



Troop 49, The Pathfinders
Camp Turrell Trip Report
July 24 – 30, 2011

Turrell by the numbers:

- 34:** Scouts attending camp for the week
- 16:** More scouts than 2010!
- 4:** Patrols - Sea Turtles, Screaming Eagles, Ninja, Chillin' Chili Peppers
- 7:** Camp days
- 6:** Camp nights
- 157:** Merit badges completed! Amazing.
- 18:** Merit badges begun for later completion
- 0:** Scouts who left camp due to homesickness
- 32:** Scouts passing the swim test - whoo hooo!
- 5:** Scouts completing wilderness survival!
- 2:** Scouts attending the Canoe Outpost
- 3:** Resident scoutmasters: Fern (SMIC), Dente, Burns
- 11:** Adults visited for at least one night
- 1:** Troop 49 finish in the Dynamic Trio rifle shoot. Nice work Nick M., Chris D., and Mr. Dente
- 2:** Troop 49 finish in Water Carnival
- 1:** Camp Genius finish (2nd year running) - nice job Nick B.
- 1:** Fishing Derby winner with the most fish caught - Nice work Chris L.
- 1:** Scout recognized by the archery staff for "Aiming for the Ten Ring" - nice job Dean A.
- 1:** Baden Powell Award - presented to the entire troop for living up to the goals of scouting while at camp: group participation, camp entrance, service projects, etc.
- 1:** Recognition for service work performed while at camp. Nice work leaders and visiting adults
- Lots:** Critters: bear, deer, raccoons, squirrels, porcupines, chipmunks, mice, newts, frogs, etc.
- 4:** Days of rain
- 23:** Scouts completing the Polar Bear Swim
- 10:** Bikes repaired by our adult leasers and visitors
- 0:** Serious injuries
- 34:** **Very Happy Campers!**

Prior to departing:

On July 9, The Fern family hosted a pre-camp meeting. Families were asked to turn in paperwork at the meeting. Despite the thunderstorm that ripped through not long before the meeting start, the evening was a successful opportunity to review the program and expectations as well as to have some fun and enjoy good food with friends. New scout families got the chance to ask questions and get insight from the veterans. The picnic also was a great way for scouts to break some ice in preparing for camp. Many of the scouts identified their tent mates for the upcoming week at camp.

On July 17, the youth leaders participated in a teleconference to discuss the expectations of their leadership roles. The meeting included the SPL, ASPL's, Troop Guides, Patrol Leaders and Quartermaster. For many scouts, this was the first teleconference meeting they had ever attended. It was a good skill-building opportunity - learning how to participate in a meeting when you are not face to face.

Sunday, July 24 - Day 1:

The troop gathered and departed from the lower parking lot at OLPH. In addition to the troop trailer, we also had in-tow a utility trailer (thanks Mr. Dugas) containing lengths of timber that would be used for the site gateway, as well as cut logs for firewood. 34 scouts, plus parents and siblings made the journey to Camp Turrell. The troop arrived at camp at 10:30 to crazy hot and humid weather. The troop stayed in the Murray Cole "Site M" campsite.

SPL Nick organized the troop in the process of selecting tents. Scouts settled in by getting their mosquito netting up and setting up their gear in their tents for the week to come. By 11:30, our site guide Wesley has arrived at the site. We made our way to the Pathfinder Pavilion and were the first troop to go through medical checks and swim tests. In what seems to have become a troop tradition, it rained for us during the swim test and waterfront orientation.

By about 2:00 PM, we returned to our site for lunch. Following lunch, Scouts continued to set up camp, with little adult supervision. The large tarp was assembled without any adult supervision, and it was done so in a short amount of time. This was just one of the indications that we were off to a great start for the week. Some of the firewood logs were split and carried to the campfire circle area.

Construction on the site gateway began around 3:00 PM. The vision for the gateway was a bigger version of the monkey bridge that was built last December for Pioneering Merit Badge at Glen Gray. With so many scouts having worked on a bridge once before, everyone got right to work. Newer scouts were taught what to do, and Mr. Burns directed the placement of the bridge, which ran over the main path into the site, between two groups of trees. Within two hours, the bridge was up and stable and a troop photo was taken in front of it.

Just before 5PM, Nick assembled the troop. The troop outfitted four patrols this year at camp:

- Chillin' Chili Peppers – Padraic B.
- Ninjas – Zack R.
- Screaming Eagles – Matthew R.
- Sea Turtles – Patrick D.

Each patrol leader did a fine job in preparing for camp by contacting their patrol in the weeks prior to departing, and made great flags to represent their patrol. They each worked out Patrol yells as well.

The patrols assembled in Class A's and off we went to the dining hall orientation. After the orientation, we attended colors at 5:45 and returned to the dining hall for dinner at 6:00 PM. Following dinner, the troop got ready for the Opening Campfire.

As always, the staff put on an engaging campfire, which introduced each area and staff member to the campers, and offered entertaining skits and songs in the process. The troop retired to our site for the evening, and everyone settled in for the first night in camp.

Monday, July 25 - Day 2:

Monday was the start of the regular program days at camp. Reveille sounded at 7:00 and at 7:45 the troop assembled for morning flags and breakfast. After the scouts made their way to the first merit badge classes of the day, some of the adults went to the training classes being offered at the dining hall. Other adults went to the waterfront on a mission to remove some stubborn rocks that had claimed injury to many toes over the years. With some shovels, picks and wrecking bars, the rocks were unearthed. Dave, the waterfront director, was thrilled to have the service performed. Since the camp had previously received two loads of sand, there was a mound of it on the beach which we used to back fill the holes. One of the largest rocks unearthed perfectly fit as a stepping stone to the platform where scouts rinse their feet off. Another slice of stone was placed along the fence line as a mini patio.

We returned to camp to find that the Camp Commissioner, Kim, had visited and left us with a perfect score on her campsite inspection. Kim marveled at the rope bridge and how quickly it was assembled.

The dining hall served a great meal of pasta for dinner, and as we ate, the rain began - something we would get used to. Everyone was in and done with the day's activities by 10:00 PM, as Taps was played over the camp loudspeaker in the distance.

Tuesday, July 26 - Day 3:

Tuesday was the first day of the Polar Bear Swim. Early birds were up around 6:00 AM, and the group headed to the waterfront at 6:30 to begin the Polar Bear swim at 6:45. The troop attended flags and breakfast, and then departed for their merit badge classes. For the second day in a row, the troop received a perfect score from the commissioners who came around for inspection.

After breakfast, it was becoming apparent to the leaders that there needed to be more discipline in getting scouts who require medication to the Health Lodge with consistency. We met with Diesel, the camp EMT, and got the names and times of all the scouts who needed to see him each day. We created a list among ourselves of "who and when" for meds, and made sure to remind the scouts at the appropriate times.

Another project the adults took on was to do some repair work to the mountain bikes that the camp owns and uses for the Extreme Sports area. The afternoon was spent assessing and beginning to repair bicycles. Jay, the Extreme Sports director, brought a number of bikes and bike parts from storage, and pointed out some of the known problems of some of the bikes. As the afternoon went on, we got through a number of bikes, and noticed it was nearly 5:00; soon, the scouts would have to be gathering for flags. As the adults went to check on the troop to motivate them, we rounded the corner past the dining hall and could see the troop all lined up, dressed in Class A's, and ready for flags! WOW! It was the type of moment when a scoutmaster feels most proud of the youth leadership in the troop.

Without any reminders from adults, the SPL and PL's had organized and assembled the troop in preparation for dinner. Nice job, scouts!

By day's end, most of the short term visiting adults headed home, and the core leaders remained. Rain dampened the afternoon and evening, but couldn't dampen the spirits as scouts continued their work on merit badges and the fun of camp. After each meal in the dining hall, the staff leads a song. Many of the songs are familiar and other new ones quickly become favorites. Some of the songs we sang were "Alice, where are you going...", "Rise and Shine", "Purple Soup" as well as other dining hall chants, such as "There aint no flies on us" and "Do you wanna buy a duck?"

Undaunted by the fact that he could not use the power washer he brought along, Mr. Burns along with Mr. Fern took on the task of cleaning the shower house in the evening. The shower house is a long building with a row of doors on each side. Inside each door is a shower stall. The cleaning crew systematically went door to door, scrubbing down each shower very well. As each shower was cleaned, a very willing scout took the opportunity to go in and use the freshly cleaned facility.

It was very encouraging to have scouts working under the tarp on merit badge tasks until nearly 11 PM when we shoed them off to their tents for a nights rest. They really worked hard in camp!

Wednesday, July 27 - Day 4:

Wednesday morning's thermometer boasted a cool 60 degrees with trees shedding residual water from Tuesday's rainfall. Most scouts were up at 6:00AM, and departed for Polar Bear swim @ 6:30. Camp was dry by mid-morning. Wednesday in camp is "OA Day". The Order of the Arrow (OA) is a brotherhood of honored campers. Each spring, troops elect eligible scouts to the Order, and they must complete an "Ordeal" to confirm their membership. After a year of membership, scouts may elect to elevate their membership to the "Brotherhood" level. On the "OA Day" in camp, scouts have the opportunity to go for Brotherhood. James J and Mike Z completed this step.

After breakfast, the troop was starting to move out to merit badge classes when one scout said that he wanted to call home. The leaders had a conversation with the scout to listen to his concerns, asked him to consider holding off until lunch time to make a call, and walked him to his program area. One leader went ahead and talked to the program director for that area, as well as the second area where the scout was going to be for his morning sessions to let them know of the situation. The camp staff is a special group of young men and women, and they wield a bit of magic when it comes to raising the morale of the campers. It is in situations like this where you truly witness them at their best. By lunch time, the leaders followed up with the scout, who was having a great day. The scout worked through his homesickness, grew up a little that day, and enjoyed the rest of the week without calling home.

Upon arriving back to the campsite in late morning, we met with Kim, the camp commissioner, who let us know that we lost one point for the day's inspection for a picnic table in the back site was littered. Later in the day, the leaders addressed the scouts responsible for the mess, and the scouts took steps to ensure that it would not happen again.

By mid-day, many scouts who came to camp well prepared with their merit badge pre-work, began to return to the site having completed their badges. Scouts looked through the schedule and picked up other merit badge classes to attend. Several scouts worked with Mr. Dente in the campsite to complete the Camping Merit Badge.

Dinner was roast beef, and Matt D celebrated his birthday today which we enjoyed with dinner. Mrs. D. brought cupcakes for all, and Matt was serenaded by the staff in the camp birthday song. After dinner, the Council OA Lodge Advisor, Mr. Burke, lead the dining hall in a Camp Turrell rendition of an old pirate song. Afterwards, he set up the OA trading post and sold sets of 2010 Jamboree Council Strip patches, which featured the Marvel Comics characters.

Wednesday evening was busy, with two scouts attending the Canoe Outpost, where the waterfront staff leads a crew of campers via canoe to a campsite on the far side of the pond. Other scouts tried their hand at rappelling, which was once again offered by Dan and Jerry, two climbing experts who are leaders in Troop 350 from Bellville. Other scouts participated in the Camp Genius Program.

Another evening event was the Dynamic Trio, which is a shooting event for 2 scouts plus 1 leader. The troop sent three teams to participate:

- Team A – Mr. Fern with Eric K. and Will F.
- Team B – Mr. Dente with Chris D. and Nick M.
- Team C – Mr. Burns with Matthew R. and Padraic B.

Wednesday evening, the scouts had their own campfire in the site. There were no adults at the campfire, and many scouts made mention of it later, saying that it was a very mature experience, and that the scouts discussed topics such as surviving middle school and peer pressure. It was a great reflection of how the “boy lead” troop worked all week. The campsite was quiet by 10:30 as everyone retired to their tents for sleep.

Thursday, July 28 - Day 5

Thursday morning was the final morning for the Polar Bear Swim. All together 23 scouts completed the Polar Bear swim for three days. During the day, many scouts completed merit badges.

Lunch was held in the dining hall, and the afternoon brought on the challenge of the Camp Turrell annual Chili Cook-off, which was to be cooked in site. Mr. Dishian was in camp and brought his culinary talents to help cook up the chili.

Mr. Burns, Mr. Fern, & Co. continued to work on camp bikes in the afternoon, and brought the total number of repaired bikes up to 10. The waterfront staff held an open swim/open boat in the evening, which allowed scouts to continue practicing and complete requirements. At the same time, the Extreme Sports area hosted a mountain bike ride. It was heartwarming to count the number of bikes which rode by the waterfront. Every bike was being used. Seeing this instantly validated the bike repair work, knowing that a little care and effort put in to the bikes resulted in the fact that 10 more scouts in camp could share in the program.

Thursday was the Fishing Derby. This program is hosted by the Nature staff, and scouts are challenged with catching the largest fish and the most fish within the program timeframe.

Thursday evening brought heavy cloud cover to the area, and so the Astronomy Merit Badge “star party” was cancelled. The scout leaders started picking up the signed merit badge cards from the camp office, and worked on organizing them all and ensuring that we were getting cards back for all the scouts and the merit badge classes they took.

Friday, July 29 - Day 6

On Friday morning, the Sea Turtle Patrol assisted in the flag ceremony for morning colors. Nice work Sea Turtles! After breakfast, the adults took latrine duty, putting the pressure washer to good use, despite the fact that there was no camp inspection.

Wrap up in the AM - completing open issues for merit badges. Lunch was served at 12:30, and shortly thereafter, we began the iron man competition.

Beginning in the parking lot, iron man proceeds like this: scout #1, the cyclist, carries the token from the parking lot to Nature Pavilion path on a mountain bike. Scout #1 passes the token to scout #2, who sprints to the Nature Pavilion, rendezvous with scout #3, and builds a fire. The fire must burn for 60 seconds. Following the official's approval, scout #2 sprints with the token to the Arts and Crafts Pavilion passing the token to scout #4 who must complete a series of knots. Upon completion, Scout #4 passes the token to scout #5, the sprinter, who sprints to the waterfront, passing the token to scout #6, the swimmer. Are you exhausted yet? Scout #6 takes the token from the sprinter, runs/swims through the shallow section of the waterfront, hoists himself up on to the dock, rolls over the dock, drops back to the water on the deep side, swims to the float, then reverses the process and finally, exhausted, sprints up the beach to complete the Iron Man by tagging the fence! Whew!

Immediately following the Iron Man is the Water Carnival. Water Carnival consists of a series of fun, and sometimes hilarious events including: greased watermelon rescue, tug of war, find the under-water rock, water bucket carry, sponge relay, kayak race without paddles, canoe water battle, scoutmaster splash, and the final, gruesome event that defies description. Scouts must: swim a slice of bread to the first dock, add jelly, then swim to the jelly-slathered bread to the raft and add peanut butter, swim it back to the dock adding a second slice of bread, then swim/sprint it to a waiting adult leader who must eat (gag) the water sodden mess and show an empty mouth to the official to stop the clock! Thanks to Mr. White who was our PB&J eater extraordinaire!

Near 4 pm, as the water carnival wound down, we had intermittent showers - the first rain that had really disrupted activities all week. By 4:30, as we mustered for Scouts Own Service, the rain intensified into a few real downpours. As vespers ended around 4:50, so did the rain, and the drying process began.

BEAR! About 5 PM, after returning from vespers, a large bear entered our camp and proceeded to eat a Twix bar that had been left on the picnic table! Much excitement ensued, as I am sure you can imagine!

Due to the heavy rain and lack of business issues to address, evening flags were cancelled. Friday is of course rib night, and all settled in for the excellent Turrell rendition of barbecued ribs, salad, and mashed potatoes. Excellent!

As dinner concluded, the last of the storm passed, sunshine burned through, and the evening was pleasant. There were many parents starting to arrive in camp for a night with their sons before the end of the week.

At 8:00 PM, we mustered on the Sports Field for Closing Ceremonies. Boys did a terrific job with our skit, The 12 Hours of Camping - thank you Mr. Kozak and Co. - and the troop took home several honors:

- 2nd Place Water Carnival
- Polar Bear Swim (23)

- Archer of the Week awarded to Dean A for consistently high score all week
- Most Fish Caught awarded to Chris L for the Fishing Derby
- Camp Genius (Nick B)
- Dynamic Trio – First place for rifle shooting by a team of 2 scouts (Chris D & Nick M) and 1 leader (Mr. Dente)
- Baden Powell honor troop award – for exploring and participating in all of the program areas that the camp has to offer
- Cleanest Campsite – for keeping the campsite clean each day.
- Best Gateway – for the rope bridge gateway that we constructed when we arrived

Our Troop Bugler, Patrick D participated in the closing ceremony, and played Taps, which ended with the camp staff leading the singing of “Scout Vespers” and leading the exodus from the Council Campfire Circle, making a gateway of twelve torches, representing the points of the Scout Law, for each scout and leader to pass through.

Following closing ceremonies, the troop had one final campfire in our site with rollicking discussion about life, scouting, and the challenges of growing up (as partially overheard by some of the scoutmasters). Yet again, there were no adult leaders present, and the scouts were self-lead which was refreshing to see what our boys are capable of.

While the scouts were enjoying the campfire, the scoutmasters, along with Mr. Kozak, wrestled with the task of collating and verifying 175 Blue Cards and tended to duties to close camp. Whew, what a week!

Saturday, July 30 - Day 7

The troop awoke to a beautiful day, with temperatures in the upper 70s and a cloudless sky. About 6:30, activity began in camp as scouts packed gear and settled their tents. We mustered at 7:40 for our last flag ceremony. Breakfast was at 8:00 - a simple affair with bagels, cereal, milk, and juice. As parents began to arrive, the troop packed up the trailer, individuals packed up their personal gear, and the troop departed by 10:30 AM.

In Conclusion

The troop had an extremely successful week in camp. The number of scouts was nearly double the amount we had in 2010. It was a tremendous compliment to the youth leaders that everything ran smoothly. SPL Nick and the Patrol Leaders, Patrick, Zack, Padraic and Matt, truly lead their troop and patrols in a responsible and professional manner. Each Patrol had a majority of ‘first year campers’ which is an unknown challenge for the leaders.

All scouts excelled at Individual accomplishments. There were many scouts who completed their first merit badge ever. There were other scouts who finished requirements for rank advancement. Most importantly, many scouts had personal victories, whether it was rappelling over the side of a cliff for the first time, awakening after a night in wilderness survival, breaking away from the urge to want to call home after you’ve been away a few days for the first time and it is a dark, rainy day, or jumping in to the lake and completing the swim test.

Respectfully submitted by Paul Burns, Rob Dente & Dan Fern

LESSONS LEARNED and BEST PRACTICES

- Assign one patrol per day to fill the water coolers and make Kool-Aid
- Improve the med form process
- Troop leaders need a matrix of who goes to meds and when they go (AM/Noon/PM/Bedtime).
- Assign ASPL to capture notes; update white board
- Create a tent inspection Tuesday or Wednesday to keep down clutter and ensure scouts know where gear is
- Put name tags on all tents to locate occupants and mark specifically those scouts who want to be awakened for the Polar Bear Swim.
- Mark leader's tents with flags or cones or something conspicuous
- Work out the skit in advance
- Create a gear canopy (useful camp gadget) next to the trailer for "leaving stuff" - keep it off the picnic tables
- Need a weather watcher located off-site who can call/email/text us in the event bad weather is predicted
- Need an in-camp device charger
- Flag covers - we need covers for the troop and American flags
- Need to post a blank schedule so scouts who finish merit badges early can see what is offered when / where
- Scout money management : recommend a 'financial plan' so not 100% of cash is in their wallets
- Need to have patrols sign up for flags early
- Bring better tools and supplies to wash shower house
- Focus more on advancement, for example building camp gadgets
- Coordinate service projects for adults - there are plenty of projects and plenty of people who want to help
- Create a toolbox (yellow?) with a mobile office
 - Pens, pencils, scissors, stapler, paper clips, sharpies of various colors, pins
- Refresh the first aid kit
- Have templates complete for Med, behavior, etc. **prior to** trip meeting
- Missed Robin Hood Shoot - need to get out ahead of evening activities

Other information to be saved:

- Logs for pioneering projects:
 - Jim Koch (logging operation)
 - Huguenot, NY
 - (914) 443-4026
 - On Rt. 209 South 3 miles past Oakland Valley Road turn
- Action Bikes and Outdoor (bike parts)
 - 102 Milford Landing Drive
 - Milford, PA
 - (507) 49x-4000
- Mata-Port Bicycles (bike parts)
 - 186 Pike Street
 - Port Jervis, NY
 - (845) 856-4500