

## **Girl Scout Honor for Planned Parenthood Executive**

***Washington Times unsigned editorial March 6, 2004***

Crawford, Texas, first garnered national attention as the locale of the president's Prairie Chapel Ranch. But in recent weeks, it has become known for something else: Parents are withdrawing their daughters from Girl Scout troops on discovering the organization's association with Planned Parenthood.

Troop 7527 has only two remaining members, according to an Associated Press dispatch, and Brownie Troop 7087 has none. The decline in membership started a few weeks ago, when Pro-Life Waco ran ads for two weeks on a Christian radio station in nearby Waco calling for a boycott of Girl Scout cookies because of the organization's "cozy relationship" with Planned Parenthood.

Parents were disturbed that the Bluebonnet Council of Girl Scouts, which oversees troops in the Waco area and 13 other counties, honored Pam Smallwood, executive director of Planned Parenthood of Central Texas, as its "woman of distinction." But the more contentious issue revolves around the fuzzy notion of whether the Girl Scouts were sponsoring Planned Parenthood's sex-education programs. Girl Scout leadership insists that it did not financially support the programs, although the materials carried the Girl Scouts' name and logo. The materials, targeted at fifth- through ninth-graders, included chapters on homosexuality and masturbation, illustrations of couples engaging in sexual relations and an illustration of fitting a condom. The Bluebonnet Council then announced that it would not be affiliated with such programs this year, appropriately so. "For us, it's the morality," said one parent. "Where are Girl Scouts going?"

The answer is disturbing. Once upon a time, parents enrolled their daughters in Girl Scouts to learn useful skills such as cooking and camping, and making strong friendships. The Girl Scouts organization was founded in 1912 in Savannah, Georgia., by Juliette Gordon Low, who wanted to provide young women with an opportunity to get out of their homes and serve their communities. And for decades, the ladies leading the Scouts did just that, working in hospitals and selling war bonds during World War I and assisting with the relief effort during the Great Depression.

In recent decades, the focus of the women in green has taken a downward spiral. The Girl Scouts dropped the word "loyalty" from their oath in 1972, and it became clear that the organization cared more about serving itself than the community. We encourage building self-esteem in young women. But the Girl Scouts' focus on politically correct ideology — such as making the word "God" optional in their pledge, promoting questionable sex-education programs and encouraging a victim mentality — is doing its 2.9 million young members a disservice.

The parents of Crawford deserve a salute for having the gumption to send a message to an organization that has forgotten its mission.