

Lampasas pays tribute to alumni killed in CIA service

FROM PAGE 1

Lampasas mayor, county attorney and county judge.

As a number of other young men from Lampasas did in the 1950s, Darrell Eubanks and John Lewis went to work for the U.S. Forest Service in their teenage years. Eubanks and Lewis worked as smokejumpers – firefighters trained to parachute into rugged, backcountry areas.

Shelton said those skills in the air and in remote locations made Eubanks and Lewis well suited for Air America missions, which often involved dropping supplies or men to support indigenous anti-communist guerillas. The speaker, however, said Eubanks and Lewis were recruited not just for their technical prowess, but also for “their dedication and their strength of character – and their willingness to do whatever needed to be done.”

Referring to the monument in the men’s honor, Shelton said it reminds people of the personal sacrifices of those who love the United States and defend the cause of freedom.

“It reminds us ... that this

nation is preserved by heroic acts of individuals – you and me,” he said.

The monument, Shelton said, will serve as “an instruction to posterity” about “the struggles to death for competing values, a never-ending struggle to preserve the freedom of other people and the way of life in this nation.”

FAMILY MEMBERS' AND CLASSMATES' REMARKS

After concluding his remarks, Shelton invited family members to speak.

Leah Lewis Hessel, one of John Lewis’ sisters, thanked American Legion Post 277 and its former commander James Briggs – the memorial committee chairman – for involving her family in the memorial dedication. The monument, she said, is a remarkable tribute to her brother and Eubanks.

“Today is the day that recognition of their lives becomes a permanent part of the history of their beloved hometown of Lampasas,” she said.

Susan Lewis Steele, John Lewis’ youngest sister, spoke fondly of her older siblings.

“I have the greatest big

brother and sister anybody could ever have,” she said, adding that while attending school in Lampasas, she was very proud to be known as “Johnny and Leah Lewis’ little sister.”

She recalled how, after he had left Lampasas, her brother used to write her letters and enclose a check so she could do Christmas shopping for the family.

“It’s hard to lose a wonderful sibling like that,” she said. “It really is.”

Mike McCoy, second cousin of Eubanks, thanked Post 277 and others who made possible the memorial to Eubanks and Lewis. His family is very proud of the monument, he said.

McCoy and his sister Margaret attended the CIA Wall of Honor ceremony, where they met Mike Pompeo – the agency’s director at the time – and witnessed a program that McCoy said was very special.

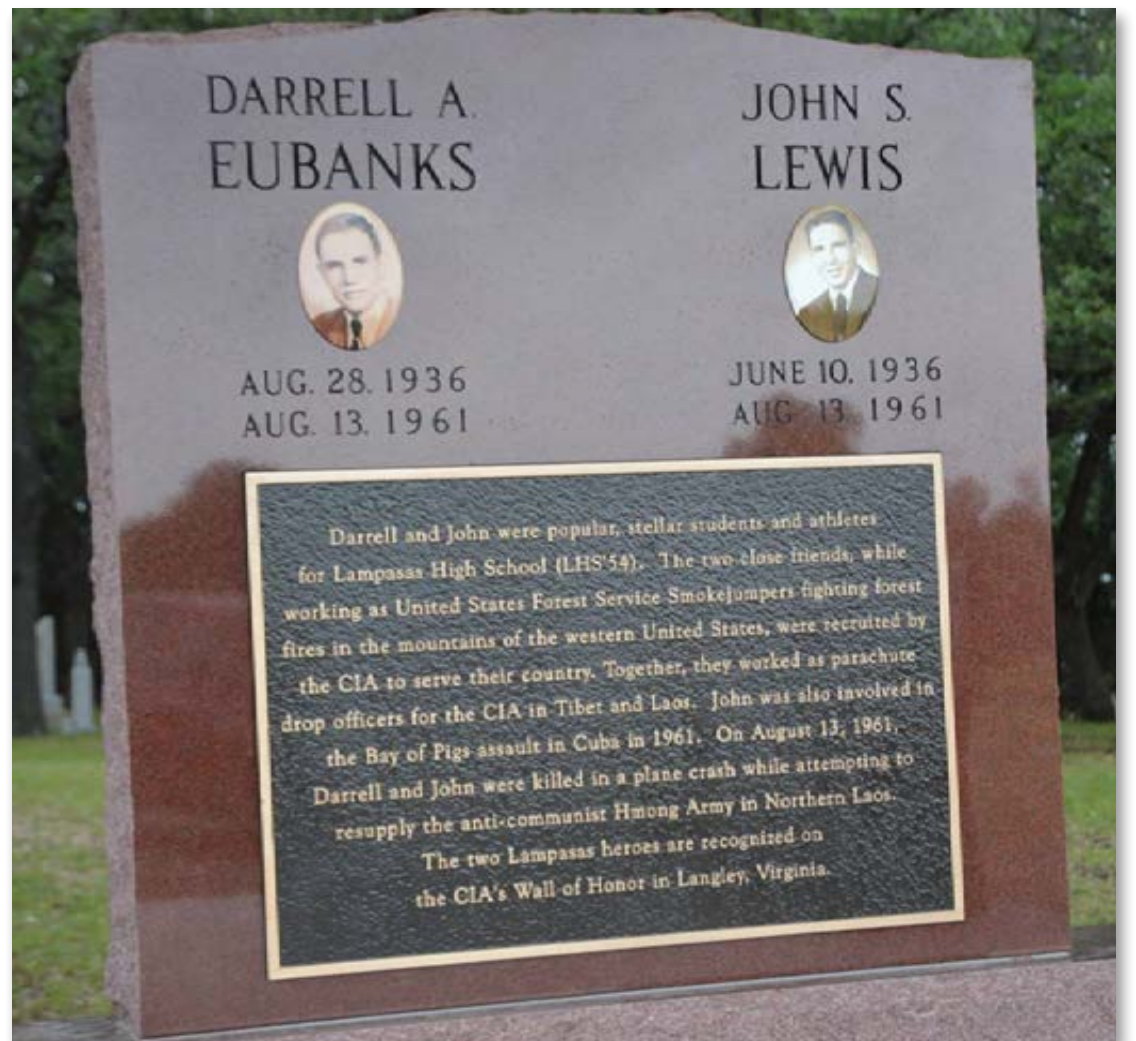
“It was quite moving, the ceremony they gave,” he said.

As Saturday’s program concluded, Shelton invited friends and family members of Eubanks and Lewis to stay and talk. High praise for the men came from several who worked with or were acquainted with them.

David Lancaster, a member of the LHS Class of 1959, worked for the U.S. Forest Service for several years before becoming a smokejumper in 1963. He said Eubanks and Lewis “were inspirations to me.”

Lancaster did surveying, various types of forestry work and firefighting before becoming a smokejumper. Parachuting into the backcountry gave smokejumpers an opportunity to experience the wilderness, he said – but it also brought danger.

Lancaster had to jump out of a disabled aircraft in 1963 in Grangeville, Idaho. Lancaster recalled that a loud explosion shook the 1928 Ford



DAVID LOWE | DISPATCH RECORD

A monument in Oak Hill Cemetery tells the story of former Lampasans Darrell A. Eubanks and John S. Lewis, who became “smokejumper” firefighters and later died in a plane crash while working on a secret mission in Laos for the Central Intelligence Agency.



LEAH LEWIS HESSEL | COURTESY PHOTO

Many Lampasas teenagers went to the northwestern United States in the 1950s to work for the U.S. Forest Service, longtime Lampasans and former American Legion Post 277 commander James Briggs said. This June 1954 photo shows some of those young men as they headed to Idaho. From left are Darrell Eubanks, Kirby Pickett, Walter Haynie, John Snell and John Lewis.

Tri-Motor, so he and the other seven jumpers headed to the door of the aircraft to parachute to safety.

“We had to get out,” he said.

Several of the jumpers saw the right engine of the aircraft fall off, Lancaster said. The spotter and pilot were able to control the plane and land it in a grassy area, Lancaster said.

Kirby W. Pickett – who was not a smokejumper, but who went to Idaho with Eubanks and Lewis to work for the U.S. Forest Service – said the experience was “just sort of an adventure” for the

Lampasas teenagers who traveled northwest.

Although some LHS classmates performed other duties with the Forest Service, Pickett said Eubanks and Lewis had set their minds on the goal of becoming smokejumpers.

As Shelton noted, Pickett’s son John Darrell Pickett – who attended Saturday’s program – is named for Lewis and Eubanks.

“Couldn’t think of any two better people [whose names] for him to use,” Pickett said.

Ken Hessel – Leah Hessel’s husband – served as a

U.S. Forest Service smokejumper, and he jumped with Eubanks and Lewis for two years. Hessel later served in the CIA from 1963-1975.

Hessel described Eubanks and Lewis as quiet men, but strong leaders.

“I would say that their leadership helped out in several tight situations, both in the Forest Service fighting fire and overseas when they were CIA employees.”

Hessel said the former Lampasans were “men that you could always depend on to have your back in tight situations.”

Despite debate about curb and gutter, council approves incentives for subdivision

FROM PAGE 1

electrical infrastructure to each platted lot. That will cost the city about \$71,346, according to the development agreement.

An exhibit attached to the development incentive agreement states that Finney will spend an estimated \$337,000 on road work for Stone Valley and \$881,000 total on infrastructure for the subdivision. In all, Finney is investing about \$1.5 million in development of Stone Valley, the agreement states.

Along with providing incentives for infrastructure within the new subdivision, the city will reimburse Finney \$33,324 for drainage improvements his contractor will make on Westridge Place, which is north and east of Stone Valley.

The Westridge drainage is not directly related to the Stone Valley work, but because Finney’s contractor

for Stone Valley already is at work in the area, city officials asked for that company to do the drainage work now. Assistant City Manager Gary Cox has said having the Westridge drainage work done by an already-mobilized contractor could cost less than if the city pursued the improvements as a project separate from the Stone Valley work.

The city’s \$21,600 payment toward Willis Street drainage prompted extended discussion at last week’s meeting.

Finney has installed a curb inlet box to take stormwater off Willis and into detention ponds inside Stone Valley. Curb and gutter installation is needed, however, to channel stormwater into the inlet box, according to information Cox presented to the City Council.

Mayor Pro Tem TJ Monroe asked if the curb and gutter along Willis will benefit Stone Valley alone, or if it will help a broader

area of the city.

Mayor Misti Talbert said officials need to determine whether the curb and gutter installation is required only because Stone Valley is being developed -- or if the city would have needed it even if there were not a new subdivision being created off Willis.

An earthen berm in Stone Valley can channel storm runoff for 10 years or so, Finney said, but the developer said as sediment builds up, some lots that back up to Willis could have trouble with runoff. The same thing has happened on Westridge, he said.

“If it’s addressed now [with curb and gutter on Willis], it’s just going to prevent a [future] problem,” Finney said.

The developer said putting in curb and gutter now would be far less expensive than doing the work later if drainage problems arise.

Although a formal

hydraulic analysis has not been done, Cox said the city’s engineer gave an opinion that it probably would be in Lampasas’ best interest to put curb and gutter along North Willis.

Councilman Randy Clark – who retired in 2013 after a long career as Lampasas’ public works director – said he has seen a lot of sediment running off Willis to the area between West Avenue C and West Avenue B.

Councilman Chuck Williamson said it could be a good protection to the city to have curb and gutter installed now. Councilman Mike White also spoke in favor of paying for the approximately 800-foot section of curb and gutter, as he said it would make the city drainage system more efficient.

Street Superintendent Carlos Garcia said the city has had a significant amount of drainage problems in the area of Willis, West Avenue B and West Avenue

C. Garcia said the city needs the section of proposed curb and gutter along Willis, and he said it would be less expensive to have the work done as part of the Stone Valley development than it would be for the city to hire a separate contractor.

Talbert voiced concerns about the street maintenance fund, as Cox said the city payments for the Rice Street extension plus the Willis curb and gutter will use about \$75,000 of the \$100,000 budget for the year.

Paying for the work on Willis is not a problem, Garcia said, because he said no other curb and gutter work is planned this fiscal year.

A motion to approve all the proposed terms with Finney – including the city payments for Rice Street and Willis Street – passed 5-2. Clark, White, Williamson, Councilwoman Cathy Kuehne and Councilwoman Delana Toups voted “yes.” Talbert and Monroe cast the

dissenting votes.

The agreement with the city requires Finney to begin building at least four houses on or before Oct. 31 and to complete at least 50 percent of the 67 proposed houses within five years of the date the agreement is signed.

If the developer defaults on any of his responsibilities listed in the agreement, the city shall give him written notice and then allow 30 days for him to come into compliance. If he has not complied with all terms after the 30-day period, the agreement shall terminate, and Finney shall repay all funds the city expended as part of the agreement – including the value of the electrical infrastructure.

If a default is not resolved within the 30-day period, the developer “shall not be entitled to any further funding from the City under this agreement, or any future funding agreement,” the document states.

PECAN CREEK VILLAGE APARTMENTS

205 Riverview
Lampasas, TX 76550
OFFICE HOURS: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday-Friday
PHONE: 512-556-8791

Rates Based on Income

Rental Assistance For Qualified Applicants,
“62 years of age or older, handicapped/disabled,
regardless of age”.

CENTRAL HEAT & AIR
ENERGY EFFICIENT
LAUNDRY ROOM

WATER, SEWER & GARBAGE PAID
HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE UNITS

Individuals with a disability wishing to request a reasonable accommodation to complete the application process should contact the apartment manager at 512-556-8791.

Para solicitar un apartamento favor llamar a manager al siguiente numero 512-556-8791. Para solicitar una adaptacion o modificacion razonable, favor llamar manager al siguiente numero 512-556-8791.

Personas que hablan espanol y requieren un interprete, favor llamar a manager al siguiente numero 512-556-8791.



“This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.”



PECAN GROVE APARTMENTS

200 Riverview Dr.
Lampasas, TX 76550
OFFICE HOURS: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday-Friday
PHONE: 512-556-8791

Rates Based on Income

Rental Assistance For Qualified Families of very-low,
low, and moderate income applicants.

CENTRAL HEAT & AIR
ENERGY EFFICIENT
LAUNDRY ROOM
WATER, SEWER & GARBAGE PAID
HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE UNITS

Individuals with a disability wishing to request a reasonable accommodation to complete the application process should contact the apartment manager at 512-556-8791.

Para solicitar un apartamento favor llamar a manager al siguiente numero 512-556-8791. Para solicitar una adaptacion o modificacion razonable, favor llamar manager al siguiente numero 512-556-8791.

Personas que hablan espanol y requieren un interprete, favor llamar a manager al siguiente numero 512-556-8791.



“This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.”

