Message from the Young Men General Presidency: Council LDS Relationships Committees

President Michael A. Neider
Young Men General Presidency Second Counselor

David Pack, the LDS BSA Relationships Director, and the Young Men General Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are reviewing all BSA council LDS relationships committees in the United States to ensure each council has an organized committee and to assist each committee in operating effectively.

The council relationships committees are an important part of the local BSA council organization which serves to promote better partnership relationships between the council and its sponsoring organizations, through regular communication, the sharing of concerns and needs, and the resolution of issues; all to enhance the experience for each boy.

LDS relationships committees are usually composed of LDS stake presidents or their counselors who are the priesthood leaders that supervise the bishops of local congregations. The committee chair reports to an Area Seventy who supervises the stake presidents. The LDS relationships committee is the proper forum for effective communications between the BSA council leaders and priesthood representatives of the Church. All issues of concern should first be resolved at this committee, including calendaring, financial, registration, training, and other issues.

Stake presidents are responsible for policy decisions in their stakes and to ensure Scouting is organized and operating properly as they work with the bishops of their local congregations. For this reason, council leaders and representatives should use the council LDS relationships committees as the first contact for the partnership leadership communications and issue resolution, including such issues as are pertinent to the LDS Scouting units as a whole.

We ask each council to have its appropriate representative contact David Pack and inform him about the existence or operation of its LDS relationships committee. He can then place in motion the needed action to organize or reorganize the committee as the case may be. We also ask any stake presidency member, bishop, or LDS Scouter who is aware of organizational needs for LDS relationships committees to contact David Pack with information, questions or suggestions.

Contact David Pack, Director, LDS Relationships – BSA, at dapack@netbsa.org or cell 801-647-1244.
Recently, the *Church News* sat down with President Thomas S. Monson and talked about the Aaronic Priesthood of the Church.

A lifelong champion of Scouting and the Church's Young Men program, President Monson spoke enthusiastically about the worth of each boy in the Church. The Church president said it's vital that every young man develop confidence, prepare wisely, and enjoy the support of dutiful parents and leaders.

He expressed his own faith in the young men of the Church, worldwide. He's optimistic about their future.

Indeed, there are tens of thousands of Aaronic Priesthood-age young men in the Church today. It would be impossible for President Monson to interview each individually. But if the Church president could speak to every young man face-to-face, he would likely share with each boy the same counsel he offered to his missionaries decades ago when he was a mission president in Canada.

"I'd tell them to be their very best," President Monson said. "Be the best of which you are capable in all things."

**A Good Education**

During his exit interviews with departing missionaries, President Monson stressed the importance of acquiring a quality education. That timeless direction to "seek learning" remains especially relevant in today's competitive, high-tech world.

"You want to be prepared to take advantage of the opportunities that come your way. If you're not prepared, you're in difficulty," he said, before quoting the scripture, "if ye are prepared, ye shall not fear." (See Doctrine and Covenants 38:30.)

It isn't enough to simply get an education, added President Monson. Young men should plan to study something that they enjoy and will allow them to earn a living. A person may possess a fondness for, say, Egyptian pottery — but the job opportunities in such a field may be limited.

"Study something you like to do and something that will enable you to have a family and sustain your family," he said.

**The Lord's Tenth and Temple Marriage**

President Monson said that during his exit interviews with missionaries, he also spoke of the safety found in satisfying one's financial obligation to the Lord. "Pay your tithing," he said, "that's the big divider between those who stay fully active in the Church and those who do not. Tithing is the first law (some) slip on, then there is slippage all the way through."

Lastly, President Monson would tell his departing missionaries to marry in the temple. "Date only a girl you can take to the temple — you're going to fall in love with someone you date."

**Gain Confidence**

As a boy, young Tommy Monson developed a passion for softball. The sport would teach him lessons that reach beyond the softball diamond. Lessons that served him well as an athlete and, later, as a Church leader presiding over young men.

"When I was in the sixth grade, I wasn't very coordinated...I wasn't very good," said President Monson, recalling his youthful image with a smile. He was usually chosen last when the other boys picked sides for sandlot softball games.

Then one day something special happened. Young Tommy was playing center field, one of his favorite positions. The opposing team's batter hit a long fly ball deep into the outfield in Tommy's direction. As he ran to the descending ball, the future Church president heard someone say, "He won't catch that."

"I ran as hard as I could, put my bare hand out and caught the ball," President Monson said. "From that point on, I could hold my own in softball. With just that one bit of confidence, I knew I could do it."

It's essential, he added, that every young man in the Church experience such confidence-inspiring moments.

Softball would also teach President Monson a lesson in humility — and the danger of judging another by his or her appearance.

When he was a little older, Tom Monson often took to the mound during his fastpitch softball games. During a Decoration Day game against another ward, pitcher Monson watched as a one-armed batter stepped into the box.

"I lobbed an easy one to him — and he hit it! The ball landed right over second base." The next batter he faced sent his pitch sailing out of the park for a home run. President Monson said he can still see that one-armed player smiling at him as he jogged around the base path and touched home plate.

**Young Men Need Leaders**

Later, while serving as a mission president, President Monson used a preparation day game of softball with his missionaries to teach an important lesson of leadership. A young elder who was pitching invited his mission president to take a few swings.

"Oh, I don't know," President Monson told the elder, "I haven't played for a long time." But he handed
his suit coat to his wife, Sister Frances Monson, selected a bat, stepped inside the batter's box, and told the elder "give me the best pitch you've got." The mission president smacked the ball out of the park.

The pitcher sent him another ball. Again, President Monson made solid contact. Then he handed the bat to the elder who was playing catcher. The catcher asked him if he was going to run the bases.

"No," he said, "I'm not competing with you missionaries, I'm your mission president. I just wanted you to know I could hit the ball."

President Monson sometimes shares that softball moment with new mission presidents. It's important that Aaronic Priesthood leaders establish "a little line" between themselves and the young men they lead. What if, say, that missionary-pitcher had lost his father a week after that softball game. "That's when that missionary needed a mission president — not another ball player."

Young men don't need another buddy or playmate, said President Monson. They need leaders to direct them.

**Scouting**

President Monson once saw a sign in a furniture store that read: "Finishers Wanted."

Scouting, he said, can help craft Aaronic Priesthood holders into finishers. Scouting's merit badge program can expose young men to a wide variety of vocations, professions and hobbies that will help them hone skills needed to be "finishers."

Bishops, young men leaders and Scoutmasters must help young men navigate the "finishers" path, said President Monson.

"You've got to demonstrate to the young men that they are important to you," he said. "You don't walk out on them. They need to know that on evenings when you have your Scout meetings, you'll be there."

While speaking about the importance of devoted leaders, President Monson remembered his first overnight Scout camp at Utah's Tracy Wigwam. Tommy and his fellow Scouts were joined on the camp by their Scoutmaster, a fellow ward member named Carl who walked on an artificial leg.

It was winter and the young boys were cold and maybe a little homesick. "Who should show up but my mother and father with a freezer of ice cream," said President Monson, laughing. "We were all freezing. Hot chili would have been a lot better."

As the Scouts bedded down for the night in their cabin, Tommy and the others watched Carl remove his artificial leg and place it next to his sleeping bag. During the night, one of the boys climbed from his sleeping bag, swiped Carl's artificial leg and hid it in his own bunk.

When Carl awoke he discovered the leg was missing. But instead of raising his voice and demanding his property be immediately returned, Carl simply said he needed to step outside the cabin for a moment. The Scouts watched their leader hop on one leg out the door. "I think every boy felt ashamed," said President Monson.

Carl soon returned and discovered his artificial leg resting where he had left it the night before. "I don't know how I overlooked this the first time I looked," said Carl, "but I'm sure glad it's here."

President Monson said Carl knew well he'd been the victim of a boy's prank, but he chose to respond with softness. "We were all better boys for his not jumping on us."

**Reason for Optimism**

As the longest-serving member of Scouting's national executive board (approaching 40 years), President Monson has spoken to countless audiences of Boy Scouts and their leaders. He spoke of one special assignment in 2005 when he addressed some 5,000 LDS Scouters gathered for the National Scout Jamboree at Ft. A.P. Hill, Va.

Tragedy had visited the jamboree days earlier when an electrical accident claimed the lives of several Scout leaders from Alaska, including Church member Michael LaCroix. During his address, President Monson paid tribute to Brother LaCroix and his widow, Carol LaCroix.

President Monson invited the thousands in attendance at that Sabbath-day meeting to stand and, at his lead, raise their right hands in an official Scout salute in tribute to the LaCroix family. A photo of that dramatic moment of unity was sent to Sister LaCroix.

The young men of the Church "learn by example more than they learn from anything else," said President Monson, "That's how you teach them to think of another person....You can be part of their lives."

In recent years, several newspaper and magazine articles have noted an unwillingness in young men across the world to set goals for their future and to make the effort to achieve them.

President Monson said he isn't buying it as far as the young men in the Church are concerned. When he considers today's Aaronic Priesthood holders, the president of the Church said he's happy and hopeful.

"If you have the leaders, there is definitely reason for optimism," he said. "If you don't have a leader, you make one."

by Jason Swenson, Church News, week ending May 25, 2008
**Message from the General Primary Presidency**

_Sister Vicki Matsumori, Second Counselor Primary General Presidency_

Cicero once said, “What greater or better gift can we offer the republic than to teach and instruct our youth.”

We thank all who are Scout leaders. Your teaching and instruction of boys and young men help them develop character and build confidence and leadership skills. In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Scout leaders also help boys strengthen their testimonies of Jesus Christ, strengthen their families, and prepare themselves to be worthy priesthood holders.

Truly, Scout leaders give a great gift. Through your selfless service, boys can become better able to serve the family, the community, and God.

---

**Steadfast in All Places, Prepared in All Things**

DILLSBURG, PA.

Hot, muggy days and nights are perfect for young boys to find high adventure among the tall shade trees of Camp Tuckahoe, Dillsburg, Pa.

On Saturday, July 26, nearly 440 Boy Scouts from nine stakes congregated at Camp Tuckahoe for the 2008 Pennsylvania/Maryland Regional LDS Scout Encampment. An additional 105 adult leaders supervised the camp, held from July 26 until August 2.

The Scouts, ranging in ages of 12 to approximately 18, hailed from Wilmington, Delaware; Columbia, Maryland; Reading, Philadelphia, York, Scranton, Williamsport, Valley Forge, and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania Stakes. The local York Pennsylvania Stake, which encompasses 10 units in Waynesboro, Chambersburg, Gettysburg, Hanover, York, and Lewisberry areas, hosted the event.

They spent the week qualifying for merit badges and enjoying a variety of outdoor activities. These included high adventure biking to Gettysburg, white water rafting on the Susquehanna River, rappelling-pole steeple at Pine Grove Furnace, and mountain biking at William Kain Park.

The Scouts enjoyed other activities, including cardboard canoe racing, Sons of Helaman Challenge, Iron Man Challenge, and Project C.O.P.E. (Challenging Outdoor Personal Experience taught by National Camp School certified directors). For a service project, the Scouts removed unwanted trees.

On Sunday the adult leaders conducted church services for the youth in the morning. The day culminated with an inspirational fireside. Elder Robert Smith, an Area Seventy presided, and York Pennsylvania Stake President Dennis G. Tyson conducted. Michael A. Neider, second counselor in the Young Men general presidency, addressed the gathering. He spoke on the worldwide Young Women/Young Men theme: "Stand Ye Steadfast in All Places." He admonished the young men to hold to the high standards that Boy Scouts and the Church have set for the young men.

Elder Smith also addressed the youth and reminded them of the historic importance of Pennsylvania, where Joseph Smith was baptized at Harmony in the Susquehanna River and where the Aaronic Priesthood was also restored on May 15, 1829.

The theme for the week was "Be Ye Prepared in All Things."

---

**Six Varsity Denali Awards Presented**

Unit 1521 of Fox Pointe Ward, Bingham Creek Stake in West Jordan, Utah recently awarded six Denali Awards to Varsity Scouts Sam Gordon, Josh Ferrin, Glen Larsen, Spencer Deppe, Mitch Fowlks, and Dane Jensen during a court of honor, under the direction of adviser Jim Larsen.

Charlie Dressen from the Great Salt Lake Council presented special letters from the YM General Presidency of the LDS Church to the award recipients. He noted that six is the largest number of Denali Awards presented at one time in any unit in the Great Salt Lake Council.

*Article submitted by Bishop David R. Homer, Fox Pointe Ward*
Making Cub Scouts Work

Since 1913 the Scouting program has been supported and incorporated in the Church programs as a way for boys ages eight to eighteen to learn and reinforce gospel values. (The idea to adopt the Boy Scouts of America program was presented to the First Presidency by Bryant S. Hinkley, President Hinckley’s father.) Since that time, Scouting has been used as the activity arm of the Aaronic Priesthood and as part of the Primary program.

Making Cub Scouts work smoothly can be a challenge. In fact, there seems to be three major barriers in terms of having a Cub Scout program work well. But if these common pitfalls are addressed and solved, the other smaller problems will take care of themselves.

Training

Problem number one: leaders and families are unfamiliar with the program. The solution to this is found in one word—training.

Any leader, in any situation, needs to understand their responsibilities and duties, as well as those of whom they work with. The Boy Scouts of America, through local districts, provides a series of training experiences beginning with an online course called “fast start training” designed to help leaders understand their job. The Boy Scouts of America website (www.scouting.org) has fast start training for every position from den leaders to the Primary president and can answer many of the questions both new and experienced leaders may have.

The next level of training is called Basic Training. This covers training for specific positions, like a den leader or committee chair. After this training, leaders will know how the program works as a whole and receive leader-specific training that will, among other things, help den leaders learn to keep records and give ideas to Cubmasters for providing simultaneous entertainment and instruction to a spirited group of eight to ten-year-olds.

In addition to these one-time trainings, roundtable meetings are provided each month by the sponsoring district and are especially great for Cub Scout leaders. At these meetings, the next month’s theme and activities are discussed. Ideas, and, in some cases supplies are given to den leaders and Cubmasters. Most districts or councils also sponsor an annual training conference called a pow wow. While pow wow attendance is not required training, the curriculum is very useful, and many classes and ideas offered are relevant to every Cub Scout position.

Tenure

If leaders are properly educated and supported in their training, they will gain an understanding of and appreciation for the aims and purposes of Cub Scouting. This will help alleviate the second major problem—tenure.

In the 2007 Aaronic Priesthood/Scouting Broadcast, President Charles W. Dahlquist II, Young Men General President, discussed tenure in Scouting. “Over time, leaders become trained, establish strong Scouting traditions, and build relationships of trust with the boys and their families. . . . Ideally, it would be wonderful to leave leaders of the youth in callings as long as possible.” Lack of tenure makes smooth operation of the Cub Scouting program difficult. In a well-run program, the boys will be able to look forward with anticipation to activities with leaders they can expect in future years.

Correlation

The third problem faced by many Cub Scout programs is one of correlation. It is difficult for some to see how Primary and Cub Scouts fit together and support one another. There are several ways Cub Scout requirements dovetail with Primary’s goals: the family, Character Connections, and Faith in God.

Family

Cub Scouting is a family program. Family and parental involvement is actually crucial to the workings of the program. Many requirements revolve around life at home and encourage participation with family members in family activities.

Character Connections

Another way the programs work together is through Character Connections. Character Connections reinforce gospel principles and subjects taught in Primary and at Cub meetings. Found as requirements throughout all three den’s books, Character Connections discuss topics like respect, faith, courage, and honesty. Passing off these requirements necessitates the boys to know, commit to, and practice these values.

Faith in God

A third way Primary and Cub Scouts reinforce one another is through the Faith in God program. This small booklet provides the requirements for the religious square knot patch. After he has earned it, this purple and silver patch is the only one that will remain with him on all his Scouting uniforms. He will wear it on his Boy Scout uniform and on his adult uniform as he becomes a leader.

The Faith in God program also uses other Scouting activities to reinforce gospel teachings that help these young boys prepare for the priesthood through hands-on activities. Many leaders try to incorporate one Faith in God achievement at least once a month in their Cub Scout meetings.

The Cub Scouting program is a way to build and support boys as they prepare to receive the priesthood. In 2007, when speaking to Scout leaders about Scouts, President Monson said, “They depend on you. Their very salvation may be at stake. You can build a bridge to the heart of a boy and can help guide his precious soul back to our Father in Heaven.” Leaders and parents who recognize and follow this counsel concerning Scouting will do a great service to future generations of the world as we help these young boys grow and mature.

Article by Dawn Frandsen, LDS Living Magazine, July/August 2008, 38-39
Vol. 3 No. 3     October 2008               Page 6

Scouts Get Spiritual Lift

SACRAMENTO, CALIF.

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve joined more than 4,000 LDS Boy Scouts and hundreds of Scout and priesthood leaders at Van Vleck Ranch outside of Sacramento, California, for one of the largest gatherings of young men in Northern California history. The occasion was the third Sons of Liberty High Adventure Encampment held August 7-9.

Boys from 25 stakes (13 BSA districts) attended the conference that featured dozens of high adventure activities from Indian lore and buckskin games to aquatic skills and rappelling. With more than 75 activities, games, demonstrations, competitions, and morning and evening devotionals, everyone was kept busy from dawn until well into the evening.

In his address to the Scouts, Elder Perry said, "As I gaze out at the thousands of bright faces, I am touched by the great priesthood power I see before me. This is truly an awesome sight."

He admonished the attendees to set goals and to keep them, saying, "Set goals including missions, education, and professional attainment. You are a part of the building of the kingdom of God on the earth."

Although the weather was in the 90’s and the press of young men who wanted to shake hands with an apostle was significant, Elder Perry traveled around to meet as many of them as he could. During his evening presentation, he bounded up onto the stage and greeted the audience with his booming voice: "Good evening, Scouts!" Many were surprised at the amount of energy and sheer enthusiasm he radiated.

He told the Scouts, "There are very few things I wish I had done in my life and have not accomplished. I wish I had gotten my CPA (Certified Public Accounting) and I wished I had achieved the Eagle Award.... I want you young men to set goals and accomplish them and go on to do many great things with your lives."

"In California it seems that we only rarely get to see General Authorities, let alone an apostle," said Logan Dunnaway, one of the priests who served as staff at the event. "And when we see them, it is usually from the back row of a cultural hall during stake conference. But this time, we got to see one of the Quorum of the Twelve who was here to talk just to us. I don't know how many of us will leave on missions in a year or so. But I can tell you that we gained a testimony that we are led by spiritual men who wear Scout shirts, tell jokes, and put up with teenagers."

Also in attendance was Area Seventy Brian Treadway, as a way to help California Scouts learn and appreciate something of the sacrifices and service rendered by the Mormon Battalion. About 2,000 young men from 19 stakes attended that event coinciding with the release of the film, "More Precious Than Gold," in conjunction with California's Sesquicentennial. The film portrayed Church contributions to the development of California, including the discovery of gold at nearby Sutter's Mill.

Mormon Battalion re-enactors, who have attended each encampment, were honored this year when Elder Perry lit the cannon at the evening Retiring of the Colors ceremony. "I'm an old artillery guy and that was fun," exclaimed Elder Perry.

"We wanted to give an idea to these young men that they are a part of a mighty army of Aaronic Priesthood holders," said Brian Matthews, 2008 encampment director. "When they can look out over a crowd of thousands of young men like themselves, it gives them an idea of what power there is outside of their own quorums."

Director of evening programs, Sal Hernandez, said, "Camaraderie and the true spirit of Boy Scouts lift these young men toward missionary service and the high ideals of honorable manhood. Through activities like this, held every few years or so, we can inspire and build great men."

The first Sons of Liberty Encampment in 1998 was organized by S. Dennis Holland, director of public affairs for the Sacramento region, along with Major Nilsen and Ben Lofgren, as a way to help California Scouts learn and appreciate something of the sacrifices and service rendered by the Mormon Battalion. About 2,000 young men from 19 stakes attended that event.

Article by Scott McDonald, Northern California Public Affairs, Church News, week ending August 28, 2008
Return to Philmont
Church hosts annual Scouting conference in New Mexico

One priesthood leader went to the 2008 edition of the Church's Scouting Leadership Conference at Philmont Scout Ranch admittedly "skeptical" that Scouting can really help young men become better priesthood holders.

A week of inspired training and fellowship under turquoise skies at the Cimarron, N.M., Scout encampment can turn skeptics into believers. "My vision has been exceeded," wrote that same leader following a week at Philmont.

Other comments about the annual leadership conference included this observation from a stake president in Colorado who had long believed in the power of Scouting: "But now I must convert others."

Once again, hundreds of priesthood, Young Men and Scouting leaders gathered at Philmont to make new friends, absorb a week of instruction of counsel from Church auxiliary leaders and celebrate Scouting.

"I believe that the hallmark of Philmont isn't the setting — it's the spirit," said David Pack, director of Boy Scouts of America/LDS Relationships.

The always popular Scout leadership training drew more participants in 2008 than ever before. More than 300 priesthood leaders were enrolled in one of the two leadership conferences, running June 28-July 11. Joining most of the men were their wives and children. In all, more than 1,200 people enjoyed the Philmont experience.

"Philmonters" came from all parts of the country, stretching from Maine to California. In fact, the demographics of the campers "was disproportionately outside of Utah," Brother Pack said. Most were first-timers to Philmont.

The many stake presidents, bishops, and Young Men leaders who went to Philmont also hail from a variety of professional and Church backgrounds. But unity was found as each man swapped the blue or white collars of the workplace in exchange for Boy Scout uniforms and Scout-themed bolo ties.

They were greeted at camp by a team of Philmont veterans, including Young Men General President Charles W. Dahlquist II and his counselors, Brother Dean R. Burgess and Brother Michael A. Neider, along with Primary General President Cheryl C. Lant and her second counselor, Sister Vicki F. Matsumori. Several members from the Young Men and Primary general boards rounded out the Philmont "faculty."

Each day, other than Sunday, the men attended courses that focused on how Scouting can make better deacons, teachers, priests, and future Melchizedek priesthood holders. "It's all about the priesthood," Brother Pack said.

The curriculum included class sessions on the various Scouting genres — Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Varsity Scouts, Venturers — along with instruction on utilizing the Church's Duty to God program. Other classroom topics included Scout financing, Scouting's relationship with the Church, teaching Aaronic Priesthood quorum presidencies how to preside, and individual goal setting.

Meanwhile, spouses and younger children were kept busy with a wide variety of fun and instructional activities. Many teenagers participated in a multi-day, gospel-themed hike in the New Mexico backcountry.

While the classrooms offered instruction, the training session's many firesides provided inspiration and testimony building. Sunday at Philmont is always a spiritual day, as participants worship together as a "ward" during Sunday services. Most of the participants fulfilled a calling, perhaps as a Primary or gospel doctrine teacher.

And, again, there was no shortage of fun — including the annual camp barbecue, dance social, children's parade, and screening of "Follow Me Boys."

Organizers are already planning for Philmont 2009. Information about next year's Scouting leadership conference can be found at www.ldsbsa.org.

Article by Jason Swenson, Church News, week ending July 26, 2008

2010 National Jamboree

July 26th- August 4th
Fort AP Hill, Virginia

In 1916, Sir Robert Baden-Powell, founder of the Scouting movement, knew what success looked like for the 10th anniversary of Scouting. It was the sight of thousands of youth gathered together to celebrate. The jamboree was born! In his words, “The secret of its growth lies in that indeterminate force which we only know as the ‘Scout Spirit,’” and grow it has!

Since 1937, more than 654,000 Scouts and leaders have shared the jamboree experience and hiked the trails, paths, and roadways at 16 national Scout jamborees. Now, 100 years after Scouting reached the United States, it’s your turn to celebrate!

Online registration and additional information can be found at the National Jamboree website: www.bsajamboree.org

May 2008 Newsletter Correction:
Donald E. Ellison, member of the Northeast Religious Relationships Committee, received the Silver Antelope in 2005 and the Silver Beaver in 1998.
Family Scouting in the Grand Teton Council

Not long after I arrived in Idaho as the new Scout executive, I was approached by our council Wood Badge coordinator, Lance Oviatt, with an interesting proposal. “What do you think about running a week of family camp?”

The idea was to run three advanced training courses simultaneously (Wood Badge, Powder Horn, and NYLT) at the same camp, along with age-appropriate programs for other family members as well. It was a very distinctive idea and I was intrigued by the possibilities.

More than 80% of the membership of the Grand Teton Council is affiliated with the LDS Church and they put a strong emphasis on the family. The idea behind a family camp was to present quality Scouting training opportunities, while, at the same time, using Scouting resources to provide great family vacation experiences to entire families.

Fortunately, the ground had already been broken on this idea and the foundation had been laid by our friends and neighbors to the south in the Trapper Trails Council (Odgen, Utah). They have been running a Family Camp week for the past three years. This gave us an opportunity to learn from them and build on their successful experiences (and avoid some of the same startup mistakes). They were very generous with their support, coaching, and ideas.

Lance Oviatt agreed to serve as the director of our first Family Scouting Experience. He recruited LaMont and Barbara Gibson to direct the Family Camp portion of the week and they recruited a staff of over 40 volunteers. We selected and assigned the three directors for the training courses using our normal procedures; Scott Poulson as Wood Badge course director, Clarence Gummow as Powder Horn course director, and Eric Empey as National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT) course director. (We call it Cedar Badge in this council.) These three national training courses were staffed and organized just like any other council level training course would be.

The result of all this was that a person of any age or interest could come to the Family Scouting Experience and have a great time. There were Cub Scout programs for Cub age boys and daily activity sessions for all kids from 18–months through 14–years old. Girls fourteen and older could choose between Venturing Cedar Badge (Kodiak) or daily activities which included crafts, hikes, historic sites, and a tour of Yellowstone National Park. There were also programs for spouses that included COPE, sailing, river rafting, shopping in West Yellowstone, crafts, and a day in Yellowstone National Park.
Every group was organized into a “patrol” with their own name and identity, such as the Rowdy Rangers (8-9 year-old boys), the Hawaiian Princesses (6-7 year-old girls), the Raiders of the Tetons (10-11 year-old boys), and the Dragonflies (10-11 year-old girls). Most meals were eaten together as families—except for the NYLT participants who cooked their own meals. After breakfast the training course participants would go their separate ways and the Family Camp patrols would gather at the parade ground. After roll call (patrol yells), a flag ceremony, and announcements, each group would go to their own activity area or start their program or trip for the day. Family members would meet up again for lunch, go back to their afternoon activities and trainings, and then come together again for dinner and evening family activities.

So, was the program a success? Absolutely! Each of the training courses had significant participation: 51 at Wood Badge, 19 at Powder Horn, and 68 at NYLT. There were many logistical issues that had to be worked out, but the participants all enjoyed positive experiences. The Family Camp had 77 kids and 17 spouses participate. Many of them said it was their best vacation ever. We already have families telling us they want to sign up for next year and almost twenty people have committed to attend Powder Horn.

There are many ways to measure success, but the Scouting Family Experience allowed the Grand Teton Council to provide advanced training to 138 Scouts and leaders while at the same time providing 58 families an outstanding camping experience. We are confident that the net results will pay rich dividends for many years to come. I believe that Scouting blesses the lives of kids and families and the Family Scouting Experience allowed us to do that in a new, fun, and exciting way.

Article submitted by Clarke Farrer, Scout Executive, Grand Teton Council, Idaho Falls, Idaho
Stake Leadership Reflects on Training Experiences

Clark Mower, Stake President, Morgan Utah North Stake
When we were sustained as a stake presidency, we met together to set goals for the coming year and for the years that we would be privileged to serve together. As we reviewed our goals, it became apparent that our short, intermediate, and long term goals all included doing everything we could to strengthen the youth and youth leadership of the stake.

We quickly realized that one of the best things that we could do would be to learn all that we could so that we would be more qualified to train our leaders and to receive the inspiration and answers we were seeking.

I had called a strong experienced youth leader to be a counselor in the stake presidency and gave him responsibility for upgrading our Young Men, Young Woman, and Primary programs. We felt that one of the best and most immediate ways of accomplishing this objective would be through the training of our leaders. I don’t believe that I can ask anyone to do anything that I am not willing to do, so we enrolled the entire stake presidency and the high councilor over the Young Men presidency in Wood Badge. (Our stake Young Men presidency had previously been Wood Badge trained). We then went to the bishops and asked those who had not previously been trained to enroll in Wood Badge and to include their Young Men presidency and Scoutmasters who had not previously attended Wood Badge. We ended up with nineteen members of our stake at the Wood Badge training in March of this year. Since that time we have had several more of our leaders attend subsequent sessions and have commitments from the remaining bishops to attend next year.

It was a marvelous experience to have that many members of our stake together at the training. There were enough of us that we had people in each patrol which broadened our collective experience and yet we were able to come together at night and build, encourage, and share with each other. It brought a greater understanding of the programs and a cohesive effort both to the stake and to the wards. I also believe that it let the wards know that the stake leadership was committed to building the Aaronic Priesthood/Scouting program. It really has brought a unity of purpose to the Aaronic Priesthood/Scouting program in our stake. The best comparison that I can make is it has made the difference of whether you feel like you are the lone voice in the wilderness or a member of a large choir who are all harmoniously singing the same tune.

After our experience, I highly recommend having the stake president, the counselor over the YM, YW, and Primary program and the stake Young Men president attend Philmont together with their families. It not only gave us a unity of purpose and a common understanding, it served to train and enroll our families in what we were attempting to accomplish and gave us each a shared vision of what the program can become. We spent much time together at Philmont strategizing and sharing ideas on how to improve the programs in our stake. It was particularly meaningful, because we were all together and could discuss it while it was still fresh in our minds and could set the direction for the future. It also gave us a unity of purpose as we returned and acted as a catalyst to move the program forward.
Roger K. Petersen, First Counselor, Morgan Utah North Stake Presidency

I had never been a fan of Wood Badge. My brother, Bob, had tried to get me to go for many years. I was even called by President Walker of the Morgan Utah Stake to go. But I steadfastly refused. When President Mower asked me to attend, I couldn't say no! And much to my surprise, our experience as a stake was extremely valuable. The instruction was excellent. The comraderie even better. We were given caring and responsive leaders. The entire instruction was goal oriented and success driven. But there was not the pressure I had anticipated. I have been to the finest Army training camps, including some at the Pentagon. This was better than any of them. When we met each morning for the flag raising ceremony, I was proud to be a Beaver. I joined in all the calls and cheers. I never thought this was possible. I even flapped my Beaver tail when the moment came to strut our stuff. I don't remember a dull moment at the conference. Of special note are the many sessions we had with our assigned mentors. They helped us develop our tickets and they followed up diligently. I look forward to receiving my Wood Badge beads, since I now have completed my ticket.

I have been invited to attend Philmont next summer. Both my wife and I look forward to this with anticipation. Thanks for the opportunity.

Greg B. Mead, Second Counselor, Morgan Utah North Stake Presidency

Both Wood Badge and Philmont were incredible experiences for me. At each one I learned principles of Scouting I had not known before. Philmont was especially helpful in understanding Scouting's relationship to the Church and its role in developing and preparing our young men for life and service in the gospel. Having our entire stake presidency in attendance at Wood Badge, together with our future Young Men president, as well as numerous bishops and Scout leaders from our stake, enhanced the experience immensely. I cannot imagine how difficult it would be to come home full of enthusiasm for what I had learned and not be able to share and talk and plan with our presidency on how to bring our ideas to fruition. Attending together is the only way to go!

The Philmont experience simply confirmed this feeling. Philmont is much more about strategizing how to teach and train the wards in the stake. With the stake president and Young Men president in attendance, we were able to have frequent and meaningful discussions on how we would implement ideas when we returned home. Yet again, I cannot imagine how difficult it would be to return and try to explain and persuade to others what I felt needed to be done to move forward with Scouting and the Church. I unconditionally recommend that stake presidencies and Young Men leaders attend together.

Darren Peterson, Stake Young Men President, Morgan Utah North Stake

Before I attended Philmont, I was speaking to my uncle who attended Philmont by himself as the second counselor in his stake presidency. He said he had a wonderful experience, but he was never able to get traction within his stake when he returned, because the stake president and first counselor did not have the same vision. Having now attended both Wood Badge and Philmont with the stake presidency allowed me to share “AHA” moments, moments where the vision and direction we needed to go as a stake became clear. Being able to share those moments and discuss where we wanted to go as a stake was beneficial to me and the stake, which has been and will continue to be a great blessing.
Thanks for Philmont!

We, the three members of the Laredo Texas District Presidency, would like to thank President Charles W. Dahlquist and Brother David Pack for preparing the way for us to attend the second session of Philmont this year. We would especially like to thank them and the entire Philmont staff for the spirit we felt and the knowledge and power we obtained.

We are from Laredo, Texas. Find San Antonio, Texas and trace I-35 southbound to the Mexican border. And there she is. It is as much Mexico as the United States. Laredo is 95% Hispanic. Enter any store here and, in most cases, Spanish is spoken first with English following when it is realized that you do not speak Spanish. Many call Laredo an island of Mexico in the south of the United States, but, in reality, it has the best of both worlds. Many attracted to living here love the fact that they can return to their Latin American missions without having to leave the United States. But this meshing of cultures also creates challenges in its own right.

And this is the very reason why we wanted to attend Philmont together as a presidency, especially when two of the members of the District Presidency are Hispanic and come from a culture where Scouting is really not part of the lexicon. It was determined that if we went and became fully embellished in Scouting, even to the extent of wearing a scout uniform to all activities, then the young men of the district, especially those from Hispanic families, would follow. We were to set the example. And this we have done.

We have now returned. And we have taken upon ourselves the task of taking the young Scouting program we have at present and making it better and stronger. We have accepted the challenge of asking every young man to become a Scout which has required us to go out and visit the less active. We are using Scouting here as a missionary tool with many non-member Cub and Boy Scouts. And each unit of the district is chartering not only their own Scout troops but their own Varsity Scout teams and Venturing crews. We are creating a uniform bank so that all can obtain a shirt. A common neckerchief design is being created. And the boy-led troop and quorum idea is being implemented. Finally, a form of mini-Philmont in Spanish is being planned for this fall, directed especially at the Hispanic membership, so that they can determine for themselves whether Scouting should be in the lives of their children.

However, if we had to describe the most important thing that has occurred due to our attendance to Philmont, it would best be described by the term: “We walk the walk and talk the talk.” Because the Laredo area is 95% Hispanic, the two members of the district presidency can look the priesthood leadership in the eyes and tell them from personal experience that the Laredo District needs Scouting and we will do it. It is not just something for the English speaking members. And we can testify to them that that is what the Lord wants us to provide for all of the youth of the Laredo Texas District.

It is because of this reason that we are planning on sending more Hispanic brethren to Philmont in 2009. We know the expense will be well worth it.

Sincerely,

Victor Illescas, District President
Dennis McCrea, 1st Councilor
Jose Malacara, 2nd Councilor