

Local Realtor rappels 32-floor building for charity

by Carley Dryden

There he was. Standing on the rooftop of the 32-floor Bonaventure Hotel, his heels balancing on the edge. Manhattan Beach resident David White was about to rappel down the hotel as a fundraiser for the Los Angeles Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

It had seemed safe enough. The Canadian organization, "Over the Edge," which helps nonprofits raise pledges in exchange for the experience of going over the edge of a skyscraper, had given a safety talk. Members of the Los Angeles County Fire Department were on hand too. So up White went to the top floor of the hotel, through the penthouse suite where the hotel owners lived and out onto the rooftop.

"I'm at the top of this thing and I'm going to get to the bottom, and I don't get to use stairs or an elevator," White thought.

They were told to "just climb up there to the edge," of one of the towers of the hotel.

"No, no, stand with your heels over the edge," they told White.

"Then you realize they're not letting you back on to the building," White said.

That was the scariest moment, White said. Not quite as easy as it had been to help raise \$100,000 for the L.A. Council of Boy Scouts. White, a Realtor at South Bay Brokers, had made a presentation in the months before the event to his colleagues, asking for donations.

"I said, 'Anybody want to throw me over the edge of the Bonaventure?' A lot of people wanted to do that. A lot of people said they'd sponsor me for more if I went over without a rope," he said.

Luckily for White, he did have a rope as he stood on the rooftop. An elaborate tripod pulley system and harness kept him from plunging down to the asphalt below. The next step was leaning back, placing his trust into the pulley system and his ability to follow the directions he was given and manage the control lever in his hand.

"Sure enough, the rope held me," White said. "After that, it was, 'Walk down the side of the building. You might see some interesting sights inside.'"

He did. There was something funny going on at the 17th floor. But he doesn't discuss that. Oh, and there was the guy in the bathrobe.

White said the most amazing thing about the rappelling was the fact that the Bonaventure is a mirrored building.

"I had just an amazing view of downtown L.A. in those mirrors. And in the middle of this



Manhattan Beach resident David White rappelled down the 32-floor Bonaventure Hotel in downtown Los Angeles to raise money to allow underprivileged children to join the Boy Scouts of America.

view is me hanging there on a rope," he said.

Many would probably not go so far as White to raise money for the Boy Scouts or another charity close to their heart.

White has been involved with the organization for years, once as a Scoutmaster for his son's troop in Manhattan Beach, and now as the vice chair of finance for the L.A. district.

In Manhattan Beach and the rest of the South Bay, White said, Boy Scouts is a low-profile organization.

"People don't realize so many kids are involved in it," he said. "It's alive and well, even in a well-to-do town like Manhattan Beach."

White said many assume that Boy Scouts are predominantly in mountainous areas or the Midwest, but that's a common misconception.

"There are kids in Compton who would like to be a part of Scouts but can't afford it," he said.

The money White and the other rappellers raised will provide scholarships for kids, like those in Compton, who want to join the Boy Scouts but financially can't.

Another misconception about Boy Scouts is that it's simply a social club for boys, full of camping excursions and the attempt to earn cloth badges.

White said scouting is all about youth character building.

"We're all trying to be good parents and help our kids become independent. To be independent, you have to know how to do things. You learn a lot of those things in Scouts," he said.

It also gives many boys that may not be interested in activities like sports, music, or art a chance to make bonds with peers that last a lifetime.

In the South Bay, Boy Scout packs have grown exponentially over the years, he said.

White's Manhattan Beach Cub Scout pack started with 50 kids and has now grown to 150 kids.

"Five years in Scouts has an enormous effect on how a person will conduct themselves after," he said, adding that Scouts teach boys strong values. "If you want to influence who (the boys) hang out with, Scouts is a good vehicle for that."



David White said the mirrored walls of the Bonaventure Hotel provided the "most amazing" view of L.A. as he rappelled down the building for charity.

