

Chamber Banquet Sold Out!

By LOUISE ABERCROMBIE
News Business Editor

It's official. The Ponca City Area Chamber of Commerce banquet set for 6:30 p.m. Thursday at the Phillips 66 Atrium is sold out, according to Rich Cantillon Chamber executive director.

The 119th banquet will be the ceremonial handing over of the chairman's gavel to Natalie Fraser from 2012 chairman Lee Evans. Master of ceremonies is a past chairman Kelly Johnson.

This event features achievements for 2012 and expectations for 2013. Several awards will be bestowed during the evening. The Outstanding Citizen, Industry of the Year and the Business Partner of the Year are to be recognized.

Also to be honored are the Ambassador of the Year, Larry Hughes Leadership Award, Volunteer of the Year, and the Gary Martin Outstanding City Employee.

The 2013 executive committee is composed of Barry Bickle, chair-elect; Vice Chair, Bill Coleman; Treasurer, Ryan Schwabe; Immediate past chair Lee Evans and Cantillon.

Past Outstanding Citizens will have reserved

seating. Chamber Board of Directors and the Ambassadors will be ushers and greeters. Dinner will be under the direction of Phillips 66 Chef Danny Perkins, Traci Wyatt, Sodexo Catering Services. Dinner music is to be by pianist Nancy Kruckeberg. The invocation is to be by the Rev. Michael Smith, First United Methodist Church.

Members of the Chamber staff, in addition to Cantillon, are Crystal Bickford, tourism coordinator; Nancy Kruckeberg, director of finance; and Chelsea McConnell, membership development.

Also housed in the Chamber building and having a part on the program is the Ponca City Development Authority. David Myers, executive director, will present the Industry of the Year award. Other staff members are Laurence Beliel, Cynthia Brown, Mike Daugherty, Lori Henderson and Katherine Long. Larry Murphy is chairman of the PCDA.

Prior to the banquet a reception for ticket holders will be hosted by RCB Bank's at the downtown facility.

Program

(Continued From Front)

At that meeting the board will consider a draft ordinance. If approved, it would then go to the City Commission for consideration and action.

Also during the meeting, Police Chief Don Bohon said the board would now meet quarterly, rather than on an "as-needed" basis.

He said he had met over the past few months with Amador and others with rescue groups about their concerns with operations at Animal Control, and he was ordering changes in the way animals are euthanized at Animal Control and particularly how cats are treated there.

He said there is a shared goal of wanting to cut down on the number of stray animals and the number of animals euthanized at Animal Control.

"The big move is that Animal Control is moving to not using gas at all in euthanizations," he said. "Until recently, aggressive dog and all the cats were gassed. We have since started using sedative drugs for the

aggressive dogs. We are working on a mechanical means of controlling the cats, and once that is operating we will remove the gas chamber completely, so there is not any question that it is no longer used."

He said Animal Control Director had been the only euthanasia technician, but Shane Feathers has now been trained as well.

"Stephanie Ringgold was hired recently and is building networks with rescue groups to increase the number of animals who are adopted.

In December, Bohon said, Animal Control took in 54 dogs. Of those, 38 were strays, four were surrendered to the Animal Control truck, two were strays and 10 were owner relinquished at Animal Control. Of those 54 dogs, 24 dogs

were released and 30 were euthanized. Of those euthanized, 19 were pit bulls or pit crosses, he said.

Also in December, 24 cats were taken in. Bohon said 23 were strays and one was surrendered to the Animal Control truck. Four cats were released and 20 euthanized.

During December, 22 citations were issued to animal owners and there were 64 visitors to Animal Control, he said.

"I have asked Animal Control to start enforcing the spay and neuter ordinance more vigorously and to write more citations," the Police Chief said.

The five-member Animal Control Advisory Board includes one veterinarian, one employee of the County Health Department and three citizens at large.

Death

Larry Allen Wunderlich

BLACKWELL — Larry Allen Wunderlich, died Saturday, Jan. 19, 2013, at Wesley Medical Center in Wichita, Kan. He was 70.

Larry Allen Wunderlich was born on July 26, 1942, in Tonkawa, the son of Gale and Nola Bernice Adkins Wunderlich. He grew up and attended school in Blackwell. Following his education he was employed at Blackwell Golf Course as the greens superintendent. He was then employed at Air System Components in Ponca City as a sheet metal fabricator and spot welder working for 20 years, retiring in 1994. He was also employed at McDonalds and as an assistant truck driver. On Aug. 21, 1993, he married Crystal Yelsma-Barwick and made their home in Blackwell. He was an active member of the Immanuel Baptist Church. He enjoyed wood-working, dancing, working jigsaw puzzles and word puzzles, and loved spending time with his cat, Prince.

He is survived by his wife;

a brother, Donald R. Wunderlich of Lexington, N.C.; and three cousins, Paula Simmons, Jim Cook and Donald R. Adkins.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and three brothers, Ronald, Eugene and Karl Wunderlich.

A service is scheduled for 3 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 26, at Immanuel Baptist Church in Blackwell with the Rev. Matt Smith officiating. Burial will follow in Blackwell Cemetery.

Casket bearers will be Lindsey Autry, Stephen Royster, Frank Simmons, Mickey Phillips, Larry Wyckoff and Chris Davis.

Honorary casket bearers will be the Holy Grounds Coffee Shop Wednesday Night Men's Prayer Group.

A memorial has been established in his memorial with Galichia Heart Hospital in c/o Roberts and Son Funeral Home, 120 W. Padon, Blackwell, OK 74631.

Online condolences may be made at www.robertsandson-fh.com.

Obituary

James Elbert McNiece



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James Elbert "Jake" McNiece, son of Eli Hugh and Rebecca Ring McNiece, was born in Maysville, Okla., on May 24, 1919. He was next to the youngest of 10 children, with four older brothers and four older sisters. He died at the home of his son, Hugh McNiece in Chatham, Ill., on Monday morning Jan. 21, 2013, at the age of 93. He spent his early childhood and elementary school education in Maysville, Okla. In 1931, when Jake was 12, he moved with his family to Ponca City.

He completed Junior High and was captain of the Junior High football team for two years under Coach Baker, who later became the coach at Ponca City High School and later coached at Oklahoma A&M (now OSU). By the time Jake completed Junior High, the nation was in the midst of the depression. Jake's Dad could not find full-time employment to take care of the family, and Jake dropped out of High School to work in order to help support his parents and younger sister. When Coach Baker became the Po-Hi football coach, he encouraged Jake to return to school to play football. Coach Baker informed him they could find employment for Jake or his father. Jake took a position at the fire department and worked the night shift while going to school and playing football by day. In Jake's senior year, he was captain of the football team and president of the senior class. He graduated in 1939. During his work with the fire department, he learned to use explosives demolishing fire damaged structures. Following high school he worked in road construction and at the Pine Bluff Arsenal continuing his experience with explosives.

After completing the job at Pine Bluff Arsenal, he enlisted for military service and volunteered for the U.S. Army Paratroop duty on Sept. 1, 1942. He was assigned to the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, Headquarters Company. Basic training took place at Camp Toccoa, Ga. With his prior experience using explosives, he was immediately assigned to the demolition sabotage section to train other troops in the use of high tech explosives. The nucleus of the group that became known as "The Filthy 13", was formed at that time. Following completion of basic training they went to jump school at Fort Benning, Ga. The 506th was then assigned for further training at Camp Mackall, S.C., at which time they were officially attached to the 101st Airborne Division. From there they were involved in the first Tennessee maneuvers in early 1943. The 101st Airborne embarked for England in September 1943, for further training and to prepare for the invasion of Northern Europe.

With Jake as their Sergeant, The Filthy 13, sporting Mohawks and war paint,

participated in the invasion of Normandy, France, June 5, 1944. They jumped behind German Beach fortifications shortly after midnight before the main invasion force hit the beaches the next morning. Jake and the others successfully accomplished their assigned mission (thought to be a suicide mission); however, most of the core of The Filthy 13 were lost in battle or taken prisoner. Following this, he made three more combat jumps, the invasion of Holland, at Bastogne (The Battle of the Bulge), and at Prum Germany.

The Holland jump was made famous by the book and movie "A Bridge Too Far."

After the Holland jump, Jake volunteered for Pathfinder Duty. He led the pathfinder team that jumped into Bastogne during the Battle of the Bulge to set up the resupply of the trapped 101st Airborne, helping turn the tide of the battle.

His fourth jump at Prum Germany (Siegfried Line), was to guide resupply of a section of Patton's tank forces that had been isolated and cut off from Allied supply lines.

After Jake's discharge from the military in February 1946, he travelled the U.S. with his father for about six months (his mother had died while Jake was overseas).

He settled in California for a time, doing railroad and construction work, and returned to Ponca City in 1949. Jake went to work for the U.S. Post Office in Ponca City and settled down for a 28 1/2 year career serving the public. Jake served in local and state offices for the Postal Clerks Union.

In Ponca City, Jake married his first wife Rosita Vitale, who died after 3 1/2 years of marriage in August 1952.

His second wife, Martha Beam Wonders, moved to Ponca City in September 1952, following the death of her first husband. Jake and Martha began dating the following spring and were married Sept. 4, 1953. They stayed happily married for 59 1/2 years. They were active members of the Hartford Avenue Church of Christ where Jake was instrumental in beginning a food program and leading a home Bible study group

among other areas of service, and later the Tonkawa Church of Christ. Jake loved fishing, hunting and gardening, friendships — and service opportunities that revolved around them.

Jake and Martha took several trips to Europe where Jake was honored for his service in WWII.

Jake has been honored over the years for his service to the Country. He was inducted into the Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame, made an Honorary Colonel of the 95th Victory Division. He was awarded an Honorary master's degree in Military Science, by Cumberland University, Lebanon, Tenn. for his participation in the military maneuvers there in 1943. In 2012, Jake was awarded the French Legion of Honor, Knight Chevalier Medal, the highest honor the French President can give to an enlisted soldier.

His story can be read in the book, "The Filthy Thirteen; the true story of the Dirty Dozen" by Richard Killblane and Jake McNiece.

Jake is survived by his wife Martha McNiece; his two sons, Alan Wonders and wife Billie Ruth of Richardson, Texas, and Hugh McNiece and wife Mary Ellen of Chatham, Ill.; his daughter, Rebecca Sue Brewer and husband Joel of Katy, Texas; and grandchildren, Lucy Wonders Hahn, her husband Micah, and their children Luke, Titus, and Elle, Cara Wonders, Michelle Brewer Withrow, her husband Matt, and their children Mason and Madison, Caleb McNiece and his wife Kristi, Silas McNiece, and Hannah McNiece.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, Jan. 26, at 1 p.m. at Hartford Avenue Church of Christ with Don Huddleston officiating. There will be a reception following the service. Visitation will be held at Trout Funeral Home on Thursday, Jan. 24, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Friday, Jan. 25, from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. In lieu of flowers please consider making a memorial contribution, in honor of Jake, to a Veteran's Organization, a food bank or any other charity. Arrangements are made under the direction of Trout Funeral Home and Crematory.

paid obituary

Aviation Museum Has New Center

WICHITA, Kan. (AP) — The Kansas Aviation Museum in Wichita is planning to open an interactive learning center that features flight simulators, a weather station and educational stations.

The new center is expected to open March 16. It is sponsored by Boeing with support from the Lattner Family Foundation and the city of Wichita.

Features will include a mock control tower with a radio connection to a Cessna 210 simulator. Visitors can use a computer-aided system to design an air foil and test it in a virtual wind tunnel. They can also build the foil and test it in a real wind tunnel.



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RCB Bank congratulates the
Ponca City Area Chamber of Commerce
on their 119th Annual Celebration and Awards Ceremony.



Chamber
Banquet
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Holders,
Please
Join our
Celebration!

In recognition, we respectfully invite all banquet ticket holders to a reception prior to the banquet honoring the Chamber Officers and Staff: 4-6 pm, Thursday, January 24 at our downtown location, 2nd and Grand

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