

The News-Journal

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'Hokee Pokee' festival new for spring

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

The same team that produced the Hoke County centennial carnival last year is preparing for a new event: the Hokee Pokee Barbecue Festival/Contest, set for March 28-April 1.

The carnival next to East Hoke Middle School was such a success

last year that the committee decided to bring it back with a barbecue cook-off as the main event, committee member Hubert Bullard said.

"That's going to be a lot of fun, and very tasty, of course," he said.

Certified judges from the North Carolina Pork Council will pick the best barbecue in the whole hog and pork rib cook-off categories. About

20 contestants are expected to enter, Bullard said. The winner will receive prize money and a chance to compete at the state level.

After the judging and awards, people can buy tickets to sample the barbecue. Tickets will be \$1 each with a minimum purchase of 10 tickets.

The competition will also have

an "Anything But" contest, where cooks can prepare other kinds of barbecue.

"It has to be anything except pork," Bullard said.

Guests will also be able to buy plates from that contest category.

Money from the Hokee Pokee festival will benefit the Hoke County Schools' Exceptional Children

Department/Special Olympics and East Hoke Middle's student initiative program.

There are several new additions planned for the carnival this year. The event will feature a stage with local performers, and radio stations WKML and Foxy 99 will drop by to offer entertainment. Foxy 99 (See *FESTIVAL*, page 5A)



John Arnold, Alan Langley, David Conklin and Jerry Ritter of the Golf Capital Chorus barbershop quartet strike up a romantic song for Valentine's Day. (Ken MacDonald photo)



Caroline Shook fills out the paperwork for Bobby Wright (left) and James Leach, who are filing for office.

Three file for local election

The filing period for many local and state races opened Monday at noon, and several candidates were quick to stop by and officially file their bid for election.

Register of Deeds Onnie Dudley, County Commission Chairman James Leach and Commissioner

Bobby Wright were the first local candidates to file to run for re-election. The filing period runs from Feb. 13 to Feb. 29 for most races. The filing period for the soil and water conservation supervisor position is from June 11-July 6 and the filing (See *FILING*, page 5A)

Clark announces

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Hoke County Democratic Party Chairman Robert B. Clark III announced this week he will step down from his position to run for election to the state Senate.

Clark seeks to represent state Senate District 21, which now includes Hoke County and part of Cumberland County.

Sen. Eric Mansfield, a Democrat from Fayetteville, (See *CLARK*, page 5A)



Clark

'Won't you B-flat my valentine?'

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

When roses wilt, jewelry doesn't make the cut and candy isn't dandy enough for your valentine, whaddaya do?

A solution for the besotted and bewildered: you call the Golf Capital Chorus.

When only a song will suffice for your sweetheart, the Sandhills' own plaid-clad

harmonizers are there to bring a little baritone to brighten the day.

Alan Langley, John Arnold, David Conklin and Jerry Ritter have been performing barbershop quartet music for more than 30 years, but they introduced their craft to a new audience when they started performing for the spouses of military members who couldn't be there in person to share the love on Valentine's

Day. "One of our members is a military guy and he decided we should help with the troops, so he arranged for an email to be sent to everyone overseas and they give us the names and addresses of their wives," Langley said. "So we sing two songs and give them a rose and a box of chocolates." (See *VALENTINE*, page 5A)

This Week

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Child's lunch at West Hoke makes Rush Limbaugh State inspector deemed lunch from home not nutritious, gave her chicken nuggets

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

A child attending pre-kindergarten at West Hoke Elementary last month ate school-provided chicken nuggets instead of her home-packed lunch, and now her story has made the Atlanta Constitution and the Rush Limbaugh Show.

The four-year-old's homemade lunch of a turkey and cheese sandwich,

banana, potato chips and apple juice was supplemented with a school lunch tray including chicken nuggets when a state employee at the school deemed the child's lunch didn't meet state-mandated nutrition requirements.

The child's mother, who wished to remain anonymous out of concern for backlash against her child, reported receiving a bill for \$1.25 for the school lunch. The child told her mother she ate only three chicken nuggets

from the lunch tray and didn't touch her home-packed lunch, the mother reportedly informed state Rep. G.L. Pridgen's office.

"She couldn't understand that they tell her child her meal's not any good and then they end up giving her chicken nuggets," Pridgen said Tuesday. The incident was "very upsetting" for the child, the representative said.

The larger issue behind what happened lies with state rules sup-

posedly meant to promote nutrition for preschoolers. All lunches, even those brought from home, served in pre-kindergarten programs are supposed to contain "milk, two or more fruits or vegetables, meat or meat alternative, bread or bread alternative," according to the state Division of Child Development and Early Education, a part of the Department of Health and Human Services. (See *NUGGETS*, page 5A)



Firefighters from Puppy Creek, Hillcrest and Rockfish fire stations put out a blaze Tuesday morning at this Stone Ridge subdivision home on Congaree Drive. The house was occupied but the homeowner was not there when the fire started, officials reported. Authorities were still investigating the cause.

Johnson named top fire chief

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Hoke County Fire Marshal and Emergency Management Director Maj. Freddy Johnson was recently named the state's top volunteer fire chief for his work with the Stony Point Fire Department in Cumberland County.

The North Carolina Association of Fire Chiefs honored Johnson as Volunteer Fire Chief of the Year at

the annual banquet February 4 in Concord. Johnson's family and association members managed to keep the announcement quiet until the banquet, so it was a big surprise, Association Director Kenneth Mullen said.

"Freddy's a very deserving guy and does a lot of great work for the state and I know he does in his community," Mullen said.

Johnson was one of four volunteer chiefs nominated for the (See *FIRE CHIEF*, page 5A)

