

What a difference a year makes

By Carol Cardenas, Headlight Staff

The headline of this story really is a mouth full, "What a difference a year makes".

Some people thought the new rules set by the Rice CISD School Board were a bit rough, but it was all worth it.

I was able to attend the commencement exercises for the 1997 graduat-

ing class of Rice High School (RHS) on Thursday, May 29.

From the start it was so different. The commencement started promptly at 8 p.m., as the School Board made their appearance on stage.

I heard a few grumbles from parents and relatives, but all in all, it was okay.

The grumbles were from folks thinking the security was a bit much, but, it did the job.

Changes made by the Board really helped with the crowd and controlled outbursts.

I didn't hear about many problems, other than a couple of folks getting escorted out because of loud

music in the parking lot during the presentation of the diplomas.

For the first time this year, commencement exercises were held outdoors at Raider Stadium.

Although during the afternoon a little rain was falling in Eagle Lake and a few other places, Mother Nature really cleared things up.

For another first, the Mighty Raider Band, lead by James Talton, played the processional, "Pomp and Circumstance", and did a great job.

Timothy Powers gave the invocation and introduced the dedication of a song, "The Dance" by Garth Brooks. The seniors dedicated it to the memory of Kyle Fink and Arcelia Orsorio, classmates they have lost.

Sara Mann then gave the salutatory address and did a terrific job.

The class song was played, the theme song from "Friends", "I'll Be There For You".

You know, in this matter, things have changed a lot.

We used to have to sing our class song.

In our government class, students had to memorize the song for a grade, which in my case helped me out a lot.

Then, two days before graduation, you and your classmates had time with a teacher to practice the processional, singing and recessional.

I think we should go back to the way it used to be. The class should have to sing their song.

It makes for great memories.

Marcie Till gave her valedictory address. She also did a great job, keeping it upbeat and always looking at the

class while speaking.

You could hear giggling and see smiles on faces of the graduates.

The diplomas were presented by RCISD Board President Jack Vawter with the graduates' names read by Joe Wendel.

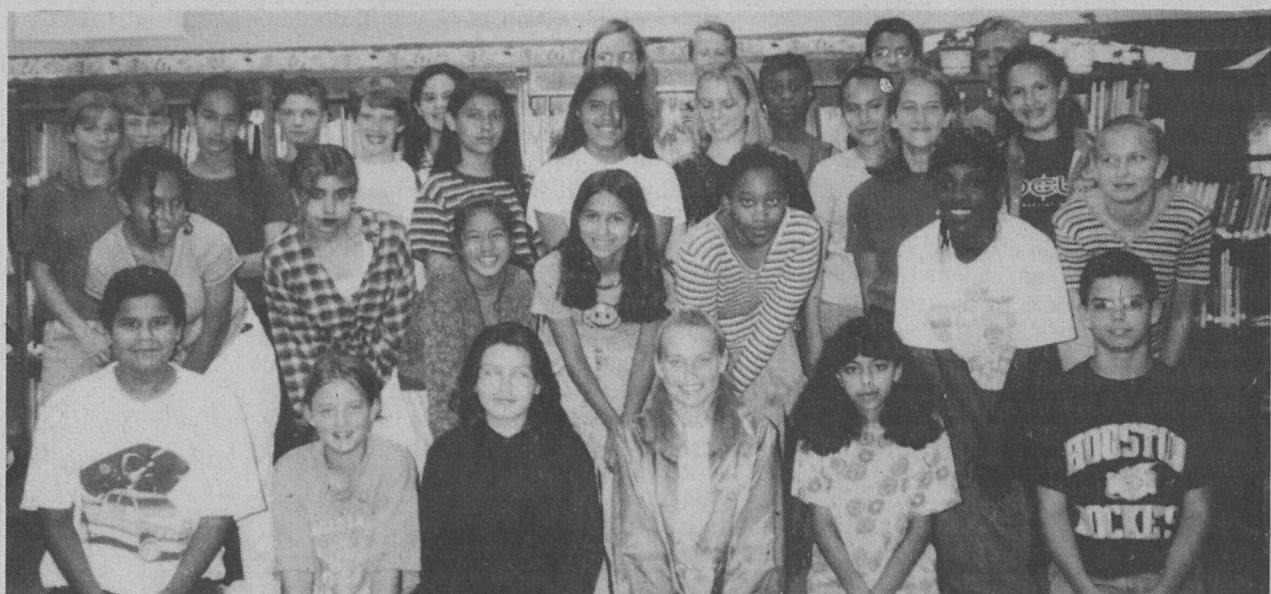
The Alma Mater was sung by the seniors, accompanied by the Band.

The benediction was given by Robyn Rucka and the recessional followed, again accompanied by the RHS Band.

All in all, a great time was had by everyone.

I know the graduates really appreciated all the teamwork and time it took to plan such a great graduation that they'll remember for a lifetime.

Good luck to the graduating class of 1997!



ELMS Accelerated Readers

The students pictured above participated in an accelerated readers program recently at the Eagle Lake Middle School. Pictured in the back row, from left, are Matt Hentzell, Colt Wilson, Stephanie Sommerlatte, Barbara Cooper, Andrew Powers, Crystal Scott, Jose Zuniga and Robert Hassin. Third row, Sarah Gould, Stevie Reynolds, Kaylann Osburn, Johana Lopez, Beatrice Avila, Rhonda Peroni, Sandra Rodriguez, Amanda Burrow and Andrea Contreras. Second row, Patricia Najera, April Torres, Shani Pena, Laura Miramontes, Sarah Foster, Corissa Mathis and Tamara Ellis. Kneeling are Juan Montiel, Kelly Konesheck, Rebecca Lopez, Amy Ellis, Melinda Cavazos and Adam Baird.

Headlight Photo by Carol Cardenas

Hentzell wins award for 'Oregon Trail' essay

Matthew Hentzell, a sixth grader at Eagle Lake Middle School and the son of Denis and Kitty Hentzell of Eagle Lake, was the recipient of the John Evoritt Chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) medal and certificate.

Hentzell wrote an essay entitled "The Oregon Trail".

The essay itself contained a wealth of information along with a map of the trail followed and a list of references he used.

There were several entries from across Colorado County.

Matt did all the work for the essay on his computer.

His mom said, "The computer was the best gift a child could get."

Below is Matt's essay:

"The Oregon Trail"

The Oregon Trail was a pioneer route to the northwestern United States. The trail extended from Independence, Missouri to the Columbia River in Oregon. This distance is about 3200 km (about 2000 miles). This trip took about four months by wagon. The first part of the route followed the Platte River for 870 km. This went through what is now Nebraska to Fort Laramie in present-day Wyoming. The trail continued along the North Platte and Sweetwater rivers to South Pass in the Wind River Range of the Rocky Mountains. From there the main trail went south to Fort Bridger, Wyoming before turning into the Bear River valley and north to Fort Hall in present-day Idaho.

The panic of 1837 brought hard times to midwest farmers, which

soured migration. Poverty made them listen to missionaries' tales of an earthly paradise in Oregon. The Willamette River valley had land for all and a long farming season. Several countries had claimed Oregon, but held by none. American and British explorers claimed it by right of discovery. Spain and Russia eyed it too. The Hudson's Bay Company dominated this region with their trading post on the Columbia River, Fort Vancouver. The Oregon Trail had already been traveled, one piece at a time, by Lewis and Clark, the Astorians, and the fur trappers.

The Oregon Trail started at Independence, Missouri. From all over the Mississippi River valley more than 1,000 men, women, and children gathered at Elm Grove, 33 miles west of Independence. Farmers were amazed to see only two elm trees. This was not their idea of a grove. They brought covered wagons packed with their goods and herded over 1,400 cattle and oxen.

They began their great march on May 22, 1843. At first they took the Sante Fe trail, but eight miles from Elm Grove the trail forked. A sign said "Road to Oregon." A few miles along the fork they came to Big Springs, where they organized the wagon train. Here, they voted on rule and elected Peter H. Burnett (1807-95) as their captain.

The huge size of the party meant little danger from the Indians, but it made problems too. Those with no cattle could travel faster. So the pioneers split into two columns, with 60 wagons in each. The "light column" with few animals, went first. The "cow column" came slowly behind. During the night the cow column

would catch up and camp with the rest. Jesse Applegate (1811-88), captain of the cow column, wrote a famous book about the amazing journey.

Late in the afternoon they watched for the place the pilot had marked with a big circle on the ground. Men drove their wagons along the circle, making a ring of wagons. They let their oxen free to go graze while they locked the wagons in a fort. Children gathered buffalo chips for fuel. For supper they had salt meat, freshly baked bread, and coffee. To cross the river they turned wagons into boats. To do this, they tightened the covering so no water would get in. Every year thousands of more people came to this trail.



Matt Hentzell is pictured with Kate Spalinger, a member of the DAR John Evoritt Chapter, who presented him a certificate and first place medal for his winning history essay.

Headlight Photo by Carol Cardenas

Sheridan School presents last 'Smart Awards' for 1996-97 school year

Sheridan students earned a whopping 277 Smart Awards to close out the school year. Winners, in order of their grades, were:

Kindergarten: Wesly Arrison, Samantha Barker, Shelby Bourne, John Buegeler, Anna Delgado, Zachary Lawson, Allyson Mathys, Tiffany Mraz, Garrett Neubauer, Courtney Ross, Cody Tesch, Elda Vasquez, Randy Butler, Johnathan Cruz and Anthony Lamb.

First grade: Courtney Andrejczak, Randall Brown, Nayeli Diaz, Kaci Kazmir, Bryan Layton, Austin Moore, Melissa Smith, Amber Tesch.

Second: Victor Brewer, Amber Buegeler, Scott Gundelach, Megan Hinze, Tawana King, Amber Kinney, Jason Laake, Megan Mowery, Daniel New, Kayla Robertson, Kurt Stern, Kimberly Varley.

Third: Edward Gundelach, Jeremy Hill, Jarod Munoz, Jonathan Perales, Chelsea Ray, Ashley Teiken, Stephanie Hardiman, Stephen Hardiman.

Fourth: Brian Avila, Stephanie Botard, Raul Garcia, Chad Garza, Julie Houser, Quindora Jones, Clifton Kazmir, Donovan King, Kore King, Tyler Kloss, Justin Machart, Robbie Patton, Rachel Peterson, Stuart Ray, Tiffany Varley, Selina Rodriguez.

Fifth: Karl Alex, Paul Brown, Jonathan Diaz, Allen Greak, Lauren Kasper, Esteyvon King, Zachary

Kloss, Jennifer Munoz, Marshall Peterson, Dustin Schlauch, Tarrah Stern.

Sixth: Leila Baggett, Krystal Buegeler, Jason Godley, Matthew Hinze, Hannah Kallina, Matthew Lloyd, Desi Rae Lowe, Jacqui Mahalic, Travis Pittman, James Scott, Andrew Varley, Joseph Cruz.

Seventh: Jakki Alleyway, Kim-

berly Denley, Shelley Greak, Brennan Jobe, Michael Kincheloe, Amanda Labay, Larry Ross.

Eighth: Robyn Alleyway, Isam Brisco, Amanda Galvan, Eric Kasper, Jeffrey Kazmir, Kyle Kincheloe, William Ross, Colleen Sevcik, Josh Spangenberg, Bruce Lowe, Matthew Arp.

Schneider graduates UT-HSC, San Antonio

Karen M. Schneider graduated May 24, 1997, from the University of Texas-Health Science Center at San Antonio with a Doctor of Medicine Degree in obstetrics and gynecology.

In her junior year, 1995-96, Schneider was recognized with permanent honors into Alpha Omega Alpha.

AOA is a national society organized for the promotion of scholarships and research in medical schools, encouragement of high standards, character and conduct among medical students and graduates, and the recognition of high attainment in medical science, practice and related fields by the alumni and faculty.

Election is based upon academic excellence achieved in all required courses of the curriculum and limited to not more than one-sixth of the total number of graduates.

Schneider also received the Amer-

ican Medical Women's Association's Janet M. Glasgow Achievement Citation and the McGraw-Hill Award.

She will do her internship at Hermann Hospital, Houston.

Karen is the daughter of Ed Lee and Ernestine Schneider of the Nada-Garwood community.

Did You Know...

The horse was first introduced on a large scale into what is now the U.S. by Francisco Coronado, the Spanish explorer. He traveled through Kansas with 260 horses, most escaping to the Midwest, Mexico and Canada.

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4. Keep shovel, rake and water nearby.
5. Don't leave fire unattended by an adult, even for a minute.
6. Consider alternatives to burning: composting, recycling, or hauling to a landfill.

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