

Membership Musings

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Be Prepared

I again open with my sincerest wishes that you all are still safe during the pandemic and that you remain so as we begin to, during the next couple of months, resume in- person Scouting activities. I am optimistic that our outstanding Scouting leaders will guide their units on a safe and deliberate path forward as we gradually reopen.

I want to start this month's musing by reminding us all what the mission and vision of our organization is:

Mission: The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.

Vision: The Boy Scouts of America will prepare every eligible youth in America to become a responsible, participating citizen and leader who is guided by the Scout Oath and Law.

I repeat these these ideals because they are the foundation against which my remaining comments rest. Everyone reading this will now know, without a doubt, that our National Council is facing numerous challenges that are not of their making but results of past circumstances. One of these actions taken by national leadership in response to the current situation is a fee increase for both personal membership and the chartering fee and the imposition of a onetime joining fee. I know all of us have passionate feelings about these decisions but it is not my intent to debate them in this forum. I am more than willing to discuss my views in any face to face opportunity that we might have in the future. I want to focus on how we can overcome these challenges.

I believe that we must first acknowledge why we do what we do. I believe that you, like me, participate in this Movement because we believe in its Mission and Vision—that we believe our children and grandchildren will benefit positively from their participation and that our Country and World will be a better place for them because of Scouting. Nothing more and nothing less.

If we accept this premise we must Be Prepared to overcome the challenges that are placed in front of us. We must use our collective strengths to come up with solutions that will allow any young person to participate in Scouting regardless of the costs. I know that your Council leadership and your Council Membership Committee are trying to do so and you will soon see some information concerning those efforts. But those efforts will not be enough—these challenges require unit level solutions as well and I am certain that you are already working in your units to come up with solutions specific to your unit situation.

We must be successful. It is just too important. Jim Rees, our Scout Executive, is fond of saying that Scouting is **“Changing the World for the Better with Every Scout”** and I wholeheartedly agree with him.

I close by pledging to you that my team and I remain firm in our commitment to help you grow your units, create new units where needed, and to ensure that the Greater Tampa Bay Area Council is positioned to make Scouting available to **EVERY ELIGIBLE YOUTH.**

Be Creative, Be Resourceful
BE PREPARED