

Dear Troop 200 Family,

December 2016

Well, another year is in the rearview mirror, and as I reflect on the year that 2016 was, I would like to share a few thoughts about it.

This year began with a return trip to 7 Springs, PA for what was potentially the best SKI TRIP EVER!! We had a 3 floor chalet that worked well for our needs. The scouts had a great time on the slopes, especially with the fresh powder that fell. Tubing was a blast! Who knew that you could get three tubes going down the track in excess of 37 mph? It just goes to show you that plus sized scout masters are good for something besides silly songs about their size.

Spring brought us scouts from 3 different packs that gave us the Owl patrol, which later chose to give up that glorious moniker and are known as the Raptors. Spring also brought the high adventure scouts to Endview Plantation where they served homemade Billy Yank Soup and grub to the reenactors whom were camping that weekend. The weather Saturday morning was a high adventure all of its own. By virtue of a fierce and fast moving storm that blew through unannounced, we literally went from setting up and getting things situated one minute, to a collapsed circus tent, twisted gnarled pop ups, and an airborne scout or two the next. There was sunshine, rain, hail, and snow, all in a matter of minutes, yet the scouts never missed a beat and managed to make a few sales before we could even gather our wits.

There was the rafting campout where we held an emergency preparedness exercise, had some of the best grub ever served by scouts and scouters alike, and taught a scout the a real life lesson in that when the guide says "tuck your feet in, or you'll fall in the river", he means it. This led to another real life e prep exercise in water rescue. You just can't have this kind of fun sitting on the couch.

Summer camp at Raven Knob rocked as summer camp always does. The scouts once again left their mark in a good way. They flew Mondo which became legend in the camp, found a 5' rattle snake which became legend in the Nature area, and held a fiesta birthday party, with a watermelon & ice cream social nightcap. Even the ride home was stuff that will become legend in Troop 200 lore. Things like teaching automotive maintenance merit badge in real time. Answering that age old question of how many scouts can you squeeze in a minivan? And never forget this; when comparing the "miles to empty" versus the gas gauge, listen to that little voice in your head that says "We need to stop for gas."

There was also the best Boating Campout ever, an 11 day trip to Philmont, Stew& Q, Wilderness survival camping, and the largest crowd ever for Thanksgiving in the Woods.

Many changes occurred within the Troop in 2016. Mr. Perdue turned over the reins of CC to Leigh Goddard. We had several committee members take the required training and became ASMs. Five adults went through Wood Badge and are in the process of earning their beads, and 4 scouts with 3 adults had their Ordeal into the OA. To date, we have had 12 scouts earn the prestigious Eagle rank, multiple scouts advance in rank, and numerous merit badges earned.

As we look ahead to 2017, this should be another exciting year filled with challenges and exciting outings. There will be some new events that we haven't done in a while, cycling, Aviation, and Gettysburg. Summer camp at Powhatan is going to be a blast, and who can forget SEA BASE !!?

I'm looking forward to another fun filled year with each and every one of you, and I can't wait to get it started. Let's all work together to make it the best year EVER, as if Troop 200 would have it any other way? I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year!! May God bless you, your families, and The Troop 200!

Yis,

*Donn Brackington*

Scoutmaster

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