



# Troop 251 Hooter Gazette



Larimer, PA

March, 2012

## THE BOY-LED ISSUE

We hear a lot of talk about Troop 251 being a “boy-led troop.” But what, exactly, does that mean? In this special issue of the *Hooter Gazette*, we’ll take a look at what a “boy-led troop” is, the progress that we’ve made towards our goal, and the work yet to be done. Let’s start with a quote repeatedly attributed on the web to Lord Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell ...

“Scouting is a game for boys under the leadership of boys under the direction of a man.”

Quite a sentence, that. Using only seventeen simple words, and no punctuation other than the period, B-P captures the very essence of the Boy Scout program. The games of a boy’s youth are always more fun when the parents get out of the way and let the games take their own course. You’ll no doubt recognize the fallacy therein, that games cannot choose a course. They are, instead, guided in their evolution by the dominant players, or, dare I say, the boy leaders. These boys, these game-changers, wield no magic that makes other boys follow them. What they bring to the field are skills and lessons learned from others, that they practice during the course of the game.

And so it is with scouting. The troop ‘plays’ the ‘game’ of scouting, led by the older boys who have learned from boys who were older than them. Tribal knowledge passes from boy to boy, older to younger, by formal means and through casual observation. But where does tribal knowledge begin?

In today’s troops, a number of men and women, wearing the badge of the Scoutmaster or Assistant Scoutmaster, offer guidance on playing the game of scouting. It may be something as simple as pointing out an untied shoelace, or as complex as coaching the boy in the logistics of a backpacking trek. Like the parents on the sidelines of the boys’ childhood games, the Scoutmaster must teach when teaching is appropriate, and then get out of the way and let the game evolve. The boy leaders must set the direction.



### New Patrol



**PANTHERS**

PL— Dylan  
APL— Max  
Scribe—Jake M.



### New Patrol



**CYCLONES**

PL— Jake S.  
APL— David  
Scribe—Chris

“The object of the patrol method is not so much saving the Scoutmaster trouble as to give responsibility to the boy.”

“*Step aside! I’ll do it myself!*” You’ve probably said that once or twice in your life, or at least have been tempted. It can be very frustrating watching someone do something for the first, or second, or third time, knowing full well that you could do it in a fraction of the time and get a better result. But who will do it when you’re not there to “help”?

What if, instead, you took the time to teach someone how to do something, and to do it well? The next time it needed to be done, there would be two of you capable of doing it. Now, consider the troop, wherein the older boys teach the younger boys what they need to know at their level. As the younger boys mature, they become the teachers, and still-younger boys their students. This is the essence of the patrol method: to teach the boys to do the things that need to be done. As Baden-Powell so eloquently put it, *to give responsibility to the boy.*

Carefully chosen, age-appropriate responsibilities encourage growth. As each challenge is conquered, the boy gains confidence in his own abilities and in his ability to teach others.

Just as the older boys teach the younger ones, the Scoutmasters must teach the older boys. To do that properly, the Scoutmaster must recognize the scout’s readiness to learn the task, and present the lesson in a way that is both meaningful and — this is important — fun.

| Troop elections were held at the regular meeting on March 8th. |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| <i>Position of Responsibility</i>                              | <i>Elected Scout(s)</i> |
| <b>Senior Patrol Leader (SPL)</b>                              | Austin P.               |
| <b>Assistant Senior Patrol Leaders (ASPL)</b>                  | Mitch                   |
|  | Justin                  |
|  | Andy                    |
| <b>Troop Guide</b>   | Jacob F.                |
| <b>Instructor</b>  | Austin G.               |
| <b>OA Troop Rep</b>  | Kevin B.                |
| <b>Quartermaster</b>   | Bradley                 |
| <b>Scribe</b>  | Zane                    |
| <b>Librarian</b>   | Kevin L.                |
| <b>Historian</b>   | Christian               |
| <b>Chaplain</b>  | Brandon                 |
| <b>Custodian</b>   | Ben                     |

**Scoutmaster’s Minute ...**

**Are we having fun?**

This month I attended the Outdoor Leader Training with 35 other adult leaders at Camp Tenacharison.

While there are things that were taught that each of us probably knew and things that were taught that each of us learned – it was actually good to revisit some skills and learn some others.

And then there were the discussions with adult leaders from other area troops about outings and adventures their troops have taken in the last several years. Not to mention exchanging information about how other troops do things within their troops.

It is really amazing how much can be learned by listening. This actually became really clear to me during a conversation that I had during the training, as I was reminded that scouting is supposed to be fun for the scouts and the leaders — while stressing scout skills, responsibilities, and leadership. But like with other areas of life there needs to be balance. The balance is what keeps everything working smoothly. The scouts need to enjoy and have fun participating in the skills, and taking on their leadership responsibilities. And while doing skill reinforcement activities at meetings can be fun, occasionally the scouts need to be able to participate in a short game of dodge ball at the end of a meeting. After all, scouting is a great adventure, the skills, leadership, and responsibility is a great learning experience – but it is the fun that keeps them coming back week after week.

So, are we having fun?

- Mr. Michael Peschock, Scoutmaster

“An invaluable step in character training is to put responsibility on the individual.”

American culture celebrates true leadership. The willingness and ability to make the informed decision, to set the direction, and to confidently take the first step into unfamiliar territory is the stuff of legend. Our country's history is filled with stories of the Colonists, who left their homes behind to establish new lives on our eastern shores, and of the pioneers who pushed westward to open new lands. These were decisions with life-changing consequences. But at their core, were those decisions really that much different from deciding which trail to take to find the perfect campsite? The men who made those decisions knew their current situation, and they knew that staying was not an option. They had to press on.

Parallels can be drawn to the scout troop on a backpacking trek, finding themselves in a location that would not make for safe camping. The topo map shows what looks to be the perfect site, two miles distant. The sun is only an hour above the horizon. The leader needs to decide, quickly, whether to follow the ridge or to go down through the valley and up the other side. One route is longer, one more arduous.

Obviously, this is a decision best left to an experienced leader. Certainly, more trail experience would be of inestimable value in this scenario. More valuable still is the confidence gained from successful past decisions. The goal of the patrol method, and that of the boy-led troop, is to build leaders by fostering success at increasing levels of responsibility. As the scout matures, the challenges presented become more complex, until the boy who, at first, found it difficult to decide where to pitch his tent in camp, is capable of leading his patrol to the perfect campsite through unfamiliar territory.

## A Great Day for a Hike!

Article by Mr. Chenot

Photos by Troop 251 scouts

Every once in a while Mother Nature gets the best of everyone, even Boy Scouts! Sunday, March 11, which had seemed like a perfect day for a late-winter ski trip, turned out to be a day with temperatures over 70° and virtually no snow in the mountains. Fortunately, a bad day for a ski trip is a great day for a hike. Eleven scouts and three leaders traded their skis and poles for hiking shoes and backpacks and took on the Extended Log Cabin Loop at Boyce Park, a three-mile hike through some of the less-developed areas of the park.



Veteran scouts **Justin** and **Kevin B.** led the first leg of the hike with GPS device, map, and compass. Justin and Kevin kept the group on the right route and even led the hikers on a side trail to find a Geocache known as “Carpenter House.” On the way to the cache the hikers discovered that it's sometimes easier to walk fifty feet out of your way on a roundabout trail than it is to take the straight-line route through thorny undergrowth. Despite (literally) hitting a few snags, though, the scouts made it to the location of the cache, and **Jake S.** discovered the cache's hiding place. Several scouts traded items they had brought for items in the cache.



At the highest point of the hike, near the Boyce Park soccer fields, another Geocache, known as “Just Kikkin around,” was waiting to be found. While looking for this cache, the hikers discovered that GPS devices can sometimes get a little confused about your direction of travel. After about ten minutes of wandering, though, the scouts zeroed in on the location of the cache, and **Andy** found it in its above-ground hiding place.

On the return leg of the hike, **Austin P.** and **Timmy** took over the navigational duties, retracing the original route, and with an assist from **Justin**, found a nice off-trail shortcut that made for a quick return trip.

**Bradley, Brandon, Ben, Dylan, and Derek** also attended the hike, while **Mr. Peschock, Mr. Evan,** and **Mr. Chenot** did their best to keep up.

Now that we've examined three quotes attributed to Baden-Powell regarding the concept of the "boy-led troop", let's take a look at Troop 251 — how our leaders interpret the concept, how it's being implemented, and where we are in the process.

## Is Troop 251 Boy-Led?

Article by Mr. Peschock, Scoutmaster

While we would all like to think that we are boy-led, the truth is we are not quite there yet. We are however heading in the right direction and the plan is to be able to say that Troop 251 is boy-led within the next year.

Troop 251 has its patrols, and separate patrol meetings during our regular troop meetings. The main focus of patrol meetings right now deals with discussions for meeting and outing ideas. Soon patrols will be asked to assist with some of the troop meetings and outings, and these will be discussed at their patrol meetings.

Once a month the Patrol Leaders Council (PLC) meets. Right now they are planning upcoming troop meetings. The next step for the PLC meetings will be for them to get more involved with the planning for up-coming outings. And moving on to the next step of the troop meeting planning which will include assigning patrols to specific portions of the troop meetings and making sure they have scouts or adults prepared to handle the teaching of scout skills for each week's troop meetings. They will become more involved with

planning of up-coming troop outings, and assigning a smaller committee of scouts to handle the actual planning for the outings with the assistance of an adult advisor for the outing. There will be some documents put together to assist the scouts in planning and making sure that a checklist is available for the planning of events, outings, and meetings. This will keep the scouts focused on the task of planning and allow us to always follow the *Guide to Safe Scouting* with our activities.

During the next several months our scouts will continue to learn scout and leadership skills. Some of these skills will insure our scouts know how to run their meetings and outings.

As they enter the next phase the troop meetings will begin a more hands-on approach for our scouts and patrols will get to be more involved with some of the scout skills, as always we will still have assistant scoutmasters and other adults present to assist when and where necessary, but we all have to remember that in order for the boys to lead we have to give them the opportunity to lead in all phases of our troop.

### A Good Turn ... and Another ...

At the Westmoreland Fayette Council's annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner on 3/22, Troop 251 was recognized with a gold level award for community service projects performed last year.



kennels, clearing a couple of drainage pipes, and pouring a 4'x5' concrete pad — a first-time activity for most of the boys. In the picture at left, Messrs. Peschock and Gillham give the boys some tips on floating.

'A Good Turn' is a big part of Scouting, and we haven't always done as much as we should. But we're off to a great start this year. On 3/31, six scouts were at Pet Friends' new shelter, placing stone around the

The next day, a number of boys and their parents gave a few more hours' assistance to Pet Friends, helping out at their Rabies Clinic at the Hartford Heights Fire Hall. The boys carried water to the waiting animals, along with other duties.

### Celebrating Achievement

Our month began on March 4<sup>th</sup> with the Winter Court of Honor. It was a special evening for the troop, as we welcomed our new Scouts and celebrated the achievements of the past three months.



The program, developed by the Patrol Leaders, reflected in its flawless execution the sincerity of the scouts in their preparation for the event. Following the presentation of advancements, the parents and visitors were invited to join the scouts in a delicious pot-luck meal featuring some of our families' favorite dishes.

### Whatzit?!



This gelatinous mass was found in a puddle of water at Camp Tenacharison. *Whatzit?!* The answer can be found in next month's *Hooter*.

### Troop 251 Invades Camp Tenacharison!

For the boys who bridged in February, a one-nighter at Camp Tenacharison on March 17<sup>th</sup> was their first official Boy Scout camping experience. **Austin P., Justin, Brandon, Ben Jon, Matt, Tim, Skylar, Jake S., Nick H., Chris, Christian,** and **Jake M.** and three leaders enjoyed the unusually warm winter weather as they made camp near the parade grounds.

lights affixed and flashlights in hand, Mr. Peschock, Mr. Hornicak, and the guys set off to explore the areas adjacent to their campsite.



**Justin** and **Austin P.** set up the axe yard and went about the work of splitting wood for the fire. They also took the opportunity to teach the new guys the rules of the yard. Then it was a lesson in fire-building skills, with the younger boys practicing and earning their Fireman's chits. The boys kept the adult leaders very busy signing off on other requirements into the evening. At the end of the day three scouts requested Scoutmaster Conferences at the next troop meeting.

Even though it was dark, the boys managed to find — and photograph — a number of interesting things along the way. So many, in fact, that it gave Mr. Hornicak an idea for a *Hooter* article! Check out the first of what will hopefully become a regular feature, *Whatzit?!*, at the top of this page.



Photos by scouts

Rather than hit the sack right away, the troop decided to take a short night-time hike. With head-

|                                   |  |                            |                         |                     |                     |               |               |                    |                              |                                   |                     |                     |
|-----------------------------------|--|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
|                                   |  |                            |                         |                     |                     |               |               |                    |                              |                                   |                     |                     |
| <b>Upcoming Events</b>            | <p><b>3/31</b> — Service Proj (Pet Friends)<br/> <b>4/1</b> — Service Proj (rabies clinic)<br/> <b>4/13-15</b> — OA Weekend<br/> <b>4/14</b> — Service Proj (tire round-up)<br/> <b>4/14</b> — Hike: Dead Mans Hollow<br/> <b>4/20</b> — Swim Test<br/> <b>4/21</b> — Scouting for Food<br/> <b>4/28</b> — Scouting for Food collection<br/> <b>5/4-6</b> — Fish-'n-Fun Camp<br/> <b>5/13</b> — Shooting Sports<br/> <b>5/18-20</b> — Spring Camporee<br/> <b>5/31</b> — Spring Court of Honor<br/> <b>6/2</b> — Fishing<br/> <b>6/24-30</b> — Summer Camp<br/> <b>8/19</b> — Summer Court of Honor</p>  |                            |                         |                     |                     |               |               |                    |                              |                                   |                     |                     |
|                                   | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>“Every boy deserves a trained leader.”</b></p> <p>Mr. Peschock and Mr. Fuller would like to extend our most sincere appreciation to those leaders who took time out of their lives this month to attend the <i>Scoutmaster Specific</i> and <i>Outdoor Leader</i> training sessions at Camp Tenacharison, as well as to all of the other leaders who completed online courses.</p> <p>To be considered ‘Trained’ this year, you will need to have completed the following:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Scoutmasters</u></b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Committee</u></b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>1. Youth Protection</td> <td>1. Youth Protection</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Fast Start</td> <td>2. Fast Start</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Leader Specific</td> <td>3. Troop Committee Challenge</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4. Intro to Outdoor Leader Skills</td> <td>4. This is Scouting</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5. This is Scouting</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> | <b><u>Scoutmasters</u></b> | <b><u>Committee</u></b> | 1. Youth Protection | 1. Youth Protection | 2. Fast Start | 2. Fast Start | 3. Leader Specific | 3. Troop Committee Challenge | 4. Intro to Outdoor Leader Skills | 4. This is Scouting | 5. This is Scouting |
| <b><u>Scoutmasters</u></b>        | <b><u>Committee</u></b>  |                            |                         |                     |                     |               |               |                    |                              |                                   |                     |                     |
| 1. Youth Protection               | 1. Youth Protection  |                            |                         |                     |                     |               |               |                    |                              |                                   |                     |                     |
| 2. Fast Start                     | 2. Fast Start  |                            |                         |                     |                     |               |               |                    |                              |                                   |                     |                     |
| 3. Leader Specific                | 3. Troop Committee Challenge   |                            |                         |                     |                     |               |               |                    |                              |                                   |                     |                     |
| 4. Intro to Outdoor Leader Skills | 4. This is Scouting  |                            |                         |                     |                     |               |               |                    |                              |                                   |                     |                     |
| 5. This is Scouting               |  |                            |                         |                     |                     |               |               |                    |                              |                                   |                     |                     |

### Chairman’s Corner

The four quotes used in this edition can be found on a number of websites, and are always attributed without question to Lord Baden-Powell. As with anything found on the web, the truth may be entirely different.

The trick in managing a boy-led troop is in being able to recognize, in any given situation, whether or not the boy is ready to lead. I am proud to say that our Scoutmasters have demonstrated an ability to gauge that readiness, and a willingness to support the boys who take on challenges that stretch their abilities a little. I am confident that our adult leaders will do their best at every opportunity to fulfill the promise of developing leaders among the boys in our charge.

Kudos and thanks go out this month to our Scoutmasters for their untiring efforts in our outdoor activities, and to the Scoutmasters, Committee members, siblings, and parents who stepped up to help with this month’s community service projects. From all indications, this is going to be a very busy year for the scouts — and for the scouters and parents — of Troop 251 ... as it should be.

- 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](mailto: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](mailto:hooter@t251.org). **More information regarding Troop 251 is available at the troop web site: <http://t251.org>.** All articles, photos, and images are © 2012 Troop 251 BSA except where noted. All rights reserved.