



# 100 YEARS OF SCOUTING

*Celebrating the Adventure ★ Continuing the Journey*

## **Bob Mazzuca Top Hands Address**

Aug. 24, 2007 — Dallas, Texas

As I begin this evening, I would like to take just a moment to once again pay personal tribute to an outstanding individual, a great leader, and a good friend.

Roy Williams led our organization through some of the most trying times in our history. What's more, he did it with discipline. He did it with determination. He did it with integrity. Roy's leadership served us well at a time when we needed an unwavering focus on our core values ...

The values that have defined us and made us great for nearly 100 years.

Roy, I want to thank you again personally for your steadfast leadership over the past seven years and for your personal support, encouragement and, most especially, your friendship during this transition period. We will all be forever grateful to you.

Nanette and I wish you and Barbara, Godspeed and fair winds as you begin this new chapter of your life. For everything there is a season. We've just come through a season of playing our cards close to our vest as we assessed and managed our threats. That season has passed.

Now is the season to stand tall ... To step out smartly ... And to go find our friends.

It is time to leave our bunkers and with complete confidence set about the task of reintroducing the American people to the real Boy Scouts of America — a Boy Scouts of America that we define, not that others define for us. We know empirically through all of our research that the vast majority of the American people support and believe in Scouting. They believe that our program and our principles are good for young people and good for America.

I know firsthand through my travels on behalf of Scouting over the past two and a half years that our friends across America are legion. Surely there are still those out there who don't support us. That's OK. That is what this great nation is all about, the absolute right to hold differing views. Our goal should not be to change their minds, nor should it be to change who we are to appeal to our detractors.

No, our goal must be to reach out to those millions of Americans, especially our alumni, who have been wondering for some time now "whatever happened to the Boy Scouts? Are they still around?" And what about that rapidly growing and dynamic segment of our population — Hispanics and other ethnic groups who have come here for their share of the American dream? We must learn to carefully communicate to them how we fit into their dreams for their children.

You and I both know, there is only one thing greater than the value we bring to the kids and communities we serve. And that is the value our Scouts deliver to society as a whole. All of us in this room could share thousands of stories about how Scouting has changed the lives of both young people and adults.

And how those changed lives have made a real difference in neighborhoods and entire communities all across this great land.

Yes, we need to be cognizant of the environment in which we operate. And, yes, we will have distractions to address along the way. But the time has come to stand up together, and speak with one loud and unified voice. There is a lot to be proud of, many people to reach, and much work to do. In fact, I would ask, when in your lifetime have the principles embodied in the Scout oath and law been needed more in our society?



Principles like: duty to God, and to your neighbor, honor, integrity, honesty, respect, and kindness. These are all sorely lacking in our very angry world today. And Scouting is one of the last bastions where these principles define the way we should live our lives.

If we truly believe all of the above — and looking around this room, I believe we wholeheartedly do ... One question remains: Where do we go from here? Any rededication or recommitment to this kind of mission must begin with a self-examination. Each and every one of us in this room tonight is a leader or we would not be here. So to us, as leaders, I ask again, where do we go from here?

I would suggest that the answer begins with a good hard look inside. As any good leader does in planning for the future, we first need to look within, with open eyes and open minds, to determine where we are right now as an organization and, equally important, as individuals. As I do this introspection, I see a number of very positive things. And I see, as well, some great opportunities for improvement.

In the category of good news, Scouting has never been better financed both locally and nationally. We are solid, and we are growing. We are blessed to have exceptional volunteer leadership, both locally and nationally. We have an outstanding five-year strategic plan that is being implemented successfully. We have a very firm foundation, one that any organization would envy. And, as I said in Atlanta, we have the wind at our back.

On the other hand, as with most organizations of our size and tenure, we have evolved into a fairly cumbersome bureaucracy. We are not nearly as nimble as we should be, which means that we are far too slow to react to the rapidly changing world around us. One of my highest priorities as your chief Scout executive will be to challenge myself and every single one of you in this room to think outside of our traditional box. I will share a couple of exciting examples of this in a moment.

But you are going to see this new approach on a number of fronts as we go forward:

- In the way we raise and share financial and other resources.
- Through the level and kinds of organizational support you receive from the national council.
- Through open and aggressive self-analysis.
- And through greater flexibility and responsiveness in our operational approach.

I know that we need to break down the silos and other barriers to creativity and effective communications. That is a responsibility that rests with all of us. But I am here to tell you, it starts with me. Since we are talking about leadership, let me speak frankly as one leader to another.

My friends, we do have an Achilles' heel. And it is not our constitutional issues. Our leadership standards, our duty to God requirement, and our willingness to pay the price for upholding them are indeed strengths, not weaknesses.

No, our Achilles' heel is not a matter of constitutionality. It is a matter of integrity.

When Rick Cronk stands before thousands of volunteers and proclaims that “rather than 5 million Scouts, we ought to be serving 10 million,” no one questions his motives. He believes in his heart and soul that it is absolutely the right thing to do ... for absolutely the right reasons. Sadly, our motivations are not always accepted when you or I proclaim the same thing.

That has to change.



In David Gergen's book, *Eyewitness to Power*, he makes the observation "If you have integrity, nothing else matters ... and ... if you don't have integrity, nothing else matters."

Our integrity is our gold standard, and I pledge all in my power to preserve and protect it.

Now that we have determined it is a new season and we have begun a process of re-examination ...

From there, what specifically are we going to do as we look upward and outward and begin to seize opportunities to move our agenda forward? It begins with us, you and me, and that marvelous cadre of professionals and volunteers across America. In large measure, our capacity for success will be determined by how we relate one to another ... How we facilitate creative innovation and the free flow of ideas.

My commitment to you is to refocus the priorities of the national council on supporting and enhancing our opportunity for success in every one of our 304 local councils. I suspect the last thing you need or want is another CD or DVD with a cover memo describing how it's going to solve all of your problems. My commitment to you is boots on the ground and an extra shoulder or two at your wheel.

I am talking about Gary Butler and his finance support team and Don York and his brave little band of road warriors coming to town, rolling up their sleeves and saying "put me in coach!" At the end of the day, that's the epitome of the partnership that should exist between the national council and local councils. We need and we will have much more evidence of this approach to partnership in the months to come. You have my commitment to the creation of conduits for the continuous exchange of ideas and the sharing of hopes, dreams and, yes, even frustrations. To that end we have to use technology much more effectively than we currently do.

We need to worry less about controlling the message and focus more on opening the floodgates of creativity and energy. A first step toward fostering this exchange of ideas and issues is the newly created Chief Scout Executive's Advisory Board. I am truly excited about the potential of this group, and I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the first group elected to serve.

As I read their names I would invite them to stand and be recognized.

#### **Central Region**

Scott Clabaugh - Indianapolis, Ind.  
Jeff Purdy - Port Huron, Mich.  
Rick Williamson - Detroit, Mich.

#### **Southern Region**

Ponce Duran - Dallas, Texas  
Chuck Ezell - Tallahassee, Fla.  
Gary Hampton - Fort Meyers, Fla.

#### **Northeast Region**

Rich Avery - Bangor, Maine  
Trip McMillan - Oakland, N.J.  
Charlie Rosser - New York, N.Y.

#### **Western Region**

Albert Gallegos - Salinas, Calif.  
Paul Moore - Salt Lake City, Utah  
Terry Trout - San Diego, Calif.

As we think about ways to improve the partnership between local councils and the national council, let me suggest a few ideas that may float all our boats. I intend, through the BSA foundation, to invite strategic partners to help us create a fund for innovation grants to local councils. The best, most creative and innovative approaches to program delivery and problem-solving have always been born in local councils. We would like to be a partner in that innovation and then be the communications conduit for sharing these successes across the land.



You have heard some, and will hear much more, about our new and exciting Hispanic initiative. For our purposes tonight, suffice it to say that rather than simply sending you a memo and a copy of the research that tells you that to truly move the needle in serving the Hispanic community, for example, you need to hire Hispanic staff. I intend to aggressively step up the recruitment of Hispanic professional candidates and to work toward the creation of a matching funds program to help councils staff up to get this crucial job done.

Another arena that we know relatively little about but must embrace fully and quickly is the whole universe of cyberdialogue. We need to get in the game ... Through blogs and other e-venues where we can share ideas and information and where anyone can learn the real story of Scouting. We have talked about how we need to relate to each other, our internal audience, if you will. Now let's take a look at how we might expand our outreach to the rest of America, our external audiences.

If we are serious about reintroducing the BSA to the American people, we need to get to it. We have been extremely effective at keeping our light under a bushel. It is time to burn the bushel. To reach those millions of Americans who are wondering where we went, we need to equip our people — our volunteers and professionals alike — with the tools they need. Then we need to truly empower them.

We should not be fearful of what they might say. Rather, in every community in the country, we should engage them in a frank and open dialogue on the values and magic of Scouting. Let's unleash our best and brightest on every service club and civic group in America. Let's climb up on every stump we can find to share the good news of Scouting. Let's take back the agenda and begin to define ourselves rather than let others define us.

We are innovative. We are creative. Great and powerful ideas resonate from all corners of our organization. We have to let them out. We have to tell our story. It breaks my heart that we have folks who won't wear their lapel pin to a cocktail party because they are unsure of what to say if someone brings up "the issue." That is nonsense! We have plenty to say, and it's all good.

Let me share two tangible examples of how we are set to equip you, your staff and volunteers to hit the trail and tell our story. We are launching tonight a national BSA speakers bank. Members of the speakers bank will be nominated by Scout executives and our goal will be to have a minimum of 1,000 speakers recruited into the program by the end of this year. I am also delighted to announce our four charter members of this group ...

- President Rick Cronk.
- Commissioner Don Belcher.
- Rabbi Peter Hyman.
- And former national commissioner, Earl Graves.

Not a bad start. All tools, templates, and resources for these speakers have been developed by Edelman Worldwide and will be available online. A special Web site has been created for speakers to access programs and materials and to record where they have spoken and what issues they may have encountered and what additional help they may need. We are even going to have a speakers bank patch. And if you are really good, there may even be a new square knot in our future.

Also tonight, we are launching our multiyear 100th Anniversary Celebration. Our goal is to maximize this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity through a purpose-driven, mission-focused program that will carry us from now through the end of 2010 and beyond.



I believe, to my core, that if the only thing we do to commemorate our 100th Anniversary is celebrate our glorious past, then we will miss one of the greatest opportunities we've ever had as an organization. Instead, we must seize this opportunity to proclaim our equally glorious future.

To help us achieve the full potential of this effort, Bob Mersereau has been appointed director of the 100th Anniversary project, and he has the full faith and credit of the chief's office to insist on cooperation and collaboration throughout the national council. We have also engaged the services of Fleishman-Hillard, a world renowned communications company, to help us add focus, style, and vigor to this project and to guarantee that we stay focused going forward.

Tonight, allow me to share just a glimpse into some of our planning for this fantastic milestone. First, I go back to the theme of empowerment ... using our national council resources to ignite and inspire action at the local level, all across the country. For our 100th Anniversary effort, we are going to offer new tools — and the backup you need to use them — to help you craft and get our word out.

Here, at the Top Hands meeting, we flipped the switch on a new 100th Anniversary Web site where you and the general public can go for important information about the celebration. The site includes a special resource center for local councils ... an area that will grow, quickly, over time. And some creative outlets for sharing information and “cross-pollinating” your great ideas across our local council network.

As you leave this evening, we'll be sending you off with an initial round of materials that really capture the spirit and excitement we are working to generate around the celebration. And here's how serious we are about engaging you and every single Scout and Scouter in this effort.

Tonight, we are launching a national contest for the design of our 100th Anniversary Celebration logo. We are inviting every Scout to help us develop a logo that truly captures our rich heritage and the promise of our journey ahead. And we want our leaders to guide and recognize the thousands of Scouts we hope will participate in this exciting effort.

Of course, no celebration is complete without festivities. Rest assured, through the national council, we will be organizing a series of events — including a spectacular gala in February 2010 and, of course, our 100th Anniversary jamboree. We'll also be working with you to customize and localize events in your own communities. These are just a few examples of the approach we are going to take in making this a meaningful, purpose-driven celebration.

Stay tuned ... you'll be hearing lots more, very soon! As we bring this evening to a close, please forgive me for getting a little personal, but I would like to share a story.

Some of you may find this surprising but I am Italian ... The son of an Italian immigrant, Guiseppi, who left his ravished native land to help my grandfather save his family from starvation. It took three years to gather the whole family together here in America and to begin their migration west and their quest for the American dream.

I am one of eight children and many adventures preceded where I am going to pick up the story but let me take you to the spring of 1958 when my best friend Abraham Vega invited me to go with him to a meeting of Troop 28 in San Juan Bautista, Calif.

It was a village of 1,000 people, and Troop 28 was the only troop in town. I was fascinated. I joined. I had no clue where I was going to get the money for a uniform, a book, or a mess kit. Miraculously they all just showed up. I suspect that old Milton Harrel ... the godfather of Scouting in our town had something to do with that.



I was on an adventure but the real magic happened when our Scoutmaster, Roy Pederson, asked my dad if he could help out. He asked if my Dad could take our troop's equipment to camp Pico Blanco, the Monterey Bay area council's summer camp, in his 1949 Studebaker truck ... One of the few real trucks in town. That was the week that my dad got his first taste of true, honest to God, American philanthropy and volunteerism.

On that trip to camp, I saw my Dad transform right before my eyes, although I didn't recognize it at the time. He connected with what was going on around him. He saw the magic. He drank the Kool-Aid. That fall he was asked to become a member of the troop committee ... The transportation chairman and, voilà, he was a volunteer. He couldn't rub two nickels together, but he was a Scout leader and by golly he was bound and determined to be a good one.

Fast forward to the night in 1963 that he and my mom pinned my Eagle badge to my chest. I saw a pride and a sense of accomplishment that can be described only as the fulfillment of the American dream. When I left for college in 1965, the first of his children to do so, my father reached into his pocket and pulled out a crumpled \$20 bill. It was more than he could afford, but he gave it to me along with a huge bear hug, a kiss, and an admonition ... "Remember, Son, you are an Eagle Scout."

If he were still alive he would be the first, and I the second, to tell you ... "Wow... it's a great country." He got it!

So did Tommy Dortch. Remember Tommy from Atlanta? He was raised poor, but he was surrounded by lots of love, little else, and a good Scout troop. He became an Eagle Scout and then grew up to found 100 Black Men and become the chief spokesperson for their incredible mission.

Bishop Placido Rodriguez got it too. At an early age, he crossed the Rio Grande with his father and mother and went on to become the bishop of the diocese of Lubbock. But that was only after, as the auxiliary bishop of the archdiocese of Chicago, he conducted the largest, most successful bishops dinner for Scouting in our history ...

Then there's Phu Tran, district director in San Jose, Calif. A most remarkable human being. When Phu was 14 years old his family had to flee Vietnam. His father, a college professor in South Vietnam, had to flee for his life and Phu tells a most incredible story of escaping by boat in the middle of the night.

It is a story of pirates on the high seas, trials and tribulations and eventual landfall at a refugee camp in Indonesia.

The first person he saw when they arrived in Indonesia was a young man in a uniform who reached out a hand to help him and his family off the boat. The young man was an Indonesian Boy Scout who took Phu under his wing.

Phu joined the Indonesian Boy Scouts and to this day has committed his life to repaying the debt he feels to Scouting for saving his life and that of his father, mother, and sister. I defy you to tell me that what we do every day is just a job.

And I submit to you that on our mission ahead, as on the mission of Apollo 13, failure is not an option. The stakes are simply too high. I appreciate each one of you, and I thank you for all that you have done for Scouting. As we embark on our second century, I could not be more excited — nor more confident — about what together we will do for this great movement.

God bless you for what you have done ... But, most especially, for what you are about to do.