

Boy Scouts of America Troop 726

State of the Troop - February 2009

The beginning of 2008 brought about the realization that we needed to find a new place for our weekly meeting. With a lot of hard work and some networking, we were able to secure this location at the Masonic Center. It seems to fit our needs very well.

As I reviewed the BSA's *Aims of Scouting* and the methods we used to measure and obtain them to earn our quality unit ranking with the SF Bay Area Council, I realized more today than ever that our Troop 726 is doing a good job in all areas.

Let's start with the adult leaders. We have 26 register adults, most of them fully trained. We had 3 new leaders join us last year: Phil Avery, Bill Hubbard, and John Miles. Each has begun the training process and are excited to help our youth along the trail to Eagle and the adventures that last a lifetime. Last year we were sad to see our newsletter editor and treasurer move on to other activities, but were glad when Sandia Chang stepped forward to take on the monthly newsletter and Lawrence Ling the treasurer position.

As for Scout membership, in March/April 2008 we had 10 new Scouts join us, and then again in Oct/Nov we had an additional 3, giving us 13 new boys last year. We now have 31 registered Scouts, having currently achieved the following ranks:

- 9 Scouts
- 4 Tenderfoot Scouts
- 7 First Class Scouts
- 4 Star Scouts
- 7 Life Scouts

In addition, this year we saw two of our Scouts complete the highest honor a youth can obtain in Boy Scouting: Eagle rank. It is said that Scouting is a journey and not a place. Branden Meadows and Adam Nikssarian can both tell you it is a journey well worth taking. Both boys entered Troop 726, started at Scout rank and made the journey all the way to Eagle. Many adults, Scouts and mentors have helped them along the trail to Eagle and it was my privilege to see them through the last phase. Eagle Scouts Adam, Branden and Edgar Woo (who each turned 18 in December) are now junior adult leaders with the troop.

Last year was another busy year of activities for our Troop: we started the year with several nights of snow camping (remember the 18 inches of overnight snowfall and the 8 hour drive home?). The annual Klondike Derby provided calmer weather, but just as much fun. In the spring we joined in community service with the Castro Valley Sanitary District, and another opportunity to partner with them for a summer e-waste event. Philmont Scout Ranch in Cimarron New Mexico was the June highlight for 7 Scouts and 2 adults as they backpacked over 72 miles in 10 days, eating trail rations and experiencing an unforgettable high adventure trek. In the summer, 35 scouts attended Scout camp at Camp Royaneh, many enjoyed river rafting on the Stanislaus, and others finished the season at the Travis Air Force Base Air show. In the Fall we began meeting here in our new home, family camp at Coyote Hills gave us time to get to

know one another, we helped those in need with our Scouting for Food program, and celebrated the holiday season with food and song.

Last year, Troop 726:

- earned 102 merit badges,
- went on over 50 outings
- spent over 340 nights camping,
- hiked over 451 miles, and
- spent countless hours doing service projects.

Community service events included working with the Castro Valley Sanitary District, Earth Day cleanup and landscaping at Independent School, Flag Day at Lone Tree Cemetery, and the Lion's Club Carnival on July 4th. We had several fundraisers this past year: our hike-a-thon brought in a range of funds from \$20.00 to over \$400.00 for a single Scout. All our fundraising efforts allowed the boys to pay for many of their Scouting activities throughout the year.

This next year promises to be just as busy, just as fun, and just as challenging. Scouting is an adventure, and you get out of it what you put into it. To make the most of your experience, you need to attend the meetings, go on the outings, participate in the community service events and live the Scout life. You can't have fun or learn a new skill if you miss these adventures. Lord Baden-Powell called Scouting a game with a purpose. If we play Baden-Powell's game, and don't pick out bits and pieces or invent our own rules, then tomorrow will be populated with boys of solid character, who are good citizens, and are both physically and mentally fit. Play hard. Play to win. Play the whole game. Have fun and remember to do all this in the spirit of the Boy Scout Oath and Law.

And as we look beyond this year, we anticipate 2010, which is the 100th anniversary of the founding of Boys Scouts of America. Already many scouts are making plans to attend the National Jamboree; a once-in-a-life time adventure at Fort AP Hill in Virginia.

Scouting promises new adventure, learning, challenges, responsibility, growth, fun, and so much more. I challenge each scout, Scouter and family to come play with us and make next year even better.

Respectfully submitted,

Phyllis Lozano

Troop 726 Committee Chair