

Boy Scouts develops young people, forges lifelong friendships

By Brenda Wilder

The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

The Scout Oath is: "On my honor, I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight." The Scout Law says a Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent.

Tim Dunaway serves as Scoutmaster for Troop 88 in Clinton, which is part of the Andrew Jackson Council and is sponsored by the First United Methodist Men's Club of Clinton. Dunaway says Scouts receive the most benefit from the program when their parents are involved, which can be fun and exciting. He defines the three aims of scouting as character building, citizenship training, and personal fitness. These goals are accomplished with an outdoor program—camping out, hiking scenic trails, building campfires, shooting rapids, climbing rock faces, and many other activities. Troop 88 is dedicated to keeping its focus on doing what's best for Scouts and their families.

Ben Tripp, an Assistant Scoutmaster for Troop 88, said scouting is a character building program, promoting personal fitness, exercise and balanced diet, and a positive outlook. Tripp has personally seen how Scouting promotes personal accountability, which eventually extends to the families and community.

"Being prepared is very important to Scouts," said Tripp. "In the Family Life Merit Badge, boys keep a log of the chores they've assisted with for ninety days. Before they earn a rank, there is a board of review, consisting of parents and leaders,



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Several opportunities for young people to join Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts exist in Clinton.

to check on how they are achieving goals. This builds skills for future job interviews and professional meeting presentations."

Scouts also participate in service projects. An example is participating in a weekend cleanup canoeing trip on the Strong River, which coincides with the Pearl River cleanup weekend.

Troop 88 has participated in this activity several times, usually retrieving several bags of empty bottles and garbage, along with discarded tires. They once removed a plastic pallet that the D'Lo Campground immediately repurposed.

Other Eagle Scout projects have

included a flowerbed at the 4C's, a park bench at the Nature Center, an information booth at Butt's Park and a mini library at the Clinton Visitor's Center. The Path to the rank of Eagle requires high standards, and even boys who don't achieve the goal still gain knowledge and experience.

Scout Troop 12 meets at Clinton First Baptist Church and recently had a celebration at the Court of Honor (COH).

These Scouts have collectively earned ninety-four merit badges, ten rank advancements, and sixteen special awards since their last COH. Twelve Scouts earned their trained strips after having completed Introduction to

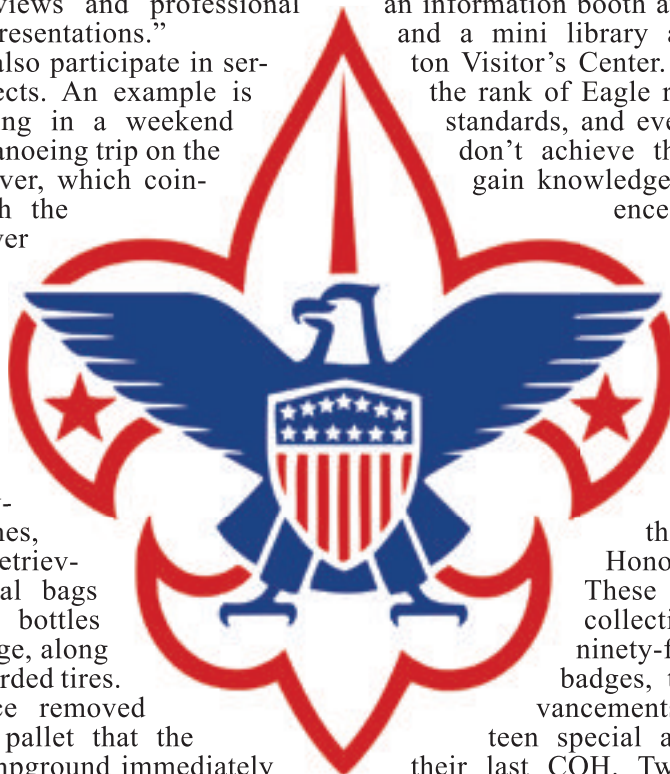
Leadership Skills for Troops (ILST) training. This troop encourages team building exercises, leadership roles and becoming servant leaders. They recently visited the World War II Museum in New Orleans, learning about how the Greatest Generation fought to preserve democracy and freedom around the world. The troop celebrated Dog Days of Summer by collecting pet food for CARA.

Jacob Roberts, a senior at Clinton High School, is a member of Troop 345 and is an Eagle Scout. Troop 345 meets at the Episcopal Church of the Creator. Roberts said a boys' troop is like a second family. Even after aging out, the young men stay in contact with each other. The troop leaders come from different walks of life and have different skills that help teach the boys merit badges and important life skills.

"Boy Scouts has been one of the best decisions in my life," said Roberts. "I have met so many people from all over Mississippi and the United States. I've learned skills that I wouldn't have known otherwise. I've learned outdoor skills as well as social and other real life skills that I continue to use every day. Achieving the merit badges helped me understand myself better. I am so thankful for my time in the Boy Scouts and would gladly do it all over again."

Cub Scouts are referred to as a "pack" and begin around first grade, ages six through ten. Boy Scouts range from ages eleven through eighteen. Participants will need a uniform, dues and camping equipment. Fundraisers are available to assist with the cost of the required items.

Schedule times, contact information, and other details can be obtained by contacting First Baptist Church at 601-924-6705 or First United Methodist Church at 601-924-6671. In addition, Clinton troops have Facebook pages and websites with additional details and further contact information.



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