



## Scouting around Rick Diles

Everyone who considers themselves as career-minded probably had an experience or two that inspired them to make the decision. This is my story — A Tale of Two Mountains.

The summer after my junior year of high school, my father received an offer to move to Dallas. It was a hard decision for the entire family. We had lived in the same house for almost 17 years, and the old hometown wasn't easy to leave.

The hardest thing for me to do was to leave my scout troop of six years and begin my senior year in a new school. The last thing I did with my scout troop was to go to Philmont.

**THE FIRST** mountain was that particular summer. It's called Mount Phillips (we called it many other things while climbing it), and the climb would involve increasing our altitude some 3,000 feet in the short distance of five miles. I remember it was raining and lightning, and that's not good when you're on a rocky mountain with a metal frame attached to your back. But we made it to the top anyway.

At the summit there was just a couple lightning-splintered trees and a strong wind. It was hot after the ascent and the first order of business was to shed the pack and cool off. And cool off we did — not only was the wind strong, it was carrying temperatures close to freezing. The second order of business was to pull on a sweat shirt. Now we could get down to some serious scenery.

From that mountain you could see three states and could look down on the rainstorm that had threatened us earlier. It wasn't a good place to suddenly remember that you weren't going to be with these guys much longer. May I never feel the dread and loneliness again that I felt on that mountain on that day in that cold wind.

I left that pinnacle a very anxious and saddened boy, full of self-pity and doubt.

The second mountain will have to wait until next time.

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