

# The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

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## This week



Scurlock kids learn new ways to count page 1B

Bicentennial chair McEachern dies page 4A

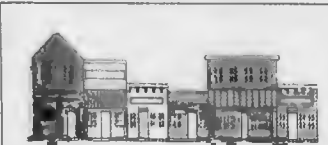
Reward offered for break-in suspect page 5A

City recognizes Leach, fire dept. page 6A

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## Around Town



By SAM C. MORRIS  
Contributing Editor

The sun is shining as I write this column on Monday morning. Sunday morning when I arrived at Sunday School, I was asked if there had been sleet at my house. It seems that it did sleet sometime early Sunday morning as many people reported seeing it on rooftops. It then changed over to rain and by Monday morning there had been about three-tenths of an inch. We still need more rain, but I can live without sleet.

The forecast for the remainder of the week, Wednesday through Saturday, calls for the highs Wednesday and Thursday to be in the 60s and the lows in the 40s. Friday and Saturday the highs will be in the 60s and the lows in the 50s. There is a chance of rain on Friday. Has spring arrived early?

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The time has come once again for the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce to sponsor their Legislative Breakfast. This event brings our Congressman and other State Legislative members to meet with local citizens. The breakfast is held at Burlington Industries and the date is Saturday, February 17 beginning at 8:30 a.m.

In a newsletter from the Chamber office an item about the event stated that only so many people can be seated at the plant's conference room (See AROUND, page 9A)

## State audits Hoke, freezes sheriff's grant

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

The Governor's Crime Commission confirmed this morning it is starting an audit today in Raeford to look at Hoke County's

financial records — specifically at grant monies that had been intended for the Sheriff's Office that Sheriff Jim Davis never received. David Jones, director of the Crime Commission said his agency has ordered County Man-

ager Bernice McPhatter to freeze \$88,000 that was paid to her office more than one year ago.

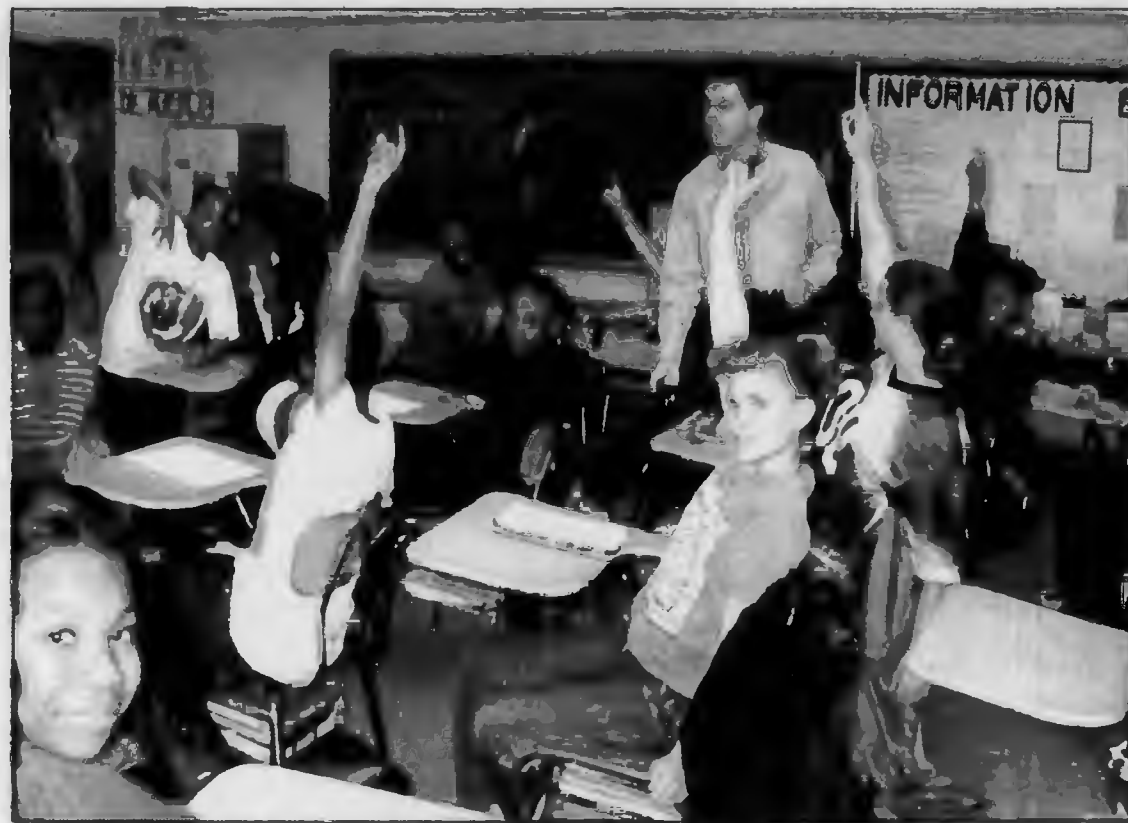
According to Jones, the order for this audit came directly from the U.S. Inspector General's Office's fraud division in Wash-

ington D.C.

Jones said County Manager Bernice McPhatter has known about the pending allegations and upcoming audit for almost a month.

According to the minutes of

county commissioners' meeting since 2001, no discussion has occurred about this problem of alleged misappropriation of funds in connection with a state audit. Sheriff Jim Davis complained to (See AUDIT, page 8A)



Canadian visiting teacher Philip King plays the "name game" to involve West Hoke Elementary School students in the learning process. (Photo by Victoriana Summers)

## Foreign teachers part of solution to Hoke's teacher shortage

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

From remote Australia, to neighboring Canada to faraway South Africa, seven foreign teachers arrived in Hoke County on January 19 to set up house and teach in the public schools, said Sharmaine Butler, Hoke schools personnel director. With a "successful reciprocity" process, these teachers hired through the Visiting International Faculty program in Chapel Hill posi-

tively exchange cultural ideas with students, Butler said.

"Our principals and faculties have given these teachers a won-

derful welcome," Butler said.

"They have donated furniture and other items the teachers may need for their stay here. It is not a complete solution to our teacher vacancies, but it does help re-

"It was a culture shock for her because she is learning how to deal with our children."

— Hoke principal referring to South African teacher

## Kiwanis presents awards

### Jordan named Citizen of the Year

Lucas is Kiwanian of the Year

By PAT ALLEN WILSON  
Editor

John Jordan and Sherry Lucas, chosen respectively Citizen of the Year and Kiwanian of the Year, are history makers of sorts in the Raeford Kiwanis Club.

Jordan follows in the footsteps of his father, Dr. Riley Jordan, previously chosen Kiwanis Citizen of the Year — a first for the club. Lucas, secretary-treasurer of the club, and her husband, Mike, were the first couple to join Kiwanis together.

Both were chosen by a secret committee, Jordan for his community involvement and Lucas for her work with Kiwanis.

A Kiwanian for more than 10 years, Jordan, 38, is branch manager of Fidelity Bank. Among his most recent endeavors, he is president of the Hoke County Community Foundation, created about two years ago. The Hoke Foundation, under the umbrella of the N.C. Community Foundation, was begun about two years ago to set up endowments for non-profit, charitable organizations. The board also gives out annual grants to such groups.

This past year, Jordan also served as president of Hoke/Raeford United Way, which exceeded a goal of \$60,000. He has served on the board of directors of H.E.L.P. (Hoke Emergency Liaison Program) since it was formed; the Smart Start program; Partners in Education, currently serving as treasurer; and the Chamber of Commerce.

A lifelong resident of Raeford, Jordan is serving his third year on the city council. He is a graduate of Hoke County High School and has a business degree from Wake Forest University.

Jordan belongs to Raeford Presbyterian Church, where he is a deacon. He is married to Polly King Jordan.

This is Lucas' second year as secretary/trea-

surer of the club. President Angel Li particularly credits her for compiling directories for each member. "She has done a fantastic job," Li said.

Lucas, vice president/city executive of the Raeford branch of the State Employees' Credit Union, also participates in the major fund-raisers of Kiwanis — the annual golf tournament and pancake supper and reverse raffle. She is on the finance committee of Hoke/Raeford Habitat for Humanity, serves on the Hoke County Job Ready Partnership and is a member of the Chamber of Commerce.

A graduate of Pinecrest High School, she has completed certified credit union executive courses. She is a member of Ashley Heights Baptist Church, where she sings in the choir and prepares the WMU newsletter.



John Jordan and wife Polly at Thursday's presentation.



Sherry Lucas is awarded.

## Hunt, Leach boycott meeting

Mayor announces truck bypass

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

Raeford Mayor Bob Gentry is attending a N.C. Department of Transportation public hearing today in Raleigh about expanding Palmer Street across Highway 211. Gentry announced to city councilmen and guests, Commission Chairman Bobby Wright and Commissioner Charles V. Daniels, on Monday, that construction would start on a truck by-pass soon. Gentry said the proposed by-pass, initially scheduled for 2003, may have the time table moved up by DOT to 2001. It will extend around Raeford's perimeter from Palmer Street to Highway 20 at Oakdale Gin Road, he added.

Gentry asked for the county's blessings during an informal joint meeting, and he was assured by Wright and Daniels of their interest. However, no resolution of support was approved by the county due to the lack of a quorum. Commissioners Tony Hunt and James Leach were absent — both boycotting because they said they were not notified properly about the meeting.

"I am not going over to a meeting just to see what he (Gentry) wants," Hunt said at the end of the commissioners' Monday night meeting. "The mayor sends over something and expects us to jump."

During his presentation to Wright and Daniels, Gentry was unaware of any earlier discord reportedly from Hunt and Leach.

"We are in the same county on the same team and in the same city," Gentry said. "We hope this by-pass will keep some of the trucks off Main Street, and it will enhance our industrial park on Highway 20."

Gentry told commissioners Raeford officials were still willing to donate the old Raeford Hotel to the county for its space needs. He said several developers were considering accepting the hotel in order to renovate it. One Fayetteville architect has volunteered to renovate the historic facility with a one-third capacity lease commitment, Gentry added.

"We do not want to spend money to fix it up, but we do not want to tear it down," Gentry said. "The first floor is possible for retail space, and offices could be put on the other floors."

A fuming Hunt told a well-attended group in the commissioners' assembly room he was "upset" at the lack of courtesy extended to his board by Gentry. Hunt asked why Linda Revels, clerk of commissioners, did not place the item on their agenda if Commission Chairman L.E. McLaughlin Jr had been notified earlier by Gentry of the proposed joint meeting.

"There is nothing on our agenda," Hunt said.

Leach and Hunt refused to recess the commissioners' meeting in (See BOYCOTT, page 8A)

## City plans annexation

By PAT ALLEN WILSON  
Editor

The Raeford City Council has set a public hearing in March on petitions for the annexation of four parcels of property that could expand the city limits by almost 217 acres.

Three of the requests are from owners of properties that are contiguous to one another but would be satellite annexations for the city. Included in those requests is a 207-acre parcel of undeveloped land on U.S. Highway 401 Business. The request is for T.B. Upchurch Inc.'s "C.W. Seate property" on U.S. Highway 401 Business adjoining the city wastewater plant. John T. Manning is petitioning for annexation his 2.2 acres, and Frankie Gilbert is petitioning for his 4.4 acres, both parcels located on 401 Business.

Across town, State Employees' Credit Union has requested annexation of a 2.5-acre site where the business' new building is planned on U.S. Highway 401 By-Pass and Fulton Street. That property is contiguous to current city limits.

(See ANNEXATION, page 6A)

## Landowners file suit against Five Points Horse Park

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

A Fayetteville couple is suing Sandhills Equestrian Conservancy, owner of Five Points Horse Park in western Hoke, over an easement dispute. A narrow farm road has become the center of controversy after landowners Henry and Sharon Adkins contended they have the right of passage on the dirt road. It cuts through 54 acres purchased by the Conservancy in 1998 — home of the new multi-million dollar 250-acre horse park.

According to design plans, Five Points intends to construct paddocks, barns, and a covered arena in the path of this unpaved road. The Adkins have requested a permanent court injunction to (See LAWSUIT, page 6A)