

October 26-27, 2013

Reported By Tommy Garback, Troop Historian

Weekend Backpacking Trip

This weekend, about ten youths and 4 adults went to the Appalachian Trail in the Blue Mountain area off of Route 309 in Andreas, PA. This was a first-time trip for Lawrence, Mr. Tsai, and Diego as well as the first trip with our scouts from the merging troop. From their troop that came were Steven and Jake.

On Saturday, we met at 6:30 to leave, and headed on the road with our bags packed, ready and heavy. The trail ahead of us turned out to be quite adventurous. For the first half hour or so, we hiked through the leafy forests on thin paths and autumn colors. Once we emerged from the bulk of the dense wood, rocky twists and turns awaited us. There was an opening where a power line was, which was a good place for a group photo. Back onto the trail, we soon came to a treacherous mountain of huge jagged rocks in a narrow, tall pile called the Knife's Edge. From atop this dangerous summit, you could see the lay of the land with fields, forests, roads and such laid out below you. The wind blew powerfully and caught our backpacks, playing as an obstacle to keep balance as we travelled across the rocks between the forest yards below, and the edge of the mountain on the other side. This was about a 50 yard path with a steep finish of rock faces at the end. There, we sat near a campsite and ate lunch, which the scouts had packed beforehand. The weather was a little bitter, and the wind whistled more and more the higher we traveled, but the blueness of the sky, and the bright sun kept us pondering and wondering at the beauty that the mountains beheld. We soon

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turned back to face the Knife's Edge once again and head for camp.

Our site was a large, flat opening in the forest where we all set up our tents and began to dive into dinner. For it, we had dehydrated meals including, Spaghetti with Meat Sauce, Beef Stroganoff with Noodles, Beef Stew, Macaroni and Cheese, and Chicken with mashed Potatoes. A few scouts created a large fire using only one match, and kept the troop warm for the night. We gathered our food and put them safe away from bears; and headed to bed, some of us around seven, others later. That day, we hiked for about six hours.

The next morning, we packed up our tents, ate what was left of our food supplies, and made a fire to heat us up for the day to come. Also, we climbed a wall of rock across the trail from our camp and marveled at the sunset, lighting the landscape in front of us. Each field and tree was defined so clearly, and the mountains on the horizon were glazed in a blue haze. After reflecting on the trip with God and embracing the beautiful nature around us atop those rocks, we headed off on the trail. Maybe an hour later, we were all back to our cars after hiking through the smooth and rolling path of the forest, bright with fall colors. On our way back home, we stopped at Five Guys for some burgers and fries. Close to noon, our cars arrived home. We had hiked maybe five miles, and the shadows of that distance pressed into our memories of the trip, and the shoulders on our backs.