

The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

75¢

No. 51 Vol. 100

RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, March 8, 2006

2 Hoke teachers charged with child porn

BY VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Two schoolteachers have been suspended with pay for 30 days after they were arrested by the Fayetteville Police Department a week ago for allegedly possessing and distributing child pornography

videos over the Internet.

Hoke interim school superintendent Don Steed said he would like to have recommended to the board that teachers Ronald Dennison and Christian Alvin Baumgart be terminated, but said he "could not."

"We were told by our school board attorney that we need to wait

until they have received due process from the law," Steed said during a special called board meeting last evening. "I immediately suspended the teachers last week when we learned of their arrests."

Discussing the personnel issue in a closed session last evening, the school board did not publicly com-

ment on the pair's arrest.

The scandal involving suspects Dennison, an East Hoke Middle School teacher, and Baumgart, a Hoke High chorus teacher, has "shocked and concerned" local parents and school staff, according to one school official. (See **TEACHERS**, page 7A)



Baumgart Dennison

Palmer Street extension faces delay

Leaders fight for project

BY VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

For the second year in a row, the state Department of Transportation may postpone the long-awaited Palmer Street extension start-up date. The unpublished 2007-2013 Transportation Improvement Plan may push the project from 2006 to beyond 2008.

The proposed project would connect Highway 211 West with a bypass beyond East Palmer to Highway 20 on to Interstate-95 at the St. Pauls exit. It would alleviate congestion of commercial traffic in downtown Raeford and enhance economic development, according to Hoke Economic Developer Don Porter.

"This would be entirely detrimental to our plans for the Hoke County Regional Industrial Park on Highway 20 to postpone this project," Porter said. "We have been hearing rumors that Palmer Street is still not going to be extended as soon as we thought."

(See **PALMER STREET**, page 8A)



Junior Miss Lumbee Alexis Jones (right) sings at an opening ceremony for the Boys and Girls Club of the Lumbee Tribe established at South Hoke. Above, children enjoy the festivities. See story on page 5A. (Photos by James A. Wilson)



This Week



**Mystery cloaks
Bowmore school**
page 1B

**Teachers teach
teachers**
page 4B

**Smith takes
Campbell job**
page 3A

**Williams named
to Human Relations
Board**
page 5A

Index

Births.....3B
Calendar.....2B
Classifieds.....7,8B
Deaths.....8A
Editorials.....2A
Legals.....5-6B
Religion.....2B
Schools.....4B
Socials.....3B
Sports.....4A
Weddings.....3B

We're on the web at
www.thenews-journal.com
Read by 3,000 each week

Commissioners support trade for Medicaid bill

BY VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

Hoke's board of commissioners unanimously supported a resolution generated by Scotland County's commissioners, agreeing to relinquish one cent of Scotland and Hoke's sales tax revenue to the state.

If the N.C. General Assembly heeds the wishes of a number of counties, a trade-off will be negotiated with the state so counties will avoid paying future Medicaid tabs of its citizens, according to Commission Chairman

Bobby Wright.

North Carolina is one of the few remaining states that mandates counties must be responsible for Medicaid bills incurred by disabled, senior citizens and low income families. This has created dissension among counties toward the state's policy not to contribute funds toward Medicaid.

Hoke's portion, required to be paid annually toward Medicaid, totals approximately \$2.3 million. Hoke Department of Social Services interim director Barbara Brooks estimates that figure could increase by 8 percent

next year.

"Medicaid is the biggest county subsidy," Brooks said. "We believe we are running on target, but we are running a little over two million dollars this year."

"Medicaid will not go down. We have increased our caseloads."

Commissioner Charles V. Daniels supports the resolution, but criticizes the state for not paying for Medicaid "outright."

"I think it is a fancy political way for the state to get out of not having to pay for Medicaid," Daniels, a member

of the Social Services board, said. "But we have to lose some revenue. It will probably still be worth it because our taxpayers won't have to bear the extra burden of paying for our Medicaid costs."

Wright said Senator Tony Rand of Cumberland County has proposed the measure to the N.C. General Assembly. Although it is being considered, Hoke Commissioner Chairman Bobby Wright said, some counties are protesting the idea. Wealthier counties "stand to lose" more revenue from returning (See **MEDICAID**, page 6A)



Nelson Tyler (right) is arrested during a Thursday raid.

Sixtieth drug raid nets cocaine

BY VICTORIANA SUMMERS
Staff writer

A raid targeting a suspected crack house in Shannon marked the 60th drug raid conducted by the Hoke Sheriff's Office under the administration of Hoke Sheriff Hubert Peterkin, he said.

The Hoke sheriff's narcotics unit surrounded the North Shannon Road residence of Nelson Tyler Jr. last Thursday,

executing a search warrant. Several Pit bull dogs and a Rottweiler protected Tyler's compound that included a doublewide mobile home and new storage buildings. Drug agents also seized his all-terrain vehicles and other vehicles.

"What's going on?" a curious neighbor, driving up in her car to the chained driveway at 1045 N. Shannon Road, said. "Was there a shooting? I was

just wondering."

A Hoke Sheriff's detective offered no information. "Miss," he said. "If you persist with asking questions about this situation and remain on this property, I will have to request you to be searched." Posthaste, the unidentified motorist backed out of the driveway.

When Tyler's residence was searched, Hoke drug en (See **RAID**, page 6A)



BY KEN MACDONALD
Publisher

Seven thousand miles away—nearly half way around the world—and would you believe all the people in Pakistan—just like us here—go counterclockwise around their walking tracks? Other revelations: there are tall people there (but not many bald), and the people are not out to kill all Americans, but are actually quite kind, gracious and

hospitable. Well, to men at least.

My wife and I were in Pakistan for the last two weeks to visit our son. In October, when an earthquake struck an area of the mountains just north of the capital city of Islamabad, my cousin, Lauren Mueenuddin sent out a plea for help to our extended family. She has lived in Pakistan for years with her husband, a Pakistani doctor, and suddenly found herself in the middle (See **OTHER STUFF**, page 5A)

Groups seek AIDS awareness

BY SONIA JACKSON
The News-Journal intern

Action, said.

"There are numerous people in this county that are infected by this disease, now, and they don't even know they are infected. So, it's so important to educate the public, inform them about the affects of this disease and early diagnosis," Rozier said.

The organizations understand the meaning and importance of outreach, Rozier said. They go out into the community and talk to people in a nonjudgmental way about (See **AIDS**, page 7A)

Organizations such as the Hoke County Health Department and the Cape Fear Regional Bureau are doing what they can to spread awareness and information about HIV/AIDS to the Hoke County community.

It's "very important" to keep the community abreast of HIV/AIDS and how it affects the rural community, Ashley Rozier II, director of the Cape Fear Regional Bureau for Community