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Eagle Scouts and Servant Leadership

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Abstract

This qualitative case study explores whether Eagle Scouts are servant leaders. Eagle Scout is the highest rank in the Boy Scouts of America. Only five percent of all boys who join Scouting attain Eagle, a mere one tenth of one percent of all boys this age in the United States. Despite this, Eagle Scouts are found in much higher percentages among astronauts, in the military academies, and in Congress. Sendjaya, Sarros, and Santora's (2008) model is used to measure six characteristics of servant leadership. Narrative and phenomenological research are conducted through personal interviews by the author and from Townley (2007). Recommendations are given for further investigation into Eagle Scouts and servant leadership.

Keywords: Boy, BSA, Eagle, Leader, Model, Scout, Servant

The purpose of this paper is to expound upon Townley's (2007) work and attempt to discover whether or not Eagle Scouts espouse servant leadership. Townley embarked on a personal journey to discover, or perhaps rediscover the essence of being an Eagle Scout and its common set values and virtues (p. 4). Townley spent a year crossing the United States interviewing hundreds of Eagle Scouts. His resulting book chronicles these adventures and provides interviews with countless Eagle Scouts and their thoughts on leadership and service.

After an overview of servant leadership and comparison of the leadership philosophy of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA), individual Eagle Scouts are examined. Seven representative examples are taken from Townley (2007) to show Eagle Scouts' thoughts and actions on leadership. Townley's work centers on the tenants of Scouting and does not address servant leadership directly. To further focus on servant leadership, these are combined with four interviews with Eagle Scouts personally known by the author.

The Road to Eagle Scout

Eagle Scout is the highest rank and award in the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). The road to Eagle is long and takes perseverance. A Boy Scout works through six ranks before Eagle: Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, and Life. The first four ranks typically take a year to 18 months to accomplish. Boys age 11-12 learn the basics of Scouting; to include citizenship, camping, cooking, first aid, knowing local fauna and flora, outdoor living skills, physical fitness, swimming, and the Scouting Oath and Law. Boys must participate in Troop camping trips or other activities on ten occasions, and they must complete a community service project.

To advance to the next rank, boys must pass a counseling conference with their Scoutmaster, the head adult leader in the Troop, and then go before a board of review consisting of Assistant Scoutmasters and Committee Members, all of whom are parent-volunteers. The Scoutmaster Conference and board of review ensure the boys are ready for the next rank. It is a time for the boys to reflect on how they have behaved and performed as Scouts, provides a formal occasion to encourage them, and asks them for ideas to improve the Troop.

The next two ranks, Star and Life require the boys to take on leadership positions for at least four and six months each. They must demonstrate leadership by taking charge, setting the example for other boys, and embodying the Scouting Oath and Law. Both ranks require a minimum of six hours of community service. Boys must pass increasingly comprehensive Scoutmaster Conferences and Boards of Review. Going from First Class to Star and Life can take another 12-24 months. One of the more interesting aspects of Star and Life and onto Eagle is that boys start earning merit badges to further hone their Scouting skills and explore other areas of interest at these stages. There are currently more than 130 different merit badges available (“Introduction to Merit Badges,” n.d.), including 13 that are required to make it to Eagle. Table 1 lists the required merit badges. Twenty-one merit badges (13 required and nine elective) are required for Eagle rank.

Table 1. List of BSA Eagle-required merit badges.

<i>Merit Badge Required</i>	<i>Merit Badge Required</i>
1. Camping	8. Family Life
2. Citizenship in the Community	9. First Aid
3. Citizenship in the Nation	10. Personal Fitness
4. Citizenship in the World	11. Personal Management
5. Cooking	12. Emergency Preparedness or Life Saving
6. Communications	13. Swimming or Cycling or Hiking
7. Environmental Science or Sustainability	

Adapted from “Merit Badges Required for Eagle Scout Rank,” n.d.

Merit badges are challenging. Adults and older Scouts teach the skills; then the Scouts must demonstrate proficiency. Some merit badges can take up to three months to

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complete. To make Eagle, the Scout must again serve in a leadership position within the Troop for at least six months. The capstone achievement is the Eagle Project. This is an extensive community service project that the Scout must plan and supervise. He must coordinate all resources and direct the actual construction or service. Projects can take six months to plan and a month to execute. The Scout gets all the volunteer help he needs, raises funds, and coordinates the purchase of supplies and services. Eagle Projects include building playgrounds, improving parks, making nature trails, and community economic development type projects with the poor and disadvantaged. It is up to the Scout's imagination, creativity, organizational skills, and perseverance to accomplish the project. Upon completion of the Eagle Project, the Scout goes before an intensive Board of Review by other adult Eagle Scouts.

About five percent of all Boy Scouts attain the rank of Eagle (Eagle Scouts, 2009). Since the BSA's inception in 1910, 110 million boys have joined with just over two-million achieving the rank of Eagle (Townley, 2007, p. 12 and History of the BSA, 2009, p. 5). Of Scout age boys, only one tenth of one percent are Eagle Scouts. Despite this, one finds a disproportionate number of Eagle Scouts in positions of leadership throughout the nation. Table 2 lists the percentages of Eagle Scouts in the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the military academies, and the United States Congress. Table 3 lists some notable Eagle Scouts in government and private-sector service. Following this overview of Eagle Scouts is a literature review of servant leadership and leadership in the BSA.

Table 2. Eagle Scouts in NASA, military academies, and Congress.

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Percentage of Eagle Scouts</i>
NASA astronauts	12.8% (40 out of 312 men) ^a
US Military Academy (West Point)	16.3% in 2012 ^b
US Air Force Academy	11.9% in 2012 ^b
US Naval Academy	11.0% in 2012 ^b
113 th US Congress	6.2% (27 out of 433 men) ^c

^a Adapted from *Legacy of Honor: The Values and Influence of America's Eagle Scouts*, by A. Townley, 2007.

^b Adapted from "Facts about Scouting," 2013.

^c Adapted from "Facts about Scouting," 2013, "United States House," n.d., and "United States Senate," n.d.

Table 3. Notable Eagle Scouts in government and private-sector service

<i>Name</i>	<i>Eagle Scout</i>	<i>Background</i>
Gerald Ford	1927	38 th US President
Sam Walton	1934	Founder and former CEO of Wal-Mart, four heirs rank 4 th to 7 th wealthiest people in the US, collectively estimated at \$80 billion
Neil Armstrong	1943	Apollo 11 Commander, landed on moon on 20 July, 1969 in lunar-lander module
Robert Gates	1958	Appropriated named Eagle 26-year career CIA officer, CIA Director 1991-3, Texas A&M President 2002-6, and Secretary of Defense 2006-11

Adapted from *Legacy of Honor: The Values and Influence of America's Eagle Scouts*, by A. Townley, 2007, "Facts about Scouting," 2010, and "The 400 Richest Americans 2009," 2009.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Servant Leadership

The concept of servant leadership entered academic and management circles through the pioneering work of Robert Greenleaf (1970, 1977). Greenleaf says that a servant leader is first and foremost a servant and helps his or her followers become "...healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more likely themselves to become servant leaders" (Greenleaf, 2002, p. 27). Long-time associate, Larry Spears (1995, 2005) condenses Greenleaf's ideas into ten characteristics listed in Table 4.

Table 4. Greenleaf and Spears' servant leadership characteristics.

Listening	Conceptualization
Empathy	Foresight
Healing	Stewardship
Awareness	Commitment to people's growth
Persuasion	Building community

Adapted from "The Understanding and Practice of Servant-Leadership," by L. Spears, 2005.

Since Greenleaf's writings, authors and scholars have developed 20 different models of servant leadership with 16 associated survey instruments (Rohm, 2013). The servant leadership models' characteristics often overlap, building on the work of those gone before. The various models have similarities to both transformational and authentic leadership theories seen in characteristics like authenticity, empowerment, and transformation. From these numerous studies, one is chosen for this study.

Sendjaya and Sarros' (2002) and Sendjaya, et al.'s. (2008) servant leadership model is comprehensive and built on a review of previous literature on servant leadership. Their model contains six dimensions: (a) voluntary subordination, (b) authentic self, (c) covenantal relationship, (d) responsible morality, (e) transcendental spirituality, and (f) transforming influence (p. 406). Through its reference to transforming influences and authentic self, Sendjaya et al.'s. model also encompasses aspects of major leadership theories. Sendjaya, et al. call their model holistic "...extend[ing] the transformational, authentic, and spiritual leadership models [and] ...incorporat[ing] follower-oriented, service, spiritual, and moral dimensions of leadership sorely needed in the current organizational context" (p. 405).

Boy Scouts of America Leadership Philosophy

The Boy Scouts of America (BSA) turned 100 years old in 2010. The organization has been training young men and women in a values-based leadership development program since before WWI. Boys age 7-20 and girls age 14-20 (through the Venture program) participate in a variety of adventure and outdoor-based programs. The vision of the BSA is to "...prepare every eligible youth in America to become a responsible, participating citizen and leader who is guided by the Scout Oath and Law" ("Vision and Mission," n.d.). The BSA's mission is likewise to, "...prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout

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Oath and Law” (“Vision and Mission,” n.d.). The guiding principles of the BSA are the motto, slogan, oath, and law. See Table 5.

The motto, slogan, oath, and law articulate the leadership skills, traits, and values desired in all members of the BSA. It is a leadership philosophy and model in and of itself that parallels the characteristics of servant leadership. Tables 6 and 7 align the BSA leadership principles with Sendjaya, et al.’s (2008) servant leadership model.

Table 5. BSA motto, slogan, oath, and law.

Motto	Slogan
Be Prepared	Do a good turn daily
Oath	Law - A Scout is:
On my honor I will do my best	Trustworthy Obedient
To do my duty to God and my country	Loyal Cheerful
And to obey the Scout Law;	Helpful Thrifty
To help other people at all times;	Friendly Brave
To keep myself physically strong,	Courteous Clean
mentally awake, and morally straight.	Kind Reverent

Adapted from *The Boy Scout Handbook* (11th Ed.), 1998.

Table 6. Alignment of servant leadership characteristics with BSA oath, law, motto, and slogan.

Sendjaya, et al.^a	BSA^b
<i>Voluntary Subordination</i>	
Willingness to serve	Help other people at all times (oath)
Acts of service	Helpful (law)
	Do a good turn daily (slogan)
<i>Authentic Self</i>	
Humility	Kind (law)
Integrity	Obedient (law)
Accountability	Thrifty (law)
Security	
Vulnerability	
<i>Covenantal Relationship</i>	
Acceptance	Friendly (law)
Availability	Courteous (law)
Equality	Loyal (law)
Collaboration	

^a Adapted from “Defining and Measuring Servant Leadership Behaviour [sic] in Organizations,” by S. Sendjaya, J. C. Sarros, and J. C. Santora, 2008, *Journal of Management Studies*, 45(2), p. 409.

^b Adapted from *The Boy Scout Handbook*, 11th ed., 1998, p. 9.

Table 7. Alignment of servant leadership characteristics with BSA oath, law, motto, and slogan.

<i>Sendjaya, et al.^a</i>	<i>BSA^b</i>
<i>Responsible Morality</i>	
Moral reasoning	Clean - in thought, word and deed (law)
Moral action	Obey the Scout Law (oath) Morally straight (oath)
<i>Transcendental Spirituality</i>	
Religiousness	Duty to God and my country (oath)
Interconnectedness	Reverent (law)
Sense of mission	On my honor, I will do my best (oath)
Wholeness	
<i>Transforming Influence</i>	
Vision	Be Prepared (motto)
Modeling	Brave (law)
Mentoring	Cheerful (law)
Trust	Trustworthy (law)
Empowerment	

^a Adapted from “Defining and Measuring Servant Leadership Behaviour [sic] in Organizations,” by S. Sendjaya, J. C. Sarros, and J. C. Santora, 2008, *Journal of Management Studies*, 45(2), p. 409.

^b Adapted from *The Boy Scout Handbook*, 11th ed., 1998, p. 9.

Empirical Survey on Eagle Scouts & Servant Leadership

The author has found only one quantitative academic study that addresses Scouting and servant leadership. Goodly’s (2008) dissertation explored the correlation between Eagle Scouts and servant leadership in the Greater Alabama Council (p. 43). Goodly used 50 of the 62 questions from Page and Wong’s (2000) servant leadership survey instrument and demographics information to answer four research questions (p. 39-40). Goodly posed four research questions: (a) “Is there a statistically significant correlation with Scouts who have achieved the rank of Eagle Scout and the influence of servant leadership?” (p. 56), (b) “Is there a significant correlation between servant leadership characteristics for Eagle Scouts in various demographic ethnic groups in the Greater Alabama Council?” (p.59), (c) “Is there a statistically significant correlation in the attitudes of Eagle Scouts to become future servant leaders based on perceived family income?” (p. 60), and (d) “Is there a significant positive statistical correlation between Eagle Scouts and servant leadership characteristics based on educational achievement?” (p. 62).

Goodly (2008) did not indicate any positive correlation between Eagle Scouts and servant leadership. Results of the four research questions are below. He found no correlation between years since achieving Eagle Scout and the servant leadership characteristics in Page and Wong’s (2000) model (p. 58). Goodly could not make any conclusion on Eagle Scouts and ethnic groups because: “...so few Eagle Scouts in the non-Caucasian categories. Participants of White/Caucasian ethnicity totaled 95.5 percent of the survey respondents. Black/African American made up the next largest group with totaling 2.1 percent of the survey respondents” (p. 59). There was a significant negative correlation between the *authentic*, *visionary*, and *courageous leadership* factors with perceived family income of Eagle Scouts... the higher the perceived family income, the

lower the scores on all three (p. 61). There was a significant negative correlation between educational level and the *power and pride* factor. The higher the educational level, the lower the negative servant leadership factor of *power and pride* (p. 71).

Qualitative Case Studies on Servant Leadership

With the lone empirical study inconclusive, one can turn to qualitative case studies to answer the question whether Eagle Scouts display servant leadership characteristics. For the qualitative studies, a theory-based sampling method is used. As defined by Patton (2002), “The researcher samples incidents, slices of life, time periods, or people on the basis of their important manifestation or representation of important theoretical concepts” (p. 238). This section consists of a servant leadership theory-based sample of seven out of over 50 interviews with Eagle Scouts from Townley (2007). The seven represent different demographics and generations of Eagle Scouts who earned their rank from the 1940s through the 1960s.

Jim Lovell, Troop 60, Milwaukee, WI, Eagle Scout 1943.

Lovell told Townley (2007) about the Apollo 13 fire and almost destruction, “That old Scout motto, ‘Be Prepared,’ was very apropos in my situation” (p. 84). Lovell said, “...in a crisis, the character of a man, or men, will make the difference” (p. 87). According to Lovell, Scouts, like astronauts, love exploration and accomplishment (p. 85).

Ross Perot, Troop 18, Texarkana, TX, Eagle Scout 1943.

Perot founded and was CEO of Electronic Data Systems from 1962 until selling to General Motors in 1984. After this he founded and was CEO of Perot Systems from 1988 until selling to Dell in 2009. Beyond being a highly successful entrepreneur and businessman, Perot is probably best known for being the most successful US Presidential 3rd party candidate ever, taking 19% of the popular vote in 1992 (Townley, 2007, p. 93-4). Perot had great determination, applying to the US Naval Academy three times before being accepted and eventually creating the honor code system still in use there today (p. 92-3). Perot’s two guiding principles are, “...treat others as you want to be treated and never leave a man behind” (p. 91). Perot, like many other Eagle Scouts, is passing the legacy onto his family. His son, Ross Perot Jr. and two grandsons, Ross Perot III and Hunter Perot are also Eagle Scouts (p. 95).

J. W. Marriot Jr., Troop 241, Chevy Chase, MD, Eagle Scout 1947.

In his interview with Townley (2007), Marriot encapsulates the essence of servant leadership.

You need to live the Golden Rule and recognize the great importance in your life and your business of – and reach out to people and be there to help them, to teach them, to counsel and guide them. Basically, let them know you’re there to clear the highway so they can get their job done and that you’ll be supportive of them, listen to their concerns, help them, solve problems, and get their advice on certain things. You need to be a servant-leader (p. 103).

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Marriot treats his company as a family. “The biggest obligation I have is to make sure our people have stability in their jobs, a full work week, and job security... Beyond that, I’m committed to providing them an opportunity to grow” (p. 104). Marriot like Perot has encouraged his three sons, son-in-law, and five grandsons to earn Eagle (Marriot, 2008). Marriot is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. This organization sponsors more BSA Troops and Scouts than any other organization. “A Cub Scout pack, Boy Scout troop, and Varsity team should be chartered by every ward and branch that has two or more boys of the particular age served by the program” (“Scouting in The Church,” 2010).

Stephen Breyer. Troop 14, San Francisco, CA. Eagle Scout 1952.

Stephen Breyer was appointed as an Associate Justice of the US Supreme Court in 1994. As such, he is one of eleven highest judges in the United States. Relationships and working together are important to Breyer. He states, “...we have to work together and participate together to make our democracy work” (Townley, 2007, p. 59). Breyer places emphasis on trust. He says, “We need to be worthy of each other’s trust because the way we work is to persuade” (p. 59).

Michael Bloomberg, Troop 11, Medford, MA, Eagle Scout 1955.

Bloomberg was mayor of New York City from 2002-13. He is currently the United Nations Special Envoy for Cities and Climate Change. Prior to this, Bloomberg was and still is an extremely successful entrepreneur and businessman. He founded Bloomberg L.P., financial news and data company. He owns 88% of the company and is the 8th wealthiest person in the United States, worth \$18 billion (“The 400 Richest,” 2009). Bloomberg stresses helping others, “We’re in the world together ...you can’t find one person or job that isn’t dependent on others” (p. 114). Bloomberg says, “If you wait and only do things once you know how, you’re never going to make a lot of progress” (p. 115). Vision is important to Bloomberg. “Being an Eagle Scout means that you took control of your own life” (p. 116). “...I think the confidence Boy Scouting builds in young men is what it’s all about” (p. 117). Bloomberg says, “I think they’re [Scouting oath and law] all the American values...” (p. 116).

Hank Paulson. Troop 21, Barrington, IL. Eagle Scout 1959.

Paulson was CEO of Goldman Sachs from 1999-2006 and US Secretary of the Treasury, 2006-9. Paulson was an all-star football player at Dartmouth and is an avid environmentalist (Townley, 2007, p. 180). He has been a member of the Nature Conservatory for over 20 years and served as the Chairman of the Board from 2004-6 (“Faces of conservation,” n.d. and Townley, 2007, p. 182). Paulson says one of the most valuable aspects of Eagle is that it tests perseverance (p. 186). On leadership, he told Townley,

Leadership is about ... having the right people in the right seats, a strong sense of direction from the top, a culture which encourages teamwork and doing the right thing, having people really believe that the role you play in the world is a noble one and that you’re a force for good (p. 184).

Gary Locke. Troop 254, Seattle, WA. Eagle Scout 1964.

Gary Locke was the US Ambassador to China (2011-14), US Secretary of Commerce (2011), and Governor of Washington State from 1997-2005. Locke says “a leader is not a dictator” and that teaching is a better way to lead (Townley, 2007, p. 37). It is important to include people in decision making. Locke also stresses accountability. People expect more of Eagle Scouts. They have shown perseverance, leadership, and “...ability to get things done...” (p. 41). “Scouting says you should leave a campsite better than you found it, and for me in public service, that’s how I’ve tried to approach things” (p. 39).

Research Question

Goodly’s (2008) empirical study does not indicate that Eagle Scouts espouse servant leadership. Townley’s (2007) interviews, on the other hand, do seem to show that Eagle Scouts display servant leadership characteristics. The World Organization of the Scouting Movement principles align with servant leadership theory (Rohm & Bramwell, 2013). In a similar fashion one can align servant leadership with the BSA principles using Sendjaya et al.’s. (2008) model.

Based on the literature review of servant leadership and Scouting principles, both empirical and qualitative studies show an emerging linkage between Scouting and servant leadership, in particular that of Eagle Scouts. This yields the research question for this study: Do Eagle Scouts display servant leadership characteristics as outlined in Senjaya et al.’s. (2008) model?

METHOD

Qualitative research allows one to explore how individuals and groups ascribe meaning to social phenomenon (Creswell, 2009, p. 4). Creswell offers five different approaches to qualitative research: (a) ethnography, (b) grounded theory, (c) case studies, (d) phenomenological research, and (e) narrative research (p. 13). Townley (2007) used the narrative approach to study Eagle Scouts. This involved studying “...the lives of individuals [and asking them] to provide stories about their lives” (Creswell, 2009, p. 13). This project expands on Townley’s work by using the phenomenological approach, which “...identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants” the goal being to “...develop patterns and relationships of meaning” (p. 13).

Research Design

Within the phenomenological approach, this study is a critical case sample as outlined in Patton (2002). The critical incident technique (CIT) was first promoted by Flanagan (1954). “A critical case makes the assumption, if it happens here, it will happen anywhere, or ...if it doesn’t happen there, it won’t happen anywhere” (Patton, 2002, p. 236). Another “...common attribute of CIT is that it elicits aspects of best and worst practices” (Byrne, 2001). The research consists of interviews with four Eagle Scouts personally known by the author.

Sampling & Data Collection

The interviews consisted of seven demographic questions: (a) name, (b) date of birth, (c) when and in what Troop they became an Eagle Scout, (d) career to date, managerial experience, number of people managed, (e) current occupation, managerial experience, number of people managed, (f) how got involved in Scouting, and (g) volunteer service in Scouting since becoming an adult. Following were six servant leadership questions related to each of Sendjaya et al.'s. (2008) dimensions. These had a brief explanation of the servant leadership characteristic discussed to introduce the concept to the interviewee. Each of the six questions had two parts, searching for best and worst practices using the critical incident technique (CIT). Answers are open-ended. Data was collected during 1-2 hour face-to-face or phone interviews in July and August, 2010.

This sampling method follows several characteristics of qualitative research: (a) researcher as a key instrument, (b) multiple sources of data, (c) inductive data analysis, and (d) interpretive as outlined in Creswell (2009, p. 175). As a key instrument, the author developed the questionnaire and participated in the interviews. Multiple sources of data include: (a) results from the one empirical study, (b) documented interviews by Townley, and (c) personal interviews conducted for this paper. The author was careful to conduct inductive data analysis, allowing the data from the interviews to determine whether Eagle Scouts are servant leaders and not to just fit the information into the servant leadership model. The author was aware of his biases and potential influence on the study, especially being involved in Scouting as an adult leader and a student and scholar of servant leadership.

The personal interview sample size was four; a convenience sample of Eagle Scouts personally known by the author. One of the interviewees, Joel Pannebaker, is the author's cousin. The other three were involved in the same Troop as the author, Troop 826 in Lithia, Florida. Ron Lane was the Scoutmaster, adult leader of the Troop. Devin Jensen was the Troop Committee Chairman, assisting with all logistics of the Troop. Kurt Wendt was a parent of a Scout in the Troop. In fact, all three and the author had sons in the Troop.

Like the seven examples from Townley (2007), the four interviewees represent different backgrounds and generations of Eagle Scouts. These extend beyond Townley's interviews into the 1970s and 1980s. As with the Townley examples, each interview highlights servant leadership characteristics, using Senjaya et al.'s (2008) servant leadership model that the Eagle Scouts displayed and talked about.

Interviewees & jobs at the time of the interviews, July-August, 2010.

- Joel Pannebaker, Colonel, Pennsylvania Air National Guard.
- Ron Lane, Production Manager, Pepsi Bottling Company.
- Devin Jensen, Manager, Gaffin Industrial Services.
- Kurt Wendt, Lieutenant Colonel, US Air Force, US Central Command.

RESULTS

Joel Pannebaker, Troop 140, Fairview, NJ. Eagle Scout 1973.

Joel got involved in Scouting through friends starting as a Bobcat in Cub Scouts. He became an Eagle Scout at 17 in a large 100-member Troop in rural New Jersey. Shortly thereafter he attended Rutgers University and joined the United States Air Force as a Second Lieutenant. He served ten years on active duty. In 1988 he moved to the Air National Guard. In more than 30 years in the Air Force, Colonel Joel Pannebaker has almost always been in charge of other people. Only for 16 months did he have a staff job with no subordinates, a job he said he disliked terribly. Joel is currently the Commander of the 112th Air Operations Squadron in State College, PA. He currently commands 141 Airmen. Interestingly enough, seven are also Eagle Scouts. Joel had never heard the term servant leader before although he has been a devoted Christian all his adult life and understands Jesus' desire for us to be servants. "I don't ask others to do what I won't do and I have always pitched in and helped," says Joel (Pannebaker, 2010). In 1982, on his first tactical deployment, then Captain Pannebaker remembers jumping in and helping set up tents. It was something, along with outdoor field craft, survival skills, and backpacking that he brought with him from Scouting. His commander saw him and said, "Captain, I don't pay you to set up tents" (Pannebaker, 2010). Not believing this was right, Captain Pannebaker waited until his commander was not watching and went on helping put up tents.

Joel humbly describes his leadership abilities as God-given. He has led teams and people over the entire course of his career. He does not want the limelight or to take credit for his organization's successes. This is hard because people always look to an organization's leader to give the accolades. Joel always strives to give the credit for success to his people and his unit. To be fair, Joel said he has at times not felt *authentic*, once asking an intermediary to conduct some discipline and counseling that were his responsibility. This of course highlights his humility. Joel strives to get to know his employees on a personal level, not to undermine military discipline, but to show that he genuinely cares about people. He admits though that sometimes he needs reminding from his wife. Joel knows it is easy to be task oriented but endeavors to be relation oriented as well in his leadership style.

The Air Force core values are "integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do" ("Core Values," n.d.). Joel recited them verbatim. He says, "I live those values, not because they're Air Force but because it's me, it's how I am" (Pannebaker, 2010). This is a driving force that propels Joel into action. He does admit to submitting to peer pressure early in his career, fulfilling the letter of the law with respect to a requirement to obtain 200 simulated intercepts, but not the intent of the occupational proficiency. Joel has always taken his Christian faith seriously and been a man of moral courage. He has acted as Chaplain at a remote site in Alaska, when there was no official one. He has conducted chapel services and lead or been a member of Bible studies. Though he practices his faith in his actions, Joel feels he failed to *interconnect* his faith

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with words by fully explaining why he is the way he is, that he is a Christian. This is often difficult in a federal organization that frowns upon proselytizing.

Joel empowers his airmen by trying to always obtain input from and push decision making to the lowest level. Even though he may have a solution, he knows that the mentoring process and growth of subordinates is important. He also admits that the combined group effort often produces better ideas and solutions. Joel does not see himself necessarily as a visionary. He does believe in setting goals for himself and the organization, then doggedly pursuing them. Joel has given back to Scouting by volunteering as a leader in his two sons' Cub Scout Pack in Pennsylvania from 1985-8. He laments that upon rejoining Scouting after a move in the early 1990's, his boys did not continue beyond Webelos, the highest rank in Cub Scouting right before one would enter Boy Scouts.

Joel has fond memories of Scouting. The outdoor skills he gained as a youth certainly helped him early on in his Air Force career. His best accomplishment was learning to swim. Joel jumped into water over his head at his first summer camp and had to be pulled up from the bottom. He eventually progressed in his swimming abilities advancing through being a beginning swimmer to gaining the challenging Swimming and Life Saving merit badges. As a parting thought, Joel remarked, "I have known leaders who didn't become Eagles and Eagles who weren't really leaders" (Pannebaker, 2010). Scouting provided opportunities to learn, fail, and teach. "Scouting started a leadership process for me in a career field that gave me leadership responsibility" (Pannebaker, 2010).

Ron Lane, Troop 31, Springfield, MO. Eagle Scout 1977.

Ron stuck with Scouting despite moving with his family and being a member of two Cub Scout Packs and three Boy Scout Troops. Ron lives and breathes Scouting in his family, work, and leisure activities. A 36-year veteran of Pepsi Bottling Company, Ron has managed people for 25 years. He is currently a production manager at the Pepsi bottling plant in Tampa, Florida, with a total of 83 people. As a young adult, Ron felt called back into Scouting. He wanted to give back for all he had received. In fact Ron's mantra is, "I know what Scouting has done for you, now what can you do for Scouting?" (Lane, 2010). Other than five years when his career did not allow it, Ron has always been involved in Scouting. This includes Cub Scouts, at the District level, and over ten years as Scoutmaster for two different Boy Scout Troops. Ron was the Scoutmaster for Troop 826 in Lithia, Florida, from 2008-12 where his son was a Scout. "There is nothing out there that my employees do that I won't do with them" says Ron (Lane, 2010). Ron expects diligent work from his employees and has high standards. He knows the work is hard and is always willing to jump in and help. Periodically, people drop pallets of bottles. Ron can hear them crash to the floor from his office. Though he does not have to, Ron will stop what he is doing to help clean up. Ron walks his shop daily. His employees uphold high standards not out of fear but out of a respect for Ron. They know he always has their best interests in mind. Ron says that he does not fire people. They fire themselves. Though Ron spends time and effort to help people who are underperforming,

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he faults himself in not better serving others and for eventually giving up on people when they are headed in this direction.

During an annual review, Ron's boss was clearly impressed with his performance. He pushed aside all the statistics and accolades and simply asked Ron one question. "I know you are a Christian, how do you show it?" (Lane, 2010). This had a profound effect on Ron. He now does not use profanity and refuses to yell at people at work. He knows that people are watching him all the time and that he must be authentic. This realization did not necessarily come from Scouting but from a boss and fellow Christian. Ron went through a brief period where he struggled with authenticity. When working for Pepsi headquarters, he adopted a superior attitude that permeated the organization when conducting inspections of plants. This lasted about a year, when once again his Christian faith intervened through a program at his church. Ron attended a week retreat, called *Walk to Emmaus*. It made Ron realize that he needed to be himself and not put on pretenses. Ron's door is always open. He has loaned employees money when they were in need. He has brought gifts to employees and their children in time of sickness and need. Ron has referred people to Financial Peace University to help them with managing money. Ron does draw a line in relations with employees. He does not spend time outside of work with them. Ron says that this "can put you in a bind and cause you to make bad decisions for the company" (Lane, 2010).

When they come to him with a problem, Ron asks how they would fix it. Then he checks back later with them to see what they did. Ron covers people if they make the wrong call, protecting his employees. Ron's main goal is to train the supervisors under him to take over his job. "You must give people leeway or they won't grow. My job is to take them to the next level" (Lane, 2010). Ron admits that he is not always good at this. If something is going wrong he will often jump in and make a decision and is sometimes not patient. In his current role as Scoutmaster of Troop 826, Ron admits that he has been somewhat authoritarian in his leadership style. Unlike on the job, Ron has not been as good at training his Assistant Scoutmasters to take over his job. Ron's motives are pure though. He wants to ensure that the Troop, only two years old, sticks to the principles of Scouting. He does not want to be what he calls "a merit badge factory" (Lane, 2010). He does not want to just push the boys through their requirements but wants them to genuinely learn leadership.

Ron relates a story of a boy who was at first troublesome but later made Eagle and became a great person. Ron had to bring the boy home from a campout because he was so disruptive. Ron stuck with him, though. He later hired the young man at Pepsi and saw him enter the Army. The man invited Ron to his wedding. At the wedding the man gave Ron a big hug and said, "I wouldn't be where I am today without you" (Lane, 2010). The man's mother also thanked Ron for helping her raise her boys. "You never know what affect you have on young Scouts. If you can affect just one, it's all worth it" (Lane, 2010). Ron's best experiences in Scouting were hiking and surviving in the Rocky Mountains at Philmont. He has attended as both a boy and adult. "Philmont Scout Ranch, the Boy Scouts of America's premier High Adventure™ base, challenges Scouts and Venturers with more than 214 square miles of rugged northern New Mexico wilderness"

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(“Philmont Scout Ranch,” n.d.). Philmont is an incredible experience, according to Ron. Everyone is in awe of the beautiful wilderness. Everyone must work together and rely on each other. It brings together all the aspects of Scouting. “People who are inclined to become leaders will excel. If a Troop is run right, it can develop people to become great leaders” (Lane, 2010). But Ron cautions that Scouting will not make leaders. He hired an Eagle Scout once for Pepsi and the guy turned out to be one of his worst employees. This makes him sad because the reputation of Scouting and Eagle Scouts in particular is paramount to him. The Eagle Scout Charge in one of its versions says,

Your position, as you well know, is one of honor and responsibility. You are a marked man. As an Eagle Scout, you have assumed a solemn obligation to do your duty to God, to Country, to your fellow Scouts, and to mankind in general. This is a great undertaking. As you live up to your obligations, you bring honor to yourself and to your brother Scouts. If you fail, you bring down the good name of all true and worthy Scouts (Eagle Scout Charge, n.d.).

Kurt Wendt, Troop 634, Waupaca, WI. Eagle Scout 1986.

Kurt got involved in Cub Scouts with a bunch of his elementary school friends. They stuck together through Cub Scouting and went into Boy Scouts. Kurt is the only one who made it to Eagle, though. He made it to Eagle Scout a week after his 14th birthday. This is quite young. In 2009 the average age was 17.3 years (“Eagle Scouts,” 2009). When asked about his feeling of bestowing the rank on younger boys, Kurt said, “being an Eagle at 14 made me more responsible. It puts you in a place of respect and pushes you to be better” (Wendt, 2010). After high school, Kurt attended the United States Air Force Academy for four years and University of Maryland for two years for a Master’s degree in International Security and Economic Policy. Kurt has been in the Air Force for 20 years working in Intelligence. During the time of the interview, he was a Lieutenant Colonel working at United States Central Command in Tampa, Florida. He later moved to Germany. Kurt has been stationed overseas in Iceland and the United Kingdom as well as several deployments to Afghanistan and the Middle East. Kurt has worked with people from other cultures, to include being their boss. Kurt said he has managed people about half of his career.

Kurt says his concepts of service and leadership are rooted in his time at the Air Force Academy and cannot directly attribute them to Scouting. Kurt learned that “you can’t be a good leader unless you can be a good follower” (Wendt, 2010). He also believes in helping out wherever needed, even if it seems below his station and rank by others. In Cyprus, while Kurt was assigned with the United Kingdom’s Royal Air Force, a British Warrant Officer told him not to take out the trash and shred documents, that the younger airmen should do that. Kurt said he had some extra time on his hands and just thought it was important to pitch in. Later the younger airmen said they were impressed that an officer would do such a menial task and respected him all the more. Paraphrasing a quote from President Truman, Kurt said, “it’s amazing what you can accomplish when you don’t care who gets the credit” (Truman, n.d. and Wendt, 2010). Kurt tries to live by this but struggles, like many of us, with enjoying personal praise and recognition. We

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often want the award, the ceremony, the medal. Kurt was once upset over the level of award he received, it having been downgraded. Though it is satisfying to be rewarded, Kurt tries to think about who else is deserving. He is just the guy out front. He tries to always recognize those on his team and give them the credit.

Kurt encourages his airmen to work through their chain of command when they have difficulties, though he always maintains an open-door. He does lose patience with people who constantly come to him with little things or with problems without a recommended solution. Kurt says, “Don’t just tell me your problem, give me some solutions” (Wendt, 2010). He believes in mentoring people to become problem solvers. Perhaps a bit on the informal side for the military, Kurt calls his airmen by their first names. He tries to get to know their circumstances and background. He tries to be helpful. “People need to know you care” (Wendt, 2010). Kurt cautions not to allow people to get too comfortable as it could be detrimental to good order and discipline for a military unit. But he does want to foster a positive work environment where people are not afraid to question his decisions in a constructive way. He does not want people to fear him.

Kurt grew up in a Christian family. Scouting reinforced the morals and values he learned at home and in church. Honesty and integrity are vital for Kurt. Rather than backdate some forms he would “take a hit on an inspection” rather than pass, as a matter of integrity (Wendt, 2010). While at the Air Force Academy, around 1992, the Superintendent, Lieutenant General Bradley C. Hosmer instituted the three core values that now belong to the entire Air Force; “integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do” (“Core Values,” n.d.). Kurt has internalized these. Kurt says that anyone successful in the military has an inner drive to serve a higher cause and do his or her duty to God and country. Kurt has twice followed unsuccessful leaders. He credits this to their lack of vision and laissez-faire attitude towards leadership. Kurt always tries to share his vision with a new organization. While in charge of training, Kurt inherited some courses that were not inspiring. He asked his subordinates how to make them better. By leveraging people with combat experience and allowing for some freedom and ingenuity, Kurt’s team *transformed* the courses, instruction, and enthusiasm at the school. One of Kurt’s most memorable experiences in Scouting was being put in charge of a composite group of Scouts attending the National Jamboree in 1989. At 17 and an Eagle for several years, Kurt was a seasoned Scout. He was the Senior Patrol Leader (boy in charge of all the other Scouts) for the group attending the Jamboree from his council. Kurt did not know any of the Scouts prior to the event. With the help of some adult leaders, Kurt and the other Scouts melded into a cohesive team and had an awesome experience. This leadership challenge, like many in Scouting made all the difference in Kurt’s leadership development at a young age.

Devin Jensen, Troop 89, Brandon, FL. Eagle Scout 1987.

Devin was not in Cub Scouts very long but got involved in Boy Scouts like many, through a friend. He made Eagle Scout a week before his 18th birthday, the deadline for becoming one. His father offered some incentives for Devin to earn Eagle, but in the end, Devin said this had little to do with getting the award. It was more about accomplishing

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something that seemed unachievable for a long time. Devin said, “My best experience [in Scouting] was seeing how proud my father was when I received my Eagle. I have only seen my father cry twice in my life and that day was one of them” (Jensen, 2010). Devin works for Gaffin Industrial Services Inc., a private industrial water blasting and vacuuming company. Devin has worked in sales and marketing since college. He has managed anywhere from one to as many as 40 people.

Devin believes in giving back to Scouting. In college he volunteered as an Assistant Scoutmaster (1988-1990). He has been an Assistant Cub Master and Cub Master for Pack 610, and Committee Chair for Troop 826 in Lithia, FL. Devin has some very poignant thoughts on leadership as it relates to Scouting. He remarks,

I truly believe that it is almost impossible to become a good leader without great leadership around you. That leadership must instill strong beliefs. To make Eagle Scout you must meet all the requirements in the book. To become a gifted leader you must be first willing to accept yourself for who you are and what you’re capable of doing. Some individuals have the knack to get others to follow them; this doesn’t make them a good leader. The gifted leader gets individuals to buy into their ideals and beliefs. In turn a strong or gifted leader must also be willing to develop the individuals around them into leaders themselves. I think Eagle Scouts become great leaders because of the experiences they must face even in the smallest of settings. The mere idea that you stay with Scouting to reach Eagle proves that you have the drive and determination to complete your goals (Jensen, 2010).

When asked about the importance of *covenantal relationships*, Devin responded, “Many projects that I have been involved with have only been successful due to being open-minded of other team members and their ideas on accomplishing the tasks at hand” (Jensen, 2010). Collaboration with people is the key to success, though this is not always easy to do. Devin says, “There have been times when I have had a plan and thought out the scenario in my mind and have been unwilling to be flexible. This is a control issue that has to be under constant control when you’re in a position of leadership or power” (Jensen, 2010).

Devin’s profession is governed by strict EPA laws. Many times it is up to him to make sure Gaffin handles its work responsibly. Dealing with hazardous chemicals, Devin says he never puts his technicians in harm’s way without them understanding the full possibilities of the situation. If something is beyond what Devin believes is outside their capabilities, he will pass on the project rather than make the money. The means are more important than the ends. Helping those that may not ask and buying into their plan of action without thinking of his own personal goals is how Devin serves people. Though at times, Devin has felt that his willingness to volunteer has caused him to not give 100% due to over commitment. As a member of the local Rotary Club, Devin often has volunteered at national and state functions without his local club’s knowledge. He wants to be “just another Rotarian in the crowd” (Jensen, 2010). Devin believes in volunteering

because it's the right thing to do. He is not interested in recognition. In his own words, Devin brings out the aspects of Scouting that are most important to him.

As far as personal thoughts on Scouting, it is my personal belief that if we don't get more young men into Scouting the country will have more and more problems. I think it's important to all boys especially those lacking in father-figures to find that comradery [sic] they get at scouting. Much of our world says that the beliefs in what we hold in Scouting are weak and many times laughed at. Though this country was built on people that believed exactly what Scouting promotes. The parents of Scouts see the possibilities and opportunities scouting offers. Should my son not make Eagle, I will be disappointed but this is not my journey, it's his. He will need to find his way and decide what is important to him. I will always be there to encourage but only in the way of pointing out opportunities and the feeling you get of accomplishing a long term goal. The idea that each Troop be boy-lead promotes the strongest leaders to the front. It builds a desire to be a leader and to hopefully learn from mistakes and successes (Jensen, 2010)!

DISCUSSION

Examining Goodly's (2008) empirical study on Eagle Scouts and servant leadership, Townley's (2007) discoveries, and the interviews conducted for this study, shows a group of men that embrace leadership in their homes, churches, communities, places of work, and through volunteer organizations. These men lead through a set of beliefs that began when they were youths in Boy Scouts. The beliefs came from family and church and were amplified by the BSA. Some continued to have these same core values reinforced in the military and government service. An analysis of the seven Eagle Scouts from Townley (2007) and the four interviewed for this study yields the following about their thoughts and demonstration of Sendjaya et al.'s (2008) servant leadership characteristics.

Voluntary Subordination

Eagle Scouts embrace *Voluntary Subordination*, by both (a) *being a servant* and (b) *acts of service*. Through his emphasis on the Golden Rule of treating other like you want to be treated, J. W. Marriot shows *voluntary subordination* through his emphasis on *being a servant*. Michael Bloomberg shows *voluntary subordination* through a *willingness to serve*. Hank Paulson says leadership is about being a force for good. Joel Pannebaker's willingness to serve despite his rank and position is a superb example of *voluntary subordination*. Ron Lane is always willing to assist in his employees' jobs. He does this from a sense of *service*. Kurt Wendt says the term servant leadership is new to him, though he is no stranger to the concept. "More than any other aspect, *voluntary subordination*, struck a chord with me" (Wendt, 2010). Devin Jensen shows service through the volunteering he does through Scouting and the Rotary Club.

Authentic Self

Eagle Scouts value being *Authentic*, which has characteristics of (a) *accountability* to others, (b) *humility*, (c) *integrity*, (d) providing a feeling of *security* in the work environment, and (e) protecting *vulnerability*. J. W. Marriot demonstrates *authentic self* through *accountability* with them to provide job *security*. Gary Locke stresses *accountability* by making a place better than how you found it and always knowing that as a leader people are watching you and expect more out of you. Joel Pannebaker is humble. He shies away from the limelight and strives to give credit for success to his people and his unit. At times though, he has not felt *authentic*, letting others conduct discipline and counseling that were his responsibility. Ron Lane knows as a leader that people are always watching him and that he must be *authentic*. He has come to realize that this is the best policy having not been happy when trying to be something he was not. Being *authentic* for Kurt Wendt is not worrying about who gets the credit. Though it is an internal struggle sometimes to not desire an award, giving credit to his airmen is paramount. Devin Jensen is *authentic* in his volunteering, doing it just because it is the right thing to do.

Covenantal Relationships

Eagle Scouts develop *Covenantal Relationships* through (a) *acceptance* of people for whom they are with their strengths and weaknesses, (b) being *available*, (c) treating all with *equality*, and (d) *collaboration*. J. W. Marriot treats his company as a family demonstrating *covenantal relationship* through *acceptance* and *availability*. Stephen Breyer shows the importance of *covenantal relationships* through *collaboration* and making democracy work. Hank Paulson says leadership is about teamwork. Gary Locke puts importance on *covenantal relationships*. Leading is teaching and including people in decision making. *Covenantal relationships* are important to Joel Pannebaker. He gets to know employees on a personal level in order to show that he genuinely cares about people. Yet he must balance this with not undermining military discipline and the easy tendency to be task as opposed to relationship oriented. *Covenantal relationships* are important to Kurt Wendt in order to foster a positive work environment. Devin Jensen values *covenantal relationships* through being open-minded and accepting others ideas, though at times, he can be unwilling to be flexible.

Responsible Morality

Eagle Scouts exhibit *Responsible Morality* through (a) *moral reasoning* based on internalized principles and (b) *moral action* in both ends and means. Ross Perot demonstrated *responsible morality* by creating the honor code system still in use today at the Naval Academy. Michael Bloomberg believes that the Scout oath and law embody American values. This shows *moral reasoning based on internalized principles*. Hank Paulson says leadership is about having a noble role in the world. Joel Pannebaker and Kurt Wendt both live the Air Force's core values of integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all they do. They do this not because the Air Force says they must but because it is already ingrained in their *morals*. Joel did admit that despite his *internalized moral principles*, peer pressure caused him to contradict them early in his career. Ron

Lane was not raised as a Christian nor did he attend church. Ron thanks the Scouting program for teaching him *responsible morality* and bringing him into a relation with Christ. For Devin Jensen, *responsible morality* is taking care of his employees' health and welfare.

Transcendental Spirituality

Eagle Scouts have *Transcendental Spirituality* as demonstrated in their (a) *religiousness*, (b) *interconnectedness*, (c) *sense of mission*, and (d) *wholeness*. Jim Lovell's duty to country and determination to do one's best demonstrates *transcendental spirituality* through a *sense of mission*. Out of 120,000 chartered Scouting units (including Cub Scouts), 37,682 units containing 405,676 Scouts are affiliated with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. This represents 14% of all Scouts. The second and third largest are the United Methodist Church and the Roman Catholic Church at 11,391 and 9,022 units with 369,733 and 286,779 total Scouts respectively ("Chartered Organizations," 2010). This tie to religious institutions, to include those outside Christianity (Buddhism, Hindu, Islam, and Judaism) demonstrates the *transcendental spirituality* of Scouting. Hank Paulson says leadership is about a *sense of mission* to a higher cause. Joel Pannebaker is a devoted Christian and lives out his faith in his everyday actions. At times he has not specifically told people that his actions come from his faith in Jesus. Ron Lane's *transcendental spirituality* has grown as a result of his introduction to Christianity through Scouting. Kurt Wendt chose the military to have a *sense of mission* and accomplishment, to be part of something larger than himself. *Spirituality* and religion are a mixed bag for Devin. He freely admits that he is not the best church-goer and has some issues with the church establishment. Devin does say he tries to promote Christ being reverent within his family and Scouting (Jensen, 2010).

Transforming Influence

Eagle Scouts believe in *Transforming Influence* through (a) *vision*, (b) *modeling*, (c) *mentoring*, (d) *trust*, and (e) *empowerment*. Through extreme bravery and being prepared, during the Apollo 13 fire, Jim Lovell demonstrated *transforming influence* through *vision* and *modeling*. Ross Perot and J. W. Marriot practice *transforming influence* through *modeling* and *mentoring* by passing the legacy onto their families. Stephen Breyer places emphasis on *transforming influence* through being worthy of *trust*. Michael Bloomberg emphasizes *vision* by gaining confidence and taking control of one's life. Hank Paulson says leadership is about having a *vision* or strong sense of direction. Joel Pannebaker *empowers* his subordinates, but he does not see himself as a visionary. Ron Lane believes in *empowering* his employees, encouraging them to make decisions and training them to take over his job. Ron Lane believes wholeheartedly in the *transforming influence* of Scouting. He would do all he does for Scouting to change just one young man's life.

Areas for further study

Clearly there are many areas for further study. More qualitative studies should be conducted on Eagle Scouts. Goodley (2008) used Wong and Page's (2003) Servant Leader Profile – Revised (SLP-R) survey instrument which contains a superb self-assessment. Other instruments that contain 360° evaluations from bosses, peers, and

subordinates could give a more holistic picture of whether or not Eagle Scouts are servant leaders. More qualitative studies could also be conducted. This paper only included a convenience sample of four Eagle Scouts. Expanding the number of those interviewed could invite more perspectives on leadership and Scouting. Not all Eagle Scouts are model citizens. A cursory search on the Internet can find mention of Eagle Scouts in jail. It would be interesting to get their perspectives on how being an Eagle Scout has affected their lives and leadership.

Conclusion

This study has aligned the BSA principles and the thoughts of Eagles Scouts with Sendjaya et al.'s (2008) servant leadership model. These men exemplify the BSA motto, slogan, oath, and law. They embody the leadership skills, traits, and values desired in all members of the BSA. Upon closer examination, Scouting principles, especially as espoused by Eagle Scouts, match the characteristics of servant leadership, in particular those in Sendjaya, et al.'s model. The Scouting principles are, however, a philosophy and model of servant leadership already, without the need to connect with other models. Robert Gates, an Eagle Scout himself, former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, US Secretary of Defense, and most recently the President of the BSA, says all youth in the US should espouse these values. In his speech at the 2010 Boy Scout National Jamboree, Gates (2010) said,

We live in an America today where the young are increasingly physically unfit and society as a whole languishes in ignoble moral ease. An America where in public and private life we see daily what the famous news columnist Walter Lippman once called 'the disaster of the character of men...the catastrophe of the soul.' But not in Scouting. At a time when many American young people are turning into couch potatoes, and too often much worse, Scouting continues to challenge boys and young men, preparing you for leadership.

More young men and women should join Scouting, and aspire to become Eagle Scouts or the equivalent Gold Stars in the Girls Scouts of America, Freedom Award holders in the Trail Life USA, and Stars and Stripes Award holders in the American Heritage Girls. In this way we could create a better society of servant leaders in America and perhaps the world.

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