

The News-Journal



If it happened, it's news to us

Turkey Festival Preview
Inside

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Wednesday, September 5, 2001

On vacation?
Hoke's top stories
are on the web
www.thenews-journal.com

This week



'A place where
friends can be
together'
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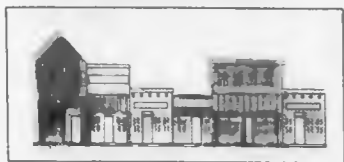
Tukey pizza to be
served at festival
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Kiwanis plan golf
tournament in Oct.
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Around Town



By SAM C. MORRIS
Contributing Editor

The weather continues not to be too hot for this time of year. It is hard to make plans, as it seems to rain off and on any time of the day. With wild fires in the west and northwest and if you go to the beaches you must be aware that sharks are coming closer and closer to the shoreline. There are also bears coming into cities in the west, which hasn't happened before. What is causing these change? Has the food supply for the wild animals disappeared? With all your modern equipment we cannot change nature. So what is happening?

The forecast for the remainder of the week, Wednesday through Saturday, calls for the highs to be in the 80s and the lows in the 60s.

Don't forget to mark your calendars for the upcoming revival at The Raeford Presbyterian Church September 16-19. The worship services will be led by Dr. Cortez Cooper, a former pastor of the church.

Dr. Cooper was at the church in the 1960s before going to a church in Georgia. He also came to deliver the sermon at the Centennial Celebration of the church in 1999.

There is an item elsewhere in the paper that gives the schedule and times for all the activities during the revival; an ad will appear next week. I hope to see you at these services. (See AROUND, page 4A)

McPhatter holds job without contract

Commissioners waiting for audit

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

County employees and commissioners expressed mixed emotions about the job performance of County Manager Bernice McPhatter — some sympathizing and

others critical. After an unsatisfactory audit forced the county to return \$93,000 to the federal government and another inquiry revealed more than \$40,000 was misused in E-911 emergency funds, McPhatter continues to hold on to her job and her annual salary of \$80,486. As the

county's highest paid executive, her salary has been hiked by more than \$20,000 during the past three years since she first became interim county manager in August 1998 and earned \$60,000. She is also working without an employment contract to protect her from possible termination.

While McPhatter straightens out financial records being scrutinized during the

routine annual audit, one observing employee said she has made only two mistakes. McPhatter offered jobs to some "inexperienced" people, and has not delegated duties, the employee said.

Some commissioners still think McPhatter won't be fired because of a new employment contract that states they (See MC PHATTER, page 8A)



Walking Miss Daisy

Daisy Duke (the short, four-legged one) took a walk Labor Day with, from left, Dalten Lawlor, Lauren Thacker, Michelle Wolte and Colten Lawlor.

Robeson woman says she knows Brittany's killer

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

On October 14, Brittany Lynn Locklear, who was murdered almost four years ago, would have celebrated her ninth birthday. Now, a prominent Robeson County grandmother with family ties in Hoke, has launched a one-woman mission to prove a Robeson County Jail inmate is the murderer of Brittany. The State Bureau of Investigation has previously interviewed the same Robeson inmate, who is being detained awaiting trial on a felony charge of taking indecent liberties with a child.



Mary Sue Trogdon

"Under most circumstances, we cannot totally eliminate everybody, but this inmate has been placed on our 'inactive' status," said lead investigator Jay Tilley, agent with the SBI of the alleged sexual offender.

However, Mary Sue Trogdon, well-acquainted with the man, said she is convinced he is the one who killed Brittany. Tilley said the SBI compared physical evidence and the inmate's version of where he was, but they could not disclose if the inmate's alibi had checked out.

The inmate has been confined in Robeson's detention center since March 13, 2000 when he was first arrested. A secured bond of \$70,000 was set for the alleged molester's release, but never paid. A sheriff's officer said the court system is so backlogged that his trial has been delayed for more than a year.

"I have told law enforcement from Robeson, Scotland, Cumberland and Hoke about him, but nobody will listen to me," Trogdon said. "I had a friendship with this man, but he stole from me. He acted strangely during the time Brittany disappeared, and I think he was (See BRITTANY, page 8A)

Davis announces reelection bid

Joins two others who have announced for sheriff

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

With a campaign slogan of "providing public safety for Hoke County citizens through professional law enforcement approaches," Hoke Sheriff Jim Davis announced last Friday he will seek reelection in 2002. As the first African American to be elected as sheriff in Hoke, Davis has fulfilled two years and eight months of his term since he took office in December 1998.

Surrounded by family and more than 300 invited guests from the Hoke community, Davis welcomed local and state officials on Saturday to his home on Aggies Lane in the Bowmore community.

During an outdoor ceremony, Davis, the Democrat incumbent, officially announced his intentions to run for a second term. The campaign's opening celebration was held in connection with the 42nd annual Stubbs Family Reunion, a branch of Davis' family.

"There were buckets of rain coming down, but

it did not keep people away," Davis said on Monday. "The more it rained, the more people came. There was a yard filled with kids and people from across the state — even some local Republicans. It was a great turnout."

According to Davis, law enforcement in Hoke is not about division; it is about unity. He thanked the "multi-cultural" residents of Hoke who turned out to support him in the upcoming campaign.

"We are focusing on the continuation of prosperity in Hoke County," Davis said. "We are bringing people together for a common goal of providing a wholesome environment."

"Good law enforcement is coupled with a good economy of businesses and industry."

Davis urged partnering with the U.S. Army, emphasizing more involvement with military communities such as Hoke's Heritage Village. One of his goals is partnering with the U.S. Department of Justice to improve human relations in the county. Davis also seeks partnering with Hoke educators in solving any problems associated with juvenile (See DAVIS ANNOUNCES, page 10A)



Escapee caught

Sandy Grove kindergartners searched the entire school building before finding their escaped Gingerbread Man under the desk of Principal George Marston.

Special county audit may be cancelled

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

In a closed session on Monday night, commissioners thrashed out the pros and cons of still having an independent, outside audit completed to determine the financial condition of the county. However, no action was taken on the matter.

In the executive session, a confidential memorandum was distributed to commissioners by County Attorney Neil Yarborough. The letter outlined whether a separate audit from the regular yearly audit currently underway could be justified.

Yarborough advised the board that the Local Government Commission told him they do not have the resources to (See AUDIT, page 9A)



Tammy Grimshawm, who lives on Phillipi Church Road, discusses speeding problems with Sheriff Jim Davis on Monday night.

Woman targets area speeders

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

One Rockfish woman is hopping mad about motorists who are constantly speeding through her residential neighborhood located on Phillipi Church Road, "screeching" their tires night and day. However, Robin Garcia, a resident of Southern Oaks (See SPEEDERS, page 9A)