

Troop 175

We're Looking for...
A Few Good Boys.

Croatian Coast Sailing Expedition

July 21 – August 2, 2021

Brad Mead

Scoutmaster

73 East Weatogue Rd

Simsbury, CT 06070

Office Phone: (860) 677 – 0000

Mobile Phone: (860) 614 – 1484

bradmead@deltanow.com

TROOP 175 IN SIMSBURY IS LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD BOYS

Boy Scout Troop 175 is looking for boys with a sense of adventure and fun to join us. Our Troop is sponsored by St. Mary's Church in Simsbury and meets on Thursday nights from 7-8:30 PM. Boys of all faiths are welcome.

Monthly Trips That Test Our Skills

In the best traditions of Scouting, we are an adventurous Troop with an emphasis on the basic skills of Scouting and putting those skills to the test every month on challenging trips. We are an "All Weather" Troop. We have camped and biked on Block Island; Bobsledded with the US Olympic team in Lake Placid (camping in snow caves that night), learned to scuba dive in Honduras and explored survival camping at our annual "Deep Freeze" survival shelter trip. The Troop has also gone skiing in Vermont, climbed, skied, and boarded in Tuckerman's Ravine on Mt. Washington, climbed two different mountains in the Adirondacks, canoed in Maine and made a five day trip to Algonquin National Park in Canada where we canoed and camped in the Canadian wilderness. We take our boys all over the world, from the summit of Kilimanjaro to the depth of the Amazon Jungle.



Sample Trips

- September – Block island Bike Trip
- October – Burke Mountain Hike/Bike Trip
- November - Annual Webelos Challenge on our “home” turf, Onion Mountain in West Simsbury. This is a great event where Cubs are invited for a full day of Scout activities and to work with our Scout patrols on making rope bridges, furniture, campfires, orienteering and zip lines. In the evening, the patrols will cook a meal with the Cubs followed by a Troop campfire with songs and skits put on by the Scouts. Cubs are invited to spend the night camping (with a parent).
- Mission Profile/Immortals Tryout - a 24 hour marathon "Seal Team" exercise for our older guys.
- December – Skills training at winter camp Mattatuck. To celebrate the New Year the troop spent all night at Launch trampoline park.
- January – Our Annual Weekend Ski trip – this year to Bromley Mt
- February - The Deep Freeze Campout
- March – Our cross-over trip for Webelos joining our troop. We camped at Camp Allynmucky in NJ. Also our leaders Group snow shoed into the White Mountains for Leadership Training at Lonesome Lake Hut
- April – we went hiking in the Gunks.
- May - We did a bike trip along the greenway in Ct.
- June – the Troop went to Sea base in Florida and sailed a windjammer for seven days among the Florida keys.
- 10th Annual Boy Scout Adventure Race. This race was developed by Troop 175 and involves biking, running, canoeing, rappelling, orienteering and climbing in Simsbury in a 16 mile, 4 hour



race.. Boys Life Magazine published a full picture, 6 page article of the race in April 2010, featuring Troop 175.

- ▣ July - Our annual 1 week summer camp at Camp Mattatuck.
- ▣ August- During August our troop provides international expeditions – last year was sailing in Croatia

Junior Leader Training

Every spring, we hold our annual Junior Leader Training Program for the older Scouts (First Class & above) based on the US Army Ranger program called "No Excuses Leadership". We hold the program in March in the White Mountains at one of the huts maintained by the Appalachian Mountain Club. It's a challenging but fun weekend. We snow shoe in deep snow into the mountains with full packs. There we practice our Scout rescue skills in the snow, engage in team missions, and discuss the leadership styles of many of the great explorers. This year we will return again to the White Mountains in March and continue our leadership training at Lonesome Lake Hut.

Immortals - The Best of the Best

As an outgrowth of our Junior Leadership Training Program, we developed something unique for Scouts who want to push harder and discover new capabilities. They are known as the "Immortals" and are our most advanced Scouts, who have learned and developed extensive survival and wilderness skills taught by our adult leaders. They wear special patches on their uniforms, are given black Machetes at their induction into the group and participate in extreme outings. Their motto is: "to Learn, to Teach, to Serve, to Lead". They operate without tents. They build shelters. On every trip, they start all fires using only flint and steel. They move very quickly through the woods and improvise almost everything they need from their surroundings.

We were proud when our group of "Immortals" was invited to visit the US Army Mountain Warfare School, to train with the Special Operation Groups that were learning winter mountaineering and avalanche skills. We continuously work to invent new challenges to test their skills and maximize what they can learn from difficult situations. We have blindfolded the group and driven them 3 hours into the Vermont countryside where they were dropped off on the backside of a mountain in a rainstorm with no maps, no radios, no GPS, no tents, some food, water, and instructions to find the largest lake in the area (about 4 miles away, but they didn't know that). The goal was for the scouts to get a water sample and return it to the drop off in 48 hours. They have been trained in how to approach, solve, and execute a plan to accomplish the mission -" What Would You Do?" By the way, as in all of our Scout programs, adults were present at all times for safety.

We took our Immortals to Honduras in April 2018 to become Open Water Scuba Certified. We then also were certified in night underwater navigation and shark diving, We will return in 2022. In 2019 we took them up Kilimanjaro in Tanzania.

The Ultimate Adventure – International/Domestic Expedition Trips

Each summer, Troop 175 provides an opportunity for its most experienced Scouts to go on an International/Domestic Expedition Trip.

Croatia Sailing Expedition -2021

This last summer we took 20 people sailing in two 50 ft Catamarans down the coast of Croatia. Each day would sail into a different port and enjoy the medieval history of this ancient country. We then stopped in Dubrovnik and toured this World Heritage City for two days.



Seychelles Sailing Expedition- 2020 – We were scheduled to take 20 of our Troop sailing through the Seychelles Islands off of Africa- Due to the Covid Pandemic we were forced to Cancel this trip.

Kilimanjaro – 2019 – Twenty-eight of our Scouts and their parents traveled to Africa to climb Kilimanjaro, a trip in the planning for over two years. It was an extraordinary adventure. We spent five days climbing the largest freestanding volcanic mountain in the world. In the process, we went through five climatic zones. Our group of 28 had 86 Tanzanian support staff, as everything has to be carried up the mountain. Our Tanzanian Guides were the best on the mountain, and each two-climber team had a guide. On day six, we started our final assault at midnight from 15,500 feet, climbing up the crater wall. The temperature was 15 degrees; the oxygen level less than half at sea level. We climbed for six hours with four, five-minute breaks. The crater wall was steep. In the dark, under a full moon, the group slowly moved to the summit. At 6 am, we reached the first summit at Gillman's Point. Water bottles were frozen, and fingers and toes had lost most feeling, but after a brief regroup it was on another two hours around the crater to the final summit at Uhuru Peak at 19,341 - the rooftop of Africa. Our group took a round of pictures and then went back down the crater wall and eventually down to 12,000 feet by 5 pm that afternoon. Everyone agreed that it was the longest – but most memorable day – of their life. We first did this trip in **2007** with a group of 24 and, at the time, we were the first US troop to climb the mountain. We did it again in **2012** with 20 people. We are the only Troop in America to have done it three times.



RV Trip National Parks in the West – 2018- In July we took a group of RV's and 25 Scouts and parents to tour the western national parks, climbing in Yellowstone, Jackson Hole, Zion and the Badlands national parks.

Roatan, Honduras 2018 - In April we took 20 of our Scouts and parents to Roatan in Honduras to get Scuba Certified and to then dive in the over 200 dive sites that surround the island. In addition we got to learn underwater night navigation and to swim with a large group of sharks.

Thailand Islands -2017 - In July/August we took 30 of our Troop to Thailand. We explored Phuket, Thailand, rafted a whitewater class 4 /5 river and rode elephants through the jungle to a giant waterfall. We then sailed through the Phi Phi islands on three yachts we operated ourselves.

Cuba – 2017 - We were granted special visas to visit Cuba and became the first Scout Troop in 59 years to tour Cuba. We toured Havana and then sailed to nearby islands. Along the way we played many soccer games with the locals kids and got to practice our Spanish.

Greek Sailing Expedition – 2016 – In the summer of 2016 we took 30 scouts and adults on three large yachts and sailed through the Greek islands. We flew to Athens and toured the city for two days and then sailed our yachts and sailed of to Serfos, Peros, Mykonos, Hydra and Paros. We spent the days sailing through the magnificent Mediterranean Sea with all the Scouts learning to sail and stand watch. At night we would be a different island and would frequently find a small restaurants to eat . We would often get invited by local Greeks to experience their way of life in this remarkable place.

Alaska Expeditions – 2015 and 2010 – We took 26 members of the Troop to Alaska and explored the Great State in 6 RV's. We explored and hiked on Glaciers, panned for Gold in the Klondike, Fished for King Salmon in the Kenai River, explored the fiords of Seward, and enjoyed the endless twilight of the Arctic Circle. We first did this trip in 2010.

Zambezi White Water Rafting – 2014 – 16 Scouts and parents traveled to Zambia, Africa to raft one of the three greatest whitewater rivers in the world. Using the world's top Rafting guide service "Water by Nature", we successfully descended 60 miles of the Zambezi River's class 3, 4, 5 rapids as well as portaged a half a dozen rapids that were un-raftable. At the end we were flown out of the Zambezi Gorge by helicopter to a mountain top lodge to clean up. The group then traveled to Botswana to explore a game park and camp among lions and giraffes.



National BSA Jamboree – 2013 – In July 18 of our Scouts attended the quadrennial Jamboree at the Summit Bechtel Jamboree Site in West Virginia.

As part of the Connecticut Rivers Council Contingent they spent 10 days rafting, zip lining, shooting and meeting other scouts from all over the country. The Jamboree site became the 3 rd largest city in West Virginia for that ten days – 45,000 Scouts and Scouters.

Caribbean Expedition – In **April 2013**, we took 24 scouts and leaders on two 45ft catamarans down the Belize Barrier Reef for 7 days. We visited many remote islands and explored the reef with snorkel equipment.

In **April 2012** we took 18 Scouts and leaders on two 47ft Ocean Catamarans on a one week sailing expedition in the British Virgin Islands. Departing from Tortola we sailed, fished, swam and explored the islands south and north. We had high winds and great sailing and all the Scouts learned the skills of navigating, piloting, and operating a serious sailing machine.

In **February of 2011**, we chartered two catamarans and sailed from St. Martin to the British Virgin Islands.

Philmont Scout Ranch – Every two years the troop sends a crew of 12 to Cimarron, New Mexico for an unforgettable 2 week backpacking adventure in the Sangre De Cristo mountain range. Philmont, donated to the Boy Scouts in 1947, consists of 220 square miles of high altitude terrain.

In 2022 we will return to Philmont. In 2020 we had two crews ready to go to Philmont but had to cancel when the Ranch did not open due to Covid.

Our 2018 Crew was unfortunately cancelled as a result of the major fires that summer in Philmont. Instead we re routed the troop through Utah and created our own equally challenging trip in the high country of the Utah deserts.

Our 2016 crew hiked 82 miles carrying fully loaded packs, which enabled us to be self-sufficient for our 2 week stay. We climbed one of the highest peaks, Mount Phillips at elevation 11,711'. Later that afternoon we cooked our dinner while watching the sunset behind the valley below. Our crew finished their experience by starting at 3am to climb another peak to watch the sunrise.

Philmont was a wonderful experience not only for the outdoor adventure but also for the wilderness and leadership skills each scout mastered along the way. In 2018 we will send 2 crews to Philmont.

Amazon Jungle – In 2008, we took eleven of our Scouts and Leaders deep into the Amazon Jungle. We flew to Lima, Peru and then into Iquitos, a city on the Amazon River that is the largest city in the world inaccessible by road. After a 110 mile journey up the river, we went through jungle training for 3 days with local Indian guides. We then departed with a full expedition into a part of the Amazon that had rarely seen humans. Under the auspices of Dr. Paul Beaver and the Amazon Research Center, we observed and cataloged rare species of monkeys. Along the way we had to deal with tarantulas, poisonous snakes, deep mud, wild boars and incessant rain. It was an extraordinary experience.



Awards/ Recognition

Over the years Troop 175 has received much recognition. The Troop often wins the best Troop in the District (Out of 30) We also routinely provide the most service hours (4,300) of any Troop. For the fifteenth year in a row the Troop also won Gold Status (Highest) for Troop Excellence.

On the National level, the Troop's 2012 and 2019 Kilimanjaro Climbs appeared in over 400 major metropolitan newspapers. In March 2013, the National Geographic Series "Are You Tougher Than a Boy Scout" aired for six weeks. Keegan Rice, from Troop 175, was the only Scout to compete in every show (other than the original pilot) and became one of the show's stars.

In April 2013, the Troop was asked to come to New York to appear on the National Broadcast of Fox and Friends to demonstrate its capabilities and teach the Fox On Air Anchors how to start a Flint and Steel Fire.

In May 2013, Scoutmaster Mead and his wife were honored to be flown to BSA Headquarters in Dallas, Texas to receive the Outstanding Scoutmaster Troop Award awarded to 54 Scoutmasters (out of 44,000)

in the Country. (The only one in Connecticut and one of four in all of New England). All the recipients got to spend three days with BSA National to talk about their ideas on how to build the Scouting Program in America.

In 2014, Ethan Meskill was awarded Eagle Scout of the Year in the Mattianuck District. Ethan earned his Eagle Scout Award in October, 2014.

Scoutmaster Brad Mead was awarded the Silver Beaver Award in May 2017. This is the highest award given by the Council for service to Scouting.

Maintaining the Scout Tradition of Public Service

Troop 175 is also actively involved in the community and demonstrates that a "Scout is Helpful" regularly. Our Scouts have done numerous projects for our sponsor, St. Mary's, including; setting up and helping to run the St. Mary's Carnival, building steps from the parking lot, building a new Christmas crèche for the Church and rehabilitating the rear entrance to the Church with a new fence and sign. Our scouts have also collected school supplies and delivered them, in person, to a community in an impoverished part of India, designed and placed new signs educating visitors about the history of Simsbury along Iron Horse Blvd, constructed birdhouses for Roaring Book Nature center, initiated a new "green" effort for the Town of Simsbury by building and placing recycling bins in eight public locations around town, collected hundreds of suits for a charity in Hartford, and performing necessary trail maintenance at the Onion Mountain Park. The Troop raises money each year by parking cars for the Simsbury Fly-In and serving grilled cheese to the Simsbury Marathon.

This last spring when the Covid Virus hit we canceled our in person meetings and went on to zoom. We also wanted to help so we mobilized the Troop to make Face Shields to distribute to local hospitals who were desperate for these safety devices. We produced over 2400 face shields and helped supply the front line health care workers.

Helping Scouts Down the Path of Advancement – Our Record and Philosophy

Troop 175 has an excellent record of working with boys to help them achieve the skills and knowledge they need for advancement, including the ultimate rank in Boy Scouts, Eagle. In the history of our Troop, 125 boys have advanced to the rank of Eagle, including 51 in just the past five years. This high level of achievement is virtually unprecedented, and we are justifiably proud of these motivated achievers. Eagle is the highest award in Scouting and one that we take seriously in terms of preparation. It's interesting to note that, in general, our Scouts earn this award at the age of 16 or 17, which is older than in many other Troops. While it is possible to receive your Eagle at a younger age, it is rare in our Troop because we believe that the Eagle badge means boys take the time not only to earn merit badges but also to learn how to lead. We believe that there is no shortcut to learning leadership. It takes time and experience. Frankly, our older boys stay active because we provide the type of adventure that holds their interest. It is often said that no award or honor received prior to a boy's eighteenth birthday is so revered in later life as the Eagle Scout Badge. Ask any Eagle Scout. Only 4% of Scouts nationally receive this award. In our Troop over 60% of the boys who enter get their Eagle.

In recent years we have had two Eagle projects that began in the US and then moved to Haiti in order to impact the people of that devastated nation. Dan Peluso(ASPL) raised \$15,000 to bring thousands of pairs of prescription eyeglasses to Port Au Prince and over seven days arranged for medical eye exams and new prescription eyeglasses for hundreds of Haitians. Christian Heiden (ASPL) traveled to rural Haiti, and he and his team helped the community build a large Hydroponics greenhouse that he designed and funded.

Leadership

We are proud of our adult leadership at Troop 175. It's deep and experienced. Our adult leaders have camped, climbed, fished, hunted, and explored on many expeditions. They are all great teachers. In addition, we have very high participation by the Dads (and Moms -5 have climbed Kilimanjaro) in our Troop, and it is not unusual to have 15-20 dads/moms on a trip. No experience is necessary, and if you were never a Scout as a boy, this is your second chance to learn the ropes. We have a Parents/Leaders Patrol, the "Usual Suspects," on each trip. We eat very well and share a lot of experiences as parents and as professionals from all walks of life.

Scout Leadership

Our Troop is boy led, and the Troop leadership selects our leaders based on their performance and ability to lead. The senior patrol leaders and patrol leaders share their wisdom and pass on their knowledge to the younger Scouts through our trip and advancement programs. They come from a diversity of schools in the Farmington Valley. Boy Scouts is one of the very few organizations where boys can be put in leadership positions at ages as young as 12. Good leaders often appear early, and the fun of scouting is watching them "take the lead". Troops are only as good as the boys who want to step up and take charge and the adult volunteers who are there to assist. Our 2019 – 2020 leaders are:

Marcos Aikman– Senior Patrol Leader

Marcos Aikman is a Life Scout in Troop 175 and is a member of the Immortals. He is a Senior at Pioneer Valley Christian Academy in Springfield, MA. He has been actively involved in Scouting ever since he was a Tiger Cub. Marcos plays basketball and baseball at PVCA and enjoys playing these sports in his free time along with fishing, hiking, and biking. He loves interacting with everyone in the troop and guiding scouts on their path towards Eagle. Marcos's favorite times in Troop 175 were when he hiked the Connecticut section of the Appalachian Trail last summer and his final year of summer camp.



Frank Hemmerich – Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

Frank Hemmerich is a Life Scout in Troop 175 and a Sophomore at Simsbury High School. He was inducted into the Immortals in 2019. Frank has been an active Scout since third grade, and joined Troop 175 in fifth grade. During his scouting career Frank has had the opportunity to attend many trips including Junior Leadership Training, hiking in New England, Sea Base, and the most recent sailing through Croatia. Frank's other interests include mountain biking, and playing baseball and guitar. His favorite parts about the troop are the friendships he's formed and bonding with younger scouts.



Brendan Shugrue – Assistant Patrol Leader

Brendan Shugrue is a 16 years old junior at Simsbury high school (SHS). He is currently a life scout in troop 175 and a member of the immortals. Brendan wrestles at (SHS) and is also a member of the model UN club. Brendan enjoys skiing, biking, fishing, and weight lifting in his free time. Some of his favorite scouting trips include junior leadership training (JLT), scuba diving in Honduras, and skiing Tukermans ravine



Ben Breslav- Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

Ben Breslav is 15 years old and in 9th grade at Avon Old Farms. He is currently a Life scout working on his Eagle Project. He is a member of the Immortals with Troop 175 and has been involved with scouting since first grade. Ben loves an outdoor challenge and appreciates the adventurous trips that Troop 175 takes every year. Outside of scouts, Ben enjoys biking, fishing, football and lacrosse



Hayden Carter – Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

Hayden Carter is a Life Scout and was inducted into the Immortals in 2020. He is a Junior and an active scout since the first grade. He has held several leadership positions in the Troop including Assistant Patrol Leader. Hayden comes from a family that has been part of the troop since 2001, and his older brothers are Eagle Scouts who both served as Senior Patrol Leaders and were part of the infamous Amazon Jungle trip in 2008. Hayden is an avid traveler and has been to Spain, Greece, Ireland, Iceland, and the UK. He is also active in the community, and particularly at St. Mary's Church where he is a regular volunteer. He looks forward to achieving the Eagle rank in the near future.



Jack Montesi – Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

Jack Montesi is 17 years old and is a senior at Simsbury High school. He is currently a Life scout and working on finishing his Eagle Scout project by Fall of 2021. He was inducted into the Immortals in 2019 and was recently elected to be the Immortals Chief. Jack took part in the 2018 "Not Philmont" trip alongside seven other scouts, and hiked 100 miles through the vast deserts in Utah. Also, he and his team won the Mission Profile in 2020. Jack has been active in scouting since 1st grade, and joined Troop 175 in 5th grade.



Joe Kalamarides– Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

Joe Kalamarides is a Life Scout in Troop 175 who is currently a sophomore at Northwest Catholic High School, in West Hartford. He has been in Scouting since first grade as a tiger scout and was inducted into the Immortals in 2020. He led the online troop throughout 2020-21 and is currently working on his Eagle Project. Both of his brothers have gone through Troop 175 and achieved the rank of Eagle. His favorite parts of Scouting are the friendships that are made and the exciting once in lifetime trips. Outside of scouts, Joe enjoys running cross country and track and hiking.



Adult Leadership

Brad Mead - Scoutmaster

Brad is an Eagle Scout and has hiked, climbed, paddled, and explored in over 146 countries, a passion developed during his Scout days. He has been on or led 5 Himalayan expeditions, four Amazon basin expeditions, a Haute Route team over the top of the Alps in winter, climbed the Matterhorn, the Eiger, Jungfrau, Mt. Blanc and two first ascents in the Wind Rivers. Brad led the 2021 Croatian Sailing Expedition as well as the 2019 Kilimanjaro expedition, the 2018 Western parks RV Trip the 2017 Thailand and Cuba sailing expeditions, 2016 Greek Sailing Expedition, the 2010 & 2015 Alaskan Expedition, the 2014 Zambezi Whitewater Rafting Expedition, the Kilimanjaro expeditions in 2007 & 2012, the Amazon Jungle expedition in 2008, the 2010 Presidential Traverse and Captained 2011, 2012, & 2013 Caribbean Sailing expeditions. He is a graduate of National Outdoor Leadership School in Lander, Wyoming. He led one of the 5 Connecticut troops to the 2013 Jamboree in West Virginia. In May of 2013, he was honored by BSA national as one of the top 54 scoutmasters (out of 44,000) in the country. He and his wife, Dianne, were flown by BSA National to the annual meeting in Texas to receive the award and spent three days meeting the national leadership. He was awarded the Silver Beaver award in May 2017. This is the highest award given by the Council. He is an Executive Board Member of the Ct Rivers Council and Chairman of the National Eagle Scout Committee. He is also a Council Trustee

Brad is a licensed pilot, deepwater scuba diver, skydiver, sailing captain and is a member of the Immortals. He is trained in CPR, Wilderness First Aid and High Altitude Rescue and in October 2014 received his Wilderness Emergency Medical Technician Certification (WEMT) from the Wilderness Mountain Medicine Institute in Lander, Wyoming. Brad is the CEO and President of Delta Capital Group, an investment bank in Simsbury, CT. His two sons Ryan and Jeffrey received their Eagle Scout awards in May 2008. His daughter Allison did everything her brothers did. All 3 summited Kilimanjaro.



Gary Barch – Assistant Scoutmaster

Gary has been active in the Simsbury Scouts for many years. He enjoys the outdoors, especially fishing, camping, hiking, mountain biking, and canoeing. He also enjoys photography and is PDIC certified in Scuba Diving. Gary organizes the Simsbury Fly-In Scout volunteers and is involved in other events throughout the year. He works for Design Innovation In Avon as a prototype developer. His oldest son, Eric, is an Eagle Scout, former SPL and a Graduate of William and Mary College. Eric joined the 2019 Kilimanjaro Expedition and Summited.



Keith Chambers – Assistant Scoutmaster

Keith began his scouting career as a Cub Scout Den Leader and continued with Boy Scouts in Troop 274 in Avon as an Assistant Scout Master. He has over twenty years in scouting and is a Wood Badge Instructor. Keith and his two sons moved over to Troop 175 in 2010. Keith is an avid hiker, enjoys photography, cooking, sailing and the outdoors. He led the 2019 BSA Adventure BASE Sailing trip and also helped lead the 2013 and 2016 Philmont Expeditions. He has experience hiking and backpacking in South Africa, and has been to more summer camps than he can remember! Keith's son, Tristan, achieved his Eagle in 2012 and is currently studying medicine at the University of New England in Maine. His son Devon is a Life Scout and was a member of 2012 Kilimanjaro Expedition



Travis Pascavis – Assistant Scoutmaster

Travis joined the troop in spring of 2016 when his son Ben crossed over from Simsbury Pack 76 and led the October Adirondack Troop trip. After holding various prior and current leadership roles in the Pack, he has a strong connection to the crossover scouts and their unique needs. Travis' focus will be to work with the troop's patrol program to ensure a secure relationship between the needs of the crossovers and the needs of the youth patrol leaders. Travis likes the outdoors and pursues hiking, biking, fishing, and camping. He works at the Hartford Investment Management Company as a Portfolio Strategist and sits on the portfolio strategy committee, which is responsible for tactical asset allocation. His son Ben is a Life Scout and an Instructor.



Todd Hollister – Assistant Scoutmaster

Todd joined the Troop in the spring of 2014 when his son, Max (and, at the time, honorary Scout daughter, Kate), crossed over from Pack 325 in Granby, CT where Todd was Cubmaster /Assistant Cubmaster and Den Leader for 3 years. Todd enjoys the outdoors, especially fishing, camping, hiking, biking, canoeing and kayaking. Todd is also Scoutmaster for the girls' Troop (Troop 1175) and was instrumental in getting that troop up and running. He is a member of the Immortals and is a major contributor to the troop's photo archive. By day, Todd is a robotics engineer and is currently Director of Software Engineering at Protedyne Corp. in Windsor, CT.

His son, Max, is now an Eagle Scout and a freshman at the University of Vermont. His daughter, Kate, is also an Eagle Scout and was the Senior Patrol Leader for the girls' Troop last year. Todd's wife, Val, is on the troop Committee and is very active with both the boys' and girls' troops.



Jon Hughes- Assistant Scoutmaster

Jon Hughes is an Eagle Scout who joined the troop in 2012 and is an Assistant Scoutmaster and a member of the Immortals. He achieved the rank of Eagle in 1969 while in Troop 786 in Michigan. Although Jon does not have any sons, he wanted to give back to an organization that had such a tremendously positive impact on his life. In addition to participating on troop trips, meetings, Eagle Scout projects, etc. he is responsible for adult and scout registration and annual troop chartering activities as well as adult training requirements. Jon is an avid outdoorsman and is trained in Wilderness First Aid. He has over 30 years as a safety professional and is currently an industry consultant.



Armando Vargas – Assistant Scoutmaster

Armando came to Troop 175 in 2012 when his son Sean joined. Sean is now an Eagle Scout and a Junior at College. His brother Alejandro joined in the fall of 2016 and is a Life Scout and was the SPL last year. Armando enjoyed participating as a parent in the many troop activities and trips, becoming a member of the Eagle Board of Review. Armando is one of the key leadership trainers in the Troop, working closely with our Senior Patrol members on their leadership skill building. He leads an annual leadership training weekend with Committee Member Steve Bessette, and they have jointly done similar training for our girls Troop. In 2016, he became an Assistant Scoutmaster and served as an adult leader on the 2016 expedition to Philmont, as well as trips to Cuba and Thailand in 2017. He led the ski trip in 2017. In 2018, he led the “Not Philmont Trip” to Utah when Philmont was forced to shut down due to fires. He was Co leader of the 2019 Kilimanjaro Trip where his entire family summited. He is a member of the Immortals. Armando enjoys a variety of outdoor activities such as mountaineering, rock climbing, running marathons and triathlon races.



Amanda Thompson – Assistant Scoutmaster

Amanda has been involved with Scouts for 8 years. She served as Pack 70 Den Leader and Committee Chair, and she currently is a trip coordinator and merit badge councilor for Troop 175. Outside of Scouts Amanda serves as Vice Chair on East Granby Planning and Zoning Board and has been on the East Granby Land Trust Board for 12 years, currently serving as Programs Coordinator. She has a passion for thoughtful land use and preservation. She is also the Historical Archivist for the East Granby Public Library preserving history for future generations. She has one son in Troop 175 and a daughter who will tag along to any event she is allowed to go on until she can be a BSA Scout herself. Amanda lives for the outdoors, from plant and insect identification to activities like hiking, biking, skiing, and canoeing. Amanda enjoys all things outdoors.



Frank Hemmerich – Assistant Scoutmaster

Frank has volunteered with Troop 175 since 2017 when his son Frank (FJ4) – a Life Scout and current Assistant Senior Patrol Leader – joined the troop. He later became an Assistant Scoutmaster for 175 to provide more support. Frank is also an Assistant Scoutmaster for Troop 1175, to which his daughter Maddie – a Star Scout and Patrol Leader – belongs. Frank has helped coordinate trips and assist in several troop activities over the last few years. Frank has been a member of the Immortals since 2019 when both he and FJ4 were inducted. In addition to enjoying outdoor activities like camping, hiking, and boating, Frank has also been a volunteer coach for FJ4’s baseball teams and enjoys restoring classic cars. Frank is currently employed by MassMutual.



Jamie Kalamarides – Assistant Scoutmaster

Jamie has been involved in Scouting for more than 25 years. In addition to his current responsibilities at Assistant Scoutmaster, Jamie has been Chairman of Troop 175, Cubmaster and Den Leader of Pack 176, and Assistant Scoutmaster of Troops 35 in Greenwich, CT and Troop 20 in Wilton, CT. Jamie has led 2 Philmont trips for the troop. He had to come home early during his first trip for the early arrival of his youngest son, Joseph, who is now a Life Scout ASPL. Jamie's older sons Daniel and David are both Eagle Scouts. Most recently Jamie led a group of our Catholic Scouts through Ad Altere Dei Emblem training. Jamie is also an Eagle Scout and Vigil Honor member of the Order of the Arrow. Jamie works at Prudential Financial.



Paul Ritchie – Assistant Scoutmaster

Paul is the Assistant Scoutmaster responsible for advancement planning and execution for summer camp. Mr. Ritchie started in Scouting in Yongsan Garrison, South Korea, then was a member of Troops in the Panama Canal Zone, Lima, Peru, Boston, and Arlington, Virginia. He has been an adult leader in Indiana, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. Mr. Ritchie is an Eagle Scout, and his son Jon was a Troop 175 Scout. Mr. Ritchie is a strategy execution leader at MassMutual.



Ken Medina – Assistant Scoutmaster

Ken is an 18-year veteran with the US Army with 3 combat deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. He is currently serving as his unit's First Sergeant, senior enlisted soldier, and senior medic. Ken is trained in advanced combat and expeditionary medicine. Ken is also a 13-year veteran with the Hartford Police Department and serves as a Detective and Special Deputy US Marshal assigned to the FBI. Both his son Alex and daughter Raelyn are involved in troops 175 and 1175. Ken enjoys Scuba diving, Mountaineering, and long-distance trekking. He is also a member of the Academy of Model Aeronautics and enjoys building drones recreationally.



Ray Mancarella – Assistant Scoutmaster

Ray began his scouting experience as a youth in Windsor Locks, progressing from Cub Scouts to Boy Scouts, earning the rank of Life Scout. An avid camper, Ray has passed his love of the outdoors to his 3 daughters. Camping, kayaking, hiking and letterboxing are among his hobbies. Ray has been an active volunteer in the St. Mary's community, chairing Carnival committees, sitting on the Parish Council and the school's Technology Committee. He recognized the value scouting brought to his life and decided to rejoin to give back to the organization which he enjoyed as a youth. Ray serves as an Assistant Scoutmaster for both our boys and our girls troops. He is our current webmaster and computer guru for our email groups and other systems. He and his wife Peg often cater the food for the parent patrol on our most well attended trips. He is an IT consultant and also enjoys cycling.



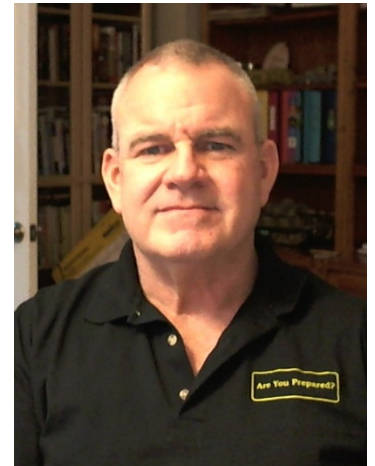
Bill Savage – Assistant Scoutmaster

For the past 20+ years, Bill has served as a leader in the field of Operational Risk Management with specialization in Cybersecurity, Disaster Recovery, Business Continuity and Crisis Management. In addition to enabling companies to identify and respond to risks arising in the business environment from people, process and technology, Bill has delivered a wide range of business continuity and disaster recovery training programs to leadership teams in the US, Europe, South America and the Bermuda. He also has hands on experience leading crisis response activities for large sites in the US and Bermuda during hurricanes from 2011 to 2016. Outside of his work life, Bill is an experienced mountain biker and avid downhill skier, and he enjoys camping, hiking and any other outdoor activity that creates a challenge. He also enjoys woodworking, automotive restoration and repair, and cooking. Bill has one son in the Troop (Matt) who is a life Scout and a Patrol Leader and another son (Ty) who recently achieved the rank of Eagle, and is now attending College.



Kevin Bradley – Assistant Scoutmaster

Kevin is an 20-year retired Veteran with the US Army where he served as an Infantry Mortarman with a combat deployment to Panama in 1990 (Operation Just Cause) and a Stabilization Force deployment to Bosnia in September of 2001 (SFOR-10). He served as the Battalion Mortars Platoon Sergeant where he was responsible for the training and tactical operations management of the Battalion Mortar assets including the 3 Infantry Companies. Kevin has had extensive training in Logistical planning and communications, Small Arms Instruction and was Chief Instructor for the Brigade Mortar Training Program. Kevin currently serves as a Team Coordinator for the Canton Emergency Response Team (CERT) and works closely with the Town Emergency Management. He also serves as the Emergency Coordinator for Canton with the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES). Kevin has a son Devin in Troop 175 and daughters Paige and Claire in Troop 1175. Kevin enjoys Camping, Amateur Radio, Geocaching, Hiking, Biking, Fishing and Kayaking and helping people gain piece of mind through knowledge and preparedness.



Rob Montesi – Assistant Scoutmaster

Rob, a former scout himself, began volunteering in scouting as a cub Den Leader when his son, Jack, a current ASPL and Immortals Chief, joined in first grade in 2010. He also coached soccer and baseball in Simsbury for several years. Rob brings a well-rounded skillset in many athletic pursuits, including regional competitive experience in alpine skiing, road & mountain cycling, and running. He has spent much of his life enjoying the great outdoors, especially while hiking (including a Presidential Traverse), camping and fishing, and has also been a professional guitarist on the local/regional scene in his younger days. As a volunteer parent and ASM, Rob has organized and led many successful scouting adventures including the Winter Survival Weekend, Tuckerman Ravine and Alpine Skiing trips. Rob is a Senior Vice President with Goman + York Property Advisors, and resides in Simsbury with his wife, Anne, their three children, and several huggable and unhuggable pets.



Attendance

The non-school life of most boys in Simsbury often is sports. Many of our Scouts play competitive sports and indeed often captain their Varsity teams. We require a 50% meeting attendance and a 50% trip attendance in order to advance rank in our Troop. This allows boys to do both sports and Scouts.

Parent Involvement

Troop 175 is successful because of the volunteer work of dozens of parents. Our Troop Committee, chaired by Peter Adamowicz, meets once a month and consists of 16 positions that are filled by individuals who spend many hours making sure we have the resources to run an organization of 90 Scouts. In addition, we have many Moms and Dads who take on one project a year or are regulars on our trips. We need many drivers to move this Troop to the different trip venues. The reward is many new friendships and many nights around a campfire sharing stories, values and occasionally politics. We often have parents come on trips when their kids can't go. We welcome all assistance anytime, anywhere. Many of our Adult Leaders stay on even after their sons turn 18 and go off to college. We encourage this continuity and experience. For many of us Scouting is lifelong passion - not something that occurs just during our son's teenage years.

How to Join

If you're a Cub, we will be contacting you throughout the year as we have various events. If you're not a Cub, but are at least 11 years old or have completed 5th grade, then please go to our website. If you are already a Scout and have just moved to the area, give the Scoutmaster a call. We would love to have you join us.

Final Thoughts

We are very excited about what we do at Troop 175. The values expressed by the Scout Law and the Scout Oath are great compasses to teach and to live by. Coupled with the Scouting Skills and "friendships made for life," the Scouts is a well-defined path through a boy's "years of change."

Some years ago I was bringing up the rear in a hike down from Tuckerman's Ravine. One of our new Scouts was struggling with a pack that was a little too heavy, boots that were a little too big and socks that were a little too wet. I asked how he was doing, and he said, "Mr. Mead this is the toughest thing I have ever done, but I'll make it. Can we do it again next year?" We did, and he did. Carter Hill would go on to get dry socks and proper fitting boots as well as receive his Eagle Award. In between he would set the record for most merit badges ever earned in the Troop(53), climb Kilimanjaro, trek deep into the Amazon Jungle to assist with a Monkey census, and complete an Eagle project in Tanzania that would win the 2nd place Eagle scholarship (out 50,000 projects that year). The confidence, the experience, the skills, and the spirit - it's what Scouting does. Its why Scouting Counts. Come be a part of it.



Yours in Scouting,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad Mead". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Brad Mead
Scoutmaster Troop 175

73 East Weatogue Street
Simsbury, CT 06070
bradmead@deltanow.com
860-614-1484

