

## **Boy Scouts of America Troop 726**

### **State of the Troop - February 2010**

Tonight we celebrate BSA's 100 year anniversary and this September we will celebrate the 37<sup>th</sup> birthday of the troop. What these numbers mean to me is not just the turning of a page on a calendar, but it represents longevity and staying power of our troop. For some of you, this is your first Red and Green Dinner, for others it's a long standing tradition that you look forward to each year.

I'm standing in front of you tonight ready to share another tradition – the State of the Troop. As Committee Chair, I have the privilege of preparing and presenting our State of the Troop address. When I sit down at my computer to write the State of the Troop address, I first review the BSA's *Aims of Scouting* and the methods we used 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.

Again, this past year, we saw two scouts receive their Eagle Rank just before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. What this said to me was that they each enjoyed their time with the troop; they wanted to move along the trail, but more importantly they enjoyed the adventure. If they just wanted the Eagle badge to pin on their shirt, then they would have moved along quicker and flew the coop at age 14, instead they wanted the whole and complete experience.

One of our older patrols is also an indication of the longevity and staying power of our scouts; 6 out of the original 7 Owls are still with us today. Our Scorpions and Dragons have had a lot of shuffling of members, but overall most are still with us today. We must be doing something right.

Troop 726 now stands at 28 youth members, at the following ranks:

- 4 scouts
- 2 Tenderfoot Scouts
- 1 Second Class Scout
- 8 First Class Scouts
- 6 Star Scouts
- 7 Life Scouts

As a troop, we spent countless hours doing community service projects, we hiked almost 300 miles and spent over 400 nights camping.

Troop 726 has 28 registered Adult Leaders, most are trained. We have a large group of adults that continue to work with our troop even though their sons have aged out. This pool of adults allows us to maintain all the behind the scenes activities. Again, this is an indication of our longevity and is very helpful in providing continuity in the program.

The statistics show that we have been very busy. Now as far as the BSA program, I asked myself this year: "*How does Troop 726 measure up?*" The Scouting program has three specific objectives. They are character development, citizenship training, and personal fitness and the Methods of Scouting are often used as a yardstick to see how we measure up. First, let me say that once again we have obtained the Quality Unit Award

and the 100% Boys Life Award from National BSA. This is a testament to our dedication to the program.

Now, for the eight methods, I think we can put a check mark by most of them:

- **Scouting Ideals:** Check! We ascribe to the scout Oath, Law, Motto and Slogan.
- **Patrols:** Check! This year we had to do some re-arranging, as some of our scouts have aged out, but we have a solid patrol system.
- **Outdoors:** Check – well, for this one I'd have to give us a half a check. Our community program and fundraising have taken the lead and a toll on our time. For 2010, I'd like to challenge our SM, ASM and Scouts to 'get outdoors more' and to plan the patrol outings at new campsites or hiking trails.
- **Advancement:** Check! Each Court of Honor scouts advance.
- **Personal Growth:** Check! Look at our whole troop; remember when they were scared to stand in front of you... now they love to be front and center.
- **Adult Association:** Check – well, maybe half a check on this one. Boys learn from the examples set by their adult leaders. We could really use more adults to lead more outdoor outings, and more adults to step up to the plate as ASMs.
- **Leadership Development:** Check! Our Owls and Rocks are now our leaders and following on their heels are the Scorpions and Dragons.
- **Uniforming:** Check! We take pride in the way our troop looks. We have been known to miss a belt now and then, or maybe even wear the wrong shoes, but overall we do fairly well. I'd like to see some improvement in the details, making sure everyone knows how to wear his neckerchief, his patches and also his sash when appropriate.

I often say, "Scouting is an adventure, and you get out of it what you put into it." My son has completed his youth experience and after 7 years with Troop 726, we can clearly and loudly say, 'it is worth it'. For those who have been involved in Scouting for 20-30 years or more, it is understood that the cycle of a troop is about every 5 to 6 years; then there is turn-over in both Scouts and Adult leaders. This cycle is part of the growing process. It is what allows new members (whether youths or adults) to enter the Troop, learn the principles of scouting and move from being a student to a teacher, from a follower to a leader. For Troop 726, we believe in longevity, and as our troop evolves, we face many choices, yet we always do our best to take care of our scouts, our adults, our community and our environment.

Tonight, 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