

Day 1 2011 summer camp.

Greetings from rainy Camp Olmsted at Goshen Scout Reservation. Been an eventful day & a half. So far we have been lucky with the weather rain wise until this evening. Started to pour down just before dinner, stopped but has now started up again with a steady down pour. Fortunately we were able to get through all merit badge classes. We look forward to the next few days when rain is gone, temps cool and stars fill the night sky. We hope to take an evening and work with boys who have astronomy badge work to complete.

Boys seem to be getting along well but it is early in the week. Hopefully the routine of merit badge classes and camp life will further bond these scouts together. Funny not to have any first year scouts with us this year.

Impressions of Camp Olmsted this year. Our site is about what you would expect, better than Camp Ockanickon, about the same as Bay Port. We have twice the tents than we need. We are centrally located but the walk to get anywhere is tough for these old knees.

Dining facilities and food is just a big disappointment. Limited choices, small servings (boys not vary happy) & poor quality makes it real easy for some of us to maintain our diets. No worries that were going to put any weight on here. Just not a well planned, well run or well thought out program.

We are fairly please with the staff so far. Generally helpful and pleasant to be around and accommodating when possible. They were not doing a lifeguard training & certification class but the aquatics head staffer is putting a program together just for me (Sandy) so our troop can have a BSA certified lifeguard. Also this old man and a couple of the troop's young studs (Bobby E. & Daniel C.) plan & are training for the mile swim certification/patch.

The trees are now just dripping as the rain has moves out. Tomorrow promises to be better now all the scouts have settled on their merit badge schedules and know where & when the classes are.

Good night from camp Olmsted. The camp fire is crackling as the trees drip. Boys don't seem to care as they roast their marshmallows and carry on with the typical camp fire conversations.

Out for now,

Sandy

Summer Camp Day 2 & 3

Greeting again from Camp Olmsted. Sorry for not getting back to you yesterday but camp claimed its first victim yesterday, making me two for two in visits here. Got the tour of the local hospital in Lexington last night and must say if I ever need to go to an emergency room again I am coming here. I was treated like I was the only person there; friendly, courteous, and they have gone out of their way to be helpfully. To make a long story short ended up spending the night in Lexington (hotel not hospital) and am now back at camp with my wings clipped but as long as I am a good boy I can finish out the week.

Now, what you are really interested in, your scouts. The weather clear and have a pleasant dry day for a low 90° could be. Boys continue to work on their badge work and enjoy camp life. Last night was cook at site night with food prepared over campfire in foil packs. It was a great success as there was food to spare (maybe because leaders ended up grilling steaks). They began the first in a series of campfire programs put on by the boys. This is to complete a requirement for the communications merit badge that all of our scouts are working on. The instructions where that the program had to put out necessary information for the next day, have an activity that requires group participation and also have some form of entertainment. The boys were to team up and plan the event, Bobby E. & Scott C. were scheduled for last night. I understand that fun was had by all and when i checked in was told that the Chuck Norris jokes were flowing. I am sorry missed it & look forward to tonight's festivities.

Our mile swimmers (minus one) continue to train for the swim. Monday was 6 laps, yesterday was 10 laps, and today was 16. Thursday (tomorrow evening) at 7:15 is the swim. Send good floating thoughts for them during that time.

Tonight our scouts who are working on the wilderness survival merit badge have their overnight. They will hike out to a site, build their own shelter for the night, and learn how to light a campfire without matches. My opinion, this should be an Eagle Merit Badge as you find out a lot about yourself and what you can do when you really have to. Our scouts working on this badge are Bobby E., Daniel C. and Chayton K. Stand by tomorrow for a report on their night's adventures.

One of the benefits of being a distance from civilization is on a clear night the stars are incredible. Last night David Song and Pat Eaton took the scouts out to the clearing and star gazed. I remember as a kid one of my favorite activities was to lay out on a summer night and look at the stars. Hopefully we are building some fond memories for our boys. I understand the reaction from some of them last night this maybe the case. Also a number of our scouts need to complete the astronomy merit badge but in the past have been clouded or rained out. We just won't tell them it's work while they are having fun.

We'll need to sign off for right now. Hope to get some picture of the camp sent out tonight and some picture of the scouts in action later. More to come

Sandy

Day 4 part 1, 2 & beginning day 5

Greetings from Camp Olmsted, been a busy day with a lot of running around to try and insure our scouts are completing their badge work. So far so good but I am having flashback to the school year as we have 2 scouts laboring over a simple writing assignment that should be easy. My single has multiplied. But the effort is paying dividends as almost all badge work is done. 11:45 pm day 4.

Up early, we had been visited by one of the local residents (raccoon) that was attempting to abscond with the marshmallows for our somores,

That was Wednesday night, play tag with it until before 5 am. Thinking I had chased it off I went to the showers only to have it come back and try to make off with something else. It scared itself away by knocking over some empty popcorn tin I had. Last night Pat Eaton & I play a trick on the critter, and hollowed out some marshmallows, filled them with spicy mustard and hot sauce, glued two marshmallows together then set them out for the visitor. This morning the marshmallows had been part eaten and funny we had no more trouble last night from our neighbor. Thought you all would enjoy a little camp adventure story to start your day.

Last morning of badge work and it looks like we will be able to get most of the badges finished. Some still need to finish qualifying on the archery range and unfortunately Hunter B. has been fishing in a dry hole. No matter we can always find him a fishing hole at home and get him signed off on fishing. Fortunately he was able to finish all other requirements since they brought in fish to scale, clean & fillet. Hunter said it was a highlight of his camp experience.

The G. Brothers are this year marksmen on the rifle range. They are punching dime size hole in targets at range, I hope to have a chance to take up their challenge today during open shoot and see if this old guy still has what it takes. Let you know what happens later, but remember history is made by the writer, so you might want to check with them to hear their version.

Need to sign off for now, promise more later. Plan to do the majority of the pack out this evening as we need to roll out early tomorrow am, this place has an early checkout.

Stay cool at home, we are sweating enough for everyone.

Sandy

2011 summer camp, Epilog

Starting this now at 1:30 am Saturday morning. Mostly packed up and packed out as another scout summer camp comes to an end. By all regards this was a very successful camp for our boys. Each one completed all of the merit badges if they could have been completed. Exceptions to this was Mohh G. and camping (needs camp outs), Hunter B. & fishing (let's face it, this lake is fished out) and Scott C. and canoeing (he need to be a better swimmer to so the water portion of the work), it is late and quiet and soon the staff will make their morning wake up call.

2011 Summer Camp, Epilog cont.

Sorry for the abbreviated last message, meant to save it but hit the send button by mistake. Now a bit over 24 hour since my return from Goshen and I am sitting in my kitchen in front of my lap top ,200 miles away from the dust, the bugs and the heat that was our home for the previous 6 days. Let's see if I can bring this all together.

First the facts, 11 scouts and 4 adults set out last Sunday. Yesterday 4 adults and 11 scouts returned with all fingers, toes, eyes, ears & other parts still attached. The 11 scouts started 53 merit badges of which 50 were completed at camp and the 3 not completed have only 1 item each to complete. 2 scouts, Bobby E. & Daniel C., participated in the mile swim and both completed it trek in very good times. All in all I would mark this down as a very successful trip, and I think our boys would have to agree with that.

The big hit of the week seem to be the Archery range. It was the topic of conversation even more than the food around the camp site. Every one of our scouts participated in and completed the Archery Merit Badge requirements involving scoring at least 80 of 140 maximum points with a 14 arrow quiver. The great discussion was; "Which of the bows was the best to qualifying with?" The bows all had names; Big Red, Old Blue, Goliath, Mother of Grendel, and the ever popular red Walmart specials (not popular among the archers, other less appropriate adjectives left out). It came down to the wire for some waiting till Friday to get there, but they all crossed the line. As a matter of fact one of the last of our scouts to qualify (Scott) ended up getting the high point total for the week with 102 and being the only one over a hundred points for the week and one of either 5 or 8 scouts for the entire summer. One of our younger scouts Hunter B. listed the archery as one of his great things about summer camp.

I asked the boys to give me list of some of their high lights from camp and most talked about Archery. Hunter gave me a list of several things that looking though I feel describes the camp experience pretty well. As above he talked about his time on the archery range and having the opportunity many can't have. He also listed making a leather pouch and an arrow, cleaning and filleting a fish, and tipping over a canoe and then using a special maneuver to right it. Last on his list was finishing 4 merit badges and if that lake hadn't been so fished out might have completed a 5th. A Madison Avenue Ad Agency couldn't have described the camp adventure better and more completely; skills, crafts and all round fun. Pat Eaton best describe Hunter's feelings about camp while on the Astronomy walk one night as "... you really know he is having a great time here with that great big ole smile on his face..."

Now to finish up some old business, in one of the previous entries I told you that I had been challenged to a shoot out by Mohh G. I will tell you here and now, Mr. Mohh has a *keen eye with a shooting*

iron, and as Pat commented, “he can shoot the eye out of a gnat a 100yards” or some such distance. An example of his shooting, during the Camp Olympics one event was to create a smiley face in the target. I’m not sure if he could have done any better with a hole punch instead of the rifle. What you have to understand is that you don’t get to sight the rifle in, but have to use it as the sights are sets. That is why to qualify for the Rifle Merit Badge it is about shot grouping and not about scoring on the target. Well Mohh and really his brother Sparsh have really a keen touch with the 22 long rifle. I have seen some incredible targets come back from the range from their shooting. Well the results are in and it was close, but the “Big Dog” still sits on top (it took a bit but Mohh did finally agree). It won’t be long though, I guess I better log in some more range time. The problem with being the “Big Dog” is you always have young pups nipping at your heels and trying to knock you off your perch. Well, when the time comes to surrender the crown I will happily turn it over to him.

Some other notable events for the week:

1. We introduced the boy to a southern buffet breakfast on the way home Saturday morning at the “CountryCookin” restaurant in Lexington. Moms check their pockets for food because I don’t know where they put all that food they ate, last looks I saw Daniel with his third heaping plate full almost completed thinking about another trip up. Now Bobby was keeping up with Daniel and I am not sure about the final outcome. Our waitress, an elderly woman, kept coming over and telling the boys to not leave hungry. She also offered to have the guys wash dishes for their breakfast which I thought about for awhile, and opportunity to get the dirt out from under their nails, but decided that I wanted to get home before dark. I will tell you if you get an opportunity to visit Lexington some time, go just for the hospitality.
2. I want to thank you parents for sharing your sons with me for the week. On several occasions I had the chance to have some conversation with the guys about either silly or serious things. The communications merit badge required that each scout interview someone they looked up to and I had the opportunity to be interviewed by two. The boys told me that they were surprised by what I told them and it really made them think. I will admit some of their questions really made me think as well.
3. The week had its highs and lows and for me some disappointments, but that was not because of the scouts. I think all the boys stepped up to get things done. I would like to thank Bobby E. for his job as SPL. I want to thank Chayton K. for his artistic ability with the troop plaque (someone is going to have to explain this “Narwhal” thing to me). I want to thank all the boys for getting to where they needed to go, keeping together and in touch with the adult leaders and doing what needed to be done to get things done. And I would like to make special note of the work by Daniel C. He really stepped up and helped out before even being asked, he took it upon himself to act as a troop mentor especially on the archery range where he was a de-facto instructor to the boys struggling to get qualified. I am not sure if some of the boys would have made it through it without his help and he did it quietly behind the scenes without fanfare.
4. Lastly I want to thank the adult leaders on the trip. These things don’t happen without their involvement. Missing this year was our DGASM (Designated Goofball Assistant Scout Master) Mike Koehler and he was missed. I need to thank Pat Eaton for keeping things together as events took me, David Song and Sam Gouda away from camp on occasion. We adults all had our part to play Sam turned out to be our supply runner and also when around checking to make

sure merit badge where being completed. David Song as well as being designated roving escort for our scouts, was the camp tech support guy, saved me a couple of time from having to make that long walk to the Leader Lounge to charge up my phone/communication things. Pat was the admin guy, taking care of meeting as needed and pushing papers when needed, he also went around with the boys to events and classes. I got to be Scout Master and the "if you need something camping/outdoors related I probably got it in my bag/box of tricks" guy.

I am sure I probably missed something about the week but I wanted to try any let you get a glimpse of what was happening at camp during the week. It was HOT, the food was LOUSY, the facilities where in need of intelligent upgrading but the staff in most parts where outstanding. It was first time back in 39 years and both visits sent me to the hospital. There has been some talk as to write Goshen off but what we were able to accomplish and other aspects of this camp requires at least consideration for summer camp in some future year. Signing off from Camp Burke.

Sandy

p.s. please excuse any grammatical or other errors in any of the post I've sent, my phone and laptops are poor editors