

Our troop used to have a very special place where we often went camping. It was called Gray's Cove, in the Carter Mountain area below Winchester. This area had a spring, and several creeks running through it, but one of the greatest things there was a grapevine that hung over one of the creeks there. This was a real swinging grapevine, and we used to spend hours playing on it, even in the winter. The way the banks of the creek were made, however, meant that you had to be careful how you swung on it. You had to really launch yourself from the one side in order to make it to the other, and when you were at the peak of your swing, you had to drop off to the other side. If you did not do this, you did not have enough momentum to make it back to the side you started from. You had to commit yourself to the full maneuver, or face the consequences.

One of the most memorable times we had there was during a winter campout. The weather during the day had turned fairly warm, and of course, we were using the vine to the fullest. One boy, however, was a little too cautious, and did not fully commit himself to the job at hand. He swung out, but did not get close enough to the opposite side to drop off onto the bank. One of the funniest Scout memories that I have is watching this boy hang on to this vine as it slowly stopped swinging. There he was, suspended over the creek, asking what he could do. Well, there was nothing for him to do but to drop into the icy creek. It was only waist deep, but it was a chilling experience for him. He had a difficult time drying out and getting warm after that.

The simple point is, if we really want the best out of life, then we have to commit ourselves to the best that we can do and be. This is just what the Scouting program is about. These boys here tonight have done that, and this is the largest Court of Honor that I have ever been a part of. But we all have to keep going, and keep making that commitment, or we will just be left hanging on the vine.