

What a wonderful year was 2006.

In January we camped at the Woodman Center (and got rained on).

In February we camped at Devils Lake State Park (and the temperature got down to 0).

In March we camped at Governor Dodge State Park (and we had awesome snowball fights).

In April we camped at Yellowstone Lake State Park (and some even caught some fish).

In June we camped at Token Creek County Park with Cub Scout Pack 53.

Mixed in with all that camping have been the Klondike Derby, the Pinewood Derby, Scout Sunday, Webelos crossover at the Blue and Gold Celebration, Order of the Arrow elections, awarding of the Fleur de Lis knives, the Scouting for Food drive, the Madison Heritage Trail hike to the State Capitol, the field trip to FocusCorps, swimming at the high school swimming pool, the Junior Leadership Training campout here at the church, Philmont high adventure training weekends, and merit badges: Emergency Preparedness, Disability Awareness, Citizenship in the Nation, and Environmental Science. We also meet once a week, nearly every Monday evening.

If you could not find something in Troop 53 that interests you, then you were probably not looking too hard. We lit match sticks with hatchets. We raced around the church with the Klondike Derby sleds when there was snow. We raced around the church with push carts when there wasn't snow. When we got tired of sleds and carts we built chariots from poles and twine and raced around the church on those.

In the summer, eighteen Scouts journeyed to the Ed Bryant Scout Reservation for seven days of Summer Camp adventures. The troop won the Spirit Stick and camp gadget awards. Twelve Scouts and leaders traveled for two weeks to the Philmont Scout Ranch near Cimarron, New Mexico and backpacked 85 miles in the Rocky Mountains. The new Patrol Leaders Council planned and led more campouts:

In July we went canoeing around the shores of Lake Waubesa.

In August we bike-hiked the Elroy/Sparta bike trail, and cruised the tunnels.

In September, we attended the Glaciers Edge Camporee, and also ran the Family Festival booth.

In October, we camped at Token Creek and climbed at Boulders Climbing Gym.

In November we shot rifles and shotguns at Camp Carlson,

And in December we cabin-camped at Montello and hiked Roche A Cri State Park.

Through all of this, we sold more popcorn than ever before (2nd in Council), hosted a great pancake breakfast, honored four new Eagle Scouts, folded flags at the American Legion, and held another junior leadership training lock-in. We covered Family Life and Citizenship in the Community Merit Badges. We welcomed a number of great new Scouts to Troop 53 as well. I count 13 new names on the troop roster from when we celebrated Christmas last year. We earned Fleur de Lis honors again. We have a great new patrol leaders' council, and a lot to look forward to in 2007:

Winter camping, ski trip, Abraham Lincoln Pilgrimage, new Webelos crossing over, Klondike Derby, Summer Camp, Northern Tier High Adventure Base, and these are just a few of the things that we know about. All of you will pitch in to make these and other activities fun and memorable, and plan new activities that will be fun and exciting too. Enjoy your holidays. Keep the Scout Spirit in all you do. Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law. See you next year.

Brock Chalmers
Scoutmaster