



Boy Scouts of America: Troop 280

Canoeing

On Friday, September 11th, seven scouts and two adults met around eight in the evening to leave for Bodine Fields in Wharton State Forest, Hammonton, NJ. The sky was clear, and fall sports were beginning their seasons in the fields across the parking lot. Cheers and chatter carried over on the eves of autumn wind as the cars pulled away from the garage. Rain was predicted to come that Saturday.

I was in Mr. Dodel's car, and I'm happy this was so. The five of us lost our way in the forest by our destination due to faulty maps. However, excellent driving skills and navigational work allowed us to make our way through the sand pits and hills after an hour. We met the other car in Campsite B, tents already set up.

The troop woke up early the next day to eat cereals and bagels with orange juice. Three adults and two scouts joined us, and we loaded onto a bus from the canoe rental company at eight thirty. It was a short drive to the banks of the Wading River, and the water was a dull scarlet, colorful even in splashes. Nevertheless, we all partnered-up and made our first segment of the journey in shallow water, pebbles and smoothed rocks screaming against our aluminum canoes.

The group spread out on the river, mostly moving at an equal pace. Skill varied greatly, but all were taking an



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adventure, and there was no time for learning in a controlled environment, such as in a lake like last year's trip.

We all met on the banks to eat lunch slightly after noon. Dark clouds wandered over us as the pressure dropped and the roaring of military planes filled the sandy forest. Peanut butter sandwiches, water, chips, and Oreo's had been packed at camp for this meal.

Jake, who was my canoe



partner, and I were one of the last ones to leave, so not many witnessed us flipping over. We had run into a low tree and leaned too far to the right in trying to avoid it. Farther down the river, I came to a few scouts swimming, because Craiggles had lost his glasses. They were

found not too long afterwards.

In taking a break, I used the time to try to get some pictures. However, from flipping over, the Ziploc bag I had used to hold my phone in was filled half-way with green river liquid. The device was blinking its apple and shining its flashlight: obviously deranged. I gave it



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to an adult that had dry belongings, and my canoe continued along. Let it be noted that Ziploc is not waterproof; don't be fooled!

Rain finally began to come for us, though it made little difference as most were already wet from falling in the river. The group finally came to the end after eight or nine miles. We landed a small walk from our campsite, and made our way there quickly. It was then decided to cut the trip short and return home that night. The goal of canoeing had been completed, and we had gotten our fill of camping from the previous night. Everyone was wet and sandy, so it was best to pack up.



We attended five-thirty mass in Class A's at Saint Mary of the Lakes, where Jack Swift's uncle held the service.

Then we went to Vincenttown's Diner, where most ordered burgers. All of the food was well-received.

The troop arrived at Bede's late at night and dispersed with gear to clean. Although rain may have



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stopped us that weekend, we all kept positive attitudes. That's what matters most, isn't it?



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