

T485 Newsletter

February 2018

Introducing the Troop 485

Monthly Newsletter

Some of you may wonder about what's goes on behind the scenes in our troop. Some of you might just want a short summary of the recent things are happening. Maybe you're just interested in learning something? This newsletter is meant to serve *you*, a member of our community, and inform you about some of the developments of our ever-improving troop. Our troop is all the more excellent when everybody is on the same page—this newsletter will bring us one step closer to that.

What happened to Bearpaw?

Richard Liu

The low levels of snow this year has forced our troop to cancel many iconic winter activities, such as BearPaw. BearPaw is an activity organised by the Silicon Valley Monterey Bay Council located in Cisco Grove, CA each year. Participants of BearPaw build a snow shelter and spend the night in it. However, due to the low amounts of snow, our troop will not be going to BearPaw this year.

It was put to a vote at a recent Patrol Leaders Council, and the backup option won by 9 votes to 7. Although BearPaw has been canceled, we will still go to a campout on that day. SiCs Glen Chen and Samuel Wong have planned a backup campout to Point Reyes National Seashore, a coastal geological abnormality just north of the Golden Gate. Campsites in the park have filled up, so instead we will be camping at Samuel Taylor State Park.

Troop Announcements

- Patrol Leader Elections occurred on January 22, 2018. Your new patrol leaders will be:
 - Jeffrey Meng (Dragons)
 - Richard Niu (Hawks)
 - Daniel Kwong (Serpents)
 - Joshua Chen (Blobfish)
 - Nathan Wong (Cacti)
 - Jeffery Ou (Wildcats)
- Interviews for Spring/Summer 2018 Troop Jobs will occur on February 12. The deadline to sign up has passed. You can contact our new SPL, Jayson Lee, for any more questions.

Future Events

- Troop meetings: February 5 and 19
- BOR/SMC: February 12
- Mt. Hermon adventure: March 24
- Bearpaw (replacement): February 24-25
- PLC: February 26
- April Backpacking: April 19-22

Fun facts

- When Yosemite was first explored, Half Dome was said to be "unclimbable." Now there are cables running to the top, and thousands of people climb it each year.

You may be interested in how much snow we have been getting this year, and whether it is really bad enough to cancel BearPaw, [Here](#) is a chart showing precipitation for northern, central, and southern California, compared to several other years.

New adventures: April

Backpacking

Jacob Nie

To my knowledge, the troop has never gone on a backpacking trip for longer than 3 days, with the exception of high adventure trips. While this may seem daunting, it should give you cause for excitement (and joy, if you're that kind of person). Weather and snow permitting, our troop will send 1-2 crews to the Yosemite wilderness, both headed on 25-35 mile treks on trails with some of the best mountain peaks and alpine lakes that California has to offer. The hiking will be tiresome and the days will be hard, but the difficulties we face will only serve to test the strength of our character, the durability of our comradeship, and the intensity of our passion. I'm sorry not everybody could sign up due to the unwieldy date, but to everybody who could, it's going to be good.

"Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop away from you like the leaves of Autumn." - John Muir, The Mountains of California

Website Updates

Jeffrey Meng

Over the past couple of months, I have been reaching out to some people in our troop to brainstorm new features for the website to make it more functional and integral for our troop needs. Some new features include a revamped authentication system, more security, better

- In June 2017, Alex Honnold became the first to free-solo El Capitan, climbing Freerider (5.12d) in about 4 hours. Free-soloing is essentially climbing without ropes to break one's fall.
- Colorado has more than 4 times the number of peaks over 14,000 feet (affectionately called "Fourteeners") than California does, but California still has the tallest peak in the Lower 48, Mt. Whitney, which stands at 14,505 feet.
- The mountains in the Sierra Nevada gradually increase in elevation the further south you head. In the Lake Tahoe area, the tallest mountains don't go above 10,000 feet. In Yosemite, the tallest mountains are just above 13,000 feet. This steady rise in elevation culminates at Mt. Whitney, after which elevations drop rapidly.
- The 1964 Wilderness Act, signed by Lyndon B. Johnson, designated wilderness areas to be "an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." Along with the National Park System, this act is responsible for the preservation of so much of America's natural beauty.
- The Sierra Nevada happens to be the site of numerous small-plane crashes, mostly due to its erratic wind systems. Many of the crash sites are undocumented and date back to numerous decades ago. Since these crash sites are at such high elevations, there is no good way of extracting the wreckage, so many crash sites are still preserved to this date.
- The Yosemite Valley is an international hub for rock climbing, due to its impressive terrain. In fact, the rock climbing sport and culture was born in the valley during the 60's, stemming from the small community of climbers that would illegally camp for months at a time in Camp 4. This is, perhaps, the root of the tensions that have existed

event pages, and a headcount collector! Here are some of the features that we have planned:

between rock climbers and park rangers over the past decades, something the park has tried to alleviate over the past couple of years.

- Revamped authentication system: Some information on our website is private, and these pages cannot be accessed by just anybody. The current authentication system is not secure enough, and I am working to create an authentication system that is both secure and fluid enough to be practical.
- Better event pages: Event pages have become an important tool our troop uses to catalog information in an organized fashion. As SiC's begin to use it more and more, some deficiencies have been uncovered, and I will work to implement new changes to make event pages even better.
- Website-integrated headcount form: Recording headcounts for upcoming events has always been a struggle in the past, and this was an update that was very well-received by our small committee. I am creating a tool that will help both event planners and attendees record their attendance in a manner that is both fluid and organized. It will also be integrated into the event pages
- Self-updates: This is an extremely useful tool that will allow people with certain troop jobs to self-update the website. For example, this will enable the scribe to upload troop meeting minutes directly onto the website without having to go through the webmaster. Similarly, the historian will now be able to upload pictures and links directly onto the troop website. This all goes towards making our website more dynamic and helpful to any member of our troop.

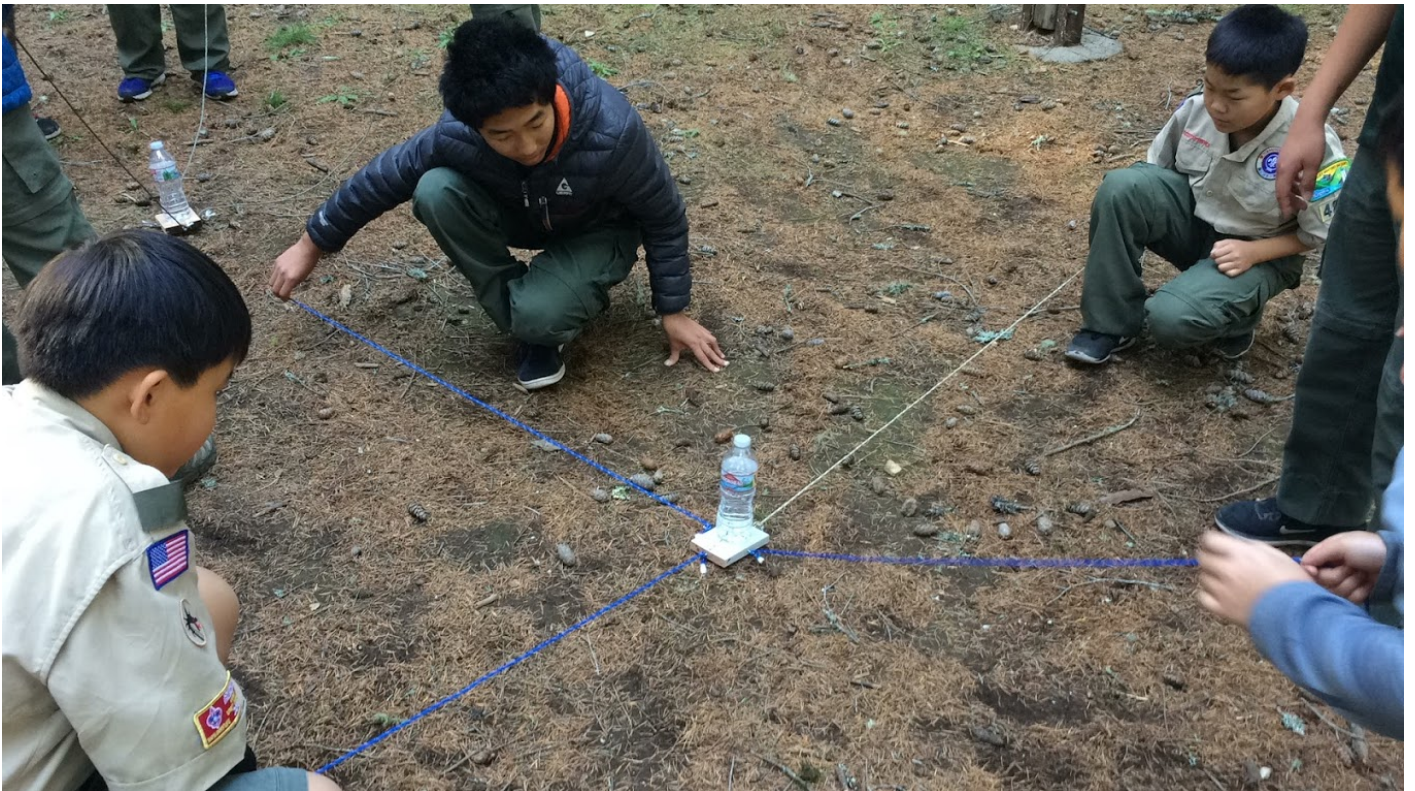
Gallery



Campfire prep at TLT 2018



Tent camping at TLT 2018



Balancing a water bottle in a game at TLT 2018

The next installment of this monthly newsletter will come out on the first day of March. If you would like to make an announcement or write an article to be featured in the next newsletter, please send us an email at bsa485@t485.org.

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