

The News-Journal

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

No. 28 Vol. 91

50 cents

Wednesday, October 14, 1998

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Maryland decision
changes nothing
— Editorial
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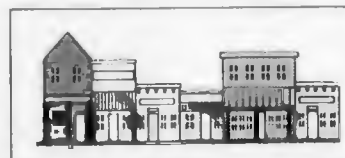


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Friday
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Around Town



By SAM C. MORRIS
Contributing Editor

I know that the fall season is here when the air conditioner is turned off and you need heat in the mornings. The lows have been in the low 50s for the past few days. The highs have been in the 70s. We didn't get as much rain last week as the areas north of us. My gauge had a reading of six one-hundredth of an inch.

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 low 50s. There isn't any rain in the forecast.

Now we can look forward to raking leaves and the coloring of the leaves. This is my time of the year.

Recently I wrote that Susan Stauffer had resigned from the advertising department to be home with her children. Last Thursday Amber Liebers Brannen joined our advertising staff. She is married and has two children, a two-year-old son and a three month old daughter. They live in the Arabia section of the county. Amber is learning her job (See AROUND, page 12A)

Maryland drops charges against Davis FAA probe continues

By KNIGHT CHAMBERLAIN
Editor

The Maryland State Attorney, citing a lack of evidence, has dropped charges against Democrat nominee for sheriff Jim Davis, effective September 30, for carrying a loaded handgun in a Baltimore airport last July.

Davis was arrested on July 18 at the Baltimore-Washington In-

ternational Airport after the gun was detected in his carry-on luggage at a security checkpoint. The Maryland Transportation Authority seized the weapon—a loaded, .25 caliber Titan—and charged Davis with carrying and transporting a handgun on his person.

A Federal Aviation Administration investigation, initiated in response to the Davis arrest, is

continuing. While the FAA cannot lodge criminal charges against him, fines of up to \$10,000 are possible. In Davis' case, however, a fine of \$500 to \$1,000 is more likely.

The Titan, a semi-automatic handgun, is commonly referred to by veteran law enforcement officials as a "Saturday Night Special" or "throwdown" due to its cheap construction and inherent unreliability.

Davis, who in his campaign for sheriff has emphasized his

extensive training and expertise in more than 40 areas of law enforcement, said he was unaware of a common federal regulation that requires anyone planning to fly with a gun to notify the airline ahead of time, check the weapon at the ticket counter upon arrival at the airport, and show security workers that the ammunition is in a separate bag from the gun. He said he had done nothing wrong because it was an oversight and that he (See DAVIS, page 12A)



Jim Davis

First Lady Carolyn Hunt welcomes Smart Start to Hoke County

By KNIGHT CHAMBERLAIN
Editor

First Lady Carolyn Hunt said she wasn't going to let a cold stand in the way of a personal appearance to formally welcome Smart Start to Hoke County.

True to her word, the wife of Gov. Jim Hunt served as Hoke County Partnership for Children and Families' guest of honor Tuesday at a ribbon cutting ceremony attended by a who's who



of Hoke County leaders.

"I'm sorry my husband couldn't be here today, but I assure you he will come to Hoke County before his term of office if over," Hunt told a crowd of about 100 business, government, civic and educational learners,

teachers and children. "He would be proud of all your efforts that have led to this day."

The ribbon cutting marked two important occasions for Hoke County's Smart Start program. It represented the official opening of the new, expanded office of the Smart Start partnership, and also the beginning of the first full year Smart Start services will be available to Hoke County's children and families.

(See HUNT, page 12A)

Guilty pleas from parade fracas entered

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Staff writer

On Monday, Hoke County District Court Judge Richard T. Brown sentenced three people involved in a fracas at the end of the N.C. Turkey Festival parade was ending on September 17. They rendered guilty pleas without benefit of attorney. The cases of four others were continued.

Kenny Kermit Rogers, 18, Culbreth Estates, and Raymond

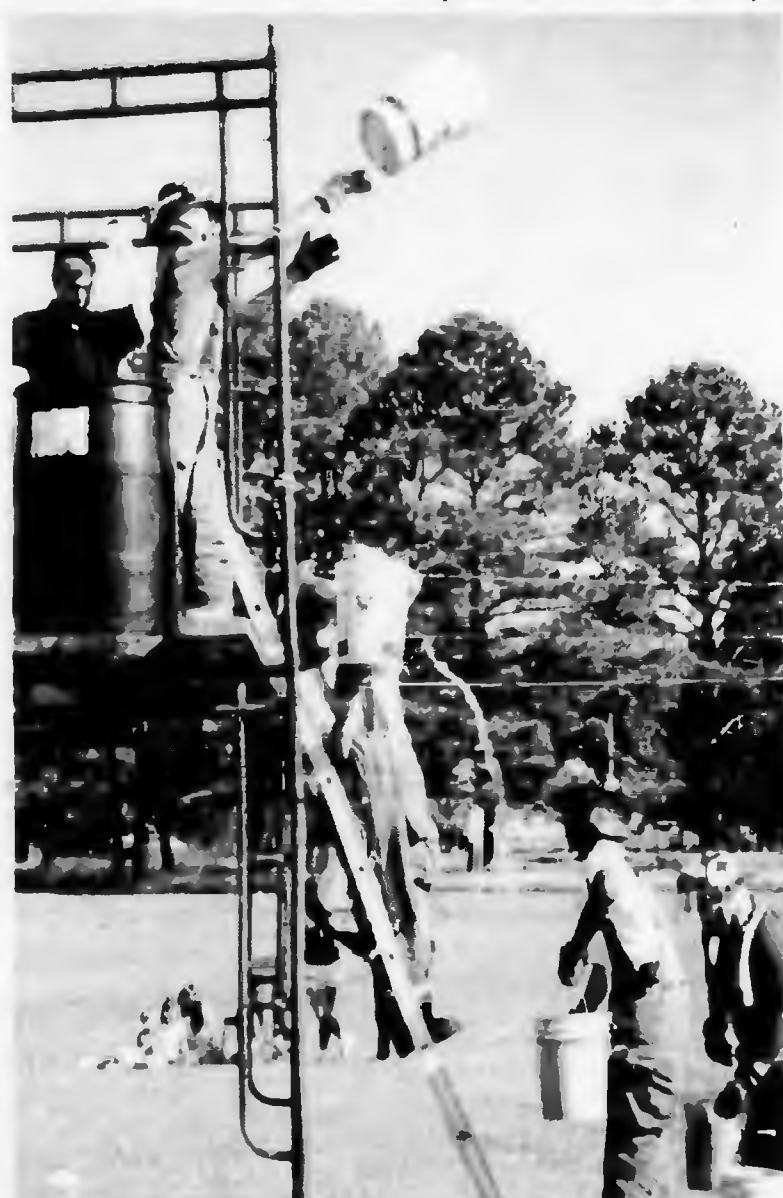
Locklear, 18, Haire Road, were sentenced on disorderly conduct charges as was Denise McNeill, 22.

The case of Gene Bernard Locklear, 17, Antioch Mobile Home Park, was continued to November 17 so that the court could appoint him a lawyer. He is charged with disorderly conduct. The judge wanted him to have counsel because of his age and high school student status.

Curtis Locklear, 52, Mary Lee

Locklear, 50, and their daughter Michelle Locklear, all of Pine Tree Lane, have been charged with assault on a government official and disorderly conduct. Their case was continued at the request of their attorney, Greg Thompson.

The charges followed an argument between Rogers and Raymond Locklear, who were cursing and challenging each other to a fight. Officers were (See PARADE, page 12A)



Firefighters' contest

Hillcrest firefighters scramble to fill a barrel with water during the bucket and ladder competition at a Saturday event which marked the close of National Fire Prevention Week. LaFayette Ford hosted a firefighters' competition for the county's volunteer fire departments. (Pat Allen Wilson photo)

OSHA fines reduced

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Staff writer

Hoke County Sheriff Wayne Byrd, Health Department Director Don Womble and County Personnel Manager Shirley Rush communicated with a North Carolina Department of Labor official in a phone conference last week to discuss citations against the sheriff's department involving hepatitis B shots. The federal Occupational Safety and Health Division imposed the citations which are enforced by the Department of Labor.

As a result of the conference, a fine for \$875 which had been levied against the Sheriff's Department has been reduced to \$500.

An anonymous complaint was

filed with OSHA in June. Byrd said he believed an employee in his department called it in. "(Whoever called) had a legitimate complaint," he said.

The citation involves a series of three shots for the hepatitis B virus, which is present in body fluids and the blood of an infected person. Hepatitis B attacks the liver causing damage and sometimes cancer. It kills 4,000 to 5,000 people in this country annually. It is estimated that 1.25 million people in this country have chronic hepatitis B.

The hepatitis B shots are given in a series of three that cost more than \$100. "There was a question of where funding for the shots was to come from. Byrd said he had asked for the funds in his (See OSHA, page 11A)

HP probing hit-and-run death

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Staff writer

The N.C. Highway Patrol is investigating the hit and run death of a Raeford resident on Scurlock School Road Monday night at 8:25.

William J. Bratcher, 45, 403 Stephens Street, was walking south with a friend on the south

side of the road when he was struck from behind, and the south-bound vehicle sped away. Bratcher's friend was not hurt.

Investigating Trooper E.D. Pender said parts of the vehicle which hit Bratcher were found on the roadway. He said the car was possibly a maroon (See DEATH, page 11A)

Changes take place at Sheriff's Department

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Staff writer

Detective Bob Crull is taking over the duties of Joey Blackburn, who was the detective assigned to the investigation of the rape and murder of five-year-old Brittany Lynn Locklear in early January.

This assignment is one of several changes made in the Hoke County Sheriff's Department with the firing of two officers and the resignation of three others.

J.P. Brock, a road officer, left the department more than a month ago. He cited a better salary as the reason for his departure. He had been demoted as a detective prior to that. Sheriff Wayne Byrd said more money is "usually a considering factor on the resignations I get."

Detective Steve Tidwell and Sgt. Travis Strickland were fired about two weeks ago. The sheriff is forbidden by law from discussing the reasons for their dismissals.

Sgt. Cecil Ard, who headed the Community Oriented Police program, also left the department (See CHANGES, page 11A)



Brittany Lynn Locklear, born October 14, 1992, died January 7, 1998. (Contributed photo)

'Barney' was Brittany's friend

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Staff writer

to become the family pet for the next four years.

Barney, a chow and shepherd mix, was just a pup when he was picked up on U.S. Highway 401 (Laurinburg Road). "He was a dream about the animal that was (See BRITTANY, page 11A)