

Boy Scouts of America Troop 726

State of the Troop - February 2011

The Boy Scouts of America is one of the largest youth organizations in the United States and its goal is to train youth in responsible citizenship, character development, and self-reliance through participation in a wide range of activities. A long standing tradition of our troop is to celebrate the birthday of the Boy Scouts of America with this Red and Green dinner, and for me to present the State of the Troop address.

As many of you know, when I prepare the State of the Troop address, I first review the BSA's *Aims of Scouting* and the methods we use to measure and obtain them, and then I review all the statistics available to me in our troop database. It is at this point that I get a good sense of our accomplishments. For this year's State of the Troop, I'd like to present you with Troop 726 Roses, Thorns and Buds. Our Scouts are familiar with these terms, but first let me remind the rest of you. After each outing, the scouts take turns, one at a time, sharing what they call Roses, Thorns, and Buds. Their Roses are the best thing that happened on the outing, their Thorns are the worst thing that happened, and their Buds are something that they are looking forward to changing on the next outing.

Troop 726 Roses:

Troop 726 now stands at 30 youth members, at the following ranks:

- 1 member
- 1 Scout
- 5 Tenderfoot Scouts
- 4 Second Class Scouts
- 2 First Class Scouts
- 8 Star Scouts
- 7 Life Scouts
- 2 Eagle Scouts

Among the scouts who were active with Troop 726, 25 of them earned a rank advancement. There were 41 rank advancements total in 2010, including 1 gold palm, 2 bronze palms and 4 Eagle Ranks (The highest youth rank attainable).

As a troop, we spent countless hours doing community service projects, we hiked 453 miles, spent over 431 nights camping and earned 230 Merit Badges. The most popular earned Merit Badges were:

- 21 Tracking
- 20 Signaling
- 19 Carpentry
- 16 Pathfinding
- 12 Citizenship in the World
- 11 Archaeology
- 10 Wood Carving

The BSA re-introduced four vintage merit badges for 2010 only; Tracking, Signaling, Carpentry, and Pathfinding. 16 of our scouts earned all four. Thank you Mr. Davidson and Mr. Markison for guiding the vintage merit badge program. The troop participated in 33 different events. 24 scouts and 7 leaders took a train to Camp Makualla in Oregon. 11 scouts and 1 of our leaders attended the 100th Anniversary BSA National Jamboree at Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia. To quote one scout, 'this was the best scouting event I ever attended'. In 2010, we had 2 scouts finish all of the 6 Rim Rover hikes; a first in troop history.

The troop successfully completed 4 major fundraising events including the annual Hike-a-thon, the car wash, the BSA Popcorn Sales and the See's Candy Sales. We also assisted in two civic events in which the tip hat was passed at the end of the evening. Several of our ambitious scouts were able to pay for summer camp using our troop's fundraising opportunities.

The statistics show that we have been very busy.

We have great boys and adults who truly care about them. Troop 726 has 32 registered Adult Leaders. We continue to have a large group of adults that continue to work with our troop even though their sons have aged out of the program. This pool of adults allows us to maintain all the "behind-the-scenes" activities. Again, these adults are very helpful in providing continuity in the program. This year we added 6 new leaders each with young scouts in the program.

Troop 726 Thorns:

It is with great sadness that one of our founding Scouters has gone home this year. Mildred Harrison's dedication and timeless efforts to the scouting program will be missed.

The closing of 2010 brought us the news that our Scoutmaster, Mr. Neil Guerin, has decided to retire from this important position. Mr. Guerin will continue the duties of Scoutmaster until the end of August 2011. He will then pass the Scoutmaster position to a successor and continue as an adult leader in the role of Assistant Scoutmaster. Mr. Guerin did a fantastic job as Scoutmaster for the last 5 years and is leaving behind big shoes to be filled. A Scoutmaster nominating committee has been formed and we are actively looking for a new Scoutmaster.

Troop 726 Buds:

As I reflect upon our Roses and our Thorns, I see many buds blooming. Each year we start a new patrol of young scouts. In 2010, we had 8 scouts join us and form the Raven patrol; I look forward to them growing and traveling along the trail to Eagle. We have parents willing to step forward and join the ranks of adult leaders, each cautious of their own time management, but anxiously and enthusiastically willing to help.

Our Cobras, Dragons, and Scorpions have watched the Rocks and Owls grow and advance along the trail. It is now their time to become the youth leaders. Our troop is rooted in tradition, yet willing to step out and explore new ways to keep our scouts interested in the fundamentals of the scouting program while having fun and allowing them to plan, execute and succeed in what interests them. We will work with our up and coming youth leaders and help them carry on the Aims and Methods of Scouting.

I often say, "Scouting is an adventure, and you get out of it what you put into it." We had a couple of scouts with 100% attendance at Troop meetings this past quarter and we look forward to recognizing and encouraging more scouts to meet the challenge of 100% attendance at our weekly meetings.

In conclusion, this year, as in years gone by, I challenge our troop to continue the growth process, to provide a better scouting program, to be a greater witness to others when we are in public view, to embrace change and to make next year even better.

Respectfully submitted,

Phyllis Lozano

Troop 726 Committee Chair