



# Newsletter

Volume 25 Number 4 December 2008

## COMING EVENTS

### DECEMBER 2008

- 12/1 – Patrol Leaders Council (7:30 - 8:30 PM)
- 12/2 – Troop Committee Mtg. & Board of Review (7:00 PM)
- 12/5 – TROOP MEETING (7 to 9 PM)
- 12/6 – Poinsettia Order pick-up at Cabin – Regular Orders 12-2 PM Please be prompt!
- 12/11 – Diamond Rock Holiday Roundtable
- 12/12 – TROOP MEETING (7 to 9 PM)
- 12/19 – TROOP MEETING and Holiday Party (7 to 9 PM)

### JANUARY 2009

- 1/5 – Patrol Leaders Council (7:30 - 8:30 PM)
- 1/6 – Troop Committee Mtg. & Board of Review (7:00 PM)
- 1/8 – Diamond Rock Roundtable
- 1/9-11 – Winter Camp at Camp Horseshoe
- 1/16 – TROOP MEETING (7 to 9 PM)
- 1/23 – TROOP MEETING (7 to 9 PM)
- 1/24 – Ski Trip
- 1/30 – TROOP MEETING (7 to 9 PM)

### NOTE:

Camping Trips/Major Events shown in: Bold

TROOP MEETINGS: underlined in CAPITALS

*Adult Leader Only Meetings: in Italics*

## NEW DADS NEEDED!

The December Troop Committee Meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7 PM at the cabin. The Committee meets on the first Tuesday of the month to guide and discuss the operation of the Troop. New dads are especially encouraged to attend these meetings to get involved in Troop activities.

## CONGRATULATIONS!



Best wishes to Jim and Gladys Donnelly who will celebrate their 65<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on November 30<sup>th</sup>!



## POINSETTIA PICKUP SATURDAY, DEC. 6<sup>th</sup>

Please pick up your poinsettia order at the cabin on Saturday, December 6<sup>th</sup> between **12:00-2:00 PM**. If you can't make this time, contact Stephanie Robinson as soon as possible. Thanks for another great year!

## ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

The Troop will hold its annual Holiday Party during the regularly scheduled Troop meeting on December 19<sup>th</sup>. Plan to attend in full class A uniform, and bring a wrapped gift costing no more than \$5 for the gift exchange. Those without a gift will NOT be able to participate, so be sure to remember it! The meeting will include a special first aid problem with a not so merry Saint Nick, the gift exchange, food, and games. The top popcorn sellers will also have their opportunity to pie some of their favorite adult leaders in the face, so be sure to bring those cameras. This event is one that can not be missed, so write it in your calendars and check it twice!



VENTURING · BSA

## ADULTS WANTED FOR VENTURE KREW 78!

Adult leaders are needed for the newly revived Venture Krew 78! As you may be able to tell from our unique spelling of "Crew", we want to be a fun and active group, specifically for the older youth of our area. Future trips will be physically and mentally demanding in order to provide participants with experiences that may not be gained on other trips that need to accommodate all skill ranges. But this will not be possible

unless we have adult leaders to assist with some of the planning and more importantly, transportation. Venturing is Co-ed and largely youth-run, but adult supervision is still a requirement. So if you have some time, want to help, and if you're up to the challenge, join...The V-Team!

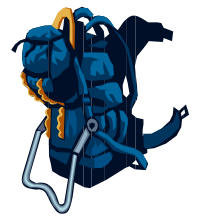
## HSRAA VIRTUAL MUSEUM ONLINE

The Horseshoe Scout Reservation Alumni Association Virtual Museum is now online! After 6 months of construction, the brand new virtual museum hosts over 2,000 artifacts for your viewing pleasure. Take a tour of the HSR camps and their history, learn about the special summer and winter programs at HSR, and delve into the vast stocks of documents, video, images, and audio that the museum has to offer. Members can also submit captions and artifacts to make the experience even richer. You can take a self-guided tour or browse the floors, rooms, and exhibits at your leisure. Promotional videos, old camp Echoes, staff photos, patches and memorabilia, camp songs, and so much more await you in the HSRAA Virtual Museum! Visit the museum by going to <http://www.hsraa.org/museum/>

## A DECEPTIVE WEEKEND

*By Michael Bennett*

Many Scouts jump at the chance to go hiking. However, when it becomes known that the hikers will need to carry two days worth of gear on their back, some will become less eager. On a Friday night, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2008, 23 Scouts and Scouters, to whom this offer still sounded tempting, boarded the bus to travel to Pine Grove Furnace State Park in Gardners, PA, near



Carlisle and Harrisburg. Spirits were high, as weather reports predicted dry skies. However, none of the Scouts knew what was really in store for them as they jubilantly paraded down the Pennsylvania Turnpike towards their Friday night campsite. Normally, a backpacking trip would depart on Saturday morning, but this time around, the Troop decided to try something new.

The first sign that all was not peaches and cream came as soon as the Scouts began setting up camp – and a lantern broke. Ominous clouds began appearing in the sky at around 10:30 PM. The Scouts got to bed at 11. When one Scout woke up at 1:30 the next morning, a full-blown rainstorm was underway.

A soaked camp aroused from slumber the next morning, only to find that things were looking a little rosy – rather, greasy - as there was a steaming meal of French toast and sausage to greet them. After breakfast, the whole Troop pitched in to help take down camp. The Scouts then packed clean, new tents inside their bags, put the wet, trashed tents from the night before into the bus, and headed off. Shortly after the hike's beginning, the Troop got onto the Appalachian Trail. At the outset, the trail was wide and paved. Just ask Mr. Bennett, who remarked, "This isn't the AT I know!" However, the trail soon became narrow, steep, and rough. Only a few breaks and passing the AT's midpoint broke up a humid morning, which ended at around 12:30 with a sumptuous lunch.

Everyone then began hiking with new confidence, buoyed by the food and the promise of "Done by 1". Unfortunately, everyone had been deceived. With a long, rambling, and rough (though scenic) trail, many Scouts did not arrive at Tagg Run Shelter until close to 3:00, and their whine of "I'm hurt-y at 2:30!" did not have the confident ring of "Done by 1".

The Scouts figured that there was finally cause for jubilation. They were at camp, relaxing, convalescing ...sitting in a deluge? A second rainstorm took camp by surprise. Once again, the Scouts were soaked.

Fortunately, dinner was ready at 5:00, so the Scouts had just enough time to both prepare for grub and get into dry clothes. Dinner was delicious beef stroganoff. No sooner had the Scouts filled up on warm, dry food than they decided that it was bedtime – at 6:00! Some adventurous Scouts managed to stay up until 7:30, but by 8:00 the shelter was quieter than a mouse.

The next morning, the Scouts awoke early, gulped down a quick breakfast, packed up camp, and continued to hike the AT. This time, though, the Scouts had to battle such obstacles as scrambling across a railroad track and scurrying across a state highway! Finally, at around 10:00, the Scouts, while hiking alongside another state highway, saw a most peculiar sight: a bus! The boys had tackled the 11 miles (7 Saturday, 4 Sunday), rainstorms, fiery stoves, and all. All 23 hikers celebrated all the way home, which wasn't without highlights. For instance, in Carlisle they saw something even more exotic than grizzly bears or ancient pine trees – gas for less than \$2 a gallon!

These boys, and many more, will probably be back for next year's backpacking trip. While you're waiting, come on down to celebrate the new year and chop wood at the Father-Son Trip on January 2-4, 2009. We hope to see you there as Troop 78 goes from winding trails to wood detail!

### **CAMPIN' SAM'S\* HOLIDAY GEAR REVIEW – GREAT CAMPING GIFTS FOR UNDER \$20**

The holiday season is upon us, and once again, you're probably scrambling to find reasonably-priced gifts that your Scout or Scouter could use. But when you come right down to it, how many penknives does anyone need? And while that Boy Scout paperweight looks nice in the display case, will it help your camper in the out-of-doors?

Lord Robert Baden-Powell, the founder of Scouting, once said that "Scouting is three-quarters 'outing'." Getting outside in all kinds of weather is what Scouting is all about. It's

certainly what Troop 78 is all about, so to help you with your holiday shopping, we've compiled a list of great and inexpensive items that would be fine additions to any Scout or Scouter's outdoor gear:

**Socks:** There's nothing worse than cold, wet socks. A smart Scout avoids cotton socks like the plague. They retain sweat and absorb water when boots get soggy. Wet socks inevitably mean cold feet, and are a breeding ground for foot fungus.



*Sam's pick:* Look for hiking socks made of a wool/nylon blend. Wool keeps you warm, even when wet, and the wool/nylon combo wicks moisture away from your feet. There are lots of great brands, including Thorlos and Smartwool, and you can pick them up for around \$10 a pair. Try Columbia Falmouth II merino wool/nylon hikers – two pair for \$15.99, at [www.campmor.com](http://www.campmor.com).

**Sock liners:** Sock liners are really just lightweight socks worn underneath hiking socks or other socks. Sock liners help to keep feet dry. They cut down on foot friction, so you're less prone to blisters when you wear sock liners. They dry quickly and can be hand-washed – which makes them really valuable at places like summer camp. And if you wear them under your Scout socks, your feet stay much more comfortable, and you can extend the life of your Scout socks.

*Sam's pick:* I like REI's merino/nylon liners. At \$6.69 a pair, these liners could even be worn by themselves – they really pamper tired "dogs"! [www.rei.com](http://www.rei.com)

**Compression sacks:** How do you fit a big sleeping bag into a pack that's loaded with gear for the November backpacking trip, or worse, for the Canada trip? Answer – use a compression sack! This nifty invention takes a compact sleeping bag's size down by 40%. There are vertical "stuff sack"-style and horizontal compression sacks that reduce the size of whatever you're packing.

*Sam's pick: A large sleeping bag compression "cap" goes for under \$15. Check out [www.campmor.com](http://www.campmor.com).*

Water bottles: There are lots of neat hydration systems out there. Many people like the Camelbak "bladder" system, with a sack of water that's hooked to a drinking hose. However, most water filter systems are made for a hard plastic bottle, like the ones made by Nalgene. Some recent studies suggest that campers should use a BPA-free bottle to reduce a potential increase in cancer risk.

*Sam's pick: I am a big fan of Nalgene bottles. These wide-mouth bottles will hold 32 ounces of water, fit most water filter systems, are dishwasher-safe, and are virtually unbreakable. Plus, you can see through the bottle, and with the graded measurements, you'll know just how much water you have left. Buy two! Try the Nalgene Tritan Widemouth BPA Free 1 Quart bottle. At [www.campmor.com](http://www.campmor.com).*

There are lots of other great items for any outdoorsman to have – hiking pants, synthetic "quick-dry" shirts, Polar-tec pullovers – and over time, I'd encourage you to add these items to your Scout/Scouter's wardrobe. But you don't need to get them all at once. Shop for them as the opportunity presents itself. For instance, TJ Maxx and Kmart are GREAT places to find clearance items and odd sizes. And don't forget about other Scouts in the Troop – they can be terrific resources for gathering "new to you" clothing and equipment for your camper. Remember - all of those big guys were young once, too! Some of them may have good clothing that they'd be willing to give to younger Scouts, or at least, to sell at a big discount compared to new items. But if you're looking for Christmas stocking stuffers, Hanukkah chatkzes, or Kwanzaa goodies, consider the items discussed above. Your camper will be happy, and you'll still have plenty of "jingle" left in your wallet after your purchase!

*\* About Campin' Sam: "Campin' Sam" is the nom de plume of an erstwhile Troop 78 Scouter whom Mr. D. exiled to the Australian outback for making fun of Mr. D's love of tomato soup and*

*grilled cheese sandwiches. Sam now makes a living selling kangaroo and duckbill platypus dessert recipes to tourists Down Under. He occasionally submits articles for the Newsletter, and even less frequently, the editor selects Sam's articles for publication.*



## **MIKE ROWE OFFERS A POTENTIAL EAGLE SCOUT HIS EAGLE PERSPECTIVE**

"Dirty Jobs" host Mike Rowe is an Eagle Scout. Here is an exchange of letters posted to his blog

Mike,  
I'm not sure where I heard that you are an Eagle Scout, which brings me to my question. Could you PLEASE take a moment and post to my 13 year old son Kelby and encourage him to finish scouting (and anything else that will help with this)? Reason I'm asking is that he only lacks 1 1/2 - 2 years in reaching Eagle, but some of his buddies have got him to thinking Scouting isn't cool at his age.

*Thanks much, Gary*

Kelby,  
Your Dad asked me to drop you a line and say something inspirational that might persuade you to dig down deep and find the determination to make the rank of Eagle Scout. It's a reasonable request, from a father who obviously wants to see his son succeed. But here's the thing - the Eagle Award is not really meant for people who need to be dragged across the finish line. It's meant for a select few, and I have no idea if you have the guts to see it through.

Statistically, I suspect you do not. Only one out of a hundred Scouts make Eagle, so if you fail, there will be lots of other people with whom you can share excuses. Quitting now might disappoint your Dad, but I doubt that he or anyone else will be overly surprised. Anytime 99 out of 100 people do the same thing, it's not exactly a shock.

I'm not trying to be cute with a bunch of reverse psychology. When I was 15, there was nothing that anyone could have said to me that would have inspired me to do something I didn't want to do, especially a stranger with a TV show. So I'm not going to assume you're any different, or pretend that I have some influence or insight that you haven't already heard from a dozen other people who actually know and care about you. I'll just tell you straight up, that doing something extraordinary can be very lonely, and most people simply aren't cut out for it.

Being an Eagle Scout requires you to be different than most everyone around you, and being different is really, really hard. That's why the award is called "an accomplishment."

Personally, and for whatever it's worth, the best decisions I've made in my own life, are those decisions that put me on the outside of being cool. Singing in the Opera, working in home shopping, starring in the school play when the entire football team laughed at me, and especially earning my Eagle, were all choices that required sacrifice, hard work, and delayed gratification. I have no idea if you possess those qualities, or even envy them. But I can tell you for certain, that NOT getting your Eagle, will be one of the easiest things you've ever done.

Anyway, I have no idea if you would prefer an easy life of predictability and mediocrity, or if have the passion to follow the road less traveled. Only you get to decide that.

*Good Luck, Mike*

## **EMAIL ADDRESSES NEEDED**

Parents, if you or your scout do not receive the monthly newsletter via email and would like to, please let us know at [newsletter at willistown78 dot org](mailto:newsletter@willistown78.org).

Occasionally reminders are also shared via email to reinforce information handed out at Troop meetings. If you have any questions, they too may be directed to this email address.



## ***Newsletter***

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