

Season's greetings to you all. It is my honor to accept the position of President of the Executive Board of our council. I am thankful to all of you representing our districts, sponsoring organizations, and units for giving me this opportunity. I promise to make the best of that opportunity and to do my best to warrant your trust.

Looking back, it seems my Scouting career has been one of opportunities. In the 7th grade I had just moved to North East Texas from the San Francisco Bay Area in California. (Talk about culture shock!) I was definitely a fish out of water looking for a place to fit in when a classmate invited me to a Scout meeting. Several years later I had an amazing opportunity to attend the 12th World Jamboree in Idaho as part of an all Eagle Host Corps Troop. I had the opportunity to Host an English Troop. My eyes were opened to the global reach and importance of Scouting.

As was the case with many of us, my son afforded me the opportunity to reenter Scouting as an adult. When he entered Tiger Cubs in Pack 66 in the Austin area, my role as Cubmaster soon began, followed by roles as Assistant Scoutmaster for new Scouts and Scoutmaster of Troop 30. In 2007, 40 years after my trip to Idaho, my life in Scouting came full circle when I served as Scoutmaster for a contingent troop drawn from four Texas councils headed to the UK for the 21st World Jamboree. This time the English were the hosts as together with Scouts from all over the world, we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Scouting movement under the theme – “One World/One Promise.” My service since has been to continue my role as an Officer of the Council, a Board Member, member of the Executive Committee and a BSA Climbing Director teaching climbing to Scouts and Scouters.

Two World Jamborees and current events convince me that at no time in our nation's and the world's history has it been more important to instill in the next generation the lessons of the Scout Oath and Law. We have a pressing challenge and need to raise citizens and future leaders who are Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, Kind, Obedient, Cheerful, Thrifty, Brave, Clean, and Reverent; who are prepared; and who go through the day seeking an opportunity to do a good turn.

When I was being considered for Scoutmaster for Troop 30, I shared my philosophy of leadership with the Troop Committee and the Scouts. My notion of what has been called “servant leadership” is that a leader works beside those he or she hopes to lead, carries a full load, works a full day, and gratefully appreciates the efforts of others. A significant reward for this type of leadership is seeing those you aspire to lead as they demonstrate that same commitment to the task—bringing others along as well. As for youth, I subscribe to the belief that it is OK to expect a lot from Scouts. We are in the business of doing so. The Scout Oath and Law are lofty goals requiring practice. When I teach knots in climbing, I urge students to practice, practice, practice forming both mental and muscle memory. It's the same with the character traits we teach. It takes practice to make them lifetime habits.

As adult leaders in this fantastic program for youth, a lot is expected of us too. To lead we must provide an example of leadership through our service. Some of us will be serving primarily by contributing our time and talent toward units, districts, and council positions. We will be teaching shooting sports, climbing, and merit badges, and counseling candidates for Eagle on projects, and training other adults to be teachers and leaders. Some of us, inspired by the goals of the program, will contribute primarily by financial support, and some will do both to varying

degrees. Know this, your contributions whether time, talent, or treasure are invaluable. The countless hours spent by adult volunteers are priceless. When a Scout exudes confidence or excitement because of some new adventure or newly acquired skill that we taught or facilitated, we know this is true. I see the reward in the wide eyes and smile of every Scout that climbs or rappels for the first time. At the same time, the dollars contributed to support our camps and programs and the work of our outstanding council staff are essential to our council's success.

As council President one of my jobs will be to seek out and encourage involvement in terms of your time, talent, and treasure and help shoulder the load along the way. I look forward to working beside many of you, getting to know even more of you, learning from you, and being inspired by you and by the importance of our common mission.

Yours in Scouting,

Jim Morriss
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