

# SMOKE SIGNALS



January 2006  
Volume 1, Issue 5

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## Website Update

Anyone visiting the website recently will have noticed a couple changes, some good, and some not so good.

First the good; the photo albums are being updated and added to. Several months ago, we asked if anyone had objections to their pictures being on the web. Nobody objected, so Mr. Lynch has been busy adding photos to the galleries. A couple hundred photos from the Jamboree are on-line now.

If anybody has pictures, either paper or digital, please get them to Mr. Lynch. They will be added to the albums for all to share.

Now the bad. We had to remove the guestbook as it was being hacked. Many inappropriate messages were being posted to the guestbook. It is a shame that this happened. But until a way is found to prevent this spamming from happening again, the guestbook will not be on the site.

On an aside note, the website can be used for the Communications merit badge. One of the optional requirements is to create a webpage. Any Scout working on Communications and chooses to do this requirement, just contact the webmaster for help. ■

## News from the Pack

The Cub Scouts have been busy lately. The Dens have been meeting, taking field trips, and working on advancement. In November, they collected food in the "Scouting for Food" program. In December, they sang Christmas carols at the Peabody House led by Mr. Regan and his guitar. Mr. and Mrs. McGinn are doing a great job with the Pack. ■

## Allagash Abductions?

Did a UFO visit the Allagash River? It appears that where we are going this summer for the canoe trip is the site of a well-known UFO mystery.

According to accounts found on the web, the Allagash abductions occurred on August 20, 1976 when four men in their mid-twenties ventured on a camping trip into the Allagash wilderness of Maine. As darkness settled that August night, the men built a blazing campfire which they expected to burn all night long. Then they headed out in a canoe across the lake for a short trip. The next thing they remembered was rowing back to shore and finding the campfire burned out. They thought they were gone only a few minutes, but strangely, did not discuss how the campfire could be burned out so soon. Instead, they promptly went to sleep without any discussion. After several years of nightmares and sleep disturbances, the brothers began asking each other if something terrifying had happened to them on the camping trip which they couldn't remember.

Under separately conducted hypnotic regressions, the men recalled being abducted from the canoe in the middle of the lake. Despite their attempt to escape by rowing to shore, a blue beam of light overhead pulled them into a hovering UFO. The men were probed and subjected to many physical and medical procedures. The Allagash abductions achieved notoriety as the first well-documented, multiple abduction case.

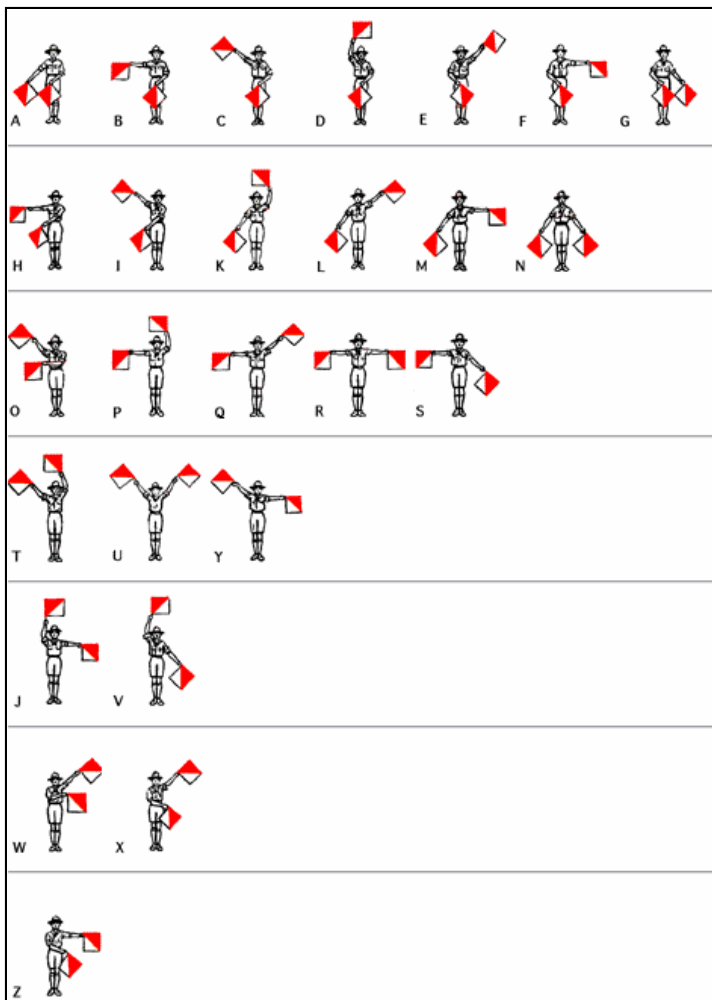
However, it is not known, as with most abduction cases, if their story was true or a hoax.

To read more about this, just type "allagash abductions" into a web search engine. ■

## Semaphore Signaling at the Klondike Derby

There will be a new event at the Klondike Derby this year. We will be signaling using semaphore flags. Semaphore is a means of communicating using flags. Each letter is represented by holding two flags in specific positions. Did you know that there was a signaling merit badge? Well there used to be. From 1911 to 1991, Scouts could earn the signaling merit badge. Until sometime in the mid 1970's, semaphore was an optional requirement for First Class. Ask Mr. O'Brien if he remembers this.

Below is a chart showing the semaphore alphabet. We will be working on this skill as a troop prior to the Klondike. To be prepared, you could practice this at home. No flags needed, just practice the arm positions. ■



## Keeping Warm at the Klondike Derby

At a recent troop meeting, Patrick L. explained the various clothing and equipment that will help you to keep warm and dry during the Klondike and other winter activities. He discussed the concept of layering. Let's go into a little more detail here.

Layering simply means wearing a combination of clothes (in layers) to help regulate your temperature and keep you warm and dry. The layers you wear for a given activity are matched to the weather, your activity level and your personal preference. There are essentially three layers to consider: base, mid, and outer. Each layer has a specific function. The base layer wicks moisture & perspiration away from your skin to keep you warm. The mid layer is for insulation and keeping you warm. The outer layer allows moisture to escape while blocking wind, and repel water.

**The Base Layer** is in contact with your skin. A tight fitting and wicking material is best to keep you warm and dry. Polypropylene, silk, polyester, Thermax, Thinsulate, wool are all good choices. Avoid cotton because it traps moisture, so it stays wet and draws heat from you.

**The Mid Layer** provides insulation. It should be a bit looser than the base layer, but to function properly it needs to maintain contact with the base layer. Mid layers also carry moisture away from the base layer to the outer layer. Common material for mid layers include down, polyester, fleece, wool and newer synthetic / natural blends.

**The Outer Layer** blocks wind and allows moisture to escape. Typical outer layers include shells made of Gore-Tex or a similar material. Extras such as pit zips, ankle zippers (for pants), and a variety of ventilation options are standard. Outer layers should also be tough enough to withstand tears and abrasions. Other less high tech options may include wind resistant materials, or water resistant fabrics.

Once you have a layering plan, you can adjust your temperature control simply by removing or adding layers as needed.

**Head, Hands and Feet** After your core is covered, you need to properly dress your extremities. Wear a hat, mittens /gloves, socks and shoes that match your activity and weather conditions. To cool yourself if you overheat, you can often just remove your hat or gloves. Keep in mind that wind blocking fabric is also important for hats and gloves. Although fleece is warm it does not provide protection from wind. ■

## Merit Badge University

Looking for a way to earn some unique merit badges? Want a chance to go to Harvard University? Think about Merit Badge University at Harvard.

The program is held on March 11th and April 8th. Registration will begin towards the middle of January (around the 16th.). The cost of the program is \$15 and that includes merit badge pamphlets and class materials.

Scouts attending typically earn three merit badges by attending *both* sessions. "Courses" are taught by faculty and students at Harvard. Last year, they offered 25 different badges to choose from. Typically, only a few Eagle badges are offered. This is by design. The Scouters who run the program assume that most troops have counselors available for most or all eagle badges. Merit Badge U. offers many badges that can be difficult to find a counselor for; aviation, chemistry, crime prevention, law, medicine, weather, etc...

For more information, ask Patrick L., he has gone for the last two years.

Check out the website at [www.meritbadgeuniversity.org/boston](http://www.meritbadgeuniversity.org/boston)

Be warned that the classes tend to fill up very quickly, so if you are interested, check the site often for registration information. ■

## Scoutmaster's Minute

### *Scouting is like a golf ball*

When golfing was first invented, the ball they used was perfectly round and smooth. However, each time the ball was used, it would get little dents in it from being hit with the iron clubs. The dents didn't look very good, and probably were thought of as damaging at first. But it didn't take long for the golfers to realize that the more dents the ball had, the farther and straighter it flew. Soon after, using the dented, experienced golf balls as a model, they began to manufacture balls with the dents already in them. Thus the balls we have today will fly much farther than any of the first golf balls they started with, because they have learned from the experienced balls of the past.

Scouting is a lot like a golf ball. Each time we learn a new skill, or earn a merit badge, or even when we try to learn something and don't succeed the first time, it's like adding another dent or dimple to our ball. The more skills we learn, the more experience we gain. Even if we fail sometimes, the more dented our ball becomes, and the farther and straighter we will be able to soar down the course of our lives.

Maybe that's why most Eagle Scouts seem to soar farther and straighter than others. It's not the Eagle rank itself, it's all the little dimples and dents working up to it that taught him how to fly. ■

## Summer Camp



Mark your calendars, Mr. O'Brien has reserved our spot for summer camp. We will be leaving for T. L. Storer on Sunday July 16th and returning on Saturday the 22nd.

This happens to be the week prior to the canoe trip on the Allagash. We will be leaving for Maine High Adventure on Sunday the 23rd. Those Scouts or leaders that are planning to do both should consider this in their planning. ■

## Month Events

Jan 4th.  
7:00 St. John's  
Troop Meeting

Jan 11th  
Rock Climbing wall at Dick's  
6:30-8:30PM  
Troop Meeting

Jan 18th.  
7:00 St. John's  
Troop Meeting

Jan 21st and 22nd  
Ski Trip

Jan 25th.  
7:00 St. John's  
Troop Meeting

Always look to the calendar on web site for the latest schedule!

[www.119peabody.org](http://www.119peabody.org)

# Fun and Games

## SUDOKU CLASSIC

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusive.

Good Luck!

Difficulty Rating ★☆☆☆☆

3	9				8		7	
4		5	9				2	
8			6				3	1
		1	7	2		8		
	4	7		8		3	5	
		9		4	5	1		
9	2				7			3
	5				1	2		6
	6		5				9	4

Look for the solution in next month's issue of Smoke Signals