



Troop 251 Hooter Gazette

Larimer, PA

August, 2012



What do you like to do on the weekend? Go horseback riding? Canoeing? How about hiking? Geocaching? Climbing? It was all available to those who spent the weekend of 8/24 with the troop.

Oh, it began simply enough. The boys planned a weekend camp in Cook Forest State Park, and a canoe trip on the Clarion River. When we realized how many horse stables there are around the park, we added a second activity, one that Troop 251 had not done for as long as any of us could remember.

Arriving late on Friday evening, we set up camp in the dark, surrounded by tall hemlocks that we wouldn't see until morning. A campfire quickly made everyone feel right at home, however, and the mountain pie irons were the next thing to be retrieved from the trailer.

The night was cool, and the morning warm enough for shorts and t-shirts. The troop awakened around 7:00 AM, and enjoyed a hearty breakfast of scrambled eggs and bacon prepared by **Mike**, with assistance from **Derek** and **Jon**.

Nine scouts then donned their river gear and headed to the outfitters. **Mitch, Tim, Derek, Austin P., Andy, Vance, Zane, Brandon, and Ben** never suspected, as they piled into the shuttle van, that their 10-mile canoe trip would turn into a 7-hour endurance test.

There ought to be a law to the effect that, in order

to be called a "river", an area must have a reasonable amount of water flowing over it. The Clarion was running fairly shallow that day, and our rented aluminum canoes drafted a little too deep. The lighter the occupants of the canoe, the more likely that the craft would slip over the rocks. The

more weight, the greater the probability of a 10-mile hike over slimy round river rock while dragging a canoe. The scenery from the river more than made up for it.

Meanwhile, in another part of the park, scouts **Mike, Skyler, Jon, Bradley, and George** saddled up for the first Troop 251 horseback ride in recorded history. The wooded trail, lined on both sides with a thick

growth of ferns, and familiar to the horses, offered a variety of forest views to their riders.

After the ride, the scouts took a short walk to a scenic overlook where they were treated to the sight of Native American petroglyphs on some of the lower rock faces. Rounding out their day, they did a little geocaching, and climbed the stairs of an old fire tower.

The adventures of the day behind them, the boys gathered around the campfire for a foil-pack dinner, followed by an extended game of Zombies played deep in the woods, and even deeper into the night.

Postscript: For some reason, this trip was disastrous to electronic gear. The troop camera went into the drink, and the SD card was subsequently lost. At least two phones and two cameras were also rendered unusable for various reasons.

Hemlocks and Horses



Photo by Mrs. Fuller

Summer Court of Honor



Over 100 Merit Badges were handed out at our Summer Court of Honor held on 8/19 at Oak Hollow Park. This is the largest batch of badges that anyone can remember our scouts earning in one three-month period.

Many of the badges were earned at Summer Camp, but a lot of them were earned the old-fashioned way: through individual work. Kudos to all of our scouts who earned badges and advancement this month!



Troop 251 Collects Food at Steelers Training Camp

The need for food collection doesn't end with our *Scouting for Food* effort in April. It's an ongoing battle to ensure that the area's less fortunate have access to proper nutrition. The Westmoreland County Food Bank fights that battle every day.

Troop 251 is proud to have helped the Steelers to help the Food Bank, by collecting food donations at the Steelers Training Camp on August 3rd. **Nick D., Jon, Ben, Tim, and Austin P.** manned the entrance gate at the Latrobe stadium, collecting non-perishable food items from those attending the practice. They were assisted by siblings, Cub Scout, Jon, and Girl Scout, Mikhayla.

NHT
End of Summer
Celebration

Fifteen scouts — **Adam B., Austin P., Ben, Bradley, Brandon, Chris, Christian, Derek, Jacob S., Jon, Kyle, Max, Mike, Nick H. and Tim** — worked two game booths, *Angry Birds* and *Fish Pond*, for the NHT End of Summer Celebration on the weekend of



8/17-18. Friday's rain put a damper on the first night and 'business' was slow. When Saturday rolled around the skies cleared and the crowd grew. At one point there was a competition between the two booths to see who could get more customers. Surprisingly, each time a cash count was taken, the booths were tied. Saturday's events ended with a fantastic fireworks display.

Article and photo by Mrs. Spagnoli

Scoutmaster's Minute ...

To get respect — you must give respect ...

At the beginning of each meeting our scouts recite the Scout Law. Almost all of the qualities that scouting teaches can be found in the Scout Law. If I could add just one more thing to the list, it would be "A Scout is Respectful".

For the most part our scouts are respectful of others, but at times we lose sight of this. During the last couple of meetings I have noticed some issues with our scouts respecting their fellow scouts and leaders – by not letting one person talk at a time. Meetings become longer or modified removing things that were planned to try to end the meeting on time. We need to remember to respect our fellow scouts and give everybody their turn to talk.

During troop outings and activities, it is important for us to show respect to our adult leaders, fellow scouts, parents, and others that we meet during the outing or activities. Remember we have an image to protect – We are Troop 251 and proud of it.

Respect the scouts that are leading the troop and running the meetings, because soon it will be your turn to lead. And remember – If you want respect, you must give respect ...

- Mr. Michael Peschock, Scoutmaster

Results of the Website Readership Survey

The results of the first-ever online survey conducted by Troop 251 are in!

Overall, the results are very encouraging. Most of you seem to like the website and the *Hooter Gazette*, and read both from time to time. You also provided some good suggestions for improvement. Those will be discussed next month.

Participation was good, with 16 responses out of a population of 35 families and a few "friends". Of those, 87.5% of you identified yourself as a Scouter or Parent.

Over half of you visit the website more than once a month. All found the site easy to use, but only 4/5 of you found it visually appealing. Looks like we have some work to do there.

Most were *Satisfied* or *Very Satisfied* with the individual pages, with the lowest rating going to the Eagle Roster page with only 68.8% of you saying that you were satisfied with that page.

Ninety-four percent 'fessed up to reading the *Hooter Gazette*. Of those who read it, 87% claim to read every issue. And almost 70% of you have read a few past issues. Surprisingly, 50% of the respondents didn't know that there is an index to the past issues online.

For the most part, you were *Very Satisfied* with the *Hooter* in general, though the number and quality of photos was ranked a little lower than other factors. None of you claimed to be *Dissatisfied*, I was glad to see.

You showed a preference for articles on recent events and educational topics. At the other end of the spectrum, 20% of you were *Neutral* on filler articles like *How Well Do You Know Camp Conestoga?* and *Whatzit?!?*

One of the most important questions in the survey was the last one: *Did the website or newsletter influence your decision to visit with us prior to joining?* A full 50% of you answered "Yes."

Chairman's Corner

Wow! What a month! From Steelers Training Camp to Oak Hollow Park, from a classic Court of Honor to a very active weekend in Cook Forest, the Scouts of Troop 251 were busy, indeed! And you can be sure that when the Scouts are busy, the Leaders are equally busy. I would attempt to list them all, but there's only so much space here! Suffice it to say that pretty much every active Scoutmaster and Committee Member, plus a number of parents, were in the mix this month. It was great to see everyone out in such large numbers for our Scouts!

Did you like the survey? I'm very happy with the results. Thanks to those of you who responded. The "positives" are gratifying, but the slight dips in some of the scores are the ones that we need to pay attention to, if we're going to make the site more valuable to the troop. In next month's *Hooter*, we'll discuss those, as well as the suggestions for improvement that were submitted with the survey.

And just like that, the Scouts are back to school, and a new fall Scouting season begins!

- 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 © 2012 Troop 251 BSA except where noted. All rights reserved.