

A scouting weekend well spent



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This weekend I had the opportunity to be among a group of great leaders who support and work with our most outstanding youth.

The Denver Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America sponsored and presented a College of Commissioner Science which was attended by men and women from the western Colorado, Denver Area and Colorado Councils of the Boy Scouts of America.

Easily 100 commissioners from districts in these areas gathered at an LDS chapel in Highlands Ranch, coming from units that meet in the churches of many denominations, and other meeting locations across these areas. Each attendee had enrolled in classes appropriate to their experience levels to advance in Scouter expertise.

This daylong program had numerous classes in progress throughout the

day. Twenty-five men and women were taking COMBAT — Commissioner's Basic Training — all day long.

Meanwhile, the remainder of the curriculum was divided between classes conducted at the "bachelor" and "master" levels.

One example of the classes is "Youth Protection," teaching leaders how to comply with the stringent rules of Boy Scouts of America that ensure the well-being of the youth and the legal protection of adult leaders, as well.

Standards of privacy for the youth and adults, maintaining "two-deep" leadership when meeting with a single youth, never "one-on-one," were emphasized.

Corporal punishment cannot be administered by anyone, including parents, at any Boy Scouts of America activity. Hazing, initiations and "secret" ceremonies are forbidden.

These were fully explained so that no one errs "just because we've always done it that way."

Classes were given on subjects such as outreach, service, working with new units, how to improve leadership and annual rechartering of units, to name a few. Other classes were presented in the duties of commissioners working with programs at unit, district and council levels.

Commissioners were given insights into the Explorer and Venturing programs, which include both young men and young women older than 14. I also learned something of the Learning for Life program, another program that is a subsidiary of Boy Scouts of America, providing learning experiences for youth not in the Scouting program.

Following lunch, the as-

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sembled commissioners heard from Mr. Jim Blair, Denver Area Council commissioner, who gave and up-

date on many developments in the council and future plans. Mr. Jeff Hermann, district executive, likewise gave comments and encouragement to the group. Blair then introduced the keynote speaker, Mr. Earl Wright, chairman of the Denver Area Council board of trustees. He gave even more information about the council and of

Scouting in Colorado and the nation.

He encouraged the leaders to even greater involvement in the outreach programs of Scouting and told of new programs that have recently come into being, one of which is the council Special Needs District that works across seven districts and is now able to interface with other councils as the expertise of the special needs staff has grown.

Wright said that despite the calls from political figures for America to "return" to high standards of morality, honesty and integrity, the Boys Scouts of America

have never left them. Boy Scouts still take an oath at each meeting saying, "On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and

my country and obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight."

That Scout Law reads, "A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent." The Scout's motto is "Be Prepared," and the slogan is "Do a Good Turn Daily."

Given these standards





and principles to work with, the commissioners attending this training program will be better able to build youth who will one day be great leaders in our nation.

It was pointed out that many of our great leaders

have been Eagle Scouts, Scouting's highest rank, such as President Gerald Ford, many astronauts, members of the business world, the military and Congress.

A Saturday well spent.

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