



Story and Photos by Mike Callaham VSCA Secretary

## Boy Scouts receive Merit Badge Training at the Bon Aire Library!

For more than 25 years, Walter Chester has been providing this great family and community venue. Tonight, Bon Aire Troop 867 paid the club a visit and got some much needed Merit Badge Training. Scout Master, Cameron Roberts wanted his troop to get a full exposure to what competitive chess is all about. Some of the scouts knew how to move the pieces and play but others did not. Mr Chester gave them a brief lesson on how to move the pieces, check, check mate, and recording their games! Within 30 minutes they were sitting down to their 1<sup>st</sup> opponents! The great part about this informal venue is that players that are new can get questions answered during the game! Jesse, featured at the right in blue attends Ecko Lake Elementary School and Manis, a six year old featured on the right in white, quickly disposed of their much older but less experienced opponents. By the end of the evening we had new ratings for the previously unrated players. Going left to right we had Joshua Polk New@ 446, Cameron Roberts New@490, Alex Chester @336, Daniel Polk New@1212, and Ethan McCartt @149. Earning the Chess Merit Badge is very prestigious! Scouts must learn to explain the benefits of playing chess and how those skills will help them in other areas of life. Scouts are required to record their games in preparation to teach and explain to other scouts the nature of the game and the decisions they made. They are also given the option of participating in scholastic chess tournaments as a way of meeting the badge requirements! In the scout badge series handbook for chess it explains that, "Chess helps to develop many different mental abilities that are lifelong; abstract reasoning, analysis, concentration, creativity, critical thinking, evaluation, pattern recognition, problem solving, strategic planning, and synthesis". They also state that you should play advanced players as often as you can to speed up how soon you become one!

The Bon Aire Library Club, known as the Huguenot Knights provides children and adults an opportunity to play unofficially rated games. The rating system is identical to the one used by the USCF and allows players to improve under close to tournament conditions, (keeping a score sheet and using a clock). The club meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of each month at 7pm. The club is free and open to the public. On any given Friday you can find beginners, advanced and experts players ready to play and give advice. Come on out. Visit this club one time and you'll be hooked! Questions? Contact Walter Chester @804-387-7986.