



Hayes visit
Both Democrats and Republicans greeted Congressman Robin Hayes when he paid a visit to Hoke yesterday evening. The Republican representative attended an event held at the pond-side retreat of Clayton Buoyer.

Memorial Day shindig
National Senior Living residents celebrated Memorial Day with a cookout. "Our residents look forward to upcoming events such as the monthly birthday party with 'The Dogs' as entertainment, 'he Friday Nighters' to play and sing, singer Don Brock and the Lumbee Homecoming in Pembroke, just to name a few," says a spokesperson. Any friends and family members wishing to attend these events should call Susan Baxley at 878-1562 for details.



Brittany



Brittany Locklear



Sheriff Jim Davis



DA Kristy McMillan Newton

Leach, a suspect currently in custody at Hoke Jail. Leach is charged with four counts of breaking and entering and one count of possession of stolen goods. Leach is also wanted as a suspect for another robbery with a dangerous weapon in Scotland County, she added.

These announcements from the SBI last week and the DA yesterday resulted after the sheriff said last week on a Raleigh TV station that a witness has revealed new evidence into Brittany's death. The girl was kidnapped as she waited for her school bus on Gainey Road on January 8, 1998. She was sexually assaulted and drowned.

Davis said he questioned the integrity of the original investigation and the motivations of those investigators. However, Newton said the former interviews were well-documented that were conducted by the SBI and detectives under former sheriff Wayne Byrd.

"We all continue to be hopeful to support not only an arrest, but also a conviction of the person who murdered Brittany Locklear,"

Newton said. "As far as I know, no one is in the process of seeking an arrest in the case."

Newton also discounted the recent reliability of Leach. She said she believes in the "credibility" of what the witness formerly stated in interviews "early on" in the Brittany investigation. However, she said Davis' alleged interview recently where the witness reportedly said the truck of Brittany's kidnapper was "blue" rather than brown would be "inconsistent" with information revealed by the witness in the original interviews.

"I have no reason to doubt that Mr. Leach was a legitimate witness before in the case," Newton said. "Now, he has destroyed his credibility as a witness in the murder case even if we apprehend the murderer."

Leach was a juvenile at the time of Brittany's murder. Newton said Leach has a long history of "getting into trouble" with the law that she was very familiar with him over the course

of the past couple of years.

"It is a pattern of Mr. Leach's behavior to get information on other people in exchange for requesting favoritism," she said.

Newton said Leach approached her two months ago with some information on some "drug-related" cases he knew off, but the DA was already aware of the information. Newton rejected his offer of an exchange of information for reduced criminal charges he was facing.

"He did not indicate he had any information on Brittany Locklear," Newton said. "I thought his own alleged crimes were too severe to warrant favorable treatment."

"Subsequent to my denial of his request, Mr. Leach then provided information to Sheriff Davis on Brittany."

Newton declined to say if Leach had been a direct witness to Brittany's abduction by the killer, or if he merely recalled seeing the truck. Another source said Leach was working in a field on Gainey Road on the day of Brittany's disappearance.

"Somehow Mr. Leach contacted Sheriff Davis and it came about he gave this inconsistent information on Brittany," Newton said. "Sheriff Davis communicated with me on May 10 that this witness had now changed his story in some respects. The sheriff said Mr. Leach had offered some new information that he had never before reported to other investigators working on this case."

After her conversation with Davis, Newton said the SBI interviewed Leach again, and said they were aware of that information.

Newton said she has still not been provided a copy of a report from Davis regarding Leach's new information.

"Mr. Leach was interviewed several times after the murder," Newton

said. "He was hypnotized. If a person is to be hypnotized, under N.C. state law, you have to accurately record anything they say prior to the hypnosis."

"The hypnosis cannot be used at the trial, but it can benefit obtaining more information on the case."

According to Newton, Leach was hypnotized shortly after Brittany's death. His statements were consistent during his hypnosis with that of his interviews.

Davis told news media last week he was trying to determine if Brittany's murder was linked with obstruction of justice allegedly from investigators in the initial investigation.

"This witness now states that he was coerced into giving false and misleading information, as well as intimidated and harassed by public officials," Davis said last week. "This witness was also told to pretend to be hypnotized as part of the investigation and to lie about specific suspect and vehicle information."

Davis has also requested additional assistance from the criminal section of the federal Civil Rights Division to see if Brittany's civil rights were violated.

Brittany was standing alone at her bus stop on a misty morning when a man reportedly leaned out of his pickup truck and "grabbed something." Brittany's body was found approximately 36 hours later — her body submerged in a drainage ditch on Ryan McBryde Road — approximately three miles from her home.

The SBI continues to encourage anyone who suspects someone being responsible for Brittany's murder, or anyone with information to contact them at (910) 486-1262; or call the Sheriff's Office at (910) 875-5111. There is a reward for the conviction of her killer.

Smoke alarms installed

The City of Raeford Volunteer Fire Department is continuing its program of checking smoke alarms and batteries at no charge as well as offering to install new smoke alarms in homes of the elderly, handicapped and those on low or fixed incomes.

Members of the Raeford fire department are providing the smoke alarms and batteries free, and some are being donated by Lodge 118, Woodmen of the World. For information and to take advantage of Opera-

tion Smoke Alarm, call the fire department at 875-5150 and leave a message.

You will be contacted by someone from the fire department.

The only requirement of the program is that home owners or dwelling occupants live within the city limits. A participant will also be asked to sign a release form if an alarm is installed.

Free home inspections will also be made.

EDITORIAL DEADLINES

FRIDAY 12 NOON - Calendar Items, Social Items, News Items

MONDAY 12 NOON - Letters to the Editor

24-hour Newspapering



To keep up with the rapid pace of technology, just like the banks, we have installed a 24-hour newspaper ATM. Conveniently located in front of our office, this ATM (automated typography machine) dispenses copies of *The News-Journal* 24 hours per day for just two quarters.

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