

Troop 566's Camp La-No-Che 2006 Diary

1. Arrived Sunday early afternoon to meet Troop 279/Jacksonville with their 10 Scouts/5 adults (includes one 18 y/o ASM, recent Eagle Scout) sharing Campsite 15 with our 7 Scouts and 3 adults (Mrs. Scott representing the XX chromosomes). Over the week the two troops bonded well and the adults comported themselves as gentlemen of the highest quality. (Anita's mattress was less than 6 inches from a particularly noisy snoring T279 ASM; graciously separated by 1/2 inch plywood partition). Found C-15 with working fridges ***AND*** freezers, though we had to replace the burnt out fans (T279 had an ASM with Contractor experience). The Scouts shared leftover ice cream from a troop activity social and ice pops saved in the Campsite freezers. The Scouts from the troops played games together; football, manhunt, cards, etc.

2. Sunday night SPL and I worked the queues in the Rotary Hall to sign up for troop activities. Scouts had voted on maximum swimming, all shooting events, Big Stump, Indian village, etc. With careful logistical coordination we were able to schedule everything; and provide a canoeing alternative for the Scouts not desiring Big Stump. Due to the Troop's packed daily schedules the Scouts carried all required gear for the day's events, avoiding multiple trips back to camp. This provided the additional benefit of giving the Scouts more free time to play games (basketball and tag were favorites), visit the Indian village/museum/trading post, snacks from the Scout Shop, meet with new friends, etc. Abuelo Piedra (77 y/o) was a key support to our vigilant supervision efforts from his rocking chair watch station on the Dining Hall veranda.

3. Weather continued to get breezy/wet as Tropical Storm Alberto approached. Scouts wore or carried their raingear depending on their tolerance to damp clothes. The fiercest electrical storms were early in the morning and many Scouts slept through them! Enduring memories the night the storm peaked include: Matthew (after much debate with me) completing his emergency shelter overnight for his Wilderness Survival merit badge, Anita getting chased out of her bed by rain driving through the adult cabin, the Scout's tents major flapping and minor leaking, etc. The storm had multiple benefits; leading with no mosquitoes the whole week! Guess they all ended up in Bermuda... The storm also broke the drought and restored Big Stump to muddy paradise after weeks of being a dry trail (imagine that!). Rest of the week was typical Florida heat and 24 hours later they place was bone dry again. Heard quite a few Scouts by Friday longing for some rainy weather again.

4. Merit badges and the Trailblazer programs went smoothly with the Scouts being well prepared and enjoying their experiences. Daniel enjoyed waterskiing and got bonus rides one morning when another Scout failed to show up for the ski boat departure! Stephen, Dominique and Matthew had fun with shooting merit badges for two hours every day. Andres in Dog Care patiently waited a few days for the "guest dog" to make his one hour appearance; coincidence (?) that he found a stray dog that accompanied the troop to meal formation one day! The two Andrews made some amazing clay creations in Sculpture; have a great photo of A. Ling's mystical winged dragon! All outstanding Scouts took the option to complete the Fingerprint merit badge. ***INNOVATION*** the LaNoche

staff tested an improved blue card process Thurs. night that accelerated getting the completed merit badge cards signed and recorded. The Program Director used ink stamps for signature, date and address, result I was in and out of the Rotary Lodge in about 30 minutes. The few blue cards for Partial merit badges slowed me down.

5. The Mile Swim and Runs programs were overcome by Alberto and not available (increased my beauty sleep time!). In the Trailblazer program, our Scouts happily completed their Totin Chip and Fireman chits, and then commenced whittling arrows for Indian bows bought at the trading post. Trained Daniel separately for his Totin Chip as he elected not to attend Trailblazers. We had a difference of opinions resolved by the Scout handbook where I was wrong on one account and happy to learn the new way! Troop swimming was refreshing break with all Scouts qualified Swimmer (interestingly, one Scout identified as a swimmer/nonfloater - with blue bar and no red). Our two competitive swimmers, Andrew L and Daniel challenged their acting Scoutmaster and lost a few races over a short course! Certain they would have beat me soundly over a longer course... Shooting events were universally popular including .22 rifles, 410 shotguns, .75 caliber blackpowder and Indian blowguns (deadly accurate). Andrew P. had the best results with blackpowder, while Daniel was noteworthy with shotguns and throwing tomahawks (presumably benefit of baseball experience). Final daily and very popular activity was catching the end of the nightly movie with popcorn and/or ice cream.

6. We challenged Big Stump with our few Scouts amongst a larger accompanying troop. NOTE Daniel and Matthew elected to go Canoeing instead. Andrew L and Andreas surged first, after a few demonstrations of Mr. Scott's instructions on the finer arts of enjoying the earthy delights of the LaNoche Spa (aka Big Stump). Together these two intrepid souls scaled new heights (depths?) in getting dirty, including full submergence and rising up to scare other Scouts. Believe we saved their family's significant expense at more pricier and posher spas as well as encouraged a new appreciation for cleanliness! Before and after photos will identify the extreme enthusiasts in our Troop.



7. ROSES: Volunteer drivers were enthusiastically efficient, Scouts managed their personality issues well with leadership encouragement, Troop maintained our traditions of decorum in our daily dining hall routine, Scouts thoroughly enjoyed the daily flow of emails and letters from home, Troops shared equipment and experience to manage daily/nightly issues, Gentlemanly behavior at the campsite with a mother's presence, and Scouts deeply interested and respectful of the bugs/plants/animals around camp. Stephen

took 30 minutes walking the 50 feet to the showers being distracted by interesting bugs including his current favorite ant-lions!

8. THORNS: We had the usual bumps and bruises... The troop was late posting our Troop Duty Roster, we initially had a few instances of missing Scouts corrected by reinforcing the Buddy Rule, near-injuries playing with pointy stick hazards (Anita seized some bows for a while), etc, etc. All managed by the Scouts themselves as supervised by the combined Troops' leadership. Thank God no permanent injuries, with only minor personal ailments: Andres with slight dehydration from a short bout with stomach upset, Daniel with a self-inflicted rope burn, Matthew poked by a sharp object, Dominique stung by a wasp under his mosquito netting, Andres stung when he picked up a cute, fuzzy bug (identified as a flightless wasp!), etc.

9. Miscellaneous: Bizarrely, the entire Camp Kitchen Staff quit one day ... shortly after T566 performed kitchen cleanup for an evening troop service project. Asked Camp Management and confirmed we were *****NOT***** directly responsible! Proudly hung our 2006 Troop Camp plaque and the first Troop plaque from 2001 Camp trip high in the center of the Camp Shelter. Scouts were thoroughly occupied each day, preventing me from having to look for the black bears (none found!) I had promised showing them. We present a troop gift at camp to Mr. (Abuleo) Piedra in grateful appreciation of his support and shining example as "Young at Heart!"

DAGTD, Mr. Kurt