

## EAGLE SCOUT COURT OF HONOR

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### “SCOUTMASTER MOMENT”

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Gliding through the smooth, quiet waters of Saganaga Lake in our canoes turned out to be one of the highlights of our 50 mile trek in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Our team of three canoes and six scouts and scouters couldn't help but soak in the serene beauty surrounding us.

When setting our canoes in the water that last morning of our adventure, I had been concerned about crossing such a large body of water as Saganaga. Over the past several days we had faced seasons of wind and rain while paddling and portaging along the northern border of Minnesota, encountering at times waves that were lively enough to wash over the gunnels, or sides, of our canoes. Would we again have to fight a head wind, or worse, a crosswind as we ventured out into open water?

Upon rounding the tip of American Point and entering into a wide expanse of clear, calm water, my concerns soon evaporated. The channel between Munker Island and Long Island was nearly a mile and a half ahead of us. Yet, with the rhythm of steady paddle strokes, we quickly moved through the awe-inspiring scenery and solitude on our way back to Sea Gull Lake to the south.

The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness stretches nearly 150 miles along the Canadian border opposite its sister wilderness area in Canada, the Quetico [Quet i ko] Provincial Park.

This pristine wilderness area has been described as a labyrinth of lakes and rock. It is filled with waterfalls, large rocky formations, cliffs, and thousands of deep, clear lakes, many of which are connected by short portages. And, as we were able to verify, it is home to more than a few loons and numerous bald eagles – and at least one beaver. (Unfortunately, there were not many fish sightings.)

Our trek began in Sea Gull Lake four days earlier with Brent and me in one canoe, Garrick and Ian in another, and their uncle Kim, an Eagle Scout, and his son-in-law, Eli, a Life Scout, in a third canoe. Over the next several days we had traveled southwest from Sea Gull Lake on through Ogishkemuncie Lake and into Knife Lake under mostly cloudy, rainy skies.

Camp life on the lakes is an adventure in and of itself. It begins with finding a vacant established campsite.

Equally challenging is finding a suitable tree from which to hang your bear bags. And once you get your rope looped up in a tree, it is not always easy retrieving it (just ask Ian).

Mosquitoes can also be a nuisance, especially when doing your business out in the woods at a designated site.

But skill allowed us to overcome these many wilderness “*amenities.*” For example, at our furthest most southwest campsite, away down past Robbins Island, Kim lit a welcome campfire in the steady downpour with the aid of bark from a fallen birch tree.

Although fishing was poor, Brent managed to catch a few fish at several of our campsites, including a pan-size smallmouth bass, which he prepared over an open fire. He also caught and

released a pike of respectable size while canoeing with his brother Garrick near our campsite at Little Knife Portage.

As we paddled across Saganaga Lake that last day in Boundary Waters, with Brent up front and me in the back, I thought of how this trip had started out as a high adventure trek for Brent's older brothers, Garrick and Ian. But during the planning of it, I simply could not stand the thought of leaving Brent behind. I knew he loved fishing and being out in God's great country. And though he was a young Scout at the time, I was convinced that Brent would hold his own out in the wilderness. In our monthly Scout campouts he had always been prepared, packing all the right gear and equipment on his own initiative.

I further thought of how being prepared was not the only Scouting ideal Brent seemed to come by naturally. He is often ready to provide service to others. To give an example, when Brent was only about three years of age, David Newman had cut himself while digging up a damaged tree in the church yard (where the garage now sits). Playing nearby, Brent noticed the cut. And before anyone knew it, Brent had gone to our home and brought back a bandaid for David's wound. The purposeful, straightforward, unassuming manner in which Brent rendered his service to David has stuck with me over the years as a hallmark of Brent's character.

I had felt compelled to offer Brent a place on this trek because of his faithfulness to duty and service. And paddling home I had not been disappointed in the least. Brent had held his own out on the waters and while carrying canoes and gear between lakes.

In reflecting on these and many other things during our quiet passage across Saganaga, I soon realized that in bringing Brent along I had been the one who had been blessed perhaps the most; with Brent's companionship and his example. Thank you, Brent.

Brent, like your trek through Boundary Waters as a young scout, you have completed a course very few people will accomplish. You have become an Eagle Scout while being registered as a Lone Scout from Cubs all the way to Scouting's highest youth rank. You did not achieve this goal alone, however. You had the privilege and blessing of participating in the Scouting program with your brothers as well as Scouters like your uncle and cousin-in-law. You have also received much support from your mother, and your sisters have contributed in many ways to your success.

We have spent countless hours as a family selling and delivering Trails End popcorn door-to-door together to help fund our campouts and Scout activities throughout Kansas and for adventures like canoeing in Minnesota and Missouri and skiing in Colorado.

Through the Scouting program you have also made many friends on campouts, at summer camp, at National Youth Leader Training, and the like. This fact is evident by your many friends here today, and especially by the honor members of Troop 216 from Independence, Missouri, are paying you by being here at this court of honor.

Now that you have become an Eagle Scout, remember that your scouting trek is not over. You have the important opportunity to ensure that others, especially your younger brothers, are given the same opportunity to advance along the trail to Eagle. As you continue to participate in Scouting, your younger brothers will benefit from your experience and knowledge, but most of all, from your companionship and service. Encourage them and guide them as you pass together through the wilderness of life.

Like the wind and rain we faced together on the northern lakes of Minnesota, storms will arise in your life and theirs. Jesus assures us they will come. But if you remain steadfast in be-

ing prepared, especially in being prepared to offer your service to others, you will be able to weather the storms of life and find your way on to your destination.

What is the most important preparation you can make for the storms you will pass through in this life? It is building your life upon a sure foundation, even the only sure foundation, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. He is The Rock upon which we must build our lives.<sup>1</sup>

Jesus taught that if anyone falls upon the Chief Corner Stone, the Rock God has placed in Zion, that person will be broken; and if that Rock falls upon anyone It will grind them to powder.<sup>2</sup> But if anyone builds upon the Rock, no storm will move them. In the seventh chapter of Matthew we read:

*Therefore, whosoever heareth these saying of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock, and the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock. And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand; and the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell; and great was the fall of it. (Matthew 7:34,35 IV)*

Like the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, the terrain of life is made up of a labyrinth of rock and water. But it is navigable if one respects and listens to the Good Shepherd,<sup>3</sup> the Rock of Heaven, the One Who came to give us living water, the One Who came to give us the abundant life.<sup>4</sup>

Brent, build your life upon this Rock. In the words of King David to his son regarding building the temple of the Lord, “Be strong and do it!”<sup>5</sup> Your body is the temple of God.<sup>6</sup> Glorify Him in it by building your life upon Jesus Christ so that He may lead you and support you all the days of your life in the way of everlasting life.<sup>7</sup>

Prepare yourself for the storms you will encounter in life by doing the words of Jesus;<sup>8</sup> His words, Jesus said, are spirit and they are life.<sup>9</sup> In so doing, you will never fall.<sup>10</sup> He will see to it.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, Brent, please remember the words I spoke to your brother Ian at his Eagle Court of Honor a few years back. Scouting is about honor, not necessarily the honor you may receive for your accomplishments or for what you do for others, but the honor you bestow upon those around you through skilled preparation and dedicated and cheerful service.

God bless both you and your life, Brent, through Jesus Christ our Lord.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I Corinthians 10:4 with I Peter 2:7,8

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 21:44-46 IV with Romans 9:33, Isaiah 8:13-15, 28:16

<sup>3</sup> John 10:11,13,27

<sup>4</sup> John 4:8-17 & 10:10

<sup>5</sup> I Chronicles 28:9,10

<sup>6</sup> I Corinthians 6:19,20

<sup>7</sup> John 14:6

<sup>8</sup> James 1:22-25 with Matthew 7:34,35 IV

<sup>9</sup> John 6:63

<sup>10</sup> II Peter 1:10 with Genesis 7:59 IV

<sup>11</sup> Philippians 1:3-6

<sup>12</sup> I John 4:9 with Hebrews 13:20,21