

100 years of scouting; 92 years of Troop 503

Troop 503 celebrates 92 years, as scouting turns 100

WINCHESTER - Troop 503 had been sponsored by the First Congregational Church since 1917 and is one of the oldest Troops in continuous existence in the United States. When the Boy Scout movement was brought from England to the United States in 1910, it caught on immediately as a program of interest to boys bit by combining the fun of the outdoors with the lessons of fellowship, high ideals, and personal skills.

Since an organized group was required as the sponsoring organization, churches adopted the program as ideal for their active boys. The First Congregational Church of Winchester was in the forefront and received a charter for Troop 3 in this area. The Troop became 503 in a nationwide numbering during the fifties.

Robinson S. Whitten, to whose memory the second stained glass window in the front of Ripley Chapel is dedicated, was the Scoutmaster serving for many of the early years. Later, during World War II when younger men were called to service, he returned again to lead the Troop.

In the beginning (and in fact up to 1965), as with most troops, 503 was run by the church fathers for their own boys. The lists of Scoutmasters, Institutional Representatives, and Committee Chairmen accompanying this article reveal many of the Deacons, officers, and leading figures of the First Congregational Church.

In 1933 when Cub Scouts was added to the Boy Scout program as a way of leading the younger boys into it, Pack 503 (then Pack 3) was organized by the Church.

In 1965, when St. Mary's Catholic Church could no longer support their own Boy Scout Troop, the boys and their fathers were invited to join the First Church's Troop, George E. Dillon was the first non-church member to become chairman of the Troop Committee, thereby making this one of the ecumenical moves in Winchester church history.

Ever since that time, the First Congregational Church's



BUNCH OF TROOPERS - Troop 503 receives recognition from Boston Minuteman Council for 92 years of Scouting: (l-r) Joe Mirabile, Scout Troop 503 Chairman, Joe Pascarella, District Executive, Paul Masi, Troop 503 Scoutmaster, and Joe Doyle, Minuteman Unit Commissioner. Right, Troop 503 Scouts Noah Clickstein and Koe Mirabile dish out ice cream and cake in celebration of the Troops 92nd year and Scouting's 100th anniversary. For more info, see story to left.

(Bill Ryerson photos)



TROOP - PAGE A2

Finigan's first six months in Woburn

● Troop (continued from A1)

Boy Scout Troop 503 and Cub Pack 503 have enjoyed the adult support of the broader community and have served any and all boys interested in Scouting. The result has been two of the largest and most active Scouting groups in the Colonial District and Minuteman Council of Massachusetts Scouting.

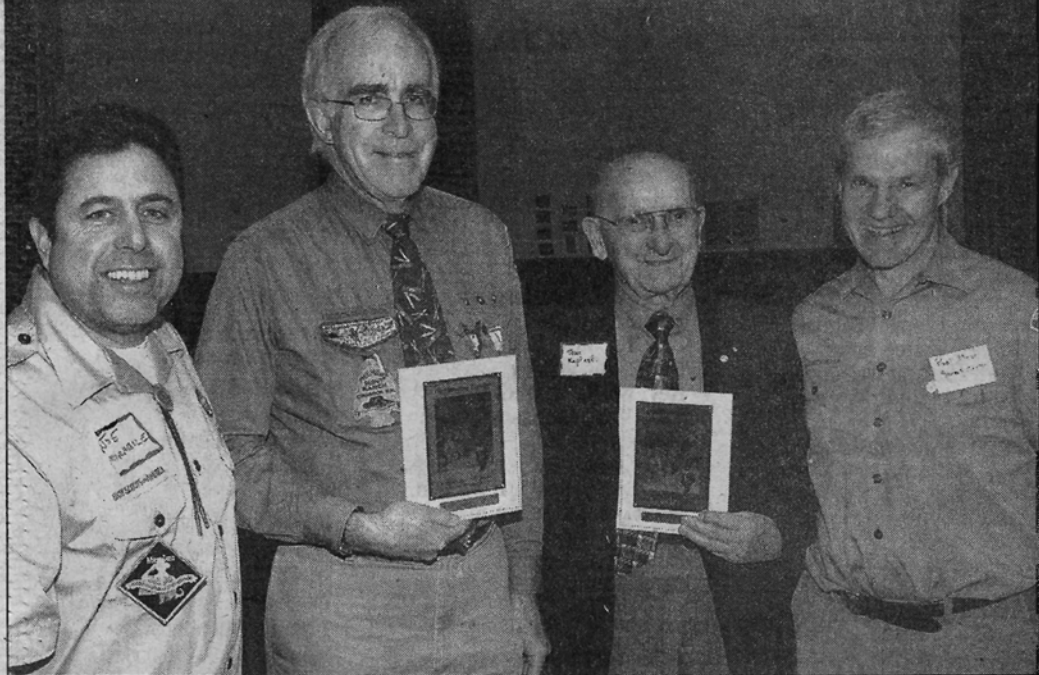
In the Scouting program, the chartering institution through their representatives have formed together in local Councils which are corporate entities. The Councils hold title to camp grounds and other common property. Minuteman

Council owns two camp grounds in Massachusetts and two in New Hampshire. Over the years many of the adults of Troop 503 have also served as District and Council leaders. Life Deacon Thomas Raphael served as Institutional Representative from 1970 to 1986, and he has remained an active advocate of our Troop. During his tenure he started the tradition of taking the Senior Scouts on a special bicycle trip to Nova Scotia.

Lawrence Keats and assistant John Looney determined the need for reorganizing the Troop activity schedule. They created a yearly program to develop each boy's beginning skills and progressively raised them to higher levels. Hiking, camping and canoeing experiences were highlighted on a three year rotation. More recently, Scout Master Paul Masi has led the Senior Scouts on outdoor camping and hiking adventures to the west to conquer higher classes of whitewater and some of the highest peaks in the country.

Unfortunately, early records of the boys who benefited from their years in Troop 503 have not been handed down. The records that have been preserved have resulted in the creation of the Troop's Eagle Scout plaque that is now proudly displayed in Chidley Hall. From 1931 to 2009, over 100 young men have earned the rank of Eagle Scout. For 92 years, Troop 503 has had the privilege of developing kind and trustworthy young men into strong leaders.

In 1982 Scout Master



CELEBRATING 92 YEARS - Winchester Boy Scouts troop 503 honors longtime supporters including (l-r) Joe Mirabile-Troop 503 Committee Chairman, honorees John Looney and Thomas Raphael, and Paul Masi, Troop 503 Scoutmaster. The troop recently celebrated 92 years, as scouting celebrates 100 years.

(Bill Ryerson photo)