

Buzzard Bulletin



April 2004 Issue

By Edward Levin, Troop Scribe

Sky Line to the Sea, April 2004

By Jeff Green, Assistant Scoutmaster

A hardy group of 7 scouts (Joel Ayala, Brandon Arevalo, Jimmy & Chris Green, Brendan Hinz, Tolly Powell and Isaac Tysanner), and 5 adults hiked over 30 miles on the Skyline to the Sea backpacking trail this April. The total mileage was broken down to three segments: about 7 miles from the Saratoga Gap trailhead to Waterman Gap, then 10 solid miles from WG to Jay camp at Big Basin and then 12 miles on the third day out to sea. After a week of perfect weather, it looked like this year's group might suffer the same fate as last year's namely a wet Friday hike to Waterman Gap (they didn't name it that for nothing, right?!). Fortunately, we had only a few tiny sprinkles in the parking lot and then nothing else for that day. We left just after noon and made Waterman Gap easily. After setting up camp, we did a short 3-mile round trip excursion to a point on a ridge above what we named Blister Creek. This allowed the segment to be counted as one of the 10 mile hikes for those scouts working on Hiking MB. We cooked dinner, hung our food and enjoyed a sound sleep. Isaac Tysanner worked on 2nd Class requirement 2f for properly lighting lightweight stoves.

The next morning we got up early and had breakfast. Some scouts cooked and some savored the more subtle texture and flavors of pop tarts. The 'pinecone' award for best breakfast cooked goes to the Hinz's for their thick country bacon and egg breakfast - you could almost taste the aroma it was so good. We were joined the second day by Michael Trimberger who was there to complete another of the five, 10-mile hikes required for Hiking MB. Our group size changed from the dirty dozen to the baker's dozen. We set out on the trail at about 9:30am and were making good progress until the Lost Patrol, got lost! As a member of this patrol let me set the record straight as there have been many rumors as to what really happened. The LP consisted of Jimmy and Jeff Green and Brendan and Dan Hinz - I was not the leader of the LP (that remains a secret within the close fellowship of the LP). Unofficially, we were

also the outing's photo journalists so naturally we fell to the back of the group as we stopped occasionally to properly frame, light, and pose a candid shot here and there. We always kept an eye out for the next Pulitzer shot when we saw the bridge...It was at the bottom of a decline on the trail, crossing a tea colored creek at sharp hairpin in the trail. Obviously, the S2S trail crossed the bridge - why else would it have been built? After crossing the bridge and starting up a long incline, crawling under a fallen tree here and there, crawling over other fallen tan oaks, even our dull buzzard senses were starting to tingle. Using S.T.O.P (Stop, Think, Observe and Plan (pages 40-41 , Tenderfoot section of the Scout handbook), the LP circled and gathered around the map. Bummer - that bridge that we didn't even photo had distracted us from the real trail. We were 'found', but off the trail by a not quite a mile. We doubled back to the trail and proceeded until just afternoon when we stopped for lunch to wait for the other half of the group who were either lost behind us or lost ahead of us. For the record, whistles and shouts didn't carry far in the dense foliage. Before we could finished lunch, Mr. Ayala and Tysanner who were in the group lost ahead of us, linked up with us. The reunited baker's dozen started down the sandstone ridge to Big Basin HQ. This terrain was decidedly different from the morning. Where we had been in redwood and shadowed forest, we were now in and out of manzanita, scrub pines and bay trees hiking down a steep ridge that fell of considerably on either side (note to scouts - don't read this part to the moms). As we neared HQ, there was much enthusiasm to reach the store in time for an ice cream bar and soda. The wisdom and experience of the LP came to the forefront once again and saved the baker's dozen from another wrong turn in the trail. At the Big Basin camp store, Mr. Green made good on his Angel Island promise to buy ice cream for all scouts who picked up trash along the trail. Some of the group were delirious from the long hike and were inquiring about hot showers at Jay Camp. At Jay camp, we setup our tents and enjoyed another fine backpacker's feast. I'd like to point out that the Hinz's camped and

cooked separately from the main group, saying there wasn't enough room to properly set up their tent (did they really mean their kitchen? Through the brush, I swear I saw Mr. Hinz pull out a lobster pot from his backpack!). Afterwards, Jimmy Green brought out his deck of about 40 playing cards and we proceeded to play 21, 31, Crazy 8s, 6s and ended the evening with a stalemated game of Crazy 4s.



The scouts cross a bridge.

Sunday morning, Art Fong joined the baker's dozen (Michael T. having left with his parent the previous night). Today's hike would be the longest of the segments at 12 miles. Another rumor that got started this morning was that some of the group off loaded tents and other 'heavy, non-essential' gear to one of the shuttle cars. We immediately began a steep and switched backed section of trail up a couple hundred feet to the final ridge of the hike before the long decline to the sea. On the initial decline from this ridge a steady drizzle began. We gave the weather situation another 15 minutes while we were hiking on the trail to decide whether or not to seriously break out the rain gear when the weather decided to improve. We made Berry Falls before lunch and had some snacks and photos taken before starting on the trail again. Along the trail we met two other scout troops (not that we were racing, but T290 was the first to the sea by a considerable time lead). One troop from the Pleasanton area was asking about our Loon Lake T-shirts, as they go there too and haven't ever seen us. Turns out they do that for their winter campout and we're there in the summer. They also do their own 10-day backpacking outing in the Sierras covering 120 miles (some quick mental math says that's over 10 miles a day...). We stopped for lunch along a creek and the Hinz's broke out their lightweight stove to cook up a hot meal (rub it in, rub it in). We made the sea by about 2:00p and called to our rides that we were there early. While we waited for our rides, we rested, watched the surfers and nodded to the other troops as they came into the parking lot to wait for their rides as well.

Huge THANK YOUs to Maria Powell, Anne

Tysanner, Martha Ayala and Frances Arevalo for shuttling the scouts and dads to and from the trail.

Final note: after getting home safe and sound, taking a hot shower and putting some of the gear away, Jimmy and I watched a torrential downpour fill our street's gutter to size of a small fast flowing creek. It was comforting to know that tonight; we'd have warm, big beds to sleep in.

2004 Friend Of Scouting Funding Drive

By Jeff Green, Assistant Scout Master

The Santa Clara County Council Friends of Scouting (FOS) funding drive concluded this year in April. For those of you not familiar, the FOS program is one of three primary sources of annual funding for the council. The other two sources being Popcorn Sales (~22%) and Youth Activities (~41%). According to council information, about 75% of your investment in scouting is spent supporting summer camps, training, camporees, membership campaigns, staff training & development, facility maintenance & utilities, postage and printing for activities, program supplies, youth & volunteer recognition. The Santa Clara County Council (SCCC) provides support for over 10,000 youth members, over 5,000 adult members and over 400 units. In 2003, scouts in our council gave over 190,000 hours of community service and earned over 200 Eagle Scout awards. It is the mission of BSA to prepare young people to make ethical choices throughout their life, and to help them achieve their full potential. Your local BSA council provides character education for the next generation of Silicon Valley Leaders.

Troop 290 gave \$1,875 dollars this year and had a participation rate of about 50%. This year's total was just over 75% of what the prior three-year's average was – so we didn't give as much as we have previously. We'll do better next year. On a personal level, I'd like to thank each of the families who took the time to make a donation. The scouting program is one of just a few nationally recognized programs that have such a positive and lasting effect on the character growth of your sons. Thank you for your participation.

Court of Honor

There was a general Court of Honor on the 19th. Ryan Barekat, Michael Brewer, Eddie Cho, Thomas Dazzi, Jim Kim, Alex Maske, Garrett Niklowitz, and Chris Nobriga earned the rank of Scout. Michael Trimberger and Greg Westhauser earned their Second Class rank advancement. Steven Flammer and Tim Healy got first class. Erik Anderson, Brandon Arebalo, Brendan Hinz, Chris Powell, and Jason Ricci all earned their Star rank advancement. Neil Bondre, Ed Levin, and Tolly Powell earned Life. There were also 33 merit badges that were given out.

Pete's Gun Club

The Pete's Gun Club outing was this month. The scouts liked the outing very much. There were lots of different guns for the boys to shoot. They were 22 caliber rifles and 20 gauge shotguns. Mr. Green also brought some exploding targets for the boys to use. They were very small and hard to hit. Chris Green hit three exploding targets out of three shots. The boys also shot at fozz ball people. Often after the boys shot the fozz ball people, they couldn't find the head or the entire body. The boys also used the shot guns to shoot clay pigeons. The marksmanship merit badge will be offered, so if you liked what you did at Pete's gun club, you can shoot some more and get a merit badge at the same time. [Scoutmaster's note: This shooting outing really wasn't at Pete's Gun Club, which is just north of Los Banos. Pete's takes a lot more time to get there and back, and a lot more time to prepare a proper range, set up targets, etc. Being closer and properly set up, the Santa Clara County Peace Officer's Association range that we used is much more convenient, even allowing some scouts with athletic commitments to come spend part of their day. And in the end, I think everyone had a fun time with the variety of targets provided. And I must say that the boys put on one awesome exhibition with the shotgun – those flying targets seemed to be quaking in the box knowing that they soon would be tossed in front of some excellent marksman. I've seen experienced adults not shot that well!]



The scouts prepare to release a volley.

Birthdays

Stephen Taylor, Jason Stibbe, Timur Wang, Jarret Gardner, Todd Westhauser, RJ Aitken, Paul Medlin, AJ Cihla, Chris Green, and Evan Camacho celebrated their birthdays during this April.

If you have any articles or comments please feel free to e-mail me at eddieL333@sbcglobal.net.