Outdoor adventure is a big part of our Scout Programs. As such, there are several mountains popular with hikers which hold a special place in our hearts. One of them is Mt. Baden-Powell, named after one of the founders of the Scout Movement, and located near our headquarters in southern California.

Another is Mont Ventoux. Mont Ventoux is a mountain in the Vaucluse region of France. It is a popular choice for the Tour de France route. But Mont Ventoux is particularly special because the first recorded person to climb the mountain was Petrarch, also known as the father of Humanism.

Humanism is an ethical philosophy which centers on humans, and their needs, hopes, values, interests, dignity, and freedom. Humanists are interested in what makes people human and are often those who volunteer for the betterment of mankind.

Petrarch is also the father of alpinism. He climbed the mountain because it was there, just for the fun of it, building interest in mountain climbing and in the Alps. Climbing a mountain for fun was not something people did before Petrarch's climb. Below is a quote.

"My only motive was the wish to see what so great an elevation had to offer." –Petrarch

Petrarch was also a poet and is thought to have created the sonnet – a form of poetry which would grow in popularity and by Shakespeare's time, be accepted as the most popular form of poetry.

A chapel stands on the mountain in his honor. We have named an award, the Petrarch Award, in honor of this intrepid explorer. The award goes to Scouts who have combined high adventure, a spiritual approach to life, and ethics in their lives. Those who receive the award will have chosen and completed a certain number of high adventure challenges, earned the Religious Recognition or Ethics Recognition Award, and must have chosen and completed a certain number of community service challenges.

Outdoor adventure and a spiritual approach to life awaits those who earn the Petrarch Award.