



County Line

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Former POWs share memories of World War II with Memorial Day observers

by Kinsey Hansel, Communications Intern

"Well, you might want to know what it was like in a prison camp," said World War II POW **Theron Powell**. Powell, a Lawrenceville resident, described his experience to a group of more than 300 gathered for a Memorial Day ceremony at Gwinnett's Fallen Heroes Memorial on May 26. The ceremony included a dedication of the new memorial that honors Gwinnett's veterans, law enforcement personnel, firefighters, and other public servants who have died in the line of duty.

crew bailed. "I had heard you were supposed to count to 10 (to pull your chute), but I only got to about one tenth. I looked up and saw a giant umbrella, and I was so pleased," he said. General Patton freed his camp, and Black went on to receive a mechanical engineering degree from Georgia Tech in 1948.

The ceremony also included the posting and retiring of the colors by the U.S. Marine Corps Color Guard and the Fallen Heroes Honor Guard.



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County firefighter's second home is an art studio



by Kinsey Hansel, Communications Intern

It is all in a day's work for **Victor McCallum**. Vic is a full-time firefighter, full-time sculptor, and full-time family man – in no particular order.

Vic has been an artist since he can remember. "I was always drawing and making things when I was young," he said. His love for the arts took him to the University of West Georgia where he received a Bachelor of Arts with a focus on painting. He earned his Master of Fine Arts at the University of Georgia and began then to focus on sculpting.

The beautiful bronze eagle on top of the Fallen Heroes Memorial is one of his latest masterpieces. "It was an honor to be involved in the (Fallen Heroes Memorial) project," he said, "I love to sculpt, and it really

meant a lot to be a part of it." Vic worked on the eagle from October 2002 to January 2003.

When he is not sculpting in his studio, Vic serves as a Gwinnett County firefighter. "I always had it in the back of my mind that I wanted to be a firefighter," he said. He joined the Gwinnett County Fire Department after finishing his master's program at UGA. Vic was raised in DeKalb County and has relatives working for their fire department.

"I love the balanced work schedule I have as a firefighter," he said. "The 24 hours on and 48 hours off gives me time to work in my studio and be with my family." Vic has five children, three in college and two in a Gwinnett County high school.



Gwinnett County bonds get AAA ratings again

Gwinnett County's AAA bond rating has been affirmed by all three of the major rating agencies: Moody's Investors Service, Fitch Ratings, and Standard and Poor's. The County was first rated triple AAA in 1997. By ranking Gwinnett as one of the most financially sound county governments in America, the very favorable reports have saved Gwinnett's taxpayers millions of dollars in interest costs. Gwinnett County is one of only 20 counties in the U.S. to receive triple AAA ratings.

Moody's assigned its AAA rating and stable outlook on May 2 to the Gwinnett County Water and Sewerage Authority \$219 million Water and Sewer Revenue Bonds, Series 2003 and \$75 million in Series 2003 General Obligation Bonds. The bonds will help finance construction of such major facilities as the new Shoal Creek Filter Plant and the F. Wayne Hill Water Resources Plant expansion, in addition to refinancing a portion of 1993 debt at more favorable rates. The General Obligation Bonds will be used to finance the Pre-Trial Detention Center, scheduled for completion in July 2006.

Fitch Ratings and Standard & Poor's issued their AAA ratings on April 29. Fitch cited positive factors including "sound management policies, a low debt burden, consistently large fund balances, and pay-as-you-go financing." Analysts noted "significant use of internal revenue sources for capital improvement."

Commission Chairman **F. Wayne Hill** said he is "very pleased by this affirmation of our fiscal policies because it means real savings for our taxpayers and ratepayers." The water system serves more than 193,000 customers, up 23 percent since 1998. A 50-year plan is in place to address the growing water and sewer needs. Construction is currently underway on new water intake and treatment facilities at Lake Lanier.

Moody's said its rating "reflects a strong local economy, a trend of strong financial operations, and modest debt levels." It expects Gwinnett's "well-managed financial performance will continue to sustain ample operating cash and equity, despite some decline in the most recent year. Financial strength has been maintained despite strong budgetary growth and while maintaining or reducing tax rates."

The assessed value of residential and commercial property in Gwinnett increased from \$13.6 billion in fiscal 1998 to \$20.9 billion in 2002. The labor force has grown over 16.4 percent to approximately 357,000 since 1997, with nearly 60 percent living and working in the county. As of January, the unemployment rate remained below state and national levels at a still moderate 4.3 percent, according to analysts.



Local and state officials join governor for bill signing



Governor **Sonny Perdue** signs **House Bill 144** into law. Joining him for the ceremony on May 27 were State Representative **Hugh Floyd**, Gwinnett County Commission Chairman **F. Wayne Hill**, State Representative **Pedro Marin**, Gwinnett County District 2 Commissioner **Bert Nasuti**, and Gwinnett County Clean & Beautiful Executive Director **Connie Wiggins**. The new law authorizes the use of inmates from various correctional institutions to remove graffiti from private property that is visible from public roadways and public places.

Property tax installment due dates September 15 and November 15

- 2003 property tax notices will be mailed July 15.
- The tax bill will include two payment coupons and two reply envelopes for both installment payments.
- You will not receive a reminder notice.
- Please retain the payment coupons to send with your payments.

If your mortgage company pays your taxes, they may require you to forward a copy of the tax bill to them. For more information, visit www.GwinnettTaxCommissioner.com.



Memorial Day memories

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Gwinnett County firefighter **Jeff Kendrix** accompanied the color and honor guards on the bagpipes. Gwinnett County Commission Chairman **F. Wayne Hill** addressed the audience as did the district commissioners and the president of the Fallen Heroes committee, **Ronald Buice**. The unveiling of the bronze eagle centerpiece, sculpted by Gwinnett firefighter **Vic McCallum**, capped the ceremony.



Generous donations from local kennel clubs to fund new K-9

by Kinsey Hansel, *Communications Intern*

Thanks to the Lawrenceville and Atlanta Kennel Clubs, the Gwinnett County K-9 Unit can begin its search for a new police service dog.

K-9 units are an essential part of police forces used in search and rescue missions, evidence recovery, narcotics detection,

and explosives detection. Following the retirement of K-9 Ex from the unit and in recognition of the importance of canines in policing, the Lawrenceville Kennel Club, Inc., raised \$2,600 to be donated to the Gwinnett K-9 Unit.

"We are concerned with safety and have a love for animals so we decided to raise the money to help out," said **Ursula Rumbaugh**, president of the Lawrenceville Kennel Club. The Lawrenceville club raised the money through a silent auction.

The Atlanta Kennel Club generously agreed to match the donation made by the Lawrenceville club, bringing the total donation to \$5,200.

The Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners presented a Resolution of Recognition to both groups during the May 20 Board meeting.



Carl Vitner (president-elect, Atlanta Kennel Club), Carol Simmons (treasurer, Atlanta Kennel Club), Mari Houston (secretary, Lawrenceville Kennel Club), Mary Ellen Macke (president, Atlanta Kennel Club), Chairman F. Wayne Hill, Gwinnett Police Sgt. Danny Bayreuther, K-9 Rusty, Gail LaBerge (Lawrenceville Kennel Club and member, Gwinnett Animal Advisory Council), Ursula Rumbaugh (president, Lawrenceville Kennel Club), and Ann Wallin (Atlanta Kennel Club)

Pardon our progress. . .

Beginning June 9, 2003, police reports will not be available at the Gwinnett County Police Department's Westside Precinct until further notice.

- Ongoing construction on the new precinct building requires the department to temporarily shut down the precinct's records office.
- Reports will still be available at the other four precincts as well as Police Headquarters.
- GCPD apologizes for any inconvenience this situation causes, but we look forward to being able to better serve the public when construction of the new facility is completed.

Check it out!

Summer on the Road is even more memorable when you can enjoy wonderful stories en route to your destination. Here are just a few of the audio recordings available at GCPL.

Beach House, by James Patterson

Prodigal Summer, by Barbara Kingsolver

Summer Island, by Kristin Hannah

Summer Moon, by Jill Marie Landis

Summer, by Edith Newbold Jones Wharton

Orchid Beach, by Stuart Woods

Remember Summer, by Elizabeth Lowell

Kaaterskill Falls, by Allegra Goodman

A Cat on a Beach Blanket, by Lydia Adamson

Summer Lightning, by P.G. Wodehouse

Paying the Piper, by Sharon McCrumb

List provided by Gwinnett County Public Library. Call or visit one of the library's 11 branches for additional selection assistance or visit the Web site at gwinnettpl.org

Pet Corner



The Sowell family adopted Smokey when he was seven weeks old. They say he is friendly and playful. The Sowells say that Smokey is a lot of fun to play with and they appreciate the opportunity to adopt such a wonderful kitty.

There are other fantastic pets just like Smokey who need a loving home. If you would like to see photos of cats and dogs currently up for adoption, see www.co.gwinnett.ga.us. You can also visit the shelter at Hi-Hope Road and Ga. 316 in Lawrenceville or call 770.339.3200.





WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND GWINNETT

Compete in a **Puzzle and Board Game competition** at Centerville Community Center on July 19 from 10:00am to 2:00pm. There will be prizes awarded in individual and family categories. Call 770.982.4647.

Join the Gwinnett County Public Library at the Centerville Community Center for a **children's puppet show** on July 23 at 2:30pm and a **magic show** on July 30 at 2:30pm. Call 770.982.4647.

If you are interested in starting a **special interest club** that would meet at the Centerville Community Center, call Michelle Carew at 770.982.4647.

July is National Recreation and Parks Month!

The National Recreation and Park Association has designated July as Recreation and Parks Month. It's a great time to enjoy what Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation has to offer, so play your favorite sport, visit the outdoors, spend time with family and friends, or just kick back and relax. Here are some ideas to get you started . . .

- **Go Swimming.** Call 770.822.8881 for summer pool hours, swimming lessons, and water exercise classes.
- **Play Tennis.** The Hudlow Junior Sizzler Championship tournament for boys and girls ages 10-14 is July 22-25 at Hudlow Tennis Center, Best Friend Park. Call 770.417.2210.
- **Play Ball.** Adult Fall Softball League registration is July 23. Call 770.822.5152.
- **Learn a Sport.** Gwinnett's 19 youth athletic associations offer the chance to play baseball, softball, basketball, football, cheerleading, soccer, floor hockey, and lacrosse. Call 770.822.8881.
- **Throw Horseshoes.** Seniors can enjoy activities all summer long. Call 770.564.4680.
- **Form a Team.** Sign up for the Nextel Gwinnett Corporate Challenge (see *article to the right*).
- **Pack a Picnic.** Join us on the lawn of the Gwinnett Historic Courthouse on July 11 for a Brown Bag concert or July 25 for a Moonlight and Music concert. Call 770.822.5450.
- **Tell a Story.** Hear some great stories to tell your friends at our storytelling events on July 11 and July 18 at Pinckneyville Community Center. Call 770.417.2200.

- **Listen to Music.** Sip some java and listen to live music at the Gwinnett History Museum on July 11 for a Ground 'n' Sounds coffee-house. Call 770.822.5178.
- **Create a Masterpiece.** Bring the whole family to our Chalk-It-Up sidewalk art contest at Pinckneyville Community Center on July 19. Call 770.417.2200.
- **Give Your Child an Adventure.** Sign up for summer camp – 770.822.8840.
- **Take a Walk in the Park.** There are miles of trails in our 26 parks. Call 770.932.4460.

- **Experience the Great Outdoors.** Come whitewater rafting on the Nantahala River on July 26. Call the Lanier Museum of Natural History, 770.932.4460.
- **Check out an Art Exhibit.** Throughout July view the Nature's Gift exhibit at the Gwinnett Historic Courthouse and the Illusions exhibit at Pinckneyville Community Center. Call 770.417.2200.
- **See Georgia's Animals.** The Lanier Museum of Natural History hosts live animal programs in July. Call 770.932.4460 for details.

Nextel Gwinnett Corporate Challenge 2003 recruiting teams

Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation, The Gwinnett Alliance with Youth, Gwinnett Parks Foundation, and Nextel Communications have teamed up to offer area businesses the chance to compete in the Nextel Gwinnett Corporate Challenge 2003.

Organizers of the event, which is in its fourth year, are recruiting area businesses and organizations to participate in 15 activities, including bowling, billiards, a 5K run, golf, horseshoes, sand volleyball, softball, swimming, table shuffleboard, tennis, two-ball basketball, tug-of-war, and a trivia game night during a two-week period this fall. The Nextel Gwinnett Corporate Challenge will begin September 7 and will culminate in an awards celebration on September 19.

The Nextel Gwinnett Corporate Challenge 2003 will benefit the Youth Recreation Scholarship Program and promote teamwork, company loyalty, and community pride. Sponsorships and event entry fees will cover the costs of Nextel Gwinnett Corporate Challenge. Any additional funds will support recreation scholarships to open the door for economically disadvantaged youth to participate in life-enriching activities.

Businesses can get involved as sponsors or by signing up a team or several teams. The entry fee is \$1,000 for companies with 100 or more employees, and \$600 for companies that have 1-99 employees.

Competing teams earn points for placing in each activity, and the first, second,

and third place finishers will receive awards. Individual medals also will be awarded to the top finishers at the conclusion of each sports athletic activity.



Team recruitment will take place through mid-July. Anyone who is interested in obtaining more information should contact **Mariann Brown** at 770.822.8862.

countyline

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