

## Coats for children collected for holiday

Gene Shelnett says he is excited at the strong response to the Campaign for Christmas Coats begun this month. Shelnett, an employee at the House of Raeford who is active with the Raeford-Hoke Chamber of Commerce, has been joined by others in his campaign to get new coats for needy Hoke County children.

Letters were sent to several private citizens asking them to buy a child's coat, gift wrap it and identify it by size and gender of the child it is intended for.

The citizens were asked to drop off their gift packages at First Baptist, Manna and Raeford Presbyterian churches; also at BB&T and Fidelity Bank.

Others who want to contribute may do the same. Also, Shelnett said, their task will be made easier if they wish to purchase a coat or coats at Moore's Department Store. A 10 percent discount will be given and store person-

nel will gift wrap the coat and hold it until it is picked up by someone with the coats campaign.

"My goal is 150 new coats and with the response I am getting from folks now, I think that is an attainable goal," Shelnett said.

Coats for children of school age are preferred, Shelnett said. Recipients of the gift coats will be identified by the Raeford-Hoke Ministerial Association. Shelnett said he would speak with school authorities if needs go beyond those selected by the ministers.

Shelnett invites community residents to "make it better for folks... and feel real good." Anyone who would like to help distribute coats or volunteer in other ways may contact him at 875-7795.

"There is a good possibility it will become an annual event," Shelnett says.

—Pat Allen Wilson

## December 1 events kick off holiday season

Santa will visit with children Fridays and Saturdays until Christmas



By PAT ALLEN WILSON  
Editor

Christmas in downtown Raeford kicks off this coming Monday and events will hold both the joys and sorrows of the holidays.

Santa arrived on a float earlier this month with the town's Christmas/Turkey Festival parade. To the delight of the children, his second trip to town will be this coming Monday.

Also on that day, the annual Hospice lighting of the Love Tree will take place in memory of loved ones who have passed on. This will be followed by a memorial service.

Events planned and confirmed for Monday, December 1 are:

- Downtown merchants will hold open houses at 4-5 p.m.

- Santa is to arrive on a fire engine at 5 p.m. at the Santa House near the Hoke library on North Main Street, where he will greet children for a brief period of time.

- The Love Light ceremony will

take place at 6:30 p.m. at the Library Stage. At the same time the tree lights up, decorations along Main Street will be lit for the first time.

- After the lighting of the Love Light tree, a memorial service, Serenaded by Angels, will take place at Raeford Presbyterian Church at 7 p.m. This will be followed by a reception in the church fellowship hall.

### Visits planned

Santa plans to be at the Santa House during certain hours each Friday and Saturday until Christmas. Children may see him at 3-5 p.m. Fridays, December 5, 12 and 19; and at 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturdays, December 6, 13 and 20.

Parents are encouraged to take cameras and camcorders with them to record the occasions when their children speak with St. Nick.

In addition to visiting the Jolly Old Man in person, letters may be dropped into Santa's mailbox at the Santa House.



## Dec. 4 fish fry helps Share Your Christmas

Bonnie Johnson, Director of Hoke Emergency Liaison Program (H.E.L.P.), announces that this year's Share Your Christmas program will be funded in part by a fish fry conducted by Raz Autry, long-time supporter of H.E.L.P. and Share Your Christmas.

H.E.L.P. accepts donations "in honor of" or "in memory of" your loved ones or friends as well as anonymous donations to help with Share Your Christmas and other programs.

The fish fry will be held Thursday, December 4 from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. at the Edinborough Shopping Center. Fish plates will be served as eat-in or take-out and are \$5 each. Volunteers are needed for the fish fry as well as Share Your Christmas Day that will be Saturday, December 20.

For further information contact Johnson at 875-8857.

The H.E.L.P. Center is located at

120 North Main Street. The center operates a thrift store throughout the year to help fund its programs. Food and clothing are provided to persons referred by the Hoke County Department of Social Services and other agencies. H.E.L.P. buys food for the food pantry with proceeds from the sale of donated clothing, furniture, books, and other items for its programs as well as with funding from agencies like United Way, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Hoke County Ministerial Association and various churches.

H.E.L.P. assists thousands of people during the course of the year and has been conducting Share Your Christmas for 10 years now.

This year more than 260 needy children, 37 foster children and their families will receive toys, candy and fruit and other Christmas presents and dozens of seniors will receive Christmas presents as well.

## Educator Linda Steed joins ECU Hall of Fame

Linda Steed of Raeford was recently inducted into the East Carolina University Educators Hall of Fame.

Steed was selected for this honor because of the impact her service to education has had on the lives of others.

Steed's name and professional sketch will be on permanent display in the Speight Building at ECU. Her induction also helps make possible an endowment fund to provide scholarships to students in the College of Education.

Steed spent her entire educational career in Hoke Schools. She taught senior English for 16 years before entering supervision and administration in the positions of assistant prin-

icipal, principal, direction of curriculum and instruction. When she retired in 1999, she was director of accountability.

Selected as Hoke County Teacher of the Year in 1985 and Jaycees Young Educator of the Year in 1979, she is a member of the Alpha Tau Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma Society, an honor educational sorority.

Congratulating her, William E. Shelton, ECU chancellor, thanked Steed for her service and her role in the education profession.

An induction ceremony was held October 25 in Fletcher Recital Hall. The guest speaker was Betty Debnam Hunt, founder of the Mini Page.

### Hoke County Parks & Recreation

## Coaches meeting set

There will be a coaches meeting on Monday, December 1 at 7 p.m. in the Senior Room (Old National Guard Armory Building). Anyone interested in coaching in the Hoke Parks & Recreation

Winter Basketball Program for Novice (ages 7-9), Midget (ages 10-12), and Junior (ages 13-15), are asked to attend this meeting.

### Miami

If you or someone you know are still interested in this trip for February 29 - March 5, 2004, please note the deadline for the first deposit will be Monday, December 1. The total price: \$419 per person double occupancy; \$539 per person triple occupancy; and \$568 for one person single occupancy.

### Senior Bingo

The seniors continue to enjoy bingo, the next session will be on Wednesday, December 10 at 10 a.m. - noon at the Hoke County Library with prizes and refreshments.

### Senior bowling

The seniors continue to enjoy bowling every Thursday at Sandhills Bowling Lanes in Aberdeen.

### Shopping trip

If you are interested in going to the Smithfield Outlet Mall for some last-minute Christmas shopping, call Patricia Graham by Friday December 5.

For further information, call 875-4035 Monday through Friday.



Top photo, Santa checked his mailbox after visiting with children last year. Bottom photo, City employee Lacy Locklear puts up the downtown holiday decorations.

## Gas prices, travels increase

Gasoline prices will be slightly higher this Thanksgiving holiday weekend and so will the number of North and South Carolinians traveling more than 50 miles from home, according to AAA Carolinas.

Gas prices are a nickel higher than last year's in North Carolina and four cents higher in South Carolina. The average gas price is \$1.431 in North Carolina and \$1.375 in South Carolina.

"Crude oil prices jumped 5 percent last Tuesday, and retailers are likely to start hiking prices in anticipation of paying higher wholesale prices in the next three to four weeks," said David E. Parsons, president and CEO of AAA Carolinas.

About 1.06 million North Carolinians and 522,000 South Carolinians are expected to hit the roads this holiday weekend, up about 3 percent from the 1.54 million expected to travel last year.

Averages for a gallon of regular, self-serve, unleaded gas in South Carolina range from \$1.408 in Myrtle Beach to \$1.34 in Spartanburg. And in North Carolina, the most expensive gas was in Boone with \$1.482 and the least expensive was at \$1.389 in High Point. The national average of \$1.498.



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