

So, I'm out shopping last weekend and wandered into the local craft store. I couldn't believe my eyes at all the holiday decorations and crafts. I was astounded... in the middle of October?

And some of it's already on "sale!" By now I should be used to the promotion and commercialism of the holiday but occasionally it takes me by surprise. I kind of get it in that sometimes people

like to create things and it takes time to have it ready, but still. I stood there for a minute and gathered my wits... then it hit me. Oh my gosh, we only have 5 weeks until Thanksgiving and nine weeks until Christmas! My next thought was, whoa, I haven't get started my shopping. Usually, by now, I am about maybe a little less than halfway done. Not this year, I guess I'd better get it in gear.

But, but Honey, I just HAVE to go shopping; hmmm wonder how that will go over?

Mountain Trek

Logan Danna an Eagle Scout with Tomahawk District, Sam Houston Area Council, went on his second Mountain Men trek this summer. Logan has been a volunteer staff member at the Philmont Scout Ranch since 2003 working in the Handicraft Lodge with his mother, Sandy Danna, who is the assistant manager. His father, Larry Danna, also works at Philmont during the summer in the Health Lodge as the medical recheck manager. Logan is now with Troop 38 as an assistant scoutmaster and hopes to go with them next year to Florida's sea



MICHELLE CORNELL



Brandon Walquist

base. Logan went on his first trek in 2006 and said "I gotta go again." Starting at base camp which is at the 6700 foot level, they hiked ranging up to 9,200 feet. The trek included sparkle climbing (climbing straight up a wooden pole wearing spiked shoes and a waist strap), hiking through thunder and pouring rain, foraging, black powder rifle shooting, midnight mine tour, and evening campfires.

Eagle Scout

Brandon Walquist, with Boy Scout Troop 1656, chartered through Pecan Grove Baptist Church, recently earned the Eagle Scout rank, Boy Scouts of America's highest honor.

Brandon began his scouting career in Cub Scouts in 2001, when he joined Pack 1680. After his Arrow of Light ceremony, he crossed over and joined Boy Scout Troop 1656 in 2004. He has held several positions of leadership including Patrol Leader, Librarian, and Troop Guide. As a scout, Brandon has earned 30 merit badges and recently achieved Order of the Arrow.

His Eagle Leadership Project consisted of planting six trees to help beautify his church, Joy

Good News 'Round the Grove

Lutheran, located on FM 359 in Richmond. Over the past several years, some of the larger trees on the property had to be removed due to age and disease. Last year, Hurricane Ike blew over two of the largest pecan trees remaining on the property. Brandon and many of the parishioners felt that the church grounds looked barren. He wanted his project to help the church that he's been a part of for so long and to be able to see the trees progress over the coming years. Brandon completed his project, totaling 155 hours of service, with the help of 15 scouts from his troop and seven adults. In addition to digging the holes and planting the trees, they installed an irrigation system to help the trees get through the first couple of years of the hot and dry Texas summers. He found many of the local businesses to be very supportive and generous towards the project.

Brandon is a junior at Travis High School. In his spare time, Brandon enjoys playing the guitar. He is taking part in the Y.E.S. (Youth Expanding Service) Program at Travis High School. The Y.E.S. Program gives students an opportunity to become involved through voluntary service at a local level so that they can help to make a difference in their own communities and neighborhoods. Brandon also enjoys working on projects that help others such as Hearts and Hammers and Anahuac Comeback. Both of these organizations help other families and communities in restoring houses and in cleanup efforts after natural disasters such as hurricanes.

Brandon has taken part in the flag program through Troop 1656 for the past couple

of years. Due to his dedication to the program, which included fundraising as well as placing and taking down of the flags on various flag holidays, he was able to earn enough funds in order to attend Venture Camp at Chisholm Trail near Dallas. This is where scouts are able to do high adventure types of activities such as rock climbing and wind surfing. He has also enjoyed going to summer camp where he has learned skills that were necessary for leadership, survival and helpful for everyday life, such as the Personal Management Merit Badge and Emergency Preparedness.

Brandon is actively serving in Troop 1656 and finds it very rewarding working with the younger scouts in helping prepare them for Eagle Scout and teaching them different skills for emergency situations.

Brandon is the son of Fran and Mark Walquist of Richmond.

Fall Festivals

Several area churches are hosting fall festivals that are a safe and fun alternative to door-to-door trick or treating.

Pecan Grove Baptist Church will have its fall festival 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 pm. Saturday, Oct. 31 at 1727 FM 359 in Richmond. The event will take place in the rear parking lot, not the front one with which we are most familiar. Don't let the lack of activity in the front of the church stop you from going by and partaking in games, food, and cake walks. For more information, call 281-342-7979.

That's it for this week. Ya'll enjoy your week and maybe I'll see you out and about shopping. If you'd like to pass along a story or some local news, I can be reached at mcfbherald@yahoo.com.