

Hunterdon

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Members of Troop 288 and Venture Crew 188, both of Annandale, recently spent time at the Philmont Scout Ranch, located near the small town of Cimarron in New Mexico. Pictured (from left, starting in the back row) Connor Snee, Nick Tripp, Greg Borowski, Paul Dorf, Ryan Murphy, Walter Dorf, Andrew Vitovitch, Suzy Molyneux, Rick Jaszyn, Matt Jaszyn, Luke Matthews and Jeff Tripp. For more about their experience at the camp, turn to **Page A-4.**

Scout trip a rewarding experience

By Matt Jaszyn

My name is Matt Jaszyn. I am a Scout of Troop 288 in Annadale and Venture Crew 188, also from Annadale.

My job as crew reporter is to write about my crew's recent trip to Philmont Scout Ranch.

Philmont, for those not in the know, is located near the small town of Cimarron in New Mexico.

It's the BSA's largest Scout Ranch (you could fit Delaware or Rhode Island into it) and several thousand Scouts go there every year. We had heard stories about Philmont from other scouts who had been there, and now we would finally be going. We had to train for Philmont because at Philmont you have to hike from place to place according to your itinerary, so we hiked constantly back here at places like Harriman State Park and Sandy Hook.

Finally, the day of our departure came. We had to get up at four in

the morning, but we didn't care. We got to Newark Airport and were soon headed off to Denver, Colo. We would spend two days at Colorado Springs to adjust our bodies to the altitude.

To kill time, we would visit the Air Force Academy, the Garden of the Gods, we would ascend Pike's Peak and have some of their excellent doughnuts at 14,110 feet above sea level and go whitewater rafting on the Colorado River.

The next day was our last in Colorado and the first of twelve in Philmont. We met our Ranger, Katharina, who would be with us for the first few days to see that we knew what we were doing. Then, our hiking began. Our itinerary would be about 65 miles long in ten days. We would have to endure long distance, steep uphill climbs, rocky areas, flat areas, but we were ready for it.

What we didn't know we had coming was the time of our lives. It

was even better than we hoped.

In the span of 10 days, we went through team building exercises, spar pole climbing, visit wreckage of a crashed B-24 liberator, play horseshoes, cut down trees, go horseback riding, win in a roping competition, brand personal equipment with the Philmont logo, milk cows, win a poop throwing competition, milk a cow, go black powder rifle shooting, throw tomahawks, climb Mt. Phillips, the second highest mountain in Philmont, pan for gold, tour a mine, tell many stories, tour a hunting lodge, and ascended the Tooth of Time, Philmont's trademark mountain that told settlers in the old times they were a week away from California. At the end of our hike, we toured the town of Cimarron, bought a few knives (Scouts never have too many knives), ate a few burritos, had some ice cream and on the next and last day, we went home, and none of us will forget this experience. Ever.