



## SCOUTER SPOTLIGHT – 5th for 2015

### Jeff Garner

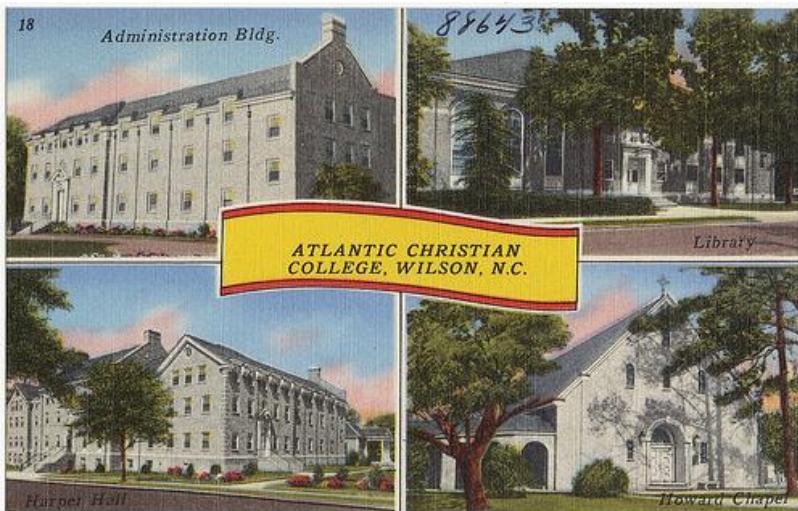
Jeffrey Thomas Garner, 47, was born in Elm City and raised there to age 10 when the family was moved to Georgia for a short period of time and then on to Tampa, Florida. His father worked for Swift Meats and through mergers and changes, the relocations were necessary. His mother did accounting work and raised Jeff and his sister and two brothers. Jeff was second oldest.

Jeff's formative years in Tampa began with Boy Scouts in what ultimately was a weak Boy Scout troop. He recalled that they only went camping once. It did lead him to later discover as an adult leader in Scouting what was missing that he would provide to Scouting many years later — fun, enthusiastic leaders, and how **not to** prepare for a camping trip. It was in church youth group though, where Jeff found his place to be.

The church was called Town and Country Baptist and it had a vibrant and active youth group that allowed him to grow spiritually and physically and provided areas for leadership. The youth group was headed by a man named Jim Ford. Jeff has had no recent contact with Mr. Ford despite trying to find him. He wants to let Mr. Ford know what a profound influence he had on Jeff's life. Mr. Ford exemplified to Jeff and others that type of adult leadership that a scouting unit needs to



thrive. Jeff reflects that the youth group had many qualities associated with today's Venturing program.



While the youth group helped to occupy many of his weeknights and weekends, Jeff also took part in track and cross country in 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades. By his 12<sup>th</sup> grade year, the family made a move back to North Carolina and settled down in Wilson. Jeff graduated in 1986 from Beddingfield High School. From there it was on to Atlantic Christian College (now Barton College) where he was an Art Major.

Along the way he met and dated another Art major, Keturah from Henderson, NC and they were later married. One hobby that developed in college and thereafter was camping and backpacking.

The young couple married in 1992 and continued to enjoy the outdoors. Jeff took on work in the real estate world and became involved with property management as a career

choice. They began their family in 1997 with the birth of Adam and then Erin in 2002.

It was in 2000 when Jeff took a true leap of faith and decided to go out on his own with a landscaping and maintenance business. Through a few rough times and wondering if this was the right move, Jeff credits Divine wisdom for showing him the way and

providing much needed support in the early years of developing the business. Hard work, faith in God and wisdom "paid off" and his business thrived. Total Grounds Care, Inc. has a great foothold in Wilson.

**Total Grounds Care, Inc.**

There was no Cub Scouts for the Garner family, but when Adam turned 11, Jeff's wife thought that Scouts might be the right thing for him and she encouraged Jeff to take him to the local troop meeting. They showed up to Troop 4 and within a week went with the troop on their first troop camping trip to Rodanthe. Jeff (and Adam) LOVED it. The food and fellowship were great. Jeff decided at that point he would go out and buy a uniform as soon as possible and that he was "all in, or not at all".

After one year in the troop, Jeff was asked to step up to Scoutmaster. While he was satisfied with the troop, he took it upon himself to go and buy every Scoutmaster and Troop resource he could find to make sure that he and Troop 4 were doing it right. He began to make changes to the troop based on what he had learned and carried the troop as Scoutmaster for the next five years. He watched scouting “work” on young boys — developing them into young men and leaders. Jeff sees Scouting as a ministry and also comments that it is a good way for youth and adults to go to new places and to do new things.



Jeff serves on the District Advancement committee and stepped up to be Scouting for Food chairman two years ago. He also serves on the Camp Charles committee and has been involved with several repair projects. He is Wood Badge trained and is a Bobwhite and has also served on an NYLT staff at Camp Sam Hatcher.

Most recently, Jeff became the Crew Advisor for Venturing Crew 4 which has grown to eight youth including three who had no prior scouting experience. His daughter Erin is excited to join the crew as soon as she turns 14 and he will be glad to have her and her friends join in the Scouting fun.

Q: Why Scouting?

A: It is a powerful opportunity to have an impact on young people's lives. Youth groups, sports leagues, YMCA, (etc.) offer certain things — but Scouting is a complete package.

Q: Best Memory?

A: The overall experience of a 50-mile troop hike on the Appalachian Trail in the mountains of Virginia in 2010. The troop will make the same trip this June.



**V E N T U R I N G • B S A**