

# The News-Journal

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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

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## Cape Fear breaks ground on hospital

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

For Hoke County residents, it's one hospital completed and one in progress. Cape Fear Valley Health System broke ground Monday on its

41-bed, full-service hospital now under construction behind Health Pavilion Hoke on Highway 401.

"We're so very proud to begin construction on Hoke County's first full-service hospital," Cape Fear Valley Chief Executive Officer Mike Nagowski said during

the ceremony.

The 41-bed hospital will have three floors, two operating rooms and a 16 bay emergency department. The hospital will also offer the only maternity ward in the county complete with four birthing suites, which will be capable

of delivering babies and performing Caesarian sections.

The Cape Fear Valley hospital is being funded through loans from the United States Department of Agriculture's Rural Development program. The USDA is providing \$30 million in a direct

loan and over \$27.3 million in a guaranteed loan to help with construction of the new hospital. In total, the USDA has invested over \$90 million in the entire Cape Fear Valley health development in Hoke, agency officials said. (See HOSPITAL, page 6A)



**Cruise-in**  
A classic car fan enjoys the display of shiny vehicles old and new at the Raeford Cruisers cruise-in on Main Street Saturday night. The cruise-in featured vehicles from many different decades, as well as music, food and fellowship. The Home Food grill opened to offer to-go refreshments. Larry Williams organized the cruise-in. For more information on joining the Raeford Cruisers for their next event, contact Williams at 904-3230.

## Investigators still probing murders

Two murders that happened last week in Hoke County are still under investigation with no arrests yet, according to the Hoke County Sheriff's Office.

In two separate and unrelated murders, a 16-year-old Hoke High student and a 28-year-old man from Shannon were shot and killed.

De'Andre "Papa" Ricketts, 16, was shot dead at a friend's birthday party on the 800 block of South Bethel Road in the early morning hours of October 13. Sheriff Hubert Peterkin reported that investigators believe several people fired multiple shots from weapons. Ricketts' mother, Sharon Murchison, said her son was shot in the crossfire.

Chad Lynn Blanks, 28, who lived with family in Robeson County – not on Goose Pond Road as previously reported in The News-Journal – was shot once in the back and died on the way to the hospital on October 14. Sheriff Hubert Peterkin said the shooting may have been drug-related. The shooting took place on the 600 block of Goose Pond Road, according to the Sheriff's Office.

Investigators continue seeking information in the two cases. Anyone with information is asked to call the Hoke County Sheriff's Office at 875-5111.

## Careful, 'Halloweenies' hit the streets Thursday

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

Fall is in the air and candy is on the minds of youngsters as several organizations in Hoke work to provide fun, safe Halloween activities for local children.

Trick or treating for Raeford and Hoke County will be from 6-8 p.m. on Thursday, October 31. Several area churches (See HALLOWEEN, page 4A)

## Names to be added to memorial

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

The names of two young soldiers killed in action in recent wars will be added to the veterans' memorial in front of the Hoke County Courthouse this fall. Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 10

Commander George Balch asked the Hoke County Board of Commissioners Monday for approval to place a new monument stone at the memorial. The board unanimously approved the motion made by Commissioner Ellen McNeill.

The Veterans Monument Committee, formed in the 1990s, worked to place

memorial markers in front of the courthouse on Main Street that included the names of local service members who were killed in action.

"At the time we placed the monument, we knew that we would probably have to place another monument stone out there," (See MONUMENT, page 6A)

## He had to fend off bear with baseball bat

By CATHARIN SHEPARD  
Staff writer

Dr. N.W. McPhatter and Eldress Artie McPhatter were married October 10, 1943 in Bennettsville, South Carolina and have stuck together through 70 years of raising children,

managing careers and enjoying life.

The couple celebrated their 70th anniversary last week with a party thrown by their family members, which include children Johnnie, Betty, Wesley and Helen, seven grandchildren and a great-grandchild.

The key to staying married?

"Don't go to bed angry," McPhatter said.

Early in their marriage, the couple lived in a two-bedroom log cabin in Georgia that had no running water. The first or second night they were there, McPhatter had to use a baseball bat to defend his wife and

child from a bear that tried to break into the cabin. The couple farmed cotton while they lived there.

Mrs. McPhatter gave birth to their second child in the cabin, during a snowstorm that sent snow through the roof. The attending doctor had to stay the night because of the conditions. The McPhatters moved to Lumber Bridge in 1946, where their son Wesley was born. The couple bought their first vehicle, a Model A Ford, which they used to go to services at Lilly's Chapel Presbyterian (See ANNIVERSARY, page 6A)



The McPhatters have seen it all in 70 years of marriage.

### This Week

**Murder charge filed in Moore slaying**  
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### OTHER STUFF

By KEN MACDONALD

With predictions of cold weather looming, I knew it was time to roll up the sleeves and move plants into the greenhouse. Before I put my 15-year-old helper Ramon to work Saturday, I warned him to put on some gloves, because, I said, in the spring, when we were clearing the greenhouse, my son found a snake amongst the plants.

I didn't have to tell him but once.

In fact, we were both a tad on edge as we talked, cleaned, straightened, repaired and readied the greenhouse, then began moving plants.

I told him that two weeks ago, when I'd been in Cary doing a little raking at Leighanne's house, Ben scooped up a copperhead in the leaves. I'd read since then, I told Ramon, that copperheads don't usually deliver fatal bites unless you're really old and, before he could joke about my age, continued to assure him that a copperhead bite would ruin your whole day.

After a few minutes of this kind of talk, we both had (See OTHER STUFF, page 6A)



### Homecoming

Teeyah Williams (left) was named Hoke High School's Homecoming Queen and took a lap around Raz Autry Stadium Friday with Matt Dawson. Tobias Edge-Campbell (above) used his helmet to honor De'Andre "PaPa" Ricketts, a Hoke High student, who was killed last week. (Hal Nunn photos)

