

The  
**Gamehaven  
Gazette**

March 30, 2025 2nd Edition



**Scouting  
America**

Gamehaven Council

# Welcome to the Gamehaven Gazette

## We Are Gamehaven

Gamehaven Council is celebrating 90 years of Scouting adventures. During those ninety years, there were some amazing achievements and some difficult decisions to make. The one constant throughout that time was the dedication of the volunteers, staff, and of course, the Scouts.

Our Council has had significant milestones this past year. We have a full slate of active Operation Committee chairs dedicated to improving the Scout experience, we saw an increase in youth retention due to dedicated unit leadership, our council has had balanced budgets for four consecutive years, and we are on an upswing in youth recruitment. Many different people and committees have helped us get to this point – and we’re just getting started.

Thank you for being a part of the journey, for saying, “yes, Scouts matter,” and for sharing your time and talents. *You and the people before you are why Scouting is celebrating 90 years in southeastern Minnesota.*

Through Scouting,

The Gamehaven Council Board

## Thank you Jeff Allman

It’s hard to believe that five years ago – our country – our state – was in lockdown, and people had no idea when it would end or what to expect. Our council was hit hard by COVID-19 restrictions, and truthfully, we were struggling. Jeff Allman, our then-council president, offered us a place to call home at a very affordable rate as we continued to recover from the effects of the Pandemic. Jeff ensured that we could continue to Scout and that our communities would benefit from our continued presence.



As we are transitioning into our council’s next chapter and move into our new office location, should you run into Jeff or his wife, Beth, please thank him for his dedication to Scouting in the Gamehaven Council.

*Article by: Arne Landsverk– Asst. Scout Executive*

## Council Calendar

DATE	EVENT/MEETINGS/TRAININGS
<b>April 2025</b>	
April 24	<a href="#">Council Annual Dinner</a> @Mayowood Stone Barn
April 25-27	<a href="#">Scouts BSA-Spring Camporee</a>
<b>May 2025</b>	
May 2-4	<a href="#">OA Spring Mawenemen</a>
May 3	<a href="#">BALOO</a> – Basic Adult Leader Outdoor Orientation
May 3	<a href="#">Council Grand Prix Races</a> - Cubs & Scouts BSA Invited
May 8	<a href="#">2025 Spring Clays Classic</a>
May 10	<a href="#">Spring Family Adventures</a> - Cubs & Family
<b>June 2025</b>	
June 6-8	<a href="#">Summer Cub Adventures</a>
June 22-27	<a href="#">NYLT</a> (National Youth Leadership Training)
<b>July 2025</b>	
July 11-13	<a href="#">Summer Cub Adventures</a>
<b>August 2025</b>	
August 8-10	<a href="#">Summer Cub Adventures</a>
<b>October 2025</b>	
October 3-5	<a href="#">OA Fall Mawenemen</a>
October 11	<a href="#">Fall Family Adventures</a>
October 25	Fall Merit Badge Rally
<b>November 2025</b>	
November 8	Ten Commandments Hike

Page	Index
Page 2	We Are Gamehaven
Page 2	Gamehaven Calendar
Page 3	Highlights from Winter Camp!
Page 4	Wolf Scout Brecken’s Story
Page 5	Camp– New challenge Course
Page 5	Order of Arrow Service to Council
Page 6	Space Derby & Pack 82
Page 6	Recognizing our Eagle Scouts
Page 7	Spotlight on Volunteers

# Highlights From Winter Camp

## Highlights From Gamehaven Winter Camp!

Are you as eager to get back to camping as I am? Probably so – there’s a magic about going to summer camp, spending the night in a hammock, or even just walking outside and seeing leaves on the trees. But we’re Minnesotans, and we have to accept that 5/12ths of the year aren’t suited for that traditional view of camping. Luckily, we have an expert team of winter camp enthusiasts who run almost two straight months of fun activities for our Cubs, Scouts, and families in Gamehaven!



**Theme Supreme at Operation Icicle Scouts!** Our Operation Icicle Scouts program is often described as “summer camp in the winter”, and attracts Scouts through promises of indoor lodging, merit badges, and extreme themed fun in the winter. This year the Operation Icicle staff team led a “Ghostbusters”-themed extravaganza. Campers spent the first two days setting up and preparing for a ghost battle on Saturday night where they faced down a haunted snowman that actually moved! Check out the video at [Gamehaven Scouts You Tube!](#)

### Finally on the Sleds at Polar Cubs!

Our Polar Cubs programs are some of the oldest and

most loved activities in the entirety of Gamehaven Council, and it breaks our heart when there isn’t enough snow to sled on! Last year both of our Polar Cub events were totally snow-free, and it was shaping up that way this year when a winter miracle blessed our final event with enough snow for some downhill fun. Needless to say, our Cubs took full advantage of the opportunity with enough sledding to get lots of amazing photos and videos.



**Fun Exploration of Phillippo Scout Camp!** When I was a Scout in Troop 9093 of New Brighton, MN, my Scoutmaster used to regularly stand on one foot during his Scoutmaster minute. He’d proudly say that we needed to “Live with One Foot Raised... always prepared for the next step.” That was certainly how our Scouts reacted at Phillippo this year. Going into the weekend, we were thrilled to be performing a real-life ice rescue on the lake, and our camporee committee had even planned a backup for in case there was no ice or too thin ice. We didn’t expect there to be TOO MUCH ice though! But what started as a disappointment quickly turned into an adventure as each troop split up to pursue their own adventures at Phillippo – from hiking to the trading post to climbing to Friendship Point on the bluffs. Scouting builds grit, and our Scouts showed that this winter.



*Article by: Brady Geary, Gamehaven Council Program Director*

# What Cub Scouts Are Saying....

## Wolf Scout Brecken, Shares His Pinewood Derby Experience!

**B**recken Berning is a 2<sup>nd</sup> grader at Longfellow Elementary School and he joined the Wolf Den of Pack 83 in January 2025, just in time to participate in their Pinewood Derby (PWD) event at Our Savior's Lutheran Church on January 25<sup>th</sup>. I interviewed him and his Dad Brent about the event on Feb 23, 2025.

**Pam: Tell me about the PWD?**

**Brecken:** We had food there and my Grandpa and Grandma came to see the race. It was fun to watch all the cars go down the track and the sound they make as they go down. I went with my Dad on the Friday before the race to put the track together. I helped put the legs on it and run the wires through the track.



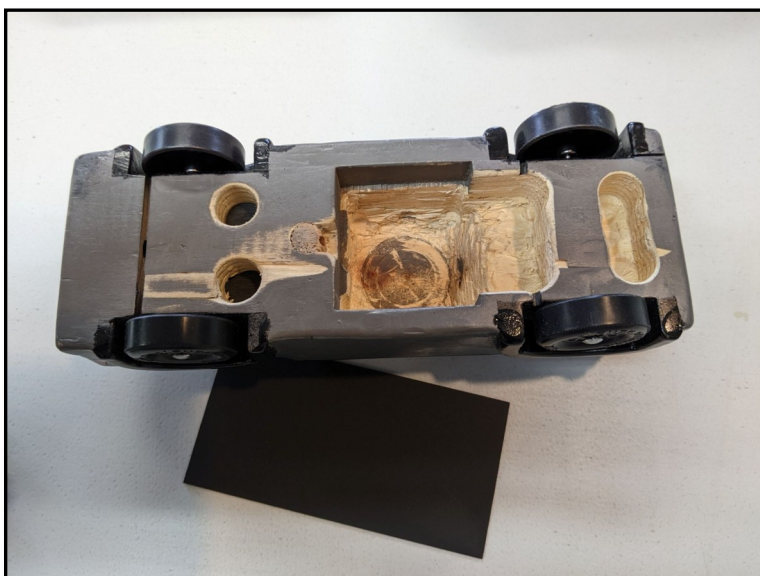
**Pam: Tell me about the PWD design you chose?**

**Brecken:** I wanted to make a truck. My Dad and I found one on the internet we liked: a truck with the spare wheel as a weight so that is the one I built. I like Ram Trucks so I built it to look like a Ram truck, even though we have a Chevy truck. I carved out too much wood from under the truck and broke through the wood so we made a truck bed liner to hide the hole.

**Brent:** We used Tungsten putty in the Spare tire as weight for the truck to bring it up to the 5 ounces needed.

**Pam: How did your truck do?**

**Brecken:** I got a trophy for 3<sup>rd</sup> place and I got a trophy for the Coolest Car. It was the only special award. Everyone voted for the Coolest Car and I won! I had my trophy in my room but my sister took it and hid it under her bed. It's in the garage now so she can't get it. I'm so sad I have to wait until next year before I do PWD again.



**Article By: Pam Legried– Registrar**



Scouting America has some great ideas & designs for creating pinewood derby cars and all the latest new gadgets etc.

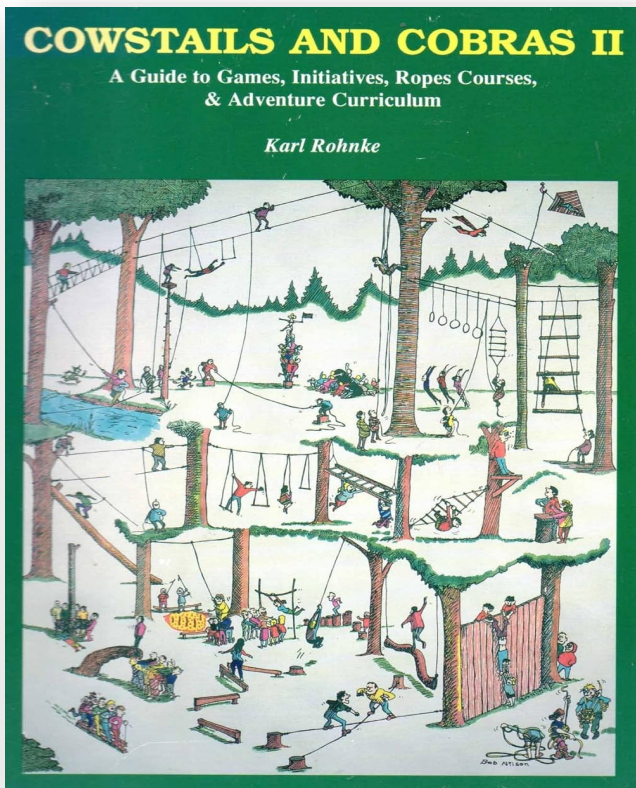
<https://www.scoutshop.org/pinewood-derby>



## What's a Challenge Course?

You might have noticed that our longtime obstacle course has disappeared from camp! But don't worry – this isn't the work of some highly secretive Minnesota-based obstacle course thieves' guild. No, we removed it because we're preparing for something big, a brand-new Challenge Course. The first set of telephone poles were just dropped at camp as we prepare for the expansion, and the rest of the course will be built in May and June.

Challenge Courses (known in Scouting America circles as



“Low-Ropes Courses” or “Low-COPE Courses”) were first well-described and popularized in one of my favorite books: 1977's “Cowtails and Cobras” by Karl Rohnke of Project Adventure. He describes the goals of a challenge course as following:

***“Individuals are usually more capable (mentally, emotionally, and physically) than they perceive themselves to be, and if given the opportunity to TRY in a supportive atmosphere, can discover this excellence within themselves.”***

So how do we do that? With 8-10 new challenge course elements. Some will be familiar to elements of our old obstacle course like balance beams and walls... but some will be very unfamiliar, like the infamous Spider's Web or the Whale Watch. Once installed, leaders will have the chance to attend training to learn how to best run each element for their own groups (and for others). Each element was carefully chosen to provide differing levels of challenge for both elementary, middle, and high-school age participants (not to mention being just as fun for adults too!)

We are so excited to share this camp development with you this summer. Stay tuned to the camp website [gamehavenbsa.org/camp](http://gamehavenbsa.org/camp) for more updates as we learn when training and the grand opening will occur!

*Article by: Brady Geary, Gamehaven Council Program Director*

## Another Year of Successful Camp Service

Blue Ox Lodge #26, Gamehaven's chapter of the Order of the Arrow youth honor society, has a longstanding tradition of providing service to our camp during their March Lumberjack Day event! Every year, lodge members (both young and old) join with other scouts and adults to serve cheerfully by doing some of the hardest and most manual labor at camp, helping prepare for a busy summer season. This year was one of their biggest,

with 63 volunteers contributing 378 hours of brush work, splitting wood, moving logs, and cleaning up our Family Camp campsites.



Thanks to them, camp looks a lot cleaner and is more prepared for our upcoming spring, summer, and fall camps.

*Article by: Brady Geary, Gamehaven Council Program Director*

# Space Derbies Still Going Strong In Pack 82

## A Surprise Find And A Rare Opportunity For Pack 82

Pack 82 leaders cleaned out their Scout storage space at Zumbro Lutheran this past summer and discovered, after hauling out 5 trailers full of accumulated program materials, a box of Space Derby kits and the wood frames for a Space Derby track.

After doing some deep research about Space Derby, Committee Chair Emily McLaughlin learned that a Space Derby event hasn't been done in years and it was, in fact, hard to find out anything about rules and procedures for this type of event. After some phone calls, searches through web archives, and tapping the memories of Pack leaders, the event was ready to launch.

The Pack decided to go forward with a Space Derby event on 3.22.25 in place of their usual Pinewood Derby event and, in addition to the kits they found on site, they also received old inventory materials from Gamehaven Council Scout Shop. The Pack also received a trophy donation that allowed each participant to get a special memento from this event.

At a Den meeting, the scouts began work on their rocket design and finished the rest at home. They learned that vegetable peelers and sandpaper work best to shape the rockets from the soft wood in the kits. The setting up of the wood frames and 6 track lanes took about 1-2 hours. The rubber bands attached to a propeller that powered the rockets were hand wound about 85 times or wound with the assistance of a power drill.



There were extra supplies available for repairs. Several parent volunteers took videos at the docking stations at the other end to determine which rockets came in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup>.

At the start of the event, the Scouts were first able to pick a lane to do test flights for their rockets, make adjustments to their rockets as needed, and then run 3 heats per Den to determine who placed, on average, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. Lastly, the 1<sup>st</sup> place winner of each Den ran a final heat for the overall winner.

### Pack 82 Space Derby 1<sup>st</sup> place winners

**Lions:** Simon  
**Wolves:** Andrew  
**Bears:** Johnny  
**Webelos:** Christian  
**Overall Winner:** Christian and all the Pack 82 Scouts who designed and raced their rockets on March 22, 2025 in the gym at Zumbro Lutheran Church!



## Recognizing Our Eagle Scouts

*Congratulations to everyone on obtaining their Eagle Scout Rank. Your experiences and lessons learned from Scouting will serve you well into your future. All the Best!*

- **Jackson Davis** -Troop 246- Earned 01/19/25
- **Aaron Dong** - Troop 083 - Earned 12/19/24
- **Ella Feenstra** - Troop 082 - Earned 03/20/25
- **Adeline Feenstra** - Troop 082 - Earned 03/20/25
- **Logan Halverson** - Troop 253 - Earned 02/27/25
- **Dillon Miller** - Troop 498 - Earned 3/20/25
- **Owen Siems** - Troop 232 - Earned 12/17/24
- **Luke Vollrath** - Troop 047 - Earned 01/16/25
- **Mathew Watters** - Troop 056 - Earned 12/19/24
- **Christopher Watters** - Troop 56 - Earned 12/19/24

# Spotlight on Volunteer, Joel Earl

Recently Pam Legried had the chance to have a conversation with IOLS Course Director and 2024 Silver Beaver recipient Joel Earl about his Scouting history and continued dedication as a volunteer.

**Pam:** *When did you first begin your Scouting journey?*

**Joel:** At about 14 years of age, my congregation in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints set up a Scout Troop. It sputtered along, we went through 3 or 4 Scoutmasters and then a new guy moved into town and jumped into the role whole hog. Our troop started camping every month and we obtained 3 man tents instead of having to lug around the large heavy canvas tent. I later moved to Texarkana with my family and got my Eagle rank with Troop 99 in 1981.

**Pam:** *What are your favorite Scouting memories as a youth?*

**Joel:** In 1980 our Troop went to a church encampment with 150 troops near Orlando, Florida. They set up the camp in a formation like the spokes of a wagon wheel to represent the 12 tribes of Israel. My troop was in the tribe of Gad. We had a church service in a rodeo arena with 3000 Scouts. That same year the local council held a Scouting Expo on the grounds of the mall. There were displays of Scoutcraft: monkey bridges, first aid displays, cooking demonstrations. My troop built a signal tower. One of the Scouting families lived on a ranch and had cut trees into poles for our use. The tower was 20 feet tall, and had Scouts climbing up and down it the whole time!

**Pam:** *How has Scouting benefited you?*

**Joel:** It has taught me how to organize things, how to plan, how to make a goal and work towards it, how to interact with a team of people to get a larger task done.

**Pam:** *I know you were a mentor to many Scouts from your years as an adult leader in Rochester LDS Scouting Units. Who would you consider your mentor in Scouting?*

**Joel:** One of my church leaders encouraged me to take Wood Badge training and I was looking for things I could do as a ticket item. First, I planned to work with Ellen MacGregor on the Ten Commandments Hike, but she already had that event fully staffed. So Lynn Bestrom, who was my Troop Guide, had another suggestion. He got me involved at the Council level for Introduction to Outdoor Leadership Skills (IOLS) and Scoutmaster/Assistant Scoutmaster Position Specific training. I started as a Patrol Advisor in 2008 and then became the Course Director several years later. It is a lot of fun being out in the woods for a day, demonstrating skills of fire building, correct knife use, map and compass navigation. It's very rewarding to work with adult participants who want to be good Scout leaders. Outside of Scouting, I think of my Mom as a mentor. I value the path she set me on and the good sense of how one should live a life. From her I learned about the meaning of paying it forward: making it better-giving it back-**paying it forward**.

**Pam:** *What is the best advice you received from Scout leaders?*

**Joel:** Be prepared, study your location, what will you be doing there. To make meals outdoors simpler by trying the recipe at home first.

**Pam:** *What is the best advice you have received outside of Scouting?*

**Joel:** I served on a mission for the LDS church for 1 ½ years in Florida and I would have conversations with the Mission President. One time I asked him, "How do I find a wife?" He told me to think about the characteristics I want in a wife, think about the type of person she would marry, and then become that person.

**Pam:** *What do you think Scouting does better than other youth programs?*

**Joel:** It's unapologetically religious. It's attached to God, and I believe that the values and skills taught there have value to our lives outside of Scouting. It takes you out of your comfort zone, it opens your mind. You don't learn best when you are comfortable.

**Thank you, Joel Earl, for paying it forward by teaching Scout leaders to be great in Gamehaven Council's IOLS training!**

*Article Courtesy of: Pam Legried, Gamehaven Council Registrar & Fellow Ten Commandments Hike Committee Member*

