

The News-Journal

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50¢

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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

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Two schools ask board to remain year-round

South Hoke, Sandy Grove would be Hoke's only 2 not switching to traditional

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Principal Tona Jacobs and teacher Tony Hunt from South Hoke Elementary School and Principal Donald Dawson of Sandy Grove Elementary School present-

ed proposals to the Board of Education last evening on why they should remain on a year-round calendar schedule.

Hoke School Superintendent Allen Strickland will make a recommendation to the board on April 13 whether the two schools should be granted special conces-

sions. If the board approves the requests from South Hoke and Sandy Grove, seven other elementary and middle schools will still begin a traditional calendar next year. Hoke High School and Turlington Alternative School are already using a traditional calendar.

"The board will have 30 days to review these requests," Strickland said.

School Board Chairman Russell Smith asked the two principals to provide more information on the costs involved in operating the two schools on a year-round basis. He also questioned if any school

resource personnel could be shared to cut expenses.

In September, the school board voted to convert all Hoke schools using the year-round schedule to a traditional calendar. This conformed to Gov. Easley's (See *YEAR-ROUND*, page 5A)

The bet's off at Stoneybrook

Bill won't pass in time to allow wagering this year, but maybe later

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

A proposed bill to establish wagering at the Stoneybrook Steeplechase in Hoke County has been reined in temporarily, according to N.C. Senator David Weinstein.

Weinstein is co-sponsoring a state bill to legalize betting one day a year for the famous horseracing event in western Hoke.

Stoneybrook traditionally attracts at least 16,000 people annually, but Weinstein said that

number could double if wagering is allowed.

However, Weinstein's bill has stalled in the senate, preventing betting at Stoneybrook for this April.

Five Points resident Barbara Pond, the Rev. Rebecca O'Berry, Rosie Stephens, and Annie Corbett continue to lead an opposition movement against gambling at the event. Pond says it is the "wrong kind" of development for Hoke. This, in spite of a written endorsement by the county commissioners who believe limited wagering at Stoneybrook would help economic development here.

"Senator Weinstein removed it (bill) again from the calendar and sent it back to commerce 'to make a better bill,'" she said. "Of course, we do not want a better bill; we want a dead bill.

"You cannot make gambling better; you cannot make wrong better, and you cannot make wrong to be right — ever."

Weinstein said if anyone objects to wagering, they (See *BET'S OFF*, page 10A)



From left are Robie Currie, owner of the Wide Open Motorcross Park, and sons Ryan, Austin and Logan.

New motocross track opens today

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

The new Wide Open Motorcross Park opens today in southern Hoke County, transforming rural farmland into a daring dirt bike

racing track, according to promoter Robie Currie, owner of the venture.

Motorcross racing will be held at the corner of Old Maxton and Chisholm roads. It is located between U.S. 401 and Highways 211 south of Raeford.

"We are starting out with practice runs," Currie said. "Eventually, the motorcycle riders will be going bar to bar in racing events.

"They get all wound up when those motorcycles rev up. Everybody loves to ride." (See *MOTOCROSS*, page 6A)

This Week



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Demolition of old Raeford Hotel: on again

By PAT ALLEN WILSON
Editor

Raeford will pay \$280,000 to have the old Raeford Hotel taken down and the material removed to a landfill in Sampson County.

City Manager Richard Douglas told city

councilmen at Monday night's meeting a contract had been drawn up with D.H. Griffin of Wilmington for the building's demolition. The council recessed to meet again today to look over the contract for expected approval.

"It wasn't easy getting them down to that price," Douglas said of the contract. "Last

week I thought it was going to be \$350,000. I'm glad to see it come down."

The building's removal proved more costly than anticipated because of asbestos in its depths. Originally it was thought the asbestos material could be identified and disposed of at a hazardous waste landfill. The remainder of the building would be

torn down, and that material taken to a construction and demolition landfill.

However, after talking with state environmental officials, it was determined all materials will have to be removed to a hazardous waste disposal site.

Douglas was particularly con- (See *HOTEL*, page 4A)

County seeks to partner with state for access to land

By VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

The Hoke board of commissioners gave their blessings Monday evening to the Clean Water Management Trust Fund to provide state grants for two conserva-

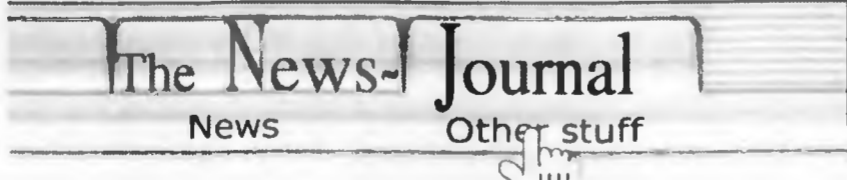
tion projects in the county. One could potentially provide public recreational opportunities, according to Commissioner Jean Powell.

In a separate request to the board, Rockfish developer David Averitte did not get a reprieve on a lawsuit filed by the

county concerning Twelve Oaks North subdivision. The board is still suing him to bring an access road up to Department of Transportation standards.

Grant requests
Hoping to provide more public recreation, the board is urging Clean Water to

provide public access to one of the preserves closest to Raeford. The board voted unanimously to request they partner on the project sponsored by the N.C. Wildlife Commission, which would not require any county funding. The project calls for (See *LAND ACCESS*, page 7A)



By KEN MACDONALD
Publisher

I was on a road trip this weekend while my wife and daughter were skydiving for the first time. I'm sure theirs is an interesting story, but because I wasn't there, and because there are no photos or movies of the incident, I can't tell it. I can picture it, but I can't tell that either.

No, I was off doing something far more adventurous—a middle school retreat. And

there we were, sitting around the table in the dining hall, when the subject of peanut butter came up.

Just the mention of the words reminds me of the day I was home making lunch and had just tossed the peanut butter-slobbered knife into the sink when my wife walked through the kitchen and said, "When I get home that peanut butter had better be put up."

I was feeling adventurous that day (See *OTHER STUFF*, page 9A)

Hoke student is Park Scholar

Ashley Marie McPhail, a senior at Hoke County High School, has been named a North Carolina State University's Park Scholar for fall 2005. She was among 46 students selected for this award.

Ashley is the daughter of Linda McPhail of Shannon and the late Richard "Ricky" McPhail.

Ashley, who plans to major in biochemistry, is parliament- (See *SCHOLAR*, page 6A)



Ashley McPhail (right) with mom Linda McPhail (left) and Hoke High Principal Mark Smith.