hicks, 41, has been on paid administrative leave since he killed David Michael Sivak, 32, in western Hoke County. The officer said he shot Sivak when he tried to run him down with his van.

"I cannot find anything in any of the information I have in the

administrative inquiry that (Hicks) violated the policy of this department. I reviewed the inquiry with the idea to see if there was disciplinary action to take against Officer Hicks or to see if there was anything I needed to address in the policy and procedure," Byrd said.

The sheriff explained that an administrative inquiry is not an investigation. "It is between an employee and an employer and the employee is required to answer questions. It has nothing to do with criminal law or state law," he said. State privacy laws forbid him from divulging what

was said during the inquiry, the sheriff pointed out.

"If he violated the policy, there would be disciplinary action. My inquiry now stops," Byrd said.

Hicks will stay on administrative leave until a Grand Jury decides if judicial action should be taken against him. On Oct. 21 a Hoke County grand jury found probable cause to believe that Frank Hicks committed voluntary manslaughter when he shot David Hicks in the back on Aug. 29. The grand jury action, called a presentment, asked the district attorney to investigate the case (See HICKS, page 10A)

Hoke student is Morehead finalist

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Six high school seniors from the South Central region of North Carolina were named finalists for Morehead scholarships, including Hesham Manzoor Hussain of Hoke County High School, the son of Manzoor and Kaneex Kausar Hussain of Raeford.

The Morehead Award offers a full undergraduate scholarship covering four years of tuition and expenses at UNC-CH, valued at \$50,000 for N.C. residents, from the John Motley Morehead Foundation.

A Morehead South Central regional selection committee in-

terview 16 candidates on Nov. 21. The candidates were nominated by local selection committees in the nine counties that make up the South Central region: Chatham, Harnett, Hoke, Lee, Moore, Randolph, Richmond, Robeson and Scotland.

Secondary schools across the state nominated more than 900 students to interview before the local selection committee. Fourteen regional committees interview 218 of these students and select 70 finalists to be interviewed by a central selection committee.

About 55 nominees from se

(See MOREHEAD, page 10A)



Hesham Manzoor Hussain

Staten to chair board

BY PAT ALLEN WILSON
Staff writer

Derrick R. Staten, chief executive of BB&T, was elected to chair the Hoke County-Raeford Joint Economic Development Board at its organizational meeting held Monday. A.K. Leach Jr., president of FCI, an agricultural service company, was chosen as vice chairman.

The board, established at a joint meeting of the Hoke County Board of Commissioners and the Raeford City Council last month, is charged with overseeing industrial growth in the county.

Other board appointees are

Duncan McFayden, an attorney; Gene Carter, Carter Realty, and Bill Hill, Burlington Industries plant manager. City manager Mike McNeill and county manager Mike Wood serve as voting, ex-officio members.

By-laws were also adopted Monday. They call for board members to come from the professional disciplines of law, finance, banking, and business with one at-large member.

Initially, law and finance representatives serve two-year terms with the others serving three-year terms. After the initial terms of all board members have expired, terms will be three years.



Pat Wilson/News-Journal

More syrup, anyone?

The Pancake Supper sponsored by the Raeford Kiwanis Club last Thursday night at Gibson Cafeteria was a success. As usual the pancakes and sausage were first class. The Kiwanis do an excellent job in keeping your plate full and offering assistance in any way.

Even Santa needs return address

Every year about this time, children perform the time-honored tradition of writing letters to Santa listing all of their wants and wishes. These Santa letters have already started streaming into the Raeford post office. Naturally, Santa knows where everyone lives, but his postal elves, who answer most of his mail, are not that magical. In order to send a personal response to each child, the elves need a complete return address on each envelope.

Postmaster Steve Holden is asking that kids place their return address in the upper left hand corner of the envelope. The letters should be addressed to Santa Claus, North

Pole, c/o Raeford Post Office.

Some of the letters the children write are amusing, like the child who said he was tired of the educational toys his parents bought for him and wanted something really fun like a pogo stick or roller blades. Others are touching like the one from the little girl who wanted Santa to make her grandmother all better.

"The most heartbreaking letters are the ones that ask for the basic things that every child should be guaranteed such as a bed, shoes or more food to eat," said Holden. "Many times the child is not requesting these things for him or herself, but for a brother or sister."

Whether it is with tears of laughter or sadness, the postal

elves at the Raeford post office will read every letter the children mail and send a response letter from good old Santa himself — every letter, that is, with a useable return address. The letters with special needs will be forwarded to appropriate agencies that may be able to provide assistance to these families.

And just who are these postal elves? They are the same women and men who provide your daily postal services.

When they slip that yellow card in the time clock at the end of the work day, they magically become postal elves who enjoy making children happy.



Mullet Roast a success

Knight Chamberlain/News-Journal

Once again the annual Mullet Roast sponsored by the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce and the Committee of 100 was a success. More than 150 attended the event at the Raeford Civic Center on Tuesday, Dec. 2. About all the industries, businesses and county and city officials were on hand to give reports for the year 1997.