

The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

75¢

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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, October 26, 2011

Restaurant destroyed by weekend fire



The Kickin Chicken burned early Saturday.

2nd fire leaves Rockfish family homeless

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Two weekend fires destroyed a Raeford restaurant and a family's home in Hoke County.

The Kickin Chicken restaurant on Harris Avenue burned Saturday, fire officials reported. The Raeford Fire Department responded to the

call about 4:40 a.m. Saturday, City Fire Marshal Terry Tapp said. No one was injured in the blaze and it didn't threaten any of the surrounding buildings but the Kickin Chicken structure itself is a loss.

The State Bureau of Investigation joined Tapp in examining the building but the damage to the roof was so severe that parts of it are

still falling in.

"It's really too unsafe to get inside it to see," Tapp said.

Officials could not determine what caused the fire but don't have reason to suspect any wrongdoing. The owner was in the building until about 3 a.m. and didn't notice anything wrong at that time, Tapp said.

The fire was hard for responders to fight because several owners added on to the original building, which used to be a pizza restaurant

and then later became a club. The fire started in the attic, but with multiple additions to the building, firefighters had to search through several attic spaces to locate the source of the problem.

"Basically, the fire was hidden on us for a while, then it finally showed its face through the roof," Tapp said.

Although the roof was destroyed, the interior of the building didn't
(See FIRES, page 5A)

Hoke man shot in Fayetteville

Three charged with his murder



Mitchell

McMillan

McLean

Surlis

Fayetteville police charged three people with murdering a Hoke County High School graduate at a Fayetteville residence last week.

Guy Leon Mitchell, 19, was killed October 19 at a home on the 800 block of

Rembrandt Drive in Fayetteville. Police are investigating the case as a homicide.

Authorities have arrested Rajeen McMillan, 19, of the 3900 block of Clarkville Court, Fletcher (See MURDER, page 4A)

Blue named director of Parks and Rec.

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Longtime Hoke County Athletic Director Elgin Blue is now serving as the county's



Blue

new Parks and Recreation Director.

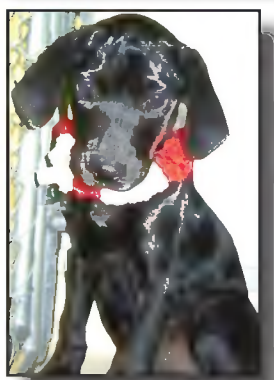
As director, Blue will oversee the budget and staff of the department that offers services for seniors and athletic opportunities for more than 900 children in the county. Blue
(See BLUE, page 5A)

SCARY



Three-year-old Isabella Clark (right) acts like she's never seen a scary skeleton, even though it's her brother, six-year-old David Murray. The children of Dusti and Ray Clark, they were among the dozens who took part in The News-Journal's annual Halloween costume contest. Winners are listed in a special publication, inside this week's paper.

This Week



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Mother disputes son's arrest in high school fight

Enlists help from state senator Pridgen, who says he'll look into bullying, fighting

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

When a fight broke out at Hoke County High School September 19, Jarret Smith, 16, was one of 11 students arrested and placed on long-term suspension from school.

However, the teenager claims he wasn't directly involved and his mother, Natasha Smith, said he didn't take part in the fight because a teacher physically restrained him in the courtyard of the

Gibson cafeteria where the fight took place. Now Smith, a pre-law student at UNC-Pembroke, plans to fight the school system's decision in court.

"My son never threw a punch, never took a punch, got held back by a teacher, and got suspended for a year," she said.

In addition to suspending several students for a short period, the school system also suspended 11 students for one year for their alleged involvement in the fight. Those students will still have educational opportunities while they are suspended,

Superintendent Dr. Freddie Williamson said. This fall the students can continue their studies from home through the online Odyssey system and will be allowed to enroll at Turlington Alternative School in January. They will be eligible to re-enroll at Hoke High in August of 2012.

That's not what Smith wants for her son, she said. She plans to take her children out of Hoke County Schools and home school them after she completes her own degree, but first,
(See SCHOOL FIGHT, page 4A)

OTHER STUFF

BY KEN MACDONALD

Ethanol as Hoke's economic salvation might not have worked out so well, but I think another long shot is worth another look: tourism. I say this after having spent a few days in the desert of southern California where we went to check up on a family member, and having seen what chamber-of-commerce wording can do for a bad situation.

My wife booked us at a remote

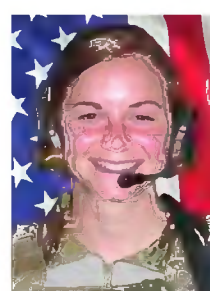
rustic hot springs ranch resort, where you can renew your health without the distractions of modern life.

That's the chamber-of-commerce take.

What you get is a primitive cottage with no Internet or TV in the middle of nowhere where they pipe poop-smelling water into your shower.

"It's just the hot water that smells," my wife said to comfort me and persuade me to finally bathe 48
(See OTHER STUFF, page 5A)

Officer killed in Afghanistan



The North Carolina National Guard announced 1st Lt. Ashley White, 24, of Raeford died Saturday near Kandahar, Afghanistan after sustaining wounds

from multiple improvised explosive devices that were detonated near her position.

White, who was from Ohio, was assigned to the Goldsboro-based Company C, 230th Brigade Support Battalion of the 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team.

"We are grieving with her family today. Our prayers are with them during this difficult time. She was a fine soldier who never shied away from the tough jobs. We will miss her," said Maj. Gen. Greg Lusk, adjutant general of North Carolina
(See WHITE, page 3A)