

From: Calvin Harrell
Sent: Saturday, October 6, 2012 11:01 PM
Subject: An Eagle Scouts Dilemma

An Eagle Scouts Dilemma:

My engagement with Scouting began in the sixth grade in Oakland, Ca, at St. Augustine Catholic School. I fondly recall the Scout Master, Les Stuart came to our class as a guest speaker and shared information on the activities that Troop 247 participated in.

He also shared a vision of young men being guided, mentored and coached into being strong citizens and leaders. Race, creed, color nor sexual orientation other than simply being a male, eleven years or older were a part of the recruitment process. I along with several classmates asked for the pamphlet and sought permission from our parents to join the troop and attend meetings every Thursday night at 7:30 pm in the St. Aug gymnasium.

Upon visiting my first meeting, I absolutely wanted to be a part of the troop and in doing so found a second home. This was as the 60's turned into the 70's. A time of political turmoil with the Vietnam War, civil rights struggles, the introduction of birth control pills, hippies, free love, easy access to Mary Jane, Ceaser Chavez farm worker struggles, the Black Panther Party activism and other issues of the time that I had no interest in. After all I was the tender age of eleven. My body, mind and soul were firmly planted in mischief and fun and Scouting seemed like a great fit.

We were a troop of more than seventy boys from all over the local community. We had representation and shared experiences of boys from schools like Peralta, Chabot, Santa Fe and Claremont in Oakland and Emerson, Willard, Cragmont, Emerson and LeConte in Berkeley. While we had high schooler's from St. Mary's, Oakland Tech and some other schools, most boys dropped the scouts as they entered high school for one reason or another.

I distinctly recall being told to learn the Boy Scout Oath with its three distinct promises:

Duty to God and Country, Duty to Other People, Duty to Self

The Slogan: Do a good turn daily.

The Motto: Be Prepared!

And the Boy Scout Law

I have tried to live my entire life following these simple yet profound tenets and the results have provided me with a multitude of blessings and profound personal fulfillment.

The most recent revelation, occurring here in our beloved Bay Area has given pause to many, and Eagles throughout the country that understand and hold true to the lessons learned are expressing gross dissatisfaction at the decision of the Scout Master of Troop 212 in Moraga to deny a young man a rank he has fulfilled all requirements for on the basis that he has, through the self-inflection and honor code of truth, taught by Scouting, stated his personal sexuality as a homosexual.

Ryan Andresen is a member of Troop 212 in Moraga. His father Eric, the troop's chief administrator was told on Sunday that his son wouldn't be able to receive Scouting's highest rank and honor, Eagle Scout. Talk about insult added to injury!

While The Boy Scouts of America have a long-standing and controversial policy denying membership to gay leaders and Scouts, this young man earned his award in every manner and the decision, based on his sexuality is blatantly immoral.

If the troop uses a public facility I would hope that their future assembly would be denied and perhaps the troop be disbanded on the basis of not following the Boy Scout Law.

- Trustworthy - Not simply honesty but trusting that a fellow being knows what is best for themselves.
- Loyal - To our fellow man.
- Helpful - In every way, extend a hand and assist those in need.
- Friendly - Consider our actions and the impact on those that would/could be a friend.
- Courteous - It would also extend to not invading the privacy of one's sexuality.
- Kind - The actions you take are to be kind and caring.
- Obedient - Know your role and be obedient to God's will. All that happens is at the hand of God and therefore God's will.
- Cheerful - Bring joy to the lives of others.
- Thrifty -
- Brave - Do the right thing even when it's not easy or convenient.
- Clean - In thoughts and deeds.
- Reverent - For all beings and things.

I cannot state that I am well versed in the human condition however, I am keenly aware that homosexuals have existed since the beginning of time and have contributed to our lives in ways most of us will never realize as simply "human beings".

I value my Scouting experience and the award rank of Eagle Scout more than any diploma, certificate or award that I have received throughout my life. Yes, there were boys that were gay in our troop and we camped, hiked, worked and held them as brothers in this wonderful fraternity.

Discrimination is not acceptable. It is times and issues like these that cause me significant heartache for an institution I hold dear.

Respectfully and in Honor of All that My Eagle Scout Rank Dictates,

Calvin L. Harrell, Jr.
Troop 274