

The new pilot in town



Hugo Daily News Photos / Amber Hanneken

SAMANTHA WILSON stands with the Cessna Caravan owned by Martinaire that she flies five nights a week out of Hugo hauling packages for UPS. Wilson stops in McAlester before arriving in Tulsa then makes the trip back in the early morning.

Samantha Wilson takes to the skies hauling packages to and from Hugo

By Amber Hanneken
Staff Writer

Five nights a week Samantha Wilson doesn't work. Well, technically she does, but she would never call it that.

"People say, 'I have to get up and go to work.' I never go to work I just have such a good time," she said.

Wilson began working for Martinaire in February. She flies a Cessna Caravan from Hugo to McAlester to Tulsa and then back, hauling freight for UPS.

"This is the most fun I've had flying an airplane and getting paid for it. It's not a job, that's the best part about it," Wilson said.

On a typical night, Wilson arrives at the Stan Stamper Municipal Airport at 6:23 p.m. — an hour before her scheduled departure — and waits for the UPS driver to bring the freight. If the driver is early, she leaves early too. In McAlester she picks up more packages and then flies to Tulsa, where she is scheduled to arrive by 8:40 p.m.

Ultimately, her night ends at the Radisson in Tulsa where she has a room all her own, courtesy of the airline. Her day begins again at 5:30 a.m. when she calls the airport to see if the UPS jet has arrived so she can load up packages for Hugo and McAlester. On Saturday morning, her route also goes to Ardmore.

Her days are spent in Hugo where she has enjoyed the Choctaw County

Library, visited The Frisco Depot Museum, the Endangered Ark, Hugo Lake and even taken in a circus performance.



SAMANTHA WILSON demonstrates her view from the pilot's seat.

On the weekends she often finds herself in Dallas but also sometimes flies home to her primary residence in Daytona Beach, Fla.

Wilson was born in London but she grew up in Westchester County, N.Y., a suburb of New York City. She moved to Washington, D.C. at 16 to attend Georgetown University and lived there

for 18 years.

After college, Wilson became a flight attendant for Delta Airlines where the travel bug hit her.

"I had the opportunity to get on Delta flights deeply, deeply, deeply discounted and I was most likely Delta's most million miler," Wilson said. "I just flew wherever I could possibly go. Days off I was out the door. Even when I had just a day off, I'd sometimes just jump on the Delta shuttle and go to New York because my mother and sister were living there at the time."

Wilson majored in languages in college and working for airlines allowed her to utilize them in different places. Although she claims she is less fluent these days, at one point she could fluently speak Spanish and French and dabbled in German and Italian.

She got a job as a flight attendant for United after five years with Delta. She worked for them for 12 years, first out of Washington, D.C. and then out of Miami. While there, she worked on flights going to South America. Eventually, Wilson decided she wanted to move out of the cabin and into the cockpit as a pilot. She took a four-year voluntary furlough, at which time she attended flight school.

"I went to one in Daytona Beach called Phoenix East, and I went to another one in Daytona called Cloud Dancer. I also was in New York at American Fly-

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Boys & Girls Club to have golf program

By Joanne Webster
Contributing Writer

HUGO — Guest speaker Jim Schutts engaged a group of 14 present for the about implementing a Boys & Girls Club golf program. Equipment donations will be sought to begin in June.

The "It Just Takes One Campaign" kick off was a major topic for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Choctaw County's rescheduled board and building committee meeting Thursday. At the campaign halfway mark, the group continues to work on the projects leading up to community-wide involvement. The official kick off is planned for the May 20 meeting. Hugo High student and Youth of the Year representative for the clubs, Preston Wells is working on a Web presentation.

The local Americorps Vista staff position is now open. It is advertised both locally and nationally. The position will contain duties that contribute to the many facets of sustainability for the club.

The Rosewood Boys & Girls Club closing brought discussion on all of the avenues which have been and could be pursued on the club's behalf. The club had been running on reserves since January in order to bring it to where the group could be incorporated into the expanded location.

Board member Darnell Shanklin was awarded two honors recently: Red River Valley Coach of the Year and Region Six Coach of the Year.

Board President Chris Scott reported on the growth of the basketball program within four years. Plaques and photo books will go out to the supporters this week.

This week, and throughout May, club directors have set appointments with towns seeking club information. These include Durant, Boswell, Antlers and Idabel.

Executive Director Henry Shaw reported on the end of March balance for the Choctaw County club which was at \$29,000 with deposits from the Oklahoma Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs and two other deposits to be made. April reporting was delayed due to tax season.

Mike Wallace to display the Choctaw Casino Resort's logo at Talladega

DURANT — The thrill. The competition. The Native American names. Choctaw and Talladega seem made for each other.

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma has partnered with JD Motorsports for a primary sponsorship of the No. 01 Choctaw Casino Resort Chevrolet Impala SS in the April 24 Aaron's 312 NASCAR Nationwide Series race at the Talladega Super Speedway. The No. 01 car, driven by veteran racer Mike Wallace, represented Choctaw this past Monday at Texas Motor Speedway.

"We are elated that Choctaw Casino Resort recognized the potential in working with us," said Johnny Davis, general manager of JD Motorsports. "We will do our best to reward their belief in Mike and the team with a great effort at Talladega."

Wallace has accumulated more than 600 career wins and hopes to add another this weekend under Choctaw's sponsorship. In order to do so, however, he must beat out his daughter. Chrissy Wallace, the first female driver to ever win at Hickory Motor Speedway, will race against her dad in Talladega as well, adding an interesting touch of drama to the event.

The Choctaw Nation expressed pride in supporting JD Motorsports and the Nationwide Series. Choctaw's logo, emblazoned on the No. 01 vehicle, reminds racing fans of the recently opened Choctaw Casino Resort in Durant, Okla. Billed as the state's newest premium destination, Choctaw now offers guests 110,000 square feet of gaming space, hotel suites, a pool, a fitness center, a spa and remarkable restaurants.



Contributed Photo

VETERAN RACER MIKE WALLACE will drive the No. 01 Choctaw Casino Resort Chevrolet Impala SS in the April 24 Aaron's 312 NASCAR Nationwide Series at Talladega Super Speedway.

HUGO LAKE

406.22

Overnight Low: 57
Tomorrow's High: 73

Southeast
Oklahoma
Weather

Tonight: A 40 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms, mainly after 7pm. Increasing clouds, with a low around 57. South southwest wind between 6 and 10 mph.

Saturday: A 50 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms before 1pm.

Cloudy through mid morning, then gradual clearing, with a high near 73. Southwest wind between 7 and 14 mph.

Sunday: Sunny, with a high near 75. West wind between 8 and 18 mph.

Monday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 73.



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