

4-H Shooting Sports News and Views
The Official Organ of the Texas 4-H Shooting Sports Program

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Attachments: All attachments normally with the newsletter are listed on the web site. Look for registrations, workshops, and similar items down the margins and across the pages of the newsletter on the web site. Karen has made it pretty user friendly as long as you are willing to look and to click on things for additional information.

Tom Davison Honored as an Inductee into the 4-H Hall of Fame

H. T. "Tom" Davison, past program leader for the Texas 4-H Program and the original chair of the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee was recently honored by his selection to the National 4-H Hall of Fame. Tom richly deserves that recognition. He was a powerful leader with the philosophy of "surrounding himself with people who are better than you and they will make you look good." He said that seriously, but his positive leadership model was one that inspired people to do the difficult immediately and the impossible with a little more time. He was one of four, not doubt the ringleader, who launched the Texas 4-H Shooting Sports Program many years ago. If you have the opportunity, take the time to congratulate Tom and to express your thanks for his leadership.

Stanley Baumbach

Stanley Baumbach, one of the early adopters of 4-H shooting sports, former chair of the Texas 4-H Shooting Sports Committee, father, grandfather, brother, and friend, passed away July 19, 2009. He will be sorely missed by all of us who knew him well. Knowing his faith and practice, we cannot and would not call him back to us, rather we seek to join him in glory. Knowing his faith provides solace to those left behind, both family and friends. Stanley left a great legacy for Texas 4-H Shooting Sports providing outstanding leadership as the program grew and prospered. The family has requested that memorial donations be set to the **V. Cary Foundation for Cancer Research, 106 Towerview Road, Cary, NC 27513**. I am sure that Janelle would appreciate your condolences.

National Match Results

The Texas Team in the 2009 Matches started slowly and finished strong to bring home the H. T. "Tom" Davison Award for the high point state for the 10th consecutive time! Competition was stiff with over 500 competitors participating in the nine disciplines, each of which involves three events. When the overall award was announced, we finished 20 placing points ahead of our friendly arch-rival, Missouri. On the other hand, it only takes one. Congratulations are in order for all team members. They endured some trying moments, rising to the occasion. At one point during the week adults from another state actually booed our team as they entered the awards ceremony. Both adults and contestants apologized for the boorish behavior of their cohorts, and our team members and coaches rose to the occasion. We have had hard contests and close finishes in other years, but this was the first case in my memory where lousy sportsmanship was demonstrated by either youth or adults during these games. Let's hope that it is also the last time we shall see it!

Issues from and for the National Matches

Several issues emerged this year during the Games. Most of them were results of departures from standard range protocols and commands. Some actions that we would not tolerate, even in local matches for beginners, were permitted on competitive ranges by range staff. Among them were breaches of range safety and protocol, like allowing shooters to handle their firearms while range staff were down range, closed actions during cease fires, and modification of stated rules on the firing line. These are showcase games. Let's make sure that we showcase superior range control and safety and the use of standard range commands. Note that most of the ranges were operated in a sound, professional manner by staff who were efficient, effective, firm and supportive of all shooters, a standard we have come to expect over the past decade.

To continue making the Games better, I am using this note to request that all coaches, parents or youth who have suggestions, praises, complaints, or observations that would assist us in improving safety and operations in Kerrville for the next two years contact me directly with any praises, complaints, observations and suggestions to improve contact me directly with that information. This is not the place for complaints or griping. It is a chance to make the best better by responding to suggestions for positive changes. We will include these items in our discussions in September, so time is short. Safety is paramount, and smooth functioning of the games is vital to our being a good host. The paramount nature of safety in matches requires constant vigilance and clarity in rules and protocols. We want to post those for all coaches and participants so none of this comes as a surprise.

Do not bash our hosts for the past two years! Nebraska and the city of Grand Island have been outstanding hosts, setting the bar very high for those who follow. Our desire is to build upon that to further challenge those who follow. They were extremely well organized and effective.

Help Wanted

We will need lots of help as we shepherd the games into their second decade. If you are willing to spend about 10

days working in the Texas heat or poring over targets, feel free to volunteer. We will need a large group of people to execute the array of tasks essential to hosting these games. The committee is not big enough to do it alone. We will need lots of volunteers before, during and after the matches to get the job done well in 2010 and 2011.

Short Fuse on Applications for the 2010 National Team

Senior shooters are cautioned that the committee has changed the time frame for selecting our teams from January to September. In addition to many other items, we will meet in closed session to select our teams for 2010 during our September meeting. Thus, the application **deadline is August 31. All Applications are due in the State Office by that date! Applications received after those dates without prior permission WILL NOT be considered. If you encounter troubles with transcripts, they may be sent once school starts if the application has already been posted. Start NOW!** For those who put things off to the last minute, note that it is four months earlier this year. The last minute is ticking down! Act now before two-a-days, band practice, school, dove season, and other activities take over your lives. Download the application, fill it out and send it in. We will even take them personally at the matches. During the weeks between the end of August and the committee meeting, we will have just enough time to get them ready for committees. Applicants may apply for more than one team by filling out the page asking for scores for each venue involved. We will copy the application and that page for the selection committee. Note that you can only be a member of ONE team in any given year.

Workshops Currently Booked

Our attempt to get all workshops booked early enough to give folks the best opportunity to fit one into their schedules have born fruit. Those currently on the books (and having applications posted) include:

August 21-22	- Jefferson	(East)
August 28-29	- Amarillo	(North)
September 11-12	- Hebronville	(South)
September 18-19	- Monahans	(West)
October 9-10	- Wichita Falls	(North)
October 23-24	- Buffalo	(East)

Those of you in the West Region are welcome to suggest locations. Regional Specialist Charla Bading has agreed to let us accept bids directly from those who would like to host. If you want one in your county, have the facilities, and feel you can recruit 40 or more people to it, talk to your County Staff and put in a formal request. I understand that at least five sites in the West region are interested. This opportunity ends on September 1, when all workshops revert to the state committee. **The ball is in your court, and we intend to continue with this approach!**

Texas 4-H Shooting Sports: September Committee Meeting is Closed

We have a history of open or semi-open meetings, but our September meeting is **closed**. If there are issues or questions you wish to have examined by the discipline committees or the state office, please provide those issues in a brief, written form to us at the state office prior to the first of September. After review, we will place those items on the agenda in priority order. Those that do not make this one will be carried over to the next meeting or remanded to the discipline committees for action. **Do not send them to the committee chairs or sub-committee members. Due to the short lead time, we will handle them from this office.**

Workshops: Plain Talk and Reality

We encounter many questions about workshops, most of them relate to costs and to their locations. One of the most frequent of the latter seeks workshops for a single county or a small group of interested in having one "at home" for a small cluster of people, perhaps as few as 4-6 individuals. Some get frustrated when we tell them that we cannot afford to run workshops on demand or request. I suspect that such folks believe that they have a right to the program because they are residents of the state and the state provides some funding for 4-H, and thus for 4-H Shooting Sports. Unfortunately that belief is badly flawed. Two salaries are funded by state funds: mine and Janice's. Our student workers, all travel, all equipment and most supplies come from program income or hard won grants and contracts. Thus with our growth, the program has undergone significant change since 1990. The "free lunch" never really existed, and it costs more today.

We do not have either the funds or the staffing to underwrite small workshops. Thus we attempt to have

at least two in each Region of the state, rotating through the three Districts in each Region, so there is at least one workshop in each district over a biennium. We view workshops as essential elements in program quality, critical to both safety and success. They go far beyond safety fundamentals and marksmanship training. If you missed it in a training, our real objective is the kids and adults themselves, shooting sports is the tool for doing that and the passion that attracts participants of all ages. We do not simply repeat what other shooting programs do. Evidence from two major studies shows that both the primary (youth development) and secondary (shooting skills and safety) objectives of the program are on target. Parents, leaders and participants are agreed on that point. I maintain that all skills development programs influence character and life skills. Ours does so by deliberate design. We cannot afford to operate under the assumption that all staff, leaders, parents and members understand and are equipped to promote the program effectively. In fact, the scope and depth of the program makes that extremely unlikely. As a result, most core impacts of the program are taught “in passing”. As one colleague once said, “they are caught, not taught”. Regardless of how they are gained, those positive impacts are valid. Workshops are instructor education in teaching life skills and shooting as a combined whole. We provide them essentially free to CEAs, not so much so they can become leaders (some do), but so they will understand how to manage the trained volunteers and the program.

The model works well when put into practice. Where it is not, challenges to program strength, outreach and impact follow surely and sometimes swiftly. A common source of challenge is placing control before understanding, which can cause volunteer unrest, disillusionment, and terminally voting with their feet. Avoiding that challenge is easy: 1) attend a workshop, 2) form a committee of volunteers, 3) empower them with responsibility and authority to address issues, and 4) visit once in a while to see how things are going. Volunteer training is critical to successful programs! CEA training is critical to understanding what we are attempting to do, why we do it that way, and how to use those volunteers to develop a successful program. Successful programs come to those who are equipped, prepared and goal directed.

Status of the National Program

The first of what I believe will be three committees working with the National 4-H Shooting Sports Program, the Steering Committee, has been formed and is functioning. A former leader of the committee, Dr. Suzie Holder, Mississippi State 4-H Program Leader, and Dr. Tom Coon, Michigan State Director of Extension are the co-chairs. Three members of the former committee are on the current one: Conrad Arnold (MD), Gerry Snapp (MO), and Rick Willey (SC). The other committees are yet to be formed. The commitment to host a workshop annually remains, and bids for a workshop are being solicited for 2010. Glenn Applebee has completed his term of interim leadership and is back with his “other” full time position with Cornell Cooperative Extension. In spite of all the uproar and rhetoric, I believe the program to be in good hands and likely to continue growing.

Texas to Host the National 4-H Shooting Sports Games in 2010 and 2011

With the cooperation of Jack Burch, Billy Snow and the City of Kerrville, TX, we successfully presented a proposal to host the National Matches in 2010 and 2011. That will require a massive amount of effort on our part and committed service by a large number of volunteers from hosts and hostesses to scorers, match directors, range officers, registration desk staff, and much more. There are thousands of us, we may need nearly 100 staffers to get the job done well. Those of you who have attended these in the past may have the insight needed to help others help the state in making this a great show.

Why are there Repetitive Items in the Newsletter?

A committee member confided that some of you have quit reading the newsletter because we say the same thing at about the same time every year. There really are some things repeated with minor variations every year. There are also reasons for the repetition. **First**, there stated needs for help may remain unsatisfied. We keep trying to get those needs met. An example is the next item in this newsletter. About a dozen of you have actually responded. That is NOT enough. **Second**, most annual events roll around at about the same time of year. Their structures often have minor changes (sometimes major ones, too). Those who do not read those directions often go by what went on the last year, rather than the current rules and formats. Such things create havoc here as we try get those matches scored and reported. Another example is the change in application deadlines for state team applicants for the 2010 National Matches. Those who miss the deadline will have to wait for 2011. **Third**, repetition is often a means of reinforcing a point that has been made many times but needs it again: example: the differences between youth development and winning! That topic is cogent every time a new person joins us. Do

NOT expect me to stop hitting the basics. They are fundamental to the program's strength.

Calling All Hunters, Trappers, Ranchers, and Woods Wanderers

I know there are more than five or six of you in this program who hunt, trap, or wander the fields! We still have a massive need for specimens. A small investment on your part can make a tremendous difference on the program's side. Specimens of any game, fur-bearing, or varmint species including skulls, skins, droppings, tracks, or signs (e.g. buck rubs, beaver cuttings, etc.), as well as wings of game birds are needed and welcome.

Thinking about those needs when afield or afloat can really improve the quality of our program. While I would love to do it all myself, I cannot. There is not enough time, and I do not get to all of the state during any given year, particularly when I could hunt, trap or fish. Collectively, you do! We need items below.

Tracks - most easily gathered by placing a strip of card stock or milk jug (paper or plastic) around the track and filling it with well mixed plaster of Paris about the consistency of pancake batter. I like to write a serial number, e.g. RAH0715090001 on the surface of the plaster as it starts to set. Then I write the specimen number and comments in a field notebook. If you don't want to do that, just send it with a rough idea of when and where you got it. Note that curing time varies from a few hours to a day or so. Under our current drought conditions, a few hours might be enough. You can leave excess soil on them. We will be happy to clean them.

Scats - Scats is a short name for droppings, excrement, or poop. There are other names from a variety of other languages as well. Note that in most cases scats carry fewer bacteria than does your mouth. Use of latex, nitrile or vinyl gloves is advised, however. Some species may have eggs of parasites in their droppings, and a few are pretty nasty should they get into your body. Put the scat in a paper bag with a note on what it is and where it came from. As one of my research partners once said, "just don't lick your fingers."

Skins or pelts - Skins from any varmint, small game animal, big game animal or furbearer, including Texas exotics are acceptable. Removing all fat and excess flesh from the hide produces a better specimen if they are going to be shipped. If you bring them in person, frozen, green pelts are quite acceptable. To dry them after fleshing, apply a liberal layer of borax, (yep, the laundry powder) perhaps with a bit of alum added, or salt (a distant second choice). Rub it in well and work the hide. This will produce a stable cure. We will worry about follow up actions Both borax and salt can suck your skin dry producing badly chapped hands. Gloves help.

Mammal skulls from any varmint, small game or big game animal are welcome. To prepare them for shipping use one of two methods.

1. Freeze them and bring them personally in a frozen condition.
2. Skin and remove the brains with a loop of wire (go in through the foramen magnum, the hole in the back of the skull, remove as much flesh as possible, and put them in a protected, dry place to let the remnants of tissue dry. Once dry they can be shipped in a padded (crumpled paper works well) cardboard box with a label giving your name, where you got it, and what it is.
3. For skulls that are rotting (too warm and wet), let the flies or ants do their work. Handle the skull with gloves (some rot bacteria are decidedly harmful if they get past your skin!). Once dry ship as above.

Game Bird Wings from any game bird, migratory or non-migratory, Texas origin or anywhere else in North America are welcome. They are also easiest to handle. Cut them off at the base of the wing. Let them dry in a safe place for 1 to 3 days (in dry climates, 12-14 hours may be enough) and ship them in a large paper envelope with documentation (who, where, when taken). Well dried materials can be shipped in cardboard boxes.

DO NOT pack any of this stuff in plastic wrap! Plastic wrap or plastic bags keep moisture in. As a result, the items so packed are prone to rotting - QUICKLY! Those who pick up the mail may become sworn enemies looking for a chance to get even! Having gotten hundreds of snakes in the mail where the specimen was a liquid mass and the questions were "is it dangerous" and "what is it" Identifying a liquid snake is a real challenge. It is also decidedly unpleasant!

NOTE: Crows, barn pigeons (rock doves), collared doves, white winged doves, mourning doves, all legal rails, gallinules, coot, sandhill cranes, ducks, geese, whistling ducks (tree ducks), snipe, woodcock, any legal quail, partridges, grouse, pheasants, turkeys (wings, tracks or droppings) are welcome. Except for a very few species, ALL birds are protected by federal law! Therefore DO NOT send loons, herons or other waders (like egrets), vultures, caracaras, eagles, hawks, owls, shorebirds (aside from those listed above) pelicans, cormorants, protected doves (e.g. Inca doves, ground doves) or any passerine (perching) bird except crows during open seasons. While English sparrows and European Starlings are not protected, we generally do not hunt them. If you do not have a season listed for the species, don't shoot it! Law enforcement takes such things very seriously unless you have the appropriate state and federal permits!

For all of these things, giving location and taker data is useful. Please list: distance and direction from the nearest town, county, state. That helps the preparer document the specimen better. Thanks in advance to those of you who help out!

2009 Texas 4-H Indoor Smallbore 3-Position Rifle Match

The 2009 Texas 4-H Indoor Rifle Match was hosted at the Fort Bend County range on June 10 and 11 with a strong field. Full results are posted with the newsletter. Scores posted earlier missed a county. While Sam Muegge fired the top individual score, posting a 562, he was ineligible for the individual event because he had won that award last year. Scott Flint of Brown County fired a 561, adding 87 points in the finals round to finish with a 648 16X to win the individual match. Christen Wilson of Harris County finished second with a 553, a finals round of 92 and an individual aggregate of 645 21X, three shots off the pace set by Flint. The Harris County team, with three members in the top 10 shooters, claimed first place spot for teams with a total of 1616 35X for team members Christen Wilson, Chris Malachosky, Jennifer Rodgers, and Taylor Brown. As usual, competition was intense, without rancor, and positive. The full results are posted to the web site for those who are starting to prepare for the next state indoor match. A total of 96 shooters fired in the match with a few being forced to choose Roundup contests or scholarship interviews over firing in the matches. In this year of tumult over Swine Flu issues, losing only a couple of teams to conflicts was a very good showing. Check the web site for full results at: <http://shootingsports.tamu.edu> For those of you who cannot find things, NOTE that the items in blue (as above) are actually hot links to information. Karen has made great strides in getting things set up so you can point and click if you wish.

The Only Constant is Change

That statement is not an oxymoron. Outside the realm of religion, nothing is eternal! Things change either gradually or in saltations (a 50 cent word for jumps or leaps). One change taking place here on September 1 will be the addition of Larry Hysmith to the leadership of Texas 4-H Shooting Sports as a half-time manager for the program. Expect to see things with his name on them coming to you. He is real. Many of you have met him through his work with Clover Kids at the state games. Others know him through his wildlife and fisheries connections. We have been friends for a long time, and I anticipate that we will work well together. Meanwhile I plan on sticking around for a while if the Lord is willing and the crick don't rise.

My role in Extension is in flux. Some duties will soften with Larry joining the team. Some will change radically. Others may expand. We will not know what it will really look like until it is viewed in hindsight. One of my tasks, left over from the old National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee, is writing the history of the 4-H Shooting Sports Program from the pilots in Texas, New York, Minnesota and Virginia to its current status. I agreed to do that, and want to complete that task. I believe that someone will be interested in the history. The three boxes of original papers in my office will take some time to read and to interpret. That will be a major chore. I also have some added duties. So, this is not a goodbye note, just a sign of change in the offing. The same thing is happening to you and to each of the kids you work with! Some of them will be leading programs in a few years. Change is inevitable. Its direction is not. We must be prepared for change and challenges. Much of that comes from showing those who follow the tracks of those who went before and keeping our eyes fixed on the program's objectives. Thus the challenge is managing change by helping those who follow to see the tracks, to observe the outcomes, to benefit from the learning, of their predecessors while finding ways to increase positive impacts on kids and families.

Purposes and Processes

From time to time we need to remind ourselves why we are involved with this program. I had a telephone encounter with a coach from another state a few days back. He played the same note for a while: i.e. the National 4-H Invitational Matches are worthless and "a throw-away match". His thesis was based upon the failure to include a precision smallbore rifle match in the venues. (Apparently he did not notice the 50 meter 3-P match.) It would probably come as a shock to those who shoot metallic silhouettes that "nobody shoots silhouettes". In fact there would be many such surprises for folks in the broad set of shooting games that are "worthless". Not only did he fail to grasp the program's objectives, he had no interest because the games did not attract the finest 3-P shooters in the country or collegiate coaches looking for them. The discussion did not change either point of view.

The 4-H program included basic rifle marksmanship from about World War I to about 1960. During

much of that time there were many smallbore rifle teams in schools. Our high school had a smallbore range in the basement and rifle match plaques in the trophy cases. Most of those programs used rifles from the Army Division of Civilian Marksmanship, now known as the CMP (Civilian Marksmanship Program). The purpose was simple and straight forward, promoting marksmanship in America so its citizens were prepared in the event of war. Supporting sport shooting was the means to that end. It was primary to the participants.

4-H Shooting Sports shooting programs, many of them related to firearms safety, were expanding into general shooting programs in several states. The process was much broader in its objectives. Primary among them was attracting boys to the 4-H program. With industrialization, the agricultural base for programs remained, but the applicability to urban and rural non-farm kids was diminished. Meanwhile female numbers continued to rise. By the 1970s, most 4-H programs were 70 to 80 percent female. Thus the new program had several objectives. Safety and marksmanship education were primary elements. Life skills were imbedded. Recruitment of males was strong for both leaders and youth. Ratios of females to males nearly reversed the ratios in most other project areas at about 60:40 male: female. Life skills development was deliberate and deeply imbedded, so that most of them were taught in process, often without the participants knowing they had learned something until they looked in retrospect. Research in Texas, Minnesota, Virginia and several other states shows those impacts.

It is too bad that my correspondent did not realize those things because of getting lost in the competition first gambit. Be careful to keep first things first, and the rest will follow.

Why Don't We Do YHEC?

First, let's eliminate a mis-conception. We do YHEC through many of our clubs that are deeply involved with this Youth Hunter Education Contest. Let me relate some history. It started from a spark of an idea by Jim Norine at NRA. We talked about it at the second National 4-H Shooting Sports Workshop. It became the brain-child of NRA's Tom Melius. Tom and I worked together to develop its structure. It is my "fault" that you shoot sporter rifles with scopes in smallbore. The target guys failed to recognize the common use of optics in hunting. I have been in the background of the program in three states. The primary reason is the wish to keep those games in Hunter Education rather than becoming another part of 4-H Shooting Sports. Its best fit is with the state fish and wildlife agencies who manage the hunter education program. Here that is Texas Parks and Wildlife and the Texas Hunter Education Instructors Association.

I would strongly encourage you to get involved and to participate in the program. The primary reason I have not been more deeply involved is simple. At its beginning, we were the elephant in the closet. Had we been the official home of YHEC, our thousands of shooters could have overwhelmed the fledgling program and turned it toward a different set of objectives. As a long term hunter educator, bow hunter educator, waterfowl ID instructor (before any formal program), and originator of the first Trapper Education program in the country, I did not want to be in the way of the YHEC program reaching its potential. Our thousands of shooters could have overwhelmed the fledgling program and turned it toward a different set of objectives.

If your kids have an interest, please get involved! I believe they will enjoy it! On the other hand, do not look for me to call for county or club teams to overwhelm those kids already involved. Let your kids choose if the venue is right for them!

A recent caller voiced the opinion that YHEC is the best venue for our hunting and wildlife event. While not averse to collaboration, I believe that our 4-H Hunting and Wildlife program is much more intense, comprehensive, and demanding. Since it is our true link to the Natural Resources roots of Shooting Sports, we will keep it more or less as is. Want to see its potential. Organize a workshop (needs 4 full days), and let us bring it to you! We have no desire to compete with other programs for kids. There are still way too many of them who have no exposure at all. When we get all the kids involved, we can worry about territoriality and turf. I do not see that happening! So we will all continue to support each other and to promote the other opportunities our kids have in this field.

Parting Shots

I was talking to some folks in a Bible Study class a while back, explaining what I do and why I have been gone for five weeks this summer. When I described the Shooting Sports Program (along with Field and Stream and Sportfishing) one of the ladies said, "it would be wonderful if they could learn life skills while they were doing those things." I had the pleasure of informing her that the most significant thing listed by the kids in the program and their parents and coaches was and continues to be the life skills they learn and the relationships they build

with adults and other youth.

We do what 4-H claims to do for the kids in our program. We offer them hands-on learning in a safe atmosphere where adults and older youth help the younger ones, where rules are minimal and evenly enforced, where early success is part of the process and challenge is matched to ability. We challenge young people to rise to a higher level of responsibility and sportsmanship, and they respond by doing so. We develop positive relationships between adults and youth, involve families as families, and provide a forum for discussing the important things in life for all of them. We create opportunities for kids to excel and to grow in their skills - mental, physical, emotional and interpersonal. We do that “in passing” – meaning that the process we use in teaching the shooting skills is focused on needed life-long skills applicable to other situations, like focus on the important things, self control, having achievable goals and working toward them in a step-wise manner, cooperation, self-evaluation, getting the most important things taken care of prior to switching to those of lesser importance, concentration, extinction of problems with focus on the needed elements of a process, and much more. In doing so we add ability to talk to adults and peers effectively and clearly, and perhaps most importantly to spend positive time with family members and other adults who have genuine concern and desire to assist young people in the challenging job of becoming functional adults.

In the process we also have an opportunity to become familiar with the outdoors, an understanding sorely lacking in most of the young people today. With ecological concerns growing higher profile issues, having personal knowledge and experience with natural systems is a precious gift, one that those in my generation and perhaps the following one learned by personal involvement. Unfortunately a very high proportion of today’s youth has “learned” those things through the lens of a camera or by proxy through the slanted views of various media. Without programs like this one, we are left with a sophomoric generation, literally “wise fools”, who actually believe that those things filtered through people with personal agendas are truth. Such things leave them vulnerable to the agendas of others who bend data to reach a desired conclusion. That allows them to lead those who cannot determine the nature of the facts or the processes as prey for those who use it to their own purpose.

You, by teaching life skills in passing, by teaching about the environment and wildlife in context, by helping young people think and reason, are among the most influential adults in our society. Your role is critical to the future of our nation and even the blue marble we live on. Your service cannot be expressed in a monetary value or in simple economic terms (most estimates are huge) , although your service is worth millions of dollars to our next generation. It is in the area of the intangible that your service is most telling, teaching recreational skills, life skills, the basics of human social behavior, integrity and much more. Don’t let that responsibility scare you away. You have been doing this successfully for years, often without even knowing that it was job one. Continue carrying the future in the present!

For all of the kids and parents who may not have said so, THANK YOU, each and every one, for your dedication and service to the youth of Texas! Your contribution to the future of this state and this nation is of overwhelming value!

Ron