

Girl Scout council offers to give mansion away

By RUTH RENDON
Houston Chronicle

The San Jacinto Girl Scout Council on Wednesday offered to give an 81-year-old concrete mansion on its campgrounds in Seabrook to any group willing to move the historic structure scheduled for demolition.

"There have been many concerns expressed by civic and historic preservation groups about our tearing down the facility," said Ann Schneider, executive director of the council.

She said the executive committee held a meeting Tuesday agreeing "to authorize a grace period to allow these groups to organize an effort to move the building."

The scouts are giving the Texas Historical Commission until Jan. 1 to accept the invitation and until April 15 to remove the concrete, mission-style house from the 43-acre camp site at 4810 Todville Road.

Ann Moeller, president of the Girl Scout Council, said, "We are asking the Texas Historical Commission to coordinate the donation and relocation of the house, as well as any fund-raising efforts."

Schneider said the executive committee also approved a donation of \$44,000 that has been allocated for demolition, to help defray moving expenses.

The council earlier this year decided to tear down the three-story home at Camp Case Mare that overlooks Galveston Bay because of increasing costs to renovate and preserve the home.

Despite Wednesday's announcement, a representative from the Houston architectural firm of Hightower-Alexander paid \$35 Tuesday for a permit to raze the house, said Paul Smith, building official for Seabrook. The permit is good for six months, he said. The home had been slated to be razed about Labor Day.

Between 800 to 1,000 people are expected at the camp Sunday afternoon for a "Farewell to the Big House" open house and ceremony. Afterwards, a rally is planned at Meador Park at 2000 N. Meyer Road in Seabrook to protest the razing of the house.

Judge acquitted in the killing

By JOHN MAKEIG
Houston Chronicle

A parolee accused of killing a Harris County deputy sheriff was acquitted Wednesday on charges of murder by a judge who said Houston police officers botched the case.

A police homicide captain blasted the judge's comments as being "blatantly unfair" and said a "cop-killer" is going free.

Jurors followed state District Judge Norman Lanford's orders and acquitted Marvin "Black" Bell, 22, not guilty of shooting off-duty Deputy Roy Dixon on July 2, 1990.

"Our forefathers must be around in their graves," one juror commented as he left the courtroom, declining to identify himself.

Bell's many relatives and friends burst into applause at the verdict, but he strolled away stone-faced without a word.

Lanford said he expects his decision will infuriate many police officers largely because it has the appearance of letting a policeman's go free for strictly technical reasons.

"It's difficult to see some guilty walk off from it because the police (officers) didn't do it correctly," Lanford said. "People can express opinions about what I did all want, but one wrong word and somebody stands a good chance of being held in contempt of court."

Lanford earlier called detective "lazy." He said their arresting of Bell without a warrant and taking his confession without required magistrate warnings of Bell's rights were typical of the lack of supervision plaguing HPD.

In his seven years on the court bench, Lanford said, he's never seen a capital case that wasn't flawed somehow by errant police procedures.

"This is the consequence they should expect," he said. "If they taken a half-hour to go 50 feet to the municipal courts and find any one of the 50 judges there, it would've cured the illegal arrest. Then the question would have been how much time Bell would have to serve."

After the verdict was announced



Bell