

The Roundup

Cal Farley's
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**64th Annual
Cal Farley's
Boys Ranch
Rodeo
Aug. 30 and 31**

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"The world is bright if your attitude is right."

July/August 2008

Rodeo Action Set For Labor Day Weekend

It is about time to pull on those dusty boots, grab a cowboy hat and head to the Boys Ranch Rodeo arena to get a seat at the 64th Annual Boys Ranch Rodeo. Once again, thousands of spectators are expected to be on hand to observe the rodeo talents of the boys and girls living at Cal Farley's Boys Ranch and Cal Farley's Girlstown, U.S.A.

Last year's winners of the Senior All-Around Cowgirl and Cowboy awards will be competing to retain their titles, while many other cowboys and cowgirls have set their sights on winning the All-Around saddles for themselves.



Jerid practices during roping school.



Celia rides in the Boys Ranch Rodeo.

Nine roping instructors worked with the youth on learning the basics of roping and improving their skills.

Chuck Keen has helped out with the roping clinic for four years.

"I enjoy coming out," he said. "All the kids are interested; they listen, and they are so respectful. I look forward to it, and it's the kids that keep me coming back."

"We appreciate how they dedicate their time to these kids," said Brent Ehlers, Boys Ranch coordinator of equine and rodeo.

James, 16, has set a goal to win the all-around cowboy title this year, but he knows that the competition will be tough. James plans to compete in roping and bull riding during the rodeo. He said he picked up a few good

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Boys Ranch alum Robert Solano and his family celebrate his retirement.

Marine Corps Sergeant Major Retires After 21-year Career

On a hot, muggy June morning at a drill field in North Carolina, an honor guard, a 36-piece Marine Corps marching band, and an audience of fellow marines, friends and family joined Sergeant Major Robert Solano as he retired from the Marine Corps after a 21-year career.

The festivities were held at the home of Marine Air Control Squadron 2, a United States Marine Corps aviation command and control squadron. The squadron provides aerial surveillance and air traffic control for the II Marine Expeditionary Force.

During the ceremony, Sergeant Major Solano was awarded a Bronze Star for "achievement in connection with combat operations against the enemy while serving as the Sergeant Major, Marine Air Control Squadron 2, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom."

Lieutenant Colonel Von Pigg, Sergeant Major Solano's former commander, offered a few personal comments and his best wishes for Sergeant Major Solano and his family.

"We're here to celebrate his career in the Marine Corps," Lieutenant Colonel Pigg said. "You were always looking out for the welfare of the marines, contributing to their success. You were very involved in operations in Iraq and made a huge impact on the marines because they knew you cared."

Sergeant Major Solano was a member of the unit for approximately 18 months and his service was appreciated by the men and women he served. "Your loyalty was impeccable," Lieutenant Colonel Pigg said. "You were a huge part of the success of this squadron. You don't make Sergeant Major by

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Depth and Breadth of Service

President's Message
By Dan Adams



I would like to pose an important question: If Cal Farley's ceased to exist tomorrow, would our absence leave a void that would be difficult to fill? The leaders of this organization continually strive to ensure that the answer is yes! But, that does not happen by standing still as the world changes.

We were once narrow but deep in our approach to caring for children. Campus care at Boys Ranch and Girlstown, U.S.A. was the sole model of intervention. Commitments were long-term, and family contact was limited.

Today, we recognize a changing society. Out-of-home care is perceived as necessary only in the absence or failure of other less dramatic options. Community-based services, where the child does not leave home, are much more available to families and in many cases more appropriate intervention strategies.

Now, with the expansion of Cal Farley's community-based services, we are adding breadth to the depth of services we are already providing at Boys Ranch and Girlstown, U.S.A. A profound uniqueness in our approach is the bridge we can maintain between the child in one of our residential programs and the services we are providing their families through our Family Resource Centers.

We are fortunate at Cal Farley's to have two individuals I consider to be among the best child-centered "program minds" in the country. Mark Strother has oversight responsibility for all operations and care of children at Boys Ranch and Girlstown, U.S.A., and Belinda Palacios oversees all of our community-based services including the Family Resource Centers.

With the leadership of Mark and Belinda and the skill of their staffs, I am absolutely confident that our commitment to long-term relationships with children and families will remain strong. We can still take that five-year-old and graduate him or her from college at no cost to the family. Or, we can simply work with them until our help is no longer needed.

So, our vision is to continue building on our "depth" of care at Boys Ranch and Girlstown, U.S.A. while expanding our "breadth" of service through our Family Resource and Alumni Support Centers.

As appropriate, we will also take advantage of opportunities for innovation and collaboration with referral networks and other service providers in a way that we can make a higher impact in the business of taking care of children.

Thank you for your undying support in these endeavors.

Weather Facts Engage Boys Ranch Youth



Boys Ranch youth make a water tornado.

Steve Kersh, chief meteorologist of a local television station, presented a short program about severe weather to a group of children as part of the Boys Ranch Summer Recreation Program.

"My goal is to get them as interested in the weather as I am," he said. "If I can get one of these kids more interested in science, then my goal is accomplished. Also, if there are kids who are afraid of weather, maybe I can ease their fears."

Mr. Kersh discussed a variety of weather-related topics, including lightning, tornados and flooding.

"More people are killed or injured by flooding in the Texas Panhandle than by tornados or lightning," he told the group.

Mr. Kersh offered tips on what to do when bad weather approaches and he used a variety of props to make a specific point. He asked the group if they could guess the size of the largest hail stone on record in the United States. After he was deluged with guesses ranging from softballs to watermelons, he pulled a basketball out of a container. "The largest hail stone on record was the size of a basketball, and it was recovered during a storm in Nebraska in 2004." Apparently the basketball-size piece of hail hit a soft patch of earth and an attentive person immediately dug it up and placed it in a freezer before calling the weather service.

After the presentation, the group divided up into smaller groups and created small water tornados by using two plastic soda bottles attached together by their openings.

"I liked making the tornados with the bottles," said Montana, 9.

"I really liked the program because he took his time to come see us," said Cassandra, 12. "I especially liked the information about tornados, because I would like to chase tornados when I grow up."

According to Mr. Kersh, Cassandra is not alone. "The most often-asked questions by children are about storm chasing," he said. "A lot of kids think storm chasing is a career and they want to go to college and get a degree in storm chasing."

Mr. Kersh's interest in weather began at a young age. "My mom has a videotape of when I was three-years-old. I was tapping on the wall with a yardstick in the kitchen talking about the 'tormatoes and thummerstorms' coming down from Oklahoma. I was always fascinated with the weather." And he enjoys sharing his passion for weather with school children.

"I've been to schools all over the Panhandle and the Boys Ranch children are some of the best-behaved," he said. "You just don't run into kids these days that say 'yes sir.'"



Meteorologist Steve Kersh explains a water tornado activity.

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Strengthening Children
and Families Since 1939

Sacred Moments

In life, if we pay attention, God allows us to encounter sacred moments. Oftentimes those encounters go unnoticed for a variety of reasons, but when we pay attention they are hard to ignore.

In July, ten Boys Ranch High School seniors and four adult staff members traveled to Colorado for a four-day wilderness backpacking excursion. The Boys Ranch Chapel staff organized the trip to provide the selected group of seniors with a unique opportunity to build stronger relationships with their peers and discuss their roles as Christian leaders at Boys Ranch.

This article is less about their trek into the Colorado wilderness and more about a powerful event that spoke volumes to this group of youth and adults.

After traveling many hours and hundreds of miles from Texas to Colorado in a small bus identified with Boys Ranch lettering on its sides, the group made one final stop in Southfork, Colorado, before heading to the trailhead. The youth were notified in advance to bring enough spending money for incidental items they would like to purchase. When two members of the group went in a store to purchase fishing licenses, Troy decided that he wanted to fish too, until he realized that he did not bring enough money. He asked Chaplain Mike Wilhelm if he could borrow \$20.

"Troy, I made it a practice a long time ago not to loan students money," Chaplain Wilhelm said. "I'll do a lot for you, but loaning money gets complicated."

The chaplain got back in the bus and he began talking to Mike Whitecotton, another sponsor, about his conversation with Troy. "I told Mr. Whitecotton that I was feeling bad about not loaning Troy the money."

At that exact moment, a strange car pulled up alongside the bus. A rough-looking older fellow with a cap on his head and a cigarette dangling from his lips signaled the chaplain to roll down his window. "He got his wallet out and then he handed me a \$20 bill," Chaplain Wilhelm said.

"Here," the man said. "I want you to use that for the boys."

"I said, 'Sir, you're not going to believe this, but we were just having a conversation and we have a boy needing \$20 dollars for a fishing license. And he wasn't going to be able to fish, because I told him I couldn't loan him the money. This boy is now going to be able to fish.'"

Chaplain Wilhelm could see that the news surprised the man and tears immediately formed in his eyes.

"Here was a hard, rough-looking fellow, and he welled up with tears," Chaplain Wilhelm said. "He was shook up, too. Then he just drove off. It was one of those moments when you realize God really does have His eyes on us, and especially on these kids."



Ten of the Boys Ranch Backpackers in the Colorado wilderness.

"It was such a neat testimony to Troy," Chaplain Wilhelm said. "His jaw dropped when I handed him the money and told him where it came from."

But the story doesn't end there in the parking lot.

Susan Jones, a female sponsor who has been on several of the chapel-sponsored backpacking trips, said the blessing of the gift continued throughout the trip. On past backpacking trips several youth fished without any success. Not this time. "Troy and Mr. Whitecotton caught a total of 15 fish during the trip," she said. "They cleaned and cooked the fish, and they fed all of us supper. It was such an unexpected treat for those two nights."

The group encountered several other sacred moments during the trip, but those will be held

for another time. And though their journey in the wilderness was experienced as a group, individually they came away from their time in the mountains with very different, very personal experiences.

"We learned how to trust and depend on each other," Tyler said.

"Those three nights in the wilderness – we all changed," Hollie said. "I'm going to remember how God can change lives, and how God can help no matter what."

"For me, it was a prayerful, worshipful experience with 10 of the best kids on the planet," Chaplain Wilhelm said. "My hope is that these kids are catalysts and leaders to plant an authentic Christian peer culture at Boys Ranch that I believe can emerge with these kids and others who didn't go backpacking."

REMEMBER LOVED ONES

Contributions in memory of a loved one or to honor a birthday, wedding, anniversary or a friend in need of encouragement are appreciated. In times of joy or sadness, others are comforted by gifts that help deserving youngsters. For your convenience, we welcome contributions by cash; American Express, Discover, MasterCard and Visa credit cards; electronic funds transfer by calling 1-800-687-3722; or through www.calfarley.org.



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Eleventh Annual Tour de Nowhere Challenges Riders

The eleventh annual Tour de Nowhere, benefiting Cal Farley's Girlstown, U.S.A. and the Levelland Volunteer Fire Department, was held July 12, 2008, in Levelland, Texas.

Approximately 100 cycling enthusiasts participated in the event that included short and long distance rides. Riders from Big Spring, Colorado City, Levelland, Lubbock, Midland and Plainview, Texas, as well as Albuquerque and Boleyn, New Mexico, participated in the event.

The Tour de Nowhere made its debut in 1998. It was organized with a simple plan in mind: offer a well-organized bike tour that encourages the healthy activity of bicycling while promoting Girlstown, U.S.A. to the surrounding community.

According to Diana, a Girlstown resident, this was her second time to ride in the Tour. "I rode because a friend of mine wanted to ride," she said. "Although we concentrated on pedaling, we laughed our whole way through it."

Her ride this year was a little more eventful than last year's ride. "My bike broke," she said. "I hollered at my friend to stop, but she didn't hear me." So Diana waited on the side of the road for a few minutes until a trail-

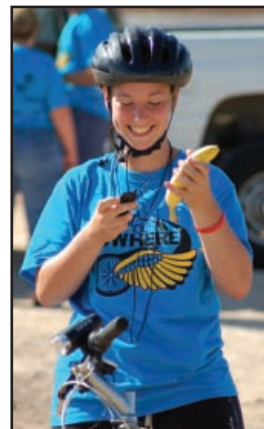
ing vehicle stopped to help fix the bike.

The Tour de Nowhere riders pedaled routes that traverse the western edge of the Texas South Plains and offer grand views of landscape filled with barbed wire fences, irrigated cornfields, oil field pumping units and grazing cattle.

Two Girlstown riders pedaled more than 40 miles and four adventurous riders not associated with Girlstown completed the 109-mile route.

"Some Girlstown residents ride as a challenge," said Jesse Pape, Girlstown's director of education programs, "while others do it just to say they did it."

Girlstown staff and residents contributed more to the success of the Tour de Nowhere than just providing riders. Girlstown volunteers helped organize the event, worked the registration table,



Nadine takes a banana break during the Tour de Nowhere.

followed riders in vehicles, set up refreshment stations along the various routes to supply the riders with fruit and cool water, and ensured a safe ride for the participants. Girlstown representatives also spontaneously cheered the riders all along the route – a much appreciated show of support for the hot and weary riders.

"I think this year's Tour was fantastic," Mr. Pape said. "The riders like our area for distance riding because the ride goes through a variety of terrain, and several plan to come back next year."

Tour de Nowhere riders begin their journey.



Rodeo Set for Labor Day Weekend

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roping pointers that he hopes will help him achieve his goal. "The instructors have helped a lot," he said. "I've got a lot better at roping."

Whether through the rodeo clinics or campus-sponsored practices, the young cowboys and cowgirls have been taught the techniques and safety procedures by professional rodeo cowboys. Be sure to join them as they prove that hard work and dedication will make this year's rodeo one of the most exciting to date.

The rodeo weekend also serves as the Boys Ranch alumni reunion - the traditional homecoming for alumni and their families. Alumni from across the country and throughout the world travel "home" for the weekend to renew acquaintances established during their youth.

The Boys Ranch Rodeo will be held Labor Day weekend, August 30-31. The two-day celebration will be filled with fun for the entire family and will include breathtaking rodeo events and a tasty barbecue meal – all for only \$5!

So make plans to join the boys and girls of Cal Farley's during the Labor Day weekend and enjoy thrilling rodeo action provided by our young cowboys and cowgirls.



Marine Corps Retiree

(Continued from page 1)

accident. You do it with hard work. You do it with dedication and determination to ensure that our customs and our traditions are carried forward. And as you leave here today, please leave with a sense of accomplishment and a sense of pride for a job well done."

At the end of the ceremony, Sergeant Major Solano addressed the audience.

"I worked with some outstanding marines," Solano said. "Marines I will remember for a lifetime. I've been at numerous billets. It was the best way of life – infantry, communications, tanks, the air wing, the drill field. Making marines and winning battles, that's what we do. Truly I am honored to have served this unit. I enjoyed serving the marines in this unit. They truly motivated me. This medal that I wear is your medal, because you got it for your efforts, for what you did. You were successful."

Almost 30 years ago, Robert's life was not heading in a direction that seemed would lead him to a distinguished career in the military. At the age of 12 he was headed down a path that involved gang activity, violent behavior and multiple brushes with the law in Los Angeles, California. "I was a thug with tattoos and an attitude," he said. Fortunately for Robert and his mother, Boys Ranch changed his life.

Robert will never forget the day he arrived in Texas. "The minute I stepped off of the plane (in Amarillo) I smelled cattle," he said. "It was weird. I'd never been outside the city. And as I was riding out to the Ranch I remember thinking, 'What am I getting myself into?' The Ranch was in the middle of nowhere."

He has many cherished memories of his four years at Cal Farley's Boys Ranch. "But it's the little things I remember," Solano said, "prayer at mealtime in the dining hall, birthdays in the home with birthday cake and gifts from the town office."

Robert graduated from Boys Ranch High School in 1986 and enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1987. The rest is history.

"The person I am today is because of my mother, Boys Ranch and the Marine Corps," he said.