

Opinions

Everybody has one...

A day to remember indeed

The day started with the masses in light jackets. It ended with folks wearing brightly colored, patriotic apparel. The weather warmed up just right for the 2013 Memorial Day Parade and subsequent services at Union County War Memorial Park.

Decorated Iraq Veteran Chuck Honaker served as Master of Ceremonies at the Memorial Day service. Lt. Col. William "Whitey" White, Georgia Air National Guard, was the keynote speaker.

And best of all, Union County's most decorated War Veteran, Major Leon Davenport, U.S. Army retired, was on the front row.

On this day, Union County honored its fallen Freedom Fighters, its heroes who fought during the War Between The States, World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam.

Leon took part in the last three. He sat on the front row, beside his sweetheart and long-time bride, looking like a face in the crowd. If you didn't already know him, you would have thought Leon was just one of the many veterans to attend the ceremony.

Leon is one of the most decorated soldiers in the history of this nation - not just Union County's most decorated - having served in WWII, Korea and Vietnam.

Our county and our nation rejoice in the daily virtues of freedom thanks to soldiers like Leon. His name is forever entrenched in the minds of locals as Union County Veterans' Building on Georgia 515 West, will forever be known as the "Major Leon Davenport Veterans Building."

He kept most of his heroics a secret for many years, and not until the last few years have we been able to discover the true valor of this patriot that has long lived among us.

Leon's distinguished military career includes three Silver Stars for performing a heroic deed during combat; two Bronze Stars and a Purple Heart. He earned 10 Air Medals for his significant number of hours in the air during the operations while in the service of our nation.

Leon graduated from Union County High School in 1945, but had already joined the U.S. Army and went on active duty before coming back to Blairsville in full military uniform to receive his high school diploma.

He served in Japan during the end of World War II, where he stayed with the occupation forces until a conflict broke out on the neighboring Korean peninsula in June 1950.

He served with the famed 24th Infantry Division during the conflict that has never officially ended, only halted by a cease fire agreed upon in July 1953. Leon earned a Battlefield Commission during the Korean Conflict, which after the Vietnam War, these appointments became nearly non-existent.

From 1955 to 1962, he served in the U.S. Army Reserves until he decided to return to active duty in 1962 during the Berlin crisis. In 1961, the Soviet Union began construction of the Berlin Wall, separating East and West Berlin. When Leon arrived, the Soviets were in the process of turning the Berlin Wall from a wire fence to the actual concrete wall that stood until 1990.

Leon remained in West Germany until 1972, when he was sent back to Southeast Asia as an advisor during the Vietnam War. When he decided to return stateside for good, he didn't kick back and enjoy retirement, although it would have been much deserved.

After all of his years of deployment for our nation, he came home and provided the same dedication to our county. He became the administrator at Union General Hospital and made it one of the best and most recognized small, rural hospitals in the United States. We thank you Leon Davenport, not only what you've done for our country, but what you've done for us.

God Bless you and the U.S.A.

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



A Time to Weep

Growing up here in the mountains most of us were told or we heard some of our friends told, "Nobody loves a cry baby." When you stubbed a toe, had to have a tooth pulled or a large briar removed from your hand or foot, the only anesthesia was verbal. Mostly, it came in the form of this phrase: "Grit your teeth, son." Later, I found out why you were told to do this. You see, it is impossible for you to scream with your teeth welded shut. I confess that I always had trouble trying to grit my teeth when my dad was fixing to jerk out a loose tooth with a string. While it is commendable to be strong, "to grin and bear it," sometimes it may be more courageous to cry. Occasionally, I encounter an individual who is an emotional wreck. They have gone through some traumatic tragedy and some well-meaning person has said, "Oh, be brave, don't cry." These people have no understanding of the therapy of timely tears. There is a time to weep and a time to mourn said the preacher of Ecclesiastes 3:4. Jesus, the most manly man that has ever lived was not ashamed to cry. He mourned over the city of Jerusalem. He wept at the grave of Lazarus. Luke records that one day a woman came to Jesus and anointed him not only with expensive ointment, but anointed his feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. Not once did Jesus ever instruct her not to cry (Luke 7:37ff). The Psalmist said that God knew his restlessness, his wonderings and tossings. He said that God had put his tears in a bottle (Psalm 56:8). God knows our hurts, our losses, our loneliness, the heartbreaks and the heartaches of life. He hears our cries and takes note of our tears. Jeremiah is sometimes referred to as the weeping prophet. He wanted to weep day and night for his wayward people (Jer.9:1). Paul in his letter to the Corinthians said, "I wrote unto you with many tears..." (II Cor. 2:4). The great need for many Christians in America is to weep over their own sins in deep repentance, and to weep for lost humanity. We certainly need to weep with those who weep. The Psalmist said, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy" (Psalm 126:5). Someday we will die to cry no more. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their

It's On My Mind

Danny Parris



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Roads Part III

Q. Why do some roads have just a centerline painted yellow and others have a centerline and outside white lines?

A. GDOT guidelines call for a road to be at least 20' wide to have white edge striping. All smaller width roads have just the yellow centerlines. All major state highways have 24' wide travel lanes. Most main county roads are 20 feet to 24 feet wide and most secondary county roads are 16' to 18' wide. We have some older roads that are 10' and 12' wide. However, we do not pave new roads unless they are as close as possible to 18' or it is an older road, built prior to 1994. In that case if there are a limited number of lots accessed on that particular road, we occasionally drop below 18', but try not to if at all possible.

Q. What county roads are being resurfaced this year?

A. This has been the most active resurfacing we have done in several years. Asphalt resurfacing has already been completed on Kiutuastia Creek Rd (K Road) of 1.895 miles. Fortenberry Rd .77 miles, Mt. Pleasant Church Rd. 1.628 miles, River Rd .526 miles, Bunker Hill Rd. 1.6 miles, Queens Gap Connector .164 miles, Sawmill Rd, .26 miles, Hospital Dr. .22 miles, Emory Circle .18 miles, Lows Mill Rd.284 miles. and we will soon complete Shoe Factory Rd.3 miles once we have completed the new fire station addition. We have plans now to surface treat the following roads this year: Another part of Emory circle, Henderson road, Ivy Log Drive, Becky Road, Justa Road, Holly Hill Lane, and Haines Mtn. Road. Most of this paving will be completed prior to June.

Q. What is the difference in surface treating a road and putting asphalt on a road?

A. We utilize asphalt almost exclusively for resurfacing existing paved roads. Likewise, we use "surface treatment" for almost all gravel roads that are being paved for the first time. Surface treatment usually consists of three or four layers of different size stone and tar. The first two layers are larger stone and the top and final layer is small stone (# 89). We hear some folks grumble that surface treatment is really not paving, but that is not accurate. Surface treatment is not as smooth as asphalt, but will last as long as asphalt when applied properly. It is a

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor ...

May 30th, a day to remember

Dear Editor,

As many Americans know, Memorial Day began as "Decoration Day" shortly after the end of the War Between the States, when an organization of Union Veterans established May 30th as a day of remembrance and a time for the nation to decorate the graves of the war dead.

Today, Memorial Day serves as a day of remembrance for all Americans who died in service to the United States. Also, many Southern states (including Georgia) continue to observe a separate "Southern Memorial Day," in addition to the country-wide Memorial Day.

In 1882, the name was changed from Decoration Day to Memorial Day, and in 1971, Memorial Day was declared an official federal holiday.

The traditional observance of Memorial Day has diminished over the years and many Americans nowadays have forgotten the true meaning of the holiday. At many cemeteries, the graves of the fallen are increasingly ignored or neglected. Most people no longer follow the proper flag flying etiquette for the day (on Memorial Day the flag should be displayed at half-staff until noon only, then raised to the top of the staff). And while there are towns and cities that still hold Memorial Day parades, many have not held a parade in decades. Some people think the day is for honoring any and all dead, and not just those fallen in service to our country.

To help re-educate and remind Americans of the true meaning of Memorial Day, the "National Moment Of Remembrance" resolution was passed in December 2000, and it asks that at 3 p.m. local time, all Americans, "Voluntarily and informally observe in their own way a Moment of remembrance and respect, pausing from whatever they are doing for a minute of silence or listening to "Taps."

This year the official event takes place on Monday, May 27th (Memorial Day "Observed"), but some of us will continue to observe May 30th as the true Memorial Day.

In 1968, Congress, against the wishes of the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign

Wars, and numerous unaffiliated Americans, changed the official observance of Memorial Day from May 30th to the last Monday in May, in order to create a three-day weekend.

The veterans service organizations (and remember that it was an organization of Veterans who originally set the date as May 30th), and other Americans across the country were, and continue to be, offended because this change diluted the significance of this holiday.

As a result, several American Legion Posts, VFW Posts, and individual patriots, continue to commemorate the day on the traditional date of May 30th, and I invite you to join us.

Oliver Wendell Holmes called Memorial Day "our most sacred holiday" and he urged that "we not ponder with sad thoughts the passing of our heroes, but rather ponder their legacy - the life they made possible for us by their commitment and pain."

General George S. Patton Jr. expressed a similar sentiment when he opined, "It is foolish and wrong to mourn the men who died. Rather we should thank God that such men lived."

Amen.
Chuck Esposito, Suches

Nostalgic Trip to the Past

Dear Editor,

As an ambassador for the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce, I have the pleasure of attending most of the ribbon cutting events for our new members. A few weeks ago was perhaps one of the most memorable.

Nestled among the beautiful mountains in Trackrock sits a neat little school house. It is named The Joy of Learning and is run by a most enthusiastic teacher, Dr. Rhonda Joy Vansant.

We sat in the children's desks in the main classroom during the presentation. I felt like I was back in grade school again. Remember the desks with the little round hole in the upper corner (ink wells), well that's what we sat in. The atmosphere was one of complete serenity unlike what you might find in a typical public school setting.

Dr. Vansant has a passion and the talent to help as many children as possible, by providing them with the tools necessary to enjoy the academic world. The learning experience should be fun and exciting and that is what keeps the children engaged.

To learn more about this wonderful gem in our midst you can visit her web page at joyoflearningeducation.org.
Joe Scerbo

Uncle Mack

My mother's two uncles, Mack and Rufus Baker, were two men that everyone loved and respected. I looked up to each one because they were tough and yet kind. They paid extra attention to all of us young boys.

Both men spent a great amount of time in the woods. Each man enjoyed hunting. As young men they especially enjoyed coon hunting the hills and hollows of Ray Mountain. Before my Dad ever dated my mother he was coon hunting with Mack and Rufus.

My Dad had two young dogs about 6 months old and they needed to be trained so my father asked Mack and Rufus if he could go hunting with them. The two men pulled up in the yard and waited with my grandparents as my Daddy fetched his dogs. The men and the young boy walked across the cotton and corn fields to the "James place." The dogs struck a coon and began the trailing just after dark. The raccoon led the dogs up and down Turkey Creek and under bluffs for about an hour. Finally, the old coon went up a Black Gum Tree standing on the banks of Turkey Creek.

Uncle Rufus tied the old dogs and told my Dad to let Sam and Lou continue tree barking. Uncle Mack waded out into the middle of Turkey Creek and began to try and squall the coon out of the tree. Basically, Uncle Mack would make a sound that resembled a fighting coon. This squalling sound will entice a raccoon to walk down a tree and jump into the middle of a pack of dogs. This day was no exception. The sound made by Mack worked and the old coon began to make its way down the tree. The coon came to within 10 feet of the ground where the dogs and Uncle Mack could see it. So, Uncle Mack made one more of the squalling sounds and the old coon jumped from the tree into the creek.

But, before the coon hit the water Uncle Mack's false teeth flew from his mouth and hit the water. The sound of the splashing convinced the dogs that the coon was in the water. So, Sam dove into the water right where the false teeth had landed. Almost immediately, the coon landed on the dog's back. So, there was Uncle Mack bending over looking for his teeth and the dog was swimming in circles while howling because the coon was biting his ear. Just when you thought matters couldn't get worse Lou, the other dog, joined the fight. Uncle Mack was hollering, "get the dogs". Sam was howling because the coon was still biting his ear. Lou finally had a good hold on the coon and she was trying to pull it off Sam's back while it was still biting his ear.

In the meantime Rufus and my Dad were lying on the creek bank laughing so hard they

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



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Top 5 Job Interviewing Pet Peeves

As many of you may know, Robin Storry, our Membership Coordinator recently announced her resignation to pursue a management opportunity.

During her tenure, Robin excelled as a member of our Chamber team, and she will be greatly missed. As we undergo the hiring process, I felt compelled to share my top 5 interviewing pet peeves. I feel certain that most interviewers would agree to some extent. Therefore, if you are currently looking for a job, here is a bit of advice for what it's worth.

Pet Peeve # 5 - Being a Know-It-All. Humility goes a long way in a job interview. While you definitely want to appear bright and capable, don't let your confidence (or lack thereof) push you into being a know-it-all. You do not have to pretend to be an expert in all things and you do not have to recite long essays to each interview questions. Point out your strengths and embrace your weaknesses. Ultimately, the job should be a good fit for both parties.

Pet Peeve # 4 - Seeming Desperate. As an employer, we realize when the job market is tough. We know by the number of resumes

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Guest Columnist Colleen Urbaniuk

I was looking through the paper last week and I came across an obituary of a woman the same age as me. I don't read obituaries all the time, especially if I don't know the person, but for some reason I was drawn to this one. And as I read through the words they had written about her, it made me think about my own life and what it would have said if that obituary had been mine. Maybe it's the fact that I'm getting older. Maybe it's seeing yet another tragedy play out with the tornado in Oklahoma. Maybe it's just that I have so many things I want to do in my life that I seem to keep putting off. But whatever the reason, the thought of our lives eventually being written down in stone stayed in my head.

I saw it written in the paper, I saw her face before her name, and when I read her age it stopped me, and prayed my life won't be the same.

It said she lived for 44 years, and she died suddenly at home, and it went on to tell her lifetime, now it was written down in stone.

It seemed we both were born the same year, but her life ended way too soon, "and who's to know", I thought to myself, how much she still had planned to do.

She left behind a loving husband, family, friends and a small son, and her lifetime came right down to, two paragraphs of what she'd done.

As I looked out the kitchen window, suddenly it seemed so clear, we don't get to choose our ending, but get to live while we're still here.

And everyone will have a story, that will be told when it's the end,

See Leone, page 5A

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