His Twelve Points of the Scout Law
(Grandpa Fesses Up)

R. A. Christmas

Excerpt from “Taps for the BSA”

Mormon Church to cut all ties
with the Boy Scouts of America
at the end of 2019.
News release

Dedicated to the memory of James “Jim” Tuepker,
field-archer, Scoutmaster extraordinaire,
BSA Troop 10, Pasadena, California.

Trustworthy

Generally, with exceptions.
Buffalo Nickels skimmed when
he worked at Botts’ Ice-Cream,
small bills at Sam’s parking-lot
when he was desperate to pay
for babies that kept coming,
supplements when he was a
caregiver for a blind old lady.
An opportunistic pilferer, a

The complete poem, “Taps for the BSA,” can be found in the author’s collection Leaves of Sass.
borrower of no-return. Face it, a bit of a thief. Ouch! But he only cheated on a wife once—oops, forgot, well twice. (No wonder Baden-Powell put this first. Ouch!)

**Loyal**

Another stinger. Yes, but passively, irresponsibly. A beatnik outsider, a rebel without a cause partly raised by pinko-commie-sympathizers. Wants to overthrow everything, marched in ’67 in S.F. against the Vietnam War, but stands and sings the National Anthem. WWII history buff, files but doesn’t pay. A contrarian—thinks Bernie’s too conservative, etc. Wants to put everyone on Social Security and Medicare pay couples to marry, and pay them for having kids too. Complains, but seldom votes (he lives in Utah, folks!).

**Helpful**

Easy to be entreated (facile à supplier). Soup-kitchen volunteer, Anyone on his road
holding up a sign gets
five bucks (at least),
a Book of Mormon,
and some Grandpa
Teresa conversation.
(“Where you from,
where you going?
God bless you on your
way.”) Shows love.
Picks up hitchhikers,
gives blood, big tipper.

Friendly

Superficially, always,
but no glad-hand
Treasures old friends,
but seldom writes or calls,
(neither do they, but
such waters run deep).
He’s here for them, and
them for him, if possible—
the mystery of knowing
some so deeply he
can’t discover why
they met or why they
continue connected, the
experience too sacred to
take lightly, analyze.

Courteous

Door opener. Pro-driver.
Signals, yields right-of-way,
lets people in, Keeps
under the limit, never
tailgates. Looks both ways
checks his mirrors, no
hollow-headed lane switcher.

Kind

Unfailingly, but firm
rather than gentle.
Non-combative, simply
finds less to do with
those he can’t abide.
Forgives everything
short of murder (Do
yo thang!) “Loosey-
goosey,” his wife
would say. Sweetly,
secretly resentful
and judgmental like
his mom, but a quick
counter-puncher,
like his dad, when
pushed too far.

Obedient

Fearfully so.
Church every Sunday,
Temple every Monday,
Prayers morning
and night. A chapter
of Scripture most
mornings: Bible,
(Old T and New T)
Book of Mormon,
Doctrine & Covenants.
Full tithe-payer
(on gross) plus
$100/m for the needy.
Family history buff.
But like his friend
Gene England, Grandpa
has “moments of utter
skepticism” (How
could an embodied
God survive in a
space full of black
holes?) A Jesus freak,
but still trying to fathom
His mysterious Father,
and still more in love
with himself than his
neighbor. A religious
revolutionary, like
Joseph Smith (his 4th
cousin) and Brigham
Young. An evolutionist,
Gay-Rights Advocate
(“Same rules same
blessings for all!”) Sees
the Body of Christ as
a person—born, growing,
messing up Big Time,
learning from mistakes
(about now a teenager).
Cheerful

Seriously, because as soon as he could talk he had to find words to make his lonely anxious mom smile. (Dad worked seven days.) So Grandpa still has this habit of listening just enough to hear something he can spin into a one-liner for a laugh, or better yet, something unforgettable, amazing if possible, at least droll. And while he’s got your attention, hit a shot over his net and see if he doesn’t return it to a corner to your left while you’re running right.

Thrifty

Compulsive saver, agonized spender. 14% Scot on one side (Muir, Stewart) 14% German-Swiss Jew (Wetzler-Guggenheim) on the other. His pinched pennies
look like the ones
the kids used to
put on tracks
for trains to run
over. But married
a money-maker
spender. Loved it!
Lived on Osmond
Lane in Provo
in a 6,000 sq. ft.
French Country
chateau. Went
bankrupt twice.

Brave

Two minor tussles with
bullies in grade-school.
Boxed at Stanford until
he didn't see a left-
hook coming and came
fully “to” a couple hours
later and decided he
preferred to be able
to think. Otherwise
physically and militarily
untested. Too young or
too old or too married
with kids for any wars,
but foolhardy enough
to get hitched in Vegas
on a weekend and
make it last 12 years.
Clean

Addicted to the usual suspects until he was fifty. Went cold turkey on cigarettes and alcohol when he got married the third time. Porn was tougher. Finally forswore all images, even bathing-suits (No Images Therapy). There's scars on his plate, some flecks, leftovers for Jesus to wipe off, but Grandpa keeps it clean as he can. A poster-adult for continuing repentance.

Reverent

Shuts his mouth and parks his brain and his butt in Church most Sundays and bows his head, folds his arms like a little kid and closes his eyes as he partakes of a piece of bread and a
thimble of water in 
remembrance of the One 
who descended below 
and rose above, in order 
to redeem him and 
everyone else, in a 
world that looks like 
it created itself.

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