

# Private Issue Scouting Square Knots (Experimental, Locally Authorized, Fake and SpooF) Part 5 of 5: Private Issue and SpooF Knots

George Crowl

Changes from V 13.0 are shown in blue.

Sea Scout Ship 90 of New Milford, PA produces two knots, each in blue and in white. The first is the **Silver Anchor Award** mentioned at the beginning of the section on Sharif. The Silver Anchor is awarded to the Sea Scout or officer who is most outstanding and active in the ship each year. The award dates from 1968, the medal from 1972 and the knot from 1974. It uses the same colors as the experimental NESA Distinguished Service Award (page 1). The **Philip W. Johnson Ship Memorial Award** was created in memory of one of their mates. It is available to members of the Pack/Troop/Ship 90 family who meet certain set requirements. The knot was designed in 1975. Ron Hall provided a copy of the ship's articles to help explain these knots.



**Silver Anchor  
(Not SSS 90?)**



**Another Variety**



**Silver Anchor,**



**Silver Anchor**



**Memorial Award,**



**Memorial Award**



**Commander Keane**

An unusual "knot" is the **Commander Keane Award**, given to one Sea Scouter in the Northeast Region per year. It is named after the famous Thomas J. Keane, a World War I and II naval officer who served as the national director of Sea Scouting from 1925 to 1941 (when he was called back into service). Years later he was a motivational speaker on the Scouting circuit. The individual must have contributed to Sea Scouting by noteworthy service. The scan is courtesy Frank LaGrange. See [www.neregion.seascout.org/program\\_and\\_communications/awards.html](http://www.neregion.seascout.org/program_and_communications/awards.html).

Two old knots from the Illinois area have surfaced on a shirt with 1960's commissioner insignia. All the other knots are BSA rough twill, indicating that they were manufactured before 1965. First is a beaded OA Vigil knot described as **Wipunquoak Charter Member OA**. The second is described as a **Lincoln Trail Medal** knot. The individual was from the Chicago Area Council. Shortly thereafter, I received scans of two **Lincoln Trail Medal** knots, at left. Accounting for scan differences, or loom run differences, the white/blue knot is from Abraham Lincoln Council in Illinois. The yellow/ blue knot is from a Kentucky council. They both have accompanying medals.



**Lincoln Trail Medal**



**Wipunquoak OA**



**Lincoln Trail Medal**



**Inclusive Scouter 2**

The **Inclusive Scouter Award** and the **Inclusive Scouter Distinguished Service Award** are emblems of a protest movement against the BSA policy of exclusion of homosexuals from membership. In 2002-05 they sponsored a web site at [www.inclusivescouting.net](http://www.inclusivescouting.net). They ask that those who seek change in the policy wear the ISA knot. No other criteria is specified. The ISDSA knot, on the other hand, is awarded after nomination to those who have advocated publicly for these positions at some risk to themselves. The knot symbolism is that of silver and purple for the church, intertwined with rainbow colors for diversity. At the end of 2007 the web site is apparently off the net. In 2009, Jeffery Bakal of Illinois marketed a new Inclusive Scouter knot, same idea, different design.



**Inclusive Scouter Award**



**Inclusive Scouter Distinguished Service Award**



**Deseret Recognition**

According to the National Catholic Committee on Scouting's web site ([http://www.catholicscouting.org/NCCS\\_History/BSA\\_Religious\\_Emblems/bsa\\_religious\\_emblems.html](http://www.catholicscouting.org/NCCS_History/BSA_Religious_Emblems/bsa_religious_emblems.html)), the **Deseret Recognition** was established in 1950, and superseded in 1955 with the Duty To God award. Randolph Finder identified the site to me, and says that his research on Google is consistent with the 1950-55 range. The knot illustrated here was thought to be is a 1966-79 era award based on knot weave. The pictured knot was used in a display.



**Bronze Scouter**

The **Bronze Scouter** I am told is a whim. But it is a good copy of a BSA knot.



**Troop 194 GISMO**

Troop 194 of Bedford, Massachusetts (Boston Minuteman Council) uses several private issue knots, has at least one of their own, and is developing more. They recognize that these are unofficial, and issue them for wear on the right pocket. They use Rafi Sharif's Wood Badge knot, the OA Vigil knot below, and the Big Bucks knot below. They use the Bowline knot as a recognition for assistant Scoutmasters who meet certain criteria. Their own knot is the **Troop 194 GISMO** award. Every few years they camp on an island in Maine. Earning the right to go is difficult. Attendees get to wear the award. The second award is the Department of Massachusetts American Legion Scout Camporee **Commander's Trophy**. This is a camporee for Legion sponsored troops. The third award is given to T194 registered adults that are Eagle Scouts and whose son has earned the rank of Eagle. In the rare cases where there are more than one son that earns the rank of Eagle then a year pin (without a color backing) is worn in the middle to signify the number of Eagle sons.



**Commander's Trophy**



**Eagle Lineage**



**ISPESS**

**International Society for Philosophical Enquiry Scouter Service.** The society is an international scientific and quasi-academic organization. The knot is given to those members who serve as Scouters. The ISPE has a goal of service towards humanity, and led to the Scouter program's creation. One must qualify as a full member. Basic membership requires testing at a high percentile. A full member demonstrates acts of service, excellence, personal betterment, etc. The award goes to trained Scouters with 2 years service and participation. ISPE mainly supports the merit badge program. An additional level of knot is earned by doing four items of a list including advanced training and performing Scout-like service outside Scouting. The award is given by the Advancement Chairman of the ISPE. This knot was sold by Chris McCullough in 2003.



**ISPESS Distinguished Scouter**



**Gettysburg Trail**



**Ven Ldrship Awd**



**Seabadge**



**Pack Trainer**



**International Scouter Awd**

**Gettysburg Trail.** In 2008 the Gettysburg Trail knot was offered on the Internet to go along with the Gettysburg Trail medal and patch set. It is a private issue by John Green. It is not from the York-Adams Area Council, who sponsors the Gettysburg Trail complex with the National Park Service. This is the first instance of a diagonal background that I have seen. It was produced by McCullough, then Murray. In 2013 it was seen associated with a Lewis and Clark Trail medal, alleged to be discontinued from use with that medal.

At the end of 2008, he came out with two more knots. One is a private issue of the Venturing Leadership Award in a slightly smaller size and using the traditional BSA knot. The second is a similar sized Seabadge knot using the BSA model. In 2010 he came out with a different Seabadge knot in blue and one in green to wear on the Venturing shirt.

About that time he also came out with a Pack Trainer knot made by Craig Murray.

In 2009 John introduced the Iraqi Scouting Service knot, for those who served in an Iraqi “council” or those who support it financially. As indicated, it is somewhat smaller than the standard. In 2011 he remade the Iraqi knot, initially with an error light green border, then with darker green. He also produced a private issue Speaker’s knot. In 2012 he produced a International Scouter’s Award in the normal colors. John is an Army officer who was active in the “Green Zone Council.”



**Iraqi Scouting Serv**



**Seabadge blue**



**Seabadge green**



**Iraqi Scouting Serv Remake**



**Iraqi Remake Error**



**Speaker**



**NESA Eagle**



**WD Boyce tan border**

In 2013 John came out with several other knots.



**Distinguished Commissioner**   **Doctor Comr Science**   **Excellence Unit Service**  
**WD Boyce green border**   **WD Boyce black border**   **WD Boyce white border**



**Afghanistan Scout Service**



**Professional Training**



**Adult SSOST**



**Adult SSOST**

In 2012, John had the Afghanistan Scout Service knot on the left made. He is also selling a Professional Training Award with the standard BSA knot design (rather than the Type II the BSA uses. In addition, John has Seabadge 3-trident (course director) and 2-trident (staff) knots with white, black, gray, and tan/green backgrounds for those who serve on Seabadge staff. This knots are illustrated under Craig Murray’s knots because I found them on Craig’s patch blanket first, but they were designed and ordered by John.

Paul Kealoha Basso has provided me information on four Sea Scout “trained” knots that appeared in the fall of 2003. These adult trained knots are awarded after successful completion of the Venturing Leader Fast Start, Venturing Leader Specific Training and Sea Scout Leader Specialized Training courses. The youth trained knots are awarded after successful completion of the Venturing Leadership Skills Course and one Quarterdeck Training. A blue khaki trained knot surfaced in 2004. “The knots were designed on the old recruit petty officer insignia from my Navy boot camp days, which was the figure eight knot. According to tradition, the petty officers of the old sailing days that trained the seamen on the fine art of handling the sails wore the figure eight knot on their uniforms to show they were the "Chiefs of the Top" (masters of the sail, in other words).” These were made because Sea Scouts and Scouters are not supposed to wear the standard “Trained” strip.



**Merit Badge Knot**



**Adult SSOST (SSALBT)**

**Youth VLSC and Quarterdeck**

In the summer of 2008 Troy Pugh and his brothers set up [www.meritbadgeknot.com](http://www.meritbadgeknot.com) as a site to identify and honor all Eagle Scouts who earned all of the merit badges available at the time they were Scouts. This varies from 101 in 1958, to 111 for the first to do it in 1951, to 131 in 1993. The most common number is 121 in the 2000s. At this writing, 270 Scouts have registered as completing all the available merit badges. The design is centered around two ideas. The first is the red, white, and blue background. These colors represent the colors of the Eagle Scout rank which is a foundation achievement to those scouts who continued on to earn all of the merit badges. The second is that the two strands represent the merit badges. The silver strand represents and is the same color as the outline of the set of required merit badges. The olive strand represents and is the same color as the outline of the set of elective merit badges.

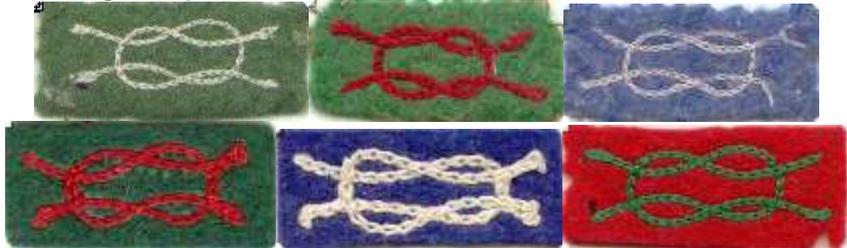


**New Orleans Area Council  
Civic Service**

Tommy Harold has, I believe, cracked the case of the mystery felt square knots. He said, "The New Orleans Area Council extensively used a series of three felt square knots as recognition of civic service hours. They were in used from at least 1954, and probably even earlier, until about 1960. This was during the administration (1947-1969) of Scout Executive Harry Wesley Maxfield, who was always very big on BSA civic service and public recognition. As a scout, the owner received all three square knots (white on green, red on green and white on blue) on his way to becoming an Eagle scout in 1957.

Additionally, the Girl Scouts also used a similar blue felt square knot, but with a gold Mylar rectangular border. The Girl Scouts most likely acquired their felt square knots from participating in a Boy Scout civic service project." (white on green at left)

In 2003, eBay had a pillow with the green knot below sewed on it. It had many patches dated 1957-60, and an Alamo Area (TX) CSP. Another set was found in Chalmette, LA (SE LA Council?). A third red felt on a merit badge sash from Metarie, LA with early 50s and a couple tan MBs. If anyone has additional information on these knots, I would appreciate if they would contact me. The top three were sold on eBay in the fall of 2002. The felt knots came from an old Scout uniform. The two felt knots in good condition are probably the second and third knots in mint state.



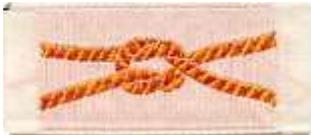
**Lincoln Trail?**

The yellow and blue knot may be Lincoln Trail by the same manufacturer as the Mataguay knot at the beginning of this paper. It may be the Medal of Merit prototype in Section 4. An additional Lincoln Trail knot is just below it, apparently the same cloth backing and blue rope, white rope, and red border.



The yellow ribbon knot came out of the Indiana area, believed to be 60s era, purpose unknown. Note it is not really a square knot. On the left side it looks like a granny knot, on the right the ropes cross and it appears as if the lower rope does not catch the loop, making it a nothing-knot! If you have information on this knot, please contact me.

**Lincoln Trail**



**Unknown**

**Wood Badge** and the **Order of the Arrow** have not had authorized knots (with the exception of the OA Distinguished Service Award). However, there is always a demand for them.

**Ric Hall**, PO Box 771, Sumner, WA 98930-0130, sells **Wood Badge** knots on eBay. **Chris Jensen**, Streamwood, PO Box 1841, Easley, SC 29641-1841 also sells them on eBay and on his web site. Notice the basic similarity between the products.

Hall »



Jensen »



Jensen »



An older set of knots also can sometimes be found. Rick Belford, now of the Catalina Council, provided a copy of an order form from 1983. The single bead was for completion of basic Scouter training. The ax in the log was for completing the practical phase, and the two beads for ticket completion. Only one was worn, above the left pocket of the red jac-shirt. These were offered in the Old Colony Council in Massachusetts, and were council-approved in several New England councils. I understand they are no longer offered because the original issuer has since died. The first versions have gauze backing. The middle version illustrated below has a white plastic (Creslon?) backing, and the latest version, on the right, is computer design with clear plastic backing. Color differences may be due to scanner settings. Walter Stevens, a collector in North Carolina, believes that these were issued from the 60s to the 80s. His set is from the mid-70s. He understands the Axe and Log were worn on course, the one bead while working your ticket, and two beads after they were earned. He estimates the top Axe and Log were from the late 60s, the single beads both from the 70s, and the center two beads from the late 60s.



Mid-70s?



Early 80s



WB Axe (Unknown)



Old Colony Council Wood Badge Knots



Mid-70s Old Colony Council Wood Badge Knot Set

The Wood Badge axe to the left is of unknown origin. It was sold on eBay in early 2006, but Ric Hall, "Good-ol-bear" said he had no information about it. He sold quite a number. If you have seen this one and know its origin, please contact me. However, I have come to believe he is the originator since I have not seen them sold elsewhere.



WB Beads, NE US

The Wood Badge beads left are also unknown, but have been around for a while. "George, Sorry I have no information regarding the maker. I have seen two versions of the knot in the last 25 years or so. I know it is not official. I have had one on my wool jacket for years. [I got this knot from my father who lived in NJ. I have a similar one and I took my Wood Badge in Connecticut. I bought mine from one of the course directors and i don't know where he got them.](#) Thanks. Roy Walton."

A new variety identified in 2013 is in support of the Troop 160 Memorial Scout Camp in Lewiston, Maine. The original sale supports scholarships to and free use of the camp. He, like I, have seen similar ones in Northeast Region for a number of years. These knots are slightly oversize, the two below being the correct size, the 3-bead knot being shrunk to fit.



Additional Wood Badge knots were produced by Rafi Sharif, and are shown in his section.

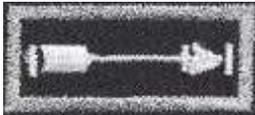


Eagle Overhand

The OA knots below are from Ric Hall. These somewhat emulate the designs on the OA sash. His first set was the white. Ric expanded his offerings in 2003 to include red and black backgrounds (only Vigil illustrated). He also sells the Vigil knot in a black triangle with white arrows on a brown overhand knot. Earlier, he started selling the Eagle knot on the overhand background. Note the size differences.



Black Ordeal



Black Brotherhood



Ordeal,

Brotherhood,

Vigil



Red Vigil

Black Vigil

Vigil Triangle

Two OA knots surfaced on eBay from southern Florida with no other information than they were OA and "ghost" knots, i.e. the embroidery is the same color as the background. If you have any information on these, I would appreciate hearing from you.





OAA Member #1



OAA Member #2



OAA Member #3



OAA Member #4



Fake Hornaday



Real Hornaday

The **Overseas Arrowman Association** (OAA), PO Box 202, Foster, RI 02825, ([www.arrowman-oaa.com](http://www.arrowman-oaa.com)) has produced **four** different membership knots and several award knots. The OAA is composed of those members of the Order of the Arrow who have served in one of the overseas lodges, primarily those of Transatlantic Council, Far East Council, Canal Zone Council, and Direct Service Council. Naturally, many/most of these people were military at their time of service, and have scattered throughout the US on their return. Note that it is difficult to tell the difference between the third member's knot and the first Silver Elephant, being tan and yellow. The fourth member knot, Silver Elephant and Turtle knots started in distribution in 2003. I became aware of the Combat Service knot in 2008. The OAA awards a patch with the symbols of the five military services inside a Pentagon to those who have qualified by service in a combat zone. The knot has an outline of the Pentagon on a blue and white knot.



OAA Turtle



Silver Elephant #1



Silver Elephant #2



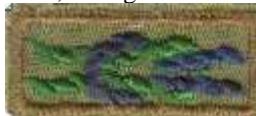
OAA Combat Service

At left are illustrated three **Hornaday** knots. The top knot is, I believe, a fake. The second is sold on eBay as a fake by Richard Albrent, 19755 E. Telegraph Rd, Santa Paula, CA 93060. The bottom knot is a genuine Hornaday knot. Allowing for different scanning settings, it may be difficult to tell the difference, but there seems to be more white and fewer green ropes in the top fake than the real one. Albrent's is on dark tan fine twill.

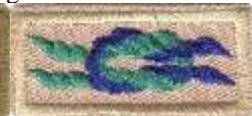
The three **Hornaday**'s below are being sold as a National preview set. I have my doubts. In my opinion, they do not have the same backing as the standard National suppliers. None are on plain cloth. There are other subtle differences from the real one next to them.



The **Greater Niagara Frontier Council** used to provide a square knot in green and blue on khaki for their **trail medal**. The image below is from Shay Lelegren. The original is quite like a standard official square knot. Chris sells reproductions of the GNFC Trail medal on eBay, and Len Michaud's copy is illustrated below. Another reproduction, of the National Eagle Scout Association Distinguished Service Award (NESA DSA) that I opened this paper with, is also sold. Both were by the same manufacturer, with gauze backing.



GNFC Original



GNFC Copy



NESA DSA Copy

Len Michaud lists some local awards I have identified as produced by Rafi Sharif, above. As an example of how private issue knots may change purpose, the blue/blue on tan Type 3 knot that Sharif lists for Quartermaster is shown as a Cub Scout Wood Badge knot by Michaud.



**OA Vigil**

Finally, I have an **Order of the Arrow Vigil** knot, fully embroidered on tan fabric. It incorporates the Vigil triangle and an overhand knot. This is on Chris Jensen's Streamwood site.

Every organization has its humorists, and **Spoof knots** are a natural outcome. I believe all of these knots are available through Chris Jensen of Streamwood, Inc., PO Box 1841, Easley, SC 29641. Check [www.streamwood.net](http://www.streamwood.net).

The James E. West knot is the only knot you can buy (\$1000 plus the cost of the knot). Naturally, it spawned some competition. The three **finance** knots below are different, but I have no idea of the meaning, if any, of the difference.



**Three Finance Knots (Big Bucks)**

Clearly in the category of spoof knots are the two **Philmont bulls** with brown piles behind them. I assume that those are for people who have attended the Philmont Training Conferences (PTC), but I don't know that. Perhaps the black and white bulls require a little explanation. Years ago, into the 1980s, Philmont sold black bulls for men and boys, and white bulls for women. Men and boys went trekking in the back country. Men and women attended PTC. Women and girls started trekking in the back country in 1977, and I personally heard the comments from the girls in my crews that they weren't going to wear that white bull! Eventually, "due to popular demand," the white bull was phased out, but vestiges live on.



**Black/White Bulls**

The **Order of the Fork** seems appropriate for many of our Scouters. This award could be presented at many camporees or other Scouting functions. In 2008 I found similar green and tan knots at Sharon Hanna, vizsla2000, on eBay. Close examination will show that the second set uses the same pattern, actually sewn from the other side! This gives the color reversal. Note that none of the three knots are actually a square knot, if you trace the ropes carefully.



**Order of the Fork**



**Hanna Order of the Fork**



Much less clearly a spoof knot but obviously not official are two Philmont "knots" which incorporate the classic **Philmont bull** sewed on the shoulder of the red jac-shirt and the classic Philmont **arrowhead** awarded only to those who complete a trek. Ric Hall sells these also.



**Arrowhead/Bull**



**Philmont Bull**

Ric Hall, in 2007, also sells a Philmont knot, made to go on the red jacket. I don't understand the purpose of this, since one may wear the black (or for ladies of a certain age, white) bull on the shoulder and accomplish the same purpose.



**Good/Bright Idea**



**SCUBA Diver**



**William D. Boyce Fellow**



**Silver Squirrel Award**



**Chehaw Council History**

The **Good Idea** knot's author has been lost in the mist (at least for now). Alex Hall found these, and has since found they came with two varieties on the same fabric. The second, with two light bulbs, is called the **Bright Idea** knot. These were recently sold in eBay.

The **SCUBA Diver** knot was made during 2004 in limited quantity by Bill Fairhurst, WFairhurst@nc.rr.com. Of course, it represents qualification as a SCUBA diver. At this writing, it has not been authorized for wear by any council, but there are people trying. In 2008 I found a copy on sale from Sharon Hanna, vizsla2000, on eBay. She states that this comes from Ship 2 in Williamstown, KY originally, made for their Florida Keys high adventure trip.

The **William D. Boyce Fellow** is promoted by Richard Stone of Bardstown, KY. The requirement is for youth 14 and over or adults to read a book on Mr. Boyce. Students can use that to make a school report, etc. He requests that the badge not be traded. The knot is based on the Friendship knot of the UK Scout Association (which see). It has no relation-ship to the William D. Boyce New-Unit Organizer Award, an official BSA award knot.

Troop 923 of Chicago, IL is presenting the **Silver Squirrel Award** to its members and making the award available to others to present. It is for those Scouters who have devoted all their efforts to the local unit level. More details can be obtained from <http://troop923chicago.scoutlander.com>. The knot is a double carrick bend in yellow and green on white, with a yellow and green border.

In 2010 as part of the Centennial celebration, the Chehaw Council of Georgia had a **Boy Scout and Council History** merit badge that was taught at summer camp and locally. Boys earned the merit badge, and adults earned a square knot. Michael Greene, who taught the merit badge, provided a copy of both the knot and merit badge for display.





**Iriquois Nation Knot**

Tim Cutler of Onondaga Council, NJ made a knot to recognize youth who earned the Indian Lore merit badge and interviewed someone from an Indian tribe. His goal was to change the merit badge requirements to reflect that as a requirement. It is recognition of accomplishing that additional requirement. The knot shows the Hiawatha belt of the Iroquois tribe.



**Philip Mason Honor Scout**

Troop 433 of Winslow, Maine started two troop awards that are now recognized by similar square knots. First is the Philip Mason Honor Scout Award. This is awarded to a Scout for outstanding service to the troop. It is given to a Scout who exemplifies the characteristics of Philip Mason, a Scoutmaster in the 1980s, who had no sons, but who did everything that was needed to make sure that the Scouts and Winslow had a good, healthy troop. He lived up to the Scout Oath and Law. The black and orange are the Winslow school colors, and the green and white stands for leadership.



**Raymond Kimball "Papa Bear" Leadership Award**

The second knot is the Raymond Kimball "Papa Bear" Award of Leadership. Mr. Kimball was a long-time Scouter, serving as the Troop 433 Scoutmaster in the 70s, later serving as a commissioner and being awarded the Silver Beaver. Adult leaders are nominated by the committee chair, Scoutmaster, and advancement chair to receive the award. This is for someone who exemplifies leadership serving the youth of the troop. Both awards started in 2010, but were not named until 2011. The knots themselves were made about 2013, and were provided through Craig Murray.



**OA Arrowhead Award**

In 2015 the Wipala Wiki 432 Lodge of the Order of the Arrow in the Phoenix area had a problem. They were only authorized to nominate 13 members for the OA Centurion Award for the 2015 NOAC. They had 140 additional members they wanted to recognize for their work in building the lodge. They provided a special patch and the Arrowhead Knot to the left to recognize them. The knot was for over the *right* pocket.

I would like to thank Rick Belford, Smokey Bassett, Al Bormuth, Allan Coady, George Cuhaj, Tim Cutler, Barry Ekle, Jim Ellis, Linda Friedrich, Michael Greene, Ron Hall, Rutherford Johnson, Frank LaGrange, Shay Lelegren, Len Michaud, Craig Murray, Chris McCullough, Bruce Noonan, Reinhard Plaut, [Bill Popescue](#), Mark Ports, Mark Ritter, Rick Rowe, Rafi Sharif, Parker Smith, Walter Stevens, Richard Stone, Mike Walton (the Black Eagle), and Ernie Walley for information, help or knots and images to add to the paper. Any errors are mine.

If you are interested in specific varieties of all or a single series of knot over time, a monograph titled *Varieties of Official BSA Square Knots* is available. It covers all official knots from their first issue to the current issues with scans of each major variety. It is also available from the author.

It is the nature of this information to change, sometimes rapidly. I hope this exposition has been of interest. As you can see, there are still some gaps to fill in. If you have information that would help, please contact me at [George@Crowl.org](mailto:George@Crowl.org) or 832-467-1998 or 16213 Congo Ln, Jersey Village, TX 77040-2011.

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