

The State of the Troop

January, 2004

Just shy of 3-years old and we are in great shape as a Troop. Of the 24 Scouts that registered with us last year, 23 are still active today. We have a group of eight Scoutmasters and a strong Committee with dedicated workers to make it all happen.

Scout that we have seen leave are Michael Lisk and Ken Dickson. Michael has moved out of the area and Ken has found that he has more activities in School than he knows what to do with. I am also sad to announce that Dan Burbank has resigned as an Assistant Scoutmaster. Dan has found out about the challenges and excitement of medicine and has gone back to school in order to pursue that goal. Rick Lisk also left the Troop and resigned as our Committee Chairman. When he left, Dave Wisniewski picked up the leadership reins.

The Troop has been skiing in New Mexico, watched flash floods in the Texas desert, canoed on Village Creek, and climbed a few rock walls but this will only be the beginning.

Our eight Scoutmasters have taken training so that they can lead Canoe trips on both flat and white-water and several along with Dean Hulsey from the Troop Committee are now certified Rifle or Shotgun Instructors.

The Troop has seen incredible growth in the maturity of the youth leadership and we have had our first Scout attend National Youth Leadership Training. Colloneh Lodge in the Order of the Arrow also has one new Ordeal member in D. A. Wisniewski. The Scouts are aware that a new year is coming and the mantle of leadership, while having been shared in the past years with the adults, will now rest almost exclusively on their shoulders.

The Troop has now come to a widening in the road. In order to keep an exciting program for the older Scouts, the Troop will now be looking to "High Adventure" activities that are more demanding physically and mentally and that will challenge the youth to excel in leadership. Two of our trained Scoutmasters and one Committee Member will be leading this program. Other Scoutmasters will continue to serve as Patrol Liaisons, First Year Program ASMs and will be helping to handle Troop logistics.

The Troop Committee has again had to address more tough topics. Budgeting and fundraising continues to be a major priority in order to continue to provide the opportunities as have been seen in the past year. The change in Chartered Partner, our equipment and storage needs, and a desire by both Scouts and Scoutmasters to pursue some very exciting adventures have required hard work to achieve.

During the past year, 23 Scouts have earned a total of 24 ranks and 180 Merit Badges. We've camped for 27 nights and had to cancel six other nights due to weather related concerns. These nights include a week at Camp Strake near Conroe and a week at Buffalo Trails Scout Reservation near Balmorhea. We fired 3500 rounds of 20ga shotgun ammunition and 1800 rounds of .22 during our Troop shooting day and saw 18 of 21 Scouts qualify at shotgun with the intensive training.

This is where we have been...here's where we are going...

We've expanded the Troop back out to four Patrols this year with anticipated Webelos crossovers. We are still limiting our numbers to a maximum of 40 Scouts between the four Patrols. Our new High Adventure program will be out there for Scouts to take part in as they earn the right to participate. We were 1658 out of 1718 on the Philmont waiting list so that is probably not going to happen in 2005. We are going to Rainey Mountain, Georgia for Summer Camp June 28 to July 10 and have three Scouts and one leader attending the 2005 National Jamboree. This fall we have a Troop Trek scheduled over the Thanksgiving break where our High Adventure Scouts will get their first real taste of the outback while the rest of the Troop works on Camping and Survival skills in the base camp. Thanksgiving Day will be celebrated with "Trashcan Turkey" and all the fixin's in the middle of the Little Aguja canyon. Preparations not only for this trek but all of High Adventure will be beginning in a few weeks and will become an integral part of the program. Biking, hiking, backpacking, canoeing, sailing, and shooting are just a few things planned.

Our movie nights will be continuing but with a change in the "admission price", the Green Bars will be meeting more frequently to get the Troop planning taken care of, and we're looking to cancel fewer campouts and be better prepared for foul weather. Our storage and equipment management concerns are being addressed, we are looking to double or triple our service hours, and we expect to continue to occasionally get "Wacky" on 5^h Tuesday. We just might see our first Eagle Scout this year and we continue to need every parent to be involved. Its only with the parents that this program continues and we need each of you to be able to do all the things that are envisioned. You, the parents, will continue to play a critical role in the Troop in the coming year. In keeping the Troop size down, we need adults from every family to help out at some level. Merit Badge Counselor, Committee Member, Scoutmaster, you name it and we'll need help with it.

In closing, I want to thank you for trusting me to work with your children. It's one of the greatest feelings in the world.

Yours in Scouting,

Chris Counts
Scoutmaster
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