

Dark. Cold. Lost. Separated forever - or so I thought. "TROOP 441!!!" we yelled. No response. "TROOP 441!!" we yelled again. Over and over as we stumbled along the trail that had been trampled by only a few adventurous souls. In a single file line with other kindred, but not related spirits, we again yelled "TROOP 441!!!" with no response. "James! Where are you??!" I thought. How could this be? My best buddy. My sole companion. Like a car without wheels, I felt I could not move any further, but, as a car needs wheels to move – the other scouts and I kept searching. The troop had split at the "Y" intersection – the proverbial "fork in the road". It was mapped, what our leadership thought, clearly. But- this lost patrol did not see it that way. They "zigged" when they should have "zagged". Nobody had seen this patrol containing my best buddy James. Fear grew amongst the kids in our group, and you could begin to see it on the faces of our scoutmasters. Scoutmaster Ron was become more and more concerned, and you could see it on his face. "TROOP 441!!!!", we yelled louder, with still no response. Fear was settling in. This was supposed to be an easy fifty-mile backpacking trip – one that earned us a merit badge, not headlines in a newspaper.

This buddy of mine and I came in the world together. May 28, 1965. We do not remember it well, but we laugh about how cool "babyland" was, and we theorize how we fought about who would enter the outside world first. "You go!", "No! You go!" is what we suspect was said on that eventful day. I ended up being first out. Pretty cool! We came into a world of two great parents. Our Dad was a young physician in Insurance Medicine in Denver, Colorado. Our Mom was beautiful even after going through the ordeal to bring us out, having been on bed rest for about six months. She was also very happy this day had come. Two sisters, TWINS, were the eldest of the siblings, and we found out we also had one older brother. "Cool!", the perfect family we thought. Happy to be through this day, we suspect, we were ready to move on to this strange new world - together.

We moved around a lot. Our family moved from Denver, Colorado to Albuquerque, New Mexico a couple of years later. Our perfect family, or so had thought it was perfect, really became perfect in

1969 when our little brother came into the world – all alone! Six kids completed the family, two sets of twins, and two singles, and I had my twin brother James by my side, forever. I thought. Growing quickly, we had the daily normal life of cereal, cartoons, naptime, and playtime, always-together James and I. Our family was blessed. Dad and Mom took great care of us kids and we had great summer vacations. The best one was our trip to Los Angeles to visit my grandma and grandpa. We piled into the Volkswagen Beetle – all six of us. Dad would sit in back with his legs spread to the front. Mom was short – so there was always room behind her. The kids just went to where it was comfortable. First stop was a Howard Johnson's hotel somewhere about half way. Mom and Dad had made the reservation and told them the Copley family needed a room – for eight. When we arrived – the hotel reader board had been changed to reflect the message “Welcome Kopley's!” It was a great message – and one for a great laugh as they spelled our last name wrong. Trips like these, with the close togetherness we shared, not always blissful and cooperative, but together, strengthened our bonds. The bonds were supposed to be for a lifetime. “TROOP 441!!!” we yelled again – still with no response.

After living in New Mexico for several years, Dad took a new job in Longview, Washington at Weyerhaeuser Industries as Corporate Medical Director. Another new house and another chance to fight over who got what bedrooms! I do not think it was ever really a fight because Mom and Dad always had that figured out. As long as James and I ended up together in the same room – it could have been a closet and I do not think I would have cared. The new house was awesome. We played outside in the smelly paper mill Longview air. We lived on a hill and the discarded moving boxes provided our first great fun – a slide in the front yard. To this day – I remember it being Olympic like, luge style racing – at least one-hundred feet long, with certain injury being the outcome of every run. In reality, it was one wardrobe box, broken open and spread out to form a slide – maybe 15 feet in length, but still. It was like our Olympic park. We had fun that summer, getting to know our new house, but then commenced what would be the first day of many years of school. Afternoon kindergarten was what we

were assigned. Mrs. Olsen, a rotund, pleasant, and very jovial spirit, was our teacher. We were in the same class (and as it turns out the last same class in any school). We loved being together, for playtime, for learning time, and for naptime. James and I starting our school journey together. "TROOP 441!!!" we yelled. I remember thinking and wondering if this was the best way to reconnect to our lost patrol? "When do we call in other people?" I thought. "TROOP 441!!!", no response.

Kindergarten became first grade. First grade became second. Now not in the same class, I remember the biggest trouble I got into in my school life so far was when I went to James' class swim lessons even though I knew it was not to be done. I knew I should not have gone that day, but I did not care. I wanted to be with my twin brother. The wrath of a second grade Mrs. McIver seem very contrary to her outside appearance. Youthful with knee-high leather boots and short mini-dress, it was classic 1970's attire, who knew somebody so beautiful could get so mad? Mom came to pick me up after being "detained and arrested" that day. I think she understood why and my motivation. She always knew her kids well. She knew we just wanted to be together, and she was always a big advocate of that, but would not be allowed with 1970's educational theories saying, "break the twins up!" We hated it.

Third grade was in a new city, Grand Junction, Colorado, where Dad moved us to so he could open a new emergency/ trauma room at St. John's Hospital. We only stayed in this town nine months, and the best memory of this town was saving the Peanut M&M's I would get in my speech therapy class. You see, I slurred my "R's" so I had to go to speech therapy. Talking like Elmer Fudd was not something I wanted for my whole life, and it was determined to be important for me. I learned the "wright" way to talk, and was rewarded like Pavlov's dog every time I did, rewarded with Peanut M&M's. Thing is – I did not like them. Therefore, I saved them for James. Even though the reward was not for me – being that I saved them for James, and it made him happy, was great enough reward for me. Twins. We get it. The fear was it was going to get dark soon. Still the patrol was lost. We had been walking for what seemed

like days now. Scouring the dense forested woods for the missing patrol, and for the best friend I had. "TROOP 441!!!" No response, fear was growing.

After Grand Junction, we moved to Spokane, Washington, where Dad took a job with Holy Family Hospital, also growing their emergency medicine department by building a new facility. We moved here in the summer of 1974, the summer of The World's fair. Not able to find a rental while our house was being built, we lived fifty miles north of Spokane outside of Usk. It was a remote cabin along a gently flowing stream. Dad worked in Spokane. We played. Mom Supervised. All six of us. Watching us closely, but not closely enough. The busy six of us decided to dam the creek right at the base of the cabin. Seemed like a great idea for us as it created a nice pool of cold runoff water right outside the cabin door. This was not just twin power, it was double twin power and two single combined. The first torrential rain told us that this was probably not a good idea. It was 3am in the morning when Dad came running into our rooms in the cabin. Water was beginning to creep into the cabin, and it became abundantly clear that our damming of the little creek worked impressively well. "Tear it down" he said. "You've created a big problem for this house!" Raining and still growing in size, our little pool of water was becoming a potentially serious problem for our remote cabin. Begrudgingly, we forged into the creek, all for one one and one for all, and tore down our dam. Instant relief for our cabin. Bye Bye Lake Copley - it was gone. Despite this setback, our adventurous spirits were not to be dismayed. Dad joined in as we formed the **Mountain Goat Climbing Club**. All six of us kids and Dad. Me and James, still together forging life with the best brothers and sisters and Mom and Dad I could have been given. "TROOP 441!!" we yelled. No response. Our twelve years together has brought us to this point. "How could I go through life without the other half of me?" I wondered "How could I go home without James?"

From Spokane, Washington, we moved to Phoenix/Scottsdale, Arizona. We were super excited to move. I remember my Dad giving us percentage chances that we were moving. I wanted to move.

James wanted to move. Older brother David did **NOT**. I think to this day – he has had to overlook our excitement to move from ideal climate Spokane (at least in my eyes now), to blistering hot Arizona. He hated the idea, we loved it. Finally the day came, eerily close to me deciding that what it would take is me learning and playing “By the time I get to Phoenix” for my Mom and Dad on my trombone. 100%. We were moving. Into the fiery oven of Phoenix we moved. Great time for James and I. Exploring downtown Scottsdale, buying cap guns with the red tape containing dots of explosive powder. Setting them off as fast as we could, and then buying more. Joining Boy Scout Troop 441. It was our first Boy Scout experience coming right after our Cub Scout and Webelos adventures in Spokane. Seventh grade was not fun for James and I socially. We were awkward. Striped shirts and checkered pants were not the uniform of those day’s kids, but it is what we wore. We did not really care because we had each other. We were the only friends we needed, but we managed to make a few. We had each other always.

Preparations for the fifty-mile hike were daunting. We bought (or Mom and Dad bought) new tents, sleeping bags, and big backpacks. We practiced hiking. We studied maps. Fifty miles across the Colorado continental divide seems ominous, but we had great leadership we trusted. We packed enough food, and we were ready to go. We left. Hiking in the mountains was breath taking. James and I together, in the woods, hiking where nary a man had gone before. Day 2 was the day James joined the other patrol. Not sure why, but maybe they needed somebody strong and confident? That is what I imagine why they wanted him on their patrol. The Day 2 hike was perilous. Up the winding trail. “Make sure above all else you stay on this trail!” said our scoutmaster. Heading out, James’ patrol went up the trail first. Our patrol lagged behind. When we joined up with the lead patrol midway through the day’s hike, it became obvious to everybody that the second patrol (James’) had never arrived. “TROOP 441!!!” we yelled exhaustingly. “TROOP 441!!!” with our best efforts at waking up the trees in the forest. “TROOP 441!!!”

“TROOP 441!!!” was the response we got back. WHAT! Had we heard what we thought we heard? “TROOP 441!!!” we yelled. “TROOP 441!!!” we heard back. The lost patrol had been found! James had been found! All I really cared about. James had been found. My world was complete again. My buddy was back. Rounding the corner, our search patrol came face to face with the lost patrol. There was James. I hugged him probably harder and longer than I ever had before. We cried. We hugged. Never again. Never again would James and I be separated with fear of losing one another. He was found. I was happy and relieved. He was too. Twins – together again. The remainder of the hike in those mountains was uneventful and happily so. We returned home together, in one piece, together. Right where we have to be. This moment defined our lives.

Fifty-three years now. Fifty-three years of iron clad friendship. Fifty-three years of being there for one another. I cannot imagine what life would be like for a person that does not have a twin. A lifelong companion. A lifelong friend. From adventurous single life through productive married lives, to successfully raising kids we refer to as “twisters” and “twothers” (twin brothers and sisters). Technically half siblings that even look alike. To aged married couples that are dealing with our nest becoming empty, to thoughts of wrapping up our careers and retirement – we are together. We talk daily. We think of each other often. He is listed first in my phone – much to my wife’s dismay! My twin brother James Copley and I. Our “we” lives have defined our “I” lives. We are together always, even if apart. Twins, Brothers, Friends, Confidants, Loyal Companions, Buds. **Wonder Twin Powers – Activate!**