

Girl Scout Stories that Keep Me Awake

By June Nelson

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn.—United Methodist churches have played a vital role throughout the 95 year history of Girl Scouts. A not-for-profit organization, Girl Scouts relies heavily on local churches to hold troop meetings and to provide support to change girls' lives, one girl at a time.

As a leader I feel blessed to be able to make a difference in a girl's life. In today's world I never know what to expect. A few years ago we had an overnight at the church. After the girls had fallen asleep, I heard one small child screaming, "You are not my daddy—stay away from me." Another girl did not want to change into her pajamas. She told her friend that too many questions are asked if someone sees her bruises and she did not want to cause any trouble.

Year after year I see and hear the needs of girls in the troop:

- "What are we having for snack tonight, Ms. June," a girl asks. If she doesn't get

food at a Scout meeting, she goes to bed hungry.

- I receive a telephone call in which a girl cries because she was waiting for the wrath she knows will come when her parent gets home drunk.

- I learn about a boo-boo on a knee, but no mother to kiss it.
- I talk with a motherless child who fears that her father will also abandon her.

Every year I see single parents with needs

for the holidays—toys and food. With help from local churches, we are able to give them that help, but one always wonders what happens to the family the rest of the year.

These stories are only a few that still wake me up in the middle of a night thinking about how to get help for our Girl Scouts.

After many years of having the privilege of being a Girl Scout leader, I know Girl



June Nelson and Junior Girl Scout Carmon Hubbard, a fifth grader in East Ridge, Tenn.

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Scouting has a positive impact on these children.

One senior Girl Scout recently earned a badge on job interview skills. She used these skills successfully and was hired for her first job. From career exploration to financial management, the Girl Scout organization continues to grow and change, giving young women life skills while emphasizing leadership, community service and values.

The Preamble to the Girl Scout Constitution states, "We, the members of Girl Scouts of the United States of America, (are) united by a belief in God... We believe that the motivating force in Girl Scouting is a spiritual one." We believe that churches play an

important role in outreach. Without support from churches and volunteers, many of these young women would not have the skills they need in today's world.

Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence and character—who make the world a better place.

The Girl Scouts of Moccasin Bend Council is a United Way participating agency and serves 15 counties in Georgia and Tennessee with 6,577 registered girls and a total of 8,000+ members.

Adult volunteers are essential to the guidance and inspiration of girls. For more information about Girl Scouting or to volunteer, visit www.mbgsc.org or call 423-877-2688.

Nelson is the leader of a Girl Scout troop that meets in East Ridge United Methodist Church in Chattanooga.



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Boy Scouts introduce religious award for Venturing crews

Since churches charter most of the Venturing crews, the Boy Scouts have introduced a "Trust" award.

Trust is an essential aspect of our relationship with others. Learning to trust is the challenge. Today young people live in an increasingly pluralistic society made up of multiple nationalities, cultures, and religions. One way to work toward a safe future is to learn to get along and work together. Understand is a good start toward trust.

While working on the Trust award, Venturers will learn more about themselves, their communities, their religion and culture, as well as those of others. The program will promote understanding and tolerance, and participants will learn how to resolve conflicts.

Participants will:

- learn about their own religious journey, and earn the religious emblem for their faith group;
- learn about freedom of religion in the U.S. and learn about religions other than their own;
- learn about the historical significance of cultures in the U.S. and study one cultural group in detail;
- complete a community service project and learn about organizations in their communities that serve youth; and
- learn counseling skills and conflict resolution techniques.



H O N O R S

Thomas R. Poe, former president of the Greater Cleveland Boy Scout Council, thought he would just be serving as MC for a



Tom Poe (left) receives a Cross and Flame Award from Bishop John Hopkins. Photo by Matt Kittelberger

Bishop's Dinner in Middleburg Heights, Ohio. To his surprise, **Bishop John Hopkins** presented him with a Cross and Flame Award at a dinner held in Pleasant Hills UMC where Poe first became a scout in 1965. Poe is an Eagle Scout and a recipient of the God and Country Award. "The presentation was very special for me because I was Tom's Scoutmaster," said Gene Weakland, scouting coordinator for the North Coast District. "Tom has raised money and contributed generously to scouting and to the UMC."

Joseph V. Vlcek, president of UM Men at the Oxon Hill (Md.) UMC, received a Silver Beaver Award from the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America. As a teenager, Vlcek was one of



the most decorated Scouts in the nation. The Silver Beaver is the highest honor an adult scouter may receive.

Bradley Murphy, a member of Grace UMC in Spencer, Iowa, received a Good Samaritan Award for making flower shaped wood plaques to identify various plants at the Longhouse/Northshire Nursing Home. Bradley and other scouts spent 123 hours on his Eagle Scout project.

Thomas Micah Stephens, a Star Scout in a troop chartered by First UMC in Georgetown, Texas, received a Good Samaritan Award for leading a food drive for a nursing home and playing the piano during social times at the home. He also volunteered to serve during the Katrina crisis and works on Habitat for Humanity houses.



Flowers that identified plants and honored residents of a nursing home in Spencer Iowa were produced by Bradley Murphy as an Eagle Scout project.

Two mission trips set for this summer

The National Association of United Methodist Scouters and the Office of Civic Youth-Serving Agencies/Scouting Ministries of the General Commission on United Methodist Men will sponsor "The Colours of the Church Mission Adventure Series." These special mission adventures are for youth connected with Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of the USA, Camp Fire USA and 4-H.

The purpose of the trips is to provide youth with opportunities to grow in their faith and understanding of different cultures.

This summer Charlotte Barker will lead a mission trip to Alaska. Barker has an extensive background in scouting ministries particularly Girl Scouts of the USA where she has served as a volunteer for 35 years. She also has been director of the American Indian Education Foundation with the National Relief Charities. Barker is also a longtime supporter of youth ministry in the United Methodist Church. Currently residing in South Carolina, she has served the church at the local, district conference and jurisdictional levels. Charlotte has been a mission team leader leading youth to Brazil and also leading Girl Scout trips to Alaska.

During the summer Mr. Gil Hanke, president of the General Commission on UM Men, will lead a mission trip to Costa Rica. He has taken 15 "Partners in Mission" trips to Haiti, one trip to Siberia and five trips to Costa Rica. His primary focus during these trips has been to provide assistance and training for children with hearing impairments



and other disabilities that affect communication and swallowing. Gil has worked closely with the United Methodist Church and Rotary to make these trips successful. He has also served as a volunteer on a United Methodist local, district, conference, and national levels.

He has served as president of the Texas Conference United Methodist Men and is immediate past president of the National Association of Conference Presidents.

Youth interested in the trips must:

- have experience in Boy Scouting, Girl Scouting, 4-H, or Camp Fire;
- be active in their home churches and able to articulate their faith;
- have leadership ability;
- be at least 14 years old but not more than 20 years old by the onset of the trip; and
- have the permission of their parents and the recommendation of their pastor and CYSA leader or coordinator.

Adults are also needed to serve as co-leaders for several trips. Each of the mission trips will have goals and objectives. Cost of each mission adventure trip will vary, but it is estimated at \$1,500 per person. A fee of \$100 must accompany the initial application and is refundable at any time up until approval of the application. Team members are encouraged and expected to seek church support as a Volunteer in Mission.

The Colours of the Church mission application form and other information is available online at www.umscouting.org. Information is also available from Karen Heim Baugh at umscoutmission@aol.com.

Reach unchurched boys through scouting

Five years ago, Jonathon Sprott was a 7 year-old Cub Scout who did not attend any church, and he had never been baptized.

Today he is an active United Methodist Church member. He says he prays every night, reads the Bible at least three times a week, and plans to play in a Christian rock band.



At age 7, Cub Scout Jonathan Sprott participates in the God and Me program.

1, 2 and 3, is the first of four scouting awards programs sponsored by Programs of Religious Activities with Youth (PRAY).

After Jonathan completed the first study, he asked Ledgerwood to baptize him. The youngster then became an active member of the youth group. He later completed the "God and Family" program (for grades 4 and 5) at the same church.

When Jonathan was 10, his family moved to Valencia where he and his family joined Santa Clarita United Methodist Church. In that church, Jonathan completed the "God and Church" program in 2003, and "God and Life" in 2006. "It was a great way to make friends in a new neighborhood," he says.

Jonathan says he remembers visiting churches and learning about their stained

glass windows in Lancaster. "I remember learning about the Apostle Paul and how courageous he was. I loved playing the hand bells for my service project during God and Church, and how could I ever forget packing shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child for another service project. I was amazed at how many boxes there were and how generous people were to people in need."

Jonathan's pilgrimage from a scout

attending meetings in a United Methodist Church to a scout who is an active member of the denomination mirrors the experience of Bishop John L. Hopkins of the Ohio East Area. The bishop recalls being invited

to join a Boy Scout troop meeting in a Methodist Church. After a few weeks, he was invited to Sunday school classes at the church. Attending Sunday school classes led to being a member of a confirmation class. That class led to a life long commitment to Christ and the church.

Forty-three percent of United Methodist churches in the United States did not receive a member by profession of faith in 2004, and yet 25 percent of boys in scout troops housed in UM churches are unchurched.

Scout units meeting in your church may include people like Jonathan Sprott



At age 12, Jonathan Sprott has received all four God and Country Awards making him a four-star award winner."



Bishop John Hopkins tells an East Ohio Scouting Dinner that he became a Methodist because of his involvement in Boy Scouts.

or John Hopkins. Inviting them to participate in a God and Country program may be their first step to becoming life members of the United Methodist Church.

Boy Scout Sunday (Feb. 11) or Girl Scout Sunday (March 11) may be perfect times to introduce the God and Country program or to present PRAY awards. You may also want to consider presenting Good Samaritan Awards or Torch Awards.

Information about these programs and awards is available from the Office of Civic Youth-Serving Agencies/Scouting, P.O. Box 340006, Nashville, TN 37203-0006; phone: (615) 620-7262. Information about PRAY is available at <http://www.praypub.org>.

Come with me to a third grade classroom...

There is a nine-year-old kid sitting at his desk and all of a sudden, there is a puddle between his feet and the front of his pants are wet.

He thinks his heart is going to stop because he cannot possibly imagine how this has happened. It's never happened before, and he knows that when the boys find out he will never hear the end of it. When the girls find out, they'll never speak to him again as long as he lives.

The boy believes his heart is going to stop, he puts his head down and prays this prayer, "Dear God, this is an emergency! I need help now! Five minutes from now I'm dead meat."

He looks up from his prayer and here comes the teacher with a look in her eyes that says he has been discovered.

As the teacher is walking toward him, a classmate named Susie is carrying a goldfish bowl that is filled with water. Susie trips in front of the teacher and inexplicably dumps the bowl of water in the boy's lap.

The boy pretends to be angry, but all the while is saying to himself, "Thank you, Lord! Thank you, Lord!"

Now all of a sudden, instead of being the object of ridicule, the boy is the object of sympathy. The teacher rushes him downstairs and gives him gym shorts to put on while his pants dry out.

All the other children are on their hands and knees cleaning up around his desk.

The sympathy is wonderful but as life would have it, the ridicule that should have been his has been transferred to someone else - Susie.

She tries to help, but they tell her to get out. "You've done enough, you klutz!"

Finally, at the end of the day, as they are waiting for the bus, the boy walks over to Susie and whispers, "You did that on purpose, didn't you?"

Susie whispers back, "I wet my pants once too."

I hope I have a gold fish friend when I need one and I hope I can be one if someone else needs one.