



# Trails of Troop 48

*Doing more before breakfast than most people do all day.*

**October 2011**

**White Horse District – SNJ Council**

## Troop 48's Newest Eagle Scouts

By Danny S

The Eagle Scout Court of Honor is the time of the year when we gather in honor of those who have made Eagle Scout, the highest rank in scouting, during the course of the year. During this afternoon event, family, friends, and fellow troop members come and watch as the scouts receive their statues, medals, and certificates. For this years court of honor, the two scouts to earn the rank of Eagle, were Aaron Kopania and Ryan Matthews. For them, this day forever marked their hard earned achievement of Eagle Scout.

The ceremony itself went rather smoothly with Mike Gallagher as the MC and the scouts participating in their usual Scout Law presentation. There were the expected hiccups here and there when a scout forgot which part of the law they were presenting or failed to light a candle, but these are the kind of things that make the event memorable in its own quirky way. In attendance, was Nate Clark, the district director from the White Horse District. Following Law, Nate gave his piece on behalf of the council in congratulating Aaron and Ryan on reaching Eagle

The two Eagle Scouts were escorted to the front of the room by their escorts who were soon replaced by the Eagle Scout's parents, each of  
*Continued on page 2....*

## Ohiopyle State Park

By Scout Scoutly

Early Saturday morning, fifteen scouts and six adults set off head off for the wilds of Western Pennsylvania. It was a quick six hour jaunt down the Turnpike. On the way out, the troop visited the Flight 93 Memorial in Shanksville, PA. The Scouts, several of whom had visited Ground Zero with the troop years before, were able to tour the temporary museum and visit the overlook of the crash site. Then we headed to Ohiopyle State Park, our home for the week.

Sunday, seven of the older Scouts disappeared for a few days to go backpacking. We headed to the Laurel Caverns. There, we spent the day exploring the cave. First, we saw the "civilized" part of the cave. Then we got good and muddy in the wild part of the cave. *Continued page 3!*

### UPCOMING EVENTS...

- Oct 14 to 16**      **Sandy Hook trip**
- Oct 22 & 23**      **Paul's Eagle Project**
- Nov 2 to 21**      **Scouting for Food**
- Nov 18 to 20**      **Bodine Field Trip**
- Nov 21**              **Scouting for Food Distribution**
- Nov 24**              **Feed theTroops Celebration**

## Congrats to Kamran N on achieving the rank of Eagle Scout!

### Congratulations to Troop 48's Elected leaders for 2011-2012!

Senior Patrol Leader – Sean G.

Assistant Senior Patrol Leaders – Luke S, Pranav C, and Don S

Patrol Leaders – Nick M, Sajin M, Bryan G, and Tim S

Also, our new Troop Guides – Eric F and Steven H

Finally, our first Junior Assistant Scoutmaster in many a year – Danny S



whom received their deserved praise and a pin. Lastly, but far from least, came the presentation of the Eagle Scout Medal to each of the Eagle Scouts. After a few closing words, the ceremony ended; Each scout exchanged congratulatory handshake with the Eagle Scouts (followed by them running as quickly as they could to the refreshment table), and after some cake and a group photo, the clean up, and the lack there of a vacuum, all came to a close on another Eagle Court of Honor.

## Multiple Sclerosis City-to-Shore Bike Ride By Scout Scoutly

The final weekend of September, we ventured out on our of our biggest service projects of the year. We spent five hours on Saturday at the Sweetwater Fire Company, where we handed out water and "Pedal Packs" to the century riders (cyclists who ride 100 miles in a single day) during the MS 150. We got lots of smiles and lots of thank yous.

Afterwards, we headed back to the campground at Estell Manor where some folks explored the ruins of the Belcoville Munitions Plant from World War I. That night, we headed down to Ocean City for spaghetti and fun times on the boardwalk. Some Scouts bought hats, others played video games, and some checked out the surf mall or the ocean.

Sunday, we were up very early (4 am) so that we could help at the Atlantic Christian School stop, helping more bikers as they rode the 75 miles of this charity bike ride back. Overall, the troop put in over 300 service hours during the weekend.

Thanks to Mr. Smith, the Chiassons, Mrs. Sperling, Matt McCormick, and Tom Ferrari for camping with us. Congrats to Mike McCormick, Danny S, Mr. Madden, Mrs. Johnson, and Jeremy Schiller for completing the ride.



## Laurel Highlands Trail By Danny S.

Once again, a trail of walking, walking, and more walking, emerges from the insane mind of a band of boys who thought it was a good idea (or at least one of them did) to go backpacking for 50 miles in the wilderness. These seven boys were myself (Danny), Steven, Jiff, Nick, Pranav, Don, and Luke. In addition to them were the three adults, Mike, Dr. Shamilov, and Officer Peanut Butter, who decided they wanted to try their hand at this backpacking thing too. For this adventure, the ten of them were bent on tackling the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail (LHHT) in the Allegheny Mountains out in Western PA and tackle it they did...

Sunday morning, the thirty-first day of the month of July in the year twenty-eleven, we awoke at an early hour of 5AM in order to get on the trail as the sun rose over the mountains which we were set on

*Continued on page 3...*

## ***EASY TROOP 48 FUNDRAISER!***

Wish you could do more to support Troop 48 but never seem to find the time? Well now you can *and* take care of your errands at the same time when you use Shop Rite gift certificates purchased through Troop 48! These gift certificates come in handy denominations of \$25 and \$50 and are sold by Deb Sperling during each troop meeting. With every card you purchase the troop makes money!

**From page 2...**

travelling on. In the usual fashion of how most things go, we didn't leave base camp until 6 instead of the scheduled 5:30, which was fine in the long term, as it tends to be. At this hour, our drivers were Mr. Smith and former scoutmaster Gary, who was kind enough to lend a hand. After getting to the trail head, thirty miles into the 70 mile trail, we all strapped up, adjusted our packs, took a photo, and... walked in the wrong direction... Okay, grant it, the span was only a few hundred yards, but if Mr. Smith hadn't gone up the hill and saw the actual trail head, we could have gone for a good bit. Luckily though, he spotted it and let us know. So once we reached the trail head, we were good and ready. This is where we official began the first day which ended up coming in around fifteen miles. The trick to fitting fifteen miles into a trail distance that is half that, is to take out a bridge that cross the PA Turnpike and substitute a eight mile detour, downhill, and then back uphill again, or at least that is how you do it on the LHHT. (Sidenote: According to the state park, the bridge is currently under construction and if all goes according to the schedule, should be finished by this upcoming December). Before we arrived at the detour, we hiked along for a good five miles at our consistent two and half mph pace. Byaround 11 o'clock we reached the detour and headed down along a gravel road for a good three miles. After this section we took a section

of paved road which then met up with the bridge that crossed over the turnpike. Following the crossing, we took a break for a little bit before heading back up the mountain a little ways where we stopped for lunch. Lunches during the trip became kind of like a kindergarten class. Everyone would eat their crackers and have some water before closing their eyes and taking a nap. With lunch breaks averaging in at an hour long, one could get a cat nap in or around the length of fifteen to thirty minutes depending on how you timed it. Once all the napping and eating was done with, we all jumped (okay, slowly lifted ourselves) back to our feet and continued on. After another 3 or so miles uphill, we finally joined back up with the LHHT. From this point, it was only a short mile, if not less than, to the shelter, and we reached it in the seventeenth hour (5 o'clock-ish) of the day. The PA Turnpike shelter area was probably the least visually appealing area that we stayed at during our trip. That is not to say it was not nice as far as shelter area standards are. When you have outhouses with hand sanitizer and stocked toilet paper, you know you're living the high life on the trail.

The following morning, we were allowed to actually sleep in on a backpacking trip. This was mostly due to the fact that we had a short distance to cover this day and the previous day had been rough on the knees. After taking in some nourishing oatmeal for breakfast (or freeze dried egg), we set off down the trail which we came to meet back up with the LHHT, day two had begun. With the distance to be covered only coming in at around 9

*Continued page 6...*



*William, Timmy, and Skippy brave the natural water slides at Ohiopyle State Park.*

***Continued from page 1...***

Other days we visited Fort Necessity (where George Washington became famous and we learned about Native Americans) and went swimming and whitewater rafting on the Youghiogheny River.

The last night of the trip, we had had skits. Among them were the famous Lighthouse Skit, Easy Riders, and Bad Santa.

Friday, we packed up camp and got ready to go home. On the way, we stopped off at Fallingwater, one of the most famous houses in America. Most of the group went on a tour of the house while some explored the grounds instead. Five hours later, we were all back in Berlin, home from yet another fun and adventurous summer trip!

**Don't forget to check out the Troop website for pictures, forms, the troop schedule, and much more!**

**[www.troop48berlin.org](http://www.troop48berlin.org)**

# Hiking the Batona Trail, The Whole Trail

## A Tale of Adventure, Hardship, and the 50 miler in five years

By Danny S.

It was the morning of Monday April 25th, 2011, and nine, possibly insane, scouts prepared to undertake the task of backpacking the fifty mile Batona Trail, rolled in to the shed at around 5:30 A.M. As day break drew near, these nine scouts loaded into the cars and set off to their destination, the south starting point of the Batona Trail. The following will be an account of the fifty miles that lay ahead of them from then on out. We turned off of Coal Road at the furthest south starting point of the Batona Trail. Here is where we were to begin our trip. Pictures were taken and good tidings exchanged before finally, at 7 A.M., we started walking. For the next two hours, we followed the "pink trail". (Some background information: the Batona Trail is blazed in pink, and, as we found out, directly next to the start of the Batona Trail, there is an "other hiking trail" also blazed in pink.) This is the trail we followed first, but luck was on our side, if you can call it luck, and the trail was a loop placing us right back where we started. After we huffed and puffed about how ridiculous it was to have two separate trails right next to each other, both blazed in pink, we set off in the correct, westward direction as we picked up the correct pink blazes of the Batona Trail.

The first couple miles we walked were at a grueling one mile an hour pace. This was hardly tolerable seeing that we had a good fifteen miles to walk that first day, so we cut down breaks and pushed harder until the group was moving at a good 3 mile an hour clip to make up for lost time. At Evans Bridge, we got our first chance to endeavor into the world of water purification. After the water filter pump failed to provide satisfactory results due to its age, iodine tablets became the water purification method of choice, seeing that the Batona Trail has a dearth of water pumps along it. Here at the bridge we were also met with our first casualty, and Little Steven had to be left on the side of the road at Evans Bridge. Following this loss, we headed on with day light waning and still six or so miles left to go.

The positive side of what remained of this days trip was that we had already hiked this portion of the Batona on previous trips. On the other hand, the last time we hiked this section we got turned around and backtracked a good mile or so. This, however, did not happen this trip. As our energy began to falter, breaks became more frequent but still within reason to keep us ahead of the oncoming darkness. When we approached the point of confusion upon our last encounter with the trail, we chose the safe route that we knew could take us to where we wanted to go. As we came up to Bull Town Road, a gentleman who owned a house we passed, informed us that if, instead of taking a left and following the pavement all the way to the campsite, we could make a right, go up a ways, and link back up with the trail again. Seeing that we were feeling slightly adventurous that first day and in hopes that it would prove to be shorter, we took the man's advice and did indeed rejoin the trail. From here, we followed the trail until, we discovered, to our tremendous joy, a small wooden sign with an arrow, indicating the direction towards camp. Upon pulling into camp around eight, right as darkness fell, we pulled out our tents or tarps, set them up, had dinner, and went to sleep. When we woke up the next morning, three more scouts (Jif, Eric, and Sajin) had fallen and disappeared in the night. From then on the casualty count stayed at four for the trip.

The second day on the trail, and all the days that followed it, were different and better than the first day in multiple perspectives. By now those who remained, knew they had already finished a fifteen mile chunk of their trip and this days hike (Tuesday) was of a shorter ten mile stretch. After repacking our packs and eating a good breakfast of oatmeal, we headed back out of the campsite to meet up with the Batona Trail and continued on. We stated off with a good more than two mile an hour pace finishing the three or so miles to Batsto Village in just over two hours. Here we took a good break for a half an hour or so while we got camping permits, filled our water bottles, and used the restroom. This would also be the last time we had a potable water source before Wednesday night. The next seven miles of the trip went swimmingly as we curved around the Batsto Lake and met up with the adjoining Batsto River. Along the Batsto River is where we stopped for lunch. This is also where Don's sleeping bag almost went for a swim, but a dive brought its roll to a stop, feet short of the water. After lunch we had about 4 more miles to put in before reaching our stopping point for the day and the midpoint of our trip.

As we came out of the bramble and brush that is the trail onto Quaker Bridge Road, we came across other members of our troop out helping Kamran N's Eagle Scout Project for that day.

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After exchanging hellos we went on our way down the road. Here, at Quaker Bridge, is where we took our halfway picture. A good break was taken on the bridge and a few historical stories and facts were thrown around to any who cared to listen. When we left this point, we knew we only had a mere mile at the most before we could setup camp. This mile was rather dragging, but we all pulled through and were in camp around 5 o'clock. With plenty of time to spare, I took a quick swim in the river at the campsite. With our dinner well devoured and the clock tolling 8, all eyes shut on day two of the fifty mile trip.

The longest day of the trip was now upon us. Despite our false encouragements that the longest day was the first day, reality hit home on this Wednesday morning that we had 16 long miles to tackle. With an early 7AM start to our day, we snapped a picture and left camp at around 9, once again taking up our brisk pace of 2.5 miles an hour. The saving grace of this days hike was the welcoming attractions of the day. By far the most interesting day of the hike by my standards, we stopped at the Carranza Memorial, Batona campground, and Apple Pie Hill. The first of these that we encountered was the Carranza Memorial. After making great time with the first 5 miles, we welcomed a short break here, where we discussed why the memorial is there and who Emilio Carranza was. Down the road a little ways, we reached another breaking spot, Batona Campground. Now while Batona Campground is nothing special to the normal camper, it becomes a whole new level of amazing to a Batona Trail backpacker because for the last 13 miles, the only available water was that of iodized Batsto River water, but here, at Batona Campground, there was a water pump! When all the hullabaloo was done with over the water pump, we manned up and took on the next 4 miles with force, until we reached Apple Pie Hill.

Here at Apple Pie Hill we had lunch and took a look see at the top of the tower. Unfortunately, it proved to be too much of an overcast to see Atlantic City or Philadelphia but being at the top of the highest point in Southern New Jersey is always fun. Upon leaving Apple Pie Hill, the only motivation we had left in us was the thought of how good our freeze dried dinner was going to taste when we rolled into camp and believe me, that is some very strong motivation. This motivation kept us going through a grueling stretch of trail between state parks that followed the road giving no cushion to our weary feet, but when we finally entered back into the state park that is Lebanon State Forest, were we only a mere mile away from our campsite. (However, it might also be mentioned as an aside, that of course we never actually camped at this campsite because it didn't open until the following weekend.) After setting up camp, Gallagher stopped by and showed me how to use a water pump that I swore didn't work along with bringing water for us drink. This evening we also tested our hand at bear bags and properly hanging them high in the trees so those Pine Barren bears didn't get them. In finishing this, we once again followed the increasingly sensible pattern of this backpacking trip and headed off to sleep at around 8:30.

The last day of the trip was by far the easiest to get through. The mentality of only having 10 more miles to go was spectacular. The group was in high spirits, and we took our time leaving camp, since we had until 3 o'clock to reach Ong's Hat. This 10 mile portion of the trail was also familiar to us from a prior trip two years ago which was reassuring when it comes to the Batona trail. The first stretch of trail took us around Pakim pond before sending us parallel to route 72 for a couple miles. When this came to an end, the Lebanon fire tower was upon us. Here we took a good long break where we also picked up a large majority of the trash we used for our service project required for the 50 miler patch. After climbing up this tower and dumping our trash in the conveniently placed trash cans, we headed out again. From here we only had 5 more miles left to go before we finished. Now here is the point of the article where I mention how beautiful the weather was for the entirety of the trip. There wasn't any rain, it wasn't too horribly unbearably hot. That is, until, the last mile of the trip. Here, the thunder claps started to roll in and the rain came pouring down. The last mile truly was walking along the trail, when we could see it, with our feet under 6 inches of water. Everything we were wearing became soaked even through the rain jackets we had, but luckily, for those of us that used them, our pack covers proved to keep the rain from drenching any of our gear. This was very helpful when we pulled triumphantly into Ong's Hat and took cover under the big overhang of an abandoned store. It was about 2:30 when we reached Ong's Hat, so that gave us a half an hour to relax before the cars got there to pick us up. During this time, some of us changed into drier clothes while others just ate all of the food they had left from the trip. When Mrs. Smith arrived, we took our last group pictures, one of which was in the rocky pose as requested by Jiff.

This is where the trip ended, 50 miles, 4 days, and 5 scouts later, an adventure none of us will ever forget.

### ***From page 3...***

miles for the day, we were able to walk the short couple of miles down the trail to a large rock formation known as Beam Rock. The name, Beam Rock, comes from how the rocks jut out from the earth and create crevices and cliffs which are fantastic for climbing on. Here at Beam Rock we spent a good hour and a half, some napping, other jumping from rock to rock and still others climbing straight up the side of these boulders. After the fun here was done, we hiked on in between rocks and along a fair flat portion of the trail. Almost less than a mile out from the shelter area for the night we took another break at a small stream. It was here that we stayed until a rumbling of thunder hurried us on our way to the shelter area. Now, upon reaching the shelter area, it was soon discovered that the park service had lied in their information, and the site had no working water pump. Luckily for us, another water pump was nearby, only a mile back down the trail across one of the roads. Pranav, Luke, Myself, and OPB, took it upon themselves to fill up two backpacks with water bottles and hike out to the pump. After filling up every bottle, we hiked back with full 30 pound packs on, but you have to do what you have to do sometimes. After finishing off some rousing freeze dried, we settled back down into dreamland for the night. Bright and early we awoke the next morning, back to the usual routine of a backpacking trip. (the early bird catches the worm they say). Embarking for the third day of adventure around 7:30 after all was said and done, we ventured into the unknown trail ahead of us full of only 10 miles and two somewhat steep upclimbs and downclimbs. It was a good day, despite some cloud cover, and we settled back into our 2 and half mile and hour pace rather quickly. This days entertainment came from the majority of the views that we passed when the trees finally parted and the mountains around us were visible. During the course of this day, we also travelled through some fairly cool spots where the trail cut in between the boulders. Some of these proved to be quite a squeeze for those who had larger bulkier backpacks. Upon reaching camp, we were met with a water pump that must have been running fairly dry due to the fact that the pump was pumping up lots of mud and dead leaves along with the water. This turn of events lead to the use of handy neckerchiefs to filter out all the dirt and muck from the water before adding in our iodine tablets. This was also the last evening of our trip, and I was determined with every fiber in my body to get a fire started, and so it happened. Along with a fire, we met up with some kindly rain clouds which down poured on us for a tiny bit of time before easing up. After the majority of the scouts went to bed, Mike and I set to work on making a rain catcher so as to have pure water sans the iodine taste in the morning if it rained a sufficient amount over the course of the night. It was an epic inventions built upon the ideas of geniuses.

The next morning, to our surprise, the rain catcher had worked! It wasn't full of a ton of water, but there was a good 20 cups worth in there for drinking and cooking breakfast with. After all the hoopla over the rain catcher was done and breakfast was completed. We headed out of camp and stopped by the water pump once more before meeting back up with the trail. While the weather was a bit rainy at times, the day wasn't bad at all. With our heads held high, we traveled down the trail and the mountain to the awaiting mile marker 70. Within the last 3 miles of the end, we also almost managed to get ourselves lost by going down a wrong path, but we quickly caught ourselves as the rain began to pick up and headed towards the finish line.

When we reached the end, there was much cheering and excitement from all. The rain that was steadily coming down was no hindrance to the high spirits of this backpacking crew. The only problem here was, our rides were about an hour away, so we put up a tarp to stand under and reveled in the moment of having completed another 50 mile backpacking trip. Before you know it, you'll be reading an article about our trip out west to Grand Teton National Park, where the real mountains are.



# Troop 48 Schedule 2011-2012

Friday to Sunday, October 14 to 16 – Sandy Hook, Sandy Hook, NJ

October 22 & 23– Paul I Eagle Project

November/December TBA – Battleship NJ Cleanup

November/December TBA – Rabbit Rescue Service Project

Wednesday to Monday, November 2 to 21 – Scouting for Food, Berlin, NJ

Friday to Sunday, November 18 to 20 – Bodine Field (with Cub Scouts), Woodland Twp, NJ

Monday, November 21 – Scouting for Food Distribution, Holy Communion Church, Berlin, NJ

Thursday, November 24 – 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Feed the Troops Thanksgiving Celebration, Cherry Hill, NJ

December - Holiday Toy & Clothing Drive

December TBA – Leader’s Holiday Party

December 7 – Super Bowl Hoagie Sale Kickoff

Thursday, December 15 – Court of Honor, Berlin Methodist Church, Berlin, NJ

Wednesday, December 21 – Troop 48 Holiday Party (Scouts), Berlin, NJ

Sunday, January 8 – Ski Trip, Jack Frost Mountain, Mt. Pocono, PA

Friday to Sunday, January 27 to 29 – White Horse District Klondike Derby, Pine Hill, NJ

Sunday, February 5 – Super Bowl Hoagie Sale, Voorhees, NJ

Thursday, February 16 – Flyers vs Buffalo Sabres

Friday to Sunday, February 17 to 19 – Rodney Scout Reservation, Northeast, MD

Saturday, March 3– Constitution Center Day, Philadelphia, PA?

Friday to Sunday, March 24 to 26 – Gettysburg, PA

Friday to Sunday, April TBA – Canoe Trip?

Friday to Sunday, April 27 – 29 – Highland Games?

May 19??? – Reptile and Amphibian Day, Museum of Natural History, Philadelphia, PA?

Friday to Sunday, May TBA – Assateague Island, Berlin, MD

Spring TBA– Movie Fundraiser

June TBA – Swim Day/ Troop BBQ, Atsion Lake, Atsion, NJ

June TBA – Eagle Court of Honor

Summer TBA – Week Long Summer Trip

July TBA– Rock Climbing

August TBA – Grand Teton High Adventure Trip

Friday to Sunday, September 28 to 30 – MS 150 City-to-Shore Bike Ride Rest Stop



# PERMISSION SLIP – Sandy Hook



**When?:** Friday, October 14 – Sunday, October 16, 2011.  
Please meet at “the shed” at 5:30 PM, we will be aiming to leave by 6:30!

**Where?:** Sandy Hook NRA, Fort Hancock, NJ

**Cost?:** \$25 - Please make checks payable to “Troop 48”

Every Scout needs comfortable hiking footwear, several water bottles, and a day pack!

Please eat dinner before you come Friday!

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SCOUT: \_\_\_\_\_ has permission to attend the troop activity/trip and has permission to engage in all activities, except as noted below. I hereby give permission to the physician selected by the adult leader in charge to treat, hospitalize, and secure proper anesthesia and/or order injection or surgery for my son/ward.

RESTRICTIONS: \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

If your son is required to take medication or has any other special needs, please list the details below:

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