

Living Hope VBS is big success

Living Hope Church in Eagle Lake was the most exciting place in town the week of June 8-12 as the church's annual Vacation Bible School (VBS) was held.

For the third consecutive year, over 100 children attended.

Eighty-one of those were perfect in attendance and awarded "Son Light Island" t-shirts.

"The last two years, we have worked very hard to get ready. This year we created three new classes, with three of them meeting outdoors, and built a new snowcone stand in the backyard of the church.

"The effect was that we handled a few more children, average attendance was up over 20% and it was more fun than ever before," said Pastor Joe Fling.

Teachers were: Trine Alvarado and Nelda Reyes, three year olds; Donna Ellis and Lola Valdez, four year olds; Martha Reyes and Rhonda Latimore, five year olds; Bart Catlett and Sarah Rivera, kindergarten; Lori Moore and Elsa Ramirez, first grade; Frances Geib and Regina Valdez, second grade; Cherrie McCain, third grade class; Amy Catlett and Maria Diaz, fourth graders; Jack Ellis, fifth

grade; and Gloria McCain taught those sixth-ninth grade.

Pastor Fling commented, "All the credit for this marvelous program goes to our teachers and workers. Everything went off without a hitch. About a dozen of our workers used vacation time from their jobs to be able to make this voluntary investment of their time in the youngsters."

Others helping out were Orlia Supak, Valarie and Cleve Scott, Julian Moore, Carmen and Pedro Ramirez, Jesse Yanez and Alvina Ramirez.

Living Hope Church was transformed into Son Light Island, where



children were taught about love from I Corinthians, Chapter 13, while learning the stories of Jesus' birth, baptism, death and resurrection, as well as the stories of Zaccheus, the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan.

Everyone who came was also treated to the elaborate decorations which have become the standard of Living Hope's VBS.

The opening assembly and music were tremendous times of celebration as the children came together.

Pastor Mercy Fling said, "The songs we sing in VBS will stay with the children and adults for years to come."

Five fun filled days concluded on Friday afternoon with the Son Light Island Beach Party, an afternoon party with games, food and fellowship for children and parents.

The missions project this year was Chris and Donna Mooney who work in relief ministry, especially the handicapped, in Guatemala.

"The children brought a total of \$614.57 in offerings during the week, all of which has been sent to Chris and Donna," said Pastor Fling.

"Living Hope keeps no part of these offerings. We provide VBS for the kids and the kids' offerings all go

to our missions project each year." Living Hope provides a continuing program for children every Wednesday evening at 7 p.m. at the church education building.

The program is under the direction of Cherrie McCain and features fun, food and games centering around the same themes of Hope, Faith and Love that highlighted the VBS.

Children ages 5 through 15 are invited to this continuing program.

As with all programs at Living Hope Church, you may contact Joe or Mercy Fling at 234-3710 for more information.

GCMC receives accreditation from AABB

Gulf Coast Medical Center (GCMC) has been granted accreditation by the American Association of Blood Banks (AABB), according to Delores Cox, Assistant Administrator.

Accreditation follows an intensive on-site assessment by specially trained representatives of the Association and establishes that the level of medical, technical and administrative performance within the facility meets or exceeds the standards set by the AABB.

By successfully meeting those requirements, GCMC joins more than 2,000 similar facilities across the U.S. and abroad that have earned AABB accreditation.

"The AABB's accreditation procedures are voluntary," Cox explained.

GCMC has sought AABB accreditation because this program assists facilities around the country in achieving excellence by promoting a level of professional and medical expertise that contributes to quality performance.

Since 1958, the AABB has been

engaged in the accreditation of blood banks and transfusion services.

The Accreditation Program assists blood banks and transfusion services in determining whether methods, procedures, personnel knowledge, equipment and the physical plant meet established requirements.

The minimum requirements for accreditation of blood banks and transfusion services are based primarily on the AABB's Standards for Blood Banks and Transfusion Services.

These standards not only set the level of professional proficiency for blood banks and transfusion services in the U.S., but also provide the basis of practice for similar facilities around the world.

Established in 1947, the AABB is the professional society for approximately 2,200 community, regional, and Red Cross blood centers; hospital based blood banks and transfusion services; and over 8,800 individuals engaged in blood banking and transfusion medicine.

Its member facilities are responsible for collecting virtually all of the

nation's blood supply and for transfusing more than 80% of the blood used for patient care in the U.S.

The AABB sets standards, assesses and accredits blood collection and transfusion facilities, and provides continuing education and information.

Dept. of Health urges swimmers to be cautious

With the temperature rising and few signs of rain drops coming, more and more people look to cool off at outdoor water spots.

But, as the heat goes up and water levels in rivers, lakes, ponds and streams go down, the potential for health problems grows.

"You look at the problems associated with swimming in fresh water like a pyramid," said James Perdue of the Infectious Disease Epidemiology and Surveillance Division at Texas Department of Health (TDH).

"At the broad bottom, you have a lot of microorganisms and bacteria that can cause such mild problems as ear infections, swimmer's itch or intestinal diseases.

"At the top point, you have the very dangerous but relatively rare problems such as primary amebic meningoencephalitis."

This infection, also known as PAM, is caused by a common microorganism found in most all untreated surface water and all types of soil.

It is the combination of lower water levels, high water temperature and stagnant or slow moving water that produces the problems, Perdue said.

During drought and high temperature conditions, concentrations of the amoebas increase as they feed on the bacteria in the warm water.

The organisms thrive at temperatures above 80° F but do not multiply at temperatures below 40° F.

Infection occurs when water containing the organisms is forcefully inhaled - usually from diving, jumping or underwater swimming - and infects the brain.

Although the infection is rare, affecting only about one person a year, for those infected, death occurs usually within a week.

Symptoms of the infection include severe headache, high fever, stiff neck, nausea, vomiting, seizures and hallucinations as the condition worsens.

People who are infected do not infect others.

Swimming pools properly cleaned, maintained and treated with chlorine generally are safe as is salt water.

TDH offers these recommendations to avoid infection:

- Never swim in stagnant or polluted water. Take "No Swimming" signs seriously.
- Hold your nose or use plugs when jumping into water.
- Swim in properly maintained pools when possible.
- Keep wading pools clean and change the water daily.
- Wash open skin cuts and scrapes (See Swimming, Page 10)



VFW installs new officers, welcomes new member

The Rice Area Memorial Post #8783 installed their 1998-99 officers May 14 at the LCRA Lakeside Plant. Installing Officer of the Post was Past Commander, Melvin Stancik.



New officers are, from left, in back, Isidoro Ramirez Sr., Vice Commander; Harry Supak, Chaplain; Stancik, Adjutant; and Earl Rodgers, QuarterMaster. In front are Len Matula, Commander; V.J. (Jiggs) Kana, Service Officer; and Fred Sosa, Post Advocate. Not pictured are Ervin Hurd Jr., Vice Commander; Dr. Raymond Thomas, Surgeon; Creston Cleveland, Officer of the Day; and Ronnie Sedgwick, Three Year Trustee.

The newest member of Post #8783, Warren Dupré, who served a tour of duty in Korea, is shown in the photo at left. The VFW Post is proud to have him join its ranks.

VFW Photos

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