

# The News-Journal

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50¢

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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

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## Area dams fail as eight inches of rain falls

### McLaughlin Lake drains from storm, no injuries

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

Torrents of rain caused McLaughlin Lake to overflow its dam Sunday evening. By early Tuesday morning, the dam failed.

Violent thunderstorms pummeled the Cape Fear Region beginning Sunday. Sporadic downpours through early Tuesday spilled up to eight inches of rain in Hoke County. Because of the potential danger from flooding of McLaughlin Lake and Rockfish Creek, law enforcement and emergency personnel were on a 24-hour vigil between Sunday and Monday, according to Al Schwarcber, Hoke's emergency management director.

"The 250-foot dam finally burst after midnight yesterday, but no one was injured," Schwarcber said. "About a 30-foot section of (See FLOODING, page 9A)



A TV crew interviews Al Schwarcber, Hoke's emergency management director, as McLaughlin Lake drains in the background. The lake's dam failed between midnight and 2 a.m. Tuesday morning, Schwarcber said, after heavy rains Sunday and Monday nights.

## Hoke graduation marred by ticket fiasco

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

More than 100 family members — some from as far away as Illinois — were blocked from Hoke High School's commencement exercises Friday night because of a suspected student prank.

Officials said the gymnasium became prematurely packed with extra guests because of counterfeit tickets distributed by some students who are still unidenti-

fied. Some parents did not get in because of the mix-up, according to Hoke School Superintendent Allen Strickland.

When the capacity reached about 1,000 people in the gym, Strickland said, a number of family members were turned away and left standing outside the facility.

"We had to move our graduation inside because of the rain," Strickland said. "We did discover that someone printed bogus tickets.

"It is a very unfortunate situation. We are disap-

pointed and sorry that it happened. If we had still held it on the football field, people would have been walking through water. It would have also have damaged the turf on the field."

Strickland, Sheriff Hubert Peterkin, and Hoke High principal Donna Kennedy were present during the emotionally-charged incident that developed at the entrance to the gym.

"There was security present, but law enforcement (See GRADUATION, page 7A)



Graduate Lisa Yopez talks to a reporter after her family was denied entrance.

### This Week



Hoke officers carry Special Olympics torch page 3A

Disabled man stabbed to death page 3A

S.T.A.R.S. shine at teen talent show page 1B

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## N.C. State Bar gets restraining order against Raeford attorney

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer



Harry Southerland

account money.

A civil, temporary restraining order was

A superior court judge has issued an order forbidding Raeford attorney Harry Southerland from handling trust

served by Hoke Sheriff's deputies on Southerland last week after it was issued by the Wake County Superior Court on May 20. It was followed by a preliminary injunction granted against Southerland requested by the N.C. State Bar during a court hearing yesterday, said Root Edmonson, deputy counsel for the N.C. State Bar.

It temporarily prohibits Southerland from handling any trust monies of his clients while the investigation continues,

according to Edmonson.

Wake Superior Court Judge James C. Spencer Jr. presided over the civil proceedings with Southerland and Edmonson present.

"There has been no determination whether Mr. Southerland's conduct will cause him to put his law license in jeopardy," Edmonson said. "Our investigation is continuing."

In the petition filed by the State Bar, the court found "prompt action is necessary"

to protect funds belonging to clients or third parties held by Southerland in a fiduciary capacity.

Southerland, former part-time foreclosure attorney for Hoke, initially came under scrutiny last year when the N.C. State Bar entered into an inquiry concerning his handling of his trust accounts for Hoke delinquent taxpayers and foreclosure clients. Hoke Tax collector Judy Pittman alleged some of Southerland's financial (See SOUTHERLAND, page 4A)

## Sheriff seeks suspect in shootings

### Rampage injures three, doctors amputated woman's leg

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS  
Staff writer

A Shannon woman's leg was amputated by doctors after she was struck by a stray bullet during a shooting rampage last week. The shooting happened outside her home at 418 Haire Road last Wednesday evening, according to Sheriff Hubert Peterkin.

Victims in the triple-shooting included

50-year-old Cora Lee Locklear; her son, Chancy Locklear, 27; and nephew, Alexander Locklear, 21. The Locklear cousins were injured by multiple gunshot wounds, he said.

Peterkin arrived on the scene shortly after the incident occurred.

"It was a mess when we got there," Peterkin said. "Both of the men were on the ground. I want to commend the medical technicians (See SHOOTINGS, page 6A)

## Gator strolls along South Hilltop Road

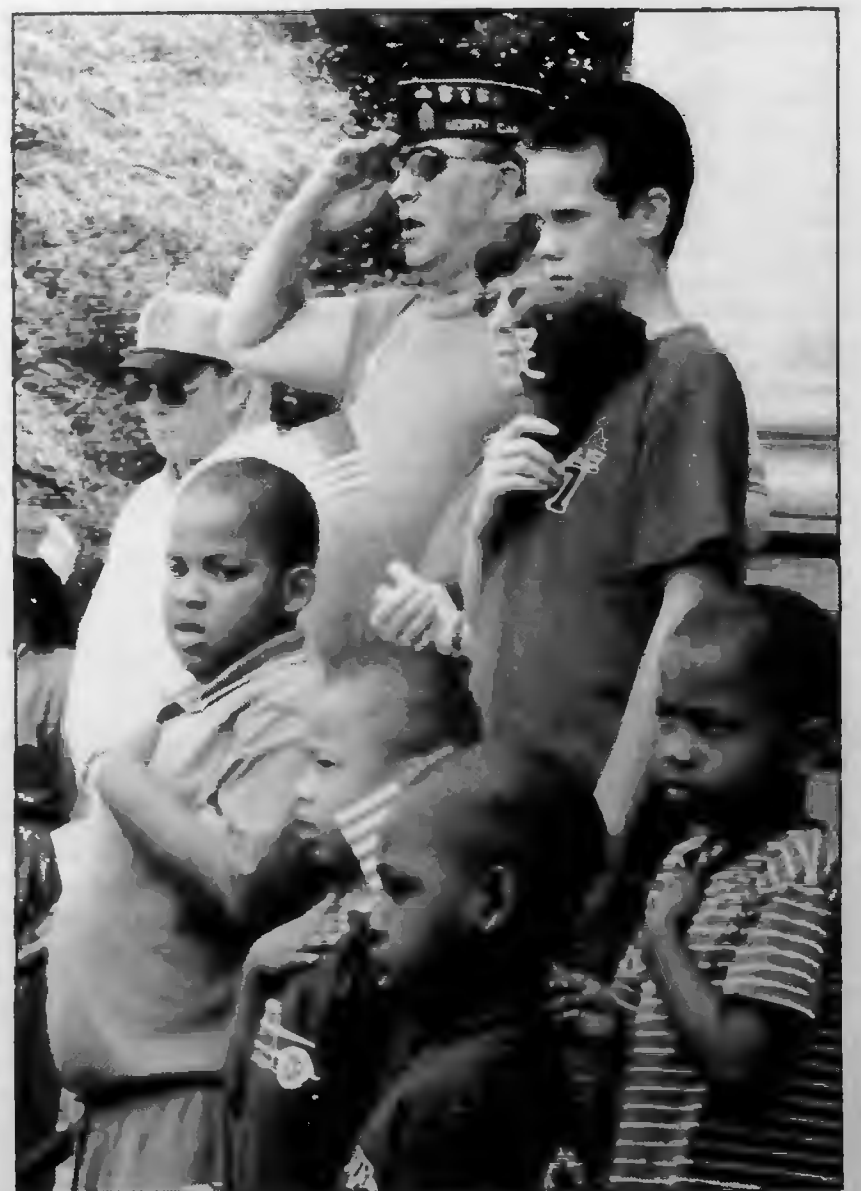
### 8-10 foot reptile dents patrol car

By PAT ALLEN WILSON  
Editor

James Crouch couldn't believe his eyes as he neared the Robeson County line in his pickup Wednesday afternoon; an alligator appeared to be strolling out of a field alongside South Hilltop Road.

"I thought I was seeing stuff," he said. "He was walking up the road like he was going to the store."

The alligator is thought to be 8-10 feet long judging from the fact that its tail reached the center line on the highway while its nose touched the white line at the edge of the roadway. Evidently it had strayed from a nearby pond where residents there said they (See GATOR, page 6A)



### Honoring special heroes

Vietnam veteran Jim Knott joined others at the courthouse for Monday's Memorial Day ceremony which featured Dr. James McLaughlin, also a Vietnam veteran, as the speaker. McLaughlin spoke of a special class of heroes who gave the ultimate sacrifice and should not be forgotten.