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Swim team, barbering new at high school

Swimmers will be bused to colleges, barbering program among first



Coach Blank

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

A new swimming and diving team and an on-campus school that will prepare students for careers as professional barbers are part of the new offerings at Hoke County

High School this year.

The Hoke County Board of Education approved last week plans to offer competitive swimming as a sport for high school students, with the long-term goals of adding diving to the schedule and eventually expanding to include younger

students.

Although Hoke County doesn't have a large public swimming pool available as a training facility, young athletes will still be able to hop in the water for practice at least twice a week at the aquatic facilities at the University of

North Carolina at Pembroke and St. Andrews University.

"While we don't have a facility, we can't let that stop us," Hoke County Schools Superintendent Dr. Freddie Williamson said.

Both of the universities plan to partner with the high school

to help make the team happen, and Hoke County Schools hired UNCP head swim coach Rhonda Blank to organize and coach the new team.

Blank has worked with the UNCP swim program since 2001 and is certified in (See *SWIMMING*, page 4)

Deputy cleared in shooting

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Hoke County District Attorney Kristy Newton released a report last week clearing Sheriff's Office Deputy Samuel Morant Jr. of any criminal wrongdoing in the 2014 fatal shooting of 33-year-old

Sandy McCall.

Morant shot and killed McCall during an altercation in the area of Rockfish Road and Highway 401 Business around 1 a.m. on May 31, 2014. The findings released Friday went into further detail about what happened that

(See *SHOOTING*, page 10)



Sandy J. McCall



Hoke High students make their way through smoke to class after it's determined an electrical fire is limited to a small room. (Catharin Shepard photo)

Students evacuate briefly for electrical fire at high school

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Students on the Gibson side of Hoke County High School were temporarily evacuated last week due to an electrical fire in a mechanical room at the

media center, according to a school official.

A short in the system was to blame for starting the fire, school building supervisor Charles Tapp said.

"An electrical panel shorted out," he said. "It

basically blew up and burned up the breaker that was in there."

The damage was restricted to the mechanical room and a small room adjacent to it at the rear of the building, located next (See *FIRE*, page 10)



A lot of Love

Silas Love brings the crowd to its feet with this shot late in the Bucks' game against Scotland County. The Bucks won in overtime 75-70. Story, page 5. (Hal Nunn photo)

Shook presented Order of the Long-Leaf Pine award

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Retired Hoke County Board of Elections Director Caroline Shook was in for a surprise Monday when she got a call asking her to come down to the office where she worked for more than 30 years.

Her family and friends were waiting with poll workers and local officials to celebrate her

decades of service to the community by presenting her with the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, the most prestigious civilian award presented by the North Carolina Governor's Office.

"This is incredible. I'm overwhelmed," Shook said upon receiving the honor.

Shook began working at the county elections office in 1984. When she started, there were fewer than 8,000 registered voters.

Today, there are over 32,000 people registered

to vote in Hoke County.

"It's a constant ongoing process, and I've enjoyed the work and seeing the progress in the county," she said.

Elections board Chairman Robert Vaughn and board secretary John Harry worked with North Carolina State Rep. Garland Pierce to seek the honor from the governor's office.

Shook has been the best elections director in (See *SHOOK*, page 4)



Sworn in

District Court Judge Michael A. Stone (right) was sworn in to office Thursdays at the Hoke County Courthouse Annex. Stone was elected to a second term in office last November. Chief District Court Judge Scott Brewer officiated.

Authorities try to identify suspect



Authorities are asking for help identifying this man.

Investigators with the Hoke County Sheriff's Office are seeking a man wanted for an armed robbery on New Year's

Even. An unknown gunman robbed and fired a shot at the victim on December 31 in Hoke County, according to authorities.

Officials obtained photographs from a security camera in a BP gas station on Skibo Road in Fayetteville that reportedly show

the suspect. Detectives are seeking the public's help in identifying and locating the man. He may have been riding in the front passenger seat of a small four-door grey vehicle, according to the sheriff's office.

Anyone with information that could help identify the suspect is asked to contact Capt. John Kivett at the Hoke County Sheriff's Office, (910) 875-3614.

This Week

Hoke Athletic Hall of Fame named
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