

NEWS FROM BOY SCOUT TROOP 113
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Merit Badges, Awards, Bonding: All Part of Boy Scout Troop 113's Summer Camp

By Tyler Jones, Star Scout

Every year, Boy Scout Troop 113 from Franklin Township (Somerset County) has a busy calendar, filled with numerous campouts and day outings. While these outings are enjoyable and present valuable learning opportunities for younger scouts, there is one outing that beats them all: Summer Camp. This weeklong camp allows boys to work toward merit badges, earn awards, advance in ranks and bond as a troop. The year 2011 marked Troop 113's second year in a row at Winnebago Scout Reservation, and thanks to the leadership of not only the camp staff but also the troop's Scoutmaster Corps, it was perhaps the troop's best Summer Camp yet.

Camp Winnebago is located in Rockaway, NJ, and has much to offer its campers: a lake for swimming, fishing and boating; a parade field for sports like soccer and football; basketball and volleyball courts, and tetherball poles; and a trading post, for snacks and gear. Throughout the week, Troop 113 took full advantage of everything Winnebago had to offer. At any given time you could find a group of scouts from 113 engaged in a heated basketball game, fishing on a dock, or sipping a drink from the trading post in the cool shade. This year also marked the final Summer Camp for Scouts Dan McCann, Joe Lesky, Mike von Ohlen, and me (Tyler Jones), all of whom will turn 18 before the next Summer Camp.

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When the Scouts weren't at play, they were hard at work on merit badges in areas ranging from aquatics to handicraft. Troop 113 brought 24 scouts to camp this year, and among them they attempted to earn a staggering 115 merit badges.

The troop also had the chance to win several awards unique to Winnebago. On an individual level, the scouts could earn Winnebago's Acorn Award, and nearly every scout in 113 received this award. In fact, only one person in the entire camp outside of 113 received this award. On a patrol level, one could earn the Green Bar Bill Award, but to do so, at least half of the members of each patrol must earn the Acorn Award. Every patrol in 113 received the Green Bar Bill Award, which meant that 113 was eligible to win the Troop Award. The troop worked tirelessly but in the end was unable to earn this honor.

However, the troop was victorious in the annual Campwide Games. A modified Buffalo Patrol brought victory for 113 after putting on a dominant display in events such as Buddy Tag Retrieval, Knot Tying and Bouldering. The overall spiritedness of the patrol was evident for all to see, and Buffalo's efforts were rewarded with a ribbon for their patrol flag and a watermelon to share with the troop.

Thursday night was bowling night for Troop 113. Wearing their new troop T-shirts, the boys headed out to Boonton Lanes for a night of pizza, bowling and fun. On Friday, Winnebago was scheduled to run a Water Carnival for the scouts, but due to the heat, they limited it to a Slip 'N' Slide in the parade field. Numerous scouts from around the camp lined up to have a turn. By the end of the festivities, everyone was wet and smiling.

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Saturday marked the end of the camp, and after a final breakfast, the campers said good-bye to the staff and packed up to leave. The final item left for 113 was the annual Summer Camp Court of Honor, where the scouts were recognized for their achievements throughout the week. The troop had 10 scouts advance a rank (based on their accomplishments) during this Summer Camp, with Ryan Sanghvi advancing 2 ranks. Also recognized were those who completed the Mile Swim. Mr. Tom Hauck completed the swim for the 5th time, David Hauck completed it for the 3rd time and Ciaran Byrne completed this difficult task for the 1st time.

All in all, 113 had a wonderful week at camp and can't wait to come back again for another week of fun and adventure next year.

In September, the troop will resume its meetings Tuesdays from 7:30 to 9 p.m. at Somerset Presbyterian Church, 100 Kennedy Blvd., Somerset. For further information, visit www.Troop113.com.

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PHOTO ATTACHED – Boy Scout Troop 113 at Summer Camp