

VENTURING MAGAZINE

International Scouting by Craig Murray

January 2017

Few scouts are as fortunate as I was because after earning the rank of Eagle Scout in my sophomore year, I was selected by the American Field Service (AFS) to live with a family in New Zealand in my junior year. The family I was matched up with was a scouting family as both boys were Queen Scouts! (Queen Scouts from British Commonwealth countries are equivalent to Eagle Scouts.) It was a great year and laid the foundation for what would be a future of leading scouts to jamborees all over the world.



In 1992, I learned of a contingent that was planning to attend the Columbus Jamboree in Brazil. I recruited several scouts from my troop and signed on as a leader of our contingent. It was an amazing experience and I learned a great deal about leading international outings. At that time, I also met a New Zealand scouter who encouraged me to attend the 1995 New Zealand Venture. A Venture is similar to a jamboree, but only for scouts in the age group 14-17. As I had been an exchange student to New

Zealand and had recently become a Exploring Advisor, I was excited about the opportunity of returning and taking my Post.

With my new knowledge of leading a contingent, I began 1993 with the attitude that I was going to grow my new Exploring Post and take them to the January 1995 New Zealand Venture. After many months of recruiting, I had six Explorers, 3 male and 3 female Explorers along with my wife, who wanted to help plan the trip. The experience for all was great and the cost of travel, touring, and the Venture was only \$2,000 each for 3½ weeks. We rented a van for our touring and stayed with other scouts along the way to keep costs down and make our adventure much more meaningful.

The next international trip planned by the Exploring Post was to the 1997 Canadian Jamboree. Here is a recent quote by one of the 1997 members of our scout group, Nate Chavez on Facebook, "During the trip we got to see Yellowstone National Park, Grand Tetons, Glacier National Park, both the Crazy Horse monument and Mount Rushmore in South Dakota, we crossed over three or four provinces in Canada, made so many memories." This is after almost 20 years so you know there was an impact.



For the millennium, the Venturing Crew (formerly the Exploring Post), planned a trip to the 2000 Australian Venture. A Venture is a great program designed for high adventure and building of international friendships. Before arriving, each scout selects a first, second and third choice from a list of activities. Upon arrival at the Venture, each scout is put into a group. All the Venturers in my Crew got their first choices and for the next four days participated with new friends in their selected activities. At the end of the four days, they came back to base camp but still stayed with the same group. From base camp, they would participate in half-day or full-day activities with their group. After eight days, each home crew would reform and leave for home.



I learned that in the summer of 2002, there was an international scout hiking expedition in Austria called Begegnung. The Post/Crew I had had for so many years had aged out of Venturing so in the Fall of 2001, I began recruiting new scouts that would like to attend Begegnung. It was not long before I had a new group of Venturers. They did a fantastic job of planning the five week trip through Europe ending with the scout expedition in Austria. The entire trip including airfare was less than \$2,100. You can read about the trip

on this web page - <https://www.sageventure.com/crews/Austria/>.



The trip to Austria would be the last one I would lead but I was the first Associate Advisor for one of the Crews that attended the World Jamboree in Great Britain in 2007 and a contingent leader for the Ukraine Scout Jubilee in 2012. I will be on staff for the 2016-2017 JamCam in

Ecuador and the 2017 Asia Pacific Regional Jamboree in Mongolia.



While scouting with youth is very rewarding, I also have fun on trips with adults. I am Baden-Powell Fellow and have attended events in South Africa, Sweden, Spain, Japan and Iceland. I am also a Life Friend of Gilwell and have attended two of the Gilwell events.

I am writing a new web site called Sage Thinking (www.sagethinking.org) which is dedicated to providing a balance to the regular news cycle — one that shows the positive contributions communities are making to this world — one that more accurately reflects reality. I believe that acts of kindness and generosity, service and leadership are the norm and should be celebrated. One posting I did was on my visit to Iceland. The Iceland scout program picked it up and posted it on their web site — skatamal.is/islenskt-skatastarf-med-augum-utlendinga/. I have to admit, it made me feel very proud.

I am so happy that I have had the opportunity to open so many young adults to the outside world. Their lives, our lives, are that much better when we meet and learn about others. The scouters I have met on these adventures are some of the finest people in the world — both the ones from the USA and from other countries. They all seem to understand what true brotherhood and friendship is.