

## Invocation by Tim Brothers SCLS

Dear lord, we thank you for this wonderful day. We ask that you bless this flag pole and keep it upright, we ask that you bless this flag and keep it flying with dignity and honor, and more importantly we ask that you bless this country and keep it sound and on the right path. Please bless our men and women in uniform as they protect us from foreign threats and also watch over our law enforcement officers as they keep us safe from threats closer to home. Again we thank you for this beautiful day. Amen

## Introductions:

Torrance, City Council members:	Bill Southerland
	Pat Furey
Mayor Pro Tem	Susan M. Rhilinger

## Dedication Speech by Phil Cohen SCLS

Welcome to the Southern California Live Steamers on this very special day. My name is Phil Cohen, and I am the Vice President of the Southern California Live Steamers as well as the Boy Scout Liaison. We are here today to dedicate this beautiful new flag pole and flag.

This is no ordinary flag pole however. This flag pole represents the culmination of many years of hard work and community service by a very special individual. You see this flag pole, and its installation, is the final step in Scout, John Finlayson's path to earning the rank of Eagle Scout in the Boy Scouts of America.

Several months ago we were approached by John and asked if he could provide us with a flag pole for our facility, here at beautiful Wilson Park, as part of his Eagle Scout community service project. We all thought that would be a great idea and John went forth and organized the fund raising, (which by the way is still under way so please feel free to put a little something in the flag pole donation box at the depot). John organized the work crews to dig the foundation, which was no small feat. A 36 inch diameter hole 4 feet deep in hard packed adobe, oy, my back is still aching and I was only watching and pointing as the boys dug the hole!

There were other folks that helped this project move along, in particular Richard Finlayson, John's dad, who provided guidance to John as well as some interim financing, also the parents and scouts of Troop 873 that helped dig the hole, raise funds, and erect this great flag pole.

I would also like to thank some very special people, for without their help in this project, we would not be having this ceremony today. First I would like to thank our Mayor, Mr. Frank Scotto and our fantastic city council as well as the folks at Community Services, for their continuous support and backing of the Southern California Live Steamers here at Wilson Park. You gave us a home and we are doing our best to make it even better.

I would also like to thank our very good friend, the Community Services Director, Mr. John Jones. We know that there are a lot of demands made by various organizations upon the park, its facilities and resources, and to allow us to use this little piece of the park for our train facility is truly a blessing, which we all appreciate very much. John helped us get approval for the flag pole installation as well as helped us with the permitting process and even arranged for the crane to help install it. Thank you John for all of those last minute phone calls and your patience!

You see, I used to be really good at launching satellites, but launching flag poles is something I don't have a lot of expertise in, it has been quite a learning experience. That being the case, I would also like to thank Mr. Randy Stillion, of Randy Stillion Construction, a good friend, who was able to work with us and the city to get everything to come together for today. I think Randy's favorite lines are, "Phil, what have you done now!" And, "Phil you can't do that!" and "Phil, Next time call me first" actually I think those were John Jones' exact remarks as well. Do you two by chance know each other? The next flag pole will be easier I promise!

We do appreciate all of the hard work that everyone has done on this project and we are particularly happy that we are able to help another fine young man earn his Eagle Scout Award.

I am not sure if you realize this, but less than 2% of all scouts make it all the way to Eagle Scout. It takes a lot of time, commitment and hard work and dedication.

The majority of our Presidents, statesmen, astronauts and military and business leaders were all Eagle Scouts and we are all very proud of John for going all the way. I am sure he will make a fine leader as he goes forth in the world.

Now if you will please Stand we will start our flag ceremony.

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Color guard, present colors.

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Before we say the Pledge of Allegiance, I would like to read something that was written by Red Skelton way back when there were only 48 states.

In the words of Red Skelton:

On January 14, 1969, I presented "The Little Old Man" as a teacher. The time was 1923. The students had finished reciting the Pledge of Allegiance which at the time I was but 10 years old. The old sage called the children together and said--

"Boys and girls, I have been listening to you recite the Pledge of Allegiance all semester and it appears that it has become monotonous to you or could it be you do not know the meaning of those words. If I may, I would like to recite the Pledge and give to you a definition of the words.

**I**----meaning me, an individual, a committee of one.

**Pledge**----dedicate all of my worldly goods to give without self pity.

**Allegiance**----my love and my devotion.

**To the Flag**----our standard, Old Glory, a symbol of freedom. Wherever she waves, there is respect because your loyalty has given her a dignity that shouts "freedom is everybody's job".

**Of the United**----that means that we have all come together.

**States**----individual communities that have united into 48 great states. 48 individual communities with pride and dignity and purpose, all divided with imaginary boundaries, yet united to a common cause, and that's love of country.

**Of America.**

**And to the Republic**----a republic, a state in which sovereign power is invested in representatives chosen by the people to govern. And government is the people and it's from the people to the leaders, not from the leaders to the people.

**For which it stands!**

**One nation**----one nation, meaning, so blessed by God.

**Indivisible**----incapable of being divided.

**With Liberty**----which is freedom and the right of power to live one's life without threats or fear or any sort of retaliation.

**And justice**----The principle and quality of dealing fairly with others.

**For all.**----for all, which means, boys and girls, it's as much your country as it is mine."

**And now, boys and girls, let me hear you recite the Pledge of Allegiance:**

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic, for which it stands; one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Since I was a small boy, two states have been added to our nation, and two words have been added to the Pledge of Allegiance "**under God.**" Wouldn't it be a pity if someone said, "That's a prayer" and that would be eliminated from schools, too?

Red Skelton January 14, 1969

I would like to thank you all on behalf of the Southern California Live Steamers and Future Eagle Scout, John Finlayson for coming today, and sharing in this special moment. Please stay, ride the trains and have some fun. Thanks again and God bless.