

THE LEON HIGH LIFE

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Celebrating 87 years as the voice of Leon

March 2007 Issue

Leon celebrates century of success

By Isabel Wilson
High Life News Writer

To commemorate Leon High School's 100 years of existence, a two-day celebration, entitled the Grand Reunion 2, will be held at the Leon County Civic Center April 13-14.

The honorary chairs of the event will be Larry Campbell (Sheriff, 1960 graduate), Lorraine Ausley (State of Florida Representative, '81) and Darrin Holloman (AmSouth Bank City President, '83).

For the first day of the celebration, Tom and the Cats, a local band, will

play at 8 p.m. at the American Legion Hall on Lake Ella. Doors open at 7 p.m. and the cover charge will be \$10. The event will be sponsored by the Leon High School class of 1973.

The following day, Leon will host a Leon High School open house. A tour will be given and will feature the many changes of Leon over the past 100 years. There will be "mini-reunions" for some of the service clubs and the athletic departments. Grand Reunion 2 and Leon High School memorabilia will be sold at this event.

The main event of the celebration will be held on April 14 at the Leon County Civic Center. From 5-6:30

p.m., a reception will be held for the sponsors of the event. At 5:30 p.m., the doors will be open to the public. Social hour will be held from 5:30-7 p.m. A cash bar and complementary appetizers will be provided. The Grand Reunion Show will be held at 7 p.m. The emcee for the evening will be Cheryl Hines, a successful actress and Leon graduate. Leon students and alumni will act in musical and dramatic performances. The production has been put together by Millie Seckel, a Leon alum and current administrator.

After the acts, the Grand Reunion Celebration Party will be held

at 8:30 p.m. At the event, local bands such as Eli, 8 of Us, Tishamingo, Wilson Dean and GT Entertainment DJ and KD Sounds DJ will play. Grand Reunion 2 memorabilia will be sold at this time as well.

Tickets for the event are \$32 and may be purchased at the Civic Center box office, Ticketmaster or at Leon High School.

One key item being sold at the event is a book written by Dr. Linda Teague, a Leon teacher and alumna. The book, titled *The Lions' Pride: A Pictorial and Anecdotal History of*

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Secret tunnels reported on campus

By Caitlin Dilks
High Life All Pages Writer

When Leon's main building was built in 1937, during World War II, safety precautions were taken to withstand any sort of attack.

Students and teachers have heard of the secret tunnels and passages throughout Leon High School, but their true whereabouts are unknown to most.

As construction continued on the school, a bomb shelter was created with underground safety escape routes to the north, south, east and west. Each varied in length.

"I've heard there's about four [tunnels]," baseball coach Aaron Clark said.

The exit route for one of the most well-known tunnels was located in the outfield of Leon's baseball diamond. The stairs leading out of the tunnel are located just outside the leftfield



Photo by Kyle Muller

The bomb shelter is located beneath the school and has remained unused for many years.

fence. However, the tunnel is now sealed and not accessible.

"There are just stairs that go straight into the ground," Student Body Vice President Christine Kessler said.

In 2006, the baseball team actually tried to dig up the tunnel, but only found a sealed exit.

According to several Leon authorities, two of the tunnel exits are located off the Leon

campus. One is reportedly near the dirt bowl, on the north side of Miccosukee Road, and the other is just off Call Street. The final exit is believed to be in the vicinity of the Nettles Building.

Clark has been known to tell crazy tales about the tunnels and how they were discovered. For example, Clark said that he heard from fellow teacher Joshua Stewart that the tunnel at Call Street was discovered by a homeless man who just happened to be living there.

"It makes you wonder if there's ever been someone living in the school since they could just walk in (the tunnels) unnoticed," Stewart said.

Kessler said she heard that former governor Jeb Bush hid in the tunnels during "9/11," but no reputable source would confirm or deny that rumor.

For safety reasons, some faculty members are concerned about students trying to find the tunnels on their own. But others would prefer to take their classes down there.

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College visitations may prove helpful



By Kelsey Stevens
High Life Editorial Editor

Deciding where to go to college is one of the most important decisions that seniors to make. Visiting appealing colleges can help make the choice much easier.

The first thing you, as a prospective college student, need to do is explore different schools through brochures and college homepages to see if the school has a major you are interested in.

Once you decide on a small number of schools,

visit. Either make an appointment with the school to have a "private" visit or attend the open house.

From personal experience, I suggest attending the open house. When I went to the recent open house at the University of West Florida, they had everything set up for the optimal information delivery. There were different panels set up that addressed financial aid and student housing. Afterwards a tour of the campus was led by an upperclassman.

While taking part in any sort of gathering that involves members of the college staff or student body, ask as many questions as you can think of.

If you don't ask, you won't know other parts of the school that may stand out to you. Find out about the types of clubs and other student ac-

tivities at the school so you won't be there just for the major.

Also, look for other aspects of the school that appeal to you. By going to the campus, you see its condition. That way, you won't be stuck in a school with a large, spread out campus if that's not what you want. Maybe you want dorms with private baths in each room. Look for that. The campus may be your home for the next two to four years.

There's really no need to be afraid of going to the college, though I can't say I wasn't nervous. Once you get there and the little activities that the school planned start, all those nerves just go away.

One way to visit a campus is to go during the scheduled open houses the school has.

Even though an open

house usually occurs on a weekend when there aren't any classes going, there is still activity. You'll see students taking part in their weekend lives when they are on campus, which does indeed include studying and visiting the library. If you want to see the school on an average day, then go visit during the week. But you may not get that much one-on-one time with the professors who head up the department you are interested in.

This is the prime time for uprising juniors and seniors to start looking for colleges and planning to visit them. That way, you'll be ahead of the game next year or the year after when you're ready to actually start visiting the schools. And by figuring out the school you want to go to sooner, you have a chance to apply early and and have a

greater chance of being accepted.

In any case, it's worth it to visit your prospective college(s). You learn a lot about the college history, campus and educational programs. Some students even decide where they'll attend next year just by visiting the campus.

Though this process takes time and effort, it is worthwhile. The college you attend helps shape your future. It is of your best interest to look now to make sure the decisions you have made are the ones that will really satisfy you and your needs once you actually make it to the college environment.

Make sure the college you choose meets most of your interests. That's how I decided, and I know I will have the best experience.

Letters to the Editor

Parking at Leon is a problem and everybody knows it. However, students are making parking an even bigger problem by being inconsiderate in their parking habits. I just hate it when I see huge gaps on Tennessee Street that are just small enough that no one can park in. There's probably room for at least six more cars on Tennessee Street but people refuse to pull forward enough to maximize the space. I think that people need to be more considerate when parking, not only on Tennessee but all around Leon's campus. We have limited space for parking and nothing ruins a morning more than realizing that there is absolutely no where to park.

Daniel Doan

The article on Marsha Click was well written. Even though I didn't get a chance to meet her, I felt by reading the article that I already knew her.

The writer did a good job on capturing her hard work and dedication.

By reading this article, it made me feel like getting involved with breast cancer sponsors and donations and to respect our faculty members.

Brittney Regis

I loved Tim Merlau's comic. It was so funny and satirical. Stereotypes are meant to be seen as wrong, but I love how his comic pokes fun at them without putting other

groups down. I look forward to seeing other work of his.

Sara Karsh

I really liked the article on Marsha Click. I never knew the full story on what happened until I read this article. It shows how much she meant to Leon as a friend, teacher and colleague. Thanks for writing a story about this lady so the kids could know what she did at Leon.

Cameron Miller

I really enjoyed the February issue of the High Life. My favorite thing was Tim Merlau's column. I think it would be great if there were more things like it in the High Life every issue. I loved that there was

something so funny in the paper that most could relate to.

Jessica Baker

After reading the paper I did not like the cartoon in the paper. I didn't think it was that funny. When people read the newspaper, the majority don't read it for humor. I didn't think it was news, so I didn't like it in the paper.

Justin Epstein

Send letters to the editor to

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Limit 100 words

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The High Life

The High Life is the official student newspaper of Leon High School. The newspaper staff controls all aspects of content and design. Kevin Record, the journalism teacher and adviser, provides guidance, supervision and assistance.

The High Life strives to serve as a forum of public opinion. In keeping with that goal, the publication does not publish material that is libelous, obscene or that may cause a substantial and material disruption of school activities.

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Remembering 100 years of Lion pride

By Danielle Spisso
High Life News Editor

Leon High School has seen over 100 graduating classes, days when gas was 10 cents a gallon and watched Leon County grow into a flourishing city.

Although times have changed, this “grand old school on the hill” honors its strong and lasting tradition and many find that they can never really leave.

The Leon Academy for Boys, Leon County’s first attempt at education, was built in 1827. It wasn’t until many years later that girls attended. In 1903, the Leon County Board of Education established the all-white public school, the Leon County Graded and High School, located on the present site of the Hobbs Federal Building. It later moved to the present site of the LeRoy Collins Public library in 1911. Because of a growing student body, Leon made its final move in 1937.

There was much controversy surrounding the construction of the current building. Tallahassee citizens said that the new building was too far out of town, too large and much too costly; Leon County would never need that much space. Despite disputes, Leon was built for \$500,000.

Dr. Linda Teague, who graduated in 1963, was a student at Leon while it was still completely segregated.

“There were two main schools: Lincoln and Leon,” Teague said. “But Leon was the all-white school and Lincoln was the all-black school.”

Leon was integrated in the fall of the 1963.

Teague remembers her time at Leon as very community involved.

“Every Friday night you knew where everyone was. [They were] at the football field to watch Leon play,” Teague said. “But there weren’t any sports teams for girls.”

According to Teague, there were parades downtown before every football game.

“All of the stores would close down so people could watch,” Teague said. “We had window decorating contests during Homecoming and the May Party.”

The May Party was an age-old tradition that dated back to the 1800s. It began at Leon in 1920 and lasted until 1969.

Teague also remembers having bomb drills because of the recent Cuban Missile Crisis.

Another well-known alumus, Principal Rocky Hanna, remembers strong participation in sporting events.

“A lot more kids went to the football games,” Hanna said. “But [football, baseball, and basketball] were the big three. The minor sports were



Photo courtesy of Dr. Linda Teague

A group of girls pose for a picture during the May Party, an age-old tradition that dates back to the 1800s. Leon began practicing the tradition in 1920, but later stopped in 1969.

neglected and the girls participating in women’s sports were discriminated against.”

Hanna also recalls “bullying” as being a big problem when he attended Leon.

“Kids were picked on and everyone had their own select group,” Hanna said. “Students today seem a lot more tolerant and accepting of people who aren’t like them.”

Hanna participated in many school activities that are still popular today. He was a member of Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Key Club, Chorus and played football for four years.

Along with a change in student interactions, Hanna feels that the quality of teachers has improved over the years as well.

“Teacher training is more rigorous and the standard is higher,” Hanna said. “Teaching used to be seen as a lesser profession, but now it’s more respected, although, the pay for teachers will never be enough.”

There are at least 12 members of the Leon faculty that attended Leon. Many feel that because of the long and lasting tradition Leon holds that they couldn’t imagine working anywhere else.

“I just wouldn’t have the same passion at any other school,” Hanna said. “Being in education and considering the impact those four years [at Leon] had on my life and who I am today made coming back to Leon really special.”

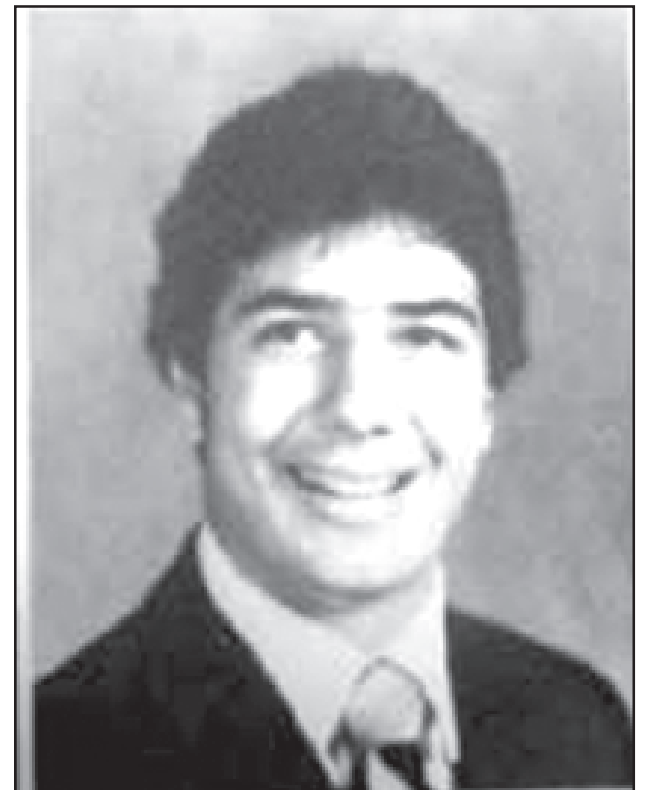


Photo courtesy of the Leon website

Leon principal Rocky Hanna graduated from Leon in 1982. He was an active member of the Key Club, FCA and Chorus. He also played on the football team for four years. He is still passionate about Leon and claims that he couldn’t work anywhere else. Hanna is pictured as a senior.

Leon Alum to bike across the nation

Recent graduate John Cook making preparations for long bicycle journey

By Kyle Muller
High Life All-pages Writer

Some people aid their favorite charity by selling t-shirts, creating promotional banners or collecting donations. However, in order to raise awareness for The Children of Fallen Soldiers Relief Fund, Leon High School alumnus John Cook is taking a cross-coun-

try bike trip.

Cook left for his trip on Feb. 5, and intends on riding from Melbourne Beach, Florida to San Diego, California. Originally he planned on only traveling to Oregon, but decided that a southern route would be warmer and, less snowy.

“I expect the ride to take eight to 10 weeks, putting me on the West

Coast sometime in April,” Cook said.

The fundraising aspect of Cook’s trip is called “Biking in Tribute.” The CFSRF is a scholarship program for kids who have lost parents in Afghanistan or Iraq, and as an Air Force veteran, Cook wants to help those who have lost family members in the war.

“I have decided to spend time

and energy promoting the CFSRF because the charity represents several worthwhile and noble ideas,” Cook said. “It honors the military members who lost their lives in service of our country, it honors education, and it gives the children of the deceased soldiers a tangible gift that recognizes their family’s sacrifice and loss.”

