

From a grateful parent

This is the part where I would normally read off the Rob's qualifications for Quartermaster. You heard about the service project in the Hornaday presentation and you can read what he has done in the program.

You also saw a number of his awards and momentos from his Scouting experiences. If you noticed Rob looking at the tables downstairs like his was seeing the stuff for the first time or quietly saying, I didn't know I had that... That's because he hasn't seen the stuff for several years. After completing an activity or an award, I would stash the stuff away in Rubbermaid containers.

A couple of quick notes about some details on today's presentations.

The flags at the front of the room are unique.

The one on the right was flown over our Nation's Capital on Rob's 16th Birthday in honor of him receiving the Venturing Silver Award.

The flag on the left was flown over the Pentagon on February 8, 2010 – the 100th Anniversary of Scouting – to commemorate todays presentation of the Quartermaster. THANKS to Skipper Ballew for helping arrange for that flag.

About the program and the supplement. We struggled with a great deal about how trees were killed in the printing of the program for today. We even discussed the giving everyone an iPad to view it electronically... I ultimately decided to go with the printed program because the more that you could read on your own, the shorter the ceremony!

As you can imagine, I am busting out with pride today. I am also grateful beyond words for the opportunities Scouting has afforded my son and for how it changed our family.

Of all the fathers in the world, Rob got stuck with me. I'm the first to admit that my parenting skills are pretty poor...and it's no big secret that I've not been the best role model of a father. I yelled at Rob far too many times, expected perfection and when he gave perfection, I would still find something wrong and tell him to do better.

There's a saying – if it weren't for fathers, boys would be overprotected; if it weren't for mothers' they would be dead. That Robert turned out so great is a testimony to his mother who has been his rock for many year.

I am indebted to the adult leaders in Scouting who have given of themselves to mentor and teach my son -- especially in ways where I was deficient. It was your willingness to care for him like he was their own son that helped build his character and turned him into the gentle, caring and competent person he is today.

When I take on a volunteer project for Scouts, I am often asked, are you doing that for your Wood Badge ticket?! When I say that was completed almost 10 years ago, the next question usually is... why are you so involved in with the Scouts?

When you see the great things that Scouting does for youth AND for families, I have to ask – how can you not be so involved?! How can you not want to spend more time with your sons and daughters in wholesome activities that teach moral lessons and build leadership skills?

I want to share with you 3 stories – I'll be quick because I know you all are waiting for a piece of the Carlini cake!

There were two trees decorating the podium during the Hornaday ceremony for a reason...

A few years ago, I bought one of those Fiskars ¾ ax with the plastic handle and the blade that is so sharp. One day after school, Rob thought he might try the ax in the back yard. Well... one thing led to another and that ax started cutting a pine tree like it was butter. When I went into the back yard and saw the tree with a huge wedge taken out, I started to lecture. But Rob knew just what to do. He looked me in the eye and said you won't believe how sharp this ax is – as he held out the ax to me. And he was right. Within a few minutes we were both yelling timber and hoping we didn't hit the house...

We justified the tree murder by suggesting we had created new animal habitat... and increased the sunlight into the back yard.

Anyway... Bade Powell said:

As a Scout, you are the guardian of the woods. A Scout never damages a tree by hacking it with his knife or axe. It does not take long to fell a tree, but it takes many years to grow one, so a Scout cuts down a tree for a good reason only – not just for the sake of using his axe. For every tree felled, two should be planted."

So the two trees are our penance as well as decoration. Ironically Rob became certified by the US Forest Service

William Shakespeare: When a father gives to his son, both laugh; when a son gives to his father, both cry.

We were at Heritage Reservation for the fishing derby. I had just taken the small motor boat for a ride around Lake Courage when Rob asked if he could drive. My initial thought was no, you're too young... but I found myself saying sure go ahead. And as I watched him navigate the lake with great skill and confidence... I started to cry. Rob thought it was because I wanted to drive the boat again and promised to let me do it again later... but they were tears of happiness as I was suddenly realizing he was growing up... and that he was becoming a highly competent young man.

I had the privilege of visiting Rob at the Bridger Teton national forest where he was working on building a new trail. One evening he said (with a smirk that I missed) "why don't you walk in with me to the trail tomorrow and see what we are doing?" When I asked how big of a hike he said not too far... Well we started out with his team in the morning and I quickly fell behind...huffing and puffing – turning red and wanting to turn back. He told his group to go ahead as he stayed with me helping me make it up the difficult trail. He told me when to stop and rest and pushed me when he felt I could go further. He watched my intake of water and forced me to stay hydrated. He never once yelled at me or made me feel bad for being so out of shape. He gave me the gentle encouragement in the way that he knew would be effective. After what seemed like hours, we finally came to a clearing in the middle of the Grand Tetons that was truly spectacular. Rob knew that it was well worth the difficult climb.

As I hiked back to the car alone, I began to cry... as I realized that the student had become the teacher... and that he had surpassed me in ability and had acquired motivational skills that were far superior to anything I had ever experienced. All his life, I tried to get him to become more aggressive and louder (like me). He showed me that his methods were so much better than mine. He showed me how he wished I had treated him...

Robert – thank you for sharing so many wonderful experiences in Scouting. And thank you for being patient with me as I grew as a result of our involvement.

Lastly – there has to be a lesson. Your mother and I chose the songs at the beginning for a reason. We were overprotective and sometimes overbearing parents. Now is your time to be independent and write your next chapter. When you first started in Scouts, a wise professional introduced us to the idea of a Scouting resume to track what you've done and your accomplishments in BSA. That resume grew to over 12 pages and still it didn't list everything you had done. Today we put that in the box with all your other memorabilia – and you start a new resume... the pages are unwritten... I know you'll do great things!