

# VENTURING MAGAZINE

## Superactivity in South Florida

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Marlins, Alligators, Tarpon and... SKUNK APE!/? This may sound like the set up for a joke, but to Venturing Crew 566 of Glenolden Pennsylvania, it was the reality of their "Superactivity" trip in August of 2014. This trip -about 2 years in the making- took them over 1,100 miles away from their cozy homes in suburban Philadelphia to explore the hidden treasures of the Sunshine State. Florida's diverse landscapes, complete with bustling cities, dense swamps, and tropical island communities, offered them a unique experience that may very well define their venturing careers.

After an early but short flight, the still-groggy members of Crew 566 arrived in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida on a sweltering mid-August day. Upon procuring the minivans that would serve as their transport for the rest of the trip, the crew drove to Miami's Bayside Marketplace to do some sightseeing and grab some lunch. After this brief escapade, they ventured into Miami's ethnically Cuban neighborhood known as "Little Havana" for some authentic Cuban cuisine. Next on their agenda was an evening in Marlins Park to watch an exciting baseball game between the Miami Marlins and the St. Louis Cardinals. Exhausted after a long, hot, and eventful day, the brave heroes retired to their quarters for a good night's sleep. They'd be busy again at the crack of dawn!



The next day the crew departed for Vizcaya, a beautiful mansion on Miami's waterfront. After this visit, they traveled to the pristine Venetian Pool in Coral Gables, the largest freshwater pool in the country. Here they swam, escaping momentarily from the fervent heat of Southern Florida, before journeying to Everglades City proper in the heart of the swamps of the Florida Everglades.

By now, the crew was ready for dinner, and had a chance to sample the somewhat exotic vittles of the local swamp varmint. They dined at a waterside restaurant and were served fresh-caught wildlife native to the Everglade swamps.



The following morning, the group took an exciting airboat ride through the mangrove-riddled swamps of Everglades National Park, and then checked out some local attractions. They visited a zoo/alligator habitat and even dared to explore the "Skunk Ape Research Headquarters" where they spun yarns of the Bigfoot-esque local cryptid animal, the mighty Florida Skunk Ape.

Later that night, after several hours of driving, Crew 566 finally arrived in the Florida Keys. They were to stay at Camp Sawyer, a South Florida Council BSA camp on its own island for the Key area natives. There they spent two full days enjoying the activities Camp Sawyer had to offer including kayaking, swimming and snorkeling in the Gulf of Mexico. They even made



a few jaunts to Key West for a trip to Ernest Hemingway's mansion, a walk amidst the town's nightlife, and a taste of authentic Key Lime Pie.

Arguably the most tropical adventure of their trip, Venturing Crew 566 was able to visit one of the United States' southernmost landscapes. They awoke early in the morning and made their way to Key West, where they boarded a ferry, taking them across the Gulf of Mexico to the Dry Tortugas National Park - a tropical island cluster and the historic setting for Fort Jefferson, a civil war-era military base. The Dry Tortugas National Park is the farthest point to the West of the Florida Keys, and the southernmost point of the continental United States. After a brief tour of the fort, during which they were acquainted with Fort Jefferson's history, the crew spent their afternoon snorkeling above a beautiful man-made coral reef and marveled at the wide variety of natural marine life native to the Gulf tropics. As night fell, the crew was treated to a wonderful stargazing opportunity before retiring to their tents.



The next morning, Venturing Crew 566 of Glenolden PA returned to Camp Sawyer to pack up their things and then braved the long drive back to Ft. Lauderdale to fly home. This trip will serve as a precedent for their trips to come and will remain a lasting part of 566's history. The crew is extremely grateful for this amazing experience and is proud of the hard work each member put in to make it all possible.

Crew 566  
Cradle of Liberty Council