

The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

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This week



Smokey the Indestructible
always has smile
page 1B

Students improve reading with unique 'phones'
page 3A

Index

Births	3B
Calendar	2B
Classifieds	10-12B
Deaths	5A
Editorials	2A
Engagements	3B
Legals	5B
Public Record	4A
Religion	4B
Socials	3B
TV Listings	8-9B
Weddings	3B

Around Town



By SAM C. MORRIS
Contributing Editor

The weather continues to remain on the cool side. Many days last week the thermometer would get up to 90 degrees, but it wouldn't stay there long. We have had rain about every day, but not as heavy as many parts of the state. I was talking with my son, John, of New Bern, and he said that it was reported that Jacksonville had 21 inches of rain in a few days. Most of the rainfall in Raeford has been an inch or under.

The forecast for the remainder of the week, Wednesday through Saturday, calls for the temperatures to be in the 90s and the lows in the 70s. The forecast doesn't call for as much rain as we have been having.

Lets hope that we can keep the hurricanes away from our seashores this year!

Last week I read in a daily paper that the unemployment rate for Hoke County was 7.9 percent.

In this area only Robeson County was higher with a rate of 9.4 percent. Vance County had the highest rate at 11.2 percent. Orange County was the lowest at 1.4 percent.

These figures for Hoke were a surprise to me. It is almost impossible to get anyone to do any work for you. Let's hope this is only for a short time and that the rate will drop later.

Every day someone asks
(See AROUND, page 5A)

Two-year-old dies trapped in hot car

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Two-year-old Zachary McKinley died on Saturday after being reportedly trapped in his parent's hot car for 3-1/2 hours at their Heritage Village home, according to

Major Thomas Carlton of the Hoke County Sheriff's Department.

The child's parents are Ryan Lee McKinley, 28, a soldier stationed at Fort Bragg, and Karen McKinley, 33.

"The mother said she was taking a nap upstairs, and the father said he was busy

working on his computer," Carlton said. "This is the first experience in Hoke I know of that a child has succumbed to the excessive heat in a vehicle and died," he said.

"The child's mother said when she woke up she realized the boy was not in

the house, and they said they started a search until they discovered him in the car, where the door was ajar."

According to Carlton, Hoke Deputy Manuel Diaz rushed to the scene, immediately administering CPR to the child
(See TRAPPED, page 10A)



A pretty girl on a summer's day

Hannah Johnson, 6, granddaughter of Anton D. and Diane Johnson, feeds the goldfish in her grandparents' front yard on Turnpike Road. (Photo by Pat Allen Wilson)

Agency correcting audit issues Partnership for Children also gets additional funds

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

The State Auditor's office recently presented results of its annual audit of the Hoke County Partnership for Children and Families' financial status, negatively citing one instance of reportable "non-compliance," and another "significant deficiency" detected in contract management and monitoring. The local Partnership's major source of revenue is generated by the Smart Start Program, serving children zero to five years old.

In the budget year that ended June 30, 1999, State Auditor Ralph Campbell Jr. detailed the financial discrepancies in internal control which could "adversely affect" Hoke Partnership's abilities to operate effectively. Campbell offered recommendations to resolve the problems.

Hoke Partnership's Chairman Jean Brewer said the organization has a correction plan already approved by the state auditor.

"We were not made to repay any monies, and not made to pay any (surplus) money back — no funds were misappropriated," Brewer said. "Some of these things were technicalities I attributed to so much growth last year."

Although unrelated, Campbell's audit findings coincided with the recent positive announcement Hoke's Partnership will benefit from \$220,800 in additional funds for Smart Start programs and expanded services. This brings Hoke's total to \$1.3 million in Smart Start funds, assisting children and families in the community.

"We've tried to improve our organization, because we only had three on staff last year to monitor our programs," Brewer said. "We've put into place a program coordinator position to touch base with all the 30 funded programs, and the person will keep tabs and trouble shoot."

In his report, Campbell said the audit
(See AUDIT, page 9A)

Hoke Partnership withdraws from after-school program

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

After the annual 1999 audit for Hoke County Partnership for Children and Families was released by the State Auditor's office last week, Hoke Partnership's officials announced the local organization is improving policies and procedures to correct some deficiencies.

"The state audit findings do not specify the names of service providers, or organizations that might be involved in any reportable deficiency," said state auditor Hannah Sullivan. "Our reports only generalize on the conditions and results of our audit on the financial statement. It is up to the local Hoke Partnership to take steps to ensure these material weaknesses are remedied."

Chairman Jean Brewer of Hoke's Partnership said the organization experienced some problems with Golden Gate Community Development Corporation in Raeford. She alleged Golden Gate was "going over budget on a couple of line
(See PARTNERSHIP, page 9A)

McNairs to be honored by Masons, community

By JAMIE HARRIS
Special to The News-Journal

The Masonic Lodge #328 is honoring Ivery and Ruth McNair at a banquet that will be held at West Hoke Middle School Saturday at 6 p.m.

"We are honoring Brother McNair for what he has done for this community," said Willie McCaskill Jr., newly elected Worshipful Master of the Lodge. "(The McNairs) have given their whole life to this community."

The McNairs were the owners and operators of McNairs Cleaners in downtown Raeford, which closed following the "big snow" earlier this year.

The business opened its doors in 1936 after Ivery McNair and his late brother David McNair got together and decided running a cleaning operation was what they wanted to do.

"If it wasn't cleaners, it would have been baseball for him," said Ruth McNair, recalling her husband's passion for baseball as a youth.

(See MCNAIRS, page 7A)



Ivery and Ruth McNair in a photo taken three years ago at the cleaning business they operated in Raeford since 1936.

Five Points Horse Park just keeps getting bigger

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Editor

The dream is not only coming true; it is getting bigger.

The Five Points Horse Park was the dream of some Moore County horse enthusiasts who created the Sandhills Equestrian Conservancy and bought 230 acres in nearby western Hoke County on which to build a world-class horse competition facility.

Step-by-step, the facility is emerging from what was once woods and fields, and plans are to hold two world-class events there this coming spring.

Friday, when some of the conservancy's planners came to Raeford to accept a \$25,000 grant from the Hoke County-Raeford Economic Development Board, they showed plans for the finished park and announced that an 20 additional acres is under contract. The land deal will be finalized "as soon as the crops come off," according to Roger Secrist, one of the founders of the conservancy.

The Southern Pines Horse Trials are set for March 16-18 and the 50th running of the famed Stoneybrook Steeplechase



Dooie Leach, chairman of the Hoke County-Raeford Economic Development Board, presents a check for \$25,000 to Roger Secrist for the Five Points Horse Park. Also pictured are, from left, Don Porter, executive director of the Economic Development Board; Lefredo Williams, of the Sandhills Equestrian Conservancy (SEC); Hoke County Commissioner Chairman James Leach; and Sue Euckley, also of the SEC. (Photo by Pat Allen Wilson)

will take place April 7 at Five Points.

Last year's horse trials in Moore County drew 400 horses, according to Secrist. It is an Olympic qualifying event, he said.

Stoneybrook attracted as many as 20,000 spectators when it was held in

Moore County on the farm of Mickey and Kitty Walsh. The land was subdivided in 1996 after the Walshes died and the event has not had a home since.

"It's amazing how many people from
(See HORSE PARK, page 10A)