

# The News-Journal

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50¢

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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

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

## This week

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writes open letter  
to commissioners  
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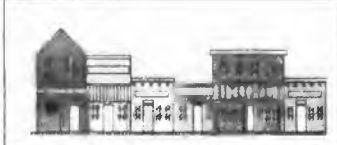
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## Around Town



By SAM C. MORRIS  
Contributing Editor



Sam Cameron Morris  
January 16, 1918 -  
June 28, 2002

This will be the last "Around Town" column to appear in The News-Journal. It is Monday morning and I am sitting at my computer wondering what to write. How do I write this final column? What would Mr. Morris want me to say? I have many thoughts and feelings that I could share with you, but that would take a book, so I will share a few. — *Becky Conoly Jones*.

I don't know the exact date the first Around Town ran in this newspaper. I do know that Mr. Morris wrote it each week for many, many years. There were only a few times that this column was written by someone other than Mr. Morris. Connie Ellis wrote it a few times when Mr. Morris was away on vacation, and I wrote it twice when he was in the hospital in the past year.

Sunday afternoon family and friends gathered at Raeford Presbyterian Church and Raeford Cemetery to mourn the loss and celebrate the life of Sam Cameron Morris. (Sam, not Samuel, as he was quick to tell anyone making that mistake!)

The photo you see with this column was taken in 1982 (See *AROUND*, page 9A)

## Patrol cars confined to 20 miles

# Compromise reached over county vehicle use

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

It was a controversial commissioners' meeting on Monday night when a public hearing was held for citizens, debating pros and cons if deputies should drive their patrol cars round-trip from home to the Hoke Sheriff's Office. After an hour of discussion by more than 20 taxpayers in a packed assembly room, the board voted 3-2 to limit deputies' and other

county employees' use of vehicles. Those who reside outside the county may drive a distance of 20 miles from the Sheriff's Office or their county department, according to the board.

Rashad Rahmann, campaign manager for the reelection of Sheriff Jim Davis, alleged the issue was about race — not gasoline use. He supported Davis' right to create his own policies.

"I have been a victim of crime," Rahmann said. "I cannot believe you

(board) are sitting in a meeting tonight, and you are crying over a few pennies of gas when the sheriff has brought millions (in grants).

"It is not about gas or about the mileage. It is about this man being the first black sheriff in this county."

Commissioners Bobby Wright, Cleo Bratcher Jr., and Charles V. Daniels voted in favor of restricting deputies driving their vehicles home. Dissenting votes were cast by Commission Chairman Tony Hunt

and Commission Vice Chairman James A. Leach, who offered a substitute option that would have allowed Sheriff Jim Davis to run his own department, determining how far a deputy could drive a vehicle home.

"We are not picking on anybody," Wright said. "Our policy is just not for the Sheriff, but to all departments. I think it will be a fair compromise. That is what the state does for the Highway Patrol.

(See *VEHICLE USE*, page 7A)

## Summer afternoon delight



The fun she is having shows in the face of Allisa Hammonds as she and other youngsters frolic on a water slide during the field day event at Our Father's Children Day Care Center at the Chapel of Jesus Christ.

## NCDOT charts 6-year course for Hoke roads

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

A route for truckers to bypass downtown Raeford will exist in 2006 between the Palmer Street Extension and Highway 20, connecting to Interstate 95, according to the state's recent Transportation Improvement Program for 2004-2010. The N.C. Department of Transportation also presented its annual secondary road construction program for 2002-2003, which was approved by Hoke commissioners last month.

Because of the negotiations of county commissioners, Raeford's city leaders and the Raeford Hoke Economic Development board with N.C. Transportation Secretary Lyndo Tippet, a convenient corridor from Palmer to Highway 20 will be open for travelers and enhance new businesses being established, said Hoke Commission Chairman Tony Hunt.

"We are pleased the DOT is also going to pave two more state-approved roads in Hoke in 2002-2003," Hunt said. "Hoke's landfill road will also be paved this year, providing easier

(See *ROADS*, page 10A)

## Seizure of video machines leads to arrests

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer



Raeford Police Detective Greg Thomas displays video poker machines seized in illegal gaming operations in Raeford.

Since the Raeford Police Department seized a number of video poker machines installed in some Hoke convenience stores, there has been a crackdown on illegal games, said Raeford Police Chief Mack High. The Hoke Sheriff's Office is also closely monitoring stores that house the gaming machines, ensuring no violations are occurring.

"The majority of machines we confiscated were because of illegal games contained in the machines that were not supposed to be installed," High said. "It was not so much because of the pay-outs."

High added, "The laws regulating these machines are written in such a way that is an invitation for breaking the law."

High said the problem that exists is most people do not want rewards for winning such as Pepsi-Cola prizes. Most prefer cash, and that is illegal, he added. Also, incentives such as cigarettes or alcohol beverages are not permitted.

On May 23, Raeford detectives issued cita-

tions, charging several store owners with alleged possession of illegal slot machines with illegal games not properly registered, and failure to post stickers that specify: "For Entertainment only — not pay-out." Some of the Pot-O-Gold machines carried illegal games such as Super Ball Keno and Super Ball Bingo, which are not considered games of chance, according to Detective John Pierce of the Raeford PD.

Among the owners receiving citations for allegations of misuse, were: Munadar Bhatti of the Quick-Serve on South Main Street; Abmad Hafe of the Lucky Stop on U.S. 401 South Business; and Harshad Patel of the Food Stop on Prospect Avenue.

"Some of these stores are making a killing off of their customers with these machines," Pierce said. "The problem is that they have the means to regulate the machines by programming them, determining how many people will win or lose."

"We get complaints about these machines every day from victims who lost money and others who received rewards. The people do

(See *VIDEO MACHINES*, page 8A)

## 'Around Town' writer Sam Morris dies

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

Raeford has lost a respected historian, longtime newspaperman, prominent civic and political leader, and a leader of the Raeford Presbyterian Church, Sam Cameron Morris, 84, former general manager of Dickson Press and former Raeford city councilman, died early last Friday morning.

Morris was remembered as one who got his fingers "wet in the ink" during high school, and the newspaper profession became his "entire life." Yet the lasting impressions left by Morris, who wrote the popular weekly column "Around

Town," will remain alive forever, said long-time friend Harold Gillis. "Election night this year won't be the same without Sam," Gillis said. "He always kept the big scoreboard at *The News-Journal* to keep tabs of the returns on election night.

"Everybody would join him at the newspaper to help him out."

Morris retired as general manager from Dickson Press and *The News-Journal* in 1982, continuing to write his column that focused on people, social events, weather, politics and anything else that piqued his interest.

Gillis said Morris had wanted to name accomplishments of people "still living" in his column because

his friend said "some fine people" had come out of Hoke.

"Sam was known as 'Mr. United Way' because of his years of working with the charitable organization," Gillis said. "He was also known as 'Mr. Democrat' for his 15 years of service as chairman of the Hoke Democratic Party."

Gillis said Morris will always be remembered for his contributions to the recent Raeford Hoke Centennial special edition that was printed by *The News-Journal*. He also helped to organize the Raeford Hoke Museum.

Paul Dickson, President of Dickson Press, joined Gillis in rec-

(See *MORRIS*, page 8A)

## Bear spotted in area 'Don't feed the bear'

By PAT ALLEN WILSON  
Editor

A black bear came strolling out of the woods in the Scurlock community Sunday, and startled residents called the Hoke County Sheriff's Office.

Responding HSO deputies attempted to follow the bear, which disappeared into a wood line, but lost its trail.

Residents were warned to stay away from the wood lines and were told not to attempt to feed the animal.

Some people were doing cookouts in their yards and were warned of the bear's presence as well as the possibility the bear was not alone.

HSO Major Thomas Carlton said there were no physical encounters with the bear and no one was hurt.

(See *BEAR*, page 7A)