

Texas Lions Camp Alumni Association

In 1993 Nolan Underwood of the Texas Lions Camp Staff approached me with the thought of starting an Alumni Association. Nolan's thoughts excited others and myself as we would soon be approaching the 50th Anniversary of the Texas Lions Camp.

Some of the main thoughts in starting the Alumni Association would be to bring the former campers and counselors back together, along with interested Lions and individuals from across the great state of Texas.

As we all worked in making this happen, it was decided that we would not want to give people the feeling that this would take away from all that was in place as far as the Camp was concerned, in fact just the opposite was starting to take place. What an opportunity for these former campers and counselors to consider joining a local Lions Club back home.

I can remember a meeting that was held in Houston one Saturday morning. As we came together and discussed the Alumni, the question was asked of several in the room if they have ever been invited to join a Lions Club? . .

. I guess that you know the answer, when they responded with their No's. This was not surprising to some in the room. As a result of the meeting, two former campers, a mother and daughter joined a local Lions Club there in Houston. The big surprise was that when they got to the first meeting and met the president of the Aldine Lions Club, guess what? The President was the Lion that sponsored the mother and took her to the Texas Lions Camp as a young child many years earlier. Wow! What a story. Just think of the possibilities for membership for this great Multiple District. Just think of all the children that have been served since that first camping session in 1953, and when you add the counselors, you are talking about a great many folks. Does this give you any ideas???

As several meetings took place in the ensuing months, many expressed good ideas for the Association on how we could network together for the benefit of the Texas Lions Camp. The Mission and Goals of the Alumni Association have three chief purposes, as were adopted by the officers and membership at their first board meeting:

1. To Promote the Texas Lions Camp

2. To Support the Texas Lions Camp
3. To Publicize the Texas Lions Camp

Some of the ways we can PROMOTE the Texas Lions Camp is to:

1. To make ourselves available in our communities to talk with local Lions clubs and other organization about what goes on at TLC.

2. To Tell the story of how the Texas Lions camp affords each and every camper the opportunity to succeed in the many challenges that are presented to each camper, and at the same time build their self-esteem, as they develop their "Can-Do" attitude.

Some of the ways we can SUPPORT the Texas Lions Camp is to:

1. Support the District Elected Directors and assist them when possible in presenting the story of the Texas Lions Camp, at local meetings as they travel through their Districts.

2. Help promote the annual Golf Tournament held each year in August. Help look for sponsorships of local merchants to help raise funds for the camp.

- 3 Support the different Fund Raising efforts for the benefit of the Texas Lions Camp.

Some of the ways we can PUBLICIZE the Texas Lions Camp is to:

1. Make contact with the local media(s), radio, television, newspapers.

2. Wear apparel of the Texas Lions Camp such as: Hat, T-shirt, Dress Shirt.

3. Wear your Texas Lions Camp Alumni Badge.

Something else that you might want to consider, and many of the Alumni Membership and Lions have discussed on different occasions is the off season programs.

Can you think back to the times that we had the Blind Program at the Texas Lions Camp and the many individuals with visual problems that were served because there was a place in Kerrville that taught many to deal with their blindness so that they could function as others do.

Many of the former campers, especially the ones that were there in the early days of camp, have told of their experiences since leaving Camp as a child, and the problems that they have in being accepted for employment and just plain dealing with life.

Just think of the possibilities of what could happen, if we decided to utilize the facility in the off-season for training young adults for employment opportunities back home.

It is a shame that we do not use the facilities year round for the purposes of a better quality life for the future of the children that we serve today!

The cost of a membership is \$5.00 per year. This cost helps offset the cost of two newsletters a year and a badge for each new member. Additional or replacement badges are \$5.00 each. We also have a life membership available for \$100.00 and this total cost goes into the endowment fund. For Membership Application, see the web page at: www.lionscamp.com or contact the Texas Lions Camp at 830-896-8500.

2000 Alumni Reunion Report

On July 7 & 8, 2000 the Alumni Association gathered at the Texas Lions Camp. Registration took place in the new Historical Museum and the Awards ceremony taken in by all who were in attendance Friday evening.

Saturday morning informal breakfast was held at the Econo Lodge and convened the meeting at the Texas Lions Camp new dining room.

All were excited about the new dining hall. Many made the comment that they wished that they had this when they were at camp as a child. The new facility is very spacious and well laid out for the convenience of the children. Now they can all have their meals together.

The business session took place at 1:00 p.m. We had a program out of Austin. Ms. Chris DeWitt, of Advocacy Inc., informed the group of a program call "QMB." Qualified Medical Benefits for people with disabilities and seniors on Medicare and Medicaid. Many in the audience were not aware that they might qualify for this program. Chris did an excellent job in presenting and answering questions.

Awards were presented to Anne Laurel, life membership and the Nolan Underwood Alumnus of the Year Award was presented to Billy Kramer for his outstanding service to the Alumni Association.

Officers for 2000-2001 were elected. Peggy Underwood will serve as Chair and Charles F. Musacchio will serve as Co Chair. Anne Laurel was elected secretary and Jennifer Stoorza was elected as treasurer.

The Alumni Project of "Christmas Cards" was discussed and will be seeking bids in the next few week so that we can try and have them ready for this years holidays.

Many went on tours of the camp, enjoyed seeing the new swimming pool and the picnic area that was recently completed. Some even visited with the children who were having a ball.

We certainly invite all past campers and counselors, as well as Lions and interested persons to be come part of the Alumni Association. Please feel free to contact the Texas Lions Camp, or visit the Camps web site at (WWW.Lionscamp.com) for more information.