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**LEARNING AND CONSTRUCTING MEANING:  
ADULTS VOLUNTEERING IN THE  
BOY SCOUTS**

A Thesis in

Adult Education

By

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## ABSTRACT

This phenomenological study examined and critically began to analyze the experience of six adults who volunteer with the Boy Scouts of America. The investigation was grounded by the notion that learning helped these adults define and construct meaning of their volunteer role. The study began by exploring the relationship between learning and volunteerism, including the relationship of adult education and volunteerism. The history, organizational structure, social and power issues past and present of the Boy Scouts of America were explored. The analysis was framed around the organizational principle that the experience of the participants could be told through the metaphoric lens of a story.

Using informal conversational taped interviews as the primary means of data collection, three main themes and ten subsuming themes emerged. The research found that learning, as informed by the field of adult education, was present across various levels of the experience of these volunteers. The role of learning was evident in the desire of the adults to ensure learning among the youth enrolled in the program, learning was identified in the outdoor aspects of the Scouting program, and learning was discussed by the participants regarding the social aspects as these adults served in their volunteer capacity.

The study concluded, through an analysis of the responses of the participants that these volunteers expressed the need to be proficient in their volunteer role. The Boy Scouts of America provides their volunteers the opportunity for learning through training, meetings, publications, and an on-line learning center. Suggestions for future research on the experience of Scouting volunteers in the field of adult education are given, including research on how adult volunteers with a military background construct meaning of their Scouting experience, how adults describe evaluation of their volunteer role, the communication process among the adult

volunteers, and the rewarding and recognition of adult volunteers involved in the Boy Scouts of America.

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## Preface

### *Grounding Myself as a Researcher*

Since high school I have been involved in clubs and organizations. While I was in high school I was a member of the Science Club. In college, my extracurricular experience consisted of an academic club, a fraternal organization, a historical society, and student government. Currently, in mid-life I am involved in fraternal, religious, and youth organizations. Being married and having children has actually increased my involvement with volunteer organizations.

My spouse also is currently involved in volunteering. During the past several years she has been involved with the Parent Teacher Organization, and youth religious programs. When she went looking for a local Daisy (Kindergarten) Girl Scout group for our daughters to join and found that one did not exist, she contacted the Girl Scouts of America and founded a local unit. Her unit now serves twenty-five girls. Not only are my wife and I both involved in volunteering, but we also tend to be elected to serve in leadership roles.

I can certainly say that I enjoy the social aspects of volunteering and meeting people. I appreciate the fact that having served as an adult volunteer leader in my son's Cub Scout unit and now Boy Scout unit permits me to spend quality time with my son. It is not always easy to obtain quality father-son time in the fast pace of modern society. There is also another factor at play for me in my volunteer experience. I want to learn. In the science club in high school, I wanted to learn more about science. In the historical society and in a religious organization setting, I wanted to learn more about history and my religion.

In my volunteer experience with the Cub Scouts, and now the Boy Scouts, I can say that I enjoy meeting new people and learning, but the learning has taken on additional meaning. An example from my experience with the Boy Scouts will help illustrate some of the learning that occurs in the Boy Scout program. When I volunteered with the Boy Scouts, I was not certain that I could competently perform in the role of an adult leader. My perceived belief was that it would be a challenge performing in this role. If I did not meet this gap in proficiency, and the parents saw me not performing to a certain standard, and the boys who were in my charge did not perceive me as competent, I would feel embarrassed and inadequate about what I was hoping to accomplish with the program. What if when we went camping I did not set up and run the camp correctly? I needed to be proficient in setting up the camp for the Cub Scouts. I would not have persisted in my volunteer role and I would have failed due to a lack of proficiency. It was this result of my perceived gap in my abilities that directed me to take the training courses offered by the Boy Scouts of America. It was this need for proficiency that caused me to seek out information on the Boy Scouts of America website. It was this need for proficiency that caused me to visit the local library and take out books on camping and Boy Scout program. It was my need for proficiency that was my rationale for learning.

My interest in being an adult leader with the Boy Scouts would soon intertwine with my interest in pursuing a doctoral degree in adult education. I had a thought about what I wanted to research that came to me while attending a Cub Scout Leader Basic Training session (Boy Scouts of America, November 2, 2003) during the fall of 2002. Myself and others were attending the training session as part of the Penn's Woods Council. I was amazed that so many adults were taking part in the training and how well the training was conducted. I was also amazed that

the council offered other training sessions on various topics (Penn's Wood Council, November 2, 2003).

I had taken some adult education courses on the doctoral level at Penn State, but had stepped out for a number of years. My prior experience taking classes in the adult education program was favorable, but it lacked direction, it lacked anxiety, and it lacked angst. Now I thought that I had a topic for my research. Seeing others participate in my lived experience of volunteering, I had a belief that others also shared this experience. As noted by van Manen (1990) it is appropriate to begin thinking about research from a personal experience. That "in drawing up personal descriptions of lived experiences, the phenomenologist knows that one's own experiences are also the possible experiences of others." (p. 54). I would ask other adult volunteers about their learning experience in the Boy Scouts. At the beginning of the Fall 2003 semester at the Pennsylvania State University, University Park campus, I had an anxiety. I did not recognize that I had an anxiety as such, but I had a question that needed quieted. I had an anxiety that I believed could be addressed through some sort of academic research (I.E. Baptiste, personal communication, September 24, 2003). I wanted to share my learning experience in the Boy Scout program with others in the field of adult education.

I began participating in and observing others learning in the Boy Scouts events. I attended my first committee meeting for my son's pack while serving as an Assistant Den Leader. I had expressed an interest in helping out in order to be with my son and share some quality father-son time. The pack that my son participated in met in a space provided by a sponsoring organization. In this case, the sponsoring agent was a church. The committee meeting that I attended was held monthly and consisted not only of all the adult volunteers who worked directly with the youth, but also those adults who served only on a committee level and acted as a liaison with the

sponsoring agent (church), or in the case of our committee served as the treasurer and secretary for the pack. Some adult volunteers served on the committee level simply to act as mentors to the unit and provide advice and guidance. This first committee meeting was the annual planning meeting where the dates of important events, such as, the pinewood derby (wooden cars raced on a downhill track by gravity), the selection of participation in certain parades, hoagie sales, the date for the annual banquet, etc. were selected. At the meeting new adult leaders, such as me at the time, and other adults who perhaps were volunteering for the first time to work with youth, and even more seasoned members were looking for things to do to perform as adult leaders and share ideas. We were provided with a program booklet entitled *Cub Scout Program Helps 2002-2003: Complete Plans for Den and Pack Meetings*. We were also advised to consult the web site for useful information, and advised of training sessions, some of which were mandatory to attend to serve the youth.

I welcomed the opportunity to attend this first organizational planning committee meeting. The meeting lasted almost five hours and included ordering pizza for everyone, and a couple of smoke breaks outside for the smokers of the group. Most of the non-smokers also went outside to take a break and to get out of the basement of the church. This first planning committee meeting was held in August. The weather outside was pleasant. The learning experience that was going on inside the basement of the church, such as, learning the dates of important events, sharing how-to-do things, looking through program planning literature with discussions and visuals of how-to-do projects with the boys did not stop during the pizza and smoke breaks. In addition to the learning that was occurring during the structured meeting, very fruitful discussions and learning occurred during these breaks. I wanted to do a good job with my volunteer experience and be proficient in what I was doing. This was even more evident to me

during the first few weeks that I served as an adult volunteer with a Tiger (first grade) Den. Each Tiger Cub Scout is required to have a parent stay with him during meetings. I wanted to be proficient at what I was doing. Even after I did it a couple of times I needed new ideas and additional learning to be successful at being an adult volunteer leader.

A few weeks into the volunteer experience I attended my first official mandatory training session. This first training was conducted over a two-day, back-to-back weekday evening sessions. The training sessions were conducted in the basement of a different church a couple of miles away from where my son's pack met. Approximately all of the 30 adults were new to the Scouting program. It was not only because it was mandatory, but because it was a way of learning to be a good adult volunteer and to know what I was doing that I chose to attend. I could honestly say, having earned a Master Degree in Adult Education, and as one who had taken doctoral adult education coursework, I was surprised how well run the training sessions were and the expertise of the materials and delivery of information during the training sessions. The training sessions were team taught by a group of seasoned volunteers with a wealth of information. A video and a powerpoint presentation were shown to the group. Both the powerpoint and the video were produced by the National Boy Scouts of America Council. The volunteer trainers were excellent in their presentations adding to the learning that was going on with their own experience. New adult volunteers were broken down into groups to discuss topics and learn from each others experience through andragogical methods. We were also shown projects that we could do during the meeting. This was a form of social learning, we would observe one or more of the seasoned adult volunteers do a craft or a project and then repeat them right then or at a later time. The observable behavior was something that we could draw upon in the future if needed.

Later, as my son got older and I continued serving as an adult leader with his pack, the learning continued. We began camping overnight. Prior to the camping experience we went to a day-long training session on camping and how to engage the youth in the camping and outdoor experience. Although the training was for adults to learn and later share the learning with the youth who participate in the Scouting program, me and the other participants were fully engaged in the learning and actively participated in the discussion. This type of training and learning at meetings occurred throughout my Scouting experience.

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### *Overview*

This study researched how adults describe and construct meaning of their learning experience as volunteers in the Boy Scouts of America. The study consisted of a group of adult volunteers in one Scouting district in Pennsylvania. The proficiency theory of Knox (1977) and the social learning theory of Bandura (1986) was used to develop a greater understanding of the adults' volunteer experience. Proficiency theory was chosen to assist with an understanding of the experience because of the training manuals, video tapes, web sites, and training sessions developed by the Boy Scouts of America to assist adults in becoming proficient in their role as adult volunteers. Adults in this district seek out this information and attend training sessions to become proficient in their volunteer role. Social learning theory applies to the volunteer experience in this district as numerous learning situations these adult volunteers encounter, involve demonstrations and modeling that the adult volunteers may be called upon at a later time to reconstruct and draw upon.

Volunteerism has been a part of adult education since the inception of the adult education field (Ilsley, 1989). Elsley (1993) states volunteerism is the 'third wave' of society, along with government and business. Volunteerism contributes to social capital and is part of the social fabric of the United States (Putman, 2000). Adult educators have recognized the importance of learning in the voluntary sector (Brookfield, 1983; Creyton, 1999; Fiset, Freeman, Ilsley, & Snow, 1987; Ilsley, 1989; Rose, 1996; Ross-Gordon, & Dowling, 1995). This study will contribute to the body of knowledge regarding this important aspect of society. It will also bring

to the field of adult education insight into the learning experience of the many adults who participate with the Boy Scouts of America program. As a manual in the Boy Scouts of America states, “Scouting thrives because of its volunteers and could not exist without them” (Boy Scouts, 1999, p. 1). Lord Baden Powell is credited with conceiving the Scouting program for boys in England in 1907. Shortly after he began the program he turned his thoughts to the involvement of adults. He knew the program could not succeed without the involvement of adults, and as a result produced *The Scoutmasters Handbook* for the education of adults participating in Scouting. The Boy Scouts of America have a rich history of adult involvement dating to 1910 (Boy Scouts of America, April 30, 2003). By 1921 there were 16,685 Scoutmasters in the Boy Scouts of America (Dean, 1992). Today, adult membership in the Boy Scouts of America is 1.2 million (Boy Scouts of America, January 26, 2005). Clearly, the Boy Scouts of America is an important factor in society and what needs to be investigated is the experience of these adults.

### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this study was to examine and critically begin to analyze the experience of adults who volunteer with the Boy Scouts. While research has been conducted into the motivation of why adults volunteer, who volunteers, and what the outcomes of volunteering are for the adults, there exists a gap in the literature providing what Stake (1995) would refer to as a *rich thick* description of adults volunteering with youth serving organizations, particularly in this case, the Boy Scouts of America. Potentially an outcome of this study is to inform the Boy Scouts of America and other volunteer organizations of the experience of their volunteers. Phenomenology was selected to conduct this research. Phenomenology was selected as the

qualitative research methodology because phenomenology seeks to describe and interpret human phenomena from the experience of those adults who have shared in a similar experience.

### *Research Questions*

This study was grounded in the proficiency theory of Knox (1977) and the social learning theory of Bandura (1986) to reflect upon how adults construct meaning of their volunteer experience with the Boy Scouts of America through learning. The following research questions were used to ground (Rossman & Rallis, 2003) and guide this study:

- How do selected adults serving as volunteers within a Boy Scouts of America district in Pennsylvania describe (in a phenomenological sense) their volunteer experience?  
How do these adults construct meaning of their volunteer experience through learning?
- How do the adult volunteers describe their learning experience and relate learning to their overall volunteer experience within a Boy Scouts of America district in Pennsylvania?
- How do the adult volunteers recognize and construct meaning of their volunteer experience from the organizational context of this district in the Boy Scouts of America?
- To develop a richer meaning of the adult volunteer experience regarding learning in this district of the Boy Scouts of America, the study examined, from the adult volunteers perspective, the following:

Types of training offered to adult volunteers in this district.

Media that is available for adult volunteers in this district.

Activities that support learning that are available to the adult volunteers who serve in this district.

## Chapter 2

# LITERATURE REVIEW: VOLUNTEERISM, LEARNING, AND THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

### *Introduction*

This chapter is divided into three sections. The chapter begins with a discussion of the history of volunteering in the United States and its importance to society in contributing to social capital. Social capital is defined as the interconnectedness of people's lives that provides for good will, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse that permits a community to become a social unit (Putman, 2000). The Boy Scouts are a part of this history and social capital. Placing the Boy Scout program in the context of volunteerism in the United States assists in developing a greater understanding of the volunteer experience. Developing a historical perspective on volunteerism increases the understanding of the modern day volunteer experience of adults in the Scouting program. Scouting does not exist in a vacuum by itself separate from the history of volunteerism in the United States. Placing the historical context first enables an expanded intimacy of the role of the adult Boy Scout volunteer experience in society and its importance in the context of history. The first section also defines what it means to volunteer.

The second section of this chapter explores learning and volunteerism. Learning is an established part of the volunteer experience. A connection of volunteerism to the field of adult education exists in the literature. This discussion also presents two adult learning theories, the proficiency theory of Knox and the social learning theory of Bandura and relates these two theories to voluntary organizations, specifically, adults volunteering with the Boy Scouts of

America. Observing the training of the adults participating in the Boy Scout program reveals social learning is a part of the training program. As shown in this chapter, learning is a part of the volunteer experience of adults.

The last section of this chapter introduces the history and organizational structure of the Boy Scouts of America as it pertains to the adults in the organization. The modern day Boy Scout program brings with it elements from its historical beginnings. Some of the current structure of the Boy Scouts goes back to the origins of the beginning of the Scouting program in the United States in 1910. The current Scout Oath (Appendix A) used in the Scouting program today is a variation of the Oath used in the early Scouting program. Social issues surrounding the Boy Scout program past and present are described to provide a further richness when examining the experience of the adult volunteer. Social issues are presented to provide the social context in which the experience of the volunteer in the Boy Scout program of today exists. The last part of the third section presents relevant research centered on adult volunteers in two other youth serving organizations: 4-H and the Girl Scouts of America. The research of the Boy Scout program is at times presented together with research of the 4-H and Girl Scouts of America programs (Helbling, 1986; Kleinfeld, & Shinkwin, 1983; Raskoff, 1994). Taken together, the history of volunteerism in the United States, the association of learning with participation in a voluntary organization, the history and social context of the Boy Scout program, and a review of appropriate research of the 4-H and Girl Scouting programs, will lay the appropriate foundation, thus enabling a further clarity of the adult volunteer experience and how adults construct meaning through learning in the Boy Scout program.

### *Volunteering in the United States and its Importance*

The spirit of volunteering is a large part of the social fabric of the United States.

Volunteerism in the United States can be traced back to the arrival of the earliest settlers. Ellis & Noyes (1990) note, “the European settlers of the new American colonies all had the same priority: Survival” (p. 17). As a result, cooperation with each other was a means to survive. Aslanian & Brickell (1980) note, “America has always been a land of volunteers” (p. 86). By this they mean the early settlers cooperated together and volunteered to assist each other for their common good and survival. What some settlers did not know how to do, other settlers showed them. They faced the challenge of living collectively to survive.

Today, volunteerism continues to flourish in the United States and has been called the third wave of society (Elsley, 1993). Elsley (1993) views volunteerism as one of the three units that creates the American experience, along with government and the private sector. However, there remains a lack of understanding and a lack of analysis of the voluntary sector. While government and business are viewed as powerful players, espousing a large influence in who we are as a nation and how we live our lives, volunteering in general is not thought of as a meaningful contributor to our way of life. As Rechlin (1982) notes, “one of the problems the sector faces is that it is both everywhere and invisible” (p. 22). By invisible, he does not mean we are unaware of volunteering but that there is a lack of understanding of its scope. Rechlin (1982) goes on to say, “we are all involved with many of its organizations, but we do not really recognize its roles or even its existence as a distinctive sector” (p. 22). We are aware of the volunteering that others or we may be undertaking, but an understanding of the vastness of volunteering, the sheer number of adults volunteering, and the impact volunteering has on society escapes most of us. We hear of the Gross Domestic Production, a total accounting of our

efforts at work (business), and we learn of total government spending, the dollar amount and scope of government projects. Today, we hear of the total number of United States troops on the ground in a foreign land, but we do not hear much of the voluntary sector as a whole or the effect that it has on society. But as Rechin (1982) notes, there is a lack of understanding for the volunteer sector, let alone the experience of adult volunteers in one specific volunteer setting.

In 2000 Putman sounded an alarm about the declining number of adults participating in voluntary organizations and his concerned about the loss of social capital. In response to this decline he presented an argument for the need of adult participation in voluntary organizations as part of the social fabric of the United States, contributing to not only the economic well being of society, but also the social fabric of America, such as voting, networking, and the well being of our communities.

Ilsley (2002) also notes the importance of volunteerism and a civil society. He suggests we develop an expanded view of volunteerism to fully appreciate the vastness of volunteering. His expanded view of volunteerism contains the modern phenomenon of someone creating a website that may be of help to someone else searching the web for information. According to Ilsley, this form of volunteering also contributes to social action. The person who developed the website did so with an altruistic motive, and someone else benefited from the information by reading the website.

### What is Volunteering

What does it mean to be called a volunteer? Ilsley (1989) states an adult volunteer is one who chooses to commit oneself to a cause or to others in a deliberate spirit of service, in response to one or more perceived social needs, within an organizational context, and in return for some

psychic benefit (p. 103). A successful volunteer experience hinges on mutual satisfaction of volunteer and organizational needs.

Vineyard (1993) notes that to be a truly volunteer experience the actions of those adults volunteering must be voluntary, intentional, arising from one's own free will. A volunteer acts by choice and without constraint or guarantee of reward. Ilsley (1990) adds that "free will is the power to exercise choice uncoerced by fate, by other individuals, or groups. It is an inseparable part of any definition of volunteerism. Voluntary action without free will implies coercion" (p. 9).

Ilsley (1990) divides volunteerism into two categories: formal and informal. Formal volunteerism is volunteering for an organization in a structured context and a coordinated way to meet the needs of society as defined by that organization. Volunteers feel rewarded by psychological or other means. Informal volunteerism is an individual's spontaneous expression of service. This expression of service is in response to a personally perceived social need that is preformed freely. The experience of the adult volunteers involved with Scouting operates within the structure of the Boy Scouts of America program. The Boy Scouts of America is a formal volunteer setting and is subject to the rules and regulations of the Scouting program.

Although the organizational structure of the Boy Scouts conforms to what Ilsley (1990) defines as a formal volunteer setting, it should be noted that social action is imbedded in the Scouting program, and an awareness of this expanded view of volunteerism may increase the awareness of learning and the production of social action as a result of learning. An example of this is the interest of the Scouting program to protect the environment. An adult volunteer may become aware of an environmental issue while serving in the Scouting program. This adult then spontaneously takes this issue on in an informal way volunteering (social action) outside of the

Scouting program for a perceived need in society without being coerced in any way. Another example would come from the social issues of Scouting and the role of God in the Scouting program. God is mentioned as a part of the Scout Oath (Appendix A).

In 2000 Putman was concerned a trend was developing, particularly since the 1960's because the number of adults volunteering had declined. The concern was that a decrease in the number of adults volunteering would result in a decrease of social engagement and social capital. Social capital is built or constructed through the networking and trusting relationships that occur in activities and organizations in which adults participate (Balatti & Falk, 2002). The relevance of social capital theory to this study of the learning experience of adult volunteers is noted by Balatti and Falk (2002). Balatti and Falk (2002) implicate effective learning through the participation of adults in voluntary organizations. This effective learning is a part of the development of social capital. Social capital defines a way of life, contributes to societies, and makes communities strong. According to Putman (2000), a decline in social capital would affect the core of many enduring social values of Americans, including education and children's welfare, safe and productive neighborhoods, economic prosperity, health and happiness, and democracy.

In 2000 Putman looked at numerous volunteer organizations and noted that adult participation in these organizations had grown steadily up until World War Two. After the war, a sharp increase was seen in most of the organizations he reviewed. Then, beginning in the 1960's, a steady decline began generally in adult participation within volunteer organizations. It is interesting to note, however, that despite the overall decline in adults volunteering in organizations, the number of adult volunteers in the Boy and Girl Scouts did decline in participation as many of the other organizations did. Putman (2000) attempted to make an

argument for what was causing this decline in voluntary organizations. He stated that several factors were at play in the declining number of adults participating in organizations, such as, television, suburbia, the pressures of money, and women entering the workforce. No matter what the reason, when the volunteer sector experiences a decrease in participation, Putman (2000) noted, a valuable adult learning experience is lost that could affect citizenship and the socioeconomic well being of members of society. However, the decline in the number of adults volunteering that Putman was reporting reversed in the waning years of the twentieth century. As noted by Fox (2000) from the Independent Gallup Survey,

The number of people volunteering reached an all time high in 1999, with an estimated 109 million people, representing an 18% increase over the 93 million adults who volunteered in 1995. Fifty-six percent of the United States population participates in non-profit associations or volunteer work. (p. 42, 43)

Adults serving in the Boy Scout program would fall under the category of educational/youth volunteer service. According to the U.S. Department of Labor in 2005, educational/youth service accounted for 26.2 percent of all volunteer activity. (U. S. Department of Labor, 2005).

### *Learning and Volunteerism*

#### Adult Education and Volunteerism

Ilsley (2002) has been calling attention to the learning that is associated with volunteering, particularly to the field of adult education. He reports that since the inception of the field, learning in the voluntary sector has been recognized as important by adult educators. He also

notes that voluntary organizations perform adult-education-related activities and that adult educators realize the value of learning in voluntary service (Ilsley, 1989). Ilsley goes on to say that voluntary organizations can be thought of as adult education settings, and he notes the value of placing adults in volunteer situations of deliberate and sustained learning. Research supports a connection between voluntary action and adult education. Volunteering influences a person's pattern of learning. Learning is a part of the volunteer experience (Fiset, Freeman, Ilsley, & Snow, 1987).

The literature on volunteering is large and vast. Particularly in the last thirty years (Smith, 2001) there have been considerable publications dealing with volunteering. Commonly cited theorists involving volunteer motivation are Maslow, Herzberg, McClelland and Atkinson (Hsieh, 2000; McCurley, & Lynch, 1996). The reason that they are cited so frequently in the literature is due to the importance that seems to be placed on the motivation of adults to volunteer. Studies seem to focus on how the volunteers got to the volunteer experience. What motivated them to begin volunteering? Do the adults have a need for self-actualization, or a need for recognition and power? Then, once adults are in the volunteer experience, there is a focus on the demographics of volunteers. How many are male, how many female, and what are their ages and their race? While these motivation and demographic studies are of importance in providing information about volunteers, they do not look qualitatively at the experience of the volunteer or specifically the learning that is occurring within a specific volunteer setting.

### Three Motivation Theories

The literature on motivating volunteers often utilizes three theorists: Maslow's self actualization theory, the two-factor theory of Herzberg, and the work of Atkinson and

McClelland, who identified three distinct motivators (Henderson, 1981, Hsieh, 2000; Smith, 2001). Because the literature on volunteerism discusses motivation to volunteer, a brief description of the work of these theorists who have been cited in the motivation to volunteer literature is warranted.

Maslow (1970) theorizes that adults have needs and once those needs are met they seek the highest need of self-actualization. The needs in order from the lowest to the highest are: physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization. Once one need is met the adult seeks the next level. Indeed, “the majority of the literature concerning volunteerism is based on the needs theory approach” (Heibling, 1986, p. 37). Knowles (1972) states he believes volunteer organizations have the potential to motivate adults to volunteer based on the needs theory of Maslow.

Herzberg (1993) developed a two-factor theory known as the motivator-hygiene theory. Hygiene factors relate to a person’s working condition, such as policies, interpersonal relationships, status, security, and money. The hygiene factors in and of themselves do not motivate people, but the lack of the hygiene factors de-motivates them. Motivators include achievement, recognition, challenging work, responsibility, and the opportunity for growth and development. Wilson (1976) noted that at a workshop of over 70 directors of volunteers, Herzberg’s motivators were clearly present in remarks stated as motivators for adults to become volunteers.

Atkinson (1958, 1964) and McClelland (1961, 1970) identified three distinct motivations that affect people’s work-related behavior. The motivators are: the need for achievement, the need for power, and the need for affiliation. The achievement motivator is defined as taking pride in

accomplishment; affiliation describes the concern for one's relationship with others, and the power motivator is wanting to have an impact or influence over others.

As noted, much of the volunteer literature looks at the motivation to volunteer (Henderson, 1981, Hsieh, 2000; Smith, 2001). Some studies look at the demographics of the volunteer and who volunteers (Zappala, G., & Burrell, T., 2002; Rohs, F.R., & Warmbrod, R.J., 1985). However, my study is interested in learning in the voluntary sector, particularly how adults describe and construct meaning through learning. Rechlin (1982) suggests that the motivation to volunteer is not the same as a rationale to volunteer. He defines motivation as an "individuals' predisposition to do volunteer work" (p.25). The approach of my study was not look at the motivation to become a volunteer or how one comes to volunteering, but the experience of the volunteer who has already committed to a volunteer agency. Wlodkowski (1985) also separates motivation away from commitment, stating, "motivation ... deals with why people behave as they do" (1985, P. 44). Instead of examining why people behave as they do and join a volunteer agency, this study looked at their experience after they have committed to serving in the organization. Rechlin (1982) goes on to say that a rationale is a justification for volunteering. By this he means adults justify spending time volunteering because of the learning involved. Rechlin (1982) places adult education under rationales. Fiset, Freeman, Ilsley, & Snow (1987) advise that learning is a neglected reason as to why adults volunteer. Their research indicates that adults may choose or not choose to volunteer based on the learning opportunities. Indeed, in the literature on adult volunteerism, motivations to volunteer and learning in the voluntary sector are kept apart by chapter (Ilsley, 1990), or totally separate in the research. One body of research may emphasize motivation (Henderson, 1981, Hsieh, 2000; Smith, 2001) and another learning (Brookfield, 1983, Cross, 1991, Ilsley, P.J., & Niemi, 1981, Serafino, 2001). This research will

discuss the experience of the adult volunteer with the Boy Scouts, in particular how these adults construct meaning through the learning aspect of their experience. As noted earlier, there exists a gap in the literature that critically analyzes the experience of these volunteers. A potential outcome of this study is to inform the Boy Scouts and other volunteer organizations of the experience of their volunteers.

### Learning Theories and Volunteering

Despite the sometimes absence or lack of understanding of discussion of adult learning in the volunteer literature, it has been established that learning in the context of groups and clubs does occur (Rose, 1996). Creyton notes, “there is a growing importance attached to the learning component within volunteering” (Creyton, 1999. p. 30). Reviewing adult education literature on adult learning reveals studies by researchers, such as, Tough (1979), who cites that adults engage in 700 hours per year in purposeful learning. Brookfield (1986) mentions informal learning takes place in voluntary organizations and involves an exchange of skills and knowledge. Callender (1992), citing the work of Knowles (1980), argues that adult education can be best seen as self-education. He cites numerous voluntary agencies to argue his point. In addition, Ross-Gordon (1998) speaks of older learners, “learning through self-directed means or participation in nonformal environments such as churches, clubs, libraries and senior centers” (p. 230). Ross-Gordon and Dowling (1995) call attention to the fact that learning within the framework of voluntary settings goes beyond the achievement of new information but also includes attitudinal change and attitudes about self-learning. In the voluntary setting the participants describe that they learned how to work in groups with others and develop “patience, trust, acceptance, respect, tolerance and cultural sensitivity” (p, 312). The participants also

describe changes in attitude about themselves; they took greater risks on projects or in speaking in front of groups than they might have in their work. Once they were successful in working together to complete a project or with some risk taking in the voluntary sector, they reported taking this attitudinal learning to other settings and were successful. Ross-Gordon and Dowling (1995) demonstrate through their research that learning goes beyond knowledge in the voluntary setting; it also goes to attitudes about self and attitudes about others.

Learning is an important psychological function gained through volunteering. Narushima (2005) conducted a qualitative study of older volunteers in Toronto, focusing on the six psychological functions associated with volunteering from a study conducted by Snyder and Clary (2003). Narushima (2005) found that few program coordinators in formal volunteer settings perceived the needs for volunteers to learn skills and were not aware of the strong incentive of the volunteers for self-development. The long-term volunteers found that what they learned through monthly meetings, guest speakers, workshops, video and book libraries, and regular and social opportunities made them feel more competent. As the volunteers became more competent in their roles, they found they could take on expanded roles serving as a volunteer. The more involved they became as a result of learning, the more hours they put in each week volunteering than those volunteers who did not undertake a volunteer role where learning was involved, such as a volunteer doing simple office tasks.

The participants in the research of Narushima (2005) found continued learning rewarding in community volunteer settings. Narushima (2005) indicated the volunteers did not realize how much learning would go into their volunteer role when they first started volunteering and that the learning aspect delighted them all the more once they began volunteering. She divided the learning that occurred into 'integrative' and 'instrumental' knowledge and skills. Integrative

learning includes inter-personal skills, leadership ability, and understanding differences in people and culture. Instrumental learning involves practical knowledge about specific topics and technical skills.

Mowen and Sujan (2005) have taken the proposal of Clary, Snyder, Ridge, Copeland, Stukas, Haugan, et al. (1998) suggesting that one reason for volunteering is the fulfillment of the motive to understand something through the learning that occurs as a result of volunteering. Based on the motive that adults come to understand something as a result of a volunteer experience, they conducted a positivistic study to determine if the need for learning served as a functional motive antecedent prior to the volunteer experience. The results of their study concluded an antecedent motive for volunteering was the need for learning. Along with the traits of altruism and the need for activity were the other motives associated with adults considering becoming volunteers. The need for learning as part of the experience of the adult volunteers in Scouting may indeed be a part of the decision of adults to become involved in the experience. Some of the conversation during the interview stage of this research probed the adult volunteers' decision to become involved in the experience of Scouting due to the possible learning that might occur as a result of participation in the program.

Program planning books, such as, Cookson (1998) and Houle (1996), also note learning takes place in voluntary organizations, and therefore there is a need to plan for such learning activities in the development of programming. Eldson (1995) studied 31 voluntary organizations and found general, specific, socialable, and attitudinal learning throughout.

Ilsley (1990) discusses three types of learning by volunteers. "Instrumental/didactic learning which includes skill training emphasizes uniformity and often is aimed at increasing professional appearance of an organization's volunteers" (Ilsley, 1990, p. 62). This type of learning is

generally associated with having volunteers meet a minimum level of intellectual competence to complete their volunteer assignments. The second type of learning is social/expressive. In this type of learning, “Volunteers in a wide variety of settings learn communication, trust, respect, compassion, and openness as a result of their experience” (Ilsley, 1990, p. 63). Another category of learning that Ilsley (1990) discusses is critical reflection. “This category is different from the others in that it involves turning inward” (pp. 63-64). Ilsley goes on to say, “It means deliberately analyzing one’s own politics, values, and priorities as well as those of society. Such learning is especially evident in volunteers involved in social and political movements and those who have made great sacrifices for the sake of a cause” (p. 64).

Ilsley (1990) identifies two learning theorists in his chapter on the importance of learning through voluntary action. The two theorists he mentions have theories of adult learning that can apply to the volunteer experience of adults in the Scouting program. He cites the psychological aspects of learning as noted by Knox (1977), and the social learning theory of Bandura (1986). My research examines how adults construct meaning and describe their learning experience while serving as adult volunteers with the Boy Scouts of America. The research was grounded with the work of Bandura (1986) and Knox (1977) to investigate adult learning in one district of the Boy Scouts of America. Specifically, the social learning theory of Bandura and the proficiency theory of Knox were used in developing a deeper understanding of the volunteer experience.

### Bandura

Albert Bandura developed a social learning theory from related observational learning theories. The social learning theory of Bandura “combines elements from both behaviorist and

cognitivist orientations, posits that people learn observing others” (Merriam & Cafarella, 1999, p. 258) to explain adult learning in groups. Bandura solidly places learning in the social context, focusing more on the cognitive processes in observation than on the subsequent behavior as a result of the observation. He believed the observation of an act could be separate from imitation of the act. He also presented as part of his social learning theory that learning that had occurred as a result of observation could be used vicariously and need not be imitated to learn the consequences of the behavior. This observation learning could also be used for self-regulation. To exemplify these statements regarding Bandura’s social learning theory, I will use an example from my participation with the Boy Scouts of America. During my Webolos adult volunteer outdoor training we observed trainers building a tent. We did not concurringly or immediately after the training build a tent, but we watched others undertaking the process. At a later time, when we would camp out with the youth of our group on a camping trip, we could use the cognitive information that we learned in a social setting to construct tents for our campsite. We may also learn as part of our observable social learning how to properly build a campfire and the importance of maintaining a safe distance from the fire. We may witness a demonstration of a campfire incorrectly built and inappropriate behavior near a fire. This demonstration may involve a tent being caught on fire. This type of knowledge would cause us to regulate our behavior around a campfire and add a further incentive to construct the campfire correctly. We also learned elements of first aid care by observing our trainers. We would hope never to be called upon to use our knowledge of first aid, but we had developed our knowledge through observation and could reconstruct it at a later time if called upon to do so.

## Knox

Knox (1977, 1986) in his research “provided comprehensive information regarding both adult learning and development” (Hiemstra, 1993, p. 40). The proficiency theory of Knox states that as adults enter a situation, such as, serving in a volunteer role, they wish to be proficient in what they do. They ask themselves if they possess the necessary knowledge and skills to perform in their volunteer role. Knox separates his adult proficiency theory from competence theory for children. Although they are similar, proficiency differs from competency in that proficiency theory involves performing or serving in a role. Competence implies knowledge of something while proficiency implies doing something successfully. “Knox’s proficiency theory centers on the gap between what adults currently know and what they want to know or be able to do” (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 286). The theory is driven by the gap between their current level of proficiency and their desired level. The adults’ perceived belief of the proficiency level needed to operate at or perform a task while serving as a volunteer creates this gap. An example from my experience in Scouting is that when I first had a group of youth in my charge, I wanted to know what I was doing and use my time with them productively. As part of my training we learned at what stage the boys I was supervising were educationally and emotionally. I also went over sample lesson plans for my Scout meetings with adults who had either accomplished the task that I was hoping to do or were adults learning the basics for the first time.

## Importance of Adult Learning Theories

Adult learning theories, such as the social learning theory of Bandura and the proficiency theory of Knox, help us understand the volunteer experience. An understanding of adult learning

will assist in this examination of how adults construct meaning of their voluntary experience. Learning provides a rationale for participating in a voluntary experience (Rechlin, 1982).

One of the extraordinarily powerful socio-economic potential of voluntary organizations according to Elsdon (1995) is that they cause their members to learn and change. Elsdon (1995) also notes the influence of learning in a volunteer organization goes beyond the volunteer themselves, but also to members of the volunteers' family, friends, and neighbors. He also remarks from his research volunteer learning can be in the generalist or specialist. Meaning that specialists concentrate on one topic and generalists have broader learning within their volunteer experience. He goes on to say that deliberate learning and change were obvious throughout the volunteer organizations that he researched. An understanding of adult learning theories in the voluntary sector will help make the volunteer experience more pleasant and rewarding for the volunteer and provide a more meaningful experience. Elsdon (1995) goes onto note that recognizing the value of learning in volunteer organizations can assist in some cases organizations in seeking funding.

Ilisley (1990) suggests learning to be a strong factor in the duration of adult volunteer service. Not only is learning itself important to the duration of volunteer service but also the type of learning. Learning that involves problem solving and critical reflection holds the volunteers' interest longer and extends their period of service more than learning that is rote and didactic. It would be in the best interest of volunteer program planners to be aware that not only learning, but also the type of learning can extend the duration of service of volunteers. Knowing that volunteers tend to stay for longer periods of time when learning occurs as part of the volunteer experience is a lesson for recruiting new volunteers. When new volunteers are recruited, a discussion of the learning that will occur as part of the volunteer experience may entice the

adults to take the step toward volunteer service. New and simulating learning may assist the volunteer by preventing burnout. If the volunteer is aware of and appreciates the learning and type of learning that occurs, the volunteer could better assist in providing direction for their volunteer experience and assessing their learning needs. As volunteers learn their role in their voluntary settings, they have the opportunity for a better volunteer service experience.

Learning is the rationale that volunteers may cite for explaining why they volunteer and continue to volunteer. The garden club member wants to learn new gardening techniques and share his knowledge with others. The museum volunteer wants to learn more about the museum's collection, while at the same time, sharing that information with visitors to the museum. I am a volunteer with the Boy Scouts because it provides me with the opportunity to become proficient at camping and the outdoors. Ilsley (1990) discusses volunteers at hospices. Volunteers at an AIDS hospice may wish to help AIDS victims and learn how to take care of AIDS patients as part of the volunteer experience. While the AIDS hospice volunteers may list their rationale for volunteering as the desire to satisfy an extrinsic, learning is still an integral part of their volunteer experience. Part of the volunteer experience is learning how to take care of seriously ill patients, not only their physical needs, but also their emotional needs. Furthermore, AIDS hospice volunteers also need to learn how to deal with their own emotions and feelings. Applying the proficiency theory of Knox (1980) to the experience of the present day AIDS hospice volunteer, the volunteer will need to feel proficient in assisting AIDS patients. Using the social learning theory of Bandura (1986), the present day AIDS volunteer may also learn through social modeling how to perform certain health care procedures when caring for AIDS patients. Without knowledge of the learning occurring in this and other volunteer situations, we would not fully understand the volunteer situation. The need for the volunteer to

experience an extrinsic reward may appear to overshadow the role of learning in the experience. However, failing to understand the need for learning is not fully appreciating the voluntary experience. In addition, failing to take into account the learning that occurs in a particular voluntary experience can make the volunteers feel inadequate and lead to a bad volunteer experience, not only for volunteers themselves, but those they are helping. If it were a bad experience as a result of a lack of learning, the volunteer may not ever volunteer again and cut their volunteer experience short. In the voluntary sector it is important to keep the learning needs of the volunteers in mind even after they have mastered the necessary proficiency. If the learning can be kept fresh with new or additional knowledge and problem solving for example, the adult education literature advises us the volunteer may continue for a longer duration of service (Ilsley, 1990). It should also be noted that volunteering is part of the social fabric of the United States. Volunteering has been described as the ‘third wave’ of our society (Elsley, 1993), along with government and business. In my view it is an important part of the social fabric of the United States. It is a part of society where individuals can matter in their community beyond work. Failing to take into account the value of learning and how learning occurs in the volunteer experience as a rationale for why adults volunteer, in my view lessens and weakens this important part of our life experience.

### Rationale for Adult Learning Theories – Evaluation

Evaluation of the voluntary experience is an important but under appreciated aspect of the voluntary experience (Ilsley, 1990). Not only is evaluation an important part of planning the volunteer experience, it needs to be done effectively. When preparing and reviewing data produced by an evaluation done for a voluntary agency, knowing the volunteers learning needs is

a vital part of the evaluation. Realizing that volunteers are seeking to be proficient in what they do as volunteers should be an aspect of the evaluation phase of volunteer program planning. During the evaluation process, from the beginning to the end of the volunteer experience, program planners need to keep in mind the need and value of learning (Ilsley, 1990). Knowing that learning is part of the volunteer experience should cause those evaluating formal volunteer organizations to be cognizant of the learning needs of the volunteers.

### *History and Organization of the Boy Scouts of America*

Moving from the history and importance of the voluntary sector in the United States and the understanding that learning occurs as a result of volunteering, we can now move into a discussion of the history of the Boy Scout program. By understanding the history and organization of the Boy Scouts we can come to a deeper meaning of the Scouting program as it exists today.

Dean (1992) states there is a lack of scholarly research on the history of the Boy Scouts. The lack of historical writing on the Boy Scouts is also noted by Putney (2002) who writes, “The centrality of the Boy Scouts in American life for nearly 100 years makes one wonder why so few histories have been written about the organization”. This statement on the lack of histories of the Scouting program is relevant to research in general about Scouting. For as large of a program that Scouting has been and continues to be in terms of the number of adults involved, one would think that a great deal of literature exists on the experience of the adult volunteers within the Scouting program. However, from this researchers’ perspective, a gap exists in the level of adult involvement with Scouting and research into the experience of those adult volunteers.

Dean (1992) presents a chronological history of Scouting with an emphasis on the early leaders of the program in the United States and discusses the early agenda of the Boy Scouts of America. Dean joined the Scouting program at the age of thirteen in 1923, served as an adult volunteer during the 1930's, became a paid professional of the Boy Scouts of America in 1943, and served as a professional for over thirty years, and retired in 1973. He writes that most people, when they think of the Scouting, think of it as a program for boys and girls; yet a third of the members are adults. He traces the history of Scouting and explains many of the current practices, awards, rituals, and recognitions of the Scouting program that would help shed light on the experience of the volunteer of today. Dean presents the early leaders of the Scouting program and what he calls the tools of the trade that are discussed frequently in the Scouting program: the Scout Oath, Scout Law, Scout Handbook, Merit Badges, the Insignia, and the uniform. He also traces the origins of some of the awards that adult volunteers can be presented: the Silver Buffalo, Silver Beaver, and Silver Antelope Awards. He then discusses the planning efforts and provides insight into the management of the Scouting program from the perspective of a paid professional.

The Boy Scouts of America officially began in the United States on February 8, 1910. Scouting began in the mind of Robert S.S. Baden-Powell in England a few years prior to that date. A detailed biography of Lord Baden-Powell can be found in Rosenthal (1984), and Jeal (1990). Lord Baden-Powell took a group of boys to the first Boy Scout camp on Brownsea Island off the English coast in 1907. The camp was deemed a success and he began working on a handbook for boys. Realizing the need of adult involvement in his Scouting program, he produced a *Scoutmasters Handbook*. The first *Scoutmasters Handbook* was published in 1913. Baden Powell was well aware of the need for adults in his program and the need for them to have

knowledge about the program. To pass on his belief of what the Scouting program should be like to other adults who were interested in Scouting, he also published his *Aids to Scoutmastership: A Guide for Scoutmasters on the Theory of Scout Training*.

The success of a Boy Scout program is now and has been since the beginning of the program determined by the leadership and ability of the adult volunteers (Dean, 1992). According to a Boy Scouts of America publication the Scouting program “thrives because of its volunteers and could not exist without them” (Boy Scouts of America, 1999, p.1). In 1921 there were 16,685 Scoutmasters in America (Dean, 1992). Today, there are 1.2 million adults volunteering with the Boy Scouts. Some may think only of youth involvement when the Boy Scouts are mentioned. However, it really is through the participation of volunteering adults that the Boy Scout program has grown and flourished.

### *Definitions and Organizational Structure of the Boy Scouts of America*

An understanding of the organizational structure of the Boy Scouts of America will assist with sharing in the learning experience of the adult volunteers. The Boy Scouts of America is an organization consisting of the National Council. The National Council is responsible for the administration of the Boy Scouting program in the United States. The headquarters for the National Council is Irving, Texas. Irving, in addition to being the location of the National Council is also the location of the National Boy Scouts of America museum and archives. The National Council sets policy, conducts research, and also develops training materials and maintains a web site, [www.scouting.org](http://www.scouting.org). The highest-ranking professional officer of the Boy Scouts of America conducts business out of the national office and has the title of Chief Scout Executive. On every level of Scouting, a committee supports the work of the Scouting

professional. The National Council is no exception; a national committee of adult volunteers supports the work of the Chief Scout Executive.

The Boy Scouts of America is then divided into councils. A Scouting professional known as a Scout Executive administers a council. Adult volunteers serving on the Council Committee support the council. Local Councils hold a charter from the National Council to promote Scouting in an assigned geographic territory. The council oversees the operation of the Boy Scout program on behalf of the National Council and has the ability to interpret and administer the Scouting program to the districts in its jurisdiction. There are 300 councils in the United States reporting to the National Council.

Councils are then divided into districts (Appendix B). This study is bounded by adult volunteers who serve in one district in Pennsylvania. According to *The District: How the District Carries out the Operational Mission of the Council* a Scouting district is a geographical area of the BSA local council. The number of districts in a council varies. One or more professional Scouts, known as District Executives, serve districts. The District Executives serve the aims of Scouting as well as the adult volunteers in the district. The number of District Executives in a given area varies by the size of the district. The district used in this study has one District Executive. Adult volunteers serve on a district committee in various roles as chairman of finance, membership, program, training, and unit service. The district carries out the mission of the council (chartered organization) and consists of units. Units may be associated with Cub Scouting (grades one to five), Boy Scouting (grades five to the age of eighteen), Venturing (Boy Scouts continuing beyond the age of eighteen) and Sporting programs. Units in the Cub Scout program are known as packs and headed by a Cub Master (volunteer). The pack is broken down by age into units called dens and headed by a Den Leader (volunteer).

Boy Scout units are called troops and are headed by a Scout Master (volunteer). The troops are broken down into patrols that are headed by youth elected by their peers to lead the activity of the patrol. The Venturing units are broken down into crews. Whether a unit is a Cub Scout, Boy Scout, Venturing, or Sports unit, they are all included under the umbrella of the Boy Scouts of America program. As noted, no professional Scouts are employed below the district executive. All of the various units of Scouting, Cub Scout, Boy Scout, venturing, and sports, are served by adult volunteers.

### Research of Adult Involvement in Scouting and Related Youth Serving Organizations

The Boy Scout literature is at times intertwined with the literature of the Girl Scout and 4-H programs under the topic of youth serving organizations. Research into each individual youth serving organizations (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and 4-H) often mentions one or all of the other organizations (Helbling, 1986; Kleinfeld, & Shinkwin, 1983; Raskoff, 1994). For this reason, this literature review on the Boy Scouts also includes selected research on the Girl Scout and 4-H programs. The literature selected to be reviewed has relevance to the adult volunteer serving either the Boy Scouts of America or another youth serving organization. The literature also has relevance to the learning that can occur in a volunteer organization.

In 2003, the Boy Scouts of America National Council released the results of a survey that they commissioned Harris Interactive to complete for them. Earlier, the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America completed two studies, one in 1995 entitled *The Values of Men and Boys in America* in which it was noted, “men and boys with strong Scouting experience often demonstrate higher ethical and moral standards than non-Scouts” (Volunteer Outcomes Study,

2003, p. 3). A follow-up study was then completed entitled *A year in the Life of Cub Scout, Boy Scout, Venturer* in 1998. This study, mentioned in the Outcomes Study (2003) showed:

That through weekly unit meetings and outdoor activities Scouts gain strong personal values and a positive sense of self-worth, build caring and a positive sense of self-worth, build caring nurturing relationships with adults and peers, spark a desire to learn, use their time creatively, and gain social skills. (p. 3)

While these two studies are important in developing a greater understanding of the youth participating in Scouting, they do not have a direct connection to an understanding of the experience of the adult volunteer. The National Council itself noted that these two studies answered questions about the involvement of youth in Scouting, but they were left with unanswered questions about the outcomes of the involvement of adults in the program. The National Council noted in 2003 that over 1.2 million adults were involved in some level of volunteering with the Boy Scouts of America, and in 2002 these adults supplied more than 288 million hours of service. This is why the Boy Scouts of America commissioned Harris Interactive to randomly select adult volunteers from 84 councils (out of 300 in the United States) invite them to go online and complete a survey, or mail a paper copy of the survey to those who did not complete the survey online. The Boy Scouts of America were searching for the outcomes adult volunteers experience by participating in the program. Eventually, 16,124 adult volunteers completed the survey. In addition to publishing the numeric (positivistic) results to specific questions asked in the survey, the study provides quotes from some of the participants. Selected quotes are presented here with emphasis added: “I’ve joined other organizations because I have **learned** so much about leadership from Scouting,” “You **learn** to use your resources to the best of your ability,” “I think I **learned** to be more understanding of today’s

youth,” “Scout volunteering **teaches** you to relate to your kids better,” “How to deal with the boys and get them motivated was part of our Wood Badge **training**,” “I feel confident I could respond quickly and effectively in an emergency because of the **training** I’ve received,” “I **learned** some great leadership skills that I have been able to take from Scouting to work.”

Seven of the sixteen qualitative comments mentioned in the survey involve learning or training, yet none of the sixteen survey questions whose results were presented in the outcomes study directly asked about learning. However, the questions did not directly focus on learning, they centered on: community service and citizenship, conservation, ethical and moral character, patience and understanding, enjoyment and self-esteem, and commitment. Some questions that could be interpreted to involve learning, such as, survival and outdoor skills; relationship skills management; and leadership skills, did not fully explore the learning experience of the adult volunteers. The study also did not fully explore the role of learning in a descriptive experience of the adult volunteers. It is noted in the qualitative answers that were provided (even through this was a quantitative study) that learning and training were in the responses given by the volunteers. The study does mention in the background and methodology section, “this study reveals that while volunteers who become involved in Scouting do not anticipate enhancing or strengthening their skills or values, it is an outcome some do realize” (Volunteer Outcomes Study, 2003, p. 3). It is of importance to be aware that the Outcomes Study states that although some adults do not anticipate enhancing or strengthening skills, it is an outcome some do realize. This issue of the adult learning experience is a gap that exists in the Boy Scouts Outcomes Survey. It was this gap that was explored as part of this research of the adult volunteer experience with the Boy Scouts of America.

Helbling (1986) interviewed twenty long-term (five or more years) volunteers with the Nishnabotna Girl Scout Council in Southwest Iowa. Through her interviews themes emerged as to why the adult volunteers had stayed on volunteering for the Girl Scouts over a period of time. She categorized the themes into two major areas: environmental and personal characteristics of the volunteers. Of note is that lifelong learning and self-confidence were part of the themes developed under the category of personal characteristics, which again reinforces the idea that learning is part of the experience of the adult volunteer with youth serving organizations. It could also be said that developing self-confidence is part of the learning that occurs in the adult experience of youth serving organizations.

Wozniak (1986) studied the relationship of leisure satisfaction through adult volunteer service in the Utah National Parks Council of the Boy Scouts of America. After establishing a relationship between volunteerism and leisure, he presented six characteristics of leisure: psychological, educational, social, relaxation, physiological, and aesthetic. He developed a questionnaire consisting of 64 questions using the Leisure Satisfaction Scale developed by Beard and Ragheb (1980) to study two hypotheses he was testing regarding the relationship between leisure satisfaction and volunteerism.

Regarding the leisure satisfaction scores in his research, Wozniak (1986) writes, "Positive leisure experience scores reflect a realization of individual needs. These scores may also be seen as a measurement of leisure satisfaction" (p.1). It is further noted in Wozniak's thesis (1986) that:

Leisure satisfaction is defined as the positive perceptions or feelings which an individual forms, elicits, or gains as a result of engaging in leisure activities and choices. It is the degree to which one is presently content or pleased with his/her general leisure experiences

and situations. The positive feeling of contentment results from the satisfaction of felt or unfelt needs of the individual. (p. 1)

As noted earlier, one of the six characteristics of Wozniak's study has direct relevance to my research of the experience of adult volunteers. It is the satisfaction through leisure that can come about due to the learning that occurs in leisure activities. Education leisure satisfaction is defined as intellectual stimulation and gaining of self-knowledge. Of the 64 questions on the survey of the leisure satisfaction of adult volunteers within the Utah Parks Council of the Boy Scouts of America, twelve of the questions addressed education satisfaction. Educational related questions asked on the survey were: My Scouting activities are intellectually challenging, generally my Scouting activities have a positive effect upon my life, some of my Scouting activities give me broader experiences, my Scouting activities restore my spirituality, I learn things about Scouting simply because I like learning them, my Scouting activities encourage me to learn new skills, my Scouting activities increase my knowledge of things around me, my Scouting activities help to satisfy my curiosity, my Scouting activities provide opportunities to try new things, my Scouting activities help me learn about myself, my Scouting activities help me learn about others, my Scouting activities help me to learn about society in general, and my Scouting activities help me to learn about nature. These questions helped provide a background in probing the nature of learning in the adult volunteer experience with the Boy Scouts of America.

Educational satisfaction came in second of the six categories identified by Wozniak (1986) in having a positive impact of leisure satisfaction on the adult volunteers in the Boy Scout Council through which he conducted his survey. Psychological satisfaction was number one, with 72.52% of the volunteers stating "often" or "often always" in terms of the leisure satisfaction of

their volunteer experience. Educational satisfaction was, as mentioned earlier, second among the leisure satisfaction reasons, with 59.54% answering “often” or “almost always.” Wozniak goes on to look at how the individual variables of differences in age, sex, education, marital status, position, tenure, training, awards and recognitions, number of children, number of children in Scouting, time in Scouting activities, childhood Scouting experience, outdoor Scouting experience, incomes, and perceived freedom of voluntary participation in Scouting activities affect the six leisure satisfactions that he identified. Of importance to my research regarding developing a *thick rich* description of the adult volunteer experience and how the volunteers selected for my study construct meaning from their experience through learning is the fact that educational satisfaction was a reason for the leisure satisfaction in 59.54% of the adults studied in Wozniak’s (1986) survey. My research notes this important aspect of the selected adult volunteers experience in the Boy Scout district chosen for my investigation. My phenomenological investigation developed the *thick rich* description of the experience that the survey did not capture. However, the questions that Wozniak (1986) developed in his survey did provide talking points during the conversational interview questions used to develop an understanding of the phenomenon of the volunteer experience of selected adult volunteers within a district of the Boy Scouts of America in Pennsylvania.

Henderson (1981) conducted a study on the motivation of adults to become 4-H volunteers. Of note is one of his questions involving learning as an adult volunteers with 4-H program. Participants were asked how strongly the following statement was in becoming a 4-H volunteer. *I am a 4-H volunteer because I want to learn new things.* The percentage of 200 adult volunteers agreeing with this statement was 78.2%. Almost 80% agree with a statement that learning new things had an influence in their becoming a 4-H volunteer.

Rohs and Warmbrod (1985) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between social factors, personality, attitudinal factors, and the participation of 4-H volunteers in Ohio. Their study does not present a *thick description* of the adult volunteer experience in a youth serving organization. However, a comment of note from their research is that they state the attractiveness of 4-H as one of the reasons adults continue to volunteer with the 4-H program. If the program loses attractiveness to the adult volunteer, the adult is more likely to quit volunteering. This study does not describe what is meant by attractiveness, can it be interpreted that one of the reasons the program may be attractive is the opportunity for the adult to learn is not mentioned.

Hsieh (2000) notes in his research, "There are thousands of volunteer organizations in America. Many of these volunteer organizations are designed to serve America's youth: the 4-H Youth Development Program, Boy Scouts, Girls Scouts, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, YMCA, YWCA, Children First and Church groups" (p. 2). He notes that he conducted his study to assist 4-H (notably Ohio 4-H) in keeping adult volunteers because of the competition it faces for adult volunteer participation from these other youth serving organizations. His study was not meant to provide a description of the volunteer experience itself. Hsieh (2000) states volunteers do not always volunteer for altruistic reasons and that many adults volunteer for their own satisfaction.

Smith (2001) studied adult volunteerism in Pennsylvania 4-H national resources programs for youth. He notes that the literature of volunteering has much to offer in regards to general volunteer trends, management, motivations, and task preferences, but little research exists on the specific adult volunteers in the area of natural resources or environmental education. The same could be said of the volunteer experience of adults with the Boy Scouts of America, particularly as this experience relates to the meaning of learning associated with the volunteer experience.

His study did not develop a *rich thick* description of the 4-H adult volunteer; instead his purpose was to look at the current status of adult volunteerism with natural resource 4-H projects in Pennsylvania and to understand the characteristics and motivations of potential volunteers. In addition to surveying the volunteers, he also conducted interviews. A volunteer in his study did stress that the training workshops offered to leaders were worthwhile and enjoyable. Also when examining the question of why some adults did not volunteer with 4-H, he found 15% of the respondents stated a lack of knowledge or awareness of the opportunity for training. This would emphasize the need for learning to be a part of the adult volunteer experience in any youth-based volunteer experience, such as the Scouting program, and a reason to increase awareness of the learning experience to potential volunteers. Perhaps this cohort of adults who did not volunteer for the 4-H program may have otherwise volunteered, had they known of the learning and training experience of other adults who had volunteered for the 4-H program.

Shinkwin & Kleinfeld (1983) studied the impact of the troop culture on what boys learn. While the paper addressed the impact of what the boys learn, it does highlight two different approaches that two different Scoutmasters (adult leaders) had taken in running their formal meetings. The two meeting styles discussed had an impact on the description of the formal troop meetings. This aspect (the experience of adults around the youth in their charge) of the Scoutmaster's overall experience was kept in mind while I completed my study on how adults construct meaning of their volunteer experience with the Boy Scouts of America. One Scoutmaster ran a loose program and the meetings quickly broke down into a chaotic situation. This Scoutmaster was not successful in recruiting other adults to help with specific events and fund-raising. The other Scoutmaster ran a tight program and kept everyone on task during the meetings. He was successful in recruiting adults to help with Scouting activities and fund

raising. Leadership style is something that should be considered when looking into the experience of the adult volunteer.

Adults stated they wanted to use their knowledge of Scouting to share with the youth in the program (Shinkwin & Kleinfeld, 1983). This statement is relevant to the learning experience of the adult volunteers. Adults in the Scouting program wish to learn things not only for themselves, but also for the opportunity to share that knowledge with the youth of the program.

### Social and Power Issues Early Years

The experience of the adult volunteer in Scouting does not occur in a vacuum of society. The place and influence of Scouting in society has been a battleground for ideologies, money, and power since the programs inception. In 1910 Baden-Powell, the man credited with the founding of the Boy Scouts had retired from the military after being promoted in 1907 to Lieutenant General. At the age of fifty-three, he decided to rewrite his *Aids to Scouting*, a booklet that he had developed in the military for military men, into a book for boys with special emphasis on camping and woodcraft. He was able to develop and expand his program for boys because of the social environment in Great Britain at the time (Macleod, 1983; Putney, 2002; Phelps, 1980; Galt-Brown, 2002). It was with the perception of the need for boys to develop citizenship and to become productive men in society that the Boy Scouting program began. Through these ideologies Baden-Powell was able to solicit the help of an enormously wealthy friend, Sir Arthur Pearson, a newspaper tycoon to fund his Scouting program and develop publications on Scouting. Baden-Powell went across England promoting his Boy Scout program. Baden-Powell knew he needed the support of adults in England to expand his Boy Scout program. He further relied upon Britain's fear of defending the motherland and protecting the British Empire to enlist

the support of adults. He stressed the need for Scouts to 'be prepared.' He relied on men of like minds for the funding, promotion, and volunteering to help with his Boy Scout movement.

When the Scouting program came across the ocean to the United States, some of the early public discussion and forums for understanding the social issues and the power struggles surrounding the Boy Scouts can be found in the *New York Times*. Dr. West, the first Chief Executive (the highest ranking paid employee of the Boy Scouts of America), knew the importance of promoting a social agenda and controlling the message of Scouting. As noted by Dean (1992), Dr. West, "was very conscious of the importance and value of favorable publicity about Scouting and built a good working relationship with the *New York Times* to see that news stories appeared often and regularly. The wire services and news agencies dutifully picked up on the stories and reported them to local newspapers throughout America" (p.4). It was through this forum that Dr. West would respond to negative commentaries about Scouting and promote the agenda of Scouting. Some of this agenda involved taking stances on social concerns that may have had an effect on donations and volunteer efforts from like-minded individuals. West (1911) would write, "The Boy Scout movement is not interested in preaching capitalism or labor. Its business is not to open its activities to the propaganda of any group of specialized subjects or experts" (p. 12). However, Baden-Powell, at early dinners seeking donations and support for Scouting, would advise wealthy donors that their money could be better spent in Scouting and producing boys of good citizenship, than on expenditures for public education. An early treasurer for the Boy Scouts of America was George D. Pratt, who came from the Standard Oil Company and was a believer in Americanism. Mortimer Schiff of the Loeb investment and banking company was a member of the board. It was announced at a board meeting in 1912 that Schiff and John D. Rockefeller had agreed to pay \$500 per month to help with the expenses of

operating the Boy Scouts of America. One could argue that this small group of wealthy men had a social agenda for America that they hoped could be partially carried out in the Scouting program.

When the Scouting program was growing in the United States, many thought it was to produce boys to join the military. In an early letter to the editor in the *New York Times* a writer notes, “The military element must necessarily be part of it <Scouting>, military virtues of alert bearing, erect carriage, obedience, and discipline are Scout virtues, but they are merely a few of many” (Alexander, 1910, p. 6).

When Baden-Powell visited New York on September 23, 1910. A dinner was held for him at the Waldorf-Astoria attended by 203 adults (Boy Scout Leaders, 1910). A letter from Col. Roosevelt’s was read and received loud applause. The letter noted that exercise is not only to make huge muscles but, “to make a boy strong and healthy it is necessary to begin with his inside, getting his blood in good order and his heart working well. That is the secret of the whole thing. Every boy also has a latent streak of patriotism in him. This the Scout idea builds up to its highest standard”.

Citizenship, patriotism, boys growing up to be productive in capitalistic society, and strong youth to prepare for service in the military were all social issues affecting the early Scouting program. Baden-Powell and other early leaders of Scouting used these issues to attract donations, support, and the participation of adults in the program.

### Social and Power Issues Today

Mechling (2001) identifies three controversies of Boy Scouting as the three G's of Scouting: God, Girls, and Gays. Again it is not the purpose of my research to fully address social issues surrounding adult participation in Scouting. However, to conduct an honest investigation of the Scouting program, one needs to be cognizant of these social issues and any effect that they may have on the experience of the adult volunteers.

Mechling (2001) discusses the role of masculinity in the Boy Scouting program. The reason being much of the experience of Boy Scouting revolves around being male. In an earlier work, Mechling (1982) reports through rituals, such as, campfires, songs, and skits, the older Boy Scouts pass on masculine traits and routines to the younger Scouts. Some historians and researchers of the Boy Scout program suggest that Scouting was founded during a time when a crisis among boys was occurring. Baden-Powell and others of his time were not only concerned about the young boys' ability to become productive citizens; many adults, both paid professional and adult volunteers were also concerned about being prepared in the event of war.

Mechling is not alone in addressing the issue of gender in youth organizations. Raskoff (1994) studied gender issues with the Girl Scouts of America. She states that women pass down gender identity to the girls in their charge through the Girl Scouts of America organization. Raskoff's (1994) research assists with a discussion of an understanding of the experience of adult volunteers because she addresses the role of the adults in the program, their effect on gendering, and the Girl Scout program itself on gendering. The focus of her study was two-fold: she examined, "(1) the adults who volunteer their resources to the Girl Scout organization in terms of

how they use the organization and (2) the impact and effect of gender ideologies within the organization and the volunteers' activities" (p. 1).

Raskoff (1994) states there are some differences in the Girl Scout and Boy Scout programs and the autonomy of the adult volunteers. While the philosophies of both programs are virtually the same, the structure for training and the design of meetings with the youth are extremely different. The Girl Scouts offers more flexibility to their adult leaders in training and conducting meetings with the youth. Raskoff (1994) notes that the Boy Scout training programs and youth meetings "offer a more 'canned' program" (p. 117).

Kim (2003) conducted research in how a 'masculine' style (concerned with the immediate completion of a task) of leadership among the youth in Scouting compared with a 'feminine' style (empathic orientation, focused on harmony within the group) to determine if the youth were selected by other youth to be leaders in their troop. Adult leader rating scales were used in this study. The results showed that the style of leadership a youth member displayed might have an effect on that youth being elected to a leadership position in a same gender organization. This research does not have a direct bearing on the experience of the adult volunteer, but it does show again the influence of gender in the Boy Scouting program.

In terms of the role of God in developing an understanding of the adult experience with the Boy Scout program the Scout pledge mentions duty to God: 'I will do my duty to God and my country'. The early Boy Scouting program in the United States was closely tied to the Young Mens Christian Association (YMCA). Today, the bulk of the sponsoring agents of Scouting are religious organizations, with the Mormon and Catholic Churches leading the way in terms of meeting places for the Boy Scouting program. The Boy Scouts sponsor 'Scout Sunday' where

all the members of a unit go to church together. Scouts also take time out of during camping on Sunday morning for a religious observance.

### Summary of the Social Issues of Scouting

The Boy Scouts cannot escape the national debate of social issues that are played out in newspapers and on conservative talk radio (Limbaugh, 2005). The national debate surrounding the Boy Scout program is unfortunate because it is clouding the experience of the everyday adult volunteer. The true everyday experience of the adult volunteers is not reflected in the newspapers, radio talk shows, or decisions handed down by the United States Supreme Court. The national debate clouds the volunteer experience of Edgar Hartt, who passed away at the age of 76 on March 29, 2005. It is noted in his obituary (Edgar, 2005) that he was a registered Scouter for more than 60 years, having served as the President of the Penn's Woods Council and having received the Silver Beaver award, one of Boy Scouts highest honors for volunteer service. The value of his lifetime commitment and thousands of other adult volunteers is not reflected in the national debate of the Boy Scout program. His experience and the value to himself and his community of being an adult volunteer is lost in the controversies surrounding the Scouting program.

Through the years when one national debate or another has been played out in the media, the strength of the Boy Scout program has remained the adult volunteers. "Scouting thrives because of its volunteers and could not exist without them" (District, 1999, p. 1). Putman (2000) noted that even during the Great Depression, when some organizations were incurring massive declines, membership in the Boy Scouts seemed to be immune to the economic distress affecting families.

To the adult volunteers in the Boy Scouts of America, their volunteer service helps the community by serving its youth. Many adults serving in youth organization do so to expand and spend quality time with their children. In addition, many do so for the learning opportunities available to them in the voluntary setting, particularly, for some adults like me, the learning opportunities involved with the outdoors and camping. Despite the national debate, the experience of volunteering with the Boy Scouts is fulfilling and provides a meaningful adult educational experience.

#### Learning Opportunities for Adult Volunteers with the Boy Scouts

The Boy Scouts of America presents to adults numerous and varied publications and venues to foster learning and enable them to be proficient in their volunteer role. As will be seen, learning does occur in the form of social learning in the experience of the adult volunteers with the Boy Scouts of America. Lord Baden-Powell produced training material for adult volunteers shortly after the founding of the Boy Scouts. The first *Scoutmaster Handbook* was produced in 1913, and today training consists not only of the *Scoutmaster Handbook*, but also numerous other publications, web sites, training sessions, and meetings centered on performing in an adult volunteer role.

Adults volunteering with the Cub Scouts are provided with a copy of a booklet entitled *Cub Scout Program Helps: Complete Plans for Den and Pack Meetings*. This booklet provides adults with games, outdoor activities, songs, ceremonies, crafts, and costumes for the various levels of Cub Scouting, Tiger, Wolf, and Bear. In addition, the adult volunteer leaders are invited to attend committee meetings. During the committee meetings, generally held once a month, all of

the adult leaders of a pack meet with the Cubmaster. This same type of learning exists in the Boy Scout troops and other levels of volunteer service to Scouting.

### Summary

Learning has been established as part of the volunteer experience. However, popular textbooks used in volunteer management courses fail to fully appreciate this factor of the volunteer experience (Fiset, Freeman, Ilsley, & Snow, 1987). Adult education literature reports that learning is a part of the volunteer experience (Brookfield, 1986; Creyton, 1999; Ilsley, 1990; Rose, 1996; Ross-Gordon & Dowling, 1995). Ilsley (1990), suggests two theories that help with an understanding of adult learning that occurs as part of the volunteer experience. The two theories mentioned by Ilsley (1990) are social learning theory and proficiency theory. Adult learning theories help us understand the volunteer experience. Without an awareness of adult learning in the voluntary sector, it would become challenging to explain the volunteer experience in a purposeful way. Program planning and evaluation could be affected negatively. The experience of the volunteer may not be as full as it could be if the learning needs of the volunteer are not met. Research into the duration of service implies attention to learning, the learning needs of the volunteer, and the types of learning which affect the duration of volunteer service. A volunteer experience that involves problem solving and is ripe with attention to the learning needs of the volunteer lengthens the duration of the time an adult spends volunteering in a specific volunteer role.

## Chapter 3

### METHOD

#### *Introduction*

Adults from a Boy Scout District in Pennsylvania were chosen to describe their volunteer experience and how they construct meaning of their experience through learning. The adults serve in a volunteer role in a district encompassing one county and parts of some of the surrounding counties. The largest city in this district has a population of approximately 47,980. The balance of the district is made up of small towns and rural areas. The county that encompasses the bulk of the district has a population of 129,144 individuals, according to the 2000 U.S. Census. In 2000 there were 51,518 households in this county and 29.3% of those households had children under the age of 18 living in them. In the county, the population was spread out with 22.7% under the age of 18, 8.9% from 18 to 24, 27.0% from 25 to 44, 24.0% from 45 to 64, and 17.40% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age in 2000 was 40 years. The median household income was \$32,861, compared to a national average of \$41,994. Located within this district is a regional trauma center, a college campus, a shopping mall, a double A minor league baseball team, camping areas and a bicycling trail.

This study developed what Stake (1995) calls a *thick description* of the adult volunteer experience as it pertains to learning within this district of the Boy Scouts of America. A quantitative research study would not achieve the depth and richness that is desired to provide an intimacy and understanding of the experience of volunteering. Stake (1995) notes, “qualitative research tries to establish an empathetic understanding for the reader, through description,

sometimes *thick description*, conveying to the reader what experience itself would convey”(p. 39). The appropriate methodology to conduct this research was qualitative in nature so the experience of the volunteers could be written and shared with others.

Reviewing the methods or combination of methods available to the qualitative researcher, it is through phenomenology that a *thick description* of the everyday lived experience of the adult volunteer with the Boy Scouts of America serving in this district can be reflected upon and communicated to others. Phenomenological research is taking the lived, the taken-for granted every day experience, the shared lived experience and suspending it, reflecting on it, and then communicating on it as knowledge, and knowing it. As noted by Darroch and Silvers (1982) this lived experience of learning in the Boy Scouts, as most lived experiences, is taken for granted. The adult volunteers may be conscious of the experience that they find themselves, or in some cases, they simply are living through the experience. However, saying that they have lived through an experience, really does not mean that they have come to an understanding of the experience. Through phenomenology, we seek to break the lived experience (phenomenon) down to the essences of the experience, those things that make the structure of the experience. We seek information about the experience through interviews (the primary way of coming to know an experience), participant observation and document reviews. Then we suspend the experience in thought and reflect upon it. Through this process we discover the essence of the experience. The essence is what makes the thing (experience) what it is and gives it meaning. Without the essence, the thing (experience) would not be what it is. As noted by Darroch & Silvers, (1982) the experience of phenomenology is from the taken-for-granted moments of everyday life, reflecting on it, and coming to know the meaning of the experience and what makes the experience a part of us.

This phenomenologic study takes the shared lived experience of the adult volunteers and breaks it down into its essence by reflection and writing, then through writing, the experience is brought to light for others to reflect upon through reading the written text. The volunteer experience is something the volunteers do consciously and are aware of doing. However, much of the time they are simply living through the experience and simply doing the experience and are not fully aware of the meaning of the experience or what is making the experience what it is to them. They also may take the experience for granted and not take the time to be fully conscious of the experience and aware of the meaning of the experience. In particular, they may not be cognizant of what makes the experience the experience or the essence of what makes the experience the experience and gives it meaning. Darroch & Slivers (1982) also advise that this experience is universal; the experience of being an adult volunteer with the Boy Scouts is not unique to the participants studied for this research. Others are sharing in this experience, not only side by side with them, but also within other Boy Scout units. The experience may not be exact in nature, but by uncovering the essence of the experience, one can come to a knowing of that experience.

Phenomenology attempts to find the essence of the experience, the thing that is making the experience what it is and is also making the experience what it is for other adults. It is phenomenology that seeks to describe this “meaning of the lived experiences for several individuals about a concept or the phenomenon” (Creswell, 1998, p.51). It is a phenomenological approach that was used to conduct this research and to bring the lived learning experience of the adult volunteers serving with the Boy Scouts of America in this district for others to reflect upon.

Writing a description of my learning experience in the Boy Scouts is not phenomenology; it is used as a starting point. In phenomenology, the researcher's words and thoughts must be reflected upon and written and rewritten with an awareness searching for the essence (meaning) of the phenomenon and an opening up to the experience to more fully be aware of what is making the experience what it is. Darroch & Silvers (1982) also note that the experience is to be suspended in phenomenology and broken down to its essence, to suspend it and take that experience from our lifeworld in order to seek its meaning. In this phenomenological research, I reflected on adult learning in the volunteer experience, bracketed the experience and reduced it to its essence to come to an understanding of the experience. I knew from a literature review and my own experience that learning is a part of the volunteer experience. I then wanted to seek the meaning of this experience. I needed to follow a phenomenological approach that enabled and guided me in obtaining a *thick rich* description of the phenomenon that could be shared with others in this written text.

The phenomenological approach of Van Manen (1990) was used to guide this research into describing how adult volunteers with the Boy Scouts of America construct meaning of their volunteer experience. In this approach the descriptive aspects of the experience are combined with the interpretive aspects to come to a knowledge of the experience so that the experience can be reflected on to learn what makes it meaningful. The experience is described in transcendental phenomenology (Husserl) and also interpretive phenomenology (Heidegger). As noted by Van Manen (1990), through phenomenology we can develop a real understanding of the phenomenon by 'actively doing it' and reflecting upon it. "Phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 9). The approach of Van Manen (1990) was used because of his belief that phenomenology can be

reported by means of a story. This story of the lived experience of a select group of adult volunteers with the Boy Scouts will bring the experience of adult learning alive for others seeking a greater understanding of this phenomenon.

It was not necessary to develop a detailed scheme of method to conduct this study. As noted by Van Manen (1990), "Phenomenology has been called a method without techniques" (p. 131). Also, as Hycner (1985) suggests, phenomenology does not come with a cookbook of instructions, as to do so would relate it too closely with positivistic research. The meaning of the research comes from the reflections of the researcher to come to an understanding of the experience that can be shared with others. Stanage (1987) describes phenomenological research as a person informing another person. Stanage (1987) goes on to say that phenomenology is a reflective process; "through the consciencing processes laid out by phenomenological exploration, descriptions, and analysis, our experiencing and feelings as persons are also shown forth toward further understanding" (p. 46). Phenomenology is not concerned with developing a set of rules for conducting research to ensure that it is 'done' correctly; phenomenology recognizes the description of the experience that emerges is an accurate account of the experience, if done with purpose and reflection. The meaning of the experience that comes out of phenomenology is the unique reflection of the researcher. Those reading and reflecting the phenomenological text that arises from the research will have their own unique response to it. In the true spirit of phenomenology, a set of rules would impede the natural uncovering of the meaning that comes about as a result of phenomenology. This study was not reduced to a set of rules to come to an understanding of the meaning of the phenomenon involving learning in the adult volunteer experience with the Boy Scouts. As Keen (1975) notes, phenomenologists are reluctant to reduce their method to a set of instructions; phenomenology is more an approach, an

attitude and investigative posture with goals. In the strict sense of phenomenology, some would be uneasy using the terms method or research and would instead prefer to say a way to come to know.

However, having noted the above concern of some phenomenologists, in practice (modern research) an important aspect of the research method in phenomenology is to stay true to the philosophic basis of the movement of phenomenology that one is using to conduct research. Through out my research, the tradition of Van Manen (1990) was part of the thought process in conducting the research.

### *Phenomenological Research*

Van Manen (1990) represents a semiotic joining of Husserl and Heidegger's phenomenology, emphasizing a textual aspect of research. Noting that Van Manen uses elements of Husserl and Heidegger, who are the two most prominent names in phenomenology, it is appropriate to investigate the work of both of these men. Husserl is associated with transcendental phenomenology, and Heidegger is associated with hermeneutics.

Transcendental phenomenology describes the knowledge that comes into being and can clarify human understanding. It has no presumptions about what will be learned but takes a part of being and by a process of reducing the conscious act, describes it, and clarifies specific aspects of a particular phenomenon. Husserl would say that there exists an intentionality in consciousness and we seek to uncover the meaning of the experience by searching for its preconscious meaning. Transcendental phenomenology would not attempt to interpret the phenomenon, it would attempt to give the experience an 'entityness' and describe it preconsciousness, to describe the experience as the thing it is. We come to know a description of

the meaning of an experience not simply by describing it, but by a purposeful reflection and come to an intuitive knowing of the experience.

Hermeneutical phenomenology is where phenomenology becomes interpretive rather than simply descriptive transcendental. Hermeneutical phenomenology is associated with the work of Heidegger. Hermeneutical phenomenology research goes beyond the descriptive of transcendental and interprets the meaning of the experience (phenomenon). Again, as in transcendental phenomenology, the interpretive nature of hermeneutics comes only after purposeful thought and reflection.

The approach of Van Manen (1990) in doing phenomenological research combines aspects of both the transcendental and hermeneutic phenomenology and adds a textual component. Van Manen uses the written story and allegory to come to knowing an experience. Through writing and reflecting upon writing and through the use of story, Van Manen is able to present the experience for others to share in that experience. The approach used in this study to understand the lived experience of the adult volunteers with the Boy Scouts of America was a blended type of transcendental and hermeneutic through anecdotes as espoused by Van Manen (1990). Van Manen (1990) combines the features of the descriptive phenomenology (coming to a knowing of the phenomenon) and the interpretive aspects. The combination of these two traditions is accomplished by an interview format utilized for data collection and what is termed “close participant observation” (van Manen, 1990, p. 68).

Through a phenomenological approach the essence of the experience of how adults construct meaning of their volunteer experience in the Boy Scout program is revealed. There was a silence in the taken-for-granted experience of the everyday life of the volunteer experience. This research searched for those qualities through learning that made this experience what it is. The

properties of the experience make it distinguishable from other experiences. The properties are not necessarily matter of fact, but without these properties the experience of volunteering in the Scouting program would not be distinguishable from other experiences (van Manen, June 25, 2007).

### Research Questions

This study is grounded in the proficiency theory of Knox (1977) and the social learning theory of Bandura (1986) to reflect upon how adults construct meaning of their volunteer experience with the Boy Scouts of America through learning. The following research questions grew out of an intense interest in the topic (Moustakas, 1994) and was used to ground (Rossman & Rallis, 2003) and guide this study:

- How do selected adults serving as volunteers within a Boy Scouts of America district in Pennsylvania describe (in a phenomenological sense) their volunteer experience?
  - How do these adults construct meaning of their volunteer experience through learning?
- How do the adult volunteers describe their learning experience and relate learning to their overall volunteer experience within a Boy Scouts of America district in Pennsylvania?
- How do the adult volunteers recognize and construct meaning of their volunteer experience from the organizational context of this district in the Boy Scouts of America?
- To develop a richer meaning of the adult volunteer experience regarding learning in this district of the Boy Scouts of America, the study examined, from the adult volunteers perspective, the following:

Types of training offered to adult volunteers in this district.

Media that is available for adult volunteers in this district.

Activities that support learning that are available to the adult volunteers who serve in this district.

### Selecting the Scope of Study

The scope of this study is bounded by one Boy Scout district in Pennsylvania. Bounding the study to one district in Pennsylvania enabled the study to be managed in terms of scope, size, and complexity. As Bogan (1998) suggests, a qualitative research study should be practical and selected because it seemed “reasonable in size and complexity so that it [could] be completed with the time and resources available” (p. 51). The district used in the study is one of four districts in the council. There are 39 units (Cub Scout and Boy Scout) in this district, a district executive (paid Boy Scouts of America professional), and a district committee. The district consists of 17 Cub Scout units (youth grades one to five) known as packs, and 22 Boy Scout troops (youth move over to troops toward the end of grade five to the age of eighteen). There are 400 registered adult volunteers serving the district under study. When the word “unit” is used, it represents a Cub Scout pack or Boy Scout troop. In addition to the adults directly serving the youth, adult volunteers serve on local unit committees and adults also serve on the district level by serving on the district committee. There are opportunities for adults to volunteer on the council and national level, but this study was bracketed to those adults working within one district to keep the study manageable in size and to bound the study.

### Establishing Contact and Access

The gatekeeper (Seidman, 1998) for this study was located and approached to grant access to the adult volunteers serving within the district. The gatekeeper was the Scout Executive who oversees the four districts in this council and is a paid professional of the Boy Scouts of America who oversees the District Executive. The Scout Executive and his committee are chartered by the National Boy Scouts of America to oversee the vision of the National Council within his local council. The Scout Executive granted access to conduct the research. This study involved adults eighteen years of age or older.

### Selecting Participants

Phenomenology does not require a large number of participants to conduct research (Van Manen, 1990). The reason is that all participants share in the same experience which in this case is serving as an adult volunteer with the Boy Scouts in the same district. As a result, a large number of adults were not needed to conduct this phenomenological study. In phenomenology, “there is an attempt to understand experience through the lenses of those describing the experience while recognizing one’s own perspective and the influence of that perspective” (Eyring, 1998, p. 141). Knowing that others share the same experience as I do and that we each share the same experience among ourselves, six participants were selected for this study. Phenomenology does not require a large number of participants because phenomenology does not seek to generalize; phenomenology seeks to develop a deep meaning of the experience. This is accomplished through lengthy conversational style interviews and close participant observation of a limited number of participants. By limiting the number of participants, the researcher is able to deeply probe the experience of those individuals rather than only skim the

surface of the meaning of the experience from a large number of participants. For this reason, six participants were chosen to develop a *rich thick* description of the adult volunteer experience with the Boy Scouts of America. Also, it was necessary to limit the number of participants due to the limited available time to complete this study. As Stake (2000) observes, “While we are studying it, our meager resources are concentrated on trying to understand its complexities” (p. 436). Limiting the number of participants also assists with keeping the study manageable. As van Manen (1990) notes, one must keep a phenomenological research project “well-defined and well-focused...otherwise one is quickly lost in the sheer expanse of one’s question” (p. 167). It was noted during the interviews that a level of saturation had been reached. By saturation, I mean it was noted the data being collected was repetitive of points already established and that “the addition of new information [would] confirm the findings rather than add new information” (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999, p. 23).

The participants were selected from adult volunteers who have served five or more years. Helbling (1986) used five years or more as a definition for a volunteer who was serving in the volunteer role long term. He notes these long-term volunteers are vital to the success of youth serving organizations. This definition of five or more years volunteer service also makes sense from my observations of the structure of the Scouting program. The adults who have a son begin at the earliest stages of the Scouting program as a Tiger Cub and continue through the Scouting program until the end of the Cub Scouting portion, a period of time that lasts five years, often tend to end their volunteer service (as some boys do) at the end of the Cub Scouting program and do not move into the Boy Scouting program that follows Cub Scouting. The boys may develop other interests and leave the program. For this reason the definition of a long-term youth serving volunteer is viewed as five years, and therefore all of the participants for this study have five or

more years. The volunteers selected also were currently active within the program serving on any of the various levels of Scouting as a volunteer, such as, on a committee, as a Cub or Scoutmaster, as a den or troop leader, or in any other manner where the adult is formally recognized by the Boy Scouts of America as serving as an active volunteer.

A list of twelve names of adults involved in Scouting in the district for five or more years was provided to me by the district executive (a Scouting professional who works with the volunteer district committee). After the district executive presented the twelve names to me, I asked him to rank the twelve on who he thought in his opinion could provide reflective type responses to questions regarding their Scouting experience. I requested people who would provide more detail than yes or no type responses to questioning. He ranked the volunteers and gave the list back to me. The initial contact was made by phone (Appendix C). The first six adults on the ranked list provided to me had accepted the invitation to be a part of study. The remaining six adult volunteers were not contacted. The interviews were all conducted in person. Prior to the first interview, informed consent (Appendix D) was discussed with each participant.

In phenomenology it is more fruitful to spend additional time reflecting on the data generated by the interviews of a small number of participants to come to an understanding of the phenomenon. Then, through writing and rewriting, a process that is so fundamental to the phenomenologic approach espoused by Van Manen (1990), coming to an understanding of the essence of the learning experience of these adult volunteers is possible.

The research was conducted with what Patton (1990) describes as purposeful sampling. Participants were chosen who share the same experience, that of volunteering as adult leaders with the Boy Scouts in the same district. All of the adults in this study were exposed to the same

training opportunities provided by the district while serving as a volunteer in the Boy Scouts of America.

### Data Collection

The primary means for collecting data in phenomenological research is through informal, conversational interviews. The interviews of the participants were taped and transcribed, read and reflected upon. As noted by Kvale (1996), “the purpose of the qualitative research interview has been depicted as the description and interpretation of themes in the subjects’ lived world” (p. 187). This comment from Kvale aptly describes what is central to this phenomenological research and was used to guide the questions asked of the participants. The questions had in mind the purpose of the research, to develop a written text that can be reflected upon and sharing the experience of the adult volunteers. The questions formed incorporated the learning experience of the adult volunteers – in terms of the “who”, “what”, “where”, “how”, and “why” (Yin, 2003). All of the interview questions (Appendix E) except for the initial interview questions were grounded with the research questions in mind. The interviews all began with general questions about the participants. Participants were asked about their family, work, what they do outside of work, and what a typical day was like for them. It was stressed to the participants to expand upon their answers and to attempt to provide descriptions and depth to their answers. It was hoped that by beginning with questions about work, family, and other non-Scouting subjects that the participants would relax and begin a pattern of not only providing short answers to questions, but expanding upon their answers and providing rich interview data. The series of interviews consisted of long, deep probing, and soul-searching depth to assist with developing meaning (essence) of the volunteer experience. Rich in-depth conversation

surrounding a theme is what a phenomenologist searches for through interviews.

Phenomenology tells us we can garner the essence of the experience by interviewing a small number of individuals who share in the experience. Following in the spirit of the hermeneutic phenomenology of Van Manen (1990), “the art of the researcher in the *hermeneutic interview* is to keep the question (of the meaning of the phenomenon) open, to keep himself or herself and the interviewee oriented to the substance of the thing being questioned” (p. 98). As also noted by Ray (1994), “Research or interview questions in phenomenology center around meaning (What is the meaning of an experience) and analogy (What is it like to experience)” (p.128). It is one thing to sit and speak with someone in a random fashion and not be open to the significance of the meaning of what is being said. In phenomenological interviewing, the interviewer keeps a mindful presence to what is being said about the experience at hand, and keeps the discussion focused on the meaning of the experience. Open-ended questions were used to permit the participants to express themselves and the opportunity for what Lincoln & Denzin (2000) render to as gazing into the participant’s soul.

### Interview Protocol

While conducting the interviews that are analyzed in a later chapter, it was necessary to keep the research question(s) in mind. How do the participants construct meaning of learning in their volunteer experience? The goal of the interview protocol was to be open to the phenomenon being studied and help create an awareness of the phenomenon. Phenomenological research questions sought the meaning or essence of a phenomenon or how adults bring meaning to the experience. The questions developed for this phenomenological research were not highly structured. The questions were broad involving the topic of study and the purpose of the

interview in order to bring out the meaning of the experience through focused reflective questions and dialogue.

The interview questions of this phenomenological study began with reflection prior to the interview and centered on meaning. Transcendental phenomenology seeks a description of the phenomenon centered on the experience itself. Hermeneutic phenomenology questions seek to interpret the experience and ask the meaning of the experience. Ray (1994) advises that when conducting transcendental phenomenology, the interview begins with one initial meaning question, and through discussion with the participant the thing itself (essence of the phenomenon) is revealed. The interview is bracketed and presuppositionless, and the research questions are not predetermined, but go with the flow of the discussion. The interview stays within the context of the experience being studied and attempts to stay away from past experience(s) with the phenomenon, or future anticipation of what the experience may hold in the future. Hermeneutic interviews can include historical and conceptual concepts as part of the interview. As part of the phenomenological 'method', the researcher should keep mindful of the movement within phenomenology that they are following. The type of movement used was dictated by the research question, descriptive, transcendental (Husserl), interpretive (Heidegger). My research attempted to bring in elements of both of these movements.

The first interview began by asking biographical information of the participants, followed by a description of their job, family, and what they did outside of Scouting. This was done to develop a biographical sketch of the participants and help them feel more relaxed. Beginning my first interview with the biographical type questions also served to produce conversational interviews desired in phenomenological research. I noted to the participants that it was

appropriate to expand upon simple quick answers to my questions. This was done in an attempt to develop a *thick rich* description.

A total of three interviews were conducted with each of the participants. This was in line with interview protocol established by Seidman (1991). Throughout the interviews I made a conscious and deliberate effort to listen carefully to the responses of the participants. After I completed each interview session and had left the presence of the participant, I spoke into the tape recorder any thoughts or observations I believed would help further develop meaning of the experience of these volunteers.

### Fieldwork and Observations

While in the field, phenomenologists open themselves up to the experience and watch for details that may relate to the experience that in a normal state of consciousness various aspects of the experience would not be noticed and open to the consciousness. I entered the field with an increased awareness of things said and done that involved adult learning and reflected upon it while participating in the experience. I then reflected upon the experience after being in the field.

Van Manen (1990) calls for “Close Observation” (p. 68) where the researcher is both a participant and observer in the experience. When in the lifeworld I maintained a hermeneutic alertness and gathered antecedents of the experience, many of these antecedents would normally go unnoticed; however the phenomenologist maintains openness to them. Spradley (1980) notes when a researcher enters a research site it should be done with “a heightened sense of awareness” and taking in a much broader spectrum of information” (p. 56). Keeping the research question in mind will enable the researcher to see and experience the phenomenon rather than simply going

through the motions of the experience and not bringing the subtle essence of the experience to the level of consciousness.

I observed each of the participants at least once while they were performing in their volunteer role with the Boy Scouts. I participated with the participants in the experience. Notes were written immediately after an observation or comments were made by me and recorded on a tape recorder, which were then referred to while analyzing the data. I also kept a journal throughout the data collection process. Observations were noted after the interviews and noted from over night camping and day camping events with the youth, and during meetings with and without youth in attendance. During the observations with youth in attendance often times the adult volunteers would join in discussions and work separately from the youth. As an example of an observation involving learning, Luther was observed teaching the youth about poisonous and non-poisonous plants. After the discussion with the youth, the adults gathered around Luther and continued the discussion. Luther had been observed using printed cards with plants on them. Red cards indicated poisonous plants, black cards indicated non-poisonous plants. I asked Luther if he had purchased the cards for his interaction with the youth, and he responded that he had purchased the cards for his own knowledge and found using them with the youth in the Scouting program helpful. He also stated that he had a library at home that he had accumulated on plants and trees and that he actively sought books on plants and trees for purchase to read because "he likes to learn about these kinds of things." Notes were not kept during the observations, but unstructured notes were written after the observations and thoughts were sometimes noted on the ride home in my van after an observation on my tape recorder. These observation notes and recordings were transcribed and referred to during the reflection and writing of the participants' volunteer experience.

## Data Analysis

After spending time in the field collecting data from the interviews and observations, I began the data analysis phase of the research and was influenced by the following from Moustakas (1994):

The return to the self as the basis for absolute knowledge of the way things are is the first and foremost step. This process of open viewings, of returning to things and being with them, abstaining from the natural attitude, can occur only through my own acts of consciousness, only through my own intentional experience, only through my own direct and open encounter with entities as they appear, and in no other way. Husserl makes self-knowledge the emphatic principle: In this solitude, I am not a single individual who has somehow willfully cut himself off from the society of mankind...All of mankind, and the whole distinction and ordering of the personal pronouns, has become a phenomenon within my epoche” (1970a, p. 184). And so it is “I,” the person among other persons, alone yet inseparable from the community of others, who sees as if for the first time and who reflectively comes to know the meanings that awaken in my consciousness. I am the person who gives existence its essence, the one who returns essence to existential life. (p. 58)

After returning from the field having conducting the interviews and *close participant observation*, this statement from Moustakas described my feelings as I began data analysis. I had been out in the field with a heightened awareness of the phenomenon. The task that I faced in my solitude, after spending time in the field to collect the data, was the search for a true understanding of the phenomenon. I had been in the field conducting *close participant observation*, I had brought back notes, a journal, Boy Scout literature, and the taped interviews. I was now alone with the data. I was alone, yet inseparable from the community and the

experience because of my taped interviews, notes, and literature. I was the one who needed to take this experience of serving as an adult volunteer with this district and would bring the experience to life. After phenomenologic reflection brought the essence of the experience to life, not only for myself, but also for others to share in the meaning of this experience.

Again, this part of the research was guided by the approach of Van Manen (1990). The data review process included a search for “meaning units, structures of meaning, or themes” (van Manen, 1990, p. 78). Phenomenological themes began to occur in the data and were understood to be structures of the experience. The process of identifying the theme or themes in the data is called “theme analysis” (Van Manen, 1990). This process of theme analysis began when the recorded interviews were listened to after each interview (Rossman & Rallis, 1998). All of the data were transcribed by me (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 1990; Ray, 1994; Rossman & Rallis, 1998; van Manen, 1990) resulting in over 184 pages of single spaced text. Transcription of interview data is important in phenomenological research according to van Manen (1990), “human science meaning can only be communicated textually” (p. 78).

In an attempt not to get distracted in issues that were not related to the purpose of this study, I frequently referred to the research questions. This helped me stay true to the fundamental purpose of the research so that I could maintain a strong and oriented relation to the study (van Manen, 1990). I also kept in front of me on an index card the code name containing the participants’ pseudonyms.

Then I read through the transcript of each interview twice, reviewed Boy Scout literature, and the notes taken in the field, and listened to recordings I made after interviews and observations. Attention was paid during this review of the role of learning in the volunteer experience of the participants. I wrote in the margins of the transcripts major themes that began to come to light as

a result of my on-going review. I reflected upon the research questions while reviewing the data. The coding developed three meaning units that became three themes of the participants' experience volunteering within their district of the Boy Scouts of America. For example, data that involved the outdoors was coded "outdoors" in the right margin of the transcript. Similarly, data that addressed altruism was coded in the right margin of the transcript (Appendix F). A researcher "may use the emerging themes as generative guides for writing the research study" (van Manen, 1990, p.168). The three themes that emerged became the basis for the three main sections of Chapter Five. The major themes that make up the meaning, essence, of the learning experience of the participants are: altruism, the outdoors, and learning to be proficient in the experience, accomplished in part through social modeling.

Once the emerging main themes were identified, a more in-depth review of the transcripts was completed. This process involved reading and re-reading the transcripts and reflection of the data based on the research questions. Additional coding was completed identifying sub-themes. I kept a list of developing sub-themes on a separate sheet of paper in my work area, alongside of the research questions and codes used for the pseudonyms of the participants.

A total of ten sub-themes emerged in the data that served to bring further meaning of the essence to the volunteer experience in the Scouting program of the participants.

### Writing

Writing is a part of the phenomenological process espoused by Van Manen (1990) and it is an integral part of understanding the essence of the experience. It is through writing that phenomenologists take the taken for granted aspects of everyday life and expose the essence of the phenomenon. Van Manen (1990) suggests, "in phenomenological human science the process

of writing involves more than merely communicating information” (p. 112). Phenomenological writing should go beyond simply word to paper and cause one to be compelled, lead us to reflect, involve us personally, transform us, and to measure one’s interpretive sense. Van Manen (1990) suggests that we accomplish phenomenological writing through the use of the anecdote or story. Writing in phenomenology causes the researcher to separate himself from the phenomenon we are seeking to understand and decontextualizations the experience and then recontextualize the experience so that it can be committed to paper. The action of writing causes further reflection on the meaning of the experience and as a result a greater understanding of the experience. Phenomenological writing done with reflection and writing and rewriting consists of a story that is an example of the phenomenon gained from the stories of those being asked to discuss the meaning of their experience. If the writing is powerful, it permits us to probe deeper into the essence and meaning of the phenomenon. Phenomenologists can produce a written document that when read can share the experience being studied.

Phenomenology, it is a reflective process and must remain true to seeking the meaning of an experience (Ray, 1990). As data is analyzed, it is reflected upon keeping the research question in mind. Van Manen (1990) notes that someone reading the written text of phenomenological research should be able to come to an understanding of the meaning of the lived experience being researched. Through reading and reflecting upon a text that has been written in the form of a story (anecdote), one comes to an understanding of the essence of the phenomenon. In my case, I wrote a text in the form of stories in a phenomenological way (writing that brings about reflection) so that others could come to an understanding of how adults participating in the Boy Scouts as volunteers come to construct meaning of their experience.

For the research to be truly phenomenological, the written text must include a generous sampling of the participants' voices (Giorgi, 1970; 1985; Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990). I began to copy and paste quotes from the themes and sub-themes and place them in a word document. This word document as well as my continued reflection became the written text from the data.

### Rigor and Trustworthiness

Using a common interview strategy among participants and a belief in the hermeneutical tradition of the dialogical conception of truth (Kvale, 1996) increases the rigor of the phenomenological research. Trustworthiness is increased because I have placed myself in the appropriate places and opened myself to the expression of the experiences of others in search for the truth of the meaning, and the essence of the experience. I observed, conducted a dialogue, and reflected on the experience of the participants "until 'the thing itself' is illuminated and described" (Ray, 1994, p. 129). I used the techniques espoused by Lincoln and Guba (1986) to produce thick descriptive data, including prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation. The triangulation came during the interview process and from observation. If a remark by the participant was not clear or I wished to see if I correctly understood what the participant said, I conducted member checking during a subsequent interview. By staying true to the research and careful reflective thought based on the research questions, I was able to illuminate the experience of the volunteers for others to share.

## Chapter 4

### THE BOY SCOUT ADULT VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

#### *Introduction*

According to van Manen (1990), “creating a phenomenological text is the object of the research process” (p. 111). The central question here is how does a researcher go about creating a phenomenological text for his study? Van Manen (1990) argues that there is no prescriptive approach, no one “right way” to accomplish this feat. Rather, “[the researcher must] be mindful.....that the textual approach one takes in the phenomenological study should largely be decided in terms of the nature of the phenomenon being addressed, and the investigative method that appears to appropriate to it” (van Manen, 1990, p. 173). In other words, decisions regarding the construction of the phenomenological text fall solely upon the shoulders of the researchers.

This chapter begins by presenting the two organizing principles around which this particular phenomenological text is constructed. The first organizing principle is viewing research through the metaphoric lens of story and the second is that as interview text is reviewed, themes will develop. The themes that are developed will assist in grounding the story. Then brief introductory portraits of the participants-those whose experience was critical in writing this phenomenological text-are provided.

#### Organizing Principle One: Using the Concept of Story and Writing

The first organizing principle centers on using the metaphoric lens of a story as a way of viewing research (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Roessman, 1993; Silverman, 2000). I had thought,

at one time, of research in a way as merely taking narrative text of the interviews and organizing them in such a way as to relate parts of the interviews of the participants to the reader. But I began to think of stories more as the way individuals “produce, represent, and contextualize experience and personal knowledge (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 55).

Riessman (1993) observes how “nature and the world do not tell stories, individuals do” (p. 2). The stories of six individuals shaped the unfolding story in this study. In the preceding sections, individual and group snapshots of the participants were presented in an attempt to involve the reader personally in the lives and stories of these six storytellers (van Manen, 1990, p. 121). The participants’ stories are recounted, and re-presented as part of the sharing their experience as adult volunteers in the Boy Scouts of America. There was a tension created between conventional wisdom and the new image of the experience that was created by reviewing the experience itself (Slivers, 1982a). Through reflection and writing I was able to unmask a part of the experience of volunteering in the Boy Scouts and share my conceptualization of the experience with you. This unmasked essence of the experience does not describe the whatness of the phenomenon, but describes how we bring meaning to the experience. The essence of the experience of the participants is written here and describes the meaning relationships of adults volunteering with the Scouting program and the world (van Manen, June 25, 2007). Their story becomes my story, my story may, in turn, become through re-representation, a part of your story.

### Organizing Principle Two: Reflection, Meaning, and Themes

To develop an understanding of a phenomenon is not simply fulfilled in a “reflective grasp of the facticity of this or that particular experience” (Van Manen, 1990, p. 32). Rather to develop a true grasp of the volunteer experience of the adults in this study required a true reflection on the

lived experience. A reflection grasping this phenomenon and renders the experience its special significance.

Silvers (1982b) speaks of three voices in reflective research for interpretations. The first voice is sense-making. This first voice accounts for our daily lives and what they mean, the taken for granted. The second voice attempts to uncover the meaning within the first through reflection. Silvers (1992) suggest the first and second voice provide, phenomenologically, the scientific foundation of the human sciences. It is through the third voice that creates the desire to create new understandings. This third voice is what was sought after for this study. To review the taken for granted experience of adults volunteering in the Scouting program, reflect upon the experience and then recontextualize the experience to create a new understanding of the experience. The essence of this third voice is my self-conceptualization of the experience itself. I have articulated this new understanding, my understanding of this experience through text for others to share in and reflect upon.

While organizing the data a search for “meaning units [and] structures of meaning” (van Manen, 1990, p.78) continued. The process of identifying the theme or themes in the data is called “theme analysis” (van Manen, 1990). The developing themes guided the story. Three main themes and ten sub-themes (Appendix G) guided the writing. The sub-theme of the Military will be discussed in Chapter Six. It is noted only a few brief comments were made about the military. The comments that were made did not revolve around adult learning, as they did concerning how the military regards the learning of individuals in the military who had participated in Scouting as a youth.

### *The Adult Volunteers*

This section presents the six individuals; all names are pseudonyms, whose experience in the Boy Scouts of America shaped the construction of this study. These portraits were developed and are presented by me; they are not self-portraits. These accounts are at best my representation (Riessman, 1993), constructed from and grounded in my experiences, interactions, conversations, observations, etcetera, with them.

#### Individual Adult Volunteer Portraits

The individual portraits introduces the six participants of this research, discusses their involvement in the Scouting program as youth, how they began serving in a volunteer capacity as an adult with the Boy Scouts of America, and the role(s) they currently are performing or the role(s) they have performed in their volunteer capacity. All of the volunteers serve in the same Boy Scout of America district in Pennsylvania.

At the time of the interviews, George, was a 57-year-old general practice attorney. He was involved in the lawyers association having served as the president of his local county bar association and currently on the board. He was helping with the formation of a new of legal professional organization in his county of residence called the America in the Court. He had been a member of a 4-H Hiking Club for fifteen years, but fell away from the program half a dozen years ago because he reports “slowing down with age.” When George was in college and law school he worked at a camp for troubled youth. He initially got the job at the private summer camp for youth as he reports, “a fluke”. He was working, as a college work-study student in the library of the college he attended and one of the books that he was processing was

a book on summer camp jobs. George reported, “I just stumbled across the idea of working at a summer camp...because it had never occurred...that you could actually make money doing what you like.” George reported in the interviews that camping and hiking is something that he has enjoyed since childhood. He has maintained his association with the summer camp for troubled youth that he worked at during the summers between college and law school and has continued contact with the adults he worked with whom he served as camp counselors. He had enjoyed his youth Scouting experience, particularly camping and the outdoors.

During college George began his volunteer experience with the Boy Scouts of America. He stated:

When I graduated from high school I met some college students at [the name of college] who had similar interest and we started a Scouting fraternity... and that Scouting fraternity actually became active during the four years that I was there. And [we] started hosting a religious retreat for Scouts in the [area].

George has served in a volunteer role in Scouting since he began at during his college years. At the time of the interviews he was an Assistant Scoutmaster for the Boy Scout troop where he was decades earlier a youth member.

Kevin is a 66-year-old retired instrumentation engineer. At the time of the interview he resided in the county of his youth. He had left the area for thirty-nine years to work in Philadelphia. He obtained an associate degree in electrical technology from Penn State and “about thirty-nine years of on the job training”. He was married twice, currently is divorced, and has three grown children. When asked what his current recreation or hobby interests were Kevin stated, “my primary recreation hobby interest is the Boy Scout program.” When asked what he did outside of Scouting he replied, “relaxing, relaxing, and relaxing, and relaxing period.”

Kevin was involved in the Scouting program as a youth for nine years and obtained the rank of Eagle Scout. He noted that there were adults who volunteered with the Scouting program when he was a youth, and he got a lot out of the Scouting program. Kevin noted this in his comment when he said:

I look back in my teen-age years and Scouting was very good to me. There were volunteers out there [and Scouting] was a program... that I enjoyed. [I] had a lot of fun [and] got to meet a lot of neat kids, and I just feel hey, our young today deserve as much as I got when I was a young guy.

Kevin describes how he began his involvement as an adult volunteer with the Scouting program, "I started out as a pack committee member [and] my kids got into Cub Scouts, next thing you know I was an Assistant Webelos Leader. Then they conned me into being the Assistant Round Table Commissioner, that lasted one month then I was the round table commissioner for three years for Cub Scouting." Kevin went on to serve as a Webelos leader, troop committee member, and Scoutmaster. In addition, he went on to serve the district and council as a member of the district and council training committees. Kevin reported being 'conned' into at least one of the positions that he had served in as an adult volunteer with the Scouting program. But he said this with a broad smile on his face and never said anything negative about the volunteer positions that he was 'conned' into assuming.

As an environmental health and safety-training consultant, Paul travels the United States. He has owned his own consulting business for fifteen years. Paul explains, "I train companies how to handle environmental issues, such as, hazardous waste, how to minimize their waste and also how to ship it and move it around the country." Paul is a college graduate with a degree in natural resources. He is forty-nine years old, married and has two boys who were in their twenties at the time of the interviews. When asked about activities outside of work, Paul replied,

“Scouting pretty much takes up all of my volunteer time... pretty much they [Scouting program] got the majority of it right now, besides the stuff that you do around the house that you have to keep the house standing.”

Paul grew up in a large city in the Northeastern section of the United States. He did not participate in Scouts or in outdoor activities as a youth. He is the only participant who did not participate in Scouting as a youth. Paul got involved because his boys joined the program as Tiger Cubs [the youngest level with a boy can join Scouting]. The adults involved in the pack that his sons were joining at the time initially asked his wife to get involved. After she began volunteering, he started volunteering with her almost immediately. His sons are now done with the Scouting program and Paul is now in his “15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> year in Scouting”. He became a Den Leader of a group of tigers [the youngest level of youth in Scouting], then became a Cubmaster, a Scoutmaster, and served on the district level with training. He had served as a trainer in outdoor activities for other adults in the Scouting program. At the time of the interviews he had just “retired” from the Scoutmaster position to become an Assistant Scoutmaster of the troop. Laughing he said he was, “still emptying the house of the stuff. There is [are] tent polls, bat boxes, file cabinets, that still have to be...gotten out of the house.” He advised the reason he decided to step down as the Scoutmaster and become an Assistant Scoutmaster, is that he thought it good to have fresh ideas at the Scoutmaster level for the benefit of the troop.

At the time of the interviews Paul reported he had fifty or sixty staffs (walking sticks) in various forms of completion in his basement. The Boy Scouts in his troop make staffs for the boys entering his troop. He reported he uses the staffs for Scouting ceremonies where the youth walk through the staffs. When asked how he got started with staffs, he reported he just pick up a stick in the woods while walking and was thinking as the wood began to smooth in his hands,

that this could be something of use. He then went out and bought sanders, stains, and wood carving tools. He reported of this hobby that he developed from his participation in Scouting:

You get to watch the wood... develop, I've brought sanders, I've brought carving tools, and stains and polishers and (exhaling) sometimes, I just grab a piece of wood and sit down and just start to work at it and watch it just develop, and then I'll put the stick down and leave it, and then I'll go find, and I have different types, I know the different types of wood because now I know my woods and trees and bark, and I look for different sticks because I know, I know what that is going to end up looking like you know.

For each of the adult leaders, to show his appreciation for the time they spent volunteering in the troop that he was serving as the Scoutmaster, Paul makes them a staff. He remarked:

For each of the adult leaders that join our troop, I make them a staff, handmade and signed, so that they have something that I took time to make for them, and so that's my way of saying thank you, and that buys them in on it, so they like have these nice staffs, and so everybody's got these staffs, so it's a tradition.

Although Paul said Scouting consumed much of his volunteer time, he was also active in the Catholic Church he belonged. He was a CCD teacher and CCD instructor at his church. He advised for Catholics that is a "religious instructor for pre-youth." He is also a lector at the church doing readings every Sunday. He was a member of the local emergency planning committee for 12 years. His business and family adopted a two-mile stretch of highway, and he had been an AYSO soccer coach for about six or seven years.

Luther is a supervisor for Norfolk Southern Railroad. He has worked in a locomotive repair shop for thirty-two years. Luther has been married twenty-six years and has four children, two boys and two girls. He attended Williamsburg Area Community College, which he explains, "is now the Pennsylvania College of Technology, a part of Penn State." When asked what he does outside of the Scouting program, Luther replied, "I do a lot of outdoor stuff, I like to hunt and fish. I like the outdoors, I like to tinker around with stuff, I'm a mister fix-it." He continued, "I

like doing carpentry stuff around the house.” He also likes to cook and noted “those are pretty my hobbies.”

Luther was not involved with Scouting on the Cub Scout level as a youth, but he joined the Boy Scout program reaching the level of tenderfoot. He advised he was not so much interested in advancement; he was in the program to have fun, particularly fun in the outdoors. His “first experience being a Scout leader...came about [because] nobody would do it and I kind was the last resort, I didn’t know this until I was asked, but I think was the last one in the whole group [of parents] to be asked.”

A police officer of twenty-seven years, Clayton reports he has an atypical job within the law enforcement community. He is a network administrator taking care of such things as the computer equipment and finger printing system. He teaches and instructs fellow police officers in the use and operation of law enforcement computer systems. Clayton is married and has three sons. At the time of the interview, Clayton reported his two younger sons were serving in the Marine Corp and were on a tour of duty in Iraq. They were planning on making the Marine Corp their career. His older son had completed his time serving in the Marine Corp and was now a police officer in a Southern state. A Marine Corp flag hangs outside of Clayton’s home. Clayton himself had also served in the Marine Corp. On speaking of what he does outside of work Clayton noted, “outdoor activities...the outdoors are primarily what I do other then work and Scouting. I enjoy back packing, kayaking, canoeing, hunting, fishing.” Clayton was involved in a large rural troop in Pennsylvania as a youth. He reported that as a youth, Scouting “consumed most” of his teen years. He got as far as life Scout.

Describing his best memory in Scouting as a youth:

We had a spot that we would go camping ...down along the Juniata river...it was winter camps...in the snow there was a cave that was close by, but

of course by today standards they would have a stoke over that, but we would spend a lot of time in this cave while we were camping, but that's why he went up into there for camping because...the cave was close by and we would spend a lot of time there...so yea, that camp, back packing up on those mountains had it, I can remember and summer camp of course which that was just awe inspiring.

Clayton was serving as the Scoutmaster of a troop at the time of the interviews. He started his adult volunteer as a Webelos Den Leader when his oldest son began in the Scouting program. Clayton reported he was then approached by a fellow about the possibility to take over a Boy Scout troop that met at the same location as the Webelos den in which he was volunteering. For most of that year he was both a Scoutmaster and a Webelos Den Leader. Clayton advised, "this was just the normal progression." He was involved with his sons in the Webelos Den and he wanted to continue to be involved as they moved into the Boy Scouts. Clayton reported he was not one who just dropped his boys off at the meeting. He explained, "my sons have been involved in the outdoors with me from the time...since they were four or five years old. I would take them backpacking, winter backpacking...we spent a lot of time [at] my hunting camp, we were on the river in canoes."

John was serving as a college administrator at the time of the interviews. His role at the college is principally Judicial Affairs. He works with students who have been reported to have broken college or civil rules. He determines if any rules had been broken through investigations and witnesses, then he assigns appropriate discipline sanctions based on established college guidelines. A student who has been charged with a violation has the right to ask for a review beyond John himself. Should a student make this request, John works with a Judicial Review Board to assist in reviewing the charges against a student. He has been married to his wife for twenty-four years and has two sons. John has a doctoral degree from Penn State in Counselor Education. When asked what he does outside of Scouting, John replied, "I have hobbies, I play

golf...not very well...both my kids play baseball...so I was a baseball Dad for a long time. I try to do some things around the house...woodworking and that kind of stuff.” He continued, “I do some genealogical stuff when I have time but the bulk of my time is taken up obviously with my job.”

John was involved in Scouting as a youth. He began as a Cub Scout and achieved the rank of Life Scout. He got involved in an affiliate organization of Scouting known as the order of the order of the arrow. The order of the arrow is the honor camper society. He received the highest honor in this society known as the visual honor.

John at the time of the interviews was involved as an adult volunteer in Scouting on several levels. He was an Assistant Scoutmaster in the troop that his son belonged, served in positions on the district and council levels including co-chairing the Eagle Board of review for the district. The first interview with John was on a Thursday; this is how he described his volunteer the week before the first interview. John stated:

This week...let's see...this past weekend we went camping...came back on Sunday, no Saturday night, and then Sunday I didn't have a Scout meeting, Monday I had Scouts at night, every Monday I either have a Boy Scout meeting or I have Eagle Boards...Tuesday we had a district committee meeting, Wednesday I was supposed to go to a council advancement committee meeting, but I thought you know, ok that's four nights, I didn't find out about the council board advancement meeting until Tuesday...I said no.

## Chapter 5

### *The Volunteer Experience*

In speaking about his volunteer experience as an adult in the Boy Scout program and the learning that occurs, Paul stated during an interview, “that’s what it is all about.” From his experience in the program Paul stated, “adults learn from Scouting in general.” Learning in the volunteer sector can be linked to an adult’s motivation, satisfaction, and commitment to belong to a particular volunteer organization, hence the duration of service (Serafino, 2001; Fiset, Freeman, Ilsley, & Snow, 1987). Learning in volunteer organizations, such as the Boy Scouts, does provide an opportunity for individual transformation (Creyton, 1999).

The themes that were developed from reviewing the data were organized around the traits of altruism, the need for activity, and the need for learning. Mowen and Sujana (2005) found these three antecedents a predictor to volunteer behavior. When these three traits are present the longevity of volunteer service increases. Learning was evident across the three themes that emerged from reviewing the data. Adult educators have recognized the importance of learning in the voluntary sector (Brookfield, 1983; Creyton, 1999; Fiset, Freeman, Ilsley, & Snow, 1987; Ilsley, 1989; Rose, 1996; Ross-Gordon, & Dowling, 1995). It has been established that learning in the context of groups and clubs does occur (Rose, 1996).

### *Altruism*

While the literature on volunteering debates if there is really an altruistic reason that adults volunteer (Reichlin, 1982), a review of the data and observations speak of the experience of these adult volunteers participating altruistically in the Scouting program because of the benefit

to youth. The participants speak of making the program for the youth a ‘learning’ experience. An experience for them as adult volunteers is a ‘learning’ one so they can teach the values of the Scouting program to youth. It was also important to the adult volunteers that the youth benefit from participation in the program.

### Sense of Benefit to the Youth

All of the participants except Paul were involved in the Scouting program as a youth. Long-term volunteers develop an affiliation to youth serving organizations during their formative years (Helbling, 1986). The participants expressed a sense that Scouting is a youth-centered program imparting values within a backdrop of outdoor skills. As noted by Dean (1992), “the key to the strength of the movement is its code of values and the opportunity it gives boys to have fun in the out-of-doors” (p. 402). The participants expressed a need to pay back the Scouting program for the fun that they had so the youth of today could have the same enjoyment in the program. It was expressed if volunteering in Scouting was not a part of their life [the participants] – that the Scouting program may cease to exist.

The participants in this study through their responses and observed actions have embraced volunteering in the Scouting program and the promises of Scouting to youth. The promises to youth are outlined in the first chapter of the Boy Scout Handbook (1998). The Scouting program promises youth the great outdoors, friendship, the opportunity to work toward the Eagle Scout rank, tools to make the most of your family, community, and nation, and the experiences and duties that will help youth mature into strong and wise adults. Youth are advised the Scout Oath and Scout Law can guide them while they are a Scout and throughout their life. (Appendix A)

Even Paul, who did not participate in Scouts as a youth, has embraced volunteering in the program and expressed a need to volunteer and fill a gap. Paul noted of his volunteer experience, “I have something that’s needed and I bring it and say here it is, do you need it...without volunteering there is a gap, there is nothing to fill that gap.” The gap he is speaking of is the need to volunteer in programs that benefit youth.

George reported, “I think it is the least that I could do to pay back what I felt that I had received... to take on a main role in keeping the program going.” He was concerned if he should quit volunteering with the Scouting program, that all of the effort that went before him would be lost when he stated:

I sort of [think] the Scout [motto of] being thrifty is a value perhaps that has prevented me from wanting to see all the effort involved in finding a sponsor, accumulating equipment, having a meeting place, and all of the work that goes into establishing a Scouting program would be lost if it doesn’t continue, if they can’t renew with new leadership, and so ...[I am] willing to help.

When George was referring to what would be lost he mentioned a part of the Scout motto for being thrifty. The sponsor in his volunteer experience is a church where meetings for his troop are held every Monday night. The equipment is all of the tents and camping supplies that have been purchased and accumulated over the years. His story of volunteering is one of pay back and a sense of possible loss should he quit volunteering.

George stated of his involvement in the Scouting program as an adult volunteer is not for selfish reasons, but is for the youth, although he recognizes a risk when he stated:

Well, if I were just there for my own benefit, then it would be easier for me to go camping and...[be] involved with outdoor activities without the responsibility of [being] worried about other peoples children...who I am supervising as a volunteer, I think of course the older that I get, the more concerned you are about what could happen, the risk involved in outdoor activities, and the concerns you should have about supervising children on any activity makes you more reluctant to be involved in Scouting, when you were younger and didn’t think about such consequences.

George continued:

Sharing my outdoor knowledge with the kids is just to give back things that I found to be interesting when I was a kid, the idea of living off the land, being able to find edible wild plants, being able to hunt game. I'm not a hunter of big game, but I evidentially learned how to hunt small game probably because of my involvement in the outdoors in Scouting and the whole idea of that...sort [of] interested me, but there are others in Scouting who do have other skills and I know that Joe and his brother have shared engineering skills and knowledge with the kids, and Robert as the Scoutmaster has shared his background that only he could impart. And those perspectives are all part of what impressed me with the adults who volunteer[ed]...in Scouting [when I was a boy].

Although he stated he is now more aware of the risk, by which he means injury, he made no comment in the interviews expressing a desire to quit volunteering. He was observed on a camping trip with youth making suggestions and comments to the other adults regarding the safety and the well being of youth.

Kevin also stated he was paying back the Scouting program. When Kevin was asked if payback ever ends, he replied, "in my opinion, never." He stated, "I'm paying back the council, the district, this area, and Scouting, for what they give you as a youth." When questioned about what the Scouting program gave to him, he responded, "character development, citizenship training, physical and mental fitness development, but I didn't appreciate that at the time and I think the best thing I got out of it was just meeting other kids and being in the outdoors." Kevin noted the need he felt for adult volunteers when he was a youth going through the Scouting program, "my experience was that it was rare that we ever had more than one adult at a patrol leaders council meeting and it was difficult often to find two or more adults to be along on the camping trips."

Luther stated from his adult volunteer experience - of the youth in the program, “we try and get learning and fun.” Luther volunteers with a Webelos Den. The learning that he is referring to are the requirements outlined for youth in the *Webelos Handbook*.

Paul participates as a volunteer in a council-wide training program for youth that assist the Scouts in developing leadership skills. The local youth training is part of the national program entitled National Leadership Youth Training or as Paul refers to it as NLYT. He reported he gets a sense of satisfaction and fulfillment volunteering in a program that benefits youth and helps to develop them into leaders. Paul states of the NLYT program:

I have boys come up to me...and these are boys from all over the council, not just from [his local district]...from all the different districts, and some of them out of council, and I'll be out someplace and have a kid come up to me, and...we have a mantra for NYLT: be-know-do; be who you are, know what you can do, and of course, just do it, and that is on our tee shirts, and this kid will come up and just scream at me, be-know-do...because he remembers me.

Paul continues discussing the importance of what he perceives as his volunteer role in the NYLT program, “besides my own sons, they’re Eagle Scouts...you can’t beat that...[the] personal part of to be [involved in] NYLT and watching the other boys accomplish that [completing the NYLT program].” The theme of altruism in benefiting youth in developing leadership skills was noted as Paul discussed the NYLT program.

At the time of the interviews Paul had served as a volunteer with NYLT twice and was preparing to do so for a third time. Paul stated in his opinion NYLT “is the best program in Scouting.” Paul stated in the interview, “I would do it again, again, again, again, and again as long as they will ask me to come back and help - that is the *core of Scouting*” (emphasis added). The core of Scouting meaning to him a program in which adult volunteers work for the benefit of youth. A program at the “core of Scouting” where the youth develop leadership skills

and go back to assist other youth in the troop evolve and develop into leaders. This part of the Scouting program is how Paul develops meaning of his volunteer role. Through his comments and the expression of his satisfaction and willingness to volunteer with the NYLT program, the benefit to the youth in developing leadership skills is important to him. Paul stated excitedly that after NYLT and the youth return to their individual troops, he receives phone calls from Scoutmasters all over the district, asking, “what have you done to these kids.” He reported that the Scoutmasters are amazed at the leadership skills the youth develop from this program. Paul states that sometimes after the youth in the program learn something through Scouting “they [the youth] are screaming out of their minds...because they learned something.”

Luther advised he would be hunting if it were not for his commitment to the Scouting program. He noted he has committed to the Scouting program and it is more important to him than to be hunting. When asked why he considered volunteering with the Scouting program more important than something he loved to do, he reported his perceived need for adult volunteers and the benefit of Scouting for youth. Luther states, “I try and make it a commitment and do it for the kids, cause I’m afraid that when it comes to the Scouting there does not seem to be enough volunteers, and I helped out, but to be honest with you...I got started because there was a need...everybody else turned it down.”

A leader at the time of the interviews of his son’s Webelos Den, Luther stated, “its fun to see all the kids, not just yours, its fun to see all the kids learning stuff and doing things that they wouldn’t do if they weren’t exposed to it [the Scouting program].” The youth and their benefit of participating in the Scouting program are of concern to Luther. So much so that he reports that his worst experience serving as an adult volunteer is when outside of Scouting, “they [the

youth] don't say hi or they just pass you up...I don't know if I did something to make them mad or what I don't know what happened or goes on there.”

Clayton stated his role as an adult leader is “to work with the children to teach them.” To Clayton the purpose of the teaching is, “to get a kid ready for life, basically, and the fact that you mix fun with it makes it all the more easier.” Clayton reported he believes in the benefits of the Scouting program stating, “the need for kids to learn this stuff hasn't changed any, in fact it's probably more important now than it was in the beginning [of the Scouting program].” Clayton mentioned from his involvement as an adult volunteer that he once had tried his best to keep two boys in the program who were misbehaving, “there were some issues with them the committee wanted to put them out before...and I wouldn't allow them to do that, but it came to the point where I realized that there was a lot being taken away from the troop by keeping them around, so making the decision to that [was difficult].”

The interviews with Clayton took place in the corner of his basement. On the walls were photographs of his sons in their Marine Corps uniforms and various photographs of adult only camping trips and other photographs camping as part of the Boy Scout program. As he spoke of his adult volunteer experience, a number of his responses to questions involved him describing youth over the years that were involved in the troop that he serves as the Scoutmaster. He had a couple of photo albums of various outdoor Boy Scout events of days gone by and he shared with me some of the photographs stating, “this one is now an Army doctor...this one's in the Marines.” He noted that many of the now grown youth stop by to visit with him when they are in town. When asked what it meant to him when the former Scouts in his charge come back to visit with him he stated, “that makes me feel really good, that means you got through to them in

one way or another...when...they're proud of what they're doing." Clayton went on to say of the now grown youth who were once in his charge as Scoutmaster:

These kids were always at my house one way or another, Joe, I think I could have claimed him on my income tax, his dad and I have laughed about that these kids...I get calls, Bob would call me from a ship out in the [Persian] Gulf, when they were out on missions [in the military] a lot of them aren't that close, but they still call when they're in town or they stop in for awhile.

Clayton spoke of his frustration when a youth that had been in his troop has an event in their life that is less than positive:

There have been times when I wanted to, I would not [get] upset, but just frustrated when you thought that you weren't getting through to the kids. There were some failures...I had a couple of them in jail, a couple of them in jail now, the last drug raid I had one there, but they still, there's respect there, it's funny, you don't realize the impact you have on a kid that age.

Scouting is the program from Clayton's volunteer role that is suited to assist youth with adulthood and to help them stay out of trouble. These comments from Clayton are similar to the goals of the program established by Baden-Powell. Baden-Powell in 1920 published his thoughts on the Scouting program from his earlier notes on courses that he had taught to Scoutmasters in his book *Aids to Scoutmastership: A Guide Book for Scoutmasters on the Theory of Scout Training*. In this book he speaks of character, including discipline, sense of honor, self-reliance, self-respect, and loyalty. He notes in the book that he considers physical fitness and personal hygiene important in the life of youth. Baden-Powell sums up the program at the end of his book, *Aids to Scoutmastership: A Guide for Scoutmasters on the Theory of Scout Training* (Baden-Powell, 1949) as follows:

The whole object of our Scouting is to seize the boy's character in its redhot stage of enthusiasm, and to weld it into the right shape and to encourage and develop its individuality – so that the boy may educate himself to become a good man and a valuable citizen for his country.

By so doing we may hope to take a useful part in bringing strength, both moral and physical, to the nation.

But in developing national aspirations there is always the danger of becoming narrow and jealous of other nations. Unless we avoid this we bring about the very evil we are anxious to escape.

Fortunately in the Scout Movement we have Brother Scouts organized in almost every civilized country in the world, and we have formed already the tangible nucleus of a World Brotherhood. And the potentialities of this are being supplemented by the wider development of the co-operative sister Movement, the Girl Guides.

In every country the purpose of the Scouts' training is identical, namely, efficiency for Service towards others; and with such an object in common, we can, as an International Brotherhood in Service, go forward and do a far-reaching work.

In our training of the boy we develop the individual in both spirit and efficiency to be an effective player in his national team of citizenship. Acting on the same principle in the case of a nation, we should try to develop the right spirit and efficiency for helping that nation to work effectively in the team of nations.

If each, then, plays in its place, and "plays the game," there will be greater prosperity and happiness throughout the world, there will be brought about at last that condition which has so long been looked for – of Peace and Goodwill among men. (pp.94-95)

Clayton envisioned his role in the Scouting program regarding youth is:

Getting them to understand that there are ways to enjoy themselves that don't involve getting them into trouble. And that the most important thing to them is finding out who they are and developing their own confidence, self-confidence, I think is the biggest thing this program provides, whether it teaches them how to go out to sleep outside if they get lost or anything getting them to realize that they are capable of doing just about anything prepares them for anything that they are going to run into life, whether its making it through med school, whether it's a lot of the kids thought it was piece of cake going through boot camp because...it's [Scouting] that is not a whole different, of course we didn't have guns to shoot at each other at that point, but that's the only difference [his opinion of boot camp versus Scouting]...they were picked out immediately by their drill instructors and drill sergeants and things like that because they, those people know exactly who the Eagle Scouts are, they can tell them in a heart beat.

### Values and Leadership

The participants in this study saw Scouting as a program that identified with what they saw as values important to them that needed to be imparted to youth, values they had learned in the Scouting program, values they believed important to society. Scouting was the venue to impart

such values that they believed to be lacking and a combination of such values that could not be found in other programs. John stated, "I see some real benefit coming out of the Scouting program." When John was asked why a church could not impart such values, he stated, "church is church, Scouting is a complete program to teach youth values, civic responsibility, an awareness and respect for the outdoors and the environment, and leadership skills." The values of the Scouting program they believed could be transmitted to others in the community. In his study of 31 volunteer organizations, Elsdon (1995) found that through learning and the activities that they have to offer, voluntary organizations contribute enormous riches to the quality of life, to the efficiency, the ethos and relationships in any community. The Boy Scouts of America (BSA) is a national organization that aims at building character, responsibility, leadership, and civic mindedness in youth (Kim, 2003). According to the National Boy Scouts of America web site (Boy Scouts of America, April 6, 2007):

Scouting is a values-based program with its own code of conduct. The Scout Oath and Law help instill the values of good conduct, respect for others, and honesty. Scouts learn skills that will last a lifetime, including basic outdoor skills, first aid, citizenship skills, leadership skills, and how to get along with others. For almost a century, Scouting has instilled in young men the values and knowledge that they will need to become leaders in their communities and country.

The experience of the adult volunteers speaks of a desire to develop civic responsibility in youth. Through their actions they are able to model generosity through social learning (Gagne & Middlebrooks, 1977) and develop youth into caring for the community around them. It is the Scouting program that enables the adult volunteers to carry on the civic responsibility that they hold dear to themselves.

Baden-Powell in his *Aids to Scoutmastership: A Guide for Scoutmasters on the Theory of Scout Training* describes his goals and vision for the Scouting program. Baden-Powell advised that Scouting is unlike other programs of its kind if its aims and goals are adhered to. When a

Scout is seen he will be an example of a youth employers wish to hire and have work for them. An ideology foundation of character building in youth has been with the Scouting program since its beginnings (Phelps, 1980). The participants speak of what they believe to be the values and leadership skills of the Scouting program. Baden-Powell knew that he needed the buy-in and participation of adults for the program to become a reality (Dean, 1992). Today, the Boy Scout program could not exist without the involvement of the adult volunteers (Boy Scouts, 1999). The participants experience speaks of values they identify with and wish to pass on to youth through a program based in an outdoor experience.

What Kevin got out of Scouting as a youth and reported he hopes to impart to the youth of today is, “character development, citizenship training, physical and mental fitness.” Kevin would repeat this theme during different parts of the interviews. During his tenure as an adult volunteer, Kevin at one time served the district as the chairman for training and volunteered on the Council level in the area of training adults. He reported overseeing adult training and getting the program materials out. When speaking of his role as Chairman for Training, he reported of the word training that, “getting my message out is a better word”. When asked what his message is, he replied:

Well, my message is to say that Scouting is a great program. And if we all work together, we can give these kids a good program: in citizenship development, character development, and physical development. I don't have to do it myself, but if I can motivate other people to do it in a positive way, I can do a lot more.

Kevin stated during the interviews that he “got a lot of personal fulfillment for myself just watching these people grow.” He noted through the growth of the adults he trained in the Scouting program, in turn spread his message. He reported his message is what he believes to be the mission of Scouting since it began when he stated:

The other adults grow and in turn deliver a program to youth where the youth got

an opportunity to grow, even though they did not know they were growing, basically that is what I really got out of it, and today what I get out of it...is still watching the adults grow, and by me providing leadership to the adults and to the units in this council, I think youth have an opportunity to get the goals and missions of Scouting developed.

The participants identified with an ideological foundation upon which the Scouting program was developed (Phelps, 1980). A belief the Scouting program develops in youth citizenship, character, and physical development. This ideological foundation permeated the discussion with the participants.

George reported:

Not everyone you meet in Scouting has common interest or similar opinions about politics or about social things or problems, but for most part the people you run into involved in Scouting do have core common values.

Paul mentioned the value of the Scouting program during one of the interviews that not only benefit youth, but also benefited him as an adult volunteer. When asked what the values were to him, he stated:

The values of Scouting would be teaching you some simple rules, like the Golden Rule, teaching you how to act, how to be a good person, the real simple things that a lot of people don't know or are not exposed to, how you should treat other people the way that you are expected to be treated, real simple...how you should have respect for other people...and how that just in return will make them respect you...how you shouldn't just automatically expect respect that you should earn respect. Actually...Scouting [as an adult volunteer]...kind of helped me learn those values better.

He continued:

I wasn't always necessarily the standard bearer for those kinds of values, they [Scouting] made me realize how important those values were...if your going to teach something, you have to learn it first...in order to teach it, I had to incorporate this into my life, because the best way that we are a teacher is

by example, and so I had to by example.

When asked of his best memory while serving as an adult volunteer with the Scouting program, Paul simply stated, “I learned to be a better person.”

John noted from his experience of volunteering in Scouting as an adult the opportunity to also share what he expressed as the good things that he learned in Scouting. John stated:

It gives me an opportunity to share the good things that I learned in Scouting to help mold them [youth in the Scouting program] as what I believe are responsible caring human beings, to see the value in taking care of the outdoors, taking care of nature, to see the value in giving back to the community as a volunteer when we do Scouting for food, when we passed out the pamphlets for the 911 center, when we do clean up projects, most of the time those things aren't the most fun things in the world to do, it's not like going to an amusement park or something like that, but I think they begin to see how one person or a small group of people can make a difference in a community, and for me that's the thing I think Scouting teaches young men, to be civic minded, to understand that they have a debt to their community, that they have an obligation to repay what was been given them, and so I think it gives them an opportunity for the light to click on and say ok this is my contribution to give back. When we went out and put the flags up on Memorial Day at the cemetery it was not only assisting the [American] Legion in doing that, but it was also recognition that many people gave their lives so that we could have our country the way it is so that we could be free, that we would have the liberties that we have, the privileges that we have. And so my hope is if we instill in them an understanding that they're a part of a wonderful nation, that they have a duty to themselves and to their country...there is an outreach into the community...to see that there is value in giving back to [the] community.

### *Need for Activity*

#### The Outdoors

Scouting was originally conceived and continues to be a program that revolves around the outdoors. From my experience in the Cub-Scouting phase of the Scouting program younger youth attend day camp where they spend the day in the outdoors, as older youth in the Cub-

Scouting program the Scouts are introduced to over night camping. As the boys reach an older age and participate in the Boy Scouting phase of the Scouting program, they attend summer camp spending an entire week in the outdoors. In addition to summer camp, Boy Scouts do weekend camping and hiking trips and may attend larger camping experiences with Boy Scouts from across their district known as camporees and may even attend larger national camping programs known as jamborees.

All of the participants reported in the interviews that they enjoyed the outdoors as adults. In addition to Scouting, their activities outside of work revolved around the outdoors. From their responses during the interviews they find the outdoor activities of the Scouting program a backdrop to share friendships, tighten family ties, serve as an educational and developmental experience for youth, something to share with others (adults and youth), and a venue to provide a meaning to life that can not be found in their daily routine. As will be noted from a review of the data, learning is also a part of their outdoor experience. The outdoors held a special meaning for the participants, the outdoors was to share with other adults and the youth in the program, the outdoors was a reason to stay involved in volunteering for the Scouting program.

George reported he “had enjoyed camping from my Scouting experience” as a youth. Although he has slowed down recently in other outdoor activities, he credits the Scouting program with him also becoming interested in cross-country skiing with the American Camping Association, hiking with a 4-H program, and hunting. Although he has only hunted a few times, he reports he learned to hunt because he wanted to continue to expand upon his love of the outdoors as a result of his participation in the Scouting program as a youth and as an adult volunteer. George explains his introduction to the outdoors, “Scouting introduced me to the

outdoors, and as a child I enjoyed it, and I always stayed with it after I joined from the age of eleven.” George relates his outdoor experience as follows:

When people are outdoors, they have a different perspective on things that you don't get while you are sitting in a room, any room, any building. You think about different things and it helps you to better appreciate where you are in the scheme of things. You see the sun, the moon, the stars, the trees, and the natural world. [It] makes you realize that it isn't all about your day to day activities; getting in the car going home to the heated house, working at whatever job you are doing. So being outside in the out of doors gives you a new perspective. And I think a refreshing perspective, a down to earth perspective that can sometimes get lost if you don't have that opportunity.

George tried other outdoor activities, including hunting, but found meaning in outdoor camping.

He states:

I still have my shot gun, but I have never gone deer hunting, I have gone small game hunting and so I have tried other outdoor activities, I have a bicycle which I got when I was at law school and they had a forest park adjoining the [university] campus, and they had like a ten mile bike trail through the old grounds of the World's Fair in St Louis and I used to do that very regularly as an outdoor activity, but neither biking, nor cross country skiing or racquetball sports held my interest as much as going as going outdoor camping.

George comments on the outdoors included that he thought it was healthy for the youth to be outdoors. His experience sometimes includes frustration if the organization of outdoor events is not adequate and time in the outdoors is lessened. He commented:

Well I get frustrated because opportunities are lost and time is wasted if the kids who have a few short years in Scouting if they're lucky maybe even just a year or less in Scouting, if things are not well run their experiences are limited, they don't get the opportunities to be in the outdoors as often as I think is healthy.

George was observed sharing his knowledge of plants with youth and other adult volunteers while on a Boy Scout hike. George actively engaged other adult volunteers for what information they could add to his knowledge of flora and fauna.

Kevin stated during the interviews that his best memory as a youth in the Scouting program was going to summer camp and being elected into the Order of the Arrow. According to the *Boy Scout Handbook* the Order of Arrow is Scouting's national honor society. It sets out to recognize those youth and adult campers who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives, to develop and maintain camping traditions and spirit, to promote Scout camping, and to crystallize the Scout habit of helpful-ness into a life purpose of leadership in cheerful service to others. He stated of his best experience as a youth in the Scouting program, "I think the best thing I got out of it was just meeting other kids and being in the outdoors." He continued, "as [a] youth...they just gave me a great program of outdoors, getting to know other youth, getting to associate with adults."

During an observation of Paul in a district sponsored adult volunteer training event, other adult volunteer trainers were commenting on his knowledge of the outdoors. He spoke freely and with much excitement of all things outdoors. He smiled and was engaging in his presentations. Paul pointed out various types of fauna, animal tracks, and various characteristics of the forest floor. Other adult trainers present often times referred questions about the outdoors to Paul. At home, he maintains a rock and gem collection of specimens that he collected himself. Paul brought rock and gem specimens with him to share during his portion of the adult volunteer outdoor training session. Paul spoke of the turtle rescue he maintains at home. Turtles that are injured in the wild or through accidents are taken to his house for recovery. If the turtle is able to heal from its injury, it is returned to the wild. Turtles not able to fully recover from injuries remained under Paul's care at his house.

Luther also enjoys the outdoors. In addition to the time he spends in the Scouting program, he likes to hunt and fish. As a youth he enjoyed the activities the Scouting program afforded

him. He was not involved in Scouting as a youth on the Cub Scouting level, but joined a Boy Scout troop for almost three years. Luther reported he was not in the Scouting program to advance in rank, but for fun to hike and camp. Luther reached the rank of Tenderfoot. He reported the outdoor activities of his youth Scouting experience kept him in the program. Of his youth experience in the Scouting program, he states:

I was a Boy Scout and we had a very active troop. Now we did a lot of activities and I never advanced. I went in as a Tenderfoot, and I stayed a Tenderfoot, but I went to all of the activities. I had a lot of fun; we did camping, hiking, all kinds of stuff. I really did have a lot of fun. ...I really wasn't interested in working towards advancement. I was just there for the fun.

Luther got involved in Scouting as a youth because his friends joined. He joined because he “pretty much had an interest in the outdoors, we lived right on the edge of town near woods and my friends and I were in woods all the time doing something in the creek or something.”

When asked what the outdoors meant to him, Luther responded:

I tell you I enjoy the outdoors on several different levels...the older I get the more I realize that and I don't think I ever realized it before. I mean more than anything when you're out there by yourself and it gets you a lot of time to just think, you know you can think out everything you are doing in your life, you can think, you know you're there by yourself, and I never really realized that until just a couple of years ago when I was hunting, you know you do a lot of sitting, watching, walking, and whatever, but I never really, [until] one day it sort of hit me how much time I spent thinking.

During an observation of a Webelos outdoor event, Luther was observed teaching the youth about poisonous plants and edible plants. He was using charts and books that he had purchased himself. He shared that he “really enjoyed learning about things like this” and keeps an eye out for books on plants and trees. After the youth had left the meeting, Luther and the other adult volunteers continued to talk amongst themselves about trees and plants.

Clayton was involved with the outdoors from the time he was a youth, “building rafts and going down the river, and climbing mountains with my friends.” As a parent and his love of the outdoors he stated, “my sons have been involved in the outdoors with me...since they were four or five years old.” As his children grew he “would take them backpacking, winter backpacking...we spent a lot of time [at] my hunting camp, we were on the river in canoes even at that point so” [joining in Scouts with them] “was just a normal progression” of joining with his boys in the outdoors. He wanted to be part of his sons’ outdoor experience in Scouting. Clayton spends “a lot of time” in the outdoors and “up in the mountains” because of “number one, the beauty...secondly is just being out away from people and enjoying nature.”

Clayton was particularly fond of winter camping, mentioning it frequently in the interviews. When asked what it was about winter camping that he liked, he replied:

Well I don’t know what it is other than the fact that wintertime comes and people just kind of wait for spring to arrive. My brother and I always...developed winter time activities that we look forward to as much as we did in spring and summer and it was just an extension of what we did, you know you didn’t have to sit and wait for the time when you could do things and very few people do it and you learn how to be comfortable with it and I think it’s as much fun as when its nice and cozy warm.

### The Outdoors and Youth

The experience the individual participants spoke of above regarding the meaning, fun, and value they find in the outdoors extends to the youth of the program. The participants spoke of sharing the outdoors with youth and of teaching youth how to be comfortable in the outdoors.

George spoke of what he believes to be the state of today’s youth and the outdoors:

Many kids I think more and more between the mall, the video games, the computer, and school have lost touch with the outdoors, the sporting programs help, but it’s not the same as living in the outdoors which is what you do when you go camping.

George continued stating his desire to pass on his love of the outdoors and not wanting to be the one who quits volunteering and stops passing on to youth the outdoor experience:

Certainly the satisfaction that I had from being involved in the program is something that I would like pass on to other kids who are now in Scouting so that they would have the same rewards for their involvement in Scouting. I think it's probably partially due to [the] feeling if you're the last of a kind, you don't want to be the one who breaks the chain and I view my involvement in Scouting as a chain. If the Scout leaders that I was impressed by had not done what they did how many other things that I got involved in wouldn't have occurred and perhaps how many things that other people have as a result of my involvement in Scouting had done would not have occurred, it sort of like the Jimmy Stewart - it's a wonderful life feeling when you, well you realize that you are getting older you realize that you can not have the same impact on the kids as you did, and yet you want to help the program continue.

As an adult leader, when discussing his volunteering role in Scouting and love of the outdoors, Luther remarked, "Scouting fits into it [love of outdoors] and it also distracts from it." He continued, "I'll have to re-qualify that it doesn't distract from the outdoors, but some of the things that I love to do in the outdoors, which is hunting, those weekends the Scouts have a lot of things planned...I usually give up a lot of hunting time." He noted, "I would be hunting if we didn't have Scouting things planned." Why does he give up his hunting time? Luther responded, "I think this is a little more important." He stated it is more important because it provides the opportunity of "sharing" the outdoors with the boys in the den. Luther remarked, "I do like the outdoors, I think most kids like the outdoors too...its nice and selfless to be able to teach them to respect the outdoors and...how you would like them take care of the outdoors and enjoy it, and so they can enjoy it and you can enjoy it to."

Clayton believes the outdoors is a part of the life of youth. He envisions himself as the one who is in the position to expose youth in the Scouting program to the outdoors. He stated:

Well there's a lot of boys that don't have guidance and there's a lot that do, there's a lot that have real good parents, but there a lot of boys that that even though their parents are

very involved in their life, they won't be interested in this part of it, I mean they won't show them the outdoor part of it that these boys are interested in.

Clayton's description during the interviews of his best memory while serving as an adult volunteer revolved around the outdoors and the experience of the youth under his charge. He advised his best memory while serving as an adult volunteer occurred in the early 90's when the troop was up around "fifty kids" stating:

And of course...the first things that I started teaching those boys was backpacking. The troop, most troops involve themselves in a lot of camping, they're either Scout camping such as the camporees or summer camp, and I just immediately started teaching the boys how to go backpacking. It was probably the first time that I took them down to West Virginia and they were just so amazed, you know it was different down there and it's just as beautiful here but its just different, and we spent three days down there...and they were pretty amazed because they had not done anything like that before.

When asked to expand why seeing the experience of youth involved in the Scouting program was valuable to him and kept him involved volunteering, Clayton responded:

I'm a firm believer in challenging the boys that you see and there is no better challenge than being able to be comfortable [in the] outdoors regardless of what the conditions are, and if you challenge the boy and he sees that he has the ability to meet a challenge like that and you over a period of time make the challenge a little more intense they find out they can do everything that they have to do.

Clayton stated he became actively involved in Scouting as an adult volunteer when his sons began their involvement in Scouting as a youth. His sons at the time of the interview were no longer involved in the Scouting program because they had grown and went on to lives of their own. When I inquired why he still volunteers, he replied, "I don't know, I thought of it, and I, and I don't know, I just can't do it yet, I guess I'm not ready yet, you know it's been rough when your kids are not there, your own kids." But he ended his thought on the learning that youth undergo from his instruction of outdoor skills. He stated, "there's the need for kids to learn this

stuff hasn't changed any, in fact its probably more important now than it was in the beginning.”

When asked to explain what he meant by stuff, he described spending time in the outdoors:

To [exhaling] believe in yourself, to believe in your capabilities even though they don't understand what they are because these kids will come into a situation and they don't want to do something cause number one it's uncomfortable or they're afraid somebody will make fun of them because they do not know what they're doing, and once they see that everybody else is in that same boat then they are part of a group, they're not all by themselves and the whole thing is to be able to have good clean fun, but in the same time they're learning some life skills that they'll use to the day that they die, and sometimes it's something that may prevent you [from] dying, and its just the schools don't teach that anymore, they don't teach kids how to think in terms of the unexpected and just how something that may just save somebody else's life or their own and that's getting to be pretty important anymore.

### Social Contact

The opportunity for social contact was part of the experience of the participants. Social contact in a volunteer organization can and does involve learning (Elsdon, 1995). Socializing is also a motivating factor why adults volunteer (Lynch, 1984). The participants expressed a widened interest from being exposed to a group of adults that they may not have otherwise met. George speaks of the opportunity to meet adults from other backgrounds through volunteering in Scouting, “different professions...are involved...there's a group of people that you meet from different areas that you might never ever usually have social contact with.”

The volunteer experience the participants described is preparing programs and various things for the youth to do. This encourages social contact among the adults as Luther explains, “I do interact with the other leaders...the leaders that 'I'm close to' in our den...we'll usually set something up, what we're going to do during the week [at the next meeting].”

The social fabric provides the opportunity to organize and prepare to share a common interest. Clayton stated of the social nature of the Scouting program:

Most of my friends are involved in Scouting or became friends as a result of the Scouting program... I have one individual from work that I that I am very good friends that was also involved in Scouting with another troop, but he and I enjoy it, we go backpacking together and have hunted together and things of that nature. For the most part my circle of friends has resulted from the Scouting program.

Why is friendship a part of the Scouting experience for George, he explained:

Well I think probably the biggest reason [is] a common interest...and that's probably the way that you meet these people, but the troop [that he serves as Assistant Scout Master] has been very fortunate in the fact we got a lot of the parents involved early on when the kids come into the troop, and for the most part they have got, they have got my passion for the outdoors.

Luther noted of preparing meetings and having fun:

Sometimes just over the phone or at the end of meeting we'll make a little notation for what were going to do for the next meeting and try to get ready it and you know when we're on the outings [we] just interact [to] have fun.

As part of the social aspect of the Scouting program, Clayton discussed:

I still have parents that may not be involved in the troop now, but still go on trips that I take myself without the troop were sometimes with the troop, they still come along, they and I got the same bug for doing that kind of thing and they found I think it was the opportunity to be with their boys and enjoy some of that and foster a relationship that way...[and] their boys that have been out of the troop for awhile.

The social contact for Clayton as an adult volunteer in the Scouting does encompass former youth under his charge who are now adults. He speaks freely of the contact that he maintains with boys who were in the troop at one time and are now in adulthood. He speaks fondly of the ones who had joined the Marine Corps. Speaking of a former Scouter under his charge who now serves as a doctor in the Army, and another former youth Scouter who is now an accountant he reported:

Most of those kids I still have contact with, the older ones today, even the ones I had problems with still when they come to town they stop at the house.

Why the Scouting experience gives him pleasure in associating with the other adults in the program, Clayton responded:

I guess their values are pretty much the same, so it's one of those things that you surround yourself with people who are like yourself, and that is pretty much why I am not the kind - I don't associate with a lot of policemen [people in my profession] so the only thing left are the Scouters, we do everything, again its that whole group we have been friends.

### Separate from Women

The first registered woman volunteering with the Boy Scouts of America served as a Den Mother in 1930. Den Mothers were the forerunners of Den Leaders in the Cub Scouting program (serving youth generally grades one -five). In the fall of 1973 the Boy Scouts of America allowed women to serve as Cubmasters. In 1976 the Boy Scouts of America dropped the title Den Mother and switched to Den Leader (Cervený, April 5, 2007). Today over 400,000 women serve as registered volunteers with Scouting (Legal Issues, April 6, 2007). The Boy Scouts of America stated until 1988 in order to provide male role models for boys the Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmaster had been limited to men. In 1988 that changed and women could serve as registered Scoutmasters and Assistant Scoutmasters (Legal Issues, April 6, 2007).

Mechling (1980, 2001) suggests the Boy Scout program and rituals promote the development of masculinity, particularly through outdoor events and campfires. Raskoff (1994) likewise suggests a comparable for the Girl Scout program. Her research suggests the Girl Scout of America program promotes and effects 'gendering' in girls.

The participants discussed the role of women in the Scouting program; even though the role of women was not a question that was posed to them. George who was never married and has no children stated, “the involvement of women in the program has altered the character of the camaraderie that develop among the adult leaders”. He went on to discuss a time when his sponsoring agent [the church that serves as the meeting place for his Scouting unit] sponsored a Cub Scout unit [for younger boys] in addition to the Boy Scout unit that he serves as an Assistant Scoutmaster. George stated:

And in the past the Cub-Scouting program was the only place where male and female leaders were common and our troop or parish used to have a Cub-Scouting program. There were frequently problems in their leadership that lead from male and female entanglements. One which can occur now - Scouting for some reason or another has thought that they need to involve women in the Boy Scouting program but those age boys act different when they're in the supervision of women than they do when they are in the supervision of men. So being an old Scouter coming through as a boy in the Scouting program I know how much we enjoyed being...that camaraderie that I have seen changed in the programs where women who are as good hearted as they are, aren't men. The 11 to 14 year old kids act differently in the program. I can see where co-ed programs are valuable for keeping teen age boys 15 and older interested and involved in those activities are different but I think it was a mistake for them to and of course, [with] our committee there's been a few times when women, as opposed to being auxiliary members, have wanted to become involved but that hasn't worked out. But I think our committee works better as a male directed group than it would if it is a coed functioning group, it would just not quite be the same.

Clayton stated during an outdoor event that I observed, “the boys need this - they need time out here away from their Moms.” John stated he had served along side a female Scouting volunteer in the Cub Scout program (grades one-five) and he thought “she had done a good job with the boys and with running things.” But on the troop level (older boys) of the Scouting program he was concerned things could be different with the involvement of women saying, “I

don't know.” What he meant by this is he was not certain things would work as well as on the Boy Scout phase with older boys in the Scouting program.

Again, all of these comments about the role of women in the program were unsolicited and freely presented by the participants.

### Boys of their own in the program

Of the six adult volunteers interviewed, George is the only one who was never married and did not have children previously or currently participating the Scouting program. The involvement of children (sons) in the Scouting program was the initial reason for Kevin, Paul, Luther, Clayton, and John becoming volunteers with the Scouting program. Parents are more than twice as likely to volunteer for organizations involving youth than adults without children (United States Department of Labor, 2005).

Kevin noted of being involved as an adult volunteer and having boys in the program, “I could see them having a good time.” In addition to seeing his children have a good time Kevin stated:

There were things that we did in our family in Scouting, particularly in the Cub Scout area. When you got into the Boy Scout troop area it was more in the troop you know [older boys plan and organize events more on their own than younger boys in the Cub Scouting program], [however] I created opportunities for them to go to summer camp and stuff like that, I would also go as a member of the troop committee and I was their Scoutmaster too.

Kevin sons are Eagle Scouts. As a youth Kevin reported he was told by his mother that he was going to be an Eagle Scout, but he did not expect his sons to be Eagle Scouts, “that was something they had to want.”

At the time of the interviews Paul's sons were in their twenties at college. Both are Eagle Scouts and both are still involved with Scouting. He describes seeing his sons receive their Eagle Scout as the most rewarding part of his adult volunteer experience.

Luther reported that he was a workaholic when his boys were young and Scouting helped him make the time to do things with his boys, even doing things together that they would not have done without the Scouting program, he noted of his adult volunteer experience when he got involved with his oldest son:

I'm really glad I did it because I really enjoy - I enjoyed the whole experience and me... always tinkering around and I kind of was a work alcoholic when I was younger, and I know there is a lot of stuff that I did with my son in Scouting that we would never would have done...had we not had that program and followed through on it... it even blossomed into things that we did as a family...then we went family camping and did a lot of the activities we did through Scouting - we did as a family then cause... I had younger kids and it was fun and usually they tagged along anyway because Cub Scouting is a family activity.

Luther continued and he mentioned the enjoyment he had watching his boys learn. "It's fun...watching [the boys] learn things and do things that that you know that their not going to get exposed to if it wasn't for Scouting."

Clayton's explains his best memory of volunteering in the Scouting program revolving around his boys in the program, "of course when my first son...when ...all three of my boys had received their Eagle." Clayton wanted to be in the Scouting program to further share his love of the outdoors with his sons. When he was not on Scouting trips with his sons he was usually with them at the family hunting camp. As soon as they were old enough that he didn't have to carry them all the time, they were with him and he reported, "they picked up the same love and pursuits outdoor wise as I did," and he reported, "I mean we hunted together, fished together, and everything was together."

John's older son began as a Tiger in the Scouting program until the eighth grade when sports took over and he left the Scouting program. John's younger son began as a Tiger and was involved in the Scouting program at the time of the interviews as a First Class Scout and was serving as a Patrol Leader. All of the time that John spends in the Scouting program is of concern to John's wife. He explains to her, "that this [volunteering in Scouting] is [an] opportunity for me to be able to be involved in my kids' lives." John continues, "this is where I see my niche [being part of his kids lives], this is my experience as a boy, this is my experience now as an adult leader."

### *Learning*

Learning in Scouting for George began when he was a youth in the program. He noted he used to compete with the other Scout troops in the district every spring during the camporee. A camporee is usually held over a weekend and is a time of fun, fellowship, and Scouting activities shared by two or more troops camping together (Boy Scouts of America, 1998). George spoke of the learning process as a youth that went into planning and organizing for a camporee. He reported he spent hours and hours of time with other kids 14, 15, or 16 years old planning and creating a gateway that would win first place at the spring camporee. The gateway was a structure that would identify his troops' area at the camporee. As an adult volunteer, he shares his current perspective on youth learning:

And of course on the other end of it now being an adult I see how difficult it is sometimes to get the kids motivated and get the kids out of their desire to play all of the time into a learning mode.

The learning mode that he is referring to is the need for the youth to work on the advancement program of Scouting, outdoors skills, and planning and organization that is needed to prepare for a successful outdoor event (Boy Scouts of America, 1998).

Luther speaks of learning camping skills in Scouting and applying what he had learned to the needs of his personal life camping with his family. This is a way he stated he linked learning in Scouts with his personal needs:

Yes, my favorite thing that I learned myself was camping. I did that as a boy as a Boy Scout, but that was a long time ago and we had different tents and things like that, and from me going with the boys - Cub Scouts actually, and camping and we transferred that into family camping. I got a young family and we've enjoyed a lot of tent camping since then, so that's one thing that I learned how to do, I relearned how to do everything and the safe way doing it, things to watch out for with your fire and your tent and all the things you need to watch for to keep you family safe, so I think that is something that I would say was my most rewarding learning experience.

This linking of learning between the volunteer and what is learned as a result of volunteering can increase the commitment that he has to the Scouting program as an adult volunteer (Serafino, 2001).

Like George, Kevin spoke of the learning that occurred in the Scouting program as a youth particularly at summer camp. Kevin reported as a youth at summer camp he would work on merit badges, and Scout Craft skill. The pioneering skills were the ones that he reported really enjoying learning the most. He described using the Scout Handbook to review requirements for various learning that needed to be accomplished. As part of his adult volunteer experience Kevin worked on the district and council level in the training area and there he got "a lot of personal fulfillment for [himself] just watching these people grow." The fulfillment that Kevin received from watching the adults he had trained went beyond the adults themselves, but as established in the interviews of his adult volunteer experience, the training of the adults he believes benefits

youth. As Kevin stated, “the adults grow [from the training] and in turn delivering a program to youth where the youth got an opportunity to grow.” He also noted learning for him in Scouting occurred from what he called the “school of hard knocks”. He described the school of hard knocks as, “you go out and do something and you screw it up so bad you can turn it into a learning experience, it’s a learning experience and not a mistake.”

Paul saw the learning that occurred as part of his experience volunteering in the Scouting program as a life changing experience, “you open up that Scout book and it says here are the things and here is how you have to follow it and you make those life changes in yourself and you follow them.” Paul was referring to the Boy Scout Handbook. Paul reported he was not always the model of values. Being the son of a cop he reports as a youth he rebelled some against values.

George spoke of adult volunteers learning from and sharing their skills with one another.

George stated:

Each adult contributes their own background and knowledge by being there with the kids, each adult has their own skills and specialties that are freely given to the Scouts when they’re involved in [a] Scouting activity. I think the adults share quite a bit with each other of their backgrounds and skills in different fields and also they work together to form a team so that if a project or a challenge arises at a committee meeting, frequently the committee swings into action with all sorts of resources that any one of them would not have known existed.

George describes his best learning experience revolving around the outdoors and a team of adults coming together. He stated, “I would have to say each outdoor adventure, where the team lives and works together, is a learning experience that I enjoy.”

George noted if a meeting is not planned or prepared for, it is a wasted effort and the end result may be less youth in the program. His remark speaks of the affect of culture on a Scout troop. Troops that have well planned, structured meetings accomplished more and the youth and

the adults volunteering have more meaningful experience (Shinkwin and Kleinfeld, 1983).

George noted:

And they then treat it as just another program which doesn't let them develop their...own leadership abilities or their own maturity doesn't happen in a program that is not well organized and it will also lead to...fewer boys involved in the program because it is boring or because it is not planned, then there is just a wasted effort to have a sponsor, equipment, a meeting room, parents, and everything there, and nothing happening.

Luther noted that from his experience that “kids learn” in the program. He describes his experience preparing to be proficient at the meetings. He cited a phrase I heard used when doing observations in this district when someone is asked to volunteer, or a current volunteer speaks of the time spent volunteering, the phrase is “it’s only one hour a week.” This phrase implies it is much more than an hour per week. Luther uses this phrase as he comments about the learning that occurs as he prepares and plans a meeting for the youth in the Webelos Den that he volunteers. He prepares and learns so that he can be proficient in delivering a program to the youth so that they can learn. His comments speak of proficiency theory of adult learning (Knox, 1980). Knox believes the need to be proficient helps the adults achieve the highest level of learning (Hiemstra, 1993). Troop culture can impact the learning that occurs. This is how Luther states from his experience he prepares for a Webelos Den meeting:

You’re learning new things all the time, you have to put a meeting together every week, so you get the book out and you think, ok what are we going to do this week...and you’re building on what you’ve already done...you might be working on one of the requirements and its supposed to take an hour a week, they say, but you’re always on the internet looking for something to add to it [the youth meeting] or at the library trying to dress it up a little bit and make it more interesting or fun for the guys, so all those things you do learn and its from Tigers on up, from Tigers to Wolves to Bears to Webelos, you know you’re a leader and you’re doing all those things you’re constantly learning and if you go to roundtable meetings...they present all the helps there and you learn a lot of different things...you can just tackle it, it’s an example and use that and then so we’ll have an opening and then they’ll present everything that’s going to happen throughout that month and asked if anybody has any questions and go over everything. And if everybody’s clear and have no questions then

they will break off into sections and the Cubmasters will all meet in this section and Den Leaders will all meet over here and the Webelos leaders will all get together. If you have any problems you talk among each other and you help each other, you know here's a way I handled this or I had a situation similar and this is what I did and you help like that...also they'll go over something, they will have an activity for you to...learn that you can use at your den meeting if you wanted to...they show you how to do it.

Luther states he feels the need to be proficient to keep the youth focused on the assigned task and the consequence of losing control if he is not prepared:

Oh yea, I could say well, even working with a group of boys you know trying to keep them, keep their attention focused in one direction and not, you know, lose control of a meeting or even during events losing control of the group of boys, that's kind of a challenge...if you have as a parent, you start with one kid or you might have two kids at the most there, but you don't have six or eight and you know, keeping them on track the whole time I think that was something I had to learn to do that Scouting trained me.

The type of meeting for youth that Luther and the other participants describe is one they prepare for and wish to encompass learning. This type of ideology does promote a troop culture of successful structured meetings that are productive for the youth and adults in the Scouting program (Shinkwin & Kleinfeld, 1983).

Interaction with other adult volunteers is part of the planning process to deliver the Scouting program. The interaction can be with planned events, such as committee meetings and roundtables. Roundtables are monthly meetings of adult volunteers from different units getting together to share ideas on planning and successful programs. The planning and organization process reported by the participants is also done on the phone and through informal discussions.

Luther states, "there's the network of showing, you know, they just show you the way to do it or how they would they would do it, here's how I would do that."

John noted:

Well we're all on committees or else we're suppose to be, anyway, we're

on...there is a District Committee at Large and there are three or four of us that are also members of the council committee and we're also on committees there, so you know, you kind of get committed to death after awhile, but the interaction that takes place, we have meetings, we have monthly district committee meetings that committee meets at least once a month maybe more often depending on what our needs are.

Luther reported he attempts to attend the roundtable every month with the other adult leaders of his den. He described his experience attending the roundtables to me as follows:

That's another way we interact...we usually go there and we'll talk about things that they bring up and we'll talk about how we can use it, or where we'll make variation, and think yea this would be good if we did it this way or I don't think that will work, but if we did it another way it would be great for us.

He went on to describe his experience with attending the roundtable:

[At] roundtable...everybody's invited... all the [adult] Scouters from your area are invited to...[the] roundtable. [The] roundtable commissioner [is] the person...holding the meeting, and now [he] prepare(s) for whatever the theme of the month is, and they'll have a lot help so they'll have printed stuff up for handouts, and you can use those, they'll actually hold a meeting there at the roundtable, they'll start off they'll have an opening and they'll pull five or six people out of the audience other Scouters that are there and you substitute as the kids, and you have the opening...whatever skit they have or whatever they have planned.

The themes that Luther speaks about are developed by the National Boy Scouts of America for the Cub Scout programs across the United States. The themes are identified in the *Cub Scout Program Helps: Complete Plans for Den and Pack Meetings*.

Luther describes an example from his experience where building napkin holders were modeled at a roundtable meeting:

They'll have everything ready like if you're going build something, say that you're going to build whatever, a napkin holder or whatever, they'll have it there and show you how to

do it and give you the paperwork on it you know to back up what your doing there. I don't use all but I look at it and some of the times I look at it I think that does look like it would be fun if I was a kid I wouldn't think that would be fun and so I won't use it, or I'll use something similar to it that I think hey that would be fun if we added this to it or did it this way but you try to make that learning and fun is what I try to work into it or maybe even have a game during the meeting.

According to Bandura (1969, 1986) and Grusec (1992) there are four components involved in the modeling process. First, the observer must pay attention to the events – live or symbolic – that are modeled. Second, the event that was observed must be retained as a symbolic representation through either an imaginable or a verbal representational system. Third, this symbolic representation now must be converted into appropriate actions similar to the originally modeled behavior. The final part of the process involved motivation. There must be motivation enough to be a sufficient incentive to motivate the actual performance of modeled actions.

Clayton had been previously in charge of taking a group of new Boy Scout leaders on an new adult volunteer only backpacking camping trip so they could learn how to safely backpack. This is how he described the trip:

Well basically I just teach them all the things they need to know in order to be comfortable during [backpacking], to do that and while your doing that I guess they also learn, they would learn how to do this with kids number one or other adults...I guess that was the biggest thing that I did learn from the adult training, is that we were trained as if we were kids in the troop so number one you get an appreciation for what they go through, how what the best practices are to do yield the best results and how to just handle different things that crop up cause, when you go out you never know what going to happen. You can plan and you can try to perceive every possible contingency that will occur and you can't always do that, luckily I've never had any broken limbs with the exception of my kid, no serious injuries, there have been some kids [who] will fall and some [rough] themselves up a little bit and I guess you have to teach the adults a little bit of Mckeivism. You have to, they have to be able to think on their feet regardless of what is presented to them whether it's something that is fun or something that is a problem that needs to be dealt with and I think...that's more a mind set than anything. And once you get them to experience that and understand it, then it becomes and for the most part over all these years we've had as many adults involved in this outdoor program as we've had kids and we still have some adults that come along on trips when their kids aren't even

there anymore you know like Patrick... and I think that is a tribute to getting the message across you know and it makes you feel [good] when guys want to do that....We've gone [on] a couple of just adult trips just to go and unwind and relax and have a ball, but it's so relaxing, so effortless because these guys know what is going on you know and its an adults only weekend. [I] take them backpacking and basically just run the weekend the way I would if I were taking kids you know what I mean....Again it is that patrol method thing maybe not so much literally but still taking them out and exposing them [to backpacking] I actually prefer to take people out in a bad weather weekend for the first time...as long as...I had ample opportunity to teach them [to] deal with it [and] as long as they have the right mind set it can be a very enjoyable weekend.

Clayton goes on to say:

They have confidence in themselves and it's that I enjoy. I just enjoy teaching even the adults outdoor kinds of skills. I used to take a group of Scoutmasters...[we went] three years in a row. The adults in the Scout troops were not getting involved in winter backpacking activities, so these three years the last week in January I took a group of Scoutmasters backpacking on a Friday evening...its eighteen miles [in the woods]...we would go half way that night, and set up camp...then get up and finish it in the morning, but it again was getting people to have the same appreciation for doing that kind of thing. [The] first time there was two feet of snow on the ground it was eighteen below zero, still as death, not a cloud in the sky, and a full moon. It was just gorgeous because at that point [and] at that temperature you can get into real trouble real fast, and it's... that's the kind of thing that I enjoy doing...teaching people things about the outdoors.

When George enrolled in law school he told me by chance a troop that met about six blocks from the campus where he was going to law school was on the front cover of Scouting Magazine. He reported at the time he “would enjoy seeing how that troop operates because they look[ed] to [him] to be much better organized than any of the other bunches [he] had been with.” He wanted to observe this troops' organization and planning, because the national *Scouting* magazine was touting that troop as one of the best in America. George advised to him this is an “attractive part of the [Scouting] experience ...[was] the planning and organizing” and this troop that he was to visit was according to the national *Scouting* magazine was, “the best” at planning and organizing. George advised he was hoping to learn something by observing that troop. Unfortunately, George reported after he observed the troop they fell short of his expectations.

However, what George meant when he went to observe the other troop was the hope of increasing his organizational and planning skills surrounding the Scouting program. He was seeking to review this other troop to model their stated proficiency in organizing and planning.

Training is available in the district to assist adults in preparing to be proficient in their role as adult volunteers. Luther and Kevin stated initially they did not think they needed training. Luther stated, "I was a little bit cocky about that [training], I wouldn't have any trouble." Luther did not think he needed training and was ready to begin volunteering. Although Kevin had later in his volunteer experience served as the Training Chair for the district, when he first learned of training opportunities, he reported his initial thought was, "I don't want to do this." Kevin reported that according to the Scoutmaster of the unit he was volunteering at the time, that he, "was expected to go to training." He now reports of being told he was required to go to training, "I was fortunate because I was told then I was expected to go to training." Because Kevin now states he became more proficient because of the training. He stated of his early training, "[it] help[ed] you do your job better and you did."

Kevin described his first learning experience during training:

I think they had various trainers training each phase. It was people in every phase of Scouting and some was audio visual, and in those days it was 16mm films and charts that people would make and they made it look easy...I went to pack committee training and I found out really how a pack committee should work.

Kevin summed up his need to be proficient in what he was doing by taking the training when he stated, "[I took] training so I can figure out finally what I'm doing because I'm beating my head against the wall."

On learning to be proficient for camping with youth, Luther noted from his training:

That happened from the program, from the first time we went as Webelos we were the younger group of Webelos and from the older group of Webelos they showed us what to do [and] told us things we have to watch for.

Kevin described his experience as training chair, a position he held for three years:

The administrative piece, which is as a course director of training chair you are responsible for, and this is first of all understanding what the training needs are which you identify as you build a business plan to get there, that includes promoting courses, recruiting staff, finding locations, and lining up the course material itself. And you're ready to go and hopefully you have people out [to attend the training], you know why don't people come out, some of them are just totally scared, I mean I had to go through my hoops to get my instructor badge and as council training chair we were trying to put trainer developments on and the attitude in the field was it is not necessary.

Kevin noted he “could see these people grow in their self esteem and their knowledge it was just fabulous that is where I saw more of a reward there than I did in any Scouting area.” He noted he considered the training a “success.”

### *Adult Learning in the Boy Scouts*

#### The Wood Badge

Paul was not involved in Scouting as a youth. He got involved because his sons joined the program. But as an adult volunteer he earned the Wood Badge. As the core leadership skills training course for the BSA, Wood Badge focuses on strengthening every volunteer's ability to work with groups of youth and adults and is less focused on outdoor skills, which are more effectively addressed in other training courses. Incorporating leadership concepts that are used in corporate America, the course teaches participants the basics of listening, communicating,

valuing people, team development, situational leadership, problem solving, and managing conflict. Once the skill is learned, each member is given the opportunity to use the skill as a member of a successful working team. At the conclusion of the course, each participant develops a set of personal goals related to his or her Scouting role. Working toward these goals allows each participant to practice and demonstrate new skills (Wood Badge, April 24, 2007).

George reports he, “only went up to being a Life Scout”, but that was because I really never had much of an interest in the award program, [and] the rank program. He stated, “Although it [was] challenging, it was never my primary interest.” However, as an adult when it came to training, George reports. “I’ve gone through all of the adult training that Scouting has had, I’ve had the Wood Badge training.” When speaking of the Wood Badge program, George replies, “it was the university of Scouting to go through Wood Badge and learn how the thing [Scouting program] was suppose to run.”

Kevin has earned his Wood Badge and he describes the significance of the Wood Badge to him:

[The] significance of Wood Badge to me [is that it] represents... the advance leadership training that I went through, one of the big things it did to me is that it brought out the spirit and served as a motivational tool and [I could] carry the torch further.

The torch and spirit of the Scouting program to him is what he refers to as the values of the Scouting program, “a good program in citizenship development character development and physical development.” When asked to describe the meaning of the Wood Badge to his experience in Scouting, Kevin replied, “now you rung my bell...I could go on for a couple of hours...the Wood Badge program is the Boy Scouts of America advanced training program for adult leaders... it is the highest that they have...it is referred to the Ph.D. of Scouting.”

Kevin explains the Wood Badge program “is run on a tight schedule, they want to see if people are going to start bickering or working together.” Kevin noted of his experience that there was a leadership training session called “Understanding the Needs and Characteristics of the Group” and by “end of the course you’re a team.” Kevin advised at the beginning of the week long Wood Badge-training course that he went through the instructors really put the pressure on at first and try to “tear you apart and then build you back up.” He reports there are no books handed out, he was assigned a task to work on as a group and the group has to complete the task. The task worked on using the Boy Scout method of having one person elected a Patrol Leader and guiding the rest of the adult volunteers. Before the end of the program each group of adults [patrol] elects a permanent Patrol Leader. Kevin noted there are a lot of egos to deal with during this process and some adults feel hurt for not being elected to the permanent Patrol Leader position, but by the end of the program the pressure starts to come off and the group of adults learns to work together and get along. Kevin notes the Wood Badge training experience has changed since he went through the program. He noted there is a national syllabus prepared from the National Council for Wood Badge, but it is up to the local ‘mentors’ on how best accomplish the goals of the Wood Badge training experience.

Kevin noted he kept in touch with his mentor from his Wood Badge training for five or six years after completing the program. Kevin noted that after the Wood Badge training during his relationship with his mentor, “we reviewed stuff that that we did during the course and he helped me grow.”

As a result of these participant’s responses it can be said that they value the learning that goes on in the Scouting program. It is noted that a great deal more learning does go on in volunteer organizations than is generally appreciated or understood, (Rossing, 1988).

### Learning How to Get Along and Communication Skills

What came out of the interviews from this group of adult volunteers with the Boy Scouts of America was a discussion of the need for learning to get along and learning to keep communication lines open. The communication lines that were discussed were not only among the volunteers themselves, but also between the volunteers and the professionals in the Scouting program and the Boy Scout organization. A response stating the need to learn to get along came out in many of the interviews. This response to a question asking what the participants had learned in the Scouting program was unexpected. Comments regarding 'getting along' and communicating were made from the experience of George. He commented that new faces, adults and youth, entered his volunteer world with Scouting over the years. Youth and adults moved in the program as others moved out of the program. Regarding the need for him to 'learn' to meet and interact with other adults entering the program, he stated:

I would just say that it's an expectation that you are involved in doing is a new learning experience because of there being new people and different kids as the program changes the program does change as those faces and participants change.

While George said it would be difficult for him to characterize one learning experience as an adult volunteer as better than any other learning experience, he did advise from his perspective, learning to work together was his best learning experience when he noted:

I would say that I have learned working together as a group in an outdoor situation where you have to act as a team in cooking, cleaning, getting to where they are going and getting back, and doing whatever it is on the outdoor activity that that working together in the outdoors I think has been the best learning experience for me over and over.

Paul made this comment from his experience volunteering regarding learning to develop social skills:

You wonder why they didn't get it earlier in life, but they didn't and sometimes this is the place they get it. [It] may be social skills, it may be finally how to have an interpersonal relationship with somebody who is different from them in some way and that's good and that is a positive thing. It is not always easy, but hopefully there is someone in there to be a mentor to help them through that.

Paul continued of his need for adults 'to learn' to get along:

You know I've always found that probably one of the greatest challenges is realizing that ...[a] problem [exists] between two people and then getting them both over that and letting them realize that was the only problem that they had, that they both needed to learn how to do that [get along] with each other. And then watching them become friends once they had done that, and it's funny because it's the same thing I had to teach the two eleven year olds and it's like wow it's too bad those two thirty year olds didn't get to learn that when they were eleven....You tell them that this is what we are trying to teach these guys at eleven so that they don't have to wait until they are thirty to learn that because that is a tough lesson to learn when they're thirty....There have been times when I've had to do that, I've had to say to somebody ok let's step back from the brink, from being really mad and let's say wow, let's think about this person, what is it that makes you so angry with them...why are we so angry...why are we ready with the pitch forks and the torches and jump into the pick-up trucks.

Luther noted from his volunteer experience the need to get along when he remarked:

I don't know if this could be pinned on Scouting, but again it really was people, it was about the people in the Scouting organization, but...they chose to make things hard to get along with each other and caused friction in there, but I would say it that wasn't Scouting, that it was the people in Scouting. But that was my worst experience...dealing with that whole issue, that so and so doesn't like so and so and so and so and so and it just made it hard for the boys. And so you should have instead overlooked this stuff and [be] putting this program together for the boys, that was my worst experience....There was just tension for years until the boys moved on to their areas and the ones quit that weren't interested.

John speaks of times that he has worked hard to set up something beneficial for the boys and another volunteer or group of volunteers comes around and has strong feelings that what he did should have been done differently. He reported:

I feel like, and it's not always for me, it's [Scouting] been about the boys, it's not been about my ego, at least I have not tried to make it that way. It's tough sometimes to differentiate especially when you have invested something and you have a personal investment in something and someone comes along and tried to tear it down, yea it can be painful at times. It can be an ego issue at times, but I try to differentiate me personally taking on a situation versus what I believe in my heart is best for the boys, and I will always err on the side of the boys.

John continued at times there could be “on-going battles and a lot of its personality, a lot of it's territory.” John states of allegiances and building allegiances among the adult volunteers:

You're going to have that with any organization including Scouts; you're going to have people that believe that you know, I've been in Scouting for thirty years and its been done this way for the last thirty years, and that you know it's the way we're going to do it. Well things change, people need to change and adapt, and some folks aren't really willing to do that so...[a] group on this side...we're of the old mentality, it's always been done that way, we've going to continue to do that way, we don't care what anybody says, no new ideas...the heck with it we're just keep doing it. And this group over here said no Scouting has evolved, Scouting has changed, we need to adapt with the times, we can't do things the same way we have always done them, there not effective anymore.

Luther noted he realized everybody's a volunteer, but he also noted in his opinion, the communication is not very good:

Even now if you try to find something out, like I missed roundtable for weeks and weeks and months and months here just this last year cause I couldn't find out where it was and what time is was, and you know I'd call and I'd call council and leave a message on the machine, no one would get back to you, to me it was frustrating we missed the spring camporee because of the same deal, I called trying to find out what was going on there, because I had missed round table, and leave a message for someone to call you, no one calls you back.

Paul stated the Boy Scouts investigated him. He reported this occurred after he chartered a new Boy Scout troop and left the troop that he had been volunteering. He reported he never really was clear on what the motivation was for the investigation. Perhaps he thought his accuser was concerned his new troop would attract youth that would have normally been drawn to join the

existing troop in the area. He stated he thought the accusation was, "I was yelling at a kid or something like that on a street corner." Paul volunteered to take a lie detector test and he reported he "passed." He suggested his accuser also take a lie detector test, but one was never administered to the accuser. Paul noted the matter was dropped and Paul was successful in not only attracting youth to his new troop, but other adults to serve as leaders as well. Paul continued in his role as an adult leader as Scoutmaster of the new troop and he has served the district on district-wide training and in leadership. From my observation of Paul he got along with all the volunteers I witnessed him associated with in the Scouting program and from comments made from those volunteers about Paul regarding his knowledge of the outdoors, he is a respected volunteer.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Conclusion**

#### *Overview*

Investigating the volunteer experience of adults associated with a Boy Scout district in Pennsylvania assists with an understanding of the experience of adults in an important element of society. We also can also understand how learning and training is a part of that experience. It may benefit those adult leaders who coordinate the programs and the training of adult volunteers to more fully understand the learning aspect of the volunteer experience. An adult volunteer who reads of the experience of other volunteers will come to a better understanding of their experience, becoming more satisfied with their experience and commit to a longer period of service with the Scouting program. Developing an understanding of the learning experience may engage more adults in this volunteer activity and maintain the interest of those already involved with this Boy Scout district in Pennsylvania.

The participants of the Scouting program spoke of their volunteer experience as one involving a benefit to youth, a sense of value of the program, and the opportunity for social interaction, all within the backdrop of the outdoors. Learning was evident in the comments and observations of the volunteers. The responses of these adults described learning when preparing for meetings and outdoor events so they can use the time productively and ensure learning was accomplished. The learning revolved around the values of Scouting and being proficient at the meetings and outdoor events. Some of the learning described and observed involved social modeling of what needed to be learned by observing others and repeating the observed learning at a later date for themselves and for the youth under their charge. The participants also described learning in how

to be safe and comfortable in the outdoors. The adult volunteers in the Boy Scout program who participated in this research noted they sought for the learning to be fun. Included in this learning experience were remarks from the participants about masculinity and masculine development.

#### Adult Education recognizes learning in volunteer sector

Adult educators through their research have recognized the importance of learning in the voluntary sector (Brookfield, 1983; Creyton, 1999; Fiset, Freeman, Ilsley, & Snow, 1987; Ilsley, 1989; Rose, 1996; Ross-Gordon, & Dowling, 1995). It is noted from the responses of adult volunteers in this study that learning occurs as a part of their volunteer experience. According to the Boy Scouts of America, the Boy Scouts exist and thrive because of its adult volunteers (Boy Scouts, 1999). The Boy Scout organization, like other volunteer organizations makes a contribution to our society. The volunteer sector has been called the ‘third wave’ of our society (Esley, 1993). Along with business and government, volunteering defines our way of life. Learning is a part of the experience of these volunteers and it is noted that learning can be a factor in the length of time these adults spend volunteering with the Scouting program (Ilsley, 1990).

Ilsley (2002) has been calling attention to the learning that is associated with volunteering, particularly to the field of adult education. He reports that since the inception of the field, learning in the voluntary sector has been recognized as important by adult educators. He also notes that voluntary organizations perform adult-education-related activities and notes adult educators realize the value in learning of voluntary service (Ilsley, 1989). Ilsley goes on to say that voluntary organizations can be thought of as adult education settings, and he notes the value

of placing adults in volunteer situations of deliberate and sustained learning. Research supports a connection between voluntary action and adult education. Volunteering influences a person's pattern of learning and learning is a part of the volunteer experience (Fiset, Freeman, Ilsley, & Snow, 1987).

It has been established that learning in the context of groups and clubs does occur (Rose, 1996), and as Creyton notes, "there is a growing importance attached to the learning component within volunteering" (Creyton, 1999. p. 30). Program planning books such as Cookson (1998) and Houle (1996) state that learning takes place in voluntary organizations and state the need to plan for such learning activities in the development of programming.

Fiset, Freeman, Ilsley, & Snow (1987) advise that learning is a neglected reason as to why adults volunteer. Their research indicates that adults may choose or not choose to volunteer based on the learning opportunities. Recognizing learning is a part of the volunteer experience this review of formal learning opportunities offered by the Boy Scouts of America offers a richer understanding of adult volunteer experience in the Scouting program. For this reason, additional qualitative studies investigating the experience of volunteers are suggested to give the adult volunteers a voice.

#### Training opportunities sponsored by the Boy Scouts of America

The Boy Scouts of America does provide formal learning opportunities for adult volunteers to learn. The National Boy Scouts of America offers an on-line learning center for volunteers seeking information on various aspects of the Scouting program. According to the web site, the online learning center provides a variety of materials, from quick references to complete courses, all designed to deliver a quality program (Boy Scouts of America, April 6, 2007). The local Boy

Scout Council and Districts administer the Scouting training program. Links to on-line learning opportunities can also be obtained through the local Council and District web site.

The volunteers in this study reported that they sought out these learning opportunities. Through their comments it was evident that the learning associated with the training offered by the Boy Scouts, and in particular the training offered by the district that they volunteered in was important to them. They wanted to take part in such training to be proficient in their role as an adult leader in charge of the Scouting youth and be able to use the time with youth wisely. The adult volunteers wanted to ensure through their participation in training and through the learning that occurs as a result of that training that they were ensuring that the mission of the Scouting program was being carried out. Through their remarks and observed reaction to training, the adult volunteers enjoyed participating in training.

Several of the participants reported that they had been the ones who had conducted and worked on delivering training to other adult volunteers. One of the participants had served on district and council-wide training committees and described the satisfaction of serving in such a capacity brought to him. Another participant was observed delivering a training program to new Webelos adult volunteers. It was noted the excitement that he exhibited delivering the program. It provided him the opportunity to share his passion of working with various types of woods and rock collecting.

The formal training sessions offered by the district and through the Scouting program further enabled the learning aspect to be a part of the experience of these volunteers.

*The District: How the District Carries Out the Operational Mission of the Council*

Opportunities for training offered by the district

Training is part of a majority of volunteer programs (Eldson, 1995) and Scouting is no exception that training is part of the experience of the adult volunteer. Eldson (1995) studied 31 voluntary organizations and found general, specific, sociable, and attitudinal learning throughout each organization. As noted by the responses of the participants, training was an important part of the volunteer experience to them. Reviewing and enhancing training offered by the Boy Scouts may increase the satisfaction of the adult volunteers.

The Boy Scouts of America (Boy Scouts of America, April 6, 2007) state training is necessary not only for the information it provides, but because it builds confidence of leaders and this helps ensure success. Training increases the tenure of leaders because they derive greater satisfaction from their job. The Boy Scouts of America also notes training gives leaders the chance to become acquainted with other leaders.

The following discussion of training offered by a Boy Scout district can serve as to continue the discourse regarding formal training offered by the Boy Scouts. The Westmorland Fayette Council of the Boy Scouts of America is located in Pennsylvania. This council does not contain the district in which the participants for this research were serving as adult volunteers. All districts, no matter their size, carry out the same standard functions. The exact method of the organizing the district to carry out the functions of Scouting in each geographic area is left more flexible and must be adapted to the needs and characteristics of the communities that the district serves (Boy Scouts of America, 1999). Reviewing the web sites of numerous councils across the United States reveals that the training opportunities are similar and follow a core of courses supported by the National Council for the Boy Scouts of America. The training opportunities

listed on the Westmorland Fayette Council web site were chosen here randomly to represent the typical training sessions that are available to adult volunteers participating on the district level in the Boy Scouts of America (Appendix H).

The training section of the of the Westmoreland Fayette Council offers on-line training opportunities and face-to-face training events coordinated by the local Council Committee (adult volunteers) and administered by the District Training Committees (adult volunteers). On-line training available to the adult volunteers includes Youth Protection for Scouting (Cub Scouting and Boy Scouting) and Venturing. Youth Protection is a requirement for all adult volunteers and includes topics ranging from safety on tours (any event away from the location of the regular youth meeting) with such things as no youth is permitted to sit in the front of a vehicle to protecting youth from sexual assault. The adult volunteers in this study all spoke to some extent of either the risk, safety issues, or possibility of being accused of wrong doing to some extent. George stated the older he got, the more he had a tendency to envision such risks as taking other peoples children on outdoor events. Luther spoke of safety issues and directly mentioned the required Youth Protection training and he now sees “the benefit of that training”. Paul was actually accused; he thinks it was for “screaming at a kid or something” which was later proven not to be true. The Youth Protection Training is a program to help safeguard against such accusations. For example, the Boy Scouting program instructs through Youth Protection that adult leadership should be two deep. This means having two adults when in the presence of youth. Also listed as on-line resources is the Cub Scout, Boy Scout, and Venturing fast start courses. The fast start courses are intended for adult volunteers for each of the three levels of the Scouting program. The fast start on-line course provides an introduction to Scouting, describes

the various age levels of Scouting, and offers some motivational tools to assist an adult volunteer.

The training committee sponsors training programs delivered to new adult volunteers taught by long-term volunteers. Listed on the Westmoreland Fayette Council/Districts web site are New Leader Essentials, National Youth Leader Training Pt. 1, National Youth Leader Training Pt.2, Scoutmaster Specific Training, Outdoor Leader Skills, Basic Adult Leader Outdoor Orientation, Commissioner Basic Training, and Webelos Leader Outdoor Training. According to the Boy Scouts of America, the New Leader Essentials is designed to introduce volunteers to the Scouting program. The National Youth Leader Training (NYLT) part one and two is the training for adult volunteers that Paul spoke so fondly of delivering to youth. NYLT is a program that teaches youth how to go back to their units and be a leader among the youth. The training mentioning outdoor skills is just that, skills to teach adults outdoor skills. The Scoutmaster and Commissioner training are specific for those adults training to volunteer in those roles in the Scouting program.

#### Participants Thoughts on Training

The participants stated that in their opinion, the training that is offered by the Boy Scouts was important to their experience volunteering. Paul stated the reason training was important to him is so that he can learn to follow the guidelines established by the Boy Scout program. Paul stated in his opinion:

I try to get as much training as I possibly can. If there is a training program that I haven't been to I try to go to it so that I can get one more piece...because the Boy Scouts depend on volunteer leadership adult leadership, without the adult learning and education you will have poorly run slip shod and sometimes counter productive local Scouting programs

that don't carry out the goals, and the message, and the purpose that the Scouting program was originally designed to serve...so there is no need to reinvent the wheel you know...so learn the system that is already there so that you can get your unit...whether it be a den or a troop or a district or committee or whatever it is, moving because that is the most important part to get it moving and moving ahead because Scouting is fast, before you know it they go from Cub Scouts to Ventures in a heartbeat, and if you're busy trying to create a whole new Boy Scouts you've wasted time you need to learn the system that's already there and go ahead and move with it by the time you get done learning everything believe me you'll realize there is there is still too much to learn, I'm not even half way there.

Luther states of his training experience:

I had the required training for Youth Protection and then kept that up yearly and then I had all the training...[for] different leaders, I was a Den Leader - Webelos Leader, I was an Assistant Scoutmaster. I think the training is very beneficial, let's put it that way, I would say its very beneficial...I think [what] I got the most from [training] was...to realize that you have to protect yourself...I did not realize or never thought of [is] you really have to make sure that you're protecting yourself so that you can't be accused of doing something that you weren't doing [you] have to eliminate all those opportunities for someone to [accuse you].

As noted from the above comments from the volunteers, they feel the need from their experience to expand the training offered by the Scouting organization. They also express a desire to take part in the training. George stated he had, "been involved with a lot of the training programs". He felt an important part of his volunteer experience is to take part in training because there are, "changes here and there every few years as to [the Scouting] requirements". Paul noted of his experience, "you have to be able to know what's happening and that's what the important part of training is all about".

The participants through their responses regarding training note a need for training and place a value to having received it. Elsdon (1995) notes from his research that training is part of a majority of volunteer programs, but as Ilsley (1990) training can be haphazardly put together. Researchers would be well advised to have an understanding of the role of learning when

investigating any aspect of the volunteer experience. Practitioners, likewise, should note the role of learning in the development and maintenance of volunteer organizations. Because of the value the participants in this study place on learning and training, practitioners should not lose sight of the need to develop training that is not well thought out and planned.

### *Social and Power Issues*

As discussed in the literature review, Mechling (2001) identified three controversies in the Scouting program surrounding God, Girls, and Gays. While not the focus of this study the three G's were noted in the observations and spoken words in the everyday lives of the participants. They expressed these social issues either overtly or latently in actions and conversations.

#### God

The participants spoke of the Scout Oath and recited the Oath with the youth under their charge. The Oath contains the words, "to do my duty to God". Paul noted the Scouting program teaches the Golden Rule and that he was not always the best person he could have been, but since he has been a volunteer in the Scouting program, he has learned to live by the values and the principles of the Scouting program. As John described his experience in the Scouting program and the importance of teaching youth, his description initially came across sounding like a Church program. I asked him directly if a Church program could do what he

believes the Scouting program does for youth, causing him to say, “Church is Church.”

However, on my mind at the time while he was his discussing the description of the values of the Scouting program, it sounded as if it came from a Church perspective in his opinion.

George mentioned that for the most part from his perspective of Scouting the people involved have common core values. Paul stated he learned to be a better person. While not mentioned as such, the values discussed by the participants could be interpreted by some as religious based. Additional phenomenological research into the role of God on the adult volunteer experience in Scouting is warranted. This additional research would assist with another aspect of how adult construct meaning of their volunteer experience.

### Girls

Several of the participants spoke voluntarily about their thoughts on women participating in the Boy Scout program. Remarking the program had changed or not been the same since women had been involved. The remark by Clayton on a wilderness camping trip stating that boys needed this type of experience away from their Moms, indicated the development of muscularity in the Scouting program as noted by Mechling (2001). George stated that the Scouting program had not been the same since women were more fully able to participate. John stated simply when discussing women in the program, “I don’t know.”

As noted in the literature review, women were limited for the most part until 1973 to volunteering in the Boy Scout program with younger youth in the Cub Scout program. Although today women volunteer in all phases of the Scouting program, including with the older boys in the Boy Scout program, the realm of women volunteers should prove of interest to researchers.

### Gays

Along the line of gendering is the issue of homosexuality. While none of the participants remarked or commented on the issue of homosexuality during the interviews and certainly no comments or actions regarding homosexuality was ever discussed, mentioned, or acted out in the presence of youth during my observations. There were at times remarks, laughter involving comments made, or looks given revolving around sexual orientation situations. These comments or remarks were generally not of a prolonged nature, and from observation not meant to harm anyone. These remarks were generally said to invoke laughter while the youth were away from the campsite or while the youth were conducting their own meeting away from the adults.

The remarks made included which adults were sleeping in which tent with whom, and what was happening in those tents. Homosexuality was alluded to when one adult volunteer during overnight camping always brought his own tent and did not wish to sleep in a tent with another adult volunteer. No negative comment was heard regarding anyone from any lifestyle outside of the immediate adult volunteers. However, it could be stated that jokes and laughter at times revolved around the issue of masculinity.

### Military

Along the lines of masculinity were the participant's remarks and observations regarding the military. The Scout Oath, in addition to doing duty to God, states that Scouts do their duty to country. During the beginnings of the Scouting program, some were suggesting it was a military type experience to develop youth for the military (Alexander, 1910). It is noted that Paul is a veteran of the Navy, John is a veteran of the Air Force, and Clayton is a veteran of the Marines.

Paul stated that sometimes during Scouting meetings the adult leaders, “sit around and tell sea stories” about their time in the military. The interviews with Calyton took place in the basement of his home. On the walls were photographs of his sons while they participated in the Scouting program as youth. On those same walls were photographs of his sons while serving in the Marines. Clayton noted in his opinion that the virtues, principles, and skills that the military finds important, are already taught to the incoming military personnel by the Scouting program. He develops these traits in youth through his volunteer efforts in the Scouting program. He noted:

And the military feels that is important enough to give them [former Scouts] a promotion based on the fact that they have those [Scouting] skills cause that’s what their trying to teach, that’s the beginning and they just expand upon it more, the virtues and the principles and the skills are what they are trying to teach.

John reported of the things he learned in Scouting that spoke directly of the Scouting Oath when he stated he wishes to pass on to the youth that they have “duty” to “country.” He spoke of instilling this in the youth an understanding that they are part of “a wonderful nation.”

A qualitative study regarding the influence or lack of influence of the role of military experience is suggested from the responses of some of the adult volunteers in this study.

### *Suggestion for Improvement and Additional Research*

#### Evaluation

Evaluation of the volunteer experience is important, but often is lacking or an under appreciated aspect of the voluntary experience (Ilsley, 1990). The Scouting program offers a Boy Scout Leader Assessment Tool. This online assessment helps Scouters of all experience

levels discover opportunities to refresh their understanding of Scouting and determine how to update their skills. According to the National Boy Scouts of America web site the Boy Scout Leader Assessment Tool will:

Identify which BSA training courses would be most beneficial to the individual Scouter. Allow local council trainer chairpersons to know and understand which courses should be offered. Remind long-term Scouters that there are new and interesting skills for them to learn. Allow adult leaders to determine their strengths and weaknesses regarding Boy Scout training. Help our adult leaders to have the latest and greatest skills to support and mentor our Scouts.

However, none of the participants spoke of this assessment tool. The evaluation process from the beginning to the end of the volunteer experience should be kept in mind and the value of learning should be a part of evaluation (Ilsley, 1990).

### Communication

As noted by the responses of the participants regarding the need to get along and communicate, a suggestion for future research would be to narrow the research to review communication and what the Boy Scout of America structure, training, management, committees, and volunteer leadership can do to increase communication. Communications is such an all-pervasive and dynamic ingredient of all human relations that it needs to be considered in the volunteer sector. As Wilson (1976) notes in, *The Effective Management of Volunteer Programs* communications can affect the organizational climate, motivation, planning and training in a volunteer organization. Narushima (2005) indicated the volunteers did not realize how much learning would go into their volunteer role when they first started volunteering. She divided the learning that occurred into 'integrative' and 'instrumental' knowledge and skills. Integrative learning includes inter-personal skills, leadership ability, and understanding differences in people and

culture. Instrumental learning involves practical knowledge about specific topics and technical skills. It is a qualitative study on integrative learning that is suggested here for further research.

Three of the participants in this study have completed the Wood Badge training course provided by the Boy Scouts of America. It is noted from the experience of the participants that they would wish for an experience with greater communication. As a suggestion to better the experience of the adult volunteers in the Scouting program, perhaps the Wood Badge course could become a required training course for all Scouting volunteers because of the course's emphasis on communication. As noted by the National Boy Scouts of America, nationwide over the past two years, Wood Badge courses have increased more than 30 percent. The course is for all adult Scouters—Boy Scout leaders, Cub Scout leaders, Venturing leaders, and district and council leaders. This has increased communication to allow for a more seamless connection among all Boy Scouts of America programs (Wood Badge, April 24, 2007).

#### Rewarding and Recognizing Volunteers

The participants in this study did not mention being officially rewarded for their effort with the Scouting program. It is noted that volunteers can recognize their fullest potential if recognized for their efforts (Murk, & Stephan, 1990; Nelson, 1997). Ilsley and Niemi (1981) also note recognition can be a motivating factor to volunteer. Among the various awards for service in the Boy Scouts of America program for adults, the National web site mentions the Boy Scout Leader's Training Award and the Scoutmaster's Key as training awards that recognize training, tenure, and performance. None of the selected adult volunteers in this qualitative study mentioned these awards for training. It was noted from Luther's experience that once a volunteer takes the available training, there is not a requirement to repeat the training. For

example, Luther had been involved in the Webelos level over a number of years in the Scouting program. He stated he had all of the Webelos training offered by the Boy Scouts of America.

He suggest however:

That should be changed with training...that...you would get trained and then retrained every couple...several years...now...they're saying that once you're trained for life, you are trained for life.

Noting his comment and those of the other participants in this study, learning is a part of their volunteer experience with the Boy Scout program. Rewarding and recognizing adult volunteer learning and its importance to the overall volunteer experience can perhaps be the topic of future investigations into the experience of adult volunteers in youth serving organizations.

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## Appendix A: Scout Oath and Law

### Scout Oath

On my honor I will do my best  
To do my duty to God and my country  
and obey the Scout Law;  
To help other people at all times;  
To keep myself physically strong,  
Mentally awake, and morally straight.

### Scout Law

A Scout is trustworthy, loyal,  
helpful, friendly, courteous, kind,  
obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave,  
clean, and reverent.

### Scout Motto

Be Prepared.

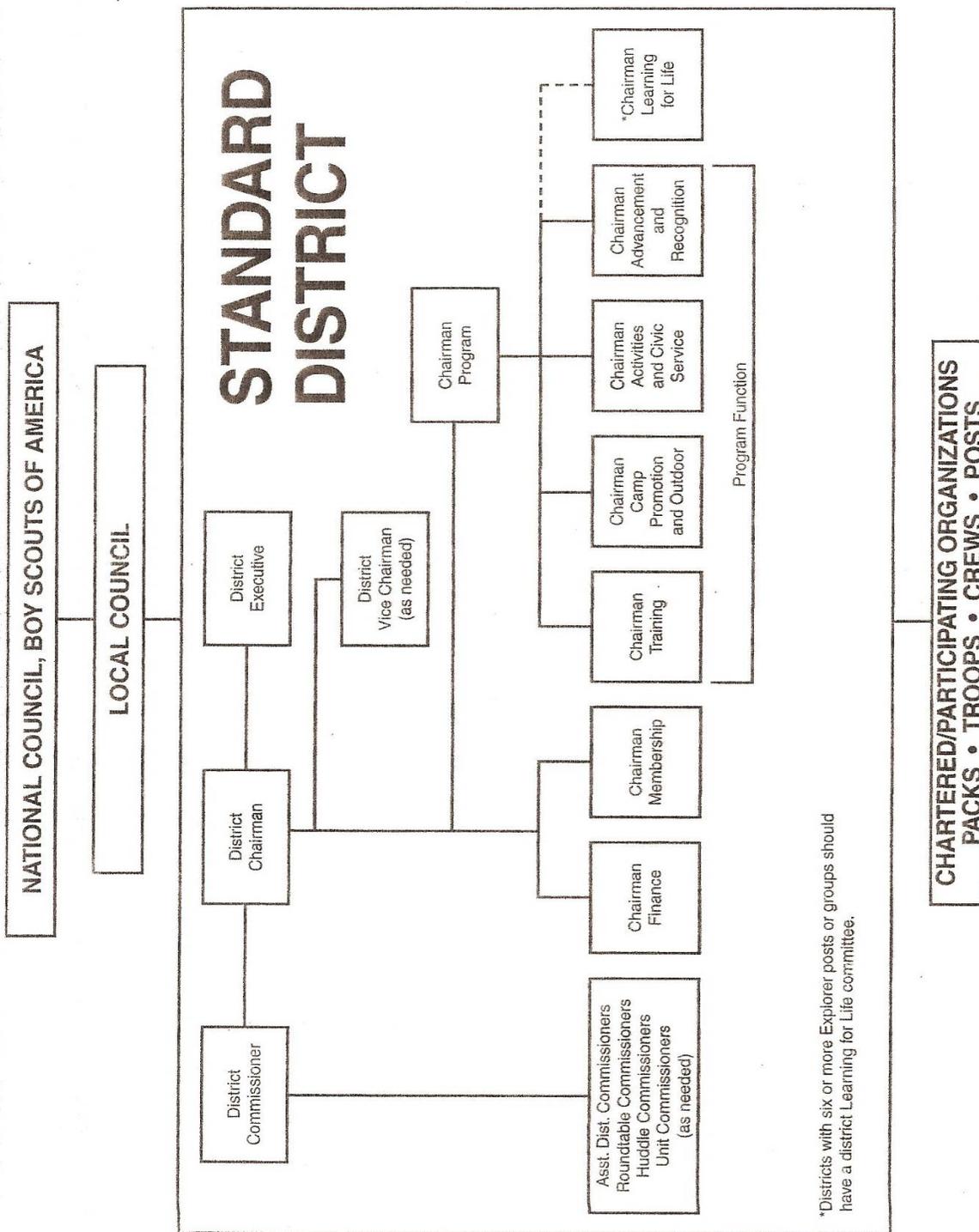
### Scout Slogan

Do a Good Turn Daily.

### Outdoor Code

As an American, I will do my best to  
Be clean in my outdoor manners,  
Be careful with fire,  
Be considerate in the outdoors, and  
Be conservation-minded.

Appendix B: Standard District



\*Districts with six or more Explorer posts or groups should have a district Learning for Life committee.

## Appendix C: Telephone Script

Hello. My name is David Pearlman. I am a graduate student at the Pennsylvania State University. Your name was provided to me by Mike Knorr, the District Executive for the Chief Logan District of the Penn's Woods Council for the Boy Scouts of America. The Council identified you as someone who has been actively involved as an adult volunteer for five or more years.

I am phoning to invite you to participate in some research that I am doing for my studies at Penn State. I am seeking to learn how adult volunteers, such as you, describe their experience volunteering with the Boy Scouts.

Your participation is strictly voluntary and you can quit at any time should you choose to volunteer. If you elect to participate, I will interview you up to three times. Each interview may take up to one hour. Your identity will be only known to me.

**If yes.** Thank you. I would like to meet with you to have you sign a consent letter. What time and place is good for us to meet.

**If no.** Thank you for your time. Sorry to trouble you.

## Appendix D: Informed Consent

**INFORMED CONSENT FORM**  
**FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH** The Pennsylvania State University

**Title of Project:** Learning and Constructing Meaning:  
 Adults Volunteering in the Boy Scouts,  
 IRB # 23656

**Principal Investigator:** David P. Pearlman, Doctoral Candidate in Adult Education  
 The Pennsylvania State University, 314 Keller Building, University Park, PA 16802

**Advisor:** Fred M. Schied, Associate Professor, Adult Education  
 The Pennsylvania State University, 305E Keller Building, University Park, PA 16802

1. **Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this research is how adults describe their volunteer experience with the Boy Scouts of America.
2. **Procedures to be followed:** Participation in this research will involve you taking part in three interviews, which will be recorded. The tapes will be transcribed with no identification of you, the participant. The tapes will be stripped of any identifiers to you and will be kept in a locked desk. The audiotapes will be destroyed no later than June 2007. One observation will occur as you are serving in a volunteer capacity with the Boy Scouts of America.
3. **Benefits:** The benefit of participating in this research is that you may gain a greater appreciation of your volunteer experience. The benefits to society may be more adults becoming involved with the Boy Scouts of America.
4. **Duration/Time:** It will take approximately one hour to complete a first interview. Two additional interviews may be requested and may also be up to one hour in length. One observation will occur and will take approximately 1 ½ hours.
5. **Statement of Confidentiality:** Only the person in charge will know your identity. If this research is published, no information that will identify you will be revealed. The advisor for this research, Dr. Fred Schied will have access to the data without identifiers to you, the participant. Only the researcher, David Pearlman will have access to the audiotapes of the interview and field notes taken during the data collection for this research process.
6. **Right to Ask Questions:** You can ask questions about the research. The person in charge will answer your questions. Contact David Pearlman at (814) 944-7880 or [dpp1@psu.edu](mailto:dpp1@psu.edu) with questions. The advisor for this project is Dr. Fred Schied. You may also contact Dr. Schied at (814) 863-3499 or [fms3@psu.edu](mailto:fms3@psu.edu) if you have questions or concerns
7. **Voluntary Participation:** You do not have to participate in this research. You may end your participation at any time by telling the person in charge. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to take part in this research study. If you agree to take part in this research study and the information outlined above, please sign your name and indicate the date below.

You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

---

Participant Signature

---

Date

I, the undersigned, verify that the above informed consent procedure will be followed.

---

Investigator Signature

---

Date

## Appendix E: Interview Guide

### INTERVIEW GUIDE

**Project Title:** Learning and Constructing Meaning: Adults Volunteering in the Boy Scouts

David Pearlman, Principal Investigator  
The Pennsylvania State University

#### Iteration One

1. Tell me about yourself, your work, what do you do outside of Scouting (NOYE: Not just “job description”, but thicker, richer)

Prompts:

- Age
- Education
- Typical Day
- Cues from notes taken during participant observation

2. Tell me about your life/typical day

Prompts:

- Family, family background
- Friends
- Recreation, hobbies, interests, etc
- Free Time

3. Did you participate in Scouting as a youth?

Prompts:

- How long
- Level of involvement
- What kind of involvement
- Best memories
- Worst memories
- Family experiences

4. Does any of your family (past or present) participate in Scouting?

Prompts:

- Children
- Parents, grandparent
- Other relatives

## Iteration Two

1. Explain what you do as an adult volunteer with the Boy Scouts.

Prompts:

- How long
- Have you had other roles
- Why did you join
- Why do you stay
- Why don't you quit volunteering

2. What is your understanding of adult learning in the Boy Scouts?

Prompts:

- Training
- Informal
- Other learning outside of formal training
- Adult interaction with other adults

3. What is an example of your best learning experience in Scouting?

4. What does the learning that occurs in Scouting mean to you?

Prompts:

- While participating in the Scouting program
- Outside of the formal Scouting program
- Why do you spend time volunteering with the Boy Scouts when you could be learning by taking a class, for example

5. What was your favorite experience and why?

6. Explain what learning in the Scouting program means to you.

7. How does the learning that occurs relate to your overall experience in the Boy Scouts?

### Iteration Three

1. In the previous interview you described your best learning experience. Now describe the worst (or one of the worst) learning experience.

Prompts:

- Compare contexts of best/worst
- Compare levels of training (workshops, etc.)
- Specific reasons (related to learning) why best/worst
- Suggestions to improve

2. If you were put in charge of training for your unit, what would you do?

Prompts:

- Ask for specific examples
- How training would be structured

3. At a broader state or national level, what do you think the key training issues are?

## APPENDIX F: EXAMPLE OF RAW DATA ANALYSIS

**I:** Can you tell me a little about yourself, your work, and what you do outside of Scouting?

**R:** OK, I've been a police officer for twenty seven years professionally. I also uh my outdoor activities are the outdoors, are primarily what I do other then work and Scouting. - outdoors  
I enjoy back packing, kayaking, kayaking, canoeing, hunting, fishing, uh pretty much it

**I:** And what does it mean to you to participate in outdoor activity?

**R:** uhhhh I spend a lot of time doing it [laughter]. Well, for instance I, I, everything that I do a side from work is spent outdoors whether it's time spending time in the woods or up in the mountains. - outdoors

**I:** What do you like about it being in the outdoors?

**R:** Probably number one the beauty, OK, secondly, it is just being out away form people and enjoying nature. - outdoors

**I:** About your current family family background, do you have children?

**R:** I have three three sons all three of them, the oldest one is 27 years old, second one is twenty four and the youngest one is twenty two, all three of them were involved in the Scouting program all three of them are Eagle Scouts. - Boys in program

**I:** Is that how you got involved in Scouting?

**R:** yes

**I:** Ok and tell me a little bit about your friends and how they fit fit into your experience with Scouting?

**R:** Most of my friends are involved in Scouting or became friends as a result of the Scouting program. Very few, I have one individual from work that I that I am very good friends that was also involved in Scouting with another troop, but he and I enjoy, we back pack together, and have hunted together, and things of that nature. For the most part my circle of friends has resulted from the Scouting program and my brother and I, we always have developed winter time activities that we look forward to as much as we did in spring and summer. And it was just an extension of what we did, you know, you didn't have to sit and wait for the time when you could do things. And it's very few people do it and you learn how to be comfortable with it and I think its as much fun as when as its nice and cozy warm. - friends contact - outdoors

**I:** What is your best memory or it could be memories of participating as an adult volunteer in the Scouting program?

**R:** It would be the troop, has been probably back in the early 90's the troop was up around pretty close to fifty kids, and of course that was the first things that I started teaching those boys was backpacking. The troop, most troops involve themselves in a lot of camping, their either Scout camping, such as, the camporees or summer camp. And I just immediately started teaching the boys how to go back packing. It was probably the first time that I took them down to West Virginia and they were, they were just so amazed you know it was different down there and it's just as beautiful here, but its just different. And we spent three days down there and that had to have been that was 1990 and they were pretty amazed because they had not done anything like that before so it was, I think my son at that point was not even in the Scout troop, he was still a Webelos. *- youth*  
*Sense of*  
*be. of. it to*  
*youth*  
*outdoors*

**I:** You mentioned your memory involved seeing the experience of the youth, can you expand upon that a little bit. Is that one of the reasons that you stay in Scouting as an adult volunteer?

*youth* **R:** I like to see the kids, I'm a firm believer in challenging the boys that you see and there is no better challenge than being able to be comfortable outdoors regardless of what the conditions are. And if you challenge the boy and he sees that he has the ability to meet a challenge like that and you over a period of time make the challenge a little more intense, they find out they can do everything that they have to do. They have confidence in themselves and it's the, I enjoy, I just enjoy teaching even the adults outdoor kinds of skills I used to take a group of Scoutmasters we did three years in a row the adult the Scout troops were not getting involved in winter backpacking activities for these three years the last week in January. I took a group of Scoutmasters back packing on a Friday evening and what we did right up here at xxxx (name of place) above xxxxx (name of place) is the xxxxxx (name of trail). Its eighteen miles and goes right up to the camp and we would go half way that night set up camp and then get up and finish it in the morning. But it again was was getting people to have the same appreciation for doing that kind of thing. The first time there was two feet of snow on the ground, it was eighteen below zero, still as death, not a cloud in the sky, and a full moon. It was just gorgeous. Then it was a relatively ruff trip the second year the same group and a couple of additional ones went. There was a totally different group of people that went that time. They knew what they were getting into. I did not have to be the Scoutmaster as much that time and they enjoyed it. In fact, pretty much the same group with the exception of one or two people went the third year and it was it was it was enjoyable to me because I didn't have to watch everything that everybody was doing. *- youth*  
*learning*

*Outdoors experience*

## Appendix G: List of Main Themes and Sub-Themes

### Theme One: Altruism

- Sense of Benefit to Youth
- Values and Leadership

### Theme Two: Need for Activity

- The Outdoors
- The Outdoors and Youth
- Social Contact
- Separate from Women
- Boys of Their Own in the Program

### Theme Three: Learning

- The Wood Badge
- Learning to Get Along and Communication
- Military

## Appendix H: Sample of Training Offered by a District

Westmoreland-Fayette Council, B.S.A.

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## Training

### On-line training resources

There are a number of web-based training courses that are available on the BSA national web-site:

- Youth Protection (Cub and Boy Scouts)
- Youth Protection (Venturing)
- Safe Swim Defense/Safety Afloat
- Cub Scout Fast Start
- Boy Scout Fast Start
- Venturing Fast Start

### External Links:

BSA National Council
Wagon Lodge #6
Join Cub Scouting
Join Boy Scouting
Good Turn for America
Our Cause earns money... GoodSearch.com

Each of these link to the BSA national site. After you complete each of these training sessions, you should print out the completion certificate and forward a copy to the council office.

### BB and Archery Training

BB and Archery Training will be held Saturday, May 12, 2007 at 9:00 a.m. at Camp Tenacharison. Rich Marshall will offer this training for those individuals who will be directing or assisting in archery or BB at Cub Day Camps and Parent Son Weekends. Call the Council Service Center for more information.

### Training Committee Schedule

Below is a schedule of events sponsored by the Council Training Committee. For more information on any of these trainings, see your district training chair, or call the office (724) 837-1630.

**April 13-15: National Youth Leader Training Pt. 1** at Camp Buck Run

**April 21: Basic Leader Outdoor Orientation (BALOO)** 9AM to 4PM at Camp Tenacharison

**April 27: New Leader Essentials;** 6:30PM at Camp Tenacharison

**April 28: Scoutmaster Specific Training;** 8AM to 5PM at Camp Tenacharison

**April 27-29: National Youth Leader Training Pt. 2** at Camp Buck Run

**May 4-6: Outdoor Leader Skills** at Camp Tenacharison

**May 12: BB and Archery Training** 9:00 a.m. at Camp Tenacharison

**April 21: Basic Adult Leader Outdoor Orientation**

**March 29: Commissioner Basic Training**

**May 18-20: Webelos Leader Outdoor Training**

### **District Trainings**

Be sure to check with your District Executive at Roundtable to see when your District will hold their Spring New Leader Essentials and Cub Leader Specific Trainings.

#### **Bushy Run**

- March 5: New Leader Essentials 6:30-8:30PM at Brush Creek Lutheran Church
- March 12: Cub Leader Specific 6:30-8:30PM at Brush Creek Lutheran Church;
- March 14: Youth Protection training 7:00 PM at Queen of Angels, Irwin

#### **Laurel Hills**

- Jan 6: Youth Protection Training at Zion Lutheran Church, 9:30am
- Jan 9: New Leader Essentials at First Lutheran, Greensburg, 7-9pm
- Jan 16: Cub Leader Specific at First Lutheran, 7:00-9:30pm

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VITA            David P. Pearlman

EDUCATION

2007	The Pennsylvania State University University Park, PA	D.Ed.	Adult Education
1993	The Pennsylvania State University University Park, PA	M.Ed.	Adult Education
1984	The University of Pittsburgh Pittsburgh, PA	B.S.	Secondary Education

CURRENT POSITION

1996-2007    Director of Student Aid, Penn State Altoona            Altoona, PA

PROFESSIONAL AND TEACHING ACTIVITIES

2005-2006	Instructor, Freshman Seminar Course, Penn State Altoona
2006-2007	Chair, Financial Aid Awareness Committee, Pennsylvania Association of Financial Aid Association
1996-1997	Chair, Campus Aid Advisory Committee, The Pennsylvania State University