

Boy Scout Troop to Journey Along Lewis and Clark Trail

By Leah Lavelle

On July 29, some of the local Boy Scouts of Troop 912 will begin a week-long canoe trip in Montana, paddling the Missouri River as explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark did more than 200 years ago.

The Scouts, 13-18 years old, will make their journey with professional photographer and long-time troop member Richard Mack, who published "Lewis and Clark Trail: American Landscapes" in 2005. During his own two-year expedition beginning in spring 2002, Mr. Mack photographed landscapes along the route that the explorers took when they set out to map the country during the early 19th century.

A Troop 912 member of Eagle Scout rank since the late 1960s, Mr. Mack will lead the crew making the trip to Montana. Yet it will be the Scouts' adventure. "The kids are putting the trip together. ...The adults are going along just because it's a cool thing to do," he said.

Mr. Mack will take the troop members back along the river around the same time of year that Lewis and Clark traveled the trail during 1804. "We'll be there almost to the night that they will have been there," he said.

The canoe trip, which will cover about 100 miles along the river, will give the Scouts a chance to use the skills they have practiced to earn their merit badges and Star, Life and Eagle Scout ranks.

"This is a part of the river that you can only access by being on the water, so you're in true wilderness for six days," said Mr. Mack.

Troop 912 recently returned from a three-day preparation trip, during which they practiced packing, camping and canoeing under the conditions that they plan to face in Montana. The troop is also preparing for their trip by reading literature on Lewis and Clark and their journey. The Scouts plan to document their trip with photographs and writings, which may appear in a future issue of the *RoundTable*.