

101 ALUMNI QUARTERLY

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“Yes, The Struggle Has Been Real, But We Carry On!”

The Scoutmaster's Corner - Dr. Ken LaPolla



July 6th will be a milestone for Troop 101 as it will be the first time since March 9th that the Troop will meet. This has been the longest hiatus the Troop has ever taken – and hopefully ever will.

Christopher, our SPL for this term, has probably had the most stressful term,

even though he's never run a meeting nor a campout. By now, he would have been at ease with the planning and diligently preparing the Troop for Summer Camp, then Canada after that. But he and the Troop will have neither of those to look forward to this Summer.

Yes, the Troop, because of the COVID-19 crisis, has been struggling to carry on, but now we are back! So, how do we develop a program that is both challenging and rewarding given the current restrictions? I'll tell you when I know.

The border to Canada and Algonquin is still closed as I write this (Mike Babyak, “Open the gates!”) so we have made the tough decision to forgo our high adventure trip this Summer. The risks are too great and as for weekend camping, the new rules make it nearly impossible to do for now: only 10 Scouts and Leaders on a site, we can only use Scout Camps while State Park Group areas are currently closed, and no preparing of shared food or carpooling. Yes, you must bring your own food and each Scout is to be driven

separately to camp. So, imagine planning a trip with the size of our Troop with those restrictions!

And Summer camp is “virtual” this year and marketed as “camp in a box.” The value is to be determined by those who choose to participate, \$129 for various freebies and some online programs, with a limit of 6 merit badges selected from an even more limited list. My brother Mike's council, Minsi Trails in Pennsylvania, is offering a free virtual Summer Camp, so we may be virtually going out of Council for Summer Camp this year. You definitely can't beat the price.

But on the bright side and thanks to your generosity, as our Alumni Association President Tim Ross noted in his column on page 2, we have a new “Big Blue” trailer that just arrived. Thanks, John Szwecyck, for driving to Georgia to pick it up and deliver it back to us (Hello Zach and Sebo!). Now Matt McCracken and his team will begin constructing the insides and, with fingers crossed, we will take her on her maiden voyage this Fall.

I hope to have more to write next time especially if we are able to organize a few day events over the next coming months. But these are unique times and are cause for unique measures. But we will come out strong on the other side.

See you soon! (I hope.)

-Ken

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From the President

By Tim Ross, Alumni Association President

Thank You, Thank You, Thank You!
We asked - YOU Responded



When I am asked what kind of satisfaction that I get from being President of the Troop 101 Alumni Association, the answer comes easily - working with and serving the people who make up the Alumni membership.

History shows that whenever we need help, they act. Do they ever!

Earlier this year we learned that our Troop equipment trailer, "Big Blue", was shot. Some 16 years of wear and tear had taken its toll and the trailer was way beyond repair.

Time for a new trailer, but the replacement cost was steep; roughly \$9,500. We put out an appeal for donations to help defray the expense.

Soon, donations from the Alumni membership, Troop members and families and Scouting friends began trickling in with dollar amounts ranging from \$25, all the way up to a couple of \$1,000 donations!

Most of the donors wished to remain anonymous and while I would love to publicly thank each and every one of them by name, I will respect their wishes.

The bottom line here is our mission to support our Scouts who depend on us to help provide the needed tools for a quality Scouting program. The Scouting program at Troop 101 has been, and will remain, a benchmark program to teach skills and leadership to those willing to learn.

We shall continue to stress the importance of being a part of a child's future and giving to future generations of Scouts who will benefit from the same high-quality program, which is a Troop 101 tradition and something we are proudly noted for.

Once, again thank you for rising to the challenge and helping to maintain our tradition of Scouting excellence!

-Tim



Ned Gold Jr. Honored with Silver Buffalo Award

One of 14 Honorees in the USA



Ned Cooper Gold Jr. is from Warren, Ohio is an outstanding Eagle Scout, Visionary Scouter, and Attorney

Ned considers founding and organizing the Philmont Staff Association as his greatest achievement in his 60 years as a Scouter. In its 47-year history, the PSA's

membership, now numbering over 4,000, has raised millions of dollars for Philmont, built buildings, and funded camperships and staff scholarships.

The members have continued their service to Philmont and Scouting by giving hundreds of thousands of hours. The PSA has spawned a number of other high-adventure and council camp staff associations that have performed the same service for their respective camps.

Ned began his Scouting tenure as a Cub Scout in his birthplace of Santa Fe, New Mexico, at age 8. He has been instrumental in bringing the BSA art collection, including the Norman Rockwell paintings, out of storage and onto display at the Medici Museum of Art

in his hometown.

His family counts three generations of Eagle Scouts, with a fourth generation on its way. Seeing his children benefit from Scouting, especially on expeditions to Philmont, has brought him joy. His wife, Debbie, has been on three of these expeditions, and Ned thanks her for her continued support of his Scouting.

Ned is the proud recipient of the NESA Outstanding Eagle Scout Award, Philmont Staff Association Silver Sage Award, and William H. Spurgeon III Award. He has also been honored with the Silver Antelope and Silver Beaver awards and is a Vigil Honor member of the Order of the Arrow.

Professionally, Ned is the managing attorney of his law firm and has practiced law for 54 years, including four years while serving as an Air Force judge advocate. He is certified in labor and employment law under Ohio Supreme Court rules and has been recognized as an Ohio "Super Lawyer" for several years.

Ned is the proud father of Gregory, also an attorney, and daughters Marianne, and Angela. The Golds have six grandchildren.

Congratulations Ned!



Editor's note: The National office of the BSA bestowed upon Troop 101 alumnus Ned Gold, The Silver Buffalo Award, the BSA's highest recognition for adult volunteers, presented annually to those who give noteworthy national-level service to youth.

This year's award ceremony looked a little different because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Normally, the awards would've been presented in-person during the BSA's annual meeting.

Ned was among 14 volunteer Scouters receiving this year's honor and here is what the national BSA had to say about Ned's long dedication to Scouting:

Troop 101 Grace

For the waters that we canoe
For the valleys we hike through
For our brothers and our friends
For the nourishment from your hands
We humbly pray for strength and understanding
For all those things which are demanding

*The Troop now has an official Grace
Written by Van Padula and Ken LaPolla*





Being 'Virtually' Prepared in the Face of a Pandemic

Mike said with lockdowns and pandemic 'stay at home' edicts, there was certainly a 'captive audience' for these homemade Scout videos. "We started out doing virtual programming for Cub Scouts. We had Cubs from California, Virginia, Texas,

remember Jim P. watching from a distance and Mr. Wasilewski right next to me, watching in awe as those chocolate chip cookies came together SIX HOURS LATER. It worked!" said Mike.

Mike LaPolla, Troop 101's Eagle Scout #20 (1986) isn't letting any old pandemic damper his Scouting enthusiasm. He's a lifelong Scouter who is taking the motto 'Be Prepared' (and creative) to a whole new level in the face of a crisis.

In these times in which the 'Outing' has been taken out of 'Scouting', Mike, brother of Scoutmaster Ken, came up with a way to deliver Scouting to scores of home-bound Scouts thanks to the internet.

Mike, now a professional Scouter, is the Forks of the Delaware District Scout Director in Allentown, Pennsylvania's Minsi Trails Council and is sharing his Scouting skills via homemade videos posted on the Minsi Council's Facebook page and quite the rage among Scouts, Leaders and parents.

"Well, a little unwelcomed visitor by the name of COVID-19 showed up in our world and we had to come up with something to keep the Scouts (Scouters and Scouts) engaged with the program," said Mike. "Many units, families or leaders are timid by virtual anything to be honest.

So, our Scout staff decided to bring the program to them."

Then Mike decided to bring the videos to the older Scout program and, drawing on his Troop 101 Scouting days, Mike said ideas came freely and naturally.

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Always seeking to inform and entertain, Mike said there is a fair degree of planning and preparation involved in cranking out these videos and there are challenges at every turn.

"At the very beginning, it was trial and error to make something funny but informative. However, a lack of good technology, unsteady hands, a five-year-old and ten-year-old in the house, home schooling, working from home, unfortunately it all made for some "un-viewable" videos," explained Mike, "Then came the idea of tripods and Velcro to hold the camera, fishing line to hide wires, the use of small, 15-20 video clips that you can meld together for a full story. 'Trial and Error' is the only thing that keeps the videos getting better."

A 'never say die attitude' continues to keep Mike's enthusiasm and creativity alive. "My family can attest that I am a certified oddball and not a fan of 'that won't work' and, 'that's impossible', or 'why waste your



Mike LaPolla and Family

"Ever since I was a Tenderfoot Scout in Troop 101, I loved to build things from the Scout handbook and Field Book. Why? Just to see if I could do it and also to impress Jim P. and the other Leaders. One time I decided that I was going to make a homemade reflection stove for camp. I was ridiculed, but I

time?' Argggggg! Those are awful things to be told and big hinderances on fostering imagination. So yes, there were challenges, but I enjoy challenges."

Writing, directing and producing all of these videos, he says, keep him 'mentally awake'.

"You might find this shocking, but I have ADHD and during this time, video making is therapy (he said he has since been 'relocated' to the garage because of it). Yes, I like doing Scout videos, Merit badge virtual classes, camping videos and everyday nonsense stuff. Sometimes, it is a family affair, making videos around the yard, which makes them even more enjoyable."

So, are there more Mike LaPolla videos in the making? "Absolutely," he said, "If anyone visits our Minsi Trails Facebook page (facebook.com/watch/minsitrailsbsa), they can see videos from me and



Young Jim Potjunas instructing Mike

other staff members. If someone sends an idea, I will try it and most likely will put a twist on it."

Mike said his target audience for these clever videos is everyone in the Scouting community. "We have to continue instilling the values of Scouting in our youth and our families, now more than ever before."

Saying Goodbye to Friends and Family



Lawrence "Larry" Beers, 81, of Warren, passed away peacefully Friday, June 26, 2020 at his home. The father of Troop 101 Eagle Scout # 50, Mike Beers (1992). Mr. Beers was an active Troop supporter.

He was born May 25, 1939, in Conneaut and was a graduate of Rowe High School and furthered his education by attending Youngstown State University, receiving a bachelor's degree in education. Larry was a professional photographer, a hobby for which he truly had a passion.

He began his career as a trainer with Arby's International

Larry Beers (1939 - 2020)

and worked for the Tribune Chronicle. Larry retired after 10 years with B & R Wholesale Tire, where he worked as a salesman in international and local sales.

Memories of Larry will be cherished by his wife of 58 years, the former Sondra Marinelli, whom he married on Oct. 9, 1962; two children, Michael (Leyla) Beers of New Albany and Melissa Beers of Columbus; and by four grandchildren, Benjamin Leffler and Daxton, Weston and Dalton Beers. He is also survived by his longtime friend, Glen (Katherine) Stiles of Warren.

A memorial Mass celebrating the life of Larry is scheduled to take place in Columbus.



Ronald Criss 84, died Tuesday, April 14, 2020, at St. Joseph Warren Hospital.

The father of Troop 101 Eagle Scout Ryan Criss #52, 1993, Mr. Criss was an avid Troop 101 supporter and, for many years, secured the Ali Baba Grotto Hall for the annual Troop Christmas Party.

He was active in the Ali Baba Grotto in several leadership roles, Old Erie Lodge #3, F. & A.M, and American Legion Post 700. He enjoyed painting, wood

Ron Criss (1936 - 2020)

carving, drawing, spending time with friends, and most of all, his children and grandchildren.

He was born Feb. 8, 1936, in Steubenville and a veteran of the U.S. Army, Second Armored Division. He was employed as circulation supervisor for the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Survivors include his wife, Shirley Hussar Criss; children, Sheri Criss and Ryan Criss, both of Howland; and five grandchildren. There were no services or calling hours as cremation took place.

Troop 101 - Celebrating 45 Years

Our History - Part 1 of 2

Editor's Note: Our Troop turned 45 this year, and while COVID-19 prevented us from holding a reunion or celebration, it does allow us time to reflect on the past 45 years.

In this article, you can read about the Troops early beginnings, as well as several milestones in the first 13 years.

Have any major Milestones we've missed, let us know at Newsletter@troop101.net!

Dissatisfied with the direction of Warren Boy Scout Troop 11, a faction of leaders and Scouts depart the Troop in an internal leadership disagreement that caused Troop 11 Scoutmaster Bill Brown to leave Scouting.

Three Troop 11 Scouts, including young Scout Gregg Hillman, decided to ride their bikes to Mr. Brown's print shop in downtown Warren and plead with him to come back to the Troop, but Mr. Brown was adamant. He was not returning to Troop 11.

About a month or so later, everyone got together to form a new Troop, "Troop 101". It consists of Gregg Hillman and five other Scouts, a handful of adults and Bill Brown as the new Troop's Scoutmaster. He is assisted by a young Eagle Scout, Jim Potjunas.

How did the number 101 come about? Borrowing the numerals "1" and "1" from Warren Troop 11, the new Troop leadership decided to separate the numerals with a "0" in the middle. This way, the Scouts coming over from Troop 11 only had to buy one patch, the 0. (These were the days when numerals were sold as individually, unlike the block Troop patches of today.) The "101" designation became the new Troop's number.

The first several meetings were held at Mr. Brown's house in downtown Warren. The Troop moved to the Elks Lodge on Youngstown Road, which became the Troop's chartered partner, (sponsor) donating \$1,000 to outfit two patrols, cleaning up part of its basement and giving the new Troop a closet to store camping gear.

To help get the new Troop rolling, Mr. Bill Marton, Troop 101's Committee Chairman, loaned a 4x8 wooden trailer and friends of the Troop loan 3 aluminum canoes. The new Troop 101 is ready to camp.

In March of 1975, the first Troop 101 campout is held at the Davenport in Southington, followed by a Mill Creek hike and in April, the Troop held its first service project, decorating veterans' graves at Mespo cemetery.

In August, 1975 the Troop made its maiden voyage to Algonquin Provincial Park, Ontario with the very first base camp in the Canadian wilds.

In 1976 – as Scoutmaster Bill Brown's health begins to decline, Assistant Scoutmaster Gary Mansell succeeds Mr. Brown as Troop 101 Scoutmaster.

1977 – The first Troop 101 Eagle Court of Honor is held on December 22 with James J. LaPolla becoming Troop 101's first Eagle Scout.

Elks To Sponsor Boy Scout Troop

Warren Elks Lodge is sponsoring a newly formed Boy Scout troop 101 and is providing \$1,000 in equipment to get the troop underway.

The first Court of Honor was held and a charter presented by William Kasanicky, exalted ruler of the Elks lodge.

Scoutmaster William Brown presented awards to Joel Bagby, John Boyle, Paul Bates, Scott Lapolla, Robert and Henry Crouse, Keith and

Eugene Carney, Gregg and Kevin Hillman, Tim Orr and Trent Kundel.

A bronze palm was awarded James Potjunas, first class award, Robert Crouse, second class, Scott Lapolla, Greg Hillman and tenderfoot Scouts invested were Joel Bagby, Paul Bates, Henry Crouse and Eugene Carney.

Meetings are held Tuesday evenings at 7 for boys over age 11.



RECEIVES CHARTER— William Brown, second from left, as scoutmaster of recently organized Boy Scout troop 101, receives the charter from William Kasanicky, left, exalted ruler of Warren

Elks Lodge, sponsor of the troop. At right is Nick Kovic, Elks state youth coordinator, and next to him is William Marton, scout committee chairman.

1978 - Troop 101 Mother's Auxiliary, a Troop support group is formed

1978 – First Troop 101 Spaghetti Dinner.

1979 - The Troop's membership swells to 59 Scouts.

1980 – March, Kenneth D. LaPolla becomes the Troop's Eagle Scout #3.

1980 - June 17th, Jim Potjunas is appointed Scoutmaster of Troop 101, succeeding Gary Mansell.

1982 - The late Bill Marton, former Troop 101 Chairman and long-time committee member, builds six new Patrol boxes, which will serve the Troop for more than 35 years.

1985 - February, former Scoutmaster William E. (Bill) Brown dies at age 77.

1988 - The Troop's first C&O Canal-Towpath Bike Trip.

In the next issue of the Alumni Quarterly, The Troop history, 1990 to 2020.

From the Eagles Nest - Stavan Shah, Eagle #143



AQ: What did you decide to do after aging out?

Stavan: I decided that I wanted to Pursue a college degree. I have been attending The Ohio State University for the past three years. I am majoring in Biomedical Engineering with an Honors Research Distinction and the intent to attend medical school.

AQ: What Scout Skills do you feel have served you best over the past few years?

Stavan: Communication and Leadership. They go hand in hand. One leads to the other. These skills are so transferable and can be applied to any position of leadership or teamwork. Whether I am on a class project, design team, research lab, or volunteer experience they are absolutely applicable anywhere. I cannot thank Mr. P and the rest of the Scout Leaders enough for how much they impacted my development off these skills.

AQ: What are you up to today?

Stavan: I am finishing up the third year of my degree. Since I am planning on attending Medical School, I have to take an entrance exam known as the MCAT which consumes a great deal of time. I have also recently submitted my proposal for my undergraduate research thesis. Without going too crazy in depth, I am looking at how iron co-locates with these brain lesions in patents diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease.

AQ: From your time in 101, what are some of your favorite memories?

Stavan: The biking trip was easily my favorite adventure

As a regular Alumni Quarterly feature, we catch up with our more recent Eagle Scouts who have turned 18, "aged-out" and moved on after completing the Trail to Eagle. This quarter, we sit down with Stavan Shah, Eagle Scout #143 (January, 2016)

with the Troop! It still surprises me to this day that I twice received the amazing opportunity to go on that trip. I look forward to doing it again sometime in the future.

I am going to cheat on this question and give a second answer. I cannot say how appreciative I am of all the time Mr. P gave to this Troop and its many Scouts. He was absolutely impactful in my development in who I am today and I cannot talk about my time in Troop 101 without recognizing him. He will always be with me in my heart.

AQ: What do you think of the Jim Potjunas Scout Center?

Stavan: I got the chance to be around when the building was going up but didn't get to spend too much time within the building. It is absolutely amazing that our Troop is blessed to have such an amazing and supportive community and Alumni Association. The chance that our Troop provides youth with the opportunity to explore so many skills including 3D printing is absolutely amazing. Also, the fact that it has Mr. P's name on it is so appropriate.

AQ: Any other comments or thoughts you want to share?

Stavan: I just want to thank all the ASM's and Committee Members who volunteer to support the youth in our Troop! This program was so great for me and my development because of the volunteerism of the adults. I hope that this remains true for many more generations of Scouts with Troop 101. I understand everyone cannot support the Troop in the same way, but the time you volunteer to support Troop 101 and Scouting is what allows for the youth's development. Every bit helps with volunteer-based organizations like these and this is absolutely a great cause with its rich history and tradition. As Ohio State coaching legend Woody Hayes said, "Pay it Forward!"

BSA Issues Commitment to Act Against Racial Injustice

Includes New Eagle Required Merit Badge



BSA Issues Commitment to Act Against Racial Injustice Includes New Eagle Required Merit Badge

The following statement was issued by the National Council of the BSA on June 15, 2020:

As our country reckons with racial injustice, we all must consider our role and our failures and commit to meaningful action.

The twelve points of the Scout Law that define a Scout are all important, but at this moment, we are called on to be brave. Brave means taking action because it is the right thing to do and being an upstander even when it may prompt criticism from some. We realize we have not been as brave as we should have been because, as Scouts, we must always stand for what is right and take action when the situation demands it.

There is no place for racism – not in Scouting and not in our communities. Racism will not be tolerated.

We condemn the murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and all those who are not named but are equally important. We hear the anguish, feel the heartbreak, and join the country's resolve to do better.

The Boy Scouts of America stands with Black families and the Black community because we believe that Black Lives Matter. This is not a political issue; it is a human rights issue and one we all have a duty to address. That is why, as an organization, we commit to:

- Introducing a specific diversity and inclusion merit badge that will be required for the rank of Eagle Scout. It will build on components within existing merit badges, including the American Cultures and Citizenship in the Community merit badges, which require Scouts to

learn about and engage with other groups and cultures to increase understanding and spur positive action.

- Reviewing every element of our programs to ensure diversity and inclusion are engrained at every level for participants and volunteers by applying a standard that promotes racial equality and denounces racism, discrimination, inequality and injustice.
- Requiring diversity and inclusion training for all BSA employees starting July 1 and taking immediate action toward introducing a version for volunteers in the coming months.
- Conducting a review of property names, events and insignia, in partnership with local councils, to build on and enhance the organization's nearly 30-year ban on use of the Confederate flag and to ensure that symbols of oppression are not in use today or in the future.

These are our next steps but certainly not our last.

We will also continue to listen more, learn more and do more to promote a culture in which every person feels that they belong, are respected, and are valued in Scouting, in their community, and across America.

As a movement, we are committed to working together with our employees, volunteers, youth members, and communities so we can all become a better version of ourselves and continue to prepare young people to become the leaders of character our communities and our country need to heal and grow.

Yours in Scouting,

The Boy Scouts of America, National Executive Committee

Dan Ownby - *National Chair*, Roger Mosby - *President and CEO*, Scott Sorrels - *National Commissioner*, Devang Desai, Jack Furst, Skip Oppenheimer, Nathan Rosenberg, Alison Schuler, Michael Sears, Thear Suzuki, Brad Tilden and Jim Turley.

Camp Stigwandish - One Last Walk, Saying Goodbye to an Old Friend

by Steve Stefanko

Editor's Note: Many of us sadly recall the last days of Camp Chickagami. Now, Camp Stigwandish (affectionately known as "Stig") is gone, auctioned off at the end of May due to long-term financial difficulties. Many of our alumnus spent time at Stig as Troop 101 camped there many times in the past. Veteran Scouter Steve Stefanko spent many days and nights at Stig shares with us his final walk-through of a Scout camp, a big part of his life, which now holds nothing more than fond memories. Steve is a 30-year volunteer with BSA, currently a Council Board member, a Scoutmaster for 10 years and a Wood Badge Course Director (C4-463-12). Steve retired this year after 25 years in the Steel industry, 15 years as a contractor to government pension agency. He is married with two children and three grandchildren.



My relationship with "Stig" is twofold: as an adult Scout volunteer with hundreds of nights camping with a couple of generations of Scouts, and as a member of the last two Council Executive Boards responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Council and ensuring its

long-term viability. The situations are diametrically opposed to each other.

So, I went out to camp to take one last walk around and, in effect, say 'goodbye' to an old friend in the final days before the auction.

In three and a half hours, I hiked pretty much the whole camp and was overcome with 30 years of memories, a great deal of emotion, a few tears and quite a bit of mental conflict. At the end of my visit, I had (I think) finally come to grips with a situation that we have been wrestling with for at least 15 years.

It was a gorgeous day – sunshine, blue skies, gentle breeze blowing, birds singing and little critters everywhere. I started in the main parking lot and hiked past the pond where every year, spring peepers announce that winter is over, and summer is not far away.

I passed by the old C.O.P.E. (Challenging Outdoor Personal Experience) course, the pavilion in the Johnny Appleseed campsite, the Eagle's Nest campsites (there are three).

At one of the Eagle Nest sites, I remember being roused late one evening by the Camp Ranger, along with my wife. Seems my Dad had been hospitalized with a massive infection and I needed to get home fast!

Across the way in another, I attended my graduation ceremony from Scoutmaster Basic Training and had my walking stave branded with the likeness of Lord Baden Powell by one of the dearest people I have ever known – George Swain.

Then it was down the hill to Mill Creek – past what is known as 'suicide hill' where little Jose Rivera once

rode his toboggan into a tree and had to be life-flighted out of camp with a broken neck. I walked past the OA (Order of the Arrow) ceremonial area and the remains of the Pop Corey campsite, formerly the rifle range. All that remains of that area are concrete piers that the cabin/rifle range building sat on, the concrete base and urinal that once was a two-seat outhouse and a small pavilion.



The Dining Hall

Years ago, a three-day rain produced a massive logjam under a highway bridge upriver from camp and when it gave way, the 'tidal wave' it produced raced through that section of camp destroying everything in its path. Had this occurred a day earlier, many Scouts would have lost their lives as they were camping in that site.

I continued to on to what is known as the 'White Trail' along Mill Creek as it winds through the lower

end of camp and then walked back up a rather large hill and back to the main area of camp. The Spring foliage was overwhelming – flowering trees, new ferns, large patches of wildflowers on either side of the path which was sometimes carpeted with a bright green moss so that it looked like a putting green.

My hike then took me to the place in camp where I have spent more time than any other – the dining hall. As I toured the kitchen for one last time, I tried to mentally estimate how many kids and adults I have fed there over the years - they number in the thousands. I



Johnny Appleseed Pavilion

cooked for many large events, often serving breakfast and dinner to over 400 people at a time.

There is little else in this world that gives me more pleasure and satisfaction than cooking for kids – and adults, too. There is just something about watching them enjoy what I worked all day to prepare. The kitchen is also where I met my “brother from another mother” and one of my dearest friends, Mr. Cook, who sadly has ‘gone home’. I will miss that building more than any other.

As I left, I walked past a big open area, which through tradition, became “Gilwell Field” the gathering area whenever a Wood Badge course was put on at Camp. I took my last walk off of that field as a Course Director for Wood Badge course C4-463-12 and that experience will forever be in my memory, because when a Course Director (CD) leaves Gilwell Field for the last time (ceremonially alone) it signifies the end of his/her ability to be a Course Director ever again, so that others may have the growth experience of being a CD, a truly bittersweet moment.

Then I hiked past the cabins, the newly

constructed archery range and up to the lakes where Scouts fished, swam and canoed, and where on one clear autumn evening, my son and I laid on the ground for a good hour just admiring the stars in the night sky.

This also took me past the spot in camp that is seemingly the absolute coldest and windiest place on earth during the winter and where I once ran a winter event with Bob Heimberger, who is a generation older than me. I had serious concerns for Bob’s safety during that event but he is a trooper and he said something like, ‘it just doesn’t get any better than this!’ – he used to say that while camping in the pouring rain, too. That attitude is something that I have tried to emulate ever since.

From there, I hiked over to the outdoor chapel where I personally feel closer to my Creator than just about anywhere else other than the outdoor chapel area at Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico.

My next stop was the nature lodge. A group of Scouters and I used to host a group of local elementary school kids for a ‘day or two at camp’ every Spring, and one particular year we used the lodge as base camp. Lots of crafts for them to do, fishing, nature walks, games in the fields – they had a BALL. When lunchtime came, we had pasta and meatballs that my good friend Mike and I cooked from scratch in the pavilion by the lodge. After lunch one of the kids (her name was Gabby and I’ll not forget her as long as I live) asked if there were any leftovers that she could take home because, she said, it was the best thing she’d ever eaten and her family didn’t always eat dinner or breakfast (she got lunch at school). So, two teary-eyed old Scouters sent her home with close to a gallon of sauce and meatballs and quite a bit of cooked pasta – a simple meal to us, but a feast to her little eyes.

My hike continued back to the rifle range where I had spent many winter days with the shooting sports group instructing Scouts how to load and shoot black-powder rifles – always the most popular event at our large winter campout known as the Klondike Derby. Then I wandered back to the campsites where tens of thousands of kids had slept over the years both for weekend camping and for week-long summer camp.

At the end of one of the roads where the campsites are, is the shotgun range where the kids in my Troop will always remind me that I almost killed “Arty” – the

shotgun instructor. I loaded the trap incorrectly and instead of throwing the clay target downrange, it swung it around and hit him on the back of the hand causing much pain and some blood. He survived, but always waved to me showing the back of that hand after that!

I finished my tour with a long walk up and down several hills and back to the parking lot. I encountered a young man along the way. “Kevin”, once a Scout and a member of Summer Camp Staff is now one of the professional Scouters. He was carrying a white five-gallon pail and walking the camp roads. When I asked him what he was up to, his response was something along the lines of, “picking up trash – just because the place is being sold, that doesn’t mean we shouldn’t keep it clean.” I was floored. This is someone who truly “gets it” and has an attitude I wish more people had.

I hiked past the Trading Post where Scouts bought delicious treats, camp gear and camping equipment. The treats were devoured many times instead of the meals that were served in the dining hall during Summer Camp, and to this day, I don’t know who it was that decided “Fire Paste” was a good thing to sell to kids! I spent an entire Summer Camp one year confiscating that particular item from the kids in my Troop, lest the entire camp was set ablaze!

On the steps of that building in the winters, I ladled out countless cups of hot chocolate and soup to thousands of Cub Scouts during their Wacky Winter Fun Day camp. Several of them have recognized me at their Eagle Scout Boards of Review many years later, which felt good, but also reminded me that I’m not getting any younger!



The Shotgun Range



The Chapel

As I chugged up the last hill on the road back to the parking lot, I was asked by one of the ‘hosts’ for the day if I needed him to call 911 for me – a jovial crack about my age and the length of time I’d been hiking. I replied, “No thanks, all I really need is something to mend my broken heart.” I signed out on the camp register with the time I was leaving, collected my souvenir patch, and headed for my truck to begin the trip home.

It turns out I left camp feeling a lot better than when I got there. I had been questioning whether or not I had made the right decision almost half a year earlier when I cast my vote as a Board Member to sell the camp – emotionally one of the most difficult things I have ever done.

At one point in my hike, I was so overwhelmed with the beauty of the camp and my memories of all the good times there, that I was convinced that we should try one more time to figure out a way to keep the camp. I even considered calling the Council President and asking him if I could retroactively change my vote.

But then I remembered paying particular attention during my hike to the general condition of the camp and the events I had attended in the recent past. These were the events where equipment didn’t work or was nonexistent, roads were inaccessible, latrines were unusable, so much so that the camp today is dotted with bright blue port-a-potties. Then there is the water system that works seemingly when it feels like working and there were many more issues that led up to the decision to sell the camp.

I also remembered the untold number of kids who have used the camp over the years. Sadly, their numbers have been declining. As a



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The Nature Lodge

result, some programs have been cancelled due to poor attendance and the unwillingness of adults to use the primitive facilities. That unwillingness, also sadly, is also evident with Scouts, as well.

Yes, we tried to save the place. We really did.

Over the past 15 years, two teams or professionals (not the professional Scout staff, but commercial real estate people, accountants, lawyers, and a couple of old Scoutmasters, myself included) from two different Scout Councils, had studied the camp in its entirety.

Factors taken into account were camp condition, usage, revenues, expenses, improvements needed and others. Everyone arrived at the same conclusion – it is financially unsustainable without a massive infusion of dollars that the current Council just doesn't have.

Personally, it all reminded me of the time when my Mom had passed away several years prior and my Dad's health and mental state were declining. It had come to the point where Dad had to go live in an assisted living facility making it necessary to sell his house in order to pay for his care, which was far better for him than living alone in the house where I was raised. I remember having pretty much the same feelings about the family house that I do about Camp Stigwandish. I desperately wanted to find a way to keep the home in the family and still have Dad taken

care of, but it wasn't possible.

In much the same way, our Council cannot keep the camp, but I believe the reality is that without all of the financial strain, we may be able to provide an even better program for kids in another camp, although not nearly as pretty of a facility. And just like with my Dad's house, I'm sure I'll get over this – eventually.

In my mind, there has never been a more beautiful piece of property with which to provide a wonderful outdoor program for the youth members of the Boy Scouts of America, as well as many other groups of kids in the local communities.

I will miss Camp Stigwandish terribly. But if my willingness and ability to work to provide great programs and life lessons to future Scouts is dependent upon my feelings about the facility where that happens, I am doing what I do for entirely the wrong reasons.

I'm pretty sure my conflict has been resolved.



Upcoming Events & Activities

Due to COVID-19, all activities are subject to change

FOR UP TO DATE EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES BE SURE TO CHECK OUT THE TROOP CALENDAR AT
<https://troop101.net/?v=Calendar>