



Troop 251 Hooter Gazette

Larimer, PA

May, 2010



Hiking the Gorge Trail at Cedar Creek



On May 8th, Mr. Chenot introduced us to one of his favorite hikes, the Gorge Trail at Cedar Creek Park in Rostraver Twp. Cedar Creek is a quiet, well-maintained recreation area situated along the Youghiogheny River and the Great Allegheny Passage bike trail.

The Gorge Trail is a short, easy hike, maybe 1.5 miles round trip, with a smooth loop trail that follows along the creek as it flows through the gorge. The second of two suspension bridges that cross the creek on the way in marks the end of the loop. The return route takes the hiker up onto a hill overlooking the creek.

Continuing beyond the second bridge, the trail gets a little more challenging as it follows along the creek to a point where a large fallen tree has created an opportunity to test your balance as you cross the creek yet again. It took our group of nine Scouts and six hiking-addicted leaders and parents about 20 minutes to negotiate the crossing. Some walked the tree, some crawled, while others rock-hopped through the water. Troop Guide **Adam** did his good turn for the day, ensuring dry passage for a number of tree-walkers.



Fish-'n-Tenderfoot-Fun Camp

The word "tenderfoot" is an American invention, coined in the ranches of the West. It was used to describe an inexperienced worker, the "new guy" among the ranch hands.

We know the word Tenderfoot as the name of the first of the achieved ranks in Boy Scouting. It's a fitting name, as the new Scout is taking his first steps on *the trail to Eagle*, and has much learning to do. The troop's annual Fish-'n-Fun camp is designed to help the new Scouts to achieve that first important rank advancement by learning the basics.

This year's outing took 15 Scouts and 6 Leaders back to Mammoth Park for a weekend of fun, fishing, games, and Scout skills. Zombies, Release, the Thicket Game, and football were the games of choice this year. The fishing was less than spectacular, with **Sol** and **Austin P.** catching 6 and 5 bluegill, respectively. Of course, the giant slide also saw its share of use.

Thanks to Messrs. Astley, Chenot, Flaherty, Gilham, Langford, and Peschock, for sharing their knowledge with our new Scouts!.

New Canopies

New Lettering

New Spare!



Troop 251 Heads for the Hills!

The weekend of May 21st-23rd saw not one, but two, backpacking outings into the Laurel Highlands as our growing troop divided and conquered!

NoName Patrol at Laurel Hill

The younger guys in the troop, the NoName Patrol, went into the Laurel Hill State Park for a 7.5-mile backpacking adventure on May 22nd. For some, this was their first real backpacking experience on a mountain trail.

The Patrol met after a regular troop meeting to plan their hike, selecting a loop beginning with the Pump House Trail to the Jones Mill Run Dam, a smooth trail with a 100-ft elevation gain. The return was to take them via the Ridge Trail, a grassy path known for its abundance of wild-life, to a part of the Water Line Trail.

But after walking the Ridge Trail, the patrol was dismayed to find that the Water Line Trail appeared to have *disappeared*. A quick re-route took them back to the Pump House Trail via the Tram Road Trail.

Despite the rain that dogged them most of the day, the patrol was in good spirits, and ready for more. After a short break they went over to the Hemlock Trail and hiked all the way to Camp Conestoga. From there, the patrol hiked back to the Hemlock Trail Nature Area where they saw the oldest Hemlock in Pennsylvania. Back at the road, the fishing gear came out and the patrol spent a few leisurely minutes fishing in the stream before ending the day's adventure.

Mr. Peschock and Mr. Chenot led the patrol.

Photos by Mrs. Peschock and Mr. McCormley



Laurel Ridge Backpacking Trek

The older boys set out on a 17-mile, 3-day trek that began at the Rt. 271 trailhead of the Laurel Ridge Trail, and ended at Beam Rock in Forbes State Forest, 17 rainy miles later.

The first night was spent at the Rt. 271 shelter, at mile marker 57, where the guys got to try out the troop's new ultralight backpacking stoves. The next morning, the guys hit the trail for a 10-mile hike to their next stop, the Rt. 30 shelter.

The yellow-blazed trail quickly became known to the patrol as the Yellow Brick Road. As they followed it, they met and were accompanied in their journey by a patrol from another troop. That patrol, from the Greater Pittsburgh Council, had planned the same itinerary as our patrol.

The last 5 miles, the patrol encountered huge rock formations, and a dense growth of broad-leaf plants that towered overhead. The guys report that it was like going from a Pennsylvania forest to the Amazon, and then to a swamp.

Mr. Astley handled the logistics and made sure that everyone was well prepared, while Mr. Flaherty and Mr. Gillham led the trek. Mr. and Mrs. Bratkowski and Mr. Fuller drove the chase cars to transport the trekkers back to their vehicles at the end of their hike.

Photos by Mr. Gillham



Troop 251 SPL Lauded

Scouting is all about personal achievement. Sometimes that achievement happens outside of the troop, "in real life," so to speak.

The SPL of Troop 251, **Solomon**, was recently honored with a distinguished award for having achieved the highest grade point average for a male student over the past three years at West Hempfield Middle School!

The next time you run into Sol, be sure to offer your congratulations. Someday, we'll all be able to say, "I knew him when ..."

Everything Old is New Again

Somewhere out there is a real fan of the *Hooter Gazette* who has read every back issue published since July, 2008. We're about to make that person very happy. The "Past Issues" page now has links to every issue of the *Hooter* known to exist, beginning with the February, 2003, issue — sixteen new "old" issues in all. And to make it easier to find what you're looking for, we've created a subject index covering every one of them up to the present day.

The older, printed editions weren't afraid to show names, faces, birthdays, and the like. In order to make them safe for the web in 2010, they had to be redacted to hide all of that. A couple of them came out looking like editorial Swiss cheese, but still make for enjoyable reading.

If you know of any issues that are not in our collection, or have any troop publications from years gone by, please contact your editor at hooter@t251.org.

How Well Do You Know Camp Conestoga?



Last month, an item was "removed" from a photo of the front of the Dining Hall. What was it?

If you guessed the horn normally found at the peak, you were right!

Chairman's Corner

You may have noticed that we've been investing a bit of money lately in gear: backpacks, ultralight stoves, canopies, spare tire for the trailer, all bought within the past couple of months. This is where the troop portion of the fundraising profits go ... all in the name of providing a quality Scouting experience for our Scouts.

Hats off this month to our Leaders, who have given generously of their time to put together a great month of Scouting! I did a quick count, and the numbers are astounding. If we only count the days spent in attendance at a planned activity, and if we don't play around with counting hours, i.e., an activity = a day ... then 10 registered Leaders (Scoutmasters and Committee) contributed 29 days to our Scouting program this month. And that doesn't count meetings, logistics, shopping for gear, etc.. It also doesn't count the parents who showed up to help at various activities this month! Thanks, everyone!

- Chuck Fuller, Committee Chair, Troop 251 BSA

Write for the *Hooter*!

Your editor cannot be everywhere that the troop goes. Please send reports of events and activities to hooter@t251.org. Not only will it help to keep everyone informed, it's also a good opportunity to develop your writing skills! Articles from Scouts, Scouters, and parents are all welcome!

The *Hooter Gazette* is the newsletter of Boy Scout Troop 251, Larimer, PA, USA. Views and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of Troop 251, the Boy Scouts of America, or of our Chartered Organization, St. John's United Church of Christ. Questions or comments should be sent to the editor: hooter@t251.org. **More information regarding Troop 251 is available at the troop web site: <http://t251.org>.** All articles and photos are © 2009 Troop 251 BSA except where noted.