

The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

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Around Town



By SAM C. MORRIS
Contributing Editor

Last Saturday night into Sunday morning we finally got some rain. It was only two-tenths of an inch, but it caused smiles on people's faces at church Sunday morning.

The leaves have been falling and there are piles of leaves all over the city. Last week my yard was cleared of leaves and the pile was placed beside the street with pine straw on top of the leaves. This was to keep the leaves from blowing back into the yard. While Mary Alice and I were away from home one day someone stopped by and took the pine straw. Now many of the leaves are back in the yard or on the street. We appreciated this work!

The forecast for the remainder of the week, Wednesday through Saturday, calls for the high Wednesday and Thursday to be in the 70s and the lows in the 50s. Friday and Saturday the highs will be in the 70s or 60s and the lows in the 40s or 30s. We could have rain on Wednesday and Friday.

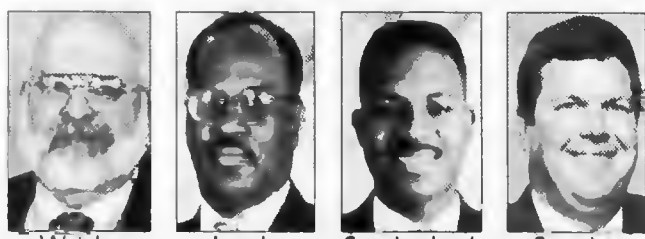
Recently I received a sports section of a Florida daily paper from Clyde McInnis. I read through it looking for some connection to Hoke County but couldn't find anything. There was an article about Ray Floyd the golfer and there was a picture of him in his younger days. Thanks, Clyde.

I attended the funeral of
(See AROUND, page 8A)

Wright, Leach elected to commission

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Tuesday's election created history with a record turnout of voters, elections direc-



Wright Leach Southerland Strother

tor Caroline Shook said. 8,873 of Hoke's citizens voted on Tuesday compared to 7,500 in a past record-breaking year.

The 2000 presidential election also seated Democrats in the two positions available on Hoke's board of commissioners. Lifelong Hoke resi-

Blue has good showing, comes in third place

dent Robert A. "Bobby" Wright and incumbent James A. Leach earned commissioners' seats, winning by substantial margins over Republican contender Jim Knott and Unaffiliated candidate the Rev. Betty L. Hardaway. However, Republi-

can Buddy Blue edged closer with more than 40 percent of the votes.

Ploughing his way to victory, Wright topped the voting chart. He earned 70 percent of the votes in the commission (See COMMISSION, page 9A)

Southerland and Strother take school board seats

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Editor

Leland Strother retained his position on the Hoke County

Board of Education, and Harry Southerland moved into the seat held by longtime member and current chairman John McAllister, who did not seek

another term.

Both men defeated Gwen Dial Locklear in the unaffiliated race. Unofficial results are: Southerland, 3767; Strother, 2656; and Locklear, 2036.

Southerland, an attorney, congratulated Strother then added, "I would like to commend Ms. Locklear and Mr. Strother on a professionally run race. Everyone was cordial to one another and there was no mud slinging."

Southerland thanked the citizens of Hoke County for allowing him the opportunity to serve them. "I look forward to working with the present board. My concern as a board member is what is in the (See SCHOOL BOARD, page 10A)



Mitch Tyler (left to right), candidate Jim Knott and Mike Sutton wait among a crowd last night outside The News-Journal office for election returns to be posted.



Catching up on the news as they stand in line at the McCain Precinct, where one voting machine broke down, are Ashley Heights residents David and Linda Schuchard.

McCaskill defends letter, ignores demand to resign

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Despite criticism at Friday's elections board meeting, Chairman Willie McCaskill said he had "no intentions" of resigning. McCaskill recently complained about Elections Director Caroline Shook and her alleged failure to post extended voting hours for the public. More than 35 citizens, most supporting Shook, offered opinions about a critical letter written by McCaskill to Shook and forwarded to the U.S. Justice Department.

Harold Brock, a former elections board chairman,

called for McCaskill's resignation as chairman due to the "cloud" he alleged McCaskill has unfairly cast on Shook.

"I believe it is in the best interest of Hoke County if you would step down as chairman and allow Mr. (Roman) Jacobs to be appointed as chairman," Brock said. "We are in this county together. I am confident our voters will not accept this cloud."

McCaskill said he will not change his mind. He said the problem is really "not her," indicating Shook. McCaskill alleged problems center around "management" of the elections board between Republicans and

Democrats, and the fact that "two minority" groups were now represented on the board.

"I will challenge you," McCaskill said to Brock. "I will step down as chairman if Mr. (Delbert) Minshew will step down and Mrs. Shook.

"The bottom line is we made some changes in 1998. People here have made this board a very political board."

Chairman Gene Shelnett of Hoke's Republican Party, who was present at the meeting, sent a letter to the elections board on November 1. He criticized the "covert actions" allegedly taken by McCaskill. Shelnett offi- (See MCCASKILL, page 9A)

Burlington gift to Sandhills Community College's new Hoke Center will help build computer lab

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

An endowment of \$20,000 was awarded last Friday by Burlington Industries to the

new \$1.1 million Sandhills Community College Hoke Center in Raeford. In announcing the donation, Dr. John Dempsey, SCC president, said it was not the first time Burlington had successfully partnered with Sandhills.



From left: Margaret McLean, Burlington's assistant human resources manager, Dr. John Dempsey, SCC president; Anna McPhatter, director of Sandhills Hoke Center; Calvin House, Burlington's new plant manager and Mary Ann Ward of Sandhills. (Photo by Victoriana Summers)

"I commend Burlington for their commitment to education and training in Hoke County," Dempsey said. "The company's gift to this college is part of a standing relationship that recaptures Burlington's dedication."

Dempsey praised Burlington, saying a special room in the computer laboratory will be named in honor of the Raeford corporate firm. Burlington specializes in a menswear division and dye plant locally, and is one of the leading employers in Hoke.

"Burlington has always been a strong supporter of Sandhills Community College," Dempsey said. "This is a celebration of further training that will be offered due to Burlington's generosity."

According to Dempsey, the computer laboratory gifted by Burlington is part of the Advanced Technology Learning Laboratory wing. It will feature state-of-the-art technology and high speed access to the internet, providing "training in the latest computer applications." It will connect students with the many resources available on the World Wide Web, Dempsey added.

In presenting the check, Burlington's new plant manager Calvin House, who was transferred from the Oxford, NC manufacturing division, said he was a strong supporter of SCC.

"Sandhills has been very good to us," House said. "It is an honor to be a part of this educational facility.

(See GIFT, page 10A)

County audit appears sound, not approved

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

James F. Baker, owner of a Raeford accounting firm, presented Hoke County with its annual audit on Monday night, outlining a favorable financial forecast for the future.

"The county fund balance is in good shape," Baker said. "You have a 32-33 percent fund balance."

"I understand you did earmark some of that money for a sewer project."

Baker informed commissioners the \$7.1 million fund balance for 1999 through June 30, 2000 was the "highest yet." Last month, commissioners approved the Highway 401 sewer interceptor project that transferred \$1.2 million from the fund balance for construction.

The audit remains a preliminary report until Hoke commissioners approve it. Vice-Commission Chairman Tony Hunt, who chaired the meeting, led commissioners to (See AUDIT, page 9A)