

Scouting has to do with having a strong “Spirit of Adventure”, where we get off the couch and go out where we don’t have all of the niceties of modern living. This doesn’t mean that we don’t thrive, for many times on our trips we were able to cook really great meals (great fried chicken and shrimp) that showed we did far better than just survive. Sometimes, though, we had only cheese and crackers, but still had a great time.

Now back when I was a young Scout, I didn’t thrive quite as well because we just had old technology sleeping bags, tents, and cookware. We didn’t backpack with lanterns, tarps, water filters or pillows. But I believe that I had just as much fun.

It is interesting that in looking back I feel that it was actually the Scout experience that shaped my character much more than church or home, at least at that time. That doesn’t mean that church and home weren’t great influences on me, but somehow Scouting changed me more.

This may have been because it put me in stressful situations in a supervised manner, where I had to get the job done if I wanted to get back home from a hiking or camping trip. It gave me the most memorable experiences. It made me physically stronger and more appreciative of all the blessings that I had. It allowed me to get away from the ordinary structures of life and see them from a distance. It filled me with the joy of doing and being, of putting my whole heart into something as I carried my pack along the trail. And this growth experience enabled me to put that same enthusiasm into my spiritual life as well.

As Helen Keller once said, “Life is either a daring adventure or it is nothing.” If you are not taking advantage of your opportunities for adventure then you are short-changing yourself. So let’s not wait too long before we plan the next “Big Trip<sup>1</sup>,” whether its main goal is physical or spiritual.

1. Read the stories of Patrick McManus