



## Scouting around Rick Diles

Last week I began a story about my decision to become a "career scouter" with an experience I had on a mountain top at Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico. Now I'd like to tell about the second mountain in "A Tale of Two Mountains".

My senior year in high school was very much like anyone else's except for one small detail . . . I was a new kid at a new school in a new town. I found the local scout troop and in turn found some new friends.

The year went rather well. Between basketball practice, good grades, a part-time job, and an all-out plunge into dating, I didn't have much time to ponder what I had left "back home."

AS GRADUATION approached I started to look for a different job for the summer, and one of my scouting friends suggested Worth Ranch, a Boy Scout summer camp near Palo Pinto on the Brazos River.

I spoke with the director and the best job available was archery range director. He asked me if I had any experience with archery, and I told him three summers . . . that is three attempts at summer camp to pass the archery merit badge, but I got the job anyway. During set-up week I wore out two bowstrings, broke several dozen arrows, and read three how-to books in preparation for camp.

I worked six weeks of camp and loved every day. Every scout executive that came to camp told me a little bit about their job, and I was amazed at how business-like they were about scouting and I was very impressed.

I wasn't very sold yet, so I held on to my plans to study chemical engineering in the fall at Texas Tech. Then I went to Philmont again.

MY FORMER troop invited my brother and I to return to Philmont with them and we couldn't pass it up. We spent a week in our old hometown before heading for the mountains, and everything seemed different. It wasn't so much the town and the people changing as it was the fact that I had changed.

I had learned many things during the past year, the most important of which was that I was a unique individual with many abilities and talents to contribute to any situation. I had learned self-confidence, self-motivation and self-worth. Through my scouting experiences I realized that everything is worthless until it is shared with someone else.

The tale of the second mountain is very similar to the first. The climb was just as hard, the environment just as threatening, and the mountain was Mount Phillips as well, but at a very different time in my boyhood.

At the peak I went to the spot I had stood one year prior and looked out over the same breathtaking horizons, and thanked the Maker for allowing me to come back and learn to face adversity no matter how large or small. I also thanked Him for scouting that allowed me to experience many things.

I MADE a decision then to be a professional scouter so that I could help as many boys as possible to become the best men they can.

I left my boyhood behind on that mountain that day, but the mountain will always be part of this young man's heart.

*(Rick Diles is a Haynes District Scout executive with the South Plains Council, Boy Scouts of America. He resides in Plainview.)*