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# Build - Serve - Achieve:

# BSA Troop 650

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**Special Summer Edition!** Scouting in the Norcross - Duluth Area since 1988 **Summer 2007**

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The following newsletter is compilation of the opinions of Scouts from Troop 650 about their experience at Boy Scout camp at Camp Ottari. It is not arranged in any special order, just the order in which I pulled the papers from my bag. The author is listed directly before their piece.

Wade Phenicie

Summer Camp at Camp Ottari was different than the two other Camps I have attended. When we were first introduced to the staff, they seem to have a knack for telling incredibly bad jokes. But as we got to know them, they really seemed more...memorable than the staff at previous Summer camps. Unfortunately, our campsite was very far from pretty much anything so we had to do a lot of walking. I liked the food better than other summer camps, but I also have very low expectations for the food.

Ryan Bercik

This camp is a great opportunity to get 6 merit badges in just one week. You also have fun singing songs and doing skits at campfires. Sure the food isn't great, but you get over it. It's also an opportunity to get Eagle

required merit badges. So if you're thinking of not going, then change your mind and sign up.

Jake Holleman

Camp Ottari was fun. I got to earn merit badges. It rained a lot.

Jack Spanjers

Camp Ottari is both good and bad. It was bad because the tents and food were awful. The good parts were shotgun, rifles, archery, and swimming. I just wish it did not rain and it was not so far away from home.

Andrew Cole

I enjoyed my week at Camp Ottari. The staff was all friendly and knowledgeable. I liked that I got to know my teachers better than I did at Woodruff. I didn't like the number of hills I had to climb, but I had a good time. I would like to visit Camp Ottari again sometime.

Taylor O'Conner

I had mixed feelings about summer camp. The last two days I enjoyed, but the other 4 days, I really didn't. I got to get 6 merit badges, go to the waterfront, and go fishing with friends.

Ross Howard

My time at summer camp was fun. During the week I completed 4 merit badges, some of which helped for second and first class. But I also learned a lot, like how to make a lanyard and the true meaning for joining Boy Scouts from PH. The only things I didn't like about camp were the food and the walking up huge hills. But overall I had fun.

Joel Hardwick

Camp Ottari was fun. The week went by quick. I got a lot of merit badges done.

Isaac Goodspeed

Camp Ottari was slightly fun because it was summer camp, but it was mainly a pain in

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the butt. Between “Cardiac Hill” and “Ankle Breaker”, I came out with a lot more muscle on my legs. Climbing up and down hills all day long is a workout. Apart from that, the nature trail was retarded; I must have slipped twenty times in three loops. The “slip n’ slide” was the most ghetto thing I’ve ever seen as it was a sheet of wet plastic held down by rocks. Woodruff is infinitely superior to that dumb. But all in all I had a great time.

#### Brian Hysell

I’m not sure if Ottari was better than Woodruff—it was simply different. Sure, the camp was arguably a bit more “rustic”, but its staff stood out as able and lively. The staff had something at a culture of its own. Aside from that this year’s summer camp was just like any other.

#### Brandon Cunningham

My week at camp Ottari was annoying at the beginning. I eventually got used to my routine. The one thing I disliked was all the hiking we did. Some of the food was bad but some of it was good. Overall I think I had a pretty good time.

#### Robert Crabtree

Summer camp at Ottari was amazing. They had many activities, from swimming to spar pole climbing. The staff was spirited, the classes well thought out, and the food was amazing for a scout camp. The only problem was the tents. They were not well put together. I would really like to return.

#### Anonymous

After my first summer camp other than Woodruff, there was a bad feeling left in my stomach about Ottari. Ottari wasn’t very bad though and was actually pretty fun. The only flaws are its large hills, its distance away, and its okay food. I got three merit badges including one that was eagle, so I can’t complain too much. Overall it is a very nice camp and I wouldn’t mind coming back again next year.

#### Tage Kelkar

I had a good time at Camp Ottari. There was a lot of walking, but the staff was really spirited. They sang songs and repeated instructions to us in total unison. At every meal we would call the head of staff ugly and at most of them he would fire a quip back at us. Two of the merit badges I had were really boring because we did not do anything, but the rest were alright. The food was tolerable and staff usually sang a song during each meal. Also, there were struggles for seconds. All in all I’d say it is a great camp.

#### Abhishek Thumaty

As always, summer camp has been a time for our scouts to get many merit badges and for our first year scouts to do rank requirements. Going to a camp we had never been to before, we were surprised by what Ottari had to offer us. The Ottari camp proved to be not only a place to improve rank and earn merit badges, but also a place of fellowship, learning, and opportunity. As ASPL, I saw the sprouts of new leadership

and skill in participating scouts. I have confidence in the future of Troop 650. I hope that every other scout shared that joy.

#### Asher Goodspeed

Camp Ottari’s Brown Sea Island program was a fun experience to learn scout skills. There were different competitions every day that required the use of the skills that we learned. It was an all over fun camp.

#### Clayt Kucera

Camp Ottari is a good place to go for merit badges, activities, and crafts. We were put at the bottom of all the hills so we had to walk up them everyday to get to our classes. In my opinion camp Ottari is kind of low budget and low quality compared to Woodruff but their food was ok and their staff was funny. I think Ottari was fun, but I wouldn’t want to come back, because the water tasted like blood, there were a lot of bugs. My legs are covered in bug bites. So that’s my trip to Camp Ottari.

#### Geoffrey Sangston

Being my second year of summer camp, Camp Ottari was a good camp. Camp Ottari was not as good as Woodruff in staff spirit. The only things I didn’t like about this camp were the long, steep hills and that basically our troop is eight entire hours away from Ottari. If Ottari was closer, I would maybe like to come back, but not in place of Woodruff.

#### Kurt Goldsmith

I had fun doing all my classes and other activities I really liked the zip line. I didn’t like

the fact that I didn't have a cot in my tent and was missing a corner post. But the cots were very comfortable.

Todd Goldsmith

Summer Camp 2007

Mostly I spent my time at summer camp with the Brownsea Island Scouts – the newest of our scouts. The program started each day with a little lecture on part of the scout law followed by a morning session working on scout skills – patrol structure and spirit, first aid including various carries, knots and the five mile hike. After lunch, there was time to swim, followed by a contest related to the scout skills learned in the morning. Our boys are very good at the knots they learned and the first aid carries.

In general there was plenty to eat, so that even with “cardiac hill” and all of the walking, I did not lose any weight. Some of our younger scouts are still at the age where they do not eat as many different food items as they will by the time they are 14 and older. So the Scouts with the “dirty trays” (the tray at each table with the most uneaten food) at meals were the younger scouts. Just wait until they are ravenous teenagers!

The week was very relaxing – no cell phone coverage, no emails, no regular work. Just a good time with the boys and other adults. My son even talked with me a little and let me eat a few meals at his table!

Lisa Slotznick

I guess you should never let appearances prejudice the camp. When we arrived at camp my first thoughts were, "What have we gotten into?"

The tents on the old platforms and the bathhouses, well... But the program and the staff more than made up for the facilities and we did find a better bathhouse.

This was Nate's and my first Boy Scout summer camp and we both had a great time. I didn't understand the importance of summer Camp until I experienced it. For those who have not gone you need to go. The program to help the first year scouts advance to first class is awesome. They complete more at camp that they ever could on troop campouts. The first year Scout who goes really gets a big jump on those who don't.

Tim Ashton

With a First Class scout about to embark on his second Summer Camp, and having not attended his Mountain Man ordeal at Woodruff last year, I decided to make the trek to the Blue Ridge Scout Reservation this summer and spend a week with scouts and Scouters. Not being a registered leader, but having gone along on a couple of weekend trips, I was not sure what to expect. I was excited and a bit apprehensive as the time to depart approached.

As it turned out, this was probably one of the most relaxing vacations I have ever had, as an adult. That does not mean that I laid in my tent all day, napping or reading a book. On the contrary, I was up by 6:30 most every day and actually stayed very busy, almost all of the time. But it was stress free. I was not there as a parent, so unlike family vacations, there was no breaking up arguments

between the kids, no deciding where to eat, or yelling at the kids to go to sleep. For the first vacation in twenty years, I did not have to "debate" with my wife over the daily agenda. There was plenty of work to do, but none of it was obligatory. I decided early on that I would help out in some fashion, either with a merit badge or by camp service in some other way, at least once each day. I also decided to attend a good deal of leadership training. These commitments were easy enough, and did take some time out of the day. The rest of my time was spent enjoying the reservation, which was easy to enjoy.

Besides the incessant hiking required to get anywhere, I hiked all over the camp, and beyond. I swam when I wished, fished a few times, got a canoe when I wanted one. I rode the 850-foot zip line the first day it opened, and later "worked it" for a couple of hours. I shot skeet against another scout leader, in a friendly game of cutthroat. And, as one who devours novels at home, I think I managed to read about thirty pages the entire week.

As is so often the case, very little of what I expected came to pass. I never took a nap, though I intended to almost every day. I was never bored, except during the training films. Walking the hills never bothered me. I made friends with former acquaintances, and got to know existing friends better. I found that I could serve food in a hot cafeteria line and be quite happy doing so. I learned that Greg could take a practical joke without getting mad. And I relearned something that I had almost forgotten- simple pleasures is the best.

Unless unseen circumstances prevail, I will be doing it again, next summer, at Woodruff.

Greg Lindquist

Attending Summer Camp out of Council (some other camp than Woodruff Scout Reservation) has been a tradition with Troop 650 over the nearly 20 years we have attended a summer camp. In 1993, my first summer as Scout Master we attended Boxwell Scout Reservation, Nashville Tenn. Though not a memorable week in the annuals of Scouting, it started a tradition of Troop 650 attending out of Council Summer Camps, for the purpose of offering a variety of long term camping. Boxwell was followed by: Skymont 1995, Skymont 1996, RC Manchester 1998, Skymont 2001, Camp Bonner, 2004 and this summer Camp Ottari.

Though I was unable to attend the entire week, due to business commitments, my four days were great. We learned that Ottari is a summer camp experience set up so that a Scout can attend 7 or 8 years in a row and never repeat a program. Thus interesting Troop 650 in returning in a few years and registering our Scouts throughout the different programs.

Woodruff could learn a few things from Ottari; like Scout Spirit, seconds in the mess hall, food that met both adult and Scout requirements and a great first year camper program.

The camp at first glance appeared to be very mountainous, but as I walked the camp it was not any more so than Woodruff. I agree with many of our experienced summer camp Scouts that the tents and tent platforms left a lot to be desired. But, the good news

for future trips there, that Ottari knows the shortcoming and is in the process of replacing the platforms with permanent, level tent platforms like Woodruff has recently installed.

The mess hall reminded me of my youth Scouting experiences at summer camp. "Scouting Spirit" was evident after every meal: songs, cheers, skits and a few daily announcements. Much better sitting inside listening to the daily news than standing outside in the blazing sun.

Then what would Summer Camp be without the famous "Hysell" prank. This year was well thought out, involved a good cast of characters and clearly pulled the wool over the eyes of the old Scout Master. It will make for great stories around future campfires.

**Summer Camp 2008**

Make your plans now to attend Summer Camp 2008. We will return to Woodruff Scout Reservation for the week of June 15 – 21, 2008. The *estimated* cost is \$250.00 for a week filled with adventure, skills, Scouting and friendship. Memories that will last a lifetime are made in a week of Boy Scout Summer Camp. The first \$100 payment is due by January 28, 2008, followed by the second \$100 payment due April 28, 2008.

With 32 Troop meetings between now and summer Camp installment payments of \$8.00 per week will more than cover the cost of the best week of the year.

Just a reminder that 50% of the profits from your sales of popcorn can be used towards payments of your summer

camp bill. Sell away and go to camp for free!

**Fill in the blank space below with your Scouts comments on summer camp if he was not included in this newsletter.**