

Annual Planning Conference 2014

Troop 96 held its annual planning conference on March 29 at the Grayslake Village Hall Community Room. Thanks to Trustee (and ASM) Shawn Vogel for securing the room for our use.

SPL Nick G. opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and thanked the troop for their attendance.

We began with a short discussion of what it means to try to become the "Best Troop in America." We graded ourselves on several key aspects of troop operations.

After discussion of each, we assigned a letter grade to our last year's performance:

Camping Program	B
Service to the Community	B
Advancement	A
Activities (day-trips)	C
Troop Meetings	B
Order of the Arrow participation	C
Patrol Method	C
Uniforming to BSA Standards	C (Note: to troop standards was a B)
Personal Recruiting	C (Note: troop recruiting was an A)

We then used "Start-Stop-Continue" to try to identify things we could do to improve our performance and "raise our grades." Kyle J. and Nick G. lead this session.

START – What could we START doing to improve performance?

- More day trip activities
- Improve patrol communications (Between troop meetings and during campouts)
- Go outside for troop meetings
- Longer or more focused patrol corners
- Learn each others' names
- Improve skill sessions
- Utilize more hands-on skill sessions, less lecture
- Get individual name tags
- Conduct regular uniform checks and reward performance over time
- More camping ideas

- More variety of games
- More frequent service projects
- More OA Service Projects
- More Patrol Meetings
- Find new variety of foods to cook
- Re-define what it means for our troop's uniform

STOP – What should we STOP doing that would improve performance?

- Change how we do Skill Sessions to train new Scouts
- Stop going over material that will be learned at Trailblazer
- Increase participation at Skill Sessions

CONTINUE - What should we CONTINUE doing?

- Helicopter Game
- Keep recruiting new Scouts
- Keep going to Summer Camp
- Monthly Campouts
- Big Trips over the summer

After completing the Start-Stop-Continue exercise, we reviewed some examples of camping activities that have been done by the troop. The following list helped to generate ideas for the next exercise.

- Tubing at Sunburst w/ overnight camping in the Moehling Shelter at Camp Lakota near Woodstock, Illinois
- Tubing at Sunburst and camping at Kettle Moraine North (one-night)
- Iceboat sailing at Lake Geneva with camping at Big Foot Beach SP
- Camping one night in Adirondack shelters at Camp Ohdakota. Saturday: rock-climbing at an indoor facility in Crystal Lake.
- Camping at Long Lake State Park with Skiing at Cascade
- Skiing at Granite Mountain and cabin camping near Mauston, WI.
- Lock-in at McHenry Roller rink. Scout cooking outside and indoor tents.
- Basic Scouting and Challenge Games at Camp Crown, Wilmot, WI
- Basic Scouting Skills and Training for new Scouts w/ camping at Richard Bong Recreational Area (Wisconsin)
- Basic Camping with New Scouts at Camp Crown
- Caving and Cooking at Maquoketa Caves State Park in Iowa with camping at Mississippi Palisades
- Biking in Warrenville, Ill and camping at Blackwell FP

- Hiking and camping at Starved Rock
- Grant's Pilgrimage in Galena with camping in Apple River Canyon State Park.
- Bike riding the Des Plaines River Trail, with camping at youth site near Sterling Lake.
- Biking (WI Rails to Trails)
- Biking, Shelter-Building and Fire-building at Rock Cut State Park with riding the Jane Addams Trail
- Climbing at Devil's Lake
- St. Louis Big Trip
- Rockets and Flying Things, Skydiving Observation, Young Eagles Flights at Bong State Park
- White water rafting at South Bend with camping at Potato Creek
- Camp Ma-Ka-Ja-Wan, near Pearson, Wisconsin
- Lincoln sites in Springfield, Illinois
- Indiana Dunes State Park with camping in Michigan.
- Pioneering and family BBQ with Camping at Rush Creek, near Harvard, IL
- Scout-o-Rama at Sterling Lake
- Rock-climbing at Devil's Lake and camping at Mirror Lake
- Mystery Campout to White Pines State Park
- Biking the canal and camping at Chanahon State Park. Day trip to Civil War re-enactment.
- Roller luge and camping at Lake Le-Aqua-Na.
- Webelos Invitational at Odakota or Lakota.

The goal was to generate a large number of ideas, then reduce the list to the most popular. Lastly, rank the top priorities to finalize our plan.

For our winter camping, we needed two themes. The top ranked ideas were:

1. A lock-in at nearby venue like the Libertyville Sports Complex, Rinkside sports or Jump America.
2. Skiing and snowboarding along with snow shelter building and astronomy.

For our warmer weather program, we needed seven themes. Chosen were:

1. Capture the Flag with Family BBQ
2. Shooting Sports
3. Ropes (or COPE) Course with Zip-Lining
4. Horseback Riding
5. Swimming and water sports at Indiana Dunes
6. Bike trip
7. Kayaking

Offline, troop adults will work to identify prime locations for these themes. The PLC will then review the locations and approve the plan. Lastly, the Committee will be informed by the SPL of the plans and ask for their ongoing support.

To help “visualize” the upcoming Camping Months, the following list has been drafted. This is not final. Since April 2014 through August of 2014 is already scheduled, the proposal begins with September 2014 (in italics).

<u>Month</u>	<u>Theme/Activity</u>	<u>Location</u>
April 2014	Caving	Mississippi Palisades SP
May 2014	Shelter Building/Astronomy	Camp Crown
June 2014	Whitewater rafting	Potato Creek near So. Bend, IN
July 2014	Summer Camp	Ma-Ka-Ja-Wan
Aug 2014	AirFest	Lewis University, Romeoville, IL
<i>Sept 2014</i>	<i>Shooting Sports</i>	<i>TBD</i>
<i>Oct 2014</i>	<i>COPE/Ropes Course</i>	<i>TBD</i>
<i>Nov 2014</i>	<i>Webelos Invitational</i>	<i>TBD</i>
<i>Dec 2014</i>	<i>No Camping</i>	<i>---</i>
<i>Jan 2015</i>	<i>Lock-in</i>	<i>TBD</i>
<i>Feb 2015</i>	<i>Skiing/Snowboarding</i>	<i>TBD</i>
<i>Mar 2015</i>	<i>New Scout Camping Intro</i>	<i>TBD</i>
<i>Apr 2015</i>	<i>Horseback Riding</i>	<i>TBD</i>
<i>May 2015</i>	<i>Bike-riding trip</i>	<i>TBD</i>
<i>June 2015</i>	<i>Kayaking trip</i>	<i>TBD</i>
<i>July 2015</i>	<i>Summer Camp</i>	Ma-Ka-Ja-Wan
<i>Aug 2015</i>	<i>Swimming</i>	Indiana Dunes SP

The Troop ranked a number of possible day-trip activities. By voting, the troop selected the top three activities, as follows:

1. Trip to downtown Chicago
2. Golf outing
3. Bowling

Another important element of the Scouting program is Service to the Community. We reviewed our current list of service projects and discussed what we wanted to change or adjust.

- PADS
- Almond Road Cleanup
- Blood Drive
- Holy Thursday lighting
- US Flags on Avon Cemetery
- Toys for Tots

- Scouting for Food Drive
- Eagle Projects

While there was no clear consensus, it was frequently stated that we could improve our overall participation rates and we may be able to add one or more new projects. However, most agreed that this list should continue to be supported. Further, we agreed that there is a tremendous opportunity for our members in the Order of the Arrow to take a greater role in our service projects. A special meeting of the Arrowmen in our troop will be held on April 9 to begin these discussions.

Lastly, we talked about two upcoming opportunities. The PLC, during their March Meeting, agreed to conduct a "t-shirt design competition during the month of April. Scouts can submit their ideas for a t-shirt design during any troop meeting in April. The PLC will evaluate all submissions at the April Meeting and select the top three picks. The entire troop will vote on the Number One choice at the May 5th troop meeting. Short afterwards, Scouts will be able to order t-shirts with the winning design. Shirts will be available for delivery before summer camp in July. The Scout with the winning design will receive one free shirt to wear with pride.

Note: All submissions must contain the following elements at a minimum: the words "Troop 96" and "Grayslake" and the fleur-de-lis logo.

SPL Nick G led the troop in the Scout Oath to close the meeting just before 12 noon.