

Doctoral Thesis
College of Commissioner Science
California Inland Empire Council
Boy Scouts of America

Reflections of a Scout Leader

Insights on building a successful unit

October 18, 2019

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all the parents and leaders that give their time and effort to make our world a little better, by contributing to the life and development of a child. Your work helps make stronger citizens, which benefits our communities. What you do, does make a difference.

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Reflections of a Scout Leader

Insights on building a successful unit

This paper is intended to help unit leaders develop successful Scout and Cub units, by sharing my thoughts, successes and mistakes over the years. These reflections are an attempt to help new unit leaders stimulate their passion and commitment to creating stellar programs, that have a point of difference, and are more enticing than video games. Ultimately, this will help grow the Scouting program. First, I think it is important for the reader to understand my perspective. So, I will give an introduction of who I am, and why I feel qualified to share my insights.

Introduction and History/Experience in Scouting.

I began my Scouting career in 1967, as a Cub Scout. My father was the Cubmaster, just as his father (my grandfather) was also a Cubmaster. Neither my father or grandfather made it to Eagle Scout. By the age of 16, I earned my Eagle Scout rank with Troop 849, in Manhattan Beach. We were a High Adventure troop, and spent at least one weekend a month hiking or backpacking. Every year, we would go to Summer Camp, as well as participate in a Long-term Outing (a 50-mile backpacking trip, which usually included

climbing a couple mountains). At 11 years old, I did my first 50-miler, and also climbed Mount Whitney (the tallest mountain in the continental U.S.) for the first time. I have been up there five times now. My Scoutmaster helped create the High Adventure program within the Los Angeles Council. At 16, I left the Scout Troop, and we formed our own High Adventure Explorer Post. Our focus was on Backpacking and Mountain Climbing, but we also had one adventure where we created our own rafts, and floated down the Colorado River for a week. In 1977, we climbed Mount Rainier, in Washington.

At age 18, I left for college, and didn't re-enter the Scouting program until my oldest son joined Cub Scouts in 1994. When it was discovered that I am an Eagle Scout, I was immediately recruited as the new Cubmaster. It snowballed from there. Our Cub Scout Pack was struggling. We had limited leadership. My wife and I took over many of the positions, just to get things going. After a couple years, we had the largest Pack in the area. As my son got older, I started eyeing the Troops in the area, and began training as an Assistant Scoutmaster, so I could be there when my oldest son was ready to bridge. Eventually, I took over as Scoutmaster, and at the same time, was Cubmaster for my youngest son, who joined as a Tiger Cub. I was involved at the Council level as part of the High Adventure training team. At the District level as the Dance Team Coach for the Order of the Arrow Chapter, and later as the Roundtable Commissioner, and ultimately as the District Commissioner for a newly formed District. At one point, I had seven different positions in Scouting. All the while, I was the Western Division Manager for my company, covering 13 Western States, and travelling 4 to 5 days a week. I was lucky to be able to create my own schedule, and I always scheduled in time for Scouting. Two

of my three weeks of vacation were taken up with Scouting events (much to my wife's chagrin).

When my company sold, we moved back to Southern California, where we immediately joined a dysfunctional Scout Troop. I took over as Committee Chair for about a month...then the parents asked me to run the troop as Scoutmaster. I stayed in that position for about 12 years. By the time I left, both of my boys had attained Eagle, and were off to college. During my tenure as Scoutmaster, we grew this small, dysfunctional troop to over 30 boys, with a wait list to get in. We focused on High Adventure, and created a point of difference between us, and the other troops in the area. Eventually, I left the troop and became a Unit Commissioner, and am now the Assistant District Commissioner. At one time or another, I have held almost every position within the Scouting program.

I don't share this information to boast. I would like the reader to understand where my perspective is coming from. Scouting has been a part of my life for over 36 years. I believe in what it does for our youth, and for what it does for its' leaders. I have had opportunities within Scouting that I probably would have never had otherwise. Learning leadership is on the top of my list. At one point, I was invited to a Scout Conference in San Francisco. The keynote speaker was Norman Schwarzkopf. It was just after Desert Storm, and he spoke to the group about what it takes to be a leader. To paraphrase, he said, "leadership is pretty simple. First is that when you are in charge, you need to take control. Second, when in control, do what is right. We all know the difference between right and wrong, so just do what's right".

My hope is that the following will give you simple ideas on how to be a good leader, and help you to develop a program that draws youth and parents to Scouting. Where possible, I will share my successes, as well as my mistakes, by giving you real examples and observations from my years in Scouting. Keep in mind that what worked for me, may be different for you. The hope is that these thoughts will spur at least one good idea that you can use.

What is Leadership?

Leadership is a process of accomplishing things through people. Setting goals, and getting people to follow your lead. A perfect example is the quarterback of a football team. He calls the plays, and guides the team down the field. Sometimes the plays work, and sometimes, they don't. The goal is always to move ahead. If one play doesn't work, the quarterback doesn't give up and go home...he tries a different approach to move the team forward. But, the quarterback doesn't do it alone. He has to have everyone working together towards the same goal. Are all the players natural born leaders or team members? Probably not, but through practice, failure, achievement, and coaching, they can all become winners.

Leadership means commitment. It means responsibility. It means headaches, adventure, disappointments, successes, and most of all, the satisfaction of giving it your best.

Find your Passion/Commitment

“The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law¹.”

What is your mission or passion? Are you into High Adventure activities, or is car camping more your thing? To be successful in anything, you need to be passionate about something. If you hate backpacking, then don't head up a program that is focused on Backpacking. Your lack of enthusiasm will be evident. You must be driven by a passion to leave a positive imprint. Your enthusiasm for the things you love, will be evident.

As you now know, I developed a passion for the outdoors early in my Scouting career as a youth member. I could have easily been turned off. Backpacking and mountain climbing are not easy. But, my leaders taught me to set a goal of climbing the mountain, or making it to the next camping spot on a 6-day 50 mile hike. I'm sure I complained along the way, but once attained, I could look back at the accomplishment. Could that have been possible if my Scout leaders didn't have a passion for what they did? I doubt it. They weren't just "going through the motions". They believed in what they were doing.

As a Scoutmaster and Cubmaster, I had a vision that what we were doing would make a difference in the lives of our members. I passionately believe that Scouting can make a difference in the lives of our members, as well as the people within our community. We build character (both mentally and physically), teach leadership, serve our community and God, and all the time doing this while finding ways to have fun. This is a vision I continue to share within my community. My vision is my mission.

As a Cubmaster, I made a commitment to myself, that I was going to grow our monthly Pack meeting attendance. We had monthly themes, so I decided to dress up for each of the monthly themes. Sometimes it was a crazy costume, or sometimes it was simpler.

The point was to create a reason for the members to show up. They wanted to see what

“crazy” Mr. Newcomb was going to do this time. This simple idea grew our meetings, and eventually our membership. When it came time for our bridging and Arrow of Light ceremonies, I had built a “campfire” (sticks with orange and red cellophane flames, a light and fan). When I plugged it in, the “campfire” looked pretty good. My wife and I created a full Native American costume with headdress. Our Arrow of Light ceremonies were second to none. My passion and commitment to building the program paid off, and we soon had the largest Pack in the district. As it says in the lyrics to A Spoon Full of Sugar, “In every job that must be done, there is an element of fun. You find the fun and snap! The job’s a game”.²

Scouting is a game with a purpose. Keep a friendly attitude and an intention to help and serve. Find meaning – that there is something greater than yourself...we have a duty to God, to Country, and community.

Values and Beliefs

What are your values and beliefs and do they match with Scouting?

Take a look at the Scout Law and Scout Oath. The beliefs are clearly stating, “A Scout is Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, Kind, Obedient, Cheerful, Thrifty, Brave, Clean and Reverent” and “On my honor, I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country, to obey the Scout law, to help other people at all times, and to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight”.

As a Scoutmaster and Webelos Den Leader, I have reviewed these values with Scouts too many times to count. I learned the words when I was a Webelos myself. I don’t know if I clearly understood the meaning of each, but over time, they became words to

live by. I take oaths seriously. I pledged my honor to do my best to uphold these ideals. These values are now my beliefs, and I do my best to live up to them. Is it easy? No. At one point, the Scouts in my Northern California Troop nicknamed me “Mister Perfect”, because I was always questioning them on how what they were doing fit into the Scout Oath or Law. I disliked the nickname, and it was hard to explain to them that no one is perfect, and I certainly was/am not. However, I always try to live up to those ideals, and they should strive for the same. The only way to do that is to lead by example. The youth members look up to us as adult leaders. We can never expect them to follow (and eventually lead) if we don’t set the right example.

Are all twelve points of the Scout Law equal? I don’t think so. I think there is a reason that the twelve points are bookended by Trustworthy and Reverent. If we aren’t trustworthy, then how can it be assumed we will follow other eleven points? Reverence relies on the belief that there is something larger than ourselves. There is a higher source from which the other eleven points come from. Be trustworthy and reverent, and the other ten points will fall in line. Once again, as Norman Schwarzkopf said, “when in control, do what is right”. The twelve points of the Scout Law emphasize what is “right”, as do “duty to God and Country, duty to Others, and duty to Self” ...the three points outlined in the Scout Oath.

As one of Scouting’s founders stated, “The plan aims to give young people something to do, something to think about, and something to enjoy in the woods with a view always to character building, for manhood not scholarship is the first aim of education. And, we would make the outdoor the real life, the indoor the incident, reversing the present way”³

Development of Vision

In any position of leadership, one must have a vision of where they are going. As Norman Schwarzkopf said, “When in charge, take control”. Well, how do you do that if you don’t know where you are going. The Boy Scout vision is clearly stated, “The Boy Scouts of America will prepare every eligible youth in America to become a responsible, participating citizen and leader who is guided by the Scout Oath and Law.”⁴ So, we know our endgame, but how do we get there? For some, this is the most difficult part of being a Scout leader.

Does your vision match with the purpose of Scouting? As defined by our National Charter, “The purpose of the corporation shall be to promote, through organization, and cooperation with other agencies, the ability of boys to do things for themselves and others, to train them in Scoutcraft, and to teach them patriotism, courage, self-reliance, and kindred virtues, using the methods which were in common use by Boy Scouts on June 15, 1916.”⁵

The way I approached this was to look at the endgame first. What do you want to accomplish during your tenure as a leader? What is your timeframe?

When I got back into Scouting as an adult, I wanted to create a program for my sons. I envisioned them both making it to Eagle Scout or at least staying in through their teens (this started when my oldest joined Cub Scouts). Many of my friends never made it to Eagle Scout, and certainly only about 3% do make it, but those who went through Scouting remember the events and activities more than the advancement. My vision was to create a memorable program. That program included activities, outings, adventures,

and opportunities for advancement. Notice I said “opportunities for advancement”, and not “advancement”. That has always been my approach. Scouting is not about advancement. It is about responsibility, participation, and leadership (re-read the vision statement of the BSA, above).

As leaders, we need to clearly see where we will be, within a certain amount of time. Then, we need to develop a plan to get there, while making sure it conforms with our passion, values and goals. But, you cannot do this on your own. (see “What de we learn from Geese” – Appendix A). You will burn out. Trust me, at one point I had five different positions in my Cub Scout Pack. This is a common problem when you are building your program. Parents won’t step up and volunteer until they understand your vision, and are sold on its’ success. My experience has been that people are afraid to step up and devote their limited time to something they either don’t understand, or believe in. You must sell your vision.

As adult leaders come on board, develop your unit committee. Fill it with those who have similar vision. You don’t want “yes people”, but rather people who are committed to creating what you envision. No unit will ever succeed unless it is focused, dedicated and disciplined.

When I took over as Scoutmaster at a long-established Troop, there was all types of turmoil. I came in as Committee Chair, but it was obvious there were leadership issues. I went on my first outing with the troop, which was a waterskiing trip to Lake Havasu. I got to the campground a little later than the others, and when I arrived, the parents had chosen the best spot on the beach to set up camp. The Boys were up in the hills (and not by their choice). The parents had a full bar set up outside their tents, and were making

mixed drinks (yes, this was a Scout outing). I was shocked at what I was seeing, and told them so. If I were to continue as Scoutmaster, this had to stop. I received all types of pushback from the parents. Apparently, this had been the way they did things for years.

At the next Committee Meeting, I laid it all out. I explained that they could lose their Charter, and even worse, if someone was injured, and the parents had been drinking, the liability was extreme. If they still wanted me as Scoutmaster, things had to change. I explained my vision for the Troop going forward. Within a month, I lost about 30% of the Troop. They went off to another or quit. Not the best start to my tenure, but as we turned the program around, we began building. I surrounded myself with like-minded adults. Within two years, we had a wait list to join our troop.

You need the support of the family. If you want to change the visible, you must first change the invisible (attitudes, beliefs, etc.).

Training

If you are committed to achieve your vision, then you must be committed to learn all the skills you can. “There is but one way to learn to do a thing and that is to do it.”⁶

The first course that any potential leader (or for that matter, any parent) needs to take is Youth Protection Training (YPT). We must keep Scouting a safe haven for our youth, and to do that, we need to assure we protect our youth. You can take online courses that will give a general understanding of the program, but I feel to truly learn, you need to go to classroom courses, where you can interact with other leaders. You can’t ask questions with online learning. You can’t share ideas online.

For the new Den Leader or Cubmaster, Scouting seems a bit overwhelming at first, but the program is laid out for you with program helps. All you need to do is follow the plan. When you get into the Troop level, things are a bit more “loose”. One of the great things about the Scouting program is the opportunity to learn. Don’t know anything about camping? Go to the Introductory to Outdoor Leadership Course (IOLS). Want to learn more about Backpacking or Cycling? Take a High Adventure Course that many Councils offer. Every District that I have been involved with runs monthly Roundtable Meetings. These are run by volunteer Scouters, where you learn about events within your district and council. There are usually breakout sessions for Scouts and Cubs where leaders share ideas. There is always something that can be brought back to the unit. When I was a Roundtable Commissioner, I used to conduct roundtable discussions well ahead of potential activities. For example, every unit should be going to summer camp. Most camps start taking reservations in September for the next summer. September is time to talk summer camp. Many units were just at camp a few months prior, and can share their experiences. Your unit might find a new camp to go to.

When I was first a Webelos Den Leader (and also Cubmaster), I attended University of Scouting. I picked up so many ideas for the boys in my den, as well as leadership ideas. I still have many of the resource books purchased at those annual events. University of Scouting is where I first learned how to do Dutch Oven cooking. I enjoy cooking, and became pretty proficient with the Dutch Oven. After winning some Dutch Oven cook-offs, I became an instructor at University of Scouting events, teaching Dutch Oven Cooking. Later, I also got involved with the High Adventure Team, teaching

Backpacking food planning, preparation, and nutrition. One thing does lead to another if you find a passion. Learning and teaching can help you find your passion.

If you really want to take your learning to the next level, Woodbadge is the training you need to attend. Before my oldest son bridged from Cubs to Scouts, I wanted to learn as much as I could, before taking over as Scoutmaster (and still in Cub Scouts). I took the Woodbadge Course. “Wow”, is all I can say. You are part of a “Troop” and set up within a Patrol (I am a member of the Owl Patrol). You will learn cooking, crafts, games, songs, and most importantly...leadership skills. Even if you were to never do another thing is Scouting, the things you learn in Woodbadge are useful in life, and your career. I highly recommend it.

One of my future goals is to attend Philmont. This is Scouting’s premiere training facility in New Mexico.

While this conversation has been focused on getting leaders trained, the most important training is that of our youth members. At the Cub Scout level, there are opportunities for youth members to step into leadership as Denners. At this level, the kids are just getting their first tastes of responsibility. We must be there to guide them, as they learn.

Learning responsibility and leadership at this younger age will strengthen their experience once they get to the Troop level, where they run the program.

“First, if you want to become a leader, you must know your job. You must know it to teach those under you, and to be able to work with those that teach you. A patrol leader who is not up on his Scouting knowledge is not apt to lead his patrol very far. Second,

when you know your job, you must approach each job enthusiastically, gather your facts and make a decision.”⁷

At the Troop level, leadership training begins with the Patrol method, and is conducted by older, experienced Scouts, and Adult leaders (who are hopefully trained in their positions).

In my Troops, we held leadership elections every six months. The boys would give their campaign speeches, and would be elected to their positions by secret ballot. Within a month of the elections, we would already have a weekend scheduled to do our Junior Leader Training program. Most times, this was a full day of leadership training, put on by myself and the other adult leaders, and usually the Senior Patrol Leader (since he was typically and older, more experienced boy). Occasionally we would also hold a weekend campout that was devoted to Junior Leader Training. The training would consist of a series of games. Each one was designed to cover a certain leadership skill (planning, communication, characteristics of the group, teaching, sharing leadership, etc.). After each game, the boys were to discuss what they learned, and how it could be used in the Troop. At the end of the day, we built a trust with each other. On longer weekend trainings, we would add cooking and camping skills. This was usually done if we had a younger leadership group. Our boys “bought into” our vision of the troop, and took it on as their own. We had a truly boy-run troop, but it was guided by the adults. (See Appendix B and Appendix C).

Trained youth leaders will be able to run their own program. As a leader you have the opportunity to help them with their meetings during the monthly Patrol Leader Council (PLC) meeting. In my units, the PLC was always held the first week of the month, and

the goal was to finalize the current months meeting plans, and to set up the next month plans. The leadership patrol ran the meeting, but my assistant leaders and I would be there to guide. One of the biggest things we worked on was getting the boys to take good notes. We also handed out a reminder with our “To Note, or not to Note” sheet. (see Appendix D). They used the PLC Agenda to work out their meeting plans (see Appendix E and Appendix F).

All three Councils I have been a member of, have had some sort of Youth Training program. They’ve had different names: Cedar Badge, Intro to Leadership Skills, Foxfire. The highest level of training for our Youth is National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT). All my units had money set aside to send two boys to training every year. It is often said that every boy deserves a trained leader, but I think is just as important that every adult leader have trained youth.

Live a learning-based life! Learning gives you wisdom. Don’t put it off. Get trained as soon as you can, and continue to seek out more. Encourage your parents and youth to do the same. Make training one of the keys to your vision.

Recruitment

It is an unfortunate reality that service organizations are showing declines. Rotary, Kiwanis, Elks, Soroptimists and Scouting have seen decreasing membership. Maybe that’s because people don’t feel an obligation to contribute to their community, or they don’t feel they have the time. Maybe they don’t think they can make a difference, so don’t want to commit the time. It could be that they just aren’t aware of what service

organizations like Scouts offer, or that they are even active in their communities.

Nowadays, we need to be recruiting year-round.

Under the “Developing Vision” segment of this paper, I mentioned surrounding myself with like minded adult leaders. We must recruit adult leaders. Maybe more so than youth members. My experience has been that if I recruited adults that had a passion for the same outdoor activities as I did, the program benefited, and if the program was strong. My Packs and Troops had a high ratio of adults to youth, and most of the adult enjoyed each others company. Many of us socialized outside of Scouting. We enjoyed going on outings together. And, all these years later, we still stay in touch. These parents (some were grandparents, or guardians) made the time to help with the unit, because it was important to them. Recruit good adults, and the youth will follow.

I believe in the program, so I am constantly “selling” our program within the community. I’ve been lucky to live in smaller communities, where an individual can make a difference. As the Cubmaster or Scoutmaster, I was very visible within our community. Anytime we did an outing, we would get a small article in the local newspaper, showing what we did. It was also important to make sure we had a contact name and number, as well as when and where we meet. Community exposure is important, but community involvement is even more critical.

My Cub Scout Pack and Boy Scout Troops have always been involved in Scouting for Food. In Northern California, we would go door-to-door collecting canned food for the local food bank. When we moved to the mountains of Southern California, our local area didn’t participate in Scouting for Food. Living in a mountain community, where most of the homes are vacation properties, going door-to-door would have been an effort in

futility. I wanted to create a community service campaign, so I contacted the local food bank, as well as the largest grocery store in the area. We spent two days standing in front of the store, and collected over 2,000 pounds of food. The following year, two other Troops joined us in the effort. The Troops and Pack in our mountain communities have now kept this service project alive for over 19 years. The local newspapers now write articles about what the Scouts do, and include photos every year. The community knows that Scouting is active in our area.

We have parades during Fourth of July and Christmas, as well as Veterans Day events. Our local Cub and Scout units show up. We hand out candy with little stickers on them that have the www.BeAScout.org address as well as a name and number for a local contact. We mainly target younger kids that are Cub Scout age.

Eagle projects are always reported in the local newspapers, and we are at every Back to School Night. It is all about building relationships within your community

When a new family does show up to find out about Scouting, the key is to always be welcoming. We only have one chance for a good first impression, so need to welcome new potential members and visitors. Be friendly, and show interest. The parents are typically skeptical, and afraid they are going to be asked to do something. First, get their child motivated by introducing them to the Senior Patrol Leader or Den Leader right away. Then, ask leading questions of the parents that will get them interested. Find out the parents' avocations. Assure them that if they want to get involved, that you'll find them a position, and help get them trained. (if you don't know your District Training Committee – get to know them, as they are a huge resource in the development of your unit).

I promote Scouting by wearing my uniform. No, not every day, but I do wear it on my way to outings and events. Most times, I need to stop somewhere to get a bite to eat, on my way to an event. I can't tell you how many times I have had complete strangers come up to me and talk about Scouting. Most have had Scouting experiences in the past, and speak very positively about the program.

Wear your full uniform at meetings. We cannot expect our youth to dress properly if we are not also dressed properly. Lead by example. Dress as an example.

It is also important for our youth members to wear their uniform on the way to and from outings. Not only does it get Scouting some exposure, but I also find the kids are more behaved when they are in uniform. They know their behavior reflects on their unit. Lead by example. Wear the uniform, and wear it properly.

Create Traditions

I think traditions are important. It helps to create consistency in the program, and helps create memories, and isn't that what scouting is all about. In both my Packs and Troops, we had traditions that were carried on throughout our program. They included meeting traditions and outing traditions. Many were traditions that I had in my Cub Pack and Scout Troop, as a youth member. These were things that I remembered, and brought to my units as an adult.

Opening and closing ceremonies for regular meetings are more important than you might think. By having both an opening and closing ceremony, the unit knows when scouting begins, and ends. Openings are probably pretty standard in most units. We start with the flag ceremony, then do the Oath and Law. If it is a Court of Honor, we officially

open the court with the lighting of a candle, declaring the court open. Then an assigned scout uses that candle to light the twelve points of the scout law candles, as well as three red, white and blue candles representing the three points of the scout law. My closing ceremony was the same in both Cubs and Scouts.

My father was a cubmaster for my Cub Scout Pack, and he used to close every meeting by standing in front of the Pack with his right hand up in the Scout sign, then slowly lowering it while saying, "And now, may the Great Scoutmaster, of all Scouts, be with us until we meet again". I closed each Pack meeting the same way. The boys knew the meeting was over, and would all help put away the chairs. I did a similar thing in my Scout Troops, but slightly modified. The entire troop would gather in a "closing circle". As the Scoutmaster, I would give a Scoutmasters "moment" talk. Originally, I called this my Scoutmaster's minute, but the boys began timing me as a joke, and the name got changed, as I invariably went over or under the one-minute mark. There are so many good Scoutmaster's minutes on the internet. You don't even have to spend much time. Just find the right one for the meeting theme. After my Scoutmaster's moment, our Chaplains Aid would conduct a prayer, then we would all put our left hand on the shoulder of the person next to us, and our right hand up in the Scout sign, slowly lowering our right hand as we all repeated, "And now, may the Great Scoutmaster of all Scouts, be with us until we meet again".

Flag ceremonies. As our troop grew, we were asked more and more to retire American Flags. Many of these retirements were done at public events. We wanted to make sure we were not only doing it correctly, but doing it consistently the same way each time.

We stressed the importance of protocol and decorum. One of my Assistant Scoutmasters,

who was much older than me, had been in the military, and participated in the Battle of the Bulge. Through him, and other retired veterans, we created and performed a proper flag retirement ceremony (see attached copy of that program in the Appendix G). This became, and continues to be the standard we use for flag retirements to this day. And, while I don't run a unit anymore, people still drop off flags at my office, knowing that they will make it to a troop to be retired.

Breaking bread. One of my favorite traditions started with my Scout Troop as a youth member. We were a high adventure troop and were up in the Sierra Nevada mountains almost every month. On the way up, we would always go by Schat's Bakery, and pick up a large loaf of Shepherder's Bread. One member of the troop would volunteer to carry the fresh loaf of bread in their backpack, and on the first night of our campout, we would all tear off a piece of bread and share the loaf around the campfire. Even when we weren't driving by Schat's, we would make sure there was a fresh loaf of bread (Shepherder's if we could find it), for our first night together. This tradition was carried on in Scout Troops when I was a Scoutmaster, and is something that my past Scouts still remember. Scouting is about creating memories, and fellowship around the campfire, or on an outing are things to be remembered.

Red & Green / Blue & Gold Potlucks. I think it is traditional for most Cub Scout Packs to hold an annual Blue & Gold Meeting in February (the birth month of Scouting). My pack always did a potluck, and the room and tables were decorated in Blue and Gold. It was a time to recognize not only the youth achievement, but the adults as well. We always encouraged our leaders to go through training, and earn their leadership knots. I don't think that many Scout Troops carry on this same event in their units, but we did.

The name was changed to the Red and Green Banquet, and for some reason, we got into the habit of always grilling tri-tip for the entire troop, supplemented by potluck side dishes and desserts. Grilling the tri-tip became such an important event, that the Scouts literally were on a waiting list to be the cooks for the evening. This was an annual meeting that they all looked forward to. After the dinner, we would do our normal Court of Honor opening and awards. Usually our troop elections were around the same time, and we would do an installation ceremony, for the new officers. We also did an installation of the new adult leaders. (see Appendix H). I felt it was important for adults to also be recognized for their commitment to the program. We would then all get a good laugh as we put on a slide show of all the previous years' events. While most of the slides were taken by the adults, we did have a troop camera, and on every outing there would be a youth member assigned as the outing photographer. I must say, we had some pretty funny photos, and a lot of great memories. I would end the Red and Green Banquet with the reading of Baden Powell's final farewell to scouts. This was a tradition that everyone knew was going to be read, and was a great reminder to us all of how to live our lives. (See appendix I).

Successes and Mistakes

Don't be afraid to make mistakes...learn from them.

Early on, as an adult leader, I noticed a rise and fall in our activity and attendance during certain times of the year. When I started as a Cub leader, I thought it might be a good idea to "go dark" during the summer months. Wrong. It is too hard to start and stop a program. Even with the ups and downs, run a year-round program. Consistency is

important, and you will put in a lot less effort creating a continuous program for the entire years. Ups and downs of attendance are normal, due to sports, outside activities, and (if you are in an area of year-round school) family vacations being taken at different times. Just accept that this is the way it is going to be, and adjust. The best thing you can do is offer a program that will be there for those that can attend. I will be the first to admit that it is frustrating when you have put a lot of time and effort into a program, and you get limited attendance. You feel like you have failed. If you have created an exciting program, the youth and adults will turn out. If they don't, then it is time to go back to the drawing board. In the Troop level, the youth members created our annual calendar of events (with outside help of the adults). If they were bored with the program, or didn't attend, I would turn back to them, and have them determine what needed to be changed. This helped take all the pressure off of me, and forced them to create the program they wanted. It took a while, but they finally caught on, and our program grew.

I've had small and large units. It is easier to run a large unit. I think the ideal size for a troop is about 15 to 25 and a Pack is about 20 to 30. When a unit gets too small, there is less adult support to help spread the load. Every unit goes through a cycle of growing and shrinking. As mentioned earlier, when I took over my second troop, I lost about 30% of my members, and had to rebuild. It took a couple years of building a strong program and recruiting at the Cub Scout Packs. All I can say is, "don't give up" There is a poem that I keep posted at my desk, and I see it every day. It is called "Don't Quit" (Appendix J) and is written by John Greenleaf Whittier. I would recommend you print it out and post it in a conspicuous spot, where you see it every day.

Working with youth requires a different approach than with adults. Tell youth leaders who they are, not what they want. For example, “you are a leader” not, “you need to take care of this problem”. Mistakes will happen if planning doesn’t take place. Sit back and let the meeting fall apart, but be sure to gather the PLC to discuss how they can improve. Let them figure it out. Most will learn from their failures. Many units use the “roses, thorns and buds” method of reviewing an outing or meeting. We even used with our adults at the pack level, during committee meetings. The “roses” were the things that went right. The “thorns” were the problems. And, the “buds” were things we could improve or grow. Each person in attendance would share their thoughts, without judgement. At the troop level, let the youth members work out the solutions to the issues, but never let a meeting get out of control. I had many meetings where our troop leadership wasn’t prepared, and the meeting dissolved in “chaos”. I would let it go for a while, all the time whispering into the ear of our Senior Patrol Leader that he was in charge. The Senior Patrol Leader knew that if he didn’t get things under control, the Scoutmaster would break out the bag of ropes or American Flags that I kept in my car, and the troop would be working on knots and flag folding...again. While we were always a “boy-run” troop, I had a plan B in the trunk of my car. I think it is okay for the youth leaders to run into issues, but I never want them to fail. I would use the “rose, thorn and bud” method at the following Patrol Leader Council meeting to evaluate, and see how they might do better next time. Most of the time, we saw improvement, but sometimes, the issues continued. All the time, it was a learning process.

Maybe I was lucky, but I must say, I have had mostly great youth members in my units.

Sure, there were a few trouble makers, like the one kid who kept throwing rocks at the

other kids, or the one kid that went to summer camp with us, and kept on picking fights with kids in another troop campsite. Those kids need to be watched, and their behavior monitored during Scoutmaster conferences and Board of Reviews. I only had to ask three kids to leave my program, after multiple attempts at correcting behavior. When they became a danger to others in our program, we could no longer allow them to attend. It is regrettable when this has to be done, and I felt like I had failed these kids. But, in the end it was for the betterment of our program. I still think of these kids, and wonder whatever happened to them. I guess the bottom line is that we can't blame ourselves, and you shouldn't feel like you did something wrong.

After 26 years as an adult leader, having only three trouble makers, I feel pretty lucky. But, when it comes to the entire program...adults are usually the problem, not the youth. That is why it is so important to recruit those that believe in your vision. When I took over my second troop, it was completely dysfunctional. We had just moved to the area, and I took my sons around to each of the Troops, and allowed them to pick the unit they wanted to join. The meeting we attended was on a parent committee night. My sons joined up with the boys, and I attend the committee meeting, which ended with parents yelling at each other, and two of the women leaving the meeting in tears. I couldn't believe this was the troop my sons wanted to join. I eventually took over as Committee Chair, and a month or so later, as Scoutmaster. As we grew, we added new adult leaders, many of whom did not get along. One evening, two adults got in a physical altercation in the parking lot. Needless to say, I had to get our District Commissioner involved. Adults lead to more problems than kids.

One of my biggest mistakes was staying in the Scoutmaster position too long. In my youth days, our Scoutmaster rotated around about every four or five years. My old Scoutmaster even told me that as a Scoutmaster, I should rotate around, but I didn't listen. I remained a Scoutmaster for about eleven years, well past my youngest son aging out of the program. I enjoyed being Scoutmaster, and going on the outings. But what I learned is that the adults got complacent. They always felt I would be around, so never went to any training beyond basic fundamentals. When I started talking about stepping down, not one of my Assistant Scoutmasters was willing to step up (until basically forced to). I agreed to stay on as the new Scoutmaster's assistant, but I was still looked at to run the program. It was dysfunctional. And because the new Scoutmaster felt forced into the position, the enthusiasm wasn't there. The program suffered, and youth members left. I remember the Scoutmaster at the time saying to me, "the boys don't like me, and I don't really care for them". I knew we were in trouble. That Scoutmaster lasted one year, until we found a new leader, but the hit had been taken and other Troops were getting the boys we used to recruit. To this day, that troop continues to struggle, and at one time, we had a waiting list to get in. Staying in a position too long builds too much dependence on one person. Looking back, we should have developed a core group of adult leaders that rotated around the position of Scoutmaster every few years. I think there would have been more consistency in the program, and a better likelihood that our high adventure program (our point of difference) would have survived.

As mentioned earlier, all troops go through cycles. If you don't continuously recruit, you will have gaps in the age groups in your unit. This happens at both the Cub and Scout level. A Pack without any Bears will later have an issue with Webelos transitioning into

Scouts. That one-year gap means there won't be Troops visiting as much, as there is no incentive to recruit, when there isn't anyone to recruit. That gap affects the Troops too, as they will now have a missing age group in the Troop. If this goes on for long periods of time, you may end up with a unit that is top heavy with only older Scouts, and no new scouts coming in. I firmly believe that older scouts need younger scouts. As much as the older scouts complain about all these little kids coming in, the older scouts can learn leadership better, and are required to train the younger scouts, as well as teach them the traditions of the unit. On the reverse, a unit of only young Scouts will not have older Scouts to look up to and learn from. This type of unit will require much more hands-on work by the adults. The way to avoid this is to recruit all the time, even if you know you won't be getting any new youth that particular year. You must remain visible, and in contact. And, most importantly stay positive. Nothing is more noticeable than a negative attitude.

One of my biggest frustrations is the Webelos to Scout transition. It is so common for an entire Webelos den to all go over to one Troop together. Then, within a year, many of those new Scouts drop out. Either they weren't prepared for the transition, or they joined the wrong troop. I saw this early on, and as the District Commissioner, we created a Webelos Weekend, where Webelos attended Troop run activities, while the parents of the Webelos met with numerous different Troop leaders. I created the top 20 questions that every Webelos parent should be asking of Troops (see Appendix K). At the same time, I spoke with each of the troops, and encouraged them to have a conversation with these parents. If their troop wasn't right for the new youth member, they should be

encouraging them to go to a troop with a different focus. Our goal should be to keep youth in Scouting, not to just build numbers in our own unit.

Be prepared to make tough decisions. After all the planning and preparation for meeting and outings, sometimes things don't work out. I can think of numerous outings where decisions had to be made, and some weren't popular. But, I did not make those decisions on my own. I can think of two outings in particular...One was a local trip in the East Bay of California. The weather forecast was for rain that weekend, but we always went on outings, rain or shine. We had never cancelled an outing. The rain was so heavy the first night, and we were encountering a lot of mud. We turned around and hiked out the next day. The second was a backpacking trip in the Trinity Alps. We had a beautiful day on the first day, then in the evening it started raining, and the temperature dropped dramatically. We had flooded tents, and could not keep a campfire going to keep kids warm. We decided to pack up and head home at about midnight. This was before cellphones, so as soon as we got to civilization, we made phone calls from phone booths telling parents what was going on, and to meet us a 2:00am to pick up their kids. Were the parents happy? No, but they understood. Sometimes the best laid plans don't work out, but we had emergency contacts numbers in place, and were able to make the appropriate decisions. As a leader, we need to first be responsible for the safety and well-being of the youth members. There is a lot of responsibility to being the leader.

I think it is vitally important to also have balance in your own life. Don't let the position(s) consume you. Trying to do it all versus staying quiet and letting it happen. Before I knew it, I held as many as seven different positions in Scouting. My weekends, vacation time, and even weeknights were taken up in Scouting. I got into the program

because I love what it stands for. I got into Scouting as an adult because I could spend more time with my sons, but it got to the point where I was spending more and more time away from my family, and my wife let me know. Until we moved, I didn't think much of all the stuff I was doing in Scouting. Once we moved, my wife told me I had to cut back, and spend more time with my family. Balance is key. Keep your perspective, or else someone else might.

Conclusion – How do you Measure Success?

Ultimately, Scouting is about helping people to be successful. Find your passion to create a point of difference in your unit. The path may not be easy, but could be simpler than you think! Anyone can do this. I travelled 5 days a week, covering 13 states, but found the time. Schedule it in as a part of monthly plan. Keep in mind that when you plant a seed, you don't harvest the next day. You must cultivate and nurture. You must learn the processes involved in growing. Don't put it all on yourself to succeed. Others have done this before you. Learn from them. Seek their counsel (Commissioners). The secrets of leadership are pretty simple: 1) do what you believe in; 2) paint a visual picture of the future; 3) go there; and 4) people will follow.

So how do you measure success? Is it the number of youth in your program? Or is it the number advancing in rank? I don't think it is any of these things. I believe success comes with the impact you have on individuals. You may not realize your success until years later. To this day, I have past Scouts come up to me. I don't recognize most of them, as they are now grown up, have beards and children. But, when we start talking, I realize who they are. They usually bring up some event in Scouting that they remember well,

and we have an immediate connection. Through Facebook, many of my past Scouts have reconnected with me. I feel honored that they enjoyed their time in Scouting, and want to reconnect. The same can be true for you.

“The great thing that strikes you on looking back is how quickly you have come-how very brief is the span of life on this earth. The warning that one would give, therefore, is that it is well not to fritter it away on things that don't count in the end; nor on the other hand is it good to take life too seriously as some seem to do. Make it a happy life while you have it. That is where success is possible to every man.”⁸

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are so many that I would like to thank for their support over the years. Many of them, whether they knew it or not, have a place in this entire thesis through their devotion to Scouting, and their participation in the programs that I ran. Without my parents getting me into the program at the age of seven, I don't know that I would have ever found Scouting.

My first Scoutmaster, John Hegner told me at my Eagle Scout Court of Honor, to give back to Scouting what I got out of it. I swore an oath to do that, and if he is still looking down on me, I hope he is happy with what I have done. Without his encouragement, I don't know that I would be where I am today in Scouting.

There are people that have served as great examples of what scouting is all about. How to make a difference in the community, by serving our youth: AJ Clark, Lorenzo Giannotti, Robert Ware. Thank you for your support, guidance, encouragement, and friendship over the years. I only wish that Lorenzo and AJ could see how far things have gone.

And lastly, and probably most importantly, thank you to my wife Jean, who understand that scouting is who I am. She has spent many weekends and nights alone while I took the boys on outings, or doing my commissioner unit meetings. Thank you. Without your support, none of this would be possible.

APPENDICES

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What Can We Learn About Getting Where We Want To Go From Geese?

1. As each bird flaps its wings, it creates uplift for the following bird. By flying in a "V" formation, the whole flock adds 71% greater flying range than if the bird flew alone.

Lesson: People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.

1. Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and added resistance of trying to fly alone, and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front.

Lesson: If we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation with those who are headed where we want to go, and we will be willing to accept their help as well as give ours to others.

3. When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into formation and another goose flies at the point position.

Lesson: It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership. With people as well as geese, we are Inter-dependent on each other.

4. The geese in formation honk from behind to encourage those in front to keep up their speed.

Lesson: We need to make sure that our honking from behind is encouraging.

5. When a goose gets sick or wounded, or it is shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help protect it. They stay with it until it is able to fly again or until it dies. Then they launch out on their own with another formation or catch up with their flock.

Lesson: If we have as much sense as geese, we, too, will stand by each other in difficult times, as well as when we are strong.

From the fall 1997 edition of Indian Highway Safety News, a publication of the BIA Indian Highway Safety Program

Boy Scouts of America

Troop 153 - Junior Leader's Training Course

	Agenda Item	Presented by
Friday		
5:00	Leave Antioch	
8:00	Arrive at Camp Royaneh	
8:30	Boy Leadership Position and Roles	Matt and Tom
9:15	JLT Video	
10:00	Collate Training Materials	Group
10:30	Cracker barrel (Lights Out at 11 PM)	
Saturday		
7:30	Reveille (Cooks at 7:00 AM)	
8:00	Breakfast	Robert Ware
8:45	Patrol Meeting and Scout Spirit	Matt and Tom
9:15	How to run a PLC Meeting	Matt and Tom
9:45	BSA Organization	Wayne Butler
10:00	Troop Equipment – Use and Clean	Scouts
10:45	Campsite and Personal Equipment	Scouts
11:30	Lunch (Cooks at 11:00)	
12:30	Annual Planning Session	SPL, ASPL, SM
3:30	Campfire Program Organization	Mike + Scouts
4:15	Campfire Prep – Plan and Practice	Scouts
4:30	Campfire Preparation	Mike + Scouts
4:30	Dinner Preparation	Robert Ware
5:30	Dinner	
6:00	Campfire Program Preparation	Mike + Scouts
6:30	Menu Planning and Duty Rosters	Robert Ware
7:00	Campfire	Scouts
8:15	Movie –	
Sunday		
7:30	Reveille (Cooks at 7 AM)	
8:00	Breakfast	Robert Ware
9:00	Leadership and Conflict Resolution	Matt and Tom
10:00	Scout's Own	Chaplin's Aide
10:30	Clean Up and Break Camp	
11:00	Leave Camp (Arrive Home at 2 PM)	

JLT Schedule - 12/12/98

10:00 - 10:30	Gathering Games (Inch Worm & Tangle Knot)
10:30 - 10:40	Purpose & Schedule
10:40 - 11:10	Banquet Menu Planning
11:10 - 11:20	Reflection
11:20 - 11:35	Representing the Group Discussion
11:35 - 12:00	Video - Meeting Plan (Resources & Planning)
12:00 - 12:40	Lunch
12:40 - 12:50	Reflect on video
12:50 - 1:30	Planning Discussion (Org. Chart, Planning sheets, job descriptions) - flow into Controlling the Group
1:30 - 1:40	Reflection
1:40 - 2:00	Controlling the group discussion
2:00 - 2:30	Electric Fence
2:30 - 2:50	Trust fall
2:50 - 3:00	Reflection
3:00 - 3:20	Goal setting
3:20 - 3:30	Final reflection and awarding of trained patch

“Accept responsibility to do your job... the best you can... stick to it until it’s done”

To Note or Not

**If you take no notes:
you will remember...**

80% Right away

50% in one week

40% in two weeks

34% in three weeks

25% in four weeks

Patrol Leaders' Council Agenda

Month / Year:	Location:

Opening:

Call of meeting to order (SPL)
Roll Call (Scribe)
Reading of last meetings' log (Scribe)

• Leader Reports:

Troop Leaders individually report on progress since last meeting

• Old Business:

• Next Months' Meetings: Use Meeting Planning Sheets

• New Business / Special Events: Use appropriate Planning Sheets

Activities
Training Needs
Next Campout / Outing
Competitions
Fund Raisers
Order of the Arrow
High Adventure Team

• Scoutmaster's Comments:

BOY SCOUTS of AMERICA

Troop 153 Meeting Plan

Date:	Topic:		
<u>Activity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Run By</u>	<u>Time</u>
<i>Pre-opening</i>			6:50
Attendance			
Set-Up			
Special Equip			
<u>Opening</u>			7:00
Flag Ceremony			
Oath/Law			
Introductions			
Overview			
<u>Business</u>			7:10
Activity Sign-up			
Dues Collection			
Promotions			
<u>Skill instruction</u>			7:20
Scout to First Class			
Star and above			
<u>Patrol Meetings</u>			8:00
<u>Inter-patrol Activity</u>			8:10
Game			
Challenge			
<u>Closing</u>			8:25
Flag			
Prayer			
Announcements			
SM Minute/Tribute			
Evaluation or			
Comments			

Revised 12-7-01

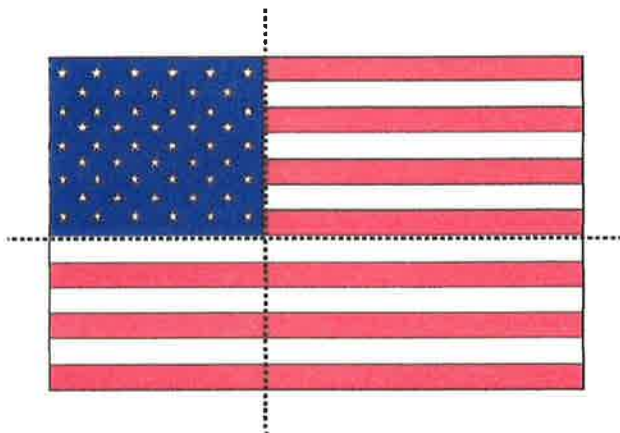
A Flag Retiring Ceremony

NOTE: Before accepting a flag for retirement, the recipient should obtain information about its history. For example: Where has it flown? How long? Any memorable events happen at that site?

1. Display the old flag, give its history.
2. **Color of the flag:** *“Remember as you look at your Flag, which is the symbol of our nation, that it is red because of human sacrifice. It is blue because of the true blue loyalty of its defenders. It is white to symbolize liberty -our land of the free. The stars are symbols of the united efforts and hope in the hearts of many people striving for a greater nobler America.”*
3. Explain to the ensemble what will happen next, and a little word or two about it: *“When the United States flag (Old Glory) becomes worn, torn, faded or badly soiled, it is time to replace it with a new flag, and the old flag should be “retired” with all the dignity and respect befitting our nation’s flag. The traditional method of retirement is to incinerate the flag, but this does not mean that one simply drop the entire flag (intact) into a fire. A flag ceases to be a flag when it is cut into pieces.”*
4. Take the flag and unfold. Place stars (as audience sees it) in the upper left hand corner. Group says together: Pledge of Allegiance then one minute of silent meditation on the meaning may be inserted, if desired.

Procedure for Flag Burning: (a pair of scissors should be on hand)

A flag should never be torn up like an old bed sheet. It should be cut up with scissors or shears in a methodical manner. The corners of the flag should be stretched out over a table top and someone should cut the flag in half, vertically (be careful not to cut up the blue star field (see the figure)). Then, place the two halves together and cut them in half, horizontally. You will end up with four pieces of flag, one being the blue star field. (Taps are hummed slowly while the flag is cut up.)



NOTE: The reason we do not cut the blue star field is it represents the union of the fifty states and one should never let the union be broken.

5. The field of blue is put onto the fire first. The stripes are laid into the fire when the stars are almost fully consumed.
6. There is absolute silence until the entire flag is completely consumed by the flames.
7. Then the color guard, with meaning, says, "OUR FLAG REST IN PEACE."
8. Sing "America" (my Country Tis of Thee)

End of the ceremony should be followed by a silent dismissal.

If the flag to be burned is small or there is more than one flag to be burned at a time, the flag may (but not necessarily advised unless due to lack of time) be laid as a whole unit across the fire. This can be done also if the first flag is torn and burned as described above, and another laid across the first one at a time.

Nothing should ever be added to the ceremonial fire after the Flag has been burned (out of respect).

The next morning the scouts that actually burned the flag and their leader will gather the ashes to be buried.

This could be included as the last step in the ceremony if the wanted all of those in attendance to participate.

A hole is dug, the dirt placed carefully beside it and the ashes are placed into the hole by handfuls. Fill the hole back up with dirt, a marker can be placed.

At the beginning of the ceremony the speaker should say who the flag grommets will be given to. They are a form of good luck can be carried or worn around the neck of the person who receives one.

If the ashes are neatly out, they can be carried to the burial site in a box, if the ashes are still hot, a bucket could be used, then place by shovels-full into the hole.

ASSISTANT SCOUTMASTER INSTALLATION

In 1914, H.S. Pelham wrote:

“He is going to be a man one day. In his hands lie the future of the city, the country, and the church to which he belongs. His own future, therefore, is one of paramount importance to Church and State.... Surely men of education and wealth should learn that perhaps the greatest service they can render to the State is to train the future citizen by bringing to bear upon him when he is young and unsettled, the influence of a strong and healthy character.”

As Assistant Scoutmaster you will help the Scoutmaster train and guide boy leaders to run their troop. You will help boys to grow by encouraging them to learn for themselves, and you play a strategic part in the advancement for all boys in the troop. There is of course another important function...Should I be unable to serve as Scoutmaster, you may be asked by the committee to step in.

With this lofty responsibility in mind, please place your left hand on the troop flag pole and raise your right hand in the Scout sign. Repeat after me:

“I promise.... to do my best.... to be worthy of my office as Assistant Scoutmaster, and to set a good example, for the sake of my fellow Scouts , my Troop and the World Brotherhood of Scouting”.

Baden Powell's Last Message to Scouts

The following message was found among B.-P.'s papers after his death.

To Boy Scouts:

Dear Scouts,

If you have ever seen the play Peter Pan you will remember how the pirate chief was always making his dying speech because he was afraid that possibly when the time came for him to die he might not have time to get it off his chest. It is much the same with me, and so, although I am not at this moment dying, I shall be doing so one of these days and I want to send you a parting word of good-bye.

Remember, it is the last you will ever hear from me, so think it over.

I have had a most happy life and I want each one of you to have as happy a life too.

I believe that God put us in this jolly world to be happy and enjoy life. Happiness doesn't come from being rich, nor merely from being successful in your career, nor by self-indulgence. One step towards happiness is to make yourself healthy and strong while you are a boy, so that you can be useful and so can enjoy life when you are a man.

Nature study will show you how full of beautiful and wonderful things God has made the world for you to enjoy. Be contented with what you have got and make the best of it. Look on the bright side of things instead of the gloomy one.

But the real way to get happiness is by giving out happiness to other people. Try and leave this world a little better than you found it and when your turn comes to die, you can die happy in feeling that at any rate you have not wasted your time but have done your best. "Be Prepared" in this way, to live happy and to die happy - stick to your Scout promise always - even after you have ceased to be a boy - and God help you to do it.

Your Friend,

Baden-Powell.

Don't Quit

by

John Greenleaf Whittier

When things go wrong as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all up hill,
When the funds are low and the debts are high
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest if you must, but don't you quit.

Life is strange with its twists and turns
As every one of us sometimes learns
And many a failure comes about
When he might have won had he stuck it out;
Don't give up though the pace seems slow—
You may succeed with another blow.

Success is failure turned inside out—
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,
And you never can tell just how close you are,
It may be near when it seems so far;
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit—
It's when things seem worst that you must not quit.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A TROOP

(Twenty Questions Webelos parents should ask and understand)

1. Does the troop go to summer camp? Where?
2. Is the troop “boy run”?
3. Does the troop have an annual troop planning session?
4. Does the troop go on monthly outings? What type of activities?
5. What troop equipment does the troop have, and is it in good repair?
6. What equipment will your boy need to provide?
7. Does the troop have fundraising opportunities?
8. Does the troop participate in District and Council events?
9. What are the troop fees and are there any additional costs?
10. Are the boys advancing?
11. Is the troop active in Order of the Arrow?
12. Do the boys and adults wear uniforms?
13. Does the troop have regular meetings in a usual location?
14. What is the make-up of the troop (older boys vs. younger boys)?
15. Does the troop have Patrol Leader Council (PLC) meetings?
16. Does the troop have monthly parent’s/committee meetings and encourage all parents to participate?
17. Is the adult leadership trained (Scoutmaster Fundamentals, Woodbadge, BBA, etc.)?
18. Are the boy leaders trained (Brownsea, JLT, etc.)?
19. Does your boy feel comfortable with the boys in the troop?
20. Do the leaders take the time to answer your questions and explain all the abbreviations (JLT, PLC, SPL), as well as make sure you, and your son understand the program?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Mission Statement from www.Scouting.org
2. Songwriters: Richard Sherman / Robert Sherman
3. Ernest Thomas Seton – “The Birch-Bark Roll of the Woodcraft Indians”, 1907
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5. The BSA National Charter [US Code, Title 36, Chapter 2]
6. Daniel Carter Beard – founder of the Sons of Daniel Boone in 1905, which later merged with the Boy Scouts of America.
7. General Bruce C. Clark – from interview in Boy’s Life Magazine, Sept, 1962
8. Lord Robert Baden-Powell