

# The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

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Hoke's top stories  
are on the web  
[www.thenews-journal.com](http://www.thenews-journal.com)

## This week



Mayor heads  
LRCOG again  
page 3A

Freedom Tree  
to be planted  
page 4A

Hussain honor  
graduate of Duke  
page 5A

## Index

B rths .....	3B
Calendar .....	6B
Classifieds .....	5B
Deaths .....	5A
Editorials .....	2A
Engagements .....	3B
Legals .....	4B
Public Record .....	5A
Religion .....	7A
Schools .....	2, 6B
Socials .....	3B
Sports .....	6A
Weddings .....	3B

## Around Town



BY SAM C. MORRIS  
Contributing Editor

The weather still can't make up its mind. We will have cool weather for a few days and then you must turn off the heat and turn on the air conditioner. One thing that we need and can't get enough of is rain. Other places are having floods, but we are in a severe drought condition. We can be thankful we haven't had tornados or hail that would cause destruction.

The forecast for the remainder of the week Wednesday through Saturday calls for the highs Wednesday and Thursday to be in the 70s or low 80s and the lows in the 60s. Friday and Saturday the highs will be in the 80s and the lows in the 60s. There could be scattered showers any day during the period. Let's hope we get the rain.

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Here are some events that will take place in Raeford and Hoke County in the months ahead:

The Hospice Golf Tournament will be held Friday, June 7 at the Bayonet Golf Course. There will be two starting times at 8 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Lunch and dinner will be served. Call the Hospice office for more details.

The McLaughlin-McFadyen Museum will hold an open house and reception on Sunday, June 9 from 3 to 5 p.m. The museum is located in the block of S. Highland St. and E. Central Avenue. Everyone (See AROUND, page 4A)

## DA doubts witness in Brittany case

SBI says it's not in on request for investigation from US Justice Dept.

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

By PAT ALLEN WILSON  
Editor

An agent from the State Bureau of Investigation said the bureau is not any closer to finding the killer of young Brittany Lynn Locklear — this despite Sheriff

Jim Davis' contention that information from a jailed witness is giving the investigation new life. Agent Jay Tilley, lead investigator on the State Bureau of Investigation's case on the slaying of the five-year-old, said his agency has not called for a federal investigation into her death despite Davis' saying a "significant shift" in information from a witness led

him to call for a probe from the U.S. Justice Department.

"We are not part of it," Tilley said.

District Attorney Kristy McMillan Newton echoed Tilley, saying the U.S. Attorney's office does not have an active investigation regarding Brittany's death.

"I have spoken with a representative from the U.S. Attorney's office," Newton

said. "I have also met with the SBI on numerous occasions.

"As far as I am aware, there is insufficient evidence at this time to establish a probable cause for an arrest (of anyone for) murdering Brittany Locklear."

Newton did confirm the person Davis is referring to as a key witness is Jordache (See BRITTANY, page 8A)

## Bataan survivor Mims: 'Never forget'

By PAT ALLEN WILSON  
Editor

On a beautiful, sunny day in downtown Raeford, John L. Mims brought the dark, horrifying realities and sacrifices of the battle for the Philippines and the Bataan Death March to those gathered at the Hoke County Courthouse for Memorial Day services.

"I think about it every day," Mims told a gathering of approximately 200 who came to remember those who gave their lives in defense of this country.

Standing with some difficulty at the podium, western Hoke resident Mims said of the fighting in the Philippine Islands in World War II, "The Japanese

threw everything they had against us. They thought the battle for the Philippines would be a cup of tea."

Mims said the steadfastness of those troops fighting against overwhelming numbers of Japanese soldiers at Bataan and Corregidor "kept them off the United States until this country was better prepared to defend itself." Recalling the battle odds, Mims said, "It was like a regiment against a whole nation."

Troops were told to "hold at all costs," Mims said, and fighting was down to "bayonets" when they were ordered to surrender. "We didn't want to. We saw that as a disgrace," Mims said.

The Japanese had invaded on Decem- (See NEVER FORGET, page 9A)



Bataan survivor John Mims



Left: firefighters fight the blaze at the Haire homestead that burned on Johnson Mill Road on Wednesday. Above: In happier times, H.R. Haire, son of the original owner Hugh Haire, relaxes with his granddaughter Emily Haire Gray in 1978 on the front porch.

## Apparent arsonist leaves behind only memories

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

All but memories were reduced to ashes for the Haire family last Thursday afternoon after an apparent arsonist was seen leaving their farmhouse property as it became engulfed in flames. While firefighters from Puppy Creek and Hillcrest fought the blaze aggressively to partially save the wood-framed residence, the family's 1915 homestead located on Johnson Mill Road was burned beyond repair.

The fire rekindled later that night. Two original outbuildings remained untouched. Also, a 1970s jeep surrounded by the weathered picket fence did not burn.

Larry Haire, owner of Haire Plumbing in Fayetteville, said the farmhouse was unoccupied and without electrical power, and Cumberland County arson investigators indicated the fire had been set inside the residence. His family had kept it in good repair over the years because of the memories it held for his father, 82-year-old H.R. Haire. The family home was originally owned by Hugh Haire, his grandfather who farmed tobacco and other crops.

"My father was so upset when he learned about the home burning," Haire said. "They think somebody threw something in one of the windows to start the fire. I rushed over as soon as I realized the house was on fire."

The Cumberland County Sheriff's Arson Task Force is actively investigating the cause of the fire and seeking a suspect in the suspicious burning, according to Cumberland detective Wallace Smith. They were serving in the absence of Hoke Fire Marshal Al Schwarzbher, who was out of town last week. The Hoke Sheriff's Office also examined the crime scene.

For Haire, the single-story house was full of memories from his swinging on what was once a wrap-around porch to summer picnics, ice cream socials on the lawn, hide-and-seek and barbecues.

"We had an antique piano still inside and that was burned up," Haire said. "It was toast."

"We always mowed the lawn and tried to keep the house presentable for our neighbors."

(See HOME BURNS, page 10A)

## Southerland justifies expense of county trips

Also says others did not repay county for travel

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

Contrary to Hoke Commission Vice Chairman James A. Leach's assertion that Raeford attorney Harry Southerland was never in Washington D.C., it turns out he was there — according to Southerland — on business unrelated to Hoke County. The county sent Southerland a bill for \$586 for attending the National Association of County Commissioners' Convention on March 2, which county records reflected has never been paid.

Southerland, Hoke's formerly contracted part-

time foreclosure attorney, says he does not owe the county any money for his recent trip to Washington, DC, even though a bill was sent to him by the county finance office. He also alleged two commissioners never reimbursed the county for their wives to accompany them, but two county officials said that is not true.

Southerland resigned his foreclosure position two days prior to the trip in March when he filed as a county commissioner candidate. County officials think he should have to pay the county pay for the expenses they paid on his behalf.

(See TRAVEL, page 10A)

## Schools renew pleas for money

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

If the Board of Education's plea to fully fund the \$3.5 million school budget continues to go unheeded by Hoke commissioners, the \$327,000 in proposed local cuts could cripple the school system next year, said Allen Strickland, officially appointed as school superintendent last week.

"We will be seriously hurting without the \$327,000," Strickland said. "The worst scenario

is: We will have trouble paying the utilities for heating and air-conditioning of our schools because a lot of that cost comes from local dollars.

"We might make it to December, but then we would be totally out of funds."

Other critical needs that would be reduced include maintenance of equipment, operation of school buses and payment for parts to repair buses.

Strickland was already predicting a crisis on a (See SCHOOL BUDGET, page 9A)