

# The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

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Hoke's top stories  
are on the web  
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## Around Town



BY SAM C. MORRIS  
Contributing Editor

The weather still can't make up its mind. One day is hot and the next is cool. I can't remember the temperature being 45 degrees on May 20 as it was Monday morning. There was a smile on some of the farmer's faces Sunday morning at Sunday School. This was because of a half to three quarters inch of rain on Saturday. This helps but we need much more rain.

The forecast for the remainder of the week, Wednesday through Saturday, calls for the high Wednesday to be in the 70s and the low in the 50s. Thursday the high will be in the 70s and the low in the 50s. Friday and Saturday the highs will be in the 80s and the lows in the 60s. There is no rain in the forecast. ....

Ruth Phillips was by the house last week, and she asked me to mention the upcoming Hospice and Unilever Golf Tournament that will be held at the Bayonet Golf Course on Friday, June 7, 2002. There will be two starting times — the first at 8 a.m. and the second at 1:30 p.m.

The price for an individual is \$50 and they will play in a team of four. The type of play is Captain's Choice. This price includes cart and green fee and goody bag (on cart). Beverages are provided during the day and lunch for morning players and dinner for afternoon players. There will also (See AROUND, page 10A)

## Brittany case witness changes story

### Sheriff questions integrity of original investigators, contacts Justice Dept.

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

By PAT ALLEN WILSON  
Editor

Sheriff Jim Davis said he has called for a federal investigation into the death of young Brittany Lynn Locklear, who was kidnapped as she waited for her school

bus on January 8, 1998. The sheriff went on a Raleigh TV station and said a witness has revealed new evidence. He also said he questions the integrity of the original investigation and the motivations of those investigators.

However, a State Bureau of Investigation official said he "was not aware" of what Davis is referring to in the unsolved

murder case.

"No information has been provided to us recently by Sheriff Jim Davis," said Agent Jay Tilley of the SBI, lead agency in the murder investigation of the five-year-old. "We have not seen anything that could result in an arrest warrant."

"We all would like to see the killer found, but we all want to make sure we get

the right individual."

Tilley said he heard a recent television newscast of Davis saying a person had "come forward" with new information, but Davis did not reveal the name. Over a year-and-a-half ago, Davis and the SBI interviewed two potential suspects in the murder investigation of Brittany, (See BRITTANY, page 5A)

## Strickland picked to head schools

### Has been interim since death of Tyler

The Hoke County School Board named Allen Strickland superintendent of schools in an early-morning meeting today.

The board met at 7 and picked Strickland unanimously. He has filled the position since the death of Mitch Tyler in early March.

Strickland, who is 49 and a native of Stedman, taught and was a school administrator for 24 years before coming to Hoke, where he was assistant superinten-

dent before being named interim.

He is a graduate of Campbell University and holds a masters in school administration. He and his wife, Beverly, a professor at Fayetteville Technical Community College, have three sons.



Allen Strickland

## Layoffs or tax hike, those are the options

### County manager presents budget plan

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

Faced with severe revenue cutbacks, County Manager Mike Wood succeeded in his assignment from the county commissioners — presenting a balanced budget with no tax increase — but at the expense of 18 jobs.

Wood presented a \$20 million budget with no tax increase, but recommended cutbacks include eliminating 18 person-

nel positions and paring the Board of Education's budget, decreasing the overall budget by \$1 million compared with last year's.

The board will review the 281-page annual budget estimate over the weekend and hold a budget session on May 28 at 8 a.m. to discuss final details.

In the budget message for 2002-2003 fiscal year, Wood said Hoke is facing a budget crisis not necessarily of (See BUDGET, page 9A)



Praise sing and dance

The rain did not dampen spirits of March for Jesus participants Saturday. See related article, page 4A.

## County bills former contract-lawyer for expenses from trip

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

No one seems to know how Harry L. Southerland, Raeford attorney formerly contracted part-time by Hoke County, was authorized to go on an official trip

paid for by Hoke taxpayers. Southerland apparently traveled to the National Association of County Commissioners held in Washington D.C. on March 2 — even though he had already resigned from his part-time position.

Southerland resigned on February 28

after filing for a seat in the county commissioners' race.

Commission Vice Chairman James A. Leach said Southerland had never been in Washington and it is "all a mistake." He said Southerland did not go on the trip because he had already resigned with the

county.

"I know I would have definitely seen him there if he had gone, and I did not," Leach said. "I am sure the county can get a refund from the hotel and convention if they paid for his trip."

(See SOUTHERLAND BILLED, page 9A)



### Senior Game winners

Senior residents (from left) Thelma McAllister, Evelyn Price, Kathryn McPhatter and Sallie Woods showed their "mettle" and returned to Hoke with nine medals from the Senior Games in Lumberton. See related article, page 10A.

## Candidate's son again charged with drug offense

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

A sheriff candidate's son has again been charged with a drug offense. Robert Bartolo Crull was cited on May 19 for possession of marijuana after a random traffic stop on Wayside Road by the N.C. Highway Patrol. A Highway Patrol spokesman said as the vehicle approached the routine checkpoint set up on Way-

side, the driver quickly turned his vehicle around to avoid the checkpoint.

No information was available if Crull was the driver of the vehicle or merely a passenger.

"The vehicle was pursued by an officer from the N.C. Alcohol Law Enforcement agency and stopped," the trooper said. "We did not actually give the citation. The agent did, and he also arrested another (See DRUG OFFENSE, page 9A)

## Police chief says sheriff stalled murder investigation

### Fifth person arrested in Robbins Heights shooting

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
PAT ALLEN WILSON

Raeford police have charged a fifth man, Travis Lloyd Taylor, with the January 23 shooting death of Timothy Lavelle Stephens. However, Chief Mack High is upset because he said

actions of the Hoke County Sheriff's Office have interfered with his department's investigation of the case by not allowing another suspect to be released from jail to show officers the location of key evidence.

Taylor is believed to be the final arrest in the shooting of Stephens and injuring of two other men who were standing at the intersection of Seventh Avenue and (See INTERFERED, page 9A)



### New Chamber president

Newly sworn-in president Randy Russell and members of the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce applaud former president Wayne Simpson at last night's 55th annual banquet.

## Sheriff Davis injured in wreck

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

Sheriff Jim Davis was injured yesterday afternoon after a driver lost control of his northbound Cheerwine tractor-trailer on U.S. Highway 401 at the Cumberland-Hoke line, striking the sheriff's unmarked patrol car. Davis had already safely turned into County Line Plaza shopping center parking area when the rig careened off the road and crashed into him.

A witness said Davis was "pretty badly banged up" from the accident. (See DAVIS INJURED, page 5A)