

The News-Journal

If it happened, it's news to us

75¢

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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, March 14, 2012

Teacher resigns over lunch controversy

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

The teacher of a four-year-old child who ate school-provided chicken nuggets instead of her home-packed lunch one day in January has resigned from her job.

Margaret Maynor, a pre-kindergarten teacher at West Hoke Elementary, was suspended with

pay February 23, according to Hoke County Schools. The school system released information Thursday that confirmed rumors of the suspension and also showed that Maynor "voluntarily resigned" from her job February 28.

Maynor taught the pre-k class where three children who brought their lunches from home were sent through the lunch line in January

and got entirely new lunches instead of being given supplementary foods such as a carton of milk as directed by state Pre-K policy. A parent contacted Rep. G.L. Pridgen's office, and the story soon sparked a nationwide debate over federal Department of Agriculture recommendations and the state policy requiring pre-kindergarten programs to follow those guidelines. The policy only affects

children attending pre-kindergarten and does not affect students in kindergarten through high school.

A letter sent home to parents of children in the classroom, dated February 28, informed parents that Maynor would be replaced with a substitute.

"As I am sure you are aware, we recently experienced an unfortunate situation where a failure to follow

district policy resulted in the substitution of a Pre-K student's lunch at West Hoke Elementary School. This letter is to inform you that Ms. Emma Thomas will be a substitute teacher" in the classroom. The substitute would serve as a teacher in the classroom "until we can bring resolution to this issue," the letter said.

Initially, Superintendent Dr. (See RESIGNS, page 4A)

N.C. senate race attracts two more



Allen Thomas Jr.
Running for: State Senate, District 21
Status: Candidate
Experience: Not previously elected
Education: Degrees from ECU
Position: Paid



Curtis Worthy
Running for: State Senate, District 21
Status: Candidate
Experience: Served on Fayetteville City Council
Education: Bachelor's from Fayetteville State
Position: Paid

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Hoke County native Allen Thomas Jr. announced last week he plans to seek election to the North Carolina state Senate in District 21.

Thomas, a Democrat and the youngest candidate in the race at 25 years old, said he decided to run for election to better support education.

"I think it's time for (See THOMAS, page 4A)

This Week



Hoke High opens tennis courts
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Not forgotten



Flags for Fallen Military places a flag at the home of a Hoke soldier who died in Operation Iraqi Freedom. (Contributed photo)

Flag placed in fallen soldier's honor

Flags for Fallen Military - NC honored the late Pfc. Gifford Hurt last week by placing a flagpole and American flag at his family's home in Hoke County.

The group honored Hurt in 2011 by installing a flagpole and flag, but since then, Hurt's family relocated to a new home and was unable to bring the base

of the flagpole with them. Flags for Fallen Military placed a flagpole and flag at their new home March 10 to make sure Hurt will continue to be honored and remembered.

Hurt was killed at the age of 19 after being thrown from a Humvee involved in a rollover crash in January 2010 while serving in Op-

eration Iraqi Freedom. He was the first North Carolina service member honored by Flags for Fallen Military.

In a message posted to the Flags for Fallen Military Facebook group, state organizer Brian Adams expressed his thanks to the family.

"I want to thank the family of PFC Hurt for

this humbling opportunity to honor his memory and ensure they know we will never forget! Remember, Freedom is NEVER Free," he wrote.

Flags for Fallen Military, a group based out of Minnesota, has placed flags all over the country in honor of fallen military men and women.

Man accused of trying to kill sheriff committed to hospital

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

The man accused of attempting to run over Hoke County Sheriff Hubert Peterkin outside Western Sizzlin in 2010 spent nearly two years in jail before being involuntarily committed to Cherry Hospital and still argues that the charges were false.

Dennis Howard Newson was charged with felony assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill, felony assault on a government official and two counts of misdemeanor communicating threats in March 2010, according to law enforcement records. Newson contends that although he had a verbal confrontation with the sheriff outside the restaurant, he never tried

to run Peterkin over.

Newson made multiple claims against the sheriff and others in the legal system, including his belief that the Sheriff's Office operates drug houses and that Peterkin owes him money from a previous lawsuit. The charges against him, his subsequent jail time and now his committal to a mental hospital are all just ways for

the sheriff to keep from having to address the lawsuit, Newson believes.

"They've thrown me indefinitely into a mental institution for no reason whatsoever, claiming that I'm psychotic," he said.

There are tapes that show what happened that day but some of them have been altered, and photo stills (See COMMITTED, page 5A)

OTHER STUFF

By KEN MACDONALD

On a recent trip, I sat on the plane beside a couple from Louisiana on their way to Cary for a cotton convention. The wife was sitting beside me and appeared to be intelligent, gentle, and kind. When I convinced her she did not want to attempt an afternoon trip from Raleigh to the Biltmore House in Asheville, the conversation turned to her occupation—she is a fourth grade teacher.

For the better part of an hour, with a little prodding, I was able to find that she is just

like most other teachers I know—deeply discouraged, but plodding on out of respect for their profession, love of children, and hope that somehow the system will get better. I would also put her in denial—she knew there's little hope for her district, but better not dwell on that. And like most teachers I know, she feels a little guilty.

I think that last thing is because deep down they've bought the line we've handed them, that if they were just better at their job and tried a little harder, they could fix this mess. (See OTHER STUFF, page 4A)

Red Cross seeks local help

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Whether it's a family burned out of their home, a soldier serving overseas or a choking victim saved by a person trained in first aid, the American Red Cross provides a wide variety of services to people in Hoke County

and around the world.

March is Red Cross Month, and Highlands Chapter Director Victoria Raleigh hopes to make people aware of the different things the American Red Cross does to help the community.

It might be difficult (See RED CROSS, page 4A)