

Trail of the Eagle

Be prepared! Do a good turn Daily! Words forever etched on my character. I started in scouts at 11 years old. I can still remember how excited I was to put on my brand new scout uniform, including the scout neckerchief, belt, socks and hat. I spent many a weekend for the next 7 years at camp-outs, back-pack trips, jamborees, scout-o-ramas, service projects and other special outings. Troop 442 always planned exciting and challenging adventures. We climbed almost every mountain peak in Southern California, we explored the wilderness of the Sierra's and the coastline from Newport to Huntington Beach. We went canoeing, biking, sail-boating, shooting and climbing, to name a few. We looked for any place that we could pitch our tents and break out the mess kits and sierra cups. We had our fill of freeze dried food, instant oatmeal and other foods that were unidentifiable after being cooked on an open campfire.

Other than the trips to the mountain tops, Sea Scout base in Newport Beach was one of my favorite destinations. All the boys in Troop 442 loved the war canoe because it seated nearly the entire troop! We would paddle around Newport Harbor, trying not to get run over by the big yachts or the many swift little sail boats. In a sea scout sail boat I once sailed so far down wind and down the harbor that I lost sight of the base. I couldn't maneuver back up against the wind, so Troop 442 had to send out a rescue party by land to bring me back to camp.

I learned many things in Scouts. Scouts taught me leadership as I lead Troop 442 as Senior Patrol leader for several years. I learned endurance climbing the never ending peaks. I learned preparation as we planned the many trips. Scouts taught me how to build a fire, read a compass, fold the flag, tie a Bowline knot and even how to save a life. I learned appreciation for the outdoors and a love for nature. Scouts truly was an exciting educational experience.

I advanced through the ranks from a young tenderfoot to the highest rank in scouting. Each merit badge I earned moved me farther down the trail of the Eagle. After many badges and boards of review I finally made it to the rank of Eagle. Soon, I was before a gathering of family, friends, former teachers and even city officials assembled together to celebrate achievement. At that court of Honor I did not realize I was among the first of so many Troop 442 Eagles to follow the trail.

My Eagle Badge helped me land my first job out of high school because the CEO of the escrow company was a former Eagle Scout. I spent most of my young adulthood working with teenagers in my church as a youth minister. All my years of helping to organize scouting events as a youth prepared me well to serve as a director of youth. After marrying and having two boys of my own I attended law school. I am now a trial lawyer in Dallas, Texas. My two boys are five and six, maybe one day they will follow the trail of the Eagle.

Every now and then I meet a former scout. I extend my left hand to shake hands with them with the scout handclasp, the true sign someone has been a scout. Left hand,

closest to the heart.

I am very proud when I think of all the Eagles propelled into flight by Troop 442. 35 years, over 60 Eagles, hundreds of tenderfoots, lots of commitment and lots of dedication. I hope 35 years from now we can gather again, maybe the Trail of the Eagle will connect us again. I know that scouting and Troop 442 will always supply us a common tie, with strength from the experiences and inspiration from one another to soar to even greater heights.

Jerry Foust
Eagle Scout 1977