

The News-Journal

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

No. 38 Vol. 91

50 cents

Wednesday, December 23, 1998

See us at
www.dicksonpress.com

In

Hoke Basketball
going strong
8A

In

Burlington marks
75 years
in business
Page 1B

BURLINGTON

Index

Business	7A
Calendar	2B
Classifieds	9B
Deaths	6A
Editorials	2-4A
Engagements	3B
Legals	7-8B
Military News	9A
Public Record	6A
Religion	10A
Socials	3B
Sports	8A
TV listings	5-6B
Weddings	3B

Around Town



By SAM C. MORRIS
Contributing Editor

As I write this column on Monday, December 21, the shortest day in the year, the temperature is about 70 degrees. We have seen many warm days this winter. It has been dry and it doesn't seem like only four days until Christmas. We had about .06 of an inch of rain over the weekend. Then we got some more rain on Tuesday. According to the weather report at noon Monday, Christmas Day will be cold and feel more like the season of the year.

The forecast for the remainder of the week, Wednesday through Saturday, calls for the high Wednesday to be in the 40s and the low in the 30s. Thursday through Saturday the highs will be in the 40s and the lows in the 20s. There is a chance of rain or snow on Thursday.

What about a white Christmas!

.....

I was talking with Mike McNeill, City Manager, last week about the Christmas holidays. He said that the last pickup of garbage would be on (See AROUND, page 5A)

Byrd's son arrested Charged in arson at Thompson's home

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Staff writer

Charles Robin Byrd, 35, has been charged with setting fire to

a North Main Street home bought but not yet occupied by Raeford attorney Greg Thompson. Byrd is the son of former sheriff Wayne Byrd. Thompson was the cam-

paign manager and also serves as attorney for Sheriff Jim Davis, who defeated the elder Byrd in the May primary.
(See BYRD, page 12A)



Santa and friends

Upchurch Elementary School Principal Hank Richards and Assistant Principal Kristi Posey visited with Santa recently as part of a photo-taking fundraising project for the school PTO. Patti Lunsford took 165 photos of children with Santa which raised \$700. (Patti Lunsford photo)



Happy Holidays!

The South Hoke Elementary School Fifth Grade Chorus, under the direction of Denise Wallace, came a'caroling in Raeford last week to thank area businesses for their support of all Hoke County schools. The youngsters braved the cold to help get everyone in the holiday spirit by singing such favorites as "Rudolph, the Red Nosed Reindeer," "Away in a Manger," "Jingle Bells," "Up on the Housetop," "Silent Night," and "We Wish You a Merry Christmas." Christmas cards, made by Ms. Goza's fourth grade class, were also presented. (Pat Allen Wilson photo)

D.A. finds Davis charges unfounded

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Staff writer

The Hoke County District Attorney's office will not file criminal charges against those whom Jim Davis complained made death threats against him during the summer's campaign for Hoke County sheriff.

Davis, now the sheriff, met with an agent of the State Bureau of Investigation on June 26 after he was told that Wayne Byrd, then sheriff, plotted to have him killed and his body disposed of in a "cherry picker."

Oscar Lee Chavis, 50, who has a Fayetteville address, told Davis he overheard a conversation take place in the Hoke County Sheriff's Department a week earlier.

Chavis' implications involved the presence of Chief of Deputies Wayne Gardner, Detective David Newton and Hoke County Emergency Services Coordinator/Fire Marshal Al Schwabacher.

During the conversation, which Chavis said took place June 19, plans were made to make Davis' death look like suicide and it was to happen "before November."

Byrd said the body should be put in a cherry picker so that there would be no evidence, according to a statement by Chavis.

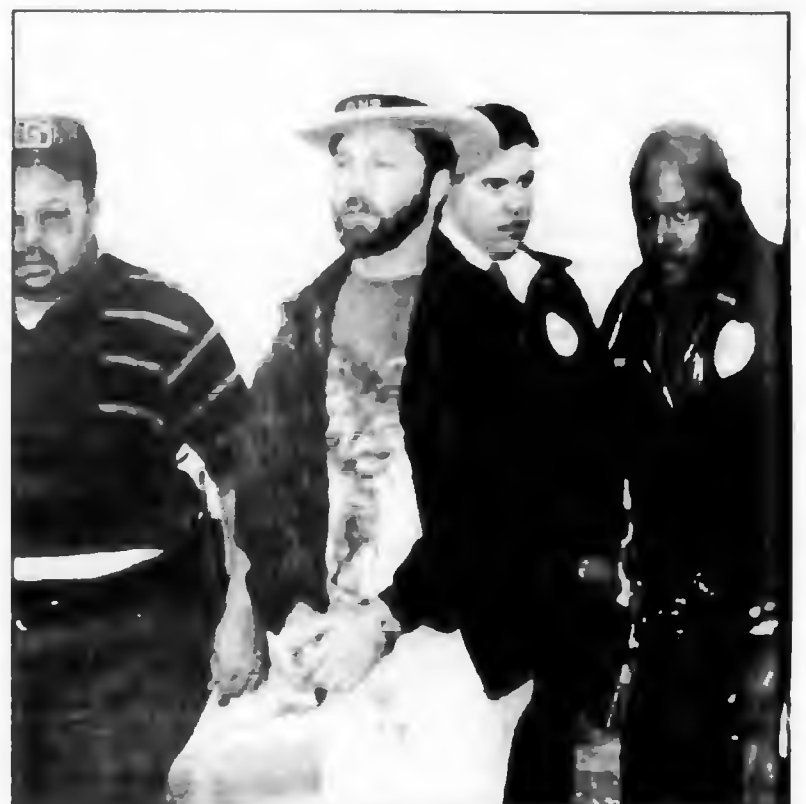
Chavis' statement did not include particulars on why Davis' body was to be ground up if his death was to appear to be a suicide or who was to grind it up after the "suicide."

In an affidavit filed in May, Rosie Lee Tyler of Shannon said she overheard a conversation in a Red Springs store in which the owner said Byrd was going to have Davis killed.

SBI Agent Fred McKinney said his office concluded their investigation and turned findings over to the Hoke County DA.

In a letter to McKinney, Davis also spoke of voters rights violations and "other conspiracies existing in Hoke County." Davis added, "I am very concerned about the level of threat that exist(s), as well as the ongoing harassment, intimidation and racial divisiveness which have occurred since the primary election of May 5."

Davis also wrote of threats from Byrd's sons, Robin Byrd and H. Wayne Byrd Jr.



Robin Byrd was charged by Raeford police yesterday evening. (Pat Allen Wilson photo)

Davis sworn in Time for 'healing,' 'unity'

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Staff writer

Judge Warren Pate had words of wisdom for a county divided after he swore in James Arthur "Jim" Davis as Hoke County's first black sheriff on Friday morning.

Pate spoke of "turmoil in recent weeks" and "troubling times" but, he added, "the process has run its course. (Davis) has earned the right to be sheriff of this county and all of its citizens."

The district judge of Hoke and Scotland counties, noting that he is a citizen of Hoke, added, "As citizens, I think we should put recent troubles behind and support the sheriff as he undertakes the duties of this office. We must move forward."

The Rev. Neil McPhatter, former longtime county commis-

sioner, opened Davis' swearing in with prayer. He prayed for guidance, wisdom and knowledge for Davis. He also said the Lord had spoken with him three weeks ago saying Davis would be sheriff and that he would be sworn in at the courthouse.

Davis' swearing in at the courthouse was 11 days later than planned. His December 7 swearing in was called off because the state Board of Elections ordered his certification be denied until the county Board of Elections heard complaints from 18 voters and one from Wayne Gardner, the unaffiliated candidate he defeated in the November 3 general election, alleging voting day violations. After the county board voted to certify Davis, five of the complainants filed appeals with the state board.

The state board met through a telephone conference on December 15 and voted to order the county board to certify Davis because Gardner had not appealed the county decision. The state will address complaints that Davis went into polling buildings on election day and that he carried a concealed weapon with him at their regular meeting on January 5.

The county board certified Davis on December 16.

Following Davis' swearing in, deputies and jailers took their oaths of office. Of the 25 deputies, 16 were from the former administration. Eight returning jailers and a new one were sworn in.

(See DAVIS, page 12A)



Jim Davis, with wife Peggy beside him, takes the oath of office to become Hoke County's first black sheriff. (Pat Allen Wilson photo)

Members appointed to juvenile crime council

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Staff writer

Political loyalties helped shape Hoke County's Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) Monday night.

County Manager Bernice McPhatter recommended three private sector appointments for replacements for Regina Carpenter, Louise Thomas and Alex Norton.

Allison Newton, Bobby Strother, Sandra Kelly, Jodi Willis, James Pope, Peggy Owens, Donald Shields and Martha Beatty had indicated they wanted to continue to serve on

the board. McPhatter recommended they be re-appointed.

Four names were presented by county commissioners: Charlotte Kelly, a former board of education member; Lillie M. Bratcher, teacher's assistant at South Hoke Elementary School; Jeff Sumner, businessman, and Gwen Dial Locklear, member of the Hoke County Native American Association and Lumbee historian.

With no one willing to throw out their nominees' names, even though Kelly, Bratcher and Sumner had not been asked if they wanted to serve, Tony Hunt (See COUNCIL, page 12A)