

What the Scout Law Means to Me



John Wayne

Many years ago, a great American, John Wayne, made one of his last public appearances at a benefit dinner to raise the last funds needed for the John Wayne Outpost Camp. This outpost is still used at the Forest Lawn Scout Reservation in Lake Arrowhead, California.

He was riddled with cancer and knew he was close to death.

At dinner, Mr. Wayne recited the Scout Law. Then he said the twelve points of the Scout Law are "nice words". "Trouble is" he continued, "we learn them so young we sometimes don't get all the understanding that goes with them. I take care of that in my family. As each boy reaches Scout age, I make sure he learns the Scout Law. Then I break it down for him, with a few things I have picked up in more than half a century since I learned it."

Then he broke down the twelve points for the guests at the dinner:

TRUSTWORTHY

The badge of honesty. Having it lets you look at any man in the eye. Lacking it, he won't look back. Keep this one at the top of your list.

LOYAL

The very word is life itself; for without loyalty we have no love of person or country

HELPFUL

Part sharing, part caring. By helping each other, we help ourselves; not to mention mankind. Be always full of help -- the dying man's last words.

FRIENDLY

Brotherhood is part of that word. You can take it in a lot of directions - and do - but make sure and start with brotherhood.

COURTEOUS

Allow each person his human dignity; which means a lot more than saying, "Yes, ma'am" and "Thank you, sir." It reflects an attitude that later in life you wish you had honored more... earlier in life. Save yourself that problem. Do it now.

KIND

This one word would stop wars and erase hatreds. But it's like your bicycle, it's just no good unless you get out and use it.

OBEDIENT

Starts at home. Practice it in your family. Enlarge it in your friends. Share it with humanity.

CHEERFUL

Anyone can put on a happy face when the going is good. The secret is to wear it as a mask for your problems. It might surprise you how many others do the same thing.

THRIFTY

Means a lot more than putting pennies away; and it is the opposite of cheap. Common sense covers it just about as well as anything.

BRAVE

You don't have to fight to be brave. Millions of good, fine, decent folks show more bravery than heavyweight champs just by getting out of bed every morning, going out to do a good day's work, and living the best life they know how against the law of odds. Keep the word handy every day of your life.

CLEAN

Soap and water helps a lot on the outside. But it is the inside that counts, and don't ever forget it.

REVERENT

Believe in anything that you want to believe in, but keep God at the top of it. With Him, life can be a beautiful experience. Without Him, you are just biding time.

John Wayne then thanked those at the dinner for putting his name on the outpost camp and said,

"I would rather see it here than on all the theater marquees the world over."

The John Wayne Outpost Camp is a part of the Forest Lawn Scout Reservation, Lake Arrowhead, Los Angeles Area Council. Here is an excerpt from the LA Council website:

John Wayne Trek Overnighter

Thursday nights during Boy Scout summer camp

This is a C.O.P.E. activity and Boy Scouts must be at least 13 years old to participate. Scouts leave Camp at 4:00 pm and return in time for breakfast the next morning.

Scouts hike approximately one mile to the campsite. Personal sleeping gear is driven to the campsite and is driven back again in the morning. Dinner is brought up to the campsite.

Scouts learn about Dutch Oven cooking, shoot a black powder rifle, and spend the night under the stars in the land once visited by John Wayne himself.

