

Philmont Jewish Scouting Course moves to the backcountry for a day.  
By David I. Karp

Participants in the National Jewish Committee on Scouting's week long advanced training course, "Scouting Serves the Jewish Community" left the Philmont Training Center on Thursday, June 25, 2009, for the backcountry.

Having had two days of lively discussion and vigorous debate in the conference center comparing notes regarding the many facets of Jewish Scouting at the national, council and unit levels, it was time to get outdoors.

Accordingly, the group departed for a day at Cimarroncito Camp via the back roads of the Philmont Scout Ranch for a hands-on experience in kosher camping led by Rabbi Rachmiel Tobesman, Philmont's Jewish Chaplain.

With "Rabbi Rock" at the wheel, participants Daryl Gamerman, Stephen Mintz and Rebecca Trapp, from Baltimore Area Council in Maryland, David Lewis from Cradle of Liberty Council in Pennsylvania, and course director David I. Karp from Western Los Angeles County Council in California, bounced along the panoramic, exciting and sometimes scary dirt roads to reach their destination.

Finally, the party arrived at Cimarroncito Camp's Jewish Chapel which serves Jewish Scouts and Scouters who pass through the camp located at an elevation of approximately 8,400 feet.

At the Chapel, observant trekkers will find materials, stored in the rafters for them, to construct an *eruv* or boundary for their use over Shabbat. This was part of the reason for the trip.

At the Cimarroncito Chapel, course participants learned about and constructed an *eruv* for Shabbat camping. Rabbi Rock noted that observant Jewish Scouts and Scouters do take treks and can plan to spend Shabbat at Cimarroncito if they are aware of the accommodations at the camp for them including the *eruv*.

The group also saw samples of, and discussed, kosher trail food, prepared a hypothetical council JCOS annual calendar, and in the main, enjoyed the magnificence of the high country, the trees, the trails, and the vistas.

Coincidentally, while at the Jewish Chapel, a Chaplain's Aide and Scout Leader camping nearby requested an impromptu religious service in the field from our Rabbi, who of course accommodated the request. This was in addition to his leadership of daily services at the Jewish Chapel at Camping Headquarters.

The annual course of the National Jewish Committee on Scouting is vital to the overall success of a council's Jewish Scouting community. The training enhances the ability of a council to promote Scouting among Jewish youth, to help Jewish institutions to provide Scouting opportunities for their youth, and to promote Jewish values in Scouting through Jewish programming and via opportunities to earn religious emblems. In addition, the participants have the additional resource of the Jewish Chaplain at Philmont, supported by the National Jewish Committee on Scouting, to enhance the experience.