

# Writer's Roost

by Willis Webb

## Boy Scouts still about fun at age 100

Boy Scouts of America's 100th birthday is Feb. 8 and, while they are constantly examining their appeal to boys and young men, they feel no necessity to reinvent themselves.

Scouting is still about old-fashioned fun and character development. It is funded by donations and various forms of fund-raising, none government derived or initiated although BSA is chartered by Congress and the honorary leader is always the President of the United States.

Competition on several fronts has reduced Scout membership — many more youth sports activities plus a lot of youth organizations have sprung up and grown, drawing from the Scouting membership base. Television, computers and the resulting proliferation of video games have siphoned interest. Another

major factor in membership reduction is urbanization.

Scouting is coming to grips with the competition and resulting loss of membership. While there are still plenty of fun offerings, Boy Scouts don't have to rely on such things as moss on the north side of a tree or a compass with the advent of Global Positioning Systems (GPS). They have embraced technology with the Boy Scout motto, "Be prepared," in mind.

Managing the nearly 3 million youngsters in the program is accomplished by Scouting's national organization through regional units, known as councils. To find the council responsible for your region, go to the national website, [www.scouting.org](http://www.scouting.org).

In checking the nearest regional unit, I went to [www.longhorncouncil.org](http://www.longhorncouncil.org) and found out a lot about Scouting. For instance there are three council Boy Scout camps — Worth Ranch, Sid Richardson Scout Ranch and Camp Tahuaya.

Boy Scouts, it seems, are still big on adventure programs: blobbing, swimming, water polo, jousting, paintball, Western fast draw, Viking ship, F-16 flight simulator, SR2 Multimedia, G-scale railroad, wake boarding and Brazos River Canoe Trip to name a few from the Longhorn website.

That canoe trip was an attention-grabber because of a 1951 summer high excursion. The Heart O' Texas Council, now part of Longhorn, sponsored a Canadian canoe trip for 26 Boy Scouts. A bus carried the Scouts (I was among them) and two leaders from Waco to Ely, Minn., the jumping off point for 10 days of canoeing in

Quantico Provincial Park across the U.S.-Canadian border.

At Ely, the Scouting contingent was divided in half with 13 Scouts and a leader assigned to a guide with five canoes. Each group took a different trail.

Most of the lakes were connected and the few portages — which involved carrying the canoes, personal item packs plus the group camping gear and food — were pretty short. The longest was about a mile. Every lake was crystal clear and you could see the bottom at 30-40 feet. We each carried a tin cup attached to a lanyard around our necks. So pristine was the water that you could take the cup and dip it into the water as the canoe glided along the surface, and drink it without fear.

It was truly a wilderness area and the only other humans we saw during the trip were a honeymooning couple and a Royal Canadian Mounted Police (Mountie) officer. There were plenty of fish (walleye pike, northern pike and rock bass) plus sightings of moose, beaver, bear and, one big-eyed Scout swore, a cougar.

In addition to outdoor adventures aplenty, Scouting also offers training and awards in a multitude of fields. Most are at least indirectly, if not directly, related to citizenship training and character development.

Scouting has some shortcomings. Their membership contains only about 11 percent minorities when the nation is 28 percent minority. However, there are active programs to increase the number of minority youngsters in an overall attempt at growth.

The Scout Oath is a strength rather than a shortcoming:

"On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight."

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FAIRFIELD LIONS CLUB presented awards this week to winners of its "Lions Efforts Against Drugs" essay contest at Fairfield junior high school. Pictured are: front l-r, first place Ellen Ezell, eighth grade English teacher Andrea Hamilton, second place Bree Bosser and third place Caitlynn Stone; back l-r, seventh grade English teacher Kim Rachel and Lions president Kevin Moller.

## From Amarillo CofC . . . FHS grad earns honor

Former Fairfield resident Bill Jenkins recently was named to the "Top 20 Under 40 List" of Amarillo chamber of commerce.

The award, the first ever given by the chamber, recognizes the influence of young professionals on the future of the Amarillo area.

Nominees were graded on professional involvement, community involvement and personal achievement.

Jenkins, a 1988 gradu-

ate of Fairfield high school, is an independent financial advisor and owner of SWS Financial Services.

He earned a bachelor's degree in accounting at Abilene Christian College and is a certified public accountant.

The honoree formerly worked for Merrill Lynch at the World Trade Center in New York City, and left his office at 1:30 a.m. Sept. 11, 2001, hours before terrorists flew airlines into the

building's twin towers. He was at a Merrill Lynch corporate campus in Princeton, N.J., when the attack occurred.

Jenkins was employed with Merrill Lynch for nine years and started SWS last summer, believing he could better serve his clients as an independent financial advisor.

The honoree is the son of Johnny and Carolyn Jenkins of Fairfield.

## For area landowners . . . Wildlife workshop set

Landowners interested in developing a wildlife management program for their property should attend a Small-Acreage Wildlife Management Workshop on Friday, March 5th, at the Gus Engeling Wildlife Management Area.

Presentations by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), Texas Agrilife Extension (TAEX) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff will help landowners better understand some commonly recommended management practices and create a workable management plan.

Wildlife management tax valuations, habitat management, supplemental food and shelter, erosion control and pond construction are covered in the presentations and demonstration site tours.

"We have a great combination of presentations and demonstrations designed to help landowners managing recreational or family lands of less than 250 acres," says TPWD biologist Wes Littrell.

Littrell notes that the program could be especial-

ly valuable to those applying for a wildlife management tax valuation.

The program is hosted by the Gus Engeling Wildlife Management Area located on U.S. 287 between Corsicana and Palestine.

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m., and the program will conclude by 4 p.m. A barbeque lunch will be provided.

Due to limited space, attendees must reserve their place in advance with a check for \$12 per person made out to the Anderson-Houston SWCD.

Registration is limited to the first 60 paid individuals.

Checks, along with attendee's name, property county and contact information should be sent to: Gus Engeling WMA, 16149 North US Hwy 287, Tennessee Colony, TX 75861.

Program sponsors include the Anderson-Houston Soil & Water Conservation District, Henderson County Wildlife Committee, NRCS, Texas Agrilife Extension and TPWD.

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## DO YOU NEED HELP completing your exemption or special valuation forms?

The Freestone Central Appraisal District will be hosting free workshops to answer your questions and assist you in completing and filing these forms.

A presentation will be given that explains some of the exemptions and special valuations available and someone will be there to answer your questions.

- February 4, 2010 - Fairfield Conference Center, Reunion Grounds in Fairfield
- February 9, 2010 - Dew School Library
- February 11, 2010 - Teague Community Center, Main Street in Teague
- February 16, 2010 - Wortham High School Library

CAD staff will be available for each workshop from 6:30 pm until 8:00 pm