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In

**Sheriff seeks citizens
for advisory group**
6A

In



**Sandy Grove
School opens**
1B

Index

Births	2B
Calendar	2B
Classifieds	8-91B
Deaths	10A
Engagements	3B
Editorials	2-3A
Legals	6-7B
Public Record	4-6A
Religion	10B
TV Listings	4-5B
Weddings	3B

Around Town



By SAM C. MORRIS
Contributing Editor

It seems that summer is here to stay. Last week my thermometer registered 102 degrees on Saturday before the thunder and lightning started. We had more noise than we did rain. Just a little over a half inch of rain fell during the storm. Julian Johnson said that an inch and a quarter of rain fell at his home. There was a report that between three and six inches fell in Robeson County. The heat index was over 100 degrees most of last week.

The forecast calls for the same type of weather for the remainder of the week. The highs will be in the 90s and the lows in the 70s. There is a chance of rain on Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

There were three deaths last week that I will mention. Phil Johnson, a native of Raeford, died in Western North Carolina last week. He was the son of the late Fred and Adeline Roberts Johnson. Phil finished high school here and graduated from N.C. State. He was a farm agent in a western county. He has many relatives here in Hoke County. (See AROUND, page 11A)

Record teacher shortage 'major problem'

By KRISTIN GUTHRIE
Staff writer

Minor bumps and bruises always accompany the beginning of another school year, but this time Hoke County is experienc-

ing teacher shortages unlike any other year in the recent past.

Personnel Director Sharmaine Butler said, after a long pause, "We have a major problem.... We are definitely experiencing a teacher shortage in Hoke

County."

As of the close of last week, Butler said Hoke County is short a staggering 40 classroom teachers.

"This number of vacancies is not unusual over the course of

the year," Butler said. "The issue is, the unfilled positions came all at once," she said.

Between June 18 and July 12, Butler said, "All of a sudden, it happened. We definitely did not expect this shortage," she said.

Butler attributes most of this sudden shortage to the \$1,500 signing bonus being offered in neighboring Cumberland County.

Cumberland County, begin See TEACHERS, page 12A)

Four now in race for Council

By KRISTIN GUTHRIE
Staff writer

With just a week and a few days left to file for one of the three seats available on the City Council, Gregory Johnson is the only new candidate to file since last Tuesday. Other candidates in the race include current Councilmen John Jordan and Earl McDuffie and other newcomer Eddie Jim White. Clyde Thomas, whose seat is also up for grabs during this November election said he does not plan to run again.

Johnson, 34, lives on East Sixth Avenue and is originally from Virginia.

As for the other candidates, McDuffie, 67, claims the most City Council experience of all four candidates. His service includes three terms as a City Council member.

McDuffie, a Raeford citizen for 30 plus years, lives on Covington Street, and works as a partner in the Edinborough Restaurant, a family business since 1981. His wife of 46 years is Willaree, and they have five children and nine grandchildren.

Fidelity Bank Branch Manager John Jordan, 36, and a native of Raeford, lives on Donaldson Avenue with his wife Polly.

He comes to the race with a partial term as a Council member. Jordan finished out the late Joe Upchurch's position beginning a little less than two years ago.

Newcomer Eddie Jim White, 58, wants to do his civic duty and serve the community. Living on West Prospect for three years now, White said Raeford has known his family for a much longer time through his wife's Raeford Dance Arts business. White's wife is Sara, and they have three children and seven grandchildren.

Retiring as a colonel after 28 years in the Army, White said he spent most of his days in the service stationed at Fort Bragg, but is originally from Georgia.

Anyone else interested in filing has until the first Friday in August to sign up.

For a minimal fee of \$5, anyone can run if they are at least 21 years old, a registered voter and a Raeford resident.

Those interested in taking part in electing the next City Council, must be registered to vote by October 8.

The Board of Elections office in the County Offices Building will register any interested Raeford citizen.

If stopping by the Board of Elections office is inconvenient, voters may also register by mailing in the registration form, available at the Hoke County Public Library and Hoke County High School.



A water main is moved to make way for a new parking lot.

Schools under construction thanks to bond money

By JESSICA S. MCDANIEL
Staff writer

The Hoke County school system is making the most of the \$21 million in bond money appropriated for school construction and renovation in Hoke County, according to Brown Hendrix, director of facilities for Hoke County Schools. The combination of construction projects is the largest number of projects at one time, Hendrix said.

The state legislature appropriated \$1.75 billion to be distributed throughout the state based on student need and financial need of school districts; \$21 million of this was designated for Hoke County. "The Board of Education and the superintendent have a strong desire to do all they can enhancing the school

system with this money," said Hendrix.

With the bond money, the Hoke County school system has constructed Sandy Grove Elementary School (See related story, page 1B). Additions of approximately 10,000 square feet each were recently completed at both East Hoke and West Hoke middle schools. These were worth one million and one hundred thousand dollars each. Scurlock and West Hoke elementary schools both recently opened identical multipurpose buildings worth \$250,000 each. Restroom renovations which cost \$185,000 were completed at South Hoke Elementary in the spring. Roofing renovations were completed at West Hoke Elementary and Hoke High, and more are (See SCHOOLS, page 11A)

Fire destroys man's home

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Editor

A disabled veteran who is an outpatient at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Fayetteville was able to get out of his house safely before it was destroyed by flames late Sunday night.

Libby Wilson, 451 North Parker Church Road, said he saw fire around the air conditioning

unit in the den window while he was in an adjoining room at about 11:30. He lived alone.

Responding firefighters found the home "fully involved" upon arrival, they reported.

Hoke County Fire Marshal Al Schwarbher said the fire is under investigation as a possible electric fire. He said the five-room frame home and a vehicle in the garage are destroyed. (See FIRE, page 12A)

Bereaved mother petitions officials

By JESSICA S. MCDANIEL
Staff writer

When Crystal Harrelson was murdered just over a month ago on June 19, her mother, Constance Maroney, was devastated. When she realized that Jeremy Beatty, the man charged with the murder, was out on bond for another murder charge, she became angry.

At the end of June, Maroney initiated a letter-writing campaign to every government official in this district. "I want them to change the laws because I think the people ought to be protected from something like this," she said.

She got the addresses from the "Write Raleigh" and "Write Washington" sections in *The News-Journal*. Soon she plans to send the letter to every senator and representative in the state of

NC and send an E-mail to every senator and representative in the country. She found these addresses on-line.

"It's something I have to do for my daughter, and for the rest of the people so that other people can't get hurt," she said.

Maroney checked with the District Attorney's Office before sending the letters. "I don't want to do anything to jeopardize the case," she said. After being assured that it would not harm the case, she sent the following letter:

I am writing on behalf of my (See BEREAVED, page 11A)



Crystal Harrelson

Commission okays \$1.2 million for sewer

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Editor

After learning that Hoke County was eliminated from the first round of consideration for state grant money for sewer construction, Commissioners approved \$1.2 million in County money for a sewer line that will hook onto Fayetteville Public Works Commission in Cumberland County. The funds were allocated in a the 98-99 fiscal year budget for infrastructure projects to help encourage industry development in three areas of Hoke.

The County will re-apply for money under the state-voter approved Clean Water Bond referendum before a September deadline. The application will again ask for \$3 million in sewer money with \$1.2 million earmarked for sewer lines to replace failing septic tanks in Silver City, where a hook-up would be made to the Raeford waste water treatment plant. This hook-up would also allow for sewer line extension to other areas, according to Hoke County Manager Bernice McPhatter.

McPhatter explained that the (See SEWER, page 12A)



What appears to be a Barred Owl patiently posed for the camera Sunday night in downtown Raeford. The bird was slightly taller than one and one-half feet. (We went back and measured its perch.)