Opinion & Editorials

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"To glorify God, and enjoy Him forever."

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EDITORIALS

Memorial Day

Everyday could be Memorial Day, but the last Monday in May is set aside as a day of reflection and remembrance of those who gave the ultimate sacrifice in service to country.

In ceremonies on town squares, at Arlington National Cemetery, at major league ball parks, at family picnics or in quiet reflection, the dead were memorialized.

"Sacrifice is meaningless without remembrance," Circuit Judge Vernon Cotten of Carthage said at a ceremony a few years ago.

"America's collective consciousness demands that all citizens be aware of and recall on special occasions the deaths of their fellow countrymen during war time," he said.

"Far too often the nation as a whole takes for granted the freedoms all Americans enjoy. Those freedoms were paid for with the lives of others few of us actually knew."

Cotten quoted Abraham Lincoln when he said: "From these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain."

Carved into granite at the cemetery in France where 5,076 Americans are buried – most of whom died in the Battle of the Bulge – are Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower's words:

"All who shall hereafter live in freedom will be here reminded that to these men and their comrades we owe a debt to be paid with grateful remembrance of their sacrifice and with the high resolve that the cause for which they died shall live eternally."

At the Vicksburg National Military Park during a weekend ceremony rededicating a monument to Iowa's fallen soldiers, former Gov. Haley Barbour choked up and wiped away tears when talking about the University Greys.

At Gettysburg, every member of the University Greys was either killed or wounded. There is a cemetery behind Tad Smith Coliseum with about 700 graves. None of the students or professors would return to Ole Miss.

As reported by Therese Apel of The Clarion-Ledger, Barbour denounced slavery but spoke of the valor on each side:

"We were taught a variety of reasons for the Civil War, and there were many reasons, but we can't ever forget that the principal cause for the war was slavery and the abolition of slavery, and that slavery was wrong. Even many of the slaveholders called it a necessary evil. Slavery was wrong. Segregation was wrong, and we've put that behind us too.

"But that doesn't make us think any less of these men, on both sides, who did so much."

Madison County families from other wars still mourn their dead, too. America mourns all of our war dead on Memorial Day.

May we never, ever forget our honored war dead and their sacrifices.

BRIAN PERRY

Mayoral races to watch

Many towns and cities still face competitive mayoral races in the June 4 general election.

Mississippi's municipal primary and primary run-offs are in the books, but many towns and cities still face competitive races in the June 4 general election. Here are a few races political leaders are watching.

Meridian voters face a rematch. Four years ago, Republican Cheri Barry won the open mayor's seat over Democrat Percy Bland by 114 votes to keep the city in the GOP column. Now as her first term comes to an end, Barry faces Bland again, along with three independents: Wally Hudnall, Doug Nichols and Walter Patton. Meridian, Mississippi's sixth largest city, is more than 60 percent black: a demographic that skews Democratic. But the Republican Party is working to hold the Queen City and Governor Phil Bryant, Lieutenant Governor Tate Reeves and Congressman Gregg Harper have all been engaged to turn out the GOP vote and resources. Some controversy erupted during the Democratic Primary in Meridian when a noose was found hanging near Bland's (who is black) campaign headquarters. That matter is under investigation.

Right behind Meridian in population size is Tupelo, another Republican held seat heavily challenged by the Democrats. Popular Republican Mayor Jack Reed, Jr. chose not to seek a second term and Republican Fred Pitts, President of the Tupelo City Council is seeking the spot. Reed endorsed Pitts who has had events with Lt. Gov. Reeves and Republican State Chairman Joe Nosef, but not all Republicans are on board. GOP Councilman Jim Newell came out in support of Democratic nominee Jason Shelton who claims he is more fiscally conservative than Pitts. Shelton, a personal injury attorney, is 34 years junior to Pitts who has said on the campaign trail that "70 is the new 50."

While further down the list in population, Starkville (#15) and Ocean Springs (#24) remain high on the list in the Democratic political bench.

Starkville's Mayor Parker Wiseman seeks reelection to a second term, challenged by Republican Dan Moreland. Moreland is Chairman of the Starkville Parks Commission Board and formerly a justice court judge. An attorney, Wiseman is touted by Democrats as one of their future statewide leaders.

Ocean Springs Mayor Connie Moran used her position to springboard a run for statewide office in 2011 as the Democratic nominee for State Treasurer. She took 38 percent of the vote and lost to Republican Lynn Fitch in the open seat race. Now Moran seeks a third term as mayor of the Gulf Coast town known for its arts and tourism. Four years ago, despite being heavily outspent, Moran won a highly contested race against Republican Scott Walker by about 100 votes. Now Moran faces Republican Jackson County Supervisor John McKay. One issue surfacing in the campaign involves two trips McKay took on boats owned by the Mississippi Marine Resources Foundation, which is directed by Walker's father, Dr. Bill Walker, former Director of the Department of Marine Resources (DMR). Both the Foundation and DMR have come under intense media criticism and investigation. McKay claims he is not under investigation and that the linkage to him and the boat trips have been generated by Moran's campaign for political purposes.

Two other Democratic incumbent mayors face strong challenges by independents.

Oxford's (#20 by population) Democrat incumbent, Mayor Pat Patterson, is being challenged by independent Todd Wade, a former Ole Miss football standout and NFL player who [illegible] businesses in Oxford [illegible] made a real estate [illegible] interest pledge as [illegible] paign and is running [illegible] sive campaign.

In Hattiesburg, [illegible] third largest city, [illegible] ocratic Mayor [illegible] seeks his fourth term [illegible] Republican challenger [illegible] independents are [illegible] including Ward 4 [illegible] Dave Ware who [illegible] city council as a [illegible] Ware's campaign [illegible] fundraiser in Madison [illegible] metro area supporters [illegible] day, May 30, hosted [illegible] Fortenberry, Perry [illegible] Self, and Karen and [illegible]

In 2011, Duffee [illegible] ocratic nominee for [illegible] Interestingly enough, [illegible] challengers in the [illegible] gubernatorial primary [illegible] mayoral races [illegible] Compton who lost [illegible] can Primary to Barry [illegible] and Bill Luckett [illegible] Representative Cohen [illegible] Democratic nomination [illegible] dale. In Clarksdale, [illegible] favored to win but [illegible] can Angie Smith and [illegible] Bradford sat and [illegible] the general election.

In Mississippi's [illegible] city, Southaven, [illegible] Greg Davis, former [illegible] can but now an independent [illegible] a challenge by Republican [illegible] ance agent Darren [illegible] and Democrat Connie [illegible] Davis, under state [illegible] and court proceedings [illegible] the misuse of city funds [illegible] disclosure in his personal [illegible] he is gay, still returns home [illegible] in Southaven, but the [illegible] pates Musselwhite [illegible] city to the Republican [illegible]

Brian Perry is a [illegible] the Madison County [illegible] a partner with Capstone [illegible] Affairs, LLC. Reach him [illegible] sonablyright@bri[illegible] @CapstonePerry on Twitter.

CORY WILSON

Obamination

Republicans should jettison the campaign hype, be the adults in the room, and get to the bottom of what the President and his people knew and when they knew it.

There has been a lot of commentary about the scandals enveloping the Obama White House. At the risk of repetition, here are a few more thoughts.

No, strike that. This needs to be repeated, from every possible outlet, until the American people realize the seriousness of what is going on. The chain of scandals relating to the Benghazi coverup, IRS targeting of conservatives, and Department of Justice intrusion into Associated Press journalists' phone records represent a chilling pattern of behavior by our government. And, that behavior emanates from the tone set at the top.

I am not talking about the increasingly unserious partisanship between Democrats and Republicans. Not only are people sick of it, the pettiness of Washington is becoming a dangerous tranquilizer. President Obama's flacks (including many in the media) are furiously spinning their own shocking actions into a mere partisan witch hunt by "desperate Republicans." Move on, nothing to see here, just the usual Washington noise.

Incredibly, many in the GOP are taking the Democrats' bait and shrinking these scandals into the next campaign pitch. If I get another email from the GOP using these scandals to ask for campaign money, I may unsubscribe. From the Party.

Republicans should jettison the campaign hype, be the adults in the room, and get to the bottom of what the President and his people knew and when they knew it. (If they do, campaign donations will follow.)

This is not a D versus R campaign issue. This is a systematic abuse of power by the most paranoid and politicized White House since Nixon's. Many of us thought that electing as President a radical leftist with no experience in governing was a disaster waiting to happen.

It's no longer waiting.

I served as a White House Fellow in the Bush Administration. One of the purposes of the Fellows program is to allow people from outside Washington like me to observe how decisions are made inside Washington. Some of the lessons learned as a Fellow are instructive.

First, the IRS. There is simply no way that a group of low-level IRS employees just decided on their own to start targeting conservatives for audits, tougher questioning, and slow-walked applications for the tax exempt status (that was simultaneously being given to liberal groups). No way. Bureaucrats do not set policy, and they surely do not do so without running everything up the chain of command, multiple times. Obama may not have given the order, but he appointed the officials who did.

And, the IRS targeting fits right in with a President who has expressly stated he intends to "punish his enemies" and, specifically, crush the GOP. Mr. Obama, your Administration got the message and carried it out long enough to help you win in 2012. Mission accomplished.

Benghazi. Again, it is inconceivable the White House was not intimately involved in scrubbing those infamous talking points through twelve drafts, until all the "inconvenient truths" were removed.

Before a President gives any speech, literally dozens of folks wordsmith and check facts, across every agency involved. For a national security story like Benghazi, senior leadership would have signed off on everything. Mistakes do happen; but lies do not happen by accident.

And, in the case of an ambassador assassinated by terrorists, it now appears that everything being said before the November election was not said by accident.

Likewise, the "what difference, at this point, does it make" explanations after the election have been riddled with misstatements, at least until three career State Department officials came forward with (some of) the truth. Heckuva job, Secretary Clinton.

The DOJ's scrutiny of the Associated Press reporters' phone records also fits the theme. Ostensibly to investigate leaks that threatened national security, the DOJ's intrusion into the work, cell, and personal phone records of twenty reporters was done without notice to the AP. Occurring in the Spring of 2012, as election season heated up, the search has already diminished journalists' capacity to report on the government, according to the head of the AP. There is more to come on this one.

So, let's review. Your freedoms of speech and association, a free press, and protections against unreasonable searches have been seriously compromised for Obama and his pals to maintain power. Add in the Administration's attacks on your right to bear arms, freedom of religion, and the basic expectation that our leaders tell the truth, and it's quite a second term agenda.

For those who still support this President, it's time to put down the Kool-aid, and start paying attention.

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RICH LOWRY

Obama's mystery night

President Barack Obama's whereabouts the night of the Sept. 11 attack in Benghazi remains a mystery.

On "Fox News Sunday" recently, White House aide Dan Pfeiffer was asked about President Barack Obama's whereabouts the night of the Sept. 11 attack in Benghazi.

This was the night when we lost our first ambassador in 30 years, and when three other Americans were killed in an attack lasting for hours at multiple locations. Since the president is commander in chief, one would think that where he was and what he did during such an event would be of obvious public concern.

Not according to Pfeiffer. He deemed the president's location, and specifically whether he was in the Situation Room, "a largely irrelevant fact." If it is so unimportant, why not simply tell us? It's not as if we haven't heard largely irrelevant information before.

Obama's actions and nonactions on that terrible night are a blank spot in his presidency. We simply don't know much about them, and the White House has always been perfectly content to leave it that way.

We know he was meeting with Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey on an unrelated matter at 5 p.m. Washington time, when he learned of the attack. In congressional testimony, Panetta said he had no contact with the president or the White House after that point. Dempsey said he didn't hear from the president, either.

We know that the president talked to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at 10 p.m., when the assault that killed Ambassador Chris Stevens and State Department computer expert Sean Smith was over but the mortar attack that killed two former U.S. Navy SEALs at another facility hadn't yet taken place.

(We also know he had an hour-long conversation with Israeli Prime Minister Bibi Netanyahu, but according to the White House, the call was about Iran.)

What about the rest of the time? Pfeiffer assures us that the president kept "in constant touch that night with his national-security team and kept up to date with the events as they were happening."

He must have experienced the loneliness and responsibility of command during all his unspecified phone calls with unspecified national-security personnel from an unspecified location until unspecified hours of the night.

When the White House has a good story to tell, we hear about it. As Boston Herald columnist Michael Graham points out, the president has been in constant evidence responding to the Moore, Okla., tornado. Two days after the storm, the White House blog informed us, among many other things, that the president spoke to Mayor Glenn Lewis and Gov. Mary Fallin "to reiterate that he had directed his administration to provide all available [illegible] support the response [illegible] governor and her team."

The Osama bin Laden [illegible] be one of the most [illegible] episodes of his presidency [illegible] diately after killing [illegible] Obama gave a long, detailed [illegible] view to "60 Minutes."

He talked about what [illegible] tion the CIA first brought [illegible] about bin Laden's hideout [illegible] what orders he gave [illegible] When the planning began [illegible] it proceeded. How [illegible] was in multiple meetings [illegible] nuance of his thinking [illegible] dynamic of the debate among [illegible] advisers. The mood in the [illegible] tion Room during the raid [illegible] And so on.

In the case of Benghazi [illegible] military maintains that [illegible] could have been done to [illegible] lives lost that night, and [illegible] right. But no one could [illegible] long the attack in Benghazi [illegible] last, or if there would be [illegible] attacks in Tripoli. As [illegible] commander in chief was [illegible] been coordinating with his [illegible] and prodding it to see [illegible] more, faster to respond to [illegible] that resulted in a national [illegible] tion.

The day after his [illegible] night, Obama emerged [illegible] statement at 10:35 a.m. [illegible] ing the Benghazi attack [illegible] Washington at 2:20 p.m. [illegible] fundraiser in Las Vegas.

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BIBLE SELECTION

Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. — Romans 12:15

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES/J. Ligon Dunca[illegible]

United to Christ

[illegible] Why is the resurrection of [illegible] so important for Chris[illegible] The point that Paul [illegible] emphasizes in this passage is [illegible] that the resurrection of Jesus [illegible] Christ is the source of their justification and sanctification. It is [illegible] the source of forgiveness and it [illegible] also the source of transformation. Not only are they accepted [illegible] as righteous (justification), but [illegible] also they are transformed [illegible] increasingly into righteousness [illegible] (sanctification) by the power of [illegible] the resurrection of Jesus Christ. [illegible] Jesus', resurrection for the [illegible] believer is a fountain of new life, [illegible] and the apostle makes that clear [illegible] here.

[illegible] In Romans, chapter 6, it will [illegible] be his concern to show you how [illegible] the power of sin is broken for the [illegible] believer through union with the [illegible] resurrected Christ.

I. Continuing in sin, living in sin, is a contradiction of grace and its purposes (V. 1-2).

Paul begins with a point [illegible] counterpoint. Should we go on [illegible] sinning so that grace might [illegible] abound? He answers that question [illegible] with a question. How can [illegible] people who have died to sin, still [illegible] live in it? Paul wants Christians [illegible] to consider their new relationship to sin. A Christian is a person who has died to sin. Paul is telling us, embracing a lifestyle of living in sin is a contradiction for Christians. It's a contradiction of God's grace. It's a contradiction of the purposes of God's grace. It's a contradiction believers' identity in Christ.

Paul is not pushing the power of positive thinking here. He's not saying, "If you will just think hard enough that you will be a person who has died to sin, you will eventually die to sin." Paul is talking about a reality, which has been wrought by God. Paul is not encouraging denial either. He's not encouraging people who are whole-hog in love with the life of sin to pretend just like they are not.

He's not saying, "Okay, you people that are in love with sin, just for a moment, pretend like you are not and pretend like you have died to sin." He is talking about what happens when a person is united to Christ. The reason the believer has died to sin is because he is united to the resurrected Christ. In union with Christ, the believer dies to the penalty and the power of sin.

II. Remember your baptism (into Christ and [illegible] death) and improve it (V. 3-[illegible]

Not only does he point to [illegible] Christian's identity, but he po[illegible] to baptism. What does bapt[illegible] mean for Christians? Paul h[illegible] cally says, "Remember [illegible] baptism into Christ and into [illegible] death, and improve it." [illegible] word "improve" comes [illegible] Westminster Larger Catec[illegible] and it says that when Chri[illegible] are present for the bapti[illegible] others they ought to in[illegible] their own baptism.

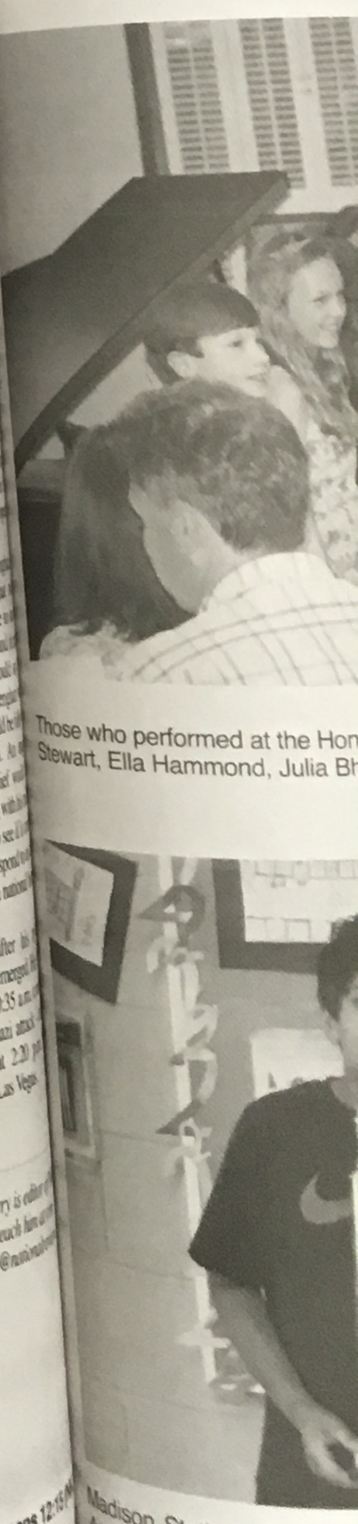
That doesn't mean th[illegible] should trade it in for a m[illegible] improved model of bap[illegible] simply means that Ch[illegible] should remember the [illegible] God held out in baptis[illegible] they witness the admi[illegible] of baptism to others.

Paul wants Chri[illegible] reflect on two particu[illegible] concerning baptism. [illegible] Christians are bapt[illegible] Christ, and second th[illegible] baptized into His [illegible] begins that focus [illegible] another question. "[illegible] know that all of us [illegible] been baptized into J[illegible] have been baptize[illegible] death?" A Christian [illegible] scratching their he[illegible] "Well, when exactl[illegible] died to sin?" And [illegible] ately says, "Consi[illegible] tism." He is no[illegible] water baptism sa[illegible] he saying that w[illegible] the instrument th[illegible] Christ. What he i[illegible] water baptism is [illegible] Christian's union[illegible]

No longer is [illegible] the Christian, [illegible] over the Christ[illegible] sin their lord, [illegible] Lord. That truth [illegible] baptism. Ch[illegible] longer under [illegible] sin, they're n[illegible] demnation of [illegible] now live in th[illegible] of the domi[illegible] Jesus Christ.

III. The [illegible] grace is dec[illegible]

Ultimate[illegible] the resurrec[illegible] and the em[illegible] that comes [illegible]



Those who performed at the Hon[illegible] Stewart, Ella Hammond, Julia Bl[illegible]

Madison Station Elementa[illegible] Arunachal[illegible]