

TO: Rob
FROM: Dad
March 19, 2006

This is the time when we usually read off how the Eagle Scout met the requirements. I'm not going to do that today.

When I asked Rob what kind of Court of Honor he would like to have – he said SHORT. He was very concerned about making sure the people who attend have FUN and that they didn't have to sit very long. Given his preference, we would finish the ceremony in a few minutes, get something to eat than play football with the Erlingers.

So he told me not to read the list of merit badges and other stuff you can read for yourself. You can see in the program his list is more than complete and actually quite impressive.

I've always told Rob not to brag about his awards or the things he's done. I told him that it's what's on the inside – in your heart – that really matters. That people will know who you are by the things you do and not by what you wear on your uniform.

It was BP that said: It's the spirit within, not the veneer without, that makes a man.

You can see that he listened to me by the uniform he wears tonight.

To be honest, this has led to some interesting moments and maybe I did him a disservice with this idea... One time after spending a week at summer camp with Mr. Jackson's troop he earned a number of merit badges – he then he spent the very next week with his own troop. Because they were frequently jealous of what he had done, I told him to keep it quiet – so when asked by the Assistant SM what MB's he earned he said "I don't remember".

Left to his own, Rob would meet the requirements, but never fill out the paperwork. It's never been awards or recognition that motivated him in Scouts.

There has been more than one time when Rob has turned to me and said "do I have that award?".

At his Eagle Board of Review, Pat Scott asked him "so how many merit badges do you have..." Rob had no clue.

Ask any Scout parent they know how many MB's their son has. -- Right Karen??

In case you are still wondering - ROB It's 50. Plus 6 partials. If you were to count the merit badges you did twice, you could have added 3 more -- and Environmental Science 3 times because you had a SM who lost your cards...

Rob, what I told you is still true. But today is your one opportunity to brag. It's OK to show off a little – and even better you can let others do it for you!

Some Scouter busy bodies have asked... why am I so involved in Scouting? Why does he do so much with his son?? I have three things say to them and to Rob...

The first is a quote from Roy L. Williams, Chief Scout Executive of the Boy Scouts of America. "In the 30 years that I've been doing this for a living, I've never had a parent say to me, 'I regretted the time I spent with my son or child in Scouting.'"

Rob, the time we spent together in Scouting was the best time of my life! We learned a lot about each other and ourselves. I wish we had spent more time together, gone camping more, and gone to more places.

Some of you can relate to the words of this poem that I've kept ever since I became actively involved as a leader and participated in Wood Badge.

BECAUSE OF MY SON

**Because of my son - I found a job to do,
I became a Scouter, tried and true.**

**I understand boys better - because of my son.
It happened through Scouting - Gee, what fun.**

**Because of my son - I can be worthwhile.
Oh what a reward, to see a boy's smile!**

**'Tis endless, the pleasures gained from Scouting.
Because of my son - I attend many meetings and outings!**

**Because of my son - I've gained friends beyond measure.
'Tis indeed blessed to hold, such a wonderful treasure!**

**Hours that were idle, are now filled to the brim,
Because of my son - I enjoy life with him!**

The second thing involves a little story.

Many know the story – but I'll repeat it again.

One of the biggest mistakes of my life was abandoning you for over four years. You were in Pittsburgh -- I was in California. We saw each other for a short time two or three times a year.

It was Cub Scouts – and the pine wood derby brought us back together. I would come to visit and we would build cars in a hotel room. By Sunday, the room was filled with sawdust and the radiators were covered with paint.

I flew out several times and we wound up building six different cars. You came in second in the Pack and due to some poor adjustments I made, you didn't do well at the District derby.

But as a result of that experience – I realized I couldn't live without being closer to you.

The last thing came to me this week. And it's another story. I was at the storage bin and came across some Cub Scout books.

The first was a new set – no big deal. The second set was from my time as a Den Chief – so it was VERY old.

The last set was yours. You are probably saying so what. But I noticed the labels on them were from Dom's – Linda and Russ will recognize the name as an outdoor sporting goods store in Livermore, California.

You're still saying so what, Dad. Hurry up (I'm hungry). I remembered looking at those books – they were purchased before you were born. When I heard we were having a boy, one of the first things I did was purchase your Cub Scout Handbooks.

You see... it was predetermined – you were going to be a Scout. You didn't have a choice.

What you have done as a Scout is nothing short of phenomenal. And, of course, becoming an Eagle was always up to you.

For those who don't know Rob, I'd like to tell you a little more about him. For those who do know Rob, you'll be nodding your heads.

Rob isn't always recognized as a "leader".

Some people mistake being loud with being a leader.

Many mistake being an autocrat with being a leader. While the dictator style of leadership works for a while inevitably it will lead to failure.

Rob leads others by treating them the way he wants to be treated. He leads them with a quiet respect and mutual trust.

He has wonderful creative abilities and imagination that is unbelievable. He sees things that no one else can... and dreams things most wouldn't dare think is possible.

There are some that suggested you've made it this far because of me. Some even spent a great deal of time and effort reviewing your Eagle and Silver Award applications with a fine tooth comb and came up with nothing!

I would suggest you succeeded in spite of me!

You have been challenged by obstacles placed in your way because of me and conflicts I've had with other Scout leaders.

Someone recently suggested that it's hard for you to be in the shadow of me.

I'm here to tell them -- you stepped out of my shadow a long time ago --- and became your own man.

And what a fine young man you've become -- your mother and I are truly proud of you!

When you were younger, you told me with the honesty of a child, Dad, I want to be as tall as you... but I never want to be as fat.

For years you would compare your height to me. It was a proud day when you were able to stand next to me and announce that you were finally taller than me. I think you expected some kind of jealous reaction or denial from me. I only smiled.

What you didn't realize -- I had been looking up to you and admiring you for some time. It came as no surprise that you were now taller!

No Dad's talk is ever complete without some advice so
HERE'S MY CHALLENGE TO YOU.

Now that you are an Eagle Scout -- enjoy yourself, but don't rest too long. Continue your service to others. This message has been very clear lately. In nearly every letter you receive congratulating you on what you have done, there are words of advice to and encouragement to continuing your service to others.

At the Price of Freedom conference last month in Valley Forge -- when characters representing George Washington and one of the obscure signers of the declaration of independence spoke they told you of their price for freedom and they had you sign the declaration of independence challenging you to actively participate as a Citizen and to serve your country. All of modern-day American heroes who addressed the conference spoke of the same service to country and their fellow man.

In your recently completed Pope Pius class – led by the Licciardellos – you were asked questions – about your calling. You heard the message that when you are called you should raise your hand high!! In the words of the prophet Isaiah, Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

Your OA Brothers were very generous in their comments and encouragement. Particularly those who shared the common experience of Trail Crew.

In the Order of the Arrow you learned of the legend from Meteu about the Lenni Lenape nation who lived peacefully until enemies threaten the tribe. Chief Chingachgook asks "Who will go and warn the villages of the Delaware's of the danger which threatens?" But none wished to go. But Uncas, his son, said, "My father, here am I; send me" Having sealed your membership in the OA, you are forever bound to this Brotherhood of Cheerful Service exemplified in the legend by Uncas.

I challenge you to: Raise your hand and Volunteer. Give Cheerful Service. Provide servant Leadership. Respond to your Calling.

In closing, (you are saying – THANK GOD, he's finally done) I will remind you of a poem we used to read when you were a child. We used to read it over and over again. We read it so much you had most of it memorized. Oh! The Places you'll Go!

No I'm not going to read the whole thing today.

But I will quote the best part that captures the moment – and provides insight into tomorrow.

And I take license in changing a few words...

And will you succeed?

Yes! you did, indeed!

(it was 98 ¾ percent guaranteed.)

KID, YOU MOVED MOUNTAINS!

NOW - in the book I always thought... that seems like a nice place to end the poem. BUT it goes on further to challenge you ... much like you knew after climbing the Tooth of Time, you had to climb Baldy and after that you know you need to climb this year -- Dr. Suess knew after climbing a mountain there will be so many more to climb.

So...

be your name Buxbaum or Bixby or Bray
or Mordecai Ali Van Allen O'Shea, or **Robbie Marks**

you're off to Great Places!

Today is your day!

Your mountain is waiting.

So...get on your way!