



The Choctaw Sun  
 Tuesday, February 27, 2007  
 Page 4A

# Opinions

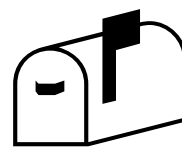
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## Letters



On the morning of Sunday, Feb. 4, I thought I was witnessing a miracle! It was early that Sunday that I when I saw a truck traveling down Gin Creek Road. The driver was scraping the road, which was (and usually is) in need of repair, and pouring sand or gravel. Now, although we, the members of Gin Creek Baptist Church, our Pastor, and those who live on Gin Creek Road, have for years requested, demanded, even begged that the road be graveled or paved, it never receives the attention it needs.

But that Sunday morning, I said to myself, "Finally, someone is paying attention to our road. Finally people will be able to come to church without worrying about slipping into a ditch. Maybe now the new school bus will last many more years because it won't have to travel over this bad road all year."

I was happy to say the least. Although we had been begging for months and years, I said, "Hey, better late than never."

The only thing that stuck out in my mind was that this very needed road service was being done on Sunday morning. "That's strange," I

See LETTERS, page 5A

## A look into the eyes of heroes

It was evident in their eyes.

A gamut of emotions filled Willow Trace Nursing Center on Friday. From excitement to patriotism to raw emotional pain to undeniable gratitude, the faces of those present displayed evidence of the poignancy of the event — and the undeniable love that had brought them there.

The event held a bit-tersweet mixture of emotions, with each emotion playing out in their faces, in their voices, and in their smiles.

But nothing shared the range of emotions more adequately than the eyes of those who attended the retirement ceremony for U.S. Air Force veteran and hero, Lt. Col. David Allen, Jr.

In the eyes of the Allen family, there was pride beyond measure, steadfastness beyond belief, and love for family that stretched beyond eternity.

In his sisters' eyes, I saw sibling love and patriotism that drew them together as one. I saw a sense of family togetherness that transcended the struggles



## Looking Up

By Dee Ann Campbell  
 Editor

that they had endured together over the years — struggles that would eventually lead them to that place, at that time.

In each of their eyes, I saw raw emotion at the mention of their late mother's name, and at the thought of the stepmother whom they had come to call their own. I saw raw, unchecked tears when they looked at their father in the wheelchair — tears that were a mixture of pain and promise, of hurt and hope.

And in Lt. Col. David Allen's eyes, I saw all of those things and more.

In his eyes, there was pride and love of country. In his eyes were the memories of years of service to America, and gratitude for the country to which he gave 20 years

of his life. In his eyes was a deep love and devotion to the wife and children who had stood beside him through his career — even when that career moved them to places far away.

In his eyes were bit-tersweet feelings of gladness for his new retirement and sadness for the ending of a career that had earned him a myriad of medals and a long list of treasured friends.

But, what I saw mostly in his eyes, was a deep abiding respect and honor for the man who had raised him to feel all of those things.

When Lt. Col. Allen looked at his father, tears obvious and unabridged, his eyes spoke volumes. They spoke of years of childhood lessons that

would make him what he is. They spoke of the utmost respect that a son has for his father, and they spoke of a strong and determined father who deserved that respect even more than ever.

But the eyes that spoke more than all the others were those of the father himself.

From his wheelchair — his mere presence a miracle — David Allen, Sr., was the epitome of fatherhood. Despite his struggles, he carried himself as the 'rock' that had held his family together through it all.

In the senior Allen's eyes, though tired from the fight and dimmed by the hardships, was honor and pride and hope and determination.

In his eyes, it seemed, were all the things that had made his family strong despite their struggles, helped them love despite the difficulties, and given them hope despite the hardships.

All those things that had brought his family — and his son — to that point at that time for that event.

And in my eyes, he — like his son — is the hero.

## Why we do what we do

It's 8:45 on Sunday evening and I'm here at my desk typing up the weekend's news events, sorting through the emails, downloading pictures from my camera that have to be sized, identified and edited, going over what needs to be covered tomorrow (Monday) for the Mid-week issue of the *Sun*, and wondering how in the heck we're ever gonna get it all of this stuff done by our 5 p.m. Monday print time at The Meridian Star.

Most folks are at home about this time, watching the news or some movie re-run, visiting with family, or just hitting the sack early after a busy weekend.

And, if tonight is like any other Sunday evening, Dee Ann and me won't get home until 10, 11 or even later.



## The way I see it ...

By Tommy Campbell  
 Publisher

An average work week for us newspaper folks is about 60 hours. That is, if there's nothing "extra" to cover and no unforeseen calamities along the way!

Our days start early, too. On "paper days", Tuesdays and Fridays, my work day starts about 4 a.m. when I roll out to go and bring back the paper from the Star.

Even on a good day, we seldom get away from the office until well after 5, and even later if there are evening meetings to

be covered.

So why do we do it? Certainly not for the money. If we wanted to be rolling in the dough we would have *definitely* chosen another line of work! One thing for sure, if you work for a community newspaper, you won't ever have to worry about being up there in the league with Donald Trump and Bill Gates!

But it's not about the money. This business allows us to keep a roof over our heads and food on our table, and we are

grateful to God and to our faithful readers and supporters for giving us that blessing.

It's about doing what we love.

It's about enjoying the work that we do.

It's about putting out a quality newspaper that serves, listens to, and cares about the good folks of Choctaw County.

It's about getting to know our friends, neighbors and the community in a way that most people (and most newspapers) never do.

We see life in Choctaw County from all angles, the good and the bad, the happy and the sad. Like any newspaper worth its salt, we try to report it all without showing favoritism in our news coverage. (A "news article", mind you, is

See TOMMY, page 8A

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