

## **To the Scouts of Troop 442,**

When thinking about my Scouting experience, the most memorable experiences are easy to identify. The thrill of my first summer camp, backpacking through the mountains, the agony of camp cooking, and those incredibly elusive Snipe (almost as hard to find as a left handed smoke sifter, or bacon stretcher). Poison Oak. These are memories I will fondly recall the rest of my life. But Scouting also taught me some very important life skills. I learned respect, for myself, for others, and for the country and freedoms we enjoy (and too often take for granted). I gained experience in setting and achieving personal goals, and developed a measure of self reliance through this. I also learned to appreciate that self reliance must be balanced with the help of others (keep in mind the countless hours your Scout leaders devote are all volunteered freely).

In earning my Eagle rank, I realized a goal set early in my Scouting experience. Personal pride in this accomplishment is certainly important, but what continually amazes me is the recognition an Eagle Scout receives - even from those not closely associated with Scouting. However, a quick reflection on my Scouting experiences turns amazement to understanding - Scouting is widely recognized for it's contributions to the community through the quality of it's members. Eagle Scouts exemplify this. Keep this in mind as you continue along your Scouting trail - be proud of what you represent, and the uniform you wear. You are part of a very special and select group.

So, now, some 20 years later, I smile in the knowledge that my Scouting experience is, in a manner, beginning again. My son Chris is a Wolf Scout in Cub Scout Pack 94.1 have begun my volunteer effort as a newly appointed camping coordinator. As I progress along this new Scouting trail, I will remember to do my best, to do my duty, and above all else, will remember what Scouting has meant to me. My hope is that in another 20 or 25 years, my son will also be fondly sharing his Scouting memories, and will have the same sense of pride and accomplishment in being a part of something very special.

Eagle Scout John Walcott