

BSA TROOP 228

TROOP MANUAL

Scouting founder, Lord Baden-Powell once said "Scouting is a game with a purpose." Like any game, Scouting and Troop 228 has rules and regulations, players, umpires and coaches. Boys who join Troop 228 are expected to "play the game." In fact, upon joining the Troop, they take a pledge to do so, the Scout Oath. The main difference between Scouting and most other games is that in Scouting there are no losers. Below is a Table of Contents to Troop 228's Information, Policies and Procedures Manual. We hope you find the information to be helpful.

Troop Organization

Patrols: The Troop is composed of two or more patrols, which are teams of 6 to 8 boys. Patrols with fewer than 4 or more than 10 members really cannot function effectively, and will be merged or divided by the Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) or the Patrol Leaders' Council (PLC) with the Scoutmaster's approval, so that every boy can fully participate in the "patrol method." Every Scout is a member of a patrol. Each patrol may meet as often as weekly, and should meet at least once a month. During these meetings, which are separate from the weekly Troop meetings, patrol members may work on advancements or merit badges, plan for upcoming Troop activities, and may choose to participate in patrol outings. (Hint to Patrols: Free campsites are available at Camp Rainy Mtn., Camp Scoutland, and Camp Rotery for Patrol camping. Call the Scout office to make a reservation.)

The New Boy Patrol: WEBELOS Scout dens and other boys who join Troop 228 as groups usually choose to stick together. We encourage you to do so by providing for one or more New Boy patrols whenever possible. These patrols are called "Newbie Patrol" only until they choose a name and animal totem to represent themselves, after which they will be known by their chosen name. These patrols will be assigned a Patrol leader Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) or the Patrol Leaders' Council (PLC) with the Scoutmaster's approval, then they will elect their own Asst. Patrol leaders. Realizing that these leaders maybe inexperienced, the Scoutmaster or SPL will appoint one or more older Scouts ("Troop Guides") to work with this patrol on advancement, organization, and the patrol method. These Troop Guides are responsible for seeing that the new Patrol Leader and his assistant are successful.

Reconstitution: when there is an influx of new members and it proves impossible to create la New Boy patrol, one or more Patrols will be reconstituted, or even the entire Troop may be formed into new patrols of 6-8 Scouts in order to ensure that no one is left out of Troop activities. The SPL and adult leadership corps will perform the actual reconstitution process.

Elections: Troop leaders are elected every 4 months In addition, leaders may be elected or appointed whenever necessary. The BSA rules covering junior leaders provide for general Troop elections to be held as often as necessary, and require at least one general election a year.

Youth Leadership Positions

Senior Patrol Leader: The Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) runs the Troop. This Scout presides over-, all meetings and activities, and is the leader of the Patrol Leader's Council (PLC). This Scout must be at least First Class; a Star or Life Scout will probably be more successful. We strongly encourage Scouts who are, or would like to be, SPL to take one of the Council level advanced training courses. The SPL appoints the following junior leaders, with the approval of the Scoutmaster:
Scribe(s) Quartermaster(s) Librarian(s) Historian(s) Chaplain's Aide
Alternately, and in conference with the Scoutmaster, the SPL may choose to have these offices elected by the Troop.

The SPL is elected by Troop youth membership to a four month term, and may be reelected with the approval of the Scoutmaster. The SPL may be elected by universal acclaim, or, if there is more than one candidate, by secret ballot.

If a balloted election is held, a simple majority (at least 51 % of all votes cast) elects the SPL. Only registered Boy Scouts (not adults) may vote in Troop elections, and a quorum must be present to hold an election (67% of the Troop).

Assistant Senior Patrol Leader: The Assistant Senior Patrol Leader (ASP) runs the Troop in absence of the SPL. He is usually also given other duties in the troop (e.g., overseeing the Troop Guides and the advancement program, uniform inspection, etc). The ASPL is elected by the Troop with the approval of the Scoutmaster. The ASPL should hold at least the First Class rank and must have previously served in the position of Patrol Leader. We recommend that Scouts who are, or would like to be, ASPL to take one of the Council level advanced training courses.

Patrol Leader: This is the most demanding and difficult position in the Troop. These boys are the frontline managers in the Troop. Patrol Leaders (PLs) advance in rank from Assistant Patrol Leader (APL). There is no rank requirement for these officers. The Patrol leader is responsible for holding at least one patrol meeting per month (at a time and place different from regular Troop meetings). The patrol leader is responsible for representing his patrol at the PLC, for communications within his patrol, for planning outings with his patrol and planning for their participation in Troop outings, and for ensuring that all members of his patrol; are advancing. Note that being responsible means that he should see to it that all of these things happen, not that he must do all these things personally. See the discussions on leadership and delegation in the Junior Leader Handbook.

Assistant Senior Patrol Leader: The Assistant Patrol Leader (APL) runs the Troop in the absence of the PL.

Scribe: The Scribe records attendance at each meeting. When there is a Troop outing requiring payment and/or reservations, the Scribe maintains a list of who plans to attend and who has paid. In addition, the Scribe is responsible for all Troop correspondence such as invitations, thank you notes, etc. The Scribe may also be responsible for the Troop newsletter. The Scribe is usually of First Class rank or higher. There may be one or more assistant Scribes as needed. This Scout in this position works with the Troop treasurer.

Quartermaster: The Quartermaster is responsible for keeping track of Troop property. He maintains records of who has borrowed Troop equipment, and the condition and completeness of each item or type of item. The QM advises the SPL or Scoutmaster when something needs to be cleaned, repaired, or replaced. The QM is usually of First Class rank or higher. The Scout in this position works with an Assistant Scoutmaster or Troop committee member who has agreed to be responsible for Troop property.

Librarian: The Librarian maintains the Troop's collection of Merit Badge booklets and handbooks, plus any other printed material, maps, etc. that belong to the Troop. The Librarian sees to it that there is a checkout system in place that the collection is up-to-date and complete, and arranges to repair or replace out-of-date or damaged books and other items. The Librarian is usually of First Class rank or higher.

Historian: The Historian gathers facts and pictures about Troop activities, maintains scrapbooks and displays, and assists Troop leaders make use of historical materials. The Historian is usually of First Class rank or higher.

Photographer (Historian): The Photographer wears a Historian shoulder patch and works with the Historian in preparing and maintaining the Troop memorabilia collection. He is responsible for recording Troop activities with his camera and preparing displays for Courts of Honor and other events.

Chaplain's Aid: The Chaplain's Aid plans and carries out religious services at Troop activities. He also tells Troop members about religious emblem program of their faith and how to earn one. This Scout works with the Troop Chaplain.

Troop Guide: Troop Guides are appointed by either the Assistant Scoutmaster for New Boys or the Scoutmaster to work with the New Boy Patrol(s). There should be at least one Guide for every New Boy Patrol. There may be additional Guides in charge of recruiting or other responsibilities having to do with recruiting and retaining new members. The Guide(s) is/are responsible for making sure the New Boy Patrol(s) is/are included in all Troop activities that they are planning for patrol and Troop outings, that they receive Troop communications, and that they are working on their advancements. Guides work with the Patrol Leader to guide and teach him how to be a good leader, and to ensure that the Patrol is participating and advancing. They do not run the patrol. Troop Guides are usually older Scouts (13+) and have at least First Class rank.

Instructor: An Instructor is a Scout who serves the Troop by teaching younger Scouts. Appointed by the SPL or the Scoutmaster, the Instructor may be of any rank, but must have special knowledge in some field of Scoutcraft (e.g., first aid, pioneering, cooking, etc.) and be willing to teach the other members of the Troop on an ongoing basis.

Order of the Arrow Representative: The OA representative must be at least an Ordeal member of the Order. He represents the Troop to the local OA Chapter, and informs the Troop about OA activities and opportunities as they arise. The OA representative is appointed by the Scoutmaster or his designated assistant.

Junior Assistant Scoutmaster (JASM): The Junior Assistant Scoutmaster is a Scout of exceptional maturity and achievement who is appointed by the Scoutmaster to hold an Assistant Scoutmaster position. Their duties are as appointed by the Scoutmaster and Troop Committee, and are the same as would be assumed by any other ASM (exceptions: they do not drive on Troop outings and do not count as adult leadership for Youth Protection purposes). These boys must either be a Life or Eagle Scout and at least 16 years old.

Den Chief (DC): A Den Chief is a Scout who meets and works with a Cub Scout Den as a junior leader and assistant to the adult leadership. This is a position of tremendous responsibility, since the Scout is serving as an ambassador from Boy Scouts and his Troop to the Cub Scout Pack and Den. He should be mature and enjoy working with younger boys. Den Chiefs volunteer for the position, and are confirmed by the Scoutmaster, Den Leader, and Cubmaster. A Den Chief is usually of First Class rank or higher, and should be at least 12. A separate publication, The Den Chief Handbook contains the requirements for this position.

Note that, with the exception of Assistant Senior Patrol leader, "assistant" positions, e.g., assistant Scribe, photographer, Assistant Patrol Leader, etc., do not qualify as "positions of responsibility" for advancement purposes.

All leaders in the Troop have vital functions and tasks to perform. These are genuine responsibilities, not just honors and titles (check the Junior Leader Handbook for details). Scouts elected or appointed to positions of leadership are expected to fulfill their responsibilities to the very best of their ability. Upon acceptance of their election or appointment, they promise themselves, one another, the Troop (their friends and peers) and their leaders that they will fulfill all of their duties!. These duties, which will be taught in detail, are specific for each position, but all include proper uniform, attendance and participation in Troop activities and meetings. This is especially important for members of the Patrol Leaders' Council (PLC), which is responsible for what actually happens during Troop activities and meetings.

Insofar as possible, No boy should hold more than one office at a time. In no case can the SPL or ASPL also be PL or APL.

If the boy leaders do not function, one or more of the Patrols, or even the entire Troop, will cease functioning as well. Boys who do not fulfill their elected or appointed duties will not receive leadership credit for advancement. If a boy discovers that he does not enjoy leadership or cannot keep up with his responsibilities, it is best to step down for the good of the Troop. (See Also: the section under Meetings

& Attendance concerning leaders who must absent themselves from the Troop for sports participation or other reasons).

Youth leaders who are not functioning, either through lack of participation or for other reasons, can be removed from their office by unanimous vote of the Patrol Leaders Council and approval of the Scoutmaster. Releasing a leader is an extremely grave undertaking and is subject to due process. In order to release a leader:

- (1) The boy in question must be notified in writing at least two weeks in advance of the projected PLC meeting that he is being considered for release. The letter must outline the reason(s) that the PLC is considering the release and invite a response (with a deadline).
- (2) After considering the situation and the leader's response (if any), the PLC will vote on the proposal to release the leader. Any decision to release a leader must be unanimous.

Junior Leader Training

"Train them, trust them, let them lead" -- Lord Baden-Powell

Basic Training for youth leaders is presented to the PLC and other youth leadership at the annual Junior Leader Training (JLT) and planning weekend each fall, and is offered again by the Council each summer at the annual Junior Leader Outdoor Workshop (JLOW). Scouts who hold the office of SPL, ASPL, PL, APL, Troop Scribe, Troop Quartermaster, Troop Historian, Troop Librarian, Chaplain's Aide, Junior Assistant Scoutmaster, and Venture Crew Chief should attend the Troop JLT session.

The district presents Den Chief training from time to time, once a year by the Council, or as needed by the Cub Scout Pack the Chief is serving.

Both youth and adult training opportunities are announced at the monthly District Round Table meetings. The cost for basic training is nominal or free. Each youth and adult leader is responsible for becoming trained in their leadership position.

Advanced Training for youth leaders is offered by the Council. These weeklong resident camps teach the eleven skills of leadership, and train boys in the Patrol method. Following the formal course, the Scout has three months ("three moons") to put what he has learned into practice. Scouts who have been trained at one of these advanced courses wear distinctive insignia and are entitled to wear a "Trained" patch under their badge of office on the uniform sleeve.

Adult Leadership

While the boys run the troop, it is guided, advised and assisted by the Scoutmaster, one or more Assistant Scoutmasters, the Scouting Coordinator, and the Troop Committee. BSA no longer requires all male leadership of Boy Scout troops; leaders may be of either gender. Troop 228 encourages all parents to take an active part in our Troop's leadership.

The **Scoutmaster's** main job is that of teacher, instructor, and counselor. He or She leads by example, and works with the boys to help them learn and grow. At times s/he must be the disciplinarian, and is always the adult in charge of the Troop. The Scoutmaster is appointed by, and is responsible to the Troop Committee.

The **Assistant Scoutmasters** help the Scouts with the program, and take care of Troop administration, advancement, program, and outings. They generally pitch in to help wherever help is needed. They are responsible to the Scoutmaster and the Troop Committee. Ideally, there should be at least one Assistant Scoutmaster to oversee each of the major program areas:

Indoor Program (works with PLC and Program Patrol to plan weekly meetings)

Outdoor Program (responsible for camping and outings outside the regular meeting).

New Boy Patrol(s) (works with new members)

First Class Emphasis (works with new members and those requiring help with Scoutcraft)

Facilities & Operations (works with the Quartermaster and Librarian)

Ways & Means (works on fundraisers)

Venture (works with the Venture patrol to plan & execute high adventure outings)

The Scouting Coordinator (a.k.a. Charter Organization Representative) is the liaison between the Troop and the Charter Organization. He or She is responsible for obtaining permission for the Troop's use of the building and property, and is also responsible for filing the charter with BSA each year so Troop 228 continues to exist. Since the Charter Organization legally owns the Troop and all of the Troop equipment, s/he works with the Quartermaster, Librarian, and Assistant Scoutmaster for Facilities & Operations to maintain the inventory and ensure everything is complete and in good repair. He or She is responsible to Charter Organization and represents it to the Troop Committee.

Please note that unpaid volunteers fill all of these positions.

Adult Leader Training

The Council offers numerous training opportunities for adult leaders. This training ranges from half-day orientations to extremely intensive courses and covers topics from first aid and cooking to committee management and scoutmaster fundamentals. Troop 228 encourages all its adult leaders, committee and parents to explore and participate in the range of training opportunities offered by the Council, especially the Youth Protection training offered at various times and locations.

The council's advanced leader training, Wood Badge, concentrates on developing skills including Scoutcraft and the eleven skills of leadership. During this course the leader develops a nine-point contract ("ticket") with him/herself committing to improving the Troop, giving service through Scouting, and personal development. This contract may take as long as two years to complete. Following completion of the ticket, the Scouter is awarded a leather necklace with two wooden beads (the Wood Badge) and a special neckerchief and slide that indicate that s/he is Wood Badge Trained.

Advanced leader training for both youth and adults involves significant expense and a significant commitment to Scouting: Troop 228 will pay for 50% of the tuition for advanced Scout leadership training providing sufficient funds are available and upon approval of the Troop Committee.

Parental Participation and Committee

Troop 228 cannot exist; much less offer a Scouting program, without the direct and active support and participation of parents. There is a monthly Troop Committee meeting on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm at Lanier water treatment plant in Buford where the Troop program will be presented and discussed, adults can plan for future activities, and social events (Courts of Honor, parties, etc.) are scheduled. All parents are welcome and encouraged to attend these meetings.

The Troop Committee is a group of registered adult Scouters representing both the parents and the Charter Organization (City of Gainesville Utilities). All of the parents in the Troop are invited to register as Committee Members. Led by the Committee Chair and assisted and advised by the Scouting Coordinator, they oversee Troop operations and provide members for the Board of Review. There must be at least five members of the Troop Committee at all times, and there is no maximum number of adults who may serve the Troop in this capacity; in fact, every parent can be a member of the Troop Committee. The Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters are responsible to the Committee but are not members. In addition to overseeing the program and advancement, the Committee maintains Troop

records, recruits boys, ensures appropriate and adequate publicity for the Troop, ensures that the Troop has adequate insurance coverage; ensures that the Troop has adequate trained leadership; oversees fundraising activities, approves Eagle projects, and provides a secretary and treasurer to keep track of Troop records, correspondence, and funds. The Troop Committee meets as part of the monthly parents meeting and may meet in special session whenever there is a need to do so.

The Troop Committee and every other parent also serve as a resource for individual advancement. There are over 120 different Merit Badges, covering virtually every vocation and avocation known. Each parent is almost certainly qualified to teach at least one badge based on education or experience. From time to time the Committee will take a "skills inventory" of all of the parents to determine who is able and willing to teach merit badges to the Troop. There is no cost, and a great deal of satisfaction, involved in becoming a merit badge counselor.

The BSA rules of Youth Protection require that no less than two adults be present for any Scouting activity. At least one of the adults must be a registered leader. In addition, according to the Rules of Safe Scouting, most hikes and all camping outings require that at least three, and preferably four, adults be present; again, at least one of the adults must be a registered leader. It is best if the registered leader is one of the Scoutmasters, but a registered committee member may serve in this capacity. It is important that one parent of each boy assumes a responsibility to attend as many outings and activities as possible to ensure that adequate leadership is always present. We always need parents to coordinate activities, drive to outings, and participate with your son and his friends. Remember that BSA regulations require that meetings and outing with insufficient leadership must be canceled.

BSA stands for Boy Scouts of America, not Baby Sitters Anonymous. Troop 228 is most emphatically; a family program. Your son will be most successful at Scouting if at least one adult (over 21) member of your family can commit to supporting your son and our Troop by participating in our program to the best of your ability.

Meetings and Attendance

Boy Scout Troop 228 meets at 6:30 pm on Monday evenings at Water treatment plant on Jim Crow Rd. Meetings are expected to start promptly, and usually last 90 minutes (until 8:00). We generally meet every week. During the school year, the Troop will meet on a Monday if North hall Schools held school that day. If the Monday is a school holiday, or if school was canceled (due to inclement weather or for any other reason), then the Troop will not meet. Over the summer, we meet every Monday that is not a holiday.

Usually, a boy must attend 75% of the Troop meetings and outings to be considered an active Scout for advancement purposes. Leaves of absence for sports participation, extended illness, family crisis, or other causes can be negotiated with the Scoutmaster and such leaves will not be unreasonably withheld.

A leave of absence is granted for a continuous period of time with a definite start and stop and for a definite purpose. The purpose can be confidential if necessary. Time spent on a leave of absence does not count as tenure toward rank advancement.

Scouts who hold elected positions (Senior Patrol Leader and Patrol Leaders) should resign their positions in writing if they seek a leave of absence, since their prolonged absence will adversely affect the operation of the Troop. A boy who has resigned a position in order to take a leave of absence may run for reelection later at a regular Troop election.

Scouts who are inactive for more than twelve (12) consecutive weeks without a leave of absence or legitimate excuse will be dropped from the Troop's active roll and mailing list. If a Scout remains inactive for an additional fourteen weeks (six months total), his name will be removed from the Troop charter at the next opportunity to do so. Note that the Troop treasury will absorb the contents of his Scout account at that time.

Dues, Fundraising, and Activity Fees

Fundraisers are held at mutable times trough out the year, more often if necessary. Every Scout is expected to participate in Troop fundraisers. In the case of Trail Ends Popcorn sales, each boy in the Troop will have the opportunity to sell popcorn. The treasurer or fundraiser chair keeps track of each boy's sales. 65% of the money of the total sales will go to B.S.A. The remaining 35% of each boys total sales, goes to the boy's Scout account, where it may be used to pay for activity fees or to purchase items at the Scout Shop (with the Scoutmaster's approval). In extraordinary circumstances, and on recommendation of the Troop Committee, the Troop will release funds from a boy's Scout account to pay for a purchase or activity that is in keeping with the ideals of Scouting even if it is not strictly Scout related.

Such a request must be made in person before the Committee, which will judge each request on its own merits.

Troop dues are currently \$2 per meeting per boy and can be paid annually. This money is used to recharter our Troop with Boy Scouts of America each January. At this writing (early 2005), the cost to do this is about \$16.00 per boy, \$7 per adult, and a \$20 processing fee for the Troop. The Troop absorbs the cost of registering adult leaders. When you join Troop 228 you must pay your national registration fee on the day that you join. The fee is prorated through the year. Boys transferring their membership from another unit to Troop 228 pay a \$1 transfer fee to BSA. In the event the BSA increases the registration fees, the Troop dues will increase as well.

If a Scout resigns from Troop 228 or is absent without leave for 6 months, the Scout is dropped from the active roll, and the contents of his Scout account becomes Troop property. If a Scout transfers to a new Troop, his Scout Account will be transferred to his new Troop upon receipt of written confirmation from his new Scoutmaster that he has indeed transferred his membership.

Scouts who must leave the Troop because they pass their 18th birthday also lose the contents of their Scout account; however, they may elect to dedicate the contents of their account to a particular purpose (e.g., to fund a particular outing or be spent toward a particular Court of Honor).

The retained proceeds of fundraisers are used to pay for purchase, repair, and replacement of Troop equipment; for awards, patches, and merit badges; for teaching aids; insurance; the newsletter; scholarships toward advanced training, and for postage and other minor expenses.

Activity Fees are levied before each activity, and are simply the direct cost to participate in each activity. These costs can include admission, building use fees, tuition (e.g., for merit badge classes), event insurance, and other direct expenses. Activity fees are paid to the Scribe (or in some cases to the Troop treasurer) when a boy signs up to participate in an activity. The Troop will make every effort to recover fees paid for canceled activities; however, once paid, activity fees usually cannot be refunded even if an entire activity is canceled or a boy must cancel his participation. If the fees can be recovered, the boy can either leave the unused fee in the treasury against the next activity or request a refund.

Uniforms and other Required Materials

The Boy Scouts of America is a uniformed organization. **All** youth members of Troop 228 are **required** to own and wear the official BSA uniform, including proper insignia. In addition, the Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmasters, and Scouting Coordinator are also required to be uniformed. The uniform is suggested and strongly encouraged, but not required, for members of the Troop Committee.

The Troop 228 field uniform is the khaki field uniform shirt (either short or long sleeve) with appropriate patches and insignia, and the solid color green neckerchief with the BSA logo in yellow. See the inside covers of the Boy Scout Handbook for proper placement of patches and insignia. We recommend the

short-sleeved shirt in a size large enough to both allow for growth and to permit it to be worn over a turtleneck or sweatshirt. Bolos, necklaces, special neckerchiefs, and other neckwear earned or awarded through Scouting programs may be worn in place of or in addition to the green neckerchief. The neckerchief must be secured with a neckerchief slide ("woggle") and never tied around the Scout's neck. We encourage, but do not require, the use of uniform trousers, belt, and socks. If a Scout elects not to use the official trousers, then neat, clean trousers or shorts must be worn with the uniform shirt. Khaki Dockers and similar trousers are ideal for this purpose, although blue jeans and other dark colored pants are also acceptable. Ragged, torn, dirty, baggy, or cutoff trousers are inappropriate and should never be worn with the uniform. Note that some BSA activities at the Council, Regional, or National level will require a complete official uniform, including the shirt, trousers, belt, hat, neckerchief, and socks.

A "Class A" uniform for the purposes of Troop 228 is the complete Field uniform as described plus the merit badge sash, any earned medals and service stars, and the Order of the Arrow sash if the Scout is a member of the Order. If you do not own uniform trousers, then khakis or other dress pants (not jeans) should be worn with the Class A uniform.

The Merit Badge Sash is worn over the right shoulder so it does not cover the left pocket. Merit badges are worn in neat, even rows on the front of the sash. The badges do not have to be displayed in any particular order. If a Scout is a member of the Order of the Arrow, the OA sash is worn over the right shoulder and the merit badge sash may be worn on the belt on the Scout's left side, folded in such a way as to both display the badges and present a neat appearance.

One of the many things we must do in order to maintain Quality Unit status is to conduct (and pass) at least one official Uniform Inspection each year. By Troop custom, we actually perform an inspection on the first meeting of each month. The Assistant Senior Patrol Leader is usually in charge of the inspection. Uniforms and Scouts are checked for a neat and tidy appearance and to ensure that the uniform shirt displays complete and proper insignia.

Notes on the phrase "A neat and tidy appearance: " This means that the uniform shirt must be actually tucked into the waistband of the Scout's trousers and not merely rolled or folded around the waist to give the appearance of being tucked in. If the trousers have belt loops, there must be a belt in them. Scout trousers should be worn with one of the official web or leather belts. It also means that the Scout's shoes should be properly tied, without dangling or trailing shoelaces. A Scout is Clean.

Due to recent unfortunate events involving uniformed radical and vigilante groups, the Boy Scouts of America is anxious to avoid associating our movement with any of these organizations. For this reason, the use of camouflage clothing of any description, including hunting camp, is strongly discouraged at Troop 228 ready to purchase them. While there are many items that a boy may choose to own as part of being a Scout, only the uniform and Handbook are required by Troop 228 for membership.

Discipline

The Scout Oath and Law apply at all times to all Scouts and Scouters everywhere.

Scouts and Scouters have all taken an oath (or promise) "on their honor" to obey the Scout Law. In joining they have promised to play the game. Obeying the law and playing the game involve an explicit promise to obey the patrol leader, senior patrol leader and other junior leaders as well as the adult leaders. The Troop is organized in this hierarchical manner for reasons of efficiency and training in leadership. All boys will have the opportunity to become leaders, so it works out best if they learn to treat their leaders as they would like to be treated when they become leaders themselves. Leaders must remember the Scout Law and what it is like to be a follower, and make every effort to be helpful, friendly, kind and fair. In order for Scouting to work properly, all Scouts must cooperate and help their leaders so that everyone can benefit from the patrol and Troop activities.

Our Troop meets so everyone can plan for our adventures, learn new things, advance in Scouting, and have a good time. We do not anticipate problems with behavior or discipline; however, the Senior Patrol Leader and the PLC will take up matters of discipline if and when necessary. The adult leaders and Troop committee will, except in rare circumstances, support disciplinary actions taken by the SPL, and PLC.

Ground rules:

We do not tolerate fighting, bullying, intimidation, humiliation, verbal abuse, or hazing in any form of anyone by anyone at any time. Even friendly rough housing and horseplay are strongly discouraged. We strive to make Scouting a Safe Place for everyone.

The misuse of fire will not be tolerated.

The misuse of bladed tools (knives, axes, saws, etc.) will not be tolerated.

Use of alcohol and controlled substances is absolutely forbidden at all Scouting activities. This applies to Scouters as well as Scouts. Tobacco is forbidden to Scouts and its use is strongly discouraged for Scouters. Leaders who must smoke should do so in private, away from the Scouts.

If a Scout's behavior gets out of hand at a meeting or outing, the offending Scout will be required to serve time in "time out" away from the group. If the first offense is serious enough, the boy must call his parents, explain what has happened, and have them remove him from the meeting.

If there is a second offense after serving time out, or after a particularly serious first-time offense, the Scout will be required to call his parent or guardian and ask to be immediately taken home from the meeting or outing.

If a boy continues to be a problem over two or more meetings or outings, he and his parent(s) or guardian will be asked to appear before the Troop committee, and chronic offenders will be required to attend all Troop functions with a parent.

As a last resort, failing resolution of the problem, the boy will be asked to leave the Troop.

Dismissing a boy from the Troop requires the Troop Committee and the Chartering Organization via its representative, the Charter Organization Representative to concur that the boy's attitude and behavior leave no alternative to dismissal. When a Scout is dismissed, a letter from the Troop Committee will be issued informing the Scout and his family that he has been released from Troop 228 for cause, explaining the cause, and offering to transfer his advancement records to another Troop upon request. The Troop Committee Chair and the Charter Organization Representative must sign this letter.

Program

The SPL is responsible for seeing that the Patrols are prepared to present the weekly Scouting program.

Program Patrol: The program patrol is responsible for the program that is presented at each Troop meeting as planned and decided by the PLC. It is recommended that they use the resource and planning material available to them in Woods Wisdom in planning each weekly program. Each patrol serves as the program patrol for one month at a time on a rotating basis.

Service Patrol: The service patrol for the month is required to be at the Troop meeting a few minutes early to set up the flags and any other equipment required by the SPL or PLC. They are also responsible for staying after the meeting to supervise clean up and help put things away. The service patrol provides the color guard for each meeting's flag ceremony, and may be asked to assist with special programs such as Courts of Honor. The Service Patrol and Program Patrol are each appointed

for one month at a time. These appointments are usually made a year in advance at the annual JLT and planning weekend. Each patrol serves as the service patrol for one month at a time on a rotating basis.

Equipment Notes

Troop 228 engages in both heavy and backpack camping. Heavy camping involves delivering camping kitchens, large tents, etc. via van or truck, while backpacking is just that, camping with the gear we can carry on our backs. Troop 228 tries to go camping at least once a month. Almost all camping is organized by patrols, which are encouraged to go camping on their own as well as with the Troop. Patrol cook kits (chef kits) and propane stoves are provided for each patrol. Each Scout is responsible for providing his own mess kit (eating utensils) and silverware.

The boys are responsible for the Troop equipment that they use. Prior to each activity, the Scouts who needs to use it may check it out from the Troop gear. After a camping activity the tents must be cleaned, dried, folded, and packed for the next outing. The patrol cooking equipment must be also be cleaned and repacked for next time. If a Scout loses or breaks an item, he is responsible for repairing or replacing it. If an item is unaccountably lost or wears out, the Quartermaster should be notified so the Troop can replace it.

NOTE TO PARENTS: *The tents mildew easily. If your son brings a tent home from an outing, it should be set up or hung in the yard, basement, attic, or garage right away and allowed to dry thoroughly and air out before it is repacked.*

ANOTHER NOTE TO PARENTS: *Spoiled food sticking to cooking gear causes food poisoning: all cooking gear should be scoured and dried before it is repacked. Soot and resin from open fire cooking is difficult to remove with detergents, and may leave a residue in dishwashers. Utensils that have been used over an open fire should be scoured (with Comet, Ajax, etc.) before being run through the dishwasher. Tents and cooking gear should be returned to the Troop in good condition.*

Make sure your son checks the equipment with the Quartermaster when it is returned.

Troop equipment is usually due to be turned in no later than the second meeting following an outing. This gives the Scout two weeks to clean and inspect the borrowed equipment and have it ready to return to the Troop. At this meeting, the tents may be set up and the cook kits unpacked and inspected to ensure the gear is in good condition before it is stored.

Of course, the Troop cannot provide everything a boy will want and need to participate in Scouting; a certain amount of equipment must be obtained by each boy for his personal use (see the checklist). Not everything on the list is required for every outing: use your judgment based on what you are likely to use versus how much you can afford and are willing to carry. Many of the items on the list are not required immediately. It is best if everything you take camping or hiking is identified in some way as yours (initials, etc.). There are usually a few items left over after an outing, and it is easier to return them if they are identified.

PARENTS: Feel free to ask the Troop leaders before purchasing camping equipment, especially major items such as tents, backpacks, and sleeping bags. It is possible to both over and under spends for these items. In general, the most expensive items are not necessarily the most appropriate for Scout camping while cheap items are often unserviceable or of very poor quality.

Personal Equipment Check List (You Will Probably Need or Want these things)

Uniform	Poncho	Jacket	Washcloth	Compass
Bug Dope	Safety Pins	Hand axe*	Sunscreen	Underwear
Socks	Sweater/sweatshirt	Toilet kit	Scout knife*	Pencil/pen
Shoelaces	Moleskin	Backpack	Scout Handbook	Boots

Bandanna	Shirts	Sleepwear	Sleeping bag	Matches/lighter
Swimsuit	Towel	Camera	Ground bed	Sewing kit
Fishing gear	Notebook or paper	Rubber bands	Garbage bags	Wallet
Saw*	Flashlight	Watch		

NO AEROSOL CANS, LASER POINTERS, RADIOS, TVs, PERSONAL STEREOs, VIDEO GAMES, OR ELECTRONIC DEVICES ARE PERMITTED ON ANY SCOUT OUTING.

*Only Scouts who have earned the Tot'n Chip (and carry it) may use these items. **NB:** proper sheaths must cover all saws and axes.

First Aid Kit: Check out this subject in the Boy Scout Handbook. A homemade first aid kit with just a few necessary items in a small zip lock bag is all you need. At least one Scoutmaster certified in First Aid and CPR carries a complete medical kit on all outings.

Backpack: Official BSA external frame backpacks and similar models are acceptable. Internal frame packs, while certainly acceptable, are usually quite expensive, and are necessary only for extended hiking trips in the backcountry. In any case, the pack material should be water-resistant and all of the seams reinforced and double sewn.

Frame: Again, the official BSA external aluminum frame is acceptable. Newer plastic frames that are adjustable and slightly flexible are more expensive but a better buy in the long run since they are more comfortable and can be adjusted to "grow" with the boy. Make sure the frame is equipped with a padded hip belt, since the weight of the backpack is more easily borne by the hips and legs rather than the back and shoulders.

Sleeping bag: A must have item. A lightweight bag rated to 20 degrees F is suggested. Down filled bags are lightweight but expensive and useless when damp. Bags filled with synthetic fibers are heavier, but less expensive and will keep you warm even if slightly wet. Mummy style bags with taffeta linings are best for cold weather camping and general backpacking, while square bags with flannel linings will do for heavy camping and Summer camp.

Ground bed. Another must have item. There are a number of products on the market to cushion you and keep you off of the ground. It is important to have something, since you lose a great deal of body heat through contact with the ground. Air mattresses are comfortable, cheap, heavy, and must be inflated; foam pads are usually comfortable, expensive, lightweight, and are usually self inflating. Both can develop leaks. Closed cell foam pads are less comfortable, of intermediate price, don't need to be inflated, and can't leak. A ground bed is a matter of personal taste, budget, and comfort. Make sure you test self-inflating and closed cell pads for comfort before purchasing them. You will want a ground bed for Troop and Patrol camping, but they are NOT required at Summer Camp.

Mess kit: The cheap aluminum kits corrode easily, give food a metallic taste, are easily damaged, and really are not economical. Stainless steel kits are heavier, won't react with food, are more expensive, and are designed to last. Actually, a homemade kit that includes a plate, bowl, cup, knife, fork, and spoon works just as well, even if it takes up a bit more room in your backpack. In any case, make sure that all eating utensils are marked in some way so you can identify them as yours.

Canteen: A plastic two-quart canteen or water bottle is recommended. Whichever you use, make sure it has a belt hook or carrying strap: remember that a quart of water weighs two pounds, and you don't want to carry that in your hands. Avoid the red European lacquer covered metal water bottles: they are heavy, expensive, and can crack if the water inside freezes. Moreover, they look exactly like the red metal safety bottles used for Coleman fuel, a similarity that can lead to accidental poisoning.

Knife: A pocketknife is satisfactory for all Scouting applications. The standard BSA Scout pocketknife or Victorinox (Swiss Army) Scout knife are both good choices. Multiplex knives with more than 8-10 blades are expensive, fragile, and generally not necessary. Sheath knives are heavy to carry and dangerous to

use, and are generally not necessary in Scouting situations. The use of sheath knives is strongly discouraged by Troop 228 for safety reasons. We also heavily recommend a lockable blade.

Poncho: This is a must have item: Scouting happens rain or shine! The official BSA (red) plastic poncho is satisfactory; however, a heavy-duty military poncho (in green or black, NOT in camo) with the extra material in the back is recommended since it will last longer, can be used as an improvised shelter, and is designed to cover your backpack.

Tent: NOT required, since the Troop has some tents and canvas wall tents are provided at Summer Camp. Investing in a tent is expensive and very much a matter of personal taste and budget. A good three season backpacking tent will be lightweight, roomy enough for two people plus gear, and have a rain fly in case of heavy weather. Avoid cheap tents and very expensive four season tents.

Hiking Clothes and Equipment: Hiking clothes consist of long pants, a shirt, and some form of hat. Hiking clothes should fit somewhat loosely to prevent chafing and to allow them to breathe, and should be appropriate to the weather. Long trousers of some rugged material are suggested to protect your legs from insects and undergrowth. Sturdy hiking boots are a must, since sneakers and other canvas shoes (even "walking" shoes) do not provide enough support and protection for your soles and ankles. Select boots that both protect and support your instep and ankles. Polypropylene sock liners worn under heavy cotton or wool socks help prevent blisters and keep your feet dry. A walking staff provides support on slippery or steep trails, and a small first aid kit (including moleskin) is useful for treating hot spots and blisters. See the Boy Scout Handbook, the Hiking merit badge book, and Fieldbook for details on the kinds of hiking clothing and gear you should have.

Food

All Scouts and Scouters attending an outing must cook, eat, and clean up with their patrols. The cooking requirements in Scouting are designed to teach a number of lessons in addition to the life skill of cooking, including planning, teamwork, and cooperation. This spirit of cooperation and consideration must include taking special diets and other accommodations that patrol members may require into account as part of the planning process. For these reasons it is inappropriate and un-Scout-like for any member to plan to cook and eat alone.

Each patrol is responsible for all of its food and cooking equipment planning and purchasing. This is something patrol should spend some time and care in planning since there is nothing better than good food in camp (and nothing worse than bad food or no food!). Each patrol should have a grubmaster and cook (two different Scouts!) who are responsible for buying and preparing the food. Remember to rotate these positions frequently and share the responsibilities, since each Scout must learn to cook in order to advance through Second and First Class. The actual cost of the food is to be shared equally by all of the boys in the patrol or in some cases by the Troop. Remember to settle up after every outing.

Each patrol should have its meal plan (with detailed menus for each meal) and duty roster (showing who prepares the fire, who cooks, and who cleans up after each meal) prepared in writing and submitted to the SPL or the Scoutmasters or the adult in charge of the outing for inspection and approval two weeks before an outing. Make good choices when selecting your menu (see the Boy Scout Handbook and the Camping merit badge book for suggestions). Remember that candy, junk foods and soda are expensive, heavy, and nutritionally unbalanced, and are strongly discouraged on Scout outings.

The adult leaders on an outing serve as an example. All adults in attendance will form a "OldDowg patrol" and will be responsible for their own food, gear, cooking, and cleanup, and will emulate a "perfect patrol," following the Patrol Method as closely as possible.

Transportation

Dates, times, and places for all Troop outings will be announced as far in advance as possible. Please check the Troop calendar for general times for outings. Whenever possible, families will receive written notice before an event detailing the schedule.

Transportation is arranged on a patrol basis. It is expected that all parents throughout the year will equitably provide the transportation. No drivers under the age of 21 can be permitted. In order to provide BSA insurance (\$18 million/vehicle) on our outings, official BSA Tour Permits or other appropriate paperwork will be filed with the Council office before each event. Drivers must ensure that the Troop administrative secretary has their driver's license number, vehicle description, and insurance limits (liability & property damage limits) so this vital paperwork can be filed. The driver and all passengers must have and use a seat belt. If you and your vehicle do not appear on the Tour Permit, you are not covered by our Troop liability insurance and should not drive on a Troop outing. Parents are requested to adhere to the delivery and pickup times for the boys. In cases when we are not sure of our exact return time, we will give the best range that we can and request that a parent be available for a call during that time.

Summary of General Rules for Outings

- 1: Parents and siblings are always welcome. A parent must accompany siblings under the age of 11.
- 2: You should attend two out of the three Troop and Patrol meetings preceding an outing so you know what is going on, and so you can be assigned your patrol duties. It is not fair to simply show up while we are preparing to leave and expect to go if you have not participated in planning.
- 3: Guests who are "checking us out" to see if they want to join Scouting are always welcome. Guests who are simply along to take advantage of Troop equipment, planning, and hospitality are discouraged. Guests who attend three or more activities will be expected to join the Troop. Guests (defined as boys who are not registered with Troop 228) must prepay any activity fees before they can attend a Troop outing.
- 4: BSA Youth *Protection guidelines*, *The Rules of Safe Scouting*, the rules in this booklet, and a certain amount of common sense govern all Troop activities and are in force at all times. The safety and security of the boys is always and everywhere of the utmost importance. All activities require adequate adult leadership. We will not participate in activities that are forbidden by BSA rules or seem too risky at the time.
- 5: Radios, TVs, personal stereos, video games, laser pointers, and other electronic toys and devices, including flashlights with embedded electronic devices such as radios, are forbidden at all Scouting events and are subject to confiscation, so don't bring them. One of the purposes and pleasures of Scouting is a chance to get away from these distractions of modern life and enjoy one another and the out-of-doors. Exception: you may bring a single band NOAA weather radio on hikes and campouts.
- 6: Shotguns, long or compound bows with target or field arrows, BB rifles, black powder rifles, and .22 caliber long guns may be taken to Summer Camp or on outings specified as Field Sport outings. Field Sport outings involve instruction and supervision by a BSA-certified range officer.
- 7: Handguns (including black powder), crossbows, slingshots, hunting arrows (broad heads, etc.), aerosol cans of any description, fireworks of any description, refillable butane lighters, liquid fuel lighters, and long guns larger than .22 caliber are strictly forbidden at all Scouting events. No exceptions. Leave them at home.
- 8: An outing or event may be canceled due to lack of sufficient leadership, lack of participation, extremes of weather, or for other reasons beyond our control. The Assistant Scoutmaster for Outdoor Program or his adult designee, in consultation with the SPL, will make the decision to cancel if necessary. When an event is canceled, every effort will be made to notify the Troop in a timely fashion.

9: The Troop program cannot succeed without input and suggestions from each and every Scout, and your ideas are important. The times to suggest activities and outings are at meetings, privately to your patrol leader or the Scoutmaster, or at Troop meetings while an outing is being discussed and planned. Once an outing has been planned and the plans communicated, it is too late to add or change activities. No matter how great your idea is, it is unfair to the Troop to try to change things by yourself at the last minute.

10: Some state parks and many Scout camps do not permit ground fires (even charcoal) or camping appliances, which use liquid fuel. Other parks do not permit bottled gas. Make sure you check with one of the leaders before you plan on building a campfire, cooking over an open fire, or bringing stoves or lanterns so you do not bring something that is not permitted by the local rules.

11: Do not keep food or drink in your tent! You cannot seal it well enough to keep all traces of aroma from leaking out, and it will attract skunks, raccoons, opossums and other night visitors. All food and drink should be kept in coolers or in "bear bags" outside your tent. Where possible, the campsite should be set up so that the cooking and food storage areas are some distance from our sleeping quarters.

12: Bare feet in camp are a **very** bad idea. Campsites are usually full of all kinds of things that can damage your feet: stinging insects, thorns and sharp sticks, broken glass, bits of sharp metal, and so on. Always wear shoes or boots when you are outside your tent.

Summer Camp

In order to get the most out of Summer Camp, you should have advanced at least one rank since you last attended Camp. Eagle Scouts should have earned at least one Eagle Palm since they last attended. This guideline does not apply the year that you join the Troop or to Life Scouts, since the Life-to-Eagle transition usually takes more than one year.

The highlight of the Scouting year is our week at Summer Camp. This is a concentrated week of friendship, fellowship, fun, and advancement. We select which camp we will attend based on a program that offers a balance of opportunities for rank advancement, merit badges, and opportunities for fun and personal growth, and free time. We select the week we will attend no later than our annual fall planning meeting, hopefully far enough in advance to permit families to arrange for their son to attend.

In past the years Troop 228 has attended the camp offered by the Camp Rainy Mtn. The program there features advancement classes for ranks through First Class and a wide variety of merit badges. There is always a possibility we will try somewhere new and different, since the leaders are always looking for the best programs.

In order to get the most out of summer camp, the Scout and his family should study the program literature from camp, which is usually available by early April each year, and should attend the parents meetings. Camp policies and all of the advancement and participation opportunities are discussed in the program booklet. Scouts and their parents should decide and agree on which advancement programs and merit badges the boy will pursue before going to camp. The adult leaders in charge will make every effort to see that adequate opportunities exist for field work, quiet study, and writing; however, they cannot require a Scout to pursue or complete any particular badge or course of study.

High Adventure

Troop 228 operates a Venture Crew as part of the regular Troop program. [Note that the Venture Crew is different from a Venturing Crew, which is an entirely separate kind of chartered unit that replaced part of the old BSA Explorer program.] Participating in the Venture Crew is an opportunity for older Scouts to try some more challenging activities such as canoe camping, spelunking, and backcountry backpacking, and so forth while still participating in the regular Troop program.

The Venture Crew goes on 2-6 outings per year. The Crew meets at a different time than does the Troop to have the boys plan these outings, which are just for the Crew and not part of the regular Troop program. In addition to any regular advancement opportunities offered by a Venture outing, the Scouts on the Crew can qualify to wear the Venture "V" insignia on the bottom of their merit badge sash. Upon completion of each qualifying outing, an enameled metal pin is earned which is worn affixed to the "V." In order to share leadership and give each Scout a chance to grow and develop, a different Scout is designated the Crew Chief for each outing. This Scout serves as the leader for that outing, working with the Crew and adult leaders to arrange and execute the outing. An adult assistant Scoutmaster, selected by the Scoutmaster, is designated the Assistant Scoutmaster for Venture, and devotes the majority of his/her effort to this program.

In order to join the Venture Crew, a Scout must:

1. Be at least 14 year old;
2. Be at least a 1st Class Scout;
3. Be active in regular Troop activities;
4. Show Scout Spirit.

To be active in regular Troop activities means:

1. The Scout must not be on a granted leave of absence;
2. He must attend at least 75% of all Troop meetings, outings, and functions;
3. He must be performing the duties and responsibilities of any elected or appointed position he holds to the satisfaction of both the Scoutmaster and the Troop Committee.

Note that to ensure each Scout's safety, there may be a list of required merit badges that a Scout must have earned in order to participate in a given outing. For instance, Scouts planning on going on a canoe camping outing might be required to have earned the canoeing, swimming, first aid, and camping merit badges, since these skills would be required if the boy expected to be successful on that outing.

In addition to this Troop program, Scouting outside the Troop offers other opportunities for High Adventure outings. To participate, a Scout must be at least 1st Class and meet age restrictions (either 13 or 14 years old, depends on the activity). High Adventure activities such as National or World Jamborees, Wilderness Base canoeing and camping, Philmont treks, Florida Sea Base adventures, rappelling, or any activity requiring the Troop to file a National or International Tour Permit. High Adventure outings are planned at least a year in advance to permit Scouts and their families to prepare to meet the physical and financial challenges of such outings.

Advancement

A boy joins Troop 228 by completing the BSA application form and submitting it, along with the registration fee, to the Scoutmaster. As soon as his registration has been submitted, a boy can begin advancing through the ranks toward Eagle Scout and beyond.

All of the requirements for every rank in Boy Scouting are explained in detail in the Boy Scout Handbook. A boy really cannot advance in Scouting unless he owns and uses a copy. Boys should read the Handbook and be familiar with each requirement. Skills can be practiced alone, with a family member, with another Scout, or with one of the adult leaders.

From time to time, Troop meetings will be dedicated to fulfilling a particular requirement, and camping outings and summer camp are ideal for learning and practicing many of the required skills. When a boy is comfortable that he has completed a requirement, he should approach either the Scoutmaster or one of the Assistant Scoutmasters to "show his stuff." This would involve demonstrating the skill, reciting the memory work, tying a knot, whatever. When the skill has been demonstrated to the leader's satisfaction he or she will sign and date the boy's book indicating when the requirement was met. Note that in this entire process, it is the Scout's responsibility to learn each skill, to approach the leader, and to demonstrate the skill.

When all of the requirements for a rank have been met except for "Show Scout Spirit," the boy is ready for a Scoutmaster Conference. It is the boy's responsibility to request a conference when he is ready. Either the Scoutmaster or a designated Assistant Scoutmaster can perform the conference (although the Scoutmaster usually does it personally). The conference is a friendly conversation with four purposes:

- 1) it permits the Scout to ensure that he is prepared for the Board of Review;
- 2) it is a chance for the boy and leader to get to know one another better;
- 3) it is a chance for the boy to reflect on his Scouting achievements so far;
- 4) it is a chance for the boy to make plans for his next rank advancement.

PARENTS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME TO OBSERVE THE SCOUTMASTER CONFERENCE!

After all the requirements for a rank advancement, including the Scoutmaster Conference, have been met, it is time for the boy to be interviewed by the Troop Board of Review (BOR). The BOR is lead by the Troop Advancement Chairman and includes at least two other members of the Troop Committee. Assistant Scoutmasters may attend a Board of Review as observers if invited by the Advancement chair; however, the Scoutmaster may attend the BOR only to introduce a Scout, does not stay for the interview. Parents may not be part of their son's BOR, nor may they attend with their son.

While there may be a certain amount of stress associated with the BOR (as with any interview), remember that the Board is truly interested in seeing each Scout succeed. Therefore, the BOR should not be viewed as an inquisition, but rather an opportunity to demonstrate all that the boy has learned. The Board will review of all of the boy's Scouting achievements, and may ask questions about anything a boy has learned, including skills or memory work required for earlier ranks.

It is both the stated policy and intention of Troop 228 that we never set a boy up for failure, but we never do for him what he ought to do for himself. To this end, it is the boy's responsibility to come to their BOR prepared to demonstrate and discuss their knowledge and skills. If a boy is found to be deficient in some area, the BOR will deny the boy rank advancement at that time, with specific criteria, recommendations, and assignments for what must be remedied or improved before another BOR can be scheduled so advancement will be possible.

Boys aspiring to the rank of Eagle Scout are not reviewed by the Troop BOR alone. This ultimate achievement in Scouting is a National award administered on the District level. Once a boy has earned the rank of Life Scout, he must plan and execute a major service project as well as earn merit badges and provide leadership in the Troop. The Troop provides guidance and assistance with the project and will provide an "Eagle Advisor" to counsel the candidate upon the candidate's request. Note that it is not necessary to have an advisor, but most Scouts find it helpful to have an encouraging adult help them prepare for their presentations and ensure that all of the paperwork is done properly.

The service project can be performed at any time after the boy earns the Life Scout rank. Some boys choose to complete all of their merit badges before starting their project, but it is not necessary to do so. There is an approval process within the Troop before a boy can present his project proposal to the District. The boy first presents his idea to the Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmaster(s), and Troop Advancement Chair. These leaders will work with the boy to advise him how best to polish and refine his proposal. When the proposal is ready, the boy presents his plan to the Troop Committee. After the Committee has approved the project, the boy then contacts the District Advancement Chairman, who will interview the boy and give written approval for the boy to start.

When the project and other advancement criteria are complete, the boy completes a written application for the Eagle award and submits it and all supporting documents to the Troop advancement chair, who then arranges for the Scout to appear before the District Eagle Board of Review. After the review, if the Scout is successful the committee will send the application and its recommendations to the National Board of Review. The National Board will review the application, recommendation, and the Scout's advancement records. The Council Executive is then notified of their decision. He or she will then notify the Scout and the Troop. The Eagle Scout rank is always presented at a special Court of Honor, which is convened in the name of the National Board of Review. The journey from Life to Eagle is strenuous but not impossible, and hopefully fulfilling and exhilarating. Our local Scout council will supply the paperwork necessary to plan an Eagle project and apply for the Eagle rank to each Life Scout. Merit Badges are designed to teach advanced skills, enhance citizenship, provide unique opportunities, allow career exploration, and to be fun.

Any Scout may start work on any merit badge at any time. Very few badges have prerequisites, although some of the water sports do require a Scout to be able to pass the First Class swimming test and all of the badges that are associated with any element of risk (e.g., cooking, hiking, camping, white water, etc.) require knowledge of basic first aid as it applies to that activity.

In order to start a badge, pick your subject and read the merit badge book. The Troop owns a library of merit badge books, so always check with the Librarian before you purchase a book. After you understand the requirements, obtain a blue merit badge card from the Scoutmaster, then contact a merit badge counselor and make arrangements to complete the requirements. Remember to take a buddy to all meetings with the counselor. A buddy can be another Scout, a friend, or a parent. After you have completed the requirements, ask the counselor to fill out the blue card. You then return the card to the adult in charge of advancement. Your merit badge will be awarded at the next Court of Honor. The District tries to maintain a listing of all registered merit badge counselors. The adult leaders have a copy of this listing. If you want to pursue a merit badge and cannot find a counselor, let the advancement chairman or one of the other leaders know. They will make sure you have a counselor. Most teachers, parents, and clergy are willing to become counselors to help you with your Scouting requirements.

In some cases, the entire Troop will work on a merit badge together. For this to happen, the PLC needs to determine which badge will be taught and when. These decisions are usually made at the fall planning meeting. Badges can be taught at Troop meetings or special outings can be arranged. In either case, either the program patrol or an adult leader will make arrangements for a counselor, and either the outing or the Troop meetings will take the form of a merit badge "class." The paperwork is the same in this case: each boy needs to obtain a blue card from the Scoutmaster; the counselor fills in the card, and the completed card is submitted to the advancement chairman.

Troop policy strongly discourages parents from counseling their own son for a merit badge on a one-to-one basis; however, a parent may lead a merit badge "class" and sign for their son as part of a group (i.e., 2 or more Scouts). The Home Repair merit badge is only exception to this rule: The Troop also endorses the "best practice" principal that a Scout should earn no more than two merit badges from the same counselor.

It is up to each Scout to keep track of his own advancement records. We recommend using either a gallon zip lock plastic bag or a notebook with plastic sheets used for baseball cards to keep all of your merit badge and advancement cards safe and together. When you sit for your Eagle Board of Review, they may ask for confirmation that you have earned particular badges or ranks, and you will have to submit photocopies of all of your merit badge cards with your Eagle Rank application forms. It is not unknown for the Council's records to be incomplete or inaccurate. The dated signatures in your Boy Scout Handbook and the signed and dated cards you receive with your merit badges and rank advancement are the final word concerning if and when you actually earned the badge or rank, if you keep all of your records together, you will Be Prepared for these questions.

Court of Honor

The Court of Honor is a formal Troop meeting at which Scouts are recognized and celebrated for their achievements and participation. Rank advancements, merit badges, badges of office, and special awards are all presented at the Court of Honor. In addition, adult Scouters may receive awards or recognition having to do with the Troop, special awards may be presented to the boys, and some of the past activities and future plans discussed.

Scouts and Scouters should attend the Court of Honor in complete and correct Class A uniform. In order to participate in a Court of Honor, a Scout's dues must be paid and current, he should not owe any activity fees, and he should not have any Troop equipment or library materials checked out with the Troop Quartermaster or the Librarian. Boys who owe dues, fees, or equipment may have their awards withheld until their debts are paid or the equipment returned.

The Court of Honor is a family event, and we would like to have all parents and siblings of boys in the Troop present. Boys should feel free to invite relatives and other guests who are important in their lives. Printed invitations are usually available before each scheduled Court of Honor, and a reception usually follows a Court of Honor. This reception is planned and staged by the boys' parents, and is planned at the parents meeting preceding the Court of Honor. The Troop holds at least two, and sometimes as many as four, Courts of Honor during the year.

Religious Service Awards

The final point of the Scout Law states "A Scout is Reverent." The Boys Scouts of America, in cooperation with almost every faith and religion practiced in the United States, is pleased to recognize Scouts who grow in their spiritual faith and give service in a religious context. Scouts who fulfill certain requirements dealing with learning about their religion and giving service in a religious context can be presented with a Scouting award. These awards, commonly referred to as "God and Country" awards, are administered and awarded by each faith. In fact, each faith has its own name for this award, which may be presented to children in other youth organizations such as Campfire, Girl Scouts, etc., as well as to Boy Scouts.

A Scout may wear his religious service award (usually a medal) as part of his Class A uniform. When the Field uniform is worn, the religious service award takes the form of a square knot patch worn centered above the left pocket and touching the pocket flap seam. The silver-on-purple knot is the same for every religious service award, since it is the part of the award presented by the BSA in recognition of the award presented by the Scout's religious organization. While encouraging a boy to grow in faith, BSA does not prefer any one system of beliefs to another, and therefore recognizes all religious awards with the same square knot insignia.

Some faiths offer more than one award, with the requirements depending on the boy's age. It is not uncommon for Scouts who are active in their church to earn more than one religious service award. With each award a Scout earns, he is entitled to wear a tiny gold "device" pin indicating the Scouting program he was in (Tigers, Cubs, Webelos, Scouts, and Venture) at the time the award was earned. The device is worn on the square knot.

Troop 228 supports and encourages our Scouts to become involved with their religion. If you are interested in earning your religious service award, let one of the Scoutmasters know. The workbooks for the Catholic, Jewish, and many Protestant denominations are available at the Scout Shop. The books for other faiths, such as Islam, Friends, Hinduism, The Ba'hai Faith, and most others, take a little while to get because they must be ordered. In either case, we can and will get the books and forms that you and your clergy will need to help you earn your award. All you have to do is ask!

Boy Scouts of America outside Troop 228

The National office of BSA is in Irving, Texas, just outside Dallas. The office provides Scouting program materials, develops training curricula for all training programs, decides uniform style and insignia, sets policy, publishes Boys Life, and runs the organization on a national level. This is where our National dues go.

The Regions administer insurance programs, specialized advanced training programs for adults, and maintain the BSA High Adventure camps in their area.

Questions, Comments, Concerns, and Complaints

Please feel free to ask questions, make suggestions, and air complaints. We are constantly striving to make Troop 228 the best that it can be. Without your input we cannot improve.