

Boy Scouting hits century mark

Written by Chris Lee

Feb. 8 marked the 100th anniversary for Boy Scouting in America.

Scouting has been around Holyoke for 73 years. The Holyoke Boy Scout charter sponsored by the American Legion was signed Jan. 18, 1937.

The scouting program in Holyoke has seen lower numbers in recent years due to kids getting involved in numerous other activities. Current Scoutmaster Glen Fricke said it is tough when numbers are low. Fricke said there are six registered Boy Scouts and around 10 cub scouts today. He said there have been different trends in numbers over the years.

Fricke said parents play a key role in keeping scouting alive. Getting boys involved early and keeping them involved is key.

A short article in the April 25, 1946 issue of the Enterprise explains what cubbing is. The article refers to Cub Scouts and urges parents of boys ages 9-11 to get involved with Cub Scouts.

The official charter date for Cub Scouts in Holyoke was April 29, 1946 and was sponsored by the Lions Club. There were 16 boys in the pack and Joe Curtis was appointed Cubmaster.

Longtime contributor to Holyoke scouting, Pete Knight said Phillips County homesteader F.B. Flanagan's name was on both the Boy Scout and Cub Scout charters. Both Knight and Flanagan have been honored with the Silver Beaver Award for their efforts in scouting in the Holyoke area. The award is the highest council award in Boy Scouting for service to youth for adults. Knight's son Kendell has also received the award.

Knight family deeply involved

Knight has been involved with scouting in some way or another for 51 years. He served as Scoutmaster in Holyoke for 15 years beginning in 1966.

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In the Feb. 20, 2003 issue of the Enterprise, it was reported Fricke presented Knight with a plaque at the Blue and Gold Banquet and said, "Knight is the mortar that holds the scouts together."

Fricke recently said Knight is the main part of the backbone of scouting in Holyoke and believes Knight and the rest of his family have done wonders for the local scouting program.

Scouting runs in the Knight family. Pete and his wife Helen spent many years serving as leaders within Holyoke's scouting community.

Their sons have also been very involved. Kendell served as Scoutmaster for 16 years. Kameron has been involved serving as Unit Commissioner for Troop 32, Cub Scout Pack 32 and Pack 34 in Haxtun in the past. Both are Eagle Scouts. Daughter Kris Gordon has also played a key role in scouting.

In 1993, the Knight family was recognized by the district as Scouting Family of the Year for their dedicated involvement to the program. Included in the recognition were Pete's wife, his father, children and their spouses and grandchildren. Grandchildren Andrew Gordon, Kolt Knight and Kade Knight were all very active in scouting. Gordon is also an Eagle Scout.

When Knight took over as Scoutmaster in 1966, there were six kids on the registry. He said the most he ever had was 31 scouts. One thing he remembers well is the bus he purchased and had painted blue for the scouting program. It was used for camping trips and also was driven in parades.

Knight said he always told the kids they were going to have good clean fun. If they learned something while having fun that was a plus.

Striving for a good scouting program was always what Knight fought for.

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Knight has contacted the State of Colorado and is scheduled to have mailed to him, the American and Colorado flags that flew over the Capitol on Monday, Feb. 8, the date marking the 100th anniversary of Boy Scouts.

They will make an addition to Knight's "scout room" at his home which is home to over 51 years of Boy Scout memorabilia.

Knight said he keeps in contact with scouts he has helped throughout the years and provides assistance when needed.

"It's been my life," Knight said. "It's been fun over the years."

Boy Scouts of America (BSA) was founded by Chicago publisher William Boyce on Feb. 8, 1910. At that time there were multiple other outdoor-oriented organizations for youth.

Scouting originally began in England in 1907-08. The scouting movement was created by General Robert Baden-Powell. Several small local scouting programs were started independently in the United States and merged with BSA.

The BSA's stated purpose at its incorporation in 1910 was "to teach boys patriotism, courage, self reliance and kindred values."