

The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

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Wednesday, December 26, 2001

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

This week



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A soldier's Christmas page 6A

Hoke residents get Campbell degrees 4A

The News-Journal will be closed January 1

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Around Town



By SAM C. MORRIS
Contributing Editor

Today is December 26, 2001. Christmas is over and I hope all your Christmas wishes came true. I am sorry to say that Mr. Morris has been in the hospital again. I received a call Saturday night from Susan Stauffer with the news that he had been taken by ambulance to Moore Regional Medical Center. I then received a call Sunday morning from Mrs. Morris with the same news and a request for me to write this column. I spoke with Mr. Morris this morning. He came home from the hospital Christmas Eve after receiving a blood transfusion. Please keep the Morrises in your prayers. — Becky Jones.

All I can really say about the weather this morning is "Baby, it's cold outside." It was not as cold as expected over the weekend. My thermometer read 28° this morning. The weather report I heard this morning indicated that we can expect highs in the 40s and lows in the 20s for approximately 16 days with no rain in the forecast. I hope you have the firewood cut and the flannel sheets and blankets on the bed.

Christmas is my favorite holiday. I love the decorations. (See AROUND, page 5A)

Peterkin cleared in traffic case

Defense says Sheriff Davis falsely accused political rival

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

In a high-profile trial in Hoke's district court last Wednesday, Hubert A. Peterkin, a Fayetteville Police investigator, never

had to testify after a verdict of "not guilty" was pronounced by Judge Donald L. Boone. The judge's ruling followed immediately after the prosecution rested its case. The traffic violation case against Peterkin, former major-chief deputy to

Sheriff Jim Davis, was dismissed amid a subdued cheer from courtroom spectators.

Peterkin had continually said the traffic stop by Davis on October 16 was "unlawful." Davis accused Peterkin of allegedly speeding, failure to stop for a blue light and siren, and careless and reckless driving after he followed Peterkin on U.S. 401. Peterkin was on his way from Cumberland County to Raeford, displaying his badge and a large Peterkin bumper sticker on the back of his Lexus automobile at the time of the incident.

"Those charges were filed because I am a political rival of Sheriff Davis," Peterkin said. "He violated my civil rights and also was harassing me."

"I am innocent."

Peterkin has been the subject of previous allegations by Davis since he resigned from the Sheriff's Office in early 2000 to return to the Fayetteville Police Department. He and several other key supervisors in the Hoke Sheriff's Office had complained of mistreatment by Davis. On the witness stand, Davis told defense attorney David Courie that Peterkin and other officials had been the subject of an

SBI investigation that was still ongoing, but the SBI could not confirm this was so. Former District Attorney Jean Powell had said previously there was not one "scintilla" of evidence to support any of Davis' claims against his former deputies.

In the traffic citation matter last week, Boone acquitted Peterkin, saying there was not evidence to support the allegations. Boone deliberated only briefly after hearing three hours of testimony from Davis and two other prosecution witnesses.

"I am very relieved the trial is over, however, I am very sorry that this had to happen," Peterkin said. "I hate that Sheriff Davis felt that he had to resort to these measures for political purposes."

"I felt the court process was fair and this shows that the justice system that I have served for many years does work."

Peterkin said he was not "by any means" afraid of Davis, but he did not trust him because of Davis' history of false allegations toward himself. Peterkin said he will continue to run a sheriff's campaign with the "concerns, reputation and goals of the community" as his highest regards.

"I want to thank the Committee To Elect Hubert Peterkin for standing by me (See PETERKIN, page 5A)



Hubert Peterkin is congratulated by well-wishers outside the Hoke County Courthouse.

Sheriff's substation opens at Heritage Village

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

In a history-making dedication last Friday, the Hoke Sheriff's Office and the U.S. Army 18th Airborne Corp at Fort Bragg dedicated a community policing substation at Heritage Village in Rockfish. Interim County Manager Don Steed recalled some years ago when Heritage Village was nothing but a field. Mortar

and bricks made a loving community — a safe place to raise our children, Steed said.

"We thank Sheriff (Jim) Davis for this vision," Steed said. "I can see this happening over and over again in this kind of partnership with the military."

Heritage's substation was also praised as a "shining example" of teamwork in Hoke by Kevin Monroe, a guest speaker from Sen. John Edward's Charlotte office.

Davis said the substation represents the first of its kind within a military housing complex across the nation. The partnering is a vision that was realized to provide the highest degree of public safety for Hoke citizens and to improve the quality of life, Davis added.

According to Davis, the mission of Heritage Village's substation housed in its community building is for military families to be protected while soldiers are deployed fighting for their country.

"We are truly blessed to be here today," Davis said. "Let the world see one of the finest law enforcement agencies on the earth."

"The Sheriff's department has come a

long way in the last three years. These kinds of projects are very significant to the concept of community policing."

Davis said the establishment of the new substation, the second in the county, is part of a decentralizing initiative at the Hoke Sheriff's Office to extend community policing throughout the county.

"We are trying to provide the best law enforcement this county deserves," Davis said. "We want to provide the same kind

of security for them (military) as they provide for us."

Lt. William Russell, commander of the road deputies, will be supervising the Heritage Village sheriff's satellite office. The first substation to be founded in Hoke is still in operation at the Hawkeye Sands Native American housing complex, according to Davis.

"We are working together with the (See SUBSTATION, page 7A)



Lt. William Russell, supervisor of the satellite office at Heritage Village, takes a call.



Hoke Sheriff's deputies and detectives pray during the dedication of the new Heritage Village substation.

County awarded grant for pilot preschool program

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Local educators announced last week Hoke County Schools is one of three school systems in the Cape Fear to be awarded a part of \$6.5 million in state funding. Hoke's portion will be used to enroll 90 four-year-old children in a pilot preschool program. Targeting four-year-olds who are at risk or challenged in school, Gov. Mike Easley's new "More at Four" initiative will be spearheaded by Kristy Posey, the new Title I preschool director.

"North Carolina is taking the steps necessary to close the achievement gap in education that has been tolerated in this state for far too long," Easley said. "The nation's top leaders in early childhood education have said that pre-kindergarten programs like More at Four and class

size reduction efforts are proven ways to give students the tools they need to succeed in school.

"Better prepared students are more likely to stay in school, stay out of trouble, graduate and go to college."

"As a key defendant in the current low wealth lawsuit that is trying to help students in counties with limited resources receive more state funding, this is a great step to ensure our students will be successful later on in life." — Superintendent Mitch Tyler

Hoke School Superintendent Mitch Tyler, a member of the More at Four committee, said he and other volunteers have been working diligently to begin the curriculum for preschool pupils. Extra teachers will also be hired with the grant funding provided.

"It is a wonderful opportunity for our students," Tyler said. "We feel like Hoke

life."

According to Tyler, additional preschool classrooms will be available next week. However, he told the Hoke County Board of Education it will probably not be until the end of January before all 90 children are enrolled because of tight time constraints in organizing the classes. The classroom size will offer a 9 to 1 student

to teacher ration.

Hoke is among 12 statewide communities participating in the first pilot program, providing a total of 800 children who will enter the preschool programs available in the state.

Jean Brewer, director of Hoke's Partnership for Children, and representatives from the Department of Social Services, Health and the federally-funded Head Start program, will be involved in the preschool grant process.

Easley's educational plan coincided with the recent ruling of Wake Superior Court Judge Howard Manning, who told the state in a three-phase ruling that the state must accommodate a pre-kindergarten curriculum for young at-risk children.

In order for students to receive a basic, sound education, Manning said a plan must be devised to ensure children in (See SCHOOLS GRANT, page 8A)

Saturday's Kwanzaa celebration here rings in the new year

Kwanzaa is a rite enjoyed around the world as communities celebrate family, community and culture. The name of this African-American holiday comes from Swahili words, matunda yakwanza, which means "first fruits." It is a concept shared by many cultures around the country and the world. All residents are invited to come out and celebrate "first fruits."

This year's Hoke County Kwanzaa

celebration will be held in the Hoke County Public Library on Saturday, December 29, beginning at 3:30 p.m. Around 6 p.m. the Kwanzaa meal will begin. Food will be provided this year, but participants are invited to bring any dish that they enjoy to share with about half a dozen friends and neighbors.

The stated purpose of the Kwanzaa celebration is to "reaffirm ourselves, re-

new our purpose and recommit to the Kwanzaa principles." The seven Kwanzaa principles include: Umoja or unity, Kukumbuka or recalling and remembering (the wisdom of our elders), Kujichagulia or self-determination, Ujima or collective work and responsibility, Ujamaa or collective economics, Nia or purpose and Kuumba or creativity.

These are all values parents wish to

instill in our children, no matter what our culture, and are the kinds of family virtues that have received so much attention since the tragedy of September 11. One of the main goals of Dr. Kaulana Karenga who founded the American version of the Kwanzaa in 1966, following the riots in Watts, California was "to encourage us to avoid the unfortunate (See KWANZAA, page 5A)