

The News-Journal

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50¢

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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

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911 supervisor, technician demoted in shakeup

Controversy over control of department culminates in disagreement with sheriff

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Two managers in the Hoke Communications department were demoted last week as controversy over control of the department escalated to a disagreement with Sheriff Hubert Peterkin. Emergency Management Director Al

Schwarcbher, supervisor of 911 communications, was relieved of 911 supervision by County Manager Mike Wood, but remains as fire marshal and emergency management director.

Ron Fairbanks, 911 data base technician, was reassigned to the county mapping department, but resigned Friday. Both had received salary cuts of \$5,000.

Wood said he took disciplinary action last Wednesday against the two after Fairbanks sent an "unwarranted" e-mail message to Peterkin, allegedly threatening to refuse requests for criminal records checks for the sheriff's department unless an updated contract was signed, Wood said.

The county manager was also critical

of Fairbank's telling the State Bureau of Investigation of the dispute without consulting him.

"This was not taking one side over the other," Wood said. "I believe this issue could have been handled better by the 911 department. Based on my evaluation of 911, the changes were warranted."

"It involved more than one incident." The disagreement came to a head when a deputy radioed in a request for a records check from the SBI's Division of Criminal Information (DCI) system on a stolen out-of-state vehicle, but was told by a dispatcher to get the information directly from the sheriff's department. (See *SHAKEUP*, page 9A)

Fire chief calls shakeup 'dangerous situation'

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Some Hoke volunteer fire chiefs are alarmed since County Manager Mike Wood promoted 911 telecommunicator Harvey "Chris" Jacobsen as the interim 911 supervisor, relieving both Supervisor Al Schwarcbher and Data Base Technician Ron Fairbanks from duties at the

communications department.

These changes leave the future organization of the 911 center unstable, especially since Fairbanks has resigned, according to Schwarcbher, Hoke's fire marshal and emergency management director.

"This is a tremendous liability for the county," Schwarcbher said. "Chris" (See *DANGEROUS*, page 9A)

City follows suit, rejects Bragg buffer endorsement

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Editor

The Raeford City Council didn't buy into a land use plan for Hoke property that would create property buffers around Pope Air Force Base and Fort Bragg even after changes were made and "ca-

veats" were offered.

Councilman Wayne Mills moved to reject the plan, presented by N.C. Dept. of Commerce chief planner Jim Dougherty, with these words: "It's a very good plan, beautiful and all that but for Hoke County it's not fair and if it's" (See *BRAGG BUFFER*, page 4A)



Last mission
LCDR Karl W. Rauch, F18 pilot on the USS Constellation, his wingmen at his side, after their last flight over Iraq. The center man behind the flag, he is pictured with some of the crewmen in charge of carrier landings, who welcomed the men with an American flag. Rauch is the son of Ginny Rauch of Raeford.

This Week



Brewer family racing on wheels and prayer
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Robert Tyner worked at Burlington almost 47 years
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Sutton signs with UNC-Wilmington
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Three charged with robberies in ring that targeted Hispanics

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Editor

Three Hoke County men found themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time Thursday evening and found themselves facing 50 criminal charges.

After being spotted riding on Old Wire Road near Antioch and stopped by Raeford police, SBI and ALE officers, they are in Hoke Jail, charged by city,

Hoke and Robeson officers.

"We've had a series of robberies in the city, county and in Robeson County," said Raeford Police Chief Mack High. "Most were Hispanics who were being robbed."

Raeford Detective John Pierce said one of the suspects, a passenger in the car, attempted to start it again after the driver had stopped for the officers at around 6 o'clock. Officers had to break out a window to stop the car, he said.

One of the suspects, Steven Ray Locklear, resisted and received superficial wounds in an altercation and was taken to FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital to be "checked out," according to

Pierce. Pierce was also nursing an injured hand at the scene.

Detective Earl Johnson of the Robeson County Sheriff's Dept. said two of the men plus two other men in custody were involved in robberies where Hispanics were targeted. "There was a little group doing around targeting Hispanics. The investigation is ongoing. We received some help from Raeford PD and the Hoke County Sheriff's Office that helped us make some arrests in these cases."

HSO Chief Deputy Troy McDuffie said his office's investigation is ongoing even though "a bunch of charges" have been (See *THREE CHARGED*, page 9A)



One of three suspects in a ring that preyed on Hispanics is handcuffed.

Jail houses females for first time, sheriff retrieves money owed to county

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Sheriff Hubert Peterkin said the Sheriff's Office has reined in spending by no longer transporting female inmates outside the county for detention, saving the county more than \$96,000 annually in transport, boarding and medical treatment. It is the first time since the jail opened in 1967 that females have ever been housed

at the local jail, according to Peterkin.

Peterkin also announced to county commissioners on Monday evening that his law agency has been reimbursed \$91,000 from the state for past-due detention fees. The accrued charges were never submitted to the state by the previous sheriff's administration, he said.

"It was disappointing to me that the budget for the Sheriff's Office was already overspent when I took office in

December," Peterkin said prior to the Monday night meeting. "It was a tough pill to swallow."

"We found old records for boarding inmates that had never been processed where refunds were due for months of boarding," he said. "These savings along with us now housing females inmates at the jail are just some of the many ways we are using moneys within our budget to better serve the county."

Peterkin has raised daily rates to the state and federal governments for housing prisoners from outside the county who are waiting for trials in Hoke. Fees have increased from \$18 per day to \$40 daily for state inmates and to \$50 for federal prisoners.

"By raising the rates for detaining state and federal inmates, we will save a substantial amount of money for the county," (See *JAIL*, page 10A)

The News-Journal

News Other stuff

By KEN MACDONALD
General Manager

A conjunction of three planets and a comet must have occurred last week, the only way to explain how chicken was served at a Hoke County school on Tuesday. Everyone knows Thursday is Chicken Day. The cafeteria staff (God bless them!) at West Hoke Middle outdid themselves for a dinner honoring Hoke Teachers of the Month and mini-grant winners.

Partners In Education holds the dinner each year to say thanks to some of the finest teachers in the system.

Wayne Simpson, the P.I.E. president, and Superintendent Allen Strickland were. (See *JOURNAL*, page 10A)

Child's book on coping with cancer to benefit Relay



By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Editor

J.J., Chad, Cliff and Lauren Jones will be spending their first Mother's Day without their mom, Victoria "Vicki" Frahm Jones, who passed away in January of cancer at the age of 52.



Left: Vicki Jones; Above: Amelia Frahm and children Tabitha and Jordan

J.J. and her family be coming from Hypoluxo, Florida this month to join other members of her mother's large family as well as members of Vicki's church, St. Elizabeth of Hungary Catholic, on The Vicksters, a Hoke County Relay for Life team that will be helping raise money for research through the

American Cancer Society. Chad and wife Misty, also Cliff, all of whom live in Wilmington, will drive up and, of course, their 15-year-old sister Lauren, a Raeford resident, will be here.

The idea for The Vicksters — that was Vicki's e-mail address — came from a letter from J.J., who asked her mother's family to participate in the Relay event that held May 16-17 on the football field at Hoke High.

Amelia Frahm, Vicki's sister-in-law, herself a cancer survivor, took an interest in the Relay for Life after J.J. asked the family to participate in Vicki's name. "I thought it was such a positive thing to do. It would be so easy for her just to go back to Florida (after the funeral) and just grieve along or wallow in self pity," said Frahm. "I know she has got to miss her" (See *VICKSTERS*, page 9A)