



Willistown Troop 78

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January 2025

Volume 41 Number 5

Celebrating the Holidays at the Cabin

GATHERING FOR THE FUN



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January 2025
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Troop Committee 7:30PM
8 Wednesday Patrol Leaders' Council 7PM
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11 Saturday Pinewood Derby Workshop
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[**Click here for the full one page calendar**](#)

Holiday Party

Friday December 20, 2024

By Ben B.

On December 20th, scouts gathered at the cabin in their most festive hats (and full uniforms) for our annual Holiday party. After we started the meeting, we headed into our Holiday-themed first aid problems. The first problem was a patrol leader problem, where the victim had a stroke and frostbite.

The second problem had a suspiciously Santa-like victim, who climbed (not fell) down a chimney into a lit fire, ran off, tripped over a strand of Christmas lights and then accidentally stabbed himself with a poker.

Following this, we did our fabled gift exchange, complete with bartering and trades between scouts for better gifts. After this, we all dug into the cookies, brownies, and ice cream brought by the wonderful PLC.

We also finally opened the mystery cans we won at the Fall camporee, which contained pudding and some kind of pasta salad.

After this, everyone went home happy and with full bellies.

See everyone in 2025!



Brandywine Museum of Art

Sunday December 8, 2024

By: Justin S.

On Sunday December 8th, Troop 78 scouts, scouters, family, and friends gathered at the Brandywine Museum of Art for an exclusive open house. Attendees visited the expansive train exhibit and several art galleries and enjoyed light refreshments provided by the museum, as a thank you for volunteering at the Radnor Horse Races.



Scouts also participated in the museum's scavenger hunt, scouring the trains to find balloon sellers, fireworks, and factories. For yet another year, the museum's open house was a fun and entertaining event for everyone who attended!



A Journey on the Troop 78 Bus

The long and winding road.....

By Judah C., Troop Historian

Have you ever wondered what the story of the Troop 78 bus is? Well, if you join me on this journey and read this article you can find out!

Back in 1966 the story of the troop bus began because that was the first time that bus #1 was used. It was a 1953 INTERNATIONAL gasoline engine manual transmission. Its first trip with the troop was winter camp at Camp Horseshoe. The Troop decided to paint it blue and white in May of 1967. Just a year later, the engine gave out and needed to be replaced. Replacing the engine cost \$691.95. The new engine extended the bus' life until a new bus was purchased in 1975. One cool story is that this bus would "break the sound barrier" because when you went above 55 mph it would shake violently but when you hit 60 mph it would get quiet and still. Also no surprise to anyone, Ernie installed a full kitchen on one side of the bus equipped with running water and full counter for making sandwiches on long trips so you wouldn't have to stop. Hope you like meat or fluffernutter sandwiches because that was all that was served.



The second Troop bus was a 1966 INTERNATIONAL (pictured here) from Gross Equipment purchased for \$3,057 and the old bus was sold for \$500. The troop installed a two speed differential in the rear but unfortunately on the way to Canada it broke on Rt. 476 and a caravan of station wagons had to be called to take the troop the rest of the way. One other memorable technical issue with this bus was on the way back from Florida on a stretch of I-95 in Virginia the engine blew out and the troop was stranded on the side of the road. Fortunately Malvern Troop 7 was going the same way and picked up the scouts but since there weren't enough seats scouts had to take turns standing all the way back to Malvern. After using the bus for about 9 years, a new bus was purchased in 1984 for \$6,500 and the old bus was sold for \$2,000.



The third Troop bus was a 1974 INTERNATIONAL (shown here). Not many details were captured about this bus but as with bus #1 and #2 lots of blown tires and technical challenges were experienced. Which is why when we purchased the current bus (bus #6), new tires were one of our first purchases. Bus #3 along with bus one, two and four had bunk beds which allowed for sleeping on long trips. After nine years a new bus was purchased in 1993.



The fourth Troop bus was a 1984 gasoline engine bus that was also purchased from Gross Equipment (pictured here). A memorable story about this bus is that coming home from a rafting trip up on the Leigh River, it was a very hot day and the defogging fans on the windshield suddenly stopped working. The troop pulled off to the side of the Northeast extension of the PA Turnpike by the Lehigh Tunnel to call Mr. Stevens who was the committee member in charge of the bus. He said to disconnect the wire to the alternator (which was the part that went bad) but that meant the battery couldn't charge so the headlights could not be used and it was getting dark. By some magic the bus got home just as the last bit of sunshine left the sky. Ten years later another bus was purchased.



The fifth Troop bus was a 2000 International that was purchased in 2003 for \$30,000. It was the troop's first diesel bus and much more reliable than its predecessors. But on a beach trip down to Jersey shore, the troop was coming home on the Atlantic City expressway and the alternator went bad and the bus broke down. NJ transit had to come out and pick up stranded people and take them to the closest place to get them where they needed to go. So NJ transit sent a bus and took the entire troop to center city Philadelphia to the train terminal and the troop rode in style on a train all the way back to Paoli. This bus was later outfitted with side compartments installed at Wolfington for increased storage. It is the last bus we attached canoes on the roof because new canoe trailers were purchased. We sold this bus in 2018 for \$5,000 after purchasing bus number six (our current bus) in November 2017 from Florida.



Our current bus (bus #6) is a 2008 Thomas Saf-T-Liner HDX Activity Bus, Mercedes diesel rear engine with AC! It is arguably the nicest bus we have ever had. In true Troop 78 style, we added our own modifications. We took out the bathroom and converted it to a storage room (but you still find the sewage tank underneath). We put in reclining seats, a table for games and installed a technology package of backup cameras and navigation. The paint job came with it but we applied our own Troop 78 name to the side. According to our drivers one key upgrade is having the engine in the back.



Since 1966 having a troop bus has been one of the important parts of building a strong Troop 78 culture. As someone said to me, often the best part of a troop trip is the bus ride! It provides more fun for scouts, strengthens camaraderie, more relaxing for adults and makes planning trips so much easier. While there has often been discussion about whether having a bus is really worth it because of all the maintenance and continual need for drivers, but for me and for all the scouts from 1966 onward, a Troop 78 bus is an important part of our culture and gives so much more than a seat to ride on.

Now we have reached our destination in this story...

Hopefully you better understand the history and meaning and value of the troop bus.

Radnor Races! Save the Date!

Saturday May 17 and Sunday May 18, 2025

PLEASE, open your new 2025 calendar and block out the third weekend in May to help Troop 78 at this year's edition of the Radnor Hunt Races.

Had your fill of cold weather?

Expect a beautiful day in Hunt Country as the Troop spends a weekend at the Races.

Planning is already well under way to make the Event better than ever.

On Saturday, May 17 & Sunday, May 18 we need your help as Troop 78 does its annual Radnor thing!

PLEASE PLAN TO BE THERE!

Horseshoe Work Day

Saturday December 14, 2024

Members of the Troop 78 community reported to camp for a work day Saturday December 14. Crews worked on several facilities improvement projects around Camp Horseshoe. Projects included completing minor dining hall renovations (featured in last month's Newsletter), improving staff living accommodations, and brush management around buildings.

We plan additional time on these projects at a future date in the Spring, TBD.



Alumni Corner

Franksgiving

Saturday November 30, 2024

Saturday, November 30th was a bright and sunny day and provided the perfect weather for the 78 Alumni's annual Franksgiving event. Dozens of Troop 78 alums, friends, current members and families came to the Cabin to enjoy a lunch of grilled hot dogs, mac and cheese, chips, green salad, cookies and beverages, complete with fellowship. It was great to see Scouts from multiple generations connecting and reconnecting, and the warm, dry weather meant that much of the socialization took place outdoors, while the Cabin provided the perfect indoor setting for the mid-day meal.



Thanks to the generosity of the attendees, as well as the 50/50 winner (who donated his proceeds to the cause), and those who provided in-kind donations of food and paper goods, Franksgiving has raised funds that will be used to provide Troop 78 Scouts with camperships to offset the expense of the Troop's annual stay at Camp Horseshoe. While the primary purpose of Franksgiving is to highlight the Troop and provide a friendly forum for networking and socialization, the fact that the event is able to advance the cause of Scouting by underwriting camperships should be a point of pride for all.

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Holiday Get-Together

Friday December 27, 2024

A second Alumni tradition followed soon after Franksgiving as adult friends and alums came together at TBD Bar in Phoenixville on Friday evening, December 27th to toast 2024 and look ahead to 2025. A small but mighty crowd gathered to enjoy this fun venue. The event was timed in the hope of catching some of the college-attending alums ahead of their return to campus. Jim Hogan, Brian Rothberg and Chris Gorman were among those in attendance.

Check the Newsletter for future 78 Alumni events and updates as we head into 2025!

We would love to hear from you!

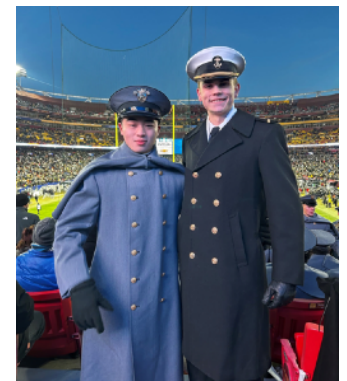
Please send in your updates. Where are you now? What are you up to?

[Click here to contact us with your alumni news.](#)

Troop 78 Alum at the Army Navy Game

Saturday December 14, 2024

Owen Li, (USMA '28) on the left in this picture, Troop 78 alumnus (Eagle Scout '24) enjoying some time at the Army Navy Game.



Upcoming Events

Horseshoe Winter Weekend

Friday January 3 - Sunday January 5, 2025

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.](#)



Klondike Derby

Saturday January 25, 2025

Chester County Council will be holding its annual Klondike Derby, round robin of scout skill stations and sled race on the weekend of January 25. This is a day event for Troop 78. We plan to meet at the cabin Saturday morning for the bus ride down to Camp Horseshoe and return to the cabin around 6PM.

[Click here for more information.](#)



Disney

Troop 78 is going back to Disney World!!

Saturday April 12 - Saturday April 19, 2025

Join us this spring (during your spring break) for another exciting trip to the most magical place on Earth. Troop 78 home away from home: Disney!

[Click here for more information.](#)

[Click here for the sign up forms.](#)



Pinewood Derby Workshop

Saturday January 11, 2025

Please join us for our annual Pinewood Derby Fabrication Workshop on 1/11/25. During this workshop Troop 78 members will be lending their time, talent and tools to help local Cubs (and parents) fabricate Pinewood Derby cars. Cubs will be asked to bring their official Pinewood Derby car kit, a package of weights and ideally a sketch of their car's design.

You can register at the following link: [Register Here](#)

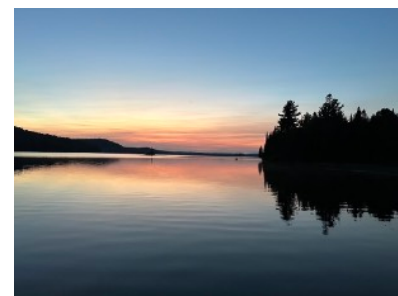


Algonquin Canoe Trip

Saturday August 9 - Saturday August 16, 2025

A week of adventure and fun awaits in the lakes and streams of Canada.

[Click here for more information.](#)



Chester County Council News

Council Off-Season Merit Badge Program at Camp

The Council off-season merit badge program at Camp continues!

[Click here for more information.](#)

Off-season Merit Badge schedule:

- Cooking January 18
- Wood Carving February 1
- Welding April 12
- Fishing May 10



[Click here for the latest news from Chester County Council.](#)

Order of the Arrow Octoraro Lodge 22

Brotherhood Blitz

Saturday, December 14, 2024

Octoraro 22's annual Brotherhood Blitz at Camp Horseshoe happened! Eligible Brotherhood members came down to camp on a cold Saturday afternoon in December, for a few hours to complete their Brotherhood. Congratulations to the 31 Arrowmen who sealed their Brotherhood! We welcomed 5 scouts and 2 scouters from Troop 78 who sealed their brotherhood at the blitz.



Please feel free to forward.

Print this Newsletter for all of your family and friends to see!