

Scouts plan another outing at dioxin site

United Press International

IRVING — The Boy Scouts have arranged for independent tests at a Virginia army post where 32,000 Boy Scouts camped near dioxin contamination in 1981 and plan another jamboree there in 1985, a scout official said Sunday.

"We don't think there are any serious problems. It's been more than 3 1/2 years, and we don't have any record of anyone coming down with any problems," said J.L. Tarr, chief executive of the Boy Scouts of America.

Tarr said an independent laboratory will test the site Tuesday, but "it may be next week before we know the results of these tests."

The Army said soil tests in 1983 at Fort A.P. Hill in central Virginia found 200 parts per billion of toxic dioxin in a storage building and 3 ppb in surrounding campgrounds.

A pesticides expert said more than 1 ppb was unsafe, and the Army said some scouts set up camp 150 feet from the contamination.

The report was turned over to the BSA Friday in Washington.

Robert Longley, a spokesman for the BSA at their headquarters in Irving, said there were no plans to move the 1985 national jamboree from Fort Hill, although he has received a number of telephone calls from concerned parents.

"I can tell you right now that no plans have changed," said Longley. "That's as definitive as I can be right now."

Army officials say the building was used to store Silvex, a weed-killer containing dioxin. The Army said it did not feel there was a health hazard, but a Colorado poison expert recommended immediate checkups.

Dioxin — a byproduct in the manufacture of herbicides and in the incineration of some municipal wastes — is one of the most hazardous man-made substances.

It is known to cause cancer and reproductive failure, impair the effectiveness of the immune system and other problems in laboratory animals.

Tarr said some staff members camped near the shed but did not say how near.

Virginia state health official Wade Gilley said that "based upon the information provided to us, it does not seem there was intimate or, for that matter, even any casual contact with the Boy Scouts there."

Army spokeswoman Maj. Mary Andrews said the BSA was told contamination in the area was small and the scouts were not exposed to it long enough for it to have been a health hazard.

Dr. Barry Rumack of the Rocky Mountain Poison Control Center in Denver said the human exposure limit for dioxin is 1 ppb and recommended those exposed be examined by a physician as soon as possible.

Rumack said symptoms of dioxin poisoning can take years to appear and would include acne and blackheads on the face, soft tissue tumors, muscle pain, fatigue, peripheral nerve damage, liver enlargement, hemorrhage of the urinary bladder and excess hair on the temples, eyebrows and shoulders.

"Since these measurements in the soil were two years after exposure, it is likely there were higher levels in the soil at the time of exposure," Rumack said. "Given the half-life of dioxin, it is likely the people were exposed to 24 parts per billion. That is significant exposure."

Slouch

By Jim Earle



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Boone chooses tunes for tower

By MARK VIGUET
Reporter

Bob Boone, director of vocal music at Texas A&M, has a new duty that will touch the ears of everyone on campus — he chooses which tunes will be played at the Albritton Tower.

"I'll mainly control the artistic part of the tower, and it will also be my responsibility to make sure it functions the way it's supposed to," Boone said. "At first we had some trouble coordinating the bells so they would ring at the right time because the clock was running fast but now it's perfect."

"Basically, I went through the national calendar and selected appropriate music for special events, because eventually we hope the carillon will play music on these dates. Right now we don't have many selections, but eventually there will probably be about 800 different melodies."

The tower will play traditional music for national holidays, like Christmas, Thanksgiving and Veterans' Day and for University events like Muster and Silver Taps.

The carillon consists of 49 bells and utilizes different controlling systems for the playing of tunes and

ringing of the bells every quarter of the hour.

An 8,600-pound bell is the largest in the system.

"We also plan a 'swinging peal,' which is heard after any celebration, like home football victories," Boone said. "There are three big bells on a fulcrum, and when the peal process is started, the two smaller bells ring first then the 8,600-pound bell joins in, causing quite a clatter. Otherwise, the songs are controlled."

Boone says the carillon system is unique, perhaps the only one of its kind.

"Two keyboards are used, one for soft and one for louder sounds, and to play various combinations," he said. "Lloyd Lott comes from Corpus Christi to play the melodies, and as he plays we record the songs on a digital tape that can be played over and over."

"The tapes can also be dubbed in various ways to play different sequences of songs."

When songs are played, an electrical impulse is sent from the tape to a clapper that strikes the appropriate bell, Boone said.

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