



Troop 49 - The Pathfinders
Glen Gray Merit Badge Fair Trip Report
May 13 – 14, 2011

The Glen Gray Merit Badge fair is a terrific *local* opportunity to enjoy a campout and for scouts of all levels to work on advancement and merit badges. Between baseball games, the VMS social, and various family events, 24 scouts participated in this annual event. There were 10 scouts in the New Scout Program - a target rich opportunity to complete advancements and quickly rise up through the ranks. For the more advanced scouts, this was a chance to pick off a few essential badges on the advancement path.

9 different merit badges were pursued by our scouts:

- American Labor
- Composite Materials
- Family Life
- Fishing
- Geocaching
- Photography
- Pottery
- Woodcarving

Friday, May 13

Most participants gathered at OLPH on Friday evening at 5:45 for our usual muster ritual. There was perhaps more excitement than usual as many new scouts were participating. Due to the complications of sports and school work, a number of the older scouts joined us later in the evening. Part of the protocol for the GGMBF is that participants must stay over on Friday evening.

With our early start, we were the very first group in camp, and quickly gathered in the parking lot to begin the hike up to camp. We reserved the Dormanville lean-to site which is located up on the ridge to the north past Mothercroft. While the hike's elevation gain is substantial, it is a beautiful spot with lovely views of the valley and it's far enough away from the center of camp to be a quiet spot in the evening.

By 6:30, we were settled in and the scouts began the process of gathering firewood. Several of the more senior scouts led advancement sessions, teaching skills to the new troop members. Of particular interest was the camp stove session, with 4 or 5 different stove variations available. Particular thanks go to Patrick D. and Zack R. for making the effort. Thank you gentlemen!

While everyone ate before coming up to camp, we enjoyed our ritual "snack" about 9:30 with quite a spread of cheese, crackers, and pepperoni. The smell should have attracted bears from miles away; sadly, there were no takers!

After the close of the VMS Social, our final few scouts arrived at approximately 10:30 PM and camp fell quiet about 11 PM, with Scouts sinking into sleep amidst thoughts of advancements and merits badges that awaited in the morning.

Saturday, May 14

The campers enjoyed an excellent breakfast thanks to Christopher and Matthew L, who stepped up to the task- thank you very much! The morning routine was completed without a hitch as scouts eagerly anticipated the events of the day.

We mustered on the dam at 8:30 for an 8:45 start. There were many familiar faces as Troop 369 was represented, as well as scouting friends from Franklin Lakes, Ramsey, and other surrounding towns.

At 9:00, we were dismissed from flags and the scouts went off to pursue their choices. The adults - some 7 or 8 parents and ASMs - fanned out amongst the venues to ensure everyone was on purpose. No concern here - everyone was engaged and making excellent progress. Michelle Bruhn, the scout mom who organizes this event and makes it work so well, had the event running like clockwork, as usual. Lots of help was available for the scouts with a rich offering of badges, advancements and encouragement.

Our scouts did exceedingly well, and were very engaged in their various classes. Many of the younger scouts took full advantage of the New Scout Program and completed enough advancements to earn rank advancement – some even shot up two ranks through a combination of completing the New Scout Program and spending time with older scouts to go over additional requirements. Congratulations to all! While a number of the newer scouts returned to the new scout program after lunch, some others took advantage of afternoon offerings and earned some of their first boy scout merit badges.

Marc P. provided an outstanding lunch; there was an abundance of breads and cold cuts for everyone. Between Friday night and Saturday, four scouts earned their Firem'n Chits and two scouts earned their Totin' Chips. All in all, the scouts were incredibly productive and took full advantage of this wonderful opportunity.

After lunch, a few of the adults worked to break camp and move gear back to the trailer, so there would be no need to come back up to camp after sessions closed. By the end of the day, there were quite a few tired, but satisfied smiles and confident airs emanating from our outstanding scouts. Once again, our scouts demonstrated that Scouting is alive and well in Troop 49!

By 4:30 PM, all scouts finished their sessions, packed up the Troop trailer and rolled for home none the worse for wear...

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Burns, SMIC
Tendai Richards, ASM