

Boy Scout troop respectfully lay flags to rest

By **RAVEN WUEBKER**

raven.wuebker@thefacts.com

LAKE JACKSON — The colors of red, white and blue burned brightly as the Boy Scouts of Troop #394 retired about 100 flags in the most honorable way possible.

The annual honoring of the flags event, a partnership between the boy Scouts and the Lake Jackson Historical Association,

took place Saturday at the Abner Jackson Plantation, Executive Director Lindsay Scovil said.

“What they do is take the flags that have been damaged beyond repair, too dirty to clean or are just no longer appropriate to be flying,” she said. “They take them apart in a very specific way in preparing it for burning. It’s a great thing to show respect for our flag for the

people who have defended it and be able to retire these flags in an appropriate way.”

As the troop members placed the discarded flags into the fire pit, those in attendance quietly watched. The program allows participants to reflect on the circumstances surrounding the memory of the flags.

“In today’s generation, in today’s time, we’ve lost respect and the fact that

someone is still showing respect for their flag and their country there is hope we can get it back,” Sandra Wood-Wicke of Lake Jackson said.

As she began to cry, she spoke of the flag’s representation and how people have died for it.

“When we disrespect that, we disrespect what our

■ See **FLAGS**, Page 2A



JEREMY HILL/The Facts

Boy Scout Troop #394 respectfully dispose of around 100 damaged United States flags Saturday in Lake Jackson. Shown from left, Mike Riley, Derek Rester, Sam Rester and Sammy Johnson.

Flags

CONTINUED FROM COVER

ancestors did to give us the life we have," she said.

To get the flags ready for burning, the Boy Scouts cut the red and white from the blue stars and they're burned separately, Troopmaster Sammy Johnson said.

"Normally we show up early and cut the flags so the blue field with the stars is separate from the stripes and then we separate the stripes from each other," 12-year-old Boy Scout Matthew Richardson said. "When burning them, we burned the white stripes first, then the red and then the blue field."

Cutting up flags is the respectful way to retire the flag. It's the rules that have been put in place that are followed, 15-year-old Boy Scout Samuel Rester said.

You separate the red and the white but you keep the blue field together because the country is still together, he said.

"This is not something to be taken lightly. Flags are more than just a symbol, they represent with their colors and what they mean," Richardson said. "White is for purity, the blue represents vigilance and justice and the red is for valor."

Throughout the year, the historical museum collects the old flags in a box people can donate to and from there, the flags are handed over to the Boy Scouts, Scovil said.

"It provides a service to the community that is a really important one, otherwise, you have an old dirty flag that needs to be retired," she said. "You obviously don't want to throw it away or discard of it yourself, so it's great we can offer this to the community as a way to respectfully retire these flags."

With this being the third annual flag retirement ceremony, the two full bags of flags remind people what it stands for, Johnson said.

"The significance of it is the fact that it's an American flag and is very prestigious and very well thought of and very well respected," he said. "You don't throw it in the trash can and you don't go bury it in the backyard. When they're tattered and torn and worn out, we dispose of them properly. Burning it is the proper way to do it. That shows young people what the flag stands for and how to dispose of it. It teaches patriotism and respect for their flag."

It's a very respectful gesture because the flag means so much to the country and the veterans that have been to war, 16-year-old Boy Scout Joshua Richardson said.

"It's a very somber event in that you obviously can't help but think what the flag represents in the people who have died protecting it," Scovil said. "At the same time, I think it is a very uplifting event because we're able to show respect to the final moments of the flag."