

WHITE STAG – 1997

CLOSING CEREMONY

A Scout Law trail has been set up leading to the ceremonial site. The trail is lit by luminaries, lighting the Scout Law and the entire trail.

The ceremonial site is arranged around a small fire. The staff stand in a semicircle on each side of a central candelabra. The candelabra has twelve candles for the Scout Law, three candles (red, white and blue) for the Scout Oath and a central candle (yellow) for the “light of Scouting.” Historic flags are suspended from a line behind the staff and candelabra.

When the troop arrives, the staff is in place in front of the candelabra. The twelve candles for the Scout Law are already lit, as is the small campfire. The red, white and blue candles and the yellow candle remain unlit in preparation for the ceremony.

The Scouts travel in silence to the ceremonial site. They are guided into a semicircle around the fire by patrols. The staff members face the Scouts.

The following ceremony is conducted:

SPL 981 “During our time together, each of us has been guided by the principles of Scouting—the Scout Oath and the Scout Law.

Tomorrow we will leave this junior leader training conference, perhaps never to be together again as a group. Each of us will return to his own troop and pick up the reins of leadership with increased knowledge, greater skills, and attitudes that have been changed by our association here.

We have come to this place to dedicate ourselves to a solemn mission—to take what we have learned and use it for the benefit of the Scouts we lead.”

ASPL 981A: *(step forward and light the yellow candle):* This golden candle represents the spirit of Scouting. It reminds us of the warmth of fellowship, the golden glow of achievement, and the flame of purpose. The spirit of Scouting gives us life and light to the principles that guide our movement.”

ASPL 981B: *(step forward and take the yellow candle from ASPL 981A)* “On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my Country and to obey the Scout Law.” The first part of the Scout Oath is the most difficult to live by. It takes courage to truly live as a Scout and to resist temptation.

(Light the red candle) “With the golden spirit of Scouting, I light the red candle of courage as a reminder of the bravery needed to fulfill our duty to God, to country, and to the Law.”

ASPL 982A: *(step forward and take the yellow candle from ASPL 981B)* “To help other people at all time.” The second part of the Scout Oath requires that we give of ourselves. As leaders, we are pledged to the service of those we guide along the Scouting trail.”

(Light the blue candle) “With the golden spirit of Scouting, I light the blue candle of loyalty as a reminder of our need to serve others.”

ASPL 982B: *(step forward and take the yellow candle from ASPL 982A)* “To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.” The third part of the Scout Oath pledges us to purity of mind and body as a living example to others.

(Light the white candle) With golden spirit of Scouting, I light the white candle of purity as a challenge to keep ourselves always prepared in mind and body.”

ASPL 983A: *(step forward and take the yellow candle from ASPL 982B)* “The spirit of Scouting has given life to the promise each of us made as we took our first steps along the trail of Scouting. Let us each raise our hand in the Scout sign and again pledge ourselves to the spirit of Scouting and the completion of our personal conference goals.” *(Make the Scout sign and lead the group in the Scout Oath.)*

ASPL 983B: *(step forward and take the yellow candle from ASPL 983A)* “With our honor solemnly pledged, the candle representing the spirit of Scouting can now be extinguished. It burns brightly in our hearts. The flames of courage, loyalty, and purity now remind us of the three parts of the Oath we have taken together.”

(Extinguish the yellow candle and return it to the candelabra.)

(All SPL's step forward one step or around candelabra)

SPL 982: “Will all the troop guides please come forward” *(Each SPL hands White Stag patches to the troop guides with instructions to go to their patrols and put one on each participant's shirt pocket. Upon completion the SPL's and troop guides return to their original location)*

In 1933 Baden-Powell said “Each of you wears the badge of the White Stag...I want you to treasure that badge when you go from here and remember that it has its message and meaning for you. Hunters of old pursued the miraculous stag, not because they expected to kill it, but because it lead them in the joy of the chase to new and fresh adventures, and so to capture happiness. You may look on the White Stag as the true spirit of Scouting, springing forward and upward, ever leading you onward to leap over difficulties, to face new adventures in your active pursuit of the higher aims of Scouting – aims which bring you happiness. These aims are duty to God, to your country, and to your fellow man by carrying out the Scout Law. In that way you will help to bring about God's kingdom upon earth – the reign of peace and goodwill.”

SPL 983: “Tonight we left our campfire circles in silence and darkness. Your Assistant Senior Patrol Leader led the way and you followed him blindly. You knew not where you were going, but you trusted his leadership without question.

Then you found your trail lighted by the twelve principles that we instantly recognized—the twelve points of the Scout Law. Perhaps we’ve seen, and heard, and said these words so often that we’ve forgotten what they really mean. They are the law we live by as Scouts.

The Scout Law begins with the words. ‘A Scout is....’ This is a demand for perfection. A Scout does not try to be loyal or friendly or brave. He IS those things. If he is not, then he is not a Scout. The golden spirit of Scouting flickers in his heart as if blown by the winds of evil. But the flames of courage, loyalty and purity can sustain the spirit of Scouting because, as we saw demonstrated tonight, it originally gave them birth.

As we prepare to leave this place, let us rededicate ourselves to service as we make the Scout sign and repeat the twelve points of the Scout Law.” *(Make the Scout sign and lead the Scout Law.)*

COURSE DIRECTOR: “As we look back on our times together, we have shared a great deal. As we worked together here at this junior leader training conference, we drew closer to each other in Scouting, and as friends. We tried to create a special place, to live Scouting at its best.

Each of you was asked to bring a sprig of evergreen with you to this campfire.

Feel it—the roughness of its stem, the tingle of its needles

See it—crush it between your fingers

Smell it—inhale the fragrance of the great out-of-doors

Taste it—chew and taste its woody flavor

Hear it—as I throw a branch on the fire and let it burn to ashes.

You have experienced this symbol of our camp with your five senses. But without the important sixth sense that has been given us, which makes it possible for us to understand and remember, the sprig will have little meaning. It is the meaning that we put into life that makes it worthwhile.

As we leave our campfire tonight, let us leave in silence until we return to the main camp. As we do so, cast a part of your sprig into the fire. Pause for a moment in contemplation of what you have pledged to do as a Scout, for Scouting, and for other Scouts.

In this simple act we leave a fragment of us here. The remainder we take with us as a reminder of our days together.

(File out in order of youth staff, adult staff and then participants and return to Dining Hall for cracker barrel.)