



TEXAS STATE TROOPER

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The Trooper who cares about kids

By Jack Lawler

This is the true story of retired DPS trooper Richard Williams, who created a large and compassionate program for abused children in Lampasas, Texas. For years on his own (off-duty) time and often with his own money, he brought hope, love, guidance and stability to them. In his fourth year, TSTA saw his efforts, needs and struggles and began helping him. After trooper retirement, Richard Williams moved away, shut down his youth program and traveled the U.S.

After ten years of this, he realized his heart was still with the abused kids of Lampasas County, Texas. The



Mario Moreno, at right

problems were still there – another “lost generation” of at-risk, abused youngsters. He moved back to his hometown and has started over – free from DPS trooper duties – and with another working relationship with the Texas State Troopers Association.

When Mario Moreno was 12 and in the seventh grade in Lampasas Middle School, he lived in a tiny, 2-bedroom frame house with six brothers and a sister, his father and his stepmother. They had little food, no cooling in hot weather, no heat in cold weather except a wood stove. All the children worked before and after school, at any odd job they could find. Mario's activities included cutting firewood and hauling hay. The parents were drinkers. It was a poor family of nine, in desperate daily struggles just to survive. But somehow, Mario got to school on most days and kept up with his grades.

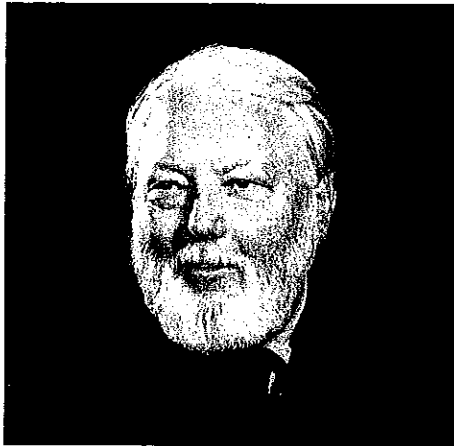
In Lampasas, population 5,000, there were many disadvantaged, struggling youngsters like Mario. **DPS**

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Court's In Session

By Judge Larry Gist



Being a Texan

Every person who ever flew over the Lone Star State can't help but look down and think of it's diversity. From the vast desert of the west with the beauty of Big Bend, to the east and beautiful piney woods of Pineland, to the splendor in the rolling hill country of Llano and Kerrville, to the coastal plains of Kingsville which gave birth to our unique Texas cattle breeds, the beautiful Santa Gertrudis and the Beefmaster, to the panhandle and the small community of Turkey for giving us Uncle Bob and the melodious "San Antonio Rose" and the brilliant colors of Palo Duro. To the high plains of Hereford for spawning "Amarillo by Morning": And the best part of Texas is that we call it home.

And Texas music made by and for Texans like Buddy Holly, Willie, Waylon, the Big Bopper, the Georges (Jones and Strait), Tex Ritter and Tracy Byrd. Include the national contributions made by Texans like John Nance Garner, John Connally, LBJ, and from Bonham, "Mr. Sam" Rayburn. Not to ignore the gifts of life by pioneer physicians like Cooley and DeBakey and of course, a former railroad telegrapher who became a real Texas cowboy, Gene Autry.

Many came from small towns like Medal of Honor recipient and the most decorated soldier in WWII, Audie Murphy from Kingston in Hunt County. He was awarded 24 medals including the French Legion of Honor. Think of WWII without Texans like Nimitz and Eisenhower. Imagine the sports world without Texans like Alvin's favorite son, Nolan Ryan, "The Heat", when he taught Robin Ventura how Texans bulldog a steer as he charged the mound, Houston's Roger Clemens, Dublin's Ben Hogan, Mission's beloved son Tom Landry, Sweetwater's Slingshot Sammy Baugh and Hubbard native and member of the baseball Hall of Fame, Tris Speaker. Other Hunt County natives include Chief Justice Calvert, Lt. Governor Bullock, and Dr. Red Duke.

Do you know what is great about Texas?

It's the same spirit that burned inside those 186 men when they crossed Colonel Travis' line in the sand nearly 165 years ago in a San Antonio mission and most impor-

tant, it is still alive in every Texan today. It's the same individualism and spirit that burned in Ayn Rand. The same desire that caused her to leave Russia, come to America, and write the Fountainhead and Atlas Shrugged over a hundred years later.

Why do thousands of Texans come home to Luckenbach to celebrate the fourth?

Because we're different! Texas is the only state that had to fight for independence like the USA. Texans know what it is to want to be free. Santa Anna heard that cry loud and clear and we didn't stutter when we said it. That desire to be free is what made the Republic of Texas a nation. It is the spirit that was burned into every person who founded this great place we call Texas, and each of them passed it on through blood or sweat to every one of us.

You see, that spirit is what made Texas. It is alive in all of us, even if we can't stand next to a cannon to prove it. It's our heritage, and our responsibility to keep the fire burning because someone started it for us.

It's in every Texan who put a "Native Texan" sign on their car. Or "I wasn't born in Texas but I got here as fast as I could." It's in anyone who ever hung a map of Texas on their wall or flew a Lone Star flag on their porch. To be a Texan is to be forged of a hotter fire.

Try to remember the last time you went to a person's house in another state and they had a big map of say "New York" or "Iowa" on their wall? When did you ever drive through another state and see their flag waving on four businesses in a row? Can you even tell what the flag in South Dakota or Iowa looks like?

There is not a Texan who can't drive 20 minutes from their home and not see a house or a business that has a big Texas flag as part of its logo. If you haven't done business with someone called "Tex something" or "Lone Star somebody or other", or just "Texas such and such", you must have moved here yesterday. It's hard to even visualize what the New Jersey Cattleman's Steakhouse, the Maine Tamale Company or the New York Chili café would look like.

At work, remind the person next to you that they wouldn't be here if it weren't for the courageous acts of Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie and William Barrett Travis, in a small Texas mission built in 1724. If they don't know the story, tell them.

In 1836 William Barrett Travis wrote that he would never surrender and that he would have "Victory or Death". He and his men were "forging a hotter fire." These men weren't your average every day guy. They stood tall, were dedicated and united in principle. Most important of all, they were willing to die for it.

Well, that is what it means to be a Texan. It meant it then, and that's what it still means today to people North of the Red River, East of the Sabine and West of the Rio Grande. It meant exactly what Texan Audie Murphy, the 5'7", 130 pound Marine corps reject, said it meant the day he single handedly interpreted it for the advancing German infantry and the six tanks attempting to surround his posi-

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The trooper who loved kids...continued from front page

Trooper Richard Williams knew lots of the townspeople. These included teachers, school principals, welfare workers, Child Protective Service employees. He learned about Mario Moreno one day while talking to a school principal, who knew who his hardship students were.

Mario's class teacher notified him that he was wanted in the principal's office. Upon entering, he was fearful, nervous, and totally uncertain as to why he had been called. Standing beside his principal's desk was a huge police officer, 6'6" and 260 lbs., wearing a uniform, badge and handgun. Smilingly and softly, the DPS trooper told Mario about his special group of youngsters known as "His Kids", and the Christian youth camp to which he would soon take a group of them. Would Mario like to join them? And would his parents let him go? Mario answered, "Probably not."

But there was something appealing about the big trooper. Mario could feel love. Later that week, the big trooper visited Mario's father and got a "yes". Mario knew a seventh grade girl who had joined "His Kids". She told him, "They call him the 'Big R'. You should go. They have food and beds."

On a Sunday afternoon 12-year-old Mario Moreno got on a bus with a dozen other Lampasas school kids – he knew a couple who had dropped out of school – and rode into Kerr County, the beautiful hill country near Comfort, Texas. The Christian youth camp was called "His Hill." A beautiful river flowed in around the area which had kids in canoes on it, a church/chapel on high ground, recreation area, hiking trails through wooded areas, a swimming pool, a cafeteria and sleeping cabins.

On his first day there, Mario was nervous and uncertain. Each day there were three good meals. He was unaccustomed to having so much food. Each day there were games, laughter and swimming, a worship service in the chapel with the singing of praises to God. He and others had never heard church music before. Once a day, a single camp counselor would sit down beside Mario on a log or bench, engage him in casual conversation, talk to him about God, and read something from the Bible. Mario began to see something big that he had been missing in his life. And a strong atmosphere of love enveloped him – from the peaceful afternoons, to the bright stars over night campfires, to the prayers and songs in the chapel, plus the hugs of loving counselors.

And then there was the big trooper – "the Big R" – who kept showing up, with a hug for every Lampasas youngster. (There were kids there from many Texas counties.) On Mario's fourth day at "His Hill" youth camp, he found himself enjoying singing Christian praise songs, when a spiritual leader in Chapel worship challenged a room full of abused and neglected children to bring God into their lives and follow Christ. Mario held up his hand and said, "Yes, I want to follow Christ."

The week ended too soon for him. He rode the bus home a changed young boy. He handled his home hardships and his school work with a new attitude. In Lampasas he enthusiastically participated in Trooper Williams' after school recreation/spiritual group meetings of "His Kids" in an old warehouse. Williams fed them hot dogs, supervised the recreation, and encouraged them in spiritual things as well as their school work. Mario caught a vision of a better life that could lift him above his desperate home life.



Mario survived his tough high school years, helped his family, helped "Big R" with "His Kids," and graduated. With the help of a school board member, some citizens and "Big R," he got a scholarship at Texas A&M, where he went to college. Today, he works for a central Texas bank. When he learned that his favorite DPS (retired) trooper was returning to Lampasas to start "His Kids" *part two*, he was thrilled and volunteered to be Richard Williams' assistant – to recruit, to organize, to counsel or chaperone – whatever.

"I love this big guy," says Mario. "Richard Williams is like a father to me. I owe him for getting me where I am today. I want to help him rebuild "His Kids".

* * * *

Nancy Lopez's father was a drunk who abused her mother physically and mentally. He was cruel to Nancy, especially when drunk, which was most weekends. He was continually arrested and jailed for DWI's. Her mother tried to encourage Nancy in school, but it was a losing

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Nancy Lopez (right)

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scenario. When she was in the sixth grade, she was really stressed out. Classmates and their parents looked down on Nancy because of her father. It was hard for her to stay focused.

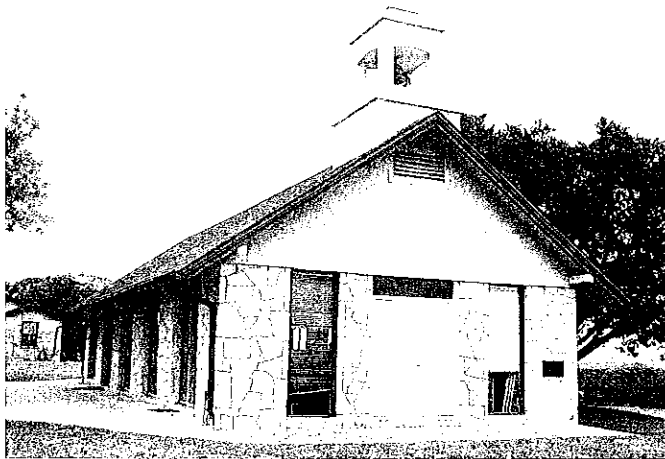
When she was in high school, her father was sent to prison and lost his successful business. Her mother divorced him. Nancy was disoriented, with self-esteem at "zero." It was then that the big trooper, Richard Williams, found her. He asked her to come to a fun meeting of "His Kids." She hardly grasped what he was asking. In their long talks, she began to trust him, and love him.

She joined "His Kids." She discovered how to laugh again. She made new friends, some of them classmates. And she felt the love and compassion of the "Big R". She got back into school. Asked why she joined "His Kids", she giggles, "He promised me a Yankee dime." (That's Texanese for a kiss.)

The day came when Nancy had the opportunity to travel with "His Kids", from Lampasas and Lometa to the "His Hill" Christian Youth Camp near Comfort, Texas. She boarded a bus provided by the Texas State Troopers Association.

Her first impressions of the "His Hill" Youth Camp? "It was beautiful," she recalls, "and I had never experienced such love. I thought the counselors were angels. When the week was over, I did not want to leave."

Like Mario Moreno, she had a spiritual experience at the camp. She gave her heart and life to God and the service of Christ. She was baptized in the river that runs through the camp. The enriching "draw" of "His Hill" –



with its little chapel on the high ground, stayed with her. Her mother struggled to support Nancy and her little sister. Somehow they made it. Three years later, after high school graduation, she returned to the "Hill" as a counselor. She worked there three summers. Today she holds a job in Lampasas while commuting to college at Texas A&M/ Tarlton (Stephenville) and will graduate soon.

When she learned that ex-trooper Richard Williams was returning to Lampasas to start up "His Kids" with a new generation, she was thrilled beyond words. He asked if she would be his assistant. She said "yes" immediately. "I love that man," she says. "And it's time for me to give back what has been given to me."

* * * *

Richard Williams was born in Elsa, Texas, a farming community near Weslaco. There he met his future wife Nancy in high school. He attended Schreiner College in Kerrville. He and Nancy married in 1954 and began living in Laredo when he worked for Central Power and Light. Seeking a better career, he applied with DPS, was accepted and became a state trooper. In the years that followed he saw highway patrol duty in Harlingen, Weslaco, San Antonio, LaMarque and finally Lampasas.

After ten years in Lampasas, he transferred to (DPS) MVI (Motor Vehicle Inspection). This work involved checking civilian inspection stations in nine counties, freed him on weekends. Interested in kids, he got on the Lampasas County Child Welfare Board, and saw bad statistics. He wanted contacts with kids. Getting acquainted in the county, he was appalled at the number of young school children who suffered parental abuse and neglect, lived at or below poverty level, with some becoming school dropouts. Several were into drugs. Some were runaways. He wanted to do something about it.

He talked with teachers, school principles, state welfare people, the Child Protective Service, community leaders and school boards. Many recognized the problems and could point out many of the needy, at-risk kids. He began to seek them in school, in dilapidated homes and on the streets. Some lived in run-down shanties without heat or electricity, little furniture and often no parents. Many had been beaten or sexually abused by drunken fathers or live-in "husbands." Some had only one dress or one pair of blue jeans; some had no underwear or socks. Many were confused and disoriented.

He began to cultivate the acquaintances of teachers and school principals in all the schools, telling them he was interested in the needy, abused kids. They would set him up with special children, in the cafeterias and on the playgrounds. *The DPS uniform worked two ways.* The teachers respected it, knew Trooper Williams was sincere. Many of the low-income kids were afraid of it. But in his small-town, friendly way, he mingled. In an elementary school cafeteria, he would sit in a chair. Youngsters would come and talk to him and even sit in his lap.

Then he did this in middle school and high school. At 6'6", he became known as "Big R." Later, he helped some with money from his own pocket. He persuaded a businessman to loan him part of an old warehouse where he installed a basketball hoop, a ping pong table and invited the kids in for after school hot dogs and cokes. Richard knew about a Christian youth camp named "His Hill," in beautiful Comfort, near Kerrville. He solicited contribu-

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tions and transportation, and took kids there. Afterwards he named his Lampasas group "His Kids."

Revelations of child abuses continued to appall "the Big R." The father of one 13-year-old girl beat her, abused her and resisted Richard's efforts to get her into his group. He beat her again when she returned from the church camp and told it around town that she was a prostitute. Through his own personal contacts, Trooper Richard Williams got her away from her father and into a children's home in a nearby town.

The father of another little Lampasas schoolgirl committed suicide in her mobile home, leaving her mother and three little ones younger than her. When the "Big R" entered the little home, it was bitter cold and the little family had no electricity and just a little heat from a wood stove. They had no money. Richard personally paid their electric bill of \$80, went to HEB and bought groceries for them. On another visit there, he got lots of hugs. The oldest little girl joined Richard's "His Kids."

"Big R's youth club of abused, disoriented and homeless kids grew. Richard included Bible verses and Christian teachings in his recreational meetings in the old warehouse. He taught them little "praise" hymns, supplied by the Comfort Christian camp. He seldom had a structured church service. Most had never been inside a church.



While Christianity was his ultimate goal for the kids, he did not push it. "I try to love them into the kingdom of God," he once said.

"They all needed to be loved," he said. "These abused ones also needed self-esteem. That's why I hug'em so much." And the kids loved the hugs. It was apparent to

Richard that many had no father figure. For them, the big trooper became their "father figure."

Some of "His Kids" had done so badly in school that they couldn't spell their own names. Others knew little about personal hygiene and wore dirty clothes. For one group, Williams had "pretty parties." He persuaded Lampasas beauticians and cosmetics people to come and instruct them. On fishing trips, cookouts and swimming parties, the "Big R" got them to talk to him, winning their confidence.

One of Richard Williams' staunch supporters was and is a realtor/rancher named Harold Clary, who was president of the Lampasas school board. He cared about abused kids, too. He often loaned his ranch to Richard's "His Kids" for fishing, camping and cookouts. Partially due to Clary's strong community influence, people gave money to the "Big R." Another supporter who grew stronger in the early days of "His Kids" was the Texas State Troopers Association (TSTA). They had a bus that could carry lots of kids, a youth director/driver named Jerry Miller, and a publicity-minded editor named Jack Lawler. TSTA made them available to Trooper Richard Williams. The TSTA bus took groups to Six Flags and other places.

How did a DPS trooper like this find time to do all this? He packed it all into off-duty evenings, weekends and lunch hours. Often Richard would awaken in the middle of the night, trying to devise a plan to help an abused or homeless youngster. One little Hispanic boy named Pablo, living in a broken home, started to drop out of school. "The Big R" got him to the "His Hill" camp. After his week there he stayed in school, got a part-time job and saved money to send his little sister to the camp. "His Hill" at Comfort is the big thing," the big trooper says. "Getting them ready for it is a struggle. We provided bathing suits, toothbrushes and sometimes clothing."

The "camp" had swimming, archery, hiking, Bible scholars and spiritual youth counselors. Two counselors were assigned to every six kids. "Bonding" came easily. The food is good. At night the kids sing around a big campfire. Some of the youngsters cried when they had to leave and return to their grim home life. In his first year, Trooper



Williams took 20 kids to "His Hill" camp. Before long, he was taking over 100.

On one occasion, "His Kids" from Lampasas and nearby Lometa sang some of their simple little praise songs for a church, and received applause. "It was a joy to behold," said Judy Hardy, one of Richard's helpers, "the kids had

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never been told they did anything right – much less had anyone clap for them.”

DPS retirement time came for Texas DPS Trooper Richard Williams. He had served his state well. He and his wife Nancy had raised two sons and a daughter, mostly in Lampasas, and they were grown. But what to do about “His Kids?” The struggling abused youth of Lampasas and Lometa. Then he thought of the years of nights and weekends when he was working with kids and leaving Nancy at home alone. He needed to make it up to her. They needed a change. He said his goodbyes. With many of “His Kids,” it was with many hugs and some tears. He didn’t know it, but he was leaving a huge legacy for some... a new life for others.

They sold their home, and began traveling several states. With a pick-up truck and a travel trailer they stayed a while in New Mexico, then came back to beautiful Leakey, Texas and settled on Richard’s brother’s ranch. They stayed two years.

Then, the “Big R” from Lampasas had a mild heart attack, had a hospital stay and came out with a “pacemaker” heart. His health was restored, but the experience made them decide to move back to the place of their “roots” – and get back closer to their children. They returned to Lampasas in February, 2008, and settled there for the second time, after ten years. It didn’t take very long for them to meet old friends – and several of them were “His Kids,” now grown adults. Among those were Mario Moreno, Nancy Lopez and Christy Ford, all of whom had jobs in the area. The reunions were joyous. The big ex-trooper was still the “Big R”, (only with gray hair) the love and respect was still there.

It didn’t take long for Richard Williams to make another big decision. He was retired with more time for kids. He had the “grown-up” “His Kids” to help him. He would re-start “His Kids.” The “His Hill” Christian camp was still there. And more than these factors – another age group of abused, homeless, at-risk kids was still present. Richard’s adult “His Kids” knew this, and told him. Would his grown-up “His Kids” help? “Absolutely!” they said. Mario, Nancy, Christy and others would help find more abused kids. They would help chaperone them on busses and cars to “His Hill.”

And so “His Kids,” phase two, was reborn in Lampasas early this year, 2009. It was agreed that the first “thrust” would be to get needy youngsters to the Christian youth camp. The new leadership went to work finding abused kids, enlisting them for “camp.” But something had changed. Many of the at-risk kids, this time, were not living at poverty level. Shortages of shoes, food and camp items were not as prevalent as before. *What the abused kids had a shortage of – was love and guidance at home.* There were still broken homes, and an absence of parental role models. Incomes with some families were up, but some parents were doing illegal drugs, partying and ignoring their school children. And the result was the same: disoriented, homeless children, school dropouts and kids in trouble. The challenge to rebuild “His Kids” was there. So the retired DPS state trooper and his veteran followers went to work again early this year.

Today, the “His Kids” youth group is on the move again. The “Big R” and his assistants have gotten several carloads to “His Hill” youth camp. The formula of the “Big R’s” love and the magic of “His Hill’s” recreational/spiritual treatment still works. More and more grown-up “His Kids” are showing up to help Richard Williams. The “Big R” and “His Kids” are



looking for an old building in Lampasas where they can meet, shoot baskets, eat pizza and have Bible classes. Until they find it, they’re meeting under a big oak tree in the park. TSTA, delighted at the return of the big retired trooper, has again lent its strength to the “Big R” with financial help and in dispatching editor staffer Jack Lawler to help with publicity and moral support.

Who says that a helping hand to needy kids can’t pay off? Who says the age-old Christian message of love isn’t relevant? Who says the acts of yesterday are merely history? Who says a retired gray-haired trooper can’t make a comeback and hit some big licks for society?

Around Lampasas, nobody is saying those things.

**Note: \$50 will send an “at-risk” or abused boy or girl to “His Hill” camp for 5 days. If you’d like to do this, send your check to:
“His Kids”, P.O. Box 1323,
Lampasas, TX 76550**

Members...it’s yours to enjoy!

TSTA In-Service Hospitality!
Starts August

for all scheduled In-Service schools.

Monday-Thursday
Half-price drinks for TSTA members
Bar Hours 5 p.m. - 10 p.m.
(Monday Nights until Game is over)

PLUS

Enter drawing for \$200 door prize
Drawing each Friday
Check Mailed

In Memorial Plaza, DPS Austin

DPS Memorial Service for fallen officers draws big crowd

It was only a 40-minute ceremonial service, but hundreds came from all over Texas and from several law enforcement agencies. Family survivors of troopers and other Texas law officers killed in the line of duty were present in large numbers. This special group was honored at a pre-ceremonial coffee at DPS Austin. On hand to greet them were DPS Interim Director (Colonel) Lamar Beckworth, Recruit Training Commander Albert Rodriguez and Allan B. Polunsky, Chairman of the DPS Public Safety Commission. Also in attendance were 105 members of Recruit Training Class B-2008, and Mr. Don Metcalf of the DPS Memorial Monument program.

Guest speaker for the event was state Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa, who was introduced by Commissioner Polunsky. Senator Hinojosa, a veteran Texas lawmaker and also a Marine veteran of the Vietnam War, related his understanding of and appreciation for state troopers. "In Vietnam combat zones, where I lost three buddies, I knew who the enemy was. Today, when a trooper makes a traffic stop, he doesn't know if the offender is friend or foe and his traffic stop can quickly become very dangerous for him. He has a unique responsibility where he often does not have time for second-guessing. I salute today's troopers and especially, today, those who have fallen."

Placing of the memorial wreath was done by Mr. Charles Cooper, son of DPS Sergeant G.O. Cooper who was killed in the line of duty many years ago. Chief David Baker read the Roll Call of fallen officers, which included several city police officers and sheriff's deputies. Before the playing of *Taps* by buglers, the gun salute of 6A's Color Guard split the air, a reminder that almost a third of DPS' fallen officers have died from gunfire.

The closing prayer was voiced by Gary Tull. Col. Beckworth closed the meaningful ceremony by thanking all who came, and by reminding survivors of fallen officers that their sacrifices are not forgotten.



Charles Cooper, son of fallen trooper, lays wreath.



Family survivors: their sacrifices remembered.



Senator Hinojosa: he knows trooper dangers



City PD officers stand when fallen fellow officer's name called.



Colonel Beckworth, 100 Club CEO Ginger McMicking. Her club helps families of fallen or injured officers.

Reflections of a retired trooper, with advice for today's troopers

By Jim Lasater
Highway Patrol, West Texas

You can train men and women to perform the duties of a state trooper but you can't train them to care about people...that has to come from the heart. I believe career troopers are called to serve.

The future tasks that our newly assigned Troopers will be asked to perform in today's world are unimaginable. You can't pay someone enough money to respond to a Sept. 11th attack or an Oklahoma City bombing. The men and women running in while everyone else is running away are very, very special people...if it cost them their lives to save someone's life they are prepared to do that. And I believe that is a calling, not a career choice. The few who join the DPS who seek power and personal recognition usually don't last very long.

I clearly remember my graduation day, May 9th, 1980. When our class marched into the DPS HQ courtyard I felt a tremendous sense of pride. When they called my name my heart was pounding in my chest and tears welled up in my eyes.

If I could visit with some of our "newly assigned trooper's," they called us "Rookies," but that term is as outdated as I am...

Have fun while you work and don't take yourself too seriously. When I was a young trooper during the oil boom of the early 80's we would stay out past the end of our shift because we loved our job. Then when things got quiet we would head home. We did not do comp-cards and we were not micro-managed by our supervisors. I loved the Department of Public Safety and enjoyed going to work. I still feel a sense of pride every time I see a black and white or pass a trooper with someone stopped.

Danger

The greatest threat to our Troopers has not changed, it is still *driving*. Slow down and make sure you arrive... you can't help anyone if you don't get there. When you



Jim Lasater is now transportation safety mgr. (rigs and trucks) for Basic Energy Service, Midland.

review the numbers of troopers killed in the line of duty a large percentage were killed in car crashes.

I remember one afternoon while in Austin for In-Service School I was visiting with several troopers out in front of the Academy near the memorial wall. Each one of us would comment about a name on the wall and how he died. I made the comment "I wonder who will be next? Whose name will be on the bronze plate that will fill the next empty space?" There was no response. You must first learn to defend yourself and each other.



A very young trooper Lasater, almost 30 years ago.

When I went through the academy, there was a Highway Patrol Lieutenant from Corpus Christi that was teaching traffic stops and he made a statement that made me very angry. He was a tall lean steel-faced man that seldom smiled...he was all business. In a nonchalant matter-of-fact delivery he made the statement "Men...if there is someone out there who really wants to kill you bad enough...he's probably going to and there is not a lot you can do about it". Rage went through me and I was thinking "you old coot...I am going to do something about that...I am going to fight against the dying of the light!" His statement stayed with me and after a couple troopers had been killed, the realization occurred to me that Lt. Swan was right. The next in-service school I attended Lt. Swan was there and I shared my anger and realization with him. If you study the troopers who have been shot to death... most of them did not have a chance...

That uniform gives you a great deal of authority...but you have to earn your own respect in the community. Those who went before you have laid the foundation for you but it will be up to you to earn the respect of your community. Your involvement in the community will play a key role in your effectiveness as a trooper. Your reputation for being honest and treating people fair will reflect in your jury verdicts.

Use Common Sense

When making a traffic stop it is very difficult to treat each one individually. Most people don't get stopped very often and the impression you make on the people you stop will last a lifetime. Good or bad, they will tell all their friends and neighbors and your reputation will begin. When I went through the DPS Academy we were constantly reminded to "treat people the way you would want to be treated" and to "use common sense and good judgment" when dealing with people. I would much rather talk a drunk driver into jail rather than fight with him. There will always be those where force is the only option and force should be used only as a last resort.

Shortly after joining the DPS I decided that I did not like the shouting matches that were much too common with my traffic stops. I began to challenge myself to control the furious violators. Once I started to have some success it was rewarding to know that I could calm the person down and conduct business in a professional

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Reflections of a retired trooper...continued from page 8

manner. It takes practice and every situation is different. They later called the technique *verbal judo*. It was a technique most of us learned on our own.

I suppose every trooper has written someone a warning that should have gotten a citation according to DPS enforcement guidelines. I stopped an elderly man in a remote West Texas highway that was traveling at a speed that deserved a citation. The elderly gentleman explained his reason for speeding with a flushed and sweating face; he had eaten a bad BBQ sandwich for lunch and had dirtied his laundry and was trying to get to a rest room. Even though it's not a medical emergency you can't write this guy a ticket ...just don't let the law or policy overrule the use of common sense and good judgment.

In my current position as the Manager, Transportation Safety for Basic Energy Services (Midland) I still reflect on my DPS career and the people skills I learned while working as a trooper. I use that experience during my training classes. I would be courteous to everyone..."yes sir and no sir" even to hitchhikers' not because they earned it but because that was the way I was taught to conduct my business. The DPS having "Courtesy" as a part of their motto is a major factor in the professional reputation they have earned.

Dealing with Trauma

Effectively dealing with death may determine whether you make the highway patrol a career or decide to leave. Being in traumatic situations is stressful and leaves psychological scars. You will leave a lifelong impression on the people involved in fatal accidents. I still have people in my community who will see me in Wal-Mart and come up to me and give me a big hug, years after I had investigated the accident where their family member was killed. Often time's people would ask me "how do you deal with the fatal accidents"? It is a tough part of being a Highway Patrol Trooper and quite frankly, you have so much responsibility at the scene you don't have much time to meditate on it. It's when you get home at night and lay your head on the pillow that you reflect on the images of the day.

The children are the worst. I investigated seven fatal accidents involving children and have not forgotten any of them. In my opinion no one mourns the loss of a child like a mother.

A Mexican national family turned their van over on I-20 and a 9-year-old boy was thrown from the vehicle and killed instantly. The mother, who was also seriously injured, crawled from the wreckage onto the hot July pavement of the service road and lay on top of her little dead boy. She was weeping bitterly and praying in Spanish. My eyes still fill with tears just reflecting on that crash and it has been over 15 years ago.

I will always remember the mother of an 11-year-old boy who was hit crossing a remote county road on his dirt bike. The neurologist who treated the little boy in the ER said, "That little boy is dead but his heart wont quit beating." 45 minutes later it stopped. The mother was in with her little boy and was sobbing and praying, "God don't take my baby boy." These incidents will stay with you forever.

You go from the scenes where children are killed to DUI arrests where alcoholic fathers are driving around with

their children in the car. Then you're supposed to stay calm while the father makes you out to be the big mean cop who is taking their daddy to jail. Even though you would like to punch the guys light out, you must revert to your training and keep your professional demeanor.

Partners

Some of my closest friends in the world are troopers. You and your partner can develop a friendship that is closer than a brother. For almost six years Troy Hogue and I were partners and friends. A few months after I transferred to CVE, Trooper Hogue was shot to death on a cold December night on I-20 in West Texas. I was the first DPS unit to arrive on the scene to find my partner and friend beside the highway with a single gunshot wound to the head. I would arrive at Troy's home to deliver the most difficult death messages of my life. I will never forget his ten-year-old daughter, with tears running down her face, asking me...pleading with me, "Is my Daddy hurt? Is he coming home?" With your partner or a fellow trooper, you're not just protecting your own life, you're protecting his children's father/mother.

Retired trooper Jim Lasater grew up in West Texas. He is an Army veteran who holds a Law Enforcement Associates degree from Midland College. He joined DPS in 1980, was assigned to the highway patrol in Lamesa. After that came duty in Midland, then Big Spring (1982). After 22 years HP-duty there, he retired from DPS for higher income in a civilian job, in order to provide special healthcare for his seriously ill wife. He has both happy and sad memories of his highway patrol years.

Court's In Session...continued from page2

tion on January 26, 1945. Lt. Murphy received a battlefield commission four months earlier and on that day he ordered his men to withdraw to safety in the nearby woods as he chose to stand tall, defend his men, his principles and his Texas spirit and honor.

There's no mountain that Texans can't climb. Did you ever ask yourself why they put the space center in Texas?

It means that we can swim the Gulf in the winter. It means that Tyler's Earl Campbell can run harder, Austin's Lance Armstrong can come back stronger and Beaumont's Babe Didrikson Zaharias became the 20th century's greatest female athlete and provided the impetus to bring women's sports into the prominence it enjoys today. It means many things, like the spirit and vision that gave birth on January 10, 1901 to the Lucas Gusher in Beaumont and power the wheels of industry, that Alpine is hotter, that Coach Landry had class, that Throckmorton's Bob Lilly was smoother and that God vacations in Texas.

It means come hell or high water, being a Texan counts for something when the chips are down. So, for today at least when your chance comes around, go out and prove it. If you are sitting there wondering what all this means, then this ain't for you. But if, when the Good Lord calls your number, the first thing you are going to do is find those 186 heroes (who crossed the line and died when 2,500 Mexican troops stormed the Alamo in a predawn assault on March 6, 1836) and shake the hands of those brave men, then this is for you.

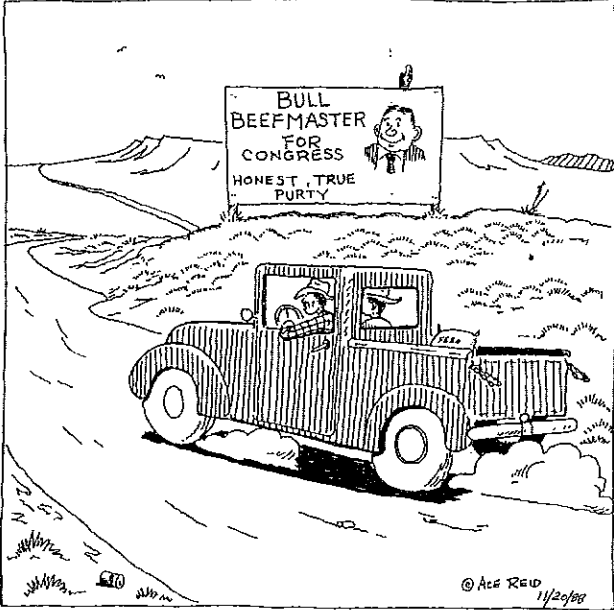
Stand proud. Stand tall. We're Texans after all!!!! So until next time, you'll be careful out there, you hear.

* Kuempel's Korner *



COWPOKES

By Ace Reid



"Bull oughtta be a good congressman. He bought a bunch of steers off me once, started a fillibuster at the scales. I figure they shrunk 10 per cent!"

It's impossible to sneeze with your eyes open.

Happiness comes through doors you didn't even know you left open.

If you want a place in the sun, you have to put up with a few blisters.

-Abigail Van Buren

Failure need not be permanent.

People who are late are often much jollier than the people who have to wait for them.

Fear knocked on the door. Faith answered. Fear went away.

"To excel or win, you don't do your assignment right most of the time. You do it right every time."

-The late Vince Lombardi, Coach Green Bay Packers

To destroy an enemy, make him your friend.

-Abraham Lincoln

"I complained about having no shoes - until I met a man with no feet."

The Gypsy woman looked up from her crystal ball at the man seated before her.

"I will answer two questions for \$100," she said.

"Isn't that price rather high?" asked the man.

"Yes," was her reply. "Now what's the second question?"

He told her he was a diamond cutter. Golly, was she impressed until she found out he mowed the grass at the new Yankee stadium.

Trains don't wander all over the map, cause nobody sits in the engineer's lap.

When you are dissatisfied and would like to go back to youth, think of Algebra.

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Statement of Purpose

Texas State Trooper is an official publication of the Texas State Troopers Association. Should you have news you would like published, mail it to:

Texas State Troopers Association
 5540 North Lamar
 Austin, TX 78751
 E-mail us at TSTAMAIL@aol.com
 Website: www.texasstatetroopers.org

The Texas State Troopers Association is open to all first-line commissioned members of the Department of Public Safety, both current and former.

TSTA intends no indictment of those of supervisory rank through their exclusion as members of this organization. We do understand, however, that no association can be all things to all people. Therefore, we have chosen to represent those who need our services more: first-line troopers. This policy negates the probability of conflict of interest that stems from multi-class representation.

TSTA will work hard for the betterment of life for every member of the department.

FOR MEMBERSHIP: Complete the application below. Mail it and a check for \$25 payable to the Texas State troopers Association to the address at the top of the application. Include your jacket size: M, L, XL, XXL or XXXL. Your cap and jacket will be mailed to you.

WILLS: Members are reminded that one of your benefits from TSTA is the free preparation of a last will and testament. This service is performed by Lee Johnson. He may be contacted at:

Lee Johnson
 Attorney-at-Law
 575 N. 7th Street
 Beaumont, TX 77702
 Telephone: 409/833-8911

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For fastest service, attach old mailing label in this space. If label is not available, print your old address in the box. Be sure to include your ZIP CODE.

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DATE EMPLOYED	DATE OF COMMISSION	DATE OF TERMINATION (if no longer with DPS)		

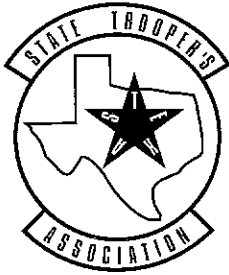
Membership dues paid to TSTA are not deductible as gifts or charitable contributions but may be deductible under an IRC Section other than Section 170 (c).

I, _____, request membership into the Texas State Troopers Association, and if accepted agree to abide by the Constitution and Bylaws of the Association, the rules and decisions of its officers. I also agree to pay annual dues of twenty-five (25) dollars for all of a calendar year or any part thereof.

I understand that any unreasonable failure to assist a fellow member of the Texas State Troopers Association will result in this membership being cancelled by the board of directors at their option.

I also understand this membership will terminate immediately if I am promoted to any supervisory rank of sergeant or above.

Signature of applicant _____ Date _____



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Health tips

Applying sunscreen

Anytime you head outdoors, protect yourself from the sun by wearing sunglasses or a broad-brimmed hat. Limit the time you spend in the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., and seek shade when possible.

If your skin is going to be exposed to the sun, correctly applying sunscreen is another way to help protect yourself. At a minimum, select a sunscreen that provides protection against both ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) light, with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15. Getting maximum protection requires proper application, including:

- *Applying 30 minutes before heading outside* – This gives the sunscreen a chance to be absorbed by the skin.
- *Using the right amount* – One ounce of sunscreen, or about 2 tablespoons, is recommended for one complete covering of the legs, arms, neck and face.
- *Covering sun-exposed skin* – Areas commonly overlooked include the backs of the legs, the feet and toes, and the ears, lips, neck and skin along your hairline. If you can't find someone to put sunscreen on your back wear a shirt.
- *Reapplying regularly* – Sunscreen effectiveness fades after approximately two hours. Reapply even more frequently in high humidity or after sweating, rubbing your skin with a towel, swimming or showering, even if you're using a water-resistant sunscreen.

Reprint *Mayo Clinic Health Letter*, Rochester, Minn., March 2009.

WE CARE
Texas State Troopers Association

Advance your DPS career with a leadership degree...

Mountain State University (MSU) now offers...

20% discount on tuition

...to TSTA members enrolled in MSU's online Organizational Leadership or Leadership Distance Education courses or programs. Members' spouses can also get the 20% discount if the TSTA member is presently enrolled. 10% discount if member not presently enrolled. The discount will be based on today's MSU tuition rates. MSU offers a Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership (BSOL), a Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership with a Criminal Justice Administration concentration (BSOLCJA), and a Master of Science in Strategic Leadership (MSSL) **entirely online**. Up to 54 TCLEOSE credits can be transferred into the BSOL & BSOL-CJA programs **at no cost!** Various certifications are able to substitute several General Education requirements. Numerous other degree plans are available as well.

TSTA member enrollees must document their enrollment. This helpful discount and your TCLEOSE hours counting as college credits can move you on to that Criminal Justice degree, which can help your DPS career. Note, please: 1) this discount cannot be used with any other discount, and 2) MSU has other degrees!

This discount is a TSTA member benefit resultant from a close working relationship between TSTA and MSU.

Mountain State University can help you accelerate career success Texas representatives are here to help you. Please visit www.mountainstate.edu/tcleose or contact Texas Partnership Coordinator Andra Nieto at anieto@mountainstate.edu or 1-800-766-6067 ext. 1773 (toll free) or 304-237-3658 (cell) for information. Call MSU today and find out more.

TSTA Membership Advantages

- Free Last Will & Testament
- Free AD&D Insurance
- Emergency Assistance
- Legal Assistance
- Recreational Facilities
- Legislative Representation
- Personal Counsel