

“Why do you do scouting, William?” Mr. Gunn asked me during one of my scoutmaster conferences.

“It’s pretty fun,” I replied. I wasn’t lying, but upon reflection, I have realized that there are more apt adjectives to use.

Try adventurous, like canoeing at 4 A.M. through the tranquil narrows of the Colorado river or within a lashing pole’s distance from alligators in the Atchafalaya swamps.

Try comical, like performing outrageous, last-minute skits for the rest of camp, or bringing a recorder to Camporee to serenade the evening fire with “The Rake Hornpipe”, AKA the Krusty Krab theme song from Spongebob.

Try empowering, like catching my first fish after many previous failures at Camp Whitsett, or finishing a two-night backpack up to top of Olancha peak, powering through fatigue and the desire for a non-backpacking pillow.

Try inspiring, like when my experience at a merit badge weekend for Programming, Robotics, and Game Design fueled my interest in computer science as certainly a hobby and possibly a career.

Try enlightening, like when I lived through the ups, downs, and overall complexities of leadership as an SPL for multiple outings and during my Eagle project.

Try rewarding. Try enriching. Try anything that recognizes that my time with the scouts carries far more meaning than as a mere bullet point on a college application or an alternative to playing a sport. And that it isn’t “just for fun,” as video games or afternoons at the beach are.

Try one of the most meaningful activities I could have spent my teenage years on. I promise it will fit perfectly.