

# The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

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## This week



Festival photos  
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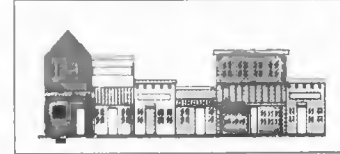
False alarm over  
water closes  
turkey plant a day  
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SBI: insufficient  
evidence to say  
death was murder  
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## Around Town



By SAM C. MORRIS  
Contributing Editor

The weather for the past week has brought plenty of rain to the county. There were different amounts of rain in the county. Some people that I talked with said that they had six inches and others said five inches. According to my rain gauge there was over four inches of rain at my house. We didn't have the flooding like we did several weeks ago because it was raining for many hours. We can be thankful that there wasn't any strong wind with the rain. I haven't heard of any destruction, such as down trees or roofs being blown off. Maybe we will escape the bad storms and hurricanes this year.

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 50s. It will be cooler and no rain is in the forecast.

The turkey festival went on even with the rain. It was nice Thursday afternoon for the parade and the units moved down Main Street in clocklike fashion. Saturday the booths on Main Street were in place and many people visited the booths, when the rain would let up.

The concert Saturday night went on as scheduled. Of course I could hear the music at my house, but it didn't interrupt my sleep. I still wonder why the lights were left on all night at Armory Park. They (See AROUND, page 4A)

## Davis sends county concerns to Reno

### Complains to US attorney general of county mismanagement

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

Sheriff Jim Davis says \$106,000 in federal grant monies " earmarked" for the sheriff's department were allegedly mismanaged by the county. Davis alleged the

majority of those funds may have been "supplanted" by the county's finance office, or used by county officials without his "knowledge and approval."

Davis addressed his concerns during a press conference last Friday. He said Hoke's finance office sought reimburse-

ment for equipment, submitting cost reports to the Governor's Crime Commission in November 1999.

"Where is the money?" Davis said. "I have not purchased one thing of this equipment designated from this grant."

Davis said he has contacted U.S. Attor-

ney General Janet Reno and state Attorney General Mike Easley, sending them copies of letters related to his concerns.

According to Davis, funding was supposed to be used for purchasing items such as weapons and supplies. Instead, he said monies were allegedly diverted by the county for "expenditures unrelated" (See SHERIFF, page 9A)



Clockwise from top: Kids eat as they watch entertainment at the library stage; a child gets a taste of the weather; the turkey on parade.

## 'What rain?'

### Festival declared a success

By PAT ALLEN WILSON  
Editor

It didn't rain on our parade Thursday, but there was enough rain the following two days to cause some turkey festival events to be canceled and to thin out festival crowds.

"I still think it was a good festival," said Jackie Lynch, executive director of the 16th Annual N.C. Turkey Festival held here Thursday through Saturday.

Thursday, dubbed "poult day," dawned with cloudy skies

but the rain held off until all events planned especially for the youngsters were over at about noon. Weather for the late Thursday afternoon parade was nice, but many of Friday's outdoor events were rained out. This did not include the turkey cooking contest, which was held under a tent.

Folks anxious to have their festival fun seemed to make up for it by a record-breaking attendance at the Stuffin and Stompin dinner that also featured boot scootin' and karaoke.

Early Saturday vendors put

together their booths in rain for the street fair. "The vendors who did set up had a good day from what I could find out," Lynch said. "The volunteers all showed up, even in the rain. They were great."

Vendors paid \$45 for their booth areas on Main Street, and some elected to forfeit the money.

Bob Rochelle of Swansboro said he and his wife got up at 3:30 and drove through rain to get to Raeford then put up their tent in a driving rain. "We kinda (See FESTIVAL, page 11A)

## Governor Hunt sends commendation to Children's Developmental Center

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

Director Shelley Daniels and the staff of Children's Developmental Center in Raeford were recently recognized by Gov. Jim Hunt for their efforts in promoting the development and well-being of children. Daniels was "surprised" by Hunt's personal interest, saying it all began with a letter from pleased parents.

Lacy and Adrienne Graham mailed a letter to the governor's

office to tell him about the extraordinary progress their three-year-old son, Tyler Graham, achieved while at the local center. According to Daniels, the Grahams told Hunt their son advanced to a level comparable to his three-year-old peers.

"He made such improvement here that he was no longer eligible to attend," Daniels said. "The Grahams placed him in another center, but they said he missed us so much. We found a place in our regular daycare pro-

gram for him.

"Now, Tyler, who was previously developmentally delayed, is with other children who are age-appropriate."

In his letter, Hunt said he was "impressed" by the high quality of staff teaching and standards used at the Raeford daycare and preschool.

"Lacy and Adrienne Graham told me of the wonderful and caring work you and your staff perform daily at the Children's (See HUNT, page 12A)

## Stepson, stepfather arrested in separate rape incidents

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

A rape of a 32-year-old woman at gunpoint that occurred early Sunday morning was followed by the successful capture of the two suspects the same day, says Major Thomas Carlton of the Hoke Sheriff's Department. The victim was asleep when two teenagers, Eugene Bullard and

Gary McLean, allegedly broke into her Harmony Heights home between 4:30 and 6 a.m. One of the teens reportedly raped her.

In an unrelated incident last Friday, McLean's stepfather, Michael Bethea, was arrested by sheriff's Detective R. Melendez. Bethea is suspected of the statutory rape of his 14-year-old stepdaughter. It is undetermined if McLean is the brother of the girl,

Melendez said. According to Melendez, Bethea's alleged sexual assault of his stepdaughter occurred from September 1 to September 30, 1999.

McLean, Bullard and Bethea remain in the Hoke Jail.

Bullard, 16, of Victoria Drive in Parkton, and McLean, 16, of Red Springs Road, Red Springs, were both charged with first-de- (See RAPES, page 4A)



Rich in history, the former Mildouson School was destroyed by fire early Monday morning. (Photo by Cary A. Wilson)

## Mildouson school goes up in flames

By PAT ALLEN WILSON  
Editor

Rubble is all that is left of the historic Mildouson School after an early morning fire swept through the building Monday.

A passer-by called the Emergency 911 number at 4:44 a.m. reporting smoke and tongues of flames coming out of the roof of the building.

The school, owned by Gearnes and Madeline Jones of Shannon, had been leased by a church, The New Faith Ministries, since October of 1999.

Because the burning of a church was involved, Hoke County Fire Marshal Al Schwarzbher called in the Arson Task Force of Wilmington, the FBI from Charlotte and the SBI of Fayetteville. Those agencies quickly determined the cause of the fire to be accidental. "Probably electrical," Schwarzbher said. It is thought flames began in the ceiling.

No one was in the church at the time it caught on fire and no injuries were reported, according to Schwarzbher.

The former school's location is in a farm field at 154 Mildouson School Road near where the highway intersects with North Old Wire Road in the Dundarrach community. The red brick building was built in the early 1920s.

Firefighting units responded

from Stonewall, Hillcrest, City of Raeford, Rockfish, Puppy Creek, North Raeford, South Antioch. Firefighters from Lumber Bridge assisted.

Also assisting were FirstHealth EMS-Hoke, Hoke Rescue and the Hoke County Sheriff's Department.

## School is rich in history

In the Gold Hill section of southeastern Hoke County at the intersection of SR 1453 and SR 1105 there was an old school building that dated back to soon after the Civil War, and unsurprisingly was known as "Gold Hill" school.

In a nearby neighborhood, located on what became the Upchurch farm, was another small school that burned. This school was rebuilt with three rooms in the village of Arabia, about 2.5 miles northeast of Gold Hill and about 1.5 miles northeast of Dundarrach. There for a number of years the school was successful under the leadership of D. Scott Poole and W. L. Caddell. Again (See HISTORY, page 11A)



Lumber Bridge firemen arrive to fight the fire at the old school.