

### A \$50,000 Goal

Brunswick County's United Way campaign gets under way Saturday with a 'fix-up' project at local agencies. Page 14-A.

### In Gear Now...

The Trojans travel to Georgetown, fresh off a whopping 41-6 win. 7-B.



### Mind Your Business

The chambers of commerce, SBA and Brunswick Community College will help you during Business Development Week. 10-C.

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## Hill Enters Surprise Plea In Evans Murder; Sentence Is Life Plus 54



WILLIAM EARL HILL listens as Judge Orlando Hudson imposes the maximum sentence of life plus 54 years in prison after he confessed to charges of second-degree murder, kidnapping and armed robbery Monday in the abduction and shooting of Ronald Everett Evans of Ash last October.

BY ERIC CARLSON

Last October, DeWayne and Marian McCumbee were grief-stricken with the news that their 20-year-old son Ronald Evans had been murdered by two Shallotte teenagers.

Last month, they suffered through a three-week trial, re-living the night of his death in the same room with one of the killers, who eventually pleaded guilty to first degree murder.

Last Friday, District Attorney Rex Gore called the McCumbees to tell them that the second defendant wanted to plead guilty to a lesser charge of second-degree murder. Faced with another three weeks of painful testimony, they agreed.

Next Thursday, William Earl Hill, 18, of Blueberry Farm Road will spend the first of at least 23 birthdays in prison after receiving the maximum sentence of life plus 54 years for the kidnapping, armed robbery and murder of Ronald Evans.

Hill's last-minute plea bargain came as a surprise to defense attorneys William Fairley and James Payne, who had spent many hours

preparing for a capital murder trial scheduled to begin Tuesday. Instead, they stood on either side of Hill Monday morning as he told Judge Orlando Hudson that he was guilty of the three charges.

Gore said he was satisfied with the outcome, saying the judgment was "as good a sentence as we could have gotten under the circumstances, while fulfilling the family's desire not to have another trial."

He said that although the state's evidence was strong enough to support a first-degree murder conviction, it was doubtful that Hill would have received the death penalty.

Hill's accomplice in the abduction and murder, Bradley Tyrone King, 18, agreed to testify against his co-defendant as part of a plea bargain in which he also admitted being the one who pulled the trigger on Evans. King received a life sentence on the murder conviction.

Later this week, he is expected to be sentenced on his armed robbery charge, for which he could receive an additional 14 to 40 years.

Assistant District Attorney Lee

Bollinger said Monday that while he hesitates to predict the actions of the N.C. Department of Corrections, he expects that if King also receives the maximum sentence, he would spend "about six years" more prison time than Hill.

In the King trial, the state sought to prove that King and Hill approached Evans in the parking lot of a Shallotte pharmacy and stole his car at gunpoint. They forced him into the trunk and drove him to a dirt logging road north of town. There, Evans was led to the front of the car and shot twice in the leg and back.

Prosecutors contend that King and Hill abducted Evans so they could steal his car, and killed him after they realized that he recognized one of the two men.

After their arrest, both Hill and King gave statements admitting that they took Evans to the dirt road. But each one claimed the other did the shooting. The state's case was solidified when two witnesses in the first trial testified that they heard King admit that he was the one who pulled the trigger.

Both defendants could have faced the death penalty if a jury decided either that they acted together to kill Evans or that they were willing participants in a felony that resulted in his death.

Although he would not comment on the specifics of the state's case against Hill, Bollinger said statements made by King immediately after his trial provided new evidence for the second trial.

As a result, a grand jury last week handed down three new indictments against Hill, charging him with conspiracy to commit murder, kidnapping and armed robbery. The indictments name Hill's uncle, Otis Hill, as a co-conspirator in the murder.

Testimony in the King trial indicated that Otis Hill kept the 9mm handgun owned by his nephew and used by King in the shooting. State Bureau of Investigation agents said they recovered the weapon from Otis Hill's home after the murder.

Bollinger would not reveal the state's theory of Otis Hill's involvement in the case, noting that he has not been charged.

Gore said that he was not sure that the state would have prosecuted William Hill on the conspiracy charges. He said they were used largely as leverage to force a plea.

"It helped," Gore said.

A conviction on the conspiracy charges could have added another 30 years to Hill's sentence.

### PUBLIC HEARING SET SEPTEMBER 21

## Health Board Divided Over Proposed Smoking Ban

BY ERIC CARLSON

Deeply divided over a proposed smoking control ordinance, the Brunswick County Board of Health on Monday put off a vote on the controversial issue and scheduled a hearing to gauge public support for the measure.

The public forum will be held next Tuesday, Sept. 21, at 7 p.m. in the public assembly building at the county government complex in Bolivia.

Rules proposed by a health board committee would prohibit smoking in all public places except those specifically exempted. Those include private homes and clubs, state and federal facilities and hotels that have rooms with ventilation systems that prevent second-hand smoke from reaching non-smokers.

Beginning next year, the rules would limit smoking in all restaurants to smaller areas each year,

leading to a complete ban on July 1995. They would also prohibit smoking in all workplaces beginning Jan. 1, except in areas served by a separate ventilation system.

Opposition to the proposed ordinance surfaced immediately Monday, with health board members Don Warren, Bruce Quaintance and Patrick Newton all voicing concerns about the burden it would put on businesses.

"Who's going to monitor this?" asked Warren. "Does the health department have enough people and enough money in its budget to enforce it?"

Dr. Brad Kerr, who chaired the smoking committee, said the department would have to rely on the cooperation of business owners and would move to enforce the regulations only when a complaint is received.

"Our intent is not to give out a lot of fines," Kerr said. Our intent

*"Twenty years from now you might be telling me I can't eat eggs because of the cholesterol."*

—Patrick Newton

is to improve the health of people by allowing them not to be exposed to second-hand smoke."

The ordinance notes that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency classifies environmental tobacco smoke "as a Class A carcinogen and one of the few agents known to cause cancer in humans."

Newton insisted that it would be

unreasonable to require business and restaurant owners to police smoking by their customers.

"We're making a rule and asking someone else to enforce it," Newton said. "If they (health inspectors) go in and see someone smoking, they're not going to cite the individual. They're going to cite the owner. That's just not right."

Kerr said "third-party enforcement" is an accepted concept in the state, citing the "dram shop law" under which a bartender who serves alcohol to an intoxicated customer can be found liable if that person causes a traffic accident.

He said when a complaint is received from a customer or employee, inspectors would try to work with the manager or owner in an effort to improve compliance with the rules.

Dr. Jeffrey Mintz noted that the rules only require a business owner to make "reasonable efforts" at

controlling their patrons' smoking.

Quaintance said he had not heard convincing evidence that second-hand smoke poses a health hazard to nonsmokers. He questioned the law's requirement that smoking would be allowed only in areas with separate ventilation systems that would cost business owners thousands of dollars.

"Twenty years ago, if someone said we'd be here tonight talking about this, you'd think they were crazy," Quaintance said. "Twenty years from now you might be telling me I can't eat eggs because of the cholesterol. You just keep making rules. I disagree."

After an attempt to go through the proposed rules quickly became mired in disagreements, the board voted unanimously in favor of Warren's motion to hold a public hearing on the proposal "with no endorsement from the health board."

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## Hundreds Show Their Support For Detective Battling Cancer

BY ERIC CARLSON

When Floyd Kirby and Paul Dennis first started talking about holding a Brunswick County Law Enforcement Day, they planned it as an annual event to thank all local police and sheriff's deputies for their public service.

Kirby owns the Sizzlin Sirlain restaurant in Shallotte, while Dennis is a partner in Sea Trail Corp., a golf course development group in Sunset Beach. So they came up with the idea of inviting a hundred or so of their closest friends for a free dinner and a day of golf.

Plans were well under way when they heard about Lt. David Crocker, the Brunswick County Sheriff's Detective who was recently diagnosed with seninoma, a form of stomach cancer. They learned of the repeated trips he makes to Chapel Hill for expensive and debilitating chemotherapy treatments.

"We had just planned to offer all law enforcement people in the county a free dinner and a round of golf as a way to say thank you for all their hard work," said Kirby. "Then we heard about David and decided to ask for a donation to help with his medical expenses. I couldn't believe the response."

Last Wednesday (Sept. 7), more than 350 people showed up at Sea Trail golf course to play golf, to enjoy a barbecue dinner and to show their appreciation and support for an

*"I've knocked down doors. I've wrestled with suspects. I've been shot at. But I've never had anything kick me like this has.... But I'm learning how to cope with it."*

—David Crocker

officer universally regarded as one of the area's best.

"I've been knowing him for years. And as far as I'm concerned, he's Brunswick County's top cop," Kirby said. "It was a pleasant surprise to see how many people feel the same way. I expected about 140 people to come. But once the word got out, it just mushroomed. We had people from all over the state sending in checks."

Even a torrential afternoon shower failed to dampen the spirits of those who attended the event. Local judges, prosecutors, attorneys, highway patrol officers and prominent

business, government and civic leaders could be seen standing in line—many of them dripping wet—for a meal of pork barbecue, cole slaw and baked beans.

Sheriff's Lt. Liston Hawes helped fry the hush puppies. District Attorney Rex Gore stood at the end of the line and handed out drinks. District Court Judge Ola Lewis and Highway Patrol Officer Jerry Dove danced to a country tune played by the "Crossroads" band, which also performed free of charge.

And all the while, the basket of donations continued to fill. Even participants who had already purchased tickets tossed in a few extra dollars for the cause.

"I was overwhelmed. It brings me to tears to think about it," Crocker said Tuesday. "There were police officers from all over the state—people I didn't even recognize."

"I just want to say thank you to all my friends who have stood by me and given so generously of their time and energy, especially Floyd Kirby, Paul Dennis and Sheriff John Carr Davis. I would love to name everybody who deserves thanks, but there are just too many. I plan to thank them all personally the next time I see them."

Seated at a table with his family Wednesday afternoon, Crocker greeted an endless stream of well-wishers. Although noticeably thin-

(See GENEROSITY, Page 2-A)



DAVID CROCKER gets a kiss from his daughter Beth at a benefit golf tournament and dinner held to raise money for the Brunswick County Sheriff's Detective's cancer treatments. Also pictured is his mother, Margie Crocker.