



Willistown Troop 78

Website: www.tr78.org

Facebook: [Willistown Scouting America Troop 78](#)

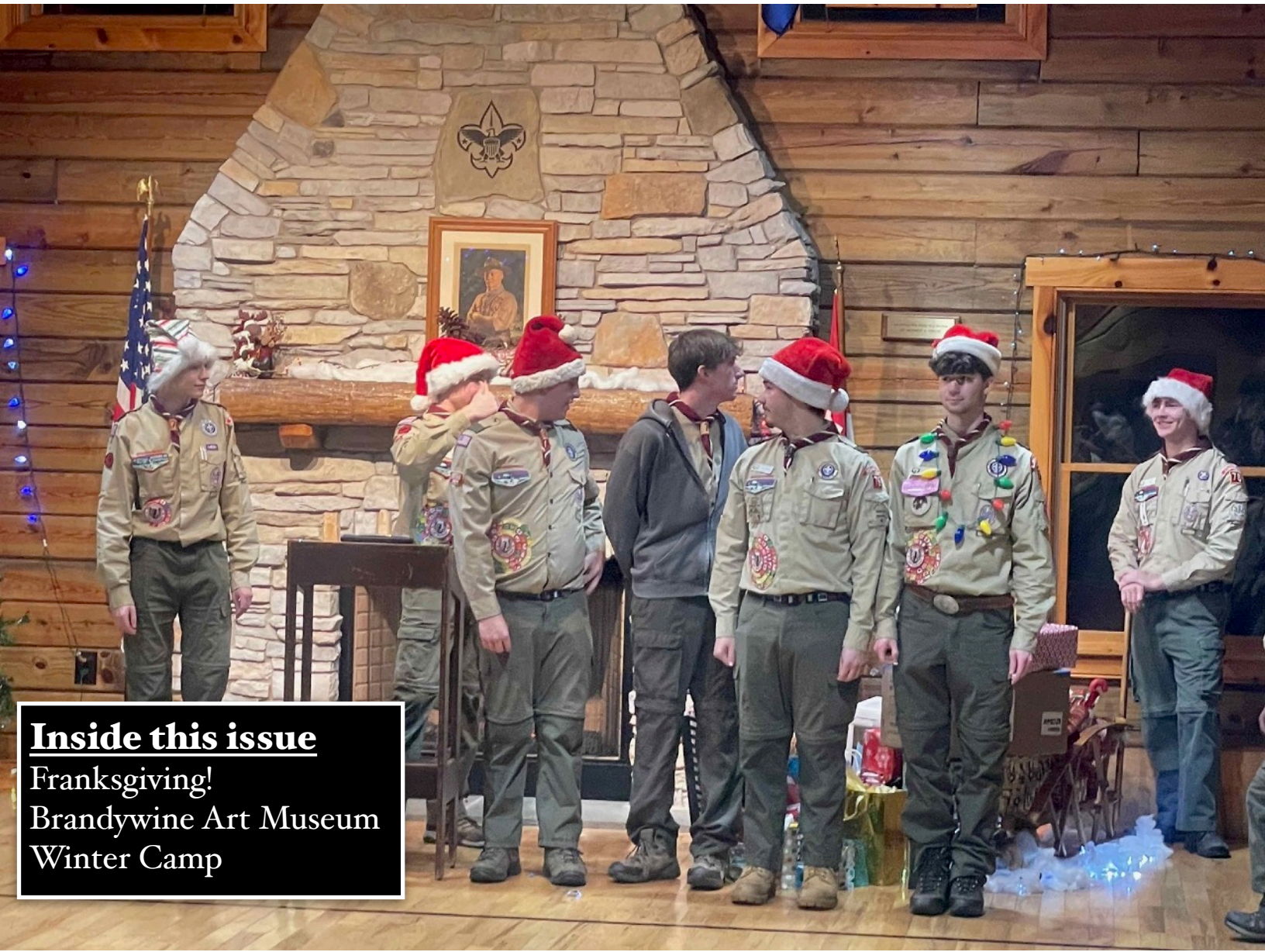
YouTube Channel: [Troop 78](#)

January 2026

Volume 42 Number 5

Holiday Party!

FUN, FOOD, FELLOWSHIP



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January 2026

6 Tuesday Board of Review 7:00PM

Troop Committee 7:30PM

7 Wednesday Patrol Leaders' Council 7PM

9 Friday - 11 Sunday Winter Camp at Camp Horseshoe

16 Friday TROOP MEETING 7PM

17 Saturday Pinewood Derby Workshop for Cubs and Webelos

23 Friday TROOP MEETING 7PM

25 Sunday Pocono Ski Trip, day trip

30 Friday TROOP MEETING 7PM

[Click here for the full one page calendar](#)

Holiday Party

Friday December 19, 2025

Cabin

By Jacob L.

The Holiday Party meeting kicked off just like our usual troop meetings, with the opening and a 15 minute patrol period. From there, the meeting shifted to a first aid focus, featuring two problems that truly prepared scouts for anything.

The first scenario was unique, as it used staff members as live actors instead of the usual paper-based problems. This scenario sparked patrol teamwork across the troop. Unfortunately, there was one key detail that every patrol happened to miss. The second scenario returned to the newer short format but stood out because of its creative storyline involving a gas leak in the cabin. Most patrols recognized the issue quickly and evacuated from the cabin (only demonstrating, of course).

After wrapping up the first aid portion, the meeting transitioned into a true festive party. Each scout who had brought a gift for the gift exchange drew a number that determined when they would select their present. After choosing, scouts swapped gifts with others. Once the final scout had selected a present, everyone unwrapped their gifts at the same time. Following the exchange, the scouts enjoyed the food brought by each patrol. Patrols were called up based on how quiet they were during fall-in to enjoy cookies, brownies, pretzels, ice cream, and other treats. The scouts had about 20 minutes to eat, relax, and check out their gifts and those of their friends.

To close out the evening, clean up jobs were announced based on the scores of the first aid problems, with first place going to Flying Eagle and second place to Cougar. This marked the end of our annual Holiday Party, and it was definitely a year to remember!



Franksgiving

Troop 78 Family Celebrates Franksgiving and Troop Alumnus, Miles Stevens

Saturday November 29, 2025

Noon - 3PM

Cabin

By Ethan S.

Troop 78 families, friends, scouts, and alumni gathered at the cabin on a crisp fall afternoon for our annual Franksgiving. This event, organized by the troop alumni association, features scouts from many generations enjoying each other's company and reminiscing on their time in the troop. I was able to catch up with the some of the alumni home from college for Thanksgiving break. We also had a delicious lunch of hot dogs, chips, and cookies, and played backyard games like Corn Hole and Spike Ball.

Many attendees generously donated to the Troop Campership fund, which provides financial assistance to scouts attending Camp Horseshoe during the summer.

At the close of the event, longtime troop friend Miles Stevens was presented with the Old Loon Award for his lifetime of outstanding service to Troop 78. It was a fitting way to highlight the contributions of so many troop alumni who continue to support our program.

By Jim Bennett

On Saturday, November 29, 2025, Willistown Troop 78 Scouts, alumni and friends gathered at the Cabin to celebrate "Franksgiving." So named because the annual event is held on the Saturday following Thanksgiving and features a cuisine built around hot dogs. Franksgiving brings the Troop 78 family together in fellowship and celebration. Once again, Mother Nature cooperated by providing sunshine and crisp weather. Troop alums and Scout leaders from six different decades brought their children, grandchildren and friends together for a meal that included grilled dogs, spring salad, baked beans, chili, cookies, lemonade, iced tea and – lest we forget a second time (as we almost did that very day!) – the world's best mac and cheese as a post-dessert "second entrée."

While catching up with everyone was certainly a featured activity, the highlight of the day was when the group gathered in a circle, and Scoutmaster emeritus Steve D'Antonio and Troop Committee Chair David Dondero honored Miles Stevens by presenting him with the Old Loon Award. This award is presented to a Scouter whose outstanding service to the Troop spans not just years, but generations of Troop 78 members. As Mr. D noted in his remarks, Miles has put a lot of "miles" on multiple Troop buses over the years, and also served as the primary mechanic and "coach whisperer" to Troop vehicles, past and present. He has taken the Troop to locations



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near and far, including Florida and the US Virgin Islands, on his treks. Miles was among the very first Troop 78 Scouts to go on the Algonquin wilderness canoeing trip, and attended that trip many times over the course of his tenure with the Troop. While Miles has two daughters, he does not have a son – but that did not stop him from continuing his relationship with the Troop as a leader, Committee member, and Board member of the Troop’s sponsoring organization, Friends of Troop 78, Inc.

The award came as a complete surprise to Miles, who was told only that his help would be needed at the Franksgiving event. In true Miles Stevens/Troop 78 fashion, Miles showed up with hands ready to work, only to be handed his very own Old Loon Award. He joins a select group of previous recipients, and his name will be placed on a placard on the Old Loon trophy that sits on a wall in the Troop boardroom.

Congratulations to Miles, and thank you to all of those who attended Franksgiving 2025. Special thanks to Troop alums Nathan Motel and Matt DeStefano for serving as our hosts for the event and publicizing Franksgiving.

Be sure to join us for Franksgiving 2026, because ... we’re on a roll!



Brandywine Art Museum Open House

Sunday December 7, 2025

Brandywine Art Museum

1 Hoffmans Mill Rd

Chadds Ford, PA

By Nishant S.

On a cold Sunday night in December, the troop gathered at the Brandywine Museum of Art to enjoy world class art. The event was graciously hosted by the Brandywine Conservancy, who the troop supports through our service to the Radnor Hunt Races and horse trials.

We arrived at 5 pm, in time to see the beautiful Christmas lights. As soon as we walked in, we were greeted with a huge Christmas tree tall enough to reach the third story, covered in all kinds of handmade ornaments. Around the corner was a spread of



delicious cookies and cider, which we all enjoyed. We also got pamphlets for two scavenger hunts across the museum; the first one was for ornaments on the giant Christmas tree, and the second was for the huge train diorama on the second floor.

Everyone started at the refreshments, of course, before moving on to the gallery. After making it all the way around the first gallery, we headed up to the second floor, taking in the impressive train track. We immediately raced to finish the scavenger hunt on the pamphlet. Most of the hidden Easter eggs were easy to find, but some took us a while. After we were done, we found the lounge area on the third floor, where we relaxed for a little while before making our way down for another course of refreshments. By then, it was time to leave, so we departed for home after this great Holiday tradition.

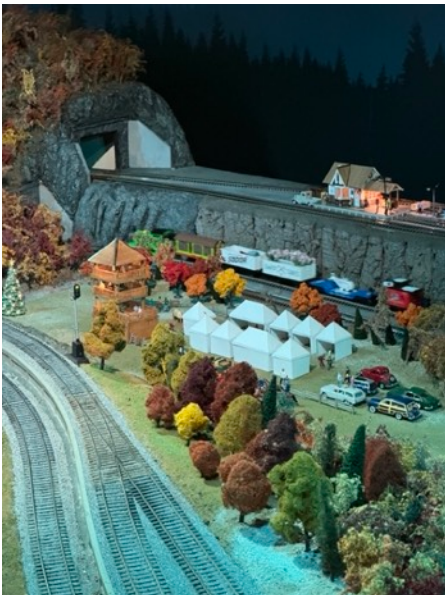


By Steve Brown

The Brandywine Conservancy & Museum of Art welcomed members of Willistown Troop 78 and their families to the Museum for a special holiday evening on Sunday, December 7, 2025. Approximately 50 Scouts and their families attended and enjoyed light refreshments, the famous Brandywine Railroad O-gauge train with over 1,000 pieces including a Radnor Hunt Races set complete with tents and tower along with current exhibitions including Baltimore contemporary artist *Jerrell Gibbs: No Solace in the Shade*.

The Troop especially enjoyed the "critter" trees and the associated scavenger hunt for certain decorations as well as for specific railroad pieces.

It's a wonderful evening to kick off the holidays for the Troop as the museum is only open to us during our visit. We thank our hosts and friends at the Brandywine Conservancy and look forward to a visit next year!



Buck Ridge Ski Club Salutes Troop 78

Repair and Renovation Work Done at Woodbridge Lodge, Vermont

By Jim Bennett

Troop 78 regularly travels to southern Vermont for a ski weekend at Woodbridge Lodge, which is a facility owned by the Delaware County-based Buck Ridge Ski Club. The Lodge is a nostalgic venue that harkens back to simpler times, when families gathered “dormitory-style” in the Lodge to take advantage of great skiing at the nearby Mount Snow, Okemo, Bromley and Magic Mountain resorts. Members also use the Lodge as a home base for warmer weather activities, such as hiking on the Appalachian and Vermont Trails, and canoeing on the lakes and rivers in the area.

While the Lodge is quaint and a beautiful place for a Scout weekend, it is also a facility in need of repair. After some quick-fixes during Troop trips to the Lodge, a number of the Troop’s leaders and friends decided to donate their time, treasure and talents for a full work weekend. As was reported in an earlier edition of the Newsletter, the crew put a new roof on the Lodge shed; checked the Lodge water pump and septic facilities; repaired the fireplace hearth; reinstalled some bunks that had been removed from the facility; and rebuilt a flight of stairs from the lower parking area to the upper level of the Lodge. In return, the Troop was given the use of the Lodge for its most-recent Vermont trek at a greatly discounted rate.

In November, the President of the Buck Ridge Ski Club contacted the Troop to invite the work crew to the Club’s annual December holiday gathering, where the Troop would receive the Club’s Carson-Gude Award. The award was named in honor of two longtime Club members and leaders: Richard Carson and Helmut Gude. In addition to their service to the Club, Messrs. Carson and Gude led extraordinary lives. Richard Carson was a World War II veteran who served in Europe in the 65th Infantry Division under General George S. Patton. He was also a Scoutmaster of two different Troops for nearly two decades, and was a Silver Beaver recipient and Vigil Honor member of the Order of the Arrow. Helmut Gude was an accomplished carpenter and cabinet maker who made much of the furniture at the Lodge and who designed the Lodge’s kitchen. He was also an Olympic athlete. Mr. Gude competed for West Germany in the 1952 Summer Games and placed eighth in the 3000M steeplechase. The Carson-Gude Award is given for extraordinary service to the Buck Ridge Ski Club. In honoring Troop 78, Club President Lydia Hill cited the work of the Troop crew and expressed the Club’s deep appreciation for Troop 78, noting that “The Lodge is always left in better shape after a visit from Troop 78!”

Scoutmaster Rob Duff, who was joined at the ceremony by crew members Ted Dinsmore, Steve Wark, Dave Bravo, Jim Bennett and Troop friend/Club member Frank Baer, accepted the award for the Troop. The Club also thanked 78 crew member Dan Connors, who was unable to attend the ceremonies.

Troop 78 thanks the Buck Ridge Ski Club for the Carson-Gude Award and values the partnership that we share. We look forward to our next visit to the Lodge! Meanwhile, adults who would like to join our next work party at the Lodge should contact Ted Dinsmore or Jim Bennett. We have plenty of work to do and we have a good time getting it done!



Holiday Sale!

Troop Poinsettia & Wreath Sale Exceeds Expectations December 2025

Troop families and volunteers came together once again to make this year's poinsettia and wreath sale a tremendous success. The team tackled unloading, sorting, and distributing hundreds of holiday plants with efficiency, teamwork, and good humor—even in less-than-ideal weather.

This year's sale exceeded its target, surpassing the troop sales goal.



Recognizing Outstanding Volunteers

A heartfelt thank-you goes out to the many hands who made this effort possible:

- **Mark Siegle** – for coordinating with the vendor and managing the large delivery at Stonewall Golf Club
- **Lisa Mundy, Brian Rothberg, Jim Hogan, Mark Siegle, Rob Duff, Steve D'Antonio, and Dave Dondero** – for unloading plants in cold, pouring rain to ensure everything was safely stored
- **Brian Rothberg, Steve Wark, Sherri Wark, and Mark Siegle** – for delivering orders to multiple car dealerships, one of the troop's major customers
- **Sherri Wark and Wayne Curry** – for spending the afternoon overseeing pickups and ensuring every family received the correct order
- **Lisa Mundy, Jess Larkin, Sherri Wark, Brian Rothberg, Jim Hogan, Tony Walton, Wayne Curry, Dave Dondero, Rob Duff, and Steve D'Antonio** – for sorting an incredible **580 plants in just 49 minutes**, setting a new troop record
- **Pete Motel** – for keeping the finances organized and ensuring all payments—checks, cash, and online transactions—were accurately reconciled
- **Jim Fox** - for creating, maintaining, and programming the troop web-store and for inputting all of the items and price information. Thank you Jim for creating the online systems which allow for a smooth customer experience making this sale a success year after year.



A True Team Effort

This sale is more than a fundraiser—it's a reflection of the troop's spirit. The teamwork displayed benefits not only the Scouts, but the broader community that supports them.

The Troop would like to thank all families of the scouts who participated and especially the scouts who led the troop in sales:

Braeden H., Ryan W., Josh S., and Jasper P.

“Band” - Our Text Notification Platform!



Band will allow us to provide improved instant communications and a better membership experience for scouts, scouters and parents.

Please download the Band app on your smartphone and join our group, “Willistown Troop 78” using the following link.

[Click this link to join the Troop 78 group on our new system.](#)

Upcoming Events

Winter Camp

Friday January 9 - Sunday January 11, 2026
Camp Horseshoe

Please join us for the annual Winter Weekend at Camp Horseshoe. We will be staying indoors in cabins heated by wood stoves, sleeping on bunks with mattresses, eating a delicious menu of home cooked food, and generally living large.

The Troop will do a service project for the camp: collecting and splitting firewood for the camp, then we will work on individual scout advancement, play games, compete in a round robin of scout skill events and all around have fun.



[Click here for more information.](#)

Pinewood Derby Workshop

Saturday January 17, 2026
Cabin

Please join us for our annual Pinewood Derby Workshop!

We are looking for Scouts and adults to lend their time, talent and tools to help local Cubs (and parents) fabricate Pinewood Derby cars. Cubs will bring their kit, car weights and a car design sketch.

Please sign up for time slots between 8:30-5 on the below Google Form. Help is needed to work with the Cubs as well as assist with check-in, answer questions about the Troop and give tours.

This is an event to generate interest in our Troop as well as performing a service for the local Cub Packs.



<https://forms.gle/D3Yp4HstSnZNWEBTA>

Ski Trip

Troop 78 Family Ski Day

DATE CHANGE: now SUNDAY, January 25, 2026

Big Boulder

Please note the following correction to the Troop calendar: The family ski trip, which had been scheduled for Saturday, January 24, 2026, has been moved to SUNDAY, January 25, 2026. We will be skiing at Big Boulder in the Poconos. Big Boulder is located at 357 Big Boulder Dr, Lake Harmony, PA 18624. The website can be found at <https://www.jfbb.com/>.

We moved the trip to Sunday to help ensure that we have a better experience. Sundays at Boulder are typically far less crowded than at their sister mountain, Jack Frost. The lifts have been upgraded, the lodge is nice, and there is terrain for expert and beginner alike. We will be providing information on pricing and logistics shortly. This trip, including the discounted pricing, is open to all family members, but only registered Scouts and Scouters may use the Troop bus for transportation to the trip. Stay tuned for more information.

Sea Base - 2027

The Troop is putting together a crew for the summer of 2027 at Sea Base in Florida. Watch for more in upcoming Newsletters.

[Click here for more information.](#)

Chester County Council News

Weekend Merit Badge Program

Camp Horseshoe

The weekend off-season merit badge program will continue with Communication merit badge Saturday January 10 at Camp Horseshoe. Please consider signing up for one of these exciting merit badges and an opportunity to visit camp during the off-season.

Here is the complete list of merit badges offerings for this year: Kayaking, Shotgun, Plumbing, Cooking, Electricity/Electronics, Communication, Geology, Welding, Fishing.

[Click here for more information.](#)



Order of the Arrow

Saturday December 13, 2025

Camp Horseshoe

On December 13th, our troop had four Scouts and Scouters participate in the Order of the Arrow Brotherhood Blitz, a focused afternoon designed to help eligible members complete their Brotherhood requirements while strengthening their commitment to cheerful service.

We are excited to share that all four representatives from our unit embraced the challenge and demonstrated leadership, teamwork, and dedication. Their efforts not only mark an important milestone in their OA journey but also bring added experience and enthusiasm back to our troop.

Please join us in congratulating our Scouts and Scouters on completing their Brotherhood! We look forward to seeing the positive impact they will continue to have on our troop and beyond.

Sebastien B., Life Scout

Mason E., Star Scout

Robert Duff, Scoutmaster

Dan Esterly, Assistant Scoutmaster



CCC Training Opportunities

Wood Badge: Adult Training

Registration for Wood Badge 2026 is OPEN!

Wood Badge is an advanced, national leadership course open only to Scouting volunteers and professionals.

Scouters from Cub Scouting, Scouts BSA, Venturing, Sea Scouts, and Explorers, and district and council Scouters all are welcome and belong here.

Why do you want to go?

1. You want to participate in a Wood Badge course because of things you will learn and do. Here are some of the benefits:
2. Stronger units. You will make your Scouting unit — and your sons' and daughters' units — stronger.
3. What and why of Scouting. You will have a deeper understanding of what Scouting is and why we do it.
4. Experience. You will learn and experience things that will stay with you in Scouting and the rest of your life.
5. Fun. You will have fun and you will meet interesting people.
6. Other groups. You will make your other groups, like work, church, even family, stronger.

COST: \$320.00 (early bird rate - register by 4/15/26), \$400.00 (registration after 4/15/26)

Register here: <https://scoutingevent.com/539-104910>



Wood Badge 2026

Scouting's premiere Adult Leadership training course is coming back to Chester County Council next May! Over the two-weekend, five-day course, you will learn essential leadership skills to take back to your unit - and above all else, you will have fun!



WOOD BADGE

May 8-10, 2026
May 16-17, 2026

Camp Ware
Camp Horseshoe

National Youth Leadership Training

Registration for NYLT 2026 is OPEN!

NYLT is a youth-led conference that focuses on providing youth leaders with the skills to run successful youth-led units. The NYLT skills are also lifelong leadership skills that will distinguish participants from their peers.

The event fee includes meals, lodging, and materials for the event. By April 1, scout participants must:

- be currently registered with a Troop, Crew, or Explorer Post
- be at least 13 years of age and at least of First Class rank (Scouts BSA) or a Venturer at least 14, or 13 and have completed 8th grade
- have approval from their unit leader AND parents/guardians
- have already completed the [Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops/Crew \(ILST/C\)](#)

WHEN: Friday, April 10 – Sunday, April 12 & Friday, April 17 – Sunday, April 19

This event includes TWO full weekends. Both weekends need to be attended to complete the course.

Arrival/drop-off on Friday each weekend is from 5:00-5:30 pm.

Please remember to EAT BEFORE ARRIVING on Friday.

Departure/pick-up is approximately 3:00 pm on Sunday.

NOTE: Registrations WILL NOT be accepted for participants who cannot attend both weekends in their entirety.

WHERE: Camp John H. Ware 3rd, 239 Jubilee Road, Peach Bottom, PA 17563

CONTACT EMAIL: nylt@cccbsa.org

COST: \$312 per participant



Register here: <https://scoutingevent.com/539-NYLT2026>

[Click here for the Chester County Council Newsletter](#)

[Print this Newsletter for all of your family and friends to see!](#)