

President's Corner – Volume 2 – March 2010

During the Washington District Awards dinner, one of the volunteer leaders remarked that he was proud to be a part of the oldest organization committed to deterring juvenile delinquency in America. As I drove the dark and rain slick highway back to Bridgeport, WV, I contemplated his words. I have used similar words in defending our United Way Campaign requests. That Boy Scouts promote values that are absent from those who abuse and abandon their spouses and children seems to resonate with the members of those Boards. As I neared home, I asked myself the question: Should that statement be the embodiment of what Scouting does?

Without ignoring the fact that an important by product of Scouting is the deterrence of juvenile delinquency, all of you -- the unit, district and council serving volunteers -- know the answer to my question is a resounding "NO."

A few days later, my attention was directed to a news article about two National Guardsmen being honored in Charleston, WV. It seems two medics from the 201st Field artillery unit based in Fairmont, WV were part of the hundreds of soldiers called out during the February snows to provide essential services to citizens in need. On February 10th, they were called to a house in the remote area of Highland Ridge outside of Berkley Springs, WV where a young woman and her premature newborn were stranded without heat or power. They drove their military Humvee as far as they could, but had to find some way to negotiate the remaining two miles to the house through 6-8 foot snow drifts. They quickly realized hiking in their military boots was not going to get them where they needed to be. They needed snowshoes. But the nearest outlet was hours of travel time away. One of the two soldiers remembered his Scouting days and some of what he had learned about making snowshoes. So the two men crafted snow shoes out of pine boughs and clothes line and trudged their way to the house. Once there, they placed the woman in a rescue sled they had brought with them. They swaddled the baby in blankets in a back pack surrounded with chemical hand warmers. Then they set about retracing their route to the Humvee and on to safety. The Scout, the volunteer soldier, was Staff Sgt. Harry F. Accor, an Eagle Scout.

I suspect there are other stories that could be told of Scouts, their parents, and former Scouts all over Allohak Council helping a neighbor or member of the community in need during this recent winter. I would expect that many a Scout willingly took his snow shovel after cleaning off his own family walk and went to an elderly neighbor, a widow neighbor, a disabled neighbor, his local church and did his daily good turn by shoveling off their walk. I also would expect that many a Scout checked to see if any of those same neighbors needed staples from the store. I suspect many such Scout, when offered payment for their good turn, politely refused it in the true spirit of the Scout William Boyce met in London more than a century ago. As the story goes, that Scout declined payment for guiding Mr. Boyce through the fog to his appointed destination. Mr. Boyce was so impressed, that he asked to meet the Scout's leader, Sir Baden Powell; learned of Scouting in England; and committed himself to bringing it to America.

Volunteers all over Allohak Council teach youth life skills and moral principles every day that, when the time comes and those Scouts are called, they use without hesitation for the betterment of our society. The Scouts you train and lead are better prepared to do their best to do their duty to God and their Country. These are not just words or slogans. Those are of the values that your Scouts bear witness to daily through their deeds. Those Scouts you train and lead today will be the trainers and leaders of tomorrow. It is your way of making sure that the values of Scouting, which have not changed in its 100 year history and which you revere today, will be revered and carried on for the next 100 years and for generations yet to come.

A Scout is not boastful. Actions speak louder than words. A Scout quietly goes about doing his duty. However, in an America that cries out for news of youth doing good things in the midst of daily news and examples to the contrary, you should feel free to make known that your Scouts are doing good things. So, if you have a story, get it to your District Chair, District Executive, the Scout Executive or me so it can be showcased as another example of what is right and good about Scouting in Allohak Council. Being proud of and recognizing what you and your Scouts are doing is not boastful. It is providing a shining example for others to follow.

In behalf of all those nameless souls who will be helped by the Scouts you train and lead today: Thank You.

Yours in Scouting,
John S. Kaul
Council President