Scoutmaster's Moment
Winter Court of Honor – December 13, 2021
Written and delivered by Troop 150 Scoutmaster Todd G. Bolick

Resolution

Setting: Scouts will be asked to raise their hand to provide a New Year's Resolution on Scouting. They'll stand from their seat to provide the New Year Resolution. If not enough volunteer, I will randomly select some Scouts.

We are concluding a year like no other! Through the first four months of this year, our only campout was a virtual one where Scouts camped in their backyard and joined the troop via Zoom. Other usual annual events, like our Men's breakfast, Scout Sunday, and so many others were either canceled or likewise held on Zoom.

Finally, in the spring, we started to see safe ways to resume Scouting, and we did so cautiously. In April, we held our first troop in-person event, a hike in DC, and in May we held our first campout in 17 months! The adult leadership was concerned that with two years of Scouts who had never camped with us before and with older Scouts whose skills were likely rusty, that the campout would be very difficult but not very fun. Quite the opposite proved true, our youth leadership rose to the challenge of training new generations of Scouts in Scouting and Troop 150 ways and the patrols each completed a successful campout while having a blast building fires, cooking, performing community service, and getting back to playing games like Manhunt and Capture the Flag.

The next test was going to Goshen. Since Goshen opened in 1967, Troop 150 has been there each year. As Stan, Lance, and our Unit Commissioner will remember, the troop even endured the Goshen flood of the mid-90s, and as I can

tell you, we persisted through the derecho in 2012, and we continued on at Goshen, through what was maybe the troop's hardest test, one summer at Camp Olmsted in the early-2000s! But in 2020, for the first time, Goshen was closed for the summer and we could not attend.

After only one campout under our belt during this new climate, we were set to make our return to Goshen. As the Troop rallied on July 4th, prior to our departure to summer camp, I proclaimed:

> "Perhaps it's fate that today is the Fourth of July, and you will once again be fighting for our freedom. Not from COVID, Camp Olmsted, or black bears, but from the annihilation of our own troop legacy."

While that was a bit of hyperbole, it also had truth in that if Goshen had not been successful this summer, it may have dramatically hindered our troop's progress in resuming Scouting. I ended that battle cry with a call to win the Honor Oar. However, it was a call I was not sure we could answer. Though, at Goshen, our Scouts once again rose to the high bar set for them and not only thrived by earning Merit Badges, making fires for each breakfast and dinner, and having lots of fun, but they also earned multiple perfect campsite inspections! That's a feat I had never seen before. Not only did we win the Honor Oar, but we also earned Best Troop at the Camp-wide event, the demanding to attain Camp-time Adventure Award, and most impressively, the coveted Troop of the Week distinction!

Coming off of those incredible achievements, our troop continued to thrive in this new reality by having successful, though challenging canoeing (we'll forget the thunder and trains), orienteering, obstacle course, and of course our favorite November campout tradition of our Thanksgiving campout! We also continued to perform service to the community with Eagle projects and projects at camps. What

I am most proud of from our troop's recent activity though is how we performed in Scouting for Food this year. That was yet another program that was impacted last year, where we had a much smaller but still remarkable one ton of food collected. This year, our troop again, rose to the task, and covered each of our 27 map territories and through lots of hard work, collected 7,776lbs of food through 224 hours of community service. I'll emphasize, that is 3.88 tons of food! The church volunteer who manages the AUMC Heritage Center's food pantry told me that the impact from this collection could not be over-stated as they are serving over 300 hungry families a week.

I am very proud of how our troop has risen this year. Each of our Scouts, from the youngest to the oldest, has set the example! We have risen from starting the year with canceled events and a virtual campout to collecting literal tons of food for our community. You have not only achieved getting back in to Scouting, but we have achieved some truly extraordinary accomplishments that show just how great our troop is.

Now, looking ahead, we have another daunting year to come with a full calendar of events to summit. Each year, at this time, we think about what New Year's resolution we'd like to commit to. I'm going to ask some Scouts what they are going to resolve to accomplish next year to continue and push past our amazing accomplishments this year. Maybe it is going skiing for the first time or maybe it is to rank up by two ranks or to earn a rare Scouting award or to get prepared to thrive at summer camp next summer, which for some of you, may be the first time!

[Ask Scouts to raise their hand to volunteer a New Year's Resolution for Scouting]
Great work Troop and have a Happy New Year!