

The News-Journal

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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

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Sheriff's office raids Butterball farm

District Attorney sends in investigators in response to animal rights group's charges of cruelty

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Hoke County deputies searched a Shannon-area Butterball turkey farm last week seeking evidence of animal cruelty after the District Attorney's office received video that an animal protection group allegedly shot undercover at the farm.

Mercy for Animals, described on the group's site as a non-profit group dedicated to preventing cruelty to farm animals, released a video that showed people kicking, throwing and hitting turkeys. The video also showed turkeys with large open and bleeding wounds.

Hoke County Sheriff's Office deputies and a veterinarian entered

Butterball Farm 11 on the 4200 block of North Shannon Road at 8 a.m. December 28 and spent hours going through an estimated 2,500 birds, checking them for evidence of animal cruelty, Capt. John Kivett reported. The video appeared to have been taken at the Shannon farm, he said.

"They provided us with this infor-

mation, we started an investigation, drafted a search warrant," he said.

The Sheriff's Office is still investigating and has not yet filed any charges in the case, although officials arrested one person on an unrelated charge. That person had a warrant out for his arrest, Kivett said. The investigators plan to discuss the collected evidence Wednesday, he said.

The video shows people kicking and stomping on the birds, dragging them by wings and necks, throwing them onto the ground or into transport trucks. Some scenes in the video show a person hitting the turkeys with what appeared to be a metal bar. The video also showed injured turkeys with missing feathers. (See RAID, page 4A)



Joshua Buie, a fifth grader at Hawk Eye Elementary, examines the Scorpion Drone 9000 during a RoboHawks club meeting.



Top: Buie pretends to be a target for the robot, when really it's the red ball. Bottom: Students gather around for a test run of their robot. (Catharin Shepard photos)

Burned florist shop torn down

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

A demolition crew last month bulldozed the remains of a downtown Raeford landmark gutted by fire two years ago.

The Calico Corner florist's shop at the corner of Main Street and Campus Avenue was one of the oldest buildings in the city, shopowner Gene Chalaire said. An interior fire in January 2010 damaged the building beyond repair.

"It's better than that burned-up building sitting there, but that building's got a lot of history in this town," Chalaire said. "It's kind of nostalgia and historic to a lot of people. A lot of people have mentioned they hate to see it go. It's one of the oldest buildings in town."

The owner knew months ago he was going to tear down the building, but he waited on a few details before (See FLORIST, page 4A)

RoboHawks build science skills...and robots

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

The RoboHawks were on the move. "Everybody gather round. Come, children, come," fifth grader Joshua Buie called, waving his teammates to a cleared space on the floor. A dozen Hawk Eye Elementary students crowded around the Scorpion Drone 9000 for yet another test run. The scorpion-shaped robot was programmed to walk forward and then hit a red rubber ball with its long stinger-tail. "It has an eye so it can see the color," Joshua

said, pointing out part of the apparatus.

But when the robot inched forward on its arachnid-like legs, the tail didn't attack.

"No, that's not right," a student exclaimed. Troubleshooting and problem solving are also part of being a RoboHawk.

Hawk Eye Elementary's robotics club has been around for five years and is helping more students learn about science and technology. The club, linked with the First Lego League educational robotics program, lets the students get their hands dirty building and programming their own robots. Then it pits their creations

against robots pieced together by other schools' clubs.

When most Hawk Eye Elementary students are long gone for the day, teacher Mario Malabunga's classroom transforms into a child-sized mad scientist's lair. Students break into groups and scatter around the room, some heading for the computers to download plans and programs. Others dig into boxes for pieces of wiring and fresh battery packs while a third group watches their latest creation slowly come to life.

(See ROBOHAWKS, page 4A)

Nature Conservancy acquires land

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

A North Carolina nature protection group recently acquired 98 acres of land in Hoke County and plans to turn the property into a habitat for native trees and wildlife.

Part of the Quewiffle Township will become home to thousands of longleaf pine trees and native grasses this spring as the Nature Conservancy takes charge of the L.F. Bass Jr. tract of land.

"This is part of our effort to restore wildlife habitat across the Sandhills," project director Ryan Elting said. "We're improving conditions for red-cockaded woodpeckers, fox squirrels and other plants and animals that compose this diverse ecosystem."

The Conservancy is a member of the N.C. Sandhills Conservation Partnership, which protects and restores

the longleaf pine ecosystem across the region. The partnership has conserved more than 25,000 acres and will (See PROTECTED, page 3A)



A pond on the 98-acre tract acquired by the Conservancy.

OTHER STUFF

By KEN MACDONALD

Sometime since high school when it started falling out, and after trying to raise children, when it came out in clumps, I'm sure at one time or another I prayed for more hair. But be careful what you pray for. Ben left his dog with us for a while, and now dog hair is everywhere.

Roomba, the robot vacuum cleaner, worked on the floors for about 15 minutes on Fiona's second day with us,

stopped in her tracks with some sort of robot-ial infarction, let out a mournful series of beeps, and refused to move farther. I had to operate to the point of removing hair and grease-entangled gears from her crankcase. Close call. Dog hair—Adjustment Number One. (Instead of New Year's resolutions, I make adjustments.)

But hair is not the only thing Fiona brought to us.

Excessive security springs to mind. (See OTHER STUFF, page 4A)

Cape Fear out of jeopardy

Surveyors completed their survey December 22 at Cape Fear Valley Medical Center and lifted the hospital's Immediate Jeopardy status.

The surveyors focused on Cape Fear Valley's discharge process for inpatients and patient assessment in the Emergency Department, according to a release from the hospital system.

"The surveyors were very impressed with our comprehensive discharge assessment process. They were likewise complimentary of our Emergency Department improve-

ments," Cape Fear Valley Chief Executive Officer Michael Nagowski said in a statement.

In December, Emergency Department volumes averaged 331 patients a day with a peak of 382 on Monday, December 19. Despite the high volumes, the percentage of patients who left the Emergency Department without being seen has dropped to less than one percent, a rate that exceeds national best practices, the hospital announced. (See CAPE FEAR, page 4A)



Bronwyn Brinegar with Aryanna.

Raeford baby is FirstHealth's first of the year

A little girl born to a Raeford mother was the first baby of 2012 welcomed at FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital on New Year's Day.

Aryanna Dakotah Craven was born at 1:55 a.m. Sunday, the hospital announced. Her mother, Bronwyn Brinegar of Raeford, said the baby is the third person in her family born on New Year's Day. Aryanna weighed 8 pounds, 12 ounces at birth.

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