

THE COMMUNITY PAGE

Boy Scouts of America: A Proud Heritage

Grand Teton Council Receives Youth Protection Award

Last year (2004) the Grand Teton Council received the National BSA Risk Management Award for the Best Youth Protection and Health and Safety Plan. Only 4 of the 308 councils throughout the United States received this award last year. It's unfortunate that the Grand Teton Council received little coverage locally for receiving this prestigious award. It was never mentioned by the *Post Register*.

The Rest of the Story: The Grand Teton Council—Building Integrity and Honor in Young Men

Since its beginning as Boy Scouts of America in 1910, scouting has positively influenced millions of lives during the past century. This positive influence is as strong today as it has ever been. More youth are joining troops and packs all across America. Scouts and Scout leaders alike are learning vital leadership skills and value-based principles that better prepare them to successfully contribute in the workplace, in the community and in the home.

New records are being set in both registration and attendance throughout the Grand Teton Council. Over 27,000 youth and adults including staff will participate in the activities trainings and camps from this spring throughout the end of the summer.

To paint a picture of the impact the Boy Scouts of America has on our society, specifically through the Grand Teton Council in Southeastern Idaho, here are a few facts and figures:

- Already this year, more than 8,500 youth have attended at least one of eight scouting events operated by the Council. These are record attendance levels. Never before has attendance been this high.
- Nearly 200 Scouts and 20 adult leaders are involved with and will attend the 2005 National Scout Jamboree held in Caroline County, Virginia, this summer.
- More than 8,000 youth have already participated this spring in Camporee and Cub Scout Field Days.
- More than 550 Scout leaders have participated in the Council's comprehensive adult and youth leader trainings this year. These include Wood Badge, Cedar Badge and Akelas Trail.
- There are currently 4,494 trained registered Scout leaders in the Grand Teton Council who have taken BSA's extensive Youth Protection Training.
- The Youth Protection Training is available online at www.grandtetoncouncil.org.
- More than 1,000 Scoutmasters and Camp Staff receive a comprehensive 2 1/2-hour Youth Protection Training session, in addition to daily refreshers for incoming Staff.

Of utmost importance to the BSA and the Grand Teton Council is the responsibility of providing a safe environment for youth and leaders. To accomplish this responsibility, the BSA has developed and published a comprehensive manual in its "Guide to Safe

SCOUTS' HONOR



Scouting" that educates adult leaders about conducting Scouting activities in a safe and prudent manner. The organization has adopted a number of policies aimed at eliminating opportunities for abuse within the Scouting program.

These policies and guidelines, found at www.scouting.org/pubs/gss, have been established because of the real need to protect members from known hazards that have been identified through nearly 100 years of experience. In addition to these policies, the BSA urges

leaders to also be aware of state and local government regulations that go beyond the "Guide to Safe Scouting."

The BSA has adopted and published the following policies to provide additional security for its members. These policies are primarily for the protection of youth members; however, they also serve to protect adult leaders from false accusations of abuse.

- **Two-deep leadership:** Two registered adult leaders or one registered leader and a parent of a participant, one of whom must be 21 years of age or older, are required on all trips and outings. The chartered organization is responsible for ensuring that sufficient leadership is provided for all activities.
- **No one-on-one contact:** One-on-one contact between adults and youth members is not permitted. In situations that require personal conferences, such as a Scoutmaster's conference, the meeting is to be conducted in view of other adults and youth.
- **Respect of privacy:** Adult leaders must respect the privacy of youth members in situations such as changing clothes and taking showers at camp, and intrude only to the extent that health and safety require. Adults must protect their own privacy in similar situations.

- **Separate accommodations:** When camping, no youth is permitted to sleep in the tent of an adult other than his own parent or guardian. Councils are strongly encouraged to have separate shower and latrine facilities for females. When separate facilities are not available, separate times for male and female use should be scheduled and posted for showers.

- **Proper preparation for high-adventure activities:** Activities with elements of risk should never be undertaken without proper preparation, equipment, clothing, supervision, and safety measures.

- **No secret organizations:** The Boy Scouts of America does not recognize any secret organizations as part of its program. All aspects of the Scouting program are open to observation by parents and leaders.

- **Appropriate attire:** Proper clothing for activities is required. For example, skinny-dipping is not appropriate as part of Scouting.

- **Constructive discipline:** Discipline used in Scouting should be constructive and reflect Scouting's values. Corporal punishment is never permitted.

- **Hazing prohibited:** Physical hazing and initiations are prohibited and may not be included as part of any Scouting activity.

- **Junior leader training and supervision:** Adult leaders must monitor and guide the leadership techniques used by junior leaders and ensure that BSA policies are followed.

The "Guide to Safe Scouting" also includes information about how parents can protect their children and general information about acknowledging and reporting abuse. Furthermore, the BSA provides Youth Protection Training and educational materials for leaders, parents or guardians and young people. These tools, which include age-appropriate videos, meeting guides and booklets, are designed to increase awareness about sexual abuse prevention and address the individual needs of each unit.

Inside the front cover of The Boy Scout Handbook, the BSA includes a pamphlet entitled "How to Protect Your Children from Child Abuse: A Parent's Guide." This pamphlet outlines facts and warning signs of various forms of abuse, in addition to a completion requirement for any potential Scout desiring to join a Boy Scout Troop.

"Missing" letters to the editor

In response to Melaleuca's offer to print "Letters to the Editor" that the *Post Register* never printed, we have received several reports about such letters. However, many people have not kept a copy of their original letters and therefore can not resubmit them to us. We received two additional letters this week, with promises of several more to come.

Our offer still stands for anyone whose letters have not been printed by the *Post Register*. If we are unable to print the letters on The Community Page because of lack of space we will post them on the website at www.communitypagenews.com.

One letter of interest came in to us from Joanna Carter. According to Ms. Carter, she submitted her letter to the *Post Register* on January 13. She was called back by the *Post Register* staff to verify her phone number and address. It has been eleven days. **As of Friday noon, June 24 (our deadline for submitting this ad to the Post Register) Joanna's letter had not yet been printed.** Of course, **after** receiving this ad from us on Friday, the *Post Register* could choose to print Joanna's letter this Saturday or Sunday. (For the record, Joanna Carter never has worked for Melaleuca. We have never met her.)

The *Post Register's* treatment of Joanna Carter brings up new questions for the *Post Register*: Is where someone works now a new standard for whether a letter gets printed? Or has this always been the standard? Also, is it common practice when someone disagrees with the *Post Register* for them to get a personal scolding from Managing Editor Dean Miller? (See "Dean Miller's response")

"Cherry Picking" and choosing to print only letters that support the *Post Register's* agenda serves to create distrust in the paper's motives.

Joanna Carter's email to The Community Page on June 21, 2005

To The Community Page,
I sent this letter to the *Post Register* on the 13th of June and heard nothing from them until your community pages turned up in the paper. I thought you would be interested to read the response of the *Post Register* staff to me.

The first email I received [from the *Post Register*] is as follows:

"Need a couple things:
1. your address and telephone number
2. since we're keeping track of this, are you now or have you ever been employed by Melaleuca?"

I then received this second email from a Dean Miller whom I have no memory of ever meeting or speaking with, even though he claims to recognize my name and claims to have had a conversation with me.

I believe my letter will get published, maybe they would have published it anyway or possibly because of your community page, but I thought you might find these letters interesting. I do wonder if all letters that disagree with *Post Register* reasoning get an extra email from the project leader explaining why the opinions are dead wrong or if mine was some how special.

Thank you for your work. There are people out there who appreciate it.

Joanna Carter

Joanna Carter's original letter sent to the Post Register on June 13, 2005

Questions for Chris

In response to Chris Mcaffrey's letter I would like to pose a few questions. Your letter consisted mainly of irrelevant personal attacks which have nothing to do with your complaints or the real issue at hand. Why is it so difficult for you to let any one else express their opinions or another side of the story?

I for one am grateful that someone in our community is willing to use their own money in defense of people and for an issue that has been grossly over-reported. It would be nice if the *Post Register* could fairly report the news instead of backing one man's agenda.

When you spoke about the integrity and honor of the *Post Register* journalists in their work on this story, I found the absurd reasoning quite comical. Maybe you could explain to us all how the "Scouts' Honor" piece could possibly be viewed as responsible journalism?

Who do you think this story helps? Beyond furthering someone's mediocre career, I can't see anything positive.

Let me be clear, who do you think this story hurts? The child molesters? No, it is the young boys in our community who will suffer the brunt of this attack.

The *Post Register* deliberately times their release of this non-recent, non-earth shaking news at a time when it would hurt the fundraising efforts for the young boys of our community at the highest impact. WHY!? Is this considered news worthy for an entire week of front/full page articles? Are the Teton Peaks Council volunteers the criminals? Are they giving their time and effort in a selfish attempt to get gain? No, it is for the boys and it always has been.

It sounds to me like your own ego is pulsating a bit in the only way it can, wishing you had financial power and the respect of your community.

Joanna Carter
Rexburg

Dean Miller's response to Joanna Carter

Ms. Carter,

The Opinions page editor forwarded a copy of your letter to me and because your name was familiar to me as a careful thinker, I wanted to note you have made an assumption that is dead wrong. I don't, by the way, expect you to change your letter. That's your opinion and you're entitled to it. But I enjoyed our conversation and I thought I'd privately ask you to confront some facts. []

Your crippling assumption is that the whole world lives exactly as you do and that everyone has the scout fundraiser marked into their day planners.

Please get out more and meet people outside your circle. Not doing so, and making assumptions about who knows what, contributes to a dark world view that is not supportable. I have kids in school who do not live their lives as yours do.

I was in charge of the series and I did not find out the scout fundraiser coincided with our publication until we were underway and a scout leader in the building clued me in. []

I look forward to reading the letter you write when you search Mr. Vandersloot's website and learn that he has published to the World Wide Web, without their permission, at least two names of victims of Brad Stowell.

Those two boys have never before been exposed in this way, even by the evil media. I privately warned Mr. Vandersloot and his lawyers and I hope they have redacted the names.

But that is who you are applauding/defending. Bravo.

Dean Miller
Managing Editor
Post Register

(It is obvious that Dean Miller confused Joanna Carter with someone else he had recently spoken to. Therefore, it appears there are others that disagree with the *Post Register* that we have not yet heard from. We did not print Dean Miller's complete letter (note: []) but have posted his entire letter on our website at www.communitypagenews.com.

Our Errors

The *Post Register* has contacted us about two errors that we made in our recent commentary on The Community Page. One error is that we reported that Peter Zuckerman was a graduate from Poynter College. We found that information at www.poynter.org/profile/profile.asp?user=115111, where Peter Zuckerman says, "I'm a former Poynter College graduate fellow. Now I work at the *Post Register* in Idaho Falls." Dean Miller has informed us that there is no such place as Poynter College and that Zuckerman attended Reed College in Portland, Oregon.

The *Post Register* has also criticized us for publishing the names of former children (who are now adults) when we put the public court documents on our website. It is ironic that it was originally the Scouts who argued in favor of protecting the children's names, and it was the *Post Register* that argued that the case should be made public for all to see. The *Post Register* was successful in unsealing the case. And it is now available to the public at the County Courthouse. We posted on our website what is now public information. Unfortunately, although most of the children's names had been removed by the courts, the courthouse had inadvertently left some names in various documents, exposing those names to the public. We put those documents on our website unchanged, thinking that all the children's names had been removed. After we had been notified that the error existed, we corrected it and informed the courthouse that some of the children's names are still on the court documents.

Just because the courts missed deleting all of the children's names does not excuse us of not looking more closely and just because all of the children are now adults does not justify our error. We feel we deserve every bit of criticism directed at us by the *Post Register* for our carelessness. We do not say that tongue in cheek. We are truly sorry.

Having said that, we invite the *Post Register* to step up and admit the errors that it made in trying to mislead the public regarding the Scouts' honor story and in wrongfully accusing innocent people just because they knew a man who committed horrible crimes.