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Troop 73!

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CAMP HORSESHOE CELEBRATES 99th SEASON

Horseshoe Scout Reservation Marks 99 Years of Summer Camp



Scouts march on the parade field during evening retreat at Camp Horseshoe

As spring approaches and the landscape around the Octoraro Creek begins to warm, preparations are underway at Horseshoe Scout Reservation for the 99th summer camp season at Camp Horseshoe. The historic Scouts BSA camp, founded in 1928 and located on the Mason-Dixon line between Maryland and Pennsylvania, is one of the few long-running traditional Scouts summer programs still operating in the United States.

Camp leaders are focused on readying the facilities and programs that will welcome hundreds of Scouts and adult leaders later this season. The reservation spans a wide area of forest, trails and waterfront, and has long been known for its traditional resident camp experience where Scouts live outdoors, earn merit badges and build outdoor skills. At the heart of the preparations are Ethan Bilson, returning as Camp Director, and Hannah Lamb, who has been named the 2026 Program Director. Bilson, an Eagle Scout and veteran of the staff, will oversee overall camp operations, coordinate with senior

staff and ensure the smooth launch of the summer calendar. Lamb, who has spent several summers on Horseshoe staff, is leading the development and scheduling of merit badge offerings, instructional sessions and program quality across the reservation.

Under their leadership, teams are reviewing activity areas, stocking program supplies and planning staff training events. Traditional program areas such as aquatics, campcraft, nature, COPE (Challenging Outdoor Personal Experience) and field sports are being refreshed, and scheduling is being finalized to give Scouts a full range of opportunities once sessions begin.

Organizers say there is a strong sense of tradition surrounding the upcoming season, which will feature the familiar routines of retreat ceremonies, campwide activities and merit badge classes that have defined Camp Horseshoe for generations. With the camp's centennial anniversary just one year away, Bilson and Lamb both say they are committed to maintaining the heritage of the

TROOP 73 PREPARES FOR FORT MIFFLIN

Valley Forge Troop 73 is gearing up for an exciting winter outing to Fort Mifflin on February 13-14. Scouts will take part in a guided ghost tour, watch a cannon demonstration, and explore the historic fort through interactive programs that highlight its role in the Revolutionary War.

Fort Mifflin, perched on the Delaware River in Philadelphia, is one of the oldest surviving military forts in the United States. Built in the 1770s, it played a pivotal role in delaying British forces during the Revolutionary War, allowing General George Washington's army time to regroup at Valley Forge. Scouts will walk along the fort's historic ramparts, examine artillery up close... [MORE ON PAGE 2](#)



Fort Mifflin, a historic military fort on the Delaware River

reservation while also supporting new and dynamic experiences for Scouts.

As the reservation moves closer to opening the summer season, troop leaders and families are completing registrations and making final plans for the weeks of camping that lie ahead. For many Scouts, Camp Horseshoe is more than just a destination, it's a place where long tradition and new adventures meet in the woods each summer.

FROM PAGE 1

TROOP 73 PREPARES FOR FORT MIFFLIN

by Nathan Greway
HEAD JOURNALIST

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The troop, which meets weekly at the Valley Forge Volunteer Fire Company, sees these outings as a key part of the scouting experience. Leaders say the Fort Mifflin trip helps Scouts practice teamwork and leadership while engaging with history outside the meeting room.

Scouts will spend the night on historic grounds, stay in soldiers barracks, and step back into a pivotal moment in American history.

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ing British forces during the Revolutionary War, allowing General George Washington's army time to regroup at Valley Forge. Scouts will walk along the fort's historic ramparts, examine artillery up close, and learn about life for soldiers stationed there during the 18th century.

In addition to the ghost tour and cannon demonstration, the troop will participate in hands-on activities including musket drills, ghost tours, and historical reenactments of fort life. Leaders say these activities give Scouts a sense of what daily life was like for soldiers and provide opportunities to work together and problem-solve as a team.

Troop 73 members will also have time to practice outdoor skills like navigation, fire building, and tent setup during the overnight stay on the fort grounds. These winter camping skills are considered important preparation for the troop's summer programs, including multi-day camps and merit badge adventures at sites like Horseshoe Scout Reservation.

TROOP 73 SCOUTS TO COMPETE IN IRON CHEF COMPETITION

by Nathan Greway
Patrols will compete for the top prize

Valley Forge Troop 73 is making February a month to remember with a cooking-focused program designed and planned by the troop's Patrol Leaders' Council and recently re-elected Senior Patrol Leader Nathan Greway. The month-long theme teaches Scouts essential kitchen skills and culminates in an exciting yearly tradition: the Iron Chef competition.

Throughout February, troop meetings will focus on cooking safety and hazard awareness, including proper knife handling, fire safety, and hygiene practices in the kitchen. Scouts will also explore their palates through spice tasting exercises, including a blindfolded spice tasting to sharpen their sense of smell and taste.

The PLC has also organized lessons on menu planning, teaching Scouts how to design balanced meals and think creatively about ingredients and presentation. The skills learned during the month build toward the

grand finale: the Troop 73 Iron Chef Competition.

During the competition, patrols will prepare a meal using only the ingredients provided, relying on teamwork, creativity, and the cooking techniques they have practiced throughout the month. Dishes will be judged by the SPL and adult advisors, with awards for taste, presentation, and teamwork.

The February cooking theme is part of the troop's ongoing effort to provide hands-on, skill-building activities that combine fun with practical learning. Scouts gain confidence in the kitchen while practicing leadership, cooperation, and planning — skills fostered by the PLC and emphasized throughout the month.

By the end of February, the Troop 73 Iron Chef competition promises to be a highlight of the year, giving Scouts a chance to put their knowledge to the test and enjoy a friendly, flavorful contest between patrols.

Winter Camping Tips

Dress in Layers: Wear a moisture-wicking base layer, insulating middle layer, and waterproof outer layer to stay warm and dry.

Stay Hydrated: Cold weather can mask thirst. Drink plenty of water and warm beverages.

Choose a Safe Campsite: Look for sheltered areas protected from wind. Avoid low spots where cold air and water can collect.

Sleeping Gear Matters: Use an insulated sleeping pad and a cold-weather sleeping bag rated for the temperature. Keep gear off the snow.

Check the Weather: Know the temperature, wind, and snow conditions to prepare gear and clothing appropriately.



The Iron Chef competition promises to be a fun and exciting event for all troop members to hone their outdoor cooking skills.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



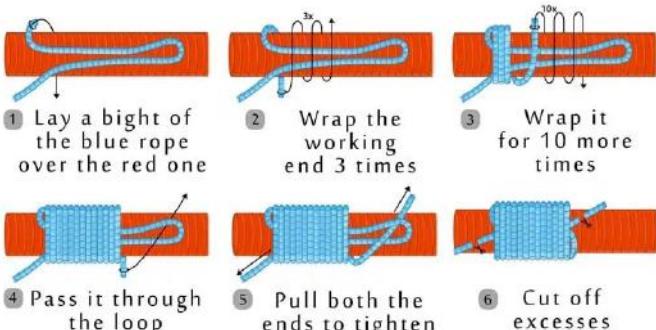
Scouts at the opening campfire on Sunday evening at Camp Horseshoe

SCOUT SKILL CORNER

HOW TO WHIP A ROPE

Whipping the end of a rope prevents fraying and makes it last longer. Scouts use this simple method that doesn't require special tools.

1. Cut off any frayed part of the rope and lay it flat. Take a length of strong twine about 2 ft long and form a loop (bight).
2. Lay the loop against the rope end with the loop pointing back toward the rope.
3. Wrap the long end of the twine tightly around both the rope and the loop several times until the wraps are about as wide as the rope's diameter.
4. On the final wrap, pass the working end through the loop.
5. Pull the short end (the tail) to draw the loop and the working end under the whipping, locking the wraps in place.



THE BEST CAMPFIRE SKITS FOR 2026

Campfire skits are a Scouting classic, and in 2026 the best ones are still simple, fast, and funny. These skits work for all ages and don't need costumes. Read the full skits and 100+ more at scoutingnewspaper.com/skits

1. The Invisible Bench

Probably the most famous skit, Scouts line up and pretend to sit on an invisible bench. When the bench is said to be removed, everyone falls.

2. Firing Squad

A group plays soldiers and prisoners. Each prisoner steps forward and on the cue "Ready... Aim..." shouts a distraction word, causing the soldiers to react, until the final sequence ends.

3. Ice Fishing

Two Scouts pretend to ice fish, repeatedly drilling holes and being told there are no fish where they are fishing, prompting them to move each time.

4. Raisins From Jamaica

A king asks each lord what they brought for him. Some bring gold or silver and are taken away, the third brings raisins from Jamaica and is accepted, until the king finds out what the raisins are.

FOR SENIOR PATROL LEADERS

MAKE YOUR PLC MEETINGS BETTER

PLC meetings play an important role in keeping a troop organized. When they are planned well, they help leaders make decisions, solve problems, and prepare for upcoming activities. Without clear organization, meetings can feel unproductive and leave important tasks unfinished.

A good PLC meeting begins with a simple agenda. Preparing topics ahead of time keeps discussions focused and ensures nothing is overlooked. Leaders can move through items efficiently, making decisions more quickly and avoiding unnecessary repetition. This structure also allows time for unexpected issues without letting the meeting drag on.

Clear communication is another key to success. Writing down decisions and next steps ensures everyone understands their responsibilities. Follow-up becomes easier, and the group can track progress from one meeting to the next. Over time, this level of organization strengthens leadership, builds confidence, and helps the troop function more smoothly.

Planning PLC meetings may seem like extra work, but the benefits are clear. Meetings become shorter, more productive, and more meaningful. With a little preparation, leaders can focus on guiding their troop instead of reacting to problems at the last minute.

Planning PLC meetings makes them shorter, more productive, and more meaningful.

CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE

CAMPING GEAR

Sleeping bag, mess kit, lantern. All items in good condition. \$15
Call (555) 013-4821

UNIFORM SHIRT

Official uniform shirt, size adult M. Lightly worn, no damage. \$10
Call (555) 019-7743

BACKPACKING STOVE

Backpacking stove, compact and reliable. Used once, works great. \$25
Call (555) 012-6609

HIKING BACKPACK

Used external frame backpack. Good straps and working buckles. \$20
Call (555) 014-7712

CAMPING TENT

Lightly used four-person camping tent. Includes rainfly, poles, stakes, and carry bag. No rips or leaks; zippers work well. Used for two weekend trips only. Great for Scouts and families. Pickup preferred. \$50
Call (555) 018-6429

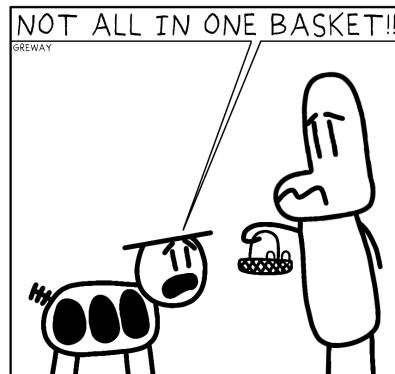
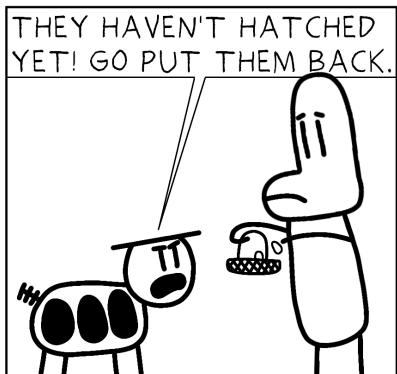
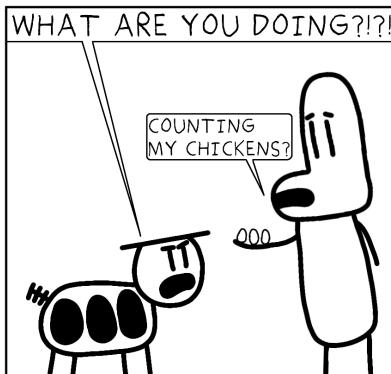


COOK KIT

Patrol cook kit with pots and pan. Some wear, fully usable. \$10
Call (555) 016-2287

BoB THE Cow

by Nathan Greway



LOST & FOUND

SCOUT HANDBOOK

Lost blue scout handbook near park. Name written inside cover.
Call (555) 014-2296

NECKERCHIEF SLIDE

Found metal neckerchief slide. Describe to claim.
Call (555) 018-4410

WATER BOTTLE

Lost green water bottle with stickers. Left near trail or lot.
Call (555) 016-9027

PAIR OF GLOVES

Found pair of gloves near trailhead. Dark color, adult size.
Call (555) 019-5826

HIKING PACKPACK

Lost blue hiking backpack with straps. Contains notebook and water bottle. Name tag may be inside front pocket. Last seen near trailhead or parking area. Sentimental value; reward.
Please check before returning.
Call (555) 012-3907



POCKETKNIFE

Found pocketknife in meeting room. Describe to claim.
Call (555) 017-3048

SERVICES

YARD WORK

Lawn mowing and yard cleanup available. Affordable and reliable.
Call (555) 015-7732

GEAR SETUP

Camping gear and tent setup help. Great for new campers.
Call (555) 012-8471

SCOUTS NEEDED

Scouts required for volunteer work. Service hours can be documented.
Call (555) 011-7468

FLAG PLACEMENT & REMOVAL

Flag placement and removal service. For holidays and special events.
Call (555) 017-8364



JOIN A SCOUT TROOP!

Adventure Awaits!

BeAScout.org

WEATHER CORNER

Today: High of 31°F and sunny

Tomorrow: High of 30°F and mostly cloudy

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Troop Meeting **Feb 11**
- Fort Mifflin **Feb 13-14**
- Patrol Meeting **Feb 18**
- Iron Chef **Feb 25**
- Troop Meeting **Mar 4**
- Court of Honor **Mar 11**
- Patrol Meeting **Mar 18**
- Parent Scout ... **Mar 20-22**
- Troop Meeting **Mar 25**

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