



Friday, 18 February 2022

The 16.5 Rumours of Scouting

Psst! Did you hear about...?

And so continues another rumour. Rumours are strange creatures. They inhabit only the periphery of reality, but everyone acknowledges their existence.

Nobody knows where rumours come from and, although they're shared only with a few close personal friends sworn to absolute secrecy, nobody knows where they end up. No one likes to be thought of as a gossip monger, but everyone loves to listen to the latest rumour.

Scouting is not immune to rumours. In fact, we have more rumours than you can shake a thumb stick at. The trick is to recognize that they have only a slim basis in fact and to treat them with the disdain they richly deserve (before you pass them along).

To help you recognize Scouting scuttlebutt, I've compiled a starter set of the 16.5 most common rumours in Scouting. Of course, you won't always hear them quoted in exactly these terms: variations abound, but you'll certainly find they cover the same ideas.

1. **It'll take you only a couple of hours a week.** Its authorship has been lost in the mists of time, but this gem probably surfaced as far back as 1908 when the first Scouters were being recruited. Being a committed, dedicated Scouter (is there any other kind?) takes an average of at least seven hours, 52 minutes, and 36 seconds a week.
2. **The parents will help you.** Sure, some parents will help you, but they will be the same few people every time. Remember, however, that the amount of parental help you receive is directly proportional to the amount of parental involvement you encourage. If you don't ask, you won't get.
3. **You have to wear uniform only from the waist up.** Originally, this may have been an attempt to soften the paramilitary label often hung on Scouting. Certainly, no one can accuse a bunch of half-dressed slobes of resembling anything military. If the members of your group look like the rear guard of a peasant revolt (to quote the late John Sweet), who's setting that example? Surely not you?
4. **Your District Scouter will visit you regularly.** While you're waiting, try to accept that service visits are secondary to service team meetings where important matters are discussed. To death. Some onus is on you, the Section Scouter, to identify your needs. Don't be shy. If you need help, yell for help!



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5. **You don't have to take training if you don't want to.** Everyone knows that any adult Scouter can fool a bunch of kids, right? Who needs special training, right? What could you possibly learn? Well, with an attitude like that, probably not too much. But would you want your kids coming to your meetings with the same attitude.
6. **The community will support you.** They will support you. They'll give you their newspapers in paper drives. They'll give you their bottles in bottle drives. They'll buy your apples on Apple Day. But they won't actually come out to your meetings to help you run an exciting program.
7. **You don't have to go outdoors if you don't want to.** A fallacy based on the premise that, if God had wanted us to go outdoors during British winters, He would have given us a few more strategically placed fat cells to insulate us. Our biggest problem here is that we start indoors and look for reasons to go outdoors. Try starting all your section's activities and events outdoors. Then, examine why you have to go indoors. Go on, try it - at least for a month.